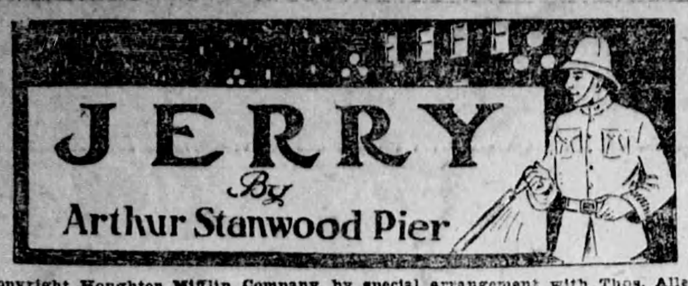

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CHAPTER XXXII.—(Cont'd.)

"Well, you're not going to get such a position right off; that's one comfort," Jerry said cheerfully. "I refuse to think of trouble before it comes. And you go ahead, Kate, and study typewriting all you want to. But I am sorry you've set your face against that college course."

He was both disappointed and disturbed; he felt even aggrieved at Kate's obstinacy. When he and his mother had become so fond of their adopted family, it was humiliating to discover that the adopted family had been secretly planning to sever relations. No matter how admirable the motive, the thing hurt. It wouldn't be the same in the house when Kate and Peter and Betty were gone. Besides, Jerry realized, with a shiver of apprehension rather than with a thrill of ecstasy, that the fulfillment of his pledge to Nora could not then be indefinitely delayed. The clear road to marriage that had been suddenly opened up before him—if he traversed it in his present mood it would be with reluctant feet.

His mother found an opportunity to enlighten him, when Kate had gone to help Peter and Betty with their lessons.

"I expect I'm responsible for Kate's decision," she said. "I wouldn't say I spoke with a purpose, but she is certainly a thoughtful and considerate child, to have made up her mind so promptly."

"What was it you said to her?" Jerry's tone was unconsciously severe, owing to the current of his thoughts.

"Now don't be cross with me, Jerry. I suppose you won't like it, but it was true enough, and it just came over me that it would be well to drop a hint to Kate—though I had no idea of her taking it up so. We were talking about Nora as we walked home from the store, and I told her—well, I told her a little about how you and Nora had once meant to get married, and how I was sure that now, of course, some time you and Nora would get married. I just felt it might be a good thing for Kate to realize—"

"Oh, mother, I wish you hadn't said that."

"Why, Jerry? Of course you and Nora will some time?"

He sat silent and looked gloomily at the floor.

"I wish you hadn't said it," he repeated at last, and in a tone so grave that she dared not question him.

After a few minutes, during which they both sat without speaking he rose, put on his helmet, and went out. It was one of his free evenings, and he took his way to the law library. He walked slowly. It was indeed a clear road to marriage that had been opened before him—and how he wished that he loved Nora now as he once had done!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Two incidents—each bearing, as may appear later, in a remote way upon Jerry's fortunes—are now to be recorded. Rather, one of them shall be only hinted at—glossed over as decorously as may be. It caused an interchange of whispers between Mrs. Donohue and Mrs. Bennett, some recently elliptical remarks by Mrs. Donohue to Jerry, and a pious understanding between the second floor and the third floor that a knowledge of shameful facts should be kept, as far as possible, from the young. In shorts, the older and prettier Armstrong girl had, to use the unexceptionable phrase employed by Mrs. Donohue and Mrs. Bennett in discussing the matter, "gone to the bad." Occasionally she returned from her life of gay and apparently prosperous adventure to pay a brief call on her family; Mrs. Bennett had a glimpse of her on one of these occasions and Mrs. Donohue upon another. "She was looking," Mrs. Donohue observed to Mrs. Bennett with satisfaction, "like the painted Jezzie that she is." They wondered what kind of a reception the family gave her. Mrs. Bennet thought that the family must at least be cool to her. Mrs. Donohue disagreed. "Proud of her, more like. That's what I should expect of such a bad lot."

