



*Under a drop light sat a late worker, a woman, young, slender, brown-haired and looking a trifle weary. She was trying to finish a book review and seemed to be in difficulties—and it was all because of Old Hickory.*

"I'm so sorry! But I didn't know that anybody was in the room!"

"Please sit down again," said Greenlee. She obeyed him mechanically. He pulled another chair forward, seated himself and laid the book on her desk.

"Just what," he asked gently, "is the—er—trouble?" Rebellion had been gathering in her soft grey eyes. They flashed now in a spirited way quite new to him.

"I think it is horrid of you to hide yourself away over in that corner and never even cough or—make a sound! How was I to know—why I might have—have cold-creamed my face, or—or powdered my nose, or—"

HE laughed quietly. He seemed to be amused at thus striking fire from a young woman who had been until now the very personification of cool, business efficiency. She was human after all!

The laugh—she had seldom heard it in the two and a half years she had been on the Daily Post—made her pause and look curiously at him. What fine teeth the old bear had!

"I thought," he said, "that you knew I was doing proof-reading for Latimer this week. It keeps me here until nine every evening. But I forget! This is your first late evening in ever so long, isn't it?"

He removed the green eye-shade as he spoke, and Miss Harriman gazed wonderingly into his deep-set dark eyes. They sent an odd thrill through her now that she saw them at close range. Her own dropped suddenly.

"Vivid," "Magnetic,"—these were two of the adjectives that people had applied to Old Hickory. Miss Harriman added, "inscrutable" in her own mind.

Could this rather pleasant person really be Old Hickory—hard-headed man of business, Napoleon of the local newspaper world? And she wondered fleetingly why "old" should have been included in the opprobrium. For old he certainly was not. Thirty-six perhaps—

"But the book—" he suggested, nodding at the volume.

"It's rotten," said Miss Harriman, succinctly.

He picked it up and opened it, then flipped the leaves, reading a sentence here and there.

"You don't like it?"

"Like it? It's the worst lot of drivel I ever tried to wade through!"

He looked up in genuine astonishment.

"Why, it's supposed to be one of the best of the new books! Just off the press! New writer too!"

"I can't help it. I've done my best to cook up one hundred and fifty words of bare justice, and I feel as though I could qualify for membership in the Ananias Club!"

She turned and gathered up some slips of paper These she thrust upon him.

"There! I've lied like a gas meter!" she said, half savagely. "Read it and see, but please don't publish it. Oh, if only I knew the woman that perpetrated that reprehensible forty-two chapters of—of—"

"How do you know a woman wrote it?" demanded Greenlee, very much taken aback.

"I'm positive."

"But 'Sidney Lee' might be a man?"

"No man would think of engaging his heroine to five or six men in turn before the right one came along! It's—it's—Oh, it's too sex-lurey! She's too charming!"

Greenlee disregarded her copy. His attention was given wholly to the speaker. She spoke heatedly, twirling a couple of pencils round and round on her blotting-pad.

# The Hidden Hope

By EDITH G. BAYNE

Illustrated by T. V. McCarthy

"Well, you know in real life that kind of thing frequently happens in the best families," he observed.

"That doesn't condone it! I was prepared to like the hero, but no decent man would want a woman that had been mauled about by half a dozen other men! Then a real girl ought to know her own mind—have more initiative. This much-kissed creature is an oh-please-tell-me-what-I-ought-to-do sort of person. I ask you, Mr. Greenlee, if you had known your wife had been embraced and kissed by other men, would you have wanted to marry her?"

Old Hickory looked grave. But presently his lips began to twitch.

"I don't happen to be married," he said, half apologetically. "But I certainly would not."

Miss Harriman smiled outright at his naive admission. It surprised her somewhat. She had always thought of him as married, with a meek gentle little wife,—whom she had always vaguely pitied.

"And then take the love-making," she went on again relentlessly. "It is crude, cave-mannish, and—altogether too gooey!"

"Too what?"

She flushed and began to sketch tiny figures on the blotting-pad.

"You know what I mean. Too—well, she leaves nothing to the imagination."

"Oh!"

"Think of the restrained, dignified manner in which Thackeray, for instance, sets a love scene before you. The intensity is there, masked in the finest English, but he does not feel called upon to go into elemental details."

