

# Secretary of Trivoltious 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 of 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 trivoltious affairs." Her chief work is to steer Mrs. Hazard's son and daughter in the right matrimonial path. Louie talks 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 Agassiz, 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 she announces the robbery on account of a headache. She is bombarded with notes from Hap imploring her to see him. 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. Next morning, Hap explains that he was in pursuit of a mysterious woman he had seen in the corridor and who eluded him by passing through Louie's room. Natalie identifies the emerald bracelet found in Winthrop's safe as her own. Louie's sister, Jo, arrives for a week's stay. John Crowinshield pays marked attention to Jo. Louie watches all night with Natalie. She sees Winthrop cross the lawn in the early morning, shadowed by Thomas, a footman. Louie hears a noise in the gallery and goes to investigate. She slips into the card room and stumbles over a bag. She starts to carry it to her room and is surprised by someone in the hall and falls downstairs.

## CHAPTER XXII—Continued.

When I remembered again, John was sitting at my desk with the glittering mass spread out before him. Every one had crowded around him, except Hap, who was kneeling beside the couch, holding my hand desperately and listening for the sound of the doctor's car. I remember that it had occurred to me how beautifully the lavender brocade dressing-gown John wore and the soft pink of Jo's kimono harmonized—and lavender and pink usually don't.

"Where did you get them, Louie?" Jo asked. "What happened, dear?" My head was buzzing; there was a pounding in my ears. Her questions seemed to make a jumble of my thoughts.

"Why, of course, I must tell you." I tried to think clearly. "I—I found them—found them in the card-room." "Yes, dear," Jo soothed. "What were you doing in the card-room?" "I heard a noise in the gallery and wanted to see—see—I—I found them—found them in the card-room." Everybody looked so queer! Natalie glanced quickly at Mrs. Hazard—a glance Laura intercepted. I sat up suddenly.

No harm done. John will hold a levee after luncheon and return them." I suppose it occurred to John what a job that was going to be, especially as he was apt to have a crowd of hysterical women on his hands any minute. He tumbled the jewels back into the bag as Doctor Graham's horn rent the air, and was just about to pull the string securing them.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he exclaimed. "This is my bag!"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

**A Disappearance.**  
Dawn found me lying on the couch in my sitting-room, pale and a little sick from the ether, with my right arm nicely boarded up and a bruise on my shoulder about as big as a turkey-platter. Doctor Graham, after mixing me some vile stuff—doctors are brutes about medicine—cheerfully turned to discuss art with Jo, apropos of the search of the gallery for any signs of disturbance. Nothing unusual was found anywhere, except the door at the bottom of the steps leading to the tennis courts was open, and a hammer that was proved did not belong to any one connected with Lone Oak was lying on one of the courts. The thieves had made good their escape during the commotion that followed my plunge down the steps into the wing.

When I awoke from the sleep the doctor prescribed it was noon. The room was fragrant with flowers and there was a huge bunch of pink roses that I knew had not been cut at Lone Oak. Laura was with me, and she tearfully hovered in the background. Celle brought my breakfast and Laura explained that Jo had gone, reluctantly, to play golf with John Crowinshield, who decided not to go to town. "There's a nurse coming," she concluded.

"Nurse!" I exclaimed. "What do I want with a nurse? I'm going downstairs tonight if I can get a sleeve over this arm."

To prove I could get up, I did, but I was rather trembly. "Louie, it was too funny about that silk stocking and the hot-water bottle," Laura laughed gleefully. "Has everybody discovered the robbery?" I asked.

"They were up shrieking before ten," she told me. "John had an awful time getting things straight. There are ten solitaires still in doubt. I think Dorothy and Mrs. Sargent will have to toss for them. Funny, isn't it, people don't know their own jewels?" "Did any one else hear the racket we made last night?" "No," she replied. "No wonder they were robbed. Mrs. Cutler thinks there must have been an attempt to chloroform her. There was no cloth or anything that has been saturated, but the odor of chloroform was in her room. Thank Heaven, there's no way to implicate Winthrop in this."

