POOR DOCUMENT

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THE CANARY'S MISSION

By V. L. Wentz

Mr. George Charlemagne Tower rang for his landlady with an impatient frown on his cholastic brow. As she entered his library she found him pacing up and down the Bokhara rug.

"That person who rented your room back there—" he began.

"A young girl, sir," ventured Mrs. Martin.

"——must part with that infernal canary," he went on, ignoring the information, "or either she or I will have to leave. For three days now I've listened to its noise till I'm in such a state of mind that I can't evolge a single clear thought, or reason sylligistically. It's absurd."

Mrs. Martin hadn't, perhaps, the faintest idea what the "evolution of a clear thought" meant, nor what "sylogistic reasoning" implied, but she had a most excellent idea of what Mr. George Charlemagne Tower's occupation of the best part of her apartment meant, and what his threat implied. For five years now he had been her model star lodger, a bachelor and a heart-whole man. She had come to look upon his as a comfortable fixture, and so had her husband, who was something of an idler, having found no position in life exactly suited to his gifted irresponsibilities.

"Miss Clemmens — that's the young girl, sir," won't part with her canary, I know," observed the landlady, nervously picking up a paperweight. "She's uncommonly fond of the bird. But I'll tell her I'd like the room when her week's up." Mrs. Martin laid down the paper weight with the air of a martyr.

"Very well," grunted Mr. Tower, pulling up the shade of his library's back window with a jerk, so that the morning sunlight struck like gold upon the big rubber plant. Then he opened the window; it was very warm in the room. "Suppose I'll have to stand the nuisance a few days longer. That'll all. Good morning." He sat down at his mahogany desk with an air of dismissal and drew some papers towards him.

As he bent over his manuscripts, goose-quill in hand, suddenly there sounded the whir of tiny wings in the stillness of the room, and there, on the

After an alert, coquettish inspection perched a little yellow canary!

After an elert, coquettish inspection of the room and its occupant, the bird lifted its slender neck and emitted several penetrating chirps; then it filled its lungs with air, its soft chest expanded, and it burst into a gust of song.

"Come in, come in," called Mr. Tower brusquely in response to a knock upon his half closed door. He looked up over his glasses. There straight and slender, and very, very young, stood a girl, the splendid morning light bathing her and turning the bronze of her soft hair to fire.

"You see—my—canary——" she explained. "I was giving him a bath—and he spied your plant in the sunlight, and—will you close your window, please, and let me coax him back? I'm your new neighbor, Gracioca Clemmens, in Mrs. Martin's back room there." She nooded prettily over her shoulder, down the side of the long apartment.

"Gracioca!" ejaculated Mr. George Charlmagne Tower half to himself as he closed the window. There had never been but one of that name outside the covers of the old green fairy-book. That one was a girl he had known in Yale in his freshman year. At that tender age she had been sufficiently older than he to lay siege upon his susceptibilities. Lordy, lordy, how far away that seemed now! "She was a Miss Barr," he said reflectively, fingering his watchchain as he looked at the girl coaxing the canary, "and she went West——"

"Uh-huh," asquiesced the girl, brightly, "that's where she met father." The bird flew to her shoulder, and with one hand she covered it daintily and bent down her coral lips to caress its tiny, fluffy head. "But how ever did you come to know mother? Think I look like her?"

"Very much, indeed," said the man gravely, answering the last question. "Only prettier," he added mentally, looking down confusedly on the fine white parting that separated the burnished golden waves of hair.

"She's disturbed my train of thought," he said, helplessly, after she had disappeared. "So her mother died when she was a baby, and she's all alone in the world, poor child!"

For the next hour Mr. George Charlemagne Tower scribbled away idly over his desk. Idly, for visions of a goddess with burnished hair got mixed up with everything he wrote. Finally, he pressed the electric button. When Mrs. Martin appeared he explained to her that he'd changed his mind about the canary—rather fancied he liked its singing, after all—so she need not disturb herself about complaining to its owner. She had not already done so, he hoped.

Mrs. Martin's kindly, motherly face beamed. No, she had not. She was deferring that unpleasant mission till evening. Miss Clemmens went out to work every morning—that was she who closed the hall door a half hour ago—and she was afraid it might upset the poor girl for the day's duties, telling her just as she left. Et cetera, et cetera.

