

gone to oversee the placing of a small mill-dam on a near-by stream. Jeffrey wished he had taken it himself; it would have been a relief to work. An hour later, on his way home to Gracia's "dinner of consolation" he met MacDonald and learned that the contract had been awarded to Connelly and Lester. He tried to think himself unreservedly glad. Here was the chance he had coveted, his at last. The disappointment and restlessness of the last few days was at an end. He smiled to think of his wife's pleasure; but as he turned into the quiet street and looked as usual for the lighted windows of his home he was saying under his breath, "But I'll never be able to face old Pat McKilligen as long as I live."

"Old Pat McKilligen" was the Irish boss under whom Jeffrey had spent his first summer of practical engineering.

EARLY November saw the completion of the big Charteris River Bridge. Owing to the length of its span and certain difficulties of construction it had largely drawn the attention of engineering circles. The L. N. & C., one of the greatest railways in the province, had sent down their consulting engineer to view the bridge, and various journals devoted to the profession had published articles or illustrations dealing with it. Connelly had worked in some of his own pet ideas in construction, little alterations adding strength or making for economy of material. Along these lines the bridge was unique, and the engineer had all the joy of a man who brings his untried theories to successful demonstration. His dissatisfaction regarding the excavation was past. He was boyishly enthusiastic about the work, and the day it was completed and he and Gracia strolled across it together was a red-letter day for both.

"It's been a glorious summer," Jeffrey said, looking away up the autumn-tinted valley. "I think, Gracia, it's been my best summer, the most perfect year I've ever lived. It's been so great to accomplish at last. No work I've ever done has run so smoothly. And it's been so 'comfie' beyond the telling to have you with me, dear, and little Bob."

Gracia smiled. The summer had been dear to her, too, for a reason Jeff could hardly understand. It was the first time she had come close to his work. Most of his contracts had been in the new North, where Gracia could never go, even in the earlier days of their marriage, when there was no little Bob to consider. Jeff talked of the things he was doing, of course; and Gracia tried to understand, even to the surreptitious reading of the books of his professional library. One night soon after their marriage, coming home early he had found her poring over one of these volumes and that night they had sat together late, Gracia happily intent while Jeff made drawings and explained the various constructive work in which he had been engaged. Later still, as they sat before the dying fire of their little grate, drinking the steaming cocoa which Gracia had provided as a fit ending for her "lesson," he had tried to tell her how much his work, all that was fine and worth while in it, belonged to her.

"I'd have done it alone, I know," he said. "It's my work—but differently. And you mustn't feel—I'd like you to know that it isn't your knowledge of the technicalities of my work that makes me know you a good comrade in it. It's just you."

He looked at her quizzically across the fire-light. He was not good at saying the things he most felt and he knew she was but half satisfied.

Thus the summer had been an intensely happy one for the wife of the engineer-contractor and she looked back a little wistfully to its long, bright days.

"Next week we'll be back in the city," she said. "I'm sorry it's all over. I know you are glad; you haven't room for any thought except just to be exultant over it. And so am I, Jeff, only—only I'd like to go back to April and do it all over again."

He smiled down at her.

"No," he said, "not this, a bigger thing."

"I don't feel to-day as if I wanted anything bigger," Gracia answered, wilfully. "It's been good enough for me."

"Such heresy to your ambitions! I didn't suppose you'd ever find it 'good enough.' There's Bob with the buggy."

"When we put in the last stroke," said Jeff, as

they climbed into the waiting buggy, "we're going to have a celebration picnic, all the men, on the flats here, games and prizes and—oh, a regular good time—and I want you and Mary and Mother to be on hand."

The big bridge was finished amid a general rejoicing. Lester and Amy Dennison and a few others of their intimate friends came out from the city to watch the sport—Lester, because he was in the secret of the men. It was Amy Dennison who, with sparkling eyes, told Gracia how all the men (even those whose work in the excavation had been completed months before) had joined in presenting Connelly with some token of their regard and esteem, a memento of the big bridge. Amy had forgotten just what form it was to take, and to Gracia it did not matter, so the honour, and joy in it, were for Jeff.

She stood a little apart from the crowd near the raised platform on which were accommodated the speakers of the day, the Northbury Band and one or two representatives of the R. S. & O. Railway Company. MacDonald, big and bluff, was talking to Jeff a few yards away. As she watched they both moved toward the awning-covered platform and the band struck up "He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

"Gracia," said Bob at her elbow, "won't you put this coat on?"

She knew suddenly that the hazy November sunshine had been blotted out. The long-expected rain had come. A moment later it was falling steadily—



Gracia stood on the rain-drenched bank looking down at the busy scene below.

sheets of it. The wind, sweeping down the valley of the Charteris, flapped the drenched awnings; women and men began moving away in little groups. She stood under Bob's umbrella watching her husband's face as he replied to the men grouped close up against the platform in the rain. She shivered a little and Bob drew her coat closer about her shoulders.