Winthrop! I closed my lips tightly again. No one but I knew he had been there on the lawn; no one but myself was going to know it. But Thomas! The thought startled me! He knew it. But— Laura finally broke the silence with one of her startling questions: "Louie, are you going to marry Hap?" I shook my head decidedly. "Why not? Won't you tell me? Have you a reason, dear?" "Yes." She paled a little, I didn't know why at the time. "Won't you confide in me?" she pleaded. "And let me help you? I can help you, no matter how difficult it is." She was very winning and sweet. I intended to tell her jokingly my reason was that her mother really had intended me as a piece-maker for her, and that I'd have to be free to encourage the eligible until she was quite sure just who she wanted to marry, but I was weak, and the tears

were very near the surface. Two brimmed over and rolled down my cheek. I couldn't joke! "You love him—don't try to deny it. Why are you giving him up?" "I can't let him spoil his life with me," was what I said after all. "I couldn't spoil your chances with His Grace if you decide to want him. His Grace would be terribly shocked—"

"I don't want him," she interrupted. "I love Winthrop and I'm going to marry him—if he ever asks me." "But I am nobody," I insisted. "I haven't a penny. Marriage—marriage is impossible!" She looked at me in amazement. "Is that your only reason?" she asked.

"Surely—"

"Is that all? Oh, my poor, deluded little Louie! What difference does a few paltry dollars make? I'm so glad that's the reason, dear; so very, very glad." She came close to me and slipped her arm around my waist. "Dear, if you had told me something terrible, some awful thing that was keeping you from saying 'yes' to Hap, I would have loved you just the same. Remember that."

It was a shameless statement. I wonder I did not see its significance at the time, but I only realized that her affection was one of the most wonderful things that had ever happened to me.

"You're a queer person," I told her. "Now, won't you let me say to Hap that he may come up after luncheon?" She tried to keep me from shaking my head. "I'm afraid he will come, even if you don't say so. I've had a terrible time keeping him out while you slept. He went to town for the roses"—she pointed to them—"and was back in an hour. I don't know how he escaped being arrested for speeding. By the way, the detective is here. He wants to ask you some questions when you are well enough to see him. We've had an exciting morning being questioned. He's rather a nice-looking chap. I think Natalie found her interview with him much more agreeable than she expected. His eyes are blue," she finished irrelevantly.

"Has he talked to Mr. Abbott?" "Yes. He and John—by the way, his name is Adams—went over to Winthrop's this morning. Winthrop came back with them; he came to play golf. He was unusually cheerful, too. He has finished his novel. I don't think he cares how many emerald bracelets he is accused of stealing, since that is over. And I'm forgetting to tell you that Mrs. Dykeman has dug up a German count. I don't know how he ranks. He's a connoisseur on art, or some kind of a high-brow. She's giving a German musicale next week. Ich dien! Oh! We had a message from the Schuylers. The general is entirely out of danger."

I lay on the couch for a long time thinking after Laura had gone, and Celle had arranged my hair and tenderly gotten me into a negligee. I tried—tried desperately—to see a way out of all the robberies for Winthrop and I could not do it. Except for the ruby, when Laura had proved that he was at home, and the woman in the corridor, every circumstance pointed to him. What did he actually know of it all? Was he shielding some one? A woman? But that thought was ugly. I had rather believe him a thief!

The door of my sitting-room, leading into the corridor, was standing open, for the day was intensely hot, and I caught the sound of Hap's voice. He was talking to his mother. I listened, not deliberately to what he said, but just to hear his voice; and because there was no one to see, I arose and buried my face in the roses—his roses. It was wrong to listen; I knew it. I could not fall to hear what he said. At first the full meaning of his words did not strike me, nor even the tone of the argument. I was thinking of other things. Then he spoke my name. He was angry; I listened, amazed.

