

# Thrilling Tales of Love and Adventure

## The Current of Life

By Annette Angert

THE interurban car was crowded as always on Saturday afternoon. Bessy managed to cling to her many bundles as she pushed her way on and down the aisle till she could steady herself against the back of a seat.

There was no chance to sit and she barely managed to keep possession of her bundles. Jack could give her no help. He himself was loaded down till he could barely stagger on.

Only about once a month did they come into the big town from the farm and there was always so much to carry. And as the cars ran only every third hour in the winter months there was always a veritable mob of farmers and their wives, shopping bent.

Bessy was tired. The wind had been cold and she had waited around at different stores while Jack made his purchases. She swayed with the lurch of the car and her arms ached from the strain of holding so many bundles. Presently the heavy coat and the muffler, which had been necessary in the cold outdoor, became unbearable in the stuffy atmosphere of the crowded car. But she could not man-

age to free herself of either. There was no room. It was impossible, either, to lay a package down and so get a hand up. Stolidly she submitted to necessity and stood in fatiguing quiet. In an hour they would reach the home station. Then there would come a weary, stiff walk of nearly a mile to their small farm. She sighed.

Once, the spring before last, when the road was sided with blue violets, she had loved that fragrant short mile. Then they were fresh from the city, she and Jack, and the country had all the beauty of novelty.

But two feet of snow that crept up to one's knees and oozed into overshoes made the mile anything but pleasant. Today she felt that she hated it. At the end of this long, trying, cold day she was in that weary mood when she hated everything connected with the country. She hated the cold snow fields, the grim, ugly fence posts, that peered from them in hateful straight lines; she hated the bundles that she carried—new overshoes, heavy stockings, woolen petticoat, a strip of ugly oilcloth for the table on which she washed dishes; all necessities; not a useless or beautiful thing among them.

"And I hate it," reflected Bessy. "And I hate the pink pork that we will have for supper. I want—"

She didn't finish the thought. Her eyes widened. Usually the same kind of people filled the car; big, comfortable farmers or stockmen in heavy caps and coats and overshoes; their faces red-hardened by wind and sleet; and their wives and daughters, also with heavy hoods, or hats tied tight with woolen scarf, heavy coats and over-

Two years back it had seemed a wonderful thing that she and Jack could get out into the country and have a small home of their own. They had been glad to go—even though they went because the doctor imperatively ordered it. Jack was not well. They had gloated over the violets, the cackling hens, the bit of unpainted shed, the small homely cottage, the chance to milk their own cow. And the interurban had seemed an added joy. It connected them with town. They had never expected to find that it came so near. They regarded it as a distinct provision of Providence.

But all that was two years back. Two winters had come since then. And they had learned how very lonely a winter, with an interurban a mile away can be.

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shoes. It was a surprise to see the two who sat about the middle of the car. The woman wore a small black velvet hat, modestly trimmed with a single quill; her coat was cloth, tailored broadcloth. Bessy had lived in a city all her life. Her own salary as a clever stenographer enabled her to appraise correctly the coat of that plain little hat, "Panne velvet," she knew. And the quilt was worth far more than its slight weight in silver. And the man beside her wore an ulster—oh, she knew how much those English ulsters were worth. And she could guess how much that plain dark hat cost. They were not interurban folks—they belonged to those who ride in taxicabs; they suggested luxury, city luxury, restaurants, gay lights, waiters, big beautiful stores, the tang of the city, the roar of the elevated, the clatter of motor trucks, daily newspapers hung at your door or grabbed from the stand while the type was still wet, not delivered to you two days later by the rural mailman; they suggested, in fact, this incongruous pair, all that Bessy longed for, and now knew that she had longed for all these past months.

She felt shabby, burdened, poor, sullen. The woman was good-looking, in massaged, powdered, scented, mani-

cured style. She had removed a glove, and Bessy stared enviously at the slim white fingers raised to the dainty black hair. Pink and polished were those fingernails—just such tint and shine as Bessy's own had boasted years before when it was worth while beautifying one's self. Now—she shivered with disgust at thought of the broken-nailed red-knuckled digits in her clumsy woolen gloves.

She turned till she could just glimpse the rough shoulders of Jack's overcoat. Hastily she turned her eyes away again. She loved Jack—at least she had loved him two years before; surely she had loved a year back. But—she was tired of their way of living. She wanted to get back to lights and noise and frivolous clothes. She wanted electric lights. And she thought with loathing of the kerosene lamps that she had forgotten to fill that morning before she left. Now she must do it when she arrived home. And the kitchen fire would be out. Jack would build it, but she must wait in the chill room till it was burning. Then the supper on the square, ugly kitchen table by the kerosene lamp. And not 300 miles away women were dining under glittering lights to orchestra accompaniment. And they were dining—not merely eating food.

