

Down and Out

A New Year's Story

By AGNES E. COLWELL

It was the last day of the year. Marcus Eldredge had determined that in closing hours would mark the end of his earthly career.

"I'll wait until midnight and go out with the old year," he muttered as he crossed the weapon tentatively against his head. As he stood there in the twilight his unattached door swung slowly open, and a girl's face appeared, startled and pale as her eyes met his reflection in the glass. His glance met hers defiantly.

"Coward!" she said sharply. "How do you know that I am?" he demanded without turning around. His face slowly reddened as the contempt deepened on hers, and involuntarily his right arm was lowered and the revolver was placed on the bureau. "How do you know that I'm a coward?" he persisted.

"Because you were going to do that?" she nodded toward the weapon, and he could see that she was afraid of it. "No one but a coward would destroy himself."

"What do you know about it?" Eldredge flushed around and faced the stranger who had so unexpectedly meddled with his affairs. "Do you know what it is to try for years to reach a certain goal and then fail? Do you know what it is to work and wait and starve and suffer privation and then fall in the end? Then, added to the failure, do you know what it is to tramp the streets looking for any sort of work without even a measure of success? What do you know about these things?"

"You are a coward, as I said before—the biggest craven I ever met. You're a traitor!" The girl ended with a childish angry sob. "You don't understand," he said, a flash of anger creeping into his face. "If I follow, can't you work and earn? Do you know what it is to try for years to reach a certain goal and then fail? Do you know what it is to work and wait and starve and suffer privation and then fall in the end? Then, added to the failure, do you know what it is to tramp the streets looking for any sort of work without even a measure of success? What do you know about these things?"

"The New Year holds no promise for you? The life ahead is a blank? No?"

"Is there anybody dependent upon you?"

"I have the ingredients to make a successful man. I can have the chance," he retorted.

"What sort of a chance do you want?" she asked, with sudden eagerness. "What is your business?"

He hesitated an instant, and then he admitted half defiantly. "I'm an artist."

"An artist!" she echoed doubtfully. "Why have you not succeeded? What do the critics say?"

"The consensus of opinion was that I'd missed my vocation. One man said I did chairs and tables so well in my pictures of still life that I really ought to go into the furniture business. That's a sample of the knocks I've been getting."

"What do you really think about it?" she asked in a low tone.

"About my own work?" he said, looking unapologetically at her.

"I know you think it's no good," he said honestly.

"Now you've made a new beginning. You can still paint. Why don't you go into the furniture business—design chairs and tables or sell them—or anything? You've got to start somewhere, you know," she urged.

"You don't know the disappointments I've had," he objected uneasily. "A girl doesn't understand what it is to have to face a blank destiny—on an empty stomach."

"You haven't anybody but yourself to take care of, and I'm ashamed of you, so there!"

Marcus Eldredge looked down at the graceful form in his doorway. It was a strange situation. He who had been worshiped in the midst of the great city, friends and forsaken, seemed to have found a friend in this eager, gray-eyed girl, who, passing his doorway, had chanced to see him rehearsing his cowardly part in the little tragedy he had determined to play that New Year's eve.

"The ashamed of myself," he said suddenly. "I don't know what has made me so ashamed." He bit off the words and evaded the questioning of his eyes.

"It's nothing," she said. "I must be going. I wonder if you'll sell me that revolver? I want it for a certain purpose." He said nothing, but she took it from him and placed it in her hand without a word, but as she dropped it

into a little bag at her waist and drew out a purse he waved her away.

"Please do not. No, I shall get along all right. I understood why you bought the revolver and I appreciate your delicacy. However, only you must not let me see that like a child I have already done. I can get a job as waiter in some of the restaurants till after New Year's; then I'm going into the furniture business—going to buy right in with me, too."

"I do, most heartily," she said, happily holding out a small gloved hand for his large one. "I know you'll succeed, and I hope you'll forgive my meddling in speaking to you as I have done. I opened your door by mistake for the one on the floor above. At the end of the new year I shall send for you to come to me, and if you want the revolver then you can have it."

"I shall never forget your coming," he said, bending low over her hand, and I shall not fail to keep any appointment you may do me the honor to make." An instant later the door closed and she was gone.

"By Jove! Think of a little slender thing like that supporting herself!" ejaculated Marcus as he paced the narrow confines of his room. "Then look at a great hulking brute like me! I make myself tired. Guess I'll look up a waiter job this very night. No time like New Year's eve in Gotham!"

