Ellen gets Her Man

THIRD INSTALMENT

SYNOPSIS: Ellen Mackay, on her way from school at Winnipeg, to join her father at Fort Edson, misses the boat by which she was to travel. Hearing that another boat was to start north in the morning, Ellen goes to the owner, John Benham, and begs him to give her a passage. To her surprise he flatly refuses.

Angry and puzzled, Ellen tells Pat McClatchney, a kindly old storekeeper of her difficulty, and Pat with the help of one of Benham's crew, succeeds in getting Ellen on board as a stowaway.

With axe and hammer and a handful of spikes, Benham went silently to work at the prow of the scow. With the poles spiked upright and a length of tarpaulin unearthed from the cargo, he fashioned a small enclosure. To finish it off he brought out the blankets Pierre Buschard had provided for her and placed them in the new-built cubby.

"When we tie up for the night the men shall gather you enough spruce for a comfortable couch," he announced. "This will afford you reasonable privacy."

Then, without another word or look he stowed the axe away, strode among his men and stood there, bringing out a short black briar pipe which he clenched affectionately in his teeth, to smoke calmly and disinterestedly.

The next half was made at sundown. The scows were tied up, fires lit and the evening meal prepared. Benham himself did not come near her, but he sent Pierre Buschard to her with several heaped dishes of savoury, steaming food and a pannikin of scalding hot tea. By the time she had finished her supper the Indians brought numerous armfuls of fragrant spruce tips for her bed.

Ellen arranged her own couch, then, with sudden determination, went ashore. Benham faced her. "I'm going for a little exercise," she said defiantly. "Or am I a prisoner?"

"Not in the least," was the quiet answer. "Only do not go too far. It is nearly dark and these woods are uncharted."

Unconsciously, Ellen stayed longer than she had intended. When she finally threaded her way back to the fire but a single figure remained seated before the fading flames. It was Benham. He looked at her without speaking.

A stir of response gripped Ellen. She knew he had been awaiting her return. "I'm sorry," she said, quietly. "Sorry if I've kept you from your rest. But somehow it seemed that I had at last come home, after being away too long. I won't offend this way again. I realize I am very much in your debt."

Benham nodded. "I understand," he said, softly. "I too have been away—and come home. And I often sit late like this. It is at night that all this speaks. A brief gesture encompassed the wilderness about them.

Ellen was startled. Most men she had known in the north country became hardened to its beauties. But there was something almost poetic in John Benham's simple words and tone. In some intangible way it seemed that a bond of friendship of common understanding between them was born there at that moment.

For a long time Ellen stood there, across the flames from this strange still, elemental man. Her mind seethed with truant thoughts, and words that frightened her lay close to her lips. Then one of the sleeping Indians stirred in his blankets. The spell was broken. Ellen moved away.

"Good-night," she called softly. "Good-night—John Benham."

The low, sturdy log buildings which comprised the Hudson Bay Post at Fort Edson, were spread out against the rising slope of a low, thickly-wooded ridge which mounted from a short beach of shingle on the west shore of the Mackenzie River, the last and mother river of those three great streams which carried the brigades of the fur traders into the vast bosom of the north.

Down the Athabasca River to Lake Athabasca, from there along the broad, smooth reaches of the Slave River to Great Slave Lake, then at last into the twisting flood of the Mackenzie, John Benham's brigade had found its way. Long, dreamy days and still, mysterious nights had passed in number since the day of the start, and now, at the death of still another day, the brigade tied up there on the beach below Fort Edson.

Side by side on the leading scow, Ellen Mackay and John Benham stood in silence and watched the end of the journey materialize out of the gathering river mists. A strange camaraderie had grown between these two. Time, enforced companionship and youth, had worked slowly but surely upon them. They were not lovers in any sense of the word. If such fires burned within them, then such fires were smouldering ones, hidden, banked fires which would need to know the ache of absence before thoroughly and consciously realized. Yet each recognized in the other a kindred spirit, an understanding heart.

