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Where Two
Paths Meet

By INA WRIGHT HANSON.

In the birch blossom path I saw her first, and my mind was full of annoyance because my sister, who kept my house, should invite a girl to visit her and then insist that it was my duty to help to entertain. I would do nothing of the sort, I was thinking, when a turn in the white blossomed pathway brought her to my view.

She was slender and had a great mass of brownish yellow hair, pinned up with gold pins, one of which glowed sardonically at me with its topaz eye. While I was wondering why she didn't comb her hair smoothly she turned, and her eyes, of a wonderful vivid blue, seemed to look down into my very soul.

"Stand perfectly still, Mr. Angove, and shut your eyes. Is there anything so sweet in this wide world as a birch path in spring-time? Don't open them, Mr. Angove. I want you to get the fragrance uninterrupted by any other sense."

Why I should have stood there with my foolish eyes shut tight I don't know, but I did until she gave me permission to look at the white feathery sprays and at her. Then quite sociably we strolled the rest of the way together. I began to feel interested in knowing what she would say when we came to the end of the path and she saw—

"Why, I don't know your name," I said abruptly.

"At first you are going to address me as Miss Britland," she replied promptly. "Afterward you will say Frances, and at the end you will call me Caprice."

"Why in the world should I call you Caprice?" I asked.

"I don't know," she said. "Don't you ever say things just as if somebody inside of you were saying them with your own tongue?"

My reply to this amazing question was hindered by the ending of the birch bushes. We stood facing a little pagoda of white marble. I looked at the girl. Her hands were tensely clasped; her red lips were quivering.

"It's like walking down the pathway of love and suddenly coming to the very temple of love itself!" she exclaimed.

I frowned. Why should my sister prattle to strangers of our ancestors' conceptions? She seemed to divine my thoughts.

"Why do you look at me like that? What is it? What does it mean?"

I showed her the inscription on the worn threshold—"Temple of Love"—and with a sudden swift grace she knelt above the lettering. Then she sprang up. "Come, Mr. Angove," she cried gayly; "I will run you a race!"

So back along the birch lined path we ran like two children, and only my sister's amused smile at the end of the race reminded me of my forgotten dignity. I spent the rest of the day among my books and alone.

Next morning Miss Britland and I selected a walk opposite the birch path. This was a straight path through an avenue of stately pines. Yesterday the girl had been fanciful or merry; this day she was neither. She walked sedately by me, talking quite learnedly of the future of radium. I began to see why I might some time call her Caprice.

"This is the path of the pines," I said when we had exhausted radium. "We should have taken this one first, for it leads straight and true as the compass needle to the temple, while the birch path meanders foolishly this way and that and makes one many unnecessary steps to reach the same place."

"One welcomes unnecessary steps when one walks with the spirit of the woods," she answered. "Anyway, you should not have told me that this path leads to the same place. It would have been nicer for me to discover it for myself."

"So it would," I answered humbly. "How shall I atone?"

"By telling me of yourself," she replied. "There isn't much to tell," I said, feeling pleased at her interest. We sat in the pagoda, and for me at least it was the temple of love. Let him who will prate of long growing affection. To me love came as the sun rises suddenly over the mountain.

I told her of my life as a boy in college, as a man in the business world till this estate came to me, neglected and long uninhabited.

Another day I told her about the temple, how my ancestor had laid out these paths to typify his love

for his fair young wife and her love for him—one path, quick and true as the compass needle, the other sweet in its shy deflections, but ending just as surely at the temple. "What was the young wife's name?" she asked.

"I don't know. His diary is full of her beauty and sweetness and accomplishments, but it never mentions her name. He had his own names for her—Sunbeam, Starlight, Heartsease. Love like that should not die when the bodies of the lovers are dust."

"How do you know that it does?" she demanded. "How do you know but their souls are living again and loving just the same?"

She had so many strange thoughts, this little Frances, and she had so many moods—gay, serious, learned, childlike. How I loved her! I could not wait much longer to tell her so, but I seemed to lack the right words. One day in the temple I had been long silent, though I had not realized it till she interrupted my thoughts most saucily.

"I wish that it could speak, for it looks so very kindly that its voice must needs be pleasant," she quoted.

"It is going to speak," I said, turning suddenly toward her, but she pointed, laughing, toward the door.

Down the path of the pines came my sister, eager, breathless, waving a letter.

"A secret drawer in the wall, back of my wardrobe!" she gasped. "And three nights since she has been here has Frances dreamed of finding letters!"

I saw with a curious feeling the peculiar chirography of my ancestor. I read aloud:

"Look under the threshold of the temple, thou man of my own blood, but think not to appropriate to thyself what thou shalt find there. They are for her whom thou lovest as I loved my own Caprice."

"Dig, dig!" exclaimed my sister, dropping on her knees and trying to pry up the step with her bare hands. "Don't sit there and stare at each other, you two. Let's find what's here."

It was not a hard task, for time had loosened the marble steps till they were easily removed. It was an exciting moment when my sister's eager hands dragged to view a small iron box.

"Open it, brother!" she cried. "Jewels!" cried the sweet, excited voice of my dear girl.

