24 PORTRAITS OF STAGE FAVORITES

SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

OCT., 1909

15 CENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS COMPLETE NOVEL AND ELEVEN STORIES AND ARTICLES

A Severe Test for the Memory

Amusing for all but exceedingly useful for liars

MACKLIN, the celebrated actor, one evening made "The Cultivation of the Memory" the subject of a lecture, during which he said that to such perfection had he brought his own, that he could learn anything by rote on once hearing it. Foote, another actor, was present, and handed up the following sentences, desiring that Macklin would read them once and repeat them from memory:

> "So she went into the garden to cut a cabbage-leaf, to make an apple-pie; and at the same time a great she-bear, coming up the street, pops its head into the shop. 'What! No Pears Soap?' So he died, and she very imprudently married the barber; and there were present the Picninnies, and the Joblilies, and the Garcelies, and the Grand Panjandrum himself, with the little round button at top; and they all fell to playing the game of catch as catch can, till the gunpowder ran out at the heels of their boots."

It is needless to say that Foote had the laugh of old Macklin, and that Pears' Soap is matchless for the Complexion

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Vol. X

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 1

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

OCTOBER 1909

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 10 OCTOBER, 1909 NUMBER 1

MISS NAN BRENNAN
With "The Midnight Sons"

Photo by Hall, N. Y.

MISS NEDDA NILLSON
With "The Midnight Sons"

Photo by Hall, N. Y.

MISS MOLLIE MARGOLIES
With "The Midnight Sons"

Photo by Hall, N. Y.

MISS HAZEL TROUTMAN
With "The Midnight Sons"

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MISS HELEN TURNER
With "The Midnight Sons"

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MISS LILLIAN LEROY
With "The Midnight Sons"

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MISS LOTTA FAUST
With "The Midnight Sons"

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MISS VIOLA CLARK
With "The Midnight Sons"

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MISS SUE DUVAL
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS GEORGIE CAINE
Primadonna with "The Motor Girl"
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MISS ELIZABETH BRICE
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS ADELAIDE SHARPE
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS GLADYS MOORE
With "The Midnight Sons"

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MISS ELINOR DAYNE
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS LILLIAN FOSTER
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS CORENE UZELL
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS LEOTA HINGSTON
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS ELIZABETH YOUNG
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS FLORA CROSBIE
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS LURA WENTWORTH
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS EVELYN MEREDITH
With "The Motor Girl"

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MISS ELSA RINEHARDT
With "The Midnight Sons"

Photo by Hall, N. Y.

MISS DOROTHY NEWELL
With "The Motor Girl"

Photo by Hall, N. Y.

THE MAKING OF DICK LARRABEE

By Emma Lee Walton

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE BONAWITZ

IN my capacity of faculty wife I have known so many boys and loved them so dearly that I was not surprised to learn that my reputation had penetrated even the fastnesses of the far West, and finally commanded the attention of Arthur Larrabee, of whom I had not heard directly in fifteen years. Newspaper and magazine articles had told me much concerning his enormous fortune and daring enterprises, but after his wife died I had only these words from the pens of strangers, to tell me aught of those with whom she had lived.

Alice Griswold and I were like sisters until she married Arthur Larrabee and went West to live—and die. Sometimes when a girl marries she shuts herself into her little home and seemingly forgets for a period of years those who live beyond easy walking distance, often letting them slip until lonely middle age wakens her to a realizing sense of loss. If I had done so I might have been excusable, for my husband was a struggling instructor, and the work in our little home was done by my own hands, while Arthur Larrabee's thousands afforded luxury and idleness. I contend, myself, that the more one has to do the more she can accomplish in outside lines, because she has steam up and is in the spirit of work; but Alice had looked upon marriage as emancipation, and had no love for any previous condition of servitude. It was as well, perhaps, that there was no necessity for any exercise of her own talents, since she was ever an indifferent housewife and never knew whether berries were poor because they were just coming in, or because the season for them was drawing to a close.

So our paths parted. Her husband rose to prominence and mine to comfort. We heard, now and then, of their journeyings, of his honors, of the growth of their sphere, of the birth of their two children, and finally of her death. When one has loved another from babyhood to womanhood, watching her develop with jealous affection, sharing every thought and every pleasure, confiding to her all trials and tribulations and planning futures at her side, one can never lose the old sense of companionship. I do not know that Alice meant to consider our financial position, but I cannot help acknowledging to myself that she let me go easily, gladly; and yet I loved her, and her death left me bereft. The ache has not

gone to-day, though I cannot but wish she had left us before she forgot me.

From the day she died her husband was a changed man, and his indifference to everything but business was noted on every hand. Reckless methods became a habit with him, though he was always strictly honorable and invariably successful. His income was quoted as enormous, though even the most exaggerated accounts always did justice to the severe simplicity of his home life. He had never built atrocious palaces or toadstool bungalows, and latterly he had not entertained, even for the growing children over whom a governess and a housekeeper ruled. Alice had so loved display and the pomp of a retinue of servants. These things, or most of them, I learned afterward, for I knew little or nothing of his life or his tastes when Arthur Larrabee wrote me a letter.

He began by saying he remembered me at the wedding—whereat I smiled, for I was maid of honor and considered myself rather noticeable. When a man takes pride in noticing and remembering, he is often at his funniest. I remember meeting a young man five years after we had had some very good times together, and having him say he had vivid recollections of a boat ride with me that he never took. I suppose a man cannot be expected to keep track of all the girls in whom he has been more or less interested.

Arthur Larrabee went on to say that his only son, having finished his preparatory school, would shortly present himself to our registrar to enter the department of which my husband is dean. The statement had the pleasant fatherly ring of one who was certain of announcing a matter of national or universal importance, so little did the writer realize how small a ripple one more pebble makes in the sea. Men in high places do not know how often their sons have to go on their own merits or have harder rows to hoe because they are their fathers' sons. He knew full well, he said, that favor was not to be desired in scholarship; but he reminded me that the boy had no mother, and added that he was certain that Alice would wish her son to be under my direct supervision. It was on the whole a manly letter, but it was the last sentence that broke me up. I am one of the delicately balanced between laughter and tears, and I wished I could know whether Alice had given me a thought.

I felt then, as I sometimes do, that it is a strange trick of fate that I should be the wife of a dean. A man in his position is obliged to be so severe and dignified that people do not understand how perfectly dear he is at home. If they ever saw him "letting off steam," as he calls it, I am certain his position in the university would be imperiled. If he were not so dear I don't know what I should do, I get so tired of the everlasting bookishness and the mad race not to be left behind in knowing things. I love people and cannot keep the pace of the intellectual faculty wives. They wonder how he ever came to marry me, because I am sort of soft and foolish, and they don't understand.

Some men, I notice, on attaining middle age take to drink; others to their clubs, and others still to incessant reading; but the older Leroy gets, the more of a joy he is. As he misses the children, married and gone, he tries the more to make up to me. And Frances, our daughter, is just like him. There is, thank goodness, none of that oft-praised "sweetness" in either of them. I have known such sweet women who never cleared the luncheon table before time for dinner, never chided the children even when they poked sticks in people's faces, never lost their tempers or their smiles, always finding some one to fetch and carry for them because they were so sweet. My people have character enough to be impatient and make mistakes.

I have always had a horror of bringing Frances up to be a college widow, so we sent her away to a girls' college and we traveled in the summers until she was grown. There are girls here, of course; but who would make her daughter a coed, knowing what I do about it? Once, in Leroy's sabbatical

year, we went abroad with her, the only one of our five children who was still with us. I am afraid our European trip was a good deal of a lark, and I know a number of the faculty ladies were quite righteously shocked to find I had acquired no great veneer of culture while away. "With such a scholarly husband, too!" they cried as with one accord. They have given me up as a bad job now, for I heard one of them say she did not believe I would ever learn to take life seriously.

Seriously! If they only knew the heartaches I have over some of my boys on occasion, especially freshmen! And here was another stranger coming as one sent by the dead, to be mothered and guided—the independent, blustering, swaggering sub-freshman!

II.

The day of the fall entrance examinations I was crossing the campus near Lincoln Hall on my way to Mrs. Storck's when I met Dick Larrabee face to face. I knew him for a freshman at once by the armful of books he saw fit to carry, and because he set his watch by the clock in the library tower; but I knew him as Alice's son by so many unmistakable signs that I stopped short, unable to do anything but gaze, the while it seemed as though my heart would burst. The boy hesitated a moment with an air of polite though arrogant surprise, raised his hat indolently, and started by.

"Wait, please," I said quickly. "You are Alice Griswold's boy, are you not?"

He whipped off the atrocious beribboned hat again, and the quick color flew to his face.

"Yes'm," he said boyishly. "But nowadays they call me that rascal of Larrabee's."

We shook hands and looked at each other curiously. I saw a tall, well-formed young fellow, with a firm grasp but shifting eyes; his wavering mouth, so like Alice's, showing his decision not yet made. The fork of the road comes sooner or later to every one, and he had yet to make his choice.

"I suppose you think it would be better for me to continue to be known as her boy," he said coldly, "though I am no credit to her. I certainly am glad to get away from housekeepers and things, and be free to live. Father tied me down too much for a man of my years."

Something in my face made his manner change of a sudden. I had thought back so far!

"I suppose you are Lady Addie," he said briskly. "There is little the fellows haven't told me about 'Addie,' as they call Professor Adams."

"You will hear all sorts of tales," I said, as we walked along slowly. "Judge your professors for yourself and not on hearsay. I am Mrs. Adams, your mother's friend, and I want to be your friend."

He held out his hand impulsively.

"I'm with you," he said seriously. "I was coming up to see you to-night, but the fellows want me for something."

Was he insincere or only diffidently palavery?

"Come to dinner when you can," I said. "My husband and I will be glad to see you."

"An invitation from you is a coveted honor, did you know it?" he asked awkwardly. "I suppose you do, since your husband is the most popular professor on the hill. Monnie told me to tell her all about you. She's my sister."

"How did your examinations go?"

"I didn't have to take any but the usual English," he said gayly. "And that was a cinch. I won't get a condition from old Davy's office, that's sure."

He was like his father as I remembered him, eager to show his familiarity with new situations by an easy adoption of terms and nicknames peculiar to the locality. Arthur Larrabee as a young man always spoke of celebrities as if he had known them from their youth up, a trick he probably lost as soon as he really knew those worth while.

"Don't forget me," I said. "I live in number sixteen. You have an engagement for to-night, you said?"

"Yes," he said boastfully. "At one of the frats. I am being rushed by four fraternities, and I presume it will take me some time to decide which one I like best. A man cannot be too careful. I'm going to try for the glee club and the crew, too."

I had seen so many confident freshmen come up the hill to meet defeat that I knew the pity of it and did not smile. I wondered what fraternities had chosen to elect him and hoped it might not be the wild ones, though I knew the hope was vain. His father's reputation was such as would give him entrance to the most noted fraternities, the little more than drinking clubs, against which our president is powerless, though he knows the wrecks that go out into the world from them, entering young in innocence and leaving old in dissipation. The tragedies of college, against which no one warns them!

"You don't think I will," he said slowly. "Is it so hard to be somebody here?"

"It depends on the kind of somebody you care to be," I said. "The most prominent somebody last year was expelled for cheating his landlady."

He laughed oddly.

"I'll pay my bills," he said. "But I didn't come to college to be a bookworm or a prig, and I intend to enjoy myself. This is a pretty country around here, isn't it?"

We stood, then, back of the library, and the view was glorious over the valley to West Hill and the lake shimmering far below. Some of the crew were out in a shell in the bright sunlight, scudding like a bird between the reflections of the green hills on either side. The beauty of it hurt me, and I resented his patronizing tone, though I said nothing. He showed himself to me more undisciplined every moment, but it only made me sorrier for him. The country is dear to me, but I had more sympathy with him than with the Idaho woman who asked me petulantly: "Isn't there anything to be seen here but scenery, after all?" I laugh to myself when I realize how crestfallen I was at having to acknowledge there was nothing more.

As I stood with Alice's son overlooking the little city and the hill-bound lake, I realized anew all the lessons the boy had to learn outside of books, and longed to help him as I knew I was powerless to do. How he would have laughed had he known my thoughts! Yet Alice's boy could not know, as I knew, the two natures that would fight for the mastery; nor fear, as I feared, that the weaker would win.

Two fraternity sophomores, turning the corner abruptly, came upon us and bore away my new friend with a laughing apology, and I was left alone with my thoughts. I turned to the stone bench, placed there by one of our great men, and, seating myself, ran my finger over the inscription as I read:

To those who sit here in sorrow
To those who sit here rejoicing—
Sympathy and greeting, for so have we done in our time.

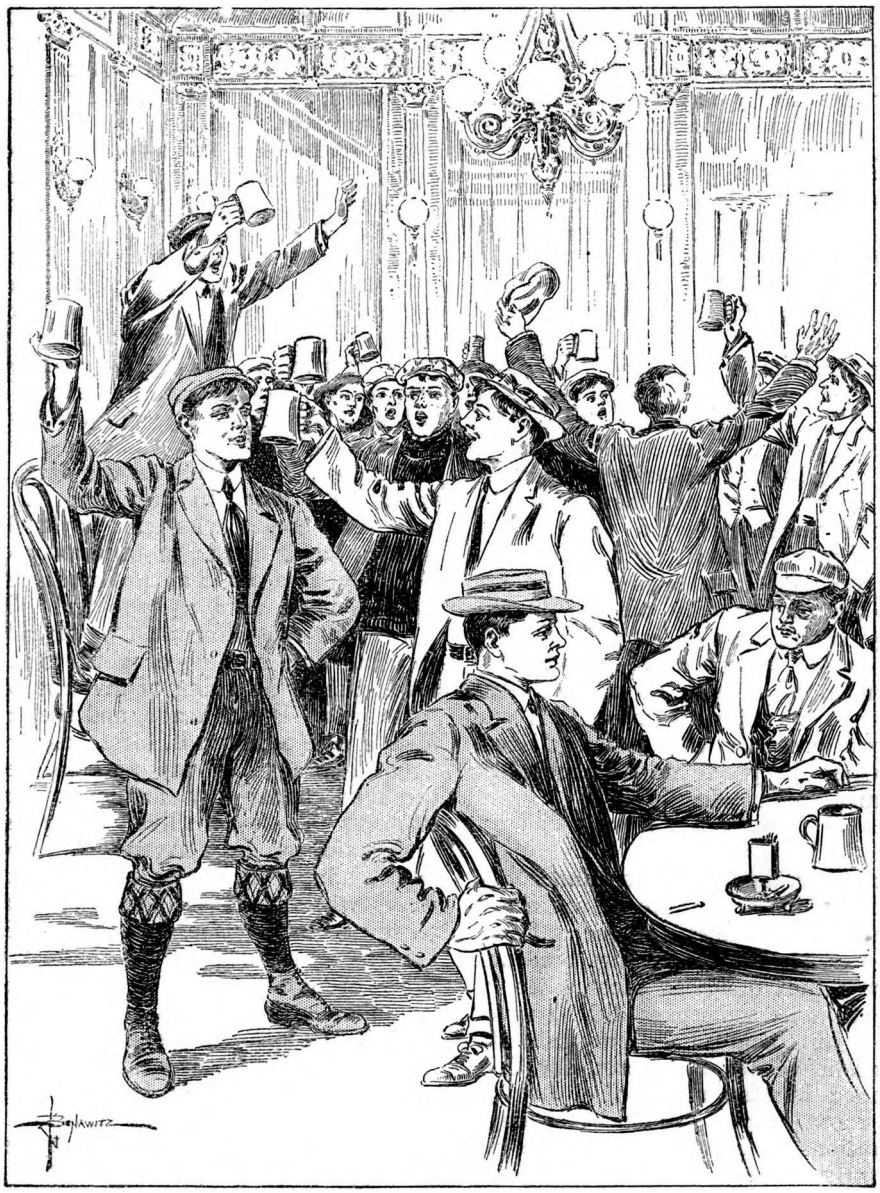
I have always been sorry I was not the one to leave that beautiful memorial behind, to greet the homesick and sorrowing; for I love its message dearly.

That day, again, it helped me, and I looked over the valley with a lighter heart. Below, I could see the bridge that the hill people had vainly begged the townsfolk to mend, the bridge they mended only when the circus company sent word it was too weak to bear the weight of the elephants, and therefore would prevent the parade. The same day an injunction was issued preventing some housemovers from proceeding across the road until after the procession had returned, to avoid blocking it! Children, all of us!

The library chimes, sounding forth over the valley, reminded me of my errand at Professor Storck's, and I rose and went on. As I came out of the modest little house, set on the edge of the bluff, I met Leroy, and we went back up the centipede walk together.

"You mustn't take that Larrabee boy too much to heart," he said, as though reading my thoughts. "I met him this morning."

"You don't like him?"



I shiver when I pass Hinck's and hear the stein song ring out from the cloud of smoke.

"The first thing he told me was that he considered it a shame that respectable fellows have to associate with students who work their way by driving wagons and tending furnaces."

The dean's voice expressed so much that we did not say another word, crossing the campus in a silence that showed more than anything how deep was our disappointment.

After all, how little we change! The real Us never does change, merely develops, and the undeveloped character is handed down to these our children. If they could begin where we leave off it seems as though it would help

a lot, but what a cynical creature our great-great-great-great-grandson would be! I contend he would not be a pessimist, but Leroy feels sure of it, and we have warm discussions over the question, all the warmer for being absurd. As I look back, though, I certainly am surprised to think I was ever the little girl who loved boiled carrots and the Mollie Books.

Leroy thinks I take the students too much to heart for my own good, and I know I never get to lots of the bridges I cross, but I know men and I knew Dick Larrabee. Perhaps, as I like to get the disagreeable things out of the way early, I have fallen into the habit of crossing the bridges in order to be ready to act when they do appear —like rehearsing for a play. The imaginary conversations I have had with some of those boys would fill a book and are usually pitched in the wrong key, after all; but there are so many people who need only a word fitly spoken to help them up and on that it pays to be ready to give it. It was a negro preacher who asked: "Bredren, when yo' git to de extreme o' de extremities, den whar is yo'?"

III.

Dick Larrabee came to dinner and condescended to be quite patronizingly agreeable to Frances and me. Leroy was merciless in cornering him and bringing him down to facts when he boasted, as he sometimes did. I saved the boy all I could, but Leroy said afterward he wished I had not, for Dick reminded him so much of a boy he once knew. Leroy always has enough illustrations in his past to fill the life of a centenarian, but they sometimes fit nicely. This boy of his boasted of the bicycle club of which he was a member, and when asked the make of the bicycles, was forced to reply: "Oh, we haven't any of us got bicycles, yet, but we all have sweaters!" I was quite crushed by the quotation until I happened to think to ask if the boy were not himself. Whereat he made no reply, but strode haughtily out of the room.

There was nevertheless a certain winsome breeziness about Dick that gave him a charm of his own and held my liking. I felt he was honest at the core, and wondered whether his apparent frivolity were not a mask to cover deeper feelings. It startled me to note how familiar his faults were, how quickly I recognized them as his mother's, though I had never known them in her. Perhaps it gave me greater patience because she was so dear to me. To quarrel is some satisfaction because there is always a feeling of justification, but to lose her so was terrible.

Leroy and I were very, very poor in those days; and sometimes, to-day, as we sit by the grate fire in the dark, we smile with tears in our eyes at the poor little couple who tried so hard to hold up their heads in university circles. What a panic an invitation from East Avenue used to give us! The president's reception must be attended, and there was nothing of which to make a waist save the lining of my trousseau party coat. It was made, and the president's wife admired it, bless her, probably divining how my nervous heart throbbed under my artificially calm manner. To-day we live—though still underpaid—on East Avenue ourselves, and I admire the taste of instructors' wives whenever I see them white and tense with nervousness. Leroy, falling heir to a tidy fortune in the nick of time, brought out the invention that was the darling of his heart, and we have been comfortable ever since.

How much the invention had to do with his being made dean I do not know, but he was, and we have faculty teas and faculty dinners at number sixteen these days, and listen with rapt attention to papers on Dante or St. Simon by a faculty wife, or applaud to the echo the loud-pedal piano playing of a faculty daughter.

When I was a young woman I went to an exposition in Chicago, an annual affair held in a building that was enormous in those modest days. Here there were pianos for sale, and when the orchestra was not playing they were, loud, echoing, flaring, blatant; and it is

of these I think when I hear the slap-dash music of the present day and watch the gymnastics of the pianist. Thank Heaven, Frances is old-fashioned enough to play the soft dreamy things, and is not afraid of spoiling her classic sense by playing "Home, Sweet Home," or "Suwanee River" for her father.

I wish I had kept a diary of those old days, even though it were filled with foolishness; for Dick cannot know his mother as he would, could he realize something of her girlhood. There are so many things hard to understand when one does not know all that others have had to undergo, and the early life of his mother was so terribly hard before she met Arthur Larrabee. I wondered how much he knew of it all, and of his grandfather, who did not live up to his old and honorable lineage. When we contemplate the sins of the others as visited on the children, we are glad there are men of such stern stuff as Arthur Larrabee to offset them.

We have not been people to keep diaries, as a rule. When Frances was a little thing she asked if she might keep one, taking the idea from some small friend whose mother considered it a religious duty. I asked, in return, of what good it would be to her; and she replied that if you kept a diary and the lady across the street died you would note the fact in your book. I agreed, and asked what then? Then, she said, when you wanted to call on her you'd look her up in the diary, find she was dead, and not go. She kept the diary.

Dick Larrabee did not have time to do much visiting, so popular was he, but I heard of him now and then, even when I did not see him. Once when I passed the row of feet on the Chi Pi window sill, on my way downhill, I recognized his big hill-climbing shoes, though I did not see any more of him than that, and I wondered if his difficult choice had been made. He was like a girl with many lovers, coquetting with this fraternity and that, certain of ample time in which to make his selection. It was enough that Arthur Larrabee's son was thinking it over. Yet without his great charm of manner they would not have tolerated his condescension.

"I see your Daniel has fallen into the liars' den, Peggy," Leroy said one day. "What has become of the angel that was to stand by and lead him safely out again?"

"I saw him," I sighed. "But he is free, white, and twenty-one, and plainly resents advice. Not that I've tried to give him any, but I know it from the tilt of his head."

"It would be better if his head were set more squarely on his shoulders," Leroy said sharply. "He was down at Hinck's until after two last night."

How things get known in a university town I do not know, unless the townspeople spread and exaggerate news, to even up old scores with the hill families. At any rate, my laundress kept me well informed of the educational influences at work on Dick Larrabee, and I realized that he was following the line of least resistance. Leroy says a man who is going to be wild will be so even in good surroundings, but I know the fatal comradeship that mars a boy before he realizes the inevitable end.

The faculty wives laugh at me because I shiver when I pass Hinck's and hear the stein song ring out from the cloud of smoke, sung by thick and shaky, though boyish, voices. They laugh themselves, these boys, as their familiarity breeds indifference rather than contempt. I have often noticed that people with an infirmity like poor eyesight, begin by testily denying their abnormality and end by boasting that they have this or that serious affliction. If they find pleasure in it I suppose it is all right. I can well remember my delight that I was the only little girl in our neighborhood who had had measles twice.

Frances was almost as severe as her father regarding my new protégé, but that was the first winter I had allowed her to meet the students, and she was so busy with some of those I liked best that she had little time for thoughts of Alice's boy. There was one fellow

particularly nice to us both, a senior who had won Sigma Zi in his junior year, whom Leroy considered the brightest man in any of his classes, too studious to have as much time to himself as he wished. He was Fred Allen, and I liked him far more than I did the sophomore president, Lewis Gregory, a Chi Pi man.

Leroy and I have been accused of being anti-fraternity in spite of our fraternity and sorority affiliations, and people are more than half right in thus accusing us. Aside from the fact that almost every university scandal has its origin in fraternity men, Leroy is too intensely democratically American to like caste. We cannot blame the fraternities for desiring wealthy members, considering the ostentatious expenditures they find necessary on the occasion of proms or other celebrations, but we cannot but see that the best men are kept down thereby. The fraternities put their members on the committees, on the masque, on everything where mere voting will do it, regardless of merit, and then people wonder at the showing we make.

I should like to take a broom and sweep every fraternity from our university, even if we had to go into bankruptcy to pay for my rashness. Leroy is a frat man, but in his day they did not spend their evenings at things called "smokers," where the chief entertainment lay in smashing chairs and shoving a piano from one side of the room to the other.

I think I should have felt better about fraternities had I known whether Frances liked that Chi Pi man as much as she seemed to. Which only goes to show, perhaps, that our most cherished prejudices revolve around some personal interest after all.

IV.

For quite a while I was out of touch with life on the campus, save as I heard it from Frances' letters, for I had to run down to my oldest son's in response to a telegram. His children were seized with measles, and Lucy was in a panic at once. Sometimes I think a woman makes a mistake in being too independent and self-reliant. The woman who sits back as Lucy does and says she cannot cook a thing, and is a perfect child about illness, always finds some one ready to help her out and take the responsibility off her shoulders. If I had only not known how to do things, I'd have had so much easier times in the early days—and been quite properly ashamed of myself, into the bargain.

Lucy and Paul live in Philadelphia, where they have a dear home and three lovely and lovable children, so, as I have always been fond of their city, I was most glad to go there. I think Lucy's relatives always expect to see me dance a jig on the table, or ride bareback through their sedate streets, because I was brought up in wild and woolly Chicago; but, so far, I have disappointed them. It may be there is a saving grace in the fact that I was born in Boston, but I am not certain. True it is that they express genuine surprise to find I am somewhat conversant with the ways of the polite world, and suppress with difficulty their inclination to point out the luxuries and desirable things of life. In a way it is the attitude of the entire East toward the West, and it is considerably amusing to any one educated in European travel and graduated from our best women's college.

Lucy's children began to get well as soon as I arrived. Their mother says I am better than any medicine in that regard. So the response to her Macedonian cry turned into a really satisfactory visit of which I enjoyed every moment. Lucy is a delightful hostess and does not fuss so much over a guest that she feels uncomfortable, nor neglect her so that she is lonely. She seems genuinely glad to have me come, and I enjoy the being there.

Twelve-year-old Margaret recovered very quickly, and we had great fun shopping together for her mother. I don't know of anything much more delightful than treating a child to ice-cream soda water; her pleasure always

seems so unbounded, her satisfaction so complete. She is very like me, and gave me a queer feeling of seeing myself as I used to be, especially when we went to a wedding together the evening before I left. It carried me back to the days when Alice and I used to attend all the church weddings advertised in the papers, sitting in the gallery and commenting in whispers on the appearance and costumes of the wedding party and the guests. There never will be anything to equal the thrill that we experienced when the first notes of the wedding march sounded over the waiting church and we knew the bride was in the vestibule, her train spread out, her head held high, ready to meet the man of her choice, who stood so proudly at the altar.

Once I sat there alone, for Alice had the proud privilege of attending her sister as a flower girl, to be set aside ever after in our minds as sanctified by an experience too wonderful to talk about save in whispers. The very thought of it brings to my mind the old Episcopal church on the corner, with its rain-spotted ceiling. What fatal weakness is it that brings out these leaky places in church roofs to this day? They make me sorry to-day, while in days of yore I was wont to rejoice at their growth and long to have the plaster fall crashing on the head of the pompous Marvin Holabird in his pew.

At this wedding we thought we knew only the bride, but I found an old acquaintance in the best man, who was no other than Dick Larrabee. It takes a gentleman to look well in conventional afternoon dress, and the Larrabees were all gentlefolk. There is, I suppose, an innate something indescribable that saves gentlewomen from the crime of tawdry overdressing, a something we sometimes sum up under the name of "taste." Certainly it is discouraging to note the reception costumes that haunt bargain counters, the seaside gowns that parade the city streets.

I had a word with Dick at the church door, for there was a mistake in the carriages, and the bridal party had to wait. Little Margaret was especially glad of the delay because of the added importance of having the best man speak to one in full view of everybody, which Dick very thoughtfully and conspicuously did. His quick, bright smile warmed the cockles of my heart and gave me a little homesick pang.

I cannot bear to be long away from my sphere, and I enjoy other places little, because I see such hundreds of boys I can never know. Boys are my friends in the college town, but elsewhere they are only strangers. If I stopped to speak to them, as I am sometimes sorely tempted to do, I can imagine their scornful admonition regarding those bold enough to butt in, or, as Mrs. Proctor would put it: "Rushing in where angels fear to tread." I covet every boy I see, wishing I might know them all, realizing keenly the homesick boyish souls that go down to strange cities in loneliness to fight the good fight, or, failing, to sink into the unknown or the forgotten.

I wish some one had been good to my boy, Ned, when he went to Omaha, just out of school, arriving in a pouring rain, absolutely alone. The sun did not come out until Sunday, when he found no place homelike but the Presbyterian lawn, where he sat him down to rest. Scarcely was he seated there when he was routed out by a policeman, who gave him that brusque message associated with the homeless: "Move on!" Move on? Where?

Dick had cut five lectures and a written test to come out to his cousin's wedding, but he was as unconcerned as one who has merely postponed a shopping tour. I pretended to be severe with him.

"Don't scold, lady," he laughed. "I didn't cut the dean's lecture. Will you let me take you to see Otis Skinner tomorrow night?"

I had to decline, as I was leaving on the noon train for home, but the invitation gave me an illuminating vision of Dick and the winning way of him. Who could be long angry with him? I remembered an examination question to which Leroy had seen his answer,

He covered his face with his hands and we were silent for some time.

brought to him by a puzzled instructor. He had answered "Yes" to a question the instructor thought should be answered more fully, so a red-penciled "Yes, what?" was returned with the paper. When the examination was handed in again Dick had improved his answer to "Yes, sir," and the instructor was troubled at heart.

I was so comfortably settled in my seat on the noon train, suitcase, flowers, Margaret's fudge, and Lucy's magazine about me, that I was nearly home before I felt that odd sensation that some one was looking at me. I think the seat was vacant all the way until that moment, but I am not certain. I scarcely recognized the culprit in the downcast figure that presented itself to my astonished gaze, so woe-begone he looked, so great a contrast to the debonair society man of the night before. Something terrible must have happened to bring him back before the end of the week. We were by that time almost alone in the car, so I motioned to him to come over and sit by me. I noticed a little hesitation in his obedience, but cheerfully overlooked it.

"Smile up your face," I said gayly. "This is a great way to run away after inviting me to go to the theatre; late hours ought not to make you look doleful."

"It isn't anything like that," he said dully. "You haven't seen the papers, have you?"

I had started off in such a rush I had not seen anything; a confused memory of telephoning, of an evil-smelling expressman, of a carriage ride, and hasty good-bys, being all that remained to me of my morning; and so I told him, my heart sinking like lead as I braced myself for I knew not what.

"It couldn't be much worse," he said. "Father's gone to smash."

I could not grasp it at first, and my earliest sensation was one of relief that

there was no tragedy. That it was a tragedy to him in every sense of the word came to me as a second thought.

"Tell me," I said gently. "Is it complete failure? How did it happen?"

He laid a crumpled newspaper on my lap and pointed to the black headlines.

"He ventured too far," he said. "We all thought he never would, but he did and got caught in that flurry last week. I wired Monnie for particulars. It will be hard for Monnie."

"And you?" I asked. "How will it affect you?"

"I can borrow," he said confidently. "The university will take my notes and the Chi Pis will see me through the rest. I decided to join them last night, and they'll be glad to stand by me. They told me they'd do anything in the world for me the other day. That's the beauty of the fraternity spirit. I'll offer my insurance policy for security; it's a good big one. I'm all right."

The old confident manner returned, making my heart ache, but I liked him the better for it.

"And your father?" I asked. "What will he do?"

Dick smiled a hard smile.

"Father will begin again," he said slowly. "His passion is business, and he is an honorable man anxious to pay off his debts. It will really serve as a new amusement for him, something as we used to rebuild card houses we had knocked over. It is of Monnie I think."

I could not tell the boy that his own hope of manliness was grounded on the possibility of his inheriting some of the strength and resiliency he so condemned in his father, so I tried to divert him by speaking of his sister.

"Monnie?" I asked. "That's a nickname, isn't it? How old is she?"

"Seventeen," he said. "Her right name is Margaret—for a friend of mother's, they tell me."

My heart gave a great leap. I had never known.

"Mother was such a beautiful woman," he went on softly. "We have her portrait in the drawing-room, and sometimes Monnie and I stand in front of it and talk about her. A woman with such beauty must have been so loyal and true, so self-forgetting, and so altogether lovely. Father can't bear to speak of her to this day, and we know very little of her, but I know how this would have crushed her, even while her sole thought would have been for us, and for the first time in my life I am glad she is gone."

The unconscious pathos of the boy lay in things so far from mere money loss that I could not speak for tears. I prayed he might never know the truth. To me the losing of the money that had turned her head, that had made her forget those who loved her when they most needed her, the money that had led her, through frivolity and display, to the very doors of scandal, was so small, so infinitely small a loss!

"I am going right up to the frat house," he said, recovering himself quickly. "Will you let me put you into a hack? I know of one guaranteed not to fall to pieces before reaching Stewart Avenue, and in case of disaster it wouldn't be far to walk from there. We'll be there in five minutes, for I can see the library tower now. I wish there were some other road to take besides the Delay, Linger, and Wait."

V.

The Larrabee crash is history now, and those who weathered the storm are proud to boast of the anxious hours that followed it. I know so little of finance that I do not clearly understand what happened in Wall Street, in spite of the beautiful explanation given in Mrs. Proctor's paper, read at a tea of Leroy's; but the memory of its effect on our small circle can never be lost. I suppose when a hurricane passes over a countryside, devastating homes and wiping out prosperous hamlets in its overwhelming onrush, startling the world with another catastrophe, there is some little girl who sits down in the ruins of her playhouse and sobs because her dolly's broken.

A day or so after, I was coming back

from Forest Home, where I had been hunting a laundress, strolling along the beautiful path on the lake shore, when I became aware that some one was at the girls' boathouse. There had been some trouble, since the house was closed for the season, with people who damaged the property; so I turned off the path to see who might be trespassing on Sage property. The steps were slippery with pine needles, but I finally reached the shore and stood face to face with the intruder, seated on a large stone.

He rose as I came up, and started away, but I put my hand on his shoulder and forced him back again, seating myself on the pine needles at his side. It was warm for so nearly winter, and we were sheltered by the glorious autumn trees, reflecting their late tints in the clear water before us.

"There's no use your saying anything," Dick Larrabee said sharply. "I suppose you came down here to try to comfort me, but it's no use. My mind is made up."

"Don't flatter yourself I did anything of the sort," I said. "I did not know who you were until you rose. A man of your strength and character needs no comforting from me. Can't you let some of this glorious weather hearten you up? Did you ever see anything more beautiful than this very spot?"

"It makes very little difference to me whether it is pretty or not," he said, without raising his eyes. "My future is blasted and I'm through with the whole business. I leave here Saturday for good."

"Day after to-morrow," I said slowly. "Were you mixed up in the trouble at Hinck's the other night?"

He did not answer for a moment, but finally blurted out: "Is that the handsome reputation I have?"

The bitterness in his voice did not escape me, but I overlooked it.

"Birds of a feather," I quoted. "They were your friends, and it will be thought you were a ringleader if you leave now."

"I don't suppose you'll believe me," he said grimly. "I don't know what my word is worth when I am worth nothing, but I'd like to tell you I've never done anything down there I wouldn't want my mother to know, though I'm afraid she wouldn't like my being there at all. It wasn't that."

"I know it isn't a bust," I said hesitatingly. "So I suppose it's money. Can anybody help you?"

"It's good of you, but nobody can," he cried. "I wouldn't stay here if I had a million. Yes, I would! I'd stay and show them what I could do. I'd make them open their eyes!"

A light began to dawn on me, but I said nothing.

"I was a fool to dream of helping hands—there isn't any such thing! When you're down they'll push you farther and laugh at you! The Chi Pis were the first to write and say they had changed their minds, and the other three followed suit on beautiful fraternity paper. They were like a lot of frightened children with a bogie man staring them in the face. What a narrow escape for them! I'm a poor man to-day, and not a desirable addition to their smokers. *Fraternity!*"

His laugh was unpleasantly harsh, but I knew the boy was looking at the ruins of his most cherished plans, and I understood. I saw Lewis Gregory's hand in it all, and remembered that he had learned of Dick's losses at our house and spoken of Dick in a contemptible fashion.

"I promised Monnie a frat pin," he went on, with rapid bitterness. "I flaunted my plans and my hopes from town to town. I was going to be somebody—and this, this is all I have to show for it. I'm the laughingstock of the hill, the only man the Chi Pis ever turned down."

"I should have thought you a better gambler," I said slowly. "I did not suppose you'd go down before the first knock like this. It ought to take more than a mere handful of men to make you turn craven."

"You don't know what you're talking about," he cried fiercely. "You

can't understand how a man feels about such things. You're a——"

"Now don't tell me I'm nothing but a woman," I interrupted. "I've heard that before, and besides, I am fully aware of it. I may not understand all the operations of man's inventions, but I flatter myself I know a thing or two outside of machines, and I know you are a very foolish, though a very dear, boy. I know, too, that you won't fail me at this day. Don't you want your mother to be proud of you?"

He covered his face with his hands, and we were silent for some time. From up over the hills came the library chimes, sounding forth the wailing sweetness of the "Suwanee River." Dick raised his head and looked out over the little lake.

"She used to sing that," he said, in a low voice. "It's all I remember of her. Do you think those that are gone know what we do?"

"Yes," I said simply. "I know it."

"Monnie says it's snowing hard in Chicago," he said irrelevantly. "I suppose we'll catch it here soon. I love to hear the snow crunch under my feet, but I should miss the roaring of old Michigan if I were to spend a winter in this town. We miss the hills and consequently the skeeing at home."

"Leroy has some skees you are welcome to," I said. "He has three pairs. He'll be glad to teach you, and it won't take long to learn, though you'll get some pretty hard falls. By Christmas you'll be an expert."

"I was going to have Monnie come on for the Prom," he said. "But that'll have to go, too. Think of the money I've thrown away!"

"Well, I guess you enjoyed the throwing," I laughed. "Can you tutor Latin?"

"I am not going to stay," he protested. "I don't know that I care to be an object of pity to such insufferable cads as there are here."

"You haven't had a chance to know the fine fellows, like Fred Allen; and besides, a man is not necessarily a cad because he is thoughtless enough to say sweeping things. A student told the dean a few weeks ago that it was a pity respectable fellows had to associate with those who worked their way through college," I said gently. "Do you remember?"

"I'm sorry for it," he said, flushing. "A mental earthquake gives a new point of view. But, honestly, I am not going to stay after Saturday."

"Indeed you are," I retorted decidedly. "You are too honorable to fail now. If you can put yourself through you owe it to Monnie, you owe it to me, you owe it to your mother, the Alice I loved."

He shook his head with an odd, crooked smile, and my heart sank. I rose, afraid to show my dismay.

"It is past luncheon time," I said. "I am going to leave you here. Come up to dinner to-night and tell me you are ready for the fight. Frances and I will be alone, and we'll need a man to cheer us."

I went away in apparent confidence, but as soon as I was out of his sight I sat down on a log by the wayside and cried as though my heart would break.

VI.

It takes so much longer to lose a prejudice against a man than it does to forget one in his favor that I feared Frances would be barely decent to Dick if he should come. Lewis Gregory had made her such a fraternity partisan that she was inclined to consider a man of small account who was an independent. I was astonished at her sentiments as expressed apropos of Dick Larrabee, though I realized she was not alone in her notion. I sometimes think there would be no fraternities if it weren't for the girls at home. But then, after all, what would there be?

I had a faculty tea that afternoon where the science professor's wife read a paper on sociology, of which she was most fitted to speak, because she once taught in a mission school in New York. She is the only one of the faculty wives who gets on my nerves. Her clothes are enough to kill any influence she might have, so dowdy are they,

so utterly without character or style. She does not realize how much a factor pretty things are in our circle, as everywhere else. Besides, she reminds me in her important fluttering of a cuckoo clock that cries out every quarter hour: "Stop, look, and listen! In forty-five minutes I am going to do something. In half an hour you will be astonished. In fifteen minutes you will hear a wonder!" And then, on the hour, does nothing more than it has done every day for years, like any mechanical toy.

Maybe I was too troubled to really enjoy anything, but mere theories always seem so out of place. I suppose I am too prone to go ahead without any plan of action, and therefore make mistakes; but I like to do things because they happen to fit, and not because Herr This-or-That or Professor Something, D. D., LL. D., R. S. V. P., considers it a proper method of procedure.

Dick Larrabee came. He was rather silent at first, but Frances talked enough for both. I think she was rather pleased with his grave courtesy and honestly tried to give him a good time. Possibly, too, she was a little aware that her blue dress was bewitchingly becoming; for, though Frances is a dear girl, she is human and she is young. By the middle of dinner she had thawed him out appreciably, and he gave us some very amusing stories of his life at home and the pranks he and his sister played in their childhood. I was glad to have him roused; for, though I am not one of those who think silence is sullenness or ill temper, I knew it was better for him. He and Frances had had similar experiences in Europe, and they thoroughly enjoyed comparing notes. Little things he let fall, unconsciously, showed a boyhood that would have been sorely lonely had it not been for the little sister, a hungry heart satisfied only by the wealth of affection poured out on her. His only regret in regard to her was that she was so utterly unlike their mother.

Fred Allen came in after dinner, and the evening passed with music and cards. Dick had a very good voice and, when questioned, modestly acknowledged that he had been accepted by the glee club that afternoon. I was glad for what it portended in the way of resolutions made. It was not until he said good night that I had a chance to talk to him. Out in the hall we sat on the carved bench together, leaving Fred Allen to keep Frances entertained and busy.

"Monnie has written me all about it," he began abruptly. "There is enough left to keep the house going without maids, and she thinks she can get private pupils among our old friends. The housekeeper refuses to leave. There are some people like that. She has been with us since before——"

He hesitated and stopped. He could not bear to speak of his mother's death. Nor could I.

"And you?" I asked. "What is my answer?"

"I have contracted to look after seven furnaces," he said brusquely. "Fortunately, I am muscular."

"Shall you stay where you are?"

"Last week I was looking for better quarters," he answered. "To-day they are too fine for me at ten dollars a week. Is there a room in your basement?"

"Don't be bitter."

"I'm not. I mean it."

"There's a little room at the end of the first floor hall," I said slowly. "Will you take that? It isn't very large."

"As large as I feel," he replied. "Will it be enough if I keep your furnace and clean your walks to pay for it?"

I could have cried! Alice's boy! I knew enough not to protest, however; for I knew he was too near the breaking point, and I could not tell how much of his resolution was mere nerve.

"The dean can get you some tutoring," I said as soon as I could trust my voice. "Language and mathematics tutors are well paid. Won't you take your meals with us?"

"No, thank you," he said, straightening suddenly. "I have found a landlady who will give me my meals if I will collect her bills for her. A great

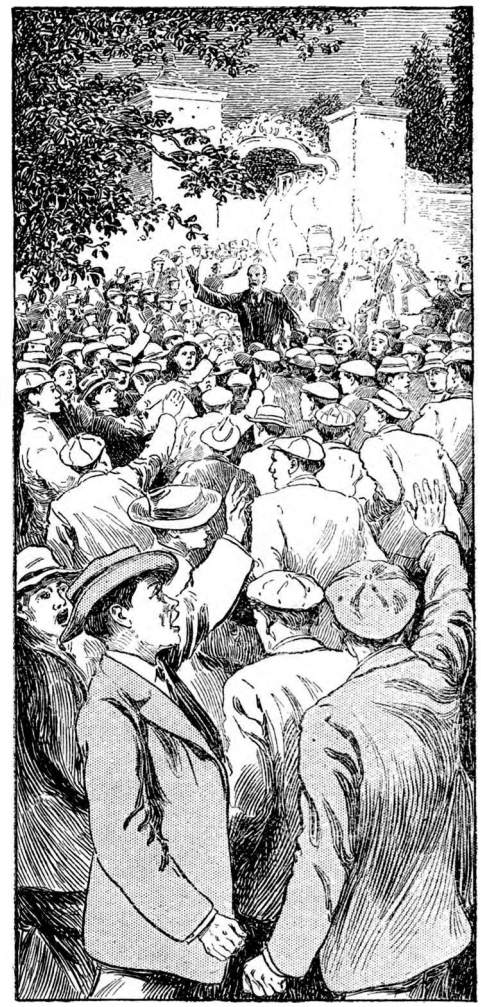
many of her boarders are fraternity fellows."

The bitterness would not down. As I sat beside him, watching the struggle with his prejudices, and noting the pride that made him take the bull by the horns, I saw my own boys in their sheltered, carefully tended youth, and my heart ached. Was there to be for him the compensation of a nobler nature developed under fire?

I find compensation everywhere. I have not Mrs. Lathrop's wealth, but I have children and grandchildren, and she has not a chick or a child to call her own. I lack the beauty that went to my sister, but I received a saving sense of humor in its stead, and she is without one. When the idea of compensation was first given me, I was obliged by parental law to read a chapter in the Bible every day. There the One Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm was a terrific strain to my conscientious soul, for the length thereof is great, but lo, it was followed by a train of little ones that took but a bare minute of my valuable time. From that day on, I have noted compensation on every hand and found it a comfort. The sole time it failed was when they tried to console me for having to go to the dentist's, telling me that if my ancestors had been savages instead of ladies and gentlemen, there would have been no such painful necessity.

"Monnie is a brick," Dick went on brightly. "You'd think it was a great pleasure to do without things. We used to ride on the street car for a lark; now she has no carriage. The places she used to go for teas and dances she goes now to give lessons to the younger brothers and sisters. Next Thursday is her birthday. She is to be eighteen, and father had promised her a diamond ring, but her letter was as jolly as though she had not been counting on it for years. I am sending her"—he swallowed hard—"I am sending a pair of cuff pins. They cost fifteen cents. Don't you wish it would snow, so that I could get to work?"

His quick smile flashed at me, and I put my hand over his.



Leroy made a speech that could not be heard over the yells.

"You'll come out all right," I said earnestly. "It's an awful pull, but four years pass very quickly. Doesn't it seem just yesterday that it was four years ago?"

"I was in France," he said slowly. "I went abroad with a tutor and we squandered twenty to thirty dollars a day. Why, twenty dollars would keep me a month here. I don't wonder there are anarchists!"

"The point of view is everything," I laughed. "Don't forget that."

"I am beginning to see myself as others saw me," he said. "Though I

can't say I am very happy yet. I could swallow my medicine if it weren't for Monnie."

I had remarked to Leroy that week that I wished to goodness I could ever catch up on myself sufficiently to avoid using old hooks and eyes and old bones in my new clothes, my idea being that a dress should be all new, and he had responded by presenting me with the check he got for lecturing in Pittsburg, for my birthday gift. I had cashed it that morning, and the large bill hung in my money pocket about my neck, where it burned like something hot under my waist when Dick spoke.

As soon as he had gone I put it in an envelope, and the next day sent it to a friend in Cleveland, asking her to forward it anonymously, but registered, to the address I gave her. The threats I made in case she should ever break faith were so dire that she never did. With the money I sent a typewritten line wishing her a happy birthday, and signing myself: "An old person who loved your mother." The typewriter is a great assistance to all kinds of criminals, they say. The romance Margaret built upon that foundation amused me in after days.

"It is good of you to take such an interest in me," Dick said, rising. "I don't want to bother you, but I feel as though there were no one else to turn to. I can't talk things over with any one like him, for instance."

He motioned to the door of the library, where we could hear the young voices raised in argument. Frances laughed lightly.

"You were kind to ask me," Dick said, drawing a quick breath. "But—but I don't know but it would have been better for my peace of mind if I had not come."

Then, with a sudden pressure of my hand, he was gone.

VII.

It is easier to make brave resolutions than to carry them out, as all the world knows well enough, and there were some days that winter when I feared for Dick Larrabee. New lines about his mouth added a severe touch that troubled me at times, but I knew they were brought there by the contact with the realities of life and not by bitterness. Occasional intercourse with fraternity men he knew was, of course, unavoidable; but he never showed in the slightest degree that he had ever seen them anywhere before. I have seen him pass Lewis Gregory with as nonchalant an air as he passed the trees on the road, apparently unaware of his presence. This oddly nettled the young man, who desired to do his ignoring himself, and make others aware of their inferiority. Once they met on our porch, and I heard Lewis hail him insolently.

"It's young Larrabee, isn't it?" he asked. "Well, I wish you'd stop up at the house and see what's wrong with the furnace. Our man seems unable to understand how it runs. It's the Chi Pi house—do you know where that is?"

Dick stopped short in his shoveling and raised a white face to answer, but Delia swung open the door before he had time to say a word. When the sidewalk was shoveled off, however, he went for a ten-mile tramp over beyond Turkey Hill, all by himself. I repeated the remark to Frances without comment, reserving my own opinions for my husband's ears. Leroy was angry enough to wish to forbid Lewis the house, though he was not, at that time, overpartial to Dick; but I would not let him. A young man opposed by a girl's cruel father is such an attractive martyr!

It was a few days later that I came upon Frances sitting on the cellar stairs asking questions of a very smutty young man mending a shovel by the side of the furnace. I sat beside her quite as a matter of course, as if the cellar stairs were as proper a visiting place as the library.

"I came down after some pickles for luncheon," she explained. "Delia couldn't get the top off, and I asked Mr. Larrabee if he would. It didn't take him a second."

"It is easy enough if you just slip

a knife under the rubber," he said quietly. "I am sorry to make such a noise with this shovel, Mrs. Adams, but I've got to use it to move that coal over to this bin. That one has no window in it, and it's too damp."

"If we don't like it we can leave," I answered. "What do you hear from your sister?"

He stopped hammering and raised a radiant face to us.

"She's been having no end of a good time," he said eagerly. "Miss Adams' friend, Mr. Allen, has been in Chicago for a vacation, and he's given her no end of a good time. He is certainly a brick."

In spite of myself I glanced at Frances, but she made no sign. A good time of Fred Allen's making was always worth while, so thoughtful was he of all a girl might like.

"I don't know how they came to meet," Dick said, puzzled. "At some party, I suppose, unless, perhaps——"

He hesitated, and Frances answered him.

"Yes," she said. "I did. Your sister is named for mother, you know, and I asked Fred to take mother's picture to her. I had a letter from her this morning."

She laid it on the chopping block and then ran lightly back upstairs, out of our sight, though not out of our minds. Dick renewed his hammering, and I sat gazing at a piece of coal on the lowest step. The things I saw in that bit of coal would have surprised the geology professor.

"Do you ever wonder at the way things turn out?" he asked whimsically. "I feel quite at home in a cellar now."

"Don't!" I cried. "You promised to put that sort of thing behind you."

"I didn't mean to be bad," he said earnestly. "I was thinking of something else. I did not know your name was Margaret."

Some people can put so much in a single sentence! There was a sort of reverence in the way he spoke that made me feel unworthy, somehow.

"I'll take the letter with me if I may," he said. "I'll bring it back tonight. I must go up to collect—try to collect—some money for Mrs. Leary, and I may succeed if I have a mascot. Don't you worry about me. I'm making friends, and it might be worse. There's a football fellow named Hardy who's really fine. He complains a good deal, so they call him Hardy-luck. He had measles last year in the hospital, and he is still refusing to pay his bill there because the cot he slept on was too short. He says his feet stuck over on to the fog, and he doesn't consider that a kind way to treat the suffering. He didn't have any Lady Addie to see that he had the softest blankets in the house on his bed."

That was a busy winter for me. There were a great many social things for us all, and a great deal of sewing in consequence. My petticoats always give me so much trouble, being too short for this gown and too long for that; so, no matter what else there is on hand, I can always adjust skirts. I know I ought not to complain, for there was a time when I had only the one dress, but I hope one of these days I'll be rich enough to have a skirt for each gown and not have to change about. Mrs. Proctor, hearing me remark this, said I had not the dignity of my years, and I told her I was glad of it. I hope I'll die before I live to be old enough to mourn because I am not young.

