Her Housebreaker

By Florence Morse Kingsley.

CHAPTER I.

In the dusk of a rainy autumnal evening a tall, rather heavily-built young fellow shouldered his way through the gathering darkness with the same steady, plodding gait he had maintained since early afternoon. His clothes were sodden with rain. Occasionally cold trickles of moisture from his drooping hat brim made themselves felt on his steaming shoulders. His shoes, weighted with mud and water, cruelly hurt his tired feet.

"If I could find a barn somewhere," he suggested to himself.

The night before he had slept in a tumble-down old house near the charred ruin of a barn, and been awakened by rain dripping through in his face through the broken roof. Why had he not stayed there till the storm was over? There was a rusty stove, he remembered; he might have kindled a fire and at least kept warm and dry. His empty stomach furnished the answer.

"If I hadn't lost my money—" was his second hypothesis, muttered through closed teeth.

What could have become of the ten dollar bill he had knotted so carefully in the corner of his handkerchief? He had drowsed for an hour under a tree by the roadside, being weary with his first day of steady tramping. When he awoke—if indeed he had slept—the handkerchief was missing from the pocket of his coat. He searched for it vainly, going back over miles of his journey. Reluctantly he decided that the money had been stolen while he slept. There was nothing for it but to go on.

Doggedly toiling up the long slope of a hill, he paused at its top with an involuntary exclamation. Below him twinkled the lights of a village. From the steeple of a church, a bell was striking the hour. The faint barking of dogs and the distant rattle of wagon wheels floated upwards through the mist and rain.

The road, descending rapidly from the heights, brought the wayfarer into what was evidently the main street, for he passed a grocery store, a druggist's window, with its green and purple lights, and a hotel withdrawn from the street under a row of dripping trees. Tantalizing odors of freshly baked biscuit and broiling meat stole forth into the night.

The lad—he seemed scarcely more, seen in the light of the big arc-light in front of the hotel—shook his wet coat with fingers that trembled slightly. His hat appeared reduced to a dripping pulp; after a moment's hesitation he thrust it into his pocket, glad for once of his heavy thatch of curling hair.

"If I only had that money," he thought, and pictured himself eating a hot supper at one of the white tables glimpsed through the windows of the brightly lighted dining room. "It was my money, all right," he added defiantly.

The front door of the hotel, hospitably wide, revealed glimpses of a cheerful red-carpeted room. Behind a white railing was a desk, and behind the desk a ferret-faced young man, no older than himself. He glanced up at the sight of the big, sodden figure which confronted him.

"Hello!" he said, "what can I do for you?"

His tone was doubtful. He had learned not to appraise a would-be patron too hastily.

"I—I've been tramping all day in the rain. Somebody stole my money. I want a job and—"

"You're a bum," decided the clerk promptly. "Get out of here—quick!"

"I'm no more bum than you are," contradicted the stranger "I want something to eat and a place to dry my clothes; I can work to pay for it."

"Oh, you can, eh? Well, all I got to say is you got some nerve. Got a watch? Or a card? Any way to identify yourself? Where did you come from?"

The door of the dining room opened and a stout man with a red face came out. He wore a white aistcoat, its rotund expanse unduly emphasized by a showy double watch chain. The odor of hot food appeared to attend his sleek, comfortable person like an aura. The stranger drew a deep breath. He had grown rather white around the mouth.

"What's up, Charley?" demanded the stout man, his sharp eyes beginning with the wayfarer's muddy boots and finishing with his shamed face.

"Says he lost his money on the way," drawled the clerk. "He'd like supper and a bed. Guess there's plenty more where he came from—"

"I told you I'd work for what I got," interrupted the stranger. "Why not give me a chance?"

"I'll give you just half a minute to get out o' that door." The big man emphasized his remark with a violent gesture. "How do I know but what you're an escaped burglar? I've a good mind to—"

Then he relaxed into a beefy chuckle in which he was joined by the ferret-faced young man.

"Didn't take him so long to ketch on—eh, Charley?"

Their raucous mirth pursued the sodden figure on its way to the street. There were brightly lighted supper tables in several of the houses he passed, with fathers and mothers and comfortably clad children gathered in the cheerful glow. He approached the back door of one such house, treading on the grass that his footfalls might make no sound. A white-haired old grandmother was eating supper, and an apple-cheeked girl waited on the family, which appeared to be a large one. From the shelter of a dripping rosebush he watched the girl baking pancakes at the stove. She turned with a start at sound of his timid knock.

