

# FRAN

BY JOHN BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

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### SYNOPSIS.

Fran arrives at Hamilton. Gregory's home in Littleburg, but finds him absent conducting the choir at a camp meeting. She repairs a chair in secret, in order to laugh during the service and is asked to leave. Abbott, superintendent of schools, escorts Fran from the church. She tells her Gregory is a wealthy man deeply interested in charity work, and is seen by Sapphira Clinton, sister of Robert Clinton, chairman of the school board. Fran tells Gregory she wants a home with him. Grace Noir, Gregory's private secretary, takes a violent dislike to Fran and advises her to go away at once. Fran hints at a twenty-year-old secret, and Gregory in agitation asks Grace to leave the room. Fran relates the story of how Gregory married a young girl at Springfield while attending college and then deserted her. Fran is the child of that marriage. Gregory had married his present wife three years before the death of Fran's mother. Fran explains that Fran is the daughter of a very dear friend who is dead. Fran agrees to the story. Mrs. Gregory insists on her making her home with them and takes her to her rooms. It is decided that Fran must go to school. Grace shows persistent interest in Gregory's story of his dead friend and thinks that Fran may be an impostor. Fran declares that the secretary must go. Grace begins nagging tactics in an effort to drive Fran from the Gregory home, but Mrs. Gregory remains staunch in her friendship. Fran is ordered before Superintendent Ashton to be punished for her subordination in school. Chairman Clinton is present. The affair ends in Fran leaving the school in company of the two men to the amusement of the scandal-mongers of the town. Abbott, while taking a walk alone at midnight, finds Fran on a bridge telling her fortune by cards. She tells Abbott that she is the fortune-teller's name. Fran tells the fortune of a man. Fran tells of a man who is coming home after midnight with a man. She guesses next of the story and surprises the rest from Abbott.

"Didn't Fran refuse to tell?" Abbott temporized.

"Yes," was the skilful response; "but her reticence must have been to save you, for the girl never seems ashamed of anything she does. I imagine she hated to get you into trouble."

"Miss Grace, you have heard Mrs. Gregory say that she trusts me—and she is Fran's guardian. I ask you to do the same."

"I must consider my conscience. That answer closed all argument."

"You had better tell her," said Mrs. Gregory, "for she is determined to know."

"I was taking a walk to rest my mind," Abbott said slowly, proceeding as if he would have liked to fight his ground inch by inch, "and it was rather late. I was strolling about Littleburg. At last I found myself at the new bridge that leads to the camp-meeting grounds, when ahead of me there was—I saw Fran. I was much surprised to find her out there, alone."

"I can understand that," said Grace quietly, "for I should have been surprised myself."

"Mrs. Gregory turned upon Grace. 'Let him go on!'" she said with a flash that petrified the secretary.

"When I came up to the bridge, she was sitting there, with some cards—alone. She had some superstition about trying fortunes on a new bridge at midnight, and that explains the lateness of the hour. So I persuaded her to come home, and that is all."

Mrs. Gregory breathed with relief. "What an odd little darling!" she murmured, smiling.

"What kind of fortune was she telling?" Grace asked.

"Whatever kind the new bridge would give her."

"Oh, then the cards stood for people, didn't they? And the card you dropped in the yard was your card, of course."

"Of course."

"And did Fran have a card to represent herself, perhaps?"

"I have told you the story," said Abbott, rising.

"That means she did. Then she wanted to know if you and she would."

Mrs. Gregory. I have always felt that Fran has deceived us about her age! She is older than she pretends to be!"

"I believe this concludes our bargain," said Abbott, rising.

Mrs. Gregory was calm. "Miss Grace, Fran told me long ago that she is eighteen years old; she came as a little girl, because she thought we would take her in more readily, if we believed her a mere child."

"Does Mrs. Gregory know that?" "I haven't told him, I don't know whether Fran has or not."

"You haven't told him?" Grace was speechless. "You knew it and haven't told him? What ought I to do?"

"You ought to keep your promise," Abbott retorted hotly.

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Mrs. Gregory rose, and spoke through her mother's ear-trumpet: "Shall we go home, now?"

"That Fran," repeated Grace, "is a show-girl! She is eighteen or nineteen years old, and she is a show-girl!"

"Wouldn't it be best for you to ask her?"