The parting was commonplace enough. Ellen stepped to the shore and her baggage was placed beside her. At the head of the slope by the fort buildings a group of Indians were gathering. Benham gestured towards this group.

"They will take care of your luggage," he said slowly. "It is best that I leave immediately."

Ellen hesitated. "That first day, below Cascade Rapids—the morning you discovered that I had stowed away—you spoke of exacting payment. I—what is that payment, John Benham?"

The look he bent upon her was fathomless. "I would save you from that payment if I could now. But I am afraid that you must pay, just the same. Not to me—but to others."

"I—I don't understand."

"You will." He held out his hand. "Good-bye, Ellen Mackay."

For a moment her hand trembled in his. Then he had stepped back on to the scow. His deep voice called orders. The Crees bent to the sweeps and a moment later the hungry river current was wafting him off into the mists.

Something gathered in Ellen's throat. She looked away and started feverishly up the slope. And now, coming towards her from the buildings was a little group of Indians, led by a stooped shambling, white-haired man.

Ellen looked aghast. "Father!" she cried. "Father!"

"Damn him!" he shrilled. "Damn him! He's taken everything from me now. All he had left to me was a wee bit of pride—and now he has taken that. You—the daughter of Angus Mackay—travelled from yon distant landing to this fort with that squaw's whelp, that thieving freerader. And mark ye, little fool, he'll boast of it. Great God! Why did not the sickness of last winter take me off? I would have been spared this—spared this."

Ellen was both sickened and frightened. There was something ghastly about this old man's wailing rage and his imprecations. And this father of hers, who had wasted away to such a shell, seemed almost like another person to her. But she drew upon her young strength and went to him. Quietly but remorselessly she forced him back into his seat and dropped upon her knees beside him. She attempted to soothe him with words such as she would have used on a child.

"You must rest, father. You are not well. You have been too long alone. I am young and strong. You must let me take most of the load from your shoulders. I have not forgotten how to handle the Indians or to grade a fur."

Again the old factor laughed and it seemed to Ellen that all the elements of despair were in that laugh. He was shaking; a man palsied by the scalding outpourings of rage and hate. Over and over again he muttered the name of John Benham, cursing and reviling. It was long before he quited, and the reaction left him weak and shrunken. His eyes, staring out beneath shaggy brows were glazed and bloodshot. He panted weakly for breath.

At that moment all the murky shadows in the world seemed to close in on Ellen Mackay. During those thoughtless, carefree years which she had spent at school, some great tragedy had been enacted here in the

Ellen looked across the flames at this strange, still man.

She flew to him, to this stooped and gnarled patriarch. What had happened? When she had left, four years before, this father of hers had been tall, ruddy and stalwart, almost as tall and stalwart as John Benham. And now. . . How thin were his hunched shoulders! How feeble his step! She began to sob.

It seemed that neither could speak intelligently now. Slowly they climbed the slope together and entered the factor's cabin.

It was dusky in the cabin. The door closed behind them and the old man sank into a chair with a deep, quavering sigh. "So ye have come at last, lass," he said, and his voice was thin and high. "I was afraid--afraid ye had forgotten me, when De Soto passed without ye."

Ellen looked at him wide-eyed. "Father--could you believe that?" There was hurt reproach in her voice. "I came immediately. I am a Mackay," she finished proudly.

"Thank God for that, lass. And who was it that brought ye?"

Before she thought the name slipped out. "John Benham."

The old factor seemed to reel in his chair. His sagging head came up. His hands gripped the arms of the chair in bloodless intensity. He stared at her like a man glimpsing some fearsome ghost. His tongue flickered over his lips.

"Ye came with—who?"

Something icy closed about Ellen's heart. Yet she had to answer. "With John Benham, father. He---he was very kind to me, where he had reason, perhaps, to be otherwise."

