The Gates of Hope

BY ANTHONY CARLYLE

The Beginning of the Story.

Marcia Halstead, secretary to Mrs. Alden, is entrusted with some jewels while her employer goes out to luncheon with Kempton Rosslaer, his stepmother Lady Rosslaer and her son Gordon Ruthven. Marcia puts the jewels in the safe but fails to find the duplicate key. She consults a noted physician who tells her she cannot live longer than six months; then answers the call of a solicitor to find that she is heir to a large fortune on condition that she marries before she is twenty-one. Returning to Mrs. Alden's she finds Kempton Rosslaer (who i. secretly married to Araby Trask) replacing the gems which his step-brother had stolen. Believing him to be the thief, Marcia promises silence if he will marry her within two days. To shield his father's name Kempton consents. At a restaurant Marcia faints and is assisted by three strangers, Araby Trask, her father, and a young man, Jasper Waldron. A week after the marriage ceremony Rosslaer visits Araby.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Cont'd.)

"You'll always tell me, Kemp, won't you? I mean, if anything really serious should happen? I can't bear the thought of being shut away from your worries. I want to exercise my right to share them—to help you bear whatever burden comes along"—

Her voice trailed into silence, and Kempton turned away his face. He did not answer her plea; he could not. In all innocence she had dealt him another stab, and he groaned inwardly. Then, suddenly, with something of the old boyish impulsiveness, he dropped to his knees beside her, resting his head once more against her breast.

"Oh, Araby!" he whispered. "I've wondered sometimes, just lately, if you were not right in what you hinted the other day—that I was wrong, utterly, damnably wrong in persuading you to give yourself to me. I'd no right to do it! I ought never to have married you if I could not do it openly. I ought not to have married you at all, since I could offer you nothing that a husband should bring to his wife—neither support, a place by his side, nor his name!"

She uttered a little, distressed exclamation, but he went on unheeding, in a rush of bitter self-accusation:

"I was a cad. There was no excuse, Araby. I see it now; see it more clearly every day; Not even the excuse that I was mad with love of you, with longing for you——"

"Hush!" She laid her fingers abruptly over his lips. "You must not abuse yourself any more, or we shall quarrel. For the rest, if there is blame there is blame for us both. And—we can't undo what is done, you know!"

She spoke lightly with a sudden irrepressible gaiety, as though the knowledge brought her more than a little of content. Kempton raised his head slowly and looked at her. His lips twiched for a moment; there was a new, brooding shadow in his eyes as he answered her, echoing her words.

"No. We can't undo it. We never can undo what we've done—even when we want to. That which we have written of our own will endures—be it for good or for ill!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

But he was thinking of Marcia as he spoke, not of that sweet madness which, unheeding and uncaring of the future, had swept them off their feet and finally made them one.

The bitterness in his voice frightened Araby. He caught the hurt in her eyes and caught her close, but she held him away.

"Would you—undo it?" she asked. Kempton stopped her mouth with kisses.

"I love you!" he cried, unsatisfactorily. And then, in desperation, "For heaven's sake, let's talk of something else."

She lay still for a minute, eyes closed under the kisses, the old content creeping over her. Then she sat upright, ruffled her bright head with long slim fingers, and laughed at him under gold-tipped dark lashes.

"Very well. What shall we talk about? There is so much—you seem not to have come near me for a year instead of just a week—and there's a whole pile of more or less exciting things to tell you.

"There's been quite a round of gaiety this week; I've been to one or other of the studios four nights running and out to dinner once at the beginning of the week with dad. He sold his latest picture and we celebrated accordingly. I think it was pretty good—the picture, I mean—but I wouldn't like to be altogether sure.

"You see, Jasper Waldron bought it, and I shouldn't imagine he's much of an art critic. Besides, he's such a dear that it would be rather difficult to exactly determine his motives. And, oh, Kemp! What do you think? I solemnly believe he's falling in love."

Kempton fished for his cigarette case and held it out to her.

"Good heavens! Your father?" he demanded, and the girl broke into a little gurgling laugh.

"You goose! Not but what he's really quite silly enough and nearly young enough if only he'd have his hair cut and shave his beard! No—I mean Jasper Waldron!"

"Never!" There was a real interest in Kempton's voice. His eyes questioned, and, lighting her cigarette, nodded.

