

Mother's Emerald

A Love Story.

By AGNES G. BROGAN

When father first spoke of bringing the student to board I was glad. Any new companionship seemed promising. But when I considered that the student, being musical, might also be the possessor of an uncertain temperament my troubles appeared to be increasing. One like father was bad enough in any family, flying off on the slightest provocation into a fit of temper or, in his better moods, listening apparently with an appreciative smile as one related some personal incident, only to find at its conclusion that his mind had been engaged with some beloved "score." Nora, the cook, was my only comfort, and Nora had not what one might call an "understanding" mind.

Father told me his plan one evening with his customary tardiness. The student was to arrive at 8 o'clock and the south room to be prepared for his disposal. He was coming "free" upon condition of exchanging secretary work for lessons. This alone was a recommendation to the student's musical ability. Father would receive a pupil without promise of skill. Excitedly he named the young man as "his discovery." Eric Knowlson's future, he said, was assured. So I went to mother's picture about it. I have a way of going to mother's picture in all my joys and perplexities to receive advice from its soft eyes. You see mother left this world as I entered slipping out very silently before ever my baby arms could reach her.

"Mother," I sighed, "if we must have another man in this house, oh, let us hope that he may be a sane one!" My experience with men ended with father, and I fancied them all like him. Nora encouraged me in this belief. "They're all the very old devil," she said. And with her remark in my ear I ran into the music room and incidentally also into the student. The sudden encounter surprised him as much as it did me. He had been removing his violin from its case, whistling softly. His whistle stopped abruptly. Then after we had stared at each other while he bowed.

"Eric Knowlson," he explained. "I should never have guessed it. Not the violinist?" "The same," he replied, "long hair and soulful eyes missing perhaps." He smiled. "Bound to be a failure, then. None of the essentials." "I am Professor Ludlow's daughter," I stiffly replied him, "and will show you to your room."

"It is my turn to say 'Mercy'! I never should have guessed it." The young man remarked pleasantly. "Your father has always spoken of you as 'my daughter,' the housekeeper." Naturally I imagined a staid, sensible appearing sort of person. Again, none of the essentials.

Suddenly my smile answered his. "You shall see," I challenged. So, with free and merry chatter, we found ourselves in the short space before dinner upon astonishingly friendly terms. It was father's forbidding presence which cast formality over the meal. Afterward, upon the top step of the stairs, I listened to his music, father at the piano, the student with his violin. And the sweet strains of the instrument at his charmed touch caused even me, surfeited with music, to linger. Into the "Spring Song" came a dominant, personal note, that was suddenly a clear, compelling call. Slowly I moved in answer down the stairs, then paused perplexed in the doorway. The student smiled.

"I called you," he said daringly, "and I knew that you would come." So our love began, abruptly, inexplicably.

One day Eric told me the story of his life. Uneventful it had been, yet one of sacrifice. His father, a violinist, had deserted Eric and his mother just as the lad was beginning to realize his inherited musical gift. After that he had quietly laid his ambition aside with his violin and turned to care for his mother. And now she was dead, now only had he dared to indulge his dreams, and father in a measure had made this possible. For himself money had not mattered, he said. There had been but one thing he coveted—a white marble stone for his mother's grave. This he must have. "And now there's you," he cried. "I must have you!" Then he caught up my hand to look at my rings—mother's emerald and its tiny guard.

"Dear," he said, "at first I feared this costly ring might be significant." "Oh, no!" I told him. "It has been the betrothal ring of our family, handed down for generations. Father's mother placed it upon my own dear mother's finger, and now that she is gone father trusts it in my keeping."

"It is of great value," Eric said, his eyes suddenly aglow as he bent over the wondrous stone; then with his first sign of impatience my lover turned from me.

"What is it?" I asked him, troubled. "The jarring thought, perhaps, of our different stations," he replied—"your mother's costly emerald, my mother's unmarked grave."

Father coming in at this moment, I hastened to draw the tea table nearer the fire. Something was wrong with the alcohol lamp, so I drew my rings from my finger, bending to adjust it. Upon the mantel stood a small brass clock. Its high center spindle, with a sort of lattice-work beneath, made an excellent ring tray. Often I slipped my rings over the spindle, and there, hidden from sight, they safely awaited my pleasure. So I heard them now tinkle down to their place and came with a laughing remark to brighten Eric's sober mood. But it was unabated when Nora called me to the kitchen. After the evening meal there was no summons in the message of the violin. "Different stations," I repeated to myself pettishly. "What in all the world is worth having save only love and happiness?" Then I remembered my rings. I had left them upon the clock spindle.

