

Stories of Adventure and Love

A CHANGE OF MIND

How Adversity Will Alter the Viewpoint

By Walt Gregg

MR. HOWLAND stood in the palatial doorway that formed an effective screen to his apartment on the upper drive.

"Well, Martha," he said soberly, "I'm going—I'm going to war. Fact is, I've got to go and—" he hesitated a moment and cast a searching glance in the direction of his graceful young wife, as she stood serene in her magnificent height watching Mary, the maid, set the dinner table for their evening meal.

Suddenly her eyes became dilated like those of a leopard cat. She scrutinized her husband closely, for she had fears, after a speech like that, that Norman might have stopped at the club before coming home.

"To what?" she echoed with a hollow sound in her voice.

"To war—to France," Norman repeated in a calm, even voice.

"Norman, you're fooling—surely—why, its preposterous—you simply can't leave me—why?" Mrs. Howland's pent-up emotions burst upon her husband like a torrent.

"Why, Nor—" she quieted down to her softer tones in a moment by way of persuading her husband to change his mind about what she considered his latest hobby. Why, Nor—" she repeated coyly, "you must reconsider a thing like that."

"Yes, Martha, it's true. You don't understand, of course. You're a woman, and—"

"You think, then, that women don't understand anything, Norman Howland?" his wife flung at him in mockery. "You think we women don't know anything about living and life and what must be and yes," she stopped now and caught her breath, "and war—yes, war. You think we women don't understand—"

Norman held up a detaining hand to check her uncontrolled speech.

"Just like you, Martha; fly right into a rage over nothing. Wait," he said, evenly, "wait until after dinner and we'll talk the thing over sensibly. Just listen to what I've got to say and then when I'm through I'll listen with unrestricted attention to you."

An hour later Norman, delicately fingering his after-dinner cigar, opened the conversation once again.

"What I was going to say," he began, "was that I've simply got to go to the war. It's a case of my going or the draft getting me. And in the long run, counting out the fact that I ought to do my bit, I'm going."

"Why can't you stay at home and serve the government in the most accommodating of ways? Can't you float some of the big Liberty loans for Uncle Sam and do your bit that way?" she asked him, eagerly.

"Little girl," he said gently, now, "I'm sorry—it's going to be hard on you—but just as hard—if not worse—on my-

self, but the fact remains I am no longer the banker I—was. I am no banker, Martha—I am helpless—bankrupt."

The realization of the fact stunned the much indulged Mrs. Howland like a hammer blow. The shock was so great that she did not speak. She could not. She simply stroked the strong hand which held her and looked deep into his eyes.

"All right, Nor," was all she said after a few minutes, "guess we can manage somehow. I'll get a position—and you—you can go to the war—and well, you'll get paid something, won't you?"

Several weeks later Mrs. Howland, meek, humble and entirely submissive, walked from the elevator at the employees' entrance of the firm of Newhall & Co., dry goods, and took her place behind the lace counter with the rest of the girls.

At noon she was tired, at 2 o'clock her back ached like a toothache. She had

packed and unpacked and showed to customers no less than two hundred boxes of lace that morning.

"Clerk—clerk," she heard a rasping voice call. "What in the dickens is the matter with you?" the stout, arrogant woman asked indignantly, "if you're sleepy why don't you go home. When I come to a store where I pay big prices, I want service—and I intend to get it."

Her voice, her gesticulating, her sharp speech arrested the attention of the floorwalker in passing.

"What's the trouble, madam?" he asked solicitously. "Is there something wrong, anything I can adjust?"

"Why!" the arrogant woman argued indignantly, "that tall girl behind there has let me stand here for at least ten minutes waiting to be attended to—and—"

The floorwalker turned glaring eyes on Martha Howland, then commanded her in stern tones to report to his office at once. The arrogant woman got her

lace from another and more attentive clerk.

"Why—why—where am I?" Martha was blinking her eyes in bewilderment as she gazed about her in the dressing room on the tenth floor of the big department store.

A little red-haired girl was holding smelling salts to her nose and fanning her gently.

"That's all right; you're all right now, Girlie. You fainted on the way up to Mr. Parson's office and they took you in here. You're all right."

Martha Howland sat up and looked around her. Then her gaze fell on little Angela Cummings, who sat beside her in the rest room.

