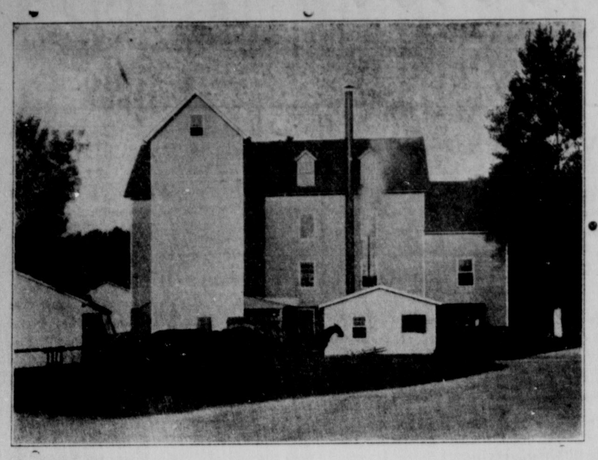
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The bitter trail in a woman's life is to be childless. Who can tell how hard the struggle may have been ere she learnt to resign herself to her lonely lot? The absence of this link to bind marital life together, the absence of this one pledge to mutual affection is a common disappointment. Many unfortunate couples become estranged thereby. Even if they do not drift apart, one may read the whole extent of their disappointment in the eyes of such a childless couple when they rest on the children of others. To them the largest family does not seem too numerous.

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WILLIAM R. PIPPIN, Proprietor

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The Mouse and the Lion.

By Constance D'Arcy Mackay.

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"My dear," said Grace Seward as she crossed the wide hotel veranda, "who do you think has come?"

Marion Page looked up brightly from the book she was reading. "The king of Patagonia," she suggested.

"Nonsense, Marion! Don't be silly! This is really somebody out of the ordinary—a real social lion! I give you three guesses. Take the first."

"But I'm no good at guessing," protested Marion. "You'll have to tell me."

"Well, then, hold your breath! It's Burton Sturgis!"

"Burton Sturgis!" repeated Marion slowly.

"Isn't that a sensation?" cried Miss Seward, sinking into a chair at Marion's side with a swish of beruffled skirts. "Fancy such a great explorer, writer and statesman as he is choosing to stop at Windmere for a day! I've always been taught to suppose that such people avoided hotels in the height of the season, haven't you? But it seems he lived some place near here when he was a boy, and he wants to stop and see it on his way through. I suppose famous people always want to visit the haunts of their early life, don't they? And Mrs. Barrington-Sells happens to know him, so she's going to give a tea for him in one of the hotel cottages this afternoon."

"A tea?"

"Yes, a tea. You might know she'd never let a lion escape. It's in the Farquhar cottage, I believe, and you are to serve fruit punch."

"I?" echoed Marion.

"Yes, you. Mrs. Sells told me to tell you. She was coming to ask you herself, only there isn't time. It's nearly half past 10 now, and you haven't the faintest idea how much there is to be done before this afternoon. I should be scurrying about this minute instead



"BUT THEY'RE SO ELUSIVE," LAUGHED MARION.

of sitting here talking. There are oceans of people to be invited—all Mrs. Sells' friends—and the cottage to be put in order, and the decorations—we've simply robbed the flower beds. And Mrs. Sells wants to know if you won't take the trap this morning and get her some ferns and trailing vines. There are a lot up the road by Benders'. You know the way. I'd come with you, but I have to fill the vases and half a dozen other things."

She skipped down the veranda steps and then paused. "What are you going to wear?" she asked.

"Mercy," laughed Marion, "I haven't had time to decide!"

"Well, then, I hope you'll choose your gray silk mull. It's perfectly fascinating. You look like a dear little mouse in it. I'm going to grace the occasion in pale blue. That's not a pun." And Miss Seward rushed across the lawn with the same impetuosity with which she had arrived.

A few moments later Marion drove briskly along the road, a scissors and garden knife on the seat beside her.

"To think," she mused, "that he should come today!"

For two years past Burton Sturgis had stood to her for an ideal, a hero to whom she had meted out a generous share of girlish hero worship. His books occupied a favorite corner of her bookshelf, and a picture of him, cut from a current magazine, was tucked away in a drawer of her desk. She had known that it was possible that she should some day meet him. Still she had not thought that it would be as soon as this. Indeed, she might have known him before had she made the effort to do so, but Grace Seward's description of her as a mouse suited her exactly.

"I'm afraid it doesn't take a gray gown to make me one either," she mourned as she stood cutting the vines, the sunlight glinting on her soft hair. "I'm not a bit good at gushing, like the other girls."

