

The Masquers

A Story Showing That Our Inmost Thoughts Are Our Own

By CLARISSA MACKIE

Miss Vardemond dismissed her maid and leaned back in her chair with a weary little sigh. She had superintended the packing of her trunks and had inspected with languid interest the lustrous white bridal gown with its dainty accessories.

There was one hour before dinner. After dinner would come Stephen. She must do it at once. She went to a writing desk and from some secret hiding place brought forth a carved sandalwood box.

She turned a golden key in the lock, and odors of sandalwood and rose leaves perfumed the air like incense rising from an invisible altar. She took out a bundle of letters and a man's picture. Untying the package, she placed the envelopes face upward in a row on the rug. There were thirty in all.

Thirty days of perfect bliss in one's life. That was not so very much, she thought rebelliously. But then each day had been full of an unutterable joy that had been rounded to an idyllic close by the receipt of a letter. She pressed a white finger on the first missive. It was merely an invitation to ride in the park. The last letter was a passionate avowal, ending in black night for her.

She stretched out her arms and murmured wistfully, "All within this little space!" Then she made a motion as if to gather and toss them into the fire, but hesitated. "Once more," she breathed to herself, "only once more."

She did not open the letters. One by one in the order of their dates she picked up the missives and read them with her mind's eye. Graphically she lived each day, and at the close of the



"ONCE MORE," SHE BREATHED TO HERSELF, "ONLY ONCE MORE."

day she tossed a letter into the fire's heart and watched while the passionate flames consumed it.

As she read her face changed from the first faint flush of newly kindled love to deeper recognition of love's meaning—tenderness, perfect joy, and then, with the last letter, awakening and despair.

When the last one had expired and its blackened specter had flown up the chimney, hot tears fell on the picture in her lap. She looked on it once as one looks on the face of the beloved dead and laid it on the licking flames. Ere it was consumed in the licking flames she placed the sandalwood box above it and watched the ascending smoke and crumbling embers through blurred vision. When the fire glowed clear and bright again her tears ceased to flow.

For a long time she gazed into the fiery coils wherein her tokens of happiness had been consumed and likened it to the ordeal through which she had passed. After it was all over, the brief, feverish term of joy which had been allotted to her, she had withdrawn into the grateful shadow of Stephen Wade's friendship. Friendship which had ripened into a love in which she played the passive part of recipient, for she had no love to give—only calm affection—but it was affection that would be lasting as life itself—and perhaps would be more satisfactory than transitory love!

Stephen did not know this. He was not aware that the offer of his sheltering love afforded a grateful refuge to her bruised heart. He believed in her love for him. He believed her to be too high minded and steadfast to come to him with anything less than love.

Yet she had done it and he would never know. It would be her life's purpose that the noble hearted man she had promised to marry should never learn that in return for his deep love she brought him sincere affection—and nothing else.

With a quick, graceful movement she arose to her full height and shook back the copper glory of her hair. It was as if she had slipped off some Franklin's Kite Experiment.

Commenting on Benjamin Franklin's kite experiment, which proved that lightning and electricity are the same, a scientist says: "It was one of the most brilliant examples of luck yet recorded. To attempt the extraction of lightning flashes from a lowering sky was almost suicidal. Even at this late day timid persons occasionally fly to feather beds, sit on glass legged chairs or find refuge in rubber boots during thunderstorms. A repetition of Franklin's experiment cost his immediate imitator his life."

burden that had lain heavy on her beautiful shoulders.

"Now I can begin anew," she said triumphantly.

"I believe it is customary," soothed quizzed Wade, with a bitter smile, as he drew a letter case from his pocket. Then he stared into the fire absently. A half hour passed, during which he sat utterly motionless, the fine profile of his face cut like a cameo against the dark velvet of his chair.

With a sudden start he slowly opened the letter case. From an inner compartment he took a small parcel wrapped in tissue paper and unrolled it in his broad palm. He looked down upon an absurdly small fan with rich lace and delicate pearl sticks crushed and broken. His own hand had wrought the injury.

Ab, the pain again! He had not thought it possible, for had not his very soul died that night? Yet there was the pain, the terrible crushing agony. Could men suffer like that and live on?

Aye, man had done it and would. He drew a sharp breath. The pain deadened into apathy, and the broken fan slipped from his fingers to the floor.

He saw a full southern moon shifting light through honeysuckles and roses while he watched with passionate ardor the shadows flickering across a beautifully dark face with soft black eyes and rose leaf lips. There was the rise and fall of her low toned contralto as they talked, to the sound of whose music he could listen forever.

He saw a warm southern sun shedding light on long delightful days when life was intoxicatingly blissful—days wherein care nor apprehension nor any doubt found place, days when his upright, honorable, clean soul rejoiced in the love of a woman, in the glory of perfect womanhood that was without a flaw. Poets and historians were base revilers to the contrary; he, Stephen Wade, knew.

