

### Miss Doane's Mealer

By J. L. Harbour

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Mrs. Semira Doane was out in her front yard counting her Shirley poppies and admiring their almost infinite variety.

"No two of them seem to be exactly the same tint, and I never had such a lot of them out at one time before," said Miss Semira. She loved flowers and nearly every foot of her small front yard was laid out in beds and mounds. There was not a weed to be seen, and her plants looked thrifty and bore evidence of care. The little white house back of the flower garden had plants in the two front windows, and climbing vines completely covered the small, green lattice-work porch over the front door. All of the flowers and plants were of the old-fashioned varieties. Miss Semira did not care for floral "novelties." She liked her four-o'clocks and ragged robins and lady-in-the-green and bleeding hearts better than any "others" she had ever seen.

Miss Semira was so small and fragile looking, with such delicately tinted pink cheeks, and such fluffy yellow hair that she looked quite like a flower herself as she moved about in her little garden in a blue lawn dress with little white flowers in it, and her lace-trimmed snowy white apron in which there was neither spot nor wrinkle. She was stooping over picking a dead leaf or two from one of her geraniums when a shrill, rasping voice startled her by saying:

"How nice your flowers do look, Miss Semira; an' how sweet they smell. I can smell them clean over to my house when it's still or when the wind is blowin' in that direction. You allus have such good luck with 'em. Flowers grow better for some folks than for others."

Miss Semira looked up and saw a tall, gaunt woman in a chocolate-colored calico dress and green and white checked gingham apron standing at her gate. A red and white tennis cap perched on one side of her iron-gray head gave the woman a grotesque look.

"O, Mrs. Sampson, is it you?" said Miss Semira. "Come in, won't you?" "No, it ain't wuth while little time as I've got to stay. Then I've left some ginger bread in the oven. I want to know if you wouldn't be willing to take a mealer."

"A mealer, Mrs. Sampson?" "Yes, you see I've got a chance to let my big front room upstairs if I can find a place for the person that wants it to take their meals. I can't undertake to give anyone their meals with my rheumatiz pesterin' me the way it does, an' Sampson havin' it when I don't. Then I ain't no cook, anyhow. But I do want to let that big front room, an' this person will take it if I can find a mealin' place near by, an' here you are right across the road an' livin' all alone, an' you as much of a born cook as you are a born flower raiser. An' I've heard you say that you sometimes got dreadful tired o' makin' your meals all by yourself."

"Why is it it wants your room?" "Well, it's a gentleman—but there, you needn't look so scared. Miss Semira, for it ain't a young gentleman nor a middle-aged gentleman, but a real nice, fatherly-lookin' old gentleman that there'd never be a mite o' talk bout you givin' his meals to. He must be old enough to be your father, an' I don't know when I've seen a nicer appearin' man. I'd a sight ruther have him around than nine out o' ten fussy, fault-findin' wimmen. Don't you say no until you think it all over."

Miss Semira thought it all over with the result that two days later Mr. Jared Lyster found himself seated at Miss Doane's daintily set table. Miss Semira had often been heard to say:

"I don't mind any part of living alone so much as I mind eatin' my meals all by myself. If I just had someone that was interesting and pleasant to talk to at meal-time I wouldn't mind the rest. I would take a mealer if I got a good chance."

Mrs. Sampson had gone a trifle beyond the truth when she had said that Jared Lyster was a "real fatherly looking old gentleman." Miss Semira's mental comment when she saw him was:

"Why, I don't believe that he is a day over fifty-five."

Miss Semira's own years numbered forty-five. She had expected her mealer to be a man of at least sixty-five and possibly seventy years of age, but she did not voice her surprise to Mrs. Sampson. She accepted the situation in a manner that manifested her good sense, and she said to herself:

"There's nothing for people to talk about if he isn't as old as I thought he was. I have lived in this town too long for anyone to gossip about me. He certainly is a very well-favored, gentlemanly person, and there's nothing in me giving him his meals that should set any one's tongue to wagging."

