

OUT OF THE GOLDEN PACK

BY IDA M. EVANS

PART I

From that first night Stephen Bentlewin knew that Lettice Towne had wiped other women except one from his mind. But even then he feared that in the end he would decide against marrying her. Had he been say, twenty-five years old, he would doubtless have married her in passion and in a rush. At twenty-five one still believes in a Santa Claus with a golden pack of futures for men and women.

Lettice looked like a lovely gift for some man. Sitting a little back from the fireplace at the end of the Wellman's expensive Lake Shore hall, in a misty pale green chiffon, her gown whose extreme low cut was most kind to her white neck and shoulders, she exhibited that careful petal perfection which is possessed in common by no modern masseuse and steam heat day.

But Stephen Bentlewin was neither sixteen nor twenty-six. He was thirty-seven. He had men friends who were husbands—surgeons, and internes, and some not belonging to his own profession. And even Bickings, tight-lipped and reticent, had once grunted in an after-dinner semi-professional conclave: "The sex isn't quinine. You can't say thus, or thus or so and thus will a man's spirit react to a long or a short dose of some woman."

Korffer, whose eyes were a glittering black and whose hair was a washed-out gray, was ironically acquiescent. "Simulate him or stagnate him."

Bickings finished oracularly. "Man, there's no way of telling beforehand." Stephen Bentlewin learned a little about Lettice the next day from the Bickings, who had known the Townes since the four children had the mumps. "Good family. Nice girl—Lettice. Let's see, she must be about twenty-six."

He changed the subject. But even then he had begun relentlessly to compare Lettice Towne with another woman—the little, bent, scrawny, purposeful one who had borne him. It was unfair to Lettice Towne, perhaps. Admitting this, he could not restrain the comparison.

When he was nine years old, freckled, barelegged, and bramble scratched most of the year, not overfed or over-clothed any month of the year, he had taken his mother to be an ordinary parent.

Since then, as he had attained skill, he had dissected Cora Bentlewin, tenderly, enough, analyzed her, given her a "humanity complex," a lonely soul and a timid but purposeful nature. She must have had all three, so he guessed, or she would not have continued to live on, after his father's death, in that sparsely settled, poverty inhabited northern sandhill district, and minister to its needs without any expectation of proper recompense.

She and Stephen's father had been students at the same medical school. Stephen never understood just why the two settled in those northern sandhills, in a three-room shack with its few wretched acres. Perhaps for his father's health, or because two poor graduates could not afford to go farther or make a better break for a practice.

An old rattling buggy and a gaunt horse and a little, bent woman going forth wind and rain, all seasons of the year, to answer calls. He could not recall that she ever refused to go herself, no matter what the hour of night, what the miles to some "foreigner's" kitchen bedroom and shackful of numerous progeny. Those she attended in their sicknesses.

Came ever a five-dollar bill, or even a two-dollar, his mother's way, and promptly it posted to city wholesale house for quinine, calomel, aconite, podophyllin and chloroform. He remembered once asking her what she'd like to have for Christmas. "Two thousand grains of quinine, son," she said gloomily. "That swamp four miles west of Nord's hill."

She died one spring—of a common cold which went into bronchitis be-

cause a wet, rainy body did not put itself into dry clothing until a gaunt, wet, thoracic had been unharmed, fed and bedded in a shed barn. Stephen was thirteen. For two years or so he worked for his board with a fairly decent family nearby. Later he sold his few wretched acres and house for a few hundred dollars and got to Chicago, and, by pure triumph of mind over matter, through "Rush Medical."

He was not vain. Sometimes he suspected that his surgical and drug skill was half vicarious, not so much original as parentally inspired. He looked at his long, lean, careful but not genius-tipped fingers and surmised that the two who bore him had given him, for all their willingness, but half a heritage. But he had a keen mind and a conscientious mind, and in time by the time he was destined to meet Lettice Towne—he was earning around twenty thousand dollars, he was on the consulting staff of several hospitals, held for waiting patients, a desk and a long bench, of the best dark renaissance walnut.

Although no one knew this—and he was careful to tell no one, deeming the matter his own private affair—his small, bent, wind-browned, rain-soaked mother often stood beside him at that renaissance walnut desk, paused to look over the bench-ranged patients, often sat with him in his inner office where men and women stripped their bodies and their souls for his diagnosis, and once or twice she had pooped in his ear while with a confere he had discussed the inconvenience of night calls.