Frances certainly enjoyed herself. Fred Allen and she were better friends than ever; Lewis Gregory did not fail her—as I hoped he would—and there were other boys who were as nice as could be. One of these, an instructor, put Dick in the way of considerable tutoring, which was very profitable, though I had much ado to keep Dick from declining it when he found Fletcher Bains was a Chi Pi man.

With all her gayety, however, Frances found occasional moments in which she could help Delia by getting the preserves, and I often suspected she had waited on the slim cellar stairs to get her breath after her exertions. Her appearance in the dining room was too often followed by a volley of coal aimed at the furnace door by an un-

certain shovel, to let me remain in great doubt.

We had an eventful year in athletics, too. Our football team made a wonderful record, and we were expecting a marvelous crew for spring. Dick went on the training table in preparation for spring events, and I was glad. I had long suspected he was not getting proper things to eat, and I knew he would have the best there. The companionship was good for him, too, for men in athletics are seldom small or snobbish. Then, too, it put an end to his late hours of study, for he had to go to bed every night at ten, and I felt a good deal easier when I knew he was not sitting up until all hours of the night working over the morrow's lessons.

His glee club work was another relaxation, though he was never able to tour with them, because he could not leave his work or afford the extras necessitated. How he found time to do all he did do I cannot imagine, but I met him everywhere. He attended the Thursday organ recitals at the chapel, appeared at the French lectures held in Barnes, skated on Beebe Lake, tramped miles on Leroy's old skees, practiced with the track team—and yet cut no classes and neglected no work. The faculty wives were enthusiastic over the good behavior of their furnaces, though Mrs. Lathrop, the science professor's wife, was very indignant because Dick declined her dinner invitation, and Mrs. Proctor said she always hid her spoons because one never knew, you know——

Mrs. Proctor is too desperately literal for any use. I think she must have been a Chinaman in a previous state of existence. We were in the receiving party at prexy's reception one evening when townspeople were bidden, and Mrs. Proctor wanted me to tell her everybody's name long after they had passed on and I had enjoyed forgetting them. Finally, I grew tired and answered her inquiry of "What was her name?" rather petulantly, I fear, with "Oh, I don't know. Mud, I guess." I suppose it did not enter her head that a faculty lady could use slang, in spite of four sons, to say nothing of a daughter; for she came back to me later in the evening to ask forlornly: "Which lady did you say is Mrs. Mud?"

Professor Proctor is a secretive, mysterious man who goes around on rubber heels and makes absolutely no sound. When he ceremoniously opens his mouth one never knows whether to expect a sneeze, a cough, a yawn, or a wise remark, until he closes it again, without, perhaps, having done anything, after all.

Once, during that winter, I think Dick was near to giving up the fight, for he came into the library where I sat alone, after Leroy had gone out with Frances, to ask me to tell him something of his mother. It was the first time I had talked freely of her in fifteen years, but I did not find it as hard as I thought it would be, and it comforted him unspeakably.

Margaret Larrabee and Frances kept up a correspondence all winter, Frances giving me the letters to put on Dick's bed for him to read and return. Once only she kept the letter in her room without showing it even to me, and I forbore to question her. I have always contended that the correspondence of my children was their own after I had censored the friendship, and as a consequence, I have always enjoyed their friends' letters with them. If some laughing remark about Fred Allen made Frances wish to keep it to herself, I did not mind.

So the winter wore away and spring came again with the ever-present commencement and the extra work for Leroy. It was seeing him work night after night until after midnight that gave me the idea that resulted in Dick's putting in harder work as secretary for Leroy and two other men than he had ever had in his stoking days.

Leroy was not inclined to like him, but accepted his services because he had to have some one; but on the day of the track meet with Princeton Leroy was wild with delight because "his man"—forsooth!—came in first in two events. Dick certainly did us up proud

in that contest, and we were glad to claim him as a friend. We had him to dinner afterward, the first time he had accepted an invitation in months, and Frances declined to go to a celebration banquet with Lewis Gregory, telling him why, with peculiar pride.

Afterward we went out back of the library to see the big bonfire, and Leroy made a speech that could not be heard over the yells. He used to mind being called on for a speech, but now he just says the same things over, satisfied that no one ever listens anyhow. Once, he declares, he recited all the examination questions for the following Monday, and yet no one passed above seventy-odd.

We had not intended to go, but the gathering clans had paused at our door to yell:

"Addie, come out!
Addie, come out!
Addie, come out, come out!"

and we had followed while they hustled him away to the great field below the campus.

Then before we knew it it was summer time again, and Frances and I packed our trunks and went to Yellowstone Park. On the way we picked up Margaret Larrabee, but her brother we left behind digging away in the summer school to finish college in three years, tutoring the dull and slow, mowing lawns, copying documents, and dreaming by the gorge in Goldwin Smith Walk.

VIII.

Margaret Larrabee was a dear, quaint mite, with a sense of humor big enough to run away with her. It was as well it was large, for she needed it three times a day, before and after meals. Her father, whom I saw for a few hours when we stopped over in Chicago, we found to be a sharp, brisk, self-centred man, so full of plans for the future that he did not note the sacrifices of the present. He was quite willing that I should take Margaret with me, because some day Margaret was to go abroad, and she would return the courtesy by inviting Frances to go with her. "Free of expense, absolutely, entirely without the expenditure of a cent—leave your purse at home, if you wish, my dear."

The almighty dollar had obscured all else in Arthur Larrabee's world, save an overweening pride in his family, his name, his home, his city, because they were his. As he talked to us my glance wandered to the lovely portrait of Alice, and I made more allowances. The wistful light in Margaret's eyes haunted me even when she was most merry.

Frances and Margaret became the best of friends, as I hoped they might. It made me somehow happier that they should be. And such a joyous time as we found in Yellowstone Park! It was a great pleasure to see how Margaret brightened up, losing her listless manner in a very short week.

Now and then letters from home gave bits of news, though as a usual thing Leroy's letters show a plentiful lack of information. The president of the university considers him a joy forever because he repeats nothing he hears, but the virtue does not seem so admirable when one is hungry for the little gossipy items that make one's everyday life interesting. For a satisfactory correspondent give me a real downright gossip every time. Margaret had several letters from her brother, nearly as non-committal, with a polite message for us in every one, but it was the letters from dear, talkative Mrs. DeVoe that really gave us satisfaction.

The Dairy building had burned, a total loss, of course, since the town refuses to put a fire station on the hill, but obliges us to wait until the breathless volunteers can pull the apparatus up to us from the valley. I don't know anything more awful than that straining, tugging mass of men pulling that heavy engine up State Street, their hoarse breathing showing their strength nearly spent, while their eyes turn in despair toward the flames they see flaring so far ahead of them.

Dick Larrabee would take no more furnaces, to Mrs. DeVoe's great disgust, but was to be secretary to so

"Why—I congratulate you, of course. She's a lovely girl."

many men that she could not remember them all. She was forced to acknowledge, she said, that I was right for once; for that fellow seemed to have something in him. She said her husband was well pleased with his summer-school work, and had had him conduct an examination for him so that he might the earlier join Leroy in the mountains. I think she thought it odd that my husband and I should be so far apart, for I know she does not agree with me in my contention that husbands and wives need to separate occasionally in order to appreciate each other.

Mrs. DeVoe also said she was a little troubled about Dick's new friendship with the wildest of the Chi Pi men, one Lewis Gregory, though she hoped the intimacy had been exaggerated, but of course we would know, as we knew them both so well. The bit of gossip was a little upsetting, but Leroy's only news soon straightened it out.

Dick had been obliged to apologize to Leroy for a broken chair in his room which he was mending, and Leroy found it was Lewis Gregory who had broken it. It seems that Lewis' work had been far from satisfactory, and the dean had given him one more chance with the alternative of expulsion. The chance lay in an examination to be taken one Friday morning at Sibley. Dick, in his capacity of secretary, knew this, so when he met Lewis Thursday night making his way down to Hinck's he had haled him bodily into his room and locked himself in with him. What happened when the door was fastened Leroy did not know, save for the evidence of the broken chair, but Dick was muscular, and triumphed. As the result Lewis Gregory's head was clear on Friday morning, and he passed with flying colors.

Yellowstone Park and its neighborhood palled on Frances of a sudden, and we started on our return trip sooner than we had planned. We left Margaret at Chicago, after promising to visit us at some future date. I never saw two girls so completely satisfied with each other. Their content was so complete neither ever even wanted to change the other's way of wearing her hair, which is something of a test, I think.

We stopped in Cleveland to see my old school friend for two weeks on our way home, Frances losing her homesickness as quickly as she had acquired it. Margaret wrote us there and enclosed one of Dick's charming letters, telling of a trip he was taking to New York on some research work for Professor Lathrop. I was so glad he could go, he had had so little variety in his year among the shovels.

We got home two days after he came back, and he ran up for a few moments to see us. He was different in some way, I could not tell how, but his easy manner was lacking and he was somewhat ill at ease. He did not come in for a set visit again that year, to my great regret. When I wished to see him I had to put myself in his way and make him answer me when I asked if he were well and comfortable.

Sometimes of a Sunday evening he would come in and sit with us in the dark, after a fashion of our own, while Frances played hymns softly; but he seldom remained after she had stopped playing, and we talked together. He was very grateful, but the fact remained that he avoided us as much as possible for one in the same house, an avoidance that was rather easy because of the long hours he had, full of work and study. He seemed to have set his teeth to a disagreeable task, which he was going to accomplish if it killed him. Sometimes I think he minded that year of secretary work more than he had its predecessor, for furnaces at least are too intent on their daily coal to be snobbish. What a pity education cannot give heart and tact!

Once when he sat alone at the typewriter in Leroy's study, he spoke my name as I passed. There was so odd an expression on his face that I was startled and asked if he were ill.

"No," he said, with the funny, crooked smile I liked so to see. "No, Lady Addie, but I have just noticed that this typewriter has a curious trick. Did you ever notice that it will often print 'a' and 's' interchangeably? I thought it was my stupidity at first, but I find it's a fault of the machine."

"Leroy wanted to send it to the factory," I said. "But we find most shift-key machines have some trick, and this is such a little fault considering its perfections."

He looked at me quizzically and drew a long breath.

"That is your ladyship to a T," he said. "I did not think of the mistake as a fault, but merely as a coincidence. Monnie received a beautiful anonymous gift on her eighteenth birthdy, and the typewritten slip that came with it bore the a's and s's interchanged. Did you find your friend in Cleveland well?"

His voice shook as he asked the trivial question, and he rose and reached for his hat.

"There are some beautiful things you cannot talk about," he said slowly. "But you never forget them. Will you please tell the dean that I have finished copying those letters?"

The winter came on and passed slowly away. I sent for Margaret to come on for the holidays and surprise Dick, and it was a great success. Our house was the gayest place in town, and our Richard was himself again for two entire weeks. Margaret at nineteen was dearer than ever and exceedingly popular with Frances' friends, many of whom did not go home that year for Christmas. Frances was glad of Margaret's good time, even when some of her stand-bys deserted to her standard, a thing Lewis Gregory would not do. I never saw the equal of that fellow's persistence, though I must admit I liked him better since he was so much with Dick. Possibly he realized desertion would do him little good as long as Fred Allen, who came on from New York to our house party, was on the spot.

All too soon it was over, and Margaret went back to her music pupils, followed by a flock of university letters, more or less ardent, and a steady, unwavering stream of dignified communications bearing the New York postmark. Margaret herself made no comments, but Frances was the recipient of many a confidence and several plaints regarding unanswered epistles

written on college paper. Whether or not Margaret also neglected the metropolitan correspondent we did not at this time know.

So the cold weather passed by and the spring came, bringing two catastrophes, one very large. Frances was so completely upset at having to tell Fletcher Bains she did not care for him that I thought the child would be really ill. He was such a splendid fellow I was sorry Frances had to have the experience—it grieved her so. She said he had not hinted anything of the sort until he was telling her some of the rumors concerning Dick and Louise DeVoe, when he told her how he felt.

Louise was a scholarly but very pretty girl, and I was not surprised at Dick's finding her charming. He was thrown with her a great deal, cataloguing the library for her father, and of course the gossips had to comment. If there ever was a superfluous person, it's a gossip! To Dick we naturally said nothing of the matter, for one does not probe when one is not confided in; but of course I was glad to hear it. Dick was earning more those days and able to send some of his earnings home to Margaret, but the days must have dragged interminably for him, unless indeed on cataloguing days. How little you can guess where lightning will strike!

Which makes me think of Mrs. Proctor, our literal member, to whom I was talking of a fire we had had once in a Western hotel. I remarked that I had stayed at the same hotel on my way West that summer, and she asked whether I were not afraid of fire there. I said: "Oh, no, lightning, you know, never strikes twice in the same place." "Oh!" she cried, as one to whom everything is clear. "Was it lightning?"

The greater catastrophe was Leroy's illness. He had never been ill a day in his life, and it came as a terrible shock to us all to have him unable to rise from bed one morning, delirious from fever. I sent Delia to call Dick at once, and for weeks I relied on him as on one of my own boys, through the long days of which I was as oblivious to external things as one in prison at solitary confinement.

IX.

A time of trouble will often show character in your friends as quickly as in yourself, and I found Lewis Gregory a very dependable fellow in the days that followed. To be sure, I did not then know how completely he was under Dick's thumb, or how his every move was dictated by Dick himself; and I gave the entire credit to Lewis. I thought little of it while Leroy was so low, considering only those things which contributed to his comfort and well-being during the awful weeks. However capable one may feel herself to be in ordinary circumstances, most women are overwhelmed by their own powerlessness at such a time of trial.

The professional nurse we sent to New York for was so excellent that I suffered from idleness more than I could have from any work. If there ever was one woman calculated to show another her complete inferiority, it was that nurse. It was only when I relieved her for a few hours at a time that I was satisfied and forgave her for putting me on a shelf like a thing of no account.

At other times I would take my sewing into the library, to have Dick's companionship, even though he might be too busy to talk. I had early sent Frances to Lucy's to spare her the continual strain of waiting, and there was no one to whom I could turn save Dick, who never failed me. There was something in the boyish smile with which he welcomed my entrance that heartened me like a tonic. And on that terrible night when I sat up until after dawn, waiting word from Leroy's room, he sat with me on the stairs, a silent comforter who helped me bear it all. It was after that night that Frances came home, saying she could not stand it any longer away.

As Leroy grew slowly better, I awoke to a change in Dick that I had

not noted before. It was not alone that his mouth was firm, or that there was a new light in his eyes; he was different. There was a buoyancy, a youth about him, that he had never had before. He saw the wonder in my eyes and answered it.

"Do you ever read Kipling?" he asked seriously. "I am like his ship; I have found myself, that's all. I remember once hearing some one say, and resenting it, that hard times would be the making of Richard Larrabee. It's a rocky road to Dublin, Lady Addie."

Once when I took my place in the deep window seat, where I could get the warm, soft breeze from over the hills and far away, he told me some news.

"It isn't known generally yet," he said. "But Margaret and Fred Allen are going to be married one of these days. If it were any other fellow it would take me a little while to get reconciled, but there never was a man like him. It has made me very glad. I'd burst if I didn't tell somebody."

I felt that his understanding was quickened by his own love for Louise DeVoe, now away at the seashore, and I was glad. My only fear was that things were not going with him as I should like, for I knew he could rejoice with Margaret even when his own heart ached, and his eyes held something of her own wistfulness when he was silent. How many battles we have to fight all by ourselves, and how many of our smiles are not real, but mere imitations! In some things such excellent imitations are made nowadays, it scarcely pays to indulge in the real, so few there are who know the difference; but a smile can accomplish its work without sincerity only when observers are superficial and lacking the psychic understanding. Dick was not entirely happy, and I set myself to find the cause.

At this time I was quite unintentionally guilty of eavesdropping, and the worst of it was that I never could bring myself to be properly sorry for my sin. Leroy was asleep on the library davenport, and I could not move without wakening him, a thing not to be thought of. Frances was out on the porch in the moonlight, and I heard her answer Lewis Gregory as he came up the steps.

"No, not dreaming, exactly," she said. "I think I am unusually wide awake to-night."

"I've been down to the field," he remarked diffidently. "Larrabee is making an elegant hurdle record. I'll bet he'll be one of the greatest stars we've ever turned out next year, on the track. He seemed especially fit to-day."

"I didn't know," Frances said lightly. "We've been so busy with father."

"He won his C long ago," Lewis went on. "I know he'll get a bar next. He'd have had it before, but——"

He hesitated, but we both knew Dick had lost the honor he might have had in order to answer the telephone and run errands for me. For the first time in my selfish absorption I wondered how he had lived in the past two months.

"Larrabee started out like the rest of us," Lewis went on. "But he turned out differently. He's the only one of the old crowd that used to meet at Hinck's who is worth while to-day, though he has tried his best to do something for me."

Lewis laughed shortly.

"My father had threatened to cut off my allowance and the dean threatened expulsion," he said, "when Larrabee took me by the literal collar and shook me. He kept me in durance vile until the dean was satisfied, and then he wrote my father demanding a reprieve. My father's letter in reply he held over my head like a club ever after, until now it begins to look as if I might get my sheepskin some day, after all."

He paused and cleared his throat suddenly.

"He didn't do all that for me," he said. "For, though now we are better friends, he had good reason to hate me in those days. I was the leader of the Chi Pis in blackballing him after the rushing. He did it for you."

"For me?" Frances gasped. "And why?"

Lewis Gregory was silent a long minute and then drew a quick breath and went on.

"I suppose we all take things too much for granted," he said slowly. "Larrabee thought because I was here a good deal and you were good to me, that you really cared, and he was bound to make a man of me if he could—if anything could."

"I don't see how he dared!" Frances broke in. "You must be mistaken."

Lewis shook his head.

"I am not," he said. "I can easily see how he dared, because I was bold enough to think it myself. Oh, I don't mean that it lasted. I remember that though the first door said 'Be bold' in the story, the last door said 'Be not too bold.' It was that I learned while your father was so ill."

"You were very good to us."

"I could not repay all your kindnesses. Besides, I loved you. Don't be afraid I am going to trouble you with my heartache, Frances; I have learned humility. If I thought you loved me I couldn't tell you this, for I am not the man for you. It takes a prodigal son longer to brace up and be somebody than it once did. I think there have been times when your mother wished I would not come here, but she was kind, and it all helped. I don't think you will either of you be ashamed to let me call you friends after this summer."

Oh, if people only did not wear masks! If we could only know why things were done, and what were the motives prompting every word and deed! How good and kind we would be sometimes to those who seem brusque and hard, who are really longing for a kindly word or a helping hand. They tell me I spoil my college students, but I answer I would rather kill them all with kindness than have one leave my house in loneliness or bitterness of heart. The little things that make up life are so often made rasping and sharp by a short, absent greeting or a neglected courtesy.

When Lewis Gregory went down our steps for the last time, erect and manly, it was with a laughing remark about the owl he had frightened from the tree, and I liked him thoroughly—too late. So sorrowful he made me feel with his courage that I did not tell Frances that, when I closed Leroy's blind that night, I saw him still leaning against the great maple tree, looking up at the house.

X.

It was, I think, the very next day that Frances suddenly awoke to an interest in housekeeping and began to bother Delia and me with questions regarding roasts and prune puff, though I noticed that Delia opened her own preserves. I had urged her for so long to learn these things that I was only too glad to see it. Her father was inclined to tease her, and said he was of the same mind as the Kentucky mountain girl who asked the society girl if she could bake bread, wash, iron, scrub, or build a fire. Each succeeding question was asked with increasing scorn as the New Yorker replied in the negative to all, and finally the Kentuckian burst out with: "Well, all I can say is, I'm sorry fer yer feller!"

Frances did not mind her father's fun, but she had something of the air of one who is going in for settlement work or taking the veil, and her desperate resolve to "do something" was very apparent.

So anxious was he not to trouble us when we had so much on our minds, I don't know when we should have learned of the change in Dick's fortunes if the registrar had not come in to see Leroy about some new students who had conflicts. Mrs. Leary's son, he said, was being put through the university by Dick Larrabee on the quiet, his expenses paid, and a liberal allowance added. Leroy disputed him, but he was so certain that he had seen Dick's check that, after he was gone, we sent for Dick and awaited him in the library. He was studying in the little room, but came quickly. When

he saw my face he looked like a naughty boy trapped in mischief.

"You have been bad," I said, shaking my head. "Couldn't you trust with your good fortune those who knew you in the evil days?"

"I'm sorry I didn't," he said, flushing. "But when father wrote me that things were brighter, the dean was so ill I didn't care about money. It seems an awful small thing, anyhow, some way."

He laughed oddly.

"Two fraternities gave me a second invitation to join them," he said. "Which was the first intimation I had that matters were really where they used to be. I'm still independent, however. I have been thinking for three years what I'd do when our fortunes brightened," he went on. "I was going to cut no end of a dash and be somebody, but when I knew I didn't have to rake and scrape any longer I felt sort of gone inside. I didn't want the money."

"We should have enjoyed knowing about it," I said. "I wish you'd told us."

"I wanted things to go on as they were," he pleaded. "And I knew you didn't need the little room."

"The little room?" Leroy asked. "What had that to do with it?"

"I wanted to stay there because in that room there's—well, I've done a lot of thinking there, and it's a sort of part of me," he said hesitatingly. "I couldn't bear to go anywhere else, and I knew you—you wouldn't let me do things for you if you knew I could afford larger quarters. I—I've grown real attached to the lawn mower and that darned old furnace."

What could anybody do with a boy like that? I just put my arms around him and kissed him, and I believe he was perilously near breaking down, man that he was.

"You'll let me stay?" he asked huskily. "Won't you?"

Would we?

A day or so later he stopped me in the hall and drew me gently into the library and to the window seat. His face wore so solemn an expression he almost frightened me, but he would not let me speak.

"I've been wondering where he was," he said in a voice that shook a little. "But it remained for Mrs. Proctor to open my eyes this evening. I remember Gregory tried to tell me, but I couldn't understand. It isn't true, is it?"

"Don't frighten me out of my wits!" I cried. "There hasn't been a fire or anything, has there?"

He laughed like a child.

"Not a bit of it!" he said. "But Gregory isn't coming here any more, is he?"

I understood. It wasn't Louise, after all!

"No," I said solemnly. "Never again unless he gets a bust notice and has to placate the dean."

"He won't get the notice," Dick said slowly. "So she isn't going to marry Gregory, after all—after all."

He seemed so far away I thought he had forgotten my very existence. But he had not.

"I would have been a very different man to-day if it hadn't been for you," he said gently. "I came here to make my college life very different from the way it turned out. I cannot see how I ever thought such things worth while, how I ever could have been bitter at the losing them—when I was gaining so much. Hang it! I can't express what you've been to me!"

"I have not done anything but flutter around you," I said. "There was so little I could do."

"Little!" he cried. "Does the lighthouse do little for the sailor? Besides, what would I have done without warm blankets and mended clothes? Who saw that I changed my shoes when they were wet, who never failed to bid me good night, who kept flowers beside mother's picture, who put fudge on my dresser, who——"

"There," I interrupted, "there you are wrong."

"Wrong?" he queried. "How?"

"Thus. The flowers and the fudge were not my doing."

"Not yours?"

"No. The real culprit has just gone out on the porch. I promised I wouldn't tell. Hadn't you better go out and scold her?"

He was gone in a moment, leaving me in my loneliness on the deep window seat. Frances looked up as he came out, and the trivial emphasized the serious.

"I was trying to discover where that cat went," she said hurriedly. "I'm sure I can't imagine what's become of him. Don't you want to look under the porch for me?"

"Can't say I do," Dick said easily. "Did you get a letter from Monnie today?"

"Yes, I did. It's up in my room. I'll go get it."

"No, please don't. Please sit down again. It's too dark to read out here, anyhow."

"We could go inside."

"No, we can't; the dean's asleep. What do you think of the news?"

"Why—I congratulate you, of course. She's a lovely girl."

"Monnie?"

"No, Louise."

"What the—— You didn't believe that, did you? Why, she's going to marry Fletcher Bains."

Fletcher Bains! I wished I could see Frances' face. How she had worried over that man and his wounded heart!

"Well, Margaret didn't know it," Frances retorted. "She asked me to tell her who on earth Louise DeVoe was, and she's asked before."

"I never thought of getting her excited when I told about the cataloguing," Dick said, laughing. "I was so busy trying to forget how much I was thinking about you that I hadn't a thought for any one else."

"You neglected us shamefully."

"Not because I wanted to," he said earnestly. "I scarcely had a minute to myself in all those months, you know, but I've dreamed about you ever since the first time I took dinner here. I've hardly had a minute's peace, either, what with Bains and Gregory and Allen and any number of others that turned me cold every time I saw them. It didn't make it any easier, either, that they came in the front door in evening dress, while I entered the back door in overalls."

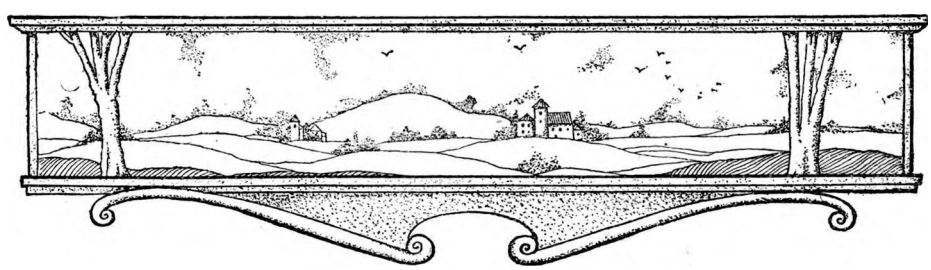
"Overalls are very becoming to you."

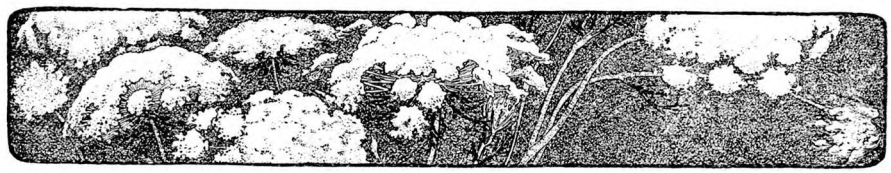
"Thank you. The wearing of them has made me see things in a new light —but I don't think I shall adopt it as a regular thing now."

Frances laughed happily and tossed her head with a new gayety.

"Don't do that again!" he said fiercely. "I can't stand it. It makes me want to pick you up and run away with you! Would you mind?"

In spite of the danger of wakening Leroy, I tiptoed hastily out of the room, my heart beating like a triphammer. My baby, my little girl! It seemed as though I could not get far enough away to hide my tears. In my hurry I turned to the left instead of the right, and stood in Dick's doorway. The moonlight, flooding through his window, touched the large picture of his mother with a gentle finger, and Alice smiled at me again as she used to smile when we were children together, making me glad at heart once more. Alice's boy!





The Caretaker

By S. Carleton

Author of "Bellegarde's Girl," "A Leaf in the Wind," "The Ribboned Way," etc.

DOROTHEA ADAMS stopped short in her lonely tramp through the rampant Adirondack wilderness, and regarded the sun-filtered September woods with the absent air of one who comes to a decision.

A soft heat rose in scented waves from the tough huckleberry bushes and the darkening sweet fern at her feet, and any other day she would have reveled in it; to-day she did not care. She and her Aunt Julia were Berkeley Appleton's guests at the palatial abode he chose to call a camp; and Berkeley, with his millions, his personality that came so second to them, wanted to marry her—Dorothea—with nothing.

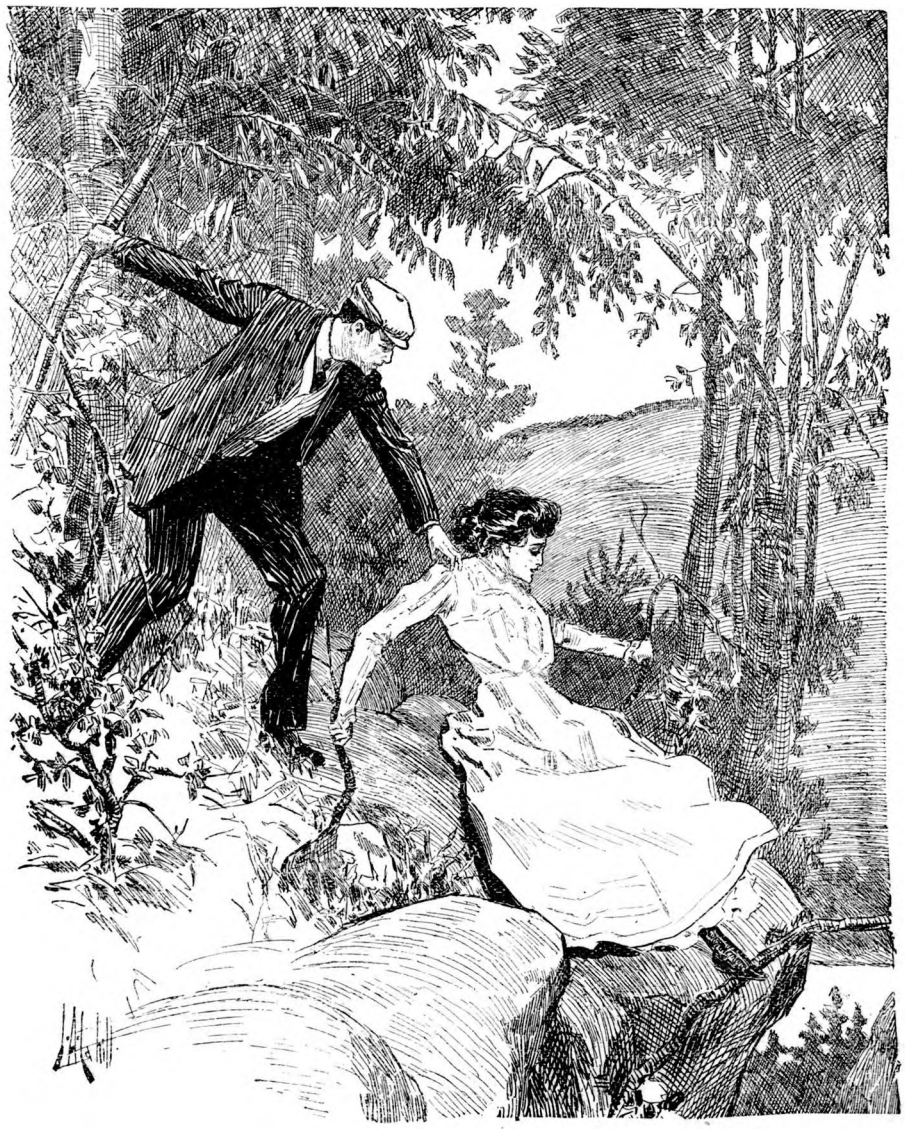
Aunt Julia had been triumphant about it that very morning, with the unforeseen consequence that her niece had rushed out of the house and into the woods to reflect. She would never have such a chance again, Aunt Julia had said so plainly; and more plainly still that if Dorothea refused it she washed her hands of her. They were not particularly sympathetic hands, but they were the only ones in the world that had ever been held out to a girl who had no other relations; and when Aunt Julia made a threat she meant it.

"Oh, Charles," said Dorothea suddenly—it was no one's name she called on, merely her proprietary expletive—"the worst of it is she's right; I'd be an idiot not to marry Berkeley! I never will get such a chance again. I don't *dis*like him; I'd better go back and let him ask me, and get it over."

Any other girl would have been jubilant at the prospect. Dorothea was not, but she knew her Aunt Julia; there would be no escaping single-handed from any kind of marriage Aunt Julia wanted. She turned grimly to go home, and stood still in the exquisitely painted landscape that surrounded her, realizing that she had not the faintest idea which way *was* home. Mr. Appleton's house stood on a hill; right and left, back and front there were hills, but no house on any of them. Her watch told her unpleasantly that it was afternoon, that Aunt Julia must be furious at her disappearance, and Berkeley—she tried to say to herself that it did not matter about Berkeley, but it was a lie, and she knew it. If he had any sense at all he would guess she had gone out to avoid him, and if he never proposed in consequence Aunt Julia would be as angry as if she had refused him.

"I'll just have to get back somehow," said Dorothea hopelessly. She took a fresh clutch on the bunch of scarlet moosewood berries that were all she had to show for her long absence, and turned to go back the way she had come.

At least she thought she did, but she could never be quite sure. In the bushes behind her something crashed heavily, and before she could even turn a deer sprang out at her very side. As it checked, its forefeet were nearly on her; she saw its flung-back antlers, its close, untamable eyes. All she thought in a second that seemed an hour was that she had been warned the deer were dangerous in the young autumn,



"Oh, I'm going down," she shrieked. "Quick!"

and that this was the biggest one she had ever seen. The barrens swam round the girl as she made a blind spring aside, and sat down unexpectedly, and very hard, on a slippery rock, with her feet dangling in plain air.

If she had only known it, below her lay a hundred-foot drop, with nothing to save her from it but the bushes she caught at instinctively. Her bunch of blood-red berries flew into the air like a flag as she did it, but she had forgotten them. The rock under her was sloping, slippery as glass; the bushes bowed as her weight came on them till they jerked her arms over her head; and suddenly her heart stopped beating. Something was coming after her! If it were the deer she could never get away. Dorothea opened her mouth to shriek at it, and did not make a sound.

A man's voice was calling above

her—a real, live man's voice. "Hold on!" it shouted comfortably. "I'll be there in a second."

"Oh, it's a person," gasped Dorothea. She relaxed her grip on the bushes, and instantly slipped some inches after her feet. "Oh, I'm going down!" she shrieked. "Quick!"

There was a momentary convulsion in a bush above her, a strain on her shoulders instead of her wrists, a feeling as of a runaway elevator; and as a child's kitten is placed on a chair Dorothea was seated on safe ground, clear of the bushes, and opposite a man. She had a dazed impression of very blue and hard eyes in a tanned face before she was clearly aware of a tall person, immaculately neat in clothes which were not those of any one she could possibly know, standing over her, and scolding.

"Why in the world couldn't you look before you jumped back?" he demanded, with the fright of guilt. It was his fault she had met the caribou, and only just not his fault that she was not lying at the bottom of the cliff in front of them.

"The deer——" Dorothea stammered.

"It's gone. It wouldn't have hurt you, anyhow! It was only a harmless caribou."

"Well, I couldn't know," returned Dorothea ungratefully. The "harmless caribou" rankled, and she had not seen the depths over which she had been hanging. "Why didn't you shout to me if you saw me?"

Her deliverer was abruptly conscious that she, too, had blue eyes.

"I didn't realize you could be alone. Besides, I was afraid of startling you."

"I'm never startled"—though to too observant eyes her hands were shaking in her lap. "And I—came out to be alone."

The man sat down on an adjacent rock slowly, and thought in haste. She had been frightened to death, and she would not own it; and—she was the sweetest thing he had ever seen! The very ordinary woods and the complexion of a somewhat Quixotic day suddenly altered to him; he felt utterly and absurdly happy.

"Well, I think you've had enough of loneliness," he remarked, with a bluntness Dorothea had never heard from a man before.

It made her realize, with a queer pang, that he was all Berkeley Appleton was not. She had never seen a man like him, and she had the sense to know it, while she had also the sense to know his gray flannel shirt was impossible.

"I've had plenty of it," she answered truthfully. "But I think you might have called out to *me!* You frightened me, cracking through the bushes; and you look, too, the sort of person with sense."

"Well, I'm not," said "the person" shortly. "I'm the other kind."

Dorothea laughed tremulously. "If you'd tell me where I am, I wouldn't mind what you were."

"Berry's Lake. Did you mean to go there?"

"I never heard of it. I was going"—it was absurd the words should stick in her throat—"to Mr. Berkeley Appleton's."

"Appleton's?" The stranger turned a start into a whistle. He had heard all about the one girl who was staying at Appleton's, but he had not thought she was this kind; it would be a sickening shame if she had to marry Appleton. He spoke with a grimness that was not for Dorothea. "It's a bit of a way there. When did you leave?"

"After breakfast."

It was about ten miles as the girl had probably walked it; a tough morning's work even for a person who "wanted to be alone," and was being hustled into a marriage with Appleton. The stranger took in something Dorothea did not know was in her eyes.

"Good Moses," he ejaculated, "do you know it's after four, you poor little soul?"

"I got lost," Dorothea interrupted trenchantly. He was not to dare to think she was afraid of Berkeley Appleton.

"Oh, I knew that. I was only—

wondering how you were to get home again."

"Walk," succinctly.

"Well, I don't know." He regarded thoughtfully the thick woods and a snarl of boulders and bushes. "I—wait one second, and then I'll get you back somehow."

He disappeared in the bushes, and for the first time Dorothea was mindful of her appearance. Torn white clothes with brown stains and green stains were not imposing; no wonder he had said "poor little soul." And his own clothes were so horribly, despicably poor and neat; he must be—but there was no one at all he could be, since he was certainly not a friend of Berkeley's. He was too abnormally shabby, for one thing, and for another she had seen his eyes when he heard where she was staying. She jumped as he stood suddenly before her.

"Oh, my moosewood!" she cried. "But why did you bother?"

It was another horrid difference between him and Berkeley, who would never have thought of retrieving red berries that had cost nothing.

"I couldn't get them all. Some of them," unwarily, "had gone over."

"Over where?"

"Oh, the edge!" He was furious at this slip; he had not meant her to know he had just been lucky enough to save her life.

"Do you mean it was *deep*, where I was hanging?" Before he had time for his casual dissent she had parted the bushes and looked. On her own level there was nothing; far below, down a sheer and ugly cliff, a lake set in rocks that were principally jagged. "Oh, Charles," gasped Dorothea; "then you—why, without you I'd have been killed!" But she stopped on the word, though it was only a ghost of a glance that had paralyzed her with the awful thought that the man's name might be Charles. "I—it's only my expression," she announced wildly. "What I say instead of gracious. I—I think it's quite as sensible as good Moses!"

"Oh, quite!" There was blameless gravity in his eyes, yet Dorothea found them insupportable.

"It's a hideous name, Charles," she cried recklessly. "I hope yours is prettier."

The man's hand happened to be on his upper lip, and he kept it there. "My name," he mumbled, "is—Perkins!" And it sounded lamentable.

"Perkins?" Dorothea did not even try to look polite. Perkins! No wonder he wore that sort of clothes. She turned speechlessly in what she imagined to be the way home.

"I mean Perkins——" the man began hastily, but Dorothea really could not bear to hear it over again.

"I know," she said faintly, "and it doesn't matter, does it?"

"Not if you say so!" But his look puzzled her. He held aside the bushes in a totally different direction from hers. "This is a better way home," he added stiffly, "but I'm afraid you'll be awfully late."

"I must be back by six." A sudden resolution spoke in Dorothea's voice. She felt without reason as if an undesirable light had been cast on Berkeley Appleton and all his works and shown them to be hateful; but all the same she had decided to put her hand to the only plow she could find, and no casual, or unmistakable, light should make her change her mind. She would not speak any more than she could help to the Perkins man in front of her, yet she did not take her eyes off him. She realized with a kind of shock that she believed in him. It was certainly the only reason she was following him through strange woods in a direction she could only trust was that of home.

"Six?" Mr. Perkins stopped abruptly. "Well, I can manage it!"

She looked so tired that he had suddenly an overmastering desire to carry her; but it was not a desire to carry her to Berkeley Appleton. He squeezed his eyelids together in a way he had, and opened them determinedly on the middle distance. "Can you walk a few yards farther?" he demanded. "I live just near here."

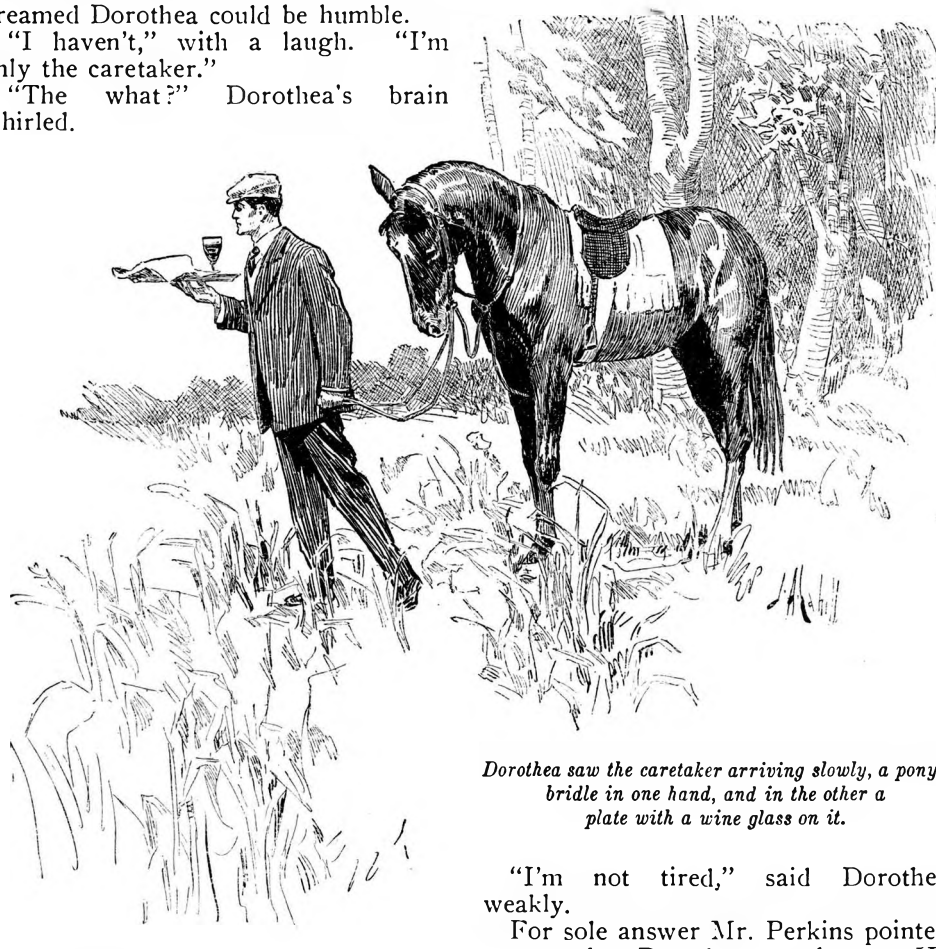
Dorothea had an appalling vision of Aunt Julia's horror at the idea of entering a strange man's house. "I can't go there," she stammered.

"Of course not," placidly. "But I must if you mean to get home tonight."

"I didn't know any one had a house out here." No one would have dreamed Dorothea could be humble.

"I haven't," with a laugh. "I'm only the caretaker."

"The what?" Dorothea's brain whirled.



Dorothea saw the caretaker arriving slowly, a pony's bridle in one hand, and in the other a plate with a wine glass on it.

"Caretaker," repeated Mr. Perkins firmly. It was literally his profession at the present minute, if his charge was a girl instead of another man's deer.

"But you can't be; you're—a gentleman," gasped Dorothea, and was dumb with shame at her slip. Judged by his clothes, it was just what Mr. Perkins was not.

"In my class it's more or less of an arbitrary distinction," he rejoined rather grimly, and she was not to know he was thinking of Berkeley. He parted a clump of bushes, and Dorothea was amazed to see a road. "Now if you'll sit and rest a minute, I'll go over to my house."

"I'm not tired," said Dorothea weakly.

For sole answer Mr. Perkins pointed to a rock. Dorothea sat down. He was gone while she was fighting with tears that astounded her. Why on earth should she want to cry, when she felt utterly and inexplicably happy? It had been like heaven to be—taken care of; she never had been before, and never would be again. She imagined Berkeley in the caretaker's shoes. He would have been swearing and mopping his brow. Yet two hours

ago she had been almost contented with him, while now—— But shame cut off her thought in the middle. She stared with determination at her surroundings. The low sun streamed through the rough vista of the wood road, arched over with the gold-stained green of September, and quiet as—— Oh, there had never been anything so quiet! Dorothea for the first time in her life was conscious of hearing her own heart, and it sounded precisely like a clock. It must be five now, and six—she thrilled with the thought that she could never be back by six.

"And I don't care." It was a new Dorothea who spoke. "I don't care. I—— Oh, if she's sent Berkeley to look for me I'll *kill* Aunt Julia!"

She flashed to her feet like a live wire. There were horses' feet coming, and they could only be from Berkeley's. The sound made her sick with terror. She had not had much happiness with Aunt Julia; they might have let her finish out the little she had found for herself, and would never see again—after six!

Dorothea wheeled, ready for Berkeley Appleton, and saw the caretaker arriving slowly, a pony's bridle in one hand, and in the other a plate with a wine glass on it.

"What's the matter?" he asked gently.

"I thought—they'd come for me!"

"Well, they haven't." Utterly unexpected pleasure lit his eyes. "It's only I and Moll," with a nod at the pony, "and this. Though I don't know that it's very good."

He held out his plate, and the Burgundy had not slopped over the chicken sandwich.

Dorothea cast Aunt Julia—and Berkeley—to the winds.

"Here's Moll's health," she said recklessly. All the light of the low sun was in the wine as she held it up, a live ruby against the gold and green of the wood road. "And——"

"My name," interrupted the caretaker hastily—he must catch this chance—"is——"

But Dorothea chopped the hateful word off deftly, though it meant saying it herself. "And Mr. Perkins," she finished. She did spill some of the Burgundy.

Perkins had swept off his cap and stood fumbling it. There was something he wanted to make sure of.

"I had no side saddle, Mrs.—er——" he blundered meekly.

"Miss!" Dorothea's face caught fire. Oh, it would be awful to be Mrs.; she had never properly considered how awful. "My name's Dorothea Adams. I don't want—ever—to be married," she said, and her lip trembled.

"I should say that was in your own hands." Mr. Perkins arranged the off stirrup across his saddle.

"It's like dying; you've got no choice," said Dorothea wearily.

She let Perkins put his plate and glass under a bush before she held up a small foot to be mounted. Not till the pony moved off soberly did she look at the caretaker, and the sun caught the points of his eyelashes. She was going back—if she could not stand out against Aunt Julia—to be proposed to by Berkeley Appleton, who had five millions and no eyelashes to speak of. She fell into gloomy silence.

The caretaker surveyed her quietly. He had several things in his head, and he knew he was going to say them. He was a high-handed young man, and intimately acquainted with Berkeley Appleton—who was not to his liking. Also he had heard of Dorothea Adams, but it had never dawned on him that Aunt Julia's niece could be this kind of a girl.

"There's where I'm living," he remarked, over the things that were really in his mind. They had mounted a rise in the road, and he pointed.

"There?" Dorothea had not been prepared for the house in the glade below them. "Do you take care of that, all alone?"

"Oh, there are some servants."

He led the pony on, and Dorothea said nothing till the trees shut off such

"There's where I'm living," he remarked.

a country house as she had seen only in dreams. Then she spoke suddenly.

"Oh, don't you wish you owned it? It must be dreadful to be only the caretaker."

"No." He looked over his shoulder with the smile she had already learned to watch for. "It wouldn't do me any good to own it."

"Money," observed Dorothea slowly, "is the only thing I've ever wanted in this world."

"It won't buy this." His hand swept comprehensively round the golden woods, the clear green spaces. "Not —all of it!"

Dorothea looked ahead of her dully. It was true, though this morning she would not have believed it.

"It might buy you three weeks of it in the year, while it was the fashion to live out of doors."

The caretaker, too, looked ahead, and he shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't," whispered Dorothea. But he went on ruthlessly.

"Just enough to unsettle you. I've tramped the world in my time, and I ought to know. This place, anyhow, is only a fad for men with more money than is good for them. It isn't the real woods."

"Then what brought you here?" It came out with some spirit, and for the first time Perkins looked sheepish.

"That caribou," said he shortly. "You see—it was that I was really taking care of, not the house. The man who owns the place had the thing trapped, and it was sick; so he sent for me. I—rather go in for deer. So I borrowed some clothes from the man who'd been looking after it, and——"

"Did you cure it?" The clothes were explained, and the new Dorothea did not care.

"There's only one way to cure that sickness." The caretaker's face turned

a fine red. "No caribou does well in captivity; I let it go. It was my fault it startled you till you nearly went down the cliff, but I felt so guilty I didn't dare own it. I ought to have looked before I set the thing loose. But I hate trapped things."

Dorothea thought of a few feats of Berkeley's outdoor career. She had a clear-cut, ingenuous face, and emotions wrote themselves on it. The caretaker was suddenly and desperately bold. He knew all about Aunt Julia and her plans to settle her niece.

"Don't," said he softly, "don't get trapped! Think what a life you could live if you kept it in your own hands. Think"—the significance of her sudden paleness was not lost on him—"what a wild creature feels when it's shut up where it doesn't belong." Dorothea saw deep down into his blue eyes as he turned and looked at her. "I can't help it," he broke out suddenly. "I've got to speak, even if it's impertinent. You're not the kind to be happy with Berkeley—for God's sake don't be hustled into marrying him!"

Dorothea's start nearly sent her out of the saddle.

"He never asked me to marry him." Her quick voice was icy, and remarkably thoughtful. It was only four hours since she had meant to go back and let him.

"Neither have I," returned the caretaker, very gently. "But I mean to."

Dorothea looked at the sky, the trees, the man's strong hand on her pony's bridle. In the silence she fairly gasped: "Oh, Charles!"

"Yes," answered the caretaker placidly. He did not feel at all placid, he had never dreamed a plain name could sound so sweet. "But Charles Perkins Haughton is the whole of it. I tried to tell you, twice, and you wouldn't let me."

And like a thunderbolt Dorothea knew him. The house they had passed was the Oliver Curtis house, and for a whole month Berkeley had been trying to get hold of the Charles Haughton who was staying there alone, and had been quietly eluded by that authority on deer and other things.

"Oh," she said helplessly, "you can't be so foolish as to—after one morning!" And it would have been incoherent to any one but Haughton.

"I am," said he. "I meant to be from the very first minute you said 'Oh, Charles,' and I had to prevaricate for fear you'd be uncomfortable, out there alone with me and a sick caribou. But it's fair to speak now; you're at home!" He smiled as he glanced round him. "I said you should be at home by six."

Dorothea was suddenly awake to the clock which Berkeley considered an appropriate thing to crown his house in the wilderness, striking the six she had been terrified to contemplate; and to people, calling out to her, and hurrying down a bypath. People! It was Berkeley and Aunt Julia, terrible in a conscientiously short skirt and a small, but influential hat.

"You see, I didn't dare wait," whispered the late Perkins, "and—quick, before they come—you're not angry, are you? You'll let me come and see you, till you find out if you could really bear to have me—try to take care of you?"

"Oh, Charles," began Dorothea detachedly, and was scarlet at her slip. But it was impossible to drop her very own word at two minutes' notice, just because it really belonged to some one else. "Oh, you won't tell Aunt Julia anything!"

"Not now," said the caretaker contentedly; he had seen the approaching Berkeley's eye, and knew he had made no unnecessary haste.

"Oh, I can't answer; you'll have to wait," cried Dorothea chokingly; she, too, had caught Berkeley's eye.

She slipped off the pony, and knew with blessed amazement that she was done with Berkeley; that she did not care whether it were six or eleven; and that it was not she who had to face Aunt Julia after the sins of the day. The caretaker was doing it—admirably.

ON MOSS GATHERING

By Charles Battell Loomis

A ROLLING stone gathers no moss."

I wonder whether that is another way of saying that a stone that does not roll becomes a "moss-back."

There was a certain man in that part of the Middle West which lies between Ohio and Illinois who had two sons. One was of the rolling-stone variety, and the other was as steady as a hitching block.

When the two boys came to the age at which a young man makes up his mind what course in life to take, the father asked each in turn what he intended doing with himself.

"I don't know yet, father," said the elder one. "The world is so large and there are so many things that one can do that I would not like to answer offhand. I think I'd like to travel a little and get some idea of my capabilities."

"Restless, restless," said his father. "There's just as much human nature here in this little town as there is in Chicago or New York. Now, Mr. Jenkins says that there is a vacancy in the First National Bank and that you can have the position if you want it."

"What is it—president?" asked the boy.

"Don't be flippant, my son. You can be under bookkeeper, with a chance of becoming head bookkeeper in five years."

