

honest fence. "Darling," said Arthur (there are two kinds of lovers-those who say darling seriously and those who put a laugh in it-Arthur was not the latter. His "darling" had already a delicate aura of coffee, bacon, and eggs). "Darling-it will have to be a long engagement, I'm afraid-

he was tall, and Amelie experienced the most

delicious thrill when he stooped above her. The

same thrill, no doubt, which in the botanic

world leads a rose veined, azure threated morn-

ing glory to stretch up its tendrils to clasp the

What could a nice girl have said if she did? "No-truly, Arthur-" said Amelic, close against his cheek.

"I shall have to make good-for you!" he told her.

Making good and a square deal were among Arthur's clinches. He was the sort of young man to whom politicians refer as the backbone of the country or the salt of the earth. Really, it needs no language but English to describe him. But his chin was wonderful.

Smooth shaven, of course, as perfect in line and contour as the chin of a statue. Women take great stock in chins. Amelie looked at Arthur's, and throbbed with pride. She reflected happily that he had a nice taste in collars, Of one may marry a man to reform but it's picer not to have to.

"You see," Arthur was saying, "this offer I've had from those people in Mexico means a comfortable living, but not at once. It may be a year, even two years, darling!"

"I'll wait for you, honey," murmured Amelic. "And when I write you-you'll come?"

"O, Arthur-way down there?"

"Darling-we'll have to live way down there, for a while at least. If things turn out as I hope they will. You'd like it. I'm sure you would. You're such a romantic little girl---" Here he tightened a strong arm, and Amelie sighed happily. "You'd be sure to like it; palms and lots of flowers and paties and fountains an-erpalms!" said Arthur. "I do love Spanish stuff." mused Amelic -- glamorous hour. Sometimes she found it hard

Mexico.

and outright penury.

mother out of a fog of crepe.

ceeded eagerly to learn about.

long ago.

earnest:

out a shadow of warning, and Amelie found

herself and her mother, when the dead man's

affairs were finally settled, facing the world

with only a small insurance policy between them

prised herself: "I'm going to find a job some-

where. I ought to have been doing something

She announced, with a courage that sur-

"Wait till we see what I can get," said Ame-

She found a place ultimately in a combina-

Arthur's epistolary protest was prompt and

store. I am working harder than ever, with

an eye to the day when I can take you out of

it and set you in our little house, where you

shall have nothing to do but be my little wife."

versely, "and wash dishes, and mend socks."

She turned back to her beloved job. Like a new

world, the goods on the shelves about her opened

a thousand vistas. Her awakening intelligence

nearly foundered itself, trying to drink the

stream dry. She realized for the first time what

color and line might mean; her finger tips

lingered happily over silken fabric and tissues

crusted with embroidery. She was like a new

creature, vibrant and exquisitely responsive. She

tried to write Arthur something of her evolu-

ling? You sound so excited. I don't want my

little girl wearing herself out. I have a piece

store, for once. I am getting a raise this month.

One more like it and all our hopes can come

true. Isn't that wonderful? I wish I could see

prints that had just come in, colorful things,

rench and English, with an occasional spirited

had done reading she lifted her eyes to a frivo-

lous gilt framed mirror on the opposite wall of

artistically loose (Arthur loved it sleek and net-

ted); a mouth touched with mockery-eyes full

Arthur would have liked to be able to watch

"What's the matter with you?" cried Amelle to herself amazedly. "What have you been

frock and turned away humming "Annie

of us is quite safe nowadays, would have ob-

She tucked the letter inside her soft grav

She saw a small, pale face with a touch of

Amelie read it, standing beside a box of new

your face when you read this!"

the mirror did not give back.

waiting for all this time?"

He replied with characteristic consideration:

"And sweep floors," thought Amelie per-

"I don't like the idea of your being in a

clothes made a pale small wraith of her, but her

spirit shot up fike a candle flame in the wind.

"I always have-that sort of catch in the music as if your heart missed a beat-or something because you saw somebody coming. And the big carved combs and mantillas-O. Arthur, true, will you send me a Spanish fan? They're going to be smart next winter." Arthur said he would. He wasn't entirely

clear as to the pure Castillianness, so to speak, of Mexico, but it was bound to be something like that. And the scent of the honey locust was potent as old wine.

