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Influence Unawares

By FRANCES GREENMAN.

PART II.

Getting paper and pen and ink, Ma wrote a letter. As she put on the stamp she said aloud, "I'll not try to use one mite of 'influence,' either. There shall be a word said about roads, not one word." She sighed as she pushed up her spectacles. "Seems sad when my body can only live once in the world that it has to ride over the sort of road it does; but we lected Tom Hart and Billy Mix, and now we'll have to abide their decision. I've thought all day, and I don't get any nearer 'influence' than I was this morning. I'll lay it away in lavender for that road, and tend to the business of making 'up' to Pa Dallas.

In two days the mail carrier on R.R. 4 left a letter for Mrs. J. Dallas. Every line of her face expressed satisfaction as she read it. "I'm not so sorry I spanked him now," she said to herself. "No, I'm not sorry at all."

"Folks," announced Ma as she poured coffee at the foot of the dinner table, "day after to-morrow we get company for dinner."

"We do!" Clarissy held a plate of raised biscuits aloft. "Who?"

"Never you mind," said her aunt; "a friend or so of mine. I want every one of you to bridle your tongues all the time they are here. I don't want one word said about roads, either foreign or domestic. No matter what comes up, or who, roads are to rest all day; and I'm considering killing Earl Haig."

"Why, Aunt Dell!" Clarissy Ann set down the old blue plate so suddenly and violently that a biscuit bounded off and landed in the pickle dish. "I thought," said Pa Dallas, "Earl Haig was for Thanksgiving. Must be real special guests."

"Extra," agreed Ma.

The next morning there was assembled in the Dallas kitchen a wonderful assortment of "cookers"—a term that Peter and Clarissy had coined for other where-withal needed for the creations for which Ma was famous.

Clarissy ran down and up the cellar stairs until she felt like a squirrel. She creamed butter, beat eggs and made six trips to the spring house. While on a flying visit to the barn for strictly fresh eggs she confided to Peter that from indications the King of all the Belgians was to dine with them on the morrow. "But she's weakening on Earl Haig," she says she doesn't want to overdo her reparation."

"Overdo what?" Peter laid down a monkey wrench and stared at his sister's flushed cheeks and tousled curls.

"I don't know, and if she'll only leave Earl Haig alone I don't care. He'll weigh a good twenty-five pounds by Thanksgiving."

"Beats me," said Peter. "There's a joker somewhere."

"It isn't like Aunt Dell to be so secretive, but I've got to hurry. I do need a pair of wings this day."

Later Ma ordered Peter to round up the three pullets that the Wyandottes had brought off so early.

"I was most provoked to anger," said she, "when that hen sprung her hatch on us—and snow still lingering in the hollows and under hedges; but now I can see why they shelled out so early; they're prime fries right now. After all's said, a platter of crusty springs with mashed potatoes and cream gravy is hard to beat, but I'm some unsteady in my mind whether it is steamed brown bread or plain johnnycake I'll need; one hot bread's enough along with fresh salt rishins."

"Let's make ice cream," coaxed Clarissy.

"No, Clarissy; ice cream is just fixings. I'm going to serve victuals—apple dumplings and cherry pie."

"Shall I dress up," asked Clarissy, "and must Peter wear a stiff collar?"

"Mercy to me, why? If there is one thing I want to-morrow, it is for us all to be natural and casual. If it's the least bit chillsome, Peter, you buy a scrap of fire on the living room hearth 'long 'bout half past eleven. A fire on a hearth, even when it's not real necessary, is cheerful as a robin. You know the kind I mean, Peter—not hot but heartening. Clarissy, you leave that braided rug right where it is and the candlesticks on the chimney piece. I'm going to use the willow wicker."

"I can see right into the back of your head, Clarissy," Ma Dallas went on. "You're going to ask me not to pour the coffee at table and not to heap up platters. Now, Clarissy, this is my company. When you have your company I've not a mite of objection to your dishing up to suit yourself and drinking coffee with the pie and interluding with a salad, and so forth, but to-morrow we serve a bountiful country dinner in true country style. And no matter what happens, don't any of you act surprised—and pick me some laylocks for bouquets."

The next day when a smart gray automobile drove into the farmyard about noon, Mr. Dallas, Peter and Clarissy Ann were as curious as quails.

"Well, I do know!" exclaimed Peter as four men climbed out of the car. "If it isn't the commissioners!"

