

### From the Beginning

By LINCOLN ROTHBLUM

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Miss Zebiah Seagrave, unmarried, unbecomingly and of uncertain age, pulled the cane-bottom rocker closer to the window, and, folding her thin hands in her lap, heaved a great sigh.

"Zebiah," called a weak, complaining voice from the other room. And Zebiah lifted her angular form and listlessly walked to the bed where lay a frail, old woman.

"What is it, mother?" she asked gently, though her voice had a weary note in it, "aren't you comfortable?"

"It just seems as if I can't get comfortable," was the querulous response. "If I face the window, the sun bothers me; and if I face the door, I don't see the sun; and if I set up, my bones ache." And the voice dwindled off in a whining wail.

Zebiah did not answer. She lowered the shade to cut off the bright glare of the sun, straightened the pillows, and, drawing up a chair to the bed, picked up a book preparatory to reading.

"I don't want to be read to and you ought to know it," the old lady muttered, her brow furrowing in a million wrinkles, "you don't pay no attention to me at all, though I don't know as I ought to be expectin' much more from a stepchild."

Zebiah seemed restrained from arguing by the invalid's weakness. "Now, mother," she softly replied, laying the offending book on the table, "don't work yourself up. You know Doctor Merrifield said you should not get excited—your heart won't stand it."

Mrs. Seagrave waved her shrunken hands dramatically. "There you go mentioning that doctor again to me. Ain't I told you how I hate him with his vile tartin' medicines and pills that stick in my throat?" Her voice rose to a shrill accent. "Anyhow, 'pears to me he likes to come to see me—every other day would be enough to take keener of an old woman, to say nothing of twice a day like he's been hangin' aroun'. I suppose it's my money what he's after as soon as I'm cold—running up a big bill like that." And the outburst of temper was followed by a protracted racking cough, rendering the body so weak and helpless it scarcely seemed alive.

Zebiah patted the scant, ashy-white hair. "I am sure Doctor Merrifield does not want your money, mother," she soothed, "he hasn't taken a penny yet for all the medicines he has given you. We all want to see you get well."

Her ministrations were interrupted by the entrance of a quiet, earnest looking man, whose bald head and bowlegs seemed strangely at variance. He smiled encouragingly at Zebiah. "How did she sleep last night, Miss Seagrave?" he questioned in a low tone.

"I was up all night, doctor, as the cough gave her no rest. She is not much better this morning."

As the doctor turned with professional interest toward the patient who lay so white and still, Zebiah stole quietly from the room. It was the mirror in the gilt frame, sole adornment of the bare walls of this "sitting room" that claimed her attention. The close inspection did not please her and quick tears of self-pity came to her eyes. As she stood off so that the small mirror might reflect her figure, the flat-chested, hipless, colorless reflection brought forth audible suffering.

"Yes, I've given her my best years, even if she isn't my mother. I've stood her abuse and I've given up friends."

The thoughts seemed too great for utterance and Zebiah sank into the cane-bottom rocker which creaked sympathetically, as she buried her head in her arms, her shoulders shaking with her sobbing. Doctor Merrifield entered the room.

"Come, Miss Seagrave," he comforted, patting her head, "you mustn't take such things so to heart. Your mother has been ill a very long time and you know she has been getting steadily worse."

Zebiah rose and wiped her eyes in a handkerchief already sadly wet. "Oh, it's not that."

"I know you have been very patient and good," the doctor continued, and he added in a hesitating manner "I hope you will be rewarded."

The pent-up gates of suppressed emotion gave way. "What has my goodness and patience brought me? I have become a recluse—even the children can point out 'old maid Zebiah,' our minister questions me what disposition I will make of her money, and but yesterday I heard Widow Bliss refer to someone 'as homely as Zebiah.' What reward can come for all that?"

"You must not let such unkindness weigh upon your mind, Miss Seagrave. We all have our crosses to bear. Even my life has not been a bed of roses."

Zebiah looked up at the kindly face in surprise.

very softly, "father died, and mother lived but a month longer. My brother married and then I started to learn all I did not know. It is not easy to learn at thirty-five—not medicine, at any rate—and it was ten years later before I got the right to hang out that sign you see in front of my office. And at forty-five, a new doctor does not easily build up a practice in a small town—indeed there were some nights when I sent myself to bed superfluous like a naughty boy being punished for having spoilt—his life," he added bitterly.