Interest shifted suddenly from the Armstrongs to Dave Scanlan. In a running fight with two policemen Red Schlupfe, who had been interrupted in a burglary job, was shot down; the bullet, passing through his lungs, inflicted a mortal wound. To the priest who was with him when he died he made a full confession of his part in the Walsh murder and confirmed the truth of all that Dave had declared on the witness stand.

Jerry carried the news of the confession to Nora and her mother, and on this occasion, at least, had no reason to feel that Nora was indifferent to her brother's fate. "Oh, Jerry, is it true, is it true?" she cried; and when he assured her that it was, she danced round the room, embracing and kissing first her mother and then Jerry, and then her mother again, while Mrs. Scanlan, overcome with emotion, wept and quavered, "Oh, Nora dear, oh, Nora dear!"

"Can't we get him out right away, Jerry?" Nora asked; her eyes were shining and eager. "Right away, to-morrow?"

"I'm afraid not as quickly as that."

"Why not, when everybody knows now he's innocent? What right have they to keep him in a day longer?"

Jerry gently reminded her that robbery or attempted robbery was no light offense, even if Dave was now exonerated of the murder.

"I'll go and see Mr. Trask to-morrow," he said. "He'll know the best way to go about it. I do feel, Nora, that we'll get Dave out soon; and then what will you be?"

"The happiest woman in the world, Jerrykins." She gave him another exuberant hug and kiss. "Oh, won't it be splendid, splendid!" She danced again up and down the room. "And now nobody can never even think he may have done it, Jerry. Isn't that fine too! I feel almost grateful to that villain Schlupfe. How lucky that he had just that much religion in him at the last!"

Trask lost no time in petitioning for a pardon for Scanlan. He prevailed on Mrs. Walsh to sign the petition; and when in the course of a month Dave appeared for examination before the Board of Pardon and Parole, by whose report the Governor's decision would presumably be influenced, Trask and Nora and the priest to whom Schlupfe had confessed appeared also. The members of the Board were impressed by Dave's attitude of contrition, by Nora's plea, and perhaps too by her personality, and by the priest's assurance that Schlupfe's dying statement could not have been in any vital respect untrue; they recommended to the Governor that he pardon Scanlan; and two weeks later the Governor signed the pardon.

On a bright May morning Trask and Jerry and Nora were waiting in the corridor just outside the guardroom when Dave, a free man, emerged. He looked pale and very clean; his eyes wore a bewildered, deprecating expression; and when Nora ran to him and clung to him and kissed him, he made only a furtive little response and stood almost passive; one would have thought him stolid but for the tears that crept quietly out of his eyes and slipped down his cheeks.

In Trask's automobile Mrs. Scanlan was waiting; Trask and Jerry stood by while she gathered her son into her arms.

There was a hall bedroom that Dave was to have on the floor above Nora and her mother. And there was a job as well as a bedroom waiting for him. Trask had induced his friend Murray to give Dave a chance; and Murray had been the more willing to do it because of a feeling that he had been unduly harsh with Trask's other protege.

"He turned you down when you were suspended," Trask said to Jerry. "Afterwards, when he got all the facts, he had remorse. If Scanlan will show he's steady and hard-working he'll get ahead."

"I know he will be all right," said Jerry.

"Just keep an eye on him for a while. Keep him from getting morbid and discouraged."

Trask left them all at the door of the boarding-house. Mrs. Scanlan and Nora and Dave each tried to thank him as in turn they shook hands with him; but after making a beginning each one of them choked up and could not speak. Dave found his tongue only after he had got into the house and was sitting on the sofa with Nora and his mother on either side of him.

"If I didn't have you two to keep me straight, I'd keep straight for Mr. Trask," he said. "He's a white man, he is."

"Yes. Oh, isn't everybody good this morning, Jerry!" cried Nora.

She sprang up and flung her arms round Jerry, and then called to her brother:—

"It's all right, Dave; don't look shocked. Jerry isn't a bit shocked—are you, Jerry?"

