

THE IRON POT

By Moira Wilkins

It stood in a corner by the fireplace, in the shadow. In the darkness there its sides gleamed with a deep blue-black lustre, for Jeanne kept it carefully polished. Even on the days when she was most listless, she would rub its rounded iron flanks with a handful of fine moist sand that she kept in a canister on the mantelshelf—sand that she had dug herself from round the bracken roots, and from under the heather, and that had in it still tiny twigs and leaves.

She had brought nothing to the cottage when she had married the young gamekeeper; there was no single picture on the walls to remind her of France—not an ornament or a piece of china. In the first week after their wedding, when he had come home in the evening, handsome, brown, tired, and as inartificially happy as the setter at his heels, and had thrown himself into the old wicker armchair, stretching his pattered legs in front of him towards the fire, smiling up at her in the way that warmed her heart—she had gloried in this. The very strangeness of it all had stimulated and charmed her—she felt as if she was on a new planet, so divorced was she from all familiar things. The soft, strange air of England, full of a diffused and misty light, that flowed through the cottage windows and lit her strange little English kitchen, was different from the luminous pale air of Brittany; under her feet were the small red bricks of the floor, instead of the cool uneven flagstones that she used to know; the pots and pans above the unfamiliar stove, the curious, ugly, dented, dented—upstairs—all, all were new to her; as new as the dazed eyes of her young husband; dazed with her beauty, and his inability to tell her a fibre of what he felt for it. No French boy had looked at her like that—dumbly, with deep, wordless adoring eyes.

She loved him. She had left her father, well-paid as lady's maid without a moment's hesitation; he had only led to wretched, like he did in his settlement, and to look at her with those dark eyes, and she had followed. She left the swing-room, and the laces and fine linens, which her hands had touched so daintily, so lovingly—and learnt to move the heavy saucepans on the dark old stove, cooking for him; for the dog; making pulpy, messy mashies for the chickens; sweeping the bricks, and whitening the hearth-stone. For the best part of a year they hardly spoke to anyone else. They were mad about each other. Her little pointed, elusive elfin face was mirrored in his dark eyes, and in his silent heart, filled till now only with trees, and their shadows, and birds and their shadows, and the dark moss green of the woods; and his face, his strange English face, came between her and everything else, with the persistence of a dream that haunts the waking hours.

She thought of it all now, leaning against the doorpost this September evening. Her wedding day, five years ago. God, how she had changed! Or was it she?—or the world? around her? It was the world; it had shifted out of focus, moved farther off, become blurred and misty to her, like a vision seen in water. She loved her husband still, but now with a fierce, devouring, painful passion that was the only real thing about her; she sometimes felt as if all of herself, all her mentality, all her feelings were concentrated in a needlepoint of pain in her heart, the pain of her love. She had left France—her own land for this; and now this other land had left her ebbled away. The ground under her feet was alien ground; the walls behind her had been built by hands whose touch she did not understand; they shut her in at night to strange noises—just as in the day the hearts of those she saw shut her out to strangeness. She was alone in a foreign land.

Four years ago, when her mother had died—the year her own baby had been born—she had written to her from Brittany to ask if she wanted anything from her old home; the Bible? her mother's crucifix? the picture of her father that hung over her mother's bed? She had written to ask for the cooking pot—the iron one with three legs that her mother had always used. They thought her quite mad—and had handed her letter from one to the other with shrugs and smiles. Enfin, done, cest idiot!—they'd half a mind to send her nothing. An iron cooking pot, all the way to England—over the sea! But, in the end, they'd done it up in an old wooden case and sent it over by petit viessé—and there it stood, in the corner, her only little bit of France; all she had for anchor when her spirit swam out on the wide seas of nostalgia and came near to drowning.

Homesick! That was a good word. It meant more than most English words do. Sick, sick, sick; sick in body and soul. Sick for the home that she would never see again, for the needlepoint of love and pain veered always in her heart, pointing at the woods where her husband worked, and keeping her tied to him by its magnetic thread.

But she still loved her? She wondered—so often. Why should he? She looked at her hands. Thin, almost like a bird's claws; she forgot to eat, often. She put one hand up to her hair, and felt the harsh tangles in what had once been as fine, as smooth as silk. She took no joy now in her beauty—and, anyway, there was but little of it left.

