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The test of the Noronic, the largest of the Northern Navigation Company's fleet, which was in drydock at Lorain having her hull widened, was concluded on Saturday night and was entirely satisfactory.

PEG O' MY HEART
By J. Hartley Manners

A Comedy of Youth Founded by Mr. Manners on His Great Play of the Same Title—Illustrations From Photographs of the Play

Copyright, 1913, by Dodd, Mead & Company

"I am glad to see you"—he bent over her—"more than glad."
"Really?"
He sat beside her. "Ethel," he whispered intensely, "I am at the crossroads."
"Oh!" commenced Ethel, without any interest.
"It came last night."
"Did it?"
"This is the end—between Sibyl and myself."
"Is it?"
"Yes—the end. It's been horrible from the first—horrible. There's not a word of mine—not an action—she doesn't misunderstand."
"How boring!" said Ethel blandly.
"She would see harm even in this?"
"Why?"
"She'd think I was here to—to"— He stopped.

"What?" innocently inquired Ethel.
"Make love to you." And he looked earnestly into her eyes.
She met his look quite frankly and astonished him with the question, "Well, aren't you?"
He rose anxiously. "Ethel!"
"Don't you always?" persisted Ethel.
"Has it seemed like that to you?"
"Yes," she answered candidly; "by insinuation, never straightforwardly."
"Has it offended you?"
"Then you admit it?"
"Oh," he cried passionately, "I wish I had the right to—to"— Again he wavered.
"Yes?" And Ethel looked straight at him.

"—make love to you straightforwardly." He felt the supreme moment had almost arrived. Now, he thought, he would be rewarded for the long waiting the endless siege to this marvelous woman who concealed her real nature beneath that marble casing of an assumed indifference.
He waited eagerly for her answer. When it came it shocked and revolted him.
CHAPTER XII.
Ethel and Brent.

ETHEL dropped her gaze from his face and said, with the suspicion of a smile playing around her lips:
"If you had the right to make love to me straightforwardly—you wouldn't do it."
He looked at her in amazement.
"What do you mean?" he gasped.
"It's only because you haven't the right that you do it—by suggestion," Ethel pursued.
"How can you say that?" And he put all the heart he was capable of into the question.
"You don't deny it," she said quietly. He breathed hard and then said bitterly:
"What a contemptible opinion you must have of me!"
"Then we're quits, aren't we?"
"How?" he asked.
"Haven't you one of me?"
"Of you? Why, Ethel!"
"Surely every married man must have a contemptible opinion of the woman he covertly makes love to. If he hadn't he couldn't do it, could he?"
Once again she leveled her cold, impassive eyes on Brent's flushed face.
"I don't follow you," was all Brent said.
"Haven't you had time to think of an answer?"
"I don't know what you're driving at," he added.
Ethel smiled her most enigmatical smile.

"No? I think you do." She waited a moment. Brent said nothing. This was a new mood of Ethel's. It baffled him.
Presently she relieved the silence by asking him:
"What happened last night?"
He hesitated. Then he answered:
"I'd rather not say. I'd sound like a cad blaming a woman."
"Never mind how it sounds. Tell it. It must have been amusing."
"Amusing!" He bent over her again. "Oh, the more I look at you and listen to you the more I realize I should never have married."
"Why did you?" came the cool question.
Brent answered with all the power at his command. Here was the moment to lay his heart bare that Ethel might see.
"Have you ever seen a young hare, fresh from its kind, run headlong into a snare? Have you ever seen a young man free of the trammels of college dash into a net? I did! I wasn't trap wise."