"Only-" said Amelic, doubtfully-"only Arthur, honey-I couldn't go all the way there, you know-I really don't think I could. seems so sort of-conspicuous. Why couldn't you come up instead and meet me somewhere halfway?"

"Darling," said Arthur, "do you know, I can see how you feel, absolutely, and I love you for it. Let's see, now. There must be some place in between-some place I could come up to."

'And that I could go down to," cooed Amelie. There was. There always is. Even between heaven and hell, as lovers a-plenty had charted

it before these two. "I've got it," said Arthur at last. "Riverside -a little town in California. I was out there one summer. It's a nice place, with rather a wonderful inn-Spanish. Now, Amelie-here it At the end of two years-

"Or less, if possible," whispered Amelie, "Absolutely," said Arthur-"however, at the end of two years at the outside I will come to Riverside-you will meet me there-and-wewill-be-married! Is it a bargain!"

"Say 'Is it a promise?" she corrected sweetly. He obeyed her. She gave her word. They kissed each other with a touch of delicious drama. A flower of the honey locust fell and caught in her hair. He disentangled it gently, put it to his lips, and bestowed it in his pocket-

"O. Amelie, darling," he groaned, "two whole "Or less, if possible," said Amelie consol-

But she was just as beautifully distressed as he. They stayed out in the yard till midnight, when Arthur's well bred conscience drove him home, seeking in each other's arms and eyes and lips the frail assurance that journey's end means one thing only.

"I shall never forget this evening," said Arthur just before he left her.

"Say night-" sighed Amelie whimsically-"it's a so much more loverly word!" She cried herself to sleep when he had gone. He was really her first definite suitor. And the

sincerity of his lovemaking had set her heartstrings singing like a wind harp. Arthur himself slept little. Across the sleeping town they wove a web of rosy fancies,

One week later Arthur departed for Mexico. A week is not a long time in which to be engaged. It allows for all of the thrill and none of the anticlimax. Amelie and Arthur achieved in those seven days a pretty cycle of devotion. They accepted congratulations-Arthur was for shouting his news from the housetops at oncein a sort of lovely haze, and clung to each other as the time for parting drew near in a noble agony of renunciation.

"We'll have our honeymoon at the inn in California two years from now," was Arthur's served that she had first to stop and consciously

Gossamer Threads of Old Romance ultimate goodby. "Promise that nothing-nothing in this world shall keep you from coming to

Amelie promised, in tears. Arthur was really extraordinarily good looking, with that steady fiame in his fine gray eyes. She flung herself into his arms and sobbed wildly. "It's killing me to let you go-

But it didn't kill her, of course. She sat about the house and moped pathetically for a full month after his departure, then gradually drifted out into the current again and

back into something like her old routine. Nothing exactly as it was before, of course -for one thing, Arthur's ardent announcement of their engagement had set her a little outside the gayeties of her old crowd. Men said, "Ametie Lawrence? O, yes! She's engaged to Shergood-going to be married as soon as he can get a start," and neglected to ask Amelie to dances. She felt it, rather wistfully, at first; she had not quite meant to put her youth in pawn when Arthur left, but that apparently was what she had done. Neither matron nor debutanteneither fish, flezh, nor good red herring!

Still Arthur wrote devotedly, just at first every day, later on with a faithful regularity three times a week; and she fed her soul on the repeated expression of his love, his loneliness without her, his continual longing for her.

"I'm making good," he wrote toward the end of the first year. "The two years we set will just about see it. Then we can have a little



"I wouldn't give tonight for the rest of my life. This place and that Song and you."

"Do call it a position, my child!" wailed her recall that it was Arthur's favorite tune. Then

she flatted it She wished sometimes that Arthur's letters lie. She smiled her rather plaintive smile. Black had more of Arthur himself. How many a woman has wished that before her, of stolid, businesslike masculine script! One remembers a moment of beautiful madness-a husky mastion book and art shop of which Beechwood was culine voice, breaking with tenderness-eyes justly proud. Books she had always loved in a that burn a hole in one's soul, and the postman haphazard, omnivorous way; pictures she proobliges next day or next week, with a chilly

crackling sheet of paper beginning clumsily: "My Dearest M. or N.: I am sitting down to write to you after a busy day. I know you will be glad to hear that I found the place Okehand everything ready for me to take hold."