"Who are the other two?" asked Clarissy.

"I calculate," said their uncle, "that I better go right down to meet them and—find out."

Ma suddenly appeared in the doorway enveloped in a very clean, very much starched gingham apron over her neat sprigged calico dress. Ma looked "folksy," but not at all "complicated."

"Now I wonder what Ma's up to?" said Pa as he started down the step.

"Remember," cautioned Clarissy, "not to be surprised even if it's a French general and an extra king—this is Aunt Dell's day, and we've got to mind."

In the farmhouse living room the guests were aware that a cosy little fire flared on the hearth, that the lilacs filled the air with sweet fragrance, and that comfortable chairs, braided rugs and sunny windows made a welcome resting place for weary travelers who had been riding over a rough road since early morning.

The good-roads expert settled himself in a padded chair near the fireplace. Young Ted McCool made conversation. He was full of reminiscences of the days when his family had lived on the Dickey place and when Ma had chastised him. Finally, he slipped out to the kitchen and frankly confided to his hostess that Paul and he were as hungry as seven-year-olds.

"I bet my new spring hat, Ma Dallas, that it would be fried chicken. Who wins?"

"You do this time, son. And now you carry it in and put it by Pa's chair."

"You're going to give us all what? You're not going to serve it hotel style?"

"Hotel style!" Ma exclaimed with derision in her voice.

With a grin of delight the famished engineer bore in the heaping platter. When the road engineer passed his plate for "more," humorously admitting that in the matter of fried chicken and gravy he was a direct descendant of Oliver Twist, Ma felt that her dinner was successful.

The commissioners were astonished that roads were not a topic of conversation. They were fully persuaded, however, that no one except the two experts they had hired could exert a bit of influence. Thinking how kind Ted McCool had been to invite young Ma Dallas to dinner and to bring with him any friends he wished, they showed their gratitude in a way that pleased Ma.

"It takes her to cook a round dinner," thought Pa Dallas. "Some women make a meal too square. I hope Mr. Paul can swim, for he's liable to drown himself in cream if he don't watch out."

The day was older by three hours when the gray automobile passed through the big gate. As the car neared the county town Billy Mix, at the wheel, called to the two men in the tonneau:

"Well, which road are you for? You have seen both."

"That was a rattling good dinner we ate at Dallas's," remarked Mr. Tom Hart, "and she told us the latching spring was out whenever we happened along."

"We'll have to go out that west road to inspect the work from time to time—if we choose that road," said Ted McCool.

"Considering that one road is about as bad as the other," said the good-roads expert, "why, I vote west. I thought such a dinner had vanished along with my boyhood."

"I'd just as lief decide on the west road," said Billy Mix.

In the late afternoon a young man was diligently searching through the post-card rack in a variety store while he softly whistled. Can she make a cherry pie, Billy Boy, Billy Boy.

The next day Ma Dallas found a post card in her mail box; there was a picture of a fine bunch of cherries on one side, and on the other, beside the address, was a message written in lead pencil.

"Mercy me!" said Ma as she read it. "My dinner won us the road!"

She sat down very suddenly upon a bench by the flowering almond bushes; a bewildered expression crossed her round, plump face. "Now I'm some surprised! I never had a notion of serving any 'influence'—just a good country dinner."

The old Wyandotte that had furnished the piece de resistance for the meal of yesterday came walking by, holding her head pertly on one side.

"Chick-biddy," said Ma softly, "Chick-biddy, I calculate I'll adorn you with a name. I calculate hereafter I'll call you Influence."

(The End.)

A Drop of Water.

Did you know that when a drop of water reaches the ocean it is destined to remain there 3,460 years? That's the average. Some drops may be drawn out by evaporation the next day. Some drops may wander about in the ocean 10,000 years. But the average is 3,460 years.

All this has been figured out by scientists who have made a careful estimate of the total volume of water that goes into the ocean every year. They declare that one three thousand four hundred and sixtieth of all the water in the world goes into the sea every year.

The life of a drop of water once out of the ocean is apparently a merry and a busy one, for, after evaporation, it will become condensed into water again in about ten days, and it will not be many years before it will have found its way back to the ocean again, either by means of rivers or by evaporation, and then by means of rain from the Great Lakes or some such place.

But wherever the drop of water lands on earth it is not long before one of three things happens—it falls to earth and gets back to the ocean by subterranean passages, it falls into a river and flows back to the ocean, or it falls into a lake and is either evaporated into the clouds or finally gets into the river.

