



The DIM LANTERN

by TEMPLE BAILEY

CHAPTER X

So Christmas Eve came, and the costume ball at the Townes'. There were, as Baldy had told Jane, just six of them at dinner. Cousin Anna-Neil was still in bed, and it was Adelaide Laramore who made the sixth.



She was all in silvery green.

Edith had told Mrs. Follette frankly that she wished Adelaide had not been asked. "But she fished for it. She always does. She flatters Uncle Fred and he falls for it." Baldy brought Evans and Mrs. Follette over in his flivver. They found Mrs. Laramore and Frederick already in the drawing room. Edith had not come down. "She is always late," Frederick complained, "and she never apologizes." Baldy, silken and slim, in his page's scarlet, stood in the hall and watched Edith descend the stairs. She seemed to emerge from the shadows of the upper balcony like a shaft of light. She was all in silvery green, her close-clinging robe girdled with pearls, her hair banded with mistletoe. For a moment he stood admiring her, then: "You shouldn't have worn it," he said. "The mistletoe? Why not?" "You will tempt all men to kiss you." "Men must resist temptation." His tone was light, but her heart glased a beat. There was something about this boy so utterly engaging. He had set her on a pedestal, and he worshiped her. When she said that she was not worth worshipping, he told her, "You don't know."

It, when things are to hard for her— Adelaide interposed irrelevantly, "I should hate to spend Christmas in Chicago." There was no response, so she turned to Frederick. "Couldn't Miss Barnes leave her sister for a few days?" "No," he told her, "she couldn't." She persisted, "I am sure you didn't want her to miss the ball." "I did my best to get her here. Talked to her at long distance, but she couldn't see it." "You are so good-hearted, Ricky." Frederick could be cruel at moments, and her persistence was irritating. "Oh, look here, Adelaide, it wasn't entirely on her account. I want her here myself." She sat motionless, her eyes on her plate. When she spoke again it was of other things. "Did you hear that Delafield is coming back?" "Who told you?" "Eloise Harper. Benny's sister saw Del at Miami. She is sure he is expecting to marry the other girl." "Bad taste, I call it." "Everybody is crazy to know who she is." "Have they any ideas?" "No, Benny's sister said he talked quite frankly about getting married. But he wouldn't say a word about the woman." "I hardly think he will find Edith heart-broken." Towne glanced across the table. Edith was not wearing the willow. No shadow marred her lovely countenance. Her eyes were clear and shining pools of sweet content. Her uncle was proud of that high-held head. He and Edith might not always hit it off. But, by Jove, he was proud of her. "No, she's not heart-broken," Adelaide's cool tone disturbed his reflections, "she is getting her heart mended." "What do you mean?" "They are an attractive pair, little Jane and her brother. And the boy has lost his head." "Over Edith? Oh, well, she plays around with him; there's nothing serious in it." "Don't be too sure. She's interested." "What makes you insist on that?" irritably. "I know the signs, dear man," the cat seemed to purr, but she had claws. And it was Adelaide who was right. Edith had come to the knowledge that night of what Baldy meant to her. As she had entered the ballroom men had crowded around her. "Why," they demanded, "do you wear mistletoe, if you don't want to pay the forfeit?" Backed up against one of the marble pillars, she held them off. "I do want to pay it, but not to any of you." Her frankness diverted them. "Who is the lucky man?" "He is here. But he doesn't know he is lucky." They thought she was joking. But she was not. And on the other side of the marble pillar a page in scarlet listened, with joy and fear in his heart. "How fast we are going. How fast." There was dancing until midnight, then the curtains at the end of the room were drawn back, and the tree was revealed. It towered to the ceiling, a glittering, gorgeous thing. It was weighted with gifts for everybody, fantastic toys most of them, expensive, meaningless. Evans, standing back of the crowd, was aware of the emptiness of it all. Oh, what had there been throughout the evening to make him think of the Babe who had been born at Bethlehem? The gifts of the Wise Men? Perhaps. Gold and frankincense and myrrh? One must not judge too narrowly. It was hard to keep simplicities in these opulent days. Yet he was heavy-hearted, and when Eloise Harper charged up to him, dressed somewhat scantily as a dryad, and handed him a foolish monkey on a stick, she seemed to suggest a heathen saturnalia rather than anything Christian and civilized. "A monkey for a monk," said Eloise. "Mr. Follette, your cassock is frightfully becoming. But you know you are a whitened sepulchre." "Am I?" "Of course. I'll bet you never say your prayers." She danced away, unconscious that her words had pierced him. What reason had she to think that any of this meant more to him than it did to her? Had he borne witness to the faith that was within him? And was it within him? And if not, why? He stood there with his foolish monkey on his stick, while around him whirled a laughing, shrieking