After her baby was born, his sister—who had come to look after the cottage during her confinement, had stayed on, for she hardly lifted a finger to clean or cook—she'd let it all go. The baby was more Mary's than hers; he slept with his aunt, was looked after by her; if he cut his finger he ran to her, and took to her the strange flower that he picked on the bank. The little dark English boy. He didn't belong to her at all.

She saw him now, bending over the wood at the foot of the garden, looking

intently at something—a water beetle, perhaps? In the dark green beech trees there were hanging tufts of brilliant leaves—autumn was here. Chains of blackberries looped the hedgerow tangles together, and the hips and haws stained the rusty leaves with points of tawny scarlet and pale gold. Autumn. Five years ago the leaves had smouldered as they did now, and burst into flame on the oak and the beech, and the bracken had turned from green to lemon, and lemon to orange, and the pheasants called wildly, as they did to-day in her man's wood. But no spring sun had come to warm her afterwards; the winter that had followed had stayed in her heart. She was ice-bound, sick with longing and loneliness, a changeling in a cold world.

Gradually, at first, the impulse came to her—and then it suddenly took possession of her. She stood upright by the lintel, thinking painfully. She would change it all. From this moment, this anniversary day, she would change. She would break down the barriers, free herself, make her life a new thing. Now. She wouldn't wait a minute. She went down the garden path, and stood by her son.

"Come and walk with me in the fields, and pick mushrooms and berries for Daddy's supper," she said.

He looked at her, surprised. This was something new indeed. He straightened himself slowly and put a small hand in hers. Her heart caught with joy—it was an omen. Her first overture to the world had been received graciously.

They walked out into the fields, and after a little while, in the rough grass, an occasional mushroom glimmered in the dusk, faintly phosphorescent. In a dewy already, rounded, clustered close dark green ring they came on many, to the earth. She showed the little boy the fawn-pink underside, pleased so sweetly, and peeled and broke a tiny piece for him, putting it between his lips; a fragrant tasting of the earth and of grass, and of the night.

Under the hedges, growing on an old log, he found a group of rosy toadstools brilliant, pink above and faintly golden below, and she made him wipe his fingers in the long wet grass after touching them. Poison.

A sweet and dreaming peace enveloped her. She felt as if this was not the twilight, but the dawn. As she walked through the field, with little Jim running round her like a puppy, she knew what she would do. This very night she would begin. Comb her hair, and change her dress, and cook his supper for him. So long since she had done that! She remembered how she had said once, taking her hand timidly, and fumbling for words—puzzled and grieved by her coldness, her aloofness, her unhappiness.

"If you would only take one step towards them, Jean" (for that was the nearest he came to her crisp, solid little French name), "they'd take the rest—and you'd get to like each other." . . . The neighbours. . . . She almost laughed. They half-hated, half- pitied her—a mad wench feckless and idle—but still, she'd try. From to-day she'd try.

The beech woods, standing up against the sky like a giant hedge, stood at the foot of the fields, and three haystacks, shaped like English loaves, lay almost in their shadow. They'd go so far, she thought, the two of them, and no farther; for it was getting dark. She held the mushrooms in a corner of her apron, her little face, triangular and delicate, lifted to the night-clouded sky, her eyes almost visionary under the thick blond hair, Jim had lingered behind, dawdling over some treasure-trove he had found.

Walking quietly, dreaming, she saw them, and they never knew that they had been seen. Her lover, her husband, her man, lying in the hay, in the shadow of the wick, with his eyes hidden that other—held him as if he was a small boy, who had come to her for comfort. The compass needle in Jeanne's heart swung madly, madly, till she almost cried aloud with the pain. Almost, but not quite. She turned, as silently as she came, and went home. She led little Jim by the hand, but forgot to speak to him. Only once she knelt in the shadows by the hedge, picking something; she laid it in her apron carefully. So they went home.

Indoors, Mary had lit the lamp, and had turned on to the table the packages she'd been to the village to fetch. Sugar, candles, tea, bacon in a thick rasher; she lifted her head as they came in.

"Wonders'll never cease!" she said. "You two been out together? Time for your bed, youngster. I could turn in, too; I'm tired, I can tell you!"

