

# The Hour of Decision

From out the dull gray, leaden sky a few flakes fluttered slowly to the bare frozen earth; the wind whirled fitfully, now coming in fierce gusts, now dying away in long moaning wafts. Within the room the fire blazed brightly. How greedily the flames licked up the logs, how they went roaring up the chimney. A long, low couch was drawn between the windows. Upon it lay a man. A soft rug was thrown across his knees, beside the couch was a stand laden with phials and bottles, from among which two stood forth conspicuously, in close proximity to the recumbent figure, one a bottle of wine, the other containing laudanum. The young man's cheeks were hollowed as by recent illness, the long, thin fingers alternately smoothed and increased the letter which he held, one evidently but just received; suddenly his fingers paused in their hitherto mechanical movements, then with quick, nervous energy he tore the letter into shreds; for a moment he held the fragments in his hand, then let them flutter to the floor. Wearily he closed his eyes, but even then, despite the darkness, the words of the letter danced before his aching eyeballs as though written in flaming characters, those cruel, heartless words.

The letters had read as follows: "To Mr. David Dalton: "My Dear David—I write to tell you of my engagement to Mr. Richard Armstrong; he has asked me to be his wife, and realizing how hopeless my engagement was, a mere boy and girl affair when we parted, I have accepted him. Indeed, David, I cannot but think our feeling for one another was nothing but a foolish fancy, a mistaken idea. I feel that in some way I have fettered you—shackled you—acted as a hindrance to your career; doubtless you would have done better had no thought of me disturbed you, rendered your hand less skilful. I am confident that entirely freed from me you will be able to devote your time more successfully, with greater results than any you have yet seemed able to achieve. You remember the old saying, 'Art is long and time is fleeting'; the waiting has been so long, so purposeless, so utterly devoid of promise for the future, and Mr. Armstrong has been so importunate of late, is so desirous of making me his wife that I have yielded. Indeed, David, I can say confidently I think it is much better so, and that even if you do not see it now in quite the same light you will later, in a little while. Most sincerely, Evelyn Graham."

Married to Armstrong, the rich broker. A man old enough to be her father. A cold cynical man of the world; a man who had seen life in all its phases, who had drained the cup to the last drop. Now he sought her out in all her youth and beauty as the one he deemed fit to preside over his household, to dispense hospitality at his board.

And she, what of her; what of the protestations of love she had showered upon him, of unwavering affection, of a love that only burned the brighter in protracted absence. Did he not notice the growing coldness in her letters? Had they not come at longer, more infrequent intervals? His nails bit deep into his palms. Of what good now was the letter which had come last evening announcing his success. In an instant he had sprung from a poor, obscure, unknown artist to one rich, famous, the talk of the day. All three of his pictures had been hung, two were already sold, at what to him seemed a fabulous price.

He remembered the elation of the previous evening when he had broken the seal; in what a fever of delight he had read; with what transports of happiness he had begun the letter to Evelyn telling her of his success, pouring out his heart to her, till at length overcome by weakness, rendered by his severe sickness the pen had slipped from his trembling fingers.

Now he had lost her. Yes, it was true that he had achieved success, was admittedly a master in his chosen profession; could that in time suffice him? Art he knew was a most exacting mistress, could she compensate for all that he had lost? Long he lay there, the freight played upon the floor and cast fantastic shadows on the walls; still he lay motionless. The little clock ticked steadily upon the mantle, the ring of the flight of time. The sheet December day was drawing to a close; gloom was enshrouding the room, when suddenly the next figure started into life. He sat erect upon the couch, the fire of determination blazing in the dark eyes, the lines about the clean-cut mouth were tense and rigid, every muscle vibrant with emotion. With a hand that never faltered he lifted one of the two bottles that stood near him on the table, slowly he withdrew the cork and poured the contents into a small tumbler; as slowly he raised it to his lips and drained the glass to the very dregs. As he did so a quivering gleam in the fireplace split in two, revealing a shower of rays that fell upon the hearth; the dying embers sparkled brightly for a moment, and then died.

# ATTACHMENT FOR PITCHERS.

## Drip Cup to Catch Drippings From the Spout of Vessels.

A peculiar and unique invention just patented is shown in the illustration below. The drip cup was designed to provide a simple means of preventing the contents of pitchers



CATCHES THE DRIPS.

and similar vessels having a discharge spout trickling on the table or on whatever object they happen to be placed. The drip cup is secured to the receptacle beneath the spout. Its use will be apparent, the drippings from the spout of the receptacle dropping into the drip cup. It is impossible for the contents of the drip cup to drop out when the pitcher is tilted. For this purpose a guard is placed partly across the top.