"Ask her? Her? No, I ask you!" "Let me push the chair," said Abbott, stepping to Mrs. Gregory's side. He read in the troubled face that she had known this secret, also.

The secretary gazed at him with a far-away look, hardly conscious that he was beating retreat, so absorbed was she in this revelation. It would be necessary for some one to go to Springfield to make investigations. Grace had for ever alienated Abbott. Ashton, but there was always Robert Clinton. He would obey her every wish; Robert Clinton should go. And when Robert had returned with a full history of Hamilton Gregory's school-days at Springfield, and those of Gregory's intimate friends, Fran, with the proofs of her conspiracy spread before her, should be driven forth, never again to darken the home of the philanthropist.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### Alliance With Abbott.

For the most part, that was a silent walk to Hamilton Gregory's. Abbott Ashton pushed the wheel-chair, and it was only Mrs. Jefferson, ignorant of what had taken place, who commented on the bright moon, and the relief of rose-scented breezes after the musty auditorium of Walnut Street church.

"They were bent and determined on Fran going to choir practice," the old lady told Abbott, "so Lucy and I went along to encourage her, for they say she has a fine voice, and they want all the good singing they can have at Uncle Tobe Fuller's funeral. I despise big doings at funerals, but I expect to go, and as I can't hear the solos, nor the preacher working up feelings, all I'll have to do will be to sit and look at the coffin."

"Mother," said Mrs. Gregory, "you are not cheerful tonight."

"No," the other responded, "I think it's from sitting so long by the White Sepulcher."

Mrs. Gregory spoke into the trumpet, with real distress—"Mother, mother! Abbott won't understand you; he doesn't know you are using a figure of speech."

"Yes," said the old lady, "number thirteen, if there's anything unlucky in figures."

Abbott effected diversion. "Mrs. Gregory, I'm glad Miss Noir agreed to say nothing about her discoveries, for the only harm in them is what people might imagine. I was pretty uneasy, at first, of course I knew that if she felt she ought to tell it, she would. I never knew anybody so conscientious."

There was a pause, then Mrs. Gregory responded, "She will not tell."

Abbott had seen them safely into the house, and had reached the gate on his departure, when Fran came running up. In pleased surprise he opened the gate for her, but she stopped in the outside shadow, and he paused within the yard.

"Fran!" he exclaimed with pleasure. "Is the practice ended?"

She made no response.

"Fran, what's the matter?" Silence.

Abbott was both perplexed and hurt. "Remember what we said on the new bridge," he urged; "we're friends while we're together and after we part!"

"Somebody ought to burn that new bridge," said Fran in a muffled tone; "it's no good making wishes come true."

"Why do you say that? Aren't you the best of friends?"

Fran collected herself, and spoke with cool distinctness: "I have a pretty hard fight, Mr. Ashton, and it's necessary to know who's on my side, and who isn't. I may not come out ahead; but I'm not going to lose out from taking a foe for a friend."

"Which you will kindly explain?" "You are Grace Noir's friend—that explains it."

"I am your friend, too, Fran."

"My friend, too!" she echoed bitterly. "Oh thanks—also!"

Abbott came through the gate, and tried to read her face. "Does the fact that I am her friend condemn me?"

"No—just classifies you. You couldn't be her friend if you were not a mirror in which she sees herself; her conscience is so sure, that she hasn't use for anything but a faithful reflector of her opinions."

"Her friends are mere puppets, it appears," Abbott said, smiling. "But that's rather to her credit, isn't it? Would you mind to explain your imagination of her character?"

His jesting tone made her impatient. "I don't think her character has ever had a chance to develop; she's too fixed on thinking herself what she isn't. Her opinion of what she ought to be is so sure, that she has never discovered what she really is. And you can't possibly hold a secret from her, if you're her friend; she takes it from you as one snatches a toy from a little child."

Abbott was still amused. "Has she emptied me of all she wants?"

"Yes. You have given her strong weapons against me, and you may be sure she'll use them to her advantage."

"Fran, step back into the light—let me see your face; are you in earnest?"

Her eyes are smoldering—Oh, Fran, those eyes! What weapons have I given her?"

Fran set her back against the fence, and looked at him darkly. "The secret of my age, and the secret of my past."

"I told her neither."

