Her Housebreaker

By Florence Morse Kingsley.

CHAP. I.—(Cont'd.)

The gate creaked noisily under his hand but no barking dog opposed his entrance. Following the neat gravel path he approached the rear of the house, brushing clumps of vivid asters which shone gayly against their dark foliage. There were no lights in the kitchen; and no answering footfall broke the silence which followed his knock. He knocked more loudly a second time. If there were sleepers about he resolved to awaken them. The dull gnawing at the pit of his stomach made him desperate. Drifting clouds swallowed the pallid moon; rain began to fall heavily once more. He took refuge from its pitiless pelting under the vine-clad verandah, pressing close against one of the darkened windows. The instinct of the animal desperately seeking shelter prompted him to try the window. The flimsy fastening yielded to his strong upward shove.

For an instant he stood trembling, listening intently. The words of the hotel proprietor seemed to echo in his ears: "How do I know but what you are a burglar!" He thrust his head into the dark square of the open window; a faint warm smell of dried rose-petals breathed against his face. Should he step over the low sill? The act would brand him a criminal.

Or should he close the window and go back to the muddy road over which the night and the storm had dropped an impenetratable curtain? A long shudder passed over his chilled body. He must—he would go in, come what might.

Moving cautiously, his feet making no sound on the carpeted floor, his groping fingers encountered a table; here were books, a framed photograph, a lamp with a wicker shade, and matches! The sharp spurt of the lighted match revealed a comfortable room; his swift glance took in a piano, a couch with gay pillows, books in low cases, shadowy pictures on the walls. The match flared, flickered and went out. Somewhere about the house a loosened shutter slammed with a muffled thud. The unexpected sound froze the intruder into rigid immobility. After a breathless minute the sound was repeated, and he recognized it for what it was. Grown bolder in the reassuring silence, he was about to strike a second match when a soft, light touch smote him on the hand. With difficulty he repressed a yell. The touch was repeated lingeringly. He almost laughed aloud: it was only the muslin curtain, fluttering in the breeze from the open window.

Deliberately he lighted the lamp and closed the window. Something in the heavy warm air of the house reassured him. He sat down in a wicker chair by the table and removed his muddy shoes.

"No use messing things up," he told himself.

There were candles in brass scones, flanking a dim mirror; he lighted one and started on a noiseless tour of inspection. Next to the parlor was the dining room. He stared curiously about him at the quaint, old-fashioned furniture and at the portrait of a white-bearded man over the mantel; the old man's eyes seemed to follow him sternly as he moved softly about the room. All at once his sharpened perceptions told him of something which brought his heart to his throat with a bound. A bowl in the centre of the table contained flowers, mignonette and sweet peas. He decided after a breathless pause that the flowers had been gathered some days before. He proceeded to inspect the upstairs rooms. By that token of the fading flowers there might be food in the kitchen; but first he must find out whether he was alone in the house.

The door of the front chamber stood wide. He peered in at an unruffled white bed; then stepped softly inside. Never had he seen a room like this—white, all white, bureau, dressing table and chairs, against a wall of dim rose sparsely hung with pictures. Mechanically he noticed a photograph in a silver frame. It was that of a young man, the frank clear eyes gazing directly at him. As he softly set the picture in its place, he caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror and shuddered at the contrast: sodden clothing, dishevelled hair, grimy skin, deep hollows under the haggard blue eyes.

"Say!" he muttered to himself, "I sure do look like a tramp!"

It occurred to him with sudden sick realization that he was, in fact, a tramp. He had broken into a house; he was sneaking about premises he had no right to enter. He set his lips in a sullen line of defiance, as he recalled the money with which he had started on his journey.

"Somebody stole it," he repeated doggedly. "If it hadn't been for somebody robbing me, I could have stopped at the hotel. I shan't hurt anything."

He broke off the thread of his thoughts with decision. Regrets of any sort were useless. Besides, there were other rooms to be inspected before he could search for food. He made quick work of this: the other bedroom was furnished simply in dark oak. There were tennis rackets on the wall and a college pennant or two. Gay neckties hung from a rack over the dresser. There was a picture of a smiling girl on the mantel. A pair of gay slippers seemed waiting comfortably for their wearer beside the bed.

