WOMAN WHO WAITED

Was It Loyalty or Love That Made Sylvia Refuse Grahame's Proposal?

By Dorothy Stather

Sylvia lifted the flowers out of the long, expensive-looking box with gentle hands.

Orchids, proud, exotic-looking things, seeming in their very fragility to disdain the ordinary modes of life.

That was like Grahame, too, thought Sylvia. He, too, was aloof, striding head and shoulders above his fellow men.

There was no doubt about Grahame Hartley's success in life—even his enemies had to admit that. Everything he touched turned into gold—the Midas touch.

She placed the flowers in a vase of water and hesitated before opening the square, massive-looking envelope that had accompanied them.

It lay there on the table, as if in mute challenge to the other letter which had come by the same post, a letter written on cheap white stationery in a rather shaky handwriting.

She sighed as she slit open the big envelope. It contained, as she expected, an invitation to dine with Grahame that evening. He would ring up later.

That was all, but she knew that it meant a very great deal more. It meant that she couldn't put off her decision much longer.

If it hadn't been for Hugh, who had caught her dreams and held them in the hollow of his hand, she would not have hesitated to have become Grahame Hartley's wife.

Yet it was five years since Hugh had gone to America to make his fortune— for her. He had gone so gloriously full of life and hope.

And then, after the first year, came sudden silence.

Month after month passed, but neither she nor his mother ever heard from him again. And all their enquiries proved fruitless.

With Hugh had gone all her love, her youth, her faith in man — until Grahame Hartley came into her life.

If she refused him, what remained to her?—work, and the dread of the future that overtakes lonely women, the long empty years stretching ahead.

Sylvia looked at the orchids, sighed, and opened the little cheap envelope.

"It seems such a long time since I saw you, dear," wrote Hugh's mother. "Can't you spare me a week-end soon? I'm very lonely sometimes. It's five years since Hugh went, but he'll come back to us both, never fear, and find us waiting."

Her lips quivered. For deep down in her heart she knew it was that hope of Hugh's return which held her back from accepting another man's love.

It was a perfect evening of late summer. Grahame Hartley had driven her down in his new car to a river-side club.

Coming back in the moon-splashed darkness, she felt herself drifting, drawn by a tide too strong to resist.

In a quiet path by the river he pulled up and laid his hand over hers.

"Sylvia, won't you give me your answer to-night? I've been patient, my dear. I must know one way or another."

She twisted her fingers in her lap.

"Grahame, it's difficult. I like you tremendously, you know that, but I can't give you the love you deserve. That part of me, the real part, is dead—you know the story."

"Yes, I know, but, dear, you're thinking of what is past. Let us take the happiness the present offers.' He laid his hand over hers. "And I believe I can make you happy, Sylvia."

Her voice trembled as she answered, "I believe you could, Grahame, but, you see, it isn't as if we knew for certain what had happened to Hugh—we never have."

"I know,' he said in his understanding way. "But after four years—well, I don't grudge the other man your faith, my dear."

"You're so good to me, Grahame," she whispered. "I'm tempted, I admit it, and comradeship—after all, that stands for a lot in marriage, doesn't it?"

The unconscious pathos in her voice stirred the man greatly. He said quietly:

"I believe it does. But you are tired. I won't press you any more to-night. Think it over again; we'll meet to-morrow night. Now I'll drive you home."

Outside her flat he held her hand.

"I will call for you to-morrow, and you will give me your answer?"

"I promise," she said.

She woke next morning with the sunlight streaming into her room. For a while she lay drowsy, agreeably aware that it was Saturday and that she had to go to the office. All night she had been dreaming of Hugh, as he used to be, so full of life, of plans—and he'd seemed so near.

She sat up, pushing back her hair. What was it Grahame had said about yesterday's love belonging to the past. But did it?

Her love for Hugh still clung to her in spite of all. A sudden inspiration came to her. She [illegible] ld go down to the little Hampshire village, she would keep faith with Hugh perhaps for the last time.

As the train carried her into the country, she made up her mind to tell Hugh's mother. She would understand, surely, and be glad that she was to find happiness with another man.

But when she arrived at the little cottage, and found Janet Grant's warm welcome awaiting her, she could not bring herself to say anything to quench the light in those brave old eyes.

