

'Square Bill

By Holman F. Day

(Continued from Last Week)

"I KNEW just how 'would be if I came to you," she said, her face hardening once more. "When I want a sermon I'll go to the parson. But I came here for law; and I brought the dockuments to prove what I've said. I've been patient, I tell you, until—"

"You've been what you call patient a few weeks, Esther, and 'Cape Dunham has been patient ever since he married you."

"Are you stickin' up for that miserable critter?" she demanded, starting out of her chair. "How could anyone expect a d-d-d-d old back to understand anything about marriage and the rights of a woman, anyway? Giv' me them papers. I know where I can buy law if it ain't for sale here."

He calmly held the papers away from her clutching hands.

"How much have you and 'Cape put away between you?" he inquired, disregarding her temper.

She hesitated a moment with the caution of the country woman resenting neighborly intrusion, but he encouraged her by hinting:

"In case of alimony, you know?"

"We've got rizin' seven thousand in the bank, and twenty-five hundred out on first mortgages."

"And not a chick nor child to leave it to," he murmured, looking at her with sympathy in his eyes. "It's too bad that your little 'Gilla was called away to her treasures in heaven before she could enjoy some of the treasures you heaped on earth for her—you two poor old, faglogging critters, you!" She sat down and her workstained, knotted hands trembled as she folded them on her lap.

"Savin', skinshin' and piling it up!" he went on. "What good has it ever done you, Esther? Why didn't you and 'Cape knock off and have a little fun together in the world before you got hardened this way? Grubbing and grubbing with your noses down to the ground!"

"Tain't any disgrace to be prudent and forehanded, is it," she demanded, "even if we ain't got no one now to enjoy it after we're gone? Oh, 'Square Bill"—the tears suddenly flooded into the cold eyes—"would have been different with 'Cape and me if only 'Gilla'd been left to us. Hain't neither of us knowed what to do with ourselves sence we laid her away in the graveyard."

He unfolded his bony frame with the abrupt and angular motions of a carpenter's jointed rule, stood up to his gaunt height and then walked over to her and patted her shoulder bowed under its faded shawl.

"And as little as you've really got left in this world now, Esther," said he, "here you are, wanting to get rid of the biggest hunk of it. Let me tear up this miserable list of 'Cape temporary aberrations. Then I'll go have a talk with him and—"

"'Square Bill," she cried, starting up, "you've known me from a little snippet. You know I ain't one to fly off to no tangents. I've told you once before that this ain't been a one-night's growth. I've kept them tabs there to show it. I'm going to have a bill from that man, I say! If you don't want to take the case, out with it bus'ness-like, and I'll go farther. But the di-vose I'm going to have. The old time he knew so well and her flashing gaze stopped his proffered mediation.

"Well, Esther," he said with a sigh, "leave your papers and I'll have notice of the libel served."

"When?" she demanded.

"Day after to-morrow."

"So do, I shall plan accordingly."

She went out of the office with her lips set tight, and 'Square Bill leaned back and rubbed the old dog's silky ear softly between thumb and forefinger, and pondered, his eyes on the smoke-stained ceiling.

Micajah Dunham was at work stacking corn stalks in his lower field a couple of days later when he saw two men coming across the furrows among the scattered globes of the pumpkins.

One was the familiar "bean-pole" figure of 'Square Gray. Behind him followed the equally well-known, waddling bulk of "Sawed-off" Purdy, the ideal deputy of the county sheriff.

"Hem, just hand 'Cape that paper," directed the notary, after the greetings. "Then, if you've a mind to, you go back to the team while I have a word here."

"This matter—me who knows you and Esther from the ground up—or would you rather see that young whippet from the Corner, who'd lift your heart out of you if he could pile up costs that way? Now sit right down on this tussle and tell me what you mean by—by—" he looked across the field toward the schoolhouse, and added, with a twinkle of a smile—"by your volunteering in



Women are Rapidly Replacing Men Abroad in Field of Sport.

It is now an uncommon sight on the other side to see women taking part in all kinds of field events. The latest in the water sports. The ladies of London and nearby towns have now organized rowing clubs, and are fast becoming familiar with the game. Many of them are said to be able to row against the best men. Our photo shows Miss Alberta Andrews, the champion of the Farnham Club, indulging in a practice spin on the river.

The farmer's sullen face paled as he took the paper, first dragging his earth-soiled hands across his trousers legs. A legal document frightened him.

"It isn't often that a lawyer comes along with his writ," commented 'Square Bill, "but I felt as though this paper might need a little elucidation and perhaps something else." The farmer blinked, holding the writing askant. The sheet cracked and fluttered in his trembling hands.

"I don't owe money nor nothin' to be sued for," I ain't got my spurs here, 'Square," he agitatedly said, at last, after long squinting. "I can't just make it out. What is it?"

"Esther has sued you for a bill of divorce, 'Cape," the notary explained, bluntly. "Charge is cruel and abusive treatment. From what she tells me, you are knowing pretty well to the whys and wherefores."

"Vi-vose! Di-vose!" Dunham stammered over and over. "Esther sue me! This is some kind of a lawyer trick! Lawyers is always stirrin' trouble. But I didn't reckon you was one of that kind, 'Square Bill."

