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## Golden Stories

A SELECTION OF THE BEST FICTION  
BY THE FOREMOST WRITERS



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1909

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*Though there was no Table of Contents in the original, one has been  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

[The Night Express](#)  
[Over The Garden Wall](#)  
[Rural Insurance](#)  
[His Honor, The District Judge](#)  
[A Fog-horn Conclusion](#)  
[Mary Jane's Diversion](#)  
[Between Friends](#)  
[The Hammerpond Burglary](#)  
[A Fo'c's'le Tragedy](#)  
[The Adopted Son](#)  
[Providence And Mrs. Urmey](#)  
[The Million Dollar Freight Train](#)

[The Bulldog Breed](#)  
[Ice In June](#)  
[The Ditty-box](#)  
[The Yellow Cat](#)  
[A Cock And Policeman](#)  
[Prisoners In The Tower](#)  
[Sankey's Double-header](#)  
[Aunt Mary Telegraphs](#)  
[The Vengeance Of The Wolf](#)  
[The Wooing Of Bettina](#)  
[The Jam God](#)  
[When Father Worked](#)

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## I

### THE NIGHT EXPRESS

#### The Story of a Bank Robbery

By FRED M. WHITE

A PELTING rain volleyed against the great glass dome of the terminus, a roaring wind boomed in the roof. Passengers, hurrying along the platform, glistened in big coats and tweed caps pulled close over their ears. By the platform the night express was drawn up—a glittering mass of green and gold, shimmering with electric lights, warm, inviting, and cozy.

Most of the corridor carriages and sleeping berths were full, for it was early in October still, and the Scotch exodus was not just yet. A few late comers were looking anxiously out for the guard. He came presently, an alert figure in blue and silver. Really, he was very sorry. But the train was unusually crowded, and he was doing the best he could. He was perfectly aware of the fact that his questioners represented a Cabinet Minister on his way to Balmoral and a prominent Lothian baronet, but there are limits even to the power of an express guard, on the Grand Coast Railway.

"Well, what's the matter with this?" the Minister demanded. "Here is an ordinary first-class coach that will do very well for us. Now, Catesby, unlock one of these doors and turn the lights on."

"Very sorry, my lord," the guard explained, "but it can't be done. Two of the carriages in the coach are quite full, as you see, and the other two are reserved. As a matter of fact, my lord, we are taking a body down to Lydmouth. Gentleman who is going to be buried there. And the other carriage is for the Imperial Bank of Scotland. Cashier going up north with specie, you understand."

It was all plain enough, and disgustingly logical. To intrude upon the presence of a body was perfectly impossible; to try and force the hand of the bank cashier equally out of the question. As head of a great financial house, the Minister knew that. A platform inspector hustled along presently, with his hand to his gold-laced cap.

"Saloon carriage being coupled up behind, my lord," he said.

The problem was solved. The guard glanced at his watch. It seemed to him that both the bank messenger and the undertaker were cutting it fine. The coffin came presently on a hand-truck—a black velvet pall lay over it, and on the sombre cloth a wreath or two of white lilies. The door of the carriage was closed presently, and the blinds drawn discreetly close. Following behind this came a barrow in charge of a couple of platform police. On the barrow were two square deal boxes, heavy out of all proportion to their size. These were deposited presently to the satisfaction

of a little nervous-looking man in gold-rimmed glasses. Mr. George Skidmore, of the Imperial Bank, had his share of ordinary courage, but he had an imagination, too, and he particularly disliked these periodical trips to branch banks, in convoy, so to speak. He took no risks.

"Awful night, sir," the guard observed. "Rather lucky to get a carriage to yourself, sir. Don't suppose you would have done so only we're taking a corpse as far as Lydmouth, which is our first stop."

"Really?" Skidmore said carelessly. "Ill wind that blows nobody good, Catesby. I may be overcautious, but I much prefer a carriage to myself. And my people prefer it, too. That's why we always give the railway authorities a few days' notice. One can't be too careful, Catesby."

The guard supposed not. He was slightly, yet discreetly, amused to see Mr. Skidmore glance under the seats of the first-class carriage. Certainly there was nobody either there or on the racks. The carriage at the far side was locked, and so, now, was the door next the platform. The great glass dome was brilliantly lighted so that anything suspicious would have been detected instantly. The guard's whistle rang out shrill and clear, and Catesby had a glimpse of Mr. Skidmore making himself comfortable as he swung himself into his van. The great green and gold serpent with the brilliant electric eyes fought its way sinuously into the throat of the wet and riotous night on its first stage of over two hundred miles. Lydmouth would be the first stop.

So far Mr. Skidmore had nothing to worry him, nothing, that is, except the outside chance of a bad accident. He did not anticipate, however, that some miscreant might deliberately wreck the train on the off chance of looting those plain deal boxes. The class of thief that banks have to fear is not guilty of such clumsiness. Unquestionably nothing could happen on this side of Lydmouth. The train was roaring along now through the fierce gale at sixty odd miles an hour, Skidmore had the carriage to himself, and was not the snug, brilliantly lighted compartment made of steel? On one side was the carriage with the coffin; on the other side another compartment filled with a party of sportsmen going North. Skidmore had noticed the four of them playing bridge just before he slipped into his own carriage. Really, he had nothing to fear. He lay back comfortably wondering how Poe or Gaboriau would have handled such a situation with a successful robbery behind it. There are limits, of course, both to a novelist's imagination and a clever thief's process of invention. So, therefore....

Three hours and twenty minutes later the express pulled up at Lydmouth. The station clock indicated the hour to be 11.23. Catesby swung himself out of his van on to the shining wet platform. Only one passenger was waiting there, but nobody alighted. Catesby was sure of this, because he was on the flags before a door could be opened. He came forward to give a hand with the coffin in the compartment next to Skidmore's. Then he noticed, to his surprise, that the glass in the carriage window was smashed; he could see that the little cashier was huddled up strangely in one corner. And Catesby could see also that the two boxes of bullion were gone!

Catesby's heart was thumping against his ribs as he fumbled with his key. He laid his hand upon Skidmore's shoulder, but the latter did not move. The fair hair hung in a mass on the side of his forehead, and here it was fair no longer. There was a hole with something horribly red and slimy oozing from it. The carpet on the floor was piled up in a heap; there were red smears on the cushions. It was quite evident that a struggle had taken place here. The shattered glass in the window testified to that. And the boxes were gone, and Skidmore had been murdered by some assailant who had shot him through the brain. And this mysterious antagonist had got off with the bullion, too.

A thing incredible, amazing, impossible; but there it was. By some extraordinary method or another the audacious criminal had boarded an express train traveling at sixty miles an hour in the teeth of a gale. He had contrived to enter the cashier's carriage and remove specie to the amount of eight thousand pounds! It was impossible that only one man could have carried it. But all the same it was gone.

Catesby pulled himself together. He was perfectly certain that nobody at present on the train had been guilty of this thing. He was perfectly certain that nobody had left the train. Nobody could have done so after entering the station without the guard's knowledge, and to have attempted such a thing on the far side of the river bridge would have been certain death to anybody. There was a long viaduct here—posts and pillars and chains, with tragedy lurking anywhere for the madman who attempted such a thing. And until the viaduct was reached the express had not slackened speed. Besides, the thief who had the courage and intelligence and daring to carry out a robbery like this was not the man to leave an express train traveling at a speed of upwards of sixty miles an hour.

The train had to proceed, there was no help for it. There was a hurried conference between Catesby and the stationmaster; after that the electric lamps in the dead man's carriage were unshipped, and the blinds pulled down. The matter would be fully investigated when Edinburgh was reached, meanwhile the stationmaster at Lydmouth would telephone the Scotch capital and let them know there what they had to expect. Catesby crept into his van again, very queer and dizzy, and with a sensation in his legs suggestive of creeping paralysis.

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Naturally, the mystery of the night express caused a great sensation. Nothing like it had been

known since the great crime on the South Coast, which is connected with the name of Lefroy. But that was not so much a mystery as a man hunt. There the criminal had been identified. But here there was no trace and no clue whatever. It was in vain that the Scotland Yard authorities tried to shake the evidence of the guard, Catesby. He refused to make any admissions that would permit the police even to build up a theory. He was absolutely certain that Mr. Skidmore had been alone in the carriage at the moment that the express left London; he was absolutely certain that he had locked the door of the compartment, and the engine driver could testify that the train had never traveled at a less speed than sixty miles an hour until the bridge over the river leading into Lydmouth station was reached; even then nobody could have dropped off the train without the risk of certain death. Inspector Merrick was bound to admit this himself when he went over the spot. And the problem of the missing bullion boxes was quite as puzzling in its way as the mysterious way in which Mr. Skidmore had met his death.

There was no clue to this either. Certainly there had been a struggle, or there would not have been blood marks all over the place, and the window would have remained intact. Skidmore had probably been forced back into his seat, or he had collapsed there after the fatal shot was fired. The unfortunate man had been shot through the brain with an ordinary revolver of common pattern, so that for the purpose of proof the bullet was useless. There were no finger marks on the carriage door, a proof that the murderer had either worn gloves or that he had carefully removed all traces with a cloth of some kind. It was obvious, too, that a criminal of this class would take no risks, especially as there was no chance of his being hurried, seeing that he had had three clear hours for his work. The more the police went into the matter, the more puzzled they were. It was not a difficult matter to establish the bona fides of the passengers who traveled in the next coach with Skidmore, and as to the rest it did not matter. Nobody could possibly have left any of the corridor coaches without attracting notice; indeed, the very suggestion was absurd. And there the matter rested for three days.

It must not be supposed that the authorities had been altogether idle. Inspector Merrick spent most of his time traveling up and down the line by slow local trains on the off-chance of hearing some significant incident that might lead to a clue. There was one thing obvious—the bullion boxes must have been thrown off the train at some spot arranged between the active thief and his confederates. For this was too big a thing to be entirely the work of one man. Some of the gang must have been waiting along the line in readiness to receive the boxes and carry them to a place of safety. By this time, no doubt, the boxes themselves had been destroyed; but eight thousand pounds in gold takes some moving, and probably a conveyance, a motor for choice, had been employed for this purpose. But nobody appeared to have seen or heard anything suspicious on the night of the murder; no prowling gamekeeper or watcher had noticed anything out of the common. Along the Essex and Norfolk marshes, where the Grand Coast Railway wound along like a steel snake, they had taken their desolate and dreary way. True, the dead body of a man had been found in the fowling nets up in the mouth of the Little Ouse, and nobody seemed to know who he was; but there could be no connection between this unhappy individual and the express criminal. Merrick shook his head as he listened to this from a laborer in a roadside public house where he was making a frugal lunch on bread and cheese.

"What do you call fowling nets?" Merrick asked.

"Why, what they catches the birds in," the rustic explained. "Thousands and thousands of duck and teal and widgeon they catches at this time of year. There's miles of nets along the road—great big nets like fowl runs. Ye didn't happen to see any on 'em as ye came along in the train?"

"Now I come to think of it, yes," Merrick said thoughtfully. "I was rather struck by all that netting. So they catch sea birds that way?"

"Catches 'em by the thousand, they does. Birds fly against the netting in the dark and get entangled. Ducks they get by 'ticing 'em into a sort of cage with decoys. There's some of 'em stan's the best part of half a mile long. Covered in over the top like great cages. Ain't bad sport, either."

Merrick nodded. He recollected it all clearly now. He recalled the wide, desolate mud flats running right up to the railway embankment for some miles. At high tide the mud flats were under water, and out of these the great mass of network rose both horizontally and perpendicular. And in this tangle the dead body of a man had been found after the storm.

There was nothing really significant in the fact that the body had been discovered soon after the murder of Mr. George Skidmore. Still, there might be a connection between the two incidents. Merrick was going to make inquiries; he was after what looked like a million to one chance. But then Merrick was a detective with an imagination, which was one of the reasons why he had been appointed to the job. It was essentially a case for the theoretical man. It baffled all the established rules of the game.

Late the same afternoon Merrick arrived at Little Warlingham by means of a baker's cart. It was here that the body of the drowned man lay awaiting the slim chances of identity. If nothing transpired during the next eight and forty hours, the corpse would be buried by the parish authorities. The village policeman acted as Merrick's guide. It was an event in his life that he was not likely to forget.

"A stranger to these parts, I should say, sir," the local officer said. "He's in a shed at the back of the 'Blue Anchor,' where the inquest was held. If you come this way, I'll show him to you."

"Anything found on the body?"

"Absolutely nothing, sir. No mark on the clothing or linen, either. Probably washed off some ship in the storm. Pockets were quite empty, too. And no signs of foul play. *There* you are, sir!"

Casually enough Merrick bent over the still, white form lying there. The dead face was turned up to the light, Rembrandtesque, coming through the door. The detective straightened himself suddenly, and wiped his forehead.

"Stranger to you, sir, of course?" the local man said grimly.

"Well, no," Merrick retorted. "I happen to know the fellow quite well. I'm glad I came here."

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Until it was quite too dark to see any longer Merrick was out on the mud flats asking questions. He appeared to be greatly interested in the wildfowlers and the many methods of catching their prey. He learned, incidentally, that on the night of the express murder most of the nets and lures had been washed away. He took minute particulars as to the state of the tide on the night in question; he wanted to know if the nets were capable of holding up against any great force. For instance, if a school of porpoises came along? Or if a fish eagle or an osprey found itself entangled in the meshes?

The fowlers smiled. They invited Merrick to try it for himself. On that stormy east coast it was foolish to take any risks. And Merrick was satisfied. As a matter of fact, he was more than satisfied.

He was really beginning to see his way at last. By the time he got back to his headquarters again he had practically reconstructed the crime. As he stood on the railway permanent way, gazing down into the network of the fowlers below, he smiled to himself. He could have tossed a biscuit on to the top of the long lengths of tarred and knotted rigging. Later on he telephoned to the London terminus of the Grand Coast Railway for the people there to place the services of Catesby at his disposal for a day or two. Could Catesby meet him at Lydmouth to-morrow?

The guard could and did. He frankly admitted that he was grateful for the little holiday. He looked as if he wanted it. The corners of his mouth twitched, his hands were shaky.

"It's nerves, Mr. Merrick," he explained. "We all suffer from them at times. Only we don't like the company to know it, ye understand? To tell the truth, I've never got over that affair at the Junction here eight years ago. I expect you remember that."

Merrick nodded. Catesby was alluding to a great railway tragedy which had taken place outside Lydmouth station some few years back. It had been a most disastrous affair for a local express, and Catesby had been acting as guard to the train. He spoke of it under his breath.

"I dream of it occasionally even now," he said. "The engine left the line and dragged the train over the embankment into the river. If you ask me how I managed to escape, I can't tell you. I never come into Lydmouth with the night express now without my head out of the window of the van right away from the viaduct till she pulls up at the station. And what's more, I never shall. It isn't fear, mind you, because I've as much pluck as any man. It's just nerves."

"We get 'em in our profession, too," Merrick smiled. "Did you happen to be looking out of the window on the night of the murder?"

"Yes, and every other night, too. Haven't I just told you so? Directly we strike the viaduct I come to my feet by instinct."

"Always look out the same side, I suppose?"

"Yes, on the left. That's the platform side, you understand."

"Then if anybody had left the train there——"

"Anybody left the train! Why we were traveling at fifty miles an hour when we reached the viaduct. Oh, yes, if anybody *had* left the train I should have been bound to see them, of course."

"But you can't see out of both windows at once."

"Nobody could leave the train by the other side. The stone parapet of the viaduct almost touches the footboard, and there's a drop of ninety feet below that. Of course I see what you are driving at, Mr. Merrick. Now look here. I locked Mr. Skidmore in the carriage myself, and I can *prove* that nobody got in before we left London. That would have been too dangerous a game so long as the train was passing any number of brilliantly lighted stations, and by the time we got into the open we were going at sixty miles an hour. That speed never slackened till we were just outside Lydmouth, and I was watching at the moment that our pace dropped. I had my head out of the window of my van till we pulled up by the platform. I am prepared to swear to all this if you like. Lord knows how the thing was done, and I don't suppose anybody else ever will."

"You are mistaken there," said Merrick drily. "Now, what puzzles you, of course, is the manner in which the murderer left the train."

"Well, isn't that the whole mystery?"

"Not to me. That's the part I really do know. Not that I can take any great credit to myself, because luck helped me. It was, perhaps, the most amazing piece of luck I have ever had. It was my duty, of course, to take no chances, and I didn't. But we'll come to that presently. Let it suffice for the moment that I know how the murderer left the train. What puzzles me is to know how he got on it. We can dismiss every other passenger in the train, and we need not look for an accomplice. There *were* accomplices, of course, but they were not on the express. Why didn't Mr. Skidmore travel in one of the corridor coaches?"

"He was too nervous. He always had a first-class carriage to himself. We knew he was coming, and that was why we attached an ordinary first-class coach to the train. We shouldn't do it for anybody, but Lord Rendelmore, the chairman of Mr. Skidmore's bank, is also one of our directors. The coach came in handy the other night because we had an order from a London undertaker to bring a corpse as far as here—to Lydmouth."

"Really! You would have to have a separate carriage for that."

"Naturally, Mr. Merrick. It was sort of killing two birds with one stone."

"I see. When did you hear about the undertaking job?"

"The same morning we heard from the bank that Mr. Skidmore was going to Lydmouth. We reserved a coach at once, and had it attached to the Express. The other carriages were filled with ordinary passengers."

"Why didn't I hear of this before?" Merrick asked.

"I don't know. It doesn't seem to me to be of much importance. You might just as well ask me questions as to the passengers' baggage."

"Everything is of importance," Merrick said sententiously. "In our profession, there are no such things as trifles. I suppose there will be no difficulty in getting at the facts of this corpse business. I'll make inquiries here presently."

So far Merrick professed himself to be satisfied. But there were still difficulties in the way. The station people had a clear recollection of the receipt of a coffin on the night of the tragedy, and, late as it was, the gruesome thing had been fetched away by the people whom it was consigned to. A plain hearse, drawn by one horse, had been driven into the station yard, the consignment note had been receipted in the usual way, and there was an end of the matter. Lydmouth was a big place, with nearly a quarter of a million of inhabitants, and would necessarily contain a good many people in the undertaking line. Clearly it was no business of the railway company to take this thing any further.

Merrick admitted that freely enough. It was nearly dark when he came back to the station, profoundly dissatisfied with a wasted afternoon.

"No good," he told Catesby. "At the same time there are consolations. And, after all, I am merely confirming my suspicions. I suppose your people here are on the telephone. If so, I should like to send a message to your head office. I want the name of the firm in London who consigned the coffin here. I suppose the stationmaster could manage this for me."

An hour or so later the information came. Merrick, at the telephone, wanted a little further assistance. Would the Grand Coast Railway call up the undertaker's firm whilst he held the line and ask the full particulars as to the body sent from London to Lydmouth. For half an hour Merrick stood patiently there till the reply came.

"Are you there? Is that Inspector Merrick? Oh, yes. Well, we have called up Lincoln & Co., the undertakers. We got on to the manager himself. He declares that the whole thing is a mistake. They have not sent a corpse over our trunk system for two months. I read the manager the letter asking for special facilities, a letter on the firm's own paper. The manager does not hesitate to say the whole thing is a forgery. I think he is right, Inspector. If we can do anything else for you \_\_\_"

Merrick hung up the receiver and smiled as if pleased with himself. He turned to his companion, Catesby.

"It's all right," he said. "Is there any way we can get back to London to-night? The whole thing is perfectly plain, now."

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Though Merrick returned to London thoroughly satisfied, he knew that the sequel was not just yet. There was much conjuring work to be done before it would be possible to place all the cards on the table. The Christmas holidays had arrived before Merrick obtained a couple of warrants, and, armed with these, he went down to Brighton on Boxing Day, and put up at the Hotel Regina, registering himself as Colonel Beaumont, sometime of the United States Field Forces. Merrick could pose as an authority on Cuba, for on one occasion he had been there for six months on the lookout for a defaulting bank manager. He had made certain changes in his appearance, and just now he bore little resemblance to Inspector Merrick of New Scotland Yard.

The big hotel on the front was full. There was a smart dance that same night, preceded by a children's party and Christmas tree. The house swarmed with young folks, and a good many nationalities were represented. On occasions like these somebody generally takes the lead, and by common consent the part of the chief of the events had been allotted to the Marquis de Branza.

To begin with, he was immensely rich. He had vast estates in Italy. He had been staying at the Regina for the past month, and it was whispered that his bill had reached three figures. He entertained lavishly; he was the soul of hospitality; he was going to buy a palace in Kings' Gardens, and more or less settle down in Brighton.

In addition to all this the Marquis was a handsome man, very fascinating, and a prime favorite with all the boys and girls at the Regina. He had his little peculiarities, of course—for instance, he paid for everything in gold. All his hotel bills were met with current coin.

Merrick had gleaned all this before he had been a day at the Regina. They were quite a happy family, and the Colonel speedily found himself at home. The Marquis welcomed him as if he owned the hotel, and as if everybody was his guest. The dance was a great success, as also were the presents in connection with the cotillon promoted by the Marquis.

At two o'clock the following morning the Marquis was entertaining a select party in the smoking-room. The ladies had all vanished by this time. The Marquis was speaking of his adventures. He really had quite a talent in that direction. Naturally, a man of his wealth was certain to be the mark for swindlers. Merrick listened with an approving smile. He knew that most of these stories were true, for they had all been recorded from time to time at Scotland Yard.

"You would have made an excellent detective, Marquis," he said. "You have made it quite clear where the police blundered over that Glasgow tragedy. I suppose you read all about the Grand Coast Railway murder."

The Marquis started ever so slightly. There was a questioning look in his eyes.

"Did you?" he said. "Naturally one would, Colonel. But a matter the most inexplicable. I gave him up. From the very first I gave him up. If the guard Catesby was not the guilty person, then I admit I have no theory."

One by one, the smoking-room company faded away. Presently only Merrick and the Marquis remained, save one guest who had fallen asleep in his chair. A sleepy waiter looked in and vanished again. The hotel was absolutely quiet now. Merrick, however, was wide awake enough; so, apparently, was the Marquis. All the same, he yawned ostentatiously.

"Let us to bed," he said. "To-morrow, perhaps——"

"No," Merrick said somewhat curtly. "I prefer to-night. Sit down."

The last two words came crisply and with a ring of command in them. The Marquis bowed as he dropped into a chair and lighted a fresh cigarette. A little red spot glowed on either of his brown cheeks, his eyes glittered.

"You want to speak to me, Colonel?" he said.

"Very much indeed. Now, you are an exceedingly clever man, Marquis, and you may be able to help me. It happens that I am deeply interested in the Grand Coast Express murder; in fact, I have devoted the last two months to its solution."

"With no success whatever, my dear Colonel?" the Marquis murmured.

"On the contrary, my dear Marquis, with absolute satisfaction. I am quite sure that you will be interested in my story."

The Marquis raised his cigarette graciously.

"You are very good to give me your confidence," he said. "Pray proceed."

"Thank you. I will not bore you with any preliminary details, for they are too recent to have faded from your memory. Sufficient that we have a murder committed in an express train; we have the disappearance of eight thousand pounds in gold, without any trace of the criminal. That he was on the train at the start is obvious. That he was not in any of the carriages conveying ordinary passengers is equally obvious. It is also certain that he left the train after the commission of the crime. Doubtless you read the evidence of the guard to prove that nobody left the train after the viaduct leading to Lydmouth station was reached. Therefore, the murderer contrived to make his escape when the express was traveling at sixty miles per hour."

"Is not all this superfluous?" the Marquis asked.

"Well, not quite. I am going to tell you how the murderer joined the train and how he left it after the murder and the robbery."

"You are going to tell me that! Is it possible?"

"I think so," Merrick said modestly. "Now, Mr. Skidmore had a compartment to himself. He was locked in the very last thing, and nobody joined the train afterward. Naturally a—well—an amateur detective like myself wanted to know who was in the adjoining compartments. Three of

these could be dismissed at once. But in the fourth there was a corpse——"

"A corpse! But there was no mention of that at the inquest."

"No, but the fact remains. A corpse in a coffin. In a dark compartment with the blinds down. And, strangely enough, the firm of undertakers who consigned, or were supposed to consign, the body to Lydmouth denied the whole business. Therefore, it is only fair to suppose that the whole thing was a put-up job to get a compartment in the coach that Mr. Skidmore traveled by. I am going to assume that in that coffin the murderer lay concealed. But let me give you a light—your cigarette is out."

"I smoke no more," the Marquis said. "My throat, he is dry. And then——"

"Well, then, the first part is easy. The man gets out of the coffin and proceeds to fill it with some heavy substance which has been smuggled into the carriage under the pall. He screws the lid down and presently makes his way along the footboard to the next compartment. An athlete in good condition could do that; in fact, a sailor has done it in a drunken freak more than once. Mind you, I don't say that murder was intended in the first instance; but will presume that there was a struggle. The thief probably lost his temper, and perhaps Mr. Skidmore irritated him. Now, the rest was easy. It was easy to pack up the gold in leather bags, each containing a thousand sovereigns, and to drop them along the line at some spot previously agreed upon. I have no doubt that the murderer and his accomplices traveled many times up and down the line before the details were finally settled. Any way, there was no risk here. The broken packing cases were pitched out also, probably in some thick wood. Or they might have been weighted and cast into a stream. Are you interested?"

The Marquis gurgled. He had some difficulty in speaking.

"A little dangerous," he said. "Our ingenious friend could not possibly screw himself down in the coffin after returning to his compartment. And have you perceived the danger of discovery at Lydmouth?"

"Precisely," Merrick said drily. "It is refreshing to meet with so luminous a mind as yours. There were many dangers, many risks to take. The train might have been stopped, lots of things might have happened. It would be far better for the man to leave the express. And he did so!"

"The express at top speed! Impossible!"

"To the ordinary individual, yes. But then, you see, this was not an ordinary individual. He was—let us suppose—an acrobat, a man of great nerve and courage, accustomed to trapeze work and the use of the diving net."

"But Colonel, pardon me, where does the net come in?"

"The net came in at a place near Little Warlingham, on the Norfolk coast. There are miles of net up there, trap and flight nets close by the side of the line. These nets are wide and strong; they run many furlongs without supports, so that an acrobat could easily turn a somersault on to one of these at a given spot without the slightest risk. He could study out the precise spot carefully beforehand—there are lightships on the sands to act as guides. I have been down to the spot and studied it all out for myself. The thing is quite easy for the class of man I mean. I am not taking any great credit to myself, because I happened to see the body of the man who essayed that experiment. I recognized him for——"

"You recognized him! You knew who he was?"

"Certainly. He was Luigi Bianca, who used to perform in London years ago, with his brother Joseph, on the high trapeze. Then one of them got into trouble and subsequently embarked, as the papers say, on a career of crime. And when I saw the body of Luigi I knew at once that he had had a hand in the murder of Mr. Skidmore. When the right spot was reached the fellow took a header in the dark boldly enough, but he did not know that the storm had come with a very high October tide, and washed the nets away. He fell on the sands and dislocated his neck. But I had something to go on with. When I found out about the bogus corpse I began to see my way. I have been making careful inquiries ever since for the other criminal——"

"The other criminal! You mean to insinuate——"

"I insinuate nothing," Merrick said coldly; "naturally enough I wanted to find Joseph Bianca. He was the man who picked up the gold; he was the man who hired a car in London from Moss & Co., in Regent Street, for a week. This was to recover the gold and incidentally also to take up the thief who stole it. I wanted to find Joseph Bianca, and *I've done it!*"

The Marquis leaped to his feet. As he did so the man in the distant chair woke up and moved across the room.

"Don't make a fuss!" Merrick said quietly. "You will be able to explain presently—perhaps what you are doing here posing as a Marquis, and where you got all that ready money from. Meanwhile, let me inform you that I am Inspector Merrick, of Scotland Yard, and that this is Sergeant Matthews. Joseph Bianca, you are my prisoner, and I have a warrant for your arrest as an accessory before and after the fact for the murder of Mr. George Skidmore. Ask them to call us a cab, Matthews!"



## OVER THE GARDEN WALL

### The Story of a Vacation

By LOUISE HAMILTON MABIE

THE impression, which floated vaguely as a perfume in the wake of the departing Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Prentiss, adapted itself pleasingly to any point of view. Generally, it was thought that Katrina Prentiss was to remain at home under the eye of Grandfather McBride. Particularly, was this Grandfather McBride's reading of the unspoken word. But Miss Prentiss, herself, thought so otherwise that the situation completely reversed itself. To Miss Prentiss, Grandfather McBride was left absolutely under her eye.

Meanwhile the Jasper Prentisses, characteristically explaining nothing, commanding nothing, leaving events to work themselves out somehow, as events have been known to do, were off for their month's fishing without undue worry.

"Grandfather will smoke his pipe all over the house," remarked Mrs. Prentiss easily, as they drove away.

"Oh, Katrina will manage somehow," returned Mr. Prentiss, as easily. "They'll come to terms. By the way, Kitty, we mustn't forget that marmalade." And, absorbed in their list of supplies, the Jasper Prentisses disappeared from view.

Grandfather McBride, eighty-one, dependent, save in moments of excitement, upon his knotted stick, hard-featured, with a rusty beard and a shabby black hat, departed slowly for his own quarters. Miss Prentiss, twenty-one, hazel-eyed and graceful, with a wonderful creamy skin, under a crown of auburn braids, sank dreamily upon the broad porch step and gazed across the green lawn into the future.

"A whole month," thought Miss Prentiss, "of doing as I please—consulting nobody, ordering things, going to places, and coming home to—freedom." Miss Prentiss spread out her hands with a sigh of content. "Not that I'm interfered with—ever," she added, reproaching herself, "but now—well, I'm it."

She rose swiftly and turned up the steps. In the wide doorway stood Grandfather McBride, stick in hand, hat jammed down, and in his mouth, at a defiant angle, a battered black pipe. A red flag, backed up by a declaration of the rights of man, could not have spoken more plainly. Miss Prentiss drew back; Mr. McBride stepped forward. Their eyes met. Then the old gentleman flung down his challenge. He removed the pipe and held it poised in his hand.

"What you goin' to do to-day, Triny?" he asked, briskly. "When you goin' over to see the Deerings' parrot? There ain't another such bird in America. You go over there this morning and see that parrot. Don't loll about the house. Don't be lazy!" Whereupon, with less profanity, but as much of autocracy as was ever displayed by an Irish boss whipping into shape the lowliest of his Italian gang, Mr. McBride replaced his pipe elaborately, and walked off with the honors. Katrina, utterly astonished, stared after him, then shrugged, then smiled.

"Poor Grandfather," she reached at length, "in minor matters I'll let him have his way."

The next day, Grandfather McBride smoked his pipe on the porch. On the third morning he smoked it in the drawing-room—out of sheer defiance, for he never entered the room save under compulsion. Katrina, reminding herself that peace was to be desired above victory, shrugged once more, smiled, and went for a ride. When she swept in, an hour or so later, Grandfather McBride was in the back garden with John, and the smoke of a huge bonfire obscured the sunlight. This was revolution, simple and straightforward, and Katrina went at once to the back garden.

"John," she said, "what is the meaning of this? Don't you know that Mr. Prentiss never allows bonfires? The rubbish is to be carted away, *not* set on fire."

John, apologetic, perturbed, nodded toward the old gentleman. "Yes, miss, I know. I told Mr. McBride, miss—"

Grandfather McBride turned coldly upon Katrina. "I ordered this bonfire," he said.

"But, Grandfather, you know the old orders. Father never allows them."

"I allow them," said Mr. McBride. "Your father's away fishing, and I'm in charge. This is my bonfire. I order bonfires when I please. I like 'em. I like the smell of 'em, I like the smoke——" Here an unexpected cough gave Katrina a word.

"But, Grandfather," she began again, only to be cut short.

"When the folks are home, I sit still and mind my own business. Now they're away, I'm goin' to do

things. I'm on a vacation myself," said Mr. McBride, "and I'll have a bonfire on the front lawn if I say so. You go back to the house, Katriny, and read Gibson."

"Ibsen," flashed Katrina.

"I don't care what his Dutch name is—read him. Or else"—a grim light of humor in his hard gray eye—"go over and see that parrot."

Katrina almost stamped her foot. "I loathe parrots," she cried, "and I came out to talk about this bonfire."

"I know you did," said Mr. McBride, "but this parrot ain't like other parrots. It's a clown. It would make a rag baby laugh."

Katrina, flushed, angry, at a loss what to say, decided to say nothing. The sight of John, discreetly gazing at the roof of the chicken house, the grimness of Grandfather's face, the discomfort of the choking smoke, urged a dignified retreat. She turned abruptly and left them, overwhelmed at the exhibition furnished by Mr. McBride, confounded at his sudden leap into activity after years of serene floating and absolutely in the dark as to any method of controlling him in the future.

For a week, his pipe and his daily bonfire contented Mr. McBride. Between himself and Katrina, relations were polite but not cordial. Katrina preserved a dignity which deceived neither of them. Both knew that she was awaiting something sensational, and the fact worried the old gentleman, for already he had exhausted his possibilities. He longed for new ideas in this matter of revolution, but none came. He began to be bored by bonfires, and the lack of opposition to them. Even the parrot failed to amuse, and he was sinking into dull monotony, when a walk down the long lane behind the back garden one sunny afternoon changed the horizon of his world.

He was gone for two hours; but Katrina was away from the house herself, and did not notice. The next afternoon he disappeared for three, finally dragging in weary in body, but high in spirit. Twice at dinner he chuckled audibly, and three times he recommended the parrot across the street to Katrina. The next day he vanished after luncheon, and was late for dinner. At this, Katrina decided to take a hand.

"Grandfather," she said abruptly at dessert, after a long interval of silence on both sides, "it's all very well to take a vacation, but there is such a thing as overdoing it. I'm sure you would do nothing that would alarm mother, and I know that if she were at home she would worry over you. For days you have had no nap. Please rest to-morrow. Don't go walking. Let me drive you to the club for luncheon."

The old gentleman glanced up at Katrina quickly. "I declare if I hadn't forgot all about that fellow till this minute," he said. "Speaking of the club, how's Sparks, Katriny?"

Katrina sat suddenly erect and her color deepened. "Do you by any chance mean Mr. Willoughby Park, Grandfather? If so, I know nothing whatever about him. I haven't seen him for a week." This with a jerk.

"Don't you marry that chap, Katriny," went on Mr. McBride, unimpressed, "and don't you let him come around here. He's no good. A fellow that hangs around a country club when he ain't hangin' around a girl, is always no good. You marry a chap with brains, Katriny, even if he ain't so long on the cash. Why, I know a young fellow——" Mr. McBride pulled himself up short. "You dash in for brains, Triny, and I'll take out my pocket book." Here he nodded, as if concluding a bargain, but Katrina was already upon her feet.

"Grandfather McBride, you are growing insufferable," she cried. "Simply because I mention the club, you assume that I am—angling—for a man that—that has been decently polite to me. I have never been invited to marry Mr. Park. And you give me low advice about laying traps for some other sort of a man. And you mention pocket books! And you go off alone for hours and come home worn out. And you smoke your horrible old pipe and build your sickening bonfires, just to spite me! I think you are a wretch, and I've worried over you every day since mother left." Here she stopped suddenly, with a catch in her throat.

The old gentleman looked at her silently. Then he got up and came around the table. Awkwardly, he patted her shoulder. Katrina sat down.

"I'm glad you don't like Sparks, my dear," said Mr. McBride, leaning on his stick. "And don't worry your heart over Grandfather, Triny. Grandfather's no fool. He ain't had so much fun in years." Mr. McBride winked just here, and put on an air of profound mystery.

"I wonder where you do disappear to," said Katrina. "I think I'll go along."

"Don't you do that," spoke up Mr. McBride alertly. "Don't you do that! A man can't stand a woman tagging at his heels. He's got to have room, and air to breathe."

"Smoke, you mean," put in Katrina, with returning spirit, "and I warn you, Grandfather, that if you make fires off our place, you'll be arrested."

"Pooh! Fires!" said Mr. McBride contemptuously. "Amusement for children. I ain't a-makin' fires these days, Katriny. I've got other things to do." And, with a final pat upon her shoulder, and a last most telling wink, Grandfather McBride dragged himself wearily, but triumphantly, to bed.

When Katrina, on the lookout next afternoon, saw Mr. McBride join John in the back garden, hold

with him a whispered consultation broken by many stealthy glances toward the house, and finally disappear with him down the lane, behind a wheelbarrow laden with boards, she gave orders that she was not at home, waited half an hour, and followed.

The lane wound coolly green and deserted from the Prentiss place into the heart of the country. Katrina, walking steadily, passed her own, passed the Graham and the Haskell boundaries, and stopped in surprise. At a branching path hung a new and conspicuous sign. "Private Road! No Trespassing, Under Penalty of the Law."

It was a churlish sign. The people of the neighborhood—a summer settlement of friends and pleasant informalities—were used to no such signs. And Katrina, knowing Grandfather McBride, turned at once into the branching path. At some distance in, she passed a similar sign, with every mark of disdain. Finally, she was brought up short by a wire fence, with a gate, high, wooden, and new, that stretched across the path. She tried the gate, but it did not budge. From the wood beyond came the sound of voices and the strokes of a hammer. With a quick glance behind her, and a determined set to her chin, she began to climb the gate.

She was descending upon the other side in safety, when Grandfather McBride came upon her. His hat was pushed back upon his head, his stick was forgotten. He descended upon her as might a hungry lion upon its prey. He roared—in fact, he bellowed.

"Katrina Prentiss, get back over that fence. Climb back over that gate; you're trespassing. Didn't you see the signs? Are you blind? Can't you read? What do you mean by coming in here where you don't belong? Climb back there and go home at once!"

Katrina, unprepared for battle and aware of being at a disadvantage, swallowed hard and obeyed. She climbed back over the gate. Once upon solid earth, however, and she glared as fiercely at Grandfather McBride as he stared ferociously at her.

"I'm not a child," she said furiously, when he stopped to breathe, "to be ordered about and sent home and insulted. I have never been so treated in my life and I give you fair warning, Grandfather, that I'll stand it no longer. After this I'll do as I please." Whereupon Katrina, having woman-like, in the act of obedience, said her say, retreated with dignity and dispatch. Behind her, Mr. McBride waved his recovered stick over the gate and shouted, but she did not turn nor attempt an answer.

He came home within an hour, slowly, leaning heavily upon his stick. John followed with the empty wheelbarrow. They parted at the barn and Mr. McBride went at once to his room and shut the door. Katrina, sitting at her own window, looked thoughtfully into space and swung a key upon her forefinger. After a time she stood up, smoothed her hair and pinned on her wide, rose-laden hat. Then she went down the hall quietly, stopped before Mr. McBride's door, and listened a moment. A gentle snore proclaimed Mr. McBride's occupation. Katrina fitted the key into the lock and turned it, took it out again and slipped it beneath a corner of the rug, listened a further moment and then walked down the stairs, out through the back garden, and, with a final glance behind her, turned once more into the green and deserted lane.

It must be confessed that Katrina started upon her quest in a spirit far removed from that of your single-minded explorer. She was urged by a variety of causes. Among them was a determination to disobey Grandfather McBride, to serve him with his own medicine, to pay him in his own coin, and to do it as quickly and as frankly as possible. Her rapidly increasing curiosity concerning the region he guarded with so much mystery counted as well, but the paramount force—for Katrina was young enough to take her responsibility seriously—was anxiety over the old gentleman himself. In fact, Katrina departed, as did Lot's wife, with her face and her thought turned backward, a policy not conducive to brilliant success in exploration.

This time, however, she was stopped by no one. She passed the gate safely, penetrated the wood and came at length upon a part of Mr. McBride's secret. It was a rough little flight of steps, made with the help of John, the wheelbarrow, and the boards, which led to the top of a high brick wall. The wall astounded Katrina even more than did the steps, which is saying a good deal. The whole elaborate contrivance for keeping people away, puzzled Katrina. It was some time before she mounted the steps and looked over the wall, but when she finally did so, she ceased to be merely puzzled. She became lost in a maze of wonder.

Stretching before her, was a wide expanse of green. Just opposite stood a long, low building of workmanlike appearance. At the left was a very presentable rose garden. At the right, a rustic summer-house. Surrounding all was the high brick wall. But it was none of these things that amazed Katrina.

Moving toward her, from the door of the long building, came a little procession—men and women, walking slowly, sedately dressed in old-time silks and finery, decked with plumes, jewels, laces, bouquets of flowers. Arrived at a broad space near the summer-house, the company, after a series of low and preliminary bows, launched forth into a stately dance. Katrina, conscious of music, descried an individual in very modern blue overalls, who manipulated a phonograph. A voice from beyond the summer-house, called forth instructions at intervals, with a huskiness vaguely suggestive of old Coney.

"More side-play there, Miss Beals. Just imagine he's a young hobo you're in love with and yer father won't let him up the steps. You're doing the Merry Widow act while the old man's not looking. Don't bow so low you hide your face, Mr. Peters. Your face is worth money to us all. And

everybody get a move on! You're too slow! Hit it up a bit, Jim."

The overalls, thus adjured, accelerated the time of his machine, and a new spirit animated the group. Katrina leaned far over the wall in order to miss nothing. At length, the dance, moving toward a finale, reached it with a succession of stirring chords, and a flourish of curtseys, and the group dissolved.

"That'll do for to-day. You can knock off now," began the husky voice, when Jim, glancing up from his phonograph, beheld Katrina in her rose-laden hat, leaning far over the wall. If he had stopped to reflect, he might have ignored the vision, for he was but man, and the vision a guilelessly pretty one, but he did not stop to reflect. With Jim, to see a thing was to proclaim it abroad. Immediately, he yelled:

"Hey! Get on to the lady on the wall! Hey! Mr. Connor, come around here. There's somebody on the wall. Hey!"

At once Katrina, to her utmost discomfort, became the centre of the stage. Everybody turned, saw her, and began to stare. The silken ladies, the velvet gentlemen, delayed their return to modern apparel, and took her in. Jim stared clamorously. Mr. Connor, rounding the summer-house, glared angrily. To Katrina, even the long building blinked its windows at her, and she thought, with sudden longing, of Grandfather McBride. She wished she had not come. Most of all, she wished to go, but she did not quite dare.

At once, Mr. Connor took charge of the situation. "Say, young lady," he demanded, in a truculent manner, "what do you mean by gettin' into these grounds and rubberin' at us over our wall? Don't you know you can be run in for passin' those signs? Didn't you see that gate?"

"Oh, yes," faltered Katrina; "yes—I saw the gate."

"Well, how'd you get past that gate and them signs," Mr. Connor wanted to know.

"I—I climbed the gate," hesitated Katrina.

Clearly this was not what Mr. Connor expected. Such simplicity must cover guile. A suppressed smile glimmered through the group and Mr. Connor became more suspicious of Katrina.

"I don't want no kiddin' now, do you hear?" he burst forth. "You're in a tight place, young woman, and you may as well wake up to the fact at once. The Knickerbocker is doin' things on a plane of high art, and our methods are our own. Now, I want to know who you represent? And freshness don't go, d'you see?"

Katrina hardly heard Mr. Connor. Her mind was occupied with the freedom that lay clear behind her, and the possible patrol-wagons and police stations before her. Perhaps she might conciliate this red-faced man by allowing him to talk, by being mild and meek and polite. Perhaps a chance might come for a desperate attempt at escape. But Mr. Connor, conversing fluently, read her very soul.

"Bring that there light ladder, Jim," he interrupted himself to order, "and if you try to get away, young woman, it'll be the worse for you. Now, I want to know what yellow sheet you represent?"

"Yellow—why do you take me for a newspaper woman?" cried Katrina. "I'm not. I'm nothing of the sort. I've never been inside a newspaper office in my life."

"Of course not," observed Mr. Connor, ironically. "They never have. Always society ladies that can't write their own names. You stand just where you are, miss, till that ladder arrives. Then I'm coming up to confiscate any little sketches and things you may have handy.

"You are a brute," said Katrina, lips trembling but head held high. "I am Miss Prentiss. I live near here, and you will not dare to detain me."

"Oh, won't I?" returned Mr. Connor. "I have a picture of myself letting you go. And where the deuce is Jim?" He turned impatiently toward the building across the lawn, then somewhat relaxed his frown. "Oh, well, I can take an orchestra chair," observed Mr. Connor. "Here comes the boss."

Katrina, with deepening concern, glanced from Mr. Connor toward the long building. A young man was sprinting across the stretch of green—a clean-cut young man in gray flannels. At the first sight of him, Katrina caught her breath sharply and blushed. It was Katrina's despair that she blushed so easily. As the young man neared them the spectators achieved the effect of obliterating themselves from the landscape. They melted into space. There remained the young man, Mr. Connor, and a divinely flushed Katrina.

The young man looked up at her without smiling. He bowed to her gravely. Then he turned to Mr. Connor. With a few low-spoken words, he wilted Mr. Connor. Katrina, gazing at the rose-garden, heard something in spite of herself. She heard her name, and caught Mr. Connor's articulate amazement. She heard mentioned some "old gentleman." She heard a recommendation to Mr. Connor to go more slowly in the future and to mend his manners at all times. After a hint to Mr. Connor to look up Jim and the ladder, she heard that gentleman withdraw much more quietly than he had come, and her eyes finally left the rose-garden and looked straight down into those of warm gray, belonging to the young man below her.

"Will you mind—waiting—just a moment longer?" he asked. "This is more luck than I've had lately."

Katrina smiled tremulously. "It's in my power to go, then," she said.

"No," said the young man, firmly, "it isn't. On second thoughts, you are to stay just where you are till that blockhead brings the ladder. I've a good deal to say. I'm going to walk home with you."

"Oh," said Katrina. "And what will become of your fancy-dress party?"

"My fancy-dress party," returned the young man, "will catch the next trolley for New York. Oh! Here labors the trusty henchman across the green. Right you are, Jim! No, the lady is not to come down. I'm to go up." And go up he did, in the twinkling of an eye, and in less than another the rose-wreathed hat and the young man's gray cap had disappeared from view together.

"Well, what do you know about that?" observed Jim, under his breath, staring at the top of the wall. He whistled softly. Then he grinned. "Hypnotized, by thunder," concluded Jim, returning with the ladder.

Meanwhile, the two lingered homeward through the deepening twilight. The gate opened easily to a key from the young man's pocket; the signs glimmered dimly. They talked lightly, but what they said proved to both simply an airy veil for what they did not say. Katrina spoke of the club and the tennis tournament.

"Of course, we lost," she said. "Our best man," with a sidelong look, "did not enter. The committee said that he was away—on business. I see now that they were misinformed."

"But they weren't," said the young man, eagerly, "if you mean me. I am 'away on business.' Why, do you know it's seven days since I've seen you?"

Katrina regarded her neat brown shoes.

"The fact is," continued the young man, diffidently, "I've been trying a new method with you. I've been endeavoring to be missed. And I'm afraid to hear that I haven't been."

"A little wholesome fear is good for anyone," observed Katrina, judicially, "but I can truthfully say that I rejoiced at the sight of you this afternoon. That red-faced man was about to drag me off the wall by the hair."

"Oh, Connor," said the young man. "Connor's not polished, but in his line, he's a jewel. He used to be a stage manager, and considered in that light, he's really mild."

"Is he?" said Katrina, drily. "Does he stage manage for you?"

"Practically that. Don't scoff—please. You see, there's a big future in this business. My father growled at first, but he's come clean around. The land was mine, and we are using it this way. The American public are going in for this thing. They want amusement and they want it quick. And the thing is to provide them with what they want, when they want it."

"Oh," said Katrina. "And you are providing the American public with what they want—back there?" with a tilt of her head behind her.

"Exactly," he answered. "That's our plant. We are the Knickerbocker Film Manufacturing Company."

"Oh," said Katrina, again. "And the fancy-dress people?"

"We are getting up 'Romeo and Juliet,'" said the young man. "Please don't laugh. It's been proven that the moving picture audiences like Shakespeare canned."

"Moving picture audiences," repeated Katrina in surprise, and then as the light broke, she stopped short and looked at the young man.

"Why, didn't you guess?" he queried. "The summer-house—why, of course, the summer-house must have hidden the camera." He looked at her dejectedly. "I've wanted you so much to know all about it," he said, "and now that you do, it sounds—oh, drivelling."

"But it doesn't," cried Katrina, eyes shining. "It sounds splendid. It sounds thrilling. I'm sure it will be a success. You're bound to make it one. I congratulate you. You've left out a good deal. You've told your story very badly, but I'm good at filling in. The fact is, I'm proud to know you, and you may shake hands with me if you wish to."

"Oh, Katrina," murmured the young man, and they clasped hands. It was just here that Grandfather McBride turned into the lane from the back garden and came upon them. When they became aware of him, leaning heavily upon his stick and frowning at them through the dusk, Katrina braced herself to meet whatever might come. But, suddenly, to her intense surprise, Mr. McBride beamed upon them radiantly.

"Well, well, Katriny," he said, in high good humor, "so you've been over that gate again, eh? Been lookin' over that wall, eh? I knew you would, my dear, I knew you would. There's some of the McBride spirit in you after all, thank God. I meant to take you myself, but you got ahead of me." Here he shook hands with the young man. "Glad to see you again, my boy," said Grandfather McBride. "Brought my little girl home, eh?"

"Well, we were on the way," admitted the young man with enthusiasm. "I see you got the steps up, sir."

"Yes," said Mr. McBride, "oh, yes. I'm much obliged to you for the permission. It's as good as any vaudeville, and it's a sight nearer home. You're bound to make money. I tell my granddaughter," with a triumphant nod to the lady in question, "to bank on brains and energy and American push. I tell her," with a profound wink to Katrina, "to let this old family nonsense and society racket go hang. I'm glad she met you."

"But we mustn't stand here in the lane, Grandfather," put in Katrina, hurriedly. "It's getting damp."

"That's so," agreed Mr. McBride, "and it's getting late." He hooked his cane about the young man's arm. "Come in and have dinner with us," he said.

Katrina stared in amazement at Mr. McBride. The young man looked eagerly at Katrina. "If Miss Prentiss will allow me——" he began.

"Huh! Miss Prentiss," spoke up Mr. McBride. "What's she got to say about it? I allow you." And as Katrina, behind Mr. McBride's back, smiled and nodded, the young man accepted promptly.

