

Secretary of Frivolous Affairs

by MAY TUTTLE

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Illustrations by
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SYNOPSIS.

Jo Codman and her sister Louie are left orphans. Their property has been swept away by the death of their father and they are compelled to cast about for some means to earn a living. Louie answers an advertisement for an invalid who wants a companion. She declines the position. Louie advertises for a position as companion, and Mrs. Hazard replies. She offers Louie a position as her "secretary of frivolous affairs." Her chief work is to steer Mrs. Hazard's son and daughter in the right matrimonial path. Louie takes baseball to Hap Hazard and also gains the confidence of Laura Hazard. The Duc de Trouville is believed to be interested in Laura. Mrs. Hazard gives a big reception and Louie meets many people high in the social world. Natalie Agazzi, to whom Hap has been paying attention, loses an emerald bracelet during the reception. She declares there is not another like it in the world. It develops that Natalie has lost several pieces of jewelry under similar circumstances. Hap takes Louie to the baseball game. He tells her he is not engaged to Natalie and has been cured of his infatuation. The scene changes to the Hazard country place, where many notables have been invited for the summer. Louie and Laura visit the farm of Winthrop Abbott, an author, in whom Laura takes considerable interest. Duc de Trouville arrives at the Hazard place. Louie hears Winthrop's motor boat out late at night. Next morning the papers announce the robbery of several nearby homes. Natalie accuses Louie of stealing her ruby pendant. Mrs. Hazard accuses Louie of her confidence in her. Hap declares his love for Louie. He promises to marry her and admit it as she fears what Mrs. Hazard will say. Louie is excused from dinner on account of a headache. She is bombarded with notes from Hap imploring her to see him. Winthrop is arrested in the presence of Hap and Louie, charged with robbing General Schuyler's home and shooting the general. A box of jewels is found in Winthrop's safe, among them an emerald bracelet exactly like the one lost by Natalie. Natalie apologizes to Louie for accusing her of theft. Louie is awakened at midnight and finds Hap in her room.

CHAPTER XVI.—Continued.

"Yes, I believe you," I replied. "You are very kind to come and tell me so."

"Let us be friends, Miss Codman," she drawled. Her cool hand touched mine. "I think you dislike me, but we'll change that if you will. We missed you tonight. There wasn't just the usual cheerful order of things. Everybody was ill-assorted, aggressive and argumentative. I hope you will not be ill again. We can't spare you. Well, goodnight." She melted to the door. "I lost my head this afternoon, or I should never have said what I did. Do you sincerely forgive me?"

"Yes," I replied. "Goodnight."

She regarded me for a moment, through half-closed lids, as if I had agreed too readily, then her lips parted in a smile.

"Goodnight," she repeated cheerfully.

I crept into bed wondering, bewildered, and lay there for a long time staring wild-eyed, questioningly into the darkness. Why this apology? What had caused Natalie to change her mind?

Just how long I had been asleep I don't know, but suddenly I found myself sitting up in bed, conscious that a door had opened and closed, conscious, too, that some one was in the room. My hand flew to the button beside my bed; I had to know the extent of my danger!

The lights flashed. The person who stood there was Hap, blinking in the sudden glare of the light, looking comically surprised and rather disheveled in a most becoming yellow dressing gown. The situation would have been embarrassing if I had not been so scared.

"I beg your pardon," he managed to say. "I really beg your pardon."

He turned, jerked at the door, and was gone. I jumped out of bed, turned the key in every lock, and sank in a heap to the floor. The day had been too much for me.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Woman in the Corridor.

The insistent rattle of gravel on the screen woke me. I arose, put on the white flannel, tied the ribbon around my head with fingers that were far from steady, and picked up my racket. The tennis was going to be a farce. My wrists were limp, my shoulders like lead, my head "nos." Out of the chaos persisted one thought. But I tried not to ponder too much on that adventure of the night before until Hap had had a chance to explain.

He was tapping the balls into the air as I came across the strip of lawn. He met me half way.

"I've an explanation to make before we begin," he said.

