



By HAROLD MACGRATH

It's their business to be. Actresses are the only women who go gadding about without their husbands, who always gettin' divorced. You never see a newspaper without readin' somethin' about their gamin' on. She's be'n here more'n a week an' hasn't be'n to either church. An' she did not attend th' ice cream socia-ble th' last o' th' season too. Hasn't been in th' village but three times, an' never speaks t' no-buddy."

"Actress, no doubt of it." "Who's an actress?" boomed a male voice from the kitchen doorway, and Uncle Billy marched in.

There was a futter, nothing more. The four women were rather spell-bound over the suddenness of his appearance.

"Are you talkin' 'bout Miss Wynne, who I'm usin'?" Well, I'll have 'r know, now 'r hereafter, she ain't no actress."

"How'd you know she ain't?" asked his wife.

"How'd I know? Ain't I got eyes'n nose? She ain't no actress. She don't do no self-advertisin', an' self-advertisin' is what I drink t' all th' actors I ever see. Keep your meddlin' tongues off'n Miss Wynne. That's all I've got t' say."

He hung his cap savagely into a corner. The three visitors rose, settled their bonnets dignifiedly, smoothed their gowns and stalked out, not, however, missing the opportunity of extending a commiserating glance at Uncle Billy's better half.

"Now look what you went an' done!" on the verge of tears.

"What I went an' done! Dodgins! Them busbodies!"

"Will you!"

"I tell y' I won't have 'em in my kitchen."

"You're kiddin'—for the benefit of the three who were just passing the window."

"My house, then, if that'll suit y' better. Buzz'n away decent folks' reputations. Them three make more trouble 'n a sturgeon in a nest o' bass eggs. Tell everything they hear, 'n ball it all up when they tell it. They drove two ministers out o' th' village already with their twistin' tongues. An' what riles me is, you let 'em in here t' bulldoze you in't believe 'all they say."

He yanked his supper off the back of the stove and ate it with a deal of banging and rattling and rumblyng.

"I'm sure I don't ask 'em t' come here with their tales," snarled the trio were now out of earshot.

"Mebbe; but I notice y' don't stuff your ears none." He got up from the kitchen table. "I anybody wants me I'm out t' th' boat-house; got t' overhaul th' dinged engine. 'P I was rich I'd throw th' blame leany o' sputterin' int' th' middle o' the lake."

He worked by lantern. He had the tops of the cylinders off when Cranford came in.

"Billy, do you want to make \$10?"

"Ten? Well, now?"

"I want you to take me over to Kingston right away."

"What—'nigh't?"

"Yes."

"Can't be done, Mr. Cranford. Do it fer nuthin' in a minute 'I could. First place, I'm takin' th' engine apart; second place, they ain't no oil, not till 'morrow mornin' An' what th' dickens y' want t' go t' Kingston fer?"

"I want very much to see a man there."

"Sakes, alike, why didn't y' see him this afternoon?"

"Didn't want to keep Miss Wynne, who was tired. Can't possibly go, then?"

"None. Ticklish job, anyhow, goin' over by th' dark. Smells windy. Take th' boat in th' mornin'."

"Anybody else I could get?"

"None. No oil anywhere. Tank wasn't filled this afternoon. Goin' out t' Pidgin 'morrow!"

"Hang Pidgin! Mark my words, Billy, you'll get caught out there one of these days and caught hard."

"But I ain't hungry fer Pidgin," protested Uncle Billy.

"You ought to be able to fake up some excuse."

"No, with Miss Wynne listenin'."

Cranford chewed the stem of his pipe.

"I suppose I'll have to give up the idea of going over to Kingston. Instead I'll go out to the farm and give Miss Wynne a lecture and try to convince her of the real danger this time of the year. A big blow is due. You remember when we hit Galoo?"

"I ain't forgettin' it none. Say, is Miss Wynne an actress?"

"A what? Good Lord, no! What put that idea into your head?"

"I dunno, unessily."

"I'm familiar with the faces of all the well known women of the stage, and Miss Wynne's is not among them. But it wouldn't matter a lot if it was."

ence. Couple o' years ago some actresses stayed up at th' hotel an' cut up high jinks. But, ding it, actress 'r not, Miss Wynne's th' finest lady I ever see." And he thumped the nearest cylinder to emphasize the declaration.