When Mrs. Martin had gone, the bachelor straightened up and laughed, and with the laugh he was transformed. He pushed his pen and ink away; put the paperweight over his unfinished manuscript, strode into the hall and rang for the lift with the swagger of youth. His slightly bent, scholarly walk was discarded. What man could be old with a face like Gracioca's in his heart?

A day or two later when he found that this embodiment of youth was "motherly Mamie," of "The Young Girls' Embroidery Bazaar," and that her duties were to lead the young mind into the mysteries of purling, drop-stitch and sentiment, he acknowledged that there was some humor in life, after all!

Life was not only humorous; it was gradually becoming luminous, as well. Gone were the days when his desk and his books were Mr. Tower's sole companions. In the daytime now he often listened to the song of the canary and lived in thoughts of its owner; in the evenings he was allowed to chat with the girl herself.

Mrs. Martin watched the growing romance with self-effacing interest. And on many a cosy evening spent around the log-fire in the library grate, she would invent some excuse and absent herself so that the two might be alone.

The bachelor had fingered his glasses nervously when he asked the question of questions; and when in her cool, confident little way the girl had said "No," he urged no further.

"I understand—" he said to himself that night as he dropped his head down on the desk. "I am too—too old. Such a fool to dream of it!"

The girl, however, in the privacy of her room, wore a wistful, sad little face. Now and then a tear would fall with a splash.

"He doesn't seem so awfully, awfully old, Blix," she pleaded, going up to the cage where the canary slept with his head tucked unresponsively under his wing. "How could I do without him now, he never guesses how this silly little heart of mine listens for his step in the hall or the sound of his voice, nor how it flutters when it hears them. Is it so very, very dreadful, Blix, to marry a man who thinks he's tco old? I wonder if—" Her sentence trailed off indistinguishably as she knelt to say her prayers.

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But she didn't wonder long, Mrs. Martin wouldn't let her. And so, on the following Sunday she tripped into the library carrying her canary cage. Blix wasn't feeling very well and she had promised him to sun-bath by the rubber plant.

As Mr. George Charlemagne Tower hung the cage he seemed overflowingly happy. (Evidently that cool, confident little "no" had been withdrawn for the purpose of amendment—it would have been even safe to guess that a "yes" had been supplied.) Gracioca had nestled herself into a big leather chair near the fire, as if she intended to stay there forever. It was a way she had—one of the many ways her lover had found so ineffably charming. Possibly other girls had them, too. He didn't know.

He stood before her for a second; then, stooping, his two patrician hands framed each side of her oval face, and he turned it up to his.

"Think, dear," he said, "you might have come and stopped awhile and gone—just like the dozen-and-one other occupants of that room, back there—if—"

"If it hadn't ben for Blix," twinkled she, dimpling divinely.

"Precious little Blix!" ejaculated he, his voice lost somewhere among the coils of the girl's fluffy hair.

And the canary, forgetting he wasn't feeling well, extended his slender body, filed his tiny lungs with air, and sang pompously. It was, for all the world, as if he were proud of the mission he had performed.

MARRYING HETTY OFF

By James Lewis

(Copyright, 1907, by Mary McKeon.)

Supper had been eaten, the dishes washed and the cows milked, and the milk strained. Farmer Johnson and his wife sat on the piazza and looked up and down the dusty highway. They had sat for ten minutes without speaking, when the husband cleared his throat and said:

"Ma, I've been thinking for the last three or four days."

"Yes, I 'spose a person has to think somtimes," she replied.

"But I've been thinking about our Hetty. She purty nigh twenty years old, hain't she?"

"Yes."

"She's purty good looking and purty smart?"

"Yes; she takes after me in those things."

"But she don't get married. All the other gals around here are stepping off, but she don't seem to have no fellers. I did think, up to a month ago, that she and that feller from town named Watterson was going to make a match of it, but it seems she's stuck up her nose at him. I'm kinder feeling that it's my duty to have a serious talk with her."

"Then you throw your feelings right over the fence," replied the wife in decisive tones. "Hetty hain't going to throw herself at no man's head. As for Mr. Watterson he got miffed about something and quit coming here, and he can stay miffed for all we care. I don't see no great rush about her getting married."

