

INSTALLMENT FIFTEEN-The Story So Far

Laura Maguire is wife of happy-golucky Mike, editor and mayor of Covington, whom banker Mays is seeking to ruin for criticism of his banking methods. She is the mother of four children: Tom, whose real estate job in a bigger eity peters out in the depression, and who separates from his wife. Mary Etta. secretary to a big shot, shen she refuses to give up her job and go with ٠

CHAPTER XXI-Continued It was just ten when she heard Alec's step. He was whistling as he came down the street. Laura's heart caught. Alec hadn't arrived home with a whistle for months.

"Hi, Mom, how's tricks and where's everybody?" was his greeting.

"Where have you been all day?" Laura demanded. "After all-' "Working," interrupted Alec. "Don't drop dead," he went on, "but

I've got a job. What a job!" He laughed, but Laura noticed that his black eyes gleamed. "Yes?" she prompted.

"Behold in me," he announced with a swagger. "Grocer Kenneday's hired hand."

"Alec!"

"Sure. I'm the grocer boy now at ten dollars a week, delivering lettuce and cabbage and what not at the back doors of all the best houses in town. If you don't believe me order a flock of goods tomorrow and watch me do my stuff."

Laura laughed hysterically. Alec of all people clerking in a cheap grocery store! Alec who had dreamed of doing tremendous things in a huge way.

"Darling," she gasped between gurgles, "please excuse it. But this is so sudden."

He grinned. "You ought to see me in a white apron slicing liverwurst."

Laura choked. And then suddenly she realized that Alec was not laughing any more. His young face was set and a little white.

"I've been an awful fool," he said huskily. "Whining because I couldn't tackle mountains. Pitying myself and running you crazy, I guess. Going to the devil because the world refused to let me set it afire. But I'm through with all that, see? Going to be a man if I can-and I think I can."

Laura's heart leaped.

"I'm paying Lou's board, Mother."

"You don't need to do that, Alec." "I know, but I want to. God knows why, but she thinks I'm the best cut. So I've sort of got to try to be, haven't I?"

Laura swallowed hard. "Yes, Alec."

"And I drew five dollars of my salary in advance. Get her some decent shoes, Mother. Next week maybe I can manage enough for a

him to the smaller town. Alec, who can't get a job and runs around with a divorcee, but lately has become interested in Lou Knight, the town drunk's daughter whom he has taken to his mother's home when her father died rescuing a crippled boy in

a fire. Shirley, whose marriage to Jaird Newsum at length takes place when they

Ritchie Graham was the fishbone in Kathleen's throat.

Ruth Yates, "dear Ruthie," had him in tow. They had come to Marigold Gardens with three other couples and were apparently having a splendid evening. Kathleen thought she had never seen anything so disgustingly blah as Ruth. But Ritchie appeared to have a sweet tooth. Every time he smiled at Ruth, Kathleen felt like clawing. And she couldn't even flatter herself that he was doing it deliberately to annoy her. He didn't seem to know Kathleen was on earth. Once when Gene Mays danced her quite close, Kathleen sang out something impudent about what a small world it is after

all. But Ritchie only looked at her as if he had a vague recollection of having seen her somewhere before and turned back to Ruth with every evidence of eagerness. It was then Kathleen ground her teeth.

"I never dreamed I could be this way about a girl," said Gene Mays in a strange hoarse voice.

Kathleen's pulses stirred. After all, he was Eugene Mays. The town prize! The guy girls had tried and tried to land. Only to get the old ax for their pains.

"If it's any news to you," he said resentfully, "you've got me standing on my ear."

Kathleen smiled. "You look awfully cunning on an ear."

"Have a heart," he groaned. "It may be fun for you, but it's hell on

The song was trite and silly but

scrape up enough money to buy a hamburger stand, though Ma Newsum wanted him to marry Connie Mays, the banker's daughter.

Kathleen, who despite herself, is becoming interested in Ritchie Graham, . newcomer, also a newspaperman. Kathleen does not approve her father and Ritchie's fighting with Mays. She's a very unhappy girl.

## CHAPTER XXIII

Gene Mays would be in a killing mood. So would Ruthie. But somehow Kathleen could not work up any lather over that. She followed Ritchie without a word down the graveled drive and across the road. There was a moon. Fantastically huge and golden above the brooding cotton fields. Honeysuckle tangled in the fence corners. Achingly sweet. The orchestra pursued them from a distance with the plaintive love song. Ritchie sang the words in a soft, deep, caressing voice that was treachery to her throbbing senses.

"Love is the sweetest thing, What else on earth could ever bring

Such happiness to everything as love's old story?"

Kathleen simply could not bear it that Ritchie should sing like that along with everything else.

"Don't!" she cried fiercely.

Ritchie turned and looked down at her. And the hand that held his cigarette was not quite steady.