Central African tribes use fish traps to get much of their food.

TITE WAD

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Irrigation Development in Southern Alberta.

Rapid development of a new country leads to the extensive use of land, with labor as the limiting factor. In parts of the West during recent years it has been realized that there was another limiting factor—moisture. Now we realize another factor of limitation in the soil—drifting, which, this year, in parts of Southern Alberta, has been disastrous in its effects.

Farming under irrigation has been increasingly practised during the past fifteen years in the area east and south of Lethbridge and has proved successful and profitable. Farming under irrigation leads to the more intensive use of land; provides against lack of moisture and tends towards the maintenance of soil fertility. In one area where soil-drifting has been most severe the remedy is closest to hand. The Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District which will draw its water from the Old Man River—an all-Canadian stream—is prepared to proceed at once with construction work as soon as financing can be arranged.

The farmers who own the 110,000 acres irrigable under the project are anxious that construction proceed at once.

That the farmers will be able to pay the cost is clearly demonstrated by the results obtained at the Lethbridge Experimental Farm. From 1908 to 1918 inclusive, a period of eleven years, the average increase per acre on irrigated land over dry land has been, wheat 23 bushels, oats 33 bushels, barley 25 bushels, peas 14 bushels and potatoes 250 bushels the results with alfalfa and hay were even more striking.

The Alberta Government has opened up communication with the Dominion Government with a view to evolving some plan to finance the District. There are other areas where the lands could be watered from all-Canadian streams, and on some of these the Dominion Reclamation Service is now completing surveys.

These areas with those capable of being irrigated from streams which are not all-Canadian make up a total of upwards of half a million acres.

Mistakes have been made in the past which, however, are now happily rectified, and it is hoped there will be no unnecessary delay on the part of Government in developing these public irrigation projects which will very soon after their practical inception, command the sound financial credit, which they will be entitled to.

G. R. Marnock, President Lethbridge Board of Trade, in a speech at the Winnipeg Conference on Conservation of Soil Fertility.

Hold Breath Test Heart.

Ability to hold the breath as a test of the efficiency of the heart is applied in England to would-be airmen. The Lancet (London), says the breath-holding test enables the physician to obtain a fair idea as to the stability of the central respiratory nervous apparatus of the examinee.

A stop-watch and a nose-clip are all the apparatus required, while the precise instructions as to carrying out the experiment are equally simple. The time the man can hold his breath before the inevitable and forceful sensation of the need to breathe compels him to give way is noted. The average time in the normal fit pilot is 69 seconds, the minimum being 45 seconds. Nearly all cases with a time record as short as this were rejected on medical grounds apart from this test.

Not the least interesting part of the test as applied to airmen is the reply given when the examinee is asked what caused him to give way and breathe in, the normal response being: "I had to give up," or "I wanted to breathe." Under conditions that point to unfitness for pilotage the reply may be: "I felt giddy," or "dizzy" or "squeamish" or "flushed," responses which indicate that other nerve centres are involved besides the true bulbar respiratory centre.

The combination of minimum time record and abnormal verbal response points to the examinee being one likely to suffer from oxygen hunger at high altitudes, and possibly is an inherent inability, by a strong effort of will to carry on under conditions of stress.

The Conqueror.

I have no patience with the man who says,
"Another day is gone."
Give me the man who sings in thick of night,
"Soon will be dawn!"

I have no patience with the man who holds
Life as a beggar's tale,
Give me the man with iron will to climb
And courage not to fall.

He dies indeed who never sees the sun,
Nor hears the song of rain,
But his is immortality on earth,
Whose every loss is gain!

Alarm clocks, better than the German pre-war models and almost as cheap, are to be made in London.

Keep Minard's Liniment in the house.

Woman's Interests




The Home Surroundings.

On a long trip the other day in a comparatively long-settled country, I observed the farm houses along the way. Some were modest little places where the owners were evidently having a hard time to make ends meet, or had very recently moved on to the farm; others were occupied by renters but many of them were the homes of well-to-do resident owners. Not a few were backed by a fine set of buildings, surrounded by quite elaborate fences, quite pretentious in their architecture and yet they were barren looking places with nothing cozy and comfy appearing about them. And why? Only because of the lack of a few shrubs.