## How to Darn.

The darning of narrow lace edges is a most difficult matter. If the tear is a serious one, the edges of the lace can be basted upon the selvages of muslin and placed in the embroidery hoop. Care must be taken not to sew into the muslin. If the edge is destroyed entirely or in part, the lace may be basted upon white letter paper and stitched several times to form a new edge and cross-threads stitched to hold this edge in place, then the paper pulled away and the remaining stitches put in on the machine or by hand. Hamburg edgings and insertions can be darned in the same way. They should preferably be free of starch and smoothly ironed to facilitate perfect work. White mosquito netting that has been washed will be found to give a good foundation for darned coarsely woven underwear on the machine, and soft black mosquito netting should be basted under the holes in the knees of boys' stockings. It should be basted directly across the hole and the machine darned be done directly upon it. The rough edges and threads can afterward be trimmed away.

When you are through darning upon the machine do not forget to replace the pressure upon the pressure foot and the stitch action to the feed, otherwise you may be very much puzzled the next time you go to the machine, and wonder why it "won't make a stitch."

## Combinations of Color.

After all there is nothing more important in a costume than combination of color, for no matter how rich the material, if the colors do not harmonize the gown will be wrong. For this reason, brown and gold have remained so very popular, as have also smoke gray and silver.

A charming tea gown is of silver grey crepe de chine, made empire and finished with yoke and sleeves of white Oriental lace which is net embroidered in heavily raised dots. The gown hangs straight and untrimmed from bust to hem, where it has a band of silver braid.

A tea gown of brown chiffon velvet is made in a rather skimpy style cut in slightly at the waist line, while the yoke and sleeves are a cream net heavily embroidered with gold thread. At the foot of the gown is a band of the same embroidered net, only the thread extends over the edge of the net in places and makes a pretty curve on the velvet.

Creu is always an attractive color and so is champagne, and both combine beautifully with a deep golden brown. Blue is the hardest of colors to trim, but its own color in a lighter or a darker shade is always a safe combination.

## Straight Hair Remedy.

Straight hair is the bane of a girl's existence, and her lucky sister who was born with naturally wavy locks does not realize the agony the girl with the straight hair endures.

A good solution is the white of an egg mixed with an equal amount of rose water and a few drops of some fragrant perfume. Then the hair should be slightly shampooed with the mixture before wrapping around the curlers. Left until thoroughly dry, then brushed gently, the hair will be wavy, with a soft sheen on it, besides looking light and fluffy, and the wave will remain permanent in spite of rain and fog.

## Kills Off Mice.

To do away with mice a mixture of equal parts of flour and plaster of paris is said to be excellent. No moisture is applied to the powder, but all food is put away and the mixture is left on a plate where the mice will get it. After one repast they return no more.

# She Forgave Him..

"I think said the pretty girl, "It is very ridiculous that you can't take a joke!"

"Joke!" repeated, in accents of deepest scorn, the young man who was pacing the floor. "Joke! I like your idea of humor! I may be easy-going and good-tempered and readily imposed on, and all that, but there is a limit! No, Mildred, I have made up my mind to assert myself at last. I came to-night to tell you that you are quite free to go automobiling with that fellow Jackson whenever you like; or with any one else. Though I suppose," he added, rather gloomily, "you'd go just the same, free or not free."

The pretty girl nodded her head emphatically. "I suppose I should!" she agreed. "And it is perfect nonsense—"

"Indeed!" interrupted the young man. "I am glad you think it is funny! You left me sitting there in front of Clara's house in my car for just five minutes, while you did an errand—and then you slid out of the back door with Jim Jackson, whose runabout was around the corner, and went riding with him. I waited an hour and a half!"

"Really, Richard," she went on, "I never dreamed of doing anything but come right back when I left you. Then I found Jim in at Clara's—he had run his car around to their barn to borrow some gasoline—and he said it would be such a joke on you if I were to finish my ride with him! If you could have heard him! Clara and I nearly died laughing at the way he pictured you patiently sitting out there waiting for me when all the time I was out enjoying a ride. He—"

"Oh, Jim is full of those little tricks," agreed the young man, grimly. "I intend to settle with him, too. But that doesn't excuse you in the least. He might have suggested the trick, but you didn't have to carry it out. If you had cared anything about me you would have scorned to—"

"It is dreadful to have no sense of humor," mourned the pretty girl. "Besides, I really didn't mean to have you wait so long."