She vaguely seemed to afford a quizzical contrast to Lettice Towne those first few months. His meetings with Lettice were casual ones; edged necessarily with infrequency into the professional days of a busy and pre-occupied man. Once or twice they met on the street; otherwise at dinners or evening gatherings, mostly under the Wellman roof. He gave Dan and Maud Wellman due credit for putting him and Lettice in each other's way. Adroitly, so they thought.

Friendships are made as well as born. His friendship with fat, rich Dan Wellman had begun twelve years before, over a business and professional men's gathering. Maud, stout, over-dressed, and over-courted for her age, had tried to marry Stephen off. He had never been tempted by her bait—until Lettice appeared.

Tempted—he corrected himself. He was not tempted now. Dangerously, that is. He had the pros against the cons. Besides love and money, the greatest modern argument for marriage is loneliness. He had his moments of that of course. But an absorbed and successful professional man is likely to realize personal loneliness less than many people must realize it.

Furthermore, he had seen almost as much loneliness inside the marriage pen as outside it. His work gave him almost merciless vantage for seeing. The interiors he saw—the acrid homes he entered. And even in his own professional circle.

There was Korffer of glittering black eyes and washed-out gray hair, whose consultation fees alone brought him in around fifteen thousand dollars a year, but whose medical desk was heaped so high each first of month with modest bills, millinery bills, masseuse bills, caterers' bills, household bills, that every end of month saw his bank account overdrawn and Korffer's nerves had an edge he permitted to few of his patients.

There was Bickings, general practitioner, with his full, immobile face and sarcasm. Mrs. Bickings weighed two hundred and forty-two pounds and was a leading and contributing member of half a dozen charity boards. Stephen had heard that thirty years before she and Bickings eloped because her parents considered her too young to marry. Now Bickings apologized mechanically when he had kept dinner waiting, even to perform a major operation, eyed small, dirty boys wistfully and wished he could adopt one.

There was Caldwell, who, when an interne, had given up a scholarship prize, two years in a foreign university, because Mrs. Caldwell would not go so far from her family for so long. Caldwell was bald now and fat and not a very good allopathist. Some in-nate fault in the man himself, of course. Still—

There was old Dewey—who hid his non-paying patients' names in a secret drawer of his desk. There was young Stillwell, who reddened when slander suits were mentioned. There was Graisy, too, with his huge practice and hunger fear, that eventually Mrs. Graisy would win her way and he would consent to move to New York—and, at fifty-four, build again. Extreme cases; Stephen admitted. Well—not so extreme, but garnered a little prejudicially by himself. He had no great fear that he himself would come to apologize for dinner tardiness. But he said to himself that he would place Lettice Towne.

Jim Towne, her father, was a commonly met type—and not the worst earth knows. He bragged about his business and his daughters. "Other people can stew over their offspring. I don't have to. They take after their mother in looks—and I didn't marry Mrs. Jim Towne for the way she could cook. Say, by the way, did you hear Metal Motors Accessories dropped to six and three-fourths yesterday? Know, I don't often get caught on the wrong side of the market—for all my little flutters are only infrequent. But this time—yes, it's down to that."

He said to himself that he was not in love with her and he had no intention of allowing himself to believe

that he was in love. But it was with a curious involuntary elasticity that a few days later he accepted an invitation to dine at the Wellman table and afterward take in a play downtown. (To be continued.)

The Fly in the Ointment
Bridget, the maid, approached her mistress.

"Oh, would I like a week's holiday, Miss Eileen," she said. "Oh, I want to be married."

Her mistress gave her a week's holiday, a white dress, a veil, and a cake.

At the end of the week Bridget returned.

"Oh, Miss Eileen," she exclaimed, "Oh was the most lovely bride. Mr. Dewey was perfect, me vell lovely, and the cake splendid."

"Well, Bridget, this sounds delightful," said her mistress. "I hope you have got a good husband."

"Bridget's tone changed to one of indignation."

"Now, Miss Eileen, an what d'ye think? The spalpeen never turned up."