"But I wish y' would git her out of this Pidgin idee. I dunno what 'tis, but seems t' me they's sumpin' more'n fish out there. You know, 'n I know th' game is fishin' all th' known places, try'n your luck everywhere. T'day was th' first time she's fished any wheres but Pidgin. An' by golly, that makes your uncle think! I got t' fix them bass this very night. Ain't she some fisherman, though? Mebbe that five pounder wasn't a wrastlin' match! Oh, my! All in when she got th' net. I'm sure I had t' list 'em in myself. A perfect fish. Anyhow, you come out t' Pidgin, too; it'll be safer all around. Don't tell her, but my ol' bones 'r whisperin' there's goin' t' be a blow before mornin'."

"So much the better. I'll follow if it takes me out to Duck Island."

It was a mile and a half out to the farm. Cranford covered the ground with the swinging stride of a man who knew how to walk.

A great ruddy September moon was clearing the tops of the trees in the east. A silvery blue haze dimmed the outline of the river.

Smead. He had really seen the man. Imagination never played such tricks; fancy could never have created that bulk, the cane, and the bad limp.

He had seen him, and in turn Smead had seen him and taken 'em in myself. A perfect fish. Anyhow, you come out t' Pidgin, too; it'll be safer all around. Don't tell her, but my ol' bones 'r whisperin' there's goin' t' be a blow before mornin'."

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"I have a confession to make," he began at once.

The smaller pair of heels became silent instantly. "I'm not going to sail under false colors any longer. Up here they think I'm a millionaire, and I've never taken the trouble to disguise their minds. Lord knows, I'm not. My grandfater was, but he was a duck and drake chap. You know what I mean."

The little heels began the tattoo again relievedly.

"He made a dozen fortunes and spent them. And my own poor dad killed himself trying to save something out of the wreck for me. Work has been my portion."

"Work is good for all of us." "But you don't know what kind of work I do. It's a sneaky business. I'm a special agent of the secret service, and my duty is to learn when and where jewels are purchased, to keep track of them, and to see that they are not smuggled in free of duty, and whenever these purchases are confiscated I am given my moiety. I hate it all, it's not a gentleman's business. But my grandfater's blood in me craves for comforts, the good things of life. If I did the work because I believed it to be right, my duty, I shouldn't mind. I came up here to forget it all—to rehabilitate my pride, but I saw a man today who brought it all back a thousandfold keener."

"In Kingston?"

Her voice was only curious.

"Yes. The man wasn't my friend. I didn't tell you the truth. He's a blackleg, and if ever a man deserved hanging this man Michael Smead does. A professional gambler, a smuggler and other detestable things. You see, two weeks ago I tripped him up, spoiled his game, and I've an idea that I'm up here with the thought of reprisal."

CHAPTER IX. Smead at Work.

Cranford took an envelope from his pocket.

"If anything should happen to me—that is, if I shouldn't turn up some morning—write to the address on this envelope. Nothing more will be necessary. It's my man's address, and he's the chap who'll pull me out of any trouble. Thanks, I'm not a coward. But these men will move in the dark. They never come out in the light."

Their hands touched as she took the slip of paper. Hers were icy cold.

"I'm putting along like that, she thought, without a break in her voice! "Drat Uncle Billy!" he laughed.

"Thirty-five makes me feel like an old man. But I don't know; I never feel more than twenty up in this country."

"Is there really danger?"

"I don't know. But never mind that. Don't go to Pidgin tomorrow, he snarled. "Don't go out there any more. It is honestly and truly dangerous. This is the time of year for the sudden north gales. They pop out of nowhere almost before you can turn head to them. You can always ride a sou'wester down the river, no matter how hard it blows, but no motorboat afloat can weather the savagery of these northerners—white capped, short, choppy, smashing and running a mile a minute. I know; I was caught in one once. I think I told you about it."

After all, she was an actress, consummate.

"I am not afraid. I can take care of myself. I love the danger—the game of chance. Didn't I tell you that I was born at sea?"

"You might be the bravest woman living, but that would not be of use to you if you were caught out there."

"Very well, after this week, then, I promise not to go out to Pidgin. Will that do?"