He saw a moonlit night, heavily scented with jasmine, when his very heart ached with the perfect joy of living—when, in the pale shadows of arching palm alleys, his perfect joy turned to agony, his strong hand clinched about the fragile toy of lace and pearl, had crushed it as his hopes were crushed under the faying scorn of her voice, under the indifferent bewilderment of her softly luminous eyes.

Bewildered with pain, he had turned away with aching face. He had walked miles through the brilliant night, every star hanging like a lamp in the sky, while the clinging perfume of the jasmine flowers that dotted the wayside hedged overpowered his senses and numbed his agony for the time.

When the first pink flush of dawn had spread into the pale morning sky he had stopped beside a fern edged pool. Hot eyed and weary, he lifted one hand and looked at the fan, at first stupidly, then with growing apprehension and then realization. He shuddered now as he thought of the hours, days, months, years, that had followed.

Then had come his meeting with Constance Vardemond, his warm admiration for her beauty and her sweet, sound disposition. They had become the best of friends. They understood each other perfectly, but he had never dreamed of marriage. He did not want to marry any one—now. But some one had whispered a word, or it materialized in the air, for it had never evolved from his modest inner consciousness that Constance cared.

Stephen Wade did not hesitate. He held out his hand and his heart and his life, and she took them gracefully, as one who thankfully receives a great boon, and between them had come a perfect peace and understanding.

To Stephen, Constance Vardemond represented the highest type of womanhood that he believed could exist. Beyond that his nature, which had been hammered into a cool, calm, evenness of temperament, did not inquire. Tomorrow they would be married with all the pomp and brilliant pageantry that was a part of such occasions in their circle. This was the last night he could open the book of the past.

A deep toned clock chimed the hour. He passed a hand wearily over his eyes. "Of course it is near dinner time," he muttered. "And after dinner there is Constance—it—I believe this is customary."

He laughed harshly and picked up the fan. The simple action seemed to give vent to some inward storm of passion, for suddenly he tore the sticks into fragments and tossed them into the fire. Then with a fierce cry he leaped forward and snatched a small bit from the glowing mass. With seared fingers he clutched the smoky tatter of lace and splinter of pearl and pressed it to his lips passionately. Then he flung it back into the fire.

With compressed lips and sullen, miserable eyes he watched the licking flames devour his little all—the only thing he had cared for in the world. There was a last burst of devouring flame and then, when not one atom of his fetish remained, he sprang to his feet and faced the large photograph of Constance Vardemond that stood on the table behind him.

He looked at it with a grave steadfastness in eyes from which all passion had fled and where nothing but a great peace remained.

Constance should never know that the love he was bringing to her was a make believe, a sham. The love she had chosen to honor him with should receive its full quota of deep, earnest affection, and he would make it the purpose of his life that the woman who loved him should never guess that he had none to give in return.

"It is good to begin life anew," he smiled confidently.

There was a soft tap at the door. "Dinner is served, Mr. Stephen."

His Wig In His Pocket.
Benjamin Franklin once wore his wig in his pocket at the court of Versailles. When he was about to present himself at the court for the first time he was informed that a wig was essential. Franklin's head was so large that no ordinary wig would begin to fit it. However, one was found sufficiently large to pass him through the ante-chambers, after which he was permitted to remove the ridiculous conventional appendage and place it in his ample pocket.

CORRESPONDENCE

MARQUAM.

The supper given by the Ladies' Aid in the M. E. hall last week was a success financially as well as socially. The Marquam Marine Band furnished the music.

Guy C. Larkins and wife, of Stafford, were here calling on relatives and friends last week, they returned home last Sunday, where he is teaching school.

We regret very much to lose our present telephone operators Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hibbard and wife, they take charge of the Molalla Telephone office the first of the year.

KELSO.

School closed last week while our teachers, Mr. Purcell and Miss Lamereaux attended the Clackamas County Teachers' Institute, giving the children a whole week for Thanksgiving. The children of our school filed two boxes of Thanksgiving contributions which were sent to the Children's Home in Portland.

Steps will be taken soon to get the use of the schoolhouse for social and educational purposes. The schoolhouse should be the educational center, not only for the children but for all the people of the community and there is no valid reason why it should not be used especially as there is no other building in the district where the people may meet.

The mill formerly owned by Anderson and Hoist at Sandy Ridge, will soon start running. The parties who bought the mill also bought Hoist's and Anderson's timber.

Otis Richey has purchased twenty acres of land from Mr. Hansen on Sandy Ridge.

A. Dixon's little boy received a cut on his head from an axe in the hands of his little brother. Dr. Barendrick sewed up the wound which proved to be very serious.

