

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 takes baseball to Hap Hazard and also gains the confidence of Laura Hazard. The Duc de Trouville is believed to be interested in Laura. Mrs. Hazard gives a big reception and Louie meets many people high in the social world. Natalie Agazzi, to whom Louie 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 reciprocates, but will not admit it as 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 the robbery. Louie is found at midnight and finds Hap in her room. Next morning Hap 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. Louie watches all night with Natalie. She sees Winthrop cross the lawn in the early morning, shadowed by Thomas, a footman. Louie hears a noise in the gallery and goes to investigate. She slips into the card room and stumbles over a man and falls downstairs. She breaks her arm. The burglar belongs to John. Louie again finds herself under suspicion. Louie overhears Hap tell his mother that he intends to marry Louie even if she is a thief, which he doesn't believe. Louie declares that she will not marry him, but Mrs. Hazard says Hap can have her if he wants her. Detective Adams is found bound and gagged. Jo is missing. The detective says she was carried off by three men.

CHAPTER XXIV.—Continued.

At the end of an hour we knew that Jo's abductors had crossed the wire fence to the pasture, a mile down the shore, for a piece of the dark blue dressing-gown that was missing from her wardrobe was found on the wire where, evidently, it had caught. A little farther on, one of her slippers was found. But there all trace of the thieves and Jo ended.

We telephoned for Winthrop and he came immediately. He knew more about that part of the country in a minute than any of the rest of us in a year. But noontime brought nothing more, and afternoon still nothing. Then the police were notified and that brought also newspaper men and photographers. The police and the newspapers seemed the end of our desperate hoping.

Doctor Graham came and barricaded me in my sitting-room when the reporters began to arrive, with Celie as sentinel. He said it would not do for me to see them; that I would be ill. Then the attempted jewel robbery leaked out—reporters just scent such things—embellished with my having heard suspicious noises, dramatically rushing out and saving the jewels, and plunging down the steps and breaking my arm as a fitting climax. An artist sketched one of the maids and added a broken arm, as they couldn't snap me; and the newspapers that afternoon came out with extras that sizzled.

But out of that episode Mr. Samuel Dick, of the Evening Columbian, concocted a very plausible story of Jo's disappearance. She had heard a noise, just as I had; she had investigated, which accounted for her having on as much as she had; she had perhaps recognized the thieves, which made it necessary for them to carry her away until they had made good their escape. They had left the detective behind because he had not learned who they were. Mr. Dick conjectured that we would find Jo alive, because if the thieves had intended to kill her they would not have taken the trouble to carry her off. The big question, of course, if we accepted this theory, was: Whom had she recognized? And that was a chance to display Mr. Dick's ability as a reporter. He wrote a lot and said nothing, but ended with a clever allusion to the emerald bracelet and Winthrop. The story breathed hope in every line, but it did not find Jo; and that's all I wanted—to find her!

The thieves had gone away empty-handed. Plainly they had come back for the jewels, not knowing, of course, the jewels had been conveyed to town and locked in good strong boxes in various banks. But Jo knew it, and she did not follow in the hope of getting back anything. Just where or how they had made her prisoner

we could only conjecture. After all, I couldn't see that it made any difference where, for our only idea was to get her back, to know she had not been harmed, but the police and the reporters gave a great deal of thought and space to this matter. I told John of the pistol when he came once during the afternoon to say there was nothing new, but he only groaned. She had not defended herself.

When the dinner-gong sounded, Lone Oak, for once, was demoralized. John had not come back; Hap was disheveled and tired and refused to dress. He dined on coffee and sandwiches which Mrs. Hazard directed Burrows to serve in the smoking-room to anybody who wanted to eat. I was in my room, dry-eyed and hopeless, with Laura consoling me; and poor, dear Mrs. Hazard was trying to be everywhere and see everybody, while an immaculate, much-starched nurse from town only got in everybody's way and added to the confusion. No one would let her nurse. Natalie constituted herself hostess.

I don't think anybody gave a thought to His Grace or cared how he amused himself. He came upon the terrace once during the afternoon, and a photographer snapped him, not for any particular reason, but just because he was a duke and was lying around loose. It was an awkward situation for a house-party. The dinner must have been a hideous affair. The women were left alone after dinner, for all the men, except His Grace, changed to rough clothes and went to see what could be done to help. Not that they had any particular hope, but they chafed at being idle in such a crisis. The billiard-room was deserted, the card-room dark, and one by one lanterns began to flit in the direction of the ninth hole, where Jo's slipper had been found.

