

The PLACE OF HONEY-MOONS

HAROLD MACGRATH

Pictures by C.D. RHODES

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

"Has he given up?" asked Abbott, his voice strangely unfamiliar in his own ears.

"A man can struggle just so long against odds, then he wins or becomes broken. Women are not logical; generally they permit themselves to be guided by impulse rather than by reason. This man I am telling you about was proud; perhaps too proud. It is a shameful fact, but he ran away. True, he wrote letter after letter, but all these were returned unopened. Then he stopped."

"A woman would a good deal rather believe circumstantial evidence than not. Humph!" The colonel primed his pipe and relighted it. "She couldn't have been worth much."

"Worth much!" cried Abbott. "What do you imply by that?"

"No man will really give up a woman who is really worth while, that is, of course, admitting that your man, Courtlandt, is a man. Perhaps, though, it was his fault. He was not persistent enough, maybe a bit spineless. The fact that he gave up so quickly possibly convinced her that her impressions were correct. Why, I'd have followed her day in and day out, year after year; never would I have let up until I had proved to her that she had been wrong."

"The colonel is right," Abbott approved, never taking his eyes off Courtlandt, who was apparently absorbed in the contemplation of the bread crumbs under his fingers.

"And more, by hook or crook, I'd have dragged in the other woman by the hair and made her confess."

"I do not doubt it, colonel," responded Courtlandt, with a dry laugh. "And that would really have been the end of the story. The heroine of this rambling tale would then have been absolutely certain of collusion between the two."

"That is like a woman," the Barone agreed, and he knew something about them. "And where is this man now?"

"Here," said Courtlandt, pushing back his chair and rising. "I am he." He turned his back upon them and sought the garden.

Tableau!

"Dash me!" cried the colonel, who, being the least interested personally, was first to recover his speech.

The Barone drew in his breath sharply. Then he looked at Abbott.

"I suspected it," replied Abbott to the mute question. Since the episode of last night his philosophical outlook had broadened. He had lost Nora, but had come out of the agony of love refused to fuller manhood. As long as he lived he was certain that the petty affairs of the day were never again going to disturb him.

"Let him be," was the colonel's suggestion, adding a gesture in the direction of the casement door through which Courtlandt had gone. "He's as big a man as Nora is a woman. If he has returned with the determination of winning her, he will."

They did not see Courtlandt again. After a few minutes of restless to-and-froing, he proceeded down to the landing, helped himself to the colonel's motor-boat, and returned to Bellaggio. At the hotel he asked for the duke, only to be told that the duke and madame had left that morning for Paris. Courtlandt saw that he had permitted one great opportunity to slip past. He gave up the battle. One more good look at her, and he would go away. The odds had been too strong for him, and he knew that he was broken.

When the motor-boat came back, Abbott and the baron made use of it also. They crossed in silence, heavy-hearted. On landing Abbott said: "It is probable that I shall not see you again this year. I am leaving tomorrow for Paris. It's a great world, isn't it, where they toss us around like dice? Some throw sixes and others deuces. And in this game you and I have lost two out of three."

"I shall return to Rome," replied the Barone. "My long leave of absence is near its end."

"What in the world can have happened?" demanded Nora, showing the

two notes to Celeste. "Here's Donald going to Paris tomorrow and the Barone to Rome. They will bid us good-by at tea. I don't understand. Donald was to remain until we left for America, and the Barone's leave does not end until October."

"Tomorrow?" dim-eyed, Celeste returned the notes.

"Yes. You play the fourth ballade and I'll sing from Madame. It will be very lonesome without them." Nora gazed into the wall mirror and gave a pat or two to her hair.

When the men arrived, it was impressed on Nora's mind that never had she seen them so amiable toward each other. They were positively friendly. And why not? The test of the morning had proved each of them to his own individual satisfaction, and had done away with those stilted mannerisms that generally make rivals ridiculous in all eyes save their own. The revelation at luncheon had convinced them of the futility of things in general and of woman in particular. They were, without being aware of the fact, each a consolation to the other. The old adage that misery loves company was never more nicely typified.

If Celeste expected Nora to exhibit any signs of distress over the approaching departure, she was disappointed. In truth, Nora was secretly pleased to be rid of these two suitors, much as she liked them. The Barone had not yet proposed, and his sudden determination to return to Rome eliminated this disagreeable possibility. She was glad Abbott was going because she had hurt him without intention, and the sight of him was, in spite of her innocence, a constant reproach.



