FACTS AND FANCIES FOR WOMAN AND THE HOME CIRCLE

THE DAILY SHORT STORY

Out of the Dusk.

By A. W. PEACH.

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MARGERY ORVIS had never stopped to think of the danger that lay for her in her habit of leaving the coal office after dusk. Old Martin, who owned the business, had never reached the point of moving his office from his yards to some uptown locality, nor had he changed the old system of having his drivers collect the money for coal delivered.

He had found Margery so clever and keen that soon he was leaving the office early for his home, and she was taking the money from the drivers. Many times the great coal yard was gray with dusk before she slipped homeward from the office.

It did not occur to her that any one would rob her, for no one was supposed to know that she left with the entire money collected during the day. Some did know, however.

On that particular evening she was hurrying down the road between the bluffs when her heart jumped at the sound of rushing steps.

She half turned to be grasped tightly around the body and to feel the innocent bag she carried snatched from her hand. In the same moment, in a wild effort she seized her assailant about the neck, but with an oath he tore loose, flinging her aside, and disappeared.

She drew herself quickly to her feet, but the dusky silence of the deserted yard gave back no sign of the robber. She stood helpless, a bit dazed; then through her consciousness came the hint that she held something in her hand. She held it up in wonder, and then shivered with the shock of what she saw. She had seized and torn away part of a necktie, and in it was still fashioned firmly a pin of peculiar design. She stared at it, recognizing it beyond any question, feeling her blood grow chill within her.

Half in a stupor, she made her way to the car line, and then to her room in the quiet residential section. She studied the pin. There could be no doubt; Alden Kenyon was her assailant. Her world of dreams began to tumble about her.

Since the day of her coming to the coal office, the old dealer's son, Reed Martin had pressed his suit upon her, and she had liked him, even to the extent of loving him if it had not been for her strict little Puritan body and mind.

His habits were against him, and she valued her own clean body and soul too much to risk it in his care. And then had come Kenyon, merrry and frank of eye, poor but honorable—she had thought—tall and strong, the type of man she could love.

Reed had brought him to the office for the two worked in the same establishment in the city, little thinking he was bringing a rival. Now the one she trusted had failed her.

"I was too hasty, I really did not know him," she said to herself bitterly, recalling the evenings with him, the pleasant times, the shy exchange of words and moods such as only lovers know. Tears came in to her eyes as she remembered. "Oh, Alden."

She slept little that night, her mind facing the issue that had arisen. He knew when she left the office; she knew she carried the money collected during the day, and she, on her part, knew that her love for him had been the quick, instinctive kind that reason does not guide with firm, directing finger.

She turned to the pillow at last, tears coming, but with her mind made up to tell the stern old business man just what had happened.

She was not spared further shock. On her way to the yard the next morning she saw a familiar figure swing onto the car, and found herself looking up into Alden's tender, smiling eyes.

"Hello, little girl. I thought I would wait a few cars in hopes of seeing you. I want to engage you for the evening," he said easily.

"I am not free," she answered as coolly as she could, although trembling within. He was wearing the very suit he had worn when he robbed her. How keenly she recalled that gray stripe she had seen as she struggled.

"I suppose it is Reed, this time. Well, I can't complain. You have treated me fair,' he said genially.

He chatted with her but she had little to say, and when he dropped from the car at his destination she was relieved, although she could hardly restrain herself from following his swinging form as it disappeared in the crowd.

All that day she fought a silent battle—whether to tell Mr. Martin of what had happened and who the guilty party was. Like a caged animal her mind went back and forth. At last she sought freedom.

The gray-haired veteran listened to her story without comment; then he said gravely: "The evidence is clear against him. My dear little girl, you must learn as we all learn, not to trust a handsome face, a friendly way, until it has been tested. I'll send for him and see what he has to say. My boy likes him, and I hate to have him jailed."

She suffered in silence until, hours later, released from his work, he came. He was changed in some way, and she guessed that he sensed what he was wanted for.

She caught him impulsively as he started to the private office door and whispered, "Oh, Alden—" Then recovering and remembering, she backed off, leaving him bewildered, a glad smile on his face fading to a shadow of pain.

Martin called her in after a little. She went with trembling step. Alden sat whiteface and silent inga corner wearing the look of a trapped man.

