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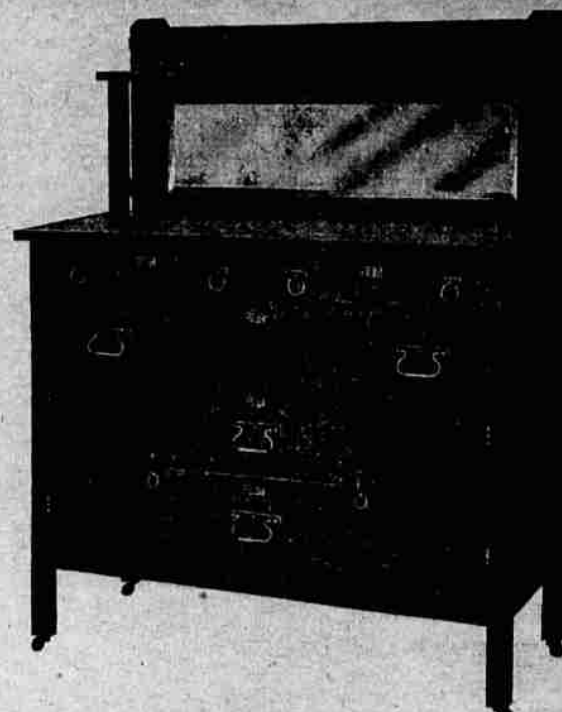
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J. J. CARR, La Grande, Oregon

RUNAWAY JUNE

BY GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER AND LILLIAN CHESTER

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AT SHERRY'S
Runs Each Wednesday and Thursday

CHAPTER II.

At parting Gilbert Blye held June's hand between both his and patted it gently, his black eyes glowing down at her, and he was smiling upon her with that suave smile which she had come to trust.

"Tomorrow night at dinner," he said, lowering his voice the slightest particle as if the remark were addressed in confidence to her, though the others were crowded eagerly round.

There was an instant of hesitation. "Then aboard the yacht!" exclaimed Tommy Thomas. She was looking at June, her deep red lips parting in a smile. June's cheeks paled. After all,



"Then aboard the yacht!" exclaimed Tommy Thomas.
as Mrs. Villard's companion it was her duty to go on this trip.
"Shall we take Bouncer?" suggested

the pleasantly modulated voice of Blye. "Of course Bouncer shall go!" June declared, and this time the handsome colle, on his feet in an instant, wagged his tail so vigorously that his hind feet sld.

There was instant gratification in the faces surrounding June.

Far away in the night Henri was speeding northward. Every now and then he turned to look back and laugh, where Jens Janssen sat stolidly puffing his pipe, one immense hand constantly on the arm or the knee of Ned Warner.

"Volla!" cried Henri in high glee as the sharp night wind cut past his face. "Well," grunted Jens in huge content. June put herself into the hands of the agitated Marie very thoughtfully after the visitors had gone.

"What is the matter, Marie?" June's tone was quite solicitous. She became suddenly aware that Marie had been in such a state of nervous excitement as she had never exhibited before.

"Nothing, Miss June; nothing at all! I'm afraid of burglars!"

"Why, Marie, come here!" Marie came slowly over, nervously kneading some knotted pink thing in her hands. "Your eyes are feverish. You must go to bed, Marie. Wait. Bring me my medicine case and a glass of water."

Meekly Marie took what June gave her, but later she dashed down the stairs and streaked across to the garage. Empty!

At that moment Ned Warner, his hands and feet still bound and his mouth still gagged, was being gleefully deposited in a deserted woodcutter's shed in the middle of a vast, bleak grove. Through the trees the moon-



"What is the matter, Marie?"

light glinted on distant water, and the shadows of the trees lay in fantastic, twisted patterns on the hillside.

Dawn. The red glow of the sunrise, blurring through the mist of the morning, stole in at the open door of the Villard garage and found Marie, with her fists foiled under her arms and the tip of her frosty nose in her armpit, loudly snoring.

She limped over to the house, plodded up to her room, dressed herself with numb fingers and after half an hour of dull eyed thought scrawled

this note, which she laid on June's bed:

Dear Miss June—I am feeling better, thank you. I hope you will excuse me if I take a few hours off. I will be back for lunch. Hoping you are the same, I remain, yours affectionately, MARIE.

She tiptoed out and hurried down the hill to the station, where she caught the first commuters' train. Arriving at the city, she sought Officer Dowd and prevailed on him to phone Ned's friends and June's parents that Ned had been kidnaped.

June in a pretty little morning robe was busy among the flowers in Mrs. Villard's boudoir window conservatory and singing softly when she heard a footstep behind her. Turning, she saw Villard towering above her, his hands in the pockets of his lounging robe, and he was grinning.

"Oh!" exclaimed June, startled. "Good morning."

"So this is friend wife's pretty new companion," observed Villard. "Well, friend wife has excellent taste."

June moved away.

"Don't be in a hurry," he chuckled. "We must get acquainted," and, suddenly reaching forward, he put his hand under her chin and turned up her face.

