

FRAN

BY JOHN BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY O. IRWIN MYERS

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SYNOPSIS.

Fran arrives at Hamilton Gregory's home in Littleburg, but finds him absent conducting the choir at a camp meeting. She repairs thither in search of him, laughs during the service and is asked to leave. About Ashton, superintendent of schools, escorts Fran from the tent. He tells her Gregory is a wealthy man, deeply interested in charity work, and a pillar of the church. Ashton becomes greatly interested in Fran and while taking leave of her, holds her hand and is seen by Sapphira Clinton, sister of Robert Clinton, chairman of the school board.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

He was sorry for her; at the same time he was subject to the reaction of his exhausting labors as song-leader. "Then," he said, with tired resignation, "if you'll follow me, I'll take you where you can spend the night, and tomorrow, I'll try to find you work."

"Work!" She laughed. "Oh, thank you!" Her accent was that of repudiation. Work, indeed!

He drew back in surprise and displeasure.

"You didn't understand me," she resumed. "What I want is a home. I don't want to follow you anywhere. This is where I want to stay."

"You cannot stay here," he answered with a slight smile at the presumptuous request, "but I'm willing to pay for a room at the hotel."

At this moment the door was opened by the young woman who, some hours earlier, had responded to Fran's knocking. Footsteps upon the porch had told of Gregory's return.

The lady who was not Mrs. Gregory was so pleased to see the gentleman who was Mr. Gregory—they had not met since the evening meal—that, at first, she was unaware of the black shadow, and Mr. Gregory, in spite of his perplexity, forgot the shadow also, so cheered was he by the glimpse of his secretary as she stood in the brightly lighted hall. Such moments of delighted recognition are infinitesimal when a third person, however shadowy, is present; yet had the world been there, this exchange of glances must have taken place.

Fran did not understand—her very wisdom blinded her as with too great light. She had seen so much of the world that, on finding a tree bearing apples, she at once classified it as an apple tree. To Gregory, Grace Noir was but a charming and conscientious sympathizer in his life-work, the atmosphere in which he breathed freest. He had not breathed freely for half a dozen hours—no wonder he was glad to see her. To Grace Noir, Hamilton Gregory was but a benefactor to mankind, a man of lofty ideals whom it was a privilege to aid, and since she knew that her very eyes gave him strength, no wonder she was glad to see him.

Could Fran have read their thoughts,



"I Don't Want to Follow You Anywhere. This is Where I Want to Stay."

she would not have found the slightest consciousness of any shade of evil in their sympathetic comradeship. As she could read only their faces, she disliked more than ever the tall, young, and splendidly formed secretary.

"Oh!" said Grace with restraint, discovering Fran.

"Yes," Fran said with her elfish smile, "hark again."

Just without the portal Hamilton Gregory paused irresolutely. He did

not know what course to pursue, so he repeated vacantly, "I am willing to pay."

Fran interrupted flippantly: "I have all the money I want." Then she passed swiftly into the hall, rudely brushing past the secretary.

Gregory could only follow. He spoke to Grace in a low voice, telling all he knew of the night wanderer. Her attitude called for explanations, but he would have given them anyway, in that low, confidential murmur. He did not know why it was—or seek to know—but whenever he spoke to Grace, it was natural to use a low tone, as if modulating his touch to sensitive strings—as if the harmony resulting from the interplay of their souls called for the soft pedal.

"What is to be done?" Grace inquired. Her attitude of reserve toward Gregory which Fran's presence had inspired, melted to potential helpfulness; at the same time her dislike for the girl solidified.

"What do you advise?" Gregory asked his secretary gently.

Grace cast a disdainful look at Fran. Then she turned to her employer and her deliciously curved face changed most charmingly. "I think," she responded with a faint shake of rebuke for his leniency, "that you should not need my advice in this matter." Why should he stand apparently helpless before this small bundle of arrogant impudence?

Gregory turned upon Fran with affected harshness. "You must go." It was annoyed that Grace should imagine him weak.

Fran's face hardened. It became an ax of stone, sharpened at each end, with eyes, nose and mouth in a narrow line of cold defiance. To Grace the acute wedge of white forehead, gleaming its way to the roots of the black hair, and the sharp chin cutting its way down from the tightly drawn mouth, spoke only of cunning. She regarded Fran as a fox, brought to bay.

Fran spoke with calm deliberation: "I am not going away."

"I would advise you," said Grace, looking down at her from under drooping lids, "to go at once, for a storm is rising. Do you want to be caught in the rain?"

