POOR DOCUMENT

MC2034

SELF ANNIHILATED SUITOR

By Jeanette Walden

"A man must be willing not only to efface himself, but to blot himself out of existence, if necessary, for my sake."

Jean Boyce made this statement without premiditation, driven to it by sheer ennui. It was the third time that she had been called upon to give her reason for not acquiescing in Maurice Ankeney's belief that they were made for each other, and this this time she wanted it to be final.

They had just turned the corner into her home street. Jean hastened her steps as she spoke with a little laugh of impatience.

Maurice Ankeney looked at her first with disappointment in his frank blue eyes, then speculation, and at last amusement. "Could you care that much for anyone?" he asked coldly.

"Oh, no," her tone was matter-of-fact, "I couldn't. It isn't in me.

"Oh, I see, you demand it as a complimentary quality in others."

He continued his scrutiny of her face as a smart trap with a man and woman in it rounded the corner. The woman — a stoutish blonde with a mountain of lavender plumes on her head—was driving.

The warm color that came to Jean's cheeks as she returned the man's recognition, deepened as the trap rolled past, for she knew that Maurice was watching her, and she felt the new, strange intentness of his gaze.

As for Ankeney, his expression suddenly became a mixture of calmness and stern determination. "I'll do it," he exclaimed. And for this apparently eccentric remark, he was rewarded by an electifying look of inquiry from a pair of dark eyes.

"Do what?"

"Efface—I mean extinguish myself by getting him for you."

The dark eyes became instrutible.

"If you want Harold Buckley, you shall have him," he continued precipitately, as they mounted the steps of Jean's Boyce's home. It will be an easy matter. He is only dazzled by her millions. It's you he really cares for. Madge Racer has no right to buy—"

"Maurice Ankeney, I'll never speak to you again." As Jean faced him with this emphatic announcement, her blushes were fully accounted for by her anger.

"All right, I might as well die one way as another," and he was gone.

In the days that followed Jean Boyce had a new experience. Maurice Ankeney had never stayed away so long before, and she had missed him—a condition she had not thought possible. Still there was the counteracting anneyance of Harold Buckley and the heiress. It is true, she never realized that she cared for Buckley until she found that he was out of her reach. But Jean's self-analysis could go no deeper than this, and her state of mind became chaotic once more, when one afternoon Harold Buckley called.

Jean's resentment was not wholly dispelled by Buckley's keenly correct valuation of the heiress. "She was fishing for a husband," he said, and "it's a good thing just to know such women. It makes one expert at estimating character."

Jean interpreted this last remark: "A man does not need to be bitten more than once," and she found herself wondering why she did not feel flattered by his confidence. Still she felt gratified by her triumph in bringing him back. She did not understand until afterwards why his next remark quenched her elation.

"She has Maurice Ankeney on her hook now, or rather, he took her by storm. I never saw a fellow manoeuver so." He spoke contemptuously. "But he's welcome."

"How small of him," observed Jean. Then all at once she thought of Maurice's strange promise to her and she wondered—no it could not be, he only wanted a cloak for his mercenary ambitions.

Jean did not feel altogether complimented by the ease with which Harold assumed his old relations. Still, when he asked her to take an automobile ride that same evening, she accepted.

Her pride in Harold Buckley's personal attractiveness was extended to his splendid machine as they went bounding over the road with a red October sunset in their faces.

Another automobile came tooting up behind them and passed them on the road. It was occupied by Madge Racer and Maurice Ankeney.

The vague depression that had been haunting Jean became poignant. She felt misused.

"Queer taste, he has," she observed, with a curl of her lip. Then to hide her pique she conjured a spirit of daring.

"Oh, let's pass them, do, do!"

Harold Buckley, ready to please her, or possibly for reasons of his own, entered into the sport and put on power with great abandon.

Jean was almost delirious with the excitement of swift motion. "How jolly——" Then came a sudden jolting and a desperate adjusting of brakes. They had struck a rocky place in the road. Before Harold could slow up, Jean was almost shaken from her seat. The sun's days, on a level with their eyes, blinded them. There was a loud report, a scream from Maurice Ankeney's auto, which they had grazed in stopping, and they toppled over into a shallow ditch, with an extra tire hanging to one of their wheels.

Jean felt a sharp pain in her arm as she picked herself up. Then the diversion of what followed made her forget herself. The blond heiress followed up her screams by an attack upon Harold, who had just extricated himself whole from the ditch.

"Mr. Buckley, this is a great way to drive," she cried in her high voice with its slightly foreign accent. "Why don't you look at your road?"

