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THE ONE LETTER

Can't Make a Selection Because All Were Precious.

By CHANNING POLLOCK.

When they had come to an under-stand- ing Frank Claxton took Virginia to dinner at Giovani's. This evening, the result of many mis- understandings, put an end to their long-continued love affair. They had been together for three years—

Frank Claxton took Virginia to dinner at Giovani's. This evening, the result of many mis- understandings, put an end to their long-continued love affair. They had been together for three years—

realized this and admired himself a bit for the inherent generosity which prevented his holding her solely to account. Claxton reached his "place" in a relieved frame of mind. He opened the door with a key fastened to a silver ring that she had given him on his birthday and walked straight across the library to his typewriter. Beside the machine was a tiny cushion she had made for him to rest his elbow upon when he was "reading copy." He recalled that it had come wrapped in numberless pieces of paper, each one inclosed inside the other, like the eggs in a Chinese puzzle. That was about the time that the interest aroused by his tale of Central American life had opened the hearts of editors toward him.

Somehow the detective story he had intended to begin did not fly from his finger tips as speedily as he had expected. The first paragraph, after writing which, he told himself, things would go better, stood alone on the page, a succession of stilted and uninviting sentences.

"Not in the mood," he confessed at last and strolled down Broadway to his club. The boy at the door didn't know him, and when, after satisfying the stupid fellow of his membership, he sauntered into the lounge room he was in an exceedingly unpleasant humor. "Parsons been here this evening?" he inquired brusquely of an attendant.

"No, sir," replied the man. "He does not come very often now, sir. Marriell, I believe."

Claxton cursed Parsons from the bottom of his soul.

"Graham?" he asked.

"Mr. Graham was in about a week ago. We don't see him more than once a fortnight."

"Funny," mused Claxton. "By George, I wonder if there's any one in the place?"

There was, in the writing room—Frederick Ford Ferguson, a youth just coming a timorous mustache into existence and tolerated only for the sake of his father, Major Ferguson, formerly of the Ninth Infantry. Claxton would gladly have passed the youngster by, but he was hailed before he could regain the hall.

"Stop a bit, old chap. I want to read you a line I'm sending to a friend of mine at Daly's. Rather a clever letter, you know."

Claxton tore himself away and went back home. What was Miss Carter doing? He would have wagered a hundred that Phelps had called and taken her out. Confound Phelps!

The story went more smoothly, stimulated by the resentful energy of its author. From 10 o'clock until nearly daylight the typewriter clicked incessantly. When it stopped clicking seven pages of manuscript, much marred by pencil marks, lay on the table near at hand. It was a good story, he felt sure, although there were two or three details concerning which he would have liked a conservative opinion. I'll take Virginia out for luncheon and read it to her," he thought. Then he remembered that they had agreed never to see each other again—voluntarily, that is.

The day, which began with his rising at noon, dragged along monotonously. It was hard to realize that he might not speak to her over the telephone that stood on his desk and harder still to be convinced that she would not call him up. Toward mid-afternoon Claxton unlocked a drawer and took out the nine packages of her letters that represented a correspondence of three years. He must choose the one letter and return the rest to her.

To do this he must read every epistle in the nine bundles. Claxton, in common with most men who write or act, was a sentimentalist, and he wanted that the one letter should be the dearest of all. The first that met his eye he laid aside in the belief that it would prove the dearest. Miss Carter had penned it when he lay ill of fever at San Jose de Guatemala. "Your cable was repeated to me at Chicago," was the message; "otherwise I should have been with you now. I know that if your illness continued you would need a nurse, and I felt that I could not delegate to strangers the privilege of attending to you." It was a womanly letter—the letter of a woman mature in heart and brain—and Claxton pondered a long while before putting it aside.

