

The Dollar Bride

EIGHTEENTH INSTALLMENT

"Nancy Virginia," he said solemnly, "we love you and we know it isn't true. But there's a story about you; to fight it, to put it down, we've got to know the whole truth. Will you trust an old man? Will you tell me?"

Nancy seemed to grow limp. "What is the story, major?" she asked.

He told her. "I'm an old man, child, forgive me—Angie wouldn't repeat it. I had to. You've got to tell me the truth so I can put it down."

She opened her lips with an effort. "I can't!" she said in a smothered voice.

The old man stood staring in grave surprise.

"I can't say anything," she said brokenly. "I—a woman can't save herself—I can't tell you, major—I can't!"

"Then Morgan must!" said the major.

"Oh, no, no! Not that—never that!" she wailed, clinging to his arm, "promise me—never that!"

She had only one horrible thought. Richard had cast her out and left her to this! She would not appeal to him again!

Major Lomax drew her hand through his arm; he said nothing more. He led her, against her will, up to his own house and opened the door.

"Angie!" he shouted. "Angie—Nancy is here to see you—keep her all night. I'll phone to her mother."

But before his telephone message reached the Gordons something had happened there which wiped out its significance. Mr. Gordon was away; he had gone to Richmond on business for the bank, and would scarcely be back for two days. Nancy had been absent since luncheon time. Only Mrs. Gordon and Amanda were at home. Mrs. Gordon was busy.

She was startled by Amanda's voice at the door.

"Mis' Gordon!" she called excitedly. "Mis' Gordon, heah come Mist' Roddy, yes m'm, sho's yo'se born—Mist' Roddy, hisse!"

With a little cry of rapture, Mrs. Gordon ran to the door.

"Roddy!"

He stared at her, his arm hanging limp, and when she embraced him he lurched away from her.

"Where—where's father?" he asked thickly.

"He's in Richmond, dear," she caught at his arm, looking up into his face. "Why, Roddy, you're ill, your eyes are all bloodshot—take off your hat, dear!"

He laughed foolishly, starting away from her again and catching at the door-post for support.

"What's th' matter with my hat?" he demanded, taking it off and smiling at it idiotically, "nice old peach of a hat—" he spun it around on one finger, giggling suddenly. Then he began to sing loudly.

"Where did you get that hatched?"

"Where did you get that hatched?"

"Roddy!" his mother gave a little cry of horror; she seized his arm and shook him. "Look at me, Rod-

ed in spite of himself.

"What is it, Amanda?"

She countered, folding her hands into her apron. "Mis' Gordon sent me fo' yo'-all, suh. She sez Mist' Roddy done gone plumb crazy, yes-suh, an' she wants yo' ter come quick."

Richard frowned. "Crazy! Rod Gordon? What do you mean, Amanda?"

Amanda edged closer, pleading her apron demurely; then she looked up sideways and gave him a wink—as one man of the world to another.

"He ain't crazy, no suh, he's jes' drunk, but his ma's takin' on ah' his pa ain't home—I reckon it's jes' as well anyways. Mist' Gordon ain't gwinter stand no foolin' no suh!"

Roddy drunk! Richard could not remember that the boy had ever had the falling of drink. A thief and a drunkard. Unconsciously the shock of it penetrated even the iron of his reserve.

"You go ahead, Amanda. I'll follow," he said, as they left the house together.

Mrs. Gordon had been on her knees beside him, but she stumbled to her feet as Morgan entered.

Richard took her shaking hands in both his. "Don't be frightened," he said gently.

"Ain't frightened," said Roddy thickly, "dry—thass it, dry as dust—an she's got water—water—" he began to sing, rocking to and fro.

Mrs. Gordon tore her hand out of Richard's and covered her face sobbing. "My boy's crazy," she said in a whisper, "I can't bear it—I can't!"

Richard drew her gently out into the hall.

"He's not crazy, Mrs. Gordon," he said kindly, "someone has given him some kind of strong drink—and it's gone to his head, that's all."

She gazed at him horrified, incredulous. "My boy never drank!"

"I know it—that's why it's affected him so badly. He'll get over it. Don't worry." Richard was sorry for her.

She turned very white. "His father!" she gasped in a frightened whisper.

"Mrs. Gordon, I'm going to take him home. My car's outside my own door. I'll get it. Nobody need know, not even your husband. He'll be all right tomorrow."

Without another word, Richard went out. But when he drove his car around to the Gordon's back door, Roddy, whose condition seemed to get worse all the time, had to be coaxed into it. Richard and Amanda managed it.

Richard drove the car straight into his garage. By that time Roddy had sagged over and gone to sleep. Richard called to his man.

"Sam! Here—you go up and tell Mammy Polk she can visit her cousin tonight. Send her packing. Then you come back here and help me get this boy into the house and into bed."

Sam went, and, half an hour later, Roddy Gordon was asleep in the room next to Richard's. He slept heavily at first, but toward midnight, he became violently ill and Richard fought a hard battle with a touch of delirium in it.

