

Banner Serial Fiction

MAIDEN EFFORT

By SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

CHAPTER VIII—Continued

"But you'd feel different about the trip after we're engaged, wouldn't you, darr-ling?" asked Snyderdacker.

"Engaged?" repeated Marne with lifted brows.

"Didn't Moby Dickstein tell you I intended we should be engaged?"

"He may have made some reference to it."

"My instructions," said A. Leon complacently. There was a swift pass, suggestive of legerdemain, and a large, pure diamond was sparkling into her eyes.

"It's lovely," was her involuntary admission.

"It's yours, darr-ling."

"Oh, no! I couldn't possibly."

He brandished the jewel before her, then held it out at arm's length the better to emphasize his impressive statement.

"But, Mr. Snyderdacker, I'm not engaged to you."

"No; but—"

"And I don't want to be."

"You don't want to be engaged to be married to me? A bonnyfied engagement."

"I'm afraid I don't."

"Lissen. When I say engaged, I mean the real McCoy. This is brass tacks. Not just one of those newspaper engagements for publicity."

"You're regular, see? I'm telling you I'll marry you." He was putting his case with a skill, a tact, a persuasive magnanimity which roused the liveliest appreciation in his own mind.

"Just as soon," he added in afterthought, "as I can get my divorce."

It was a painful shock to him to hear her laugh. And there was no bitterness in her mirth; it was whole-hearted. He was astute enough to recognize this for a bad sign.

And yet—surely she wasn't turning him down. Not A. Leon Snyderdacker, with his position, his authority, his millions.

"Oh dear," she murmured. "How can I get it over to him? I don't want to marry you, Mr. Snyderdacker."

"You don't want to marry me?"

"No; if you don't mind. I don't want to marry anybody."

"I don't get your point of view, darr-ling. I don't get it at all."

"Do you want me to leave the company?"

"No; no," he cried, alarmed. "Nothing like that."

It all seemed to him so illogical. Here he was offering her—Oh, well! Let it go for the present.

"O-kay," he yielded sadly. "We'll leave it lay." He extended the solitaire. "You keep this to kinda hold the thought."

"Oh, no! I couldn't possibly."

"I'll charge it to the studio and you can wear it as a prop," he propounded in one of his bursts of inspiration. "Think it over anyway. Think the whole proposition over."

Gloria and Moby Dickstein relieved the situation by appearing to keep an appointment which their boss had forgotten. When this had been postponed and Marne had left with them, the ring in its elegantly embossed case still rested on the official desk.

Out of his instinctive knowledge of women, A. Leon Snyderdacker evolved a measure of strategy to resolve the deadlock. While all were at dinner he had the precious box smuggled into the star's room. That night he slept well in the peace-giving assurance that all women, even the classy ones, were essentially alike and all you needed was a little tact.

Morning brought disillusionment. It also brought the engagement ring, plus the emeralds, back to their purchaser. No word came with them.

In unendurable anguish of soul A. Leon began to suspect that he was being played for a sucker which, to his proud spirit, was a fate worse than death. He raged. He cursed. He sent for Moby Dickstein and fired him again, re-hired him, re-fired him, and finally told him to get out. By the time the Great Man, once more reconsidering, had shouted, "Wait a minute," the for-once-resentful Mr. Dickstein either was out of hearing or pretended to be.

ing factotum was at the Park House in Moldavia, treating his spiritual injuries with cocktails. The business of being fired had finally got on his seasoned nerves.

While chaos was brooding, Marne and Gloria were taking a sail on the lake. One of the daily rain-squalls chased them in, wet and disgusted. The first thing they noticed was a typed square on the bulletin board which A. Leon Snyderdacker had set up in the front hall for the daily edification of his underlings. The legend read:

NO MORE REHEARSALS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE BY SPECIAL ORDER OF

A. LEON SNYDACKER, PRESIDENT, PURITY PICTURES, INC.

Gloria's fair, straight brows drew down in concern. "Now, what's the idea of that?"

"Let's ask Moby," suggested her companion.

A sound of melancholy song issued from a side-room. Mr. Dickstein had returned from the Park House. The girls knocked and were

two-fifty a week," chuckled Marne. "Not seriously."

Gloria, clinging to a last hope, addressed Moby.

"What about our contracts?"

"Contracts, pfooiel!" the factotum favored her with a sour grin. "Ever hear the word, 'snide'? They say, out in Hollywood, it comes from Snyderdacker. A. Leon's got him an old-fashioned crook lawyer who can draw a contract so full of holes that the ink leaks through while he's writin' it."