"As soon as you and Mrs. Gregory wheeled away Mrs. Jefferson," said Fran, "I went right down from the choir loft, and straight over to her. I looked her in the eye, and I asked what you had been telling about me. Why, you told her everything, even that I was trying to find out whether you and I would ever—would ever get married! I might as well say it, it came out enough from her—and you told! Nobody else knew. And you dropped your King of Hearts over the fence—you told her that! And when we were standing there at the gate, you even tried—but no, I'll leave you and Miss Grace to discuss such subjects. Here we are at the same gate, but I guess there's not much danger, now!"

"Fran!" cried Abbott, with burning cheeks. "I didn't tell her, upon my honor I didn't. I had to admit dropping the card, to keep her from thinking you out here at midnight with a stranger. She saw you in the shadow, and guessed—that other. I didn't tell her anything about your age, I didn't mention the carnival company."

Fran's concentrated tones grew kinder. "But Mrs. Gregory has misheard about the show all this time. She would die before she'd tell on me."

"I never told, Fran. I'm not going to say that again; but you shall believe me."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



Fran Set Her Back Against the Fence and Looked at Him Darkly.

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### QUICK WIT PREVENTS PANIC

Natural Aptitude to Grasp a Situation Turned to Good Account on Stage.

Natural aptitude to grasp a situation has been turned to account more than once on the stage, and in one case, if the veracity of a favorite comedian goes for anything, it saved a panic and possible loss of life.

"We were playing one-night stands," said he, "in Kansas during the terrible period of cyclones, and found ourselves in a large, dilapidated building, called, by courtesy, a theater."

The low comedian was on the stage in the part of a drunken husband receiving a vigorous lecture from his wife. "Madam," he had just roared, "when there was a roar heard, followed by a tremendous crash, the building swaying like a tree in a storm. Everybody jumped to their feet, for they saw the roof had been carried away. They were about to turn and make one dash for the exits, when the comedian, com-

ing down to the footlights, looked up into the air, and, quick as a flash, turned to the lady, and said: "There, what did I tell you?"

The audience howled with laughter, and the quick-witted comedian was undoubtedly the means of preventing a serious calamity."

St. Kildan Parliament.

One feature of St. Kildan life would have appealed strongly to Doctor Johnson if he had carried out his intention of spending a winter on the island.

The men of St. Kilda, writes John Sands, "are in the habit of congregating in front of one of the houses almost every morning for the discussion of business. I called this assembly the parliament, and with a laugh they adopted the name. When the subject is exciting they talk with loud voices and all at one time, but when the question is once settled they work together in perfect harmony. Shall we go to catch solan-geese, or ling, or mend the boat today? Such are some examples of the questions that occupy the house. Sometimes disputes are settled by drawing lots."

### VARYING IDEAS FOR BATHING COSTUMES



AMERICAN and Parisian designers agree that white makes an attractive tone for bathing garments. The two models shown give one an idea of the bathing garments very much in vogue at American and Parisian seaside resorts. The American costume on the left is of white silk with sandals to match and headgear of the same color. The Parisian garment, on the right, is of white tulle trimmed with broad silk braid of the same color, and cap to match.

### FIVE-MINUTE SCALP MASSAGE IMPROVING SKIN OF THROAT

Persevered in This Treatment Will Bring Best Results and Hair Will Not Become Oily. Just a Few Minutes Each Day, With Proper Applications, Will Accomplish Wonders.

If your scalp is dry and shows dandruff, get a bottle of ordinary red vaseline. Pat a very little of the vaseline on the tip of each finger of your hand; then rub the tips of the fingers of the other hand against those that have vaseline on them. There should be apparent then only a slight oiliness of all the finger tips. Next place the finger tips upon the scalp at the edge of the hair, one hand at either side of the head. It does not matter much whether you start at the nape of the neck, or on the forehead, but wherever you do start, let the hands be an even distance apart. For instance, place one in back of each ear. Once started rub the finger tips above each temple, slowly and gently forward, until they meet at the crown of the head. Then draw them back to the starting point in the same manner. Repeat this operation until the finger tips be applied to them. By means of this five minute massage more vaseline is rubbed into the scalp than one realizes, and it is well nourished thereby. If the massage is properly carried out, that is to say, always started at the hair line, and little vaseline used, the hair will not become the least oily a result.

