In the Land of the Cocoanut Palm

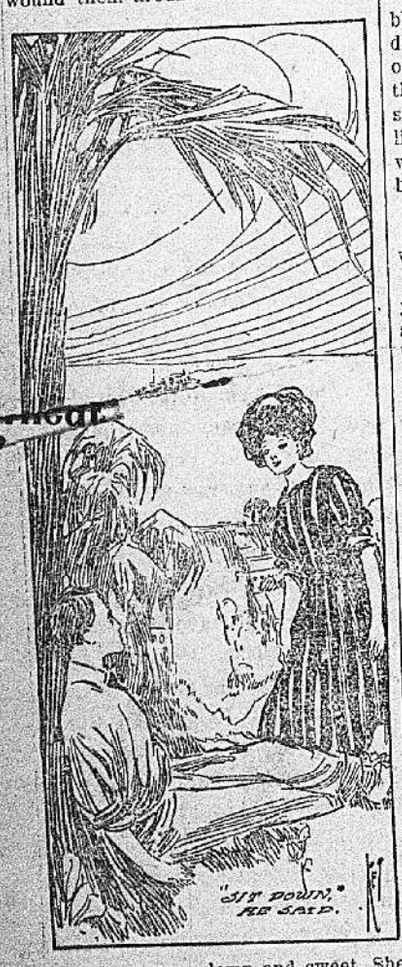
By SARAH FRANCES LINDSAY

On the height that overlooked the water lay a man, stretched full length in the shade of a breadfruit-tree. His pose and the outlines of his figure had the grace that comes from pure southern blood and the habit of leisurely motion. The skin of his face and hands was brown—not with the clear olive that indicates somewhere a trace of native Carib ancestry, but with the tan of a white man long exposed to tropical suns. An ordinary observer would have thought his eyes were closed. In reality they were gazing in dreamy reverie, under half-fallen lids, upon the beauty of the bay.

The scene before him was brilliant with the colors nature loves best. Down the street of the town, on to the bluff where he lay, came a girl, dainty and fair, an unexpected bit of activity in the midst of the lazy heat. She was young and she was romantic; a visitor to this little Central American town from out the strenuous north. She saw the figure of the man, walked up to him, stood at his side and laughed. He opened his eyes—thoughtful, poet's eyes—into which at the sight of her there came the light of passion. He raised himself into a sitting posture.

"Sit down," he said.

With surprising quickness of motion she dropped on to the ground at his feet and laughed again. Then, reaching out her arm, she picked, one at a time, three long grasses and wound them around her finger, while



her face grew solemn and sweet. She looked out on the blue water of the bay.

"I know," she murmured. "You love it so. It's more to you than people."

"And you," he asked; "you love it too?"

She shook her head. "I love my lake—my stormy inland lake, with its stinging northeast winds. I'm often homesick for it."

As he heard her words his expression grew troubled. He knew so little of coquetry.

"But papa's still buying mahogany logs," she said.

It was not a breeze, but just a soft stirring of the atmosphere that played with the curls about her forehead and fluttered in and out of the folds of her dress a dainty texture of modish northern make. Back in the days of his life in the States he had studied and loved the Greeks. Now he looked at her and thought of the Graces. The rare delight of her, who understood his moods and made no demand for verbal expression, filled him.

From a tall palm in front of them a cocoanut, over-ripe, dropped to the ground with a thud and rolled down the bank into the water. Then once more there was only the sultry silence. She clasped her hands in her lap in meditation. But in her, thought and impulse were youthful, and expression a necessity.

"Yes," she said, "it is beautiful—very, very beautiful. But all it says is dream, dream, dream; and I've been taught that life meant work. At home I'm interested in a settlement."

He listened and heard not her words, but the sweetness of her voice.

"Oh, don't you see? It is right that one should have rest and for rest this is ideal. But not for one's life. Life should be self-sacrifice."

Her blue eyes, persuasive and tender, looked long at him. They aroused him into action and to speech.

Under the glare of the tropical sun, and within the shelter of the stately cocoanut palms, he told her the story that is never old. She listened in ecstasy, trembling. Then fear came to her, and she fled from him.