"I suppose it will have to do. Ah, Diana!"

"No, Mr. Cranford."

She stood up quickly, and of necessity he rose also. "Just good friends, I know. The moonshine, the beauty of the night. It gets into one's head. Just friends, always. Another September I shall come up, maybe, and we'll fish and hunt again. Please be just a boy, don't spoil it. What do you know about me? Nothing. And I am not in the mood to make confidences. Please, just good friends."

"I should lie if I told you I did not love you."

"I am sorry. If you cannot accept my friendship upon the basis I offer it there mustn't be any more shore dinners."

"No hope?"

"None."

"It is simply impossible not to ask why."

"I cannot marry any man, Mr. Cranford, if that will comfort you."

With dread foreboding he said, "You are already married?"

"She did not answer."

"I cannot let you go out of my life like this!"

"I don't want to go out of it. Friends, I am very unhappy, very lonely. Friends."

"Friends, if you will have it so. But it's a jolt. This is a funny old world. Ten days ago I didn't know you existed; now I'm asking you to marry me, and you belong to some one else."

"But you are going to be brave about it. You're going to be the out of door friend, and some day you're going to be glad that I couldn't marry you."

He wrung her hand and held it as he held her up to the road.

(To Be Continued.)

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Our Query and Reply Department

How long did the Dreyfus trial in France last? Was it the longest trial on record?

Captain Dreyfus was arrested Oct. 15, 1894, on a charge of selling military secrets to Germany, was condemned and publicly degraded Jan. 4, 1895, and transported March 10. In 1899 he was brought back to France for retrial by court martial, was again found guilty on Sept. 9, but was pardoned by the president. Afterward a court of appeal reopened the case and July 12, 1906, declared that his first conviction was based on forgery, and he was restored to his original rank in the army and promoted to major. The whole proceeding covered about twelve years, but Dreyfus was in exile most of the time, and the actual trial, or both of them, occupied but a short time. There have been many longer trials, some in the United States, which is more noted for long trials than for short ones. The celebrated Tichborne case in England, growing out of a fraudulent claim to a large estate, lasted 102 days. The trial of Warren Hastings, governor general of India, before the house of lords, lasted seven years, and three months, commencing Feb. 13, 1788, and ending in his acquittal April 23, 1795. Probably this is the longest trial on record.

Why has the United States senate no committee on education?

The constitution says all bills for raising revenue shall originate in the house of representatives and the senate has no need of a committee of that name. The senate committee on finance has charge of all business in that body connected with the public revenue, taxation, banking, currency, etc.

Where suffrage has been granted to women, does the privilege extend to the presidential vote?

It does in some states, but in others only to local, municipal or school elections.

Must I make a return if I receive an income tax blank from the internal revenue collector's office, even if my income is less than the required amount?

You need not make a return unless your income is in excess of \$3,000 (except in case you are a married man and you and your wife have a combined income of over \$4,000).

What is the reason for the difference in the numbering of the Fahrenheit and the centigrade thermometers?

The difference is in principle, that between circular measure and the neat simplicity of the decimal system. When Fahrenheit had found that his thermometer was capable of giving him a means of measuring heat the necessity for a scale presented itself. He was able to establish two constants of temperature—that at which a mix of salt and snow melts at one end of the scale, that at which water boils at sea level establishes the other. Evidently with some reference to the fact that in circular measure the maximum distance possible to measure from one point to another is 180 degrees, he scaled 180 equal parts between these two limits. He scaled the thermometer below his freezing point to its reading on a winter day colder than the oldest inhabitant could remember to have experienced, and here he established his zero. It chanced to be 32 degrees below his freezing point. The centigrade on the other hand establishes its zero at freezing point and 100 degrees at the boiling point. These constants are selected because they may be so conveniently reproduced at any time and therefore obviate the necessity of maintaining an officially scaled standard, as must be the case with measures of length and capacity.

Please give the name of the vessel built by the United States to be driven by electricity, to serve as a collier for ships at sea.

The boat to which you refer is the Jupiter. It was built at the Mare Island navy yard last year, the first electrically driven seagoing vessel and the largest ever laid down on the Pacific coast. It is possibly too soon to tell whether she is a success or not.

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