"If You Can Stand Up in Front of Me for Ten Minutes You Need Make No Explanations."

Presently she would have her work, and there would be no time for loneliness.

The person who suffered keenest was Celeste. She was awake; the tender little dream was gone; and bravely she accepted the fact. Never her agile fingers stumbled, and she played remarkably well, from Beethoven, Chopin, Grieg, Rubinstein, MacDowell. And Nora, perversely enough, sang from old light opera.

When the two men departed, Celeste went to her room and Nora out upon the terrace. It was after five. No one was about, so far as she could see. She stood enchanted over the transformation that was affecting the mountains and the lakes. How she loved the spot! How she would have liked to spend the rest of her days here! And how beautiful all the world was today!

She gave a frightened little scream. A strong pair of arms had encircled her. She started to cry out again, but the sound was muffled and blotted out by the pressure of a man's lips upon her own. She struggled violently, and suddenly was freed.

"If I were a man," she said, "you should die for that!"

"It was an opportunity not to be ignored," returned Courtlandt. "It is true that I was a fool to run away as I did, but my return has convinced me that I should have been as much a fool had I remained to tag you about, begging for an interview. I wrote you letters. You returned them unopened. You have condemned me without a hearing. So be it. You may consider that kiss the farewell appearance so dear to the operatic heart," bitterly.

He addressed most of this to the back of her head, for she was already walking toward the villa into which she disappeared with the proud air of some queen of tragedy. She was a capital actress.

A heavy hand fell upon Courtlandt's shoulder. He was irresistibly drawn right about face.

"Now, then, Mr. Courtlandt," said Harrigan, his eyes blue and cold as ice, "perhaps you will explain?"

With rage and despair in his heart,

Courtlandt fung off the hand and answered: "I refuse!"

"Ah!" Harrigan stood off a few steps and ran his glance critically up and down this man of whom he had thought to make a friend. "You're a husky lad. There's one way out of this for you."

"So long as it does not necessitate any explanations," indifferently.

"In the bottom of one of Nora's trunks is a set of my old gloves. There will not be anyone up at the tennis court this time of day. If you are not a mean cuss, if you are not an ordinary low-down imitation of a man, you'll meet me up there inside of five minutes. If you can stand up in front of me for ten minutes, you need not make any explanations. On the other hand, you'll hike out of here as fast as boats and trains can take you. And never come back."

"I am nearly twenty years younger than you, Mr. Harrigan."

"Oh, don't let that worry you any," with a truculent laugh.

"Very well. You will find me there. After all, you are her father."

"You bet I am!"

Harrigan stole into his daughter's room and soundlessly bored into the bottom of the trunk that contained the relics of past glory. As he pulled them forth, a folded oblong strip of parchment came out with them and fluttered to the floor; but he was too busily engaged to notice it, nor would he have bothered if he had. The bottom of the trunk was littered with old letters and programs and operatic scores. He wrapped the gloves in a newspaper and got away without being seen. He was as happy as a boy who had discovered an opening in the fence between him and the apple orchard. He was rather astonished to see Courtlandt kneeling in the clover patch, hunting for a four-leaf clover. It was patent that the young man was not troubled with nerves.

"Here!" he cried, brusquely, tossing over a pair of gloves. "If this method of settling the dispute isn't satisfactory, I'll accept your explanations."

For reply Courtlandt stood up and stripped to his undershirt. He drew on the gloves and laced them with the aid of his teeth. Then he kneeled them carefully. The two men eyed each other a little more respectfully than they had ever done before.

"This single court is about as near as we can make it. The man who steps outside is whipped."

"I agree," said Courtlandt.

"No rounds with rests; until one or the other is outside. Clean breaks. That's about all. Now, put up your dukes and take a man's licking. I thought you were your father's son, but I guess you are like the rest of 'em, hunters of women."

Courtlandt laughed and stepped to the middle of the court. Harrigan did not waste any time. He sent in a straight jab to the jaw, but Courtlandt blocked it neatly and countered with a hard one on Harrigan's ear, which began to swell.

"Fine!" growled Harrigan. "You know something about the game. It won't be as if I was walloping a baby." He sent a left to the body, but the right failed to reach his man.

