

THE FINDING OF THE PATH

"We can't go on like this." The girl twisted round in her long cane chair and caught at a swaying creeper with petulant fingers.

"I am painfully aware of the fact. If you have quite finished your tea we may as well discuss matters now."

The man's tone was quite level-businesslike, in fact—the tone that he would use later in the day when dictating letters to his Babu typist. There was no indication that he was interested in the matter other than from a business standpoint.

He settled himself rather more stiffly in his chair, waiting for her to speak. But she only trailed the bit of creeper over the edge of the veranda, looking straight in front of her with eyes that were curiously hard for so childish a face.

It was not a particularly attractive scene; the flat was midway in a narrow street, and the white gray walls of the opposite buildings were broken only by a struggling peepal tree and a stunted palm.

The narrow outlook had always seemed to Nina the epitome of the big travesty she found India. Her home visions were of a marble mansion, more or less white, with a retinue of dark servants in snowy garments, feathery palms and flaming blossomed bushes growing at her doors, and trees thick with oranges, guavas and mangoes (irrespective always of the time of the year and the precise situation of Bengal).

She had found a three-room flat, "with no front," as she wrote home in dismay; her suburban-provincial mind could not take to the word "compound," and, in any case, the flat had none.

In short, out of the depths of her ignorance she had come out to find heaven and all that in it is on five hundred rupees a month, with a husband of forty-odd, and had found—this.

"Can you make any suggestions as to what we can arrange?" His voice was measured still; he had, at least, found that sort of pathetic dignity which comes to most men (and many of the women) in the land where only death hurries. His wife—barely seven months out and restless under the misery of her first hot weather—was far from it.

"I want to go home," she broke out, taking quick breaths and tearing the tiny pink petals from the creeper; "I am sick of this hateful place, and the heat—and nobody here! It was bad enough in the cold weather, but now it's—it's hateful!"

Frere glanced at the pretty face and its fretful eyes with the same look, half judicial and half absent-minded, that he had given shortly before to the bearer as he swept a cup of the chota hazri tray. Something of a failure from boyhood, he had thrown for happiness so late in life that he had hardly surprised himself he had drawn one of the many losing numbers. But each day helped to blunt the regret and make him look forward, almost with relief, to the inevitable return to his old existence.

"It is certainly a pity that you came out," he replied, slowly. "I am sorry that you have found life so unpleasant, and I can hardly give you a more luxurious place at home on my present income."

"Oh, I can go home—to my own home!" she flashed out.

Allen Frere flushed, and his lips went into a thin line.

"I think not," he answered quietly. "You see, Nina, you are my wife, and the fact that you prefer to reside in England doesn't affect my position."

"But I thought people separated when they couldn't agree—the man wins—and we never shall get on together, so what is the good of keeping up this farce?"

"There's some question of dignity, you see," he said, after a pause. "As it is, you may find it somewhat difficult to go home—alone. Unfortunately, marriages can't be undone, because of a difference in tastes and tempers; and I shall not trouble you much—I'm not likely to come home."

The girl moved her rings restlessly and kept her eyes away.

"You'll find it rather hot going home now," Frere went on, after a long silence, "and it will be worse later on. Would you like to go up to Darjiling until September, and then—just as you prefer?"

"No, no. I don't want to go to the hills; I want to go home—now!" And, with the angry, miserable tears of a defiant child in her eyes, she walked past him to the little room he had tried to convert into a "bed-chamber" to please her, swinging the purdah behind her fiercely.

For no apparent reason, Frere walked round the table to reach the veranda stairs; as he passed the long chair, he dropped his hand on the top of it and stood staring down at the withered creeper she had torn.

The last week had been such a whirl that he had hardly had time to think—certainly not time to think so much of her sorrows.

Frere had taken her passage in the next homeward-bound boat, and tonight he was to see her on board at Garden Reach, as they were to leave the river in the early morning. With wholly feminine irrationality, she was complaining to herself that he might have got away from the office, at least for this day; that there would be no particular reason and small satisfaction in doing so did not occur to her. She had dressed early from sheer restlessness, and moved from one room to another of the deserted flat for the last time, trying to arrive at a mood of satisfaction or only reaching one of fretful doubt.

He had been too old and grim and self-centred—her people had always said so; and she had thought to find India such a different place, and did not know that they would really be poor there and not "in society" a bit; and—and—this was the only way out of it. She was young and pretty, and why should she spoil any more of her life?