It was quite dark when John came, and besides the horror of its being dark, there was no news. He knocked softly, came in, spread out his hands helplessly. He was tired and dusty, and his clothes were torn where evidently he had struggled through gaps in wire fences. When I met his clear gray eyes and the look in them I moaned. Then he gave way, too, and sat down, burying his face in his hands. I knew the truth; he loved her! He had waited a long time to love, then had tumbled in pell-mell, and the woman was Jo. I obeyed an impulse and put my hand on his bowed head.

"We'll find her," I whispered brokenly.

"Yes, we'll find her!" he repeated grimly.

"One of the newspapers suggests that perhaps she was abducted and is being held for ransom. In that case there's a chance—"

He came to his feet with an exclamation and eagerly scanned the paper I gave him.

"If they are holding her—if only they will demand a ransom," he said hoarsely. "Great God! If only they will!"

"You think they have killed her?" I cried.

"No, no!" he denied. "She's alive. She must be alive. Why, she's got to live, live!"

It was an awful thing to see him



Just Because He Was a Duke and Was Lying Around Loose.

go to pieces, and he had gone completely. The effort he made to control himself made it all the more pitiful. His lips were white; he could not hold the paper steady, and when he spoke his words, try as he did to keep them from being so, were tragic. I didn't know what had happened between him and Jo the evening before, but I knew what was going to happen if she ever came back alive; and no dressmaking nonsense and false pride were going to have anything to do with it. When a man waits for nearly forty years to fall in love, a tornado—and that's the most strenuous thing I can think of—

couldn't stop him. He folded the paper and put it down gently.

"If the damned scoundrels are after ransom," he said, "they will take care of her. It's growing cold—he shivered, but the breeze that came in was hot and sultry—and she has only one shoe. Louie, does she know how to use that revolver?"

"She can plug a dime at fifty yards," I replied, remembering that somebody at the club once said he would like to see her plug a dime at fifty yards.

"Then why didn't she shoot?" he demanded suddenly.

"It's an awful thing to shoot a man, now, isn't it?" I demanded in turn. "Even if he is a thief?"

"Great Lord, no, when she's in danger; it's self-defense."

"Well, that's the way I'd feel about it, and that's the way she would, too. Perhaps when she realized there was danger it was too late."

He was exasperated with me. He couldn't see that a woman's mind works differently from a man's. He came close to me after a moment, drew me into his arms and placed a very brotherly kiss upon my forehead.

"Women," he said softly, "women are angels."

The worst continued to happen. Just at that particular instant Hap banged on the door and, without waiting, suddenly opened it. It was an awfully awkward situation. There was John with me in his arms—John, who never looked twice at a woman in his life—and I practically engaged to Hap, and Hap looking as if something had exploded just under his nose. I know I went red, and I'm sure I would have done something foolish if John's beautiful self-possession had not saved us. He continued to hold me in his arms.

"Women," he remarked over my shoulder to Hap, "women are angels." Hap blinked.

"You bet they are!" he said. But he was trying to readjust himself. I went to him.

"Don't you see it's Jo, you goose, not me," I whispered. "Get him a drink; he needs it."

"Scotch or rye, John?" Hap asked from pure force of habit.

"Neither," John replied.

"Scotch," I said firmly. "Make it a long one—I think that's the way to say it, and I illustrated as the men do—and—and put a cherry in it!"

CHAPTER XXV.

The Man at the Bridge.

It's a strange thing that the first definite clue we had to Jo after the slipper and the torn piece of her dressing-gown, came from Charlie Ayer. There had been no demand for ransom on the following morning and we were in despair. Mr. Partridge arrived, but he could only bring me consolation. A rumor that some strange men had been seen at the railroad station came to naught, and finally Charlie had taken the run-about and gone away, no one knew where and had not bothered. He came back late that afternoon, grimy, with two men in the car, one a milk man, the other a stable boy, and held up to the shocked gaze of everybody present Jo's other slipper.

While the detectives John had had sent down from town, and the local police, were following up clues that led nowhere, Charlie had stumbled upon one that seemed to be good, through pure unadulterated chance, and a puncture. He had started to town, I don't think he himself knew why, and he got the puncture on a stretch of roadway that didn't boast a tree for a mile. It's a thirsty job fixing a puncture, more so when the sun isn't particular just how hot it shines, and it's the first time the shoe has been off and has rusted on the rim.

