

STORMY DRIFT

by Ethel M. Dell

CHAPTER 23

THERE WAS a brief pause before an answering movement came from inside the door, and the door opened to him. Viola stood in the entrance, dressed to go out, her suitcase in her hand.

"Oh, you're up!" said Tiggie in a tone of relief. "Hope you've slept."

Her eyes gave him the answer, and again in the morning light he was shocked by her look—her transparent pallor, and the shadows that seemed to be ever deepening, imparting to her features an almost unbelievable parity of outline.

"I was just coming to see if I could find you," she said. "Is there anywhere where we can talk?"

"Have you had any breakfast?" said Tiggie.

She shook her head, with a faint, nervous smile. "No, but I'm all right."

"Let's go down and have some!" said Tiggie practically. "And by the way, my brother-in-law—Harvey Gilmore—will be there—the man you saw last night. You don't mind meeting him?"

Her eyelids flickered a little; he saw that she was nervous herself. "Of course not!" she said.

"You certainly needn't," said Tiggie. "He's a good sort. We're pals. Come along down!" He took the suitcase from her, and set it on the side. "We'll leave that here till later."

"Couldn't I just—speak to you first?" she said, with an effort. "I've been thinking a good deal during the night, and—"

Again he interrupted her with decision. "No, Viola. I'm done with the talking—and the thinking—today. He held out his hand to her with the words, and as she laid her own within it, "That's all you've got to do," he said gently. "Understand?"

She shrank a little. "You're not going to make me do anything—irrevocable?" she said.

"Yes, I am," said Tiggie.

Her eyes looked up to his, startled. "Oh, what?"

He hesitated for an instant. He had not meant to be sudden; but it seemed he had no choice. Quietly he told her, "Presently when we've had some breakfast, I'm going to take you along to a quiet church in the city where we can be married."

She made a sharp, involuntary movement. Her hand went up to her face as though to ward off a blow. "Oh, hadn't we better—wait a little?" she said breathlessly. "Wouldn't it be wiser—safer?"

"No," said Tiggie, and he spoke with a resolution that would not be gainsaid. "I don't see any point in it. In fact in my opinion there's every reason for not waiting. I got a special license yesterday, and Harvey has fixed up the rest."

She broke in almost feverishly, but she kept her face hidden. "But—yesterday—you didn't know—everything. It was only last night that—"

"It didn't make any difference," said Tiggie simply. "In fact, if I needed anything further to make me decide what to do, it would have been that."

She turned from him; he saw that she was trembling. "I ought not to let you," she said in a choked voice. "It isn't a question of letting," said

Tiggie. "It's just plain necessity. You needn't be afraid that I'll ever do anything to make you regret it."

"But you!" she said. "You!"

There was a kind of suppressed anguish in her utterance that made him realize the need for firmness. He knew that he had already established a certain ascendancy over her, and he must not suffer it to slacken.

"My dear," he said very quietly, "we're not going back over that old ground now. You are in my care, and I'm going to do all I can to protect you. But first I want the legal right to do so. You can't refuse to give me that—at this stage."

She made an odd, blind movement towards him. "I couldn't refuse—to give you anything," she said. "Only—only—are you sure it's fair? Isn't there—some other way?"

"None," said Tiggie firmly. "And it's perfectly fair. You need never ask yourself that. Now look here! Wouldn't you like to stay and have your breakfast up here? I'll give you time to get used to the idea. Then, when I've had mine, I'll come up and fetch you, and we'll just go off and get the thing done. Come! How does that strike you? You'll be ready for me, will you?"

She had turned back into the room. She made a small gesture with her hands. "I don't know—what to say to you," she said.

"That's all right," said Tiggie cheerily, looking at his watch. "Practical determination was his plan of action at this stage. He had used it before with success. "In half an hour's time then! I'll tell them to send you up some breakfast. You'll be ready?"

He paused, wishing she would turn and face him; then, as she did not, he went straight to her, halting close behind her.

"Viola!" he said.

She turned very slowly in response, not willingly, but as though she had no choice. Her face was set, immobile. "Yes?" she said passively.

"I'm counting on you," said Tiggie with emphasis. "You'll be ready?"

She bent her head; her eyes were downcast. "Yes," she said again.

"Very well then," said Tiggie. "That's settled."

And with the words, he turned and quietly left her. He knew that she would make no further attempt to resist. Yet as he went away he was conscious of no feeling of elation. Rather was the weight he carried at his heart almost a presage of tragedy.

Harvey, openly skeptical of the ecclesiastical element, and a gray-haired verger of almost unbelievable sanctity, were the sole witnesses of that strangely unreal yet strangely impressive wedding.

"Why on earth did he choose a church ceremony?" was the wonder in the mind of Harvey to whom the whole affair seemed unnecessarily prolonged and theatrical.

