

A Good Little Liar

By CLARA DELAFIELD

Hatchem's was the slickest cheap restaurant in town, and Aggie was Hatchem's slickest bash-slinger. It was reported that professional con-jurers sometimes frequented Hatchem's to watch Aggie balancing poached eggs on a knife on top of three orders of flapjacks, five cups of coffee and four bowls of mock turtle.

That, of course, was an invention, but Hatchem's being in the theater district, many men who could have afforded better meals did drop in to Hatchem's. It was a sort of meeting place for people who wanted to talk over things.

Aggie lived in Harlem with her widowed mother, and her life was exemplary. She was engaged to be married to Bill McGurk, who drove an ice-wagon and was waiting for a raise before popping the golden circlet over Aggie's slim finger. Aggie had had plenty of beaux before Bill, but when they tried to get fresh she squashed them flatter than a stale pancake.

And she could give as good as she got from any of the smart Alces who frequented Hatchem's. There was not an ounce of sentiment about Aggie.

That was why she bore an abounding grievance against Bill the Brute. That wasn't his name. He was a dark, athletic, well-dressed man of about forty, and he happened in one evening when the restaurant was comparatively empty.

"Give me a plate of ham and eggs," he said.

Aggie brought it, and he toyed with the ham and played with the eggs.

"I don't like these eggs," he said presently.

"What's wrong with 'em?" snapped Aggie.

"I want 'em laid over again," said Bill the Brute.

"Somebody's slipped a pair of roosters inside 'em. Gimme my check."

"You wait!" said Aggie under her breath. "I'll know you again in a million years."

It was three months before Bill the Brute returned. This time he came with a lady, about the time the theater closed.

"Stenog," sniffed Aggie. "Not yours, though, Bill. That kind don't go out to supper with the boss."

Aggie, watching them like a hawk, as she fox-trotted along the restaurant, bunny-bugging a pyramid of orders, saw that something was doing.

"He's made her cry," she said, as they rose to depart. "Can this be love! Oh, Bill McGurk, come to me!"

After that the little stenographer took to coming to the restaurant for lunch and supper. Aggie surmised that she worked late. At lunch she ate a hurried meal and went away quickly, but at supper she waited till—sometimes—Bill the Brute came in and sat down beside her. Then her face would light up.

"But he's a married man," snapped Aggie to the lamb croquettes and pea tins. "That kind always are. Pair of roosters, eh, Bill?"

The next time Bill the Brute joined the girl in the evening Aggie saw that he was trying to persuade her to do something or other. It was pitiful to see the indecision and doubt and trust on her face, too, as she looked at Bill.

"I guess girls don't look like that when single men tell them they're the main squeeze," Aggie soliloquized. "If I'd looked that way, Bill'd have sent for the plumber. Pair of roosters, eh?"

"Waitress, my check!" called Bill the Brute from his corner. "Then it's all settled, dear." Aggie heard him say under his breath as she rose from the table.

He made his way in front of her to the desk. There were two or three in front of him. The girl waited beside the door.

"Scrambled eggs on toast, coffee, and a pair of doughnuts!" called one of the regulars.

"Coming!" said Aggie, staggering under an Eiffel tower of dishes.

She one-stepped up to the girl. "Say! You put that gink where he belongs!" she whispered. "Can him! See? I'll sell you why in a minute."

"Stewed eels and ham!" cried another regular from across the room.

"Coming!" said Aggie, depositing the scrambled eggs on the marble-top. "It was a good girl once!" she whispered, as she entered past the door.

"I was a honest, hard-working stenographer, and he—he brought me to this. Put him out of your heart, lady; he's got a wife and family over in Brooklyn, and he's deceiving you. I learned it—too late, too late."

With frightened eyes and quivering lips the little stenographer darted through the doorway, just as Bill the Brute was paying his check.

"Ducks and the golden!" called a patron from beside the umbrella-stand.

"Coming!" cried Aggie.

The Fireside Forum.

"My dear," said Mr. Gadsper, mildly, "of course I like for you to be interested in politics, but when we spend a quiet evening at home I wish it were possible for us to discuss some other subject."