"Look here, 'Cape"—the old notary put his thin hand on the farmer's sleeve—"would you rather have me handle

the cause of education?"

Micajah was visibly discomposed.

"If you was a school agent in a-d-d-e-trick," he muttered, "and there was a poor, lonesome, orphan little critter of a girl teachin' the school, wouldn't you sort o' show her a few attentions so's to keep her in the deestrick, sence that the children all like her? I've tried to explain to Esther, 'Square, that it's only in the way of school gover'munt, as you might say, but you know what a woman is."

"I'm afraid I don't understand quite as well as I ought to," admitted the old notary, sadly; "but as for you, I reckon you don't know 'em at all. 'Cape, there are a good many things I could say to you right now, and I would say 'em if I thought you knew any better than all this. But, you poor old critter, you don't know! You simply don't know! I'm going to take you with that paper in your hand right up to your wife. We'll see! We'll see! Come along."

He led the way across the field, up the apple-tree-bordered lane and into the house. There was no one in the kitchen nor in the little sitting room where Esther Dunham sat afternoons, rocking and sewing, the sunshine filtering on her through the leaves of the

crowding geraniums and petunias on the window shelves. No one in all the house. Only the clock ticked and the flies buzzed disappointedly on the outside of the screens. They searched and called. Everything was tidied. The table had been reset after the noon meal, and its well-scoured ware glistened cheerfully.

Micajah grabbed the notary's arm.

"She's took her naphkin ring," he gasped. "She's gone, 'Square!" The husband hurried into the west bedroom and fumbled in the closet. "Her clothes is gone, 'Square," he called, mournfully. "Oh, my Gawd! if this ain't trouble come double, then I don't know what 'tis." He sat down on the edge of the bed and seemed about to weep.

"Get up, there, you old fool!" the notary roared. "I've about concluded that the two of you need guardians or—or-keepers." He stood before Micajah, his lean arms akimbo, his eyes flashing. "Eleven thousand in the bank and twenty-five hundred on first mortgages," he sneered. "And while you've been pawing that out of the muck, you and your wife, you have never stood up straight, taken full, free breath of God's air and sunshine and looked into each other's eyes like real man and wife. Oh, 'Cape Dunham, I'm ashamed of you."

The man only stared at him stupidly. "You don't know yet what I mean, do you?" the lawyer went on. "You're waiting for me, an old back, to explain to you your mistakes and point out your duty."

A youngster came flopping barefoot along the shed walk.

"'Square Gray," he called, "Miss Dunham is over to my marm's, and she jest see you come in here and sent word if you've got any bus'ness with her you can call over there. She's brung her clothes to our house, too, and she's goin' to be our boarder," he added, triumphantly. He had edged into the bedroom, and his round eyes, big with the half knowledge and guesses of childhood, goggled at the woe-stricken husband.

The old notary meditatively stroked his nose a moment and then, turning without a word, stalked out of the house. The boy pattered on ahead. Dunham picked up the writ and followed dejectedly.

"'Cape you goin' to stay to the big meetin' to-night, 'Square Gray?" inquired the boy, bursting with his fresh knowledge. "Miss Dunham and my marm and my pa and Mr. Bolster are goin' to have all the people meet at the schoolhouse to-night and discharge the teacher." He turned his urchin's stare of inquisitive significance on Dunham stubbing behind in the highway dust. "Miss Dunham come into school this afternoon and told teacher, and teacher didn't go home after school, but I peeked in the window and she's there cryin' and—"

"Bub," said 'Square Bill, severely, "you're anxious to grow up to be a good big man, aren't you?"

"Yep."

"Well, there's nothing that stunts growth like using your tongue too much. That's why so many women are shorter and slimmer than men. Now you remember that fact all your life, and some day when you grow up good and tall you'll remember that a nice old lawyer gave you that valuable advice and never charged you a cent for it."

The boy, impressed by the grave tones, stared up and down the towering figure, slowly slooped up the moisture of his open mouth and closed his lips apprehensively.

Mrs. Dunham was on the front porch of the neighbor's house, defiantly awaiting their approach.

"Have you served that paper as you agreed?" she demanded, when they were still some distance away down the path.

The abandoned husband held up the fateful document, and was about to burst into appealing speech, but she stamped her foot and checked him.

Continued Next Week



On the Scottish Farm the Milkmaid is still a Common Sight.

THE
most
was
22
24

were held,
careful,
attended
U.F.A.,

There
our local
in their
tee in cha
difficult to
to allot m
paid, how
the access
It is hope
aroused b
will result

The full
held on
Fast, by
other spea
ings held
Forestbur
Galahad
Pleasings
Sedgewick

Killam
Daysland
Bawlf
Camrose

The sp
Mrs. Roo
speak to
organizer
izing sev
Lellan to
of the l
power as
—F. W. I

The o
U.F.A. o
provinc
was re o
with 11
held in
and was
secretary
Rory as
U.G.G.
ized is
around
weeks,
organize
Calgary
farmers
ing of
through
chain.
dent of
John G.

A su
with th
at Spr
eight n
Address
Rice 80
Robins
Liveste
terest
that as
giving
near f
At t
make
to bri

In
from
follow
great
having
U.F.A
stimul
is eer
bring

An
gathe
ard is
the s
succe
to al