

MRS. LAKE'S SECRET

By BELLE MANIATES

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"Ethel, don't you go up to the house," said the moon-faced woman coming out on the porch of the farmhouse. "I'll only harrow your feelings."

"It seems like shirking to let you go for me," said Ethel Sturgis, "but I do dread to see the familiar things again."

"I'll go to town and get that new auctioneer and drive him to your house to tag the things. To-morrow I'll go to the auction and finish the business, and you won't have to go."

"You have been so kind to us, Mrs. Lake," said Ethel wistfully as the comely, good-natured woman slapped the reins over the broad-backed horse and drove down the road.

Then the girl returned to the house and vigorously applied herself to household tasks. She dared not be idle long enough to think and remember. It was two years since she and her father had left the little town in the east and bought the farm that was to bring them prosperity. Things had gone very wrong from the start. A cloud-burst, the Hessian fly, her father's illness and the failure of a bank brought about the loss of the farm.

All they had left was a forty-acre piece. Their household goods were to be auctioned on the morrow to enable them to buy the stock and implements for their little remnant of land. Their kind-hearted neighbor had invited them to remain at her house while the sale was in progress, and she insisted that they continue to accept her hospitality during the construction of the little cabin her father purposes to build on the "forty."

Toward evening Mrs. Lake returned from her expedition.

"We got them all tagged, Ethel," she said cheerfully. That auctioneer's a dandy. I got him interested in your pa, telling him what chunks your bad luck had come in."

Ethel winced. She knew her neighbor's propensity for "talking over" things, and she felt that she would rather realize less from the sale than have her private affairs discussed with a stranger.

"If only you could have brought yourself," continued the loquacious

keep bidding till kingdom come, so Austin finally quit."

"What sort of a looking man was he?" asked Ethel.

"Oh, a fat, pudgy, homely man."

"Probably some second-hand dealer."

"Maybe; and he bought all the best things. All your parlor and bedroom things—all the very things you would have chosen."

"I am glad a stranger got them. It would make me feel queer to go in to call on the neighbors and see them using our things."

Early the next morning Mr. Sturgis went to town. He came back looking more cheerful over his purchases than he had looked in months. Ethel was left alone very often during the next week, Mrs. Lake taking advantage of having some one to leave in charge of the house. One afternoon Mr. Sturgis asked Ethel to go over to the "forty" and select a site for their cabin. He declined to accompany her, as he had to go to town. Mrs. Lake was in the midst of bread making, so Ethel saddled a horse and rode toward the "forty."

Suddenly a disagreeable thought struck her.

"If Mrs. Lake has sent Austin over here to see me I'll never forgive her."

She rode slowly, with her eyes glued to the horse's mane, wondering if she had been wise to reject Austin's love and protection. She didn't raise her eyes until she turned in at the "forty." Then she stared in amazement. Here stood a trim, little house with a neat, broad porch and blinds.

"This is what Mrs. Lake and father have been so mysterious over," she thought with sudden enlightenment. "But how could it have been built in so short a time?"

She dismounted and went up the steps. A card lay on the steps and some advertising matter. "Oh, I see! One of those portable houses. I wonder if the door is open?"

It was, and with its opening came another surprise. Here were all her household goods arranged as they had been in the old house. She passed through the living room, dining room, kitchen and then into her father's bedroom. She opened the last door. All her personal things were here, and many more beautiful, new furnishings. What did it mean? Then she grew faint. She knew. Austin! Had he dared? She could not take them unless—

She heard a knock at the door and she felt that it was the decision of her life awaiting her. Could she? A moment elapsed before she summoned courage to open the door.

On the threshold stood a tall, lithe-limbed man.

"Will!" she said faintly.

He clasped her to him.

"It took you two years to forgive," she murmured reproachfully.

"Dearest, I got your note only ten days ago. It was in the secret drawer to your desk. You forgot to mail it."

"How could I! But how did you come by it?"

"I am the new auctioneer. I didn't know you lived in these parts till Mrs. Lake took me to tag your things. She told me how you would miss your desk, and I made up my mind to bid it in. Casually I opened a secret drawer and found the letter. I had all the things bid in. The next day your father came to see me and we fixed up this surprise."

"Then these things are yours?"

"No; ours. We are going to live here with your father."

"Will, did Mrs. Lake know, too?"

"Yes; she was our right hand man."

"I have misjudged her. I never dreamed she could keep a secret."

The Worst Laundrymen.

The distinction of being the worst class of washerwomen all the world over belongs, it is said, to washermen—the "dhobies" of India. The methods of the dhobie are far from gentle. He collects the clothes, and dumps them into a trough of soap and water and vigorously jumps up and down on them, changing the water now and then. Next, he goes to the nearest washing pool, and there he really gets to work. He seizes a garment, well soaked, whirls it around his head, and bangs it on a hard, flat stone. Off flies a button. Another soak, another whirl and a bang follow, and another button gone. When sufficient damage is done the garment is clean and ready to be repaired. All of which sounds precisely like the operations we believe our best things have gone through when we get them back from "the wash."