As the two women sat over tea in the dusk, talking of the man whose memory bound them together, it was to Sylvia as if she were going back into the past, living over again those days with Hugh.

"I shall come back and I know you'll be waiting, sweetheart,' he had said. And to-night she had promised to give Grahame her answer! She felt suddenly suffocating in the little room.

She got up with an impulsive movement.

"Mother,' she said, gently laying her hand on her knee, "I want to tell you something."

Swiftly, the words tumbling over each other, she told the other woman of the new love that had come into her life, and of the answer she had promised to give that night.

"I am going now to write to Grahame, to tell him he was wrong. Yesterday's love still lives.'

She kised Hugh's mother lightly on the cheek, and left her.

Upstairs, in her little room under the eaves, she took a writing pad and wrote quickly, firmly: "Forgive me, Grahame, but this is good-bye, I can't turn my back on the past."

Hugh's mother called to her from the parlor as she came down the stairs and something in her tense attitude arrested the girl's steps.

The elder woman stretched out a trembling hand.

"Sylvia, is that your letter? Give it to me, child, you must not send that answer."

Janet Grant took the letter from her, and tearing it across, threw it into the fire.

Then she faced her, two bright spots of color in her cheeks.

"Sylvia, there is something I must tell you, something which I have hidden even from you—until now, but I dare not keep the secret any longer. It's not true that I've never heard from Hugh again. I've known all these years where he is—worst of all, I've lied in letting you think he was the fine, true lad you dreamed of.' She paused and drew a sharp quivering breath. "He'll never come back—to you, Sylvia. My boy's in prison."

"Mother!" gasped Sylvia.

"Oh, it's true,' said the elder woman sadly. "I've kept it from you too long, but my Hugh was always easily led. Over there he soon got into a bad set, gambling, and drink. He confessed as much to me in the end—and then there was a girl. It was for her he did wrong, I believe, that first time, and then he has never run straight."

"Mother," Sylvia cried, trembling, "you've known this all along!"

"Yes, I've known."

Sylvia's heart ached for the other woman, but in her own was a strange new radiance.

She knew now that it was the bond of loyalty—not love, that had held her to her promise to Hugh. That girlish dream of yesterday was but a pale shadow against the deep tide of love that welled up in her heart for the other man.

And so at the cottage gate an old woman watched her go and her eyes were dim with tears.

"Forgive me, Hugh," she whispered, "I had to tell her—but your mother's still here, lad — waiting."—Pearson's Weekly.

Huge Mum

Miss Betty May of Englewood, N.J., is seen here with Chrysanthemums which won first prize in white class at a recent exhibition of horticultural society in New York City.

Interesting Facts Of Bird-Life

By Professor Julian Huxley
In The Strand Magazine

Man happens to be the most successful of a whole series of diverse and fascinating experiments to deal with the problems of the world; but we are not therefore the most beautiful or the most ingenious.

Birds branched off from reptiles somewhere about a hundred million years ago, and were remodelled for flight, so that their forelimb was irrevocably converted into a wing. They clung obstinately to one important character of their reptilian ancestry—the shelled egg, and thus debarred themselves from ever being born into the world at such an advanced state of development as is possible to man and other higher mammals.

In respect of their minds just as much as their bodies, birds have developed along other lines than mammals. Mammals have gradually perfected intelligence and the capacity for learning by experience, and the power and fixity of the instincts have diminished; birds have kept instinct as the mainstay of their behaviour, and while they possess some intelligence, it is used merely to polish up the outfit of inherited instincts. The front part of their brain, known to be the seat of intelligence and learning, remains relatively small, while other parts, known to be the regulating machinery for more automatic and emotional actions, are in birds relatively larger than in four-footed creatures.

Perhaps the most obvious way in which birds differ from men in their behaviour is that they can do all that they have to do, including some quite complicated things, without ever being taught. Flying, for instance, with all its complexity of balance and aeronautical adjustment, comes untaught. Young birds very frequently make their first flight when their parents are out of sight. The stories of old birds "teaching" their young to fly seem all to be erroneous. Some kinds of birds, once their young are full-fledged, do try to lure them away from the nest, but this is merely to encourage them to take the plunge. There is no instruction by the old bird, and no conscious imitation by the young.