He thrust his aching feet into them with a sigh of relief. No use in being squeamish now. The house was empty of any human presence save his own; he made doubly sure of this before he sought the kitchen. If he could find something there with which to satisfy the intolerable pangs of hunger, he would go away and no one would know of his clandestine visit. A clock in the hall struck nine, confirming the mute evidence of the faded flowers that the house had not long been unoccupied and the owners might return at any moment. He made a way of escape for himself by means of an open window in the kitchen; then fancying he hear the sound of a motor far up the road he extinguished the light in the parlor. Returning to the kitchen once more he began an eager search for food. An odd childish fancy buzzing in his exhausted brain suggested that the gay slippers on his feet were at home here. They should guide him. Yes, the brown jar on the second shelf held cookies—spicy ginger cookies of a satisfying thickness—"the kind a fellow goes for when he is hungry." On the shelf close at hand there was half a loaf of bread in a tin box and a thick wedge of cheese under a wire screen. And oh, joy! the half of an apple pie on a china plate. The slippers knew!

The boy sat down on a wooden chair near the table and ate till he could eat no more. He had somehow lost the guilty feeling which had haunted him for days past. As he swallowed the last delicious mouthful of apple pie he recalled seeing a blue-and-white bath-robe lying over a chair in the room where he had found the slippers. Sleep was already clouding his senses. He thought drowsily that he must remove his muddy shoes from the parlor. Someone might find them there and scold. But, no; the maker of those satisfying big cookies could never scold! Still, he would carry the shoes upstairs with him. How soft and comfortable the many-pillowed couch felt to his tired body! He would rest for half an hour—not longer—then he must go on. Daylight should find him miles away on his vague quest. But some time, years later, perhaps, he would return and confess his theft of the pie and cookies. He would be a rich man by then and he would give the lady of the white bedroom a—a diamond—as large as—a brown cookie——

(To be continued.)

BANKRUPTS IN GREEN CAPS.

How France Discouraged Habit of "Liquidation."

A curious custom was prevalent in France during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Anyone who found it necessary to liquidate his affairs was obliged to wear a green cap—a humility to himself and a warning to others.

Those who make a hobby of getting rid of their indebtedness by way of the Bankruptcy Court should at all costs steer clear of China. Bankruptcies are almost unknown in that country, as they entail immediate execution.

A similar drastic punishment used to be meted out to delinquents in Japan.

To come nearer home, one need only go back to a little before the Act of Union to find that debtors in Scotland were obliged to wear garments of diverse colors, a suit of grey and yellow being the most common.

In Siam, a man unable to meet his liabilities was put in chains and compelled to work as a slave for his creditor. Should he escape, his wife, children, father, or other relative were seized in his stead.

At one time bankrupts were considered criminal offenders even in England. As a matter of fact, certain cases of fraudulent bankruptcy have incurred the death penalty in this country. Any concealment of books or the secreting of property by a debtor was so punished. Under this law a man called John Perrot was hanged in 1761.

It is said that no bank failure has occurred in China for over nine hundred years. When such an event last happened an edict was promptly issued stating that in future any such failure on the part of a bank would entail the severest punishment on all responsible officials. The heads of the cashier, president and directors became forfeit.

August.

Shorn of their wealth, the harvest fields
Lie silent in the sun;
Weary, beneath the languorous haze,
Their generous labor done.

The dreamy river trails its length
Across the breadth of gold;
Slow-creeping, till it find its way
By cedars grim and old.

Gone are the lilies, but the leaves
Float sullen on the stream;
Above the shimmering underflow
Where water-grasses gleam.

The flashing pickerel snaps the fly
Which careless skims the wave;
And circles widening to the shore
The rooty margins leave.

The turtle warming on the log
Prolongs his length of days;
Unheedful of the empty nest
The puffing cattail sways.

Now, slow before the lowering sun
A lucid vapor spreads,
Drifting in hazy coolness o'er
The mallow's rosy heads.

Nature holds close and tenderly
Her drowsy children dear;
This is her hour of full content—
Her "rest-time" of the year!

Canny Finance.

A man from the north of Scotland was on holiday in Glasgow. On Sunday evening he was walking along Argyll Street when he came upon a contingent of the Salvation Army, and a collection-bag was thrust in front of his nose. He dropt a penny into it.

Turning up Queen Street, he encountered another contingent of the Salvation Army, and again a smiling "lass" held a collection-bag in front of him.

"Na, na!" he said. "I gied a penny tae a squad o' your folk roon' the corner jist the noo."

"Really?" said the lass. "That was very good of you. But, then, you can't do a good thing too often. And besides, you know, the Lord will repay you a hundredfold."

"Aweel," said the cautious Scot, we'll jist wait till the first transaction is feenished before we start the second."

Motor Traffic in Trinidad.

It is stated that, for the last four years, the importation of motor vehicles into Trinidad has averaged 165 per annum, and this rate is likely to increase, as not only are stocks of new cars practically non-existent in the country, but their popularity is growing rapidly. Estate owners in Trinidad are beginning to realize the advantages of motor transport for conveying their produce to the railway or coast, and are eager to obtain commercial trucks for this purpose. At present about 600 miles of roads suitable for motor traffic exist in Trinidad, and lately there has been a pronounced movement towards the improvement of highways.

