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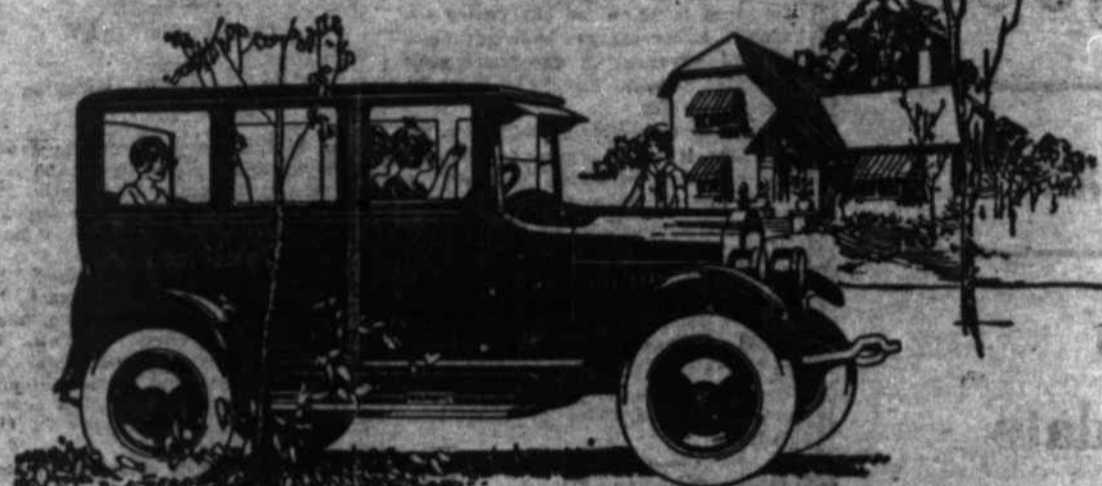
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"TOMORROW'S CAR TODAY"

Gen'l Camp. No. 3-B—P. O. 100

SO BIG



By EDNA FERBER

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WNU Service.

North Shore hostesses vied for the honor of entertaining these nobles. Paula—pretty, clever, moneyed, shrewd—often emerged from these contests the winner. Her latest catch was Emile Goguet—Gen. Emile Goguet, hero of Champagne—Goguet of the stiff white beard, the empty left coat sleeve, and the scorp of medals. He was coming to America ostensibly to be the guest of the American division which, with Goguet's French troops, had turned the German onslaught at Champagne, but really, it was whispered, to cement friendly relations between his country and a somewhat diffident United States.

"And guess," thrilled Paula, "guess who's coming with him, Dirk! That wonderful Roelf Pool, the French sculptor!"

"What do you mean—French sculptor! He's no more French than I am. He was born within a couple of miles of my mother's farm. His people were Dutch truck farmers. His father lived in High Prairie until a year ago, when he died of a stroke."

When he told Selma she flushed like a girl, as she sometimes still did when she was much excited. "Yes, I saw it in the paper. I wonder," she added, quietly, "if I shall see him."

"That evening you might have seen her sitting, fingering the faded shabby time-worn objects the saving of which Dirk had denounced as sentimental. The crude drawing of the Haymarket; the wine-red cashmere dress; some faded brittle flowers.

Paula was giving a large—but not too large—dinner on the second night. She was very animated about it, excited, gay. "They say," she told Dirk, "that Goguet doesn't eat anything but hard-boiled eggs and rusks. Oh, well, the others won't object to squash and

mushrooms and things. And his hobby is his farm in Brittany. Pool's spinning—dark and southerly and very white teeth."

Paula was very gay these days. Too gay. It seemed to Dirk that her nervous energy was inexhaustible—and exhausting. Dirk refused to admit to himself how liked he was by the shallow heart-shaped exquisite face, the lean brown clutching fingers, the air of ownership. He had begun to dislike things about her as an unfaithful spouse is irritated by quite innocent mannerisms of his unconscious mate. She scuffed her heels a little when she walked, for example. It maddened him. She had a way of biting the rough skin around her carefully tended nails when she was nervous. "Don't do that!" he said.