She jerked away, but he closed the door toward which she darted and, gathering her in his long arms, crushed her to him. June's struggles were futile and her shrieks muffled, but one pair of ears heard. There was a crash of glass, the flash of a long, lithe, white and brown body through the room, and then Villard released his hold. Bouncer! He had sunk his teeth into Villard's arms, and now he was a whirlwind of canine fury.

The man turned pale with fear, kicking and striking at the enraged animal.

"Bouncer!" That cry from June saved Villard's life, for the dog, with a yelp of joy, was springing for his throat as he fell. The man lay back. The dog stood still, motionless. The man's hand moved nervously. The colle moved precisely that same amount. Villard did not twitch a muscle from that time on, except to speak.

"Call off the dog!" he ordered. "Watch him, Bouncer," said June quietly.

June rose from the chair into which she had limply sunk, but a cold anger had come to replace her weakness. She walked from the room and, going to the house phone in the hall, called to the kitchen.

"Has Mrs. Villard returned?" she inquired of the maid who answered.

"Not yet."

"Do you know where to reach her?"

"Any one down at the cottages will hunt her up and give her your message."

"Ask her to come home immediately, please. Tell her it is quite important." She walked back to the boudoir and glanced in at the door. The two statues were as she had left them. At the sound of her footstep Bouncer wagged the tip of his tail, but not for one fleeting instant did he remove his fiery eyes from the pale gray eyes of Bert Villard.

Mrs. Villard, hurrying up the stairs within a few moments, found June in the landing alcove, white, shivering as if with cold.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Villard, but I am going at once," she said before the older woman had even a chance to speak.

"Why, child"—Mrs. Villard's face

was full of concern, but as she stared at June her brows knotted and a flush crept into her cheeks—"what—what is the matter?" she faltered.

June was already halfway up the stairs. She turned. Mrs. Villard, without a word, followed her. Side by side the two women stood looking at the man and the dog. Mrs. Villard needed no explanation to tell her what had happened. For the first time in her married life she gave way to anger.

"You beast!" she cried, her cheeks scarlet and her eyes flashing. "This is the last! I warned you to leave this girl alone! I hate you! I could see you torn to shreds! Go on, Bouncer!" The colle crouched at June's feet. The man rose cautiously.

"You forget!" husked the man. "We have a bargain!"

Mrs. Villard lowered her eyes for a moment.

"It is broken!" she suddenly flared. "You have paid me well, and I have served you well. But we were not to interfere with each other's life. You have interfered with mine. I am through!"

She stripped her hands of her rings and threw them at him. She swept from the room, followed by June and Bouncer. They heard the man telephoning for his racer at a nearby garage, and while Mrs. Villard was still packing her clothing her husband came along the hall. He stopped at the door.

"I don't think you will find that your new line of work will pay you as well as being my wife," the man snarled. Mrs. Villard sprang to the door and closed it in his face, and Villard laughed mockingly.

"He is a beast!" said Mrs. Villard and sat down as if she wished to say something more. There was the sound of wheels at the door. Mrs. Villard suddenly buried her face in her hands and cried.

CHAPTER III.

MONEY! June was face to face with another angle of that eternal problem, which, it seemed to her, had complicated the entire relationship of men and women. Mrs. Villard had plainly sold herself, and the price is never great enough for any woman who has done that. Always in June's rapidly widening observation the man gave and the woman received, and her very dependence made the question of matrimony one of essential barter and sale. It was wrong! It destroyed the very source and fount of love. Was there no remedy? June, shaken though she was by her painful experience of the morning, was strengthened in her own resolve. The answer to the problem was independence even though she suffered in the attainment of it, even though Ned suffered. Their love would be all the stronger for it, and it would be pure always.

Could she have seen Ned at that moment all her theories and all her deductions would have taken swift flight, and she would have bathed with her tears the swollen wrist which he had just freed from the rough rope that had bound it.

Slowly and with infinite pain Ned finally freed his hands. They were quivering as, with a mighty effort, he raised them to the back of his head and fumbled with the knot which held his gag in place. It seemed ages before he was able to remove that tight bandage. He removed the tight thongs from around his ankles. He limped

backwardly for half a mile, bent and stooped like an old man, but exercise restored him, and by the time he found a road he was his vigorous self again and full of the dogged determination which had led him so far in the pursuit of his runaway bride.

Down the highway a mile or so he found an obscure roadhouse, and he strode in at the saloon door.

While ordering a "bracer" for his shattered nerves he saw his two captors sitting at a table. He rushed madly at them and knocked them both to the floor. Dashing out of the place, he

saw their auto. He jumped in, pressed the starting button and sped away.

The house of Mrs. Villard was closed and locked when Ned arrived there at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

In the meantime June and Mrs. Villard and Bouncer were snugly ensconced in a pleasant hotel downtown, and before her at the writing table Mrs. Villard held open a bank book. Its figures represented the price she had received for the sale of her ten best years, and she had spent an hour in the debate of whether to give up her earnings. June had been taken

Read the advertisements.

(Continued on Page 3.)

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