"I really do think so! And with the prettiest girl. We've only known her a week, but she's one of those who sort of get you right away. We're friends already and Jasper Waldron's obviously smitten. I can't say I wonder at it. She's got beauty and personality and charm as well. Her name's Marcia Halstead."

CHAPTER XIX.

Kempton gave an uncontrollable start. Her announcement momentarily took his breath away, filled him with an amazed dismay. Araby paused in her narrative to look at him inquiringly.

"Do you know her?"

The man nodded. He was fumbling with his cigarette case again with fingers that were not altogether steady. His face was a little averted, his lips compressed.

He was profoundly disturbed, but with an immense effort he forced himself to answer her naturally.

"Yes. I met her once or twice at Audrey Alden's flat in Arliss Mansions. She is Mrs. Alden's secretary, isn't she?"

"She was. Oh, Kemp! Life really is like a fairy story for some people. This girl—Marcia—is one of them. She was quite poor, life was a real struggle for her, and she has a delicate mother. And then, only a few days ago, she learned that some relation had left her, literally, a fortune! I'm awfully glad. She really is a dear; and, when you get to know her, so much more girlish and human than she at first appears. Just at present she's like a child let loose in a toyshop! And she's having the time of her life. I've been with her shopping once or twice already!"

She broke off with a little gurgle of reminiscence. Rosslaer groaned inwardly and stirred uneasily. Then he raised his brows a trifle.

"Rather a sudden friendship, isn't it?" he drawled. "You're not generally so prodigal of your favors, Araby."

The girl laughed and lifted her slim shoulders in a little idle shrug.

"I suppose it is. But as I have already said, Marcia is a woman with a personality—as well as being a positive peach where looks are concerned—and one is quite remarkably drawn to her almost at once. At least, I was—and I'm quite sure Jasper was, too! Anyway, he's managed to turn up at quite a lot of places where she has been this week.

"I took her to that affair at Jim Eldridge's—when Con Wilde exhibited his pictures. She didn't seem to want to come at first, but changed her mind. Of course, Jasper Waldron was there and paid her an awful lot of attention. Quite took it upon himself to show her the ropes and initiate her into the customs of Bohemia, as it were! And I must say she seemed to enjoy herself immensely."

Rosslaer, puffing at a cigarette, did not answer. His feeling of dismay was increasing. Araby spoke of the other girl as of one for whom she had conceived a lasting friendship. The fact that these two women, of all others should be instantaneously attracted to each other was as strange as their meeting had been.

"Don't you think she's pretty?"

He started as Araby's voice broke upon his uneasy thoughts, and a little flush passed over his face for an instant.

"I? Why, I've never thought about it! Yes; I suppose she is, in a rather insignificant sort of way."

"Insignificant! My dear Kemp! Oh, but I was forgetting! You knew her only as a serge-skirted, short-waisted, smooth-haired person with a writing block and pencil in her hand! She isn't like that now, I can assure you! Even in these few days the transformation is complete. She's been buying clothes—wonderful clothes! And hats!"

She passed to draw a little envious breath, and a sudden deeper shadow crossed Rosslaer's face. His glance took in the plain white cotton blouse, the plainer, rather shabby skirt, and his lips twitched. She went on eagerly:

"Such hats! And she looks perfectly lovely in them all. And then she has been running about and amusing herself—and eating at all the best restaurants—and having altogether a good time. She was such a pale, thin thing before, wasn't she? But she's got a color now, and her eyes are quite different—bright and eager—almost feverish sometimes. But you don't seem a bit interested!"

Rosslaer made a quick movement of his hand.

"Why should I be? There's only one woman who interests me, sweetheart!"

She laughed again, tenderly, and catching his arm to her rubbed her smooth cheek against his sleeve.

"You dear! But you will be interested—or, at any rate, surprised—when you meet her again. You will hardly believe she's the same girl!"

"It's quite unlikely that I shall meet her!"

He spoke so sharply that she looked at him in momentary wonderment. The cigarette between his lips was unlighted, his hands were thrust deep into his pockets and there was the sharp line of a frown between his brows.

"I don't see that!" she exclaimed. "In fact, I should think you'd be more likely to meet her now than before. She was working then; now she is playing and going about everywhere. Mrs. Alden's taken her under her wing; and, then, she is interested in Bohemian circles, too——"

"But I thought she was going out of England!"

