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Swanson's Home Sweet Home

By CONRAD RICHTER.

CHAPTER IV.
Swanson looked thoughtful. He glanced up to the distant Coleman house on the hill.

"Matt," he began confidentially, "she's never yet asked me to come to see her. Don't you think I know her well enough for that—with us giving each other things like we do?"

"Gosh, I'd think so," declared the agent. Then put it down," said Swanson eagerly. "Write it on the book that I'm coming down next Sunday."

The following Sunday morning Swanson came to the Sabbath-quieted little town and struck out eagerly for the house on the hill. But despite himself he passed irresolutely by the gray fieldstone gateposts.

"I saw a figure in dainty white appear in the green arbor near the house. Something convincingly familiar in the figure arrested him. He strode eagerly up the drive. And it was no surprise to find that it was really, truly she."

"You don't mind I stopped to see where you lived?" he asked as humbly as only a strong man can.

"I don't look sorry, do I?" said the girl with a wonderful smile.

"Your folks here—do you think they might care any?"

The girl flushed. "They aren't my folks, you—"

"There is only one," explained the girl. "That's Mrs. Coleman. She is very sweet and won't be down this morning till eleven."

"I wish you'd ask me to come at six," wished Swanson earnestly.

"I will," promised the girl, "if you'll only start to play 'Home, Sweet Home' again. If you could only stand up here on the hill and hear how beautiful and impressive it sounds. Why won't you play it any more?"

"I was complained of," said Swanson briefly. "The same man did it who wanted to keep you off my cab that night at Redding."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. It was my fault, then."

"No, sir. It's his fault," replied Swanson gravely. "He never did like to hear it or any other music."

"He was a coward to report you," cried the girl. She clenched her small fists so feelingly that it warmed Swanson's heart to see her.

"You are a good friend to have," he said soberly.

He stayed until 11 o'clock. Under the green arbor they paced together through his gift book of bungalows.

Two more happy Sunday mornings and Swanson had almost learned to court his "weekaversary" girl. The third Sunday he found her gone.

"Of course, it is not her fault," he said to himself as he rode back to Penn City. "She's got to be a companion to the old lady. That's her business. If I'd have only known it, though, I might have put in the time by that—I could have easy. By gosh, I'll do it yet!"

He big list enthusiastically on to the other. Two hours more found him eagerly peeping in at the porch windows of a stained shingle bungalow in a little grove at the edge of Penn City.

The hardest thing Swanson ever did was to go through Queenston that following week without blowing "Home, Sweet Home."

"Home, Sweet Home," he sang at 7 o'clock. But boyishly he waited to tell her until it was time to leave.

Then, with his heart in his eyes, and eager as a kid, he hurriedly descended from roof to cellar. The girl listened, drinking in every word.

"It must be a wonderful place," she said softly. "I do wish you all the happiness in the world."

Swanson was a bit taken back. "Is—that all you're going to say?" he stammered.

"What else would you want me to say?" asked the girl gently, looking down into the green valley.

This was still queer. Swanson tried to think quickly and arrive at some relieving explanation. Perhaps she hadn't known him long enough—it wouldn't look right. Perhaps she didn't want to leave old Mrs. Coleman just yet. He hadn't counted exactly on this—but it would be all right. He and the house could wait. As he was picking his thoughts, an expensive motorcar passed along in the road below. The horn called loudly, and a young man whom Swanson recognized waved a hand to the girl, who waved back. Swanson's eyes grew stee.

The man was young Keene. "You know him?" he asked gravely. "He comes here with his mother to see Mrs. Coleman. Mrs. Keene and Mrs. Coleman are friends."

"I thought from his wailing that you might know him—sort of well," mentioned Swanson. His eyes were very still.

"I do know him well," said the girl. "One thing has interested us very much. His voice always sounded familiar to me, and he says mine has to

him. But neither of us can imagine where we ever saw or heard the other before. Mrs. Coleman says it's romantic. Can you imagine where we might have met?"

"Don't know—don't know," muttered Swanson stubbornly. For a full minute he was silent, then with a wistful light in his eyes he said goodbye and went down the drive.

