

# The Mood Of a Maid.

By CECILY ALLEN.

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The girl leaned forward after scanning the road in both directions and touched the chauffeur's arm. The great crimson car came to a panting, deliberate standstill.

The girl did not wait for the chauffeur to help her, but sprang lightly to the road and vanished into the woodland on the right. The chauffeur turned the car as if his thoughts were concentrated on the necessity of making the smallest possible turn in time of safety, in order to be prepared in time of emergency. And then the great crimson car shot back in the direction from whence it had come.

Safely screened by the underbrush, the girl found a clearing in the woodland and sat down on a moss grown log. Deftly she unwound the swathings of chiffon from her hat, baring a face delicate and sensitive as the anemones opening at her feet.

She drew off her gloves and felt of the velvety moss on the old log, then stooped to gather flowers. Finally, with the blossoms forgotten in her lap, she leaned forward, her elbows on her knees, her chin propped in the palms of her hands, watching the woodland life around her.

Chipmunks and squirrels scampered along the edge of the clearing. Where the sun shone upon a tangle of fern and jack in the pulpit two robins perched pertly on dry twigs and discussed the troubles of May moving day. From the shadows of the wood beyond came the persistent hammering of a woodpecker.

Beyond the screen of underbrush automobiles and smart turnouts spun on toward the race track, where the world of fashion was foregathering. An hour passed, and then at the distant wall of a peculiar siren whistle the girl sprang to her feet, dropped her lapful of flowers and ran to the roadside.

Bearing down upon her was a crimson car, twin of the one which had dropped her so unceremoniously an hour earlier.

But the resemblance stopped with the car. The chauffeur in the first car had worn a spik span uniform in tan color from the tips of his highly polished boots to the crown of his heavy red cap. The man in this car wore a disreputable looking storm coat of English cloth, a shabby visor cap and a pair of goggles which had certainly seen more prosperous days.

He was scorching along at a fine pace. But the girl calmly stepped to the edge of the road and waved a detaining hand—a bare hand at that. The machine slowed down, and the man made preparations to descend, as became one hailed by a maiden in distress. But again the girl raised a detaining hand.

"My car met with an accident. I thought perhaps—I am very anxious to reach Dalton this afternoon. Perhaps you were going that way. Would you give me a lift?"

She looked up eagerly into his startled face. Then the man coughed discreetly, swallowed a smile and sprang from the machine.

"I was—or thought I was—going to the races, but I am sure it will be much more pleasant at—er—was it Dalton you said?"

The man's accent was English. The admiration in his eyes was the sort that knows no nationality. The girl flushed beneath it and sprang into the car before the astonished man could assist her.

For a few minutes the car ran on in silence. Then the girl spoke abruptly. "Let us take this crossroad. Then a mile farther we will strike the old Dalton turnpike. There we will not meet."

"I understand," he interrupted gravely. And the great car swerved into the crossroad, running through a stretch of woodland.

Again the girl seemed plunged in thought. But at last the man remarked a bit lamely:

"Perfect day, isn't it?"

The girl looked up at him shyly. Her eyes were soft and luminous.

"Oh, I have had the most beautiful hour there in the woods. I've never seen anything half so wonderful as those little creatures doing just as they pleased. Just as soon as the birds tired of one tree or bush or fern they flew off to another. They did not mind me nor each other. Just think of being like that all your life!"

The man looked at her curiously, as if she were a new specimen of the genus feminine and entirely worthy of deep study.

"It is all so different from what I've been used to. I make up knowing that Marie will be right there with my chocolate. And then will come cards and mail and flowers and Aunt Margaret. Of course Aunt Margaret is a dear, but ten years of doing things right under Aunt Margaret's eyes are very tiresome. Don't you think so?"

"I am quite sure it must be a terrible bore," replied the man gravely.

"And then seeing the same people everywhere you go and being quite sure that you will see no one that Aunt Margaret has not seen first."

The man bit his lip at this naive confession.