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Woman's Interests

An Apron From Left-Overs

Turning a stray yard of chintz and a jagged length of organdie into a fichu apron is a good antidote for a blue Monday or a drizzly spring Wednesday. It gives that pronounced satisfaction—the same feeling you have when you roll out the bit of left-over pie crust, pare a couple of speckled apples, slice them, crumple up the crust, and pop two delicious turnovers into the oven, registering the thought that you have made something tasty out of what might have been thrown away.

The fichu apron recipe, too, that can be varied to suit the ingredients at hand. Crisp blue chambray with a fichu of blue-dotted white swiss is a possibility that comes to my mind. Checked gingham might be used with a starched voile, batiste, or lawn fichu. Or cut cross-barred dish-towel for a fichu, using the band that comes off at the side for trimming on a white lawn apron.

And if your sewing bag disgorges an odd length of voile that's yellow beyond using, put on the tint pot and have a new blouse. It will take a lovely light gray, which happens to be decidedly smarter than white as an accompaniment to a blue suit.

In fact, running over the new styles makes me think of many more "luck-aways." A square of lace, for instance. It will make one of the tippy berthas that all the girls are wearing. There are several ways of accomplishing the feat. It can be edged with narrow lace, or the corners rounded and left raw. Or scallop it and finish it with an edging. For the neck opening, just cut a circle in the centre. Of course, you must tint the lace exactly to match the shade of the dress.

Perhaps you have a seedy Paisley shawl—one that's too far gone to make a jacquette. However, there may be enough that will hang together to patch out a delightful banding for a white wool sport skirt, piecing your band at the centre front and the sides.

When you are rummaging around you may bring to light a dress length of blue chambray which you have been holding for a house dress, way back to the time when house dresses were not gay calicos, chintz, and tempting peppermint green-checked gingham. My advice is to forget the house-dress idea right off. You have the start of a smart summer street dress if you invest your spare time for a couple of days in stitching a pattern on it. You can use a band design transfer pattern, stamping the band crosswise of the goods and parallel to give an all-over effect. In stitching on your machine, place the paper under the goods, so it won't pucker, and use coarse sewing cotton. Then there are slipper frills to use up your scraps of silk. Some are just straight strips of material, six inches wide, folded through the centre, lengthwise, and gathered to form a hoop. The centre is finished with a buckle. This forms a "trim," as the shops call it, that can be tacked to the front of a plain pump.

We Like Gasoline Lamps

Since we have installed two gasoline vapor mantle lamps in our home it is so very much more cheerful, bright, and agreeable that now we look forward to the arrival of evening with its time for reading and fun.

We had used the common coal-oil lamps, as so many farmers do, until we purchased our first gasoline vapor mantle lamp. A year's use proved this system for lighting our home so satisfactory that we purchased a second one.

This was the latest type lamp generated and lighted directly with a couple of matches. It gives a powerful light of several hundred candlepower, costing us only a few cents an evening to use. While its light is bright, it is non-flickering, pure white, and restful to the eyes. We fill the lamps only once or twice a week. There are no wicks to trim, no chimneys to keep clean. They are perfect.

I wish every farm woman could see our home as we now light it for night recreation.—R. L.

easier to manage than the ordinary mixing bowl, especially if one's hands are small and one's wrists not particularly strong. I find it easy to tip the saucepan for beating and to pour or spoon the batter from it onto the griddle or waffle iron. I have them in all sizes, and use them for nearly everything in preference to other kinds of kettles and mixing bowls.—L. A. H.

It is impossible to do the weekly wash without getting one's apron and dress wet, and the damp spot so quickly becomes soiled, and then is not easily made clean again.

Why not make a bib-shaped apron of oilcloth, bind the edges with tape, fasten a piece of tape to each corner of the bib, to slip over the head, and attach a piece of tape to each side to tie in the back? Splash all you want to, your clothing will keep dry behind this protector.—Mrs. C. W. S.

Last year when we butchered I ran all the fat through my food chopper. It came out in long white strings, and instead of the usual amount of cracklings, I had, in comparison, just a handful. Of course, I have no lard press, and this gets me more lard than I usually get, and the waste is already ground ready for the hens.—Mrs. F. C.