crowd. Why, the thing was a carnival, not a sacred celebration. Was there no way in which he might bear witness? Edith had asked him to sing the old ballads, "Dance, get up and bake your pies," and "I saw three ships a-sailing." Evans was in no mood for the dance who baked her pies on Christmas day in the morning, or the pretty girls who whistled and sang—on Christmas day in the morning. When all the gifts had been distributed the lights in the room were turned out. The only illumination was the golden effulgence which encircled the tree. In his monk's robe, within that circle of light, Evans seemed a mystical figure. He seemed, too, appropriately ascetic, with his gray hair, the weary lines of his old-young face. But his voice was fresh and clear. And the song he sang hushed the great room into silence.

"O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie, Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, The silent stars go by; Yet in thy dark streets shineth, The everlasting light; The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight." He sang as if he were alone in some vast arched space, beneath spires that reached towards Heaven, behind some grille that separated him from the world. And now it seemed to him that he sang not to that crowd of upturned faces, not to those men and women in shining silks and satins, not to Jane who was far away, but to those others who pressed close—his comrades across the Great Divide! So he had sung to them in the hospital, sitting up in his narrow bed—and most of the men who had listened were—gone. As the last words rang out his audience seemed to wake with a sigh. Then the lights went up. But the monk had vanished! Evans left word with Baldy that he would go home on the trolley. "I am not quite up to the supper, and all that. Will you look after Mother?" "Of course. Say, Evans, that song was top notch. Edith wants you to sing another." "Will you tell her I can't? I'm sorry. But the last time I sang that was for the fellows—in France. And it—got me—"

"It got me, too," Baldy confided; "made all this seem—silly." It was just before New Year's that Lucy Logan brought a letter for Frederick Towne to sign, and when he had finished she said, "Mr. Towne, I'm sorry, but I'm not going to work any more. So will you please accept my resignation?" He showed his surprise. "What's the matter? Aren't we good enough for you?" "It isn't that," she stopped and went on, "I'm going to be married, Mr. Towne." "Married?" He was at once congratulatory. "That's a pleasant thing for you, and I mustn't spoil it by telling you how hard it is going to be to find someone to take your place." "I think if you will have Miss Dale? She's really very good." Frederick was curious. What kind of lover had won this quiet Lucy? Probably some clerk or salesman. "What about the man? Nice fellow, I hope—"



"And—I told him he must not, Miss Towne." She read it. "Lucy Logan? I don't believe I know her," she said to the maid. "She says she is from Mr. Towne's office, and that it is important." "Miss Towne," Lucy said as Edith approached her, "I have resigned from your uncle's office. Did he

tell you?" "No. Uncle Fred rarely speaks about business." With characteristic straightforwardness Lucy came at once to the point. "I have something I must talk over with you. I don't know whether I am doing the wise thing. But it is the only honest thing." "I can't imagine what you can have to say." "No you can't. It's this—" she hesitated, then spoke with an effort. "I am the girl Mr. Simms is in love with. He wants to come back and marry me." Edith's fingers caught at the arm of the chair. "Do you mean that it was because of you—that he didn't marry me?" "Yes. He used to come to the office when he was in Washington and dictate letters. And we got in the way of talking to each other. He seemed to enjoy it, and he wasn't like some men—who are just—silly.

