SHINING PALACE

By CHRISTINE WHITING PARMENTER

COPYRIGHT BY CHRISTINE WHITING PARMENTER — WNU SERVICE

CHAPTER X—Continued

—13—

After a while she drew the manuscript from its envelope. For weeks Nora had been too worn and tired to peruse the articles her husband was sending out. Now, reading critically, her heart sank still lower. The editor was right. This wasn't on of Don's joyous narratives. It was the work of a harassed, half sick man, driving himself on because the need of money was imperative.

Part of the thousand dollars James Lambert had tucked into her gold mesh bag had paid the charges at the nursing home in London. The rest (long saved for an emergency), melted away during the months of sickness in South Africa. Dreading to run up bills, Nora had paid the Cape Town doctor at every visit, not realizing that if the man possessed a conscience he would doubtless have deducted something from the sum total. There had been medicines, too, expensive medicines; and nourishing food that cost real money. And now Don, burning the candle at both ends in a desperate effort to provide for his loved ones, was failing to make good. She would not show him that letter. She could not.

What Nora did was to sit down at the kitchen table, spread out the rejected manuscript and proceed to imbue it with the missing charm. And because she knew her husband's style so well—because she had listened spellbound while he talked of his adventures, she did it superbly. Her tired eyes lighted as she read it over, knowing by instinct that her work would "get across." And then she made the wisest move of all: wrote simply and honestly to the London editor (she had to check herself from beginning the letter "Dear old life-preserver"!), confessing what she had done to this Cape Town Letter—telling him something of the unforeseen troubles which had descended on them—agreeing to watch over her husband's work, speaking quite frankly of the reason why they must return to England at the time planned. And at the end: "You will understand, of course, why you must send no answer to this letter; but if in its present form you find the article available for publication, kindly forward a check to Mr. Mason as soon as possible . . ."

"And never let anyone persuade you," she said months later when Don learned the truth, "that Englishmen, for all their cold exteriors, haven't the warmest hearts in the whole world!" For just when her husband was beginning to worry about the missing check, a letter arrived bearing the familiar heading. The editor, it seemed, had learned of his contributor's recent illness, regretted it deeply, and suggested not trying to write till he was quite himself. Enclosed was a check for the last article (an especially good one), as well as for the three to follow, "on which, my dear fellow, you are at liberty to take your time." And with kindest regards to Mrs. Mason, he remained very cordially indeed . .

"But how in thunder," asked Don, lifting puzzled eyes from this welcome missive, "did the old boy learn that I've been sick? And why does he lug you in all of a sudden?"

"Well, don't ask me!" responded Nora, so guilelessly that for the time being Don hadn't a suspicion of her intrigue.

After that things really did improve. The tension lessened. Don did better work. The little son was growing rosy; and Nora, rested herself, admitted (although it went against the grain to do so!) the surpassing beauty of Cape Town harbor — the grandeur of Table mountain rising majestically behind the city.

Thus a day arrived when she braved the eyes of a scandalized community, and stopped at the house of a woman who, like a ministering angel, had appeared one chill, gray dawn to offer help.

"Whoever sees me will be horrified, I suppose," she said to Don, "but after all, why should that matter? I was at the breaking point when she helped me out, you know. It wouldn't be decent not to say good-by to her."

"Of course it wouldn't." Don turned from locking a steamer trunk to add: "I'll go with you, dear."

But Fate had other plans. Because of some error about their stateroom Don was called away; and Nora went alone.

"I just dropped in to say good-by." Her hostess, obviously astonished at the call, was leading her into a small, tidy living room. Nora had not expected its surprising neatness. Then she saw that the woman herself looked neater—more self-respecting, and continued: "We leave for home tomorrow; and I've never half thanked you for all you did for us."

"You don't need to, lady." The voice sounded a shade breathless. "It wasn't — nothing. I —" The woman, seated across the little room, arose suddenly. "I heard you folks was pullin' out tomorrow and I got somethin' for you—a—a sort o' good-by present, if you don't mind. I was goin' to carry it over after dark."

