

The BALL of FIRE
of GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER
and LILLIAN CHESTER
ILLUSTRATED by C.D. RHODES

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SYNOPSIS.

At a vestry meeting of the Market square church Gall Sargent listens to a sermon about the sale of the church to the city...

CHAPTER XI—Continued.

For just one second the rector's mother felt an impulse to shake Tod Boyd. Gall Sargent was a young lady of whom any young man might approve...

"Well, for one thing, she has a most disagreeable lack of reverence," he stated. "Reverence?" and Mrs. Boyd knitted her brows...

The Rev. Smith Boyd watched his soup disappearing, as if it were some curious moving object to which his attention had just been called.

"Miss Sargent claims to have a new religion," he observed. "She has said most unkind things about Market Square church. She says that it is a strictly commercial institution..."

He omitted to mention Gall's further charge that his own motive in desiring the new cathedral was personal ambition. Candor did not compel that admission.

"I am ashamed of you," she told her son. "This girl is scarcely twenty. If I remember rightly, and I'm sure that I do, you came to me, at about twenty, and confessed to a logical disbelief in the theory of creation..."

The deep red of the Rev. Smith Boyd's face testified to the truth of this cruel charge, and he pushed back his fish permanently.

"I most humbly confess," he stated, and indeed he had written in spirit many times over that remembrance. "However, mother, I have since discovered that to be a transitional stage through which every theological student passes."

"Yet you won't allow it to a girl," charged Mrs. Boyd, with the severity which she could much better have expressed with a laugh.

She had carefully ironed out the tiny little wrinkles around her blue eyes by the time her son looked up from the profound cogitation into which this reproach had thrown him.

"Mother, I have been wrong," he admitted, and he seemed ever so much brighter for the confession. He drew his fish toward him and ate it.

Later the Rev. Smith Boyd presented himself at James Sargent's house, with a new light shining in his heart; and he had blue eyes. He had come to show Gall the way and the light.

Gall's eyelids dropped and the corners of her lips twitched when Rev. Smith Boyd's name was brought up to her, but she did her hair in another way, high on her head instead of low on her neck...

ing forth music. "You haven't been over for so long."

Rev. Smith Boyd colored. At times the way of spiritual instruction was quite difficult. Nevertheless, he had a duty to perform.

"Before we sing I should like to take up graver matters," he began, feeling at a tremendous disadvantage in the presence of the music.

Gall's eyelids had a tendency to flicker down, but she restrained them. She was adorable when she looked prim that way.

"You are most kind," she told him, suppressing the imps and demons which struggled to pop into her eyes.

"I have been greatly disturbed by the length to which your unbelief has apparently gone," the young rector went on, and having plunged into this opening he began to breathe more freely.

"Why stop at the edge of Vedder court?" inquired Gall, with a nervous little jerk, much as if the words had been jotted out of her by the awkward slam of the music rack...

"If you like," she assented, smiling at him with willful deception. The wicked thought had occurred to her that it might be her own duty to broaden his spiritual understanding.

"Thank you," he accepted gravely. "If you will give me an hour or so each week, I shall be very happy."

"I am nearly always at home on Tuesday and Friday evenings," suggested Gall. "Scarcely anyone calls before eight-thirty, and we have dinner quite early on those evenings."

"I shall make arrangements to be over as early as you will permit," declared the rector, warmly aglow with the idea.

"I should like nothing better," mused Gall, and since Rev. Smith Boyd rose and stood behind her and filled his lungs, she turned to the piano and struck a preliminary chord...

"We shall begin with the creation," pursued the rector, dwelling, with pleasure, on the idea of a thorough progress through the mazes of religious growth.

"And wind up with Vedder court," she had not meant to say that. It just popped into her mind, and popped out the end of her tongue.

"Even that will be taken up in its due logical sequence," and Rev. Smith Boyd prided himself on having already displayed the patience which he had come expressly to exercise.

Gall was immediately aware that he was exercising patience. He had reproved her, nevertheless, and quite coldly, for having violated the tacit agreement to take up the different phases of their weighty topic only "in their due logical sequence."