Next came a telegram, sent to his apartments before the telephone had been installed: "Please come tonight. Am blue. Have wired Minnie stay home." A very sweet, dependent little message, but, of course, not to be thought of as the single memento of so close a friendship as theirs had been. It was even preferable to retain the short note which he had always ascribed to her literary genius rather than to her feelings—"Each thought of you, dropping into the waters of my heart, produces ever widening circles of tender recollection."

Then there was an envelope from her, on the back of which he had composed a fragment of verse. It began:

Thou art so dear to me, my love— So dear and, oh, so necessary!

Claxton remembered that she had prized the poem above anything else he had given her. "It is so fine to be thought 'necessary,'" she had said. In this manner he progressed through five of the nine packages. Each letter seemed more desirable than the rest, and every moment made a selection less easy. This scrawl was a reassurance which she had pencilled on the leaf of her program at the theater; that sheet of blue paper bore the first words of affection he had ever received from her.

At the bottom of the fifth bundle was a long envelope with the name of a publishing company on its upper left hand corner. The postmark was over two years old. "Rejected manuscript," Claxton concluded, tossing it to one side contemptuously. That had come back in the days when rejected manuscripts had not been half so rare as good dinners or money with which to pay rent. Something approaching curiosity made him pick up the envelope, again and draw the contents from its mouth. The story that lay before him was headed, "From Frank Claxton, 211 West Twenty-first street," but the name unmistakably belonged to the matrychine which still remained a fixture at Miss Carter's. The tale was one that she had sent over his signature to an editor of whose opinion she had

felt certain, and it had in consequence been returned to him when that gentleman had classed it as "unavailable." "I thought you'd get a check," Virginia had confessed, "and I know you'd spend it without considering whys and wherefores. It's just like Phelps! He was enthusiastic over the plot when I told it to him last week."

"Virginia," he had remonstrated, "it was like offering me charity." "Nonsense! I shouldn't have thought of handing you money. I simply wrote a story for you that you might have written yourself if you had taken time."

"Taken time!" Good Lord, how much time he had taken that year in just such discouraging, unremunerative labor! How unhappy he had been and how awfully, awfully hard up! He hadn't been spending every evening with her then, and he hadn't begun selling whatever he wrote either. "No-body ever did—at first," she had assured him.

For twenty minutes Claxton sat silently on his chair in the middle of a sea of letters. His fingers clung to the rejected manuscript, but his eyes looked beyond it into the past. All the half forgotten history of his love for Virginia Carter had been recalled to him with wonderful vividness—her unvarying goodness, the sweetness of their intercourse, the erstwhile strength of his affection for her. A ship's clock in the adjoining room struck 2, the nautical fashion of saying that the hour was 5, and with quick resolution he began climbing into his evening clothes.

"I've come to take you to dinner," he said to Miss Carter when she responded to his pressure on the button at her door.

"So you were lonely, too?" she asked him.

"Lonely? By George, and those letters!"

She was too clever a girl not to seem surprised, and he could not look through the sides of her trunk into the tray where reposed several packages of his letters to her, unsearched, untouched, since first they had been read and laid away.

Liverpool's White Plague Fight. "Some years ago old Liverpool was the most insanitary city in the United Kingdom," said a London physician. "Every condition was favorable to the dissemination and spread of consumption. People by the thousand dwelt in habitations unfit for human occupancy. At one time 40,000 dwelt in cellars in the midst of squalor and filth that were appalling. Then came the period of active war on the disease. It took millions of money and unceasing war on evil conditions, but the fight has been won. The municipality tore down no less than 8,000 insanitary hovels at a cost of \$4,500,000, and in this area there have been built thousands of small but comfortable homes for working people. The mortality in the district, once the site of so many foul domiciles, is now less than in the city taken as a whole, the consumption rate having declined to 1.35 per thousand."—Baltimore American.

Adam's Sister. The palm tree has always been venerated wherever it grows; in some places it is worshipped. "Honor the palm tree," says a Mohammedan writer, "for she is your father's aunt, for this tree was formed of the remainder of the clay from which Adam was created."