But at the quiet little station he drew the agent aside. "Matt, did you ever hear anything about somebody else going with the lady up at Coleman's?"

Mattern turned away uneasily, then shook his head. "I don't know nothing, Home," he declared.

"You got to tell me," declared Swanson grimly. "You might as well have it over with."

"Well, they just said," stammered the agent, "that they believed she'd be nicer to young Keene after she pays you back enough for doing a favor for her once—they didn't say just what it was."

"I'm much obliged, Matt," said Swanson, tight-lipped, turning away.

He caught the red caboose of a north-bound extra and rode her silently into Penn City. That afternoon he tried vainly to think it over. Then he sat down in the unhomelike red-and-green-papered room of his boarding house and laboriously started a letter on ruled tablet with thickened purplish ink.

Dear Weekaversary Lady:
I just found out that there was somebody else. Excuse me for being so thickheaded before. So I won't come to see you any more. And you won't have to bother to send me any more weekaversary things. You more than paid me back long ago. But please keep the bungalow book. I couldn't stand to keep it. I wish that you will always be happy and have a Yours truly,

HOME, SWEET HOME.

He dropped the letter in the slot at the deserted postoffice, and then tramped out wearily to the bungalow at the edge of the woods. Somehow it looked small and very humble to him now.

"I guess we wasn't made for a lady, little house," he said, his voice choking him. "But I'm not going to sell you. We got to stick together. It'll be just you and me, now."

Next morning he reported off sick and asked for a pass out to the Pacific coast. The trainmaster told him it would take nearly a week to get it. They'd have to wait on for transportation. "Never mind, then," said Swanson. "I'll pay my way once like a man."

It was almost a month before he saw Penn City again. Quietly he reported on duty and went out to his little house in the woods. Several times he walked around it, trying to get up courage to go inside. But he couldn't do it; so he sat on the back porch steps with his chin in his knuckles. Early next morning, at the accustomed time, he went to the roundhouse with his bucket and coffee-can.

Almost like a sick man Swanson ran his train that day. Then, waiting for track room in the yards at Redding, a clerk from the nearby tower handed him a message. Without looking at it he passed it to his conductor who, with stammered apologies, handed it back and fled. Swanson glanced vaguely at the penciled words:

James Swanson, engineerman of no. 103: girl at Coleman's left on fifty-seven for good going west nobody knows where they say she turned k. down flat and made Mrs. Coleman mad has been sort of sick since you're away was down asking about you maybe you'll see her she takes pennies eleven o'clock flyer reading. MATT.

Swanson looked up bewildered; but there were flickers of light burning in his eyes. The cheeks that had grown sallow suddenly took on color. He turned his eyes to the cab window.

Nearly a half mile away, high up on the hill, lay the red brick Penn City station. He could see the platform dotted with white and black human beings waiting for the 11 o'clock westbound express. He looked at his watch. Three minutes to eleven—the express was due at eleven-two. There it was, along the river! He could hear the unmistakable Penn City whistle.

It was too late. She was up there on the platform in that black and white sprinkling of people. In a minute she would be getting on the express—on her way West—nobody but she would know where. He wouldn't be able to find her again—to find out whether she did care.

His eyes suddenly crackled and grew very wide and blue. Jake, the front brakeman, gave him the "highball"—the track was ready for him. But he paid no heed. Steadily he wrapped the white rope around his fingers and hooked his elbow under the throttle. Then cleaving out from the slit of the whistle valve on the dome be-

hind him, with an accompanying funnel of white steam, came three low but scolding notes of a tune.

"Home," cried Bill hoarsely, shouting into Swanson's ear. "Don't you know where you are? McCormick have to suspend you, if you play it here under his nose!"

Swanson gave no answer. Probably he didn't hear. His eyes were steady on that speckled Penn City platform, his ears on the pitch of his song. He had never before played it just as he played it to-day. The music came straight from his heart. And when the tenderness of a heart is coupled with the strength of a steam whistle it can work white magic. Bill stood by with fear on his face, but his eyes grew dreamy with enjoyment.