Pity 'Tis, 'Tis True.

They looked across the room at a pretty young woman who was dining animatedly with a handsome young man.

"Isn't that Mrs. K—?" she asked.

"Yes," said he.

"And is that her husband?" asked she.

"No," said he. "She came here to dine probably because she thinks it is an out-of-the-way place where nobody will see her, but there is no place in Chicago so out of the way that a handsome young woman who is dining with a handsome young man who is not her husband will not be seen by somebody who knows her or him or both of them."

"Is there a place in the world?" asked she?

"Probably not," he answered.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

Not Guilty.

It was 4 a. m., and Bilkins crept softly into the house and removed his shoes, but as he tiptoed up the stairs one of the treads gave a loud creak.

"Is that you, John?" demanded Mrs. Bilkins, from above.

"No, my love," replied Bilkins. "It's the stairs."

Under the River

By HAROLD CARTER

Under the ooze and slime of the river bed, far beneath the hulls of the great ships that lay at anchor in the middle of the stream, O'Donovan and Healy fought out their quarrel.

O'Donovan had taken Kate's photograph from his overalls ostentatiously and kissed it, looking the while insultingly toward his former friend and conquered rival in the fight for the girl's favor. Then he had laid by his overalls again and squared his naked shoulders to the spade. This was the instant when Healy sprang on him from behind as a panther springs.

They had no knives, and they could only cling to one another and batter each other's faces with their fists. They fought alone within the narrow air-tight zone, out of the sight and hearing of the rest of the gang.

In front of them the great shield fitted snugly into the tunnel which it had made, and all around oozed the gray slime, kept from overwhelming them only by the force of the compressed air, a wall that wavered under the pressure, sometimes seeming to advance and then to recede again, and filtering into small waves that rolled round their feet as they stumbled backward and forward in that wild battle.

At length the fight was over. Healy tripped over the car tracks, and a moment later O'Donovan had fung him face downward into the muddy pool. He stood over him with his fists clinched, his face distorted and the muscles leaping at every movement under the bronzed skin. But Healy lay there moaning faintly. He had been worsted.

Suddenly faint shouts were heard from the midst of the tunnel and the muffled ringing of the alarm bell. O'Donovan looked round in panic. The walls were advancing, walls of slimy, gray-green ooze-viscid, clammy and foul walls of river mud that wavered and broke and trembled as the feeble power of the compressed air retained them, and then swept forward in a shuddering tidal wave.

With one yell of horror O'Donovan leaped forward toward the safety of the tunnel. He ran on and on blindly, no longer a reasoning thing, but an animal driven by desperate instinct. Then far in the distance the faint light of a bulb burst on his eyes and distant cries became audible. And then, recalled to himself suddenly, he stopped. He turned each way resolutely. Beads of sweat rolled down his cheeks and he clasped his hands in anguish. He breathed a prayer.

Then he went back. Swiftly as he had fled he ran, ankle-deep through the soft mud that sucked at his feet, striding and leaping over the granite piles and excavations in desperate haste to reach the comrade whom he had abandoned. And now the hiss of the mud tide resounded in dreadful gurgles through the hollow tunnel.

He was not an instant too soon. The walls were closing together, spurring before them long lava-like streams of slime waist-deep around him. And Healy was standing hard against the shield, clinging to it with both hands, held as in a vise by the slime.

O'Donovan caught his enemy by the arms and heaved. His broad back strained and cracked beneath the effort. And slowly, very slowly, the mud yielded its victim. In a inch O'Donovan dragged him leaving a wide furrow that instantly closed in behind him, drawing his half-conscious adversary toward the shelter of the tunnel.

With a roar like distant thunder the walls leaped together and a big wave came rolling down on them. It battered against the roof behind them as they ran, deluging them with liquid grime and ooze; it rured behind them, but faster still the hurriedly towards safety, until at last they fell exhausted at the tunnel entrance and willing hands hauled them up the shaft together.

When O'Donovan opened his eyes and heard himself called a hero he surprised himself by bursting into tears. Then he staggered to his feet and went over to Healy.

"Take this," he said, passing a thin piece of cardboard into his hand. "It's you she loves, Tim. Sur, and I lied to ye."

Writer's Lean Oys.

Victor Hugo was at the time of his death the wealthiest of nineteenth century authors. In his punger days, however, he knew the pangs of poverty, as after a quarrel with his father, Gen. Hugo, he and his brother had their allowances stopped. "We made \$160 last us for 18 months. One chop would serve for lunch three days in succession; on the first day we would eat the lean, and the second day the fat and on the third day we would suck the bone. We discovered a place in the QuarterLatin where for 15 sous (15 cents) we obtained a four-course dinner, a little of wine and as much bread as we liked. For another sou we obtained the sweetest of smiles from the pretty girl who looked after us." This regime does not appear to have spoiled Hugo's digestion, for at the age of 83 he cracked nuts with his teeth and ate oranges as some proud eat apples—peel and all.

