

# Secretary of Frivolous Affairs

by  
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## SYNOPSIS.

Jo Codman and her sister Louie are left orphans. Their property has been swept away by the death of their father and they are compelled to cast about for some means to earn a living. Louie answers an advertisement of an invalid who wants a companion. She declines the position. Louie advertises for a position as companion, and Mrs. Hazard replies. She offers Louie a position as her "secretary of frivolous affairs." Her chief work is to steer Mrs. Hazard's son and daughter in the right matrimonial path. Louie talks baseball to Hap Hazard and also gains the confidence of Laura Hazard. The Duc de Trouville is believed to be Laura's lover. Mrs. Hazard gives a big reception and Louie meets many people high in the social world. Natalie Azarias, to whom Hap has been paying attention, loses an emerald bracelet during the reception. She declares there is not another like it in the world. It develops that Natalie has lost several pieces of jewelry under similar circumstances. Hap takes Louie to the baseball game. He tells her he is not engaged to Natalie and has been cured of his infatuation. The scene changes to the Hazard country place, where many notables have been invited for the summer. Louie and Laura visit the farm of Winthrop Abbott, an author, in whom Laura takes considerable interest. Duc de Trouville arrives at the Hazard place. Louie hears Winthrop's motor boat out late at night. Next morning the papers announce the robbery of several nearby homes. Natalie accuses Louie of stealing her ruby pendant. Mrs. Hazard assures Louie of her confidence in her. Hap declares his love for Louie. She rejects him, but will not admit it as she fears what Mrs. Hazard will say. Louie is excused from dinner on account of a headache. She is bombarded with notes from Hap imploring her to see him. Winthrop is arrested in the presence of Hap and Louie, charged with robbing General Schuyler's home and shooting the general. A box of jewels is found in Winthrop's safe, among them an emerald bracelet exactly like the one lost by Natalie. Natalie apologizes to Louie for accusing her of theft. Louie is awakened at midnight and finds Hap in her room. Next morning she explains that he was in pursuit of a mysterious woman he had seen in the corridor and who eluded him by passing through Louie's room. Natalie identifies the emerald bracelet found in Winthrop's safe as her own. Louie's sister, Jo, arrives for a week's stay. John Crowninshield pays marked attention to Jo.

## CHAPTER XX.—Continued.

It was perhaps ten o'clock when Jo took a notion to see the gallery. The notion was quite sudden, too. She even interrupted John to say so, apropos of nothing. We met Hap on the stairs as we went up. I remembered afterward that he looked puzzled and was flushed a little. He shouted to Burrows from the stairs.

"Who locked the card-room?"  
"No one, sir."  
"It's locked; have it unlocked. Where is Thomas?"  
"I don't know, sir."

There was more anger in the way he spoke to Burrows than such a simple thing warranted. He came up to the gallery with us, glaring at the card-room door as we passed.  
"What's the matter?" I asked. "Do you want to play poker?"  
"No, but I want the room unlocked. It's not supposed to be locked."  
We climbed upward in silence.  
"Well, you might quit looking like a thundercloud," I suggested presently. "I haven't been horrid, have I?"

He glanced up to where Jo and John Crowninshield were disappearing into the gallery, and apropos of nothing he seized my hand and pressed it to his lips.

Inside the picture gallery was Thomas, the footman about whom Hap had asked Burrows. When Jo and John Crowninshield entered they found him standing in front of the Velasquez, staring at it oddly. He should have been below, of course. Upon our entrance he turned and stalked out. Hap looked after him with a pucker of perplexity in his forehead.

Jo was surprised at the size of the gallery, just as I had been. She hadn't expected it. She walked the length of the room, then turned back.  
"Are all these pictures originals?" she asked.

"No," John answered her. "A few are copies, but valuable copies."  
"Let's see if I can pick the copies," she suggested, and walked the length of the gallery again.

Hap and I dropped down on a bench, but John followed her.  
"That one," said Jo presently.  
"Oh, that's easy, Jo," I cried. "The original is in the National Gallery, and you know it."  
"And this!"