It isn't quite what one would be glad to hear. of course; however, the average man makes but inadequate love with a pen. Which probably saves him a good deal of trouble, at that, Arthur, in any case, was no knight of the

quill. He said what he had to say definitely and on time, added the customary number of dariings and little girls, and called it a day, "He takes me just as much for granted as if

I were his-collar button!" Amelie thought rebelliously. She thought of the honey locust, but with the passing of two years, the honey locust grew vague somehow, like a tree in a lovely stage setting, hung with artificial garlands. still stood in Amelia's yard, two springs it flowered heartlessly without Arthur; but its magic waned. It was now, at best, a tree. A little "Are you sure you aren't overworking, dar- stereotyped, like the letters, which were now

all Amelie had of her great moment. Toward the end of the second year, Amelie's mother remarried.

of news for you that may make you forget the That was a distinct blow to Amelie, who had not even seen it coming. She knew the man had been an old suitor of her mother's, knew that he sometimes came to the house, knew that he seemed to care, in a stolid, inarticulate sort of way-but marriage-with Amelie's father so new a ghost! With the crepe veil and black kid bit of black and white among them. When she gloves so lately put away!

Amelie was hurt. She was affronted. She quivered with disgust-the fastidious unreasoning disgust of youth for middle aged ardors. The stepfather had been some years a widdelicate rose on the cheeks; cloudy dark bair, ower and possessed already of a tidy family. When Amelie thought of his grizzled mustache

and neat alpace coat, of his grown daughter's of dreams, but the ecstatic happiness which shrill, inane laughter, and the deviltries of his two small freckled sons, she felt as if cuckoos had crowded her out of her nest. She stayed late at the shop and came home

with reluctance to her place at the noisy dinner table over which her mother now presided. Mrs. Lawrence, Mrs. Lawrence no longer, torn between old ties and new, offered the ob-Laurie." but a psycho-analyst, from whom none vious solution when Amelie's unrest became apparent.

"Anyhow," she protested pathetically, "you'd

be leaving me, sooner or later, to get married yourself, you know, you and Arthur."

It made Amelie turn with a desperate dependence to Arthur's letters, which just about that time displayed a renaissance of ardor, as if in answer to her need. "The time's almost up," he wrote, "I'm due another raise in a month and as soon as I get

it I'll wire you. Then you will start west to meet me, darling! Riverside, Cal.-remember? Take the California limited-that's the best train-get off at San Bernardino and drive over to the inn. I'll be waiting for you, there. 1 wonder if we will find each other at all changed. I am sure you will be the same dear little girl. As fer me, I am what I have always been, your faithful old sweetheart. It's been a hard two years, but we'll forget all that once we're together again. A man has temptations" (he had blacked something out there and gone on again), "a lot of temptations a sheltered little girl like you knows nothing about-but I've kept your picture on my desk and your promise in my mind-and here we are, almost out of the wood! . When I wire, be ready to start. It might be any day now."

Amelie was distinctly moved by that letter. She went out and bought herself a gray coat and skirt to travel in, also some demurely smart blouses and an engaging little gray hat. She added other things, a small but dainty trousseau, then held her hands and waited for Arthur's wire to come.

Her road to Rome, as it were. Her key to the garden of the world.

It troubled her a bit, nevertheless, that even Arthur's photograph could not make real for her now his eyes and mouth. She had lost her power to visualize him, completely. "I feel-as if he were-almost strange," she told her mother in a moment of insistent misgiving. "It's so hard to keep it all real-over two years-and he" (a flare of nervous shyness) "he seems so -sure and so-so" (she stumbled over a reticent word) "so affectionate."
"It'll be all right," said her mother com-

fortingly. "Arthur's a good boy. Just you be as faithful as he is." That really seemed to cover everything, that

last homely bit of advice. When Arthur's wire eventually came Amelie packed her trunk, gave up her position in the little bookshop, and climbed aboard the California limited with a sense of high fulfillment -if a most irregular pulse.

