



**K.**

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

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**Little Sidney Page Makes the Acquaintance of a "Bad" Woman and Finds That She Is Human.**

**SYNOPSIS.**

A strange and charming young man, K. Le Moyne, becomes a roomer at the Page home, where Sidney, her mother, Anna, and her old maid aunt, Harriet, a dressmaker, reside. Through the influence of a brilliant young surgeon, Dr. Max Wilson, Sidney goes to the hospital as a probationary nurse. Aunt Harriet becomes a fashionable modiste and opens a shop downtown. Christine Lorenz and Palmer Howe are to be married soon and they are going to take rooms at the Pages'. Sidney is loved by "K." by Joe Drummond, a high-school beau, and by Dr. Max, who fascinates her. At the hospital she begins to see the under side of the world. She comes in contact with Carlotta Harrison, who loves Doctor Max and who has been intimate with him. Sidney has just come home for a day and is telling "K." about a "bad" woman patient. "At first I hated her," she says. "Now I like her."

**CHAPTER VIII—Continued.**

"Yes."

"Well, this is the question: She's getting better. She'll be going out soon. Don't you think something ought to be done to keep her from going back?"

There was a shadow in K.'s eyes now. She was so young to face all this; and yet, since fate it seems, how much better to have her do it squarely.

"Does she want to change her mode of life?"

"I don't know, of course. There are some things one doesn't discuss. She cares a great deal for some man. The other day I propped her up in bed and gave her a newspaper, and after a while I found the paper on the floor, and she was crying. The other patients avoid her, and it was some time before I noticed it. The next day she told me that the man was going to marry someone else. 'He wouldn't marry me, of course,' she said; 'but he might have told me.'"

Le Moyne did his best, that afternoon in the little parlor, to provide Sidney with a philosophy to carry her through her training. He told her that certain responsibilities were hers, but that she could not reform the world. Broad charity, tenderness and healing were her province.

"Help them all you can," he finished, feeling inadequate and hopelessly didactic. "Cure them; send them out with a smile; and—leave the rest to the Almighty."

Sidney was resigned, but not content. Newly facing the evil of the world, she was a rampant reformer at once. Only the arrival of Christine and her fiancé saved his philosophy from complete rout. He had time for a question between the ring of the bell and Katie's deliberate progress from the kitchen to the front door.

"How about the surgeon, young Wilson? Do you ever see him?" His tone was carefully casual.

"Almost every day. He stops at the door of the ward and speaks to me. It makes me quite distinguished, for a probationer. Usually, you know, the staff never even see the probationers."

"And—the glamour persists?" He smiled down at her.

"I think he is very wonderful," said Sidney valiantly.

"Christine Lorenz, while not large, seemed to fill the little room. Her voice, which was frequent and penetrating, her smile, which was wide and showed very white teeth that were a trifle large for beauty, her all-embracing good nature, dominated the entire lower floor. K., who had met her before, retired into silence and a corner. Young Howe smoked a cigarette in the hall.

"You poor thing!" said Christine, and put her cheek against Sidney's. "Why, you're positively thin! Palmer gives you a month to tire of it all; for I said—"

"I take that back," Palmer spoke indolently from the corridor. "There is the look of willing martyrdom in her face."

Howe was a good-looking man, thin, smooth-shaven, aggressively well dressed. This Sunday afternoon, in a cutaway coat and high hat, with an English malacca stick, he was just a little out of the picture. The Street said he was "wild," and that to get into the Country club set Christine was losing more than she was gaining.

Christine had stepped out on the balcony, and was speaking to K. just inside

"It's rather a queer way to live, of course," she said. "But Palmer is a pauper, practically. We are going to take our meals at home for a while. You see, certain things that we want we can't have if we take a house—a car, for instance. We'll need one for running out to the Country club to dinner. And we're getting the Rosenfeld boy to drive it. He's crazy about machinery, and he'll come for practically nothing."

K. had never known a married couple to take two rooms and go to the bride's mother's for meals in order to keep a car. He looked faintly dazed. Also, certain sophistries of his former world about a cheap chauffeur being costly in the end rose in his mind and were carefully suppressed.

"You'll find a car a great comfort, I'm sure," he said politely.

Christine considered K. rather distinguished. She liked his graying hair and steady eyes, and insisted on considering his shabbiness a pose. She was conscious that she made a pretty picture in the French window, and preened herself like a bright bird.

"You'll come out with us now and then, I hope."

"Thank you."