Touched, and a trifle puzzled, Nora watched her open a bureau drawer and take out a small box tied with a bit of scarlet ribbon.

"Will—will you promise me somethin'?" she asked, her voice still shaken.

"Why not?" said Nora. "Weren't you a real friend in time of need?"

"Friend!" echoed the woman, a nervous, unsteady laugh escaping her. "Well, lady, it's this I want: Promise you won't open this box till you're out at sea; and—and that you won't never try to get it back to me, noways."

"That's easy," smiled Leonora, anxious to put the other at her ease. "Why should I want to send it back?"

"You'll know when you see it. Your man might not like to have you take it—from me, you know. But you tell him that if I was to kick off sudden some guy would steal it off me most likely. And—and I wanter give it to you—'most more'n I ever wanted anything. I—"

"Let's get back to the barn."

she hesitated, then broke out passionately: "Say! you're the first good woman that's spoken a kind word to me for 15 years! I'm dirt to 'em all; but if they knew how I got this way— Well," her voice dropped, dully—"that don't matter now. I'm used to it. But you keep that safe, lady. I come by it honest. A man give it to me once—the only decent fella I ever knew . . ."

And next morning, a bright, clear morning as if Cape Town were doing its best to overcome an unfortunate impression, they set forth in a second-class cabin (Oh, shades of Leonora Lambert!) on what was to be a most momentous voyage. Safe in the depths of Nora's handbag lay a small white box tied with a scarlet ribbon. The English boy, reluctant to see them go, was on the wharf. His was the last face they saw in Cape Town. His the last voice they heard. Above the confusion of departure it reached them clearly: "Good-by and Good Hope!" South Africa's farewell to the departing voyager.

How near, and yet how infinitely far away that year seemed now! Thus mused Nora as she watched the rising tide encroach, slowly, but surely, on their resting place. What things one lived through and emerged from unbroken! And here they were where they started life together, she and Don, back at "the shack," a very crowded dwelling place, "because," said Don, regarding Carl Venable's last gift to Nora, "because, my dear, with a baby-grand and two grand babies, there's hardly room to come in out of the rain!"

Yet Leonora was so happy at being home again—so lost in ecstasy over the piano, that nothing else seemed of the least consequence. It was a long, long cry from that day six years before when she had regarded mere cobwebs and the lack of running water with such keen dismay. What inconveniences hadn't she put up with in those six years? Nora smiled at the thought, and observed abruptly:

"What a parlor ornament I once was, Don! Do you remember that until you brought me to the shack I'd never known the want of a kitchen apron?"

Don turned his head, and without disturbing their younger son, who sat astride him, reached out and lifted one of Nora's hands, her right hand. It was the delicately formed, sensitive hand of a musician—long-fingered, slender. Nothing could mar its perfect contour; yet it was also the hard, brown hand of a woman who had labored at tasks that leave their scars It was a hand that had washed innumerable dishes; scrubbed floors; patched; darned; ironed; but on one finger blazed a thing of undying beauty: a matchless Kimberley diamond, the "good-by present" of a woman in far off Cape Town.

Don kissed the palm of that work-worn hand, and said, addressing his small son: "She's a wonder, isn't she?"

"A perfec' wonner," agreed the baby; and they both laughed before Don questioned: "Where's brother vanished to?"

Nora glanced down the beach to where a small boy in a scarlet bathing suit was beginning operations on a tunnel that was to reach "Aunt Connie way over in Capri!"

"He's constructing a subway to Italy, I believe. The U. S. A. agrees with the kiddies, doesn't it?" This question, innocent in itself, was, as developed later, merely an opening. "Even this single month has made a difference in them," Nora continued, choosing her words with care. "Jimsy has gained a pound, and Donald, two. I almost dread . . ."

Don moved to scan her face for a stealthy moment.

"I've been rather expecting that, my dear," he said.

Nora laughed, touching his hand as if to reassure him.

"Afraid I'll turn domestic?" she queried lightly.