I have always admired my sister, but never more than at that moment, when her curiosity must have been well nigh uncontrollable. She cast one swift look at us two; then she started up the pine path.

"I know that careless Martha is letting the bread burn," she called back over her dear motherly shoulder.

I took a string of diamonds from the box and put them around my sweetheart's neck. An amethyst in its quaint setting I pinned at her white throat, a coronet of pearls I placed on her golden hair. On her slender, trembling fingers I put rings—rubies, diamonds, emeralds. On her pretty arms I hung bracelets of queer design, and then I fastened her girdle—dull gold, set with a great white opal which broke into marvelous colors as my sweetheart touched it reverently. When I had finished, she looked like a sweet barbaric princess. I knelt before her, kissing her hand.

"All yours, my queen," I whispered, "for I love you as he loved—Caprice."

"Maybe I am his Caprice," she answered dreamily, "and maybe you are he."

"Tell me that you love me, dear," I pleaded.

She put her flowerlike face to mine. "My first thought of you and my last are the same, beloved," she answered. "And the thought is this—that you have a heart for whose belated waking queens might keep vigil."

When the Sun Grows Cold.

Dr. Fridtjof Nansen predicts the fate of the earth in the far distant future, when the sun grows cold. The simple, low organisms, he says, will probably live longest, until even they disappear. Finally, he says, all water on the earth's surface will freeze and the oceans will be transformed into ice to the bottom. Some time later the carbonic acid of the atmosphere will begin to fall on the surface of the earth in the form of snow. Some time after that the temperature on the surface will have reached about 330 degrees below zero F. New oceans will then be formed by the atmosphere being turned into liquid, and the atmosphere of that future earth will be only hydrogen and helium.

The sun will go through the same process. It will continue on its way as a dark star through space, accompanied by the planets.

GREEDY FOR GOLD

India a Glutton In Swallowing Up the Yellow Metal.

HOARDS IT LIKE A MISER TOO.

Millions on Millions In Bullion and Golden Coins Flow Into That Country Every Year, Hardly Any of Which Returns or Is Ever Seen Again.

A steady stream of gold has been flowing for centuries into India. One might say streams of gold flowing thence, for since India produces comparatively little gold herself she lays the whole world under tribute. Hardly any of this gold returns. It is as if the earth of India had opened and swallowed it up. The American tourist in India who parts from a sovereign or a five dollar gold piece may be pretty certain it will go straightway out of circulation and nevermore be seen in the country of its minting. In one year alone India has been known to import over \$300,000,000 in bar gold and English sovereigns.

What has become of this vast accumulation of gleaming treasure? To what use is all this gold put, since India has not minted a gold coinage of her own for many generations? The puzzle becomes a bit curious when it is remembered that as a whole the three hundred odd millions of natives refuse absolutely to deposit their savings, gold or otherwise, in banks and will take no part financially in such productive enterprises as railroads, irrigation works or factories.

The sharpest and most astute get-rich-quick bucket shop artist that ever soaked a gullible occidental public could no more beguile the mild Hindu to buy a share of stock with the glittering promise of a thousand point rise in value than the government has been able to induce him to invest in solid guaranteed bonds.

It has been estimated that "the visible hoarded wealth of India in temples, the treasure chests of princes and in the jewelry of the Indian men and women amounts to \$1,800,000,000"—a simple portable treasure that would look like a pretty respectable pile even for our day and make the old time buccaners set sail for India in a hurry. Part of this American tourist can see for himself in such toys as the two gold cannons of the golkwar of Baroda, each containing 280 pounds of pure gold, and from glimpses caught of temple images of solid or thickly plated gold and blinding with jewels.

As a special favor he may be permitted to glance within the iron bound treasure chests of some highness and plunge his arm to the elbow in ancient gold mohurs.

But this would hardly account for the greater part of that golden current set toward India since the beginning of the record. It is into the earth that current sinks, year after year for hundreds of them, to be forgotten or lost trace of in the violent social upheavals, plagues and famines that have swept over the country. In India man has but to relinquish his fight against the jungle growth for a short space to result in the tearing down, overwhelming and utter obliteration of all his work. Therefore it is scarcely a fight of imagination to picture the black cobra nesting in some hole of ruined temple masonry stuffed with gold and jewels or the tiger seeking a lair in the dazzling throne room of a long forgotten dynasty buried in the jungle.

For the reason of this curious gold problem of India apparently one has not far to seek. Until the English went to India the country was swept repeatedly by invasions and conquests. Each newcomer was bent chiefly on plunder, but if he decided to remain he set up a government in which all life and property were his sole and undisputed possession. The only rights the conquered Hindus possessed were those he chose to grant. These consisted principally in providing the conqueror with splendid palaces, jewels, gorgeously caparisoned elephants, dancing girls, a host of swashbuckling retainers and costly tombs. That is why the American tourist in India gets a surfeit of palaces, temples and tombs.