Martin's voice was grim. "Margery Kenyon admits that the pin is his. It is such an odd one that I doubt if he could do otherwise, and he practically admits that he robbed you, although he won't say so."

She looked at him with tears in her eyes. "I can't believe it- I can't!"

Kenyon stared at her and half rose to his feet, his lips opened, but he said nothing.

Martin looked at him coldly. "I shall take action against you unless you return that money. Can you do it?"

"I'll try," Kenyon answered—and the answer was admittance of guilt.

As she sank back with a low cry, she heard a sharp knock on the door. It opened and in came Reed; his handsome face dark. He threw his hat into a chair and sat down.

"I just heard what was up. I'm the one. I room with Alden. It was easy. I needed money—debts—cards. I borrowed his suit, and the rest of his stuff. He was wise, and I knew he would try to save me. I'm not such a dog as I might be—and, dad, I'm downright sorry. I feel like a cur."

She saw the old man at the desk age years in a moment. As his son's self-condemning voice went on, his despair seemed to be checked.

She caught Alden's signal, and they both went out.

Outside the door, he looked down at her with a twisted smile. "I was afraid the old man's heart would break, and I thought I could save him. Reed told me and I urged him to 'fess up this afternoon, but I didn't think he would. Now, he has. Gee, but it's a rotten mess. And the only thing that looks good to me now is you. Say, will you go to the park with me this night?"

She leaned her face against his shoulder as his boyish voice rambled bravely on to cover his own emotion; and then, while his hand patted her encouragingly, she managed to say with more quavering than she wished, "I—guess—so," which seemed to be quite satisfactory to him.

Confessions of a Bride

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Could I Rely on Dr. Certeis to Save Bob from Death?

Somewhere in the foothills Certeis found his auto. Evidently it had been parked there, waiting to pick him up after his visit to Don Manuel. The chauffeur received his extra passengers with unveiled surprise. He welcomed the elegant and aristocratic Don Manuel as an intimate friend, not as a superior. Remembering the odious Berghoff, butler, junker and international spy, I decided that the chauffeur was not a hired man at all. Like Certeis, he was probably descended from a duke and he would, for the sake of obtaining certain Mexican mines, set the pace for the circle of German spies which is said to be trying to embroil Mexico and the United States.

It was midnight when we swept into the long avenue which stretched from the road to the hacienda. The towers of the great rambling adobe building shone white in the moonlight. The place looked like an ancient castle—a castle of haunted chambers and ogres, of dungeons and fairy queens, and of miraculous paintings which came to life! It was a castle asleep in the moonlight. I wondered as we stopped at the patio if it could be awakened by any magic of my own.

Bob had collapsed more than once on the long ride in the car. His silence—amounting to a stupor—made me tremble with dread. I noticed that Dr. Certeis was watching him carefully, but I dared not ask if Bob's fever were rising—I dared not hear the doctor's answer.

Long before we reached the hacienda I forgot that Bob and I were prisoners, forgot what would have filled me with terror had Certeis been an ordinary man, forgot everything but Bob and his need of rest.

As I saw Certeis and Don Manuel supporting Bob to a room, it occurred to me that I was going to have very little time to consider my personal dangers—if any existed. It looked to me as if Bob were in danger of life itself. He and I were completely in the power of a man who loved me! And that man was a traitor to every good thing in the world—except his love for me!

If my husband became dangerously ill—as it appeared he was rapidly becoming—if he came close to the doors of death—could I rely on Dr. Certeis to save him?

Certeis had the ability to do so, if any man on earth possessed it. Thus I meditated when I was alone in the splendid room I had occupied once before. I looked hopelessly over the broad window ledge and saw the lights of the north-bound train slow down at the adobe station at the edge of the town. It was carrying free men and women to the states but there was no hope in it for me. And no splendid flying-man was planning to drop out of the skies to rescue me on the morrow. Not a living soul that loved us had an idea of what had become of Bob and me!

Now that I had been caught, I saw that a particularly Hunnish trap had clutched me. Bob and I were not under lock and key and bars like ordinary prisoners. We were, nevertheless captives. As long as Bob was sick his wife would not wander far from his bedside.

While Certeis and the helpers he had summoned bathed Bob and put him to bed, I changed my aviator's breeches and blouse for a fluffy blue chiffon negligee I had left in the room the day of my flight with Baby Babs. Then I hurried to my husband's side.