Soak salt fish in milk to freshen it for immediate use.

Use borax in tepid water with a little soap to wash silk handkerchiefs. When cooking potatoes for salad, cook with skins on and peel afterwards.

Minard's Liniment Cures Garget in Cows

Authors Who Wrote in Bed

There is a photograph, with which most of us are no doubt familiar, of Mark Twain at work in bed—holding his writing-pad on his knees, and having the things he needed for his labor disposed about on tables on either side. But the idea of working in bed was not original with Mark. Many eminent men before him did the same thing. Indeed, no small part of the world's literary treasures has been produced between the sheets by physically indolent although mentally active men of genius.

One of the best known lines in English poetry came into its author's head when he was actually asleep. While visiting at Minto, Thomas Campbell one evening went to bed early, with his mind full of a new poem. About 2 o'clock in the morning he suddenly wakened repeating, "Events to come cast their shadows before." Ringing the bell sharply, he summoned a servant. The man found Campbell with one foot in bed and one on the floor."

"Are you ill, sir?" he asked.

"I was never better in my life," said the poet. "Leave the candle and bring me a cup of tea."

Seizing his pen he put down the happy thought, changing "events to come" into "coming events," and over the noninebriating cup, he finished the first draft of "Lochiel's Warning."

Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus" came to him as he was sitting by his fireside, the night after a violent storm. He went to bed, but could not sleep; the Hesperus would not be denied; and as he lay the verses flowed on without let or hindrance until the poem was completed.

One at least of Rossini's operas was composed in bed. It was when he was young, poor and unknown, and lived in wretched quarters. After writing a duet, the composer allowed his manuscripts to slip off the sheets and fall under the bed. Rossini was too comfortable to get out of bed, and moreover he believed it would be unlucky to pick the sheets up; so he went to work to rewrite the duet. To his disgust he could not remember it. It was, therefore, necessary to write a new one. This he had finished when a friend entered.

"Try that," said the composer, "and tell me what you think of it." The verdict was favorable.

"Now," said Rossini, "look under the bed. You'll find another duet there. Try that, too."

The friend did so, and declared that the original composition was much the better. Then both were sung again—Rossini in bed and his friend sitting on the edge. Both arrived at the same conclusion touching the merits of the two compositions.

"What shall you do with the other one?" asked the friend.

"Oh, I shall turn this into a terzetto," said Rossini, and he did.

Woman's Sphere

Englishwomen's Work at the Canadian Memorials Exhibit.

Three Eng. women had the honor of being commissioned by the Canadian Government to paint canvasses to be used as mural decorations for the great War Memorial Building which is to be erected at Ottawa, and the three pictures which are the happy result of these commissions hang in a conspicuous position at the Canadian War Memorials Exhibition which this year forms an interesting part of the Canadian National Exhibition at Toronto.

Each of these canvasses depicts a typical scene in army life, in which the figures are of heroic size, and they are the very last pictures in the entire collection that one would imagine to have been painted by women, for they are all three distinctly "masculine," both in the subject and its treatment.

The most striking of the three is called "The Boxers," and was painted by Laura Knight, a very well known artist in England, especially famous for her figure painting. Two Canadian soldiers stripped for combat stand out against a background of bright blue sky and heavy white clouds, surrounded by their khaki-clad comrades.

Mrs. Knight is a woman in the early thirties, whose husband, Harold Knight, is also a well known artist. Their studio is in a charming, out-of-the-way village in Cornwall.

If, as now seems probable, the conservative old Royal Academy decides at last to open its sacred portals to women painters, Laura Knight is named as the most probable candidate for the honor of being the first of her sex to affix the magic letters "R. A." to her name.

The "Cookhouse" of the 156th Canadian Infantry is the second picture. This picture is the work of Miss Anna Airy, another Englishwoman, whose work is very well known in her native land. It shows the huge caldrons of "chow" being prepared for the soldiers by the white-capped chefs, and it is all in greys and white, with the exception of here and there the brilliant yellow of the flame under the kettles.

Because of the success of this canvas, Miss Airy has recently been appointed by the British Minister of Munitions to paint a series of pictures showing the workers in the different branches of munitions making for the Imperial War Museum in London.

The third war canvas is by Claire Atwood and is called "On Leave." It shows the inside of a Y. M. C. A. hut at one of the great London termini at the hour just before the dawn. Here the Canadian soldiers have come for breakfast and a cigarette before taking the train. Some have a few days' leave before them and some are on their way back to the trenches. A Canadian soldier in the uniform of the celebrated Black Watch is seen in the foreground giving his sergeant a light from his cigarette.