I know I went red, but he was not looking at me. He led the way to a rustic bench that ran the length of the court, and waited for me to sit down.

"I want to tell you why I happened to be in your room this morning," he said quite frankly. The tone robbed his words of an embarrassment. I could even let my face relax. "Perhaps first you'd like to know that we got Winthrop out on bail," he went on, "although it took the combined efforts of Hazard money and Crowninshield influence to do it. We had to drag a judge away from a poker game and my mother to jail at midnight to go bail."

"But Mr. Abbott's out?" Hap's at last I questioned.

"Yes," he answered. "Oh, it's a lot of tommyrot. They have nothing against him. A mud-headed detective pounced upon the first person he saw, which happened to be Winthrop, shot him in the arm, and found some family jewels in his safe."

"Jewels!" I exclaimed.

"I might as well tell you—you'll see it in the newspapers. They mean nothing, except the lively imaginations of the police connect them with the jewel robberies we've been reading about."

"How absurd! But, of course, Mr. Abbott can prove he didn't steal them? The people who have been robbed will have to identify their property, and there you are! If they are Mr. Abbott's family jewels, they are not any one else's. It's ridiculously simple, isn't it?"

"It is," he agreed. He narrowed his eyes and stared into space for a while, then rose and began pacing in front of me. What he was trying to figure in, or out, was that emerald bracelet which I didn't know about, and of which he had not the slightest intention of telling me. It was incriminating evidence against Winthrop.

"What does Mr. Crowninshield think?" I asked.

"Oh, you know how he is—a regular clam. Think a good deal and says nothing. He's inclined to treat the whole thing as a joke, except—"

"Except what?"

He sat down suddenly.

"I'm forgetting to tell you my exciting little story," he said, and the question passed unanswered. "We got home about two, all dead tired. I took Winthrop home and wanted to stay with him, but he wouldn't have it. It didn't take me long to go to sleep. Well, something woke me—what, I don't know—but it was odd, for I never wake up suddenly. I sat up in bed and listened. At first I could only hear the surf, and then I caught another sound, an annoying little rasp I couldn't explain to myself. I thought a lot of stuff about rats and such junk, but I got up and went into John's bedroom. I listened again; the sound was closer. I didn't want to wake John, for I knew he would be amused, but with all these robberies, I decided I'd find out what it was."

"Finally I located the sound in the hall. I sneaked to the door and listened. Ten seconds of listening convinced me that some one was at Natalie's door and the sound was that of an instrument against the lock."

"Now, what I intended to do was to jerk open John's door suddenly and see who it was and why he was there. But the blamed door stuck as I jerked, and when I did get it open a woman—a woman, you understand!—was scooting down the hallway, not up toward the steps, but down toward Laura's room, or mine. It was pretty dark, but there was enough light for me to see that it wasn't Laura. Laura is skinny; this woman was plump."

"I can't tell you why I followed except the thing was queer. The lady reached the end of the hall, opened Laura's door and disappeared. I followed. I was just in time to see the door into Laura's bedroom close. Now, I was sure it wasn't Laura, so I followed again. Laura was asleep, and there was a swish of skirts through the door into my mother's bedroom. I

"I have another strange belief," he smiled. "I believe I'm going to marry you."

"Once I made a fool of myself," he interrupted. "We're going to forget all about that, you and I, aren't we?"

"Yes," I replied; then after a moment. "We are going to forget all about everything, you and I."

"Except that we love each other."

"We are going to forget that," I said firmly.



The Lights Flashed. The Person Who Stood There Was Hap.

lost track there of everything except that some one was trying to escape me. My mother was snoring softly as we whizzed through—whatever it was ahead of me and myself—then—well, the next thing after more door-opening and closing, my going into a chair once and knocking the peeling off my shins, was your screaming." He paused and stared at me. "Louie, do you remember any one coming in before you screamed?"

"No," I replied. "I really don't remember screaming. I knew something was wrong, that I was sitting up in bed, that I had snapped on the lights, and that—that you were there."

