

# A SHREWD WOMAN

By EUNICE BLAKE

Martin Kempfer was a mountaineer in the Swiss Alps. He owned a number of goats and made cheese of their milk. One day when Martin was climbing up to a considerable height he came to a man lying on his back in a dying condition. For he had slipped and fallen over a cliff. Martin stretched the blood flowing from the wound and otherwise cared for the sufferer until he died. Then he went down to the valley to report the matter.

Martin's wife, Gretchen, was a very shrewd woman, and before doing anything of importance he was used to consulting her. So he went home and told her of his experience and that he was about to report it that the body he had left on the mountain side might be buried.

"Don't you say anything about it," said Gretchen. "You might be accused of having committed a murder."

Martin had thought of that himself, and this was one reason why he had mentioned the matter to his wife. He concluded to keep his mouth shut. But there were two things he did not think of. In succoring the stranger he had got some blood on his sleeve, and when descending the mountain he had met Jacob Kirshner going up. Kirshner found the body and in telling of his find mentioned having met Kempfer coming down the mountain. This excited some suspicion that Kempfer had been the cause of the stranger's death, and a man was sent to his house to investigate. Kempfer received him, and the visitor noticed a spot on his shirt sleeve that looked like blood.

To make a long story short, Kempfer's death led to his undoing. He was tried for murder and convicted, and was sentenced on a Friday at the hour of 12 noon.

Gretchen, his wife, was horror-stricken at the result of the advice she had given her husband, who attempted to comfort her by saying that if he had reported the matter he might still have been convicted. The misfortune was in finding the stranger, Gretchen, who, as has been said, was a woman of great shrewdness, set her wits to work to think of some plan whereby she might save her husband.

She went to Adolph Switzer, the head man of the canton, and besought him to save her husband, assuring him that it was her fault that he had been convicted and it was she, if any one, that should be punished. Switzer replied that the verdict was a matter for the courts, over which he had no power, and Gretchen went away disconsolate.

One morning some time before the hanging Gretchen, being still asleep, dreamed of a plan by which she might save her husband. When she awoke, though she did not consider it likely to succeed, still she believed it possible. At any rate she determined to try it.

Her husband had, among other things, a chronometer which had been given him by a watchmaker in Geneva and which he valued very highly. He secured the time once a month regularly and found that his watch never varied more than a few seconds. The result was that Martin furnished time for the whole valley. The day before the hanging the sheriff asked a citizen to go to Gretchen and get the time, that he might be sure to execute his prisoner in exact accordance with the sentence. Gretchen gave the inquirer time fifteen minutes behind what was correct, stating that she had learned that owing to bad weather the astronomer in Geneva who observed the sun had been unable to do so for several weeks and had discovered a considerable error in his chronometers. The sheriff set his watch in accordance with the time given him.

On the morning of the hanging Gretchen went to the head man of the canton and asked him for an order for the body of her husband that she might give it burial. Switzer replied that he would give her the order after the execution had taken place and not before. Half an hour before 12 she went to his house with her chronometer, which she set ahead fifteen minutes, and when the hands pointed to 12 Switzer signed the order. Gretchen had a horse and a cart in waiting a short distance from the house, and, jumping into the cart, she whipped the horse to a gallop, traversing a mile to the jail. On the way she turned the hands of her chronometer backward to correspond with the time she had given the sheriff. When she reached him his and her timepieces both marked ten minutes to 12. She held the head man's order aloft, crying:

"A reprieve, a reprieve!"

The sheriff read the order and, thinking that the condemned man had been pardoned, turned him over to his wife. Then the two jumped into the cart and drove like mad to a railway station a few miles distant, where they caught a train bound for the French border. The misunderstanding that Gretchen had brought about between the head man of the canton and the sheriff was not discovered till an hour after that fixed for the execution and when the convicted man was well on his way to foreign territory. As soon as the truth was known a conference was held by the authorities, but nothing was ever done about the matter, for when they learned that Kempfer was in a foreign land they did not try to get him, and in time his wife convinced them that he was an innocent man. Then he returned to his home.

## LABOR AND ART CLASHED

The Battle Was Rather One Sided and Labor Won the Night.

Among the experiences which Sir Frederick Cowen, the eminent composer, relates in his book "My Art and My Friends" is the following: Once while conducting in Melbourne a terrible noise of hammering started overhead as soon as the concert began.