Arthur had said merely, "Meet me Mission Inn Riverside June Fifteenth love." Not a lengthy slogan at the sound of which tear up one's life by the roots, but Amelie responded gallantly. She said goodby to the locust tree the night before she left with a

vague feeling that she who was about to die

saluted it. The focust tree was blooming but sparsely that year. It dropped no amorous blessoms on her hair. Approaches now the distressful and proble-

matic part of the story of Amelie Lawrence. She slept none too well that first night, as might have been expected, rose late the next morning-she had a lower berth-and dressed and made her way out to the dining car. A negro waiter came forward to meet her. was either a stupid or an uncommonly clever creature. He scated Amelic at a small spotless table on which silver and glass and china gilttered brightly in the rays of the 8 o'clock sun, and presented her with a menu. Just across the small spotless table sat a man reading a book and waiting apparently for his breakfast. In the fact of him lay the stupidity or uncommon eleverness of the waiter.

Outside the window the Kansas landscape streamed by, naked as God had made it, yet with a certain flat freshness about it.

Amelie wrote upon her order slip: Orange juice, coffee, rolls.

But she nearly set down her startled subconscious ery, "Oh, Amelie, my child. What a man! He couldn't possibly be as wonderful as he

She shouldn't have responded to the wonderfulness of him, of course, but she did in an odd sert of way, with Arthur looming always

in the back of her mind. For one thing he, the man across the table, looked like the direct lineal descendant of caballeres and hidalgos. His dark eyes were full of a melancholy amusement. He had dark, smooth hair and a small sophisticated dark mustache. In another day he would have worn ruffles at the wrist and carried a rapier. As it was, his clothes were good, not too new, and he wore a black opal in a dark knitted tie. His hands, holding the book, which Amelie made out by indirect lady-like glances to be a play of Bennvente's, were slim and brown and incon-uously strong looking. They gave her, those hands. merely in looking at them, a faint warning thrill, which she could not help but feel to be

In the midst of her musings he looked at her and spoke, in a voice that could have belonged to no other man that Amelie had ever

Of course, he only said, "May I have the sugar?" (His grapefruit had arrived.) But that voice! It was tragically beautiful, Full of whimsical inflections and deep velvety undertones. The voice of Hadlequin, rhyming the moon in an old garden, among forgloves and roses, where fountains played-but lunguidlyand one time gods and goddesses stood formally about, their marble limbs gleaming palely against the massed dark green of laurel and rhododendron.

Amelie gave him the sugar bowl, smiling faintly. Not in the least beyond the degree prescribed by convention for ladies traveling alone.

"It's a delightful morning," he assured her gravely. There was an undoubtedly humorous glint in the deep dark eyes. "A little warm, I think," said Amelie primly.

"I like it warm," he said, as if that obviously affected the thing.

"But not too warm," said Amelie To herself she cried in scorn. "He'll think you're a hopeless prig. Do behave as if you'd talked to a man without an introduction before." As a matter of fact she never had, which glamored the whole affair and put her

She shut her teeth, took a deep breath, wiped what Arthur would think of her out of consideration, and said sweetly: "Do tell me what that is you're reading.

at a disadvantage.

I've been dying of curiousity." He held it up for her to see with a sudden

and charming smile. "'Antumna! Roses,' by Jacinto Benavente.

Do you know him?" "No-it's good?" said Amelie eagerly. 'It distinctly isn't. Although I hoped it would be. Are you ever violently disappointed in books you take on trains with you? It matters so much more, then-you're so helpless, You can't trot an entire library about. I suppose one should rely on Shakespeare and the Bible. But fancy either one of 'em in an ob-

What do you read?" She could see he was really interested in what she read and answered with a touch of

ahyness: "I've got two-this time." (she was glad he couldn't possibly know she had never been two whole days on a train before in her narrow little life). "The Way of All Flesh' and in case

I shouldn't like that, 'The Book of a Hundred "You must be going to build one," he offered. His eyes, eyen in the lightest moments,

had a glow and a warmth that startled. 'I-unless it's built already," said Amelie. She applied herself hurriedly to her breakfast, which the waiter set down before her. After all, one didn't tell one's intimate affairs

to strangers. "May I have the sugar back again?" she

inquired quaintly. "Which means," he interpreted, handing it, "that you consider we're getting on too fast for dining car acquaintances. Sorry! Shall we go back and begin at the weather? I'll try to progress more slowly. Let me see-books look safe enough, and yet they got us into personalities in no time."