The old man started to his feet and began to laugh, in high, shrill senile cachinnations. He stumbled to and fro across the confines of the room. Suddenly the laughter ceased and he began to curse—curse with a venom that was ghastly.

fastnesses of the north. Alone and in silence this father of hers had fought some great overwhelming misfortune, to be slowly beaten down and shattered until it seemed that his reason was tottering. And the cause of his misfortune had been John Benham. John Benham!

Something stirred and surged through her veins. Behind her was a long line of fighting ancestors, a lineage reaching to the far gorse covered highlands of Scotland. Here before her lay battle of another sort, yet battle none the less. With a click of her white teeth she caught up the gage. Gone in an instant were all memories of that thousand-mile trip from the north. In a flicker of an eyelash she placed John Benham in new status. An enemy now --an enemy who had shattered and brought near to death--her father.

At last the insanity of rage left Angus Mackay. One thin hand came out and rested on Ellen's dark head caressingly. "Forgive me, lass,' he murmured. 'But only the great God knows what I have been through. It is hard, at my age, to see defeat and disgrace looming just before the grave."

It was late when she kissed her father good-night and went to her room, the cozy little cubby that had been hers since a babe in swaddling clothes A shaded. lamp suffused it with a gentle, homely glow. It was carpeted with deep, rich furs, even to the enormous hide of a polar bear, in the gleaming pelage of which she sank to her slender ankles.

Prepared by the loving hands of Gitchie, her bed lured her beneath a spotless counterpane. On a little table in one corner was a bowl of wood violets, which Moosac had gathered and which filled the air with fairy incense. Swiftly she disrobed, blew out the light and slipped between cool, caressing sheets. But as she relaxed the darkness brought many thoughts and many images. Try as she would she could not keep a certain picture from drifting before her closed eyes. It was that of John Benham, as she had seen him many times. He stood before her again, clean, splendid, powerful, his strong still face grim and purposeful; his brilliant eyes adream with the mystery of the wilderness.

(Continued next week).

1936 Business Made Increase

Much of Expansion Was Largely Concentrated Among Durable Goods Inrustries.

By STANLEY M. SHAW
Associate Editor Standard Statistics Co., Inc.

The most significant feature of the 18 per cent increase in composite industrial activity in the United States during 1936 has been the fact that this expansion has been so largely concentrated among the durable goods industries. Depression in these lines has been primarily responsible for the continuing volume of new long term financing.

The year closes with industrial activity in the aggragate at virtually the "normal" levels of previous years, but there is still room for wide improvement in the production schedules of most of the depression, it appears reasonable to believe that a protracted period of large scale activity is still ahead. This forecast applies in particular to such industries as steel, building materials, railroad equipment, electrical equipment and farm and industrial machinery.

Heavy advance ordering for 1937 already assures the maintenance of high operating schedules in all of these major heavy industries for an indefinite period. Based on recent comprehensive studies by the Standard Statistics company, composite industrial production for the first quarter of 1937 should be at least 15 per cent above that for the same period in 1936, and a forecast of a gain in agregate activity for the year 1937 as a whole of 10 percent appears reasonably conservative.

Notwithstanding a persistent uptrend in production costs, the trend of industrial earnings in 1937 should be upward at a rate at least coinciding with the increases in volumes. Both wage and raw materials costs are increasing in most lines, but little difficulty should be erperienced in passing these costs along to consumers under present conditions. Moreover, revival of business confidence and the huge potential credit supply, plus the maintenance of low interest rates, opens the way for a large volume of necessary new capital financing on an advantageous basis.

The labor situation remains the major problem with which American business must contend in 1937. On the one hand there is a shortage of skilled workers. This may seem paradoxical in view of the high unemployment figures which still persist, but it is considered that few industries were able during the depression years to continue their training of workers for more skilled positions. Many industries will doubtless be hampered in carrying out projected increases in production schedules next year by reason of their inability to obtain additional skilled labor. On the other hand, the intensive drive by labor organizations for unionization of workers, for rates of pay based on shorter work-week. and for the closed shop. is virtually certain to cause strikes which will interrupt production schedules of numerous companies. Although no major industry-wide strikes are likely. labor disturbances will probably be numerous next year.

