THE ESCORT

By W. W. Rose.

When John Delmont went South with his wife they arranged to have Laura's mother and sister come and care for the house during their absence. The Delmonts started a day earlier than they expected, and, consequently, were away when Emily Trevor and her mother arrived. A note that Laura left explained the change of plan and ended with this postscript: "John has secured seats at the theatre for you and mother tomorrow night. It's only a step to the car and you won't need any escort. Be just as comfortable as you can, you and mother, and let us hear from you often. Lovingly, Laura."

Emily Trevor turned to her mother.

"Only think, mamma!" she cried, "isn't that lovely?"

And just about that time John Delmont was saying to Laura, as they sat at luncheon in the dining car: "I didn't like the idea of those two women staying alone in that big house without any man within call,

SHE CALLED FOR AN ESCORT.

and so I telegraphed for brother Jim. Jim is in Philadelphia on business for the works, and they have decided to open up an office in New York. So he can sleep at the house just as well as not."

Back in the Delmont home the visitors were settling themselves for their two weeks' stay. There were many little details to arrange, trunks to unpack and clothes to put away and the maids to consult. And then, quite without warning an exceedingly unwelcome visitor arrived. It was an attack of neuralgia, and the elder lady was the victim. She was familiar with the foe, but that didn't make the attack any more endurable.

"Poor mommy," cried Emily, as she busied herself with various attempts to soften the infliction. "It's just a shame. And you were feeling so well too." And then she suddenly sank down in the nearest chair. "Oh, mommy!" she gasped. "How can I go?"

And then the girl suddenly sprang up and ran into the library and came back with the morning paper in her hands.

"Listen to this, mommy dear."

She found the place and read an item aloud:

"Special Notice—For the convenience of ladies visiting the city without escort, the management of this house will maintain a select corps of young men who can be secured for escort duty by application at the box office. These young men, who will be found unexceptional in dress and deportment, may be engaged to call at hotels or private residences if requests for their services are not made later than 7 o'clock."

The paper dropped from the girl's fingers.

"What do you think of that, mommy?"

"My dear," said the older lady. "I know you mean to do just as you please in this matter. I won't oppose you."

Emily impulsively kissed her mother. Then she darted into the library and called up the theater. The conversation was a brief one.

It was not later than 7:15 when the bell rang, and Emily, in her becoming long coat and dainty hat, answered the summons.

The young man in the vestibule raised his hat. Emily gave him a hasty glance. He was good-looking and well-dressed, although not in evening clothes—a fact which occasioned the girl some surprise.

"I'm quite ready," she said. "Good-night, mother."

"Good-night," came a faint voice from the library.

"You are a little ahead of time, I think," she said as they went down the steps.

"Then you expected me?" said the escort. He had a pleasant voice and a decidedly respectful air. Of course she must be reserved, but there was no necessity for treating the man as if he were a block of wood.

"Of course, I expected you, but not until 7:30. My mother would have gone with me to-night, but she was suddenly taken ill."

"I am sorry to hear that," he said, "and trust she will soon recover."

And just then the car they wanted stopped at the crosswalk and they stepped aboard, the escort helping the young woman with a firm uplifting pressure beneath her arm. As she passed the conductor she handed him two fares, an act that caused the young man to frown a little.

Presently the young man spoke.

"Am I to understand that you have tickets for this performance?" he asked.

"Of course," she answered shortly.

"I didn't know," he somewhat humbly explained. "You see, I never attended the theatre under just these circumstances. If I had known about it a little beforehand I would have appeared in the—the conventional garb.

"Your system must be faulty," said the girl. "I'm sure there was ample time to let you know."

"I received the message," he answered, "but there was no particulars enclosed. He turned and signaled the conductor "Here is the theatre," he said.

She was glad to notice that the theatre people did not seem to recognize him, and a moment later they were seated in the very excellent orchestra chairs that John Delmont had reserved for her.

She took another glance at the escort He certainly was a fine looking fellow and—was it possible? he was bowing and smiling as he acknowledged the greeting of some fashionable looking people in the nearest box.

