

The GOOSE WOMAN

by REX BEACH

SIXTH INSTALLMENT

"You thought I'd be shocked," she went on a moment, "but it takes more than—well, it takes something pretty dreadful to shock a girl who has lived the way I've had to live. There's one thing the theatre teacher—that's charity. Your mother, whatever she is now, was a brilliant artist in her time and we must remember that in the theatre that counts for a great deal. There are people endowed with such blazing genius that ordinary conventions don't, can't bind them. The fire of it burns away their bonds. Yes, and how can you judge right and wrong? They're such words. Circumstances are so powerful. She told you what price girls sometimes have to pay for success—"

"You angel!" breathed the boy. "It's only good, clean women like you who can be truly charitable."

"No, no! We're all pretty much alike. Only some of us are differently placed. What we actually do is of so little consequence as against what we are—or what we become. She had no right to stand in your way, of course; that was wicked and cruel; it was hideous of her to tell you this thing; but—how many geniuses are quite normal? Any great talent throws the scales off balance."

Gerald had somewhat recovered himself by now. Gently he kissed Hazel full upon the lips; quietly reverently, but with a throbbing earnestness he said: "You're the truest, sweetest woman I have ever known and you've brought back all my faith, all my courage, all my self-respect; you've made a man of me. If you can think charitably of my mother, then surely I can. Yes, you've done a wonderful thing, for you've made me more ashamed of myself than of her."

It was late when the lovers managed to tear themselves apart and to exchange the last kiss. For some time after Jerry had gone Hazel stood where he had left her, gazing meditatively at nothing and with the faintest pucker between her brows. She pulled herself together when she heard a sound in the adjoining room and inquired:

"Is that you, Jacob?"

"Yeah! I been waiting till Jerry went home. I wanted to talk to you."

Hazel returned to the dining room. "It's pretty late—"

"I know but—there was a couple of fellows at the theatre after you left. A couple—detectives."

Miss Woods turned startled eyes upon the speaker. "Detectives? W—what for? What about?"

"The Etheridge case, of course. They asked a lot of questions: how often he was used to coming here; did he ever come after the show, when you was alone; was you ever out to his place; what kind of friends was you and him? All that kind of stuff."

"I see. And what did you tell them?"

"I told 'em what the Book says: 'The wicked man shall fall by his own wickedness. He shall be snared in the work of his hands.' Amos Etheridge was an abominable unto the Lord and the Lord slew him with the edge of the sword."

"But surely that didn't answer their questions, Jacob."

"Oh, I told 'em he came and went here, like a lot of others—him owning the theatre like he did—and you went out to his place once in a while when he was giving a party or something. About him being here that Thursday night—"

"They asked about that?"

"They were awful particular about the right he was killed. I said if he'd been here I'd of seen him, sure, and I didn't. I didn't see his automobile standing outside either. I swore positive to that."

There was a moment of silence, then Miss Woods murmured with an effort. "No doubt they are questioning everybody. I knew Mr. Etheridge well; he was very kind to me. He treated all of the company well, for that matter. Why should I wish to—to injure him? Or anybody?"

"Sure thing! That's what I told 'em. Folks hope to have a reason for killing folks. You're just a

sweet, innocent kid. Iniquity ain't in the innocent and nobody taketh reward against 'em. They showed me the letter that was found on Mr. Etheridge and wanted to know if it was your writing."

"Well?" The inquiry came faintly.

"Oh, I lied about that, too! I said it wasn't."

Miss Woods' knees weakened and she sat down. Her eyes weakened and frightened; they were fixed hypnotically upon Jacob's. The old man regarded her kindly, then said: "Now don't you worry. Nothing's going to happen. You go to bed. Jacob won't let nobody hurt you."