It was over. The last shred of steam from Swanson's whistle had drifted away and melted into the blue. The 11 o'clock express had come and gone. Swanson slipped down from his cab and started across the terrace which the two railroads maintained between their properties. In five minutes he had gained the level of the other road and was hurrying down the half-mile of track. There were still a few people on the platform when he came near. His eyes searched them. He doubled his pace. There, with the familiar black bag in her hand, uncertain whether to run or stay, hovered a girl in a dark suit. She was a cleanly, fanned girl, comely and pale, with the softest of black hair and the purest look in her eyes that Swanson had ever seen. He came up to her, breathing deeply.

"You didn't go!" he murmured humbly. "You heard me. What did it say?"

The girl seemed only conscious of the staring faces about her.

"Take me away somewhere," she whispered.

"Where did it say?" asked Swanson. "Home, Sweet Home," softly answered the girl.

(The End.)

A Strange Mourning Party.
Do you know that cattle hold wakes, or some sort of mourning ceremony, for the death of one of their number? I was down in a hardwood forest on Red River looking over some lumber operations, and was the guest of the mill officials at their club, says a magazine writer. We were all sitting on the porch after supper looking off into the wilderness of great trees when an old man stopped in the middle of a yarn and turned to me.

"This is something I want you to see," he said. "Listen!"

I heard the tramping of hoofs and the hoarse bellowing of cattle. In a minute about two dozen cattle passed near the corner of the porch in a running trot. At a certain place they swerved in a semicircle to the left, almost brushing a great oak, and then swung back into line, making for a tiny hollow, where they gathered and pawed the ground, making a hoarse, moaning bawling while. In a short time their excitement ceased and they scattered.

"That's a mourning party," the old man explained. "One of the herd was killed at that place yesterday by a stray shot. His friends came and raised a great hullabaloo over the corpse. We had the carcass taken away, but they came back to the same place to-night. A few of them will come again to-morrow; then they will forget."

Since that time I have witnessed one more of the strange gatherings. A cow had been killed by a log train, and the other cattle came at such a headlong pace up the railway embankment and down the other side that there was danger of further casualties. A platoon of men known cattle to gather from miles away to mourn the death of one of their herd, "with their snuffin' and moanin' and pawin' enough to raise the hair on yer head."

Work of the San Remo Conference.
The conference closed on April 26. It brought about a satisfactory understanding between France and Great Britain, which was demonstrated in the note to Berlin sent in response to the request of the German government for authority to increase its army to 200,000. The conference declined to consider the request unless the Germans met the obligations of the treaty of Versailles with regard to disarmament, and threatened to occupy new areas in Germany if a genuine disarmament were longer postponed. The Flume question was left to negotiation between Italy and Yugoslavia, with the understanding that an arrangement substantially like that suggested by President Wilson should be reached. Flume, which D'Annunzio refuses to leave, was put under strict blockade by Italian military forces. The conference also authorized the Supreme Economic Council to carry on negotiations for the renewal of commercial arrangements with Russia. The terms of the Turkish treaty were drawn. France, it was understood, had decided not to ask for a mandate over Cilicia. Mesopotamia and Palestine are to be administered by Great Britain; Syria by France. Armenia is to be a republic. The conference sent a message asking the United States to accept mandatory responsibility for Armenia. The straits between the Black Sea and the Aegean are to be administered by international commissions. Thrace was awarded to Greece, which will also administer Smyrna, though the city will remain nominally Turkish.

Camel's hair brushes are not made of the hair of camels, but of hairs from the tails of Russian and Siberian squirrels.

Keep Minard's Liniment in the house.

Worth Remembering.
Self-reliance is the first step towards independence. As a rule, the educated man everywhere is master of the situation. Nature, when she adds difficulties, adds brains.

Misrepresent nothing. No permanent success was ever built upon a foundation of fraud.

The young man who thinks first of his employer's interest, and devotes himself tirelessly to it in forgetfulness of his own, is, other things being equal, the surest to succeed in life.

Each one is the trustee of his own character.

A man who lives rightly, and is right, has more power in his silence than another has in his words.

Character is like bells which ring out sweet music, and which, when touched accidentally, even, resound with sweet music.

The measure of a master is his success in bringing all men round to his opinion twenty years later.

Carry on every enterprise as if all depended on the success of it.