"Somethin' t' eat you're wantin'? Sure it's a tramp ye are—an' all wet an' muddy. Go 'way from me kitchen, or I'll set the dog on ye!"

Sick at heart, he hurried out of the yard, aware of the sudden commotion in the dining room, as the apple-cheeked girl dispensed her pancakes and her information.

Further down the street he tried again, to be again repulsed, this time with a smartly shut door in face of his halting request for food.

A third attempt was effectually blocked by a big dog which bounced at him, barking vociferously, as he attempted to enter the gate. Other dogs in different quarters of the town responded in a scattering chorus of barks. He had never been afraid of dogs, but to-night in the darkness and the rain, this angry yelping filled him with vague terror.

He was walking rapidly now, like one pursued, hunger and fatigue alike forgotten in the desire to escape from that unfriendly village. There was faint comfort in the fact that the rain had ceased. Under the urge of some upper current of air the clouds parted, revealing the cold face of the moon. He looked about once more in search of shelter and saw close at hand an old-fashioned picket fence skirting the road for some distance. Presently he found the gate and stood irresolute, staring at the house it guarded. It was painted white like the fence; a gravel path bordered with flowers led to a verandah garlanded with vines. Late honeysuckles were in bloom; their penetrating fragrance floated out to him like a visible presence. There was no light in any of the windows. Its occupants were busy in the back of the house, he decided. He would ask them for a crust and leave to sleep in the barn. In the morning he would work. There must be work to be done at a place like this.

(To be continued.)

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Woman's Sphere

Rest Rooms For Farm Women.

What is the value of a rest room in the nearest town or village to the farm women in the neighboring communities? It would be difficult to estimate, but I have not the slightest doubt that women who already enjoy these privileges would not part with them for the world. All state they have many times been repaid for the time and money spent in their establishment. The country woman, especially the woman who has young children, knows what it is to get them nicely dressed, all looking spick and span, ready for a drive of anywhere from six to fifteen miles, to the nearest town to do her shopping. The day is hot, the roads are dusty, and when they arrive at their destination, the children are all mussed up, and the mother feels tired, blown about and untidy. How nice it is to know that they can go straight to their rest room, have a wash and tidy up generally, rest a little while, and perhaps make a cup of tea, before they start out to do their shopping and to meet their friends.

Even if one is lucky enough to own an auto, the rest room is none the less valuable, as even in an auto one gets pretty well blown about on a windy day, and after battling with the elements for even a comparatively short distance, one appreciates being able to get one's hat on straight once more and the stray ends of one's hair pinned up. It is also nice to have a place where one can meet one's friends and have a chat, instead of having to stand in the street, or in some store. Undoubtedly women will come to town much oftener if they know that when they have finished their shopping, they can go to a nice bright cheery room of their own, where they can sit and talk with others or read a magazine while waiting for the men to get through with their business. This means a long dreary interval spent sitting in the car or buggy, if there is no rest room, which detracts very considerably from any pleasure which the outing has for the women. Many farm women say they had rather stay at home than stand around.

Rest rooms have a variety of uses. In most places they are social centres, where the meetings and entertainments are had. It is very much easier to get a good attendance at a meeting when it is held in a bright comfortable room where the members are at least sure of warmth in winter. Dishes are kept on hand, and as a rule there is a small stove where a kettle can be boiled, so that a light lunch can be served with very little trouble, which is greatly appreciated.

The establishment of a rest room is not a very difficult problem. It is necessary to secure a room centrally located in the town or city. Rent is paid for this, met by an annual tax.

The next thing to do is to furnish the room. This need not be expensive. For the ideal rest room let us suggest a couch, some chairs, including a rocker or two, some benches, a few shelves for dishes and a small stove. The main idea should be to make the room attractive with the least possible expenditure. Wonders can be performed with empty boxes and some pretty inexpensive muslin. For instance, an empty apple or orange box can be transformed into a washstand, while another would make a dresser. A looking-glass, needless to say, is a most essential article, as are also a wash jug and basin. Paper towels cost very little, and are more sanitary than the ordinary kind. Book-shelves should also be put up, or two or three empty orange boxes might be put together draped with muslin and made to serve the purpose of holding a library. A nice linoleum or congoleum on the floor will add greatly to the attractiveness of the room, and muslin curtains on windows should not be omitted.

There are women's organizations in every community willing to take care of the rest room, though some permanent organization must stand back of it to see that it is properly equipped, cared for, and of continual and dependable service to the community.

My Veranda.