"Go, Mary," said Jeanne, turning her eyes on her sister-in-law. "Go to bed, with the boy. Eat some bread and milk with him, and go to rest." Her cheeks flushed darkly, and her lips parted in a slow, unaccustomed smile. "Have you forgotten this is my wedding night?" she asked. "I will cook Joe's supper. I wish to, tonight. You go to bed, and rest. Poor Mary! I leave so much to you."

Mary's country wits were completely baffled. Jeanne had not cooked for four years, or cleaned for that matter, or done a hand's turn. Everyone in the village thought it was a crying shame the way Mary worked for that queer cue, and got no thanks for it. And here was Jeanne telling her to go to bed, to rest, and she with her legs aching, dear knows, and her arms too. She didn't know if she was on her head or her heels. Jim started to jump up and down, up and down, in a frenzy of excitement.

"Come to bed, same time as me, Auntie!" he cried. "N you can tell me stories, 'n" His voice broke with joy, he almost choked.

Mary looked down at him. Her little boy. Hers. She had done all for him but bear him. She smiled.

Jeanne pushed her gently towards the stairs. "Go, go," she said, almost laughing. "I bring your supper. Take the boy."

As their feet climbed the uncarpeted steps, she cut the bread into neat dice, stirred the fire in the stove, and heated the milk. She took two bowls up

Santa Claus Down South



Santa Claus has indeed gone modern. He landed his new plane in San Francisco, last week, to enquire of Jack and Jill what their wishes were. In addition he took 'em for a ride.

Two rocked his infant cradle as he slept, and crooned for him their native lullabies. One gave her sense of beauty to his eyes. One taught his heart her smiles, the tears she wept. Each made him love her as the child his home. And, mother-wise, reclaimed his wandering glance: Beloved England and beloved France— Each drew him, though, afar, he could not come!

In his imagination, fleur-de-lis And English daisy blossomed side by side, And dreams were his, lost transports to renew. Half exiled whereso'er he chanced to bed. Like migrant birds his thoughts went soaring wide, Wooded onward by the vision of the true!

—Florence Earle Coates, "Poems"

Du Maurier

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Young Men of Britain Have All-Year Camps

London.—An organization known as Grith Fyrd Camps has come into existence in response to the popular demand. A chain of permanent camp communities is being formed in which young men of all classes can live a worth-while life, even if precluded from earning a living. The project was initiated by the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry, a social and educational organization, which has had sixteen years' experience of year-round camping.

It is more than an unemployment scheme, for it aims at filling needs which would be urgent if there were no unemployment—(1) for the regaining by young men of that personal experience of primitive adventure which was lost in the migration from country to town; (2) for the constructive use of readiness to face danger and difficulty in serving their country; and (3) for education in the purposeful use of the leisure which humanity has secured by the elaboration of machines.

Members of Grith Fyrd Camps set about the task of learning by first-hand experience how to control themselves and each other, or, in other words, how to live in communities and yet find life adventurous and satisfying.

The first camp has been constructed close to the bank of the Avon at Godshill near Fordingbridge, on the north-western edge of the New Forest, twelve miles from Southampton.

The Pledge to Disarm

By LORD CECIL OF CHELWOOD, British Peace Worker, Speaking at Acton.

As to the case for disarmament, apart from the questions of expense and the diminution of international suspicion, the strongest argument of all was our definite promise, repeated on several occasions, to disarm as soon as Germany had accepted and carried out the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. The obligation of honor resting upon us and the other countries who gave this promise was complete and binding.

It has now become an urgent question, by reason of the German claim for its fulfillment, with an intimation that unless the other countries are prepared to disarm she will claim the right to rearm. What possible answer is there to this point now is, not whether it would be better for us to disarm or not to disarm but what is the alternative if we do not disarm?

In the first place, as it seems to me, we lose our honor; we abandon the pledges which we have given to Germany and on the faith of which she signed to treaty. But quite apart from that the inevitable result must sooner or later be the rearmament of Germany. Is that what we want? Can it possibly be right for us to take a course which will lead to a repetition of the state of things existing in Europe in the years before 1914?

Smokers' Eyes Better At Seeing Red Lights

Los Angeles.—Tobacco smoking, it has been shown in experiments conducted at the University of Southern California, tends to increase the sensitivity of eyesight to red and green colors. This sensitivity, experimenters point out, may in future determine whether a person is a good or poor accident risk for insurance.