MY UNKNOWN FRIEND.

A Flow of Wealth Came From a Hidden Source.

By THOMAS R. DEAN. Copyright, 1910, by American Press Association.

I was thirty years old and had not saved a penny when I fell in love with Emma Earle. I told her of my love, but also told her that we could not be anything more to each other than friends, owing to my ill success. She was a practical girl and admitted that a man who had reached my age and had not forged ahead at all was very unlikely ever to be able to support a family comfortably.

"You are too good hearted," she said, "to achieve financial success. Most of the wealth attained is by saving. To save one must shut one's eyes to other people's needs, their sufferings." I was obliged to admit that there was a lot of good sense in this, though it was not in accordance with the teachings of Christianity, which Emma and I both professed. It seemed best for us to give up all idea of mar-



Dear Sir—I intend to open an office in New York for the transaction of the business of our company, principally the transfer of shares. You have been recommended to me as a suitable person to take charge of this office. The salary attached will be \$10 a month. The position is open to you. If you accept please notify me. Yours truly, SAMUEL LANGFORD, President.

Who Samuel Langford was or who had recommended me to him I had not the remotest idea. Nevertheless I made inquiries about the Acme Mining company and learned that it was a paying institution, the shares standing considerably above par. Langford owned a majority of the stock. He lived at Antelope, giving all his attention to the mine. I endeavored in every way to get a clew as to why he, a stranger to me, had taken me up and enabled me to earn nearly twice the income I had ever earned before, but I failed.

I wrote accepting the position, at the same time requesting Mr. Langford to tell me why I had been selected to fill it. Neither in the return letter nor in any that followed did he make any reference to my request. In due time I found myself in charge of his eastern business, which was principally transferring stock, though I often made purchases for him and shipped the goods to him at Antelope. After awhile I wrote him to know if he was satisfied with me and if the position was likely to be permanent. He replied to both questions in the affirmative.

Emma and I concluded to get married, though she insisted that we live on two-thirds of our income and save the other third. I assented to this, but owing to wedding expenses it was two months before we were able to begin our saving, and on the third month an old friend called on me with a pitiful story of sickness at home and nothing with which to buy either provisions or medicines and our savings for that month went to him.

I had scarcely given him the money when I received a letter from my employer advising me (confidentially) to put what money I had into the stock of the company. My wife insisted on replying to his letter, telling him that I hadn't a cent to invest and why. He replied to her that he had bought 1,000 shares of the stock of the company for me and would hold it till he thought it time to sell. We were somewhat surprised, but Emma, who is a level headed woman and had no confidence in mining stocks—and justly so—said that we wouldn't presume on any profit we might make.

It was only a week after the receipt of Mr. Langford's letter that on going to my office one morning I found a crowd of investors there waiting for me to transfer shares. They told me that they had bought under private advice and intimated that there was a movement of some kind on foot. The shares had raised a few points on the market and the next day made a sudden jump. Then reports came that a very rich vein had been struck in the Acme mine. The price of the shares continued to rise for a week or two, then, after slight fluctuations, settled down to about 200 per cent above what it had been when I was advised to buy it.

One morning I received a check from my employer for about \$2,000, payable to my wife's order. There was no letter accompanying it, but pinned to it was a bit of paper on which was written, "Profit on 1,000 shares of Acme mining stock." Emma and I had watched the rise in the price of the stock and knew that if our mysterious friend had really bought the shares for us we would have the profit sent us, but my wife insisted that there would be some reason why we wouldn't get it. When it came we were almost as surprised as if we had known nothing about the matter. We were certainly delighted.

And now we began to be consumed by a gnawing curiosity as to who was our unknown friend. We spent all our leisure time trying to think of some one who for some reason had thus favored us, going over every relative and every friend both of hers and mine. I recalled a number of persons to whom I had loaned or given small sums of money, but not one of them had ever prospered, and certainly none of them was named Langford.