"If the head bookkeeper dies or defaults in that time. Well, father, I think, if you don't mind, I'll pass that job on. How much do they offer?"

"It's eight dollars a week to begin with. I started in at nothing a week just to learn the business. Eight dollars is good money."

The young man hesitated. Then he said: "Father, I might try it for a month, but this very day I've had a chance offered me to go out as accompanist to a little concert company——"

His father snorted.

"I know, father, it's kind of disgraceful, seeing that

we have always been respectable people—storekeepers and farmers and so forth—but the rest of the company are just as good as I am, and I'm to be paid ten dollars a week and my expenses. I can see something of the world, I shall be absolutely independent, and I won't run any chance of being tempted to run away with a bank account. I think I'll go, if you don't absolutely forbid it."

The father was easy-going and he did not forbid it, so the young man started out.

When the second son was approached by his father and asked what he intended doing—the boys were within a year of each other and had begun school together, so both had reached the threshold of the great world at the same time—he said: "Whatever you think best, father."

The old gentleman did not say, "Spoken like a good and dutiful son," because neither of them was on the stage, but he was naturally pleased to have so compliant a son, and he told him about the vacancy in the bank.

"It looks good to me, father. There's Brierly has been there twenty years, and pay day every Saturday as regular as clockwork."

"But don't you want to have your fling? Don't you want to see the world?"

"What'll I see it on? I'd like to see the world, but I think I'd better wait until I can pay my way. I know you can't afford to do it."

"No, I can't, and I'm glad you are going to be steady. I think Harry is a good boy, but I wish he wasn't so restless. That concert business doesn't seem to be anything dignified. Playing on a piano is all right for a schoolgirl, but for a man almost grown—it doesn't seem right to me."

"Don't you worry, father. Harry will be back before long. He never stuck at anything. Look at him at school. Never had any application. Many's the lesson I've helped him on, although I'm younger than he. I'll probably be supporting him in ten years, because I mean to have a steady salary and I mean to earn every cent of it.

"I've got my eye on the cashiership, father. Alsop began there as office boy, so I'll start better than he did."

And so Frank, the younger son, started in at his life work, while butterfly Harry entered upon a career as a rolling stone.

It was not many months before Frank's assiduity and application were rewarded by an increase in his salary.

By a strange coincidence, the very day that Frank received his first check for ten dollars, his pay having been increased two dollars a week, he received a telegram from his brother:

Am broke in Brodhead, Wisconsin. Wire ten dollars.
HARRY.

Plodding Frank was a good brother, and a generous one, and he sent twenty to his brother, not without a feeling of pride that his steadiness had enabled him to do it. He hoped that Harry had not spent his money "roystering," and awaited his letter with interest.

It turned out that the concert company had gone to pieces from lack of support, but that Harry was not coming home. He had obtained work with a local photographer, who was going to teach him the business.

"A rolling stone," said their father; but he was glad to learn that Harry was not a prodigal.

After this they used to hear quite often from Harry, because he was not only fond of the old folks, but he was also fond of writing, and his letters were always breezy.

Nearly every letter gave news of a change of occupation. Once he was on a fruit farm in Utah, then he was telegraph operator in a railroad station in Arizona, then he was playing the piano in a moving-picture show, then he was driving a team in a little town in Oregon, then he tried cowpunching in Dakota; but the cow punched back and broke his leg, so he gave that up and went into chicken raising in Petaluma.

His father had a sense of humor, and once, when a neighbor said: "What's Harry doing now?" he answered: "I don't know. I haven't been down to the mail this morning."

But while Harry was roving the earth, stone broke today, making easy money to-morrow, working for a pittance in one town and earning fifty dollars in one brief week as agent for a big book concern, Frank went steadily upward, always working faithfully, and being raised in salary every six months.

His circle of acquaintances was not large, but he was well liked by the few whom he did know, and father and mother were proud of their stay-at-home boy.

So wagged the world with him for ten years, and then he reached the summit of his desires and became cashier in the bank, at a salary of three thousand dollars a year.

The very month that Frank became cashier, Harry came home on his first visit. He was strong and well, he had a large view of things and an idiomatic way of expressing them, but he was sick of travel and wanted to settle down.

"The fact is, father, I've fallen in love with the best girl in the world, and I'm going to prove myself worthy of her by doing the only thing I was ever cut out for doing."

"And what's that?" asked his father.

"Writing."

"Do you mean story-book writing?"

"Nothing else. Here's Frank has made a success of his life, and although it wouldn't have done him any harm to have had a few hard knocks in the world, he has certainly won out, and that's what I'm going to do—as a writer."

Well, the old gentleman did not think that writing was much more of a business than playing the piano, but he believed in even fathers minding their own business; and, besides, Harry was twenty-nine. So he said nothing; and the young man put a desk in the little room that had been his in childhood, and there he wrote.

He had been on a newspaper for six months and he had from time to time written short sketches for magazines, but he had never written a novel before.

"There's always a first time," said he, "and if I can put one-tenth of what I've seen and done into a book I believe the public will want to read it."

And the public did want to. It was his first novel, but he sold it with very little trouble, and when the royalties began to come in he was very glad he had been born in Indiana, because his book became a "six-best-seller."

"A rolling stone gathers no moss," said he, the day he paid the mortgage on his father's house, "but I wasn't ever partial to moss, father. And if I had crept into that stuffy bank I would have died of lung trouble on purpose."

Success is fond of assuming various shapes.

The Cowboy Countess

Her Adventures While Maid of Honor to the Queen

TOLD IN LETTERS TO HER LATE GOVERNESS

V.

Edited by C. N. and A. M. Williamson

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

SANDRINGHAM,
Saturday.

DEAREST MADEMOISELLE:—There was very nearly no Me in the world to write this letter. If it hadn't been for—but I had better begin at the beginning.

You remember my writing you about my cousin, Ada Wilbraham, who looks so like me, and who nearly ruined me through that resemblance, by making it seem that I had "given away" to a newspaper man a state secret learned at court? But, of course, you do remember; because, though that affair is months old, you are such a dear that you never forget things which concern me.

Well, Ada Wilbraham might have gone to prison, I suppose, for what she did; but she had mixed herself up with the business of people so far above her that publicity was undesirable, and somehow or other she was allowed to disappear. I was sorry for her, in spite of the dreadful scrape into which she got me, for I believed her when she said that she had never really meant to do me any harm. I am so impulsive myself that it makes it easy for me to forgive others who do wild things in haste, and repent them at leisure; and as I found myself often thinking of the girl, I finally wrote to her brother asking if he could tell me what had become of her.

It was the first letter I'd written to him since the dear queen rescued me from the "Grimmies'" clutches, and it was decided that I was not to live with them after all. But through Mr. MacGregor, the nice old solicitor, I had tried to make up as well as I could for their disappointment. He would not let me offer them as much money as I wanted to, but I teased till I was allowed to send Mr. and Mrs. Wilbraham a check for two hundred pounds. That ought to have consoled them a little for not living at Dalmarre Castle; and anyway Mr. Wilbraham might have felt grateful enough to answer my letter pleasantly. But not he! There came a stiff note saying that he had long ago severed all relations with his sister Ada, and that he could give me "no information concerning her whereabouts." Perhaps if I hadn't written to ask that question, and put the idea in his mind—but I'm going too far ahead again.

A fortnight ago we were all at Sandringham, and there was going to be a big house party for the shooting. I had a horrid cold, and, though it was my wait, the queen had excused me from duty. I was keeping my room still, when a letter arrived, addressed to me in a strange handwriting, on rather a cheap-looking envelope. I was prepared for something out of the way when I opened it, but I was surprised to see the name "Ada Wilbraham" at the bottom of the third page. The letter ran:

DEAR COUSIN: I think that your kind heart has forgiven me the evil I nearly brought upon you, but if not quite, you will be ready to forgive, I know, when I tell you I am dying.

My heart gave a jump when I got as far as that, and it beat harder and harder as I read on. The letter told me that Ada was supposed to have left England, but that, finding herself desperately ill with consumption, she longed inexpressibly to die, if she must die, in her own country. She had come back from France with very little money, and was in a small flat lent her by an old friend —an actress now on tour. She went on to say:

If it were known that I had come back I might be arrested, for I gave my word that I would keep out of England if I were allowed to go free after that affair of the newspaper. I trust you not to tell a soul where I am, or that you have heard from me. You don't know how much harm it will do if you speak to any one, no matter who. But for the love of Heaven, and of your dead mother, who was my dead mother's twin sister, come and see me. I have things to say which I can say to nobody else, and I can't rest until they are said. You will receive this on Monday. Come on Tuesday or Wednesday in the afternoon between three and six, as that is the time when I generally feel strongest. Wire what day I may hope to see you, not to my name but simply to H. Dorton, which is the name of my friend who has lent me her flat on the sixth floor.

Then she added the address, Kendal Mansions, Pimlico; and that was all, except one more plea that I would go to her and keep the secret.

Of course I can't be expected to know much about English law, can I? So it never occurred to me to think Ada's explanation of the way she left England, and the necessity for hiding, now she had come back, particularly strange. It seemed natural enough that she should turn to me, being ill and alone, as her cold-hearted brother would have nothing to do with her. I felt despecately sorry for the poor creature, and all the more anxious to help her, because there was something for me to forgive. You understand that feeling, don't you? One likes people so much better if one has forgiven them, than if one has been forgiven by them! I thought how good it would be if through me her life could be saved after all, and determined that, when I had seen her, I would send a good doctor at my own expense.

The difficulty was, how to get away without telling any one where I meant to go. I felt sneaky and sly; yet I argued that my conscience was oversensitive, as, even if there were no other reason for not telling my dear mistress, it would make the queen uncomfortable to know that Ada Wilbraham had disobeyed orders and come back to England.

Eventually I made up my mind to slip off the following day while still supposed to be doing a "rest cure" in my own quarters. I sent a wire saying only "Tuesday, about four," a message which could have no meaning save for the one person initiated; and next morning I sneaked out of the house, unknown to everybody who mattered.

It was raining a little, and there was a raw east wind which made me shiver, after being shut up for several days. I knew I was making myself worse, a thing which I had no right to do, in my situation; so I had that thought to worry about, as well as the chance that my absence without permission would be discovered. When I was in the train, and there was no turning back, I began to see that the thing I had done was much more serious and might have graver consequences for me than I had realized at first. I was afraid that I had been a great deal too impulsive, and altogether, physically and mentally, I was rather miserable.

Instead of thinking entirely about

poor Ada, I thought more about myself, and kept saying in my mind: "Oh, if *only* I get back without any one finding out, or any horrid adventures, how thankful I shall be!" but it seemed too good to be true that I should not be punished for my recklessness.

I wore a very plain dress, and a motor veil, so it did not seem likely that I should be recognized either at Wolferton Station—whither I'd walked the two miles from Sandringham—or at St. Pancras, when I reached London. But if it weren't too Irish a way of expressing myself, I'd be inclined to say that I've begun to expect unexpected things to happen. They generally do contrive to happen to me; and this time it was Captain O'Malley who happened. He happened at St. Pancras Station just after I'd given up my ticket, and was thinking of finding a cab.

Perhaps he might not have noticed me in my dark gray serge and thick gray veil if I hadn't had rather a helpless air, very different from the air I used to have on the dear old ranch—the manner you sometimes told me was almost too independent for a *jeune fille bien élcvée*. But a ranch and a London railway station—especially when a girl is there alone, and knows she oughtn't to be there at all!—are two very different places. I suppose Captain O'Malley saw a young woman in motor-car rig, gazing aimlessly about as if she didn't know what she ought to do next; wondered vaguely whether she had shed a broken-down automobile somewhere along her route; and then his eyes, sharpened by curiosity, recognized a familiar profile through a layer of gray tissue. Anyway he knew me before I had seen him, and my first intimation of his presence was a surprised: "Why, Lady Dalmarre! Is it possible?"

His tone and face both expressed so much astonishment that I couldn't help laughing a little. Another thing I couldn't help, by the bye, was being glad to see him!

"If you could like me enough to be engaged, and take me on trial, I would ask you to let me beg the queen's permission to speak——"

"It is possible, but not probable," said I. "And you——" I had begun, when suddenly I remembered that he was due at Sandringham that evening, being invited for the shooting. He is a noted shot, I must tell you.

"Why, of course," I went on, "you are going to Sandringham." And I grew red under my veil, for it would be awkward to ask him not to tell any one that he had met me.

"And you are coming away," he answered, in a nice, disappointed tone of voice that was a compliment.

"Only for a few hours," I said, trying not to show that I was embarrassed. "I—I have some business I must attend to."

"You are going to Lady Bellington's, I suppose?" said he.

"No—o, I—er——" I began to stammer; and, being a very intelligent young man, he naturally guessed that there was a secret. Not that he suggested anything so indiscreet, but I saw by a quick light which flashed into his eyes that he knew. At that I thought I had better confess all it was safe to confess, lest he should imagine something more wild even than the truth.

"I have to go and see a relation," I explained, "who is in a little trouble. As a matter of fact, I'm supposed to be in my own room at Sandringham at this very moment."

Captain O'Malley looked anxious—or shocked—I wasn't sure which. "You don't mean that nobody there——" he began, and then stopped, realizing, no doubt, that I might think he was interfering with my affairs.

"I do mean just that," I admitted. "I hate it, but it can't be helped. I had to come. But I shall soon be back again, and it will be all right."

"Oh, of course," said he; but his cheerfulness seemed rather forced. "Only—I can't help wishing you were going to Lady Bellington's. I—er—I suppose there's nothing I can do to help? No commission I could——"

"No, no, thank you," I cut him short, "except not to 'give me away.' But I'm certain, without asking, that you won't do that."

"You may rely on it that I won't," he assured me; but he was very grave and evidently troubled. "Do you know about the trains back?"

"Yes, I've studied it all out from a time-table I got at Wolferton," said I, adding hastily: "But I don't know which train I can get. It depends on circumstances. However, I shall be as early as I can. It wouldn't do to arrive late."

"Indeed, it would not," he earnestly agreed with me, and I understood that he took a very serious view of my escapade. You can imagine that this fact didn't add to my peace of mind! I began to feel almost ill, and was glad I had on such a thick veil, for I was sure I must be far from "looking my best."

"Well, good-by," I said. "The sooner I finish my business the sooner I shall be able to get back."

"You will let me put you into a cab, won't you?" he asked. "Unless—you are expecting any one to meet you?"

"No one will meet me. My relative is ill," I replied. "I shall be glad if you will put me in a cab—only—not for my own sake at all, but for my cousin's sake—I think I mustn't let you give the address to the cabman."

"Very well," he assented, looking as if he were going to be shot. We walked a few steps side by side without speaking, and I was rather sad, thinking how violently he disapproved of me, when suddenly he said: "Lady Dalmarre, do forgive me for speaking in such a way and in such a place, but—but—of course you must know already that I'm awfully in love with you?"

I almost gasped, it was so unexpected. Even if I had fancied that he cared, I hadn't dreamed that he would tell me so for a long, long time; and I was so surprised that I couldn't speak.

"I know you can't possibly feel for me what I do for you," he hurried on, as modestly as if he weren't one of the most attractive young men in England, with dozens of girls dying for him to propose. "Yet if you could like me enough to be engaged, and take me on trial, I would ask you to let me beg the queen's permission to speak——"

"But you have spoken!" I laughed, so happy suddenly that I was ready to tease him a little.

He laughed, too. "I couldn't very well ask permission if there weren't some faint hope that you might be induced to look at me. Will you?"

I did, immediately; and he must have read the answer through that heavy

veil—which was very clever of him—for his face lit up with joy.

"Darling! Angel!" he exclaimed, and a few other things which are perhaps unnecessary to repeat even to you. Then he asked if I really did like him a very little, and when I said "Yes," instead of being satisfied, he wanted me to say "love" instead of "like," and after I'd said that he wasn't contented yet, until I'd put "a great deal" in the place of "a little."

Did you ever hear of such a queer place and time for a proposal? But I knew, even before he went further, that he hadn't spoken entirely on impulse. I was sure there was a special reason; and as soon as we were able to think of anything, except the state of our own and each other's hearts, the explanation came.

"Darling, you must let me share this secret of yours now," he said. "I'll promise to help, not hinder."

But I shook my head. "I can't tell you," I answered. "It wouldn't be honorable. Thank you all the same, though. I know you think I shall probably get into trouble, and it's very noble to want to be in it with me, and see me through."

"Noble!" He laughed at the idea, and tried to persuade me to confide in him, but I would not. All I would promise was that, as soon as he liked, permission for our engagement might be asked. "That is," I amended, "unless I get into a dreadful scrape through being found out. In that case, I'll be in it alone."

"No, you won't," he said in a low voice; but he no longer insisted on "helping" me in my mission. With an air of resignation, he put me into a deadly respectable four-wheeled cab—he wouldn't hear of a "taxi" or a hansom—and charged the driver, whom I agreed to keep on by the hour, to "take good care of this young lady." Then he let me go; and as I looked out once to see him gazing anxiously after me, something of the depression and fear I had felt came heavily back.

Can you imagine the queer feeling I had? I was wildly happy to think that he really cared, for—though I wouldn't quite confess to you when I wrote last—to tell the truth, I've been in love with Teddy O'Malley ever since we were at Carmonceux Castle together, and it seemed almost too good to be true that he could really want me to be his wife.

It would have been strange not to be happy when the dearest wish of my heart had just been granted; and yet—and yet—it was as if ink had been dashed into the crystal fountain of my joy. I felt that he had spoken now only to give me a man's arm to lean upon if there were need, and I told myself that he was firmly convinced there *would* be need. Besides, I was weak and feverish. My head ached, and it seemed as if every nerve in my body was vibrating like the strings of a violin when one has just broken.

Kendal Mansions turned out to be even uglier than I had fancied, and it was a most depressing neighborhood. I felt more sorry for Ada Wilbraham than ever, as I went up flight after flight of bare, concrete stairs.

"On the sixth floor," Ada had said, so I didn't pause till I had reached the top of the house; and there, tacked on to a door, I saw a card with the name "H. Dorton" written on it in purple ink. If I hadn't been out of breath, realizing from my fatigue that I was still something of an invalid, perhaps it might have struck me as odd that the absent actress-friend's card should be quite new and fresh; but as it was I thought nothing of it—until afterward.

There was no bell or knocker, but I rapped on a panel, and almost immediately an elderly, bleared individual, who looked like a moth-eaten charwoman, opened the door just enough to peep out. She had on something which had once been a bonnet, and an incredibly faded cloak. "Who is it?" she inquired, and a whiff of beer came with the question.

"My name is Dalmarre," said I, not knowing whether it would be discreet to ask for Miss Wilbraham. However, I had said the right thing, for the old creature opened the door wide.

"Very well. Obey me in every way, and you shall die—without suffering."

"You can walk in," she answered. "You're expected; and I've got to go out on an errand."

As I went in she went out, and, shutting the door behind her, shut me into the flat.

There was a tiny vestibule, not large enough to call a corridor, which opened into a room with very little furniture in it. What there was gave it the appearance of a combined kitchen, dining room, and sitting room.

No one was there, but a door leading to another room stood ajar. "Miss Wilbraham—Ada?" I called, expecting a weak summons to my cousin's bedside; but instead of that the door was pushed open, and—of all people in the world—into the room where I waited stepped Henry Drummond, the thought-reader.

I'm not a coward, am I, dear? Yet my heart gave a jump of terror when I saw him, because it was through me he had failed and been exposed during the royal visit to Carmoneeux, and, of

course, he owed me a grudge. Instantly I remembered the new card on the door, and the request to wire H. Dorton, not Ada Wilbraham, and felt sure I had walked into a trap.

To prevent its closing on me I whirled round, and made a rush at the outer door; but the fastening was intricate, and while I fumbled at it, Henry Drummond grabbed my wrist, and pulled me into the room. I gave a cry, but he covered my mouth with his hand.

"Don't be foolish," he said, in the quiet, firm voice whose sound carried me back to the day when he pretended to help the Duchess of Sussex out of her dilemma about the entertainment at Carmonceux Castle. "I am not going to hurt you. I am very sorry to seem rude or violent, but I can't have you screaming before I've explained why you've been brought here. I wouldn't struggle if I were you. You'll only tire yourself out for nothing. I am very strong. And you look as if you had been ill."

I was staring up at him as he spoke, and he was gazing, gazing down at me, straight into my eyes, with those strange, *compelling* eyes of his. You know, I wrote you about them, and told you how brilliantly blue they were, between the inky lines of his short, thick lashes. And I told you then that they were eyes one wouldn't dare look into for long, unless one wanted to find oneself thinking or doing whatever Mr. Henry Drummond wanted one to think or do. Yet now, I had to look at him. It would be worse to shut my eyes, or turn away; and I tried to be brave and defiant.

"H. Dorton is a *nom de guerre* of mine," he said. "You have ruined the name of Henry Drummond, which was once a valuable asset to me. Still, I am not going to hurt you. I am only going to talk to you a little. Look at me. Listen to me. That is all I want. Don't be frightened. Don't try to turn away. Now—now, you can't turn. You *must* look. There, that is right! That is right!"

His voice had begun to sound very soothing in my ears. I had ceased to be frightened, as if on his command, but I was mistress of my own mind sufficiently to know that the feeling of calm resignation slowly, slowly stealing over me was far worse than the most deadly fear. I could not resist. I didn't even want to resist, because he was putting my will to sleep, but I had sense enough to feel that I was like a mouse caught by a big, playful, yet merciless cat. I remembered once seeing a cat let a mouse go, and, though I tried to save it, the poor wretch would creep back to the cat who sat waiting. I was like that mouse now; for when Henry Drummond took his hand from my mouth, and loosened his grasp on my wrist, I did not scream or try to run away.

He put his hand on my forehead, and his fingers felt cool and firm. Gently he led me to a chair. "Sit down," he said. I sat down. And his eyes never left mine, or mine his.

"You will do exactly as I tell you now," he said.

"Yes," I answered. I heard my own voice as of some one speaking far away, through a telephone; and my mouth was very dry.

"Answer my questions and speak the truth," he went on. "Did you tell any one you were coming here?"

"No," I said.

"Or show any one the letter?"

"No."

"Where is it?"

"In the pocket of my coat."

"Give it to me."

I gave it to him.

"Have you arranged to meet any one when you leave this house?"

"No."

"Very well. But if you should meet any one you know, you will not tell where you have been, whom you have seen, or anything that has happened. You will not mention my name, or the name of Wilbraham."

"No," I said again. I knew that I should have to obey him. It was like receiving instructions from a being of some higher planet than ours. He no longer seemed human to me. He was a superior Intelligence, dominating me

"I must die, I must die!" I moaned in indescribable agony. "Here comes the train. Let me go! Let me go!"

completely. His eyes were two blazing stars into which my spirit was striving to plunge and annihilate itself, like a moth that flies into the naked flame of a candle.

"You are very tired of life," the charming voice went on.

"Yes," I whispered. And even as I spoke it became true. Nothing in my life was of any value.

"You want to die."

"Yes." And I longed for death, fearlessly, eagerly.

"Very well. Obey me in every way, and you shall die—without suffering. Now you must go downstairs to the cabman who is, I know, waiting for you. Pay him well. Tell him that you will not want him again after all. Tell him nothing else. When you come back I will be waiting, and you shall hear what else to do."

How sure he must have been of his power over me to let me go out alone! But no doubt many experiences had made him sure. I went willingly down to the cabman, gave him double what he could have asked, and told him I was staying on after all. He looked at me curiously, and drove off. I watched him turn the corner, and then went back upstairs—just as that mouse, I remember, went back to the cat.

Henry Drummond was at the door waiting for me. The window was open. He had probably watched me as I dismissed the cab.

"Here is a coat," he said, when we were inside the flat again. "Put it on." He held out a dust cloak, which, when I was wrapped in it, covered my dress. "Now, take off that veil, and fasten this one over your hat," he commanded. When I had obeyed, I must have looked like a different person. No one who had casually noticed me go into the house would have recognized the young woman in the long brown coat and brown veil as the same person.

"Go downstairs now," Henry Drummond went on. "Turn the corner to the left, and walk straight on until you come to a florist's, on the right-hand side of the street. Turn again to the left there, and presently you will see a cab rank. Take a hansom and drive to St. Pancras Station. Go to the platform at which you alighted, and walk up and down till you see a train coming in. Then jump in front of the engine. That is a splendid way to die, without pain. It is the way you want to die. You want to do this more than you ever wanted to do anything in your life before. You are to let nothing and no one prevent you from jumping in front of the engine of the first train that comes in at that platform. You will behave quite calmly before you jump. Nobody must suspect what you intend to do. You will obey me."

"Yes. I will obey you," I said. I felt, indeed, that nothing on earth could stop me.

"One more thing," he added, opening the door to let me out. "Just before the moment comes, I will you to see, flashing into your brain as if in letters of fire, the whole truth about this visit you were asked to make to-day. I will you to know all, but not to hold back, not to change your mind, for that or anything else."

"Not to hold back, not to change my mind, for that or anything else," I repeated after him.

"Very well. Now go."

I went, without looking back, but I could feel his eyes on me. I felt them on me, and his spirit compelling mine as I turned the corner where my discharged cabman had turned, and walked straight on, exactly as the hypnotist had told me to do. I engaged a hansom, and drove to St. Pancras station, eager to obey my instructions, yet perfectly calm. There was no sense of revolt against fate in my heart. I was a mere automaton. I had forgotten all about Captain O'Malley, forgotten his love for me and my love for him. The world and everything in it, except Henry Drummond's eyes, had ceased to be of importance for me.

I found my way to the platform by which I had come in, and began quietly walking up and down, as there was no train in sight. People were assembling, however, so I knew one would come soon—whence did not matter.

I had not gone half the length of the platform when I saw Teddy O'Malley among the crowd. With him was the old cabman who had driven me to Kendal Mansions. This was only vaguely strange to me. I was not in a state of mind to puzzle over anything, but I did not want to be recognized, for fear Teddy might try to prevent me from jumping. I remembered that I had a coat and a different veil, which Henry Drummond had thoughtfully provided for me; nevertheless, I turned quickly, and walked away from the two men.

I was not quick enough, however. I heard the old cabman say, "There she is, sir—don't you see?—in that brown cloak. It's that she had on when she came out of the house the second time."

"Peggy, dearest, what has happened?" Teddy asked, close beside me, bending over me.

"Nothing," I answered. I was conscious of no love for him, only annoyance. I felt like a cross child. "Go away, please."

"I can't go away. I shall not leave you," he said.

"Why didn't you go away in the train when I left you here before?" I inquired, sharply. "They will be very angry with you at Sandringham for breaking your engagement. People don't do that sort of thing with royalties."

"They do when they think the girl they love is running into danger, and when they are determined to save her in spite of herself," he answered. "And royalties forgive them, because they are kinder and more considerate really than lesser folk. I wouldn't follow you, but I couldn't leave London without knowing you were safe. I simply couldn't. I waited outside the station, hoping you'd return to catch the first train. Before very long I saw your cabman—I had taken his number in case of accident—and hoped he was bringing you safely back, as he'd promised. But the cab was empty, and the man had a queer story to tell—about your discharging him, and your voice and manner being odd and changed.

"He suspected something might be wrong, and instead of going off when you'd paid him, he drove his cab just round the corner, and stood where he could watch the door of the house without being seen. By and by he saw a lady in a brown coat and veil come out. He wouldn't have been sure it was you if you hadn't held your head and arms in a stiff way he'd particularly noticed when you discharged him. So he went back to his cab, and drove slowly after you, until you took a hansom. He noted the number, and then whipped up his horse, hurrying back to St. Pancras where he had an idea he would find me waiting. He did find me—and as I suppose your hansom cab driver went a long round to get more money, he got here before you—just in time to explain before you came. Now, you see, my dearest girl, I know that something strange must have happened; and, if I didn't know it, your manner would tell me. For heaven's sake, be frank with me. What is the matter?"

"Nothing!" I exclaimed angrily. "I don't want you, Captain O'Malley. I ask you to go, and leave me alone."

He looked stricken. The blood rushed to his face, and then receded, leaving him very pale. But I did not care.

A train was approaching, far away still, but coming in to this platform. It was *my* train. My moment was at hand. I felt my muscles stiffen, and it annoyed me intensely to know that Teddy was watching me. I turned my back upon him, and took a few steps toward the incoming train, moving a little closer at the same time to the edge of the platform. I hoped the crowd would separate me from Captain O'Malley, if only for a minute, for a minute would be enough.

The train was very close now, and coming fast. I must jump before it slowed down too much. "Now!" I said to myself—and perhaps I said it aloud. Then I sprang forward—only to be snatched back. Teddy had caught me by the arm.

"Great heaven!" I heard him gasp, half under his breath—for, somehow, Englishmen don't exclaim such things aloud, even in moments of their greatest excitement. I struggled furiously to free myself. It was as if my soul had gone, and given place to a fiend mad for suicide.

"I must die, I must die!" I moaned in indescribable agony. "Here comes the train. Let me go! Let me go!"

But he only held me the tighter, and the train came in, and stopped. I had been forced to disobey my orders, against my will; but the spell was not broken, and the terrible force of it seemed to snap something in my brain. I gave a cry when the train stopped, caring nothing, knowing nothing, of what people round me said or did, and then I knew no more, until I waked up in a room which seemed dimly familiar.

I felt as if I had been very ill, down close to the brink of death, but I was quite sane again, sane enough to be sur-

prised at what I saw. In front of me stood Henry Drummond, by his side a man who looked like a doctor; and at a little distance, by a door, two policemen.

"Thank God!" said a woman's voice. I turned my eyes and saw Lady Bellington. Close by was Teddy O'Malley. And I was myself again, wholly; because, at sight of him, a great flood of love rushed over me, and I put out my hand with a pleading look at him. Dimly I realized that he had something to forgive. What it was I didn't know, but I knew he had forgiven by the quick pressure on my fingers as he took and kissed them.

"Now we shall no longer need this gentleman. You are welcome to him," said the man who looked like a doctor. He spoke to the policemen, and without a word Henry Drummond turned and walked toward them. In another moment all three had gone.

I gave Teddy's hand one grateful squeeze, and fell fast asleep.

I was too weak to feel the slightest curiosity then. I gave Teddy's clasping hand one grateful squeeze, and fell fast asleep; I slept for hours, and the first thing I wanted to know when I waked up was how soon I could start for Sandringham. It was a hospital nurse with pink cheeks and dimples who cheerfully answered me. "Lady Bellington has gone there to explain all, and make everything right. You needn't have the slightest uneasiness. That is the message her ladyship left for you," said the nurse. "And Captain O'Malley would like to see you when you feel able."

"Hasn't he gone away?" I asked faintly.

"He has been back and forth. But the message is that you are not to worry about him either. It is all explained and understood about his not leaving London just yet. The doctor, who is in the next room, will let you talk with Captain O'Malley for five minutes, if you like."

Of course I did like; but it wasn't then I heard all that had happened. Next day I was told; and I must make

a short story of it for you, dear, as already my letter is too long.

Teddy took me from the station in a cab to Lady Bellington's, and sent for her doctor, who remarked, more by accident than because he really suspected: "Why, she is like a person hypnotized."

With that a strange idea popped into Teddy's head. He thought of Henry Drummond! Outside, the cab that had brought me was waiting—the cab in which I had driven to Kendal Mansions. Teddy made the man take him straight there, and Henry Drummond, who felt quite safe, had not left the house. Not only was he in the flat, but—who do you think was with him? Dear Cousin Wilbraham, the schoolteacher!

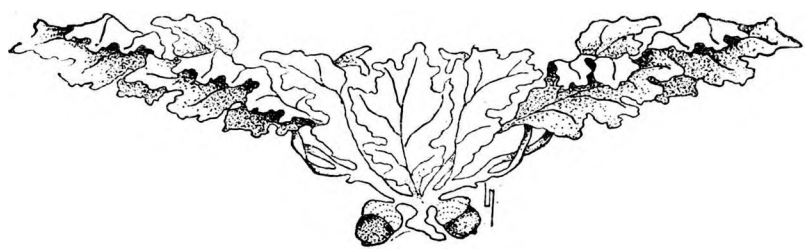
My big, strong Teddy overawed them both, pretending he was going to shoot if they didn't do what he told them to do. Henry Drummond, anxious to save his own skin, gave his confederates away. I say "confederates" deliberately; for he had several who were, according to him, the ringleaders in the plot. Ada's friend, from whom I took Lady Maud's letters, is—or was—a friend of her brother's, too. He knew Henry Drummond, and found out that Henry hated me both wisely and well. That was a bond between them. Ada's friend introduced Mr. Drummond to Ada's brother—my heir! And Drummond's story was that Cousin Wilbraham offered him ten thousand pounds down to hypnotize me to the desire for suicide. If I killed myself, alone in a railway station, for instance, nobody could be blamed—and Mr. Wilbraham would not only inherit my money but the title that, in his opinion, ought to have been his in spite of me.

Teddy forced the two men to go with him to a police station, where they were arrested; but Henry Drummond was brought on, by the doctor's orders, to take the "influence" away from me.

I was rather ill for two days, but I am well again now. The queen is kinder and more angelic than ever, and I think I am to be allowed to marry Teddy—some day. Your very loving

PEGGY.

P.S.—Did I tell you before that Teddy *never* was in love with, or engaged to the princess? That it was his elder brother who wanted her, but for some mysterious reason nothing has come of it? And I fear there is going to be an equally mysterious obstacle to our marriage. But Teddy and I are determined to overcome it, whatever it may be!



Butterflies

LIKE petals floating in the air
Reflecting varied rainbow hues,
Or ox-eyes in the flowered fields
Kissed by the morning dews;
Thither ye drift o'er meadows green
Like beds of stemless flowers,
Or tinted leaves from forest trees
In Autumn's golden hours.

GEORGE WILLIAM HOPKINS.

Hoofing It With The Heathen.

By Holman F. Day.

ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

MR. BITTERSON was not very certain regarding his mental equilibrium or his eyesight that morning, anyway. He had "come to" gradually. He found himself jack-knifed down in the fore part of his farm wagon, his head on the seat and his legs hanging out over the dash-board. His patient horse was cropping leaves from the roadside bushes. When Mr. Bitterson tried to move his legs he realized that he must have been reposing in that condition for many hours.

At that moment, dim as figures in a vision, out of the daybreak fog came the strangest procession that Mr. Bitterson had ever seen. Seven old men plodded past, and as they neared the wagon each put his hat over his face. Behind the old men followed Chinamen—fifteen of them; Mr. Bitterson, languidly opining that he was dreaming and therefore not alarmed, counted them. They went past silently, trotting on the soft mould of the highway, and disappeared in the fog.

Mr. Bitterson did not turn his head. It seemed to him that he had winked them out of sight. He rubbed some feeling into his legs, gathered up the reins, got on to the seat, and drove home, counting what money he had left and piecing together scattered recollections of a convivial evening at the shire town.

He never mentioned to any one the solemn old men of the fog or the wraithlike Chinamen, having decided that any man who saw seven old men and fifteen Chinamen on a quiet country highway was having 'em bad and ought to quit. So he swore off and remained a teetotaller ever after, being a man of naturally excellent principles —and that's all about Mr. Bitterson!

When Cap'n Aaron Sproul and his six ex-master mariner comrades and the fifteen attendant hiking heathens were once more swathed in the fog and safe from observation by the roadside accidental who had appeared to them so suddenly, the cap'n halted his retinue.

"This ain't never goin' to do, gents," stated Cap'n Sproul, who in his perturbation had not remarked the condition of Mr. Bitterson. "That steer back there will be startin' a hue and cry after us in less than ten minutes."

"He didn't seem to show any particular interest in us," grumbled Cap'n Cook.

"The sight paralyzed him, probably," suggested Cap'n Cole. "You can't be expected to perade fifteen Chinamen

through here and have folks look at 'em like they was a drove of sheep. He ain't got his voice back yet, but he will in a minute. I reckon there ain't anything to do but to run for it."

But Cap'n Sproul checked their lumbering flight the moment it began.

"I say it ain't goin' to do, gents. It's comin' broad daylight and we've got to get off'm these roads. This foot-racin' these hellions acrost country is played out." He surveyed the obnoxious charges with blistering gaze. They stolidly endured his glare.

"There ain't nothin' left to us but to lie out of it," declared Cap'n Kitchen. "We're ownin' up to bein' pretty flat kind of flounders if the whole seven of us can't make up a story."

With a snort of contempt Cap'n Sproul turned off the road and led the way into the undergrowth, and the others followed. When he had reached what seemed a safe retreat, he sat down and scowled at Cap'n Kitchen.

"Now, Mr. Liar Kitchen," he said, "having walked all night and needin' a little rest and relaxation, suppose we set down here and have you knit up your lie that's goin' to convince the people we meet that seven ship captains teamin' fifteen Chinks is as natural a sight for a country neighborhood as little birds swingin' on a bough. Jest let's hear it!"

Cap'n Kitchen glowered back. He did not reply.

"You might borrow a Bible and tell 'em we was missionaries," suggested Cap'n Sproul maliciously.

Continued silence. When the skein of trouble is especially tangled, the natural human impulse is to blame the other man. The old skippers sat down and scowled at each other, and then bent concerted gaze of malevolence on the unhappy fugitives who squatted in a half circle about them.

Cap'n Tansom felt called upon to voice querulous complaint for the party. He stuck up his stubby fingers and bent them down one by one as he enumerated.

Cap'n Sproul bent forward and stared at the fingers, with gritting teeth.

"I ain't goin' back too far," said Cap'n Tansom. "I could go back and show if it wasn't for Sproul comin' down to the shore for his vacation we wouldn't have gone a-sailin', anyway. But I'll take my share of the blame in that first trip. Howsomever, the rest of it is different. We was all ready to come back by train; he coaxed us till we shipped back with that cussed Tate on a *pleasure* trip. That's what he called it—a pleasure trip." There were three fingers upstanding. "He made Tate mad, and Tate skipped out and left us with these smuggled Chinamen that he'd hid below and collected two hundred dollars apiece from, and that's lookin' to be delivered in Boston." Another finger down. "If it wasn't for Sproul talkin' the way he done, Tate would have seen it through. If it wasn't for Sproul bound to put our names on charter papers for that schooner, we could have left the Chinamen battened below and could have skipped ashore. Here we are with 'em stickin' to us with the idee, probably, that we're Tate's pardners and have got to carry out the contract." One finger left up. "Here is Sproul drum-majorin' us off acrost country—and what does he say? Says he's tryin' to find some one that can cuss in Chinese hard enough to make these heathens stop follerin' us. Now——"

Up came all the fingers again. Cap'n Sproul arose, clutching a stone.

"Tansom," he snarled, "you stick them claws up again and go to checkin' me off, and I'll peg 'em out of sight clear into your arm. Don't you go to layin' all this off onto *me*."

"You're most responsible for us gettin' into it, and you ought to get us out," stated the unterrified Cap'n Cook.

"How?" demanded Cap'n Sproul, in a fury.

"You'd better be thinkin' how," advised Cap'n Cook, with maddening condescension, "instead of wastin' your time threatin' men that you've imposed on."

Cap'n Sproul looked away from the lowering countenances of his comrades to the faces of the Chinamen. The

latter afforded restful relief for his eyes. They did not show any emotion. They sat there gazing at him with that grave, unblinking, uncompromising, emotionless regard that one sees on the faces of cats. And the despairing reflection came to him that he might as well try to explain to cats as to those stolid individuals. Cap'n Tansom was right in one respect. Cap'n Tate had taken their money and had promised them safe delivery to their kind in Boston. It was plain that they expected the bargain to be carried out by some one—and why not by the men whom Mr. Tate had left on the schooner that bore them to land? Cap'n Sproul gazed at the baggy sleeves and remembered with a shudder those long knives, that had already been shown with a mien that needed no language to explain. Whether this parley of their guardians interested them, their expression did not indicate. They merely sat and waited with the patience of Fate.

"What do you think you're gainin' by settin' here in these woods?" demanded Cap'n Kitchen. "I'm hungry. You don't reckon crows is goin' to come flyin' to us with gingerbread, do you?"

He looked at Cap'n Sproul in a manner that indicated that he, like the others, held that gentleman responsible for all their troubles.

"Go out and promenade with 'em, if it suits you," recommended Cap'n Sproul tartly. "I'm perfickly willin' to stay here in the woods while you do it."

There was a pause, and by the twisting of the brows of the seven captains it was plain that all were engaged in weighty pondering. Cap'n Doty put some of their thoughts into words when he broke the silence.

"There ain't no doubt about these bein' smuggled Chinamen, and all signs and symptoms point to us as bein' the ones that smuggled 'em if we're caught with 'em plastered onto us. And we as innercent as that 'ere bidoodle bird settin' over on that limb yender! And that Tate gettin' his three thousand dollars out of 'em and leavin' us the cuss of the thing! I ain't ever goin' to believe no more in circumstantial evidence. I've heard of plots before in my time, but I never knowed of a devilisher one than this."

"How much does the United States gov'munt soak a man for smugglin' a Chinaman?" inquired Cap'n Tewksbury fearfully.

"I read in a paper once about a feller gettin' caught at the job," stated Cap'n Kitchen, with deep gloom. "As I remember, they give him jail somers around a year and dreened him with a fine for about all he was wuth."

For some minutes no speech profaned the solemn hush that ensued.

"I reckon there ain't no doubt," suggested Cap'n Cook despondently, "that what they was cal'latin' on, and what they was payin' that renegade Tate for, was to be set down in Boston."

That last word interested the wide-eared Celestials, who had been crouching about, listening to the palaver and trying to catch one sound that was intelligible. They squawked excitedly in chorus.

"Bos'n!" they clamored. They beat their breasts and pointed over the tree-tops.

"Yes, it was Boston," continued Cap'n Cook. "And it's three hundred miles from here. We might as well give up all idee of ever gettin' 'em there."

For some time Captains Cook and Kitchen had been exchanging pregnant glances, and had found opportunity for a muttered word or two of privacy. Somewhat nervously Cap'n Kitchen cleared his throat and spoke. He said again that he was hungry, and volunteered to go and forage. He said that there was probably some farmhouse or village store within reaching distance. When Cap'n Sproul squinted at him suspiciously, he went on to say that he was no kind of a hand to devise plans, and he would leave the others to do that while he hunted for something to eat.

"What's to prevent you from keepin' on goin'?" inquired Cap'n Sproul.

"I'll take Cook, here, with me; and each of us will watch the other," stated

Cap'n Sproul gave him an open-handed buffet on the ear that staggered him.

Cap'n Kitchen, with brave attempt to seem candid and trustworthy.

"I hain't got a mite of confidence in either of you," said Cap'n Sproul so insolently that Doty, Tewksbury, and Cole protested. The hungry majority overbore his suspicions. For all of them to go in quest of food meant that the damning evidence would tag at their heels. It was not even certain that the suspicious Chinamen would allow two of the guardians to leave.

"They look to you now as sort of the leader," said Cap'n Cook. "You've been givin' off most of the orders, Sproul, and you'll have to make 'em understand that we're goin' after grub. I don't want one of them knives stuck into me."

"Tell 'em yourself," snorted Cap'n Sproul, stubborn in his angry suspicion. "And ask 'em whether they'll have it fried on one side or both, whatever it is you're goin' after."

The two volunteer foragers started to depart, casting wary and doubtful glances at the heathens. The latter scrambled up and produced their knives from their sleeves, growling Chinese oaths.

"You'll have to make motions to 'em, Sproul," said Cap'n Kitchen. "It ain't goin' to do this outfit any good to set here and starve when here's two men willin' to do and dare to get some grub."

Even Cap'n Sproul's premonitions were not proof against good sense, and he yelled at the Chinamen in a voice that startled and impressed them. The face and tone of authority do not require words always. He opened his mouth, pointed over the trees, patted his stomach, and by gestures indicated that two were going, the others were to remain. The Chinamen jabbered among themselves and sat down again. The foragers departed with alacrity. The guarding circle of Celestials drew closer about the five who remained.

"I've been thinkin'," said Cap'n Doty, glancing apprehensively over his shoulder at the row of boding faces, "that when we get well fortified with grub we can break and run and head 'em into a village, and then holler that we've been attacked by pirates that has follered us off from the sea. Our word is as good as theirs is, and, seein' that they can't talk English, I reckon it will be a good deal better. Now what do you think of that scheme?"

"You might be a good hand to write a dime novel," stated Cap'n Sproul,

"but for plannin' a sensible way of gettin' out of a scrape you don't seem to draw no particular amount of water."

When Cap'n Doty would have argued the point, Cap'n Sproul yapped indignant protest and leaned against a tree, with hat pulled low over his eyes. In two minutes he was asleep and snoring. One by one the four old men who had trudged doggedly through the night followed his example. With Eastern stoicism the Chinamen squatted about them, on guard.

At last the sun, high and hot, found a cranny in the foliage and blazed upon Cap'n Sproul's anatomy until it awoke him. He squinted at the sun with one eye and then squinted at his big watch.

"They've done it," he yelled, in a tone that awoke the others. "They've done it edsackly as I said they would. Skun out and abandoned ship. They never intended to fetch grub."

"There ain't any knowin' how fur they had to go," suggested Cap'n Doty weakly.

"Go!" barked Cap'n Sproul. "They would go to Tophet and get back here with fried flapjacks before eleven o'clock, what it is now. I say we've been done by old Kitchen and old Cook."

"For one, I'm willin' to go hunt 'em up and bring 'em back," stated Cap'n Cole, trying to appear in the guileless rôle of the willing helper, and failing signally to conceal his real intent.

"So'm I," volunteered Cap'n Doty, his impatience even more brazen.

"Let's see you try it," said Cap'n Sproul, in baleful tone.

"Well, how much longer do you think we're goin' to stand it here?" demanded Cap'n Cole, his voice breaking into an angry squeal. "I ain't a hoss. I can't eat grass. I'm all cavin' in. And look at them Chinamen! Look at the expression on their faces. When they get hungry enough they'll fall to and eat *us*."

"I've heard they like rat stew," suggested Cap'n Sproul grimly. "If you go to puttin' yourselves into the rat class, you can't blame the Chinamen if they tackle you."

He had been eying their heathen associates with some uneasiness. He noted signs to indicate that even their dogged patience was becoming exhausted. They entered upon an argument among themselves with such vehemence that the captains surrendered the forum of discussion, and sat and gaped with as much intentness as the Chinamen had heretofore bestowed on the Caucasian wrangling.

Their discussion finished, the Chinamen acted with celerity and confidence. They fell upon Captains Tansom and Cole, rifled their pockets, and piled the plunder on the ground. They opened their mouths as wide as possible, made sounds like the squawkings of hungry young crows, and pointed their fingers down their throats. Then they pushed the two quaking old men out of the circle and shooed them away. The significance was plain. The Chinamen wanted food and were holding the property as a guarantee that their emissaries would return. As to the time of return, a solemn Chinaman pointed to the sun and then to a spot in the heavens that would indicate midafternoon.

The two captains departed at a pace that was no doubt encouraging to the hungry refugees. But Cap'n Sproul and his two remaining intimates were not consoled.

"I'd give a hunderd dollars apiece for Chinese words that I could use right now," panted Cap'n Sproul. "Sendin' them two off without a blasted cent to buy grub with, even if they had the least notion of doin' it and comin' back!"

"This thing is gettin' narrered down," mourned Cap'n Doty. "There's somethin' terrible goin' to happen before this is over and done with."

Cap'n Sproul sat for some time with his chin in his hand, his expression divided between anger and despondency.

"Gents," he said at last, "I reckon we can see, all of us, how this thing is headin'. Anchors is draggin', and

what cargo has been throwed over so far ain't been any help. I'm gettin' pretty much discouraged about there bein' any such thing as friendship that amounts to a cuss in times of need. And I'm the one that's in need. These pigtailed hyenys have got into their heads that it's me that's runnin' this performance."

"Well, you be," accused the unreconciled Cap'n Tewksbury. "If it wasn't for you we wouldn't be in the dummed scrape."

"Feelin' that way, then, you're sorry you ain't been tagged off among the scooters, hey?" demanded Cap'n Sproul, with heat. "I wish I could talk Chinee. I swear if I wouldn't jine drives with them pigtailers and make you two sweat."

Following on that declaration, there were three distinct factions that sat silent and hungry and waiting in the summer woods. A brook that splashed at their feet satisfied thirst, but of the recreant captains with food there was no sign.

When the sun was halfway down the heavens, the Chinamen again broke into speech among themselves. This time their tones were shrill, and anger flamed in their eyes. They flung themselves upon Tewksbury and Cole and stripped them of their possessions. But this time they did not content themselves with the hostage of mere personal effects.

Their sign language was unmistakable. They pointed to the horizon, pointed their fingers at their throats, and patted their empty stomachs. Then they drew their knives and each one in pantomime cut Cap'n Sproul into mincemeat.

"That means, gents," stated the hostage, with a tremor in his tones, "that if you don't get back here with grub you're leavin' an old friend, that ain't any more entitled to it than you be yourselves, to be slit into shoestrings. And that ain't the whole of it. I'm in a terrible scrape. I ain't said anything to you fellers what kind of a job I'm holdin' up country, because I was down to the shore for a little change and relaxation and wanted to stand in with the old seafarin' boys like I used to."

The Chinamen and the two captains he was addressing displayed impatience, but he persisted. He unbuttoned his waistcoat and showed a gold badge attached to his suspenders.

"I'm high sheriff of my county, gents. It's bad enough if they carve me up. But think what's it goin' to be if I'm arrested all alone in company with this gang! For Gawd's sakes, come back with that grub and let's figger to get out of this scrape by standin' by each other!"

"A sheriff, hey!" snorted Cap'n Tewksbury, seeking excuse to steel his heart against friendship in those dangerous circumstances. "That's what I call foolin' by false pretenses. I ain't goin' to resk my neck for any one that's fooled me by false pretenses. No, sir!"

"If you're a sheriff," squeaked Mr. Doty, ready with another brilliant resource, "all you've got to do, when we've gone, is to show your badge and say 'I arrest you in the name of'—well, in the name of whatever it is you arrest 'em."

And they turned away from him, blinked before another flourish of the knives, and slunk into the woods. Cap'n Sproul, alone, faced his self-imposed charges and, strange to say, took courage as he looked at them; for the mental calibre they had shown in their efforts to get food made him despise them.

"They're about four grades under Portygee sailors," he muttered, "and I never needed the English language to make *them* stand 'round!"

A stout cudgel, estray from some chipper's load, lay near by. He picked it up.

"Say, you low-lived, cat-eyed flickereens, you—get into line and come along! I can't talk Chinee to you, but you understand that, don't you?"

He flourished his stick and pointed down a wood road that led away among the trees.

"Pick up that stuff on the ground."

A Chinaman obeyed and bundled the

plunder into a cloth that he produced from somewhere. He straightened and paused in uncertainty when the cap'n ordered him to advance along the wood road. Without a moment's hesitation Cap'n Sproul gave him an open-handed buffet on the ear that staggered him. He humped his back, shielded his head from another blow, and started. And the others tamely followed the cap'n, who pursued his victim, roaring counsel about stepping lively. Those solemn faces took on serenity once more. Conditions were natural again. They were receiving the treatment that they had learned to expect from the tyrant white man in their passage from Hongkong. Again the white man had taken up his burden. He had assumed command instead of trying to run away from them or drive them away from him. Once more they were receiving what they had paid their money for—masterful authority, relief from all responsibility; and they obeyed implicitly and went along contentedly.

But Cap'n Sproul, striding majestically at the head of his strange retinue, understood that he was now bound to his convoy indissolubly. He was their single stay and dependence. He knew that not for one moment would their sharp eyes leave him. And therefore the state of his mind did not agree with the pomposity of his deportment.

Having only a general idea of the lay of the land, he kept the setting sun on his left, and proceeded north. Branching lanes in the wood enabled him to hold a fairly straight course, and he figured that this route would keep him nearly parallel with the highway; that must be a closed thoroughfare to him as long as daylight lasted. He wondered why the unknown stranger whom they had passed that morning had not started a crowd in pursuit of them. That word of this mysterious irruption of Chinamen had gone abroad he did not doubt, and cold sweat dewed his brow when he thought of the task ahead of him, for food must be secured. He was weak with hunger himself. It was plain that his charges believed that he was leading them straight to something to eat.

