

The Couple Next Door

By JOANNA SINGLE

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Miss Cornelia, weeding her pansy bed in the early May evening, turned her back on the couple next door. The Howards somehow embarrassed her. Not that their behavior was ever out of good taste, but their very glances were caresses, their house-keeping a progress of cooing and nest building that made their neighbors' face a bit more grim than the softness of young summer would seem to warrant. She was finding that she could not get away from love. Also that the great passion ignores the small matter of age. So, at nearly forty, and after the lapse of nearly twenty years, she found herself fondling a pansy plant—and wondering what had become of Steve Stratton. Years do not sweeten the bitterness of a woman deserted without explanation by her lover.

She weeded on, and heard young Howard bid his wife good night as he started on an errand down town. Then she looked up to see the girl wife coming toward her, and wishing she did not make herself so unapproachable to people.

"Good evening—what a lovely garden you will have before June is out! I wish I could make things grow!" Eugenia Howard's very voice was winning.

Miss Cornelia smiled and removed her weeding gloves. She wore a white dress with touches of black on it, being in half mourning still for the old father for whom she had cared so many years. And one who had known the rigid, stern, peevish old man would not have wondered at his daughter's leaving the place where she was brought up, and buying a cottage in a town where she could begin a life of her own anew.

She led the way to the porch, seated her visitor, and sat in silence, but it was a pleasant silence. She was not without a sense of grim humor, and read the question in the young wife's eyes.

"You are wondering why I have not married? Married women always wonder that about unmarried ones. They are sorry for us, too—which they needn't be, by any means!"

Young Mrs. Howard blushed crimson, went white again, and gave a little gasp.

"Don't mind my bluntness," continued Miss Cordella, "it is my way. And I like you, and I have never told a living soul why I am single. At the same time, before I tell you why it is, let me tell you that happiness does not depend on others, but on ourselves. I am not unhappy. I have known dozens of married women whose lives were burdens. But, all the same, I was once terribly in love—terribly in the right word. When things went wrong it nearly killed me, and if my mother hadn't suddenly died and left me to the daily necessary care of an invalid father, I am sure I should have gone half insane." She paused, and the young wife reached out for her neighbor's hand and gave it a squeeze. There was no sickly weakness in Miss Cordella—she straightened as she talked.

"I've always wanted to tell somebody. I was only twenty, and loved a man a few years older than I, a childhood friend, very sensitive and haughty. He was the son of the village rich man. Father did not like him, but that did not change me. We had never spoken our love—but one night I stole out to meet him and—he kissed me. We didn't need words. The next day I had a letter from him formally asking me to marry him. He knew my answer, but I wrote it nevertheless. I told him about a little silly affair I had had with another man, and that I never cared for a soul but him, and asked him to answer immediately and say it made no difference. I also told him my father objected because of the difference in religion and fortune. Well, days passed, and I did not hear from him.

"Then I found he had gone on a business trip for his father. I waited for his return, and still had no word from him. Finally, I wrote him an angry little note—I said a number of hot things, among them that I hoped never to see him again, that he need not dare to come to see me; that I would return unanswered anything he wrote! Then, without telling my mother why, I coaxed to go for a visit to a cousin.

"I went. In a few days my mother died of heart failure, and I hurried home. After the funeral and the trouble was over I remembered my lover. He had gone to Canada. I never saw nor heard from him again.

"What—a shame!" murmured Eugenia Howard.

The older woman showed a placid face. She rose and pulled at a growing vine.

"It wasn't—just losing him," she said. "It was knowing that his feelings for me were just a caprice, and that he was sorry he had asked me to marry him; that he took the silly, exaggerated confession of my past half-love, pitifully innocent, for another man, for an excuse to jilt me! He was not worth it, of course; but it nearly killed me! I would feel bitter, even now, if I knew he had a worthy reason for his treatment of me, or if he had been man enough to tell me straight out! A note like

my last one should have made him seek me out in spite of myself! He might have come! At least, he might have written!" Her tone was a little angry and spirited.

