

to begin with Fleming was a successful merchant and had made a modest fortune. So he decided to retire.

His shop was turned over to a couple of his lieutenants—they paid and owed a fine for the good will. G. F. Co.—the style and title which had won success—was sold.

Lieutenants have done so well, indeed, that they have to Fleming's name instead of their own, for the thing and private life of George Fleming had taken had long ago been settled in full. He might have money with the firm; he never, to put it into some-

certain as to the exact nature investments. All I know is that ten years later they had, leaving George Fleming and past his prime.

"I'm not beaten. There's work to me," and he tapped

There was enough of his money left fresh, and he had decided should be London, and even Ox-

to him that he might re-enter

his old firm, buy back a share in it, or take some high position.

It was years since he had been in London as a breadwinner. A few days here and there with the wife and girls, stopping at a good hotel and doing a round of shops and theaters—such was his more recent contact with the city.

Today he found himself there as a petitioner, and already at Paddington some of his courage seemed to go, a daze began to thicken his ideas, and he found some relief in the knowledge that he had a little money behind him and jingling sovereigns in his trousers pockets.

A stiff brandy and soda helped him to enter the many-windowed frontage of Messrs. G. F. Fleming & Co. without to great a sense of its oppressive hugeness. To think that all this space and vastness had started from his own modest enterprise in the cosier 90's.

Department after department unfolded itself, new, undreamt of in his time. At last with an effort he collected himself and sought out the counting house and next the private rooms of his successors. If he were to make a proposal he must do it now.

The two partners—they had come to him as apprentices—received him warmly. He must go out to lunch with them; he must give them one hour—two. They seemed to have no idea of his recent losses and he couldn't very well broach the subject without a sacrifice of pride. He let the moment slip, the opportunity.

The figures they dropped so casually startled him. What use was his small

capital to such as they, and all his knowledge and experience so long out-dated? When they shook hands and that touched Fleming had said nothing that he reflected, the most prosperous shopkeeper would not have been admitted to the palatial club where they had entertained him.

The clerk had warmed him and so had the friendliness. These two young men—well, perhaps they were not so very young, he reflected—these two young men still had a sense of gratitude, a dash of sentimentality about about the old relationship, and no doubt, if he had asked, they might have found some place for him. But a partnership, or even a position of responsibility, that was too rosy a dream. He recognized now that he was past it.

The very fashions of all these women in the streets of London were beyond him; there was nothing like them at home, neither in the village nor in the county town. A woman dressed as they were dressed would have been regarded as a show.

He stopped on the pavement and watched them. Once he had known all about it—the very latest thing and the fashions of the coming season. Today he stood nonplussed or gazed into shop windows. It was beyond him—the clothes they wore, the way they carried them, and stranger still the personality behind the clothes.

The fumes and mental stir of that expensive luncheon lasted until 5 o'clock and Fleming had gradually

drifted back to his hotel to discover that he was capable of what his physician called "depression." So far he had always regarded this as a distressful and uncomfortable complaint which seized on women, leaving the sterner sex immune.

He dined alone dejectedly, feeling his race was run. A late hour found him in the crowded streets, still shak-

And again, in the line of vehicles outside an emptying theater he had detected a carriage and pair among the shining horde of gasoline-driven cars. But mostly he had wandered—alien and strange—a denizen of the 19th century at large in the 20th.

He recalled a book he had read about the planet Mars. This life, this city, and its people might have belonged up there. In a few brief years they had changed to Martians while he still kept the easier ways of earth. It was a fancy, and unaccustomed flight.

It pursued him all the way to his hotel; and in bed he lay awake, wondering where in this new city of speed—of tubes, of taxis, of motor buses, of overpowered buildings fed by elevators, of unaccustomed light and glare, and gasoline stench and motor horns—wondering where in it all remained a place for him. The hansom, he remembered, had crawled along empty. Just so would he crawl if he came back here.

The train whereon George Fleming returned, crestfallen and despondent, took him to a west-country town whence he would drive homeward in a fly, or he could walk the short three miles and let the fishmonger bring out his bag. He decided to walk.

It was early in the afternoon, and fresh from London this place had a sweetness, an air of settled peace. From the moment he disembarked at the simple station a little of his courage came back and some of his old power.

In High street he paused, and for the first time since he had known that somnolent thoroughfare he loitered; actually loitered. Hilberto—speaking commercially and in respect to the shops—he had always regarded Elmford as "a one-eyed place." It was his own term for it. "A one-eyed place" was Elmford; he had said so frequently, and Elmford had taken it without complaint.

The county town made no pretence—had never aped the metropolitan. It filled up on market days; it served the stabler needs of the surrounding gentry; it was crowded again on Friday and Saturday nights when the laboring folk drew their wages. George Fleming looked at it and found himself once more within the 19th century.

