

BEAUTY'S DAUGHTER



By Kathleen Norris

CHAPTER XV—Continued

"But, good heavens, Vic, what's that!" the man said roughly, in impatience. "What's all that compared to the other thing, compared to hurting your pride, and killing your love for me, and putting the thought of another woman eternally between us? Why, lots of the fellows go home to women who are extravagant and nagging and nervous, and who don't have a houseful of gorgeous kids to show for it! There's no comparison between the two."

"I think there is. I think nagging and extravagance and nerves are serious things, too, and I think women who won't have children, who hate home, who are always running about with other men, are just as bad! Even if they don't go to the limit—even if they fool along, getting everything they can out of a man and then stopping short, never giving anything—it seems to me detestable," Vic said. "My own temptations are different," she added. "I think maybe I'm a mother first and a wife afterward; I've never gone in for pink baby pillows and long-legged dolls!"

The words brought back with a moment of horror the memory of her last sight of Serena's bedroom, and she was still.

"Serena loved you," she said thoughtfully, in the silence.

"She never loved anyone but herself," Quentin said. "Everything she said and did revolved about that. She loved her own beauty and power. She used them to get what she wanted. I knew it, after a while. Morrison must have discovered it as soon as they were married. Her first husband tried twice to kill himself. She was cold and vain, poor girl! And she was the woman," he ended, "for whom I broke your heart!"

"No, you didn't break my heart." "Breaking a person's heart is a cheap way of putting it," Quentin said. "It sounds romantic, when it wasn't anything but damn stupid and selfish. You said what it really did, a minute ago. It made you think less of me; that's the real price. We never can go back of that. You'll never be able to trust me again. There'll always be that feeling, somewhere, 'way back in your mind, that I failed you!"

Vicky, her elbows on the kitchen table, her chin in her hands, looked thoughtful.

"I suppose so," she said slowly. "But I don't know that it matters. You've seen me looking pretty horrible, ugly and crying and frightened and only anxious to be let off pain; it doesn't seem to make you like me any less when I'm all gotten up in my new Paris clothes. Luckily people forget those things, when—under it all—they love each other."

Quentin answered with a long look. "I think you really believe that," he said after a while. "You're not like anyone else in the world!"

Vicky in her turn was thoughtful. "Perhaps we're both tired," she said. "For that matter, what's hap-

pened tonight is enough to throw us into nervous breakdowns. We don't often talk this way. But it's only fair to tell you something, Quentin, that may partly explain the way I feel, the way I act. When we were married, eleven years ago, I talked about marrying for reasons, about not being carried away by excitement, about not falling in love. "I told you my idea of marriage was companionship, home, children. You were a widower with a delicate youngster—" She laughed. "It seems funny now to think of Gwen as delicate, doesn't it?" she said. "Women were making your life a burden, and you needed just what I had to give. I remember our talking of it once, and your saying that whatever the agreement was before marriage, however reasonable and dispassionate the feeling was, no man could have a young wife around and not come to love her, that is presuming that he didn't come to hate her. Do you remember that?"

"Vaguely."

"Well, the joke was on me," Vicky said, "for I had it—had it desperately, the whole time! I trembled and got silly when you spoke to me, I thought of you all day long and lay awake dreaming of you all night. I was the love-sickest woman who ever knelt down and thanked God that the most marvelous man in the world had deigned to look at her! I never told you, I was too proud. I tackled the big house and the servants and Gwen; I even went to the hospital and had your babies, Quent. But I never dared tell you! You never asked me to; you took me calmly for granted, meals and furnace and Gwen and babies and answering the telephone and buying you new shirts, and that was the way I wanted it to be. I didn't want to be the one to introduce the silly, the sentimental side of it, cry when you forgot my birthday, and expect you to compliment me every night on the way my hair was done! I'd said I wanted a certain kind of marriage—work and responsibility and companionship, and plenty of criticism if I didn't do my job, and I got it! But I've loved you all the time! Quent, when you come home tired at night and go to sleep with your big heavy head on my shoulder, I lie awake sometimes for joy. Juliet has nothing on me, nor Beatrice, nor Nicolette! I've never loved anyone else, and no woman ever loved a man more, or so much; his old coats and his voice in the hall at night, and the way he looks at her when she's scared in her strange room in the hospital, the way his hand pats her hand when she goes up to the surgery."