"Isn't it odd to think that we are going to be practically one family?"

"Odd, but very pleasant."

He caught the flash of Christine's smile, and smiled back. Christine was glad she had decided to take rooms, glad that K. lived there. This thing of marriage being the end of all things was absurd. A married woman should have many friends; they kept her up. She would take him to the Country club. The women would be mad to know him. How clear-cut his profile was!

**CHAPTER IX.**

The hot August days dragged on. Merciless sunlight beat in through the slatted shutters of ward windows. At night, from the roof to which the nurses retired after prayers for a breath of air, lower surrounding roofs were seen to be covered with sleepers. Children dozed precariously on the edge of eternity; men and women sprawled in the grotesque postures of sleep.

There was a sort of feverish irritability in the air. Even the nurses, stoically unmindful of bodily discomfort spoke curtly or not at all. Miss Dana, in Sidney's ward, went down with a low fever, and for a day or so Sidney and Miss Grange got along as best they could. Sidney worked like two or more, performed marvels of bed making, learned to give alcohol baths for fever with the maximum of result and the minimum of time, even made rounds with a members of the staff and came through creditably.

Dr. Ed Wilson had sent a woman patient into the ward, and his visits were the breath of life to the girl.

"How're they treating you?" he asked her, one day, abruptly.

"Very well."

"Look at me squarely. You're pretty and you're young. Some of them will try to take it out of you. That's human nature. Has anyone tried it yet?"

Sidney looked distressed.

"Positively, no. It's been hot, and of course it's troublesome to tell me everything. I—I think they're all very kind."

He reached out a square, competent hand, and put it over hers.

"We miss you in the Street," he said. "It's all sort of dead there since you left."

He went out and down the corridor. He had known Sidney all his life. During the lonely times when Max was at college and in Europe he had watched her grow from a child to a young girl. He did not suspect for a moment that in that secret heart of hers he sat newly enthroned, in a glow of white light, as Max's brother; that the mere thought that he lived in Max's house (it was, of course, Max's house to her), sat at Max's breakfast table, could see him whenever he wished, made the touch of his hand on hers a benediction and a caress.

Carlotta Harrison, back from her vacation, reported for duty and was assigned to E ward, which was Sidney's. She gave Sidney a curt little nod, and proceeded to change the entire routine with the thoroughness of a Central American revolutionary president. Sidney, who had yet to learn that with some people authority can only assert itself by change, found herself confused, at sea, half resentful. She got the worst off-duty of the day, or none. Small humiliations were hers; late meals, disagreeable duties, endless and often unnecessary tasks. Ignorant of the cause of her persecution, she went steadily on her way.

And she was gaining every day. Her mind was forming. She was learning to think for herself. On the whole, the world was good, she found. And, of all the good things in it, the best was service. True there were hot days and restless nights, weary feet, and now and then a headache. There was Miss Harrison, too. But to offset

these there was the sound of Doctor Max's step in the corridor, and his smiling nod from the door; there was a "God bless you" now and then for the comfort she gave; there were wonderful nights on the roof under the stars, until K.'s little watch warned her to bed.

K. was having his own troubles in those days. Late at night, when Anna and Harriet had retired, he sat on the balcony and thought of many things. Anna Page was not well. He had noticed that her lips were rather blue, and had called in Doctor Ed. It was valvular heart disease, Anna was not to be told, or Sidney. It was Harriet's ruling.

"Sidney can't help any," said Harriet, "and for heaven's sake let her have her chance. Anna may live for years. You know her as well as I do. If you tell her anything at all, she'll have Sidney here, waiting on her hand and foot."

And Le Moyne, fearful of urging too much because his own heart was crying out to have the girl back, assented.

Then, K. was anxious about Joe. The boy did not seem to get over the thing the way he should. Now and then Le Moyne, resuming his old habit of wearily himself into sleep, would walk out into the country. On one such night he had overtaken Joe, tramping along with his head down.

Joe had not wanted his company, had plainly sulked. But Le Moyne had persisted.

"I'll not talk," he said; "but since we're going the same way, we might as well walk together."

But after a time Joe talked, after all. It was not much at first—a feverish complaint about the heat, and that if there was trouble in Mexico he thought he'd go.

"Wait until fall, if you're thinking of it," K. advised. "This is tepid compared with what you'll get down there."

"I've got to get away from here."

K. nodded understandingly. Since the scene at the White Springs hotel, both knew that no explanation was necessary.

For almost twenty minutes they tramped on without speech. They had made a circle, and the lights of the city were close again. K. stopped and put a kindly hand on Joe's shoulder.

