

and be my Love

By PEGGY DERN

WNU RELEASE

THE STORY THUS FAR: Meg learns from Susie, a high school girl, that Alicia has spread gossip all over town about her and Tom Fallon meeting on the ridge. She avoided Fallon for several days, but on Saturday she came into the chicken yard where she was working. She told him of the gossip. "Who started this talk?" he demanded. Meg told him it was Alicia Stevenson, the widow. "I'll have a talk with her," Tom declared. She begged him to do nothing about it, but he left with a grim face. When he came back to pick up the milk and eggs he told Meg that he thought Mrs. Stevenson was "going to mend her ways." Megan had her doubts, for she had known Alicia longer.

CHAPTER IV

Megan shook her head. "She has no children," she explained. "She is a widow. She came here to live in the spring, because, as she frankly stated, her income has shrunk so much that she can't afford to live anywhere else. And she amuses herself by ferreting out small things that people would rather not have known—and then—sort of broadcasts them where they will create the most excitement."

"She sounds like a thoroughly unpleasant person," said Tom grimly. "And a dangerous one. Where does she live?"

"Across the road," answered Megan, indicating the once drab little house that now wore an air of freshness that was almost charm.

Tom said sternly, suddenly, "I think I'll have a little talk with Mrs. Stevenson."

But Megan laid a swift hand on his arm, stopping him.

"Please don't," she said urgently. "After all, nothing can be gained by talking to her. We've all tried it—she only uses our protests and arguments to add more fuel to her talk. We've found that the best way is to avoid her, and give her as little material as we can."

Tom nodded grimly. "Just the same, I think I'll have a little talk with her," he said, and before Megan could stop him he had turned and strode away in the direction of the little silvery-gray house with its green trim.

It was almost half an hour before Tom came back and stopped at the back door to get the two bottles of milk and the eggs that she had waiting for him.

His face was grim and set. There was a little white line about his mouth, and his eyes were angry. But he managed a slight smile that tried hard to be comforting, and said quietly, "I don't think you need to worry any more. And there is no reason why you should not continue your walks to the Ridge any time you like. I think Mrs. Stevenson is going to mend her ways a bit."

He picked up the milk and the sack of eggs and went his way.

After a minute Annie said, as she slid a pan of biscuits deftly into the oven, "Dat Miz Stevenson sho' do make a heap of trouble, don't she?"

Megan looked at her sharply.

"What do you mean by that, Annie?" she demanded swiftly.

"She be'n tellin' folks dat Ruby Mae—dat's Pearl's gal—stole a ring off'n her," said Annie. "An' Ruby Mae, she say she ain't nebbber seed de ole ring. An' den dat ole Miz Stevenson, she tell people she found de ring on de back po'ch, when she say Ruby Mae done hid it; she say Ruby Mae skeered Miz Stevenson gonna call de Law an' she stick de ring up deh so folks think she ain't took it."

Annie straightened, put her strong brown hands on her hips and faced Megan almost belligerently.

"Miss Meggie, dat po' chile ain't stole nuthin'," she said sharply. "Ruby Mae a good gal! Y'all knows dat, Miss Meggie—but white folks always believes white folks 'ste'd o' colored folks—an' Ruby Mae can't git a job."

Annie's lower lip thrust out a little more and her chocolate brown eyes were almost black. "Sometimes when folks do like Miz Stevenson—things happen to 'em."

They were not more than half-way through supper when the front door opened and a cheerful voice called, "Yoo-hoo—it's only me! I'll come right in!"

It was Alicia, of course, cool and fresh looking in a brown and yellow print frock, her hair brushed into coquettish curls, a yellow bow tucked into it. She was rather heavily rouged as usual, and if she was feeling the unpleasantness of Tom's visit, she certainly did not show it.

Jim MacTavish, always with an eye for an attractive woman, greeted her with obvious pleasure, and drew out a chair for her. She demurred prettily at their invitation to have supper. And then she broached the subject of her visit; she had bought some new window shades for her house and was completely helpless when it came to putting them up, and wondered—so prettily—if Mr. MacTavish would give her a hand.

"I know it's terrible to ask you to help, Mr. MacTavish," she apologized, "but it's simply impossible to get anyone to do anything in this crazy little place—I mean to hire anyone. It makes one terribly dependent on one's friends. I'm afraid

It's a terrible imposition—but—" She fluttered her hands and the light glimmered on two very good diamond rings that she wore.

Jim expressed himself as delighted to be of service, as he rose from the table and went to get his tools.

A moment later she and Jim were going down the steps and along the walk.