The elderly clergyman who conducted the service had a weary look, as though he were wondering the same thing, but he conscientiously did his best to muster a little enthusiasm and prevent his thoughts from straying in the direction of a parish matter which to him was of infinitely greater importance.

Certainly the attitude of the two

parties chiefly concerned was not such as to excite any very keen interest. The man, sturdily built, romantic in every detail, held a Prayer Book with one finger inserted in the leaves of the Marriage Service for reference, until the loudly-whispered instructions of the attendant verger convinced him that this was unnecessary, when he turned with a business-like air and handed it to Harvey, who studied it with an air of impersonal criticism for the rest of the service.

The girl, wrapped in her cloak, her hat brim drawn down over her small pale face, seemed intent only upon fulfilling her part with as little delay and ostentation as possible. She betrayed no sign of agitation though the husky quality of her voice made her words somewhat indistinct. The hand upon which Tiggie eventually placed his ring was very cold but quite steady. She behaved like a perfectly regulated automaton throughout.

No, the officiating clergyman was perhaps not greatly to blame, though he blamed himself, for the failure to fix his full attention upon the matter in hand. They were so obviously desirous to get the thing over and be gone.

In the vestry, after he had blessed them, he essayed the old time-worn jokes suitable to the occasion; but only Tiggie laughed, and that perfunctorily, and so evidently from a mere sense of decency that he speedily refrained, suffering his tired and rather gloomy thoughts to travel back to the parochial problem which was harassing his mind. He was too hard-worked to have time or energy to spare for these strangers, though he did throw a glance of disapproval at Harvey for remarking that the good deed thus duly completed and ratified ought to earn them some abatement on the credit side of virtue in the celestial pass-book. Again it was only Tiggie who laughed, and that somewhat grudgingly, but Harvey had not spoken with the idea of provoking merriment. He only expressed the sarcastic thoughts with which his satyr-like brain supplied him. And the dim church, with its long aisles and narrow stained glass windows through which the sunlight could only point long thin fingers here and there, was not in his opinion a very inspiring place. The general atmosphere depressed him, and the fusty smell of cassocks and surplices in the vestry did not improve things. He voiced the decision later that the whole edifice wanted fumigating. The catacombs of ancient Rome could hardly have been less stuffy. But perhaps religion thrives best in such surroundings.

To which Tiggie, newly married, responded prosaically, "Oh, let's talk of things we know something about!"

It was then that Viola, who stood between them veiled in silence, uttered a faint laugh which made them both turn and look at her with concern.

They had reached the dark porch of the church; both clergyman and verger had faded away behind them and the roar of lorries and tradesmen's vans filled the street in front.

Tiggie spoke over her head to his faithful supporter. "Go and get a taxi like a good chap!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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Progress Is Slow In Road Projects Over This State

Washington, March 3.—Progress in highway construction in North Carolina under the \$400,000,000 appropriation by Congress for public works roads is below the average for the whole country according to the Bureau of Public Roads, U. S. Department of Agriculture, which is supervising the work of the State highway departments actually engaged in carrying out the program. On February 24, 74.5 percent of the total \$400,000,000 Federal highway appropriation had been allotted to work in progress. On the same date 55 percent of North Carolina's \$9,522,293 appropriation of the total fund had been put to work.

In North Carolina a total of 184 projects, estimated to cost \$6,197,000, had been advertised for contract, including regular Federal-aid and State funds. 147 projects had been awarded to contractors or started by day labor; and 77 projects, employing 3,905 men, were under construction. The public works

funds involved in the advertised projects amounted to \$5,236,000, other Federal and State funds making up the balance of the total estimated cost of \$6,196,000.

.WORLD. at a Glance

By LESLIE EICHEL, Central Press Staff Writer
New York, March 2.—President Roosevelt is expected to reply to his critics by radio.
The president retains his jovial mood at press conferences.
Observers in New York who have traveled around the country recently report that the president's support among the people is stronger than ever.

TROUBLES
The president is keenly aware of his troubles.
In his radio talk, he may bluntly put some questions to the people.
It seems likely that the president will discuss regulation of stock and commodity markets, air mail contract cancellation, and the NRA—particularly its labor provision and resistance to them.

MARKETS
The president is likely to ask a single question concerning stock and commodity markets.
That question will be:
Do the American people desire a repetition of the 1928-29 speculative debacle?
Tremendous pressure is being brought by New York financial interests on members of congress, the president has been informed by Democratic leaders.

AIRMAIL
The president is convinced that evidence proves there was collusion in the award of airmail contracts, that operators who were not on the "in" were squeezed out, and that the government suffered losses of \$48,800,000.
He will discuss his position on that—in any radio talk that is likely to occur.
As to the sacrifices made by army flyers—the president has been urged by high army officers to respond that the test has been in extraordinary weather and that the army considers this a proper time to call attention to the fact that its equipment has been neglected.
To any observer in Washington, the debacle on the airmail will continue for some time. One is likely to read of it in his newspapers for weeks to come.



