



Loosed.

BY ELEANOR H. PORTER.



TWO days before the wedding of Elizabeth Winston and Elmer Craddock, Miss Winston's father met the prospective bridegroom in the Park. Both were on

horseback, and each reined in as he saw the other.

"Ah, good morning, my boy," cried Winston, turning about. "I've been wanting a few words with you for some time; and at the house—well, the fuss and feathers there just now are not conducive to that sort of thing; eh?"

A tender light flamed into the younger man's eyes.



In the Park.

"They are not," he agreed, with a smile. "But they'll soon be over, sir."

The other did not reply. His eyes were studying the young man's face. At last he drew a deep breath and placed a heavy hand on the broad, square-cut shoulder near him.

"Egad, Craddock, I'm sure I can trust her to you—my Betty!"

"I hope so, sir," Craddock said simply.

"She's so affectionate—Betty is," Winston resumed. "So tender, so delicate, so—well, perhaps she's a little spoiled. She—she's always had her own way," he added, with an apologetic little laugh.

"And it shall be my pleasure still to give it to her," declared the lover fervently.

The older man smiled.

In November, Mr. and Mrs. Craddock opened their modest little establishment on West Eighty-second Street and began life in earnest.

"And to think you've got to leave me and go to that tiresome old office!" demurred Elizabeth the first morning, her hands upraised to her husband's shoulders.

"Sure, dear; but I'm a responsible citizen now," laughed Craddock. "I'm no longer a floating atom; I'm a family man with duties to myself and the commonwealth!" he finished with mock impressiveness.

"You'll be lonesome!"

"Of course."

"You'll just long to see me!"

"Indeed I shall."

"Maybe—maybe I'll come down!"

Craddock laughed, kissed her tenderly, and ran down the steps for his car. He had forgotten all about the matter when, three hours later, she hurried into his office, flushed, trembling, and angry-eyed followed by an expostulating office-boy.

"This silly boy did not wish to let me in," began Elizabeth, "—me. Wanted to know my name and my business."

"Yes, but he—he was only obeying orders, you see, dear. He—"

"Orders not to let me in!"

"No, dear, no," he said softly. "You don't understand. It's orders for anyone—everyone; I should be tormented to death if—"

"But didn't you tell him I was coming?"

"Why, no, I—didn't."

"You forgot?"

"Well—perhaps I did."

"Oh, shame!" laughed Mrs. Crad-

ock, shaking a playfully admonitory finger. At this moment the boy entered and handed Craddock a card. The man made an impatient gesture and threw a helpless glance at his wife.

"It's Henderson. I had an appointment. Er—I'm sorry but—I must see him."

"Dear me, how tiresome! Well, never mind; I'll wait."

"Yes, but you—he—I—come in here, then," said Craddock hurriedly, opening the door to an inner room.

Twice during the next fifteen nervous minutes Craddock heard the door behind him pushed on its hinges. Henderson, who had expected to exert the utmost of his tact and persuasiveness for at least a good half-hour, found himself at the end of these same fifteen minutes ready to depart with papers which represented a deal so advantageous to himself that he hardly believed it real.

"There. I thought he would never go!" cried Mrs. Craddock almost before the door had clicked behind the visitor. "Elmer, when do you go to luncheon? I'm so hungry!"

"Er—now," returned her husband, with manifest alacrity, as he reached for his hat.

An hour and a half later he was bidding good-by to his wife before the door of an uptown hotel, where they had lunched with long waits—and a yet longer bill.

That was but the first of many vis-



"Oh fie!"

its. Elizabeth insisted that her husband must be lonely; that it was her duty to look after him, to see that his luncheon was suitable, and partaken of with sufficient moderation.

Craddock's business, also, was taken into her tender care, and grave questions were asked as to his income, his expenses, and his methods of dealing with his employees. A wife ought to know, she said. Incidentally she was able to make many suggestions in the way of improvements.

It was after some six months of married bliss that Craddock came home one night with thoughtful eyes and a preoccupied air.

After dinner he said:

"I'm sorry, dear, but I must go out to-night."

"Out? Why Elmer!"

"It's business, dear—Henderson: I'm to meet him at the club."

"Oh, is that it?" laughed Elizabeth. "I was afraid you really were obliged to go. Just telephone him you can't come, of course. As if I was going to give up my evening for any man that ever breathed!"

Her husband's jaw fell.

"But, dearest, I've got to go; don't you see? I said I would."

"You said you would, when you knew we always spent our evenings together. Why, Elmer!"

"I know, but—"

"Oh, very well, if you prefer it. Never mind. I have a headache; I'll

go at once to my room." And she swept through the hall door.

"Well, by George!" muttered Craddock under his breath. He hesitated, twice crossed the length of the room, then hurried to the telephone, there to notify Henderson that, owing to Mrs. Craddock's illness, his engagement could not be kept.