Perhaps the owners do not care, but strangers and buyers notice it. Ten dollars' worth of shrubs well placed about a house, may mean several hundred dollars' difference in the sale value, especially if the buyer happens to have his wife along.

These bare exteriors tell a pitiful story; they tell only too plainly that the people within those walls, especially the women, are worked to death for the lack of modern conveniences which they could well afford to have, and are so worn out with the duties within doors that they have no time or energy left to enjoy their worthwhile opportunities. Nearly everyone of those tell-tale yards advertises to all who pass by, that the man dwelling there is not giving the proper consideration to the comfort of his women folks. Given the leisure and the strength almost any woman will seek to beautify her surroundings. It is one of her chief joys. If she is deprived of it, she is deprived of one of the greatest joys of living in the country.

If more attention were paid to this, there would be fewer wives nagging their husbands to sell the place and move to town, and there would be more children anxious to stay on the farm.

The month of July is a good time to form an estimate of the value of shade. You have heard of the man who never shingled his house because he could not do it when it was raining and he did not need it when it was dry! We do not need shade in the early spring or the late fall, when the season is right for planting trees, and consequently do not think of it. When the sun is scorching them in midsummer, people make trees the next solution to plant shade all about it when spring arrives. August is a good time to make an inventory of your shade and that of your neighbors. Observe the best shade trees of your section; see what kind they are, and decide where they ought to be located. Then put them down on your docket to be ordered next February. Do not put it off because you are afraid they will not grow up in time to do you any good. They will be a good size before you realize it. If they are needed, plant them; even if you cannot get the benefit of their shade, the next fellow will; and he is a real man who considers this next fellow, since earlier tree planters have benefitted him.

Reminders for Mothers.

Why should babies be weighed? Because it is one of the best ways by which the steady thriving of an infant can be ascertained.

How often should children be weighed? Every week regularly until the end of the first year. Once a month until the end of the second year. Once every three months until the twelfth year, or thereafter. Twice a year after that.

If a baby loses weight it shows there is something wrong, probably with its diet. If it loses weight during three successive weeks, a doctor should be consulted. Loss of weight at any period of childhood is always a serious matter, and should never be allowed to continue without ascertaining the cause.

The times already given for weighing apply to children in health. Delicate babies or children may need to be weighed more often.

Always weigh at the same hour each week or month. Always weigh before a meal, and the same weight of clothing as worn at previous weighing, or if this cannot be done, then weigh the extra clothes separately, otherwise accuracy of increase in weight cannot be arrived at. Remember that accuracy as to even half an ounce is important where babies are concerned. Bear in mind, too, that there should always be an increase in weight every week during the first year. Even standing still in weight, though not losing weight, is a matter that needs looking into at once, especially during the first year.

Do not trust to memory at these weighing times. Always keep a little book, and in this write down each child's age, with the date and result of each weighing.

Care of a Patient's Bed.

If possible, use a single bed in the sick room. If this is not convenient, be sure that there are no broken springs or missing castors and that the mattress is soft and comfortable and fits the bed well. Place the head of the bed straight against the wall, not too near the window but near

enough to insure a free circulation of fresh air.

It is a mistake to pile too many clothes on a bed. The patient endures the discomfort of the unnecessary weight and is really no warmer than with fewer bedclothes and with a hot water bottle at his feet.

If a rubber sheet is necessary to protect the mattress, use a large one that will tuck in well. Be sure that there are no wrinkles under the patient's back. The heat of the body is increased by a rubber sheet making the patient perspire, and the presence of wrinkles in the rubber, or even if the linen sheet, often causes great discomfort if not actual bed sores.

In making the bed it is a good plan to use a draw sheet, or narrow sheet, somewhat longer than an ordinary one. This is used with the length across the bed and can be tucked far in on one side of the bed and drawn through to the other side, making a fresh, cool spot for the patient to lie on. When crushed but not soiled, the discarded top sheet can be used for a draw sheet by folding it once lengthwise.

To make the bed without disturbing the patient, proceed as follows:

In the first place, have everything you need at hand.

Loosen the bedclothes all around, without jarring the bed.

Take out the pillows, shake them up and put them to air, unless the patient objects to being without them.

Remove the spread and one blanket. Take off the top sheet. If possible use it for a fresh lower sheet, or for a draw sheet.

Next, change gown and rub patient's back.

Now turn the patient on one side, straighten rubber sheet and lower sheet and pull draw sheet through.