"What, for instance?"

"Well, before you entered public life and felt called upon to solve problems of national importance you used to read interesting bits of gossip about the neighbors. I'll admit that there isn't much mental pabulum in that sort of talk, but it at least keeps me from getting sleepy two hours before my usual bedtime."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

SURELY WAS "QUARE THING"

No Wonder Mr. Murphy Couldn't Understand His Better Half's Sudden Indisposition.

In a certain town there is an Irish cobbler whose conversation is much relished by his fellow townsmen.

"Good morning, Mr. Murphy," said a customer one day, going into the shop with shoes to be repaired. "I hear your wife is ill. What is the matter?"

"It's meself that's tried to find a rayson for Mary's being took since yesterday morning," said Mr. Murphy. "Unless it's the heat, I don't know what the trouble is."

"The day before yesterday she was as well as Iver she was. Ye mind it was a powerful hot day, day before yesterday? Well, thin, Mary took no notice of the weather, no more than usual. She picked blueberries all morning; thin she made a blueberry pie for dinner, and she ate the half of that pie, and a quarter of a watermelon I'd bought, and she relished every mouthful."

"Thin she made the rist of the blueberries into a nice cake for supper, and she ate the half of that—me eatin' the rist, as I did of the pie—an' the last quarter of the watermelon; an' what with the Irish doughnuts an' the last end of Mrs. Dooley's weddin' cake, she made out a foine meal, an' in the evenin', it being so terrible hot, she made a pitcher of lemonade, an' drank the whole of that."

"It's the quare thing her being took sick yesterday mornin' after being so well the day before," said Mr. Murphy. "She ate twice what I did, and I remember spakin' to her about her foine appetite, with the heat an' all; and here she is flat on her back since yesterday mornin'." — Philadelphia Ledger.

Why British Flag Bears Large Cross.

During the early part of its history, Great Britain used a number of different flags or standards to identify the men and the ships belonging to the nation. In medieval times, practically every great nobleman had a flag of his own, but, at the time of Richard the Lion Hearted, what is now the official badge of Great Britain had its beginning.

As time went on, the insignia of conquered nations were added to this ensign, together with certain symbols of the reigning families with whom the British kings and queens intermarried, even the symbol of France appearing on this flag as late as 1801. Gradually, however, these were eliminated and the present royal standard adopted—divided into four quarters, symbolical of the divisions of the island empire. In the first quarter are the three British lions. In the second appears the fighting lion of Scotland. The harp of Ireland occupies the third quarter and the lions of England are repeated in the fourth quarter, for Wales does not appear as a separate entity. Joining the four—or separating them—is the Cross of St. George, as typical of the different British standards as the Stars and Stripes are of the various forms of the American flag.

A Quick Thinker.

"Speaking of alibis," said Jim Bottorff, who prosecutes the cases of the state of Indiana in the Clark Circuit court at Jeffersonville, and has sometimes been troubled by alibis which he distrusted but could not disprove, "I knew an old negro once—well, he sure was a quick thinker. This negro used to deal with a grocer named John Burnside, who had a store just north of Jeffersonville. One night the negro crawled through a small hole, only made for chickens, and when he crawled out a chicken went with him. Next day Burnside picked up the negro's grocery account book near the place the chicken had been and was not. He silently handed out the book to the negro who came later to make a purchase, and then said: 'I found it in the chicken house, uncle.' 'Yes, sah, yes, sah; suah, sah. I see left it thar so's you could charge up the chicken, sah.'" — Indianapolis News.

Road Built on Sandy Shore.

By the use of sectional planking it was possible to build a stretch of re-enforced concrete highway along the shore of Lake Michigan, east of Michigan City, on what is known as the Long Beach road extension. Starting at the central mixing plant, says Popular Mechanics Magazine, the contractor put down 2,000 feet of sectional planking; made up in sections 5 feet wide and 19 feet long, 2 by 6 inch boards being used for this purpose. He then had the wet concrete carried from the mixing plant to the end of the walk, and as the road was laid, the duckboard was taken up and conveyed back to the mixing plant. When he had worked back to the mixing plant, he used the same planking, extending it 2,000 feet in the opposite direction and working back in the same manner.