"I don't care if she is a thief," he said. "I want her, and I'm going to have her. I'd marry her if she is proved a thief a thousand times. And I wouldn't believe her a thief if I saw her stealing!" His mother's answer I didn't want to hear; an instant later I stood in the doorway across the corridor. "Don't believe him," I said to his mother. "He isn't going to marry me."

Hap, with an exclamation of concern, threw some pillows into a chair and indicated an intention to carry me to it.

"I'm not an invalid," I insisted. And I walked to the chair. "I've just a silly broken arm, otherwise I am quite fit. Now, tell me why am I a thief again?" I was quite calm about it, but I had to sit down, for my knees were shaky and I was realizing why Laura had said such queer things to me.

Hap made some choky noises like men do when they want to swear; Mrs. Hazard pressed her handkerchief to her lips.

"Just because I found some jewels in the card room, and can't tell you who put them there, or why they were there?" The whole thing suddenly struck me as absurd and amusing. I laughed. "My story isn't plausible!"

Mrs. Hazard began to cry—what a blessing tears are to a woman—and it was so different from her dear chuckle I could not resist the impulse to go to her and put my only good arm around her fat neck.

"Please don't cry," I begged. "I can't see that it's worth one little tear. I'm not going to let him marry me, be sure of that; and the other only concerns myself."

"My dear child," she sobbed. "I feel responsible for everything. I told your sister I would take care of you." "You distinctly said you would not be responsible for any lacerated affections, and you certainly can't help it if I'm a thief. I tried to get him on the right track, but—"

"Right track!" she sobbed. "Right track!" Hap echoed. And, notwithstanding the gravity of the situation and the tears running down her fat cheeks, Mrs. Hazard chuckled. She dabbed at her eyes. "I said, too, you might pick a plum from the social pudding, and I had no objection. If the plum happens to be my own son it's my own fault."

"What are you two talking about?" Hap demanded. "I love her, and I'm going to marry her whether she's a thief or not."

"All right, take her," Mrs. Hazard replied, giving me a gentle push, and Hap gazed at her with that comically surprised expression. "Just be sure to pour the coffee for him every morning at breakfast, my very dear little girl, and you have my blessing. It just occurs to me that I've never yet made a mistake in estimating a person, and I'm not going to begin now."

"But gracious me!" I exclaimed, as Hap swept me to my feet and shamelessly kissed me, "I'm accused of stealing!" "We'll have to prove you innocent!" Her tone was final. "I must have my judgment vindicated."

"But—"

"The bag was my brother's," she interrupted belligerently. "It occurs to me that he needs to do some explaining."

"Surely you don't think—?" "I don't think anything, after the fool I've just made of myself trying to. We have a detective here now to do the thinking. If he thinks wrong, I'll discharge him. Why isn't your story true? You heard a noise in the gallery; you're a brave girl and you went to see what it was. I would have been crazy with curiosity myself. If you don't know why a thief put down a bag of jewels on the floor of the card-room and left it there for you to find, why you can't help it. Natalie having a pistol and you knowing it is just a coincidence. The thieves didn't get to her, that's all. The door of the back stairs was open and a hammer was dropped on the court where a hammer doesn't belong. It's quite plain that the thieves came from outside, since I've had the common sense to think of it."

But I saw how unreasonable my story was as she repeated it. The absurdity of my being in the card-room when I had said the noise was in the gallery, the absolutely ridiculous idea that a thief had put down a bag of loot on the floor of the card-room for me to pick up, and yet that's what he did—it was all a child's story. And I couldn't speak of Winthrop, nor of Thomas without mentioning Winthrop, and Winthrop had enough to do to explain the emerald bracelet.

"There won't be any further trouble," she went on. "Every jewel has been taken to a bank until somebody has been proven guilty. Now let the detective solve it. And he may just as well prove Winthrop innocent while he's at it. Winthrop is a farmer, not a thief." She dismissed the subject with an airy motion of her fat hand. "Since you've got Hap on the right track—"

"What's this right track thing?" Hap demanded. "A scheme, ya put up job, to make you notice me," I replied. "But I had to do it; it was a part of my job." I suddenly covered my face with my hands.