Draped Lace Tunics. Although perhaps the lace tunic has a tendency to age its wearer it has compensating merits which recommend it to women of middle age and even younger women who have a tendency to stoutness. For the close-fitting pointed tunic of black lace cut with the upper part in the form of a coat tends to make the figure look slim in a manner that many, alas! find eminently desirable as years come fast upon them. The favorite lace employed is Chantilly, and when one knows how to drape artistically nothing can be more elegant. On the contrary, nothing can be dowdier than a drapery which seeks to be artistic—and fails lamentably in the attempt.

Wash Silk Petticoats. Wash silk petticoats are a useful addition to any wardrobe, be it limited or not. They are made of somewhat heavy silk, is almost as durable as heavy all-silk material and is more durable for petticoats, at least, than cheap all silk. The petticoats are made in striped pattern with scant bias flounces at the bottom. They can be worn with any light street costumes. One of violet and white in narrow stripes could be worn with tan, green or violet outside skirts; one of tan and white would find many uses, and more decided colors would be useful to wear with a few frocks.

### LATE PARISIAN MODEL



Margaine Lacroix model of pink charmeuse with skirt veiled by white lace. White chiffon yoke.

To Gain Health and Beauty. A teaspoonful of olive oil before each meal is an excellent thing for the nervous as well as a tissue builder, and is said to prevent the joints from becoming stiff and rheumatic. Outwardly applied, it prevents wrinkling, which is caused by a deficiency of fat in the cells of the skin. In cases of extreme waste of tissue larger doses are advised, as the oil is absolutely pure nourishment. Keeping oil in darkness is the secret of its remaining sweet. Cold is less essential than darkness.

Fan Again in Fashion. The fetching neck ruff remains a great favorite with the girl of the season. A chic girl at a smart afternoon gathering the other day wore the latest and shrewdest development of the ruff, which consists of but a single thickness of fine tulle, with rary a plait.

### STRIKE WON IN 20 MINUTES

Union Is Formed and Disbanded Within Short Time After Cause Is Won.

A story comes from Sydney of a union that was formed, strike declared and won, the union dissolved, all in a matter of 20 minutes.

The strike was of theater-goers in Mt. Gambier, in South Australia, and was against tongs. The management of a barn-storming troupe.

The management asked two shillings for admission to the show, but the prospective audience refused to pay more than one shilling, and after a hasty consultation outside the theater formed a theater-goers' union.

Pickets were stationed and within a few minutes 278 persons—practically all who were there—had agreed not to pay the two shillings.

The manager appeared at the doorway and refused to make the required reduction. "I'll give you till I count 20," said the president of the union, "and after that our price will be sixpence instead

of one shilling." He counted slowly to nine, when the manager capitulated. The strike was declared at an end, the union dissolved and the strikers trooped into the hall.—New York Tribune.

Receiving a Seat.

"Why don't you let the people in?" suggested Mr. Justice Joyce in trying to solve the Paladium queue tangle. This would be putting the theatrical clock back. In the seventeenth century doors were opened long before the curtain rose. Peggy, for instance, patronizes the pit: "To the playhouse at a little past 12 to get a good place in the pit," and then, getting a poor man to keep my place, I out and spent an hour at Martin's, my book-seller's, and so back again, when I found the house quite full. But I had my place."—London Chronicle.

Queer Uses for the Crocus.

The crocus is nowadays held to justify its existence by its beauty, but in bygone centuries it was cultivated with an eye to profit—its saffron being in high demand both as an

aromatic and as a flavoring for cakes and pies. A distinction of crocus blossoms, also, was held to be good for strengthening the lungs and heart, and as a preventive of plague. Evidence of the flower's commercial value survives in the name of the chief center of its cultivation, Saffron Walden, but saffron nowadays is appreciated only by the sparrows, who wreck the crocuses to obtain it.

"Lorna Doone's" Popularity.

Richard Blackmore's romance, "Lorna Doone," was by no means a success on its first publication. The public gave it but grudging approval, and like many another good novel, it might have hovered on the verge of oblivion but for the opportune marriage of the Marquis of Lorne. Then, for the first time, did the initial word of the book's title, "Lorna," catch the eye of the public, who, imagining that it must have reference to the queen's new son-in-law, rushed to get a copy, which, if it made no reference to the Argyle family, afforded in its charming Devonshire story ample compensation to its purchasers.