

# "The Greater Glory" By William Dudley Pelley

A 100,000-word Novel by the Editor of The Evening Caledonian about folks in a Vermont town like St. Johnsbury--The story of two girls, each with a philosophy of life and of love and how those philosophies worked out in after life, the worldly glory of one and the "greater glory" that came to the other. Follow it each night, chapter by chapter and read into the lines your own experience.

"What's the trouble, Mary?" In a voice which was an effort to keep from breaking and betraying her brave words of a moment before, she said:

"Your father has just sent word that I mustn't touch nor carry away anything from here but my mother's and my own personal property. He says . . . the law doesn't recognize anybody but Artie as the heir--step-children don't count."

"It's hard, Mary. I've known it from the first. But don't blame the governor. He didn't make the law." "I thought--I thought--maybe I was going to have the place and--"

"It's got to be auctioned," the boy stated miserably. Independence Day arrived. Five weeks slipped away and came August sixteenth, the annual observance of the Battle of Bennington and a Vermont holiday. The leaves and bowered country lost the virility of summer freshness. They were dusty and faded and gradually streaked with yellow and brown. Time was going relentlessly along into another autumn.

The village housewives began covering their rosebushes and flowerbeds with sheeting and papers at night to preserve their beauty for a few weeks longer which was a futile effort at its best. Canny old Trumann and the other two dummy executors decided to wait until after the crops were in, before holding the Wheeler auction. The farmers would then have time and money to make the sale a financial success.

It came one day early in Indian summer. There is ever an atmosphere of beautiful tragedy connected with a country action--with the breaking up of a home that has existed over many years. With gambling pulse and bagatelle, the sanctity of a home is smashed and the thousand little furnishings which give each human habitation an individuality different from any other are scattered to the winds of heaven. Here is a drama the city never sees and cannot know.

The day comes for the auction. Rooms that through the vicissitudes of the years have meant the only Alsatia on earth for tired souls, the only place for them to retreat when all other places on earth have disappointed or failed them or held no further interest for them, are entered rudely and attacked with barbaric spoilation. The outraged household spills the pathetically shabby contents into the yard before the door. Strangers or morbidly curious neighbors gather around. An auctioneer who mounts his box with conversation which he mistakenly imagines is funny, and the "sale" begins.

The Sale! There are chairs which have creaked by green-birch fires in many feathered twilight while a woman's voice crooned a lullaby that soothed deep in the dark. There are tables with toy-scarred limbs who have supported uncertainly flumby baby steps, on which many a meal has been served that has meant only a heartache in after years to those who were privileged for just a little while to gather amid familiar faces around that board. There are bedsteads where helpless little lives wailed their tiny terrors in their new-born nights, and where the pillow for them then was the softest thing in all this universe--a mother's arm. And on those same beds, tired souls have laid them down, and breathed a sigh, and known the peace of God which passes human understanding. There are pictures which have hung on homely walls so long, seen so many gala times, so many hours of anguish so many hours of numbing sorrow that they are misty of map and glass with memory. And there are countless little worthless trinkets, each one standing for a milestone in some life, that have remained to see the giver or the gifted reach the final Milestone of them all and lie in dreamless slumber underneath it.

Cheap and tawdry and worthless the "things" appear as they are lifted before the unfeeling thoughtless crowd of strangers and disposed of for a pittance. A lot of junk! And yet pitifully hard-earned money bit by bit bought that crazy collection of pots and pans and jars and kettles. The blood of a woman's fingers lies upon those balled up counterpanes and articles of bedding and up on those dollies and spreads and curtains and is woven in those old rag rugs. It was a great moment back in the years, for that home, when some of these tables and chairs and parlor sets and stoves and carpets were purchased. Labors of love, possessions of a lifetime, all that remains to show for the generation-long struggle of a man and a woman, are going now--going!--going!--GONE!--and when the auction is over and strangely piled wagons have departed and the crowd has dispersed and the auctioneer been paid off and departed also, when the yard is cleared excepting for the clutter, many is the relative, the official, the executor, who has locked the doors and gone away from the betrayed and gutted home with the money in his pocket burning like the silver in the palm of Judas on the evening of the day he sold his Lord.

