

The Magpie's Nest

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

"I see," he said. "Come around next week—say Monday."

And she went out, propelled by the mere force of his will.

Evidently he meant all along to accept her services. Or perhaps her sheer unspoken hopefulness decided him when she came again. In the meantime she had gone nowhere else, feeling as if it might cross her luck in her first attempt. At any rate, after a moment when he appeared to be trying to remember where he had met her before, he abruptly swept her down the long city room and delivered her over, with an air of relief and the manner of one executing a writ of habeas corpus, to a sub-editor. The sub-editor, who was fat and worried looking, in turn after one harassed glance shooed her toward a thin, tired, sharply handsome woman of no particular age. This one sat before a typewriter in the attitude of one plucking out its vitals and flinging them in the face of a despised public.

"You'll work with Mrs. Garvice; she'll tell you what to do," said the fat sub-editor. "Come and see me about it later; we'll talk things over a bit . . . We're starting some new specials . . . women's dope . . ."

Mrs. Garvice pushed a mass of fair hair from her brow, as if making room for a new impression to be devoted to Hope. "How do you do? I'll be through with this in half an hour . . . mind waiting?" She fell on the typewriter again. One or two reporters glanced at Hope casually, and looked away again. Hope knew and liked the atmosphere of a newspaper office; it suited her temperament; nowhere else in the world do men and women work together with such brusque friendliness, so little consciousness of sex; it is a workshop above everything, and those in it like their work or they would not be there. But for that very reason it is no place to look for personal companionship. Waiting, Hope wondered where then she might look. Not in a boarding house; that she had never been able to endure. She stayed on at the hotel tentatively.

Two weeks can be a very long time—on a desert island, or worse, in a strange city. When Hope met Evelyn Curtis, she saw her with an eye sharpened by loneliness; here was another like herself. She was interviewing a wealthy woman who kept a *crèche* for a whim; she had been shown into a long, rather dark, luxurious drawing-room—to her mild surprise, on the second floor—of a brownstone house, one of forty exactly alike on a semi-fashionable street off Fifth Avenue. Hope remembered it very vaguely afterward; she had had so many new impressions, but even before she looked comprehendingly at her hostess she exchanged a quick glance of greeting with the thin, dark girl who sat, awkwardly, as if fearful of the unaccustomed softness, in a squat and puffy boudoir lounge.

Evelyn Curtis was very plain; her lack of beauty was positive; and her too bright black eyes admitted that she knew it thoroughly. There was an infinite pathos in her smile, for it made her less lovely than before; she had no bloom; she looked as if she had never bloomed. She looked starved, body and soul; her mouth was not red, and her long black hair was lustreless. Only her eyes were terribly alive. The two, strangers in every formal sense, looked at each other with sympathetic understanding, and felt that the woman they had both come to see was rather an interruption.

"She looked *stodged*," said Hope to Miss Curtis, after they had escaped from the house together. "Her very voice was overfed and massaged. What a lot of New York women look like that!" She had seized the other's arm as they went down the brownstone steps together, disdaining conventional advances.

"YOU haven't been here long, have you?" said Miss Curtis, smiling her ugly, pathetically appealing smile. "No. Have you? How did you guess it?"

"You have a different accent. You're on the *Courier*?"

"Yes. What are you with? Do you have to rush right down to the office? Won't you stop and have supper with me? I haven't eaten with a soul since I came to New York. Do, do come. Do you notice that people here don't ask you to eat? They ask you to have a drink. I almost felt insulted, at first. But I'll buy you a drink, if you like. Come to my hotel—it isn't far. And have supper in my room!"

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 50)

A Word with

A Personal Chat

One Woman's Way



WE have had a multiplicity of women speakers among us this year. Some with only a pleasing platform presence and a gift of words to offer; others with a real message. Mrs. Ralph Smith of Vancouver, wife of a former Liberal member, and herself a nominee for the House of Commons, who addressed the Political Education League of which Mrs. Prenter is President, belongs to the latter class. She gave us something to carry away, something worth remembering. Sympathy and a broad outlook marked what she had to say. They study things out for themselves those western women. They do not get their opinions second hand from politician and profiteer. "Surely, surely" she says "domestic questions and matters concerning women should be in woman's hands, since she is a domestic person. We may have to pay high food prices, and big taxes, but if so we mean to study enough political economy to know why." She told of the Women's Civic Ratepayers' Association of Vancouver, and of what it had done, and hoped to do. The three planks in its platform are equal suffrage; equal pay for equal work; equal moral standards for men and women. A platform to be proud of, and loyal to, is it not? And what gives us an added warmth in our heart for this clear-eyed, good-looking Vancouver woman is the fact that behind her ideals is the practical patriotism which could give four—think of it—four bonnie sons to go overseas. It is this type of woman whom the poet had in mind when he wrote of the men who fight our battles:

"Since never soldier fought and died

For country's honor, country's pride,
But owed much of his courage strong
To her who sang his cradle song.
Ah, blazen on each flag unfurled;
The splendid women of the world!"