I received my \$2,000 at a time when, owing to a financial panic, there were many bargains to be picked up in dividend paying stocks. I invested the amount and within ten months had doubled my capital—that is, I owned \$4,000 of securities paying me a good interest. About a year after my first acquisition Mr. Langford telegraphed me one morning to buy some shares of the Sarah Ann company, located in the vicinity of the Acme mine. In a short time news came that an extension of the valuable vein in the Acme mine had been struck in the Sarah Ann. I bought the shares of the latter at 7 cents and sold them for \$2.

I had now an income sufficient to support my family very comfortably without earning a cent by my own labor. I determined to go to Colorado and find out who this man was who had placed a fortune in my hand. I wrote him that I proposed to put some one in the office to attend to the business during my absence and would be with him in a couple of weeks.

I received a reply to this letter notifying me that he would be in New York before long and if I wished to see him I could then have an opportunity, but that it would avail me nothing, since I would not see one who was at all familiar to me. As for the thanks I had sent him, he had much more reason to thank me than I had to thank him. After the receipt of this information Emma and I again racked our brains to remember some one who was thus indebted to me, but met with no better success than before. Langford continued to buy or to sell, but never did so except on accurate information of the mines.

A time came when my investments gave me all the income I required, and I resolved to investigate my benefactor. Without notifying him of my intention, I went to Colorado, and one morning appeared in his office, which meanwhile had been removed to Colorado Springs. A man over fifty years of age was pointed out to me by the clerks as Langford. I advanced to

make myself known. He rose, pressed my hand and said to me: "Dine with me this evening at my house. Meanwhile say nothing to any one here about our connection."

He bowed me out, and to kill time I went about indirectly pumping people about my benefactor. No one knew anything of his antecedents before he came to Colorado in a very forlorn condition and went about with a pick like any other prospector. In time he found a hole which promised well and sold it for enough to set him up comfortably as a mine seeker. Other mines fell into his hands, the Acme from his having grubstaked his finder. Since he acquired the controlling interest in that mine he had made money rapidly.

When I met Mr. Langford at his house I saw not only by his manner and mode of living, but by his family, that he was a man sprung from the lowly walks of life. After dinner he took me into a private room. We lit cigars, and he said:

"Do you remember one morning, when you were about eighteen years old, walking on a road with a shotgun on your shoulder and meeting an escaped jailbird?"

"Yes. Tell me something more."

"On seeing you he turned and started to run. You pointed your gun at him and called on him to halt. Being defenseless, he gave himself up."

"I remember very well. But go on."

"He told you how he had been born in poverty in the city; how without parents to guide him, after he was some six years old, he had fallen into such a life as such boys must inevitably fall into and had at last been sent to state prison. There, under the influence of a lovely woman who ministered to the prisoners, he had attained to a desire to lead a different life. He had escaped. His story touched your heart. You went to your home and brought him some clothes. He concealed his stripes in a wood. You gave him all the money you had with you, \$18.63, and sent him on his way into a new world. I am that man, and I vowed then that if I ever became prosperous I would hunt you up and return your loan with interest."

"I have gone over every person I have ever helped," I replied, "and remembered you, but I never dreamed that I was indebted for my good fortune to a former jailbird."

Caught in the Holes. Meat Eater—I've tried nuts as food, but they don't seem to agree with me. Vegetarian—What kind of nuts did you use? M. E.—Doughnuts.—Boston Evening Transcript.

Wise Bobby. Bobby, you can't go over to play with Willie Jay today. "I heard him say his ma's milliner was coming to the house." "Well, you may go for a little while and see what kind of a hat his mother gets, but don't stay long."

What Was the Matter With Moses? Percy—Miss Jane, did Moses have the same after dinner complaint my papa's got? Miss Jane—Gracious me, Percy! Whatever do you mean, my dear? Percy—Well, it says here the Lord gave Moses two tablets.—Lippincott's.