The old-fashioned house in which I once lived had a long front veranda facing the north. But it was little comfort we derived from it, for continually we had to watch to keep the babies from rolling off of it.

When my third baby came I determined to alter that veranda, so that I would have a safe, cool place for the little folks to play and a comfortable place for all of us to sit when the day's work was done.

I had the veranda screened in, a flower box built at the east end and a Japanese screen hung at the west end. Clematis and honeysuckle climbed up the netting in front. With a hook high enough on the screen door to keep little fingers from unfastening it, I could put the three little tots out there to play with their toys and know that no harm could come to them. Later I added a long strip of matting, porch pillows, a hammock and a veranda table.

The summer that the veranda was screened in I noticed that our living room was nearly deserted. I took my sewing out on the front veranda, my husband read his paper while he rested in the hammock; the hired girl found the screened veranda the coolest place to shell peas and beans in the morning and to crochet in the afternoon; in the evening guests always said: "Let's sit on the veranda, it's so cool and pleasant here."

When it came my turn to entertain the missionary society they voted to have the meeting on the big front veranda. When I needed three rooms for entertaining a large crowd one summer evening the screened veranda made the third and was the most popular of the three. Banked with flowers and green branches at both ends, it certainly did look inviting.

My veranda became so popular that the next summer there was quite an epidemic of screened-in verandas in our neighborhood.

Sandwiches, Delicious and Dainty, From the Garden.

The most delicious of all the summer sandwiches can be made right from the garden. Nothing makes a more acceptable lunch for a summer day than a vegetable sandwich, with a crisp, cool filling and a bit of mayonnaise and a glass of iced tea. Cut smaller in fancy shapes this is an ideal menu for the porch tea also.

Lettuce sandwiches have for a long time been favorites. To make them, pick the lettuce the night before, wash thoroughly and put in a cheesecloth bag on the ice. When ready to use it will be very crisp. Vegetable sandwiches are always better made just before using, as the dressing softens them. If this be out of the question, they may be opened and the mayonnaise or cooked dressing spread on them.

Another good sandwich is made from ripe tomatoes simply sprinkled with a bit of salt. The tomatoes are cut very thin, and either brown or white bread is used. A particularly dainty and delicious sandwich for a refreshment sandwich is made from cucumbers. Try to pick them all about the same size. Peel and crisp on the ice. Cut small circles of bread, a little larger than the slices and put one slice between, covered with a bit of mayonnaise.

If a more substantial sandwich is desired, a supper sandwich for example, make a potato salad with chopped chives, cut large slices of brown bread, spread with butter, put a lettuce leaf on each slice and fill with the salad.

Another sandwich that is popular with the masculine side of the family is an onion sandwich. Cut the onions into very thin slices and let them stand for some time in cold salted water to extract some of their strength. Spread thin slices of brown bread with butter and a thin coating of mustard. Season with paprika and salt.

A vegetable club sandwich makes a splendid emergency luncheon. Toast two slices of bread for each person and broil one slice of bacon. Have ready lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers sliced. Put on half the slices a large leaf of lettuce, tomatoes, then the bacon and cover with cucumbers and more lettuce. Add a spoonful of mayonnaise and the second slice of toast and serve at once.

A very good sweet sandwich is made by mashing berries; gooseberries and currants should be cooked a bit, sweetening them and spreading between slices of white bread when cool.

Unusual sandwiches for a garden party can be made by picking nasturtium, clover or rose blooms and packing them about both the bread and butter to be used in an air tight tin box the night before. Wrap the butter in a cloth. When the sandwiches are made they will have the flavor and odor of the flowers used. Serve on sandwich plates garnished with the flowers.

Oldest Countries Least Advanced.

The history of China dates back to thousands of years before human footmarks began to appear in Britain. From Asia civilization spread westwards, travelling right across Europe, and thence to America. To-day Japan, instead of absorbing the apathy of her nearest neighbor, is touched by the westward flow, and is raising her head.

The majority of domesticated animals are Asiatic in origin, such as horses, dogs, mules, donkeys, sheep, goats, honey bees, chickens, ducks, etc., and this alone shows that domestic man had his first kingdom in Asia. Yet it is strange that the countries with the longest human histories are to-day the least advanced.

Ideal Marriage Age.

Interesting points regarding matrimony are raised by a clause in the will of a London magnate. Much of his property is left in trust for his children, the income from their shares to be paid to their mother until each child attains the age of twenty-seven. The maker of the will expressed an "earnest wish and desire" that no child should marry until that age was reached.