But she was instantly mollified by Harold's abject apologies, and shook hands with him quite sweetly.

Maurice, who had got to work without loss of time had almost finished putting on a new tire, when Jean felt so faint that she had to sit down on the grass. The pain was coming back into her wrist.

It was just then that Maurice Ankeney happened to look over his shoulder. He burst out roughly to Harold, who was still busy with the heiress, "Don't you see the girl is hurt?"

He got to her first, but in a second they were all bending over her. She assured them that it was only a sprained wrist.

Maurice gave Buckley his handkerchief, ordering him to bandage the injured arm tight, and flew back to work again at the tire.

Jean received a feverish impression through her pain that there was a parley and almost an altercation. Maurice semed to be out of patience with everybody and the heiress played him a close second. Jean couldn't see all the time, but she heard Madge Racer's voice grow shriller and shriller.

"No, Mr. Buckley must take the back seat with Miss Boyce. I'll ride in front."

But Mr. Buckley said that someone must stay with the disabled machine. It came hastily to Jean that he suggested Maurice as the one to do this. At this Madge Racer insisted that they take Buckley's auto in tow.

After what seemed hours to Jean she felt herself lifted up in somebody's arms and the next thing she knew, the wind of rapid motion, against her face, brought everything clear to her. Maurice at her side, looked back grimly over his shoulder and swore under his breath.

"All right?" he questioned, seeing her looking at him. "Guess I surprised them this time. She thought I was going to wait to take Buckley in tow, with you about to keel over there on the ground."

"But I didn't keel over." Her voice sounded far away.

"Oh, no you didn't. You're game. I'd like to see the heiress in the same fix."

There was so much of genuine admiration in his look and tone that Jean took new strength for a moment. She must have been weak too or she would not have said what she did next.

"Do—do you really care for her money?"

Maurice gave her a sharp, quick look. "You must be out of your head," he muttered as he bent again over the guide wheel.

Whe he was ready to leave her at home, after the sprain had been cared for and the color was creeping back into her cheeks, he stood over her in her couch and asked humbly:

"Am I sufficiently blotted out?"

"I think you are," she laughed.

"But I'd like you to be sure," he insisted.

"I am sure," declared Jean, and the look that came into his blue eyes told her that he was satisfied.

BY SPECIAL LICENSE

By A. M. D. Ogden

Autumn was dying in a blaze of crimson and gold. Every where color fairly rioted from the vivid blue of the cloudless arching sky against which the green of scattered firs stood sharply defined, down to the windblown leaves through which the old white horse shuffled his slow way. Squire Godfrey, Justice of the Peace for the County, and now out riding circuit, let fall the reins while he gratefully inhaled long breaths of the clear October air. The nuts must surely be ripening.

From the woods on his left rang out the merry voices of children and involuntarily the Squire smiled. In those very woods forty years ago he and Hetty had gone a nutting. Hetty, with her dancing rouguish brown eyes, her plain little calico frock and the deep sun-bonnet always hanging by one string. How distinctly he could see the little figure.

Then the shaggy grey eyebrows met in a heavy frown over the keen blue eyes. What was Hetty to him but the girl who had flouted and mocked him, driving him away from home for these wretched ten years. Well, he had come back and made a success of his life—and the Squire's frown soothed itself as he reflected on the prosperity which was his. And Hetty had married Johnson Wetherby, who had died not long after leaving her with one boy to educate and care for. She had done it well, admitted the Squire grudgingly. But that young John should have presumed to court his Susie! The Squire's frown became a scowl as he whipped up the old white horse. He would have none of that nonsense.

Luckily Susie was a good girl. She submitted quietly enough to the thundering pronunciamento launched at her head by the irate Squire. She was not to see that Wetherby, not to write him, except the one letter conveying her father's decision.

"And you cannot marry him without my consent for three years yet," chuckled the Squire. "For I won't sign the license. Of course, if you choose to run off to some other country——"

But Susie shook her head. No, she would not do that.

It was well that he had been so firm, pursued the Squire. He had been proved in the right, for it was a year now since Susie had ever mentioned John's name. She was cured, just as he predicted she would be. Otherwise he would scarcely have left safe leaving her in charge of the office according to former custom. But he could trust Susie; she was his own child. Perhaps the Squire overlooked the fact that he himself had not yet forgotten.

