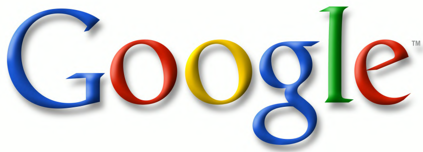

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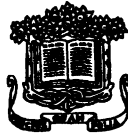
SHORT STORIES FROM
LIFE

Short Stories from *Life*

The 81 Prize Stories in "Life's" Shortest Story Contest

With an Introduction by
Thomas L. Masson
Managing Editor of "Life"



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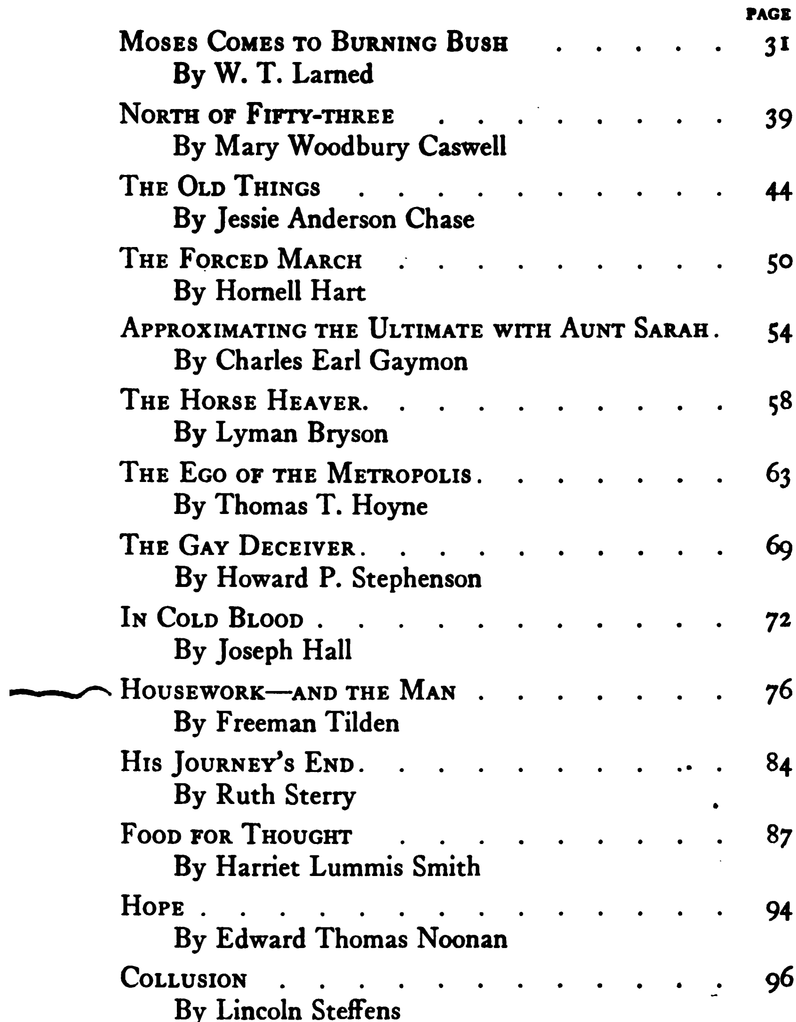

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INTRODUCTION

By Thomas L. Masson
Managing Editor of *Life*

It was at a luncheon party that the idea of *Life's* Short Story Contest was first suggested by Mr. Lincoln Steffens. He propounded this interesting query:

"How short can a short story be and still be a short story?"

It was thereupon determined to discover, if possible, a practical answer to this interesting question. The columns of *Life* were thrown open to contributors for many months, prizes aggregating $1,750 were offered and eighty-one short stories were published. This book contains these stories, including the four prize winners.

The contest cost in round numbers a little less than $12,000. Over thirty thousand manuscripts were received. They came from all over the world—from sufferers on hospital cots, from literary toilers in the Philippines, from Europe, Asia, and Africa, and from every State in the Union. One manuscript was sent from a trench at the French battle front, where the) p. 18

story had been written between hand grenades. Every kind of story was represented, the war story and the love story being the leaders. Every kind of writing was represented, from the short compound of trite banalities to the terse, dramatic, carefully wrought out climax. Back of many of these efforts the spectral forms of Guy de Maupassant and O. Henry hovered in sardonic triumph. Tragedy predominated. The light touch was few and far between. But it was still there, as the stories published show.

Here let me pay a just tribute to the readers who, with almost superhuman courage, struggled through these thirty thousand manuscripts. In the beginning they were a noble band of highly intelligent and cultivated men and women, with strong constitutions, ready and willing to face literature in any form. I understand that many of them survived the contest. This speaks well for the virility of our American stock. Theirs was a noble and enduring toil, and theirs will be a noble and enduring fame. Without them this book now might contain twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and eleven poor stories instead of eighty-one good ones. To those among them who still live, a long life and, let us hope, an ultimate recovery!

Naturally, in the method of securing the stories, there had to be some way of getting the contributors

to make them as short as possible. Mr. Steffens' ingenious suggestion admirably attained this end. First, a limit of fifteen hundred words was placed upon all stories submitted, no story longer than this being admitted to the contest. For each story accepted the contributor was paid, not for what he wrote, but for what he did not write. That is to say, he was paid at the rate of ten cents a word for the difference between what he wrote and fifteen hundred words. If his story, for example, happened to be 1,500 words in length, he got nothing. If it was 1,490 words he got one dollar. If there had been a story only ten words long, the author would have received $149. To be accurate, the longest story actually accepted for the contest was 1,495 words, for which the author received fifty cents, and the shortest was 76 words, for which the author received $142.40. The interested reader will be able to discover the identity of these two stories by examining the stories in the book. At the original luncheon party a large part of the warm discussion that took place turned on how short a story could be made and still come within the definition of a short story. It was really a question as to when is a story not a story, but only an anecdote. When a story is a story, is it a combination of plot, character, and setting or is it determined by only one of these three elements? Must it end when you have ended it

or must it suggest something beyond the reading? I shall not attempt to answer these questions. The definition of the short story should be relegated to the realm of "What is Humor?" "Who is the mother of the chickens?" and "How Old is Ann?" If you really wish to vary the monotony of your intellectual life and get it away from "Who wrote Shakespeare?" or "Who killed Jack Robinson?" start a discussion as to what a short story is. It has long been my private opinion that the best short story in the world is the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, but I have no doubt that, should I venture this assertion in the company of others, there would be one to ask: "What has that to do with the price of oil now?"

But in order that the reader may have some idea of the method adopted in judging the stories which were finally selected, it may be well to give what I may term a composite definition of what a short story is, gathered from the various opinions offered when the contest was originally under discussion by the judges. This definition is not intended to be complete or final. It is not the cohesive opinion of one individual, but only a number of rather off-hand opinions which are of undoubted psychological interest as bearing upon the final decisions.

A short story must contain at least two characters, for otherwise there would be no contrast or struggle.

A situation must be depicted in which there are two opposing forces.

A short story must be a picture out of real life which gives the reader a definite sensation, such as he gets upon looking at a masterpiece of painting. While it must be complete in itself, the art of it lies in what it suggests to the reader beyond its own limits. That is to say, it must convey an idea much larger than itself. This is the open sesame to the golden principle. (This is well illustrated in the story that took the first prize.)

Every short story must of necessity deal with human beings, either directly or indirectly. It must reveal in the briefest manner possible—as it were, like a lightning flash—a situation that carries the reader beyond it. It is, therefore, inevitable that the supreme test of the short story lies in its climax. The climax must gather up everything that has gone before, and perhaps by only one word epitomize the whole situation in such a way as to produce in the reader a sense of revelation—just as if he were the sole spectator of a supremely interesting human mystery now suddenly made plain.

The technique of the short story should be such that no word in its vocabulary will suggest triteness or the fatal thought that the author is dependent upon others for his phrasing. When, for example, we read "With a glad cry she threw her arms about him"

"A hoarse shout went up from the vast throng" "He flicked the ashes," we know at once that the author is only dealing in echoes.

These were some of the general considerations which governed the readers and judges, but it would be unfair to say that there were not other considerations which came up later on. In a number of instances, manuscripts which were interesting and well written, and even longer than others that were accepted for the contest, were rejected because it was felt that they were not really stories, but more in the nature of descriptive sketches.

So far as the practical method pursued was concerned, it will not be amiss to state briefly how the work was carried on.

It was deemed best, on general principles, to let the authors of the stories have a hand in the matter, the editors feeling frankly that they preferred a disinterested method which would relieve them in a measure from the fullest responsibility. The conditions were therefore made to read that:

"*The editors of 'Life' will first select out of all the stories published, the twelve which are, in their judgment, the best. The authors of these twelve stories will then be asked to become judges of the whole contest, which will then include all the stories published. These twelve authors will decide which are the best three stories, in*

the order of their merit, to be awarded the prizes. In case for any reason any one or more of these twelve authors should be unable to act as a judge, then the contest will be decided by the rest.

Each of these twelve judges will, of course, if he so wishes, vote for his own story first, so that the final result may probably be determined by the combined second, third, and fourth choices of all the judges. This, however, will not affect the result. In case of a division among the judges, the Editors of 'Life' will cast the deciding vote."

This method worked well and was fully justified by the final result. As the manuscripts were received they were registered according to a careful clerical system and turned over to the readers, who were from five to seven in number, including three women. The rule was that each story should be read independently by at least two readers, their verdicts separately recorded. If they were unanimous in rejecting a story, it was returned. If they were agreed upon its merits, or if they were at all doubtful, it was then passed up to the five members of *Life's* editorial staff. It was read and reread by them, and the individual comments of each editor recorded independently. By this sifting process, each story was subjected to a final process of discussion and elimination. The stories, as accepted, were

paid for on the basis of ten cents a word for all the words under 1,500 which the story did not contain and were published in *Life*. From the authors of the eighty-one stories published, the editors selected the following twelve judges, each one of whom consented to serve:

Herbert Heron, Carmel, Cal.
J. H. Ranxom, Houston, Texas.
Ralph Henry Barbour, Manchester, Mass.
Clarence Herbert New, Brooklyn, N. Y.
William Johnston, New York City.
Graham Clark, New York City.
Mrs. Elsie D. Knisely, Everett, Wash.
Mrs. Jane Dahl, San Francisco, Cal.
Selwyn Grattan, New York City.
E. L. Smith, Ft. Worth, Texas.
Herbert Riley Howe, Sioux Falls, S. Dak.
Miss Ruth Sterry, Los Angeles, Cal.

These judges, independently of each other, sent in their opinions, several of them not voting for their own stories as the first prize, although this was allowable under the rules. There was no difficulty on their part in awarding the first prize of one thousand dollars and the second prize of five hundred dollars. In the case of the third prize there was such a division of opinion that the editors, under the rule of the competition that gave them the final decision, determined that it would be fair to divide the third

prize between two competitors who had received the same number of the judges' votes.

The prize winners were as follows:

FIRST PRIZE

Ralph Henry Barbour of Manchester, Mass., and George Randolph Osborne of Cambridge, Mass., joint authors of "Thicker Than Water."

SECOND PRIZE

Harry Stillwell Edwards of Macon, Georgia, author of "The Answer."

THIRD PRIZE

Dwight M. Wiley of Princeton, Ill., author of "Her Memory," and Redfield Ingalls of New York City, author of "Business and Ethics." This prize was divided.

This book is now offered to the public in the confident hope and the firm belief that it will be found a valuable contribution to the literature of short fiction, in addition to the interest it also merits because of the stories themselves.

One final point should be emphasized. This book is not, in the very nature of the case, a book of uniform literary style; it is not the polished expression of the highest literary art. It is the best of thirty thousand attempts to write a short story, by all sorts and conditions of minds—a fair proportion of them amateurs, a fair proportion writers of considerable

experience, and a small proportion excellently skilled craftsmen. In their final selection of these stories, the readers and judges were governed, not so much by the question "Is this superfine literary art?" as they were by the question "Is this interesting?" By this touchstone the book certainly justifies its existence.

T. L. M.

SHORT STORIES FROM *LIFE*

Short Stories from *Life*

N. B.

By Joseph Hall

LIEUTENANT LUDWIG KREUSLER glanced hurriedly through the mail that had accumulated during the month that the X-8 had been away from base. At the bottom of the pile he found the letter he had been seeking and his eyes brightened. It was a fat letter, addressed in feminine handwriting, and its original postmark was Washington, D. C., U. S. A.

"His Excellency will see you, sir." The orderly had entered quietly and stood at attention.

With a slightly impatient shrug the Lieutenant shoved the letters into his pocket and left the room.

He found Admiral Von Herpitz, the wizard of the sea, at his desk. As the young man entered the old Admiral rose and came forward. This unusual mark of favour somewhat embarrassed the young officer until the old man, placing both huge hands upon his shoulders, looked into his eyes.

"Excellent."

The one word conveyed a volume of praise, gratification. The old sea dog was known as a silent man. Censure was more frequent from him than applause.

The Lieutenant could find no word. The situation was for him embarrassing in the extreme. He, like Herpitz, was a man of actions, and words confused him.

"These English," the old Admiral spoke grimly, "we will teach them. Have you seen the reports? They are having quite a little panic in America also over the *Seronica.* Two hundred of the passengers lost were American."

A file of papers lay on the table. Kreusler ran through them hurriedly. The Berlin journals gave the sinking of the *Seronica* great headlines followed by columns of sheer joy. The London and Paris and some of the New York sheets called the exploit a crime and its perpetrators pirates. But they all gave it utter and undivided thought. The X-8 had become the horror craft of the world. Berlin figuratively carried her young commander on her shoulders. He found himself the hero of the hour.

"You have done well for the Fatherland," Von Herpitz repeated as the Lieutenant was going out.

In his own cabin Kreusler forgot the *Seronica* and the X-8. The fat letter with the Washington postmark absorbed him.

Two years, ending with the outbreak of the great war, Kreusler had been naval attaché to the German embassy at Washington. He had been popular in the society of the American capital. He was highly educated, a profound scientist, an original thinker, and an adaptable and interesting dinner guest. Dorothy Washburn, the youngest daughter of the Senator from Oregon, had made her début in Washington during the second winter of Kreusler's presence there. The two had met. They were exact opposites; he tall, severe, blond, thoughtfully serious; she, small, dark, vivacious, bubbling with the joy of life. Love was inevitable.

The fat letter was engrossing. It breathed in every line and word and syllable the fine love this wonder woman gave him. One paragraph was most astounding. It read:

"To be near thee, loved one, I have arranged, through the gracious kindness of our friends, to come to Berlin as a nurse. Just when is as yet uncertain, but come I will, fear not, as quickly as may be. Dost long for me, to see me, dearest heart, as I for thee? Well, soon perhaps that may not be so far away. Couldst not thou arrange to be wounded—only slightly, of course, my love—so that I might attend thee?"

The letter ended with tender love messages and assurances of devotion. The last sheet bore a single

word, "Over," and on the reverse side a woman's most important news, a postscript. This read:

"P. S. Arrangements have been completed. Everything is settled. Even my father has consented, knowing of my great love. I sail next week."

And then:

"N. B. The ship on which I sail is the *Seronica.*"

THE CLEAREST CALL

By Brevard Mays Connor

"DON'T worry," said the great surgeon. "She will pull through. She has a fine constitution."

"She will pull through because *you* are handling the case," the nurse murmured, with an admiring glance.

"She will pull through," agreed the Reverend Paul Templeton, "because I shall pray."

He did not see the ironical glance which passed between nurse and doctor, materialists both. He had stooped and kissed his wife, who lay on the wheeled table that was to carry her to the operating room. She was asleep, for the narcotic had taken immediate effect.

For a moment he hung over her and then he moved aside. When the door of the operating room had closed on the wheeled table with its sheeted burden he stepped out on the little upper balcony beneath the stars, knelt, and earnestly addressed himself to his Maker.

A distant clock struck eight. The operation would take an hour. . . .

Humbly he prayed, but with superb confidence. He had lived a blameless life, and his efforts were in behalf of a life equally blameless. It was inconceivable that he who had given all and asked nothing should be refused this, his first request. It was even more inconceivable that his wife, who was so worthy of pardon, should be condemned. Humbly he prayed, but not without assurance of a friendly Auditor.

It was a sweet May night, satin-soft, blossom-scented. The south wind was whispering confidences to the elms; the stars were unutterably benign. Surely God was in His heaven, thought the Reverend Paul Templeton.

Then up from the darkness beneath the trees came the low, thrilling laugh of a girl. He lifted his face from his hands and stared, scarce breathing, into the night, while his ears still held every note of that low, thrilling laugh, which spoke of youth in love in the springtime.

The black bulk of the hospital behind him faded into obscurity as swiftly as a scene struck on a darkened stage. He was no longer on a little upper porch, but in an old-fashioned summer-house, hidden from the tactless moon by a mesh of honeysuckle in bloom. He was no longer on his knees before his Maker, but sitting beside the girl who had been Ellen McCartney.

She was dressed in white. She was so close he

could feel the warmth of her. Somehow, in that darkness, their hands met and clung, shoulder touched shoulder—the fragrance of her hair in his nostrils. The soft, womanly yielding of her body.

Now her palms were resting against his cheeks, drawing his head down; now, as lightly as a butterfly upon a flower, her lips brushed his one closed eye and then the other; now she laughed, a low, thrilling laugh, which spoke of youth in love in the springtime.

Prayer had gone dry at its source, choked by the luxuriant vegetation of memory. He remembered other kisses and thrilled in sympathy with the delight of other time. . . .

The distant clock struck nine, but he did not hear it. The shriek of a woman in pain sliced through the silence but could not penetrate the walls of his dream. The girl who had been Ellen McCartney lay in his arms, her lips to his.

Then a hand fell upon his shoulder.

"Come," said the nurse, and slipped back into the room.

The Reverend Paul Templeton came back with a wrench to consciousness of the time and place, and horror surged through his veins like a burning poison. It was over—and he had not prayed! And worse! When his whole being should have been prostrate in humble supplication he had allowed it to walk brazenly erect among memories that at the best were

frivolous and at the worst—carnal! He seemed to hear a voice saying:

"I am the Lord of Vengeance. Heavy is mine hand against them that slight Me!"

Mastered by despair, he clung to the iron railing. What could he hope of science when he had failed in his duty to faith? Somehow he managed to struggle to his feet and gain the room.

The sheeted figure on the bed was very still, the face paler than the pillow on which it lay. He crumpled down beside her and hid his face, too sick with shame to weep. He *knew* with a horrid certainty that she was dead and that he had killed her.

And then:

"Paul!"

It was the merest wisp of sound, almost too impalpable to be human utterance. He lifted his head and looked into the face of the great surgeon. . . . He was smiling.

"Paul!"

He looked now into the pale face of his wife . . . and *she* was smiling.

"There, there," said the great surgeon. "I told you she would come back. Her constitution——"

"Constitution!" scoffed the nurse. "It was you."

"Or," smiled the surgeon, magnanimously, "your prayers, sir."

But the sick woman made a gesture of dissent.

"No," she said, "it was none of those things. I came back when I remembered——"

"Paul," she whispered, "lean down."

He obeyed. Her palms fluttered against his cheeks, and, as lightly as a butterfly on a flower, her lips brushed his one closed eye and then the other. And then the girl who had been Ellen McCartney laughed a low, thrilling laugh, which spoke of youth in love in the springtime.

GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN

By Selwyn Grattan

THE empty vial—the odour of bitter almonds—and in the chair what had been a man.

On the desk this note:

"Farewell. From the day of our marriage I have known. I love you. I love my friend. Better that I should go and leave you two to find happiness than that I should stay and the three of us wear out wretched lives. Again farewell—and bless you.

"ROBERT."

THE GRETCHEN PLAN

By William Johnston

"AND Solomon had seven hundred wives," read Pastor Brandt.

Gretchen Edeler sat up to listen. A new idea had come to her. A distressing state of affairs existed in the village of Eisen. There had gone to the war from the village over three hundred men. From the war there had returned fifty-one—only fifty-one—and there in Eisen were two hundred and eighty-one girls wanting husbands.

Of the fifty-one returned soldiers twenty had wives and families already. Two had married during the war, married the nurses they had had in the hospital. Hilda Sachs, the rich widow, had captured one. That left just twenty-eight men available for husbands—twenty-eight to two hundred and eighty-one girls.

Yet no marriages occurred. The men wished to marry as much as the girls, but how could a man decide with so many to pick from? Thus stood matters that Sunday morning.

After the service Gretchen waited to speak to Pastor Brandt.

"Everything in the Bible," she asked anxiously, "is it always right?"

"Ja," the herr pastor affirmed, "the Bible always gives right."

"About everything?"

"Ja, about everything."

"The Bible says that Jacob had two wives and that Solomon had seven hundred wives. Is it right for men to have many wives?"

"It was right in Bible days," affirmed the pastor guardedly. "In those times many wives were needed to populate the land."

"Many wives are needed now to populate the land," asserted Gretchen. "Why should not each man in Eisen take now ten wives?"

"It is against the law," declared the pastor.

"It is not against Bible law."

The pastor pondered ten minutes.

"Nein," he answered, "it is not against Bible law."

"It would be for the good of the Fatherland."

The pastor pondered twenty minutes.

"Ja," he decided, "it would be for the good of the Fatherland."

"We will do it," announced Gretchen. "Ten of us will take one husband. Better a tenth of a husband than never any husband. Will you marry us?"

The pastor pondered thirty minutes.

"Ja," he said at length, "for the good of the Fatherland."

Quickly Gretchen spread her news. Quickly the girls accepted the Gretchen plan. Quickly they formed themselves into groups of ten and selected a husband. Quickly the twenty-eight men accepted. What man wouldn't?

Only Selma Kronk, the homeliest of homely old maids, was left unmated. In indignant dismay she hastened to Frau Werner's kaffee-klatch and unfolded to the married women assembled there the schreckliche Gretchen plan.

"Impossible!" asserted Frau Stern.

"Unspeakable!" declared Frau Heitner.

"It must not be!" announced Frau Werner.

In outraged wrath they appealed to their husbands to interfere.

"It is for the good of the Fatherland," the husbands one and all declared. "What man would not have ten wives if he could?"

They appealed to the Mayor, to the Governor, even to the Kaiser himself, but in vain. To a man they welcomed the idea.

So the Gretchen plan was carried out. Each war hero took ten wives, not only in Eisen, but throughout the land.

Nevertheless, Frau Werner and the other aggrieved

respectable advocates of monogamy had their revenge.

As invariably happens after a war, all the babies born were boy babies.

"Aha!" cried Frau Werner exultantly, as each new birth was announced. "Twenty years from now there will not be women enough to go around. Each wife then will have to have ten husbands. I wonder how the men will like that?"

THE GLORY OF WAR

By M. B. Levick

HE WAS an orderly in the hospital and had got the job through a friend in his Grand Army Post. The work was not for a fastidious man, but John was not fastidious. In his duties he affected the bluff manner of a veteran, and, peering at the internes with a wise squint, would say, "Oh, this ain't nothin'; an old soldier is used to such things. If y' want t' see the real thing, jus' go to war." And he would laugh at them and they would laugh at him.

He wore his G. A. R. emblem conspicuously on all occasions. At the slightest chance he became a bore with long tales of fighting, of how he had chased Johnny Reb and how *those* were the days. The students, still near enough to the classroom to hold a lingering repugnance for the text-books' over-emphasis on the Civil War, would guy him, but John never suspected.

On Decoration Day he marched and attended as many exercises as he could squeeze into the too short hours. He wore a committee ribbon like a decoration for valour. Once he carried a flag in a parade,

and for weeks talked about Old Glory, the Stars and Stripes, and regimental colours that had changed hands in distant frays.

And he had fought only to save his country, he would assert. He didn't have no eye on Uncle Sam's purse, not he; he could take care of himself, and if not, why, there was them as would. When the youths accused him of sinking his pension, he turned hotly to remind them of their lack of beard.

He was ever so ready to defend himself with an ancient vigour that the students and the nurses were sorry when he fell ill. Perhaps his campaigning had taken from his vitality, they surmised. The house surgeon told them he would never get up. After that—and the afterward was not long—John told his tales to more sober auditors.

He had been in bed a week and had begun to suspect the state of affairs when he called to him one evening the youth who of all had shown him the most deference.

"Sit down," he said, without looking the youngster in the eye; and for a time there were heard only the noises of the day-weary ward. Presently John spoke, in an apprehensive tone of confidences.

"I've been a soldier now for forty-five years," he said, "an' for once I want to be just myself. . . . I kind o' like you, an' there ain't nobody else I can talk to, for I ain't got any one. . . .

"In '61 I was on my father's farm in Pennsylvani'. I was on'y a kid then—fifteen—but when the war come I wanted the worst way to go. But my mother, she cried an' begged me not to, an' my daddy said he'd lick me, so I tried t' forget it.

"But I couldn't. Lots o' other boys was goin' away t' enlist an' they was all treated like heroes. Ye'd 'a' thought they'd won the war already by themselves the way folks carried on when they left—the girls cryin' about 'em an' the teacher an' the minister an' the circuit judge speakin' to 'em an' all the stay-at-homes mad because they wasn't goin', too.

"It kept gettin' harder an' harder to work on the farm, an' finally I said, 'Well, I'll go anyway.' I knew pa an' ma wouldn't change their mind, so I didn't say nothin' to them. But I went to all the other boys an' told *them*. 'I'm goin' away t' enlist,' I'd say, an' when they'd laugh an' say, 'Why, y'r ma won't let ye,' I'd look wise an' tell 'em to watch me, an' I'd strut aroun' an' wink sly-like.

"They got to talkin' about it so much I was scairt my dad would find out, but he didn't, an' I held back as long as I could, because all the other boys was lookin' up to me. I was a man, all right, then. None o' 'em that went away was the mogul I was. The girls got wind of it, too, an' I could see 'em out o' the tail o' my eye watchin' me an' whisperin' an'

sayin', girl-like, all the things the boys was tryin' not to say. That on'y made the boys talk more, too.

"So after a few days I ran away. The first night I hung roun' near the town an' after dark sneaked back to hear 'em talkin'. 'He'll be back soon,' one feller said. Another, just to show he knew more, spoke up, 'No, he won' come back 'less in blue or in a coffin.' An' the others laughed.

"I thought that was fine—in blue or a coffin. 'You bet I won't; I'm the man f'r that,' says I to myself.

"It took me three days to walk to the city. When I told the recruitin' sergeant I wanted to be high corporal he laughed an' pounded me an' put me through my paces. Then he said I couldn't be a soldier. My eyes wasn't good enough.

"I cried at that; on'y a kid, y' know—the' was lots of 'em younger than me fightin'. But I remembered the feller what said, 'He won't come back 'cept in blue or a coffin,' so I went where the soldiers was an' bummed an' hobnobbed with 'em till they let me help at peelin' vegetables and pot-wrastlin' an' such things. Then I got to be a sort o' water boy. My, I was proud! . . . But that on'y lasted a month, an' I had to get out.

"I jus' couldn't go home without the blue, an' it seemed too soon to get a coffin yet, so I went to New

York an' stayed all through the war. Nearly starved, too.

"After it was over I went back home. They didn't suspicion, o' course, an' the first thing I knew I'd told 'em I'd been in the army. Hadn't planned to, but some way it just popped out.

"Right away it was hale-fellow-well-met with them that had been at the front, an' we were goin' roun' givin' oursel's airs an' the girls seemed to think we was better than all the rest. . . . Well, sometimes I . . .

"I was jus' a young fellow, y' know, an' kep' gettin' in deeper an' deeper an' never thought it'd mean anything. When a man says, 'John, you remember that clump o' trees the Fifty-eighth lay under at Antietam?' why, you say, 'Yes.' An' the next time y'r tellin' about Antietam you jus' throw in them trees without thinkin'. That's the way it was with me. An' I read books to get my facks straight an' no one never caught me nappin'. I used t' correct *them*. . . . At last I got to believe it all myself. . . .

"Then the G. A. R. Post was organized in our town. . . . An' so it went.

"Well, it's been a long time. If I'd 'a' known in the first place maybe it'd 'a' been different. . . . But it was my right, anyway, wasn't it, now? Say, don't you think it was comin' to me? It wasn't my

fault. By God, I wanted to fight! Jus' one chance an' so help me——

"They cheated me out o' it an' I got even. That's all it was. I never took no pension. I've had the glory, like 'em. . . . I've paid for it. . . . I on'y took my own.

"And the Post will bury me."

THE AVIATOR

By Hornell Hart

THE French Government declines to accept your services." The words said themselves over and over in his ears in the drone of the motor, as the monoplane climbed into the velvet night sky. Was that diplomatic blunder of two years ago so utterly unforgivable? Was exile not enough? Would the Republic deny him even the right to fight under her colours? "The French Government declines to accept your services." The recruiting officer had said it, and General Joffre had reiterated the unrelenting statement in reply to his direct appeal for enlistment. And now the drone of the propeller, the hum of the motor, and the rush of the air through the braces whispered the words ceaselessly into his ears as the great wings carried him up into the darkness.

Below, the ghostly searchlight fingers of the fortress reached up, groping toward him. The central searchlight of the fortress was playing on a French cruiser which had crept up recklessly close to the fort and was pouring shells in rapid salvos up into the battlements on the hill. The sparks of fire from the

ship's side seemed but tiny points of light far down below. Momentarily balls of flame appeared above and around the dim outlines of the fortifications, and the smoke of bursting shells drifted wanly across the white, searching pencils of light. Down there France, undaunted, grappled the Turk in the darkness. From the farther shore distant lights of Asia twinkled in the night.

Behind that central searchlight, Henri had said, lay the entrance to the powder magazine. That passageway was the vital spot of the fortress. An explosion there would ignite the ammunition and shatter the entire centre of the fortifications.

A searchlight came wheeling across the sky and shot past just behind the monoplane. The flash of the guns on the hill were now just beneath him, and their roar formed a surging background of sound to the whirr of the machine. He swept in a huge curve toward a position back of the fortress. The searchlight was circling the sky again. For a fraction of a second the aeroplane was silhouetted in its full glare. The beam wavered and returned zigzagging to pick him up again. This time it caught and followed him. A shell burst below him. If one fragment of shrapnel should strike the nitroglycerine which he carried France would profit little from this last ride of his.

The fortress was not far behind him. He swept about and pointed the nose of the monoplane down-

ward straight toward the base of the central search-light. Its beam had ceased to play on the battleship and was lifting swiftly toward him. Suddenly its glare caught him straight in the eyes. He gripped the controls and steered tensely for that dazzling target.

"The French Government declines to accept your services." He smiled grimly. They could not well decline them now. The air rushed past him so swiftly that it seemed stiff like a stream of water under high pressure. Below him at that point of light death stood smiling. The crash of a shell bursting behind him was lost in the gale of wind in his ears. The light grew swiftly larger and the outlines of the battlements became distinct. "The French Government——" the world ended in a crash of blistering whiteness.

"He was pointed directly at the magazine," said Abdul, the gunner. "If the shell from the French cruiser had not struck him we should all by now have been with Allah."

LOYALTY

By Clarence Herbert New

THEY had been playing "cut-in" Bridge until the Charltons went home, at midnight. Instead of following them Norris returned to the library with Steuler and his wife. In the old days Barclay Norris had asked Barbara to marry him; but Steuler's impetuous love-making appealed to her imagination, and Norris had remained their loyal friend. In the library, Steuler yawned—without apology. Extracting a suit-case from the coat-closet, he started for the stairs.

"You and Barbara may sit up all night, my friend; but me—I haf been travelling, I cannot keep my eyes open! Good-night!"

Norris stopped him with a slight motion of the head, nodded to a chair by the table, lighted a cigar rather deliberately, and sat down.

"There's a matter I want to discuss with you, Max—*now*. . . . Don't go away, Bab. It concerns you—rather deeply." He inspected his cigar critically during a few moments of silence. "Max, you may have heard that my law practice brought

me occasionally in touch with the Government, but you didn't know I was officially connected with the Secret Service. When we were drawn into this war your probable sympathies were considered. But you enlisted for the Spanish War, though you never got farther than Chattanooga You took the oath of allegiance. We considered your loyalty had been demonstrated, so we trusted you. We've had a constant fight against treachery, however, in the most undreamed-of places. You were again suspected. Is it necessary for me to say more? Lieutenant Schmidt was arrested ten minutes after you left him this morning. I saw you receive from him specifications for the Wright Multiplane, the Maxim Chlorine Shell, and the perfected 'Lake' Submarine. I also know you have a copy of the State Department's code-book."

Barbara Steuler had remained standing at the end of the table, her eyes dilating with an expression of incredulous, outraged amazement.

"Barclay! Are you *insane?* Are you accusing *Max* of these horrible things? My *husband?*"

Norris spoke gently but firmly

"I'm stating facts, Bab—not accusing. Because I've been your friend, and his, I'm giving him this chance to return the papers and code before it's too late. At this moment I'm the only one who really knows. He meant to sail on Grunwald's

yacht for Christiania at sunrise. There's still time for him to get aboard and escape. I'm personally answerable for the unknown man I've been following to-day!"

She whirled upon her husband, saw, with horror, that he was making no denial, that he was looking at their old friend with a gleam of hatred in his eyes. Presently he pulled open a drawer in the table, thrusting one hand into the back part of it.

"So! You efen suspect where I put the code-book? Yess? Well, it iss the fortune of war, I suppose. You think I will not arrested be, if I reach the yacht before morning? Nein? You are the only one who knows—yet? Und suppose I nefer come back? My wife I mus' leave with the man who always haf lofed——" There was a flash, a stunning report. Norris staggered up from his chair and pitched headlong upon the floor.

"Max! *Max!* A traitor! A murderer! My God!"

He took a canvas-bound book from the drawer, thrusting it hastily into the suit-case, then fetched overcoat and hat from the closet. In his hurry he overlooked the automatic pistol which lay upon the table. So intent was he upon escaping with what he had that he seemed to have forgotten her entirely. But a low, gasping voice made him whirl about at the door.

"Another step—and I'll—*kill* you!" The pistol steadily covered his heart. (He'd seen her shoot.)

"Put that book on the table." He hesitated, meditating a spring through the doorway. "When I count three! One! . . ." With a muttered curse he took the code from the suit-case.

"Empty your pockets!"

There was no mistaking the expression in her eyes· He emptied his pockets.

"Now—*go!* Without the suit-case!"

"Barbara! You would haf me leave you! Like this!" Her face was colourless, in her eyes a brooding horror, a dazed consciousness of that motionless body on the floor behind the table.

"My people fought at Lexington and Concord—for principles dearer than life to them. You swore allegiance to those principles, to their flag. And you are—*this!* You've murdered our loyal friend—when he was giving a traitor a chance, at great personal risk! Go! *Quickly!*"

As the front door slammed she ran to the window, watched him down the block. A man who did such things might return later, catch her unarmed, secure the papers. Her brain worked automatically. There was no safe place to conceal them. They must be destroyed at once! Tearing the book to pieces, she piled the leaves upon the andirons in the fireplace with the other papers, then lighted the heap. When

they were entirely destroyed a patter of footsteps echoed from the stairs; a little figure in pajamas came peeking around the portière. (A thrill of passionate thankfulness ran through her that he resembled *her* people, with no trace of the alien blood.)

"Mo-ther! What was that big noise?"

"Possibly some one's automobile, dear—a blowout or a back-fire, you know." She forced herself to speak quietly, standing so that he couldn't look behind the table.

"Mo-ther, who was down here wiv you?"

"Uncle Barclay, sweetheart. But—oh, God!—he's gone now." (Norris's love had been the truer, deeper affection; she'd known it for some time.) "Run along back to beddy, darling. Mother will come up presently."

She had a feeling of suffocation as the boy hugged her impetuously and padded softly upstairs. As she listened to his careful progress another sound, a faint rustling from behind the table made her heart stop beating for a second. With trembling limbs she leaned across the table and looked. The dead man lay in a slightly different position; there was a barely perceptible movement of the chest. She reached breathlessly for the telephone.

"Give me Bryant 9702, please! . . . Yes! Doctor Marvin's house! *Quickly!*"

MOSES COMES TO BURNING BUSH

By W. T. Larned

MELTING snow in the spring and cloud-bursting rains in the fall poured their floods from the foothills, through the arroyo, and were licked up and lost in the arid lands below. The Mormons came, dammed the outlet in the ridge—and, lo! there was a lake. Thus Burning Bush, Cortez County, New Mexico, was created, on the edge of green alfalfa fields. And because there was coal the railroad ran a spur to collect it; and because there was a railroad cowmen came in with their beeves and sheepmen with their mutton and wool.

In the terms of a now-discarded census classification, the "souls" composing Cortez County's population were officially designated as "white men, Mormons, and Mexicans." Also, there were Indians, who could not vote and did not count. Finally, there was Ah Sin.

Ah Sin was no common coolie. He had been, indeed, the prize pupil at the Chinese mission on the Coast. He could speak and read English, do sums with his head in American arithmetic, and recite

whole passages from the Bible. With a cash capital accumulated in ten years of dogged domestic service, he had come to Burning Bush and opened a general store. It was the only one in town, and it paid.

Ah Sin—smiling, courteous, honest—worked fifteen hours a day, and put his profits in the bank. In time he would go back to China a rich man. Then Moses came.

That Moses should come to Burning Bush was inevitable. Burning Bush had begun to boom. The odour of its prosperity had been wafted afar, and the nostrils of the Israelite knew it.

The new store, lavishly painted in greens and yellows, was the most noticeable thing in town. When Moses had moved in, even the Montezuma hotel seemed to shrink. It had two show windows of pure plate glass—their contents tagged with legends proclaiming cut prices. Across the full width of its imposing false-front elevation there appeared this sign:

STOP! LOOK! LISTEN!
THE ORIGINAL MOSES
GOLDEN RULE EMPORIUM.

With such simple lures are the simple enticed. Burning Bush stopped, looked—and listened to maneuvering Moses. It is the new thing that

catches the eye and fills the ear. Ah Sin had forgotten to beat his gong. Custom fell off, and found its way to the newcomer. In a month or so the Celestial hardly held his own.

Ah Sin, losing trade, was troubled. Meeting the cut in prices did not bring back his customers. With Oriental taste he organized a novel window display—in vain. Something was the matter. But what?

Ah Sin's guileless mind could not grasp it. Thrown on his own mental resources, he grappled as best he could with the problem. The Bible teachers had taught him that the Jews were a race dispersed and paying the penalty of their transgressions. Ah Sin believed this to be literally the truth. Yet he, a Christian, seemed about to be overcome by the competition of an Israelite.

"Velly funny," said Ah Sin to himself. "Heblew make good. Chlistian catchee hell."

He strolled out into the street, his shop being empty for the time, and contemplated long and earnestly the place of his competitor across the way. Something about the sign seemed to puzzle him and to make him think. He shook his head. Then he backed off and looked critically at his own shop, with its modest device: "AH SIN—GENERAL STORE." Presently his impassive face lighted up; and that night his sleep was shortened by an hour devoted to a search of the Scriptures. Had not his teachers

told him to turn to the Bible in time of doubt and trial? They were not here to counsel him, but he had a clew.

He awoke next morning clothed and girded with strength. And all that day, when business permitted, he laboured on a canvas sign, which he lettered himself, with brush and India ink, smiling contentedly the while.

It was Curly Bob, foreman of the Frying Pan outfit on Sun Creek, who saw it first. Coming into town at a lope, in quest of cut plug, his roving eye was arrested by the new announcement of Ah Sin. By temperament and training Curly was unemotional, but, seeing Ah Sin's handiwork, he pulled so suddenly on his spade bit that the cayuse fell back on its haunches. For there, in the eyelids of the morning, Ah Sin, seeking an everlasting sign, had flung forth a banner that prevailed against the Jew. In black, bold letters a foot high, it beckoned to the trade of Burning Bush:

STOP! LOOK! LISTEN!
THE ORIGINAL SIN
TEN PER CENT. FORGIVEN FOR CASH

Whereupon Curly Bob, swearing softly in admiration, blew himself to tobacco for the whole outfit.

BUSINESS AND ETHICS

By Redfield Ingalls

IN THE dingy office of A. Slivowitz & Co., manufacturers of dyes, things were humming. Every clerk was bent over his desk, hard and cheerfully at work, and there was a general air of bustle and efficiency.

That was because A. Slivowitz stood in the doorway of his private office looking on.

The portly head of the firm watched the scene complacently for a few minutes. Then, catching the eye of his young but efficient private secretary, he beckoned him with an air of mystery to the inner sanctum.