H. Francis is surface-clearing an acre of land for Robert Jonsrud.

The Misses Stella and Clara Jonsrud and Miss Vida Brewer, of Portland spent Thanksgiving with the former's parents, Gilbert Jonsrud's.

Max Kligel has commenced work on his new barn.

Mr. Gunderson, who recently had his knee badly cut by falling on an ax in a serious condition. Complications set in and he is not expected to survive.

Charley Danielson is contemplating buying a donkey engine to use in clearing sixty acres of logged off land. He cleared one acre last spring and put in wheat which yielded seventy bushels.

Mrs. Carrie Skau and Mrs. Lewis Eri, of Portland visited relatives here last week. Lewis Eri has gone to Southern Oregon for the benefit of his health.

EAGLE CREEK.

School has reopened after a week's vacation.

H. S. Gibson made a business visit to Portland last week.

W. F. Douglass, with the help of three men, dug and put in the barn 600 sacks of potatoes last week and he has several hundred sacks yet to dig.

Mr. and Mrs. Tracy Clester and Miss Orpha Clester went to Molalla last Wednesday and were the guests of Mr. Clester's parents for the remainder of the week.

Mr. and Mrs. Udell entertained Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Gibson at dinner Thanksgiving.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy Woodie and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Woodie spent Thanksgiving with Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Woodie of Estacada.

Mrs. Viola Douglass, Mrs. Jane Douglass and Carl Douglass spent the week-end with relatives in their neighborhood.

H. G. Huntington traded a heifer to H. S. Gibson for a new hack harness last Monday.

Walter Douglass made a return trip to Portland Monday.

Jim Bell, of Sandy Ridge, was over this way Saturday.



WORRELL'S FRIDAY AND SATURDAY TEMPTATION SALE

DRESSES \$15 to choose from 1-2	Petticoats Every color in 3000 lot \$1.98	WAISTS 98c to \$20.00
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\$15.00 Dresses to choose from at 'HALF PRICE.' Serges, Ratine, Fancy Cloths, Party Dresses, Dancing Frock in Chiffons, Nets, Evening and Dinner Gowns, Opera Coats, samples and models of the world's best makes at a saving of half.

\$8.00 Dresses	\$4.00
\$10.00 Dresses	\$5.00
\$12.50 Dresses	\$6.25
\$15.00 Dresses	\$7.50
\$20.00 Dresses	\$10.00
Up to \$300.00 at a Saving of Half	
Silk Petticoats unprecedented in quality, style and price.	
Values to \$5.00	\$2.98
Values to \$4.00	\$1.98
Values to \$3.50	\$1.49
Waists in every good style for WORRELL'S Xmas giving	98c to \$20.00
Umbrellas	98c to \$10.00
Furs! Furs!	\$1.98 to \$300.00

Tailored Sample Suits bought for 43c on the dollar, a collection that is wonderful in magnitude. No two alike and none like them in other stores.

\$20.00 Sample Suits	\$12.45
\$25.00 Sample Suits	\$13.98
\$30.00 Sample Suits	\$14.75
\$35.00 Sample Suits	\$19.85
\$40.00 Sample Suits	\$24.75

COATS! COATS!

Until you can't rest. Just think 2000 coats No two alike. Velvets, plushes, boude, crocule astrichan, Johnnies and full lengths in belted and fancy designs. The largest collection of styles on the Coast.

Worrell's Sample Cloaks and Suits

AMERICAN CLOTHIERS FOR WOMEN
6th and Alder, Opposite Oregonian
Portland, Oregon

DOVER.

Elma DeShazer is quite ill. George Vanatta went to Portland last week to take a position with Capt. Exon.

Miss Eleanor Bevs entertained her young friend Friday evening.

Miss Alice Wheeler returned to her school work this week.

Alice Berghouse is visiting friends in Dover.

Mrs. H. H. Udell is on the sick list this week.

Mr. Seward had to kill one of his horses last week. The animal breaking one of its legs.

K. C. Vanatta spent Thanksgiving in Portland.

M. M. Reid was home for the Thanksgiving holidays.

Mr. and Mrs. DeShazer entertained the Udegrave family to dinner Sunday.

Birch Roberts returned from Hood River Thanksgiving. He packed fifteen thousand boxes of apples while he was gone.

Supervisor Keith with a crew of men finished laying the plank on the Sandy Road Friday.

Dover's high school pupils all left for Estacada Sunday, moving.

ELWOOD.

After 15 years of faithful duty in being post masters of Elwood Mr. Henderson's have tendered their resignation. We feel assured we have lost honest and diligent workers yet we are grateful for the past favors.

Mrs. Alvaretta Martin and daughter Dessie, of Oregon City, visited relatives here last week.

BARLOW.