Rosslaer bit his lip sharply the instant he had uttered the words. He flushed again as he met Araby's surprised glance, and added quickly:

"I—I heard she'd had some good fortune, of course, though I didn't pay much attention at the time. And I imagined her intention was to go abroad."

He trailed to a stop. Araby nodded.

"So it was. But she's changed her mind. She finds London much more fascinating than when she was poor! So she's taking a furnished flat—a duck of a place—and I believe she's going to stay at least a month or six weeks."

CHAPTER XX.

While Araby, innocently unaware of Rosslaer's consternation, was idly informing him as regards Marcia's altered plans, Marcia herself was sitting at a little, gleaming, discreetly screened table in that same restaurant where first they had met, opposite Jasper Waldron.

They were to join Mrs. Alden at the theatre after dinner. Waldron, meeting the girl that afternoon at Arliss Mansions, had asked both women to dine with him before the play. Audrey, to his not easily concealed relief, had pleaded a previous engagement. Marcia, after a flushed moment of hesitation had accepted.

Glancing at him now from beneath her lowered lids, she found it difficult to believe that she had first seen him one short week ago. She had met him frequently since; he seemed to turn up wherever she happened to be—at luncheon, tea or dinner. Sometimes they had seen each other as many as three times in one day.

For the girl had plunged immediately into that whirl of pleasure which her new estate made possible. The opportunity to enjoy herself at last was here; she made the most of it without hesitation.

(To be continued.)

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Singing the Old Songs.

"Ah, for the old days!" sighed the old-fashioned young man. "The girls of to-day are not at all like our mothers used to be! Why, I'll bet you don't know what needles are for!"

He glanced with admiration at the modern girl.

"I do too!" she flashed. "They're for phonographs!"

Minard's Liniment for Burns, etc.

Health and Beauty.

The dark circles under the eyes, of which so many of my readers complain, may be due to poor circulation or to other causes. Massage will do much to improve the circulation, and is most effective when it follows steaming or bathing the face in hot water. The tips of the fingers should be dipped in a good massage cream, then with slight pressure worked around the eyes in a rotary motion; the nose should be stroked from the bridge outward and downward, and the skin of the cheeks should be pinched up and rolled between the fingers and thumb. Plenty of fresh air, day and night, an abundance of sleep, and regular habits of the body are also necessary. If improvement does not follow, it is advisable to consult a physician.

To combat wrinkles, feed the skin plenty of oil and use astringents. This means that a gentle but thorough massage with a good cream is necessary. By a good cream I mean one made from almond or olive oil. This should be used immediately after a hot soap-and-water wash, while the pores of the skin are open. After the massage the surplus cream is to be wiped off and an astringent is used to draw up the lax muscles and to close the pores. Nothing is better for this purpose than ice, which should be rubbed over the skin for ten minutes to be most effective. If you have no ice, fill the bowl with water as cold as you can get it, add a few drops of tincture of benzoin, and rinse well with this.

For a thin neck, practice deep-breathing exercises; these are most essential; they will build up the chest and fill out those ugly hollows at the base of the throat and over the shoulders. Second, give the neck a thorough scrubbing with hot water and soap and a complexion brush every day. Follow this with a hot rinse and then with a massage. For the massage, use either a flesh-building cream made with almond oil, or use warm cocoa-butter. Cocoa-butter is more fattening, but some few sensitive skins can not stand it.

The massage should be gentle; the tips of the fingers should be used, the strokes should be up and down the neck and in small circles over the skin. As a finish, the cream is wiped off and the neck is rubbed with ice or rinsed in quite cold water. There is also a good exercise that keeps the chin line firm and youthful: Roll the head around on the shoulders. This may sound strange, but it is quite practical. You'll find that it gently stretches every muscle in the throat.

For chest and bust development and to straighten round shoulders, the proper exercise is also some form of deep breathing. You can stand before an open window or out of doors and take a certain number of deep breaths every day. Or you can take the deep-breathing exercise in an even better way: Fill the lungs with as much fresh air as you can pack into them, and then hold the lungs full for a certain number of seconds before exhaling, lengthening the time you hold the air as you become accustomed to the exercise. About half a minute is a good average.

A deep-breathing and arm exercise combined is also used for chest development. Start by holding the arms in front of you, and as you breathe in slowly, bring the arms around to the sides and as far to the back as you can get them. This is really the most effective way, as you can feel the pull on the muscles of the chest.

Home Decoration.