When getting ready to dress a chicken if the water is boiling hard in the teakettle, it is too hot, and is apt to cook the flesh, so that the skin will come off and make the chicken hard to clean, and also spoil the looks of it. I always put half or two-thirds of a

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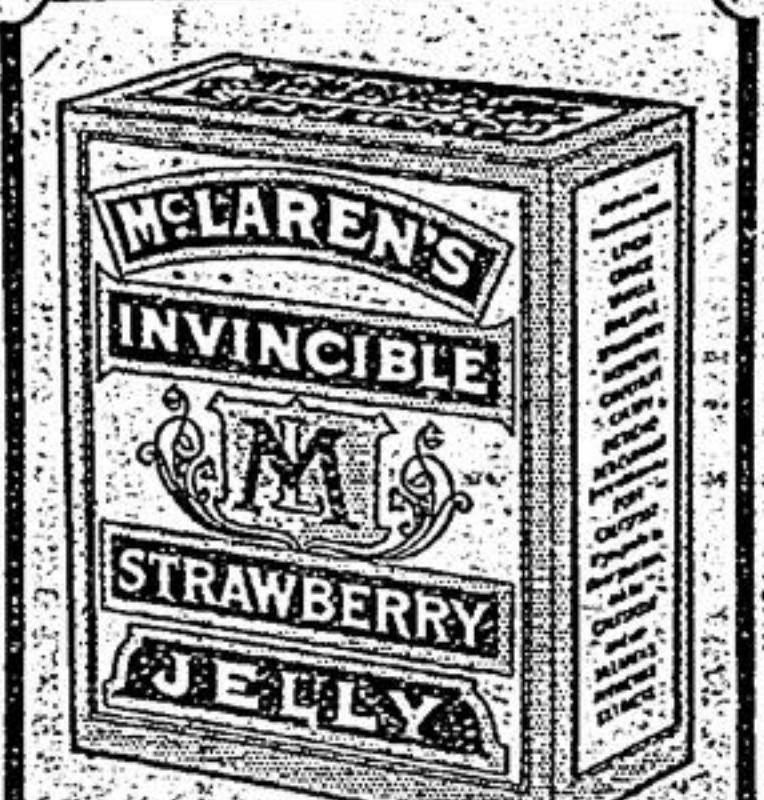
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The Flavor Lasts

cup of cold water into the boiling water, and then it will be scalded just right. When I am dressing the chicken I use warm water, as it cleans much easier than to put it in cold water. Some rub baking soda on the chicken, as it has a tendency to clean easier. After dressing the chicken I always put it into cold water at once, and add just a little salt, as it helps to draw out the blood and makes the flesh white and clear.—Mrs. A. R.

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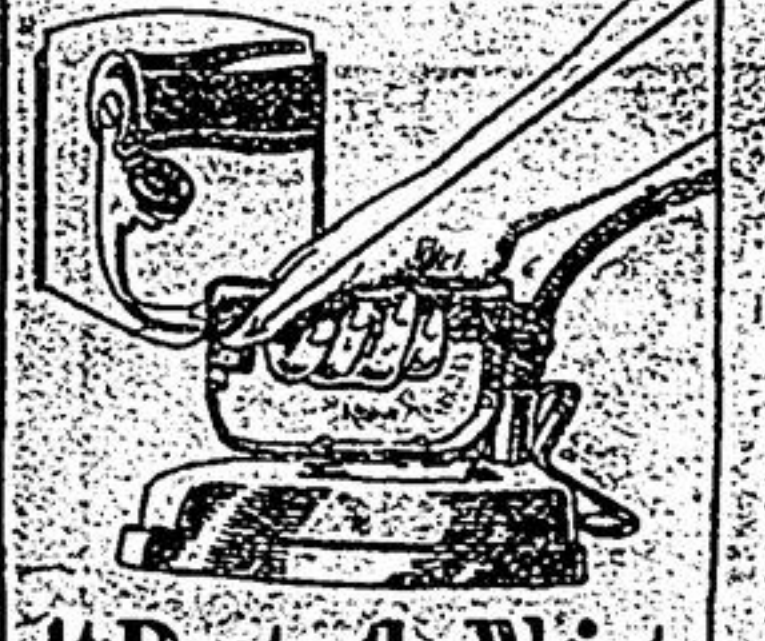
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