Jack found the girl on that night of the Wheeler sale down in the lower orchard. She had no other

place to go. She had climbed up on the hoary, gnarled old arm of the russet-apple tree, the only one in the orchard--the place where as a little girl, she had played through violet-visited hours with her dolls. There was no one to comfort her then, no one left from those Other Years, but the old russet apple tree. And soon--all too soon--that would be but a memory.

A few feet away was the hole in the stone wall where she had first seen the little Haskins boy who had played with her for a little time and then moved away and grown up and become a minister and gone as a missionary to India. Where was he now, and did he ever think of the girl on the adjoining farm in Foxboro who had dared to follow him through the hole in the stone wall under boulders that might easily slide off and crush them? She wondered.

Over between the two scrawny astrachan trees was the big boulder where she had always sought safety from the wicked knives of the moving machine when they cut the grass in the orchard. She had played mud-pies there with Nellie Harrington, who came down from the Harrington place which had burned years and years ago and was now only a blackberry-grown cellar-hole and a stump of senile brick chimney; Nellie had married one of the Blodgett boys and died with the coming of a little child.

A score of old familiar things she saw: The one pure white stone in the wall where on a winter's day she had come face to face with a fox; the outline of the frog-pond in the swamp where some men had once shot an ailing horse; the bars into the woodlot where the youngest Osgood boy had started a fire with stolen matches and nearly ruined a township; raspberry and blackberry bushes where she had watched for the first autumn fruit to ripen. Every feature of the landscape had its associations.

"Old apple-tree!--dear old russet apple-tree!" she choked. "I'm going away now and I can't come back any more. You have always seemed human to me. Will you remember the little girl who played dolls here, and brought cookies and sugared bread-and-butter here, and came here for solace when she had been punished for some disobedience of childhood? Will you remember her, old apple-tree,--and think of her as having gone out into the world from this day a woman?"

A breeze blowing over the valley stirred the branches. It seemed as though the tree had replied. She stole her arms about its battered scaly trunk and placed her fair face close against its surface.

Her face was streaming tears when Jack came upon her. "Mary," he said with a wonderful tenderness in his rebuke. "You promised you weren't going to the auction today; you said you were going to stay with the Osgoods until after the agony was over. That's why I worked at the office. Otherwise I should have tried to be with you."

She slipped off the apple-trees low from the knee of an aged grandparent--slipped down and stood before her lover with her back against the tree. He looked into her face and he knew what she had that day suffered and was suffering now.

"Mary," he said huskily. "I never felt more lonely in my life than I do now, Jack," she said. "Up to now I have been only a girl. After this I'm a woman--a woman and alone. A man can be alone and lonely and not mind but a lonely woman is the most miserable creature in God's world."

"Mary," he said. "I've been talking to Mr. Hod. He was at the auction you know, and he saw you. He made me come out early and . . . and take care of you. Mary, dear, I'm alone, too. I'm alone and in debt. I have my own way to make, my living to earn under a handicap. You know what that handicap is and what it means. But Mary, since this has happened, . . . since you too have been left alone, . . . since my talk with Mr. Hod and his kindness to me, I've come to realize what it means for you and I to try to solve this problem alone and apart. I want you, Mary. I want you to help and encourage me; to work with me; to be at home when I come there at night after trying to fight my way ahead in the day. I want to feel that nothing is going to part us but--death. I want you to marry me, Mary--marry me and fight with me, and share with me the glory of winning the victory. Perhaps I have no right to ask it. I'm a poor man. But we are both alone and poor now. Why should it be any harder to fight our way together than separately--and alone?"