"A man's got to stand up under a thing like this, you know. I mean, it mustn't be a knockout. Keeping busy is a darned good method."

Joe shook himself free, but without resentment.

"I'll tell you what's eating me up," he exploded. "It's Max Wilson. Don't



"She's Crazy About Him."

talk to me about her going to the hospital to be useful. She's crazy about him, and he's crooked as a dog's hind leg."

"Perhaps. But it's always up to the girl. You know that."

He felt immeasurably old beside Joe's boyish blustering—old and rather helpless.

"I'm watching him. Some of these days I'll get something on him. Then she'll know what to think of her hero."

"That's not quite square, is it?"

"He's not square."

Joe left him then, wheeling abruptly off into the shadows. K. had gone home alone, rather uneasy. There seemed to be mischief in the very air.

Harriet's business instinct had been good. She had taken expensive rooms in a good location, and furnished them with the assistance of a decorator. Her climbing was not so rapid as to make her dizzy; but business was coming. The first time she made a price of seventy-five dollars for an evening gown, she went out immediately after and took a drink of water. Her throat was parched.

She began to learn little quips of the feminine mind. No woman over thirty but was grateful for her pink-and-gray room with its soft lights. And Harriet herself conformed to the picture. She took a lesson from the New York modistes, and wore trailing black gowns. She strapped her thin figure into the best corset she could get, and had her black hair marcelled and dressed high. And because she was a lady by birth and instinct, the re-

sult was a magnificent, sat refined and rather impressive.

There were other changes in the Street. The Lorenz house was being painted for Christine's wedding. Johnny Rosenfeld, not perhaps of the Street itself, but certainly pertaining to it, was learning to drive Palmer Howe's new car, in mingled agony and bliss. He walked along the Street, not "right foot, left foot," but "brake foot, clutch foot," and took to calling off the vintage of passing cars. "So-and-so 1910," he would say, with contempt in his voice.

K. had yielded to Anna's insistence, and was boarding as well as rooming at the Page house. The Street, rather snobbish to its occasional floating population, was accepting and liking him. It found him tender, infinitely human. And in return he found that this seemingly empty eddy into which he had drifted was teeming with life. He busied himself with small things, and found his outlook gradually less tinged with despair. When he found himself inclined to rail, he organized a baseball club, and sent down to everlasting defeat the Linburg's, consisting of cashboys from Linden & Hofburg's department store.

He made no further attempt to avoid Max Wilson. Some day they would meet face to face. He hoped, when it happened, they two might be alone; that was all. Even had he not been bound by his promise to Sidney, flight would have been foolish. The world was a small place, and one way and another, he had known many people. Wherever he went, there would be the same chance. The meeting took place early in September, and under better circumstances than he could have hoped for.

Sidney had come home for her weekly visit, and sent Katie to ask Doctor Ed to come over after dinner. With the sunset Anna seemed better. She insisted on coming downstairs, and even sat with them on the balcony until the stars came out, talking of Christine's trousseau, and, rather fretfully, of what she would do without the parlors.

"You shall have your own boudoir upstairs," said Sidney valiantly. "Katie can carry your tray up there. We are going to make the sewing room into your private sitting room, and I shall nail the machine top down."

This pleased her. When K. insisted on carrying her upstairs, she went in a flutter.

"He is so strong, Sidney!" she said, when he had placed her on her bed. "How can a clerk, bending over a ledger, be so muscular? When I have callers, will it be all right for Katie to show them upstairs?"

She dropped asleep before the doctor came; and when, at something after eight, the door of the Wilson house slammed and a figure crossed the street, it was not Ed at all but the surgeon.

Sidney had been talking rather more frankly than usual. Lately there had been a reserve about her. K., listening intently that night, read between words a story of small persecutions and jealousies. But the girl minimized them, after her way.

"It's always hard for probationers," she said. "I often think Miss Harrison is trying my mettle."

"Harrison?"

"Carlotta Harrison. And now that Miss Gregg has said she will accept me, it's really all over. The other nurses are wonderful—so kind and so helpful. I hope I shall look well in my cap."

Carlotta Harrison was in Sidney's hospital! A thousand contingencies flashed through his mind. Sidney might grow to like her and bring her to the house. Sidney might insist on the thing she always spoke of—that he visit the hospital; and he would meet her, face to face. He could have depended on a man to keep his secret. This girl with her somber eyes and her threat to pay him out for what had happened to her—she meant danger of a sort that no man could fight.