"No, that's a Greuze," John explained.  
"Sorry," smiled Jo. "Greuze made so many heads, didn't he? Is the Lely next to it genuine?"  
"Yes."

"Is that a Velasquez, or a copy?" Hap asked her, and indicated the disputed picture before which we were sitting.

"I don't know," Jo replied. "I'd say —" She chose her distance and looked at it a long time—"copy!"  
"It's disputed," John told her. "Five experts say it isn't, twelve say it is. Fred—Mr. Hazard—believed it was an original and bought it."  
"The old geezer used to frighten me when I was a kid," Hap remarked. "but he doesn't seem so fierce now. His eyes always looked so—well, clean through, you know—bald, a novelist would say. I'd call them watery, now." He regarded the "old geezer" smilingly. "Pleasant looking customer, isn't he?"

"I'd hate to meet him up a dark alley," John laughed.  
"That's a copy, isn't it?" asked Jo, and pointed to a picture on the opposite wall.

"No, a real Van Dyke," John replied.  
"I'll quit guessing!" Jo exclaimed, but she crossed the room and stood for a long time before the Van Dyke.

"Aren't you afraid to leave all these beautiful pictures here in the country?" she asked finally, coming back where we were.

"They are insured," Hap answered. "Against fire, or theft?"  
"Fire. No one wants to steal them. No one has an opportunity. I'd like to see a thief get away with that big fellow. Jenkins sits on the steps all winter with a gun."

"Are they protected now?"  
"Well, not with a gun. There's no need when we are here."

Hap tried the card-room door as we descended; it gave to his touch and swung open. He switched on the lights and looked about. The room was quite in order. I couldn't see any cause for the pucker between his eyes. He lighted a cigarette and smoked it thoughtfully as we descended the stairs. He smoked where she pleased; he had learned to put the ashes in his pocket. Occasionally he would remove his cigarette from his lips, regard the lighted end intently, then smile, or frown, and smoke again. I watched the performance, highly amused.

"A clue, Monsieur Lecoq?" I whispered.  
"I'm a fool," he replied. "I'm letting my imagination run away with me."

"I can prove an alibi this time," I pursued flippantly. "I haven't been in the card-room for a month."  
"Please don't, dear," he said quickly.

He was quite serious about it. A silly lump got into my throat. My feelings were always near the surface when he was serious. I glanced up and met that look in his eyes I was never going to be able to take care of.

"Who locked the door, Burrows?" he asked, when we reached the lower hall.

"It wasn't locked, sir."  
"You are quite sure, Burrows?"  
"Quite sure, sir."

"What was Thomas doing in the picture gallery?"  
"I didn't know he was there, sir."  
"How long has he been here, Burrows?"

"Since we came to the country, sir." Whatever else Hap intended to say was not said. There was a commotion in the drawing-room, a scurrying of feet and the overturning of a chair. Natalie had fainted.

Some one, Mrs. Higginson I believe it was, was shrieking excitedly to get her into the open air, but Jo reached her first, stretched her on the floor, fopped her over, and deftly and quickly unhooked her dress. She gave Natalie's corset strings a pull and released them. Hardly a minute later Natalie, with her head on Jo's knee, opened her eyes. She was a bit bewildered and confused, but all right.

Jo sent for a wrap to cover Natalie's somewhat disarranged toilet, and when she had quite recovered John Crowninshield and Benny Bliss assisted her upstairs.

"I wonder if she lost anything that time?" Jo said to me when we were alone.

I stared at her, startled.  
"Then you think—?"  
"I think if she did the thief is a woman, as Mr. Hazard thinks," Jo replied calmly. "The men got out when I started to undress her."

"It almost looked as if you did it purposely."

"I did. When I saw her fall I thought of what you told me of her fainting at the reception in town. I acted more quickly than I thought. I tried to remember who was near her—"

"Well?" I demanded excitedly, when she didn't go on.  
"Some one in dark blue."  
"Mrs. Sargent," I said.  
"And the very fat one?"  
"Mrs. Higginson."  
"And—really I don't remember. She was standing near a window, I think—"  
"Jo, where was the duke?"  
"At the piano, all the way across the room." She regarded me questioningly. "I'd really like to know if she—she lost anything."  
"I know a way to find out," I said. "Ask her."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### The Midnight Watch.