Dallas never irritated him. She rested him, he told himself. He would arm himself against her, but one minute after meeting her he would find gratefully and resistlessly into her quiet depths. Sometimes he thought all this was an assumed manner in her.

"This calm of yours—this effortlessness," he said to her one day, "is it possible, isn't it? Anything to get her notice."

"Partly," Dallas had replied amiably. "It's a nice pose though, don't you think?"

What are you going to do with a girl like that!

Here was the woman who could hold him entirely, and who never held out a finger to hold him. He tore at the smooth wall of her indifference, though he only cut and bruised his own hands in doing it.

"Is it because I'm a successful business man that you don't like me?"

"But I do like you. I think you're an awfully attractive man. Dangerous, that's not."

"Oh, don't be the wide-eyed ingenue. You know I do well what I mean. You've got me and you don't want me. If I had been a successful architect instead of a successful business man would that have made any difference?"

"Good Lord, no! Some day I'll probably marry a horny-handed son of toil, and if I do I'll be the horny hands that will win me. If you want to know, I like 'em with their gears on them. There's something about a man who has fought for it—I don't know what it is—a look in his eye—the feel of his hand. He might have been successful—though he probably would be, I don't know. I only know he—well, you haven't a mark on you. Not a mark. I'm not criticizing you. But you're all smooth. I like 'em bumpy. That sounds terrible. I don't want I mean at all. It isn't—"

"Oh, never mind," Dirk said, wearily. "I think I know what you mean. Let's talk. Dallas. If I thought—I'd go back to Hollis & Sprague's and begin all

over again at forty a week if I thought you'd—"

"Don't."

Chapter XVI

General Goguet and Roelf Pool had been in Chicago one night and part of a day. Dirk had not met them—was to meet them at Paula's dinner that evening. He was curious about Pool but not particularly interested in the warrior. Restless, unhappy, wanting to see Dallas (he admitted it, bitterly) he dropped into her studio at an unaccustomed hour almost immediately after lunch and heard gay voices and laughter.

Dallas in a grimy smock and the scuffed kid slippers was entertaining two transients from Chicago society—Gen. Emile Goguet and Roelf Pool. They seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely. She introduced Dirk as casually as though their presence were a natural and expected thing—which it was. She had never mentioned them to him. Yet now: "This is Dirk DeJong—Gen. Emile Goguet. We were campaigners together in France. Roelf Pool. So were we, weren't we, Roelf?"

Gen. Emile Goguet bowed formally, but his eyes were twinkling. He appeared to be having a very good time. Roelf Pool's dark face had lighted up with such a glow of surprise and pleasure as to transform it. He strode over to Dirk, clasped his hand. "Dirk DeJong! Not—why, say, don't you know me? I'm Roelf Pool!"

"I ought to know you," said Dirk.

"Oh, but I mean I—I knew you when you were a kid. You're Selma's Dirk. Aren't you? My Selma. I'm driving out to see her this afternoon. She's one of my reasons for being here. Why, I'm—" He was laughing, talking excitedly, like a boy. Dallas all agrins, was enjoying it immensely.

"They've run away," she explained to Dirk, "from the elaborate program that was arranged for them this afternoon. I don't know where the French got their reputation for being polite. The general is a perfect boor, aren't you? And scared to death of women. He's the only French general in captivity who ever took the trouble to learn English."

"We're all going," announced Dallas, and made a dash for the stuffy little bedroom off the studio.

Well, this was a bit too informal. "Going where?" inquired Dirk. The general, too, appeared bewildered.

Roelf explained, delightedly. "It's a plot. We're all going to drive out to your mother's. You'll go, won't you? You simply must."

"Go?" now put in General Goguet. "Where is it that we go? I thought we stayed here, quietly. It is quiet

here, and no reception committee. His tone was wistful.

Roelf attempted to make it clear. "Mr. DeJong's mother is a farmer. You remember I told you all about her in the ship coming over. She was wonderful to me when I was a kid. She was the first person to tell me what beauty was—la. She's magnificent. She raises vegetables."