"You are domestic," asserted Don. "That's one of the reasons why I love you. You can create a home in the barest of hotel rooms, darling. Haven't I seen you do it numberless times? Haven't I seen you take a tumble-down villa overlooking the Lake of Como, and with the aid of a couple of Italian blankets and a brass candlestick transform it into such a place of peace and beauty that even Mussolini (if he had the good luck to get inside), would cease to dictate for a moment and let himself relax? If we were to occupy an igloo in the Antarctic, I've no doubt you'd make it so attractive that the penguins would stand 'round begging to come in! You are a wonder, Nora, just as I observed a moment since. Why, I'll wager you could take that weather-beaten old barn back there beyond the dunes and make a home of it!"

"I could!" said Nora.

Two words. Two words spoken with such a triumphant ring that in a flash Don comprehended things that had been puzzling him: a recent preoccupation on the part of Nora; a day when he found her staring, dreamy-eyed, at the old barn; a trip to the Port that seemed unnecessary

He sat up suddenly; deposited his outraged baby on the sand, and exploded with undue violence: "Nora, you can't mean it! You're crazy! That hideous old stable!"

"It's a lovely stable," defended Leonora, "and we can buy it for almost nothing. The owners moved to Portland years ago when the house burned, Don. They're tired of paying taxes and waiting for a summer colony to spring up next door and boom land values. They'll take $300 for the whole place—an acre facing the broad Atlantic! Imagine that! And the barn's thrown in. They don't consider it worth mentioning."

"It's not," said Don. His face was just a bit forbidding. "And it strikes me, Madam, that you're rather astonishingly well informed."

Nora was forced to laugh at this merited attack.

"I've taken pains to be," she admitted honestly. "Not to deceive you, Don, or to put something over on you in an unguarded moment, but because I had to know just where we stood. I'm not asking you to settle down forever, dear (How could you earn a living in such a spot?), but I'm homesick for a place to call my own—a refuge in time of need—a nook to hold the lovely things we just can't help collecting—a haven when there's a baby to be born. It's no fun bringing a child into the world during a storm at sea, as—as I did Jimsy."

Don looked at her in silence for a moment. When he spoke there was a trace of anger in his voice.

"Are you implying that I don't know it? That I underestimate the horror of that experience—for you, my dear? Do you think I'd have risked waiting so long to sail (even though we thought there was time to spare) if we hadn't been so damnably hard up that I felt I must squeeze every possible shilling out of South Africa? Why, I even considered sending you on earlier, alone, Nora, and was afraid you couldn't stand the trip with the boy to look after! I wonder if you've the least conception of how I felt that night when you woke me to say that things were imminent and I found the ship rocking like a cradle and the only doctor on board too sick with fever to lift his head off the pillow. I—I was sick myself, Nora, sick with fear, I mean, remembering what you went through before. You don't know me if you think I'd let you take a chance like that again. You don't—"

"Oh, come!" broke in Nora, smiling a little. "One would think I'd accused you of neglect! And I didn't need a doctor with that marvelous Norwegian nurse you dug up from among the passengers and my capable husband, who took her orders like a soldier. It's you who's the wonder of the family, Don. You never let me see that you were nervous—not for a minute. I remember thinking: 'Don wouldn't be so calm if things weren't going right'; but I was frightened just the same, terribly frightened, especially when the storm was at its height and my vivid imagination pictured the ship just ready to go down. And if everything hadn't been normal this time—Well, let's forget that possibility. Let's get back to the barn."

"Pony?" questioned James Lambert Mason with what appeared to his admiring father as rare intelligence.

"You hear that, Nora?" he asked grimly. "Why, even the kiddie understands that a barn's intended to shelter only cattle."

Nora laughed.

"Since when have ponies been considered cattle, darling?"

"Oh, you may laugh," said Don, and his wife knew instantly that something hurt him, "but when I remember all you gave up for—for me, Nora, the thought of your living in a stable—"

"The Christ Child was born in a stable, Daddy."