And so, with the scowl of tyranny and supreme authority on his brow and shrinking fear in his heart, Cap'n Sproul strode down the woodland ways with his pigtailed wood elves trotting patiently at his heels.

Under the shadows of dusk he gained the highway, not daring to have darkness overtake him in the woods. The road wound past groves and barren plains, and neither wayfarer or dwelling appeared. So he went on, with keen outlook ahead.

Twice his ear caught the rattle of a wagon and he leaped for concealment. His Chinamen leaped with him. Their automatic celerity in following the leader afforded him grim satisfaction, but further clinched his conviction that there was no escaping them.

He seemed to be traversing a particularly desolate country with his personally conducted party. Not a glimmer of light did he see until well into the evening. Then a lamp in a farmhouse window greeted him. It was no time to weigh consequences. He was so hungry that his knees wobbled. When he halted, his tourists crowded around him expectantly. The light in the window suggested something to eat. Cap'n Sproul's sign language was direct and to the point. Revealed to them by the dim light of the stars, he patted his stomach, gave a feeble imitation of chewing, and then shook his fists at them after he had put his fingers on his lips. He hoped that the gestures conveyed the intelligence that he would kill the man that made a noise.

When he approached the door, he looked back over his shoulder and saw that his charges were crafty without relaxing their vigilance in regard to him. Some hid behind trees, others crouched in the lee of the woodpile, and some flattened themselves in the shadows on the dooryard grass. He knocked, and a man came to the door, bearing a lamp in his hand.

"Another shipwrecked sailor wantin' to buy cold vittles, hey?" he inquired, before Cap'n Sproul had found his

"There's who I be, farmer," he said briskly.

voice. "I've heard that lasted lie three times to-day, from three pairs of liars, and I don't want to hear it again," he went on. "It's pickin' me up to make a fool of me. There wa'n't no storm last night. It was the calmest night we've had this summer. Now what is it, and I want the truth."

Cap'n Sproul clawed his fingers through his short beard and was bothered for a reply. He had framed a shipwreck story for himself. The man held the light full on his visitor's troubled face. The cap'n was thankful that its flare blinded the man to what was outside the circle of its radiance.

"I hain't been shipwrecked, mister, and I ain't claimin' to be. Them critters that came along here was the dogwickedest, meanest skunks that ever scuffed dirt—probably." He hastened to add the last word in milder tone, noting that his heat astonished the other. "You see, I'm—I'm," he stammered, "I'm takin' some orphans on a walkin' trip through the country, and I——"

"What are you takin' orphans around for?"

"To—to—well, to find jobs for 'em."

"How big are them orphans?"

"Well g r o w e d—w e l l growed," replied the cap'n, thinking of the amount of food he was about to demand.

"Glad to hear it! I want help on my farm. I'll hire two of 'em. Bring 'em along. Where be they?" The man was peering.

"They ain't what you want," protested Cap'n Sproul desperately. "They're girl orphans. Braided hair hangin' down their backs. That's honest! Braided hair right down their backs. I want to buy——"

"Nothin' to sell here," declared the man, after a long stare at his perspiring caller. "First place, them other critters that came along et it all, what I had to spare ready cooked; and second place, you're lyin' worse than they ever dared to. I'm a good mind to hitch up and drive round and get the constables out. There's queer actions goin' on in this place, and it's time we was gettin' to the bottom of 'em."

Cap'n Sproul, confounded, retreated into the gloom, and fled. From here and there his attendant spirits popped up and pursued him. The man with the lamp slammed his door and double-bolted it. He had caught glimpses that terrified him.

The next house was dark. But the growls of the hungry men behind him had become animal-like and alarming. Besides, Cap'n Sproul was desperate enough on his own account to venture. He pounded the door until a voice hailed him from an upper window.

"I want to buy all the cooked-up grub you've got in the house, payin' double prices and no questions asked or answered," the cap'n promptly barked back to his snappish questioner.

"You seem to have a good appetite, whoever you be," returned the voice. "But I've got something to dull it on. There's one barrel just for a sample."

There was a flash and a bang. In his panic Cap'n Sproul tumbled headlong off the steps. A chorus of Chinese squalls sounded from all about the house. The man upstairs was silent a while, as though overcome by his astonishment.

"No, I never hit no one, either," he said to some one inside the house. "I fired straight up into the air. But say, you, below! The next barrel wings some of you if you don't get out of my dooryard with your menagerie."

Cap'n Sproul led off his forces on the trot. A little way up the road they surrounded him, frightened, ugly, and rebellious.

"Bos'n!" croaked the spokesman, flashing out his knife.

The cap'n whirled his club and struck down the menacing hand, and the man screamed with pain and staggered back.

"You yaller-bellied hair-oil signs," he cried, leaping away and swishing his big stick, "if I can't lick fifteen Chinamen, knives and all, with this belayin' pin, I'll eat it. You can't understand them words, you squint-eyed oolongers, but I'll motion enough to show you the drift of it."

When he made at them they retreated nimbly, squealing. But when he grew tired of trying to catch one, they stolidly resumed their march behind him. He groaned, cursed his helplessness, and plodded on. His thoughts whirled. He attempted to project in his mind some outcome of the affair. But he could not conceive any logical conclusion that would enable him to extricate himself. The nightmare parade could not go on like that forever, but an appeal to authority meant explanations upon which his peculiar situation might cast the suspicion of the law, or involve ridicule that he could never face. As he pondered, his wrath grew. It embraced all humanity. He had been betrayed by his friends, flouted by strangers of whom he had asked food with money in his fist to pay, and now these Chinese leeches that stuck to him whetted the edge of his general hatred of humankind, newborn from the experiences of twenty-four hours.

"If I've got to be a pirut to get my rights in this world, by geehooferus, I'll be a good one whilst I'm about it," he gritted, peering through the gloom for another house.

In his hunger and his wrath he felt himself slipping back to the state of the primitive man. Backed by fifteen shadowy figures slipping through the night behind him, he realized that the ancient spirit of the freebooter was swelling in his breast. And then a turn of the road brought him in sight of the next house.

Either his heathen guard understood now that he was honestly endeavoring to obtain food, or else his stickwork had corrected the spirit of revolt. They followed docilely into the yard, and remained at a discreet but tactical distance when he assailed the front door. It was no meek and appealing alarm; he thundered with both fists, and a startled voice above replied promptly:

"Who be ye, and what's wanted?"

"It's business, and I want ye down to this door, and down here quick," bellowed the cap'n.

"I hain't doin' business at this time o' night." The voice had a quaver in it.

"Down comes your door, then."

"Say, look here, mister, you've struck the wrong place for that kind of talk. There's six able-bodied men besides me in this house, and they——"

Cap'n Sproul pricked his ears. An illuminating idea occurred to him. That number of male adults in a farmhouse meant unusual circumstances. Had his master mariner friends rendezvoused at that point in their journey?

"So they've got under cover here, have they?" he blurted, at a venture. "Do you know you're harborin' desperate criminals? Six elderly men, ain't they? Strangers, ain't they?"

"Yes," faltered the householder.

"Get down to this door quick, if you vally your life," roared the cap'n, in tone of authority that had the true ring in it. "I'll show you who I be the minute you get here, and it's lucky I've got along just as I have."

There was compelling quality in that command from the night outside, though hoarse protests from upper rooms followed the farmer when he came pattering downstairs with lighted lamp. He flung open the outer door just as Cap'n Sproul had changed his gold badge of office from his suspenders to a proud position on the breast of his coat. It glistened in the lamplight's flare, and the cap'n's stubby finger tapped it admonishingly.

"There's who I be, farmer," he said briskly. "High sheriff, with a posse chasin' desperate criminals. One a tall, thin man with the corners of his mouth sawed down; short, thick man with bulgy nose; cock-eyed man with bristly whiskers——"

"It's them—it's the same ones," gasped the frightened farmer. "My Gawd, what be they? Murderers?"

"Worse," snapped Cap'n Sproul. "But I hain't got time to be gossipin' this thing. It's a wonder they haven't slit your wizen before this. Get your folks down cellar. My posse's all around this house, and there's li'ble to be shootin'. Keep out of the way, and no matter what sounds you hear don't come up till I tell you to. You'll be all right if you do as I say, but if you don't then you'll have to take the consequences."

In five minutes the farmer and his whimpering wife had found refuge in the farthest potato bin, hugging to themselves their sobbing children. The decks were clear. Cap'n Sproul went to the front door and beckoned, illuminated by the lamplight behind him, and into the house and straight to the pantry filed fifteen eager and grateful Chinamen, following the course set by the cap'n's directing finger.

With mouth full of apple pie, and balancing a second triangle of the same on upcocked fingers and thumb, Cap'n Sproul listened to sounds that told of the confounding of those upstairs. There were thuddings of stockinged feet and hurried mumblings of agitated voices. It was plain that the recreant ones realized that retribution was on their track and near at hand, and the thought of their present apprehension savored the food that the cap'n crammed gustfully down his throat. And then, with both hands full of doughnuts, he beckoned to his charges to follow him; and they obeyed, eating as they climbed the stairs behind him, their cheeks puffed like squirrels' pouches.

Cap'n Cook was at the head of the stairs in the hallway, his lamp in his hand and uncertainty on his face. The other five peered and blinked from near-by doorways.

Cap'n Sproul glared at Cap'n Cook, mouth full of food, and postponing speech.

"We happened to drop along here, one by one," faltered Cap'n Cook, "and bein' hungry and kind of legweary we hung up for the night. We was—we was—er—waitin' for you to come along."

"Wuf—unk—wuf!" remarked Cap'n Sproul.

"What was it you said?" asked Cap'n Cook, anxious to discover the temper of their late victim, now victor. The sheriff of Cuxabexis swallowed hard to dispose of the doughnut.

"I said I'd got along."

He filled his mouth again. The Chinamen flocked on the stairs, gnawing at food they gripped in both fists, and their eyes shining in the shadows like the eyes of animals. The silence

Cap'n Sproul hearkened to the hue and cry behind.

was oppressive, and Cap'n Cook broke upon it nervously.

"We—we knowed you could handle 'em all right till we could straighten round to help you. I was tellin' the boys, here, that you was the greatest hand to manage men, Portygees, Chinamen, or any other critter that ever needed handlin'." He was eagerly, fulsomely complimentary; but there was no softening gleam in the cap'n's eyes. Cap'n Cook blinked anxiously at the gold badge with its legend "High Sheriff." "Yes, sir, I was tellin' the boys that Cap Aaron Sproul could be depended on to handle men."

"Wuf—unk—wuf!" muttered the sheriff past his mouthful.

"What was it you said?"

"I said you was right about my handlin' men. I'm goin' to show you a sample of handlin' 'em in about two minutes. You get your pants on, all you swelled-out hoptoads, if you can manage to pull 'em on over them vittles you've been stuffin' yourselves

with. I'll show you about handlin' men."

"We don't propose to be routed out at this time o' night," shouted Cap'n Tewksbury rebelliously. "We'll talk this matter over, and then we'll——"

"Mebbe this looks like a serenade or a joint debate party, and then again mebbe it don't," snarled Cap'n Sproul. "You needn't beg nor argue. You're comin' out. I'll give you five minutes to have your clothes on. Or I'll let 'em loose on you, toad stickers and all. It's move or massycree. Take your pick."

His tone and the spectacle of the sullen group on the stairs intimidated the six. They pulled on their garments, and Cap'n Sproul led each along to the top of the stairs and delivered him over to a couple of Chinamen. The heathens grabbed them by the arms and marched them out. There was no misunderstanding the gestures of their commander.

He did not hesitate in performance or waver in grim determination. His moment of vengeance was at hand. His plan was clear in his mind. He decided that those recreant captains who had abandoned him deserved no consideration. Having marshaled captors and captives in the highway at a safe distance from the house, he left them and plodded back to the farmer. By that time it was plain that he had won the confidence of his Chinamen. They did not oppose his going. They only crowded more closely about the hostages he had left, and waited with Oriental patience.

"Squire," said the cap'n, after he had recovered the householder from his retreat in the potato bin, "I've cleared the coast and got 'em out. You're all safe now. They will be marched off by my posse. As for me, I've got to get to the railroad as quick as I can and report capture, and arrange to have 'em locked up. Hitch up and take me there, and name your damage."

"It ain't goin' to cost you a cent, sheriff," cried the man. "You've saved my life!"

"I pay as I go," declared Cap'n Sproul. "Here's ten dollars for your trouble and for grub that my posse eat. Now, get that hoss between the shafts."

The flicker of a lantern about the barn hinted to the captains what plot was afoot, and their desperate shoutings voiced their fear and wrath. But even when Cap'n Sproul fled past, the farmer lashing at the galloping horse, his unsuspicious Chinese coadjutors kept their clutch upon six raving old captains, all partners in a sweet revenge that irradiated the soul of escaping Cap'n Sproul.

Before the rattling wagon had turned the first curve in the road, it was apparent that even Chinese comprehension had grasped the situation. Cap'n Sproul hearkened to the hue and cry behind. They were all in full chase.

"Desperit' critters," he observed to the farmer. "But that posse will handle 'em, all right. You lick along!"

Cap'n Sproul arrived at Newry by train at a seasonable hour the next forenoon, and trudged directly to his office in the county buildings. Hiram Look, to whom he had delegated the duties of his position during his absence, locked him over critically. He was dusty, haggard, and unkempt.

"Well, sheriff," remarked the old showman finally, "this goin' to the seashore for rest and relaxation don't seem to agree with you, if looks go for anything."

"Don't you worry none about *me*," returned Cap'n Sproul, with spirit. "I went for a change—and I got it." And he retired to his room, snapping over his shoulder: "I've got some sleep to make up, and I don't want to be bothered."

For several days he read the newspapers so carefully and with such obvious show of anxiety, and between whiles so vigilantly observed all comers from the office window, that Hiram was provoked to inquire whether he had committed murder during his absence. The fact that the cap'n had rebuffed

all his friendly attempts to find out where he had been and what he had done during his vacation, did not accord with Hiram's notions of what constituted friendly intercourse.

When at last, after some days, a surly-looking individual, of the type that Hiram had learned to recognize as nautical, appeared and glowered on the sheriff, the old showman decided that this must be the man and the event that Cap'n Sproul had been expecting.

The visitor was Cap'n Siel Cook, but the sheriff did not present him to his friend. He led him promptly away into a juryroom, and locked the door on the conference.

"Now, Cook," stated the cap'n, with decision, "if you've come here to fume and fuss, cuss and complain, I'm givin' you fair warnin' to shift course. You and your bunch done me, and I turned to and done you back, and as them lawyers that get here in this buildin' and gabble say, the case ain't goin' to be reopened."

"This ain't no pleasure trip I'm makin' up here," stated Cap'n Cook, very sullen. "I'm come on business, bein' picked for same. You got us into——"

Cap'n Sproul picked up a chair.

"Twit me of that again and I'll lam you," he gritted.

"We was all in a scrape together," resumed Cap'n Cook, after a lowering survey of his late comrade. "Put it that way. There ain't no sass talk in sayin' that, is there? Well, six of us was left to straighten out the scrape that we all seven was in—together. We had to bribe and hire a farmer to take a hayrack and canvas and hide them Chinks and con-vey 'em to seashore. Then we had to bribe and hire a fishin' smack feller to con-vey 'em to Boston. We saw the thing through, and it was hell, that's what it was! Now it all figgers to a hundred and seventy-six dollars apiece for us seven. I'm here to see if you are standin' for your lay in expense. That's all. And no twits either way!"

After a long pause, during which he considered the matter with knitted brows, Cap'n Sproul began to work his fat wallet out of his waistcoat pocket. He counted down the money.

"I ain't no quitter, Cook, on what I'm beholden for, and you can't set down on that loafin' wharf of your'n and chaw tobacker the rest of this summer and say things behind my back. There's your money. Now what else?"

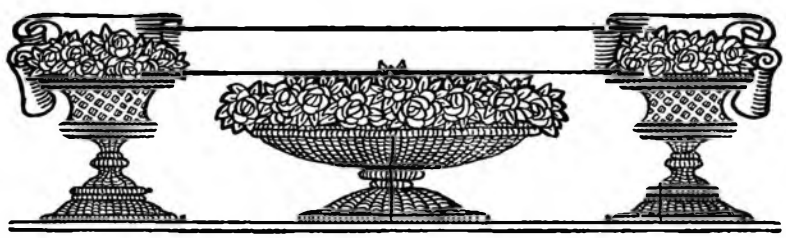
"Nothin'," returned Cap'n Cook, moving to the door.

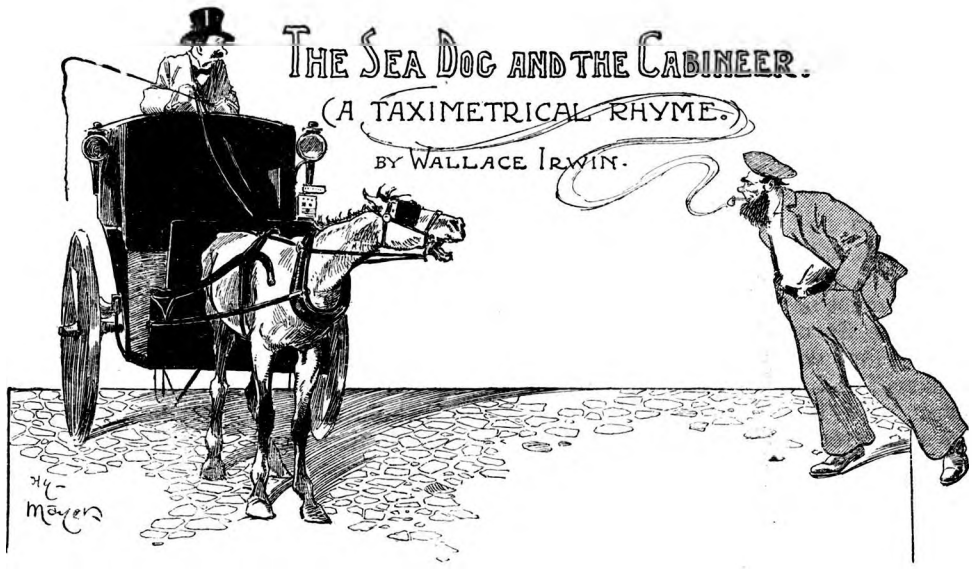
"Nothin' it shall be, then," agreed the cap'n.

"Only this," said Cook, when he was a safe distance down the courthouse corridor; "when you are plannin' your next vacation trip, make up your crowd out of folks that you're tryin' to get even with, mixin' in a few murderers that the law ain't been able to hang; don't take your friends."

"Now what did that old batch of sour dough want of you?" asked Hiram, when the cap'n was back in the office. "Why don't you show that you appreciate a friend's interest, and open up?"

"I'm goin' to," replied Cap'n Sproul calmly. "I'm goin' to, now that I can give you the whole story. It wasn't finished up to just a minute ago. You remember, I went away for sea breeze and rest and relaxation. Well, you hand me a seegar out of that box, and I'll tell how I got what I went after."





IT was a lonesome hansom cab that on the curb did lop,
It was a hansom cabineer who perched upon the top;
And as he sate so proudly high
A sad sea-dog came rolling by
And said, says he: "You've heard of me—I'm Captain Hiram Popp!"

Then spake the hansom cabineer, whose eye was gray and chill:
"Ye may be Jones or Smith or Brown for all I wot—but still,
If ye've the price to take a ride
I'll tote ye out to Riverside
Or to the Bronx or to the Morgue or to the Waldorf grill."

"Oh, strike me red and blow me blue!" the mariner did say,
"I've scoured the seas from pole to pole and scrubbed 'em at Bombay,
I've seen the King of Punko-Boo,
I've been in shipwrecks forty-two—
Could I find thrills in Waldorf grills a dozen blocks away?"

"Be brief, be brief!" the cabman cried. "The night doth pass away,
I cannot listen by the hour to what you have to say."
"Why not?" inquired the sailor dour,
"If you'll but listen by the hour
Your legal rate—including tips—I'll gladly, freely pay."

What cabman can resist the fare? So in the captain got,
The cab-horse switched his fiery tail and broke into a trot;
And as each costly mile they wheeled
The captain forth his story reeled,
A tale of startling incident, but very little plot.

"We was en route for Oyster Bay, our ship the *Daffodil*,
Our cargo it was pop corn from the firm of Pack & Dill;
When this strange fact ye've realized
I hopes you'll feel a bit surprised."
"I'll do so," said the cabineer, "and put it on the bill."

"The afternoon was calm and cold, and calm and cold was we,
When suddenly with whoop and roar, a ragin' N. N. E.,
There came a nawful waterspout
Which chased us down and picked us out
And lifted us full seven mile above the troubled sea.

"Our crew was every inch a man and never known to quail,
Yet I observed in going up they turned a trifle pale.
For when a ship not built to fly
Jumps seven mile into the sky
It's only decent for the crew to turn a trifle pale.

"Among the clouds directly south our gallant vessel blew,
Of North and South America we got a splendid view;
We turned the corner at the Horn,
We passed Suez and Capricorn,
And far below we seen the light of Upper Timbuctoo.

"But as we passed o'er Punko-Boo the air became so hot
We felt that we would surely melt like sugar in a pot,
And that there pop corn in our hold——"
"Whoa!" said the cabby, calm and cold,
"Your bill's eleven dollars now—proceed, sir, with your plot."

"And that there pop corn in our hold began to sizz and swell,
Began to stir, began to purr, then with a noise pell-mell,
With snip and snap and skip and hop,
It suddenly began to pop,
And in a snowy avalanche on Punko-Boo it fell.

"So all night long that pop corn fell upon the isle below.
On hill and valley, wood and stream it lay as white as snow.
It looked so real that Gloomy Seth,
Our second bos'n, friz to death—
Imagination was his curse, I always told him so.

"The simple folk of Punko-Boo they shivered fit to die,
Got out their winter overcoats and turned the collars high,
And every childish cannibile
A-dwellin' on that tropic isle
Began a throwin' pop corn balls at strangers passin' by.

"And suddenly that waterspout it let our vessel down
Which fell among the pop corn in the middle of the town,
Where all the folks went wild because
They thunk that I was Sandy Claws
When they beheld my long white beard which fear had turned from brown."

"Your bill is twenty dollars now," quoth cabby from up top.
"It's long enough," the captain cried, "and so I guess I'll stop."
And with a flourish free and frank,
He drew a draft on Morgan's bank.
"*Pay bearer twenty dollars gold, yours truly, Hiram Popp.*"

The captain bowed, the captain scraped, then quickly turned about
And vanished down Fifth Avenue among the merry rout.
The cabman sat and scratched his head:
"I hate them deep-sea tales," he said,
"What leaves the hero in a fix and doesn't get him out."

The Beginners of Song

By Rupert Hughes

A SIX-THOUSAND-THROATED singer singing a song caused a deal of ado this past summer in New York. The German vocal societies domiciled in America had gathered for the twenty-second National Saengerfest, and a male chorus of six thousand voices, with an orchestra of one hundred and fifty instruments, rendered three lyrics: Kreutzer's "Shepherd's Sunday Song"; "Das ist der Tag zu Heeren"; Kremser's "Soldatenlied"; and Filke's "Departure for the Holy Land." The effect of the music was overpowering, and reporters spoke of it as record-breaking.

But nearly two thousand years ago Julius Cæsar gave, at Rome, a sham naval battle between thirty triremes, with a musical background furnished by ten thousand singers and instrumentalists. Still, as Clément, the historian of music, says, "To make large is not a synonym of to make beautiful," and he blames the musicians of his own day because they, "without being Cæsars, have thought to do something wonderful by increasing sonorities beyond measure, and to such a point that the judgment of the ear cannot prevail amid the confusion and the noise."

In ancient Assyria, too, there were great choruses, and the Israelites sang *en masse* national glees or dirges, according to their situation. In Greece were municipal bodies of singers, and music was given an importance it has had from no other nation. Homer was a wandering singer—some say a number of wandering singers; and Greek mythology has given the world the very ideals of godlike and heroic song. The twelve major deities sang together on Olympus, and the sun god, Apollo, was also the master of song. Grecian legends were full of figures like Arion saved by the dolphin and Orpheus invading hell with his lyre as a weapon.

What would they do to Orpheus if he came singing his great songs today, even through the slums of one of our cities? Sticks and stones used to rise and follow him in Greece. And they would follow him here, with perhaps a few brickbats added. For Orpheus twanged a lyre of only four strings. But in our slums people are used to street pianos, and the gamins and gamines will dance to no less. The street piano has dozens of strings, most of them clattering at once, and often two pianos vie with each other in the same block. Besides, there are the phonographs, and Caruso and others may be heard singing their lustiest from many a window.

What would people, who are addicted to their Caruso, think of poor old Orpheus? His songs would be Greek, indeed, to them.

They would probably think he was trying to sell something—old clothes, perhaps.

The Greeks, who were such wonderworkers in every other art, who left us unsurpassable architecture, sculpture,

drama, epic and lyric poetry, and prose in every form of history, biography, fiction, philosophy, science, must have had great music. Little of their painting has survived, but we may feel sure of its glory. That people, which created and understood the other arts so well, made more of music than we do. It was to the Greeks one of the first necessities of education and character. Practically none of the Greek tunes has survived, in recognizable shape, though a mass of technical writing about music is still extant.

It is like most musical theory, hair-splitting and hair-weaving—and with false hair at that. But I for one do not believe that it disproves the greatness of true Greek song any more than the tomes of mediæval technical literature prove that the people were then devoid of madrigals in springtime.

A thousand years from now, all that remains of Wagner's music may be some learned critic's attack upon it as horrible noise, unendurable to the human ear. Posterity may not know what miracles of fire and honey made Wagner's music a household joy throughout the world. But it shall have existed, none the less.

So, when we know, as we do, that the tremendous texts of Æschylus and Sophocles and Euripides and the immortal comic librettos of Aristophanes were sung to music of the composers' own writing, and swayed huge amphitheatres of Grecian souls, we can hardly believe that the little twanging of a few toy harps and the tootling of a few flutes in unison were all that the lines had to support them.

In Æschylus' masterpiece, "Prometheus Bound," the verses seem to be carved from the eternal granite to which the fire-stealing giant was manacled. The drama, or rather the grand opera, opens in a wild region of Scythia. Two demons carry the Titan to the crag, and the blacksmith god Vulcan makes him fast.

For a long while the hero listens in silence to their chatter, but finally breaks forth in the immortal apostrophe:

"O divine air and fleet-winged winds,
And fountain heads of rivers, and sea waves
Of infinite laughter, and all-mothering Earth,
And all-seeing cycle of the sun——"

Can we believe that the great actor who voiced these great words through the sonorous mask, could have sung them to any music other than a great melody?

And the love songs of Sappho, the pastorals of Theokritos, the light wine songs of Anacreon, and the hymns in the temples—they must have had music that was music, now as then. It is lost, but it must have been real song, or it would never have suited the Greeks.

They put song far higher than instrumental music, and of course its power over the heart has always been infinitely more immediate and compelling. Their god Apollo could not play the pipes so well as Marsyas, but when it came to singing, Apollo won so great a victory that he felt justified in skinning the presumptuous technician, literally as well as artistically, and ever since the vocalist can flay any instrumentalist alive.

Everybody knows that Orpheus, when he went after his dead Eurydice, trusted to his voice to get him past the watchdog Cerberus, and to melt the heart of Pluto, who sat unmoved before the countless sorrows of hell, but could not resist the sorrow in the singer's voice. If he had only kept on singing! But he looked back.

Even the Spartans, who resisted every other art, could not resist song, and once, when recruiting was slow, they sent for an Athenian poet who came down and sang the whole country to arms and to victory. Thales, the lawgiver, set laws to music. Solon, desiring to move the Athenians to rescue the lost island of Salamis, sang them to action.

Homer shows the effect of music on Penelope. Once, he says, when a famous minstrel was singing of the return of the Greeks from Troy, from her room above, Penelope "heard the heavenly strain and knew its theme."

She appeared on the stairway, hiding her tears with her veil, and begging the bard to choose a more cheerful song:

"Sing of one of these, and let the guests
In silence drink the wine; but cease this strain.
It is too sad. It cuts me to the heart,
And wakes a sorrow without bounds."

So Bryant translates the text. The music of Homer and the narrative bards was doubtless largely recitative, but, I repeat, the more lyric poems and moods must have had much variety, much spontaneity, and much grace to thrill so sensitive a race as the Greeks.

In ancient Greece every town had its body of singers, and as early as 500 B. C. a room was rented at Athens for the town chorus to practice in. Song competitions were long in vogue, and Pausanias describes the first prize contest held at Delphi. It was won by Chrysothemis of Crete. He says that Orpheus and the nine Muses abstained from competing. And, by the way, this very evening in New York I saw on a fruit stand kept by—perhaps a descendant of the winner, who knows?—a newspaper published in Greek in this town. Across the top were headlines —and just enough Greek remained to me to read the words "The Great Powers Are Debating a New Intervention in Crete."

In Greek musical history we find the patterns for all time. We find Plato protesting against the debasing influence of Egyptian music, just as the Germans war against Italian tunes now, and England against German. Aristophanes ridicules the soft cadences and the cadenzas of the Egyptians, just as our critics ridicule the florid foreigner to-day.

We find the theorists protesting against the freedom and outlawry of the innovators and pointing with approval to the example of Egypt, where there were laws prescribing the exact limits of musical procedure, just as there were laws compelling painters and sculptors to present faces and feet and hands always in profile. In consequence of the rules, the arts stood still, as they always do when the theorists hold sway.

Instrumental music has felt this influence more than song, for song springs from the people, and they neither know nor care what the dry-as-dusts are fussing about.

It was the theorists who ruined European music as they ruined European art and literature through the dark night known as the Middle Age. It was the people who saved music in spite of the professors, though the art was in a cataleptic trance for centuries; or, rather, it was only a twitching automaton, for, while it had motion, and its joints creaked jerkily, its heart did not beat.

The unquenchable thirst for song saved music from becoming a sort of noisy algebra.

Through all the Middle Age the theorists, especially the church theorists, were warring over technical terms and acoustical mathematics with an ingenuity that was inconceivable. But the people were going on singing in the streets and the fields as their hearts impelled them. And, after centuries had passed, it was realized that the people had been right all along and the scholars had been wrong all along.

The experts fought over ecclesiastical "modes" and ecclesiastical technicalities of every sort with false premises and false logic; and, of course, they reached the most amazing conclusions.

It was as if the universities should be divided to-day into a war lasting for centuries; Harvard maintaining that apples were birds and flew north every summer, Yale insisting that apples were wild animals that swam in from the sea, Columbia declaring that apples were eggs laid in the sand by phœnixes, Princeton averring that apples were meteorites, and Johns Hopkins attesting that there was no such thing as apples at all. And, meanwhile, the jolly gardeners were raising them in bending orchards, and munching them by the peck.

For centuries the churchmen fought over the correct arrangements and

values of musical tones, and never dared to sing two tones in succession without consulting their books. They tore down the equally silly complications of the Greek theorists, and built them up again into a new structure more elaborate, and hence more false.

Of all the twelve church modes, only two are in use to-day, even in the churches. We call them the major and the minor. And any composer to-day mixes them up as pleases his whim. These two surviving modes were the two in which the common people of that old time had been singing their songs.

Eventually, the songs of the street crept into the churches in various disguises, just as the Salvation Army of to-day uses music-hall tunes with sacred words. At times the old churchmen used indecent street songs as themes, and it became not uncommon for some of the choir to be howling in lusty tones words and music of such coarseness as only the Middle Ages could invent or endure, while the rest of the choir chanted the solemn Latin of the ritual in counterpoint against it.

When this scandal had lasted till it grew overripe, reform was necessary. The churchmen resolved that sacred music should no longer be made up of the ridiculous overornamentation of a ribald street song. But in seeking simplicity they were forced, or urged, back upon the methods of the better street music. Thus the people, who had gone their ways, singing as their hearts impelled, and clinging to the old songs that satisfied their hearts, found their art taken as a model for the new music of the great scholars up in the cathedrals.

The names of hundreds on hundreds of composers of church music are preserved in history, though many of them were only famous for their misguided ingenuity in tormenting and twisting sounds into abominable combinations. Some of these fearful braids of sound were about as artistic as the watch chains ladies used to make from their own hair for their lover's waistcoats.

Old Gower spoke of the nightingale as one who "of love's maladie maketh diverse melodie." These contrapuntal maniacs reversed the process and made of love's melody a diverse malady. They wrote canons of every conceivable twist, a highly artistic success being the "crab" or "cancrizans" which sounded the same sung backward as sung forward. But sung either way it sounded foolish and futile.

The people, however, were not writing fugues, canons, motets; they were writing love songs, war songs, cradle songs. Many of them were persons of high degree, noblemen, indeed, prouder of their music than of their crests. And there were the strolling singers, whose success and whose very food depended upon entertaining and moving their listeners. The wandering minstrel who happened in upon a banquet of hard-fighting, hard-drinking knights could not hold them with any musical mathematics; he had to go straight for the heart, or out he went.

Some of the minstrels had been to Asia on the Crusades and they brought back something of the Oriental ornamentation, the flowery turns and exquisite graces, which gave to the solidity of European melody just the brilliance it needed. In the Orient there has remained little else but the ornamentation.

The poetry of a nation and its song have much kinship. Now, Oriental poetry is enormously more elaborate with metaphor and adjective than our most Swinburnian rhapsodies. Hebrew poetry has a majesty and solemnity characteristic of the severer religion of the Jews, but Persians, Turks, Egyptians, Arabs, and Hindus overlaid their arts with the ornateness seen in everything from architecture to rugs.

The Omar Khayyám we know has been filtered through the hard limestone of Fitzgerald. The original, for all its bigness of thought, would prove too florid to move us as it has done by infiltration. So when Omar pleaded only for his Book, Loaf, Jug, Bough, and Thou, we may be sure that the Thou who sat singing by him in the wilderness would only make it Para-

dise enow by singing a most elaborate strain.

In the first place, the Persian scale is twice as minute in its divisions as ours. Our octave contains twelve half-tones—as from C to D flat—and the half-tone is the smallest interval we sing. But the Persians have quarter-tones, and their octave contains twenty-four notes.

The Hindus formerly had twenty-two, but now they have our twelve. Only, they have grouped them in little series or modes. Our old church modes were twelve, and they were at least ten too many; but the Hindus have seventy-two! And the confusion is further confounded by a set of formulas called Ragas, restricting the melodic forms with great rigidity. And then they confuse this confounded confusion by setting apart certain Ragas to certain hours of the day.

If you wish to see what can be done within such fetters, read Sir Hubert Parry's "Evolution of the Art of Music." He quotes a melody written "in the mode of Maya-malavagaula and the raga Nada-namakrya." When you have seen this example of Hindu raga-time, you will probably prefer the lawless rag of our own Ethiopiano pounders.

We have most of us heard Chinese music in the Chinatown theatres, and it likes not our ears. Edgar Stillman Kelley, however, made a charming song of a Chinese tune; it is called "The Lady Picking Mulberries."

Japanese music shows modernity as does everything else in that island. The music in Sullivan's "Mikado" and in such operas as "The Geisha" and others has given us incorrect but suggestive hints of their ideas of song; but our own music is conquering Nippon, and there are conservatories in Tokio where Japanese teachers, trained in Leipzig and Berlin, teach Beethoven and Chopin. Japanese orchestras play the symphonies of our best masters. And when our fleet visited Japan the school children sang our national anthem so well that our sailors almost recognized it.

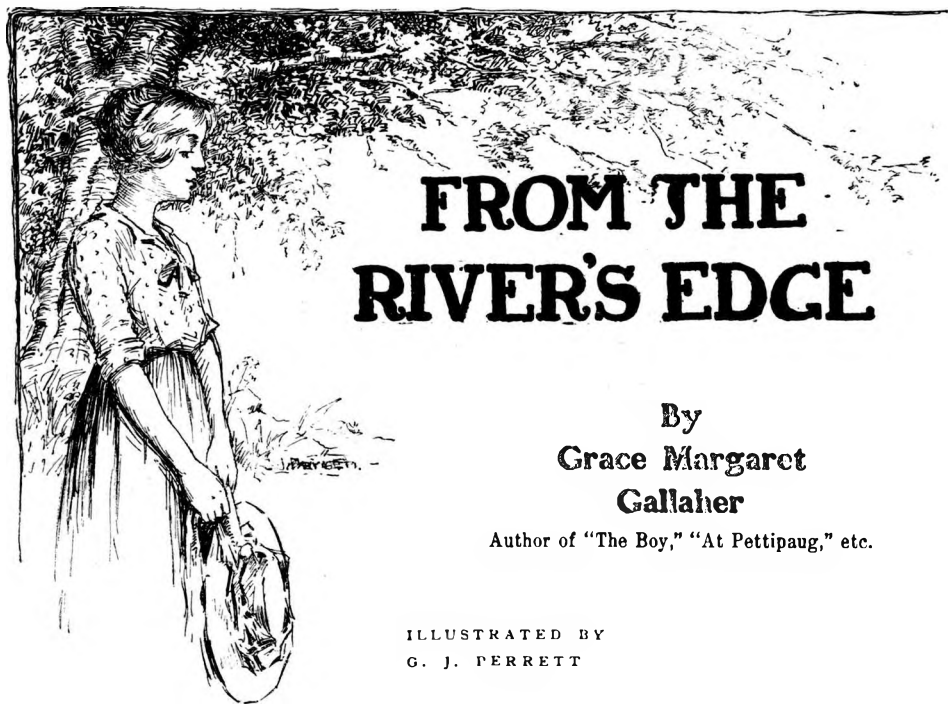
But this is a long tangential swing-off from the fact that the mediæval minstrels had felt the influence of Saracen singers, and learned to add a little embroidery of their own to their own lyrics.

It was as late as 1563 that the church began to demand reform in the direction of simplicity. It found at hand composers like Palestrina and Orland di Lassus. Some of their music is still sung and still loved. But centuries before their day, there had been splendid secular music written, often by men whose names are lost in that oblivion which the public visits on the composer of a popular tune.

How many who sing and whistle the air of the day ever care to know the name of the man who set it spinning? Or, having heard it, take the trouble to remember? We know the names of a few of our folk-song composers, because we are so young a nation. Stephen C. Foster gave us "The Suwanee River," and a number of other bits of the purest folk song, and Dan Emmett, the "nigger minstrel," invented the immortal "Dixie" tune. But Germany, France, Italy, and England do not know who gave them hundreds of their dearest songs.

Centuries before Palestrina there were gifted composers in England capable of turning out such skillful and still delightful music as the six-voiced canon "Summer is i-cumen in," composed before 1228. Ireland and Wales were also very early in the field. Who would imagine that "Robin Adair" is really a very ancient Irish song, "Eileen Aroon"? I have heard it sung in the original Gaelic. It is pure perfection. In fact, Sir Hubert Parry says that "Irish folk music is probably the most human, most varied, most poetical, and most imaginative in the world." And he is an Englishman.

The story of the growth of the folk music of Europe, and the minstrels, jongleurs, troubadours, mastersingers, minnesingers, and singers of every sort who made it, is a story rich in romance and character.



FROM THE RIVER'S EDGE

By
Grace Margaret Gallaher
Author of "The Boy," "At Pettipaug," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
G. J. FERRETT

AND now you've broken down, Persis, and can't work, I don't see anything ahead of us but the poor farm." The last words aroused the girl, who had only half listened to her mother's laments about the heat, the noise, her own feebleness, the dreary boarding house, all the miseries of their ruined fortunes.

A sudden blot of red stained her white cheeks. She sat straight in her chair. "I will work!" she cried. "Mother, somebody's knocking."

It was "the mechanic," in his Sunday clothes, and shiningly washed and brushed.

"Good mornin', Mis' Talcott. I didn't know but thet maybe yer daughter'd like ter set a piece this mornin' on th' porch off my room; et's quiet an' et ain't so hot there, an' nobody won't pester her, fur et's all mine."

"Oh, mother, it sounds cool."

The man's face glowed into pleasant light in a friend-making smile. "An' ef ye wuz plottin' goin' ter meetin' this mornin', Mis' Talcott, I could set out there, tew, so as ter git anythin' yer daughter wanted fur."

'Twas a poor dingy little porch with a dust-bedraggled vine, but Persis curled herself happily into the comfortable chair placed for her. She studied "the mechanic," seated near her, with gentle, pondering intentness. Although he had been her neighbor across the table all winter, and had sometimes talked to her, she seemed never to have seen him really till that morning. He looked oldish, thirty-five even, judged this girl of twenty-one, and certainly he was "homely," so big and awkward, his tanned face so heavy-featured. Yet his steady gray eyes were both smart and honest, and his smile was all kindness. What had brought this countryman to the city? He looked prosperous and contented. Plainly no tragedy lurked in his life as in her own. The thinking wearied her; she let her eyes wander about the porch.

"Oh, lilies of the valley! Where'd they come from? They grow in our garden home."

"Where's that?"

"Pettipaug, in Connecticut."

"Ef thet ain't a beater! Mine's Deep Cove."

"Oh!" Persis stretched thin, eager hands to him. "You've been to Pettipaug, and you know my river and Lyme Hills and——"

"Well, I guess!" He drew his chair close.

"Ain't it a sweet place?" sighed the girl. "Can't you just see it this Sabbath morning, the folks going 'cross the cool green fields to meeting, and the birds singing and the bells tolling, gentle and solemn."

Tears clouded her eyes, her voice quivered.

"How come ye ter leave it?"

Persis stiffened at once—an outsider prying into private matters! Then the Pettipaug bond pulled at her lonely heart, shut up so many months to its own bitterness, and that fierce craving for a listener swept her on.

"My father was Doctor Joel Talcott. I guess you knew 'bout him? Everybody our way did. He was generous to all; not more'n half his patients paid him, and he was generous other ways, too, and he made some bad investments —there, I needn't go into that! When he—when he—died"—the girl brought out the hard word in a shiver of pain—"there wasn't much of anything left but the house, and that mortgaged. We lived 'long as best we could; for, mother and me, we set by the country and our home. But there didn't seem any way for me to work there. You know how 'tis, in little places.

"Folks were all for me to come to the city, for I write a good hand, and I'm quick at figures, and they thought I could get into some office. Mother thought so, too. So we sold our home a year ago and came here, and I did get a place. But mother, she had one of her long spells o' sickness—her heart's feeble—and I took sick, too, and lost my place, and it's dreadful dear living in cities. And the doctor's bills! Oh, my! And we had to move to this house. I don't care 'bout myself, but mother's been raised nice; she was a Spellerman from Lyme way. And now I've took sick again, and I can't keep my place, and we ain't got any money."

Her voice trailed away miserably, then ceased altogether as she saw the compassion in his face; she drew herself violently back to conduct fitting intercourse with a stranger, in the prim inquiry:

"How was it you came to the city?"

The man laughed. "I can't tell no straight story like your'n. My folks wuz all Connecticut raised, same as your'n."

He paused, and Persis waited nervously for his name. His speech, the kindly, familiar Pettipaug talk, showed he had no education. Suppose he should be one of the Rants, or Beggs, or any other "Tolux tribe."

"My name's David Mulford; Dave ter folks home."

"That's a real, good old Connecticut name," with strong relief.

"Yes, I cal'late some o' my forefathers wuz pretty respons'ble cit'zens, but I never set none by farmin', an' the country seems kinder lonesome like ter me, for all I wuz raised there. Machinery's what I was always tinkerin' over; an' th' crowds an' th' life en th' city 'bout suits me. Then last year father, he died sudden, an' mother, she went pretty quick arter thet, an'—well, 'twas consid'ble diff'rent when they weren't there, an' me not likin' th' farm; so I rented th' place, got a job in one o' th' shops en this town, an' here I be. But th' country must be lookin' fine now; this early spell o' heat will bring all th' blooms en th' River Woods."

And Persis, thus lured into talk of Pettipaug ways and wayfarers, forgot the troubles of her day in happy memories.

Monday led in a week of futile strivings and unending pain, through which Persis labored with all the summoned forces of her failing life. Morning and evening, she gave her mother the smile of a courage stronger than death. One person only seemed to understand and care. David Mulford bade her good-by with cheering words each morning,

waited at the steps to help her in each night, went errands for her mother, brought her fruit and flowers.

Sunday afternoon she woke from a long sleep on the old lounge. The windows were opened wide to let in the evening breeze, and the room was filled with the amber and rose of the sunset. The girl looked like some lovely "flower of the heat"; fever had blown bright color into her ashen cheeks and kindled shining fires in her eyes. Her soft hair gleamed gold in the alchemy of the sinking sun, and the pure outline of her face showed delicately clear against the dark lounge pillows.

"Mother," she said softly, "could I see Mr. Mulford? He's been so good."

As if he had waited all day for the summons, David's knock followed on the words. He came and sat down beside the lounge and took one of her thin little hands between his two large ones, pressing it gently, in silence.

"Mr. Mulford, I don't know as I can thank you; you've been so kind and neighborly, just like Pettipaug folks."

Mrs. Talcott drifted from the room with a murmur of "some little matters."

"Mother's helping Mrs. McKim for her board," she said simply, with the confidence of their first day, and then, her hand twitching in his: "I've lost my place."

"Sho, too bad! But there's plenty more."

"Not for me. I'm dying."

"There now, there now! Ye're tired and kinder worked up."

Persis smiled sadly. "I've got walking typhoid; I heard the doctor tell mother so this morning, when he thought I was asleep. I guess it'll sound dreadful kind o' queer to you, but I can't be reconciled to going—even—even to Heaven, without I see my own Connecticut River once more, and my hills."

David drew her hand up against his breast. "Ye ain't goin' ter die," he said in a strange voice. "Ye put all them thoughts out o' yer little head an' think o' gettin' well ter take care o' mother."

Sudden agony grooved Persis' face. "How'll I ever leave mother!" she panted. "We ain't got anything left—nothing but just debts we can't pay! What's poor little mother going to do when I ain't here to work for her?"

"Ain't she got no kin?"

"No."

David's face bent low over her, his slow voice deepened with compassion.

"Persis, don't ye fret. Ef anythin' wuz ter happen ter ye, I'll take care o' her, same as ef I wuz her son. I'm well fixed; 'twon't be no burden."

Into her thick misery pierced the sense of the beautiful kindness of this stranger. Tears spread a softening film across her burning eyes.

"You're so good! I don't know what makes you so kind to me! I won't ever forget it—wherever I am. But it ain't possible to accept of your services. You see, you ain't her son, and 'twould be just charity; and if it's got to be charity, mother'd rather the town she and father always lived in should do for her, than a stranger."

A strange and awing change grew upon the man's face. His voice trembled on each word, yet went on, without a pause:

"Let me be her real son. Let me marry ye, Persis."

Persis jerked herself upright in spite of her weakness.

"Marry me!"

He pressed her gently back upon the pillows, his hand resting soothingly upon her shoulder. "'Tain't nothin' ter frighten ye, ez et, dearie, ter hear I care 'bout ye? Why, th' very minute I set eyes on ye, I took ter ye, the first day I come ter this boardin' house. Th' first o' et I warn't agoin' ter stay in no such place 'nother meal, but ye kep' me, an' by an' by I wouldn't hev changed fur a palace. An' then when I see ye day arter day a-keepin' on workin' an' never complainin' an' smilin' yer little, heart-breakin' smile, an' I knew, fur all ye wuz so little and slim an' sweet, ye had th' grit an' th' will o' a man—why, I set by ye more'n ever. I ain't one thet's fit fur ye, but I'd be good ter ye, oh, I would, my darlin'." Suddenly his voice broke in

a sound Persis had never heard from a man; it touched her heart with a quick agony of pity. "An' ef et should turn out ez ye think, I'd hev somethin' ter hold onter afterward, thet I eased ye at—th' last."

Persis' tears were wet upon her cheeks. "It's too great a sacrifice!"

"'Twould be the biggest happiness I'd ever hev again—ef—Persis, I'm thirty-two year ol', an' I've seen a plenty o' girls, likely ones, too, but I ain't never cared a whistle fur one o' 'em, an' I ain't never goin' ter. I love ye." The great words were wrenched from this Connecticut man as if they would rack his very body.

"Oh, it ain't fair! I don't——"

"I know ye don't, dearie"—his deep voice was steady now, and quietly tender—"but maybe ye could learn, an' ef there ain't no need. Don't ye think o' nothin' but jest mother. She can't hev no feelin's 'bout a son-in-law helpin' her out, an' folks can't make no handle o' et ter talk. An' ef ye should git well——"

That word spurred Persis. "Oh, please don't—I can't! 'Twould be wicked—without I cared. Oh, don't!" She tried to hide her face from him against the pillow.

"I won't no more. Don't ye give et another thought now. Your mother's a-comin'." He laid her hands back in her lap with no touch of tenderness for farewell. The strange, vibrant look had passed into the old keen, kindly one.

Long after her mother slept, Persis lay awake beside her. Her nature, passionate, poetic, within its Pettipaug shell of self-restraint, pulsed to power and beauty at the touch of this wonderful love which, all undreamed, had been growing up for her. And then, the pride of generations of "good Pettipaug folks" stirred against this uncouth, uneducated "shop" worker. From out the casket of her innocent girl heart she drew the portrait of her ideal hero, the lover that some day should come riding from somewhere to woo her, deep-eyed like a poet, classic in features like the makers of our republic, elegant in bearing, exalted in speech. "Dave" Mulford! Her very body shuddered away from the thought.

The round world grew slowly upon her. First it was the large different room, and the four windows, then the flowers from old gardens and the woods, then Aunt Wealthy Larcom, of Pettipaug, comfortable and hearty, in the rocking-chair, then David looking in every morning and night to say: "Ye're goin' ter hev a real good day, I know," and "Made out a good day?"

"Aunt Wealthy"—'twas her first question—"why didn't I die?"

"Well, now, Persis, ye did give us a good scare; but I cal'late ye're some tougher'n what we thought fur, an' then, my landy-laws, the pains ye had took with ye, th' best doctors en th' hull city, an' two nurses from th' hospital, an' stuff en pipes ter keep ye breathin'."

The next day: "Who brings all those flowers?"

"Oh, a friend." Aunt Wealthy was obviously uneasy under her sprightly tone.

"Ain't it David?"

She nodded.

"Didn't I marry him?" Persis spoke with entire calmness. Her mind had reached the fact without grasping its significance.

Aunt Wealthy hesitated, but Pettipaug's "Tell the truth, if you kill your best friend" impelled.

"Yes, dearie."

"I remember."

But not till Persis was sitting up by the window would Aunt Wealthy answer the often asked: "Where is mother?"

Then, holding the girl's hands, tears running down her kind old cheeks: "Dearie, she warn't but a frail creature always, an' one day when ye wuz a-layin' there en thet kind o' stupor, th' way you wuz arter ye hed thet bad sinkin' spell, she jest dropped inter a chair, an' 'twas all over en one minute. She's with yer father now, an' she's a sight better off'n she could ever be here."

David grasped his visitor with an earthy hand. "Pleased to meet ye. Ye'd better set by fur dinner with us."

Looking back years after, it seemed to Persis she had not grieved for her mother, so fiercely did the irony of her own recovery eat into her own heart. She had given herself as her last dying gift to the helpless, precious mother. And her mother had escaped from the need of such giving; and she, who would die a hundred times rather, was bound body and spirit in chains for all the days of her life.

"I cal'late yer well 'nough fur me to go ter meetin', ain't ye?" Aunt Wealthy plumped up the pillow in the rocking-chair. "Ye'll be ez peart ez a woodchuck soon ez ye kin git round en th' sun."

Persis shivered. To be well meant to lose the shield of Aunt Wealthy and begin the intimate, dutiful married life.

"You go to meeting," she said with sweet gentleness, and Aunt Wealthy bustled out.

She cowered at the knock at the door, but, summoning all her courage, called: "Come in."

David took a chair near her. "Good mornin', Persis," in his kind voice. "I been en th' woods last afternoon, outside th' city, an' I found them," holding out some wood violets.

"Thank you, David!" His pleasant, everyday tone soothed her terror.

"How makin' out ter-day?"