He paced the room restlessly, all the self pity rising in him. He went on:
"Heavens, what nurslings we are when we first feel our feet! We're like children just loose from the leading strings. Anything that glitters catches us. Every trap that is set for our unwary feet we drop into. I did—dropped in, caught hand and foot, mind and soul."
"Soul?" queried Ethel, with a note

or quiver.
"Yes," he answered.
"Don't you mean body?" she suggested.
"Body, mind and soul!" he said, with an air of finality.
"Well, body anyway," summed up Ethel.
"And for what?" he went on. "For what? Love! Companionship! That is what we build on in marriage. And what did I realize? Hate and wrangling; wrangling, just as the common herd, with no advantages, wrangle and make it a part of their lives, the zest to their union. It's been my curse."
"Why wrangling?" drawled Ethel.
"She didn't understand."
"You?" asked Ethel, in surprise.
"My thoughts, my actions!"
"How curious!"
"You mean you would?"
"Probably."
"I'm sure of it." He tried to take her hand. She drew it away and settled herself comfortably to listen again: "Tell me more about your wife."
"The slightest attention shown to any other woman meant a ridiculous, a humiliating scene."
"Humiliating?"
"Aren't doubt and suspicion humiliating?"
"They would be a compliment in some cases."
"How?"
"They would put a fictitious value on some men."
"You couldn't humiliate in that way," he ventured slowly.
"No. I don't think I could. If a man showed a preference for any other woman she would be quite welcome to him."
"No man could!" said Brent insistently.
She looked at him coldly a moment.
"Let me see—where were you? Just married, weren't you? Go on."
"Then came the baby." He said that with a significant meaning and paused to see the effect on Ethel. If it had any Ethel effectually concealed it. Her only comment was:
"Ah!"

Brent went on:
"One would think that would change things. But no. Neither of us wanted her. Neither of us loves her. Children should come of love, not hate. And she is a child of hate." He paused, looking intently at Ethel. She looked understandingly at him, then dropped her eyes.
Brent went on as if following up an advantage: "She sits in her little chair, her small, wrinkled, old, disillusioned face turned to us, with the eyes watching us accusingly. She submits to caresses as though they were distasteful, as if she knew they were lies. At times she pushes the nerving face away with her little baby fingers." He stopped, watching her eagerly. Her eyes went down.
"I shouldn't tell you this. It's terrible. I see it in your face. What are you thinking?"
"I'm sorry," replied Ethel simply.
"For me?"
"For your wife."
"My wife?" he repeated, aghast.
"Yes," said Ethel. "Aren't you? No? Are you just sorry for yourself?"
Brent turned impatiently away. So this laying open the wound in his life was nothing to Ethel. Instead of pity for him, all it engendered in her was sorrow for his wife.
How little women understood him! There was a pathetic catch in his voice as he turned to Ethel and said reproachfully:
"You think me purely selfish?"
"Naturally," she answered quickly.
"I am. Why not be truthful about ourselves sometimes? Eh?"
"We quarreled last night—about you!" he said desperately.
"Really?"
"Gossip has linked us together. My wife has heard it and put the worst construction on it."
"Well?"
"We said things to each other last night that can never be forgiven or forgotten. I left the house and walked the streets—hours! I looked my whole life back and through as though it were some stranger's." He turned abruptly away to the windows and stayed a moment, looking down the drive.

Ethel said nothing.
He came back to her in a few moments.
"I tell you we ought to be taught—we ought to be taught, when we are young, what marriage really means, just as we are taught not to steal, nor lie, nor sin. In marriage we do all three—when we're ill-mated. We steal affection from some one else, we lie in our lives, and we sin in our relationship."
Ethel asked him very quietly:
"Do you mean that you are a sinner, a thief and a liar?"
Brent looked at her in horror.
"Oh, take some of the blame!" said Ethel. "Don't put it all on the w-



He Impulsively Stretched Out His Arms, Embracing Her.