The secretary, who was sharp of eye and alert of manner, rose at once and followed, though it was not the custom of A. Slivowitz to summon him thus. His employer sank ponderously into his swivel chair and motioned to the secretary to shut the door and take a seat. Then for a minute or so he was silent, playing with his massive gold watch chain and studying the young man through puckered lids. But if the secretary was perturbed he did not show it.

"Mr. Sloane," began Slivowitz, at length, in his heavy voice, "you been with the firm now how long —six or five months, ain't it?"

"Nearly six," the dapper young man confirmed briskly.

"You're a smart feller, Mr. Sloane," his employer continued, examining the huge diamond on his left hand. "Already you picked it up a lot about dyeing. A fine dyer you should make. Now, Mr. Sloane, I'm going to fire you."

The secretary's eyebrows went up a trifle, but otherwise he showed no great perturbation. Perhaps a certain elephantine playfulness in the big man's tone reassured him.

"By me business is good," Slivowitz went on, with a fat chuckle. "I'm a business man, Mr. Sloane, first and last, and nobody don't never put nothing over by me."

Knowing something of his employer's business methods, Sloane could have amplified. What he said was: "Thanks to your royal purple, Mr. Slivowitz. You've about cornered the trade."

"They can't none of 'em touch it, that purple; posi-*tive*-ly," agreed the dyer, with much satisfaction. "But"—and he became confidential—"between me and you strictly, this here now Domestic Dye Works, they got it a mauve what gives me a pain."

He hitched his chair closer and laid a pudgy hand on Sloane's knee. "I'm going to fire you," he repeated, with a wink. "I want you should go by the Domestic Dye Works and get it a job. Find out about the formula for their mauve—you understand me—and come back mit it, and you get back your job and a hundred or seventy-five dollars."

Sloane started. For a moment he stared at his employer, his face going red and pale again; then he rose to his feet.

"Sorry, Mr. Slivowitz, but I can't consider it," he said.

"Oh, come now, Mr. Sloane!" protested the dyer, with a laugh, leaning back in his chair. He produced a thick cigar and bit off the end. "These here scruples does you credit, Mr. Sloane, but business is business; and, take it from me, Mr. Sloane, you can't mix business up mit ethics. Them things is all right, but you gotta skin the other guy before he skins you first, ain't it?"

"That may be——" began the secretary, as he moved toward the door.

"*May* be? Ain't I just told you it *is?*" Slivowitz paused in the act of striking a match to glare. "You needn't to be scared they'll find it out where you come from and fire you, neither, Mr. Sloane," he added, more quietly and with a cunning expression. "I got brains, I have. A little thing like recommends

to a smart man like *me*——" The match broke. He flung it into the cuspidor and selected another.

Sloane paused with his hand on the doorknob. "Mr. Slivowitz——" he began again.

"Of course," continued his employer, "I could make it—well, a hundred fifteen, Mr. Sloane. But, believe me, not a cent more, posi-*tive*-ly."

The secretary shook his head decidedly.

"What?" roared Slivowitz. "Y' mean to tell me y' ain't goin' to do it? *All* right; you're fired anyhow, you understand me." Then with an evil glitter in his eyes, "And if you don't bring by me that formula, you get fired from the Domestic Dye Works; *and you don't get it no job nowheres else, too!* Now, you take your choice." This time the match lighted successfully.

Sloane smiled. "Quite impossible," he said. "I was going to resign in a day or two, anyway."

"Eh?" exclaimed the head of the firm, his jaw dropping and his florid face paling a little. In the face of a number of possibilities he forgot the match in his fingers.

"Yes. You see—you'll know it sooner or later—the Domestic Dye Works sent me here to learn the formula for your royal purple."

And the door slammed shut behind A. Slivowitz's private secretary.

NORTH OF FIFTY-THREE

By Mary Woodbury Caswell

THE short winter day of Alaska was brightening as Gertrude pushed her chair back from the breakfast table and announced that she proposed to go at once for her constitutional. Her brother placidly assented, but Keith interposed with a worried look.

"Hadn't you better go with her, Bob? I suppose I've grown to be an old granny, but since Jacques told us of that outlaw who threatened to kidnap a white girl for his wife, I don't like to have Gertrude get out of sight."

The girl bent over him caressingly.

"Don't worry, dear," she said. "Jacques had been drinking hard when he told you of this mythical exile. Besides, I am no Helen of Troy to be abducted for my beauty. I'd really much rather have Bob stay with you."

And she kissed him, put on warm wraps, took her snowshoes and started for the daily tramp that had kept her fit ever since she had come up on the last boat, hastily summoned by a cable from Bob

when her fiancé had his shoulder crushed, and it would be impossible for the young men to return to the States with their stake. She and Bob had nursed him into convalescence, but it had been a hard winter for him, and she did not wonder that he had developed some nervousness, though she considered his fear for her wholly unnecessary, as, indeed, did Bob.

When she was a half-mile from the cabin and a slight rise of ground hid it from her, she saw a dog team approaching, and smiled, thinking that Keith would surely consider that danger was near. As it met her the driver touched his cap, and she had a swift impression of a very different type than she had recently met, and one that made Jacques's fantastic tale seem less absurd. As she involuntarily glanced back she saw, and now with alarm, that the stranger had turned and was coming toward her. He stopped the dogs close to her and inquired courteously, and with a foreign accent:

"Can you tell me, mademoiselle, how near I am to some residence?"

"Our cabin is over the hill," she replied quietly, though with growing terror, which was justified, as he sprang toward her, swathing her in a blanket, so that she could neither speak nor struggle, and placing her on the sled.

She could not have told whether it was hours or

minutes before she was lifted, carried into a cabin, and the blanket unfolded from her, while a savage-looking husky dog growled a greeting. Her captor shook off his heavy outer coat, removed his cap, and with exaggerated deference said:

"Mademoiselle, pray remove your parka and permit that I relieve you of your snowshoes. I do myself the honour, mademoiselle, to offer you marriage."

Resolutely conquering her fear, Gertrude looked steadily at him. The man evidently was, or had been, a gentleman; but what must his life have been to bring him to this! As composedly as she could she answered:

"I must decline your offer. Pray permit me to return home."

"Ah, no, mademoiselle. I fear I cannot allow that. As for marriage—as you please, but in any case you must remain here."

"Not alive," she said.

"Ah, but, mademoiselle, how not?" he asked, in mockery of courtesy more pronounced. "It is not so easy to die"—with a sudden bitter sadness.

"There are many ways," she replied. "Here is one."

And, seizing a dog whip lying near, she struck the husky a sharp blow and, as he furiously leaped to his feet, flung herself upon the floor before him. He

fastened his teeth in her arm as his master grasped his throat, and the struggle shook the cabin. At last the man broke the dog's hold and dragged him to the door. Gertrude's heavy clothing had saved her arm from anything but a superficial wound, but as he bound it up she said:

"The dog will not forget, and if he fails me I can find another way."

His face, which had paled, flushed a dark red as he hastily spoke.

"For God's sake do not think—but why should you not? You are free, mademoiselle. Such courage shows me I am not quite the brute I fancied I had become, and also that there is one woman in the world whose 'no' assuredly does not mean 'yes.' I will take you home at once, on the faith of a Marovitch."

She stared at him incredulously and said slowly:

"Is it possible—are you Count Boris Marovitch?"

"Yes"—in deep wonder—"that is my name, but how could you know?"

"This letter should interest you," she said. "It is from Varinka. I was at a convent school in Paris with her." And she watched him excitedly as he read aloud the passage she indicated.

"Do you remember my telling you of my cousin Boris, who was sent to Siberia for killing Prince——— in a duel? It was supposed that he was shot while

trying to escape, but the guard has confessed that he was bribed to assist him, and he may be living. The Czar would gladly pardon him if he would return, his homicidal tendencies being valuable in the present war crisis. And Olga has steadfastly refused to marry any one else, so——"

A sharply drawn breath interrupted the reading, and the letter fell to the floor from his shaking hands as he looked at her, his face white and drawn.

"Mademoiselle, it is too much," he gasped. "Your courage—your generosity—I insult you unforgivably and you give me back honour, love, life—I cannot say——" And he sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands.

She went over to him and laid her hand gently on his shoulder.

"I am glad you are happy, Count," she said, "and I am sure we shall be very good friends. Please take me home now."

They met Bob halfway, striding along with an anxious face, his rifle over his shoulder. "This is my brother, Mr. Stacey," said Gertrude. "Bob, this is Count Marovitch, of whom Varinka wrote. He starts to-morrow by dog train to the States on his way to Russia."

THE OLD THINGS

By Jessie Anderson Chase

LIKE Sir Roger's neighbours peering over the hedge, I had daily observed, over my stone wall, a very old gentleman in his shirt sleeves, who pleasantly gave me the rôle of Spectator. A New-Englander of the elder type, with the heavy bent head of the thinker; but, particularly, with the piercing yet so kindly humorous blue eye that loses none of its colour with age, but seems to grow more vivid and vital with the same years that steal from the hair its hue of life and from the walnut cheek its glowing red.

Such an eye, to a lawyer like myself, accustomed to look for a human document in every human face, seemed the very epitome of eighty years: a carefree boyhood among *contemporaries*—in house furnishings, in barn and pigsty, orchard and gardens; a youth that sees already a new generation in most of these companions of his earthly pilgrimage; a middle age, forced out of the romantic sense of companionship on the road, into the persistent and finally triumphant view of using environment for ends of its own; and then old age, free to return and lavish for-

gotten endearments upon the "old things!" This or the other "landmark," dear, and familiar from life's beginnings. These periods, all slipping unnoticed into their successors, yet each possessing a distinct and tangible outline and colour, had all had their turn at my neighbour's blue eyes. And the look that comes only at the end, when the life has been prodigal of response and of an unswerving fidelity in the storing up of values—that was the look that I valued as a thing of price.

It was a day of late summer that brought me more directly face to face with its beauty and gravity. The old gentleman appeared, in his shirt sleeves, but with plenty of ceremony in his quiet demeanour, at the door of my little "portable" law office, at the edge of the orchard.

"I am told, sir," he began, "that you are an attorney at law."

I bowed, and offered him a chair but he continued standing.

"I have come," he said, "to request your services in drawing up my last will and testament—that is," he serenely emended, "in case your vacation time is subject to such interruption."

While I was formulating my assent he continued:

"You have no doubt, since coming into this rather communicative neighbourhood, been informed that my son owns the homestead."

The kind, keen old eyes took on a look of what George Eliot names "an enormous patience with the way of the world."

"Everything belongs to John and Mary. But there are one or two little old things that they don't care about. They're up in the lean-to. The old mirror that, as a lad, I used to see my face in over my mother's shoulder, it's still holding for me the picture of my mother smiling up at me. And the old ladder-back chair that she used to sit in and cuddle me; and switch me, too—and maybe that took the most love of all. That's all. John and Mary don't want them. They're only old things, like myself. It's natural, perfectly natural. At their age I most probably felt just so."

He paused and looked through the lattice, where the reddened vine-leaves were beginning to fall.

"The young leaf-buds pushing off the old leaves. It's nature."

Before sunset—for the old man was strangely impatient—I had his "will" signed, witnessed, and sealed. The old mirror and chair were to go to a wee, odd little old lady, called in the neighbourhood "Miss Tabby" Titcomb because of her forty-odd cats, except for which she lived alone.

"Little Ellen," *he* called her, as he fondly spoke of their school days together. "Mother would have been well content if we'd hit it off together, Ellen and

I. But a boy is as apt as not, when urged one way, to fly off in another; and I was at the skittish age.

"I've never said this before to any man, sir, but I'd have been a better husband to Ellen. Mary was a faithful wife, and better than I deserved. But she was not just aware, like Ellen, of where to bear on hard and where to go a little easy. That's what a man needs in a woman, sir. Ellen always knew just when and where."

The next morning, which was Saturday, I was riding down Bare Hill Road—as it chanced, right past Miss Tabby's—when my horse shied; and that tiny old lady, with an enormous gray cat beside her, rose up from behind the lilac bushes. Bigger people than "little Ellen" have been frightened by Prince's antics, but she quietly put her hand on his restive neck as if he were only a little larger kitten, and then spoke to me in a soft little purr of a voice:

"I've heard—and you'll excuse me—that you're a lawyer, Mr. Alden; and I've a small matter I don't wish to entrust to any one here, being private. It's a letter for Mr. Thomas Sewall, to be delivered upon my demise, which I feel is about to take place." She spoke with a little note of relief, as if from some long strain.

I took the small envelope.

"It's just the cats," she was moved to confide

further; "the little ones and the smart ones will all find friends. But the two *old ones!* Mr. Sewall has a notion for the old things. And"—here she hesitated long, while I breathlessly assured her of my best care for the letter—"there's—somewhat in the note *besides* the cats," she brought out bravely. "You'll make sure it doesn't fall into John and Mary's hands?"

This was Saturday morning. Sunday, as I listened absent-mindedly to the slow toll of the meeting-house bell, my houskeeper remarked, on bringing in my coffee:

"Did you notice, sir? It was eighty-six. There's an old man and an old woman, both just the same age, in the village, died in the night."

The old chair, upon which—when they were young together—the little Tom had been spanked and comforted; and the mirror, still treasuring the picture of the round, saucy phiz over his mother's shoulder, were offered at auction and bid in for a trifle by me. I would have paid gold sovereigns for them, but not into the hands of John and Mary! The cats, likewise, sit by the hearth, on which was burned to ashes the letter "not *entirely*" about their disposal.

And the "Old Things" that cherished these earthly companions? The minister—himself a rare "old thing"—preached a funeral sermon for the two so strangely united by death; and his thin voice, like

the tone of an old, cracked violin, still haunts me:

"Their youth is renewed like the eagle's . . . And they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

THE FORCED MARCH

By Hornell Hart

INTERMITTENTLY, when the snow ceased falling for a moment, Wojak could see the regiments ahead, black against the white fields, crawling interminably over the hilltop under the dull sky. Wojak was a burly, bearded fellow. These winter days pleased him. He liked the tingle that came with marching in the cold air. He liked the dull, rhythmic "scruff" of the hundreds of feet as the regiment swung along, welded by its months of marching into a living unity.

This was his own country they were marching through. His homestead lay not twenty miles away, near this very road. As he trudged along thoughts of Sophy and little Stephan kept slipping into his mind.

At the crest of the hill the regiment came to a halt. Back from the road, half hidden in trees that were cut sharp and black against the snow and the sky, stood the ruin of a house.

"Just so stands my house," thought Wojak. "Behind, among the trees, should be the pigsty to the left, the stable to the right."

He turned and waded through the newly fallen snow toward the dwelling. Charred beams at one end showed where a fire had been checked by the snowfall. In the yard beneath the fluffy new snow the old layer had evidently been tramped. Behind the house he found the pigsty and the stable.

"But the stable is bigger than mine," he murmured.

He looked in. A pile of hay was in the corner, and on it lay some rags. The stable was so dark that Wojak thought he saw a child lying there. He went over to the corner. On the hay was a yellow head, the round cheeks streaked with tears. The child was sleeping, but its breath came in little sobs. With clumsy gentleness the soldier picked the baby up.

"Stephan had curls like that," he whispered.

As he stepped out into the light the child awoke. A chubby arm slipped about the burly neck, and the blue eyes looked at him with the beginning of a smile. But in a moment the fact that this was not father, but a strange man, came over the baby, and he began to sob, not angrily, but with a worn anguish that gripped Wojak's heart.

The company was falling in after the halt when he came to the road. The curly head lay close to his bearded face, and a great clumsy hand protected the little body.

"Where did you get that, Wojak?" growled the

lieutenant, staring blankly at the sorrowful little bundle. "Leave the kid and fall in," he commanded. "There's no time for nonsense on this march."

Wojak started to protest, but the habit of obedience was too strong. Sullenly he stood the baby in the snow and took his place in the ranks. The child's sobs turned to a heartbroken wail.

"Forward, march!" commanded the officer, and the company moved away down the road. Wojak looked back and saw the tiny arms stretched out after him while snowflakes settled on the yellow head. Long after the hilltop was hidden in swirling snow he seemed to see them and to hear the wail of the orphaned baby.

. . . .

The sun was setting when the army bivouacked four miles from Wojak's farm. The orders were that no leaves of absence should be granted; but he knew the sentinel on guard, and home was too near to be left unseen for another four months.

The stars were glittering from an all but clear sky when he slipped silently through the lines and started down the familiar roads toward Sophy and Stephan. Four months was a terrible length of time. The passage of armies had marked the country. The great tree by the cottage of Ivanovicz had been shattered by a shell and had crashed through the roof. Jablonowski's barns had been burned. The

windows of the church at the corners were shattered and a great hole had been shot in the steeple. Wojak walked faster, and a twinge of anxiety came over him as he entered the lane that led up to his barnyard. His heart stopped: the thatch of the stable had been burned and only the walls were standing. His eyes strained for a glimpse of the house. It was not there. A few charred beams marked the place where his home had stood.

He ran nearer. Snow had covered everything. Beside the place where the door had been was a white mound with a stick standing in the earth at its head. To the stick was nailed a little shoe. Wojak seized it with shaking hands.

"Stephan!" he choked. "My little Stephan!"

After a while he looked up. Looming above him was a man on horseback who had ridden up unheard through the muffling snow.

"You are under arrest" said the voice of the lieutenant.

APPROXIMATING THE ULTIMATE WITH AUNT SARAH

By Charles Earl Gaymon

AUNT SARAH was sixty-three years old. Uncle John was sixty-four years old.

If you spoke to Aunt Sarah about any new fringe on the tapestry of the intellectual loom she would say:

"Oh, yes, we 'proximated that line of thought in 1893. It is near, but not quite the ultimate."

If you spoke to Uncle John about Schopenhauer he would reply:

"I don't take much stock in them new-fangled cultivators."

Uncle John and Aunt Sarah had lived together in the old homestead for thirty-eight years.

Aunt Sarah always had intellectual curiosity: she had left the old Baptist church in her girlhood to join a joy cult; she had followed with her mental telescope the scintillating trajectory of William James's flight through the philosophic heavens of America; she had known about eugenics long before the newspapers had made the subject popular knowledge, and she had played in the musty, rickety gar-

ret of occultism at a time when the most daring minds in science were sitting tight in the seats of the scornful. But there was a shadow in the sunlight of Aunt Sarah's mental advancement, an opaque spot in the crystal of her mysticism, an unresolved seventh in the harmony of her simple life in the Wisconsin backwoods—

She was married.

She was married to Uncle John!

At six o'clock in the evening of June 1, 1915, Aunt Sarah glanced up from reading Bennett's "Folk Ways and Mores" as Uncle John entered the kitchen door. Uncle John had just come from performing the vesper-time chores.

"Pa, we shall have to get a divorce!" said Aunt Sarah, shutting Bennett with determination. "Marriage is a worn-out convention; it is only one of the thousand foolish folk ways that hinder the advancement of science among the masses."

"Very well, ma."

"We *will* get a divorce."

"I quite agree, ma."

"Don't attempt logic with me, John. I said that we would get a divorce."

Uncle John shook his head. "When will it be?" he asked.

"To-morrow."

Uncle John smiled, dropped his armful of kindling into the wood box behind the kitchen range, and

began to lay the Brobdingnagian bandana handkerchief that served them for a tablecloth.

Aunt Sarah finished the preparation of the bacon and onions and set the coffee pot back when it began to boil.

After supper Uncle John read the seed catalogue and Aunt Sarah resumed her Bennett.

The following afternoon Judge Thompson, who lived in the biggest and best house in the little county seat, was surprised to see from his chair in the big bay window an antiquated carriage drawn by a retired farm horse draw up before his cast-iron negro hitching post. In the carriage were Aunt Sarah and Uncle John.

Judge Thompson was on the porch in time to receive his guests.

"We've come to get a divorce," said Aunt Sarah, with a direct gaze; then she added, with the *sang froid* of one who is wise, "What'll it cost?"

The judge motioned them to seats in the wicker chairs on the porch, and then replied:

"But you must have grounds——"

"Everybody knows it. Incompatibility of temperament."

And the judge, smiling, humoured Aunt Sarah, for he knew her and the community in which she lived. "It will cost you just ten dollars," he said.

"Make out the papers," Aunt Sarah replied.

One hour later Uncle John and Aunt Sarah left the judge's house together, separated for life.

Moses, their horse, looked at them out of the corner of his good eye as they approached the carriage.

Uncle John paused, but Aunt Sarah stepped firmly into the vehicle.

Uncle John followed her and took up the reins.

Moses knew the way home by a clairvoyant sense, and he took that way at his own pace of prophet-like dignity.

At the door of the old homestead Uncle John handed Aunt Sarah down from her seat in silence. Then he put Moses into his stall. And when he returned to the house he found Aunt Sarah beaming upon him through her gold-rimmed spectacles from her place at the table, which was loaded with a supper such as she alone could cook.

Aunt Sarah was jubilant. She was living at last with a man to whom she was not married; no longer was there a blot on the 'scutcheon of her intellectual progress; no longer did a black beetle mar the pellucid amber of her simple life of Advanced Ideas; no longer could the acolytes, in off moments when they were not engaged in trundling the spheres through the macrocosm, gaze sternly down upon her through interstellar space and say:

"Aunt Sarah is nearly, but not quite, an intellectual."

THE HORSE HEAVER

By Lyman Bryson

"FOR why should you be tired?" demanded his wife, splashing her arms viciously in the suds as she finished the day's rinsing. "You've nothing to do but shovel dirt all day and rest when your boss ain't looking."

"Gwan, I'm a hard-working man," said Kallaher. "And, what's more, I can kick about it whenever I want to without any remarks from yourself. I'm tired. When's supper?"

"Supper is any time when I can get my arms dry and get a good breath." Mrs. Kallaher began belligerently to get his supper.

Kallaher stretched his short legs out in front of him and leaned back in his chair. "It was a hard day," he said gently. "As if it wasn't enough to have me breaking my back with the shovel and all, a fool drove his horse too close to the ditch, and the dumb beast fell in on top of me."

"That's likely—now, ain't it?—and you being here to tell about it!"

"Believe it or not, it happened." Kallaher folded his hands across the place where he didn't wear a belt and sighed. "But I put him out again and went on with my work without taking a rest or nothing."

Mrs. Kallaher might have tried again to express her incredulity, but just then old Mother Coogan, next-door neighbour, thrust a red excited face through the kitchen door.

"Mary Kallaher, is your man home?"

"Why shouldn't he be?"

Mrs. Coogan entered and stood, one hand clutching a newspaper, the other pointing dramatically at Kallaher. "It may be so, but he don't look it," she said.

Before they could question her she began reading from the paper: "Mike Kallaher, a ditch digger on the new Twelfth Street sewer, is a small man but a mighty. A horse, driven too near the ditch to-day, fell in. 'Begorra,' said Mike, 'can't a man work in peace?' He laid down his shovel, spat on his hands, and heaved the horse back into the street. The foreman thought he had been hurt when the horse fell in, but he wasn't, and he was not in the least bothered by having to throw him back out again. He went back to his digging."

"Let me see that paper." Kallaher rose and took it from her hand. Slowly he went over the story—

which the reporter who wrote it had thought exceeding clever. "Yeh," he said finally, "that's me, all right."

Mrs. Coogan looked upon him with respect. "I never thought much of you before, Mike Kallaher, but you're the only man I know that could pick up a horse." She turned to his wife. "It's no wonder you're a meek woman, Mary, but you ought to be proud of a man like that, sure."

"Are you coming on with supper now?" asked Kallaher in a mighty voice of the speechless Mrs. Kallaher. "Be quick now, or I'll give you what's needing."

Never before had he dared make a threat as if he meant it. His wife was struck with sudden awe. She gasped and hurried silently with the setting on of supper. She trembled and dropped a dish.

"You poor clumsy dub!" roared her husband, towering to the height of five-feet-two. "Are you so weak you can't hold a pot, now?"

"Excuse me, Michael," she murmured. "Excuse me, man. I was excited."

Mrs. Coogan saw with approval that Kallaher was bullying his wife, and went down the street to tell the neighbourhood.

In Mike Kallaher's kitchen—for it had suddenly become his own, after belonging for fifteen years to his wife—a poor, meek, unhappy-looking Irishwoman

was obeying orders. She jumped when he yelled at her, which he did every two minutes to see her jump, begged his pardon, brought his pipe, and looked on in silence when he deliberately knocked out the ashes on the newly scrubbed floor. A man who could throw a horse out of a ditch would stop at nothing.

As the new monarch sat in his chair looking contemptuously away from his slave, who was tentatively watching him, there was a knock at the door. Mike's chest had begun to get tired from being swelled out so far, and he let out his breath with a sigh.

A suave young man was admitted. After ascertaining that Mike Kallaher really lived in this place he asked Mike how he was feeling.

"Good," was the truculent answer.

"No injuries from your little adventure this afternoon?"

"Injured, is it? Not a bit—not a bit."

"I'm glad to hear that. I'm assistant manager of the Burke Construction Company. We heard one of our horses fell on you to-day, so I came down to help out if you were hurt. We thought we could afford to pay a few hundred dollars on doctor bills." The young man smiled pleasantly. "But since you're not hurt and are so willing to admit it, we won't have that pleasure. Good-bye." He got up and went.

Kallaher had forgotten to swell out his chest again. He sat drooping in his chair. His wife was no longer tentative.

"Horse heaver, is it?" She advanced, menacing. "Horse heaver? You poor mick! There goes your chance to be a cripple for life and die rich."

She pulled his face up by the front hair and slapped him like a mother.

"Horse heaver, is it? Take that, now!"

And Kallaher took it.

THE EGO OF THE METROPOLIS

By Thomas T. Hoyne

YOU couldn't get her picture?" sneered the city editor contemptuously. "Come, Johnson, get into the game. You're not in Chicago or St. Louis now. This is New York."

Johnson was eating his bread in the sweat of his brow, but he wanted to continue eating. Therefore he said nothing, but lounged off into the local room, empty during the dead afternoon hours.

He was lucky to be working at all. During the couple of weeks he had been wearing out shoe leather chasing pictures for the greatest of all metropolitan morning newspapers he had been told his good fortune a hundred times. He, a perfect stranger in New York, had walked right into a job.

The job should have been tempting only to the rawest cub, but Johnson, a crackerjack reporter, snapped at it. He knew that some of the best newspaper men in New York, crackerjack reporters, were carrying the banner along Park Row.

The afternoon newspapers were boiling over with editions, black type and red crying out that one

hundred and sixty-eight thousand dollars had disappeared from a vault of the soundest bank in Wall Street and that the cashier was missing. To be assigned to this bank story, to get the chance to show what he really could do, Johnson would have given a finger from his right hand.

He sat on a corner of a typewriter desk, swinging one leg, while he raged inwardly at the insolent city editor. Bread or no bread, he could not work himself into spasms of enthusiasm over a near society woman's photograph for a cheap story. He was too old in the game for such child's play.

The noisy opening of the door between the managing editor's room and the office of the city editor roused him. He heard the managing editor's voice.

"Got any line on that bank cashier?"

"Not yet, sir," replied the city editor, "but every live man on the staff is out on the story."

Johnson flushed as if he had been insulted publicly. How would the old guard in Chicago or Cincinnati retort to such an insinuation against a man who had campaigned up and down the country and had learned the newspaper game as a soldier learns war—in action? He recalled winning out in California, notwithstanding "Native Sons." But to win against the esoteric self-sufficiency of New Yorkers demanded higher fortitude.

"Where can I find the owner of this newspaper?"

Johnson came out of his dream abruptly to answer the insignificant little man who had rambled into the local room.

"He isn't in the building just now," said he patiently.

Owners of newspapers do not receive callers casually. When cranks get through the outer doors now and again it is the duty of some employee to act as buffer.

The visitor lifted a trembling hand to his forehead, shook his head uncertainly, and began to mumble a meandering, inconsequent tale. Amid the aimless words one sentence unexpectedly shaped itself that set the reporter's nerves atingle.

Johnson glanced fearfully toward the city editor's office.

"You want to see the owner of the paper?" he asked softly, the sudden thumping of his heart sounding in his voice. "Come with me."

He grasped the visitor's arm and hurried him out of the local room into the hall, and thence into an elevator.

"This way," he coaxed, when they reached the street level. He led the man out into the crowded thoroughfare, cleverly sheering away from points of danger, as a battleship might convoy a treasure bark.

In the empty local room time dragged. The city

editor busied himself in his little office, glaring at his assignment book, studying clippings from afternoon newspapers, and answering calls on his telephone. Once he was interrupted by a woman who laid two tickets for a church fair on his desk and asked to have a paragraph about the entertainment published.

"Johnson!" shouted the city editor arrogantly. His voice merely lost itself in the hollow local room. He rose from his chair irritably and peered through the door of his office, but there was no Johnson on whom to break his wrath.

As evening came on reporters and copy readers straggled in. No one brought startling news in the bank story. The cashier was still missing and there was no trace of him.

The local room burst into nervous life, emphasized by erratic volleys from pounding typewriters and hoarse yells for copy-boys. More than once as the night wore away the city editor stepped from his office to look toward the corner where Johnson usually sat. Each time a vacant chair aggravated his anger.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when the ringing telephone bell called his attention from the proof before him. He jerked the receiver from its hook.

"Johnson, eh? I wanted you half a dozen times this afternoon and evening, but now you needn't come in at all. You're through."

He jammed the receiver back with a glow of satis-

faction in having good reason to discharge an incompetent.

The telephone bell rang again. This time the city editor listened.

"You've got the cashier locked up in your room!" he fairly yelled. "All right! All right!"

Shaking with excitement he wheeled from the telephone.

"Brail! Jack! Fredericks!"

He roared the names into the local room in sharp succession.

Like soldiers at a bugle call men sprang from desks where they were working or idling.

"You, Jack, get on the 'phone and take a story from Johnson! He's got the biggest beat that ever was pulled off in the city of New York."

The rewrite man settled himself at the wire.

At the other end of it Johnson, in his room at the cheap hotel where he lived, struggled to be calm in this moment of triumph. He began to dictate.

Near him, well within range of vision, sat his willing prisoner. Not once since they left the newspaper office together had the cashier been out of Johnson's sight. Helpless, hopeless, but with a conscience no longer heavily burdened, the unfortunate man listened now just as he had listened while the reporter, without betraying his source of information, craftily verified by telephone the wandering confession.

Clear and without interruption the stream of dictation poured over the wire. The story was written as a newspaper story should be written, and when it was told it ended.

"That's all," sighed Johnson proudly. "I'll hold him here till two o'clock to make the beat an absolute cinch. Then I'll 'phone the police."

In the newspaper office the rewrite man had hardly drummed out the last line of copy before the sheet of paper was snatched from his typewriter and rushed in the wake of former scudding sheets to the composing room, just in time for the first edition.

"There never was a beat like it," cried the exultant city editor. "I don't see how he landed it."

"It's a great piece of newspaper work," agreed the managing editor. "No man in the country could have done better. Who is Johnson?"

"A new man, but I've taught him the game already. He didn't wait for any assignment—just went right out and dug that cashier up." The city editor's voice cracked with enthusiasm. "That's the kind of newspaper men we turn out in little old New York."

THE GAY DECEIVER

By Howard P. Stephenson

THE only other passenger thumbed his tobacco into a melancholy pipe-bowl.

"What's your line?" he asked.

"Soap and Christmas candles," I said, and held out my cigar for his light.

"Married?"

"Yes, you?"

"Um-m-m-m." And he stretched his legs, drew up his elbows and looked worried.

"When I was making this territory about this time last year," he began, "I met a pretty, wifely little girl, and we were married before I left town. Tarascon wasn't on my regular trip then, but now I have to strike home once a month.

"You see, I was raised in a family of sisters—all older than I, all unmarried. I could never bring myself to tell them about Edyth. They don't know it yet. Live in Cranford, on the Vandalia. My wife thinks I haven't any folks."

"Well?"

He blushed. "There—it—we—I'm going to be a father." Then he did blush.

I laughed, sympathetic. "You can't bear not to let your sisters know?" I ventured.

He nodded and gulped.

"Tarascon," called the brakeman. "Tarascon."

. . . .

I was on the hot veranda of the Croxton House, at Croxton, some two weeks later, when I felt a modest hand on my shoulder.

"Boy or girl?" were my first words, with a grin.

"Girl," announced the father with pride. "Sophronia Judith Rose. Named for my sisters."

He seated himself, fished in his pocket for his pipe, and smiled nervously.

"They knew it when I got home," he said. "I'd left Edyth's letter in my room. I believe they had been suspecting all along. Well, they never said a thing at supper, but when I went upstairs I saw a string of baby ribbon sticking out of my sample case. The girls had packed it full of things from their hope boxes. Baby things, they were.

"I tried to bluff it out, but I—I couldn't do it, and I'd told them all about it five minutes after I came downstairs.

"We all took the train for Tarascon the next day. Edyth was tickled—said she'd suspected I had sisters. She hadn't, though, of course.

"So I had to name the baby for them. Weighed eleven pounds, too.

"My, I've got to catch that 9:32 for Tarascon!"

He pulled out his watch, then turned the dial to me sheepishly. Under the crystal was a tiny slip of narrow ribbon, baby blue.

"So long," he said. "Mayn't see you again. This is my last trip. The firm's giving me a city job, where I can be with the family."

IN COLD BLOOD

By Joseph Hall

WITH the door of her room locked Viola Perrin opened the letter which she had taken from her husband's office table. It was not very securely glued, and she succeeded in loosening the flap without marring the envelope.

When she had read it she dropped the thing upon her dressing table and stared with dry, unseeing eyes into the mirror. Her world had crumbled. She did not burst into tears. She was one of those women who cannot weep. The thing that had happened to her left her racked, writhing, tearless.

Suddenly the horror of the thing struck her with full force. St. John was untrue. He was intriguing with another woman even while he was being the same courteous, attentive husband to her that he had always been. She rose and clenched her hands fiercely. She caught her lower lip cruelly between her teeth. For the first time in her life she wanted to scream.

In an instant she was hot with anger and hurt pride. She rose quickly and dressed for the street.

She hurried. She must get away. She had no right in this room, in this house, in the house of a man who did not love her.

Outside she walked to the street car. She had no plan. She did not intend to go to his office. She was simply getting away from his home.

She went into a department store and idly looked at some things without knowing what they were. It was a sale day, and the crowd in the store was immense. She came to herself when a sharp cry sounded at her right and the throng surged in that direction.

A woman had fainted, one of the saleswomen. She was a tall woman, thin and not bad looking. She had been waiting on Viola the moment before, and she had simply crumpled behind the counter without a word. The cry had come from a cash-girl who happened to see her fall. They lifted the woman and carried her limp and pitiful to the elevator, a policeman keeping back the crowd.

She left the store and wandered again aimlessly about the streets. The sidewalks were crowded, mostly with women. It was getting warm, and the women all looked tired and wilted. Lines of them disappeared into certain doors, and Viola, looking in, saw that these doors were entrances to cheap restaurants. It was the lunch hour, and these women were taking their short recess.

The display in the window of one of these places attracted her attention. It contained meats in various stages of preparation and dressing and a wild assortment of vegetables. Some flies had gotten inside the glass and hovered about the viands. She turned away in disgust.

She thought of her own lunch. When she was downtown St. John always took her to lunch with him at one of the hotels. The white napery, the soft lights, the stealthy-footed waiters, the music, the silver sprang into her mind in vivid contrast to the cheap display she had just turned from. She shuddered.

In the palm room of the Brinton with the cool, shadowed comfort about her and an ice before her, the thought of her tragedy returned. She had been evading it all day, putting it away from her, shunning it. But it was always with her, reminding her that her world, the life she had lived, was shattered.

What then? She must go away. It would be better to go quietly, without giving any reason, simply leave. Of course St. John would understand, as would Myrtle Weiss, but their guilt would seal their tongues.

Disappear? And then what? How would she live? What could she do? She was incompetent to teach. She knew nothing about office work. Of course, she could clerk in a store.

Suddenly a vision of what that life would mean to her passed deadeningly before her. She remembered the thin, tall woman who had fainted behind the counter without a word. The lines of wilted workers, hastening in their worn clothes to their cheap lunches, rose before her. She shivered.

For seven years she had lived in the lap of luxury. Nothing had been denied her. She had the best of clothes, the best of service, the choicest of food, the promptest of attention of every kind. Her home was one of the handsomest houses in the most restricted and stylish residence district of the city.

Another thought came to her. No one knew that she had found the letter.

The clock in the palm room showed the time to be one-thirty. St. John, she knew, was out of town.

She rose quickly and left the room. At the office Miss Johnson, the stenographer, had just returned from the dairy lunch across the street. She was powdering her rather unattractive nose. Mrs. Perin smiled at her as she entered her husband's room. Vaguely she envied this homely creature.

The table was undisturbed, exactly as she had left it.

She sealed the letter carefully and replaced it on the top of the little pile of mail upon the blotter.

HOUSEWORK—AND THE MAN

By Freeman Tilden

"AND you live here—all alone?" she said.

"It looks it, doesn't it?" replied Archer, with a little embarrassed grin. "I have a woman come in once a week to clean up. I do the rest—when it gets done. I suppose it looks pretty bad—to you."

She ran her finger appraisingly along the table and held it up. It was covered with dust. She laughed. "Men can't keep house," she said.

She rummaged around until she found a rag that would serve as a duster.

"Now, please don't bother, Miss——" he began.

"I'm married," she corrected soberly. "*Mrs.* Kincaid."

"Well, Mrs. Kincaid, please don't bother to do that. Really, I'm afraid I enjoy dirt."

"Nobody enjoys dirt," was her severe reply. "Not if they can be clean."

He sat and watched her. He couldn't help laughing. With deft hands she seemed to fathom every hiding-place of dust. And he noticed that her

cheeks, which had been pale enough when she came in, were becoming radiant.

Pretty soon she turned her attention to the bed. "Well, of all the messes I ever saw!" she exclaimed. "Who ever showed you how to make up a bed?"

"You just watch me," she told him. "Like this—and then like this—then you smooth it out—see?"

"It sure does look better," he admitted. "But please don't poke around in the kitchen. At least spare me that mortification."

She didn't heed his plea. "I thought so!" she exclaimed. "Not a dish washed!"

"I was going to wash them this afternoon," said Archer humbly.

"Huh! don't you know it's twice as hard after you let them stand? Where's the dishcloth?"

"Oh, come now, really, I won't have you——"

She paid no attention to him. "What pretty dishes!" she said, as the hot water began to run.

"Five-and-ten cent store," Archer laughed.

"Really? And they look much prettier than mine. Do you know, I think this is a dear little place."

"Dishwashing is the worst part of it," said the young man.

"Listen," she told him. "Whenever the dishes have egg on them, don't put the hot water on first. Watch me. . . ."

She even insisted on rearranging his little closet

of dishes. She cleaned the top of the gas range. Archer vainly tried to prevent her. She was singing now, as she worked. She straightened the pictures on the wall. She averred that she couldn't be happy till she had swept the place from end to end.

After it was all over they sat down facing each other. There was a pink flush of satisfaction on her cheeks.

"And I never knew who lived up here," she began. "I must say you're quiet. These apartment houses are just like a lot of cigar boxes. You know our flat is right underneath."

"It's so decent of you," began Arthur.

"Listen," she interrupted. "I've had a perfectly splendid time. I suppose I must be going now. It's five o'clock, isn't it?"

He nodded.

At the door she stopped and said, "I've often seen you down at the street door, and wondered whether you'd speak some time. You don't think—because I came in here——"

"I think nothing," he said.

"I *knew* you were that kind of a fellow," she whispered, and fled downstairs.

. . . .

Kincaid came in at 6:10.

"Supper ready?" he asked.

She threw down the magazine she was reading.

"I guess you won't starve! It's nothing but cook, cook all the time, anyway. I'm getting tired of it."

Kincaid said nothing. His fingers were resting on the dining-table. When he took them away there were little patches of varnish showing through the dust.

She went out into the kitchen and wearily put on a torn apron. The sink was full of unwashed dishes. He saw them and was unwise enough to comment on what he saw.

She turned upon him like a flash.

"If you don't like to see them, wash them yourself," she said. "I'm sick of housework, anyway."

HER MEMORY

By Dwight M. Wiley

WARRINGTON had really no right to be angry. He was not engaged to Virginia, merely engaged with her in a somewhat tempestuous summer flirtation. Down in his heart he knew it for just that. But he was angry no less, for she had allowed a "hulking ass" newly arrived at the Inn to "hog her whole program and make him look a fool before every one."

"Ah ha!" cried the still small voice, "so it's Pride not Heart." And that made him more angry than ever.

So he went away from the ball-room, out onto the dim veranda, and strode up and down muttering things better left unmuttered. Presently he stopped at the far shadowed end, lit a cigarette, snapped his case viciously, and said "damn."