Together the three went through the back garden and up to the house. Arrived there, Katrina disappeared. Grandfather McBride, after settling his guest, came straight upstairs and stopped at her door.

"Little cuss," beamed Mr. McBride, "goin' off, locking up her old grandfather and meetin' young chaps. Say, Katriny," he remarked casually, "he's a fine fellow, ain't he?"

Katrina, busy with her hair, nodded.

"Now, if I was a girl," continued Mr. McBride, diplomatically, "and a fellow like that took a shine to me I'd show a glimmer of sense. I'd up and return it."

"Would you?" remarked Katrina. "I'm glad you like him. You see, Grandfather, you are too smart for me. I didn't know until just now that you had even met Mr. Park."

Mr. McBride's smile stiffened, then froze, finally disappeared. He opened his mouth, and shut it. He swallowed hard. At last, he got it out. "Katriny—Katriny, is *that* Sparks—that fellow downstairs? Is that *Sparks*?"

"Hush," said Katrina. "Of course, that is Willoughby Park. Why, Grandfather, didn't you ask his name?"

"No," said Mr. McBride, "I didn't. I just saw he was a fine, likely——" He stopped abruptly. "Well, I'll be damned," said Mr. McBride.

Katrina came over to him and put her hand on his shoulder. Mr. McBride looked into space. Standing so, he spoke once more. "Do you—do you really like him, Triny?" he asked, and although he looked into space, Mr. McBride saw Katrina's blush. He patted her hand once, and left her.

On his way downstairs, the grimness of Mr. McBride's face relaxed. In the lower hall, he went so far as to chuckle. When he joined Mr. Park on the porch, he grinned at him amiably.

"I'm a good sport," remarked Mr. McBride, irrelevantly, "but I know when to retire to my corner and stay there. Say," continued Mr. McBride, unconscious of discrepancies between thought and action, "after dinner I'm goin' to take you children across the street to see that parrot."

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### III

## RURAL INSURANCE

### The Story of a Wayside Halt

By CLOTILDE GRAVES

EXHAUSTED by the effort involved in keeping the thermometer of the closing day of August at an altitude intolerable to the human kind and irksome to the brute, a large, red-hot sun was languidly sinking beyond an extensive belt of dusky-brown elms fringing the western boundary of a seventy acre expanse of stubbles diagonally traversed by a parish right-of-way leading from the village of Bensley to the village of Dorton Ware. A knee-deep crop of grasses, flattened by the passage of the harvest wains, clothed this strip of everyman's land, and a narrow footpath divided the grass down the middle, as a parting divides hair.

A snorting sound, which, accompanied by a terrific clatter of old iron and the crunching of road-mendings, had been steadily growing from distant to near, and from loud to deafening, now reached a pitch of utter indescribability; and as a large splay-wheeled, tall-funneled, plowing engine rolled off the Bensley highroad and lumbered in upon the right-of-way, the powerful bouquet of hot lubricating oil nullified all other smells, and the atmosphere became opaque to the point of solidity. As the dust began to settle it was possible to observe that attached to the locomotive was a square, solid, wooden van, the movable residence of the stoker, the engineer,

and an apprentice; that a Fowler cultivator, a fearsome piece of mechanism, apparently composed of second-hand anchors, chain-cables, and motor driving-wheels, was coupled to the back of the van, and that a bright green water-cart brought up the rear. Upon the rotund barrel of this water-cart rode a boy.

The plowing-engine came to a standstill, the boy got down from the water-cart and uncoupled the locomotive from the living-van. During the operations, though the boy received many verbal buffets from both his superiors, it was curiously noticeable that the engineer and stoker, while plainly egging one another on to wreak physical retribution upon the body of the neophyte, studiously refrained from personally administering it.

"Hook off, can't ye, hook off!" commanded the engineer. "A 'ead like a dumpling, that boy 'as!" he commented to the stoker, as Billy wrought like a grimy goblin at the appointed task.

"A clout on the side of it 'ud do 'im good!" pronounced the stoker, who was as thin and saturnine as the engineer was stout and good-humored. "Boys need correction."

"I'll allow you're right," said the engineer. "But it ain't my business to 'it Billy for 's own good. Bein' own brother to 'is sister's 'usband—it's plainly your place to give 'im wot for if 'e 'appens to need it."

The stoker grunted and the clock belonging to the Anglo-Norman church tower of the village struck six. Both the engineer and his subordinate wiped their dewy foreheads with their blackened hands, and simultaneously thought of beer.

"Us bein' goin' up to Bensley for a bit, me an' George," said the engineer, "an' supposin' Farmer Shrub should come worritin' along this way and ask where us are, what be you a-going to tell 'im, Billy boy?"

"The truth, I 'ope," said the stoker, with a vicious look in an eye which was naturally small and artificially bilious.

"Ah, but wot is the truth to be, this time?" queried the engineer. "Let's git it settled before we go. As far as I'm consarned, the answer Billy's to give in regards to my question o' my whereabouts is: 'Anywhere but in the tap o' the Red Cow.'"

"And everythink but decently drunk," retorted the stoker.

"That's about it," assented the unsuspecting engineer.

The stoker laughed truculently, and Billy ventured upon a faint echo of the jeering cachinnation. The grin died from the boy's face, however, as the engineer promptly relieved a dawning sense of injury by cuffing him upon one side of the head, while the stoker wrung the ear upon the other.

"Ow, hoo," wailed Billy, stanching his flowing tears in the ample sleeve of his coat, "Ow, hoo, hoo!"

"Stop that blubberin', you," commanded the stoker, who possessed a delicate ear, "and make th' fire an' git th' tea ready against Alfred and me gits back. You hear me?"

"Yes, plaize," whimpered Billy.

"An' mind you warms up the cold bacon pie," added the stoker.

"And don't you forget to knock in the top of that tin o' salmon," added the engineer, "an' set it on to stew a bit. An' don't you git pickin' the loaf wi' they mucky black fingers o' yours, Billy, my lad, or you'll suffer for it when I comes home."

"Yes, plaize," gasped Billy, bravely swallowing the recurrent hiccough of grief. "An' plaize where be I to build fire?"

"The fire," mused the engineer. He looked at the crimson ball of the sun, now drowning in a lake of ruddy vapors behind the belt of elms; he nodded appreciatively at the palely glimmering evening star and pointed to a spot some yards ahead. "Build it there, Billy," he commanded briefly.

The stoker hitched his thumbs in his blackened leather waist-strap and spat toward the rear of the van. "You build the fire nigh th' hedge there," he ordered, "so as us can sit wi' our faces to'rds yon bit o' quick an' hev th' van to back of us, an' git a bit o' comfort outside four walls fur once. D' ye hear, boy?"

"Yes, George," quavered Billy.

The sleepy eye of the engineer had a red spark in it that might have jumped out of his own engine-furnace as he turned upon the acquiescent Billy. "Didn't you catch wot I said to you just now, my lad?" he inquired with ill-boding politeness.

"Yes, Alfred," gasped the alarmed Billy.

"If the boy doesn't mind me," came from the stoker, who was thoroughly roused, "and if I don't find a blazin' good fire, an' victuals welding hot, ready just in the place I've pointed out to 'im, when I've 'ad my pipe and my glass at the 'Red Cow,' I'll—" A palpably artificial fit of coughing prevented further utterance.

"You'll strap 'im within an inch of 'is life, I dursay," hinted the engineer. "You pipe what George says, Billy?" he continued, as Billy applied his right and left coat cuffs to his eyes in rapid succession. "He's give you his promise, and now I give you mine. If I don't find a roarin' good fire and the rest to match, just where I've said they're to be when I come back from where I've said I'm a-goin'—"

"You'll wallop 'im a fair treat, I lays you will," said the stoker, revealing a discolored set of teeth in a gratified smile. "We'll bide by wot the boy does then," he added. "Knowin' that wot 'e gits from either of us, he'll earn. An' your road is my road, Alfred, leastways as far as the 'Red Cow.'"

The engineer and the stoker walked off amicably side by side. The sun sank to a mere blot of red fire behind the elms, and crowds of shrilly-cheering gnats rose out of the dry edges and swooped upon the passive victim, Billy, who sat on the steps of the living van with his knuckles in his eyes.

"Neither of 'em can't kill me, 'cos the one what did it 'ud 'ave to be 'ung," he reflected, and this thought gave consolation. He unhooked a rusty red brazier from the back of the living van, and dumping it well into the hedge at the spot indicated by the stoker, filled it with dry grass, rotten sticks, coals out of the engine bunker, and lumps of oily cotton waste. Then he struck and applied a match, saw the flame leap and roar amongst the combustibles, filled the stoker's squat tea-kettle with water from the green barrel, put in a generous handful of Tarawakee tea, and, innocent of refinements in tea-making, set it on to boil.

"George is more spitefuller nor wot Alfred is," Billy Beesley murmured, as the kettle sent forth its first faint shrill note. Then he added with a poignant afterthought, "But Alfred is a bigger man than wot George be."

The stimulus of this reflection aided cerebration. Possessed by an original idea, Billy rubbed the receptacle containing it, and his mouth widened in an astonished grin. A supplementary brazier, temporarily invalidated by reason of a hole in the bottom, hung at the back of the living-van. The engineer possessed a kettle of his own. Active as a monkey, the small figure in the flapping coat and the baggy trousers sped hither and thither. Two hearths were established, two fires blazed, two tea-kettles chirped. Close beside the stoker's brazier a bacon pie in a brown earthen dish nestled to catch the warmth, a tin of Canadian salmon, which Billy had neglected to open, leaned affectionately against the other. Suddenly the engineer's kettle boiled over, and as Billy hurried to snatch it from the coals, the salmon-tin exploded with an awe-inspiring bang, and oily fragments of fish rained from the bounteous skies.

"He'll say I did it a purpose, Alfred will!" the aggrieved boy wailed, as he collected and restored to the battered tin as much of its late contents as might be recovered. While on all fours searching for bits which might have escaped him, and diluting the gravy which yet remained in the tin with salt drops of foreboding, a scorching sensation in the region of the back brought his head round. Then he yelled in earnest, for the roaring flame from the other brazier had set the quickset hedge, inflammable with drought, burning as fiercely as the naphtha torch of a fair-booth, while a black patch, widening every moment, was spreading through the dry, white grasses under the clumsy wheels of the living-van, whose brown painted sides were beginning to blister and char, as Billy, rendered intrepid by desperation, grabbed the broken furnace-rake handle, usually employed as a poker, and beat frantically at the encroaching fire. As he beat he yelled, and stamped fiercely upon those creeping yellow tongues. There was fire from side to side of the field pathway now, the straggling hedge on both sides was crackling gaily. And realizing the unconquerable nature of the disaster, Billy dropped the broken furnace-rake, uttered the short, sharp squeal of the ferret-pressed rabbit, and took to his heels, leaving a very creditable imitation of a prairie conflagration behind him.

It was quite dark by the time the engineer and his subordinate returned from the "Red Cow," and their wavering progress along the field pathway was rendered more difficult, after the first hundred yards or so, by the unaccountable absence of the hedge. It was a singularly oppressive night, a brooding pall of hot blackness hung above their heads, clouds of particularly acrid and smothering dust arose at every shuffle of their heavy boots, even the earth they trod seemed glowing with heat, and they remarked on the phenomenon to one another.

"It's thunder weather, that's wot it be," said the engineer, mopping his face. "I'm like my old mother, I feel it coming long before it's 'ere. Phew!"

"Uncommon strong smell o' roast apples there is about 'ere," commented the stoker, sniffing.

"That beer we 'ad must 'ave bin uncommon strong," said the engineer in a low, uneasy voice. "I seem to see three fires ahead of us, that's what I do."

"One whopping big one to the left, one little one farther on, right plumb ahead, and another small one lower down on my right 'and. I see 'em as well as you," confirmed the stoker in troubled accents. "And that's how that young nipper thinks to get off a licking from one of us—"

"By obeying both," said the engineer, quickening his pace indignantly. "This is Board School, this is. Well, you'll learn 'im to be clever, you will."

"You won't leave a whole bone in his dirty little carcass once you're started," said the stoker confidently.

By this time they were well upon the scene of the disaster. Before their dazed and horrified eyes rose the incandescent shell of what had been, for eight months past, their movable home, and a



crawling crisping rustle came from the pile of ashes that represented the joint property of two men and one boy.

"Pinch me, Alfred," said the stoker, after an interval of appalled silence.

"Don't ask me," said the engineer, in a weak voice, "I 'aven't the power to kill a flea."

"There ain't one left living to kill," retorted the stoker, as he contemplated the smoking wreck. "There was 'undreds in that van, too," he added as an afterthought.

"Burned up the old cabin!" moaned the engineer, "an' my Sunday rig-out in my locker, an' my Post Office Savings Bank book sewed up in the pillar o' my bunk, along o' my last week's wages what I 'adn't paid in."

"I shouldn't wonder if Government 'ung on to they savings o' yourn," said the stoker, shaking his head. "It's a pity, but you'd invested yours as I 'ave mine," he added.

"In public 'ouses?" retorted the engineer.

"Some of it 'as went that way," the stoker admitted, "but for three weeks past I've denied myself to put a bit into a concern as I think is going to prove a paying thing."

"Owch!" exclaimed the engineer, who had been restlessly pacing in the velvety darkness round the still glowing wreck of the living-van.

"Don't you believe wot I've told you?" demanded the stoker haughtily.

"You don't always lie, George," said the engineer, gently. "Wot made me shout out like that just now," he explained, "was treading on something queer, down by the near side wheels. Somethink brittle that cracked like rotten sticks under my 'eel, an' then I slid on something round an' squashy. An' the smell like roast apples, what I noticed before, is stronger than ever."

"'Ave you a match about you?" asked the stoker eagerly.

"One," said the engineer, delicately withdrawing a solitary "kindler" from the bottom of his waistcoat pocket.

The stoker received the match, and struck it on his trousers. A blue glimmer resulted, a faint s-s-s! followed, and the match went out.

"On'y a glim," said the stoker in a satisfied tone, "but it showed me as I've made my money. An' made it easy, too."

"'Ow much 'ave you pulled orf, then?" asked the engineer.

"Double the value," replied the stoker, smiling broadly through the darkness, "of the property what I've lost in this here conflagration."

"That 'ud bring you in about eighteenpence," retorted the engineer bitterly.

The stoker laughed pleasantly.

"Wot do you say to three pun' seventeen?" he demanded.

"Better than a poke in the eye with a burnt stick," said the engineer. "Wot did you say was the concern you invested in?"

The stoker felt in the darkness for his superior's arm, grasped it, and putting his mouth close to where he thought his ear ought to be, said loudly:

"A boy."

"Look 'ere, mate," began the engineer, hotly, "if you're trying a joke on me——"

"It ain't no joke," responded the stoker cheerfully. "Leastways not for the boy, it ain't. But Lord! when I think 'ow near I come to lettin' the policy fall through." He chuckled. "It's three weeks gone since I took it out," he said contentedly, "an' paid three weeks' money in advance, an' at threepence a week, that makes ninepence, an' the thought o' them nine half-pints I might 'ave 'ad out o' money 'as drove me 'arf wild with thirst, over an' over. I should 'ave 'ad to pay again come Monday, if only 'e 'ad 'ave lived."

"If only 'e 'ad lived——" repeated the engineer in a strange far-away tone, "Oo's 'e?" he asked eagerly.

"You know old Abey Turner as keeps the little sweet-an'-tobaccer shop over to Dorton Ware?" pursued the stoker. "Old Abey is a agint for the Popular Thrifty Life Insurance Company——"

"I know 'e is," confirmed the engineer.

"Abey 'as bin at me over an' over again to insure my life," explained the stoker, "but I told 'im as I didn't 'old with laying out good money wot wouldn't never come 'ome to roost-like, until I was dead. Then Abey leans over the counter an' ketches me by the neck 'andkerchief an' says, 'Think of the worst life you know, an' 'ave a bit on that.' Naturally, talkin' o' bad lives, you're the first chap whose name comes into my 'ead."

"Me!" ejaculated the engineer, starting.

"But it wasn't wickedness old Abey meant," continued the stoker, "only un'ealthiness in general. Somebody wot wasn't likely to live long, that's the sort o' man or woman 'e wanted me to insure. 'A child'll do,' says 'e, smiling, an' tells me 'ow a large family may be made a source of blessing to parents 'oo are wise enough to insure in the Popular Thrifty. Then it comes into my mind all of a sudden as 'ow Billy 'ud do a treat, an' I names 'im to Old Abey. 'That young shaver!' calls out old Abey, disgusted like. 'Why, 'e's as 'ard as nails. Wot's likely to 'appen to 'im?' 'If you was to see the 'andling 'e gets when my mate is in 'is tantrums,' I says to old Abey, 'you'd put your bit o' money on 'im cheerful an' willin'.' 'Is Alfred Evans such a savage in 'is drink?' says old Abey, quite surprised——"

"I'll surprise 'im!" muttered the engineer, "when I meets 'im!"

The stoker continued: "So the long an' the short is, I insured Billy, an' Billy's dead!"

"You don't really think so?" cried the engineer, in shocked accents.

"I don't think," said the stoker, in a hard, high tone, "I knows 'e is."

"Not—burned with the van!" gasped the engineer.

"Burned to cinders," said the stoker comfortably. "'Ow about that smell o' roasting you kep' a sniffing as we came along, an' wot were it if not cooked boy? Wot was it your foot crashed into when you called out awhile back? 'Is ribs, 'im being overdone to a crisp. Wot was it you slipped on——?"

"Stop!" shuddered the engineer. "'Old 'ard! I can't bear it."

"I can," said the stoker, following his comrade as he gingerly withdrew from the immediate scene of the tragedy. "I could if it was twice as much."

"It will be that to me!" sighed the engineer, seating himself upon the parish boundary stone, over which he had stumbled in his retreat, and sentimentally gazing at the star-jewelled skies. "Twice three pound is six, an' twice seventeen bob is one-fourteen. Seven pounds fourteen is wot that pore boy's crool end 'as dropped into my pocket, and I'd 'ad those best clothes ever since I got married; an' there was only eight an' fourpence in the piller o' the bunk, an——"

The engineer stopped short, not for lack of words, but because the stoker was clutching him tightly by the windpipe.

"You don't durst dare to tell me," the frenzied mechanic shouted, "as wot you went an' insured Billy too?"

"That's just wot I 'ave done," replied the half-strangled engineer. Then as the dismayed stoker's arms dropped helplessly by his side, he added, "you ought to be grateful, George, you 'ad no 'and in it. I couldn't 'ave enjoyed the money properly, not if you'd 'ad to be 'ung for the boy's murder. That's wot I said to old Abey two weeks back, when I told 'im as 'ow Billy's life went more in danger than anyone else's what I could think of, through your being such a brutal, violent-tempered, dangerous man."

"An' wot did that old snake in the grass say to that bloomin' lie?" demanded the stoker savagely.

"'E said life was a uncertain thing for all," sniggered the engineer, gently. "An' I'd better 'ave a bit on the event an' turn sorrow into joy, as the saying is. So I give Abey a shillin', bein' two weeks in advance, an' the Company sent me the policy, an' 'ere I am in for the money."

"Like wot I am, an' with clean 'ands for both of us," said the stoker in a tone of cheerful self-congratulation. "I 'aven't laid a finger on that boy, not since I insured 'im."

"Nor I ave'n't," said the engineer. "It's wonderful how I've bin able to keep my temper since I 'ad the policy to take care of at the same time."

"Same with me," said the stoker happily. "Why, wot's wrong?" he added, for a tragic cry had broken from the engineer.

"Mate," he stammered tremulously, "where did you keep your policy?"

"Meanin' the bit o' blue-printed paper I 'ad from the Popular Thrifty? Wot do you want to know for?" snapped the stoker suspiciously.

"It just come into my 'ead to arsk," said the engineer, in faltering accents.

"In my little locker in the van, since you're so curious," said the stoker grudgingly.

"I 'ad mine stitched up in the piller o' my bunk with my Post Office Savin's book," said the engineer in the deep, hollow voice of a funeral bell. "An' it's burned to hashes, an' so is yours!"

"Then it's nineteen to one the company won't pay up," said the stoker after an appalled silence.

"Ten 'underd to one," groaned the engineer.

Another blank silence was broken by the stoker's saying, with a savage oath:

"I wish that boy was alive, I do."

"I know your feeling," agreed the engineer sympathetically. "It 'ud be a comfort to you to kick 'im—or any-think else weak and small wot didn't durst to kick back."

"If I was to give you a bounce on the jor," inquired the stoker, breathing heavily, "should you 'ave the courage to land me another?"

The engineer promptly hit out in the darkness, and arrived safe home on the stoker's chin. With a tiger-like roar of fury, the stoker charged, and on the engineer's dodging conjecturally aside, fell heavily over the parish boundary-stone. He rose, foaming, and a pitched battle ensued, in which the combatants saw nothing but the brilliant showers of stars evoked by an occasional head-blow, and the general advisability of homicide. Toward dawn fatigue overcame them. The stoker lay down and declined to get up again and the engineer even while traveling on all fours in search of him, lost consciousness in slumber.

A yellow glare in the east heralded the rising of the orb of day, as the figures of an aged man and a ragged boy moved from the shelter of the belt of elms that screened the village of Dorton Ware, and proceeded along the right-of-way.

"It's burned, right enough, Billy, my boy," said the old man, shading his bleared eyes with his horny hand as he gazed at the blackened skeleton of the living-van. "An' all considered, you can't be called to blame."

Billy whistled.

"If you'd bin asleep inside the van when that theer blaze got started," said old Abey, rebukingly, as he hobbled along by the boy's side, "you wouldn't be whistlin' 'My Own Bluebell' now; your pore widowed mother, what lives in that theer little cottage o' mine at Porberry End—and 'om I persuaded to insure you in the Popular Thrifty—would 'ave 'ad a bit o' money comin' in 'andy for 'er Michaelmas rent, an' one or two other people would be a penny o' th' right side, likewise." He paused, and shading his bleared eyes under his gnarled hand, looked steadfastly at two huddled, motionless, grimy figures, lying in the charred grass beside the pathway. "Dang my old eyes!" he cried. "'Tis George an' Alfred—Alfred an' George—snatched away i' their drink an' neither of 'em insured. I'll lay a farden. Here's a judgment on their lives, what wouldn't listen to Old Abey an' put into the Popular Thrifty. Here's a waste of opportunity—here's—"

Old Abey's voice quavered and broke off suddenly as the corpse of the engineer, opening a pair of hideously blood-shot eyes, inquired ferociously what in thunder he meant by making such a blamed row, while the body of the stoker rolled over, yawned, revealing a split lip, and sat up staring.

"We—we thought you was dead, mates," faltered Old Abey. "Didn't us, Billy?"

"At first I did," Billy admitted, "an' then I——"

"Then you wot?" repeated the engineer, bending his brows sternly above a nose swollen to twice its usual size.

"Out with it!" snarled the stoker, whose lip was painful.

"I was afraid as it couldn't be true," stuttered Billy.

The stoker exchanged a look with the engineer.

"The van's burnt, an' we've both lost our property, to say nothin' of our prospects, mate," he said with a sardonic sneer, "but one comfort's left us, Billy's alive!"

A little later the plowing engine with its consort was at work under the hot September sky. As the Fowler cultivator traveled to and fro, ripping up the stubbles, the boy who sat on the iron seat and manipulated the guiding-wheel, snivelled gently, realizing that the brief but welcome interval of icy aloofness on the part of his superiors had passed, never to return; and that the injunction of the Prophet would thenceforth be scrupulously obeyed.

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## IV

### HIS HONOR, THE DISTRICT JUDGE

#### A Tale of India

By JOHN LE BRETON

His Honor, Syed Mehta, the District Judge of Golampore, had dined with the Malcolms, and he was the first of the Collector's guests to leave the bungalow. He sauntered down the drive, lifting his contemplative gaze to the magnificence of the starry heavens. Behind him, the lamp-lit rooms sent long thrusts of light, sword-wise, into the hot darkness. Joan Malcolm had taken up her violin, and the sweet, wailing notes of it came sighing out on to the heavy air. Ruddy, broad-faced young Capper, of the Police, lounged by the open window, eating her up with adoring eyes.

His Honor smoked his cigar tranquilly, but at heart, he smouldered. Harrow and Lincoln's Inn backed his past, the High Courts awaited him in the future. For the present he was a Civil Servant of excellent position and recognized ability, a Mohammedan gentleman who had distinguished himself in England as well as in the land of his birth. Also, he was of less account in the eyes of Joan Malcolm than Capper, a blundering English Acting-Superintendent of Police, with a pittance of six hundred rupees per mensem.

Possibly Capper had not intended to be offensive, but it is not given to the young and the British to entirely conceal all consciousness of superiority when speaking with a native. His courtesy was that of a man who considered it to be beneath his dignity to use less ceremony. His civility was due to his respect for himself, not for the person whom he honored with his unintellectual conversation.

The Judge flipped the ash off his cigar, and his slender hand was cool and leisurely. His dark, straight-featured face was impassive as carven stone. Mentally, he was cursing Capper with curses of inexhaustible fire and venom.

Malcolm, the Collector, had a right to speak loudly, and to say this or that without cause, for he was Collector; but Capper, a mere Superintendent of the Police, a cub of twenty-three, was on a very different footing. Yet, not even as an equal had he borne himself toward a District Judge.

His Honor's bungalow was on the outskirts of the town, and as he paced along the dusty road, he came to a footpath that ran down the hill, through dense jungle, to the native village in the valley. There was a swarm of dark-skinned fellow-men down there, to whom his name stood for all that is highest in authority. They would have loaded him with gifts had he permitted them to approach him. To them, it seemed that he was placed far above as a god, holding their lives and their fate 'twixt finger and thumb, in mid-air. In the unfathomed depths of the Judge's educated, well-ordered mind stirred a craving for solace. Galled by the brutish indifference of the Englishmen, there was yet left to him the reverence of his own people. He looked sharply up and down the road before he dived into the moist heat beneath the trees. He knew all that he was risking for a mere escapade. He had never trodden that path before, excepting when he had gone on a shooting expedition with the Collector. There were strange noises in the darkness, stealthy rustlings, small, unfamiliar cries. He heard nothing but Capper's comment on his carefully reasoned prediction that the day must come when India would govern herself.

"Oh! you think so?"

Stupid, unmeaning, absurd, but—successful.

Then, immediately Capper was talking to Miss Malcolm about tennis, and she was listening, smiling and intent. The Judge was a crack tennis player. He loathed the game, but he had made himself proficient in it, because it is one of the things that people expect of a man. He was impelled to challenge Capper, and the answer was a drawled excuse.

The Judge was well down the hill now, descending the last precipitous slope, and the countless odors of the Indian village rose to his nostrils. There was a dull murmurous commotion afar off, such as bees make when they are hiving. He listened, without curiosity, as he pressed forward. Suddenly he halted. The murmur boomed out into a long, thunderous roar. Then silence, and out of the silence a single voice, deep and ringing.

"An infernal protest meeting," the Judge's British training informed him.

He went forward again, moving noiselessly, and reached the outskirts of the crowd, sheltering himself between the bushes that fringed the jungle. Torches flared, and smoked, and shed a ruddy, uncertain light on hundreds of rapt, upturned faces. The orator stood tall and straight above them, fully revealed by purposely clustered lights. He volleyed reproach and insult upon his listeners, he gave them taunts instead of persuasion. They stood enthralled by the passionate voice, and bitter words found their mark, and rankled poisonously.

"These *soors* of Feringhi, whom you call your masters, beat you, and they use your brothers to be their sticks. But for your brothers, who wear the uniform of the Feringhi, and carry their guns, these worthless masters would be trodden into the dust beneath your feet. The men who hedge them in with steel must turn that steel against them."

The roar of voices thundered among the trees, and died away suddenly, so that no word from the speaker might be lost.

"They are cunning, these Feringhi, my brothers. They steal the wisest from among us while yet they are children, and bear them away to their own land, and give them over to their own teachers. Thus come back your own, with power and authority to scourge you. Your sons, your brothers come back to you, learned, praised greatly, having striven against the Feringhi in their own schools, and won what they desired. Collector-sahib, Judge-sahib, yea, even padre-sahib, come they back to you—not to lift you to honor and happiness beside them, but to side with those that oppress you, to grind taxes from you who starve, to imprison you who would be free. Sons of unspeakable shame! They drink your blood, they fatten on your misery, and they have their reward. *We* curse, them, brothers! The Feringhis smile upon them, they eat bread and salt in their company, but they spit when they have passed by!"

Something in the scornful voice rang familiarly on the Judge's ears, and incautiously he changed his position and tried to get a clearer view of the treasonmonger. Instantly the man's bare brown

arm shot out, and pointed him to public notice.

"Here is one," pealed out the trumpet-voice, "has he come as our brother? Or comes he as the slave of our masters, to spy upon our meetings, and to deal out punishment to those who dare to be free? O brother, do you walk to Calcutta, where the High Courts be, over our bodies, and the bodies of our children? Will you go to the Collector-sahib with tales of a native rising, and call up our brothers of the police to kill and maim us? Or come you to offer us a great heart?"

The Judge stood there, a motionless figure, flaring against the dark jungle in his spotless, white linen evening dress. There was a broad silk cummerbund about his lean waist, and a gold signet-ring gleamed on his left hand. Half a dozen Englishmen, thread for thread in similar garb, still lounged in the Collector's drawing-room. He appeared the very symbol of Anglicized India. The brown, half-naked mob surged and struggled to look at him. The brown, half-naked orator still pointed at him, and waited for reply. Meanwhile, he had been recognized.

"Iswar Chandra—by Jove," muttered the Judge.

The last time they had met was in a London drawing-room. Iswar Chandra, the brilliant young barrister-at-law had discoursed to a philanthropic peeress upon the social future of his native land, whilst an admiring circle of auditors hung upon his words. The fate of India's women, he had said, lay at the feet of such fair and noble ladies as her Grace. The Judge remembered that people were saying that evening of Iswar Chandra that he was a fascinating and earnest man, and that he would be the pioneer of great things in the country of his birth.

The eyes of the half-naked savage challenged the Judge over the sea of moving heads, and drove away the supercilious smile from his lips.

"Brother, we claim you! You are of our blood, and we need such as you to lead us. The Feringhi have sharpened a sword to cut us down, but it shall turn to destroy them. Brother, we suffer the torments of hell—will you deliver us? Brother, we starve—will you give us food? Will you deal out to us life or death, you whose fathers were as our fathers? Choose now between great honor and the infamy that dies not! You are the paid creature of the British Raj, or you are a leader of free men. Brother, speak!"

As in a dream the Judge approached the waiting crowd. His mouth was parched, his heart beat fitfully. He wanted that piercing voice to wake the echoes again, to take up the story of the old blood-feud, to goad him into doing that which he had not the courage to do. Vanished was his pride of intellect, and of fine achievement. He was a native, and he tugged and crawled at the stretch of the British chain.

"The Feringhi are few, and we are many. Shall the few rule the many? Shall we be servants and poor while yet in the arms of our own golden mother? In their own country do the Feringhi not say that the word of the majority shall be law? So be it! We accept their word. The majority shall rule! O brother, skilled in the Feringhi craft, high-placed to administer justice to all who are brought before thee, do I not speak the truth?"

The Judge threw away the dead end of his cigar, and shouldered his way into the inmost circle.

"Peace, thou," he said, thickly; "this is folly. Ye must wait awhile for vengeance."

Chandra threw up his arms, writhing in a very ecstasy of fury.

"We have waited—have we not waited?—beside our open graves. Death to the Feringhi! Let them no longer desecrate our land. Let us forget that they ever were. They be few, and we be many. Brothers! To-night, to-night!"

The Judge was tearing off his clothes, he was trampling them beneath his feet, he was crying out in a strange, raucous voice; and all the swaying crowds were taking up his words, maddening themselves and their fellows with the intoxicating sounds.

"Death to the Feringhi! To-night, to-night! Our land for ourselves!"

All but a few torches were extinguished. Secret places were torn up, and out came old guns, old swords sharpened to razor-like edges, great pistols, clubs, skinning-knives, daggers. Then, up and up through the dark jungle they thronged, hordes of them in the grip of a red and silent frenzy. Chandra was in the forefront, but the leader was his Honor the District Judge, a glassy-eyed, tight-lipped Mussulman in a loincloth and a greasy turban.

The lights of the Collector's bungalow came in view, and the leader thought of young Capper, and rushed on, frothing like a madman, waving his sword above his head. Then he paused, and ran back to meet the laggards of a yard or two.

"Only the men!" he shouted.

Chandra mocked at him as the press bore him onward again, with scarcely an instant's halt.

"Only the men, my brother!" he echoed.

A few of the native police stood guard at the Collector's gates, but they turned and fled before the overwhelming numbers of the attacking force. Up the long drive the dark wave poured, and into the wide, bright rooms. The bungalow was deserted. Some fleet-footed servant had brought warning in time, and the British were well out of the town by the other road, with young Capper

and a score of his men guarding their rear.

The mob howled with disappointment. The next instant it was screaming with triumph as it settled down to sack and burn and destroy.

The Judge went into the dining-room, and looked at the long table still decked with silver, and glass, and flowers. He looked at the chair on which he had sat, with Joan Malcolm at his side, and he picked it up and dashed it with all his might into a great ivory-framed mirror, and laughed aloud at the crash, and the ruin, and the rain of jagged splinters.

"India must pass into the hands of the Indians!"

"Oh! *you* think so—you think so—you think so...."

He overthrew a couple of standard lamps, and watched the liquid fire run and eat up their silken shades, and run again and leap upon the snowy curtains, and so, like lightning, spring to the ceiling, and lick the dry rafters with a thousand darting tongues. Then, he was out in the night again, the night of his life, the wonderful night that was calling for blood, and would not be denied.

There was no lack of light now to make clear the path to vengeance. The Collector's bungalow roared red to the very heavens, and flames shot up in a dozen different parts of the town. The bazaar was looted, and English-made goods were piled upon bonfires in the street. A greater mob than had entered the town poured out of it, swift on the road to Chinsurah where thousands of their brothers lay, lacking only courage and leaders.

At the midway turn of the road where the giant trees rear themselves at the side of the well, came a sudden check, and the mob fell back upon itself, and grew dead silent. Those in the rear could only wait and guess what had happened. The forefront saw that the road was barred. The moon had risen, and well out in the white light, was Capper Sahib. Some of his men were behind him. There were soldiers there, too, how many could not be seen, for they were grouped in the velvety black shadows which the trees flung across the road. There might have been only fifty—or five hundred.

Young Capper came forward with his hands in his pockets, and stared at them. They saw that he was not afraid. He spoke to them in Maharattee, bluntly and earnestly, so that some of them wavered, and looked back. He said they were fools, led by a few rotten schemers who had only personal gain in view.

"Take good advice," he said, "go to your homes while ye may. Ignorant, and greatly daring that ye are, the *bandar-log*, or such thievish scum among ye, drive ye with idle words and chatterings even to the brink of death. So far have ye come, but no farther——"

The Judge had snatched a villager's gun, and fired. Capper Sahib fell, unspoken words upon his lips. His fair head dragged in the dust, and a red stain showed suddenly upon the white linen over his breast.

A triumphant roar swept the mob from end to end. British rifles cracked out the answer, and the bullets went home surely, into the rioting mass. Amid shrill screams of pain and fury the leaders rallied their men, and charged forward. A second volley stopped them, before young Capper's prostrate body could be reached. Few had joined the attack, but now they were fewer, and neither of the leaders stood among them.

That was the end. Bearing their dead and wounded, the rebels returned, wailing as they went. Before daylight the townsmen were in their houses, and the villagers had passed through the jungle, and regained their homes. Arms were concealed with all haste. The dead were buried, the wounded, for the most part, were hidden. Prisoners had been taken, but only an inconsiderable number. Before daylight also, the headman of the village, and a native surgeon came stealthily from the Judge's bungalow, and went their ways. They had their order, and they went to spread it abroad. The order was—*Silence!* The headman had bowed himself to the earth when it was given, for he understood all that it meant. Prisoners would be brought before a brother, not only to-day, but to-morrow, and for many morrows. So much had the night given them.

At noon His Honor came stiffly into the court-room, leaning upon the arm of his native servant. The Collector, who was awaiting him there, feared that he had been injured by the rioters on the previous night; but he was quickly reassured. The Judge, it seemed, had sprained his knee shortly after leaving the Malcolm's hospitable roof. It was nothing. A mere trifle, though indisputably painful.

The Collector seated himself near the bench, and talked in a low voice. The ladies were all safe. No Europeans had been killed, and few injured. Capper had been shot by some cowardly dog while parleying with the rioters, but there were good hopes of him.

The Judge was most truly concerned to hear of the calamity which had befallen Mr. Capper—immensely thankful to know that things were no worse with him.

His Honor had heard little or nothing of what had happened during the riot, being laid by the leg, as it were, in his own room.

The first batch of prisoners was brought in. At first the Judge did not look at them. Afterward his eyes sought their gaze, and held it, and they knew him for their brother. They heard his soft voice

speaking of them compassionately, as wayward children whom mercy would win over, though harshness might confirm them in their foolish resistance to authority. The Collector seemed to protest, but with gentle courtesy his objections were put aside. He leaned back in his chair, flushed and angry, as one after another, the sullen-looking rebels were fined, and having paid what was demanded, were set at liberty.

When the Judge looked up again, a single prisoner stood before him, a wounded, hawk-faced native, whose eyes blazed hate and contempt. The Collector drew his chair closer to the bench, and began to speak in gruff undertones.

"A ring-leader. Man of some education, I understand—qualified as a barrister, and has taken to journalism. Must make an example of him—eh?"

The Judge, straining in agony of mind and body, was aware of sudden relief from the pain of his wound. The bandage had slipped, and blood was cooling the torturing fire. A deathly faintness was upon him, and through it he spoke distinctly—again of mercy.

"They were all blind. The leaders were blind. The blind leading the blind. Blind—blind——"

The Collector sprang up with a startled exclamation. A thin stream of blood trickled from behind His Honor's desk, and went a twisting way down to the well of the court. He caught the Judge in his arms as he fell forward, and lowered him gently to the ground. Then it was seen that the unconscious man's clothes were saturated with blood.

Instantly the court was cleared. A military surgeon cut away the blood-stained clothing from the Judge's thigh, and laid bare the clean wound made by a British bullet. A look passed between him and the Collector, but never a word. Syed Mehta's life had ebbed with his blood, and so he passed, unawakened, from swoon to death.

The English, as their way is, betrayed nothing. It was His Honor, the District Judge of Golampore, who had died, and they gave him burial the next day with due regard to the high position which he had held in the service of H.M. the King and Emperor.

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## IV

### A FOG-HORN CONCLUSION

#### The Story of a Gramophone

By FOX RUSSELL

THE *Saucy Sally* was a vessel of renown. No blustering liner, no fussy tug, no squattering steamer, she; but a bluff-bowed, smartly painted, trim-built sailing barge, plying chiefly from the lower reaches of the Thames to ports west of Dover. She had no equal of her class, at any point of sailing, and certainly her Master, Mr. Joseph Pigg, was not the man to let her fair fame suffer for want of seamanship.

"Cap'n Pigg," as he insisted upon being called, was a great, hairy-faced man, with brawny muscles and a blood-shot eye. And in these respects, his mate, Bob Topper, greatly favored him—in fact, their physical resemblance was rather marked; but their tastes were in no way similar; 'the Cap'n' was fond of his glass, whilst the mate was a blue-ribbon man; Joseph Pigg couldn't bear music, in any form, whilst the total abstainer had a weakness for the flute and would not infrequently burst into song; the Skipper hated women, whereas the mate was, what he himself called "a bit of a gay Lathero." But notwithstanding these dissimilarities of tastes and disposition, they got along fairly well together, and both met on the common ground of getting as much work out of the two "hands" as was ordinarily possible. The Skipper didn't drink alcoholic liquors before the mate, and the mate returned the compliment by refraining from any musical outrage in the hearing of his superior officer.

One hot summer afternoon, when the *Saucy Sally* was taking in cargo and the Skipper was ashore, Mr. Topper, seated on the coamings of the hatchway, abandoned himself to the melancholy pleasures of Haydn's "Surprise," the tune being wrung out of a tarnished German-silver flute. "Kittiwake Jack," one of the crew, was seated as far as possible for'ard, vainly trying to absorb his tea and stop his ears, at one and the same time, whilst his fellow-sufferer, Bill Brown, having hastily dived below, lay in his bunk, striving to deaden the weird, wailing sounds that filled the ship. And just as Haydn's "Surprise" was half way through, for the seventh time, the Skipper walked on board.

The flutist stopped short, and stared up at him.

"Didn't expect you back so soon, Cap'n," he said in confused tones.

"No. What's that 'owlin' row you're making?"

"I dunno about no 'owlin' row, but——"

"Well, I do. I s'pose, accordin' to you, I ain't got no musical h'ear," sneered Cap'n Pigg.

"This—this here tune——"

"Yes. This disgustin' noise—what is it?"

The mate looked sulky.

"This is Haydn's 'Surprise,'" he growled.

"So I should think. I dunno who the bloke was, but it must have given Haydn quite a turn! Don't let's 'ave no more of it."

"Well, I don't see as there's no 'arm in music. And I didn't loose it off when you was about. I know you don't like it, so I studied your pecooliarities. Fact is, I studies yer too much," and the mate looked mutinous.

Cap'n Pigg scowled.

"You shet yer 'ead," he grunted as he stamped off below. He went to a small cupboard in the corner of the cabin, and mixed himself a stiff "go" of gin and water, which he tossed off at one gulp, saying:

"Haydn's 'S'prise,' eh? Haydn's S'prise be d—dished! 'E don't come no s'prises 'ere while I'm master of the *Saucy Sally*!"

After this slight breeze, things quickly settled down again on the old lines between master and mate, and the voyage to Chichester Harbor was entirely uneventful, the barge bringing up at a snug anchorage near Emsworth.

The next day Mr. Topper had undressed and gone overboard for a swim. After this, climbing up the bobstay, he regained the deck, and proceeded to dry his hairy frame on an ancient flannel shirt. In the midst of this occupation, temporarily forgetful of his superior officer's prejudices, he broke into song.

Thirty seconds after he had let go the first howl, the Skipper's head was thrust up the companion-way.

"Wodjer want to make all that row about? Anything disagreed with yer? If so, why don't yer take something for it?"

"It's a funny thing yer carn't let a man alone, when all 'e's a doin' is making a bit of 'armony on board," replied the mate, pausing in the act of drying his shock head.

"'Armony be d—driven overboard!" cried Mr. Pigg, wrathfully. "Now, look 'ere, Bob Topper, I ain't a onreasonable man in my likes and dislikes, but it ain't fair to sing at a feller creature with the voice nature fitted you out with! I never done you no 'arm."

Next day the *Saucy Sally* shipped some shingle ballast, got under weigh on the first of the ebb tide, and safely threading her way past the shallows and through the narrow channels of the harbor, emerged into the open sea, and turned her bluff-bowed stem eastwards.

The following afternoon, as Bob Topper took his trick at the wheel, he ruminated on the mutability of human affairs in general, and the "contraryness" of skippers in particular.

"Won't 'ave no music, won't he? Well, I reckon it's like religion when the missionaries is a shovin' of it into the African niggers—they just jolly well got to 'ave it! An' so it'll be with the ole man. I'll jest fix up a scheme as'll do 'im a treat."

He smiled broadly; and when Bob Topper smiled, the corners of his mouth seemed to almost meet at the back of his head.

And as soon as the *Saucy Sally* had pitched and tossed her way up channel—for she was light as a cork in ballast—and dropped anchor a little way off Gravesend, Bob Topper sculled himself ashore. Twenty minutes after stepping out of the boat, he was seated in the back-parlor of a friend, a musical-instrument maker.

When Mr. Topper went aboard again, he carried under his arm a large brown paper package, which he smuggled below, without encountering the Skipper, who was in his cabin at the time, communing with a bill of lading and a glass of Hollands neat. And, soon after the mate had come aboard, "the Cap'n" went ashore.

And then Mr. Topper laid himself out for some tranquil enjoyment, on quite an unusual scale. He unfastened the package, produced a gramophone, brought it on to the deck, and started "The Washington Post."

"Kittiwake Jack" and Bill Brown immediately fled below.

The mate sat on the edge of the hatch and gazed lovingly at the new instrument of torture, as he beat time to the inspiring strains, with a belaying pin. When the "Washington Post," was finished, he laid on "Jacksonville," with a chorus of human laughter, which sounded quite eerie. And so intent was he on this occupation, that he never even noticed the approach of Cap'n Pigg's boat until it was almost alongside.



The Skipper clambered aboard, looking black as thunder. This new outrage was not to be borne. Just as his foot touched the deck the instrument gave forth its unholy cachinnation of "Ha! Ha! Ha!" in the high nasal tones peculiar to its kind.

Cap'n Pigg was not easily disconcerted, but this ghostly "Ha! Ha! Ha!" was a distinct trial to his nerves; he thrust his hands deep into his coat pockets, glared at the mate, and then growled:

"Wodjer got there? More 'armony?"

"Grammarphone," was the mate's brief reply. He was getting sulky.

"Grammar be blowed! Worst grammar I ever 'eard," returned Pigg. "Turn the bloomin' thing off—and turn it off at the main. Enough to give any respectable, law-abidin' sailor-man the 'ump!"

He proceeded two steps down the companion; then hurled this parting shot at the offending mate:

"You oughter be 'ead of a laundry where the 'andle of the mangle turns a pianer-horgan as well—work and play!" he concluded scornfully, as he disappeared from the musician's sight below.

The mate whistled softly; then he stopped the offending instrument and conveyed it below.

"P'raps the old man'll be glad of it, one o' these days," he muttered mysteriously.

The next trip of the *Saucy Sally* was a more eventful one. She left Tilbury in a light haze, which first thickened into a pale-colored fog, and then, aided by the smoke from the tall chimneys, to a regular "pea-souper." The mate, taking advantage of the Captain's spell below, brought up a long yard of tin, which looked remarkably like the *Saucy Sally's* fog-horn, and quietly slipped it overboard.

As they got lower and lower down the river, the fog increased, and both Cap'n Pigg and Topper experienced a certain amount of anxiety as, first another barge, then a tramp steamer, and finally, a huge liner, all sounding their fog-horns loudly, passed them considerably too close for comfort. The Skipper himself was at the wheel and, coughing the raw, damp fog out of his throat, he shouted hoarsely to Topper:

"Better get our fog-horn goin', mate."

"Aye, aye, Skipper. It's in your cabin, ain't it?"

"Yes, in the first locker."

The mate descended the companion-steps, with a mysterious smile on his face, and his dexter optic closed. The casual observer might have thought that Mr. Topper was actually indulging in a wink.

After a time, he reappeared on deck, walked aft, and said:

"Fog-horn don't seem nowhere's about, Skipper. Thought you always kept her in your charge."

Cap'n Pigg whisked the wheel round just in time to escape a tug, fussing up-stream, and feeling her way through the fog at half-speed, and then he grunted sourly:

"So I do. What the d—delay in findin' it is, I can't understand. 'Ere, ketch 'old o' the spokes, and I'll go; always got to do everything myself on this old tank, seems to me."

And thus grumbling, Cap'n Pigg went below—not altogether unwillingly, as, being a man who understood the importance of economizing time, he combined his search for the fog-horn with the quenching of a highly useful thirst. But when he came on deck again, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he was unaccompanied by the fog-horn.

"Where the blamed thing's got to, I dunno, more'n the dead. I see it there, myself, not two days ago, but it ain't nowhere's to be found now."

"Rather orkard, Skipper, ain't it, in all this maze o' shippin'?" returned Mr. Topper with a half turn at the wheel.

"Yes, I don't more'n 'arf like it," returned the Cap'n uneasily. "My nerves arn't quite what they was. An' a fog's a thing as I never could abide."

On glided the *Saucy Sally*, almost the only one on the great water way which spoke not, in the midst of a babel of confusing sounds. Syrens whooped, steam whistles shrieked hoarsely; the raucous voices of fog-horns proclaimed the whereabouts of scores of craft, passing up and down the river; but the trim-built barge slid noiselessly along, ghost-like, in the dun-colored "smother," giving no intimation of her proximity.

Then it was that Mr. Bob Topper's moment for action arrived. In casual tones, he observed to the Skipper:

"Pity, we ain't got something as'll make a sound o' some kind, so's to let people know as we 're a-comin'."

Cap'n Pigg said nothing: but the anxiety deepened perceptibly in his face.

"Where the blank blank are yer comin' to?" roared the voice of another bargeman, as, tooting

loudly on a fog-horn, one of the "Medway flyers," shaved past them.

"Near thing, that," observed the mate, calmly.

Cap'n Pigg went a shade paler beneath the tan on his weather-beaten face.

"Cuss 'im! careless 'ound!" he muttered. "Might a' sunk us."

"Ad no proper lookout, I expect," returned Mr. Topper, "even if 'e 'ad, 'e couldn't see anything, and we got no fog-'orn to show 'em where we was, yer see."

"No. An' p'raps we shall go to the bottom, all along o' our 'aving lost our ole bit o' tin. It's a orful thing to think of, ain't it?" said Cap'n Pigg solemnly.

The mate appeared to be in a brown study. Then, as though he had suddenly been inspired, he exclaimed:

"What about the grammarphone, Skipper?"

Even in the midst of his perturbation, Cap'n Pigg looked askance at mention of the hated instrument. But it was a case of 'any port in a storm,' and, with a grim nod, he relieved the mate at the wheel, and said:

"Fetch the bloomin' consarn up."

Mr. Topper obeyed, with alacrity in his step, and a wink in his eye. The 'consarn' was quickly brought on deck, and the 'Washington Post' let loose on the astonished ears of fog-smothered mariners, right and left of them.

One old shell-back, coming up river on a Gravesend shrimper, listened in blank astonishment for a minute, and then confided huskily to his mate that he thought their time had come.

"'Eavenly, strains! It's wot they calls 'the music o' the spears,'" he said mysteriously, "Hangels' music wot comes just before a bloke's time's up. We better prepare for the wust."

His mate, less superstitious and with more common sense, rejoined:

"Garn! 'Music o' the spears' be blowed! It's more like a pianer-horgan or a 'urdy-gurdy."