"Ah! A farm! But yes! I, too, am a farmer. Well!" He shook Dirk's hand again. He appeared now for the first time to find him interesting.

"Of course I'll go. Does mother know you're coming? She has been hoping she'd see you, but she thought you'd grown so grand—"

"Wait until I tell her about the day I landed in Paris with five francs in my pocket. No, she doesn't know we're coming, but she'll be there, won't she? I've a feeling she'll be there, exactly the same. She will, won't she?"

"She'll be there." It was early spring; the busiest of seasons on the farm.

They were down the stairs and off in the powerful car that seemed to be at the visitors' disposal. Through the loop, up Michigan avenue, into the South side. Chicago, often lowering and gray in April, was wearing gold and blue today. The air was sharp, but beneath the brusqueness of it was a gentle promise. Dallas and Pool were much absorbed in Paris plans, Paris reminiscences. "And do you remember the time we... only seven francs among the lot of us and the dinner was... you're surely coming over in June, then... you've got the thing, I tell you... you'll be great, Dallas... remember what Vibray said... study... work..."

Dirk was wretched. He pointed out objects of interest to General Goguet. Sixty miles of boulevard. Park system. Finest in the country. Grand boulevard. Drexel boulevard. Jackson park. Illinois Central trains. Terrible, yes, but they were electrifying. Going to make 'em run by electricity, you know. Things wouldn't look so dirty, after that. Halsted street. Longest street in the world.

And, "Ah, yes," said the general, politely. "Ah, yes. Quite so. Most interesting."

The rich black loam of High Prairie. A hint of fresh green things just peeping out of the earth. Hothouses. Coldframes. The farm.

"But I thought you said it was a small farm," said General Goguet, as they descended from the car. He looked about at the acreage.

"It is small," Dirk assured him. "Only about forty acres."

"Ah, well, you Americans. In France we farm on a very small scale, you understand. We have not the land. The great vast country. He waved his right arm. You felt that if the left sleeve had not been empty he would have made a large and sweeping gesture with both arms.

Selma was not in the neat, quiet house. She was not on the porch, or in the yard. Meena, Braa, phlegmatic and unfastidious, came in from the kitchen. Miss DeJong was in the fields. She would call her. This she proceeded to do by blowing three powerful blasts and again three on a horn which she took from a hook on the wall. She stood in the kitchen doorway, facing the fields, blowing her red cheeks puffed outrageously. "That brings her," Meena assured them; and went back to her work. They came out on the porch to await Selma. She was out on the west sixteen—the west sixteen that used to be unprofitable, half-drowned muckland. Dirk felt a little uneasy, and ashamed that he should feel so.

Then they saw her coming, a small dark figure against the background of sun and sky and fields. She came swiftly, yet ploddingly, for the ground was heavy. They stood facing her, the four of them. As she came nearer they saw that she was wearing a dark skirt pinned up about her ankles to protect it from the wet spring earth, and yet it was spattered with a border of mud spots. A rough, heavy gray sweater was buttoned closely about the straight, slim body. On her head was a battered soft black hat. Her feet, in broad-toed sensible shoes, she lifted high out of the soft, clinging soil. Her hair blew a little in the gentle spring breeze. Her cheeks were faintly pink. She was coming up the path now. She could distinguish their faces. She saw Dirk; smiled, waved. Her glance went inquiringly to the others—the bearded man in uniform, the tall girl, the man with the dark vivid face. Then she stopped, suddenly, and her hand went to her heart as though she had felt a great pang, and her lips were parted, and her eyes enormous. As Roelf came forward swiftly she took a few quick, running steps toward him, like a young girl. He took the slight figure in the mud-spattered skirt, the rough gray sweater and the battered old hat into his arms.

They had had tea in the farm sitting room and Dallas had made a little moaning over the beauty of the Dutch mooring set. Selma had entertained them with the shining air of one who is robed in silk and fine linen. She and General Goguet had got on famously from the start, meeting on the common ground of asparagus culture.

"But how thick!" he had demanded, for he, too, had his pet asparagus beds on the farm in Brittany. "How thick at the base?"