"I put down my baton and stopped," writes Sir Frederick; "so did the noise. Thinking it was over, I began again; so did the noise. I then sent a messenger with a polite request that the noise should cease. After about ten minutes, during which the hammering grew more and more persistent, the messenger returned, and I said to him: 'Did you give them my message?'

"Yes, sir."

"And what was their answer?"

"They said, 'Tell Mr. Cowen we've got our contract to finish by a certain time and we ain't going to stop for no concert or nobody.'"

"Upon this I turned to the audience and said: 'Ladies and gentlemen, as you have possibly noticed, there has been a fight between labor and art. Labor has won. I am very sorry, and I wish you all good night!'

"Then I dismissed the orchestra, and there was no concert that evening."

## FIRE RISKS ON FARMS.

Safety First Should Be as Much the Rule There as Elsewhere.

A contributor to Farm and Fireside shows how appalling fire risks are on farms. He tells how to reduce some of these fire risks and writes in part as follows:

"The inveterate smoker is about as dangerous as a walking stick of dynamite. It makes me shudder to see a man smoking around the farm buildings. One man I know never will forget the way he was run off the farm when I caught him smoking a cigarette while stacking hay."

"Another dangerous practice of which the average man is guilty is that of carrying ordinary matches loose in his pockets. He should carry either safety matches or keep the ordinary kind in a metal box."

"On most farms the lantern is still the usual light for working about the buildings after dark. A good way to keep it clean and safe is, first, to take out the burners and clean them by boiling in strong soapuds. This will keep the ventilating passages of the burner working properly. Then wipe all leaking or spilled oil off the base. 'Never set a lantern down. Either hold it or hang it up. Then when it is accidentally struck it will swing instead of upsetting.'"

A Gladstone Anecdote.

Lord Alington tells this anecdote of Gladstone in his "Recollections": "Mr. Gladstone was very much interested in the Caucasus. I had a friend, Captain X., who had recently come home from that district, and I gave him a letter of introduction to Mr. Gladstone. A few days later I met Mr. Gladstone in Parliament street. He stopped me and said, 'Your friend, Captain X., knows more about the Caucasus than any man I ever met.' A few minutes afterward I met Captain X. in Pall Mall. I said to him, 'Well, you have made a great impression, Mr. Gladstone.' 'Have I?' he said. 'Yes,' I replied. 'He says you know more about the Caucasus than any man he ever met.' 'Well,' said Captain X., 'that is very strange for, though I was with him for three-quarters of an hour, I made only three observations.'"

## Leather Medals.

Leather medals were originally conferred as a genuine mark of honor. When King John of France, captured at Agincourt, was forced to pay to Edward III. of England a ransom of 3,000,000 gold crowns to effect his release he was left without precious metal for coins or decorations. So he found it necessary to pay the palace expenses with leather money. He also used leather medals when he wished to confer honor on some nobleman. The custom quickly arose of presenting leather medals as a burlesque distinction.—American Boy.

## Discretion.

"Mother"—Elsie's eyes were round with horror—"that little boy next door just said the funniest thing."

"Come tell mother, dear."

"Oh, I couldn't possibly tell you; it was too awful."

"Elsie, tell me instantly."

Elsie beckoned toward the door. "I think I'd better run out in the garden and play. I feel it coming on that I'm going to tell."—New York Post.

## Sound Advice.

"I wish Ingsomar to think only of me."

"I would not distract his thoughts too much from business, my dear," counseled her mother. "Remember you will need a great many expensive things."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

## Why He Failed.

"I understand his marriage was a failure."

"Yes; he tried to run it the way he ran his business."

"How do you mean?"

"He was never in the office."—Detroit Free Press.

## Gentle Gertrude.

Penelope—Gertrude is a gentle creature, isn't she?—Yes; instead of whipping the cream she just scolds it.—Youngstown Telegram.

It belongs to great men to have great defects.—French Proverb.

# An Exploded Secret

By EUNICE BLAKE

The French ship Arago sailing from New York for Caspary, France, on March 19th, loaded with munitions of war for the allies. She had been on six days, and two of the voyagers remained, when one of the passengers, a man, appeared at the door of the captain's cabin on the upper deck, slipped in hastily, put his finger to his lips to enjoin silence and stood for a moment waiting, evidently endeavoring to convey some strong emotion. Then, after turning the key in the door he slipped almost in a whisper to the astonished commander:

"Captain Le Moyné, this vessel is in imminent danger."