"It would be--easier--Jack!" "Will you marry me, Mary?" "When?" she asked fearfully. "Now!" he said. "Tonight! Mr. Hod said--and I see how truly he knew--that you would need me to-night, especially. Oh Mary! I--love--you! I want you! Come with me and let's live--together!"

Under the old apple-tree where she had played with her dolls and brought spaced cookies and tried her childhood tarts and fell--on many golden afternoons--dreaming with books of lords and fine ladies and

knight-errants and charming princes spread before her but forgotten, she told him that she would marry him--that night.

## CHAPTER XV

And so They Were Married--But Did They Live Happily Ever After as the Story Books Have Had It Since the Days When the Old Earth Was Young? That is the Real Story.

Life holds many mysteries but among them is none greater than this: That the lives of some folk should lead into pleasant places and beside still waters; that most of their troubles should be small ones, that their days should be filled with pleasure and their nights with untroubled slumber. And that there should be for other folk, in no way responsible, for whom existence is a pathway through many shadows, for whom many of the most enjoyable of life's experiences are denied, whose days are filled with endless labor and evenings with heartache.

At times it seems a hopeless mystery. There are those who become small and mean and cynical and say in their hearts there is no God and laugh down the philosophers who contend that the Almighty never made a world and then went away to let it run itself.

And there are others who behold a soul made strong by the roughness of the pathway it has trodden, poised by the shadows it has encountered in many valleys, indomitable by the endless struggles of the days and stunted by the evenings of sad meditation. And by such is God made real and life worth while and each new day an inspiration.

But what of the folk themselves who teach the wise men this lesson? What shall be said for those who by the manner in which they have done their work and accomplished their tasks, made others broadminded and gentle and generous and noble and strong in the faith wherein is great peace?

What remuneration is there for those who so live and struggle and endure and strive to do worthily the tasks which are left for them to do that they become bright and shining lights before men, glorifying their Father, who is in heaven, salt where the earth is savored?

These are the things understood only by those who with clean hands and a pure heart aspire to the secret places of the Most High: That there is a Glory which comes to these other folk--a Greater Glory than anything which men of little hearts and little minds conceive.

This, our tale, is a love story. But for the tired scribe whose pen scratches line after line across the paper, it is more than that. It is the Greater Glory as he has seen it descend upon a woman. It is the narrative of a girl's love for a man and the still greater love for the sons of that man which she bore him as he has been set down before. But it does not end with a wedding. Few of us, indeed, live "happily ever after." It ends with the coming of that Greater Glory as will be subsequently set forth. It goes beyond the Commencement of courtship. It follows onward into some of the deep and sacred tragedies and dramas of plain, ordinary, day-to-day living. And the best part of it is this: This is the story of Everywoman--your wife and my wife, your mother and my mother--a hoped-for tribute, dedication, eulogy, testament.

Mary Wood married Jack Purse on the evening of the day of the auction. She married him in the little front parlor of the Methodist parsonage on School street before the Rev. David Dodd, who is now sainted old "Doctor" Dodd of the Calvary Methodist church. The only witnesses were Mrs. Dodd, who blew her nose, shed tears and smiled simultaneously all through the ceremony, which after all was so short and simple as to seem as though something were horribly illegal somewhere at starting immediately to live together afterward.

If, on the evening of her wedding day, Mary gave a thought to the dreams she had dreamed of the gorgeous wedding which she had imagined was coming on some wonder night in the future, of wealth and aspiration and golden opportunity which married life was to open to her, no one knew it but herself. If there was the least twinge of bitter-sweet disappointment that this simple little exchange of promises before the kindly minister was her "great wonder night," it never disturbed the outer surface of the love for the young chap whom she raised her sweet face up toward when the thing was done and called him husband. Despite her mother's experience, her mother's bitterness, the girlhood warning, she had married finally for love, on eighteen dollars a week, and before her lay the same variety of matrimony which year in and year out has dotted the continent with millions and millions of homes and makes up, forsooth, the Great America. But very worthwhile homes they are, though built on a very great amount of affection, the courage of ignorance, and a pitifully meager amount of money.