He loitered, and the women who passed gazed at his well-known figure. A few of them bowed respectfully. Here they stood in awe of him; here they dressed like human beings and he

could understand them—he could master them. It seemed familiar ground.

A vacant shop front caught his eye, quite close to Martin's, the leading drapers. He looked in at Martin's. Yes, he could do as well as that, and better; far better. More glass, a more varied display; the fellow had no taste, no sense of contrast, or balance; he crowded things.

George Fleming stood there as a critic, a past master. He could hold his own with Martin's; he could smush them if it came to it. He knew his business. There was the vacant shop close by.

George Fleming swelled with power again; his deep dejection had passed off, leaving him young, fertile and full of the methods that had won him his Oxford street success.

Andrew Martin came out of the shop and greeted the illustrious master. The two men knew one another; they both sat on the County Council. But far above that distinction was Fleming's past.

In Martin's eyes he was a classic. He was the original proprietor of G. P. Fleming & Co., he was limitless, he was immortal. So might a journeyman painter feel in the presence of Sargent or a small novelist greet the august shape of Caine.

"I'm thinking of starting a business here," said Fleming. "I'm going back to it again. Had too much loafing."

"Here in Elmford?" asked Andrew Martin.

"Elmford suits me."

"Not as a draper?" For it seemed incredible, and in Andrew Martin's eyes it seemed a threat.

"I've just been having a look round in London. My old firm will back me. I can buy with them, and they'll send me lines they've overstocked. I'm afraid I'll be in a position to cut prices, but business is business."

He was romancing, yet he could see it all so plainly. He might have the use of that great name, and the two partners would help him. He would profit by their immense, purchases their direct accounts with agents and manufacturers. He needn't fiddle along with usurious go-between and small-parcel prices.

Poor Andrew Martin saw it, too. Here was the master come out of a prolonged retirement. "You're joking," he forced himself to say; but Fleming, stern and formidable, assured him to the contrary and mentioned that he must be moving.

The following morning he sat at breakfast with his wife and daughters. A single letter had come by the first post.

He read it. The thing was astonishing; it was surprising. And yet—Martin's had asked him to reconsider his decision. A partnership might be arranged, they said. They would not be difficult as to terms, and united they could do more than in opposition.

"I've frightened them," he cried, throwing the letter across to Mrs. Fleming. "I've frightened them worse than London frightened me."

Just a Little "Stenog."

By Ethelred Elkins

LETTY Ada Manley entered Miss Catherine Lane's dainty sitting room in a somewhat stormy mood. She flung down an open letter and stamped a rebellious little foot.

"Now, here's Aunt Letty," she said, "dittating to me all do with every cent of the Uncle Ben left me, and I've earned my own living for a live on, so I needn't touch a legacy. She wants me to her Saturday and she will how to invest it. She says her hands of me forever if penny of it. Well, she may. I had a really good time in and I'm going to have onespoony if I was liable at any time to

now. Just as soon as I read the lawyer's letter about the money I knew what I should do. I'm going to have some nice clothes made, stylish and right, and I'm going to Moccasset to stay three solid weeks and pretend to myself that I was born with a gold spoon in my mouth. I want to know how it feels to spend money, and I want to forget that I'm a little fifteen-dollar-a-week stenographer, and that all the living relative I have is cantankerous Aunt Harriet. But, of course, I can't go alone. You'll go with me, won't you, dear Miss Catherine? Please say you will, else my castles in the air will all fall."

"But why, my dear child, do you choose a place so far away and so expensive? There are pretty, quiet summer resorts much nearer."

"Don't you see, dear Miss Catherine, that I couldn't feel half so gold-

spoon if I was liable at any time to be recognized by somebody as one of Bent & Co.'s stenographers? And I don't want a quiet place. No, I must go to Moccasset. Now, please, please say you will go with me!"

Miss Catherine did not at once consent; but when she realized what the project meant to Ada she at last yielded.

A month later an impecunious adventurer, stylish of air and clothing, walking along a terrace at Moccasset, spoke low to George Arnold, tutor and companion to the invalid heir of a wealthy house:

"Have you seen that Miss Manley who arrived this afternoon with a fine-appearing elderly woman? The girl's a corker for looks; hair and eyes as black as your hat, and, judging by her clothes and general appearance, she's got money. But I'll find out before I fall in love with her. No

impecunious fair one for your little Willie. The girl I marry must have rocks as well as looks."

"So you'd marry a woman for her money?"

"Bet your life I would and the more the better."

The two men happened to meet again in the evening.

"No danger in telling you, Arnold," said the adventurer, "seeing you'd scorn to marry a girl for her money. I've found out about Miss Manley. She's the daughter of old Hi Manley, who got rich in the laundry soap business. She's worth millions if she's worth a cent. Now, I shall proceed to get introduced in proper style, and then watch me make love to the coo-millionaire. O, I shall love her, all right. Don't you worry. I could love a girl with that amount of money if she were as homely as a hedge fence,

and Miss Manley's a beauty."

