

MOTHERHOOD

By Josephine A. Meyer in the New Review

Carlton at last managed to jerk up the window and after wiping the perspiration from his face and neck, leaned back to enjoy the mild, cinder laden breeze. The two women sat in the seat behind him and through the rhythmic hum and click of the moving cars and the misty memories of that afternoon at the hospital, Mrs. Shinski's yellow face, and the haunting eyes of Mrs. Connor, drifted the meaning of their words.

"I don't know what the world is coming to. I often say I've outlived my day. It's all this suffrage nonsense that's to blame. Now they've come to a point where they have to pay women to become mothers!"

Two days after Carlton had been sent to investigate unusual conditions in one of the tenements owned by his firm.

Three women sat on the steps of the house that was his goal. A fourth, in the doorway, was trying to administer nourishment to a wilted, fretful infant in her arms. To Carlton, who could barely stand the baking, odor-laden air and the stolid placidity seemed to mark them as something less than human, products of an unnatural environment that would droop and die if fed upon quiet and clean air.

"Mrs. Connor?" Carlton addressed himself to the woman in the doorway inquiringly.

"Nah, she no Missis Conna," the youngest of the group, without dropping a stitch in the elaborate cotton lace her brown hands were so deftly creating, flashed upon him a large, white-toothed smile.

"She's at work," volunteered the big-boned, forbidding Mrs. Donlan. "That's the whole trouble with her."

"Why, it's after six," exclaimed Carlton with some exasperation. "I came late on purpose. She doesn't work all night, does she?"

Only the Sicilian maker of lace smiled.

"She work all time till seven," she declared pleasantly.

walked away through the boisterous sight of misery and eager to get away to the sweet coolness of his summer cottage near the sea.

Mrs. Connor held to the iron rail and watched him go. The yellow lights fast appearing in the windows and the sickly white of the street lamps but contributed to the dismal sultriness of the murky street.

"It ain't our fault," intoned Mrs. Shinski. "My Mann, he says—"

Mrs. Connor raised her trembling hand, her eyes bright. She spoke thickly as one under intense restraint.

"I ain't blamin' nobody," she said and pushed her way past them to mount the close, dark stairs.

At the sounds that greeted her on her own landing, she shivered as if actually chilled, and raised her hands in impotent revolt.

"My God!" she gasped hoarsely. "I wish we was all dead." She put the key in the lock with a shaking hand and stood for a moment to brace herself.

"I can't blame 'em," she muttered. "I wish I could lose 'em as easy." A jarring thud behind the door woke her from her musing and she went in quickly. They came from the window, a flock of pitiable little moths, seeking the last glimmer of daylight, from Jimmy, not five, clad only in blue rep overalls and a torn shirt, to the fifteen months old baby in a soiled jumper, scrambling in the rear on all fours.

Jimmy nearly fell off the fire-escape. He was a tale-bearer at four. "He was makin' faces."

"You shut up!" advised Jimmy malignantly.

"The wath Lily," put in Annie, and a storm of wrath broke among them, while the baby roared miserably.

Their mother was lighting the lamp, turned on them suddenly, her eyes blazing crimson.

"Leave each other be!" she commanded fiercely, and seizing Jimmy by the shoulders, shook him passionately, boxed his ears and threw him from her across the room.

Lily dodged in vain and Annie waited her turn white-faced, under the table. Only the baby escaped. Then the woman dropped into a chair and between sobs cursed them.

"What comfort are ye?" she cried. "Nothin' but sorrow and bad luck have ye brought since ye was born. I wish ye had fallen out of the window—all of ye!"

The children's cowed silence lasted throughout the crude meal she prepared when she recovered herself, a moment later. She ate nothing, but sat at the window listening to the sounds of the city and watching the lines of wash hanging limp and ghostly still in the scorching air.

The children fed themselves with little whimpers, then crawled in to their corners and went to sleep. Still their mother sat, new and terrible, by the open window that let in only more heat.

The roar of the city came to her deep-toned and subdued. It brought to her mind the sound of the sea as she had heard it years ago when she had been in service with a family that spent the summer at the shore.

She might take service again if she had only herself to think of. She turned to look into the room and found the yellow eye of the kerosene lamp fixed on her steadily. She drew her hand to her breast as though to shield her heart, then rose and blew out the light. "It's a waste," she muttered, trembling.

Again she sat on the window-sill, but all thought slipped from her. She woke with a thrill of fascinated horror. She had dropped till her head rested between the iron bars of the rails, and five stories below the grey dawn showed her the empty and gaping yards. If she had fallen!

The horror passed. All one needed was the courage to jump—or something less than courage. Confusedly she realized that the children were holding her back more securely than any iron rail. A dazzling thought shot through her and she glanced in terror toward the dead lamp.

She could no longer sleep. She envied wearily the still little figures in the twilight room. It was for them she was giving up everything, kuing herself. In return they brought her the hate of the neighbors—jection!

commented the weary sewing. The anemic woman at her side had on a soiled red neck ribbon that looked intensely hot and caught Mrs. Connor's eye whenever she turned to get more work. Once the owner of this ribbon snatched the time to whisper sympathetically: "You look awful sick."