"Soon," said Sidney, through the warm darkness, "I shall have a cap, and be always forgetting it and putting my hat on over it—the new ones always do."

It was then that the door across the street closed. Sidney did not hear it, but K. bent forward. There was a part of his brain always automatically on watch.

"I shall get my operating-room training, too," she went on. "That is the real romance of the hospital. There was a lot of excitement today. Dr. Max Wilson did the Edwardes operation."

The figure across the Street was lighting a cigarette. Perhaps, after all—

"Something tremendously difficult—I don't know what. It's going into the medical journals. A Doctor Edwardes invented it, or whatever they call it. It was the most thrilling thing, they say."

Her voice died away as her eyes followed K.'s. Max, cigarette in hand, was coming across, under the alantus tree. He hesitated on the pavement, his eyes searching the shadowy balcony.

**Why do you think "K." fears Carlotta Harrison, and why does he shrink from meeting Dr. Max Wilson? Has he done them a wrong?**

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**Which?**  
Forgetful Waiter (to diner who has ordered)—"Beg pardon, sir, but are you the pork chops or the boiled cod?"—Boston Evening Transcript

**LATE NORTH CAROLINA MARKET QUOTATIONS**

Western Newspaper Union News Service  
Prices Paid by Merchants for Farm Products in the Markets of North Carolina as Reported to the Division of Markets for the Week Ending Saturday, January 20, 1917.

**Asheville.**  
Corn, \$1.24 bu; oats, 75c bu; Irish potatoes, \$5.25 bbl; sweet potatoes, \$1 bu; apples, \$3.30 bbl.  
Western butter, 48c lb; N. C. butter, 43c lb; eggs, 38-43c doz; spring chickens, 15c lb; hens, 13c lb.

**Charlotte.**  
Corn, \$1.15 bu; oats, 68c bu; Irish potatoes, \$4.75 bbl; sweet potatoes, 90c bu; apples, 4-5 bbl.  
Western butter, 40c lb; N. C. butter, 40c lb; eggs, 40c doz; spring chickens, 25c lb; hens, 15-20c lb; hogs, \$10-\$12 cwt.  
Cotton, middling, 17.50c; cotton seed, 75c bu.

**Durham.**  
Corn, \$1.10 bu; oats, 68c bu; peas, \$5 bu; Irish potatoes, \$5.50 bbl; sweet potatoes, \$1 bu; apples, \$3-4.50 bbl.  
Western butter, 35c lb; N. C. butter, 35c lb; eggs, 35c doz; spring chickens, 15c lb; hens, 10c lb.  
Cotton, middling, 17.50c.

**Fayetteville.**  
Corn, \$1.20 bu; oats, 68c bu; peas, \$1.75 bu; soy beans, \$1.50 bu; Irish potatoes, \$4.50 bbl; sweet potatoes, 75c bu.  
Western butter 40c lb; N. C. butter, 40c lb; spring chickens, 25c lb; hens, 15c lb; hogs, \$13.50 cwt.  
Cotton, middling, 18c; cotton seed, 85c bu; lbs. of meal for ton of seed.

**Greensboro.**  
Corn, \$1.1250 bu; soy beans, \$2.25 bu; peas, \$2.25 bu; Irish potatoes, \$5.50 bbl; sweet potatoes, 90c bu; apples, \$4.50-\$5.50 bbl.  
Western butter, 40c bu; eggs, 40c doz; spring chickens 22c lb; hens, 14c lb; hogs, \$11 cwt.

**Greenville.**  
Corn, \$1.10 bu; oats, 70c bu; soy beans, \$1.25 bu; peas, \$1.75 bu; Irish potatoes, \$4 bbl; sweet potatoes, 70c bu.  
Eggs, 30c doz; spring chickens, 22c lb; hens, 14c lb; hogs, \$11 cwt.  
Cotton, middling, 17.75c; cotton seed 80c bu.

**Hamlet.**  
Corn, \$1.25 bu; oats, 75c bu; peas, \$1.75 bu; sweet potatoes, 80c bu.  
N. C. butter, 35c lb; eggs, 35c doz; spring chickens, 18c lb; hens, 15c lb; hogs, \$11 cwt.  
N. C. butter, 35c lb; eggs, 35c doz; spring chickens, 18c lb; hens, 15c lb; hogs, \$11 cwt.  
Cotton, middling, 17c.