man."
"You've never spoken to me like this before."
"I've often wanted to," replied Ethel; then she asked him, "What do you intend doing?"
"Separate," he answered eagerly. "You don't doctor a poisoned limb when your life depends on it; you cut it off. When two lives generate a deadly poison, face the problem as a surgeon would—amputate."
"And after the operation—what then?" asked Ethel.
"That is why I am here facing you. Do you understand what I mean?"
"Oh, dear, yes—perfectly! I have been waiting for you to get to the point."
"Ethel!" and he impulsively stretched out his arms, embracing her. She drew back slightly, just out of his reach.
"Wait." She looked up at him quizzically. "Suppose we generate poison? What would you do—amputate me?"
"You are different from all other women."
"Didn't you tell your wife that when you asked her to marry you?" He turned away impatiently. "Don't say those things, Ethel; they hurt."
"I'm afraid, Christian, I'm too frank. Am I not?"
"You stand alone, Ethel. You seem to look into the hearts of people and know why and how they beat."
"I do—sometimes. It's an awkward faculty."
He looked at her glowingly. "How marvelously different two women can be! You—my wife!"
Ethel shook her head and smiled her calm, dead smile: "We're not really very different, Christian. Only some natures like change. Yours does. And the new have all the virtues. Why, I might not last as long as your wife did."
"Don't say that. We have a common bond—understanding."
"Think so?"
"I understand you."
"I wonder."
"You do me."
"Yes—that is just the difficulty."
"I tell you I am at the crossroads. The finger board points the way to me distinctly."
"Does it?"
"It does." He leaned across to her.
"Would you risk it?"
"What?" she asked.
"I'll hide nothing. I'll put it all before you—the snubs of your friends; the whisper of a scandal that would grow into a roar; afraid to open a newspaper, fearing what might be printed in it; life at first in some little continental village, dreading the passers through, keeping out of sight lest they should recognize one. No. It wouldn't be fair to you."
Ethel thought a moment, then answered slowly:
"No, Chris, I don't think it would."
"You see I am a cad—just a selfish cad!"
"Aren't you?" and she smiled up at him.
"I'll never speak of this again. I would have spoken now—only—I'm distracted—completely distracted. Will you forgive me for speaking as I did?"
"Certainly," said Ethel. "I'm not offended. On the contrary. Anyway, I'll think it over and let you know."
"You will, really?" he asked greedily, grasping at the straw of a hope. "You will really think it over?"
"I will, really."
"And when she sets me free," he went on, "we could, we could"— He suddenly stopped.
She looked coolly at him as he hesitated and said, "It is a difficult little word at times, isn't it?"
"Would you marry me?" he asked, with a supreme effort.
"I never cross my bridges until I come to them," said Ethel languidly. "And we're such a long way from that one, aren't we?"
"Then I am to wait?"
"Yes, do," she replied.

CHAPTER XIII.
An Unexpected Arrival.
"IS all your money gone?" Brent asked Ethel.
"I think so."
"Good heavens!"
"Dear mamma knows as little about business as she does about me. Until this morning she has always had a rooted belief in her bank and her