Making rooms cheerful and homelike is an art, but there are many simple rules which one can follow. If a room is dark, it is obvious that the walls and woodwork should be light in color. If a room has several windows and is very light there is the place to use the darker colors, if one likes.

Color changes the size of a room to the eye and determines the amount of light. To tone down a room that faces south and has more light than it needs, paint the walls green, blue, tan or brown. Rooms having north and east windows are made more pleasant by using colors with tones of yellow, canary, red, etc. Bedrooms should always be finished in delicate light tones. The nearer to white the better. Blue, grays, etc., are suitable for dining-rooms.

A room looks higher without a border on the walls and lower with a drop ceiling. Yellow and red are warm colors and make rooms appear smaller than they really are. Gray, green, blue and soft colors make rooms look larger than they really are. Some bad combinations are red or buff walls and mahogany woodwork. Shades of pink, old rose and cream will give a room warmth and coziness. They are desirable colors for rooms with a northern or eastern exposure, especially bed-rooms.

Whitish tones are cold in effect. They make the room appear large and spacious. For the reason one must use warm colors in draping, curtains and upholstery—to add cheerfulness to the general effect. Large and pronounced designs in wall decorating give rooms a crowded and smaller appearance.

Eat More Lettuce.

Lettuce is an excellent food for the nerves. It should be eaten freely the year round if possible. Lettuce should be planted early, and as fast as one bed is used up, or the lettuce begins to get old, another should be put in. By this means, crisp, tender lettuce can be had from very early in the season until very late in the fall.

Transplant the young plants of the head lettuce so that they do not sit too close together in the ground. Fine firm heads will result. Lettuce is delicious and beneficial served with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, or with vinegar and sugar, or with mayonnaise dressing.

As the basis of a salad, it is unexcelled. Fruits, vegetables, meats, or combinations of these will make a delicious salad which can be prepared in a few moments with a bed of lettuce, and a bottle of dressing at hand. Leftovers may be used up nicely, and the emergency shelf may contain just such canned goods as salmon, pineapple, crab meat, shrimp, lobster, or other suitable supplies.

Pineapple Salad.—Lay a drained slice of canned pineapple on a bed of crisp lettuce. On the centre of this place a small ball of cottage cheese about the size of a large walnut. The cottage cheese should have been nicely seasoned with melted butter and salt. Garnish the cheese with half of a walnut meat, or a maraschino cherry stuffed with the nut meat, or two strips of red sweet pimento laid in a cross.

A Handy and Handsome Waste Box.

I obtained from a groceryman an empty cheese box and stained it a handsome oak color by simply using a little roof cement— the kind that is found in tin cans inside the rolls of roofing. This I thinned with turpentine and applied with a small cloth, rubbing it well into the wood. After varnishing I placed it under the kitchen sink, where it is not only good to look at but one of the handiest articles in our kitchen. When the children have any waste paper, strings, etc., they know just where such things belong. It is truly a great help in keeping the kitchen clean.

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Plenty of Room.

"I never go to church," the millionaire said. "I guess you've noticed that, bishop?"

"Yes, I have noticed it," said the bishop gravely.

"I guess you wonder why I never go to church, don't you?" the millionaire pursued. "Well, I'll tell you why, bishop. There are so many hypocrites there."

"Oh, don't let that keep you away," said the bishop, smiling. "There is always room for one more."

His Ideas.

Youth—"I sent you some suggestions telling you how to make your paper more interesting. Have you carried out any of my ideas?"

Editor—"Did you meet the office boy with the waste paper basket as you came upstairs?"

Youth—"Yes, I did."

Editor—"Well, he was carrying out your ideas."

True Enough.

"Then you have decided not to marry him to reform him?"

"Such is my decision. If the Government can't reform him, what chance have I?"

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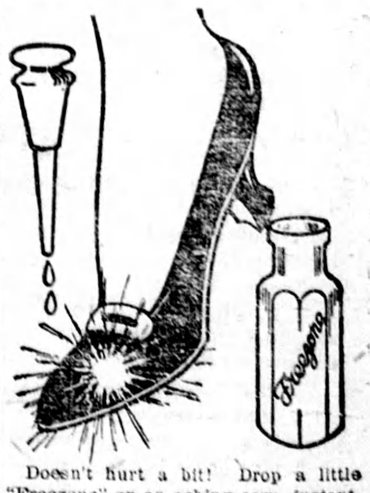

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