The shrimper glided on, and a tramp steamer, going dead slow, just shaved past the musical barge. Its master roared derisively from the bridge:

"'Ullo, barge, ahoy! Wot yer got there? Punch and Judy show aboard?"

Which cost Cap'n Pigg a nasty twinge. He had always prided himself on his seaman-like ways, and to proceed thus, down the great river, like a mountebank, or a Cockney out on a Bank Holiday, hurt his feelings more than he could say.

Yet another insult was to be hurled at the *Saucy Sally*, for "Jacksonville," with its weird human chorus, having been turned on—when the "Ha! Ha! Ha!" rang out on the ears of a passing tug's captain, that outraged gentleman, thinking he was being personally derided, shouted, as the tide swept them out of sight:

"Yah! 'Oo yer larfin' at? Set o' bloomin' monkeys!"

But the gramophone was certainly playing a useful part in warning others off the *Saucy Sally*, down that fog-laden river. And, when, at the end of their day's slow journey, they let go their anchor, the "Washington Post" was again nasally shrieking out its march-time glories.

The mate stopped the machine and carried it tenderly below, then, returning to the deck, he observed.

"Good job as we 'ad the grammarphone aboard, Cap'n."

Cap'n Pigg swallowed a lump in his throat, and looked like a child confronted with a dose of nauseous medicine, as he gruffly replied:

"It's better n' nothin' when yer wants a row made."

A pause ensued, and then the Skipper went on:

"In future, I don't object—not very much—to the dammarphone—grammarphone, I mean—If you can stand music, well, so can I. But you can't contrarst the beauty o' the two instruments, and I'm goin' ashore, straight away, to buy myself a good, old-fashioned fog-'orn. The tone of that is altogether more 'armonious and more soothin' to the hear, than that there beastly grammarphone ever could be!"

The mate heaved a deep sigh and sorrowfully went below. In the effort to ram music into his superior officer he had to admit himself defeated.

# MARY JANE'S DIVERSION

## A Western Tale

By CHARLES ALDEN SELTZER

TEXAS RANKIN stood in the street in front of the High Card Saloon, his lank body trembling with surprise, indecision, and indignation; his face alight with the fire of outraged dignity. Three long paces from him stood Sheriff Webster, indifferently fondling an ivory-handled .45.

The sheriff was nonchalantly deliberative in his actions, betraying only a negative interest in Rankin's movements—for Rankin's holster yawned with eloquent emptiness. With his empty holster dragging on his desires, it seemed to Rankin that to await the sheriff's pleasure was his most logical course.

And so he waited.

The sheriff had come upon him, when, in an incautious moment, he had emerged from the High Card Saloon, having forgotten the very important fact that the sheriff was looking for him. This forgetfulness had been the cause of his undoing, for at the instant he had turned to go down the street the sheriff had reached for his gun. The empty holster was evidence of his success.

After that there was no use in getting excited. True, Texas had flashed around in his tracks when he had felt the gun leaving its holster, and had made a lightning movement with his hand to prevent such a disgraceful occurrence. But he might just as well have reached for a rainbow. As he had faced about, rage-flushed and impotent, he saw his gun swinging loosely in Webster's left hand, while in Webster's right hand another big six-shooter had reached a foreboding level.

The distance between the two men approximated ten feet; for Webster had wisely stepped back, knowing Rankin's reluctance toward submission.

And now, over the ten feet of space, captive and captor surveyed one another with that narrowing of the eyes which denotes tension and warns of danger.

"I reckon I was too quick for you, Texas," said Webster, with a gentleness that fell too softly to be genuine.

Rankin gazed dolefully at his empty holster. The skin tensed over his teeth in a grinning sneer.

"I ain't sayin' that you took a mean advantage," he said, raising his eyes and allowing them an expression of mild innocence that contrasted strangely with his drawn lips, "but you might have given me a chance to fight it out square. I wouldn't have took your gun, Jim."

Knowing Texas less intimately, the sheriff might have been misled by this crude sentiment; but the sheriff's fingers only drew more closely around the ivory handle of his .45. And there came a glint of humor into his eyes.

"I ain't sayin' you would, Texas. But as sheriff of Socorro County I ain't takin' any chances. I wanted to talk to you, an' I knew if I had your gun I'd feel easier."

"Which means that you didn't want me to have a chance," complained Texas glumly. "Socorro's always been meaner'n —"

"T ain't Socorro's fault," interrupted the sheriff with a sudden coldness; "you've been cuttin' didoes in Socorro for so long a time that you've disgraced yourself. You've gambled an' shot yourself into disfavor with the *élite*. You've been as ornery an' as compromisin' as it's possible for any human maverick to get without havin' to requisition the unwillin' mourners."

"Not that I'm sayin' you're naturally bad, Texas. It's that you've got an overdose of what them modern brain specialists call exaggerated ego; which us common critters would call plain swell head. That there disease is listed an' catalogued in the text books of the New York Medical Institoot as bearin' a close relationship to the geni Loco; which is a scientific way of sayin' that you've got buzzers in your attic."

Texas smiled, showing his teeth in wan sarcasm.

"You wouldn't say that if I had my gun, Jim. It ain't like you to pour out your blackguardisms on a man what ain't armed."

"I ain't blackguardin' you none," said Webster easily. "It's the naked truth, an' you know it. Takin' your gun was part of my official duty. Personally I could have talked to you without trampling down any of the niceties of etiquette, but officially I had to have your gun."

Rankin's face lengthened with a deep melancholy. With this expression he intended to convey the impression that he was suffering a martyrdom. But the sheriff's acquaintance with Texas was not recent.

"An' now that you've got the gun," said Texas, after an embarrassed silence, "what's the next thing on the programme?"

"Takin' your gun," said the sheriff heavily, "was a preliminary; like they say in the sporting

papers. The big event is that you're goin' to say your adooos to Socorro without bein' allowed to make any farewell announcement. The reason is that you an' Socorro is incongruous—like a side-saddle on a razor-back hog. Socorro won't stand for you a minute longer. You're a Public Favorite which has lost its popularity an' which has become heterogeneous to the established order of things. In other words, you're an outlaw; a soft-spoken, lazy, good-for-nothin' road-agent. An' though Socorro ain't never had anything on you before, it knows you had a hand in robbin' the express office last night. An' it's——"

"You're a damn ——"

"——like playin' a king-full against three deuces that you done the trick. You was seen goin' toward the station about an hour before Budd Tucker found Ridgely, the agent, stretched out on the floor of the office, a bullet from a .45 clean through him. An' there's five thousand dollars in gold gone, an' no trace of it. An' there's been no strangers in town. An' here's your gun, showin' plain that it's been shot off lately, for there's the powder smudge on the cylinder an' the barrel. That's a pay streak of circumstantial evidence or I ain't sheriff of Socorro!"

Rankin's eyes had flashed with an unusual brilliancy as the sheriff had spoken of him being seen going toward the station previous to the finding of the agent's body, but they glazed over with unconcern during the rest of the recital. And as the sheriff concluded, Rankin gazed scornfully at him, sneering mildly:

"I couldn't add nothin' to what you've just said." He idly kicked the gray dust that was mounded at his feet, standing loose and inert, as though he cared little what might be the outcome of this impromptu interview. And then, suddenly, his blue eyes twinkled humorously as he raised them to meet the sheriff's.

"Give you time you might tell me where I spent the money," he said drily. "There's no tellin' where your theorizin' might end."

The sheriff ignored this, but he eyed his prisoner meditatively.

"There's been a rumor," he said coldly, "that you've got cracked on my daughter, Mary Jane. But I ain't never been able to properly confirm it. I meant to tell you some time ago that while I ain't had no objection to livin' in the same town with you, I'm some opposed to havin' you for a son-in-law. But now, since the express robbery, it won't be necessary for me to tell you not to nose around my house, for you're goin' to ride straight out of Socorro County, an' you ain't comin' back any more. If you do, I reckon you'll discover that Socorro's present leniency ain't elastic enough to be stretched to cover your home-comin'."

"I ain't sayin' nothin'," said Texas, glancing with pensive eyes to a point far up the sun-baked street where his gaze rested upon a pretentious house in a neatly-fenced yard where there were green things that gave a restful impression. "Circumstantial evidence is sure convincin'." he sighed deeply. "I reckon you knowed all along that I thought a heap of Mary Jane. That's the reason you picked me out for the express job."

He scowled as his eyes took in the meagre details of Socorro's one street. Because of long association these details had become mental fixtures. Socorro had been his home for ten years, and in ten years things grow into a man's heart. And civic pride had been his one great virtue. If in the summer the alkali dust of the street formed into miniature hills of grayish white which sifted into surrounding hollows under the whipping tread of the cow-pony's hoofs, Texas likened it unto ruffled waters that seek a level. The same condition in another town would have drawn a curse from him. If in the winter the huge windrows of caked mud stretched across the street in unlovely phalanx, Texas was reminded of itinerant mountain ranges. The stranger who would be so unwary as to take issue with him on this point would regret—if he lived. The unpainted shanties, the huddled, tottering dives, the tumble-down express station—all, even the maudlin masquerade of the High Card Saloon—were institutions inseparable from his thoughts, inviolable and sacred in the measure of his love for them.

And now! Something caught in his throat and gave forth a choking sound.

"But I reckon it's just as well," he said resignedly. "I sure ain't of much account." He hesitated and smiled weakly at the sheriff. "I ain't croakin'," he said apologetically; "there's the circumstantial evidence." He hesitated again, evidently battling a ponderous question. "You didn't happen to hear Mary Jane say anything about the express job?" he questioned with an expression of dog-like hopefulness. "Anything that would lead you to believe she knowed about it?"

"I don't see what——"

"No, of course!" He shuffled his feet awkwardly. "An' so she don't know anything. Didn't mention me at all?" The hopefulness was gone from his eyes, and in its place was the dull glaze of puzzled wonder. "Not that it makes any difference," he added quickly, as he caught a sudden sharp glance from the sheriff's eyes.

"An' so I'm to leave Socorro." He looked dully at the sheriff. "Why, of course, there's the circumstantial evidence." His eyes swept the shanties, the street, the timber-dotted sides of the mountains that rose above the town—familiar landmarks of his long sojourn; landmarks that brought pleasant memories.

"I've lived here a long time," he said, with abrupt melancholy, his voice grating with suppressed

regret. "I won't forget soon."

There ensued a silence which lasted long. It brought a suspicious lump into the sheriff's throat.

"I wouldn't take it so hard, Texas," he said gently. "Mebbe it'll be the best for you in the long run. If you get away from here mebbe you make a man——"

"Quit your damn croakin'!" flashed back Texas. "I ain't askin' for none of your mushy sentiment!" He straightened up suddenly and smiled with set lips. "I guess I've been a fool. If you'll hand over that six-shooter I'll be goin'. I've got business in San Marcial."

"I'll walk up to the station platform an' lay the gun there," said the sheriff coldly; for Texas was less dangerous at a distance; "an' when you see me start away from the platform you can start for the gun. I'm takin' your word that you'll leave peaceable."

And so, with his gun again in its holster, Texas threw himself astride his Pinto pony and loped down toward the sloping banks of the Rio Grande del Norte.

A quarter of a mile from town he halted on the bare knob of a low hill and took a lingering look at the pretentious house amid the green surroundings.

Near the house was something he had not seen when he had looked before—the flutter of a white dress against the background of green. As he looked the white figure moved rapidly through the garden and disappeared behind the house.

"She didn't say a word," said Texas chokingly.

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Ten hours out of Socorro Texas Rankin rode morosely into San Marcial. Into San Marcial the unbeautiful, with its vista of unpainted shanties and lurid dives. For in San Marcial foregathered the men of the mines and the ranges; men of forgotten morals, but of brawn and muscle, whose hearts beat not with a yearning for high ideals, but with a lust for wealth and gain—white, Indian, Mexican, half-breed; predatory spirits of many nations, opposed in the struggle for existence.

For ten hours Texas had ridden the river trail, and for ten hours his ears had been burdened with the dull beat of his pony's hoofs on the matted mesquite grass, and the rattle of his wooden stirrups against the chaparral growth. And for ten hours his mind had been confused with a multitude of perplexities and resentments.

But all mental confusions reach a culminating point when the mind finally throws aside the useless chaff of thought and considers only the questions that have to do with the heart. Wherefore, Texas Rankin's mind dwelt on Mary Jane. Subconsciously his mind harbored rebellion against her father, who had judged him; against Socorro, which had misunderstood him; against Fate, which had been unjust. All these atoms of personal interest were elements of a primitive emotion that finally evolved into one great concrete determination that he would show Jim Webster, Socorro, Mary Jane—the world, that he was not the creature they had thought him. Tearing aside all mental superfluities, there was revealed a new structure of thought:

"I am goin' to be a man again!"

And so Texas rode his tired pony in the gathering dusk; down the wide street that was beginning to flicker with the shafts of light from grimy windows; down to the hitching rail in front of the Top Notch Saloon—where he dismounted and stood stiffly beside his beast while he planned his regeneration.

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Half an hour later Texas sat opposite a man at a card table in the rear of the Top Notch Saloon.

The man conversed easily, but it was noticeable that he watched Texas with cat-like vigilance, and that he poured his whiskey with his left hand.

Ordinarily Texas would have noticed this departure from the polite rules, but laboring under the excitement that his new determination brought him he was careless. For he had planned his regeneration, and his talk with the man was the beginning.

"You lifted the express box at Socorro, Buck!" said Texas, so earnestly that the table trembled.

Buck Reible, gambler, outlaw, murderer, pushed back his broad-brimmed hat with his hand—always he used his left—and gazed with level, menacing eyes at Texas. His lips parted with a half-sneer.

"If a man does a job nowadays, there's always some one wants in on it!" he declared, voicing his suspicion of Rankin's motive in bringing up the subject. "Because you was lucky in bein' close when the game come off is the reason you want a share of the cash," he added satirically. "How much——"

"Go easy, Buck," said Texas. "I ain't no angel, but I never played your style. I ain't askin' for a share."

"Then what in——"

"It's a new deal," declared Texas heavily. "A square deal. You took five thousand dollars out of Socorro, an' you salivated the agent doin' it. Jim Webster thought it was me, an' I was invited to a farewell performance in which I done the starrin'. Some night-prowler saw me down near the station just before you made your grand entrée, an'——"

"Serves you right for spoonin' with a female so close to where gentlemen has business," said Buck. "I saw her when you come toward me shootin'."

"An' what makes it more aggravatin'," continued Texas, unmoved by the interruption; "is that the lady was Jim Webster's daughter, an' we was thinkin' of gettin' married. But we didn't want Jim to know just then, an' she told me to keep mum, seein' that Jim was opposed. She said we'd keep it secret until——"

"I admire the lady's choice," said Buck, sneering ironically.

"——until I braced up an' was a man again," went on Texas, with bull-dog persistency.

"Then you wasn't thinkin' of gettin' married soon," slurred Buck.

"I reckon we was," returned Texas coldly; "that's why I came here. I'm goin' to take that five thousand back to Socorro with me!"

And now Buck used his right hand. But quick as he was, he was late. Rankin's gun gaped at him across the table the while his own weapon lagged tardily half-way in its holster.

"I'm goin' to be a man again," said Texas. There was a positiveness in his voice that awoke thoughts of death and violence.

"You damn——" began Buck.

"I'll count ten," said Texas frigidly. "If the money ain't on the table then I reckon you won't care what becomes of it!"

"One!—Two!"

With a snarl of rage and hate Buck rose from his chair and sprang clear, his gun flashing to a level with the movement, its savage roar shattering the silence.

Texas did not wince as the heavy bullet struck him, but his face went white. He had been a principal in more than one shooting affray, and experience had taught him the value of instantaneous action. And so, even with the stinging pain in his left shoulder, his hand swept his gun lightly upward, and before it had reached a level he had begun to pull the trigger. But to his astonishment only the metallic click, click of the hammer striking the steel of the cylinder rewarded his efforts. Once, twice, thrice; so rapidly that the metallic clicks blended.

And now he saw why he was to meet his death at the muzzle of Buck's gun. Fearing him, Jim Webster had removed the cartridges from his weapon before returning it to him that morning. He had committed a fatal error in not examining it after he had received it from Webster's hand. The Law, in judging him, had removed his chance of life.

But he smiled with bitter irony into Buck's eyes as the latter, still snarling and relentless, deliberately shot again; once, twice.

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According to the ancient custom—which has many champions—and to the conventions—which are not to be violated with impunity—Texas should have recovered from his wounds to return to Mary Jane and Socorro. No narrative is complete without the entire vindication of the brave and the triumph of the honorable. But to the chronicler belongs only the simple task of true and conscientious record.

Therefore is the end written thus:

Came to Jim Webster's home in Socorro a week later a babbler from San Marcial, who told a tale:

"There was a man by the name of Texas Rankin came down to San Marcial last week an' went gunnin' for Buck Reible. Quickest thing you ever saw. Buck peppered him so fast you couldn't count; an' I'm told Texas wasn't no slouch with a gun, either."

"Dead?" questioned Webster.

"As a door nail," returned the babbler.

"Socorro's bad man," said Webster, sententiously. "Wasn't a bit of good in him. Gamblin', shootin', outlaw. Best job Buck ever done."

He found Mary Jane in the kitchen, singing over the supper dishes.

"Texas Rankin is dead over at San Marcial," he said, with the importance of one communicating delectable news.

Mary Jane continued with her dishes, looking at her father over her shoulder with a mild unconcern.

"At San Marcial?" she said wonderingly. "I didn't know he had left Socorro!"

"A week now," returned Webster with much complacency. "Fired him from Socorro for doin' that express job. Socorro's bad enough without Texas——"

His mouth opened with dumb astonishment as Mary Jane whirled around on him with a laugh on her lips.

"Why, dad! Texas Rankin didn't do that job! It was Buck Reible. Texas told me the night it happened. We were walking down near the station and we heard some shooting. I wasn't close enough to see plainly, but Texas said he could recognize Buck by the flash of his gun. And so Texas is dead!"

"I thought," said Webster feebly, "that you was pretty sweet on Texas."

"Sweet!" said Mary Jane, blushing with maidenly modesty. "Socorro is so dull. A young lady must have some diversion."

"Then you don't care——"

"Why, dad! You old sobersides. To think—why I was only fooling with him. It was fun to see how serious——"

"In that case——" began Webster. And then he went out and sat on the front stoop.

Far into the night he sat, and always he stared in the direction of San Marcial.

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## VII

### BETWEEN FRIENDS

#### A Story of the Italian Quarter

By ADRIANA SPADONI

VINCENZA looked from the three crisp dollar bills to her husband, and back again, wonderingly and with fear in her eyes.

"I understand nothing, Gino, and I am afraid. Perhaps it will bring the sickness, the money—it is of the devil, maybe——"

Luigi laughed, but a little uneasily. "It is time, then, that the devil went to paradise; he makes better for us than the saints, to whom you pray so——"

"S-sh!" Vincenza crossed herself quickly. "That is a great wickedness."

Luigi picked up the bills, examining them closely. Apparently they were good. Nevertheless he put them down again, and went on carving a wooden cow for the little Carolina, with a puzzled look in his black eyes.

"Gino," Vincenza stopped undressing the baby suddenly when the thought came to her. "Go thou and ask Biaggio. He has been many years in this country, and, besides, he is also a Genovese. He will tell thee."

Luigi's eyes cleared, but he condescended to make no reply. It is not for a man to take the advice of a woman. But when it was dark, and Vincenza had gone to lie down with the Little One, Luigi took his hat and went over to the shop of Biaggio Franchini.

Biaggio listened attentively; his pudgy hands, crossed on his stomach, rose and fell with the undulations of the rolls of flesh beneath. From time to time he ceased for a moment the contemplation of the strings of garlic and sausage that hung from the fly-specked ceiling of his diminutive shop, and turned his little black eyes sharply on Luigi.

"So," he said at last, "to-day a lady came to thy house, and after to ask many questions left these three dollars. It was in this way?"

"Just so," replied Luigi, "and questions the most marvelous I have ever heard. And in this country, where everyone asks the questions. How long that I do not work, and if we have to eat?" Luigi laughed; "of a surety, Biaggio, she asked that. She sees that we live—and she asks if we eat—*ma! ché!* And then, if we have every day the meat? When I said once, sometimes twice in the week—thou knowest it is not possible to have more often, when one waits to buy the house—then it was she put on the table the three dollars, and gave me a paper to sign——"

"Thou didst sign nothing?" Biaggio spoke eagerly.

"No. Once I signed the paper in English and it cost me two dollars; not again. I said I could not

write, and she wrote for me."

"*Bene*," Biaggio nodded approval. "It is not thy writing. It can do nothing."

"Perhaps it is because I voted twice at the election last week? But already I have taken the money for that. It was one only dollar. I——"

"Non, non, it is not that. Listen!" Slowly Biaggio shut both eyes, as if to keep out the tremendous light that had dawned upon him, and nodded his head knowingly. Then he opened them, shifted his huge bulk upright, and clapped Luigi on the knee.

"Thou art in great luck friend," he cried, "and it is well that thou hast asked me. If thou hadst gone to another, to a man not honest, who knows? Listen. In our country when a rich man dies, he leaves always something for the poor, but he leaves it to the church and it is the fathers who give away the money. *Corpo di Bacco!* what that means thou knowest well. Sometimes a little gets to the poor. Sometimes—— But in this country it is not so. He leaves to a society. There are many. And they pay the women, and sometimes the men, to give away the money——"

"Santo Cristo," gasped Luigi, "they pay to give away the money?"

"For them it is a job like any other. Didst think it was for love of thee or the red curls of thy Vincenza?"

"Marvelous, most marvelous," murmured Luigi, "and it is possible then for all people to get——"

"Ma, that no one can explain," and Biaggio shrugged his shoulders; in a gesture of absolute inability to solve the problem.

"She will come then again, this lady?" Luigi leaned forward eagerly. He was beginning to grasp it.

"It is for thee to say stop, my son, if thou hast in thy head anything but fat. But thou art a Genovese. Only I say," Biaggio laid a grimy thumb across his lips and winked knowingly—"Tell to none."

"Thanks, many thanks friend," Luigi's voice was deeply grateful, "perhaps some day I can do for thee——?"

"It is nothing—nothing," insisted Biaggio, patting the air with his pudgy hands in a gesture of denial, "a little kindness between friends."

At great inconvenience to himself, Biaggio held the door open to give Luigi more light in crossing the street. As he closed it and turned out the gas, he smiled to himself. "And each bottle of oil will cost thee ten cents more, friend. Business is business, and yesterday thy Vincenza returned the carrots because they were not fresh. Ecco!"

Back in his own room, Luigi folded the three notes neatly, while Vincenza watched him, her gray eyes wide with wonder.

"Marvelous, marvelous," she whispered just as Luigi had done, "to-night I thank the Virgin."

As Biaggio had foretold, the Lady in Fur came every day. Luigi did not understand all that she said, but he always listened politely and smiled, with his dark eyes and his lips and his glistening white teeth. It made her feel very old to see Luigi smile like that, when he had to live in one room with a leaking water pipe and a garbage can outside the door. Sometimes she was almost ashamed to offer the three dollars, and she was grateful for the gentle, sweet way Luigi accepted it.

Then one day when the air was thick with snow, and the air in the tenement halls cut like needles of ice and the lamps had to be lit at two o'clock, the Lady in Brown Fur came unexpectedly. She had found work for Luigi. She kissed the Little One, patted Vincenza's shoulder and shook hands with Luigi. Again and again she made him repeat the name and address to make sure he had it quite right. The Lady in Brown Fur was very happy. When she went Vincenza leaned far over the banisters with the lamp while Luigi called out in his soft, broken English, directions for avoiding the lines of washing below and the refuse piled in dark turns of the stairs. When the Lady in Brown Fur had disappeared Vincenza turned to Luigi.

"Of a surety, cara, the saints are good. Never before didst thou work before April. In the new house we will keep for ourselves two rooms.

"These people have the 'pull' even more than the alderman, Biaggio says," replied Luigi with a dreamy look in his eyes. "It may be that from this work I shall take three dollars each day."

"Madonna mia," gasped Vincenza, "it is beyond belief."

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For five days Luigi stood four hours each afternoon, bent forward, to the lifting of a cardboard block, while Hugh Keswick painted, as he had not painted for months, the tense muscles under the olive skin, the strong neck and shoulders. The Building of the Temple advanced rapidly. And Luigi's arms and back ached so that each night Vincenza had to rub them with the oil which now



cost ten cents more in the shop of Biaggio.

On the Sixth day Luigi refused to go.

"I tell thee it is a stupidity—to stand all day with the pain in the back. For what? Fifty cents. It is a work for old men and children——"

"But thou canst not make the money, sitting in thy chair, with thy feet on the stove, like now——"

"Dost thou wish then that I have every night the knives in my back? If so——"

"Not so, caro, but——"

"Listen. You understand nothing and talk as a woman. A lady comes to my house. She says—you have no work, here is money. Then she comes and says—here is work. But at this work I make not so much as before she gave; and in addition, I have the pain in the back. Ecco, when she comes again, I no longer have the work. It is her job to give away the money. She is not a fool, that Lady in Brown Fur. It is that I make her a kindness. Not so?"

"As thou sayest," and Vincenza went on with her endless washing.

But when the week passed and the Lady in Brown Fur did not come, Luigi's forehead wrinkled with the effort to understand. When the second had gone, Luigi was openly troubled. When the third was half over, he again took his hat and went over to the shop of Biaggio.

As before Biaggio listened attentively, his eyes closed, until Luigi had finished. Then he opened them, made a clicking noise with his tongue, and laid one finger along the side of his nose.

"Holy Body of Christ," he said softly, "in business thou hast the head like a rock. In one curl of thy Vincenza there is more sense than in all thy great body. Did I not tell thee to be careful, and it would stop only when thou didst wish. And now, without to ask my advice, you make the stupidity, bah——"

"Ma, Dio mio," Luigi's hands made angry protest against the invective of Biaggio, "I said only like a man of sense. It is her job, it make no difference——"

"Blood of the Lamb! Thou hast been in America eight months, and thou dost not know that they are mad, all quite mad, to work? Never do they stop. Even after to have fifty years, think, fifty years, still they work. They work even with the children old enough to keep them. For many months The Skinny One, she who gives milk to the baby of Giacomo, had the habit to find him such work, like the foolishness of your painter. And Giacomo has already three children more than fifteen. Ma——" Biaggio snorted his contempt. Then suddenly his manner changed. He leaned back in his chair, and apparently dismissed the subject with a wave of his fat hand.

"And the little Carolina she is well in this weather of the devil?" But Luigi did not answer. He was thinking with a pucker between his black eyes. Biaggio watched him narrowly. At last he spoke, looking fixedly at the sausages above his head.

"Of course—it—is—possible—you have made a—mistake—but——"

Luigi leaned forward eagerly. "It is possible then to——"

"All things are possible," Biaggio nodded his head at the sausages, blinking like a large, fat owl. Then he stopped.

"Perhaps, you will tell—to me," Luigi was forced to it at last.

Biaggio gave a little grunt as if he were being brought back from a deep meditation. "There is a way," he said slowly. "If thou write to her of the Brown Fur that thou art sick and cannot do the work——"

"But never in my life was I better. Only last week Giacomo said I have grown fat. How the——"

"It is possible," replied Biaggio wearily, "to be sick of a sickness that makes one neither thin nor white. With a sickness—of the legs like the rheumatism, for example, one eats, one sleeps, only one cannot walk or stand for many hours."

In spite of his efforts to the contrary, the wonder and admiration grew deeper in Luigi's eyes. "Thou thinkest the——?"

"I am sure," now that Luigi was reduced to the proper state of humility Biaggio gave up his attitude of distant oracle, and leaned close. "Thou hast made a mistake, but it is not too late. If thou dost wish I will write it for thee."

"If thou sayest," replied Luigi and now it was his turn to gaze at the strings of garlic, "if you will do this favor."

"With pleasure," Biaggio's fat hands made little gestures of willingness to oblige. "Of a truth it is not much, but when one wishes to buy the house, and already the family is begun, two dollars and a half each week——"

Luigi glanced at him sharply. "Two and——"

Biaggio drew the ink to him and dipped his pen. "Two and a half for thee, and for me——"

"Bene, bene," Luigi interrupted quickly, "it is only just."

"Between friends," explained Biaggio as he began to write.

"Between friends," echoed Luigi, and added to himself, "closer than the skin of a snake art thou—friend."

The Lady in the Brown Fur came next day. She had been very angry and disappointed in Luigi, too angry and disappointed to go near him. Now she felt very sorry and uncomfortable when she saw his right leg stretched out before, so stiff that he could not bend it. He smiled and made the motion of getting up, but could not do it, and sank back again with a gesture of helplessness more eloquent than words. When the Lady in Brown Fur had gone, Vincenza found an extra bill, brand new, tucked into the pocket of the little Carolina.

Luigi waited until he was quite sure that Biaggio would be alone. There was a look of real sorrow in his dark eyes as he slipped a shiny quarter across the counter. "She left only two," he explained, "the reason I do not know. Perhaps next time——"

"It is nothing, nothing between friends." Biaggio slipped the quarter into the cigar box under the counter and smiled a fat smile at Luigi. But he did not hold the door open when Luigi went, and his little eyes were hard like gimlet points. "So," he whispered softly. "So. One learns quickly, very quickly in this new country. Only two dollars this time. Bene, Gino mio, the price of sausage, as that of oil, goes up—between friends."

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## VIII

### THE HAMMERPOND BURGLARY

#### The Story of an Artist

By H.G. WELLS

It is a moot point whether burglary is to be considered as a sport, a trade, or an art. For a trade the technique is scarcely rigid enough, and its claims to be considered an art are vitiated by the mercenary element that qualifies triumphs. On the whole it seems to be most justly ranked as sport, a sport for which no rules are at present formulated, and of which the prizes are distributed in an extremely informal manner. It was this informality of burglary that led to the regrettable extinction of two promising beginners at Hammerpond Park.

The stakes offered in this affair consisted chiefly of diamonds and other personal *bric-à-brac* belonging to the newly married Lady Aveling. Lady Aveling, as the reader will remember, was the only daughter of Mrs. Montague Pangs, the well-known hostess. Her marriage to Lord Aveling was extensively advertised in the papers, the quantity and quality of her wedding presents, and the fact that the honeymoon was to be spent at Hammerpond. The announcement of these valuable prizes created a considerable sensation in the small circle in which Mr. Teddy Watkins was the undisputed leader, and it was decided that, accompanied by a duly qualified assistant, he should visit the village of Hammerpond in his professional capacity.

Being a man of naturally retiring and modest disposition, Mr. Watkins determined to make his visit *incog*, and, after due consideration of the conditions of his enterprise, he selected the rôle of a landscape artist, and the unassuming surname of Smith. He preceded his assistant, who, it was decided, should join him only on the last afternoon of his stay at Hammerpond. Now the village of Hammerpond is perhaps one of the prettiest little corners in Sussex; many thatched houses still survive, the flint-built church, with its tall spire nestling under the down, is one of the finest and least restored in the county, and the beech-woods and bracken jungles through which the road runs to the great house are singularly rich in what the vulgar artist and photographer call "bits." So that Mr. Watkins, on his arrival with two virgin canvases, a brand-new easel, a paint-boy, portmanteau, an ingenious little ladder made in sections; (after the pattern of that lamented master, Charles Peace), crowbar, and wire coils, found himself welcomed with effusion and some curiosity by half a dozen other brethren of the brush. It rendered the disguise he had chosen unexpectedly plausible, but it inflicted upon him a considerable amount of æsthetic conversation for which he was very imperfectly prepared.

"Have you exhibited very much?" said young Porson in the bar-parlor of the "Coach and Horses," where Mr. Watkins was skilfully accumulating local information on the night of his arrival.

"Very little," said Mr. Watkins; "just a snack here and there."

"Academy?"

"In course. *And* at the Crystal Palace."

"Did they hang you well?" said Porson.

"Don't rot," said Mr. Watkins; "I don't like it."

"I mean did they put you in a good place?"

"Whatyer mean?" said Mr. Watkins suspiciously. "One 'ud think you were trying to make out I'd been put away."

Porson was a gentlemanly young man even for an artist, and he did not know what being "put away" meant, but he thought it best to explain that he intended nothing of the sort. As the question of hanging seemed a sore point with Mr. Watkins, he tried to divert the conversation a little.

"Did you do figure work at all?"

"No, never had a head for figures," said Mr. Watkins. "My miss—Mrs. Smith, I mean, does all that."

"She paints too!" said Porson. "That's rather jolly."

"Very," said Mr. Watkins, though he really did not think so, and, feeling the conversation was drifting a little beyond his grasp, added: "I came down here to paint Hammerpond House by moonlight."

"Really!" said Porson. "That's rather a novel idea."

"Yes," said Mr. Watkins, "I thought it rather a good notion when it occurred to me. I expect to begin to-morrow night."

"What! You don't mean to paint in the open, by night?"

"I do, though."

"But how will you see your canvas?"

"Have a bloomin' cop's——" began Mr. Watkins, rising too quickly to the question, and then realizing this, bawled to Miss Durgan for another glass of beer. "I'm goin' to have a thing called a dark lantern," he said to Porson.

"But it's about new moon now," objected Porson. "There won't be any moon."

"There'll be the house," said Watkins, "at any rate. I'm goin', you see, to paint the house first and the moon afterward."

"Oh!" said Porson, too staggered to continue the conversation.

Toward sunset next day Mr. Watkins, virgin canvas, easel, and a very considerable case of other appliances in hand, strolled up the pleasant pathway through the beech-woods to Hammerpond Park, and pitched his apparatus in a strategic position commanding the house. Here he was observed by Mr. Raphael Sant, who was returning across the park from a study of the chalk-pits. His curiosity having been fired by Porson's account of the new arrival, he turned aside with the idea of discussing nocturnal art.

Mr. Watkins was mixing color with an air of great industry. Sant, approaching more nearly, was surprised to see the color in question was as harsh and brilliant an emerald green as it is possible to imagine. Having cultivated an extreme sensibility to color from his earliest years, he drew the air in sharply between his teeth at the very first glimpse of this brew. Mr. Watkins turned round. He looked annoyed.

"What on earth are you going to do with that *beastly* green?" said Sant.

Mr. Watkins realized that his zeal to appear busy in the eyes of the butler had evidently betrayed him into some technical error. He looked at Sant and hesitated.

"Pardon my rudeness," said Sant; "but, really, that green is altogether too amazing. It came as a shock. What *do* you mean to do with it?"

Mr. Watkins was collecting his resources. Nothing could save the situation but decision. "If you come here interrupting my work," he said, "I'm a-goin' to paint your face with it."

Sant retired, for he was a humorist and a peaceful man. Going down the hill he met Porson and Wainwright. "Either that man is a genius or he is a dangerous lunatic," said he. "Just go up and look at his green." And he continued his way, his countenance brightened by a pleasant anticipation of a cheerful affray round an easel in the gloaming, and the shedding of much green paint.

But to Porson and Wainwright Mr. Watkins was less aggressive, and explained that the green was intended to be the first coating of his picture. It was, he admitted, in response to a remark, an absolutely new method, invented by himself.

Twilight deepened, first one then another star appeared. The rooks amid the tall trees to the left of the house had long since lapsed into slumberous silence, the house itself lost all the details of its architecture and became a dark gray outline, and then the windows of the salon shone out brilliantly, the conservatory was lighted up, and here and there a bedroom window burnt yellow. Had any one approached the easel in the park it would have been found deserted. One brief uncivil word in brilliant green sullied the purity of its canvas. Mr. Watkins was busy in the

shrubbery with his assistant, who had discreetly joined him from the carriage-drive.

Mr. Watkins was inclined to be self-congratulatory upon the ingenious device by which he had carried all his apparatus boldly, and in the sight of all men, right up to the scene of operations. "That's the dressing-room," he said to his assistant, "and, as soon as the maid takes the candle away and goes down to supper, we'll call in. My! how nice the house do look, to be sure, against the starlight, and with all its windows and lights! Swop me, Jim, I almost wish I *was* a painter-chap. Have you fixed that there wire across the path from the laundry?"

He cautiously approached the house until he stood below the dressing-room window, and began to put together his folding ladder. He was too experienced a practitioner to feel any unusual excitement. Jim was reconnoitring the smoking-room. Suddenly, close beside Mr. Watkins in the bushes, there was a violent crash and a stifled curse. Some one had tumbled over the wire which his assistant had just arranged. He heard feet running on the gravel pathway beyond. Mr. Watkins, like all true artists, was a singularly shy man, and he incontinently dropped his folding ladder and began running circumspectly through the shrubbery. He was indistinctly aware of two people hot upon his heels, and he fancied that he distinguished the outline of his assistant in front of him. In another moment he had vaulted the low stone wall bounding the shrubbery, and was in the open park. Two thuds on the turf followed his own leap.

It was a close chase in the darkness through the trees. Mr. Watkins was a loosely built man and in good training, and he gained hand over hand upon the hoarsely panting figure in front. Neither spoke, but, as Mr. Watkins pulled up alongside, a qualm of awful doubt came over him. The other man turned his head at the same moment and gave an exclamation of surprise. "It's not Jim," thought Mr. Watkins, and simultaneously the stranger flung himself, as it were, at Watkins's knees, and they were forthwith grappling on the ground together. "Lend a hand, Bill," cried the stranger, as the third man came up. And Bill did—two hands, in fact, and some accentuated feet. The fourth man, presumably Jim, had apparently turned aside and made off in a different direction. At any rate, he did not join the trio.

Mr. Watkins's memory of the incidents of the next two minutes is extremely vague. He has a dim recollection of having his thumb in the corner of the mouth of the first man, and feeling anxious about its safety, and for some seconds at least he held the head of the gentleman answering to the name of Bill to the ground by the hair. He was also kicked in a great number of different places, and apparently by a vast multitude of people. Then the gentleman who was not Bill got his knee below Mr. Watkins's diaphragm and tried to curl him up upon it.

When his sensations became less entangled he was sitting upon the turf, and eight or ten men—the night was dark, and he was rather too confused to count—standing around him, apparently waiting for him to recover. He mournfully assumed that he was captured, and would probably have made some philosophical reflections on the fickleness of fortune, had not his internal sensations disinclined him to speech.

He noticed very quickly that his wrists were not handcuffed, and then a flask of brandy was put in his hands. This touched him a little—it was such unexpected kindness.

"He's a-comin' round," said a voice which he fancied he recognized as belonging to the Hammerpond second footman.

"We've got 'em, sir, both of 'em," said the Hammerpond butler, the man who had handed him the flask. "Thanks to *you*."

No one answered his remark. Yet he failed to see how it applied to him.

"He's fair dazed," said a strange voice; "the villain's half-murdered him."

Mr. Teddy Watkins decided to remain fair dazed until he had a better grasp of the situation. He perceived that two of the black figures round him stood side by side with a dejected air, and there was something in the carriage of their shoulders that suggested to his experienced eye hands that were bound together. In a flash he rose to his position. He emptied the little flask and staggered—obsequious hands assisting him—to his feet. There was a sympathetic murmur.

"Shake hands, sir, shake hands," said one of the figures near him. "Permit me to introduce myself. I am very greatly indebted to you. It was the jewels of my wife, Lady Aveling, which attracted these scoundrels to the house."

"Very glad to make your lordship's acquaintance," said Teddy Watkins.

"I presume you saw the rascals making for the shrubbery, and dropped down on them?"

"That's exactly how it happened," said Mr. Watkins.

"You should have waited till they got in at the window," said Lord Aveling; "they would get it hotter if they had actually committed the burglary. And it was lucky for you two of the policemen were out by the gates, and followed up the three of you. I doubt if you could have secured the two of them—though it was confoundedly plucky of you, all the same."

"Yes, I ought to have thought of all that," said Mr. Watkins; "but one can't think of everything."

"Certainly not," said Lord Aveling. "I am afraid they have mauled you a little," he added. The party was now moving toward the house. "You walk rather lame. May I offer you my arm?"

And instead of entering Hammerpond House by the dressing-room window, Mr. Watkins entered it—slightly intoxicated, and inclined now to cheerfulness again—on the arm of a real live peer, and by the front door. "This," thought Mr. Watkins, "is burgling in style!" The "scoundrels," seen by the gaslight, proved to be mere local amateurs unknown to Mr. Watkins, and they were taken down into the pantry and there watched over by the three policemen, two gamekeepers with loaded guns, the butler, an ostler, and a carman, until the dawn allowed of their removal to Hazelhurst police-station. Mr. Watkins was made much of in the salon. They devoted a sofa to him, and would not hear of a return to the village that night. Lady Aveling was sure he was brilliantly original, and said her idea of Turner was just such another rough, half-inebriated, deep-eyed, brave, and clever man. Some one brought up a remarkable little folding-ladder that had been picked up in the shrubbery, and showed him how it was put together. They also described how wires had been found in the shrubbery, evidently placed there to trip up unwary pursuers. It was lucky he had escaped these snares. And they showed him the jewels.

Mr. Watkins had the sense not to talk too much, and in any conversational difficulty fell back on his internal pains. At last he was seized with stiffness in the back and yawning. Everyone suddenly awoke to the fact that it was a shame to keep him talking after his affray, so he retired early to his room, the little red room next to Lord Aveling's suite.

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The dawn found a deserted easel bearing a canvas with a green inscription, in the Hammerpond Park, and it found Hammerpond House in commotion. But if the dawn found Mr. Teddy Watkins and the Aveling diamonds, it did not communicate the information to the police.

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## IX

### A FO'C'S'LE TRAGEDY

#### An Ancient Mariner's Yarn

By PERCY LONGHURST

"YEH may gas about torpedoes an' 'fernal machines an' such like, but yeh can't learn me nothin'; onct I had t' do wi' suthin' o' th' sort that turned th' heads o' a dozen men from black ter white in 'bout ten minutes," and the ancient mariner looked at me with careful impressiveness.

"Bad, eh?" I inquired.

"Sh'd think it was—for them poor chaps."

"Didn't turn your hair white, Uncle?"

"Gue-e-ss not," and the ancient mariner had a fit of chuckling that nearly choked him.

When he recovered he told me the yarn. I had heard several of old Steve's yarns, and I considered that his fine talents were miserably wasted; he ought to have been a politician or a real estate agent. This yarn, however, might very well have been true.

"It was 'bout nineteen years ago," Steve commenced, "an' I'd jest taken up a job as cook on the *Here at Last*, a blamed old Noah's Ark of a wind-jammer from New York to Jamaica. She did th' trip in 'bout th' same time as yeh'd walk it. She was a beauty—an' th' crew 'bout fitted her. Where th' old man had gathered 'em from th' Lord on'y knows; but they was th' most difficult lot I've ever sailed with, which is sayin' a deal consid'rin' that, man an' boy, I've been a sailor for forty years. They was as contrairy as women, an' as stoopid as donkeys. I couldn't do nothin' right for 'em. They complained of the coffee, grumbled at th' biscuit, an' swore terrible at th' meat. But most of all they swore at me."

"'It all lies in th' cookin',' an old one-eyed chap, named Barton, used ter say. 'Any cook that is worth his salt can do wonders wi' th' worst vittles'; an' he told me how he'd once sailed with a cook as c'd make a stewed cat taste better'n a rabbit. An', durn me, when I went ashore next, an' at great risk managed to lay holt of a big tom and cooked it for em, hopin' to please 'em, an' went inter th' fo'c's'le arter dinner an' told 'em what I'd done, ef that self-same chap, Barton, didn't hit me over th' head wi' his tin can for tryin' ter poison 'em, as he said. They complained to th' old man, too, which was worse; for when we got t' th' next port my leave ashore was stopped, an' all for tryin' to please 'em. Rank ingratitude, I call it.

"Another time I tried to give the junk—it really was bad, but as I hadn't bought th' stores, that wasn't no fault o' mine—a bit of a more pleasant flavor by bilin' with it a packet o' spice I found in th' skipper's cabin. One o' th' sailors comes into my galley in a towerin' rage arter dinner.

"'Yer blamed rascal,' he said, an' there was suthin' like murder in his starin' eyes. 'Yeh blamed rascal, whatcher been doin' ter our grub now?'

"What's th' trouble, Joe?' I asks quietly.

"Trouble, yeh skunk,' he howls; 'our throats is hot as hell, all th' skin's comin' off 'em; Bill Tomson's got his lips that blistered he can't hold his pipe between 'em. What yeh been doin'?"

"Hold hard a jiffy,' I said, an' looks at what was left o' th' spice I'd used. I nearly had a fit.

"Go 'way,' I says, pullin' myself together; 't ain't nuthin'.'

"An' it wasn't nuthin'; but there was such an almighty run on th' water barrel that arternoon th' old man was beginnin' ter think a teetotal revival had struck th' *Here at Last*. But though cayenne pepper drives a chap ter water pretty often while th' effect lasts, it don't have no permanent result, as th' old man found out. Course it was a mistake o' mine; but ain't we all liable to go a bit astray?"

"I'm jest givin' yeh these few examples t' show yeh that things wasn't altogether O.K. 'tween me an' the crew. They was always swearin' at me, an' callin' of me names, an' heavin' things at me head, because I'd done or hadn't done suthin' or other. An angel from heaven wouldn't have pleased 'em; an' as I never held much stock in the angelic trust yeh kin easily understand we was most times very much at sixes an' sevens.

"One evenin' I was sittin' in th' fo'c's'le patiently listenin' ter th' horrible language in which they reproached me because one o' 'em had managed t' break a front tooth in biting a bit o' th' salt pork they'd had for dinner, which was certainly no fault o' mine, when one of 'em, an English chap he was, an' the worst grumbler of all, suddenly cries:

"Jeerusalem, wouldn't I give somethin' fer a drop of beer just now. Strike me pink if I ain't a'most forgotten what the taste o' it's like.'

"Me, too,' said Harry Towers, the carpenter. 'A schooner o' lager an' ale! Sakes! Wouldn't it jest sizzle down a day like this?'"

"My aunt! I'd give a month's pay f'r a quart,' the surly Britisher says fiercely.

"A quart, why don't yeh ask for a barrel while yeh're about it; then I'd help yeh drink it,' I says.

"Yer, yer blighted, perishin' idiot,' he shouts—it was him that'd broken his tooth. 'What, waste good beer on yer that's fit fer nothin' but cuttin' up into shark bait!'"

"That ain't th' way t' talk to a man as is always ready an' willin' t' help yeh,' I says reproachfully.

"The chap glares at me like a tiger with the colic. His language was awful. 'Lord 'elp us,' he finishes up with, 'why, yer've done nuthin' but try ter pizen us ever since we come aboard. Ain't I right, mates?'"

"Righto,' they choruses; an' I begin t' think they'd soon be gittin' up to mischief.

"P'raps I might help yeh t' git some beer if yer was more respectful,' I says hurriedly.

"Beer!' they all yells, an' looks up at me all to onct as if I was a dime museum freak.

"Yes, beer,' I says quietly.

"An' where'd you be gittin' it from?' asks one.

"Never yeh mind that,' I answers. 'I've a dozen or two bottles of English stout I brought aboard, an' since yeh're so anxious to taste a drop o' beer, I don't mind lettin' yeh have some—at a price, o' course.'

"What's the figure?' Towers inquires suspiciously. He was a Michigan man.

"A dollar th' bottle.'

"What!' shouts th' man as was ready t' give a month's pay fer a quart. 'A dollar th' bottle! Why, yer miserable old skinflint!'"

"A dollar th' bottle. That's the terms, take 'em or leave 'em,' says I, very firmly.

"They talked a lot, and they swore a lot more, but finally seem' as I wasn't t' be moved, and that they couldn't get the beer except at my price, the hull ten of 'em agreed to have a bottle apiece.

"Money down,' I stipulates; an' after a lot o' trouble they collects seven dollars between 'em, an' tells me it's all they've got, an' if I didn't bring up th' ten bottles mighty quick they'd knock me on th' head an' drop me overboard.

"Mind,' I said, as I goes off to th' galley, money in my hand; 'don't yeh let th' officers see yeh drinkin' it or they'll think yeh've been broachin' cargo, an' that's little short o' mutiny.'

"Bring up that beer,' growls the Britisher, almost foamin' at th' mouth.

"When I came back with th' ten bottles o' stout in a basket they all looked so pleased an' happy it did my heart good ter look at 'em.

"Hand it over,' they shouts impatiently.

"I'm afraid it's gone a bit flat,' I said, as I handed th' bottles round. 'But I've tried to pull it

round.'

"Flat or not, they weren't goin' to kick; an' they was jest 'bout to unscrew the stoppers when the second mate suddenly shoves his head down the hatchway an' yells out:

"'On deck, yer lazy, skulking, highly colored lubbers. Tumble up at once, an' git a lively move on, or I'll be down an' smarten ye up!"

"McClosky, the second mate, was not a fellow who stood any nonsense, an' th' men weren't long before they was out o' th' fo'c's'le, grumblin' an' swearin' as only men who've lost their watch below can. They just stayed long enough t' shove th' unopened bottles o' stout well out o' sight underneath th' mattresses o' their bunks an' then they was up on deck working like niggers. A squall had struck the *Here at Last*; mighty inconvenient, these squalls in the Caribbean Sea are, an' th' *Here at Last* wasn't best calc'lated t' weather 'em. For two mortal hours everyone was hard at it, takin' in sail, doublin' ropes, an' makin' all ready for what promised t' be a dirty night. All thoughts o' beer was driven out o' their heads. An' when everythin' was ship-shape an' they came below again, soakin' wet an' dog-tired, they just climbed into their berths without stoppin' to think of th' precious bottles o' stout.

"'Bout two o'clock in th' mornin', I was woke up by what sounded like a pistol shot in th' fo'c's'le, an' before I c'd rub th' sleep out er my eyes, there was another, an' another an' another, an' I saw four sailors tumble outer their bunks an' fall on th' floor shriekin' as if they'd been attacked by th' most awful pain. Everyone else in th' fo'c's'le sits up, wide awake, an' starin' at th' sufferin' wretches on th' floor.

"'Wot th' 'ell's up?' asks th' Britisher; but no one knew, an' th' nex' second there was another explosion, an' he suddenly gave a scream that lifted th' hair on my scalp, an' leaps outer his bunk as if he'd been suddenly prodded in a tender spot wi' a red hot poker.