On the morning after Jerry's visit, Mary Holmes ran through a stack of newspapers and discovered, to her surprise and to her chagrin, that nowhere was her name mentioned. The Etheridge case was featured as prominently as ever, but she had dropped out of it. In one week she had become a national character, and had been forgotten; it seemed almost as if she had been born, had lived feverishly, and had died, all in seven days. She did not enjoy the sensation; she was offended. The taste for publicity is likely the taste for narcotics: it feeds upon itself, and once formed, it is hard to break. For awhile Mary Holmes had walked in the spotlight; now to be elbowed aside, to be crowded entirely off the stage, caused her to boil with rebellion. Her vanity had been able to ignore their mockery and to construe what remained as applause: it took some effort to picture herself as the old Mary Holmes beneath whose feet once more were the rapt, upturned faces of the world, but after a fashion she had succeeded. It was a sort of game and she had enjoyed playing it. To be robbed now of that enjoyment left a bleak feeling of emptiness, a feeling which increased when she dimly recalled her scene with Jerry on the previous evening. So he was going to get married! That would leave her more alone than ever. She was sorry she had told him the truth about himself; he was such a sensitive flower! He would probably stay away altogether, and his visits had at least broken the deadly humdrum of this wretched existence. Any interruption, anything whatever to do or to think about, was preferable to monotony such as she endured. She realized this morning that those visits had meant more than she had imagined. Heigh-ho! About all the excitement she could look forward to from now on was being called as a witness in the Etheridge case and getting back into the newspaper columns in that manner. There was no certainty that she would be called. Her love of the dramatic made her wish that she had a really sensational story to tell. It would be thrilling to take the stand and give testimony that would electrify the court, the whole country. There would be some fun in that, too.

Her mind envisaged a new thought and she considered it while feeding her poultry. When she had finished her work she walked up the road and spent a long while studying the scene of the tragedy and carefully exploring the ground. When she returned there was a deep frown of preoccupation upon her face, but her eyes were bright and there was a purposeful set to her features.

Later that day she assured herself that some destiny must have shaped her thoughts for Mr. Vogel the new prosecutor, drove out from town and interviewed her. With him he brought Westland's chief of detectives, Lopez. For a while Vogel questioned Mrs. Holmes perfunctorily; then his bearing changed; he became alert, attentive.

"Why didn't you make all this known before?" he inquired.

"The police talked with you and so did the newspaper men."

"Yes," the woman laughed harshly. "They talked with me; and then they went out of their way to make me ridiculous. The idiots! The swine! Why should I tell them anything. Come here

I want to show you something? She led her callers out of her living room and into a squalid bed-chamber adjoining. The bed-clothes had been slept in repeatedly and had not been made up; the



room was indescribably dirty, its windows were unwashed. It was precisely the sort of den in which a woman like Mary Holmes would sleep. Too bad she was not a credible witness, Vogel thought. If she were anything except what she was he could put some confidence in her, make use of her, but—

"Sit down," Mrs. Holmes cleared two rickety chairs of their burdens of old clothes, dusty newspapers, and what not, then from a dark corner she dragged forth a rusty trunk. The lid of this she flung back: it was partially filled with old scrap-books, programs, lithographs, photographs, and the like. She rose with her arms full and dumped her burden upon the bed, then thrust a huge volume into Vogel's hands. "Run through that and then ask me why I tried to shoot that penny-a-liner! Those are clippings. Most of them are foreign, but you'll find some in English."

Vogel turned the first few leaves of the book, then he looked up incredulously. "What the devil?—Are you—Maria di Nardi?" he inquired.

"I am. Or I was."

"Good Lord." The prosecutor stared at Mrs. Holmes. Lopez looked over his shoulder and read the yellowed headlines. Together they examined the photographs on the bed and compared them with the huge slattern before them. The pictures were old; those in street dress were quaintly out of date, but many were in operatic costume which the men readily recognized. All showed a young woman of magnificent physical proportions and considerable beauty. In the shapeless figure and the bloated face before them none of that beauty remained; nevertheless the likeness was recognizable.

Vogel rose to his feet in genuine agitation. "This is astonishing! I knew of you, of course, although I never heard you sing. I—it's incredible!" He stared about at his surroundings. "Do the newspapers know who you are?"

"Nobody knows who I am, except my son."

"You have a son?"

Mrs. Holmes nodded. In a few words she told her callers about Jerry, and from her tone as much as from her words they drew pretty accurate conclusions as to the relations existing between her and her boy.

