

Advertisement for Sweet "Saint" Valerie, A New Year's story. Includes a small illustration of a woman.

She was walking on the levee with a rapt expression on her face. There was a small basket on her arm, which would have shown the initiated that she was returning from an errand of mercy.

She was quite unconscious of the admiring glances that followed her, for her thoughts were occupied with things far away from that autumn afternoon. There was a spiritual beauty in her deep eyes, which was suggestive of some cloistered nun praying in a dim old chapel beyond the sea.

They called her "Sweet Saint Valerie" for miles around the plantation. To minister to others in sickness or in sorrow was her natural vocation.

To maidens who can regard love as pretty plain sailing Valerie's question never comes. They can say on the leaves of an imaginary daisy, "I love him, or I love him not," and decide the matter on the evidence of their own hearts.

Orange flowers and bridal veil seemed to be a more reliable medium, while Northern capital was ready to flow in healing streams at the sound of the wedding march.

There is generally a practical strain in very good women. St. Theresa, fairest and most spiritual of Catholic visionaries, had a strong talent for organization, and Valerie possessed a clear comprehension of all the worldly details about her.

She set her sweet lips at the bare suggestion. For herself she might face the unknown future rather than a loveless marriage—but for them!

The lamps were lighted before she reached home, and she stole around to the side to see if her father was in the library. She saw him sitting by the table—his gray head buried in his hands. The sight struck her with a sharp pang.

"Oh, dear God!" she murmured. "If this be sin, forgive me!"

The New Year's ball in New Orleans at Mme. de Hamers' was especially brilliant that year.

Several people remarked that there was a weary look on Valerie's lovely face, and that the lilies of the valley at her heart were visibly drooping.

One short week ago she had mentally made her choice. To-night she was to ratify that decision, to give her delicate hand, blue-veined with the blood of old nobility, into the clasp of Mammon.

Marschal Beaumanoir, who was one of her neighbors at home, approached Valerie. He was a thorough representative of what good birth and culture can do for a man.

It steps that tickling in the throat, is pleasant to take and soothing and healing to the lungs. Mr. E. Bishop Brand, the well-known Galt gardener, writes:—I had a very severe attack of sore throat and tightness in the chest. Some times when I wanted to cough and could not I would almost choke to death. My wife got me a bottle of DR. WOOD'S NORWAY PINE SYRUP, and to my surprise I found speedy relief. I would not be without it if it cost \$1.00 a bottle, and I can recommend it to everyone suffering with a cough or cold.

Advertisement for Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup, featuring an illustration of a pine tree.

Advertisement for Father Koenig's Nerve Tonic, featuring an illustration of a man's face.

A Burning Sensation. JOHNSVILLE, New Brunswick. For over six months I could hardly sleep and had a burning sensation in my feet, that would go through my whole system.

FREE A Valuable Book on Nervous Diseases and a Sample Bottle to any address. Poor patients also get the medicine free.

unwilling to make his marriage mere exchange and barter. It would be well to respect him at last.

The notes turned her. "Ring in the false, ring out the true!" they seemed to say.

He looked at her as she sat with her hands clasped in her lap. "But my answer, Valerie."

At last she raised her eyes and said very steadily: "I do care for you, and I feel that I shall be very happy."

Mr. Guinn had a vigorous understanding, however, and after fifteen months of married life he had struck the plumb line into Valerie's consciousness.

He felt great sympathy for her, and treated her with a chivalry which men of gentler rearing might have copied. He would not have married her had he known that she brought him no love.

His earliest education had been of the plainest kind; literature and art were sealed books for him.

On the evening before alluded to she dressed herself with particular care. Her gown was tinted with ashen pink, and gave a sort of floating, cloud-like effect to her figure.

"I have just received some new books on American literature, Hymar. I ordered them for papa, you know. I remember you once said you always go to sleep when you read a novel, but I thought perhaps you might lie comfortably on the sofa and listen while I read aloud."

She spoke with elaborate coolness, but her object was quite apparent to

the practical man beside her. "So she wants to cultivate me," he said to himself. "It is beginning to be hard to be mated with what she calls ignorance."

He sat up on the sofa, and for a second the keen light eyes shot out a glance that startled her.

"I have to keep in my mind all the fluctuations of a complex market," he said. "I must daily remember more details than all your authors put together would write up in a year. You need not begin by slow stages."

After that she read every night, but gradually it was he that directed the subjects and regulated the time. He drew out from what she knew outside the printed page, and assimilated it.

In January the first break came in the even tenor of their daily existence. Hymar brought home a telegram. His father was very ill in the old New Hampshire farmhouse, and might not live to see his son.

"I will be ready," she answered. This sorrow and sickness came like an echo from that maiden past, when people had called her "Sweet Saint Valerie."

For a moment the old life came to him—the loving, rustic people of his youth; his plain, unlettered home. He thought of his father, lying perhaps at the point of death, and his mother, with an apron over her head, weeping in a corner.

She said no more, but made her preparations to accompany him. He made another protest, but she cried piteously: "I am your wife. I have a right to be with you and your people in trouble. I am such a good nurse. Let me do my duty, Hymar."

A great surprise awaited him in New Hampshire. His wife, the dainty Southern princess, came into his stricken household like an angel of light. She nursed the old man, whom they found hovering between life and death; she encouraged his mother, and soon the family regarded her as one of themselves.