The husband and father didn't want to say that her last hat cost six dollars, and her dress eighteen, and that in the fall she would want a cloak costing at least fifteen, but his wife knew him to be a close man. What he remarked when he got ready to say anything further was:

"There'd be room right here in the house for her and her husband, if she had one. I'd give him his rent if he'd milk and chore around, and I'd make their board purty reasonable. If you told her so, perhaps, it would encourage her."

"Samuel, am I Hetty's mother or not?" asked the wife.

"You are her mother, of course."

"Then you leave things to me, and don't worry yourself any more. When a girl's mother don't know what is best for her, her father needn't try."

He sighed and groaned and grunted, and said the wind would probably change to the east by midnight and reluctantly dropped the subject. Two days later he came home from the village, where he had been to buy a grindstone, and his face wore a broad smile as he entered the house after putting up his team. He whispered to his wife:

"Say, now, but what d'ye 'spose has happened?"

"'Nother earthquake somewhere?"

"Nope. I've found a husband for Hetty!"

"Samuel Johnson, what did I tell you 'tother evening!" exclaimed the wife, as she trimmed off the edges of a pie crust.

"Wall, you see, it was this way. When I was buying that grindstone in the hardware store there was a wire-fence man there, and when he found out where I lived he said he was coming into this neighborhood to put up some fencing for Lester. He offered me four dollars for a week's board, and I told him to come along."

"Well, what's going to happen if he comes?"

"Marriage, ma—love and marriage. Say, Hetty can't help but fall in love with him. He's got two watchchains, wears tan shoes and talks the biggest words you ever heard. He's a hero, even if he hain't a millionaire. Don't say nothing to Hetty. I want to take her sudden like. I didn't say nothing to him about her, and he'll be taken suddenly. When you see 'em standing up to be married you'll allow I know a thing or two after all."

"I'll allow just as I do now, that you ought to be sent to an idiot asylum."

A day later the "hero" came. Hetty has been posted by her mother and wasn't a bit surprised. Besides having two watchchains, the stranger had a heap of nerve, and he wasn't astonished. Farmer Johnson made him one of the family at once, but the women folks were only barely civil. It transpired after a couple of days that Mr. Meeker, as the wire-fence man called himself, was actually a hero. He had killed a mad dog and shot at a thief. As he slyly showed the farmer a $50 bill there was no room to doubt that he was a millionaire as well. At the end of a week his job at Lester's was finished, but he said he thought he would take a rest from his strenuous struggles, so he had paid another week's board.

"Didn't I tell you so?" whispered the farmer in his wife's ear. "I tell you he's stuck on our Hetty and if she gives him half a chance he's going to propose to her within a week. Just think of having a millionaire and hero for a son-in-law! I could probably get the whole farm wire-fenced at half cost. Can't we manage to leave him and Hetty together on the piazza in the evening?"

"Couldn't you manage to 'tend to your own affairs if you tried hard?" tartly replied the wife. "Samuel Johnson, I never say you acting up as you are now. Are you going to break out with boils again?"

"But you hain't doing anything, and Hetty hain't doing anything, and so you see—"

"I don't see nothing, except that Hetty wouldn't wipe her old shoes on no such man as this Meeker."

"You don't say so!" groaned the father. "What on earth can the gal want?"

"She wants to be let alone."

Mr. Meeker stayed on for the third week. There was no doubt in any mind that he was seeking to make a favorable impression, but at least two minds doubted of his ability. It was near the end of the third week that Mrs. Johnson saw Mr. Watterson drive past the house for the first time since the "tiff." She also saw that he took notice of things out of the corner of his eye and seemed in no hurry to get out of sight. She knew that Hetty hadn't seen him, and with a look of childish innocence on her face she waited ten minutes and then said to the girl:

"Hetty, you remember that Mrs. Bascomb borrowed my best flatiron last week and hasn't brought it back. Don't you want to take a walk down there and bring it home? Tell her that I didn't have a quinsy sore throat, as I thought I was going to have."