Her eyes grew big. For Jack was

looking at the man in the ulster. And Bessy, who had imagined that only in her own wondering at the bitter melancholy and envy in Jack's eyes. She saw him. There was more than a moment he betrayed what he was carefully hiding from her. Fatigue. There came a little monition to her that perhaps she would be no one, sick or well, her here.

And she knew then very well that she loved him or not. She missed her eyes, she missed the seat ahead. Turning to some few had left the car and gazing through the aisle was wholly impossible. Jack reached to take some bundles when she turned him. He held them close. "You're going," she smiled at him. "I hurt her to see how she forced all weariness from her until in return." "Tired?" he asked, smiling.

Her eyes clung fascinated to these two representatives of that city life. She ached to throw the bundles down, get back to a railroad station, and go.

As for Jack—for the first time she resented his lack of health. For the first time she wished that she was back making her own living. She had been a competent worker in the city; she had made enough and more to get pretty hats and shoes and coats. Not luxurious, but pretty things. Nothing like the horrible things in the bundles which made her arms ache.

For the first time she called Jack selfish to ask her to bury herself out here; he was satisfied, being a man; the cow, the chickens, the straight furrows contented him. The evening before he had spent three excited hours debating whether he should set out blackberries or strawberries on the fertile strip west of the barn. She felt a sudden hot resentment at his easy content. As she stretched around to look at him her glance wavered. The woman with the panne velvet imported hat had reached again to pat the black hair. Bessy looked at the white, manicured hand for several aching moments before her eyes went on and found Jack. And then— Her eyes grew big. For Jack was

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## Two of a Kind In Style

By Will Seaton

ALMIRA SPOONER, sitting at the window with her crochet work looked up as a little tripping woman went by. The little, tripping woman bowed and smiled and Almira responded graciously. As the woman passed down the street Almira snubbed her nose against the pane to gaze after her. A sound behind her made her turn with a start and there stood her next door neighbor, Mrs. Seeley, who had run in with her crochet work.

"Whom are you watching?" asked Mrs. Seeley, selecting a chair with a view to comfort and beginning to crocheted so as to lose no time.

"Lou Chittenden. Have you seen her new gray coat?" Almira also began to crochet.

"Mercy, yes. She's been out airing it every day since she got it a week ago. She got it at Gould's."

"It's exactly like a coat I was looking at and wanted," said Almira short-

ly. "I shan't buy it now that she's got one."

"That's the trouble in a place of this size," consoled Mrs. Seeley.

"I shall go to the city and get me a coat," replied Almira, looking very decided.

"I don't blame you one atom," Mrs. Seeley said admiringly. "Course, you can buy where you want to. Mr. Spooner is a salaried man and pays his bills as he goes. But with me it's different," she sighed. "We're connected with Gould and I feel under obligations. I wouldn't dast hardly buy anywhere else."

"Well, I dast and I shall," affirmed Almira.

Until she had spoken she had never dreamed of going out of town for her coat. But now that she had spoken she felt she could not very well drop back. Mrs. Seeley would tell everybody that she was going to the city to get her coat and everybody would be looking for her to do so. Besides, she really wished to have a coat different from any she had seen, especially from that of Lou Chittenden, to whom she bore a grudge of long standing.

The thought of Lou Chittenden stimulated her. She knew Lou thoroughly, knew how easily turned and dissatisfied she was. Pleasantly she pictured to herself Lou's dismay when she, Almira, marched into church Sunday morning arrayed in the latest city style.

Almira's next move was to approach her husband on the money question.

Al Spooner was as close as the proverbial bark on the tree, but a legacy of \$3,000 recently acquired had done much toward loosening up his strings. However, he growled considerably before he handed out three \$10 bills to his wife.

"Now, don't ask me for another cent this winter," he admonished.

"Al Spooner," returned Almira with spirit, "I shall ask you for money every time I want it, and I'll see that you give it to me, too."

"Oh, go long," said Al, who was no match at all for his aggressive little helpmate.

With her three \$10 bills tucked safely away, and arrayed in last summer's suit, her new hat and a fresh veil Almira took the early morning train to the city. Not until she was fairly on her way did her high spirits begin to flag. Then she realized with a miserable little inward quake that she was doing an adventuresome thing. She had scarcely ever been out of Bayville in her life and here she was starting alone for the city! "I'm afraid," she thought penitently. "That I'm a great hand to speak hastily. But when I've said a thing I won't go back on it, no siree!"