"Was it really an hour and a half? How dreadful! Clara might have come out and told you! She is dreadfully thoughtless! Truly, Richard, I thought Jim and I would around the block and come up beside you out in front. I thought you'd be so amazed and bewildered because you had just seen me go in to the house!"

"But you didn't!" insisted the young man. "You went away for a long ride with Jim and had a good time and never thought about me sitting out there—"

"Oh, but I did think of you!" said the pretty girl with a suppressed chuckle. "Honestly, I did! But how could I come right around when Jim wouldn't? You surely don't think that I could throw a big, six-foot man out of an automobile so that I could get hold of the steering gear, do you? I never knew you to be so unreasonable before, Richard! You've no idea how—how indignant I was with Jim for not doing as I wished! I was so worried about what you would think!"

The young man took a fleeting glance at her. "That sounds well," he remarked.

The pretty girl hunted for her handkerchief. "You needn't be so cross," she said. "You act as if it was my fault. Just as though I would do such a thing!"

"Don't cry, Mildred!" said the young man, nervously.

"As if I was to blame for other people's mistakes!" she wept. "Why don't you blame Clara for not coming out and telling you—or Jim for not going right around the block to where you were? Instead of that you t-t-take it out on me! Really, I should think you would be ashamed, Richard—"

"Clara never did suit me," he said severely. "She never considers other people. She might have realized how unpleasant she made it for you by not thinking of telling me how you had gone. And the idea of Jim Jackson carrying you away, practically against your will!"

"I just b-b-begged him not to," she supplemented the pretty girl. "What could I do?"

"Not a blamed thing!" said the young man indignantly. "And worrying you so, too! You wait till I get hold of him! Never mind, Mildred, don't bother about my waiting so long! I'd wait twice as long for you! Don't cry any more, little girl!"

"I forgive you," said the pretty girl, sweetly, as she gazed at her reflection in the mirror over the young man's shoulder with the honest admiration that one bestows upon a person who has achieved success under difficult conditions.

Landlord and Tenant.  
In no place is there more trouble between landlords and tenants than in New York City. There is a daily average of 190 cases tried in the courts growing out of their relations.

## JUMP THE ROPE.

### You Would Restore Figure to Its Former Syphilitic Lines.

"If you would retain the syphilitic form, attain one, in case the accumulation of adipose tissue has distorted your former slenderness into unsightly lines, jump the rope.

This is what certain New York women are spending their spare time in doing nowadays. When you see a woman who once tipped the scales at 200 and now balances them at 135 you may be sure that she has been following the latest form of beauty culture.

From Paris comes the beauty culturist who introduced this simple method of flesh re-education, and though she pretends that some mysterious medicinal virtues emanate from the handles of her skipping ropes yet those who have tried the system with ordinary skipping ropes report remarkable results from the sport.

As a matter of fact, this reformer herself might recommend almost anything in the line of beauty culture for flesh reduction and her adherents would follow it, even to standing on their heads. If that would do any good, for she has a syphilitic form herself. Encased in a sheathlike corset over which hangs a princess gown of white broadcloth she presents a picture of grace if any woman would do much to acquire.

## Anchor on the Dust-Pan.

The virtues of the dust-pan as a household convenience have been long since recognized to the extent that the implement has now come into almost universal use in all the civilized countries, but a serious feature connected with its use is the stooping involved. With the pan in one hand, and its companion-piece, the dust brush, in the other, the operator must stoop continually, so that the work is more than usually tiresome. A long-handled dust-pan is in use to some limited extent, but it requires a long-handled brush, also, which is unsuited for all kinds of work.

A very welcome improvement is shown in the cut herewith, which has been recently patented. With this implement dust accumulations of dirt which have been swept up may be carried right into the dust-pan with the aid of the broom alone and without the necessity of the brush or involving any stooping whatever.

The implement has two excellent features. The first one is the employment of an easel of wire secured to it in such a manner as to support it in just the right position for the sweeper, and the other is that this wire construction is designed in the shape of a stirrup, made to accommodate the toes, so that it may be held firmly in position while the act of sweeping the dust into it may be accomplished.

## Dancing Makes One Graceful.

"That's not the way, little Beth!" she exclaimed. "Get the rustic well into your head and your feet will ooze you, too, and you will float like a cloud. That is why everybody ought to learn to dance, so that their bodies may be trained to more gracefully and rhythmically. Weak-minded people never walk well but shuffle. That is because they do not know how to hold themselves together with a thought."