Fran looked up at Grace, undaunted. "I want to speak to Mr. Gregory. If you are the manager of this house, he and I can go outdoors. I don't mind getting wet. I've been in all kinds of weather."

Grace looked at Gregory. Her silences were effective weapons.

"I have no secrets from this lady," he said, looking into Grace's eyes, answering her silence. "What do you want to say to me, child?"

Fran shrugged her shoulders, always looking at Grace, while neither of the others looked at her. "Very well, then, of course it doesn't matter to me, but I thought it might to Mr. Gregory. Since he hasn't any secrets from you, of course he has told you that one of nearly twenty years ago—"

It was not the rumble of distant thunder, but a strange exclamation from the man that interrupted her; it was some such cry as human creatures may have uttered before the crystallizing of recurring experiences into the terms of speech.

Fran gave quick, relentless blows: "Of course he has told you all about his Springfield life—"

"Silence!" shouted Gregory, quivering from head to foot. The word was like an imprecation, and for a time it kept hissing between his locked teeth.

"And of course," Fran continued, tilting up her chin as if to drive in the words, "since you know all of his secrets—all of them—you have naturally told the most important one. And so you know that when he was boarding with his cousin in Springfield and attending the college there, something like twenty years ago—"

"Leave us!" Gregory cried, waving a violent arm at his secretary, as if to sweep her beyond the possibility of overhearing another word.

"Leave you—with her?" Grace stammered, too amazed by his attitude to feel offended.

"Yes, yes, yes! Go at once!" He

seemed the victim of some mysterious terror.

Grace compressed her full lips till they were thinned to a white line. "Do you mean forever?"

"Oh, Grace—I beg your pardon—Miss Grace—I don't mean that, of course. What could I do without you? Nothing, nothing, Grace—you are the soul of my work. Don't look at me so cruelly."

"Then you just mean," Grace said steadily, "for me to go away for a little while?"

"Only half an hour; that's all. Only half an hour, and then come back to me, and I will explain."

"You needn't go at all, on my account," observed Fran, with a twist of her mouth. "It's nothing to me whether you go or stay."

"She has learned a secret," Gregory stammered, "that vitally affects—affects some people—some friends of mine. I must talk to her about—about that secret, just for a little while. Half an hour, Miss Grace, that is all. That is really all—then come back to me. You understand that it's on account of the secret that I ask you to leave us. You understand that I would never send you away from me if I had my way, don't you, Grace?"

"I understand that you want me to go now," Grace Noir replied unresponsive. She ascended the stairway, at each step seeming to mount that much the higher into an atmosphere of righteous remoteness.

No one who separated Gregory from his secretary could enjoy his toleration, but Fran had struck far below the surface of likings and dislikings. She had turned back the covering of conventionality to lay bare the quivering heartstrings of life itself. There was no time to hesitate. The stone ax which on other occasions might be a laughing, elfish face was now held ready for battle.

"Hidn't we better go in a room where we can talk privately?" Fran asked. "I don't like this hall. That woman would just as soon listen over the banisters as not. I've seen lots of people like her, and I understand her kind."

CHAPTER V.

We Reap What We Sow.

If anything could have prejudiced Hamilton Gregory against Fran's interests it would have been her slighting allusion to the one who typified his most exalted ideals as "that woman."

But Fran was to him nothing but an agent bringing out of the past a secret he had preserved for almost twenty years. This stranger knew of his youthful folly, and she must be prevented from communicating it to others.

It was from no sense of aroused conscience that he hastened to lead her to the front room. In this crisis, something other than shuddering recoil from haunting deeds was imperative; unlovely specters must be made to vanish.

He tried desperately to cover his dread under a voice of harshness: "What have you to say to me?"

Fran had lost the insolent composure which the secretary had inspired. Now that she was alone with Hamilton Gregory, it seemed impossible to speak. She clasped and unclasped her hands. She opened her mouth, but her lips were dry. The wind had risen, and as it went moaning past the window, it seemed to speak of the yearning of years passing in the night, mystified. At last came the words, muffled, frightened—"I know all about it."

"All about what, child?" He had lost his harshness. His voice was almost coaxing, as if entreating the mercy of ignorance.

Fran gasped, "I know all about it—I know—"

She was terrified by the thought that perhaps she would not be able to tell him. She leaned heavily upon a table with hand turned backward, whitening her fingertips by the weight thrown on them.

"About what?" he repeated with the caution of one who fears. He could not doubt the genuineness of her emotion; but he would not accept her statement of its cause until he must.

"Oh," cried Fran, catching a tempestuous breath, uneven, violent, "you know what I mean—that!"