Zebiah forgot herself as she saw the need for quick sympathy. "But look how splendidly you have done, doctor, in the five years you have been here. Surely that is encouraging."

"It is if it were not counteracted by hearing people speak of 'that old batch,' 'old baldy,' and 'bowlegs,' and wondering 'who'll he leave his money to when he dies.'"

A faint call from the sick room interrupted their exchange of confidences and both stood over the figure breathing so laboriously. The doctor felt the pulse and looked very compassionately at the lined features.

"Guess I'm done for, Zebiah," came in a far-away voice, "and—and—don't let the Doc get my money. I'd rather—'d rather—' A weak cough stopped her. In a moment she went on, "I'd rather see you have it. I ain't been so kind to you, Zebiah, these many years. You'll forgive me, child?"

With tears coursing down her faded cheeks, Zebiah leaned over and kissed the shrunken lips. "There is nothing to forgive, mother."

"I wish I'd been your real mother, girl, I might've done better by you. Don't give the Doc any of my money."

Silence ensued.

The doctor noiselessly arose and covered the body with the sheet. "She is dead," he said simply.

Zebiah retreated into the other room and the doctor followed. She was dry-eyed and felt horribly old. Irritating and complaining as her stepmother had been, she now had no one and the void seemed too immense to fill. Her head sank upon her chest.

"Zebiah," the doctor called.

Zebiah was aroused from her apathy by his use of her Christian name.

"Zebiah," he repeated, "will you marry me?"

Zebiah stared in incredulous amazement.

"We are both alone in the world," he continued gently taking her hands. "Your goodness to your stepmother has aroused love I long thought gone. Don't you think you could learn to care for me?"

"But, doctor, doctor," Zebiah's voice seemed another part of her, "I'm only 'old-maid Zebiah,' 'homely old Zebiah.'"

"And I'm only 'that old batch,' 'old baldy,' 'bowlegs.' Come, it's not too late, Zebiah, lets start from the beginning."

Zebiah seemed to have lost her angles, her hair seemed to curl about her forehead and long-absent color mounted her cheeks.

"Yes, let's start again," she whispered.

### PECULIAR SOURCE OF RIVER

Pool Flowing From Cave Gives Rise to the Oklawaha Stream in Heart of Florida.

Down through the heart of Florida winds one of the most beautiful of American rivers, aptly named by the Indians Oklawaha, "Crooked Waters." The steamboat that carries you up the stream scrapes its sides against the river banks as it twists through the palmettos and live oaks which line the river bed. Every few minutes it seems that the boat will run into the banks, which refuse to stay at the sides, but are always shifting so as to get directly in the way. Just as you decide what to do when the apparently inevitable collision shall occur, a long pole, dexterously guided, shoots out, the boat swings around, and you are safe until next time.

Presently the charm of the tropics seizes you, and you forget to worry about the boat. You hear a sudden "kerchunk," and a sleepy alligator flings himself from his sunny log into the water. The swamps beside the river are rank with lilies, water hyacinths, and yellow jasmine. Gray Spanish moss twines over the trees. The foliage is so dense that you readily imagine yourself in the African jungle instead of only a few miles from civilization.

The water of the Oklawaha is black as you look down, but if you dip up a cupful it is clear and sparkling. Down to join the dark river flows the Silver Spring run, a stream as clear as the Oklawaha is turbid. Here the boat leaves the main stream of the Oklawaha and travels up the tributary to its source, the mysterious Silver spring, a pool 75 feet deep, flowing from a great cave. How the water gets into the cave, and why it rushes forth with such force are problems yet waiting for scientific explanation. The great pool is 600 feet from lip to lip, a diamond in an emerald setting.—Chicago Daily News.

### She Was No Piker.

The lovely lady consulted the popular attorney in regard to getting a divorce. She was particularly interested in knowing how much it would cost. After looking over the case the lawyer said: "This is comparatively easy; I can get you a divorce without any publicity whatever for five hundred dollars." She looked at him haughtily. "I have plenty of money," she said. "How much will it cost with plenty of publicity and everything?" He saw that she was a person who wanted things done right, so he hastily revised his figures.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

## CZECHS IN ITALY MUST WIN OR DIE

Fighting Against Austria, Their Capture Means Nothing but Execution.

