



In the tempered light Hope looked not a day older.—"You're pretty sometimes, Hope," Mary remarked.—"Did you come all this way to flatter me? Tell me all the news instantly."

Hope shook her head, rose, and walked about the room again.

"No," she said. Acquaintances . . . some agreeable people. I can't seem to put anyone in the place you and the others occupied. Oh, I have been so lonely—but I didn't want new people. But look, I like this better than the dust and desolation I left." She drew back the curtain; Mary came and stood beside her. The house stood on top of one of Seattle's myriad hills, and over the roofs of the buildings that dropped away like a vast dark stairway to the harbor they could see far, down, to a galaxy of twinkling lights that marked the mastheads of ships from all the ports of the world. And a climbing rose peered in at the casement from the violet dusk. "I like all that," said Hope. "I daresay I'm romantic yet. Sometimes I go down to the docks and mouse around for hours, sniffing at bales of stuff in tea-matting, and piles of square timber—smells of spices and cedar and the salt water—and Chinamen and bilges," she broke off, laughing. "There are weird shops down there, too, and yellow-faced people, and big, tall turbaned men with black beards—Sikhs. And lumberjacks and sailormen. I wish I could really draw. You must come down to-morrow. No, I haven't really any friends. Oh, bother!" The doorbell was tinkling apologetically. She dropped the curtain and went across the room quickly, but drew the door open only a few inches. Mary had a momentary glimpse of a tentative looking young man, quite a personable youth, holding his hat in his hand in a manner ludicrously suggestive of one waiting for instructions. He must have said good evening, at least, but Hope did not listen.

"I'm sorry, Ches," she said. "I forgot; and I'm busy. I want to talk to Mary to-night; she came a day early. I don't believe I'll have any time this week—why, yes, you might take us around to see the town; I never thought of that. Telephone me; goodnight." She closed the door again with decision, and the tentative youth apparently ceased to exist.

"Well, if you haven't any friends, I should think you must have a few enemies," suggested Mary mildly.

"Who—Ches Landry? Oh, bosh!" She seemed to think that enough, but amplified, with a yawn, "I didn't say I was a hermit. It serves him right," she added darkly.

"Because he's a man?"

"Oh, no—really, I have a sense of

humor left. He's merely an example of it. The first time I met him he said he didn't like me—and I heard about it!"

Envisioning that waiting attitude, Mary said: "Nero was at that rate a great humorist. Do you jest often?"

NOW you're inquisitive," said Hope defensively. "Well, there was one other—but I wasn't the humorist that time. Perhaps you'll appreciate this, so I will divest myself of honor and tell you. I had a proposal here—one. His name doesn't matter—but there's his portrait." She tossed over a photo of another man, not so young quite, but still ornamental, wearing that peculiar expression of insouciance almost typical of the man who, with every opportunity to succeed, still fails. Just such a look Tony Yorke had. "He didn't belong here, and he clung to my hearthstone like a drowning mariner."

"A drowning mariner," reflected Mary audibly, "might really make a better choice of something to cling to than a hearthstone."

"So might this party," retorted Hope promptly. "I was just telling you he was a stranger here; and that's how it all began." I became quite an agreeable habit to him, and, falling in with what I suspect was another habit of his—he proposed. He told me that he had had his romance, and no doubt I had had mine; he could not ask my first girlish love, or words to that effect, and hoped I felt the same. I was positively quite sympathetic, and he told me how his heart had been blighted. She was all that was lovely and good, but neither of 'em had much money, so she married another man who had. It broke their hearts, of course, but what could they do? He gave her his blessing. Do you know—would you believe it—he really thought she had done something highly creditable in landing the man with money? Yes, he respected her for it! I simply giggled at him, and asked why on earth they couldn't have taken a chance and lived on what he earned. I shall never forget his answer. He said I didn't understand—she was too fine and rare—why, she paid fifteen dollars a pair for her shoes! I told him I did too, sometimes, and earned the money myself. We weren't really *simpatico* after that."

"But are you divorced—did you tell him you were free?" Truly Hope had changed.

"I did not," said Hope. "I do not tell anything to anyone. Mary, do you just happen to know—anything—about

Ned? Where is he—and what—and why?"

"I believe he is back in Montreal, still in the bank," said Mary. "Of course you know his people, after everything—"

"Ah, yes, that's something else I should like to know now. What was—everything? People did hear of it, then?"

"Oh, heavens," said Mary, "it was a nine days' wonder—everyone knew, and no one knew just how it got about. If I had felt like laughing, I'd have laughed myself weary, watching them try to make up their minds to ask me—and not doing it. Ned closed up like a clam, too. And his people heard, and he went home suddenly—and went into the bank again at home. That's all I know. Do you still think—"

"No. I was just curious." She sighed a little, and poked the fire absently. It was late spring, but the evenings were still refreshingly cool. "I forgot to ask about Emily Edgerton."

"She's engaged, to someone I don't know. A man from the East, I think," said Mary. "I saw her awhile ago; she's quite wonderful."

ONE other, too, she had forgotten to ask about. Not once did she mention Tony York's name, and at the end of the visit Mary was convinced it was from neither pride nor pique, but because she did not care. But then neither did she seem to care much for anything; that inquiry in her eyes was terribly impersonal. Mary had come to see, and now she did not like what she saw. Once she had vowed she would never again play *dea ex machina*, but what was a vow against a friend! Mary thought deeply in the week that followed, and sifted Hope's life to the bottom. In it she found only husks, and a few vivid memories; poor food for a soul that must fare as it may. Hope had grown—she even looked physically taller, perhaps because of her thinness—she was a woman now but she had not come into a woman's heritage. The episode of Ches Landry served as a keynote to her emotional state. Hope had really told it all in the one sentence. When she met him she had had her face turned from men in weariness, hardly in scorn; and his casual flouting of her had affected her strangely. Was she not desirable—she, who had been torn by the very claws of desire? It was to make nothing of her griefs, and, in short, she would not endure it. And then, having vindicated her right to her own woe, he was noth-

ing to her. He had never kissed her lips; more, he had hardly touched her hand. She made a casual confession of that to Mary, and turned her emotions inside out briefly for her friend's enlightenment.

"I understand now; I haven't got my astounding ignorance for an excuse. So I can't play at it all any more. Con used to kiss me sometimes, and it just meant to me that he was kind and I liked him. What should I do if I met him again? Well, I'm sorry about Ches—that is, if I've hurt him; he never said—I was a cat; I won't do it again. But you can see it's those terms or nothing; and he doesn't go away. There won't be any others, probably."

"You flatter yourself," said Mary.

"No, I don't," said Hope. "I used to. I was always weaving nets, and throwing them to the winds, to snare love. Not for any one man—but every girl's like that—you know yourself, you find what you're looking for. Like a sailor whistling up a wind; it's our attitude. If it hadn't been for that, should I ever have taken Ned seriously? Why, I thought that men *might* die for love; not that I quite foresaw him in such extremity, but it seemed a terrible thing to me—as if every touch of fever might be mortal! Maybe love does make the world go round; but at that, I needn't have imagined it would stop turning because a young cub sighed in vain after some particular girl!" She laughed lightly. If in the face of that declaration it seemed foolish of her to be still so spent and undone, the point were missed. She suffered not from the mere loss of the desired object, but from the moral shock of seeing Tony as he was, and the following revelation of her marriage. To have her sand castle swept away by the tide was perhaps no great matter—but what dead man's bones had come to light in the backwash?

THE next few chapters of "The Magpie's Nest" brings the interest to a climax. The story grows more gripping as it unfolds. The December Everywoman's World will contain another goodly installment. Don't miss it.