"Most well, I guess. Aunt Wealthy says so."

"Aunt Wealthy an' me, we cal'late we kin make et through ter take yer journey now; so she's a-goin' ter pack up ter move ter-morrow."

"Why, David, where to?"

"Home."

"Home! Oh, not Pettipaug!" she cried out, like a child, with very joy.

"Nigh tew. Deep Cove. I've give th' folks thet rented th' farm notice, an Nancy Dawes ez there slickin' fur us."

"What you going to do there?"

"Farm et, same ez my granddads."

David looked down on his heavy, work-marked hands as if something in their silent strength helped him.

"I can't help sittin' by ye, Persis, an' I ain't a-goin' ter try. But I ain't never goin' ter pester ye none; ye needn't hev no fears o' thet, ye poor little girl!" His voice was maternal with pity. "There ain't nobody ter blame, but ye're en an awful hard place an' there can't nobody help ye; though God, He knows I would if I knew any way ter. But I'm a-goin' ter give ye what happiness ye kin git outer life now. I'm a-goin' ter put ye down en th' country 'mong th' birds an' th' flowers, an' I'm a-goin' ter work fur ye an' take care o' ye—an' *keep outer yer way!*"

Gratitude and shame flooded Persis; she stretched her hands to him.

"Oh, I don't deserve to have any one feel that way."

David did not take her hands. "Folks can't always make other folks feel ez they think they orter," he cried roughly; then, in his ordinary calm, kind way: "I brought th' notices 'bout yer mother en th' *Valley News* fur ye ter read."

The Mulford farm was on a velvet green knoll stretching out under elm and willow trees between two lovely coves bent in from the Connecticut River. Nancy Dawes, vigorous and "likely," did the work. Persis spent her days among the flowers, on the wooded roads with the mild-mannered horse David had bought her, and under the trees down by the shore, watching sky and hills and loved river.

David remembered his word; he kept out of her way from early morning, afield before she was awake to late evening, coming home to his dinner long after hers. Yet he surrounded her with invisible walls of love. All her days a hard-faring handmaiden to a stern, overworked father and a sickly mother, Persis now blossomed like a flower brought out at last into the sun. Sometimes her heart grew so tender toward David that she could have cast herself at his feet for very gratitude, and then, like the rush of a great tide, would flow over her the bitterness of her bondage; and then came the hero of whom she had once dreamed, whom she must never meet now.

"Well, Persis Talcott, I wouldn't have believed you'd forget old friends."

"Why—whoever—it's Elbridge Lyman!" She would have risen, but the young man placed himself on the rustic seat beside her.

"You haven't changed one line since you and I studied spelling in Pond Meadow schoolhouse."

"I'm married." Surely that mighty inner change must have left some outward mark. Then quickly: "I'd know you, too, anywhere. I'm proper pleased to see you, Elbridge."

"Me, too."

Then they shook hands again, laughing with pleasure.

Elbridge Lyman was a handsome boy, very slim and slight, with a clear pallor as if from living indoors too much, and eager, brilliant eyes.

"Grandfather told me you were here, and I came to see you as soon as I could."

"But what are you doing in Deep Cove?"

"I've taken Judge Spence's office here in Deep Cove. Grandfather wanted me to be real near him, and, of course, Judge Chapin has all the law in Pettipaug."

A long hour sped nimbly by while they talked about the dear old days. Finally the lane gate creaked, and a loud voice called: "Gee, there, Buck, whar ye goin'?" David was driving the ox team into the yard. His dark face glistened with heat, his black hair was dank on his forehead with sweat, his check shirt stained with red earth. Persis, quick to the contrast of cool, fair Elbridge, in magisterial broadcloth, swallowed a bitter lump, and, in a voice evened from all feeling, turned to him.

"My husband, Elbridge. David, it's Elbridge Lyman, who used to live in Pettipaug."

David grasped his visitor with an earthy hand. "Pleased ter meet ye. Ye'd better set by fur dinner with us."

The long New England winter,

whirling snows and roaring winds, tucked Persis away in the snug old farmhouse, humming with warmth from the great fires David kept going. But David seemed to find as much to do out of doors as in the summer; Persis saw little more of him. Elbridge Lyman came over from the village often; the two miles through the wood did not frighten him. Sometimes it was "town business" brought him, for David was "first s'lectman"; sometimes just neighborliness. If David were out, he would sit in the big, low sitting room where Persis' plants bloomed royally, talking to her with joyous, innocent egotism of his school triumphs, his honors and glories at college, his great future on the bench. And little Persis, listening with all the sweet sympathy of her face offered to him, would think how brilliant among men he was, and how humble and ignorant and dull she herself. When she talked to David—for it was he who listened then, his kind eyes drawing her on—she felt like the wisest, most valued of women, whose every sentence was a gift. When David was home, the two men talked politics or played chess while she sewed. It troubled the orderly arrangement of comparison in the girl's mind that, though Elbridge played the keener game, David nearly always won; and though the last word was always with Elbridge, the last argument remained with David. Then, looking from placid David, uncouth of person and slipshod of speech, to Elbridge, on fire with youth and eloquence and ardor, the cureless pain of her life would stir in her heart: "Oh, if I were only *free!*"

Snow and ice still bound the earth, but the freedom of spring, nevertheless, thrilled in the air one March Sunday as David drove his household home from church. Rufus, the hired man, sat beside him, and Nancy Dawes, in the good-fellowship of old Connecticut days, snuggled among the robes with Persis. On the crest of Sheep Hill David pulled in Prince and Captain, jumping with anxiety for their stalls. Persis delighted in the great sweep of the view from this hill. She had never told David that, never asked him to stop on the hill. It was one of his unmentioned acts of kindness and of love.

A sleigh, hitched to an old white horse, and filled with women, came up behind them.

"I cal'late Car'line Tuckerman's feelin' kinder plain now, viewin' thet open water, don't ye, Dave?" called the driver, a robust, cheerful woman.

"Mornin', Mandy. Well, et does make et kinder hard on Car'line, a widow with a passel o' children hevin' ter be cut off from folks till th' river's so ye kin la'nch a boat."

Persis looked thoughtfully over at the farmhouse across the river.

"What'll Mrs. Tuckerman do now if she gets out o' something or wants a doctor—go to Lyme?"

"Lyme!" snorted Rufus in friendly contempt. "Land, no—ten mile there, an' she without no horse! Do? Do without, I cal'late."

"Somebody's a-startin' on th' ice ter come over right now," Nancy Dawes exclaimed.

"Sammy, 'most likely," contributed Rufus. "He's pretty near man-high now."

"He orter stay off," David spoke soberly. "Ef th' channel's open off Joshuay's Rocks, 'tain't more'n skinned over here."

"I wuz over there 'long' th' middle o' th' week when th' ice hadn't set en ter weaken an' her baby was complainin'. Like 'nough et's been took worse," said a voice by the sleigh.

Every one started. A young woman, carrying a baby, and followed by an old woman in a pumpkin hood, had come silently along by the fence.

"Better lose her baby than her oldest son," Mandy announced with solemnity.

A kind of breathlessness held them silent, watching the black figure, small but distinct, which skated in long swoops across the river.

"Sammy's in a dreadful collar pucker ter git over," Rufus permitted himself to chuckle, for the boy had crossed the

"Oh, Dave, Dave, I beg of you go keerful!" Mandy panted from alarm.

thin centre. "He'd git th' prize fur skatin'——"

The skater wavered, flung up his arm, sent out a shout that the hills gave back strangely, like the cry of some wild bird, and plunged out of sight. Instantly his head and shoulders reappeared, and hung on the edge of the ice.

David thrust the reins at Rufus and leaped down.

"Git out!" he cried to Persis and Nancy Dawes. "Abby Jane, ye kin drive, git up ter Post's an' bring Lijah and Ted a-runnin'!" David cast a glance over his shoulder. "Come on, Rufe!" And he started in a quick run down the lane to the barn, the hired man following heavily.

Persis, light and swift of foot, could hear, plain in the winter hush, Sammy's cries before her and Mandy's wheezing old horse behind.

David had the barn door swung back

and was out at the river's edge, a long pole in one hand, a rope in the other. He threw one end to Rufus, who knotted it round his arm.

"Oh, Dave, Dave, I beg of ye go keerful!" Mandy panted from alarm.

"David Mulford!" shrilled Nancy from the hill down which she was slowly working, encumbered with the baby and the old woman. "Ye can't do et! Go back! Ye'll be drownded!"

Persis understood that David was flinging himself upon an even chance of death. She knew he had not stopped to figure this at all. Sammy had no one else to save him; that was all there was in it to David. Her heart beat quick and small, and she could not find a word to utter. David cast his coat on the bank as he stepped on the ice and so saw her right beside him. He turned and, like one seized with a great desire, came close to her. It beat in on Persis how grotesque he looked, his Sunday broadcloth, bought in some slenderer season, now strained and bulging, his collar burst loose, his face purple red from exertion. She forced away the thought, but another caught her. He meant to kiss her! Well, 'twas his right. She was his wife, and he was saying good-by, perhaps forever. Even in this great moment, Persis' spirit quivered away from him, but she held her body quiet. David pressed down close upon her, his face worked, and a light she could not meet flared up in his eyes. But it was for an instant only. David straightened away from her without even a touch, his face set, his eyes narrowed.

"Ye'd better blaze a fire, Persis, an' het up some blankets," he called as he stepped cautiously out on the ice.

The other women stood, rooted in terror, while the two men worked their way toward the boy. Persis flew into the house, started the kitchen fire, dragged the lounge close to the stove, and made ready for the frozen men. A horde of neighbors burst in upon her.

"Sam's alive! They're comin'! Dave's been under himself!" rang Mandy's voice, high above the others. "I knew Dave Mulford'd git him out!"

The next afternoon, as Persis sat sewing by the bow window, she saw Elbridge Lyman come around the house and enter through the kitchen.

"Where's Dave?" after his greeting to her.

"Down to Pettipaug with Rufus."

Elbridge strode about the room; he was greatly excited.

"The Buckingham case's just been decided. I came right from the court to tell you."

"Oh, Elbridge, you won? Tell me 'bout it."

This, the young lawyer's first case, he described eagerly, now with amazing technical lore, now with boyish glorying, while Persis glowed with pride.

"I guess you've got the Watrous smartness," with a triumph unconsciously tender.

"'Watrous luck,' mother used to name it. I tell you, Persis, I'm scared when I think how everything's always come my way. Why, ever since I was a little tad, if I wanted anything real, downright hard, I got it, and it's always been through somebody else's bad luck. Father couldn't afford to send more'n one of us boys off to school at a time, so George went. But right away he took sick, so I got his place without waiting; and then Grandfather Lyman died right in his prime and left me the money for college, and soon as I began to look round for a good practice close to Grandfather Watrous, old Judge Spence had a stroke. I don't know as I ever longed for anything before—the deuce!" He broke off incoherently, blushing like the boy he was, his eyes hard set on Persis, charming in a dress of clear blue, her gold hair in a great coil in her neck.

Persis' eyes grew troubled. What was it? Vague sadness and shadowy fears moved her; she was glad to say yes when Elbridge cried out suddenly:

"Come, take a little walk with me; it's the prettiest day this winter."

Up the lane and on to the lonely, silent River Road they went. The feel of the spring was magical, stirring strange pulses in them both.

"Look—bittersweet! Let's climb the fence for it." Persis pointed toward the pasture lots.

Elbridge climbed through a gap in the fence and held back a bush while Persis stepped over.

"I'm caught!" She raised her pretty face, laughing at her mishap, close to his as he bent down to help her. She twitched at her skirt, stumbled, and fell forward against the boy. For an instant she lay in his arms, soft and warm and helpless. Then he kissed her.

Instantly he started from her, stricken with terror. They faced each other, motionless as the sentinel pines on the hill. Persis was powerless with amazement. Her silence wrought upon the boy more than a fury of reproach. He burst into a whirl of words.

"I've outraged you—I never meant to—I thought I could keep hold of myself—I'm a hound! I can't help loving you, Persis, and you're not like other wives! Oh, don't you think I can see how you feel to him! Oh, if you were only *free!* I know I could make you love me!"

The boy raved on miserably. Persis heard nothing. Elbridge's kiss had been the revelation. She had seen at last the two men of her world as they were; the one, in a sweep of passion, would crush down her honor to disgrace her; the other, in a love too tender to hurt even her delicacy, had remained outside the line he himself had drawn around her.

Now she understood why David had not kissed her in that moment of perhaps eternal farewell. A trivial accident had scattered to the winds all Elbridge's manhood. The threat of death, to front which he had summoned all the powers of body and soul, could not startle David from his promise to his "poor little girl" to "keep outer th' way." And she had been so shallow, so cheap, that she had set the heavy accent, the clumsy speech, for the man.

At last Elbridge's voice cut a way into her senses. Free! Free from what? From the protection and love that made her life a sheltered, treasured thing. Free for a life lonely and friendless and loveless. Free to marry—whom? This egotistic, weak boy? A horror of this smooth, pretentious creature, who had so long made her see things as they were not, smote her. With a fierce outward gesture, as if she swept Elbridge Lyman away forever, she plunged through the fence gap into the road. Her hat fell off, her skirt caught on a nail; she never stopped. She did not know where she would go or what she would do; only she must run, run away so far from Elbridge Lyman that she should never see him again.

"Whoa!" A startled shout jerked her to a pause, and David leaped to the road. The horses flung up their heads and trotted down the lane to their barn.

Persis gripped David's coat with both hands and pressed her face hard against its rough surface, earthy, strong of tobacco. "Oh, Dave! Dave!" she cried. "You might have died yesterday!"

David's hand touched her hair; his voice came quiet and low in her ear. "Ef I'd 'a' died, Persis, ye'd been free."

Again that master word! And now all the disordered elements driving one another in a furious dance through the tired brain—pity, gratitude, shame, justice—were resolved, as in some mighty alembic, into one strange and beautiful ore. She put her hands up around David's neck, bending his head to her till his face was wetted with her tears. Her eyes were wide with amazement, like a child's; her voice was hushed by the awe of a great discovery.

"Why, David," in simple downright statement wrung from her by the wonder of it all, "I love you!"

David's arms trembled queerly as he put them close about her, and he hid his face against her breast. Neither spoke. Then they kissed each other softly, like two children. David, who would not draw out even this great moment just for his own happiness, said in his protecting voice, that now sounded infinitely dear in Persis' heart:

"Ye ain't got no bunnit, dearie; ye'll git cold. Ye come en doors—we kin talk there."

The COUNTRY MOUSE VISITS the METROPOLIS

By Virginia Middleton

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

TO think that it has been seven years since you moved to Pinopolis! Pinopolis! Who ever heard of such a name outside the middle west! How ever have you managed to stand seven years of it, Gwennie, darling?

You don't mind my staying while you unpack, do you? If I sit on the corner of the bed with my feet folded neatly under me, I shan't take up too much room, and I can't bear to lose a second of you! It's awfully tiny, this guest room of ours; that's the worst of flats —the bedrooms are cupboards. But then one can't have everything, unless one's a millionaire, and I'm willing to make a few sacrifices to stay in New York.

This apartment isn't nearly as bad as some; indeed, it's a very good one—there's only one dark room, besides the kitchen and the maid's room. Oh, and the bath. That's right next door to this room, so that we don't need a washstand and toilet things. If we did, we'd have to hang them to the ceiling!

How many rooms have you in Pinopolis? Eleven and an attic and cellar. My dear Gwennie, what on earth do you want with eleven rooms and an attic—you and Joe and only two children? Isn't it an awful nuisance to take care of them?

Oh, well, I suppose that's so; in Pinopolis there aren't so many things to do that you haven't lots of time for your housekeeping. Yes, I dare say that's so; and interest in the house must take your mind off the drawbacks of life in the provinces. I don't know what I'd do with eleven rooms here —it's as much as I can manage to attend to our seven. And in an apartment everything is so convenient! We cook by gas, and have unlimited hot water and all that.

What's that, Delia? The people upstairs used all the boiling water before you got to your washing, and it only ran tepid into your tubs? Dear

"Gwennie! What a love of a dress!"

me, how provoking! Those people simply will not take another day for their laundry work. If I had room for another servant, that couldn't happen! She could draw off all the hot water before the people upstairs got started, while Delia tidied up. Have you gas and electricity in Pinopolis, Gwennie? Oh—natural gas—you cook by it! Isn't it dangerous? No? Very convenient and inexpensive? M-m-m! Well, gas certainly isn't inexpensive in New York, I'll admit that. Oh, you do, do you? Artesian water supply? That must be very interesting.

Gwennie! What a love of a dress! Where did you get it? It's a dream—that color was always becoming to you, that ashes-of-rose, peachy, half color! But that's adorable. Don't tell me that ever came out of Pinopolis, for I won't, I simply won't, believe it! Out of Pinopolis and Paris? What are you talking about? Goes over twice a year, does she? What! There are three dressmakers in Pinopolis who do! Well!

What's that you say? There are some rich women in Pinopolis who have all their things from Paris, and really the standard of dressing is very good? Well, that's a charming frock, I'll admit! And I noticed your tailor suit the instant you came through the gates at the Grand Central—well, I suppose a woman who makes up her mind to it can dress well in the Desert of Sahara! And, out there, where there's so little excitement and so much leisure, I suppose you have a good deal of time to consider those things. You probably have a chance to make lots of pretty little dress accessories—embroidered belts and collars and the like.

But, 'fess up now, Gwennie, you'd like a lot better to have a whole street lined with fascinating shops where you could pick out embroidered belts and collars for all Pinopolis and there'd be no appreciable diminution of the stock. Aren't you glad you're going to shop in the civilized city of New York again? That's a good girl! If you had pretended not to be crazy over shopping, I should have disowned you. We'll go as often as you please!

What's this you're giving me? This box meant for me all along? You dear thing—but what is it? It looks like a flower box. It is? Why, how exquisite! What darling little roses! And what heavenly pink stock! It makes me think of grandmother's old garden—that's why you brought it to me, I know. How fresh they've kept in this damp moss! They were beautifully packed. That florist knows his

business—Gwennie, I don't believe you! Out of your toy greenhouse, that you and Joe potter in? I simply don't believe it! How long have you had it? Why didn't you write about it? Oh, to surprise me when I came out on my visit—Gwennie, I was so sorry not to come that time, but I simply couldn't manage it. Think of it! A little greenhouse! Well, I suppose in Pinopolis you have time for such things.

But tell me, when were you at the theatre? I told Tom to be sure to get us seats for tonight at "The Marquis and the Manicure"—it's a scream, my dear! We've been three times. I hope you like jolly plays. I sometimes go to matinées of the other sort—when somebody asks me. But Tom simply will not pay to be made gloomy, so we don't go to the serious drama much—Ibsen, and the Shakespeare revivals, and all that. You and I'll go one night to the opera to see the people in the boxes—Tom can't be dragged there. He'll meet us afterward, and take us to supper. Are you very keen on serious music?

"In Pinopolis you have time for such things."

A pianola with grand opera records? Gwennie, fancy! And you always go to Chicago for the week when the Metropolitan company sings? Aren't you the culturinos! But what's opera in Chicago? Wait until you see the horseshoe curve with hundreds of thousands in jewels. Do you like the pianola? We've sometimes thought of having one for popular music—I don't get time for any practicing. No one has time in New York; it's one of the penalties. Do you keep up your music at all? That's awfully sweet—almost suburbanly sweet! Oh, yes, of course; for the opera scores the mechanical player must be fine.

I wonder what Delia is doing? I told her to bring us a cup of tea right here; you'll want it after your trip. What a pretty negligée! Home-made? You didn't know how to sew much when you went away from New York. What a funny idea! A sewing society that sews just for its own members—and exchanges ideas and patterns and makes negligée and matinée affairs and shirt-waists! Seven members—and luncheon each time? You poor dear—you must be in desperate straits for amusement if you can pass your time that way, and call it fun! But it is a pretty negligée!

Here is the tea. It'll refresh you after the subway trip. That's pretty fast travel, isn't it? Faster than old Dobbin, don't you agree? Oh, isn't he your only means of locomotion any longer? Gwendolin Dobson! How long have you had it, and why had you never told your own cousin? A French motor car—pray, have you any crown jewels concealed about you? Oh, bought it at a sale, did he? But, my dear, isn't it an extravagance? Doesn't it cost a lot to keep it in running order?

It's your chief extravagance, is it? And since you finished paying for the house, you have a little money burn-

ing holes in your pockets. Well, I suppose that expenses in general are so much lower there in Pinopolis that you can afford yourself an amusement or two. It compensates you for Broadway, I suppose—a little.

Now, tell me just what you want to do while you are here. We both

"Here is the tea. It will refresh you after the subway trip."

want you to have a thoroughly good time, Tom and I. After seven years in the wilderness, you deserve it. A little studying? Oh, Gwennie, how tiresome! What for? There isn't time for any studying in New York—it's all perfect nonsense. What? A reader's card to Columbia University library? Where did you get it? The president of Pinopolis College! Oh, I had forgotten there was that little fresh-water institution in your borough. And to think that you, Gwennie, with all those pretty clothes and that naturally curly hair, should wish to be a half-done pedant like the fresh-water faculty ladies!

What's that? They're cultivated women, and have kept your mind awake all these years? Nonsense! You won't need their style of aid to keep your mind awake in New York. You wait until we go shopping, and until you hear the *Marquis* in "The Marquis and the Manicure" sing "Hold my hand, hold my hand," and you'll be awake enough without any reading at any library. Now, what else do you want to do?

Visit settlements? Yes, there are a lot in New York, I believe. I read about them now and then in the Sunday papers. But I don't think they are such a rage as they were. Why on earth do you want to visit them? Your club is going to start entertainment centres in the mill districts of Pinopolis? And you've promised to confer with some of these philanthropists while you are here? All right, my dear! There's no accounting for tastes! If you lived here, you'd be too busy for all these culturino fads! But one of my friends has a cousin who was disappointed in love and she's doing some such work, somewhere—you can see her and she'll do whatever you want about taking you around. Only—— But I suppose in a small place you not only have time for all those things, but you actually need them to keep you occupied and busy, to keep you from boring yourself to extinction.

The Ten? The Eight? What are you talking about? Oh, painters! Exhibiting now? I shouldn't wonder; that is, I don't know anything about it, but a man who plays bridge at the Bensons', where we play a good deal, is an awful art sharp—we'll ask him. What? It will be in the papers? Well, you know I never was much on art. Remember how I nearly died when Aunt Cassie dragged us through the

"Aunt Cassie dragged us through the galleries of Europe."

galleries in Europe? Maybe, if I'd lived in the wilderness, with time hanging heavy on my hands, I might have made a collection of penny prints of the old masters and become interested, too. But, living in New York, one hasn't much time for manufactured interests. There's too much life!

Now, don't get huffy, Gwen. If that isn't just like you people from Oshkosh and Kalamazoo—you simply can't bear to hear that New York is a bit bigger or busier than your own towns. I think that must be the worst feature of life in a little place—it makes one so provincial. That and the gossip—every one is always so interested in every other one's affairs.

What's that, Delia? Two towels gone from the line; well, it simply must be that that woman upstairs takes them; I shall ask Tom to speak to the superintendent. She's a very peculiar person altogether—lives all alone and has very pink cheeks, although she has gray hair; but she's not old—any one can see that.

Who is she? My dear Gwen, you don't suppose I know my neighbors in this apartment house, do you? I should as soon think of making acquaintance with utter strangers on the

street car. Why, sometimes the most dreadful things happen from becoming acquainted with people who merely happen to live in the same building with one. There are the Knowleses, for instance—great friends of ours, we play bridge there once a week—they made acquaintance with the family below them in the Morro, and what do you think? He was a man who had been fired out of some college for some view on something—believed in free trade or free oil or free love or something of that sort; they—the Knowleses, I mean—didn't really know whether they had been married after they learned who they were.

No, of course not the Knowleses! They knew they had been married—poor Angie didn't get her trousseau paid for for nearly two years, so she ought to know whether she was married. But the people under them in the apartment house—the radicals—whether they had ever been married.

I hear Tom's key in the door. You rest a little while, dear. I want you to be fresh for "The Marquis" tonight. I'll take these lovely flowers out with me to decorate the table. My fern was getting mangy-looking; the steam heat in these apartments kills them in no time, and flowers are so horribly dear.

Couldn't you get a little nap before dinner? You want to rest all you can, you know—you'll be on the go a good deal. You aren't in Pinopolis any longer, Gwennie dear!

Tom, dear, Gwennie Dobson has come. Yes—a very good trip, I believe. But what I wanted to say was, I hope we can stand it while she's here. You know how rusty people get away from New York. And I find she's sensitive about the rural districts, so don't say anything reflecting on them. Well—we must try to wake her up and give her a lively time!

The Golden Hour

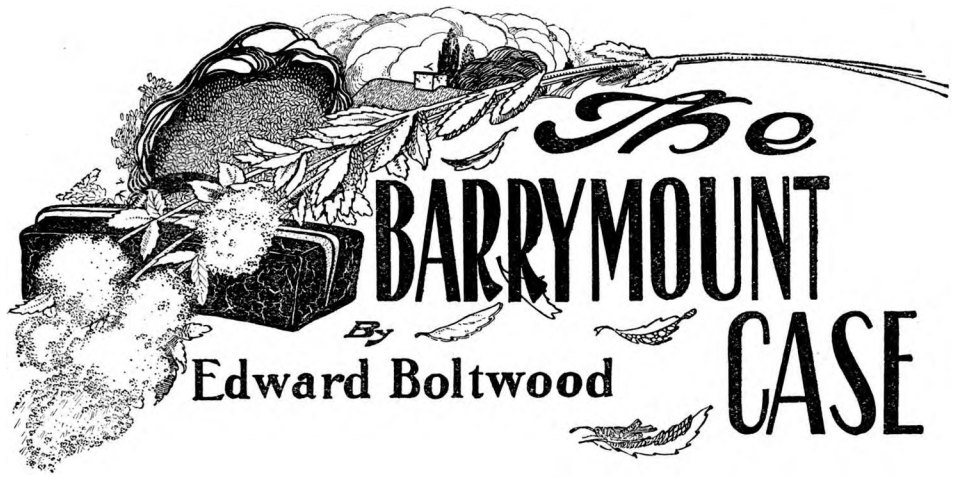
YOUTH:

"Somewhere, adown time's road there waits
A golden, golden hour;
Each sun that opes morn's misty gates
Brings near its perfect flower;
It is a casket where the Fates
Hide love and life and power.
Sweet hours, that swift as swallows fly,
I heed not how you hasten by,
I wait the golden hour!"

Age:

"Somewhere along the road I missed
A golden, golden hour;
For never life's warm sunlight kissed
The bud to flawless flower,
And never gleam of morning mist
Revealed its priceless dower.
Ah, cruel hours, that steal away
Fame's hope, love's joy, life's little day,
Give back my golden hour!"

—ALINE TRIPLETTE MICHAELIS.



ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

WITHOUT preparing young Merwin for the coming shock, the liveried groom held the office door open with one hand, and with the other touched his hat.

"Doctor Merwin, sir?" he said. "Mr. Flavel Barrymount wishes you to attend him this morning, sir."

The doctor, deprived for the moment of all power of speech, merely blinked; but the desk chair, in which he sat, gave a shrill gasp, as of appropriate astonishment.

"If you please, sir, I was to drive you to Pinnacle Lodge, if agreeable. Unless you prefer your own trap, sir."

"That's all right—quite agreeable," mumbled Merwin, suppressing an imbecile grin sternly. "I'll be ready in a minute."

When the servant had gone, Merwin fled to the shabby sleeping room behind his modest office, executed a silent war dance, and collapsed limply on the bed. Flavel Barrymount—Flavel Barrymount, the double-figured millionaire! The young doctor jumped up and put on his other suit of clothes in frantic haste.

Out of doors, however, he took his time about climbing into the dogcart beside the groom. Merwin hoped that people would see him climb into the Barrymount dogcart that summer morning. He had not been long in Hartlefield, but he knew that then was the hour when fashionable cottagers usually drove in for the mail.

The doctor had, of course, viewed Pinnacle Lodge from a distance. It was a show place, even in showy Hartlefield—a great, turreted house, set on a ridge of woodland. In a vestibule which was like a palm garden, Merwin encountered a little, middle-aged lady, who talked habitually in italics and with a rising inflection.

"I am Miss Barrymount, Doctor Merwin?" she said. "Perhaps you would better see my brother at once?"

Quite overawed, Merwin was ushered by a stately footman to an elevator, wherein he ascended to the second story; and a valet escorted him to a chamber door, and knocked softly. Merwin realized that here was a crisis of fortune; he wished that he had purchased a frock coat, even at the cost of bankruptcy.

On a couch in a shaded alcove of the room lay a gentleman in a Japanese robe. He greeted Merwin eagerly, and asked him to sit down. Mr. Barrymount was not young, but younger than his sister, Merwin fancied. His color was healthful, and his voice was strong.

"I have been a sufferer for years, doctor, as you may have heard," began Mr. Barrymount. "They say you have

just taken over old Rickford's practice here. I desire to see what you can do for me."

Merwin started incredulously. He noticed a vial on a table, and a blue-gowned nurse, seated by a secluded window.

"You will pardon me, Mr. Barrymount," he said; "it seems that you are under treatment already. Does your regular physician know that I have——"

"I haven't a regular physician!" exclaimed the invalid vehemently. "I never could find one that suited me. That's the reason you're here. Are you ready to listen? I am going to state my case to you."

The statement consumed nearly half an hour. Merwin listened with attention, then with distrust, and finally with complete bewilderment, for the Academy of Medicine itself would have been stumped by Mr. Barrymount's catalogue of symptoms. When the recital was at an end, Merwin frowned knowingly, asked a few noncommittal questions, and took his patient's pulse

The young doctor jumped up and put on his other suit of clothes in frantic haste.

and temperature, both of which were normal. But he did not say so.

"You mentioned, sir, having been under the care of Doctor Tuxhorn for a while. I was in his clinic at the P. and S."

"A devilish poor doctor I found him, for all his reputation," said Mr. Barrymount, with a vigorous sniff. "Well, are you prepared to take charge?"

"I will do my best," declared Merwin.

A pleased expression settled on the millionaire's face.

"Instruct my nurse," said he. "Her name is Miss Cabot. She is very satisfactory. I have had her only a few days."

Miss Cabot arose when Merwin crossed the spacious room. The young doctor had seen handsome nurses before, but Miss Cabot took him by surprise.

"Very satisfactory!" he thought. "I should say so!"

The girl flushed a trifle, and Merwin promptly shifted his glance of admiration and introduced himself.

"Didn't you have a sister at the Presbyterian?" he queried, suddenly remembering.

"Yes," said Miss Cabot. "My sister Jane. She—she has to live in Colorado now."

"Oh, I'm sorry for that," said Merwin. "I might have gone to Colorado," he added idly. "There's a promising opening for me out there, but I chose Hartlefield instead. What is being done for Mr. Barrymount?" lowering his voice.

"Why, nothing," murmured Miss Cabot. "What is there to do, except——" She did not finish the question, but eyed Merwin curiously. "Do you wish me to stay on, doctor?"

"Certainly," he assented. "I am going to take hold of this case with all my energy, and I shall want your best help."

She implied her thanks by an odd smile, and the recollection of it accompanied Merwin all the way to the village. It interfered with his elation in the drug store, where, with a visible impression on the gossiping clerks, he ordered three mysterious prescriptions to be filled for Mr. Barrymount. It spoiled his enjoyment of the novel respect with which he was regarded that evening at the hotel. And the smile was with him when he went to bed.

"I'm Flavel Barrymount's family physician," soliloquized Merwin to his pillow, "but why did she look at me like that?"

II.

Each day of the succeeding fortnight plunged Merwin deeper and deeper in perplexity. The most perplexing part of the Barrymount case, next to Miss Cabot, was that the patient appeared to be growing stronger and more alert. This was puzzling because Merwin, secretly unable to diagnose the difficulty, had employed no active remedies whatever.

One morning he boarded a train to New York, and called at Doctor Tuxhorn's office. The distinguished specialist was glad to see Merwin, and asked his former pupil to lunch. Over their coffee, Merwin detailed his experience at Pinnacle Lodge. Doctor Tuxhorn chuckled.

"My dear boy, there is nothing at all the matter with Flavel Barrymount."

"Neurasthenia?" hinted Merwin.

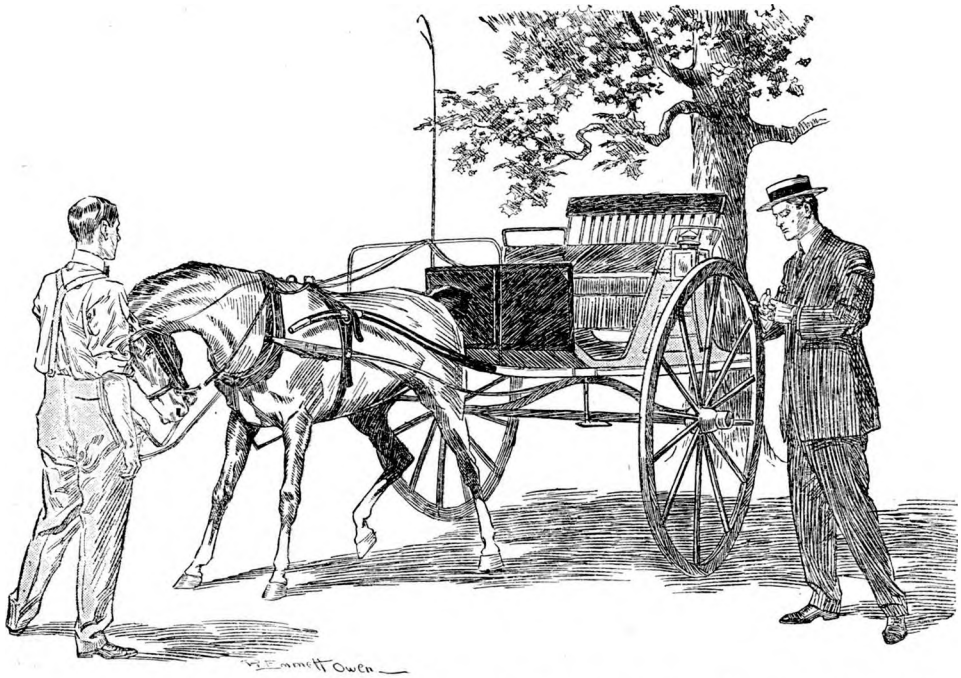
"Not even that," said Tuxhorn. "Mentally, nervously, and physically, he is a well man. But—you don't mind my saying it—he has always consulted doctors who can afford to tell him so. You're in luck, Merwin, if you want to be."

Merwin drummed on the table thoughtfully, and Tuxhorn rolled a cigarette with surgical accuracy.

"The sole amusement of Barrymount's bachelor existence," went on Tuxhorn, "is to be an invalid. Until he finds another amusement, another object in life, he'll devote his money to that one. Now, if I were in your circumstances——"

"But he seems to show improvement," Merwin interrupted.

"Then you," said Tuxhorn, "have the



The next morning he hired a trap and drove to Pinnacle Lodge.

reputation of curing him. You're in tremendous luck, Merwin, either way."

Being an indigent and frugal youth, Merwin had planned a stay of only a single night in town, but after his interview with Doctor Tuxhorn, he remained there two or three days. He visited a tailor, and priced an electric runabout. A classmate invited him to dinner at their college club; and Merwin, the next evening, reciprocated in kind, and asked several other men. One of his guests chaffed him on his evident prosperity. Merwin did not object.

He allowed himself a parlor-car seat on the way back to Hartlefield. Two modish ladies gazed at him with friendly interest, and in the smoking room an elderly gentleman offered Merwin an enormous cigar, addressed him by name, and chatted with him about the affairs of the village. Merwin recognized the gentleman; he was Moses Delaplaine, an ex-ambassador to a European court, and a leader of the summer colony.

The next morning he hired, for the first time, a trap at the livery stable and drove to Pinnacle Lodge, where, somewhat to his surprise, he found his patient in an Indian reclining chair on the piazza. Miss Barrymount greeted Merwin with both hands outstretched.

"Aren't you proud, doctor?" she cried. "When everybody says you ought to be?"

"Perhaps it was my absence which has done your brother good," said Merwin lightly.

Barrymount shook his head with the petulant air of one who would endure no jesting.

"I noted the benefit of your treatment before you went away," he said. "I feel that you understand my case. Call Anatole. Of course, you wish to make a careful examination."

The valet helped his master to the elevator, and Merwin followed solemnly. The medical examination was, as usual, an examination of the physician by Mr. Barrymount, rather than what it purported to be. Miss Cabot was

present, but effaced herself rigorously. In spite of this, Merwin's mind was full of her when he returned to his office.

"Am I such a fool," he asked himself angrily, "as to be bothered by a pretty nurse?" But to this weighty question the answer seemed to hang fire.

The result of Miss Barrymount's enthusiasm for Merwin was soon displayed. He was summoned to treat Diana Van Ord for what that sportswoman fondly imagined to be a tennis elbow. He was commanded to prescribe for the cherished and famous ambassadorial gout of Moses Delaplaine; and, on the following Sunday, Merwin's name appeared in the society correspondence of a New York newspaper. He sent a marked copy to Doctor Tuxhorn.

III.

It was the day after this triumph that Merwin happened to meet Miss Cabot at sunset, out walking on a country road. He had never seen her except in her nurse's dress of regulation blue, but he decided without debate that dark brown was equally becoming.

"I need the air, too," hinted Merwin. "May I——"

"If you like," she consented, rather coldly. "There's a short cut through the woods to the lodge near here somewhere."

"And how's our patient?"

"He's automobiling," said Miss Cabot.

Merwin stared at her blankly.

"I saw no harm in it," she said, quite undisturbed.

"But at least, Miss Cabot, you ought to have gone with him!"

"Why?" she retorted calmly. "This is the path, I believe."

The path was so narrow that Merwin fell in behind her. This order of march barred conversation, but had its recompense, for Merwin could look at her graceful figure without detection. They soon reached a small clearing, however, and here Miss Cabot halted and picked at the white bark of a birch.

"I am wondering what you think of me," she said suddenly.

"Think!" blurted Merwin. "I think you——"

"No, no!" she parried, with a pretty leap of color. "I don't mean that at all. I mean about my staying on with—at Pinnacle Lodge."

"Good heavens, Miss Cabot, there is, I am sure, no fault to find with your work there!"

She tore a strip of the bark in two, and looked up at him searchingly.

"Work?" she said. "I'm not much of a comedian. Do you call it work? Honestly?"

"Why, yes," maintained Merwin, but with an uneasy laugh. "I'm free to say that Mr. Barrymount is an imaginary invalid, more or less. I see now that you discovered that fact long ago. But a man's imagination can cause him as much trouble as typhoid-pneumonia, and so, to cure him of what he thinks he has——"

"What does Mr. Barrymount think he has?" put in Miss Cabot.

Merwin waved a hand helplessly, and the girl tore off another bit of bark from the trunk of the birch.

"You see, this is my first private nursing," she explained. "I've always worked in a surgical ward. You feel differently there—as if you were doing something—almost fighting."

"Yes, I know," sighed Merwin, and his shoulders drew back an inch or two.

"Well, when my sister went West," said Miss Cabot, "we needed more money. So I left the hospital. The Barrymounts pay me a great deal—and for what?"

Merwin winced.

"Oh, look here!" he protested warmly. "Aren't we earning it? For years Mr. Barrymount lived in what he chose to call a sick room. Now he's out in a motor, on the piazza, everywhere. Haven't my treatment and your care justified themselves? Isn't he finding other objects in life than to be an invalid?"

"I am wondering what you think of me," she said suddenly.

"Yes, I think he is," said she.

"Well, then!" exclaimed Merwin. "What more could a doctor and a nurse do for him?"

For reply, Miss Cabot turned abruptly into the path, and set a brisk pace until they emerged upon one of the drives of the Barrymount estate.

"Thank you," she said, holding out her hand. "Good-by."

"Good night," amended Merwin, "and don't let conscience run away with you."

For a worldling who had just delivered such gay advice, Merwin had an oddly sober face as he walked homeward.

"I guess," he muttered, "that I'm not much of a comedian myself."

There was a trolley accident the next

forenoon, and Merwin was sent for in hot haste, although nobody was very badly hurt. At the little improvised hospital in a farmyard, he took off his coat and bared his arms, and patched up the battered passengers with intense elation. It was a positive joy again to bring help to people who really needed it. Tired, worn out, and altogether happy, he returned to his office to see Miss Barrymount in a victoria posted at the door.

"Oh, dear Doctor Merwin!" she wailed. "Flavel has had the most dreadful relapse, you know? A darkened room, you know, and all the rest of it? And he insists that you call Raubermitz—that new German in Boston—for an immediate consultation with you."

Merwin smiled wearily.

"Of course, I shall do as Mr. Barrymount wishes," he said. "When did he decide to be—when did he discover that he was so ill?"

"Shortly after he woke up," answered Miss Barrymount. "Can't you telephone to Raubermitz at once? On the long distance?"

"Yes. Miss Cabot, I suppose, has the situation in hand," said Merwin.

The lady in the victoria leaned back, groped among the cushions for her handkerchief, and produced with it a square, gray envelope.

"At breakfast time," she quavered faintly, "Miss Cabot told us that she was leaving Hartlefield in three quarters of an hour! She's gone! To join her sister, or somebody? And she asked me to give you this note. I hope it explains her outrageous conduct."

IV.

Merwin read the note in the telephone booth after he had sent in a Boston call over the wire. Miss Cabot wrote:

I am bound to try to explain to you. Although my patient is perfectly well, I realize that this sudden desertion of him may mean the end of my career as a nurse, but I can't stand a career founded on continuous play acting—which is too light a word for the Barrymount case.

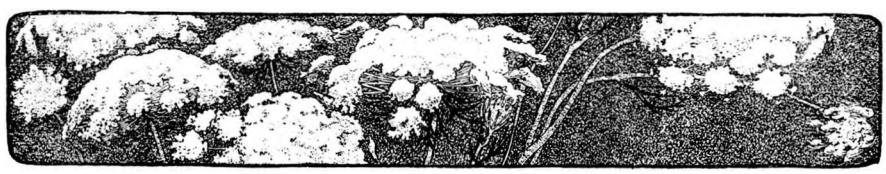
The telephone bell buzzed. Doctor Raubermitz was engaged, but Flavel Barrymount's name operated like a talisman on the doctor's office assistant. He promised that his superior would talk to Merwin in a few minutes. Merwin held the wire, and resumed Miss Cabot's letter grimly.

Besides—and this I ought not to tell you. But I don't want any doctor to think I'm a nurse who quits for a whim. So this in the most strict professional confidence. The "object in life" which Mr. Barrymount has found is not at all agreeable to me. It is concerned with his putting a ring on my third finger. I think that idea is what made him feel better for a while. Perhaps this is a fact his hard-working physician should know. A line from you, if you can condone my desertion, would not be distasteful. Jane's address is——

"Hello, hello!" said Raubermitz, from Boston.

Although Merwin seemed able to think of nothing but Miss Cabot's distracting face, he managed to carry on the long conference intelligently, and during the course of it his resolve took shape. His ready heart welcomed the decision with an eager spring of delight.

"Very well, Doctor Raubermitz," concluded Merwin. "We shall look for you by the afternoon express. Please come prepared to stay and assume charge of the case. What's that? Yes, I'm retiring from it—in fact, I'm about to give up work here, and take over a practice in Colorado. I'm not a play actor—oh, I beg your pardon! I was speaking to some one else."



LITTLE SON

By Alan Sullivan

WHEN your stormy day is done
And you stumble up the stairs,
When your golden head is bent
In the jumble of your prayers—
Drowsy head, but reverent!
And about me all your toys
As you left them; the brown horse
In a corner of the wall
Nods defiant at your nurse,
The machine that wouldn't go
Standing helpless in the hall,
While your blocks, in formal row,
Range their lines belligerent
Round a painted regiment.

All the mystery of sleep
Broods above your eyelids now,
All forgetting in the deep
Peacefulness above your brow.
Gone your elfin smiles and tears,
Disappointments, hopes and fears,
Praise and blame and sudden joys!
Other little girls and boys
Lie behind you as you rest,
Face into the pillow pressed,
Like some rare and precious bloom
In the shadow of the room.

So, beside the tumbled bed,
Mute with wonder and with love,
Daddy sits with bended head;
Breathes a prayer to One above,
That when his own day is done,
When into his Father's keeping
He commits his long last sleeping,
With his own toys every one
Left disordered on the floor—
His machines that wouldn't go
Though he tried and worried so,
All unfinished—yes, and more—
Work that waited for his hand,
Things he didn't understand!
Then, perhaps, in loneliness,
In the ultimate distress,
As his wandering spirit slips
With a tremor of the lips,
One will lean across his bed,
Put a hand upon his head,
And his Father say: "Well done,
Little Son!"

The Confessions of a Stenographer

By Anne O'Hagan

ILLUSTRATED BY H. VON S. LUCAS

IV.

FEBRUARY 10: If I were less amiable than I am I think I should be glad of the very evident misery of Mr. Dirkman Fletcher. Of course I suppose it is all because he is not really quite engaged to the poet lady, and he doesn't like uncertainty. But sometimes it seems as if it were because he is more engaged than he really hankers to be. He has taken to being moody, and occasionally irritable. He snapped at Hattie Lawlor the other day, and she answered back with all the freedom of a girl who is going to be married the night before Washington's Birthday, so that they can begin their married life with a holiday, and who therefore is in no fear of authority. Afterward he apologized to her. In the late afternoon, when Hattie had told the story all over the office and had made her own replies sound very witty and his speeches very flat, he came in to ask me to buy an individual wedding present for her.

"I've been grouchy for a week," he said. "I ought to give her a martyr's crown; she's been, on the whole, so patient and pleasant."

"She'd rather have a Dresden china teapot and cream jug and sugar bowl," I told him.

"Are you sure she'd like that?"

"As sure as any one can be who has seen her pricing them and sighing over them and lamenting their inaccessibility for two months."

"Will you come out with me to-morrow noon and lunch with me and help me select them?"

I said that I would. It's a sort of queer pleasure and queer pain for me to be with him. It hurts, but I can't help courting the opportunity of feeling the hurt. I'll have long enough to cure myself and salve myself after they are married.

February 11: It was such a nice little luncheon—the nicest I've ever had in my life. I couldn't help liking the soft carpet my feet sank into, and the white sheen of the damask, and the lustre of the glass and silver, and the early tulips in the vases on the tables. Every girl likes luxuries—that's what makes it hard to be a poor girl, hard and dangerous. But it was more the warm sense of being with him, about to help him in an intimate, gay, little task that made the occasion so delight-

ful. I put Miss Flower out of my mind deliberately—after I had spared one thought to wonder why he hadn't asked her to buy Hattie Lawlor's wedding present—and was as bubbly with pleasure as if there were no afternoon's work to be done and no to-morrow to be lived through.

He told me, when we were through, that I'd given him the best hour he had had in a fortnight, and when my eyes questioned him skeptically, his mouth grew straight in a determined little way he has, and he said, very obstinately: "I mean just that!" A little shiver ran up my spinal column, and it almost seemed as if it had started in his look.

As we left the St. Martin, we ran into the man who had been calling on old Mrs. Bleecker the other night. Dirkman nodded to him and said something that sounded like "How are you, Wise?" I asked him if that was Mr. Wise of our staff.

"That's what he is," answered Mr. Fletcher, "but the railroad doesn't know it. He's one of their engineers. But he's interested in property out our way."

"Oh, yes, I remember," said I. It puzzled me a little to make out which side Mr. Wise was now playing false—the railroad or ours. It must be ours, since he was making independent offers to Mrs. Bleecker. I thought for a few minutes, and then I told Dirkman what I knew in regard to his dickering with my old lady.

"I've always told Petersen we couldn't trust him," snorted my companion. "A man that will play one set of people false for a hundred dollars will play the other side false for another hundred. Will you tell Mr. Petersen what you have told me when we go back to the office?"

I said that I would, and then he begged me to forget the whole thing for an hour—just to come on and shop and think what a jolly, energetic little housewife Hattie would be, and how she would "sass" and manage her husband, and how they would love their three-room flat out in the Bronx somewhere, and what cozy evenings they'd have under the big, gorgeously hideous lampshade he knew Hattie'd choose for her parlor, and how they'd walk over to the Park Sunday mornings; and he went on picturing Hattie's married life with great enthusiasm, but in terms which he himself can have no hope of with June Flower for a wife, if he has even a glimmer of common sense.

When I told Mr. Petersen about Mr. Wise, he made his eyes very small in his head and rolled out his mouth. But he didn't say anything for a few minutes. Then he remarked:

"Thank you for the information. It will not be convenient to crush the busy little buzzer just at present, but when I have more leisure, I shall teach him a lesson. Meantime, we'll conclude that Baylawns business at once."

He rang the bell, and told Robbie, a tow-haired office boy, who constantly and nonchalantly chews gum, to ask Mr. Fletcher to come in to him. Then he told me he would not need me for some time. Nevertheless, in spite of the dismissal, I knew before I left the office that Dirkman was empowered to offer Mrs. Bleecker as much as thirty-five thousand dollars for Baylawns.

February 12: Mrs. Bleecker has gone away on a visit at this juncture. It is very inopportune, and Mr. Petersen seems to hold me personally responsible for it, though I knew nothing at all about it until this noon when Dirkman had reported the fact at the office. I had noticed that she was not at dinner last night, but she goes out to dine frequently with old friends in other parts of the city. And I generally breakfast earlier than she. She has been rather taken up with the poets lately—she's a vain old darling, and it has set her up tremendously to have two versifiers coming to see her, bringing her flowers, reading their immortals to her, taking her to freak matinées and the like. She treats me with a tiny bit of condescension nowadays, but I don't mind. I feel sort of glad that she has anything to make her lively and gay, and to give her a feeling of importance in the world of human beings. Of all sad things, I think, the

saddest is an old person who doesn't matter to any one.

The funny part of this new affair of hers is that it is always June Flower and Mr. Priestley, never June Flower and her affianced or semi-affianced, or whatever he is, that come to cheer the old dame up. That engagement is getting on my nerves. I wish they'd get married and be done with it. Then, I am sure, I could get the better of this ridiculous feeling about—him. As things are now, I find myself studying his face every day for a signal that it is all right—or wrong! I watch for him to come in in the morning. I make errands past his room to see if I can see his coat on its hook. Oh, I am a ninny, and I'm going to take myself in hand.

February 15: Mrs. Benthorn came to the office to-day with that awful look on her face that means something about her husband. How she manages to work as she does, with what she has upon her mind and heart, I do not see. I walked up the street with her at noon; she wouldn't go and eat her lunch like a sensible woman, but said she needed air. I did manage to hale her into a drug store and to force some malted milk down her throat before she went back to work. It is as I supposed. He has turned up again, and she says she thinks she cannot endure it—there is something so coldly cruel about him.

"Oh, Miss Eldridge," she cried, in her suppressed, tragic sort of way, "I am nearly desperate. Think of it—he held my wrists in a twisted grasp until I told him where the money was I was saving, and then he went and took it! And he—why, when we were first married, if the cat scratched me, he was full of sympathy and worry, and he loved to pour all his money, literally, into my lap. We used to make a gay little rite of it. And now—now—I tell you," she went on fiercely, "I know that he is crazy. He is not himself! His real self was that other one—that dear, other one! But I cannot stand this—it is doing him no good, and it is killing me. I must go away somewhere into hiding, unless the miracle happens and he is restored to me."

It is terrible. It makes a little thing like being half in love with a man who's half engaged to another woman seem like child's play. What a beastly old world this is, after all! Who's happy? Who has what he wants?

February 17: Mrs. Bleecker, very important and consequential, came home from her journey, wherever it was, to-night. She is quite mysterious about it, and evaded my questions. Heaven knows I asked them, not out of curiosity for the office's sake, but just to be chatty and polite. She almost snubbed me for my pains. So I left her, and Doctor Mabel and I went to see an East Side stock company doing "Prince Karl." It was smelly, but otherwise like any other theatre, except that the audience seemed to have a better time.