"Then the party's really over?"

"Looks like it."

"But you're not going, Moby!" cried Marne. "The place would be dead without you."

"That's what I'm goin' to find out and quick. The big stiff is still here. I dunno why. I'm goin' in to have it out with him. But first I'm goin' to have another drink." Which he did in spite of Gloria's instant protest.

"He'll fire me, will he!" he declaimed. "First he knows I'll seg-seg-segregate myself from his organization." He took his departure with dignity and steadiness.

"In conference," was the gruff re-

"Now, wait a minute," pleaded his boss. "You got me wrong."

Everybody was always getting A. Leon Snyderdacker wrong, to the grief of his sensitive soul. "You know I got your best interests at heart."

"As per invoice," remarked the ex-factotum, waving the memorandum of his dismissal under its author's nose.

"That means you're through on this picture," explained the employer with swift ingenuity.

"Well, I don't want to be through on this picture. I like this picture. Through on this picture, through on the whole show." Alcohol was inspiring the normally amenable Dickstein spirit to a fine irresponsibility.

"Sure. Sure. You stay right here on the job and look after—er—my interests."

"As and on what?"

"In charge and on your present salary. I've cut the others but—"

"Nothin' doin'," said the bold Moby, perceiving that he had his opponent on the run.

The Snyderdacker jaw dropped. "You wouldn't let me down in—my time of—of trial and tribulation, would you, Moby?"

The appeal left its object cold. "We were talkin' about a raise, 'way last March."

"We'll talk about it again one of these days."

"We'll talk about it now," said the fourth cocktail, assuming its place of command in the Dickstein organism.

"What do you want?" asked the employer apprehensively.

"A twenty-five per cent raise and a contract drawn by my lawyer."

"Make it ten per cent, Moby, and we'll talk."

"Twenty-five. I'm a softy I don't say fifty."

"The business won't stand it," wailed its proprietor. "We ain't made a dollar yet."

"Yeah? What about the pill-and-pellet trade? That isn't doin' so bad, I expect."

A. Leon wilted. Moby, sticking to his point with alcoholic tenacity, finally won out. That being settled, A. Leon proceeded to relieve his feelings of their chief and sorest preoccupation.

"That Van Stratten girl, Moby. I'm getting just nowhere with her."

"Sure, you're gettin' just nowhere. You chased me off the lot and said leave it to you; you knew how to handle 'em."

The great man gave way to the humility of depression. "I was wrong, Moby. There's something about that high society lot that gets me down."

Having won its victory, the alcoholic stimulus within Moby now moved him to confidential sympathy, together with a touch of condescension. "Get onto yourself, Bwana!" The Great Man perked up at sound of the title only to be taken down by the next remark. "Society, my pants! She's no more society than you are. She's a phony."

"I don't believe it," said his chief hollowly. "How d'you know?"

"How wouldn't I know? I made her up."

"H-h-h-how could you make her up?"

"Easy. You wanted a swell, didn't you? The minute you set eyes on her you spotted her for Class with a big, capital C, didn't you?" A. Leon groaned. "And you needed a build-up for it. You didn't know it, but that's what you were lookin' for. Moby's job. Apply to Moby. He's the little fixer. So I shook you up a debutante society swell; three parts imagination to one part Social Register with a dash of Blue Book. And did you lick it up? Gluck! Moby made an unpleasant swallowing sound, worthy of Glunk's best effort.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Floyd Gibbons'

ADVENTURERS' CLUB

HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!



"Tower of Terror"

HELLO EVERYBODY:

You know, boys and girls, when I was a kid, listening to those Christmas-time tales about Santa Claus, there were two things I always used to wonder about. One was how could a big fellow like Santa get down that little bit of a chimney of ours, and the other was how he managed to come out through a fireplace with a fire burning in it without getting burned up himself.

Nobody ever did give me a good answer to the first of those questions, and I had to wait until today to get the dope on the second one from Barney Donaghey of New York City. And even the information Barney gave me doesn't help much. Barney pulled that Santa Claus act once. He came right down the chimney and went right through the fire in the fireplace and lived to tell the tale. But Barney doesn't know how he did it. He just did, that's all.