Jared Lyster was a childless widower who had purchased a small store in the town. He was a quiet, gentlemanly man of domestic taste who, it must be confessed, had no intention of going through life homeless. Like most

men he had a fondness for good meals well served and he liked to live in an atmosphere of cleanliness and order. He found this atmosphere in Semira Doane's pretty and well kept little home, and the meals she served were to his entire satisfaction.

Miss Semira, on the other hand, found the society of Jared Lyster to be more agreeable than she would have dared confess. She would not acknowledge even to herself how much she valued his presence when he had been her "mealer" for three months. But she found herself studying his tastes and cooking the dishes she knew he liked. She found herself also putting a red ribbon bow in her hair nearly every day after he had casually remarked that red was his favorite color and that he liked to see the little bow of red in her hair. She found herself watching for his coming and he did not know that she often stood behind the lattice work on her little porch watching him out of sight. Nor did she know what his thoughts were as he walked away. He did not know how tumultuously her heart throbbled one evening at the tea table when he said as he slowly and carefully folded his napkin back into its original creases:

"Well, Miss Semira, I think that I must tell you that I have decided to make a change."

"In your business?" she asked with her eyes fixed on her plate.

"Well, yes; the change I have in mind will give me a partner in my business. But what I was going to speak to you about was a change in regard to my meals. It isn't altogether convenient having my room in one place and taking my meals in another. Moreover, I do not quite like being a mealer."

"Of course, if you wish to make a change you are at liberty to do so. I could not promise you any better meals than I have been giving you even if you stayed with me."

"I wouldn't want any better meals any place."

"O, thank you."

"The meals are all right, but I never before was what they call in this town a 'mealer' and I don't like it. I would enjoy my meals a good deal more if they were served by—well, by my wife. There! Semira, don't look so frightened! It is what I have been wanting to say for a long time, almost from the first meal I ate with you! Let me stop being a 'mealer' and let me be your husband instead."

He had reached across the little table and taken her by both hands and was looking into her face with shining eyes. Her eyes met his in a moment and he must have seen something of hope and encouragement for him in them, for he was by her side in a moment with his arm around her waist and his cheek to hers.

The next day Miss Doane received a call from Mrs. Sampson, who said:

"Well, Semira, its turned out just the way Sampson an' me have been sayin' for two months that it would turn out, an' I'm glad if it even if I have lost a roomer. Anyhow, you gained a mealer for life. I wish you joy, I really do."

### IRON HADES IN SOUTH WALES

Molten Metal Rolling Down Side of Invisible Wall Turns Heavens into Great Blaze.

The first night spent by a visitor in South Wales, in the center of the great iron country, is marked by a wonderful impression, says the London Daily Mail.

In the daytime the iron works seem only an ugly cluster of tall chimneys and uneven roofs seen through gray smoke. More insistent are the shrill voices of ragged children and the huddling cottages of the workmen, at whose doors stand careworn women with anxious eyes. And the dim mountains, sometimes half hidden by sweeping rainstorms and sometimes a clear greenish color, every lonely tree on their bare sides silhouetted in a darker hue, force themselves upon the eye with the tragedy of their impotence against the defiling hand of man. When one stands right beneath the tips they stand out against the sky like monstrous caricatures of Swiss peaks. There is something about this place desolate and infinitely depressing.

But at night when all is dark the sky is suddenly lit with a red glare. From the window the stranger sees a ruddy light touching the billowing clouds and glimmering away to blackness between them. He sees roofs and chimneys standing out in startling solidity against the flaming background; the furnaces are opened, and it is as though the lid of hell were lifted. Then, on top of one of the tips, but appearing as though isolated in the sky, comes a stream of brilliant gold rolling down the side of the invisible wall in molten fire.

### Hospital for War Boots.

The war girl is again setting new records in a factory near the east end of London. Here, however, it is not shells, but boots which she is turning out. It is more like a surgery for boots than a factory because, within 40 minutes, a pair of boots from Flanders thick with mud and hardly recognizable are completely restored to strength and soundness. The boots are scrubbed in warm water, dressed with castor oil, the heel and tap is stripped off, then the outer skin of the upper part is taken off with a machine invented during the war. The sole and heel are renewed, the whole blocked into shape and finally restained, polished and made ready for use again in the army; all in 40 minutes. About 800 girls are working in this boot hospital.