Coming to a pause at the little side window which gave on to a not very savory back compound, she saw a native—a woman—walk softly to a sun-drenched veranda, and a cool breeze from the veranda, that new world

THE POT-BOILER

"Oh! What's this?" she asked, knitting a pair of clear, penciled eyebrows.

"That's only a pot-boiler," he replied airily.

For two years he had been painting mysterious "impressions" to the immense satisfaction of himself and a select circle of highly intellectual, long-haired friends. They were wonderful pictures, with fantastic titles, and might be hung in any light without the loss of effect. The great French artist under whom he had studied in Paris described them as beautiful. Perhaps they were, but the British public showed no disposition to purchase them.

Now, considered as impressions, Brampton Hay's pictures were undeniable. Considered as salable articles for the decoration of galleries or rooms, they were a complete failure. Consequently, when he observed that his modest banking account was becoming so ridiculously modest as to approach the non-existent state, like a wise young man he set to work on something likely to prove convertible into money.

"What is a pot-boiler?" she asked. "I suppose you will think me a Philistine for not knowing, but although I have often heard the word, I have never properly understood it."

"Pot-boiling," he said, with the self-confident air of a young man who has absorbed the wisdom of ages, "is the art of painting or writing 'rot.'"

She looked at him in amazement, and then turned and looked again at the picture, which until she arrived had stood on the ground face to the wall in disgrace.

"Why paint 'rot'?" she asked. "Because the public like it!" he said, gravely, "and when the public like a thing they buy it; buying it involves paying for it, and when people pay for things you have no wherewithal to purchase bread and butter, and possibly a small piece of cheese to go with it."

"You mean that the public don't buy these?" she said, indicating with a sweep of her arm the stacks of "impressions" with which the little studio was furnished.

"They don't," he said dryly, but without any bitterness. To his credit he said he had not cultivated long hair or cynicism in spite of many years of bitter failure.

"But they will buy this!" she said, indicating the pot-boiler. "With all my heart I hope so," he said.

"One more question," she murmured with a pretty smile, "and then I will try not to be a Philistine again. In what respect is that picture 'rot'?"

He looked at his handiwork with the head on one side, while an expression somewhat between pride and disdain flickered across his face. Why was it "rot"? He hardly knew how to explain it in so many words.

"You see, there is an artistic pretension in that picture," he said slowly. "There is no—tone, no imaginative effect, no subtle contrast. The picture doesn't appeal to you as a picture, but as a story."

"Mustn't a picture mean anything, then?" she asked innocently. "To be sure it should," he said, hurriedly. "But its meaning should be pictorial, not—"

"Not human?"

"Not narrative," he corrected severely. "Then he added, with deep disdain, "That is the kind of picture people will affix in its print form to cottage walls."

"I suppose that would be humiliating," she remarked demurely.

"You are laughing at me," he said, with a perfectly good tempered smile. "Not at all; I am honestly trying to understand the point of view, she said hastily, giving him a look which had he happened to see it, would have cheered him more than a dozen favorable criticisms. "I suppose I shall always be a Philistine," she went on, "for it seems to me that this picture is the best in the room."

He looked at her in silent astonishment.

"Let me see if I understand it," she said. "You have a farmhouse and by the red clay soil I should say it is Devonshire, or at any rate West Country. In the field outside the homestead there is a young man lying asleep and a dear old mongrel doggie is looking at him. The title of the picture is most peculiar, part of it. You call it 'The New Road.' Just at first it sounds unsuitable, but let me see if I have guessed the title correctly. The young man is half starving and utterly exhausted, which she has been so carefully constructing of late, wherein she would forget all the unpleasant things and really enjoy life. Except, perhaps, with him; with the utter unreasonableness of a woman, she only felt pity for him—pity and a curious indefinite feeling which she had never yet had for her husband. The voices ceased, and she stood idly watching a hen-woman on the veranda below her—both of them with the thin, sun-parched faces and dead, weary eyes of the country born and bred. The man was making a few shuffling steps to and fro, the woman taking half his weight; evidently she was lying in hospital with him, after the curious fashion of India. Neither of them was attractive, except so far as the commonplace tragedy of their obvious poverty and the man's illness went; but, as they came slowly into the patch of vivid moonlight on their veranda, the look in the woman's face suddenly took the hardness from Nina's; the absorbed, heart-aching devotion of those weary eyes that never moved from watching the man's face made her shiver and turn away as if she had no right to see such things.