I knocked upon Natalie's door; Minette opened it. Instead of finding Natalie in bed, as I expected, she was sitting near an open window, surprisingly rosy.

"Can I do anything for you?" I inquired.

"Nothing, thanks, unless you'll stay and talk to me," she replied, rather cordially. "I feel quite well and cheerful, and I can't account for fainting. Won't you sit down? It's sweet of you to come, dear."

I looked after Minette's retreating figure.

"I came to ask you a question—an impertinent question," I said frankly, for it was that, and I hated to be hypocritical about it. "But I'd like to stay with you if you really care to have me. I hope you'll think I'm interested and not curious. Did you miss any of your jewels when—when you fainted?"

"No."  
"I can't say that I was surprised; I know I felt absurdly relieved."  
"I'm awfully glad. It looked so very much like—once before, that I was afraid you had."

"You have no cause for worry. You were not even there, my dear."  
"Oh, no!" I exclaimed. "I was not thinking of myself."

"I'm going to tell you something," she said suddenly. "something I had decided to keep to myself. It's true I did not miss anything when I fainted, but I was not wearing all my jewels. Tonight I yielded to an impulse in wearing them. I had what the poker players call a hunch. I was sure if I left them here they would be taken. But there were too many, they looked absurd, and at the last moment I removed six bracelets, a pendant and a rope of pearls." She arose and crossed to her dressing-table. "I've been keeping everything locked since the ruby was lost. Every day I have put the jewel box in a different place. Tonight, when I decided to leave some of the jewels behind, I put them in the box, yielded to another impulse, and slipped the box under the pillow on my bed, where it never had been before. I didn't lose anything when I fainted, but the jewel box is empty!" She opened it.

Poor Natalie!  
"But you must tell it," I urged when I had sufficiently recovered from the shock of it. "It's too important not to. Everybody here is in danger unless—" I did not go on, but involuntarily I glanced at the door where Minette had gone out.

"I will not suspect Minette," she said firmly, noticing the action. "She was with my mother when I was born, and she doesn't steal. There are a thousand ways to prove her innocent."

I knew that in the same thought I suspected her, and I remembered Laura's argument that Minette was the Abercrombies. Also that at the very minute the ruby was stolen Minette was giving Natalie a massage. Minette distinctly was innocent.

"No, I shall not tell it," Natalie pursued, "not yet, anyhow, it's too absurd. And I shall rely upon your discretion, my dear. When we see what happens to Mr. Abbott, then—"

I came to my feet with an exclamation.

"You believe Mr. Abbott guilty?"  
"I refuse to believe anything," she replied coolly.

"I beg your pardon," I said, "but I thought you once told me you were sure Mr. Abbott was not a thief."  
"That was before I knew about the emerald bracelet. My dear, I can't reasonably believe he's innocent now. There isn't another emerald bracelet like that in the world. Detectives found it in Mr. Abbott's possession. He doesn't deny it; he can't."

"But they didn't find the ruby, and whatever it was you lost at the Abercrombies," I protested.

"A sapphire and a diamond bracelet," she sighed.

"And before that? He's shielding some one," I burst out. "I know it; I feel sure of it."  
"Who?"

I shook my head. Every time I tried to conjecture I brought up against a blank wall.

"Mr. Crowninshield will surely make him tell—will find a way," I declared. "That's what a lawyer is for. Anyhow, he didn't have anything to do with the ruby." I clung to that tenaciously. "He was at home, Laura telephoned, and he answered."

"I don't want to think of it any more," Natalie drawled. "I don't understand it and I'm not trying to. I'm not going to sleep tonight if I can help it. I shall sit here all night with the light on, my remaining trinkets in my lap, grasped firmly—so! In the morning I shall go to town and lock them in a safety deposit; then I'm going to Europe, unless I have to stay here about the trial. When the detective comes tomorrow he can look after everything else. He won't have to bother about me."

