There COMES a MOMENT

By ELINOR MAXWELL

© ARCADIA HOUSE PUBLICATIONS—WNU SERVICE

SYNOPSIS

Mary Loring and her father, Jim, an ineffectual attorney, meet a train which brings his wealthy sister-in-law, unmarried Linnie Cotswell and her friend, Lelia Ormsby, divorcee, for a Christmas visit. Waiting at home for them are Mary's mother, her younger sister, Ellen; her father's nagging maiden sister, Aunt Mamie, and Peter, the baby of the family. At the depot Dr. Christopher Cragg helps the guests with their luggage. Mary is secretly in love with Doctor Cragg. In leaving, her Aunt Linnie urges Mary to visit her in New York, but Mary refuses. Mary works in a rental library, where she spends her spare time writing short stories. Mary's father is let out as railroad attorney, the fees of which were almost the sole support of his family. To earn money she decides to begin writing in earnest. Mary feels sure that her newest story, "At Sea," would please the editors of National Weekly. After finishing it she calls Doctor Cragg, who comes to the book store for a current novel. Falling from a ladder while getting his book, she regains consciousness to find his arms around her. He tells her he loves her, and then tells her he is to be married the coming month to a girl he has known all his life. Despondent, Mary decides to accept her Aunt Linnie's invitation. In New York her aunt laughs at her for her plans to write, and insists that she meet as many eligible men as possible. The new week brings two letters. One, from the National Weekly, with a $100 check for her story, makes her deliriously happy. The other, from her sister, tells her that financial conditions at home are getting worse. The next day, at a party given by her aunt, Mary meets distinguished Jerome Taylor, wealthy middle aged man-about-town, and effusive Count Umberto Balianci. The count's oily manner nauseates her.

CHAPTER V—Continued

—5—

The Mulatto woman consulted the names on the envelopes with maddening precision, finally extending a letter towards Mary. "Just one, honey. Looks like a man's writing, too."

Mary caught the letter from the long, olive-tinted hand. "I hope it's from my father," she said, almost as if to herself. Dad had not written to her since her arrival in New York, and she was hungry to hear, in his own words, how he was getting on.

It was from her father—just one page of his small, scholarly handwriting—neat, modest, suppressed, like the man himself. She read, with affectionate eagerness, what he had to say.

My own little girl:

Your money-order for eighty-five dollars came today, and it is with inexpressible embarrassment, and deep gratitude that I am accepting this loan from you. There is no use trying to conceal from you that I am terribly hard-pressed, and that your generous offering has arrived as something of a god-send, but Mary, I shall pay you back. I am doing everything I can to make a contact, and hope for something good to break this week.

Don't, I beg of you, ever mention to your aunt the straitened circumstances in which I—through my inadequacy—have thrown my family. I could not bear the chagrin of having your dear mother's sister know the true state of our financial affairs, let alone suffer the embarrassment of an offer of help from her.

Try not to worry about us, dear. Have a good time while you may. Something, I am sure, will work out for me soon.

Mary placed her unfinished piece of toast on the blue Spode butter dish. She could not eat any more. Her ravenous young appetite had deserted her. Poor Dad, trying to "make a contact" at his age! Hoping for "something good to break this week!" Begging her never to divulge to Aunt Linnie, who could so very easily spare a thousand or two thousand dollars to relieve, at least temporarily, the devastating worry that gnawed at his heart and mind! No, she would not "let on," by word or act, how desperate the Hawkinsville situation was. She would never betray Dad's confidence, or do anything to hurt his pride.

Hastily, she picked up the breakfast tray, with its powder-blue dishes and silver coffee pot, and carried it to Addie, who forthwith remonstrated with her for "doin' my work." Then, returning to the sunlit living room, she placed the typewriter on the table, inserted a sheet of white paper and put on the glasses which Ellen said made her look typically librarian.

She had an idea for a plot—a simple idea, but so had been the idea for "At Sea." Mr. Buchanan had liked that well enough to accept it. Her story was to concern a little boy whose mother and father were on the brink of a sensational divorce. Just as things were reaching a crisis, he was hit, but only slightly injured, by an automobile, and this near tragedy brought the parents together again, the tale concluding in a sane and happy manner for all concerned.

Fifteen minutes later, she was still waiting for an introductory line that would inspire within Mr. Buchanan an avid interest to read the rest of the story, but the portentous words were fearfully slow in coming. At last her fingers fell upon the keys, and sharply tapped out a sentence—a sentence that did not please her in the least, but which would simply have to do for the time being. She would have to get on. She couldn't sit there all day, waiting to begin.

Paragraph after paragraph slowly but surely stretched themselves over the pages, but the story unrolled with painful effort. "I've waited too long since the last one. My thoughts simply can't get down to business. Too many things have happened to me since I wrote 'At Sea.' If only I'd begun another story the very day after I finished that! I suppose your mind's just like any other kind of machinery. You've got to keep it working all the time, or the wheels get rusty, and are hard to start up again."

Mary worked on "Their Son" again the next morning, rewriting whole sentences, transcribing phrases, deleting words that appeared unnecessary, but the conformation remained the same, and she could see no way in which to improve it. She was not satisfied with what she had done. The story lacked something. At one o'clock, she put it aside, telling herself grimly, "I'm so saturated with the thing that I can no longer look at it from an unbiased standpoint. I'll go out for a walk. Maybe the fresh air will drive the cobwebs out of my brain, and I can get to work on it again tonight with a fresh outlook." Then, she suddenly remembered that Aunt Linnie had made an engagement for the evening with Umberto Balianci, and, with a sigh, she resigned herself to waiting until the following morning to work on the script again.

Balianci called for them at seven, just shortly after Lelia had ensconced herself comfortably in bed with Somerset Maugham's new book at her side, and a tray of delectable food over her knees. "Well, thank heavens, I'm not going out with you and Linnie tonight," she said with a mischievous grin.

"Aunt Linnie said to wear a street dress," Mary remarked.

Lelia yawned luxuriously. "Oh, of course, with Balianci footing the bill! He will, no doubt, treat you to an eighty-five cent table-d'hote in some wretched place in the Village, and smugly feel that you and Linnie are in his debt for the rest of the winter. He's so accustomed to having somebody else pay the check that, when he does come across with an invitation, he damn' well sees to it that his output of cash is of the smallest possible denomination. He's a sponger, darling, looking for a rich wife, and nobody on earth can make me believe anything to the contrary."

Mary pulled on her Lapin coat, and caught her gloves up from the dressing-table. "You do look cozy, Lelia," she said, "and heaven knows I wish I were staying at home tonight instead of going out into that horrid, raw weather. I'd have liked to work on my story."

"The afternoon paper says we'll have a regular blizzard by morning," Lelia announced, crunching a

She settled herself in an armchair and began to read.

Julienne potato with tantalizing enjoyment. "Thanks be to Allah for my bed and board! See you later, my dear, unless you get lost in a snowdrift. I doubt if Balianci has the price of a taxi!"

Balianci had the price of a taxi, or else had decided to spread himself for the evening, for, upon descending to the street, he ordered the doorman to whistle for a cab. "Corliani's," he told the driver, "in the Village."

A startled look sprang into Linnie's eyes, but was quickly, diplomatically, succeeded by a smile. "Corliani's, Balianci?" she inquired brightly. "Is that a new place?"

Balianci plumped himself down on one of the small side seats, and lighted a cigarette. "It is a place I have but recently discovered, Miss Cotswell, and the food is most excellent—cooked as only the chefs of my country can cook. I thought perhaps Miss Loring would like a bit of atmosphere—something different from what she has been accustomed to seeing and doing since she has been in New York."

Corliani's was crowded, garish, and shabby, and the bare wooden tables were set so closely together that it was almost impossible to wedge a way through them. Sputtering candles, set in wine bottles, furnished the only illumination, and the air was heavy with the stale, accumulated smell of garlic and cigarette smoke.

Mary wondered, during the long, spasmodic serving of the meal, if they were going some place later on, but her speculations as to that were soon brought to an end by Balianci's saying, a tentative tone in his voice, "The weather, it is execrable. Should we not be happier to remain here for the evening?"

Miss Cotswell, who had scarcely touched her food, replied that perhaps they would, lit a cigarette, and sat back resignedly in her chair. After which, Balianci divided his attention and his eyes equally between the tawdry floor show and Mary. Once, during the evening, he put his hand over Mary's as it lay on the table, caught it to his lips and murmured, "A hand so beautiful, it needs no jewels."

Mary hastily withdrew her hand, and the corners of her mouth twitched with amusement as she thought, "Just as well—since I haven't any!"

"You are so right, beautiful lady," Balianci continued, his voice reminding Mary of the purr of a large Maltese cat. "The lily should never be gilded."

Miss Cotswell caught Balianci's eye at this moment, and neatly conveyed to him by her expression that his remarks were not altogether to her liking.

Eventually, at eleven o'clock, she rose. "We must be getting home," she said tersely.

Balianci managed to squeeze into the same seat with the women on the homeward trip in the taxi, and to take advantage of the closeness of the quarters by pressing his shoulder rather too tenderly against Mary's. "He can't be doing it on purpose," Mary told herself. "It's simply that this seat is so narrow."

Miss Cotswell turned abruptly, just as they reached the elevator in her apartment house, and extended her hand to Balianci in an undeniable farewell. Later, in the privacy of her apartment, she said to her niece, "Umberto was loping right along with us into the lift. No doubt, he intended to come up for a nightcap, but I couldn't stand another moment of his company. Dreadful evening, wasn't it?"

Mary, warming her chilled fingers before the dying fire on the hearth, smiled. "Maybe it was for you, Aunt Linnie. You're so accustomed to nightingale's knees on toast that I can imagine how low-life you consider a place like Corliani's. As for me, however, it was rather fun. Remember, hot chocolate and salted crackers at Bowen's drug store have been the high points in my night life for years! I'd never tasted real Italian food before, and I was even intrigued with some of the rather strange-looking creatures that practically sat in our laps."

For some inexplicable reason, Mary woke at six the next morning. Lelia and Miss Cotswell were, of course, still asleep, and even Addie could not be heard stirring about. The script of "Their Son," which she had tucked away in the bottom drawer of her bureau the day before, sprang to her mind, and with a sudden spurt of energy, she decided that now, in the early hours of this cold morning, with not one sign of life to disturb the calm, was the time to read it over. She could look at it from a fresh viewpoint, and, no doubt, discern in its structure glaring flaws which she had been too weary to notice the day before.

A second later, she settled herself in an armchair before the living room window and began to read "Their Son." It really went rather smoothly, she told herself. The phraseology was perfect; her choice of words, beyond criticism.

"I shan't do another thing to it," she decided. "It's as good as it'll ever be, and it may be far better than I think. I'm going to submit it to Mr. Buchanan today, and it's got to sink or swim." With eager fingers, she slipped it into a large, manila envelope, and, securing Aunt Linnie's fountain pen from the tray of odds and ends on the desk, wrote across its front in large letters, "Mr. Phillip Buchanan, The National Weekly."

"I'll take it to him myself," she thought, "and if he's not there, just leave it with his secretary. I wish it were later. I don't suppose these editors ever think of rolling into their offices until at least ten. Well, I'll just have to take a long bath, eat a long breakfast, and spend an hour getting dressed. Maybe that'll consume the time between now—and then!"

CHAPTER VI

—

It was half past ten, and Mary sat with flushed face and icy hands in the reception room of The National Weekly. She had arrived exactly at the stroke of ten, and, after giving her name to the efficient receptionist, had been told that Mr. Buchanan was in, that he was occupied at the moment, and to sit down, please.

Two other persons had now entered the reception room; a good-looking young man with an intense air; a swarthy girl of twenty-five or so. "But I'll be next," Mary told herself excitedly, her hands like blocks of ice beneath their tan suede gloves.

The other callers had disappeared through mysterious doors and Miss Hickenlooper, the secretary, was now speaking through one of the telephones in response to a buzz that had resounded throughout the reception room. "All right, Miss Loring," she said. "Your turn now."

Mary jumped to her feet, dropping her purse as she did so. Miss Hickenlooper raised a supercilious eyebrow. "Your purse, Miss Loring," she said coldly. "And you'd better take your coat with you."

"Hateful woman!" Mary thought, her face suffusing with a deep red. "She probably knows I'm excited."

"To the right, please," Miss Hickenlooper was saying. "Office at the end of the corridor."

"Thank you," Mary said coldly and, elevating her chin ever so slightly, stepped through the door that led into the working quarters of The National Weekly.

Offices opened off to the right and left of the long narrow hall but, with eyes straight ahead, she made for the one at the end—the sanctus-sanctorum of the lot—the office of Phillip Buchanan.

She stood in the doorway an instant before the man at the desk became aware of her presence. He was scanning a typed letter, and a deep frown made a furrow between his eyebrows. He looked austere, and Mary, none-too-assured at best, felt increasingly nervous. He was younger than she had expected to find him, perhaps thirty-five, and his hair looked sunburned, as if he had just returned from a fishing trip in Florida, which, indeed, he had.

Suddenly, he glanced up, and seeing her standing there, rose hastily from his chair, a puzzled expression on his face. He was taller than one would have judged, seeing him sitting down, glaring at that letter. He was as tall as Chris. "Is this—Miss Loring?" he asked, and the fear that he had inspired in her was instantly dispelled. His voice was kind, young—with the faintest trace of a Harvard accent.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Color Is the Major Theme in Gay Spring Song of Fashion

By CHERIE NICHOLAS

IN CLARION notes loud and clear the spring song of fashion rings out the message of the importance of color for coming modes. That which is destined to prove a dramatic color program starts out in midseason with handsome woolens that are being tailored alluringly into smart suits and ensembles, also topcoats as attractive as ere the light of fashion shown upon.

If you are impatient to don color you do not have to wait for the actual arrival of spring, neither are you called upon to travel to sunny climes to wear one of the new bright woolen outfits, for at this very moment fashion-alert women are acquiring tailleurs of flashing, dashing gay wool weaves that forecast the color-glory of suits, ensembles, dresses and coats that will enliven the style scene throughout the coming months.

Early spring tweeds "say it" irresistibly via plaids and stripes that are superbly colorful. Playing up bright woolens in trios is one way of showing enthusiasm for the new novelty stripes, plaids and checks. In such instances a stripe, a plaid or check and a plain are so interrelated in color values as to make a stunning costume such as any lady of fashion might covet.

The tailored suit of plaid woolen in the foreground of our illustration in softest shades of rose and green with wool jersey blouse of dusty pink would sound a triumphant high coloratura note under a fur coat in any clime where the thermometer persists in registering low or with light accessories it will prove ideal on a southern cruise.

From Paris comes the dramatic sport ensemble shown to the left in the group. Lucien Lelong creates this style-significant costume of multicolored stripe tweed. The blouse is in green jersey enhanced with a brilliant studded belt.

The oncoming rush for plaided or striped woolens is modishly told in the two attractive models shown in the background. Crossbar plaid in blue and white imported tweed makes the topcoat and jacket for the costume shown to the left with matching blue monotone skirt. Bright yellow, red, blue and a natural beige blend harmoniously in the beautiful plaid topcoat of imported tweed at the right. It is lined with matching blue silk crepe.

The task that fashion sets before the designer of smart wool outfits for spring is to so inter-relate colors, that combined make a harmonious individualized entity of their own. It is not beyond the bonds of good taste to combine a stripe, a plaid and a plain. In fact, the working of novelty woolens in trios is one of the smartest newest moves among designers who notably lead in costume art.

The dominant note in early spring fashioning is, as it has been for some time past, the contrast jacket and skirt two-piece suit. The stripes and plaids and nubby wool weaves that go to make up these youthful suits are more fascinating than ever. In stylizing these popular numbers designers are making a big play on pockets. Sometimes the front of the jacket is fairly plastered with innumerable decorative as well as useful pockets.

Newest among woolens in use for spring are diagonal stripe effects such as a gray wool with wide white stripes running diagonally across. Prospects are that we will be seeing more of stripes this season than ever.

© Western Newspaper Union.

Bows and Beaux

It takes a bow or more to catch a beau. With bows at her waist, there's sure to be beaux to the fore for the girl in the portrait dress as you see here pictured. Naively draped off the shoulders, the dress in black velvet has as its only adornment a soft gold kid belt which was especially designed by Criterion to enhance its richness. Note the tiny bows frolicking 'round, adding a sophisticated air to this girdle of gold. The wee velvet hat with its twin bows carries out the theme of this dinner gown.

Calot With Earmuffs

The clever calot, favorite of schoolgirls the country over, returns this winter embellished with fluffy earmuffs and warmly lined with bright plaid flannelette. The earmuffs can be worn up or down.

Neckwear Means Accessories Also

Neckwear doesn't mean just pique and batiste or organdie collars.

Neckwear (at least the items sold at neckwear counters) doesn't mean just pique and batiste or organdie collars. Neckwear in the modern interpretation of the word means ruchings, embroideries, stiff little Buster Brown collars, Irish lace collar and cuff sets, little bows for your neck, with little lacy pockets to match. Neckwear may be in velvet with mother-of-pearl flowers and jewels. It may be of grosgrain ribbon or of chiffon, or it may be of velvet ribbon or of taffeta, satin, lame or kid. It may be an elaborate sequin bolero or it may be a wee jacket of ruffled net. At any rate neckwear is a most featured theme for spring.

Squirrel Sets Off Spray of Orchids

For night wear, one of the more delicate pelts should be chosen. Squirrel will set off a spray of orchids like nobody's business. In undyed squirrel look for clear gray, untinged with brown, and a close even pile. "Flank" squirrel is usually dyed brown, and costs less than gray.

Old-Fashioned Slips

Slips have gone old-fashioned—camisole tops with lace beading and baby blue ribbon. Lace ruffles and ribbon decorate the bottom of the slip, too.

For Winter Wear

A white chiffon blouse banded with black val lace is shown in one collection for wear with a black faille suit.

What Women Want to Know About Fashions

Small hats, big with charm, are the darlings of the mode.

Satin is very much in the mode, as befits this sleek, glittering season.

Lo, the conquering heroine in a bicorne hat of Napoleon style introduced by Schiaparelli!

Sweaters are such an important part of the college girl's wardrobe, she simply can't have too many.

Caracul and Alaska seal are two furs that have staged a comeback.

White and natural are two outstanding colors for resort sportswear.

The new resort frocks which are going south sing a fashion song of color.

Little jackets have a way of injecting their popularity into the fashions of every season.

Floyd Gibbons'

ADVENTURERS' CLUB

HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!

"Panic in the Dark"

HELLO EVERYBODY:

Here's the story of a cock-eyed railroad accident—so cock-eyed that everything seems to work just the opposite from what it should. You know, when anyone mentions railroad accident to me I immediately think of a collision. But Marcella Timer of Clifton, N. J., was in one once that not only wasn't a collision, but as a matter of fact, was just the opposite of a collision.

That sounds pretty doggone near impossible, and I know it. Two railroad cars coming together can cause a mighty serious accident. On the other hand, two cars getting farther and farther apart every minute—well—that ought to be just about the safest thing on tracks. But it was the ever-widening distance between two cars that threw Mrs. Timer right ino the lap of Adventure and caused all the horror, and panic, and suffering that you're going to read about today.

Marcella's husband is a traveling representative for a New York firm. In the summer of 1925 he was covering the New England territory. The Timer's home was then in Ridgefield Park, N. J., but Marcella with her two children, a boy, six, and a baby girl not quite a year old, was touring New England with her husband.

It was about the middle of July and they were in Hartford, Conn., when the baby developed a colic and began running a high fever. Marcella decided to take the children home to Ridgefield Park. They arrived in New York on a terrifically hot day, crossed to New Jersey and got on a West Shore train at Weehawken about four-thirty in the afternoon.

Train Comes to Stop in Tunnel.

"I don't know whether you're acquainted with the West Shore railroad at this point," Marcella writes, "but it has a long tunnel under the city of Weehawken which comes out on the Jersey meadows about seven miles from where it begins. I had often

Passengers began to show signs of uneasiness.

been through this tunnel and had never given it a second thought."

But many are the thoughts Marcella has given that doggone tunnel since.

She boarded the train for Ridgefield Park and found seats in the next to the last coach. The train started, and entered the tunnel as usual. It was about half way through when it began to slow down and came to a gradual stop. That wasn't unusual. Trains often did that. Marcella paid no attention to it and neither did any of the other passengers.

After a while the lights went out. That WAS unusual. The passengers began to get restless. A conductor was running up and down outside the coaches swinging a red lantern. A second conductor had stationed himself at the door. The day had been hot enough in the first place, but down there in the tunnel it was stifling. The windows of the cars were all closed to keep out the poisonous gases that filled the tunnel at all times, and what little air there was in the beginning was rapidly being used up.

The baby, whose fever had mounted, began to scream at the top of her lungs. Several other passengers began to show signs of uneasiness. Some of the men got up and approached the door, but the conductor would not let them pass, nor would he give any satisfactory explanation why the train was standing still in a dark and gas-ridden tunnel.

For a few minutes after that all was quiet. Then, suddenly, panic gripped the people in that dark, stifling car. One man leaped to a window and threw it open. "They can't keep us in here to suffocate like rats," he shouted. "I'm getting out!" He clambered through the window, and many others followed him. And almost immediately the coach was filled with the sulphurous, poisonous gases of the tunnel.

"Then," says Marcella, "terror such as I had never known before gripped me. My baby stopped screaming suddenly and became very still. My little boy leaned with unnatural weight against my side. In the pitch darkness everyone was gasping for breath. Some man shouted to everyone to lie down on the floor. I couldn't get down with the two children. But I prayed—and how I prayed!

Coal Gas Fills Passenger Coaches.

"Women were fainting and men's lungs were wracked with a hacking cough that only filled them with more coal gas. I felt as if a hand of steel were gripping at my throat. Then I began to sink down into a dark, black pit of nothingness that seemed to becoming up to meet me. I tried to fight it off, but it seemed it was no use. Deeper and deeper into the gloom I sank. Subconsciously I felt the train jar and shake, but by that time it didn't mean anything. It is the last thing I remembered. Then I was unconscious."

Now let's go back and tell the part of the story Marcella didn't know anything about. What had happened was that a coupling had broken, and the front part of the train had gone on, leaving the last two coaches behind in the middle of the tunnel. It was the exact opposite of a collision, but the conductors realized that it was serious, nevertheless. One of them went out into the gas-filled tunnel with a red lantern to make sure that the cars weren't hit by another train, while the other tried to keep the passengers from leaving the comparative safety of the car.

When the front of the broken train reached the meadows, the loss of the two cars was discovered and an emergency engine was sent immediately. But it had taken 20 minutes to accomplish that, and in the meantime the passengers in those two stranded cars had breathed in a lot of coal gas.

Ambulances were waiting when they reached the mouth of the tunnel, to give first aid. "And maybe you think we didn't need it," says Marcella. "My little boy and I were revived almost immediately, but it was only with a terrific struggle that my little girl's life was saved." And if Marcella had to go through another railroad accident, I think she'd pick a good old-fashioned collision in preference to one of those trick accidents where the cars all go in different directions.

Copyright.—WNU Service.

Producing Artificial Pearls

The fact that a pearl can be produced by the introduction of an alien body into the oyster has been used in industry for the culture of artificially bred pearls, observes a writer in Pearson's London Weekly. An expert states that as soon as the grain of sand (or any other particle) is introduced into the shell, the irritation causes the oyster to cover it with a smooth, protective layer containing calcium. Pearls are nothing but thousands of layers of calcium.

Daniel Boone's Birthplace

The birthplace of Daniel Boone, famed Kentucky frontiersman and pioneer, is a public park at Baumstown, Pa. Boone started his notable exploits as a hunter on the farm tract as a boy of 13 when he killed a bear.

Natural Salt Deposit

A natural salt deposit at Weeks island, Louisiana, averaging 99 per cent pure, is more than a mile and a half in diameter and of a depth as yet unknown.

The Passion Flower

The three leaves of the passion flower that grow in a cluster represent the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. The tendrils are the thongs with which Christ was bound. The various parts of the flower—stamens, pistil, sepals and petals—represent the crown of thorns, the three nail prints, the five wounds, the three spears, the two clubs and the cross. The ten pods represent the Apostles, excluding Judas, who betrayed Christ, and Peter, who denied Him.

Hi Ho Saying

"It is dangerous," said Hi Ho, the sage of Chinatown, "to try to win approval by telling funny stories. Most men think that when they laugh at one of your stories they have done you an act of condescending favor and that you ought to be eternally grateful."

City on Three Islands

New York city is built on three islands, Manhattan, Staten and Long Island, with a portion on the adjacent mainland, the Bronx.