Filled with new courage for the future, even though his cherished castle of another life work had crumbled about his ears, Marcus dug out his suit case and left it with a convenient uncle in the district who at the same time permitted him to don a rusty suit of evening clothes. At the first restaurant into which he dodged he met a distracted head waiter, who gladly set him to work, and there was not a happier fellow in New York city that night than the hungry young man who courageously started on his new career by carrying delicious viands to and fro for his less hungry patrons.

Two days afterward Marcus got a job with a furniture house. He sold chairs and tables and other furniture. He succeeded so well in the work that he was promoted to more responsible positions, and finally he was sent out on the road as a traveling salesman.

When the year drew to a close he was drawing a good salary and saving money, for what purpose he did not admit to himself. He had had one great and bitter disappointment during the year—he had never been able to find any trace of the girl who had so mysteriously appeared at his door that New Year's eve and who had been so kind as to give him a job in life and had challenged the giant talent for every evening. That had been the girl for which he had no real regret.

Mrs. Jones had disapproved every step of such a young lady as she called "the girl." "It's a pity," she said, "that the girl has got her hair cut so short. She's a little thing, but she's a little thing."

With that Marcus had to be content. It is needless to say he spent the months as they flew by, hoping for some word from the girl who had actually saved his life from his own destructive hand. She said she would send for him at the end of the year, and he was eager to meet her—to tell her he had cast aside his cowardly despair and had put his shoulder to the wheel of labor and was earning success. He had dreams, too, but these he hardly dared foster.

New Year's eve found him once more in New York and again domiciled in his little room at Mrs. Jones' boarding house, although he really had his headquarters in a more fashionable section of the city. He sat on the edge of the little bed and tried to relive the scenes of that other night a year ago and tried to bring up the same feeling of despair, but in vain. His heart sang of nothing save work well done and a hope that something greater might be his, for he had never ceased to think of the girl who had called him a coward.

There came a knock at his door, and it flew open to reveal a messenger boy. "Miss Danforth has asked me to fetch you to her," said the messenger. Eldredge grabbed his hat and went. "Danforth" must be the name of his mysterious friend.

He was scarcely prepared to be taken to a fashionable uptown street, where a trim maid admitted him to a charmingly furnished room. A slender form arose from a deep chair and came toward him. As their eyes met in that first eager glance there was much revealed of what a year's waiting had meant to both of them.

"You have come for the revolver?" she asked wistfully as she laid her hand in his.

Marcus shrugged his shoulders and laughed for pure happiness. "Not on your life. See what you've done for me, Miss Danforth! I owe everything to your heavenly sympathy. You've made a man out of me."

"I must explain how I happened to be there. I was on my way up to see Miss Brooks, a girl I had seen at the settlement house, and I opened your door by mistake," she explained. "I hope you have forgiven me."

"I forgive anybody," cried Marcus happily. "I thought last year was a bully one; but, Miss Danforth, I wonder if you'd go out with me tonight and join the crowd—and help me to usher in what I feel is going to be the happiest year of my life."

As they stood together in the shadow of old Trinity and heard the chiming bells in the distance, a ray of light came into Marcus' eyes. He had seen the dawn of something that would make the New Year the happiest in his life as well as his.

FAMOUS NOVELISTS.

What Some of Them Did Before They Took to Writing.

Among those novelists who studied law we have Fielding, Scott, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, Blackmore, Washington Irving, George Meredith, Robert Grant, Henry James, Anthony Hope, Rider Haggard and Owen Wister. Journalism, which Mr. Kipling once defined as the one legitimate branch of the profession, is represented by Dickens, David Christie Murray, William Black, J. M. Barrie, Marion Crawford, George W. Cable, Stephen Crane, George Barr McCutcheon, Frank Norris, Richard Harding Davis and David Graham Phillips. The navy and merchant marine have given us Smollet, Captain Marryat, Fenimore Cooper, Clark Russell, Joseph Conrad and Morgan Robertson. Artists and architects include Thackeray, Du Maurier, Hopkinson Smith, Robert Chambers, Thomas Hardy and William J. Locke. Medicine and theology are not so well represented. Under the former head we recall for the moment only Smollet (naval surgeon), Holmes, S. Weir Mitchell and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; under the latter, Sterne, Charles Kingsley, Henry van Dyke, Edward Everett Hale, Ian MacLaren, Ralph Connor and Thomas Dixon. College professors who have either given up their chairs to become novelists or have found time for occasional novels, in the midst of their other duties are Sir Walter Besant, Robert Herrick and Brander Matthews.—Bookman.