"Down there" was three-quarters of a mile down to the next farmhouse. Hetty had dressed for the afternoon and looked as sweet as a peach, and as she set out the mother ran upstairs to the garret window, from whence she could survey every foot of the road. After one glance she hauled in her head and said:

"Mr. Watterson has turned around and is coming back, and they are bound to meet at the crabapple tree. Providence will take care of the rest."

She had not been downstairs ten minutes when things began to happen. The husband was working down in the turnip field, and Mr. Meeker had gone down there an hour ago. All of a sudden the farmer came clumping in over the clean floor to exclaim:

"Well, ma, what'd I teel you? The hero and the millionaire wants to become our son in-law. He's in love with Hetty, and he wants to stay on and win her heart. He'll wire-fence the farm for half price, and he thinks he can get me $50 off the price of a windmill. I've given my consent to the marriage, but he wants to know what you think of it."

The wife had her mouth open to reply when the knocker sounded on the front door and a woman was in waiting to ask if a Mr. Meeker was stopping there. The question had hardly been answered when a second and a third drove up, and the last announced that the wire-fence man was skating for the woods. Each of the three claimed him for her hero and millionaire husband, and all were talking at once and berating each other, when Hetty and Mr. Watterson quietly entered and the latter as quietly said:

"Mr. Johnson, I have the honor of asking your consent to my marriage with your daughter."

It was several hours later, when a calm had settled down and Farmer Johnson was doing the milking that he muttered to himself:

"Ho, now, but what you about, you old one-horned critter! Dang it, but I can't help but think of that 'ere Meeker, and that 'ere Watterson, and the old woman, and Hetty, and them three wives. There's another, but he's too big a fool to think of—and that's me, and if this infernal old cow don't stop switching her tail I'll chop it off with an axe!"

A BOND OF SYMPATHY.

While the new maid tidies the room the busy woman kept on writing.

"Do you make that all out of your own head?" asked Jane.

"Yes," said the busy woman.

"My," said Jane admiringly, "you mus have brains!"

"Brains!" sighed the woman despondently. "Oh, Jane, I haven't an ounce of brains."

For a moment Jane regarded her with sincere commiseration.

"Oh, well," she said presently, "don't mind what I say. I ain't very smart myself."

SIMILARITY OF WRITING.

"From my pile of autographs I take one of a statesman well known and lay it side by side with the autographs of a great author and a great ecclesiastic," writes a British publicist. All three are very small, exquisitely legible. Well, as I knew the three writers, I doubt if I could tell which wrote which. They were Cardinal Manning, Mr. Froude and Lord Rosebery. Will the experts tell me if in this case similarty of writing bodied forth similarity of gifts or qualities?"

MATRIMONIAL.

Three Germans were sitting at luncheon recently and were overheard discussing the second marriage of a mutual friend when one of them remarked:

"I'll tell you vhat. A man vhat marries de second time don't deserve to have lost his first vhife."

THE KIND THEY FOOL.

He—Some girls are awfully conceited. She.—Why? He.—They'll brag about making a fool of a man that was never anything else.—Detroit Free Press.

MISS FARRADAY'S MODEL

By Izola Forrester

(Copyright, 1907, by Homer Sprague.)

"But is it necessary, absolutely necessary, Trix, for you to live in such a way, in such a place?"

Trix Farraday laughed, tucked an extra soft pillow behind her head as she sat in the window seat, and disregarded the appeal in Granger's voice and eyes.

"It isn't 'such a place'" she said. "It is a very nice, interesting place when you get used to it. Why, Jerry, they call it Little Sicily all the way from Third Street to Canal, and crosstown as far as Sixth. You haven't been down here before, and ou don't get the atmosphere."

"That is exactly what I did get," protested Granger. "I got it in whole chunks of realism as I walked over from the elevated to this—this—"

"Don't call my little den bad names," Miss Farraday interrupted serenely. "The trouble is, Jerry, you don't get the point of view. I can't explain it to you, exactly, but you lack perspective on general conditions, my own general conditions, I mean. All you really know is that you have found me here, and you think I'm a poor, lone, struggling artist girl, and you want to carry me right away to save me from something—"

"From yourself," Granger exclaimed.