Emily Trevor felt her cheeks flush. The didn't like this at all He deserved rebuke. She leaned a little forward.

"Customers?" she asked.

"Why, no," he answered. 'Merely friends."

The curtain rose and fell and rose, and presently the dainty fantasy was at an end. The escort helped her cloak and then they were in the throng in the lobby. She noticed that several people spoke to him and she quickly decided that he must be a member of some good family that had fallen into financial distress.

The memory of the play was still dominating her mind as they rode home and she was silent most of the way.

"You like the theatre?" said the escort.

"I like good plays," she replied.

"There are other good plays too be seen just now," he somewhat hesitatingly remarked.

It was quite apparent that he was advertising his business. She would give him a sharp reproof.

"I suppose you would like to have me engage you by the season," she said.

He laughed.

"I would be delighted, he answered.

He was quite brazen.

On the steps of the Delmont home she turned to him.

"Come in," she said, "and I will pay you."

He didn't answer, but meekly followed her into the hall.

As they entered somebody met them at the library door. It was Emily's mother.

"Why, mommy," cried the girl, "are you still up?"

"Yes, my dear," the older lady answered. "I was so worried I couldn't sleep."

"Worried? And the neuralgia?"

"Frightened away. My dear, there has been some dreadful mistake." And she glared at the young man. "Ten minutes after you started a man called and said he had been sent to take you to the theatre. And there you had gone away with an entire stranger!"

The girl, her face flushing turned to the stranger. "Aren't you a professional escort?"

He suddenly smiled.

"Why, no," he answered. 'I—I am a professional caretaker."

"Then how dared you take me to the theatre?"

He smiled again .

"If you will kindly recall the circumstances, I think you will admit I went at your invitation."

She drew a long breath. She wanted to laugh, but that would never do.

The young man suddenly removed his overcoat and put down his hat.

"Come into the library,' he said, "and let's talk it over."

"Certainly not," cried Emily.

"It isn't very late," he urged.

Emily's eyes dilated.

"Who are you?" she demanded.

He laughed.

"I thought you'd ask that presently. I'm John's brother, Jim. He telegraphed me to come here and take care of you."

"Oh!" gasped Emily.

And then they all went into the library.

Salt Lake to the Rescue.

It begins to look as if Salt Lake might prove quite a problem for the Western railroads. They have been having lots of trouble with weeds sprouting in the roadbeds. Now one of the lines is putting water from Salt Lake in tank cars and sprinkling the roadbed with it. It is found that the brine kills everything it comes in contact with.

The Garden of Triumph.

By A. Galsiworthy.

"When we are married," said Myra—she is not so shy of the word as she was a year ago—"when we are married, George, we must have a garden." "We must," I agreed firmly, in blissful blindness of future finance.

"A flower garden," added Myra.

"And a summer house,' she supplemented as an afterthought.

"And some caterpillars." I suggested.

"Oh, George, how horrid you are!"

"How horrid they are you mean But you will want some butterflies in your garden. And then we can study entomology as well sa botany."

"Oh, we can study a dictionary without those things," she said.

"Well, and I didn't say 'caterpillars' so we're quits." Myra's reasoning is sometimes too profound for me

We were walking in the park and it was in the springtime I fancy the suggestion of a garden of our own came to Myra from the beautifully kept plots around us At any

WE MUST HAVE A GARDEN.

rate we had never discussed the subject before. Perhaps that was because we were both city bred, and had not fully realized, although we had decided, that our future home was to be set in the country.

"Yes," I said, after a pause, "I think a garden is the very thing. It's so healthy, and it needn't cost much if we do the work overselves."

"I'm very glad you like the idea, George," returned Myra, in the quick utterance which always tells me when she is pleased. "It's a lovely idea! What can be sweeter than watering the flowers coming up—"

„And listening to the grass growing," I put in to tease her.

But she was too delighted to be annoyed.

"And then," ran on the sweet enthusiast, "we'll be able to send lovely bouquets to mother. Oh, George, I wish we— she stopped abruptly.

"Well?" said I encouragingly.

"I was going to say something, but I didn't. I knew she glanced swiftly at me to see if I had noticed her blush, and then, thinking . had not, she resumed talking.