And I began to think about him a lot. But I didn't let him see it. And he told me afterward, he was always thinking of me. And the morning of your wedding day he came down to the office—to say 'Good-by.' He said he—just had to. And—well, he let it out that he loved me, and didn't want to marry you. But he said he would have to go on with it. And—and I told him he must not. Miss Towne." Edith stared at her. "Do you mean that what he did was your fault?" "Yes." Lucy's face was white. "If you want to put it that way. I told him he hadn't any right to marry you if he loved me." She hesitated, then lifted her eyes to Edith's with a glance of appeal. "Miss Towne, I wonder if you are big enough to believe that it was just because I cared so much—and not because of his money?" "You think you love him?" she demanded. "I know I do. And you don't. You never have. And he didn't love you. Why—if he should lose every cent tomorrow, and I had to tramp the road with him, I'd do it gladly. And you wouldn't. You wouldn't want him unless he could give you everything you have now, would you? Would you, Miss Towne?" Edith's sense of justice dictated her answer. "No," she found herself unexpectedly admitting. "If I had to tramp the roads with him, I'd be bored to death." "I think he knew that, Miss Towne. He told me that if he didn't marry you, your heart wouldn't be broken. That it would just hurt your pride."

Edith had a moment of hysterical mirth. How they had talked her over. Her lover—and her uncle's stenographer! What a tragedy it had been! And what a comedy! She leaned forward a little, locking her fingers about her knees. "I wish you'd tell me all about it." So Lucy told the simple story. And in telling it showed herself so naive, so steadfast, that Edith was aware of an increasing respect for the woman who had taken her place in the heart of her lover. She perceived that Lucy had come to this interview in no spirit of triumph. She had dreaded it, but had felt it her duty. "I thought it would be easier for you if you knew it before other people did." Edith's forehead was knitted in a slight frown. "The whole thing has been most unpleasant," she said. "When are you going to marry him?" "I told him on St. Valentine's day. It seemed—romantic." Romance and Dell Edith had a sudden illumination. Why, this was what he had wanted, and she had given him none of it! She had laughed at him—been his good comrade. Little Lucy adored him—and had set St. Valentine's day for the wedding!

There was nothing small about Edith Towne. She knew fineness when she saw it, and she had a feeling of humility in the presence of little Lucy. "I think it was my fault as much as Dell's," she stated. "I should never have said 'Yes.' People haven't any right to marry who feel as we did." "Oh," Lucy said rapturously, "how dear of you to say that. Miss Towne, I always knew you were big. But I didn't dream you were so beautiful." Tears wet her cheeks. "You're just—marvellous," she said, wiping them away. "No, I'm not." Edith's eyes were on the fire. "Normally, I am rather proud and—hateful. If you had come a week ago—" Her voice fell away into silence as she still stared at the fire. Lucy looked at her curiously. "A week ago?" Edith nodded. "Do you like fairy tales? Well, once there was a princess. And a page came and sang—under her window." The fire purred and crackled. "And the princess—liked the song—"

Gallant Sea Officer Honored



CAPTAIN PERCY AMBROSE KELLY, Chief Officer of the Canadian National Steamship "Lady Hawkins" when that vessel was sunk by an enemy submarine on the evening of February 19, 1942, was recently honored by the Dominion Government for conspicuous gallantry shown on that occasion. The testimonial took the form of a silver tray on which the following inscription was engraved: "Presented by the Government of Canada to Percy Ambrose Kelly, Chief Officer, R.M.S. Lady Hawkins, for meritorious conduct when the vessel was sunk without warning by an enemy submarine on the night of February 19, 1942." The presentation took place in the Nova Scotian hotel at Halifax, Captain Kelly receiving the government's token at the hands of C. H. Hosterman, Marine Agent for the Department of Transport at Halifax, representing Hon. C. D. Howe, Acting Transport Minister. In the photograph Captain Kelly is seen holding the silver tray, and to his immediate left is Mr. Hosterman. On Mr. Kelly's right is Captain Charles Waterhouse, Superintendent of Ports, Halifax. In the center background is W. G. Miller, Halifax manager, Canadian National Steamship, who represented R. B. Teakle, General Manager. Standing in the foreground next to Mr. Hosterman is Arthur Standen, Director of Merchant Seaman at Ottawa. A message of congratulation from Mr. Teakle said: "Mr. Kelly throughout the trying period displayed the high qualities of those who go down to the sea in ships." Captain Kelly was in charge of a lifeboat containing 76 persons which was adrift four days before being sighted by a rescue ship. The official account of the event cites that "Captain Kelly showed gallantry in staying to assist in the lowering of other boats after his own was safely away. His judgment in all things was above discussion. His leadership and friendly discipline were first-class. His seamanship was good. Not one person in the lifeboat ever criticized him. All considered him deserving of honor."

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"I've chastised my garbage can 'Hitler' and believe me he doesn't get anything that's worth anything."



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