

THE GIRL IN BLACK

By CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

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In a shaded spot just inside the entrance of Central park a girl was sitting. She was all in black, from the crown of her fetching little hat to her low shoes. Her face was pale with the paleness of a summer spent in the city, her brown hair rippled back from a smooth white forehead, her eyes were deep gray, steadfast and courageous. "And I have need of courage!" Cornelia Stratton murmured. For two months she had been hunting a position and so far she had not found one, although she had been able to substitute at a large commercial office for a week or two, and the pay she had received for that had, by careful hoarding, saved her from actual want. Yet as time dragged on her money dwindled and there seemed no hope in sight. "I shouldn't complain," she said wistfully; "it's the lot of many another girl who goes to a big city where she



THEY CAME FACE TO FACE WITH A PICTURE THAT HELD HER AMAZED.

has neither friends nor relatives to help her. But, oh, I do wish I could find something. I'm so tired of disappointments."

From where she sat she could hear the ceaseless hum and stir of the city. There had been hours when it seemed to call like a challenge, and her heart beat in answer to it. Now it frightened her. It seemed so vast, so overwhelming. There were so many problems to be met and mastered. One of them was clothes.

"She had chosen to dress in black because it was the most economical. Her left fingers had fashioned a chic hat for a trifling sum, and for the rest she wore the same suit, day in and day out, taking such scrupulous care of it that she looked as well groomed as many a woman of means.

"Each day, when she had searched for work till she was too tired to search further, she came to sit in the park, where everything was green and quiet, where squirrels frisked untroubled across the grass and where the clear liquid notes of birds lent a semblance of the country. There were moments when the scene charmed Cornelia, but oftener she was too disheartened to care. "What am I to do in this state of affairs lasts much longer?" she mused on this stifling afternoon in mid-August. She was utterly despondent. Her hands were clasped listlessly in her lap, and she shut her eyes to keep back the tears. When she opened them again, she encountered the direct gaze of a man sitting on the bench opposite her. He was a well set up young fellow of about nine and twenty, broad shouldered and smooth shaven. As their eyes met the pity that was in his look changed to something deeper. "Take courage," the man said. "Life is a battle for all of us. Fight on."

Cornelia turned away her head, her heart fluttering strangely. Some one in all that vast city had seen, had cared. "It's simply nonsense," she told herself. "He's never seen me before, nor I him." Yet already she felt cheered. Unrolling a newspaper she held in her hand, she went over its want columns again. At the next office where she applied the business manager noted something bright and spritely in her aspect that argued well for her. "I'm the happiest girl in the whole wide world," she laughed a few minutes later, for she had found a position at last.

The winter months sped quickly and pleasantly. There was so much to do and so much to see—the shops, the theaters, the surging throngs on Broadway and the great promenade on Fifth avenue at twilight, when countless carriages blocked the crossings and when all the fashion and beauty of the earth seemed to shine before Cornelia's delighted eye. It grew to be a custom with her in going to and from her work to search the faces of the passersby in the half confessed hope that some time, somewhere, she should again catch a glimpse of the man whom she had seen in the park. It was a wish, however, that seemed destined to remain unfulfilled.

But one Saturday as she loitered in a crowded downtown art gallery she came face to face with a picture that held her amazed and spellbound, for it was a portrait of herself. Half trembling and turning the leaves of her catalogue with nervous fingers, she read its name, "The Girl in Black," by George Heathwood.

"And certainly the best thing you've done, George, old man," said a boyish looking fellow at her elbow. "It's the hit of the exhibition, and such a simple thing too! Just a girl with a pretty flower-like face, sitting on a bench in the park. Oh, I remember! She's the one you once told me about. Have you found her yet, George?"

"Not yet," said a voice that made Cornelia's heart leap. "Not yet; but I mean to if I have to spend all my life in trying."

"And find her when you're at the tender age of forty! You needn't frown so savagely! I'm sure you've often been near her when you haven't in the least suspected it! Today, for instance, have you searched this room thoroughly? For you know it's a true saying," drawled the boy over his shoulder as

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he moved away, "that love makes people blind."

"What do you mean?"—Heathwood began, and then, turning, caught sight of Cornelia. "You!" he said softly beneath his breath. "You!"

