

"I TRUSTED HIM"— Moans Queen of the Rum Runners.— "As Every Woman Trusts The Man She Loves"

Edith Stevens, Aristocratic Consort of Millionaire Bootlegger. Discusses in New Article How She Met Casse and Tells More Than She Has Ever Told Before of Her Early Life—She Never Has Allowed Her Friends to Know Who the Much Written About "Edith Stevens" Was—How Her Early, Luxurious Circumstances Fell Away When She Was Sixteen, Leaving Her an Ordinary Wage-Earner at an Adding Machine—Her Marriage at Seventeen, as Reckless as Anything Else She Ever Did in Her Reckless Life—A Yellow Roadster Almost Runs Over Her and Its Driver is the Master Mind of the Rum Runners, Antonio—There is an Instantaneous Attraction Between the Strong-headed Young People—He is a "Gentleman"—The First Love Passage.

My Experiences as Queen of The Rum Runners

BY EDITH STEVENS

I am twenty years old. In the last four years I have seen the world. In the last year I have attained a place in the modern world of crime—the rum-running profession—that has been the envy of those in my own group. During that adventurous year I became the acknowledged queen of liquor traffickers. Revenue officers, prohibition agents and representatives of the Government's bureau have been constantly on my trail, on land and sea. Working together with a group of the shrewdest, most desperate characters of international underworlds, never was my authority questioned. Never was my place of "honor" in jeopardy. On the one hand, there were men in our band who were known to the world as gentlemen, and who were at home in society's drawing rooms. Again, there were sharpers, cheats, gamblers and notorious characters—many of whom I had seen at some of the nation's leading race courses. Yet again—and it can be readily understood why—in our pirates' band were some of the most inhuman cruel, most deluded figures of the underworld. Regardless of the differences that existed between the polished veneer of my lieutenants and the crude gestures of the riffraff of my following, our big jobs were accomplished with team work that was almost 100 per cent efficient. These men at heart were all adventurers, who sought the easiest way to line their pockets with gold. However, they were so selfish, each and every one of them, that they would fight like rats in a cellar, each to promote his own personal greed and criminal ambitions.

In so far as I know, I was the first woman ever to engage in rum running; the first who seemed to possess the necessary dash, courage and devil-may-care abandon that marks the successful leader in criminal enterprises. My men, who may have been a little largely because of my connections—which I will explain a little while—actually believed that I had a character. They looked on me as being a human symbol of good fortune. Many times, when the instant gratification of our complicated organization "fell down" in their private enterprises, so superstitious were the men, that they attributed these failures to my absence.

The Silver Spoon.

My start in life was a particularly auspicious one. Born of wealthy parents, I had no cares, nor did I have any whim or caprice that went unfulfilled until I was sixteen years old. At that age a cloud of domestic difficulties darkened our home. There was a divorce. My father went his way. My mother hers. As usual, the child paid the price. I have not seen my father since that time.

From wealth to comparative poverty is not an easy path for any one to travel, much less an easy one for a girl of artistic tendencies, for a girl educated to the belief that a place had been set apart for her special aggrandizement.

Yet, even in this, if I may say so without becoming immodest in my claims, I displayed nerve and ability. Cast adrift from my home, from my associates, in society, I endeavored to acquire enough money to meet my wants.

But alas! the wants of a society debutante are many. I obtained a position with a life insurance company. I went to work on an adding machine. Dreadfully prosaic was this venture. I thought I should go mad!

I tried to be game, as the sporting world has it, but my heart and soul rebelled. My work—and it was work—followed me to the apartment where my mother, my sisters and I were hiding away from our affluent friends. Numbers, additions, dreary columns of dreary figures haunted me in my sleep. Life was a nightmare of monotony.

Every human being, the old masters tell us, seeks to escape from the things of life, the drab things, without laying down life itself. I was always on the lookout for this escape. At last I found it.

I did not know when I met Antonio Casse that I was entering upon the most adventurous and dangerous career that any woman could undertake. This sounds extreme, melodramatic and bookish, but I hope to convince you in this series of revelations that it was so. Antonio Casse was seventeen years older than I. I was eighteen. He was a good-looking Italian of extraordinary antecedents. I thought I loved him then. I know I did now!

Antonio Casse is an attractive fellow. I am a Southerner. Some persons may deem it silly to repeat the hackneyed phrase that Southerners are "fiery," impulsive and more than usually hot-blooded, but it is true! I loved him with my whole soul. Even today, as I sit in this room, persecuted by officers of the law, but still beloved by those who know me really, I realize more than ever that my heart belongs to Anthony Casse. Antonio is now in Raymond Street, New York, awaiting the outcome



Edith Stevens

grow worse. I held fast to this decision. After a half hour of pleading with me to please see him at least once in a while, he gave up battling. Then without another word, he took his hat. I saw his face before he left. It was the saddest I had ever seen. I was frightened by the grim line of his mouth.

And then—well, I couldn't live up to my decision. In a few days I surrendered to my heart's instinct and called him back to me!

Perhaps the most important reason that led me to take the path which would finally take me beyond the law, into the tempestuous swirls of the sea, and the desperate dangers of illicit liquor traffic was this:

Personally, Antonio Casse is one of the most honorable men who ever lived! I admit that his judgment had been frightfully misled—that he should not have loved me and that he should not have been a "rum runner." He was honorable with all those with whom he came in contact. He was chivalrous, fine in every respect toward me.

"Indeed, the outstanding reason that he was so greatly respected at sea was that men knew they would get what they called a "square deal" from him.

This quality was exemplified in the quality of liquor he brought into this country. The majority of rum runners carry a bottling apparatus on their ships. As they bottle the liquor, they dilute it. But Antonio Casse never did that. He brought the liquor in bottles under seal. It was genuine. Everybody who knew him knew that he was square in his dealings, and for this reason all his liquor was sold before it even got to this country.

Mr. Casse's liquor was delivered here bottled just as he bought it in the Bahamas.

"I am sure that he never defrauded or tricked a single human being out of a cent in his life. He felt that he had a right to a certain extent to take the chances of liquor trafficking honorably since the people in this country wanted it.

He was wrong in caring for me just as I was, but that is all that can be said about him. He paid me every honor and respect that a woman can be paid. Because of his dominating personality, not a word that I should hear could even reach the roughest of the sailors say in my experience.

It is impossible to get away from the fact that every woman follows the judgment of the man she loves. Her love is founded on admiration and respect. And even though she cannot understand the course of his action, she says to herself:

"About all the things I could understand, I knew Mr. Casse to be a gentleman and a splendid character. And about those I could not understand, I trusted to his superior judgment—and gave him the benefit of the doubt."

Now I see that in this I was wrong. But this is the great pitfall that brings more suffering to women than anything else. It is easy not to do the things that look bad. It is when things that are entirely wrong look as if



The car had stopped, a tall, slender man was running toward us.

They were entirely right—there is the rub. Women do not need protection in society from wicked men who everybody knows are wicked. Women shun men of that type instinctively.

It is from the sincere, honest men, with sweet natures who have wicked notions about living this world that women need protection.

And they are not exactly wicked notions. They are just notions based on ignorance; notions that one can't have and live happily!

I hope that my story will help other girls to understand many things that I have had to learn through experience.

And I advise every illicit whiskey trafficker to get off the sea. It doesn't work out.

In next week's chapter of her un-

quely thrilling narrative, "Conscience vs. Romance," Miss Stevens tells of her being thrown blindly into the hazardous life of rum runners—How its allurements and excitement made it impossible for her to give up this life voluntarily—She had thought Antonio Casse a wealthy tobacco merchant—Casse presents Edith with a beautiful yacht named after her—One cold November day, she sets sail on a pleasure trip. As they steam into the gorgeous sunsets and the moonlight nights her story-book fancies seem all coming true, and Antonio Casse is the Prince Charming.

When the party arrives in the "Kingdom of Rum Runners," a grand reception is staged for them as they land in Nassau. They live in the magnificent home of friends—The days are spent doing mysterious business—

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enriches the natural flavour of the food and makes the meals more enjoyable.

Get a bottle to-day.

Then follows much entertainment—Each host showing off his rare liquors. Devious methods of protection are employed by the canny rum runners in transacting their business with the wholesale liquors of the island. Don't Miss This Fascinating Tale of Twentieth Century Adventure. (Copyright 1923 by the Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

RADIO FOR THE PATIENT AS THE SURGEONS WORK

New York, April 14. — Radio was employed as an aid to local anesthesia by surgeons at Fordham-Hospital this week during an operation on Edward Higgins. The operation, for hernia, was successful, and it was admitted that the radio might in future become a factor in similar operations.

The four physicians who performed the operation were loath, for professional reasons, to discuss the use of a radio outfit, but it was learned that Higgins' attention had been completely distracted from the work of the surgeons as soon as the head gear had been slipped into place by a nurse. He listened to a concert from W JZ, in Newark, and, according to one informant, laughed at one time during the tedious operation at jokes by a comedian.

It was explained that none of the surgeons could hear the concert, as no magna-vox equipment was used, and that therefore their attention was not similarly distracted from the operation.

Earthquake

Washington, April 13.—Earth tremors of moderate intensity were recorded today by the Georgetown University seismograph. The disturbance began at 10:42 a. m., reached a maximum at 11:20, and died away at noon. Father Tondorf, in charge of the observatory, estimated that it was centred 3,000 miles from Washington, apparently south.

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"You are married?" I interjected. "Yes," he replied. I was stunned. The soul in me seemed to die!