

THE COST OF A BARGAIN.

Julia F. Deane.

"Chatelaine bags for 69 cents, real value \$1.00 to \$2.00. Greatest offer of the season; not to be duplicated at any store in the city."

Mrs. Borden read aloud the advertisement at the breakfast table, commenting as she read. "The very thing I am needing. I shall go down early this morning and take advantage of the opportunity to get one at the special sale."

"My dear," said her husband, lifting his eyes from the stock quotations at her remarks, "am I never going to be able to convince you that there is no real economy in what you and the rest of the feminine world are pleased to designate as 'bargains,' that you expend what you make on one article in a fictitious price on another, and that even were that not true, the few cents you imagine you are saving cannot compensate for the loss of dignity that you incur in your mad scramble after a bargain?" With which mild remonstrance Mr. Frederick Borden retired behind the morning paper.

"Yes, Frederick," replied his wife, "I seem to have heard that argument before, and while I defer to your judgment on most questions, on this subject, of which I have an experimental knowledge and concerning which you have only a theory, I consider myself more competent to judge than you."

"A bargain does mamma's soul almost as much good as a sermon, I verily believe," said her son Robert. "It gives her such a satisfactory consciousness of frugality and economy that she feels generous to all the world for days afterward; that is, after she gets over the little unpleasantness incident to the fray, like torn garments and tattered temper. I've learned by experience that the way to get around you, pa, is to tackle you after a good meal, but the time to get in strategic work with mamma is after she's purchased a 50-cent article at the reduced price of 39 cents."

"Even though on the strength of that 39-cent bargain she does go and indulge in at least 49 cents' worth of extravagance," said Mildred.

In a woman of average motives and ideals a passion for bargain hunting might have passed unnoticed, but in Mrs. Borden, a woman of generous nature, large sympathies and benevolent habits, it seemed so incongruous as to be an occasion for frequent remonstrance and kindly ridicule on the part of her family.

Mrs. Borden was not only an active member of the First church, the ruling spirit of the Ladies' Aid Society and an intelligent and ardent worker in the Home and Foreign Missionary Society, but she personally carried on various enterprises on the "let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth" plan, religiously devoting one afternoon in each busy week to visiting in a certain forlorn neighborhood and expending herself freely in as religiously, although perhaps with

the interest of friendless families. Just less effort, Mrs. Borden devoted the morning of that same day to bargain counters in the department stores. It certainly never had occurred to Mrs. Borden that the motive which lay back of this habit was anything but praiseworthy. It was formed long years before, when her husband's salary was small and she felt obliged to exercise every faculty in its wise expenditure. Although the occasion for such effort had long ago become a matter of family history, the habit continued to grow.

On this particular Friday afternoon at least one-third of the feminine population appeared in desperate need of chatelaine bags, so great was the crowd in K. & S.'s department store. To an uninformed observer the occasion seemed somewhat inadequate for the expression of eagerness and intentness of purpose which adorned their faces. Side by side were women in silks and sealskins and women with faded shawls and tired faces; women who carelessly pulled bills of large denomination from well-filled purses and women who carefully counted the pennies as they paid for their purchases, all pushing and plunging toward a counter where a group of tired saleswomen answered pointless questions and tried to keep the crowd good-natured. The chatelaine bags were undoubted bargains; "couldn't be duplicated," Mrs. Borden complacently quoted to herself as she carefully smoothed down her somewhat ruffled person after making her purchase.

Without being at all conscious of the fact, the benevolent side of Mrs. Borden's character was invariably credited with whatever saving she made in her bargains, and now mindful of a certain needy family left in her charge, she invested the money saved in California grapes for the sick girl of the household and proceeded upon her errand of mercy.

"Let me see," soliloquized Mrs. Borden, as she somewhat daintily picked her way through the alleys of the Nineteenth ward. "Mrs. Tolman said there were three in the family, a mother and two daughters, one an invalid and the other who supports the family by working in a downtown store; that they lived in the rear of the second floor. This must be it," consulting her directions: You go up a dirty alley to get to their door, but you can tell their rooms from the others by the geraniums in the windows and their spotless neatness. "Yes, this is certainly the place. That description distinguishes it from the neighbors better than a silver door-plate."

"I am Mrs. Borden, a friend of Mrs. Tolman of the First church," she explained to a sweet-faced elderly lady who answered her rap. "Mrs. Tolman is away this week, so asked me to call in her place."

Mrs. Borden found herself in a neat, homelike living room. Upon the couch in the corner lay a girl of 20,

while from an adjoining bedroom came a weary, hacking cough that the world over tells its hopeless story and leaves an ache in the hearts of those who hear it.

"Not two invalids to care for?" inquired Mrs. Borden.