"I'll sit up with you," I told her. I went toward the door. "I'll be back presently when my sister is asleep,

and we can amuse ourselves with double dummy. I don't mind sitting up."  
"You haven't such a thing as a revolver?" she asked.  
"Jo has," I replied. "She carries one in the car, but I wouldn't pull the trigger for an empire. I'll bring it, though, if you want it."  
"Bring it," she said.

I didn't tell Jo the whole truth. I said Natalie didn't lose anything when she fainted, and she didn't. When Jo was asleep I went back to Natalie and took the revolver. We played double dummy with the wicked little weapon on the table, and talked about everything except thieves, until two o'clock. Nothing happened. A little slice of the dying moon hung in the west, but it cast only a pallid light outside. I couldn't keep from yawning. Both Natalie and I were growing stupid. Finally she suggested that I get some sleep, and she would read. She wasn't afraid with the revolver, for she said she could shoot and shoot straight, but perhaps she, too, would go to bed.

The scare petered out as the morning advanced; our night vigil began to look a bit wild and absurd.

I yawned good-night and went. I think I was asleep before I touched the bed. I dreamed, and the dreams were not pleasant. I saw Winthrop, his arms covered with emerald bracelets! he plucked at them and they became little green snakes. Looking on, smiling, was His Grace, but instead of being small and dark he was tall and fair, with a saber-cut across his cheek. Then the emerald bracelets were chains, and I was pushing frantically against the card-room door when it gave, and I was in a cell

where Winthrop was walking up and down, up and down, dragging his clanking chains.

I awoke. Everything was quite still. I listened; I heard nothing. After deciding I wouldn't get up, I did. The doors were securely locked, I knew, but I tried them each in turn. Jo was sleeping soundly. I went into the sitting-room and looked out. There was the faint light of early dawn, just enough to distinguish the dim outline of trees. After a while I became conscious of the fact that some one was moving below. I strained my eyes to see, my heart beating wildly. Then I knew it was—Winthrop! He moved across the lawn. I saw him stop, raise his arm and rub the back of his head. I couldn't be mistaken in that gesture. I think he turned back once, then the dim outline of his figure retreated, and was lost in the direction of the beach.

While I stood there wondering, my brain in a mood of conjecture, starting after Winthrop, something else moved on the lawn below! I looked, straining my eyes through the pale dawn. A man, yes; that much was obvious. Vaguely the figure seemed familiar, and suddenly it came to me—Thomas, the footman! But not the rigid, liveried servant now; a quick-moving, alert, crouching, creeping Thomas. He darted across the lawn and vanished in the direction Winthrop had gone.

I was getting back into bed, too bewildered for connected thought, when I heard a sharp, quick noise like the falling of a hammer or some heavy object on the floor. The sound seemed to come from overhead. There was no one overhead, unless some one was in the gallery! I had no business investigating, but I did. A sudden thought pushed forward in my now wide-awake mind that Jo had acted strangely about the gallery.

I unlocked my door carefully. Natalie's light was out. No doubt she had decided to go to sleep. I stood there beside my door for perhaps two minutes, perhaps ten—it seemed to be a century—and finally my waiting was rewarded. The sound came again just overhead, but this time muffled, and I was sure I heard footsteps. It never once occurred to me that I was going into danger when I went toward the steps leading from the wing to the floor above. I wanted to know who was in the gallery at that time of the night—or morning.

I reached the top of the steps, feeling my way carefully. The corridors were quite dark, for the shades were drawn, keeping out what little light there was, but I knew the steps to the gallery were just to my right. Before I turned to ascend that second flight I felt there was some one near me. I put out my hand, but drew it back quickly. I had not touched anything, but I was scared blue. My fright must have made me lose my bearings for the moment.

My hand came in contact with a door—I knew it was the card-room door. I pushed it open and went in

while I tried to control my wildly beating heart and my stampeding courage. Once I thought of switching on the light, but I—I was afraid of the light. It occurred to me that I was in a ridiculous position. The duke's suite was just beyond. If he should hear me, and he, too, should decide to investigate—

I knew one thing, that I was going back to my room instantly and let the noise in the gallery take care of itself.