"This is the girl who carried you in," began the little red-haired girl by way of introduction, but Martha heard no further.

"You—working—here?" Angela commented, astonished, as she now recognized the familiar face of Martha How-

land. Mrs. Howland had been one of the most popular patrons of the store before her husband's bankruptcy.

"Yes," Martha Howland answered, simply, extending her hand.

"I've learned my lesson. I shall never forget." She looked pitifully into Angela's eyes. "I shall never forget the day I did the same thing to you—because—you didn't wait on me quickly enough."

"Oh—that's all right, Mrs. Howland," Angela said, smiling, "only at that time it was a little different. You see—labor wasn't so scarce then—and I lost—my job."

"Please let me make up to you for it—now," Mrs. Howland cut short the painful story. "My name from now on is plain little Martha Howland."

"And mine," returned Angela, "is Angela Cummings—and—" extending her hand in a friendly way, she added, "pleased to meet you."

Martha had passed the first stage in becoming a real woman.

GAINING A NEW GRIP

Being Just a Breath of Real Life

By Elsie Emms

AND now Mrs. Ray was convalescing. Once again she was bravely making the fight for an indefinitely prolonged existence here on this terrestrial globe.

Along came her neighbor, Mrs. Gay. "Good morning, Mrs. Ray. So glad to see you out. How are you feeling this morning?"

"Fine, thank you," was Mrs. Ray's reply.

"Oh, you always say fine. Now you must be careful this time. Don't overdo. Take things easy. Just let things go. Your family will get along somehow. Don't try to breathe for them. Suppose they should have to get along without you? Just remember that." And Mrs. Gay went gayly on her way.

Good advice—if only it had not gone too far.

The fight was a stiff one. The struggle was imminent. But the first and foremost implement in this war for supremacy—was courage. Courage first, last and always. A sprinkle of cold water dashed over one's courage the first thing in the morning—when hope is renewed and expectant—does not always daunt one's spirits, but in the afternoon or at night it is not so easily shed.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Ray! How are you getting along? Isn't it fine you are out again? Too bad you have had such a siege! Now, do be careful this time. You know you are not very strong. You ought to have a good spring tonic," advised Mrs. Kidout, who had stopped a moment at the curb—with her automobile chugging the while.

Mrs. Ray was obliged to remain standing on the walk for several moments while this and more similar advice was offered.

That evening found Mrs. Ray reclin-

ing on the couch. Said Mr. Ray: "Now, what you need to do is get outdoors all you can. That's the best spring tonic I know of."

"I quite agree with the outdoor part if"—she paused.

"If what?" he asked.

"If only I could get away from folks. If only I could be outdoors somewhere—out of the face and eyes of queries and advice. If only folks were not so lavish with advice—did not spread it on too thick. They mean it kindly," she explained. "But—well, I would like to forget it myself."

Mr. Ray's face suddenly beamed.

"What do you say? I think I could arrange it, if you and I could go out to the lake alone, without the children, the last of the week. Possibly I can manage to leave the office for three days."

Mrs. Ray sat bolt upright. "Really?"

"Yes, really."

"Oh! if only I could arrange to leave

the children! Wouldn't it be—be heavenly!" she exclaimed.

And so it came about. The children were left with a kind, motherly house-keeper, and Mr. and Mrs. Ray found themselves in the great out-of-doors—where the combined odor of coffee and bacon can not be excelled for an appetizer.

It was the tiniest rustic camp; and they were just playing house. Being early in the season, the morning breezes were keen though invigorating. The sun's rays, growing more direct each day, helped wonderfully to supply the necessary ingredients for the spring tonic.

He was rowing the little red canoe. "My, but I haven't enjoyed life like this for many a day."

"Monarch of all you survey," she answered, smiling.

"My right there is none to dispute," he added.

The twinkle in her eyes was good to look upon.

"And that's the best part of it. None to dispute; none to advise; none to care whether—" and here she broke off suddenly. "Oh, I've got 'im! I've got 'im! No, don't reel it! Let me get 'im! I can do it!"

He kept on rowing. Hand over hand the line came in. Sometimes with a strong, steady pull, sometimes like magic. And then—a one swift motion—and there it lay flopping in the bottom of the canoe.