A demure voice just behind him said "shocking!" and he turned to confront a small figure in a big chair backed up against the wall.

"I repeat, shocking," said the voice—a very nice voice. And giggled—a very ripply little gurgly little giggle.

His anger went away.

"Mysterious lady of the shadows," he said (he was very good at that sort of thing), "does my righteous wrath amuse you?"

He came nearer. He had thought he knew every girl at the Hotel. Here was a strange one, and pretty. Very. He decided that monopolizing Virginia had been a mistake.

"It's not a night for wrath, righteous or otherwise. See!" and she stretched out her arms to the great moon hanging low over the golf links beyond.

He hunted for a chair. This was bully. And when he had drawn one up, quite close:

"Whence do you come, all silvery with the moon, to chide me for my sins, moon maid?"

Without doubt he was outdoing himself.

She laughed softly and leaned toward him, elfin in the pale shimmer of light. "I am Romance," she breathed, "and this is my night. The night, the moon, and I conspire to make magic."

He secured a slim hand. The pace was telling. His voice was a little husky.

"Your charms are very potent, moon maid," he said, "it is magic, isn't it? It—it doesn't happen like this—really."

Their eyes met—clung.

"You—you take my breath," he stammered. "Does your heart mean what your eyes are saying?

Don't—don't look at me like that unless you do—mean it."

She didn't answer in words. She, too, was breathing quickly.

He released her hand, and sprang up—half turned away. Then he dropped to the arm of her chair. Swiftly he took her face in his two hands. The throbbing of her throat intoxicated him. "I—I—love me," he stammered.

Her lips moved. A sob more poignant than words. They kissed for a long time.

There were footsteps down the veranda. She drew away. She recognized her mother's voice and Miss Neilson's. She was thinking very quickly. Should she send him away or end it now—end it all now?

"You darling—you darling. I—I love you," he was saying.

She leaned to him. "Kiss me. Kiss me—quickly."

The voices were quite close now.

"Mother," she called, "here I am." She laughed. "But I guess you know I wouldn't run away. Mother, this is Mr.—ah—Brown, and we have been discussing—doctors. Mr. Brown has an uncle in exactly my condition. Hopelessly paralyzed."

She said it calmly. The world reeled. His brain was numb. She was being wheeled away by the nurse. A wheeled chair—God!

"Good-night," she called.

A cripple. He had kissed her. Horrible! He made for the bar.

In her room while the nurse was making her ready for bed, the mother said, "How strange you look, dear. And how—how beautiful."

She flung her arms wide in an intoxication of triumph. "Mother," she half sobbed, "all my life to now I've been just—just a thing. A cripple. Now—now—I am a woman."

"Oh, God!" she cried, her eyes starry. "Life is good—good. For now—now I have—a Memory."

HIS JOURNEY'S END.

By Ruth Sterry

FOG enfolded the city in a drenching white veil. It clung to the windows of the Palace Hotel and shut out the light from the bedroom in which a man sat earnestly penning a letter. It seemed to make an effort at entrance as though it would blot from the paper the words he wrote.

"Palace Hotel,
Wednesday morning.

"DEAR MISS ARLISS,

"It seems strange to call you that when I am about to ask you to be my wife. Yet what can I do when I have seen you only once?

"You surely remember, do you not, that one day when you and I met and were held prisoners by the train wreck in the San Joaquin Valley, you said I might call on you when I returned to San Francisco after my trip to the Orient? But you could not have dreamed what your permission meant to the lonely, business-bound coffee merchant who long ago, in the poisonous lands of South America, had shut his heart to women's smiles, and had turned deaf ears to the music of their voices.

"Nor can I ever hope to make you understand what

it meant during the long journeying that followed the wreck. The memory of you with your cheeriness, your undaunted smile in all the hardship of that wreck, has brought new life to me.

"For eight months I have dreamed of you day and night. During that time I have not once lost the picture of heated desert waste, the ugly wreckage of the train, the groaning, weeping people—and you, a girl with tender eyes, a smile of sympathy for the unluckiest devil, and ready resourcefulness to ease pain that would have done credit to an army nurse. I have dreamed of you in my home—awaiting my coming with your radiant smile.

"And so, unable to come to you in simple friendship, I thought it best to write first and explain. I wanted to come with your permission granted after you knew that I love you—I love you. I like to write the words, I want you for my wife.

"I stopped on my way from the station to buy all the flowers I could find to send with this note. I chose spring blossoms because they are so much like you.

"I am waiting with mad impatience for your answer. Do not regard my love lightly. It springs from the unspent passions, the unfulfilled ideals of a lifetime. Oh, my dear, speed your answer back to me. Say I may come to you—now.

"Yours to eternity,

"JOHN MARBLE."

It was three o'clock in the afternoon before the fog lifted. It vanished before the piercing rays of

the bright spring sun. At the windows of the Palace Hotel little rays of sunlight struck aslant the glass as though merrily demanding admission. They poured through the windows of John Marble's room and illumined his face as he, with trembling fingers, opened a note a messenger had brought. A single sunbeam fell on the paper, blurring the lines so that he shifted it to read:

"600 Pacific Avenue,
Wednesday afternoon.

"MR. JOHN MARBLE,

"*Dear Sir:*

"We put your flowers on her coffin to-day. She was like the spring blossoms which she loved. They hold your letter to her buried in the depths of their bloom. She had made my life a heaven for five bright months. I am trying to bear God's will.

"Her husband,

"MORRISON GREY."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By Harriet Lummis Smith

FORBES had bribed his way past the gateman and stood on the station platform at the foot of the stairs, his manner drearily resigned. He had come to meet a girl and he did not fancy the job.

"Hang it, man," he had protested, when Keith Chandler, his partner, summoned to New York by a telegram, had deputed Forbes to meet the four o'clock train, and incidentally, his sister-in-law. "I shouldn't know the girl."

"I've never seen her myself," his friend reminded him. "She was in Japan when Agnes and I were married, studying decorative art. Cabled she'd come home for the wedding if we'd postpone it three months." Chandler indulged himself in a smile of reminiscent scorn.

"If Mrs. Chandler would accompany me," said Forbes, brightening. He really liked his partner's wife, partly because her devotion to her husband made unnecessary those defenses he was accustomed to erect about himself in the society of women under sixty. Chandler's answer shattered his hopes.

"If Agnes could leave the baby it wouldn't be necessary to trouble you. But the little thing's under the weather. Nothing serious, but you couldn't bribe Agnes out of the house till the child's herself again. And you won't have any trouble picking Diantha out of the crowd. She looks like Agnes," Chandler ended complacently. "There won't be two of that kind on any one train, my boy."

Forbes, immaculate in his gray business suit, frowningly scanned the crowd hurrying past, the rabble of men with suit-cases on ahead, the women following more deliberately. Heavens, what a swarm of women! Forbes saw himself addressing the wrong girl and snubbed for his pains.

Then all in a moment a figure took on distinction, a girl splendidly tall, who carried herself as if proud of every inch, who walked the station platform in a fashion suggesting that she could dance all night, and go horseback riding in the morning. Yes, she was like Mrs. Chandler, only larger, handsomer, more stunning in a word. Hat in hand he approached her.

"Miss Byrd, I believe."

The girl halted, facing him squarely. He had no time for explanations. A well-shaped, perfectly gloved hand rested lightly on either shoulder. He had a bewildering impression of a tall figure swaying toward him, of a fragrance too elusive to be called

perfume, of gray eyes flecked with violet. Then her lips touched his.

"Miss Byrd, indeed!" She was laughing in his face. "You are my first and only brother, young man, and I warn you I shall make you live up to the part." One hand slipped from his shoulder and through his arm. He found himself walking beside her, following the porter who carried her satchels, and listening mechanically to a flow of words which fortunately required no reply.

The affair was a hideous nightmare. Mistaking him for Chandler, whom she had never seen, this unsuspecting girl had kissed him before a hundred witnesses. Most appalling of all, an explanation seemed an unthinkable brutality. When once she knew, she could never look him in the face again. It was essential to keep her in ignorance of her blunder till he left her at Chandler's door.

Not till they were seated in a taxicab did she ask a direct question. This was fortunate, as Forbes had been incapable of an intelligent reply.

"How's the baby, Keith?"

"The baby—oh, yes, the little thing has been slightly under the weather." As he repeated the information imparted by Chandler earlier in the day, Forbes blushed to his ears.

"Little darling!" murmured the girl. "How many teeth has she?"

"Teeth! Oh—I—the usual number, I believe."

"I'm awfully ignorant, Keith. I ought to be ashamed to confess it, but I really don't know what is the usual number for a child of six months."

Vainly she waited for enlightenment. Forbes' answer was a tortured smile. His agonized prayer that she might change the subject was granted all too soon.

"How's Reggie?"

"I beg pardon." Forbes' jaw dropped. His Christian name was Reginald.

"Mr. Forbes. I prefer to call him Reggie. Do you admire him as extravagantly as Agnes does? Then I see I shall be forced to conceal my prejudice to keep peace in the family."

"Prejudice? You are prejudiced against him?"

"Of course. Such a bundle of perfection."

"Oh, no." Forbes spoke with generous earnestness. "He's not that at all. Just an ordinary good sort."

"Then you think I shall like him?"

The innocent question stabbed him. "No," Forbes said after a long pause. "You won't like him." In his heart he felt he was understating the case. She would regard him with abhorrence. Every moment this deception continued, even though practised to spare her feelings, added to her righteous grievance. The pain in his voice as he spoke was a surprise to himself.

"He must be a singular person," mused the girl. "Agnes vows he is perfection. You reassure me by acknowledging him human, and yet you are certain I won't like him. Or is that because I am so unreasonable?"

"Really, Miss Byrd——"

He thought she was going to kiss him again, she leaned toward him so swiftly. His heart stood still though his mood could be hardly characterized as shrinking. But she confined herself to beating a tattoo against his arm with a little clenched fist.

"I won't be Miss Byrd to my only brother, I *won't!* Say Diantha."

"Di-an-tha."

"You say it as if it were Keren-Happuch. Try it again."

He stammered out the three melodious syllables. He was thinking less of her name than of her eyes. There were golden mischievous lights swimming like motes in the blue, and her drooping lashes made black shadows. She turned her head and the curve of her neck was distracting.

"Why, he's stopping," Diantha cried. "Are we there?"

Incredible as it seemed, they were at Chandler's door. "Wait," Forbes said to the driver, his voice hoarse. He took Diantha's arm to assist her up the steps and she looked at him wonderingly.

"Aren't you coming in?"

"Not just now." Forbes forced a smile. It was possible that they would never meet again, and if they did, her friendliness would have been transformed into implacable enmity. He extended his hand. "Good-bye," he whispered.

"*Au revoir.*" His agreeable doubt whether her ideals of sisterliness would lead her to something more affectionate than a handclasp was merged in disappointment. The door swung open and she disappeared. Forbes went back to the cab in a dejection only partially dissipated by Mrs. Chandler's note next day.

"DEAR MR. FORBES:

"Can't you dine with us Friday? We have all enjoyed a good laugh over Diantha's absurd mistake.

"Cordially yours,

"AGNES BYRD CHANDLER."

Forbes' uncertainty as to how far Mrs. Chandler was in her sister's confidence was unenlightened three weeks later when he asked Diantha to marry him. He had waited three weeks, not from choice, but because he had been unable to induce that elusive young woman to listen to him earlier.

She looked past him, her changeful eyes sombre and sad like the sea under clouds. "I can't say yes," she murmured plaintively, "without owning up. And if I own up, you'll want me to say no."

"Diantha!" he faltered. Used as he was to feminine extravagance in speech, her words chilled him.

She turned her tragic gaze on him. "I knew it was you all the time."

"I don't understand."

"That day at the train. Agnes had sent me a kodak picture of Keith and yourself taken on a fishing trip and I recognized you instantly. I had a little prejudice against you to start with, Agnes praised you so preposterously, and then when I saw you looking so bored and superior—oh, I know it was immodest and unwomanly and perfectly horrid, but I just had an intuition of the way you'd gone through life holding women at arm's length, and I made up my mind to give you something to think about."

The confession ended in a half sob. A tear clung for an instant to her curving lashes then fell to her cheek. Forbes leaned closer, murmuring something neither an assurance of forgiveness nor altogether entreaty, but a mixture of both. If it was further food for thought for which he pleaded, he did not ask in vain.

HOPE

By Edward Thomas Noonan

"HERE'S a pathetic case of chronic melancholia," the doctor continued, as we walked among the inmates. "That white-haired woman has been here twenty-six years. She is entirely tractable with one obsession. Every Sunday she writes this letter:

"'Sunday.

"'DEAR JOHN:

"'I am sorry we quarreled when you were going away out West. It was all my fault. I hope you will forgive and write.

"'Your loving,

"'ESTHER.'

"Every Monday she asks for a letter, and, though receiving none, becomes radiant with hope and says: 'It will come to-morrow.' The last of the week she is depressed. Sunday she again writes her letter. That has been her life for twenty-six years. Her youthful face is due to her mental inactivity. Aimlessly she does whatever is suggested. The years roll on and her emotions alternate between silent grief and fervid hope.

"This is the male ward. That tall man has been here twenty years. His history sheet says from alcoholism. He went to Alaska, struck gold, and returned home to marry the girl he left behind. He found her insane and began drinking, lost his fortune and then his reason, and became a ward of the State, always talking about his girl and events that happened long ago.

"He is the 'John' to whom 'Esther' writes her letter.

"They meet every day.

"They will never know each other."

COLLUSION

By Lincoln Steffens

THE sacred door of the Judge's chambers bolted open and he beheld the light, lovely figure of a woman trembling before him; brave, afraid.

"Oh, Judge," she panted, but she turned and closing the door securely, put her back against it to hold it shut. And so at bay, she called to him:

"Judge, Judge, can't I tell you the truth? Can't I? My lawyer says I mustn't. He says perjury is the only way. And I—I have done perjury, Judge. So has my husband. And I'll swear to it all in court when we are under oath. But here where we are all alone, you and I, unsworn, with no one to hear, can't I tell you the truth?

"I must. I can't stand the lies. Yes, yes, I know they are merely forms, legal forms. My lawyer has explained that, and that we must respect the law and comply with its requirements. And we'll do that, Judge; we have, and I'll go through with it, if—I mean that it would help me if I could know that you were not deceived by the lies; if I could know that you knew the truth.

"And the truth is so much truer and more beautiful than the lies. Ours is. I loved him, Judge. I love him now. And he loved me. And it wasn't his fault that he fell in love with her. And she didn't mean to—to hurt me so. She was my friend. I brought them together. I was happy when I brought them together, her, my old chum, and him, my lover; and when I saw that they took to each other, I was glad. I never thought of their loving. I didn't think of that till, by and by, I found that they were avoiding each other. I couldn't get them to meet any more. That made me think—it was terrible what I thought.

"I thought—Judge, I knew that they had agreed not to meet any more because they had discovered that they loved each other. He admitted it, when I asked him, finally. So did she, later, when upon my demand, we all three met to speak what was in our hearts.

"That was when I refused to have it so. I wouldn't keep a man who loved another woman. I couldn't, could I? And so I said I would go away and get the divorce and let them be together and, by and by—marry.

"It was all to be clean and honourable and fine, Judge. We didn't know then the requirements of the law. We didn't know we shouldn't have an honest understanding like that. And I—I didn't know that

I had to make charges against him that are not true, and that he had to write me letters to prove he had refused to support me; false letters; and coarse. He? Coarse? Judge, he——

"But I'm not complaining. We copied, my husband and I, the letters the lawyer wrote out for us to sign and date back and show to you. We have done our part. I have lived here, in this terrible place, among these other—people. I have been here the required length of time for the 'residence.' I have withstood the looks we get from men—and women. We have obeyed the law, yes, and I will come to your court and swear—I will swear falsely, Judge, to all you ask. I must, mustn't I? I can't go on this way loving a man who doesn't love me. And I can't keep two lovers apart, can I? When love is so beautiful, so right, so good. Don't I know? And it must be pure.

"So I will do my duty, just as my lawyer does his, and as you do yours. Oh, I know; I know how conscientious you all are, and especially you, Judge. My lawyer has told me, again and again, that you know it's all perjury. Every time I wanted to come to you and tell you the truth, he has said that you understood. He forbade me to come; he doesn't know I am here now. But I had to come. I think I might not be able to go through with it if I had not told you the truth myself: How we three

have agreed perfectly, he and I and she; how we are to pay each a third of the costs. They were so generous about it, begging to pay all. And I want you to be sure we are all perfectly reconciled to the change; all of us; I, too; perfectly.

"And, Judge, he, my husband, he couldn't, he simply could not have written letters like that. Oh, I'll swear to them; I'll swear to anything, I'll do anything, almost, if—if only you, Judge——"

The Judge rose.

"If," he finished for her, "if only I will understand. Well, I will."

And he went to the door, opened it wide and, as she passed, be bowed to the woman with the respect which, till that day, he had paid only to the Law.

FAITHFUL TO THE END

By Clair W. Perry

EMBARKATION of the 10th London Reservists for France was the occasion of a demonstration in the city such as had not been seen since the Canadian contingent crossed the Channel. The call for these fresh troops had a sinister significance. It meant the long-awaited "general advance" from Calais to Belfort was impending. At the quay, where the dingy transports were swallowing up file after file of England's youth, were hundreds of women and girls come to bid a bitter-sweet farewell to their lads, whose vigorous bodies were to be crammed into the hungry maw of war.

Lieutenant Topham, Wing Commander of the aerial division with the 10th, stood apart at the far end of the quay. He had just finished superintending the loading of his machines. He was watching the troops file aboard, hungrily absorbed in the dramatic scenes that passed, one after the other like cinema scenes, when wife, mother, sweetheart, sister, kissed loved ones good-bye. He moved nearer the sloping gangway where were enacted these hasty tender fare-

wells, swift embraces at the foot of the passage, so swift the progress of the tramping files was scarcely halted, each woman, for an instant, giving up her soul in an embrace—and the next instant giving up her son, brother, or mate to his Maker—or his destroyer.

Topham was deeply moved by the scenes. But it was a selfish emotion. There was no one to bid him farewell. For the first time in his careless life he felt the lack. He had no mother, no sister, no sweetheart. His men friends, even, were not there; they had gone on before.

As he moved nearer the ship on which he was to take passage for France, and the wild dash in air for which he had been detailed, to shell the recently established German Zeppelin base near "Hill 60," there came over him a premonition of death and a yearning emotion. He wanted some human being to bid him farewell, some one who placed his life above all else, a woman who cared.

In his abstracted progress he almost ran into the figure of a girl. She was standing close to the moving file, and in her searching eyes, as Topham looked in silent apology, he saw a fire that thrilled him. He noted, too, beauty, and a band of mourning on her sleeve. Her gaze pierced Topham with compelling appeal. The bugle was giving its piercing call, "All hands on." With a sudden impulse Topham stepped close to the girl.

"Are you sending—some one away?" he queried.

She shook her head and touched the band on her arm.

"My father—a month ago—at Ypres," she replied.

"I am going—over there," eagerly explained Topham, "and I have no one. I feel that I—shall never return. I wonder if you—— Will you kiss me good-bye? I promise you I shall never kiss another woman—that I will be faithful—until the end," he finished with wistful whimsicality.

Her smile was like a soft flame. Without a word she stepped close to him and, as he doffed his cap and bent, she clasped him about the neck, drew his close-cropped head down, and kissed him on the lips.

There was no time for words. Topham had to spring for the moving gang-plank. The bugle had sounded its last call for stragglers such as he. The girl who had given him his sweet farewell was swallowed up in the crowd.

Halfway across the Channel Topham found he could not even recall the girl's features, the colour of her eyes or hair. All that remained to him was a dim expression of sweet, yearning womanliness, an abstract conception.

At the transfer hospital, a week later, Topham's shattered, helpless form was laid for a few moments on a cot. His fall from a great height after a desperate duel with a German Taube left him victor and hero

but with the shadow of death hovering over him. Numbness mercifully stilled the pain that had gripped him and he lay passive. It was not until he felt the touch of a hand softer than that of the hurrying surgeon who had given hasty "first aid" examination that he opened his eyes. A woman nurse, the only one he had seen so near the lines, was bending over him. He could see only dimly. A mist was over his eyes from the explosion of his engine. Her touch, however, seemed to give him a thrill of vitality. When she moved on he sank into semi-coma, with the feeling of chill. Death bearing down on him. She moved again to his side and he moaned. The grim grip was tightening. Like a boy he was afraid. In the world there was only himself, this woman, and approaching death.

"I am going," he muttered swiftly, as the nurse bent near. "Will you kiss me good-bye? I can promise you—I will be faithful—until the end." His smile was a pitiful effort at humour. He felt her warm lips on his—and then oblivion.

Topham came to himself—save for the memory of a delirium of travel in motor-ambulance and boat—in a clean white bed in a large, lofty room. When his senses cleared he knew he was in England. White-clad nurses moved about the room in which were many other beds containing huddled or stretched-out figures. At his first movement one of the nurses

came to his bedside. Her keen glance, under her significant cap, spoke efficiency and warm human sympathy. A few deft touches, a spoon of medicine, a pat of the pillow, and she was gone.

Topham awoke again in the dark small hours when man's vitality is at its lowest ebb; awoke with that familiar depression, as of a chill hand gripping his heart—squeezing his very soul. It was Death, again, groping for him. Only his brain seemed clear. He tinkled, with a supreme effort, the bell at his bedside. A nurse came, her face indistinct in the dim light, and bent over him in an attitude of solicitation.

"What is it?" she asked, and her voice seemed that of an angel from Heaven.

"I—I am almost gone," gasped Topham. "My heart is stopping. I—I am not afraid—but—it is so lonely. I have no one. Could you—kiss me—good-bye?"

He was halted by a swift movement. She had raised his head and he swallowed a draft of something that sent a liquid thrill through him. In a trice his feeling changed from that of a sinking, suffocating soul to that of a man whose life is rushing back into him. The nurse was smiling into his eyes.

"You were going to say," she murmured musically, "that you will be faithful to the end."

Topham opened his eyes wider. That face—the

ripe lips—the clear, burning eyes! They were those of the girl at the quay—of the nurse at the transfer hospital—no, of the nurse who had bent over him when he first regained consciousness here—yes, of all three. A deep flush overspread his pallid face.

"You said you would be faithful to the end," she repeated roguishly. He groped for an answer.

"In my mind," he confessed, "I did not know you. But in my heart I must have known you all the time."

Then she kissed him again.

ARLETTA

By Margaret Ade

IT WAS on a Monday morning in August that Miss Backbay climbed the brownstone steps to the rooming-house conducted by Mrs. Edward Southend in Massachusetts Avenue, Boston. Miss Backbay was short, stout, and sixty, and her face was flushed and scowling.

"I wish to speak with Mrs. Southend," she snapped at the woman who opened the door. The woman, a middle-aged, quiet-looking little woman, glanced at the card and said: "I am Mrs. Southend, Miss Backbay; come this way please."

In the parlour Miss Backbay and Mrs. Southend looked into each other's eyes for a few moments and exchanged a silent challenge; then Miss Backbay leaned forward in her chair and said: "I have come, Mrs. Southend, to talk with you concerning this—this affair between your son and my niece, Miss Arletta Backbay. I have, as you know, brought her up, and I love her as if she were my own daughter. She is the last of the Backbays—the Backbays of Backbay. Our family lived on Beacon Hill when

Boston Common was a farming district. The Backbays are direct—*direct* descendants of William I, King of England—William the Conqueror."

Miss Backbay drew a long, deep breath.

Mrs. Southend was silent.

"I have devoted years of my life," Miss Backbay continued, "to the education of my niece. Nothing has been spared to prepare her for the high social position to which, by her ancestry alone, she is entitled. I am going into this bit of family history so you will understand—so you will see this affair from my viewpoint. I have been exceedingly careful in the selection of her teachers, her associates, and her servants. Your son came to us well recommended by his pastor and by his former employer. I have no fault to find with him as—as a chauffeur, but as a suitor for the hand of my niece he—he is impossible. Absolutely! The thing is absurd. I—I have done what I could to break up this affair. I have discharged him. But my niece has defied me. She assures me that she loves him and—and will marry him in spite of everything. She is headstrong, self-willed, and—and completely bewitched. She has lost all pride—pride in her ancient lineage. Now I have come to you to beseech you to use your influence with your son. Induce him to leave the city—he *must* leave the city, if only for a year. I—I shall pay——"

"Pardon me, just a moment, Miss Backbay." Mrs. Southend left the room, and in a few minutes she returned carrying a large volume, her fingers between the pages.

"As I listened to you, Miss Backbay, the thought came to me very forcibly that it is a pity—a great pity—that you could not have selected your ancestors as you do your servants—from the better class of respectable working people. But, of course, you could not. You could, however, try to live them down—forget them—some of them, anyway. Listen to this biographical sketch of your most famous ancestor. It is from page 659 of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica': 'William I, King of England—William the Conqueror, born 1027 or 1028. He was the bastard son of Robert the Devil, Duke of Normandy, by Arletta, the daughter of a tanner.' "

Mrs. Southend closed the book with a bang.

"Not much to boast about, is it? We all have ancestors, Miss Backbay, but the less said about some of them the better. And now, if my son wants to go out of *his* class and mix it up with Robert the Devil and Arletta—why, that's his—his funeral. You'll excuse me now, Miss Backbay. I have my husband's dinner to prepare."

WHICH?

By Joseph Hall

THEY were two women, one young, radiant, the other gently, beautifully old.

"But, Auntie, it's such fun."

The older rose.

"Wait."

In a moment she had returned. Two faded yellow letters lay upon the young girl's lap.

"Read them."

Wonderingly the girl obeyed. The first read:

"DEAREST:

"I leave you to John. It is plain you care for him. I love you. Just now it seems that life without you is impossible. But I can no longer doubt. If you cared, there would be no doubt. John is my friend. I would rather see you his than any others, since you cannot be mine. God bless you.

"WILL."

The other:

"BELOVED:

"I am leaving you to the better man. For me there can never be another love. But it is best—it

is the right thing—and I am, yes, I am glad that it is Will you love instead of me. You cannot be anything but happy with him. With me—but that is a dream I must learn to forget.

"As ever and ever,

"JOHN."

WHAT THE VANDALS LEAVE

By Herbert Riley Howe

THE war was over, and he was back in his native city that had been retaken from the Vandals. He was walking rapidly through a dimly lit quarter. A woman touched his arm and accosted him in fuddled accents.

"Where are you going, M'sieu? With me, hein?"

He laughed.

"No, not with you, old girl. I'm going to find my sweetheart."

He looked down at her. They were near a street lamp. She screamed. He seized her by the shoulders and dragged her closer to the light. His fingers dug her flesh, and his eyes gleamed.

"Joan!" he gasped.

BEN T. ALLEN, ATTY., VS. HIMSELF

By William H. Hamby

"LAWYERS always get theirs." The hardware dealer on the north side spoke with some bitterness and entire literalness. The check for one hundred and seventy-five dollars just wrenched from its stub bore "Ben T. Allen, Atty.," in the middle, and "Peter Shaw Hardware Co.," at the bottom.

Peter, by the aid and advice of counsel, had been resisting the payment of a merchant's tax of five dollars a year which the alleged city of Clayton Center had insisted on collecting. The case had now been in the supreme court two years. This check was merely "on account."

The check had occasioned the remark, but the bitterness back of it was engendered by another case, in which Peter had been prosecuting his claims for the affection of Betty Lane, court stenographer. Attorney Allen appeared against him this time instead of for him, and in both cases Peter seemed to be getting the worst of it.

But that, of course, is all in the viewpoint. At that moment Attorney Allen stood by the front

window of his offices, his thick hair tangled like the fleece of a black sheep after a restless night, his soul splashing in a vat of gloom. Betty Lane had just passed through the courthouse yard on her way to work. Nature had made Betty very attractive, but her job had made her independent.

The lawyer was bitterly despondent. Law practice in Clayton Center was no longer lucrative. Although Allen was very dextrous in twisting three-ply bandages around the eyes of the Lady with the Scales, the Lady with the Pencil at the right of the Judge was not so blind. The citizens of Clayton Center had developed a spineless, milksop tendency to settle even their constitutional rights out of court. Besides Betty's seven dollars a day Allen's income looked as ill-fed as a dromedary in an elephant parade.

The young lawyer's heart was so heavy over his light matrimonial prospects that he went out that night with some of the boys and got drunk. In returning at one A. M., singing "It Was at Aunt Dinah's Quilting Party—I was seeing Nellie home," he fell off the board sidewalk and broke the established precedent that a drunken man cannot hurt himself by a fall.

The breaking of one leg was the most fortunate accident upon which a distressed barrister ever fell. It gave him two legs on which to stand in court.

He sued the city immediately for ten thousand dollars' damages on account of the defective sidewalk. His three companions swore positively that there was not only one hole in the walk, but two, and not only two loose boards, but six.

Moreover, it was not a plain fracture of the limb. Allen proved by a liver specialist that the jolt had permanently deranged his liver; a spine specialist testified the jar had injured the fourteenth vertebra; a nerve specialist swore that the shock of the fall and subsequent anguish of mind in seeing his law practice drop away would probably result in a total breakdown.

The jury gave him four thousand dollars' damages —twice what he hoped. And the city attorney, having a fraternal feeling for fractured legal legs, advised the city to pay instead of appeal.

One bright morning, fully recovered and adorned in a natty spring suit, Ben T. Allen went to the courthouse to get an order from the court to the city treasurer for his four thousand dollars' damages.

There was a click of a typewriter in an anteroom. Betty Lane, the court stenographer, was down early working out some notes.

Ben T. Allen went in, laid his hat debonairly on a stack of notebooks, sat on the edge of her desk, and locked his hands around his knees and smiled possessively.

"Why, good morning, Mr. Allen." Betty looked up and nodded. "Allow me to congratulate you."

"For what?"

"Why, haven't you seen the supreme court's decision in this morning's paper? You won your case. Peter Shaw does not have to pay his annual five-dollar merchant tax."

"Good!" exclaimed Allen. "No, I had not seen it."

"Yes," nodded Betty, with something not quite transparent in her smile, "the judge who handed down the decision sustained your contention, that as the notices of election, at which the town was incorporated thirty-eight years ago, were posted only nineteen days instead of twenty, as the law requires, the articles of incorporation were illegally adopted. Therefore, the town is non-existent. Its officers have no right to levy or collect taxes, to sue or to be sued, to receive or *pay out moneys*."

"Good heavens!" Allen felt himself slowly collapsing on the table, sick in every organ described by the specialists.

"Sometimes," smiled Betty, as she glanced out of the window toward the hardware store—"*sometimes* a lawyer gets his."

THE JOKE ON PRESTON

By Lewis Allen

"HAS the prisoner secured counsel?"

"No, your honour," responded District Attorney Masters.

Judge Horton looked over the tops of his steel-rimmed spectacles, first at the unkempt prisoner, and then around the courtroom.

"The court will provide counsel for your defense. Have you any choice?" he asked the prisoner.

The prisoner had not. He didn't know one man from another in the courtroom. A faint suspicion of a smile showed on District Attorney Master's face. He winked slyly at several of his brother attorneys, and even smiled rather knowingly at the judge when he made the suggestion that the court appoint Mr. Preston attorney for the defense. A titter went around the courtroom at this, and young John Preston flushed to the roots of his yellow hair as he arose and went forward to consult with his client.

"Honest to God, are you a lawyer?" asked the prisoner, in a voice that carried. It took nearly two minutes to restore decorum.

In spite of his embarrassment young Preston thanked the court and asked for a day's postponement in order to acquaint himself with his client's case. This was granted, and after adjournment the District Attorney took young Preston aside, put his hand patronizingly on his shoulder, and said:

"Great Scott, Johnnie, give the poor devil a square deal! The only thing in the world for him is a plea of guilty and a request for leniency."

"Thank you, sir," said Preston rather stiffly, "but I at least want to know something of my client's case."

"Now, now, Johnnie, you must learn to take things in the proper spirit. Every young lawyer must have his first case, and he must expect a certain amount of good-natured raillery over it, and, believe me, it isn't every man fresh from law school who gets a murder case for the very first thing. Be sensible about it, boy. I'm advising you for your father's sake. We were partners, you know."

"Yes, I know," answered Preston.

"Oh, don't be stubborn, Johnnie! Why, dash it all, the prisoner has confessed!"

"A great many innocent men have confessed under the third degree," and young Preston bowed rather too formally and turned on his heel.

"He'll get the chair if you fight the case," snapped the District Attorney.

"He'll get the chair—or liberty, sir," was all young Preston replied, and he hurried over to the jail, where he was secluded in the cell with his client, the prisoner.

It wasn't much of a story the prisoner told. He said his name was Farral, that he was a plain hobo, and that with another hobo he had got into a fight with a freight brakeman who wouldn't let them jump the train. Both picked up lumps of coal to defend themselves, and in the mix-up the poor brakeman's skull was crushed. He managed to shoot and kill the other hobo, but he died before they got him to the hospital.

Young Preston said nothing, for five minutes. Farral became nervous. Finally he said:

"Say, kid, I ain't blamin' you any. You gotter have your first case some time, and so they wished you on me. The only thing to do is to plead guilty to self-defense——"

"Never do," said young Preston. "There isn't a juryman in the county who would agree to justifiable homicide."

"But I confessed, kid; I confessed. Whatcher goin' to do about it now?"

"Just what did you say? Give me the exact words."

"I says to the captain, 'Don't put me through no third degree. I killed him!'"

"What made you say that?"

"They'd put it on me anyway. I thought it would help me."

"What was the name of the man with you?"

"I don't know. I never saw him before."

"His name was Ichabod Jones," said Preston impressively, "and don't you ever forget it. Remember, you have known this man for a long while and that he went under the name of 'Black Ike.' "

Preston talked a half-hour longer with the man and drilled him over and over before he left him.

When the case came up the prosecution introduced witnesses sufficient to prove that the brakeman had been killed and then introduced the confession.

"We rest the case there, your honour," said District Attorney Masters, with somewhat of a flourish.

Young Preston put his client on the stand without delay and had him tell his story of the fight, which was to the effect that it was not he, but the other man, who killed the brakeman.

"What was the other man's name?" asked Preston.

"Ichabod Jones," replied the prisoner; "at least, that's what he told me."

"How did you always address him?"

"I always called him Ike."

"You may tell the court just what you said in this *alleged* confession."

"I didn't make no confession. I said to the captain, 'Don't put me through no third degree. *Ike* killed him.' "

And, for all that the prosecuting attorney could prove to the contrary, Ike did.

THE IDYL

By Joseph F. Whelan

Let us have a day of idyl, you and I,
Upon some mountain-top, with no one by
Save birds and flowers and waving trees that sigh,
And crooning winds whose lyrics never die.

THE Poet handed it to the Girl, with rather a quizzical smile. They did not know each other. He had seen her walking along one of the park paths, and the loneliness of her face stopped him. She read the verse, then gazed at him a few seconds, half amused, half annoyed, then wholly joyous. He read compliance in her eyes.

"Rather rude, isn't it?" he asked. "But the desperation of loneliness is heavy on my soul."

They sauntered to the gates and boarded a street car, which whirled them, with twenty other people equally though unconsciously lonely, toward the mountain. She did not speak until they were zig-zagging along a bridle path up the mountainside. Then she unfolded the verse and said musingly:

"A day of idyl! A year ago I thought that every day would be an idyl." And the sweet mouth soured in the churn of memory.

"My dear lady," he said, "memories have no place in a day of idyl. Oh, let me teach you how to live, live, live, if only for an hour! Let's sing the song of nature which is happiness—dance the dance of winds which is joy—think the thought of butterflies which is nothing! Oh, there is happiness everywhere, everywhere—even for you and me!"

They reached a little hillock where a clump of bushes cast a tempting shadow.

"Let's sit down a while," she said, pouring water on a rocket.

For a few minutes they sat in silence. The idyl had not yet begun. From behind them came voices, and a woman's laugh startled the air and the Poet. Nearer came the voices, and the Girl gripped the grasses at her sides. The couple swung jauntily past without noticing them and settled down in the long grass at the foot of the hillock.

The Poet and the Girl were statues. Their faces were averted. From the long grass came the noise of kisses.

The sun slipped away. The air was hot and heavy and all around was the silence of premonition. A bird piped fretfully, and a peevish breeze shook the leaves. The amorous couple in the long grass rose.

"Say," said the man, looking at his watch, "if we're goin' to see that show we've got to hustle."

And they hurried away.

The Girl rose, walked a few yards, then stood gazing on the far horizon of departed time. Then she returned.

"That was my husband," she said.

The Poet sprang to his feet as though released by a spring. His face was gray as the sky.

"God help us both!" he cried. "The woman was my wife."

WITHHELD

By Ella B. Argo

EVERY time he had tried to propose to her they had been interrupted.

There was the moonlight night on the beach when a sudden storm sent them scurrying to shelter. Once it was in her mother's drawing-room and callers were announced. He had almost reached the interrogation point while dancing when a colliding couple made them slip, and for weeks a broken ankle made her inaccessible. He might have put the momentous question in writing, but that did not appeal to his sense of fitness.

Lately she felt like Evangeline, since business always took him out of New York the day before she arrived, and twice illness called her home when he was to have met her at some resort. The Evangeline feeling was strong to-night, because he had inexplicably failed to keep his Miami appointment to accompany her mother and herself home, and at the last moment they had decided to come by sea.

Then suddenly off Norfolk she came face to face with him on the deck. She was excitedly responsive

to his white-faced, trembling-voiced rapture at seeing her, and they both forgot to make explanations.

It was late, but they paced the deck for an hour, and every moment of that hour she expected him to speak, although one passenger walked disconcertingly near them.

His love had taken on a new humility, for where once he had been masterful, impetuous, he now seemed afraid and looked at her adoringly but despairingly, as though at some inaccessible heaven. She fought between modesty and a desire to encourage him. The hours flew, and he had not even sought a secluded corner. She sent away the maid who came with her mother's summons and lingered another moment for the words she felt were trembling on the lips beneath the love-agonized eyes. He accepted her proud good-night without remonstrance, although he clung to her hand as though he would never let it go.

"This must be good-bye," he said. "The ship will dock before you are up, and I have to make a dash for the train."

No word of future meeting.

Almost all the passengers had landed and her mother and the maid were far ahead in the crowd when she remembered a silver cup she had left in the stateroom. Her way back was barred first by a laughing and weeping reunited Cuban family, and

then by a group of men excitedly discussing the quick capture of a murderer who had claimed self-defense in a political quarrel but had run. It seemed the man was prominent, and it sounded interesting, but her mother would worry if she stopped.

The emotional Cuban family was again in her way. The cup was knocked from her hand, and it rolled down the deck. She picked it up and turned to see him framed in a door opened by the restless passenger of the night before.

Then her sun went down in eternal blackness. He was handcuffed.

UP AND DOWN

By Bertha Lowry Gwynne

RHYOLITE ROSE kept always her curiously unfeminine sense of humour. Standing in the doorway of the Bodega where nightly she accompanied herself on a battered piano, and sang indecorous songs with the voice of a seraph, she listened, vastly diverted, to the crap dealer's flights of fancy.

"Get your money down, boys; six, eight, field or come—play a favourite. Here comes the lucky man! He throwed nine, Long Liz, the ham and egg gal."

Rhyolite was booming, and Rhyolite was fortune-mad. It was Saturday night. Outside on Golden Street crowds surged up and down. There were miners, promotors, engineers, cooks, crooks, tin horns and wildcatters; good women, bad women, and boarding-house keepers. Adventurers all; each confident that to-morrow would bring him fortune.

The Bodega overflowed with a good-humoured crowd that stood four deep at the bar. Around the crap table was a restless throng, drawn by the dealer's recitative, a curious chant detailing the fortunes of Big Dick from Boston, Little Joe, Miss Phoebe, and

many more of the fanciful folk that indicate the fall of the dice.

Mining booms a-plenty Rose had seen. For five years she had followed them since she had first appeared in the Klondike a young girl with a lovely face, a gentle voice, and a consuming passion for Scotch whiskey. Each year since then had taken some of the innocence from her face, and set deeper shadows in her eyes; each year found her growing sadder till evening came, and then very gay, indeed; for by night Rose's sorrow, whatever it was, had been drowned in a square bottle.

The pastry-faced crap dealer droned on: "Now and then I earn a small one," he was saying. "Miss Ada, yore maw wants you——"

He faltered, and came to a pause. A shot had sounded on the street outside, and almost instantly the saloon was emptied.

Following the crowd, and still smiling, went Rhyolite Rose. She gathered from snatches of agitated conversation that "Sidewinder," the camp's bad man, in shooting at an unbearable acquaintance, had killed a stranger.