On the highest ground in the neighborhood, quite apart from the Carib village that forms the main part of the town, is a little cluster of houses which are the homes of the few white people of Livingston, Guatemala. Conspicuous among these, because of its location on the highest point, is a low frame house, set in a picturesque garden where cocoanut palms, banana trees and roses vie with one another in luxuriant growth. Orange trees are there, too, and lime, and the breadfruit, with its large, deep-colored leaves and green, spherical fruit of corrugated skin. On all four sides of the house runs the wide gallery, but the stretch at the back commands the most beautiful view, for it is this side that overlooks the sea.

It was a comforting solitude to the girl, who came onto that rear gallery on an evening late in the spring. Her step was slow with meditation. Her face was troubled. Emotions held her, to which she yielded in delicious forgetfulness. Then, crowding into her mind, unwelcome, came other claims—those of her thrifty Puritan inheritance.

Who was this man of luminous eyes and those few glowing words? Why was he here, apart from men? What was his life? A dreamer's?—nothing more.

In the distance she detected the faint rhythmical sound of paddles, accompanied at each dip by minor notes from a human voice. Over and over again with each repetition of motion, there came the same slow strain.

"Pull away—easy way."

It was, she knew, the chant of a Carib boatman who was bringing the burden of his craft to her. She listened to the chanting, growing louder and nearer, until it stopped. Over the bluff appeared, silhouetted in the starlight, the figure of a man. Into the garden he came with a slow, swinging step, until at the gallery's edge he paused.

"Little girl, O little girl," he said. And his heart whispered: "The love with which I love you is a holy love."

In the truth of her woman's instinct hers answered back: "I know."

Together they went down over the bluff and on to the water, leaving the dusky-skinned boatman behind them on the shore. An hour passed and they scarcely knew. Then, hiding the stars, little clouds came and stole the light from the night. He saw them with misgivings. They were far out beyond the bay.

"We must go in," he said.

But she was willful. "Not yet. I will not go."

And he, unused to woman's ways, yielded, while the clouds came thick and fast until the sky was solid gray. Then when his man's judgment allowed no more delay, he turned homeward without words. It was too late. The gray rain caught them as it fell straight and thick through the heavy atmosphere. It drenched her dainty garments through and through and made of her curls long, straggling locks of hair that clung about her temples. She shook them until the drops fell from them, while she laughed.

"I'm only wet," she said. "I'm very warm, not cold."

His lips grew thin, and inwardly he cursed himself. "The rain and the night air," he thought, "and she not yet acclimated."

"Good morning, sister."

The clear, dark face of the Carib woman wore no smile as she spoke. Her voice was of a high pitch, but not loud, and plaintively musical. With a slow movement, plainly habitual, she walked in her bare feet to the doorway and let more air and light into the low room.

Out of the long languor the girl on the bed had just opened her eyes to consciousness. The hands on the coverlet were almost transparent, the face thin, the eyes unnaturally large and full of troubled questioning. She looked through the doorway into the street of sun-baked clay and on to the landscape opposite. Slowly there formed in her mind the picture of a Carib house situated remote and isolated at the very end of the main street of the Carib village.

"It is his house?" she questioned.

"Yes, sister," the Carib woman answered.

Through it all—the fever and the stupor—there had been with the girl, as a part of an unreal world where everything was shadow, the consciousness of two forms. Now she sought to understand.

"Why am I here?" her slow mind asked again.

"The white people, they afraid of you. He bring you here. We nurse you—he and I."

"And my father—did he let him in?"

"Yes, sister. Because back in the States he learned of medicine."

The eyelids of the sick girl drooped with weariness, while the Carib, bending close, smoothed the pillow under her patient's head. The woman was a pure-blood, and knew her own immunity. She watched until the white girl's breathing came in an even rise and fall that told of healthful sleep. Then the woman went back to the doorway, and with anxious face looked toward the nearest cottage—the one that lay below them at the foot of the slope. She was waiting for a sign.

Suddenly through the still, dry air there came the sound of wailing—human voices that rose and fell in long, slow minor notes that spoke unutterable woe. The Carib had learned many things from the white people; one thing was self-control. In absolute silence she went back again to the bedside.

There once more the eyes of the girl were opening, and on her face was a smile of rare sweetness. She had had a dream.

"And he? He will come soon again?" she asked.

The Carib turned on her the plaintive eyes of her race. "No, sister," she answered with her measured slowness. "Just now the fever took his spirit."

Love Controls

Neither Husband Nor Wife Rule

By HELEN OLDFIELD

WHEN a man who contemplates being married seriously asks how he shall "manage" his future wife, it may safely be predicted that there is trouble in store for her. People who want to manage each other ought not to marry.