Welcome Home

"I WOULD rather be that woman than the Queen of England. Think of having a son win such honors and live to come home and tell her about it!" exclaimed one poor little mother whose boy sleeps "somewhere in France" as she watched Mrs. Bishop and the hero of the day receiving congratulations. "Ah! proud she must be and happy too!"

The mother of the daring air man was all that if her face was a true index to her heart. She looked as though her dreams had all come true. "My Billy" she said "is the only boy living who has won the Victoria Cross, the D.S.O. with a bar, and the Military Cross. And, best of all, I have him safe home for awhile."

It is a great thing to be the mother of a man who is a hero. Major Bishop is the Prince of Air men, since Guynemer went, with 47 Hun planes to his credit. Every heart thrills at his courage.



The Mother

with Jean Blewett

the home holiday. The others are for change, rest, running around, according to taste, but Xmas is for clan gathering. So long as we can "go back home" for Xmas, back to the old ways which will not change in this world, and the old welcome which will not change in the next, we hold fast to enough of our youth to be mother's kiddies.

All the while we are getting ready we tell ourselves that there isn't a flake of snow in the air: it is going to be a bare Xmas. Not that it matters, only— But when we get up early the day before Xmas and find the ground, ay, and the bare trees—which last night were quarrelsome and clean like bad children bathed against their will—all tucked in the white blanket of winter we are glad out of reason. The gladness stays through the day's journey, stays through the drive from the station, with us tucked in the sleigh, stars twinkling down on the white highway, the bells chiming sweetly in the air and the bells of memory chiming sweetly in our heart. Glorious!

Every window has a light gleaming. The door is flung wide open. Yes, they are all there, nobody is missing. All at once you see the dear faces through a mist of tears, glad, thankful tears—and our welcome is upon us with a rush.

Oh, it is good to be home where our old place waits us, where even our old chair at table waits us! In the world if sickness, misfortune, failure, anything, makes one drop out of things one's place isn't kept, oh no, it is given somebody else—the world is a big busy place. But leave the home circle for as long as one will and nobody crowds one out. Thank the dear Lord:

"For home and all home's tender ties."

The appetizing smell of Xmas which runs through the house like a messenger carries us back to the delectable land of childhood—and leaves us there. Who wants to be middle aged, anyway, and have to pretend to be wise, and worldly, and far-seeing? Pretending is hard work. What did Daddy say as he kissed us: "Well if here isn't Roly-poly!" despised nickname of the old days, but unaccountably sweet now that we're getting—no, we won't say it. Age is honorable, but Xmas isn't the time to talk about it.

Under cover of the table cloth we grab mother's hand and squeeze it—our old trick—and her dark eyes rest on us lovingly, approvingly. The understanding comes to us—and with it a delicious sense of having left the cares and responsibilities of life outside in the darkness—that to father and mother the children stay children, just children. We are Daddy's girl; this is why he tweaks our ear when he bids us: "run away to bed or Santa Claus won't come to us," And isn't it good to be his girl!

It is a great thing to be the mother of a man even if he be of the order that does but the day's work. One of this ilk came home from the Front about the time that Bishop did. He had won no decoration (unless we call the ragged seam in his cheek where a bullet had ploughed its way, a decoration) but, bless you! it made no differ-

Peace on Earth, Goodwill To Men

Peace, Peace on earth! Goodwill to man. O strong, O sweet, O clear,
The bells rings out! "help me," she prayed
"to swell the song of cheer.
O, Christ Child, touch this heart of mine and heal it of its pain,
For one, the bonniest of the flock, who sleeps in Flanders' Plain,
Let me forget my grief and put my bitterness away
Swell Thy glad song of Love and Peace this glorious Christmas Day!"
Thus kneeling in the rose of dawn the weeping mother prayed,
And Christ the Healer, Comforter, this tender answer made:
No mother prays in vain to me
On this day of the year,
For when the faltering words she speaks
Fall on my listening ear,
I do remember that my cheek
Lay on a bosom warm,
I do remember Bethlehem
And Mary's cradling arm!

Jean Blewett.

ence to his mother. Her welcome couldn't have been warmer, her loving pride greater, had he led a forlorn hope and been crowned conqueror. If you doubt it I wish you could have seen her dear glad eyes when they lighted on him after his two years in the trenches (those of Bartimaeus on receiving his sight may have held just such rapture), if you could have heard the joy in the voice which cried as her arms closed about him: "Safe are you my bonnie boy, and on my heart once more? Praise the Lord!"

Ay, it is a great thing to be the mother of a man!

Home For Christmas

YOU'RE not eating your dinner—must be under the weather" said one club man to another. "No," came the answer, "but ever since I found out I couldn't get back to the homestead for Xmas I've been smelling the delicious juicy odor which pervades the air when mother starts a-cooking. It sort of spoils one's appetite for club meals, don't you know?"

Isn't it like a man to try and hide his sentiment behind his appetite?

It is in the air these days, the getting home for the holiday. Christmas is