"I was so astonished when you

screamed," he went on, "that I stopped dead in my tracks and who ever was trying to escape me, did. I went back to bed and did some thinking. I tried to connect up all the queer things that had happened—Natalie losing her jewels, Winthrop being arrested, the woman at Natalie's door, but I couldn't get anywhere. My mind simply tied itself into a knot, everything jumbled. I could make no connection. But there's one thing certain. If we have a thief here it's a woman!"

My mouth dropped open a bit in the way I thought I had learned to control, but I didn't say anything.

"If there had been just one door locked, I'd have had her, but every door was unlocked, making it as easy as pie for anybody who wanted to steal."

"But we have nothing to steal," I expostulated; "at least no jewels. I have none, Laura has none, and your mother's are in the bank. Natalie's door was locked, wasn't it?"

"She has had her lesson."

"Besides, we've never been certain before that a thief was here."

"We are not certain now," he pointed out. "But something is wrong, queer. I want you to keep mum about it. I'm going to investigate."

"Ah, Monsieur Lecoq!" I taunted.

"Don't laugh. I'm quite serious about it. I have all sorts of theories."

"If you are quite serious about it, you ought to have all sorts of a detective," I suggested.

"One is coming, but it isn't going to keep me from doing a little work on my own hook. A detective might find a gang planted here among the servants; I might find the chief at the dinner table. Fascinating, isn't it?"

"Horrible!" I declared.

"Perhaps Natalie's ruby was stolen after all," he mused. He began pacing again. "I thought she was crazy, for why would a thief take one jewel and leave the others? I'm not so sure now but that she is right. We no doubt have a charming creature in our midst with a delightful sense of humor."

"And you are going to unearth her?" He sat down again and looked at me intently.

"Are you losing the main point?" he demanded. "You must be cleared of suspicion, you know."

"Oh!" I exclaimed. "I am no longer suspected. Miss Agazzi came to my room last night and said she was sure I hadn't taken her ruby; that she realized I couldn't possibly have done such a thing, couldn't possibly."

"Well, I'll be —!" He stared at me. "What happened to make her change her mind?"

"I don't know," I answered. "She didn't give me the impression that anything had happened. She was quite calm and cool as she always is, and she was rather friendly."

He brushed the forelock out of his eyes, and regarded me for a while with that comically surprised expression of his. Then he laughed.

"You'll excuse me," he said, "but the thing is funny. Wait a minute! Let me think! She heard about Winthrop."

"I'm sure she didn't," I assured him. "I don't see how she could have heard. No one knew it but myself until that message came for your mother. Your mother talked to Mr. Crowninshield from her own room. It's her own private number, as you know, and has no possible connection with the other phone. The conversation revealed nothing, even if any one had been listening at the door. Laura did not guess, and you know how keen she is. Miss Agazzi came in soon after, but she couldn't possibly have known."

"I believe she did know."

"You're rather strange in your belief, aren't you? Whatever else Natalie is she isn't a hypocrite," I defended. "You ought not to be too hard on her, remembering that once you—"

"I have another strange belief," he smiled. "I believe I'm going to marry you."

"Once I made a fool of myself," he interrupted. "We're going to forget all about that, you and I, aren't we?"

"Yes," I replied; then after a moment. "We are going to forget all about everything, you and I."

"Except that we love each other."

"We are going to forget that," I said firmly.

There was no use answering. I picked up two tennis balls and started for the other end of the court. But it's just my sex to have the last word. I looked back over my shoulder.

"And I believe you're going to make some girl an argumentative husband," I said very sweetly.

He opened his lips to reply, smiled, changed his mind and swung his racket into position.

"Ready!" he called.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Bracelet is Identified.

The horror of Winthrop's arrest had not magnified over night. The newspapers came out with a blare of headlines: "Noted Author Arrested, Accused of Vast Jewel Thefts. General Schuyler Shot!" Mrs. Hazard had gone on Winthrop's bail, and they made a lot of that, hinted at an engagement between the accused and Laura, endeavored to make John Crowninshield as counsel, significant, tried to invent a mystery out of a balky carburetor—and they are!—admitted that a mud-headed detective might have made a mistake, and fizzled out toward the end like a wet firecracker. The story hadn't a leg to stand on.