"'My Gawd!' he screeches; 'th' bunk's exploded an' I'm bleedin' ter death;' an' he starts yellin' like a catamount, runnin' up an' down th' gangway, an' tramplin' upon th' four shriekin', cursin', prayin' sailors who'd been attacked fust.

"'It's an infernal machine, an' it's blowed a hole in me back,' the Britisher yelled; an' we who was lookin' on c'd certainly hear suthin' drippin' from th' bunk he'd just got out of.

"'Owch! I'm blowed t' bits. I'm bein' murdered. I'm dyin', Lord help me,' Harry Towers, the carpenter, wails; an' there was another terrific bang, an' outer his bunk Harry shot, landin', on th' chest o' one o' th' moanin' squirmin' sailors. Th' poor fellow, findin' himself thus flattened out, an' not knowin' what it was had fallen on him, gives a gaspin' sort er yell, an' drives Towers in th' back wi' his fist.

"'Th' row goin' on was suthin' terrible; a 'sylum full o' ravin' lunatics on th' rampage couldn't have made more noise; an' them that hadn't been hurt was beginnin' t' feel as bad as them that was, when someone scrambles down th' companionway.

"'It was McClosky, th' second mate, whose watch on deck it was. He'd heard th' row—an' no wonder—an' thinkin', I dessay, that murder or mutiny was goin' on, came forward to investigate. He was a red-headed, hot-tempered Irishman, an' c'd handle a crew in rare style.

"'What th' dickens——' he commences, when one o' th' men on th' floor, seein' th' gun in his hand, an' not recognizin' him, shouted, 'They're comin' t' finish us,' an' grabs th' mate round th' legs wi' th' grip of a boa constrictor.

"'Th' mate, sure it was mutiny, lets off his gun permiscuous. A clip on the jaw made th' sailor let go, an' th' mate, seein' Towers groanin' on th' floor quite close, kicks him hard an' asks what's th' matter.

"'We're blown up, sir,' Towers whimpers.

"'Blown up, ye fool, what d' ye mean? Who's blowin' ye up?' demands McClosky.

"'Dunno, sir,' Harry stammered; an' just then there was two more explosions, an' a couple more o' the seamen bundled headlong out er their berths, utterin' doleful shrieks that'd make yer heart stand still.

"'Th' mate was kickin', swearin', and shoutin' like a demon, th' men all th' while keepin' up their row as if they was bein' paid a dollar a minute to yell. Then th' skipper put in an appearance. His face was white as chalk, but his hands, in each o' which was a big Colt, were steady as rocks, an' he come down th' ladder like a man who reckons he's in for a good fight.

"'What's all this mean, Mr. McClosky?' he asks, pausin' when he sees there's no fightin' goin' on.

"'Whatever th' mate said was drowned by th' row th' sailors was makin', though he bellowed like a frisky bull. Th' old man didn't seem a bit frightened; droppin' one o' th' Colts inter his pocket, he roars, 'Silence'; and steps over to th' berth where Joe Harper, th' bo'sun, was sittin' upright, stiff as a poker, an' his eyes fairly startin' out er his head wi' terror.

"'Now, then, Harper,' he says, an' judgin' by his face th' skipper was 'bout as mad as a bear with a sore head. 'What th' blazes does it mean? Have yeh all gone mad?"

"'But th' bo'sun, he was too scared to do more than gape at th' skipper like a codfish three days

out er water, an th' old man gits a bit madder.

"'Answer, yeh damn rascal,' he shouted; an' he grabs Harper by th' shoulder an' shakes him until his teeth fairly rattled. But th' bo'sun couldn't say a word.

"'If this ain't enough t' drive a man crazy,' th' skipper yells; 'McClosky, have yeh lost yer senses like all these condemned rascals here? What's th' meanin' o' it?'

"'Don't know, sir; I heard 'em ravin' an' screamin' like lunatics, but I can't get a word out of 'em. Think they must all have become mad,' an' th' mate kicked Towers again t' relieve his feelin's.

"He'd just finished speakin' when suthin' busted underneath th' bo'sun. Harper screams, th' skipper gives a jump an' lets go of his arm, an' Harper falls out er his berth as if he'd been suddenly shot dead, only he was makin' a row like a man suddenly attacked wi' D.T.'s. And at that all th' other miserable wretches on th' floor starts worse than ever.

"Th' skipper pulls himself together, an' goin' t' th' bo'sun's bunk, leans over an' examines it. He poked about f'r a bit, put his fingers into a stream of suthin' that was fallin' from th' bunk to th' floor, an' then by th' light o' th' swingin' oil lamp, I see his face turn a blazin' crimson. I see him take suthin' outer th' bed, an' then he swings round an' faces th' men.

"'Yeh low down, thievin', chicken-hearted, blank, blank scoundrels,' he yells, an' his voice was that loud an' so full o' passion th' sailors were scared into quietness. 'Yeh miserable sneakin' apologies for men! So this is what's th' matter, is it? By gum! If I don't have every mother's son of ye clapped into jail soon as we reach Kingstown, call me a crimson Dutchman. Blown up, are ye? I wish t' th' Lord some of ye had been. Sailors, yeh calls yeh-selves! Why, by gosh! yeh haven't enough spirit t' rob a mouse. What's that yeh say, Towers? Infernal machines, eh? Dyin'! If yeh don't all get a move on ye in double quick time, some of yeh will be. Git out o' my sight, ye blubberin' babies; I'm sick an' ashamed of ye.'

"A more sick an' unhappy lookin' drove I never saw when th' men got on their legs again an' found out they weren't hurt a little bit; an' discovered what it was had caused th' explosions. They wouldn't look at each other; an' they daren't speak or else there'd have been fightin'.

"I went about in fear of my life for days, but they did nothin'; though if they'd known that I—quite innocent o' mischief, yeh understand—had put a dozen grains or so of rice inter every bottle o' stout—amazin' stuff rice for causin' fermentation in hot climates—they wouldn't have stopped short at mere profanity. My life wouldn't have been worth a moment's purchase."

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## X

### THE ADOPTED SON

#### A Tale of Peasant Life

#### From the French of GUY de MAUPASSANT

THE two cottages stood side by side at the foot of a hill near a little seaside resort. The two peasants labored hard on the unproductive soil to rear their little ones, of which each family had four.

In front of the adjoining doors the whole troop of urchins sprang and tumbled about from morning till night. The two eldest were six years old, and the two youngest were about fifteen months; the marriages, and afterward the births, having taken place nearly simultaneously in both families.

The two mothers could hardly distinguish their own offspring among the lot, and as for the fathers, they were altogether at sea. The eight names danced in their heads; they were always getting them mixed up; and when they wished to call one child, the men often called three names before getting the right one.

The first of the two dwellings, coming from the direction of the sea-bath, Belleport, was occupied by the Tuvaches, who had three girls and one boy; the other house sheltered the Vallins, who had one girl and three boys.

They all subsisted with difficulty on soup, potatoes, and the open air. At seven o'clock in the morning, then at noon, then at six o'clock in the evening, the housewives got their nestlings together to give them their food, as the goose-herds collect their charges. The children were seated, according to age, before the wooden table, varnished by fifty years of use; the mouths of the youngest hardly reaching the level of the table. Before them was placed a deep dish filled with bread, soaked in the water in which the potatoes had been boiled, half a cabbage, and three onions; and the whole line ate until their hunger was appeased. The mother herself fed the smallest.

A little meat, boiled in a soup, on Sunday, was a feast for all; and the father on this day sat longer over the repast, repeating: "I should like this every day."



One afternoon, in the month of August, a light carriage stopped suddenly in front of the cottages, and a young woman, who was driving the horses, said to the gentleman sitting at her side:

"Oh, look, Henri, at all those children! How pretty they are, tumbling about in the dust, like that!"

The man did not answer, being accustomed to these outbursts of admiration, which were a pain and almost a reproach to him. The young woman continued:

"I must hug them! Oh, how I should like to have one of them—that one there—the little bit of a one!"

Springing down from the carriage, she ran toward the children, took one of the two youngest—that of the Tuvaches, and lifting it up in her arms, she kissed him passionately on his dirty cheeks, on his frowzy hair daubed with earth, and on his little hands, which he swung vigorously, to get rid of the caresses which displeased him.

Then she got up into the carriage again, and drove off at a lively trot. But she returned the following week, and seating herself on the ground, took the youngster in her arms, stuffed him with cakes, gave bon-bons to all the others, and played with them like a young girl, while the husband waited patiently in the frail carriage.

She returned again; made the acquaintance of the parents, and reappeared every day with her pockets full of dainties and of pennies.

Her name was Madame Henri d'Hubières.

One morning, on arriving, her husband alighted with her, and without stopping with the children, who now knew her well, she entered the peasants' cottage.

They were busy splitting wood to cook the soup. They straightened up, much surprised, offered chairs, and waited expectantly.

Then the woman, in a broken, trembling voice, began:

"My good people, I have come to see you, because I should like—I should like to take—your little boy with me——"

The country people, too stupefied to think, did not answer.

She recovered her breath, and continued: "We are alone, my husband and I. We should keep it—Are you willing?"

The peasant woman began to understand. She asked:

"You want to take Charlot from us? Oh, no, indeed!"

Then M. d'Hubières intervened:

"My wife has not explained clearly what she means. We wish to adopt him, but he will come back to see you. If he turns out well, as there is every reason to expect, he will be our heir. If we, perchance, should have children, he will share equally with them; but if he should not reward our care, we should give him, when he comes of age, a sum of twenty thousand francs, which shall be deposited immediately in his name, with a notary. As we have thought also of you, we should pay you, until your death, a pension of one hundred francs a month. Have you quite understood me?"

The woman had arisen, furious.

"You want me to sell you Charlot? Oh, no, that's not the sort of thing to ask of a mother! Oh, no! That would be an abomination!"

The man, grave and deliberate, said nothing; but approved of what his wife said by a continued nodding of his head.

Mme. d'Hubières, in dismay, began to weep, and turning to her husband, with a voice full of tears, the voice of a child used to having all its wishes gratified, she stammered:

"They will not do it, Henri, they will not do it."

Then he made a last attempt: "But, my friends, think of the child's future, of his happiness, of —"

The peasant woman, however, exasperated, cut him short:

"It's all considered! It's all understood! Get out of this, and don't let me see you here again—the idea of wanting to take away a child like that!"

Then Mme. d'Hubières bethought herself that there were two children, quite little, and she asked, through her tears, with the tenacity of a wilful and spoiled woman:

"But is the other little one not yours?"

Father Tuvache answered: "No, it is our neighbors'. You can go to them, if you wish." And he went back into his house whence resounded the indignant voice of his wife.

The Vallins were at table, in the act of slowly eating slices of bread which they parsimoniously

spread with a little rancid butter on a plate between the two.

M. d'Hubières recommenced his propositions, but with more insinuations, more oratorical precautions, more guile.

The two country people shook their heads, in sign of refusal, but when they learned that they were to have a hundred francs a month, they considered, consulting one another by glances, much disturbed. They kept silent for a long time, tortured, hesitating. At last the woman asked: "What do you think about it, man?" In a sententious tone he said: "I say that it's not to be despised."

Then Mme. d'Hubières, trembling with anguish, spoke of the future of their child, of his happiness, and of the money which he could give them later.

The peasant asked: "This pension of twelve hundred francs, will it be promised before a notary?"

M. d'Hubières responded: "Why, certainly, beginning with to-morrow."

The woman, who was thinking it over, continued:

"A hundred francs a month is not enough to deprive us of the child. That child would be working in a few years; we must have a hundred and twenty francs."

Stamping with impatience, Mme. d'Hubières granted it at once, and as she wished to carry off the child with her, she gave a hundred francs as a present, while her husband drew up a writing. And the young woman, radiant, carried off the howling brat, as one carries away a wished-for knick-knack from a shop.

The Tuvaches, from their door, watched her departure; mute, severe, perhaps regretting their refusal.

Nothing more was heard of little Jean Vallin. The parents went to the notary every month to collect their hundred and twenty francs, and they were angry with their neighbors, because Mother Tuvache grossly insulted them, repeating without ceasing from door to door, that one must be unnatural to sell one's child; that it was horrible, nasty, and many other vile expressions. Sometimes she would take her Chariot in her arms with ostentation, exclaiming, as if he understood:

"I didn't sell *you*, I didn't! I didn't sell *you*, my little one! I'm not rich, but I don't sell my children!"

The Vallins lived at their ease, thanks to the pension. That was the cause of the inappeasable fury of the Tuvaches, who had remained miserably poor. Their eldest son went away into service; Charlot alone remained to labor with his old father, to support the mother and two younger sisters which he had.

He had reached twenty-one years, when, one morning, a brilliant carriage stopped before the two cottages. A young gentleman, with a gold watch chain, got out, giving his hand to an aged, white-haired lady. The old lady said to him: "It is there, my child, at the second house." And he entered the house of the Vallins, as if he were at home.

The old mother was washing her aprons; the infirm father slumbered at the chimney-corner. Both raised their heads, and the young man said:

"Good morning, papa; good morning, mamma!"

They both stood up, frightened. In a flutter, the peasant woman dropped her soap into the water, and stammered:

"Is it you, my child? Is it you, my child?"

He took her in his arms and hugged her, repeating: "Good morning, mamma," while the old man, all in a tremble, said, in his calm tone which he never lost: "Here you are, back again, Jean," as if he had seen him a month before.

When they had got to know one another again the parents wished to take their boy out through the neighborhood, and show him. They took him to the mayor, to the deputy, to the curé, and to the schoolmaster.

Charlot, standing on the threshold of his cottage, watched him pass.

In the evening, at supper, he said to the old people: "You must have been stupid to let the Vallins's boy be taken."

The mother answered, obstinately: "I wouldn't sell *my* child."

The father said nothing. The son continued:

"It is unfortunate to be sacrificed like that." Then Father Tuvache, in an angry tone, said:

"Are you going to reproach us for having kept you?" And the young man said, brutally:

"Yes, I reproach you for having been such simpletons. Parents like you make the misfortune of their children. You deserve that I should leave you."

The old woman wept over her plate. She moaned, as she swallowed the spoonfuls of soup, half of

which she spilled: "One may kill one's self to bring up children."

Then the boy said, roughly: "I'd rather not have been born than be what I am. When I saw the other my heart stood still. I said to myself: 'See what I should have been now!'" He arose: "See here, I feel that I would do better not to stay here, because I should bring it up against you from morning till night, and I should make your life miserable. I shall never forgive you that, you know!"

The two old people were silent, downcast, in tears.

He continued: "No, the thought of that would be too hard. I'd rather go look for a living somewhere else."

He opened the door. A sound of voices entered. The Vallins were celebrating the return of their child.

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## XI

### PROVIDENCE AND MRS. URMY

#### The Story of an International Marriage

By ARMIGER BARCLAY and OLIVER SANDYS

LADY HARTLEY (*née* Miss Persis Van Ness) gave a little gasp. In her excitement the paper rustled noisily to her knee.

"O-h! Have you seen this?" She shot the *Morning Post* across the breakfast table to Mrs. Rufus P. Urmey, with her finger marking a paragraph.

Mrs. Urmey glanced at it. "I guess it ought to corral him right away," she said, with the merest suspicion of embarrassment. "You see, it's Jeannette's last chance. Two seasons in England and never a catch, so I—"

"You did it?" Lady Hartley looked at her friend in round-eyed wonder.

"I—I had to do something," allowed Mrs. Urmey, with a dawning suspicion that perhaps she had, after all, run afoul of British conventions, which she found as difficult of comprehension as her regular morning study of Debrett.

"But Jeannette!"

"That's so. Jeannette'll raise Cain." Mrs. Urmey got up from the table. "It's this a-way, Persis. I reckon I fixed your little affair up with Lord Hartley to home, and you've got to thank me for it. Now, I'm trying to do the same for my girl. She can't, or she won't, play her own hand. Every chance she's had she's let slide, and I allow she's got to marry a title before I go back to the States. Some one's got to hustle when Providence isn't attending to business, and as there's nobody else to do it, I've taken on the contract." She pointed to the paragraph. "I own up I don't see just how, but there wasn't much time, and it was the best I could do."

Lady Hartley slowly reread the incriminating paragraph:

"A marriage has been arranged, and will shortly take place between the Earl of Chilminster, of Sapworth Hall, Wilts, and Miss Jeannette L. Urmey, of Boston, Massachusetts."

"It knocks me out!" she murmured, lapsing into the Western idiom which a whole week spent in the society of her bosom friend was bound to call up. "But why Lord Chilminster?" She pronounced the name Chilster.

"Why won't he do? Isn't he the real thing? I picked him out in my sample book of the aristocracy, and when I fitted the name on to Jeannette—the Countess of Chilminster—it sounded quite elegant."

"Then it wasn't because you knew I knew him?" demanded Mrs. Urmey's hostess with growing amazement.

Mrs. Urmey's face took on a blank expression.

"You've heard me mention the name. That's how it's pronounced," explained Lady Hartley. "His place isn't far from here."

"You don't say! The way these British titles are pronounced is enough to make you doubt your own eyesight. I didn't know. But if he's a friend of yours that'll likely make it all the easier."

"Lord Chilminster!" Lady Hartley spoke in an awed tone.

She felt it would be useless to make Mrs. Urmey understand the enormity of her offence against good taste, and presently her astonishment gave way to amusement.

"Lavinia," she rippled, "as a matchmaker you take the cake! I don't believe—" She paused, listening. "Hush! Here's Jeannette!"

Miss Jeannette Urmy came in through the open French window. She was dressed in a natty little cotton frock, looked fresh and chic, and only pleasantly American. Perhaps she inherited her good looks and refined tastes from "popper" Urmy, deceased, in which case that gentleman must have committed one serious error of taste and judgment when he selected Jeannette's mother for his better half.

"My! You're late, Jeannette!" observed Mrs. Urmy, shooting a quick glance at Lady Hartley.

At the same moment, both ladies, by common consent, sauntered toward the door. They knew Jeannette's temperament. A crisis, such as the announcement in the *Morning Post* was sure to evoke, was one at which they were not anxious to assist.

"Oh, I'm ahead of time," answered Jeannette. "I've been up since six looking for eggs."

"Eggs?" echoed Lady Hartley.

"Yes; I collect birds' eggs." She picked up the newspaper and let her eye wander along the items in the Court Circular. "But getting up early makes me homesick. The best time of my life was when I was a kid, when I hadn't an idea beyond the woods on the old Massachusetts farm, when popper kept his store, and—Oh!"

She had reached the fatal announcement, and sat with parted lips, rigid as stone, while the world seemed toppling about her ears. There was a long pause. Jeannette's lips gradually tightened, and her firm hand crumpled up the paper.

"Mommer!" she exclaimed. "Here, Mommer!" But Mrs. Urmy and Lady Hartley had beaten a diplomatic retreat. Jeannette jumped to her feet, the color flaming in her face, her eyes snapping with indignation. "Oh!" she cried, impotently. "I'll—I'll—oh! what can I do? It must come out! He must apologize. Who did it? Oh, I don't even know him, the—wretch!"

The "chuff-chuff" of a motor-car coming up the drive interrupted her outburst, and she looked up to see it being driven up and halted before the entrance. Lady Hartley had a perfect fleet of cars. Jeannette at once jumped to the conclusion that this was one of them. She had a sudden inspiration. It was running free—ready to start. There was temptation in the soft purr of its engine. The driver, quietly dressed, but not in livery, she appraised as one of Lady Hartley's motor-men.

"Shall I?" she whispered. "Dare I? I can set things straight at once if I do. Persis will be wild with me for going off without a word, but I'll—I'll chance it!"

She ran into the hall, slipped into her motoring coat, and, throwing discretion to the winds, walked out to the front of the house and quickly up to the car.

"How soon can you drive me to Sapworth Hall?" she asked, getting in and pulling the rug around her.

The barefaced appropriation of his car by an unknown young woman almost took Lord Chilminster's breath away. He had, at much inconvenience to himself, motored all the way to Lady Hartley's to contradict and sift an amazing and annoying report that he had discovered in the *Morning Post*. He had heard Lady Hartley mention the name of Urmy as that of a friend of hers, and naturally decided that she was the proper person to consult. But before he had time to get out of his car and ring the bell here was a young person, springing from goodness knows where, mistaking him for a motor-man, and ordering him about. For a moment he was speechless. Then, as the humor of the situation began to appeal to him, so did the good looks of the girl.

"Really," he began. "You see I—"

"Don't talk, get under way!" commanded Jeannette. "Quick! Her ladyship has altered her mind about going out. You've got to take me to Sapworth Hall. It's thirty miles. I want to be there by lunch-time. Do you know the way?"

"I—I think so," stammered Chilminster.

Her bewildering eagerness to be off was infectious. The noble owner of the car felt it. But apart from that, he was quite ready for an adventure in such pleasant company. He forgot all about the object of his visit. Without another word he let in the clutch and started.

Jeannette sank back with a sigh of relief. She credited herself with having secured Persis's car very neatly. The man might, perhaps, get into trouble, but she could make that up to him by a generous tip. Her one idea was to contradict and confute the disgraceful announcement at its fountain-head. It was providential that the unknown Lord Chilminster's place was so near; but had it been ten times as far off, Jeannette, boiling with justifiable indignation, and with her mind made up to exact reparation, would have gone there.

"It's awful! It's unheard of! I—I won't have it! Who can have done it?" she kept repeating through white teeth set viciously. "I'll have it contradicted in large print by this time to-morrow, or the American Ambassador shall—"

She was not quite sure what ambassadors did under similar circumstances, and she left the mental threat unfinished. Anyhow, it was a disgrace to herself, and her sex, if not a slight on her country, and it redoubled her determination to "get even" with the perpetrator of it. She leaned forward to make herself heard.

"Set a killing pace," she called. "I'll make it up to you."

Chilminster nodded, hid a smile, and let the car out to the top of its speed. It ate up mile after mile; and as it came to Jeannette that each one brought her nearer and nearer to the hateful person whose name had been so scandalously bracketed with her own, she experienced a feeling of nervousness. The boldness of her escapade began to alarm her. What should she say? How express in words her view of an intolerable situation which no self-respecting girl could even calmly think about?

Lord Chilminster's mind was almost similarly engaged. He was wondering who Miss Jeannette L. Army could be, and whether she was aware of the obnoxious paragraph in the paper. He did not do her the injustice to suppose that she had inspired it (he had an open mind on that point), but as he was not responsible for it himself, he had a suspicion that she might be. Chilminster had met very few unmarried American girls, but like most Englishmen, he was aware of their capacity for resolution in most matters. Then, again, it was leap year. Suppose— For a little while he did a lot of hard thinking.

"I say," he called suddenly, looking over his shoulder. "Isn't there a Miss Army staying at the White House?"

Jeannette drew herself up and fixed him with a stony stare.

"I am Miss Army," she answered frigidly.

The start that Chilminster gave unconsciously affected the steering-wheel, and the car swerved sharply.

"What are you doing? You're driving disgracefully!" exclaimed Jeannette.

"I—I beg your pardon," faltered Chilminster. "I thought you were her lady's maid."

He felt he owed her that one. A girl who could announce her approaching marriage with a stranger (Chilminster no longer gave her the benefit of the doubt) and follow up that glaring indiscretion by a visit to her victim, was— The imminence of such a thing alarmed him. Was she coming to propose—to molest him? He got hot thinking of it.

The situation had undergone a complete change since he had started out in a rage, and some trepidation, to confront Miss Army herself, if need be. Now trepidation over-balanced all his other emotions. Miss Army was behind him, in his own automobile, and he was meekly driving her at a cracking speed to his own house! It was too late to turn back now. The thing had to be seen through. Besides, he could not help feeling a curiosity to know what was in his passenger's mind, and to discover her bewildering plan of action.

Neither spoke for the rest of the journey, and at length the car passed through the lodge gates, swept up the drive, and stopped at the entrance to Sapworth Hall. Jeannette got out.

"You had better go round to the stables and ask for something to eat. I may be some time," was all she volunteered as she rang the bell.

Rather staggered by the order, but foreseeing a bad quarter of an hour ahead of him, Chilminster was glad of the respite. He opened the throttle and slid out of sight as Jeannette was admitted.

His lordship was out, the butler informed her. Then she would wait—wait all day, if necessary, she said decisively, following the man into the library. No, she was in no need of refreshment, but her *chauffeur*, who had gone round to the stables, might be glad of something in the servants' hall.

With a foot impatiently tapping the polished floor, she sat summoning up all her determination whilst awaiting the ordeal before her. For, by this time had come the inevitable reaction, and the sudden impulse that had made her act as she had seemed, somehow, out of relation to the motive that had inspired it. Not that she regretted having come: her self-respect demanded that sacrifice; but she wished the unpleasant affair over.

An intolerable ten minutes passed. The beautiful seventeenth century room, like a reflection on the spirit of democracy, was getting on Jeannette's nerves. The strain of listening, watching the big mahogany door for the expected entrance of Lord Chilminster, at last reduced her to a state of apathy, and when he did come quietly in she was taken by surprise.

"I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting," he said.

Jeannette stared. Bareheaded, gaiterless, minus his driving coat, very self-contained and eminently aristocratic, the supposed motor-man advanced into the room.

"You see, you told me to take the car round to the stables," he proceeded, with a touch of apology in his tone.

"You—you are the Earl of Chilminster?" she gasped.

"Of Sapworth Hall, Wilts," he augmented, like one who quotes. "And you are Miss Jeannette L. Urmy, of Boston, Massachusetts, I believe."

There was quite a long silence.

"You knew all along," she flushed angrily.

Chilminster raised a hand in protest. "Not until you told me."

"Then why didn't you stop? You ought to have taken me back immediately you knew who I was."

"So I would have if——"

"You mean you didn't believe me. You thought I was a lady's maid!" Jeannette interrupted indignantly.

"That was an error of judgment for which I humbly apologize. We are all liable to make mistakes sometimes. You, Miss Urmy, for instance, took me for a motor-man. You also appropriated my car, and commanded me to bring you here at a murderous—no, a killing pace. And I think you added that you would make it up to me."

Jeannette's face tingled. She had come to accuse, and, instead, found herself patiently listening to a recital of her indiscretions. But if Lord Chilminster was a strategist, Jeannette was a tactician. She appreciated the danger of a passive defense, and conversely, of the value of a vigorous aggression. Without a moment's hesitation she began a counter attack.

"In to-day's *Morning Post*——" she commenced.

"Ah, the *Morning Post*!" echoed Chilminster, also changing front.

"There was a disgraceful announcement."

"Half of it certainly was—irksome."

"Which half?" asked Jeannette suspiciously.

"I have no conscientious scruples about matrimony in the abstract," parried Chilminster.

"But I have. I object altogether to the paragraph. I resent it."

"Then you did not insert it?"

"I insert it? *I?*" flamed Jeannette. She drew herself up as haughtily as a pretty woman can under the disadvantage of being seated in a yielding easy chair. "Do you mean to assert, Lord Chilminster, that I——?"

She was interrupted by the entrance of the butler.

"Luncheon is served, my lord," he announced.

"You will take off your coat?"

Lord Chilminster turned to Miss Urmy, and advanced a step in anticipation. The butler—with a well-trained butler's promptness—was behind her, and before she could frame a word of objection, the fur-lined garment had slipped from her shoulders.

Thus must martyrs have marched to the stake, was one of Jeannette's bewildered reflections as she preceded her host out of the room, and, as in a dream, found herself a few minutes later facing him across the luncheon table. Outwardly, the meal proceeded in well-ordered calm. Lord Chilminster made no further reference to the debatable topic; only talked lightly and pleasantly on a variety of non-committal subjects.

As the lady's host that, of course, was the only attitude he could adopt; but the fact remains that he did so *de bonne volonté*. Perhaps because, so far, he had scored more points than his opponent in the morning's encounter; perhaps, also, because of her undeniable good looks, his irritation, due to the circumstances that had prompted that encounter, began to lessen with *truites en papillote*, was almost forgotten in face of a *mousse de volaille*, and entirely vanished among *asperges vertes mousseline*.

Miss Jeannette L. Urmy, with her veil lifted, and relieved of her voluminous coat, was, he had to admit, distractingly pretty; not at all the type he had pictured as the original of the name. Young, pretty, and charming woman (he was convinced that *au fond* she was charming) ought to have no obstinate prejudices against marriage. He even ventured to think that Miss Urmy's mind had become obscured on that point by those—well, indiscreet lines in the *Morning Post*. They had upset him; then why not her? They were so—premature.

As for Jeannette, in spite of Lord Chilminster's effortless ease, her powers of conversation were frozen. She was reduced to monosyllables, and she ate in proportion. It was a humiliating experience to be accepting the hospitality of the enemy; one, moreover, that made it awkward for her to prolong hostilities. Having broken bread in his tents (a Puritan strain was responsible for the illustration) she felt disarmed. Besides, she was rather ashamed of her maladroitness in mistaking Lord Chilminster for a common motor-man. It argued *gaucherie*. Perhaps he thought her unconventional call a violation of good taste—considered her forward! He had plainly shown his annoyance about that obnoxious—that embarrassing paragraph, and that fact spiked most of her

batteries. He might, after all, prove to be quite——

"Do you mind if I smoke?"

Lord Chilminster's voice startled her out of her reverie. The servants had noiselessly retired, and they were alone.

"I—I feel ready to sink through the floor," she rejoined inconsequently.

He returned his cigarette case to his pocket, looking quite concerned. "I'm so sorry. I ought not to have——"

"No, no. Please smoke. It isn't that," stammered Jeannette.

"It's the *Morning Post*?"

Jeannette evaded his eye.

"Yes; it does put us in rather a tight place," mediated Chilminster.

Nothing was said for a moment.

"Engaged!" he murmured.

Jeannette raised her eyes and noted his reflective attitude.

"Who can have put it in?" he went on.

"I can't imagine."

"And why?"

"It does seem strange," admitted Jeannette in a detached tone.

"It's not as if we were——"

"No," she interposed hurriedly.

"Well, what ought we to do about it? Of course, we can contradict it, but——"

"But what?" she asked, filling his pause.

"I hate advertisement—that is, *unnecessary* advertisement," Chilminster corrected himself. "It would make us—I mean me—look so—so vacillating."

He looked up rather suddenly, and just missed Jeannette's eyes by the thousandth of a second.

What could he mean? she asked herself, while her heart pumped boisterously. Was he magnanimous enough to be thinking of accepting a compromising situation to save her? What he had said sounded very unselfish. Of course, she couldn't allow him to. What a pity he was not an American—or something quite ordinary. Then she might——

"There's nothing for it but to write to the paper, I suppose?" he said ruefully.

"I—I suppose not." The comment was dragged from Jeannette in a tone as unconsciously reluctant as his was rueful.

Chilminster sighed. "It's so rough on you."

Jeannette felt a consuming anxiety to know whether his sympathy was occasioned by the announcement or the suggested denial of it.

"And on you, too," she admitted. "What were you thinking—how did you propose to phrase it?"

"I?" he asked apprehensively. "To be quite frank. I haven't got as far as that. Never wrote to the papers in my life," he added pusillanimously.

"But *I* can't," argued Jeannette. Her determination of two hours ago had vanished into the *Ewigkeit*.

Chilminster had an inspiration. "What do you say if we do it together?"

While she digested this expedient he fetched paper and pencil, and then sat gazing at the ceiling for inspiration.

"Well?" she queried at the end of a minute.

"How ought one to begin these things?" asked the desperate man.

Jeannette cogitated deeply. "It's so difficult to say what one wants to a stranger in a letter, isn't it?" she hesitated. "Wouldn't a telegram do?"

"By Jove! Yes; and simply say: 'Miss Urmy wishes to deny——'"

"In *my* name!" exclaimed Jeannette.

"Well—you are the person aggrieved."

"I really don't think it's fair to put the whole of the responsibility on my shoulders," she

demurred.

"No, I suppose not," Chilminster admitted grudgingly. "How would this do: 'Miss Urmy and Lord Chilminster wish to contradict their engagement——'"

"But that implies that there *was* an engagement!"

Chilminster pondered the deduction. "So it does. I see. People would jump to the conclusion that we were in a desperate hurry to alter our minds!"

"And, of course, we haven't."

"Y-es. I don't know how you feel about it, but if there's one thing I dislike it's tittle-tattle about my private affairs."

"Horrid!" shivered Jeannette. "What *are* we to do?"

Her tone was so hopeless, so full of tears, that it melted Chilminster. Susceptibilities that had been simmering within him for an hour past came unexpectedly to the boil; and as they did so the difficulty vanished.

"Why need we bother at all about it?" he asked impulsively.

For a world of moments, Jeannette stared at him, revolving the question. Then a faint radiance came into her face, and grew and grew until it burned. Jeannette bit her lip. Jeannette looked down.

"What do you mean?" she asked in confusion.

"Don't—don't you think we had better—take the consequences?" said Chilminster, as he reached across the table and let his hand fall on hers.

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Mrs. Urmy stood at the window looking with lack-lustre eyes across the park. She had had six solid hours in which to reflect on that risky communication of hers to the *Morning Post*, and Jeannette's disappearance since breakfast time provided a gloomy commentary on it. She fidgeted uneasily as she recalled her daughter's scared look when reading the paper, and maternal forebodings discounted her interest in an automobile that showed at intervals between the trees of the drive as it approached the White House.

But two moments later it occurred to her that it was Jeannette who sat on its front seat beside the driver; and, as the car drew up, her experienced eye detected something in the demeanor of the pair that startled but elated her.

"Here's Jeannette!" she called over her shoulder to Lady Hartley. "In an auto with a young man. Say, Persis, who is he?"

Lady Hartley hurried to the window, gave one look, and doubted the evidence of her eyes.

"Lavinia, it's Lord Chilminster!" she cried, with a catch in her voice.

The two women flashed a glance brimful of significance at one another. Lady Hartley's expressed uncertainty; Mrs. Urmy's triumph—sheer, complete, perfect triumph.

"Didn't I say it was a sure thing?" she shrilled excitedly. "It's fixed them up! Come right ahead and introduce me to my future son-in-law!"

As she raced to the door she added half to herself: "I don't want to boast, but, thank the Lord, I've got Jeannette off this season!"

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## XII

# THE MILLION DOLLAR FREIGHT TRAIN

## The Story of a Young Engineer

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

IT WAS the second month of the strike, and not a pound of freight had been moved. Things did look smoky on the West End. The General Superintendent happened to be with us when the news came. "You can't handle it, boys," said he nervously. "What you'd better do is to turn it over to the Columbian Pacific."

Our contracting freight agent on the Coast at that time was a fellow so erratic that he was nicknamed "Crazy-horse." Right in the midst of the strike Crazy-horse wired that he had secured a big silk shipment for New York. We were paralyzed. We had no engineers, no firemen, and no



motive power to speak of. The strikers were pounding our men, wrecking our trains, and giving us the worst of it generally; that is, when we couldn't give it to them. Why the fellow displayed his activity at that particular juncture still remains a mystery. Perhaps he had a grudge against the road; if so, he took an artful revenge. Everybody on the system with ordinary railroad sense knew that our struggle was to keep clear of freight business until we got rid of our strike. Anything valuable or perishable was especially unwelcome. But the stuff was docked, and loaded, and consigned in our care before we knew it. After that, a refusal to carry it would be like hoisting the white flag; and that is something which never yet flew over the West End.

"Turn it over to the Columbian," said the General Superintendent; but the General Superintendent was not looked up to on our division. He hadn't enough sand. Our head was a fighter, and he gave tone to every man under him. "No," he thundered, bringing down his fist. "Not in a thousand years. We'll move it ourselves. Wire Montgomery (the General Manager) that we will take care of it. And wire him to fire Crazy-horse—and to do it right off." And before the silk was turned over to us Crazy-horse was looking for another job. It is the only case on record where a freight hustler was discharged for getting business.

There were twelve carloads; it was insured for \$85,000 a car; you can figure how far the title is wrong, but you never can estimate the worry the stuff gave us. It looked as big as twelve million dollars' worth. In fact, one scrub car-link, with the glory of the West End at heart, had a fight over the amount with a skeptical hostler. He maintained that the actual money value was a hundred and twenty millions; but I give you the figures just as they went over the wire, and they are right.

What bothered us most was that the strikers had the tip almost as soon as we had it. Having friends on every road in the country, they knew as much about our business as we ourselves. The minute it was announced that we should move the silk, they were after us. It was a defiance; a last one. If we could move freight—for we were already moving passengers after a fashion—the strike might be well accounted beaten.

Stewart, the leader of the local contingent, together with his followers, got after me at once. "You don't show much sense, Reed," said he. "You fellows here are breaking your necks to get things moving, and when this strike's over, if our boys ask for your discharge, they'll get it. This road can't run without our engineers. We're going to beat you. If you dare try to move this silk, we'll have your scalp when it's over. You'll never get your silk to Zanesville, I'll promise you that. And if you ditch it and make a million-dollar loss, you'll get let out anyway, my buck."

"I'm here to obey orders, Stewart," said I. What was the use of more? I felt uncomfortable; but we had determined to move the silk; there was no more to be said.

When I went over to the round-house and told Neighbor the decision, he said never a word; but he looked a great deal. Neighbor's task was to supply the motive power. All that we had, uncrippled, was in the passenger service, because passengers should be taken care of first of all. In order to win a strike, you must have public opinion on your side.

"Nevertheless, Neighbor," said I, after we had talked awhile, "we must move the silk also."

Neighbor studied; then he roared at his foreman. "Send Bartholomew Mullen here." He spoke with a decision that made me think the business was done. I had never happened, it is true, to hear of Bartholomew Mullen in the department of motive power; but the impression the name gave me was of a monstrous fellow, big as Neighbor, or old man Sankey, or Dad Hamilton. "I'll put Bartholomew ahead of it," said Neighbor tightly.

I saw a boy walk into the office. "Mr. Garten said you wanted me, sir," said he, addressing the Master Mechanic.

"I do, Bartholomew," responded Neighbor.

The figure in my mind's eye shrunk in a twinkling. Then it occurred to me that it must be this boy's father who was wanted.

"You have been begging for a chance to take out an engine, Bartholomew," began Neighbor coldly; and I knew it was on.

"Yes, sir."

"You want to get killed, Bartholomew."

Bartholomew smiled as if the idea was not altogether displeasing.

"How would you like to go pilot to-morrow for McCurdy? You to take the 44 and run as first Seventy-eight. McCurdy will run as second Seventy-eight."

"I know I could run an engine all right," ventured Bartholomew, as if Neighbor were the only one taking the chances in giving him an engine. "I know the track from here to Zanesville. I helped McNeff fire one week."

"Then go home, and go to bed; and be over here at six o'clock to-morrow morning. And sleep sound, for it may be your last chance."

It was plain that the Master Mechanic hated to do it; it was simply sheer necessity. "He's a wiper," mused Neighbor, as Bartholomew walked springily away. "I took him in here sweeping

two years ago. He ought to be firing now, but the union held him back; that's why he don't like them. He knows more about an engine now than half the lodge. They'd better have let him in," said the Master Mechanic grimly. "He may be the means of breaking their backs yet. If I give him an engine and he runs it, I'll never take him off, union or no union, strike or no strike."

"How old is that boy?" I asked.

"Eighteen; and never a kith or a kin that I know of. Bartholomew Mullen," mused Neighbor, as the slight figure moved across the flat, "big name—small boy. Well, Bartholomew, you'll know something more by to-morrow night about running an engine, or a whole lot less: that's as it happens. If he gets killed, it's your fault, Reed."

He meant that I was calling on him for men when he couldn't supply them.

"I heard once," he went on, "about a fellow named Bartholomew being mixed up in a massacre. But I take it he must have been an older man than our Bartholomew—nor his other name wasn't Mullen, neither. I disremember just what it was; but it wasn't Mullen."

"Well, don't say I want to get the boy killed, Neighbor," I protested. "I've got plenty to answer for. I'm here to run trains—when there are any to run; that's murder enough for me. You needn't send Bartholomew out on my account."

"Give him a slow schedule, and I'll give him orders to jump early; that's all we can do. If the strikers don't ditch him, he'll get through somehow."

It stuck in my crop—the idea of putting that boy on a pilot engine to take all the dangers ahead of that particular train; but I had a good deal else to think of besides. From the minute the silk got into the McCloud yards, we posted double guards around. About twelve o'clock that night we held a council of war, which ended in our running the train into the out freight-house. The result was that by morning we had a new train made up. It consisted of fourteen refrigerator cars loaded with oranges which had come in mysteriously the night before. It was announced that the silk would be held for the present and the oranges rushed through at once. Bright and early the refrigerator train was run down to the icehouses, and twenty men were put to work icing the oranges. At seven o'clock, McCurdy pulled in the local passenger with engine 105. Our plan was to cancel the load and run him right out with the oranges. When he got in, he reported that the 105 had sprung a tire; this threw us out entirely. There was a hurried conference in the round-house.

"What can you do?" asked the Superintendent in desperation.

"There's only one thing I can do. Put Bartholomew Mullen on it with the 44, and put McCurdy to bed for Number Two to-night," responded Neighbor.

It was eight o'clock. I looked into the locomotive stalls. The first—the only—man in sight was Bartholomew Mullen. He was very busy polishing the 44. He had good steam on her, and the old tub was wheezing away as if she had the asthma. The 44 was old; she was homely; she was rickety; but Bartholomew Mullen wiped her battered nose as deferentially as if she had been a spick-span, spider-driver, tail-truck mail-racer. She wasn't much—the 44. But in those days Bartholomew wasn't much: and the 44 was Bartholomew's.

"How is she steaming, Bartholomew?" I sang out; he was right in the middle of her. Looking up, he fingered his waste modestly and blushed through a dab of crude-petroleum over his eye. "Hundred and thirty pounds, sir. She's a terrible free steamer, the old 44. I'm all ready to run her out."

"Who's marked up to fire for you, Bartholomew?"

Bartholomew Mullen looked at me fraternally. "Neighbor couldn't give me anybody but a wiper, sir," said Bartholomew, in a sort of a wouldn't-that-kill-you tone.

The unconscious arrogance of the boy quite knocked me: so soon had honors changed his point of view. Last night a despised wiper; at daybreak, an engineer; and his nose in the air at the idea of taking on a wiper for fireman. And all so innocent.

"Would you object, Bartholomew," I suggested gently, "to a train-master for fireman?"

"I don't—think so, sir."

"Thank you; because I am going down to Zanesville this morning myself, and I thought I'd ride with you. Is it all right?"

"Oh, yes, sir—if Neighbor doesn't care."

I smiled: he didn't know whom Neighbor took orders from; but he thought, evidently, not from me.

"Then run her down to the oranges, Bartholomew, and couple on, and we'll order ourselves out. See?"

The 44 looked like a baby-carriage when we got her in front of the refrigerators. However, after the necessary preliminaries, we gave a very sporty toot, and pulled out. In a few minutes we were sailing down the valley.

For fifty miles we bobbed along with our cargo of iced silk as easy as old shoes; for I need hardly explain that we had packed the silk into the refrigerators to confuse the strikers. The great risk was that they would try to ditch us.

I was watching the track as a mouse would a cat, looking every minute for trouble. We cleared the gumbo cut west of the Beaver at a pretty good clip, in order to make the grade on the other side. The bridge there is hidden in summer by a grove of hackberries. I had just pulled open to cool her a bit when I noticed how high the back-water was on each side of the track. Suddenly I felt the fill going soft under the drivers; felt the 44 wobble and slew. Bartholomew shut off hard, and threw the air as I sprang to the window. The peaceful little creek ahead looked as angry as the Platte in April water, and the bottoms were a lake.

Somewhere up the valley there had been a cloudburst, for overhead the sun was bright. The Beaver was roaring over its banks, and the bridge was out. Bartholomew screamed for brakes: it looked as if we were against it—and hard. A soft track to stop on; a torrent of storm-water ahead, and ten hundred thousand dollars' worth of silk behind, not to mention equipment.

I yelled at Bartholomew, and motioned for him to jump; my conscience is clear on that point. The 44 was stumbling along, trying like a drunken man to hang to the rotten track.

"Bartholomew!" I yelled; but he was head out and looking back at his train while he jerked frantically at the air-lever. I understood: the air wouldn't work; it never will on those old tubs when you need it. The sweat pushed out on me. I was thinking of how much the silk would bring us after the bath in the Beaver. Bartholomew stuck to his levers like a man in a signal-tower, but every second brought us closer to open water. Watching him intent only on saving his first train—heedless of his life—I was actually ashamed to jump. While I hesitated he somehow got the brakes to set; the old 44 bucked like a bronco.

It wasn't too soon. She checked her train nobly at the last, but I saw nothing could keep her from the drink. I gave Bartholomew a terrific slap, and again I yelled; then turning to the gangway, I dropped into the soft mud on my side: the 44 hung low, and it was easy lighting.

Bartholomew sprang from his seat a second later; but his blouse caught in the teeth of the quadrant. He stooped quick as thought, and peeled the thing over his head. Then he was caught fast by the wristbands, and the ponies of the 44 tipped over the broken abutment. Pull as he would he couldn't get free. The pilot dipped into the torrent slowly. But losing her balance, the 44 kicked her heels into the air like lightning, and shot with a frightened wheeze plump into the creek, dragging her engineer with her.

The head car stopped on the brink. Running across the track, I looked for Bartholomew. He wasn't there; I knew he must have gone down with his engine. Throwing off my gloves, I dived, just as I stood, close to the tender, which hung half submerged. I am a good bit of a fish under water, but no self-respecting fish would be caught in that yellow mud. I realized, too, the instant I struck the water, that I should have dived on the upstream side. The current took me away whirling; when I came up for air, I was fifty feet below the pier. I scrambled out, feeling it was all up with Bartholomew; but to my amazement, as I shook my eyes open the train crew were running forward, and there stood Bartholomew on the track above me, looking at the refrigerator. When I got to him, he explained how he was dragged under and had to tear the sleeve out of his blouse under water to get free.

The surprise is how little fuss men make about such things when they are busy. It took only five minutes for the conductor to hunt up a coil of wire and a sounder for me, and by the time he got forward with it, Bartholomew was half-way up a telegraph pole to help me cut in on a live wire. Fast as I could, I rigged a pony, and began calling the McCloud despatcher. It was rocky sending, but after no end of pounding, I got him and gave orders for the wrecking gang, and for one more of Neighbor's rapidly decreasing supply of locomotives.

Bartholomew, sitting on a strip of fence which still rose above water, looked forlorn. To lose in the Beaver the first engine he ever handled was tough, and he was evidently speculating on his chances of ever getting another. If there weren't tears in his eyes, there was storm-water certainly. But after the relief engine had pulled what was left of us back six miles to a siding, I made it my first business to explain to Neighbor, who was nearly beside himself, that Bartholomew not only was not at fault, but that by his nerve he had actually saved the train.

"I'll tell you, Neighbor," I suggested, when we got straightened around. "Give us the 109 to go ahead as pilot, and run her around the river division with Foley and the 216."

"What'll you do with Number Six?" growled Neighbor. Six was the local passenger west.

"Annul it west of McCloud," said I instantly. "We've got this silk on our hands now, and I'd move it if it tied up every passenger train on the division. If we can get the stuff through, it will practically beat the strike. If we fail, it will beat the company."

By the time we had backed to Newhall Junction, Neighbor had made up his mind my way. Mullen and I climbed into the 109, and Foley, with the 216, and none too good a grace, coupled on to the silk, and flying red signals, we started again for Zanesville over the river division.

Foley was always full of mischief. He had a better engine than ours, and he took great satisfaction the rest of the afternoon in crowding us. Every mile of the way he was on our heels. I was throwing the coal, and have reason to remember. It was after dark when we reached the

Beverly Hill, and we took it at a lively pace. The strikers were not on our minds then; it was Foley who bothered.

When the long parallel steel lines of the upper yards spread before us, flashing under the arc lights, we were away above yard speed. Running a locomotive into one of those big yards is like shooting a rapid in a canoe. There is a bewildering maze of tracks, lighted by red and green lamps, which must be watched the closest to keep out of trouble. The hazards are multiplied the minute you pass the throat, and a yard wreck is a dreadful tangle; it makes everybody from roadmaster to flagman furious, and not even Bartholomew wanted to face an inquiry on a yard wreck. On the other hand, he couldn't afford to be caught by Foley, who was chasing him out of pure caprice.

I saw the boy holding the throttle at a half and fingering the air anxiously as we jumped over the frogs; but the roughest riding on track so far beats the ties as a cushion, that when the 109 suddenly stuck her paws through an open switch we bounced against the roof of the cab like footballs. I grabbed a brace with one hand, and with the other reached instinctively across to Bartholomew's side to seize the throttle. But as I tried to shut him off, he jerked it wide open in spite of me, and turned with lightning in his eye. "No!" he cried, and his voice rang hard. The 109 took the tremendous shove at her back, and leaped like a frightened horse. Away we went across the yard, through the cinders, and over the ties; my teeth have never been the same since. I don't belong on an engine, anyway, and since then I have kept off. At the moment, I was convinced that the strain had been too much, that Bartholomew was stark crazy. He sat clinging like a lobster to his levers and bouncing clear to the roof.

But his strategy was dawning on me; in fact, he was pounding it into me. Even the shock and scare of leaving the track and tearing up the yard had not driven from Bartholomew's noddle the most important feature of our situation, which was, above everything, to *keep out of the way of the silk train*.

I felt every moment more mortified at my attempt to shut him off. I had done the trick of the woman who grabs the reins. It was even better to tear up the yard than to stop for Foley to smash into and scatter the silk over the coal chutes. Bartholomew's decision was one of the traits which make the runner: instant perception coupled to instant resolve. The ordinary dub thinks what he should have done to avoid disaster after it is all over; Bartholomew thought before.

On we bumped, across frogs, through switches, over splits, and into target rods, when—and this is the miracle of it all—the 109 got her forefeet on a split switch, made a contact, and after a slew or two, like a bogged horse, she swung up sweet on the rails again, tender and all. Bartholomew shut off with an under cut that brought us up stuttering, and nailed her feet with the air right where she stood. We had left the track and plowed a hundred feet across the yards and jumped on to another track. It is the only time I ever heard of its happening anywhere, but I was on the engine with Bartholomew Mullen when it was done.

Foley choked his train the instant he saw our hind lights bobbing. We climbed down, and ran back. He had stopped just where we should have stood if I had shut off.