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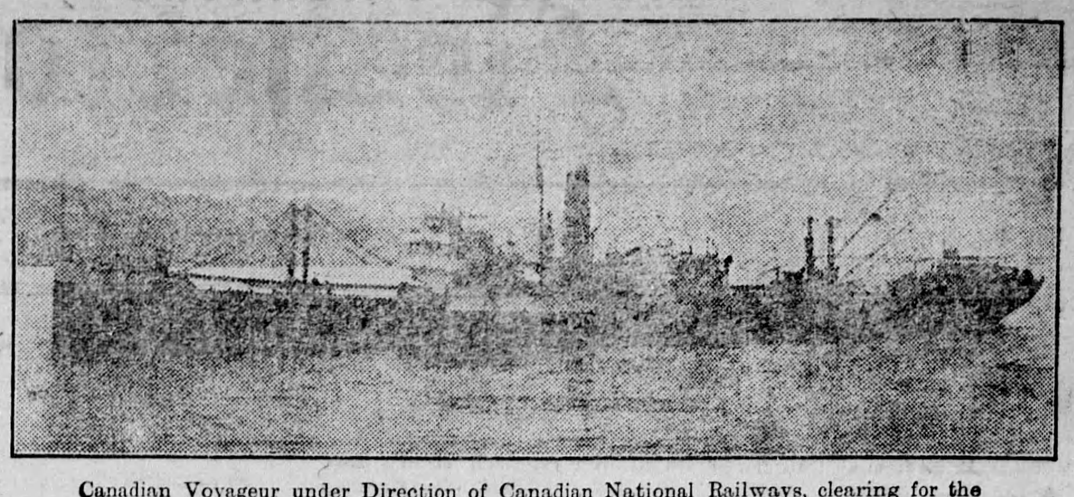

Canadian Voyageur under Direction of Canadian National Railways, clearing for the West Indies from Montreal, July 10th, with a cargo of general merchandise. She is scheduled to return with sugar.

SHIPS WHICH FAIL TO RETURN

POSTED AS "MISSING" AND "LOST" AT LLOYD'S.

"Chamber of Horrors" in London, of Which the World at Large Knows Nothing.

In the very heart of the city of London there is a "chamber of horrors" which none but the privileged may enter, and of which the world at large knows nothing, says a London magazine.

There is nothing at all gruesome in the aspect of this chamber, which is, in fact, a small, cheerful room leading out of the great hall of Lloyd's, and on the walls of which is an array of flimsies, yellow and brown.

It is in these innocent-looking pieces of paper that the latent tragedy lies, for they tell of ships missing and lost, and each telegram has quite a tragic importance to some of the 150 underwriters who haunt the room.

Whenever a ship leaves port she is insured by her owners at Lloyd's against loss or damage to herself or her cargo; and this risk is divided among a number of underwriters, who insure her for certain sums ranging from £100 to thousands of pounds, in return for a premium.

Huge Gambles.

A slip is passed round from one underwriter to another, and on the information supplied as to the destination, cargo, and class of the ship, the names of her owners and captain, the insurance required and its rate, each underwriter puts down on the slip the sum for which he is prepared to make himself responsible in case of loss or damage.

The limit is entirely at the discretion of the underwriter, and there have been cases in which a man has ventured £50,000, and even £100,000 on the safe voyage of a vessel.

When a man thus risks hundreds or thousands on a stake so full of uncertainty as the safety of a ship, which naturally encounters so many dangers, her voyage is a matter of daily anxiety to him until she reaches her destination.

When she is overdue the anxiety of the underwriter increases, and each day that passes without the ship's arrival at her destination being reported adds to it. He begins to see the wisdom of reducing his risk by "hedging," and at this stage the "doctor," as he is called at Lloyd's, comes on the scene.

"Doctor" Deals in Risks.

The "Doctor" is a man who deals in overdue risks, and for an increased premium is willing to take the original underwriter's responsibility on his own shoulders.

Where the original premium was, say, 25s. per cent., the "doctor" demands five guineas—or, as the risk increases through the continued non-arrival of the overdue ship, ten, twenty, fifty, or more guineas for each £100 insured.

In some cases an underwriter has paid as much as seventy and ninety guineas per cent. to reinsure an overdue vessel, which has turned up safely after all, to his chargin and the "doctor's" great jubilation.

It is thus easy to see with what trepidation a man who has staked a large sum on an overdue vessel must enter the "chamber of horrors," dreading day by day to see the fatal announcement that must mean a heavy loss, and may mean absolute ruin to him.

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