Nevertheless, the coming year should prove a period of further net gain in business volumes and profits. The forces of basic recovery which are responsible for the current improvement in the heavy industries promise to more than offset any temporary hindrances imposed by new Federal regulatory legislation, credit control measures. labor disturbances or foreign unsettlement.

READ THE ADS

Brazilian Soprano to Make Her Debut During Metropolitan Opera Broadcast

By BIDU SAYAO

Everybody knows the woman who casts away everything worth while—the love of a man, the honor of her family, her own self esteem—all for the show and pretense and display of the moment. She may be beautiful and charming, and in a way, innocent; but for her the shadow is the substance, and all that glitters is gold. Apparently nothing can bring her to resist her mad desire for sparkling jewels, pretty dresses and the fitful whirl of entertainment and admiration. She is the spoiled child who follows every whim and caprice until, in the end, she brings disaster upon herself, ruin to the man who loves her and tragedy to her family.

Of course, she is not only American. I have known her in France and Italy and my native Brazil; she is of every nationality and every age. If you look, you will find her name in today's newspapers; she is in history and fable, poem and song—her name is Manon.

Next Saturday afternoon when I sing for the first time in American opera, it will be as Manon in the Metropolitan Opera's presentation of Massenet's work of the same name, to be broadcast by the National Broadcasting Company and the Radio Corporation of America. And I hope that from my portrayal, listeners will gain some understanding of the innocent and beautiful, capricious and yet, above all else, lovable Manon.

We first meet her alighting from a coach at Amiens. Her parents, apprehensive over her eagerness for the joys of this world, are sending her to a convent. Hardly has she set foot in the courtyard before Guillot, an old roue, makes advances and offers his coach for flight to Paris; and Bretigny, with a practiced eye for beauty speculates on his own chances. But Lescaut Manon's soldier cousin, frightens them away and warns her against strange men. "But it wasn't my fault . . ." she says plaintively. And when he leaves to drink, she looks with envious eyes on the finery of women of dubious character. "How nice it must be," she sighs, "to spend one's life so gaily."

Now comes the handsome young Chevalier des Grieux. He is immediately taken by the coquette's youthful beauty and he protests against the convent's gray life for Manon.

BIDU SAYAO

But how escape? At that moment Guillot's coach arrives and, at Manon's suggestion, they both climb in. When tipsy Lescaut emerges from the inn he hears only the rumble of the departing coach and he accuses Guillot of besmirching his family honor. Guillot swears vengeance on the pair.

In the next act we find Manon reading, in a letter des Grieux writes to his father, declaring his intention to marry her, "no eyes are more charming." "Is that true?" she asks naively. The maid announces Lescaut and Bretigny. Lescaut is soon satisfied that his family honor is safe: Bretigny meanwhile tells Manon that her lover's father, the Count des Grieux, will have him abducted that night, but that, if she will be reasonable, she can be "Queen of Beauty." "Speak lower!" she admonishes.

Poor Manon's head is turned by the prospect of luxurious living and she cannot bring herself to warn des Grieux. When, later, he answers a knock at the door and is overpowered, she only whispers, "Oh, my poor Chevalier!"

When next we see Manon, in the third act, she steps from Bretigny's sedan chair into the admiration of a holiday crowd. "Do I look pretty?" she asks, and is so wonderfully pleased when the nobles assure her she is adorable. She overhears the Count say that his son is about to enter the priesthood. "He cannot have forgotten" she exclaims fretfully, and in short order she is off to the church of St. Sulpice.