Not dead, but desperately wounded, the man lay on the boardwalk. Rose pushed her way to his side. As she looked down upon him her face blanched, the red of her cheeks standing out in odd relief.

"He's a friend of mine," she said to the men around

her. "Take him to my cabin, and send for the doctor."

Rose darted into the saloon, and snatching a decanter of whiskey, saturated her handkerchief with it. As she ran she rubbed the rouge from her face. She passed the little procession, and reaching her cabin made preparations for the man's coming. That done, she dug into a trunk, taking from it a much-crumpled dress. Hastily she put it on.

The unconscious man was laid on the bed, and in a few minutes the doctor came. He gazed at Rose astounded. She was garbed in the habit of a novitiate of a nursing sisterhood.

"What the——" he began. She interrupted him, and underneath her flippancy the man saw real misery.

"It's *Sister* Rose now," the woman said. "I shed my sins with my scenery. Get me?"

The doctor nodded. Carefully he tended the wounded man.

"There is nothing we can do," he said at length. "He is dying."

"Suits me, Doc," said Rose.

He left, and the woman sat quietly by the bed, her face set, her body tense, waiting. In a little while the man opened his eyes, and she saw that he knew her. She leaned over and lifted him into her arms. His head rested on her thin bosom.

"Little Sister, is it true?" he said in a whisper. "I dream so much. Every night and every night I dream that I have found you. I have hunted for you so long, Little Sister; everywhere; up and down the whole world." His voice died out.

When he spoke again it was with an effort. "The other woman . . . she didn't count. When you left I went mad." He raised himself with a burst of strength, his face distorted. "It was the uncertainty, the uncertainty! You were so little," he muttered. "I have looked for you," he repeated, drearily, "everywhere up and down the whole world."

"Never mind." Rose spoke serenely. Subtly, indefinably she had become again a gentlewoman. "Oh, my dearest, *yes*, I forgive you. God has watched over *me*, honey. There is a typhoid epidemic here. The sisters sent me."

The man gave a long sigh. "My little girl, unhurt."

She laid him down, and he drowsed awhile. Just before dawn he stirred.

"Sing, Little Sister," he whispered.

> "I am far frae my hame
> I am weary aften whiles——"

Rose sang a song of her childhood. Her voice had withstood the ravages of cigarette smoke, whiskey, and overstrain. It rose clear and true,

> "Like a bairn to its mither,
> A wee——"

"Little Sister!" She bent to hear him.

"I have looked for you everywhere; up and down——" he was dead.

Tearless, Rose sat by the bed a long time. She came to herself with a sudden start.

In the dead man's hands she placed a crucifix; and, kneeling, with little lapses of memory, she recited the prayer for the dead.

Then, as if moved by some force without herself, with eyes staring, she rose from her knees and hurried to the kitchen. She took down from a shelf a bottle of Scotch whiskey. With fingers that trembled she poured herself out a long drink.

"Now and then I earn a small one," said Rhyolite Rose.

THE ANSWER

By Harry Stillwell Edwards

THE dim lights of the old pawnbroker's shop flickered violently as the street door opened, letting in a gust of icy wind. The man who came with the wind closed the door with difficulty, approached the low desk, took off his thin coat, shook the sleet from it and laid it on the counter.

"As much as ye can," he said crisply. "'Tis me last!"

The broker measured the garment with a careless glance and tossed fifty cents on the counter.

"Come wanst more, me friend! 'Tis not enough for the illegant coat."

Pathos did not appeal often to the old dealer, but this time it did. A vibration in the voice exactly fitted the mystery of something buried deep in the subconsciousness. He questioned the other with a swift glance, hesitated, and by the coin laid another like it. The man nodded.

"'Tis little enough, but 'twill do."

He took a pencil from the desk and with much effort wrote a few lines on a bit of wrapping paper.

Straightening, he fixed a steady gaze on the old face turned, not unkindly, to his.

"We have known aiche ither more'n a bit. Ye know I'm not th' drunkard nor th' loafer. I know ye aire a har-r-d man—ye have to be in this trade, har-r-d but square. I am off for good and all; 'tis for the sake of the gyrul and the little man. She'll not go home till I lave her. Sind th' money and the line to the place it spells; 'twill pay her way home—they'll take her, without me; they have said it. Will ye do it?"

The old man looked away from him and was silent.

"Yes!" he said, at length.

They waited and then shook hands, for no reason, after the fashion of men.

"What have you been doing of late?" a voice broke in that was clear-cut, sharp, and almost offensively authoritative. It came from a third man standing near, unnoticed. The coatless stranger regarded him steadily, his face hardening. He saw a short, rotund figure, almost swallowed up in a fur coat now thrown open, a heavy chain across the prominent paunch, an enormous diamond above, a prominent curved nose and sweeping black moustache. An elbow on the counter supported a jewelled hand that poised a fat black cigar with an ash half an inch long.

The eyes of the two men met, Celt and Hebrew. A moment of strained silence and something passed.

What? Eternity's messages travel many channels. The Irishman's resentment faded; his lips framed a slow, sardonic grin.

"Me? Sure, I been searchin' for the Christ! Do ye mind that ye saw Him along the way ye came?"

"No," said the other simply. "He does not live in New York! You spoke of going for good. Where —without a coat—by the bridge route?"

"An' is't your business?" The Irish blood flared.

"Perhaps," replied the Hebrew, coolly flicking the ash. And then:

"Wouldn't you rather put it off and take a job?"

The red faded from the face in front of him, the pale lips parted in silence, and one hand caught the counter.

"If you would, come to my place, The Star Pool and Billiard Palace, four blocks above the Bridge, and I'll start you at twelve and a half a week. One of my men skipped with forty dollars' worth of billiard balls yesterday—I am looking for them now. You can have his job. A man who will pawn his coat a night like this for his wife and baby and don't get drunk won't steal billiard balls. It's a business proposition."

He drew from his pocket a fat roll of bills and peeled off a five.

"Take this on account," he concluded, studiously avoiding the other's gaze. "It will loosen up things

at home until to-morrow. Here, take your coat along."

From the door the Irishman rushed back, seized the garment, extended his hand, but suddenly withdrew it.

"Not now, sor," he stammered brokenly. "Sure, I can't say it! I'll say it ivery day I work for ye."

"Good! You're all right! Now hustle, my boy!"

. . . .

The woman in the room sat prone on the floor, her thin shawl sheltering herself and wailing infant. Not an article of furniture remained, not even her little charcoal burner—it had been the last to go. The firm, quick footsteps in the hallway carried a message that brought her face up and drew her eager gaze to the door. The man who stepped within carried an armful of packages. With her eyes riveted on these, her own arms tightened around the emaciated form she held.

"Maery!" said the newcomer gently. "Ye have been telling me I'd be finding the Christ Child if I tried hard—I do remember ye said He always came to the poorer an' sick first; to the honest an' thrue! Ye knew, Maery, me girl! Sure, it's in the holy name of ye—the faith. Well, I found Him to-night!"

He stood silent, his lips twitching and his face drawn against an emotion that shamed him.

A wordless cry came from the woman. She

struggled to her knees and leaned toward him, her eyes shining with the light that ever is on land and sea where angels pass.

"Mike! Where?"

The packages slipped from Mike's arms to the floor, and his lifted face blanched with the wonder of some far-away scene, and a revelation undreamed of in his hard, narrow life. And then with a twinkle in his Irish eyes:

"In the heart of a Jew," he whispered.

PATCHES

By Francis L. Norris

VAN GILDER, although worth an easy million in his own name, was proud to be able to write M. D. after it. He had a practice, to be sure, but it was mostly upon poor dumb beasts made sick or otherwise to suit his passing purpose. This engrossed most of his time and attention. "It was so fascinating." This pastime was called research, and, being a man of means, he could devote himself at will to it.

And so it happened that one day when on his way to the laboratories he chanced to see the very specimen he "needed" for the day's investigation. It was indeed a poor, wretched beast by the side of a still more wretched human who was on the corner begging. This was luck. Van Gilder usually was lucky.

He stopped his electric alongside the curb and approached the pair.

"Mister, would y' be kind enough——"

"Yes, surely, I can help you. Here's ten dollars for your dog."

"Ten dollars? For Patches? Oh, no."

"Well, then, make it twenty-five. You need the money, and the dog will be out of your way."

"Patches? Sell him for twenty-five? To get him out of the way?" The wretched, shrivelled soul seemed dazed. "Why, sir, not for a thousand could you have that dog."

It was now Van Gilder's turn to be puzzled. Nay, more; he was interested. Here was a man wretched, destitute, in the clutches of poverty, yet he said that not for a thousand dollars would he part with a mere useless dog. *Could* he mean it? Could a dog mean that much to any one? Or was he merely speaking in hyperbole? The question held Van Gilder. A thousand dollars. What would he do if actually offered a thousand dollars? This was research along a new line, but Van Gilder was determined to find out. A trip to the bank, and he returned with ten one-hundred-dollar bills.

"You say you wouldn't sell that cur for a thousand dollars?"

"Not for a thousand dollars—would I, Patches?"

"Y' sure? Here's a thousand dollars. Can I take the dog?"

The sad, drawn face looked at the ten crisp golden bills as if in a trance, but never for a moment did the owner waver.

"No, not for a thousand. Patches and I have

seen better days, comrades we've been for years; he is as loyal to me to-day as ever, and we'll not part till death does it. I could not sell my best friend, could I, Patches? All the rest have left me, but *you* have never once complained, have you, old fellow? No, my friend, I'm pretty low, but I'll never be as low as that. I thank you for the offer, but I can't accept."

Van Gilder, a puzzled, thoughtful man, got into his car and drove off. But not to the laboratories. Like Saul on the road to Damascus, a new light had burst upon him.

THE ARM AT GRAVELOTTE

By William Almon Wolff

HE WAS an old man, with snow-white hair and a patriarch's beard. One sleeve of his coat was empty. He had lived in the village for many years—since five years after the great war, men said. He had prospered; when the new war of 1914 broke out he was the largest landholder for miles around.

It was not far from the French border, this village of which Hans Schmidt was patriarch. It had no railway station, but a line of rail came to it and ended in long platforms in open fields. Twice, of late years, trains had rolled up beside those platforms, discharging soldiers of the Fatherland, engaged in manœuvres. Now, in the first week of August, there was real use for the platforms. For three days trains rolled up in a never-ending procession, discharging their living freight of men in a misty, gray-green uniform that melted into the background of grass and shrubs at a hundred paces, with even the spikes of their helmets covered with cloth.

Westward moved the soldiers, like a swarm of locusts. But they left something behind, an integral

part of themselves, their collective brain. About the house of Hans Schmidt sentries were posted. Mechanics, working quietly, swiftly, as if they had known long since what they must do, laid wires into his modest parlour, connected it by telephone and telegraph with Berlin, with the ever-moving forces to the west. In Hans Schmidt's bed slept a corps commander; the whole house was given up to the staff. He himself was allowed a cot in the kitchen. His house was chosen for headquarters.

From the parlour the general ordered the movements of forty thousand men, playing their part, like a piece in a game of chess, in the plan of invasion of the Great Headquarters Staff. Vastly important were these movements; each corps must coördinate absolutely with every other. Confusion here might ruin the whole great plan.

The high-born general was very busy. But on the second day he deigned to notice Hans Schmidt, who had drawn back, his one arm raised in the salute, as the general passed him.

"*Ach!*" said the general. "You have lost an arm! An old soldier, *nicht wahr?*"

"Yes, my general. I left my arm at Gravelotte."

"So! I was in that business, too. I got my company that day, when Steinmetz lost half his corps. *Ach!* This time we shall finish them even more quickly! Von Kluck is halfway through Belgium;

the Crown Prince is hammering at Verdun! We shall be in Paris within the month!"

Hans Schmidt listened respectfully, as became him. The general went to his desk. Hans Schmidt, in his garden, looked at the western sky. Flying low, near-by, was an aeroplane, blunt, snub-nosed. He knew it for a Taube, though no monoplanes had circled over Gravelotte. It turned, and flew eastward, out of sight. Still he peered into the west. High in the air something flashed gold in the rays of the sun, shining upward from behind a cloud. Hans Schmidt went slowly into the kitchen.

There a hot, smokeless fire of hard coal burned to roast two suckling pigs for the dinner of the general and the high-born officers of the staff. He sent out a maid whose duty it was to watch the pigs. Hans Schmidt took a bag from his pocket, emptied it into the fire, added a pile of kindling wood. He went back into the garden. Thoughtfully he looked at the chimney, from which there rose suddenly a thick column of oily black smoke. Straight up it went, higher and higher.

"In Berlin you would be fined for that," said a young staff officer, coming up beside him.

"The maids are careless," answered the patriot.

The officer gaped at the smoke. Hans Schmidt looked to the west. Again he caught the gleam of the sun on metal. From the west a monoplane was

coming, flying like a hawk. It took shape. A mile away a gun spoke; another, and another. Above, below the monoplane, hung three fleecy balls of white smoke, where shells had burst. Followed a volley. Other officers came from the house to stare upward. On came the monoplane.

"A French flyer!" cried one.

It was overhead. It paused in its flight, circled. A tiny black thing hurtled down. The side wall of Hans Schmidt's house vanished. In a moment more there was no house—only a heap of smoking ruins. Amid fused wires a thing that had been a man, in the uniform of a general, dragged itself, shrieking, till it died.

"The smoke!" cried an officer. "It was a signal! Headquarters was betrayed!"

"Fools!" cried Hans Schmidt, as they turned on him. "The arm I left at Gravelotte carried a French *chassepôt! Vive la France! Vive Alsace—jamais plus Elsass! Vive la rep——*"

A revolver spat in his face. But as he lay his staring eyes were turned to the west, to a monoplane that was flying home to France.

THE BAD MAN

By Harry C. Goodwin

PRISONER to the bar," called the Clerk of the Court.

The prisoner came forward, closely followed by a dog, which, because it had been evidence during the trial, had become known as Exhibit A. In one hand the man held what might have been a hat when new. The other hand hung at his side so the dog could reach up and give it an affectionate lick now and then—when the man needed sympathy and encouragement.

In answer to questions put, the prisoner said he was John Brent, twenty-seven years old, and his mother's name was Mary.

"And your father's name?" asked the clerk, thinking Brent had overlooked this detail.

"Never had none."

The judge looked up, glanced in sympathy at the prisoner, then looked down again.

The famous Von Betz, who had caused Brent's arrest and trial, sneered.

Some women present, attracted by the high social

and professional standing of the great Von Betz, looked shocked.

Possibly they were shocked.

Exhibit A moved closer and gave the hand of his master two or three encouraging licks and wagged his tail joyfully in recognition of the prisoner's friendly smile.

"The jury," said the judge, "has found you guilty of assault, with intent to kill, on the person of Dr. Enrich Von Betz. You have had a fair trial. The evidence seems to justify the verdict. Have you anything to say why sentence should not be passed?"

"I would like to say something, judge, 'cause I got a hunch you'll understand. I got a feelin' you'd done the same thing I did. I never had a father, and the world seems to blame me. But it wasn't my fault, and I've never blamed my mother, neither. She was a good girl. I've had a pretty tough time—nobody but my mother, the dog, and God has given me a square deal. Sometimes God forgot, I guess."

The judge leaned forward, interested. The dog licked the prisoner's hand and wagged his tail. Thus encouraged, Brent continued:

"There ain't been a day since my mother died that some one ain't come along and made me feel in the way. Every time I'd get a new start some one would say I didn't have a father, an' back I'd go.

"I got to thinkin' I must be a pretty bad man until

Yip, the dog, fell in with me three years ago. Guess he saw somethin' in me others didn't. He didn't ask if I had a father. He's stuck by me, he's starved fer me, an I've starved fer him. Just see how he looks at me, judge. A dog don't look at a man like that unless he sees some good in all the bad.

"I pulled Yip out from under a trolley car and went under myself. They took me to the hospital and sent Yip to the pound. I was in for a long time, and on the day I left I did this thing I'm going up for.

"I was passing a building on the grounds when I heard a dog yelp. It was Yip. I don't know how I got in, but I did. I don't know exactly what I did when I got in. I guess I did come near killing the doctor.

"But judge," and his voice grew thick from anger, "when I got in I saw Yip stretched out on his back. They had straps pulling his legs one way and his head another way so he couldn't move. All he could do was cry—cry just like a baby that knows he's being hurt but don't know why.

"And the doctor, judge, was standing over Yip and the knife in his hand was all bloody."

"Go on," said the judge.

"I ain't got anything more to say, except that I want you to send Yip along when you send me away. If you don't, judge, and the doctor gets Yip and kills

him, I'll kill the doctor when I gets out, because I've got just as much right fer killin' the doctor as he's got to kill Yip. That's all I got to say, judge."

"I know how you feel, Brent," said the judge, in a rather husky voice. "I've got a dog at home—a dog like Yip. And—and—but duty compels me to sentence you to ten years at hard labour, and I impose a similar sentence on the dog Yip——"

"Thanks, judge, thanks, fer sending Yip along. You know, judge. You got a heart, you got feelings, just like Yip and your dog has. You——"

"But in view of the circumstances that provoked the assault," interrupted the judge, "I'll suspend your sentence during good behaviour."

"But Yip," begged the man without a father.

"I'll suspend Yip's sentence, too," smiled the judge.

NEMESIS

By Mary Clark

THE Little White Mare stirred uneasily in the narrow stall, and shifted her weight from one three-legged balance to another. There was no room to lie down, and the warm stench of ankle-deep manure could not rise as far as the small opening where, occasionally, penetrated a flickering beam from the arc light at the corner.

The day's work had been hard, and supper inadequate; in her dreams there came the taste of a carrot, succulent, crunchy, tender, but solid, a carrot such as the little boy used to give her—the little boy who lived on the long street of the hard pavement and the many car-tracks. That was in the days when Estevan and she had carried fruit and vegetables in the old cart, and pleasantly, had stopped before many houses, often three and four times in a block. By her association memory (the only memory psychologists allow her kind) she recognized that street whenever she crossed it in her journeys—the Street of the Carrots.

But, latterly, they carried other things in the cart,

heavy, jangly things, queer, knobby sacks that Estevan gathered hastily, a few at a time, at strange hours, in quiet places. In night journeys to dark alleys and courtyards the loads were transferred to other Mexicans, who counted small jingling pieces into Estevan's ready palm. Nowadays there were no carrots, no rest under spreading cottonwoods and chinaberries. With Estevan there never had been anything to associate but work and blows. Such is life—far too little dirty water from a dirty pail; roughage for food, with, now and then, a grudging heap of cheapest grain; a galling harness; a filthy stall; work—never-ending work; a child and a carrot the only memory of a kindness!

El Paso she knew, not as you know it—its mountain vistas, its blocks of substantial homes and pleasant bungalows, but as her half-starved, rickety old frame knew it: hard-paved streets that hurt her feet; dreadful, unpaved ones where she stumbled in the ruts and mud or choked with dust; the mountain winds of winter; the wicked summer gusts that gather up adjacent Mexico and blow it to the Mesa, only, a few days later, to resume the burden and with it madly assail Mt. Franklin; the cruel summer heat when, afternoon long, Estevan dozed in the cool 'dobe while she stood in the pitiless glare, harnessed and helpless, envious of the paltry, flapping shadow cast by the red rag that floated over the abarroteria,

telling, though she neither knew nor cared, that carne, fresh carne, was for sale that day. And heat, glare, red rag, dreadful streets of Chihuahuita, their memory association was—flies, millions, billions, black, busy, buzzing, biting flies.

Now, even in her sleep, she heard them.

Disturbed in their myriad sleep, the flies buzzed mightily. Estevan's heavy slap fell on her shoulder, and in the starry darkness he hustled her out of the stall and into harness. Past dark rows of 'dobes and one-storied shops—jog—jog; jolt—jolt over rough tracks where the shrieking engines run; a smothered " 'Spero" brought the Little White Mare to an obedient halt in the black shadow of a freight-car.

Men waited there for Estevan, there were signs and whispers. What business of hers! She lowered her head to nose a pile of sacks; one was torn; cautiously she smelled, then licked it. Heavenly! a substance rough like salt, that turned magically on one's tongue to smooth, slippery, ineffable sweetness! Sugar it was, a carload, sent from dangerous Mexico to the safety of these United States. In the deep shadow the thieves skilfully shifted the sacks from the car to Estevan, who swung them into his cart.

Something amiss! The men muttered to each other, crouched, dropped from cart to car, disappeared in the black beyond. Industriously the

Little White Mare nuzzled the torn burlap into whose folds the delightful fodder was receding.

Dazzling light—big men—men different from Estevan—everywhere—in the cart—around it at her head.

"Vamoosed! Hell take it!" was the verdict.

"And will you look who's here," cried the biggest, turning his torch on the laden cart. "Lord love you, it's a haul for a Packard truck! They sure got this old bonebag anchored! Must be a ton or two on that wagon. Well, men, shift most of this to the patrol, seal the car, and run in this outfit as evidence."

The Little White Mare stood at ease, contented, warm and sleepy, while the big man at her head rubbed back of her ear in a delightful and unaccustomed way.

The patrol whirled away.

"All right, Bourke," they called, "you can escort the corpse."

"Look out for the speed-cop, bo. It's four blocks to the boneyard."

Bourke swung into the driver's seat, clucked comfortably, and always obedient, the Little White Mare turned from the freight yard into the dusty road.

A strange creature, this man with the big, soft hands—no sharp, jerking rein, the whip, forgotten; maybe he slept; when Estevan slept he awoke with, always, a crueler lash.

For all animals Bourke had a tender friendliness, and the sight of the scarred, decrepit back patiently jogging between the shafts irritated him, as did the nervous wince the old mare gave when he joggled the whip-handle in the broken socket. The idea grew in grim delectability that she might, of her own habit, deliver her tormentor to the law.

"Now's your chance to get even, old girl," he muttered; then louder, "take me to him—*casa—sige casa!*"

Reins flat on her back, a full stomach and an easy mind, that strange association memory said to the Little White Mare that it was time to be at home, in the dirty stall, with the empty manger and the sleeping flies.

Jog, jog, past the sleeping 'dobes, past the shops, into the familiar alley—home, at last!

Bourke was gone; from the house beyond the stable partition came Estevan's voice, high, whining, pleading.

A shrill whistle outside; other voices; the whir of the patrol speeding townward; silence; sleep.

The Little White Mare was avenged.

THE BLACK DOOR

By Gordon Seagrove

"LIEUTENANT TOWNLEY," said Captain Von Dee sharply, "as a spy you will be executed in two hours. Pursuant to my custom you will be given a choice in the matter. Either you may elect to be shot in the customary manner, or you may pass through the Black Door which you see behind me. State your choice when the hour comes."

Von Dee—"Von Dee the whimsical" they called him in the trenches—turned to his reports while Lieutenant Townley was led back to the cell. A great hopelessness fell upon the latter. So this was the end then? All his hopes, his plans with regard to marriage to Cecile were to be swept away. It was difficult to realize that in another hour he would be separated by an unfathomable void from the woman whom he loved like life itself and trusted like no man had ever trusted woman before.

"Shot . . . or the Black Door. . . ." Von Dee's words came back to him. What horrible fate—which legend held was worse than death—met those who passed beyond the Black Door? He knew

that not one of death prisoners had dared to pass beyond it. Each had chosen death at the hands of the firing squad.

A half hour passed. Then, suddenly, a scrap of paper fluttered into his hands. He opened it and read:

"Choose the Black Door. I know." It was signed Cecile.

Now the hour for the execution could not come soon enough. Cecile had remembered! Cecile had saved him. Perhaps behind the Black Door he would only be maimed or crippled and could go back to Cecile. As the guards led him into Von Dee's quarters his heart pounded gladly. In the gloom of the room he could see Von Dee and a stranger talking. In another moment he would tell Captain Von Dee that he, Lieutenant Townley, elected to pass through the Black Door.

He waited. Apparently his presence was not noted. He could hear scraps of conversation: "I've always maintained," Von Dee was saying, "that, no matter how brave a man, he will choose a known form of death rather than an unknown. . . ."

There was a lull, and then the other voice said: "And you are the only one who knows what lies beyond the Black Door?"

"No," Von Dee answered his brother. "A woman

knows." Then he added with a light laugh: "She was a former mistress of mine!"

Lieutenant Townley heard, trembled, turned white, then stiffened. Von Dee was before him, talking. "Well, Lieutenant," he said, "do you elect the Black Door?"

"I do not!" the prisoner answered. Von Dee nodded to the guards who led Lieutenant Townley away. A moment later came the report of the firing squad on the drill grounds.

"What did I tell you!" cried Von Dee to his brother. "Lieutenant Townley, one of the bravest, couldn't face the unknown. He went the usual way." For several moments he puffed his cigar silently, then: "Birwitz," he asked suddenly, "do you know what lies beyond the Black Door?"

The younger Von Dee shook his head.

"Freedom," said Captain Von Dee. "And I've never met a man brave enough to take it!"

THE MAN WHO TOLD

By John Cutler

TOWARD midnight in the smoking-room of the trans-Atlantic liner Howard, the author, held forth on realism and romance. In one of his pauses another of the company broke in:

"Realism," said the interrupter, "is but the word with which those who can see nothing but the ordinary and humdrum in life try to excuse their blindness to the romances that unfold themselves all about us every day. The last time I heard the doctrine of realism preached was in the home of a wealthy New Yorker who declared that in his life there had never been the least tinge of the unusual or the romantic. He had never fallen in love and never had any adventures. Three days later in the morning he was found seated in a chair on the piazza of his summer home dead from a stab wound through the heart. Three hundred thousand dollars in cash which he had received from the sale of a block of bonds was missing from his office safe where he had placed it the preceding late afternoon because his bank was closed. The only clue found to the murderer was a blood-stained

stiletto which was discovered between the Old and the New Testaments in a big family Bible on a high shelf in the library of the murdered man's summer home. The mystery of the murder was never solved."

"The plot of a very interesting story," commented Howard and went on with his monologue. A little later the party broke up. On his way to his stateroom Winton, who had been one of them, dropped in at the wireless room and sent a message.

Three days later at the New York pier the man who had interrupted Howard was arrested for murder committed four years before. "I was once a member of the force," explained Winton to Howard; "that stiletto was never found until he told where to look for it that night in the smoking-room."

THE UNANSWERED CALL

By Thomas T. Hoyne

SIX months of married life had not staled the two great adventures in each week day of Delia Hetherington's placid existence—the morning leavetaking and the evening return of her husband. His departure was a climax of lingering kisses, admonitions, and exhortations; his return a triumph. Did he not put all to the touch with Fortune at every parting and go forth to strive all day, a dauntless hero, 'mid motor juggernauts and rushing trolley cars, 'neath dangling safes and dropping tiles, beside treacherous pitfalls and yawning manholes? But ever he bore a charmed life and returned to his love in the dark of the evening with thrilling tales of his salesmanship and of repartee to his boss.

Delia hummed a plaintive, childish melody as she set the little, round dining-table for two persons. As is the habit of brides, she laid the places side by side instead of opposite each other. A light shadow of curiosity flickered across her mind, and she carefully laid a saucer on the table to note the effect of a third place. She snatched it up again, blushing, although

there was no one else in all the length and breadth of the four-room apartment where she and Fred, upheld by the installment plan, had built their nest. She resumed her singing, bird-like in its thin simplicity. Such a song, one could imagine, Mrs. Cock Robin sang while awaiting the home-coming of her mate.

A soft knocking at the back door drew Delia from happy contemplation of the glistening forks that lay beside the two plates on the dining-room table. She hurried into the kitchen, wisely remembering Fred's insistence that she must never unlock the screen door to a stranger before she discovered his design. No well-dressed youth seeking to pay his way through college by getting subscriptions for "The Woman's Life and Fashion Bazaar" could find in his patter the countersign to win him admittance; no grizzled gypsy with shining tins to barter for old shoes knew the magic word to make the hook fly up under Delia's cautious hand.

But the man who stood on the narrow porch, panting like a Marathon runner, was none of these.

"The steps," he gasped, pressing one hand over his heart, "too much for me."

To climb the four flights of stairs to the Hetherington apartment at the top of the building was a test for a strong man. He who knocked at the screen door was slight in build and looked ill.

With quick sympathy Delia unhooked the door and pushed it open.

"Come in and sit down a minute," she said gently.

The man staggered across the threshold and dropped into the chair she offered him. The screen door shut with a slam.

He shivered as if a draft of icy air had struck him.

"Close the inside door—quick," he panted; and Delia, under the spell of her sympathy, obeyed without thought.

"It's too bad to trouble you," he said nervously, "but I'm not a well man."

Delia handed him a glass of water. He sipped at it between gasps.

"Don't light the gas," he cried sharply.

Delia had scratched a match, for night was falling rapidly. She snapped out the little flame and looked at him half afraid.

"Just let me rest a moment," he said. "There's no harm in me. I couldn't hurt a baby if I wanted to."

He almost whimpered as he looked curiously around the room.

"You're all alone, eh? I'm glad you weren't afraid to let me in. Some women would have left me standing out there."

"What would I be afraid of?" she asked simply, feeling uneasy nevertheless.

"Oh, I don't know," he answered irritably. "Only most people seem to be afraid of a sick man. They don't want him around. They won't give him a chance."

"That can't be so," said Delia. "Every one naturally feels sorry for a sick person."

"No, they don't," he contradicted roughly. "Do you know what would happen if I fainted in the street? Do you think any one would help me? Not much. I could lie there like a dog while the crowd went by. The men would laugh; the women would say, 'Disgusting.' I know. It has happened to me."

He coughed slightly and finished the glass of water.

A faint sound outdoors caught his ear. He stepped quickly to the window and peered out. Starved and unkempt he looked, but a quaint neatness about his clothing hinted at the regular habits of a workingman.

He turned to Delia suddenly.

"I've got to tell you," he whispered swiftly. "They're coming up here. You've got some sympathy for a man and you ain't afraid."

She looked at him and began to understand.

"I'm a thief," he said bluntly, and gulped on the word. "I stole a few dollars and the police are after me."

"A thief!" she cried, staring at him. "I have no money."

"I know, I know," he mumbled in desperate hurry. "I don't want to rob you. I want to get away. I was forced to do it."

"Forced!"

"We were starving. I'm married, the same as you are. Wouldn't your husband steal for you?"

He stopped short and listened. Loud knocking sounded somewhere below.

"All I want you to do is to let me out the front door; and don't tell. Say you didn't see me."

Already he had shuffled through the dining-room, Delia following him into the narrow, short, dark hall.

"If any one knocks don't answer," he whispered. "Don't light any lights."

He opened the front door cautiously.

"They'll think no one's here." He turned and looked at her. "It'll give me a chance—just a chance is all I want. You'll never be sorry."

He closed the door softly behind him.

Delia stood listening, breathless.

Voices questioned and answered on the porch below, but she could not distinguish the words. She felt as if she herself were guilty of some crime.

Suddenly the telephone bell on the wall beside her rang with startling abruptness.

She did not move. Heavy feet were mounting the stairs to the back porch.

Again the telephone rang out against the stillness in the little apartment.

She dared not move, but stood pressed against the wall. Through the darkness she could see the doorway into the lighter kitchen like a black frame.

The telephone rang again, long and insistently.

Heavy knocking shook the back door, but it got no response from Delia. There was a pause of silence and then a voice cried out with the rapidity of excitement:

"No one's home, Jim. He couldn't get through here."

This was what she had been listening for.

The noise of descending footsteps died away.

Delia sprang to the telephone and waited eagerly. But the bell did not ring again.

. . . .

"Any trace of him, Jim?" asked the desk sergeant, as the big patrolman entered the police station.

"Naw. Anybody identify the body?"

"He had cards on him that gave his name and address. The poor guy never knew what hit him. He didn't get the chance to give up his dough; one white-livered sneak croaked him from behind with a piece of lead pipe. We called up his home, but couldn't raise anybody."

THE WOMEN IN THE CASE

By Mary Sams Cooke

JACK BURROUGH'S dog broke from him and made a sudden dive down the first opening. The usual clear whistle made no impression. "Jim" was off. Jack quickly followed, and to his relief saw a big Irishman patting "Jim's" head; "Jim," with unmistakable signs of delight, jumping up and down and rubbing against the man.

That started the strange friendship between Jack Burroughs, lawyer, sportsman, and Dennis O'Sullivan.

Dennis lived in the last house on "Grasshopper Hill." It was a little less ramshackle, a little more independent looking than the rest of the row that faced on a small bluff above the railroad tracks, and its garden bloomed like a rose. Dennis himself was large, burly, rather red of face, but with the twinkling blue eyes and the genial courtesy of the true son of Erin.

Later Dennis brought out to the almost palatial suburban home of Jack Burroughs rare bulbs and old-fashioned flowers; Jack got Dennis to help him in making his own garden beautiful.

As the war dragged its fearful way along they, strange to say, never even mentioned it, until one day in June suddenly Jack said: "Dennis, I have written to a cousin in England to know if it's possible for me to get a commission in the English army."

Dennis looked up from the border he was working and demanded:

"For why and I would like to know?"

"Well, Dennis, you see, my great-grandfather was an Irish patriot, and came over here during Emmet's rebellion; but now Ireland needs me, and I'm going."

"From what part of the ould country was ye grandfather?"

"Oh, from near Lough Neagh."

"Are ye maning County Antrim, Misther Burroughs?"

"Sure, Dennis."

"Thin I'm yer boy, and will go with ye."

Jack was rather startled, but on second thought he decided to take the risk.

"Dennis, will you sign the pledge if I take you?"

Dennis' blue eyes twinkled, and with a comical smile he lifted his cap from his fiery head and said, "Shure, yer honour."

Both gardens bloomed gayly in the June sunshine; both men talked and worked and planned in secret for their swift going. At last the letter came.

Jack, as gay as a boy, went first to Dennis. "Come

out to the house to-night, Dennis, and we will make our final arrangements."

"Ye can count on me, and I will be that grateful to ye for the whole o' me life."

With this letter held high, Jack, with "Jim" at his heels, gayly waved it to a sweet girl that he caught a glimpse of on a neighbouring porch.

"Can I come in, Eleanor?" he called.

The blue eyes gave him welcome. He sat on the lower step and, leaning against the post, looked up at the girl.

"Eleanor, I am off to the war!"

The smile froze on the sweet lips, the slender, strong hands clenched, but the girl's voice was quiet as she answered:

"I hardly understand, Jack."

Then he eagerly explained how his cousins in England, with the same strain of Irish blood in their veins, were fighting—nay, some dying—on the battlefields in France, and call had come to him, and he must go.

He stood tall and straight, his gray eyes flashing—those eyes she so loved—his head thrown back. Ah! The girl felt he would lead his men even unto death. He gave his warm, merry smile; surely she would understand.

"Sit down, Jack dear. Yes, I understand," she smiled into those eager eyes; "but you do not under-

stand. No, wait, please—you are an American, Jack, first, last, and all the time; and now soon, only too soon, your country might need all such men as you. You cannot desert your country now! You cannot, cannot, Jack, dear!"

And Jack understood.

How to tell Dennis, how to break the news to him; what was he to say?

As later he saw the big man walking slowly up the path Dennis touched his cap to Jack.

"Will ye pardon me pipe, Misther Burroughs, being that low in me mind I kinnot spake without it?"

Jack smiled.

"I am a bit low meself, Dennis."

"Well, I had best out with it like a man, Misther Burroughs. I went to spake to me Nora and she said, 'Dennis O'Sullivan, have ye lost the little bits o' wits ye be blessed with? Not one foot do ye stir from your own country. Did ye not become an American citizen this five years back?' And, shure, Misther Burroughs, 'twas true the word she spake!"

THE CAT THAT CAME BACK

By Virginia West

LEONARD RAYMOND was temperamentally a naturalist. Had circumstances not compelled him to make a living he would no doubt have been an Audubon, or a Gray. He spent his spare moments studying the habits of the living things about town, English sparrows, pigeons, stray cats, homeless dogs, and so forth. Old man Peterkin, whose wife kept the boarding-house at which Raymond was getting his meals, who did nothing but collect the board bills, grow fat, and hold the position of church deacon, had told him that the crows in the cupola of the Eutaw Place synagogue had been nesting there for eleven years. Raymond did not know whether to regard that as an interesting item about crows, or as evidence against Mr. Peterkin's veracity. However, Mr. Peterkin and the crows have nothing to do with this story.

In the backyard of the Linden Avenue house in which he lived with his married sister Raymond raised flowers, and on Sundays and holidays he would often go to the country to study the wild flowers and the birds.

One summer evening he sat in the backyard among the flowers. He was hot and lonesome, the thermometer being close to ninety, the family being out of town, and no vacation for himself in sight. Tomorrow, he reflected, he would return to his post of teller in the bank, and hand out more money than he would ever own in a lifetime; the day after he would do the same thing——

His melancholy reflections were broken in upon by what seemed to be a ball of fire on top of the tall board fence. In an instant it disappeared, and he saw the long black form of a cat slide down the fence, and light in the yard. The beast went to a garbage can in the corner of the yard, sniffed about it, observed that the lid was on, and then, turning the gleaming ball upon Raymond, sprang up the fence and disappeared.

The same thing happened the next evening. On the third evening when the cat appeared Raymond advanced cautiously, and tried to be friendly. The cat hesitated, but when the man's hand was almost on him he streaked up, and over the fence.

The following evening when Raymond walked uptown from the bank, as he approached Richmond market he thought of the cat, and stopping at a stall bought a small portion of meat.

The meat was put on the ground near the fence on which at the regular time the cat appeared. The eye

gleamed. Raymond was wondering why both eyes did not gleam when the cat seemed to fall straight down upon the meat. Raymond sat as still as a stone, and heard the meat crunching between the cat's jaws. The animal was licking its chops when he advanced—it met him halfway, and while Raymond rubbed his fur, the cat purred. Sitting down upon a bench, the cat leaped into his lap, curled up, and settled down for a nap. Then it was that he found about the cat's neck a small chain with a tag on it.

When he went into the house the cat followed him, and by the gas light he read on the tag a Madison Avenue address. Also he observed that the cat had but one eye, and forthwith he christened him Cyclops. He wondered why a person who thought enough of the cat to provide him with a chain and tag should have left him to search for his victuals in alleys and backyards like an ordinary stray.

Cyclops stuck by Raymond like a twin brother. And every evening when Raymond came from business he stopped in Richmond market and bought meat for Cyclops. One day the man in the stall asked him if he were a family man.

One Sunday morning Raymond strolled across Eutaw Place and up to the Madison Avenue address. The house was closed for the summer, but the policeman on the post told him who lived there.

Summer was nearly at an end when Raymond happened to see in the paper that the people at the Madison Avenue house had returned to town. Now, Raymond was an honest man—had he been anything else he would not have been allowed to handle the bank's money, so on Saturday evening with Cyclops under his arm, he sadly went up Madison Avenue to return the cat to his lawful owner. Boys on the street made personal remarks about the man and the cat, and Cyclops' great eye turned green with wrath as he glared at them.

A coloured woman of the Mammy type answered his ring. She looked and gasped. Before Raymond could explain she thrust her head into the hall and shouted in strident tones:

"Come heah, Miss 'Liza! Bress de Lawd ef heah ain't yo' cat!"

In a moment appeared the prettiest girl that Raymond's eyes had ever rested upon. She had blue eyes and a mass of golden hair. Though comparatively young, and quite in the eligible class, Raymond was not a lady's man. With much embarrassment he told the history of the cat.

While she held Cyclops to her bosom, the girl explained that she had left him with a friend to keep for her during the summer, and he had run away. She had given him up for lost.

"Dat cat know whut he doin'," snickered the

Mammy, who was standing back in the hall. "Dat cat kin see further'n you kin ef he ain't got but one eye."

Raymond went off catless. All the way home he was thinking of a way by which he might call on the beautiful Miss 'Liza. Sunday afternoon he went out to the country, to the woods, the flowers, the birds, and his soul was full of poetry and his mind of thoughts of the girl.

That evening old Cyclops was back on the fence! His great eye had a gleam of mischievousness. Down the fence he slid, and straight to Raymond, who decided that he must take the cat back to his owner immediately.

While Cyclops prowled about the parlour with tail erect, rubbing against every article of furniture, Raymond talked to Miss 'Liza.

Every evening Cyclops returned to Raymond, and every evening he as promptly took him home. Thus time passed from autumn into early winter.

One evening sitting before the little wood fire in her parlour, Raymond said to Miss 'Liza: "I don't see but one way to keep our cat in one place!"

Then Miss 'Liza blushed, and said she didn't see but one way either!

Then he kissed her!