"And, George, I must have a garden hose; it's so much nicer than a stupid watering can and we can have a fountain spray like—"

"Let's go to a hosier at once, then," I exclaimed, catching her arm.

"Oh, dear me! Will you never be sensible?"

"But, George," she interrupted, "about the serious business of a garden—the digging, and weeding, and so on?"

"Why, of course, that'll have to be done, won't it?"

"Can you dig?" she asked.

"I will try to dig," I murmured humbly.

"Can you weed?" she inquired.

"I can sow," I said modestly.

"Oh, I'll do the sowing, George," she said kindly. "So you'l only need to dig, and weed, and rake, and, of course, cut the grass and trim the borders."

"You don't mean to say that's all I'll have to do?"

"Do be sensible. My idea is to begin at once."

"They won't allow you to do that in the parks."

"Oh, silly, I don't mean here this very minute. I mean that we should begin to study the subject. First of all we ought to get a book on gardening—a simple book—and learn what we can from it, and some of those beautiful seed catalogues I've seen. And we could get a spade and a rake and a growel—"

"You mean a trowel."

"Yes, didn't I say so? And a—well, I think these will do to begin with. And we could practice in the back yard, I'm sure mother won't mind."

"But, Myra—"

"So that's all nicely arranged, isn't it dear? And I'll—""

"But, wait a second—"

"I'll buy some seeds this afternoon, and whenever you've got the ground in nice order I'll sow them."

I gave in gracefully. "We'll begin tomorrow," I said.

"You are a good boy, George," she said, beaming upon me.

Still I felt I was going against my better judgment.

Myra lived in one of a long row of houses, very similar outwardly, which ran the whole length of the block. For some unaccountable reason the builder in erecting them, had left a piece of ground behind each house upon which he did not build, and this had been enclosed by a fence and was called the back yard. When we began our operations there was nothing much more than bare ground, though it looked as though some patches here and there might become green if left to themselves and kindly nature. Myra's mother smiled leniently upon us from a window above, but did not attempt to encourage us.

"Perhaps you had better begin George. I have a few little things I want to do in the house and I will be out in a little while."

She nodded and left me. I took off my coat, seized the spade and began to dig. In five minutes I was warmer than I had ever been in my life. I felt that I deserved a smoke, not so much for work done as for energy expended.

Myra returned in the course of half an hour, looking cool and cheerful. "Oh, I thought you'd have finished it, George. What a little bit you've got done!"

"It's a pickaxe that's wanted here," I said, mopping my brow, and regarding the little patch of broken clayey ground.

"The ground is full of stones," I explained, as I lit my pipe again.

"Do you thing the soil is rich, George?" she asked.

She must have got that word from the gardening book, forthere was nothing in the back yard to suggest it.

"It may be rich dear, but it's very miserly. However, don't worry I daresay in a fortnight or three weeks—"

"Nonsense, George! Dig away and you'll soon be finished with it."

"While you're digging I will follow with the hoe and chop up the big pieces of earth. The book says the earth must be very fine."

"It is fine," I grunted, but she did not notice the miserable humor of my meaning. We labored silently and with diligence for some time.

But suddenly I began to grow desperately tired of what seemed unavailing toil. The hotter I became the more certain I was that nothing would grow in the wretched ground; the more uncomfortable I felt, the more positive I was that Myra and I were wasting time. And when I happened to lift my eyes and caught sight of grinning faces at the windows of the adjoining houses, I threw down the spade with an exclamation of disgust.

"It's not nearly dinner-time yet," observed Myra, who was cheerily stabbing away at the lumps of clay.

"No, it's stopping time," I replied, not very nicely.

"Poor George, are you tired?"

"No, I'm not tired; but I'm sick of this. It's perfectly useless. I'm sure you can see that for yourself."

"Perhaps you're right. But we haven't tried very long, you know."

"A little of such foolishness goes a long way," I returned, putting on my coat.

"All right, we'll go into the house for a little rest," she said, quietly. "Aren't your hands sore, George?"

"My hands are right enough," I answered ungraciously.

She left me but presently returned with a lemonade for my delectation.