Bartholomew ran to the switch to examine it. The contact light (green) still burned like a false beacon; and lucky it did, for it showed that the switch had been tampered with and exonerated Bartholomew Mullen completely. The attempt of the strikers to spill the silk in the yards had only made the reputation of a new engineer. Thirty minutes later, the million-dollar train was turned over to the East End to wrestle with, and we breathed, all of us, a good bit easier.

Bartholomew Mullen, now a passenger runner who ranks with Kennedy and Jack Moore and Foley and George Sinclair himself, got a personal letter from the General Manager complimenting him on his pretty wit; and he was good enough to say nothing whatever about mine.

We registered that night and went to supper together: Foley, Jackson, Bartholomew, and I. Afterward we dropped into the despatcher's office. Something was coming from McCloud, but the operator to save his life couldn't catch it. I listened a minute; it was Neighbor. Now, Neighbor isn't great on despatching trains. He can make himself understood over the poles, but his sending is like a boy's sawing wood—sort of uneven. However, though I am not much on running yards, I claim to be able to take the wildest ball that ever was thrown along the wire, and the chair was tendered me at once to catch Neighbor's extraordinary passes at the McCloud key. They came something like this:

"To Opr. Tell Massacree"—that was the word that stuck them all, and I could perceive that Neighbor was talking emphatically. He had apparently forgotten Bartholomew's last name, and was trying to connect with the one he had "disremembered" the night before. "Tell Massacree," repeated Neighbor, "that he is al-l-1 right. Tell hi-m I give him double mileage for to-day all the way through. And to-morrow he gets the 109 to keep.—NEIGHB-B-OR."

# A Story of the Russo-Japanese War

By AMBROSE PRATT

"WHAT do you make of her, Maclean?" asked Captain Brandon anxiously.

First mate Hugh Maclean did not reply at once. Embracing a stanchion of the S.S. *Saigon's* bridge in order to steady himself against the vessel's pitching, he was peering with strained eyes through the captain's binoculars at two small brown needle-points, set very close together, that stabbed the northeastern horizon.

At length, however, he lowered the glass, and resumed the perpendicular.

"You were right, sir," he declared. "She has altered her course, and our paths now converge."

"Which proves that she is one of those d——d Russian volunteer pirates."

"Or else a Japanese cruiser, sir."

"Nonsense! The Jap cruisers have only one mast."

"So they have, sir. I was forgetting that."

"What to do!" growled the captain, and he fell to frowning and cracking his long fingers—his habit when perplexed. He was a short, thick-set man, with a round, red face, keen blue eyes, and strong, square jaws: a typical specimen of the old-time British sailor. Hugh Maclean, on the other hand, was a lean and lank Australian, of evident Scottish ancestry. His long, aquiline nose and high cheek-bones were tightly covered with a parchment-like skin, bronzed almost to the hue of leather. He wore a close-cropped, pointed beard, and the deep-set gray eyes that looked out from under the peak of his seaman's cap twinkled with good health and humor.

"We might alter our course, too, sir," he suggested.

"Ay!" snapped the other, "and get pushed for our pains on to the Teraghlind Reef. We are skirting those rocks more closely than I like already."

"You know best, sir, of course. But I meant that we might slip back toward Manila, and try the other channel after we have given that fellow the go-by."

"What!" snorted the captain, his blue eyes flashing fire, "run from the Russian! I'll be —— first. We haven't a stitch of contraband aboard," he added more calmly a moment later. "He daren't do more than stop and search us."

But Maclean shook his head. "One of them took and sunk the *Acandaga* last month, sir, and she carried no contraband either."

"Russia will have to foot the bill for that."

"May be, sir. But Captain Tollis—as fine a chap as ever breathed, sir—has lost his ship, and the Lord knows if he'll ever get another."

"Are you trying to frighten me, Maclean?" asked Captain Brandon, stormily.

The mate shrugged his shoulders. "No, sir; but I am interested in this venture, and if the *Saigon* gets back all right to Liverpool I'm due to splice Mr. Keppel's niece, and the old gentleman, as you know, has promised me a ship."

"And hasn't it entered your thick skull that to return as you suggest would cost fifty pounds' worth of coal? How do you suppose old Kep would like that?"

"Better burn a few tons of coal than risk losing the *Saigon*, sir, and mark time till God knows when in a Russian prison."

Captain Brandon shut his mouth with a snap, and muttered something about Scottish caution that was distinctly uncomplimentary to the Caledonian race. Then, to signify the end of the argument, he strode to the ladder, and prepared to descend. Maclean, however, was of an equally stubborn character. "About the course, sir?" he demanded, touching his cap with ironical deference.

"Carry on!" snarled the captain, and he forthwith disappeared.

Two hours afterward Hugh Maclean knocked at the door of the captain's cabin, and was hoarsely bidden enter. Captain Brandon was seated before a bottle of whisky, which was scarce half full.

"Have a nip?" he hospitably inquired.

Maclean nodded, and half filled a glass.

"Thank you, sir. Queer thing's happened," he observed, as he wiped his lips. "The Russian——"

"I know," interrupted the captain. "I've been watching her through the port. She's the *Saigon's* twin-sister ship, that was the *Saragossa* which old Kep sold to Baron Dabchowski six months ago. Much good it would have done us to run. She has the heels of us. Old Kep had just put new triple-expansion engines into her before she changed hands. But they've killed the look of her,

converting her into a cruiser. She's nothing but a floating scrap-heap now."

"But she has six guns," observed Maclean. "Don't you think you'd better come up, sir? She is almost near enough to signal."

"Well, well," said the captain, and putting away the whisky bottle, he led the way to the bridge.

Some half-dozen miles away, steaming at an angle to meet the *Saigon* at a destined point, there plowed through the sea a large iron steamer of about three thousand tons' burden. She exactly resembled the *Saigon* in all main points of build, and except for the fact that two guns were mounted fore and aft on her main deck above the line of steel bulwarks, and that her masts were fitted with small fighting tops, she might very well have passed for an ordinary merchantman.

For twenty minutes or thereabouts the two officers watched her in silence, taking turn about with the binoculars; then, quite suddenly, the vessel, now less than two miles distant, luffed and fell slightly away from her course.

"She is going to speak," said Captain Brandon, who held the glasses. "Look out!"

Maclean smiled at the caution; but next instant a bright flash quivered from the other vessel's side, and involuntarily he ducked his head, for something flew dipping and shrieking over the *Saigon*. In the following second there was heard the clap of the distant cannon and the splash of a shell striking the sea close at hand. Invisible hands unfolded and shook out three balls of bunting at the truck of the war-ship's signal boom. They fluttered for awhile, and then spread out to the breeze. The arms of Russia surmounted two lines of symbolic letters.

"Quartermaster!" shouted Captain Brandon.

"Ay, ay, sir!" rang out a sailor's voice, and the *Saigon's* number raced a Union Jack to the mast-head.

"Well, Mac?" cried the captain, with his hand on the engine-room signal-bell.

Maclean looked up from the book. "His Imperial Majesty of Russia, by the commander of the converted cruiser *Nevski*, orders us to stop."

Captain Brandon pressed the lever, and before ten might be counted the shuddering of the *Saigon's* screw had ceased.

"What next?" he muttered.

As if in answer, another flag fluttered up the *Nevski's* halliards.

"He will send a boat," interpreted Maclean.

A short period of fret and fume ensued, then a small steam launch rounded the *Nevski's* bows, and sped like a gray-hound across the intervening space. The *Nevski* now presented her broadside to the *Saigon*, and all of her six guns were trained upon the English steamer's decks. The launch was crammed with men. Captain Brandon ordered a gangway to be lowered, and although the tars sprang to the task with great alacrity, it was hardly completed before the launch touched the *Saigon's* side. An officer, bedizened with gold lace, and accompanied by two glittering subordinates, climbed aboard, and Captain Brandon met him on the main deck. Hugh Maclean, from the bridge, watched them file into the captain's cabin. Ten minutes later they emerged, and without waiting a moment the Russians hurried back into the launch. Captain Brandon's face was purple. He hurriedly mounted to the bridge, and leaning over the rail cursed the departing launch at the top of his voice in five different languages.

"What's the trouble, sir?" asked Maclean when his superior appeared at last to be exhausted.

"They want our coal. C—t them to — for all eternity," gasped the frenzied captain. "And they'll blow us out of the water if we don't follow them to Tramoieu."

"Where is that?"

"It's a little island off the Cochin coast, a hundred miles from anywhere, with a harbor. By — they'll smart for this!"

"Not they," said Maclean. "That is, if you obey. They'll gut and scuttle the *Saigon*, and then kill every mother's son of us. Dead men tell no tales. We'll be posted at Lloyds as a storm loss."

"But what can we do?"

"Full speed ahead, and ram her while she's picking up the launch! Chance the guns!"

"By —! I'll do it!" shrieked the captain, and he sprang to the signal-bell. But even as he grasped the lever with his hand, he paused.

"What now?" demanded the mate, his face tense with passion. "Hurry's the word, sir. Hurry!"

The captain, however, turned and looked him in the eye. "You've counseled me to murder— wholesale murder, Maclean. Avast there, man! Keep your mouth shut. This is my bridge, and I'll not hear another word from you."

The mate bit his lips and shrugged his shoulders. His eyes were blazing with contempt and rage,

but he kept his self-control, and was rewarded by a dozen sympathetic glances from those of the crew grouped upon the deck who had heard the controversy. From that moment he was their idol. The second mate, too, who was standing by the wheel, turned and nodded to him as he passed.

The captain, who missed nothing of this by-play, felt himself to have been absolutely isolated. But he was a strong man, and he knew that he acted rightly. Five minutes later four thunderous reports rang out, and shells splashed the sea on all sides of the *Saigon*. Then the machine-guns began to speak, and a perfect storm of bullets tore through the vessel's rigging, some directed so low that they pierced the top rim of the funnel smoke-stack. The display lasted sixty seconds. When it was over, a very sheepish looking lot of men arose from the recumbent attitudes they had assumed. Of the whole ship's company on deck, Captain Brandon, Hugh Maclean, and the chief engineer had alone remained standing.

There was a new flag at the *Nevski's* truck. "Follow at full speed!" it commanded. The *Saigon* instantly obeyed. Before night fell, the moon rose, three-quarters full. It lighted the procession into dawn. Sunrise brought them to a rock-bound coast, and so nicely had the *Nevski's* navigator steered, that the first headland circumvented made room for the revelation of a little bay. It was enclosed on three sides with gray hills, and across the mouth was stretched a broken line of hungry-looking surf-crowned reefs. The *Nevski* steamed boldly through the first opening, and dropped her anchor in smooth water three-quarters of a mile beyond. The *Saigon*, curiously obedient to the Russian's signals, followed suit, bringing up within a biscuit cast of her consort and captor. An hour later Hugh Maclean, the engineer, and the lesser officers and thirty-two men of the *Saigon's* company and some two score of Russian sailors were working like slaves transferring, under the supervision of a strong guard, the *Saigon's* coal and cargo into the *Nevski's* boats.

Captain Brandon was not among the toilers. He would have been, perhaps, but for the circumstance that he had permitted himself the liberty of striking a Russian officer in the face. A marine having retorted with the butt end of a carbine, the Englishmen had helplessly watched their captain being carried off, bleeding and insensible, and dumped with a sickening thud into the Russian launch. The incident encouraged them so much that they worked without complaint throughout the day, and they did not even grumble at the rations which their taskmasters served out to them. Shortly before dusk the breeze that had been blowing died away, and the Russians took advantage of the calm to warp the vessels together. After that the business in hand proceeded at such a pace that by dawn the *Saigon* was completely gutted, and she rode the water like a swan, the greater part of her bulk in air. The weary Englishmen were thereupon driven like sheep upon the *Nevski's* deck, and forced to descend the small after-hold, which was almost empty. The hatches were then fastened over them for their greater security, and they were left in darkness. But they were too worn out to care. Within five minutes every man of them was sleeping dreamlessly, lying listlessly stretched out upon the ship's false bottom, excepting only Hugh Maclean. He was too tired to sleep. He was, therefore, the only one who heard an hour later the muffled boom of a distant explosion and a faint cheer on deck.

"They have sunk the poor old *Saigon*," muttered Maclean. "There goes the last hope of my captaincy and Nellie Lane." He uttered a low groan, and covered his face with his grimy paws. Maclean was very much in love, but he was too young and of too strenuous a temperament to rest for long the victim of despair. Moreover, contempt for foreigners, particularly Russians, served him instead of a religion, when not ashore, and he soon fell to wondering just where was the weak spot in his captor's armor, and how he could find and put his finger on it. That there was a weak spot he did not doubt at all. He searched his pockets and found half a plug of tobacco, but not his meerschaum. A Russian sailor had confiscated that some hours before. Maclean consigned the thief to perdition, and with some trouble bit off a plug. Then he lay back to chew and think. "There's only one thing to do," was the result of his reflections. "We'll have to take this boat from the Russians somehow."

But exhausted nature would not be denied, and before he knew it Maclean was in the land of dreams. He was awakened by the noisy removal of a portion of the hatch. He looked up and saw the moon, also a couple of bearded faces looking down at him.

"Good Lord!" he groaned, "I've slept the day out."

"You hingry—men—like—eat?" observed a hoarse voice. And Maclean saw an immense steaming pan descending toward him on a line. He caught it deftly. A can of water and a tin of biscuits followed. He was instantly surrounded by the *Saigon's* company, who attacked the contents of the pan like wolves. He seized a lump of fat meat from the mess, also a couple of biscuits, and retired apart. The darkness renewed itself a second later, and for some time the hold buzzed with the noise of crunching jaws and guttural exclamations.

Of a sudden someone near him struck a match, and Maclean looked over the flame into the eyes of Robert Sievers, the *Saigon's* chief engineer.

"Hello, Mac," said Sievers.

"Good evening, Sievers," replied Maclean politely. "We're still at anchor."

"I've remarked it. What do you suppose they intend to do with us?"

"Maroon us, likely, if we let them, on the island yonder."

"How can we prevent them? But I think not. It's my belief this meat is poisoned!"

"Tastes vile enough," agreed Maclean, but he went on eating, and Robert Sievers, after a momentary hesitation, followed suit.

"We're in the devil of a hole!" he muttered, his mouth full of biscuit. Then he swore horribly, for the match had burned his fingers.

Maclean stood up. "Any of you men happen to have a bit of candle in your pockets?" he demanded.

Silence for a minute, then a Norwegian fireman spoke up. "Bout dree inches," he said.

"He eats 'em," cried another voice, and a roar of laughter greeted the announcement.

"Pass it here," commanded Maclean.

Sievers struck another match, and presently the steady flame of a candle stump showed Maclean a picture such as Gustave Doré would have loved to paint. He glanced at the begrimed faces of the *Saigon's* wild and ghastly looking company, and beyond them for a moment, then stumbled over the coal, followed by Sievers, until he was brought up by the iron partition of the hold. He made, however, straight for the bulkhead, and stooping down, held the candle close to the line of bolts covering the propeller's tunnel.

"By Jingo!" cried Sievers. "I see your game. Let me look, Maclean! This is my trade."

He bent forward, wrenched at a shoot-bolt, and with a cry of satisfaction threw back a plate. The *Saigon's* company crowded round the man-hole thus revealed, muttering with excitement.

"One moment, Sievers!" cried Maclean, for the engineer had one leg already in the tunnel. Then he turned to the men. "My lads," he said, "it's a case of our lives or the Russians', for I firmly believe the accursed pirates mean to kill us. We must take this ship by hook or by crook, and I think I see the way to do it!" He concluded with some precise instructions, and a few savage sentences, in which he promised an unmentionable fate to the unfortunate who made a sound or failed to follow to the letter his instructions.

A second later, in a silence that could be felt, he blew out the light, and followed Sievers into the tunnel. A few cave-black yards, crawled painfully on hands and knees, slipping and slithering along the propeller shaft, brought the leaders to the edge of a wider space. Sievers struck a match, and a well-like, vertical opening was revealed. High overhead towered and threatened an enormous steel crank. Before their feet lay a deep pool of slime. The heat was horrible.

"It should be hereabouts," whispered Sievers, and his fingers searched the wall. For a moment nothing could be heard but the deep breathing of the *Saigon's* company. Then came a slight but terrifying clang.

"I've got it!" whispered Sievers. "Are you ready?"

"Right!"

Maclean's eyes were dazzled of a sudden with a hot flare of light, and the deafening thud of the condensers smote in his ears. He never quite coherently remembered that which immediately ensued, for something struck him on the head.

When he came to his full senses again he was lying on a grating beside the body of the Russian cleaner he had strangled. The *Saigon's* men were all around him. He arose, gasping for breath. Sievers thrust a bar into his hand and pointed to a line of ladders. Maclean nodded, crossed the grating, and began to climb. Sievers, armed with a hammer, followed at his heels.

There were three men in the engine-room, an engineer and two cleaners. They took the climbers for stokers, and went on with their occupations. Maclean sidled to the door across the grating and closed it in the twinkling of an eye. The engineer, who was reading a newspaper, heard the noise and looked up. Sievers struck him with the hammer and flew at one of the cleaners. Maclean rushed at the other with his spade. It was all over in a moment, and without any noise that the thudding of the donkey-engine did not drown. Maclean changed coats and caps with the insensible Russian engineer, while Sievers called the *Saigon's* men from below. He then strapped on the man's dirk, and put his revolver in his pocket.

"What next?" asked Sievers.

Maclean glanced at the engine-room clock. The hands pointed to seven-fifteen. "Captain and officers are just about half through their dinner," he reflected.

"Wait here," he said aloud: "I'm going to reconnoitre. Just keep the door ajar when I leave. Let anyone come in that wants to, but crack him over the skull once he gets inside."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Maclean opened the door and stepped out leisurely upon the deck. Before him rose the captain's cabin, the officers' quarters, and the bridge above. Beyond that stretched the main deck, with the fore-castle far forward. An officer paced the bridge; some two score sailors were grouped about the fore-castle door drinking tea, and the rattle of knives and forks, the clink of glasses, and sounds of talk and laughter proceeding from the saloon astern sufficiently located the leaders of



his enemies. Maclean thought hard for a moment, then pulling his cap over his eyes walked underneath the bridge and looked up. As he had expected, and ardently hoped, he perceived the muzzle of a machine-gun protruding from the very centre of the iron rampart. Thanking Providence for two years spent in the service of the New South Wales Naval Brigade in his younger days, he returned to the engine-room door, and after a cautious whisper stepped inside.

"Sievers," said he, "the officers are all at dinner astern. Take this revolver, and when you hear me knock three times on the railing of the bridge, sneak out with all the men and rush the cabin. Most of the crew are forward. I'll look after them; there's a Nordenfeldt on the bridge."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Give me your hammer!"

"Good luck to you, sir!"

Maclean took the hammer, slipped it under his jacket, and once more sought the deck. A steward passed him at a run, and two stokers proceeding toward the engine-house saluted his uniform. He pulled his cap over his eyes, and began to climb the ladder. The *Nevski* was swinging softly at her anchor, her nose pointing to the land. On the distant beach a small fire was burning, and at this the officer of the watch was gazing through his telescope. He was quite alone, and standing in a shaded corner of the bridge. "What sort of a watch can one man keep?" muttered Maclean who had served on an Australian gunboat. He stepped to the officer's side, seized the telescope in his left hand, and as the startled man turned, he dealt him a terrible blow on the nape of his neck with the hammer. The officer fell into his arms sighing out his breath. Maclean laid him gently on the floor, and relieved him of his revolver. Then he slid softly to the machine-gun, and uttered a low, irrepressible cry of joy to find that it was stored with cartridges and prepared for action. A moment later its muzzle commanded the deck before the forecastle. One of the sailors had just commenced a song. He had a fine tenor voice, and the others listened entranced. Maclean, however, rapped three times very loudly on the railing with his hammer, and the song ceased.

Someone called to him in Russian, but he would not have answered even if he understood. His every sense was strained to listen. He counted twenty, the song commenced again. Thirty, forty. Then a wild scream resounded through the vessel.

"Sievers is dealing with the watch on the after-hold," muttered Maclean. "Hurry!" he whispered. "Hurry! Sievers, hurry!"

The sailors forward were now afoot, exclaiming aloud and glancing questioningly at one another. A great many more, too, poured out every second from the forecastle, made curious by the noise. Maclean grasped the crank firmly and gave them every scrap of his attention. There woke an increasing buzz of shouts and cries astern. It culminated presently in the crack of a revolver, a shriek of pain, and a wild British cheer. Then all over the din a loud, insistent whistle shrilled. The sailors forward rushed for their stacked arms, and formed in ranks with the speed of magic. A petty officer shouted a command, and down the deck they started at the double.

"Halt!" Maclean shouted, and he turned the crank of the Nordenfeldt. The effect was horrible. A dozen fell at the first discharge. The rest halted, and after one dazed instant's wavering, threw down their arms, broke and fled for the cover of the forecastle. The air was filled with the sound of groans. The deck was like a shambles. Maclean watched three or four poor wounded creatures crawl off on their hands and knees for shelter and he shuddered violently.

He was already sick to death of war. But the fight was not yet over. He heard footsteps on the ladder behind him, and turned just in time to escape a sweeping sword stroke. Next instant he was locked in a deadly struggle with the captain of the *Nevski*, a brave man, who, it seems, had refused to surrender, and had cut his way through all Sievers's men in the desperate resolve to retrieve the consequences of his own carelessness. Maclean, however, was a practised wrestler, and although lean almost as a lath, the muscles he possessed were as strong as steel bands. Even as they fell he writhed uppermost, and baffling with an active elbow the captain's last effort to transfix him, he dashed his adversary's head upon the boards. A second later he arose, breathless, but quite uninjured.

Sievers was calling to him: "Maclean! Maclean! I say!"

"Hallo, there!" he gasped back, hoarsely.

"Look out for the captain. He escaped us!"

"I've got him!" croaked Maclean, with a grim glance at his unconscious foe. "How about the rest?"

"All sigarnio! What shall I do?"

"Drive them forward to the foc'sle."

Sievers obeyed, and very soon five splendidly upholstered, but shamefaced-looking gentlemen, three stewards, and four sailors were standing underneath the beacon light before the forecastle companion. Maclean noted that already many of the *Saigon's* men carried swords and carbines. He watched the rest arm themselves with the *Nevski* sailors' discarded weapons as they marched their prisoners along the deck. His breast began to swell with pride.

"Any casualties?" he demanded.

"Two of ours have crossed over," replied Sievers, "and some of us are hurt a bit. But we can't grumble. There are four Russian corpses aft, and I see you've bagged seven."

"Damned pirates!" commented Maclean. "I've a mind to shoot the rest of them out of hand."

"Just give the word, sir."

"No," said Maclean, "we'll maroon them instead. Lower away all the boats but one, Sievers, and bring them under the bows. I can look after these dogs!"

"Ay, ay, sir. But first three cheers for Captain Maclean, lads!"

The cheers were given with hearty good-will, and then the men tramped off to carry out their new task.

Maclean, whose face was still flushed from the compliment that had been paid him, leaned over the machine-gun and surveyed the prisoners.

"Can any of you pirate scum speak English?" he demanded truculently.

"I have that privilege, sir," replied a swart-faced lieutenant.

"Then kindly inform your friends that at the first sign of any monkey trick I'll send you all to kingdom come."

The officer complied presumably with this command, and when he had finished, addressed Maclean:

"You cannot intend to maroon us, sir?" he cried. "The island yonder is totally uninhabited."

"You're a liar!" retorted Maclean. "Fires don't light themselves. Look yonder."

The officer choked back an oath. "Have a care what you are doing, sir," he muttered in a strangled voice. "This will lead to a war between your country and mine."

"I guess not—not even if I hanged the lot of you—you dirty pirates. But if it did, what then?"

"You should see, sir."

"And so would you—see that Englishmen can fight a durned sight better than the Japs. I guess you know how *they* fight by this."

"I have always heard that the English are generous foes, sir——"

"None of your blarney," interrupted Maclean. "Short shrift to pirates, is an English motto. You sank our ship: we take yours. Fair exchange is no robbery. You should be thankful to get off with your skins."

"At least permit us to take with us our personal belongings."

"Not a match."

"Some provisions?"

"Not a biscuit."

"Some arms, then, to defend ourselves against the natives, if we are attacked?"

"Not a penknife."

"Sir, you condemn us to death!"

"Sir, we have but forestalled your intention in regard to us!"

"As God hears me, sir——"

"Shut up!" cried Maclean, "your voice hurts my ears."

Nevertheless, when all was ready, Maclean commanded Sievers to stock the boats with water and provisions, and to throw some fifty swords and bayonets aboard. Then began the debarkation. Using the officer who could speak English as his mouthpiece, Maclean commanded the crew of the *Nevski* to file out one by one from the forecastle, and slide down a rope over the vessel's bows into the waiting boats. They numbered one hundred and thirty-three all told, but not a man offered to resist, and within an hour the last boat had sheered off, carrying with its hale company the still unconscious bodies of the Russian captain and the officer of the watch. Maclean's next business was to bury the dead, which done, he searched the ship. He made two discoveries: He found in the captain's cabin a chest containing no less than fifteen thousand golden rubles; and locked away in one of the disused bathrooms astern, inhumanly disposed of in a tub, the silent form of Captain Brandon. But the tough little bulldog of an Englishman was by no means dead, and when some three days later the ghost of what had been the *Nevski* steamed out of the bay of Tramoieu, he was already so far recovered from the terrible blow that had laid him low, but which had, nevertheless, failed to shatter his hard skull, as to be engaged in a confused but constant effort to remember. On the following morning he insisted upon getting up, and was helped afterward by a steward to the bridge.

Maclean greeted him with a genial smile.

"Well done, sir," he cried heartily. "Glad to see you up again and looking so fit. The old *Saigon* has been as dull as a coffin-ship without you."

Captain Brandon nodded, frowned, and glanced around him. A carpenter close by was busily at work painting *S.S. Saigon* upon a row of virgin-white life buoys. The captain wondered and glanced up at the masts. They were just ordinary masts in the sense that they had no fighting tops, but they gleamed with wet paint. He frowned again, and, wondering more and more, looked forward. There was not the slightest trace of a cannon to be seen—but the deck in one place had a canvas covering. He began to crack his fingers, his old habit, but a moment later he abruptly turned and faced the mate.

"Maclean," said he.

The eyes of the two men met.

"This is not the *Saigon*, Maclean," said Captain Brandon.

"You'll see it in iron letters on her bows, sir, if you look."

"Come into the chart-room."

Maclean obeyed, chuckling under his breath.

"Tell me how you did it," commanded the captain as he took a chair.

"It was as easy as rolling off a log, sir," replied the first mate. "The blighters clapped us into the small after-hold, but totally forgot there was such a thing there as a propeller tunnel. We got into the stoke-hole and collared the engine-room while the Russians were at dinner. Then, while I covered the sailors forward with the machine-gun on the bridge, Sievers took the gold-laced crowd aft with a rush. The rest is not worth telling, for you know it. All that is to say, barring the fact that we're the richer by 15,000 rubles and triple-expansion engines, and the poorer by two of our crew the Russian captain killed."

Captain Brandon drew a deep breath.

"What course are we steering," he demanded.

"Straight for Kobe, sir, to carry out our charter. We've every stick of the old cargo aboard—the pirates saw to that—also our books and papers. The guns are all at the bottom of the sea. We'll be a bit late, but we can easily rig up a yarn to explain."

"But the Russians will talk."

"No fear, sir: they'd be too ashamed to own up the truth; ay, and afraid as well, for what they did was piracy on the high seas—nothing less. You take my tip for it, sir, one of these days we'll hear that the *Nevski* struck a reef."

"We'll have to tell the owners, though—what will they say?"

Maclean closed one eye. "The new *Saigon* has triple-expansion engines, sir. If I know anything of Mr. Keppel, he'll be better pleased with a ship in the hand than a cause of action against the Russian Government."

"But our own men?"

"Why, sir, we have 7,000 rubles to share among them. They'll be made for life."

"But I thought you said just now there were 15,000?"

"So I did, sir; but there's only you and Sievers and myself know how much there is exactly: there was no call to shout it all over the ship. And I've figured it out this way: You, as captain, are entitled to the most, and you'll want all of four thousand to heal up the memory of that crack you got on your skull properly. That'll leave two for Sievers to do with as he likes, and two for me to buy Nellie—that's Mrs. Maclean that is to be—just the sort of house she's set her heart on these ages back. What do you say, sir?"

"What do I say, Maclean?" cried Captain Brandon, his eyes big with excitement and surprise, too, perhaps. "Why, I say this: You are that rare thing, a sensible, honest man! Tip us your flipper!"

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## II

### ICE IN JUNE

#### A Playwright's Story

By FRED M. WHITE

"THAT," said Ethel Marsh judicially, "is the least stupid remark you have made during our five weeks' acquaintance."

"Which means that I am improving," John Chesney murmured. "There is hope even for me. You cannot possibly understand how greatly I appreciate——"

The sentence trailed off incoherently as if the effort had been all too much. It was hard to live up to the mental brilliance of Ethel Marsh. She had had the advantage, too, of a couple of seasons in town, whilst Chesney was of the country palpably. She also had the advantage of being distractingly pretty.

Really, she had hoped to make something of Chesney. It seemed to her that he was fitted for better things than tennis-playing and riding and the like. It seemed strange that he should prefer his little cottage to the broader delights of surveying mankind from China to Peru.

The man had possibilities, too. For instance, he knew how to dress. There was an air about his flannels, a suggestion in his Norfolk suits. He had the knack of the tie so that it sat just right, and his boots.... A clean-cut face, very tanned; deep, clear gray eyes, very steady. He was like a dog attached very much to a careless master. The thing had been going on for five weeks.

Ethel was staying with the Frodshams. They were poor for their position, albeit given to hospitality—at a price. Most people call this kind of thing taking in paying guests. It was a subject delicately veiled. Ethel had come down for a fortnight, and she had stayed five weeks. Verily the education of John Chesney was a slow process. Chesney was a visitor in the neighborhood, too; he had a little furnished cottage just by the Goldney Park lodge gates, where a house-keeper did for him. As for the rest he was silent. He was a very silent man.

It was too hot for tennis, so the two had wandered into the woods. A tiny trout stream bubbled by, the oak and beech ferns were wet with the spray of it. Between the trees lances of light fell, shafts of sunshine on Ethel's hair and face. It was at this point that Chesney made the original remark. It slipped from him as naturally as if he had been accustomed to that kind of thing.

"I am afraid you got that from Mr. John Kennedy," Ethel said. "I am sure that you have seen Mr. Kennedy's comedy 'Flies in Ointment.' Confess now!"

"Well, I have," Chesney confessed accordingly. "I—I saw it the night it was produced. On the whole it struck me as rather a feeble thing."

"Oh, really? We are getting on, Mr. Chesney. Let me tell you that I think it is the cleverest modern comedy I have ever seen."

"Yes! In that case you like the part of 'Dorothy Kent?'"

Ethel's dainty color deepened slightly. She glanced suspiciously at the speaker. But he was gazing solidly, stolidly, into space—like a man who had just dined on beef. The idea was too preposterous. The idea of John Chesney chaffing her, chaffing anybody.

"I thought perhaps you did," Chesney went on. "Mr. Kent is a bit of a butterfly, a good sort at the bottom, but decidedly of the species lepidopteræ——"

"Stop!" Ethel cried. "Where did you get that word from? Whence comes it in the vocabulary of a youth—a youth? Oh, you know what I mean."

"I believe it is a general name for insects," Chesney said humbly. "Mrs. Kent is a good sort, but a little conceited. Apt to fancy herself, you know. Young widows of her type often do. She is tired of the artificial existence of town, and goes off into the country, where she leads the simple life. She meets a young man there, who, well, 'pon my word, is rather like me. He was a bit of an ass——"

"He was nothing of the kind," Ethel cried indignantly. "He was splendid. And he made that woman love him, he made her acknowledge that she had met her match at last. And he turned out to be one of the most brilliant——"

"My dear Miss Ethel, after all it was only a play. You remind me of 'Mrs. Kent,' and you say that I remind you of the hero of the play who——"

"I didn't, Mr. Chesney. I said nothing of the kind. It is unfair of you——"

"When the likeness is plain enough," Chesney said stubbornly. "You are 'Mrs. Kent,' and I am the hero of the comedy. Do you think that there is any possibility that some day you and—of course not yet, but——"

Miss Marsh sat there questioning the evidence of her coral-pink ears. She knew that she was furiously angry because she felt so cool about it. She knew that the more furious one was, the more calm and self-contained the senses become. The man meant nothing, either—one could see that by the respectful expression of his eye. Still——

"You are quite wrong," Ethel said. "You have altogether misunderstood the *motif* of the play. I presume you know what a *motif* is?"

"I think so," Chesney said humbly. "It is a word they apply in music when you don't happen to understand what the composer—especially the modern composer—is driving at."

"Oh, let it pass," Ethel said hopelessly. "You have misunderstood the gist of the play, then!"

'Walter Severn' in the comedy is a man of singular points. He is a great author. Instead of being that woman's plaything, he is her merciless analyst. The great scene in the play comes when she finds this out. Now, you do not for a moment presume to put yourself on a level with 'Walter Severn,' do you?"

Chesney was bound to admit the height of his audacity. His eyes were fixed humbly on his Minerva; he was Telemachus seated at the feet of the goddess. And even yet he did not seem really cognizant of the enormity of his offence. He saw the sunlight on that sweetly serious face, he saw the beams playing with the golden meshes of her hair. No doubt he was fully conscious of his own inferiority, for he did not speak again. It was for him to wait. The silence deepened; in the heart of the wood a blackbird was piping madly on a blackthorn.

"Before you go away," Chesney hazarded, "I should very much like——"

"But I am not going away, at least not yet. Besides, I have a purpose to serve. I am waiting until those impossible people leave Goldney Park. I understand that they have already gone, but on that head I am not sure. I want to go over the house. The late owner, Mr. Mainbrace, was a great friend of my family. Before he died he was so good as to express a wish that the heir to the property should come and see us and—but that part is altogether too ridiculous. And as an only daughter——"

"I see," Chesney said reflectively. "The heir and yourself. It sounds ridiculous. Now, if you had been in the least like the romantic type of young woman, perhaps——"

"How do you know that I am not? Am I like Byron's woman: 'Seek roses in December, ice in June'? Well, perhaps you are right. After all, one doesn't find ice in June. However, the heir to the Goldney Park estate and myself never met. He let the place to those awful Gosway people for three years and went abroad. There was not even the suspicion of a romance. But I am curious to see the house, all the same."

"Nothing easier, Miss Marsh. Let us go and see it after luncheon. The Gosways have gone, you may take my word for that, and only a caretaker is in possession. Will you come with me this afternoon?"

The prospect was not displeasing. Miss Marsh poised it in her mind for a few moments. There was Chesney's education to be thought of as well. On the whole, she decided that there might be less pleasant ways of spending a hot August afternoon.

"I think I'll come," she said. "I want to see the old furniture and the pictures. I love old furniture. Perhaps if the heir to the property had gone on his knees whilst I was seated on a priceless Chippendale settee, I might——"

"You might, but I don't think you would," Chesney interrupted. "Whatever your faults may be I am sure you are not mercenary."

"Really! How good of you! The thing that we are apt to call depravity——"

"Is often another name for the promptings of poor human nature."

Miss Marsh turned and stared at the speaker. Really, his education was progressing at a most amazing rate. Without the least sign of mental distress he had delivered himself of an epigram. There was quite a flavor of Piccadilly about it. And Chesney did not appear in the least conscious of his achievement. Ethel rose and shook out the folds of her dainty muslin dress.

"Isn't it getting late?" she asked. "I'm sure it is lunch time. You can walk as far as the gate with me, and I will meet you here at three o'clock."

She passed thoughtfully across the lawn to the house, her pretty brows knitted in a thoughtful frown. Was she giving her pupil too much latitude? Certainly he had begun to show symptoms of an audacious presumption, which in the earlier days had been conspicuous by its absence. Whereupon Miss Marsh sighed three times without being in the least aware of the painful fact.

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"This," said Chesney, "is the Norman Tower, built by John Mainbrace, who was the original founder of the family. The first two trees in the avenue of oaks that leads up to the house were planted by Queen Elizabeth. She also slept on several occasions in the house; indeed, the bedroom she occupied is intact to this day. The Virgin Queen seemed to pass most of her time, apart from affairs of state, in occupying bedrooms, so that the descendants of her courtiers might be able to boast about it afterward. Those who could not give the royal lady a shakedown had special bedrooms fitted up and lied about them. It was an innocent deception."

Miss Marsh eyed her pupil distrustfully. The educational progress was flattering, and at the same time a little disturbing. She had never seen Chesney in this gay and frivolous, not to say excited, mood before. The man was positively glib. There were distinct flashes of wit in his discourse, too. And where did he get so close and intimate a knowledge of the old house from?

He knew every nook and corner. He took her through the grand old park where the herd of fallow deer were grazing; he showed her the Dutch and Italian gardens; he knew even the history of the sundial on the terrace. And yet they had not been within the house, though the great hall door

stood hospitably open. They moved at length out of the glare of the sunshine into the grateful shadows. Glint of armor and gleam of canvas were all there. Ethel walked along in an ecstasy of quiet enjoyment. Rumor had not lied as to the artistic beauties of Goldney Park. The Mainbraces must have been a tasteful family. They had it all here, from the oaken carvings of the wandering monks down through Grinling Gibbons and Pugin, and away to Chippendale and Adam, and other masters of the Georgian era. They came at length to the chamber sacred to the Virgin Queen; they contemplated the glorious view from the window in silent appreciation tinged with rapture.

"It's exquisite," Ethel said in a low voice. "If this were my house I should be very much tempted to commit an act of sacrilege. I should want this for my own room. I'm afraid I could not resist such an opportunity."

"Easily done," said Chesney. "No trouble to discover from the family archives that a mistake had been made, and that Elizabeth of blessed memory had not slept in this room. Being strong-minded she preferred a north aspect, and this is due south. You would get a reputation for sound historical knowledge as well."

Certainly the education was progressing. But Ethel let it pass. She was leaning out of the latticed windows with the creamy roses about her hair; she was falling unconsciously under the glamour of the place.

"It is exquisite," she sighed. "If this were only mine!"

"Well, it is not too late. The heir will be here before long, probably. You have only to introduce the name of Mr. Mainbrace and say who you are, and then——"

"Oh, no. If I happened to be in love with a man—what am I saying? Of course, no girl who respects herself could possibly marry a man for the sake of his position. Even 'Mrs. Dorothy Kent,' to whom you compared me this morning, was above that kind of thing. She married the man she loved after all, you know. But I forget—you did not think much of the comedy."

"I didn't. I thought it was vague and incomplete. I am certain of it now. This is the real thing; the other was merely artificial. And when the hero brought 'Dorothy Kent' to the home of his ancestors he already knew that she loved him. And I am glad to know that you would never marry a man like that because it gives me courage——"

"Gives you courage! Whatever for?"

"Why, to make a confession. You laughed at me just now when I presumed to criticize your favorite modern comedy. As a matter of fact, I have every right to criticize it. You see, I happen to be the author. I am 'John Kennedy'! I have been writing for the stage, or trying to write for the stage, for years. I got my new idea from that old wish of my uncle's that you and I should come together. It struck me as a pretty suggestion for a comedy."

"Stop, stop," Ethel cried. "One thing at a time, if you please. Positively you overwhelm me with surprise. In one breath you tell me you are 'John Kennedy,' and then, without giving a poor girl a chance, you say you are the owner of Goldney Park."

"But I didn't," Chesney protested. "I never said anything of the kind."

"No, but you inferred it. You say you got the idea from your uncle—I mean the suggestion that you and I—oh, I really cannot say it."

"I'm afraid I'm but a poor dramatist after all," Chesney said lamely. "I intended to keep that confession till after I had—but no matter. At any rate, there is no getting away from the fact that my pen name is 'John Kennedy.'"

"And you wrote 'Flies in Ointment'? And you have been laughing at me all this time? You were amused because I took you for a simple countryman, you whom men call the Sheridan of to-day! After all the pains I took with your education."

Ethel's voice rose hysterically. Points of flame stood out from the level of her memory of the past five weeks and scorched her. How this man must have been amused, how consumedly he must have laughed at her! And she had never guessed it, never once had she had an inkling of the truth.

"You have behaved disgracefully, cruelly," she said unsteadily.

"I don't think so," Chesney said coolly. "After all is said and done, we were both posing, you know. You were playing 'Mrs. Kent' to my hero. It seemed a pity to disturb so pleasant a pastoral. And no harm has been done."

Ethel was not quite so sure of that. But then for the nonce she was regarding the matter from a strictly personal point of view.

"I hardly think you were playing the game," she said.

"Why not? I come down here where nobody knows me. It is my whim to keep quiet the fact that Goldney Park belongs to me. As to my dramatic tastes, they don't concern anybody but myself. I take a cottage down here until those tenants of mine are ready to go. They are such utter bounders that I have no desire to disclose my identity to them. And so it falls about that I meet you. Then I recollect all that my uncle has said about you. I cultivate your acquaintance. It wasn't

my fault that you took me for a countryman with no idea beyond riding a horse and shooting a pheasant. Your patronage was very pretty and pleasing, and I am one of those men who always laugh or cry inside. It is perhaps a misfortune that I can always joke with a grave face. But don't forget that the man who laughs inside is also the man who bleeds inside, and these feel the worst. Come, Ethel, you are not going to be angry because you have lost the game playing with your own weapons."

The education was finished, the schoolmaster was abroad—very much abroad. In his cool, masterful way Chesney had taken matters into his own hands. He was none the less handsome because he looked so stern, so sure of his ground.

"You are a man and I am a woman," she faltered.

"Of course. How could the comedy proceed otherwise? Now where shall we move these Elizabethan relics? After what you said just now they could not possibly remain here. Among the family archives I dare say——"

Chesney paused; he was conscious of the fact that two large diamond drops were stealing down Ethel's cheeks. It seemed the most natural thing in the world for him to cross over and take her hands in his.

"My dear child, what have I said to pain you," he said. "I am truly sorry."

"You—you take too much for granted," Ethel sobbed. "You make me feel so small and silly. And you have no right to assume that I—I could care for anybody simply because he happens to possess a p—p—place like Goldney Park."

"But, my darling, I didn't. I was delighted when you said just now that you would never marry a man you did not care for, even if he could give you Chippendale for breakfast, so to speak. I watched your face then. I am sure that you were speaking from the bottom of your heart. I have been watching you for the last five weeks, my sweetheart. And they have been the happiest weeks in my life.

"Laughing at me, I suppose! It's all the same if you do laugh inside."

"No, I don't think I laughed," Chesney said thoughtfully. "I only know that I have been very much charmed. And besides, see how useful it has been to me to be in a position to hear all the weak points in my literary armor. When I come to write my next comedy, it will be far in advance of 'Flies in Ointment.' I have learned so much of human nature, you see."

Ethel winked the tears from her lids; her eyes were all the brighter for the passing shower, like a sky in April, Chesney thought. A smile was on her face, her lips were parted. As a lover Chesney was charming. She wondered how she was playing her part. But she need not have had any anxiety. There was nothing wanting in the eyes of the man opposite, and his face said so.

"You are going to put me into it?" she asked.

"Why, of course. There is no other woman so far as I can see. Why are you pulling my roses to pieces like that? Do you know that that rose tree was planted a hundred years ago by Thomas à Becket after the battle of Agincourt? My dear, I am so happy that I could talk nonsense all day. And I say, Ethel——"

The girl broke off one of the creamy roses and handed it shyly to Chesney.

"*Væ victis*," she said with a flushing smile. "It is yours. You have conquered."

"Yes, but I want all the fruits of victory. I ask for a hand and you give me—a rose. Am I not going to have the hand as well as the rose, dear?"

He had the hand and the rose and the slender waist; he drew her toward him in his strong, masterful way, and his lips lay on hers in a lingering pressure. It was a long time before the girl looked up; then her eyes were full of shy happiness.

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### III

## THE DITTY-BOX

### A Pawnbroker's Story

By OWEN OLIVER

IN THE COURSE of our dealings over the curiosities that my brother sent home from Burma, Mr. Levy and I became very good friends. When we had finished one of our deals we generally had a chat in the quaint little room behind his queer little shop in the old-world alley frequented by sailormen. On one of these occasions he mentioned that the cigar which he had given me was the brand which he always smoked; and the quality of the cigar suggested opulence.

"If you can afford cigars like this," I remarked, "you must make some pretty good bargains with your curiosities!"

"Good and bad," he said. "That's the way in business—in life, if you come to that!" He was a bit of a philosopher.

"You make more good bargains than bad ones, I'll be bound," I asserted.

"Yes," he agreed; "but it isn't so much that. The bad aren't very bad, as a rule; and some of the good are very good. That's where I get my profit."

"What was the best bargain you ever made?" I asked.

He filled his glass and pushed the decanter toward me.

"The best bargain I ever made," he said, "was over a ditty-box."

I helped myself to a little whiskey.

"A ditty-box? I thought they were ordinary sailors' chests that they keep their clothes in?"

"Not exactly chests," he corrected. "They're smallish boxes that they keep their needles and thread in, and their money, and anything else that they set store by—their letters or their sweethearts' photos, or their wives'—or other people's! There's no profit in them, and I don't deal in them in a general way. I got my gain out of this one in a roundabout fashion; but it was handsome. If you've got half an hour to spare I'll tell you about it."

This was his story:

It was eight years ago, and I'd had Isaac for seven years, and concluded that he was to be trusted. So I took it into my head to have a fortnight's holiday and leave him in charge of the shop. Everything was in order when I came back, and the books balanced to a penny. Business had been pretty good, he told me, but nothing out of the ordinary.

"Unless," he said, "I've stumbled on a good thing by accident. It's a ditty-box; rather a superior one, and a good bit bigger than usual; almost a chest; brass bound and a nice bit of poker-work on it; a girl's head. I've put it in your bedroom."

"Ah!" I said. "Ah-h!" He wouldn't make this fuss over a bit of poker-work, I knew.

"The mate of the *Saucy Jane* brought it here," he went on. "It belonged to the captain. George Markby, the name was; and that's poker-work on it, too. He sickened of a fever over at Rotterdam and died at sea; and they sold off his things to send the money to his widow. I gave a sovereign for it. There's a tray inside with a lock-up till. Keys all complete. Ought to fetch thirty-five shillings."

"As much as that?" I said. I knew there must be a good deal more in it than appeared, but it's no use hurrying Isaac. He likes to tell things his own way.

"I thought it might suit you to lock up your books and papers. That was all—till the day before yesterday. Then a ginger-haired sailor came in. North countryman. Wanted a ditty-box, he said. I told him we weren't marine outfitters, and he'd better try Barnard's, round the corner. He said he didn't want the ordinary sort, but something out of the common; extra large size; brass-bound; tray with a lock-up till. 'Mind if it was a trifle old?' I asked. 'Carved or cut about a bit? You know how some chaps use their knives on them, just to pass the time.' He said he didn't care for things that were hacked about, but he wouldn't object to a bit of poker-work on it. I told him I'd look through the warehouse and let him know in the morning, and he went. Byles, the dock policeman, was standing outside. I went and asked him who the chap was. He said he was cook on the *Anne Traylor*; just come in, and he believed he'd done time. If he hadn't I'll swear he ought to have, from the look of him.

"About half an hour afterward in walks an oldish chap with a stoop and a gray goat's beard. He wanted a ditty-box, too; something extra large and old, and strong, and a tray with a lock-up till in it. He was a fireman on the *Anne Traylor*, I found; a shifty sort of chap that couldn't look you in the face. He offered to go to a couple of pounds for the right thing. I told him I'd look through our stuff and let him know if we had one of the sort.

"Just as I was closing, a smart young fellow swaggered in. He was second mate of the *Anne Traylor*, and he'd heard of the death of her old captain on the *Saucy Jane*, and that we'd bought some of his effects, and he'd like to have a memento; just a matter of sentiment, he explained. I asked him what form the sentiment took, and he said a ditty-box; and if we had the one that belonged to the old man he'd give two pounds five for it. I put him off like the others.

"Two Swedish sailors came in after the shutters were up, while the door was still open. They wanted a ditty-box of the identical description. I told them I'd look for it, same as I told the rest. You always brought me up not to close too soon with a customer who was keen on a thing."

"Very good, Isaac," I said. "Very good! Go on!"

"In the evening I made inquiries at the 'Duke of Wellington,' where the dock policemen go, and the two-penny-halfpenny money lenders and such; and old Mrs. Higgins, the landlady, knows more about the crews that come here than anyone. Lots of them knew old Markby, it seemed; a



very respectable old chap and a favorite with his men, but a bit of a miser, and a trifle queer in his ways. He boasted that he didn't believe in banks and such things, and he'd got his money hidden where even his wife didn't know. And the conclusion I've come to is that those chaps believe it's in the ditty-box, and they mean to have it."

"Ah!" I said. "We'll have something to say to that, Isaac! You told them we hadn't got it, of course."

"Of course," he said; "and of course they didn't believe me! I had a rare bother with the ginger-haired man yesterday morning, and had to send the boy for a policeman before he'd go. And in the afternoon the Swedes tried to sneak through the shop into the warehouse, but I jumped out of the shop parlor and hustled them off. I've put longer screws in the bars to the windows; but I'd be easier if you'd let me sleep here."

Isaac always thought that he could look after me better than I could look after myself!

"I'm all right, Isaac," I said; "but we'll have a look at the box before you go. It might be worth a bit more if it had a secret drawer, eh?"

When the shop was closed we went upstairs and laid the box on my bed, and turned it over and tapped it, and put a lamp inside, and examined every inch. We couldn't find a trace of a secret drawer, or anything scratched on it to say where the old captain had hidden his long stocking. So I concluded that the talk was the usual nonsense, and I daresay I'd have sold it and thought no more about it, if the goat's-beard man hadn't come in the first thing the next morning. He didn't beat about the bush, but said he wanted Captain Markby's ditty-box that we'd bought, and he'd give two pounds ten for it. I told him I wished I'd got it to sell, since he was so generous, but ditty-boxes weren't in my line.

The others that Isaac had spoken of came in too. I was tempted to sell it to the mate for three pounds, but I couldn't quite make up my mind, and told him to come again the next morning. That very night the two Swedes broke into the shop. The police caught them. They're always on the look-out round my place, knowing that it's a fiver to them on the quiet if they catch anyone breaking in. The Swedes got three months apiece.