### WON'T LEAVE THEIR DEAD

All Fallen Comrades Carried From the Field—These Valorous Warriors Select Their Own Officers and Eliminate Weak and Unfit.

(Special Correspondence of Italian American News Bureau.)

Italian Front.—The Slav soldiers in the Italian army elect their own superiors by the most rigid tests, and thus they are representative of the manhood of their nationalities. The Italian soldiery and people have taken kindly to them.

The first of the proofs of valor they gave are admirable, although limited to modest operations in exploring and raiding. Whether by themselves or with Italian troops, these Czech-Slovaks, arriving from beyond the ocean, have kept up the fire of patriotism and the ardor to fight, and have fought well.

The repatriates of the Czech-Slovak army have been saluted already with brotherly love by the population in the zone of war, especially by the ancient inhabitants of the Veneto, who have the most recent and liveliest recollection of oppression and the convulsive struggle for redemption.

The women of Verona offered them a battle flag in the Bohemian colors, surmounted by a lion. The soldiers recognized the sanctity of the gift and swore an oath that they would die for that emblem of liberty. The expression was not rhetorical and the oath superfluous.

### Are Killed if Captured.

The fate that awaits these new warriors for the ideals of a far-off and oppressed country is shown by the inflexible military rules of the Austrian empire. They are all subjects of the Emperor Carl and as such death is the only thing in store for them if captured.

Their word is for that reason sacred. Neither alive nor dead must they fall into the hands of the enemy. Even the dead must be snatched from the oppressor. Each one has sworn to carry off to the Italian lines the body of a compatriot killed in action.

Recently, during a reconnaissance, a Bohemian fell close to the enemy lines. Braving a hot fire, the explorers hurried to carry him off, fearing that in a night sortie the Austrians might get the body.

These "soldiers of death" know that if an operation fails of success they must kill themselves. To the ignominious death inflicted by the enemy they prefer suicide. Whether through death by the enemy or through their own hands, they have consecrated their lives to the distant fatherland, from which they have come to fight in the greatest cradle of all liberty and all ideals—Italy.

### Eliminate Weak and Unfit.

Rome, the ancient lighthouse of civility and of liberty, has substituted these new companions in arms for those of Russia. These warriors for the freedom of their country have found in the ranks of our own combatants fraternity and sturdy faith. This fraternity, more than common ideals for the redemption of their respective countries, is cemented by the knowledge and vision of the real difficulties and the resolution and firmness of purpose of the new combatants. From their own ranks on a spontaneous vote they have eliminated all about whose military vigor or enthusiasm there could be any doubt, so that the recruits represent the flower of the soldiery of the oppressed nationalities. Drawn from the same country, speaking the same tongue, in the daily intimacy of their new military life, they have subjected each other to voluntary but inflexible tests. The results are confined only to their officers.

"Ttus does not please me. He would not make a good corporal. We do not want him," they say. Thus, out of the ancient military system of Austria springs elements of criticism which exclude the weak and unfit. The officers must heed these verdicts, which, like

all collective judgments, arise from a full consensus of the judges.

### Elect Own Officers.

The examination of the political opinion is not less exacting for being carried out by fellow soldiers. A Czech recruit who spoke his mother tongue well was challenged by his compatriots. "He speaks our language well, but his heart is not Czech," they said. It was learned that during protracted business transactions in Vienna he had lost the fierceness and the intrepidity of the Bohemian character through daily contact with the Austrian authorities.

This control has been fraught with excellent results. Those who have survived the tests of the assembled judges have furnished the best war material and proved themselves dependable in military and moral affairs. The officers are also elected by the soldiers, who trust their leaders with blind faith, and give them the most rigid obedience and discipline. Such discipline the new soldiers of liberty are taught, by their remembrance of imperial oppression, to hold essential to the triumph of their cause.

Cheap teaspoons are being made from compressed cotton fiber.

