

# The Masked Hostess

by BLAIR STEVENSON

## CHAPTER XXVI.

A connoisseur in champagnes would have been made profoundly unhappy at the manner in which the first of that which Monty had brought was carried in and broached and served with cracked ice in it because the time was lacking to chill it according to ritual.

There were two more cases on his truck, and as a couple of Stefano's servants carried the first one in, Monty halted them and commanded them to produce a punch bowl and a block of ice. He sent a third man for a hatchet and chisel, and when that had been supplied forced the lid off the case where it lay on the floor, and with the edge of the hatchet knocked the head off the first bottle he drew out after tossing its straw jacket toward the ceiling.

He was standing pouring, a bottle in either hand, as Nathalie appeared coming down the main staircase in shimmering green. He set one bottle down, filled a high goblet from the other and added some ice, and stood holding it before her as she reached the bottom step of the staircase.

She lifted the goblet to her lips and drained it before she brought it down. His seasoned drinker's ear was quick to catch the rattle of its rim against her teeth and his eye, profoundly practiced in all that pertained to alcohol and its devotees, noted the agitation of her hand as she clutched the goblet's stem.

"Needed that one, didn't you Senora? As you are, while I run a pour you another one."

She had "needed it" as Monty had said in the consecrated expression of drinkers, but not because, as he imagined and was convinced, she had looked into the depths of too many crimson cups the night before.

It had been welcome and she had drunk it eagerly, because as she reached the bottom step of the stairs she had been faint with fright at a happening which had occurred just as she was leaving her suite of rooms to come down, and the commotion of which had been lost to hearing below in the noise of motor horns raised when the drivers coming in behind Monty's loaded truck discovered the nature of the cargo it contained.

She had been standing before her mirror and facing her dressing table, dressed to go downstairs, but with her mask off and looking at her image in the glass while she added the last of the dead white powder she always wore, and was about to color her lips with her heavy rouge.

The window at back of her was open and the heavy screen of fir branches which grew close up to it stirring pleasantly in the night wind. The reflection of them in her oval of mirror, and went cold at her as she reached for a hand reached forth from among them and touched the sill of the window, but did not quite grasp it.

Nathalie was the child of a sportsman, and had valor. She did not cry out nor move. But lowering her hands slowly to the shallow upper drawer of her dressing stand, kept her eyes toward her mirror while she opened the drawer and felt for the revolver which Stefano had given her. She always kept it there. When her

right hand found it and gripped it she wheeled where she was like a flash, and shot toward the window point blank.

She knew that she had not hit whoever had been trying to enter the room when there was neither cry from the tree nor the crash of a body falling. But she knew too that whoever was in the tree was descending from it as she heard him scramble downward hastily from branch to branch. Her ear caught the thud of his feet on the ground as he jumped to it from half way down the tree. She heard him run a few steps and then slow to a walk. A moment afterward she heard the slam of a car door and then the car go out of the grounds.

As Monty brought her a second deep draught of champagne and she drank a little of it off and then slowly sipped the rest, she grew steadier and calmer and decided that she would not alarm the house, but that after the daylight breakfast which always concluded each night's merrymaking, she would tell Stefano what had happened and arrange with him some plan by which it would be possible for her to sleep elsewhere and be in the house only when he was and it was crowded with guests.

She sent for her maid and going back upstairs with her had the girl draw the shutters and lock all the windows of her suite of rooms, shutting and locking the steel door which guarded them after her, she came down to the main floor again and was at once seized by one of a group of several dancing men at the base of the stairs.

As he whirled her in and around the dancing floor she could see that Monty Delaine's pensive bestowal of champagne would lift the spirits of the gathering to the dizzy peak in fast order and that before almost certainly effect its inevitable casualty list. It was not nearly one o'clock yet but laughter was high everywhere and rising higher. A girl danced with Stefano and Nathalie recognized her as Sylvia Swayne.

She had not known her the night before in her Moroccan dress but now as she saw her in an ordinary dancing frock—it was an exquisite one—she was rejoiced that she was in the house for they were affectionate friends. If no better plan came to her mind as to where she would stay by daytime so as not to have to sleep in the house she would confide in Sylvia, she determined, just before Sylvia left for home.

It gave her a sense of safety to have her cousin so close at hand and she watched the girl laughing up at Stefano for she had heard plenty of gossip, since she came to the firm, about her aunt's intention to manage a marriage between her daughter and the handsome South American.

