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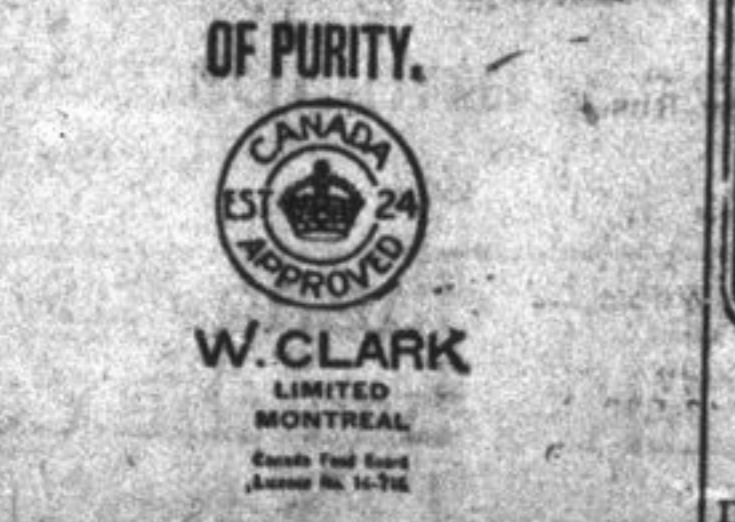
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The Luck Geraldine Laird

BY KATHLEEN NORRIS

Author of "The Story of Julia Page," "Heart of Rachel," "Josselyn's Wife," "Sisters," etc.

Throughout the merry confusion of introductions that followed, she continued her running fire of comment, and every one continued to laugh and to listen, half-shocked, half-admiring, and wholly amused.

Geraldine, at the tea-table, watched her in a sort of scornful amaze. She thought the girl beautiful, and her success was undeniable, but that all the men present and most of the women should be captivated by this unthinking stream of audacities and egotisms, was astonishing. Geraldine had always been considered quick of speech herself, but she knew that she would stand no chance of holding her own with this chatter-box, who asked and answered her own ques- tions, and whose tongue was ob- viously tied by no considerations of dignity or delicacy.

Just as Geraldine and another woman at the neglected tea-table had fallen into a deep, low-toned conver- sation about Louis, the Miss Bond came up to her, and insisted that she come to the fireplace and meet Miss Bond.

"Oh, but Louis—I'm really not dressed!" Geraldine protested. He drew out her words, drew her hand under his arm, and took her to the fireside group.

"Laird? You're the one who writes plays? Miss Bond said, standing to give Geraldine her hand, and look- ing keenly into her face.

"That's my husband!" Geraldine laughed. "Or rather, he wants to write them. He hasn't even be- gun. Well, then he must let me see them," the newcomer said, interest- edly. She drew Geraldine a little aside and, through their first laughing remarks to each other, Geraldine could hear Louis telling the others, with great relish, that seven months after he refused to give her a place in the chorus, a Broadway manager had come meekly to Miss Bond's lovely little Washington Square stu- dio for a play.

"And you live here, all the time, in Stockham?" asked Miss Bond, with a look down at her fan, a be- witching look upward, and a look down again. "And your husband can find material for plays—here?"

"Plays have been written in coun- try places before this!" Geraldine smiled.

"In country places, yes," the other woman answered quickly. "But in small towns—br-r-r!" She shrugged her shoulders in a little foreign fash- ion that was as affected as her voice, and as charming.

"Mr. Laird is not a native," Gera- ldine explained serenely, tho she was a little ruffled. "He has lived in other places—he has lived in New York. He is a Williams man, he wrote all their plays and jinks dur- ing his last two years there, and had a good deal of encouragement. Then after he left college he went to New York, and tried to get on a magazine or paper, but somehow he had no chance."

"Ah, I wish I had been there," then! the play-broker said politely. "Then his uncle offered him a pos- sition here," Geraldine continued, "and we met each other, and we've been here ever since!"

"But if he is to write plays, you must certainly bring him to New York," said Miss Bond, with another keen look.

"I hate New York!" Geraldine said frankly.

"Ah—you don't hate it when it is good to you, when it holds out its hands to you!" the other said, in a little rush, and with a far-away look in her eyes. "Now, there," she said, in a suddenly interested, and cau- tiously lowered tone, "who is that man who has just come in, with an eye-glass ribbon and the camellia—the short, square man over there by the door?"

(To be Continued.)

