

MARY'S INSANITY

By Louise Jackson Strong

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"Well, Molly!" Mrs. Briggs kissed her daughter again tenderly. "I'm glad to get you back. It was unreasonable in your Uncle Page to keep you for months. I'll never spare you so long again."

"That isn't the only thing Uncle Page is unreasonable about," Mary replied, following her mother to the buggy.

Mrs. Briggs said nothing more until they were jogging along the pleasant road. Then she turned with a doubtful smile. "We may as well have it out and done with, Molly. Of course I know you mean that your uncle is unreasonable about that schoolteacher, but he's a good judge of men."

"He is too prejudiced to judge fairly," Mary declared. "And he prejudiced you against Allen too. If you only waited until you had become acquainted with him, mother—"

"I would never consent to your marrying a mere schoolteacher!" Mrs. Briggs broke in.

"Allen hasn't taken it up as a life profession," Mary hastened to explain.

"Time he's pottered around at country school teaching a few years he'll be spotted for anything else," Mrs. Briggs asserted, "and I can't have you tied to that kind of a man, dear."

Mary was silent, and her mother scrutinized her face, finding it thinner than it should be and pale, now the excitement of their meeting had passed. That made her anxious.

"You can't really have cared for him, Molly, so as to make you unhappy! You had never seen him until you went up there, and your father and I were two years, off and on, making up our minds."

"I think it is different with some," Mary said shyly, her cheeks pinking. "It seemed as if we had known each other always, from the first, and I saw him constantly, you know, till Uncle Page interfered. I care for him more than I can ever care for any one else, but I couldn't defy you, mother."

"I suppose he was angry over my letter?" Mrs. Briggs said tentatively.

"No, he wasn't angry, but he felt that you were unfair in not giving him



SHE PLUNGED OUT OVER THE WHEEL.

a chance to show what was in him. He went away, as you had forbidden me to see him, and I have known nothing of him since," Mary said wistfully.

Mrs. Briggs felt a sudden contempt for the young man who had obeyed her mandates so completely without a struggle. However, it only proved him a poor thing, unworthy such a prize as Mary, and the dear girl was young. She would get over it and be happy in the love of some man who was a man. Such a one was at hand, and Mrs. Briggs considered him so desirable as a son-in-law that she already regarded him as such prospectively.

"Well," she said finally, "I am glad, Molly, that you hold no grudge against me. I told you about the judge's nephew, a fine, smart young fellow. Mrs. Brown has a couple of girl cousins visiting her, and the Hendersons have several nice young men among the boarders. Our little town will be gay this summer, and I've fixed up a bit, so you can do your share of entertaining."

Mary shrank, exclaiming, "Oh, mother, I want to stay quietly at home with you!"

"And have people saying you're moping over a disappointment?" Mrs. Briggs spluttered.

"I don't care what they say. It's no use, mother. I see what you mean for me, but I can't forget." Then, with a wan smile, "I am not behaving very well, mother, but don't mind it, and let's just go on as usual."

"And don't fling me at the judge's nephew," she added mentally.

"I have asked the nephew and Flora for this evening," Mrs. Brown said presently, "but I can send John to tell them you are too tired."

"John, the new hand?" Mary commented absently.

"Yes, and he's a wonderful manager. There he is," Mrs. Briggs pointed with her whip as they rounded the home corner.

Mary glanced indifferently at the figure beyond the grove, then with a low cry leaped forward, gazing intently.

"John?" she repeated, turning a be-

wildered face to her astonished mother.

"Why, Molly! What is it?" Mrs. Briggs cried, somewhat alarmed.

The young man took off his hat and tossed back his hair with a peculiar gesture, and with a shriek Mary jerked up Dobbin, plunged out over the wheel, darted to the barbed wire fence, dropped flat, rolled smoothly under it and flew, still shrieking, across the meadow.

Paralyzed with dreadful fear, Mrs. Briggs gazed helplessly. There could be but one hideous explanation of the astounding scene—Mary was suddenly seized with mental derangement—she had taken that miserable affair to heart; she had brooded over her trouble; her whole expression showed that, and now, having it all brought up again—oh, horrible! It was her own mother who had—

"Oh, lordy, lordy!" Mrs. Briggs moaned, backing clumsily out of the buggy and fluttering along the fence like a hen at the garden pickets, but she could not roll her plump figure underneath. She would have to go around, and that poor child running headlong, perfectly wild. She was now disappearing in the grove. In her frenzy she would rush on down the hill beyond, and the creek was high.

"John! John!" Mrs. Briggs screamed frantically. "Catch her, John!"