It was a very happy, loving Elizabeth that exerted every power to please during the next two hours, and so successful was she that Craddock vowed he was a brute to think of leaving her; thereafter, business would be attended to during business hours, or not at all!

Time passed, and Craddock grew strangely restless. He ran across an advertisement one day, the picture of a man bound by slender threads whose number made their strength. It came to him, then, that he was that man. It seemed to him, sometimes, that there was not an hour of his time nor an act of his daily life that did not strain against those cords.

There was his food: he ate, now, not the pies and hot breads which he craved, but the cereals and dry toasts of his wife's ordering, and he drank a grain coffee—a thing he abhorred. Again, his clothes: the cut of his coat and the color of his tie were now according to Elizabeth's fancy.

In April Mrs. Craddock was suddenly called to the bedside of her grandmother. Craddock was actually shocked at himself as he realized that during the first week of her absence he had spent six evenings at the club and reveled in pie every day.

It was while Elizabeth was away that she chanced to meet her childhood's friend, Timothy, the old gardener.

"Well, well, Timothy," she exclaimed, "I'm glad to see you! And how does the world use you, these days?—and how's Mary?"

A queer look came over the man's face.

"Mary? Why, Miss 'Lizbeth, didn't yer know. We're parted—Mary an' I be."

"Parted! Why, Timothy, I'm ashamed of you—and Mary was such a good woman!"

"That's jest it, ma'am; she was too good—she was."

"Oh, Timothy!"

"Well, she was," reiterated the man. "She was that good she jest thought there wa'n't anyone else in the world that knew nothin'. She made me hoe my pertaters jest so, an' she always bossed my eatin' and drinkin', an' she wouldn't let me work bareheaded."

Mrs. Craddock laughed.

"Oh, fie! Timothy, that was only



Lunched with long waits.

her care of you. Mary used to think a lot of you—I know—I remember! You should have been pleased that she loved you so well."

"That wa'n't it, ma'am, that wa'n't

it," demurred Timothy, with a shake of his head. "I could 'a' stood lovin'—lots of it; but she tied me all up with them notions of hern. I couldn't do nothin', ma'am, notum' as I wanted to. I tell yer, ma'am, I'll never furgit that first week after she went; I did ev'rythin'—ev'rythin' she hadn't let me do ter so long!"

Four days later Elizabeth returned home. It was earlier in the week than she had written she would come, and she decided to surprise her husband by an unexpected appearance.

An hour after her arrival she called Katie to consult with her about the dinner.

"The Boss has ordered it, ma'am," said the girl; "but maybe you'll be after making some changes. He ordered pie and hot rolls for two things."

"Oh," said Mrs. Craddock, flushing. She bit her lip, then smiled sweetly. "I think perhaps I will change that, Katie; those things are not good for Mr. Craddock. We'll have the meat and vegetables as you've planned, but for dessert, rice-pudding, perhaps, and—coffee, as usual."

"Yes, ma'am—er—you mean cereal coffee, as we used to have?"

"Used to have?"

"Yes, ma'am; the Boss has—has had real coffee, you see, lately."

"Oh, I understand; well, the cereal will be better for night, I think," returned Mrs. Craddock hastily.

"Yes, ma'am." Katie hesitated, then she said timidly: "Mr. Craddock ordered dinner to be prompt, ma'am, as he was going out."

"G-going out?"

"Yes, ma'am; the Boss most generally goes out now—you bein' gone, so."

"Very well, Katie, that will do," returned Mrs. Craddock faintly.

Then before her eyes rose a hateful vision. It was Timothy, as he said: "I tell yer, ma'am, I'll never furgit that first week after she went; I did ev'rythin'—ev'rythin' she hadn't let me do fur so long!"

Two minutes later, flushed and trembling, she faced Katie in the kitchen.

"I've changed my mind, Katie," she said. "We'll have hot rolls, pie, and coffee, just as Mr. Craddock ordered."

The Miller of The Dee.

There dwelt a miller, hale and bold,
Beside the River Dee;
He wrought and sang from morn till night,
No lark more blithe than he;
And this the burden of his song
Forever used to be,
"I envy no man, no, not I,
And no one envies me!"

"Thou'rt wrong, my friend!" said old King
Hal,
"As wrong as wrong can be;
For could my heart be light as thine,
I'd gladly change with thee.
And tell me now what makes thee sing
With voice so loud and free,
While I am sad, though I'm the King,
Beside the River Dee?"

The miller smiled and doffed his cap;
"I earn my bread," quoth he;
"I love my wife, I love my friend,
I love my children three.
I owe no one I cannot pay
I thank the River Dee,
That turns the mill that grinds the corn
To feed my babes and me!"

"Good friend," said Hal, and sighed the while,
"Farewell! and happy be;
But say no more, if thou'st be true,
That no one envies thee.
Thy mealy cap is worth my crown;
Thy mill my kingdom's fee!
Such men as thou are England's boast.
Oh, miller of the Dee!"

—Charles Mackay.