

Redeemed Pledges.

By J. LUDLUM LEE. Copyrighted, 1908, by Associated Literary Press.

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 his showcases often displayed gorgeous gems, 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 thought it. Turning to leave the shop.

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ed Nita. She could not explain why she had this subconscious, constrained 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. Ellidreth, "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 twisted 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 Ellidreth 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. Would you carry it in yours, Miss Norcross?"

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

"Open it," she almost whispered.

He did so and revealed the picture of a curly headed child of about six, and while Hilidreth looked long at the picture the girl told the story of how she came by it.

"And isn't it absurd," she was saying. "I thought you were a thief that day when I saw you with the policeman."

"And I," said Hilidreth, "though you were a society girl getting extra money to play the races or go to fortune tellers or some equally wicked dissipation." Then, changing his tone entirely, he continued: "I hate to ask the return of this, but mother valued it above price. But as she is now abroad I want you to show you hold me no ill will by putting it back on your throat and wearing it while you are at Oak Ridge. When we part?"

He extended the trinket to her, and his hand touched hers. Without argument she clasped the fine chain once more about her neck. Nothing was said by either, but Lawrence lit another cigarette and hit her.

"I think we had better join the crowd," said Nita, "or they'll be instituting a searching party for us."

The next days and for many days after during Nita's stay at Oak Ridge, Lawrence Hilidreth found an excuse to run over in his motor or to sail over in his boat to the Clyde lodge. The last evening of Nita's visit had come, and she and Lawrence were once more sitting by the water's edge. Nearly a month had passed, and another moon had come to shed its rays upon Oak Ridge.

"Tomorrow I am going home," Nita said, "so I will give you back the locket tonight. Your mother will be home soon, too, I hear."

He took it from her with reluctant hand.

"Nita," Lawrence's voice was tenderness itself. "There is just one woman to whom my mother would give that locket—my wife. Will you take me, Nita? Take my locket and my love? Tell me, Nita, that you love me."

Nita looked straight into his eyes.

"Larrie, dear, I do love you, and I always will."

He clasped the locket about her throat again, pledging it to her for life, and the kiss he received in payment seemed priceless.

From Welsh to Spanish. A very long time ago the British government ordered that English should be taught in Welsh schools.

There was a colony of persecuted Welsh miners fled from the British tyranny and settled in the deserts of Patagonia. These men were heroes, and with most magnificent courage they dared to live in a desert where not a plant would grow, where the water was brackish and the heat intolerable. They were surrounded by wild tribes of hostile savages and made them warm friends; they were ruled by a foreign government and became loyal citizens.

Through long years of want and famine they never despaired. They have turned the desert into a beautiful fertile country, have become rich, numbered settlements right across South America, own a paying railway and ship large crops of wheat, wool, ostrich feathers and quacoco skins.

They left Wales to escape the tyranny of the English language and now, rather than talk Welsh, they converse largely of their freedom in excellent Spanish.

Germs, Their Friends and Foes. Germs are powerless to affect a healthy body in which the vital resistance is maintained by good habits of living. Alcohol, tobacco and other such drugs, whether narcotic or stimulant, in their effects, are aids and comforts to our invisible enemies. Too much food, especially hearty food such as meat and beans, forms supplies for the commissary department of the enemy instead of for the brigades of white corpuscles. On the other hand, every breath drawn deeply into the lungs of fresh, sun warmed air is a direct blow struck at our foes and on the side of our defenders. Every sip of pure water aids the forces of life. So, too, does every motion in walking, running and other exercises—when exercise is not excessive. Every mouthful of pure food adds fuel to the same of life.

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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. "I used to ride a great deal there," she admitted.

"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 Hulda 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.

"I am glad to have Betty under her influence," she told her brother. "She is a lady to her finger tips."

"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 Dulcie Duval was gazing into the little lake. The 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."

"Surely," Sherwood urged, "one should not keep beauty hidden."

"I am not beautiful," she said quietly. She leaned back in the big wicker chair. Her face was very pale, and there were shadows under her eyes. Behind her the lilacs under her gaze were glowing in the spring breeze.

"I am not beautiful," she repeated.

"but I think I ought to tell you why I do not want my picture placed before the public."

It was such a simple little tale. She was married. That was the fact that was borne in upon him with stunning force. Her husband had been her father's choice, not her own.

"We were rich," she explained, "but after my father's death my husband spent everything we had, and I was very unhappy. So I ran away and took my maiden name. And that is why I do not want my picture to appear. I do not want him to find me."

She said it vehemently, with a little flush on her cheeks. "My father said love would come," she went on hurriedly, "but it did not. I felt for Betty's sake I ought to tell you. It's such unpleasant history that you might not care to have me with her so much."

Sherwood flung up his head. Suddenly it seemed to him that there was nothing that he so much wished to do as to shelter her from misfortune.

"Betty will always be honored by your presence, as we all are—as we shall always be," he said, and she smiled at him and held out her hand.

"Somehow I felt that I had found a friend," she said simply. "That is why I told you. It seemed best, and I knew you would understand."

That afternoon Sherwood went for a long ride on his favorite horse, Maxtel, and during that ride he fought a battle. Now that Dulcie Duval was out of reach she seemed the most desirable thing in the world. Indeed, from the first moment she had been desirable, but he had let the artist in him blind the lover. He had made himself think that it was her picture, not herself, that he wanted.

And now that he knew that he loved her he felt that he must go away—back to Paris to the studio—to the dreams that had of late been partially submerged in his practical plans for Sherwood farm.

When he came back that night, Betty met him on the porch.

"We are going for a ride early in the morning," she said, "Miss Duval and I, and I want you to go with us."

"Not tomorrow, Bettykins," he demurred. "I've got a lot of things to do. I am planning to spend the summer in Paris."

Betty's dismayed exclamation brought his sister and Miss Duval.

"He's going away," Betty cried, "and he doesn't know when he will come back."

And Sherwood, watching the face of the Lady of the Lilacs, saw it grow pale, and his heart leaped at the thought that she cared.

In the early morning from his bedroom window he saw them ride away. Five minutes later he was at the stables. "How does it happen that Miss Duval is riding Maxtel?" he demanded of a groom.

"Hulda is lame," said the man, "and Miss Duval insisted on riding Maxtel. We tried to get her to have one of the other mounts, but she wouldn't."

"Maxtel can't be trusted," said Sherwood sharply, "not