I suppose I was ashamed of myself because I could not apologize, and when I left the house a little later it was with a heavy heart—heavy because I had not humbled myself.

I was glad when a day or so later I hastened to Myra's home to say how sorry I was for my ill-natured behavior. There was no one in the parlor when I arrived, and after waiting for a few minutes wondering if Myra had hardened her heart in my absence, I went to the window and looked sorrowfully forth it was a real surprise to behold the transformation. The whole of the ground had the appearance of having been dug and well broken. I concluded at once that Myra, not wishing to give up her scheme, had summoned professional assistance It was quite unreasonable of me but I felt a little sore. However, I had no time for further thought, for just then Myra appeared.

"Don't, George!" she cried, wincing when I caught her hands.

"What's the matter? I know I don't deserve to be forgiven, but—"

"It isn't that, dear," she said, gently, "it's simply because I—"

"Let me see your hands, Myra," I cried, seized with a sudden inspiration.

She held them up after some persuasion. And then I understood. I drew her over to the window.

"How on earth did you do it?" I asked, with a queer feeling in my throat.

"Don't be cross, George," she said. "I'm a little bit tired."

"Oh, Myra! Myra!"

"S-h-h. Never mind, dear," she whispered.

The back yard isn't looking at all bad. A wagon load of fresh soil helped matters wonderfully, and Myra and I have found unlimited joy in watching the little lives come up. They may not all be in season, and we wonder what some of them are; but we shall do better next year.

The New Owner.

By Clarence Wallace.

"Well" whispered Marion to me, "I guess it doesn't make any difference if we did have to wear silk gowns that you washed, turned, mended and made over. Guess what I just heard."

"What did you just hear?" I asked.

"Why," proceeded Marion, delightedly, "I was standing over by those farns a minute ago and just round the corner I heard Mrs. Lewis say to Claudie Brooks; 'I don't see how the Harcourt girls manage to dress so well,' and Claudia—spiteful old thing—said: 'I think they ought to be ashamed; everybody knows they can't afford it.' But just then that grand looking Mr. Maxwell came over to them and it wasn't two minutes before I heard him ask who that striking girl with the red roses in her hair was. That was you, Eleanor. Now aren't you flattered?"

"Dreadfully," I answered. "Anything more?"

"Yes, indeed," whispered Marion. "The best of it all was that he asked right away if you were one of the

MRS. LEWIS WAS ANGRY.

Harcourts who had owned the old place up town, and he asked her—Oh, look!"

Marion's volubility was checked at this point by the appearance of the already mentioned Mr. Maxwell with our hostess on his arm. He was a grave, handsome man, about 30, I thought, and after Mrs. Lewis had presented him he sat down beside me. He had talked about a good many things and had almost wearied of my monosyllabic replies, I fancy, when he finally brought up Harcourt, and I proceeded to astonish him by forgetting that we were strangers, and telling him the most ridiculous things with characteristic recklessness. I told him how we, Marion and I, went a round about way to avoid passing the dear old place, and how, when there was no way out of it, we went by with our heads turned away, because we loved it so. I told him we had been born there and that every big room and every dingy panel brought up a memory that we loved. And it was not until Marion came for me to go home that I realized that he had listened to me silently for about an hour, and that Mrs. Lewis was angry with me for monopolizing the lion of the evening I went home terribly ashamed and convinced that notwithstanding that he looked very sympathetic, he was probably shocked.

But some days later, after Mr. Maxwell called with Mrs. Lewis and was so nice, I guess he didn't mind after all. And in the weeks following he came frequently and we met at several places. Somehow I told that man everything—I couldn't seem to help it. He always knew just when to smile, and I never said a silly thing to cover up a deeper feeling in all those weeks that I did not see sympathy and understanding in his face. Well, it was a pleasant time, as I remember it, and I got to thinking a good deal about him and to liking him very much. There was only one thing to dampen our pleasure. One day the news came to us that Mr. Griffin, who held a mortgage upon Harcourt, had sold it to strangers, and Marion and I told ourselves that from that time our claim upon it would be only that of any outsiders, who might look at its dear old walls and pass it by. As I say, this darkened our lives a little, but there were still Mr. Maxwell's visits to look forward to, so it was worth while existing. But one evening when he called he said: "Miss Eleanor, I am going away tomorrow and I want you to do something for me. Will you?"