"That's a dandy!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, you beauty! You handsome thing! And I caught you all myself."

"How excited she was."

"Yes, and without the net," he said.

"Why, I never once thought of a net. I just can't reel them in. I'm sure to lose them if I do. I know real fishermen would laugh at me; but, never mind, I got him!"

"Yes, you got him; and never mind how. Won't the boys be delighted when they see mother's catch? Why, it must weigh five pounds. A beauty salmon!" was his comment.

"Now, let's turn and row with the wind," she said. "And please let me row, so you can fish. This seems to be a good spot—so let's go back."

"Do you really want to row?"

"Sure thing! It's easy going back. About all I need to do is steer."

Drifting and steering brought them into deeper water. Silence reigned. She was absorbing the beauty of the surrounding mountains. He was otherwise engaged, but she did not notice.

"No, it isn't gone, either," he said.

She looked. It jumped. "Oh, what was it?"

Slowly, patiently, reeling in that never-ending line, or so it seemed to her—at last he landed it.

"A laker," she screamed. "Glorious! And we've never caught one before. Now won't the boys be wild?"

"That is some catch, if we don't get any more. Guess that fellow is about as heavy as the salmon," he commented.

"Oh, it's heavier, lots heavier. Isn't it great—you got it. I'm so glad! Somebody said lakers didn't jump. But salmon for me. There is nothing quite so thrilling for sport as landing a salmon."

The truth of her statement was plainly written upon her countenance, which he noticed.

It was nearing the end of the third day. "Hain't it been glorious, just doing as we jolly well please, with nobody to ask once 'how do you feel?'" she said.

And "how she has gained," he thought. "She has gained a new grip on things." And then aloud he added:

"Wish we might stay longer."

A PRACTICAL WOMAN

A Story of a Man's Lost Position

By Harold Hass

BUT, Nellie," Rob protested, "I have the license and we have made arrangements with the minister for tomorrow afternoon. Everyone expects us to be married and how can we explain your changing your mind at the last minute? Besides, you say you still love me, and I am sure you can not doubt my love for you."

"Rob, I am a practical woman, as I have told you dozens of times, and love is not the only thing to make a happy marriage. The paper says today that potatoes are 90 cents a peck and other things will advance in proportion. How can we afford to get married if I stop work, and we agreed that it would be best for me to stop at the end of the month. One should look at these things sensibly. If our friends want an ex-

planation tell them the truth. The high cost of living is enough to discourage anyone with less than \$5,000 a year."

"But, dearest, I am making \$30 a week and there is that thousand in the bank to buy furniture with. Surely we have more to start on than many young folks."

"That is not the point, Rob. I have told you over and over that I will not be content with an uncertain future and all the hardships of my mother's life and my childhood repeated. I am not mercenary and we could live nicely on \$30 a week and save something if the price of food were as they should be, but with potatoes at 90 cents a peck I will not try it. One should consider the possibility of children. We both agree that people should have children and it is the duty of parents to see that they have a start in life. It will take all we can both earn to live on now and there is no need of thinking of getting mar-

ried. Send the license back and explain why you do so. If the government wants the right kind of people to carry on the race it should provide against potatoes selling at 90 cents a peck."

Rob left Nellie with a heavy heart, but he knew she was a woman of strong will and would keep her word, so the license was returned and plans for the wedding cancelled.

Nellie had struggled up from a poverty-stricken home, through many discouragements and heartaches, until now she felt as if she could call herself a successful woman. Her near relatives were all dead and she lived alone in a comfortable little kitchenette apartment. She had furnished it prettily and enjoyed her play housekeeping as only a home-loving woman can. She earned \$18 a week as a bookkeeper, and on this she lived and had saved enough to buy some linen, pictures, etc., for the home she and Rob planned to establish in an-

other apartment a little larger than this one.

Nellie had not given notice at the office of her intended marriage as she had planned to finish out the month there. So she went to work as usual the following day and so one but a few intimate friends knew of her changed plans.

At first she saw Rob several times a week as usual; but soon more and more time elapsed between his calls, and one day she realized that she had not seen him for two weeks. The knowledge made a strange empty feeling in her heart. She really loved him and hoped some day to marry him and the thought of his leaving her life gave her a feeling of alarm. Two months had gone by since the day she decided to postpone the wedding and for the first time in that period she felt a twinge of regret. For a moment there seemed to be more important things than potatoes at 90 cents a peck.

