

The GOOSE WOMAN

by REX BEACH

NINTH INSTALMENT

On Monday came the news that Mary Holmes was ill, completely prostrated by her son's arrest and by the frightful realization of what she had done. This, too, was tasty. People enjoy sympathizing with the innocent.

Mrs. Holmes was indeed ill, not however, by reason of what she had sworn to, but by reason of what she had drunk. That bellboy's choice of liquor had not been wise and Vogel had been summoned early Sunday morning to learn that his principal witness was suffering from "non-alcoholic" poisoning. Realizing that the truth regarding her condition would surely become known and very likely prejudice her reliability as a witness if he sent her to a hospital, he insisted that she remain where she was, meanwhile receiving, of course, the best medical attention. He it was who gave out the story of her collapse.

Gerald, very naturally, had no reason to question the cause of his mother's illness. It seemed to him that his plight was enough to pro-

trate her, but it destroyed his immediate hopes of disproving the charges against him. He was allowed to read the papers, but what he read appalled him. It was conceivable, of course, that his mother had actually witnessed the killing, as she maintained, and had told him nothing about it—she was eccentric; there was no telling what she might do or how she was likely to behave under the influence of liquor—but he strongly doubted this and clung to the conviction that she would confess to a wild and imaginative romance or that somebody would prove her story to be, in part, at least, the fanciful creation of an alcoholic brain. But would she confess? How could she bring herself to do so? Granting that she now realized where the truth of her story ended and imagination began, an assumption which, by the way, was not likely, was her love for him sufficient to warrant humiliation? Moreover, could she undo the wrong she had done, even if she tried? These were questions Gerald could not answer. As a matter of fact, he did not try very hard to answer them, for something more important than his own welfare weighed him down and rendered him apathetic—it was the misfortune that had befallen Hazel. From what he read in the newspapers it seemed to him that he was the only person in the world who believed in her. The poor girl must be suffering more keenly than he. Hers was the greater tragedy.

Gerald was surprised on Monday to receive a visit from two lawyers, members of the leading local firm, and to learn that they had been retained as his counsel. He assumed, of course, that his mother had sent them and he took cheer from that fact, but he gained little comfort out of talking with them aside from the realization that some one stood beside him.

He had expected some word, some communication from Hazel; but none came and at last her silence convinced him that she, too, believed in his guilt. It was a bitter pill to swallow, but, after all, why should she doubt his own mother's word?

Some people are possessed of such self-confidence, and such high regard for their own importance, that they assume others must share that faith. It is a form of conceit, and no doubt it is a blessing to the possessor, but Jerry was not conceited. He was a humble-minded, modest young man and he considered himself of very little consequence indeed. Upon consideration it seemed quite natural that Hazel should wish to be assured of his innocence before yielding to her impulses. Had he not tried her sufficiently without putting her love to this test? He told himself that he had.

For several days Mary Holmes remained a very sick woman. Instead of enjoying her unparalleled publicity she lay abed weak, nauseated, suffering wretchedly. When at last she was able to lift her head she eagerly demanded the daily papers and a complete account of all that had happened since she was stricken, but not until she was strong enough to sit up did the doctor permit her curiosity to be gratified. Then he told her guardedly that the "man in the robe" had been arrested and that the Ethridge case had been solved. He did not tell her who that man was, but he prepared her for a shock. She listened incredulously, in a daze. He gave her the papers and left her alone to read them.

He returned to the sick room after a while to find his patient staring blankly at the wall. "I thought you might feel the need of a stimulant," he said.

Mrs. Holmes did not hear him. "Did—Jerry do it?" she inquired, stupidly.

"You ought to know. You saw him."

"But they can't—they can't do anything to him on evidence like mine, can they?"

"Why not? It's hard to get a conviction on purely circumstantial evidence, but yours is direct."