Girl Guide News

Glad That I Live Am I Glad that I live am I, that the skies are blue, Glad for the country lanes and the fall of dew After the sun the rain, after the rain the sun, This is the way of life, till the work be done, All that we need to do, be we low or high. Is to see that we grow nearer the sky. (These words will be sung as a song at the Ring of Service in London, England.)

The Guide Law

1. A Guide's honour is to be trusted.
2. A Guide is loyal.
3. A Guide's duty is to be useful and help others.
4. A Guide is friendly to all.
5. A Guide is courteous.
6. A Guide is a friend to animals.
7. A Guide obeys orders.
8. A Guide smiles and sings under all difficulties.
9. A Guide is thrifty.
10. A Guide is pure in thought, word and deed.

Taps

"Day Is Done, gone the sun, From the hills, from the sea, from the sky, All is well safely rest, God is nigh."

Courtesy

Let us think a little about what our courtesy means. In some ways this is the most attractive of all our Guide Laws. We begin with Truth, Honour, and Loyalty for the foundation; then we have the most solid and beautiful part of the building—Usefulness, Helpfulness and Friendliness; and then we polish these until they shine with Courtesy.

Courtesy means a great deal. It means politeness and good manners. It means consideration and thoughtfulness for others, and it means chivalry, deference and respect for others. If we are truly courteous, we shall show deference to all those who are older or wiser than ourselves, or who are above us in any way; and we shall also show respect to all who are weaker, smaller or more helpless than ourselves, even to the animals, remembering that they are God's creatures too.

Marial Honey contributed a little poem to one of our magazines, which I think might be repeated here:

Courtesy

Have we got time to be courteous? I know it's an awful bore To remember to wipe your feet on the mat

And not to slam the door. But it is the little courtesies In the rush of modern life When our nerves are horribly on the jar.

That we do much to palliate strife. And, I think, if we try to be courteous, We shall find the old-time grace Of manners is welcome in every age. And will never seem out of place.

—Millicent M. Benson, Captain of Lone Guides.

Shorts

More than 1,110,465,999 National Savings certificates have now been bought in Gt. Britain.

Scientists claim that they can now measure speeds up to about 1,600 miles an hour.

Incapacity for work due to rheumatism costs Britain the amazing sum of £20,000,000 a year.

Starting in Glasgow fifty years ago with a membership of only thirty, the Boys' Brigade has a strength of over 100,000.

Measured by a special apparatus, the speed of a driver when it touches a golf ball is from seventy to 125 miles per hour.

Nine of the world's most famous liners are to be overhauled this winter at Southampton; the task will find employment for thousands of men.

After being trapped in a rabbit-burrow for six days, a terrier was found to be pure white in colour when rescued. Originally she was a rich sandy brown.

A recent road census in the United Kingdom showed that over a period of four years motor-cars had increased by twenty-four per cent, while motorcycles have decreased by eighteen per cent.

Documents dating back 700 years are in the possession of one Stockholm firm which has been carrying on business since the twelfth century. It claims to be the oldest trading concern in the world.

In the wardrobe of the "Old Vic" London's theatre, are 20,000 articles of clothing and personal adornment. When "Henry VIII" is staged more than 900 items of apparel are required.

Fourpence pays for medical consultation, treatment, and a bottle of medicine in the poorer districts of Liverpool, where three experienced doctors carry on the work of the cheap dispensaries founded in that city in 1778.

Smoke in the air is responsible for the City of London losing 300 hours of sunshine every year. In one month alone, December, there should be an average of forty hours of sunshine, of which the city enjoys less than one-third.

Designed on the grand scale, the new home of the League of Nations being built in Geneva has a facade one-third of a mile long; the Assembly Hall will seat some 2,000 people, while there is room for 600 journalists in the Press Gallery.

Of the main roads round London, the Portsmouth road as Esher is stated to be the busiest. During one week the following vehicles were counted: 66,218 cars, 12,219 motorcycles, 20,331 heavy motors, and 7,219 other vehicles.

No vessel may dock in the Port of London until the medical officers in charge of the dock have given her a clean bill of health, but only a small percentage of the 15,700 vessels which enter the Thames every year have actually to be boarded.

Because it is built on a bed of clay, the fifteenth century church at Elton, Northamptonshire, has to be "watered" in very dry weather. The clay shrinks when too dry, and the church is only safe so long as its foundations are kept moist by the local fire brigade.