They both turned, startled, not having heard the approaching feet of their elder son. He stood behind them, his scarlet bathing suit a patch of gorgeous color against the dunes, his big, brown eyes regarding his parents soberly.

"So He was," said Don, and pulled the scarlet figure down on his knee. Across the child's dark head his eyes met Nora's. This serious first-born of theirs, whose five short years had been spent almost entirely among elders, possessed an uncanny way of getting at the heart of things. Sometimes it awed them, as it did now.

"Cows?" questioned the baby, and sat down again, this time on Nora.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Black Bear in Real Stupor Throughout Winter; Woodchuck Is One of His Rivals

Cold weather holds little terror for the chipmunks, bears, raccoons and others of the tribe which holes up in the winter time and goes to sleep. Best known of all the winter-sleepers, says a writer in the Detroit Free Press, is the Michigan black bear, who crawls into a sheltered hole under the root of some fallen tree for the winter. When he first goes into his den, his sleep is natural and he is easily aroused. If he is left undisturbed, his sleep develops into a real stupor. When he is in the midst of the winter sleep he can be aroused only by many proddings of a sharp stick.

The woodchuck or ground-hog rivals the bear for popularity as a winter sleeper. Woodchuck dives underground late in September, and remains hidden until early in spring, when some bright day, he again begins to look around.

Unlike the woodchuck, who goes underground sharp on time, the chipmunk's disappearance is prompted entirely by the frost. The chipmunk postpones his departure until some cold day, after which he passes the rest of the winter in a death-like sleep, to reappear again some bright warm day in spring.

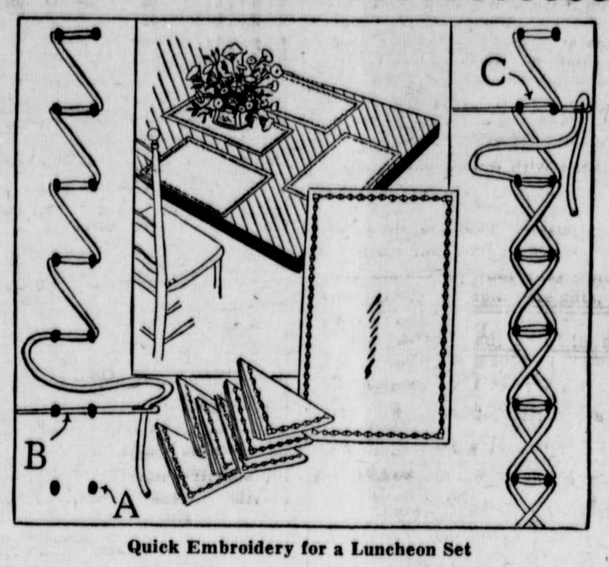
Ernest Thompson Seton, who encourages many a popular belief about animals, lists a total of "seven sleepers" to include the skunk, raccoon, jumping mouse and bat. All of these except the bat hole up during part of the winter when the weather is severe. The bat merely hangs itself head down on a convenient peg in a barn or sheltered spot, and remains in this position until warm weather comes.

Gainsborough, Society Painter

Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), the first of the distinctly English school of painting, was the most celebrated society painter of all time. His procedure was to have his sitter patiently wait while he painted the most attractive woman he could imagine. After that he began to work down to a point that approached the appearance of the lady in question. When she began to see a resemblance, he quit. He confessed to George III that he preferred to paint landscapes, his works of which as art rank as high or higher than his portraits, but his wife's extravagant demands made him turn to the more lucrative portrait painting. Gainsborough portraits are in clear and transparent tones of blue and green.

HOW to SEW

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS



Quick Embroidery for a Luncheon Set

HERE an embroidered border is plainly shown. No pattern is necessary. Book offered herewith contains other interesting borders of this type. Space your stitches just as they are here. The embroidery should be done in a light and a dark color. Use all strands of six-strand mercerized embroidery thread. Color suggestions are—dark and lighter blue thread on white material—dark green and light yellow on light green material—black and bright blue on pale yellow—deep rose and brown on pale pink.