"It altogether depends at which end we start our sequence," she sweetly reminded. "My own impression is that we should begin at Vedder court and work back to the creation. Vedder court needs immediate attention."

That was sufficient. When Allison called, twenty minutes later, they were at it hammer and tongs. There was a bright red spot in each of Gall's cheeks, and Rev. Smith Boyd's cold eyes were distinctly green!

"So glad to see you," said Gall conventionally, rising and offering him her hand. If there was that strange thrill in his clasp, she was not aware of it.

"I only ran in to see if you'd like to take a private car trip in the new subway before it is opened," offered Allison, turning to shake hands with Rev. Smith Boyd.

"You might tell us when," she observed, transferring the flame of her eyes from the rector to Allison. "I may have conflicting engagements."

"No, you won't," Allison cheerfully informed her; "because it will be at any hour you set."

"Oh," was the weak response, and, recognizing that she was fairly beaten, her white teeth flashed at him in a smile of humor.

There was another little pause of embarrassment, in which Gall and Rev. Smith Boyd were very careful not to glance at each other.

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"Gets anything he goes after," Tim informed her, and screwed one of his many-puffed eyes into a wink; at which significant action Gall looked out at the motorman.

"That's a successful way, I should judge," she responded, now able to see the humor of Tim Corman's volunteer mission, but a red spot beginning to dawn, nevertheless, in either cheek.

"That was a wonderful achievement. How did he accomplish it?" "Made 'em get off and walk!" boasted Tim, with vast pride in the fact.

"You mean that he drove them out of business?" "Pushed 'em off!" chuckled Tim. "Anybody Allison likes is lucky," and with the friendly familiarity of an old man, Tim Corman patted Gall on the glove.

"It occurs to me that I'm neglecting my opportunities," observed Gall, rising. "I'm supposed to be running this car," and going to the glass door she looked into the motorman's compartment, which was large, and had seats in it, and all sorts of mysterious tools and appliances in the middle of the floor.

Tim Corman, as Allison's personal representative, was right on the spot. "Come on out," he invited, and opened the door, whereupon the three responsible-looking men immediately arose.

So it was that Edward E. Allison, standing quite alone on the platform of the Hoadley Park station, saw the approaching trial car stop, and run slowly, and run backwards, and dart forwards, and perform all sorts of experimental movements, before it rushed down to his platform, with a rosy-cheeked girl standing at the wheel, her brown eyes sparkling, her red lips parted in a smile of ecstatic happiness, her hat off and her waving brown hair flowing behind her in the sweep of the wind.

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"Boosted you to the girl. Say, she's a peach!" Allison looked quickly back at the platform, and then frowned on his jealous friend Tim.

"What did you tell Miss Sargent about me?" "Don't you worry, Eddie; it's all right," laughed Tim. "I hinted to her, so that she had to get it, that you're about the most eligible party in New York. I let her know that no man in this village has ever skinned you. She wanted to know how you made this big combination, and I told her you made 'em all get off; pushed 'em off the map. Take it from me, Eddie, after I got through, she knew where to find a happy home."

Allison's brows knitted in quick anger, and then suddenly he started the subway with its first loud laugh. He understood now, or thought he did, Gall's distant attitude; but, knowing what was the matter, he could easily straighten it out.

"Thanks, Tim," he chuckled. "Let's talk business a minute. I had you hold up the Vedder court condemnation because I got a new idea last night. Those buildings are unsafe."

"Well, the building commissioners have to make a living," considered Tim. "That's what I think," agreed Allison.

Tim Corman looked up at him shrewdly out of his puffy slits of eyes, for a moment, and considered. "I get you," he said, and the business talk being concluded, Allison went forward.

The girls and Ted came back presently, and, with their arrival, Gall brought Rev. Smith Boyd into the crowd, whereupon they resolved themselves into some appearance of sociability, and Allison, for the amusement of the company, slyly started old Tim Corman into a line of personal reminiscences, so replete in unconscious humor and so frank in unconscious disclosures of callous knavery, that the company needed no other entertainment.