Helligoland's Transformation.

When a syndicate of American and German capitalists finish wading the mangie wand over Helligoland, the former grim wags' best will assume the aspect of a most attractive bathing resort with a winter hotel, and a casino offering every facility for polite gambling. It is intended that Monte Carlo shall feel the competition.

Business Up in Air.

A special airplane, with a cabin containing desks, typewriter and other office equipment, has been ordered by a London business man with big interests in Paris, Brussels and other continental cities.

Little Miss Emory

By MYRA C. LANE

"Did you see that in the paper?" asked Sutphen, the oldest boarder, pointing to a paragraph. "You wouldn't remember Tim McCarthy, but I remember him well. Thirty years he's served—dear, dear!" He clucked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "Thirty years, Miss Emory. Big slice out of a man's life, isn't it?"

"What did he do?" asked little, faded Miss Emory, the school teacher.

"Why, this McCarthy was 'most notorious desperado in the West, but it was in Trenton they got him. He'd gone home because his mother was dying. Queer streak in a fellow like that. And that's how the police got their hands on him."

"Odd thing, but there was quite a public reaction in his favor. For one thing, he'd never taken a life. And, for another, there was a girl believed in him. Appen't she'd stuck to him through thick and thin, and swore she'd wait for him. But I guess that sort of hero ain't much in your line, Miss Emory!"

He smiled at the precise little middle-aged lady as he put the newspaper down.

"Well, I guess the pardon board did the right thing," said Harris. "McCarthy won't go on the rampage again."

"I guess not," answered Sutphen. "He'd be quite lost among modern inventions. Gosh, I bet he's never seen a skyscraper, nor used the telephone, nor ridden in an auto-car. Oh, I guess his desperado days are over."

"I saw in the paper he'd said he was going to take up farming," said Miss Emory placidly.

"Farming, huh? Well, I guess that ain't changed much," said Sutphen. "Mighty queer sort of neighbor to have, though, I should say! I didn't see anything about that girl, though. If there's a girl willing to wait thirty years until her sweetheart comes out of the pen, lead me to her!"

Miss Emory smiled; so did Harris. Nobody wasted much sympathy on McCarthy. After all, he had got what he deserved, and he was mighty fortunate to see a bit of freedom before he died.

McCarthy stepped out of his cell for the last time and strode beside the guard to the warden's office. The warden met him at the door and grasped his hand cordially.

"Glad you're going, old man," he said. "Be good to yourself. No need to hand you the parting guff, eh, Tim?"

Tim smiled. He still stood straight as an arrow, despite his lined face and close-cropped, iron-gray hair. "I guess the gink's all right for me," he said. He glanced inquiringly at the office, and the warden nodded.

"It's all fixed, license and all," he said, "and the mayor's private car's at the door. He said that was the least you could do. All you've got to do is to hop in, and you'll be on your own homestead inside of four hours."

McCarthy nodded back, and stepped inside the office. A woman of about his own age was waiting there. She was clothed in a soft fawn gray, which showed up her clear skin, delicate features and graying hair. Tim clasped her in his arms and she laid her head upon his shoulder.

"It doesn't seem real, Tim," she sobbed.

"Cheer up, sweetheart," whispered Tim in her ear. "We need every ounce of our courage."

She looked at him in alarm. "Wh-what for, Tim?" she stammered.

"To talk to the photographers," grinned Tim.

He had spoken truly, for Tim's release had fired the city's imagination, and their appearance at the gate of the penitentiary was the signal for the snapping of innumerable cameras. When at length the car rolled away, mobs packed the streets. The entrance to the license room was guarded by policemen, but Tim had to clear a passage for himself and his bride by sheer force.

Nevertheless, it was a happy, smiling pair that finally emerged, again to run the gamut of the photographers. And now the journey toward the city limits became a sort of triumphal progress, and thousands lined the streets, cheering vociferously, so that their car could hardly force its passage.

Harris, who often lunched with Sutphen, was waiting for him at the corner of Main and Ems, when the auto came laboriously along. Sutphen appeared.

