

### "You here, mother?' said the fresh young voice reprovingly."

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## The Gold Gown

"Sheldon Marshall has asked her for the next cotillon."

### By Grace Torrey

ETTY was looking uncommontoo tightly drawn back from her wan little face, fringed

it, now, in drab wisps. Her eyes, never of the strongest, were red behind their thick lenses. She had been up several nights lately with the twins. Grandmamma watched her with old eyes that saw everything. There was some-thing especial, she was sure, on Hetty's mind. Waldo's insurance was paid. The twins' croup had rounded a turn. Howard was doing well in school. "What is Elaine up to?" she asked,

suddenly, twitching her knitted lavender cape about her shoulders. Hetty looked guilty at once.

"Elaine?" She was vague, grandmamma knew, because she frightened. "Elaine is getting was "Elaine is getting on beautifully. Her professors all say the kindest things. She has made herself the prettiest hat out of just nothing. She was asked to something at the Marshalls', and her hats were all impossible.'

"The Marshalls ask her often," commented grandmamma. Hetty had started, blinked behind her glasses, turned red, considered, then abandoned her guns.

"Sheldon Marshall has asked her for the next cotillon."

the young people, who had refused to ly forlorn. Her hair, always let her money aid in keeping the wolf at bay. From pride, she had gone to impatience, rage, and exasperated anguish, as the infatuated two steadily refused her. Waldo knew a great deal about chemistry, and his university counted him its most eminent man. He could not, however, transmute bills, babies, and breakdowns into coin of the realm, and the salary of eminent university men takes into account none of these things.

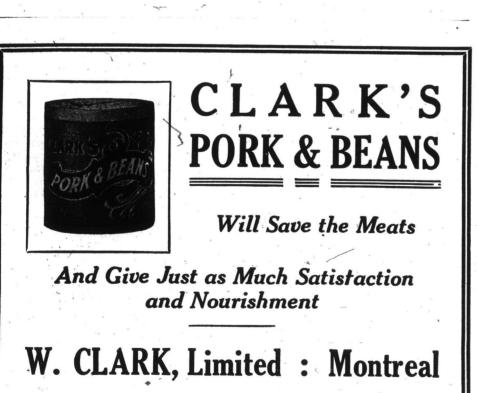
Grandmamma saw the arrival of Elaine, who was a very sickly and costly babe, with misgivings. Waldo's trouble with his eyes, that took him to Paris for a year, dismayed her utterly. Howard, baby number two, and Hetty's ensuing six months at the hospital brought her to spoken protest. arrival of the twins was the signal for war. If they chose to be poor, at least they need not be pitiful before her eyes. They would either take her money, or stop having babies and tragic happen-ings. But Waldo was calmly recalcitrant. And Hetty, mute, but with the distressed pucker between her eyes steadily deeper, held her mother's pocketbook at arm's length.

The two did stop having babies. They managed their incredible finances somehow. When grandmamma inquired how Waldo had fared in the annual "So that is what ails you," her university budget, she always learned mother considered. "Elaine is obliged that there had been a little, a hundred to have a new frock!" two more, but that there had been dentistry all around, or the house to be painted, or assessments on some of Waldo's absurd investments, that licked up the little hundreds. Of late years, she had heard frequently of little expenditures for Elaine. "You are making that girl into a luxury that nobody could afford. You are ruining her. You are destroying your own morals. I wash my hands of you," she cried, as she had cried innumerable times before. Hetty was used to being washed from her mother's hands. There was certainly storm in the air as Elaine opened the door upon the two on this wet afternoon. For an instant after her rosy fairness looked in upon them, the room was so still that the drip from the gutter outside and the subsiding of the wood fire within seemed uproarious.

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"She does so wonderfully with her poor little frocks," Hetty besought. "She is the cleverest girl! You know how stupid I am with my meedle. But Elaine! Out of ten dollars she evolves Parisian marvels."

"Well, I suppose Sheldon is worth a ten-dollar miracle," commented grandmamma, acidly. Sheldon was a precise young person, bred at the university that she most disliked, and infused, with the poison of his father's money. Grandmamma, who was democratic, and the widow of a famous professor of Greek at the university to which she believed all young men should be sent, thought him a youthful example of all that menaces our country.

"But Elaine says she just can't wear a patched-up thing to the cotillon with Sheldon. There is to be a dinner, and she will go in a carriage, and—well, she is right. She ought to have a proper gown."

"How does she propose to pay for it?"

asked grandmamma pointedly. "Oh, Waldo and I will manage!" Hetty tried for dignity, and failed; for unconcern, and failed; and ended with have you?" grandmamma spoke sharpsimple tragedy.

Grandmamma refused to be touched. Years ago, when she had yielded Hetty "I am really having a gown. It seems to Waldo, she had jested about giving to me I deserve it. Here I am, twentyher over to the wolf. She had been one years old, and asked about, and secretly proud of the spirited folly of

"You here, mother?" said the fresh young voice reprovingly. "Is my under-skirt done?" Hetty trembled.

"I left Miss Bemis just finishing the ruffles."

"You have the dressmaker, already,

"Yes, grandmamma," answered Elaine. Continued on Page 5