"I guess you're satisfied then," Hap grinned. "And now you refuse to marry me after deliberately—"

## IMPORTS TOO MUCH

STARTLING FIGURES SHOW LACK OF ECONOMY IN DISTRIBUTION IN STATE.

## TO HAVE FARM LIFE MEETING

Experts on Agricultural Topics From All Over the Country Will Be Brought to North Carolina For the Big Conference Next Year.

Charlotte.—Interest in the Farm Life Conference which will be held in Charlotte May 22 and 23 of the coming year is increasing, according to reports being received by the secretary of the Greater Charlotte Club who suggested the conference. President Clarence H. Poe of the North Carolina Press Association has written that he is in sympathy with the movement, that he will take pleasure in assisting in arranging the details for the conference and that he will gladly speak during the meeting. A number of government officials have written that they approve the idea and the secretary of agriculture for the United States is of the opinion that the conference will be well worth while if speakers who are well versed in the matters they are to discuss are secured. Maj. W. A. Graham state secretary of agriculture, is enthusiastic over the conference and looks to see much good result.

In this connection the secretary of the Greater Charlotte Club has gathered considerable data relative to the amount of food products imported into North Carolina during the past year and it reaches the almost unbelievable sum of more than \$50,000,000. It is hard to believe that more than \$15,000,000 worth of hay was brought into the state of North Carolina last year from other sections. And this must be considered in connection with the broad acres of North Carolina land which is adapted to the growing of hay which excels that of any other section.

But when the statement that more than \$4,000,000 worth of vegetables were imported into North Carolina within the same length of time it is seen that the necessity for a Farm Life Conference is greater than has been realized. "And it is here," says the secretary of the club, "that it is hoped that some of the good results will be secured. A great many vegetables are grown in this state that are not properly used."

**Two Days For Highway Building.**  
Raleigh.—The North Carolina Good Roads Association, in session here, unanimously adopted a resolution calling on Governor Craig to set apart two days in November to be devoted to the building and improvement of highways by the people of the State. Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, secretary, said that he had already talked to the governor about the matter and that the governor had indicated his readiness to issue such a proclamation. The association went on record for a state highway association to be created at the extra session of the general assembly, favored bond issues for road building in counties instead of special tax.

**North Carolina New Enterprises.**  
Raleigh.—A charter was issued for the Keystone Paper Box Company, Burlington, capital \$50,000 authorized and \$3,000 subscribed by E. P. Bacon of Polk county and J. H. Clapps of J. W. Murray of Burlington for a general paper box manufacturing business. The Jackson Mills Company, Monroe, chartered September 17, for a general cotton-manufacturing business and including silk, wool, hemp and other fabrics, filed an amendment to its charter increasing the capital.

**Nance Declared Insane.**  
Rockingham.—The case of the State against George S. Nance, confessed slayer of his wife in the Seaboard Hotel at Hamlet last month, was temporarily ended at Rockingham recently after an all-day inquisition of the accused by expert alienists for the prosecution and the defense who declared him insane.

**Davie and Davidson Are Lucky Ones.**  
Raleigh.—Davie county and Davidson county are the lucky ones. They get a part of the government money for building good roads. 710,000 or perhaps \$20,000 to Davie, and \$10,000 to Davidson. And there is a reason assigned for apportioning \$20,000 or \$30,000 of the \$40,000 to these two counties, though each is a different reason. To one the money goes because of what a county has done, to the other because of what men have done to have a county put money in good roads.

**Successful Raid on Still.**  
Newbern.—One of the most successful raids ever made in this section by revenue officers took place when Deputy Collector Cameron and Deputy Marshal Lilly confiscated and destroyed near Stella, Carteret county, an 85-gallon still and a quantity of whiskey and captured Daniel Hill, colored, the alleged owner and operator of the still. This raid is the first made in this section in several months but it was a complete success and the revenue men are very much gratified with the results.



"Don't Believe Him. He Isn't Going to Marry Me."