"H'm," said Greenlee, thoughtfully. "Possibly 'Sidney Lee' has not had sufficient experience in—er—matters of the heart—"

"Then she ought to have been reasoned with, before—"

She broke off at his smile, but went on again: "Most incipient novelists should be carefully suppressed, anyway. Don't you think so?"

"I think 'Sidney Lee' would feel so, after you got through with her!"

She smiled penitently.

"I don't want her to strafe us. I'll—I'll try again. In my selfishness I was forgetting that it is the Daily Post's opinion I am chronicling."

"I see you have endeavored to say a good word for the style," remarked Greenlee, referring to her notes.

"Oh, yes the style is good," she conceded. "In spots it is almost masterly. That is why it seems such a pity—you know?—to spoil good workmanship with such a flimsy plot."

There was a moment's silence. Then Old Hickory became Old Hickory once more. He stood up.

"We have the greatest respect for your opinions, Miss Harriman," he told her. "I regret very much that you find this task so difficult. You may leave this review out. I know you are the soul of mercy and the epitome of tact, but I see that even your good nature would be strained were I to insist upon this being written. I have already tried Crosson with it and he refused. Therefore—I shall do it myself."

"You've read it, then?"

He nodded.

"What—shall you say?" she asked, curiously.

He shrugged his shoulders wearily.

"Oh, likely I'll treat it—bromidically. When in doubt, you know, always be vague."

Miss Harriman's eye rested upon the much maligned volume.

EDITH G. BAYNE is a Canadian writer who is rapidly forging ahead. Her name has become familiar to readers of Everywoman's World, her most recent contribution having been "The Lady of the Emeralds." She has made "The Hidden Hope" a love story in which the trend of events is a little out of the ordinary.

Carrying out the theory that true love never runs smoothly, the author endows the heroine with a touch of temper, the hero with a reputation for "grouchiness" and introduces a rainy night as a contrast to the general cheeriness that must necessarily follow in all orthodox love tales. Read it—it might happen to you!

—THE EDITORS



THE City Room was wrapped in unwonted silence—silence that would have been utter and profound but for an occasional faint rustling sound as of the hasty turning of book-leaves or papers. Down at the extreme end of the apartment under one of the few droplights still burning, sat a late worker, a woman—young, slender, brown-haired, and looking a trifle weary.

She was trying to finish a last book review for the Saturday edition, and seemed to be in difficulties. At least, so the many scribbled-upon and discarded sheets of copy paper at her elbow indicated.

Miss Harriman usually prepared her column in ample time so that she could leave the office before six, but at a late hour this afternoon the City Editor, Norman Greenlee (known behind his back as Old Hickory) had placed a new novel on her desk with the request that she cover it for the forthcoming Book Review.

And because Old Hickory's requests were always unquestioningly obeyed, Miss Harriman had remained overtime. True, she was a little sorry for him this week, because he was trying to do the work of two men, the literary editor being ill; but she also knew that he could do it. Old Hickory took to hard work like a cat to cream. He was a magnetic force in the office of the Daily Post. Not a man, not a boy, not an employee, or co-worker of any kind but sprang to attention when his crisp, resonant voice issued a command.

It was eight o'clock. Big Ben across the way had just said so in solemn, booming tones. A mouse darted forth from an obscure corner, circled about the book-reviewer's trimly-shod feet and made a raid upon the fragments of somebody's lunch in the big wire wastebasket.

Miss Harriman being an essentially modern, and a rather unemotional lady, didn't scream at this dangerous apparition. She merely started, and with an impatient movement resumed her rapid reading. From time to time she frowned.

The title of the book stood out in gold letters on a red cover: "The Hidden Hope."

Suddenly she flung it from her with a cry of exasperation—flung it vindictively and far. Her eye followed its trajectory across the room and over a big baize-screen that concealed the literary editor's desk.

Plop!

She hoped hurriedly that it hadn't overturned the ink or glue bottle. Then:

"Great Scott!" spoke someone, fulsomely.

A man's head appeared round a corner of the screen!

"Oh!" gasped Miss Harriman.

For the head was the head of Old Hickory—and he was rubbing it.

A sense of calamity overwhelmed her and she got upon her feet, shakily.

Old Hickory came round and stood opposite her. He was in his shirt-sleeves and was wearing his well-known eye-shade. In his hand he held "The Hidden Hope."

"Oh!" repeated the book-reviewer. "Did I—did it—"

Old Hickory's firm lips relaxed into the semblance of a smile.

"It did," he said, grimly. "Right on the back of my head."