Now, in the first place it wasn't a chimney Barney got caught in, but one of those big towers in an oil refinery—which is a whole lot worse. The refinery was located at Aruba in the Dutch West Indies, and Barney was employed there as a welder. At its best that's a dangerous job in an oil refinery. An open flame is always risky when there's oil around, and a welder has to do his work with a mighty hot open flame.

Takes Every Safety Precaution.

On the night of November 6, 1929, Barney had a job to do on one of the big hundred foot towers, and he took every precaution possible. The weld he was to make was on the inside of the tower, 90 feet from the ground and 10 feet from the top. He had to climb up to that spot from the inside, through a mess of pipes and coils, but before he started he made a mental note of the fact that there was also a ladder running up the outside of that tower, to a manhole at the top. If anything went wrong—if sparks from his welding apparatus set fire to the oil down at the bottom, there was a way out.

But Barney wasn't going to start any fires if he could help it. To make doubly sure he took along a helper and left him at the opening at the bottom of the tower with instructions to watch for any sparks falling from above and put them out the minute they landed. When that was done he started climbing up to the spot where the welding was to be done.

"Up I climbed," says Barney, "and went right to work as fast as I could. I was working at night because it was cooler, but it was still



He landed sprawling—on something soft.

plenty hot and I wanted to finish as soon as possible and get out in the air again. I worked steadily for about an hour, and then I noticed that a thick smoke was accumulating in the tower."

Barney noticed the smoke, but he didn't pay much attention to it. There are always fumes present around an oil well, and he figured that if anything had gone wrong down at the bottom his helper would have warned him long since. He was anxious to finish that job he was working on, and he was working at top speed. Working so absorbedly that he didn't pay any attention to anything else. He didn't even stop to take a glance down the shaft. And that absorption almost cost him his life.

Welder Light Saves His Life.

It was the light of his welder that saved him. Saved him by going out! As long as it was working the tower was bright as day. But suddenly it died—and then Barney noticed that it wasn't the only light in that tower. A bright red glow was coming up the long shaft from below. The bottom of the tower was on fire!

The first thing that entered Barney's mind was a question. Why hadn't his helper warned him? Loudly he shouted the helper's name. But there was no answer. At that moment Barney was more alarmed for his helper than for himself. There was that manhole at the top of the tower and the ladder leading down the side. He could get out that way. But if his helper didn't answer, something must have happened to him.

Barney started for the top. It took him hardly any time at all to climb that 10 feet and reach the upper manhole. But there, a surprise waited for him—a surprise that struck terror into Barney's heart. A beam of wood a foot square was blocking the opening!

"I couldn't get my hand through that opening, let alone my head," Barney says. "And I couldn't move the beam because there was a block and fall attached to it. There I was with the heavens above me and hell down below. But the heavens were out of my reach and what lay below was hell and no mistake."

But down was the only way Barney could go, so down he went. The blaze didn't look as though it were reaching far up the shaft. Maybe he had a chance after all.

"The farther down I went," says Barney, "the more scared I got. The smoke was thicker and the heat was terrific. For a moment I played with the idea of staying in the tower and waiting until the flames were discovered and put out. But in my heart I knew that wouldn't work. It was late at night. Supposing no one discovered the blaze? Suppose it spread and the whole place went up in flames? And beside that, I didn't know how long I could hold on in that hot, smoke-filled shaft. Suppose I passed out and fell in that fire unconscious!"

He Made a Drive for the Bottom Opening.

No—Barney knew he had to take his chances with that fire. On down he went. He was almost at the bottom, and the flames were licking up at his feet when he played his last card. He pulled his jumper over his head, and with hands protected by his heavy gloves, he dropped into the midst of the blazing inferno and made a drive for the bottom opening!

One blast of heat, and then Barney was through the opening, his body hot and his clothes smoking. He landed sprawling—on something soft. Barney pulled the jumper off his head and took a look at that soft object. It was his helper—just waking up from a sound sleep.

"He jumped up," says Barney, "and took one look at me. And I haven't seen him since! When it was all over, there wasn't a single burn on my body. But just the same, I did no more work that night. I let the fire boys do the rest with the steam hose."

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Uses for Tung Oil

Chinese tung oil has the highest specific gravity of all known fatty oils, with the exception of castor oil. Its characteristic quality is the readiness with which it sets to a hard jelly on being heated for a time. Besides being used for paints and varnishes, it is also used for dyes and as a lubricant for motors. It is used in China for water-proofing paper.