"Must have been soaking himself and got some wood alcohol, too," Richard thought, sitting up.

At two o'clock in the morning, Roddy was really very ill; it took all Richard's time and skill to turn the tide in his favor.

It was five o'clock now and broad day. Richard went downstairs and made some strong coffee. When he went back to his patient, Roddy was awake and terribly sober. He choked down the hot coffee and wanted to kill himself.

"How did I get here?" he asked

blankly.

Richard told him, feeling his pulse. "You're better. Keep quiet, old man. No one knows but your mother."

"My mother?" Roddy groaned turning his face to the wall.

Richard quieted him. He was using almost all his power as a doctor and an older man to keep him quiet when old Sam called him from the stairs.

"Somebody down heah, Mis' Richard!"

In the hall stood Nancy. She was bareheaded and she still wore the frock in which she had gone to the Lomaxes.

"Richard, where's Roddy? I must see my brother!"

Then, as he hesitated, she broke out angrily.

"He hasn't diphtheria! Mama told me—I must see him, I've got a right to see him—where is he?"

Richard turned to the stairs. "He's up there—he's sober. You may see him."

That was all; he did not even look at her as he led the way upstairs.

At the door of Roddy's room Richard stepped back for Nancy to enter. The girl stood still an instant, her hand pressed against her breast.

"Don't let Roddy frighten you," Richard managed stiffly, his voice sounding harsh. "He's been under the influence of too much liquor. He's come out of it with a headache and the blue devils. Don't let it frighten you."

Nancy's head went up! she thought he felt that they heaped their troubles on him—she and her brother.

Richard opened the door and she went in. She heard him close it behind her and she seemed to hear, too, his footsteps going downstairs. They sounded heavy, final, like the footsteps of a man who had too much to do to bear other people's burdens! Then her eyes cleared of the mist in them and she saw Roddy, half dressed, sitting on the edge of his bed, reaching for one of his boots.

"I don't want to make a mess here for Richard—he's been pretty white to me!" he said bitterly, "I'm going out to kill myself!"

Nancy went over and sat down on the edge of the bed beside him.

"Rod," she said under her breath, with something like a gasp, "have you—been doing it again?"

He turned and looked at her, utterly incomprehending.

"What the deuce do you mean, Nancy?"

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

In Loving Memory Of My Dear Sister

It is with a sad heart I will try to write a brief sketch of my dear sister, Eva. It was on Feb. 10th, 1934, God needed another angel to fill another vacant place around the great white throne and he stooped down with loving hands and plucked from the house of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Chambers their loving daughter. Eva was 21 years, nine months and three days old, making her stay on earth very short. It is so sad to part with one so near and dear to us, but we will have to be submissive to an all wise God who doeth all things well. She suffered severely for about nine months but she bore it patiently. She was so sweet and kind and always had a kind word and smile for every one, but when God called her she closed her eyes and slipped quietly away to her Father's house. No sunny smile from her to greet us now, but we have the consolation that some time we will be with her in heaven and how sweet it will be to see her and hear her sweetly saying "I have been waiting for you and knew you was coming." A loving one from us is gone and a vacant place in our home which never can be filled. We

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DROWNS HERSELF AND 2 CHILDREN

High Point, July 12.—Mrs. Robert Glenn Smith, 23, carrying her two children, Peggy, 3 and Ray, 14 months, in her arms, stepped into 12 feet of water in Freeman mill pond, seven miles east of here, about 8 o'clock this morning, drowning all three.

The first body, that of one of the children, was not located and taken from the water until 2:30 p. m. today. The second child's body was recovered about an hour later and that of the mother about 5:30 o'clock after Guilford county officers, High Point firemen and High Point policemen had joined in the search.

The death of the mother ended two years' suffering with pellagra, which the neighbors said had affected her mind and which is believed to have caused her to walk to her death with her children this morning.

Clarence Chambers, all of Timberlake; six sisters, Mrs. Bessie Day and Mrs. Allie Day, Mrs. Mary Wade, all of Roxboro; Mrs. Mina Montcastle, Lynchburg; Misses Naomi and Lucy Chambers of Timberlake, besides a host of relatives and friends. She was laid to rest in the family cemetery. The floral designs were so beautiful that covered the grave of one whom we loved. She was always so cheerful and would greet us with a smile. We feel that she is now wearing her starry crown and is safe in the arms of Jesus. We weep for thee, dear sister, not as dead, but asleep in Jesus. We hope to meet thee some happy day when there'll no goodbyes have to be said. Written by her sister, Bessie.

In a city beautification campaign, Lansing, Mich., planted more than 5000 petunia beds last summer.

A lotton crop, that is two weeks late and prospects for the smallest yield in years is reported from Harnett County.

Each Thought

EACH thought, each detail, each possibility is provided for in advance, that the final ceremony may be one of complete harmony.

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