



SHORT STORIES

OF LOVE AND ADVENTURE



MR. CROY had been dead a month before it was found out that his business schemes had failed, and everything he had owned was lost. It was hard for his wife to be left poor, with a baby to support. She had never been used to work. But Zilda was brave, and didn't lose heart; she must find work to earn money to support her child. There was but one thing she could do—she could sing. She had studied music before her marriage; many had predicted for her a brilliant career on the stage, but she had married and given up her ambitions in that line. But now that Emile was dead and there was the baby to care for, she must try for a position. Could she do it now? Would they take her?

It was hard, going from place to place—first one manager to another—meeting the cold refusals. There was no room for her, and night after night she came home to her baby, weary and discouraged; but each morning she would start out again with new hope.

OMAMA, it will be dark coming home, and the river road is horrid—all those noises and it's so long!" Joan Haynes looked at her mother beseechingly. "But there is no one else to go, dear," Mrs. Haynes said; "and Willie must have the medicine. Come, make haste, daughter. Mother can't spare you long."

The Hayneses had been but a few weeks in their country home, and to little Joan, coming from the lighted city streets, the darkness and the strange noises of the night were terrible.

"Come, daughter," Mrs. Haynes said, as Joan still lingered. "You must go; mamma has no one else to send; papa can't get home tonight. You'll forget all about the dark road when you get home and sit here in the bright light again. Kiss baby and run along after little Willie's medicine. Poor Willie, poor little Willie," she said, under her breath. It wasn't so bad, that river road, in the sunny Spring afternoon, the river

DORIS, dear, please finish this hem while I see what little brother wants," was mother's request.

"Oh, dear! Little brother" doesn't want anything except to bother, as usual," replied Doris impatiently, as she took the work from her mother's hand, after reluctantly putting away her writing materials. "I felt just in the mood for writing, too, and I had just begun. Now there won't be another chance today," she sighed when she was alone.

To tell the truth, the two places of unripe pie which Doris had eaten a short time before were having the inevitable effect which that delicacy has when partaken of too late in the day. In plain English, Doris was cross. She felt very much injured, for she loved to write, and, though interruptions were really infrequent when she was thus engaged, her present state of mind (and digestive organs) made them seem very frequent indeed.

"I don't have much time, aside from

SHE was forty, but she was slim and dainty. The gray hair was soft and becoming and her eyes were unusually large, with streaks of gray in their depths. But she was just Miss Allan, dressmaker, who worked by the day and often late into the evening for her rich customers. Her work, however, for her was a beautiful art, and it was never long before her wealthy patrons recommended her to their friends.

As she paused at the corner of Winter street her attention was called to the figure of a man of about 30 years, who looked, to her sympathetic gaze, unutterably tired and pale. A wisp of his iron gray hair was pushed carelessly from under a cap, and the gray uncarved ear heard tended to prove him a tramp.

In all her 40 years Miss Allan had never hesitated to follow the generous little impulses of a kindly little heart. So in her positive woman's way she marched up to the middle-aged wan-

LAURA'S mother had died when Laura was 12 years old, leaving her to keep house for her father and her 4-year-old sister, May. May was full of mischief, in fact, she was a regular "tomboy."

It was next to impossible for Laura to watch May and still keep house for her father as she desired, but she never complained. Knowing, as she did, what the result would be, May would be sent to an institution of some kind, which would have broken Laura's heart, as she dearly loved her little sister.

At the end of three years, Mr. Leeman decided to move into the city, and he had no trouble in letting their cottage in the country to a family of three who had died of the city and were enthusiastic about "getting back to nature."

and determination to win, to find a place, somewhere. At length Mrs. Croy obtained a position with a company to sing the minor parts, and she hired a maid to look after the baby. But the pay was small. She must do better, must become the leading lady; nothing else would do. Day and night she worked, practicing, and one evening the manager said to her: "You are doing it better; keep on and I will give you a chance at the leading part; there is an opening there, if you can fill it it is yours."

Fervently the mother worked, with renewed hope. Her voice grew stronger; she could reach the high notes now, and hold them. For the baby's sake she must succeed. Every day she sang to the little one, and the baby cooed at the sweet sounds of the music. Hope

came into the mother's heart, and she smiled once more. "Yes, mamma will sing, darling," she would say, "she will sing and please the people, and we will have money. Mamma will buy you pretty clothes, and presents—and a doll, precious!"

At last the time came when she was ready, and the manager said to her: "Tomorrow night you shall sing the part—you shall be the leading lady. Do your best—please the people. If you succeed, the position is yours, and I will pay you well."

Joyfully the mother heard his words. Yes, she would succeed. It was for the baby. She went home with a glad heart, and joy in her large, dark eyes.

