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Merry Christmas To All

We desire to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas. With malice toward none we extend this wish of a Merry Christmas to everyone. May the glorious Christmas Day bring joy and good cheer to every living soul.

Mother's Emerald

A Love Story.

By AGNES G. BROGAN

When father first spoke of bringing the student to board I was glad. Any new companionship seemed promising. But when I considered that the student, being musical, might also be the possessor of an uncertain temperament my troubles appeared to be increasing. One like father was bad enough in any family, flying off on the slightest provo-

cation into a fit of temper or, in his better moods, listening apparently with an appreciative smile as one related some personal incident, only to find at its conclusion that his mind had been engaged with some beloved "score." Nora, the cook, was my only comfort, and Nora had not what one might call an "understanding" mind.

Father told me his plan one evening with his customary tardiness. The student was to arrive at 8 o'clock and the south room to be prepared for his disposal. He was coming "free" upon condition of exchanging secretary work for lessons. This alone was a recommendation to the student's musical ability. Father would receive no pupil without promise of skill. Excitedly he named the young man as "his discovery." Eric Knowlson's future, he said, was assured. So I went to mother's picture about it. I have a way of going to mother's picture in all my joys and perplexities to receive advice from its soft eyes. You see,

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SECURITY AND SERVICE Our Motto

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mother left this world as I entered, slipping out very silently before even my baby arms could reach her.

"Mother," I sighed, "if we must have another man in this house, oh, let us hope that he may be a sane one!" My experience with men ended with father, and I fancied them all like him. Nora encouraged me in this belief. "They're all the very old devil," she said. And with her remark in my ears I ran into the music room and incidentally also into the student. The sudden encounter surprised him as much as it did me. He had been removing his violin from its case, whistling softly. His whistle stopped abruptly. Then after we had stared at each other awhile he bowed.

"Eric Knowlson," he explained.

"Mercy!" I exclaimed rudely. "I should never have guessed it. Not the violinist?"

"The same," he replied, "long hair and soulful eyes missing perhaps." He smiled. "Bound to be a failure, then. None of the essentials."

"I am Professor Ludlow's daughter," I stiffly reproved him, "and will show you to your room."

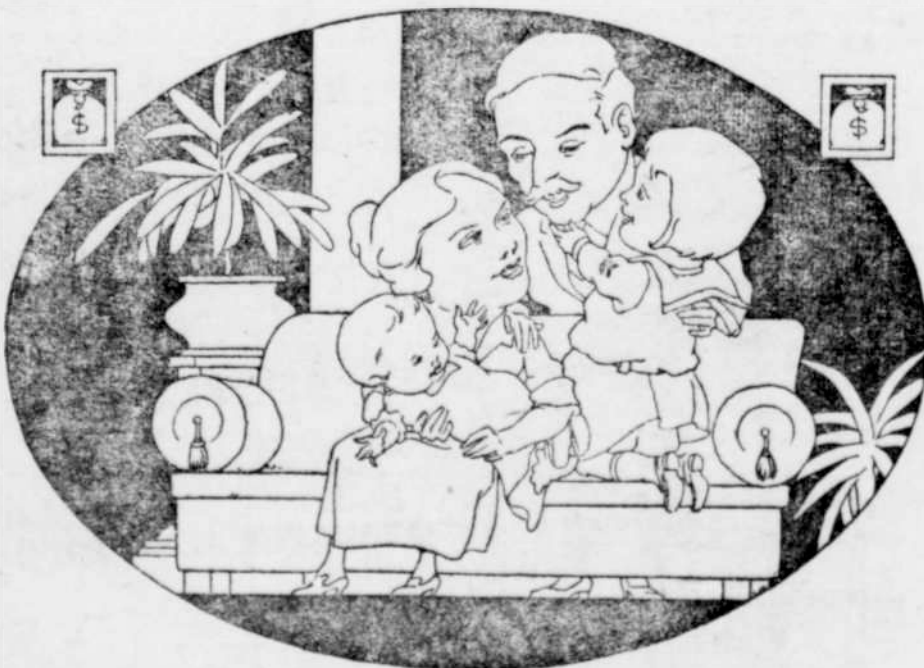
"It is my turn to say 'Mercy!' I never should have guessed it," the young man remarked pleasantly. "Your father has always spoken of you as 'my

daughter, the housekeeper.' Naturally I imagined a staid, sensible appearing sort of person. Again, none of the essentials."

Suddenly my smile answered his. "You shall see," I challenged. So, with free and merry chatter, we found ourselves in the short space before dinner upon astonishingly friendly terms. It was father's forbidding presence which cast formality over the meal. Afterward, upon the top step of the stairs, I listened to their music, father at the piano, the student with his violin. And the sweet strains of the instrument at his charmed touch caused even me, surfeited with music, to linger. Into the "Spring Song" came a dominant, personal note, that was suddenly a clear, compelling call. Slowly I moved in answer down the stairs, then paused perplexedly in the

(Concluded on last page.)

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