Still more wonderful is it that a bird should be able to build its nest untaught. Young birds, mating for the first time, can make perfectly good nests, and nests of the usual type found among their particular species. Some people suggest that the young birds may have gained the necessary knowledge from contemplating the structure of the nest in which they were brought up, but this theory is negatived by the facts. The young brush-turkey of the Australian region scrambles out of its tunnel immediately upon hatching, and does not bestow so much as a look upon the mound of rubbish and decaying leaves that formed its nest, yet when the time for mating comes, it will build a mound just as its ancestors have done. Moreover, young birds reared by hand in artificial nests will later build the proper kind of nest for their species. A finch will have the impulse to weave coarse material into a rough cup, and then to line this with a finer material; the tailorbird takes leaves and sews them together; and the house-martin collects mud or clay and constructs a cup against the side of a cliff or a house.

Birds in a state of broodiness will have the impulse to sit on eggs, but if eggs are not available, then on something else. Crows have brooded on golf-balls, gulls on brilliantine tins, and penguins on lumps of ice.

Contrary to general opinion, birds have no real affection for their young. They have a strong, emotional, irrational concern, not entwined with reason, memory, personal affection, and foresight. When a nestling dies there is no sign of sorrow, although there may be some agitation if a whole brood is stolen. When a chick becomes ill, it is definitely neglected. It would seem that the bird is only impelled to parental action when there is some activity, like gaping or squawking, on the part of the children.

Perhaps the familiar cuckoo provides us with the completest proof of the dissimilarity of birds' minds with our own. A young cuckoo, having been deposited as an egg in the nest of some other quite different species of bird, and having hatched out in double-quick time, proceeds to evict all the rest of the contents of the nest, whether these be eggs or young birds. It has a slightly hollow, hyper-sensitive back, and the touch of any object there drives him frantic, so that, no matter what it is—eggs, young birds, nuts or marbles—he walks backward and upward to the edge of the nest and tilts it overboard. It is neither cruelty nor malice aforethought, it is merely instinct.

When the foster-mother comes home, she is not distressed in the least, but sets about at once feeding the changeling, and paying no attention to her own offspring, even though some of them may be dangling just outside the nest. Even when the young cuckoo grows into a creature entirely different from its foster-parents, and so bulky that they have to perch on its head to feed it, the older birds do not seem disconcerted as human beings certainly would.

The well-known "broken-wing" trick is usually set down as a remarkable example of intelligence, but all the evidence points to this, too, as being merely instinctive—a trick not invented by the individual bird but patented by the species. It is, in fact, on a par with the purely automatic "shamming dead" which many insects practice, and is the inevitable outcome of the animal's nervous machinery when it is stimulated in a particular way.

Besides instinctive actions, we could multiply instances of unintelligent behaviour among birds. If a strange egg is put among a bird's own eggs, the mother may either accept it or intelligently turn it out of the nest and continue to sit. But a quite common reaction is for it to turn the strange egg out and then desert the nest.

But because birds are mainly instinctive and not intelligent in their actions, it does not follow that their minds are lacking in intensity or variety: in fact, they experience a wide range of powerful emotions. There is an intense satisfaction in brooding and feeding its young; where there is danger, birds suffer very real fear; in song, the bird gives vent to a deep current of feeling; the emotions aroused during their courtship display often make them oblivious of danger; and they are as subject as men to the emotions of jealousy — rival cocks sometimes fight to the death.

Bird-mind has sufficient subtlety to indulge in play: birds have been seen dropping small objects in midair, and swoop down to catch them before they reach the ground, with the greatest evidence of enjoyment. Some birds, for example, the ravens, have a real sense of humor although of a rather low order. Two will combine to tease a dog or a cat, one occupying its attention from the front, and the other stealing behind to tweak its tail.

But being without the power of conceptual thought, birds still differ in a fundamental way from ourselves. Their emotion is not linked up with the future or with the past as in the human mind. Their fear is just fear: it is not the fear of death, nor can it anticipate pain, nor become an ingredient of a lasting "complex." They cannot worry or torment themselves. The bird mother is not concerned with the fate of an individual offspring; and when the young grow up and her inner physiology changes, there is no intellectual framework making a continuing personal or individual interest possible. Our powers of thought and our imagination bind up the present with the future and the past: the bird's life must be almost wholly a patchwork, a series of self-sufficing moments.