And old Cyclops rubbed against both of them and purred to beat the band.

"SOLITAIRE" BILL

By Arthur Felix McEachern

CAPTAIN BILLY MacDONALD was one of those dour Highland Scotsmen; deep-water men; exhaling an unmistakable atmosphere of the sea. Past middle age, taciturn; yet there was that indescribable glimmer in his gray eyes betraying a sense of humor. If indications pointed to a "spell of weather," Captain Billy habitually retired to his cabin, leaving orders with the mate to "call me if it breezes up," and when the first puff of a squall bellied the sails of the *Lizzie MacDonald*—named after his daughter, and second only to her in his affections—heeling the bark in to her lee scuppers, Captain Billy would hastily leave his game of solitaire and bound on deck. One glance at the heavens sufficed for his decision. With him decision and action were synonymous; and when be bellowed the order, "All hands shorten sail," every man-Jack jumped to the ratlines, for "Solitaire" Bill, as the captain was known to seafaring men from Glasgow to the Horn, was an Absolute Monarch when at sea.

For twenty years the bark *Lizzie MacDonald* had freighted hither and yon about the Atlantic, and was one of the few of her type which had managed to stay in the running against modern steam tramp competition. She lay in the roads at Kingston, Jamaica, having discharged a cargo of dry fish from Boston, and was all ready to clear for Liverpool with sugar and molasses. War conditions had boosted freight rates, and the *Lizzie* had been paying her owners as never before.

It was 102 degrees in the shade, and at ten o'clock in the forenoon "Solitaire Bill" sat in his cabin at a rickety table apparently oblivious to everything except the inevitable solitaire. It was not generally known that the captain could more clearly map out a course or think of foreign subjects to better advantage when thus engaged than at any other time, and when the Yankee mate came aboard in a bum-boat, he coughed apologetically before disturbing the skipper.

"Well," said Captain Billy, looking up in the act of placing the ten of diamonds on the queen of spades, "what's the good word?"

"Nothing stirring," answered the mate, an angular, weather-beaten man with the unmistakable nasal twang of the New-Englander. "The cook's the only one of the outfit of them with the spunk of a rabbit. It was as I anticipated. The crew were afraid of the German submarines, and they jumped north on

the steam tramp that left for New York this morning."

"So there's no chance to get a crew," ruminated the captain. "It is too bad that we are to be delayed at this time when freight rates are so high, but I suppose it cannot be helped. We can't sail without men, that's sure."

"There ain't a sailorman without a ship in Kingston," averred the mate. "If we were steam we could ship a dozen or so of these niggers, but they won't do on a square-rigger. They wouldn't know the main't'gall'n's'l halyards from the bobstay," and the mate went on deck leaving "Solitaire" Bill pursuing the pastime which was his hobby.

That afternoon when a slight breeze swept through the city from the mountain behind, "Solitaire" Bill had the cook put him ashore. He intended cabling his agents that he would be indefinitely delayed owing to lack of a crew. Mechanically he walked through the sun-blistered streets past the squat white houses with negroes lolling in the doorways, to the Custom House, where he found a cablegram awaiting him.

As he perused the typewritten sheet a smile flitted over his care-worn features. It was as he had hoped, although he had made it a point to never meddle in his daughter's affairs. He had scrimped to give her the education which neither he nor her

dead mother had enjoyed, and though he had seen her never more than twice yearly, he had known of her reciprocation to the love of Douglas MacGillis, and had approved of her choice. He reread the cablegram: "Douglas and I to be married March 30th. He leaves for the front early April. Expect you Liverpool before 30th."

Since the death of his wife, fifteen years before, his daughter, Lizzie, had been the constant object of "Solitaire" Bill's care and affection. She was to marry a Scotsman; a gentleman; and one who was going to the firing line to "do his bit" for King and country. Many a time since the outbreak of war had Captain Billy wished that he were younger. Gladly would he have donned the khaki to fight for Britain in the trenches. His was the indomitable spirit of the Highlander. But, though vigorous and keen of mind as are the majority of men of half his years, he was beyond the active service age limit, so he devoted himself to the equally patriotic task of bringing supplies to Britain to keep her wheels of commerce humming.

"If I had a crew," he muttered, as he shuffled the dog-eared deck of cards in the solitude of his cabin while awaiting the evening meal, "I could make Liverpool, weather permitting, in time for the wedding. If I could do that—well, that's all I ask——"

Suddenly Captain "Solitaire" Bill burst into a

paroxysm of laughter. "By the Powers, I'll try it," he cried, as he bounded up the companionway with boyish light-heartedness.

"Supper's ready," called the cook from the door of the galley.

"Get supper ready for a full crew," ordered the skipper, "and will you come ashore with me, Mr. Smith?" he said to the mate. "I want you to round up a crew of those niggers, while I go to the Custom House and clear. We sail as soon as you get them."

The mate looked incredulously. "The niggers can't box the compass even, and——"

"Never mind about that," commanded "Solitaire" Bill, "you get them aboard and leave the rest to me."

. . . .

"Well, I might as well explain now; it's too good to keep a moment longer," chuckled "Solitaire" Bill, as he ordered the driver of the taxi waiting in front of the church to drive to the Liverpool House.

"We are assuredly anxious to learn what you and Mr. Smith are laughing about," chorused Lieut. Douglas MacGillis and his wife in unison. The mate, Mr. Smith, was obviously uncomfortable in what he termed his "moonlight clothes," nevertheless he laughed immoderately as he indulged in retrospection.

"I've always been a fiend for solitaire," said Cap-

tain Billy, "and after getting your cable I was in a quandary, and sought solace in a game with myself. I wanted to get to this wedding more than anything else, but I couldn't get here without a crew to work the ship, and sailormen were about as plentiful as hen's teeth in Kingston. But the cards gave me an inspiration. I shipped a crew of niggers who did not know one rope from another on a square-rigged ship—but they all knew how to play cards. I fastened a playing card to each of the principal ropes and sails, and those niggers were like cats aloft.

"When I shouted, 'Clew up your ace of spades,' they were after that mizzen-royal in a jiffy. Mr. Smith, the cook, and myself took turns at the wheel. 'Double reef your deuce of diamonds,' and they made snug the fores'l to a nicety. All's well that ends well. I never had a smarter lot of sailors. I know the men all called me 'Solitaire' Bill behind my back, but henceforth and hereafter, every fo'c'sle hand and the cook calls me 'Solitaire,' or they don't sign articles on the trimmest brig that sails the Atlantic."

JUST A PAL

By Elsie D. Knisely

JIM DOYLE—sent to Sing Sing last year—is innocent. I done the job he was sent up for. I was broke and out of work and Mary, my wife, had consumption and needed food and warm clothes and medicine. I held up a guy with more than he needed that didn't come by it any honester than I done when I cracked him over the head and took it out of his belt. Then Jim cooked up a scheme to own he done it and take my medicine as long as Mary lived, so she wouldn't know and so's I could be with her and look after her. She died to-day. There's one hundred and fifty dollars under the mattress along with the proof that I'm the guilty guy. Bury my wife decent and give the rest to Jim to get on his feet after you turn him loose. Get a kind-hearted parson to say a prayer over me and then plant me in Potter's Field. I'm going the gas route. Jim's no kin of mine—just a pal. He allowed no one would care a darn if he was in the pen or not. He loved a girl once, but she turned out bad and spoiled Jim's life. Tell him "God bless him."

P. S.—I'm sorry I killed that guy, but I just had to have money for Mary. Mebbe I can square it with him where I'm going.

WHEN "KULTUR" WAS BEATEN

By Lieutenant X

KNEE DEEP in the mud, the French "Alpines," the "Blue Devils," as the Germans called them, were watching the shelling of the enemy's positions. Huge columns of black smoke crowned the white line of trenches below the thicket of spruce, and at each of the terrific explosions chunks of dirt, sand-bags, and armour plates flew high in the air.

In the expectation of the rush the "Blue Devils" stood leaning on the rifles, some of them laughing and joking, while others, grave and stern, read once more the last letters of the beloved ones.

Corporal Dupin sat down, looking at the photograph of the wife and baby. When hell broke loose Dupin was quietly living in Canada, and he had come as a man of honour to join the colours, leaving his little family on the safer side of the ocean. The morning mail had just brought him news that wife and baby had sailed on the *Lusitania*, to be nearer to him. . . . How his heart beat hard!

. . . Surely he would come safe out of this struggle, though he would bear himself as gallantly

as usual, and perhaps be fortunate enough to get twenty-four hours' leave and meet the wife and baby somewhere, perhaps in Belfast or in Nancy. He could already imagine that meeting. He was happy. How heartily he went to his duty to-day! . . .

He caught the voice of the lieutenant.

"Here, boys!" was the brief command. "You've always done your duty. To-day you have to do it doubly, for Germany has added a new crime to the list. One of her submarines has sunk the *Lusitania*. There are innocent victims to avenge."

The *Lusitania!* Greet her! Eagerly Dupin tore the paper from the officer's hands. He read and reread the list of rescued. Two seconds later there was no more room for doubt, and he knew that all he loved in the world had gone down.

Oh, kill! Kill the murderers and avenge! . . . Kill and torture! . . . How long would the shelling last? When would the signal of the storm come? . . .

Ah! the welcome starlike rocket! The French guns lengthened their shots, shelled the upper line of trenches. . . . A loud shout and a mad rush. . . . The "Blue Devils" were in action.

Ta, ta, ta, ta. . . . The German machine-guns. Sh! Cirr! Shrapnel burst with a quick flame and little yellow clouds. . . . Dead men fell.

But the remainder kept on running and bouncing

until they reached the German works. The "75s" shells had made a mess of the entanglements, and the main trench was a ruin, spotted with corpses. . . . Bullets whistled, grenades exploded, injured men shrieked.

From a black aperture a bullet missed Corporal Dupin as he passed, bayonet forward, after a flying man. He gave that prey off, threw a bomb in the den, and as soon as it had exploded he rushed in.

Covered with blood, a German officer lay down. He menaced Dupin with his empty pistol, when, realizing that everything was over for him, he threw the gun, with a wild laugh, and defiantly and haughtily looked at Dupin. The cold, blue eyes of the Teuton did not mistake Dupin's sentiment. To the corporal's dark, glancing eyes they returned hatred for hatred. Dupin thought that the submarine's commander must have had the same likeness. Yes, this man would pay dearly for the cold-blooded murderer's debt. The hour of vengeance had come.

Dupin did not strike yet. He found sweet to contemplate the agony of his enemy. . . . He thought of torturing the man. . . . The fellow must suffer. . . .

From loss of blood the German officer suddenly fainted, and Dupin found himself kneeling over the enemy, bathing his wounds, stopping his blood, nursing him as a brother. . . .

Again shrapnel burst. The German artillery was already shelling the conquered trenches. Ready for a new fight, Dupin, before he left the wounded officer, wrapped him in a blanket, left him his own water bottle. A last time he looked at him with a sad but proud smile and said:

"No, we are not the same race. We cannot do the same things."

And they were his last words, for a bullet went through his heart, and, still smiling, but this time very sweetly, Dupin went to meet the beloved ones.

. . . .

The above story was accompanied by the following letter:

DEAR MR. EDITOR:

Just fancy the shelling of the trenches and a little French officer trying to keep up the morale (excellent, I should say) of his men, to teach them the contempt of death, or, rather, to show that he is not in that respect inferior to them.

Fancy that same officer reading your Vive La France Number of *Life* and translating it to his men, then looking at your contest proposition, and finding very funny to fill his fountain pen and write on the first scraps of paper he can procure a very short story.

The author has not the boldness to say that his story is very interesting. He knows, too, that as a Frenchman he does not speak nor write very correct English; but he has sent it to you rather because of

the originality of the thing and to show you that the French soldiers appreciate the friendship of America.

At any rate, it is a genuine story of the trenches and a souvenir of the war.

Yours most sincerely,

M. CONSTANCE.

FROM THE TRENCHES,
June 15, 1915.

PRESUMPTION OF INNOCENCE

By Lyman Bryson

INTO the judge's empty office came the attorney for the defense, followed by his client. The attorney for the defense wore belligerent hair and spectacles. His manner was more upright and simple than his speech, which was full of guile. His client was heavy, of the ugly fatness often characteristic of ward politicians, porcine, grossly genial. They had come to escape the gaping crowd The attorney was recovering from his four-hour address to the jury. Sweat stood under his upstanding hair, and he wiped his wrists with a limp handkerchief.

"Honest John" looked at his lawyer with dull admiration. "Tom, that was a great speech." Then, as if this might be too humble praise for a politician to give his hireling, he added: "Best you ever made."

Tom Jenison made no reply. When he was tired there was a quality of frankness in his eyes as if cleverness had been assumed for business purposes.

"How long will they be out?" asked Honest John, thinking of the twelve who were debating in a nearby

room on sending him to the penitentiary for stealing public money.

"How should I know?" Johnson spoke petulantly.

The politician sat quietly, his fat hands folded above the top of his trousers on his negligee shirt. He was thinking that generous public sentiment might avail little with the twelve men now busy with his destiny. He sighed tremulously.

"You're not worried, are you?"

"No—guess not. I'm all right."

The composure of the politician began to desert him. He flushed and sighed and slapped at flies. His jaw relaxed and slid down. His hands trembled.

"Tom," he began, "what are the chances?"

"I don't know. Scared?"

"I'm a little nervous. That's all."

Jenison had loved the fight for its own sake. Spectators supposed he defended Honest John only to earn his huge hire, but that had not been all his motive. It had not occurred to him before that his client was not as courageous as himself. He supported the "presumption of innocence" and pitted himself against machinery of prosecutor and court. But if his client was a coward his fight seemed suddenly unworthy.

Honest John's puffy eyes filled with tears. "You've been a good friend to me, Tom."

"Oh, cut that."

"Yes, you have. I appreciate it."

Jenison, looking at him, wondered that he could ever have thought this man a friend or worth an effort to save. The wretched face sickened him.

"You're the only man who knows how I feel." His client was trying to explain his collapse. "I can't face guilty. I know you'd keep up the fight as long as I kept up the money"—his attorney winced—"but I couldn't stand another trial. I'm ready for 'em."

"Ready? How?"

"I've got it here." Honest John tapped his chest, then drew out a narrow pill box.

Contempt came back into Jenison's eyes. "What are you telling me for? Go tell some one who'd care."

"I don't know what you mean, Tom."

"Oh, yes, you do. You'd never take that stuff. You haven't the nerve. You're stalling for sympathy."

The politician turned to an ice-water stand and dropped two tablets into a glass of water. He said with tremulous bravado, "All right—here goes."

"You might as well drink it," answered the attorney. "God knows you're guilty. You'll pay for it some time."

The glass went halfway to Honest John's lips and then back to the stand. "I think—I'll wait."

"I thought so. You'll wait until you're behind bars, and then you'll wish you'd taken your medicine." Jenison spoke as if it had been his professional advice to his client to drink the potion. "It takes a man to quit when the game's up. I suppose in a way I'm as dishonest as you, but there's a chance for me to clean up, because I'm not afraid. If I thought the name helping you has given me would stick, I'd be glad to take your poison."

They heard a shuffling of feet in the courtroom.

"There's an officer announcing that they've reached a verdict," said Jenison. He looked his client in the eyes and added, "I hope it's guilty!"

"Why—I don't—what's the matter? I'll pay you."

Jenison blazed. "Yes, you'll pay! It's all money to you! Do you think if I'd known you for a coward I'd have made this fight? I hate myself now to think I ever took your money!"

His client looked at him in stupid silence.

"And let me tell you something else. You're the last thief I'll work for. I'm done with keeping your kind out of jail." Huge self-disgust overwhelmed him. "I'll never take another cent of crook's money as long as I live, so help me God!"

They heard the slow procession of the jury filing into the court to deliver the speedy verdict. Jenison felt his soul crawling with shame. A convulsive

sigh made him turn. Honest John had raised the glass to his lips. His eyes bulged with fear, and he spilled half the liquid on his shirt. Before Jenison could reach him he had swallowed it. Horror held the attorney for an instant, then he burst through the doorway into the courtroom.

A lank man in the jury box smiled as he entered. That meant "Not guilty." Without noticing the attorney's ghastly excitement the judge said, "If the respondent will return the verdict will be delivered."

Jenison controlled himself and stood straight.

"If your honour please," he said, "if your honour please"—he could only point through the doorway at Honest John's body straddled in a chair—"the respondent has delivered his own verdict."

A MEXICAN VIVANDIÈRE

By H. C. Washburn

NIGHT had fallen on the third day at Vera Cruz, and from navy headquarters the commanding officer, his orders snapping like wireless, was directing the clean-up of snipers.

"Lawrence," he said, "you'll find six machine-guns —buried in boxes—backyard of No. 17 Avenida Cortes."

As Lieutenant Lawrence left headquarters with his squad Ensign McHenry came in and reported.

"McHenry, you're next. This is Gonzales, who knows where you can round up Fernando Diaz. Get Diaz to-night."

McHenry started at once with Gonzales, listening to his flood of directions. The Mexican smiled in spite of himself at the American's burst of speed, but kept up with him easily. They turned corners into filthy by-streets leading to the market space.

At the entrance to a dark alley Gonzales stepped aside.

"After you, *señor.*"

When the white uniform entered the shadow of an

awning "Gonzales" whipped out his revolver and fired pointblank into the officer's back. Flinging away his weapon, he ran to No. 17 Calle de Zamora and whistled.

"Pava, Pava, *ven aca!* I have shot an American officer! The marines are hunting for our machine-guns. I said 'Avenida Cortes,' but that dog, Vicente, who betrayed us, will lead the Americans here."

"Let them come," said La Pava. She bolted the door as he stepped in. "What name did you give?"

"Emilio Gonzales."

"Listen, Fernando. Don't stay a minute. Let me think. What if I cut your head, a very little, so?" He winced under the knife, and she kissed him. "See, it bleeds enough on this bandage, which will hide your face. Quick! To the Military Hospital! Sleep there, safe among hundreds of our wounded. Go!"

Meanwhile Vicente, the informer, had followed Diaz. Hearing the shot and finding McHenry wounded, he scurried to headquarters. The news went to Lawrence, who took his squad "on the double" to Calle de Zamora. Rifle butts shattered the door, and Lawrence, automatic in hand, led the men in with fixed bayonets.

La Pava, the beautiful *Azteca,* stood facing the bright steel, a thin wisp of smoke drifting from her cigarette.

"*Buenas noches, señor*?"

"You have six machine-guns. Where are they?" Lawrence looked at his wrist watch. "I give you three minutes to answer."

La Pava had faced death before. A crack shot, riding in advance of Villa's army, she had drawn the enemy's fire, had stolen plans, food, money. She had sold herself to the opposing general and learned his strategy. She was a scout, a spy, a harlot—a patriot. Now she gazed innocently, admiringly, at the young lieutenant. His men, fascinated, unconsciously lowered their rifles.

"*Señor*," she pleaded, "you will do me a great wrong if you shoot, for I have no guns. Some one has lied. Search and you will see."

The marines turned the place inside out.

When Lawrence asked La Pava to take him into the courtyard she showed no hesitation, and his flashlight told him the ground had not been disturbed.

Stooping over, he caught the gleam of a knife, and in the same breath twisted it out of her fingers.

"You are quick, *señor*. But some day I will get you—you who would not take my word."

The sergeant returned and reported, "I can find nothing, sir." Then, seeing the knife, he added, "Put her in irons, sir?"

Lawrence knew her breed; she would be flattered by handcuffs and would consider him a weakling.

"No, sergeant. The lady will walk with me."

Through the streets to prison, wafting a powerful scent of perfumed powder, she walked at Lawrence's side, using her eyes with that dazzling effect known only to women of the tropics.

He would confront her with Vicente, Lawrence thought, but as the battlements of Ulloa Castle came in sight, the "Place of Executions" suggested another idea.

"Halt!" He formed a firing platoon and blindfolded the prisoner. Thinking of Vicente's story of the guns, he asserted, as if he meant it, "With my own eyes, during the fighting, I saw your gun boxes taken from the arsenal. Where are they now?"

La Pava gave no answer. She folded her arms and held her head proudly.

"Ready! . . . Aim! . . ." Lawrence raised the muzzle of the sergeant's gun; the men, following this lead, aimed high.

"*Squad*——"

It was too much even for La Pava. She dropped to her knees.

"Wait, *señor!* I will tell all, on one so small condition—that you spare the life of Emilio Gonzales. If not—you can kill me. On your word as an officer save him, and let me see him, and by the Blessed Virgin I will tell you the truth."

"Where is this man?"

"He is in the Military Hospital."

"I will do all I can for Gonzales—I'll take you to him. Now, where are the guns?"

"They are buried in the patio—in *front* of my house."

Even then she smiled.

"Remember," he warned, removing the blindfold, "if you have lied, you will be shot. Sergeant, look for them; report to me at the hospital."

As the men marched off Vicente, the ubiquitous, who had trailed La Pava, emerged from the shadow of a doorway. La Pava, whom nothing seemed to startle, sneered at him. Lawrence gripped his automatic, recognized Vicente, and thereupon wiped the sweat from his forehead.

"*Señor*," whined the beast, "her lover's name is not Gonzales, but Diaz, the traitor." La Pava glared at him murderously. "It was Diaz," Vicente added with unction, "who shot the officer in the back."

"You gave me your word——" she began, turning to Lawrence.

"To save 'Emilio Gonzales,'" he reminded her.

"True, my captain, alas!" Her black lashes drooped over a message of love. "But you will set me free?"

"When I see the guns."

Furious, she sprang at Vicente, who stepped back. Haughtily she faced him and spoke shrilly in an

Indian dialect. Despite this, her manner reassured Lawrence. Apparently, she was in a mad rage. In reality, she was telling Vicente to take the underground passage from Ulloa Castle to the hospital and warn Diaz. "Do this," she was saying, "and I'll see no more of Fernando. You will have me—you alone—for life."

She ended with what seemed a torrent of invective. Vicente played his part—with his heart afire, he seemed to Lawrence merely scornful.

"*Hasta la vista, señor.*" Vicente, triumphant, sauntered toward the castle.

"Ugh!" said La Pava, with deep loathing. "He is but carrion. Because I do not give myself to him he would destroy his rival." She shrugged her shoulders. "Will you take me to the hospital?"

"We are going there now."

"I am very tired," she sighed, leaning against him. "I grow faint."

They walked slowly, Lawrence giving her the support of his arm. Finally, nearing the hospital, they turned into a plaza where the street lamp had been shot down.

In a flash La Pava swung under his arm, drew his pistol, wrenched herself away, and covered him.

"Ah! You are not so quick this time. Don't move! You Americans say you will shoot, and you do not shoot." She fired twice, rapidly, over his

head. "But I have still four shots, and I am a *Mexican.*"

A mounted figure, leading a second horse, whirled up and reined in with a jolt. Fernando Diaz showed his white teeth, smiling cordially, as he took the automatic from his mistress and levelled it at Lawrence.

"What say you, *querida?* I finished Vicente. Shall I do away with this *gringo?*"

La Pava mounted as Diaz spoke.

"Let him live," she said, "for he is a brave man. "*Adios, señor!* The machine-guns are safe through the lines. Take my advice, *teniente*, and never trust a woman——"

Diaz's spurs dug deep, and sparks flew from the cobbles.

"—unless," La Pava laughed back through the darkness, "unless, *señor*, she loves you."

MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT

By Carrie Seever

LIZZIE was sitting in a corner counting her money. "Thirty-five, Kitty, thirty-five cents." When Lizzie's mother was away, washing, she made her kitten her confidant. "Talk about mamma'll be s'prised when she gits this birthday present, My-i! Third one I'm givin' her—when I was five I gave her peanut candy; only she didn't come home till the peanuts were picked out. Second time I gave her a blue hair ribbon; blue looks nice on my red hair. Now I'm seven—twice seven an' I won't have these freckles an' long skirt'll cover my skinny legs, an'," she continued, getting up and trying to stand dignifiedly, "my name'll be Elizabeth. Then I'll give mamma a' album! S'long, Kitty."

Out of the door she skipped, and down the alley toward the market. She forgot about the market when she reached the corner of the alley, for there stood a cart loaded with clocks, vases, jewellery, everything to satisfy one's birthday wish—even an album.

Lizzie joined the crowd that had gathered to hear what the owner of these articles had to say. She listened a moment and then danced for joy—the man, who seemed to be all stomach and voice, was actually inviting them to take a twenty-five dollar watch for five cents.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," said the stomach and voice, "any article on this counter for five cents—every piece o' chewing gum wins something. You want to try, mister? Now, folks, watch him read the name o' one o' these handsome presents from the slip o' paper 'round that gum. Gold-handled umbreller? Here you are. Who's goner win the other one? Nothin' faky. That's right, try your luck"—to a man who was edging to the front. "Diamond stud? You're lucky—only a few more diamond studs left. Next! Any one else? Don't stop 'cause you won a' umbreller. That's it. Watcher got now? Gold bracelet? Five rubies and four emeralds in it, ladies and gents."

Lizzie began to realize that she wasn't dreaming—three prizes gone already!

"Lady, don't you want this linen tablecloth? Fifteen dollars retail. Or this album that plays music when you're lookin' at your loved ones?"

Lizzie gasped—there was only one album. "I want to win the album," she shouted.

"Come right up with your nickel. Here's a gal

knows a good thing even if she did swallow two teeth."

Had this remark been made about Lizzie's teeth at another time she would have fired a red-headed retort, but now she thought of only the album.

She exchanged her five pennies for the gum, and with trembling fingers unrolled the tissue paper and let the stomach and voice read the name from the slip of paper—"Lead pencil," was announced.

Poor Lizzie's heart sank, and the stomach and voice was telling the crowd that there were a few pencils in the lot, and showed them a box containing five pencils.

At this Lizzie cheered up—she decided that if no one else won those pencils and she was unlucky five more times she would still have five cents left with which to win the album.

She won five more pencils, had given a last look at the last five pennies, unrolled the slip of paper and given it to her nearest neighbour to read—"lead pencil," was read.

"Since they ain't no more pencils I'll take the album," announced Lizzie triumphantly.

"Got more, sissy," said the stomach and voice, taking a few from his pocket and placing them in the box, handing one to Lizzie.

The crowd jeered and left. Lizzie was too dazed to go, and, sitting on a soapbox in the alley, stared

at the album. She heard the shrill whistle the stomach and voice gave, and a few minutes later saw the winners appear, returning the articles they had won. She wondered why they did this, and, as a new crowd was coming, drew closer to the cart.

She listened again to the same harangue and saw the umbrella winner take another chance. She gave a start when he thundered "umbrella"—she saw through the performance, and her cheeks glowed with indignation.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she screamed, "this is a fake business—that man won a' umbreller an' brought it back, an' so did the other man." By this time she was out of reach of the stomach and voice, who threatened to knock two more teeth down her throat. But Lizzie's voice was not out of reach, and the crowd could hear her yelling, "Everybody else wins penny lead pencils." The crowd laughed and left.

Lizzie waited for the next crowd, and, coming from her hiding-place, gave them the same information.

After the crowd had gone the stomach and voice caught Lizzie, who, while trying to free herself from his grasp, bumped her lip, and the blood oozed from her tender gum.

"P'liceman, p'liceman, help!" she screamed.

Seeing the people in the neighbourhood coming to

Lizzie's rescue, the stomach and voice promised to return her money if she would keep quiet.

"I'm goner tell 'em all you knocked my teeth out 'less you gi' me the album," snapped Lizzie.

"A' right," meekly answered the stomach and voice, who had been collared by this time, but was released when the men received Lizzie's invitation to come up the alley and see her album.

"Good-bye, mister—thanks awfully for the gum an' pencils, too," and away she ran, the album in her arms.

When in the room, she locked the door for fear the album would be taken away.

"Kitty, look! A' album, and me on'y seven. They'll just have to call me Elizabeth, freckles an' legs an' all."

RED BLOOD OR BLUE

By E. Montgomery

DEAR LOU:

"This is the last letter I shall write to you, for to-morrow I begin the final stage of my transition. At four o'clock I shall become a lady. To be sure, you and I will know that I am only an imitation, but with an eighteen-carat setting every one else will take me for the real thing.

"Lou, I've been wondering how many generations it will take to make a real lady. My daughter perhaps will be one, and if not, then her daughter; but I will always be an imitation.

"My grandmother did day's work to give my mother a schooling, and my mother helped in the shop so that I could have dancing lessons before I was six. I can't disappoint them, and I can't shirk my duty toward my children yet to be born. They stretch out their hands to me, asking I know not what, so to-morrow I give them a gentleman father. Yes, Lou, he is a little man, not much higher than my shoulder, and he is fat and jaded and old; but he has a name which can unlock the holy of holies in New York, and I may enter it with him, for I shall be his wife.

"They tell me I should be proud of my conquest,

and I am, for it is not my gold alone which has ensnared him, but myself; and I am beautiful, Lou. It is three years since you have seen me, and I grow lovelier every day.

"I am tall, divinely tall; slender of hip and full of bosom, with all the promise of ripening womanhood. And to-morrow my maidenhood is to be sacrificed on the altar of holy (?) matrimony, and the metamorphosis will be complete. I shall be a lady.

"Oh, Lou, why wasn't your father a gentleman? He might have been a rake, a roué, a gambler—anything, so long as he was a gentleman. But he is only my father's boyhood friend, and still a village carpenter.

"You had to work your way through college, and my father rolled me through on the almighty dollar.

"And yet I think for all my education there is something radically wrong with me. I am that hybrid thing, 'a lady in the making, an imitation lady.' And what troubles me most is the thought that perhaps I am only an imitation woman also.

"My ancestors had red blood in their veins, and my descendants' blood will be blue; but in my veins there is nothing but water.

"Listen, Lou; to-day I shut myself in my room and scrubbed the floor of my private bath. Down on my knees I went with soap and brush and scrubbed for all there was in me, and when I finished my back ached horribly, and still the floor was far from clean; and I the granddaughter of a woman who has scrubbed acres of floors, and could do it yet, though she is almost eighty.

"Oh, Lou, Lou, I wish I had dared to run away with you that last night three years ago. Do you remember—the moon, the gate that creaked, the smell of the dew on the grass, the chirping of the insects—a heavenly midsummer night, made for love—as we were made for love?

"I had to stand on tiptoe when you kissed me. And your dear eyes were filled with anguish when we parted. You told me I would find you there when I needed you. And, oh! I need you now!

"How many generations of our children's children would it take to make a lady, Lou?

"Everything is wrong with the world to-night. My head hurts and I can't think.

"See! Here on my desk I have a time-table, a brave blue time-table, which tells me that I am only four short hours away from you, and that I still have ample time to pack and catch the midnight train.

"If I join you, you need never see this letter—and if I do not, then you *must* not see it. I will burn it.

"This is my hour, my future is in my own hands. It is all a question of courage: my ancestors had it, my descendants will have it; but have I?

"Your unhappy

"RUTH."

The wedding of a steel king's daughter into one of New York's oldest families is worth a column on the front page of any paper. Pictures of the happy couple stared out of every edition.

The weary housemaid spread one on the floor

as she cleaned the disordered room her young mistress had left behind.

She gathered a little pile of ashes from the hearth and dumped them on the paper. They completely covered the smiling faces of the bride and groom—not that it mattered, for the ashes were cold.

THE IMPULSIVE MR. JIGGS

By Roger Brown

MARATHON JIGGS approached the day-clerk. "Is Mr. George Jones here?" he inquired.

"He is registered here, but he's out at present," replied the clerk. "Would you like to leave any message?"

"Thank you, I believe I will," said Jiggs, reaching for the hotel stationery. He hastily scribbled a note, left it, sans envelope, at the desk, and took his departure.

About an hour later a large, overbearing woman of the superdreadnought type steamed majestically to the desk, a small and timid-looking individual in her wake. After taking the mail that had accumulated in the box she stalked imposingly to the elevator, accompanied by the timid person, who, by his conduct, appeared to be her husband.

When the couple got to their room Mrs. George Jones sat down and scanned the family mail. As she read, the colour flooded her expansive face like a sunset, then receded, leaving her chalky white with rage. Her unfortunate spouse cowered in a corner.

Rising to her feet in all the majesty of her five-feet-eleven, she thrust a note into Jones's hand. "Read that!" she commanded hoarsely.

With amazement and fear alternately expressed in his weak countenance, Jones read the following:

"DEAR GEORGE:

Why don't you let me know when you get to town? I expected you yesterday. Call me up, the same old number, and we will have a time to-night.

"Yours as ever,

"MARY."

"You roué!" stormed Mrs. Jones. "I shall institute divorce proceedings immediately. To think *you* have been leading a double life! You may expect a visit from my lawyer!" The door slammed behind her as Jones sank dazedly into a chair.

As she flounced out the door of the hotel Marathon Jiggs again came to the desk. "Did Mr. Jones get my note?" he asked.

"No, but his wife did," replied the clerk.

"His wife?" came in gasp from Jiggs. "*His wife?* Who—let me see the register, please."

He hastily scanned the list of guests until he came to Jones's name. "'Mr. George K. Jones and wife, Chicago, Illinois,'" he read incredulously, "and I thought it was George H. Jones of Pittsburg. What if his wife—I must see him immediately," and he hurried to the elevator.

As Jones sat in his room, bewildered at the events of the past hour, a knock startled him out of his reverie. "Come in!" he called uneasily, expecting his wife's lawyer to appear. The sight of the homely but benevolent face of Jiggs was a distinct relief.

"My name is Jiggs," stated the caller—"Marathon Jiggs, nicknamed 'Mary' at the university. I left a note for a friend of mine whom I thought was staying here, named George H. Jones. I understand that your wife got it by mistake. It is quite possible that she read it and misunderstand the matter; therefore I have come to clear it up, if such is the case, and exonerate you."

Jones drew up a chair. "Sit down," he said, "and we will talk this over. My wife has just gone out to see a lawyer about a divorce. You have already done me a favour; now what," taking out a checkbook, "will you take to keep quiet about the facts?"

TOMASO AND ME

By Graham Clark

I CAN'T talk good American way. In the carpet factory where I worked the Polacks, Sheenies, and Wops talked any old way, and I learnt to say American like them. But maybe I talk good enough to tell about Tomaso and me.

Tomaso comed from Italy. For that the peoples in this country calls him a Wop. I comed from Albania. Never did my father lets a Wop come to our house, for most Albanese hates the Wops. But first day I seen Tomaso I stopped hating *all* the Wops. He comed to work in the factory, setting patterns like me. His eyes looked big and soft like our little dog's. His voice was like the big strings on my father's harp when he pulls his fingers over them gentle like. He was like American fellas—tall with a nice head. His neck, where the hair comed down black and shiny, was like a young girl's.

When I first seen Tomaso he was nineteen. But some ways I was an old woman, for the hunger that pulls your waist in tight and the cold that makes your blood black comed many tim[illegible] to[illegible] d

many times to my bunch, for in our house was many kids, and my father couldn't makes enough money to buy plenty of food. So I went to work in the factory before the law lets me. The superintendent fixed it so I got the job all right. I said I was older than I was.

Always I thought about the bunch at home, till I seen Tomaso. Then I thought in my mind of him —and me. One day, soon after Tomaso comed to the factory, my mother said to me: "Maria, you're big enough to marry. In the old country you would have a husband. Your father will go to Brooklyn and tell your aunts to gets you a husband. In Brooklyn there's plenty of Albanese. You will marry one of your own peoples."

I said no word back. In my mind I was thinking I would marry only Tomaso. On Sunday my father went to Brooklyn to speak with my aunt for a husband for me. We lived in New Jersey, in an old shack like a pig's. Dirt and bad smell was everywhere. Always I wanted to live American way; but how could we gets clean with nanny-goats and chickens coming in the house like peoples?

Two weeks, and my aunt comed from Brooklyn with a guy. He looked like a rat. His hair was thin like lace, and you could see the yellow skin in spots, greasy like. He was just as high as my little brother Stephano, fourteen. And he was twenty-five!

"Here's Dimiter," my aunt said. "He's a nice fella. He drives a team for Brooklyn and gets good money. His father has a house in the old country. Each year he'll send Dimiter wine and oil."

My father gived Dimiter his hand to kiss. My mother said he was better than us, Albanese way. I said no word. At dinner my father said: "Maria, you are engage to Dimiter. He will be my son. I'll give him one hundred dollars and kill the old nanny-goat for the wedding. All the Albanese and some of the Wops and Polacks will come and make presents."

In my mind I was asking, "Where will you gets the hundred dollars?" I looked at Dimiter. He showed all crooked teeth when he laughed. In my mind I was thinking I would likes to spit in his face. To my mother I said: "I am too young to marry. Wait a year."

"A year!" My mother hollered and hit the table. "A fella don't wants a girl if she's old. You'll marry Dimiter now."

Something inside me got hard like a stone. I hated my mother. The whole bunch. Why should I marry the rat? Why shouldn't I pick my own fella, American way?"

"When will I come to marry?" Dimiter asked my father.

My father said: "Sunday we'll speak to the priest. Next Sunday will be the wedding."

Up I jumps. Two weeks and me married to the rat? What about Tomaso? Two days ago he had walked with me from the factory. At the bridge we stopped. "You're my little sweetheart," Tomaso said, soft like. His eyes was shiny like dew. I got red as a pepper and runned away. But in my mind I was thinking I loved Tomaso. Sure, I would not tell my father, for the Albanese hates the Wops.

So I remembered Tomaso's eyes and voice. And I said: "I won't marry this guy." My father's shoulders went up high. My mother got mad like diavolo. The rat was yellow like sick. My aunt said: "Maria's just a young girl. Give her time for thinking over."

"No thinking over," my father hollered. "I give Dimiter my daughter. Two weeks will be the wedding."

My mother laughed with her tongue out, Albanese way. More than ever she looked like our old nanny-goat. I stood higher than her and said to her face: "If I am a little girl I will stay home with the other kids and my father to feed me. If I am a woman and works for the bunch I will find my own fella, American way."

My father made to hit me, but I runned upstairs and shut the door hard. My aunt and the rat went away. All day I put nothing in my mouth. I said no word.

Next day I set the patterns wrong. The boss sweared. In the evening Tomaso walked with me. "Why are you to cry?" he asked. His voice was like all his peoples was dead. I told him about the rat. He put his head high and his eyes looked like two pieces of fire in the dark. His lips got tight over his teeth and I seen him make hard fists.

Then he comed close. His arm was by my arm. In my mind I said I would like to put my head on his shoulder and my lips to his lips. But Albanese girls don't do that way till they're married.

"I hates Albanese! I hates Italians! I hates the old country!" said Tomaso. His voice was like a knife. "They makes their girls to marry any old guy. I likes American way—a fella and a girl to love and then marry, and other peoples stay out of it."

"I will do American way," I said. Tomaso's hair rubbed my cheek; I got warm and happy. Only Tomaso and me. Just us in the world.

"And *I* will do American way," Tomaso said in my hair. It was dark, but I seen his face, warm like the sunshine. Before I knowed, Tomaso's lips held mine tight. Sure, it was wicked. Don't the priest tell you so? But how could I help it? Tomaso was so strong—and we loved together.

"We'll get married American way," Tomaso said, soft like. His face was like fur on my face. "I have two hundred dollars from my last job. My fat

is not a poor man, and I am his only child. Shall it be that way, my sweetheart?"

Sure, there was a big scrap at our shack next day when I runned off with a Wop. But Tomaso and me should worry! We got married American way. I stopped the factory and made my house nice. One month married, and comed my father and mother to see me.

"Ta, like Americanos!" my mother said. But she didn't laugh with her tongue out. She wanted to be good. I was her first child. My father gived his hand for me to kiss. "Bless my daughter," he said. Then he gived his hand for Tomaso to kiss, and made tears to run out of his eyes. Then he borrowed ten dollars from Tomaso and everything got all right.

About 600 words

THICKER THAN WATER

By Ralph Henry Barbour and George Randolph Osborne

DOCTOR BURROUGHS, summoned from the operating room, greeted his friend from the doorway: "Sorry, Harry, but you'll have to go on without me. I've got a case on the table that I can't leave. Make my excuses, will you?"

"There's still an hour," replied the visitor. "I'm early and can wait."

"Then come in with me." Markham followed to the operating room, white-walled, immaculate, odorous of stale ether and antiseptics. On the table lay the sheeted form of a young girl. Only the upper portion of the body was visible, and about the neck wet, red-stained bandages were bound. "A queer case," said the surgeon. "Brought here from a sweat-shop two hours ago. A stove-pipe fell and gashed an artery in her neck. She's bleeding to death. Blood's supposed to be thicker than water, but hers isn't, poor girl. If it would clot she might pull through. Or I could save her by transfusion, but we can't find any relatives, and there's mighty little time."