Bob had lapsed into unconsciousness. But Dr. Certeis' eyes widened perceptibly as I appeared in my dainty feminine attire. Then he returned to the study of the still form on the bed.

"You are going to let me nurse my husband?" I pleaded.

"Not yet—not alone," said Certeis. "I will watch with you for a while," he said gravely as he placed a splendid cushioned chair for me near the head of my husband's bed.

Sister Mary's Kitchen

The cup that cheers but not inebriates" is always welcome, but never more so than on a cold winter day.

Most women do serve tea to an afternoon visitor nowadays, but comparatively few have adopted the English custom of serving it to just the family.

The simpler the "tea" and the daintier the service the better. The idea is not to spoil one's dinner with real food but rather to calm the spirit and warm the heart.

A slice of orange with two or three cloves stuck in it gives the tea a little bit different flavor and not quite so much sugar is usually needed as with lemon.

A maraschino cherry dropped in each cup makes a change.

Plain cookies or wafers answer the purpose just as well as more elaborate and fancy tea cakes and sandwiches.

Menu for Tomorrow.

Breakfast — Baked apples, cereal with top milk, broiled bacon, toast, coffee.

Luncheon — Macaroni and cheese, graham bread and butter, peanut cookies, tea.

Dinner—Clear soup, filet of beef, twice baked potatoes, cauliflower, endive salad, bread and butter, canned pears, coffee.

My Own Recipes.

Perhaps filet of beef seems extravagant, but remember that in this cut of meat there is no waste. It is the same cut in beef that the tenderloin is in pork. Left in the strip, larded and roasted "rare," 'tis indeed a rare treat.

Graham Bread.

1 cup scalded milk.
1 1-2 hot water.
1-2 cup molasses.
3 teaspoons salt.
1-4 yeast cake dissolved in 1-4 cup lukewarm water.
3 cups flour.
4 cups graham flour.

Add molasses and salt to milk and water. When lukewarm add dissolved yeast cake and flour. Beat well, cover and let rise to double its bulk. Beat again, turn into greased bread pans, filling pans one-half full. Let rise to almost double its bulk and bake.

Peanut Cookies.

2 tablespoons butter.
1-2 cup sugar.
1 egg.
1 cup flour.
1 1-2 teaspoons baking powder.
1-2 teaspoon salt.
1-2 teaspoon vanilla.
1-2 cup finely chopped peanuts.

Soften butter and beat butter, sugar, and egg thoroughly. Sift baking powder, salt and flour together and add to first mixture. Add nuts. Drop from a teaspoon onto a greased and floured pan and bake in a slow oven for fifteen or twenty minutes.

Twice Baked Potatoes.

4 medium sized potatoes.
1 tablespoon butter.
4 tablespoons hot milk.
Salt and pepper.
2 tablespoons grated cheese.

Use smooth potatoes. Wash thoroughly with vegetable brush. Bake in a hot oven for about 40 minutes and the potatoes should be soft. Take from oven, cut slice from top of each and scoop out inside. Mash and beat in butter, salt, pepper and milk. Beat! Refill skins, sprinkle with grated cheese and return to a very hot oven for six or eight minutes.

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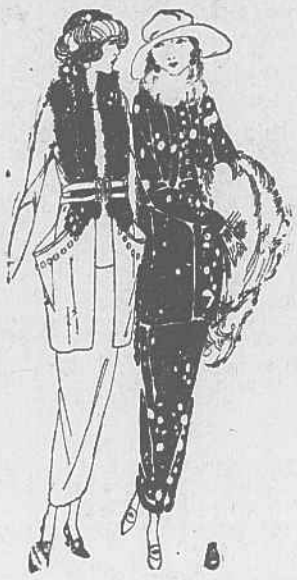

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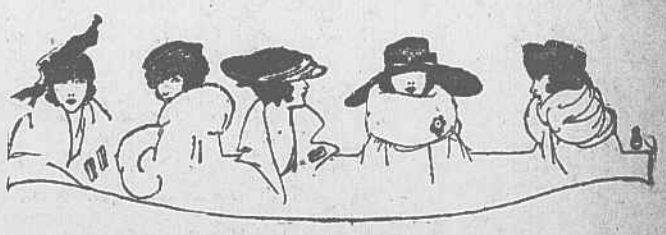

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