Then jealousy touched her as they came into her vision again, and there flashed back to her—her mind had been full of it all day but the fright of the man in the fir tree had obscured it for a space—that by morning Stefano was to come to her and put in when his wordless avowal of love when he folded her in his arms two nights before. She looked at him and Sylvia again wondering

if there had been, or still might be, any foundation to the talk about them or if their evident pleasure in being and dancing together was no more than kindly friendliness.

Then she heard Sylvia, who had danced out of her vista of view and had then come close behind her, say to Stefano while Stefano laughed:

"And so, Stef, now that you're never going to marry me because Monty!"

A girl screamed at Sylvia from half across the room.

"Sylvia—let me into the secret. Where's all the money you get hold of all the money to buy all this champagne?"

"Yes, where?"—cried the youth who was her partner. "He sold me the last pony he had a week ago. Had to have the money that day. And now he's the boy millionaire."

"Don't ask me—ask Monty," Sylvia laughed back. "Here comes the cheerful lunatic now."

Monty came ambling across the floor a champagne cooler in one hand and a bubbling bottle in the other.

"Oh, you, Stefano," he called out when he spotted his host. "Drop my girl an' come outside 'th me. Got 't talk 't you about important matter business. Head clear as a bell now but won't be very long. Arms 't Morphew twined around my neck right now."

"I'm behind you Stef," he mumbled as Stefano preceded him to the quiet of a porch.

(To be continued tomorrow.)

OSTEND, Belgium (AP)—The use of airplanes in conveying cables to distressed vessels has proved so successful that the authorities have decided to adopt this method in preference to sending out salvage boats.

Chemawa M. W. of A. are giving a tree supper to the baseball team, their friends and families on November 26. Mr. Ball of Independence, president of the M. W. A. baseball league, will make the formal presentation of the

loving cup to Chemawa team as winners of the league pennant at the banquet. A program and entertainment will follow.

G. G. Beckner spent the fore part of the week at the coast, returning Tuesday afternoon.

Henry Stolk replaced Calvin Mason in the Clear Lake Christian Endeavor society play cast. Mr. Mason is unable to take part due to other activities. Ralph Harold has also been added to the cast. The play is well under way now.

Miss Elaine Chapin who is teaching school at Taft, spent the week-end at home. On Saturday morning her mother, Mrs. Luther Chapin, was taken suddenly ill. A doctor was called from Salem to attend her.

MACLEAY, November 21.—M. A. Wells has a new poultry house just about completed.

Mr. and Mrs. M. F. Kephart had as their dinner guests Mr. and Mrs. Queenie Rand last Sunday.

Macley friends of Mrs. W. Horner are sympathizing with her in the loss of her mother, Mrs. Baker.

Mr. and Mrs. John Guthmiller were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Pete Engbrecht one day last week.

Lowell M. Lambert has been plowing in the Pratum district.

Mrs. Tekenberg who had her shoulder out of place is recovering nicely.

Mrs. George Berg is reported much better at this time. She is now in the state T. B. hospital.

Henry Benz who is an electrician by trade has been wiring houses for the Portland Electric Power Co.

The long period of nice weather has been a great boon to many of the farmers of the Waldo Hills, making it possible to get most of their farming done.

Mr. and Mrs. Lowell M. Lambert and son Lawrence were the dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Herr Sunday.

Marie Breckheimer who lives in Salem is visiting Mr. and Mrs. Larond V. Hackett.

**Clear Lake**

CLEAR LAKE, November 21.—Mr. and Mrs. Carl O'Neil and children of Marshfield spent the week-end at the home of Mr. O'Neil's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jas. O'Neil.

Mrs. Fred Moreing of Silverton was a visitor at the Theodore Stolk home Friday.

Mrs. W. H. Curry has gone to California to visit her son, H. Curry. The Currys are former Clear Lake residents.

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Harold had as dinner guests Sunday the Rev. H. R. Scheuerman, Birney, Opal and Milton Scheuerman, Alice Massey, Robert Massey, Andrew Olson, Mrs. Latorette, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Harold and son Verel. Miss Frances O'Neil visited her sister, Mrs. Stanley Starr, at Horton, Ore., Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Harold had Tuesday, November 12, were congratulated on their 29th wedding anniversary by a dinner at the home of their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph A. Harold.