TALKING IT OVER

—With Lorna Moon—

What IS a "School Ma'am?"

Dear Lorna Moon:
 I am in love with a dear girl. We have been engaged for four years (I have been at the front.) I am not in a position to marry yet, but she is willing to wait.

I don't know just how to begin to tell you what is worrying me. It may seem very trivial and rather foolish to you but it is a real cause of anxiety to me.

My sweetheart is a school teacher—nothing very terrible in that, you say! But that is just what DOES trouble me. Before beginning to teach school my fiancée had the most charming manner; I returned after three years abroad to find her altogether changed in manner, although she is more beautiful than ever. She has become very dictatorial; her atti- tude is always that of a teacher to- wards her class. It is most annoy- ing, she proceeds even to explain a joke, the moment she has told it. Now, I am no fool myself, and I don't care to be compelled to sit upon the dunce's stool for the rest of my life.

My sisters tease me and declare that when we are married my wife will keep a punishment strap behind the door, and make me do a hun- dred lines when I spill cigar ashes on the carpet.

If I were in a position to marry, now I would do so, but I won't be for two, or even three years, and by that time I may have a regular thorough going "school ma'am" on my hands. I love the girl, but I have all that I can do now to keep from shaking her when she patron- izes me as if I were in short pants.

Distressed.

My Dear Correspondent:
 You seem to be convinced that be- ing a school teacher has made your fiancée dictatorial. Perhaps she became a school teacher because she WAS dictatorial. I won't commit myself by a word, for I ALMOST became a school teacher myself! However, this is an opportunity for school teachers to defend them- selves against your suggestion that if girl loses her charm when she be- gins to teach school.

One blow starts the trouble—and occasionally ends it.

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DRUG OF WHITE MICE.

One of the Results of Ending of Great War.

The sudden ending of the war caused a panic in the mouse market. One large dealer, finding himself "long" \$5,000 white mice, offered the whole lot for sale at half a cent apiece.

How cheap was this price may be judged from the fact that white mice a fortnight earlier were quoted at ten cents apiece in lots of 100 or more. White rats were then worth twenty-seven cents, but they dropped coincidentally to two cents.

The reason lay in the fact that the Government, which had been buying millions of white mice and white rats for medical experiments, and for use in diagnosing war diseases at base hospitals, withdrew from the market. Just now it is monkeys that are in demand for such employment, in connection with "flu" and the new "sleeping sickness." They are obtained mostly from India and the Philip- pines.

White mice and white rats are mainly farm products. Farmers boys breed them and sell them to city dealers, whose agents go about in automobiles, collect them and ship them in boxes from the most con- venient railroad station.

One constantly sees these dealers' advertisements in the newspapers, offer- ing to sell or to buy the little rodents in quantities. Under normal conditions there is a very active market. A good many are sold by fanciers as pets, "selected pairs" fetching as much as a dollar.

They are not bred in the cities for market. Dealers merely handle them as stock, like any other merchandise, keeping them in big boxes with wire- net fronts or tops.

White rats and white mice, of course, are typical albinos. They have been bred so long under domes- tication as to be quite tame.

This is one reason why hospitals and medical laboratories prefer them to the ordinary wild varieties; they are much easier to handle. An- other reason is that they are less likely to be afflicted with diseases of their own.

Rabbits and guinea pigs are bred for the same market on farms, and are bought and handled in the same way, medical laboratories and hos- pitals requiring great numbers of them. They are fed by the dealers on oats, hay and whatever fresh vegetables may be cheapest.

The author of "Figs in Pigs" did not much exaggerate the reproduc- tive powers of guinea pigs. Truly, they are not advocates of race sui- cide, and one pair might conceivably have seventy-five descendants in a year's time—an outside limit not likely to be attained. Rabbits are far more prolific, the mother bunny producing from eight to twelve young in each litter, whereas the lady guinea pig antedates her maternal ambi- tions with five or six.

Young Breeding Cattle for Belgium.
 Officials of the Belgian Government are in the West in an effort to buy 50,000 young breeding cattle as part of the plan of that nation to rehabili- tate its dairy industry, according to well defined rumors in live stock circles.

Traveling.
 It takes a powerful locomotive drawing a train of 10 passenger cars, a distance of five miles to reach a speed of 60 miles an hour on a straight and level track. The brakes will stop the train in 700 feet.

A decree is published by the Petro- grad press of June 26th ordering the mobilizing of 10,000 children under seven years of age that plays havoc with his income.

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