John apparently understood and disappeared in the trees, while Mrs. Briggs, shaking with sobs, scrambled into the buggy and lashed Dobbin into a run with a suddenness that flung his heels to the top of the dashboard. She slid to her knees in the box and plied the whip, wailing aloud at every jump of the horse. At the pasture lane she turned so sharply that the buggy tilted against the post, nearly tipping her out, but she only urged the astonished Dobbin on, her imagination picturing her darling already at the bottom of the swirling stream. She dashed through the open gate of the potato field.

She could not wait to take down the bars of the small oat patch that intervened, but squeezed through and ran, panting breathlessly, too exhausted to call. Soon she caught sight of John. He had Mary safe. Her abused knees weakened at that, but she struggled to them. John clasped Mary close in his arms, and she was laughing shrilly, crying hysterically, "Oh, it is Allen; it is Allen!"

"Yes, honey; yes," Mrs. Briggs quavered. "Oh, lordy, lordy! Come to the house with mother, dear. Don't let go of her for your life, John. I've been wicked cruel to her— Yes, honey; yes; it's Allen."

"It's Allen, Allen!" Mary reiterated, her face on the young man's breast.

"Oh, lordy, lordy!" moaned Mrs. Briggs, the tears streaming. "Humor her, John. Help me get her to the house, then bring the doctors. Yes, ho-honey; it—it's Al-Allen."

"Mrs. Briggs"—John patted her shoulder comfortingly—"you needn't be frightened. Mary is all right. It is Allen—John Allen Smithers, instead of John Smith. I wanted to prove to you that I wasn't a mere good for nothing"—Mrs. Briggs sat down suddenly—"and I hope you have changed your opinion of me and will accept me as your son-in-law."

"For I'll never, never have anything to do with the judge's nephew!" Mary declared aggressively.

Mrs. Briggs started, then burst into peals of tearful, choking laughter. "I guess we'd better stop and see where we're at," she gasped. "I'm the only one that's crazy, it seems. Who wants you to have anything to do with the judge's nephew, missie? So, you young scamp, you're Allen, are you? And you've worked a slick game on me, but I'm suited. Why, it's the very thing I've been planning for weeks!"

Then, with fresh shrieks, Mary fell upon her mother, and they kissed and cried and laughed together, while John Allen looked on, grinning foolishly.

Noon as Nature's Dining Hour.

Persons who keep close watch on themselves are of the opinion that the hour of noon is the most critical period of life. At that time the human frame undergoes serious changes. The stomach has dispatched the morning meal and sends scouting parties in search of another. The eyes and brain are on the alert, and there is a sort of all-goneness pervading the anatomy that sharpens the faculties and puts a new edge on the teeth. It is nature's dining time, and everything about the healthy man or woman is attuned to the demolition or enjoyment of what is called a "good square meal." Those who pay heed to the prompting of nature at this divine hour have their reward in good appetite, good temper and excellent digestion, which is conducive to all the good that flesh is heir to. But those who, following the imperious dictates of fashion, defer the hour of dining until all natural longings are dead and have to be resurrected by adventitious aids lay a train of evils and discomforts which sooner or later become the plague of their lives.—London Telegraph.

A Polite Editor.

"Why did you tell that poet to hitch his wagon to a star?"

"That," answered the editor gloomily, "was my polite way of saying I wished he'd get off the earth."—Exchange.

He Got Her.

"Oh," she said, "your conduct is enough to make an angel weep."

"I don't see you shedding a tear," he retorted, and his ready wit saved the day.

I've never any pity for concealed people, because they carry their comfort about with them.—George Elliot.

HEALTH AND HABITS.

Tissue Income and Expenditure Must Be Made to Balance.

The day must come at some future period of sociological development when the instinct of self preservation will overrule the pernicious habits and customs of the present day fashions and necessity. Men will come to learn that tissue income and expenditure must be adjusted to a better balance if the human machine is to be kept in smoothly working order; that excess of either is a physiological sin which nature will surely avenge either on the individual or on his descendants; that sustained work of the best quality can only be performed when effort is kept well within the margin of accomplishment; that luxurious idleness and artificial excitement, when carried beyond the limits of a healthy counterpoise to the daily routine of active duty, bring about their neurasthenic nemesis as surely as over strenuous endeavor, and that the coming generation can be fitted to battle with the increasing complexities of life only if endowed with bodies that are structurally perfect and with nervous centers capable of producing throughout an average duration of life sufficient energy to enable the machine to perform satisfactorily the work whereof it has been set.