"I suppose that uncouth Mays cub represents all the things you think you want from life," he said abrupt-

Her lips quivered. "Perhaps." Ritchie made a sudden violent gesture. "You are not in love with him."

"I'm not?"

Ritchie stared at her and there was a flame back of his gray eyes. "Kathleen!" he said and again his voice made a poem of her name. Little ripples of emotion surged through her, strange impulses that swayed her like a slender palm in the clutch of a tropical wind. "What are you going to do about it?" he demanded.

"I don't know what you mean." "Don't you?"

He leaned toward her and she began to tremble wildly. Everything in her reached out to him. Furiously.

"I can't give you anything but love," sang Ritchie under his breath.

it didn't sound that way when Ritchie sang it. Kathleen's hands clenched.

"After all, my wife won't really



cottons (and one in wool jersey, for extra warmth).

The jerkin can also be made to to go with sweaters and jackets and the blouse to be worn with

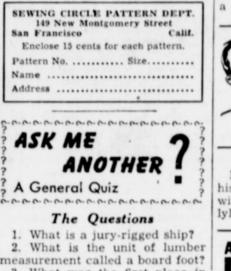
signed for sizes 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16 years. Size 10 jerkin and skirt require  $1\frac{3}{4}$  yards 54-inch material; 2% yards 35-inch. Blouse with long sleeves requires 1% yards of



contrast with odd skirts, the skirt

suits and jumpers. Barbara Bell Pattern No. 1296-B is de-

35-inch material; short sleeves, 11/4 yards. Send your order to:



3. What was the first place in the British colonies in America to

tends along the border from New

5. In Greek mythology what was the name of the monster with 100

What is a bowdlerized novel? 7. Who was the financier of the American War of Independence? 8. Who made the Gibson girl

famous? 9. The "Hundred days" are

usually associated with whom?

## The Answers

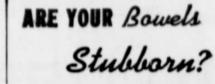
1. One rigged for temporary service. 2. One foot by one foot by one

inch.

- Jamestown, Va. 3. 4. Ontario.
- Argus.
- An expurgated novel.
- 7. Robert Morris.
- Charles Dana Gibson.

9. Napoleon. (The interval between his entry into Paris after his escape from Elba and his departure after his abdication, March 10 to June 28, 1815.)

A gift within a gift is the new Christmas gift humidor package of Prince Albert Smoking Tobacco now being featured at local deal-The handsome wrapping



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If you've neglected YOUR bowels until they finally became stubborn and unwilling to act, ask your druggist for ADLERIKA. It is an effective blend of 5 carminatives and 3 laxatives giving DOUBLE action Gas is expelled and bowel action follows surprisingly fast. After that, make up your mind to give your bowels 5 or 10 minutes' time at regular hour, daily. Your druggist has ADLERIKA.

## How Big I Am!

It was prettily devised of Aesop: The fly sat upon the axle-tree of the chariot-wheel, and said, What a dust do I raise.-Bacon.



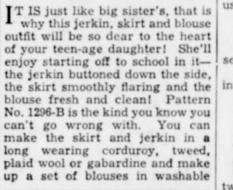
Empty Talk No mortal has a right to wag his tongue, much less wag his pen, without saying something .- Carlyle.



Father of Mischief

It (gambling) is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, and the father of mischief .-George Washington.





1296-B



What'll You Give

dress."

Laura's breath caught. "I think I can fix up some of Kathleen's for her."

"Gee, will you, Mother?" Alec's face was radiant.

Laura sat very still. But a pulse throbbed in her throat. And inside she breathed a little grateful prayer to the God who watches over the sons of mothers.

## CHAPTER XXII

"Where's Lou?" Alec stood in the doorway.

"She went up to her room and I've an idea she's crying her eyes out," said Laura. "But you might see for yourself."

Alec went almost shyly up the stairs.

"It's Alec, Lou," he said. His voice held a note Laura had never heard before. "I came to say goodnight."

"Gee, you've been crying," said Alec. "I'm sorry."

Lou's wan little face quivered. "You needn't stay away all day tomorrow," she whispered, "just because you can't bear to have me around. I don't want to run you out of your own house. I'll leave, honest, right away."

"You've got me wrong, Lou," said Alec. "I don't feel like that about you. I like you. Better than any girl I ever knew."

He heard her catch her breath. "You're not just saying that-because-you're sorry for me?"

Somehow he had her small trembling hand. "Look at me, Lou."

Her eyes lifted to his. "You're so sweet," he whispered and stooped and kissed her. "Oh!"

Lou's little face flooded with burning color.

"Some day," said Alec, "maybe I'll be some of the things you think me. But in the meanwhile-oh, Lou, go on believing in me."

"I couldn't not believe in you, Alec," she whispered, "because you're you."