"I really like personalities, rather," said Amelie unexpectedly. "Which means you've reconsidered and are

willing to take a chance on my being respectable ' She lifted an eyebrow at him importinently,

"Oh, respectable-no question of that-but how safe are you?"

"Not too safe to be interesting, I hope." "A dark man-and a blonde woman, you know," said Amelie daringly-"nature's danger signals, so I've been told."

"Then it must have been a blonde man or a dark woman that told you, he retorted pleas-He finished his breakfast and lingered, mak-

ing conversation, obviously attracted by her! Amelie deliberately dawdled over hers. They discovered a bookish tendency in commonlaughed at the same things.

She said at last, rising: "Goodby-you may go back to Benavente now.' "Perhaps I shall see you later on in the ob-

Did he sound assured. A frequent conqueror? Amelie replied coolly:

"Oh, I scarcely think so." He bowed, accepted the rebuff with a dig-

nity so delightful Amelie felt herself absurd to have offered it. Nevertheless, she left him standing there

and made her way back to the Pullman, where among her bags and wraps and magazines she sat down determinedly to think of Arthur and the future. It was not so easy to think of Arthur. He seemed at first to wear a small, dark mustache, which was, of course, ridiculous. Amelie swept her mind clear of extraneous matter and said to herself over and over like a charm, "Riverside, June 15th, love." In the midst of which, some one paused in her section, murmured a vague apology, and sat down in the other seat. It was the man of the dining car.

Amelie flushed brilliantly. Alarm took her. Had her first and only adventure in unaccredited romance resulted unfortunately? "Sorry," he said, with an appeasing smile, "know it seems like a silly musical show or something. I nearly doubted my eyes when I

came down the car just now and saw you sitting here. Have you the lower?" "Yes," said Amelie, a trifle coldly, "I have.

> He continued deprecatingly: "I am going as far as San Bernardino."

"So am I." said Amelie. At which a tide of amusement rose in them

"Riverside?" he suggested hopefully, Amelie nodded, trying to look grim. "And the Mission inn?"

"Oh, this is too absurd!" she cried. "Isn't it?" he agreed; "but I do think, in the interests of propriety, we should not tell

each other our names and produce letters by way of credentials. Don't you?" Amelie had really a delicious laugh, slight

and silvery, with a shy sort of catch. She told him formally in the midst of it: "Mine is Amelie Lawrence."

"It's utterly adorable," he commented. "What's yours?" she demanded.

"Don Reynard."

"As in fox?" "As in a French fox-Reynard-accent ea the last syllable. I'm fussy about that, What do you think I sound like?"

"You sound like the lover in a medera French comedy," Amelie told him quickly; but you look like a Spanish grandee-once or twice removed.

Reynard said with a softened note in his voice, "My mother was Spanish. Her name

was Mercedes Castellanos." "How lovely!" said Amelie softly. She added with a shy sense of sudden intimacy: "Mine's name was Amelia Manning before she married

my father?" What is it now?" he teased.

"Amelia Manning Lawrence Wolfers," said Amelie.

"Oh!" said Don Reynard, "I see." He looked so sympathetic that Amelie's underlip nearly quivered. "Are you running away from a stepfather, by any chance?"

"I am going-" Amelie began. She stopped, and looked down at her two hands folded nicely together in her lap. It occurred to her auddenly, almost violently, that to say to this fascinating stranger that she was going out to meet Arthur and be married to him would undoubtedly put a period to what was beginning to seem the most remantic of adventures.

Also, once married to Arthur, romantic adventures would likely not come her way every day in the week, if any day in any week,

It was not, deliberately, as a last fling that she embarked upon the thing, but something like it. Her mental processes were such as to bring a flush to her smooth, soft cheek and keep her long, dark lashes at halfmast,

"What shall we talk about?" he inquired suddenly, watching her, "that is likely to get us past the preliminaries quickest and put us heart to heart, so to speak. I know a lot of things on which I'd like to compare preferences