It was Saturday afternoon and a half holiday for her. On her way home she met Rob unexpectedly, and at the sight of his familiar figure she hurried forward eagerly and said: "Rob, it has been a long time since I have seen you. Surely you are not going to drop me altogether."

As she spoke she was startled at the change in him. His neat appearance had been her chief delight in the old days, but now he seemed positively shabby. He needed a shave and his face seemed thinner than usual.

"Let's go over to the park and sit down," he answered soberly. "It is as warm as spring and I will not keep you long, but I want to say a few words to you where it is quiet."

Silently Nellie walked beside him until they had found a bench and sat down. Then Rob spoke.

"You showed better judgment than I

thought when you refused to marry me, Nellie. I lost my job two weeks ago. They had to cut expenses and the manager thought I could be spared better than the man next to me. He has a wife and family, and, as the manager said, I have no one but myself to look out for. I have not been able to find anything else yet, so guess I am not much good after all."

"There is the money you saved," Nellie began, but Rob said quickly: "That went at the time my job did. The day before my brother came to me with a hard-luck story about needing money to save his little business with and I loaned him the thousand. He played the market and lost it the same day. So you see," he continued, "you are a lucky girl. Good-by. I am going to get out of here. Hope you will have better luck next time."

But Nellie caught his arm. "Tell me

honestly, Rob, when you are last. You look hungry, and before he could answer she rose and half pulled him with her. "You are going home with me to supper. Let the neighbors say what they like. It is too late to get a license today, but you are to apply for one the first thing Monday morning, as tomorrow is Sunday. In the meantime take this \$10. I can spare it all right. I know of a place where you can get work. It only pays \$15 a week, but I can keep on working as long as I want to. There is room enough and furniture enough in my apartment for us to get along with for the rest of the winter and we can be as cozy as can be. I am a practical woman, as I have often said, and I'm not going to let a good man lose his job a second time because he is single. Besides, I love you, and that is everything!"

And that very day she had seen a sign in a window: "Potatoes, \$1 a peck!"

LOVE LETTERS THAT WIN

Dan Cupid Makes Good In Writing

By Contributors

DEAR WIFE—I am thinking of you tonight, although we are far apart. Tonight and every night I think of you and long for the touch of your hand, the sound of your thrilling voice, the love which shines from your sweet eyes.

I close my eyes, dear love, and picture you in a thousand different ways. I see you at breakfast, sweet radiant and joyous with happy morning spirits.

I picture you at the piano, the soft light falling upon your glorious hair, your wonderful hands running lightly over the keys, the clear, beautiful notes of your voice filling the room with their melody.

I feel the fragrance of your presence, the magical charm of your love surrounds me.

I am inhaled with the joy and wonder of it.

Nothing can separate us, sweetheart, because we love each other. Ever thine, GEORGE.

Contributed by G. E. O.
Somewhere in the Field.
Dear Girl—Surprised in getting this?

No more so than I am in sending it. But I'm just thanking you for the casual message you sent through Sis. "My love to the little brother in the trenches." It helps, believe me—though you probably wrote it much as you would have written. "Yes it is a nice day."

You see, dear, they got me, and slungly speaking, they got me good. Right shoulder. And there is no possible chance for recovery. They haven't told me outright, but I know. They're awfully good to me here at the hospital, but sometimes, little girl I'm most fragile in wanting my old Canadian hills—and you.

Can you imagine anything more farlorn than a wounded little trencher, 3,000 miles from home, with an awful ache in his shoulder, writing to the only girl he ever loved, who doesn't care a rap for him? I know something more forlorn—same little trencher, with not even a girl he loves.

I was at training when they wrote from home that you had married. Dear, the shoulder ache is heaven to the heart-ache I carried around and down into the trenches. But a year's sight of universal pain and heartache softened my own heartache until I can just be happy for you, and glad that you're not missing me. Besides in the few hours left, I'll

live again happy zammers way back in kid days, and be glad, because I know a lot of chaps without even a memory to cheer them.