It was received in just that spirit at Lone Oak. There was some embarrassment at first, but Winthrop suspected of being a thief was so ridicu-

lously absurd that before noon it was a joke.

Laura shed a few tears of honest concern at the breakfast table when she saw the silly thing in the papers, then she laughed. Mr. Abercrombie got hot under the collar, and told us all what he would do with the police when he was governor, then laughed. Everybody else laughed, including His Grace, who merely knew it was a nice little bon mot of American humor. Only Natalie was serious.

I met her on the threshold of the wide doors opening upon the terrace where the younger people were wildly welcoming the '90's as the motors arrived. She drew me back into the house while I merely wondered what had brought her out so early. It was only ten.

"It's rather tragic about Mr. Abbott, isn't it?" she asked. The tone of her voice was unusual, and her attitude held a hint of excitement.

"Not now," I answered. "It looked that way last night, but this morning it is comedy, not tragedy. General Schuyler isn't badly hurt. Have you seen the newspapers?"

"Yes. I didn't know if the situation was better or worse, that's why I wanted to know from somebody—from you."

"Oh, the newspapers always try to make it worse you know," I told her, "and even at that it's nothing. The jewels are Mr. Abbott's and he can prove it. Except for the general having been shot it's rather amusing, and something to break the monotony. The boys have gone to bring Mr. Abbott. They're going to celebrate, or do something exciting. I know Mrs. Dykeman will think we have a press agent."

But my flippancy met no response from her.

"I'm glad it isn't serious," she said. I looked after her curiously as she



"Once I Made a Fool of Myself," He Interrupted.

walked through the wide hallway and into the library, then I went out upon the terrace. Winthrop had arrived with the '90's who had gone for him, and just as I came out Lydia met him with outstretched hands.

"Good morning, Mr. Burglar," she laughed. "Where is your revolver, and dark lantern? Did you wear a mask? And you were shot, too! Do you know you're such an interesting person and have furnished us such corking excitement that I'm tempted to hug you."

Winthrop rubbed the back of his head reflectively and the last bit of embarrassment disappeared in the laugh that went up.

I was mentally juggling my crowd and planning my schedule for the day when a car that didn't belong to any of the '90's came up the driveway. It carried one passenger and a chauffeur, the passenger being a red-headed young man whom I knew instantly. Hap knew him, too. He reached the steps by the time the newspaper man did and politely managed to block his progress.

There was a curious silence on the terrace after whisperings as to the identity of the newcomer. Everybody was listening.

"See Miss Agazzi?" we heard Hap repeat. "Awfully sorry. Miss Agazzi is in town."

"Can you tell me where she is?" the reporter asked.

"She's shopping," Hap lied glibly. "Never know exactly where a woman is when she shops."

"Shopping?" repeated the reporter. "But—" He looked at Hap and smiled, glanced toward the front door, then frankly looked over Hap's shoulder at the crowd on the terrace. Hap noted the action and grinned. He swept his hand generally in our direction.

"You see she isn't here," he remarked affably. He was sure that Natalie was still up-stairs in bed, but I knew better, and every minute I expected to see her step through those doors to the terrace. I moved and stood where I could look down the hallway. The reporter glanced at the front door again. Not one of us thought of its being a holiday.

"Will she be back this afternoon?" the reporter asked.

"I hardly think so," Hap answered. "I think she's going to stay over and shop again tomorrow. And I really can't tell you where she's staying. It might be with her aunt, you know, or again it might be with some friend—He'd have gone on like that until doomsday, I suppose, if the reporter hadn't interrupted."

"I'd like to speak to Mr. Abbott," the reporter said, and started suddenly for Winthrop. But Hap's foot was mysteriously in the way, and the newspaper man had hard work adjusting his equilibrium. "I'd like to ask

him if he can positively prove that the emerald—"

Something happened, we could never say just what. But the reporter's hat was on the ground and Hap, picking it up to restore it to its owner with exaggerated courtesy, was babbling about the gorgeous sunshine and the delightful breeze from the east. Then he linked his arm through the reporter's, and it was just as well for that red-headed young gentleman to go where he was being led. Five minutes later the car and the red-headed reporter disappeared down the driveway.