"No, I'm getting to like it. Nora's bound that you shall have a brother somehow, Dave."

"She seems to have got me a pretty good one this time," Dave answered. He rose and shook hands with Jerry and then gave his sister a kiss. "I guess now we're all going to get busy and forget what's past."

Jerry was touched by Nora's impulse to share her happiness with him—to demonstrate it by running to his arms. When he had left the reunited family and was walking home, he thought of that little incident with pleasure. There was Nora at her best, an adorable Nora, a Nora brimming with sweet emotions, joyous trust, and happy hopes. If there was sometimes another Nora, what did it matter? This was the real, with the sunshine in her eyes and the soft caresses in her finger tips; this was the Nora that through the storms and trials of life must finally emerge.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was not long before Jerry realized that his prospects for an early marriage had been improved by Dave's release from prison. Before that had taken place, Jerry had felt that marriage, no matter how much he and Nora might desire it, must remain a remote possibility. He could not marry her and leave his mother to live alone; Nora could not marry him and leave her mother to live alone; and to marry and have both mothers live with them—well, that would not be a promising experiment, even if his mother were willing to make it, which she never would be.

But Dave's release had simplified the situation. Dave would be able now to take care of Mrs. Scanlan; and after Kate and Peter and Betty had started upon their independent career, there would be absolutely nothing to prevent Jerry and Nora from getting married and taking Mrs. Donohue to live with them. It was clear enough to Jerry; and in discovering that marriage, instead of being a thought to play with, had been suddenly brought forward into the realm of immediate actualities, he felt a tremor of dismay. He would have liked not to consider it at all until he had passed his bar examinations and got some kind of a start towards the practice of his new profession. It was the most inconvenient time to have to be bothered by plans of marriage and arrangements for an entire readjustment of life.

Even more disturbing to Jerry was the ominously determined preparation on Kate's part for the withdrawal of her little family from the roof that had sheltered them. Although their departure was not and could not be imminent, there was a dispiriting feeling of imminence and inevitability in the air. Kate told Jerry with unconcealed satisfaction that the Commercial School practically guaranteed to find you a place if you had taken the full course in stenography and had shown proficiency. And after one month at it she reported that the instructor was most encouraging. Jerry wondered jealously how she could be so enthusiastic and so happy; it was almost ungrateful of her, it certainly was selfish. Of course young things were always excited by any prospect of change; but still, if her affections had gone out to him and his mother as his had to Peter and Betty and even her selfish little self, she couldn't be so gay and sanguine over the prospect.

He hardly ever had any conversation with her; she was always studying or writing. And in her silent abstraction she seemed to Jerry to grow by degrees more and more distant; a person that he had once known intimately was being curiously transformed before his eyes into a person that he didn't know at all. The girlhood stage was passing; womanhood was blossoming. Kate gained in interest and attractiveness for Jerry as she gained in mystery. Often he watched her when she was unaware of it, and wondered what was going on in that well-shaped, well-poised little head.

To some of the processes he got a clue one day and embarrassed her by so doing. He brought up from the letter box on the ground floor a large envelope addressed to Kate and bearing the name of a New York magazine. She was standing in a window when Jerry handed it to her and he did not see that the color came at once to her cheeks. Even so, it was rather tactless of him to say pocularly, "Writing for the magazines, Kate?"

"I tried, but I guess they didn't want it."

She opened the envelope and drew out a slip that she glanced at and then passed over to Jerry.

"Of course I didn't really expect anything more—but I couldn't help hoping—"

"They might have written you a letter anyway!" Jerry exclaimed indignantly. "I'll bet it was good too. Let me read it, will you, Kate?"

"No, I don't think I could. I know now that it's poor. I wouldn't want you to see it."

"Anyway you must keep on trying. That's what you ought to be doing. Much better than grubbing along in some business office."

"But it doesn't look as if I could even grub along by writing, Jerry. I did hope I could get something accepted once in a while; it would help. But of course I don't intend to let writing interfere with my main work."