When Charlie finally threw the pump and the jack into the tonneau the only thing in sight was a milk-wagon. Now, I don't think Charlie ever took a drink of milk in his life, but milk is better than nothing and Charlie halled the wagon. While he was drinking the milk, the milkman began reading a morning paper. Charlie gazed at the back page, knowing that on the front page, just under the milkman's eyes, was a story, capped by a two-column head, to the effect that Miss Codman was still missing. He asked a perfectly silly question, with startling results:

"You don't happen to have seen a young woman, in a dark-blue dressing-gown, looking lost, strayed or stolen?"

"No, sir," the milkman answered, "but Bill, the stable boy where we keep the wagons—he jerked his head toward the interior of the wagon—'says he thinks he knows about this here young woman who was stolen from Lone Oak. Are you a-looking for her?'"

"Yes," admitted Charlie, "I'm a-looking for her."

The milkman whistled, then held up two fingers and dexterously expectorated between them.

"Well, Bill says he thinks he picked up them three men and the young woman on this here very road about four o'clock in the morning, and drove 'em about two miles. He ain't sure; he don't remember nothing about the dressing-gown, for it was dark and he didn't see it, but he said this morning that it did seem to him as if it must have been them."

A greenback changed hands, and the result was that the milkman agreed to take Charlie to the stable and introduce him to Bill.

Bill's story was that he had driven a couple who had missed the last train up to a stable that boasted an auto, mobile, and there he had turned back toward home. It was late then, or rather, early—somewhere between half-past three and four. At a point

which he did not exactly remember, three men accosted him and asked if they might ride with him. He didn't consider this unusual, because it had happened to him before. The men were supporting a young woman between them. Bill concluded she had had too much. He was paid in advance, a bill which, in the light of a smoky kerosene stable lamp later, turned out to be ten dollars, but that, too, had happened to Bill before when he had given a lift to a "souse."

They rode what Bill judged to be about two miles, and got out at a path evidently leading to a house, just before coming to a small bridge. He remembered the bridge distinctly. They had called "good-night" to him. One of them, he thought, spoke in German. He had ceased to think of the incident until he saw the row the newspapers had kicked up about a young woman having been, presumably, abducted from a place in that vicinity on that very morning. He had hesitated about informing the police, because he didn't want to get mixed up 'bout nothing when he wasn't sure 'bout nothing, and didn't know nobody; and he couldn't be spared from the stable to go court 'bout nothing.

But when he had been promised full pay for any time lost and a guarantee of his job from the owner of the stable, he consented to accompany Charlie to Lone Oak, if the milkman would go also, and place himself and his information at the disposal of whoever wanted it. He gave Charlie a slipper which he had found in the carriage. It was Jo's.

The terrace became a newspaper office, and at the rustic tables where we usually had tea in the late afternoon reporters were frantically writing. The photographers snapped Bill and the milkman every time they looked up.

It was quite a procession that went down the driveway to take Bill to the spot near the small bridge where the men and their victim had alighted. Winthrop said he knew the path and



A Passing Automobile Party Had Found an Unconscious Man Beside the Road.

the bridge—it was perhaps four miles or more below Lone Oak—and if Jo's abductors had left the carriage there he was certain it was not to follow the path. He knew it led to a little house and a celery farm, owned by an old German couple named Hingelmuller, simple, honest folk who certainly had no hand in an abduction or in concealing any one who had. But everybody went, just the same, and rather eagerly when it was remembered that Bill said he thought one of the men spoke in German.

The little old couple were astonished at the intrusion, but answered questions straightforwardly, and because Winthrop, who knew them well, requested it, allowed a search of their house and premises. Absolutely no trace of any person was found. The detectives and—more to the point—the newspaper men were finally convinced that the Hingelmullers knew nothing. If it had not been for the slipper, it is probable Bill's story would have been entirely discredited.

The bridge spanned a small brook that ran through the Hingelmullers' celery farm on one side of the road, coming through an estate on the other belonging to a family who had been abroad for three years. This estate was vacant. The house was some distance from the stream, and stood on a knoll that gave a view of the ocean. It was surrounded by weeds and overgrowth.

The detectives decided to inspect this house. A careful search, however, proved conclusively that no one had been near the place. The house was securely shuttered, its shutters and porches thick with dust. There was no indication anywhere of the weeds having been trampled. It was reasonably certain that the house neither was nor had been occupied for some time. But the police took the responsibility of tearing off a shutter and searching. Inside was the same coating of dust, no footprints anywhere, no signs of anything having been disturbed.

The search from that time on seemed to stand still. Bill and the milkman were sent back to the stable handsomely rewarded, but the story came to naught, just as everything else had. We were no nearer finding Jo than we had been the morning of her disappearance.