As to the people, they seem to have come to the conclusion pretty far back that it was advisable for them never to display signs of overmuch wealth. The plundering soldier or tax gatherer was always at the door, so apparent poverty was the best shield of defense. Besides, as hasty flight was recurrently necessary before the ravaging armies of Tartar, Afghan and Mogul, gold and jewels were the easiest forms of negotiable security to transport or hide in the earth. In this way Delhi was sacked and sacked again until John Ireland, the New York traveler, visiting that city in the middle of the eighteenth century, thought Nadir Shah must have swept it clean of treasures in his last \$200,000,000 raid. Delhi looked to him a poverty stricken place. Yet a century or so afterward, when the British troops stormed it in the mutiny, the Thomas Atkins of those days was pretty soon seen bartering jewels for drinks and playing quoits with gold anklets and bangles.

Since then Delhi has probably accumulated another hoard of treasure, for the people's yearning in that respect seems to be explained by their never having got over their scare of the invader plundering and squeezing them for ages or the dread terror of a plague taking its toll in millions. Something then unchanging in value to fly with or bury would appear to be their sole idea of security, and without doubt this is best represented in gold and jewels.—New York Tribune.

GETTING ON THE STAGE.

Dangers That Beget New Eggs in the Vaudeville Basket.

The most amazing thing to a theatrical manager is the utter lack of comprehension on the part of applicants of what professional work really means.

When I was writing vaudeville sketches I used to get letters from young fellows in country towns who wanted to go into vaudeville. For some unaccountable reason they figured out that that was the easiest way to break into the entertainment business. As a matter of fact, they were choosing the very toughest end of it all. In vaudeville there is no stage manager to tell one what to do and how to do it. He must rely entirely upon himself. Furthermore, he must do his own booking, get his own transfer agent to take care of his baggage, negotiate his own railroad and even pack his own properties. In fact, he has a thousand and one troubles to divert his mind from his proper business. It never seems to dawn upon the aspirant that it's much better to get into a great organization, where there's somebody to attend to every problem for him and where he has a chance to learn the details of stagecraft.

A clever vaudeville man, to begin with, must have a good act, and if he be unknown he must know how to talk his act to the managers. If he employs an agent he is at a disadvantage, because these persons work for the management of the theaters. Furthermore, the vaudeville man must remember that he comes out on to the stage with nothing behind him, practically no properties, no chorus girls to divert attention. The eyes of the people are centered on him. He must do it all. It is by far the most difficult business in the world to succeed at, unless one is very talented.—George M. Cohan, in the New York Sun.

SCARED THE LION.

Bravery and Daring Displayed by an African Woman.

In "Hunting the Elephant in Africa" the author, Captain C. H. Stigand, in telling some lion stories, admits that there is a certain thrill in connection with the king of the jungle. The Somali says that a lion makes you jump three times—first, when you hear him roar; secondly, when you unexpectedly meet his spoor, and thirdly, when you first sight him. They say that even a bold man is thus frightened three times by a lion, but after the sudden shock of seeing him is over he is no longer afraid. And in this connection he tells us a good story of female heroism.

"At a village near Fort Manganche, also in Nyasaland, a man was sitting one night at the door of his hut drumming while his wife was cooking food inside. The hut was an isolated one, being several hundred yards from the rest of the village.

"Suddenly the woman heard the man call out, 'A lion has got me.' She took a burning fagot from the fire, ran out and smacked the lion in the face. The astonished animal let go, and she dragged her husband into the hut and hastily put up the poles which form the door. The man died a few minutes after, and the woman sat there with the dead body.

"Presently the lion returned and scratched gently on the door. 'This he repeated several times till it got on the woman's nerves. At last she could stand it no longer, so she took another fagot from the fire, unbarred the door and fled to the village, leaving the dead man. The lion then walked into the hut and took him."

How We Got the Gas Jet.

Possibly very few people know that we owe the ordinary gas jet to the accidental use of a woman's thumb. After the dinner of the British Commercial Gas association Professor Vilhelm Lewes told how Clegg of Redruth used to burn the illuminant straight from the open pipe and turn it off by plugging the pipe with some clay. Upon one occasion his lump of clay was missing, and, picking up his wife's thumb, he put this on top of the pipe. Much to his surprise, the gas escaped through small holes which had been worn by the constant use of the needle, small burning jets of gas resulting. From this Professor Lewes traced the evolution of the gas jet.—London Globe.

Surf Birds.

That birds of the family termed surf birds in the Hawaiian Islands should leave that paradise of the Pacific to go and rear their young in the tundras of Alaska would seem to many an extraordinary proceeding, yet the turnstone and the black bellied plover and the Pacific golden plover make the long journey of about 4,000 miles thither annually.

Classified the Family.

"Everybody in our family's some kind of an animal," said Bobby to the amazed lady visitor. "What nonsense!" she exclaimed. "Well," replied Bobby, "mother's a dear, my baby sister is mother's little lamb, I'm the kid and dad's the goat."—Dundee Advertiser.

Shooting Through Glass.

A rifle bullet may be fired through a pane of glass, making a hole the size of the ball without cracking the glass. If the glass be suspended by a thread it will make no difference, and the thread will not even vibrate.—London Telegraph.

Poor Eve.

Eve (in the garden)—Adam, I've got to have another dress. Adam—Eve, you're the most resolute woman I've ever known. You're always turning over a new leaf.—London Tatler.



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