"But I don't want to be saved. I like this. It's the first time in my life that I ever had an object to work for. Listen now, dear. It is about ten months since you have seen me, isn't it? At the last Cinderella cotillon, just before you went out West for your father. The perspective on general conditions was very different from what it is now, and you asked me to marry you—some day. So I said yes. I couldn't help but say 'yes,' Jerry, because I really didn't have a single good reason for saying "no." You are so awfully dearw hen you want to be—"

"Oh, cut that part of it out," interrupted Granger, uncomfortably.. "I don't give a rap about myself. It's you that I'm worrying over. Is it necessary, just because your uncle happened to die off-hand, without as much money as was expected, for you to live in this uncomfortable, Bohemian, God-forsaken way? I'll bet anything that you do light house keeping behind that green curtain over there, and half starve yourself on the fool things that girls fix up with corn starch and olives, and spaghetti and things."

Trix reddened slightly, and looked steadily out of the open window at Thompson street. If she leaned forward a little, she could catch a glimpse of Fifth avenue, and the triumphal arch and the little splashing fountain in the foreground. It wasn't nearly as bad as Granger said. She had almost begun to like it, and count herself a part of it, when he had suddenly found her out. She had not thought he would come back East so soon. Two years at least, he had told her when he went away, two years of hard work out in the mines that had made old Bob Granger a power to be reckoned with in the world of finance, two long years before he would claim her promise to be his wife—some day.

That promise had seemed such a simple thing when she had made it. "Some day" was far away, and the world had looked wonderfully bright to the girl who was accounted Langdon Farraday's heiress. But one can't very well be an heiress when it suddenly appears there is nothing to inherit, so she had taken inventory of her ability to earn a living for herself, and had decided upon art, mostly because it was the only tangible thing that she liked to do, and she had not entirely disassociated pleasures from labor as yet. And now, just as she was becoming accustomed to the topsy turvy attitude of fate toward her, Jerry Granger had returned, and claimed the right to make her his wife at once. It was bewildering, to say the least. Not only that, but it roused in her a certain vague defiance. Certainly she had promised she would be his wife, but it was to be some day, some day when she pleased.

"You always take such a personal view of things," she said. "The corn starch and olives don't matter so long as they happen to be my own corn starch and olives, and I choose to eat them. It is the simple life."

"Simple life be—"

Granger choked off his sentiments, and rose from his chair to pace up and down the studio. It was not luxurious, not even comfortable, according to the up-town code of comfort. The house was a small two story and a half red brick. The first floor was occupied by an Italian artificial flower factory. He had caught a glimpse of dark girlish faces as he entered the narrow hallway, and rows upon rows of pink roses, and ox-eye daisies for the summer trade hanging on ropes across the room. One girl had answered his knock, and told him where Miss Farraday worked. Then she had stood in the doorway and watched him as he went up the short flight of stairs, watched him suspiciously, yet with a certain eager curiosity.

He had forgoten her as soon as Trix opened the door of the studio. It was the upstairs front room. With the aid of her own little household goods transported from up-town, she had transformed it to a fairly good semblance of a studio. And as he walked up and down now, an object caught his eye that heh ad not noticed before. On the easel facing the window light, was a study in oil, so near completion that only the artist would miss the last touches. As Granger saw it he stopped short to stare. He had not thought Trix could do a thing like that.

It was the head of a young Italian boy, strong, eager, passoinate. On his head was the tasselled stockinet cap of the Sicilian fisher boy. His blouse was open at the throat, his head uplifted, three-quarter view, and his eyes looked at one through half closed lashes, with a certain vague youthful arrogance, or pride of race. He might have been Massaniello in his boyhood, with all the dreams of empires new born.

The instant hat Trix saw his interest, she crossed the room to his side.

"Isn't he a darling, Jerry," asked she. "Can't you see from that how it has helped me living down here. It is sold already, Viola Dunderdale and her mother called out of curiosity, and the precious old cat went into a spasm of joy over this. She wants it for their Italian villa at Lakewood, and will pay enough for it for me to live on corn starch and olives for years. I shall exhibit it first—"

She paused as a knock came on the door. As Trix opened it, Granger caught a glimpse of the rose maker who had told him where Miss Farraday lived. She stood out on the landing, a slender, untidy Sicilian girl with a mass of rumpled curly brown hair knotted loosely at the nape of her brown throat and dark, sombre eyes that took in the whole ensemble of the little studio with on sweeping, eager glance.