"A mere mouse," she repeated to herself that afternoon as she sat in a fern embowered corner of the tiny reception room behind a huge cut glass bowl filled with pineapple lemonade and its attendant sherbet cups and plates of delicate wafers. Beyond, in the drawing room, was a swirl of pink and white and blue, a mass of fluffy gowns and pretty wearers, and in the center of them the portly figure and triumphant face of Mrs. Barrington-Sells. Beside her, immaculate in white flannels, stood Burton Sturgis, a tall, thin man with a commanding profile and dark hair lightly touched with gray.

"He's just as I imagined he would be," murmured Marion, "even to the little bored look that settles around his eyes and the quick way he has of throwing back his head."

Every now and then a group of girls would drift up to her table with little exclamations and thrills of laughter. "Oh, thank you, Miss Page! How cool and delicious! Oh, girls, isn't Burton Sturgis fascinating, and aren't his books too lovely for anything? Let's go back and talk to him again." And the group would break away from Marion and return to the ring that surrounded the great man. From time to time Marion caught snatches of their feminine chatter. "Your charming books, Mr. Sturgis! Adorable! Quaint! Delicious!"

Presently Mrs. Sells broke away from her circle and waddled up to Marion with Burton Sturgis in tow.

"My dear," she wheezed, "let me present Mr. Sturgis. Mr. Sturgis, Miss Page. See that he has enough, Marion," and, playfully waving her pudgy hand at them, she went back to her other guests.

"It is a thirsty day," said Burton Sturgis, taking the sherbet cup that Marion held out to him. "Do you think you could manage to put in another cherry, Miss Page? I'm awfully fond of cherries."

"But they're so elusive," laughed Marion. "They always seem to slip out of the ladle. I just think I've caught one, and then it gets away."

"It's like the small boy and the minnow," agreed Burton Sturgis, his bored look giving place to a smile. "There! You've missed it again!" as a refractory cherry with a little splash sank to the bottom of the bowl.

"I doubt if you could do as well!" cried Marion.

"What do you bet?" he said boyishly.

"Two wafers and half a macaroon."

"Done!" He seized the ladle and was in the midst of an excited dipping when Mrs. Sells came toward him like a ship under full sail.

"They're calling for you, Mr. Sturgis," she said, "and this room is too small to hold them all. We shall be mobbed if we don't hurry."

He put down the ladle with a regretful look. "I suppose I'll have to, then," he said and followed her with lagging steps.

Marion leaned her chin on her hand and looked after him. Her moment of moments was over. She had met her idol face to face, and not one word had she spoken of all that his personality and work had meant to her in the past two years. A flush passed across her face. "I might at least have told him that I had read his books," she said to herself, "but it's too late now. I've had my chance and lost it. What a little stupid he must think me if he thinks of me at all!"

Then the line of chattering guests began to thin. One by one they were departing. Mrs. Barrington-Sells' round face was lit with contentment. It had been a most successful afternoon.

"Even she had something to say to him," thought Marion disconsolately. There was a quick step at her side. She looked up. It was Burton Sturgis.

"Well, that's over!" he cried, with a shrug of delight. "And, heavens, but I'm glad to be back in this corner with you! Do you know, Miss Page, you're the only girl this afternoon who hasn't said 'Quaint, lovely, charming and delicious!' I'd like another cherry, please. And will you do me a favor?"

"Delighted," cried Marion gayly.

"I've decided to stay over another day, and there's a place near here I'd like to show you if you'd care to see it. Will you come driving with me tomorrow?"

For an instant his eyes held hers. Understanding, humor, camaraderie and a something deeper than all these passed between them.

"I should be glad to," said Marion.

High Priced Elections.

A century ago elections in England were costly affairs. In one case half a million pounds was spent on one election alone. This was the great contest for Yorkshire, in which the candidates were Viscount Milton, the Hon. Henry Lascelles and Mr. Wilberforce. Wilberforce won at a cost of £58,000, "with every resource of the most rigid economy and great voluntary assistance in labor."

Mrs. Fanny Kemble tells us of another Yorkshire contest, where the money seems to have been spent just as freely. Mrs. Wentworth Beaumont is the heroine. "She, then a very old lady, drove in her traveling carriage to Downing street and, demanding to see the prime minister, with whom she was well acquainted, accosted him thus: 'Well, my lord, are you quite determined to make your man stand for our seat?' 'Yes, Mrs. Beaumont, I think quite determined.' 'Very well,' replied the lady, 'I am on my way down to Yorkshire with £80,000 in the carriage for my man. Try and do better than that.'"—London Chronicle.

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