### THEY LOOK THE PART



It seems peculiarly appropriate that these German soldiers should look like the swine they imitate in their methods of warfare, though perhaps the porkery will object to the comparison. The type of gas mask used by the enemy gives them this repulsive swinish appearance that is topped off by the spiked German helmet.

## WAR GARDENERS RESPOND TO CALL

Will "Keep the Food Coming" as General Pershing Has Asked.

### BIG INCREASE THIS YEAR

Central West and Pacific Coast Especially Are Doing Well—National Commission Offers Prizes for Best Home-Grown Canned Vegetables.

Washington.—The war gardeners of the United States answered Pershing's call to "Keep the Food Coming." There are, according to figures being tabulated by the national war garden commission, 4,900,000 war gardens in the United States. These figures are incomplete and the estimates were made on reports received up to June 15. This number indicates an increase of 40 per cent over last year when there were 3,500,000 garden muniton plants at work. Figuring in the increased cost this year over last, further estimates will be made by the commission both on the number of gardens and the estimated crop value.

"Taking these early figures into consideration," said Charles Lathrop Pack, president of the commission, in making public the preliminary survey, "together with the increased canning demonstration work being done by the United States department of agriculture in cities and towns, we feel safe in saying the forecast of 1,500,000,000 quarts in tin and glass of canned stuff, made by the department, will be reached."

### Big Prizes Are Offered.

The report points to the early planting season this year, which was made possible by weather generally favorable throughout the country. To encourage saving the garden crop the national war garden commission, which planted a 400-acre demonstration war garden at Camp Dix, N. J., is offering \$10,000 in prizes for the best canned vegetables grown in war gardens, with the slogan "Back up the cannon by use of the canner."

In nearly every section of the country there has been an appreciable and encouraging increase in the number of war gardens this year, the commission announced. This has ranged anywhere from 10 to 60 per cent. In the Eastern portions there was a failure to note a gain on the early returns.

"The greatest percentage of increase," was made in the Central Western states and Pacific coast, taking any one section of the country as a whole. There an awakening has taken

place which revealed itself in an enthusiastic, widespread drive to help home food production. Of the total number of war gardens in the United States, the preliminary reports show that more than 2,000,000 of them—2,276,000, to be exact—were in the Central Western territory. There was a gain of fully 50 per cent over the war garden activity of last year.

### Eastern States Lagging.

"The Eastern states, including New England, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, on the whole showed little increase over last year. In certain parts of all this territory there has been a better showing, and particularly has there been a greater activity among manufacturing concerns in providing land for their employees; but these gains have been counteracted to a certain extent by less activity in other places; so that the amount of food home-grown along the upper Atlantic coast this year will be slightly if any greater than last year. Better cultivation in hundreds of cases may make up for what is lacking in numbers. In New York the park department alone reports 2,000 war gardens 26 by 40. The total number of war gardens in this territory, as shown by the reports, is 848,000, of which 737,000 are in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

"The South has made an excellent record, certain states in particular having made notable gains. Including Texas and Oklahoma, there are a total of 1,246,000 war gardens in the Southern states this year, one-fourth of the number in the entire United States. California, Washington and Oregon show a total of 463,000 war gardens. That the war gardeners intend to save a great part of the garden crop is shown in the 200 entries received up to July 1 for the canning contests that garden clubs are organizing all over the country."

### REJECTED BY NAVY; DRAFTED

Man Is Accepted for Service in Army After Qualifying as Postman.

Corvallis, Ore.—Ernest Chase, rural mail carrier, enlisted in the navy. After his final physical examination he was discharged as being physically unfit. Then he got a job as rural carrier and invested \$40 in a rig, horse and outfit. After working 20 days he was called in the military draft, passed by the local examining board, and ordered to camp.

He doesn't know now whether to sell his rig and give up his job, or whether to take a "lay off" and trust to being rejected by the army as he was by the navy.

### MAN TOO HEAVY FOR NAVY

Recruiting Officer Says Uncle Sam Hasn't Suit Big Enough for Kansan.

Salina, Kan.—"I want to fight," declared V. C. Emlck, twenty-one, of Miltonvale, at the local naval recruiting office. A recruiting officer gave him the "once over," put him through a series of paces and then said: "There is nothing doing here. There isn't a sailor suit in Uncle Sam's navy that would fit you."