As he drew up at the little Inn which was to be his first halting place, the man was surprised to see a familiar looking buggy already fastened in the trim wooden shed. The tavern was a quaint, homely building, white and square, with tall pillars and green shutters. At the rear ran a wide sunny verandah. The Squire, going through the dark, chilly hallway pushed open the swing door. Then he stopped short. Facing him rose a slim, white faced little woman, clad in dusty black bombazine. The worn hands, tightly clasped together, shook a bit, but the brown eyes met his own with the old dauntless look.

"Lemuel," she murmured.

"Hetty," responded the Squire, bewilderedly breaking the silence of thirty years.

A sudden appeal flashed up into the thin face. Her fingers strained themselves desperately in their cotton gloves.

"Lemuel," she began again. "I—I want to speak to you—I've wanted to for a long time, but you wouldn't let me. Then John told me that you would probably stop here today——"

"Ah, yes, John," said Squire in an altered tone. "For the moment I had forgotten John. It is to him then that I am indebted for this pleasure," his stubborn mouth wrinkling into a sudden sarcasm.

Mrs. Wetherby regarded him with level glance.

"Yes, it is John," she said steadily. "For my own sake, I should never have pleaded. That you chose to take as serious a bit of girlish folly, a childish pique which one kind word from you would have melted, for all that—let it go. The past is past. But John, my boy. Must his life too be spoilt. He loves your daughter. She loves him," unheeding the Squire's angry flush. "Must they lose their youth and let life's sweetest years be sacrificed, merely to satisfy a dislike of me, Lemuel?" A passionate energy inspired her eager words. "Lemuel."

"Dislike," repeated the Squire, thoughtfully. Dislike, was it really that? Whatever his faults, the Squire was truthful. "But Hetty," a sudden warmth breaking into his own voice. "Hetty, you said—you said "spoilt—too." Do you mean that you cared? Did you, Hetty?" with compelling eyes on hers.

"Yes," said Mrs. Wetherby simply. "I cared. And you went away, you never wrote. And so—at last—I married Johnson Wetherby. He was a good husband." A sudden impulse of loyalty towards the dead surging within her.

"And I married Susan Martin," mused the Squire aloud. But he was conscious of what he was saying. A great wonder held him fast. Was this the quiet self-repressed woman who all these years had sat across the aisle from him every Sunday morning in church, this slender, vibrant creature, trembling in the might of her demand for happiness of this her son? Was this the woman whom he had believed without feeling? In a sudden flash of insight he caught himself, a man cherishing the hidden resentment which year by year hardened character and face. While she— A tender reverence slowly crept into the stern old eyes.

"Come," he said gently. "We'll have some dinner. And then we can talk about John."

When a wek later, the Squire's buggy pulled up before the honeysuckle by pulled up before the honeysuckle-laden porch of home, the owner's brows were drawn together into a semblance of its former frown, the mouth held its accustomed lines. Only in the deep-set blue eyes a new light gleamed irrepressibly. But Susie did not see. The girl came slowly to the door. Cuose behind followed a tall, slim young fellow with steady brown eyes. The Squire stared.

"Father," announced Susie, pale but resolute. "I want to tell you at once that I'm married to John. The blank licenses for any one needing them were on your desk, already signed. It was only necessary to fill in the names. I—I hope you forgive me. But if you won't," as her father still stared with features unrelaxed, "I'm ready to go. I couldn't leave the house alone, though. And besides I wanted to tell you myself. We were married this morning," the Squire's own defiant will beaming from her blue eyes. She was his own child all right, the Squire recognized with an amused recollection of his former thought. And he could hardly sue himsel for issuing a license to a minor without her parent's consent, his own name being signed to the document.

The Squire threw down his reins.

"Well," he capitulated. "If it's done, it's done. And we were planning to give you such a fine wedding, too." Then as an amazed "we" broke from the startled girl, Squire Godfrey leaned over and patted the curly head.

"I'm not going to scold," he declared heartily. "Fact is, I'm married myself. My wife's waiting now at the hotel for you to come; said I must tell you myself first. So run get on your hat. John," while a long searching look passed between the two men as their hands met, "you've got to be doubly a son to me now. Your mother has taken me at last."

A TURN ON THE WHEEL

(Copyrighted, 1907, by Constance D'Arcy Mackay.)

It was summer in Ballymoran, long days of blue and white and green, the blue of the sky, the white of drifting clouds and the bright green of the Irish turf. Gorse rose golden in the fields, wild roses blomed by the hedges, fragile and exquisite, yet full of snares for the unwary. Many an eager child plucked at them only to withdraw a scratched finger.