Cornelia flushed. "I beg your pardon," he said quickly, "but since circumstances are what they are I am going to call a truce to convention and ask you: 'do me a favor. Will you please stay just where you are for two minutes? Promise me that you will not go away.'" He evidently took her reply for granted, for he did not wait to hear it. But before half the allotted time was up he returned with a distinguished, gray haired woman, whom many people in the room seemed to know, for they bowed to her as she passed.

"It's Mrs. Heathwood," Cornelia heard some one whisper. "The mother of the famous young illustrator." Heathwood approached Cornelia.

"Mother," he said, "I want you to meet Miss—Miss—"

"Stratton," Cornelia murmured. "Stratton?" rejoiced Heathwood, dwelling on the word.

The older woman smiled in appreciation of the situation.

"Miss Stratton, may I present my son, Mr. Heathwood?"

Cornelia bowed. "And now that we've been properly introduced," George commenced.

"There is a Japanese tea room next door," Mrs. Heathwood broke in, "where I am very fond of going at this hour of the day. Won't you join us, Miss Stratton?"

Cornelia assented gladly. It was all so sudden and bewildering that it seemed like part of a dream—a dream that was coming true. "For now that I've found you," declared George Heathwood, "I never mean to lose you again!"

As they moved slowly through the room the young fellow who had been Heathwood's companion half an hour earlier looked after them with twinkling eyes.

"It's easy to see," he chuckled, "that that picture of George's wasn't properly named, for the Girl in Black is going to be the Girl in White, with a tulle veil and orange blossoms. So runs the world!"

Two Intelligent Horses.

"I have heard many stories of the intelligence of animals," said a close observer of animal life, "but the actions of two horses the other day equaled if not surpassed many of the tales. The pair were fine looking beasts attached to a farmer's wagon and had been left outside a feed store on Kensington avenue. Just beyond their reach were several bales of hay. By some clever maneuvering the white horse, which was nearest the pavement, managed to get hold of some of the hay. His brown mate, not getting any of the hay, with almost human actions made the white horse understand that he wished to share the feast. To satisfy his mate the white horse took large mouthfuls of the hay and turned his head in a way so that the brown horse could enjoy the feast. By the time their owner reached them nearly half the bale of hay had been consumed by the pair. When the owner of the hay was informed of the unique manner in which the horses secured their luncheon he said that it was a good scheme and he would stand for the loss."—Philadelphia Record.

Sermons by Time.

"I have attended church in a good many different places," said the southern man, "but I had to come to New York to see a man preach holding his watch in his hand. Down in our part of the country the pulpit orator is usually long winded. He has a certain subject in mind and has certain things to say concerning it, and he holds forth until he has said them all if it takes till bedtime to do it. Up here the time that can be devoted to the delivery of a sermon appears to be limited. In order not to overstep the bounds several

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clergymen that I have heard talked literally by the watch. They did not lay it down or stick it into a convenient pocket to be consulted occasionally, but held it out face up as a constant reminder that time was fleeting and that other pressing engagements awaited them. That may be an excellent preventive of weariness in the congregation, but I must say it makes me uncomfortable to have spiritual advice measured by the minute and second."—New York Press.

Rose Eyttinge and C. R. Thorne, Jr.

When Rose Eyttinge was leading woman at A. M. Palmer's Union Square theater, New York, with Charles R. Thorne, Jr., as her vis-a-vis in the cast, she was a handsome woman and a fine actress. Owing to their different temperaments, Miss Eyttinge and Thorne were frequently at outs behind the curtain. One evening after a trifling spat Thorne sought to restore amicable relations with the irate actress while in the greenroom waiting for their cues to go on together. To achieve his purpose Thorne began to tell Miss Eyttinge some interesting bits of gossip, but the actress leaned back in her chair and yawned, especially often as the actor neared the climax of his story. This so exasperated him that he exclaimed, with much temper, "For heaven's sake, Rose, don't swallow me!"

Miss Eyttinge rose with marked dignity and quietly responded, "You forget, Mr. Thorne, that I am a Jewess."

John Ruskin.

It was with a volume entitled "Modern Painters," which created a sensation in 1843 by reason of the brilliancy of its style and the originality of its views, that John Ruskin first established his fame as an art critic. His ultimate writings wielded an immense influence in creating a new interest in the beauty of nature and of art in England. Then, again, his philosophical works have done much to vivify ideals of life and ennoble our standards of conduct. Ruskin, however, was not only a philosopher, art critic and political economist, but also a philanthropist. He devoted time and money to the promotion of home industries and always worked with the one great aim of improving the condition of his country and countrymen.—London Mail.

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