There was a moment of silence. "The reporters are calling up every few hours. They want to interview you as soon as you're able to talk to them. Everybody is curious to know what you'll have to say. Yes, and the Woods girl has been here half a dozen times."

"I won't see them, nor her, either. Why does she want to talk to me? Hasn't she done enough? I shouldn't think she'd dare show her face on the street after causing all this and after everybody knows what she is." Mrs. Holmes found the doctor staring curiously at her; in irritation she flared out: "Why are you looking at me like that? What's the matter with you?"

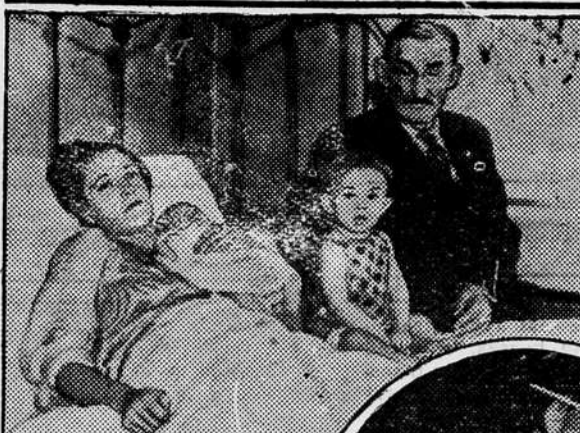
"You're a queer creature. I was wondering how it feels for a mother— But you can't be much of a mother." The speaker shrugged.

"How dare you?" Mrs. Holmes cried, shrilly. "The idea of your talking to me like that! I'm sick. I'm in no condition to—Why, even the newspapers blackguard me! But how did I know? What could I do? I never dreamed I'd—that it was—Jerry I saw."

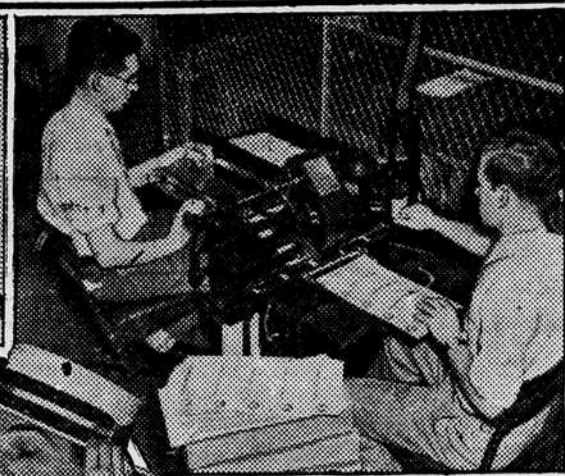
Without comment the doctor turned and left the room.

The sick woman raised herself laboriously, gathered the newspapers together and flung them as far as she could. A terribly bitter but impotent feeling of resentment came over her; tears wet her cheeks. Again she had been foiled. The world was always against her. Why did everything she touched go wrong? Why was she frustrated in everything she tried to do? So Jerry had bought an automobile without telling her about it! That's where the whole trouble had started—out of his deceit. He was not only cold and indifferent; he was deceitful. He had been her ruin, from the very first; now he had ruined both of them. But he had brought this upon himself. The fool! She had never hated anybody as she hated him at this moment, for once again he had turned her triumph into disaster. . . . How could she help hating him when he despised her and disapproved of everything she did? Well, why should she worry? There was no love lost between them and the mere fact of their relationship meant nothing. It was an irksome tie. . . . There had been a time when it meant something; he had seemed to care a great deal for her when he was a little boy. . . . He had been a pretty boy, by the way, with cute, lovable ways. Mrs. Holmes stirred restlessly and rolled her head. But no longer! All he did now was preach and voice his con-

In The WEEK'S NEWS



96-YEAR-OLD FATHER—The only Confederate Veteran George Isaac Hughes of New Bern, North Carolina, 96 years old, with his 28-year-old wife, their infant daughter Mary Gertrude, born June 3, and their son Franklin Roosevelt Hughes, 17 months old.