Down the stairs I crept silently—the household might be sleeping. The light of a street lamp shining through the window guided me across the room. I felt for the rings. Just one was there. The emerald must be upon the floor, or perhaps the mantelshelf, or— I pressed the electric button. Father, entering unexpectedly, found me upon my knees after a last hopeless search.

"The ring, of course," he exploded. "You show it off to a penniless young vagabond, then leave it upon the mantelshelf—a fortune within easy reach of a stranger." Still muttering accusations, father went carefully over the polished surface of the floor, where no smallest glinting thing might hide. Then, as I had so many times done, he lifted each article from the mantelshelf. There were but four—the candlesticks, the clock and mother's picture. The ring had completely disappeared. For one long moment father eyed me in stern condemnation.

"You will make no mention of this loss," he commanded sharply, "nor let the adventurer know that he is suspected. In that lies our only hope of recovery. He shall be watched. He is the only person, excepting our two selves, who has either entered or left this room tonight. There is no possible way that the ring could have escaped."

It seemed all very true. But perhaps, I reflected, Eric had taken the ring for the night into his own safe keeping. In the morning he would unwillingly chide me for my carelessness as he restored it. In the morning Eric was gone. Nora brought a note from him as I was dressing.

"Dearest," it read, "I am called away very suddenly. Will explain when I see you."

A sickening sense of the trade this news would bring forth from my father came over me. And if he should learn that the man was my lover, my promised husband! In my own heart was no thought of Eric's guilt.

"He's covered up his tracks pretty well," father said bitterly, "but we'll find him yet. That ring can't be disposed of without a sensation."

But they did not find him. My own eyes, filled with sad questioning, searched mother's smiling ones. "Wait," they seemed to bid me—"wait!"

And at last Eric came. I was quite alone in the dusk, and at first he did not speak—just folded me close in his arms.

"It has been so long," I murmured brokenly, "and no word."

"There was so much to attend to," my lover said. "And I was hurrying back to you. On the way I stopped to place a stone—a fine, tall white marble one—on mother's grave."

Frantically I endeavored to push him from me. Father stood before us. I had never known his wrath to reach such bounds. Inarticulately he raved, marking his accusations with a threatening fist, which, gesticulating, brushed from its resting place mother's picture. I stooped to pick it up, mechanically adjusting the catch of the heavy frame, then—I stood breathless.

"Father!" I gasped. Eric's staring eyes turned toward me. The back of the picture was held in place by two broad strips of brass. In the lower of these pockets and evidently jarred from its wedding place gleamed the fateful emerald ring. For a moment we all stood looking at it.

"I don't understand," muttered Eric. "Don't you?" I cried, laughing through my tears. "Well, one evening I thought I had slipped the ring over the clock's spindle, but it bounded, it seems, turning down into the open pocket of mother's frame, hiding there close and tight. It is the betrothal ring of our family, handed down from parent to child. And now, don't you see? Mother is giving it back to me to wear for you."

My lover came close; father was forgotten.

"Nance," said Eric, oh so tenderly—"Nance, you'd take me like this, a penniless student? You'd believe in me through all false appearances against all the world?"

"Yes, Eric," I told him simply. Then he said: "I am glad I'm not quite so unworthy. My father died a few days ago. That's why I went away so suddenly. He sent for me when he was lying. He's left me all his money, Nance, and it's quite a lot."

Father cleared his throat several times before we turned to listen. Then as he spoke we hardly knew his voice, it was all so soft and humiliated.

"Boy," he said, "boy, I've done you wrong in my thoughts. Will you forgive me?"

"Forgive?" laughed Eric. "Well, I should say so, for if I haven't stolen your jewels I have stolen your daughter, that's sure."

Then father reached over and put the emerald ring in Eric's hand, while mother's eyes smiled at us all through the firelight.

TO ORGANIZE AIR SERVICE.

Twenty British Flying Squadrons Are Coming to Canada.

LONDON, Jan. 8.—The scheme for an all-Canadian flying corps, upon which Colonel Grant Morden has been working for the past year, seems to be disposed of by the announcement of the latest arrangement whereby twenty squadrons will be sent to Canada forthwith by the Royal Flying Corps. The establishment of a training school and a factory in the Dominion are the two chief objects in view. Training in practical flying will be given by Col. Soare, with several of the officers of the Imperial staff, and with perhaps a few Canadians. The Canadian scheme really reached a deadlock on account of the financial proposals, as the Treasury refused to find the bulk of the money, but this will be forthcoming since the organization is Imperial.