Marble tablets engraved with details of great feasts and games which occurred between A.D. 108 and A.D. 112 have been discovered during excavations in Italy. They are fragments of the "Fasti Annales," an official gazette of the Roman period, and one of the world's earliest newspapers.

Notable Large Monoplane Ordered by the Prince

The Prince of Wales has been well known as an enthusiastic private airplane owner for the past four years. Hitherto he has flown light machines. He has now ordered for his own use a twin-engined monoplane which will be one of the latest air line craft of comparable size yet built anywhere in the world. It is notable among British aircraft because it is constructed entirely of metal even to the coverings of the wings and tail unit. The restricted space available in small craft has meant that the Prince's attendants have had to travel in escort machines. The new Viastra craft, furnished specially to meet the Prince's wishes, will enable him to fly from place to place when he wishes with his luggage and staff in the same machine. Similar planes operate the air mail service in Australia between Perth and Adelaide; they hold the record for the fastest trip ever made over the 1,450 miles of the route, a journey accomplished with a full load of twelve passengers and much mail on board at an average speed of 155 m.p.m.—Toronto Mail and Empire.

The Manchurian Issue

By LORD LYTTON

The Manchurian situation is not hopeless. The greatest hope at this moment of preserving the peace of the world is for the United States and the rest of the world to stand shoulder to shoulder. The issue at stake is a much larger one than whether China or Japan shall control the future destinies of Manchuria; it is responsibility and the maintenance of peace and justice between nations shall be preserved, or sacrificed. The choice lies between the continued organization of peace by co-operation or a return to the anarchy of competitive force.

The problem is obviously difficult; it is not impossible, if firmness on the essential issues is combined with patience, tact and sympathy in adjusting the details. The success of the negotiations is profoundly important for the peoples of the world in general and for the people of the United States in particular.

THE ENCLOSURE

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

WRITES A NOTE TO MRS. WIMPLE EXPLAINING THE DOLLAR BILL SHE'S ENCLOSING IS HER SHARE OF THE LUNCHEON YESTERDAY

STAMPS AND SEALS ENVELOPE, RELIEVED TO GET IT OFF HER MIND

FINDS DOLLAR BILL ON DESK, SHE MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN TO PUT IT IN

SLIPS IT BETWEEN BLANK SHEET OF PAPER, INTO ANOTHER ENVELOPE WHICH SHE STAMPS AND SEALS

REALIZES THAT IF SECOND ENVELOPE SHOULD GET THERE FIRST, MRS. WIMPLE WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT

SLIPS FIRST ENVELOPE TO PUT DOLLAR BILL WITH NOTE, BUT FINDS THERE'S A DOLLAR IN IT. SHE MUST HAVE HAD TWO DOLLAR BILLS

ADDRESSES, STAMPS AND SEALS NEW ENVELOPE, BUT DISCOVERS SHE FORGOT TO PUT NOTE BACK IN

TRIES ONCE MORE, BUT NOW CAN'T TELL WHICH ENVELOPE CONTAINS THE BILL AND NOTE, AND WHICH THE BILL AND BLANK PAPER

FEELS IT'S MUCH TOO COMPLICATED AND THAT SHE'LL PAY MRS. WIMPLE IN PERSON NEXT TIME SHE SEES HER

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A Rough-Crepe Model

By HELEN WILLIAMS. Illustrated Dressmaking Lesson Furnished With Every Pattern.



Isn't this a fresh and attractive new type for the smart school and college miss? It is also suitable for youthful women types. It displays clever manipulation of fabric.

The new wrapped bodice cut is snappy and slirring, too. The skirt with front and back panels, that by the way, cut in one with the hip section, give youthful height to the figure. Hyacinth-blue novelty silk and wool crepe made the original. The revers collar and cuffs were of plain blue wool crepe.

It's charming too fashioned of rough or flat crepe silk in tobacco-brown.

Style No. 2671 is designed for sizes 14, 16, 18, 20 years, 36, 38 and 40 inches bust. Size 16 requires 3 1/2 yards of 29-inch material with 1/2 yard of 35-inch contrasting.

HOW TO ORDER PATTERNS. Write your name and address plainly, giving number and size of such patterns as you want. Enclose 15c in stamps or coin (coin preferred; wrap carefully) for each number, and address your order to Wilson Pattern Service, 73 West 44th St., New York.