For perhaps an hour Vogel and Lopez took turns questioning the woman, then they drove her back to town with them. In Vogel's office she repeated her story to a stenographer, read it in typewritten form, then swore to it.

When, at least, she had been sent home, Lopez exclaimed.

"Well! That's the biggest wallop I ever had. It upsets everything."

"Don't you believe her?"

"Sure! She must be telling the truth, but you're going to have a hard job to make a jury believe her."

"We'll have to check up, of course."

"That'll be easy. But remember she's queer." Everybody knows she's drunk half the time. She's a notorious character and—well—she'll prejudice herself."

"I'll take care of that. I'll see that she makes a good impression. I'm going to get her out of the pigsty, dress her up, and put her in a hotel and make her look like a human being. I'll take her off the whisky, too, and make sure that

The Family Doctor

Counter irritants are agents which produce temporary irritation in another area than the infected part. They are seldom used any more, yet they are worth a bit of study, because of the good they may do in an emergency.

Counter-irritants in common use in the household may be named as, pepper, mustard, turpentine, croton oil, and the like. We base the use of these things on our knowledge of infection and inflammation beneath the surface. In very acute pneumonia, and "pleurisy" we have two deeper seated inflammations which are often benefited by counter irritants—but always to be used in the early stages, mind you.

A lobar pneumonia may be aborted, or the attack rendered much milder, by the judicious use of mustard-plasters applied vigorously when the lung is in the stage of "determination." This means, coughs just after or even during the initial chill. Later on in the disease counter-irritants are wasted effort.

I like turpentine, in just strength to redden—which may be used longer, because of the benefits of inhaling its vapor. But we must be sure the kidneys are sound, before we permit any contact of turpentine with the patient.

In a chronic pleurisy, especially when recurrent—in aged persons, with hacking, dry cough, the chest over the pain may be just touched with a cotton-tipped tooth-pick, wet with croton oil; this old method is just as useful today as it was sixty years ago. I have a neighbor now, who attends to his pleurisy-pains satisfactorily himself with this application. It produces vesication, (slight blistering) which he says "draws the poison out." At any rate, it gives him relief—over night.

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JOE GISH



WEARS OUT SO REPUTATION THAT IT TAKEN CARE OF.

Jokes

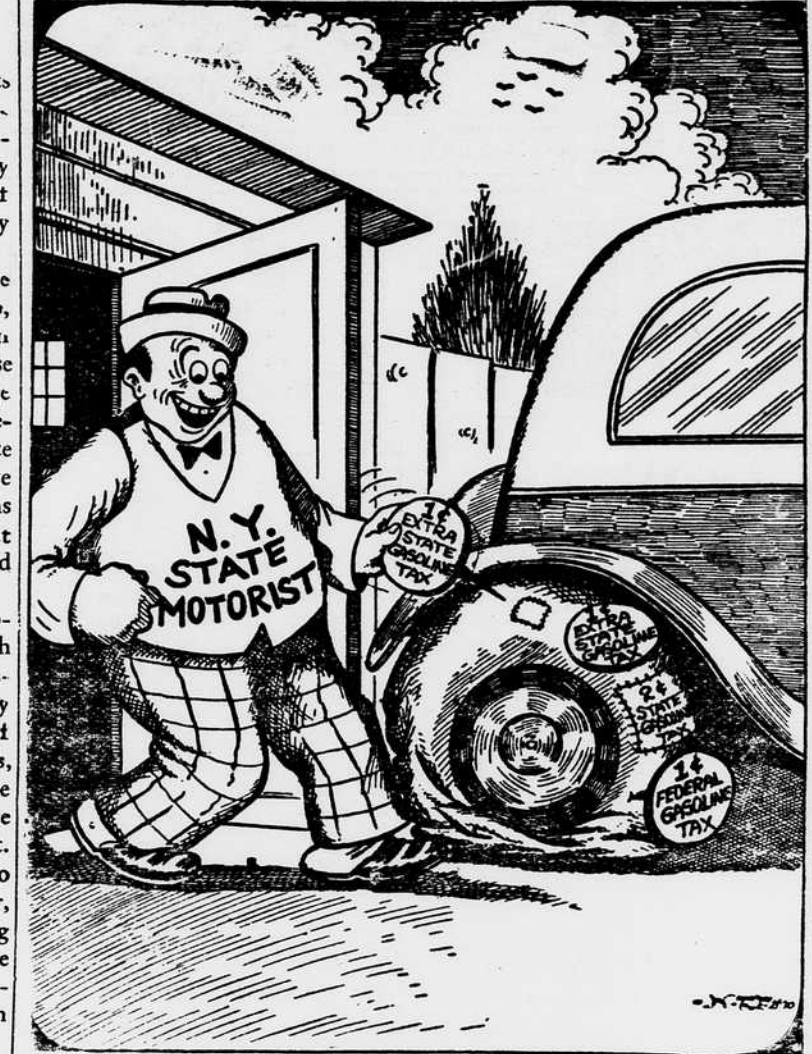
GOOD REASON
Stripp: "See here, my man, I'd like to use that telephone. You've done nothing for the past 15 minutes but stand there with the receiver to your ear—you haven't spoken a word."
Man in Booth: "Please be patient, sir. I'm talking to my wife"