Mary Miles Minter



# Youthful Favorites of Fortune

June Caprice



Bessie Love

Helen Ferguson



Margarita Fischer



Ruth Clifford

TO ATTAIN nation-wide fame while still in the "teens," at the same time acquiring a salary equal to or larger than that of the president of the United States—payable not in stage money but in real coin of the realm—may be said to be quite some feat. Such a feat, however, has been accomplished in the very recent past by several young women.

That the young women in question are "movie" stars goes without saying, of course, as such a thing would be impossible in any other field of endeavor. That the romance that surrounded the mushroomlike development of the motion-picture industry has not all been dissipated since it has been placed on a modern business basis, is shown by the stories of these young stars who have risen to fame and fortune almost overnight. While they have succeeded, of course, hundreds of others, treading the same path, have failed, but that is another side of the picture. The world is not interested in failures. It is interested in those who have "made good" under unusual circumstances.

It seems probable that some of the leading "movie" stars of today may have had to tell a tiny fib or two to escape the clutches of the minions of the law whose duty it is to enforce the child labor regulations, for some of those who are now in the very center of the spotlight are still far from that age which they must attain, according to the fiction of the law, before they are capable of managing their own affairs.

The case of Bessie Love, one of the most recent youthful stars to flash into view in the "movie" firmament, is typical of that of several others who have gained fame and fortune in the past year or two. Just a little more than a year ago this young star was just "sweet sixteen" and still a pupil in the Los Angeles high school. She admits now that while she pored over her books her thoughts were elsewhere. She dreamed of the time when she might become a "movie" star, but she did not know then how soon her dreams were to come true.

If she hadn't had tonsillitis and had to stop studying, Miss Love would not have been out of high school yet, but the doctor said "no more school for a while," and that dictum resulted in Miss Love becoming a star almost in the twinkling of an eye. Of course she did not become a star the first day she visited a studio, and she worked hard before she reached the top, but her period of probation was a short one, and it was only a few short weeks, after she first went timidly to a studio in Hollywood, the center of the motion-picture industry in Los Angeles, and was given a trial as an extra, that she was playing leads with such actors as William S. Hart, Douglas Fairbanks and De Wolf Hopper. Then it was but a step to the point where it was "Bessie Love in —," when the pictures in which she played came out. She is now a full-fledged star, appearing in her own pictures and still she is only seventeen.

Through it all, Miss Love has remained unspelled. She is still the modest and unaffected girl of sixteen. Neither she nor her mother, who always travels with her, seems to think that it is anything unusual for a girl just past seventeen to be earning as much money as the president of the United States. Mrs. Love tells how Bessie used to sit up in her high chair and discuss civic matters and religion and music at the age of six, and of how they had planned that she should be a schoolteacher. "And here she is a film actress," says the mother; "but her heart was set on it and I believe that one only does well that which one loves to do." And Bessie declares that she loves her work in the movies.

Then there is Mary Miles Minter, who is not yet sixteen, and is said to be the youngest of all stars receiving the amount of money which is paid to her

in salary each week. Unlike Bessie Love, her mother was raised in a grease-paint atmosphere, she rather playing with many famous stage stars during the days when she was but a tot. She made her first appearance on the stage when she was so small that she was still taking naps in the tray of her mother's trunk in the dressing room. A few years ago Miss Minter went into the "movies" and she immediately became a star. She is said now to be drawing a fabulous salary.

Miss Minter, like Miss Love, has none of the up-stage atmosphere about her that many of the motion picture stars accumulate when their salaries begin to crawl into the five-figure cycle. She is still a merry, unsophisticated child, anxious to succeed in her pictures; but brim full of vivacity and freedom of her youth and reluctant to come into the age when she will have to put up her hair and wear long dresses.

She loves her work, but dislikes very much the ordeal of shopping for clothes, having her pictures taken for personal photographs and being compelled to dress up for company.