Terry O'Rourke, looking up from his potato patch, philosophically observed that "thim flowers were as sharp as they were swate, ivry one o' them!" and then smiled to himself, thinking of Clodah Mulvaney. Hazel-eyed she was, with red-brown hair, cheeks like a wild rose, and temper as keen-edged as the prickliest thorn.

"Yet, faith what matter about the thorns," said Terry, "if the rose be worth the winning!"

He was as quiet and determined as Clodah was hasty, and if, as his neighbors declared, he was a bit slow in his love making, he was none the less sure. True, he had a dangerous rival in Jim Hagan, who had lately fallen heir to a legacy, who had spent the half of it on a bran new jaunting car fit for the Mayor himself. It was in this that Jim had begged Clodah to accompany him to the Gulmullet fair, some ten miles distant.

"Thank ye kindly, Jim," she answered, "but I've promised to go with Terrence."

"Well, thin, it's myself that will have to ride alone," sighed Jim, disconsolately, "for sure there's no one in Ballymoran who can take your place at all, at all."

The night before the fair Clodah and Terry sat before her door discussing the joys of the morrow.

"We'll start early," said he, "and be back by nightfall."

"And I'll wear my best dress with the blue ribbons," said Clodah, "and keep my coat in the back o' the cart."

"I mistrust ye'll have to hold it on your lay, mavoureen," said Terry, "on account o' the pig."

"Pig!" cried Clodah.

"I'm going to take the pig along in the back o' the cart. 'Tis a foine price I'm expecting to get for her, and—"

"Terry O'Rrouke," shrieked Clodah, "do ye think I'd ride in a cart with a pig?"

"You've done it before."

"Niver with my best dress on!"

"Lave your best dress at home, thin," said Terry, humorously.

Clodah saw no humor in his remark.

"You can choose betwain us," she said haughtily. "Will ye take me—or will ye take the pig?"

"But, Clodah, girrul, be reasonable. The pig can do no harm. She's as clean as an angel, and as well behaved, and 'tis my one chance o' selling her."

Clodah stamped her foot.

"I've given ye your choice, Terry O'Rourke. Once and for all, which will ye take?"

Terry was usually slow to anger, but now a danger spark burned in his eyes.

"I'll take the pig," he said.

Clodah flew inside and banged the door.

Next morning she passed Terry's cabin, riding with Jim Hagan in his jaunting car. Her muslin dress was as blue as the sky, and its many ribbons fluttering in the wind. Terry was out in his garden, and Clodah feigned not to see him, though Jim glanced round with a look of triumph.

"How are ye, Terry," he called out, "'Tis a foine day for the fair."

And they rattled gaily down the road, the new yellow wheels of the jaunting car shining in the sun.

Terry gazed after them. All the brightness seemed gone from life. It was as if the candle of his happiness had been blown out, leaving him in utter darkness. "'Twas a wise man," he muttered, "who said that Fortune was a fickle jade. A turn of her wheel—and where are ye now, Terry O'Rourke!"

Then he harnessed up slowly, put the pig in the cart, and took the road for Gulmullet.

There was no one to see Clodah drive out of Ballymoran save a few old women and children. The rest of her neighbors had risen with the dawn, and set out for the fair hours ago. Clodah, being of two minds whether to go or not, had kept the ardent Jim waiting till she reached a conclusion. Now they rolled swiftly along in order to make up for lost time. The road was almost deserted save in the distance where there were a few tardy wayfarers like themselves. And these, too, having the start of them, soon vanished. Clodah was contented enough. She felt that she was looking her best, and if she had any doubts on that score, Jim's fluent tongue would have reassured her. She answered his love making with laughing banter, and he was declaring for the twentieth time that he would make the kindest husband in the world, when the jaunting car gave an abrupt lurch, and Clodah found herself sitting on one side of the road, while Jim scrambled up from the other. He did not even pause to ask her if she was hurt.

"Oh be the powers," he ejaculated, "look at my foine car! The wheel's off, ruined entoirely."

"If it's the wheel that's troubling ye——" But Clodah's sarcasm was lost on him.

"My foine car!" he cried over and over again. From where they stood it was five miles to Ballymoran, and five to Gulmullet. The fields and bogs stretched away unbrokenly to the sky line. There was not a cabin in sight.

"Well, can't ye do something?" said Clodah. Her ankle was paining her and the sun was very warm.

But Jim was better at repartee than at meeting emergencies, and with his head on one side he considered the situation.

"I'm thinking we'll have to foot it," he said, gloomily.

There was a sob in Clodah's voice.

"My ankle's wrenched, and 'tis not a step further I'll go," she avowed.