Then a nurse came to take her to her husband, and, with a warning that she must be very quiet and not excite him, left them together. The glowing moonlight was screened out of the tiny private room where they had but him; in the dim light Nina hardly saw his first look toward her, yet the likeness of his eyes to those of the woman she had just seen made her throat choke and words impossible.

"I'm afraid—I've upset you," the old quiet voice said. "I'm sorry—it should have happened—just now." But the girl was down on her knees by him, his hands in hers and the light dawned in her eyes which he had never seen in her, crying brokenly "Ah! Oh, Ah!"

With the cry he knew that "between the heights and the depths there is a middle way on which they had, at last, entered together—Florence M. Bailey in The Sketch.

THE POT-BOILER

his clothes are Londoned but in rags; his boots are dropping off his feet, he is dead beat, at the lowest ebb of despair. But he has in fact struck the new road. He has been to London and gone more than half way to the bad, then he has turned his face toward home. He seems to have tramped most of the way, and he has arrived there just before day-break one spring morning. Utterly worn out, he has flung himself down under a blossom laden apple tree and fallen asleep. The sun has risen and the dog has found him. It is the prodigal son in a new guise. You call it "The New Road"; that is, he has turned his back on the old road and is going to begin afresh."

He seemed to be about to offer some explanation, for he had kept his artistic faculties quite apart from his love of human nature, and was about to explain that a beautiful story is not the same thing as a beautiful picture, but at that moment a girl's voice was heard.

"Are you two people never coming to tea?" she said.

So the two people strolled into the adjoining room, where the fiancée of Brampton Hay's chum was dispensing tea.

It was a red letter afternoon for the two young artists when the girls swooped down upon them unexpectedly.

Sir George Chalmers has found it necessary to run up to London on business and had very properly brought his daughter and her visitor with him for the occasion.

Clem Walton, who shared a studio with Hay, was naturally enraptured when his sweetheart wired to say she was coming.

But even his joy was exceeded by that of his friend as the news that Lucy Chalmers would take part in the "swoop." The two men had spent a cheery holiday the year before in Devonshire, where they had both fallen victims to the young gentleman who is usually represented as being attired in the Spartan simplicity of a bow and arrow. But their fates were widely different. Clem, who was nobody in particular, had succumbed to the charms of a girl whose position was not more exalted than his own. Consequently, in due course they were comfortably engaged in quite the old-fashioned, commonplace way.

But Brampton Hay had no such luck; although the two girls were friends, he had the misfortune to fall in love with the one who was daughter to two millions money. Now, birth and position are often bars to romantic unions, but there is no bar so impermissible as enormous wealth. Lucy Chalmers was no better born than Brampton himself, she was, besides, a thoroughly unaffected, simple-minded girl. But enormous wealth of the self-made order has its responsibilities. Sir George Chalmers had risen from the proverbial half crown—some say less—to the aforementioned dazzling sum, and picked up a baronetcy on the way. He was, in fact, a very decent old fellow, and above all ridiculously fond of his daughter.

But he had a very clear conviction as to her duty in the matrimonial market. He had accumulated wealth. In a generation or two the Chalmers of his day would be long to the landed gentry of England, as a matter of course. He would no longer belong to the nouveaux Chalmers worthy of the name to add something to the lustre of the family, irrespective of his own private wishes. Having no brother, Lucy must perpetuate the glories originated by her father, for her husband would be required to assume Chalmers as a name, and the girl had been taught to feel this responsibility as a real duty.

Consequently, Brampton and Lucy understood from the first that their cause was practically hopeless. They made no particular secret of their affection, for Sir George had no dislike for the young man himself, and was wise enough not to oppose his daughter's admirer so long as the "family duty" was perfectly understood.

"My dear old Brampton," the girl had said when he proposed for the twenty-seventh time, "you know what my feelings are, but what can I do? I suppose it's awfully heroic of me, but I would no more think of marrying a man to whom the old dad objected than I would think of marrying a man to whom I objected myself."

"Perhaps he will come round some day," said Brampton.

"Perhaps so," she said with a wistful smile.

Women have more patience and it must be admitted more common sense in these matters. She was very fond of Brampton and was certain that his wife she would have been extremely happy, but she also saw that it was not to be.

In the interim they had a very good time. They wrote as many letters as they liked, and when Sir George brought the girls up to town he was quite satisfied for them to spend the afternoon with the young men after a morning in Bond Street.

It was while the four young people were sitting at tea that the house-keeper—a woman of most respectable ugliness—announced a gentleman.

"I suppose I must see who it is," said Brampton.