"Begin at the beginning and tell me about you," commanded Amelie, "You'll like that and I can be thinking what to leave out about me." She had a faint, a very faint and rather provocative dimple in her left cheek. Don Rey-

nard observed it at once. "I'll tell you one thing," he said earnestly, "and that is this: I never expected, when cursing my luck at having to take this upper yesterday, that you-oh, well: How far back shall I begin? I was born of honest parents-not so poor then as later, unhappily-in a place in outsiana of which you never heard-in Bayou Lafourche. My father had some money, from his father; won some more in the Louisiana lottery, of cruel fame; lost everything in the same convenient way-and shot himself through the head one fine morning in April when I was

a years old." Amelie exclaimed sharply-a small, shaken sound. For all his light tone and the slightly bitter mockery of his words there was, for the moment, a heavy shadow in her companion's

"My story at least begins with a shocktechnically, I believe, that's said to be good. It's when I think of my mother it seems indecently unfair. She wasn't made for hard times. She didn't know how to be poor. Nor unhappy. She was lovely and frail and helpless. She died a year after my father, and an aunt in Chicago took me. I must have been a handful. But she had three boys of her own who licked me into shape, gratuitously. I went to school with them, went to college, got out, floundered around a bit, tried business, tried law-to please my aunt -tried architecture, to please myself-and

found myself. "Oh, you are an architect!" said Amelie hap-

pily. "Of sorts," he admitted, smiling into her servation car. It doesn't seem decent somehow. eager eyes. "Why? Do you like the tribe? Or is it just because you are going to build a house -unless it's built already?"

"I like houses," she explained, smiling back

at him. "And I've been working in a shop where we did a bit of decorating, you know! Oh, not a big shop. But we used to help people about framing and draperies and things." "I like girls who work at something," said

Don Reynard, approvingly. "I was afraid you might be an idle rich." "Ha!" said Amelie scornfully, "Do I look it?"

"Now that," he returned gravely, "is something we won't go into, becaus if I tell you so early as this, what I think you look like, I shall be snubbed and put out of this section.' "I'm glad you realize it."

"So, instead, suppose you tell me about you," he finished gravely. "And then we can proced to likes and dislikes, favorite flowers, pet aversions and such. Begin at the beginning. When I was a little girl-by the way-you aren't much

more than that now, are you?" "When I was a little girl," copied Amelle, ignoring frivolities. She told him a great deal about herself in

th next half-hour, all of it quite truthful, but none of it involving Arthur. And when she had done with her feminine Oryssey, they went on as he had suggested, likes to dislikes, of which it appeared almost at once

they had an extraordinary number in common. Amelie had never known a man with whom she felt herself so instantly and utterly at home in the most beautiful sense of the word. She began to feel and so, apparently, did he, almost at once, as if they had known each other forever. "Simpatica-that's what you are, most of all" he told her just before they went out to

luncheon together. "Sympathetic?" inquired Amelie, frankly pleased. Don Reynard looked at her for a moment,

smiling his dark, amused smile before he an-"Not just that, exactly. Sympathetic, of course, congenial-all that sort of thing. But it implies as well-let me see! Someone you-you

could love, if you see what I mean. That's really the sense of it." Amelie saw. It was what in a less definite phrasing she had been working out to herself about him. A trifle early to have arrived at

it, on either side. They lunched together. Part of that afternoon he took himself off to the smoker while Amelia tried to sleep and tiresomely couldn't; but part they sat and talked as in the morning, of a thousand suddenly important nothings, after which they dined together, and for two moonlit dusty hours watched thin silver rails

spinning out into the flying shadows behind the train. A folding chair on the rear platform of an observation car is not a cushiony seat, but Amelie could not remember afterward any deep discomfort. She went to sleep with the sound of a slow caressing drawl in her ears-meaning

On the following day she meant to tell about Arthur. But she didn't. For the following cay, advancing out of farms into prairies and out of prairies into long gray stretches of sage brush with painted rocks smudging the sky line, advanced also with an incredible swiftness and a breathless charm into a multitude of acutely personal discoveriesas that they both liked quantities of sugar in coffee (after all-it had begun with the sugar bowl-significant), as that neither of them could bear "Main Street" (with all the rest of the world devouring it), as that he adored beautiful hands, and Amelie's were the innocent pride of her life. As that he-as that she-as that

It's never a new story, unless you happen to be starring in it.

Don Reynard had laughed at a hundred other men for the same sort of thing inte (Continued on Page 1-B.)