"Nello not come yet today?" she asked.

"Not yet," said Trix, kindly. "He may not come at all today. Tomorrow is Easter, and he said he would be busy."

The girl did not answer. Her glance had fallen suddenly on the picture at the easel. From the picture she glanced at the tall, fair American girl, and there was a new understanding in her eyes.

"You paint that?" she asked quickly.

Trix nodded, half smiling. It was fun to show Jerry a tangible touch of the atmosphere she had boasted of.

"Isn't it a nice picture of him?"

"It is not him at all," exclaimed the girl, scornfully. "It is a foolish picture. I shall tell him I don't like it."

She banged the door as she shut it, and went downstairs. Trix met Granger's laughing look with composure.

"She doesn't understand a thing about it," she said. "She is only one of the flower makers at Tonino's downstairs."

"She seems to know Nello anyway," Granger went over to take a closer look at the picture, and Trix turned her back on both. Someway, she felt more unhappy and jarred over the words of the girl than even over Granger's coming. It was the second time the girl had come to her studio door. The first time, Nello had been there, and had gone out on the landing and pacified her. And now she had come again. She almost believed the little black-eyed thing was jealous of her. It was all so nonsensical, and now, there was even Granger looking at her with an odd, whimsical glance of inquiry.

"He is nothing at all but a street piano player," retorted Trix. "I wanted a model for this head, and one day I saw him over on MacDougal street standing beside his piano with a crowd of children dancing on the sidewalk. He is only an ordinary Italian boy, who happens to have a good head for a model. He is posing for me for fifty cents an hour, and is glad to get it. It is more than he can earn with his street piano, and even Italian opera gets tiresome mixed in with 'Waiting at the Church,' and 'Moving Day.' He has come here and posed now and then for over two months and Carmela is jealous. That is all there is to it. They are to be married, I believe, and I only need him for three or four more sittings. Do you like the picture?"

Granger left the easel, and crossed to where she sat in the window-seat.

"Dear," he said, taking the hand that wore his engagement ring. "I don't give a rap about the picture. It is you I want. Marry me tomorrow, and you can paint any old thing you feel like, but for heaven's sake clear out of this neighborhood, and stop picking up Dago organ grinders for models——"

Miss Farraday rose, and disengaged her hand with dignity and decision. Also, she drew off the diamond ring on its third finger, and handed it to the giver.

"Jerry, it's no use making believe. If you loved me in the right way you would be in sympathy with my work, and not ridicule it. He is something more than a Dago organ grinder, as you call him. Nello is a very bright, handsome boy—"

"He's a Dago organ grinder," repeated Granger, with unction. "You told me so yourself. And you have him up here, posing for you by the hour. Why, great scott, Beatrice—"

"Wait."

There was a rap on the door, not the soft, uncertain rap of Carmela, but a quick, assured knock that brought a touch of color to Miss Farraday's cheeks."

"It is Nello," she said. "I did not think he would come today, but he is nearly as anxious about the picture as I am. Do be decent to him, Jerry, He's only a boy."

She opened the door, and a tall, slender Italian stepped into the room. Jerry groaned in spirit as he sized up the "boy." He was in the twenties, and nearly as tall as Granger. The picture did not flatter him. It was a first rate portrait of him, barring the costume. When Granger went down the narrow stairs a minute later, he slipped the diamond ring into his vest pocket, and cursed the ethics of Thompson street. Also, he decided, that never again would he climb that particular flight of stairs.

As he passed out of the door, Carmela glanced out of the window at him, and the rose leaves she held in her hand dropped on the table unheeded, as she sat with her chin in her palm, thinking of Nello in the studio upstairs.