A bevy of beautiful girls, and an all-star cast, headed by Jimmy Cagney, Ruby Keeler, Dick Powell, and Joan Blondell, make "Footlight Parade" a picture always to be remembered. Here are some glimpses of the splendors awaiting you in this latest Warner Bros. masterpiece coming Monday and Tuesday to the Stevenson theatre

Farm Colony Basis For Agricultural Aid Plan

Placing of Idle Tenants In Self-Sustaining Farm Villages Proposed by W. T. Couch, Director of University Press; Sensible and Simple

Chepl Hill, March 3.—A farm colony plan which he believes is as sensible as it is simple has been advanced by W. T. Couch, director of the University of North Carolina Press, who has recently edited a book embracing a symposium of views on "Culture in the South," which has attracted national attention.
His proposal calls for the establishment of numerous farm colonies which would be fashioned after those formed in North Carolina by Hugh McRae of Wilmington and by the Federal government at Norris, Tennessee. Mr. Couch, however, would establish the farming village on a different principle from Mr. McRae's and would have it less industrialized than the Tennessee colony.
Of the six million farmers in the United States, approximately one-half are in the South. Of this number one half are cotton farmers. By a further reduction, according to Mr. Couch, one half of these could raise sufficient cotton both for home use and for export. But this would have to be on the condition that they till soil best suited for cotton production and employ the most improved farming methods.
"Texas can raise cotton several cents cheaper than the states located in the Southeast. Although other sections might later become able to produce it as cheaply," he says, "the only sensible thing to do at present is to let Texas raise more."
The press director explains that the majority of cotton farmers are of the tenant class. This is significant due to the fact that many tenant families have been displaced as a result of the governmental plan for the reduction of cotton acreage. Landlords, instead of reducing the number of acres held by each tenant, found it more profitable to dismiss some of the tenants and allo the acreage of the remaining ones to be the same.
"While Federal aid has been a good thing," Mr. Couch goes on to say, "it has hurt the tenant farmers a great deal. If allotments were made on the

basis of the family-sized farm, then the family farm as an economic unit could be protected. But under the present system of making allotments on the amount of cotton produced on a farm in the last five, or in the last ten years, the family farm has no chance whatsoever.
"If allotments were made as I have suggested, the remaining tenants could be placed in self-sustaining farm villages. Large numbers of these tenants, who have lost their farms and who are at present reduced to beggary, would welcome an opportunity such as the farm colony would provide."
Mr. Couch has just completed a tour of western North Carolina and parts of Tennessee, during which he discussed his plan with many different types of people. He says all the educators he conversed with thought the plan sound, that all the farmers he met declared themselves eager to engage in such an enterprise.

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MONDAY AND TUESDAY
Roland Young and Lillian Gish—in "HIS DOUBLE LIFE"

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REAL INSURANCE SERVICE
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MOVIE MEMORIES



Pearl White

Twelve years ago: After appearing in wild west pictures and convincing directors that she could ride, Pearl White began making a long series of screen serials—dashing melodramas that reeked with thrills. Remember how they would leave you in terrible suspense from episode to episode every Saturday afternoon?
This the 24th day of February, 1934.
JOSEPH L. COCKERHAM, Substituted Trustee.
Robert Weinstein and Victor W. Thompson, Attorneys, Raleigh, N. C.

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THEATRE, HENDERSON, N. C.
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ONLY WARNER BROS. COULD MAKE IT!
The master creators of musical shows eclipse the glittering glories of Gold Diggers and "2nd Street" with a new wonder show!
FOOTLIGHT PARADE
300 Girls—1000 Surprises
20 Stars—including
JAMES CAGNEY
RUBY KEELER
DICK POWELL
JOAN BLONDELL
Added Culbertson Bridge Series "Society Cheaters"
ON THE STAGE WEDNESDAY ONLY
"EUROPEAN PASSION PLAY"
Matinee Prices 50c, 75c, \$1.00—Plus Tax
Night Prices 75c, \$1.00, \$1.50—Plus Tax
Coming Thursday
One Day Only
Edmund Lowe—Ann Sothern
"LET'S FALL IN LOVE"
—EXTRA ADDED—
"3 LITTLE PIGS" The Most Popular Short Subject Produced in Colors

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Now Open
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Buy For Investment Or To Build Your Own Home.
EARNINGS OVER 6 PER CENT. TAX FREE
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The investor looking for a safe place to invest money at a high rate of interest will turn to Building and Loan shares, such as we are now offering you in our 44th series.
The Association is proud of its record, having passed through the most trying period in the history of our country without loss of a single member.
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