Origin of Word 'Sybarite'

A "sybarite" is a self-indulgent person; a lover of ease and comfort. The inhabitants of Sybaris, in South Italy, were proverbial for their luxurious living and self-indulgence. A tale is told by Seneca of a Sybarite who complained that he could not rest comfortably at night, and being asked why, replied that he found a roseleaf doubled under him.

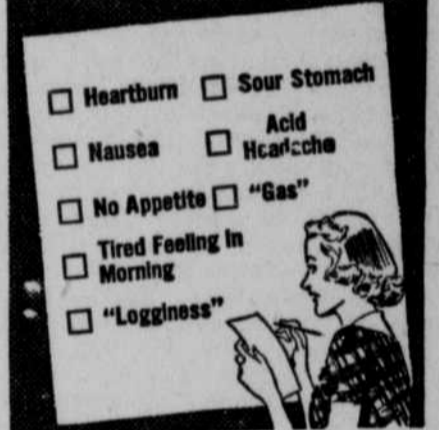
Rug for Bathroom



Four strands of string or rags in three colors or in black, white, and a color worked in shell stitch, make this durable rug. It's crocheted in five parts—the center and four identical corners—and that makes it easy to handle. It's a lovely rug for bathroom or bedroom. Pattern 6243 contains instructions for making rug; illustrations of it and of stitches; materials needed; color schemes.

To obtain this pattern, send 15 cents in coins to The Sewing Circle, Household Arts Department, 259 West 14th St., New York, N. Y.

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Afflictions and Grace Extraordinary afflictions are sometimes the trial of extraordinary grace.

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 and you feel you need a good general system tonic, try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made especially for women. For over 60 years one woman has told another how to go "smiling thru" with reliable Pinkham's Compound. It helps nature build up more physical resistance and thus helps calm quivering nerves and lessen discomforts from annoying symptoms which often accompany female functional disorders. Why not give it a chance to help YOU? Over one million women have written in reports wonderful benefits from Pinkham's Compound.

Will to Peace World peace in the long run depends upon a universal will to peace.

Sentinels of Health

Don't Neglect Them!

Nature designed the kidneys to do a marvelous job. Their task is to keep the flowing blood stream free of an excess of toxic impurities. The act of living—life itself—is constantly producing waste matter the kidneys must remove from the blood if good health is to endure. When the kidneys fail to function as Nature intended, there is retention of waste that may cause body-wide distress. One may suffer nagging backache, persistent headache, attacks of dizziness, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes—feel tired, nervous, all worried. Frequent scanty or burning passages may be further evidence of kidney or bladder disturbance. The recognized and proper treatment is a diuretic medicine to help the kidneys get rid of excess poisonous body waste. Use Doan's Pills. They have had more than forty years of public approval. Are endorsed the country over. Insist on Doan's. Sold at all drug stores.

DOAN'S PILLS

California Means 'Hot Oven,' Although The Name-Giver Had Never Visited Country

California is literally translated "hot oven," but native sons may take comfort; the Smithsonian institution reports that it was so named by a man who had never even been there, writes a Washington United Press correspondent in the Chicago Daily News.

A bare 18 years after the first voyage of Columbus, the Smithsonian reports, a Spanish scribbler, Montalvo by name, seized upon the new world as an ideal background for a new yarn.

His tale, "The Exploits of Esplan-dion," published at Madrid in 1510, gave a lurid account of a race of Amazons, rulers of "California," an earthly hades lying "at the right hand of the Indies, and very close to that part of the terrestrial paradise."

Spanish conquistadors seem to have read the novel avidly. When they discovered Lower or Mexican California, that barren waste "at the right hand of the Indies," as explorers believed, they gave it the name of the novelist's "hell on earth." As exploration proceeded,

the fertile land to the north received the same title.

By that time the true meaning of the word had been forgotten. According to Dr. John P. Harrington of the Smithsonian institution, the learned Montalvo concocted the romantic Amazon nation from two Latin words—"callidus fornax," or "hot oven." The "la" is the common Latin and Greek feminine ending so often used for names of countries or regions.

Otter Held Sacred Animal

Russians, Spaniards and Englishmen sailed round the world in tiny ships hunting the sea otter. They were so successful that they practically exterminated the animal. It was known in Biblical times and in old Sanskrit was called uras. The mid-European countries called it uder, odder and finally otter. The ancient Persians held it sacred. The man who killed an otter had to kill 10,000 frogs or 10,000 snakes in ancient Persia. That was because the otter killed frogs and snakes with which the land was overrun.