



A CASE OF EQUITY

By VIRGIL INGLIS SHEPHERD

THE typewriter clicked away in feverish monotony. The blonde with singular nonchalance piled sheet after sheet of the crisp typewritten copies of the testimony in the case of "People vs. Richard Travers," president of the Union Gas Company. When they were finished she turned. "Mr. Curtiss, they are done," she said.

The man addressed wheeled in his chair, jerked the black cigar from his mouth and took them. He followed every line and word with minute analytic scrutiny.

"Rogers," he said, handing the papers to his junior law partner, "I've got Travers nailed four points down this time." He relit his cigar and pulled away in grim confidence.

Rogers after careful reading nodded approvingly. "I see no possible means of his evading that," he said. "In my opinion the testimony is damning in its completeness."

The two lawyers bent to their separate tasks, examining some reports apropos of the case at issue, Curtiss singling out telling points in the testimony. Curtiss turned.

"Rogers."
"Yes."
"What time did you say those parties would be up?"

"They told me they would call this morning at ten. It's quarter of ten now," he said glancing at the clock.

Curtiss walked up and down the room, smoking impatiently. "I wish they would come. This case has almost unstrung me. I know we have Travers where he can't move, but I won't rest until I have squared accounts with him—Damn him! and yet—" he paused. "Rogers," he said, "has it ever occurred to you that as consummate a rascal as Travers is, he has a family that must suffer his disgrace?"

"There are other families besides that of Travers," said Rogers.

Curtiss was all business again. Flicking the ash from his cigar he clucked his lips in vexation and turned to his desk when the door opened and the plaintiffs entered.

They were serious looking men of the "let well enough alone" type, who, when they are aroused by corruption affecting them as individuals become at once singularly persistent in their efforts for civic reform.

"Good morning, Mr. Curtiss. Mr. Rogers, you see we are punctual," gushed the spokesman—a fat-faced portly gentleman.

"Yes," said Curtiss. "Now, gentlemen, if you will kindly step into this side room, we will be with you in a moment."

The men filed in. The lawyers gathered their books and papers and followed. Curtiss closed the door after them.

The conference was going on in subdued tones in the ante-room when the blonde was again interrupted in her labors. A veiled woman had entered. She was something above medium height, tastefully gowned in blue silk which delicately traced the exquisite contours of her form.

The girl at the typewriter removed her gum in concealed admiration and pointed obviously to a chair.

The woman sat down, nervously fingering the tassels on her cape. "Is Mr. Curtiss in?" she asked.

"Yes ma'am, but he is busy with some men now in his private office. But I will tell him you are here," she added respectfully.

HOW a Woman Caused a Lawyer to carry his Case to a Higher Court.

"Thank you."
"Shall I give any name?"
"No, just tell him a lady would like to see him at his earliest convenience—and please ask him when that will be."
"Very well."
The girl opened the door of the ante-room. "Mr. Curtiss."
"Yes," came from within, "what is it?"
"A lady wishes to know when she may see you."



And this is the woman who did it.

"What is the name?"
"She didn't give any."
"Tell her to call to-morrow at two o'clock."
The woman clutched the girl's sleeve. "I must see him to-day. Please ask him if he can oblige me."
"Mr. Curtiss."
"Yes," somewhat impatiently.
"The lady says she must see you to-day."
The lawyer rubbed his chin dubiously. "Very well, tell her we will be through here in an hour if she cares to wait."
The girl closed the door and turned to the woman. "You heard what he said. Will you wait?"
The stenographer fixed her belt, adjusted her

marcel wave and unearthed a magazine from the debris on Curtiss' desk? "Perhaps you would like to read a little while you are waiting?"

The woman took the magazine. "Thank you very much," she said.

The girl resumed her pounding on the typewriter, occasionally turning to cast an admiring glance in the direction of the woman.

The woman fingered the pages aimlessly. She was listening not for words but for the conference to cease when she was suddenly startled.

"You are quite certain then, Mr. Curtiss, that Travers can't wiggle out of this and incur upon us a needless expense?" one was saying.

"Yes, read that letter and judge for yourself whether or not the case has merit," came in clear-cut tones.

There were murmurings of approval.

An icy chill sent a shiver through the woman. The magazine was almost crushed in the shapely white fingers. The typewriter kept up its incessant clatter. The old-fashioned clock ticked ponderously from its station in the corner. The woman watched the long hand as though fascinated as it crawled slowly around to eleven o'clock. At last it tongued out the hour.

The men, followed by Rogers, were filing out through the main office. Rogers turned toward the woman.

"Mr. Curtiss will see you now," he said. "Am I to go in there?"

"Yes," replied Rogers, following the men out. The stenographer was fixing her hat preparatory to going out for the noon lunch.

The woman stood alone, trembling. She feared to face the lawyer.

WITH a supreme effort she softly opened the door and walked in. The lawyer was standing by a window chewing the end of a cigar in a tense attitude of preoccupation. She only had a side view of him but it was not reassuring. A plain black business suit hung loosely upon an immense frame—the shoulders were too broad to be well proportioned—one wing of a black tie stood out in an aggressive tilt under a jaw that belongs to the fighter. A high broad forehead supported a shock of thick black hair slightly streaked with grey. She did not see the eyes until a subtle sense of her presence caused him to turn and she thought them grey and forbidding.

"You are Mr. Curtiss?" she asked with a brave effort at control.

"Yes, won't you be seated?" He motioned courteously to a chair.

"Thank you," she said, but remained standing.

The lawyer noticed that she was agitated. "To whom am I indebted for this visit?" he asked kindly.

The woman was studying a design on the cheap carpet with contained intensity.

"I am," she said slowly, "Miss Travers."
"Well?" There was a note of suspicion in the curt tone.

"I came to see you about this trial."
"Very well," with professional courtesy.

The meaning conveyed in his tone stung the woman, but she recovered herself.

"Mr. Curtiss," she began as firmly as she could, "I am a woman and do not know the mysteries of your profession, but I would like to know if there isn't some possible way of settling this thing without