Hap called me aside.

"Will you go tell Natalie that a newspaper man has been here, and not to let him trick her into seeing him if he comes back?"

"She's in the library if you want to tell her yourself," I told him.

He knew there was something odd in Natalie's being up so early. He did some thinking, but the result of his meditations he didn't confide to me.

"You tell her, dear," he requested finally, that I want to talk to John."

I found Natalie replacing several books, but the Almanach de Gotha still lay open on the table. I delivered my message.

"Thanks," she said. "I'll be careful. Do you know what he wanted to ask me?"

"No."

"There wasn't any one but the reporter?" she went on anxiously. "No detective, or policeman?"

"No one but the reporter," I replied. Then suddenly: "Would you mind telling me if you had any particular reason last night for changing your mind about me?"

"Yes," she replied. "I simply came to my senses. I'll never be able to apologize sufficiently for what I said. My only consolation is that no one but the family know it." She closed the Almanach de Gotha and put it carefully back on the shelf. "Did you ever hear of the Duc d'Aubigny?" she asked.

"Yes," I answered. "Why?"

"Do you know that he was charged with jewel thefts in France and sent to jail?"

"I do. Why?"

She didn't answer for quite a while; finally she came close to me.

"It's a silly thing I'm going to tell you," she drawled. "I have no foundation for my suspicions, but Saturday, when I was in town, I'm sure I saw the Duc d'Aubigny!"

I gasped, and my mouth fell open.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

EASY TO TEACH BLACKBIRD

Is a Natural Imitator, and Responds Quickly to Training—Its Memory Strong.

The blackbird, which belongs to the thrush family, has strong imitative powers, and has been taught to speak. There is not much variety in its natural song, but its voice has a pure, flute-like tone and full volume. The bird is very susceptible of being trained, and when reared by hand from the nest is capable of forming strong attachments and makes itself a great favorite.

When a blackbird is six or eight weeks old, his training should be begun. Take him to a quiet room away from any other birds, and each night and morning whistle the portion of the tune you wish him to learn, or play it on the flute. Feed him before you begin, and put a fat, lively worm where he can see it. After you have whistled or played the air, say twenty times, stop, so that the bird may have an opportunity of imitating it.

If he should make the attempt, give him the worm at once, praising and caressing him meanwhile. He will soon begin to see why a reward was given to him, and will not be slow in trying to earn it. When once he has learned the tune he will never forget it, and it will pass into and become a part of his song.

After the blackbird has completed his education, he should be placed near some other singing bird, whose notes he would soon learn and blend with his own.

Put his cage out of doors whenever the weather permits, and he will tell you how pleased you have made him. But during the hot days of summer, let him be well shaded and kept cool, as heat and dry air seem to affect his voice. He will begin to sing in the end of February or the beginning of March, and will continue until the fall, if the summer is not too hot.

Light for English Police.

The "bull's-eye" lantern of the patrolling policeman may shortly pass into the museums. Electric torches are far handier than the old-fashioned oil-fed "bull's-eye." The policeman has the torch attached to his belt, and the pressing of a button sends a searchlight on the track of a criminal. There are no risks of burnt fingers and damaged tunics. Experiments are being made with the electric torches in the outlying suburbs, and later every metropolitan and city policeman may be provided with one. Burglars have long known their value, and will not welcome this imitation, however sincere the flattery.—London Mail.

Men's Defects Sized Up.

The ten chief defects of men, as decided by the votes of the women readers of Femina, one of the most popular women's weeklies in France, are egotism, easily first with 2,387 votes; then come jealousy, 1,968; infidelity, 1,783; intemperance, 1,417; cowardice (or rather base mean-spiritedness), 1,350; immorality, 1,070; despotism, 1,067; anger, 1,051; conceit, 1,000, and idleness, 985.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR JULY 6

CHILD MOSES SAVED FROM DEATH.

LESSON TEXT—Ex. 1:22 to 2:10.
GOLDEN TEXT—"Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." Matt. 18:5.