PREPARING BABY BONUS BONDS—Employees of the Treasury Department writing checks by machine to pay the soldiers bonus.



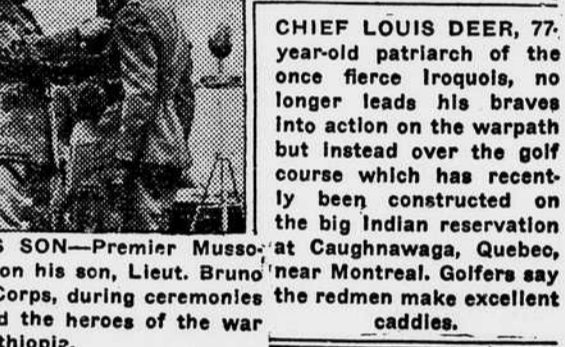
MARQUISSETTE DINGER DRESS—Black sheer marquisette, summer's favorite fabric, is used to create Singer Rogers' newest tunic dinner dress. Rows of fine stitching make a border for the tailored collar and bow, the short sleeves and the skirt of the tunic. Double medallions of white lace are appliqued all the way down the front of the tunic.



FIRST STRAW—AND THE LAST—Unable to wear his new straw hat to Newport's official opening, Walter Wolf King, star of "The Flying Red Horse" program, donned it at his Friday show heard over Columbia network at 8:00 P. M. E. D. S. T. King claimed it was the last straw when his co-star Joan Marsh insisted on putting the hat at her own angle.



MUSSOLINI DECORATES SON—Premier Mussolini pins a medal of valor on his son, Lieut. Bruno Mussolini of the Aviation Corps, during ceremonies at which Il Duce decorated the heroes of the war against Ethiopia.



CHIEF LOUIS DEER, 77-year-old patriarch of the once fierce Iroquois, no longer leads his braves into action on the warpath but instead over the golf course which has recently been constructed on the big Indian reservation near Montreal. Golfers say the redmen make excellent caddies.

will forget, so far as he is concerned. But they'll never forget the girl in the Ethridge case. You see, Mrs. Holmes, I'm not the great artist that you were. You had a God-given voice and a God-given genius. Maria di Nardi wasn't an ordinary woman; she was more; she was one out of many millions. She loved and suffered more intensely than we common women, she topped greater heights and sounded lower depths. Jerry told me the story you told him. It is the divine talent, the heaven-sent gift of the artist, that we must worship, not the weak, human artist herself. The one is so insignificant, so unimportant as compared with the other."

Mary Holmes experienced a grateful warmth about her heart at these words. Here was a fellow "professional," a woman with soul and understanding. Hazel was still speaking:

"Jerry feels the same way. Even what you told him that last night made no real difference in his regard for you. When you say he is no son, that he never loved you, you are mistaken. The world suffered a loss when you lost your voice, but you have passed on, through him, a talent perhaps as precious as your own. It must be saved—not for us only, but for

(Continued on page three)



Are you one of these nervous people who lie awake half the night and get up feeling "all in"? Why don't you do as other light sleepers have been doing for more than two generations—take Dr. Miles' NERVINE? One or two pleasant effervescent NERVINE Tablets or two or three teaspoonfuls of liquid NERVINE will generally assure a night of restful sleep. Perhaps you will have to take NERVINE two or three times a day just at first. Nervous people have been using Dr. Miles' NERVINE for Sleeplessness, Nervousness, Irritability, Restlessness, Nervous Indigestion, Nervous Headache, Travel Sickness, for more than fifty years.

Dr. Miles' NERVINE
Liquid and Effervescent Tablets

Keep a Good Laxative always in your home

Among the necessities of home is a good, reliable laxative. Don't be without one! Do your best to prevent constipation. Don't neglect it when you feel any of its disagreeable symptoms coming on. . . . We have used Theodor's Black-Draught for 21 years and have found it a very useful medicine that every family ought to have in their home," writes Mrs. Perry Hicks, of Belton, Texas. "I take Black-Draught for biliousness, constipation and other ills where a good laxative or purgative is needed. I have always found Black-Draught gives good results." Sold in 25-cent packages.

