BRIDE OF BATTLE

A Romance of the American Army Fighting on the Battlefields of France

By VICTOR ROUSSEAU

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WALLACE IS STUNNED BY REVELATIONS MADE TO HIM BY HIS COMMANDING OFFICER

Synopsis.—Lieut. Mark Wallace, U. S. A., is wounded at the battle of Santiago. While wandering alone in the jungle he comes across a dead man in a hut outside of which a little girl is playing. When he is rescued he takes the girl to the hospital and announces his intention of adopting her.

CHAPTER I—Continued.

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"What are you going to do about her?" inquired the major, standing beside the camp bed and looking down at Wallace uneasily.

"Boil some canned cow and see if it will dissolve the cellulose out of an army biscuit."

"It shall be done. I guess that'll stay her till morning. But seriously, Wallace?"

"I suppose I'll have to assume the responsibility for her. I'll take her down to the base with me tomorrow and ship her home to my people in charge of one of the stewardesses on some liner."

"I've got a better scheme," said the major. "Let me have her, Wallace. My wife will go crazy over her. You know she's always talking of adopting a little girl. She's got her ideal type in mind, and that's it. I was to look round for one like that if ever the chance came along."

"Well, you'd better go on looking round, Major," said Wallace, irritably.

"See here, my boy, you don't really want that kid, do you?"

"I do. I'll think over your proposition, Major, of course, but my sister would give her a home and—"

"Let me send her to my wife. You can claim her after the war, if you want to. Suppose you got killed; we'd neither of us have her. If you don't let me take her I'll make you pay for it."

"How?"

"I'll order her a bath, under the sanitary code. And you'll have to give it. And scraped beef—our beef!"

"Get out, Major, and give me a chance to yell when my wound hurts. Listen! I tell you what I'm ready to do. I'll let the regiment adopt her, with myself as godfather."

CHAPTER II.

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He stopped, astonished at the way the Major took his suggestion. Howard began to stutter, paced the inside of the tent for some moments, muttering to himself, and then swung round upon his heel, facing the lieutenant.

"Good God, no, Wallace! Whatever put that infernal idea into your head?" he exploded. "See here, now! You're not well enough to talk this thing over tonight. Some day I'll tell you why your proposal is impossible."

"That's all very well, Major. I don't know what you mean, but if you don't like my proposition you know what you can do. I'm quite well enough to listen to what's worrying you. Dig it out!"

"I haven't time, Wallace. There's these stragglers to be sorted out. Not that much can be done tonight, I suppose. Sometime I'll tell you—"

He swung round on his heel and made for the entrance, stopped and returned.

"I suppose I'd better tell you now," he exclaimed. "I had thought it might be as well not to tell you ever. You don't happen to know who this child's father was—that man in the tent?"

"What do you mean, Major? Some settler caught by a bullet, I suppose."

"Hampton!" said Major Howard, grimly.

Lieutenant Wallace sat bolt upright on the bed and stared at the other in amazement.

"The man who sold our mobilization plans to Spain?" he whispered, conscious of a sudden terror for the child.

The major nodded. "It's years since we worked together in the war office," he answered, "and, frankly, I didn't know the face. You wouldn't have, would you, after the work that the bullet had done? One of those d——d dum-dums. But—you didn't see this, did you?"

He took a purse from his pocket, opened it and shook out three gold pieces into his hand. "That was on a belt about the body," he said. "And there were some papers—not the ones we wanted, but enough to identify him. It was Hampton all right."

He went to the tent door and looked out. "Here, Johnson!" he called.

The negro servant appeared almost instantaneously within the opening and stood to attention.

"Could you use three gold pieces, Johnson?" inquired Major Howard.

"Well, suh, I don't know as I'd object," replied the negro, grinning.

"It's part of a sum that was paid to an American soldier for betraying his country."

"Oh, Lord, no, Major!" answered Johnson.

"Then do what you think best with these."

The negro looked at the gold coins in his hand, stepped outside the tent and swung his arm. The pieces fell in the jungle grass far beyond the encampment. Major Howard shied the purse after them and went back to where Wallace still sat upright on the bed. He noticed, with a certain grimness of spirit, that one of the lieutenant's hands rested on the child's fair hair.

"Well, Wallace?" he asked.

"It's damnable."

"We can't exactly make his child the regimental pet, can we?"

Wallace was silent, and the major sat down on the edge of the bed beside him.

"I had orders to watch for him," he said. "He was to have been hanged as soon as we captured Santiago. That's why he was making for the jungle. He was detected and allowed to escape with his life, but he had been working as a Spanish agent since he was drummed out of America. His career ended at the luckiest moment for him. He seems to have had the one redeeming quality of affection for the child, though if he had had a particle of unselfishness in him he would have left her behind him. I suppose she was the only thing he had in his wretched life."

"Of course there's no palliation," suggested Wallace. "But the man may have been born good and—gone downhill."

"He was born rotten," answered the Major. "He sold his country to pay his gambling debts. Cuba was about the only place that would hold him. I imagine. And to think that swine was once in our regiment! Sorry I had to tell you, Wallace!"

He hesitated a while; Wallace had not moved; but the child at his side stirred and breathed heavily. The major's fists clenched.

"I'm trying to be just to the dead," he said. "But I feel that a thousand years of hell wouldn't atone for that crime, Wallace."

Mark Wallace looked up. "I'm not sure that I know all the facts about the case, Major," he said.

"The facts are that it was no sudden act of fear or temptation, but calculated, cold-blooded deliberation. We knew at the war office that there was a leakage. It had been traced to the mobilization division, where Kellerman and I were working. Even we were under suspicion for a time. Then it narrowed down to Hampton and another.

"Wallace, those months were the worst time I've ever spent. Hampton was my best friend, and Kellerman's, too. We spied on him—had to.

"Well, you know what happened, more or less. There was a woman gobetween, as there generally is—a fine-looking young woman, little more than a girl, named Hilda Morsheim. One of those French-German Alsatians, Wallace. Kellerman got some hold on her, and she confessed. The case against Hampton was absolutely proven.

"There wasn't any trial. The fellow could have been shut up for a good many years; he had cost his country millions; he ought to have been hanged. But he was quietly cashiered and allowed to disappear. Maybe it was a foolish move, but we felt the shame pretty badly and wanted to forget it. Hampton was let go, on the understanding that he leave the country forever. Oh, yes, he assumed the innocent air quite dramatically. Some of the war office people believed in him until the damning documents were laid before them.

"And he was still somehow in touch with things, Wallace, and the leakages went on afterward. That's why we



Stared at the Other in Amazement.

had orders to hang him as soon as Santiago was taken. He did the kindest thing he could have done to himself when he got in the way of that sniper's bullet.

"I'll tell you who the child's mother was, Wallace, because I was unfortunate enough to know her. She was a Miss Rennie, Miss Marjorie Rennie, of a Baltimore family—fine people, and, of course, with a tradition like that, she believed in the scoundrel absolutely. She came to me twice. The first time was before the informal trial held by the department. She begged me to believe he was innocent and the victim of a trap. I wouldn't even listen. You know, when a man has to run down his friend he has to harden his heart.

"She came to me again, after Hampton was broken. She told me I had played false to my best friend and that I'd suffer for it to the last day of my life. I've never forgotten that interview, and you can guess how it made me mad to hang Hampton when we learned that he was still keeping up the game from his exile in Cuba. He must have got quite a number of confidential papers out of the war office. That's about all."

"It's enough," said Wallace. "The girl married him, then?"

"So much we learned. And also that she died later. You see, we've been pretty close on the fellow's track the last couple of years—ever since the war became a probability, in fact. Most of the officers in the regiment are since that time, but I guess they all knew something, and kept it quiet, like you."

Wallace nodded. "I fancy there's a good deal of feeling," he said.

"Quite a good deal," said the major, dryly. "And I guess you'll agree with me that this makes it—let's say, a little difficult to adopt his child officially?"

"You mean the remembrance would be too bitter?"

"I mean that that position is the one and only position that she is disqualified from holding, by reason of birth."

"Still," urged Wallace, "it isn't in the blood. The mother was decent. Why should that baby be tarnished with her father's treachery?"

"It's written in the Good Book—" began the major.

"And there's something else about coals of fire, too, Major, which came as a sort of revision of the old law. It's just what we ought to do, because it's the only way to adjust the matter."

"Adjust it? Adjust what?" cried the Major, with sudden passion.

"The whole of that hellish business, Major. The man was once an officer of the Seventieth. He's dead and his crimes have died with him. We want to forget that such a thing could have happened, and the only way is to leave him to God's judgment and to cast out all bitterness from our hearts. You quoted Scripture to me—well, I gave you the answer from the same Book. Let death bring oblivion to the man's memory. He's left us the child. Start here. Start fresh. I have the right to the kid, but what you have told me makes me feel strongly that there's a Providence in this affair, and I'll lend her to you—mark that word, Major!—on that condition or none."

Major Howard pulled at his mustache in agitation. "You don't really mean it, Wallace?" he asked.

"I do. If you want me to let you take her till the war's over—"

"It means forgiving that blackguard."

"It means forgetting him and letting the Judge judge."

"It goes against every instinct. I'd bring her up away from the regimental life. Besides, there are the others."

"Who else knows?"

"Well, of course, nobody else knows who the dead man was. The colonel will have to know. But he needn't know we've adopted the child. He's going South after the war. However, I'm afraid Kellerman knows. He recognized what was left of the face, or suspected somehow. I could tell from his manner."

"I don't see any overwhelming difficulty in that. You can trust Kellerman?"

The major nodded, and it occurred to Wallace that he would rather trust any of the officers than Kellerman. He had conceived a prejudice against him which he could not have explained.

"And Hampton's name was erased from the old mess list," Wallace continued.

The major, who had been pulling at his mustache and thinking deeply, came to his decision.

"Well, I'll take her on those terms, Wallace," he said. "The fellow was a bad lot, but, as you say, there may be no reason why this little animal should suffer for his sins. The mother was decent, and there may be something in that idea of a vicarious restitution. I'll agree, Wallace, if you'll let me take over the charge of her till the war's ended. We'll enter her on the mess book and settle a fictitious parentage on her afterward, and may she never know her father's history. By the time she's old enough to understand a mascot's duties, flirt with the lieutenants, and plead for the drunks, maybe we'll have forgotten it ourselves. Goodnight, my boy. Take care of your wound. I'll send in that milk and biscuit and a couple of cakes of naphtha soap, and a porcelain tub with silver trimmings, for you to make a start on her in the morning."

He glanced at the sleeping child, took Mark's hand and went quickly out of the tent. Under the sky he stood still for a few moments.

"The d——d scoundrel!" he muttered.

At that instant his alert ear heard what the sentry, posted some distance



The Major Could Not Distinguish How the Intruder Was Dressed.

away, had failed to catch—the rustling of some moving figure in the dense jungle grass at the edge of the camp.

The major remained perfectly motionless, except for his right hand, which was swiftly withdrawing his revolver from its case. Suddenly he was transformed into action. He leaped between the two last tents of the line, to see a man confront him for an instant. In the light of the quartermoon the major could not distinguish how the intruder was dressed. It was evident, however, that he had been prowling outside the tent which held Wallace and the child.

"Halt!" shouted the major and the sentry together, and, as the man dropped into the grass, the rifle and revolver rang out simultaneously.

The sentry, shouting to the guard, came running up. The major and he searched the spot, but they found nobody.

"One of those d——d Cuban sneak-thieves!" muttered Major Howard as he replaced his revolver in its case. And he hurried away to look after his men.

Several years elapse and then Wallace, now a captain in the army, visits Eleanor at a young ladies' boarding school. Eleanor, now a young lady, gives her guardian a shock, but a pleasant one, as he takes leave of her. Don't miss the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FLASH LIGHTS IN UNISON

Fireflies Seem to Have an Understanding as to When to Begin an Illumination.

Various observers testify to the fact that myriads of glow worms very occasionally indulge in synchronous flashing with very beautiful effect. It is thought by some that this phenomenon is accidental, although in this light some cases would seem incredible.

John V. Purcell of Washington, D. C., records that in the town of Cotabato, island of Mindanao, P. I., a few years ago there were two trees about the size of apple trees and perhaps a hundred yards apart, and every evening these were filled with fireflies which flashed in unison, first one tree lighting up and then the other. There must have been several thousand insects in each tree, yet the synchronism was so perfect that rarely or never did a single firefly flash at the wrong time.

"To the best of my recollection the illumination period lasted about two or three seconds and the dark periods perhaps twice that long. I can positively vouch for the accuracy of the foregoing, for it seemed so strange and produced so beautiful an effect that I thought it one of the most remarkable things in the Philippines, and it made a deep impression on me."

A Nap on a 40-Mile Wind.

It was not so long ago that a ten-mile breeze would upset all flying plans for a day at any airdrome or exhibition field. Now nothing short of a hurricane can keep the machines on the ground. As far as the ability to make good weather of it is concerned the airman of today can laugh at a gale and fairly take a nap sitting on a 40-mile wind.—William A. Bishop, V. C., S. O., M. C., in Saturday Evening Post.

TWO EX-PREMIERS IN CABINET

Situation in British Politics That Has Never Before Occurred Is Among the Possibilities.

Herbert H. Asquith, former premier, is often mentioned as a possible addition to the present cabinet. The Manchester Guardian points out that if this happens Lloyd George will have two former prime ministers among his subordinates. There is no former instance of this state of things in modern history, and it is a long time now since an English government contained in a secondary place even one former premier.

The classical case occurred about the middle of last century, and is furnished by the game of see-saw which was played by Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston. In the government of 1846-52 Lord John Russell was prime minister and Lord Palmerston foreign secretary, and in the government of 1859-65 their two positions were exactly reversed.

It was Lord John Russell's exceptional fate to be prime minster from the age of fifty-four till that of sixty, to be in and out of subordinate office, under Lord Aberdeen and then under Lord Palmerston, from sixty to seventy-three, and at that age to be prime minister again.

If Lloyd George gets Mr. Asquith as well as Mr. Balfour he will have all the living former premiers except one, the exception being Lord Rosebery, whose period of office—15 months—was so short as to compare with the meteoric premiership of the age of Canning.

Rice in United States.

There are five varieties of rice grown in the United States. The so-called Japanese varieties are planted almost exclusively in California, a kind known as the Wateribune being the one principally grown.

Mrs. Tetlow's Thanksgiving Guests



THE old Tetlow place stood off to the east of Layton. It had once been surrounded by wide acres, but gradually the growing town had encroached on its borders; and, bit by bit, the property had been swallowed up, until at last the low-browed, rambling farmhouse was elbowed by smarter town residences, and could boast only a narrow door-yard in front, and a cramped orchard in the rear.

"The mills had spoiled Layton," old Mrs. Tetlow used to say, with a dreary shake of the head, as she watched these changes.

The Tetlow farm had been a prosperous one in its day, and its owners had lived on it in quiet respectability for many generations. But they were all scattered and gone now—these Tetlows—save for the one lonely old woman, who gazed out of the small-paned windows.

People said Mrs. Tetlow was growing forgetful. Perhaps she was—forgetful of the present.

It was a dreary November day. The clouds hung low and a few scattering snowflakes were beginning to fall.

"Real Thanksgiving weather," murmured Mrs. Tetlow, as she looked out of her front window.

"Yes, it's real Thanksgiving weather," repeated the old lady, drawing her small shoulder shawl closer about her. "It's time to be making the mincemeat."

"Mother always did that the first thing," she went on, by and by, "and today is Friday. Next week will bring the last Thursday in the month. The proclamation'll be read next Sabbath."

The knitting needles lay idle in Mrs. Tetlow's lap, as she rocked slowly back and forth.

"Grandma Spencer's folks always came by Wednesday night," she said, after a reflective pause, "and brother Peter and his wife and boys would get here as early as 9 Thanksgiving morning. The rest didn't come till nearly noon. I wonder where Peter's boy is now. I wish the West weren't so far off. I wonder if the boy's done well."

Mrs. Tetlow stopped rocking and sat up straight in her chair.

"Wouldn't I like to get ready for another such Thanksgiving party," she exclaimed, a red spot burning in either cheek. "I believe I will."

She arose, her slight figure trembling as she rolled up her knitting work and thrust the needles into it.

"Let me see," she went on musingly, how many must I provide for? There's Peter and Mary and the three boys, and Jane and Henrietta and Uncle Solon. Nannie and her husband and the little folks, bless 'em! and Grandma Spencer's folks and Joe and Letty. It'll be a long tableful, but I'll be ready for them."

Monday saw active preparations going on in the old kitchen.

The last thing each night before going to her bed the old lady took her wavering candle and inspected her pantry shelves, and with every evening there were more toothsome goodies to behold.

When the traveling butcher stopped Wednesday for his usual small order, Mrs. Tetlow followed him out to his cart and selected the largest turkey in his collection. The man's eyes opened wide.

"Expecting company, ma'am?" he asked as he weighed it, and the old woman nodded gravely.

That morning the windows in the upper chamber were thrown open to the wind and sunshine, and sweeping and dusting and airing of bed linen were in order.

"Grandma Spencer's folks always come by Wednesday night," she said, "and the rooms haven't been used for some time. They feel a little damp, so I'll have them open all day."

Toward night Mrs. Tetlow put on her second best gown and sat down near the window to watch.

When her guests arrived, the nearest neighbor might not have known, but a lamp was lighted in the dim best room that evening, and at nine o'clock the old woman took a bedroom candle in either hand and toiled up the creaking stair. On the little stand beside each bed she placed a brass candlestick, and, having turned back the sheets, went out again, murmuring a soft "good-night."

Mrs. Tetlow arose at dawn, and before it was time to prepare breakfast she had dressed her turkey and set it aside, ready for the oven.

About nine o'clock she began to lay her table.

Having smoothed out every wrinkle in the cloth, she gathered all her geranium blossoms and put them in the center of the table in a glass bowl. Then the silver, which had all been polished the day before, was brought forth from its canton flannel wrappings, and Great-grandma Tetlow's blue china was lifted down from the shelves of the china closet.

"How good it is to see all these things out again!" exclaimed the old lady, surveying the result of her labor with pardonable pride; "and it's right good to have company once more," she added with a little sigh; "I've eaten alone so long."

"I've nothing to do now," she said, "but to sit at the front window and watch for the folks to come. I'll be able to see them far up the meadow road."

A few minutes later she was startled by hearing a knock at the front door, and, quite trembling with the shock, she arose to open it.

"Good morning, Mrs. Tetlow." It was Mrs. Clifford, the young doctor's wife, who spoke. "Good morning, Mrs. Tetlow. Isn't this a beautiful Thanksgiving day? Madam Clifford is out in the carriage and she wants to take you home to have dinner with us. Please say you'll come; and let me get your bonnet and shawl for you."

Mrs. Tetlow looked down into the bright young face, with a dreamy happiness in her own, as she slowly shook her head.

"You're real good," she said, "and please tell Madam Clifford I'm just as much obliged to her, but I can't come today. I'm—I'm looking for company."

There was a ring of tremulous pride in the old voice that went to the heart of the young woman. She looked up into the wrinkled old face and noted the strange glow of content and far-off happiness in the old eyes. Mrs. Clifford remembered it afterward with a sense of awe.

As she turned to go now she saw, through the open door, a corner of the long table, all ready for dinner.

"I'm so glad for you, Mrs. Tetlow!" she exclaimed impulsively. "I hope you will have a pleasant Thanksgiving day." Then she hurried back to her carriage, and Mrs. Tetlow returned to her rocking-chair by the window.

"They're real late," she murmured to herself now and then, and a new, strange weariness and numbness crept over her as she sat and waited, her dim vision still wandering far up the meadow road.

Suddenly she started forward with outstretched arms. "Peter!" she cried, "Mary!" and then sank back feebly in her chair. "I'm right glad to see you all," she faltered, "but I seem to be a little tired. Just lay off your things and draw up near the fire. It is growing chilly." She drew her shawl closer about her, with a little shiver as she spoke.

"Johnny, just put another stick in the stove; that's a good boy." She closed her eyes a moment, murmuring softly to herself, "I musn't give out now; its nearly dinner time. I'll just rest till the others come."

But soon she leaned forward again, a joyous smile on her lips.

"Nannie!" she exclaimed, "and the blessed baby! I didn't see you come in. Sit here, child; I'll hold the little one while you rest," and she began to croon softly as she rocked. "It is cold," she murmured again, "real cold; but then it's Thanksgiving weather."

Several moments slipped by, while the old clock alone broke the stillness; then Mrs. Tetlow raised her head. "I smell lavender," she said. "Aunt Henrietta! I knew you had come. I smelled the lavender."

"Grandma Spencer's in the best room," she added. "She came at sundown last evening and she seems real smart. What, Joe, you here, too! Did you come in the back way? Uncle Solon and pa are in the barn, aren't they?"