"Oh, no, I'm not sick," said the occupant of the couch with a forced cheerfulness which the dark lines under her eyes plainly belied, "I'm only a little tired and am laying off a day or so."

"It's only a bargain day attack," said the mother without bitterness, but as if stating a well-known fact. "Jennie has them often. The girls mostly have them. Sometimes I'm afraid Jennie will lose her job, but she stands it about as well as the run of them."

"Bargain day attack! What do you mean?" inquired Mrs. Borden, conscious of a disease of similar name often laid to her charge.

"Yes," answered the old lady, "bargain day fever some call it, and some special sales, but it's all the same. I don't suppose ladies like you do know about it. You don't find it mentioned in any doctor's books. But you see, ma'am, it's just this way: On such days the customers they just rush and crush to get the choice, and of course that makes them cross and snappy-like and then the girls they get it. Then, too, with those crowds all around, the girls can't hardly get a breath of air and never a chance to rest a minute with those women clamoring to be waited on, until it's got so that bargain days and special sales are just nightmares to the girls and it's a rare day that somebody don't give clean out."

Mrs. Borden sat and listened with hands tightly clasped in her lap. All the plausible arguments which she had been accustomed to use when discussing the subject with her husband and children came to her mind, but they seemed to have lost their force, and she sat silent.

The old lady continued: "And it ain't as if anybody was getting anything much out of it. A body can stand it and get tired and worn out if somebody else is going to get some good of it, but the girls say, ma'am, they ain't bargains at all, lots of them, for you know a bargain is getting something for nothing, and just says to myself sometimes that the Lord never made the world so that folks should get things for less than they're worth, and if you do happen to, somebody else pays the part you think you've saved, and it ain't honest."

"Oh, mother, don't please," said the girl. Then turning apologetically to the visitor, "You must excuse mother; she gets so worked up on that subject."

"Yes, I just do," continued the mother, "and I wonder sometimes if those women who come Mondays and Fridays and get things a little cheaper than they do other days know that the few pennies they save come out of somebody else in 'headaches' and

"backaches" and "heartaches" and "nerves." But then I'm only an old woman and I suppose it's all right.

"But it isn't all right," said the visitor with such emphasis that the mother and daughter looked up in surprise. "It's all wrong, and there is one woman that has learned her lesson and she thanks you for it."

The conductor was obliged to ask Mrs. Borden three times for her fare before he could get her attention, so absorbing was the new point of view from which to consider the bargain question.

"Well, my dear, how many dollars have you saved us today?" inquired her husband as he opened the door.

"Frederick," answered his wife seriously, "I've had the most luminous afternoon in many a long year. I've learned the definition and the cost of a bargain and I learned it in a poor home in the Nineteenth ward."

"I think, my dear," said her husband smilingly, "that the combined intelligence of the Borden family with the aid of the Century dictionary might have enlightened you to that extent without the necessity for a trip to such an unpleasant quarter of the city."

"No, Frederick, it never could. It had to be illustrated—no, illuminated—for me by a brave little, worn-out salesgirl and her heartsick mother." Then she told of her afternoon's visit.

When she had finished her husband added gently: "Yes, dear, you were right; your illumination is better than my arguments."

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS FURNISHED BY THE Lake County Title and Trust Company

Abstracts Title Titles Guaranteed
MASONIC TEMPLE BUILDING
WAUKEGAN, ILLINOIS
LOUIS J. GURNEE
Secretary

A. C. Thompson and wife to J. M. Reilly, Blk. 26, and part Blk. 25, E. A. Mears Plat, Highwood. W. D. \$3421.50.

Estate of E. A. Atteridge, (minor) to A. B. Dick, N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 32, Shields Twp. and lot 28, Western Add, Lake Forest. Deed \$1525.00.

C. H. Ferry and wife, to Newton Crissey, lot 12, Blk. 33, Lot 19, Blk. 42, and Lot 9, Blk. 27, Lake Bluff. Q. C. \$ 2.00.

L. A. Jones, to P. A. Montgomery, Part Lot 7, Blk. 15, Highland Park. W. D. \$1.00.

E. E. Prussing and wife, to Emma M. Montgomery, East Part Lot 7, Blk. 15, Highland Park. Q. C. \$1.00.

L. A. Jones, to Emma M. Montgomery, Part Lot 7, Blk. 15, Highland Park. W. D. \$2.00

E. P. Cobb, to Elizabeth S. Cobb, S. 140 feet Lot 61, Lake Forest. Q. C. 10.00-

D. M. Erskine and wife, to L. A. Jones, Lot 12, Blk. 70, Highland Park. W. D. \$2,000.00.

J. V. Garrity and wife, to Fannie A. Shelton, Part Lots 1 and 2, Evans Sub, Highwood. Deed \$1.00.

Lake Forest Water Co., Increase of Capital Stock to \$159,000.00. Certificate.