She stood up, smiled at him. "There!" she said. "That's my awful confession. I've made you a speech."

Quent took Victoria in his arms. "You've made me a speech, Vic. I'll never forget it."

Victoria raised her eyes to her husband's eyes, and there was in them the shadow of her undefeated smile.

[THE END]

Toothpicks

By KARIN C. ASBRAND
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THE toothpicks were the very last straw. May Belle had succeeded in reforming her family for the great occasion in every detail except the toothpicks. They still reposed conspicuously in their decidedly imitation cut glass almost on the center of the table.

"Your father wants them there," her mother had interposed mildly, as May Belle attempted to remove them.

"You have such funny, old-fashioned ideas, Mother," remarked May Belle petulantly. "Larry will never be able to understand you. Dinner in the middle of the day, toothpicks in that terrible cheap glass, and what's worse than everything, seven children! Nobody ever has seven children nowadays."

"You're one of the seven, May," reported her mother, hurrying out into the kitchen to haste the roast.

Virginia drew on a becoming pink sweater and went out into the welcoming sunshine of the front porch to wait. Asthma, the long, low racer which in itself was part of Larry, ought to be turning around the bend in the road almost any time now. Almost she wished he were not coming. Larry, the immaculate, the fastidious, with his big ideas of a vast and promising future. Larry, who mingled in his business as a young and rising architect with the big "swells" of the city. She found it hard to picture Larry here.

She had promised to wed him, however, and, forsooth, the whole family must pass judgment on him first. That was the trouble with having a big family. They always thought they did part of the marrying. Larry would want to have nothing more to do with her."

Her mother came to the porch door to blow a whistle for the children—the call to dinner. Pell-mell they all piled in from the barn and the hay field, a disheveled, healthy band of youngsters. Pa drew up in the rear, mopping his hot brow with a rumpled red handkerchief. Mother seized eight-year-old Jerry, the tomboy, as she bounded for the dining room.

"Look at your hands," she reprimanded gently. "Go wash up, all of you. An' pa, you better go change your clothes."

"Now listen, Sal," began Pa. "May's young man's gotter git used to seein' me in overalls, an' overalls I'm gonna wear."

"Pa," wailed May Belle. "Overalls and toothpicks, and Pa forgetting, and eating with his knife."

"It's too late to change, any-

SHORT SHORT STORY

Complete in This Issue

ways," put in Pa, mildly, as the honk of an automobile horn shrilled in on the group, "'cause here he is."

"Larry!"

May Belle forgot Pa and his overalls as the slim, trim, knickered young man swung his long frame over the machine door. In a twinkling she was in his arms. The next moment the family had been introduced, and they sat at the table. Pa did forget. He ate with his knife. He used toothpicks at will. And the children talked vociferously.

"I like you," put in Jerry, the incorrigible. "I bet you never had seven kids."

"No, I never did," laughed Larry. "But there were nine kids in my family. I'm the middle one."

"Geraldine!" May Belle, her face very red, bolted from the table. Larry excused himself to follow her. Mother wisely prevented the children from doing likewise. He found May Belle in a heap on the garden bench in the summer house. He laid a soothing hand on her shoulder.

"May, honey, don't cry so," he soothed her.

"I'm not crying," she managed to gasp between spasms. "It's all so funny and mixed up. You with the children, the toothpicks, dad in his overalls. Oh, Larry, it's awful."

"It's wonderful," he assured her. "I've never found a place so much like home. Your dad is a perfect facsimile of my pa. I never told you, I guess, but he runs the big Willowood farm. Your mother's dinner was every inch what mother used to make. And even toothpicks. Pa couldn't go a meal without his toothpicks right in front of him in their little 10-cent glass. And the kids—I've got a kid sister very much like Jerry, only a bit fatter."

"I worried about the toothpicks," confessed May Belle. "I've been very silly."

Sunbeams filtering through the grape trellis caressed them as they stood there. Mother's voice floated over to them, deep and throaty, in gentle command.

"Now you young ones, scoot," they heard her say. "I don't want to see none of you round here when May an' her young man come in to finish their dinner. Hurry up now; clear out from under foot!"