There was not a soul whom she knew on the train. Half a dozen years before Almira had been to the city with Al; and womanlike, had trusted to him to pilot her about. Her memory she found, was confused and valueless. As she stood on the station platform she was utterly turned around. Only one thing stood out boldly in her mind's eye and that was the name of MacNamara.

"Keb, ma'am?" Almira started. She began to see a way out of her difficulties.

She alighted from the cab at MacNamara's door and with renewed courage entered. After Gould's this

department store looked vast, overwhelming. Moreover, it caught the fancy at every turn. She was like a silly little butterfly in a great field of flowers. She fluttered here and there enraptured. Never had she seen so many things she wanted. If she resisted one thing she gave way to another. At last she awoke to the fact it was 2 o'clock, she had had no lunch, she was laden with small parcels and considerable of her money had been spent.

A considerate floorwalker directed her to the restaurant, where she swallowed some tea and a sandwich. Then she returned to the store. On the way to the coat department she ran across some bargains in silks which delayed her so long that she had barely an hour left in which to select her coat and get to the station.

By that time her poor head was in a whirl and her money far gone. A clever little saleswoman helped her into a coat luxuriously silk lined. Almira caught a glimpse of the price tag and gasped. Twenty-five dollars!

"I can't pay so much," she said, "something simpler, please—something about \$12."

The saleswoman immediately looked bored, but she went on putting coats upon Almira, who became more and more confused. She had never seen so many coats in her life. After she had tried on eight or nine they all looked alike to her. The electric lights made her head ache. Moreover, time was flying. She glanced at her watch and was horrified to find that it would be close work getting to the depot.

"Give me the coat you think is the best," she said to the salesgirl. "And hurry, please, or I shall miss my train."

Almira, with a dozen parcels under her arms, ran nearly the whole way to the station. Yet in spite of her haste, she arrived just in time. As with her last breath she hurried toward the train a big, familiar arm gathered her and her bundles in.

"Plenty of time, hon," said her husband's voice in her ear. He had grown uneasy about her, and had come in upon one train just in time to take her home on the other.

Almira was never so tired in her life. The next morning she dressed up

in her new coat and went to do an errand. Before she had gone down she paused superciliously at the display. As she stood a woman drew near.

"Why, Almira Spooner!" exclaimed Chittenden. The corners of his voking mouth curled. "If you gown and got a coat just like I didn't know you thought of me."

Almira swung round and he her. Then she turned and he. Horribly true. Her coat was like Lou's. And she had gone way to the city to get it! No! That she had paid \$2 more for Lou had paid at Gould's! For stant her ears rung, then she herself. She had been a fool, body knew it save herself. Al bobby should know it. She no hope you don't mind, Lou," she

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## A Faith In Human Nature

By Walt Gregg

SHE always had been jealous. Yet she had prided herself that she was sensible about it. That is, after she had grown beyond a rather stormy childhood. And since her marriage, she had kept her

trifles to herself, knowing that there was never any real reason for doubting. But now—here was proof. Could she doubt her own eyes?

The package her husband had so carelessly handed over with the mail she found to be a box of beautifully embroidered linen handkerchiefs, hemstitched, and with his own monogram in the corner—such handkerchiefs as he would never think of buying. Then the card, "Miss Louise Dalton, 213 Linden walk, Louisville, Ky., made it evident that they were a gift. That and the fact that her husband had been to Louisville that week completed her hastily gathered evidence.

She remembered trying to think just what she should say to Lindsay, then a wave of self-pity would drown all thought of the logical statements she prepared. She, Edith Stone, would be

pitted as she had pitied others; she who had so boasted and glared in the fact that she loved and was beloved in a manner out of the ordinary.

"Do you go too Louisville often?" "She was suddenly conscious that the guest was speaking.

"Why, yes; and will probably go oftener from now on," she heard her husband reply.

He was trying to prepare her for his absence! Edith felt that she must get out where there was cool air. But speech seemed to have left her. What was the man saying? That he must go? Oh, yes, she remembered, and smiled graciously as she shook hands.

She heard the front door slam, heard Lindsay coming toward her and tried vainly to say something. As he bent over her in an attempt to kiss her forehead the wife drew away from him, still looking at the fire and not saying a word.

"The tired little lady had better go to bed," he said gently, as he went out of the room.