"Now let me show you how to stand when dancing. Do not press close to your partner nor look as if you were afraid to come too near. Stand erect, bending the merest trifle forward from the hip joints not the waist, just enough to keep your dignity and his. Then your left hand must not look as though you were clutching his shoulder. You must bend your left elbow and rest your hand in the crook of his arm."

"We began dancing again as she hummed, and at every step I went better, forgetting myself in the rhythm of the music. Following my guide, not trying to lead her, until to my delight she exclaimed: "Splendid, splendid! You will be a superb dancer yet!"—Delineator.

## Sewing Box.

Obtain an ordinary wooden cheese box from your grocer and get three pieces of wood  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Either paint or varnish both boxes or sticks. Now, at equal distances apart, screw the sticks to the box, leaving about one foot projecting to be the "feet." The cover of the box can then be screwed on the stick above the box and almost at the end of the sticks. Then line the cover and box with some pretty material that can be laundered.

# THE FLOWER OF SPAIN

The train was an hour late, the station agent informed me, and to add to my annoyance the waiting room was decidedly hot and stuffy. Sitting for 40 minutes in an isolated railway station in the mountains of Spain with \$5000 worth of jewels in one's travelling bag is not a cheerful outlook. I glanced at the stupid-looking agent, but he was dozing peacefully in his chair. No danger from that section, at any rate.

Then, once more, my thoughts reverted to a girl I had met in Seville a week ago—a girl with a face like a queen of heaven, and great, sombre, inscrutable dark eyes. Even before I had talked with her, I realized that she was the one woman, and I determined to return to Spain as quickly as possible after I had deposited the jewels with my bankers in England, and endeavor to win this flower of Spain, as I called her, for my wife.

A faint tapping against the window suddenly attracted my attention, and I glanced up, nervously. A pair of familiar dark eyes, sad and luminous, were peering in at me, and with a glad cry I rushed out to her.

"Senorita!" I cried, joyfully, "this is indeed an unexpected pleasure." She clasped my arm with both hands, and I saw that she was trembling violently. "Senor, your life is in danger! I have come all the way from Seville to warn you! They are determined to get possession of your rubies, and they will murder you if necessary." Her voice trembled and broke, and my heart throbbed with a sudden, fierce joy.

"And you have risked your life to bring me this warning?"

"That does not matter—it is of no account, senor. There is no time to lose; you must come with me at once!"

She had already started down the gleaming track, and I stumbled along behind her, my travelling bag grasped tightly in one hand.

Half an hour later we reached a cave in the mountains, and my companion sank down wearily on one of the moss-covered rocks. I stood before her, looking down at her, and some of the tenderness which was in my heart must have been mirrored in my eyes, for the color suddenly flamed up into her face and she rose to her feet nervously.

"You are safe here, senor, until to-morrow. I must leave you now." I felt my face whiten at her words. Leave me—perhaps forever—and I had only just found her! I drew nearer to her and took one of her hands. "Senorita, you are a Spanish woman, and should know what love means. Can you then understand me when I tell you that I have loved you from the minute I saw you in Seville—that I want you to return to England with me as my wife?"

She started back from me and put her hand up to her throat. "You must not speak of love to me, senor! It is impossible!"

I smiled confidently. Every gesture proclaimed her love for me, and that was sufficient. "I am very certain that I can teach you to care for me if you will give me permission to try."

She looked at me silently for a minute, with her great, sad, black eyes, and I wondered if, in all the world, there were another woman so beautiful.

"It is impossible, senor, because—the chief of the brigands who intended to murder you is my husband!"

The world seemed to grow suddenly black and stifling. I turned, abruptly, and walked a few paces from her, to regain my self-control. A long silence, then: "You understand—now—how impossible it is?"

"Yes!"

"Good-by, senor! God bless and keep you always!"

I knew she had gone, and yet I remained there, motionless, staring before me with unseeing eyes. At last I turned and walked slowly back to the rock where she had sat, and as I sank down on it, my eyes fell on the travelling bag, which I had placed by the side of the cave. My rubies—they alone were left to me! Perhaps their rich, red beauty might dull the ache in my heart. I drew the bag over to me and opened it. And suddenly my heart seemed to stop beating, and I felt faint and sick! The bag was empty! I staggered to my feet, slowly realizing what it meant. I had been tricked, deceived by the woman I loved, but even at that moment there was no anger in my heart against her—only overwhelming love and pity. I put my hand back into the bag, hoping that I might have been mistaken—and drew out a tiny, folded slip of paper.

"They have forced me to do this horrible thing, and I must obey, otherwise they would murder you. They would track me to the ends of the world if I deserted them, and it would mean death to both of us. They married me to him when I was a child and my life is one long, unceasing torture. I love you—dear— even as you love me—but it is impossible. Forgive me!"