"What is it, Gracia?" he questioned, catching the look in her face.

"I don't know, Bob, just the storm, I guess."

LESTER came to tell them that the party from the city had decided to return by rail, leaving the chauffeurs to take back the cars. They had been guests at the farm and Bob looked uncertainly at Gracia.

"The men are breaking up now, Gracia," he said; "there won't be anything more to see. Let me take you to the carriage."

Gracia looked toward the crowded platform. Jeffrey was moving away with MacDonald.

"All right, Bob. Thank you," she answered.

Once started the rain continued. It had been a summer of drouth. Now for almost a week it rained unceasingly. The Charteris Valley had never, in the memory of its oldest inhabitant, passed through such a week of storm. Steadily the river rose. The flats where the big picnic had been were a seething mass of water. The flood-gates had been opened in the immense mill-dam above, and in every dam on the whole length of the little mountain torrent. News began to come in of culverts washed away; then one of the country bridges

went, its big timbers sweeping down to be held in check by the first dam in its course. Men interested in the mills began to look anxious. People in Northbury openly speculated about the upper dam, that of the woollen mills a mile up the river. There could be no danger to the huge concrete dam above the new bridge. If it went—but that was impossible.

Connelly joined the men of the town in their efforts to save the upper dam. His practical knowledge of flood-power and of construction was of the greatest value, and the mill-owners were glad to carry out his suggestions in regard to the protection of the weakened flume which the angry water seemed in danger of beating out. At the end of the storm the upper dam still stood, though up the valley Rippon's and Mitchell's had both been swept away, and two of the bridges were gone on the country roads.

Sunday evening the sun shone from under sullen rolling clouds on a drenched and bedraggled world. The rain was over. Upstairs in the farmhouse attic Gracia sang happily as she tucked little Bob, fast asleep, into the big, white bed. The next day they were to leave for the city. She fell asleep that night thinking how good it was to hear no beat of rain on the shingles, to know that outside a few stars at least were breaking through the sullen clouds, that Jeff's work and his volunteered service for the mills was over. Gracia was half afraid of the swirling river—altogether afraid of it as she pictured Jeffrey in the most dangerous places on the dam or up to his waist in its swollen waters directing and working with the men. But it was all over now. She could sleep without anxiety.

HOURS later she wakened to the same old roar of beating rain against the shingles. The wind seemed to have risen, too, for gusty torrents dashed themselves against the windows. Downstairs someone was moving about, she heard voices, then the sound of wheels on the gravel. Down in the kitchen she found Bob's wife standing alone by the fire. She turned and smiled cheerily at Gracia.

"Did the rig wake you?" she asked. "Come and have some coffee."

"Where is Jeff?" asked Gracia, moving across to the fire.

"Gone to the bridge—he and Bob. Wilcox telephoned that the upper dam had gone, and they are afraid for the big Northbury dam. All the debris that was piled up back of the upper dam is heaped up against it and—"

"Did they send for Jeffrey?"

"No."

"Was it—was he afraid for the dam? I mean, did he go there?"

"No, to the bridge."

"Alone?"

"Oh, no, Gracia; Bob's with him. Why, you are trembling! Come and have some coffee. They'll be back soon, likely. Jeff ran up to tell you

about it, but you were fast asleep and he said he wouldn't waken you."

"I wish," Gracia began; she put down the coffee untasted. "I ought to go back to little Bob, I guess," she said. "I'll take the coffee with me."

"Now, don't worry, Gracia. Bob distinctly said there was nothing to be anxious about."

"No, of course there isn't," Gracia answered from the stairs. "'Twas nice of you to send them off with this good, hot coffee. Are you going back to bed?"

"No," Mary hesitated, "not yet. I think Bob will telephone."

"Mary," said Gracia, "was the man who telephoned afraid for the bridge?"

"Oh, no. He did not mention it. 'Twas Mr. Wilcox."

"Was Jeffrey?"

"I think, perhaps, he was. But Bob says the dam can't go."

Gracia went slowly upstairs. She walked to the little casement and leaned her head against it trying to see out into the dark. She was desperately, horribly afraid—not for the bridge, what did all the bridges in the world matter? but for Jeff. Into what danger might he not be plunged out there in the blackness of the night? She tried to reason away her fear. Jeff was in no worse danger than last night; he had been in hundreds of dangerous places: he loved her too well to run any unnecessary risk. With the morning he would come back to her, up those same narrow little stairs she had just climbed—oh, surely he would! She came over

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