

an arithmetical problem of another kind. "That was Wesson we just passed, wasn't it? Then the next stop is Brookhaven—three fifty-two. When Craigie makes his books balance the first time trying, he goes home at four. Craigie's our cashier, you know."

"But isn't there anyone else you could wire?" She was still living up to her name; there was no tang of reproach in the query.

"Dozens of 'em, if I only knew which one I'd be sure to catch," said Graeme, scowling reflectively.

"Poppa is at home," suggested Felicity, tentatively.

Graeme turned on her like a hunted fugitive in the last ditch. "Don't you ask me to do that," he pleaded. "I'm in too miserably deep without adding that."

"Well, Mr. David Graeme, senior?"

"He is on his way to New York. He left this morning, if nothing happened to prevent him."

"Then let us pray that Mr. Craigie's books are utterly and hopelessly tangled up. It's our only chance," she sighed.

Graeme hastily wrote his telegram to the cashier, compressing it into ten words for the sake of a possible contingency which he foresaw might arise. Being so brief, it was very much to the point.

"Wire two hundred care Western Union, New Orleans. Waive identification."

was the form which finally approved itself; and while he was signing his name the train slowed for Brookhaven.

At the station operator's window the contingency reluctantly provided for became a fixed fact. The day rate for ten words to St. Louis was fifty cents, and the operator pointedly refused to take the risk of sending a "collect" message for a mere passer-by. Graeme gave up the final half-dollar in the joint purse and went back to Felicity feeling more keenly in sympathy with the submerged tenth than he had ever hoped to feel.

"It's done," he said, grimly, when the train was once more swinging along towards night and the Crescent City. "We're broke."

"Oh!" the exclamation was a little gasp. "Did you have to pay for it?" "Strictly in advance. And the operator seemed to think he was doing me no end of a favor to take it upon any terms."

"But our porter—did you see him last night?" Miss Felicity's brother had drilled her well and duly upon the matter of porter's tips.

"No; he stands to lose out this time. It's an imposition, anyway. The Pullman Company ought to pay its employees living wages. This is going to be our joint protest against an iniquitous system of blackmail."

"Yes, but—" "I know; we always do it. But this is one of the times when we are not going to do it."

He did not mean to be short with her, but a fresh examination of the railroad folder had given him a still more violent wrench towards desperation. Their train, which was promptly on time, was due to arrive in New Orleans at seven-fifteen, but the last train by which Miss Allardice could reach Pass Christian would leave the L. & N. depot at the foot of Canal Street at eight o'clock.

Forty-five minutes for the transfer were ample, granting a cab and no detentions. But they must walk, and there must be a pause at the Western Union office on the corner of Gravier and St. Charles. Also, there was supper, or the lack of it, to be reckoned with.

Graeme excused himself abruptly and went to the smoking-room to think it out. Money—ready money—must be compelled at any and all costs.

The only other occupant of the smoking-compartment was an elderly man who looked as if he might be an Iowa farmer on a vacation trip. He had lower six, and earlier in the day, before the poverty blight had fallen so wiltingly upon them, Graeme and Felicity had joked about the facial likeness of Lower Six to the Uncle Sam caricatures of the cartoonists. But now Graeme was studying the plain, elderly face from the attacking point of view. It was not very hopeful, he decided. It had all the shrewdness of the caricatures, without the

and Graeme, unused as any son of

was to be going for favors at

strange hands, managed to start a conversation and to flog it around in some halting fashion to his present need in matter for the blue pencil of oblivion. So, also, is the rebuff he had. Five minutes later, riding a still sharper-edged rail of despair, he was tackling the train conductor. Once more his good clothes and his lack of thief's impudence—which was promptly set down as the role of innocence badly overplayed—stood in his way. In vain he offered his watch, his suit-case, any and all things portable, as security. The trainman was more than reluctant; he was fiercely suspicious.

"That'll do, young fellow," he snapped. "You don't work any of your confidence games on me. And, say, if I catch you so much as battin' your eye at anybody else on this train, off you go into the cypress swamp, ticket or no ticket."

Graeme was six-feet-one in his socks, and the conductor was under-sized. For a single, fire-flashing instant the I. C. train service stood to suffer loss. But the moment passed, and Graeme went slowly back to the Pullman. Fair play demanded that the person most nearly concerned should know what she was confronting.

"Have you ever gone without a meal because you couldn't get it, Miss Felicity?" he began, doggedly.

"I suppose not," she rejoined. "Why?"

"Because we shall have just forty-five minutes between trains this evening, with a mile to walk, and a call to make at the telegraph office. I can't seem to figure in the supper time."

She took it sympathetically. "You poor, harassed thing!" she said, "I don't wonder you have to go off by yourself to say hard things about the evil chance that befell you last night in the St. Louis Terminal!"

He shook his head. "It was your evil chance, not mine. And there are lots of other—er—cussing marks to fire at."

She smiled sweetly. "Is it time for me to come to the rescue?"

"I wish you would—or could." "Listen, then. Do you know New Orleans?"

"Well enough to find my way about." "Very good; when our train arrives we'll walk to the telegraph office, and from there to the other depot. Then I'll let you buy me a ticket and a sandwich and a cup of tea, and put me on my train. Could anything be simpler?"

"Oh, no; it sounds simple enough. But I'd rob somebody of the cab fare rather than make you walk—if I knew how."

"I know you would," she answered, quickly. "And because I know it, it isn't necessary to worry about it; don't you understand?"

"I understand that you are all kinds of an angel, and that I'm not fit to travel on the same railroad with you," said David, in a sudden upheaval of devotion, and from that on they watched the backward-racing station lights in silence, bracing themselves for the final plunge.

It came soon enough, beginning, in fact, before the train stopped, in the persuasive attentions of the porter. Graeme let the whisk broom make its invitational passes in the empty air, and waved the negro away with a scowl so fierce that Felicity laughed.

"Is that a man's way?—to be savage because he wants to be generous and can't?" she asked.

Graeme was gathering up her hand baggage and his own.

"One minute more and we'll be out in the cold, cold world. I'm a desperate man, Miss Allardice. If Craigie has failed us—"

"Oh, don't suggest such horrible things," she begged; and together they left the train and the station, and fought their way through the crowd of vociferous cabmen at the curb to the comparative quiet of the opposite banquettes.

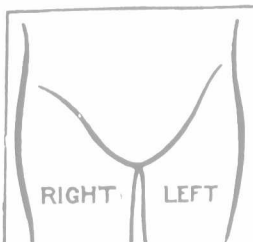
It was a good bit of a walk from the Illinois Central station to St. Charles Street, the way they made it. Graeme was not too familiar with the city, and he led the way over to Canal Street, which he knew, before turning riverward. The forthfaring was in solemn silence, but after a block or two Felicity began to be sorry for her companion and once more lived up to her name.

"Don't you know, I think this has been

(Continued on next page.)

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