"You sit here, thin, and I'll go for help," said Jim, his face brightening.

"Yes, and it fair time, and the country full o' vagabonds! That's a grand idea, Mr. Jim Hagan, to leave me alone entoirely by myself.

Jim wilted.

"What'll we do thin?" he demanded.

"We'll sit here till some one comes," said Clodah.

So they sat. Birds sang in the long meadow grass. A hare flitted by like a shadow. Nothing else stirred. The road stretched away white and deserted. Tim moodily scanned the horizon, and Clodah wonderer if the sunlight would fade her ribbons. She wished devoutly that she had never come. Who could have supposed that her pleasure jaunt would end like this.

She cast a quick glance at him. The great unfeeling umathaum! Never once had he asked her how she felt, or if her fall had shaken her! Ah, Terry was the lad! Terry always knew what to do! And she had lost him — lost him through her folly. Well, there was no good in thinking of that now, and she had blinked hard to keep back the tears. It was near noon, her throat was parched, and the pangs of hunger were astir. The sullen silence of Jim wore on her.

"Why don't ye say something?" she burst out, "instead of sitting there staring, like a bump on a log!"

"Whist, Clodah, here's someone coming at last!"

Through a cloud of dust apeared a rickety little cart drawn by a gray donkey. Terry was on the front seat. The pig stole stolidly behind. At sight of their plight Terry halted. Clodah hung her head and could not raise her eyes. It was Jim who spoke first.

"We're in the divie of a mess," said he. "The wheel's broke and Clodah's hurt her ankle."

"Has she now?" cried Terry, a note of anxiety in his voice.

"'Tis not so painful whin I sit still," said Clodah, "but 'tis like the curse of all the crows whin I try to walk!"

"I'll tell ye the best way out," said Terry, "I'll take Clodah with me to the fair, and thin I'll send some one to help ye with your jaunting car. How will that be suiting ye?"

There seemed no other way and Jim muttered that it would suit him very well.

"And you, Clodah?"

"If—if ye will take me," she said humbly.

"Here's a piece o' bread for ye, Jim," said Terry, "and a bit o' goat's cheese. Belike it will stay your hunger till help arrives. Don't ate it too fast," he called back, after he had helped Clodah up onto the seat beside him, "don't ate it too fast, for 'tis rich, and likely to give ye the dyspepsia."

For a while Clodah and Terry rode in silence. Then—"Clodah, girl," said Terry, tenderly, "'Tis a churl I am, at times, but I meant nothing by it. Will ye forgive me for what I said last night?"

"Forgive ye," cried Clodah, "forgive ye! Oh, Terry, I'd rather ride with you and fifty pigs than with Jim Hagan and a coach and four!"

WHEN BESSIE MOVED

Bessie sat with her face against the pane of the south windows. Ever since the gathering dusk of the winter afternoon had settled down she had watched the road for signs of the team. Two of the loads had come and gone. The last should have started only an hour or so after the others, yet it was nearly nine o'clock and the familiar farm had not put in appearance.

Then a knock at the door startled her and she cowered into the darkness, hoping that the intruder, who-ever it might be would become tired and go away. Instead the knocking continued and presently there was a gust of cold air as the door was thrown open. It could not be the folks; they were coming from the South. It must be a tramp.

The furniture was still piled in the centre of the room and there was no hiding place save the great cupboard that had been Grandma Bailey's. Softly she stole across the room, but was just concealing herself when a man entered carrying a lantern.

Tremblingly she obeyed his command to come out and stood facing him. There was nothing very terrible about his appearance. He was muffled up to his eyes in coats and scarf, but the eyes were frank and kindly and there was a twinkle suggestive of fun.

"Give an account of yourself," he demanded. "Trying to steal the house?"

"We are moving in," she cried indignantly. "I came on with the first load and mother and father were to be here with the last. They have not arrived yet. I don't know what can be keeping them. I am Bessie Lyford," she added as an afterthought.

"And I'm Joel Ware," he introduced. "I just got back from town and saw the lights. I did not know that the new owners were moving in and came over to see if tramps were in the house. I live across the way."

"I have been here since eleven," she said. "We are moving out from Groton. I was to show the men where to put the things. The last load went—oh! years ago."

"And you've been sitting here since then watching for your folks," he said, looking at the chair by the window. "Had your supper?"

"I had a cold lunch," she said indifferently. "The kitchen things are on the last load."

"I'll bring something over," he declared. "I haven't had my supper yet."