The attending nurse entered. "The patient's

brother is here," she announced, "and is asking to see her."

"Her brother!" The surgeon's face lighted. "What's he like?"

"About twenty, Doctor; looks strong and healthy."

"See him, Nurse. Tell him the facts. Say his sister will die unless he'll give some blood to her. Or wait!" He turned to Markham. "Harry, you do it! Persuasion's your line. Make believe he's a jury. But put it strong, old man! And hurry! Every minute counts!"

The boy was standing stolidly in the waiting-room, only the pallor of his healthy skin and the anxiety of his clear eyes hinting the strain. Markham explained swiftly, concisely.

"Doctor Burroughs says it's her one chance," he ended.

The boy drew in his breath and paled visibly.

"You mean Nell'll die if some one don't swap his blood for hers?"

"Unless the blood she has lost is replaced——"

"Well, quit beefin'," interrupted the other roughly. "I'm here, ain't I?"

When he entered the operating room the boy gave a low cry of pain, bent over the form on the table, and pressed his lips to the white forehead. When he looked up his eyes were filled with tears. He nodded to the surgeon.

Doggedly, almost defiantly, he submitted himself, but when the artery had been severed and the blood was pulsing from his veins to the inanimate form beside him his expression changed to that of abject resignation. Several times he sighed audibly, but as if from mental rather than bodily anguish. The silence became oppressive. To Markham it seemed hours before the surgeon looked up from his vigil and nodded to the nurse. Then:

"You're a brave lad," he said cheerfully to the boy. "Your sacrifice has won!"

The boy, pale and weak, tried to smile. "Thank God!" he muttered. Then, with twitching mouth: "Say, Doc, how soon do I croak?"

"Why, not for a good many years, I hope." The surgeon turned frowningly to Markham. "Didn't you explain that there was no danger to him?"

"God! I'm afraid I didn't!" stammered Markham. "I was so keen to get his consent. Do you mean that he thought——"

The surgeon nodded pityingly and turned to the lad. "You're not going to die," he said gently. "You'll be all right to-morrow. But I'm deeply sorry you've suffered as you must have suffered the past hour. You were braver than any of us suspected!"

"Aw, that's all right," muttered the boy. "She's my sister, ain't she?"

THE OLD GROVE CROSSING

By Albert H. Coggins

MORE mother's tears, and the fourth prisoner discharged! The judge began to fear permanent softening of the heart and therefore took grim satisfaction when the name Timothy McMenamin, alias "One Eyed Johnny," was called and there shambled into the dock a chronic old jail-bird whose appearance left no remote possibility of the further painful exercise of discretionary powers.

Silence reigned while his Honour scanned the card. From highway robbery and safe cracking the record of Timothy ran the entire gamut of inspiring action, and by some subtle mental telepathy the crowd knew that he had indeed been a man of parts. But now Timothy was in the sere and yellow and had fallen on evil days. The Judge read aloud from the present indictment, to which Timothy had sullenly pleaded "Guilty."

"Soliciting alms upon the public thoroughfare and vagrancy."

Then fraught with deep agrieve, his "Why—Timothy!" caught the levity of the crowded courtroom.

The Judge pursed pondering lips. Then a playful thought was his.

"Are you represented by counsel, Timothy?"

Timothy was not.

"Mr. Wallace!"

If a room may be said to gasp, that courtroom gasped.

William R. K. Wallace!

The rubber rattle of an impromptu assignment, usually thrown the teething tyro, given to the very leader of the bar!

His Honour was indeed facetious.

Wallace, engaged in an undertone confab with a court clerk, looked up, converted the instinctive gesture of impatience into one of good-natured acquiescence, and stepped forward. The crowd's tribute to supremacy: a hush so distinct as to seem almost audible.

The Judge assumed due solemnity.

"Mr. Wallace, we have here a knight-errant of most distinguished parts. He has sojourned in many public institutions. A most cosmopolitan citizen and of unquestioned social standing; having met some of the best wardens in the country. Some twenty years ago he committed a little indiscretion up in Montour County, dwelling there subsequently for a period of six months. That being your own native heath, Mr. Wallace, would it not be chivalric

and neighbourly upon your part to volunteer your professional services!"

The crowd enjoyed the speech and scene. In all his years at the bar no one had ever seen William R. K. Wallace nonplussed. Now his Honour had succeeded in "putting one over" on him. His "Certainly, your Honour," was but instinctive. Of the purport of a possible plea Wallace had no remote idea. So he turned and indulged in a critically professional survey of his client.

As he took in the sullen figure, unshaven, unkempt, and hard, the forbidding aspect painfully accentuated by the patch over one sightless eye—what came of a sudden to the attorney? Masterful and adroit though he was, did he feel the utter futility of it all? It certainly seemed that Wallace—William R. K. Wallace—trembled through an acute second of actual stage fright, the horrible unnerved instant when the mind gropes and finds no substance of thought. Yes, his Honour had scored.

Then, himself again, he addressed the Court. Quietly, almost conversationally and entirely away from the subject at hand; but this was Wallace, and no one stayed him.

"I was born in Centre County, your Honour, not Montour, but so close to the county line that your Honour's impression is to all intents and purposes correct. So close, in fact, that right down the drive-

way, scarcely a hundred yards away, one could step into Montour County by crossing the railroad tracks, for *they* were the county line at that corner."

Then for a few seconds he indulged in memory's visualization of early days. Still in a desultory way he continued:

"We lived there contentedly, your Honour, a good father, a sainted mother, myself a grown boy, and—and a baby sister. . . . She had come late. . . . Perhaps that's one reason we made so much of her. Just turned two she was, and a little bundle of winsomeness. . . . She gathered to herself all the glinting morning sunlight of the mountain tops."

People stirred restlessly. This was not like Wallace. True, he sometimes indulged in sentiment before a jury and ofttime moved the sturdy yeomanry to free some red-handed rascal regardless of the facts. But to parade his own early rural days and his little sister—well, it only indicated that he was sore pressed.

But now the discerning could note the least little shade of resonance and purpose. And, too, he half turned from time to time toward the man in the dock.

"Through that valley the magnificent Blue Diamond Express went thundering by, bearing its burden of the prosperous and contented. . . . But then there were other trains, the long slow freights that

wended their way, laden, down the valley. They, too, carried passengers . . . on the couplings . . . cramped up underneath . . . or smuggled into the corner of a box car. These were of the underworld—the discontented and the disinherited. The tramp, the outcast . . . perchance the criminal, making his getaway from city to city."

He glanced keenly, quickly; his client was beginning to emerge from stolid indifference.

"The Old Grove Crossing, as they called it, was not so well guarded twenty years ago as now, your Honour. And one day this little two-year-old took it into her baby head to roam. Perhaps childish fancy paints the wild flowers on a distant hill brighter, perhaps some errant butterfly winged its random way across the tracks—who knows?

"At all events, the wanderlust seized her tiny feet and she had come just so near Montour County that she had but to cross the far track to have completely changed jurisdiction. And there she stood, for a big, slow-moving train of empties occupied that track. Puzzled? Perhaps a little; but still it was a matter of no moment. . . . Neither, your Honour, was the big, thundering Blue Diamond. Why should it be? There existed in all this world no such thing as either evil or fear. . . . And so she waited, transfixed only by wonderment as the monster thing bore down on her. . . . I'm aware,

your Honour, that in every well-appointed melodrama the hero always appears at the proper instant. . . . But in real life sometimes—well, we *have* tried cases in our courts, the purpose of which was to determine the dollar value of that for which there can be no recompense—a baby life crushed out."

He paused for an impressive second.

"And this was my baby sister.

"Oh, yes, they saw her . . . when less than two hundred feet away. Along that straightaway the Montour Valley Railroad Company, in its corporate wisdom, shot its Blue Diamond seventy miles an hour. The engineer was the best man on the line —and he fainted dead away. That's what their best man did. He had a baby of his own. Instinct made him throw on the brakes . . . as well, a child's bucket of sand on the tracks! . . . Down, down it came, shrieking, crashing, pounding, and swirling from side to side; belching its hell of destruction and rasping its million sparks as the brakes half gripped. . . . Only one small mercy vouchsafed—by its awful might and momentum—instant death!"

Dramatically Wallace passed his hand over his forehead. The Judge had done the same. So well had he played upon their emotions that he sensed to perfection the proper pause duration. . . .

"No, your Honour," he said quietly, "she did not

die. This little story of real life followed the conventional. . . . Sometimes God is as good as the dramatist. They told us the meagre details. *He* didn't; he had a pressing engagement and slipped away, resuming, I suppose, his 'reservations' on his Blue Diamond. . . . He wasn't very prepossessing, anyway, from all accounts. Any ten-twenty-thirty dramatist could have given us a more presentable, better manicured hero."

Wallace sauntered a little.

"This object that tumbled from a box car, sprawled, picked himself up, and then jumped like a cat, was, as a matter of fact, a nobody, an outcast, a crook——"

Casually, it seemed, his hand rested on the bowed shoulder of the broken old man.

"Just a one-eyed yeggman, making his way——"

He got no further. The courtroom was in an uproar and unrestrained applause ran its riotous course. There was none to check it.

His Honour, savagely surreptitious with his handkerchief, finally took command of himself and the situation.

"Mr. Wallace, the Court requires no argument in this case. We will accept the guarantee of future good conduct which you were about to offer, and, if necessary, underwrite it ourselves. . . . Sentence suspended !"

Then as the Court was adjourned and they crowded about the pair of them, counsel and client, a shouldering, demonstrative throng a dozen deep, the Judge, before retiring stilled them for a brief afterword.

"Mr. Wallace, in the matter of the—ah, of certain refreshments, in which we had rendered a mental ruling incidental to the costs thereof, we would say that ruling is hereby reversed and the—the refreshments—are on—the Court."

LOST AND FOUND

By John Kendrick Bangs

I

THE week-end was over, and Begbie had returned to town, restless, and strangely unhappy. There was within him a curious sense of something lost, and yet, now and then, the intimation of another something that seemed to be gain wholly would flash across the horizon of his reflections like a ray of sunshine attempting to penetrate a possible rift in the clouds.

He unpacked his suit-case listlessly, and compared its contents with the catalogue of his week-end needs which he always kept pasted on the inner side of the cover of his suit-case. Everything was there, from hair-brush to dinner-coat—and yet that sense of something left behind still oppressed him. A second time he went over the list and compared it with his possessions, to find that nothing was missing; and then on a sudden there flashed across his mind a full realization of what the lost object was.

"Ah!" he ejaculated with a deep sigh of relief.

"That's it! I will write at once to my hostess and ask her to return it."

Action followed the resolution, and, seating himself at his escritoire, Begbie wrote:

" The Mossmere, New York.
"August ——, 19—.

"MY DEAR MRS. SHELTON:

"Upon my return from the never-to-be-forgotten series of golden hours at Sea Cliff I find that, after the habit of the departing guest, I have left at least one of my possessions behind me. It is of value perhaps to nobody but myself, but, poor as it is, I cannot very well do without it. It is my *heart*. If by some good chance you have found it, and it is of no use to you, will you be good enough some time soon, when you have nothing better to do, to return it to me? Or, if by some good fortune you find it worth retaining, will you please tell me so, that I may know that it is in your custody and is not lying somewhere cold and neglected? It is the only one I have, and it has never passed out of my keeping before.

"Always devotedly yours,
"HARRISON BEGBIE."

II

It was on the morning of the second day after the mailing of this letter that Begbie found a dainty-hued missive lying beside his plate at the breakfast-table. It was postmarked Sea Cliff, and addressed

in the familiar handwriting of his hostess. Feverishly he tore it open, and found the following:

"Sea Cliff, August ——, 19—.

"MY DEAR MR. BEGBIE:

"What careless creatures you men are! I have found ten such articles as you describe in my house during the past ten days, and out of so vast and varied a number I cannot quite decide which one is yours. Some of them are badly cracked; some of them are battered hopelessly—only one of them is in what I should call an A1, first class, condition. I am hoping it is yours, but I do not know. In any event, on receipt of this won't you come down here at once and we can run over them together. I will meet you with the motor on the arrival of the 12:15 at Wavecrest Station.

"Meanwhile, my dear Mr. Begbie, knowing how essential a part of the human mechanism a heart truly is—*I send you mine* to take the place of the other. You may keep it until your own is returned to you.

"Always sincerely,

"MARY SHELTON.

"P. S.—Telegraph me if you will be on the 12:15."

III

Ten minutes later the following rush-message sped over the wires:

"New York, Aug.——, 19—.

"MRS. SHELTON, Sea Cliff, L. I.:

"Haven't time to wire you of arrival on 12:15. Am rushing to catch the 9:05.

"HARRISON."

YOU NEVER CAN TELL

By "B. MacArthur"

VERY dimly shone the lamps of the rickshaws; very faintly came the tap-tap of the sandals passing to and fro on the Bund. Yokohama was going to sleep, and the great liners in the bay looked dark and ghost-like against the rising moon. The three men sitting on the terrace of the Grand Hotel met here every ninth week. They were captains of three of the liners. All were Englishmen. Blackburn, who commanded a ship owned and manned by Japanese, lit his pipe and gazed out across the harbour, drawing his hand over his brow and hair.

"Same old heat," he said.

The others nodded.

Bainbridge, a slight little man with fair hair, moved restlessly.

"A week, and we'll all be at opposite corners again," he said, "none of them much cooler."

"Not bad at home now," mused Villiers, broad and silent man, with the gray eyes of a dreamer. He leaned forward, smiling slightly.

"D'ye know, it's three years next month since

I've seen th' wife. Devil of a life! And I don't see my way to getting back yet, either. No place for women, the East."

Bainbridge stared at him uneasily.

"Yes, deuce of a life," he assented, "but worse for the women, even in England. Always standing on their own legs, as it were, pinching and skimping for a chap they only see once in a couple of years. I say, y'know, it's rotten bad for them, at best."

"Quite right," said Villiers, "and it is an experience that is bound to have its effect. The strong woman will be stronger, the weak woman weaker, and the bad woman—will go under."

Blackburn smiled.

"Then we are three lucky chaps," he said, and blew a ring of smoke and looked at it rather sentimentally.

Villiers laughed.

"The queer part about it is the faith they've got. It's that which pulls them through. I believe if I wrote the wife to-night that I'd a Japanese girl in Nagasaki she'd never believe me, though she's quite sophisticated enough to be cognizant of the prevalence of that sort of thing out here. She takes the attitude that such things might happen—but not to her or hers. It's rather a potent point of view."

"It's an absurd point of view—no offence to you, old chap," said Bainbridge. "Suppose it was a fact and she had to face it—what would be her attitude?"

"It couldn't be a fact so long as she felt as she does about it," answered Villiers; "it is that which insures her being quite right in her belief."

"Oh, rot!" said Bainbridge. "You're an idealist." He took a deep drink from his tall glass. "I'll bet you if all three of us wrote home to-night in the light of remorseful confession every one of us would receive replies, next mail out, to the same effect."

"There's just one way to prove that," said Villiers, "and that's to write."

"Done!" said Bainbridge.

"Hold on, old chaps!" Blackburn knocked out the ashes from his pipe. "D'ye know you're about to play a devilish risky game? Shouldn't care to enter it myself. Luck to you, however, if you must. But both of you are taking too much for granted."

"You hold the stakes, then," said Villiers complacently. "Next trip we meet here, as per schedule, we'll have our mail first thing and rendezvous at eight for supper. If we can't read our letters aloud we can at least describe the attitude taken therein, which is the point under discussion."

"Very well," said Blackburn, "but I warn you it's a silly affair."

. . . .

Nine weeks later Blackburn, tying his tie before the mirror in his cabin, felt a curious interest in seeing his two friends as had been arranged at their previous

meeting. They would have received their mail from home even as he had received his, but it was with a thrill of satisfaction that he remembered he had not endangered his own or his wife's happiness in what he considered the mad manner of his friends.

Very promptly, then, and most serene, he appeared on the terrace and seated himself at the usual table to await their arrival.

Bainbridge presently appeared and, after greeting Blackburn, sat down and lit a pipe. They talked spasmodically. A curious tranquillity seemed to have enveloped the little man, which so held Blackburn's attention that he could think of nothing to say. They sat in silence, Blackburn mentally taking stock of his friend. All his nervousness and cynicism seemed to have left him, and his eyes, usually so furtive, looked very still and deep.

"Wonder why Villiers doesn't come along," said Blackburn at last.

Bainbridge nodded. . . . "I'll read you my letter now," he said, and in a lower voice: "By Jove, old chap, I was quite wrong, d'ye know? Never would have believed it possible any one could feel so about a chap like me."

He laid the letter on the table. "Wonderful thing that," he said; and Blackburn took it.

"Are you quite sure you want me to read this?" he asked.

"Quite," replied Bainbridge, "because—because it's changed things so—for me, you know."

Blackburn read:

"DEAR LAD:

"Something in my heart tells me this horrible thing isn't true. It can't be. Such things may happen to people, but somehow I can't feel it has happened to me and mine. But if it has—and you will begin again because your best nature still cares for me—won't you begin right now, because I love you and will try to forget. I can't write more.

"MINNIE."

When Blackburn had finished he folded it very gently and handed it to Bainbridge.

"I congratulate you, old fellow," he said gravely, and then: "Let's go up to Villiers' room and stir him up. He may be snoozing."

They rose and climbed the stairs to the room Villiers was wont to occupy during his stay in port. The door was unlocked, and after knocking and receiving no reply they entered. It was so dark at first they could see nothing. Blackburn, dimly discerning the bureau, shuffled toward it to light the gas. But before he reached it his foot struck a soft object, and simultaneously a nauseous wave of horror swept over him.

"My God! Light a match," he said.

Bainbridge did so and, stepping over the prone figure, lit the gas with trembling hands.

Villiers was quite dead. His gun lay by his side, and in a little pool of blood by his right temple a crumpled letter lay, face up.

"Nothing should be touched," said Blackburn, "until the proper steps have been taken—except——"

Bainbridge stooped and lifted the bloody page.

"Except this," he said, and, folding it carefully, put it in his wallet.

. . . .

When, many hours later, Blackburn was aboard his ship, he locked his cabin door, and Bainbridge, who had accompanied him for the purpose, spread out the sheet and read it slowly.

"My Dear Frank:

"Your rather extraordinary epistle has reached me, and I assure you it was quite unnecessary. You surely do not expect me to have lived all these years alone and to have known men as I do without realizing that I could scarcely expect you to live the life of celibate in the 'Far East.' In this strange little game of life we must take our pleasures as they come, and I have taken mine even as I have not prevented you from taking yours. Foolish boy! If you expected me to have hysterics over your self-imposed confession you may be relieved to know that I merely laughed at it. We are all in the same boat, we sinners, so why should one of us cavil at another. Cheer up and don't take life so seriously.

"Sue."

THE ESCAPE

By A. Leslie Goodwin

THE tent flap lifted and dropped. The prisoner could make out the dim outlines of a man's form.

"To be shot at sunrise, eh?"

The prisoner stirred quickly. That voice was strangely familiar to him.

The figure moved nearer. A knife flashed and the prisoner's bonds fell off.

"Follow me, and not a sound."

They crept out of the tent, past a dozing sentry, and across a dark field.

"Now," said the guide, as they straighened up in the shadow of a hedge, "a proposition, for cousins will be cousins, even in war."

He paused, looked warily around, and emitted a low chuckle.

"Six months ago," he continued, "when I was captured by your side and sentenced to be shot you rescued me, as I have you. You showed me our lines and gave me two minutes to get away. After that two minutes you were to fire, and you——"

He stopped, wheeled like a flash, but too late. A shot rang out, and another.

The two men stiffened, leaned toward each other, gasped, and dropped to the ground.

Around the corner of the hedge stepped the sentry, a smoking automatic in his hand.

"Huh!" he growled, stirring the prostrate figures with his foot. "Relatives have no business on opposite sides, anyway."

TWO LETTERS, A TELEGRAM, AND A FINALE

By H. S. Haskins

"New York, September 10.

DEAREST MARIAN:

"Is it not time to break silence? Three months have passed since we quarrelled on the eve of your departure for the mountains. I wrote twice during the first week. You did not answer. Pride forbade my risking another rebuff.

"Frequently I have been so desperate that it has consoled me to run into needless danger. Often, during the summer, I have swum out beyond the breakers when there was a heavy undertow. I have taken automobile tours by myself, speeding at seventy miles an hour over narrow roads along mountain-sides.

"These foolhardy adventures were backed by what seem to you an unaccountable desire for revenge. I pictured your face as you read an account of my death; gloated over the horror in your eyes when they scanned the ghastly details.

"I invented such news items as these: 'Blake's body was cast up on the beach, horribly gashed by the rocks'; or, 'The automobile leaped into a chasm. Blake, clinging to the wheel, was crushed into an unrecognizable mass when the car turned turtle.'

"This desire to punish you for your neglect seems a barbarous instinct or a childish whim, as you choose. But, ashamed of it as I may be, and struggle against it as I will, such a thought is often with me.

"Take this morning, for instance: alighting from the train at Jersey City, I stopped to admire the huge locomotive which has been lately put on the morning express. I laid my hand on one bulky cylinder. 'What if this monster should explode with me standing here!' I thought. 'What if one side of my face and my right arm were blown off! What would she say, my little Princess of Indifference, far away in her mountain fastness?'

"I gave imagination its head. It soon seemed as if the horrible thing had really happened. They picked me up, conscious and suffering frightfully. Before I slipped into merciful oblivion the awful truth was apparent to me—my right arm was gone and the right side of my face was terribly scalded by the blinding steam.

"Weeks grew into months. The day before the bandages were to be removed from my face I escaped from the hospital. I took a night express to Montreal. From Montreal I plunged into the wilderness, anywhere to get away from the sight of man, where, slowly and painfully, with my untrained left arm, I built a hut on the side of a mountain. Besides the rough furniture I installed a typewriter and a framed photograph of you. Just these two things with which to start life over again.

"Here I learned with difficulty to typewrite with one hand. At first it baffled me to devise some way of depressing the shift key. Then I attached a

rough contrivance for working the shift key with my foot. Finally I became fairly expert, and began to submit magazine stories, with some success.

"Often I dreamed of a footstep outside my cabin, of the swish of skirts, of a cry, and somebody rushing across the floor. Two hands, unmistakably yours, pressed my eyes—my good eye on the good side of my face and my useless eye on the useless side of my face. Then I seemed to play a gruesome hide-and-seek, twisting, turning, dodging—ever striving to keep the undamaged side of my face toward you, concealing the stricken side from your eyes.

"That's enough of such rubbish. Fancies, made morbid by your long silence, have run away with me. Forgive me. But have mercy, and write!

"I have stopped running risks in the water. I observe the legal rate of speed in my car. But I have not given up an equally hazardous adventure—loving you.

"Forever and ever yours,

"JOHN."

"Paul Smith's, Adirondacks, N. Y.,
September 14.

"MY OWN SILLY JOHN:

"Your letter gave me the shivers. Forgive me. I have been thoughtless and brutal. Your letter was so graphic, your description of your make-believe accident in the train-sheds so real, that I cannot get it out of my mind, I love you, love you, love you! I shall leave here two weeks from to-morrow. I'd leave to-night if it were not for Mother,

who is not well enough yet to travel. That fictitious cabin on the mountainside with you blinded and alone frightened me. Be careful, John; be careful, you dear, dear thing !

"Always yours,

"MARIAN."

(Telegram)

"Noonday Club, New York,
September 24.

"MARIAN BLACKMAR:

"Paul Smith's, Adirondacks, N. Y.

"The cabin on the mountain was not fictitious. Neither was the explosion of the locomotive, which happened three months ago. I gave an assumed name at the hospital. Do not try to find me. There is nothing left worth finding. I want to be remembered as I was when we parted. Good-bye.

"JOHN."

The Finale

An October moon shone through the scarlet leaves of a Canadian forest. Shadows from the thinning branches fell across the clearing where John Blake's cabin clung to the side of a mountain. The light from a shaded lamp, within, fell upon a typewriter with its singular attachment for depressing the shift key.

Before the machine John sat, bowed in thought, his right sleeve hanging empty. He was thinking

of the letter which he had written to Marian Blackmar, and which he had enclosed with a note to the steward of the Noonday Club, to be mailed from New York, for the sake of the postmark, of the telegram which had been relayed through the same club.

The autumn wind coaxed the logs in the fireplace. The responsive flames lighted with a warm glow the photographed features of the beautiful girl in the oval frame.

There was a footstep outside the cabin, the swish of skirts, a cry, and somebody rushing across the floor. Two hands, unmistakably hers, were pressed over his eyes, the good eye and the bad eye alike. Two lips, every now and then interrupting themselves against his, wept and laughed and pleaded and made-believe scold, and finally persuaded John that no life can be disfigured where love dwells.

THE INTRUDER

By Reginald Barlow

MIDWINTER, bitterly cold.

Having entered the house, I drew the blinds and lit the gas-logs, stretched myself in an armchair, and dozed. A strange feeling crept over me; some one else was in the room.

I slowly opened my eyes; they stared straight into a gun-muzzle; my hands flew up.

"Stand up!"

I stood.

The other hand deftly extracted my revolver.

"Sit down!"

I sat.

"Rotten weather?"

I agreed.

"How did you get in?" I asked.

"Basement window. How d'you?"

"Front door, of course."

He looked quizzically. "Ain't Richman coming home to-night?"

"Certainly not; don't expect him."

"That's funny. Where's the servants?" The curtains behind him trembled.

"With the Richmans, Atlantic City," I informed. "Why not call when he's home?" I inquired. A gun, hand, and arm divided the curtain.

"Right; feel warmer now; must get to work."

"Been here before?" I asked, as the newcomer, tall and strong, covered the bullet-head before me.

"Sure. Remember the burglary in this house five years ago? Well, I was on that job. Another night like this. I sneaked up——"

"Biff!" The newcomer landed squarely. "Cord in that drawer," he said. "Tie him up."

I obeyed.

"You're Mr. Jones, I believe!—I'm Mr. Richman," he continued. "My agent wired that I'd find you here. Knew I'd be late, so sent you the key. What's the matter with our friend?"

Our prisoner had come to, gasping, "You Richman?"

"Yes."

"I'm Burns, Headquarters. Damn you, I'll pinch you, too——"

He raved on. Richman lifted the 'phone. Found it out of order. I knew he would.

"Police Station is two blocks south," he informed me. "Go and notify them. I'll take care of this noisy person."

"Damn fool! He's a crook!" bawled the helpless one.

"He thinks you're as bad as himself," laughed Richman.

"How did you learn of my danger?" I inquired.

"I borrowed a basement key from the servants. On entering I heard voices up here; crept upstairs, peeped through the curtains, saw your predicament, and nailed the fellow."

"I'm eternally grateful," I said warmly.

"Don't mention it. Now, go for the police, like a good fellow."

"Surely. Take care of yourself," I said. Entering the hall, I lifted a heavy fur coat as the thud of footsteps approached the front steps. I opened the door quickly and faced the newcomer, closing it behind me.

"Pardon! Is Mr. Richman in?" he inquired.

"Are you Jones?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Richman is waiting for you. Pardon my haste. Let yourself in. You have a key."

My bag was very heavy, being full of Richman's silver and a few thousand dollars' worth of jewellery, but I made good time through the snow.

I remembered Richman saying the Police Station was two blocks south—which, of course, explains why I went north.

MOLTEN METAL

By Hornell Hart

THE president of the Canfield Iron Works sat at his desk, poring over departmental reports. The hush of Saturday afternoon had settled over the deserted works. Instead of the rumble of trucks, the tattoo of steam hammers, and the shrill of signal whistles, a fly droned at the window screen and birds twittered from the eaves.

It was with a startled feeling that the president looked up and saw, standing at the end of his desk, a tall, dully dressed working girl. Her eyes were circled with shadow, and her thin lips were set with the expression of one who forces back tears.

"I came to get five hundred dollars," said the girl, in a tense voice. He looked up at her in dumb astonishment, and she hurried on. "We just got to have it, and you owe it to us. Pa, he kept telling the boss that the big ladle for the melted iron was cracked and it would spill some day, and the boss just laughed. Well, one day, about three months ago, he came up here to the office to tell you about it, and the fella out there told him to go on out and mind his business.

"Well, last month—on Thursday, it was—the handle broke off and spilled the hot iron all over Pa and the men in his gang. They brought him home, and his legs were all burned off, and he was dead. John Burczyk his name was.

"I'm the oldest at home, and all the others are little. There ain't one of all six of them that can work yet. And Ma, she ain't very strong, and she can't earn much, washing. Well, we needed money awful bad, and a smart fella from you came to our house and gave Ma ten dollars. Ma's Slovak, and she can't read English, and she didn't know what it was she was signing. Well, she found she'd signed away her rights to sue for money from you, because dad was killed. Now you're going to give us that money." She finished with a harsh peremptoriness and paused. The president started to speak, but she stopped him with a crude, imperative gesture.

"You wait," she said; "I ain't through yet. It was bad enough that you killed Pa and stole the damage money from her and the kids. But that ain't all. You done worse than that. There was another man burned with that melted iron. His name was Frank Nokovick." The girl's voice rose and broke in a sob, but she choked it back harshly and struggled on.

"Frank—he and I was sweethearts for a year and a half before that, but he couldn't get the money for

the furniture and things. Well, we was to be married on Saturday, but Thursday the ladle broke and the iron burned Frank all down the side. He made 'em bring him home, and he sent for the priest. 'Run for the priest, Pete,' he says to my brother. 'Run like hell, and make him come quick.'

"Frank, he was groaning terrible, but he just grabbed hold of my hand and hung onto it, and he kept saying, 'Our kid's got to have a father, Mary. Our kid's got to have a father.'

"Well, the priest came as quick as he could, and he was going to marry us, but Frank was dead."

The girl's voice trailed off into a wail, but she choked on defiantly.

"Now I lost my job, because they can all see my trouble. And we got to have the money You give me that five hundred dollars! You give it to me!"

The president had turned his back toward her. She fumbled nervously with a queerly shaped thing covered with a handkerchief in her right hand. The president turned silently and handed her a bundle. Dumbly she counted five one-hundred-dollar bills. At the bottom was a check.

"Pay to the order of Mary Burczyk," it read, "two thousand dollars."

Mary sank on the floor in a little heap. "I'd rather have shot you," she sobbed.

THE WINNER'S LOSS

By Elliott Flower

"BET you fifty!"

"Aw, make it worth while."

"Two hundred!'

"You're on. Let Jack hold the stakes."

"Suits me."

Four hundred dollars was placed in the hands of Jack Strong by the disputatious sports, and he carefully put it away with the lone five-dollar bill of which he was possessed.

Jack, although sportily inclined, lacked the cash to be a sport himself, but he was known to the two who thus disagreed, and they trusted him. He might be poor, but he was honest.

Nor was this confidence misplaced—at least so far as his honesty was concerned, although there might be question as to his judgment and discretion.

For instance, carrying that much money, it was a foolish thing to let an affable stranger scrape a barroom acquaintance with him when he stopped in at Pete's on his way to his little mortgaged home. He realized that later. He was not drunk—posi-

tively, he was not drunk, for he recalled everything distinctly, but he did fraternize briefly with the jovial stranger. And in seeking his lone five-dollar bill, that he might return the joyous stranger's hospitality, he did display the four-hundred-dollar roll. It was all very clear to him the next morning, when he found nothing in his pockets but the change from the five-dollar bill.

Naturally, he hastened to Pete's to learn what he could of the amiable stranger, which was nothing. Then he sought his sporty friends, and made full confession. They regarded him with coldly suspicious eyes, deeming it strange that one so wise should happen to be robbed when he was carrying their money. He promised restitution, but they were not appeased, for well they knew that it would take him about four years to repay four hundred dollars.

He went to the police, and the police promised to do what they could to identify, locate, and apprehend the sociable stranger, but there was still much in the attitude of the sporty pair to make him uneasy.

He remained at home that evening, having neither heart nor money for livelier places, and about eight o'clock he had his reward. The police telephoned him that they had the genial stranger in custody.

"Hold him!" he cried jubilantly. "I'll be right down."

He was rushing for his hat when his wife, who

had been strangely silent and thoughtful, stopped him.

"John," she said, "I'd like a word with you before you go out. Why have you deceived me?"

"Deceived you!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, deceived me," she repeated severely. "I've suspected this duplicity for some time, and now I have proof. When I asked you for ten dollars yesterday you said you didn't have it, but last night I found four hundred dollars in your pocket."

"Howling Petey!" he cried. "Great jumping grasshoppers! I've had a man arrested for that, and two others are just about ready to beat me up! Where is it, Mary—quick!"

"I applied it on the mortgage," she answered calmly.

THE RECOIL OF THE GUN

By Marian Parker

YES, I will tell you why I did it. I can talk to you, because you are a gentleman. You will understand. Those others were horrible men, policemen. They hustled me, they took me by the arm—me! Did you ever see a prison cell before? I never did. It's a queer place to receive you in, but that isn't my fault. They won't let me out.

You wish to know why I killed my husband? It does sound rather dreadful, doesn't it? Though, you know, a woman might get angry—might throw something at a man. But I wasn't angry. It's not really hard to kill people. Why, even now, here, alone with you—but they haven't left anything handy. May you call in your friend from the corridor? Yes, of course.

About my husband. He was a very good man, very fond of me; a little tiresome, but I wouldn't have killed him for that. People won't understand that I did it from the highest motives.

This is the reason. It's very reasonable. *I did it for the children.* Now you know.

He began to follow me about. He began to watch me. Even when I was alone he watched me. He was suspicious. That's a very bad sign. I know what it meant. It was dreadful to know, but everything proved it. He was going insane. But no one else knew. If I waited people would find out. I had to think of the children, my little girls. No one would have married them. It's hereditary, you know. So I shot him.

Your friend's a lawyer? He will get me off? They won't hang me? I knew they wouldn't if I explained. What's that you said? I heard! To plead insanity. *For me?* But he mustn't do that! *The girls*—don't you see? Why, you're crazy! No one would marry them! And I did it for them! I did it for them!

"MAN MAY LOVE"

By Robert Sharp

MISS YOUNG, I want to ask you something," and Geoffrey modestly pulled the sheets close up under his pink chin. "I suppose you'll think me an awful bore for saying this to you so abruptly, but I'm dreadfully in earnest. Will you marry me, please?"

Miss Young did not stop a minute in her deft arrangement of his breakfast tray. She didn't even blush. "No, I don't think I will," she answered. "You see, I can't marry every one that asks me."

"How many have you married already?"

"Well, I haven't married any yet."

"Then marry me."

The unruffled little nurse smiled at his impetuosity. "You know," she said, "every marriageable male that I have ever nursed has proposed to me. It is merely a sign of recovery. It ought to go on the list of symptoms."

"My proposal is a symptom, all right, but not of recovery. It is a symptom that I am desperately in love."

"You do it beautifully, but you are not quite so romantic as Antonio, my last potential husband. He wanted me to flee with him to Italy, but his wife came and took him away."

Geoffrey was indignant. "Do you think I'm going to let you stay here while every Dick, Tom, and Dago Henry proposes to you?"

"Better eat your breakfast, Sonny."

"Sonny," Geoffrey flounced over, his face to the wall. "I don't care for any breakfast, thank you."

"All right, I'll take the tray away in a minute," and with a knowing smile she left the room.

Geoffrey was twenty-one, possessing all the impetuousness and dignity accessory to that age. He had offered his love and had been laughed at. She had called him "Sonny."

Yet, during those three past weeks of antiseptic nightmare she had been extremely kind to him. Perhaps she loved some one else. At the thought Geoffrey became quite disconsolate.

But finally he turned over and his eyes fell upon the breakfast tray laid temptingly beside his bed. A ravenous hunger assailed him. He pulled the tray onto the bed and began to eat. After all, things were not so bad. A woman always had to be coaxed.

Meanwhile Miss Young was talking it over with a sister nurse at breakfast in the nurses' quarters. "What I want to know, Heine, is this. When do we

ever get a fair chance at a man? We don't get away from the hospital long enough at a time to capture one, and here, where we receive proposals every day, it's against the rules to marry the patients."

"Did he propose to you?" interposed Heine.

"Yes, he did. And he's a nice boy, too."

"Excuse me, not for mine. I'm vaccinated against marriage. I'm tired of having men growl and grumble at me all the time."

"Sure, so am I. But, Heine, wouldn't it be perfectly grand to have just one great big man to jaw at you! He asked me to call him Geoffrey."

"Look here, kid, you're not falling in love, are you?" demanded the quizzical Heine.

"I wonder if he has another girl," answered Miss Young irrelevantly.

About noon Geoffrey became exceedingly restless. Miss Young smoothed his pillows again and again. Once, when her hand strayed temptingly near, he grasped it and kissed it. It must be confessed that Miss Young didn't withdraw her hand quite so quickly as the superintendent would have thought proper. She even blushed, and that was very unusual for the sophisticated nurse.

"Gee, I know I'm an awful bore to keep bothering you like this, but haven't you changed your mind? Don't you think you can marry me?"

"Look here, Geoffrey"—she really hadn't meant

to call him Geoffrey—"you don't know what you're talking about. I'm the only woman you've seen in the last three weeks. I may have helped pull you over some pretty rough places. Of course you think you have to marry your benefactor."

"I have to marry you, Miss Young, but that's not the reason. I'm going to ask you three times a day until you consent to be my wife."

"Well, keep it up, Geoffrey. It will help pass the time." Miss Young had quite regained her customary impenetrability.

Geoffrey kept his word. When his nurse was in the room he watched her continually and at the most unexpected times propounded the old question. If she left the room he always developed a dreadful thirst as an excuse for an imperative summons. Even Miss Young found it hard to doubt his sincerity. She floundered between natural emotions and her professional indifference.

At last Geoffrey was pronounced well, and yet the girl had not consented. He had no excuse for remaining longer, so with evident bad humour he consented to go.

"Miss Young," he said, "I'm going home to-day, and I just won't leave you here for some dirty 'Dago' to be grabbing at your hand and proposing to you all the time. Marry me and come away from here."

"Geoffrey, I'm going to give you a square deal.

You go home for a month, see other girls, and if you then still want to marry me, come up here and I'll think about it."

"I'm on, Miss Young. Say, I've found out your first name. It's Claire, isn't it? You know I used to think 'Diana' was a peach of a name, but 'Claire' beats it a mile."

Geoffrey went home. Miss Young cried a little in the solitude of her room. Then she settled down to a half-hopeful vigil of waiting. During the first two weeks she received seven letters, each one declaring Geoffrey's undying devotion and his firm desire to return for her. Every night she read the entire collection up to date, and wept over them, as is the manner of women beloved. Then for days she received no word. She fought this rather hopeless portent with trusting heart.

Often during the long day's work when patients grumbled, when some ogling male became amorously persistent, when the little nurse found herself almost hating mankind, she slipped into the vacant corridor and reread one of the treasured epistles to give her faith.

The third week dragged along and the beginning of the fourth, and still she received not a word. At first she waited impatiently for each day's mail, but finally she began to delay her call at the desk, dreading the recurrent disappointment.

At last one morning at breakfast she received a letter addressed in Geoffrey's handwriting. All aflutter she slipped it into her pocket until she could be alone. But she couldn't wait, so she tremulously tore the envelope open and read:

"My Dear Miss Young:

"I shall always regard you as a woman of the rarest good sense. You must have thought me a great fool. I think a man is hardly responsible for what he does when he is sick. I must thank you for your splendid nursing, and, furthermore, for the way in which you brought me to my senses. You see, Diana and I have made it all up again. I'm sending you a card."

The card bore the conventional "Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Harvey announce——"

Miss Young slowly crumpled up the letter and shoved it into her pocket. "Heinie," she said, "one of these days I'm going to take advantage of some guy and marry him while I've got him down."

ONE WAY—AND ANOTHER

By Noble May

THAT'S where my finish will be," said the girl. She rested her odd-looking bundle on the railing of the bridge and looked moodily down into the river.

Tough Muggins wasn't particularly strong on the conventionalities, but he had stopped on the bridge to look at the river coquetting under the moon's rays, not to listen to idle talk from strange girls. It listened like a touch, too, so he slid an indifferent eye around in the girl's direction and advised her to chop it. Something, however, about the tense look of her as she gazed fiercely down into the rippling water compelled him, in spite of his natural inclination, to carry the matter slightly farther.

"What's got you sore on the livin' proposition?" he asked grudgingly.

If he had expected melodrama he was doomed to disappointment.