"Do you know," said the girl, waxing confidential as the car lapsed along over the tree hung road. "I've always dreamed of having a man come to my rescue just like this—a man I had never known—a man quite different

from any of the men I have ever met."

She paused, and the man at her side studied her with grave eyes. "Now, there, was Bessie Stewart—she married Jack Coghlan. They'd gone to kindergarten and dancing school together. And then she'd gone to all his college 'proms' and the same cotillions. Why, it was just like marrying some one who had lived in your own family always."

"And now they're bored to death with each other. They had a honeymoon at Monte Carlo, where they had been the year before on the Borden-Jones yacht, and they came back to the same old round of teas and dinners and dances. There was no romance in that."

The man shook his head. "But Harriet, one of our parlor maids, married a mimer way out west. She met him by answering an advertisement in a matrimonial paper. He came east after her, and she wrote Marie that they were awfully happy. He had never beaten her once."

The man fung back his head and laughed, and the girl laughed with him. Then suddenly she clutched his sleeve.

"You've passed the Dalton turnpike, and I must be at Stoneywold for lunch."

"We are not going to Dalton," said the man calmly. "I've been out this way before. Just two miles beyond we will cross the state line."

"But why? Oh, I must go on to Stoneywold."

The man ignored the remark.

"And across the state line, I understand, there is no need of a license."

"Oh!" said the girl very softly, and the great car stopped beneath the arch of freshly leaved trees.

He fung aside his heavy driving gloves and took the delicate, sensitive face of the girl between his two hands.

"Will you, dearest?"

Her eyes stopped dancing and turned wondrously tender.

"Oh, I hoped you'd understand, but I did not dream!"

"Will you, dearest?" persisted the man.

She lowered her long lashes over the eyes into which he tried so hard to gaze. Later she murmured from the shelter of his arms: "But I want to tell you the truth, Lester. I never loved you till just this minute. And I had made up my mind that if you did not understand I would just—"

He threw on the power.

"Let us get across the line quick before you change your mind again."

Hiram Manning, justice of the peace in the —th district, plucked at his beard and regarded the couple doubtfully.

"I'd like to oblige you, but this ain't no Gretna Green, an'—well, I don't mind tellin' you that the girl looks under age."

"But I am not," protested the girl. "I am twenty."

"Not castin' no reflections, ma'am, but I'd like some proof."

The girl and the man looked at each other; then the girl's troubled glance traveled to the table, and a smile brightened her face.

"Isn't that proof enough that my family are willing?"

She held the paper toward the justice with the face of a girl peering straight from the printed page.

The justice looked from the picture to the girl, and his face alternately flushed and paled.

"Gosh all hemlocks, you're Banker Clafin's girl, and he—he's—"

"Yes," said the girl, her eyes dancing. "He is Lord Gramaton. But, indeed, he's very nice in spite of the fact," she added as Justice of the Peace Manning continued to stare incredulously at the man's slim figure in its disreputable motoring apparel.

"You wait a bit. I'll be right back," said the justice, with sudden accession of spirit, and he started for the door.

The girl and man sprang after him.

"You are not going to telephone—to town—to those wretched reporters. Please, please, let us be married quite alone, with just some of your family for witnesses," cried the girl.

"Yes," added the man nervously. "We've just run away from all that sort of thing—piffle, don't you know. Please let us get away quietly. Don't telephone. I beg of you."

"Telephone nothin'," exclaimed the justice heartily. "I'm just goin' to put on my Sunday suit. Never expect to marry a millionaire's girl and a lord again in my time."

## ENFORCE THE LAW.

Just as soon as the Attorney General and the Solicitors of the State are able to fully digest and understand the anti-trust law passed by the last legislature, which its friends and supporters claim has a sufficient number of "teeth" to do the work, they should proceed to enforce it—in order that those Senators who fought so "manfully" for section "F" may have a full and thorough vindication.