The dew glistened on his brow, but he doggedly stood on the defensive. "You are indefinite," he muttered, trying to appear bold.

She knew he did not understand because he would not, and now she realized that he would, if possible, deny. Pretense and sham always hardened her. "Then," she said slowly, "I will be definite. I will tell you the things it would have been better for you to tell me. Your early home was in New York, but I had a cousin living in Springfield, where there was a very good college. Your parents were anxious to get you away from the temptations of a big city until you were of age. So you were sent to live with your cousin and attend college. You were with him three or four years, and at last the time came for graduation. Shall I go on?"

He fought desperately for self-preservation. "What is there in all this?"

"You had married, in the meantime," Fran said coldly; "married secretly. That was about nineteen years ago. She was only eighteen. After graduation you were to go to New York, break the news to your father, come back to Springfield for your wife, and acknowledge her. You graduated; you went to your father. Did you come back?"

"My God!" groaned the man. So she knew everything; must he admit it? "What is all this to you?" he burst forth. "Who and what are you, anyway—and why do you come here with your story? If it were true—"

"True!" said Fran bitterly. "If you've forgotten, why not go to Springfield and ask the first old citizen you meet? Or you might write to some one you used to know, and inquire. If you prefer, I'll send for one of your old professors, and pay his expenses. They took a good deal of interest in the young college student who married and neglected Josephine Derry. They haven't forgotten it, if you have."

"You don't know," he gasped, "that there's a penalty for coming to people's houses to threaten them with supposed facts in their lives. You don't know that the jails are ready to punish blackmailing, for you are only a little girl and don't understand such things. I give you warning. Although you are in short dresses—"

"Yes," remarked Fran dryly, "I thought that would be an advantage to you. It ought to make things easier."

"How an advantage to me? Easier? What have I to do with you?"

"I thought," Fran said coldly, "that it would be easier for you to take me into the house as a little girl than as a grown woman. You'll remember I told you I've come here to stay."

"To stay!" he echoed, shrinking back. "You?"

"Yes," she said, all the cooler for his attitude of repulsion. "I want a home. Yes, I'm going to stay. I want to belong to somebody."

He cried out desperately, "But what am I to do? This will ruin me—oh, it's true, all you've said—I don't deny it. But I tell you, girl, you will ruin me. Is all the work of my life to be overturned? I shall go mad."

"No, you won't," Fran calmly assured him. "You'll do what every one has to do, sooner or later—face the situation. You're a little late getting to it, but it was coming all the time. You can let me live here as an adopted orphan, or any way you please. The important fact to me is that I'm going to live here. But I don't want to make it hard for you, truly I don't."

"Don't you?" He spoke not loudly, but with tremendous pressure of desire. "Then, for God's sake, go back! Go back to—wherever you came from. I'll pay all expenses. You shall have all you want—"

"All I want," Fran responded, "is a home, and that's something people can't buy. Get used to the thought of my staying here; that will make it easy."

"Easy!" he ejaculated. "Then it's your purpose to compel me to give you shelter because of this secret—you mean to ruin me. I'll not be able



to account for you, and they will question—my wife will want to know, and—others as well."

"Now, now," said Fran, with sudden gentleness, "don't be so excited, don't take it so hard. Let them question. I'll know how to keep from exposing you. But I do want to belong to somebody, and after I've been here a while, and you begin to like me, I'll tell you everything. I knew the Josephine Derry that you deserted—she raised me, and I know she loved you to the end. Didn't you ever care for her, not even at the first, when you got her to keep your marriage secret until you could speak to your father face to face? You must have loved her then. And she's the best friend I ever had. Since she died I've wandered—and—and I want a home."

The long loneliness of years found expression in her eager voice and pleading eyes, but he was too engrossed with his own misfortunes to heed her emotion. "Didn't I go back to Springfield?" he cried out.

"Of course I did. I made inquiries for her; that's why I went back—to find out what had become of her. I'd been gone only three years, yet, only three years, but, good heavens, how I had suffered! I was so changed that nobody knew me." He paused, appalled at the recollection. "I have always had a terrible capacity for suffering. I tell you, it was my duty to go back to find her, and I went back. I would have acknowledged her as my wife. I would have lived with her. I'd have done right by her, though it had killed me. Can I say more than that?"

"I am glad you went back," said Fran softly. "She never knew that. I am so glad that you did—even that."

"Yes, I did go back," he said, more firmly. "But she was gone. I tell you all this because you say she was your best friend."

