

# Thrilling Tales of Love and Adventure

## That Farm Of---Ours

By Annette Angert



**M**ISS DUNNING, ten years government employe in Washington and dismissed without an hour's notice, went to her boarding house with calm face and steady eyes, for that was her way.

When she reached her room she went straight to her desk and took three letters from one of his pigeon-holes. These she spread out in the order of their receipt, placing the one of the morning below the others. Then she read:

"North Dakota, Jan. 1, 1907.—Dear Edith: I got here two months ago, and expended four of my five hundred dollars in forty-five good cows, which I think I got at a bargain. I believe I understand cattle pretty well, dear, even if I did make a failure of my farm back there. The other hundred dollars I put into a dugout and some blankets and provisions. It is a hard, but bracing country out here, and this morning the thermometer is 34 degrees below. I am glad you are trying for a government position. It will be better than keeping house for that uncle of yours. But this is enough now, because you said I must make good by actions and not words. Yours, TOM BURKE."

"North Dakota, April, 1907.—Dear Edith: Two years later. Have forty-five cows now, thirty-five yearlings, and thirty calves. Had my fingers and toes frozen several times, and can ride a wild mustang as well as most of the

cowboys. Shot five bears and traded three of the pelts for my mustang. This is about all the real action so far. "TOM."

"Double XXX Ranch, N. D., April 1, 1909.—Dear Edith: You notice I have my ranch named now, with my brand, though it is government land and I still live in a dugout. But I have 260 cows, 150 yearlings and 250 calves. I have hired a Swede to help me. In four more years, at the rate of increase so far, I shall have over a thousand head of cattle. Then I shall sell and return home and buy my old farm. This is my great ambition now—and you."

"All my old neighbors there know how I fooled away my farm and let it go under a mortgage. I suppose it will take \$6,000 or \$7,000 to buy it back. A thousand head of cattle at the present market price will do it. "TOM."

She read the three letters with as much indifference as though the writer was a stranger; but then she knew them all by heart and the five years of silence was in her mind. With the same indifference she opened the letter of the morning and began to read. But as her eyes went over the sprawling letters they widened and her face went white, and when a few more lines were struggled through with blinding tears Miss Dunning threw herself face downward upon the bed and sobbed bitterly.

"Oh Tom, Tom!" she moaned. "I was hard, so hard! But I didn't mean it. I was only trying to make a man of you, and you were a man all the time, inside. I ought to have known."

Oh, Tommy, Tommy! It was all my fault."

Five minutes later her face remained buried in the bedclothes; then she rose, bathed her face and took up the last letter received for a second reading:

"No Ranch, No Cattle, N. D., Oct. 1, 1914.—My Dear Miss Dunning: I have failed to make good and am merely writing this because you may hear of my returning to the old neighborhood. I hope to find some sort of job there, perhaps as driver of a milk wagon. I have lost out here, and now just want to get back home. You will find this letter almost unreadable, for I am writing with my left hand, and it comes awkward. My right was amputated after the great blizzard."

"The year after I wrote you before I took my herd farther up into the northwest for better grazing and built another dugout. For a year or more all went well, and the herd increased to over 800. Then came the great blizzard, which swept the whole northwest. I struggled with it for three weeks, trying to round up my herd under the lee of bluffs and into ravines for temporary shelter, but in the end being driven over a hundred miles, with four-fifths of my herd dead, and myself frozen to uselessness for the time being. When I got out half of the few cattle left were gone. "But there seemed no reason why a one-handed man shouldn't make good, so I started in again and had built the herd up to half its former size when the big snow of last winter came and shut us away from the grazing and buried great bunches of cattle,

"I am now being cared for by a good friend of mine named Scott. He has purchased the thirty head of cattle I had left and as soon as my broken leg mends enough to travel, which the doctor says will be before the end of the month, I shall start home. The cattle money will pay the doctor and my fare."

"I hope your government work is proving congenial, and that you have or will find some one to bring into your life the happiness that my incompetency has denied me. Sincerely yours, "THOMAS BURKE."

"Poor boy!" murmured Miss Dunning as she kissed the letter. "He has made good in every way, and I shall be so proud of him."

She went to her desk and removed the contents of a small drawer, which represented her worldly wealth, a few hundred dollars saved from her salary and the deed of a lot far up 14th street. She looked at this deed with a wry face. She had purchased it through the persuasiveness of a land agent during her first year in the department, and paid for it in installments. The agent had taken her out in an automobile, and it had not seemed far. Later, when she went to the end of a car line and then walked across stony and muddy fields to the lot she felt differently. She had gone back to the agent and offered the lot for cost, half cost, and finally, a quarter. But the agent only laughed, and advised her to hold on.

But now she wanted every dollar she could get for Tom was coming home. Perhaps they could rent the

old farm. The lot had cost her \$1,200. Maybe he could sell it for something. An hour later she was at the land office. The man she had bought of was away, but his partner was in.

"Um!" this man said, after listening to her. "My disinterested advice is to hold on."

"I've been holding on nearly ten years, and now I mean to sell. I want the money."

"W-o-a-l-l, in that case—let me see. I recently sold the adjoining lot to a man who is going to erect a nice house. That will enhance yours some, of course. I suppose you have considered that. But you mustn't place your price too high. Exaggerated values are the trouble with most lot owners. She won't get it, though—not for some years to come, at any rate. Now, if you would consider, say, ten thousand—"

"Ten thousand, cash?" Miss Dunning was surprised at the calmness with which he was able to pronounce the words without any apparent tremor.

"Yes, cash, of course. I know several parties who are interested out that way. And it may be I can get you a little more, as she remained silent, trying to calm herself inside. "Of course, the bigger the price the bigger my commission. But I promise ten thousand, clear."

"Very well, get all you can," forcing herself to speak calmly, "though I'm ready to sign papers for ten thousand. When shall I know?"

"I will have the money and papers

ready tomorrow night. And now," as she rose, "may I ask if you intend investigating? I have some very attractive thing this week."

"No, thank you. I am hoping to buy a farm just out of the city—The Glen Echo Dairy Farm."

"Why? What?" in surprise. "I've got that very farm on my list. Owner wants to go to Florida, and will sell for \$9,000. If you want the place we can have all the papers fixed up here tomorrow afternoon. Odd thing, I received a letter from Dakota this very morning, wanting to rent that farm—addressed to my predecessor here who seems to have sold it once. Man wants to rent on shares, work half and half the crop for rent, he to furnish, everything. Pretty good offer in a renting way, but, of course, sale is the most important and the only thing just now. But you'll need a manager on that place, of course, and I wouldn't wonder if this would be just the man. Anyhow, when he comes I'll send him out for a talk."

The next day the transfer was made, and Miss Dunning moved out in the afternoon. There were repairs and improvements she wanted to make, and they must be done quickly. Several weeks passed and the changes were all completed and the workmen gone away. With the last one gone, Miss Dunning brought a rocking chair to that corner of the veranda that commanded a view toward the end of the nearest car line.

But two more days passed before a man was seen coming down the lane. He walked very slowly, with a cane in one hand limping. As he neared the house he stopped frequently to look

about, and came forward with a ble effort. Once he paused and turned, as though minded to go back, then he seemed to get his hand, for he came straight to the door.

As he stopped Miss Dunning came from her corner behind the door, "Tom!" she said, striving to keep her voice steady.

But the man recoiled, with a face, and would have fallen had not stepped forward quickly. He whispered hoarsely, "I think to meet you. I'm—not—enough for that yet. And here. Are you the wife of the owner?"

"Not yet, Tom. I have been waiting for you. Don't you remember you used to ask me to marry you once, for forty times, I think. I told you to go away first and get man of yourself. You have done and come back, and I have done. Now we will be married."

"Come back a man! Why, Edith, am a failure, the very worst. I have even had \$500 when I went away. Have nothing now."

"But you are a man, Tom," Dunning declared, her happiness making her eyes luminous. "That is a thousand times more. A failure, I am one, for I worked years in the government printing and thought I had made myself indispensable, but they dropped me out explanation. But come, dear minister lives but two houses away and I have spoken to him. This will come back and look over farm—ours, I mean."

## The Broken Resolution

By Will Seaton



**I**T was at the weekly meeting of the Young Dorcas Society of St. Luke's church, Ridgeville, whose present session was being held at the home of the speaker. As it was a cold, blistering day, the assemblage proved to be small, and the workers present seemed more inclined to use their tongues than their needles. As in most charitable societies of the kind, the real work fell upon a few earnest hands, while the majority of the members found it merely a matter of policy or fashion to spend an hour or two each week making, as Mr. Weller expressed it, "dannel ves-kits" for the heathen.

"How many of you are going to receive New Year callers?" asked Belle Davis as she briskly plied her needle. "I am, for one," replied Jo Mott, in answer to Belle's question. "I shouldn't feel as if I had begun the year without my usual quorum of callers."

"I think Jo is right," said a quiet voice belonging to Agnes Gelay, an earnest-faced girl, with the others, had been an interested listener to the con-

versation. "And it would be a good plan if we would all agree right here to banish all intoxicants from our tables at this coming reception. What say you, girls? I am sure you will accede to the proposal, Marcia, when you look at the matter in the right way, and consider what an influence your example would have."

But Marcia was neither to be coaxed nor flattered. "I shall do nothing of the sort. I did not come here to listen to a temperance homily nor to receive officious advice," she answered shortly, laying aside her work. "If I had known that I was going to be inveigled into a reform meeting I would have stayed at home."

"For shame, girls!" exclaimed Belle. "Don't go, Marcia. Of course, all do not think alike about these things, and nobody should take offense because another expresses her opinion."

"I am sure I intended no offense," said Jo. "But I meant what I said, only perhaps a church society is not exactly the place to carry on arguments of any kind, but I do think Christians, if anybody, ought to be interested in this question," she concluded, with a decided nod, which set the yellow curls bobbing.

"Of course, we all admit that," re-

turned Belle peevishly, anxious that her duties as hostess should pass off smoothly and amicably.

"But just now the question of great interest to me is whether this garment you will say. Perhaps not; yet by no means an uncommon sort of one."

The subject which Belle had so skillfully changed was not again reverted to that afternoon, but the result showed that the discussion had left its impression.

On the particular New York's Day mentioned at the Young Dorcas Society, Charles Reynolds, in company with two of his friends, started out to make his round of calls. It was a custom which he followed every year, not for any particular pleasure derived from the thing to do, and expected of him, as an active member of society.

He was a bright, genial fellow, rather too warm-hearted and generous for his own good, with a manner too free and obliging to always resist any reasonable temptation which came in his way. The one which most frequently assailed him was in the form of intoxicating drinks. He had no special fond-

ness for them, but did not wish to be unsocial enough to refuse, even though he was conscious of feeling their unpleasant effect all too easily. Not a very strong-willed or self-reliant hero, you will say. Perhaps not; yet by no means an uncommon sort of one."

The subject of temperance had been quite strongly agitated in Ridgeville that winter. Societies and lodges were formed, and drew a large number of young people within their circle. Charles Reynolds among others, his intelligence and popularity soon gaining him the highest position in the order to which he belonged.

He set out to make his usual calls that New Year's Day with no fear of the risk of the undertaking.

"Knowing the stand which I have taken, no one will offer me any temptation, and, if they should, it will be easy enough to decline. I have denied myself so long," he assured himself.

Jo Mott and several others contented themselves with furnishing simple refreshments, accompanied with fragrant coffee and chocolate.

"I don't wish to do my friends the injustice to presume that they call merely for the purpose of getting something to eat," said that plain-spoken young lady. "I would rather give them credit for a desire to see me."

Marcia Downing, on the contrary, thought she was only preserving the prestige of her social position and family and best pleasing her callers by placing before them a collation made more tempting by the variety and choiceness of its wines.

It was four o'clock when Charles and his companions reached the Downing mansion.

Marcia and her friend appeared as fresh and charming, and greeted them as pleasantly as if they had not been listening to the same compliments, with a slight change of expression, perhaps, and making the same commonplace responses for several hours. They were in very elaborate toilets, Marcia looking especially lovely in pink brocade and white lace, with a cluster of pink and white carnations in her hair, and another at her throat. The contrast offered by Miss De Mille, a tall blonde, set off Marcia's dark beauty to greater advantage.

After the usual compliments had been exchanged, recourse was had to the refreshment room. It was profusely decorated with flowers, and the tables loaded with various delicacies to delight the most fastidious epicure. "I fear we have nothing to tempt

your appetite," Marcia observed to Charles, in a pretty, deprecating way, noticing that his already satiated taste allowed him barely to touch the dainties before him. "Perhaps this may coax it, though," she suggested, with her own hands filling a delicate Bohemian wineglass and smilingly offering it to him.

"Of course, you take wine, Mr. Reynolds?"

He was very tired. The mere color of the rosy, sparkling liquid seemed to invigorate him. He took the glass and swallowed its contents quickly. He was in no mood for sipping them leisurely.

"Ah, how are you, Reynolds?"

It was Mr. Downing, who stopped on his way through the room to exchange a word with his bookkeeper. "Has Marcia been trying to satisfy you with some of that child's cordial?" he continued, noticing the empty glass which Charles still held. "It's only fit for women and children. Come with me, and I'll show you something that is worth drinking."

So long unaccustomed to its use, Charles was already beginning to feel the effects of the wine, light as it was. He felt rested and enervated. Now that one glass had been taken, another

would not make the matter any worse and he could not refuse without offending his host; so, exclaiming to those present, he followed Downing out of the room.

The next day Marcia's father called on her the following week with the local newspaper with the news: "Our assistant bookkeeper is off today."

"We regret to chronicle the temporary indisposition of one of our most popular young business men said to be caused by the abuse of privilege of making New Year's calls. It is also rumored that he is required to answer grave charges in regard to his connection with one of our town societies."

"Not Charles Reynolds?" she asked, with a little indifferent air.

Mr. Downing nodded.

"Hoys will be boys," he said contentedly.

Charles's indisposition was not as well as physical. Of course standing in the temperance boat was lost to him, but more than all he lost his self respect, which it requires months of self-denial an upward to regain, but his experience, though so dearly won, has been none the less invaluable.

## In The Fields Of Romance

By Elsie Endicott



**W**HEN Lydia Moulton unexpectedly to herself and everybody else fell heir to \$2,000, the whole town wondered what she would do with it. Three thousand dollars was a lot of money to possess without a single effort on one's part, especially when times were as hard as they were then. A good many people with mortgages and large families envied Lydia, and thought how much better they could use it than she. She would be quite likely to do something foolish with it.

Lydia Moulton was twenty-seven, a wisp of a thing, with pale cheeks, sad eyes and lots of light hair. She had

a twisted hip as a result of a childish fall, and she could not walk without leaning upon somebody's arm. Her aunt or uncle usually supported her. She had lived with them for years, and they regarded her as their own child almost. They were plain people who had just enough to live upon in the one place they owned, a tall brick building on Main street. The first floor was used as a store, they occupied the second, and there were lodges on the pavement and a string of groceries across the street. There was a bit of yard at the back, but it was always littered with refuse from the store. Mrs. Moulton dried her clothes on a pulley line and kept her coal on the back balcony.

Lydia painted little things for an art store—pin cushions and sofa pillows and calendars. She did not earn much, but it kept her busy and happy. She seemed not to have a care in the world.

She appeared, however, to grow grave after receiving her inheritance. The possession of money always entails responsibility. Lydia seemed to feel this deeply.

"Well," Mrs. Jessup said, "I suppose now, Lydia, seeing you've never been able to walk any more, you'll get an automobile. Your Uncle Nat can run it for you, and you and your auntie can sit on the back seat and take lots of comfort."

"I've thought of that," Lydia replied. "But, no—I'm not going to get an automobile."

"A horse and buggy?" Lydia shook her head.

"What then?" Mrs. Jessup was persistent.

"I'm just thinking."

"The Darrins had a house to sell and came to see Lydia. "It's got a garden and a yard with trees and rose bushes. You'd enjoy living there," they told her. "And we'll sell it to you—seeing it's your—cheaper dirt. We wouldn't sell it at all, only we want to go to California."

Lydia sighed. "This is home," she said gently. "Aunt Mate wouldn't live anywhere else. No, I don't want your house."

"Get you some good clothes, now, Lydia, and come out and have a good time," teased Lola Woerdtge, who kept the art store.

"Study art," said Miss Minor, who had a studio.

"Invest—invest," urged everybody who had stock, or lots or bonds to sell. Lydia remained gently obdurate. But at last her real intention was known—she was going to buy Borden's field.

It was known that the Borden had been trying for years to sell the field. The old man had run through everything but the cat. The boy Ray was wholly unlike his father. He was a fine, keen, businesslike young fellow who worked hard and acted as if he meant to amount to something. He resembled his mother, and it was said that since he had reached man's estate he had laid a restraining hand on his profligate old father.

However they had not thought of trying to sell the field to Lydia. She had made her own proposition. It took nearly the whole \$2,000 to buy it. With the rest of the money she had a fence

put up and seats placed under the elms and the whole place freed from weeds and litter. Every pleasant morning her uncle or aunt took her there and she stayed all day. Sometimes they all had a picnic lunch there together. She painted there—she fairly made her home there all summer. And she kept open house. Children were welcome, and old people who loved the air. Her hospitality was never abused. The sight of her easel exercised a restraining property in common with the wild flowers, which began to grow so abundantly.

After a time it was noticed that Ray Borden was joining the procession to Borden's field. He would sit after supper near Lydia and watch her while she caught the last light on her painting.

One day Mrs. Jessup said to Lydia: "That old field of yours is getting popular in this part of the town. The park itself. But, say do you think it was a shame your uncle charged her such a price for it. 'Taint worth no \$2,800."

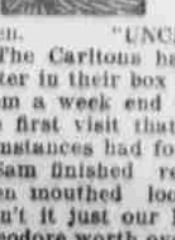
"It is to Lydia," Ray said with quick flush. "Then he added: "Mrs. Jessup, you may as well go home. Every body will soon be going into a house for Lydia. She will stand in the midst of Borden's field. And she and I are going to be in it."

"For the land's sake!" cried Mrs. Jessup.

And she hurried forth to tell of romance that had blossomed in Borden's field.

## His Own Particular Secret

By Enos Emory



**M**Y DEAR NEPHEW— I have just landed from Rio Janeiro and shall arrive at your house on Monday for dinner. Am anxious to know my new niece whom you have written me so much about and I have never seen. "UNCLE THEODORE."

The Carletons had found the above letter in their box when they returned from a week end visit to the Allen's, the first visit that their reduced circumstances had forced them to make. Sam finished reading it and stood open mouthed looking at Margaret. "Isn't it just our luck to have Uncle Theodore worth over a million dollars, land on us when we haven't a thing in the house to eat."

He reached in his pocket and drew

forth \$1.00. "Can we get our dinner on that?" Margaret smiled happily. "Certainly we can. Give me the basket. All our future depends upon the attitude of Uncle Theodore."

Margaret went out in a most cheerful mood on her way to market. When she returned from her marketing she sat the basket down triumphantly upon the table.