February 18: It is midnight of the happiest, the strangest, the most perplexing night of my life. This is what has happened, and this is how it happened.

About eight o'clock, when I was curled up on my bed, with a blanket over my feet, reading "Our Mutual Friend" for the twenty-seventh or thereabout-th time, and wondering whether I was going to get a cold in my head—I had been sneezing so—the good, grim, old chambermaid toiled up the stairs to tell me that Mr. Fletcher was in the parlor and would like to see me. I kicked the blanket off my feet, did up my hair, pulled my rumpled waist smooth, and went down. He told me that he had come to try to see my amazing old protégée—that's what the office calls her—who had paid no attention to our letters of the past day or two, asking for appointments, but that word had come down that she was out, having gone to the theatre with friends.

"I have decided that if you'll help me out by letting me visit with you, I'll stay until she comes in, and will make a desperate effort to pin her down to an appointment."

I said that I should regard enter-

"I mean just that!" A little shiver ran up my spinal column.

taining him, under these conditions, as part of my duty to the office. So we sat and talked for a while—only not very consecutively. I felt smothery—and it wasn't the approach of any cold, either! And he—well, he seemed nervous and restless and not altogether happy. Finally he broke off in the midst of something we were laboriously saying about the opera—neither of us having been—to ask me if we weren't friends, he and I. I faltered and then said, yes, of course we were!

"Well, I want a friendly service from you," he told me. "I want your advice. I want you to tell me something as you would tell your brother if he should put the question to you."

"You have a sister," I reminded him, "and you've often told me you and she are chums."

"Oh, Jessica!" He paused, looked a bit rattled, and then laughed. "To tell you the truth," he went on, "Jessica disqualified for judge in this case at an early stage by developing most unjudicial prejudices. I know what she'd say beforehand."

"Well, what is it?" My voice sounded a little far away to me. My hands were cold. I knew that he was going to talk about June Flower, and I don't know—or I didn't know—what I feared and hoped.

"Tell me—you know her and I don't believe you have any prejudices against her. Do you think that Miss Flower, to whom, as you are aware, I have proposed, has any—regard—for me?"

"Certainly I do suppose so," I replied. I was quite proud of my voice. It was so firm and self-reliant. And

what a nice, non-committal word "regard" is.

"Any strong regard?" he went on.

"Yes," said I, with a sort of sullen obstinacy.

"Do you believe her to be in love with me?"

"That is a question you should ask her and no one else," I replied, with some spirit.

"Perhaps you are right. Well, tell me this. We'll leave Miss Flower and me out of it for a minute. Do you think a woman who is really in love with a man requires time to consider her feelings when he asks her to marry him?"

"Perhaps not to consider her feelings, but she might to consider her answer. There are other things in the world to consider besides feelings."

"Income and all that?" he sneered.

"Yes," I answered doggedly.

"Well, unless she is contemplating a really wealthy alliance, I don't think she needs to pause to consider the income question. I'm not a Crœsus, but I could certainly take better care of her than she can take of herself!"

"You're back to Miss Flower," I warned him.

"So I am. So I am. Well, Joan—what a quaint little name you have, by the way."

"You cannot call me by it," I said. I shall never forget how it hurt me to hear him say it; it was like a thin-bladed knife going into my heart and making me faint with the sensation.

"No, I suppose I mustn't. I suppose I mustn't." He looked across the room at me so strangely, so queerly, so unhappily. "But it is a dear, little name—Joan is. I like the sound of it. I say it sometimes to myself for the pleasure of it: 'Joan—Joan.' And—like a poor, weak, impulsive fool, I've cut myself off from the right to say it aloud, the right to say it to you! Oh, Joan, if you only knew what scales have fallen from my eyes in the last month or two, and what I have learned about the difference between a fancy bred of idleness and a—a fondness—and—respect—based on true realizations. Oh, Joan!"

Somehow I got on my feet. Somehow I called up my voice.

"You have no right to talk to me so," I said. "Do you want me to despise you? Your word is pledged to some one else."

"She doesn't care for me, I'll swear."

"Your word is pledged, your love is offered to her."

"That is what is breaking my heart, that is why I am calling myself a fool every hour of the day. To mistake a bit of midsummer madness—for that was what it was—an infatuation based not upon one taste in common, not upon respect, even, for the feeling that enables two people to go through the hard world together. Oh, what a precious fool I've been!"

"Well," said I, with all my good, old New-England, Chelsea-Mass., principles supporting me in my time of need, "you needn't add to it by being anything more contemptible now."

But oh, my heart was singing and my blood was racing through my veins with happiness. He does care for me! He does, he does! And though he marries her and forgets all about this evening, I shall remember it with joy all the days of my life.

He suddenly went out to the hall, where his coat and hat were, and began to put them on.

"I'm going," he announced. "I'm a contemptible blackguard, as you remind me. I can't stay to see that dear little old simpleton of a Mrs. Bleecker. Won't you try to make an appointment for me with her in the morning? And—Jo—Miss Eldridge—Joan—if I hadn't been a fool, couldn't you, wouldn't you, have cared?"

I didn't say anything—I couldn't. But I guess the tears in my eyes answered for me. For he caught my hand and kissed it and said: "God bless you, my dearest! I'm going to untangle this business somehow."

And that was an hour ago. Whatever happens—whatever happens—I shall remember this night all my life. Oh, if only I hadn't given June Flower

that fatal advice! If only I had let her go on and lie to him, and expose herself as the untruthful creature she is!

February 19: I had a pleasant piece of news to break to the office this morning. I have to feel of my neck occasionally even yet to make sure that my head is on after the way Mr. Petersen almost took it off me. It was like this:

I stopped at Mrs. Bleecker's room on my way to the street after breakfast. She bade me enter when I rapped. She was looking quite dear and sweet—pink-cheeked and excited. She greeted me more kindly than she has done lately—not that kindly is a good word, for she is always kind, but with more interest, more eagerness.

"I've come bothering you on office business," I told her when we had passed the time of day, as our old washerwoman used to say. Her bright expression clouded over a little. "Won't you let me tell them up there that you will see Mr. Fletcher, who has been trying to get you all the week, some time to-day? They are really prepared to make you a very nice offer!"

"Oh, my dear, it's too late," cried Mrs. Bleecker.

"Too late? You don't mean to say that you have given Mr. Wise an option on the place, after all I told you?"

"Not Mr. Wise, no." Mrs. Bleecker seemed unaccountably embarrassed.

"But you have given an option?" I wailed. "And not to us?"

"I've sold it—to the railroad," she confessed.

"Mrs. Bleecker! All yourself! Well, you are an astute lady."

"Not all myself at all," she interrupted, with a good deal of asperity. Then she grew apologetic. "You see, you yourself would never ask me to sell it through you."

"That's very true. My principals were not willing—until now—to make you a fair offer, and you and I were friends."

"That was just like you," declared the old lady, with admiring fervor. "But you see—this was so romantic. She would have had to marry some one else. And the commission will just support them in Italy, where living is so much cheaper, until his play is produced and the returns are——"

"Mrs. Bleecker," I cried, sitting down and staring at her, "am I crazy or do I hear you right? Are you talking about Italy and plays, or are my ears performing tricks on me?"

"No, I'm saying what you think. Oh, I do hope you won't be angry with me, my dear, but—suppose it had been one of my own girls."

"Won't you please begin at the beginning and tell me what you mean?"

"I mean that I have sold Baylawns to the railroad for twenty-two thousand five hundred dollars," said Mrs. Bleecker defiantly. "And that I sold it through June Flower, who told me quite candidly that the commission would enable her and Mr. Priestley to get married. Of course, the two dear poets haven't a cent."

"June Flower—Mr. Priestley," I repeated in a daze.

"They did everything for me," the old lady bubbled on, evidently very anxious to justify herself for some supposed disloyalty to me. "They told me, frankly, just what it would mean to them. Dear June's father is a hard-working, country-town doctor. Her own dear mother is dead. There is a stepmother and a new brood of little sisters and brothers. She couldn't hope for a cent from home. Rodman—I call both the young things by their first names—has only a pitiful allowance from his people in England. They love each other so! So poetically! So beautifully! And the little commission would just enable them to weather a year or two in beautiful Italy, that they both love; and then his big poetic drama will be done—and he comes into a little inheritance besides. And they found me the dearest little place—not so big a house or so big a farm as Baylawns, of course, but ample for an old woman all alone in the world—up on the Putnam division, that I can have for twelve thousand, and I can invest the rest, and they get the two thousand

two hundred and fifty. Oh, I have felt as though I were living in a play!"

"Are the papers passed?"

"The bonds for the deeds are signed."

"And—forgive me, dear Mrs. Bleecker—how about the other heir to your husband's place? How about your son?"

The lined old face paled, the cheeks seemed to droop and sag.

"We have set on foot the necessary proceedings for having him declared—dead—legally," she said, in a low tone.

I could only pat the poor old hands. After all, the place was hers. And after all, had she not opened the doors of happiness to me? That is, if June Flower isn't lying again, if she really means to marry her poet, and if Dirkman wasn't only flirting. But he wasn't! It is a low, unworthy suspicion, and I don't believe a word of it, even when I say it. He wasn't at the office to-day—how many times I went past the door of his room and looked to see if his hat and coat were hanging on their hook! You can see the hook from the hall, and even when the door is closed the ground glass reflects the things hanging on it, though his desk is out of sight of the corridor. Mr. Petersen came a little late, too. So that it was nearly noon before I could tell my glad tidings about Baylawns. My! How vindictively he looked at me! If that man had lived at the time of the Holy Inquisition he would have enjoyed himself.

I couldn't eat any dinner to-night, thanks to my excitement. I kept wondering of He would come to see me. He must know by now—if she really meant it. He must know that he is free!

February 19: There was a letter from him at breakfast—three letters, in fact, one from him to me enclosing a copy of one he wrote to June Flower yesterday, and one from her to him which crossed his. He had had to go hurriedly to Boston yesterday morning to catch a man who is putting some money into the Meyer-Grimson company, and who was sailing from Boston to Liverpool to-day. His letter to June Flower was so like him—so direct, so manly. He said that her long delay in coming to a decision had answered sufficiently as to her feelings; that he saw she could not care wholly for him; that she must never reproach herself with having hurt him, for he had all the self-reproaches to make; he had been impulsive and insistent, and her wisdom in requiring a time for consideration had acted for his benefit also; he had considered, too, as, indeed, she had so generously begged him to, and he was the wiser for the reflection. But though he thus frankly told her that he had misinterpreted his feelings in the first place, still, until she had finally answered him, he was at her command in every particular.

Hers to him was a characteristic document—brief—a scrawl on the vivid blue paper she affects.

> Forgive me all I have made you endure. I have thought—I have even prayed, pagan though you deem me, pagan though I am! But the workaday world, the workaday pursuits, the scramble for money—however worthy they all are, however necessary and right—are not for me. Our aspirations are too dissimilar, dear friend. Let us be that—dear friends—and nothing more forever!
>
> JUNE.

His letter to me—I shall wear it on my heart and in my heart, sleeping and waking, as long as I live.

February 20: Never again do I expect to see so mad a man as Dirkman Fletcher when he heard through whose intervention we had lost Baylawns! Of course, it was from him that June Flower had learned of the place and of our desire to buy it. Dirk is awfully apt to talk "shop," and I imagine he never has had to pay a dearer price for indulging his fancy than when he indulged it in the presence of his ex-ladylove. Of course it was a low trick for her to play—and then to write him that business-scorning note! If there had been likely to be any trace of illusion in him about Miss June Flower, poet, I think this little incident has cured it.

On the whole, I have no cause of complaint. I firmly held him back from making a bitter reply to her, and taunting her with her treachery to him.

I think he would have liked to call her out to a duel. But what's the use of rowing? I've learned some wisdom from Mr. Petersen. "It doesn't do you the least good in the world," he says, "to get the better of any man in a war of words. It's a mere waste of energy, and a victory in a battle of verbal wits is about as useless a triumph as the world affords. If you've discovered faithlessness, double-dealing, in any one whom you were fool enough to trust, don't give yourself the blamed poor satisfaction of telling him you know him for what he is worth. No—— Just know him! Just add your secret knowledge of his real character to your store of business ammunition. The time will come when you can use it, all right, all right!"

I don't suppose I want to use any ammunition against June Flower, but it didn't seem to me worth while for Dirk to reproach her. We're so happy! And poor old Mrs. Bleecker has come to me and begged me not to let any one know about the bargain. It seems she had promised not to tell until the whole thing was over. That will be before so very long, it seems, because advertisements for the missing son having appeared in all the papers in the country at the time of the father's death, and having remained unanswered, the "presumption of death" is strong, and the time of advertising is much shortened now when they desire to declare him "legally dead."

February 22: Mother's letter came this morning. The dear is so happy because I am happy, and says such sweet, old-fashioned things about a good man's love and all that sort of thing. And dear old Jimmie's letter—I cried when I read it, he was so grateful for the few little old nothings of things I've been able to do for him since father died. "I always meant to make a fortune and to take care of you, myself, sis," he said, "and somehow it doesn't seem square to let any other fellow have the first chance. But mother says she guesses I can do enough for you by being a—etc. etc. kind of man—you know how the good old mater talks! And I'm afraid it would be a longish wait for you if you waited until I could give you all that's coming to you if there's any justice in this old universe. Bring him up Sunday. He looks like a good sort in the picture. Is that straight that you told me about his drive?" Dear old Jimmie!

Hattie Lawlor's wedding last night was so sweet. She loved all her presents so madly, and she looked so dear in her dotted muslin—twenty-four cents a yard, it was, and it is to be her party dress this winter and her best dress next summer. We were all there in the church, though it was just a tiny, unpretentious little affair. How my heart pounded as she said those solemn, solemn words! Dirk sat in the pew beside me and his big, comforting hand closed over mine when she repeated the vow after the clergyman.

We went for a windy holiday walk on top of the Palisades this morning. In the afternoon Jessica Fletcher came to see me—such a nice girl, so like her brother, tall and out-of-doorsy and laughing and honest. She lives with her mother, who's a good deal of an invalid, at a married brother's out at Pelham Manor. Dirk has his rooms in town. I'm to go out there to Pelham the Sunday after next. This Saturday night I'm to go up on the Fall River boat to Boston, to spend this Sunday at home. Dirk's coming up on the midnight train, and we're coming back together on the five o'clock Sunday. I'm going to keep on working until two weeks before we're married—in early June. I need the money!

February 25: A note of sadness has been struck in the general joyfulness by poor Mrs. Benthorn. Of course, no one at the office knows of our engagement, Dirk's and mine. It isn't to be told until I resign in May. And Mrs. Benthorn is too deeply saddened by her own troubles to seem to notice any particular radiancy about me. To-day she got me out at noon to walk with her and to listen. She says she thinks she would go mad if there were no one at all who would listen to her. It

seems that her husband has been more or less on hand ever since the last day she told me about him—the day when he had twisted her hands to make her tell where she kept her money. He doesn't come home every night, but now and then he appears, either to threaten her with some sort of physical or mental torture so as to make her give him money, or else very drunk.

"I am becoming desperate!" she told me, with such a look in her eyes as frightened me. I feared she meant suicide. I besought her to remember that any harm she did herself, through fear of her husband, or through horror at her situation, would really be on his soul—the blackest of all his black account. It was the only thing I could think of which would put any restraint upon her; she cares so for him even yet that she would do anything, bear anything, to save him!

February 27: I have never heard of anything so perfectly desperate as what she has done! She did not come to the office at all yesterday, but sent word that she was sick. To-day she came in looking ghastly—ghastly!—at about eleven o'clock. She got to work and worked in that grim, dreadful way of hers until noon. Then, of course, I went out with her. She led me into a comparatively quiet side street, one of the Thirties, and clutching my arm in so fierce a grasp that there are the marks of her fingers blue on the flesh now, she said:

"I've done it, I've done it! Oh, God forgive me, I've done it!"

The only thing I could think of was that she had killed her husband.

"What have you done?" I gasped, though I dreaded to hear the answer.

"I drugged him," she told me, with such a horrible iciness that my blood curdled with fear of what would follow. "I gave him a dose so big that I was almost afraid to give it. He had come up to the apartment, and was trying to make me drink with him, as he always does, and when he lay there, inert, helpless, I went out and I traveled down to Doctor Eversley's as fast as I could—you remember?"

I nodded.

"I told him all about it," she went on. "At first he would hear nothing of it—he wouldn't listen to me. But—I went on my knees to him. I told him I would give my whole life's labor to pay him. He said it wasn't a question of money, but of tampering with a man's life without his consent. But I told him, I told him everything. I begged, I pleaded. I told him that this changed creature who inhabited my husband's body would never consent to any experiment for his regeneration, and that we could not wait for him to come out of his stupor. It must be done, if it was to be done, in spite of him. It must be done, I said, to save Walter's soul, to save my life, my reason. Finally, I triumphed. An ambulance went back with me in it. They moved Walter to the hospital last night. The X-rays have revealed something awry in the spinal column. Oh, my God, to-day they are going to operate when he has entirely recovered from my drug—they can manage it, with some little lie to him—and—it may be happening now!"

I was almost as wild as she was. We went back to the office. She was called to the telephone. She could not go, she was so weak with terror. I went for her. It was the hospital. The operation had been successfully performed. The head nurse talked to me. Doctor Eversley hoped for the happiest outcome, she told me. And, meantime, Mr. Benthorn wanted to see his wife. A half hour later I left her, a shaken, trembling creature, at the hospital portal.

April 12: I haven't been doing much in the journal line. I've been too busy hemming napkins and putting lace edging on clothes. And I have to give a good deal of time to Dirk, who is some exacting as a lover—how disappointed I should be in a man who wasn't! Mr. Petersen has never forgiven me for the fiasco about Baylawns—as though it were my fault! I have learned since that he sent an emissary to Mrs. Bleecker with an offer to assume the liability for her forfeit

on her bond, if she would break her contract with the railroad. Of course, she wouldn't do anything of the kind, even though he threw in five thousand dollars to boot. I gather from what she says that all the preliminaries are about complied with, that her son will very soon be declared dead, legally, and that the railroad will take the deeds and the title, and then I suppose the pair of cloud-dwelling poets will draw their little commission and be off to Italy. It makes me a little mad.

But there's so much to rejoice over that I can't bother to be mad with them. There's Christine Benthorn, for instance, with her husband home with her—her own husband, apparently, and not the awful stranger who blackened her life those wretched years. What a triumph for her faith in him—and for Doctor Eversley! He—Mr. Benthorn—was let out of the hospital about a month after the operation.

April 13: It is too wonderful! As we stood in the Benthorns' hall tonight, saying our farewells, I noticed that charcoal sketch again.

"Look, Dirk," I said, "isn't this drawing of Mr. Benthorn's like a place that came near being our Waterloo?"

Dirk looked, but said he didn't remember what it was.

"Why, it's like Mrs. Bleecker's Baylawns," I explained.

"Mrs. Bleecker's Baylawns?" said Walter Benthorn. And when I turned and saw the white, "gone" look on his fine features I knew!

"You are the boy who ran away!" I cried.

We went back into the little sitting room and talked it out. He was the one. He had been in Alaska or Australia or God knows where when his father had died and the advertisements had appeared. Until the time of his accident, when he had been so changed and made so indifferent to all that he had once held dear, he had always hoped to hear from his father, whose name he had renounced in a fit of boyish heroics. But things had happened as they had happened.

When we had talked until two o'clock about the wonderful past, and about how his mother should be prepared for his reappearance, I suddenly cried:

"And now the railroad needn't have Baylawns!" And Walter Bleecker heard that tale and he promised with a good, round promise that the railroad shouldn't have Baylawns, now that the heir had turned up!

April 17: I like the nerve of that poetess! Oh, I like her nerve! When all the business negotiations in which she was concerned were called off by the railroad upon the unexpected reappearance of Mr. Walter Bleecker and his proof of his identity, if that brazen cloud dweller didn't have the colossal cheek to try to whistle Dirk back.

She wrote to him:

> It needed this long absence to test me, to teach me what I want. Has my folly cost me—I will be bold and say it!—has it cost me my life's happiness, my heart's desire?

Her Rodman doesn't want her without her commission, evidently! Dirk replied courteously that he was sure her delay had cost her nothing to which she would attach the least value, and he asked for her congratulations on his engagement to me.

April 19: The young Bleeckers like the place up on the Putnam division, especially since the Baylawns neighborhood is to be so changed. They will sell—but to us of the Meyer-Grimson company. And they insist that it is through me! I went in and mentioned the matter to Mr. Petersen. He scowled at me and rolled out his mouth.

"You'll get only five per cent. commission!" he told me.

"Well, then, I think I'll dispose of my option to the Pennsylvania," I replied. When we compromised on seven and a half per cent., he said:

"It's a pity you're going to be married, as I hear you are. You'd have made a good business woman if I could have had the training of you."

Perhaps! But the commission means that I shall not go to Dirk like a beggar—and that Jimmie is sure of college. Oh, I'm not such a bad business woman already! And oh, I'm a happy one, Mr. Petersen!

The Greenhorn and the Ambassador

By Edward Lucas White

ILLUSTRATED BY ROLLIN CRAMPTON

THE greenhorn looked very green indeed. He was long and lean and lanky. He had very big, flat feet in very loose, old shoes, not at all tidy. His socks were red; an ugly, insistent red. His trousers were too short, as were his coat sleeves. The suit he wore was a marvel. It was of a loose-woven darkish green cloth, marked off into big squares by narrow stripes of a darkish yellow. At the intersections of the stripes were tufts of a more greenish yellow, like sun-dried grass, which gave a shaggy effect to the whole surface. It looked like the product of a weaver's nightmare, made up into clothes by the indiscreet whim of a freakish employee of some wholesale clothier, sold after repeated reductions at the last gasp of a clean-sweep sale. The greenhorn wore no cuffs, his shirt-sleeve bands were frayed, his low collar, two sizes too large for him, was even more frayed. His necktie was a stringy device of a bright and uncompromising blue, which made his red-rimmed, watery blue eyes look entirely colorless.

His long face, boyishly smooth except for an incipient corn-silk mustache, had a vacuous expression. His wide mouth he kept not entirely shut. His skin was of a peculiar raw, scaly texture, as if universally and permanently chapped. He had a way of putting one or the other hand up to his

towish yellow hair, a bewildered way, as if trying to remember something. And those hands were the most striking thing about him. Every part of him was long, but his hands were uncannily long, and had a clawlike, centipedish, daddy-longlegs-like motion to every joint of them. As one timidly waved an envelope and the other mechanically sought the side of his head they were very ugly indeed. And they moved in that way over and over again, as he sat in the waiting room of the legation.

A more hopelessly countrified specimen of a backwoods American the secretary thought he had never seen. He was an expert at protecting his chief from the intrusion of those countrymen of his who in a never-ending stream, without any shadow of a claim upon official or personal attention, sought to thrust themselves upon official time. The secretary was always suave and always seemed sympathetic. He now appeared especially regretful that the ambassador was not in. Mr. Medick would perhaps leave his letter to be transmitted by the secretary. The greenhorn used few words, but he conveyed unmistakably that he meant to deliver that letter in person. The secretary had no idea how long it might be before the ambassador would reach the legation. The greenhorn sat immovable; the secretary decided to let him sit a while.

"He'll soon get tired," he thought.

The greenhorn soon got very tired. But he kept his place, meditating on the way in which he proposed to win the ambassador's notice. He had been told that he would find him an old-fashioned man with old-fashioned ideas, a courteous and kind-hearted gentleman, most considerate of every one, but capable of overmastering wrath if crossed in his pet notions, and prone to take an unalterable dislike to those who shocked his sense of the proprieties by beliefs or actions contrary to his views.

The greenhorn reflected as to what those views probably were. He had been told that the ambassador revered sweet, serene, domestic, home-keeping women, and abominated loud, self-assertive children; that he abhorred what he called the sordid scramble for mere lucre; that he anathematized the modern tendency to specialization and lauded the antique ideal of a well-rounded general education as the only fit training for all men; that he prided himself on his ability to read character at a glance.

Beyond these points the greenhorn had to resort to inference or conjecture. He tried to imagine himself a man born when the ambassador was born, in the same place and of the same kind of family, brought up similarly and influenced by similarities of education; to think of every conceivable subject and to conjure up a picture of how it would strike him. This mental exercitation helped to while away the tedium of waiting, but he was weary in heart and soul before the secretary again addressed him.

The secretary tried every device in his arsenal. The greenhorn would wait or would come back at any hour, to-day, to-morrow, or the next day or the day after that. He had a letter of introduction to the ambassador from an old friend. He would do nothing else but try to present it until he had presented it. After a while the secretary realized that he was beaten. Entering the ambassador's private room, he said:

"I fancy, sir, you would best have it over at once. He is worse than a horse leech."

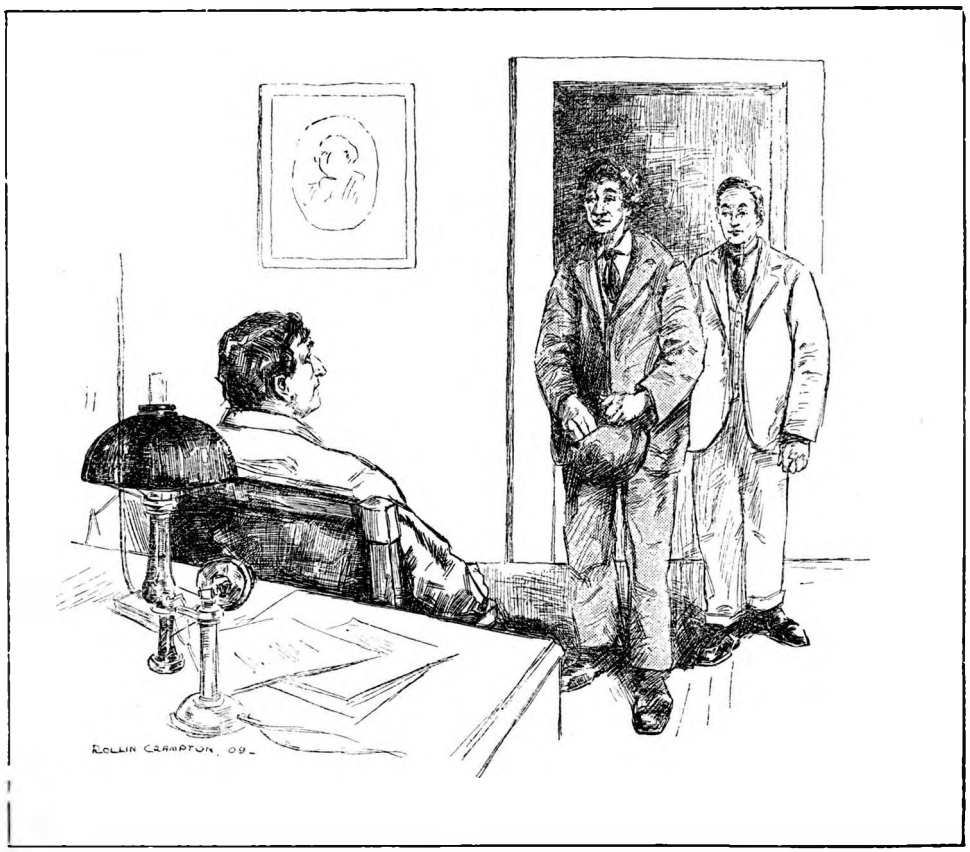
"Show him in," said the ambassador wearily.

The secretary returned to the waiting room. The ambassador had reached the legation and was now at leisure. Would Mr. Medick walk in?

Where he was led the greenhorn followed, his heart thumping. The ambassador saw in the young man's face something the sleek, glib secretary had wholly missed. He rose, offered a warm, dry hand, and indicated a chair by his desk.

"Sit down, Mr. Medick," he said. "To what do I owe the pleasure of seeing you?"

"I have a letter of introduction, sir,"



The ambassador saw in the young man's face something the sleek, glib secretary had wholly missed.

said the greenhorn, "from the Honorable James Hollis, who was at the University of Virginia with you, sir."

"Jim Hollis!" exclaimed the ambassador. "Haven't heard of him for years. How is Jim?"

"He is the richest and most important man in our section, sir," said the greenhorn.

"Good for Jim!" said the ambassador. "He always had plenty of push."

"He has yet, sir," said the greenhorn.

"Many alumni of the University of Virginia in your section?" the ambassador inquired.

"As far as I know, sir," said the greenhorn, "Judge Hollis is the only one, sir."

While the ambassador was reading the letter the greenhorn studied him, noted the silvery sheen of his iron-gray hair, the fresh pink of his wrinkled face, the clearness of his brown eyes, the decision of his mouth and chin. And particularly he dwelt upon the high standing collar, its points projecting beside the jaw, and upon the voluminous black cravat that swathed the throat.

"Hollis," the ambassador began, looking up from the letter, "tells me that you have come to Vienna to study. What are you studying?"

"Music, sir," replied the greenhorn.

The ambassador swept a glance over his visitor, conning the lack-lustre eyes, expressionless face, outlandish attire, and baboonish awkwardness of posture.

"Is your family musical?" he asked.

"Not at all, sir," answered the greenhorn. "I am the only one who ever cared for music, as far as I know, sir."

"Why do you care for it, then?"

The greenhorn and Lucy Maitland.

"I have never cared for anything else, since I was born, sir," said the greenhorn simply.

"Do you take it up as an amusement or as a profession?" the ambassador queried.

"As a profession," the young man told him. "I mean to make my living by it, sir."

"Not a very remunerative profession, is it?" the ambassador inquired.

The greenhorn thought he saw his chance, and he was glad that he could reply with perfect sincerity, for he felt the penetrating power of those keen brown eyes.

"I think, sir," he said, "that it will be more profitable for me to spend my life doing what I love best, even if I have to stay poor, than to waste it doing something I care nothing for or even hate. That's the way it looks to me, sir."

"Not bad, not at all bad," said the ambassador.

"I think, sir," the greenhorn went on impetuously, "that to earn a little money pleasantly and at the same time cultivate my ability to enjoy it will be better than to aim at making much money, ruin my capacity to take pleasure in it, and perhaps fail to make it after all; that's my idea, sir."

The ambassador regarded the greenhorn. From his awkward appearance no one could have expected him to talk so well. Perhaps here was, in spite of his exterior, a young man worth advising.

"Very good," said the ambassador, "very good indeed. But you must remember that to attain that ideal you must make yourself an all-round musician. You must not put too much time or energy upon any one phase of your art. You must study the history of music, the development of its methods. You must attain some measure of skill upon every known instrument. You must master theory and orchestration

and composition. You must not make yourself one-sided."

"I should delight in all that, sir," said the greenhorn argumentatively. "But I am not independently well off. I have no property, no income at all. I have my living to make, sir."

"All the more reason for laying a broad foundation of solid knowledge," the ambassador maintained.

"But, sir," the greenhorn reasoned, "I must begin to make my living soon."

"Don't make it too soon," the ambassador warned him. "Superficiality and shallowness are the curse of our age; shallowness and superficiality and haste."

"All my natural bent, sir," the greenhorn asserted, with the air of one proving a proposition, "has been toward piano playing. All my best prospects seem to lie in the cultivation of those capacities. They tell me I have unusual hands, sir."

The ambassador eyed those certainly remarkable hands. He perceived their mobility, but was most struck by their hideousness. He flared up.

"That is the way with all of you young men," he broke out. "You want to cultivate one faculty to the exclusion of everything that makes the faculty worth having. You came here to study. Europe offers you the widest opportunities for acquiring variety of culture and breadth of character. Instead of making good physicians of yourselves you specialize on children's diseases, or eye and ear, gain a specious reputation, make a living easily and quickly, and never really amount to anything. Instead of learning Greek and Latin you moil over Doric dialectic case-endings, Samnite inscriptions, or hidden quantities; when you might become scholars you turn into moles, delving underground at the damp roots of literature. Even you artists specialize." He blinked and puffed, rolling himself in his chair.

"Leschetizky, sir, is not only the best piano instructor in the world," said the greenhorn, "but an all-round cultured musician, sir."

"A mere specialist," the ambassador said, dismissing the discussion with a wave of his hand. "You are one more sacrifice to Moloch, one more infant cast into the furnace of Baal."

"Perhaps you are right, sir," the greenhorn admitted deprecatingly.

"Certainly I am right," said the ambassador, with his "I dare you to contradict me" air. "But you will pay no more attention than the others."

"I shall reflect upon what you say," said the greenhorn, with an attempt at a conciliating tone.

The ambassador eyed him for a moment in silence, and then said:

"You have not yet told me why you came here. What can I do for you?"

"I have been told, sir, that if I can obtain a letter of recommendation from you to the director of music studies I can then procure free tickets to the performances of the opera at the Imperial Theatre, sir."

The ambassador puckered up his face, and replied testily:

"Oh, they clamor for such letters. I am eternally pestered for them. I give too many. I cannot give one to you. If you were a student of orchestration or composition I might stretch a point for you. But, being a pianist, I fail to see how you have a valid claim."

The greenhorn fixed upon the ambassador's face a gaze devoid of any glint of intelligence.

"It's queer, sir," he said softly, "how it works out. Against my will I am compelled to specialize. You, sir, tell me I am all wrong, and advise me to train myself musically in all possible ways. I grasp eagerly at an opportunity to broaden and strengthen my general knowledge of music. And you tell me I must forego it because I am a specialist, sir."

The greenhorn's look had in it just the ghost of a smile, of a satisfied, comprehending smile.

The ambassador regarded him.

"Caught," he said, "and I acknowledge it. You have caught me fairly. You have earned your recommendation and you shall have it. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"If it is not asking too much, sir,"

said the greenhorn, "I should like another for a friend of mine."

"Also a pupil of Leschetizky?" the ambassador asked.

"Yes, sir," said the greenhorn.

"And what is your friend's name?" asked the ambassador.

"Lucy Maitland, sir," the greenhorn replied, his raw complexion pinkish.

The ambassador conned his visitor afresh, viewing him with new eyes and pondering. How much foresight, economy, and saving, he wondered, how much pinching of himself and others had been necessary to equip the greenhorn with even that incongruous garbing. Was not his uncouth appearance the result of poverty and privation rather than defects of personality? He imagined him well-fed, well-groomed, well-clad, and seemed to see a not impersonable being. Even in his uncouthness, except for his hands, he was not uncomely. The ambassador fancied he could see possibilities of winning expressiveness in the lustreless eyes. How much soul, after all, might not be hid behind that boyish face? It had given him no hint of the ingenuity of mind it masked. Perhaps it concealed potentialities of companionship unguessable from its owner's exterior. And of what witcheries of melody and harmony might not those spidery fingers be capable?

"Lucy Maitland," mused the ambassador. "Is she related to the Lucy Maitland who married Jim Hollis?"

"She is her niece, sir," said the greenhorn.

"Jack Maitland's daughter?" the ambassador inquired.

"Yes, sir," the greenhorn answered.

"Is she as pretty as her aunt?" the ambassador queried.

"Much prettier, I believe," said the greenhorn, his face unquestionably pink.

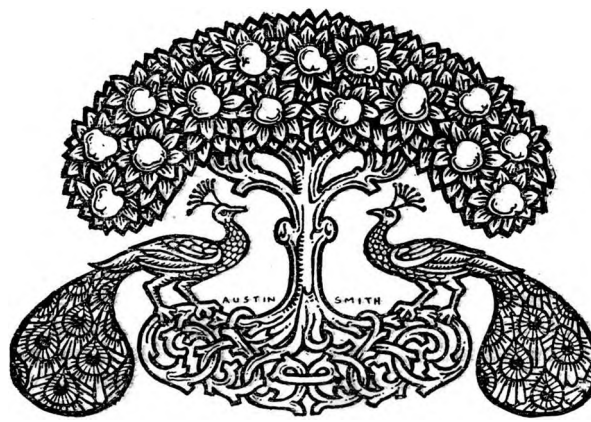
"And has she a specialty, too?" asked the ambassador.

The greenhorn's face flushed a fine universal red. His pale blue eyes met the ambassador's fatherly gaze.

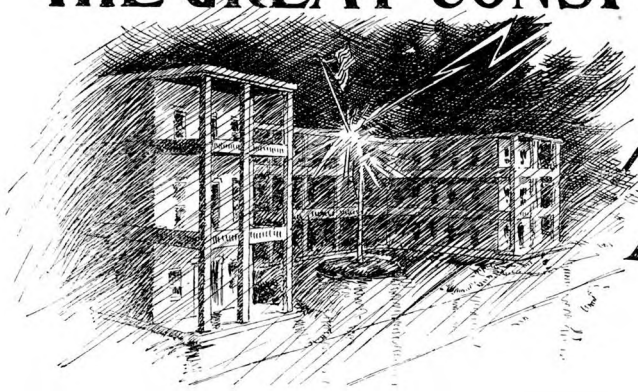
"If I have my way, sir," he said, "I am going to be her specialty, sir."

The ambassador beamed, chuckled, and stood up. The greenhorn, deferentially rising as his elder rose, felt his hand clasped in two warm, friendly ones.

"She shall have her card, too," said the kindly old man. "I congratulate you, and I congratulate her also. Since the world began a lover or a husband has been the ordained specialty for a woman. It is old-fashioned but natural; and not only human but divine. The right man is the only proper specialty for the right kind of woman."



THE GREAT CONSPIRATOR



By Howard Fielding

ILLUSTRATED BY F. X. CHAMBERLIN

[*We consider this one of the best mystery stories written in recent years. It will appear in five installments in this magazine.*—THE EDITORS.]

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Mrs. Frances Seabury, a woman of enormous wealth, who has sunk every other feeling in her financiering, lives with her two nephews, Jack Deering and Arthur Seabury, and a daughter of an old friend, Sylvia Leland. These are to inherit her money, but are kept on a meagre allowance owing to the parsimony of Mrs. Seabury, with whom relations are constantly strained. Mrs. Seabury's secretary, a young lady named Alice Warden, becomes close friends with the other young people, and Deering falls in love with her. Arthur Seabury and Deering speculate against the expressed wish of their aunt, get on the wrong side of the market, and are on the edge of a failure which will necessarily come to the attention of Mrs. Seabury. At this juncture, the four go to Cape May to spend the summer. On the night of their arrival the hotel flagstaff is struck by lightning. At the moment of uproar, Alice Warden, who had gone into Mrs. Seabury's room by mistake, is shot in the throat, so that she cannot speak, and dies, after making an unintelligible attempt to write the murderer's name. Jack's revolver, of peculiar pattern, is found to be missing; and Dalton, a servant, who had professed his affection for Alice, also disappears. During the excitement Mrs. Seabury's attorney comes to report the loss of a quantity of securities entrusted to him. No trace of the murderer is found, and Mrs. Seabury assumes the responsibility of directing the suspicion away from her three charges, who were the only persons near the scene at the moment. The chief of police, Quinn, arrives and starts his investigations.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE telephone bell rang, startling us all, and Mrs. Hammond looked up at it over her spectacles with grave reproach, as if it had committed an impropriety. Quinn answered the summons, and having listened for some moments, he turned to Sylvia.

"It is Mrs. Seabury," he said. "She wants to see you."

This put Sylvia into a difficult position, for she could not decline to go without emphasizing the hostility between herself and Mrs. Seabury. On the other hand, as I could readily perceive, she felt unequal to the interview and desperately dreaded it. She was in a state of nervous exhaustion; I doubted whether she had the strength to rise from the big armchair to which I had unobtrusively guided her while Jack's disclosure of the bullet was attracting the attention of the others; and yet I hoped that she would make the effort rather than refuse in Quinn's presence. I think she may have read my face, and perhaps Jack's also; for he, too, had seen the point.

"Please tell Mrs. Seabury that I will come to her directly," said Sylvia, "unless you wish me to remain."

Her voice was perfectly controlled; it revealed nothing, and Quinn did not quite succeed in concealing his disappointment. Doubtless he had expected a refusal, and had prepared a shrewd question or two. He now paused in thought, keeping his eyes upon Sylvia, but presently he extended a groping hand behind him which found and

covered the transmitter of the telephone.

"Miss Leland," said he, "I don't want you to take offense. It's the farthest thing in the world from me to suspect you of any wrong. But I know what's going to happen, and you don't. I know about trials in court, and what's evidence, and what isn't. Now, one of my men thinks he saw you hiding something, and he'll have to testify to that, by and by, and you'll have to testify the other way, if it isn't so. And there'll be a contradiction, against the interests of justice. But if you wouldn't mind letting Mrs.——"

"Not at all," said Sylvia, and looked toward Mrs. Hammond with a smile.

"Why, I'm sure if Miss Leland says she hasn't anything, she hasn't," said the housekeeper. "I'd sort of feel as if I was doubting her word if——"

"Chief," said the man who was the cause of this, "can I put in a word? A search ain't necessary. If it's anywhere, it's in that handkerchief tucked under her belt."

"This?" said Sylvia, taking out the handkerchief. "Captain Quinn may look."

She gave it to him, and he felt the substance in the knotted end, and was perplexed.

"This seems to be a key," said he.

"Yes," answered Sylvia, "that's what I thought. And now, if you will please return it to me——"

Quinn had undone the knot.

"A door key," he said; "just an ordinary, old-fashioned brass one. Key of your room, I suppose?" And he made a motion as if to give it back.

Some intuition informed me that it wasn't the key of Sylvia's room, and that Quinn had guessed that it wasn't. He was trying to gain the advantage which comes from involving a questioned person in falsehood, however trivial the subject may be, and it seemed to me that Sylvia came very near falling into the trap. She hesitated, and then answered:

"I don't know."

"Don't know?" rejoined Quinn, with exaggerated surprise. "Well, that's queer. Where did you get it?"

"I found it," said Sylvia.

"Where?"

Quinn was so quick with this question that his voice outran his courtesy. His tone was just a bit harsh and peremptory; and I thanked him in my heart. I saw the expected color flame in Sylvia's cheek; she sat straighter, and there was a gleam in her eye.

"Here," she answered.

"You mean——"

"In this chair where I am sitting," said Sylvia steadily, and she proceeded to describe how she had noticed the key in the crevice of the upholstery between the seat and the back of the chair. "I supposed that some one must have dropped it and would be asking for it presently," she proceeded, "so I tied it into my handkerchief, knowing that if I laid it down anywhere I should forget the place."

"It may be Mrs. Seabury's," said I. "She sat in that chair while she was here. But I fail to see the importance of——"

"Here's all there is to it," Quinn interposed. "My man reported to me—as in duty bound, of course—that Miss Leland seemed to be concealing this thing, whatever it was. It dropped on the floor, and fell heavy, and when Mr. Seabury started to pick it up, the young lady snatched it quick, as if she was afraid to have him touch it. Is that so?"

"Yes, sir," said the policeman; "and I'd noticed, some time before, that she had something, and seemed to be looking for a chance to get rid of it."

Sylvia smiled at the man indulgently, and slowly shook her head. Then she addressed Quinn, reminding him that Mrs. Seabury was waiting. He turned to the telephone.

"Miss Leland will be with you directly," said he. "And, by the way, have you lost a key?"

He repeated the question several times, as if he were unable to get any answer. Sylvia meanwhile had risen, and was now standing by the couch,

with bowed head. Her manner was full of tenderness, and wholly free from that ignoble terror which death inspires in many. Jack approached her from one side and I from the other. She whispered to me very softly, without looking up:

"Attract Quinn's attention—away from me. Go to him."

I crossed to where Quinn stood.

"What does Mrs. Seabury say?" I asked.

He caressed his chin with a fat hand.

"Well, to put it mildly," he replied, "the lady told me to deliver her message, and in all other matters to mind my own business. But if you come to think of it, you know, this *is* my business."

"May I go now?" asked Sylvia; and Quinn bowed gravely.

I opened the door for her, and when I turned again, I saw Jack in the corner beyond the couch, sitting on the edge of the table.

"Mr. Deering," Quinn was saying, "I want you to show me just where you found that bullet."

Jack slowly crossed to the window that was nearest the bedroom door, and indicated a spot at the edge of the curtain.

"Yes," said Quinn, "that's about where it would have bounced to. When did you find it?"

"After Miss Warden's death."

"Why didn't you tell me about it when we talked in your room?"

"Well," said Jack, "you see I've been very much accustomed to rely upon Mrs. Seabury. I thought I'd tell my story to her first."

"What is your own opinion? Did this bullet come from your revolver?"

"You may judge for yourself," Jack answered, thrusting a hand into his coat pocket. "Here's one of my cartridges. I found several in my trunk."

The electrician held his lamp for Quinn, while he compared the battered bullet with the missile of the cartridge. It was a matter of a moment; obviously, they were not meant for the same weapon.

"Not yours," said Quinn, shaking his head. "How about Wickham's?" And he drew the pistol from his pocket. "I beg your pardon," he added, addressing Mrs. Hammond, who sat directly facing him. "I'll take these things somewhere else."

"If it's necessary to do it, let it be done," said the old lady. "I don't need to look"; and she kept her eyes steadily upon her sewing.

Quinn removed the cylinder from Wickham's revolver, and applied the bullet to the bore, in a variety of ways, and with that ready reliance upon method which marks the instructed man. He looked up at Jack with a corner of his chin, and perhaps a part of one eye.

"The gun's a common sort," he said. "Nobody could positively swear that this bullet came out of it; but I'll swear that it might, and that's a point gained."

"You're mistaken," said Jack. "That bullet is bigger than a thirty-two."

"So's the gun," responded Quinn. "It's a thirty-eight."

"Oh," said Jack. "It is? I thought you said in my room that it was a thirty-two. But it doesn't matter."

"I think it matters a mighty big lot," rejoined Quinn. "Taken in connection with the bond robbery——"

"What do you know about that?" I demanded, in surprise.

"A plenty," said Quinn.

"Robbery?" said Jack. "Who's been robbed?"

"Mrs. Seabury," I replied. "She lost some bonds. That's what brought Wickham down here."

"Does Aunt Frances suspect Wickham?" demanded Jack. "Absurd! Wickham wouldn't steal five cents to keep himself from starving. I know him through and through. If there's been a robbery, you can mark Wickham off the list. He had nothing to do with it. And certainly it is monstrous to connect him with this awful crime. He hardly knew Miss Warden."

"In the dark," said Quinn softly; and then raised a hand to check Jack's further utterance. "Gentlemen," he proceeded, "I don't want to discuss this

matter any further. I am investigating this case without preconceived ideas or prejudice against any person. My advice is, leave it to me. And that reminds me to say that my orders detaining people in this room are recalled. Anybody can go, and Miss Leland can come back; she alone."

"How about Mrs. Seabury?" asked a guard, and Quinn bestowed some thought upon his answer.

"Let Mrs. Seabury come in if she wants to," he said, at last. "But she won't."

Jack gave me a glance, and then moved toward one of the windows, but returned to speak a few words to Mrs. Hammond, asking if she would rather have us stay; but she, perceiving that he wished to go, sent him away in grandmotherly fashion.

I followed him out to the veranda, where he asked me somewhat excitedly if I had not heard Quinn say that Wickham's revolver was a thirty-two. I told him that I had no memory of it.

"Well," said he, "I got the idea somewhere. If I hadn't, I never would have given Quinn that bullet. I knew it was a thirty-eight; anybody could see that."

"Where did you get it, Jack?" said I.

"Why do you ask?" said he, with rising excitement. "Did you see anything fishy about it? I wonder if Quinn did."

"Do you mean that that bullet is a fake, a substitute?" I demanded.

"Oh, no," he declared. "The bullet's all straight. It's the right one, sure enough. But I didn't find it; that's the point."

"Who did? Not Sylvia?"

"Certainly not. I got it from Clinton. I saw him after I left you. This is confidential, Arthur, you understand. You're not to tell anybody, not even Aunt Frances; no one except Sylvia."

"I may tell her?"

"Yes. That won't do any harm."

"Jack," said I, after a pause, "what do you make of that business about the key?"

"Why, nothing at all," he replied. "It's unimportant."

"Sylvia seemed excited."

"Oh, a little, perhaps," said he, "just for a moment."

"What did she say to you, after she sent me away? That is, if it's not private."

"Not at all," he responded. "She asked me where I got the bullet, and told me about Quinn's finding the mark on the wall."

"Jack," said I, "you impress me as if you were holding something back. I've already had the same feeling with Sylvia. I believe that you and she have a theory of this crime, and that you don't care to tell me what it is. Very well, but——"

He interrupted me to protest in the strongest possible manner that I was entirely mistaken; that he had no opinions except upon the negative side, and that Sylvia was in the same state of mind as himself, being sure that certain persons were innocent, but absolutely without suspicion as to who was guilty.

"Very well," said I, again, "this is of the less consequence because I'm sure that you are both wrong. But tell me this; what was it that you wanted me to get outside your window when Quinn came to your door?"

"Nothing of importance," he answered, "nothing that has the remotest connection with this tragedy. It was a little private matter of my own, all done with now and forgotten."

"But what became of the thing?"

"Blew away, I guess," said Jack.

"Blew away? Paper? Was it the wrapping paper with that girl's name on it—Marjorie Vannard?"

"For Heaven's sake!" he cried. "What put such an idea as that into your head?"

"Where is that paper?"

"I don't know. It's gone."

"Do you mean that somebody's got it?" I demanded. "Not Quinn?"

"I don't know or care," said he. "Hello; it's beginning to rain. Let's go in."

We went into my room, and I perceived as soon as the lights were up that the place had been visited in my

absence. All my things had been disturbed, as if in a hasty search, and I breathed forth vengeance upon Quinn.

"Take my advice and keep quiet," said Jack. "Pass it over without a word." And he overwhelmed me with reasons.

We were interrupted by Sylvia at the door, and she entered, pale, and with shining eyes.

"Where is Dalton?" she asked, as if it were a matter of great magnitude.

"I don't know," said Jack. "I can't find him. Why?"

"They have learned that there was a woman on the lower veranda. She was seen going out there just before the flagstaff was destroyed. That marks the time for every one."

"Who was the woman?" Jack asked eagerly.

"They don't know," she answered, "but Dalton may."

Then, in response to our questions, she told us that while she had been standing by the railing of the veranda, just before the destruction of the flagstaff, she had seen Dalton cross the court and ascend to the lower veranda by some steps almost directly below her. The course that he had taken made it evident that he intended to go out toward the seaward side; in other words, he was approaching the scene of the murder by the shortest possible route, which would have lain along the veranda and up the exterior stairway.

"How far could he have gone?" I asked. "Would he have had time——"

"No, no," she answered. "He could not even have reached the stairs when the lightning came. It was an interval of seconds. He would have been at the corner of the house, I should think. He must have seen that woman."

"If she were below," said I. "If she had not come up."

"Arthur," she said, very gently, "you don't understand. The woman, whoever she may be, can't have had anything to do with the death of Alice. But if by accident she were alone so near the scene, she might not speak of it; she might be afraid. She may not have seen Dalton, and, at any rate, she will wait to be sure that he saw her. Then she will come forward."

"Well?" said I.

"Don't you see that they are shutting us in?" she cried. "Shutting us in with this crime, we three? Doctor Clinton was in the hall. No one could escape that way. Dalton and this woman were below. You were at this window, Arthur; I was beyond the corner on the courtyard side; the murderer was between us. How did he get away?"

I noticed that Jack looked at her as if he were perplexed. His manner might have suggested that there had been some previous understanding between them with which her present action did not accord. And it was to him that Sylvia addressed her next words.

"I say this," said she, "because I am driven to it. We must not let circumstances put us into this false and terrible position."

"What can we do?" I asked.

She drew us together, holding a hand of each; and her hand in mine was cold.

"Arthur must change his story," said she; "only a little, but enough. He must give time for some one to have passed this window and have gone in through Jack's or one of the others beyond."

"But nobody did it, you know," I objected. "Why, Sylvia, I was in sight. About two-thirds of me was outside the window. The murderer must have faced me as he turned after firing the shot, and have approached me as he ran toward the stairs. That's hard enough to believe; but that he embraced the gallows by running past me——"

"You must say that you were in the room, not by the window, at all," said she. "It is the only way."

"But I've already told Quinn where I stood. I didn't describe my attitude, nor say that I had been asleep——"

"Who was there when you said this?" Sylvia interrupted. "Was it Jack? Jack, do you remember Arthur's saying that he was by the window?"

