

The Free Press Short Story

The Magic of a Loving Heart

MARGARET E. SANGSTER

SUE NOLAN was not very important in the firm of Chardan et Cie. She was one of the least pretentious cogs in the wheel of the great dressmaking establishment.

Upon this day she was designing a dress. Because it was February, and the weather was cold, Sue had decided to use a frosty blue-white taffeta.

That, in short, was her particular type of creative ability—Sue Nolan usually did surprising things. She would take party fabrics and make them into the simplest gowns.

The manager said: "If the dress is as interesting as it sounds, Miss Nolan, I've a customer for it. That Van Rensselaer girl is coming in to-morrow afternoon to look at some clothes. You've seen her?"

"From a distance," murmured Sue. The manager went on: "You've seen her—she has white skin and red lips and eyebrows that are like the thin line of a glue-black pencil, and her hair is platinum colored, and the high lights in it are like the high lights in the taffeta you're working on."

"Ah, well," she said, at last, "if she's as beautiful as that, I hope she likes the dress and buys it and wears it and is gay in it. You see, it's a special dress for me, in a way. Incidentally, I won't be with Chardan et Cie. much longer."

It was in the shape of a heart, Sue had picked it up in the depths of a button box—even great shops have button boxes.

Finally every bit of the work, except such items as buttons and snap hooks, was finished. Sue sent the dress rather regretfully into the finishing room.

Just then a little messenger came hurriedly into her presence and said: "Miss Nolan, somebody's calling you on the phone."

"Yes, that Miss Van Rensselaer bought it, just as I thought she would. She was crazy about it. That is," added the manager, "as crazy as Miss Van Rensselaer can be about anything."

Maxine Van Rensselaer did not have the silver dress sent home. She carried the dress, herself, in one of Chardan et Cie's flat silver boxes. She actually held the box on her lap during the drive back to her house.

That evening, you see, Maxine Van Rensselaer had an engagement with a young man whom she liked better than any young man she had ever met. She knew he was going to ask her to marry him that night, too; a note had come in the morning, with flowers, and had told her so. She knew also that if she allowed herself, she could love the young man very dearly.

This was the manner in which Maxine Van Rensselaer reasoned. It was the way in which she had always figured things out. Life, to her, was a commodity that one bought and that one paid for in dollars and cents, exactly as one bought and paid for a dress.

Not until after dinner did she get into the new frock. When she had tried it on, in the ornate fitting room of Chardan et Cie, she had been charmed with it, but now, putting it on in her own room, she was even more interested. The dress had a vague enchantment that got into her blood.

"I don't know what's gotten into me," she said mentally, and a trifle crossly, as she fastened the Peter Pan collar that had belonged to her mother. "This dress makes me feel positively sentimental and silly. I should put on a sophisticated black satin gown, this evening; it would make what I've got to tell Ned, Ned was the young man's name, come easier."

light caught his breath as he saw Maxine coming toward him. He was an ordinary looking young man, in many ways, but he had something firm, steadfast and fine in his dark eyes and something tremulously eager about his mouth as he spoke her name.

"Maxine—oh, my dear," he said, huskily, "you are always wonderful, but I never saw you like this!" Her very soul was set to give a brusque and abrupt answer to a tender question: Her mind was made up, Maxine had decided she would not be silly, she would not sacrifice her chance of wealth because of affection. Maxine, in other words, was ready to deny love; yet, when Ned came forward in the candlelight, when his arms closed around the rusty bluish-white silk of the taffeta gown, she burrowed her head into his shoulder and said, "Darling!"

On the other side of the city, Sue Nolan, at that very moment, was sitting across a restaurant table from an ardent young man. She was looking deep into his eyes, and she was saying:

"I wouldn't find it in my heart to envy anyone." Jim Harley said: "You lamb!" He added, in a veritable tumult of questioning: "When are we going to be married? Have you given notice at Chardan's? Do you love me half as much as I love you?"

"Yes, I do love you, and I have told them I'm leaving," she said. "They did not want me to go—they spoke of more salary, even, but I couldn't be talked out of my set ideas!"

"Thank goodness for that," said Jim. Sue spoke reflectively. "A minute past," she told Jim, "I told a fib—a decided fib."

"What do you mean?" asked Jim, anxiously. "You weren't teasing me about getting married soon or about loving me?" She said: "No, not either of those. I said I didn't envy a person in the world and I don't. But I would like to own something that somebody else has. And that's my envy, isn't it?"

"You mean?" asked Jim. "It's a dress, a dress that I designed and that was immediately sold to the rich Van Rensselaer girl. You know—you've seen her picture, in the society columns. It was the first dress I made after you asked me to marry you. Oh, Jim, I may have the loveliest wedding dress in the world, but that dress is actually my wedding dress. Know why? Because it was built of my dreams and my happiness. I envy Maxine Van Rensselaer because her money could buy it; and because she's wearing it. After all, it's wasted on her..."