Continued on page 7

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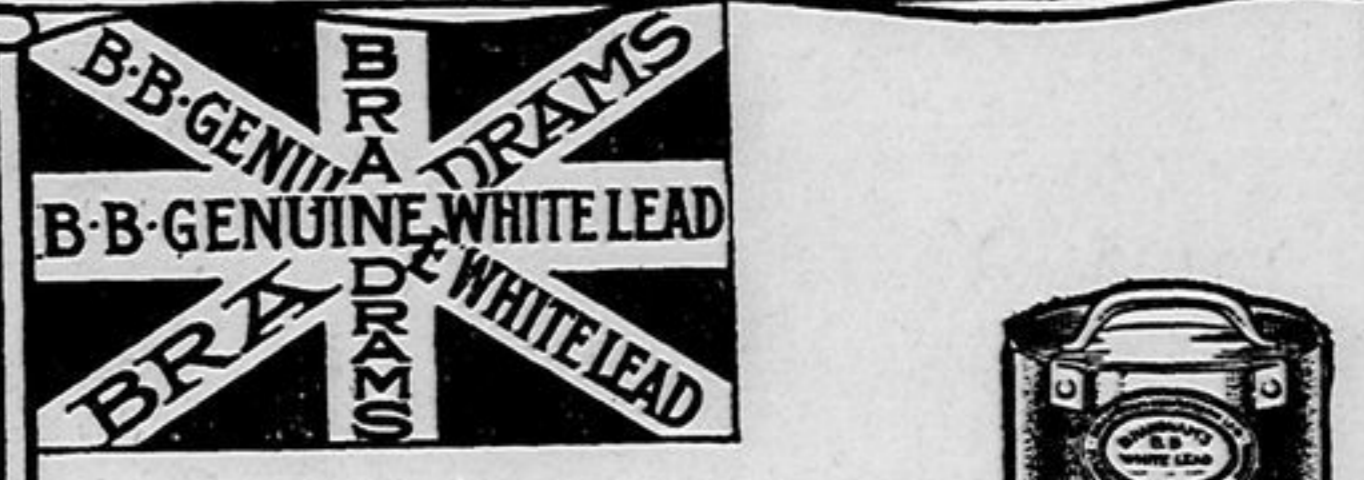
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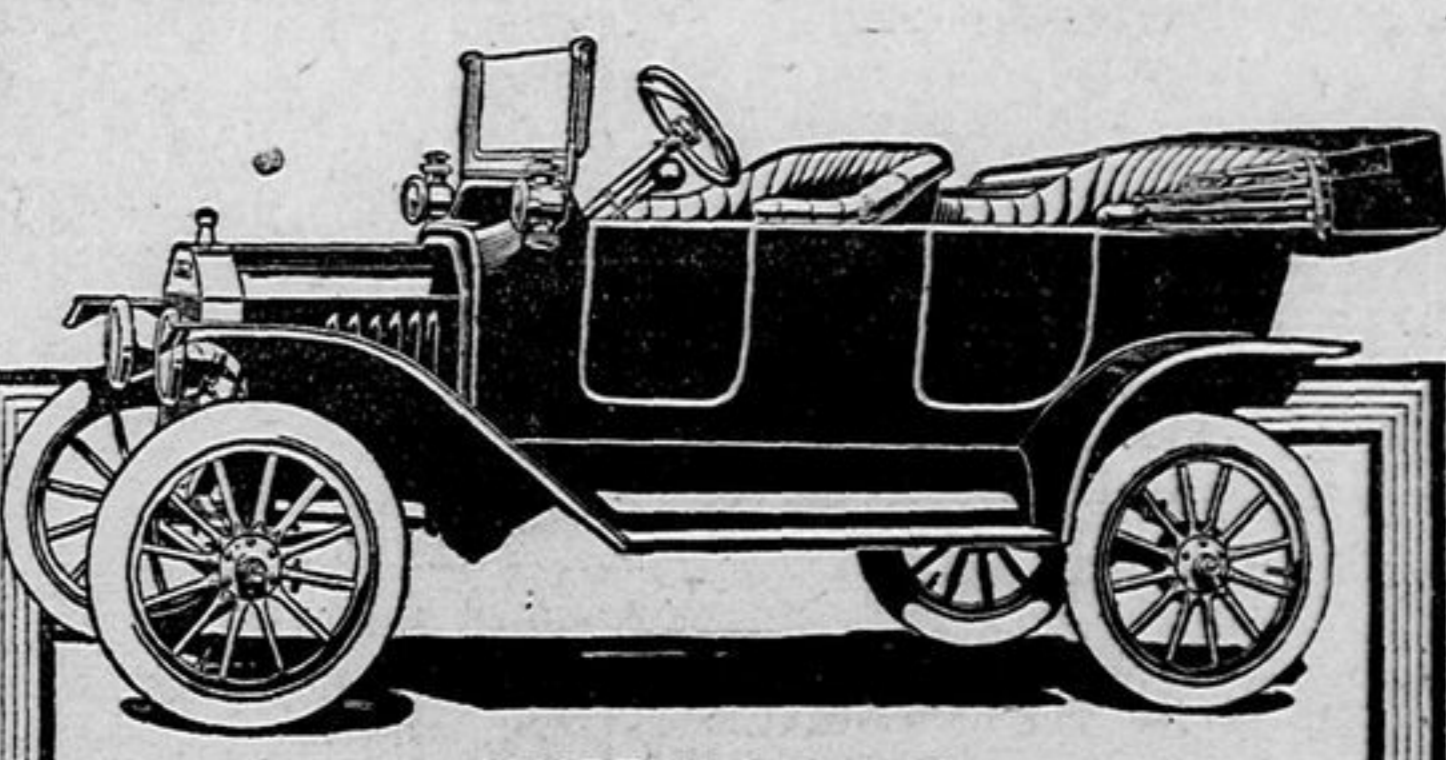
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