For some time Harrigan jabbed and swung and uppercut; often he reached his opponent's body, but never his face. It worried him a little to find that he could not stir Courtlandt more than two or three feet. Courtlandt never followed up any advantage, thus making Harrigan force the fighting, which was rather to his liking. But presently it began to enter his mind convincingly that apart from the initial blow, the younger man was working wholly on the defensive. As if he were afraid he might hurt him! This served to make the old fellow furious. He bored in right and left, left and right, and Courtlandt gave way, step by step until he was so close to the line that he could see it from the corner of his eye. This glance, swift as it was, came near to being his undoing. Harrigan caught him with a terrible right on the jaw. It was a glancing blow, otherwise the fight would have ended then and there. Instantly he lurched forward and clinched before the other could add the finishing touch.

The two pushed about, Harrigan fiercely striving to break the younger man's hold. He was beginning to breathe hard besides. A little longer, and his blows would lack the proper steam. Finally Courtlandt broke away of his own accord. His head buzzed a little, but aside from that he had recovered. Harrigan pursued his tactics and rushed. But this time there was an offensive return. Courtlandt became the aggressor. There was no withstanding him. And Harrigan fairly saw the end; but with that indomitable pluck which had made him famous in the annals of the ring, he kept banging away. The swift, cruel jabs here and there upon his body began to tell. Oh, for a minute's rest and a piece of lemon on his parched tongue! Suddenly Courtlandt rushed him tigerishly, landing a jab which closed Harrigan's right eye. Courtlandt dropped his hands, and stepped back. His glance traveled suggestively to Harrigan's feet. He was outside the "ropes."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Harrigan, for losing my temper."

"What's the odds? I lost mine. You win." Harrigan was a true sportsman. He had no excuses to offer. He had dug the pit of humiliation with his own hands. He recognized this as one of two facts. The other was, that had Courtlandt extended himself, the battle would have lasted about one minute. It was gall and wormwood, but there you were.

"And now, you ask for explanations. Ask your daughter to make them." Courtlandt pulled off the gloves and got into his clothes. "You may add, sir, that I shall never trouble her again with my unwelcome attentions. I leave for Milan in the morning." Courtlandt left the field of victory without further comment.

"Well, what do you think of that?" mused Harrigan, as he stooped over to gather up the gloves. "Any one would say that he was the injured party. I'm in wrong on this deal somewhere. I'll ask Miss Nora a question or two."

It was not so easy returning. He ran into his wife. He tried to dodge her, but without success.

"James, where did you get that black eye?" tragically.

"It's a daisy, ain't it, Molly?" pushing past her into Nora's room and closing the door after him.

"Father!"

"That you, Nora?" blinking.

"Father, if you have been fighting with him, I'll never forgive you."

"Forget it, Nora. I wasn't fighting. I only thought I was."

He raised the lid of the trunk and cast in the gloves haphazard. And then he saw the paper which had fallen out. He picked up and squinted at it, for he could not see very well. Nora was leaving the room in a temper.

"Going, Nora?"

"I am. And I advise you to have your dinner in your room."

Alone, he turned on the light. It never occurred to him that he might be prying into some of Nora's private correspondence. He unfolded the parchment and held it under the light. For a long time he stared at the writing, which was in English, at the date, at the names. Then he quietly refolded it and put it away for future use, immediate future use.

"This is a great world," he murmured, rubbing his ear tenderly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HUNGRY CROWS KILLED CAT

Pussy Had No Chance Against the Numbers and Ferocity of Her Attackers.

Fuzzy-Wu, a small parti-colored Japanese cat, which had been presented recently by a friend returning from the Orient to Ralph Marion, owner of a farm in the Christian Hook section of Oceanside, L. I., wandered a short distance from the farmhouse and was stalking sparrows when a flock of hungry crows descended on it.

The leader of the crows swooped like a hawk on the cat, attacking with claws, wings and beak. Fuzzy-Wu tried to run away, but crows swarmed in from all directions. From his house Marion saw the huge black birds flapping their wings a few feet above the ground and then darting awkwardly downward. When he approached them the flock took flight, cawing angrily and leaving on the ground the remains of a Japanese cat.

Hunger, increased by the present cold spell, is believed to have been the motive of the crows, which normally are content with worms, insects and grains.

Women to Build Chapel.

The National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is to be the name of the chapel which Catholic women of the United States will erect at the Catholic university in Washington. The money will be collected, not in large gifts, but in small sums from all the Catholic women of the country, through the National Organization of Catholic Women, of which Mrs. Henry W. Taft, sister-in-law of former President Taft, is the president. About \$50,000 of the \$500,000 required has already been received.

The Humility Fallacy.