Selma made a circle with thumb and forefinger. The general groaned with envy and despair. He was very comfortable, the general. He partook largely of tea and cakes. He flattered Selma with his eyes. She actually dimpled, flushed, laughed like a girl. But it was in Roelf she turned; it was on Roelf that her eyes dwelt and rested. It was with him she walked when she

was silent and the others talked. It was as though he were her one son, and had come home. Her face was radiant, beautiful.

Selma next to Dirk, Dallas said, in a low voice: "There, that's what I mean. That's what I mean when I say I want to do portraits. Not portraits of ladies with a string of pearls and one lily hand half hidden in the folds of a satin skirt. I mean character portraits of men and women who are really distinguished looking—distinguishedly American, for example—like your mother."

Dirk looked up at her quickly, half smiling, as though expecting to find her smiling, too. But she was not smiling. "My mother!"

"Yes, if she'd let me. With that fine splendid face all lit up with the light that comes from inside; and the jawline like that of the women who came over in the Mayflower; or crossed the continent in a covered wagon; and her eyes! And that battered funny gorgeous bun old hat and the wide shirt-waist—and her hands! She's beautiful. She'd make me famous at one leap. You'd see!"

Dirk stared at her. It was as though he could not comprehend. Then he turned in his chair to stare at his mother. Selma was talking to Roelf.

"And you've done all the famous men of Europe, haven't you, Roelf? To think of it! You've seen the world, and you've got it in your hand. Little Roelf Pool. And you did it all alone. In spite of everything."

Roelf leaned toward her. He put his hand over her rough one. "Cabbages are beautiful," he said. "Then they both laughed as at some exquisite joke. Then, seriously: "What a fine life you've had, too, Selma. A full life, and a rich one and successful."

"I!" exclaimed Selma. "Why, Roelf, I've been here all these years, just where you left me when you were a boy. I think the very hat and dress I'm wearing might be the same I wore then. I've been nowhere, doing nothing, seeing nothing. When I think of all the places I was going to see! All the things I was going to do!"

"You've been everywhere in the world," said Roelf. "You've seen all the places of great beauty and light. You remember you told me that your father had once said, when you were a little girl, that there were only two kinds of people who really mattered in the world. One kind was wheat and the other kind emeralds. You've wheat Selma."

"And you're emerald," said Selma quickly.

The general was interested but uncomprehending. He glanced now at the watch on his wrist and gave a little exclamation. "But the dinner. Our hostess Madame Storm! It is very fine to run away but one must come back. Our so beautiful hostess. He had sprung to his feet.

"She is beautiful, isn't she?" said Selma.

"No," Roelf replied, abruptly. "The mouth is smaller than the eyes. When the mouth is smaller than the eyes there is no real beauty. Now Dallas here—"

"Yes, me," scoffed Dallas, all agrins. "There's a grand mouth for you. It's a large mouth is your notion of beauty then I must look like Helen of Troy to you, Roelf."

"You do," said Roelf, simply.

Inside Dirk something was saying, over and over, "You're nothing but a rubber stamp, Dirk DeJong. You're nothing but a rubber stamp." Over and over.

"These dinners!" exclaimed the general. "I do not wish to seem ungracious, but these dinners! Much rather would I remain here on this quiet and beautiful farm."

At the porch steps he turned, brought his heels together with a sharp smack, bent from the waist, picked up Selma's

rough work-worn hand and kissed it. And then, as she smiled a little, unceremoniously, her left hand at her breast, her cheeks pink, Roelf, too, kissed her hand tenderly.

"Why," said Selma, and laughed a soft tremulous little laugh. "Why, I've never had my hand kissed before."

She stood on the porch steps and waved at them as they were whirled swiftly away, the four of them. A slight straight little figure in the plain white blouse and the skirt spattered with the soil of the farm.

"You'll come out again?" she had said to Dallas. And Dallas had said yes, but that she was leaving soon for

Paris, to study and work.

"When I come back you'll let me do your portrait!"

"My portrait!" Selma had exclaimed, wonderingly.