He slipped out, and Bessie sank into the chair by the window to resume her watch. After a while he returned and she went out into the dining room, where he was straightening out the chairs. The steam of the hot coffee filled the room with its delicious odor and for the first time she realized that she was hungry.

"I brought mine, too," he explained. "It'll save time."

He drew up a chair and presently she found herself chatting as she sipped the coffee and munched the biscuit. Joel, she found, kept bachelor hall in the little farmhouse across the way. In the summer he had several hands helping him, but in the winter he lived by himself and was glad enough to have neighbors again.

She almost forgot her troubles until the tray was depleted and Joel rose.

"I'll take these things over to the house," he said, "and then come back. You won't be scared, will you?"

Bessie shook her head laughingly. There was a certainty of movement about Joel that induced confidence, and as she watched the light go up in his kitchen while he moved about at his work, the occasional silhouette against the light brought comfort to her. Then the light went out again and she could see him striding through light snow that had begun to fall.

She looked up with a smile as he entered.

"I was tempted to run across and help you with the dishwashing," she cried. "I never thought or I should have offered to do so before you left."

"I guess I can do my own chores," he laughed back. "I was wondering how it would do to hitch up and drive back Groton way. I've got a fresh team and if you don't mind being alone, I can find out what's the matter. I brought my revolver over so you would feel safer. I don't suppose you'll need it, but it might be a comfort to feel that you had it."

"But it's such a long, cold drive," she protested.

"I guess a little snow won't hurt me, or the team, much," he laughed. "You'll be worrying till you know what the matter is. I'll bring in some wood for the stoves and then get along."

He built up a roaring fire and then turned to Bessie.

"This is a sort of back road," he explained. "The tramps mostly hold to the line of the railroad, so don't worry. I'll be back as soon as I can."

She watched him drive out of the yard presently and as the well-matched team sped down the road a sudden sense of loneliness cave over her. It was not quite the feeling she had experienced before. That had been the lonliness of solitude. Now she was lonely because Ware had gone, and even while she cired softly to herself her heart glowed as she remembered how quietly he had taken possession and had brought light into the gloom.

She fell asleep after a time and was unconscious of the speeding hours until she was awakened by a light touch. She sprang to her feet with a cry of alarm, but wasreassured by a glimpse of Joel's kindly face.

"I found 'em about seven miles out," he explained. "It seems that the sled tipped over turning out for another team. Your ma broke her leg and they took her to Deane's and set it. They've been so busy with their own troubles that they never thought that you might be worrying and did not send anyone on to tell you. It's all right, though, and your ma said not to worry. She'll be in shape to move in the morning and they'll bring her on here."

"Poor ma!" Bessie said, softly. "But I'm glad to know that it's only that instead — instead of some of the horrible things I was thinking."

"I thought you'd sleep better if you knew just what the matter was," he smiled.

"Sleep," she repeated. "I can't sleep tonight."

"Yes, you can," he insisted. I'm going over to put up the team. Then I'll come back and sit here awhile. You get a bed fixed up and I'll warrant you'll sleep.

He was a true prophet, for after she had won from him a half-promise that he would not sit up all night she went to her room and, exhausted by the emotions so foreign to her usual placid life, she dropped asleep.

The soft black of the winter night was turneing to the grey of dawn when she roused herself and stared dumbly for a moment at the unfamiliar room. Then recollection returned, and she sliped on a wrapper and crept downstairs.

A light was burning in the sitting room and Joel sat reading. He sprang up at her aproach with a cheery "Good morning."

"I thought you were not going to sit up all night," she reproached.

"I thought you might wake up in the night and be scared," he confessed. "Now I'm going over to make some coffee and bring it here. It won't take very long."

He was out of the room with the same alert step that had marked his cariage the night before. There was no trace of weariness in his stride, though every bone in his body ached. He was soon back with a breakfast, and this time Bessie had the table prepared.

"You'll have your folks here by dinner time," he said as he gathered up the dishes. "I guess this ends our picnic."

"I'm sorry," she confessed, softly. "You have been very good to me."

"Just neighborly," he said, awkwardly. "I was glad to help out, though it's going to seem pretty lonely over at my house now. A woman sitting across the table does give one an appetite."

"You should get married," she suggested, with a blush.

"I'm going to," was the straightforward answer, "just as soon as it's polite to propose to you—that is, if you'll have me."

"I'll say yes now, if you ask me," she promised. "I knew that I loved you when I watched you drive down the road last night, and felt that you were going away from me."

"I beat you!" he exulted. "I knew that you were the girl for me the moment you stepped out of that wardrobe."