"How are you getting on with that?"

"Pretty well now. Typewriting I don't have much trouble with, and I'm able to take simple dictation if it isn't to fast. They feel quite sure I'll get a position as soon as I've finished the course.

"Whatever the position is, don't be in a hurry to leave us, Kate. Don't leave until, what with your writing and your regular work, you can count on at least eight hundred a year."

"No; I think that the only way to do is to start out and be independent when you mean to be independent. It won't do me a bit of harm to feel the spur of necessity."

"It won't do you a bit of good either," grumbled Jerry.

It made him the more unhappy the more he thought about it. He had become so attached to Peter and Betty and they to him that he felt it was positively cruel to compel a separation. Kate was a creature of steel to treat them all so. Why did she insist? Merely to ask himself the question caused him to have uncomfortable thoughts. What else would the proud, high-spirited girl do after receiving such an intimation of his designs and desires as his mother had given Kate?

And why had his mother conveyed that intimation? She was not ordinarily addicted to the performance of gratuitous and officious acts. She was not in the habit of indulging in idle gossip. The ironical truth penetrated to Jerry's mind. His mother had acted with deliberate intent, foreseeing the pressure that she would be putting upon Kate; Jerry suspected that one purpose and only one had actuated her—to provide, so far as she was able, that nothing and no one should stand in the way of her son's happiness.

(To be continued.)

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SOME CURIOUS SUPERSTITIONS

The Probable Origin of These Widespread Beliefs.

Man's curiosity is in excess of his power to interpret and understand; consequently he guesses, says Mr. J. Arthur Hill in Chamber's Journal, and when he guesses wildly and inaccurately others of a later date call his guesses superstition. Long after people have clearly seen that there is no rational evidence for the thing believed, the superstition lingers.

The thirteen-at-table superstition, which has spread to thirteen of anything, is an example. The origin of the prejudice against this number is usually supposed to be the fact that thirteen persons sat down at the Last Supper, after which occurred the most tragic event of the Christian era. But the superstition is older than Christianity. Hesiod says it is unlucky to sow corn on the thirteenth of the first month; and an old Norse legend says that the twelve great divinities were dining at Valhalla when Loki, the god of discord, appeared, and a quarrel with Balder occurred in which Balder, the god of peace, was killed.

The Friday superstition arose because the crucifixion is supposed to have taken place on that day. Some persons think that it is unlucky to spill salt because Judas Iscariot seems to be spilling it in Da Vinci's pocture of the Last Supper. Others think that it is because salt is a symbol of incorruptibility, and spilling it is therefore a sign of broken friendships and general upsets.

There are some curious and very widespread customs of a superstitious nature about sneezing. People sometimes say "God bless you!" to the sneezer. In similar circumstances the Romans used to say, "Jupiter preserve you!" The Greeks did the same, and the custom was ancient even in the time of Aristotle, who endeavors to account for the custom in his Problems; but he evidently knew nothing of its origin.

When a Hindu sneezes the bystand- cry out, "Live!" and the sneezer replies, "With you." The Zulu thinks that sneezing is a sign that the good spirits are with him; other peoples believe that it means that evil spirits are being expelled.

The prejudices about the danger of being the first occupiers of a new house is perhaps a dim recollection of our prehistoric ancestors' attitude toward a newly discovered cave. There might be wild beasts already in occupation.

THE PULSES OF THE WEATHER

Influence of Atmospheric Pressure at Certain Parts of the Globe.

There appear to exist in the earth's atmosphere "centres of action," which have wide control over climatic conditions and make it possible to foretell the character of the weather long in advance.

One of the most important of all these centres is that about Iceland. According as the atmospheric pressure there is high or low, mild or severe winters result in central Europe, and there are those who contend that this influence is also felt on the North American continent.