He strolled out into the studio where his visitor awaited him and found it was Sir George Chalmers himself, who had finished his business earlier than he anticipated.

"You are just in time for a cup of tea," she said, Brampton, with the heartiness appropriate to the father of the girl he wanted to marry.

The old man paid no attention to the welcome nor to the outstretched hand.

"What do you mean by that picture?" he asked pointing to the pot-boiler.

"That? Oh, that is just a little fancy picture," said Brampton.

He was somewhat astonished at the question, because hitherto Sir George had declined to take any interest in his work, having no "fancy for the rubbish."

"Yes, yes," said the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

THE POT-BOILER

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

"That is a More Farm near Mary Tavy," said Brampton, with a smile. "I was born there. When I was in Devonshire last year I made a sketch of the old place, and the other day, when I wanted a subject for a pot-boiler, I used it."

the old fellow testily. "But what put the idea into your head? What does the picture represent? What do you mean by it?"

"I call it 'The New Road,'" said Brampton.

The old man looked at him with a kind of fierce surprise. "But the farmhouse," he said. "What is it? What is its name?"

Table with 4 columns: DAY OF MONTH, DAY OF WEEK, COLOR OF VESTIMENT, and SEVEN DOLORS. It lists the days of the month from September 1st to 30th, including religious observances like 'Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost' and 'Most Holy Name of Mary'.

Electric Wiring advertisement for McDonald & Wilson, Toronto. Includes text: 'Complete Plants Installed. Satisfactory results guaranteed.' and 'McDonald & Wilson TORONTO'.

St. Michael's College advertisement. Text: 'St. Michael's College IN AFFILIATION WITH TORONTO UNIVERSITY. Under the special patronage of His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto, and directed by the Basilian Fathers. Full Classical, Scientific and Commercial Courses. Special courses for students preparing for University Matriculation and Non-Professional Certificates.' Includes name of Rev. J. R. TEEFY, President.

Loretto Abbey advertisement. Text: 'Loretto Abbey.. WELLINGTON PLACE, TORONTO, ONT. This fine institution recently enlarged to over twice its former size, is situated conveniently near the business part of the city, and yet sufficiently remote to secure the quiet and seclusion so essential to study. The course of instruction comprises every branch suitable to the education of young ladies. Circular with full information as to entrance terms, etc., may be had by addressing LADY SUPERIOR, WELLINGTON PLACE, TORONTO.' Includes name of A. T. LAING, Registrar.

School of Practical Science advertisement. Text: 'SCHOOL OF PRACTICAL SCIENCE ESTABLISHED 1876 TORONTO. The Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering of the University of Toronto. Departments of instruction: 1-Civil Engineering, 2-Mining Engineering, 3-Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, 4-Architecture, 5-Analytical and Applied Chemistry. Laboratories: 1-Chemical, 2-Assaying, 3-Milling, 4-Steam, 5-Metallurgical, 6-Electrical, 7-Testing. Calendar with full information may be had on application. A. T. LAING, Registrar.'

St. Joseph's Academy advertisement. Text: 'ST. JOSEPH'S ACADEMY St. Alban Street, TORONTO. The Course of instruction in this Academy comprises every branch suitable to the education of young ladies. In the ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT special attention is paid to MODERN LANGUAGES, FRENCH, ITALIAN and FINE ARTS. Pupils on completing the NORMAL COURSE and passing a successful EXAMINATION, conducted by professors, are awarded Teachers' Certificates and Diplomas. In this Department pupils are prepared for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts of Toronto University. The Studio is affiliated with the Government Art School and awards Teachers' Certificates. In the COLLEGIATE DEPARTMENT pupils are prepared for the University, also for Senior and Junior Law, Engineering, Medicine and Commercial Courses. Circulars and prospectuses sent free. Photographs and Typewriting. For Prospectus address: MOTHER SUPERIOR. A Wide Sphere of Usefulness.—The consumption of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil has grown to great proportions. Notwithstanding the fact that it has now been on the market for over twenty-one years, its prosperity is as great as ever, and the demand for it in that period is very greatly increased. It is beneficial in all countries, and wherever introduced fresh supplies are constantly asked for. Mothers and other guardians of youth will appreciate the point of a story found in "Sunday at Home." Alexis came home one night with his clothes full of holes. "What has happened to you?" exclaimed his mother. "Oh, we've been playing shop ever since school closed," Alexis replied. "Shop?" echoed his mother. "Yes. We opened a grocery, and everybody was something," Alexis explained. "It was this cheese."