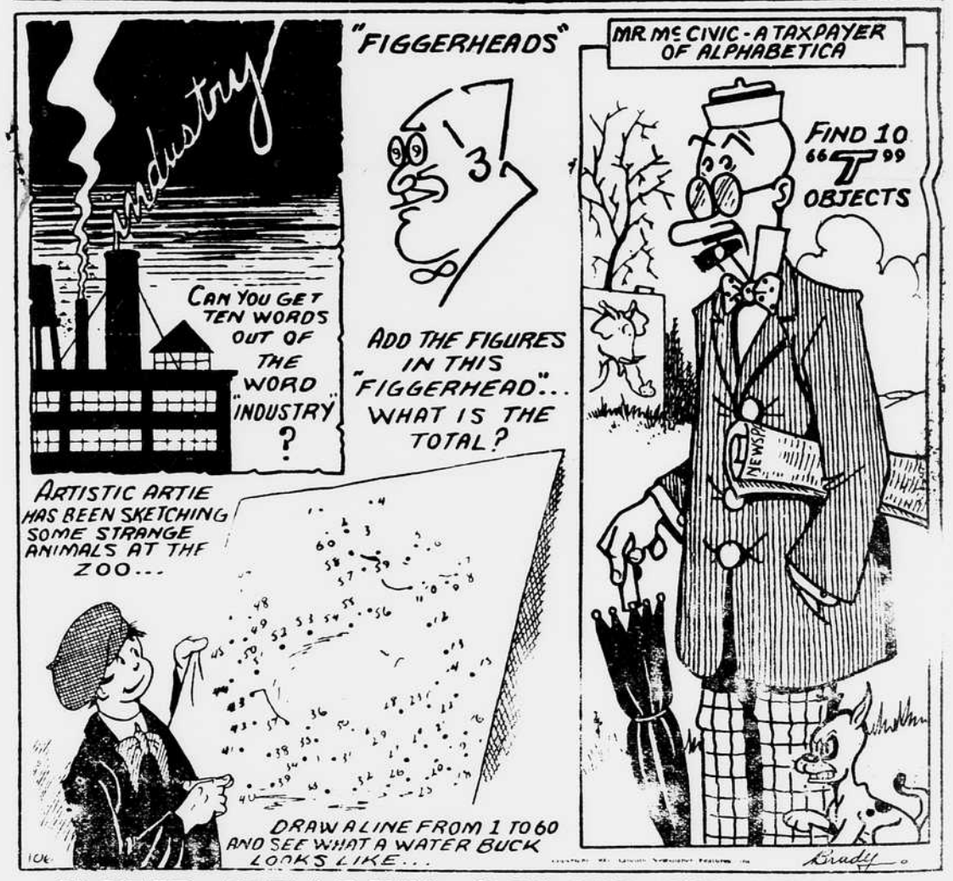
She arrives just after the Count, having tried in vain to dissuade his son, promises him a settlement of 30,000 francs. In a fine state of repentance, Manon falls at the Chevalier's feet and begs him to come back to her. After a brief struggle with himself, he falls into her arms.

But Manon's way of living is not economical and the settlement is soon wasted. In the fourth act we meet the pair in a gaming house, des Grieux filled with shame, but urged on by Manon. "You'll see," she says, "we'll soon be rich again." Guillot is there too and, seeking revenge, he challenges des Grieux to play. The Chevalier wins every wager and the enraged roue accuses him of cheating. He departs, only to return a few moments later with the Count and police, who [illegible] and her lover.

He is soon released, but Manon is held and, at length, condemned to be deported to a penal colony. In the last act Lescaut and des Grieux are plotting to bring about Manon's escape from the band of fallen women on their way to Havre, there to embark for Louisiana. Where force fails, money persuades Manon is released in their custody until nightfall. Broken by grief and imprisonment, Manon only shakes her head when des Grieux pictures a happy life in some distant land. She begs his forgiveness and with — "This kiss is a last farewell"—sinks into her last sleep. So ends the unhappy story of Manon, who took glitter for gold.

In Saturday's Manon, Maurice d'Abravanel will be the conductor Rene Maison, the Belgian tenor, and Richard Bonelli, American baritone, will take the parts of the Chevalier des Grieux and Lescaut. Bretigny will be George Cehanovsky.

OUR PUZZLE CORNER



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