**Maxton.**  
Corn, \$1.25 bu; oats, 75c bu; peas, \$2 bu; sweet potatoes, 75c bu.  
Western butter, 40c lb; N. C. butter, 40c lb; eggs, 30c lb; spring chickens, 18c lb; hens, 15c lb; hogs, 10 cwt.  
Cotton, middling, 17c; cotton seed, 85c bu.

**Raleigh.**  
Corn, \$1.19 bu; oats, 66c bu; soy beans, \$1.30 bu; peas, \$1.75 bu; Irish potatoes, \$5 bbl; sweet potatoes, 75c bu.  
Western butter, 43c lb; N. C. butter, 85c bu; apples, \$4.50-\$5 bu.  
Cotton, middling, 17.50c; cotton seed 78c bu; lbs. of meal for ton of seed, 2800.

**Rocky Mount.**  
Corn, \$1.15 bu; oats, 66.50c bu; Irish potatoes, \$5 bbl; sweet potatoes, 80c bu; apples \$5-\$6 bbl.  
Western butter, 38c lb; N. C. butter, 38c lb; eggs, 35-38c doz; spring chickens, 18c lb; hens, 16c lb; hogs, \$12.50 cwt.  
Cotton, middling, 16.50c; cotton seed 75c bu; lbs. of meal for ton of seed, 2600.

**Wilmington.**  
Corn, \$1.13 bu; oats, 70c bu; Irish potatoes, \$4.75 bu; sweet potatoes, 75c bu.  
Western butter, 44c lb; N. C. butter, 42c lb; eggs, 40c doz.

**Winston-Salem.**  
Corn, \$1.10 bu; oats, 70c bu; Irish potatoes, \$4.50 bbl; sweet potatoes, 70c bu; apples, \$4.50 bbl.  
Eggs, 36c doz; spring chickens, 14c lb; hens, 13c lb; hogs, \$12 cwt.

**Chicago.**  
No. 2 white corn, 98.50-99.50c (delivered in Raleigh, \$1.1350-\$1.1450); No. 2 yellow corn, 98.50c-\$1.0175 (delivered in Raleigh \$1.1350-\$1.1675).  
Butter, 31.50-37c (creamery); eggs, 40-49c (firsts).

**New York.**  
Irish potatoes, \$5.25-\$5.55 bbl; sweet potatoes, 65c-\$1.75 (Jersey basket).  
Butter, 40c (extra); eggs, 44-56c (extra fine).

**Pleasantness Demanded.**  
There is no place in the modern scheme for the man who cannot be pleasant. He is a back number whether he is in the office or the factory, the private business or the city hall.

**Strikingly Unoriginal.**  
A prominent clergyman says that the only way to be interesting is to break the Ten Commandments. How is that being interesting? It's about the least original thing mankind can do.

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**Japanese Trade in Manchuria.**  
Mr. Yoshida, who was selected by the Japanese government to investigate commercial conditions in Manchuria, has made a report giving details of the trade. About one month is required to transport goods from Osaka to Harbin, even by passenger train. The principal Japanese products that are sent from Harbin to European Russia are hosiery, underwear, shoe soles, cotton textiles, medicines, isinglass and insulated electric wire. Since the middle of August an import tax has been assessed upon hosiery and underwear by the Russian Manchurian customs. The trade of North Manchuria is on the road to prosperity, on account of the increased population and the development of agriculture. Harbin is regarded as the center of business.

**Gala Affair.**  
"How was Gertrude Swashby's wedding?"  
"A great success, apparently. The Swashby's exhausted their credit getting ready for it and the society editors exhausted their stock of adjectives describing it."

**Stone Wall?**  
"Why do they call it 'Wall Street'?"  
"Bump up against it and you'll find out."

**Is Work Too Hard?**  
Many kinds of work wear out the kidneys, and kidney trouble makes any kind of work hard. It brings morning lameness, backache, headache, nervousness, rheumatism and urinary troubles. If your work is confining, strains the back, or exposes you to extreme heat or cold or damp, it's well to keep the kidneys active. Doan's Kidney Pills are reliable and safe. Thousands recommend them.

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N. A. Spence, Sr., 423 S. Wilmington St., Raleigh, N. C., says: "I suffered for years from kidney trouble. I had backaches and pains through my loins and the kidney secretions were unnatural and filled with sediment. After using Doan's Kidney Pills, I passed several gravel stones and improved at once. The aches and pains soon left and the action of my kidneys was regulated."

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