The attention of the authorities has been drawn to the fact that at present, when daring exploits are performed by Canadians, the credit does not go to the Dominion, but Sir George Perley has now arranged with the director of the corps to keep him informed of such cases. In fact the latter has written to Sir George that the Canadians in the Royal Flying Corps are doing very well and are in every way a credit to the Dominion. Colonel Grant Morden is submitting a bulky report to General Turner in hope that the scheme may be made thoroughly Canadian. He asserts that his recommendations have been approved by the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Navy Aerial Service as workable. The scheme now announced is fathered by the Imperial Munitions Board.

Famous Hunter Killed.

LONDON, Jan. 8.—Captain Frederick Courtenay Selous, author and hunter, who accompanied Theodore Roosevelt on his hunting expedition in 1909, has been killed in action in East Africa.

Selous had world-wide fame as an African big game hunter, and explorer. He was born in London in 1851. At 20, he left for South Africa, and from 1873 to 1890 travelled continually all over Central South Africa, making a living by elephant hunting and the collection of specimens. He next guided a pioneer expedition into Mashonaland. In 1892 he returned from England to take part in the Matabele War. He had resided in Africa since, and volunteered for service with the Legion of Frontiersmen. He was the author of several books.

Better Laws for Jews.

PETROGRAD, Jan. 8.—The new Minister of Justice, Dobrovolski, in an interview with representatives of Petrograd newspapers, speaks vaguely of the necessity of modifying the restrictions on Jews and other subject races. He disavows the Duma's proposals for a radical change in the organization of the Senate and that the reform is generally considered essential in the interests of a cleaner administration of the empire.

May Commander Potatoes.

LONDON, Jan. 8.—The next article of food likely to be commandeered by Lord Devonport is potatoes. The scarcity is apparently due to the speculators rather than an actual shortage in the supply, but a reliable authority informs me that some months hence there may be no potatoes for civilians. Appeals have been made to Canada, but the prices are so high that the Government here will not consider them. In fact, the wholesale price in Canada is higher than the retail price here.

Japanese Steamers to Arm.

TOKIO, Jan. 8.—Owing to the activity of submarines, it is understood that the navy will arm Japanese merchantmen bound for the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea with six-inch guns. The arming of merchantmen will begin with the steamer Suwa Maru, which sails for London on January 20th. Steamships bound for the Atlantic Ocean by way of the Panama Canal, it is understood, also will carry guns.

The Wretchedness of Constipation

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SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson III.—First Quarter, For Jan. 21, 1917.

THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Text of the Lesson, John i, 35-51. Memory Verses, 36-37—Golden Text, John i, 43—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns:

One of the wonderful and most interesting things in this first chapter of John is the many different names of the Lord Jesus. In this respect it is somewhat like Rev. i. He is called the Word of God, the Word made flesh, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Lamb of God, the Messiah, the King of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth and other names, and each one bears a different revelation of Him to our souls. Let our heart cry ever be, "That I may know Him!" until we can say from the heart, "Yea, He is altogether lovely; this is my Beloved and this is my friend."

(Phil. iii, 10; Song v, 16). When we are fully occupied with Him all else will seem different. As John cried the next day, "Behold the Lamb of God!" two of John's disciples followed Jesus, and when He turned and said, "What seek ye?" they replied, "Where dwellest thou?" To which He answered, "Come and see!" This led to probably many hours with Him, for it was about the tenth hour (verses 35-39), which was not, as in the margin, two hours before night, but, as we count time, 10 a. m.

It is easily proved by John xix, 14, where, at the sixth hour, which must have been our 6 a. m., Jesus was still before Pilate, that John uses Roman time as we still do. Matthew, Mark and Luke use Jewish time, counting from 6 a. m. (Roman time) as the beginning of the day, so with them the third hour would be our 9 a. m., the sixth hour our 12 noon, and so on. Jesus was crucified at the third hour Jewish time, or 9 a. m. Roman time and our time. The darkness began at the sixth hour and continued till the ninth (Jewish time) or noon till 3 p. m. our time, when He died (Mark x, 25, 33, 34; Matt. xxvii, 45, 46; Luke xliii, 44). He met the woman at the well at 6 a. m. or 6 p. m. (John iv, 6), not at noon. Just remember that John counts the hours of the day as we do. What our Lord talked about in this interview we may imagine from the previous chapter (Luke xiv), where we read of His conversation on the way to Emmaus, and in the upper room that same evening. We know that one of the two men on this occasion was Andrew, and we may safely conclude that the other was John himself (verses 40-42), for the evangelists have a way of not mentioning their own names when they are specially in the event.