COOLED OFF
An author attended the first performance of his new play. It was not a success.
At the end of the last act, a lady seated immediately behind the unhappy playwright, tapped him on the shoulder, placing something in his hand, remarked:
"I recognized you when you came in and cut off a lock of your hair. You may have it back!"

PROVIDENT
Snipp: "Jones certainly is a mean man. He never buys his wife anything unless he can see some advantage in it for himself."

she doesn't talk until I'm ready to have talk. This isn't an ordinary case, Chief; it's a newspaper trial. When the time comes I'm going to explode something."
"Oh, it'll be a big thing for you if you can get a conviction where our local people have failed to even start anything. But speaking of explosions, what about the Woods girl. This kind of blows up our theory about her doesn't it?"
"We'll have to wait and see."
"Shall I show that 'Thursday' letter to the reporters? They've after me every day to see it. They know about as much as we do."
"Show them nothing until I tell you to. Now then, locate that automobile with one headlight just as quickly as you can and bring me the name of the man who drove it."

Thank Goodness That One's Out!



NEWS ITEM: New York legislature reduces gasoline tax. Beginning July 1, 1936, the state gasoline tax will be 3c per gallon, saving to taxpayers of approximately \$15,000,000

MOLLY SAYS



(From the famous radio program "The Goldbergs")
"Mothers are not al- ways right, they are also human."

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Piffle: "He bought her a new car, didn't he?"
Snipp: "Yes; but he took out a \$10,000 life insurance policy on her at the same time."

MODERN MOONSHINE
A revenue agent was investigating a mountain region once famous for its corn liquor and struck up a conversation with a native. "Tell me," he said confidentially, "is there any moonshine made around here any more?"
"Well," replied the grizzled native "there's them as call it moonshine but to tell the truth it acts more like sunstroke."

STRANGE HONEYMOON
An absorbing article revealing the hair-raising tales and startling sights of a newly-wed couple who visited Devil's Island. One of many features in the May 31 issue of the American Weekly, the magazine which comes regularly with the Baltimore Sunday American. Get your copy from your local newsdealer.

Route One Items

Mr. and Mrs. Swink of Lexington were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Myers over the week-end.

Mr. and Mrs. James White and Norma Ruth of Cooleemee called on Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Myers the afternoon of the 17th.

Miss Mavis Powlas was the guest of Miss Detlas Lowder on Thursday night.

Miss Dorothy Walton and Miss Mary Helen Kerfees were entertained in the home of Miss Mavis Powlas the past week-end.

Mr. J. R. Gentle was the guest of Mrs. Harry Lowder recently.