In order to conquer, what we need is to dare, still to dare, and always to dare.

To learn new habits is everything, for it is to reach the substance of life. Life is but a tissue of habits.

Digestion is as dangerous as stagnation in the career of a young man of business.

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BITS OF COMEDY OVER THE WIRES

SOME AMUSING MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

Funny Messages Sent by Telephone, Wireless and Telegraph.

The wonder of the telephone-user who heard an unknown voice ask: "Did the poison work?" is matched by the lady, awaiting news of her daughter's safe arrival somewhere, who received by mistake a sportsman's wire: "But two ponies on Bonny Boy, but hold the monkey for the present till we see how the cat jumps." She was sure the wire had gone suddenly loony, for not only was this rank gibberish, but it was not even in her daughter's well-known caligraphy!

Supposing you were crossing the Atlantic, and wanted to send a message by wireless to tell your wife, or husband, that the weather was perfect, the food super-excellent, your fellow-voyagers congenial, your health perfect, your bunk comfy—how would you do it in two words? The time-honored "All's well!" is much too mild. "Good time," or "All serene," are better, but still on the unsatisfactory side.

Last week, a lady, whose husband, being a Yank, thought he knew all about poker, had been left behind in "little old New York," succeeded in saying all these things in two words. She asked a fellow-voyager what was the biggest and best poker hand possible. He told her, and the lady sent her hubby the marconigram: "Royal flush!"

A Hidden Meaning.
During the last British election, a certain M.P. had as opponent a man named Coates. His wife, who had been with him in the constituency almost to the last moment, was called away before the declaration of the poll. She gave her husband the strictest orders to wire the exact result the moment it was announced, as it was certain to be very close either way. The wire she got gave her great joy, for she understood it if the telegraph clerk did not: "I am in by thirty-eight overcoats."

Some years ago a member of the British Government was staying for a rest in a little country village, and, being a lawyer, he was much interested in a certain Bill which was then before Parliament. Wanting to consult it and prepare his speech, to his dismay he found he had left his copy at home. So he wrote off a wire to a friend, who he knew had a copy: "Send Homicide Bill," and sent it by the gardener to the local post-office. The man returned saying that the postmaster at the village had refused to send such a wire, as they had enough bad characters around without sending for any more.

A London wire to an Australian paper read: "Lincoln Ob Dean Swift Roseate Dawn." The sub in charge, who had evidently taken no interest in that year's Lincoln Handicap, expanded the London wire as follows: a paragraph duly appeared next day: "We deeply regret to announce the death of the celebrated Dean Swift, author of the well-known hymn, 'The Roseate Hues of Early Dawn.'"

Wrong Interpretations.
Reference to the newspapers recalls the one which received a wire, and immediately put upon its poster the startling bit of war news: "Capture of Point d'Appul," which again recalls the wire reporting the destruction of the Hotel de Ville at Schaebeek by fire just before the war, and which a local paper announced as "Famous Hotel Destroyed," adding in its news column: "The proprietors suspect that the outbreak was not accidental."

Which reminds one of the English parson who, being in Paternoster Row, London, just before Christmas, and having been strictly enjoined by his wife to bring home a certain motto for the Sunday-school wall, and having forgotten length, breadth, and text, wired his wife, prepaid, for particulars, and got this reply, which is said to have prostrated a whole telegraphic department:

"Unto us a child is born, two feet wide and twelve feet long."

Long-Life Signs.
It is said to be possible to distinguish a long-lived person from one who will not last so long, at sight! Are you going to live long?

First, according to a well-known authority, the primary conditions of longevity are that the lungs, heart, digestive organs, and brain, should all be long. If such be the case, the trunk will be long and the limbs comparatively short.

A good indication of longevity, it is said, is a long hand with short fingers, which are not stumpy at the ends. Blue, hazel, or brown eyes, too, are said to denote a long life. Another sign—large, open, and free nostrils which denote large lungs!

If you are a long-liver, you will appear tall when seated, and short in standing! Your brains, we are also told, will be deeply seated, as portrayed by the office of the ear being low.

Women seem to outlive men, for it has been recorded that from birth to ten years of age, the male death-rate has exceeded the female.