When I moved, my foot came in contact with something. Again my absurd fright until I had assured myself that whatever it was it was not going to harm me. I stooped and picked it up. It was soft—a cloth bag. A thought came like a lightning flash: A bag—with jewels! I clutched it to my breast and jerked at the door. When I turned in the direction of the wing I felt, I knew, some one again was in the hall. I couldn't find the stairs to the wing! Whoever was there near me moved!

In that instant the blaze of an electric light was flashed straight into my eyes.

"Miss Codman!" I heard in a tone of utter surprise; I had no recollection of ever having heard the voice before.

I screamed, and turning, rushed blindly in the direction, as I thought, of the wing. My feet touched—space! I plunged forward headlong and went down, down, down into darkness.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### The Bag of Loot.

When I regained consciousness, John was putting me on the couch in my sitting-room, and there was a jumble of faces before me—Jo, and Laura, and Mrs. Hazard, all badly frightened, clutching at unfastened dressing-gowns. Natalie was there, too, but I did not see her at first.

"I'm afraid she's badly hurt," John was saying. "Did Doctor Graham answer, Hap?"

Hap was crushing my hand within both of his, hurting me, but I didn't want to say so. Everything was terribly confusing. My right shoulder was hurt; the doctor said afterward I must have struck the wall as I plunged down the steps into the wing, and that saved me, perhaps, from breaking my neck. It was later I discovered that my right arm was broken, when I remembered the bag I had picked up and couldn't feel it.

"The jewels!" I cried.  
"Jewels!" everybody repeated in one tone—a tone of surprise.

"I had them when I fell," I said. "A bag of jewels."  
Hap groaned. "I'm sure he thought I was out of my head, and after a great deal of fuss he managed to get a drink of brandy down my throat—what he didn't spill down my neck. But John went out and came back presently with the bag. It was a dark green cloth bag like lawyers carry their—whatever they do carry in them. And thrown into it, like so many potatoes, was about the most beautiful collection of jewels I have ever seen. There was a silk stocking—Lydia's—containing more jewels; and Mrs. Higginson's hot-water bottle.

"A thief would never look for jewels in a hot-water bottle," I quoted hysterically.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## NATURE IS NEVER UNKIND

Provides Compensation in Some Way for Those Who Suffer From Affliction.

When the third question put to the girl who was tinting a customer's hair a fashionable shade elicited no reply the woman turned to the manager of the beauty shop and said: "What is the matter with that girl, anyhow? Is she deaf?"

"Very nearly," said the manager.  
"How does she hold her place?" said the woman. "It seems to me that a person employed in a place like this stands in need of her five senses."

"That is just what they do not need," was the reply. "If one sense is lacking the other four make up for the deficiency and become more valuable because more acute. Your hairdresser cannot hear, but her sight is marvelous. She can detect a gray hair half a block away and her gift for shading and matching colors amounts to real genius. No woman with all her faculties is so consummate an artist as she is in touching up a difficult head of hair. When you are ready for massage I shall bring you a blind girl. All her art is centered in her finger tips. She can find and smooth away wrinkles that less sensitive fingers would not discover. Another deaf girl in the establishment is particularly sensitive to scents and is invaluable in mixing and applying perfumes. The manager in a place of this kind needs her five senses and as many more as nature can provide, but for her assistants, elimination and concentration are desirable."

## Russia's Hunting Bag.

The hunting season in Russia has come to an end, and the following particulars, says a St. Petersburg correspondent, relate to the booty, which has far surpassed that of the preceding year.

The largest number of animals killed are squirrels, which head the list with 4,525,300 victims. The most sought after fur is of course black sable, of which 12,250 were caught. Last year a clear profit of 2,500,000 francs was made on sables, which fetched as much as 1,000 francs apiece.

The remainder of the "bag" was composed of 200,000 ermine, 1,500 brown bears, 150,000 skunk, 100 blue foxes and 16,500 gray wolves.