That made up my mind. I showed the mate an ordinary box when he called, and he went off grumbling that it was nothing like the one he'd asked about, and I'd played the fool with him. I never saw him again, or the Swedes either; but the old man and the ginger-headed chap were always looking in the window. They seemed to have chummed up. I had an anonymous letter that I put down to them—written in red ink that I suppose they meant me to take for blood. It warned me against keeping "a ditty-box that others have a better claim to, and is like to cost you dear." D-e-r-e they spelt it, and one t in ditty.

Two days later they called to ask if the box had come my way yet. "Yes," I said, "and I'm going to keep it. It's got two blackguards three months, and it will get two others a good hiding if they don't mind. Clear out, and don't come here again." They didn't, but we often saw them hanging round, and when I went out one of them generally followed me. I didn't worry about that, for I could have settled the two of them easily if I wasn't taken unaware. I was always a bit obstinate, and I'd sooner have chopped the chest up for firewood than have been bullied into letting them have it; but I was sorry that I hadn't taken the mate's offer, for Isaac and I had measured it all over inside and out, and calculated that there wasn't space anywhere for a secret drawer.

I'd had it about three months; and then a young girl, about twenty, came into the shop one afternoon, when Isaac was at tea. She was a pale slip of a young thing, and her clothes looked as if they'd been worn all through the summer, and it was autumn then; and she hesitated as if she was half afraid of me.

"Well, little missie," I said. "What is it?" I spoke to her with the smooth side of my tongue uppermost, as a big, rough chap generally does to a girl of that sort, if there's anything decent about him.

"My father was Captain Markby," she said, and I liked the way she spoke. "He died at sea, and they sold his things here. I want to find something of his, and I thought that perhaps you might have bought it?"

I knew directly what she meant, but I looked very innocent.

"If it was anything in the curiosity line, I might have," I answered. "You see the sort of things I deal in." I waved my hand round the place.

"No," she said. "It wasn't a curiosity. It was an oak chest with brass corners. I think they call it a ditty-box."

"A ditty-box," I said. "They're too common to be curious. Was there anything special about it?"

"It had a tray in it, and he'd drawn a head on it with a red-hot iron; a girl's head. He meant it for me; but I don't expect you'd recognize me by it. I hope not!" She smiled faintly.

"I hope not," I agreed, "judging from what I've seen of such figures." I laughed, and she laughed a little, too. "And you want to buy it, if you can find it?"

"Ye-es," she said. "At least—I haven't very much money; but I would pay you as soon as I could, if

—I suppose you wouldn't be so kind—so very kind—as to agree to that?"

"Umph!" I said. "I don't generally give credit; but as it was your father's, I might stretch a point for once if I should find that I have it."

"Oh, *thank* you!" she said with a flush. "It is a kindness that I have no right to expect. *Thank* you!"

"I'll have a look round among my things," I promised. "I haven't bought such a box myself; but my assistant might have; or I might be able to find it for you in some of the shops round here. I'll see what I can do." I meant to let her have it, but I wanted to find out more about it first.

"How kind you are!" she cried. "I—you see I want it very particularly, Mr. Levy."

"Being associated with your father," I said, "naturally you would. Perhaps if I don't come across the ditty-box, I might find something else of his that would do, eh?"

"No-o," she said. "It wouldn't. You see we—my mother and I—aren't well off. We knew that father had some money, but we couldn't find it, or learn anything about it; and we think it must be in the box, or a paper telling us about it."

I shook my head.

"There's no paper in any box that I have," I assured her. "We always go through the things that we buy very carefully."

"You wouldn't find it," she explained eagerly. "There was a secret place. He showed it to me when I was a little girl. I don't expect he thought I would remember, but I did. You take off the brass corners on top, and then the lower part of the lid drops out. The lid's in two pieces and you could put papers—or bank notes—in between."

I couldn't help smiling.

"Aren't you rather foolish to tell me?" I suggested.

She looked at me appealingly.

"Am I?" she asked.

"No," I said. "As it happens, you aren't; but I wouldn't tell anyone else, if I were you. They *might* think they'd like those bank notes for themselves. I might if—well, if you weren't a good deal younger and more in need of them than I am."

"I think you are a very good and kind man, Mr. Levy," she said solemnly.

"I'm afraid not, little missie," I told her; "but there are some a good deal worse; and some of them have an inkling of what may be in that box, if I'm not mistaken. They've been inquiring after it."

"Oh!" She started. "There were two horrid men who seemed to be watching me when I came in here. I half thought I remembered one of them: an old man with a stoop. I believe I must have seen him aboard my father's ship. I felt rather nervous—because it's such a dark alley." She looked anxiously at the door.

"It is a bit dark," I agreed. "Would you feel safer if I saw you to a main thoroughfare?"

"I should feel *quite* safe then," she declared, and she smiled like a child does. "I really don't know *how* to thank you enough for your goodness to me."

I called Isaac to look after the shop, and put on my hat and walked off with her. She was a bright little creature to talk to, and when she was excited she looked very pretty. I found that she was going to walk all the way, so I said that I would see her right to her road. She seemed pleased to have my company, and jabbered nineteen to the dozen. It was such a change to have someone to talk to, she said, because they had moved and knew nobody here. She told me that she tried to earn money by teaching music and by painting. I said that I was badly in want of a few little sketches, and she promised to bring some for me to look at.

"I would ask you to accept them," she said, with a flush, "if we weren't so poor."

"If it weren't for that," I said, "I should ask you to have some tea before I leave you, without fear that you would be too proud to accept. It would be a pleasure to me. Will you?" We were just outside a good place, and I stopped.

"It is very kind of you," she said, "but I don't think—I suppose I *am* foolishly proud." She laughed an uneasy laugh.

"You mustn't let your pride spoil my pleasure," I told her, and grinned at myself for talking like a book. "You can repay me when you find your fortune, if you insist; but I hope you won't."

She looked up at me quickly.

"No," she said. "I couldn't treat your kindness like that. Thank you, Mr. Levy."

So we went in, and I ordered tea and chicken and cakes. The poor little thing was positively hungry, I could see; and when she mentioned her mother the tears came into her eyes. I understood what she was thinking, and I had some meat patties put up in a package. When I left her at the corner of her road I put the package into her hands, and boarded a 'bus with a run

before she had time to object. She shook her head at me when I was on top of the 'bus; but when I took off my hat she waved her hand, and laughed as if she was a great mind to cry. It's hard for an old woman and a young girl when they're left like that.

I had the corners of that ditty-box off as soon as Isaac had gone for the night. The lid was double, as she had said. Between the two boards I found a portrait of an elderly woman—her mother, no doubt—and three photos of herself; two in short frocks and one with her hair in a plait when she was about seventeen. She looked stouter and jollier then, poor girl. There was one other thing: a half sheet of note-paper. "Memo in case of accident. Money up chimney in best bedroom. Geo. Markby, sixth of April, 1897."

I started to change my clothes to go there and tell them; but just as I had taken off my waistcoat I altered my mind. The money wouldn't be in the rooms where they lived then, but in their old house; and that was probably occupied by someone else now, and even if the money was still there she would not be able to get it. It was no use raising her hopes, just to disappoint her. I would try to get the money before I spoke, I decided.

She came at eleven the next morning, and timidly produced a few little sketches, mostly copies of things. I'd like to say that they were good, but I can't. It was just schoolgirl painting, nothing else. She wanted to give me some, but I wouldn't hear of that. She had sold a few for eighteenpence apiece, she said. I said that I wanted four to frame for ships' cabins, and I'd give twelve-and-six for them, and that would leave me a fair margin. I was afraid to offer more, for fear she would suspect me; and as it was she was dubious.

"You're sure you *will* get a profit?" she asked.

"You ask anyone round here about me," I said. "They'll soon tell you that I look out sharp for that. They'll look very nice when they're framed; and I make a good bit out of the frames, you see. Now about this ditty-box. I've got on the track of one that might turn out right; but there's a difficulty that I'd like to put to you. Suppose that there's no money in it, only a clue to where your father hid it. Wouldn't that be likely to be somewhere where you can't get at it? On board his ship, for example? Or in your old house?"

"If it's in the house," she said, "I could get in. At least it was empty a week ago. Mother heard from an old neighbor. But perhaps it would be better to get someone else to go, and say that they wanted to look at the house?" She glanced at me doubtfully.

"You mean me?" She nodded slowly. "You are afraid that I might keep some of it?"

She stared at me in sheer amazement.

"Why, of course not!" she cried. "I was only thinking that it was a long way to ask you to go; and that I must not impose on your kindness."

"Give me the address," I said, "in case I should want it any time."

She gave me an address in Andeville. Then I changed the subject. I walked part of the way home with her. Then I had my dinner and went off to Andeville.

It was about an hour by train. By the time that I had found the agent and got the key it was growing dusk. I was some time arguing with him, because he wanted to send a man with me to lock up afterward. "We've had tramps get in several times," he explained, "and they've done a lot of damage; torn up the flooring and such senseless mischief." It occurred to me directly that the tramps were some of the men who had come after the ditty-box.

I persuaded him at last that I'd lock up all right and he let me go alone. I soon spotted what would be the best bedroom. I fumbled up the chimney and lit a match or two, and found a heavy canvas bag and a smaller one that rustled like notes. I was just looking for the last time when I heard soft steps behind me. I glanced round and saw two men before the match flickered out. The light caught the face of the foremost. It was the old man with the goat's beard. Then I was struck on the head and knocked senseless.

It was about six when I came to and lit another match and looked at my watch. The bags were gone, of course. I never saw them again or the two men. It was as well for them I didn't!

It was no use telling the agent or anybody. I never thought about that, only what I was to do about the girl and her mother. I didn't think very much about the mother, if you come to that. It seemed to me that I'd made a mess of it and lost their money, and I couldn't bear to think of the girl's disappointment. What upset me most was that I knew she'd believe every word of my story, and never dream that I'd taken the money myself, as some people would. She was such a trusting little thing, and—well, I may as well own up that I liked her. If I hadn't been fifteen years older than she was, and felt sure that she'd never look at a Jew—and a much rougher chap than I am now—I should have had serious thoughts of courting her. And so—well, I knew that a hundred pounds was what they hoped for; and it didn't make very much odds to me. I took out the paper that night and put in twenty five-pound notes, and did it up again. A bit of folly that you wouldn't have suspected me of, eh? Then you think me a bigger fool than most people do! At the same time, it was only fair and honest. I'd had her money and lost it, you see.

I was going to take the chest to their lodgings in a cab the next morning, but she called in early to ask if I had found it. I had an unhappy sort of feeling when I saw her come smiling into the

shop, thinking that she wouldn't need to come any more. It's queer how a man feels over a little slip of a girl when he's knocked about all over the world and known hundreds of women and thought nothing of them!

I'd carried it down into this room, and I took her in and showed it. Her delight was pretty to see. She fidgeted about at my elbow like a child while I was taking the corners off; and when she saw the notes she danced and clapped her hands; and when I gave them to her she sat down and hugged them and laughed and cried.

"If you knew how poor we've been!" she said, wiping her eyes. "How lonely and worried and miserable! Your kindness has been the only nice thing ever since father died. Twenty times five! That's a hundred. They're real notes aren't they? I haven't seen one for ages."

"They're real enough," I told her. "I'll give you gold for them, if you like."

"I'd rather have their very selves," she said with a laugh. She studied one carefully; and suddenly she dropped them with a cry and sprang to her feet. Her face had gone white.

"Mr. Levy!" she cried. "Oh, Mr. Levy! *You put them there!*"

I told her a lie right out; and I'm not ashamed of it. I was a hard man of business, I said; and a Jew; and she was a silly sentimental child, or she'd never take such an idea into her head; and she needn't suppose I kept my shop for charity, and she'd know better when she was older. She heard me out. Then she put her hand on my shoulder.

"Dear kind friend," she said, "father died in May this year. The note that I looked at was dated in June!" And I stood and stared at her like a fool. I suppose I looked a bit cut up, for she stroked my arm gently.

"You dear, good fellow!" she said. She seemed to have grown from a child into a woman in a few minutes. "I can't take them, but it will help me to be a better girl, to have known someone like you!"

"Like me!" I said, and laughed. "I'm just—just a rough, money-grubbing Jew. That's all I am."

She shook her head like mad.

"You may say what you like," she told me; "but you can't alter what I think. You're good—good—good!"

Then I told her just what had happened.

"So, you see, you owe me nothing," I wound up.

She wiped her eyes and took hold of me by the sleeve.

"I will tell you what I owe you," she said. "Food when I was hungry; kindness when I was wretched; your time, your care—yes, and the risk of your life. If you had had your way you would have given me all that money. You—Mr. Levy, you say that it is just a matter of business. What profit did you expect to make?"

"I expected—to make you happy," I said; and she looked up at me suddenly; and I saw what I saw. "Little girl!" I cried. "May I try? In another way."

I held out my arms, and she dropped into them.

"My profits!" I said.

"Oh!" she cried. "I hope so. I will try—try—try!"

Mr. Levy offered me a fresh cigar and took another himself.

"It's a class of profit that's difficult to estimate," he remarked. "I had a difficulty with Isaac over the matter. You see he has 5 per cent. over the business that he introduces, but that was only meant for small transactions, I argued. He argued that there were no profits at all; not meaning any disrespect to her, but holding that there was no money in it; or, if there was, it was a loss because I'd have to keep her, and nobody knew how a wife would turn out. She held much the same, except that she was sure she was going to turn out good; but she thought I ought to find some plan of doing something for Isaac. We settled it that way. He wanted to get married, so I gave him a rise and let them have the rooms over the shop to live in; and there they are now."

"And how do you reckon the profits yourself?" I asked.

"Well," he said "in these last eight years I've cleared forty thousand pounds, though you wouldn't think it in this little shop. I reckon that I cleared a good bit more over that ditty-box. Come round to my house one evening, and I'll introduce you to her."

## An Idyll of the Summer

By ANNIE E.P. SEARING

THE minister of Blue Mountain Church, and the minister's wife, were enjoying their first autumn fire, and the presence of the cat on the hearth between them.

"He came home this afternoon," the minister's wife was saying, "while I was picking those last peppers in the garden, and he jumped on my shoulder and purred against my ear as unconcernedly as if he'd only been for a stroll in the lower pasture, instead of gone for three months—the little wretch!"

"It does seem extraordinary"—the minister unbent his long legs and recrossed them carefully, in order to remove his foot from the way of the tawny back where it stretched out in blissful elongation—"very extraordinary, that an animal could lead that sort of double life, disappearing completely when summer comes and returning promptly with the fall. I daresay it's a reversion to the old hunting instinct. No doubt we could find him if we knew how to trail him on the mountains."

"The strangest thing about it is that this year and last he came back fat and sleek—always before, you know, he has been so gaunt and starved looking in the fall." She leaned over and stroked the cat under his chin; he purred deeply in response, and looked up into her eyes, his own like wells of unfathomed speech. "I have an eerie feeling," she said, "that if he could talk he'd have great things to tell."

The minister laughed, and puffed away at his corn-cob pipe. "Tales of the chase, my dear, of hecatombs of field-mice and squirrels!"

But she shook her head. "Not this summer—that cat has spent these last two summers with human beings who have treated him as a kind of fetich—just as we do!" As she rubbed his ear she murmured regretfully: "To think of all you've heard and seen and done, and you can't tell us one thing!"

The Yellow Cat's eyes narrowed to mere slits of black across two amber agates; then he shook his ears free, yawned, and gave himself up to closed lids and dreams. If he could have told it all, just as it happened, not one word of it could those good souls have comprehended—and this was the way of it.

It was near the close of a June day when the cat made his entrance into that hidden life of the summers from which his exits had been as sudden, though less dramatic. In the heart of the hills, where a mountain torrent has fretted its way for miles through a rocky gorge, there is a place where the cleft widens into a miniature valley, and the stream slips along quietly between banks of moss before it plunges again on its riotous path down the mountain. Here the charcoal-burners, half a century ago, had made a clearing, and left their dome-shaped stone kiln to cover itself with the green velvet and lace of lichen and vine. The man who was stooping over the water, cleaning trout for his supper, had found it so and made it his own one time in his wandering quest for solitude. The kiln now boasted a chimney, a door, and one wide window that looked away over the stream's next plunge, over other mountains and valleys to far horizons of the world of men. This was the hermitage to which he brought his fagged-out nerves from the cormorant city that feeds on the blood and brains of humans. Here through the brief truce of summer he found time to fish and hunt enough for his daily wants, time to read, to write, time to dream and to smoke his evening pipe, to think long thoughts, and more blessed than all—to sleep! When autumn came he would go back with renewed life and a pile of manuscript to feed to his hungry cormorant. He was chewing the cud of contentment as he bent to his fish cleaning, when, glancing to one side where the fire, between stones, was awaiting his frying-pan, he caught sight among the bushes of two gleaming eyes, and then the sleek back and lashing tail of the Yellow Cat. The man, being a cat lover was versed in their ways, so for a time he paid no attention, then began to talk softly.

"If you'd come out of that," he said, as he scraped the scales, "and not sit there watching me like a Comanche Indian, I'd invite you to supper!"

Whether it was the tone of his voice or the smell of the fish that conquered, the tawny creature was suddenly across the open with a rush and on the stooping shoulders. That was the beginning of the companionship that lasted until fall. The next season brought the animal as unexpectedly, and they took up the old relation where it had left off the previous summer. They trudged together through miles of forest, sometimes the cat on the man's shoulder, but often making side excursions on his own account and coming back with the proud burden of bird or tiny beast. Together they watched the days decline in red and gold glory from the ledge where the stream drops over the next height, or when it rained, companioned each other by the hearth in the hut. There was between them that satisfying and intimate communion of inarticulate speech only possible between man and beast.

There came a day when the man sat hour after hour over his writing, letting the hills call in vain. The cat slept himself out, and when paws in the ink and tracks over the paper proved of no avail, he jumped down and marched himself haughtily off through the door and across the clearing to the forest, tail in air. Late that afternoon the man was arrested midway of a thought rounding into phrase by the sudden darkness. There was a fierce rush of wind, as if some giant had sighed

and roused himself. The door of the hut slammed shut and the blast from the window scattered the papers about the floor. As he went to pull down the sash the cat sprang in, shaking from his feet the drops of rain already slanting in a white sheet across the little valley. At the same moment there was a "halloo" outside, and a woman burst open the door, turning quickly to shut out behind her the onrush of the shower and the biting cold of the wind. She stood shaking the drops from her hair, and then she looked into the astonished face of the man and laughed.

She was as slim and straight as a young poplar, clad in white shirt-waist and khaki Turkish trousers with gaiters laced to the knee. Her hair was blown about in a red-gold snarl, and her eyes looked out as unabashed as a boy's. The two stared at each other for a time in silence, and finally it was the woman who spoke first.

"This isn't exactly what I call a warm welcome—not just what the cat led me to expect! It was really the cat who brought me—I met him over on Slide Mountain—he fled and I pursued, and now here we are!"

She made a hasty survey of the hut, and then of its owner, putting her head on one side as she looked about her with a quick, bird-like movement, he still staring in stupefaction.

"Of course you detest having me here, but you won't put me out in the rain, again, will you?"

At once he was his courteous self. With the same motion he dumped the astonished cat from the cushioned chair by the writing table, and drew it forward to the fire. Then he threw on a fresh stick of pine that flared up in a bright blaze, and with deferring gentleness took the sweater that hung from her shoulders and hung it to dry over a section of tree-trunk that served as a chimney seat.

"You are as welcome to my hut as any princess to her palace," he smiled on her, "indeed, it is yours while you choose to stay in it!"

"Don't you think," she made reply, as he drew another chair up opposite to her, "that under the circumstances we might dispense with fine speeches? It is hardly, I suppose, what one would call a usual situation, is it?"

He looked at her as she stretched her small feet comfortably to the blaze, her face quite unconcerned.

"No," he acquiesced, "it certainly is not usual—or I should hate it—the 'usual' is what I fly from!"

She threw back her head, clasping her hands behind it as she laughed. She seemed to luxuriate as frankly in the heat and the dryness as the cat between them.

"And I"—she turned the comprehension of her eyes upon him—"I cross the ocean every year in the same flight!"

The storm drove leaves and flying branches against the window, while they sat, for what seemed a long time, in contented silence. He found himself as openly absorbing her charm as if she had been a tree or a mountain sunset, while she was making further tours of inspection with her eyes about the room.

"It is entirely adorable," she smiled at him, "but it piques my curiosity!"

"Ask all the questions you wish—no secrets here."

"Then what, if you please, is the object I see swung aloft there in the dome?"

"My canvas hammock which I lower at night to climb into and go to bed, and pull up in the daytime to clear the decks."

"And the big earthen pot in the fireplace—it has gruesome suggestions of the 'Forty Thieves!'"

"Only a sort of perpetual hot-water tank. The fire never quite goes out on this domestic hearth, and proves a very acceptable companion at this high altitude. There is always the kettle on the crane, as you see it there, but limitless hot water is the fine art of housekeeping—but, perhaps you don't know the joy there is to be found in the fine art of housekeeping?"

"No, I do not," her eyes took on a whimsical expression, "but I'd like to learn—anything in the way of a new joy! In the way of small joys I am already quite a connoisseur, indeed I might call myself a collector in that line—of *bibelot* editions, you understand, for thus far I seem to have been unable to acquire any of the larger specimens! Would you be willing to take me on as a pupil in housekeeping?"

"It would add to my employment a crowning joy—not a *bibelot*!"

"Pinchbeck fine speeches again," she shrugged. "Do you stop here all the long summer quite alone?"

"All the 'short summer,'" he corrected, "save for the society of the cat, who dropped down last year from nowhere. He must have approved of the accommodations, for he has chosen me, you see, a second time for a summer resort."

"Yes—I think he was trying to protest about you being his exclusive find, when I invited myself to follow him down the mountain—leading and eluding are so much alike, one is often mistaken, is it

not so?"

She was sitting forward now, chin in hands, elbows on her knees, gazing into the flames where a red banner waved above the back log. When she turned to him again the westering sun had broken through the clouds and was sending a flare of rosy light in at the window. Studying her face more fully, he saw that she was years—fully ten years—older than he had supposed. The boyish grace that sat so lightly was after all the audacious ease of a woman of the world, sure of herself.

"I, too, am living the hermit life for the summer. I am the happy possessor of a throat that demands an annual mountain-cure. Switzerland with its perpetual spectacular note gets on my nerves, so last year we found this region—I and my two faithful old servitors. Do you know the abandoned tannery in the West Branch Clove? That has been fitted up for our use, and there we live the simple life as I am able to attain it—but you have so far outdone me that you have filled my soul with discontent!"

"Alas," said the man, "you have served me the very same trick! I could almost wish—"

"That I had not come!"

"Say, rather, that you would come again!"

She stood up and reached for her sweater, waiting for him to open the door. The round of the little valley was a glittering green bowl filled with pink cloud scuds. They stepped out into a jubilant world washed clean and freshly smiling. She put out her hand in good-bye.

"I almost think I shall come again! If you were a person with whom one could be solitary—who knows!"

When she appeared the next time she found him by the noise of his chopping. They climbed to the top of the moss-covered boulder that hangs poised over the ledge where the stream leaps into the abyss. Below them the hills rolled in an infinite recession of leaf-clad peaks to the sky line, where they melted to a blur of bluish-green mist.

"Oh, these mountains of America!" she cried, "their greenness is a thing of dreams to us who know only bare icy and alps!"

"Far lovelier," he said, "to look down upon than to look up to, I think. To be a part of the height comes pretty near to being happy, for the moment."

She turned from the view to study her companion. The lines in the corners of his kind, tired eyes, the lean, strong figure, hair graying about the temples. He grew a little impatient under it before she spoke.

"Do you know," she said slowly, "I am going to like you! To like you immensely—and to trust you!"

"Thank you, I shall try to be worthy"—even his derision was gentle—"I seem to remember having been trusted before by members of your sex—even liked a little, though not perhaps 'immensely'! At any rate this certainly promises to be an experience quite by itself!"

"Quite by itself," she echoed.

"Wouldn't it be as well for you to know my name, say, as a beginning?"

"No," she nodded, "that's just what I don't want! I only want to know you. Names are extraneous things—tags, labels—let us waive them. If I tell you how I feel about this meeting of ours will you try to understand me?"

The answer was less in words than in the assent of his honest gray eyes.

"I have been surfeited all my life," she went on, "with love—I want no more of it! The one thing I do want, more than anything else, is a man friend. I have thought a great deal about such a friendship—the give and take on equal terms, the sexless companionship of mind—what it could be like!"

He brushed the twigs from the lichens between them and made no answer.

"Fate—call the power what you will"—she met the disclaimer that puckered the corners of his mouth—"fate brought us together. It was the response to my longing for such a friendship!"

"It was the Yellow Cat!"

"The Yellow Cat plus fate! While I sat there by your fire I recognized you for that friend!"

Far below over the tree tops cloud shadows and sunlight were playing some wonderful game of follow-my-leader; a hawk hung poised on tilting wings; and on the veil of mist that was the spirit of the brook where it cast itself from the ledge curved the arch of a rainbow. The man pointed to the augury.

"You might try me," he said, and they shook hands on the compact, laughing half shamefacedly at their own solemnity.

"As woman to woman," he offered.

"Let it be rather as man to man," she shrugged.

"As you like—as women we should have to begin by explaining ourselves."

"Precisely, and men companion each other on impersonal grounds."

"Then it is a man's friendship?"

"Better still," she mused, "we'll pattern it after the ideals of the disembodied! We'll make this summer, you and I together, a gem from the heart of life—I will have it so!"

So it came about that like two children they played together, worked, walked, or read and talked by the open fire when cold storms came. Every morning she came over the wood-road that led by winding ways from her valley, and at sunset she went back over the trail alone. He might go as far as the outlook half way over the mountain where the path begins to go down, but no farther; as for any fear, she seemed to know nothing of its workings, and the revolver she wore in a case that hung from her belt was a mere convention.

One morning she came with eyes dancing—it was to be an especial day—a fête—and the gods had smiled on her planning and given them perfect weather. Never such sunshine, such crystal air, such high-hung clouds! Breakfast over, they hurried about the miniature housework, and packed the kit for a long day's tramp. Then they started forth, the cat following, tail aloft. Beyond a dim peak, where the clove opens southward, by the side of a tiny lake they lunched and took their noonday rest. She watched the smoke curl up from his pipe where he lay at peace with the scheme of things.

"Do you know, Man, dear," she said, "I am glad I don't in the least guess who you are! I have no doubt you write the most delightful stories in the world—but never put me in one, please!"

He took the pipe out of his mouth and looked at her long before he replied.

"Woman, dear," he said, "I have put you in a place—your own place—and it is not in my novels!"

She scrambled to her feet laughing.

"It's very well to make stories, but it is really more diverting to live them! Come, I must lead you now with your eyes shut tight to my surprise!"

So hand in hand they went along a smooth green wood-road until she stopped him.

"Look," she cried, "now look!"

Straight away till the road narrowed to a point of light against the sky where the mountain dipped down, banks of mountain laurel rose on either side in giant hedges of rose and white, while high above them waved the elms and beeches of the forest.

"It is the gardening of the gods!"

"It is my own treasure-trove! I found it last year and I have been waiting to bring you to it on my fête—what you call birthday! And now wish me some beautiful thing—it may come true! There is a superstition in my country—but I shall not tell you—unless the wish comes true!"

He broke off a spray of the waxen buds and crowned her solemnly where she stood.

"I have already wished for you—the most beautiful thing in the world!"

She shook her head, sorrowful. "Man, dear, the only thing in all the world I still want is the impossible!"

"Only the impossible is worth while—and I have wished!"

She shook her head again, laughing a little ruefully. "It could not arrive—my impossible—and yet you almost tempt me to hope!"

"Anything—everything may arrive! You once thought that such a friendship as this of ours could not, and lo, we have achieved it!"

"I wonder"—her eyes seemed fixed on some far prospect, a world beyond the flowery way—"I wonder if we have! And I wonder why you have never made a guess about my world when you have at least let me get a peep now and then into yours?"

"I don't care a rap about your 'world,'" he smiled into her eyes, "while I have you!"

"No curiosity about my—my profession?"

"Not a bit—though it was clear enough from the first that it was the stage!"

She made an odd little outcry at his powers of divination.

"Then I must look it—before the footlights from my birth! Since you are so clever, Mr. Man, will you also be merciful when you come to weigh me in those scales you try to hide beneath the garment of your kindness? Think, when you judge me, what it is for a woman never to be herself—always to have to play a part!"

He reached and took her hand suddenly, drawing her to him with a movement that was almost



rough.

"This is no play acting—this is real! No footlights—no audience—only you and me in all this world!"

But she drew away, insistently aloof. She would have none of his caresses.

"This, too," she said, as she moved apart and stood waiting for him to follow, "is a part of the play—I do not deceive myself! When I go back to my world—my trade, I shall remember this little time that you and I have snatched from the grudging grasp of life as an act—a scene only! It's a perfect pastoral, Man, dear, but unreal—absurdly unreal—and we know it ourselves while we play the game!"

Down through the flower-bordered vista the cat went stalking his prey, his sinuous body a tawny streak winding along the green path. These trivial humans, with their subtle attractions and compunctions, were as though they never had been when the chase was on—the real business and purpose of life!

For the rest of the time they were together they avoided the personal. Each felt the threat in the air and tacitly averted it. For that one perfect day there should be no past, no future, nothing but the golden present.

Swinging in his breeze-rocked hammock between door and window the man lay awake through the long watches of the night, thinking, thinking, while his heart sang. Toward dawn he fell into a deep sleep from which he was only awakened by the cat springing up to lick his face in reminder of breakfast.

It was when he came back from his plunge in the pool that he first noticed a paper pinned to his door-post. Within its folds his doom was penned!

"Even you, dear Man, could not wish me the impossible! That superstition of my country is that to come true it must be the first wish of your fête day—and by one who loves you! Alas, my old servant had already wished—that he might get me started for home to-day! Clever Friedrich—for he had also packed! When you read this I shall be far on my way. You could never find me though you searched the earth—but you will never try! It is well as it is, for you see—it was not friendship after all!"

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And yet there was a sequel. During the following year there dropped to the man in his hard-pressed literary life, one of those errant plums from the political tree that now and then find their way to the right basket. He was named for an excellent diplomatic post. His friends congratulated him and talked a good deal about "material" and opportunities for "unique local color;" his wife chattered unceasingly about gowns and social details, while he armed himself, with the listless reticence that was become habit, to face new responsibilities and rather flavorless experiences. He had so withdrawn himself of late to the inner creative life that he moved in a kind of phantasmagoria of outer unrealities. It was the nearest to a comfortable adjustment for the mis-mating of such a marriage as his, but it was not the best of preparations for the discharge of public duties, and he walked toward his new future with reluctant feet, abstractedly. In some such mood as this, his mind bent on a problem of arrangement of fiction puppets, seeing "men as trees walking," he found himself one day making his bows at a court function. Along the line of royal highnesses and grand duchesses with his wife he moved, himself a string-pulled puppet, until—but who, in heaven's name is this?

For one mad moment, as he looked into her eyes, he thought the tightened cord he sometimes felt tugging at his tired brain had snapped, and the images of sight and memory gone hopelessly confused. She stood near the end of the line with the princesses of secondary rank, and the jewels in her hair were not more scintillant than her eyes as he bent over her hand. She went a little pale, but she greeted him bravely, and when they found themselves unobserved for a moment she spoke to him in her soft, careful English:

"You recognized me, you remember, for a play actor, and now you are come from the world's end to see me perform on my tiny stage! Alas, dear critic, since my last excursion, I am no longer letter perfect in my part!"

They met but once again. It was in the crush of guests in the great hall where her old Prince, in the splendor of his decoration-covered coat, was waiting to hand her to her carriage. There was a brief time in which to snatch the doubtful sweetness of a few hurried words. She was leaving in the early morning for the petty Balkan province where her husband held a miniature sway, over a handful of half-savage subjects. Hardly more than a renewal of greeting and a farewell, and she was gone!

As the old Prince wrapped her more carefully in her furs, and the carriage rolled away in the darkness, he spoke to her, somewhat puzzled:

"I should be sorry to think the American Ambassador has been taking too much wine—as you well know, my knowledge of the barbarous English tongue is but limited, and yet—I thought, as I joined you, he was talking some farrago of nonsense about a *Yellow Cat!*"

That year the Yellow Cat came home lean and gaunt, a chastened, humble creature, as one who has failed in a long quest, and is glad to stretch his weary length before the hearth and reap the neglected benefits of the domestic life.

"It is really very odd" said the minister, quite as if he were saying something he had never thought of saying before, "where that cat goes in the summer!"

"Isn't it?" responded the minister's wife—just as she always did. "It fires the imagination! He walks off some fine morning and completely shuts the door on our life here—as if he gave us notice not to pry into his movements. But this time"—she was leaning to stroke the tawny sides with a pitying touch—"this time you may be sure something very sad and disappointing happened to him—something in that other life went quite wrong! How I wish we could understand what it was!"

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## V

### A COCK AND POLICEMAN

#### A Tale of Rural England

By RALPH KAYE ASSHETON

IT HAPPENED up in Lancashire, and the truth can be vouched for by at least half a hundred spectators. It fell in this wise: Bob O' Tims owned a game-cock which was the envy of the whole street for lustre of coloring and soundness of wind. Its owner was almost unduly proud of his possession, and would watch it admiringly as it stalked majestically about among its family of hens.

"There's a cock for you!" he would say, with a little wave of his pipe. "There's not many cocks like that one. The king himself has got nothing like it down at Windsor Castle."

Now, Jimmy Taylor had always been a rival of Bob O' Tims's. Jimmy's grandfather had fought at the Battle of Waterloo. This gave him great prestige, and it was almost universally believed, in Chellowdene, that the preëminence of the British Empire was mainly due to the battle-zeal of Jimmy's ancestry. But whenever Jimmy talked about his grandfather, Bob skilfully turned the conversation to his game-cock. This made Jimmy testy, and one day he told Bob, in contemptuous tones, that "he'd be even wi' him yet, in the matter o' game-cocks, as well as everything else."

That was one Monday evening, and the following Wednesday Bob O' Tims's cock disappeared. When Bob discovered his loss, his face went quite pale with anger. Without a word, he flung on his cap and set off for Jimmy Taylor's cottage.

When he reached it, he went still whiter. For Jimmy was sitting at the door, and up and down the yard in front of him strutted a magnificent game-cock.

Bob O' Tims stretched out his forefinger, pointed at the cock, and with a stubborn look forming about his mouth and jaw, observed:

"Yon's mine."

"It isn't," responded Jimmy. "It's mine."

"I tell thee, yon's mine. Yo've prigged it."

"It's mine! I bought it at th' fair."

"Thee never bought yon cock at any fair. It's mine, I tell thee."

Words grew high between the disputants, as the cock, in all its bronze and golden splendor, marched up and down the yard, until the argument between the two men terminated in a quarrel so violent that half-a-dozen neighbors came in to see what was the matter. It ended in Bob O' Tims insisting that he would take the matter into court. He was as good as his word, and the next time that the bench met, Bob O' Tims summoned Jimmy Taylor on a charge of having stolen his game-cock.

The magistrates listened to the witnesses on either side. Half-a-dozen people were ready to swear that the cock belonged to Bob. But Jimmy brought up a couple of witnesses to testify that they had seen him buy a similar animal at Turton Fair. The cock was then brought into court. It clucked and choked indignantly, and the partisans of Bob and Jimmy swore against each other as hard as ever they could. The bench appeared perplexed; and it was owing to their inability to come to any decision that the magistrate's clerk made his famous suggestion.

"The case appears to me impossible to prove as it stands, your worships," he said to the bench. "I would suggest, if I may be allowed, that you direct an officer of the court to take the cock to some spot at an equal distance between the houses of the plaintiff and of the defendant. If he is there

placed upon the ground, and left to his own devices, he is pretty sure to make his way straight home."

The magistrates accepted the suggestion of the clerk, and gave judgment accordingly. A policeman was ordered to carry out their instructions. Now, this officer was young and raw, and had only recently been enrolled in the constabulary. He was a fat, rosy man, with an air of self-importance. He set out from the court with the cock under his arm. An excited crowd streamed after the policeman, who stalked on with no little pomposity. When he reached the common, which lay between the houses of the rival claimants, he stood still for a minute or two, grasping the cock and looking judiciously from one side of the broken land to the other.

The crowd eagerly commenced to give information.

"You're a bit nearer Bob O' Tims's than you are to Jimmy's!" cried one.

"Nay! Nay!" interposed another spectator, who was a partisan of Bob O' Tims. "There's a corner to turn afore you get to Bob's. It's not fair, not to make allowance for that."

"Stand back!" cried the policeman majestically—"Stand back, every man of you. The critter will be too much put about to go anywhere if you don't keep still tongues in your heads."

The officer still stood, with his legs wide apart, turning his head slowly from side to side. Once he made a pace in the direction of Jimmy Taylor's; then, changing his mind, he took a couple of steps toward Bob O' Tims's. Finally, he decided that he had fixed upon the exact locality commanded by the law, and with a magisterial air, he again waved back the crowd and deposited the cock upon the ground in front of him.

Everybody held their breath. The first thing that the cock did was to shake himself until he resembled nothing so much as a living mop. Then he began to smooth his feathers down again. Then he stretched his neck, flapped his wings and crowed. Finally, with a blink of his bright eyes, which almost appeared like a wink to the hushed and expectant crowd, he made two solemn steps with his slender legs in the direction of Jimmy Taylor's cottage.

"He's going to Jimmy's!" exclaimed the crowd with one voice.

"Can't you all be quiet for a moment or two," interposed the policeman, indignantly. "I tell you, if you don't keep still, you'll upset the critter's mind, and make the magistrates' decision just good for nothing."

The crowd appeared ashamed and relapsed once more into silence.

The policeman stood erect and tall, a few paces in front of them, watching the cock with great solemnity. It was standing still now, jerking its neck a little. Then it looked round, and, retracing its paces, began stepping slowly off in the opposite direction.

"It's going to Bob's!" cried the crowd.

But the cock was doing no such thing; it paused again, scratching in an imaginary dust-heap, and then, with a loud crow, stretched its wings and flew up into a small tree.

This was disconcerting. The policeman turned with anger upon the crowd.

"I told you you were not giving the critter a chance!" he exclaimed. "You'd best be off home. Come, move on! Move on!"

The crowd retreated, but it had no intention of going home. Some of those less interested strolled away, but the partisans of Bob and Jimmy remained at a little distance, eagerly watching to see what would happen next.

The cock, after jerking his head round several times, settled down comfortably among his feathers, and went to sleep in the tree.

This was altogether beyond the expectancy of the policeman. Not knowing what else to do, he sat down on a broken bit of fence under the tree and waited.

The day advanced. The cock slept on and the policeman began to doze. Now and then he awoke with a start, and looked up at the obstinate biped above his head. Presently the man got down from the fence and shook himself.

The partisans of Bob and Jimmy still remained at a discreet distance, watching the progress of events. The policeman stood still for a few moments, staring at the cock; then he approached the small, stumpy tree and clapped his hands vigorously.

The cock woke up, gurgled, and went to sleep again.

The policeman clapped his hands a second time, and then with shrill indignation the creature flew down from the tree, and set off in the direction of the distant moors.

The proceedings promptly assumed the aspect of a hunt. The cock ran along with outstretched wings and neck, and the policeman and the crowd ran after it. At last it reached a small cottage, belonging to a widow of the name of Gammer. Exerting a final effort, it flew up toward her open window and ensconced itself on the top of the good woman's tester-bed.

Now Mrs. Gammer was a woman of character. She heard the noise outside; and when the breathless policeman arrived at the door of her kitchen, she was wiping the soapsuds off her plump red arms, ready for any dispute or fray. She stood with her arms held akimbo, as the man in blue explained his errand. When he had finished his recital she looked at him defiantly.

"And I should like to know what you call yourself, policeman or no policeman, to be chasing a poor harmless critter across 'em blazing commons on a day like this! You want to go and poke him down from my tester-bed, do you? Well, you can just go back and tell the magistrates as Mrs. Gammer's got him, and if they want him they must come for him themselves."

This was direct defiance of the law, and the policeman commenced a remonstrance. His remarks were, however, cut short by Mrs. Gammer.

"I have always said as magistrates was as ignorant as babies, and I only wish that they was as harmless," she persisted, in open contempt of the government of her country. "You can go back, and tell 'em as Mrs. Gammer says so. My house is my house, magistrate or no magistrate, and I won't have any policeman messing about on the top of my tester-bed."

The policeman was not certain whether the authority which had been entrusted to him in the matter would justify his making a deliberate prisoner of Mrs. Gammer. And, as she showed every sign of resorting to violence, should he attempt to pass the door, which she barred with her stout figure, he decided upon beating a retreat. He went outside again and reasserted his shattered dignity by once more driving away the crowd; then, not knowing what else to do, he returned to the police station and reported the matter to the chief constable.

The chief laughed, and so did everybody else who heard the story. The policeman was directed to return to Mrs. Gammer's cottage later in the day, and serve her with an order requiring her to give up the cock immediately. But when he handed Mrs. Gammer the official paper, she laughed in his face.

"You can look round the house for the cock now if you like," she said contemptuously, slapping down the order upon the table, "and you can see if you can find him."

"Is he still on the top of your tester-bed?" demanded the policeman.

"Go and look," responded Mrs. Gammer, with a snort. "You can take the turk's-head brush and brush him down!"

So, armed with the turk's-head brush, the policeman ascended Mrs. Gammer's small, steep staircase. When he reached her bedroom, he poked into every cranny and corner with the handle of his brush. But no cock was to be found.

He descended the stairs, and stood again in the little kitchen. A savory smell of cooking arose from a stew-pan on the fire.

"Where's the critter gone to?" he demanded.

"How should I know?" replied Mrs. Gammer testily.

The policeman, still standing in the kitchen, wished that Mrs. Gammer would give him an invitation to supper. The widow glanced up sharply at him and saw what was in his mind.

"You'd like some supper, I make no doubt, after your wild-goose chase," she said. "Sit down at t' table and take a bit o' stew."

The policeman seated himself with alacrity. The stew which Mrs. Gammer placed before him consisted of a mixture of barley, onions and some white meat. He ate a hearty supper, and when he stood up he drew his hands across his mouth.

"Thank you kindly," he said. "I must be off now, and see where that cock has gone to."

Then it was that Mrs. Gammer gave a short and derisive laugh. She began to pile up the empty plates and to put the spoons and forks in the basin by the sink.

"If you go a-chasing of that cock until you are black and blue in the face," she said, "you'll never find him. And the reason why, is that you have just helped to eat him up."

"I have eat him up!" he gasped.

"Aye," responded Mrs. Gammer, with brevity. "I made him into soup!"

The policeman remained open-mouthed, staring at the impenitent widow.

"You'd no business ever to do such a thing," he said. "The cock belonged to the Law."

"I care nowt for your Law," retorted Mrs. Gammer. "Anyway you've helped to eat him!"

A vague sense of cannibalism was haunting the policeman's mind; he felt almost as dismayed as if he had made a hearty supper off the magistrate's clerk himself.

"You're a very wicked woman," he said to Mrs. Gammer. "And—and—"

He broke off, entirely nonplussed by the situation in which he found himself. Mrs. Gammer continued to wash up the spoons and forks with utter indifference to his consternation.

"The cock's eat up, and there's an end of it," she said. "You'd best go and tell the magistrates all about it."

Sheepish and disconcerted, the policeman slunk home. The next morning the chief asked him if he had served the order on Mrs. Gammer.

"I—served it," said he, scratching his head.

"And did you get the bird given up?" demanded his superior officer.

"No, I can't say as I did," replied the policeman.

"Was it still on the top of the tester-bed?" pursued his awkward questioner.

"No. It was not on the tester-bed," replied the policeman.

"Then where was it?" insisted the chief.

For several seconds the policeman was silent, then he told a lie.

"I canna say," he answered, "it war gone."

The chief shrugged his shoulders, and sent the man about the business of the day. The next time that the magistrates met, the question of Bob O' Tims's cock was again brought into court. The magistrate's clerk demanded if the case were settled.

To the great relief of the policeman, who was waiting in attendance, Bob O' Tims spoke up from the spot where he stood.

"Jim hadna stolen my cock after all, sir," he said, "for it came home the next morning."

"Then what happened to the cock that was brought into court on Tuesday?" demanded the magistrate's clerk. But nobody seemed to know.

Only, people used to wonder why Widow Gammer almost always gave a peculiar kind of snort when she spoke of Police Constable X, and why that worthy officer avoided her cottage ever after, and invariably turned down a side street if he saw the widow within speaking distance of him.

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## VI

### PRISONERS IN THE TOWER

#### An Episode of Travel

By LUCY COPINGER

"IN THE words of Macaulay this, ladies and gentleman, is the saddest spot on earth." The white-haired old Tower guard in charge of the little chapel of Saint Peter waved his hand impressively toward the open door. "Through that door"—the heads of the American tourists who were doing the Tower all turned in unison—"you may see the block upon which many a royal head has rested, and beneath these very stones lie buried two dukes between two queens—Dukes of Northumberland and of Somerset, with the Queens Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard—all beheaded."

The chapel was a crypt-like place, windowless, dark, and musty, and at this mournful climax one of the tourists who was nervous moved suddenly off that particular stone upon which she had been standing; the school teachers out for self-improvement began to write it all in their notebooks, while a stout matron evidently of good old Dutch stock looked sadly down at the flat, gray stones. "Poor things!" she murmured, "and there ain't one of them got a respectable white tombstone with a wreath carved on it." Then, in their usual two-by-two line, the party moved down the aisle wearily, but triumphant in the fact that they had succeeded in doing the Tower, the Abbey, and the Museum all in one day. Peggy Wynne, in demurely severe blue suit and jaunty panama, lagged at the end of the line while she looked critically at her compatriots.

"The animals went out two by two,  
The elephant and the kangaroo,"

she murmured to herself, "and I'm so tired of playing Noah's Ark or a Christian Association out for a lark," she continued in unconscious poetical despair. Then, warned by the attitude of the guard, that wonderful attitude of the haughty Briton in hopes of a tip, she opened her ridiculously tiny gold-linked purse and gave herself up to the absorbing question as to which of the pieces therein was a shilling. Having at last decided this, she presented it to the guard with a dazzling smile. It had been so long since Peggy had had an opportunity to smile at anything masculine that the smile was unusually bright.

She had already passed through the little door when she suddenly turned back. The other

tourists, noses in Baedekers, were hurrying on before, the guard was busily counting his sixpences, and she slipped back into the dim chapel unperceived.

"They'll think I've gone back to those dingy lodgings," she reflected, as she groped her way between the benches into an even more shadowy corner—a little recess, with a tiny niche in the wall, that had probably been the sanctuary of some pious king. She seated herself comfortably behind the pillar in the corner and gazed pensively at the stones.

"Tombs and tombs and tombs!" she murmured mournfully, "even in Paris, instead of Maxim's and the cafes, nothing but tombs! The next time I want to see where anybody is buried I will just go out to the cemetery instead of coming across that dreadful ocean. Oh, just to have one adventure before I go home!" she continued with a long sigh, "a real adventure with a real man in it—not a horrid, womanish Frenchman or a stolid, conceited Britisher, but a nice, safe American—like—like—my American."

Then the dimple in her right cheek that was probably responsible for the calling her Peggy, in spite of her many protests for her rightful dignity of "Margaret," came out suddenly as it always did when she thought of her American. She had called him that from the time when, in the midst of the perplexities of the English luggage system, she had looked up and found him watching her. The cut of his gray suit and his shoes had told her his nationality at once, and they had looked for a moment at each other with that peculiar friendliness that compatriots in a strange land always feel. She had forgotten him until, leaning from a taxi-cab in the Rue de la Paix, she had met the same eyes, this time so unrestrainedly joyful in their recognition that she had suddenly blushed. When, a week later at Calais, as she stood by the rail of the departing Channel steamer she caught a glimpse of him on the dock, he had seemed like an old friend, and before she had thought she had smiled in answer to his lifted hat. She had grown so sure of seeing him that now when they had been in London a week and he had not appeared she found herself suddenly sick of tombs and tourists.

Peggy's day had been a strenuous one of trams, motor-busses, abbeys, and galleries, and though she realized an adventure might probably await her outside, it was pleasant to sit for awhile in the dimness of the quiet chapel. From her recess she could look out through the open doors upon the tragic Tower Green, where in the sunlight two sparrows were frivolously flirting. Even as she watched, the sparrows grew dim, her ridiculously tiny purse slipped from her hand, her head with its thick dark hair dropped against the pillar, and her lashes touched her cheek. After awhile a cautious footfall sounded in the chapel, then somewhere a heavy door closed, and all was still.

When Peggy sat up indignantly with the queer sensation that she had been violently shaken, darkness surrounded her, a darkness so deep that she could not see her hand as she ran it along the bench in front of her. With the movement came remembrance of her surroundings, and also a realization in strained and aching muscles that a stone pillar is not a wise choice for a head-rest.

"Oh!" she gasped painfully.

"Don't be frightened," entreated a voice quite near to her, and out of the lesser darkness a tall black figure rose suddenly.

"I am not at all frightened," said Peggy at once. In spite of the bigness of the figure there was something reassuring in the voice with its crisp, humorous note and its intonation that Peggy at once recognized as American.

"What are you doing here?" she continued, inhospitably addressing the darkness before her.

"I went to sleep" the voice explained, "on the other side of the pillar."

"How silly!" said Peggy, severely, "didn't you see me here?"

"It was a little dim," the voice apologized and, Peggy's silence still condemning, "you should have snored," it continued extenuatingly.

Peggy arose with a dignity that she hoped penetrated the darkness. Then she groped along the bench.

"My purse," she explained anxiously, "and it had a sixpence for tea and two shillings for tips," she continued with an unconscious epitome of the joys of traveling. As she groped along bench and floor she was conscious of assistance from her companion, and just as she grasped the discovered purse she felt purse and hand caught and retained in a firm grip.

"I apologize," he said at once, still however, holding on to her hand, "I thought it was the purse."