And upstairs, Nello was very busy explaining to the blonde American, Signorina Farraday how he could not continue his posing. He was but, oh, so sorry. The signorina had been most kind to him. If it had not been for the many fifty cents she had given to him, it would have been impossible for him to marry Carmela for maybe two years. It took so very long to accumulate fifty cents with the street piano, and here in the studio, he had earned it by merely standing still. All his life he would adore and bless the signorina, but he must beg to be excused from any further sittings, as he had promised Carmela they two should wed on the morrow, Easter Day. For Easter brides were held more blessed than other brides in Sicily, where he and Carmela came from. Therefore, tomorrow they were to marry over in the little church on Bleecker street, and then they were going to take the piano and start for Brooklyn. And from Brooklyn they would work on, day by day, until the blue skies of June found them at the place where the golden shower falls on the thrifty sons of Italy, Coney Island.

Just here, Nello's feelings swept over him in a flood of spontaneous joy, and he dropped on one knee to kiss the hand so graciously extended to him by the signorina. To him it was more than the hand of a lovely girl. It was the hand that had lavished fifty cent pieces on him but to Carmela as she paused an instant at the head of the stairs to look in the studio door, the whole scene bore a different meaning. And she drew the stiletto from her bosom.

Twice Granger had walked as far as the elevated station, and twice he came back to walk by the little red brick house with the rows of artificial flowers hanging at its lower windows, and one lone, dark green fern on the upper window ledge, beside a bunch of daffodils. He had said he would never come back, but that was ten minutes ago, and he could not go up-town and leave her there with that Dago.

As he stood in the doorway hesitating the second time, he caught a sound from upstairs that made his heart seem to stop its beating. It was a stifled cry from Trix Farraday's lips, and with a bound Granger was up the stairs and in the studio. It was different from what he had left it ten minutes ago. The easel was overturned. The picture of the fisher boy lay on the floor, face downwards. Standing over it, her eyes shining with startling amazement was Trix, and around the room, now here, now there, struggling, overturning chairs, sketches, fighting desperately to free herself, was Carmela in the grasp of Nello, and in one hand, Granger caught the flesh of a bared steel.

"Jerry!" cried Miss Farraday, helplessly, as she saw him. "Jerry, that girl wants to kill me."

A flood of Sicilian rage poured from Carmela's red lips. Nello suddenly deftly slapped the red lips with the back of his hand, and with the other wrenched the stilletto away, and stuck it composedly in his own back pocket. Carmela's dusky brown hair had tumbled about her face, and she leaned her back against the wall, her arms crossed over her eyes, sobbing heavily. Nello smiled, and shrugged his slim shoulders in humble, helpless apology.

"She was jealous of the signorina," he explained, breathless from the struggle. "She not understand anything at all. She one grand woman fool. After I marry her, I beat her good for this."

Granger had a wild longing to laugh. It was primitive, but he could have joined in the sentiment. As it was, he put his arm around Trix, and told the Sicilian to take the girl away. And Nello obeyed, half dragging Carmela after him with a rough tenderness, now swearing at her in swift, sweet sounding Italian, then urging her to beg the signorina's pardon, lest the signor forget his own goodness, and send the police after her.

But Carmela never begged, nor even looked at the signorina as she passed her. She was sobbing still, but quietly, happily, for had not Nello said after they were married he would beat her? Little she cared for the beating. He had said they were to be married, and she was happy.

And as the door closed on the two, Granger slipped the diamond back in its old place.

"Tomorrow, dear?" he asked. "Easter is the lucky day for brides."

Miss Farraday looked about her at the studio wreck. Her face was white still, and in her eyes was the memory of an uplifted stiletto that had come too near her heart for comfort. Suddenly she felt very tired of Little Sicily and its code of honor and of love.

"Jerry," said she. "I like your perspective on general conditions. It can happen tomorrow if you like—if you'll promise not to beat me good for this."

She laughed, but there was an undercurrent of meaning in her words, and Granger promised in his own way.

And Easter Day, at sunset, two brides started on their honeymoons. Trix Granger, standing on the platform of a westbound express, watched the lights of the city disappear below Kingsbridge, and crossing Brooklyn Bridge, trudging happily along beside Nello and helping him pull the street piano, was Carmela, and the light in the eyes of each was the same, and the gladness in each heart, for to each had come the great awakening of love.

FIGHTING DESPERATELY TO FREE HERSELF, WAS CARMELA IN THE GRASP OF NELLO.