"Sorry to be so late," he panted. "This d—n mob's the worst I seen since Hardin's election." Suddenly he grasped Harris by the arm. "Snakes!" he ejaculated. "Am I seeing 'em again, or—who's that beside Tim McCarthy?"

Harris' eyes were popping out of their orbits. "By all that's holy!" he gasped. "Miss Emory?"

New Type of Snow Plow.

A new apparatus for clearing snow from railroad tracks has been devised by Louis P. Chaboude of Vaudreuil, Quebec, Canada. The apparatus has the general V-shape of a snow plow, but instead of consisting of a plain V-shaped plow it has a series of cutters detachably mounted on the front portion of the plow. These cutters each have a rectangular shank, the lower end of which extends forward to locate the cutting point in advance of the plane of the shank and rearwardly to re-enforce the point which has a knife edge. This enables the device to cut through the ice and crusted snow efficiently. The device has been adopted as a standard one on one of the large Canadian railroads.

The Governor's Decision

By MARY J. STRINGER

"And so you want to pardon this woman, governor," said the leader of the deputation, "because she is more sinned against than sinning. She has served ten years in the penitentiary."

"For a revolting murder," interposed the governor harshly.

"For a murder to which she was accessory. She was swayed by the man who committed it and has paid the penalty of his crime. We want to restore her to society, to give her her chance in life. She is still young, she has been educated in prison. She was accessory to the murder of a brute. Her life was far from exemplary. But what started her upon the downward road? The man who took advantage of her youth and innocence, the first unnamed, unknown man who made her what she is."

There was a pause in the governor's room. Governor Bates was scrupulous in the way he measured out justice. The deputation knew that all the facts concerning Mary Seyforth would be carefully weighed. It knew that Governor Bates would act according to the dictates of his conscience.

But he had his sentimental side, and Dr. Abner Pritchard, the leader of the deputation, was playing it for all it was worth.

"If every man dared look himself in the heart," she said, "who is there who would not say, of such women, 'There, but for the mercy of God, stand I?'"

The governor meditated. He had released many prisoners during his term of office. He had been unjustly blamed and extravagantly praised. He was not thinking of what the newspapers would say. The business of the state was in suspense for half an hour that he might weigh whether or not Mary Seyforth should be restored to liberty. It was a decision that required almost superhuman clarity.

"Her prison record?" he asked.

"Splendid," said Doctor Pritchard. "I'll go and see her," announced the governor.

The deputation withdrew. They had gained something, at any rate, but they had hoped for more.

That evening the governor went to the penitentiary to see the woman. He rose and bowed as the slight, prison-dad figure entered the warden's office.

"Sit down, Mary Seyforth," he said. "You know why I am here. I have been approached with a view to granting you a pardon. You must not be influenced by undue hopes. Tell me your story."

The slight figure faced him across the table, but she kept her face buried in her hands. She did not answer him.

"You were lucky to escape the chair," said the governor judiciously. "Your life has not been exemplary. I am not reproaching you with it; I am summing up the facts. Did you love Carter?"

She shook her head.

"Then, why in God's name, were you an accessory to his crime?" the governor demanded.

She spoke between her fingers: "I was alone in the world. I had been a servant. I had—a child to support. I couldn't be a servant and support it, and—Carter came to me and promised to let it live with us if I—I'd agree. What is one to do?"

"You should never have sinned in the first place," answered the governor, but she went on:

"Then, when he planned to break into the old man's safe, he swore that there should be no violence. When the old man awoke and cried he strangled him with his pocket handkerchief. I didn't know what he was doing. When I knew I—I told him to get out of my sight forever."

"All this does not excuse the fact that you had deliberately placed yourself outside the social institutions," said the governor.

"That's all. I didn't ask for a pardon, and I—I didn't want one. You see, the—child is dead."

"You don't want to go free?" asked the governor in astonishment.

"No. What should I want my freedom for? I'm happy here, in a way."

"You should have your chance in life," said the governor. "A chance to atone for the past by years of service. You are now an educated woman. You could obtain a position. Doctor Pritchard has promised to see to it. I have decided to grant this application. But, Mary Seyforth, do not blame society in your heart. You alone are the cause of your misfortunes."