Her Ungratified Want. Irritable Proprietor of Dry Goods Store—Why did you let that lady leave the store without selling her something? Clerk—She wanted a parasol that would cover her hat.—Woman's Home Companion.

His Dearest. "This very nice To kiss her twice," Said Andrew Jackson Carter, "But, glory be, So sweet is she, Two times is just a starter!" —Birmingham Age-Herald.

A Limerick. There was a young woman from Daisy, Whose lover was apt to be lazy, So she said, "Quit the mob And acquire a real job Or you'll never be husband to Maisie." —Spokane Spokesman-Review.

Modernity. "Some are so intensely modern that they prefer a Corot to a Rembrandt." "If it's a better hill climber I don't blame 'em. Me for the French car every time."—London Punch.

His Biggest Mistake. "What was the biggest mistake you ever made?" "Thinking I was too foxy to make a big mistake."—Cleveland Leader.

There is something more awful in happiness than in sorrow.—Hawthorne.

What She Would Do. "Johnnie, dear," said his mother, who was trying to inculcate a lesson in industry, "what do you suppose mamma would do for you if you should come to her some day and tell her that you loved your studies?" "Lick me for telling a falsehood," said dear little Johnnie with the frankness of youth.

A Quick Return Business. "You said you were going into some business that would bring you quick returns," said a young fellow to his chum. "I did," was the answer. "I am sending manuscripts to the magazines."

A Nice Bull. An Irishman, quarrelling with an Englishman, told him if he didn't hold his tongue he would "break his impenetrable head and let the brains out of his empty skull."

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A Crumbling Obelisk. Cleopatra's Needle, the Egyptian obelisk on the Thames embankment opposite the Savoy gardens, has been exposed to London atmosphere for thirty-two years and is slowly succumbing to its effects. The acid in the smoky air and the damp fogs are gradually destroying the sharpness of the hieroglyphs upon which the people of Heliopolis gazed more than 3,000 years ago. According to the suggestion it made that the needle may have to be removed to a more salubrious atmosphere, maybe to the British museum, where there are already two Egyptian obelisks safely protected from the weather. The monument is periodically cleaned, and since the last survey the process of decay has been much more rapid than before. CAGLIOSTRO. Effect of a Draft of the Notorious Charlatan's Elixir of Life. Cagliostro, the famous eighteenth century charlatan, was the hero of many strange stories. A great lady who was also, unfortunately for herself, an old one and was unable to resign herself to the fact was reported to have consulted Cagliostro, who gave her a vial of the precious liquid (his "wine of Egypt"), with the strictest injunction to take two drops when the moon entered its last quarter. While waiting for this period to arrive the lady who desired to be rejuvenated shut up the vial in her wardrobe and the better to insure its preservation informed her maid that it was a remedy for the colic. Fatal precaution! By some mischance on the following night the maid was seized with the very malady of which her mistress had spoken. Remembering the remedy so fortuitously at hand, she got up, opened the wardrobe and emptied the vial at a draft. The next morning she went, as usual, to wait on her mistress, who looked at her in surprise and asked her what she wanted. Thinking the old lady had had a stroke in the night, she said: "Oh, madam, don't you know me? I am your maid." "My maid is a woman of fifty," was the reply, "and you?" "But she did not finish the sentence. The woman had caught a glimpse of her face in a mirror. The wine of Egypt had rejuvenated her thirty years! Cagliostro's valet was as great a rogue as he and posed equally as a mystery monger. "Your master," said a skeptic to him one day, "is taking us all in. Tell me, is it true that he was present at the marriage at Cuba?" "You forget, sir," was the reply, "I have only been in his service a century." In the Vernaculus. "I understand that Blax got into financial difficulties owing to his desire for a more elegant home." "Yes. He couldn't let well enough alone."—Washington Star.