Miss Minter gives several hours a day to her tutor, who reads constantly with her young charge. Thus her education is far beyond that of most girls of her age, for her appetite for knowledge often keeps her tutor working nights to keep up with her. She is especially fond of poetry and loves to gather about her an audience of children to whom she tells wondrous fairy tales.

June Caprice is another film star who has had a meteoric career. In March, 1916, she was attending school every day in Arlington, Mass. In March, 1917, she was one of the best-known and most popular of film stars. The story of the intervening twelve months reads like a page from the Arabian Nights.

Toward the end of that first eventful March a motion picture magnate happened to be in Boston on a business trip. He was on the lookout for new picture material. Consequently he kept his eyes more than usually wide open. As he was riding down Huntington avenue one day he saw a pretty little golden-haired girl walking along by herself. He instructed his chauffeur to follow her. The result was that he met her at her home in Arlington. He also met her parents there. He told them his plan. They agreed. A week later June Caprice was in New York.

The scheme was this: Little June, seventeen years old, was to come to New York to submit to a film "test." If this proved that she photographed half as beautiful as she looked in the flesh, June was to be starred. It didn't matter whether she could act; the directors would teach her that. But, as a matter of fact, June had always had theatrical ambitions and had spent many moments in amateur acting. So she knew a great deal about the art before she began.

When Miss Caprice arrived in the big city for the first time, she was taken to a fashionable girls' school on West Seventy-second street. There she made her home during the first year of her life in New York. Each morning she would study, each afternoon she would work in the studios, and at night she was early to bed, weary from the day's tasks. Now she is a real honest-to-goodness star with a great big salary.

Ruth Clifford, who is now in the class of high-salaried stars, violated all feminine traditions by pretending to be older than she really was when she was picked out from a big bunch of "extras"

in a California studio, as a result of her work in minor parts, and was offered a fat contract as a regular. In reality she was only eighteen, but she assumed all the dignity and importance of twenty-one so that she might be able to sign her own contract.

Her mother was unable to make the long trip to California in order to perform the necessary formality at the time a contract was offered to the little actress, but she just couldn't wait to become a regular member in good standing of one of the largest film manufacturing concerns in the universe. So she did her best to add cubits to her stature by taking thought, and carried herself with such a grace and stately bearing that she really might have succeeded in getting away with it. However, when the formal, legal-looking document, with its "parties of the first part" and "whereas" and "do hereby agree," and all the other quaint phraseology which is necessary to make a promise really binding, was laid out before her and she took her pen in hand to sign away her services, her courage failed. With nervous haste she declared her really insignificant number of years, and the contract had to wait until mother could make the trip to California after all.

Success did not come so easily to Miss Helen Ferguson, although she is now a star at sixteen. Miss Ferguson says that much patience, courage, persistence and hard work were required before she got a start. She now looks upon her first efforts to get a trial as a joke, but it was not so much of a joke then.

"I visited the studio every day it was open for four months," laughed Miss Ferguson. "They wouldn't even give me a chance until one day, in a courtroom scene they had one vacant chair. They had pressed into service stage hands and everyone else obtainable to fill other seats and finally, in desperation, the director grabbed me for the last chair."

"That was the beginning. I made good as a courtroom spectator, so I got extra work from time to time until finally I was a 'regular.'"

Miss Ferguson believes perfect health is the greatest asset of an actress, therefore she taboos late hours and exercises regularly in a gymnasium built especially for her in her home.

"I want to look as young as I do now," explained the little actress. "The only way I can do that is to safeguard my health. I retire every night at 9:30 o'clock."

Miss Margarita Fischer is a youthful star who is not satisfied with the success which she has already attained, but believes in working hard all the time in an effort to improve her work. She takes life seriously in spite of the fact that most of her pictures do not indicate it. Miss Fischer's chief aid in the work which she does at home is her mother. When she reaches home after a busy afternoon in the studio, her mother has her mail all sorted out for her, and after dinner she retires to her study, where she looks after the answering of an immense correspondence. And after the letters are out of the way, she goes over the plans for her next day's work.

"Co-operation of the star and the director is absolutely necessary for the making of better pictures," she says. "I give an hour every evening to going over the work and thinking out better ways to submit to the director. For you cannot allow yourself a moment's let-up, if you are ambitious to do good work on the screen."

## IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of the Sunday School Course of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)  
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### LESSON FOR JANUARY 6

JOHN PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS.

LESSON TEXT—Mark 1:1-11.  
GOLDEN TEXT—Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.—John 1:29.  
PRIMARY MEMORY VERSE—Thou shalt call his name Jesus: For it is he that shall save his people from their sins.—Matt. 1:21.  
INTERMEDIATE, SENIOR AND ADULT TOPIC—Herald of the king.  
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS—Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1-3; Luke 1:5-25; 39-80; Matt. 2:1-7; Luke 3:1-8; John 1:19-42.

The first lesson for this year marks the introduction of The Improved Uniform series of International Sunday School Lessons. This series has grown out of several years of frank discussion and the presentation of many proposed lesson schemes. It is an effort to conserve the benefits of the uniform system of lessons with the desire to adapt the lessons as thoroughly as possible to the modern pedagogical idea of graded instruction for the various departments of the school: an attempt to provide for the whole school as thorough and as teachable a uniform lesson plan as possible.

Special topics and special memory verses and additional scriptural material have been designated wherever it has been deemed possible whereby to make the lessons more helpful to the pupils of different departments. It is the beginning of an eight-year cycle, chosen with the view first, of incorporating several short topical courses in addition to the usual series on the chronological basis, and second the committee had in mind the desirability of more frequent survey of the entire Bible with varying methods of approach than is possible under a six-years cycle. Finally, to harmonize in the period of the cycle the newly adopted quadrennial conventions of the International Sunday School association. Where no topic, memory verse or additional material is indicated for inter-departments of schools, it is intended that uniform material should be employed for such departments.

Occasionally the general title and lesson may be found to be more helpful than the special topics or additional material as indicated for a given department. Sunday school leaders frankly acknowledge that this new plan is an experiment. It is hoped, however, that the long continued controversies over graded lessons, extrabiblical material and uniform lessons may find a solution in this newer plan.

Mark's Gospel pictures Jesus as the servant; therefore, it makes no reference whatever to his genealogy. The key-word to this gospel is the word "straightway," which is used more than forty times, and it is a suggestion as regards the obedience of a servant.

I. Introduction (vv. 1-3). The beginning of the gospel story as told by the evangelist, Mark. Note it is a fulfillment of prophecy (Mal. 3:1; Isa. 40:3). Mark is here more particularly referring to Isaiah. This is the period in the life of Christ between his temple experience and the day of his baptism, when he first entered publicly into the real history of Israel. Jesus must needs have a herald, even as an earthly king is announced before his arrival. Christ himself is the living word (John 1:1), though the voice which announces him is the voice of a man—John the Baptist. The baptism of John was unto repentance and the remission of sins. It must not be confused with Christian baptism. Some interesting questions arise as to the life of Jesus before this event—his religious habits (Luke 4:16); his attitude toward the word of God and its prophecies (Luke 4:17-21); the work he had been doing in Nazareth (Mark 6:3).

II. The Baptizer. (vv. 4-9). To know what kind of a man John was, we must look up Mark 1:6 and Matt. 3:4. His religious convictions are interesting also. They were a matter of his heart (Luke 3:8), a thing of his daily life (Luke 3:10). He was a man who held to a strict moral standard (Mark 6:18). His method and his message were a protest and a warning as well as a preparation. Repentance is not remission of sin (I John 1:9). John demanded "fruit" which should accompany repentance (Matt. 3:8, 9). His message was not national but individual and his suggestion (Matt. 3:10-12) of future punishment for wrong-doing is only exceeded by the words of our Lord himself.

III. The Baptism (vv. 10, 11). Baptism is always an emblem, a symbol. (See Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:9; Mark 1:8; Rom. 6:4.) It is a public identification, a public consecration and confession of faith. Jesus Christ himself took the place of sinners (II Cor. 5:21).

While this lesson is a lesson of the herald who preceded our Lord, who came to prepare the way and to usher in his kingdom, still there is the other side which we cannot forget, and his teaching this lesson we must emphasize, the character of the king whom John came to herald.