REVOKING HIS ORDER

By Henry Moore

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The division superintendent on the western end of the K. and L. road had not risen from the ranks. If he had, he would be more popular with the force under him. He had obtained his place through "influence," and nineteen times out of twenty such men are cordially hated for the best of reasons. He had many trainmen in hot water within a month, but in all appeals he was sustained. A division superintendent, on his own ground, is an autocrat. What he says goes. He is a monarch of the rails in his territory. He is responsible only to headquarters.

The K. and L. had no use for women telegraphers. It had long been the rule of the road to turn all such applicants down in the curtest manner. In some way that seemed mysterious to the other operators on the division, a young lady had taken charge of the office at Stapleton. The place was only a hamlet, and there was not much freight or passanger traffic, but there was the great bridge over the Big Blue river just to the west of it, and there was the deep cut extending for half a mile in which several landslides had occurred, so, in a way, the post was an important one.

The agent and operator in question was Miss Carrie Williams, and she had been crowded in, so to speak, by one of the big stockholders who had helped the president out of a hole. She had learned telegraphy at a school, and this was her first place. A hundred miles down the line lived her widowed mother, and the girl was working for the support of both. When the operators came to understand all this they "went slow" on her. Had she been a man they would have let her sink or swim. She made mistakes and they covered them up. She became confused and tangled up, and they helped her to straighten things out. She got discouraged and they flashed her words of sympathy and hope. They would have done nothing of the sort for a beginner of the male sex. He wouldn't have held his job beyond the first month.

It was a bit strange that Charles Morton, the new "D. S.," had been in power for six months before he ascertained that there was a woman on the line. Even his private operator had sheltered her. Then an accident to his train at her station brought the two face to face. The man was brusque and pompous in his authority and he was provoked and inpatient at his delay. He saw that the girl was a lady, and that her office was well kept and that she understood her business, but even before he had addressed her, he had made up his mind to have her out of that at the end of the month.

She was told plainly that his division had no use for her. He was not running a kindergarten. At the end of twenty days, she would be replaced. He had no complaint or excuse to offer. In fact, he was not a man to make excuses. What astonished and piqued him a bit was the way the young lady received his orders. She was not in the least flustrated and lost none of her dignity. While treating him with the respect due his position, he somehow felt that there was a feeling of contempt for him in her demeanor. He took his departure a bit ashamed of himself, and yet furious that the whole division had conspired against him.

Within an hour it was known the length of the division that Miss Williams had got the sack because she was a mere woman. She had the sympathy of all the operators, and more than one counseled her to appeal to headquarters. She thanked them for their kind words and said that she would be all ready to step out of the office when the new man arrived. The D. S. should have saved his dignity, but the feeling that he had been outwitted kept him boiling hot, and within the next ten days he discharged five operators and struck terror to the hearts of all the rest.

"For inefficiency" was the report he made at headquarters, and that went in each case. The president of a railroad never sees reports of such trifling affairs, and would not read them if they were placed under his eyes. It therefore followed that the president of the K. & L. knew nothing of what had happened and was going to happen at Stapleton. It might have altered the case if he had been appealed to, but the girl, knowing that she had been crowded out through no fault of her own, would make no sign.

Fifteen of the twenty days allowed her to finish her month had passed. It was early spring and there were constant rains. The track gang was watching the big bridge and the deep cut, but the floods rolled under the one, and the banks of the other showed no signs of giving way. The Stapleton office was cut out of the circuit after the passage of the 7 o'clock train in the evening. Then the girl operator went to her boarding house for the night and resumed duty at 8 next morning. The office at Marion, the next one east, was run on the same schedule. At 6 o'clock in the evening of the fifteenth day the track gang came in and reported all safe. At 7 the passenger train whizzed by without stopping, and ten minutes later the girl was ready to go home. As she stepped out into the rain and darkness she heard shouting down the tracks, and five minutes later an affrighted hobo appeared and called out:

"Say, now, me partner is buried under about four million tons of dirt back dere in de cut!"

"Do you mean that one of the banks has caved in?" was asked.

"More'n an acre of it. It'll take a whole week to dig me partner out. Better git de telegraph workin'. If a train runs into dat heap you won't find nuttin' but splinters left."

(Continued on Page Seven.)