Mrs. Connor tried to forget the red ribbon and focus her mind on the machine. She found the wheel swelling under her feverish fingers, and the treadle racing madly away under her powerless foot. Then the wheel began to diminish till it was hard to see it at all, and a black curtain slowly dropped before her straining eyes.

The boss's rough voice broke through the maze.

"If you're goin' to be sick, we don't want you here. I tell you that right now!"

"I ain't sick," she heard herself say thickly.

"Then do your work right. I ain't goin' to accept this. It's punk!" He threw her a blur of white muslin to be ripped.

At noon she fainted, but she managed to conceal her weakness from the boss and went through with her afternoon work. The owner of the red ribbon, whom she knew as Bertha, offered to see her home, but she refused. She walked unseeing through the hot, noisy streets and came face to face with the same group on the stoop of her tenement.

"Your kids dey bin yellin' on de fire-escape," was her greeting from Mrs. Shinski. "An' dat little Shimmy-be climb! oi!"

"They be no childer," said Mrs. Donlan conclusively. "They be divil sin to plague us all!"

Mrs. Connor nodded to them and smiled and wiser people would have seen a sinister warning in her look.

She was still nodding and smiling vaguely when she let herself into her own dim room. The children quieted as she entered, but she presided over their supper with unusual gentleness and afterward, to their astonishment, hunted out clean things for them and washed them and combed their hair. At first they took advantage of her mood, but when it did not change they became startled and grew quiet and wary.

When the general cleaning was over, she blew out the lamp and called them to her, where she sat in the broken chair near the window. Her head throbbed. She felt she had to be very cunning in what she was about to do. With her hands crossed above her madly beating heart, she told them a story while they listened eagerly in the dark.

"They flew away!" gasped Annie incredulously.

"Flapped their arms an' it went as easy as anything. But mind ye, not many is brave enough to jump," she nodded, her eyes burning.

"I would if Jimmy did," declared Lily.

"I would," boasted Jimmy stoutly. "An' ye'd all go and leave yout little brother behind?"

"I'd carry him in my arms," said Lily. "We'd all fly together."

"Try it to-morrow an' when I come home to-morrow night ye can tell me how ye liked it," said the mother in soft tones. "O, I wish I was a little boy or girl myself, to take a nice fly from the fire-escape! Ye flap your arms, so."

She illustrated with a clicking mechanical laugh and her children joined in delightedly, for they had not heard their mother laugh in many days.

"Now, to bed, all of ye!" she whispered hoarsely. "Ye'll need all yer strength to fly in the mornin'!"

They scrambled away, laughing and chattering, discussing their courage and the sort of flying stroke they would use and where they would fly to first. She sat and listened, near the window. The heat grew so oppressive that she dragged the collar from her throat. A sudden frenzied horror shook her as she looked up, for the lamp she had so carefully extinguished was blazing with treble power, searing her eyes and her brain and her breast.

She woke in a light room and remained watching the ceiling and thinking of nothing but the pleasant coolness and comfort of the bed on which she was lying. Gradually the roar of thunder and the hiss of falling rain dawned upon her consciousness, and she turned her head. She was near a window that looked up into the grey sky; on the other side of her were more beds, and coming toward her a hospital nurse in blue and white.

yard, five stories below, and the baby in Lily's arms. She cried out once and fought against the cruel power of the opiate that held her helpless to the bed.

"Insanity?" asked a man's voice, vaguely familiar, miles away.

"Temporary, of course. The heat and overwork. The Shinski woman, who told us to send for you, says she always left before eight and never got back till seven. With four children and a notice to move because she couldn't stay home and look after them—"

"Oh, you don't think—"

"It was all worry and over-fatigue in mind and body, and the heat."

"Good! Lord! In a way then, we're responsible!"

A little silence fell and Mrs. Connor, struggling for speech, heard her own voice break in, harsh and barely audible.

"Where are they?"

"Safe!" Mrs. Shinski has them right here, see!"

Mrs. Shinski in feathered bonnet, bearing the youngest Connor in her arms, appeared at the foot of the bed. The other children stood beside her, dumb with awe.

"Dey bin Teufels," declared Mrs. Shinski, genially. "But I catch dem! Mein Got! I bin sick von it yet!" She placed the baby on the bed and beamed over the re-united. "Ach," she turned to Carlton, wiping her eyes with a large handkerchief. "Ich weint' darmit. Mrs. Marini an' Mrs. O'Reilly an' Mrs. Donlan an' me, we look after dem kids till she's better."

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

To the battleship "New Zealand," which visits the port of Vancouver, on Monday, July 27th.

Welcome! thou emblem of a darker age; when Mars and Woden strove for fame;

When tribe with tribe relentless war did wage;

And heartless tyrants ruled in blood and shame.

Welcome! for what? The reasons are not few.

Why flags and shouting greet thy visit now;

That waking workers may each one review

The tool, before which sleeping slaves must bow.