A more vigorous public sentiment, fostered by an example of greater self denial and more rigid adherence to simplicity of life on the part of those who set the pace and lead the fashions of the day, would do much to arrest the downhill rush of the multitude; pronounced social disapproval of the immoderate use of alcohol and tobacco and the stern forbidding of both under the age of puberty would shield the nervous centers from two of their most deadly enemies, and, though it might at first grate against popular feeling, the introduction by the legislature of an enactment whereby some form of compulsory military service was exacted from every healthy young man would materially contribute to the preservation of active minds in vigorous bodies to those who are destined to make or mar the future history of their fatherland.—Guthrie Rankin, M. D., in Detroit News-Tribune.

CHILDREN'S GAMES.

The game of hare and hounds originated in England about 1640.

Leapfrog is mentioned in the works of both Shakespeare and Johnson.

The game of hide and seek came from Europe about the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Blind man's buff found its origin with the Greeks, among whom it was often indulged in by adults.

Skipping rope is a childish pastime of ancient origin. In place of rope a vine stripped of leaves was originally used.

The spinning of tops came from the Greeks. Records show that this kind of fun was in vogue at the time of Virgil.

Kite flying is about two centuries old in Europe. Probably it originated in China, where the practice of flying kites is very ancient.

The game of seeing who can hop the longest on one foot came from the ancient Greeks, among whom it was practiced by the youths for wagers.

Cathedral's Title Chain.

There is one thing in particular in St. Patrick's cathedral in New York that you cannot see in any other building in the city, if indeed in the country. It is a framed sheet of paper hanging on the wall of the southern entrance that contains the complete chain of title of the property on which the edifice stands from the time it was first sold until the church authorities bought it. The only reason for its being there so far as any one knows is to put a stop to the old story that the property was originally purchased by the church for a dollar. To settle this point the chain of title shows how much was paid for it in the beginning, and from that point on each change of ownership is accompanied by the price it was sold for.

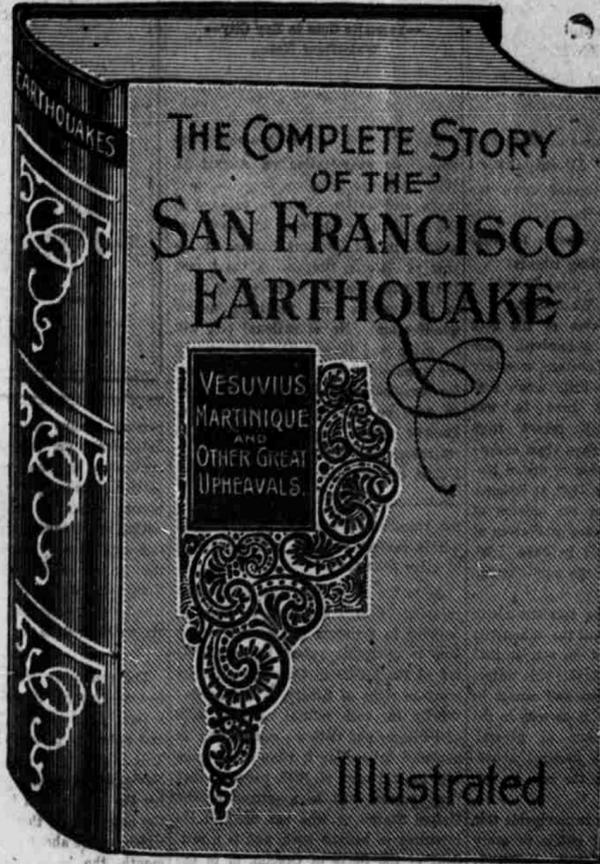
A Quaint Old Town.

Salem, N. C., is one of the oldest towns in the United States. Driven out of Saxony more than 200 years ago on account of religious persecution and led by Count Zinzendorf, the followers of the Moravian church journeyed to North Carolina and, settling at the foot of the beautiful Blue Ridge mountains in the western part of the state, founded the town of Salem. Among all the changes brought about by the process of time Salem has always preserved its individuality and the atmosphere of the long ago. A visiting globe trotter once remarked that the only thing lacking to make it a complete reproduction of an old Saxony town was the clatter of the wooden shoe. Salem is the twin sister of the modern town of Winston, and the two are commonly spoken of as Winston-Salem, yet to cross the railroad track which marks the dividing line between the two is to step from the twentieth century into the seventeenth.—New York Press.

Unrecorded Dreams.

The subject of dreams is one of the most intricate and perplexing in the entire field of mental philosophy, and it has not yet met with that amount of attention which its importance would seem to demand. Sir William Hamilton, the great metaphysician, held that "whether we recollect our dreams or not, we always dream." To have no recollection of our dreams does not prove that we have not dreamed, for it can often be shown that we have dreamed, though the dream has left no trace upon our memory.

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