

Redeemed Pledges.

By J. LUDLUM LEE.

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Solomon Isaacs had been counted a prosperous pawnbroker for years. His little shop, located on the corner of a busy thoroughfare, showed a big profit, while large concerns in the neighborhood had failed during the hard times.

Real estate sharks had made tempting offers to Solomon for his precious corner, but he assured them all that he was doing very well and did not care to sell. Indeed, Solomon boasted of many fashionable customers, and this showcases often displayed gorgeous items, offered for sale at temptingly low prices.

Business seldom started in until after 10 in the morning, so Solomon was standing in the open doorway smoking a cigar when his attention was attracted to a fashionably dressed young woman looking in his window. Suddenly she caught his glance and darted in the doorway.

"I want to get this watch out of pawn," she said as Mr. Isaacs followed her into the shop. She handed him the ticket.

"Out early, ain't you?" suggested Isaacs as he glanced her over, wondering how she had happened to pawn a watch for \$5. Clearly some one had arranged the matter for her. Isaacs never forgot a business face.

He took the ticket and went to the back of the store in search of the pledged article, and Nita Norcross spent the time in looking into a tempting case of old jewelry. One old locket attracted her and on his return she asked its price.

Isaacs took out the locket slowly, still searching the girl's face. The price seemed reasonable, and she bought it. Turning to leave the shop.



"WHY, I BOUGHT IT," SHE FINALLY ANSWERED.

she met face to face a huge policeman and a little youth. Nita's heart went out to the latter. In her imagination she pictured the young man as wayward and pawning, perhaps stealing, jewelry. Surely he must be a thief, or why his police escort? The suspected youth looked at her sharply as he passed into the shop, and Nita hurried home with her purchase. Once in her room, she told her maid to send the laundress upstairs. She wished to speak to her privately.

"Here is your watch, Mrs. Berry," said Nita as she handed the timepiece to her washerwoman, who began to weep copiously on a gingham apron.

"I hope you will never have to part with it again. The next time you need money for sickness or any serious trouble come to me. Never pawn anything again. It is a terrible habit," continued Nita. Then, recalling the picture of the handsome youth, she added: "It teaches young men where they can get extra money and offend girls then into trouble than out of it. Now run along to your work and never think of it again." And Mrs. Berry, clasping the cheap yet precious watch of her dead husband to her heart, went back to her tub.

Several weeks later Nita Norcross was invited to the clam bake given at Oak Ridge by her old friends the Clydes. Mrs. Clyde introduced her to the many new friends they had met since moving to Oak Ridge, and soon supper was in full swing.

Encircling the round table were thirty men and girls, and Nita casually looked them over. Directly opposite she recognized a new face strangely familiar. Where had she seen that man before? He had an almost imperious smile, and look where she would, their glances seemed always to cross.

Supper was over, and the guests were strolling about the grounds. The man with the familiar strange face came up to Nita as she stood beneath a large tree.

"This is Miss Norcross, I believe," he said. "I am Mr. Hildredth. We were introduced early in the evening, but I don't think you did catch my name. Have you seen the stolen locket of which Clyde is so proud?"

"I saw it," Nita answered, and she turned away from the crowd, then found a comfortable little seat along the water's edge, and the moonlight fell clear upon them.

"Gorgeous night, isn't it?" suggested Nita. She could not explain why she had this subconscious compulsion feeling when with this man.

"Bully," he replied. "May I light a cigarette just to keep the bugs away?" "You certainly may," agreed Nita.

"I wonder if you would think me frightfully rude," began Mr. Hildredth, "if I were to ask you where you ran against the locket you have on your neck, Miss Norcross. It's a perfect beauty. I have seen but one other like it, and that belonged to my mother."

Nita blushed and nervously twirled the locket which hung on a fine chain about her neck.

"Why, I bought it," she finally answered.

"Yes, of course, but where?" The silence which followed was painful, and Hildredth continued: "You see, my mother's locket was stolen along with a lot of other jewelry that my valet relieved me of about a year ago, and I've spent hundreds of dollars and a world of time trying to locate the stuff. What he took of mine I don't care a rap about, but my mother's keepsakes—well, you could understand that would be a different thing. In my mother's locket there is a picture of a child—a picture of me. Whom do you carry in yours, Miss Norcross?"

Hildredth waited several minutes for his answer. Slowly the girl took the locket from her throat and reached it to him.

The Lady of The Lilacs.

By Philip Keen.

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Sherwood called her "The Lady of the Lilacs" because always on spring days there was a bunch of lilacs on her desk, offerings from the girls to a best loved teacher.

"You simply can't help loving her," Betty Baynes said to Sherwood in her emphatic young girl way. "You simply can't help it, Uncle Jack."

"I don't see," Uncle Jack ventured. "Where her particular charm comes in."

"She's so sweet," Betty analyzed, "and dainty—and—and—Betty was getting into deep water. "Anyhow, she's lovely."

Sherwood always called for his niece after school and drove her out to Sherwood farm, where Betty and her widowed mother made their home with him. The farm was beyond the town—a great place, with great barns, where were housed the beautiful horses that had made the farm famous.

As he sat in the trap waiting he could look right into the windows of the room where Miss Duval taught, and he could see her head bent over her desk, with the great bunch of lilacs making a background.

"Look here," he said to Betty one afternoon as they drove away in the sunshine, "I'd like to paint her that way."

"What way?" asked Betty. "Paint Miss Duval—just her head, bent a little, against a background of lilac blooms, with a circle of gold inclosing it like a halo."

"Oh, Uncle Jack," Betty's face was beaming. "It would be beautiful." "I'd call it 'The Lady of the Lilacs,'" Sherwood planned. "By George, Betty, I believe it would be the best thing I've done."