I suppose before you get this I'll be somewhere in a far greater field than any we know but it's all right—whatever comes. But if you could only be with me when I go. I really guess I'd ask you to kiss me. I'm tired. So long—

Contributed by E. M. F.
My Darling Husband—This letter is the gift which I am preparing for you on this, our wedding anniversary, for, darling, my love for you is so great that never in the five years of our married life have I been able to express it to you in words.

Oh, George my darling, I know you love me dearer than life itself. But even that does not express the extent of my love for you.

All day when I wait so longingly for the hour which brings you home to me, the love in my heart forms into words, endearing little sentences which are meant to be whispered to you in the evening.

But oh, my husband when I am clasped in your arms, words seem a sacrilege, and why utter words when our eyes talk

so understandingly (even now, darling, I see your dear gray eyes, with your very heart reflected in them, and all the love of my heart rises to mine in response), and when our hand clasps reveals our innermost thoughts to each other.

But on this day of days I want to tell you some of my feelings for you, so I will try to write the words that the sacred happiness of your presence drives away.

Oh, my darling, do you know that in the evening, as I sit by your feet with your dear hand so vibrant with love stroking my hair, I leave this earth and enter another world—heaven, I know it is, for you are there.

Just you and I, darling; no words can express those moments of bliss. But you will understand, dear, for I know it is not only in my imagination that you accompany me. I know that your whole being is sensitive to my every mood, as mine is to yours, that the spiritual magnetism, or whatever it is called that draws one to another, is ever present between us, making our thoughts and feelings one.

Oh, my husband, I never thought that life could hold such perfect happiness, and above all married life, which I in my ignorance was afraid to enter lest

we become like other married couples I know who lead hum-drum, unromantic lives.

We thought we loved each other then, didn't we dear? But, oh our love lacked the depth, the feeling of nearness, of being one and when I think of the time we wasted (yes, wasted, for life did not begin for us until our wedding day) from the day we discovered God intended us for each other until we let Him make us one, I feel guilty and remorseful for making you miss so much of life's happiness.

But I have tried to make up to you, dear, for ever teasing your dear heart to suffer; and George, my husband, never in thought, word or deed will I make you suffer again.

Can it be possible that it is five years since that happy day? It doesn't seem so to me, but when I look at our two beautiful children I know it must be so, and my heart swells with thanks to God.

I close my eyes now, dear, and fly to you in spirit, and I know you will feel me close. You often tell me you do, as you work so hard in that terrible place.

Oh, George, I do feel resentful when I think of how hard those dear hands have to work. And oh, how hard I try to save that we may soon have our own little home, and you can take things easier;

but if we get to be millionaires, we can never be any happier, can we?

Well my darling, I will soon have you home now, so must go get you a nice supper. Oh, my George, I love you with an intensity you alone know I am capable of. A love that can never change.

May God bless you and our children, and make the remainder of our life together as happy as the past five years.

Your own little wife, MAMIE.

Contributed by B. J. F.
I open my eyes and look up into your sweet, solemn face and you smile down on me.

Once more I feel those strong young arms encircle me and a crushing embrace as you place your cheek against mine, and once more our lips meet in a caress that seems to last eternally when at last you speak: "Dear heart, we must go in; the clock has struck the midnight hour and 'tis growing chilly." Tenderly and unwillingly you place me on my feet and hand in hand we walk through the garden to the house, but, William, dear William, you are not with me! What has happened? I rub my eyes and look around and before me is only the dimly outlined garden as seen from

my window. Alas, I have been dreaming! Yes, dear William, 'tis all a dream, with you as the hero.

I rise from the window with a sigh and kneel to offer up a prayer that the dear Lord may bless you and keep you, dear; that if it is best we may sometime meet in that blissful dream called loved. Ever and lovingly yours, MARION.

Contributed by C. F.
These beautiful lines I chanced upon not long since seem peculiarly fitted for a place among "Love Letters," albeit they are addressed to a loved one who has passed beyond:

Dear, I am strong, and working can forget you;
Dear I can nerve my soul to face the night;
But, O, Belov'd! I can not face the waking.
Can not endure the tender downing light.
After deep sleep, that seems to end all sorrow,
Must I renew the bitter fight each dawn?
After sweet dreams, which God in mercy send me,
Must I awake and always find you gone?