John still expected a demand for ransom, so did Mr. Partridge, who broke two pairs of glasses the morning he came, rubbing them. I had ceased to hope. I nursed my broken arm and cried every time I looked—and I looked often—at Jo's long, slim gowns hanging on their pegs. Just

how it happened the newspapers hadn't discovered Jo's connection with Mme. Gautier, Robes et Man-teaux, I do not know. It's a fact that all the stories referred to her as Mrs. Hazard's guest, the beautiful Miss Codman. Perhaps it made a better story.

We dragged through Sunday. Winthrop had taken the reporters into his home, for there was no such thing as a hotel near us. We discovered that Sam Dick was an '07, and Sunday evening Mrs. Hazard brought him in to see me—she's soft-hearted about reporters anyhow. He told me he wouldn't print anything I said if I didn't wish it, but he simply had to be able to tell his city editor that he had seen me; that he would like to take a message to the other boys. I told him I'd stand for what he chose to tell them. He's a dandy chap.

Monday morning Mrs. Hazard authorized the newspaper men to say that twenty-five thousand dollars would be paid for Jo returned alive. I didn't have to be told who had offered to pay it.

Monday noon something happened that we could not see had any bearing on Jo's disappearance, but which took the newspaper men and photographers to the rustic bridge on the run. A passing automobile party had found an unconscious man beside the road just at the rustic bridge. He had been shot in the throat. How he came there no one knew. He could not speak and no one could identify him. Afterward a trail of blood was found leading into the woods along the stream, but before it had been followed many things had happened.

The wounded man was taken to Dr. Graham's, where it was not thought he could live, as he was terribly exhausted from loss of blood, and he evidently had dragged himself from the place where he had been shot, to the road for assistance.

While we were digesting this new horror, John, who was pacing up and down Mrs. Hazard's sitting room, suddenly gave a short, sharp cry, and the next instant he was tearing madly—tearing madly is exactly what he was doing—down the steps and across the lawn. Coming from the direction of the beach, stumbling, weary, exhausted, was Jo!

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THOUGHT HE GAVE THE SIGN

But Old Gentleman Naturally Was Indignant at Mistake of Drug Clerk.

A well-dressed old man walked into a corner drug store the other day, mopped his brow with a handkerchief and took a seat at the soda fountain. The clerk faced him expectantly.

"I am very thirsty," he remarked as he drummed on the counter. "I don't know what I want. Well, I believe I will take a phosphate," he concluded, still drumming on the marble with his fingers. The clerk smiled, picked up a stein and went to the rear of the store. He came back, set it in front of the old man and rang up 15 cents out of the half dollar which was given him. The old man, without looking in the stein, thirstily raised it to his lips and took a long draught. Then he quickly set the stein down, sputtered a moment and then exploded between his coughs.

"What do you mean? I never took a drop of liquor, sir, in my life. But I know it, sir, the rotten stuff, when I smell it. I'll not stand for it, sir. I called for a cherry phosphate. What do you mean, sir, by giving me whisky?" And the old man stopped for breath as he glared at the amazed clerk.

"Well, I—I er—I guess I made a mistake. I thought you wanted it for medicine," stammered the clerk.

"Sir, I am a teetotaler. I wouldn't touch the stuff for love nor money." And the old man marched out indignantly.

"Well, for the love of Mike!" exclaimed the clerk to a man at the counter who had been served a stein in the same way, but who made no kick. "That old duffer came in here and certainly gave me the correct high sign. And he drank nearly half of it, too." The clerk laughed as he looked into the stein.—Kansas City Journal.

Care of Your Umbrella.

A soft silk wears the best in an umbrella. A steel frame is lighter to carry and admits of a closer roll. When carrying your umbrella on the street not in use, keep it furled; if hanging in your closet keep its case on. In fact, it presents a very neat appearance if the case is on when it is carried. To furl, grasp the stick in the right hand, shake out the folds, wrap them closely around the stick, beginning at the lower end, and smooth as they are wrapped around the stick, then fasten with the silk band on the silk cover.

When coming in with a wet umbrella, wipe off the handle and ferrule, and furl the silk sections. If the silk gets a spot on it, remove it with a silk cloth, warm water and soap. Clean a gold or silver handle in warm soapsuds, rub up a wooden handle with a very slightly oily cloth.

Up in Chemistry.

"Thomas," said the professor to a pupil in the junior class in chemistry, "mention an oxide."

"Leather," replied Thomas.

"What is leather an oxide of?" asked the professor.