"Humility, as a virtue, is fast disappearing, and that's a very good thing," said Mayor Rolph in San Francisco.

"Our fathers used to preach humility to us—respect for our superiors, contentment with our humble station, and so forth."

"He who is down need fear no fall," a humility exponent said to me, solemnly, one day.

"Quite right," said I, "but he's sure to get sat on and walked over."

Facts in the Case.

Miss Laura Drake Gill, president of the College for Women at Suwanee, Tenn., says that while statistics show that college women marry a little late in life, they finally marry in the same proportion as their female blood relations who are not college bred.

Fault-Finding an Easy Matter.

The fault-finder—it is his nature's plague to spy into abuses and oft his jealousy shapes faults that are not.—Shakespeare.

GOOD JOKE ON WIFEY

MRS. TRUEBOY'S FLIRTATION WITH HANDSOME "STRANGER."

She Really Thought She Had Never Before Seen the Young Man Who Taught Her to Swim, but It Turned Out She Had.

"You never—never—do the one thing I have asked you to do until I'm tired of asking!" said pretty Mrs. Trueboy to her husband.

"O, you mean"—and he flourished one hand about his face, with a grin.

"Yes. Just that. I want you to shave. You're the only man in the neighborhood with a beard."

"But when we were sparking, dear, you thought my beard so nice—so silky, you said, and so becoming."

"But I've changed my mind. Other men of your age don't wear a beard. Nobody but old codgers. Besides, the other women talk about it. 'He must have a weak face,' I heard one of the neighbors say. She didn't think I was listening, the cat!"

"Well, dear, if you insist upon it, I'll shave the moment I get back from this fishing trip."

"What! Are you going fishing again?"

"Yes. Up in Canada. Want to come along?"

"I should think not! And if you go fishing again, I shall go down to the shore for a couple of weeks. I suppose you'll be gone that long."

"All right, my dear. Go and enjoy yourself. But don't flirt too much."

John Trueboy started on his fishing trip, and Mrs. Trueboy lost no time in making for the seashore.

Mrs. Trueboy had no notion of flirting when she went to the shore, although she felt a little resentment at Trueboy for selfishly going fishing and leaving her to her own devices.

But the first day she did flirt with a young man—one of the very few in the water—to the anger of every other woman on the beach. She sat with him and swam with him, and in the evening she danced with him. And he appreciated her kindness. The next day, as she was floating and swimming about and wondering whether she had done just right in the matter, she caught a glimpse of a handsomer young man floating near her. She had noted him at breakfast, for he was a fresh arrival, and had been tempted to indulge in a slight flirtation there and then, for he had encouraged it. But all at once she thought of John Trueboy, away up in Canada, and she really began to believe he couldn't flirt on a fishing trip.

But she changed her mind. She was floating in shallow water, as she found by touching bottom, and the temptation was too great. She pretended she couldn't swim, and shrieked and made a show of helplessness. This experimental deceit is sometimes affected by young women who really could give a mermaid a race.

The handsome fellow, of course, came to her rescue, and their acquaintance began. He set about teaching her. Young women who can't swim or who pretend they can't and young men who teach young women how to swim know something of the peculiar intimacy of this joyous task. It was not long before Mrs. Trueboy forgot all about John in Canada, and she even looked at the young man she had flirted with but yesterday as though she never before had seen him. At moments her conscience troubled her a bit, but she got over that. This was too much fun to be worrying.

"You seem to like me," said the young man unblushingly, as they waded out.

Mrs. Trueboy looked about in alarm. This was not the voice that had been teaching her to swim. But it was the voice of John Trueboy, who had shaved.—Judge.

The Gentleman.

As a finished product, the gentleman seems to do everything very easily; but that ease like the case of the habit, can only come by effort. He is socially secure; but whatever his station, he was not born so, for no man ever is socially secure by birth, even if he was born to be a king. The test of a gentleman is the pleasure others take in his society, and not in his wit or his virtue of his learning, but in their ordinary social relations with him. And this pleasure he cannot give merely by being on good terms with himself.

They Don't Know.

Men talk about what they would do if they had \$1,000,000, but nine out of ten lie about it. If they had \$1,000,000 the first thing they would do would be to lay plans and concoct schemes for getting two.—Toledo Blade.

His Chance.

He—"Girls are queer creatures; they marry the first fool who asks them, as a rule. I suppose you'd do the same, wouldn't you?" She—"Suppose you ask me and find out."