BLACK-DRAUGHT



A Common Sense Message to War Veterans About the Bonus

NO ONE likes to be told how to spend his money, and yet veterans will be appealed to from every angle by those who have anything to sell—anything from sox to gold bricks.

The wise veteran is not the man who throws away his bonus money on worthless goods—nor the man who hoards it. It's the man who gets real value when he does spend his money.

And what single thing could bring more real value into a home than a 1936 Kelvinator—the outstanding refrigerator of the year? We urge veterans to see the new Kelvinators and then judge whether there is a better method of investing a small part of their bonus.

Kelvinator is not only the most beautiful refrigerator you ever saw, but it has everything you've always wanted in the way of convenience.



Only Kelvinator gives you a Built-in Thermometer, a Certificate of Low Operating Cost and a 5-Year Protection Plan. It is just as easy to buy as an ordinary refrigerator.

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tempt. . . Contempt from her own son. Well, this would take him down a peg. He'd have to get out of this scrape the best way he could; she did not propose to make a liar out of herself, to make herself ridiculous or—worse. . . . She couldn't go back on her sworn statement, even if she wanted to. That was prejury. And this Woods hussy who had played at love-making with him, what did she want? Help, of course, in clearing him. #Humph—Some mothers might feel called upon to go to extreme lengths for their sons, but not she. No. She would not talk to her.

The next day, however, when Hazel Woods came again, Mary Holmes suddenly changed her mind and had the girl sent upstairs. She was feeling strong enough to sit up in a chair by this time; she steeled herself to endure some hysterical outburst, some extravagant appeal to her sympathies. It surprised her when none came. Miss Woods was haggard and listless, but she was in perfect control of herself. She had fine eyes, the elder woman noted, but they were hopeless and they gave the impression of thorough defeat. She made it plain with her first words that she accepted as true what had been given out through the papers—namely, that Mrs. Holmes' illness was the result of shock and maternal anxiety, and took it for granted that she was ready to join in any effort, however desperate, to undo the mischief she had caused.

This gave the mother a disagreeable sensation. She inquired coldly, "Have you been to see him?"

Hazel shook her head; her voice faltered. "How could I, after what came out? I was tried, convicted, and—publicly branded, all in one day. It would only cause him pain to see me and I can spare him that." After a moment she went on: "I've done what little I can. I've hired the best lawyers in the city, but—that is so little." Again she choked. "Oh, Mrs. Holmes, he didn't do it! I know it and so do you, but what can we do?"

"Nothing, I'm afraid."

"We must do something. Don't you understand the danger he's in? If it hadn't been for your statement—"

"Oh, of course, blame it on me!" irritably cried the elder woman. "I suppose everybody expects me to go back on my oath, just because he's my son."

"I'd sin, I'd do—anything if I had one. But—"

"He has never been a real son to me. He never cared a snap for me. He has caused me every bit of unhappiness I ever had. I've had more than my share, by the way." The speaker's tone was one of utmost bitterness.

"And yet it makes no difference, does it? You love him just the same." Mrs. Holmes uttered a derisive sound. "Oh, now! Why try to deceive me? We women nurse our babies at our breasts and no matter how old or how big or how bad they become they're still our

babies and we fight for them, tooth and nail. I'm a woman. I know."

"Humph! We fight for our lovers, too. Do you, honestly—care for Jerry?"

"I love him. I want him so much that I'd—burn eternally to have him for one day, one hour. You must know how I feel. I'm speaking to Maria di Nardi. . . . But that's not all. I care for him so sincerely that I wouldn't marry him, even if he asked me. It's too late. You understand that, don't you? He can be cleared; he can be made a name for himself; people



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