The angry tears rushed to her eyes. It was the first time she had ever shrunk from his kiss, and he thought only that she was tired! She would stay up, right where she was, till he came to see what was the matter. Then

she would tell him what she knew. Supposing, though, that he could explain! What would he think of her for doubting him? Her heart almost stopped beating at the thought that her doubt might mar their hitherto perfect understanding.

This Louise Dalton—what manner of girl was she? Perhaps some pretty foolish schoolgirl who didn't know Lindsay was married. She would necessarily be both pretty and attractive. Edith reflected, or Lindsay wouldn't be interested in her. The more she thought of the girl the more she pitied her and the more real her jealous fancies became, until it seemed to her that her whole duty lay in warning the girl. After all she had the address. Why not see this pretty, foolish Louise the next time she went to Louisville? Then, if her fears had been unfounded, Lindsay would never be the wiser.

Suddenly she remembered hearing Mrs. Thurman, her neighbor, say she was going to Louisville on the early train. Why not go with her? She heard the clock strike four; then it was nearly time to get up and get ready.

Mrs. Thurman was delighted to have company and chatted amiably until

Edith Stone, not daring to trust her voice, pleaded a headache. This made the rest of the trip more endurable, and once in Louisville she told Mrs. Thurman she had an appointment with the dressmaker, and, if possible, would meet her for lunch, otherwise Mrs. Thurman was to know that she would have to remain over another day for an extra fitting.

As quickly as possible she found her way to 213 Linden walk and asked for Miss Louise Dalton. She was told that the young lady in question was not at home and would not be until late that afternoon.

"But my train will be gone then. I—I must see her soon," stammered Edith, incoherently.

"Shall I call Mrs. Dalton?" asked the woman, eyeing her doubtfully.

"Oh, no; don't do that! That is," she added in a calmer tone, "if you can tell me where I can find her this morning."

"At Bellevue Seminary on Fourth street," answered the woman, looking even more dubious when Edith hardly waited for the end of her sentence.

When she reached the street again Edith felt that the nervous strain was beginning to tell on her. She had been keyed up to calmness for an im-

mediate interview and now that she must search further her courage began to waver. Weak and trembling, she called a cab.

Almost staggering, she alighted at the door of the seminary, and asked to see Miss Louise Dalton. On being told that Miss Dalton would be in in a few minutes, she sank into a chair.

After what seemed a long time the door opened, admitting a pretty child of about twelve or thirteen. She wore short dresses and a huge bow on her lobbied hair.

"Good morning, do you wish to see me?" asked the child brightly.

"Can you be—are you Miss Louise Dalton?" questioned Edith breathlessly.

"Yes. You wanted to see me?" the child was frankly puzzled.

"No, honey, no!" she cried, giving the astonished child a dazzling smile. "I only wanted to look at you. And now I've seen you, you run along back to your class, and I'll go home where I belong!"

That night, after she had gleefully showed Lindsay all the bargains she found that afternoon, she turned to him suddenly.

"It was nice of you not to fuss about my taking French leave this

morning. Perhaps I'll tell you, oh, a long time off, why I went."

"I imagined it was some great secret, like my birthday, for instance," he laughed indulgently. "That reminds me," he continued, tossing her a letter, "read this and see what you think of it."

"My Dear Mr. Stone—Your name and address were given to me by a mutual friend. I am a little girl, 12 years old, whose father is dead, and I am trying to earn part of my education at Bellevue."

"I am sending you a package of handkerchiefs with your monogram in one corner. If you would care to buy them kindly send \$3 to me; if not, please return the handkerchiefs to this address, Miss Louise Dalton, 213 Linden walk, Louisville, Ky."

"The blessed child!" exclaimed Edith.

"Child? You don't really think a child wrote that? It is undoubtedly a grown person trying to work the sympathy racket in a novel way."

"But I know it is a child," she began, then ended, a little more weakly. "The handwriting shows it."

"Well, dear," declared her husband, looking at her with amusement and

tenderness, "even if I thought money would never be used for good purpose, I'd send it to a human nature. Don't ever lose concluded, earnestly; 'It's our greatest charms.'"

"I'll try not to," she murmured, flushing at his praise and looking face on his shoulder.

"I am going to recite 'Ode to Private Entertainment' this evening," remarked the soulful woman proudly.

"Take my advice," said the man boarder at the hotel, "and don't do the kind. The majority of audience-to-be probably never will be a lively stable and therefore will be able to appreciate it."

"Now," said the very young "let us take the average woman; example; she—"

"But," interrupted the man with the missing hair, "there is with the missing hair. Every woman of average woman. Every woman of ers herself above the average."

"Explained at Last," "Because" is essentially a "word," growled the man, "because" is a woman gives "because" as son for anything, the female mind's efficiency of the female mind."

"She doesn't do anything," kind, snapped the woman with the trudging chin. "She merely expresses inadequacy of the English language when it comes to explaining mental operations."

"False," "Truth crushed to earth will rise again," quoted the moralizer. "According to that," rejoined the moralizer, "there is no truth in

## In the Glow of the Morning

By Elsie Endicott

REALLY do not like it," he said somewhat coldly, looking across the room to where she sat in the red glow of the firelight. There was a scowl on his forehead and a general air of agreement about him.

She glanced up inquiringly, then arose and crossed the room. She passed her hand lovingly over his wavy hair, his arm stole about her waist and he drew her down beside him.

There was silence for a moment. Then she drew herself half away and looked up at him.

"Arthur?"—pleadingly.

"Well,"—impatiently.

"I wish you wouldn't."

"Wouldn't what?"

"Be jealous, you gollywog!" she snouted, but there was a subdued sparkle in her eyes.

"But how can I help it?" he asked, a tender note creeping into his voice. "Here we were, nice and comfortable, and happy as can be, when this man comes along and falls in love with you."

"I couldn't help it," she interrupted. "I'm no so sure about that," he said slowly and emphatically.

"Arthur!" She sat upright, her indignant blue eyes looking straight into his.

"No, I'm not so sure," he went on doggedly. "A man doesn't fall in love so desperately without some encouragement—no, I don't mean that you encouraged him purposely, but you took things as a matter of course, were passive, and he didn't know about me, or, if he did, he thought I didn't count." His voice was bitter now, and his eyes averted. "Why should I?" he went on. "I'm only a countryman, you know, and he is from the city and has all the ways to attract one. Besides, he is rich, and I—why, I have nothing and no prospects."

I shouldn't blame you if you did like him best. It must be tiresome waiting for me so long. Perhaps you'd better take him after all, and let me—"

He got no farther. Two soft arms were about his neck and a pleading, tearful face close to his own.

"No, of course I didn't mean it," he was saying five minutes later. "I'm a jealous old fool, and I know it."

"And I never gave you any cause?" "No!"—a happy light in his eyes. "You are as true as steel, dear, and I'll promise never to be jealous again."

"You will never have cause," she replied simply. "For I love you and no one else, Arthur, dear."

She had been sent for suddenly. Bruce was dying from an internal injury caused by being thrown from his horse.

There was a hush in the sick-room as she entered. His mother drew aside, and she knelt by the injured man's bed.

"I have loved you so well," he said,

weakly pressing the warm hand that held his; "and it has made me so happy."

"I do not know how it is, but all my life I've had an ideal before me. I knew I should find her some day, so I've tried to live to be worthy of her. And I have lived worthily—looking up triumphantly into the tear-stained face. "I have found her in you."

There was a moment's silence. "I know that you do not love me," he said sadly, "but—I want you to marry me, before I go."

She bowed her head, while the tears ran unchecked down her cheeks. "Surely you will grant me this," he began eagerly—"just a day, an hour—perhaps only a moment—to feel that you are mine; and then when I am gone 'twill be but a memory of how you had made a dying man happy."

given him one glimpse of the heaven to which he hopes he is going."

Her lips scarcely moved. "I cannot—oh, I cannot!" she moaned. "A shadow fell over his face. "I wish that it might be," he said resignedly, and closed his eyes wearily. "A sudden light sprang into her eyes. "I do love you," she cried. "It has just come to me. It has been creeping into my heart, and I did not know it. I thought I loved him, but it is you."

She held him close. "But I promised to him," she added slowly. "He loves me, and I must not break my word."

"No," he echoed feebly, looking deep into her eyes; "you must keep your faith."

A figure stood beside her. "I've heard about it," he said gruffly. "He wanted you to marry him, didn't he?" She nodded.

"You did?"—eagerly.

"No—turning her eyes full upon him. "I had promised you, you know."

"You oughtn't to have minded that," he said. "Of course I wouldn't mind, seeing he wasn't going to live. And, Beatrice—"

"Well?"—dreamily.

"You'd have had all his money."

Silence.

"You'd have been nicely fixed, and we could have been married soon."

"I did not think of it," she answered mechanically, her eyes on a floating cloud in the east.

He laughed bitterly. "It couldn't have done you any harm, and you might have thought about me. You might have been willing to sacrifice something for me."

He turned and left her.

Her eyes were still intent on the cloud—a soft, fleecy cloud that seemed