Larry held her close.

"Aren't big families wonderful?" he whispered.

Ask Me? Another

A Quiz With Answers Offering Information on Various Subjects

1. What American statesman was the grandson of a king?
2. How much does a single inch of rain over an acre weigh? Over a square mile?
3. How many wars have there been since the signing of the Armistice in 1918?
4. Do Chinese surnames precede or follow the given names?
5. Who was the author of "Give me men to match my mountains"?
6. Name some famous musicians who had the gift of absolute pitch.
7. How many cabinet members were there in the first President's cabinet?
8. What is the usual order of business for general meetings of clubs and similar organizations?
9. What caused a farm to "sink" in Idaho?
10. How many words are there in the English language?

Answers

1. Charles Bonaparte, a member of Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet.
2. A single inch of rain weighs 113 tons an acre, or 72,300 tons a square mile.

3. There have been 17 wars since November 11, 1918.
4. They precede.
5. Samuel Foss.
6. Among them are Mozart, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Rachmaninoff, Von Bulow and Max Reger.
7. Three: secretaries of state, at first called foreign affairs; treasury and war. The attorney general and postmaster general were not at first given the rank of cabinet members.
8. Reading of the minutes; reports of boards and standing committees; reports of special (select) committees; special orders; unfinished business; general orders; new business.
9. The geological survey terms this a landslip. The Salmon Falls river undercuts its canyon walls until some of the land overhead breaks away, causing cracks or other land adjustments at some distance from the rim.
10. According to the World Almanac the reputable English language contains approximately 700,000 words. Possibly 300,000 more terms may be stigmatized as nonce, obsolete, vulgar, low, etc., and therefore seldom or never sought in dictionaries.

Uncle Phil Says:

Laws Are a Retreat

It isn't laws that Americans need to enable them to get along together, but a decent regard for each other.

You cannot often communicate the lesson you have learned by experience.

The hardy pioneer, rest his soul, cut down so many trees that his descendants, bless their souls, now have to restore them for their descendants.

Truth is stranger than fiction, but most of the facts about truth never come out.

A Very Salutory One

The best part of experience is the scores it puts into you. Photograph albums should be revived. That was the only way of getting some idea of the family tree.

Be free with compliments. They cost you nothing, but the surrender of your stiff-necked ill will.

Boys who run away from home usually repent within a week and they have learned a valuable, lasting lesson: that imagination can't be trusted.

One way to learn patriotism toward your country is to have to live in a foreign land.

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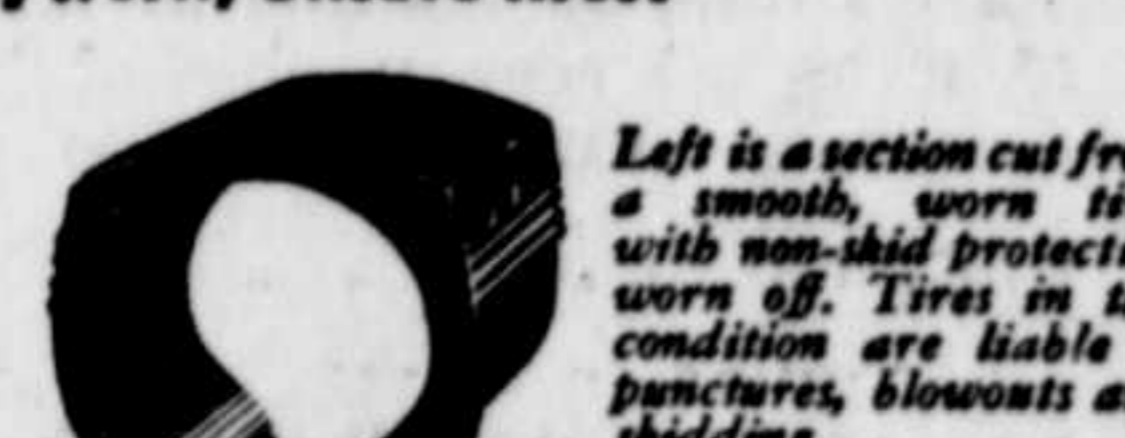
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by Gilbert Patten

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