HOW WILL ALLIES PAY DEBT? England and France Said to Be in Peculiar Position of Financial Distress.

England's foreign investments are not owned by the government, but by individuals, and they will not sell; and there seems as yet no way to compel them. American securities are the only ones that appeal to the British and French investors at this moment as being good.

What no financial expert ever predicted was the amazing trouble that England and France would have in paying for the equipment purchased in this country. It has been thought that these two creditor nations would merely have to sell their foreign securities, or merely stop making foreign investments, to have all the money they needed.

France is in an even more embarrassing position. She has gone mad for years over epargnes-savings. The average Frenchman would rather go without clothes and food at the present moment than sell his American securities at a loss.

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Conducted by the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

STOP RECKLESS DRIVING. Maryland's automobile operators are prohibited from taking a single drink while at the wheel of a car.

Commissioner Roe, whose department has this matter in hand, says: "I have decided to put an end to reckless driving, and especially to reckless driving superinduced by strong drink, if it is possible for me to do so."

"To accomplish my purpose, it will be necessary for me to refuse to distinguish between people who drink little and those who drink much. I shall, therefore, in the future revoke the license of every automobile driver who is brought before me if it can be shown that the accused has been drinking while operating his car."

"This, in my judgment, is the only safe rule to follow. I do not wish to pose as an authority on drink or what constitutes drunkenness. I see no ray of hope in so-called sobriety tests."

"Therefore, I must conclude that a chauffeur or car owner who has taken one drink is as guilty as the motor operator who technically is considered full. I am vested with full authority by law to forfeit licenses for such offenses, and I certainly shall."

LAST WORD ON CONSERVATION.

The necessity for conserving our national resources has been occupying the attention of our legislators, national and state. Laws have been enacted to protect our forests and our water supply. Millions of dollars have been spent in controlling contagious diseases among our domestic animals, and to eliminate the boll weevil from the southern cotton fields and the various blights from our fruit orchards.

"How dare you champion a thing you can't pray for?" demanded Mary Harris ARMOR recently to an audience at the First Methodist church of Erie, Pa. "How dare you say, 'Thy will be done on earth,' and go out and sign a liquor license application? How dare you pray, 'Deliver us from evil,' and put a stumbling block in the path of your neighbor's son? You do these things every time you expose the liquor traffic, every time you vote for the liquor interests, every time you put your name on an application for licensing the sale of liquor in your community."

DRY TERRITORY. Of a total of 2,973,890 square miles in the United States, 2,236,062 are prohibition territory. The population of the United States is 91,972,296. Of this population 48,118,394 persons now reside in territory in which the liquor traffic is outlawed.

PRODUCTION DECREASING. "During the first eight months of the fiscal year 1914-15 the production of beer in the United States has decreased more than three million barrels. The cause of this enormous decrease, where under normal conditions an increase would have been only natural, is assigned by some to the increase of prohibition territory; and this is true to some extent."

THE BARROOM BANNED. A man who would enlist for military service must gain mastery over himself. A like mastery is needed in all civilian service. There is no place of worthy service where the barroom is not banned. Both "booze" and the barroom must go from Canada, as "vodka" has gone from Russia, and as the "public house" is condemned in Britain. The unfit cannot survive.—Toronto Globe.

REDUCED EARNINGS. A workman in one of the Coatesville steel mills declares that when the saloons were open it was not unusual for twenty to forty tons of steel to be spoiled in the rolling following pay days. Thus the earnings of every tonnage man in the mill were reduced because of the half-drunken condition of some of the men.

NO MORE LIQUOR ADS. After January 1, 1916, the Associated Bill Posters and Distributors Protective company of New York, perhaps the largest concern of the kind in the country, will refuse to advertise intoxicating liquors. By this ruling the company, says its president, is compelled to decline nine contracts, a single one of which would be worth \$35,000 a year.

LIQUOR ADS BARRED. About one-fourth of all the dailies in the country take no liquor ads.



Introduced Himself With Smiling Ease, as Tim Corman.