Another Bad Turn

"How's your friend Hadsum getting along now?" asked the kindly neighbour.

Tillings shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, he's progressing satisfactorily," he replied, "but he's still in convalescence, you know."

"I'd no idea," said the neighbour. "I thought he'd got over his operation two months ago."

"He did, but then he got his doctor's bill," came the reply.

Canadian Indian In Fiction

A number of Canadian writers have recognized the unique artistic and dramatic effects to be derived from Indian life. Fortunately, none of them has written a "Hiawatha." That is to say, the Canadian Indian has not been conventionalized and idealized into an epic hero mildly allegorized. The Canadian Indian has various qualifications for appearing in literature, without being elaborated into a copper-colored Aeneas or Prometheus, or a solar deity. For one thing, the Indian mythology, product of naive minds in close contact with primitive nature at her wildest and grandest, has literary value, sometimes quaint and sometimes impressive. Again, the Indian character, ranging from its merely physiological aspects — endurance, keenness of sensory perceptions, and so on—up to its more complex mingling of dignity, courage, and fierce savagery, is full of dramatic elements, displayed to the fullest effect against the background of eventful life on the prairie, mountain, and river. Finally there is the tragedy which inexitably followed his contact with the white invader.

The impulse to study the Indian in the flesh and not fancifully did not come first through literature but through painting. The adventurous artist Paul Kane showed the inexhaustible fund of picturesque scene and incident provided by the Indians of the plains. He and his successor, Edmund Morris, have left on canvas invaluable records of the red man as he was, while some of his fading glory survived.

While in poetry Canada has no "Hiawatha," in prose she has a "Last of the Mohicans." Indeed, Richardson's "Wacousta," produced contemporaneously with Cooper's books, seems to be inheriting at this late date the esteem that Cooper has gradually been losing. Since Richardson's time, however, the Indian's role in Canadian fiction has been a minor one Apparently the dramatic elements, which we have found effectively used in poetry, have not appealed to anyone as valuable for the more sustained effort of a novel.—Lionel Stevenson, in "Appraisals of Canadian Literature."

Scientist Declares Death Is Busiest at Night

The question of the time of day at which most deaths occur has engaged the attention of the French scientist, Lavastine, we are told in the Neues Wiener Journal (ienna). We read:

"On the strength of carefully collected statistical material Lavastine has come to the conclusion that the predominant majority of deaths occur at night.

"Most people die during the time of sleep, between seven o'clock in the evening and six in the morning. More rarely death occurs in the hours which man usually spends awake. Thus Lavastine observed last year that in the hospital under his direction about 120 patients died at night, where as according to the records only sixty-eight deaths occurred in the daytime.

It is interesting that the French scientist, although he expressly emphasizes his rejection of astrology, traces this back to cosmic influences, still unknown to us.

"Moreover, he has concerned himself with the problem of the hour of birth, and has collected extensive material from the memoranda of Parisian hospitals for women. Here, too, it may be proven from statistics that the number of births in night-time is much larger than by day."

Mexican "Home Dish" Declared to be Importation

Mexico City.—"Chile con carne," as it is known in the United States, is not a Mexican dish, writes a correspondent in The Christian Science Monitor. It really is not, for in Mexico the real product is "carne con chile." The first consists of an alleged Mexican bean soup, while the real article is a sort of meat stew with chile sauce. Here is the true story of "chile con carne." It is in reality a Texas product, manufactured and canned in the United States as a Mexican importation, and is generally recommended to northern visitors to the Mexican border as a Mexican dish. Its popularity is great and it has become generally accepted as a "native dish of Mexico," and a lure to Mexican border tourists So widespread has been its popularity, however, that this supposedly Mexican product has actually migrated into Mexico, where it has become accepted as a "Mexican" dish imported from the United States, but it appeals to the Mexicans themselves.

City Man—"How old is this cow?" Farmer—"Two years." City Man—"How do you know?" Farmer—"By looking at her horns." City Man—"What a fool I am. I might have seen that she has two horns."—Animal [illegible]