Peggy jerked her hand loose indignantly, and speechless with wrath she hurried toward the door only to find that she had mistaken her direction. In her effort to recover her bearings she became hopelessly confused, stumbled noisily over a bench, and fell headlong into the arms of her companion.

"You had better sit down again," he remarked coolly as he returned her to her seat and sat down calmly beside her. As he did so Peggy noted curiously the dim attractive silhouette of his head and the remarkably good line from ear to shoulder.

"I am going at once," she said haughtily, but without moving.

"You can't," the man beside her replied, "and if you promise not to cry or fall over any more

benches I will tell you why—although I myself do not object to the latter," he continued judiciously, "but for the sake of your own bones, merely."

Peggy ignored the last.

"Why can't I go?" she said defiantly.

"Because the door is locked," he explained succinctly.

"We can both scream or you can throw a bench through the window," said Peggy triumphantly.

The unseen laughed a nice laugh that Peggy liked.

"In that latter case, beside the fact that there is no window, we would surely be had up before the head-warden of this old jail. Besides, do you know what time it is?"

"About tea time," said Peggy who had lunched frugally at one of the tea-shops on a cup of tea and a jam roll.

"Just before you woke up," said her companion, "I used my last match—it always is the last in a case like this—to look at my watch. It was half-past twelve. Remember, you promised—" at a warning gurgle from Peggy.

Then suddenly a laugh rang out sweet and clear in the darkness of the musty chapel, a laugh that echoed into the recesses of the old tombs—perhaps in its musical cadences stirring pleasantly the haughty slumber of their noble occupants.

"What are you laughing at?" said the voice suspiciously.

"An adventure at last!" Peggy cried, clapping her hands applaudingly.

"I am glad you take it so cheerfully," returned her companion. "There is only one thing to do," he continued practically, "I thought it out for myself before you woke up and complicated matters by your appearance. Of course with sufficient yelling we can arouse the barrack sentry, and for our pains we'd probably have the whole barrack out to arrest us. There is no way in which you can offend the noble and independent Briton more deeply than by treating lightly his worship of royalty, dead or alive, and we would probably be held for committing *lese majeste* by getting ourselves locked up with the numerous relicts of Henry the Eighth. But if we wait until morning we can run good chances of slipping out unperceived with the first crowd of tourists."

"I feel just like the little princes in the Tower, or Queen Mary or Charlotte Corday," murmured Peggy in ecstatic historical confusion, "or somebody noble and romantic and beheaded. I think I shall play at being Queen Mary. I once learned a piece about her. It was very sad, but I always stuck at the fifth line and had to sit down. Since we have to stay here till morning we might as well amuse ourselves and you may be Rizzio."

"Who was he?" asked her companion sceptically, "sounds like one of those Italian fellows."

"He was Queen Mary's chaperon," Peggy explained vaguely, "and he sang her love songs."

"Good," said the voice agreeably.

"Can't you think of something else for me?" said the unseen, gloomily appalled by the prospect of having doughnut recipes pronounced over his remains.

"How would you like to be Darnley?" said Peggy. "He was her husband." "I'll be Darnley," came from the darkness so decidedly that Peggy jumped.

"You have to get blown-up right off," she hastened to add. "Darnley did."

"Oh he did, did he?" the voice spoke with deeper gloom.

"Queen Mary did it," added Peggy.

"Well, even in the Dark Ages matrimony seems to have given your sex the same privileges," philosophized her companion cynically.

"How mean!" said Peggy coldly, "I shall play at being Elizabeth all alone."

"It wouldn't suit you," said her discarded leading man, "not with your voice."

"Why not?" said Peggy.

"Because it's not hard and cold and metallic enough. Because it has too much womanly sweetness in it and not enough harsh masculinity."

"What a good dramatic critic you would make!" said Peggy a little spitefully, "and since you are reading voices I can tell quite well by yours that you are fat and red faced."

The man laughed.

"And by the same token you are all sweetness and blue eyes and dearness and dimples," he punished her. Then the banter in his tones died suddenly out.

"There's something I want to tell you," he said abruptly, with a movement that seemed in the darkness like a sudden squaring of his shoulders. "But first I want you to tell me your name."

"What a sudden descent from romance and poetry to mere stupid facts," hedged Peggy. "Think, in this atmosphere of royalties if it should be Bridget, or, still more horrible, Mamie."

"Please," the voice persisted in its gravity, "we have been fellow-prisoners, you know, and you should be kind."

Peggy told him with the full three-syllabled dignity of the "Margaret."

"Mine," he continued, "is John Barrett."

"Now," cried Peggy, "if this were a proper adventure we have reached the place when I should be able to say, 'Why! not the Jack Barrett that Brother Billy knew at Harvard?' Then you would cry, 'And this is my old chum William's little sister Peggy that used to send him fudge!' and then everything would be all right. But I haven't any brother at all," she finished regretfully.

"And Harvard wasn't my college," said her companion. "However," he went on, "it would take more than the conventional backing of many brother Billies to put me right with you after I've told you what I have to tell you."

"Then don't do it," said Peggy softly.

"If I didn't know you'd find it out in a very few minutes I wouldn't," he confessed shamelessly. "But before I tell you I want you to know what finding you here meant to me. You've got to realize the temptation before you can understand the fall. You always got away from me, from that first time in Liverpool——"

"Oh!" said Peggy with a gasp.

"And at Paris and at Calais when you smiled adorably at me——"

"I didn't" said Peggy, blushing in the darkness.

"When you didn't smile adorably at me, then," pursued the voice relentlessly. "It was always the same. I found you and you were gone—snatched away by an unkind fate in the form of your man from Cook's. When you sailed away from me at Calais I was booked to leave that same day from Antwerp, but I came on here after you instead. London is small—the American tourist London, that is—the Abbey, the Museum, the galleries, and the Tower, but I seemed to miss you everywhere. It was fate again that sent me here to find you asleep in the corner."

"Now I know you are going to tell something very foolish," said Peggy reflectively, "when people begin to talk about fate like that you always find they are just trying to shift the responsibility."

"I want you to know it wasn't premeditated, however," pursued the voice. "It wasn't till the guard shut the door that I thought of it. You will believe that, won't you?" he pleaded.

The dimple appeared suddenly in Peggy's cheek. There came an echo from without of many footsteps.

"And so," she took up the tale quickly, "having nicely planned it all out you shook me rudely to wake me up, told me the door was locked, and that it was midnight when it was only four in the afternoon. And it wasn't at all necessary to shake me so hard," she continued, "because I woke up when you came in."

"Peggy you knew!" the voice cried with a sudden realization, "you knew and you stayed!" He caught her hand, and in the darkness she could feel his nearness. Then suddenly the door opened letting into the chapel a flood of bright sunlight. "Ladies and gentlemen," the sonorous voice of the old guard came to them, "this, in the words of Macaulay, is the saddest spot on earth," continued the mournful recital, even as, in happy contradiction, Peggy and her American, secure in their little recess, looked blissfully into each other's eyes.

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## VII

### SANKEY'S DOUBLE-HEADER

#### A Winter's Tale

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

THE oldest man in the train service didn't pretend to say how long Sankey had worked for the company. Pat Francis was a very old conductor; but old man Sankey was a veteran when Pat Francis began braking. Sankey ran a passenger train when Jimmie Brady was running—and Jimmie afterward enlisted and was killed in the Custer fight.

There was an odd tradition about Sankey's name. He was a tall, swarthy fellow, and carried the blood of a Sioux chief in his veins. It was in the time of the Black Hills excitement, when railroad men, struck by the gold fever, were abandoning their trains even at way-stations and striking across the divide for Clark's Crossing. Men to run the trains were hard to get, and Tom Porter,



trainmaster, was putting in every man he could pick up without reference to age or color. Porter (he died at Julesburg afterward) was a great "jollier," and he wasn't afraid of anybody on earth. One day a war party of Sioux clattered into town and tore around like a storm. They threatened to scalp everything, even to the local tickets. They dashed in on Tom Porter, sitting in the despatcher's office upstairs, while the despatcher was hiding below, under a loose plank in the baggage-room floor. Tom, being bald as a sand-hill, considered himself exempt from scalping parties anyway. He was working a game of solitaire when they bore down on him, and got them interested in it. That led to a parley, which ended by Porter's hiring the whole band to brake on freight trains. Old man Sankey was said to have been one of that original war party.

Now this is merely a caboose story, told on winter nights when trainmen get stalled in the snow that drifts down from the Sioux country. But what follows is better attested.

Sankey, to start with, had a peculiar name—an unpronounceable, unspellable, unmanageable name. I never heard it, so I can't give it to you; but it was as hard to catch as an Indian pony, and that name made more trouble on the payrolls than all the other names put together. Nobody at headquarters could handle it; it was never turned in twice alike, and they were always writing Tom Porter about the thing. Tom explained several times that it was Sitting Bull's ambassador who was drawing that money, and that he usually signed the pay-roll with a tomahawk. But nobody at Omaha ever knew how to take a joke. The first time Tom went down, he was called in very solemnly to explain again about the name, and being in a hurry and very tired of the whole business, Tom spluttered: "Hang it, don't bother me any more about that name! If you can't read it make it Sankey, and be done with it."

They took Tom at his word. They actually did make it Sankey; and that's how our oldest conductor came to bear the name of the famous singer. And more I may tell you: good name as it was—and is—the Sioux never disgraced it.

I suppose every old traveler on the system knew Sankey. He was not only always ready to answer questions; but, what is more, ready to answer the same question twice. It is that which makes conductors gray-headed and spoils their chances for heaven—answering the same questions over and over again. Children were apt to be startled a bit at first sight of Sankey, he was so dark. But Sankey had a very quiet smile that always made them friends after the first trip through the sleepers, and they sometimes ran about asking for him after he had left the train. Of late years—and this hurts a bit—these very same children, grown ever so much bigger, and riding again to or from California or Japan or Australia, will ask, when they reach the West End, about the Indian conductor. But the conductors who now run the overland trains pause at the question, checking over the date limits on the margins of the coupon tickets, and handing the envelopes back, look at the children, and say quietly: "He isn't running any more."

If you have ever gone over our line to the mountains or to the coast, you may remember at McCloud, where they change engines and set the diner in or out, the pretty little green park to the east of the depot, with a row of catalpa trees along the platform line. It looks like a glass of spring water. If it happened to be Sankey's run and a regular West End day, sunny and delightful, you would be sure to see standing under the catalpas a shy, dark-skinned girl of fourteen or fifteen years, silently watching the preparations for the departure of the Overland. And after the new engine had been backed champing down, and harnessed to its long string of vestibuled sleepers; after the air-hose had been connected and examined; after the engineer had swung out of his cab, filled his cups, and swung in again; after the fireman and his helper had disposed of their slice-bar and shovel and given the tender a final sprinkle, and after the conductor had walked leisurely forward, compared time with the engineer, and cried, "All Abo-o-o-ard!" then, as your coach moved slowly ahead, you might notice, under the receding catalpas, the little girl waving a parasol or a handkerchief at the outgoing train. That is, at Conductor Sankey; for she was his daughter, Neeta Sankey. Her mother was Spanish, and died when Neeta was a wee bit. Neeta and the Limited were Sankey's whole world.

When Georgie Sinclair began pulling the Limited, running west opposite Foley, he struck up a great friendship with Sankey. Sankey, though he was hard to start, was full of early-day stories. Georgie, it seemed, had the faculty of getting him to talk; perhaps because when he was pulling Sankey's train he made extraordinary efforts to keep on time; time was a hobby with Sankey. Foley said he was so careful of it that he let his watch stop when he was off duty just to save time. Sankey loved to breast the winds and the floods and the snows, and if he could get home pretty near on schedule, with everybody else late, he was happy; and in respect of that, as Sankey used to say, Georgie Sinclair could come nearer gratifying Sankey's ambition than any engine-runner we had. Even the firemen used to observe that the young engineer, always neat, looked still neater on the days when he took out Sankey's train.

By and by there was an introduction under the catalpas. After that it was noticed that Georgie began wearing gloves on the engine—not kid gloves, but yellow dogskin; and black silk shirts—he bought them in Denver. Then—such an odd way engineers have of paying compliments—when Georgie pulled into town on Number Two, if it was Sankey's train, the big sky-scraper would give a short, hoarse scream, a most peculiar note, just as it drew past Sankey's house, which stood on the brow of the hill west of the yards. Thus Neeta would know that Number Two and her father, and naturally Mr. Sinclair, were in again, and all safe and sound.

When the railway trainmen held their division fair at McCloud there was a lantern to be voted to the most popular conductor—a gold-plated lantern with a green curtain in the globe. Cal Stewart and Ben Doton, who were very swell conductors and great rivals, were the favorites, and had the

town divided over their chances for winning it. But at the last moment Georgie Sinclair stepped up to the booth and cast a storm of votes for old man Sankey. Doton's friends and Stewart's laughed at first; but Sankey's votes kept pouring in amazingly. The two favorites got frightened; they pooled their issues by throwing Stewart's vote to Doton. But it wouldn't do. Georgie Sinclair, with a crowd of engineers—Cameron, Kennedy, Foley, Bat Mullen, and Burns—came back at them with such a swing that in the final five minutes they fairly swamped Doton. Sankey took the lantern by a thousand votes. But I understood it cost Georgie and his friends a pot of money.

Sankey said all the time that he didn't want the lantern, but just the same he always carried that particular lantern, with his full name, Sylvester Sankey, ground into the glass just below the green mantle. Pretty soon, Neeta being then eighteen, it was rumored that Sinclair was engaged to Miss Sankey, and was going to marry her. And marry her he did; though that was not until after the wreck in the Blackwood gorge after the Big Snow.

It goes by just that name on the West End yet; for never were such a winter and such a snow known on the plains and in the mountains. One train on the northern division was stalled six weeks that winter, and one whole coach was chopped up for kindling wood. The great and desperate effort of the company was to hold open the main line, the artery which connected the two coasts. It was a hard winter on trainmen. Week after week the snow kept falling and blowing. The trick was not to clear the line; it was to keep it clear. Every day we sent out trains with the fear that we should not see them again for a week. Freight we didn't pretend to move; local passenger business had to be abandoned. Coal, to keep our engines and our towns supplied, we had to carry; and after that all the brains and muscle and motive power were centered on keeping One and Two, our through passenger trains, running.

Our trainmen worked like Americans; there were no cowards on our rolls. But after too long a strain men become exhausted, benumbed, indifferent; reckless, even. The nerves give out, and will-power seems to halt on indecision; but decision is the life of the fast train. None of our conductors stood the hopeless fight like Sankey. He was patient, taciturn, untiring; and in a conflict with the elements, ferocious. All the fighting blood of his ancestors seemed to course again in that struggle with the winter king. I can see him yet, on bitter days, standing alongside the track in a heavy pea-jacket and Napoleon boots, a sealskin cap drawn snugly over his straight black hair, watching, ordering, signaling, while Number One, with its frost-bitten sleepers behind a rotary, tried to buck through ten and twenty-foot cuts which lay bank-full of snow west of McCloud.

Not until April did it begin to look as if we should win out. A dozen times the line was all but choked on us. And then, when snow-plows were disabled and train crews desperate, there came a storm that discounted the worst blizzard of the winter. As the reports rolled in on the morning of the 5th, growing worse as they grew thicker, Neighbor, dragged out, played out, mentally and physically, threw up his hands. It snowed all day the 6th, and on Saturday morning the section men reported thirty feet in the Blackwood cañon. It was six o'clock when we got the word, and daylight before we got the rotary against it. They bucked away till noon without much headway, and came in with their gear smashed and a driving-rod fractured. It looked as if we were at last beaten. Number One pulled into McCloud that day eighteen hours late; it was Sankey's and Sinclair's run west.

There was a long council in the round-house. The rotary was knocked out; coal was running low in the chutes. If the line wasn't kept open for the coal from the mountains, it was plain we should be tied until we could ship it from Iowa or Missouri. West of Medicine Pole there was another big rotary working east, with plenty of coal behind her; but she was reported stuck fast in the Cheyenne Hills. Foley made suggestions, and Dad Sinclair made suggestions. Everybody had a suggestion left. The trouble was, Neighbor said, they didn't amount to anything, or were impossible. "It's a dead block, boys," announced Neighbor sullenly after everybody had done. "We are beaten unless we can get Number One through to-day. Look there: by the holy poker, it's snowing again."

The air was dark in a minute with whirling clouds. Men turned to the windows and quit talking. Every fellow felt the same—hopeless; at least, all but one. Sankey, sitting back of the stove, was making tracings with a piece of chalk. "You might as well unload your passengers, Sankey," said Neighbor. "You'll never get 'em through this winter."

And it was then that Sankey proposed his double-header.

He devised a snow-plow which combined in one monster ram about all the good material we had left, and submitted the scheme to Neighbor. Neighbor studied it, and hacked at it all he could, and brought it over to the office. It was like staking everything on the last cast of the dice, but we were in the state of mind which precedes a desperate venture. It was talked over an hour, and orders were finally given by the superintendent to rig up the double-header and get against the snow with it.

All that day and most of the night Neighbor worked twenty men on Sankey's device. By Sunday morning it was in such shape that we began to take heart. "If she don't get through, she'll sure get back again, and that's what most of 'em don't do," growled Neighbor, as he and Sankey showed the new ram to the engineers.

They had taken the 566, George Sinclair's engine, for one head, and Burns's, the 497, for the other. Behind these were Kennedy, with the 314, and Cameron, with the 296. The engines were

set in pairs, headed each way, and buckled up like pack mules. Over the pilots and stacks of the head engines rose the tremendous plows, which were to tackle the worst drifts ever recorded, before or since, on the West End. The ram was designed to work both ways. Under the coal, each tender was loaded with pig-iron.

The beleaguered passengers on Number One, side-tracked in the yards, eagerly watched the preparations Sankey was making to clear the line. Every amateur on the train had his camera out taking pictures of the ram. The town, gathered in a single great mob, looked silently on, and listened to the frosty notes of the sky-scrapers as they went through their preliminary manœuvres. Just as the final word was given by Sankey, conductor in charge, the sun burst through the fleecy clouds, and a wild cheer followed the ram out of the western yard; it was looked on as a sign of good luck to see the sun again.

Little Neeta, up on the hill, must have seen them as they pulled out. Surely she heard the choppy ice-bitten screech of the 566; for that was never forgotten, whether the service was special or regular. Besides, the head cab of the ram carried this time not only Georgie Sinclair, but her father as well. Sankey could handle a slice-bar as well as a punch, and rode on the head engine, where, if anywhere, the big chances would come. What Sankey was not capable of in the train-service we never knew, because he rose superior to every emergency that ever confronted him.

Bucking snow is principally brute force; there is very little coaxing. West of the bluffs there was a volley of sharp tooting, like code signals between a fleet of cruisers, and in just a minute the four ponderous engines, two of them in the back motion, fires white and throats bursting, steamed wildly into the cañon. Six hundred feet from the first cut, Sinclair's whistle signaled again. Burns and Cameron and Kennedy answered; and then, literally turning the monster ram loose against the dazzling mountain, the crews settled themselves for the shock.

At such a moment there is nothing to be done. If anything goes wrong, eternity is too close to consider. There came a muffled drumming on the steam-chests; a stagger and a terrific impact; and then the recoil, like the stroke of a trip-hammer. The snow shot into the air fifty feet, and the wind carried a cloud of fleecy confusion over the ram and out of the cut. The cabs were buried in white, and the great steel frames of the engines sprung like knitting-needles under the frightful force of the blow. Pausing for hardly a breath, they began the signaling again; then backed up and up and up the line; and again the massive machines were hurled screaming into the cut. "We're getting there, Georgie," cried Sankey when the rolling and lurching had stopped.

No one else could tell a thing about it, for it was snow and snow and snow; above and behind and ahead and beneath. Sinclair coughed the flakes out of his eyes and nose and mouth like a baffled collie. He looked doubtful of the claim until the mist had blown clear and the quivering monsters were again recalled for a dash. Then it was plain that Sankey's instinct was right; they were gaining.

Again they went in, lifting a very avalanche over the stacks, packing the banks of the cut with walls hard as ice. Again, as the drivers stuck, they raced in a frenzy, and into the shriek of the wind went the unearthly scrape of the overloaded safeties. Slowly and sullenly the machines were backed again. "She's doing the work, Georgie," cried Sankey. "For that kind of a cut she's as good as a rotary. Look everything over now while I go back and see how the boys are standing it. Then we'll give her one more, and give it the hardest kind."

And they did give her one more; and another. Men at Santiago put up no stouter fight than these men made that Sunday morning in the cañon of the Blackwood. Once they went in, and twice. And the second time the bumping drummed more deeply; the drivers held, pushed, panted, and gained against the white wall; heaved and stumbled ahead; and with a yell from Sinclair and Sankey and the fireman, the double-header shot her nose into the clear over the Blackwood gorge. As engine after engine flew past the divided walls each cab took up the cry; it was the wildest crowd that ever danced to victory. Through they went and half-way across the bridge before they could check their monster catapult. Then, at a half full, they shot it back again at the cut, for it worked as well one way as the other.

"The thing is done," declared Sankey, when they got into position up the line for a final shoot to clean out the eastern cut and get head for a dash across the bridge and into the west end of the cañon, where there lay another mountain of snow to split. "Look the machines over pretty close, boys," said he to the engineers. "If nothing's sprung, we'll take a full head across the gorge—the bridge will carry anything—and buck the west cut. Then after we get Number One through this afternoon, Neighbor can put his baby cabs in here and keep 'em chasing all night. But it's done snowing," he added, looking at the leaden sky.

He had the plans all figured out for the master mechanic, the shrewd, kindly old man. I think, myself, there's no man on earth like a good Indian; and, for that matter, none like a bad one. Sankey knew by a military instinct just what had to be done and how to do it. If he had lived, he was to have been assistant superintendent. That was the word that leaked from headquarters afterward. And with a volley of jokes between the cabs and a laughing and yelling between toots, down went Sankey's double-header again into the Blackwood gorge.

At the same moment, by an awful misunderstanding of orders, down came the big rotary from the west end with a dozen cars of coal behind. Mile after mile it had wormed east toward Sankey's ram, and it now burrowed through the western cut of the Blackwood, crashed through the drift Sankey was aiming for, and whirled out into the open, dead against him, at forty miles an hour.

Each train, in order to make the grade and the blockade against it, was straining the cylinders.

Through the swirling snow that half hid the bridge and interposed between the rushing plows Sinclair saw them coming. He yelled. Sankey saw them a fraction of a second later, and while Sinclair struggled with the throttle and the air, Sankey gave the alarm through the whistle to the poor fellows in the blind pockets behind. But the track was at the worst. Where there was no snow there were "whiskers"; oil itself couldn't have been worse to stop on. It was the old and deadly peril of fighting blockades from both ends on a single track. The great rams of steel and fire had done their work, and with their common enemy overcome, they dashed at each other like madmen across the Blackwood gorge.

The fireman at the first cry shot out the side. Sankey yelled at Sinclair to jump. But Georgie shook his head: he never would jump. Without hesitating, Sankey picked him from the levers in his arms, planted a sure foot, and hurled him like a coal shovel through the gangway far out into the gorge. The other cabs were already empty. But the instant's delay in front cost Sankey his life. Before he himself could jump the rotary crashed into the 566. They reared like mountain lions, pitched sideways and fell headlong into the creek, fifty feet. Sankey went under them. He could have saved himself; he chose to save George. There wasn't time to do both; he had to choose, and to choose instantly. Did he, maybe, think in that flash of Neeta and of whom she needed most—of a young and a stalwart protector rather than an old and failing one? I do not know; I know only what he did. Every one who jumped got clear. Sinclair lit in ten feet of snow, and they pulled him out with a rope: he wasn't scratched. Even the bridge was not badly strained. Number One pulled over it next day.

Sankey was right; there was no more snow; not even enough to cover the dead engines that lay on the rocks. But the line was open: the fight was won.

There never was a funeral in McCloud like Sankey's. George Sinclair and Neeta followed first, and of the mourners there were as many as there were spectators. Every engine on the division carried black for thirty days.

Sankey's contrivance for fighting snow has never yet been beaten on the high line. It is perilous to go against a drift behind it: something has to give. But it gets there, as Sankey got there—always; and in time of blockade and desperation on the West End they still send out Sankey's double-header; though Sankey, as the conductors tell the children, traveling east or traveling west—Sankey isn't running any more.

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## VIII

### AUNT MARY TELEGRAPHS

#### A Comedy of Everyday Life

By LLOYD E. LONERGAN

"AUNTIE left on the six-o'clock train last night. Meet her at the depot.—CLARA."

This telegram, dated New York, greeted Frank Carey when he reached his pleasant little home on Indiana Avenue, Chicago.

"Aunt Mary will be here to-night," he said to his wife, "my rich aunt from New York, you know. I am to meet her at the depot."

"When does she arrive?" fluttered pretty little Mrs. Carey, a bride of a few months. "Cannot I go with you to the depot?"

Mr. Carey said she could, then he thought for a moment, then he put his doubts into words after a second reading of the telegram.

"I wonder what road she is coming in on?" he said.

"'Twas stupid of her," replied his wife, "but call up the railroads and find out which one has a six-o'clock train from New York. Silly!"

Mr. Carey kissed his wife and remarked that she was the brightest little girl in the world, after which he gaily telephoned, listened intently to someone on the other end of the line, made numerous notes, and turned to his wife in despair.

"Bless Clara!" he said devoutly.

His wife looked surprised, so he hastily explained.

"There is a six o'clock train from New York on the Pennsylvania, also on the Lake Shore, likewise on the Michigan Central, and the Lehigh Valley, and the Grand Trunk, and the West Shore, and the B. & O.!"

"Which one is auntie coming on?" inquired Mrs. Carey with interest.

"All of them," replied her husband wrathfully. "She is sitting on the cow-catcher of each and every train, and if I'm not there to meet her she'll disinherit me. Haven't you any sense?"

Whereupon there were tears, apologies, and finally a council of war. It was Mrs. Carey who solved the problem.

"All we have to do," she cried, "is to meet all the trains. Won't it be cute?"

Carey didn't think so, but was afraid to express himself. He simply tried to look impressed and listened.

"There are only seven trains," she continued. "Now you," counting on her fingers, "are one, and I am two and Mr. and Mrs. Haines next door, who belong to my whist club, are four; and Ella Haines is five; and I just saw Mr. What's-his-name go in to call on Ella—and he'll be six; and that horrid man on the next block who is in your lodge will have to be seven."

The "train meeters" were gathered together inside of an hour. Mrs. Carey overruled all objections and laughed away all difficulties. She told them it would be a lark, and they believed it—at the time! As none of them had met Mrs. Smith (Aunt Mary), Carey was called upon for a description.

"Aunt Mary," he said, "is of medium height, dark complexion and usually dresses in black. She is fifty-eight years old, but tells people she is under fifty. You cannot miss her." And with this they were compelled to be satisfied.

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Ella Haines was assigned to the Pennsylvania depot and arrived late. All the New York passengers had disembarked, but an old woman was standing at the entrance and looking anxiously at the passers-by.

"Mrs. Smith?" said Ella, inquiringly.

"Thank heaven, you have come," was the joyous reply.

"Here," and she stepped to one side and revealed a little girl who was gazing out at the tracks. "I've had such a time with that brat and I'll never travel with another again. I've just got time to catch my train for St. Paul. Good-bye!" Whereupon, disregarding Ella's cries and her protestations, the woman rushed madly to the other end of the depot and disappeared through a gate which closed behind her with a slam. It was the last call for the St. Paul train.

Naturally, Ella did not know what to do. She hung around the depot for half an hour, hoping someone would claim the child. Then she put the little one in a cab and gave the Careys' address in Indiana Avenue.

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Walter Haines went to the Lake Shore depot. One of the first passengers to emerge from the New York train was a female, who seemed to answer the general description furnished by Carey. She was breathless as if from running faster than an old woman should run. As she reached Haines, she stopped and glared at him.

"Mrs. Smith?" he inquired, lifting his hat.

The woman grabbed him by the arm. "I knew you would be here, but hurry, that man is after me!"

"What man?" asked Haines in surprise.

"Hush, we cannot talk now," was the reply. "Get a carriage and drive fast, fast; we must escape him."

"George couldn't come, he sent me. My name is Haines," said the puzzled escort.

"I don't care if your name is Beelzebub" was the impatient retort. "You get that carriage or I'll write to Roosevelt." And Mr. Haines, very much astonished, complied.

He thought as he drove away that he heard someone shouting, but was not sure; in fact, he paid no attention, for he was too busy thinking what a queer old aunt his friend Carey had.

The "horrid man who belonged to the lodge" was named Perkins. He reached the B. & O. depot half an hour ahead of time, so he went across the street and had a drink. When he returned he discovered that No. 7 was late, and so had another. Also, several more. By the time the train did arrive he was in such a mellow state that he couldn't tell a parlor car from a lake steamer—and he didn't care! He had likewise forgotten what George's aunt looked like, but that, too, was a trivial matter. So he stood at the gate, beaming blandly at every person that appeared.

"Are you Georsh's saunt?" he inquired of a tall man with white side-whiskers and garbed in ministerial black. His answer was a look of horror, but it had no effect on Perkins, who repeated his question at intervals without result. His lack of success finally drove him to tears.

"Poor Georsh!" he sobbed. "Dear old Georsh! Must have an naunt! Break his heart if he don't

have an naunt! Can't fine his naunt! Get him one myself!"

A gang of immigrants were passing at the time. Perkins grabbed one of them by the arm.

"Be nish fellow," he said persuasively, "be Georsh's aunt."

The immigrant was obdurate, but Perkins was persistent. He drew a roll of bills from his pocket and peeled off a five. This he pressed upon his new-found friend.

"Be a good aunt," he said, "be a nish aunt, and I'll give you two more like thish!"

The Italian, overcome by the sight of so much wealth, fell captive to the eloquence of Perkins. The latter was delighted. He escorted his victim to a saloon across the street and hurled six drinks into him in rapid succession. The immigrant beamed and forgot all his troubles. He lit a fifteen-cent cigar and puffed away as if he were used to it.

"Be your-a aunt," he said, "be-a anybody's aunt. You good-a feller."

This sentiment led to another round of drinks, and then the pair tumbled into a cab, singing discordantly in two languages. Perkins fortunately remembered the address of Haines, and was able to mumble it so that the hackman could understand. Therefore there was no bar to his enjoyment.

Of course they stopped en route, for Perkins was brimming over with gratitude and the cabman was included in their rejoicing. Long before they reached Indiana Avenue, everybody was drunk except the horse.

In the meantime there was all sorts of trouble in the modest residence of George Carey. The head of the household had fumed and fretted about the Michigan Central depot, and finally started home, auntless. There he met his wife, Mrs. Haines and Ella's young man with similar stories. Five minutes later a carriage drove up and Ella and her charge alighted.

"Isn't she a dear little girl?" gurgled Miss Haines, who, being petite and worried, didn't know anything else to do under the circumstances except to gurgle.

Carey gazed at the young woman with distinct disapproval for the first time in his life.

"I know the popular impression is that old ladies shrink," he said, "but Aunt Mary could never have shrunk to that size. Where did you get her and why?"

Falteringly, Miss Haines explained. Then she cried. The child, who had regarded them gravely up to this point, took it for a signal. She screamed, then she roared. Nobody could comfort her or find out who she was.

The arrival of another cab distracted their attention. The bell rang loudly. As Carey opened the door, an old woman bounded in. Her hat was on one side of her head and her eyes gleamed madly.

"Safe at last!" she cried. Then she ran upstairs, entered Mrs. Haines's room, and locked the door. Through the panels came the sound of hysterical laughter.

Walter Haines entered the house at this moment. His attitude was distinctly apologetic.

"Remarkable old lady, isn't she?" he ventured.

"Who?" asked Mr. Carey.

"Why your aunt, of course; didn't you see her come in?"

Carey choked down his wrath out of respect to the ladies, but it was hard work.

"I never saw that woman before," he remarked; "you brought her here uninvited, now you take her away."

Naturally this provoked argument. Mrs. Haines sided with her husband, Mrs. Carey flew to the aid of her worser half, Miss Haines wept, and the little girl screamed. Upstairs, the bogus Aunt Mary was still laughing.

None of the interested parties could tell afterward how long the talk continued. A louder noise outside drew them all to the front porch. In front of the house was a hansom cab drawn by a disgusted-looking horse. He looked and acted like one who had been compelled against his will to mingle with disreputable associates.

The driver descended from his seat and fell full length upon the pavement. He didn't try to get up, but chanted in a husky tone, "Hail! hail! the gang's all here!!!"

Then the door of the cab opened and Mr. Perkins appeared. Nobody could deny that he was very much the worse for wear. But Mr. Perkins bore himself like a conqueror. He advanced hastily and embraced Carey with enthusiasm. Carey recoiled.

"Dear Georsh," said Perkins. "Got you an naunt!"

Apprehensively, Carey ran to the carriage. Huddled upon the floor was an object that moved faintly. From the atmosphere Sherlock Holmes would have deduced that a whisky refinery had exploded in that cab a few hours before. The onlooker gingerly touched the object. It rolled over,

then it rolled out of the cab and lay on the sidewalk beside the driver.

Perkins kept on smiling. "Your naunt," he remarked, blandly. "Couldn't get you what you wanted. Got you thish one!"

At this moment, Carey remembered that he had a telephone. He spurned his "aunt" with his foot and passed into the house. He called up Police Headquarters. His friend, Sergeant Bob O'Rourke, was on duty, which made it easier for him.

"Bob," he said, after greetings had been exchanged, "have you an alarm out for a little girl kidnapped from the Pennsylvania station?"

"Yes."

"And does anybody want a crazy woman, last seen on a Lake Shore train?"

"Yes; her keeper was here half an hour ago," was the reply. "He was taking her to Kankakee and she made a get-away. What do you know about her?"

"They are both here," was the reply. "Send the wagon, and just for good measure I'll throw in an Italian immigrant who came in over the B. & O. and a cab-driver. They are both drunk, very drunk, and please take the cab away too."

The next half hour gave Indiana Avenue residents plenty to talk about for a month. But finally the combat was over, and Carey and his friends sat down exhausted.

"But what I would like to know," remarked the head of the house, "where, oh where is Aunt Mary?"

It was a messenger-boy who brought the answer—a telegram dated Niagara Falls, current date and reading:

"Stopped over here. Isn't the view from Goat Island wonderful? Leave for Chicago on the first train. Meet me."

There was a sudden painful silence.

"Does anybody know how many trains there are from Niagara Falls?" inquired Mrs. Carey, speaking to the company generally. She didn't dare to address her husband.

"Just about as many as there are from New York," replied Haines, with a woebegone look. "But—"

"Don't finish it," returned Carey, "I am not going to ask you to try again, and I am not going to do so myself. Aunt Mary can leave her money to anybody she pleases. If I had another night like this the executors would be compelled to mail me my cheque to an asylum."

And the next evening Aunt Mary, unattended, reached her nephew's house without any trouble at all. She didn't disinherit him; in fact, she felt so sorry because of his troubles that she bought Mrs. Carey a complete spring outfit regardless of cost.

It's a good thing to have an Aunt Mary, even if she is indefinite in her telegrams.

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## IX

# THE VENGEANCE OF THE WOLF

## A Drama in Wales

**By J. AQUILA KEMPSTER**

IN THE great stone hall of Llangarth, Daurn-ap-Tavis, the old Welsh Wolf lay dying. Outside was the night and a sullen gale whose winds came moaning down the hills and clung about the house with little bodeful whispers that grew to long-drawn eerie wails, while pettish rain-squalls spent their spite in futile gusts on door and casement.

And through the night from time to time a horseman came, spurring hard and spitting out strange Welsh oaths at the winds that harried him. Five had passed the door since sun-down, four worthy sons and a nephew of the Wolf. They stood now booted and spurred about the old man's couch, a rough-looking crew with the mud caking them from head to foot, while the leaping flames from the log fire flung their shadows black and distorted far up among the rafters.

They hung around him sullenly, but as he looked them up and down the sick man's eyes took on a new keenness and a low, throaty laugh that was half a growl escaped him.

"Well, Cedric, man, what devil's game have you been playing of late? and, Tad, you black rascal—ah, 'twas a pity you were born to Gruffydd instead of me. Well, well, boys, the old Wolf's cornered at last, cornered at last, and Garm, Levin, Rhys—the Cadwallader's going to live and laugh, aye, he's going to live and laugh while a Tavis roasts in hell."

Garm started with a low growl, while Cedric kicked savagely at a hound that lay beside the logs.

"Aye, Ced, kick the old dog, but it won't stop the Cadwallader's laugh."

Cedric clenched his fists at the taunt and his face grew purple in the fire glow, but old Daurn went on remorselessly: "Twenty years he's laughed at the Wolf and his whelps, an' think you he'll stop now? He was always too lucky for me. I thought when my lads grew strong— But there, he laid me low, the only man that ever did, curse him! There's the mark, boys; see the shamed blood rise to it?"

He loosened his shirt with a fretful jerk and they bent over and glowered at the red scar which ran across his chest. They had all seen it times before, knew the dark quarrel and the darker fight, had tingled with shame again and again, but to-night it seemed to hold an added sting, for the Wolf was going out with his debt unpaid.

Cedric, the elder, gaped and shuddered, then fell to cursing again, but Daurn drew back the quilt and went on talking: "I swore by the body of God to get even, and day and night I've watched my chance. I tried at Tredegar, and that night ye all mind at Ebbu Vale. Yes, I tell you a dozen times, but he's a fox, curse him! a sly old fox, and now the Wolf's teeth are broken. What's that, Ced? Look to him, Tad—aye, look to all thy cousins. Fine grown lads, big, brave, and fierce, but the Cadwallader still lives and laughs; yes, laughs at old Daurn and his boys. My God! to think of it."

"Curse me! choke me!" Cedric stormed out in spluttering fury, gripping his sword with one hand while he dragged at his coat with the other. "I'll cut—cut his bl-black gizzard, blast him. I'm a c-coward, eh! Right in my t-teeth! Well, wait till th'-th' dawn an' see."

He had crammed his hat over his eyes and with coat buttoned all awry was half way to the door before Tad caught and held him, whispering in his ear: "Steady, Ced, steady. He's got some plan or I'm a fool. Come back an' wait a bit, an' if I'm mistaken I'll surely ride along with ye."

Cedric yielded, doubtful and sullen, but Daurn greeted him bravely: "God's truth, lad, you've the spirit of the Wolf at least, but you've got no brains to plan. Come close an' listen, an' if ye truly want a fight thy father'll never balk thee."

Then with faltering breath but gleaming eyes he unfolded the plan he had conceived to make his dying a thing of greater infamy than all his bloody days.

The beginnings of the feud between the House of the Wolf and that of Llyn Gethin, the Cadwallader, were so remote that probably both had forgotten, if they ever knew them, for the old Welsh chieftains passed their quarrels on from generation to generation and their hot blood rarely cooled in the passing. Llyn was about the only man in the country who had been able to hold his own against "the Tavis," but hold it he had with perhaps a trifle to spare. Indeed, of late years he had let slip many an opportunity for reprisals, and thrice had made overtures of peace which had been violently rejected. Llyn had fought fair at least, even if he had struck hard, but the life of the Wolf had been as treacherous as it was bloody. And day by day and year by year, as Daurn's strength began to fail and brooding took the place of action, the bitterness of his hatred grew, and out of this at last the plan. It was simple.

Daurn was old, dying, and weary of the strife. He would pass at peace with the world and particularly with his ancient foe. A messenger should be sent inviting Llyn and his sons to Llangarth. They would suspect nothing, for all Wales knew the Wolf lay low—would probably come unarmed and needs must, as time was short, travel by night. Well, there was a convenient and lonely spot some three miles from Llangarth—did the lads understand? Aye, they understood, but their breath came heavily and they glanced furtively each at the other, while the youngest, Rhys, shivered and drew closer to Tad.

Daurn's burning eyes questioned them one by one, and one by one they bowed their heads but spake never a word.

"Ye'll swear to it, lads," he whispered hoarsely, and drew a long dagger from beneath his pillow. For answer there came the rattle of loosened steel, and as he again bared his breast they drew closer in a half circle, laying their blades flat above his heart, his own dagger adding to the ring of steel.

And then they swore by things unknown to modern men to wipe out the shame that had lain so long upon their house, and that before their father died.

As their voices ceased the wind outside seemed to take up the burden of their bloody oath as if possessed, for it shrieked and wailed down the great chimney like some living thing in pain. And then, in a little lull following on the sobbing cry, there came a curious straining push that shook the closed oak door.

They stood transfixed, for a moment daunted, with their swords half in and half out their scabbards, till with a warning gesture to his cousins, Black Tad stole softly across the floor and, lifting the heavy bar cautiously, opened the door.

He paused an instant on the lintel, motionless and rigid to the point of his sword, his eyes fixed on the white face of a girl who was cowered back against the further wall. For a fraction of time he hesitated, but the awful anguish of the face and the mute, desperate appeal of the whole pose settled him. With a rough clatter he sprang into the dim passage, rattling his sword and stamping



his feet, at the same time giving vent with his lips to the yelp of a hound in pain, and following it with rough curses and vituperation. Then, without another glance at the girl, he re-entered the hall and slammed to the door, grumbling at Rhys for not keeping his dogs tied up.

By one o'clock the great hall was still. The men were lying scattered about the house, for the most part sleeping as heavily as many jorums of rum made possible.

But the firelight flickering in the hall caught ever an answering gleam from the old Wolf's eyes as he lay there gray, shaggy, and watchful. From time to time his bony fingers plucked restlessly at his beard, and now and again his lips stretched back over yellow teeth in an evil smile as he gloated over the details of his coming vengeance.

And out in a chill upper hall Gwenith, the fair daughter of a black house, sat in a deep embrasure, her arms clinging to the heavy oak bars desperately. The wind moaned and sighed about her while her white terrified lips echoed the agony of her heart. And the burden of her whispered cry was ever, "Davy!—Davy!" and then: "For the Christ's sake! Davy!—Davy!—Davy!"

So the night drew on with the men and dogs sleeping torpidly; with the old Wolf chuckling grimly as the shadows closed about him, and with the child in the cold above sobbing out pitiful prayers for her lover, for only yesterday she had plighted her troth to Davy Gethin, the Cadwallader's youngest son.

These two had met in the early days when she wandered free over the rolling hills, a wild young kilted sprite, fearful of nothing save her father and his grim sons. And Davy had wooed her ardently, though in secret from the first. It had been charming enough in the past despite the fear that ever made her say him nay. Then yesterday he had won her from her tears and fears, won her by his brave and tender front, and she had placed her little hands on his breast and sworn to follow him despite all else when once her father had passed away. And now, twelve short hours after her fingers had touched him, her fear had caught her by the throat, for they would kill him surely, her prince, the only joy she had ever known.

So went the night, with desperate distracted plans, and the dumb agony of cold despair. And in the very early dawn, when men and things cling close to sleep, she heard a gentle stirring—a muffled footfall on the stairs, and Black Tad stood at her side, a great shadow, questioning her.

"Mistress, what heard you?"

And she answered quick with loathing: "All! all the vile, shameful thing!"

"They are our foes" he muttered moodily.

"Foes! Foes! Nay, none of you are worthy any foe—save the hangman! Ah, God will curse you! Cruel! Cruel!"

She leaned out of her seat toward him, her panting breath and fierce words lashing him so that he stepped back a pace, dazed—she was ever such a gentle child.

"What would you, Gwen?"

"What would I! My God!—a fair fight at least. Oh, Tad, and I thought you were a brave man."

"I—I—damme, I, what can I do?—and what does it matter?"

"Matter?—a foul blot!—matter to you and Ced and father—nothing! Murderers! I hate you all! What has the Cadwallader done? All Wales knows 'twas ever father set on him, not he on father—Always!—always, I say! Aye, I remember that bloody night at Ebbu Vale. Shame! Shame! And the harrying and burning at Rhyll, when the mother and her babes perished. No, you weren't there, Tad, but you know and I know who was. Ah, Tad, she's crying to God—that mother, and holding the little dead things in her hands, close up to his face. And now you'd murder Llyn, for all he's ever been for peace."

"Hush-s-sh! not so loud, Gwen."

"Not so loud! not so loud!" she jibed bitterly. "If you fear my poor voice now, what will it be when all Wales is ringing with this last foul deed?"

Tad breathed hard, then caught her wrists suddenly, crushing them in his fierceness: "Listen, Gwenith. After all I'm no Tavis—I'm Gruffydd, and I love you."

She shrank away with wide, fearful eyes, her breath coming in little painful gasps.

"What—what do you mean, Tad?"

"I love you, Gwen."

"And—?"

"Well, I'm no Tavis—I'm Gruffydd."

Slowly the meaning which he himself hardly understood dawned on her.

"You'll save them, Tad?"

"Na, na. A fair fight is what you said. 'Tis all I can do."

"And you will?"

"I love you," he persisted stubbornly.

She closed her eyes tightly and leaned back against the wooden shutter, her hands still held close in his grasp. And she strove to see clearly through the mist of horror and pain. It was a chance, at least a fighting chance, to save Davy, her prince; the only chance, the only way, and outside that what else mattered?

Her eyes opened and her lips trembled; then she got her strength back and faced him in the dim dawn.

"My life for theirs, Tad,—is that it?"

Her eyes and her question shamed him, but he clung to his text doggedly, for he had loved her long and hopelessly in his wild, stubborn way, and this was his first and only desperate chance.

"I love ye, Gwenith, I love ye!"

There came a stir in the far hall, a long-drawn yawn; and at the sound the girl whispered fiercely: "Well, it's a bargain; give them fair warning and I'll—I'll do—give you your will. Yes, I swear it by the dear Saint David. Quick! let me go—no, not now!—Tad, I command you, I—I—Quick! that's Garm's voice; let me go."

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"Llyn Gethin! a word in your ear before we ride on."

It was Tad who spoke to the old Cadwallader out in the moonlight. Llyn had answered Daurn's urgent message for peace, and a few miles north of Llangarth had met Tad. At the words the old man looked at him curiously, but reined his horse in, while his sons watched the pair suspiciously, for they were young, their blood and their hate still ran hotly, and save for their father would have had none of this death-bed reconciliation.

"Well, lad, what is it?" asked Llyn, when they were out of earshot.

"A word of warning, sir—from one who hates you."

"Ah! You were ever a good hater, boy. What is it?"

"'Tis a trick o' mine, sir—this visit—and you'd better ride back."

"I think not, Tad."

"Well, have your way, but if you ride with me you ride to hell."

"We ride with you, Tad."

"Your blood be on you and your sons, then, Llyn Gethin. You're safe to the stone bridge; after that fend for yourself. I—I'm a cursed traitor, but, by David, I strike with my house. There, I've warned you, and God forgive me."

"Amen, lad! Will you shake hands before we ride?"

"No, choke me! I'd sooner ding my dagger in your neck."

So they rejoined the waiting group and rode forward, Tad moodily in advance, Llyn and his sons in a whispering bunch some yards behind. It had been Tad's own suggestion that he ride forward and meet the Gethins so they might be lured the more easily to the turn beyond the bridge. Now they followed on till they saw the white masonry gleaming in the moonlight, and then the dark form of Tad's horse crossing it, when there was a halt and a grim tightening of belts and loosening of swords. And as the man on the bridge threw up his arm, Llyn answered the sign hoarsely: "God keep thee, son of Gruffydd!" he cried. Then as his sons closed in he turned on them sternly: "Remember, lads! who touches him touches me. Ah! steady now! Forward!"

Even as they clattered on the bridge Tad's challenge and signal to his kinsmen rang out furiously:

"The Wolf! The Wolf and Saint David!"

Then came a rush of horse and steel and wild-eyed men, which but for their preparation would have swept the Gethins down. As it was they met it fiercely as it came. They had not come unarmed—perhaps wise old Llyn distrusted such late penitence even as did his sons. Be that as it may, the cry of "Cadwallader!" rose against "The Wolf!" and bore it back, for even in the first wild rush, Cedric fell away before a long, swift thrust, and a moment later Rhys, the youngest of the house went down and died beneath the stamping iron hoofs.

When Llyn saw this he called to stop the fight, but Tad, in a frenzy of horror and remorse, flung on again with Garth and Levin striking wild beside him. 'Twas a wicked rush, but now the fight stood five to three, and in the crash Levin slipped and got a dagger in his throat, while Tad spurred through an open way. Then as he reined and turned, the end was come, for Garm's shrill death-cry tore the air, and he was left alone.

Thrice he charged like a wounded boar, shouting hoarsely for the house he had betrayed. "The

Wolf! The Wolf! Saint David and the Wolf!"

And ever he found that open way and ever their steel avoided him.

At last he reined in his sweating mare and fell to cursing, his face distraught with agony and wet with blood and sweat and tears. So he stood, desperate—at bay, and taunted them with every vileness his furious tongue could frame. Then faltered at last with a great heartbroken sob, for they sat silent and still and would not give him fight.

On the road at his horse's feet Cedric lay and Rhys, and over yonder in the grass the other two. He swayed weakly as he looked, then slid from his saddle and stooping, kissed his cousins one by one, with those grim, silent figures looking on. He broke his sword across his knee—his father, Gruffydd's sword—and flung the pieces with an oath at Llyn. Then, ere they could guess his meaning, his dagger flashed, and with a last weak cry for "the Wolf," he fell with the men of his House.

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Back at Llangarth the great hall was aglow and Daurn chuckled and waited and plucked at his beard, till, just past midnight, there came a sudden commotion and the heavy tramp of horses in the outer court. Then Gwenith ran in white and wild, and kneeling, buried her sobs in the drapery of the couch. And ere her father could question her a group of sombre figures filled the doorway.

'Twas a dream—surely 'twas a fearful dream! Or were they ghosts? Yes, that was it; see the blood on them! He was either dreaming or these were the very dead.

They drew up to the couch, Llyn and his tall, stern sons. Daurn knew them well and strove to curse them, but the Cadwallader's grave voice hushed him to a sudden fear.

"Peace be with thee, Daurn-ap-Tavis, we come—to bid thee farewell."

Daurn gasped and stuttered, his fingers clawing fearfully while a cold sweat broke out over his forehead. But ere he found his voice two of Llyn's sons, David and Sion, drew away to the door, and later, Llewellen and Pen. They came back heavily and laid their burdens gently by the fire logs and returned, then came again and went. Five times in all. And an awful fear was in Daurn's eyes as he glared at those still, muffled shapes lying close beside him in the firelight.