"Not if it's going to hurt anybody," answered Jack promptly. "And I quite agree with you, Sylvia. He must say that he was in the room, and well out of the way. But you know there's just one other chance, and it beats me to understand why nobody has thought of it. Quinn seems to have been entirely blind to the possibility."

"What possibility?" she asked eagerly.

"That the murderer dodged in through the window of Alice's room," said Jack. "It was nearer than the passage, nearer than the stairs; it was not ten feet from where he stood."

"But that way led nowhere," said I. "He wouldn't have dared go through into the hall."

"There was just one minute when he might have done it," answered Jack impressively. "After I had called Clinton into the room where Alice lay, there was an interval, just long enough, when the coast was clear. No one was in the upper hall. The wind had closed our door so that we could not have seen any one pass—closed it with a bang, too, that would have announced the fact. It was a chance."

He caressed his chin with a fat hand.

"Or he might have lurked in that room," said Sylia, "and have escaped to the veranda afterward."

"No, no, no," protested Jack. "Too risky. Fancy being caught doing that! Perhaps that's why nobody has thought of it; because it seems so much like stepping into a trap. And yet, if he could have got through so as merely to have been seen in the upper hall—that might be explained."

"Has Alice's room been searched?" I asked. "The weapon might have been hidden there."

"It wasn't," responded Jack. "I was hunting for it within ten minutes after you left Quinn and me together. I found nothing. But if Quinn has searched that room, or if he has considered it as a possible way of escape, I haven't learned of it."

"He and his men are there now," said Sylvia. "I saw them as I passed."

"Well," said Jack, "he may have waited, having other features of the case more immediately at hand. Undoubtedly he thought that he had all that territory protected, but some of his people didn't take the stations assigned them. I heard him giving one fellow fits."

There was a moment's silence.

"Let us look this squarely in the face," said I. "Except for the chance that the murderer, after shooting Alice, ran in through the window of the next room, and escaped unseen to the hall at the precise moment when that was possible—except for that slender chance this crime falls fairly among us three."

"Why, then," said Jack, with spirit, "as none of us did it, that chance becomes certainty. We have worked out the way that this crime was committed."

CHAPTER IX.

If Jack's theory was correct, the murderer must have been guided to his safety by a combination of accidents. His natural impulse would have been to escape down the stairway to the lower veranda, which he might well have hoped to find deserted because of the storm. Had he done this he must have encountered the unknown woman and Dalton; had he fled through the passage into the upper hall, he would have been seen by Clinton; but, by a chance most fortunate for him, he had seen me standing by my window as he turned after firing the fatal shot, and in the dread of instant discovery he had sprung into the nearest place of concealment.

Except for the destruction of the flagstaff, this act must have been his doom. The lower part of the house had instantly become a scene of confusion, and the outcry from the court had stifled the alarm which Jack had raised. Otherwise, the murderer would have been almost instantly surrounded in his place of momentary refuge, and his mere presence there would have condemned him. With what agony of terror he must have lurked in that room, the brief interval of his detention stretching into hours of torture; with what an ecstasy of wonder he had found a way of safety opening before him through the deserted hall! I could fancy the creature lifting up his eyes with a perverted and dreadful gratitude.

Such thoughts and pictures occupied my mind, as I stood silent while Sylvia and Jack spoke eagerly together; but the murderer as I saw him was only a shadow of myself. I was imagining my own sensations in such a situation, my own distracted behavior; and it was a mere emotional indulgence, unaccompanied by any rational attempt to reach the man through comprehension of his conduct. Indeed, since his successful flight had been without design, could it provide a clue to him?

"Can it have been Wickham?" said I, thinking aloud.

"No, never," returned Jack instantly; and he proceeded to defend Wickham earnestly.

I spoke of the man's guilty look. Could he have stolen the bonds? But Jack defended Wickham quite as warmly against this imputation. In his opinion Wickham had merely lost his nerve through dread of facing Mrs. Seabury as the bearer of such news.

"It was enough to rattle anybody," Jack declared. "You know what Aunt Frances would have done to him in ordinary circumstances."

Yes, I knew; and I was forced to admit that Wickham's fright had reasonable justification.

"The fact is," said I, "that this theory of yours points toward Clinton, if it has a personal bearing. He was the only person seen in the upper hall, and you yourself have said that his appearance was mysterious."

"Don't worry about Clinton," Jack responded. "We'll get him out of it."

His manner puzzled and irritated me.

"You seem to want to get everybody out of it, Jack," said I. "You rush haphazard to the defense of every person whose name comes up. This is unnatural, and it's not at all the sort of thing I should have expected. Alice was one of us, and she is dead, and somebody killed her. I want his life for it. That's the way I feel, and I can't help it. If the man were in this room, what would you do? What should I do? I don't like to think of it."

They looked at me aghast.

"You are exciting yourself," said Jack. "It's what I've been trying to avoid. We haven't the strength for it, Arthur, and you least of all. We've been through a fearful strain in the last few weeks, and—Arthur, come here."

He led me to a mirror, and tapped upon the glass with a pointing finger.

"Do you wonder that I don't talk of vengeance with that man?" he demanded. "I am too much his friend."

I turned away from the sight of my own face.

"I must keep cool," said I. "Yes, you're right. I didn't realize."

"We have tried to feel less bitterly, Jack and I," said Sylvia. "No one could have meant to harm Alice. We must remember that."

"If he meant to shoot Aunt Frances, is he any less a murderer?" I exclaimed. "I can't understand——"

"This must stop," said Jack, with decision. "Sylvia, good night. Keep a brave heart. I'll take care of this boy. I'm going to put him to bed."

I offered no protest; my mind seemed to be unable to free itself from a single idea.

"Jack," said I, "have I been looking like this ever since this awful thing happened?"

"Don't bother about that," said he. "A night's rest will fix you."

"When did it come over me?"

"It's not so sudden or so bad as you think," said he, "so don't worry. You've been wearing that face for a week or more. It's a little worse tonight, that's all."

"I haven't noticed it."

"You never were vain," said he. "And I fixed it with Aunt Frances."

"Did she ask you about it? When?"

"A few days ago. Stomach, said I, and gave her a good story. Fortunately, she had a lot of other things on her mind, so she didn't speak to you. I gambled that she wouldn't. Now go to bed."

I protested that it was a weak thing to do; that I ought to be up and busy; that this was a time for action; but meanwhile I was obeying Jack like a child. Finally, he sat down upon the foot of my bed, and announced that he would stay there until I went to sleep. It seemed entirely impossible to oblige him in this matter, but I certainly did not wish to keep him there all night. It would be better to counterfeit sleep, and so I relaxed into extreme quietude, though my mind was active. Possibly I may have hit by accident upon some undiscovered method of inducing slumber, or perhaps the time had come when natural rest could no longer be postponed. The fact is that I fell into a dreamless region of profound peace, whence I emerged to find the morning sun blazing across the ocean to my windows.

A flood of memories surged in upon me, filling the delicious vacancy of my waking mind with dreadful images, but they were powerless to daunt me. I had passed some hours in a realm of magical refreshment, and my strength was renewed. Within the first five minutes of that morning I tasted all the joys of an extended convalescence, as I recalled them from an experience of boyhood; I seemed to gain weight with every breath; my natural face looked out upon me from the mirror. It was pale and haggard, but it no longer dismayed me. The current of my interests had turned, and now flowed healthily outward toward external objects.

The first business of the day was to find Sylvia. If she had passed the night in vigil, I must see that she took rest; if she had slept, I must talk with her and learn what service I could render. As soon as I was dressed I went out upon the veranda, and beheld in the first instant a somewhat startling spectacle. A woman in black was crouching by the nearest window of the corner room, in the very spot where the murderer must have stood, as I believed, and in the necessary attitude. What had occurred there in the blackness of the storm was reproduced for me in the vivid light of morning, yet with a hideous unreality. The strong sun beat upon that place, with pitiless intensity of revelation; I saw the worn black gown, and the lean hand a little knotted at the joints, beginning to grow old, and the thin line of the lips in profile, and an eye narrowed to a slit.

"Aunt Frances!" The exclamation was involuntary and scarce above a whisper, but she heard me and faced about.

"Good morning, Arthur," said she, and viewed me critically. "It seems to

me you're looking better. How's your stomach?"

"All right again, thank you, aunty," I replied, and inquired after her own health.

"I'd be ill if I could afford it," said she, "but I can't. There's too much to do; we must all be busy. And I'm very glad you're well again. I've just been inquiring about Sylvia. Jack has been worrying about you, but so long as I knew you weren't being victimized by some expensive doctor, I had no fears for the result. I've been inquiring about Sylvia," she continued. "Mrs. Hammond has made her lie down in the bedroom, and she's asleep."

"That's good," said I. "And Mrs. Hammond is still there?"

"Yes," she replied, adding in a lower tone: "I suppose we'll have to pay her something. I had thought of two dollars."

"It's not too much," said I.

"Well," said she, brightening, "I suppose you'd like to know what's been done. Let's walk over toward the other end." She glanced backward at the window, the lower half of which was now closed by the strong interior blinds wherewith all the rooms opening on the veranda were provided as a bulwark against intruders.

"A beautiful morning," said Aunt Frances. "I came out to enjoy the air. Don't do that!" she cried suddenly, as I sat down on the low balustrade; and I remembered that she had a peculiar terror of high places. Even so moderate a height as that at which we stood affected her so strongly that she would not willingly look over the brink, nor lean upon the railing, though it was built solidly. The elevators in the trust company's tall edifice were a source of positive physical torture to her, and it must have been for very weighty reasons that she maintained an office for herself upon the topmost floor.

"I beg your pardon, aunty," said I.

"It's bad enough when children do that sort of thing," she said. "But, then, you're not altogether an adult. I wish you were. There's a piece of business I'd be glad to have you handle. Somebody's got to arrange with the coroner."

"Arrange with him?"

"Pay him," she said sharply, "find out what he's got to have. I shall probably want to use him."

"I know Coroner Ritter," said I seriously, "and I think he's an honest man."

"So do I," she responded, "or I wouldn't try to buy him. I'd like Quinn, too, but I don't believe he's trustworthy. However, I can't expect you to manage such affairs. In the first place you'd pay too much."

"I wouldn't do it at all, aunty," said I. "And I may as well say so."

"But you'd give ten cents to your barber," said she, "and twenty-five to a waiter and fifty to the porter of a Pullman car. Why not give five hundred dollars to a coroner, if you need him as badly as that? I'm not sure that I do. I think I see a way to save the money. This affair seems to be coming out very nicely."

"How?" I asked.

"In various ways," she replied. "You've heard about the woman who was on the lower veranda? Well, we've learned who she is. Edith Lockwood."

Mrs. Seabury knew very well that the mention of that name would alarm and distress me, yet she uttered it without a trace of feeling. Miss Lockwood was a charming girl with whom I had engaged in a very mild flirtation in the latter part of the previous season. This innocuous affair of the heart had begun rather suddenly, about the time that Doctor Clinton had laid siege to Sylvia. I had always run about with Sylvia like a big brother, and I suppose I felt lonesome. Miss Lockwood was attractive to the eye, and a very stimulating companion for a young man tending toward melancholy; a girl of widely varying moods and a somewhat tempestuous emotional nature. She was an all-the-year resident of Cape May, living with her widowed mother, who owned some bits of property in the place.

"Edith Lockwood!" I exclaimed. "What in Heaven's name was she doing there?"

"I don't know yet, but I shall," said Mrs. Seabury grimly. "She wasn't there by accident."

"This is most unfortunate," said I, "but we'll protect her in every possible way, of course. Do you think we can keep her name out of the papers?"

"I got my information from a reporter," she replied. "You may judge what chance there is."

"Does anybody else know? Can't we see this fellow, and——"

"And what?"

"Buy the story," said I. "Get him to suppress it."

"Is that any better than buying a coroner? But, never mind; I don't want it suppressed."

"How did the reporter happen to come to you?"

"He asked me what I knew about Doctor Clinton's relations with this girl. I didn't know anything. Do you?"

"Good Lord!" I groaned. "Why, nothing at all. There's nothing in it, Aunt Frances. They used to go around together, as any other two young people might. There was no romance about it."

"The reporter says they were engaged secretly," said she, "and that Doctor Clinton jilted her for Sylvia last summer. According to his account, she made a scene in Doctor Clinton's office, some time in the winter, and threatened to kill him—or herself—the reporter's not sure which."

I knew that a part of Mrs. Seabury's callous manner was assumed for a purpose. She studied me closely as she spoke, and I judged that she was satisfied with the result of her scrutiny. Doubtless she had tested me to learn whether I was seriously attached to Miss Lockwood.

"Aunt Frances," said I, "if this story is printed, it will read like a direct accusation of murder. Do you realize that?"

"Why should the girl murder Alice?" she demanded. "That poor child had nothing to do with Miss Lockwood's misfortunes."

"They'll say she mistook her for Sylvia."

Mrs. Seabury nodded slowly.

"I wondered whether you'd see that," said she.

"The only thing to do," said I, after a moment's thought, "is to acquit her at the very start. Dalton is the only one who can do that. Did Sylvia tell you——"

"Yes; she told me about seeing Dalton."

"Where is Dalton? Surely he can be found."

Mrs. Seabury slowly shook her head.

"That remains to be seen," said she.

We were not far from Jack's window, and now he threw the shutters open, having heard our voices, and came out to us. He had exhumed black clothes from the bottom of a trunk, just as I had done, and we both were somewhat shabby, but I observed that Mrs. Seabury viewed Jack's appearance with pronounced approval.

"I remember when you wanted to give that suit away," said she to him. "It looks very well."

"Yes, aunty," he said gently. "You were right to make me keep it."

And Mrs. Seabury was pleased.

She led us straight away to breakfast, in the room where I had dined, and she discouraged the discussion of important matters until we had had coffee. Then she began to speak of Miss Lockwood in a fragmentary manner very hard to follow, cutting off the ends of sentences or sinking her voice beyond the zone of audibility upon essential words. This was her habit when she had not formed an opinion; it was a method of making up her mind, and she disliked interruption, as we knew. We sat in silence, therefore, but at every opportunity Jack turned a speaking eye to me, and I perceived the hair upon his head rippling with energy in Miss Lockwood's defense.

"This girl," said Mrs. Seabury, "is in one way an obstacle, and in another a——" She cut off the word, whatever it may have been, with her thin lips. "Upon the whole, I am inclined to think——" The guillotine fell upon that sentence, also.

Presently her manner became more

assured, showing that she had come to some decision, but she did not enlighten us as to its nature. She abandoned the topic, and took up Jack's theory that the murderer had escaped through Alice's room. It appeared that Jack had spoken of it to her late in the evening, after he had left me asleep, but I judged that she had made no comment upon it at that time.

"Jack," said she, "will you open that door? There; about so much. Now stand here." She pointed out the spot. "No one could come into the hall from Alice's room or from the passage beyond it, without your seeing him?"

"Certainly not, if I were facing that way," said he.

"I came to this room thinking Sylvia was here," said Mrs. Seabury slowly. "I didn't close the door."

"Where were you standing?" I asked. "Were you looking toward the hall?"

"Please close the door, Jack," said she; and then, after a pause: "I think I'd better not tell you anything more just now, but you see that my testimony will settle the question whether anybody came out of Alice's room or not. Jack, if you're asked whether this door was open or shut at that time, you'd better say you don't know."

"I don't," responded he. "I didn't notice."

"And you haven't heard me say anything about it," Mrs. Seabury proceeded. "I mention that point because inquests are so loosely conducted. The strict rules of legal evidence are the only defense against persecution. I'll defy the best man living to get anything out of me in one of the higher courts; it's been tried often enough. But even a fool can find out some of the truth, if you let him ask questions in the natural way."

"Aunty," said I, "what are we doing to find out who killed Alice?"

"Everything that's possible," she hastened to say. "I am very well satisfied with our progress; very well, indeed."

"As to the inquest," said Jack, somewhat uneasily, "can't we get it postponed until we really know what we're doing? It seems to me——"

"It seems to me," Mrs. Seabury interrupted, "that I know precisely what I'm doing, and that I shall attain the exact end which I have in view."

"There can be but one end," I insisted; "the detection of the guilty."

"And the protection of the innocent," Jack suggested, whereat Mrs. Seabury nodded approvingly.

She did not detain us when breakfast was over, nor assign us any tasks.

"Look out for the reporters," she said. "There are dozens of them downstairs, but they can't get up to this floor; I've attended to that. I'm going to see them all at eleven o'clock; so tell them that, if they catch you. Make that your excuse, and be pleasant about it. If you care to go out, don't pass through the office." And she proceeded to describe a corridor and a back stairway leading to a servants' exit in the rear.

By this path Jack and I escaped from the hotel unmolested, upon our way toward the small cottage where the Lockwoods lived. We had decided that it would be best for Jack to see Miss Lockwood alone, and that I should go to Doctor Clinton's and await Jack's coming. Not very far from the Eglinton, we were aware of a short, stout man of thirty-odd, who wore eyeglasses, and was fanning himself with his straw hat as he came along, though the morning was not unseasonably warm. When we were near, he suddenly halted in the middle of the sidewalk, and peered at us as if he saw imperfectly, even with the aid of the gold-rimmed lenses perched upon his prominent nose.

"I beg your pardon," said he, in a slow, grave voice. "Mr. Deering and Mr. Seabury, I believe?" And he offered his card, which bore the words, "Stanton Lynde, Correspondent," with an office address in Philadelphia.

"Is this an interview?" asked Jack. "Because, if it is, we must refer you to Mrs. Seabury. She will see you at eleven, at the Eglinton."

Lynde's fat, perspiring face assumed additional gravity. He looked at us

with a wise and moderate disapproval, as if he were a little oppressed by our obvious inadequacy, and would recommend that we accept advice from a man who knew the world.

"You were going to Miss Lockwood's, perhaps," said he. "You will not be able to see her. She is ill."

"We regret to hear it," said I.

"Yes," responded Lynde. "It is unfortunate. Miss Lockwood was caught in the rain, last evening, on her way home from the Eglinton. Pneumonia is feared, I am informed."

"By whom?" said Jack.

"By Doctor Clinton," was the reply. "He is attending her. You are surprised." And he viewed us through his glasses with a manner faintly suggesting that it was our fault that he could not see us better. "So was I," he added.

"Why?" asked Jack.

"Because Doctor Clinton and Miss Lockwood were formerly engaged, and so——"

"Did you tell this story to Mrs. Seabury last evening?" Jack interposed.

"Yes," said Lynde.

"Does anybody else know it?"

"I have telegraphed it to my papers," answered Lynde, with the satisfaction of a serious-minded man in the performance of a duty.

"Do you realize——" Jack began. "But what's the use of talking? The harm's done now."

"In such cases," said the correspondent, "it is best that a conservative statement should be published first by reputable papers, in order that the truth may be fixed in the public mind before the sensational press appears with its distorted stories."

"Have you really tried to put this thing mildly and decently?" I demanded.

"I value my reputation, Mr. Seabury," said Lynde solemnly, "and it rests upon conservatism. Upon conservatism," he repeated, with the amusing dignity of the fat; and then he turned to Jack. "You are better acquainted with Doctor Clinton than Mr. Seabury is. Doubtless you know that he has a fad for firearms, and is quite a marksman. I have learned that he taught Miss Lockwood to shoot with a revolver, and that he gave her one which she still has."

"Have you published that?" exclaimed Jack.

"It could hardly be avoided in a case of this kind," was the reply. "But perhaps I ought to tell you that I was careful to state that the identification of Miss Lockwood as the woman who was on the lower veranda, shortly before the murder of Miss Warden, has not been verified by me, and is open to doubt. The fact is, I know nothing about that part of it, except that Chief Quinn has a witness who will testify to Miss Lockwood's presence there. I don't know who the witness is; but it occurred to me that you or Mr. Seabury might learn."

"So that's the point," said Jack.

"If you learn the name of that witness," said Lynde, "I shall be happy to exchange information with you. I know a number of things, which I am holding in reserve. They will be at your disposal."

He said good morning to each of us, being careful to avoid any distinction in cordiality; adjusted his hat upon his head, which was bald all along the middle; and soberly pursued his way.

"Did you hear? Did you understand?" said Jack, in my ear. "Identification not verified, eh? Did you notice the way he said it? I'll tell you what's a fact, Arthur; it wasn't Edith Lockwood, at all; she's not the girl; and this fellow knows it."

"If he does, he ought to be strangled," said I, in wrath. "A man who'd publish a story such as that, when he knew it was a lie, ought not to be on earth. But I don't quite agree with you, Jack. I think the man's in doubt, and has printed a rumor that he got from Quinn."

"If Quinn has a witness on the quiet, he didn't tell that fellow," said Jack. "That's sure."

About fifty yards beyond the spot where we had talked with Lynde, a

blue-eyed, cheerful young man was sitting on a fence.

"Mr. Deering," said he, as we came abreast of him, "I represent the *Philadelphia Recorder.*"

"I don't care if you represent the Recording Angel," said Jack; "we haven't any time."

"You had time for Stanton Lynde," retorted the young man.

"He did the talking," said Jack. "He gave us important information."

"I can do the same," rejoined the young man briskly. "I can tell you who Lynde is, and what he is, and why he's here. Do you want to know?"

"Who Lynde is?" said Jack. "He's a correspondent, a——"

"He's an agent of publicity," the reporter interrupted. "His business is to make public opinion. For the big fellows, you understand. The Coal Trust hires him when it's going to do something particularly devilish. The Money Trust paid him thousands in the last panic. This is not generally known, but I happen to know it. He has worked for your aunt in the same line; he's working for her now. She called him down here on this murder. There, I guess I've given you more information in a minute than you got from Lynde in fifteen; and mine's true."

Jack looked slowly round at me, and then back at the reporter.

"My friend," said he, "whatever Mrs. Seabury has done, its propriety must not be questioned in our presence. You share, perhaps, a common and mistaken prejudice against her, but you ought to know that the members of her own household see her as she is, and are prepared at all times to defend her name from any disrespect."

The reporter got down off the fence, his bright blue eyes fixed upon Jack's face.

"I spoke hastily," said he. "I try to be a gentleman most of the time, but maybe I don't succeed so well as you do."

"That's the humblest estimate I ever heard a man make of his own conduct," said Jack, with a smile. "Nobody could reject an apology pitched in that key. I guess you're a pretty good fellow, and I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you the only authorized interview with me; but you'll say nothing about the circumstances. Does that go? Very good. And you'll also get an interview with Mr. Seabury, only he won't

She drew us together, holding a hand of each.

be here when it happens. Arthur, go on to—where we were to meet; and wait for me there."

I went on to Doctor Clinton's, with black care walking at my elbow. The revelation about Lynde brought clearly to my intelligence the nature of the secret agencies which Mrs. Seabury so ruthlessly employed, and the unceasing trickery which she practiced upon the public. I seemed to see with an especial clearness the inwards of the golden idol. Bribery and falsehood were the springs that moved it, but this was no new discovery. I suppose this gimcrack of the religion of money seemed

the worse to me because it had been exhibited to cheat myself, and perhaps because it had been dragged into the presence of a private grief, a pitiful tragedy that touched the quick of natural sympathy and revealed the sharp line between good and evil. I was sure that Mrs. Seabury had no intention of disclosing Lynde's true status to me, and the chance discovery proved that I might be deceived in almost any feature of our situation. Cold horror entered into me when I realized that I could not now have faith even in Mrs. Seabury's intent toward Sylvia. They stood at variance. How deep might be the enmity between them I could not judge, but I knew that Mrs. Seabury never permitted herself to be defeated, nor scrupled to use any weapon which circumstances put within her reach for the destruction of an adversary.

It was impossible that she should cherish any ill will against Miss Lockwood, and if she had striven through Lynde to put the unfortunate girl in a position of difficulty, it must be only with the purpose of acquiring a hold upon her. What use Mrs. Seabury might intend to make of this power I could not guess, and possibly she herself did not yet know. It was her method to control all persons concerned in an affair, and then use such of them as were required, leaving the others to sink or swim, with the indifference of a rising tide.

CHAPTER X.

Doctor Clinton lived in a new house which had cost him more than he could afford. He had gone into debt for it with the typical American recklessness, and was already seriously embarrassed by maturing obligations. His income had been cut in half by the manipulated panic of 1907, and, like the vast majority of his fellow citizens, he had experienced no corresponding benefit after the trouble was supposed to be over. But he had a good house in which to entertain his quota of care, the shadowy dragoons of that invading and victorious army quartered upon the nation's homes from sea to sea.

His office projected from the main structure, and had a separate entrance from the yard, with a treilised porch, where flowering vines perfumed the air. A flagged path led me round the corner of the house, and my foot was on the stone step of the porch before I noticed that this pleasant nook was occupied. In the most shaded corner sat Chief Quinn, as patient as a cat.

"Good morning," said he. "Glad to see you. Was intending to pay you a little visit later."

"Doctor Clinton's not in, I suppose," said I.

"No; I was waiting for him, and my time's nearly up. By the way"—and he drew forth a little black memorandum book—"do you know a person of the name of Marjorie Vannard?"

"No," said I.

"You've heard the name, though. I could see that."

"Well?" said I. "What of it?"

"Did you ever hear Mrs. Seabury's man, Dalton, mention that name?"

"No."

"That's queer," said he. "I'll tell you about it; I've been hunting Dalton high and low, of course, and here's the only clue I've struck. Somewhere between seven and eight o'clock last evening, near the Eglinton, he met a boy who'd never seen him before, but who describes him satisfactorily; and he gave that boy a dollar to take a package to the express office and ship it to Philadelphia. Which the boy then did, and paid the charges, and kept the change for himself, as was agreed. The address was 'Marjorie Vannard, Steward's Hotel, Philadelphia,' and it was shipped according. I've notified the police up there to hold it for me, and detain the woman when she calls to claim it. Where did you hear her name?"

"I don't remember," said I, and he understood what I meant to imply.

"Well," said he, rising, "it's a good answer. Stick to that when they put you on the witness stand, and you'll be

mistaken for a millionaire—which you would have been to-day, now that I come to think of it, if the guilty party in this case had hit the mark he thought he was shooting at. Many times a millionaire, you'd have been, as I'm informed. Good morning."

And he strolled heavily away.

It was far from my desire to be an obstacle in this man's path of duty, but I dared not talk to him about Marjorie Vannard. The darkness which enveloped that mysterious name was far too dense for me to wander in with safety; it was Jack's business and not mine to hold a light for the police. He alone would know what to disclose and what to hide. As for Dalton, I could not believe that he had figured in the affair except as messenger. It must be Jack who had sent that package to Miss Vannard, probably some part of the contents of the larger parcel upon which her name had been discovered. The matter might be trifling, and essentially distinct from those black strands of tragedy with which, by a malicious chance, it had been woven in.

If Jack had promised violets to a girl, it would be like him to remember it at the foot of the scaffold and to spend his last moments cheerfully in sending off the flowers to their appointment. And yet I could not reconcile this brighter view of the occurrence with Jack's manner yesterday when Mrs. Seabury had questioned him about Miss Vannard, and afterward when he had begged me not to press him for an explanation. There must be something serious at the root of this; but my wits were not sharp enough to dig it out, and I was interrupted in the vain attempt to do so by the coming of Clinton.

At the first glance I knew that he was weary to the marrow of his bones, and stricken with anxiety as with a mortal wound. There was always something soldierly in the man's demeanor, and now he came on marching, with defeat written all over him, but not a hint of yielding. When he saw me waiting, he somewhat marred the effect by putting on the ready, superficial suavity of the physician, at your service always, that manner which so rarely gets worked into the real fibre of the individual character.

"Ah, Seabury," said he, carefully steadying a tired voice, "what can I do for you? Come in."

He ushered me into the reception room, which was a sort of hall with a recess on either side, and then through folding doors into his office, where we took our seats as for a consultation.

"You have just come from the Lockwoods'," I began. "I hope Edith is not seriously ill."

"I hope not," said he.

"I heard that she was threatened with pneumonia."

"There is some ground for apprehension upon that score," he replied.

"It would be impossible for me to see her, of course?"

"Quite. She mustn't see anybody."

He showed no disposition to impart more information; his manner was courteous enough, but extremely guarded.

"Have you seen a reporter named Stanton Lynde?" I asked.

"I have," said he; "and I gave him the truth, under a sort of compulsion. If he prints anything else, it will be the worse for him."

He explained what he meant by compulsion, and it proved to be the usual thing; he had been forced to give Lynde facts in order to prevent the man from publishing injurious falsehoods.

"It is true that Edith and I were engaged," said he. "Our engagement was no more a secret than many others. Her mother knew of it, and my father, but it hadn't been announced. Then, for reasons which seemed adequate, it was broken; and we were friends as we had been before."

I questioned him as delicately as I could about the scene between himself and Edith, which was one of the most dangerous features of Lynde's story.

"A difference of opinion only," Clinton replied, measuring his words. "A servant overheard us in a rather warm

discussion. Subsequently the servant was discharged; and this reporter has got hold of her, and she has told him a wild fiction for his money."

"She won't dare tell it under oath," said I, and looked to him for some response; but he sat silent, self-contained, a statue of disciplined discretion.

His manner had begun to get upon my nerves. I experienced that peculiar sensation of striving to direct another person's conduct by mere will, unexpressed; my own impulses were trying to get inside of Clinton's skin, while a voice within my brain constantly repeated: "He'll have to do this better. He is lying to shield Edith, and anybody, a blind man, must perceive it." And when I asked the critical question, whether Edith was in fact the woman seen on the veranda at the Eglinton, my chief curiosity was to know how badly he would tell the predetermined falsehood. To my surprise he spoke straight out.

"No, thank God! She was at home," said he.

I remembered in a flash that Lynde himself had hedged upon the matter of the identification. This, then, was the point; the jealousy and bitterness were real and could be proved, but Edith's presence near the scene of the murder was merely an invention of the enemy. Yet there must be danger here, to account for Clinton's fears. The man had something more to trouble him than the publication of an unpleasant, mildly discreditable incident of his private life.

"Who knows that she was at home?" I asked, and he resumed his cautious manner.

"I think we shall be able to cover that satisfactorily," he said, after a pause. "Her mother will testify."

"Now, look here, Clinton," said I, "we're enlisted in the same cause, and it's unnecessary to shut me out in this way. The fact is that Edith was alone at that time; her mother didn't see her go out, and that's all she knows. The whole matter, so far as legal evidence is concerned, rests upon Edith's own story. Isn't that so?"

"No," said he slowly. "Not exactly. As I told you before, her mother——" He hesitated, and before he could select a phrase with which to finish his sentence, the bell rang.

"That's Jack," said I; and Clinton stiffly moved as if to rise, but let himself sink back. With an elbow on the arm of the chair, he bent forward, resting his forehead on a hand which covered his eyes.

"I feel a bit tired," he said. "Would you mind letting Jack in?"

When I went into the reception room, I closed the doors behind me, thinking to speak a word with Jack in private. He came in breezily, asked me where Clinton was, and took his answer from my eyes, talking straight on meanwhile.

"That reporter was all right," said he. "I got a good line from him on this business about Edith Lockwood; I know just how it stands. I don't believe she went to the Eglinton yesterday afternoon. Several people saw that girl, whoever she was, go out on the veranda, but not one of them recognized her or will pretend to identify her. Quinn has questioned every living soul who might have seen her, and that's the best that he has got. She was a tall girl, with dark hair, wearing a black or brown rain coat, just like ten thousand others. Some say she was veiled, and others say she wasn't. The fact is that nobody paid any attention to her when she went out there, and nobody saw her at all when she came back. They were all too scared by that clap of thunder. The whole yarn about Miss Lockwood's being at the Eglinton comes from Lynde, who had dug up this tale about the broken engagement, and realized what a beautiful newspaper story it would be, if she were the mysterious woman on the veranda. So he began to ask questions, and of course that started the rumor."

"You may be right," said I, "but Clinton is scared. He knows more than we do, and the man's desperate."

"About Miss Lockwood?"

"Who else can it be?"

"Well," said Jack, "it might be him-

self, if you come to that; though it doesn't seem reasonable that a man should worry so much over troubles of his own. It's the other fellow that we walk the floor for, in this world, Arthur, my son. Especially when the other fellow's a girl. Let's go in and cheer the poor boy up."

"Wait a minute," said I. "There's a queer thing that I've got hold of—about Dalton. I got it from Quinn. It seems that Dalton's last known act on earth was to send a package by express to Marjorie Vannard in Philadelphia——"

I stopped short, amazed by the sudden change in Jack's expression. He looked like a man who has stepped on a rattlesnake.

"Quinn's lying," said he, in a quick, gasping voice. "This is a trick."

I shook my head, while studying his face.

"Oh, see here, Jack," I began, "you'd better tell me——"

"Wait," he interposed. "This doesn't seem to get into my mind. Dalton sent a package to Marjorie Vannard?"

"You told him to," said I. "It's the stuff you were going to send her yourself."

"I don't know her," said he mechanically. "But it doesn't matter. Where did Dalton send this thing? To what address?"

"Steward's Hotel," I answered. "Quinn has telegraphed the Philadelphia police. They've got it, by now."

"Yes," said he softly. "Quite so."

He turned away from me, and, leaning with his hand against a pillar, looked out of the window.

"Beautiful day," said he. "Sky clear; grass like new velvet; trees all washed clean—'the people with the green heads'; fine folk, the trees. And a good world altogether; but oh, what a hash I have made of it!" He faced about with a smile. "Arthur, when the ship starts to sink, get busy; then you won't mind. What can we do for Edith Lockwood?"

"What can I do for you, Jack?" said I. "You're up against it, old man."

"Yes, I guess so," he replied, "but I was wrong to let you see it. I'm a fool about that. My first impulse is always childish, to reach right out after sympathy; but the next minute I perceive that I'm only loading the trouble off on somebody else when I might just as well carry it myself."

"You don't want to talk about it?"

"No; we'd simply waste time. And that reminds me that we mustn't stay out here any longer; Clinton will think it strange. He's down, you say. Let's go in and give him a boost."

He passed his hand across his hair with the familiar gesture which seemed to act as a sort of stimulant, and then, crossing the room briskly, he opened the folding doors. The office was deserted. Upon Clinton's desk a large sheet of paper hung from the hooks of the telephone, and we found this message written on it:

> I have received an imperative summons, and must ask you to excuse me. I shall go out through the house because it is the nearer way, and I am in haste. CLINTON.

"The nearer way?" said I. "Nearer to what? The ocean?"

"That's the geography of it," Jack responded, and looked at me dubiously. "Where is this man's trouble really located?" he asked. "In his mind, in his heart, in his pocket——"

"Some of it's in his conscience," said I.

"Precisely. That's what I was working up to. Now, between you and me, who are friends of his, what has been Clinton's manner since this crime was committed?"

"The manner of one who carries a great burden," I replied. "It may be his own, or it may be another's, but there's no doubt that he's bent double under it."

"To speak plainly," said Jack, "he acts as if he killed Alice himself, or knew who did. Is that what you mean?"

"Yes," said I, "but you must remember that you're nearly as bad yourself, and that Sylvia is worse. Edith Lockwood is prostrated, not with pneumonia or anything of the kind, but with excitement and terror resulting from this

He favored me with a full view of his acute, unpleasant countenance.

murder. You saw what Wickham looked like—the picture of guilt; and Dalton has run away. What inference can be drawn from such a situation as that?"

Jack passed his hand backward along his hair, which fairly leaped up when released, whereby I knew that he was energized to an unusual pitch.

"You're wrong about Sylvia," said he, "utterly mistaken. Sylvia has no suspicions; none whatever." And he proceeded to drive this point into my head with such acute insistence that I was very painfully affected. Why was he so anxious to make me credit this? There could be but one answer; he was afraid that I should come to believe as Sylvia did. Then he must know who it was that she suspected. Did he share her opinion? It seemed probable; but I could form no guess as to the reason why they strove so hard to exclude me from their confidence. I became impatient, thinking about it.

"Jack," said I, "let up. The tongues of angels couldn't convince me. It's a moral certainty that Sylvia suspects somebody. And she finds excuses, though Heaven only knows what they can be! I've tried to imagine an excuse, and the best that I've found yet is too wild a dream for any sane mind."

"What is it?" he asked, and I could see that he dreaded my reply, and stood ready to assail and overwhelm it.

"Suppose," said I, "that Sylvia believed the shot was intended for herself, and that she had deserved it. She would deplore the deed with all her heart; she would feel a sense of guilt; and she would be too just to lay full blame upon the actual perpetrator. Oh, I know that this is a man's view and not a woman's. It would suit you or me much better than it suits Sylvia. If I had wronged a man so that my life was forfeit to him, and he had shot you in mistake for me, could I, holding his secret, give him up to the law? Should I not rather shield him, at least with silence?"

Jack exhaled a great breath, and his face brightened.

"Now that's clever," said he. "There's a fine line of psychology in that. It's well worth thinking about. Of course Sylvia hasn't really injured anybody, but she may think she has—unintentionally, you understand."

"Could she believe herself responsible for that broken engagement?" I suggested. "This is a dream, but let's follow it for a moment. We don't know what happened; Edith may have been subjected to some peculiar anguish or

humiliation—one of those slights that women never forgive; and she may have held Sylvia responsible. If Edith had been maddened to the pitch of retaliation, and had blindly done this dreadful deed, would Sylvia now betray her? It might depend upon the measure of Edith's suffering."

Jack shivered slightly.

"It's curious how these theories fit together," said he. "I had started out to speak of Clinton when you steered me off for the moment. And now you've brought me back again. We don't know where Clinton really stood when the shot was fired. Suppose he was in the passage, and heard it. Assuredly he would have looked out upon the veranda. The question is, did he, or did he not, see anybody go down the stairs?"

"If he did, and has kept still about it, there can be only one conclusion," said I. "We may be certain that it was Edith whom he saw. Have you thought how strange it is that he should have been called to attend her? Our wild dream-theory explains it; Clinton would have gone to her house without being summoned. He would have known that she would need attendance; that she would be hysterical, perhaps, and might betray herself. And, on the other hand, supposing that he did not go unasked, Mrs. Lockwood would have sent for him the moment that Edith became irrational and began to talk. No matter what the bitterness may be, Clinton would have seemed the only man who could be trusted."

"This is mere fancy, of course," said Jack, after a brief silence. "Neither of us believes that Edith had any hand in this dreadful affair, and we're threshing the matter out only because other people are certain to do the same thing. Aunt Frances won't be blind to these possibilities; nor Lynde. In fact, we may confidently expect to see every detail of your theory exploited in a hundred newspapers. And that means that we must get ahead of them. I've a little theory of my own. Come over to the hotel, and we'll see how it works."

CHAPTER XI.

Beyond the Hotel Eglinton to the southward there lay a strip of land which the city had acquired with the intent of opening a street, and this work was proceeding with municipal slowness. The place looked like a ribbon cut from original chaos, unimproved since the beginning of the world, and its condition seemed to have spread like a disease into the grounds of the Eglinton. Elsewhere the lawns were excellently kept, but the little piece between the uncompleted street and the end of the south wing had been neglected. The bare earth showed in random patches wet from yesterday's rain, and weeds were growing along the low fence, which the laborers had splashed with mud.

To this uninviting spot Jack led me, while unfolding to me the theory which he had mentioned. It had struck him as very strange that all reports of the mysterious woman represented her as going out upon the veranda; there was no story of her having come back. In speaking to me of this state of the matter, Jack had explained it by referring to the confusion which had followed the destruction of the flagstaff, and in the same way Quinn had accounted for it, as Jack had been informed by the correspondent of the *Recorder*.

"But there's a better explanation than that," said Jack; "nobody saw that girl come back, because she didn't come."

"Do you mean that she went in through a window?" said I. "There are no steps at the south end of the veranda, and it's as much as ten feet from the ground."

"Not quite," said he. "An active young woman could negotiate it; and I've come to the conclusion that that's what happened."

Pursuing this line of investigation, we came upon a very remarkable discovery. We looked for footprints in the soft earth at the end of the veranda, and were amply rewarded. The surface was ideal; many of the impressions were as sharp as if made with care and skill in a prepared plaster;

and we were able to read an interesting record. Two men and two women had been there, but not at the same time, as was proved by the condition of the imprints. One of the women had been the first to arrive, and it seemed certain that she had leaped from the veranda at the lowest point—a height of about seven feet—and had then run to the fence bordering the unfinished street. The other woman, coming later, after the surface had begun to dry, had followed the footsteps of her predecessor, and had deliberately trodden in and distorted the impressions so that accurate measurements could not be taken.

This had been done hastily, and it was still possible to decide that two women—or at any rate two pairs of shoes—had taken part in the astonishing performance; indeed, this might be readily inferred from the fact that the second of them had made no effort to blur her own record. She had not come down from the veranda, but from the lawn at the front of the wing, and when her task was done she had returned that way.

The ground had dried still more when the first of the men arrived. He was the smaller of the two, and wore very narrow shoes, whose imprints somehow gave the notion of expensive footgear. This person had inspected the record in the earth, being careful not to mar it. He seemed to have made some measurements; and the other man had done the same, a little later, as was proved by the attention which he had evidently bestowed upon *all* the prints except his own. He was a heavy fellow with a broad shoe.

"What do you say to Lynde and Quinn?" queried Jack; and I replied that it was a good guess.

"But what do you make of the women?" said I.

Jack did not answer me. He was following a trail which led rearward, in the direction of the Eglinton stables and garage.

"That's the way the little fellow went," said he, turning back. "The big one tracked him to this point, and then branched off to the street. Arthur, do you realize how serious this is?"

"I don't see how it could be much worse," said I. "Quinn will arrest either of these women if he can find her. The second has made herself an accessory."

"That's what she's done," said Jack, taking off his hat to stroke his hair. "Arthur," said he suddenly, "you'd better go. Vanish, my boy!"

"Why?"

"This girl—the second one—has given me a good idea," said he. "I'm going to blot out *her* tracks. But there's no reason why you should be in it."

I stared at him in a dull wonder.

"Why should you do such a crazy thing as that?" said I. "We don't know who this woman is that trampled out these tracks, nor why she did it. Whose tracks were they? We can only guess, and it's a thousand to one that we're wrong. And yet, at the mere sight of a clue which may be of some small help to the police in running down the assassin of our friend, we act like a couple of Corsican cousins trying to cover up a murder committed by a member of the family."

Jack came close to me, and spoke in a low, intense tone.

"Take your own theory," said he, "and whose footprints would these be, the second ones? What girl do you know who is clever enough to have guessed that these marks might be here, and plucky enough to have acted on that inspiration? Who had the whole night to think of this, and was astir at dawn, when no one was about, and there was light enough, and not too much?"

"Sylvia!" I whispered. "I don't believe it—but we can't take the chance. I'll do it, Jack. Leave me alone here."

There were no laborers at that moment upon the street, and the passers-by in front of the hotel were not likely to observe what I might do. The chief danger would be at my back, and I turned to look up at the windows of

the hotel. I saw Sylvia leaning upon the railing of the upper veranda.

"Wait," she called. "I will come down."

She disappeared, and at the same moment I heard a smothered imprecation from Jack.

"There's Quinn," he said, "way up the street. He's coming here, no doubt, and he mustn't find us. I'll go and head Sylvia off; and as for the tracks, they must stay as they are. We haven't time to fix them, but there's something just as important that you can do. Go out to the stables and scout around for anybody who might have seen this girl, the first one, the one that climbed down from the veranda. If she was observed, it was probably from that point. Question the boys quietly, and find out where they were located about seven o'clock yesterday afternoon. Do you remember Bud Burke? If he's here this year, look him up. He's a prying rascal, and thoroughly up to date in his business methods. He'd sell out his grandfather for five dollars. Find Bud, by all means. I'll be with you presently."

He gave me a gentle start in the right direction, and then hurried away to meet Sylvia.

In the matter of Bud Burke, I was notably fortunate, for my eyes lighted on him as soon as I had passed beyond the end of the south wing. He was polishing a headlight of an automobile, and whistling a popular air. He saw me coming, but pretended that he didn't, keeping his face averted and continuing to work with a very jaunty, self-satisfied manner. When I had come near enough, he drew a large gold watch from his waistcoat, opened the case, and snapped it shut again carelessly, as one to whom such baubles were familiar. Then he favored me with a full view of his acute, unpleasant countenance, and said: "Good morning, Mr. Seabury," speaking the name with a slight emphasis, for he took a pride in knowing everybody.

He may have been nearly thirty years old; one of those men who seem content with humble station and small wages, yet have always money in their pockets. And now, when Bud thrust his two hands down into the capacious cupboards of his trousers, I felt abashed at his superior ability to get on in life, and shrank from the attempt to bribe him.

Therein I underestimated Bud's facility in business, for when I mentioned that my errand was confidential and that I came for information, he took the conduct of the affair out of my hands with all the suavity and professional readiness of a good salesman in a store.

"They all come to Bud when they want to know anything," said he, with pardonable pride. "I suppose you just drifted around to me, natural-like. Nobody told you that I'd seen that woman, did they?"

"No," I answered.

"Well, I did," said he. "I saw her climb over the fence. It was just after the flagpole got what was coming to it."

"Did you recognize her?" I asked, with a dry throat; and he smiled tolerantly.

"I might," said he, "if I was to see her again in a good light."

"You did not know her?"

He smiled again.

"I'm an agreeable party," said he. "What do you want me to do? Know her or not?"

It struck me vaguely that the man was suggesting a crime. If I should bribe him not to know the girl, I should become an accessory to murder; and with a flush of shame I thought of what the deed had been, so base and so abhorrent.

"I want you to tell me who she is," said I.

"Well," he responded thoughtfully, "that might be arranged."

He took out his watch again.

"I've got an appointment with a gentleman at the Hotel Donaldson in ten minutes," said he. "Maybe I can see you again when I'm through with him."

"Where?"

"You might walk up that way," and he indicated the street running behind the Eglinton. "I suppose Mr. Deering will be with you? I've got no objection to that. I like Mr. Deering first rate."

Evidently the rascal had surmised that I should wish for time to talk with Jack. Probably the engagement at the Donaldson was an agreeable fiction, and a method of suggesting that our decisive conference might better be at some remoter spot.

"Very well," said I. "It is understood. Mr. Deering and I will walk up toward the Donaldson in about twenty minutes."

"That'll do nicely," he responded, and leisurely put on his coat and strolled away.

Presently Jack appeared, in a great hurry.

"Well," said he, as soon as he was near enough to speak without risk of being overheard, "it wasn't Sylvia who trod out the footprints. I'm at my wits' end about this matter. Have you found Bud?"

I told him what had passed.

"Do you think he really knows who she was?" asked Jack.

"No," I answered. "It's likely enough that he saw her, but his identification will depend on what there is in it for himself. He'll identify anybody, if he's paid for it."

"Oh, no," Jack protested, "Bud's not so bad as that. There's a kind of an honesty about Bud; I've always found him reliable, in a way."

"Reliable people of that kind are getting too common," said I. "Aunt Frances could name you a thousand."

"Well," said Jack reflectively, "if Aunt Frances named them, I'd be certain they were worth the money. But I'm afraid she wouldn't guarantee Bud Burke. However, we've no choice; it's Bud or nobody. If he can't identify this girl, I think she'll never be known, unless she comes forward voluntarily; which isn't probable, for she certainly must understand the danger by this time."

"Is it so grave?" said I.

"My boy, she would be arrested in a minute. It's like this; there were two persons very near the scene of that crime, and both, in a sense, have fled. Dalton is one, and this girl is the other. Have you any doubt that Quinn would arrest Dalton, if he could find him?"

"None whatever."

"Yet Dalton has the advantage of Sylvia's evidence in his favor, while this girl has absolutely nobody to say a word for her, unless Dalton can do it, and we're not sure that he saw her. Dalton may never be found; he may be dead. And now, Arthur, look at the case for a moment as a criminal mystery. In my opinion it will never be solved; I didn't think so in the beginning, but now I'm thoroughly convinced.

"Aunt Frances has made a great many enemies in the last ten years. I wouldn't speak of this outside the family, but between you and me, in this emergency, the plain truth must be recognized. Some of those people had been rich, and they went to the gutter, or the madhouse, and a few to prison. Discarding all wild theories, isn't it very near a certainty that this atrocious deed was prompted by revenge? What other motive will stand serious consideration? Blind chance deluded some poor, vengeful, half-crazed rascal into shooting that innocent child who had never harmed a human being, even by so much as an ungentle thought. And then blind chance saved the murderer from the immediate detection which was so vastly probable. He escaped, not by his own cunning, but by sheer luck, and he will never be caught. Nobody will ever know who he is, except possibly Aunt Frances, and there may be many reasons why she would prefer to lock the secret in her own breast.

"But the public," he continued, with increasing earnestness, "will not be satisfied with silence. Even now you can hear the clamor rising to heaven, and this is only the beginning. An arrest will be demanded. Quinn, the district attorney, the coroner—everybody in authority will be besieged. I tell you

an arrest is certain, and that girl will be the victim. Edith Lockwood's name has been already mentioned; you have heard from Clinton what a weak defense she has, scarcely more than her bare word. But the evidence against her will be only a very little stronger, and the district attorney will not dare to bring the case to trial, though he will be able to force an indictment. The law permits no bail, and Edith will stay in prison while her lawyer exhausts his trained ingenuity in collecting money from the poor girl's mother. He will take her last penny and the roof from over her head; it is the rule in criminal cases. That's the stake we're playing for, Arthur, when we deal with Bud Burke."

"You must handle him," said I. "He's too much for me."

"He's a moneymaker," Jack rejoined. "You don't understand him. He is ignorant, shallow, vicious, whatever you please, but he is gifted with the instinct for pecuniary gain, and you are not. You're a better creature than a fishhawk, Arthur, but you can't lay your back against the under side of a cloud and watch your supper swimming in the briny deep a thousand feet below you. Neither can you see a dollar as far as Bud Burke can."

"What will you do with him?"

"Here's the first point," Jack replied. "Does he know this woman or does he not? You think he doesn't, but you may be wrong. We can't afford to take a chance; we must be sure. My plan is to make him think I know her, and you may take my word that I can do it. Then I'll offer him a high price for an identification, and he'll think it's a test, and that I'll pay him for his silence, if I find he's worth it. If the girl is Edith, and Bud knows it, he won't dare refuse my money, because Edith is already suspected. He'll name her, and then we'll stand on solid ground. If he knows the girl, and it isn't Edith, I can't predict just what he'll do; it will depend on circumstances. But if he hasn't an idea who she is, he'll recognize the great pecuniary need of finding out, and he'll try all sorts of tricks with the intent to trap me into giving him a hint. I shall recognize that procedure easily. There's the plan of campaign, my boy. Can you improve it?"

"I could neither improve it nor follow it," said I. "You must do it all yourself. I'm helpless."

"Well," said he, "let's get under way. Quinn's just round the corner studying those footprints. We can't stop him, and we don't want to be asked to help him. We'll try our luck with Bud."

I shuddered at the mention of the footprints, and Jack noticed it.

"Cheer up," said he. "Sylvia's entirely out of it. She told me so. Dismiss it from your mind, and help me think about Bud. That's the nearest duty."

"Suppose you're satisfied that he doesn't know," said I, as we began to walk toward the Donaldson, "we shan't feel safe. He may still be bribed or bullied into naming somebody."

"Oh, that's all right," said Jack, with easy confidence. "I'll see that he identifies a girl, but it won't be anybody who was within a hundred miles of the Eglinton when Alice was shot."

"But you can't drag another girl's name into this dreadful business, Jack," I protested.

"Can't I? My son, I'll find one who will jump at the chance," said he; "some fair young journalist from Philadelphia. There'll be a dozen here, and one of them is sure to answer the description. Any tall, dark-haired girl will do; and her story will squelch Bud completely. Leave it all to me."

At this, I saw Bud walking toward us, his hands deep in his pockets, jingling some coins, his face cunning, calculating, self-complacent.

"My man wasn't there," said he. "I've got to go back; but it'll take me only a minute with him, and then I'm at your service. While I'm seeing my party, you might wait for me out on the veranda. Now, if Mr. Seabury was to stroll along ahead, and pick out a nice place——"

"Bud doesn't want to be in a minority," said Jack. "You've got the mak-

ings of a lawyer, Bud. Why don't you study to be one?"