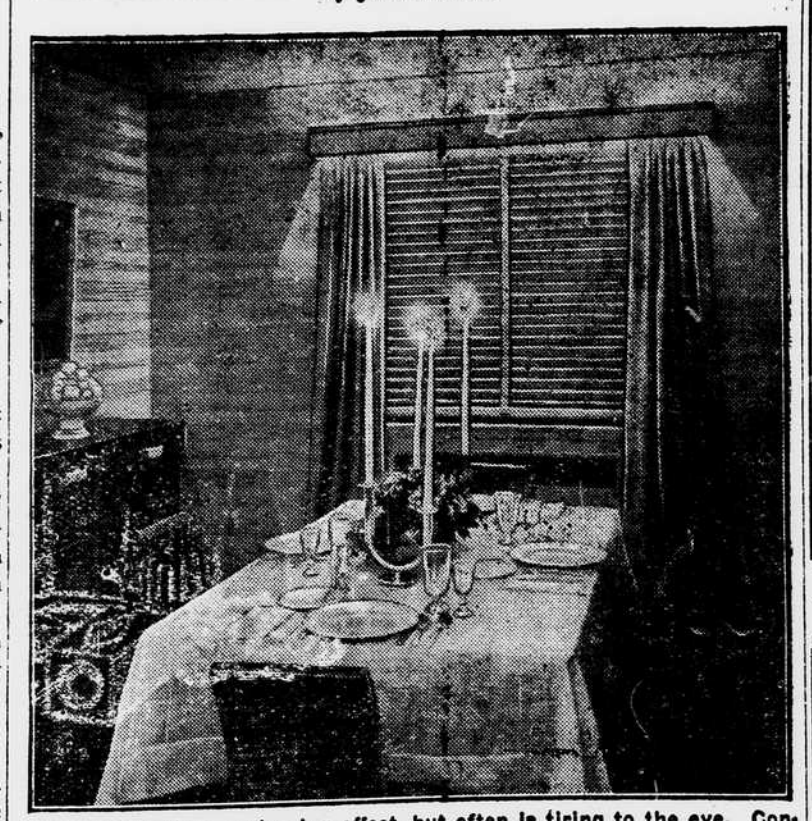
Miss Virginia Adderholdt has returned from New York to the home of her parents, Rev. and Mrs. Adderholdt of near Lebon church where she is convalescing.

Mrs. Maude Carlyle has spent some time with Mrs. Noah Cline recently.

Geo. F. Powlas was the dinner guest of Mrs. J. H. Myers of Salisbury on Tuesday the 19th.

Mrs. J. G. Lyerly is now at her home.

Here's a New Way to Have Candlelight Without Gloom or Glare



Candlelight gives a pleasing effect, but often is tiring to the eye. Concealed light coming from behind a drapery lambrequin, as shown here, softens the brilliance of the candles and enhances the general scheme.

THE dining room in the average home has come to be the "coat of many colors." Sometimes it must be the efficient study or game room, or even the sewing room, for often the table is the only area in the house big enough for cutting. Again it is the family dining room, and in this use it must be suited to the more festive atmosphere required on the afternoon tea, buffet supper, or formal dinner party.

Lighting Can Be Flexible
One ceiling lighting fixture—even one of those fine modern ones—is scarcely resourceful enough to serve all these varying demands equally well.

Many a homemaker prefers eating by candlelight, and usually does, when entertaining. Now there is no gainsaying the fact that dining by candlelight is delightful and most desirable. However, unless there are many candles of the taper height in the room, candlelight alone is tiring to the eyes annoying to many people, and, almost always (haven't you ob-

erved?) to the men. The thoughtful hostess certainly wants the charm, but not at the expense of her guests' comfort. Fortunately there are lighting compromises which will insure both delightful and comfortable effects in any setting.

Variety of Effects Possible
The flickering light of the candles—and you know it is usually right at the level of the eyes—needs other light in the room, soft and unobtrusive, to be sure, and of small amount so that the sparkling brilliance of the candles will not be wiped out but merely softened. This additional light may come effectively from carefully shaded wall brackets, from indirect urns, or still more subtly from behind drapery lambrequins. The latter method is the newest, and is becoming extremely popular. It employs a concealed metal trough equipped with several of the new luminaire lamps, and sheds a soft radiance that is really a joy to behold. Any good electrician can install it for you in very little time, and the cost is quite moderate.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK