

Nowhere

By RUBY M. AYRES.
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(Continued from Yesterday.)

An idea flashed into her mind; she was very quick of perception; she sat up and stared at the boy with eager eyes.

Supposing it was to do with him that Martin had come? And supposing that Violet for what reason could Violet be holding the child? There was the offered reward. Olive puckered her dark brows thoughtfully. Violet was evidently flying for higher game than the mere reward; she recalled the letter she had seen addressed to Ronald Hastings; she laughed suddenly to herself—so that was Violet's little game! She had never believed her capable of such shrewd deception.

It was some time before Violet climbed the stairs. Olive had smoked three cigars. Ronnie was fast asleep.

Violet came into the room with dragging steps; she walked past the boy without planning at him; she threw her hat down on the bed, then she saw Olive.

"Olive, you do look tagged out! Do sit down; there's a present for you over there—a gem of a hat. I had to undo the box and have a look; you are a lucky girl. Who sent it to you?"

Violet glanced at the black hat indifferently; she took it up and saw the attached card.

"You know who sent it," she said coldly. Olive's eyes flashed; she threw a half-smoked cigarette into the empty fireplace almost viciously; she rose to her feet, snatched her chair along the worn linoleum; Ronnie woke up with a start.

"You're not very amiable tonight, my dear," Olive said languidly, though there were still angry sparks in her eyes. "I think I'll say 'a-t-a.' She left the room, shutting the door noiselessly.

Violet took Ronnie in her arms and laid him in bed; she did not kiss him, but she sat beside him staring before her with dry eyes, holding his little warm hand till he fell asleep.

She had quarreled with Leslie Martin, and she was afraid of the consequences. She had accused him of following her, of breaking his word; he had at first answered gently, making allowances for her; then he, too, had grown angry and finally, he had gone off without saying good-bye.

Violet turned her head and looked down at Ronnie; her grasp on him seemed to be loosening every day; soon the day would come when she would be alone once more, when the sixpenny boat and the penny engine would stand idly on the cheap chest of drawers, and wait in vain for the dear little man who had amused himself with them for so many hours.

She dragged herself to her feet; she wrote a hurried note to Martin, addressing it to Agate's Detective agency; she humbly asked his pardon for her unreasonable anger that evening; she reminded him aish of his promise to allow her the five days; she asked him to meet her on Friday evening following her motor drive with Hastings; she slipped out of the house and posted it, then she came back feeling happier and tried on the black hat with the bunched roses.

It suited her admirably; it threw up her delicate coloring and fair hair; she decided that she would wear it when she went out with Hastings; then she stood suddenly very still, the hat in her hands, staring at her pale reflection in the glass.

Hastings must know her address to have sent the hat to her, and if he knew her address—a fierce light crept into her eyes; she set her teeth. Well, she would prove herself a match—more than a match for them both, these two men who were so ruthlessly bent on snatching from her all that she had to love in the world.

Olive Hale was never one to let the grass grow under her feet; she believed in striking while the iron was hot. Accordingly, the following morning she sought out Mr. Gatwick, a fat, illiterate old man with a gold watch chain like a young cable, and greasy hair and asked if she might have the Friday morning off.

Mr. Gatwick smiled at Olive faintly; he considered her a "deuced nice girl" and had often decided in his mind what steps he would take if fate kindly ordained that he should be left a widower; he had had an unfortunate marriage, he had been successful from a business point of view—at 50 he was a wealthy man, but his wife had been in an asylum for 15 years and seemed likely to be there for another 15; but for the unhappy circumstance he would long ago have taken and have asked Olive to marry him and take over the management of his new and hideous red-brick mansion.

He invited her to sit down next to him, but she preferred to remain standing; she was conscious that she showed to greater advantage.

"I am so sorry to trouble you—she said. "But—if it will not be very inconvenient, may I have Friday morning off? It is only to see to a business matter. I could be here again at 2 o'clock."

She spoke very humbly. Mr. Gatwick liked humble people; he thought Olive would make a charmingly submissive wife; he would have been amazed had it been possible for him to compare notes with Mr. Green of the ribbon department.

"Certainly, certainly," he said in answer to her request.

He dragged himself up from his easy chair and leaned on his desk, looking across at her admiringly. "But take the whole day—take the 'ole day by all means."

Mr. Gatwick could never manage to get out an "h" more than once in a speech.

When Olive had thanked him effusively and gone again he sat for some seconds lost in thought; once he sighed ponderously—a sigh that agitatedly shook the gold cable; then he stretched out his hand and took the receiver off the telephone stand at his elbow.

He gave the number of the private asylum where Mrs. Gatwick spent the long days of her life playing with a rag doll. When he was connected he asked after his wife's health; the answer came back that she was very well indeed, marvelously well.

Mr. Gatwick said he was delighted

to hear it—exceedingly glad—but the melancholy of his fat face belied the words, and when he had hung up the receiver again he looked toward the door through which Olive had hustled in her silk shop gown and swore softly to himself.

Violet experienced no difficulty whatever in getting the Friday off; indeed, as she shrewdly suspected, Hastings had already spoken to madame, and madame merely smiled, and graciously consented, when the girl broached the subject to her.

Lena had hardly spoken to Violet since that scene in the dressing room at Violet's; she looked pale and unhappy. Violet was hurt, but she was too proud to make advances which she felt sure would be rejected; but when she left the establishment on the Thursday evening she hurried after Lena, who was some way ahead of her down the street.

"May I walk a little way with you?" she asked timidly.

Lena turned.

"Certainly, if you like," she said. The permission was chilling and ungracious but Violet pretended not to notice. She talked away about various subjects till they reached the corner and then Lena stopped.

"I go this way," she said.

"Oh," Violet flushed. There was such unmistakable dismissal in the tone. She looked at Lena appealingly; suddenly she held out an impulsive hand. "Oh, do be friends with me," she said.

But the impulsive hand was not taken; Lena drew her tall figure up almost disdainfully.

"You cannot want my friendship," she said. "You evidently do not trust me. I think it would be better to go on as we are now."

The tears rushed to Violet's eyes; she felt utterly lonely; at that moment she would have given a great deal had it been possible for her to tell Lena the whole story about Ronnie, about the game of pretense she was playing with the man who was Ronnie's father, but the thing was manifestly impossible. She turned away hopelessly.

Friday morning broke warm and sunny; in spite of herself Violet experienced a little thrill of excitement as she got out of bed and drew aside the blind. After all, the world was a beautiful place. She determined to forget the unpleasant side of what she was doing just for the one day and make the most of the pleasure lying to her hand.

She felt quite easy in her mind about Leslie Martin; he had, of course, got her letter by this time; tonight she would meet him as arranged, and apologize.

She half thought there might be a letter from him, but there was none.

She dressed herself in a white cotton frock, and the black hat Hastings had sent her. Ronnie watched her from his high chair with admiring eyes.

"Pretty mummy-girl," he said. "You darling!" Violet snatched him up in her arms and covered him with kisses. "If I could only take you with me," she said wistfully, as he clung about her neck.

"Take Ronnie, too," said Ronnie, coaxingly. "Take Ronnie with Mummy-girl."

Violet kissed him again, but she put him down determinedly. "Not today, darling; another day, Mummy-girl bring Ronnie some sweeties."

Ronnie nodded; he was used to being left behind and did not really mind; presently he waved her good-bye from the window quite contentedly, and stomped downstairs to find Mrs. Higgs.

"My Mummy-girl's got new hat," he informed her gravely.

Mrs. Higgs sniffed loudly, and peeled a potato with sudden viciousness; she had seen the creation from Violet's and it had made her suspicious.

"Fine feathers make fine birds," she said solemnly.

Ronnie stared, but the statement was past his comprehension; he turned away, and amused himself by putting small knobs of coal into a boot belonging to one of the many lodgers who made their home beneath the elastic roof where Mrs. Higgs resided.

Hastings had arranged to meet Violet at Charing Cross; he had asked to be allowed to call for her, but she had refused; she had not been able to prevent him from discovering her address, but she was quite determined that he should never call there. When she walked into the stationyard his big green-painted car was already chugging impatiently at the curbstone. Hastings himself was at the wheel; he had no intention of allowing a third party to spoil his day; he wore a rough grey suit with a loose motor coat over it, and a cap with the peak turned carelessly over the back of his head; he looked very young and eager as he sprang out from the seat to greet her.

"I was afraid you weren't coming," he said. "It's five minutes past."

Violet laughed in spite of herself. "Only three minutes late," she told him. His eyes rested admiringly on her flushed face beneath

the big black hat.

"Thank you for wearing it," he said in a low voice, as he helped her in beside him, and tucked the rug about her.

"You were not angry with me for sending it?"

"No," said Violet, but she turned her face from his ardent gaze; the old feeling of shame was creeping over her; she hated herself because she was with him, she hated him for assuming that air of protectiveness which she had always despised other girls for doing; she wondered miserably what Hastings was really thinking of her.

She tried to fix her thoughts on Ronnie, but the dear little baby face seemed misty and unreal; it was blotted out by that horrible sense of shame and self-contempt.

Presently they were gliding through the streets. Violet had never been in a private car before, and she leaned back with a delicious feeling of luxury; she told herself that she would not remember anything unpleasant; that she would forget the manner of her introduction to the man at her side; that for one day she would have enjoyment, real, real enjoyment.

(Continued in The Bee Monday.)

the opening paragraph of the brief. No Free Toll Service.

It also is stated that the company demands an increase at North Platte upon the basis of its own figures of 9.6 per cent, as against a return of 5.96 per cent for the entire state. The brief states that the nearest approach to North Platte is Alliance, where the company wants a return of 7.84 per cent.

One of the complaints cited in the brief is that at North Platte and in Lincoln county there is absolutely no free toll service to any of the surrounding villages.

"The citizens of North Platte wonder why they are singled out for this treatment," the brief reads. Also:

"If telephone rates are increased at North Platte many of the telephones will be removed. If the commission reduces the rates more telephones will be installed and the company's business will be better. This is the greatest problem that has been put up to the railway commission. Out of it we are convinced there will come a decision and a classification of rates, not such as the company desires, with the increase, but with the surcharge removed and a uniform schedule of rates for similar communities and classes of service. This is a great opportunity to serve the people and the company."

Phone Strike in North Platte Is Hinted in Brief

Chamber of Commerce and Patrons Enter Formal Protest Against Rate Boost Application.

Lincoln, June 23.—The Chamber of Commerce and telephone patrons of North Platte, Neb., in a memorandum brief filed today with the Nebraska State Railway commission, in the matter of the application of the Northwestern Bell Telephone company for an increase of telephone and toll rates, state that it looks as though North Platte was selected as the chief victim by the telephone company.

"Here (in North Platte) the greatest increase in telephone rates per month is demanded of any city in the state, and also it is demanded that North Platte pay the highest percentage of profits of any town in the state," is a statement contained in

Girl Awarded Verdict for \$8,000 Heart Balm

Lincoln, June 23.—(Special.)—Isaac A. Stine, wealthy Lincoln merchant, was ordered today to pay Gertrude Henoch of Brooklyn, N. Y., \$8,000 for breach of promise. The trial in district court has been under way for a week.

Stine is a cripple and, according to testimony, obtained a promise of marriage through correspondence with Miss Henoch following insertion of an advertisement in a matrimonial paper. It was charged he paid Miss Henoch's railroad fare here from Brooklyn, took her to his mother's home, purchased a trousseau and set the wedding date, but turned her down before the minister arrived.

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Jereen's Crushed Lila Tablets
Jereen's King Cocoa Soap
Jereen's Violet Transparent Soap

Woodbury's Facial Soap, 2 bars 43c
Sayman's Soap, 4 bars for37c
Resinol Soap, 3 bars for68c
Cashmere Bouquet Soap, 3 large bars to box69c

Pear Soap, Imported, transparent, 3 bars for62c
Swans Down Flour, 2 pks.69c
Best Creamery Butter, per lb.34c
New Potatoes, large, 1/2 peck.32c
2-lb. Basket Tomatoes25c
Cantaloupe, guaranteed, 6 for 55c
Fancy Home Grown Cucumbers, for5c and 10c
Strawberry Beets, 6 bunches.19c
Home Grown Stringless Green and Wax Beans, 2 qts.22c
Red Alaska Salmon, 1-lb. tins, 2 cans for58c
Sardines in Tomato Sauce, 15-oz. cans, 3 for50c
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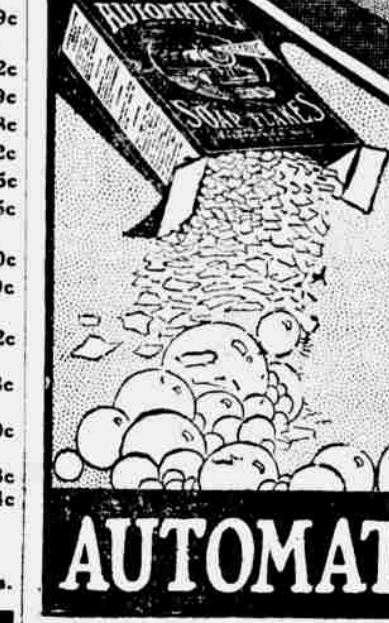
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