"A while ago you asked me who I am—and what—"

"It doesn't matter," he interjected. "You were her friend; that is all I care to know. I went back to Springfield, after three years—but she was gone. I was told that her uncle had cast her off, and she had disappeared. It seems that she'd made friends with a class of people who were not—who were not—respectable."

Fran's eyes shone brightly. "Oh, they were not," she agreed, "they were not at all what you would call respectable. They were not religious."

"So I was told," he resumed, a little uncertainly. "There was no way for me to find her."

"Her?" cried Fran; "you keep on saying 'her.' Do you mean—?"

He hesitated. "She had chosen her part—to live with those people—I left

her to lead the life that pleased her. That's why I never went back to Springfield again. I've taken up my life in my own way, and left her—your friend—"

"Yes, call her that," cried Fran, holding up her head. "I am proud of that title. I glory in it. And in this house—"

"I have made my offer," he interrupted decidedly. "I'll provide for you anywhere but in this house."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Don't ask any man about his origin; you can read it in his face.



"My God!" Groaned the Man.

THE STORY OF NOTRE DAME

Some Account of the History and Vicissitudes of This Great Church.

London.—Some account of the history and vicissitudes of Notre Dame appears in the Strand. The first cathedral was erected in the year 1238 by Childebert and afterwards demolished, the same site being used for the present building, which was begun in 1163 and finished in 1251.

Alexander III. laid the foundation stone, the first mass being celebrated by the patriarch Heraclius. The grand old building has been sorely beset by many dangers and has witnessed many strange and stirring scenes.

The reign of terror in 1793 led to such disgraceful orgies within the precincts of the cathedral that it was closed to the public as a place of divine worship in 1794, but was reopened in 1802 by Napoleon. The interior has suffered severely at times at the hands of the mob and individuals. The worst offender, was perhaps, Louis XIV.

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who, carrying out his father's vow, caused the destruction of the fourteenth century stalls, the high altar embellished with gold and silver statues, the cloisters, tombs and unique stained glass work. In 1845 restoration was necessary in many parts of the building, the work being successfully undertaken by Lassus, Viollet-le-Duc and Boeswillwald.

In 1871, also, during the commune, Notre Dame was menaced with grave dangers owing to the fury of the communists, who, having effected an entrance, collected all the available chairs and other combustible material and, piling it in a huge bonfire, drenched with oil, in the center of the choir, attempted to destroy the cathedral by fire. The evil designs of the incendiaries were, however, happily frustrated by the arrival of the national guard.

MUSIC MAKES BAD MEN GOOD

So Says Columbus (O.) Warden After His Experience With His Orchestra.

Columbus, O.—Not a prisoner has been guilty of an infraction of the prison dining hall rules since the eleven-piece orchestra has been entertaining the men during meal time. Two weeks ago the warden conceived the idea of having the prison orchestra play in the two dining halls. The musicians play in one hall at noon and in the other in the evening, but the two halls are so close together that the music from one can be heard in the other.

In this way nearly 1,600 convicts have the uplifting influence of music. Under the old plan, Warden Thomas said, about half the fights were started in the dining room. Good music, the warden thinks, does not necessarily mean classical music, and on each program there is a goodly sprinkling of popular music, including ragtime.

Warden Thomas is considering the advisability of forming two crack military companies. If the plan under way materializes, one company will be of white prisoners and the other of colored. Residing temporarily behind the bars are former members of the U. S. army and the National Guard of other states who might be used to start the two companies.

FIGHT WITH 100 REPTILES

Several Workmen Are Bitten Before Killing Fifty-eight Copperheads at Washington, Pa.

Washington, Pa.—A gang of 150 men laying a big pipe line for the Philadelphia company in Greene county engaged more than 100 venomous copperheads in battle. The copperhead lair was encountered on the farm of Madison Scott.

James Notts, a pipe line worker, was surrounded by the reptiles before he could get away, and was badly bitten. His screams brought fellow-workers, who engaged in one of the most remarkable contests ever waged with a horde of vipers. The copperheads fought with deadly precision and bit several other men before they were finally routed.

A count after the battle showed 58 dead reptiles. The bitten men were given aid at the Washington hospital; but several are in a critical condition.

Operated on 25 Times.

Yuma, Mich.—Fred Maybury, twenty-three, was operated on for the twenty-fourth time in ten years. His initial visit to the operating table was made when his right hand was cut off. Maybury next lost his left leg. Then he was stricken with appendicitis. Next a stray shot destroyed his right eye, following which necrosis developed in his left arm and several bones were removed at different times. A portion of his liver was removed in the last operation.