"How about the man—the first man?" asked Mary Seyforth quietly, for the first time looking him in the eyes across the table.

Into the governor's eyes a look of horror came. He stared at her bewildered.

"You, Mary?" he cried in horror. And the words rang through his brain. "There, but for the mercy of God, stand I!"

And he knew that it was he himself who must atone for the past by years of service.

Pensioners of Early Wars.

The largest number of Civil War soldiers on the pension roll, 745,822, was in the year ending June 30, 1923. On June 30, 1921, there were 218,775 Civil War soldiers on the pension roll, as against 243,520 the previous year. On June 30, 1921, there were surviving sixty-four widows of the War of 1812, also 100 soldiers and 2,135 widows of the Mexican war; as well as 59,282 pensioners of the Spanish war.

Repressed Emotions.

"How do you react toward the man classic dancer?" "I control myself," said Mr. Grumpson. "What?" "No matter what violent thoughts are coursing through my mind, when he balances himself on one toe and looks up into the flies like a dying roach, I don't do anything but snort, and I manage that so cleverly that the people around me think I'm merely clearing my throat."

Old Ribtree's Dog

By HUBERT RAY

The murder of Old Ribtree had passed from a nine days' sensation to an unsolved mystery. Only one man knew who had killed Ribtree, and that was James, because James had killed him himself.

Ribtree and James lived in a town of fifty thousand inhabitants, just large enough to escape that prying gossip which makes murder so unsafe in villages. The two men had always been enemies, under the guise of friendship. James had especially wanted Ribtree's girl, Ada Lachaussee.

James had made no elaborate plans. He had figured out that a spontaneous murder is the safest. He went to Ribtree's house one night when he knew he would be alone, walked straight into the study, and shot Ribtree through the heart, and went away. Now he had Ribtree's girl, Ada Lachaussee.

Detective Aston had questioned James very closely the next morning. Happily James was able to prove that he had been in bed all the day before, with grippe. His old housekeeper, Mrs. Cannon, confirmed this statement. Being quite deaf, she had not heard James open his window and descend; being in bed when James returned, she had not heard his key in the front door.

Ada Lachaussee, moved by James' protestations of sympathy, had transferred her affections to him. Three months after the murder, James moved to Ribblefield, and next week they were to be married.

James knew that Aston suspected him, and he was worried. Aston was the sort of detective who, with little imagination, possessed the pertinacity of a bulldog. A bulldog? That was the fly in the ointment. Ribtree had had a bulldog—Bones.

Bones and James had always been good friends. But Bones was an uncanny dog. It was not until James had shot Ribtree that he perceived Bones lying in front of the gas log. Bones got up, sniffed at his dead master, and jumped up at James for a caress. The memory of it made James' blood run cold.

Next day Bones had met James in the street and tried to follow him home. Bones did not know where James lived; but every time James took a stroll in the direction of Ribtree's house, he met Bones. Each time he met him nearer and nearer his own house. He knew that Bones was slowly running him down.

James, seated in his new house in Ribblefield, heard a scratching at the door. The sweat started to his forehead. He rose and opened it, and Bones came in, wagged his tail, and lay down at his feet.

For the first time James felt his impending doom. The sweat streamed down his forehead. He did not know what to do.

He kicked the dog furiously, and Bones gave a yelp, and then jumped up at him for a caress again. There was something devilish in the bulldog's deliberate design. It was as if Bones had set himself to run him down, to furnish the one proof that could connect him with the murder.

Bones must die. James formed that determination as he watched the bulldog crouching at his feet, looking up at him with an expression of devotion on his face. He must get his pistol, shoot it, dispose of the body before morning.

A policeman passed, stamping heavily on the sidewalk. He was accompanied by a man whom James, looking into the darkness, could not recognize. But a horrible feat came to him that this man was Aston.

As the men passed James took the bulldog by the collar, dragged it to the front door, and opened it. He was determined to take Bones to a lonely place in the country, shoot him and throw the body into a ditch.

