

# LOVE LIGHTLY

By MARGARET E. SANGSTER

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## SECOND INSTALMENT

"Your father was away when I made my discovery. He'd been away for several weeks on something that he called a 'big deal.'

I was expecting him home the very night that I saw the doctor, and I planned to tell him all about you, at once. So I sat in the garden and waited for him, and watched for his train. And finally I saw it—the train that should have brought him to me—sweep across the valley below the house. I saw it stop at the station, and I saw it go on again. And I waited, with my soul full of the news I had to tell—I waited to give him the tidings of his son (for I thought, darling, that you were going to be a boy!) but he didn't come, although I waited all of that night.

... And the next day, when I got the message that told me he wasn't coming back, ever, I went upstairs, and into my room and locked the door. And I sat down and began to knit a blue sweater for you. And I whistled, hard, as I knitted. I haven't whistled since—and I certainly never whistled before, Ellen! That's why, I guess, you were a girl.

## IF YOUR BREATH HAS A SMELL YOU CAN'T FEEL WELL

When we eat too much, our food decays in our bowels. Our friends smell this when it comes out of our mouth and call it bad breath. We feel the poison of this decay all over our body. It makes us giddy, grouchy and no good for anything.

What makes the food decay in the bowels? Well, when we eat too much, our bile juice can't digest it. What is the bile juice? It is the most vital digestive juice in our body. Unless 2 pints of it are secreted every day, our bowels get constipated and disintoxicated. This decay sends poison all over our body every six minutes.

Our friends smell our bad breath (but we don't) and we feel like a whipped cream. Don't use a mouthwash or take a laxative. Get at the cause of your trouble. Little Liver Pills, which gently start the flow of your bile juice. But if "something better" is offered you, don't buy it, for it may be a calomel (mercury) pill, which loosens teeth, gripes and scalds the rectum in many people. Ask for Carter's Little Liver Pills by name and get what you ask for—25¢. ©1934, C.M.C.O.

... A boy wouldn't have had any use for a mother who whistled so badly.... A boy—"

All at once Ellen's mother had stopped talking. Her voice had dwindled away into a funny, tragic silence. And Ellen saw her face go oddly white, felt her hand go chill and limp.

It was then that Ellen, starting to her feet, saw her mother's head sag forward.

"I'm going for the doctor," she half sobbed. "Your chest.... Is it your heart, darling? Is it—"

Ellen's mother had rallied. Her smile was less wan than it had been.

"My heart?" questioned Ellen's mother. "Oh—nonsense! Indigestion, no doubt. Something—I—" even then she managed a trifle of gayety, "something I ate as a child, no doubt! I'm quite well, now...."

\* \* \*

It didn't occur to Ellen in the weeks that passed, to ask her mother for the details of what had happened to her father. In her mind she had a vivid impression of some major calamity—of a train wreck or an automobile disaster. Only a calamity could have kept her father from her mother at such a time, she was sure!

And then, perhaps a month later, the special delivery letter arrived.

It was the boy from the post-office who brought the letter. Because her mother was at work she had signed for it, and dismissed the boy, before she spoke to the woman who painted so absorbently.

"It's a letter," she said, "a special delivery for you. I guess it's about the drawing you sent away last week. We were expecting some word."

With a start her mother came back from the land of her own creation, to reality. With listless hands she took the envelope from her daughter, and slit it open. Ellen watched her mother idly—so idly that at first she could scarcely believe what her eyes were seeing! For, as she stood watching, she saw her mother change completely and dreadfully. More dreadfully than she had changed on that other day, weeks before. In a minute she saw a lovely, white-haired woman become a broken, shriveled, parchment-cheeked figure.

"You're ill!" Ellen cried, as she started forward. "Was there bad news in the letter? You're upset—"

But when the answer came it wasn't an answer. For Ellen's mother, her hand again pressed to her breast, was rising. And as she rose to her feet, she was looking beyond Ellen. She swayed slightly—and then, as if she couldn't help it, she sat down again. But her voice was steady, though toneless, when she spoke.

"It's that indigestion, I guess," she said, gaspingly. And then—"Bring me my check book, dear...."

Ellen didn't speak. She sensed a desperation in that toneless voice, a need of hurry. Turning, she ran into the house, scampered to the desk where the check

book lay. She brought it, and a fountain pen and stationery, to her mother, and watched as her mother's shaking hand wrote a check—wrote it to what, in Ellen's knowledge of the family finances, was an alarming amount. It was only after the check was carefully made out to a strange name, and as carefully blotted, that the woman spoke again.

"Ellen," she said, "dear. Get your hat and take this, at once, to the post-office in the village. And send it special delivery, and register it."

Ellen, even in the face of her mother's tragic hurry, couldn't quite grasp the seriousness of the letter. Her mother's sudden illness seemed so much more important.

"Too bad I didn't ask the boy to wait," she said. "He could just as well have taken a letter back."