The boy and girl came out and stood on the sidewalk.

"Mr. Hod says we are to come up to his house and spend our first night together," Jack said huskily. At the top of Maple Street Hill, before Sam's house, she paused. For a moment she clasped his arm, her face against his shoulder.

"Oh, Jack," she said softly, "I guess--I guess--I'm your's now; you're to love, work with, play with, suffer with, sorrow with--your's to abuse, neglect, forsake. My life is your's now, Jack. I have given it to you. Where you live I will live. Your joy shall be my joy; your successes my successes. I don't mind what the future brings only this: Be good to me, Jack--take me and do what you will with me. But be as kind as you can, Jack, that someday I may be able to--how mother she was wrong!" And man and wife, they passed in to Sam Hod's house for their first supper together.

At the moment that Jack Purse and Mary Wood entered Sam Hod's house together, another girl came out of the Henderson house and strolled leisurely down Main Street.

Near the corner of Union street she heard the rattle of buggy wheels behind her and the hoarse bark of an excited dog. She turned. Slug Truman driving Monday Washing with Cardinal Wolsey on the seat beside him, stopped at the curb beside her.

"Mibb, . . . come here," he called thickly. She switched her jacket to her other arm and strolled across the strip of sod to the buggy side.

"Well," she demanded. "What ails you, Slug. You look like a case of seven-weeks sickness." "Anything on this evening," Mibb?" "Nothin' special."

"Get in and take a ride with me, Mibb." "Where you goin'?" "Get in and take a ride with me, and I'll tell you. It's awful important, Mibb."

She cast an uneasy look at his heavy features, but she calculated she could take care of herself with any man that she ever see wearin' pants and so she got in beside the boy and they rumbled away in the summer's evening.

"Mibb--Mary Wood has just married Jack Purse!" "She's WHAT?" "Married Jack Purse, . . . tonight! tonight! . . . in the Methodist parsonage. They're up to supper together at Hod's right now. They're man and . . . wife!"

"The--little--fool!" Mibb ejaculated. "But what the ding-dong are you takin' on about it, Slug?" "I guess I'm--I'm--jealous, Mibb." "Jealous of who--Purse?"

"Of just bein' married and have somebody to care about me." "Gosh but you're an awful fathead!" "Don't talk to me like that, Mibb. It hurts!" He sloughed down into the seat. "Hell," he told her miserably, "you don't know what a happy home we got up there on Main street, . . . dad sick, Esmeralda stage struck and always bossin' Ma, and Ma with no more spine than a . . . than a . . . than a fish! I'm sick of it, Mibb--plumb sick. I wish it was different, Mibb, . . . so different."

She looked at him out of the corner of her world-wise young eyes. "Just how sick is your dad, anyhow?" "Pretty bad, Mibb. He may go off and day now. He's hit pretty hard." "Slug," she said quietly, "let's run away and get married too!"

"Let's WHAT!" he cried. "Let's run away and get married. Mary Wood and Jack Purse aren't the only ones who can play the game."

"You'd--marry--me . . . a great big lummock that's always puttin' his hoof in everything?" "Yes," she declared determinedly, as though she had arrived at her decision long beforehand, "I'll marry you, Herb Truman."

"W-h-e-n?" he demanded blankly. "Any old time you want me!" The big fat rosy young man turned pale. Then the blood surged into his face again and made it beefy red.

"You mean it, Mibb?" "You don't imagine I'm talkin' in my sleep do you, on a question of so much importance?" "Oh--Mibb!"

"There's no need for you to get maudlin about it as I see," she reminded him. "But you called Mary a . . . little fool."

"Sure she's a little fool. Because Jack Purse isn't situated like you're situated."