But as he opened the front door he heard the pounding feet stop. He stopped, cold with terror. The policeman and his companion were returning. They walked back to the gate of the garden, pushed it open, and came up the path.

And James, standing silently upon the step, his hand in Bones' collar, knew that Nemesis was at hand.

The light from the street lamp fell on the face of the second man. James recognized Detective Aston.

"I want to see you," Aston said.

"You've got me," James babbled. "For God's sake take me away. Yes, I killed Ribtree, and I'm ready to go to the chair for him."

Aston stared at him in stupefaction, and a light broke over his face.

"Why, it's Mr. James!" he exclaimed. "I didn't know you were living here. Lucky I got that transfer last week. You heard what he said, Mullins?"

James looked at him piteously. "What—what d'you mean?" he stammered. "Didn't you—didn't you—?"

Aston grinned. "Only wanted to know if you'd got a license for that there dog," he answered. "But I guess it don't matter so much—now."

CONDITION OF WHEAT BELOW THE AVERAGE

A winter wheat condition of 80% which is below the average for this date a year ago and 85% a substantial increase in number of brood sows and the farm labor supply generally exceeding the demand are the leading statements in the April crop report released today by Leo Stull, secretary of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and A. E. Anderson, Statistician for the Bureau of Markets and Crop Estimates.

The present wheat condition 80% which is 12% below last year and 5% below the ten year average, forecasts a production of 60,101,000 bushels. The bulk of the crop it made better progress than one would ordinarily expect under the dry unfavorable autumn and winter weather, and further improvement is possible under favorable condition.

The present condition of the wheat crop in the eastern third of the state is generally very satisfactory but west of here and particularly in south central Nebraska, more or less damage has been sustained. Here, stands have been thinned out to varying extent and some abandonment is expected. The crop is starting out with the disadvantage of being late and in a weakened condition and with little reserve subsoil moisture. The chance for the crop to recover depends largely upon such weather conditions as will favor tillage and give the thinned stands an advance start of the weeds. Some of the important wheat counties in western Nebraska were still short of moisture and the condition is not promising. An estimate of the abandonment will be made next month.

The condition of rye is 85% as compared to 88% last December and the ten year average of 91% for this date. A possible production of 1,928,000 bushels is forecasted by this condition. The final estimate last year was 1,714,000 bushels.

The number of brood sows has increased 10% over the previous year, the number being placed at 734,000 head as compared to 667,000 last year. The present corn reserves and the relative prices of corn and swine during the past winter seems to have given considerable stimulus to swine production. Reports on the litters to date vary from severe losses to highly satisfactory results.

The farm labor supply is 102% as compared to last year and 103% as compared to the normal supply for this date. The labor demand is 91% as compared to last year and 91% as compared to the normal demand. Correspondents report a general tendency toward the elimination of hired farm labor as far as practical. The relation of farm labor supply to the demand is 112% as compared to 114% last year and 74% two years ago.

Estimates for the United States are as follows: winter wheat condition 78.4% as compared to 76% last December, 91% a year ago and the ten year average of 84.3%. The present condition forecasts a crop of 572,974,000 bushels as compared to the final estimate last year of 587,032,000 bushels. The present condition of rye is 89% and the indicated crop 69,667,000 bushels as compared to 57,918,000 bushels the final estimate last year.

Indian Fighter Told of "Reviewing" Quadruped Army That Had Front of Ten Miles.

The famous Indian fighter General Maas, who lost an eye in border skirmishes with renegades and received the congressional medal of honor for gallantry in an Apache campaign, told me about seventeen years ago of a dramatic incident in which he participated in the middle '70s. As a young lieutenant, with an orderly and two Indian scouts, he was trailing the great Nez Perce Chief Joseph in his flight from Oregon to Canada.

The American scouting party came into an open prairie country in Idaho. They paused on a tiny hillock, scanning the horizon. The Indians dropped, cars to ground. They signaled. Presently all with ears down heard it distinctly, the hump, hump, hump of rhythmic march, and far off, of a mighty hoed marching.

Buffalo!

They came into view; they approached. General Maas described the great spread of