CUPID AND CROESUS.

By Constance D'Arcy MacKay.

"But the trouble with being rich is that you never know whether any one is in love with you or not," mourned Rosamond Maythorn, stretching out a daintily slippered foot to the fender where a bright fire gleamed.

Her father's eyes twinkled. "I think I have heard that phrase before, my dear," he said kindly, "and while I acknowledge that your fortune is a good real of a lure, I must confess that if I were a young man just the sight of your eyes and the sound of your voice would be enough for me!"

Rosamond shook her head. "You see, father, you were an exceptional young man," she said, but the look in her eyes was troubled, and a faint pucker showed between her brows. Her father leaned forward and patted the slim young hand that lay on the carved arm of the chair; his motherless daughter was very dear to him.

"What's gone wrong, Rosamond?" he queried, "is the new Worth gown a failure, or didn't you enjoy your dance last night, or is the world generally stuffed with sawdust?"

"It isn't the world that's stuffed with sawdust. It's the men!" cried Rosamond.

Her father laughed outright, and Rosamond frowned at him with delicious severity.

"Ah, you may laugh," she said, "but I'm in earnest, just the same. I'm sick of all men I see at balls and operas. I don't want a puppet in evening dress to talk to. I want a man—a man who works and thinks and feels, and in this silly social whirl I've not been able to find one. Besides, there's not one of them that's not a fortune hunter, from Toby Lapman to George Astorgilt. The fact is, I'm beginning to tire of utterly vapid days, and a pleasure-seeking existence."

"What do you intend to do, then?"

"I propose to work for my living."

"Seriously, Rosamond?"

"Doesn't this look serious?" She drew from the floor beside her a writing pad covered with cabalistic signs.

"Shorthand, as I live!" ejaculated her father. "Well, Rosamond, I've always let you have your own way, and if you want to try an experiment, go on. I won't hinder you! I suppose in a month or two you'll be applying for a situation in my office."

"Nothing of the kind," she flashed, "I'll find a situation of my own! I'll cease to be Rosamond Maythorn; tomorrow morning I'll be Rosamond Marsh, and if you expect to catch a glimpse of me you'll have to be up early, for I'm off to my business college at eight o'clock."

There folowed days when Rosamond was utterly fatigued and disheartened. Many a time she hovered on the verge of giving up her course and going back to her butterfly existence. But the same vital energy that made her father a power on Wall Street was latent in her, too, and she struck out courageously, though often the penciled letters swam before her eyes, her back ached, and her fingers almost refused to "clack" at the type of her machine. To a girl accustomed to waking at ten in the morning it was no small wrench to put back the hands of the clock to seven a. m., as a rising hour, and instead of luncheon in a well-appointed dining room, to scurry to a restaurant for a hurried mid-day meal.

"My, isn't it fine to think that our course is nearly finished,' sighed Matty Brown, a trim girl in black, busily engaged in puting on her hat before a small mirror, which hung in the cloak room. 'I suppose we'll be hunting for work next. I'onder if we'll soon get any?"

"I hope so," said Rosamond, soberly. The hundreds and hundreds of toilers whom she passed in the streets each night after the five o'clock whistles blew had given her a very different view of life from that which she had cherished in her brocaded boudoir. She knew now that it was composed of infinite struggle and hardship, and it was with a thrill of thankfulness that she found herself singled out from a dozen aplicants to be the stenographer of Graham Ellis, a young lawyer, of whom great things were prophesied.

From the first Rosamond liked him. He was kind and courteous; never too hurried to be polite, never more exacting than the occasion required. His sincerity and straightforwardness spoke not only in his frank and genial maner, but in every direct glance of his steady gray eyes, every motion of his well-poised head.

"Tired?" said Rufus Maythorn a few months later, looking at his daughter across the dinner table that sparkled with silver and cut glass.

"Not a bit," she answered, cheerfully.

"And you still like your employer?"

"He seems," said Rosamond, demurely, "to be a very just and reasonable sort of person!"

"The people who know him say fine things of him," returner her father. "I should judge that he was composed of brain and muscle rather than of saw-dust."

One evening after office hours, as Rosamond was walking homewards, Graham Ellis joined her. She had played so long on the dangerous edge of discovery that she had become accustomed to it, but on this particular night his sudden presence startled her, and to gain time she turned into a shabby side street. The girl was just disappearing into one of the dingy dorways. It was Matty Brown. Instantly Rosamond saw a way of escape.

"Good night," she said, pausing, and abruptly holding out her hand to Graham Ellis.