Emlck walked out of the office a disappointed man. He weighs 275 pounds and was recently registered under the new draft law.

### Find Indian Skeletons.

Martins Ferry, O.—While stripping coal at the Beech Flats Coal company mine at Rush Run, above this city, workmen unearthed the skeletons of three Indians. The skeletons are in a good state of preservation. The teeth are perfect and white as ivory.

The island of Tasmania lays claim to having the world's richest tin mine.



### A LITTLE BIT HUMOROUS

#### INNOCENCE.

The culprit had hired the young town lawyer to defend him against the charge of stealing a book cabinet. After the first conference the young student of law who was just beginning court practice said to his client:

"Now, Bill, I'm convinced that you didn't steal that book cabinet. If I thought you did I'd advise you to plead guilty. However, just leave it to me and I'll prove to the court that you are innocent. In the meantime I'll take a retainer of ten dollars and you can pay the rest when—"

"Ten dollars!" said Bill. "I ain't got no ten dollars."

At this startling news the young lawyer seemed downcast, but suddenly he brightened. "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," he said. "I'll try to get you out of this scrape and then we'll call it square if you send the cabinet around to my office. I need one badly."

#### Disposed Of.

"You remember that clock you sold me?" asked the lady.

"Yes, madam, I do," replied the salesman.

"You told me it would run eight days without winding."

"Well, does it not, madam?"

"I don't really know. It had such a diabolical alarm that I didn't keep it long enough to find out."

#### Did Best She Could.

Mrs. Flatbush—I'm surprised at the neighbor of ours.

Mr. Flatbush—What's wrong now?

"Why, I saw her banging her head over the head today with her umbrella."

"Oh, well, dear, I guess that's all right. Perhaps she didn't have a cracker handy."

#### HEARD MANY A ONE.



The Judge—Madam, do you understand the nature of an oath?

The Witness—You seem to forget your honor, that I've been married for over twenty years.

#### Mary's Little Shoes.

Mary had a little limp And tumbled in her brow. She couldn't wear a number two. But tried it anyhow.

#### Good Reason.

Redd—They always call a ship don't they?

Greene—Yep.

"Well, do they call an airship too?"

"Certainly."

"Why?"

"Because they're inclined to be flighty."

#### True.

"Gardening is a good deal like raising children."

"I find that it's not enough merely to have one. To get the best results with either a child or a garden you got to give them constant care."

#### Perhaps Both.

Wife—I believe you're getting old, you never go out with the boys any more.

Hubby (knowingly)—It isn't my wife's wisdom.

#### Happy Disappointment.

Sad prophecies all unfulfilled. Did every pessimist be mute. Each year we say, "The fruit will be killed!"

Yet somehow there is always fruit.

#### Excusable.

"That's the first fight that ever me run," said Broncho Bob.

"I didn't know running was in your line."

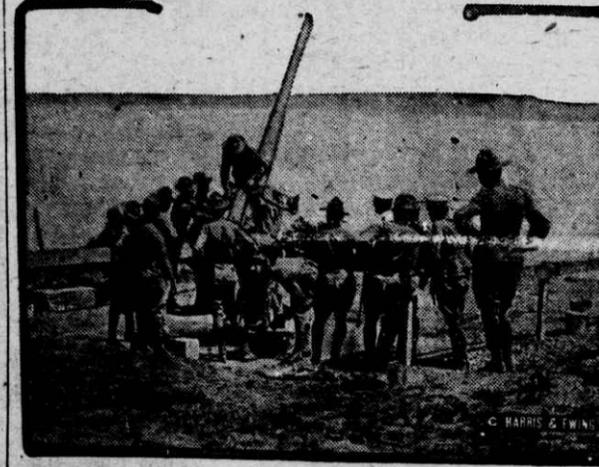
"It isn't. But this time if I had run fast enough to catch up with that Pete, there wouldn't have been a fight."

#### One-Sided Heredity.

"Do you believe children inherit faults?"

"Certainly. Our children get theirs from their father's side."

## PROTECTING OUR COAST DEFENSES



An anti-aircraft gun of the type which protects many of our coast defenses.