## THE KITCHEN CABINET

SPRIT, O my spirit,  
Why art thou out of tune?  
Art thou lingering in December,  
When the earth is in its June?  
Hast thou lost thy part in nature,  
Hast thou lost the key?  
Art thou angry that the anthem  
Will not, cannot, wait for thee?  
—J. G. Holland.

## RED, BLACK AND WHITE CURRANTS.

Currants are a favorite fruit with most people. The red currant is the most used for jellies, although many like the combination of red and white, making a light-colored jelly. The combination of red currant and red raspberry is especially delicious.

The black currant is not so common now, but makes a peculiarly delicious jam for those who are sufficiently old-fashioned not to forget "grandmother's garden," where the black currant bushes were always found.

To be in the best condition for jelly making, the currants should not be too ripe nor picked after a heavy rain. Pick over the currants, but do not remove the stems. Wash and drain, and mash in the bottom of a preserving kettle with a wooden potato masher; add a few more and mash until there is enough for the receptacle. Cook until the currants have a white appearance, strain through a collander, then put the juice, boil five minutes, then add an equal measure of heated granulated sugar, or less if sour jelly is desired. Boil two or three minutes, try a little in a cold saucer; if a thin skin forms at once, pour into glasses. Jelly to be of good consistency should be just firm enough to keep its shape when turned from the glass. It should be clear and of good flavor. Let stand for a day or two in a sunny window to set, then cover and put away for winter use in a cool, dry place.

The delicious bar le duc currants may be prepared at home if one cares to take the time for it. Use the large cherry currant and remove the seeds with a large needle. Cook the currants very carefully and mix with currant jelly. Put away in glasses, carefully covered.

These may be prepared when making jelly, and a glass or two saved for the bar le duc currants. This conserve being very rich, is only used in small quantities, or as a garnish for cheese or salad.

Nothing is easier than fault-finding, no talent, no self-denial, no brains, no character are required to set up in the grumbling business. —Robert West.

## DINNER NOTES.

A few suggestions for reasonable dinner menus may be enjoyed at this time. Fruit soups are quite popular among the Scandinavian people, and are becoming better known and appreciated among the American. A delicious cold soup on a hot day is most satisfying and refreshing.

Iced Fruit Soup—Put a quart of berries or sour cherries and a quart of cold water over the fire in a granite saucepan; heat slowly to the boiling point, boil for three minutes, add sufficient sugar to sweeten palatably, stir until dissolved, and press through a sieve. Reheat, and when at the boiling point add a tablespoonful of arrow root which has been blended with a little cold water. Stir until well cooked, add a tablespoonful of lemon juice and set away to cool. Serve cold in small glasses.

Fried Chicken, Virginia Style.—Prepare a fat young chicken and joint it as for a fricassee. Wipe it and dredge with salt, pepper and flour, then lay out on a platter. In a deep frying pan try out a half pound of fat bacon, add one scant cup of lard, and when smoking hot lay in the pieces of chicken, cooking only enough at a time to allow plenty of room to turn them. The thickest pieces will take ten minutes to cook. Place on a hot platter and keep hot while the rest is cooking.

Almond Delight.—Make a rich pastry and fill it with the following mixture: Blanch and chop fine one cupful of almonds. Put a cup of granulated sugar into a frying pan, add a teaspoonful of water and place over a slow fire until melted, stirring briskly until the sugar turns a golden brown. Turn this out on the crust quickly before it cools. Beat three eggs, add two tablespoonfuls of sugar and a pint of milk. Pour over the crust with the almonds and bake in a hot oven at first. Cover with a meringue or with whipped cream, and serve.

Figaro Figs.—Steam pulled figs until soft and plump, slit at the side and insert a half of a marshmallow and bits of nuts. Roll in sugar and serve on a pretty plate.

## Nellie Maxwell.

Instinct Above Intelligence.  
A boy was asked to explain the difference between animal instinct and human intelligence. "If we had instinct," he said, "we should know everything we needed to know without learning it, but we've got reason, and so we have to study ourselves most blind or be a fool."

## Call Again, Please.

Bix—Jones says he gives employment to a large number of men." Dix—"So he does—other people's bill collectors."—Boston Transcript.



Hap and I Dropped Down on a Bench.