Welcome! that those who dare to sound revolt,

And raise the scarlet emblem of the free,

May, in the master's march, effect a halt.

By showing others what our goal must be.

Welcome! some rulers of the world may know.

That some refuse the tyrants voice to hear;

And, while the bugles of rejoicing blow,

That many view the scene without a cheer.

Welcome! yes doubly welcome to the west!

The cruiser which New Zealand's sons have given

To guard an empire, which, like all the rest,

The slaves with iron hand has ever driven.

Frank Foster.

To secure to each laborer the whole product of his labor, or as nearly as possible is a worthy object of any government.—Abraham Lincoln.

THE BOY SCOUT

So now, our boys, the goose-step learn, and the killer's joys, and to powder burn; before they reach the age of reason, if peace we teach they call it treason. They line them up in every town, and batter our defences down. Hot-headed youth is bound to drill, or read of sleuth and how to spill their superfluous gore, they can see it, feel it, eat it, when they learn more they'll quickly beat it; they'll sometime learn what an unholly mess, is this foul, misleading, military B. S. Go to it, sons, and get your fill; go do your stunts on every hill, go join the eighth, and tenth, and twelfth; I was young one time myself. But when these lads reach man's estate, I do not think they'll hesitate; they'll join their comrades who've gone before. Our system's rotten to the core. We'll unfurl our banner to the breeze, that coils our brow, and sways the trees, you'll see it wave from sea to sea, the blood-red flag of liberty. We'll show them we're not for nothing learned, the stately goose-step and powder burned, we'll sally forth from every town and goose-step this whole darned system down; unless our foes step down before, but peace shall reign for evermore.— J. S. Derick, Millet, Alberta.

EVOLUTION + By Langdon Smith

When you were a tadpole and I was a fish, In the Paleozoic time, And side by side on the ebbing tide We sprawled through the ooze and slime Or skittered with many a caudal flip Through the depths of the Cambrian fen, My heart was rife with the joy of life, For I loved you even then.

Mindless we lived and mindless we loved, And mindless at last we died; And deep in a rift of the Caradoc drift We slumbered away by the side. The world turned on in the lathe of time, The hot lands heaved amain, Till we caught our breath from the womb of death, And crept into light again.

We were Amphibians, scaled and tailed, And drab as the dead man's hand; We coiled at ease 'neath the dripping trees, Or trailed through the mud and sand, Croaking and blind, with our three-clawed feet.

Writing a language dumb, With never a spark in the empty dark To hint at a life to come.

Yet happy we lived, and happy we loved, And happy we died once more; Our forms were rolled in the clinging mold Of a Neocomian shore. The sun came, and the cons fed, And the sleep that wrapped us fast Was riven away in the newer day, And the night of death was past.

Then light and swift through the jungle trees We swung in our airy flights, Or breathed the balms of the fronded palms, In the hush of moonless nights. And Oh! what beautiful years were these, When our hearts' hungers each to each; When life was filled, and our senses thrilled In the first faint dawn of speech.

Thus life by life, and love by love, We passed through the cycles strange, And breath by breath, and death by death, We followed the chain of change. Till there came a time in the law of life When over the nursing sod The shadows broke, and the soul awoke In a strange, dim dream of God.

Deep in the gloom of a fireless cave, When night fell o'er the plain, And the moon hung red o'er the river bed, We mumbled the bones of the slain.

I flaked a flint to a cutting edge, And shaped it with brutish craft; I broke a shank from the woodland dank And fitted it, head and aft.

Then I hid me close to the reedy tarn, Where the mammoth came to drink— Through brawn and bone I drave the stone And slew him upon the brink.

Loud I howled through the moonlit waste, Loud answered our kith and kin; From west and east to the crimson feast The clan came trooping in. O'er joint and gristle and padded hoof, We fought and clawed and tore, And cheek by jaw with many a growl, We talked the marvel o'er.

I carved that fight on a reindeer bone, With the rude and hairy hand; I pictured his fall on a cavern wall That men might understand. For we lived by blood, and the right of might.

Ere human laws were drawn, And the age of sin did not begin, Till our brutal tusks were gone.

And that was a million years ago, In a time that no man knows Yet here to-night in the mellow light, We sit at Delmonico's. Your eyes are as deep as the Devon springs Your hair is as dark as jet; Your years are few, your life is new, Your soul untried, and yet—

Our trail is on the Kimberley clay, And the scrap of the Purbeck flag; We have left our bones in the bagshot stones, And deep in the Coraline crags. Our love laws, our lives are old, And death shall come again; Should it come today, what man may say, We shall not live again?

Great cities have sprung above the graves Where the crooked-boned men made war, And the ox-wain creaks o'er the buried cars, Where the mummied mammoths are. Then as we linger at luncheon here, O'er many a dainty dish, Let us drink anew to the time when you Were a tadpole and I was a fish.

HEALS 24 HOURS

It is a new way. It is something absolutely different. No lotions, sprays or sticky tinctures, salves or creams.

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