We may also easily imagine that John found his brother James as quickly as Andrew found Simon. Are we as eager to bring others to Him, and does our talk about Him lead others away from ourselves to Him, as John's "Behold the Lamb of God!" did? Is our motto "He must increase, but I must decrease?" (John iii, 30). The next day Jesus went Himself to find Philip of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, and said to him, "Follow me." I cannot tell you why He sought Philip and went Himself to do it, but I am glad that He ever sought me, though I fear that He has occasion to say to me, as He did to Philip after those three years, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me?" (John xiv, 9). We all seem to become acquainted with Him so slowly. Oh, how patient He is with us. His "Follow Me" to Philip (verses 43, 44) makes us think of His resurrection word to Peter in chapter xxi, 19, 22, and the application to us so helpful.

Philip soon found a friend, saying to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." With a diabolical word concerning Nazareth Nathaniel was persuaded to come and see for himself, and soon he was heard exclaiming, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel!" (verses 45-46). Perhaps the word of Jesus, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee," had something to do with his conversion. Only He who knoweth our down-sitting and uprising and all our ways could say such things to any one (Pa. cxxxix, 1-6). It will help us greatly if we remember that we have to do with Him who knows us so thoroughly and to whom all things are naked and open. Our Lord's next word to Nathaniel, "Thou shalt see greater things than these," I have often taken to myself as I have seen many of the wonderful things He has wrought for us and through us, and then have I pleaded again His words in Jer. xxxiii, 8.

The last verse in our lesson, which is an evident reference to Jacob's dream and vision at Bethel (Gen. xxviii, 12), makes me think that perhaps under that fig tree Nathaniel had been meditating upon this very thing, else why should our Lord refer to it? If my supposition is right, it is a confirmation of Beek, xi, 6, "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them." Only in this gospel is this man mentioned by this name, but he is supposed to be the Bartholomew of the other gospels, as he is always mentioned as such with Philip (Matt. x, 3; Mark iii, 18; Luke vi, 14). The last mention of him is in John xxi, 2, where he is seen as one of the seven.

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It Would Be Handy in Making Change and Might Reduce Prices.

The ham sandwich which was once 5 cents, now frequently costs a dime. The same disturbing truth applies to other things in common life, both inside and outside of lunch rooms. There is no need of statistics from economists to inform us that the cost of living has advanced. Every spender of money knows it. Retailers are more reluctant to put prices up than in generally realized. They know that consumption decreases as prices advance. That means less business, and profits depend partly on large business. When more than the traffic will bear is charged the traffic falls off.

Change making is one of the items in up to date retelling. It must be done quickly if expenses are to be kept down. The young woman at the lunch room desk has not time to count pennies. She must deal in nickels, dimes and quarters if she is to maintain her astonishing speed and accuracy.

We need another coin. Three cent pieces were confused with dimes and were hard to use because they were not fractions of other currency. No one but a statistician thinks in decimals. The rest of us do our sums in fractions. Four three-cent pieces make 12 cents, but there is no such coin. Eight of them make 24 cents, but the coin almost corresponding is worth 1 cent more. If three cent pieces were again issued they would not fill the bill.

With a half nickel it would be different. Half a nickel is a fraction of every coin from the mint. Were there such a coin 5 cent raises would not have been so common. If there should be such a coin many prices would come down.

SAVING THE RUG.

Tale of a Bottle of Ink, a Quick Witted Friend and Some Salt.

While stopping at a new and expensively furnished hotel a guest spilled a bottle of ink on a costly velvet rug, light blue and pink in color. A friend who was calling on her at the time quelled her fears by assuring her that she would fix it so that not the slightest stain would be left.

First she had a quart of fine table salt sent up at once. Sifting the salt through her fingers, she covered the ink spot entirely. To all appearances there was nothing but a pile of fine table salt on the rug.

Over this she placed a heavy chair, cautioning the guest not to disturb it nor to allow the maid to do so. After promising to return the next afternoon to finish the job she went cheerfully about her own affairs.

True to her word, she made her appearance the following afternoon and, calling for a dustpan and whisk broom, removed the salt. There was not the slightest stain of ink on the rug. The salt, having carefully sifted on the spot, had slipped into the pile and absorbed all the ink. Of course the salt, except a thin layer on the outside of the pile, was as black as ink could make it.

This method of preventing ink stains is as effective as it is simple. The secret of success lies in acting promptly, having fine salt, sifting it on the spot so slowly and gently that it slips into the goods and allowing it to remain undisturbed until it is bone dry. Then it may be safely removed with a whisk broom and dustpan.—New York Sun.

Picking a Pocket. "Isn't pocket picking a difficult and dangerous art?" "Yes, till you get your hand in."—Lamb.

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