Annie, coming in to clear the table, frowning blackly, said unexpectedly, "Whut's dat 'oman up to now, Miss Meggie?"

Megan tried to laugh. "What do you mean?"

"Comin' ove' heh, an' takin' Marse Jim away—you s'pose she makin' up to him? Rollin' heh eyes like dat—Annie's anger was mounting and Megan rose swiftly.

"That will do, Annie," she said firmly. "Mrs. Stevenson wanted Dad to help her hang some window shades—"

"An' she too burnin' stingy to pay somebody, so she get Marse Jim to do it fo' nuthin'," Annie finished



He was at the table having his final cup of coffee, when she came into the dining room.

angrily, departing with a tray loaded with dishes before Megan could answer her.

Megan went on into the shabby, comfortable living room and sat down with a mending basket. But though she sewed until after ten, which was disgracefully late according to Pleasant Grove's early-to-rise habits, her father had not come home when she finally went to bed. Indeed, she had been in bed for some time and was almost asleep before she heard his cautious entrance and the door of his room closing behind him.

In the morning, she had already had her breakfast and done her morning chores before her father came down. He was at the table, having his final cup of coffee, when she came into the dining room. He looked up at her a little defensively.

"That Mrs. Stevenson is a delightful little woman," he stated firmly. "I can't think what this filthy-minded little town means by low-rating her as they have. I've heard all sorts of gossip about her. I have never had a chance to get acquainted with her—but now that I have, I intend to defend her whenever I get a chance."

Megan looked at him, startled, and then she smiled.

"Look, Pops," she said firmly, "Alicia is getting exactly the treatment she seems to want. She has an absolutely scandalous tongue and she goes around making people miserable by ferreting out their pitiful little secrets and broadcasting them—"

"People have no right to be upset about the truth—her father began sternly.

Megan said quietly, "Yesterday at Mrs. Stuart's quilting she dropped the information that I have been seen meeting Professor Fallon secretly on the Ridge."

Jim stared at her for a moment, and then his handsome, rugged face began to darken with anger. "Is that true, Megan?" he demanded sternly.

"I met him on the Ridge once, purely by accident, and talked to him a few minutes," Megan answered quietly. "After all, he is a customer of ours—he is a fine, intelligent, interesting man. I could not very well turn around and walk away, refusing to speak to him, could I?"

"Certainly not—but you didn't have to keep going back to meet him again," snapped Jim furiously.

Megan held on to her temper with an effort.

"I've told you that I saw him there just once, purely by accident," she told him levelly.

"Well, then, what's all the fuss about?" snapped Jim.

"The fuss is because Alicia gave the impression at Mrs. Stuart's that I was meeting Tom there almost daily—and in secret," Megan returned.

"Then you should have explained—"

"I did," Megan cut in. "But the harm had already been done."

"Harm? What possible harm could come from such a thing?"

"None at all, except that Alicia dropped her little information in the exact way to make it sound ugliest—and of course the women around the quilting frame were most of them mothers with children in the school, and they promptly began to wonder—you could almost see them wondering—just how much truth there was in the suggestion, and whether Tom was the right man to hold the job he's got—"

"You keep calling him 'Tom,'" her father cut in suddenly, and there was a curious, almost a suspicious look in his eyes.

Megan set her teeth for a moment, and then answered quietly, "I have never called him anything but 'Mr. Fallon' or 'Professor Fallon' to his face."

She laughed and made a gesture of helplessness.

"You see how well Alicia does her work?" she said dryly. "You wonder why the women at the quilting party yesterday afternoon could think for a moment there was any truth in what she was hinting—and yet you yourself, my own father, are wondering uneasily if maybe I haven't been just a little—well, indiscreet!"

Jim rose from the table and flung his crumpled napkin down and snorted.

"That's idiotic! I'm not wondering anything of the kind! I'm just puzzled to understand why sane, normal people like these in Pleasant Grove should so cruelly misjudge a woman like Alicia Stevenson. I confess I was amazed last night, to discover how childishly friendly and simple she is. Why, I'm positive there isn't a malicious bone in her body! Maybe she chatters too much—but I'm convinced it's merely a guilty conscience that makes people think she's talking about them! You know the old saying—'If the shoe pinches'—and he strode out of the house."

For the past two years, Megan had had two dates a week with Laurence Martin, from the county seat. Laurence was a Pleasant Grove product who had, by grim determination and an almost superhuman amount of labor, managed an education and a law course. Two years ago, he had gone to the county seat and into the office of old Judge Graham, where he was getting much valuable experience and very little money. He and Megan had grown up together in Pleasant Grove, although Laurence was older than she by several years.

He had been quite honestly disappointed when he had been rejected for military service, partly because of his eyes, partly because of a stomach disorder resulting, as Megan knew very well, from an impoverished childhood, and malnutrition during the years he had been fighting his way through law school.

On this Tuesday night, Megan dressed for his arrival, with a feeling of relief that she was not facing any complication in Laurence's arrival. She liked him sincerely. She had, she admitted to herself, thought of marrying him. He wanted her to, when, as, and if he ever achieved a position that would make it possible for him to support a wife. That was an understanding between them that had no need to be put into words.

Tonight, standing before the mirror in her neat, cheerful bedroom, she studied her reflection in the mirror, with a soberness and an intensity that she seldom bothered to give the girl in the glass. She seldom had time to do more than glance at herself as she brushed her hair; but tonight, dressed and ready for Laurence, she looked at herself thoughtfully, trying to see herself with the eyes of someone else, or a stranger—perhaps of Tom Fallon.

She saw a girl a little over medium height, neat, trim, well-rounded figure born of the hard work and outdoor exercise of her daily life; she saw leathery brown hair that had no need of the curling iron and that she wore shoulder length because it was less trouble to have to go to the barber shop once in two months, than every week; her eyes were her best feature, her chief claim to beauty. They were gray-blue, long lashed, set well apart beneath airy brows. She was not beautiful, she told herself with an almost impersonal frankness. She looked healthy and wholesome, and that was all!

As she reached the foot of the stairs, her father turned, almost guiltily, from the front door, and said stiffly, "I knew Laurence would be along soon so I thought I'd step out for a little fresh air."

He was dressed, she saw, in his "best" suit, ordinarily reserved for trips to the county seat and rare trips to the city more than a hundred miles away.

A word of caution is needed, for some have sought to interpret this Scripture as providing biblical ground for doing all sorts of things on their day of rest. That day is for man's good, not for his destruction. His greatest good is served by rest, worship, spiritual development, Christian fellowship, and the doing of deeds of necessity and mercy.

The desecration of the Lord's day in our time is a serious matter. Let us not contribute to it.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

Lesson for August 4

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JESUS AND THE SABBATH

LESSON TEXT—Exodus 20:8; Mark 2:27-28; Matthew 12:9-13. MEMORY SELECTION—This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.—Psalm 118:24.

"The Sabbath was made for man," and was ordained of God for the good of man's body and soul. It was intended to be a day of glad fellowship with the Lord.

Since the Sabbath—the seventh day—was essentially one of rest and worship, the principles which surrounded it and directed its life may be applied to our day of rest, which is the first day of the week—the Lord's day.

That word "rest" sounds a little strange in this busy world of ours, and yet it is an important one. It means quiet for the struggling one, calm for the troubled, repose for the weary, cessation of labor for the worn-out one.

God in his infinite wisdom saw that without rest man would soon destroy himself, and he made provision for one day in seven when labor should cease and man should be free for that recreation of the soul and body which should fit him for the labor of the week.

I. A Day of Holiness (Exod. 20:8). God gave his people a holy day to balance up their days of labor and to bring blessing to their souls. On that day he decreed that they should come apart from their labors, turn from secular interest and turn their hearts and minds to the unseen and the eternal. Man would become so engrossed in the things of this world that he would soon forget; therefore, God commands him to stop and worship. That should be sufficient to cause his people to "remember" the day "to keep it holy."

Notice that the day of rest was to be not only for the family, but also for servants and for visitors. The employer who unnecessarily operates his factory or office on Sunday violates this commandment. Note also that the man who is to rest on the seventh day is supposed to work on the six days. Some neglect to do both.

This matter of keeping the Lord's day holy is one which has tremendous implications in the lives of our children. Many men and women who have had built into their own characters the stalwart virtues nurtured by family attendance at divine worship have not only forgotten their own continuing need, but are destroying the interest of their children in church attendance.

It is serious enough to go astray in one's own life, but to lead one's children astray is an appalling responsibility. Let's keep the Lord's day as a holy day.

II. A Day of Helpfulness (Mark 2:27-28).

The formalists of Christ's day, the Pharisees, had overlooked the heart of God's law and the holy living which it was intended to produce, and had bound up even the observance of the sabbath (which was intended to be a day of rest and gladness) in such a mass of technical "thou shalt not's" that it was a day of fear.

The accusations against the disciples because they had taken and eaten grain was not on the ground that they had stolen, for the law (Deut. 23:25) guaranteed that right to the one who passed through his neighbor's field. The Pharisees contended, however, that the disciples had worked on the Sabbath in picking and hulling the grain.

God's laws are helpful laws, and it is only when men pervert them, or add to them their own traditions and interpretations, that they become burdensome to anyone who is God-fearing and obedient.

III. A Day of Healing (Matt. 12:9-13).

Jesus made it clear that healing of the body (yes, and of the soul) was most appropriate on the Sabbath day; in fact, that is the very day for it.

The healing of the man with the withered arm revealed that back of the Pharisees' professed concern for the Sabbath was a real hatred for Christ. It is an appalling thing that in the house of worship on the very Sabbath day, these men, outwardly so religious, were plotting against our Lord.

Jesus cuts across human hypocrisy and hatred to declare that the true keeping of the Sabbath is to do the work of God. No work of necessity (like plucking the grain) or of mercy (like healing the withered arm) is ever out of place on the day of rest.

As we have sought to interpret this Scripture as providing biblical ground for doing all sorts of things on their day of rest. That day is for man's good, not for his destruction. His greatest good is served by rest, worship, spiritual development, Christian fellowship, and the doing of deeds of necessity and mercy.

The desecration of the Lord's day in our time is a serious matter. Let us not contribute to it.

WNU Washington Bureau, 1616 Eye St., N. W.

Crowded Capital Slowly Resuming Former Charm

WASHINGTON is the biggest county seat town in the country.

It is a beautiful city of broad, tree-lined streets and avenues, of stone and marble public buildings, exquisitely beautiful parks and statues, laid out with pleasant symmetry, roughly in the form of a wagon wheel with its avenues emanating from the Capitol and the Mall.

But Washington is a city of contrasts, and its beauty but lightly masks its slums, for in the shadow of the national capitol, of the ornate senate and house office buildings, there are slums and blighted areas equal in squalor if not in extent to that of any large city.

Fifteen years ago Washington's population was something like 350,000. It had the air and atmosphere of a southern city. It was easy-going and unhurried and its pulse quickened only when congress convened. It was a city of tourists, the native population looking upon them with condescendingly good humor. Today Washington's population numbers over a million, and in the metropolitan area which spills over into Maryland and Virginia across the District of Columbia line, the total population runs something like 1,300,000. These people have flocked into the capital city from every corner of the nation, once the world, and today Washington is truly cosmopolitan in population if not in its physical plant.

City to Remain Big

For the city, its business district, its utility facilities, its planning, zoning and housing was set up for a city of less than half its present size and although there may be some reduction in population as government, its only industry, reduces its staff after the war, civic leaders here do not foresee an appreciable reduction in the size of the city.

So during these 15 years Washington has zoomed, and particularly the past five war years the place has been packed and jammed with hurrying scurrying humanity. Stores are crowded and lines even form to get out of these stores; people are living doubled-up in apartments, single apartments having as many as five or six people occupying space intended for one or two; streets teem with shoppers; traffic is slow; street cars and buses are packed; houses are at a premium, of course, although there is a tremendous building boom underway in outlying Maryland and Virginia in the metropolitan area which includes Bethesda, Silver Spring, Takoma Park, Hyattsville and other communities in Maryland, and Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church and other near-by towns in Virginia.

Life is complex here today. Congressional debate draws no packed galleries from local gentry; transportation and other facilities have barely kept pace with growth; food is in short supply; there has been little or no beef in Washington for months; restaurants feature seafood dishes at prices which paralyze; there are lines waiting for tables; sightseeing buses have started operating again; the capitol dome is again floodlighted; business and office space is at a premium with rents outrageous; huge foreign governmental agencies such as the British Purchasing agency and the Russian Purchasing agency are giving up whole apartment buildings which they occupied, and these are being turned back to tenants; government agencies are being reshuffled and the people of the district at last see an opportunity to gain the ballot.

Civic Pride Lacking

For this capital of the greatest democracy in the world is the least democratic city in the world . . . its people are taxed without representation . . . its government is a hedge podge affair, unrepresentative of the people . . . and congress now seems inclined to grant these people the right to vote. Because of the fact the people have no say about their city government there is no civic pride here . . . there is no civic leadership . . . for congress and the commissioners named by the President and approved by congress run the city.

Big Parties at Embassies

Social life here is largely confined to homes and to diplomatic centers. The embassies and consulates along Massachusetts avenue and Sixteenth street provide the settings for lavish parties and entertainments. Private clubs also furnish social life for their memberships. There are no first class night clubs, and hotels, overcrowded as they are, have few facilities for this purpose except at the Statler and the Mayflower.

NEEDLEWORK PATTERNS Pineapple Potholder to Crochet

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