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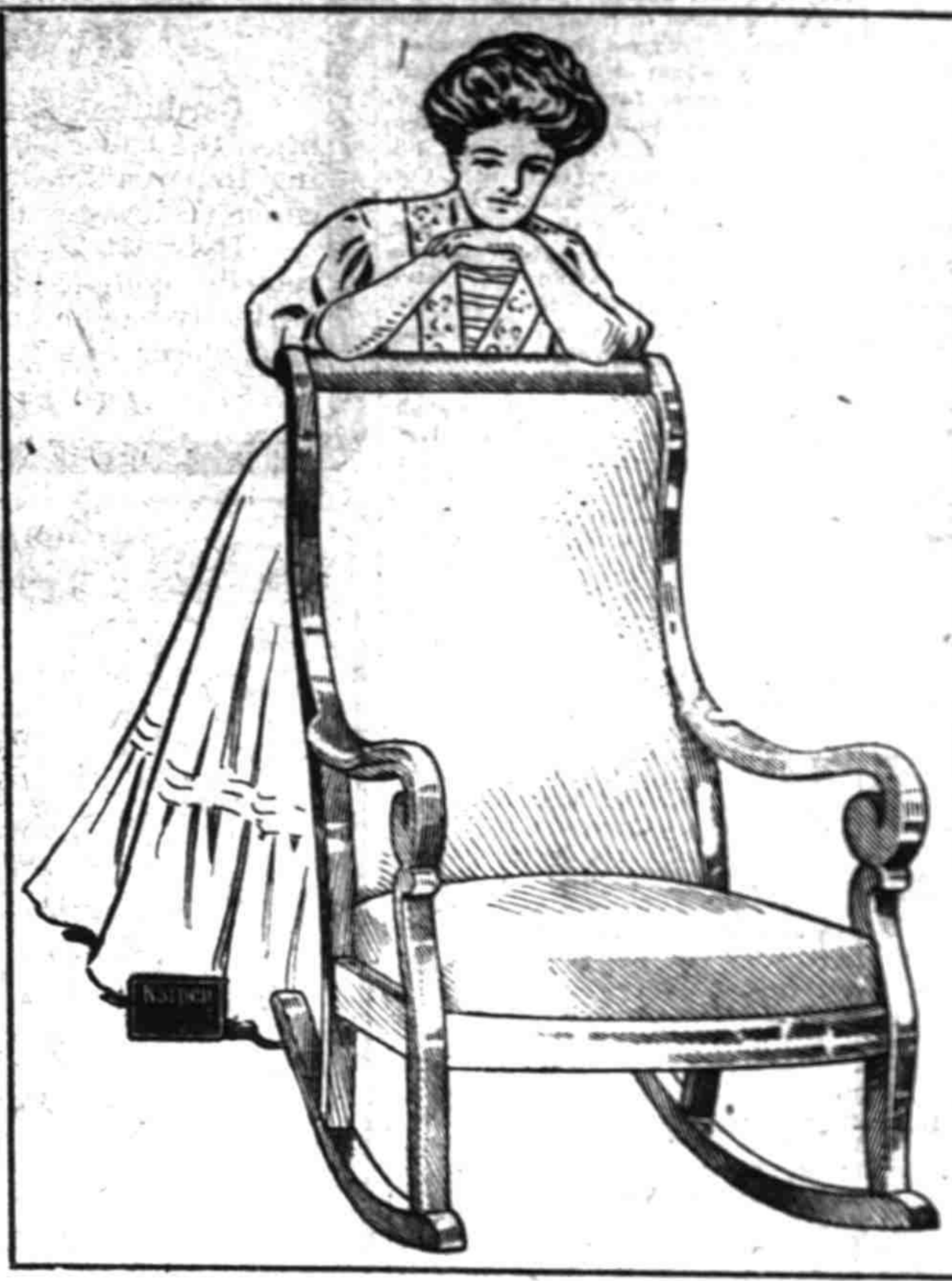
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## LADIES - SPRING - SUITS

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**F. N. & R. Z. Egerton**  
Louisburg, N. C.