Herb should have taken warning from that significant declaration, but he did not. The lad was heartless, lonesome and miserable. It wasn't the girl he was in love with, it was love and comradeship and consolation in his life. He recovered from his lugubrious surprise and like the boy eternal that he was in his heart, he suddenly began to enthuse with the proposition the Henderson girl had suggested.

"The evening train is comin' down the valley," he cried. "Hear the whistle? Mibb!--let's--let's elope!" "The sky's--" he retorted

brazenly. "Yes, let's!"

"The station? I wonder can we make it?" "We could if I had those lines," "Giddap, Monday Washin'!" he cried suddenly. And he struck the little mule with the whip.

Down through the village they were carried swiftly and around the corner of Depot Street toward the station. Just once Herb wondered if he might not regret this thing she had proposed. But Mary Wood was lost to him now--lost for always. He might as well take second choice while he had the chance. Besides, he didn't want to endure the coming in week of readjustment alone. A wife of his own might help. And so he refused to harken to consequences. And they made their train.

"We'll just see who gets the most out of marriage!" declared Mibb Henderson grimly and with abandon. "What?" demanded Herb above the rattle of the vehicle. "I'm not talkin' to you, I'm talkin' to myself. It was making a remark about something Mary Wood said once. It's nothing you need lose any sleep over, now?"

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## Part II

### CHAPTER ONE

We Have Followed Our Young Folk Through the Morning of Their Lives and the Throes of Young Love. We Come Now to the Afternoons--At Present the Early Afternoons--and the Henderson Girl Comes Back from Her Wedding Trip.

For the proper and orderly denouement of the events which have gone before, it has been necessary to refer now and then to the old files of our newspaper from the time we founded the "Telegraph" up to '83. But approaching now the events in the years 1883 to 1897, it is necessary to take the battered old volumes down from the safe completely, spread them freely over tables, chairs and reporters' desks, and watch the front pages and follow the local columns day by day. For from the ready-reference of those files we have refreshed in our memories many incidents that throw sidelights on the people of our story, help to straighten our chronology and bind in neatly to form a symmetrical, clean-cut whole, many of the tiny frayed ends and ravellings of our narrative.

For instance, here comes first a half-column account of the Purse-Wood nuptials. It says that they were "quietly married" at the Methodist parsonage on the preceding evening on account of "the recent death of the bride's mother." There is a brief sketch of each person's life in which the phrases "accepted a position" when the meaning is that they "got a job," and "in order to advance their prospects" when the inference is that it was the only thing left for them to do under the circumstances, occur frequently in the text. Thus do these calloused, heartless, obstreperous country newspapermen prostitute their talents ignominiously to soften the tragedies of day-to-day living for plain people and help them to put the best face upon shame and necessity and misfortune in the eyes of the multitude.

Witness how the account reads on that evening of recent untoward events bride and groom will "postpone their honeymoon until a later date" but that in honor of the nuptials a pretty wedding supper was served at the home of the young couple's employer attended by a "few intimate friends." And the menu is given--in all of which may be detected the hand of Mrs. Hod and the heart of her husband.

The village might not care for these things,--what indeed did it matter to those of the "Telegraph's" three thousand readers in the outskirts and the distant places that one of the paper's compositors had married the make-up man? Little indeed. But someday that clipping--like thousands of other such clippings the nation over--would be discovered in a scrap-book dusty and faded and thumb-marked with age. As the years passed, to a human heart somewhere the value of that stiff-leaved book would increase until all other earthly possessions were but outdone. Tollown hands would turn its pages. Lack-lustre eyes would grow moist as again and again they read the familiar lines. Someday would come a funeral and the cleaning out of effects afterward. The book would be found, scooped at, tossed into a barrel of rubbish. But what of that? Our mission as publishers of a country paper will have been accomplished. Because this is after the nature of our business a great satisfaction is our portion. We have at least fellowmen along the way and share with them the Gethsemanes that every life must know. And that is little enough.