At the door of her home the maid met her with a frightened face; "Baby is sick, marm," she said.

The mother sprang forward into the room where the child lay moaning in pain, scarcely able to breathe. "Go for the doctor, quick!" she commanded, and the maid went.

The doctor came and did what he could, and left medicine. "All night the mother watched by her sick child, and all through the next day. The doctor came in the morning, and again in the afternoon. The baby was sicker, but the crisis was not yet passed.

All through the day the mother had not thought of her singing, but of the great part she was to take that night. Suddenly it came to her. She looked at the clock; it was already time to dress. But her heart sank. "I can't sing," she moaned. "I can't leave my baby—I must stay and nurse her."

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The Leading Lady

By Phil Moore

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again, she sprang up. "Oh, poor little Willie! I must hurry," and clutching the package she ran gasping, stumbling, ran until turning the corner she stopped, breathing hard before the lighted window. Her mother sat in her low rocker before the open fire with little Willie in her lap and Ha! in his little chair beside her, waiting till "Dante" should come to get him to bed.

She opened the door and ran through the entry, and standing in the doorway, laughed and laughed, a clear ringing childish laugh. Joan had a pretty laugh, the only pretty thing about her, except her hair and feet," her brother said.

Voice That Called

By Parke Whitney

The Inspiration

By Jocella Johnson

Forbidden Fruit

By Jocella Johnson

Rewards On Earth

By Elsie Endicott

the driver. "Take me home—be quick!" And they flew through the silent streets. She paid the man and darted up the three long flights of stairs to her poor little room and flung open the door.

"She's sleeping, warm," the maid whispered. "She's been sleeping for an hour." The woman hastened into the room where the little one lay. The child's breathing was even and natural. The fever flush had gone from the little face. The worst had passed, and the mother knew that her child would live. The long suppressed tears burst forth, and she dropped upon her knees with a prayer of thanksgiving.

Just Chewing. First Ancient (with morbid fear of growing deaf, breaking long silence)—There—it's come at last! You've been talking all this time and I didn't hear a single word. Second Ancient—Hain't been talkin'—been chewin'.

take a second for the mind to traverse years or miles, and back across the years a frightened child heard that same plaintive cry and saw stumbling and breathless into the sweet home dreight. Again she heard her mother's voice, "Perhaps you wouldn't have laughed happily again if you had been a coward when you knew mamma needed you."

Again she took up the package of medicine and went home along the river road, went home to win the victory for herself and the boy's young father.

One warm evening the baby, now a "big boy," sat playing on the piazza. "Listen, papa," he said, "Mamma's laughing. It sounds pretty, doesn't it?"

His father dropped the paper and sat listening until the sound of laughter from the house died away.

"Your mother has the prettiest laugh in the world, son," he said and resumed his reading.

"Oh, no. But I've had such a dreadful dream! I'll tell you about it some time. I want to finish this hem now." When the hem was done, she hunted up "little brother" and gave him a big hug, then sat down and wrote all about it. And the check she received from the publishers proved the truth of her statement that "it is the people and events of everyday life that furnish inspiration" for the would-be author.

How to Get Rich. "Your friend seems to improve on acquaintance."

"He improves financially, if that's what you mean. Every time he meets me he generally manages to borrow a sovereign."

Sufficient. Mrs. Jinks (to 1920 model maid)—Olga, how many times do I have to tell you to scrub the floor? Olga—Just once, ma'am; good day.

"It didn't, little woman," he denied laughingly. "I said I couldn't read the menu, which was and is true. I am forbidden to look at fruit for at least a month. Won't you forgive what deception there was, dear, when you know that through that experience I learned to love you?"

Miss Allan—or more truly Mrs. Brown (which really answers the above question) is unusually fond of her tall, middle-aged tramp husband. He still has a little trick of banding over her chair before kissing her, and whispering "mischievously," "Yes, ma'am, I'd be most pleased to."

In Defense of the Meddles. I wish to hear no more of army terms for one. The skipper's awful roar, "Coffin's Ten-hunt!" But sweet sounds on my ear. A happy victory won. When Doc whines and says, "How is your precious-shunt?"

finally consented, admitting that he did think a great deal of May; but holding Laura in his arms, he said, "I can never love anyone but you, dear," then going to May, he asked her to become his wife. They were married immediately and lived with Laura and her father.

Laura began to droop and grow thin, and at last her father noticed it and called the doctor. He told her father that the girl was hiding some "great sorrow" and must be made to forget it. When being questioned by her father, she told him of the sacrifice she had made, whereupon he gathered her in his arms and said, "My brave little girl! I'll get her reward in heaven," but when he saw fit to reward her on earth.

In a few short weeks May passed in to the Great Beyond, and another year found Laura happily married to Tom.