"An oxide of beef," answered the bright youngster.

What Happened.

He went to ask her dear old dad To let his daughter marry him; He got home later, but he had An ambulance to carry him.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

LESSON FOR AUGUST 3

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

LESSON TEXT—Ps. 105:23-36 (cf. Ex. 7:8-11:10).

GOLDEN TEXT—"Whoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted."—R. V. Matt. 23:12.

While this Psalm is a succinct statement of all that is contained in Exodus, chapters 7 to 12, still no teacher can judge himself as having made proper preparation who has not studied carefully the earlier record. Beginning with those of discomfort the plagues become more and more severe until the last and the crowning one, the death of the first born, caused the Egyptians to thrust out the Israelites with haste and gladness, laden with an abundance of "spoil." Pharaoh trusted in the superior greatness of the Egyptian gods, he also had great pride in his absolute power and hated to lose the profitable service of his Hebrew slaves. Over against this was God's right to demand the worship of his chosen people, God's profuse warnings to the proud Egyptian, and the inevitable outcome of the man, tribe, or nation who sets up human will in opposition to the plans of an Omnipotent God. True thanksgiving and praise are based upon "His marvelous works" (v. 5 R. V.)

Israel Made Strong.

I. The Induction of Israel into Egypt, vv. 23-25. By "Israel" in verse 23 the Psalmist does not refer to the nation but rather to the supplanter who became "Israel, a prince." His induction into Egypt was in accordance with God's purpose and plan, yes, his specific command, Gen. 46:2-7, Acts 7:9-15. God increased the descendants of Israel greatly in the land of Egypt, see v. 24. At the same time God made those same descendants stronger than their "adversaries" on account of the fact that Jehovah fought on their side, see Rom. 8:31.

II. The Exodus of Israel From Egypt, vv. 26-36. Now the Psalmist is referring to the nation. In Exodus there are recorded ten plagues, here there are mentioned but eight. The plague of the murrain of beasts and the plague of boils, the fifth and the sixth, are here left out for some reason best known to the Psalmist.

God saw the afflictions of Israel but sends relief through human agents. Moses was God's "servant" (v. 26) and Aaron "His chosen" (I Sam. 12:6) so also is every true believer. Their work has to "shew" (v. 27) God's wonders in the land of Egypt (Ham). They were to shew "His" wonders, signs, the "Words of His signs" (R. V. marg.), and none of their own. In other words they were to be the visible embodiment of God's character and power.

Worshipped the Nile.

The Psalmist then turns to the first of the historic plagues. The Egyptians were so dependent upon the Nile that they personified it and worshipped it. They had shed the blood of the Israelites and were given blood to drink, see Rev. 16:5, 6 and Gal. 6:7. The third plague was directed against the goddess "Hekt," queen of two worlds, and who was represented by a frog-like figure, see Ex. 8:8. It was after this calamity that Pharaoh temporized. The third and fourth plagues are grouped together in verse 31. God often uses very little things to humble the great ones of earth. Life is made up of trifles, but life is no trifle. Pharaoh had proudly boasted of his agnosticism (Ex. 5:2) but when he sought to try conclusions with God and said, "Neither will I let Israel go" God let him wrestle with frogs, lice and flies. We thus see a man setting himself against God who is not able to overcome these smallest of pests. As we have mentioned, the fifth and sixth plagues are omitted from this record, hence the plague mentioned in v. 32 is in reality the seventh (Ex. 9). It was a rebuke to the God of the air, and from Rev. 8:7 and 16:21 we learn that it is to be repeated in the end of time.

Though Israel was free from the eighth, the plague of locusts (v. 34) they did suffer from a like experience in later days, Joel 1:1-7. These small pests can turn a fruitful land into a barren waste.

But the culminating plague (v. 36) was the smiting of the first born. Even Israel could not escape this calamity except by the previous shedding of blood, Ex. 12:3-18. God gave Pharaoh ample warning, Ex. 4:23. Refusing to yield under the lesser judgments, God brought this supreme penalty, smiting all the first born, "the beginning of all their strength" (R. V. marg. v. 36).

III. The Teaching. Before the plagues Pharaoh was warned; before the second one he was given an opportunity to repent and because of the suffering thereby he relented and asked for a respite. Refusing to declare God's greatness (Ex. 8:10) "the (Pharaoh) made heavy his heart" (Ex. 8:15), an act of his own, not an act of God. No warning is given of the third plague for Pharaoh had broken faith. The acknowledgment upon the part of his magicians of a power greater than their own did not serve as a warning and he continued in his rebellion.