Many are on the sick list this week. Jas Erickson is ill of a cold and fever.

Mrs. W. W. Jesse has gone to Spokane on account of her ill health. Mr. Jesse accompanied her.

Mrs. Will Bauer is in the hospital in Oregon City.

Mrs. Churchill is very ill and is in the care of Drs. Dedman and Mason.

Mrs. Andrus is laid up with a lame hip.

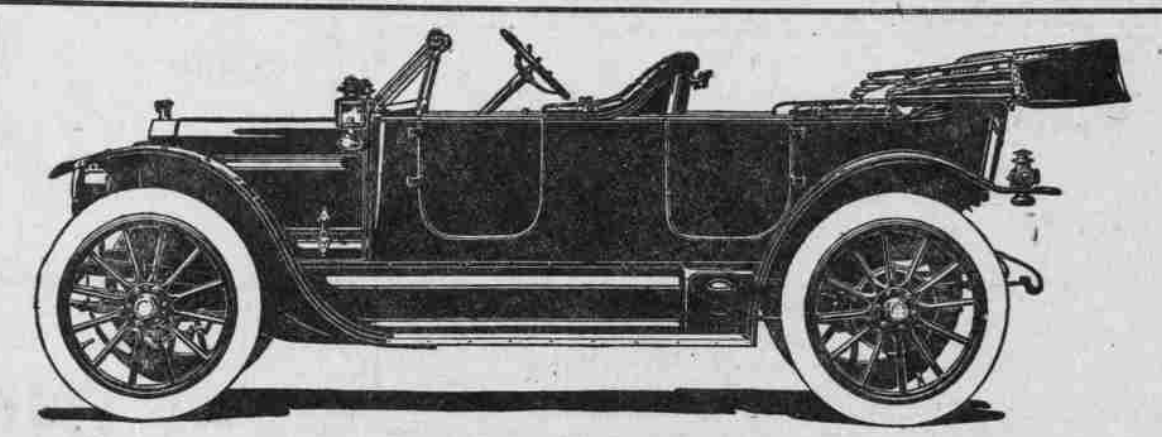
A wagon load of young people attended the dance at Aurora Wednesday evening and report a good time.

Mrs. Churchill's father and mother are with her during her illness.

Mr. Kebaugh is breaking his new coat.

W. S. Tull and wife were in Oregon City visiting this week.

U. S. Armstrong has rented the Tiedeman ranch and is moving onto it.



Is This Your Automobile?

Its a 5 passenger car with full equipment, including a clock and self starter. It's one you would be proud to own, and we are going to GIVE it to somebody on May 1st. This is the plan: Votes will be given with every purchase--1 vote for each 1c purchase--and the person who has the most votes on May 1st will get this Automobile free of any charge. Its a prize worth working for--shall we enter your name and give you 2000 votes for a starter? Just ask for the Contest Manager at Huntley's. See the Car in our window.

IN OUR BIG HOLIDAY STOCK embracing hundreds and hundreds of desirable gifts--there is something for every taste and every pocket book, so now is the best time to make a start when your friends will be spending their Christmas money.

Votes are transferable before they are voted--not after. So if you decide not to enter you can give your votes to some friend who is contesting.

The Rexall Store HUNTLEY BROTHERS CO. Quality Druggists

The following business houses are participating in this contest and will give votes with all purchases:

- J. LEVITT The Up To Date Glothier.
- V. HARRIS Quality Grocer.
- STAR THEATER Pictures and Vaudeville.
- OREGON CITY ENTERPRISE The Paper with the News.

How to Become a Candidate

Fill out coupon below and mail or bring to Huntley Bros. Co. store, and you will be assigned a number, and given 2000 free votes for a flying start.

I hereby enter the \$1800 Auto Contest. Please assign me a number and credit me with 2000 Free Votes.

(Signed)

I hereby nominate as a candidate in the \$1800 Auto Contest.

(Signed)

RULES OF CONTEST

- ONE. No names of contestants will be known, each entrant having a number.
- TWO. Each contestant receives 2000 free votes as a starter.
- THREE. Votes will be counted each Wednesday and recorded.
- FOUR. Different colored votes will be used each month and all votes of a certain color must be deposited during the month issued.
- FIVE. All votes are transferrable only before being cast in ballot box.
- SIX. All votes must be cast at ballot box in Huntley Bros. Co. Store, or mailed to the Contest Manager.
- SEVEN. Any individual, church, lodge, school, or other organization in the county is eligible to enter the contest.
- EIGHT. Contestants will not be permitted to solicit votes inside our stores or in front of them.
- NINE. The contestant having the most votes to his credit at 9 P. M. May 1st, 1913, will be declared the winner.
- TEN. The decision of the Contest Manager is final in every question which may arise during the contest.