"How's that for a dollar?" Sam was busy dusting the furniture and answered without looking up. "I know it's all right, Marjie, it always is when you buy it, dear."

Sam was searching in the sideboard drawer for a fresh table-cloth. "It's getting dark, Margaret, you better drop another quarter in the meter."

Margaret appeared at the door with a look of blank astonishment on her face, her apron covered with flour. "Have you forgotten, Sam Carleton,

we have only five cents in the world. Sam reached in his pocket for his watch and drew forth only the ticket. Sautering over to the window he glanced at the church clock.

"We must get that 25-cent piece mighty quick, Margaret, for Uncle Theodore will be here in less than two hours and there is not a sign of dinner yet."

The young couple grew silent while a look of adventurous mischief crept into their eyes. Then without a word Sam rose, removed his collar, tied a handkerchief around his neck, changed his coat for a very old one, pulled a slouch hat over his face and coming out of the den turned squarely around to Margaret.

"I may look peculiar, Marjie, but you will admit I closely resemble a first-class beggar. Margaret Carleton, I'm going to beg a 25-cent piece down street somewhere. Here goes." He

slouched out of the door like a real beggar.

After he had gone it occurred to Margaret, "What if he should fail. Going into her room and regardless of possible consequences, she arrayed herself in a gypsy costume she had worn in her college days and started for the tea-room of a near-by fashionable hotel.

As she hurriedly passed through the lobby she was attracted by an elderly man sitting somewhat apart from others, tossing a coin from one hand to the other evidently in deep thought. The atmosphere of chance penetrated to the spot where Margaret stood and oblivious of all else but the necessary quarter she walked timidly over to the man and sat down beside him.

The genial faced man in the loose alpaca coat and Panama hat transferred the coin to his pocket and reaching out his hand toward Margaret smilingly

said, "Palm reading, I suppose?"

Quickly grasping her opportunity, Margaret began a hasty resume of his life's probabilities. Judging from his genial countenance, she dwelt at length upon his good nature, his prosperity and charity. She finished with an emphatic and flattering assertion that he was bound to always be successful, and taking the much desired quarter which he offered her, walked swiftly out of the hotel.

Margaret was the first to return home. Groping her way to a kitchen chair she stepped on it and dropped the silver piece into the meter. The gas quickly responded to the touch of the match and the odor of cooking floated fragrantly through the rooms.

Five o'clock came and Sam had not appeared. Six o'clock ticked merrily away when she heard his step in the hall.

"It's no go, Margaret, there isn't a

kind-hearted person out tonight. I couldn't scare up a penny. I'll have to stick to the legitimate even though we all starve. Nothing doing in the begging line for me. How in the world did you get the light and the gas-stove going, Marjie?"

"Now, never mind, Sam, how I got it. I just have it, that's all, and supper will be ready in 20 minutes."

Sam hastily changed his clothes and was ready to answer the apartment bell just as it rang.

A large man in a plain tweed suit and a Panama hat stood at the door. "Well, if it isn't my nephew, Sam."

"How are you, uncle? I'd know you anywhere."

Sam's face beamed. Visions of his prosperity seemed to emanate from his uncle's face. Leading the way to the little parlor he called to Margaret. "Her feet grew cold and she trembled as she approached the parlor."

What if Uncle Theodore should notice her as the gypsy?"

Her fears were entirely dispelled when at Sam's presentation Uncle Theodore took her in his arms. "Don't look a mite like your picture. You couldn't; you're too good-looking."

There was not a sign of recognition of their past meeting as they walked into the dining room and their seats at the table.

The dinner progressed happily, dessert was an especially gratifying course, as Uncle Theodore testified his confidence at this time.

"I've had a plan in my mind all way up from Rio Janeiro," he said, "and I thought it was my own plan, but I'm particular secret; but I've switched it a little gypsy woman came into the lobby of my hotel last night and tell me almost everything I've thought for the last three years."