The improvement club held the first meeting of the season at the church Wednesday afternoon. The work to be taken up by the club was discussed and the following officers elected: Mrs. Roy Smith, president; Mrs. Robena Ector, vice-president; Mrs. Arthur Baker, secretary; Mrs. Cecil Boyd, treasurer. Others present were Mrs. Alex Detott, Mrs. Jas. O'Neil, Mrs. Theo. Stolk, Mrs. Forem, Mrs. Alex Harold, Miss Pearl Baker, and Miss Frances O'Neil.

J. C. McFarlane who lately returned from a vacation at the coast, is on the sick list this week.

Mr. H. A. Fenney made a business trip to Oregon City Wednesday.

William Fox, club supervisor of Marion county, visited the Clear Lake and Buena Crest schools Wednesday.

**Kingwood**

KINGWOOD, November 21.—A group of friends of Mr. and Mrs. O. E. Bittner were their guests one day recently. The visitors were Mr. and Mrs. Dan Giger and son Percy and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stout, all of Portland, Mr. and Mrs. Gibson Osburn of Homper, and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Beatty of West Salem.

Harold Phillippe of Salem and Miss Lucie Walker, of Spokane, Wash., were recent guests of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hall.

The house owned by William Gilson of Salem which the Gerber family recently vacated, is again occupied. The new tenants are Mr. and Mrs. Olen Cannoy who came here from the Elkins neighborhood near Nonmouth.

Mr. and Mrs. E. P. White, of Longview, Wash., spent the week-end with Mrs. White's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Cannoy. Mr. White is an employee of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Co., who have larger timber holdings than any other company in the world. They will have forty acres under cover when a mill now under construction is completed. The Weyerhaeuser Timber company furnishes logs for the operations of the Long-Bell Lumber company.

Mr. and Mrs. Burton Cray with Mrs. Cray's sister and brother-in-law Mr. and Mrs. George Johnson of Boston, Mass., were guests of Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Eblevin Sunday.

Dr. and Mrs. W. J. Patterson and Mr. and Mrs. Oren Stratton, all of Salem, were dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Brown Sunday.

Saturday night visitors at the Robert Hall home were Mr. and Mrs. James Murphy and daughter Myrtle of Nonmouth.

C. H. Eighth, proprietor of the auto repair shop at the west end of the inter-county bridge, has sold his home on Wallace Road and he and his wife are now residents of Front street, Salem.

Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Garner have disposed of their property on Kingwood Heights and have left for Sacramento, Cal., where they expect to locate permanently.

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**Home-Making Helps**  
By ELEANOR ROSS

**Returned Goods and High Prices.**

THE Young Husband looked at his new suit ruefully. He had worn it twice and now he felt that his criticism was just. It was the wrong color for him. Too bad, but he'd choose a better shade next time.

She, however, wasn't disposed to regard this as a complete failure. "Take it back," she suggested. "They'll be only too glad to exchange it for something you like."

He looked at her in amazement. "Why, I couldn't do a thing like that. It's not their fault that I don't like the color. I chose it in the first place."

(Which sounded very silly to her. She exchanged things constantly. You looked at something in the shop, liked it enormously then, but by the time it came home you had changed your mind and didn't care for it a bit. Back to the shop it went. And storekeepers were awfully nice. They were always pleased to take things back and exchange them or even give you a refund. No reason why he shouldn't take back a suit he didn't like. The stupid thing was to keep it.)

It became a hotly contested point, and for several weeks all kind friends were invited to join the discussion. In the main the opinions were rather definitely established in each sex. Women maintained that one bought everything with the privilege of returning it. Men seemed to regard it as a rare and unfortunate circumstance if a purchase had to be returned. And it was justifiable only if there had been a mistake or a misrepresentation on the part of the store. To return something to a merchant merely because you had changed your mind, or even made an error of four or five dollars, was putting rather a heavy burden on him. Except of course, for one consideration—that the customer paid for the service. It stands to

reason that in fixing prices for an article the merchant who offers the exchange or refund privilege with the purchase must add something for the possible risk thus involved. Merely calling for an article costs a store on an average of fifty cents for delivery, labor, bookkeeping, and so on. Then if the article is shown by reason of its handling it can no longer be sold at the full price.

At a recent convention of storekeepers it was said that over a billion and a half dollars' worth of merchandise is returned annually to retail stores. Almost half a billion of that is merchandise returned to department stores.