The North Cape is another similar centre, and between these foci a kind of compensation of action often exists, sometimes at intervals of six months. A warm winter at the North Cape corresponds to a cold winter in Iceland, and is followed by cold winds in central Europe and over the plains of Hungary. The cause of the phenomena, it is thought, is to be found in the variations of the north polar ice cap, which constitutes the great reservoir of cold for the Northern Hemisphere.

Communing With the Dead.

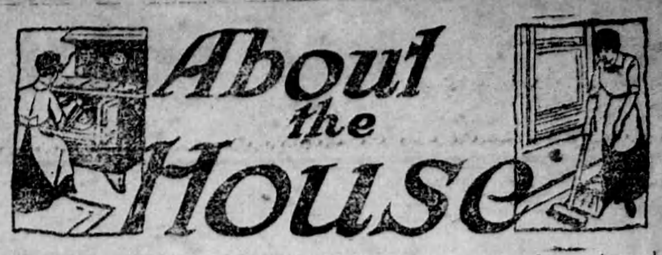
That is a pretty picture of simple faith that Mrs. Nina L. Duryea gives in her article on The Soul of Fighting France. Among the sand dunes of Brittany, she says, superstition finds fertile soil. Bretons are less French than any other class in France, having retained their own language, customs and beliefs. They have little fear of death, and they are deeply religious. A cemetery is a place where children play, and on fete days it is the meeting place for gossips and swains. Relatives go always once a week with flowers to deck the graves and tidy the wee shrines above them as they do their own homes.

A Breton apparently is not entirely convinced that the dead has really departed to another world; he behaves as if the lost one were still near, hearing, seeing, and interested in his former associates. A discreet watcher will hear a widow say in a pleasant, conversational tone, while she tends the grave:

"Was the rain cold on thee last night? I thought of thee when I lay with the children in our snug bed behind the lattice. Perhaps thou wouldst care to hear that Jean has twins. That has proved a happy marriage, though Marie had no other dot than her good looks. Also the apple crop is excellent, and next week we begin to make cider. Au revoir, my well-beloved. Sleep well, for all goes well, and I have money in my stocking."

With a tender pat on the cross she will then return home to her hard life, consoled by this chat with her husband.

To lengthen the life of linoleum, mix the warm suds and cooked starch left over from wash day, and use to mop up the linoleum. This not only preserves it, but gives a new gloss.



Eight Commandments for Children.

1. The growing child must have plenty of sleep. Up to six years he should sleep half the time—twelve out of twenty-four hours. Part of this time may be included in the daytime nap.

2. His food should be plentiful and nutritious. Each child should have at least three pints of milk a day. Part of this may be in some other food, such as custard or ice cream. He should also have limited quantities of meat and plenty of eggs, cereals, vegetables and fruits.

3. He should have plenty of out-of-door play—not too much work, nor too long continued.

4. He should have a daily bath or rub-down and a cleansing bath with warm water and mild soap at least once a week, oftener if possible.

5. His bowels should move freely at least once a day. If they do not his diet and exerices should be so regulated as to bring about that result.

6. He should be interested in life. Sullen, dull, or unhappy children are frequently suffering from the want of interest in life. Such a child should be watched to discover if possible what he does enjoy and where his natural interest lies; and it is then an easy task to stimulate his interest until his whole attitude is changed.

7. He should be taught simple lessons of personal hygiene; the use of individual towels, handkerchiefs, toilet articles; good care of teeth, nose, eyes, hands and feet.

8. He should be taught to believe that to be healthy is one of the finest possible achievements in the world, and most patriotic.

How Food Can Be Saved at the Table

Smaller portions should be served.

Persons at the table should be given an opportunity for choice, so that no food is served unless a person wishes it.

Bread should be cut at the table.

In serving meat, bone or surplus fat should be left on the serving plate, so they can be utilized in stock or for cooking.

Everything served should be eaten. There should be nothing edible left on the plates.

As far as possible care should be taken to prepare only the amount of food needed by the family

Smaller amounts of salad dressing should be served.

How Food Can Be Saved After the Meal Is Over.