Fractures Hip Dancing Tango.

Los Angeles.—While dancing the tango at Long Beach, near here, Mrs. Raymond Torry fell and fractured her hip. Mrs. Torry declared that as soon as she is able she will tango again. The mishap was caused by my tight skirt, she said.

Canada's Oyster Industry.

There are no oysters on the coast of New England, north of Cape Cod, but they are numerous in certain parts of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and adjacent Canadian waters. Efforts are being made by the Dominion government to develop the oyster industry to much larger proportions than its present comparatively small size.

The next best thing to belief in God is to sympathize with people.

Backache Is a Warning

Thousands suffer kidney ills unaware—not knowing that the backache, head-aches, dizziness, all tired condition are often due to kidney weakness alone.

Anybody who suffers constantly from backache should suspect the kidneys. Some irregularity of the secretions may give just the needed proof.

Doan's Kidney Pills have been curing backache and sick kidneys for over fifty years.

A Minnesota Case

Mr. Anna Beard, 71 years old, St. Paul, Minn., says: "I suffered terribly and doctors could do nothing for me. I was so weak that I could not walk. I took Doan's Kidney Pills and in a few days I was in perfect health."

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LAMB MADE ALL THE TROUBLE

By Comparison, the Lion Was Inoffensive and Mild—"Butts Like a Battering Ram."

The tidings that a lamb is appearing on the stage in the production of "Joseph and His Brethren" has been noted far and wide. Several correspondents have written to ask why a lion should not also appear, the pair lying side by side. But that has already been done, by Lord George Stanger, and thereby hangs a tale.

When the sale of the old showman's menagerie took place, the two animals were put together and bought by Mr. Fred Ginnett, of Dick Turpin fame. By this time the lamb had got pretty long in the tooth, to say the least of it. A few days afterwards an acquaintance asked Mr. Ginnett how the happy pair were getting on.

"I wish I had never seen them," said the showman gloomily.

"Why, is he savage?"

"Savage is the word for it. He won't let anyone come near him."

"Indeed! I thought he looked such a mild old lion—"

"Lion? Lion be blowed! It's the lamb I mean. He butts like a battering-ram."—London Mail.

What He Meant; Not What He Said.

"I got—"

"John," called Mary, the astonished wife, "I never heard you use such language before. What's the matter with you?"

"I wasted usig such bad language. I said I got—"

"John!" called the wife again.

"Well, Bary," explained John, "I was saig I got to fide that beddine or this blabed hay fever will sboid by debber. If I don't fide it sood I will swear—I'll say dab."

Contradiction.

"Rare cooks belle their name."

"How so?"

"Because the work of a rare cook is generally well done."

DIDN'T KNOW That Coffee Was Causing Her Trouble.

So common is the use of coffee as a beverage, many do not know that it is the cause of many obscure ills which are often attributed to other things.

The easiest way to find out for oneself is to quit the coffee for a while, at least, and note results. A Virginia lady found out in this way, and also learned of a new beverage that is wholesome as well as pleasant to drink. She writes:

"I am 40 years old and all my life, up to a year and a half ago, I had been a coffee drinker. "Dyspepsia, severe headaches and heart weakness made me feel sometimes as if I was about to die. After drinking a cup or two of hot coffee, my heart would go like a clock without a pendulum. At other times it would almost stop and I was so nervous I did not like to be alone. "If I took a walk for exercise, as soon as I was out of sight of the house I'd feel as if I was sinking, and this would frighten me terribly. My limbs would utterly refuse to support me, and the pity of it all was, I did not know that coffee was causing the trouble. "Reading in the papers that many persons were relieved of such ailments by leaving off coffee and drinking Postum, I got my husband to bring home a package. We made it according to directions and I liked the first cup. Its rich, snappy flavor was delicious. "I have been using Postum about eighteen months and to my great joy, digestion is good, my nerves and heart are all right. In fact, I am a well woman once more, thanks to Postum. "Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Write for copy of the little book, 'The Road to Wellville.' "Postum comes in two forms: Regular Postum—must be well bottled. Instant Postum is a soluble powder. A teaspoonful dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage instantly. Grocers sell both kinds. "There's a reason for Postum."

CALLER WAS HARD TO PLEASE

Mrs. X Made Many Guesses as to Visitor's Identity, Until a Great Light Dashed on Her.

"Miss Jennings, madam," the maid announced. The visitor was a sweet-faced girl, quietly but prettily dressed in black. She greeted Mrs. X by name and calmly seated herself without invitation, saying: "Will you pardon me while I readjust my hat, the