They wonder, here in England, why I do not marry, and why I shun all women. They do not know that my heart belongs to the most beautiful woman in all the world—the "Flower of Spain."

## LONG TIME CONVICTS.

### With What They Amuse Themselves in Prison.

As a warden of Dartmoor once said to the writer, "You get all kinds up here." Convicts are not all the abandoned ruffians which they are so often described to be. And one of the best proofs of this is the widespread love of animals that exists among them. It is so uncommon to find during severe weather that prisoners are saving crumbs from their bread to feed the birds with. And such an act is real sentimental for a big, burly man, who has been hard at work all day in a Portland quarry or upon Dartmoor farm, does not find his rations any more than he can comfortably consume.

You will always find a few convicts in every big prison who appear to possess a peculiar power over animals. There was a man up at Parkhurst a few years ago, who seemed to be able to charm birds. Sparrows would come into his cell at any time, perch on his head and feed out of his hands. And yet this man was serving a fifteen-year sentence for a crime so brutal that one cannot here even mention its nature.

Talking of birds in prison cells, a pretty story comes from Stockholm. A convict serving a long sentence in the State prison at Stockholm, managed to tame a pair of robins so completely that the confiding little red-breasts not only came in and out of his cell constantly, but actually built there. When he saw what was happening, the convict asked to be allowed to see the governor, and implored him to order that the birds should be left alone. The governor granted the request and he certainly never had reason to regret his action. The convict, previously sulky and dangerous, became the most tractable man in the prison. He took the keenest delight in watching the visitors hatch out four young ones and these in turn he tamed until they would come to him at a whistle. Gradually the convict's character changed entirely, and two years after the first visit of the robins he was released on ticket-of-leave.

There was an amusing scene one day in January, 1908, in an Isle of Wight train. Four grown men were seen on their hands and knees in a third-class carriage, apparently hunting vigorously for something. Inquiring what was the matter the guard found that the object of their search was a mouse. The men were released prisoners from Parkhurst, and the mouse had escaped from one of them. Fortunately its owner managed to recapture it unhurt, and when he had done so, he carefully replaced it inside his cap. He said that the little creature had been his constant friend and companion for two years past, and it had become so tame that it would sit in his open hand and eat the crumbs with which he fed it. He could not bear to leave his pet behind in the prison and so was taking it with him.

An elderly "lifer" at Dartmoor, a farmer by profession, has an amazing way with animals. There is a large flock of sheep belonging to the prison and these are the old fellow's special care. When lambs are left motherless he feeds them so carefully that he seldom loses one, and it is a pretty sight to watch the lambs following him about. The farm colliers are also attached to the prisoner and he loves his charges so well that he has lost all wish for liberty.

## Hanged the Shoemaker.

During the struggle between King Charles and the parliament, Pembroke castle was so well fortified that Cromwell, with all his cannon, could not take it.

After many failures he gave up his intention, and began to march on for Tenby; but before he had proceeded far a country shoemaker came up to Cromwell and asked him whether he would reward him if he would tell him how to get the castle into his possession.

Cromwell, very glad of this offer, consented; then the old shoemaker, glad to get some money, as no doubt there was a pipe through which they got their water, and that if he were to cut the pipe, the castle would surrender.

Cromwell said: "I thank you for the information you have given me, but as you have turned traitor to your countrymen the only reward I will give you is that you shall be hanged on the very next tree that I come to."

Cromwell had the shoemaker hanged and cut the pipe he had told him of, leading to the castle, which then surrendered.—Weekly Telegraph.

## Chestnut Leaves in Cigars.

Cigars are being made out of chestnut leaves over in England nowadays. So far, it appears, the custom has not been introduced into this country. Many men were employed in gathering up the dead leaves in the chestnut groves of several big London parks. The leaves are enclosed in wrappers of real tobacco.

While it is declared that smokers are unable to detect the spurious tobacco no attempt is made to get fancy prices for the cigars. They sell for one and two cents a piece.

A Chicago slaughter house makes thousands of dollars monthly by saving the gall stones found in the gall bladder of animals and exporting them to Japan, where they command a high price.

## THE FLOWER OF SPAIN (Continued)

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"It is impossible, senor, because—the chief of the brigands who intended to murder you is my husband!"

The world seemed to grow suddenly black and stifling. I turned, abruptly, and walked a few paces from her, to regain my self-control. A long silence, then: "You understand—now—how impossible it is?"

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