But "The Lady of the Lilacs" when approached refused to be painted. "Oh, please tell Mr. Sherwood," she said breathlessly, "that I couldn't think of such a thing. I am sure he can find a better model, Betty."

"He can't," Betty said obstinately. "Please, please, Miss Duval." The little teacher shook her head. "Don't insist, dear," she said. "I really cannot."

"Now, what do you think of that, Uncle Jack," said Betty, almost in tears as they drove away that night. "I don't know what to think," said Sherwood. "I hate to give up the idea."

"Well, don't give it up," Betty said. "You know you always get your own way when you want it, Uncle Jack."

"Yes, I do," said Sherwood thoughtfully. Several days later when Betty came out of the school arm in arm with the little teacher Sherwood met them at the door.

"Won't you let us drive you home, Miss Duval?" he urged. "We will go the long way round, and it will do you good."

Miss Duval hesitated. "Oh," she began, but Betty interrupted: "Of course you'll go. You've never driven behind the Buckner team, and they are such beauties."

It developed that Miss Duval was from Kentucky and that she loved horses, and she must come at once. "Why can't you ride here?" Sherwood demanded. "We have a half dozen ladies' mounts in the stables that are growing fat and lazy for want of exercise."

"I haven't a habit," Miss Duval demurred. "I have two," Betty announced promptly, "and you can wear one."

On Saturday Miss Duval in Betty's covert cloth habit and three cornered hat and mounted on Hilda Buckner was a transformed creature.

"I thought she was pretty," was Sherwood's mental comment, "but, by Jove, she's a beauty."

And more and more he yearned to paint her.

To that end he paid her most devoted attention, and it became a regular thing for the little teacher to spend the week ends at Sherwood farm. Betty's mother found her charming.

"Yes," Sherwood agreed moodily, "but I wish she would let me paint her as 'The Lady of the Lilacs.'"

His sister stared indignantly. "I don't believe you ever look at a woman except from the standpoint of art."

Sherwood laughed. "I don't fall in love easily, if that is what you mean," he said and shrugged his shoulders and went on.

"That afternoon he sauntered down to the end of the big garden where Dulce Duval was pouring tea. The little table was set under a lilac bush, and the fragrance of the blossoms filled the air.

Betty, on the other side of the bush, was playing tennis with a boy from town. Mrs. Baynes had been called to the house, and Sherwood was alone with the Lilac Lady.

"I wish you would let me paint your picture," he said to her.

"No," she said slowly. "I am not sure that I like the idea of my picture hanging in a gallery for the public to gaze at."

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Suggestive Questions on the Sunday School Lesson by Rev. Dr. Linscott for the International Newspaper Bible Study Club.

Dec. 6th, 1908.

Solomon Chooses Wisdom.—1 Kings iii:1-15.

Golden Text.—The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Prov. ix:10.

Verse 4.—What is the chief dependence alike of a king and citizen?

What was the chief object of sacrifices in those days? Was it to appease God, or to develop a spirit of giving to God, and did they have any idea that it prefigured the death of Jesus?

What are the chief benefits to the givers, of money given to the church, to missions and to the poor?

Which is the richer man and the one who has lived to most purpose, he who dies leaving no estate, but having given to God's cause \$10,000.00 during his life, or one who dies leaving an estate of \$20,000.00, and having given away practically nothing during life?

Verse 5.—Are such visions or dreams, as Solomon had, unusual in these days to spiritually minded people?

How could Solomon distinguish this dream from an ordinary dream?

Does God still give his children a choice as to what they would like, or does he choose for them?

If God does not choose for his children, does he influence them in their choice, and what is the difference in the two supposed methods?

Verse 6.—What help is it to us, to be able to praise God for the lives of our fathers and mothers?

Do you think it probable that our fathers and mothers, on the other side, look back and see their sons and daughters here, and take pleasure in their prosperity?

Verse 7.—Should we, like Solomon, recognize the hand of God, in putting us into our present positions?

(Continued from page 4.)

Nov. 15th, 1908.—Psalm 32:1. May we learn of the reality of God's individual, and constant care of us, by "The practice of the presence of God," the same as we learn to think and see, and do, almost everything else by practices?

Nov. 22nd, 1908.—1 Kings 15:10

Are great men ever boastful; and is true humility always a mark of greatness?

Verses 8-9.—Solomon's chief desire was, to have wisdom to properly administer the trust committed to him; what should be our chief desire?

No matter how grave our responsibilities, or difficult our position, is it absolutely sure that God will give us in answer to our prayer, the necessary wisdom and facilities to successfully administer our trust?

Should all men in positions of public trust, feel their insufficiency and call upon God as Solomon did?

Verses 10-12.—Why did Solomon's request please the Lord?

Does God to-day answer every true or wise prayer, as he did this prayer of Solomon?

Would not all public, and private, sin and folly be prevented, if men only relied upon God?

What is some of the evidence, that God gave Solomon great wisdom?

Verse 13.—If our prayers are for goodness, and not greatness, to be of service, and not to be served, may we depend that God will give us every necessary thing, without our asking? (See Matt. vi:33-34.) (This question must be answered in writing by members of the club.)

Will every true Christian have all the riches and honor, that are good for him?

Verse 14.—Were God's promises in this case conditional upon obedience, and are they so conditioned in every case?

Verse 15.—Does communion with God always make us strong and brave and generous?

Lesson for Sunday, Dec. 13th, 1908.—Solomon Dedicates the Temple.—1 Kings viii.

How do you explain the fact that Abi-salom and Adonijah, sons of the same mother, and very handsome men, both turned traitors to their father and to the plans of God?

Nov. 29th, 1908.—Isaiah xxviii:10. In what consists our chief hope for the suppression of the ravages of the drink habit?

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