Now as the four were whirled back to Chicago over the asphalted Halsted road they were relaxed, a little tired. They yielded to the narcotic of spring that was in the air.

Roelf Pool took off his hat. In the cruel spring sunshine you saw that his black hair was sprinkled with gray. "On days like this I refuse to believe that I'm forty-five. Dallas, tell me I'm not forty-five."

"You're not forty-five," said Dallas in her leisurely easygoing voice.

Roelf's lean brown hand reached over frankly and clasped her strong white one. "When you say it like that, Dallas, it sounds true."

"It is true," said Dallas.

They dropped Dallas first at the shabby old Ontario street studio, then Dirk at his smart little apartment, and went on.

Dirk turned his key in the lock. Saki, the Japanese houseman, slid silently into the hall making little hissing noises of greeting. On the correct little console in the hall there was a correct little pile of letters and invitations. He went through the Italian living room and into his bedroom. The Jap followed him. Dirk's correct evening clothes (made by Peel the English tailor of Michigan boulevard) were laid correctly on his bed—trousers, vest, shirt, coat; fine, immaculate.

"Message, Saki?"

"Miss Selma telephone."

"Oh—save my message?"

"No. Say it's call 'gata.'"

"All right, Saki." He waved him away and out of the room. The man went, and closed the door softly behind him as a correct Jap servant should. Dirk took off his coat, his vest, and threw them on a chair near the bed. He stood at the bedside looking down at his Peel clothes, at the glossy shirtfront that never bulged. A bath, he thought, dully, automatically. Then, quite suddenly, he flung himself on the fine silk-covered bed, face down, and lay there, his head in his arms, very still. He was lying there half an hour later when he heard the telephone's shrill insistence and Saki's gentle deferential rap at the bedroom door.

[THE END.]

Walnut Cultivation

Commercial success in growing English walnut is found only in southern California. In the eastern states, so far as present data show, it may be said that the Persian walnut flourishes on all soils upon which the black walnut is found, and under favorable conditions on some others. Sandy loams, clay loams and gravelly loams, if not too open, are suitable for the growth of this tree.

Strange Bequests

The bequest of his body to a hospital by a certain gentleman to help in the discovery of the origin of headaches, reminds us of the following strange bequests: A certain philosopher directed that his skeleton should be clothed, provided with a specially molded wax head, and presented to the medical section of a London university where it may still be seen.

Powerful Quality

Call it imagination, call it wonder, call it love, whatever it be that shows as the deeper significance of the world and humanity and makes the difference between the surface-light of sapidity and the interpenetrating glow of worship, we owe to it whatever highest truth, whatever truest guidance we have.—James Martineau.

Popular Fruit

The culture of alligator pears is a thriving industry in southern California and Florida. It takes from six to eight years for an avocado plant to bear fruit. The flavor depends upon the variety. The variety grown in the United States is very good and compares favorably in flavor with the imported fruit.

Use for Old Newspapers

A European inventor claims that ordinary newspapers folded together in a thick strip and held between wire clips will make a good substitute for the regulation leather razor strap. The ink on the paper is said to assist in putting a keen and non-pulling edge on the blade.

Beauty in Cheerfulness

Cheerfulness is almost as necessary as air, food and water. It stirs hearts as a pebble thrown into a lake sends ripples to every shore—returning again and again to you—making the heavy load lighter and the dark road brighter for all.—Grit.

"Translator General"

The title of "Translator General" was conferred on Philemon Holland, English classical scholar, who died in 1836, by Fuller, in his "History of the Worthiest of England." His translations include Livy, Pliny and Plutarch.

Shakespeare of the Dutch

Joost Van Der Vongel, the greatest name in Dutch literature, is called the Dutch Shakespeare. As a young man he kept a stocking shop, which he inherited from his father. His works fill 12 volumes.

Red Letter Day

The term "red letter day" is derived from the church usage of marking the principal feasts of the year in red letters in the books used in services to distinguish them from the ordinary daily festivals.



He Picked Up Selma's Rough Work-Worn Hand and Kissed It.