The prosperous favor of the king's court did not last long for the descendants of Jacob, and a Pharaoh arose "who knew not Joseph" (1:8). In chapter 1:7 we see that Israel was (a) "fruitful," (b) "increased in numbers," and (c) "exceeding mighty." This was in fulfillment of God's promised blessing (Gen. 12:2, 3). It excited the envy of the Egyptians, however, and they began to "deal wisely" (v. 10), see I Cor. 1:19, and eventually Pharaoh promulgated his iniquitous decree recorded in Ch. 1:15-21.

Child Unheralded.

I. The Child Born, Ch. 2:1, 2. Pharaoh's cruel scheme seemed well adapted to avoid the supposed danger in that it would cripple Israel, keep them in slavery and effectually prevent them from escaping from Egypt. How frequently man is deceived. A babe is born in the home of the rich or the great of earth and we speculate upon the possible ensuing changes in history, whereas at that same time another child is born unheralded in some humble home that God raises up to set aside the schemes of men. Attention has been called to the humble marriage (v. 1) of Amram and Jochebed (ch. 6:20) and the important outcome. No marriage is trivial.

It does not appear that to cast the male children into the river was an edict when Aaron was born. Though humbly born Moses was nobly born and his parents thought more of their duty to God than the edicts of man. Moses was a "godly child" (v. 2, Acts 7:20 R. V. marg. and Heb. 11:23 R. V.). That is, he was without blemish, well pleasing to the eye, "fair to God." His parents must have entertained the hope that he was to be the deliverer of Israel and taught him so to believe, see Acts 7:25.

God's Plan.

II. The Child in Danger, vv. 3-6. At three months of age (Acts 7:20) it was no longer possible to hide the child Moses. However, instead of his being cast into the river he is cast upon the river. Jochebed knew of the deliverance of Noah and it is probable that her meditation upon this suggested to her the adopted plan, for she made her ark somewhat after the plan Noah followed, Gen. 6:14. She also knew of the habits of Pharaoh's daughter and planned accordingly. It was a perilous risk to commit her child to the crocodile infested river, but she trusted Jehovah (Heb. 11:23) and God honored her faith, as events demonstrate.

It seems a trivial incident for this daughter of a king to indulge in a bath and to find this rude pitch covered ark at the river's brink. Yet who can comprehend His ways? She sent one of her servants to investigate. Seeing so many strange faces the child begins to cry; how very ordinary, yet how wonderful when considered as a part of God's plan for the redemption of a race.

III. The Child Delivered, vv. 7-10.

From the monuments of Egypt we are able to study Pharaoh and his court. His word was supreme. At this opportune moment under God's direction, the cry of a child is used to set aside Pharaoh's word and to turn the course of history. The tears of the babe found their way into the heart of this princess of the royal house and thus the deliverer came from the system from which he was to set his brethren free. God knew that among those frivolous Egyptian slaves there was none properly fitted to care for His own. So it is that the waiting sister offered to secure a Hebrew woman to care for the child, perhaps according to a pre-arranged plan with her mother. The plan is successful and the very best nurse possible was secured. The only nurse properly fitted and God-endowed for the rearing of a child is its own mother. Perhaps it was Pharaoh's infamous decree that led his daughter to send her new-found treasure away with a Hebrew woman with the promise of wages (v. 9). At any rate, Pharaoh is set at naught in his own household and his edict worked a blessing to Jochebed. It was most certainly during these plastic years that Moses was instructed concerning God, Abraham and Isaac and God's covenant to these the fathers of his race, and to look forward for Him who should deliver Israel. See Acts 7:25 and Heb. 11:24-26.

God providentially separated the Israelites from intermarriage with the Egyptians, a fact which saved them from deterioration and effeminacy. The absolute impossibility, humanly speaking, of their deliverance enabled God to end their affliction and deliver to them His promised inheritance. The hour has now arrived for deliverance, all that is needed is a leader and in His own way He is preparing that leader. Moses was neither killed nor enslaved. The venture—some faith of Moses' parents in spite of all appearances preserved the life of their babe.