Baste ½-inch deep hems around both mats and napkins. Working from right side with double thread, make two rows of running stitches in the dark color, as at A, catching through the hem. Thread a blunt tapestry needle with the light thread and weave through the running stitches keeping needle pointed to the left as at B. Next, weave back again, as at C, still pointing the needle to the left.

Readers who have received their copy of Mrs. Spears' book on Sewing, for the Home Decorator, will be pleased to know that Book No. 2 is now ready. Ninety embroidery stitches; fabric repairing; also table settings; gifts; and many things to make for yourself and the children. If you like handwork you will be pleased with this unique book of directions for every article illustrated. Postpaid upon receipt of 25 cents (coin preferred). Just ask for Book 2, and address Mrs. Spears, 210 S. Desplaines St., Chicago, Ill.

Appliqued Kitchen Towels

Pattern 1679

A brand new idea . . . applique scraps of print to form the aprons for these gay, embroidered peasant figures which cheer up kitchen towels. Pattern 1679 contains a transfer pattern of seven motifs averaging 6 by 7¼ inches and applique pattern pieces; color suggestions; illustrations of all stitches used; material requirements.

Send 15 cents in stamps or coins (coins preferred) for this pattern to the Sewing Circle, Needlecraft Dept., 82 Eighth Ave., New York.

Please write your name, address and pattern number plainly.

AROUND THE HOUSE

Hanging New Curtains.—Baste a tuck in new curtains under the top hem where it will not show, then if the curtains shrink when first laundered it will be easy to let out the extra length.

* * *

Washing a Raincoat. — Soap should never be used when washing a raincoat. Instead, use a solution of one pound of alum to three gallons of water.

* * *

Odors Eliminated. — Left-over vegetables having a strong smell, such as cabbage, onions, cauliflower, etc., should be put into a glass jar and the top screwed on tightly before placing in the refrigerator. Otherwise the whole ice box will take up the unpleasant odor.

* * *

Save Pickling Sirup.—Sirup left from pickled or spiced fruits makes a delicious flavoring for roast meats.

* * *

Grind Cheese. — When using cheese for macaroni, potatoes, etc., do not grate it. Put it through the fine cutter of your meat chopper and you will not have any small pieces left over.

IRON the EASY WAY

INSTANT LIGHTING
Coleman SELF-HEATING Iron

Make ironing a quicker, easier and more pleasant task. Iron the easy way—with a Coleman, the genuine Instant Lighting Iron. Just turn a valve, strike a match and it lights instantly. The Coleman heats in a jiffy, is quickly ready for use. Operates for ½¢ an hour. See your dealer or write for FREE FOLDER.

THE COLEMAN LAMP AND STOVE CO.
Dept. WU320, Wichita, Kans.; Chicago, Ill.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Los Angeles, Calif. (7220W)

Cut Through Difficulties

The greatest men have been those who have cut their way to success through difficulties.—Robertson.

NERVOUS?

Do you feel so nervous you want to scream? Are you cross and irritable? Do you scold those dearest to you?

If your nerves are on edge, try LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND. It often helps Nature calm quivering nerves.

For three generations one woman has told another how to go "smiling through" with Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. It helps Nature tone up the system, thus lessening the discomforts from the functional disorders which women must endure.

Make a note NOW to get a bottle of world-famous Pinkham's Compound today WITHOUT FAIL from your druggist—more than a *million* women have written in letters reporting benefit.

Why not *try* LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND?

How Well

It matters not how long you lived, but how well.—Seneca.

"Black Leaf 40"
KILLS INSECTS
ON FLOWERS • FRUITS
VEGETABLES & SHRUBS
Demand original sealed bottles, from your dealer
3644

CHEW LONG BILL NAVY TOBACCO 5¢ PLUG

Advertised BARGAINS

● Our readers should always remember that our community merchants cannot afford to advertise a bargain unless it is a real bargain. They do advertise bargains and such advertising means money saving to the people of the community.