Turn over two issues and here on the fifth page, third column, fourth item down, is something else:

Mr. and Mrs. John Purse who were recently married at the Methodist parsonage, have furnished a home in the house owned by William Stevens on Pleasant Street and will be at home to their many friends after November 1st.

What did it matter that the "furnishing of a home" was merely the fitting up of three rooms in one of Bill Stevens's upper tenements next to the wood yard on Pleasant Street,--that the "furnishings" were mostly indescribably sacred little odds and ends which the girl had saved from the auction or bid in with her slender purse or that Jack had bought on installments from Blake Whipple's "Household Emporium & Furniture Bazaar. Also Undertaking." The hands of a woman with a song in her heart, have been accomplishing miracles making a human habitation out of nothing since the days when the

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her wedding journey. She wore an elaborate creation of broadcloth and satin mauve and mustard. The skirt was flounced and draped and multiple-pleated after the fashion of the period, the bustle and the basque waist set off a figure which Skinny Napoleon declared was a cross between the Venus de Milo and a two-day drunk, and on her head she wore one of those ridiculously small hats seen now only in the wood cuts of old ante-bellum magazines.

"Hello, little Eight-Point!" she called out. "How's the local-oh?" Mary rested her stick on the edge of her case and stared at the butterfly that had emerged from its black-cambrie chrysalis.

"Well," demanded Mibb, "--and how do you like the landscape gardening?" "You're beautiful!" exclaimed Mary, her hungry eyes taking every detail of the city attire.

"I'm graduated--thank Gawd!" returned Mibb, with a suggestive sniff at the lay-out of cases. "I thought I'd drop in because I heard you and Jack had also married. I didn't know," insinuated Mibb with a poke of the parasol that matched the suit at an old patent-medicine cut lying on the floor, "that Jack could afford it. But you're going to keep on working, of course. That explains it."

Mary picked up her stick hurriedly. She read it over with eyes which saw no type.

"Yes," she said after a time, "I'm going to keep on working." Mibb paced grandly up and down the short type alley, swinging the parasol, effecting to be interested in the typecases as though she had never seen them before and wondering how such little slivers of metal were managed.

"Of course I wouldn't say anything for the world about another woman's husband; but weren't you a bit hasty, Mary? You ought to have waited until you could afford it, you know."

"I wasn't--anymore hasty--than you were, Mibb." Mary examined very minutely the badly-penned copy before her on the cap-case.

"What do you mean? Why, Herbert and I have been going together for years, . . . long before you ever arrived in Paris! And we've been planning our elopement for weeks and weeks. It was--grand!"

Mary remained silent. The type began to click in her stick. "We're taking the Holland house," went on Mibb. "I think I shall have it made over retaining its colonial style." She continued to stroll restlessly about examining things very superficially and condescendingly.

"I hope you will be very happy," said Mary. She did not know what else to say.

"Happy? Huh! Leave it to me, Mary Wood. I always told you, didn't I, there was nothing like money to make a marriage happy. Herb says to me this morning, he says: 'I want you should have everything your heart desires, Mabel; you only got one life to live and while it's short it ought to be merry. Don't let money stand in your way of making life worth living. Anything you see that you want, say the word and I'll try to see that you get it.' That's the kind of husband to have, Mary Wood."

"Yes," said Mary, "that's the kind of husband to have."

Mibb was nettled. Somehow beyond her first show of surprise, Mary didn't seem at all impressed by her "creation" or the costly little dew-drop bonnet. Mary's last statement she fancied contained a subtle inference of doubt at her veracity. In piqued Mibb to declare:

"Only a fool would marry a man who didn't have nothing to fall back on but his wages."

It had the desired effect. Mary paused for a moment, stared ahead of her absent, turning a capital M over and over in her grimy fingers.

"I think," she said softly, "