Then Llyn spoke, slow and sorrowfully, as he stooped and one by one drew the face-cloths from the dead.

"Peace be with thee, Daurn-ap-Tavis; thy son Cedric—bids thee farewell.

"Rhys—bids thee farewell.

"Also Tad, thy brother's son—bids thee farewell."

But the end was come, for Daurn, with a little childish cry, had gone to seek his sons. Llyn stooped and gently closed the old Wolf's eyes, then with bent head and weary step passed from the room.

But young Davy stole back softly and knelt near the stricken girl at the foot of the couch.

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## X

### THE WOOING OF BETTINA

#### A Story of Finance

By W.Y. SHEPPARD

MR. PAUL STRUMLEY stood on the veranda of Mr. Richard Stokes's sumptuous home in the fashionable suburb of Lawrenceville and faced the daughter of the house indignantly. The daughter of the house was also plainly perturbed. Their mutual agitation was sharply accentuated by the fresh calmness of the spring morning, which seemed to hover like a north-bound bird over the wide, velvety lawn.

"Bettina," announced Mr. Strumley suddenly, "your father is—is——"

"An old goose."

"No, a brute!"

This explosion appeared momentarily to relieve his state of mind. But in his breast there was still left a sufficiency of outraged dignity to warm his cheeks hotly, and not by any means without an abundance of cause. Scarcely an hour before he had nervously, yet exultantly, alighted from his big touring car in front of the Commercial Bank, to seek the president of that institution in the sanctity of his private office. There, briefly but eloquently, he announced the engagement of Miss

Bettina Stokes to Mr. Paul Strumley, and naively requested for the happy young people a full share of the parental sanction and blessing. And his callow confidence can hardly be condemned on recalling that he was one of the wealthiest and most popular young swains in the city. Mr. Stokes, however, did not seem to take this into consideration. On the contrary, he rose to the occasion with an outburst of disapprobation too inflammatory to be set on paper, and quickly followed it with a picturesque and uncompromising ultimatum. In the confused distress of the unexpected Mr. Strumley found himself unable to marshal a single specimen of logical refutation. He could only retreat in haste, to recover, if possible, at leisure.

But this leisure, the time it had taken him to hurl the machine across town to Bettina, had proven sadly insufficient. When he rushed up the steps to the veranda, where sat the object of his affections rocking in beautiful serenity, he was still choking from indignation, and had found it hard to tell her in coherent sentences that her father had energetically refused the honor of an alliance with the highly respectable Strumley family.

The grounds, however, on which had been based this unreasonable objection were of all things under the sun the most preposterous. Mr. Stokes had emphatically declared that his daughter's happiness was too dear to him to be foolishly entrusted to one who could not even manage his own affairs, let alone the affairs of a wife, and, presumably later, of a family. Mr. Strumley was rich at present, so much was readily conceded; but he was not capable himself of taking care of what a thrifty parent had laid by for him. He in his weak-mindedness was compelled to hire the brains of a mere substitute, a manager, if you prefer. Should anything happen, and such things happen every day, where would Mr. Strumley be? And where, pray, would be his wife and family? In the poorhouse!

"My daughter is too good for a man who cannot manage his own concerns," the irate father had summed up. "When you have shown yourself capable, my lad, of competing in the world with grown-up intellects, then there will be time enough for you to contemplate matrimony—and not until then. Good morning to you, Mr. Strumley."

"And he snapped his jaws together like a vise," recalled Paul, coming out from his gloomy retrospection.

"If he shut them so," and Bettina worked her pretty chin out to its farthest extension, "well, that means he is like the man from Missouri; you've got to show him before he changes his mind one iota."

"I ought to have been humping over a desk from the start," regretted Mr. Strumley, feeling his bulging biceps dolefully. "It's all right stroking a crew, and heaps of fun, too, but it doesn't win you a wife. Now there's your dad, he couldn't pull a soap box across a bath tub; but he can pull through a 'deal' I couldn't budge with a hand-spike."

Miss Bettina sighed sympathetically, and smiled appreciatively. She felt deeply for her lover, and was justly proud of such a capable parent. "Every one does say papa is an excellent business man," she remarked; "and he certainly can swing some wonderful deals. Only yesterday I accidentally overheard him telling Mr. Proctor that he held an option—I think that was the word—from Haynes, Forster & Company on thousands and thousands of acres of timber land in Arkansas. He said it would expire to-day at two o'clock, but that he was going to buy the land for cash—'spot cash' he said was what they demanded."

Mr. Strumley smiled ruefully. "And I guess it will be some of my 'spot cash,'" he ruminated. "I am not saying anything against your father, Bettina, but if it wasn't for such idle good-for-nothings as myself, who let their money accumulate in his bank, I doubt if he could swing many of these 'big deals.' If we were like he wanted us to be, we'd be swinging them ourselves."

After Mr. Strumley had finished his bit of philosophy, he fell to communing with himself. Apparently his own wisdom had stirred a new thought within his breast. It had. He was beginning to wonder what would happen if Bettina's father suddenly found himself bereft of sufficient "spot cash" to take advantage of this option. Anyone having a second call on same might be fortunate enough to swing the "big deal"—and profit by it, according to his intentions!

"Paul," Bettina broke in upon his meditations, a little note of hopeful pleading in her voice, "it might not be too late for you to—to reform?"

Mr. Strumley aroused himself with difficulty, and looked into her bewitching face before replying. Then: "Maybe you are right," he mused; "at any rate I have an idea." And kissing her thoughtfully, he strode down the steps toward where encouragingly panted his car.

The car proudly bore Mr. Strumley and his idea to the brand-new offices of a certain young friend of his who had himself only recently metamorphosed from the shell to the swivel chair. Mr. Greenlee looked up in mute surprise. But Mr. Strumley ignored it and came to the point with a rush. Did Mr. Greenlee have twenty thousand dollars in cash to spare? He did? Good! Would he lend it to Mr. Strumley on gilt-edge collateral? Never mind exclamations; they had no market value. Eight per cent. did. Then Mr. Greenlee was willing to make the loan? That was talking business; and Mr. Strumley with the securities would call in two hours for the cash. That would give Mr. Greenlee ample time in which to get it from his bank—the Commercial.

When outside Mr. Strumley allowed himself to smile. Suddenly this evidence of inward hilarity broadened into a heartily exploded greeting, as a familiar figure turned the corner and advanced

directly toward him. It was another wealthy customer of the aforesaid bank.

"I was just on my way to your office, Mr. Proctor," Paul announced pleasantly, at the same time cautiously drawing to one side the customer of the Commercial. "I intend investing heavily in real estate," he vouchsafed with admirable sang-froid; "and need, right away, in spot cash, about thirty thousand dollars. Have you got that much to spare at 8 per cent., on first class security?"

Eight per cent! Mr. Proctor's expression expanded. He made his living by lending money for much less. If dear Mr. Strumley would call at his office within two hours he should have it every cent—just as soon as he could get a check cashed at the Commercial.

Next the faithful machine whirled Paul to the rooms of his staid attorney and general manager, Mr. John Edwards.

That elderly gentleman welcomed him with his nearest approach to a smile. But the young man was in no mood for an elaborate exchange of exhilarations. Without preface he inquired the amount of his deposit subject to check in the Commercial Bank. Fifty thousand dollars! A most delightful sum. He needed it every cent within an hour. Also he wanted from his safe-deposit box enough A1 collateral to secure loans of twenty and thirty thousand, respectively. But first would Mr. Edwards kindly call up and get second option on all Arkansas timber lands represented by Haynes, Forster & Company? Mr. Strumley believed that the first option was held by a local party. Furthermore he knew it expired to-day; and had reasons to believe that a local party would not be able to take advantage of it, and he, Mr. Strumley, thought that he could handle the property to a good purpose.

For the first time Mr. Edwards learned that his young client had a will of his own. After a few fruitless exhortations he rose to obey, but remarking: "Right much money in these hard times to withdraw in a lump from the bank." Then, with a sidelong glance at the grave, boyish face, he added significantly: "Know you would not do anything to jeopardize Mr. Stokes's financial standing."

"Oh, a bagatelle like that wouldn't embarrass as shrewd and resourceful a business man as he," assured Paul breezily.

"Money is pretty tight," mused the lawyer. But he called up Haynes, Forster & Company without further remonstrances and afterward went out to perform his commissions. Soon Mr. Strumley lighted a cigar and followed. There would be something doing in the way of entertainment presently in the neighborhood of the musty old Commercial Bank.

In front of that institution he had the good fortune to meet the town miser, who seldom strayed far from the portals behind which reposed his hoard. Mr. Strumley halted to liberally wish the local celebrity an abundance of good health and many days of prosperity. Incidentally he noted through the massive doors that his three cash-seeking friends were in the line before the paying teller's window, the lawyer being last and Mr. Greenlee first. When the latter came out, still busily trying to cram the packages of bills properly in the satchel he carried, Paul remarked confidentially to his companion:

"Must be something doing to-day. The big guns are drawing all of theirs out."

The old fellow gave a start as the suggestion shot home. Before Paul could nurse it further, he had sprinted off up the street like mad, chattering to himself about the desirability of returning immediately with his certificates of deposit.

It is an old adage that no one knows the genesis of a "run on the bank." Maybe Mr. Strumley was the exception which proves the validity of the rule. At any rate he considered with large satisfaction the magical gathering of a panic-inoculated crowd, which, sans courage, sans reason, sans everything but a thirst for the touch of their adored cash, clamored loudly, despairingly, for the instant return of their dearly beloved.

At last through the meshes of the mad throng appeared the shiny pate of Mr. John Edwards. He uttered an exclamation of relief at the sight of his calm client.

"Hope you got it before the storm broke?" Mr. Strumley greeted amiably.

"S-s-sh!" cautioned the attorney dramatically. "I was about to go in search of you." Then he added in even a lower key: "Mr. Stokes asked me to persuade you not to withdraw the money until he had had a chance to get the flurry well in hand."

"But the money is mine, and I want it now," expostulated the young man.

"Come with me, please, and listen to reason," beseeched the lawyer, drawing him resolutely in the direction of a side entrance. "It would be a dire misfortune, sir, a calamity to the community, if the bank were forced to close its doors. So far, however, it is only the small depositors who are clamoring; but the others will quickly enough follow if you do not let your fifty thousand remain to help wipe out this first rush. The bank, though, is as sound as a dollar."

In another instant they were through the door, and before Mr. Strumley could reply, for the second time that morning he stood in the presence of Bettina's father.

"As Mr. Edwards will tell you," explained Paul, unable altogether to suppress his nervousness, "I hold second option for to-day on large timber tracts in Arkansas, represented by Messrs. Haynes,

Forster & Company. The first option, I was advised, will expire at two o'clock; and my party was of the belief it would not be closed. It is a big deal, Mr. Stokes,"—Mr. Stokes winced perceptibly—"and I was extremely anxious to swing it, because—er—well, because it's my first big venture and much depends on its success."

"Yes," mused Mr. Stokes sadly, "it is quite probable the first option may be allowed to lapse, and I understand good money is to be made in Arkansas timber." His face had grown a trifle ashy. "Of course, this being the case, I feel in honor bound, Mr. Strumley, to instantly recall my request."

Paul gave a gasp of admiration. He was glad Bettina's father was "game." So was Bettina. In the up-boiling of his feelings he emphatically vetoed the determination of the banker. Indeed, so well and eloquently did he argue for the retention and use of his funds by the Commercial, that even the self-effacing man of "deals" could not resist the onslaught. He rose with unconcealed emotion and grasped the hand of the young man whose generosity would save the credit of the old financial institution.

Later, flushed with victory, Mr. Strumley returned to the cushions of his touring car; and the jubilantly chugging machine whizzed him off in the direction where, surrounded by cash, awaited the 8 per cent. expectations of Messrs. Proctor and Greenlee. Later still he descended with said cash upon the offices of Haynes, Forster & Company. And even later, after an exhilarating spin in the country, he arrived safe and blithesome at his well-appointed rooms in the Hotel Fulton, ready to remove with good soap and pure aqua the stains of mart and road before calling on Miss Bettina Stokes.

The first thing that attracted his eyes on entering his little sitting room was a neatly wrapped parcel on the table. On the top of it reclined a dainty, snowy envelope. Mr. Strumley approached suspiciously. Then he recognized the handwriting and uttered an exclamation of joy. It was from Bettina.

In the short time he held the missive poised reverently in his hand Paul permitted a glow of satisfaction to permeate his being. He had done well and was justly entitled to a moment of self laudation. Mr. Stokes—Bettina's father—would no longer be against him, for who could not say he was not capable of competing in the world-arena with full-grown, gladiatorial intellects? He had even successfully crossed blades with Mr. Stokes's own best brand of Damascene gray matter. And he had won the fray, for the everlasting good and happiness of all parties concerned. In anticipation he already felt himself thrilling proudly beneath the crown of Bettina's love and her father's benediction.

The crackle of the delicate linen beneath his grasp brought him sweetly back to the real. What delicious token could Bettina be sending him? Of course her father had told her all. How happy she, too, must be! Mr. Strumley broke the seal of the envelope and read:

"MR. PAUL STRUMLEY,  
City.

"DEAR SIR:

"I herewith return your letters, photographs, etc. Papa has told me all. It was at first impossible to believe you capable of taking such a base advantage of my confidence about the Arkansas option; but I am at last thoroughly convinced that you incited the run on the bank to embarrass poor papa and compel him to let the deal fall into your traitorous hands. And the by-play of yours in returning the money you did not really need, though it has completely deceived him, has in my eyes only added odium to your treachery. I trust that I have made it quite clear that in the future we can meet only as strangers.

"BETTINA STOKES."

Mr. Strumley let the letter slip unnoticed through his palsied fingers. He sat down with heavy stupefaction. So this was the sud-spray of his beautiful bubble? It was incomprehensible! Bettina! Bettina! Oh, how could she? Where was her faith? No small voice answered from within the depths of his breast; and Mr. Strumley got clumsily to his feet. He was painfully conscious that he must do something—think something. But what was he to do? What was he to think? Could he ever make her understand? Make her believe? At least he could go and try.

Mr. Strumley finished his toilet nervously; and repaired to the home of Bettina, to cast his hope on the waters of her faith and charity. The butler courteously informed him that she was "not in." But Mr. Stokes was in the library. Would Mr. Strumley like to see him? Mr. Strumley thought not.

It was a bad night for Paul. From side to side he tossed in search of inspiration. Day came; and he rolled wearily over to catch the first beams of the gladsome spring sunshine. From its torrid home ninety-three million miles afar it hurried to his bedside. It shimmered in his face and laughed with warm invigoration into the torpid cells of his brain. It awakened them, filled them with new life, hope—inspiration!

Mr. Strumley leaped from his bed to the bath-tub, and fluttered frolicsomenly in the crystal tide. When he sprang out there was the flush of vigorous young manhood on his skin and the glow of an expectant lover's ardency in his breast. Everything was arranged satisfactorily in the space beneath Mr. Strumley's water-tousled hair, wherein sat the goddess of human happiness—reason.

Mr. Strumley, after a hurried stop-over at the office of his astounded charge d'affaires, reached the Commercial Bank before the messenger boys. While waiting in the balm of the spring morning for the doors to open he circumnavigated the block nine times—he counted them. Coming in on the last tack he sighted the portly form of the banker careening with dignified speed around the corner. Another instant he had crossed the mat and disappeared into his financial harbor. Mr. Strumley steered rapidly in his wake.

Again he stood in the presence of Bettina's father. This time, however, he was calm. In fact, the atmosphere about the two men was heavily charged with the essence of good fellowship. Mr. Stokes held out his hand cordially. The younger man pressed its broad palm with almost filial veneration. He noted, too, with a slight touch of remorse, that the banker's countenance was harassed. Evidently his heart still ached for the lost Arkansas timber. Mr. Strumley smiled philanthropically.

He had something to say to Mr. Stokes, and began to say it with the easy enunciation of one who rests confident in the sunshine of righteousness. He spoke evenly, fluently. Of course Mr. Stokes at first might be a trifle perplexed. But please bear with him, hear him through, then he himself should be the sole judge.

He, Mr. Strumley, did not care a rap—no, not a single rap, for every tree that grew in the entire state of Arkansas. What he wanted to do was to show Mr. Stokes—Bettina's father—that he was worth the while. That is, he wanted to demonstrate—it was a good word—to demonstrate that he had brains in his cranium as good as many another variety that boasted a trade mark of wider popularity. Had he done it? And if what he had done did not concur with the elements of high finance, he would like Mr. Stokes—Bettina's father—to tell him what it did concur with. Now, there was the whole story from its incipiency. And as conclusive proof that he did not mean to profit by the deal financially, would Mr. Stokes kindly examine those papers?

Mr. Stokes looked at the documents tossed on the desk before him; and saw that they were several warranty deeds, conveying to Richard Stokes, his heirs and assigns forever, all titles and claims of all kinds whatsoever in certain therein-after described tracts or parcels of land in the state of Arkansas, for value received.

Mr. Strumley leaned back and contentedly watched a flush overspread the banker's face. His automobile waited at the door to whisk him to Bettina, and he was ready to carry on the campaign there the moment her father had finished his effusions of gratitude. Meanwhile the flush deepened; and, all impatience to fly to his lady-love, Paul egged on the speech.

"You will note, Mr. Stokes," he volunteered, "that the price is exactly the same you had proposed paying. At your convenience, of course, you can remit this amount to my attorney, Mr. Edwards."

Mr. Stokes rose slowly. The flush had become apoplectic.

"Mr. Strumley," he began, his large voice trembling, "this trick of yours is unworthy of an honorable man. Here, sir, take these papers and leave my office immediately."

Mr. Strumley rose also. Like the banker's voice, he, too, was trembling.

"But, sir——" he commenced to expostulate.

"Go!" thundered the father of Bettina.

Dazed, confused by the suddenness of the blast, Paul groped his way through the bank to the refuge of his car. Mechanically he put one hand on the lever and glanced ahead for obstacles. Crossing the street, not twenty yards ahead, tripped the most dangerous one conceivable—the beautiful Bettina herself!

Mr. Strumley's hand fell limply to his knee. Fascinated he watched her reach the curb and with a little skip spring to the pavement. Then she came straight toward him; but he could see she was blissfully oblivious of his nearness. Suddenly an odd wave of emotion surged through his brain. His heart leaped with primitive savagery of love, and every fibre in him rebelled fiercely against the decrees and limitations of modern courtship. He had failed in the game as governed and modified by the rules of polite society and high finance. The primogenital man-spirit in him cried out for its inning. Mr. Strumley, as umpire, hearkened to its clamor.

"Bettina!" he called, as that young lady came calmly abreast of the car, "wait a moment. I must speak with you."

She started with a half-frightened exclamation; but met his look, at first defiantly, scornfully, then hesitatingly, faltering as she tried to take another step onward.

"Bettina!" Mr. Strumley's voice vibrated determinedly, "I said I wished to speak with you. I can explain—everything."

She halted reluctantly, and partly turned. In a moment he was at her side, his hand upon her arm. His glance had in it all the compelling strength of unadulterated, pristine manhood. She seemed to feel its potency, and without remonstrance suffered him to lead her toward the machine.

For a moment, for a single moment, Mr. Strumley was exhilaratingly conscious of being borne aloft on a great wave of victorious gladness. Then the waters of triumph let him down with a

shock.

"Bettina!"

At the word they both pivoted like pieces of automata. Mr. Stokes, large and severe, was standing between the portals of his financial fortification.

"Bettina!" His voice was almost irresistible in the force of its parental summons.

At the sound of it the primeval lover, newly renascent in Mr. Strumley's breast, cowed before the power of genitorial insistency. Then it came back into its own exultantly.

"Bettina, my darling, get in," he commanded.

She faltered, turned rebelliously, turned again and obeyed.

"Bettina!" The voice of the childless banker faded off in the distance, its last echo drowned in the full-throated: "Bettina, we are going to be married at once," that broke joyously from Mr. Strumley's lips. "I have followed the example of the Romans, and taken me a wife from the Sabines."

Bettina peeped up at him from beneath the dark screens of her lashes. "Then I, like the wise Sabian ladies, shall save the day for peace and for Rome," she smiled archly.

And the machine laughed "Chug-chug!"

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## XI

### THE JAM GOD

#### A Tale of Nigeria

By H.M. EGBERT

LIEUTENANT PETERS, of the Royal Nigerian Service, was lying upon the ground face downward, under a prickly tree. The sun was nearly vertical, and the little round shadow in which he reclined was interlaced with streaks of hot light. As the sun moved, Peters rolled into the shade automatically. His eyes were shut, and he was in that hot borderland which is the nearest approach to sleep at noontide in Nigeria.

The flies were pestering him, and he was thirsty—not with that thirst of the mouth which may be quenched with a long draught, but with the thirst of the throat that sands and sears. He felt thirsty all over. He had been thirsty, like this, ever since he struck the bend of the Niger. What made it worse, every night he dreamed of fruits that were snatched away, like the food of Tantalus, as he approached to grasp them. Two nights before he had been wandering knee-deep in English strawberry beds; the night before he had been shaking down limes and oranges from groves of trees set with green leaves and studded with golden fruit. Once he had dreamed of a new fruit, a cross between a pear and a watermelon; but when he cut into it he found nothing but hard, small seeds, with a pineapple flavor, which he detested.

Peters was dreaming now, for he twined his fingers in the long grass and tossed uneasily.

"I'll pick them all," he muttered sleepily. "All mixed together, with ten or twelve pounds of damp, brown sugar, and boiled into jam."

He woke and felt his teeth for the hundredth time, to note whether any untoward looseness betokened the advent of the dreaded scurvy. Reassured, he stretched his limbs and rolled over into the shade of the tree.

"When I get back to a white man's country," he murmured—"when I get home to England what is it I am going to do? Why, I shall go into a restaurant and order some rich brown soup. Then I shall have *pate de foie gras* sandwiches. Then scrambled eggs, chocolate, and muffins buttered with whipped cream. Then half a dozen cans of jam. I shall either begin with strawberry and conclude with apricot, or else I shall begin with apricot and wind up with raspberry. It doesn't matter much; any kind of jam will do except pineapple."

He opened his eyes, brushed away the flies that swarmed noisily round him, took out his hard-tack, and opened a small can of dried beef. He munched for a while, sipping occasionally from the tepid water in his canteen. When he had finished he put the can-opener back in the pocket of his tunic and rose, his face overspread with a look of resolution.

"I believe," he cried, "I believe that I could eat even a can of pineapple!"

He rose, the light of his illusion still in his eyes, and began staggering weakly under the blazing sun in the direction of his camp. He was weaker than he had thought, and when he reached the shelter of his tent he sank down exhausted upon the bed. Through the open flap he could see, five hundred yards away, the round, beehive-shaped huts of the native village and, in their centre, the



square palace of King Mtetanyanga, built of sticks and Niger mud, surrounded by its stockade, the royal flag, a Turkish bath-towel stained yellow and blue, floating proudly above.

Lieutenant Peters had been sent by the Nigerian Government along the upper Niger to conclude treaties with the different kings and sweep them within the British sphere of interest. The French were out upon a similar errand, for in this region the two nations possessed only a vague and very indeterminate boundary line. Peters had been successful until he came to the village of King Mtetanyanga, who had balked at affixing his cross to the piece of mysterious parchment on the ground that it was unlawful to do so during the festival of the great Ju-Ju, whose worshipers could be heard wailing and beating tom-toms nightly in some unknown part of the jungle. What this Ju-Ju fetish was nobody could tell; it had come into the village recently, from the coast, men whispered; it possessed awful and mysterious potency; was guarded zealously by some score of priests, who veiled its awful vision; and it was the greatest Ju-Ju for hundreds of miles along the Niger, tribes from distant regions frequently arriving to sacrifice pigs to it.

However, Lieutenant Raguet, the French commissioner, had been equally unsuccessful in inducing the dusky monarch to affix his signature to the French treaty, and the ambassadors of the rival nations were both encamped near the village, waiting for the Ju-Ju festivities to reach their plethoric conclusion before the king sobered up and attended to business.

Raguet, strolling into his rival's camp that evening, found Peters in his tent, flushed, and breathing heavily.

"Tcht! tcht! you are seeck," said the Frenchman sympathetically. "That ees too bad. Have you quinine?"

"Quinine be hanged," cried Peters huskily. "I've taken the stuff until I've floated in it. There's only one thing can cure me, Raguet. I've been living on crackers and canned beef for over a month, and I'm pining for jam. Have you got any jam?"

"Dsham, dsham?" repeated Raguet with a puzzled expression.

"Yes, les preserves—le fruit et le sugar, bouilli—you know what I mean."

"Ah, ze preserve!" said the Frenchman, with an expression of enlightenment. "Ze preserve, I have him not."

"I tell you what, Raguet," said Peters irritably, "I've got to get some jam somewhere or I shall kick the bucket. I'm craving for it, man. If I had one can of the stuff it would put me upon my feet instantly, I can feel it. Now it's ten to one I'll be too sick to see the king after the ceremonies are over, and he'll sign your treaty instead of mine. And I've given him three opera hats, a phonograph, and a gallon of rum, curse the luck! What did you give him, Raguet?"

"Me? I give him a umbrella with ze gold embroider," the Frenchman answered.

"My government won't let me give the little kings umbrellas," said Peters in vexation. "It makes the big chiefs jealous. I say, Raguet," he rambled on, sitting up dizzily, "what is this Ju-Ju idol of theirs?"

"I know not," said the French lieutenant. "Only ze king and ze priests have seen him. If zey tell, zey die—ze idol keel zem."

"I suppose they'll be keeping up these infernal tom-toms for another week," grumbled the sick man, lying back and half closing his eyes from weariness. "Well, I'll have to try to get well in time."

The Frenchman resisted the impulse to leap back in surprise, but his eyes narrowed till they were slits in his face. So! This Englishman did not know that this had been the last day of the sacrifices, that at midnight a hecatomb of pigs was to be killed and eaten in the bush in honor of the Ju-Ju. Nor that the king, when he had broached and drunk the cask of rum, would be in a mood to discuss the treaty. Peters evidently was unaware how much his majesty had been affronted by his failure to present him with an umbrella. La! la! Fortune was evidently upon his side. All this flashed through the Frenchman's mind in an instant. A solitary chuckle escaped him, but he turned it into an exclamation of grief, sighed deeply, seated himself upon the bed, and kissed Peters affectionately on either cheek.

"My Peters, my poor friend," he began, "you must not theenk of leaving your tent for ze next two, t'ree days. Ze fever, he is very bad onless you receive him in bed. I shall take care of you."

"You're a good fellow, Raguet," said Peters, wiping his face surreptitiously with the backs of his hands. When his visitor had left he turned over and sank into a half-delirious doze that lasted until the sun sank with appalling suddenness, and night rushed over the land. Tossing upon his bed, all through the velvet darkness he was dimly conscious, through his delirious dreams, of tom-toms beaten in the bush. His throat was parched, and in his dreams he drank greedily from his canteen; but each time that he awoke he saw it hanging empty from the tent flap. Presently a large, bright, yellow object rose up in front of him. Greedily he set his teeth into it; and even as he did so it disappeared, and he awoke, gasping and choking under the broiling blackness.

"I'll have to take that canteen down to the stream and fill it," he muttered, rising unsteadily and proceeding toward the bank. To his surprise he found that rain had fallen. He was treading in ooze, which rose higher and higher until it clogged his footsteps. He struggled, but now it held

him fast, and he was sinking slowly, but persistently, now to the waist, now to the shoulders. Frantically he thrust his hands downward to free himself, and withdrew them sticky with—jam! He scooped up great handfuls greedily; and even as he raised it to his mouth it vanished, and he awoke once more in his tent.

He flung himself out of bed with an oath, took down his canteen, and started toward the river. The noise of the tom-toms was louder than ever, proceeding, apparently, from some point in the bush a little to the left of the king's palace. Scrambling and struggling through the thorn thickets, he reached the sandy bed of the stream, filled his water-bottle at a pool, and drank greedily.

It was that still hour of night when the many-voiced clamor of the bush grows hushed, because the lions are coming down to drink at the waters. The rising moon threw a pale light over the land. The tom-toms were still resounding in the bush, but to Peters's distorted mind they took on the sound of ripe mangoes falling to the ground and bursting open as they struck the soil. He counted, "one, two, three," and waited. He counted again. There must be thousands of them. Peters began to edge his way through the reeds in the direction of the sound. After a while he came to a wall of rocks perpendicular and almost insurmountable. He paused and considered, licking his lips greedily as the thud, thud continued, now, apparently, directly in front of him. All at once his eyes, curiously sensitive to external impressions, discovered a little, secret trail between two boulders. He followed it; a great stone revolved at his touch, and he found himself inside the sacred groves. He went on, gulping greedily in anticipation of the feast which awaited him.

Suddenly he stopped short. He had seen something that brought back to him with a rush the realization of his whereabouts. Seated in the shelter of a cactus tree, not fifty yards away, was King Mtetanyanga, wearing his three opera hats, one upon another, in the form of a triple crown, and drinking his own rum with Raguet, under the shade of Raguet's umbrella. Prone at their feet crouched Tom, the interpreter.

"His Majesty say, 'How you fix him Ju-Ju?'" translated Tom.

"Tell His Majesty, my Ju-Ju stronger than the Englishman's Ju-Ju," answered the Frenchman. "My Ju-Ju eat up his Ju-Ju. He very sick. If I choose, he die."

"Ugh!" grunted the king, when this explanation was vouchsafed, apparently impressed.

"Tell His Majesty my Ju-Ju stronger than his own Ju-Ju. If he no sign treaty, eat up his Ju-Ju," Raguet went on.

A flow of language came from the king's lips.

"His Majesty say, he bring his Ju-Ju, see whose greater," said the interpreter.

Vaguely aware that treachery was impending, but crazed now by the falling mangoes, Peters left them palavering and followed the trail. All at once he emerged into a tiny clearing and stood blinking at a fire, round which a group of men—priests, as he knew, from their buffalo horns and crane feathers—were reclining, hammering upon tom-toms and shouting in various stages of intoxication. The firelight blinded their eyes. Peters stood still uncertainly. Then his eyes fell upon a sawed-off tree-trunk, in the hollow of which lay something wrapped in a white cloth, surrounded with snake-skins. He had come by this secret road into the actual presence of the great Ju-Ju.

Curiously he inserted his hand, lifted the object out, and examined it. Inside was something of a strange, yet familiar shape, oval, and flattened at the ends. He lifted it out of its wrappings, and there, in his hand, he saw a can, bearing the legend:

GREENAWAY'S BEST JAM.

He looked at it in solemn and holy meditation; then, sitting down, he drew the can-opener from his tunic and wiped it clean upon his sleeve.

After awhile a babel of sound broke in upon his ears. Men had come running up, brandishing spears, stopped, flung themselves upon the ground prostrate in front of him. The priests were there, frantically abasing themselves; Mtetanyanga, his opera hats rolling, unheeded, on the ground. Their cries ceased; they veiled their eyes. Then from the dust came the feeble tones of the interpreter.

"His Majesty say, you eat him Ju-Ju—yours greatest Ju-Ju, he want to sign treaty."

But Peters, waving the empty can over his head, shouted:

"I've eaten jam, I've eaten jam! It's pineapple—and I don't care!"

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## XII

# WHEN FATHER WORKED

## A Suburban Story

By CHARLTON LAWRENCE EDHOLM

"H'everybody works but Fadher,  
H'and 'e sets 'round h'all diy——"

Thus in chorus shrilled the infant Cades like the morning stars singing together, but still more like the transplanted little cockneys they were.

The placid brow of Mr. Thomas Cadge was darkened with disapproval, he shifted his stubby brier pipe to the other corner of his mouth, edged a little from his seat on the sunny front stoop and, craning his neck around the corner of his house, revealed an unwashed area extending from collarbone to left ear.

"Shet up, you kids!" he barked. "Wot for? Becos I say so, that's why. I don't like that song, 'taint fit for Sunday."

With a soothing consciousness that he had upheld the sacred character of the Sabbath, Mr. Cadge settled back to the comfort of his sun-bath and smoke. But he had scarcely emitted three puffs before the piping voice of Arabella Cadge was again wafted to his ears. She sang solo this time, and the selection was of a semi-devotional nature, more in keeping with the day:

"Oh fadher, dear fadher, come 'ome wid me now,  
De clock on de steeple strikes——"

"Shet up, drat you!" again commanded her parent. "If I has to get up and go arter you——"

The balance of this direful threat may never be known, for at that moment Mr. Job Snavelly, garbed in the black broadcloth which he wore one day out of seven, paused in front of Mr. Cadge's door and bade him good morning.

"Mornin'," responded the ruffled father.

"Your little girl is quite a song bird," continued Mr. Snavelly, with his usual facility in making well-meant small-talk more irritating than a hurled brick.

"She sings too much," commented Mr. Cadge, shortly, "I likes people wot knows when to 'old their tongues."

"Very true, very true!" amiably replied Mr. Snavelly, "but for all that, there is nothing sweeter than the artless babble of babes; I declare it almost brought the tears to my eyes when I heard them prattling, 'Everybody works but father,' it is so very, very appro——"

Mr. Snavelly checked himself abruptly, for the light in the small, green eyes of Thomas Cadge was baleful, and his square jaw protruded menacingly. The kindly critic of music had a vague feeling that the subject might be changed to advantage.

"Been to church this morning, I suppose?" he inquired briskly with the assurance of a man just returning from that duty.

"No I 'asn't," retorted Cadge, "and wot's more the old woman 'asn't, and the kids 'asn't neither. 'Cos why? 'Cos in this 'ere free country of yours, a laboring man can't make a living for 'is family, workin' 'ard as I does, Sundays, nights, and h'all the time. The missus and the kids stays from church 'cos their duds ain't fit, and I stays 'ome 'cos I've got to work like a slave to pay you for seven dollars' worth of spoiled vegetables and mouldy groceries. That's the reason I works on Sundays, if you've got to know."

"Work on Sundays!" gasped the grocer. "Work! work?" and he stared at the reclining figure of Mr. Cadge in unfeigned astonishment.

"Yes, work. This 'ere construction company wot's doing the job of grading this vacant block, employs me to sort of look after things, their shovels, scoops, and the like. A kind of private police officer, I am," he concluded, drawing himself up a little and puffing into the air.

"And when are you on duty?" asked Mr. Snavelly.

"Nights," replied Cadge, "nights and Sundays, when the tools ain't in use."

"I hope they pay you well for it?"

"Ah, but they don't. 'Ow much do you think I get for stayin' awake nights and doin' without my church on Sunday? Three measly dollars a week and the rent of this 'ere 'ouse, if you can call it a 'ouse."

It would have been difficult to determine just what name to give the residence of Mr. Thomas Cadge. It would hardly be called a cottage, though not because it was more spacious than the name implied; nor was it a piano-box, in spite of the fact that a piano would have fitted snugly within its walls, for no manufacturer would have trusted a valuable instrument in so flimsy a shell. It was not a real-estate office, as the sign which decorated its entire front proclaimed it to be, for through a jagged hole in the window facing the street projected a rusty iron stovepipe,

which was wired to the façade of the building, and emitted the sooty smoke that had almost totally obscured and canceled the legend, "Suburban Star Realty Syndicate."

Moreover, a litter of tin cans, impartially distributed at the front and back doors, indicated the domestic use to which this temporary office had been put. A smell of steaming suds that pervaded the place likewise indicated the manner in which Mrs. Cadge eked out her lord's stipend. This impression was confirmed by the chorus of irrepressible little Cadges proclaiming:

"Mother tikes in washin',  
H'and so does sister h'Ann,  
H'everybody works at our 'ouse,  
But my old——"

—a burst of melody which was abruptly checked with a tomato can hurled like a hand-grenade by their unmusical father.

"Look here, Cadge," said Mr. Snavelly, with the air of proprietorship one adopts to hopeless debtors, "three dollars a week is not going to keep your family, to say nothing of paying up that seven dollars. I can't carry you forever, you know. Why don't you get a daylight job?"

"Ah, that is easy enough said," protested that injured individual. "'Aven't I tramped the streets day after day, lookin' for work?"

"Them as 'as a good paying business don't know wot it means to look for a job," pursued Cadge bitterly.

"Yes they do," asserted the grocer cheerfully. "I was given work at sweeping floors in the very store I now own. The fact is, I am sorry for you, Cadge, and I have been looking around to get you a job."

Mr. Cadge seemed depressed.

"And I am glad to say," chirruped Mr. Snavelly, "that I have found a small piece of work for you, which will be worth a dollar and a half a day."

Cadge's brow was still gloomy.

"Of course, it is real work," added his kind-hearted creditor, briskly, "no sitting in the sun and watching other people's shovels; but a customer of mine, a widow lady, that lives along Catnip Creek, wants a man to pile up a wall of loose stones to keep her land from washing away in high water."

Thomas Cadge shook his head with the air of Cæsar virtuously refusing the crown.

"No, no, Snavelly, it wouldn't do," he said. "I can see that it would interfere with my present h'occupation, and I can't afford to risk losing this 'ere job. Supposin' my family was to be turned out of doors!"

"Nonsense! It will only take you about four days to build the wall, and at one-fifty per day, that will be six dollars, twice your week's wages right there, and almost enough to pay what you owe me."

"I am afraid it can't be done, Snavelly; the company might not like it; you see, I would be competing with them, that's their line."

"They wouldn't handle so small a job. You know that, Cadge."

"Yes, but a man can't draw pay for two positions at once; 't ain't honest."

"Why, this is not a regular situation," protested the upright Snavelly, who saw his bill still unpaid; "you could work on it at odd times if you like. She'll pay you by the piece, I am pretty sure, and you will get your six dollars cash when the wall is done."

The furtive eyes of the hunter of work avoided those of his benefactor. He was pondering a new excuse when he happened to notice Master Cadge, aged nine, Thomas Cadge, Jr., aged eight, and Arabella Cadge, whose years were six, busily constructing a fort of cobblestones, and an idea struck him.

"Very well," he said, loftily waving his pipe, "I'll drop in Monday and talk this over with you, Snavelly. Then if the job suits me I may take it. I don't like to talk business on Sunday, you know."

Thus rebuked, Mr. Snavelly resumed his homeward way.

The following Monday Cadge overslept; Tuesday found him with a headache as a result, which by Wednesday had settled in a tooth; Thursday he felt so much better that he feared to do anything which might check his convalescence; Friday was an unlucky day, but so desirous was he of work that he manfully conquered his superstitious qualms and strolled over to the little shop where Mr. Job Snavelly dealt in groceries and vegetables.

The details regarding the work were furnished with cheerful alacrity, the tradesman going so far as to accompany his protégé to the home of their patron, Mrs. Pipkin, a withered little lady who lived with her cats on the bank of the creek.

The work to be performed demanded more brawn than brain and no vast amount of either. All that was required was to pile up the boulders and cobblestones which littered the bed of the stream, as a rough, unmortared wall, along the sloping bank of Mrs. Pipkin's property.

It was evident that Mrs. Pipkin herself had not the slightest notion of how much a wall should cost, as she was ignorant of the two factors which determined it, namely, the wages of day-laborers and the time required to build the wall; therefore she requested Mr. Snavely, as a man of affairs, to make the bargain for her.

It was well that she did so, for Mr. Cadge's ideas on the subject were as boundless as hers were limited. Day wages, he affirmed, ranged from two dollars up for common labor, and as building a wall was highly skilled labor he thought three and a half or four dollars per diem would be about right, going on the basis of at least six days of eight hours each.

Mr. Snavely, on the contrary, after looking over the ground declared that four days' steady work would build a wall running the entire length of the widow's lot. Furthermore, that a dollar and a quarter a day was fair wages for such employment, while laborers would scramble for the job at a dollar and a half. As a concession to Mr. Cadge, he was willing to allow him to take his own time and agreed to pay six dollars when the wall should be completed.

Mr. Cadge waxed indignant and very voluble, while Mr. Snavely was a mild man of few words; but the simple laborer was no match for a man who made his living by small chaffering. He was forced to give in, and Saturday morning, bright and early, he appeared on the banks of Catnip Creek accompanied by Master Cadge, Thomas Cadge, Jr., and Arabella Cadge.

"Daddy's going to give you kids a treat to-day," he announced. "My eye! wot larks we will 'ave. Nothing to do all day long but play building a stone fort right on the brook, and Daddy will show you 'ow to build it."

The little Cadges were perfectly charmed at this condescension on the part of their sire, who seldom acknowledged their presence except with a cuff in passing. They were eager to begin, and as they had no need to strip their legs, which were always bare, the work proceeded apace.

Cadge, Sr., ensconced himself in the sunniest nook of the bank, and directed his offspring what stones to select and where to place them, and above all, to make haste, since the enemy would soon appear to attack the fort.

Before their Saturday holiday was over, the children had discovered that their father was a strenuous playfellow. In vain they suggested fishing, hunting Injuns, or gathering wild flowers; they had set out to build a fort on Catnip Creek, and build it they must.

They entertained hopes of sneaking off alone when they should go home for lunch, but Mr. Cadge had provided for this contingency. His wife appeared at noon with slices of bread and butter for the Cadgelings, to which was added a cold beefsteak and a bucket of beer for the support of their house. Having already lunched at home, she was permitted to lay a tier of heavier stones along the wall while waiting for her family to finish the repast.

It was an arduous day for the tribe of Cadge, excepting, of course, its head. Not until the first star came out and the owls began to hoot along the Catnip did he declare himself satisfied with the day's work and proceed homeward to supper. Widow Pipkin's wall was half finished.

Not until Saturday was the patient father able to enlist once more the services of his offspring, for, "What if they are your own kids!" retorted Mrs. Cadge from her wash-board. "I've rubbed my 'ands raw to give 'em the eddication you and me lacks, and to school they go. You build that wall yourself, or wait until the week's end for your pay."

The former alternative was not to be thought of, and the Widow Pipkin wondered mildly whether the half finished wall was ever to be completed.

But Saturday at dawn Cadge once more appeared, driving before him three tear-stained and reluctant Cadgelets. They had inherited part of their father's disposition in regard to real work, likewise his unwillingness to be imposed upon. Constructing fortifications along the Catnip was well enough for one Saturday, but their backs still ached from their exertions, and they had only disdain for the restricted paternal imagination which suggested that this time they build stone castles.

Their sire waxed eloquent over the art of castle building and the sport of imprisoning ogres in them, but was finally compelled to assume the attitude of an ogre himself, and threatened to skin them alive if they did not do as they were bid.

It was a long, hard day for the whole Cadge family. The little Cadges worked like galley-slaves in fear of the lash; their mother, out of pity for them, laid two tiers of cobbles when she came at noon, and even Cadge himself was tempted on one or two occasions to descend from his nook and lend a hand, but restrained himself.

Again the owls hooted along the stream and bullfrogs croaked from the reedy places. Cadge knocked the dottle out of his pipe and arose, stretching his short, muscular limbs, which had become cramped from sitting still so long.

"Run along 'ome, kiddies," he said, "and tell the old woman not to wait supper for me. There's a man down town as wants to see me about a job. I'll 'ave a bite with 'im."

The little Cadges disappeared in the twilight and their father presented himself at the Widow Pipkin's door to receive his hard-earned wages.

"Oh, dear me! I can't pay you to-night," answered Mrs. Pipkin. "I never keep any money in the house."

Cadge grumbled something about, a check would do. He was pretty sure that the barkeeper at Spider Grogan's place would cash it.

"Oh, but mine is a savings account, and I will have to go down to the bank myself and get the money; but, never mind, you shall have it first thing Monday morning."

The thirsty man could find no solution to this problem and, although he urged the Widow Pipkin to think of a way, as his "missus needed the medicine something orful," that kind-hearted old lady could suggest nothing more to the point than going at once with a mustard poultice to the sufferer.

Old women are so set in their notions that the anxious husband was a full half hour dissuading her, and, when he reached home with both hands in his empty pockets, Mrs. Cadge was washing the dishes.

"Did the man give you a job?" inquired his wife brightly.

"Wot man? Wot job? Where's my supper?" snapped Cadge. Then, as the ingenious ruse occurred to him, a flood of language rose to his lips and would not be dammed, though everything else was.

"Gone and hogged all the supper, did you!" he growled. "H'it's a nice state of affairs, when a man comes 'ome from a 'ard day's work to a h'empty table."

"But it was such a little steak, Tom," urged his wife, "and the children were so hungry that I let them finish it."

There was no money in the house, and Snavelly, the only credit grocer, had closed his shop, so Mr. Cadge's supper that night was bread and cheese without kisses.

Sunday was a long-remembered day of misery for Cadge's wife and children, who played the scapegoat for Mr. Snavelly and whipping-boy for Mrs. Pipkin.

Monday morning the head of the house arose early and, before Mrs. Pipkin had finished her beauty sleep, that hard-working man was at the door demanding his pay. An hour was all the time she required for dressing. Mr. Cadge wished he had broken his fast before leaving home.

"Really, I don't know whether I ought to pay you," replied Widow Pipkin when she finally answered his last, desperate ring. "Mr. Snavelly made the bargain, and I should like to have him see the work before settling with you."

She jingled some silver in her plump chain purse as she spoke.

Aha, the widow had deceived him! It was eight o'clock, the bank would not open for an hour, she had had the money in the house all the time. The deceitfulness of women!

Mr. Cadge's blood rose to his head. His little green eyes smouldered. Fortunately for the widow, Mr. Snavelly drove up at that moment on his delivery wagon, and cheerfully agreed to appraise the work.

"Oh, come now, Cadge, my man, you don't call that a finished job, I hope? Why, it is three foot short at each end and lacks a tier at the top. You had better pitch in for an hour or two and make a fair job of it, and then you'll get your money."

"Wot do you call a fair job, I should like to know?" replied the heated Cadge; "look at them 'ere boulders, as I fished out of the h'icy water at peek o' day! Look at all them little stones, h'every one of them as cost me backache and sweat. H'if that job ain't worth six dollars it ain't worth six cents."

"Mebbe so, mebbe so, my good man," responded the grocer, genially, "but whatever it's worth, I don't pay for a job until it's finished."

At this point Cadge's torrent of eloquence swept away all punctuating pauses and he became slightly incoherent, but the drift of his harangue was that because he had worked like a slave and finished the wall in two days they wanted to rob him of his money. "I'll 'ave the six dollars for my work, or I'll 'ave the lor on you," he concluded.

The amiable but tactless Snavelly saw a happy solution of the problem. "Never mind, Mrs. Pipkin," he said, "there shall be no lawsuit. You pay me the six dollars, and I will write Cadge a receipt for the seven dollars he owes me. I lose a dollar that way, to be sure, but then it is just the same as finding six."

"Ho! that's your game is it?" snarled Cadge, gasping with indignation. "That's 'ow you two plot against a poor 'ard-workin' man with a family, to beat him out of 'is pay. H'it's a put-up job, that's wot h'it is! But you don't get the best of Tom Cadge that way. I'll 'ave a h'orficer 'ere if I don't get my money, you bloomin' old plotters, you!"

"Yes, you had better call an officer," agreed Mr. Snavely. "I saw one around the corner as I passed; the same one your brats were pelting from behind a fence last week."

Mr. Cadge tacked adroitly. "No, I ain't going to spend my money with the loryers, as'd want twelve dollars to get you back six. I'll tear down the wall, that's wot I'll do. If I don't get my pay the loidy don't get her wall, and you can tike your measly job and give it to some poor man wot needs it."

Mr. Snavely had one foot on the wheel and swung lightly into his cart. "Have it your own way, Cadge," he responded cheerfully. "You can finish the wall and get your six dollars cash, or you can leave it as it stands and take my receipt for seven, or you can tear it down and have your labor for your pains; but mind, if the police catch you destroying property, you will get a month in the chain gang."

"I don't care if I get sixty days!" screamed the outraged laborer. "The city can look after my missus and the kids if their nateral provider is took from them. That wall is comin' down! I'm h'only a workin'-man, and I don't mind bein' spit on once in a while, but I won't stand for it bein' rubbed in."

It was a sultry June day, the first of the summer vacation, and toward noon Mrs. Cadge set out to take her husband a bite of lunch. The little Cadges accompanied her, eager to exhibit the noble castle which they had completed on Catnip Creek. When they came to that charming stream, their eyes flew open in amazement and their jaws dropped.

"Why, mamma, look at daddy!" they cried in unison. "Daddy's workin'!"

Incredible though it seemed, it was true indeed. Father worked. Mrs. Cadge wondered whether she, too, was to have a vacation, after her years of drudgery.

Cadge worked furiously, his rage uncooled by the waters of the Catnip which flowed through his shoes. He had discarded coat, vest, and hat, and was hurling rocks with the strength of a maddened giant, clear across the stream. What splendid muscles he had!

A tier or two of Mrs. Pipkin's wall was already down. The telephone within her cottage was ringing madly.

Even as the Cadgelings watched their parent sweating at his toil, a blue-coated figure ran swiftly down the bank, caught the hard-working man by the collar, and firmly led him away to where steady work awaited him.

Mrs. Cadge watched him go with mingled feelings. She had seen him depart thus before, and remembered how much easier it was that month to feed four mouths instead of five. Besides, the exercise on the rock pile would do him good, poor man. A night-watchman's position was so confining.

Mr. Snavely had driven up to the curb, and the Widow Pipkin ran out all of a flutter. They sympathetically related to Mrs. Cadge the events of the morning which had led to her husband's arrest.

"And there was only an hour's work to be done on the job," said Mr. Snavely judicially.

"I would gladly pay six dollars cash to have it just as it was this morning," added the tremulous Widow Pipkin, "and I'd make it ten if it were done as Mr. Snavely says."

"And I'd still be willing to write a receipt for the full seven dollars for six dollars cash," interposed that astute philanthropist.

Mrs. Cadge's shrewd, birdlike eyes were half closed in mental computation; ten dollars for the wall and one dollar discount on the grocery bill, that would make eleven dollars clear.

"Come along, kiddies," she said, "you and me will pitch in and finish that wall to the queen's taste in an hour or two!" And she did.

Eleven dollars clear, and the watchman's pay still going on, Cadge on the rock pile, hence the biggest mouth of the family fed by the city. Indeed, indeed, the little Cadges were not the only ones who enjoyed a vacation when father worked!

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