A BLOOD TAX.

Payment by a French Town to Spain for an Ancient Crime.

Seven hundred years ago some shepherds of the valley of Roncal, in Navarre, were murdered by shepherds of the valley of Baretou, in Bearn, the crime taking place on the high-pasture lands of Arbas, in the Pyrenees. It would have been difficult to bring the murderers individually to justice, and the Spaniards were preparing to make war upon the valley from which the French villagers had come when the French villagers proposed that peace be maintained at the price of a yearly tax or tribute, to endure for all time, and this proposition was accepted.

The payment of this blood tax—originally three white mares, but later three cows of a particular breed and color—has been made ever since, the custom (it is nothing more) having survived even the great wars in which both France and Spain were engaged and the storm of the French revolution.

Yearly the representative men of the two valleys meet on the frontier at a certain hour remote from any town and go through the ceremony of presenting and receiving the cattle. The order of procedure is that the shepherds of the valley of Baretou, bearing the tax to the Spaniards, are paid a hundred years prior to that time. The records of each yearly meeting and payment are duly attested and deposited in the archives of the Roncal.—New York Tribune.

The Manly of Paris.

The French life within their means and by a sense of economy wholly unknown to us manage to save and retire to enjoy whatever fortune has stored up for them, says F. Berkeley Smith in Success Magazine. To their France is sufficient. They voyage rarely and gamble less. The spendthrift or the man who plunges on the bourse, the races and the gaming table is regarded by the masses in the light of a rogue and a fool. The Parisians work hard enough for their leisure, but they never eliminate it from their work to encroach upon their traditional daily vacation, as luncheon, the aperitif hour, dinner and fete days. They work, not to amass millions and die in harness, but to save enough to give their daughter her dot, without which she may never marry—start their son-in-law's business and have enough income left to retire before they are too old to enjoy their freedom.

Old and Modern Customs.

Palm Sunday in certain places is called "Big Sunday" from the custom of eating fish on this day, as snappers on Christmas eve, plum pudding on Christmas day, oranges and barley sugar on St. Valentine's eve, and on Ash Wednesday, salt cod fish on Ash Wednesday, salt cod fish on "Mothering Sunday" (mid-Lent), cross bun on Good Friday, gooseberry tart on Whit Sunday, goose on Michaelmas day, nuts on Allhallow's, and so on.—New York American.

Leading the Leader.

A very small boy was trying to lead a big St. Bernard dog up the road. "Where are you going to take the dog, my little man?" inquired a passer-by. "I—I'm going to see where—where he wants to go first," was the breathless reply.—Argonaut.

An Exceptional Case.

"What are you doing these days?" "Playing the horses." "No money in that?" "Yes, there is. I get \$2 a night for imitating hoof beats in a melodrama."—Washington Herald.

Her Mad Habit.

"I don't like that woman." "Why not?" "She's the woman who is all the time teaching my wife a new wrangle setting up cold meat."—Detroit Free Press.

Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and destructive.—Johnson.

SETTLED OUT OF COURT.

Raising Far the Hottest Lawyer in a Town in Denmark.

In telling of his boyhood home in Denmark, "The Old Town," Jacob A. Rile says that he does not remember that there were at any time more than two lawyers in the place. One was good, the other bad—not a bad lawyer perhaps, but reputed to be tricky, whereas the other was known to be honest itself.

It is therefore perhaps the best character I can give my people when I record the fact, writes Mr. Rile, that when two farmers quarreled, each one that he was right, they would have to hitch up to get first to the honest lawyer, and usually that was the end of the quarrel, for the law in the case was willing to make peace. They used to tell of two well-to-do neighbors who had fallen out over a line fence and started simultaneously for town. Both had good teams, and they were well matched in the race. For half an hour they drove silently alongside, each on his own side of the road, grimly urging on their horses, but neither gaining a length. At last as the lights of the town came into sight, for it was evening, a trace broke on one of the rigs, and the horses stopped. The other team whirled away in a cloud of dust.

"Hans," the boater one called after him, and he halted and looked back, "are you going after Lawyer —?" naming the square one.

"I am thint!" came back. "Then let's go back, Jim, best." And back home they went and made it up.

A MERCENARY MARRIAGE.

Remorse of Lady March and the Second Duke of Richmond.