"Oh, I don't know," responded Bud, somewhat disdainfully. "You can always hire a lawyer, and make it worth his while not to throw you. If you don't, he'll throw you anyway, even if you know more law than he does. It's so easy."

He turned to me apologetically.

"No offense," said he, "but you understand these matters. It's one gentleman with another, and an even break afterward, if they come to disagree. Neither's word is worth a cuss if unsupported, and that's fair to both sides. Now, I think well of both you gentlemen, and no preference. You've got the same sort of stuff in the kettle, but it boils a good deal harder under Mr. Deering's lid than it does under yours; so, the time being limited——"

"Despite that fact," I interposed, "I'm going to delay this matter a few minutes. I have something to say to Mr. Deering, and in imitation of your admirable prudence I shall ask for privacy."

"You'd like a little of my absence?" queried Bud. "Why, sure; as much as you want. Help yourself."

He took a seat upon a pile of building material, and waved his hands abroad, with a kind of cordiality.

"Go anywhere you please," said he.

We withdrew to some distance.

"Jack," said I, "don't you think that my advice would be worth something in this dangerous transaction?"

"Bud won't talk to both of us," said he; "and you don't seem to feel up to it. So——"

"I mean my advice beforehand; before you go into it with Bud."

"Certainly," said he. "Let's talk it over."

"Then let me know the facts; let me know the real reason why you're doing this."

"Don't you understand about Edith?" he asked uneasily. "Do you think we're alarmed for her without cause?"

"I do not," said I. "She faces at least a year in prison and an utterly ruinous expense. To be the selected victim and stop-gap in a murder mystery nowadays is an experience to wreck a life. I'd do all that we propose to do, and ten times more, to save her. And so would you, of course; but that's not the whole of the matter."

"What do you mean?"

"There's something under it," said I. "You have another reason which, in your own mind, overshadows Edith's peril completely; a reason which you steadily refrain from mentioning to me. Sylvia knows what it is; since last evening you and she have acted upon an understanding which you do not share with any one else."

He drew a long breath, and as he let it out of his lungs I saw him shudder from head to foot. He laid a hand upon my shoulder, and I felt the tremor that was running through him. Then suddenly his fingers closed upon me in a sort of violent caress, strange beyond description, and tears came into his eyes.

"Arthur," said he, in a voice a little choked, "you've hardly been yourself for the past few weeks. You can't stand money worry; you ought to live on a breadfruit island among decent, respectable, and kindly savages. The United States commercialized is no place for you."

"The Lord knows it isn't," I replied. "But what of it?"

"Why, just this," said he. "Sylvia and I have been a trifle anxious about you, and the last thing we'd be likely to do would be to load any more troubles upon your back. Last evening you were——"

"I was all in; but the night's rest has worked a miracle. My head's as clear to-day as ever it was in my life."

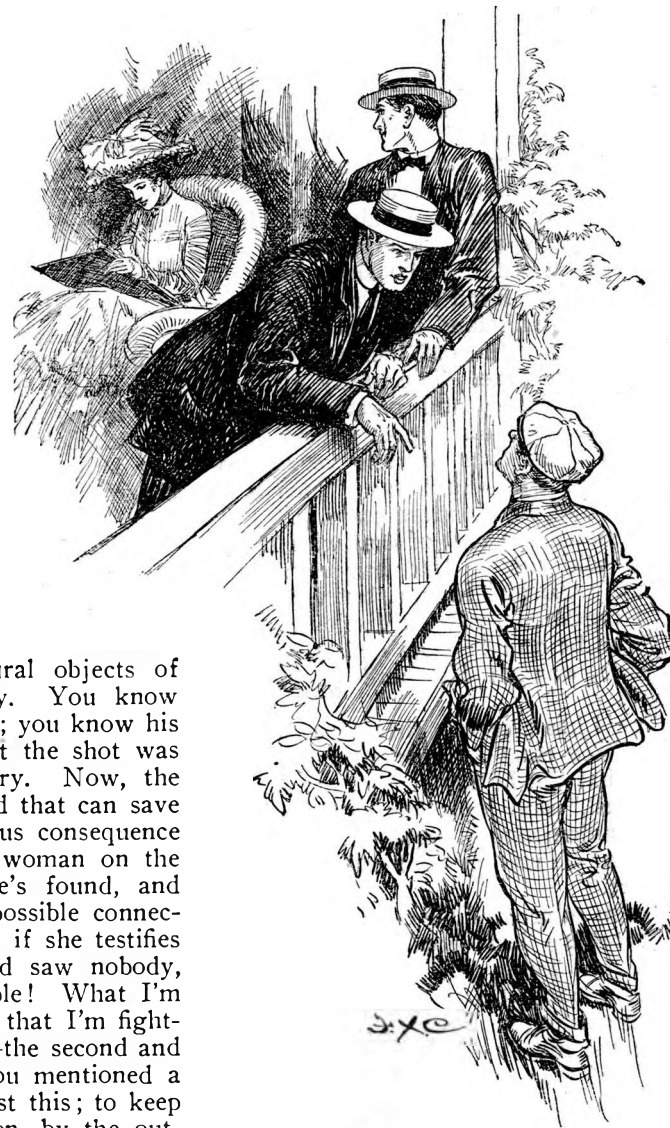
"No doubt of that," responded Jack, "and we'd like to see it stay that way." He hesitated and put his hand up to his hair. "I think you haven't seen this affair in quite the same light that Sylvia and I have."

"That's precisely true," said I. "You take it differently. You seem to have a more than natural horror of it. You shuddered just now as if you'd

seen the crime repeated before your face; and Sylvia did the same thing fifty times last evening. Whenever I looked at her and caught her eye, she shivered to the soul. Jack, it looks almost like guilt—forgive me if I say so."

He made a tremendous call upon his energy.

"You don't understand what it is to be in our position," said he, "and we've tried not to let you know; we've tried to bear it together. But you're better to-day, and you may as well be told. Sylvia and I are natural objects of suspicion, she especially. You know how Quinn regards her; you know his theory of the case—that the shot was meant for Mrs. Seabury. Now, the only thing in this world that can save us from the most serious consequence is this mystery of the woman on the lower veranda. If she's found, and is a stranger without possible connection with this case, and if she testifies that she was there and saw nobody, then look out for trouble! What I'm trying to do, the thing that I'm fighting for as for my life—the second and stronger reason that you mentioned a few minutes ago—is just this; to keep that way of escape open, by the outside stairway to the lower veranda. If Edith was the girl down there, I hope she'll never say so, and I'm going to try my level best to help her keep the secret."



"That's her," said he, "the girl with the pencil and the paper."

"But, Jack," I protested, "there was a murderer; he escaped somehow. The unknown woman may have seen him; she may herself have fired the shot."

"I tell you," he said, with an intensity that drove the words into my mind, "I tell you that nobody will ever know who fired the shot. I'm sure of it. Then what remains for us? To protect these two girls, and I'm going to do it. Now leave me alone with this fellow Burke."

Mentally overpowered, but neither enlightened nor convinced, I turned away, and walked steadily, without looking behind me, until I reached the Hotel Donaldson, where I waited, sitting on the railing at the near end of

the veranda till Jack passed by with Burke. They separated at the main entrance of the hotel, and Jack came to me. There was no one near us except a pretty girl in a lounging chair, and a fat man tucked into a corner, asleep, with his head against a pillar. He had the face of a baby, with little yellow curls along his forehead, and he wore a smile as he slept, seraphic and idiotic. Even my miserable mood could not withstand this spectacle, and I laughed, and so did Jack when he sat down beside me. The pretty girl was equally amused, and presently I saw her sketching on a pad, giving us a glance from time to time very decorously, as who would say: "This is so funny that we all must share it."

"I've made a sort of deal with Bud," Jack told me. "He has agreed to identify the girl for me, but upon certain conditions, not yet disclosed."

"Can he do it? Does he know her?"

Jack wagged his head as one in doubt.

"Bud has a certain shrewdness," said he. "He can't be read at a glance."

"What did he say?"

"Well," said Jack, "he examined me in supplementary proceedings to see whether I was good for a thousand dollars."

"You offered him a thousand!"

"Nothing less would interest him. And, you know, my boy, we're numbered among the wealthy, and must pay accordingly. How in blazes I'm to raise the money—but I haven't got to think of that to-day. Bud's going to trust me."

"And he'll tell you who she is?"

"Upon conditions, as I said before," Jack answered. "Is there a trick in that? I have thoroughly saturated his mind with the conviction that I know who the girl is. I didn't tell him so, of course; I made him guess it—a kind of forced draw, where a person thinks he's taking a card at random, but really takes the one you give him. The question is, does Bud intend to haggle over the conditions, and thus string the matter out while he attempts to pump me on the sly?"

At this moment I caught sight of Bud Burke's head protruding from a window. He was looking the other way, along the veranda, but a moment later his visage was disclosed to me. He seemed somewhat surprised to catch my eye, and he pulled in his head with haste.

I supposed that he would join us immediately, but we waited nearly a quarter of an hour before his voice startled us, coming from below. He had approached us stealthily along the end of the hotel, and now stood with his hands upon the edge of the veranda's flooring, and his chin level with our heels. He might have been there several minutes listening to our conversation, some of which was not well calculated to increase that cordial feeling toward myself which Bud had courteously professed.

"As to conditions," said he, in a cautious tone, "this is all: Me to get the money within thirty days; me to point out the girl to you before noon to-day; you to tell nobody outside your own family until I say so."

"Hold on," said Jack; "suppose you should identify somebody else? For another customer?"

"I won't," responded Bud, with a chuckle. "Don't worry about that. If I should, you can do what you please—punch my head, don't pay me the money, anything to suit yourself."

"What else?" said Jack.

"If this girl is not identified by anybody else, you're to keep dark. You're not to tell nobody."

"Outside the family," said Jack.

"Right. You seemed to want to let Mrs. Seabury and Miss Leland in, and I'm agreeable, provided that they agree to the conditions, the same as yourself."

Jack turned to me, a useless proceeding. I have no head for business, and at that moment I had no idea as to the desirability of this bargain. My impulse would have been to agree to anything in order to end the suspense.

"Is that all?" said Jack.

"Yes," answered Bud, after a moment's meditation; "that'll be all."

"Well," said Jack, "I accept the terms."

Bud extended his hand upward, and the bargain was ratified in the old-fashioned way.

"You're the witness, Mr. Seabury," said Bud, with a grin. "I suppose you understand this deal, acting for both parties, and looking at both sides."

I was very far from understanding the real nature and inner meaning of this agreement, but I answered: "Yes."

"And now," said Jack, "what are we to do? Where shall we go?"

"You don't have to go anywhere," responded Bud. "Keep your sitting. There's the girl right in front of you."

Jack got up from the railing as if it had been red hot; and, turning, glared down at Bud.

"Look here," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "do you realize the seriousness of this matter?"

"A thousand dollars," answered Bud, with gravity, "is more than serious to me; it's sacred."

He was enjoying the situation down to his bootheels, and took no trouble to disguise the fact; yet his countenance gave no hint of trifling, and he met Jack's eye with an unflinching stare.

"That's her," said he, "the girl with the pencil and the paper. She's the one, and at the proper time you'll hear me swear to it. But the time ain't come yet; not for me, not for you. Remember your bargain, Mr. Deering. I've delivered the goods honest, and I expect the same."

He looked up steadily into Jack's face for a moment longer, then turned and walked away. Jack remained perfectly still, gazing down at the place where Burke had been, as if he did not notice the man's absence. I waited in my usual way for somebody else to take the initiative, and then, upon a sudden impulse, sprang over the railing and ran after Burke.

"Hold on," said I, laying a hand upon his shoulder. "We must ask a little more of you. Who is this young lady? Tell me her name."

"I didn't know it myself till a few minutes ago," responded Bud. "Happened to see her sitting on the veranda there, and I inquired. Her name's Marjorie Vannard." And he spelled it out with an elaborate precision which gave me time to gather up my wits.

"You're making a most terrible mistake," said I. "You can't intend to insist on this identification of a stranger. In that storm it was as dark as——"

"Go back," he interrupted. "Go back and ask Mr. Deering if I've made any mistake. He knows. Ask him."

I looked toward the veranda, but Jack had stepped away from the railing and was not within my view. It seemed best to overtake him, and to leave the further questioning of Burke until another time; but I was unable to find Jack. He had disappeared, and Miss Vannard also. I found her name upon the register of the hotel, in the same hand that I had seen before, but I dared not risk inquiries, and I returned to the Eglinton alone.

CHAPTER XII.

On the way back to the Eglinton I encountered Stanton Lynde, walking with a young woman very expensively attired; not showily, but with an elegance that might command some praise were it an incident and not an object of existence, and if the world were in a situation to afford it. But the world as a whole is poor, a family mismanaged and in debt; and, before the lady of the house may wear her finery without disgrace, she must take up the bills, and see that all the servants have been fed.

Lynde's companion seemed a bit the taller, and she walked erect, with an impatient air, her eyes a little restless, scouting for excitement and for notice; but the man's head was rigidly held forward, as if his failing sight must be employed upon the path. The woman spoke to him as I came near, and he withdrew his contemplation from the ground and blinked at me.

"Mr. Seabury," said he, "may I have a word with you?"

Immediately I was made acquainted with his wife, and we exchanged some empty sentences. Mrs. Lynde spoke to me of the tragedy with a smooth correctness and a tactful brevity. If a woman is a mere shell to be covered with clothes, why waste emotion on her after she is dead? And yet I was aware of something like resentment, as if Alice had been belittled in my presence.

"You can do me a considerable favor, if you will," said Lynde. "I have tried to see Mrs. Seabury upon a matter of some importance, relating to this sad affair, but she has been unable to spare me even a few minutes. May I beg of you to intercede for me?"

"I will do so," said I.

"Thank you very much. If three o'clock would suit Mrs. Seabury's convenience——"

"I will mention that hour, and leave word for you at the office."

He thanked me again, and Mrs. Lynde rewarded me with a smile delicately fraudulent, as cleverly put on as was the color in her cheeks.

I went my way, wondering why Lynde had thought it worth his while to play this comedy. Was it merely to convince me that he had no secret understanding with my aunt? I guessed there might be something more behind it.

At least a dozen correspondents halted me in the court, and on the steps, and in the office of the Eglinton. All of them had interviewed Mrs. Seabury at eleven, and all were anxious to repeat to me what she had said, and ask me whether it was true. I put them off, and went in search of Sylvia.

Mrs. Seabury still held possession of the rooms originally assigned to Sylvia, and another suite had been engaged. It was at the end of the south wing, and beneath its windows Quinn was still busy, measuring the footprints, while a squad of bluecoats kept a crowd at bay. There was an open trunk in Sylvia's sitting room, and upon a table lay the pretty gown that Jack had never seen. Tears came to my eyes; I may have had some distant realization of what a toy may be in a house where there is no one now to play with it.

A kind of joy appeared in Sylvia's face as she greeted me.

"I wanted some one here," she said. "It seemed as if I couldn't cry any more alone."

"It won't be hard for me to help you, Sylvia," said I. "That poor little dress is enough to make anybody cry," and I touched it lightly with my fingers. "Alice is to wear it, I suppose."

Sylvia shrank away, as if this shroud that she had helped to make frightened her; I saw the terror in her eyes as they met mine for a moment. Then she sank suddenly upon her knees beside the table, clasping my hand in both of hers, and pressing her face upon it hard. Her cheeks were wet with tears, but she had now ceased to weep. The pang of grief, the shrinking from a vivid view of death, seemed to have passed away, and to have been succeeded by an infinite pity. She drew up the sorrow of the world into her soul, as it were a lily, and breathed it forth in sweetness. The beauty of her thought enfolded me like a perfume as I bent above her, touching with my free hand her shining hair. I stood beside her thus for unregarded minutes, talking to her softly—words without particular meaning even to myself as I uttered them, and to her, no doubt, vague sounds, signifying my presence and my sympathy.

"When are we to take Alice home with us?" I said, at last.

"To-morrow," she replied, rising. "Mrs. Seabury has persuaded them to let us, but we must all come back immediately."

"Aunt Frances told you?"

"Yes."

"Did you go to her, or did she come to you?"

"She came here. She had heard about the footprints, and she seemed much worried, as though she feared that I had had something to do with that matter. I told her that I knew nothing whatever about it."

By this time all indication of the gentler emotions had vanished from Sylvia's countenance. A restrained excitement now possessed her; she had the manner of one who holds anger in check.

"Upon what terms did you and Aunt Frances meet?" I asked.

"Upon terms of mutual deception," she replied; "thoroughly dishonest on both sides. What would you expect of us? Aunt Frances expressed great affection for me—in her peculiar way."

"But that's not altogether dishonest, Sylvia," said I. "She feels it. On your side, however, there is something that is almost hatred."

"Almost?" she said. "Arthur, I suspect that woman of a wrong that goes beyond all bounds. I am frenzied when I think of it; I am capable of anything. Hatred? That's not the half of it!"

I looked toward the door in sheer fright.

"Don't speak like that!" I whispered. "You must not do it. You don't realize the danger."

"Yes, I do," she answered firmly. "I know what Captain Quinn suspects, and what he is very likely to do when the truth comes out. But it will come, Arthur, when I learn the whole of it, myself. No prison can keep it in."

"Sylvia, you have learned more since yesterday. What is it? You'd better tell me."

"I have learned nothing. My feeling is the same. It is you who have changed. Arthur, do you know what we have suffered upon your account these last few weeks? You wouldn't do anything to help yourself, you wouldn't even listen, you seemed to have no understanding. Do you even remember what we said to you, Jack and I?"

"In the last month?" I shook my head. "Jack was always after me about my health; but all I cared for was to keep Aunt Frances in the dark. As to the rest of it, I walked in a dream."

"But that's all past."

"Yes; I'm thoroughly myself to-day. It was the sleep that healed me. And there's something very strange about it; I have far more reason to be troubled now than I had before, but I am like one who has got through with a hard task, a burdensome and haunting duty. It is off my mind. God knows what it was; I know only that it's gone."

"You mustn't try to recall it," she said. "Don't permit yourself to go back."

"No, you're quite right. I died last night, and am born again; republished in a somewhat better edition. Oh, if this hideous thing had not defaced the world for me, I could be so happy! But this is rank selfishness. Tell me your trouble, Sylvia, and we'll find a way to meet it."

She paused a moment, gathering her thoughts.

"What do you know about my father?" she asked; and at this a thrill went through me like the thrust of a sword, for Sylvia's father was her religion. She had no stated creed, no firm adherence to a formulated faith; her father's hand alone linked her to celestial mysteries. She walked with him daily in a sweet and dear companionship, without extravagances of fancy, but with a perfectly simple recognition of his continued life and love for her; and only thus did she perceive her own soul. Even an infidel might think this admirable; yet I knew that, in a nature such as hers, it might become the spring of acts wearing a very different color. Her father's enemy, one that had injured him, she would see branded with a mark upon the brow, for pardon and pity to avoid; she would regard vengeance as a duty and pursue it with unreasoning fanaticism. If she had now discovered any serious wrong done by Mrs. Seabury to Warren Leland in his life or to his memory afterward, she would never rest till it was righted. And, upon the other hand, I could not imagine anything else which Mrs. Seabury would so dread, and so desperately struggle to avert, as such a discovery.

"I know very little of your father,

Sylvia," said I. "He was called a successful man, in the sense that he was prominently identified with important affairs. At the last, he was heavily interested in coal and iron properties which were in litigation, and his fortune was submerged when the case went against him. But Mrs. Seabury was not concerned in this, except as his friend and adviser. I have even heard that she advanced him money."

"What do you know of his death?"

"Nothing," I answered, aghast at the mention of it.

"He died in a hospital," she said. "He was taken there at night from a hotel where he had lived for a few days only—after he had given up our home to his creditors. The newspapers of the time say that he was stricken as the result of an injury to the head, received long before, and that an operation was hastily attempted—and he died."

"You knew of such an injury?"

"Yes, but it never troubled him."

"Yet the effects might still have been there. They might have disclosed themselves suddenly. Why do you think of these things?"

"I will ask you a question," she said, after a moment's thought. "Do you know anything that could justify Doctor Clinton in demanding that Mrs. Seabury should pay me an enormous sum of money?"

"Did he do that?"

"Yes. Alice overheard him."

"And that was all she heard? No reason?"

"My father's name was mentioned."

"In what way?"

"I never learned. Alice was afraid to speak; she had no confidence in her comprehension of what she had heard. I had to drag every word out of her."

"But what has Clinton said? Surely you have tried to get the truth from him."

"Yes," said she, "but remember that I haven't known of this very long. Alice didn't tell me immediately. I have been able to see Doctor Clinton only twice. The first time he admitted to me that he had reason to believe that Mrs. Seabury had dealt dishonestly with my father, and should make restitution to me; and he refused to speak more definitely. He said that what he had learned was sacredly confidential, that it came to him under the seal of his profession."

"The seal of his profession? What in the world can that mean? Whom has he attended?"

"I know nothing about it. You may imagine how I strove with him, but he made it almost impossible for me——"

"I understand. He mingled love with this."

"Yes. But in justice to him I am bound to say that he did not make a bargain of it. Yet I could have promised to marry him, and have had his secret, and have jilted him the next minute. Oh, I've been taught in a good school; I can make and break bargains, if I choose."

She checked herself, startled by a sound which I, too, had heard; and for a few seconds we both stood alert.

Then Sylvia held up a warning finger and stepped lightly across to one of the windows, whence she made a sign to me. I hastened to her side, and looked out along the veranda just in time to see Stanton Lynde stumble at the head of the exterior stairway.

For an instant there was nothing in my mind except a fascinated interest in the man's situation. He seemed about to plunge down the whole length of the stairs, and when he saved himself by a random clutch at the banister rail I was perhaps as much relieved as if he had been a friend. There was something in his manner as he began soberly to descend, which showed me that he was habituated to such experiences, resulting from his defective sight, and had attained to that familiarity with danger which distinguishes the veteran.

"Was he listening here?" said I; and Sylvia answered that she thought he must have been; whereupon I told her who he was and what I had heard of him.

"If he is in Mrs. Seabury's pay," said she, "he has earned his wages in the last few minutes. For my own

part, I care very little. I shall see Doctor Clinton within the hour, and I will make him speak. Then there will be no more concealment."

"But, Sylvia, you can't hope that Clinton will speak upon such terms as that. He won't dare. And even if he should, what could you do? If Mrs. Seabury robbed your father, you may be assured she did it legally, or at least that so much of it as wasn't legal is securely hidden. What are your plans?"

"I have none now," she answered. "The truth first."

There came a brisk knock at the door, spirited, like a drum beat.

"Come in, Jack," called Sylvia, and he entered with the air of one who intends to conquer fate in the next minute.

"Now," said he, with decision, looking from one to the other of us, "something's got to be done. Where's Aunt Frances?"

"In her room, I think," said Sylvia.

"She doesn't answer knock or telephone bell," said he; "but, of course, that doesn't prove anything. I'm going to try Quinn."

"About what?" I asked anxiously.

"Arthur, that girl is Marjorie Vannard. You knew, eh?" For he saw that I was not surprised. "You've told Sylvia?"

"No."

Upon that he gave Sylvia, in rapid sentences, the story of Bud Burke's identification.

"But you can't tell that to Quinn," I said, as soon as he had ceased. "We've given Burke our word——"

"Yes, we have, indeed; and he's tied us up in fine shape. I couldn't even tell Miss Vannard."

"You've seen her!"

"Why, of course. I sent my card to her the instant I found out who she was. A splendid girl; a thoroughbred. You saw her, Arthur; but just wait till you know her. You're to go over there with me this afternoon, if I can arrange one or two matters."

"But what did you say to her?" I demanded. "What excuse could you offer?"

"Excuse?" he echoed. "I should think I had one that was good enough, without breaking my word to Bud Burke. You forget that Miss Vannard's name is in this case already."

"You're speaking of the name on that paper?" said Sylvia. "But we needn't tell of that. It has nothing to do with what has happened."

"There's more than that, Sylvia," said I. "Dalton sent a package by express to Marjorie Vannard in Philadelphia last evening. Quinn knows it."

"Dalton!" she exclaimed.

"Miss Vannard never heard of Dalton," said Jack. "I'll explain all that presently, but I must speak to Quinn first. He's gone to the station. I'll use your telephone, Sylvia, if you don't mind."

He gave the necessary call, and was immediately put into communication with Quinn. We heard Jack ask about the package, and as to what had been done with it in Philadelphia. Then there was a long silence upon Jack's part while he listened; I saw him put a hand against the wall, steadying himself while his head dropped forward. Finally he said: "All right. Good-by," in a kind of gasp, and, hanging up the receiver, turned to us.

"Well," said he, "they didn't get it."

"The package?" said I. "Why not?"

"It wasn't there," he answered. "Quinn says that it started but never arrived. It left Cape May, but it didn't reach Philadelphia. The express company will make an investigation, but Quinn doesn't seem to be hopeful. And I shouldn't think he would. It will never be found."

He spoke with conviction, but I did not immediately perceive the grounds on which it rested. Sylvia, however, understood.

"All these strange things are not merely happening," she said; "they are being done. This package is not lost; it has been made to vanish as a part of some design."

"Jack," said I, after a pause, "you were going to explain——"

He waved his hands in the air.

"This knocks all my explanations

into a cocked hat," he said. "I'm glad I didn't waste my breath and your time. Let me tell you about Marjorie Vannard."

But I stuck to my point.

"Do you mean that the disappearance of this package changes your opinion about it—who sent it, what was in it, and all that?"

"It doesn't change my opinion," he replied. "Change isn't the word. My opinion is obliterated; nothing remains of it."

"Well, then," I insisted, "what *was* it? What did you think before the obliteration occurred?"

"I thought Dalton really sent the thing."

"Is there any doubt of that?"

"Yes," said he, "a very strong doubt. Dalton didn't appear personally at the express office, as you're already aware. The package was handed in by a boy, and that boy wrote the address on it himself. Questioned, he described Dalton whom, by the youngster's own story, he had seen only once and in the dark. Yet Dalton was immediately recognized by that description. Wonderful boy, it seems to me. Who told him to describe Dalton? And how to do it? That's what I'd like to know."

"Aunt Frances!" I exclaimed.

"Yes?" said a somewhat muffled voice behind me; and then, louder: "Did you call me, Arthur?"

The door had opened, and Mrs. Seabury had entered the room.

"I heard some one there," said I weakly. "I thought it must be you."

"I knocked three times," said she; and this may very well have been the truth, for Mrs. Seabury had a way of knocking on a door with the tip of her forefinger, a merely formal proceeding, like a directors' meeting of one of her corporations.

"I have a message for you," said I hastily, in order to prevent her from asking what we had been talking about. "Mr. Lynde begs that you will receive him at three o'clock upon a matter of importance."

"At three o'clock," she repeated, weighing the words. "I'm very sorry, but I have no more time for reporters to-day. And at three o'clock I shall be particularly busy. Mr. Cushing wants to have a conference in my room at a quarter before three, and we must all be there, and Doctor Clinton, also. One of you boys must see Doctor Clinton, and tell him. Make him understand that his presence is required. Will you do that, Arthur?"

"I will do it," said Sylvia. "I shall see Doctor Clinton within a few minutes."

I cast an anxious glance at Mrs. Seabury, but she was unruffled by that veiled threat which she must have understood.

"Thank you," said she. "That will save Arthur the trouble. And I really need him and Jack very much. My work must go on, no matter what happens. I came to see if my boys were here. In a few minutes, I shall expect you."

She moved toward the door, but, happening to catch sight of some paper on Sylvia's desk, she stopped.

"Perhaps I'd better send a message to that reporter, Lynde," she said. "Arthur, will you write it for me, and leave it at the office?" And she proceeded to dictate while I wrote, as follows:

"Mrs. Seabury has received Mr. Lynde's request for an interview at three o'clock, and regrets that she has already made an engagement for that hour."

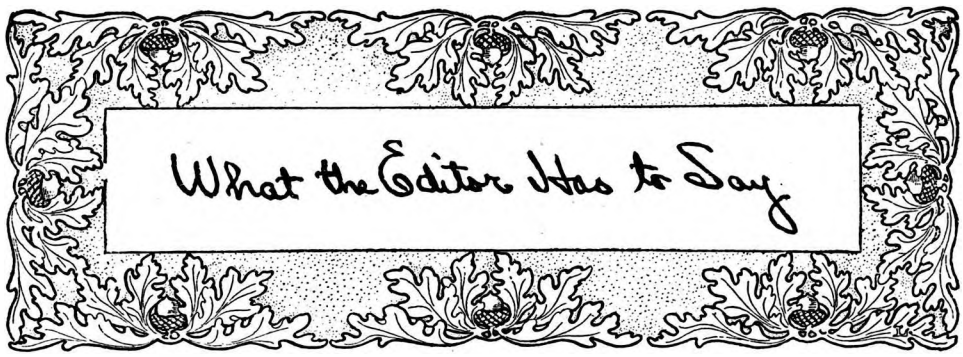
"Have you got that?"

I read it to her, and she gave me a nod of assent; then, with a smile for us all, withdrew.

"It's odd she wouldn't see him," said I softly.

"Oh, Arthur, Arthur, you are the youngest lamb of our flock," said Sylvia. "Do you really suppose that Mr. Lynde asked for an interview, and that this is a refusal? Mr. Lynde merely sent word of an hour, and Mrs. Seabury has accepted it. You will see that something will happen at three o'clock."

TO BE CONTINUED.



"WINTER'S WIFE," the novel which will appear complete in the November issue of SMITH'S, is one of the most remarkable stories ever written by W. B. M. Ferguson, whom most will remember as the author of "Zollenstein" and "Garrison's Finish." It is a story of married life, and of a woman who was misunderstood. Her husband, in spite of his weaknesses, is a human and likable character, but the woman herself is a great deal more interesting. There is another woman in the story, as well as another man. Also there is plenty of incident in the tale, the scene of which is laid in New York and a fashionable suburb adjacent thereto. The account of the real-estate company, and the peculiar methods by which it exploited its property, is interesting enough in itself to make the story worth while.

VIRGINIA MIDDLETON, who has written a number of stories which have appeared in recent numbers of SMITH'S, will start in next month's issue a series of more or less connected stories, called "My Stage Career." Of all the countless thousands of girls who want to go on the stage, very few have the faintest idea what the life behind the scenes actually is, and what qualities and application are necessary for even a moderate success. Miss Middleton is writing from personal experience, to a great extent. She knows her subject well, and she can tell you a great many things which may surprise you. We are certain that her new series of stories will be a success.

WE hope that by this time you have read the second installment of Howard Fielding's serial, "The Great Conspirator." Do you like it? If you do, please write us and tell us about it. Have you any ideas as to who committed the murder, and for whom the bullet was intended? If you have, we would be interested to hear them. We are looking for a man or woman who can solve the mystery before the author himself explains it. We have had a number of people, all trained more or less as readers, examine the manuscript up to the very page whereon the puzzle is explained. No one, so far, has come anywhere near a good guess. At the present time, to the best of our knowledge and belief, there are only two people in the world who know how the killing was actually done. One is Mr. Howard Fielding himself. The other is the present writer. We don't intend to tell, but we would like to know if there is any one who can solve the riddle. Personally, we don't believe there is. If you have any ideas on the subject, if you think that you are a natural-born detective, let us hear from you. All we can say is that the explanation is perfectly logical and simple, but that, until Mr. Fielding himself tells you, we don't think you will find out who committed the crime, or why it was committed.

DID you ever hear of Bronson Howard's great comedy, "The Henrietta"? It is absolutely one of the best and funniest comedies that has ever been put on the boards. It had an unexampled success in its day, and is being revived as a success this present season. Mr. Arthur Dudley Hall has told "The Henrietta" in short-story form for the November number of SMITH'S. Mr. Hall is a playwright of some note himself, as well as a novelist. In telling "The Henrietta" he has caught the charm and merriment that made it so irresistible as a comedy, and transferred them to the story.

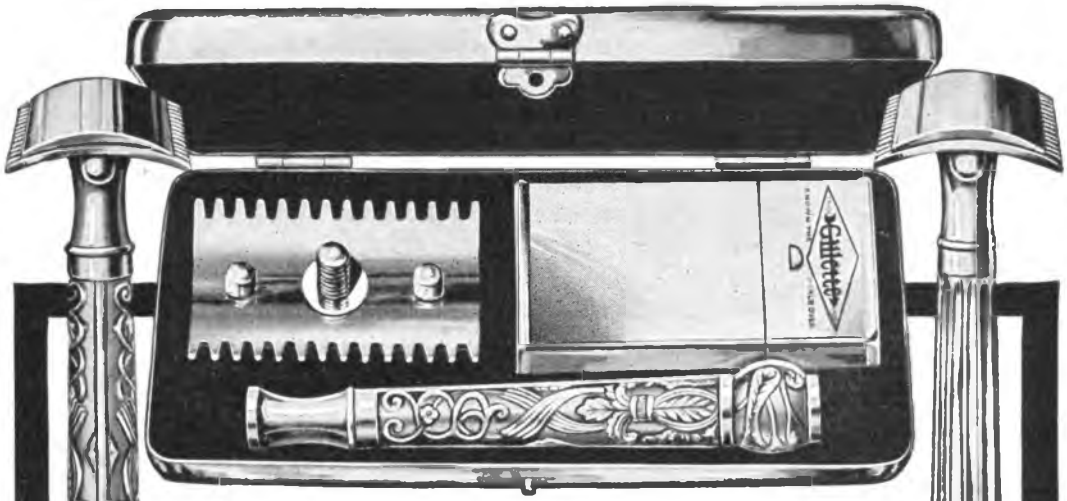
RUPERT HUGHES, the critic and playwright, has written for the November SMITH'S an unusually interesting article on folk songs. No matter how unmusical you may be, or where you were brought up, you know something about this form of music, and you will be interested in learning more. Mr. Hughes has some surprising and little-known facts to communicate, as well as a very witty and clever way of setting them forth. SMITH'S is primarily a fiction magazine, and this is the only thing in the number that is not an out-and-out story; but, still, when you read it, you will be glad that it was there.

THERE is another story of "The Cowboy Countess" in the November number of the magazine. This, as a mystery story, and as a love story, is well up to the level of anything the Williamsons have ever done. It relates some of the adventures of the Texas girl with several members of a distinguished family, which was supposed to have a curse hanging over it, and which, in its ancestral hall, kept some dark secret bidden in a room, which was only opened once for the eldest son of the family, when he became of age, and was closed again for another generation. The countess found out what was in the room, and, incidentally, fell in love. You're sure to like the story.

WHETHER, like the elder Mr. Weller, you have firm convictions on the subject of widows, or not, you will be interested in the story by Anne O'Hagan in next month's issue of SMITH'S, entitled "The Baleful Influence of the Widow Trevelyan." It concerns a widow, and, whatever her influence may have been, there is nothing baleful about the story.

THERE are two good love stories in the November number, one, "Siniard," by Alma Martin Estabrook, and the other, "Perseus and the Sulphur Matches," by Dorothy Canfield. There is also a very good little talk on "Sociability," by Charles Battell Loomis, and a funny story by Holman F. Day about the things that happened to Captain Sproul and some of his friends on a certain occasion, referred to by the gallant captain as "When Tophet Broke Loose." That is the name of the story.

GOOD verse is very rare, indeed, but when it is good it is well worth while. There are two poems in the November number which we want you to look for. One is a nautical ballad by Will Irwin, whose work you know already. The other is called "Silk of the Corn," and was written by Arthur Guiterman. If you don't find it full of music, full of the spirit of outdoors, and altogether delightful and worthy of remembering, we will be surprised.



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AGENTS to sell Ladies Novelt. Embroid. Waist Patt. Kimonos, Silk Shawls, Scarfs, Mexican Drawn Work, Battenberg, Cluny, Russian Laces Europ. & Orient Novelt. Ask for Cat. S. Bonan, Dep. D. 143 Liberty St. N.Y.C.

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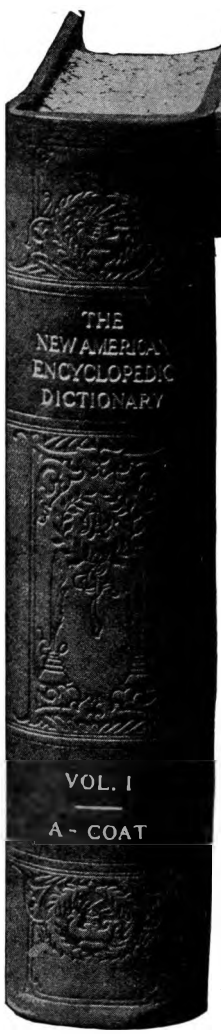

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How to Grow Tall

AND BROADEN YOUR SHOULDERS

A Startling Discovery That Will Revolutionize the Physical Condition of Mankind.

Why Remain Short and Stunted When You May Learn Free the Secret of How to Grow Tall?

No Matter How Short You Are or What Your Age, You Can Increase Your Height.

No new discovery has attracted more attention in the scientific world than that made by K. Leo Minges, of Rochester, N. Y. Mr. Minges is to short men and women what the great wizard, Edison, is to electricity. He has gathered more information relative to bone, muscle and sinew than anyone else in existence. Making people grow tall has been a hobby with Mr. Minges for years, and the results he has accomplished are startling to a high degree. By his method every man or woman not over fifty years of age can be made to grow from two to five inches in height, and anyone older than that may increase his height perceptibly. His method has the endorsement of leading physicians, and several prominent educational institutions have adopted it for the better physical development of their pupils. If you would like to increase your height you should read the book which tells you how this remarkable discovery was made and reveals to you the secrets of how to grow tall. It is free. You are not asked to spend a single cent, and if you desire it we will send you the statements of hundreds who have grown from two to five inches in height by following this method. The results are quickly accomplished. Many have grown as much as three inches in two months. There is no inconvenience, no drugs or medicines or operation. Merely the application of a scientific principle in a perfectly hygienic and harmless way. Your most intimate friends need not know what you are doing. All communications will be sent in plain envelopes. The book C, "How to Grow Tall," contains illustrations that will interest and instruct anyone. One thousand of these books will be given away, absolutely free, postage prepaid, while the present edition lasts. If you want to grow tall, write to-day, in strictest confidence, for a free copy. Address the Cartilage Co., 155K, Unity Building, Rochester, N. Y., U. S. A.

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And gentle applications of Cuticura Ointment. For eczemas, rashes, itchings and chafings of childhood and for the prevention of the same, as well as for the sanative, antiseptic cleansing of ulcerated, inflamed mucous surfaces and other uses which suggest themselves to women, these gentle emollients are indispensable.

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Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

IT IS better for you to remember the name and ask for **Shawknit** socks when buying, than to merely ask for socks and take the first thing that a dealer may offer you. For over 32 years Shawknit socks have been acknowledged standard for durability, fastness of color and comfort.

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Styles 3554B Our famous black (snowblack).
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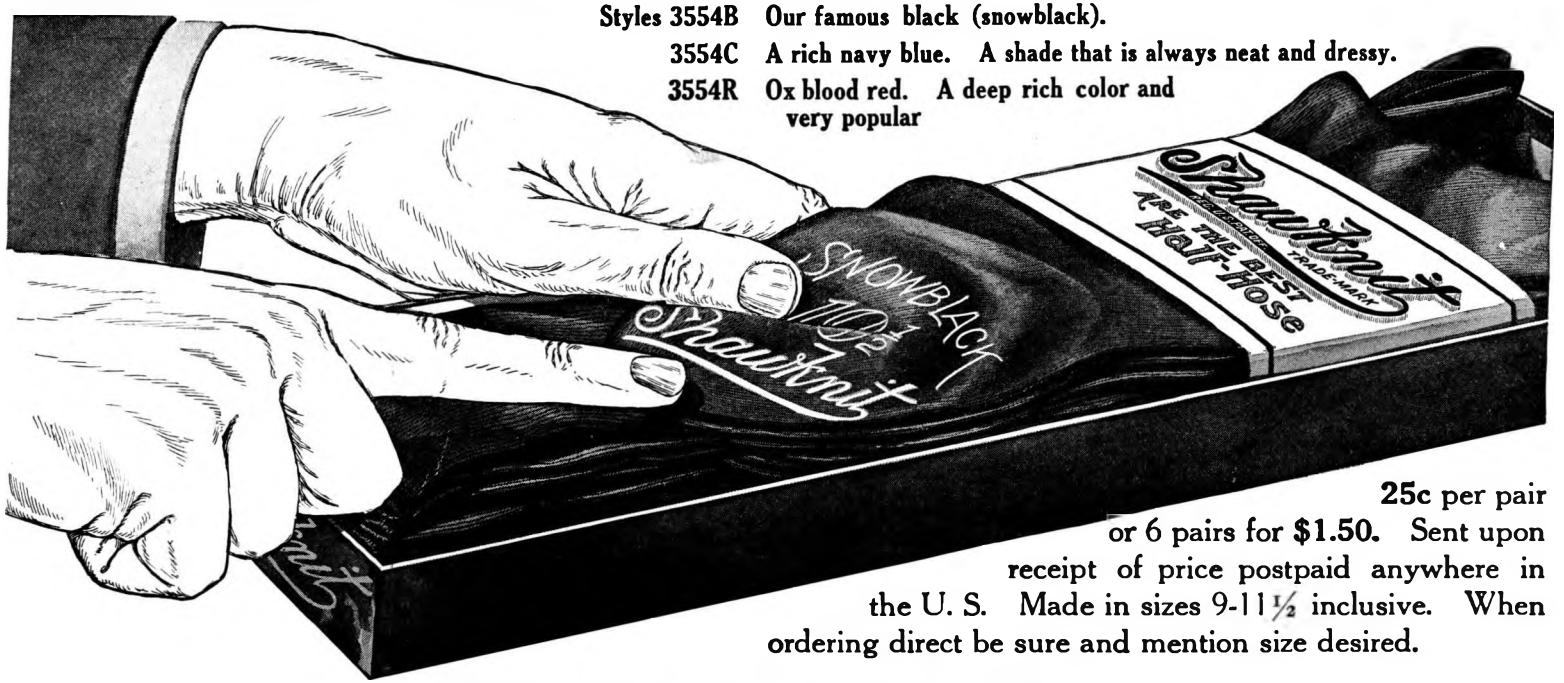

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THE SHAW STOCKING CO., 208 Shaw St., LOWELL, MASS.

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"Mother, You're All Right"

The association of mother and daughter is usually very close. Praise of face, or form, or character by either to the other means much more than the casual compliment of friends who want to be polite. When the daughter can look into the fresh, smooth, youthful face of her white-haired mother and say "Mother, you're all right" she is paying sincere tribute to her mother and in most cases she is also giving praise to the wonder-working power of

Pompeian Massage Cream

"Don't *envy* a good complexion, use Pompeian and *have* one"

for it has several million users who know that Pompeian Massage Cream "is all right."

It is not a "cold" or "grease" cream. The latter have their uses, yet they can never do the work of a massage cream like Pompeian. Grease creams fill the pores. Pompeian Massage Cream cleanses them by taking out all foreign matter that causes blackheads, sallowness, shiny complexions, etc. Pompeian Massage Cream is the largest selling face cream in the world, 10,000 jars being made and sold daily. All dealers, 50c, 75c and $1 a jar. Cream sent to any part of the world, postage prepaid, if dealer can't supply you.

For men. *Pompeian Massage Cream takes away soreness after shaving. By removing the soap from the pores it allays the irritation so distressing to those to whom a thick, fast growing beard makes constant shaving a necessity.*

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Cut off Coupon NOW Before Paper is Lost

You have been reading and hearing about Pompeian for years. You have meant to try it, but have not done so. This is your chance to discover what a vast difference there is between an ordinary "cold" cream and a scientifically made Massage Cream like Pompeian. Fill out the coupon to-day and prepare for a delightful surprise when you receive our quarter ounce trial jar. When writing enclose 6 cents in coin or United States stamps.

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Gentlemen: Enclosed find 6c. Please send me a special trial jar of Pompeian Massage Cream.

Name .....

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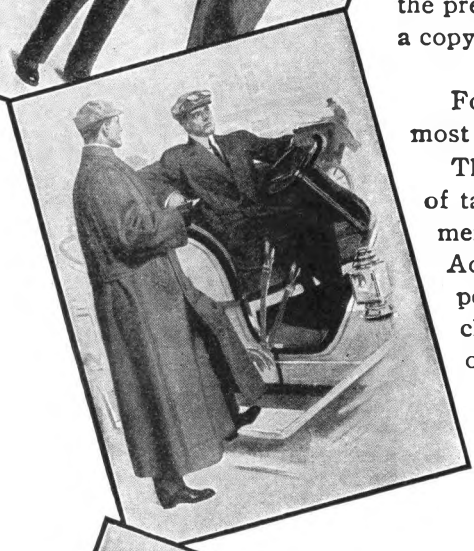
Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



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These clothes are designed by the ablest men in this line, at a cost of $30,000 per year. They are made by custom tailors, without regard to time.

The making cost us twice what the cloth costs, and *four times* what some makers spend.

That is why Adler-Rochester clothes have achieved such a great reputation.

97 Cents Profit

But we limit our profit to six per cent. Our average last year was 97 cents per suit.

So Adler-Rochesters cost like other high-grade makes. Our suits and overcoats sell for $18 up.

Please see our latest creations—the topmost styles for this winter. Ask us to send our Book No. 3. Address

L. Adler, Bros. & Co., Rochester, N. Y.

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There is no higher efficiency in the world than that of the American business man.

The multiplication of *power* in a business man—if he has the ability within him—depends upon the *increased number* of people whom he can, *by personal contact*, interest in his purposes.

He does this by telephone, and the multiplication of *the telephone's* usefulness depends on the *increased number* of persons whom he can reach.

In 1890 the Bell System had 200,000 subscribers' telephones in use. As late as 1899—ten years ago—it had only 500,000.

To-day it has 4,400,000—one for every twenty persons in this country—and is increasing at the rate of 500,000 a year.

Has the vast development of industries since 1890—the greatest period of advance in the world's history—*when America has advanced faster than all the rest of the world,* been the force that has built up this great, unified, efficient telephone service; or

Has the increased ability of the American business man to bring people to him from every locality, far and near, *over the Bell Telephone System*, been the cause of the multiplication of his power and his principality?

Whichever the cause and whichever the effect, the advancement of one is inseparably linked with the advancement of the other.

The business man's Bell Telephone, with its long distance and emergency advantages, is his most precious asset next to his capital itself.

The Bell Long Distance Telephone means as much to the home as it does to the office. It is the most marvelous convenience of modern times—if not all time—added to home life.

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Every Bell Telephone Is a Long Distance Station

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

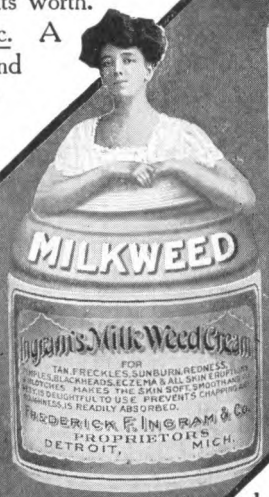
MILKWEED CREAM

We want every woman in America to send for a **free sample** of Milkweed Cream and our booklet telling of the wonderful results that follow its daily use. Write today before you forget.

This is the one toilet cream that has proved its merit.

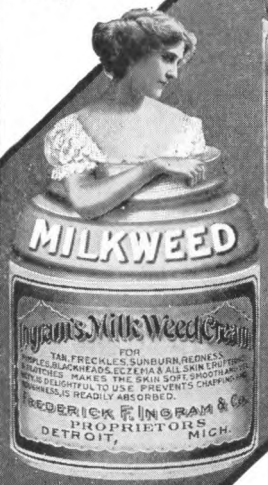
Milkweed Cream is not a new thing. Your grandmother used it and her matchless complexion testified to its worth. It is nature's own aid to beauty—a skin tonic. A very little applied gently to the face, neck and hands, night and morning, cleans out the tiny pores, stimulates them to renewed activity and feeds and nourishes the inner skin and surrounding tissues. The certain result of this is a complexion clear and brilliant in coloring—a skin soft and smooth without being shiny—plump, rounded cheeks from which all lines and wrinkles have been taken away.

JAR.



IN EVERY

BEAUTY



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Milkweed Cream is good for all complexion faults. It has a distinct therapeutic action on the skin and its glands. Excessive rubbing or kneading is not only unnecessary, but is liable to stretch the skin and cause wrinkles. Milkweed Cream is absorbed by the skin like dry ground absorbs rain. Thus the pores are not clogged up, irritated or enlarged as they are by having stuff forced into them by rubbing. Milkweed Cream is dainty, fastidious and refined—a necessary toilet luxury for every woman who values her personal appearance.

Sold by all druggists at 50 cents and $1.00 a jar, or sent postpaid on receipt of price. Don't forget to write for the free sample.

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OVERCOMES FRECKLES, TAN AND SUNBURN

IMPROVES BAD COMPLEXIONS
PRESERVES GOOD COMPLEXIONS

COLGATE'S RIBBON DENTAL CREAM

An Amusing Incident

(Told by a Dentist)

"COLGATE & CO.

Dear Sirs: Thank you for calling my attention to your Dental Cream. Preventative dentistry for children is my special work, and I am delighted to know of such a delicious dentifrice for young people. One little boy ate the contents of the tube which I asked his mother to get for him, remarking to me the next day:

'Say, Doctor, I wish that tube had been three feet long.'"

Signed by a former President of a State Dental Association. (Name on application.)

Isn't that like a boy!

There is actually—in each tube

15 Feet of Cream

If he had used it properly—(one inch twice daily) it would have lasted 3 months.

Delicious and antiseptic, the dentifrice that combines efficiency with a delightful after-taste. Your mouth does not need to have a medicinal taste and it won't if you use Colgate's.

Antiseptic It gives a pearly lustre to the teeth and a perfect polish to gold work. Destroys decay-germs, stimulates gum tissue and prevents tartar.

Economical (1) More Cream—almost half as much again as in the average tube. (2) Less used—half as much cream comes out of our flat opening as from usual round-mouth tube. (3) No waste—our flat ribbon of cream cannot roll off the brush.

42 inches of Cream in Trial Tube sent for 4 cents.

COLGATE & CO.
Dept. F, 55 John St.
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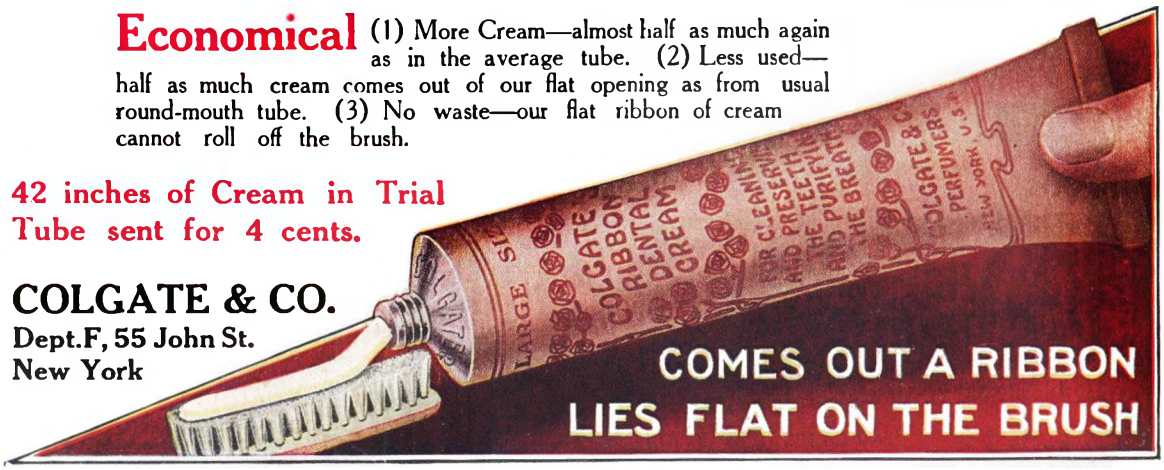

COMES OUT A RIBBON
LIES FLAT ON THE BRUSH