"Same old trouble," she said quietly. "I was workin' for some swell folks up on the North Side—real swells *they* was, believe me. They thought I

was bad. Maybe I am. I don't know. He promised. What more could a girl expect? When they found out, the lady she says to me, 'Of course, I can't keep you here, Molly. It wouldn't be right with me with two daughters of my own, but I'm awful sorry, and I hope it'll be a lesson to you. There's plenty of chances for you to start again. It ain't never too late to turn over a new leaf. Don't tumble down them stairs,' she says when I kind of stumbled. Like it would make any difference! Then she shut the door on me. 'There's plenty of chances for you to begin over again.' That's what she said. Lord, ain't it funny?" cried the girl. Her laugh rang out high and shrill, seeming to cut into the clear darkness.

Tough agreed that it was funny. Having, perhaps, less sense of humour than Molly, he qualified the statement by adding that it was kind of tough also.

"How about the fella?" he asked casually.

"Ditched me," replied the girl. "After I come out the horspittle I never seen hide nor hair of him. Gee," she concluded bitterly, "I was crazy about that lad."

"Must 'a' been a kind of a mean skunk, though," judged Tough. "How about the kid?"

The girl's eyes sought the glittering river. "I give it away," she told him finally.

"Oh!" ejaculated Tough.

The girl seemed to feel a tentative rebuke in this. "What could I do?" she asked. "I tried to get another job before—and I couldn't. I don't know's I'll try again. There's easier ways"—the sentence hung suspended for a moment—"you know."

There was no polite veil of assumed ignorance thrown over such situations in the circle in which Tough moved. He knew, of course. Still——

"There's better ways," he ventured.

Tough was startled at the flash of anger that lit up the girl's shrunken face. For a moment she looked as if she would strike him. Then, with a sharp, quick movement, she buried her face in the covering of the bundle which she had been holding lightly on the railing of the bridge. The next instant Tough heard a soft splash as something struck the water.

"There's that way," a voice shrieked in his ear.

Tough sprang to the railing and looked down.

"Gawd a'mighty, girl!" he panted.

"I seen—seen—Gawd, woman!" he moistened his dry lips. "Was it—say, it wasn't the kid?"

Molly burst into a blood-curdling laugh.

"Sure it was," she cried. "I doped it a purpose. I been trying to get up the nerve to do it ever since this morning. Do you think I was going to let her grow up into a thing like her mother? Man, you're crazy."

Tough's coat had been already flung off. "Don't be a quitter, girl," he gasped. "Run for the cop and tell him to put out a boat, and then you wait for me. We'll save her and she'll be an all-right one and like her mother, too."

Just how near Tough came to seeing his finish there in the rays of the moon which he loved nobody but Tough even knew. It was easy enough to swim with the current and overtake and seize the tiny bundle held up for the moment on the surface of the water by the expanding draperies. It was when he turned and tried to swim back to the bridge that the waves pushed and beat at him like cruel hands. He thought somebody was trying to strangle him. What were they hanging to his feet for? Why did they push him and strike him? He wouldn't go that way. He had to go the other way. He must make them quit twisting him. And then through the awful pounding at his brain came a cheery voice: "Ketch a hold, bo. Ketch a hold."

Sputtering, gasping, sick, exhausted, Tough hitched his elbows weakly over the side and let the unconscious thing he had so nearly lost his life for slip gently into the bottom of the boat.

"Why, it's Tough Muggins," said the officer, looking down into his face. "For the lova Mike, what was you doin'?"

Through the dank drip of his hair Tough winked.

"I just dropped in to get a drink," he said. "I belong to the cop family and I got the habit."

It was not until the boat had ground itself gratingly up against the rough stone ledge that served for a landing that Tough openly acknowledged Policeman Connelley's right to an explanation of a sort. He jerked his head toward Molly, who stood, wild-eyed and trembling, on the narrow ledge above.

"My girl," he said succinctly. "We was scrappin', and she pitched my bundle of clothes that I was fetchin' home overboard. There was money in the pants," he added by way of gracious explanation. "That was why I jumped in after 'em."

"Didn't know you had a girl, Tough." Big Jim Connelley may have had his suspicions, but his tone was of the most conventional.

"That so?" inquired Tough as he scrambled up the ledge. "Say, Jim, the things you don't know would fill a city directory right up to the limit."

Then he turned to Molly. "Guess you're cooled off, now, old girl, what?" he said. "Come on, then. Let's beat it home."

Gathering her unconscious baby to her with trembling, passionate hands, the girl went with him trustingly.

THE BLACK PATCH

By Randolph Hartley

I WEAR a black patch over my left eye. It has aroused the curiosity of many; no one has suspected the horror that it hides.

Twenty years ago Bernard Vroom and I, fellow-students at the University of Jena, were devotees at the feet of Professor Malhausen, the foremost optical surgeon of his time. Living, working, dreaming together, Vroom and I became almost as one intelligence in our passionate study of the anatomy of the eye. Vroom it was who advanced the theory that a living eye-ball might be transferred from the head of one man to the head of another. It was I who suggested, and arranged for, the operation, performed by Professor Malhausen, through which Vroom's left eye became mine and my left eye became Vroom's. Professor Malhausen's monograph, published shortly afterward, describes the delicate operation in detail. The ultimate effects of the operation are my own story.

Very distinctly do I remember the final struggle for breath when the anesthetic was administered; and

quite as vividly do I recall my return to consciousness, in a hospital cot, weakened by a six weeks' illness with brain fever, which had followed the operation. Slowly but clearly my mind advanced through the process of self-identification, and memory brought me to the moment of my last conscious thought. With a mingled feeling of curiosity and dread I opened my eyes.

I opened my eyes and beheld two distinct and strongly contrasting scenes. One, which was visible most clearly when I employed only my right eye, was the bare hospital room in which I lay. The other, distinct to the left eye alone, was the deck of a ship, a stretch of blue sea, and in the distance a low, tropical coast that was to me totally unfamiliar.

Perplexed and vaguely afraid, I begged the nurse to send at once for Vroom. She explained gently that Vroom had recovered quickly, and that, although deeply distressed over leaving me, he had sailed for Egypt, a fortnight since, on a scientific mission. In a flash the truth came to me overwhelmingly. The severing of the optic nerve had not destroyed the sympathy between Vroom's two eyes. With Vroom's left eye, now physically mine, I was beholding that which Vroom beheld with his right. The magnitude of the discovery and its potentialities stunned me. I dared not tell Professor Malhausen for fear of being thought insane. For

the same reason I have held the secret until now.

On the second day of double-vision my left eye revealed a gorgeous picture of the port and city of Alexandria—and of a woman. Evidently she and Vroom were standing close together at the ship's rail. I saw on her face an expression that I had never seen on woman's before. I thrilled with exultation. Then suddenly I went cold. The look was for Vroom, not for me. I had found a love that was not mine, a love to which every atom of my being responded, and it was to be my portion to behold on my loved one's face, by day and by night, the manifestation of her love for another man.

From that moment on I lived in the world that was revealed to me by my left eye. My right was employed only when I set down in my diary the impressions and experiences of this other life. The record was chiefly of the woman, whose name I never knew. The final entry, unfinished, describes the evidences that I saw of her marriage to Vroom in the English Garrison Church at Cairo. I could write no more. A jealousy so sane and so well founded, so amply fed by new fuel every new moment that it was the acme of torture, possessed me. I was truly insane, but with a true vision, and to me was given the weapon of extreme cunning that insanity provides. I convinced Professor Malhausen that my

left eye was sightless, and by simulating calmness and strength I gained my discharge from the hospital. The next day I sailed from Bremen for Port Said.

Upon reaching Cairo I had, naturally, no difficulty in finding my way through the already familiar streets, to the Eden Palace Hotel, and to the very door of Vroom's apartment, overlooking the Esbekieh Gardens. Without plan, save for the instant sight of her I loved, I opened the door. Vroom stood there facing me, a revolver in his hand.

"You did not consider," he said calmly, "that my left eye also is sympathetic; that I have followed every movement of yours; that I am acquainted with your errand through the entries in your diary, which I read line by line as you wrote. You shall not see her. I have sent her far away."

I rushed upon him in a frenzy. His revolver clicked but missed fire. I bore him backward over a divan, my hands at his throat. His eyes grew big as I strangled him. And into my left eye came a vision of my own face, as Vroom saw it, distorted by the lust of murder. He died with that picture fixed in his own eye, and upon the retina of the eye that once was his, and is now mine, that fearful picture of my face was fixed, to remain until my death.

I wear a black patch over my left eye. I dare not look upon the horror that it hides.

A SHIPBOARD ROMANCE

By Lewis Allen

"ISN'T that young Griggs and Miss Deering?" asked the captain, peering down from the bridge at a dark spot silhouetted against the moonlit sea.

"Yes, sir," replied the second officer.

"It's the speediest shipboard romance I've ever seen in all my thirty years aboard a liner," remarked the captain, smiling.

"I understand they never saw or heard of each other until they met at dinner, Tuesday. Have you talked much with them, sir? I see they sit next you at table."

"Oh, yes, that's true. Why, on the second dinner out he complained because there was no jewellery shop aboard. She looked as happy as a kid with a lollypop, and blushed."

"Whew! Engaged within forty-eight hours! Going some! I suppose they'll be married by the American consul before they've been ashore an hour."

"Not a bit of doubt of it," grinned the captain. "True love at sight in this case, all right. Well, they

have my blessings. I fell in love with my Missus the same way, but we waited three months. I'll go below. What's she making?"

"Nineteen, sir. Good-night."

. . . .

Two hours later there came a terrific explosion away down in the hold amongst the cargo. The ship trembled and listed.

"Women and children first! No danger! Time enough for all!" shouted the officers, as the frantic passengers surged about the life-boats.

She was going down rapidly by her stern. There came another explosion, this from the boilers.

"All women and children off?" bellowed the captain.

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the second officer.

"Married men next!" shouted the captain as the men began scrambling into the boats. A score of men paused, bowed, and stepped back. Young Griggs tore his way through and started to clamber into the boat.

"Damn you, for a coward!" cursed the second officer, dragging him back.

Young Griggs yanked away and again clutched at the boat. This time the second officer struck him square in the face and he went down.

The boatload of married men was merely cut

away, so low was the ship in the water. Then came a lurch, and the waves closed over the great ship.

. . . .

The next evening the Associated Press sent out, from its St. Louis office, this paragraph:

"Among those lost was H. G. Griggs, junior partner of the Wells & Griggs Steel Co. He leaves a wife and infant son in this city. It is feared Mrs. Griggs will not recover from the shock."

THE COWARD

By Philip Francis Cook

JOHNSON stopped at the edge of the clearing and looked carefully at the hut. A few yards back, where the spring crossed the trail, there were tracks of a woman's shoe-pack. It was country where one didn't live long without the habit of noticing things. The tracks were light, mostly toes, and far apart for so small a foot. Johnson knew no woman travelled north so fast, into the wilderness, and without a pack, at that, for diversion, so he had sidestepped from the trail, silently slipped off his tump-line, and circled to the edge of the clearing, about a dozen yards from where the trail struck it. There in the shadow of the pines he searched the clearing with his eyes. No sign of life.

The door of the hut was shut, but a couple of boards had been knocked off one of the window openings. The tall grass was trampled toward the spring. Over to the right was a wreck of a birch, where some one had been cutting firewood. Nothing especially alarming, but Johnson was not popular and a few early experiences had made him cautious.

He stood there, silent, for perhaps fifteen minutes, before he started for the door. There was still no sound, and he stepped inside, gun in hand.

A rusty little yacht stove, a few shelves, and a rude table were all the cookroom contained. Beyond was the bunkroom with a large double-decked bunk against one wall, and opposite it the window. Johnson went on in.

In the lower bunk lay the body of a man with a hunting knife sticking in his breast. He lay staring at the ceiling with a rather silly smile, as though he had been grinning, and death had come too quickly for it to fade.

"MacNamara—— My God!"

Johnson was unnerved. It was not often that men die by the knife in the North country. Then a great load seemed to leave his shoulders, for this dead man had sworn, not three weeks before, to shoot him at sight—and Johnson was known to be a coward. No more need he sleep with an eye open, or slip into towns at night. MacNamara, thank God, was dead.

The dead man's pack was in the other bunk, and scattered around the room were hairpins, a small rhinestone ring, and a few other feminine trinkets. "Woman!" said Johnson—and then he saw the note. It was scrawled on the cover torn from an old magazine. It read:

"Ed, you'll find this sure. Mac was going to lay for you and pot you at the White Rocks. I couldn't find you, so I promised to come here to Carmels with him. When he climbed in the bunk I give it to him —the damned fool!"

It was unsigned.

The sun was very near the western hilltop. Johnson went to the woods and returned with his pack; he dropped it near the stove in the cookroom. Then he burned the note. Next he took a small bag of parched corn out of his pack and concealed in it the woman's little things, and put the bag in his shirt. There remained only one thing to do. Without looking at the dead man's face he drew the knife out of his breast and forced his own into the wound. The woman's knife he took to the door and hurled far out into the woods.

There wasn't much daylight left. He closed the door quietly and started for the trail, north.

"I'll have to hurry," said Johnson.

THE HEART OF A BURGLAR

By Jane Dahl

NOISELESSLY the burglar drew his great bulk through the window, deposited his kit of tools on the floor, and lowered the sash behind him. Then he stopped to listen. No sound broke the midnight stillness. Stealthily he flashed his lantern around the room in search of objects of value. His quick ear caught the sound of a door opening and hurried footsteps in the upper hall. Instantly he adjusted a black mask and sprang behind an open door. Pistol in hand, every faculty alert, he waited. He heard the soft thud of bare feet on the padded stairs, then laboured breathing nearby.

As the electric light was switched on, brilliantly illuminating the room, he gripped his revolver and stepped from behind the door.

"Hands up!" he cried in a hoarse whisper. Then he fell back with a short, raucous laugh. He was pointing the revolver at a frightened little mite of a girl shivering before him in her thin, white nightgown. The small, terrified face touched him strangely, and, placing his pistol in his pocket, he said, not unkindly:

"There, little girl, don't be so scared—I'm not going to hurt you. Just you be real still so as not to disturb the others until I get through and get away, and you shan't be hurt."

The child looked at him much as she would an obstacle in her path, and attempted to rush past him. He grabbed her and held her tight.

"You little vixen!" he exclaimed. "Didn't I tell you to keep still?"

"But I've got to telephone," gasped the child, struggling to free herself. "Just let me telephone and then you can do what you like with me—but I can't wait—I've got to telephone right away." And she made another effort to reach the telephone on the wall.

Again the burglar laughed. "It's very likely I'll let you telephone for the police. No, missy, you can't work that on me. I guess I'll have to tie and gag you after all."

Fresh terror found its way into the child's face, and, for the first time the burglar realized that he was not the cause of it. She was not afraid of him. She fought and scratched him like a young tigress, striving to free herself, and when she realized how powerless she was in his strong arms she burst into tears.

"Oh! My brother is dying," she cried, "and I want to telephone the doctor. He has convulsions

and mamma doesn't know what to do—and you won't let me telephone the doctor!"

At the word "convulsions" the burglar went white—his hands fell nervelessly to his sides—the child was free.

"Call the doctor, quick," he said, placing the child on the chair in front of the telephone. "What room are they in?"

"End of the hall, upstairs," responded the child, with the receiver already off the hook.

In three bounds the burglar was up the steps. He made for the light which shone through a half-open door down the hall, striving to formulate some explanation to offer the mother for his presence in the house. When he gently pushed open the door he saw that none was needed—the woman before him was oblivious to all the world. Dishevelled and distracted, she sat rocking to and fro, clutching to her breast the twitching body of a wee boy. Piteously she begged him not to die—not to leave his poor mummy.

Quietly the burglar came to her side and gently loosened her clasp.

"Give me the baby," he said in a low voice. "He will be better on the bed."

Dumbly, with unseeing eyes, she looked at him, and surrendered the child.

"He is dying," she moaned—"dying—oh, my little, little man!"

"No, he's not," said the burglar. But as he looked at the wide-open, glassy eyes and blue, pinched face of the child he had little faith in his own words.

He placed the baby upon the bed, and turning to the mother, said in an authoritative voice:

"You must brace up now and save your child—do you understand? I can save him, but you must help me, and we must be quick—quick, do you understand?"

A glimmer of comprehension seemed to penetrate her palsied brain.

"Yes, yes!" she said. "What shall I do?"

"Heat a kettle of water, quick. Bring it in his bathtub—and bring some mustard, too. Hurry."

Impatiently the mother was off before the last "hurry" was hurled at her. Now that a ray of hope was offered, and something definite to do, she was all action.

Reverently the burglar removed the baby's night-robe, and, covering the little body with a blanket, he rubbed the legs and arms and back with his huge hands—very, very gently, for fear their roughness would irritate the delicate skin.

In a short time the mother was back with the hot mustard bath. Together they placed the baby in the tub. His little body relaxed—the glassy eyes closed—he breathed regularly—he was asleep.

"Thank God," breathed the burglar, fervently,

though awkwardly, as though such words were strange to his lips.

"He is sleeping," cried the mother rapturously. "He will live!"

As the mother was drying the little body with soft towels the burglar said brokenly:

"I had a little boy once—about his size—two years old. He died in convulsions because his mother didn't know what to do and the doctor didn't get there in time."

A sob of ready sympathy came from the heart of the woman.

"And his poor mother?" she asked. "Where is she?"

"She soon followed—she seemed to think the little fellow would need her over there," he replied in a tear-choked voice.

Half ashamed, he ran his sleeve across his eyes to remove the moisture there. The woman's tears splashed on the quietly sleeping infant in her lap.

Both were startled by the clamorous ringing of the doorbell.

"The doctor!" cried the man, suddenly brought to a realization of his position.

The woman looked at him, and for the first time she really saw him; for the first time the strangeness of an unknown man in the house in the middle of the night was apparent to her. From his face her glance

wandered to the chair where the burglar had thrown his mask and tools.

"Yes," he said, answering her look, "I'm a burglar. I heard your husband was out of town, and I came to rob you. You can call the police, now."

"No," the woman interrupted. "Go into the next room and wait until the doctor leaves. I want to help you to a better way of living than this, if I can."

After the doctor had departed the woman went into the next room. The burglar was not there. Going downstairs she found the drawers ransacked and all her valuables gone. On the table was a scrap of paper. On it was written:

"Thank you, madam, for your offer, but I'm used to this life now and don't want to change."

The woman thought of the sleeping baby upstairs, and a tender smile came to her lips. That robbery was not reported to the police.

THE REWARD

By Herbert Heron

NO ONE knew just how popular Cobbe was till Dick Walling shot him. It was Cobbe's fault, but Walling didn't wait to explain. Like others, he didn't know the degree of the deceased's popularity but he had a fair idea, and left Monterey as fast as his horse could take him. The animal was the speediest in the county.

He stopped at Parl's on his way up the valley. Parl greeted him cordially. For half an hour they talked. The 'phone rang.

"That's for me. I told Cobbe I'd stop here," and with that Walling took down the receiver.

"Hello! This Mr. Parl's. Oh, yes, you want me. What? Well, I'm damned! Not a sign. I'll watch. Sure. What? How much? Whew!" He ended in a long whistle, and hung up.

"I'll be sliding along now." He shook hands, mounted, and rode toward Monterey till Parl shut the door. Then he circled, and went on up the valley. A thousand dollars reward, dead or alive! He knew now how popular Cobbe was.

They hadn't even waited till the sheriff had failed to get him.

There are few ranches above Parl's, and these have no telephones, so he rode by, unconcerned. Toward midnight he came to a place owned by a girl and her brother. He had loved the girl, but decided that she didn't care for him. The brother liked him, though, and he could get some food for his stay in the mountains till things quieted down and he could leave the country.

The brother came to the door, pale and troubled. "He can't have heard——" The thought was dispelled by the sudden relief on the boy's face.

"Thank God, it's you, Dick! Mary's dying, and——" Walling followed him into the room where the girl lay, high in fever. "I couldn't leave her alone, to get the doctor, but now you can go——" Something in Walling's manner stopped him. "I'll go, and you can stay with her. Are you on Firefly? I'll take him. It'll be quicker." Before Walling could think what to say, the boy was gone. He went to call him back. The girl moaned. What could he do? He couldn't refuse this duty fallen on him from the sky, even if the girl were a stranger; and this was the woman he loved, . . . but she was dying.

"Dick! . . . Oh, Dick! . . . Dick! . . ." The voice from the bed startled him. He went

softly over to see what she wanted. In her eyes there was no recognition: she had spoken in delirium.

She loved him! But the rush of joy was swept away by the sight of her suffering. He bathed her face and hands. By and by the fever seemed less. She passed into a light sleep.

He made some coffee. While he drank it he had time to think of himself. When the doctor came from Monterey. . . . The doctor would know, and . . .

"I must clear out when I hear them coming." Then another thought forced its way in: "Go now, while you've still a good lead. Go now!"

He went to the stable, saddled a horse, and led him out. Then the face of the girl came over him. He left the horse tied to the gate, and went back. She was sleeping still, but brokenly. He couldn't go.

It was a two hours' ride to Parl's, where the boy could 'phone. . . . If the doctor left Monterey immediately, he'd get to the house about five. It was now nearly two.

The girl slept. Walling knew it was the critical time. If she woke better, she would probably recover. The thought was sweet to him. If she went again into delirium. . . . He sat still, thinking. The hours passed very slowly.

Suddenly Walling heard a step outside. He had heard no horse coming. He looked out cautiously

and saw four men with rifles. Walling cocked his revolver, took down the boy's rifle from the wall and loaded it. He could account for some—and those who were left might depart. It would be a battle, anyway. There was no use being taken alive. Better be shot than hanged.

The leader made a signal. Walling raised his gun. And then—Mary stirred. Her battle, like his, was still undecided. If she slept on, and woke refreshed, she would get well. If not . . .

Walling laid down his rifle and stepped outside. The men covered him. As he was taken down the road to the waiting horses, the doctor and the girl's brother drove up.

"She's asleep," said Walling.

The boy showed no surprise—he had heard the story from the doctor—but his voice was pitiful:

"Why didn't you? . . . I didn't know. . . . Oh, my God! . . . and you stayed . . . when you could have got away!" He turned to the men with a hopeless look. "It's my fault!" he cried. "He stayed with my sister. I thought she was dying. He didn't tell me he *couldn't* stay! He'd be safe in the mountains by now. . . . Oh, my God!"

The leader glanced at his companions. They were stern men, but they were moving uneasily. The situation was unbearable.

"How long have you been here?"

"Since about midnight," answered Walling, though he couldn't see what difference it made. The leader took out his watch.

"Twelve minutes past five now. Say, we've been twelve minutes getting you, that leaves five hours. We'll stay here and rest our horses. At twelve minutes past ten we'll start again. That suit you, boys?"

"What do you mean?" asked Walling.

"I mean you still have your five hours' start; you haven't lost anything by staying with the sick girl."

Walling went back to the house. Mary was still sleeping. He touched her hand. It seemed cooler.

"Tell her I'll write—if I can."

"Good-bye," said the boy.

As he went out Walling saw the men unsaddling their horses. He took off his hat to them as he rode away into the mountains.

THE FIRST GIRL

By Louise Pond Jewell

THEY had been talking of the Marsdens, who had just gone down with the torpedoed ship; and among the kindly and affectionate things said about them, the exceptional happiness of their married life was mentioned. Some one spoke of this as being rather surprising, as they had married so late in life; then, naturally enough, another remarked what a different world it would be if every man had been accepted by the first girl he had proposed to. And he added, that sometimes he thought that first choice was one of truer instinct, less tinctured with the world's sophistication than any later one. The bachelor contributed with a laugh that that first girl had one advantage over the wife, no matter how perfect the latter—that she remained the ideal. And then, little by little, they came to the point of agreeing to tell, then and there, in the elegance and dignity of the clubroom suited to the indulgence of their late middle years, each one about that first girl, and what she had meant to him.

The Explorer began.

"I met her in the Adirondacks, and knew her only one summer. After that, I couldn't see her just as a friend—and she was unwilling to be anything else to me. So, all my life, I've associated her with the woods and lakes, with the sincerity and wholesomeness of the great Outdoors. She had the freedom of Diana, and her lack of self-consciousness. I never saw her except roughly clad, but she always suggested that line of Virgil—'She walked the goddess.'

"She was strong and lithe as a boy, could climb mountains, row, play golf and tennis with any of us; and what a good sport She never fussed over getting caught in drenching rains, being bruised and torn by rocks and thorns; and once when a small party of us lost our way, and had to spend the night on a lonely mountainside within sound of wolves and catamounts, her gayety made a 'lark' of it. She could drive horses with a man's steady hands; she knew the birds by name, and all the plants and trees that grew within miles, and she was familiar with the tracks and habits of all the small creatures of the forest. To me she was—simply wonderful, and, I confess, always has been."

"What became of her?" they asked.

"Later, she married—a man who didn't know a pine from a palm! I always wondered. . . ."

The Diplomat came next.

"That sort," he said, "is a little too independent

and upstanding to belong to my type of woman. The rough, tanned skin, the strong, capable hands—big, probably—the woolen skirt and blouse—they'll do very well in a girl chum, for a summer. But when it comes to a *wife*, one's demands are different. The girl I wanted first—and I've never forgotten her; she was a queen—I knew during my first winter in Washington. You talk of Diana; I prefer Venus—wholly feminine, but never cloying. She was the kind that looks best in thin, clinging things. I remember yet a shimmering green and silver 'creation' she wore at the Inaugural Ball. She didn't take hikes with me through scratchy forests, but she'd dance all night long, and her little feet would never tire. She didn't handle guns or tillers, but you should have seen her pretty fingers deftly managing the tea things in a drawing-room, of a winter's afternoon, or playing soft, enchanting airs on the piano at twilight; or, for the matter of that, placing a carnation in a man's buttonhole—I can feel her doing it yet! She probably didn't know birds, but, by George! she knew men! And there wasn't one of us young fellows that winter that wouldn't gladly have had her snare him. Only —that was the one thing she didn't do!"

"Didn't she ever do any snaring?"

"Oh—finally. And—the pity of it!—a man who couldn't dance, and had no use for Society! Sometimes . . ."

"How about you?" the third member of the group was asked, an Engineer of national reputation. "Was there a first best girl for you, too?"

"Guilty!" he replied. "But my account will sound prosaic after these others. You know, my early days weren't given to expensive summer camps, nor to Washington ballrooms. I made my own way through college, and 'vacations' meant the hardest work of the year. But when I was a Senior, all the drudgery was transformed. Paradise wouldn't have been in it with that little co-educational college campus and library and chapel and classrooms; for I found *her*. Just a classmate she was. You tell how your girls dressed; I never noticed how *she* dressed; it might have been in shimmering green and silver, and it might have been in linsey woolsey, for all I knew. But—she could *think*, and she could *talk!* We discusssed everything together, from philosophy and the evolution of history to the affairs of the day. I spent every hour with her that I could, and in all sorts of places. There's a spot in the stackroom of the old library that I always visit yet, when I go back—because of her. I've never known a woman since with such a mind, such breadth and clearness; and it showed in her face—the face of Athena, not Diana or Venus! I believe that with such a companion at my side, to turn to in every perplexity, I could make my life worth while. But she—saw it differently."

"Is she a feminist now?" slyly inquired the Explorer.

"She, too, married, after a while—a fine fellow, but—anything but a student. I can't help . . ."

"Mine," said the fourth, the Socialist, "will sound least dramatic of all—though I assure you the time was dramatic enough for me. You talk about your goddesses; my pedestal held just a sweet human girl, —a nurse, serving her first year at the hospital, that time we had the smash-up in '80. And you talk of beauty, and style, and brain; but with me it isn't of a pretty face or graceful form I think when I recall that magic time; and least of all is it of any intellectual prowess. I'm not sure whether she knew the difference between physics and metaphysics, or whether she'd ever heard of a cosine. But she was endowed with the charm of charms in a woman—sympathy. She would listen by the hour while I poured out to her my young hopes and ambitions; I could tell her all the dreams a young fellow cherishes most deeply—and would die of mortification if even his best friend guessed at their existence. She always understood; and though she talked little herself, she had the effect of making me appear at my very best. I felt I could move the world if she would just stand by and watch. But in spite of her kindness and gentleness she turned me down. Many times I've questioned . . ."

"That was all right for a sick boy," commented the Diplomat, "but for a *wife*, a girl like Alison——"

" 'Alison,' " echoed the Engineer, involuntarily, "a nice name, anyway; that was *her* name."

"Why——" the Explorer mused—"that's an odd coincidence; so was *hers*—Alison Forbes."

"Alison Forbes"—breathed the Socialist—"Alison Forbes—Marsden!"

And suddenly there was a silence, and the four friends looked strangely at one another. For they knew in that moment that there had been in those lives of theirs left far behind, not four first girls, but one—seen with different eyes.

A SOPHISTRY OF ART

By Eugene Smith

ON THE station platform in Quanah, one morning, I stopped "waiting for the train" for a moment to watch a man and woman painting on a large signboard across the way. The inevitable wiseacre in the little group of travelling men explained that they were really talented artists, a man and wife.

The husband had contracted—er—a throat affection in their studio back East, and physicians had ordered him to the open air and high, dry altitude of west Texas. So they had come, and were earning expenses, making a series of paintings on signboards, advertisements of a lumber corporation, throughout the Panhandle country.

I walked out across the tracks near where the slightly stooped husband, in overalls, and his little wife, looking very attractive in her neat apron and sunbonnet, were at work.

There was a pathos about the thing that went straight to my heart. The loyal little woman and the stricken husband there in the clear, crisp morning

air and sunshine, earnestly striving, undismayed. Something—a common sympathy—thrilled me.

And now the painting seemed artistic. The general idea was a lovely cottage home (built, of course, with Oakley's lumber, as was intimated). But the cottage was not glaringly new—rather mellowed a bit with time, it seemed, and was the more homelike for it.

In the front stood a sweet little woman, looking down a winding road, and in the expression on her face, painted by the real little woman, was joyous hope—almost certainty—of seeing the husband coming down the road to her and home, after his day's work.

The colours of sunset added to the beauty of the conception, which altogether made desirable the having such a little wife to wait for one each evening at such a little cottage home. And that was the purpose of it; when you thought of home-building, you also thought of Oakley's lumber.

The painters were happy in their work—happy as two birds building a nest. The wife, seated on her little stepladder, with palette and brushes, was deftly pointing up the vines about the windows, as all good wives should. She hummed something of a tune, now and then looking gayly down at him, who laughed back up at her from his work on the winding road and distant trees.

A courteous inquiry and my being an Easterner,

was a passport into their confidences. "We only paint a little while in the cool of the morning and afternoon of each day," he was saying to my remarks on the weather. "It's dangerous to lay on much paint at a time," he continued, "for the sand ruins it."

"Oh, if it wasn't for the sand storms!" she chimed in. "But we love the country, and the folks, too; they seem so much a part of the out of doors, you know. Though we hope—we expect—to go back home before long." She was looking fondly down at him.

"I had a little trouble with my throat," he explained depreciatively. "But this western air has just about put me in the running again. It's wonderful." I could see the thankfulness in his eyes, as he smiled up at his companion. I didn't blame him for loving life.

In the smoking-car of the belated train we travelling men discussed the case of the painters.

"It's only his throat that bothers him a bit," I denied with some heat. "Besides, he is nearly recovered, and looks it."

"Yes, I know; that's characteristic. It's what they all say when they begin to perk up in a change of climate," persisted the Pessimist in the crowd. "But the average is 100 to 1 against them. I've seen too many lungers out here in this country."

Damn a Pessimist with his statistics, anyhow!

. . . .

Several months later I made another trip through the Texas Panhandle country, and at each town going up from Quanah toward Amarillo I saw one of the Oakley lumber advertisements prominently displayed on large bill-boards. They were all the same, like the first one; that is, if your glance was but a passing one. But to me, who had grown interested in Art and things artistic, there was a difference in the paintings. Yes, a difference! I wasn't so sure at first. "It's just imagination," I pooh-poohed the idea. But later on——

Anyhow, I soon found myself going directly from the station, on each arrival, to look up the Oakley bill-board. It was never hard to find. Somehow, I just got to wondering—worrying—about the welfare of the young husband, the artist, I had met.

In the first few of the paintings I found portrayed all the life and glad hope and expectancy that I had seen some time before in the one at Quanah.

Then came the inevitable. Strange as it was, I knew that I had been expecting—dreading—it; though rather in the gossip around the hotels than in the pictures themselves, where I really found it. That was the only surprise.

I remember, in Clarendon—the first town after you get up on the Cap-rock of the Staked Plains—

there I saw—or imagined—it first. One is ever instinctively wary of eyesight in that land of mirages.

And in each succeeding village and town as I travelled westward and upward, I felt it—saw it—there on the bill-boards, as if painted in half-unconsciously by the artist: a faint trace of querulous doubt in the face of the little, waiting wife, spirit of melancholia lying dull in the picture.

As I was getting out of Goodnight one afternoon—a little ahead of time—in the automobile that daily makes the round trip to Claude, we drove past the Oakley signboard. I was in a hurry to get on to Claude to see the trade before night, and be ready to leave for Amarillo the next morning. But forgetting all this at the sight of the picture on the bill-board, I asked the chauffeur to stop a minute before it.

She was still smiling, the little wife waiting there in front of their home for her husband's return, but the smile was hollow and lifeless. I knew—could see—she was full of uneasiness and dread, and was only smiling to keep up her courage.

"That's quite a lumber advertisement—there," I ventured. The chauffeur was drinking water from the canvas canteen.

"Uh-huh!" he gulped. "I seen 'em painting it."

"A man and woman?"

"Well, yes; but the woman did most of it. I saw

her there every day for some time. Once in a while the man—her husband, I guess—would be tryin' to help paint, but he was all in. You could tell it, the way he looked."

I winced at his words. So here it was, confirmed, what I had been hoping was only imagination. Confound that Pessimist!

"They must have painted a good many of these signs; I see them everywhere," I continued, in a disinterested manner.

"There's another'n over at Claude," yawned the chauffeur. "I think I remember hauling them people over in the car."

"Over to Claude?"

"Yes—I fergit. I never pay much attention to the folks I haul," he remarked casually, eying me in a bored way.

Then we drove on.

A day later I arrived in Amarillo from Claude, glad, for it was my trip's end. I started walking uptown from the station to stretch my legs, besides—well, there across the street, on a vacant lot, was the Oakley bill-board, and the picture. The late afternoon sunlight fell full across it.

I looked at the woman in the picture, whom I had come to know for the real little wife, the artist, painting from her heart. She stood smiling, but behind the smile I read doubt and dread realized, and

hope—almost—dying hard. For the smile was but a poor attempt, and the joyous expectancy I saw shining in her eyes months before at Quanah was not there now. There was a subtle air of unmistakable despair about her. Her very frailty and dependency and loyal effort to keep her smile wrung from me a quick sympathy.

I turned back to the drab routine of life sadly, and picking up my grips, saw the Pessimist standing on the sidewalk with his detestable knowing look. There behind him came the Wiseacre. It was one of those little coincidences of a drummer's life which so often find the same parties together again.

"I was just looking at another one of the pictures—the last one, I guess," I said suddenly, feeling unashamed of my concern and sadness.

"Last one!" exclaimed the Wiseacre, full of ready information. "Why, man! That's their *first* one. Here's where they began last year. I saw them in St. Paul three weeks ago, happy as wrens."

THE MESSAGE IN THE AIR

By B. R. Stevens

THE typewriters were clicking busily in the place. Every one seemed honestly, industriously at work.

Looking out of the aperture prepared for the purpose, Lance Allison saw nothing suspicious. Yet Monsieur the General had been so sure that information was leaking, in some mysterious way, from this very room.

Lance had been surprised that the fame of an American detective should have made any impression in France: more surprised when the General, on learning his identity, had personally solicited his aid.

Sitting with ears as well as eyes alert, his quick brain began to dissociate the sound of the typewriters one from another.

That tall girl in black—the one with the pale, pale face, he amended in his thought, so many, alas! were in black—that girl wrote with an even monotony in consonance with her expressionless countenance.

The pert little lass in blue seemed to write each

word with an emphasis, for her spacing was noticeable each time.

And so it went, each typist showing some marked peculiarity as his ear picked out the particular rhythm.

His examination had reached the last one, and for the first time be observed its operator closely . . . Something familiar and different about that girl. . . . Not her clothes, nor her coiffure—nothing he could put a finger on.

Then he caught the click of her machine. Different from any of the others, it seemed to jerk out the words and syllables with amazing irregularity, dwelling on one letter, slighting another, pausing between. Here, too, was something hauntingly familiar.

In the meantime men came and went, and Lance's watchful eye followed the slightest movement made by each newcomer. At any moment some signal might give him a clue to the disclosures which the General declared seemed to be made daily.

A timid country lad entered, wiping the dew of embarrassment from his brow. After some awkward hesitation he conferred with one of the clerks, evidently stumbling and halting in his inquiries.

No word of the colloquy reached Lance's ear, but he suddenly became aware of a message in the air—clear, deliberate, reiterated!

Fifty thousand English left Paris this morning. Destination, Arras.

An hour later the girl who somehow seemed different was confronted in the private quarters of Monsieur the General by Lance Allison, American detective. Bright-eyed and defiant, she smouldered under the guard's restraint.

"You are an American!" There was curt reproach in the detective's tone.

"Well, what of that?" she snapped.

"How came *you* a traitor to the Allies?"

Then, as she did not answer, he bowed to Monsieur the General. "This girl gave out her information to a young clod-hopper to-day. More than likely some other one yesterday and the day before, or to him in a different disguise. At any rate, they were men who could spell English—or American," he added whimsically.

"But how? How, Monsieur le detective? He approached her not—nor even looked toward her."

"No," smiled Lance, "but he had his ear cocked in her direction." He turned to the seething girl. "Now, make a clean breast of it, Miss. You are done for. What evil spirit prompted treachery in one born under the Stars and Stripes?"

Suddenly the smouldering fire burst into the flame of speech.

" 'Twas Jean Armand, the low-down dog! Pretended to love me—*me!* Kissed me—took my hard-earned money for his own comfort. And then—the

day he went to the front—he married Elise, a stupid, wax-faced doll! . . . *Then* I swore to betray France as he had betrayed me—and I have done it."

"But how?" The General's question was addressed to the detective.

"By the clicks of her typewriter, Monsieur. She practised a peculiar jerky touch so that it would become unnoted. Then when a spy came in—was the hand on the heated brow the signal, I wonder?—she talked to him by the dots and dashes of the Morse code with as much clearness as if the words were breathed into his ear."

"Yes, and it took an American to find me out," she glowed with strange exultation. "These conceited Frenchies were all at sea. . . . *And*—Jean, the husband of the fat Elise, fell yesterday under a charge from troops *I* sent to meet his regiment—so—I don't care what you do to me, now. My work is done!"

IN A GARDEN

By Catherine Runscomb

DICK HALCOMB stood waiting on the shady station platform. A little groom appeared, suddenly and breathlessly.

"Sorry to be late, sir," he gasped. "Mrs. Paige and Miss Laura have gone to Mrs. Vingut's garden party, and left word for you to join them."

"Damn!" muttered Halcomb. He had had a hard day in the city, and felt quite unequal to dragging himself about, wilted and irritated, any longer. Really, he considered, settling back into the motor, he was getting pretty fed up with this insatiable lust of Laura's. He wondered whether, when they were married and she was away from her mother, he would be able to instil in her a more normal enjoyment of her pleasures. He thought, vaguely, of not going after all—of awaiting them at the house. But a vision rose before him of Laura all evening wrapped in her delicate fury of aloofness, something too inhumanly polite to be called sulking, but of shattering import to nerves on edge—and he decided grimly that he was too hot, too tired. In the last

analysis it was less trouble to go to the garden party.

By this time they were humming smoothly up to the Vinguts' gates. The breeze had cooled the heat of his brow, but his thoughts were growing only more feverish with the passing moments. He halted the chauffeur suddenly: "Let me out here, Lane. I'll walk up to the house—I need exercise."

It was pleasant to stroll along the driveway, to stretch his cramped limbs, and absorb at leisure the careful beauties of the land about him. The lonely graciousness of tall poplar trees, the low-flowering crimson of rhododendrons ministered gratefully to his troubled soul. New satisfaction filled him as he discovered no people in sight. They must be the other side of the house, on the terraces, he thought, restfully. And then, suddenly, he stopped short, staring.

Just ahead in a clearing was an old Italian fountain, gray stone, carved and mellowed by the centuries, water splashing musically into its basin. Sitting on the edge was a tall young girl, the adolescent grace of her body showing clear and white through the classic scantness of her shell-pink draperies. Diana herself she might have been, nymph-robed and formed, her chestnut hair bound about by a silver fillet, her long, white legs, uncovered, dangling in the water. He felt a wild certainty that if he

spoke she would melt away into the spray of the fountain. And then she turned her head and saw him.