One of the mercenary marriages which turned out happily was that of the second Duke of Richmond. He was married to Lady Sarah Cadogan as part of an agreement that her father's gambling debts should be canceled, Lord March (as he then was) being eighteen and the bride thirteen. Immediately after the wedding Lord March's tutor took him off to the continent for the grand tour, and Lady Sarah went back to her nursery. This is the sequel as told by Lady Russell in "The Rose Goddess."

Three years elapsed. Lord March returned from his travels, but, having such an uninteresting recollection of his bride, was in no hurry to claim her and went the first evening of his return to London to the opera. There he noticed that all eyes and tongues were directed to one girl, who was surrounded by several persons, and who she was. "You must be a stranger in London," was the remark, "to know the reigning toast of the town, the beautiful Lady March." Lord March lost no time in going to the box and introducing himself to his bride, with whom he ever after lived as affectionately as their devotion to one another became proverbial.

Cruelty to Women.

We wonder what death the man will die or what tortured life he will be caused to lead who discovered the little "trick" by which a woman's age can be ascertained beyond a doubt—that is to say, while her health is normal. The only instrument required is an ordinary watch. The wrist of the lady whose age is in question is the telltale, for when you count her pulse and it registers sixty-nine beats per minute you know that she is between twenty and twenty-five years old. During the next five years, every one beats go to the minute, and the "count" is seventy-three. It is in this time that the man who is watching the facts is not more exact when dealing with the women of their age for, according to rumor and tradition, it is only then that a thirty that a woman begins to have her "birth" days.—Westminster Gazette.

"Breeding, Coachman of the Royal Household." The great railroad system of Great Britain and the great passenger coaches and intermediate stations without stopping up the locomotive, even for a fraction of a second, in its speed of sixty or more miles an hour is called the "rail coach" system and is described in Popular Mechanics. It is a system never tried in America and consists of dropping, or "slipping," one of every year coaches just before the station is reached. Undoubtedly many American tourists in England, after alighting at their destination have been amazed to discover that the coach which they occupied was still beside them, while the locomotive and the remainder of the train were so where to be seen.

An George Best the Poet. "David Lloyd George," said the editor from Wales, "is a very witty speaker. I've heard him many a time in Carnarvon. Speaking in Wales he once mentioned in Carnarvon the home of lords. He said the average poor thought so much of himself at family prayers, he always made one well known passage run: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of lords for ever."—London Globe.

Mr. Wink. "Life is something of a game after all," said the cynical person. "Perhaps," replied Mr. Winkler, "but I wish Herford wouldn't regard it as a bridge, with me forever being the opposite of 'dumpty.'—Washington Star.

Most Nutritious Food Made From Flour

A strong statement—but an absolute fact. Backed up by years of testing.

The stomach digests them with pleasure, and sends them on their way to make rich, red blood, sound flesh and tough muscle.

Every ingredient is a strength-giver, scientifically blended and perfectly baked.


Crisp and delicious Uneeda Biscuits come to you in their dust tight, moisture proof packages, fresh, and clean, and good.

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

(Never sold in bulk)

Uneeda Biscuits

W.B. NUFOR CORSETS



THE Nufors is a positive corset, modeled on the latest fashion, and is made of the finest materials. It is made of the finest materials, and is made of the finest materials. It is made of the finest materials, and is made of the finest materials.

All Nufors Corsets are made of the finest materials, and are made of the finest materials. They are made of the finest materials, and are made of the finest materials.

Your dealer will supply you with the latest styles of Nufors Corsets. They are made of the finest materials, and are made of the finest materials.

Nufors, Style 478. (A) Medium. For average and well-proportioned figures. Medium bust, extra length, extra back and abdomen. Coutil and lace. \$12.00. \$14.00. \$16.00.

Nufors, Style 480. For average and well-proportioned figures. Medium bust, extra length, extra back and abdomen. Coutil and lace. \$12.00. \$14.00. \$16.00.

Nufors, Style 482. For average and well-proportioned figures. Medium bust, extra length, extra back and abdomen. Coutil and lace. \$12.00. \$14.00. \$16.00.

W.B. NUFOR CORSETS

2+2

ONLY 4c IN STAMPS

FINEST FRENCH PERFUMS

EDIPAUD'S DECAVOR

Write for book on perfume. Address: Edipaud, 100 West 4th St., New York, N.Y.

Have You Any Mantle Trimmings?

USE BLOCK INNERLIN MANTLES

AND YOUR PROBLEMS ARE OVER

GET ONE TO TRY WITHOUT COST

Give the best cover from 1/2 inch to 1 1/2 inch. It is made of the finest materials, and is made of the finest materials.

The Block Linen Co., New York, N.Y.