Bits of vegetables should be kept for soups, salads, etc.

Fruit juice from canned fruit can be used for gelatine desserts or to flavor puddings.

Left over cake and cake crumbs should be used in puddings or to replace flour in dark cakes.

Juice left from cooked vegetables should be saved for soup

All bread crumbs should be saved.

All left over muffins, biscuit, bread of any kind shoud be saved, made into crumbs and used in scalloped dishes, baking, etc.

No bit of food is too small to be saved!

How Food Can Be Saved Before It Reaches the Table.

The butcher is often allowed to keep bones and trimmings. These should be taken home. The bones and meat should be used for soup. The fat should be tried out for cooking.

Fresh fruit and vegetables should be purchased as needed. Overbuying of perishable food results in spoilage and waste.

Perishable fruits and vegetables should be carefully put away and not allowed to wilt.

Vegetables and fruits should be pared thinly or scraped.

Cereals should be kept in clean, covered jars to prevent their becoming wormy.

Mixing bowls and cooking utensils should be carefully scraped. Much food can be saved in this way.

Food should be carefully cooked, for burned or badly cooked food is wasted.

Care of House Plants.

In caring for house plants it should be borne in mind that they are of two classes and that such plants as ferns, palms and the rubber plant will do better in those parts of the room where the light is limited, while flowering plants, such as geraniums, tulips, narcissi and cyclamen, must have as much light as possible. Plants are more like human beings than like bric-a-brac and if grown to brighten the home during dull winter months they must not be left to take care of themselves or they will soon fail to fulfill the purpose of their presence.

There are not a large number of successful house plants and those which experience has shown are best suited for the purpose demand certain definite conditions The fundamental condition relates to the atmosphere of the room. If this is suitable even the soil is of secondary importance. The atmosphere must be kept at a suitable temperature and also, for success, must contain plenty of moisture. A dry atmosphere even when plants are well watered, is fatal to good growth. Regular watering is another important factor for success.

Plants will grow better in houses heated with hot water than they will in those heated by hot air or steam The latter systems absorb the moisture from the atmosphere with the result that the plant either loses some of its leaves by withering or fails to make healthy growth. Pans of water stood on the radiators to give off moisture always improve the conditions for plants. The blooms will last longer when the atmosphere is kept somewhat cool and moist. The ideal temperaure ranges from about 50 to 70 degrees. Higher temperatures necessitate more frequent waterings. Some plants need to be watered daily, others not more than two or three times a week. A pot which rings hollow when tapped with the knuckle needs water Over watering is bad for plants and only one or two varieties, like the spirea, will succeed if the pots are allowed to stand in water. All pots should be supplied with good drainage in the form of broken crocks filled in at the bottom of the pot when the plants are potted.

Fresh air is always beneficial, but not in the form of direct draughts. A temperature of 40 degrees or lower will often seriously affect the tender house plants. Palms and ferns are the better for sponging once or twice a month. Never water a sickly plant too freely; it more often requires to be repotted. Most plants will be benefitted by a yearly repotting. Healthy plants and plants in flower require much more water than those which are sicky. Soil should not be watered so often that it becomes soggy and always cold. A plant with cold feet and a hot head soon dies.

The Judgment's Rehearsal.

We knew Wars brazen brow would be uncrowned;
For in a world ruled by the Holy Child
Some home for blessed Peace must aye be found,
And Freedom, Reason, Truth ne'er be exiled.

So when on that last act the curtain rose
And miles of battleships to our fleet bowed
In awful silence, o'er our fallen foes,
I seemed to hear old Justice speak aloud:

"'Tis a rehearsal of the Judgment Day!
All Wrong take heed, thy sway will end likewise;
Though feet of Vengeance for a while delay,
God, nature, history—all against thee rise,
And those base exiles whom the Furies keep
Proclaim aloud: "What peoples sow they reap'."

—Alexander Louis Fraser.

If a man lacks enthusiasm it takes him twice as long to accomplish a task.

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