The introduction was obtained and the adventurer began to use all his arts to win the supposed heiress. Ada, intoxicated by her new life, with its freedom from daily toil and its gaiety, was flattered by the attentions of the debonair young man and soon fancied herself in love with him. His manner toward Miss Lane was perfection itself, and the old lady, usually so astute, believed in him and liked him.

George Arnold remained in the background, merely the tutor of young Richard French, but Ada's eyes often followed him somewhat wistfully as he walked with his charge. She was not conscious of any special attraction toward him. She fully meant to say "yes" to the adventurer when he should ask the all-important question that his manner toward her left no doubt of his intention to ask

It had not been asked on the evening that he accosted Arnold with unusual excitement of manner. "Say, Arnold," he said, "I'm stung all right. Chap here this afternoon on a flying trip says Hi Manley's daughter has red hair and she's in Europe now. Says he's dead sure this girl's a stenographer that he's noticed in a big wholesale house back in Aldena. Mighty lucky I hadn't got engaged to her!"

"Mighty lucky for her," growled Arnold.

"What do you say?"

"I say that you are a low-down reptile, and if you don't make yourself scarce quick I'll throw you over the wall."

The adventurer, more discreet than plucky, walked rapidly away and a moment afterward Arnold went in the opposite direction. Then a burning-eyed Ada arose from a rustic seat near

by, concealed by a clump of shrubbery, where she had gone to enjoy the cool evening breeze. She knew now that her erstwhile ardent lover had loved not herself, but the money he thought she possessed, and she realized, too, that her pride and not her heart suffered. The next day the adventurer left Moccasset and Ada never saw him again.

It was her last evening. Again she sat on the rustic seat, but this time not alone.

"Sweetheart," said George Arnold, "it was a glad moment for me when I heard that you were not the daughter of a multi-millionaire, but just a dear little stenographer whom I might hope to win for my wife."

"When did you begin to love me, George?"

"The first time I set eyes on you, blessed extravagant little girl."

THROUGH the open windows of the little white house came the sounds of singing and occasionally one would catch a glimpse of the songstress as she moved back and forth from table to stove. If long enough one could dis-

she was as good to look up her voice to listen to. Borne August morning breeze there led the appetizing odor of Mollie Wade was frying

colander of nut-brown beauty at the back of the stove.

Every once in a while Mollie Wade skillfully rescued one from the hot fat with the aid of a long skewer and added it to the pile.

Perhaps it was the voice of the girl as she sang. Perhaps it was the fragrant smell of the doughnuts. It might have been the doubt of both. At any rate a weary knight of the road, first cousin to John Barleycorn, roused from his morning slats, looked longingly toward the little white house.

A few minutes later Mollie was interrupted in her work and in her song by a knock at the side door, and opening it, found herself face to face with a tramp whose apologetic attitude and voice could not belie his true charac-

ter. Mollie hastily agreed to his mumbled demand for good; glad to shut the door upon his visage.

Alone in the house she fully realized that she was entirely at his mercy. What could she give him to get rid of him at once? Her eyes fell upon the pile of doughnuts and with trembling fingers she hastily filled a big with the brown beauties.

Meanwhile fate was having its own particular frolic with Mollie Wade. While she was busily filling the bag with doughnuts the arrival of a young man on the scene was the cause of the tramp's abrupt departure. Just as the young man reached out his hand to grasp the brass knocker Mollie Wade cautiously opened the door far enough

to admit the passage of the bag, shoved it into the outstretched hand and with assumed bravery ordered the receiver to be off.

The young man stared in amazement from the bag in his hand to the door which had just banged shut in his face. There was still a puzzled expression on his face as he passed down the steps and out upon the road. So preoccupied was he in wondering why the pretty vision in pink had ordered him from the door that it was not until he reached his own house that he discovered he was still holding the paper bag that had been thrust into his hand.

Curiosity prompted him to open it. A delicious fragrance assailed his nostrils and the sight of the contents re-

warded his eyes and tempted his palate. He ate one and immediately reached in the bag for another. A fourth followed the third and still he was not satisfied. When the bottom of the bag was finally reached still another surprise awaited him. There, in the midst of a few remaining crumbs, reposed a dainty gold brooch.

The young man had no doubts as to who was its owner, and despite his reception of the morning, felt a keen sense of pleasure in the knowledge that his discovery necessitated another visit to the little white house.

The following morning Mollie Wade was again interrupted in her tasks by a knock at the door. Vision of the tramp returning came to her. This time, however, she had not so much

cause for fear. Aunt Letty was at home. She was nevertheless agreeably surprised when the open door revealed a good-looking young man in place of the tramp she half expected to see.