"I couldn't," said her mother with a great effort, "have trusted it to anyone else, this letter! You'd have had to take it, anyway.... And I'm glad—remember that, always, Ellen!—that it is just about all the money I have. I'm utterly grateful that there was enough. And—I don't want a doctor. I'm not ill. I'm never ill...."

She rose again. She turned heavily away, toward the house. And Ellen, with no other word, but clutching the envelope, went out of the garden and started toward the post-office with a frank curiosity—and hurried on.

"Mother'll be cross," she told herself, as she scuffed her feet along in the dust of the road—"because I've asked the doctor to stop by. But she can't go on, having these funny spells! I wonder who the letter was from?"

Ellen, sobbing, understood at last.

But Ellen was never to know the details of her father's final degeneration, or of his death, or of his burial. All that she ever knew was that the last check her mother had written was returned, duly endorsed by some distant firm of undertakers, to the bank.

The letter! Ellen couldn't help being curious about it—couldn't help feeling that it held the elements of mystery. It didn't, of that she was sure, relate to business, for what business dealings could have to do with such a large check? It must be something strange and ominous. It might almost go back, across the years, to her father, and yet...

The house lay in the last light of the setting sun, it was her world. Its four walls bounded all of her life, and her childhood, and her fragile store of experience. It was her home—surrounded by her garden.

Down the path she went, with its border of fading beauty, in through the wide open door. In the hallway she paused for a moment before a dim mirror and automatically fluffed her hair. Suddenly, without knowing why she did it, she was calling wildly, was running toward the stairs.

Screaming— "Mother! Mother! darling! Where are you? Where are you—"

There was no answer, only a whispered echo from quiet rooms. Ellen, with the cold fingers of dread touching her heart, found herself running up the flight of stairs that led to the second floor.

Ellen knocked, not too softly, upon the panel of her mother's door. And then when she heard no sound from within, she jerked the door open and paused, panting, upon the threshold.

At first, as she stood there, she knew a great sense of relief. It was as she had supposed—her mother was lying on the bed, resting! As she tiptoed across the room, Ellen thought that her mother was really asleep. For her lips were smiling very beautifully, with their old magic; and her eyes were softly closed—it was as if, in truth, she were the sleeping beauty.

At first Ellen thought her mother was asleep. And then suddenly she knew completely and utterly, and with an overwhelming sense of loneliness, that her mother was not sleeping!

Perhaps it was something in the sweetness of her mother's smile. Perhaps it was something in the chill magic of the room. But Ellen knew surely.... And yet, knowing, she did not touch that still figure, and neither did she cry out. Instead she walked very close to the bed. And as she came close, she saw that her mother's fingers held a letter, ever so slightly crumpled. It was the letter that had come only the space of a few hours ago.

Ellen, scarcely knowing what she did, reached over and took the letter from her mother's hand. She smoothed out its wrinkles very methodically, and read.

And then, suddenly, she was lying on the floor, beside her mother's bed, sobbing out all of her heartache and her disillusionment and her pain.

For the letter, written with brutal frankness, in an untaught hand, was from a woman. A woman who told of a man's death

## Richberg On Job



WASHINGTON... Donald Richberg (above), Director of the Industrial Recovery Board, is the man around whom the administration of the NRA now swings as General Hugh Johnson definitely stepped out on October 15.

in a cheap lodging house, in another state. "Toward the last," wrote the woman, "he spoke of you, often. But still and all, there wasn't any reason why he should have seen you! He'd stopped loving you—and he did love me. Maybe he thought you were well to do—and, at the end, he hadn't anything. And after all, you were his wife, for there was never any divorce. And now that there's no money for funeral expenses — well, of course, if you want charity to bury him.... But a grave and a marker and all the rest—" here she named a sum of money, a sum that Ellen had seen her mother write upon a check.

"I don't suppose, though," the letter ended, "that it matters much, now. Only he was sort of proud, always...." Ellen, sobbing, understood at last.

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The house lay in the last light of the setting sun, it was her world. Its four walls bounded all of her life, and her childhood, and her fragile store of experience. It was her home—surrounded by her garden.

Through the darkness Ellen could hear the approaching rumble of the doctor's Ford. But she was aware of its subjectivity. The only actual sound that she heard was the echo of her mother's voice, speaking. Saying—

"Love lightly. Don't get intense about love. Don't give anything.... Take everything, but don't—"

Oh, it had been a magnificent lie! Ellen's hand, wet with her own tears, reached up to touch her mother's chill fingers that had been clenched upon a cruel letter.

(Continued next week)

S. W. Weston of Hyde county had his first experience with leprosy this season and produced two tons of hay to the acre.

Administratrix Notice North Carolina, Wilkes County.

Having qualified as administratrix of the Estate of J. W. Shepherd, late, of Wilkes county, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of the said deceased to file said claims with the undersigned Administratrix on or before twelve months from the date of this notice or same will be plead in bar of their right to recover. All persons indebted to said Estate are requested to make payment thereof at once.

This 28th day of Sept., 1934.

MRS. ELLA SHEPHERD, Administratrix of the Estate of J. W. Shepherd, dec'd. 11-1-34.

10-29-34.

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