"You live here?" he interrogated.

A little demon of mischief looked out of Rosamond's brown eyes.

"Why not?" she queried, lightly, already half way up the steps.

"May I come and see you some time, when you're not too tired or busy?" he asked.

"I should be delighted," smiled Rosamond, and then slipped into the dimly lighted hall where the figures of Matty Brown was slowly receding. Here she waited till she knew that Graham Ellis had passed, and then went out again, her heart beating more than it had ever done over a social triumph. Poor and dismal and dingy though the place was, he had cared enough to come and see her in, while the men she was accustomed to meet in the drawing rooms of her friends would have sneered and passed on.

"I must have made a mistake in the number, Miss March," he said to her the following week. "Was it fifteen or seventeen? I rang at several doors, but no one seemed to know your name."

"We've moved," said Rosamond, calmly. "We don't live there any more."

"Oh, I see," said Graham Ellis. There was a long pause. "Of course, he began rather stiffly. "Of course, if you don't care to have me call—"

Rosamond bent over her machine. "I don't know when you've seen where I life, if you'll like it," shem urmured, and Ellis was too much in earnest to note the catch of amusement in her tone.

"Like it," he cried, "of course I'll like it! Do you think it makes any difference to me where you live. Surely we can't have worked together all these months without your knowing that I love you!"

"Ah," said Rosamond, with a ripple of whimsical laughter, "then if nothing makes any difference, you won't mind my being Rufus Maythorn's daughter, instead of Rosamond Marsh! For you know, there was once an ancient who set out with a lantern to look for an honest man, but, since I'm a modern, I've used a typewriter instead! And it led me straight to you!"

"To a man with nothing on earth to offer you, but love!"

"Well, isn't that the greatest thing in the world?" she whispered, flushing adorably.

IS YOUR DIAMOND A REAL ONE?

Girls Who Wear a Single White Stone on the Engagement Finger Can Test for Themselves.

Wholesale dealers in precious stones have opened a campaign against the fraudulent sale of imitation precious stones, and information is being sent to retail jewellers throughout the country of a new but simple method of distinguishing all glass imitations from genuine stones.

Hitherto, dealers in Maiden lane say, the sale of spurious gems has been greatly facilitated by the fact that the false character of many of them could not be detected except by a man trained in using special apparatus. Now any person by simply dipping the stone, whether free or set, into an acid, may learn at once if it is glass. Hydrofluoric acid, which is commonly used in jewelry factories in etching glass is the only requisite. One minute's immersion will eat the polish off the hardest glass ever made.

Because of the cheapness of this acid and the simplicity of the method the dealers believe it will soon be in general use in retail stores and among purchasers of stones to end deception. The president of a company of lapidaries in this city discovered that the acid would solve the problem and imparted the information to other wholesale dealers.

Hydrofluoric acid, this man says, will not injure gold, so that stones set in rings or brooches may be immersed without removal from the settings. Turquoise and opals are rapidly eaten by the acid, and quartz gems, such as amethyst, ordinary topaz, crystal and peridot, are slightly etched. The dealers are sending out warnings to persons not used in handling acids to wear rubber gloves or rubber finger tips to protect the skin and to exercise caution as to the fumes which are dangerous. They are rejoicing because the four stones classed as precious—the diamond, the ruby, the emerald and the sapphire—are all proof against the action of the acid.

A CURIOSITY OF LUNACY.

Periodicity of Mania by Which the Patient Lives Three Lives.

There is a special form of mental disease, first described in France, whose definite character is given to it by its periodicity, and hence it is called folie-circulaire. In it there are three sections of the mental circle that the patetin moves in—viz., elevation, depression and sanity—and in this round he spends his life, passing out of one into the other, for it is, when fully established, a very incurable disease.

The patient takes an attack of mania, during which he is joyous, restless, troublesome, extravagant and often vicious. He eats voraciously, sleeps little and never seems to tire. His temperature is a degree or so above the normal, his eye bright and glistening, he is enamored of the other sex.

HAPPENS ONCE EVERY 2,500,000 YEARS.

A remarkable freak in moon phases was noted in the month of February, 1866, a month which has gone into astronomical annals as "the month without a full moon." In that year January and March each had two full moons, but February none. A writer in a leading astronomical journal uses the following language in describing it: "Do you realize what a rare thing in nature it was? It has not happened before since the beginning of the Christian era or probably since the creation of the world! It will not occur again, according to the computations of the astronomer royal of England, for—how long do you think? Not until after 2,500,000 years from 1866!"