The new minister introduced himself and taking the gold brooch from his pocket handed it to Mollie Wade. "This, I believe, is your property," he said with a faint smile.

Mollie Wade gazed at the brooch in glad amazement. "My pin," she cried. "I never expected to see it again. I lost it yesterday and after searching the house from top to bottom felt certain that it had dropped into the bag of doughnuts I gave a tramp. Where on earth did you find it?"

The smile on the minister's face

deepened. "In the bag of doughnuts you gave me yesterday," he said.

Mollie Wade gasped. "Gave you? How-when-where? I gave those doughnuts to a tramp," she exclaimed weakly.

The new minister's smile was compelling. "No," he said, "that was what you meant to do, but the fellow ran off when he spied me coming and it was in my hands you put the bag."

"And upon you I slammed the door. What must you think of me?" murmured Mollie in sorrow.

It was not until a few months later that he dared tell her all he thought of her; but when he did Mollie Wade blushing agreed to cook doughnuts for him for the rest of their lives.

Better Days Ahead

By Elsie Endicott

ARTHA VALE crowded another piece of wood into the old stove, and stooping down, dextrously caused the pies on the top and bottom shelves to change places. When the oven door was once more closed upon rose, and with a corner of and faded apron wiped the on from her faded cheek. she had settled herself for a spell in the old wooden wouldn't rock—couldn't since the night that Jason a board under its rockers, locking annoyed him—the

law entered.

"Mercy, Martha, but it's hot in here. That stove of yours is worse than a furnace. When you going to get one of those wickless ones? If you want me I'll meet you tomorrow and help you select one."

Martha slowly raised her downcast eyes to the other's inquiring gaze. "I wouldn't be no use to meet me, Ellen. I'm not going to get one of those stoves this summer after all. Jason says that he needs all the money he can get to help pay for that strip of meadowland he is going to buy from Luke Hardy."

"Well, I'd like to know. And he after telling Will only the other day that he expected to make enough out of this year's crops to more than pay for

knows that there isn't a farm within miles that is paying as well as his'n or a farmer that has as good tools to work with. They know, too, that there isn't a woman within the same distance that has as little to do with as you have and it's all your own fault, Martha Vale."

"If you hadn't always given in to Jason things would never have been so bad. Look at that chair there. Do you suppose that any other woman would have sat quietly by and let her husband nail it up because he didn't like to see it rocked? What about the things that Jason does that you don't like?"

"Oh, I know what you're going to say. And if it's true it's just because you've sort of forced yourself into lik-

est way for you, Martha. What you need is a little more spunk."

"Do you suppose that because Jason is my own brother that I can't see his faults? It isn't that he means to be hard, either. It's just a habit that has sprouted and grown considerable under your meekness. Martha Vale, if you want to get any happiness in this life with Jason, you've got to handle him differently."

For some time after her sister-in-law had left Martha Vale sat staring out upon the most prosperous farm in the whole country. From there her gaze slowly traveled back to the poorly furnished kitchen, to the dingy olive-table-cloth with its numerous cracks and gashes, the unpainted walls and back to the latest bone of conten-

the old, cracked and badly warped stove that had belonged to his mother. Ellen's words kept resounding in her ears, and as she pondered on them she became so excited that she even attempted to rock the chair she was still sitting in, and didn't realize what she was doing until a series of uncomfortable jerks recalled her to the situation.

Brushing back the damp clinging locks of hair she rose listlessly with a half-vague idea to get the kitchen cool and tidy before Jason returned. And then, born of her long-smouldering sense of injustice which had been kindled into life by her sister-in-law's words, Martha Vale rebelled.

A few hours later when Jason returned home he was met at the very

little kitchen, became unbearable. "Whew, Martha, but it's hot in here. What you been doing?"

"Working," was Martha's nonchalant reply as she moved vigorously back and forth in the rocking-chair that now could rock while Jason stared in open-mouthed amazement at his once meek wife now grown defiant.

The days which followed were but a repetition of each other, during which meal hours became a source of torture to Jason, and during which time—despite an unusual amount of labor.

It was not until the end of a week of such treatment that Jason evinced any signs of weakening. One evening, returning after an unusually hard day in the hot sun to a still hotter kitchen, he surprised his wife by suddenly in-

much desired.

"Better get Ellen to go with you tomorrow to buy one, then," he said finally. "and get whatever else you need to make this kitchen cool and comfortable. I'm tired to death of all this needless heat and needless wood chopping."

Martha smiled to herself as she went about her work. Her strategy had borne fruit and she knew that there were better days ahead.

Changed his Mind.

"Do you think the motor-car has come to stay?" asked one man. "Well," replied the other, "I was one out in front of the day which I should