"How so?" asked the captain, starting.

"Write me out a promise of immunity, that I shall be treated in every respect as any other passenger aboard and that you will take no action except such as I approve and I will tell you."

The captain demurred for some time, crossing questioning the man in an effort to get out of him something of what he had to say without making any promises. But the man about him like a clam and would say nothing further except that there was a strong probability that the ship would be destroyed that night. Finally Captain Le Moyné gave in, wrote out a bond such as the man required, and he told his story.

He said that in the stateroom next to his he had heard two men talking. He could not hear all they said, but had heard enough to lead him to believe that they were emissaries of either the German or Austrian government, who had been sent to blow up the ship and send the cargo of arms and munitions to the bottom. He had heard distinctly one of these men say to the other, "Very well, we'll do it tonight."

The captain started to leave his cabin when his visitor took the key from the lock and held it in a tight grip while he added:

"Remember your promise—if on examination you see anything that looks like an implement of destruction you will not throw it overboard; but place it where it can do no serious damage to the ship."

"Why do you stipulate for that?" asked the captain.

"Because I do not wish to be responsible for property destroyed by mistake. I should never forgive myself for doing so, and I would lay myself liable to damages that might take all I have."

This satisfied Le Moyné, who had no more relief for destroying harmless property than his informant.

The captain obtained a pass key and accompanied only by the informant, went to the stateroom. There they found a box about the size of a suitcase with a sliding cover, which was locked. Putting his ear down to the box, the captain fancied he heard a faint ticking, but was not sure. His informant also listened and declared that he could hear nothing. But he was a trifle deaf and could not hear a watch tick without putting it close to his ear.

The captain was for leaving the box overboard at once, but the other demurred, reminding him of his promise. Le Moyné agreed that the lives of the crew and passengers were of more value than any promise, whereupon the other said:

"In the first place, captain, if you don't keep this matter a secret you'll have a panic aboard your ship; in the second place you can make all safe without the risk of laying you and me liable for damages in the destruction of what may be valuable property. All you have to do is to attach a line to the box, drop it overboard and let it float a couple of hundred yards astern."

The captain was so anxious to get rid of the article that he consented. Two strong iron handles were attached to it, one at either end. Producing a line, the captain secured it to one of these handles and ran it through the other for greater security. The informant suggested that it would be best to take it to his own stateroom, to be kept till after dark, that he might not attract attention, then drop it over the stern. To this he added a suggestion that it had better be put in place of the log for recording the ship's progress, which was hung out from the stern. The captain, not wishing it to be known that there were persons aboard intending to blow up the ship, assented to the delay, which was little more than an hour.

As soon as it was dark the informant carried the box to the stern, where he found the captain waiting for him, and no one being near, it was lowered into the water, the line paid out and the near end attached to the reel. As soon as this was done Le Moyné breathed easier, though he was by no means sure that the persons who had intended to blow up the ship had not other contrivances for the purpose.

One morning when the Arago was sailing near the French coast Captain Le Moyné went aft to look for the floating box. He could not see it even with his binoculars. In fact, it had disappeared. He sent a steward for his informant, but the man could not be found.

For was he or the box ever heard of? When the Arago reached port detectives who had been cabled from New York came aboard to arrest an absconding bank cashier who had taken a hundred thousand dollars of the bank's funds.

## THE THIRD NAPOLEON

By FREDERICK H. HARRIS

A traveling salesman for a large department store in New York City was one day on his way to a house in the town that morning. He had a package of goods in his trunk and was carrying it to the trunk of a car. He had a package of goods in his trunk and was carrying it to the trunk of a car. He had a package of goods in his trunk and was carrying it to the trunk of a car.

"Well, I got away on the earliest specimen of a horse I ever mounted, and I was to see him back by the small carrier, through mud, in a couple of post packages. It took me some time to cover the distance—I was very much tired when I had to walk—had he I could have done better at the time, because the horse of a small specimen of a horse was to see him back by the small carrier, through mud, in a couple of post packages. It took me some time to cover the distance—I was very much tired when I had to walk—had he I could have done better at the time, because the horse of a small specimen of a horse was to see him back by the small carrier, through mud, in a couple of post packages. It took me some time to cover the distance—I was very much tired when I had to walk—had he I could have done better at the time, because the horse of a small specimen of a horse was to see him back by the small carrier, through mud, in a couple of post packages. 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