Of course a goodly percentage is justifiable. Wrong sizes are sent, so are wrong articles, delivery may be delayed so that the customer has to make a quick purchase elsewhere. It is not in perfect condition. But a goodly proportion of the returns are made for capricious reasons. In most cases the storekeepers do very credit, no matter what the circumstances, and sometimes even when the article shows signs of wear. Which may seem like most courteous service, but somewhere has to be paid for. And if it is true that men are more scrupulous about this matter, it may account for the fact that prices for men's clothes are so much less than an equal quality of women's apparel.

One of the incidents related by a man in the department store is that a good customer purchased a very expensive dinner set, used it, then decided she didn't like it and sent it back. During the next three months she ordered and returned three different sets of dinner dishes, and each time the store accommodated. But who paid the price of this service?

**Containers and Your Health**  
By ROYAL S. COPELAND, M. D.  
United States Senator from New York.  
Former Commissioner of Health, New York City.

THIS article was written on a railroad train between Detroit and Washington. In the dining car I looked over the men to find out how many of the dishes served came in cans, bottles, or other packages.

It is surprising how many do come in that form. Let me enumerate: Orange marmalade, strained honey, pineapple, fish, preserved strawberries, clam bouillon, Boston brown bread, cookies, grape juice, sauerkraut juice, tomato juice, doughnuts, maple syrup, coffee, cocoa, milk, malted milk and yeast cakes.

Practically everything served is received on the car in the original wrappings. Even the bread comes this way, I assume. The fish, eggs, meat and potatoes are almost the only articles purchased in bulk.

The other day I was thinking about Commander Byrd and his gallant boys at the South Pole. They couldn't be there at all without processed and packaged foods, could they?

Napoleon said, "An army travels on its stomach." An explorer does, too. No exploration could succeed without some means of carrying its food and safe means and food merchants make possible such trips, far from sources of daily supply.

It is not alone the traveler to the poles, or the traveler on trains who depends on commercially prepared foods. Mr. Average Man to day would be greatly inconvenienced without them.

It is not fair to say that the average family would be the worse for the can opener. It has not gone that far by any means. But much of the labor of food preparation has been taken from the home, and the glad of it. Household work is hard enough without demanding of the housewife that she spend needless hours in the kitchen. Her life is lengthened by this modern advance.

Many of our foods, perhaps most of them, are prepared just exactly as well, and in some instances better, by quantity production. Fruits and vegetables are processed where they are grown. They need not be trucked and transported long distances for home preparation. At the field and orchard they are made ready for use.

There can be no question of the wholesomeness and digestibility of such foods. The best of chemists and bacteriologists are in the employ of these concerns. Every check and balance needed for safety is employed. The relationship of the given food to health is never overlooked.

**Answers to Health Queries**

D. E. Q.—What can I do for liver spots?

A.—As this condition is due to more or less poor intestinal elimination, the first thing to do, therefore, is to correct constipation. For full instructions, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope, to request pamphlet.

A. BRADDER, Q.—I have had my tooth

A.—This should not affect your tooth.

H. H. Q.—Would excessive smoking affect the complexion and cause a heavy cough on arising in the morning?

A.—Excessive smoking often affects the respiratory system and this in turn affects the complexion. It is also a source of the health of the lungs. Every

## POLLY AND HER PALS



## TILLIE, THE TOILER



## LITTLE ANNIE ROONEY



## TOOTS AND CASPER



## Home-Making Helps

At a card party was given at Shaw hall Sunday evening. Present were Mr. and Mrs. Joe Hortsch, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Schaeffer, Mr. and Mrs. Launing, Mr. and Mrs. Reis, Mrs. Ed Amort, Staffie Massor, Fred Lorens, Chas. Nannemann, A. Fieber, Henry Hanson, W. Peter, Archie Garmond, Andrew Stagman, Frank Masser, Josephine Nannemann, Julia Hienert, Nicholas Klien, John Masser, Christina Reis, Ralph Reis, Mabel Sherman.

SHAW, November 21.—Ben Hortsch who is employed at Longview, Wash., was visiting his parents over the week-end.

Mabel Sherman was a guest of Josephine Nannemann over Armistice.

Tom Schwiebert was visiting friends in Shaw Sunday morning. A shooting match was held at Shaw Sunday.

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