A week passed by. His father rallied; the doctor gave them hope, and the patient looked with strange understanding at this new daughter-in-law. They all took her quite simply.

"Hymar done well," said his elder brother, emphatically. "She has considerable faculty and no airs. We heard a year ago that her and him put on tolerable style, and that Hymar, long of his wife, had given up all his nat'ral ways. 'Pears like Hymar's got on more style than what she has."

On the tenth day Hymar sat alone in the dining-room. Valerie entered noiselessly. "Father is better," she said, "he wants to see you."

"Did you say my father was better?" he asked, with a slight accent on the positive pronoun. "Our father, Hymar. Surely what is yours is mine." Her face was very beautiful as she spoke, but her words sent no warmth to his heart.

Neither did the subsequent words bring him joy, when through his father's period of convalescence he saw his whole family cluster around her in a familiar love and admiration.

She was doing all this, he said bitterly to himself, as a Sister of Charity might have done. Once he overheard his father talking to his mother in the high, querulous voice of old age.

"I've got to love that girl better'n anybody'd suppose; but she sets more store by Hymar'n he do by her."

"Yes," said the mother, "her eyes is always a followin' of him round."

Advertisement for Surprise Soap, featuring an illustration of a woman washing clothes.

Makes Child's Play of Wash Day. A PURE SOAP. H.M.A.

He's perlit, but he don't seem in no ways lovin'."

"I've been thinking," said the old man, "that perhaps his money's gone the wrong way with Hymar—that p'raps, now he's so high up in the world, he wishes he'd hev married different—not a pretty, hard-working girl like Valerie, one of our sort, calling us father and mother, but a fashionable lady, with fine clothes and high and mighty airs."

Her husband thought of her as he had seen her at a ball only a month ago, resplendent in diamonds and rose-colored velvet.

He heard his mother repeat once more, like the sad refrain of an old song: "No, Hymar don't love her like she loves him," and he felt more desolate than ever before in his life.

Mr. Guinn passed the spring sadly. He was prosperous in all things, and his lovely wife came back with him from New Hampshire benefited instead of blighted by the cold.

Perhaps he had discovered a dangerous solace for the pain at his heart in the use of his mind.

Marschal Beaumanoir had always taken the exchange and barter view of Valerie's marriage, and had tried in several little French ways to console her.

"The maternal pie must have agreed with her," he said basely; but, to do him justice, he felt ashamed of the speech afterward.

"There has been high water for some time," said the father, standing on the veranda and speaking to Hymar Guinn. "If you are determined to return to New Orleans to-night, you had better go down by boat."

"First," said Hymar, "I must ride over and see Mr. Beaumanoir—he wants to consult me on business."

"It is well, my daughter, that you were led by your heart to understand and love that man. I used to wonder at your devotion once, but now I see he was worthy of it from the beginning."

And Valerie said to herself that friendship and esteem were the best guarantees of happiness in married life, and that the romantic love of youth was a most undesirable dream.

Two hours later she learned it. Her father had gone to see if he would hear any news of this husband whom she had told herself a thousand times she did not love.

A mingling of remorse and despair drove her frantic. He had been her one thought, one care for five years. He had been all her own, and she had not known she had loved him.

They all took her quite simply. "Yes," said the mother, "her eyes is always a followin' of him round."

gencies, forgetting herself to aid others. Now she thought only of herself.

That he might have escaped she did not dare hope. He was dead; such was her punishment.

She rushed out in the storm, and they followed her as best they could. She went in the direction of the Beaumanoir plantation.

Her sister pleaded in vain: "You will kill yourself, Valerie. It is quite in vain; papa will bring us news."

"What can you know, Marion! You have no husband. Let me be let me be! I will find him!"

Valerie's father had the satisfaction of discovering Mr. Guinn safe at Beaumanoir plantation. He explained that he feared his son-in-law might have gone on and been caught in the water flood further down.

"I let Valerie know nothing of it," said her father. "She would have been quite beside herself. She has such an affectionate heart."

"Valerie is very self-contained," replied her husband; "she is always cool."

He thought bitterly that the crevasse might have done his lovely wife a good turn by sweeping him away. He could picture her in her decorous and becoming widow's weeds.

"Yes," he said again, sighing, "I have never seen her lose her self-control."

The three men stepped out upon the veranda, just as a breathless and disheveled woman made her way towards the house. Valerie never knew afterwards what she said or what she did, except that she found herself in her husband's arms.

Valerie, weeping and distracted, with her hair down and her self-control torn to shreds, was a new Valerie to him. Marschal and his father, took it as a matter of course. Any wife is allowed to be as hysterical as she pleases when she finds her consort saved from sudden death.

It was with blank astonishment however, that Hymar beheld her first; then in her broken sentences he found the clue. Just as he knew before that she did not love him, so he knew now that she did. Only an emotion swamping all personality could have reduced her to that abject state.

So he comforted her, feeling again like the lover of that distant New Year's night, taking the good Providence had brought him without much question as yet.

As the days and weeks went by he concluded never to question. The love had come as a reward for her unflinching self-sacrifice. He would not trouble her by letting her guess the cruel pain which had blotted those years for him.

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