An anxious look suddenly clouded the sunshine in her eyes. "Nannie," she whispered, "will you just take a look at things in the kitchen. I seem to be a little tired, but there's nothing to do. I'll come soon."

Her gaze wandered up the "meadow road" again, the joyous look returning. "They're coming!" she cried at length, "They're coming; I can see the sleigh." Then she turned, as though some one had touched her elbow, and started back wonderingly.

"My little Mary!" she faltered, with dimming eyes, "my little Mary, with her old rag baby! I thought—oh, father, John, here is our little Mary!"

With a beautiful gesture she clasped the child of her youth to her heart, and when she raised her eyes again it was to murmur, "Mother, father, Letty, Eben—what a grand Thanksgiving! I didn't count on seeing you all—why, the room is full—full—but I have enough—"

* * * * *

The sun had gone down when Dr. Clifford drove by the old Tetlow place, on his way to see some patient.

"So the old lady is entertaining," he said to himself, remembering his wife's story, and then, glancing at the house, he drew his horse up suddenly. "No lights!" he exclaimed, and an intuitive impise made him stop. "I can't seem to go by," he said, "I must just run in and see if all is well with the old lady."

He hurried up the path and lifted the heavy knocker, but no one answered. Then the doctor opened the door and walked in.

"Mrs. Tetlow," he called, but the loud tick of the clock alone responded. Finally a sleepy cat emerged from the kitchen and rubbed against his leg.

Dr. Clifford struck a match and lighted a lamp that stood on the hall table. Then he passed into the sittingroom. The fire in the air-tight stove had gone out and the room had grown cold. Through a half-open door he could see dimly a long table, laid for many guests, but no plate had been disturbed.

The doctor raised the lamp above his head and turned toward the front window. In the high-backed rocker a slender, motionless figure leaned back among the cushions, but the old house was wrapped in peaceful stillness; for, with a wonderful smile upon her white lips, Mrs. Tetlow had gone forth with her Thanksgiving guests.

Grateful for Victory in War.

This is indeed a sad world to which Thanksgiving day comes this year, a world full of death and destruction, woe and hatred, and my greatest and deepest thankfulness this year is that Almighty God made it possible for me to believe in an outcome of it all which shall be for the ultimate welfare of all people. My hymn of praise is for the faith that is in me. Otherwise, amidst the play of titanic forces which use men merely as pawns on a world chessboard, I would see nothing but doom and despair. Unless we believe that wrong is going to triumph over right in this world, unless we believe that injustice is going to triumph over righteousness, unless we believe that God is mocked, unless we believe that the wheat of the kingdom is going to produce a harvest of tares, unless we believe that Calvary was a vain sacrifice, and that God is going to be defeated in his good purposes, we can thank God this day for the mighty faith which sees the invisible and trusts its God in war's dark hour.—Exchange.

Life's Object.

The image of Christ that is forming within us—that is life's one charge. Let every project stand aside for that. "Till Christ be formed" no man's work is finished, no religion crowned, no life has fulfilled its end. Is the infinite task begun? When, how, are we to be different? Time cannot change men. Christ can. Wherefore, put on Christ.

Faster Flying.

"It would be easy for any English airplane manufacturer to produce a machine which could make better than 250 miles an hour," declared Capt. W. G. Ashton, one of the leading experts on air mechanism, the other day.

"This could be accomplished," he explained, "by merely altering the curvature, or caliber, of the planes. But this would mean a minimum landing speed of 150 miles an hour, and there is the great difficulty. The machine would be unquestionably flyable, but its successful landing would require an airdrome five or six miles long, to say nothing of extraordinary skill on the part of the pilot."

The Matter.

"What makes nearly all of your business men look so despondent and talk so gloomily?" asked a guest. "To pass the time I dropped into various establishments this forenoon, and the proprietors of practically all of them told me business had not only gone to tunkett, but showed no promise of ever coming back. None of them had made a cent this year, and all were momentarily expecting to be closed by the sheriff. What is the matter? Is there a blight on the town?"

"They are afraid so," replied the landlord of the Petunia tavern. "Every one of 'em suspected you had come to open up a rival establishment and compel him to clean out his shebang, wash his windows, advertise, and be fairly civil and decent to his customers."—Kansas City Star.

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