If the lower sheet needs changing, roll the soiled one up lengthwise to the middle of the bed. Place a fresh sheet exactly where it should come on the side left bare. Tuck it in firmly and roll the surplus width toward the middle of the bed and next to the soiled sheet, both being very close to the patient.

Now turn the patient back over both sheets; remove the soiled one. Draw the clean sheet out smooth and tuck firmly. A nervous patient needs a well-made bed.

Put on a clean top sheet and the blankets and spread, tucking them in carefully so that they will not be too tight across the patient's feet.

In making a bed while the patient remains in it, all care should be taken to work swiftly. Keep the patient warmly covered. Avoid any undue exertion on the part of the patient.

To raise a patient in bed, have him flex his knees so that his feet rest firmly on the bed. With one hand grasp him firmly under the arm nearest you, and while you raise him from the bed, adjust the pillows with the other hand. Always work swiftly.

The String Trick.

Here is a trick that is startling and puzzling, but so simple that with a little preparation any girl can do it.

The performer places her hands together in front of her, holding the palms against each other and the fingers flat. She then allows her wrists to be bound together with a handkerchief. A string is passed between her outstretched arms and behind the handkerchief that binds her wrists; both ends of the string are held by some one who stands facing the performer. In full view of the spectators the performer gets the string out from behind her wrists without removing the handkerchief that binds them, and while her assistant is still holding the two ends of the string.

When her wrists have been tied with the handkerchief and the string has been passed between her outstretched arms, the performer moves away from the person who holds the ends of the string until she has pressed the string down tight against the handkerchief that binds her wrists. Then she steps forward a pace or two and allows the string to slacken a little. With her teeth or with her fingers she takes hold of the string and pulls it through the handkerchief—that is, between the handkerchief and the inside of her wrists. When the loop thus made is large enough, she slips it over one of her hands and asks her assistant to pull steadily on the string. When the assistant pulls, the string slips between the handkerchief and the outside of the performer's wrist; the loop of the string falls to the floor without her removing the handkerchief and without the assistant's letting go the ends of the string.

The best way to practice is to get the things and work on them with these directions in front of you; in that way the simplicity of the trick will be strongly impressed upon you.

The Pioneers.

To them life was a simple art
Of duties to be done.
A game where each man took his part,
A race where all must run.

A battle whose great schemes and scope
They little cared to know,
Content, as men-at-arms to cope
Each with his fronting foe.

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Live While You Live.

O seize the present—it is ours,
No tides delay, my boat is near,
The clock is ticking on the wall;
The sweet dew has bathed the morning's flowers,
And golden sunshine gilds them all
Fair Mother Earth in emerald green
Her lovely form doth all adorn;
Forget the past, the night has been,
Come forth and greet the smiling morn.

O seize the present—it is ours,
No tides delay, my boat is near,
I'm jealous of the fleeting hours,
For winter snows are all too near,
O'er yonder deep no clouds are seen
To stain its depths a deeper hue;
Forget the past, the night has been,
Full flooded Life once more renew.

This Life is mixed with sweets and
sours,
Sunshine and shadow, grief and
pain;
O seize the present, it is ours,
The past is gone nor comes again.
If in your eyes the calm serene
A sudden moisture should annoy,
Forget the past, the night has been,
If any tears, then tears of joy.

France is Scrapping Powder Factories.

France has again refuted the charge that she is militaristic by commencing to transform her powder factories into industrial plants not allied with war, says a Paris despatch. The largest munitions plant in Toulouse is being adapted to the manufacture of phosphate, fertilizer and ammonia through the extraction of nitrates from available powder supplies.

Even the French War Minister has approved the plan, although he has insisted on holding some of the factories in case of emergency. In this he was supported by Gen. Marglin, who asserted that until universal peace is really established it would be unwise to throw away the sword without even turning it into a ploughshare. The present plan is to maintain several small plants, which will be devoted to the manufacture of guano, in which form it can be preserved until needed.

The Derelict of Dreams.

Three ships sailed out to win the race
Together at the starter's word;
While each one kept a goodly pace
Men timed the two, but not the third.

She was the Derelict of Dreams,
The two stout ships their efforts spurred,
And though they caught not sight nor gleams
They felt the presence of the third.

Successful failure was her goal,
She steered by every wind that stirred;
The others fell in her control—
She was the winner, though the third.

A horse collar of steel instead of leather has come into use in France.

Minard's Liniment used by Physicians

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