Cooking for Threshers.

According to the testimony of the men themselves, some threshing day dinners are to be remembered for their excellencies, and others are to be remembered for other reasons. But if the energies of workingmen are to be kept at par, they must be well stoked. Workingmen appreciate plenty and a good flavor. The good flavor is attained by cooking to the right degree and seasoning carefully.

Preparing the threshing dinner is a heavy task for the housewife and she should have plenty of good help. Presumably she is informed beforehand when to expect the threshers and to make her preliminary preparations. Then she must decide on her bill of fare. Here is one meant not to be arbitrary, but suggestive: Bread and butter, chicken pie, mashed potatoes, cottage cheese, new beets, fresh or canned fruit, fresh tomatoes, fried cakes, apple pie, tea, coffee and milk.

The day before the threshing all the baking except the chicken pie should be got out of the way, plenty of white bread, half a dozen pies, a lot of fried cakes, a big loaf or jelly cake, or two small ones.

On this day also the chickens should be killed, dressed, and cut up. Thus the flavor of the meat will be improved and time and labor for the next day saved. Reckoning the proportion of chicken to the number of persons, there should be one good sized chicken to each six persons. The number of men required to run a threshing machine varies with the conditions and neighborhood. Some need twenty men and others get along with fourteen or fifteen.

To accompany the chicken, rice may be cooked according to the Japanese method. This is delicious served with chicken gravy. Wash the rice in cold water over and over again until the water runs off clear. Then add cold water enough to stand in the pan three times as high as the rice, and salt. Cook fast until nearly dry. Then remove the lid and allow to dry on the back of the stove. Thus the grains will stand out white and flaky. Add no milk or butter or anything else, this would only spoil it.

The chicken should be cooked tender, boned, and made into pies because in this way it will go farthest. And everybody likes chicken pie. But it should be so managed that there will be plenty of good rich gravy for the potatoes and rice.

If the threshing is to be prolonged to the supper hour, there must be another hearty meal. But by this time the housewife is very tired. So in the forenoon, while the other foods are cooking, she should have a big pan of beans boiling. These can be baked for supper and if well prepared will be appetizing.

The following supper menu is suggested and will not require a great deal of work: Bread and butter, baked pork and beans, roast potatoes with milk gravy, cabbage salad with sour cream dressing, apple sauce, cake, tea, coffee and milk.

If the men with the machine stay all night, the breakfast may be the most awkward of all the meals. But that is because it crowds upon so many other early duties of the day. It can be managed by simply expanding the family breakfast.

Value of College Training.

Many parents are working hard and denying themselves in order to send their children to college. The sacrifices are worth while provided the girl or boy is willing to work out his or her education. A college education not only enables its possessor to obtain better business positions, but it enriches and enlarges the life in every way, if the student has made the most of his opportunities. But parents should be sure their children want an education and not merely a good time when they send them to college. If a solid groundwork of character and elementary knowledge has been given the child and the child is willing to work and study for an education, there need be no fear of the effect of college life on him.

The Homestead.

O wanderers from ancestral soil,
Leave noisome mill and chaffering store;
Gird up your loins for sturdier toil,
And build the home once more!
Come back to bayberry-scented slopes,
And fragrant fern, and ground-mat vine;
Breathe airs blown over holt and copse
Sweet with black birch and pine.
What matter if the gains are small
That life's essential wants supply?
Your homestead's title gives you all
That idle wealth can buy.
All that the many-dollared crave,
The brick-walled slaves of change and mart,
Lawns, trees, fresh air and flowers, you have
More dear for lack of art.
Your own sole-masters, freedom-willed,
With none to bid you go or stay
Till the old fields your fathers tilled,
As manly men are they!
With skill that spares your toiling hands,
And chemic aid that science brings,
Reclaim the waste and outworn lands,
And reign thereon as kings.

Hotels For Babies.

The babies' hotel is becoming a feature of the English national life. There is one at Bexhill, and there is another at Hampstead, and more are to follow, says the Manchester, Eng., Guardian. Parents are strictly excluded, and the babies engage rooms, subject to the control of nurses and governesses only.

Generally speaking, the babies' hotel is in miniature both as to beds and as to chairs and tables. The indignity of the highchair is past, and it is the grownup who has to adjust herself to the new conditions. Meals are run on strictly nursery lines.

Minard's Liniment Cures Diphtheria.

On the Same Job.

Bill and 'Enry had not met for some time, when they quite unexpectedly came across each other in the street. Noticing that his chum was looking downcast, Bill clapped him on the back and said:

"Hallo, 'Enry; how are you gettin' on? Still working for the same people?"

"Yes," was 'Enry's sad reply. "Wife, mother-in-law and ten kids."

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