The husband's duty is to "love, cherish and protect," the wife's to "love, honor and obey." Because every government must have a nominal head, the husband, being physically the stronger of the two, is regarded as the responsible head of the family, but the loving obedience to his wishes which a wife owes her husband is in no way incompatible with perfect equality between man and wife.

If a woman does not look up to her husband and in all things fitting defer to his judgment, it usually is the man's own fault. From the days of Eve, wives, for the most part, have proved amenable to the law laid down for the first woman:

"Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Any woman who loves a man will do all she can to please him; it is the joy of her life to make him happy.

But when the rule is selfish and unreasonable, foolishly indulgent one day and tyrannically unjust the next day, what wonder that wives rebel and fail to obey where they are unable to honor?

There never yet was a woman, from palace to hovel, with whom praises and kisses were not more effective than curses and blows. The man who is tenderly considerate of the wife who loves him, who recognizes her efforts to please him, who is patient with her mistakes, may make of her pretty much what he pleases, limited only by her capacity. In justice to the men, it must be said that scarcely any of them are willfully unkind to the women whom they marry. They are thoughtless, preoccupied, ignorant of women's ways, and sometimes selfish. They do not think it worth while to bother with the trifles which make up the sum of a woman's life.

When husband and wife truly love each other there can be no struggle for supremacy between the "two souls with but a single thought," whose greatest joy is found in each other. While husband and wife each have separate duties which the other is unable to perform, their interests are identical, and together they must stand or fall. Whatever injuries the one necessarily in greater or less degree must hurt the other, and neither can wholly clear their skirts of the consequences of the acts of the other. Neither can anything befit the one and not accrue to the advantage of the other. "It is ill quarreling between the bark and the tree," says the old proverb with reference to man and wife.

Making Mortal of "The Goddess"

By LEA REYNOLDS

In "our office"—we all call it that, from the proprietor, who spends his odd time in looking up Scotch ancestry that he can in some way annex as a family tree—there is a division manager whom we call the "goddess," who has (or had) an idea that she knows it all.

This, in an office where there are some ten girls, all keenly alive to what is going on in the world outside and each having her own special hobby, is sometimes resented.

One day at an office gabfest they one and all decided this same know-it-all manager should be taught she did not know it all. Now this manager seldom left her office during the luncheon hour, bringing her toothsome luncheon from a well-filled, home-cooked table, while these girls for the most part ruled over no one thing except hope, in their hearts, but sat at a restaurant table and cooked appetizing dishes in their own rooms when they had time.

Bright, sparkling eyes had the first girl who was to try the scheme upon the "Goddess," as she came in one noon hour. She made chance to talk with the "Goddess" and so had her beyond her depths in the discussion of some intricate problem. This wise girl related her experience to the other girls and from that on about once a week some one of the girls would begin to talk science, politics, arts, craft, books, picture exhibits, and one thing and another as their line of knowledge lay.

It was not long until every girl in that office saw the gains she had made in her own favor. Since that time the "Goddess" has grown more tolerant of those girls, many of whom are her superiors (in many ways) and now knows that office girls have some other way of spending their time than in mere chatter.

They have opened up a new world to the manager and shown her that she is not the only one who knows a thing or two. We may be all right in our own line of knowledge, but the world's knowledge is of many sorts, as are its pleasures, but we, like the "Goddess," are densely ignorant of that which the other fellow knows and because he does not know our own pet hobbies, or line of work, our interests, or "butterflying," as the French call pleasuring, we must not condemn him as ignorant.

High School Pupils Poor Writers

By J. H. BACHTENKIRCHER of Lafayette, Ind.

Why are seven out of ten grammar and high school pupils poor writers? What is the remedy, if there is a remedy? We answer that the remedy lies with the teacher. Yet I am not censuring the teacher. She does the best she knows how. The fault lies with those in authority. Systems of penmanship have little to do with the result. What we need is not system, but method. Copy books do no particular harm, although as they are generally used they certainly do little good. Teachers will never be able to turn out good writers until the teachers themselves are first taught how to write and how to teach others to write, and this is not a difficult thing to do if it is gone about in the right way. Every teacher must know, and know that she knows, and this is the special work of the specialists.

Good, plain, practical writing is easily acquired if efforts now put forth are properly systematized. Too often the writing is neglected because but little interest is shown in the subject by school authorities.