Take Your Chice.

Church—If a man wants to have disagreeable things about him he should run for office.

Gotham—Or discard yerworth pole.

—Yonkers Statesman.

SUNDAY SERVICES AT THE LOCAL CHURCHES

Grace Methodist Church.

The morning service Sunday will be given to a report of the Laymen's Missionary convention in Houston, and the evening service to "The Responsibility of Woman." These will be mixed services, but we especially desire the men to be present at the morning hour.

Other services at the usual hour.

H. Howard Davis, Pastor.

Sacred Heart Church.

First mass, 7 a. m.

Second mass, 10 a. m., followed by benediction.

Sunday school at 9 a. m.

On week days during the time the work on church is being done, mass every morning at 6 a. m.

B. Lee, Pastor.

Centenary Methodist Church.

Sunday school, 9:30 a. m.

Preaching at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m.

Junior League, 3 p. m.

Senior League, 6:30 p. m.

Prayer meeting, Wednesday, 7:30 p. m.

A cordial invitation to all of these services.

J. Kilgore, Pastor.

Avenue Baptist Church.

Usual services tomorrow.

Sunday school at 9:45 a. m.

Preaching at 11 a. m.

Sunday school and preaching at Green street Mission at 3 p. m.

B. Y. P. U. at 6:45 p. m.

Evangelistic services at 7:30 p. m.

Every one invited.

A. D. Sparkman, Pastor.

Presbyterian Church.

Sabbath school, 9:30 a. m.

Sunday school teachers' meeting at 6:30 p. m.

Westminster League service, 6:30 p. m.

Evening worship, 7:30 o'clock.

Mid-week service, Wednesday, 7:30 p. m.

Strangers and all others are cordially invited to worship with us at all the services of the house of God.

J. C. Oehler, Pastor.

St. Philip's Church.

Third Sunday in Lent.

Service and sermon, 11 a. m.

Service and sermon, 7:30 p. m.

All seats free.

We cordially invite you to worship with us.

J. W. Sykes, Rector.

First Congregational Church.

Services will be as follows:

Sunday, 9:45 a. m., Sunday school

Sunday, 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m., the pastor will preach.

Morning subject: "The Influence of Woman."

Evening subject: "A New Tongue."

Special music at both services. "Famous Gospel Hymns" are exclusively used at the night service, under the leadership of Miss Mary E. Copeland.

Sunday, 2:30 p. m., the Junior Endeavor Society will meet.

Sunday, 6:30 p. m., Senior Endeavor meeting.

Wednesday, 8 p. m., prayer service, followed by choir practice.

The pastor and members cordially welcome all strangers and visitors to each service.

Allan Crabtree, Pastor.

Christian Church.

9:30 a. m., Sunday school.

Preaching by the pastor at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m.

Morning subject: "Woman's Influence."

Evening subject: "The Hidden Life."

Special music: Solo by Miss Teamer.

Prayer meeting, Wednesday at 7:45 p. m.

Ladies will be requested to remove hats at evening service.

You are invited to worship with us.

L. D. Anderson, Pastor.

Christian Science.

Sunday at 11 a. m.

Wednesday at 8 p. m.

Public invited. All are welcomed.

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E. W. Grove



Rode Toward the "Forty."

woman, "to have taken Austin Hobert. He's just wild over you."

"I wouldn't marry a man for those reasons," said Ethel.

"Well, he isn't so bad looking. One eye just a mite off and his legs aren't quite true, but you can't have everything. Sometimes I think you have had a love affair and been crossed, Ethel, to let such a fine chance go by."

The girl smiled faintly.

"I told the auctioneer about you and how you helped your pa and kept his spirits up, and he said you must be plucky."

Ethel wondered vaguely if she had confided in him regarding Austin Hobert also. "It doesn't matter, though," she thought sadly. "Nothing does, now."

The next day, when Mrs. Lake returned from the auction, she was in a state of jubilation and excitement.

"Oh, Ethel, the things brought twice what your pa thought they would. Here, Mr. Sturgis, the auctioneer sent you this check."

Walter Sturgis took the check and glanced at it eagerly. His face flushed and he looked curiously at his daughter.

"How much is it, father?" asked Ethel, extending her hand for the check.

But he had stowed the check carefully away in his pocket, and naming the amount, he left the room.

"Oh!" she exclaimed thankfully.

"That will buy the implements, a team a cow, wagon, two hogs and some chickens. Who bid in the things, Mrs. Lake? Were the neighbors all there?"

"Yes, and a lot of town folks. What do you think brought the most?"

"Why, I suppose father's bedroom set. It is a real mahogany, you know."

"No, sir," it was your little writing desk."

"My desk! Who bought it? Why was it bid up?"

"Austin Hobert was bound to have it, but a fellow from town got it. He bid in a way that you could see he'd