And then she closed the door and Alec went off to his own room to crawl into bed beside Tom. But Alec did not go to sleep at once.

"Probably everybody will laugh," he told himself. "But I'll beat the face off the first ape who sneers at her."

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Kathleen was dancing with Gene Mays and pretending to be breathlessly absorbed by his determined efforts to flatter her off her feet. Actually she was not absorbed at all either in him or his compliments.



"You're dancing this with me."

me. The way you throw me for a fall every time I open my mouth." "Do I?" she queried innocently.

"You know damned well you do." She laughed. "Maybe I'm bad dope for you," she suggested. "Perhaps you'd better leave me lie."

"Listen," he said fiercely, "I'll make you take me seriously if I have to break a tooth or something." Kathleen smothered a yawn.

'You're dancing this with me." said a voice at Kathleen's elbow. "Is zat so?" growled Gene Mays. Ritchie did not even look at him.

"Aren't you taking a lot for granted?" she asked thickly.

"I don't think so," murmured Ritchie and held out his arms.

She had the perverse desire to hurt him the way he was always hurting her without even trying. She wondered why he mattered so much. It had no rhyme or reason. But he did. Throat tightening, Kathleen slipped into Ritchie's arms while Hot Shot Mays stared after them with a scowl.

"I didn't suppose you could tear yourself away from the syrup pitcher," she remarked.

Ritchie looked down at her with lazy, sardonic gray eyes and Kathleen's heart ran up and down a wild chromatic scale.

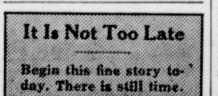
"You don't want me, but you hate to think someone else might," he remarked.

She colored furiously. "So I'm a dog in the manger, along with a bad-tempered brat and a mercenary little beast," she summarized with bitterness.

"Yes," agreed Ritchie and laughed. She could have slapped him.

To her horror Kathleen found her eyes threatened with tears. She looked hastily away. But Ritchie must have seen, for his arms suddenly tightened about her and a thrill cut her heart in two.

"Come outside, Kathleen," he said in a low voice. "There should be a moon if there isn't-and I've something to say to you."



starve, Kathleen." "No," she said passionately.

'You'll manage to keep a roof of sorts over her head. And if she's extremely clever about using up every scrap of stale bread for pudding and stoking the furnace on rejection slips and sponging last year's Panama so that it'll do for another season, she'll probably live happy ever afterward."

Ritchie looked down at her and his face was white and very stern. "Your values are confused, Kathleen. They're backfiring."

"I'm determined not to have a rush of glamour to the brain and spend the rest of my life regretting it."

"I could make you forget false gods."

He took a quick step toward her and her heart cried out. If he caught her in his arms, she was lost. She knew it. She wanted so terribly to be crushed against Ritchie's breast. "Please," she whispered.

Only deep within she did not really crave mercy of him.

"Don't worry," cried Ritchie in a cold, inflexible voice. "I want you. It's queer that I never wanted any woman this way before. I don't know why you tear me to pieces or how it happens that in all the world you're the one my heart cannot resist. But I don't want even you at the cost of my self-respect and yours. I could take you, Kathleen, if I would, here and now. I could set you afire with kisses. Hold you till you begged me never to let you go."

"It isn't true."

"But I don't want you that way, Kathleen. I'm a quixotic fool. I take advantage of nobody. I love you. I think you love me too in spite of yourself. But you'll probably break both our hearts with your half-baked misconceptions of what life's all about. Would you rather I let you strictly alone?" he asked.

She hesitated. Ritchie stared at her with caustic gray eyes. He was proud and, as he had said, quixotic. He did not force his love on any woman.

"You're right," she said unsteadily. "You do something to me. You have from the first. Maybe it's love. Maybe it's biological. I don't know -but I hate it. Probably you could sweep me off my balance if you liked. And for a while it might be heaven in your arms. But it wouldn't last. Love doesn't. Some day I'd wake up and know I'd cheated myself for the kind of thrill that soon burns out. I'd never forgive either of us. Never!"

He walked away without a word (TO BE CONTINUED)

"What are you taking for your dyspepsia?"

"Make me an offer."

"Nobody," says a writer, "has any use for the man with cold feet." How about the people who make hot-water bottles?

Wouldn't Think So "Will you join me in a cup of

tea?" "Will there be room for both of

us?"

That's Sure

"I want to know what I'm best fitted for. Should I go to a palmist or a mind reader?

"Better choose a palmist-you know you've got a palm."

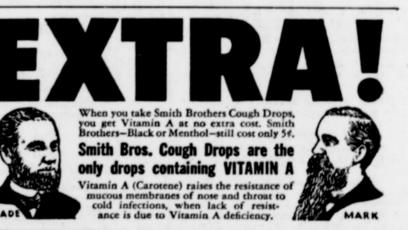
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