Little did Sue Nolan know!

A doctor and a dentist were intimate friends for many years, but neither knew the age of the other. (Aberdonians never give anything away.) At last the dentist died and the doctor thought that he would now be able to ascertain his dead friend's age. He attended the funeral, approached the coffin, and looked at the brass plate. This is what he read: "Angus McLeod, Dentist. (Hours 10-4)."

DOUKHOBOR LEADER DIES



Spiritual leader of the 15,000 Doukhobors in Canada, Peter Verigin, Above, died in Saskatoon in his 64th year, after failing to respond to medical treatment following an operation. He was born in Russia and came to Canada 12 years ago to succeed his father as leader of the "Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood."

CANADA AS EXAMPLE

Expressing the hope that the suggestions made by Canadian poultry experts might be of value to British poultry producers, the Fish Trades Gazette, the national chronicle of the poultry trade in Great Britain, recently reproduced the main points of the Dominion Department of Agriculture's pamphlet on the grading and packing of poultry.

CANDID ABOUT IT

Two young women were chatting before the fire on Christmas Eve. "Mollie," said the prettier of the two "would a stocking hold all you would like for Christmas?"

"No," said the other, "it wouldn't. But a pair of socks would."

With all their worldly possessions slung across the back of a mule, a Spanish Loyalist family, consisting of a mother and her three children, arrive at Le Per-

Advertisement for Eastern Steel Products Limited, featuring a house and text: "Council Standard RIB-ROLL or Tile-Lap Roofing is being widely used for houses. It is permanent, fireproof, weatherproof—requires minimum upkeep. Write for our new free book, 'House Tops'."

BANDED BIRD FROM RUSSIA TAKEN IN NEWFOUNDLAND

What is believed to be the first North American record of a banded bird from Russia has been furnished the Canadian Government through the co-operation of the Department of Natural Resources, Commission of Government, St. John's, Newfoundland. While Newfoundland has in the past co-operated closely with Canada in completing other useful bird-banding records, the information supplied in this instance is of particular value and has been added to the bird-banding records of North America by the National Parks Bureau of the Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, which is in charge of bird-banding operations in Canada.

This long-distance bird-traveller was a Kittiwake Gull. It was killed near Little Fogo Island, Newfoundland, on September 20th, 1937, and carried a band of the Central Bureau of Birding, Moscow. Investigation revealed that the band, which was inscribed with the name "Moscow," and the number 51412,

was placed on the Kittiwake on the Island of Kharlov on June 19th, 1937. The Island of Kharlov lies in the Barents Sea, off the coast of Murmansk, Bering, in the northern part of Russia adjoining Finland, about two hundred miles within the Arctic Circle.

This species of Kittiwake, believed to be an Atlantic Kittiwake, is a colony nesting bird of the gull family. It is the smallest gull of the Herring Gull type of coloration, which species it resembles rather closely except for its smaller size. The Atlantic Kittiwake is rare in North America except on the east coast. Available records for banded Kittiwakes recovered in Newfoundland indicate that at least two of these birds from the British Isles and one from Greenland have been taken.

This remarkable bird-banding record is a practical illustration of the value of "bird banding in determining migration routes—breeding and wintering grounds—concentration points, and economic status of wild birds. By means of official numbered leg bands, through which the birds may be identified as in-

dividuals, their movements are accurately recorded and other exact and useful scientific information obtained concerning their general life histories. Thousands of records are now available for study by officers and organizations concerned with problems relating to native wild birds, which represent an important natural resource worth millions of dollars annually to Canada.

OLD-FASHIONED

First Witch—Come on out, granny, and take a spin with me on my new vacuum cleaner. Second Witch—No, I'm too old for that. Give me a nice easy-gaited broomstick.

HARDLY NECESSARY

"What are you playing, children?" "Wedding, mamma. I'm the bride and Tilly is the bridesmaid." "But you have no bridesmaid." "That's so—but this is only a small wedding."

Orphans of the Storm Cross French Border



With all their worldly possessions slung across the back of a mule, a Spanish Loyalist family, consisting of a mother and her three children, arrive at Le Per-

Large advertisement for Carrolls Limited featuring various food items and prices: Grapefruit 9 Medium Large Marsh Seedless Real Value 25c; Spinach 2 lbs. Clean, Curly and Crisp 13c; Oranges 2 lbs. 15c; Celery 3 Stalks—Delicious and Crisp—Nice Size 13c; Tomatoes 13c; Lemons 9 Nice Size—Loaded with Juice 10c; Mushrooms 29c; Lettuce 2 Nice Size Heads for 11c; Butter—ALWAYS A TREAT—PRICED TO SAVE. CARROLLS LIMITED.

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