"I don't know," I answered in a low voice. Somehow I couldn't [illegible]

[illegible] Rug he didn't [illegible] said nothing about regretting [illegible] ing away. He simply [illegible] I would go down to Harcourt with him. I was too miserable to [illegible] and we went.

My heart beat heavily as we [illegible] ed up the dear old oak avenue, and when we had mounted the [illegible] steps and opened the door I could not see the familiar dim old hall because my eyes were blinded with tears. "Oh, well," thought I, as I stealthily dried them away, "you're a dear old place, but you're nothing to me now, and I've got no right to cry about you." But later, when we went up to the long hall above and found that some impatient person had removed our few remaining pieces of old furniture and had hung new paintings there over crimson hangings I felt I couldn't stand any more. "What does this mean?" I cried.

"The purchaser seems to [illegible]" explained Mr. Maxwell, "and he is getting it ready for occupancy."

Here, I suppose, the poor man was bewildered enough, for I had restrained myself as long as I could, and I rushed to the one place where the hated crimson did not cover the panels, laid my head against their friendly support and burst out crying.

"Oh, why did you bring me here?" I said. "I can't stand everything. I would rather have this old place burned to the ground, with only the poor old chimney left to show where it stood, than to see it filled with the most beautiful things in the world by strangers. Everything I care about turns out wrong." I concluded with a sigh. "I am losing my home, and now you—"

I stopped, frozen with horror. What had I said! But Norman Maxwell suddenly put me into the window seat and sat down beside me. "Eleanor, look at me," he said. Since I absolutely couldn't lift my head so he put his hand under my rebellious chin and turned my face toward him. "Eleanor," he went on, "don't you know I've loved you all the time and that I was going away with the heartache, couldn't bear you did not care for me? Don't you care just a little more about me than for an ordinary friend?"

"Oh!" I exclaimed [illegible] afraid that my [illegible] him into it. [illegible] —I didn't [illegible] his arms [illegible] knew it was [illegible] had said.

Well, Laura [illegible] and laughed [illegible] fashion, and [illegible] Marion [illegible] which [illegible] my mom [illegible] the last [illegible] shed, [illegible] has [illegible] is to be [illegible] fied.

Playgrounds.

The number [illegible] grounds in [illegible] many cities. [illegible] ering 14 cities [illegible] 300,000 population, [illegible] been in two years [illegible] per cent in [illegible] per cent in [illegible] grounds, and [illegible] kinds of [illegible] in that period.

A [illegible]

An [illegible] ing [illegible] in their [illegible] typical [illegible] has been [illegible] partment [illegible] most. The [illegible] and is over [illegible] of 5,780 feet. The [illegible] is about 300 feet [illegible]

Biggest Cannon Ball.

What is said to be the biggest cannon ball ever made weighed [illegible] 00 pounds and was manufactured at the Krupp works, Essen, for the Government of the Czar. The gun from which this projectile was fired is placed in the fortifications of Sevastopol. The gun [illegible] of 12 miles and it has been estimated that each shot costs $1,000.

Change of Scene.

Change of scene comes to us as a rest at least to many of us. It is a holiday from cares that may bother us. It awakens in us new ideas, helps to obliterate old and unhealthy ones, renews the energies that were well-nigh exhausted, and seems to remind us that life after all is worth living.—Holly's Magazine.

American Colleges Abroad.

Yale is far less honored in England than is Harvard. The residence of Elihu Yale at Plas Grano has been pulled down and it is difficult to identify the site. Yale's tomb is a solid mass of masonry at the back of Wrexham Church tower, is almost his sole visible memorial.

Steel Changes Place Brass.

On account of the high price of copper the plumbers of Birmingham, England, are now making preparations to manufacture a large proportion of their pipes of steel instead of brass.

What's Good Manners.

It is [illegible] that [illegible] are a [illegible] of [illegible] in good [illegible]