"You are late," she said, in a very clear, low voice that merged into the plashing water.

"Yes—I am late," he stammered. "I wonder . . . who you are?"

She stared into his eyes with the deep, unconscious gravity of a child.

"I am Athena," she answered simply.

"Athena!" he gasped. "Good heavens! Then you *are* a goddess—or a nymph——"

She laughed—and her laughter sounded in his ear more like the fountain than the fountain itself.

"Oh, no," she reassured him. "We all have Greek names because they are more beautiful."

"'We all'! . . . Good lord, child, who *are* you?"

"Why—I am Athena—one of the Morris Dancers. We came to do our Spring Dance for the party."

How absurdly simple, he thought. And yet how insufficiently it explained the wonder of her.

"Why are you here—alone?" he went on. He could do nothing but question her. He had to get to the bottom of her, somehow.

"We're through dancing—and the people tired me."

He sat down on the edge of the fountain, and she moved up beside him, touching him, a divine friendliness in her deep blue eyes.

"How did they tire you—child?" he asked her gently.

"They are all so artificial—and so conscious. We are taught how terrible this consciousness of self and sex is. Hellena Morris teaches us that woman is only really beautiful, really strong, when she is quite unconscious and unstudied."

He eyed the grave little lecturer amusedly.

"Do you understand all that—Athena?" he ventured.

"Why, yes," she said. "We are all very intelligent. It's the wholesome life we lead and the perfection of our bodies."

He threw back his head and laughed.

"I like you when you laugh," she told him suddenly. "I like you to throw your head back, and the kind little crinkles round your eyes. When you are not laughing you look so tired."

"I am tired," he admitted; "tired and disillusioned most of the time. Perhaps it's my unwholesome life and imperfect body——"

He watched her, glowing with unreasoning pleasure at her laugh.

"Humour, too!" he cried. "Child, you are wonderful! Tell me about yourself . . . everything. I must know the magic that evolved such perfection."

"Give me your hand," she said. "There! . . . Now you can understand me better.

"There isn't much to tell. I am seventeen, and have lived with Hellena since I was eight. There are

twenty of us. She teaches us . . . wonderful things. Not hideous 'accomplishments,' but *real* things that will help us—Greek and Latin, and the care of our bodies, and the worship of beauty. We all dance, and sing, and play . . . and we paint, and write verse, and translate the classics, and read to each other. And we are very strong and hardy, because of our simple lives. . . . We can beat men at their own games, although we are so slight. We wear few clothes—nothing to restrain or disfigure us. And when we dance we don't learn special steps; we express in ourselves whatever we are dancing—Sorrow, or Love, or Spring. See, I will do you part of our Spring Dance."

She drew her white, dripping legs from the fountain and danced before him—a thing so light and delicate, so breeze-blown and whimsical, so altogether lovely, that his distrust of her humanity returned to him unbearably.

She stopped—a sudden flush of rose and gleam of white—and dropped by his side again.

"And every night," she went on, as though there had been no interruption, "we say our creed: 'I believe in beauty—all the beauty that ever has been and ever will be in the world. And I will worship and serve it with the highest there is in me—always.'"

He could not speak at first. Then finally, unevenly: "I can't presume to praise your theory of life, Athena

—any more than I could your dancing. Thank you for them both."

She put her hand on his knee, looking at him, whitely, a little wildly.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Dick," he answered, as simply as she had told him hers.

"I should like to marry you—Dick."

He stared at her.

"So you include marriage—in your scheme of life?" he said dully.

"Yes. Hellena says our marriage laws are terrible, but, while there is no substitute, if we love terribly it is right to marry. I want to marry you, Dick—to be with you always, and take the tired look away from your eyes."

"Child!" he cried. "You don't know me!"

"It doesn't matter," she told him quaintly. "Love often comes this way."

He took her hand against his cheek.

"Dear," he said, "I am thirty-five—a pretty world-stained and world-weary creature. Your radiant youth was given you for a better man than I."

"I love *you*, Dick, I have never loved before."

"Athena, I am . . . going to marry . . . some one else."

She trembled against him.

"Some one you *love?*" she cried. "Dick, some one

you love as you could love me? Is she as young and beautiful? Could she amuse you, and care for you, and adore you always—*always*, as I would?"

"Athena," he said slowly, "there is no one like you . . . in the world. I love this . . . other girl in my own way. Not as you should be loved, but I'm not fit for such love as that. I can't marry you. Athena—dear—don't make it too hard."

She sat, silent.

Then: "Dick—would you—kiss me?"

He took her gently in his arms.

In the distance people were moving. There was a rustle and a chatter. He let her go suddenly.

"Good-bye—dear," he said.

"Good-bye—Dick," she answered dully.

Once he turned back and saw her—drooping, rose-white, against the old gray fountain.

. . . .

From the gay group ahead Laura detached herself, ruffled and fluttering.

"You're late enough," she greeted him.

"Yes," he said. Then, with an effort: "Have you seen the—Morris Dancers?"

"Oh, yes; we all did. I think they're rather disgusting—so few clothes and so much throwing themselves about; don't you?"

"You forget," he answered slowly, "that I have just arrived."

A CLEVER CATCH

By Lloyd F. Loux

SHE was a thief, and he knew it. He had followed her in her travels, where she posed as a saleswoman. At various times he had thought to capture her, but she evaded him. He feared he had too little evidence, and she was so wily and so clever.

When he saw her sun-kissed hair and inviting lips, he felt abashed to think of associating crime with her, and so he waited for more conclusive evidence. He wished to be sure. How embarrassing it would be to accuse her and then find her innocent!

And yet—he knew she was dangerous. Then one day he realized something odd. He had been robbed! *He*, the cleverest detective on the force, had been robbed! Yes, it was hard to realize. And by the very woman he was seeking to capture. Yes, he knew *she* must have done it.

Now he would bring her to justice! But how? He had no actual evidence more than his own conviction. Ah, yes! He would put on a bold front and bluff her. Yes, bluff her! How happy he felt. Why, after he had made this capture he would be

the proudest man on the force. And he could have the satisfaction of saying he had wrung the confession from her. So he togged up and put on a bold front and a wise air and started out. But suppose she suspected his bluff? Oh, horrors! Imagine his chagrin. The wisest man on the force, and made a plaything of by a baby of a woman! But he was started, and only cowards turn back. Suffice it for us to know that he succeeded and escorted her to the nearest magistrate's office, and she confessed! Yes, and he had the satisfaction of hearing her take oath to the confession. Then the magistrate appointed him to be her keeper for life.

The case was closed with the best wishes of the magistrate.

STRICTLY BUSINESS

By Lincoln Steffens

"THERE'S an extra, a Christmas girl downstairs, that I think you'll want to keep; she's a worker, but——"

The big store manager looked up at the tall, prim New England woman who was the head of his employment bureau, and he understood. But he's a brute.

"But?" he insisted.

"Her references aren't good."

"Not good?" he said. "You mean they ain't good people?"

"Oh," she exclaimed, "they're good people; they're very good people, but——"

"But?"

"They prefer not to speak, for or against."

"I see," he growled. "A case for bad people. Send her up to me."

And up came the case, another Puritan, slim, alive, afire.

"I know," she began, "I know what you're going to say; every word of it. I'm fired, but, first, I must

hear a lecture; the same old lecture. So fire away, but cut it short."

"Won't you be seated?" he said politely.

"Thanks," she mocked.

He rose, and, with a chivalrous bow, begged her to "Please be seated."

"No," she declared decidedly, "I'll take it standing, so I can get out if I don't like——"

"Sit down," he bellowed.

She sat.

He stood glaring at her. "Think I'd let you stand there lecturing and judging me?" he growled. And he lectured and judged her. Then he, too, sat.

"How do you know what I was going to say?" he demanded.

"Because you all say the same thing," she flashed; "everywhere I work. They tell me I'm bad, so I'm discharged, but they all give me that lecture on how to be good—out of a job." She named places she had worked: stores where the managers and the conditions were notorious. "They gave it to me at Freeman's," she sneered, "and," she jeered, "at the One Price Stores! Everywhere I get it, and not only from you bosses. I see the other girls catch on to my story, and, with looks at me, pass it on. 'Poor Thing,' they whisper and, then, of course, the Poor Thing is fired."

She didn't look like a Poor Thing. She looked

like a very Brave Thing to this manager of women, but he felt, with his man's intuition, the despair that was washing her courage away. So he was kind.

"How old is the child?" he asked brutally.

"Five."

"Who takes care of it while you're at work?"

"Mother."

"And you support all three?"

"Yes, and," she blazed, "you needn't worry about that. You fire away. I'll make out, somehow. Only don't, don't tell me I'm bad again. I know that, too. Don't I tell it to myself every hour, every day, and, if I forget it for one little hour, doesn't some one remind me?"

He was afraid she'd break, and he didn't want her to; not her. "Too proud, too brave."

"You needn't worry about me, either," he said. "This is a business house, strictly business. No sentiment, and no scruples. We're here to make money, and we're on the lookout for women who'll work and work hard for us. We don't mind a little thing like a little child. Fact is, a little——"

She was lifting from her chair.

"Which is it," he asked roughly, "a boy, or——?"

"A girl," she said, and she dropped back.

"The fact is," he resumed, "a little girl at home makes the mother work harder in the store. And that's the report on you. They say you're a hard

worker, so I'd like to keep you on, regular, for life."

She lifted again.

"But——" he said.

"But," she collapsed.

"I don't see," he said, "how you can work hard, regular, if you go on telling yourself that lie every hour, every day; that you're bad."

He got up, huffily. "How bad are you, anyway? How good you been since—during the last five years?"

"As good as I was before," she blazed, springing to her feet.

"Um-m," he calculated. "I'll bet you are, and I'll bet that's pretty good. Good enough for us. We ain't so awfully good ourselves. Quick sales, small profits, and satisfied customers—lots of 'em. That's what we call good."

She was reaching for him again, with hands, with eyes.

"But," he struck, "you can't do much for us and the little girl if you're afraid every hour, every day, that you'll be found out and fired. We got to cut out fear."

"You mean?" she gasped.

"I mean," he thundered, "I mean that you got to cut out that every-hour-every-day business. See? It's rot, anyhow. You're as good as anybody, and if

anybody here says you ain't, you come to me and I'll tell 'em this is a women's business, run for profit; and women; including mothers; women, children, and—money. Y'on?"

She stood there staring; comprehending, and he felt that she wanted to break, but——

"Now, now, none o' that," the brute commanded. "Not here. This is business, strictly business. You get back on your job. D'y' hear?"

Yes, she nodded; she heard, and she bolted for the door, but as she opened it she turned and she broke:

"God, how I will work! How I will——"

THE ADVENT OF THE MAJORITY

By Stella Wynne Herron

COLONEL SCIPIO BRECKENBRIDGE stopped polishing the lighthouse lamp and stared out across Lone Palm Key to where the blazing yellow sand met the dark blue waters of the Gulf. Yes—there they were again, hobnobbing on the beach—the alien Higgins, his face a beef red from alcohol within and the tropic sun without, stretched prone, the breeze flapping his loose sailor's pants around his skinny ankles—the Captain erecting a tarpaulin tent against the day of the great four-yearly event, the presidential election.

Yes, indeed. Make no mistake. Lone Palm Key *is* a part of the United States. This speck of an island that flips up out of the Gulf like the tip end of a fish's tail is listed as the sixty-sixth precinct of Florida. For twenty years now the Colonel had religiously cast one vote for the Democratic candidate; the Captain, one for the Republican candidate. For twenty years—the Captain and the Colonel being the entire population—the sixty-sixth had split fifty-fifty—and for twenty years both had

cherished the secret hope of one day carrying it.

Mr. Higgins had drifted into Lone Palm—literally—on a hatch top of the ill-fated *Petrel* two months before, and it was not long before his lamentable failing made itself manifest. Mr. Higgins was unhappy unless drunk. When his entertainment ceased, and it looked as if, through sheer thirst, he would have to consent to be taken to Key West with the Captain's next cargo of sponges—non-human—he had discovered a cast-up keg of whiskey. Such an act of Providence almost restored his waning faith in God. But, alas! for an acrid week now the sacred fount had been dry. This time he would surely be frozen out—— But, now, here was the Captain encouragingly friendly, almost chummy, with him——

The Colonel strode across to the recumbent Higgins, and touched him with his foot.

"Higgins," he asked, "do yo' reckon to vote on Lone Palm this election?"

"I 'ave that intention," replied Mr. Higgins gently.

"Are yo'—Republican or—Democrat?" The Colonel's voice trembled in spite of himself.

"I 'aven't decided—yet," and Mr. Higgins let his gaze drift again skyward.

The Colonel met the Captain's perfidious eyes

across the prostrate form of the potential majority. In that silent glance there was a declaration of bloody war.

From that moment began the Golden Age on Lone Palm for Mr. Higgins. With flattering frequency he drank healths to the Grand Old Party, then to the party "that gave birth to Andrew Jackson and Thomas Jefferson, sah!"

But no maiden, pressed by two suitors, was ever more coy in avowing a choice than he.

A week before election the Captain's and the Colonel's liquor ran out. Mr. Higgins, to his horror, began to get sober. The day before election the Captain and his sloop disappeared. The Colonel did not wait to investigate. He also hoisted sail for Key West. That night both the Captain and the Colonel unloaded mysterious cargoes. At midnight, after wandering constantly between the Captain's bungalow and the lighthouse, Mr. Higgins fell down in the sand, impartially between the two abodes. The Captain and the Colonel, in silence, removed the political enigma to his sail-cloth tent.

Mr. Higgins did not appear at the polls until nearly noon. It was evident that the combination of Jamaica rum and Kentucky mountain dew had made terrible ravages on a constitution even so immune to spirituous shocks as his.

"Drink's the cause o' this here country's goin' to

the dorgs," he remarked, through pallid, parched lips, as he entered the booth.

His ballot cast, he disappeared, still enwrapped in mystery and silence.

At exactly six o'clock the Colonel arose.

"The polls of the Sixty-sixth Precinct, Monroe County, State of Florida, are now closed. We will proceed to count votes, Captain Hartford!"

The Colonel thrust into the box a hand that shook in spite of him and drew out a ballot.

"One Republican!"

The Captain's heart leaped.

"One Democratic!" announced the Colonel tremulously.

The Captain waited, staring at the floor. Finally he looked up. The Colonel was gazing as if hypnotized, his bulging eyes fastened on the ballot in his hand. At last the announcement came:

"The Prohibition Party—one vote!"

Two minutes later they found this pinned to Mr. Higgins' empty tent:

"i don what i don bekaws of conshunce i suddently cam to fel the orful kurse of drink hav made free to borrow a sale bote will leve same at kee west"

The Colonel drew himself up in his Prince Albert.

"The Sixty-sixth has again split even, sah!" he announced.

THE NIGHT NURSE

By Will S. Gidley

IT WAS long after the midnight hour in the dimly lighted wards of the field hospital back of the English battle line at Ypres, and pretty, white-capped Nydia, the nurse best beloved by the wounded soldiers—Nydia, with the face of a Madonna and voice as soft and soothing as that of a mother crooning a lullaby to a sleeping babe—was flitting about among the cots, adjusting a bandage or pillow here, and giving a swallow of water or medicine there, and doing everything possible for the comfort of her charges.

There was something of a mystery about Nydia. Nobody knew her history or antecedents. She had appeared at the hospital and proffered her services at a time when they were badly needed, and the medical staff had accepted the offer and set her at work without further questioning or investigation.

From the first Nydia was very popular with the patients to whom she ministered; far more so than she was with the grim-visaged surgeon-general in

charge of the field hospital. Said he one day to his assistant:

"This angel-faced nurse we've taken on lately may mean well, but I am afraid she is a bit careless. Altogether too many of her patients are dropping off—er—unexpectedly. I'll have to look into the matter."

Which he did—later on—but that, as Kipling says, is another story.

Return we now to Nydia on her nightly rounds.

She pauses at the cot of a stalwart young English captain who is suffering from a gunshot wound received a few days before, and bends over him with a look of anxious solicitude on her face.

"How is the pain to-night, my captain?" she asks, in a low, sweet voice like a caress.

"Bad, bad," he replies slowly. "But I can stand it, dear, so long as I have you for a nurse. Just think! Only a week since you first came to my cot side, and already I love——"

"Hush! my brave captain," she breaks in on his rhapsody. "You must not think of such things when you are suffering so from your wound. It will be time enough for that to-morrow. To-night you must sleep. I must use the needle to quiet your pain."

"And when I wake to-morrow may I talk to you of love?"

"Yes—when you wake, my captain, you may talk to me of love—*when you wake!*

"Listen, dear," she went on in a whisper so low that only he could hear. "I am going to lull you to sleep with a story—a story of myself." She paused long enough to use the needle and then resumed whispering in his ear:

"Don't interrupt or try to ask questions, my captain; there isn't time for that. In three minutes you will be asleep, and I must talk fast. You, no doubt, believe me to be either French or English. I am neither. I am from beyond the Rhine, a true daughter of the Fatherland. When the war came I had an affianced lover in the German army, a young lieutenant, who had been sent to England on a secret mission. There he was arrested, tried, and executed, as a spy, in the Tower of London.

"Yes, the English shot my lover for a spy! Since that my only thoughts have been of revenge. That is why I am here acting as nurse—and why my patients die!

"The English sent my lover out into the Great Unknown—alone. I will send a thousand English to keep him company! To-day, my captain, you said you would gladly die for me, so I am taking you at your word!

"I have just given you a fatal dose of the hypodermic, and when you wake it will be in another

world, with my brave Wilhelm, who was named for the great War Lord. When you meet him, tell him that *I sent you*—and give him my love!

"Ha! ha! Do you hear, my captain? Give him my love; and tell him that each night, Providence permitting, I will send him a new messenger bearing my greetings! That is all. Good-bye, my captain. The end is near. I am going to kiss you now so you may die happy!"

She bent lower over the cot of the dying officer. He had not spoken before during her self-revelation; but now his eyes, filled with horror and loathing, rolled upward to meet hers, and with a final effort he hissed forth the one word—"*Fiend!*"

Nydia smiled—a grim, mirthless smile.

"No, not fiend, my captain—only a German!"

WHY THE TRENCH WAS LOST

By Charles F. Pietsch

NOT two miles away lay his home. Metre by metre, Joffre's "nibbling" had forced the Boches back over the death-sown fields of the Argonne. And now as he sat in his cunningly hidden nest aloft in a treetop, observer for a battery of 75's, his telescope, wandering from the German trenches, brought home so close that he seemed almost to be standing in his own garden.

It was so close, he thought—just over there. And it was so good to be able to watch little Marie playing at the door, and to peep inside into the kitchen where Jeanne was working—or to follow her from room to room as her slim figure flitted past the windows.

He had worried so when "Papa" Joffre's masterly retreat had left her there alone. But this was the fourth day now that he had kept watch over her, and soon, he said to himself with a smile—soon that little home was sure to lie back of the French lines in safety.

The day was quiet. Only intermittently a cannon barked or a rifle spat across the wire entanglements. And all the morning he had sat watching Marie's

flaxen tresses bobbing among the rose bushes—and dreaming of when the war ended.

And suddenly the picture changed.

Marie has dropped her dolls and is racing into the kitchen. The door slams. He almost hears the bolt shot to, he thinks. And a squad of Uhlans rides into the yard.

For months past he had driven that picture from his mind. It couldn't be—oh! it couldn't be. And now in sight of home it came in grim reality. So close—and yet as well be at the ends of the earth with that German line between them.

He steadied the telescope in time to see a gun butt smash in the door and the officer stride in. The German batteries opened with a crash. A charge was coming. But he had no eyes for the enemy. He felt, rather than saw, a gray-green wave with a crest of steel flow up from the German trenches and over the "dead man's land." And instinctively he shot orders into the transmitter at his lips.

"Two hundred metres."

"One hundred and seventy-five metres—left."

And as the little puffs of shrapnel began to blossom over the gray-green wave, his gaze swung back to the little cottage.

And then he forgot the Germans—forgot his comrades in the endangered trench—forgot war—everything. For a figure—a woman's figure—struggling—

fell past a window in the arms of a uniformed figure.

He thought a scream came to his ears. For one insane second he started down from his station: he must go; he was so close. She needed him. And then as his eyes fell on the struggle below he realized how far it was—how helpless he was. And——

But there was a way. And he began to snap orders into the transmitter.

"One thousand five hundred metres—eight degrees left."

A puff rose on the highway running past his home.

"One thousand six hundred metres."

And a shell exploded at the little stable.

"One thousand six hundred and fifty metres"—he shot another order over the wire—and another—and another—and then:

"Battery, fire!" And with a cry, fell headlong from the treetop as the little home and its tragedy vanished in a whirl of smoke and wreckage.

THE KING OF THE PLEDGERS

By H. R. R. Hertzberg

The Editor of *Life*,
31 West 17th Street,
New York City.

I SEND this communication to you rather than to the editor of one of the country's daily papers, because your publication is national and even international, instead of being a more or less local one, and also because the sketch of my life it contains, true though it is, has an appearance sufficiently fictional to fit one of your short-story numbers.

My special purpose in wishing to have this autobiographical sketch published is that it may warn and protect a worthy body of men, the Roman Catholic priesthood of the United States, against a class of grafters which preys upon them and of which I was the "King" for nearly ten years.

But, knowing mankind in general, and myself in particular, fairly well, I have no doubt there is another reason for the wish, to wit, that vanity of vanities which compels all crooks, "con"-men, grafters, to brag of their exploits occasionally, and which—

through a perverse viewing of viciousness as prowess —causes the most of men to be prouder of their falls from grace than of the good things they have done.

Up to this very day ten years ago I was wealthy and happy. The wealth I had inherited and the happiness I had married. Then my happiness died— with my wife. And, the same evening, my wealth disappeared—with a dishonest manager.

There was nothing left me but our little daughter, a child of eight, and some two thousand dollars. The former I gave into the care of the Dominican Sisters at whose convent, in a small Eastern town, my wife had been educated, and who would, I felt sure, make a true woman and lady of the girl. And the money I also turned over to the nuns, for my child's keep as a boarding-pupil, until she was eighteen.

So I remained alone with my responsibility: the need of providing for my daughter's later future. This purpose simply had to be achieved, and that within ten years—because, when I recovered from the sickness, partly brought about by my wife's death, the doctor, a scientist of note and a close friend, told me frankly that I was afflicted with a disease of the heart which would not let me live no longer than a decade, and this only if I remained as exceptionally temperate as I had always been.

God knows I did my best to obtain honest and fairly remunerative work. My very best. But I failed utterly. And, finally, I came to think of work that was not honest. Grafting began to seem almost a duty, what with my pennilessness and my responsibility. Still, I did not know how to graft, not at all.

A bit of street-corner talk it was that "put me wise." I heard a fellow ask another to have a drink, and I heard the other's answer: "No," said he, "no more of that for mine. I've bin to Father O'Kelly's 'n' took the pledge fer keeps, 'n' the good man's give me five dollars to help the wife 'n' the baby till I c'n git a new job."

"He has taken the pledge and the priest has given him five dollars!" I repeated to myself. And then what poets call an inspiration came to me: there might be money in taking the pledge continually, as a business. First, I smiled at the odd, phantastically sacrilegious conceit. But I grew serious—the Responsibility (yes, it should be spelled with a capital) looming large in my mind's eyes. Soon I was walking rapidly toward the nearest Catholic church and calling for the pastor, a priest whom I did not know and who did not know me. My clothes were rather shabby by this time and I may have looked dissipated, thanks to my several months' incessant "worrying."

And the priest received me, and I took the pledge "before God and His Mother and the whole Court of

Heaven"; and the kindly old Father asked me whether I was in need, and, when I stammered a "yes," he gave me a bill and his blessing, and I was again on the street, a successful grafter.

To appreciate the enormity of my self-contempt at that moment you must know that I had steadily been not only what is usually meant by "a gentleman," but, also, a sincere, practical Catholic, while now I was a petty swindler—and a swindler of my Church.

Almost did I return to the priest and tell him the truth. Responsibility appeared, however, and led me away. At a distance from the priest's house I looked at my "thirty pieces of silver" which were a ten-dollar greenback. Then I judged that my appearance—of decent poverty—was an asset of sorts, that the "gentleman-gone-wrong" naturally elicited more sympathy of heart and purse than the commoner bar-room loafer.

Thereafter I became the King of the Pledgers.

Yes, there are many pledgers in the land. Professional pledge-takers, who are also professional drunkards. For Catholic priests are easily imposed on, since they're almost always warm-hearted men and since their faith and their calling render charity, helpfulness, imperative; impel them to extend the benefit of the doubt to every applicant, however worthless-looking, for fear of sinning against charity.

Wherefore, even the least plausible pledger is sure to pocket a donation each time he takes the pledge.

The professional pledger must be a traveller, of course. The most of cities can be "worked to a finish" in a week. But there are three, at least, which have kept even the King of the Pledgers, with all his sobriety and diligence, busy for four or five months.

As I have said, I was exceedingly successful. Two weeks ago my bank account, piled up through pledging only, totalled $9,902. With eighty-eight additional dollars I would have enough to purchase for my daughter the annuity—sufficient to keep her comfortable all her life—that was the object of my more than nine years' swindling.

Three times had I visited the little one since I took her to the convent. The last time she was sixteen and a happy, gentle, flower-like girl, gladdeningly and saddeningly like her mother. And I wrote her and heard from her every month.

Well, that day, two weeks ago, when I'd found myself so near my goal, I went out to "work" as usual. My victim was a young priest just ordained, the son of a multi-millionaire, who had given up a brilliant worldly position. I was the first person to whom he administered the pledge. He was moved to the core. And he gave me . . . one hundred dollars.

My life work was done.

In almost childlike glee I ran back to my room there to draw the check necessary for the immediate purchase of my girl's annuity. And there I found a letter from the child.

She asked for my fatherly consent—that she might enter the Dominican Sister's Order as a novice. She had a true vocation, said she, had always meant to be a nun. And now that she was eighteen . . . "it is my heart's wish, father, dear," were her words. A note from the Mother Superior confirmed her declaration.

Having read, I fell back in my chair and laughed crazily at the joke that was "on me." Then I thanked God for the child. And then I wrote a check for all the money I had, went to my last victim at once, told him everything, handed him my check and his hundred dollars—to spend in charity but not by way of gifts to pledgers, and fell into unconsciousness.

From that hour on I have been dying in a hospital bed. My daughter has received my consent, and the young priest will send her her father's love and last blessing when I am dead, in a day or so. And I shall die in peace.

Very truly yours,
The ex-King of the Pledgers,

A PO-LICE-MAN

By Lincoln Steffens

"CHIEF," said Mickey Sweeney, police reporter, to the Chief of Police, "my paper wants th' goods to prove whether that red-headed crook, Captain Mahoney, is a crook or an honest man."

The Chief was about to light a cigar. He blew out the match and turned an anxious face to Mickey. Twice the reporter had saved his official life. There was nothing he would not tell him, if he really wanted to know it, nothing. He looked at the boy darkly, then he looked away, off across the humming restaurant, off across the humming years, and the Chief's face cleared.

"Mickey," he said, "when I was young, younger than you, and a green cop, greener than you, I was posted on Sixth Avenue, east side, between Twenty-eighth Street and Thirty-three. The heart of the Tenderloin. And my beat beat with the beat of the blood of it; an th' life; an' th' death. One night, one of my first nights, a fly cabman—one of them night-hawks that picked up drunks to take 'em home and took 'em instead to th' Park and robbed 'em; I

wasn't onto th' game then, but because of th' tips they give th' police about other crooks, we let them operate—well, this night-hawk drives up close to th' curb by me, and says:

" 'Hey, Bill,' he whispers, hoarse, 'there's murder an' riot in th' Half Shell.'

"I hot-footed to th' oyster house. Empty; not a head in sight. But I listened, and underneath, hell was boiling: yells, curses, thuds. And I piped at th' end of th' counter, a bit back, a trapdoor with th' lid off. I dropped in.

"I come down on them. One of my feet scraped down th' face of some bloke, and he cussed. My other leg got across a feller's shoulder and stuck so I went down on my head, and my hands touched th' murdered body; they was all blood. Which helped me up; that, an' hearing near me a call, low an' quick; 'A cop!' and the chorus singing: 'Kill him!'

"So I come up standin', an' striking out, blind, with th' stick. But I began to look around, careful, to get th' lay. There was one gas-jet, rear. By it I made out th' feller that did th' murder. He was being fought over; some, th' friends o' th' dead man, desirous to kill him: others, his friends, to save him. I made for him. He was at the back, under the light, at th' tip end of th' two twisted strings of crazy-mad fighters. I had to go along between 'em, but that wasn't so hard. In th' surprise of my arrival,

the clinch had broke, and that let me pass; that an' my stick on their faces. So I got through, grabbed my man by th' collar of all th' shirts and coats he had on, and I threw him up back o' me onto an old poker table that stood in th' corner.

"So far I enjoyed it, but th' mob rallied. The two fighting sides joined, and all together come for me.

"Ever see a mob mad to murder, Mickey? It scares ye. It's a beast; looks like a beast, smells like a beast. I was scared. I hit out, first with my stick, then when th' mob jammed me against th' table, I hopped up on it and kicked with both legs. An' I floored 'em; lots of 'em. But they come up again, and again, and th' mass of 'em bent me back on th' prisoner. I had to hold him, you see, and he rolled an' pitched an' kicked; that's what give me only one hand. And, by and by, I had only one leg. He—or somebody—drove an oyster knife through my ankle, in between th' tendon an' th' bone, and nailed me to th' table.

"I was done for, I guess. I was hit all over—fists, knives, chairs, legs of tables. I was sore; weak. Mike, I was all in when I seen a red-headed cop dive into th' hole. That's how it looked to me, like a dive head-first. Maybe it was because I noticed first, and so particular, th' red head on that uniform, an' th' red face, an' th' red eyes; and because they looked so good to me.

" 'Hold 'em, Brother,' he calls to me, quiet-like an' sure. 'Easy does it.'

"And up he turns on his feet, an' begins to cut a swathe up to me through that mess o' men. It was beautiful. That's when I learned to use a stick right, watchin' him. He held it high, so as when it landed on a head, it come down level, exactly on th' crown. Seems to shoot th' 'lectricity down th' spine, through all th' nerves to all th' joints, plumb to th' toes. He hit no head twice. Every man he fanned closed up like a knife, and click, click, click—slow, regular, nice, he laid 'em down like a corduroy road on which he walked to me.

"His red eyes was looking every which way, and they didn't miss a thing. I saw 'em see th' knife that spiked me to th' table, but they was looking at somethin' else when his left hand pulled that knife, one jerk, and, in the same stroke, drove it into a bloke that was pounding my face, and left it in him.

" 'Baby between us,' he says, an' he grabs th' prisoner, yanks him to his feet, and when I, obeying him, took th' other side, he says:

" 'Forward, march!'

"And we marched. We stumbled some, an' slipped —off the bodies on th' floor. They was coming to, and moved; and some was getting up; enough to keep our sticks busy. But we marched, us three, like a battalion, to—under the hole.

" 'Up we go,' he says to me, and with my good foot in his two hands, he shoots me up and out like a lady mounting a horse in th' Park.

" 'Now, you,' he says to th' prisoner, and up th' prisoner came to me.

"And then he turns, belts th' two nearest heads two good last belts, and be bows. 'Gentlemen,' he says to th' mob, 'good-night.'

"He hands me his hand and comes out, closes th' trap-door down careful and stands on th' lid.

" 'Now, then,' he says to me, 'you take your baby to th' station; send me th' off-platoon, with th' wagon; and—don't hurry. I like it here. And that old oyster knife left rust in your left ankle. 'Tend to it.' "

The Chief lit the cigar he had been handling as a club. When it was burning perfectly, he said:

"Sweeney, I wish you wouldn't ask me nothing about Mahoney. He's a po-lice-man."

THE QUEST OF THE V. C.

By A. Byers Fletcher

THERE was tumultuous cheering in the ranks of the Irish Guards somewhere in France. Sergeant O'Reilly, V. C., had returned to the trenches. Two months before, Private O'Reilly had, with a scorching-hot machine-gun, held, single-handed, an important trench after all his comrades had fallen. Incidentally, he had also saved the life of an officer, who lay wounded and exposed on the parapet of the trench. His was but one of many such brave deeds which occurred almost daily along that terrible front, but O'Reilly's deed had the advantage of being conspicuous. Hence his two-months' leave, his journey to London, and his reception at Buckingham Palace, where the King himself pinned the little bronze cross to his khaki jacket. Hence, his public reception in his native village of Tullameelan, where they hung garlands of flowers about his neck, and his old mother wept tears of joyful pride. Hence, too, his return with the sergeant's stripes. The story of the honours heaped upon him had been duly chronicled and illustrated in the press, and had preceded his return

to the trenches. Hence, his joyful reception by the regiment.

Private Finnessy and Private Moloney had been among the first to grasp the hero's hand, and had joined heartily in the vociferous cheering, but now that affairs had again resumed their normal round, these two companions sat at the bottom of the trench, smoking thoughtfully.

"O'Reilly's a brave man," said Finnessy, then added, after a pause, "the lucky devil!"

"I believe ye," replied Moloney.

"And he only five feet sivin," continued Finnessy.

"With one punch," said Moloney, contemplating his hairy fist, "I could lift him into the inemy's trenches!"

"Do ye mind how all the girls in Tullameelan kissed him?" said Finnessy.

"I know one girl there that didn't!" said Moloney hotly.

"And I know another!" as hotly replied Finnessy.

"The papers are nothin' but lyin' rags," said Moloney.

"I believe ye," said Finnessy.

Viciously whistled the bullets across the top of the trench, and a shell or two whined overhead, unheeded by the comrades, long accustomed to the sound.

"But I'm not denyin'," said Finnessy, after a

pause, "that the little brown cross is a great timptation to anny girl."

"It is that!" agreed Moloney.

. . . .

"At five o'clock!" the whisper ran along the trench. Since three o'clock the guns massed on the hills behind them had been sending a shrieking death-storm into the enemy's trenches in front of the Irish Guards. At five, promptly, the storm of shell would cease. At a given signal the men would clamber out over the parapet, make their way through the openings in the wire entanglements, and rush the trenches before them. There was no outward excitement. The aspect of the men remained unchanged, but one could feel the nervous tension. A young subaltern, near Finnessy and Moloney, glanced occasionally at his wrist watch and smoked his cigarette more rapidly than usual.

"If he falls," whispered Finnessy to Moloney, " 'tis mesilf that will bring him in."

"You will not," said Moloney, "I've had me eye on him f'r wakes!"

"Ye can have the Major," said Finnessy.

"I'll not!" said Moloney, "'twud take a horse to carry him in!"

The batteries ceased firing. A low whistle sounded. The men grasped their rifles with bayonets fixed. Cold steel alone must do the work now.

Another whistle. With a hoarse cheer the men climbed out over the front of the trench and the charge was on.

Side by side raced Finnessy and Moloney, with eyes fixed on the young subaltern, who, carrying a rifle, was sprinting on before them. For a few moments it seemed that the batteries had effectually silenced the trenches of the enemy immediately in front. A hundred yards farther and they would be reached. Now, however, from that line of piled earth and barbed wire came the crackling roar of machine-guns. For a moment the men wavered and many fell, but, with a growl, the others rushed on. Fifty yards farther, and then the ground seemed to heave up and hit Finnessy and Moloney. Side by side they lay, with their faces partly rooted in the trampled ground. To their ears came dully the sound of the fierce hand-to-hand fighting beyond them. Slowly they scraped the dirt from their faces and looked at each other.

"Where did they get ye, Finnessy?" asked Moloney.

"In the leg," groaned Finnessy.

"The same f'r me," moaned Moloney.

The bullets of the machine-guns still sang over them, and both men began to dig into the soft earth and pile it into a mound in front of their heads.

Now back across the torn ground came the remnant of the charge, for the trenches had not been

taken. Some ran, others walked or crawled or were carried, but always over them and among them whirled the leaden death. Soon Moloney and Finnessy were left alone in their little self-made trenches, for none of their retreating comrades had noticed them.

Twilight was fading, when a brilliant idea flashed across the mind of Finnessy. The intensity of the illumination almost dazed him for a moment.

"Moloney," said Finnessy, "'tis not very sthrong ye're feelin,' I'm thinkin'."

"Ye'er think-tank is overflowin', shut it off!" growled Moloney.

"Sure, Moloney, ye'er voice is very wake! Ye'll be faintin' in a minute!" said Finnessy soothingly.

"I'll not!" cried Moloney. "What's eatin' ye?"

"Poor old boy!" purred Finnessy, "ye're in a disperate state. Ye must be rescued. I'm goin' to take ye in!"

"How?" asked Moloney.

"I'm goin' to take ye on me back and crawl in with ye. It's me duty to do it, and England expicts every Irishman to do his duty! Me only reward will be ye'er gratitood!" said Finnessy.

Slowly the brilliant idea spread to the mind of Moloney.

"Sure, Finnessy," said Moloney, " 'tis brave and kind of ye, but I can't accipt ye'er sacrifice. 'Tis

ye'ersilf that must be saved. I can hear the trimble in ye'er speech. No one can say that a Moloney iver diserted a friend! I'll take ye in if I die f'r it!"

"Don't be a fool, Moloney, ye know ye're waker than I am!"

"I'm not!" cried Moloney. "I'm as sthrong as a horse, and I am goin' to save ye or perish in the attempt!"

"Ye silfish baste!" howled Finnessy. "Ye'd spoil me chance for the V. C., would ye!"

"Silfish baste ye'ersilf!" roared Moloney. " 'Tis me own chance! And in ye'll go on me back, dead or alive!"

Moloney and Finnessy reached for each other.

Back in the trenches of the Irish Guards the young subaltern, peering through a loop-hole, saw dimly through the growing dusk the struggles of Moloney and Finnessy.

"Poor devils," he muttered, "must be in agony. Didn't know any were left alive out there."

Even as he spoke a wiry figure beside him sprang to the top of the parapet and started toward the struggling men.

Now the enemy's trench awoke again, but presently, through the zone of death, the subaltern and all who could secure loop-holes saw that wiry figure slowly crawling, crawling back toward their trench,

dragging behind him two reluctant but exhausted men.

As the limp bodies of Finnessy and Moloney slid down into the trench a cheer broke forth from the men which drowned the noise of the firing.

Slowly Finnessy and Moloney opened their eyes. The subaltern was speaking:

"Sergeant O'Reilly," he said, "if such a thing were possible, you deserve and should have another Victoria Cross!"

Again the cheers broke forth.

Finnessy looked at Moloney.

"For the love of Mike!" said Finnessy.

"I believe ye," said Moloney.

SOMEWHERE IN BELGIUM

By Percy Godfrey Savage

THE crude little cottage had been surrounded and two stalwart peasant boys routed out, but only one gun had been found. Each lad stoutly swore that he was responsible for the sniping. The old mother stood near them.

"Choose one or we will shoot both!" the German officer again ordered the old woman.

Her shrunken, toil-worn frame seemed to suffer pain of death. She wound her rough hands in her apron. Terror, hatred, love, devotion, helplessness filled her eyes.

Alphonse, the tall, light-haired boy, was urging the smaller and more delicate Petro by gestures and eager, low words to yield the punishment to him.

With equal intensity the little fellow pleaded to take the blame because Alphonse would be better able to care for their mother.

The imperturbable German, not asking for more than one life, set the decision before the mother herself. Apparently it would be necessary to shoot both of them.

The soldiers stood waiting for their part in the procedure.

The old woman turned aside. "Take Alphonse," she groaned.

Surprised, but satisfied, they took the boy to the side of the house and fired upon him.

Perhaps a thought of another youth, perhaps the wonder of why the old woman had chosen, perhaps a burden of conscience delayed the officer, as he followed his men from the yard.

"Quick, Petro," whispered the mother, and the boy who had been standing rigid, with the horror of this brother's death gripping his heart, came to life. Like a shadow he disappeared. The next instant there was a shot and the German officer fell in the road.

A pack of wild beasts rushed toward the house. Two of them fell.

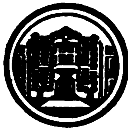
Somewhere inside the dwelling Petro was killed, but there was neither shot nor cry.

They found the old peasant kneeling beside the doorway.

"I said, 'take Alphonse!' oh, God," she moaned, "but," she shrieked with fierce satisfaction as her enemies appeared, "because Petro could aim better with his gun!"

Three graves on the right of the cottage held the peasants, but three graves on the left held their toll.

THE END



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