"Something you don't know may have happened," answered Mrs. Howard, gently. "Things happen to men, too. I have an uncle who has never married. My mother told me a little about it. The girl did not answer his letters; her father, in her name, sent him from the door without explanation, and she finally dismissed him in a note—I imagine something like the note you say you wrote. Don't misjudge him."

"I have waited twenty years for him to clear himself," said Miss Cornelia. "I think that is enough. I shall never mention him again—I don't see why I have at all—but somehow you made me, with your bright eyes questioning me! Shall I get you a wrap? It is chilly for May."

The matter of Miss Cornelia's love was not mentioned again, but the young wife and her husband came very close to her heart. They appealed to her latent desire to mother something. She advised, helped, took them through several little crucial times. One of these was a quarrel, very slight, when they were fixing up a room for Eugenia's uncle to come to stay with them. Young Howard wanted the older man to come—the invitation had come from him, made and accepted for a month. The quarrel was some silly thing about furnishing the room, but the young wife spent the better part of two days in tears about it. Finally Cornelia Braden marched over, and in her militant fashion inquired into the trouble.

That evening she waited until she saw Howard enter and followed him.

"Don't be—idiots!" she said to both of them. "He doesn't want you to tire yourselves out making chins hangings, and you ought to let him worry about you. He likes it! She likes to fuss for her uncle, and you ought to fuss for a woman has to fuss! Kiss and make up, silly children!"

A week later, on a night train came the uncle. Miss Cornelia, awakened from her sleep by the welcome almost beneath her window, wished the old man—she had somehow taken his age for granted—in Halifax, and before dropping off again remembered that on the morning she must unbox, air and repack certain of her father's garments which she had not in the two years since his death had the heart to touch.

Good as her intention she began her day early. It was June, balmy, dewy and sweet. Evidently the Howards were not up yet. Cornelia Braden, for all her forty years, was good to look upon as she emerged into her grassy back yard carrying an armful of faded black clothing. Her morning dress was crisp and blue, her firm-fleshed face rosy, her eyes bright. There was hardly a gray hair in her ruddy crown of hair. With her back to the Howard cottage she pinned the old-fashioned coats and trousers to the line and began brushing away at them.

If the neighbors had not all been sleepy-heads, they might have seen Romance. For a man's head, slightly touched with gray, thrust itself from the newly furnished Howard guest room. A pair of broad shoulders became visible, gray-clad, manly. The stranger's gray eyes perceived Cornelia Braden at her work, stared at her, continued to stare. But she did not note.

Like all good housewives, she was fighting dirt. She seized a coat, shook it, sneezed, and shook it again, this time upside down. A number of papers and letters fell to the grass. She stopped and picked them up, turning them over.

There was something queer in her attitude. She stood looking down at the letters, one hand raised to her head, and then she gave a little moan and sat down in the wet grass, putting both hands over her face, the letters in her lap, her blue dress crushed in folds about her.

The man next door came quickly through the window, leaped the low stone fence, and stood before her.

"Cornelia! Cornelia!" he said, in the deep voice that she might have recognized the night before. "Cornelia!" It seemed foolish to say her name again, but Stephen Stratton did say it time after time. She looked up at him, dumb, and he knelt beside her and took her hands in his. Then he saw the letters he had written her twenty years before, five of them, all unopened, carried all those years in a hard, obstinate old man's pocket.

Forgetful of everything but him, she leaned to meet his kiss. Then they both rose to their feet.

"Cornelia," he said, "I want you to believe in me again before we read those letters together. Will you?" She was leading the way to her cottage, he just behind. Her bearing was fine and proud, and she turned her head over her shoulder to smile at him. She nodded.

"We'll be as happy," she said, "as the couple next door. They have been teaching me that I have always wanted you in my heart!"

WE EAT POISONS EVERY DAY

Even Common Salt, in Large Quantities, is Sure Death, and So is Saltpeter.

"When the doctor told me he was prescribing prussic acid for the pain in my stomach, I said I would rather keep the pain than take such a poison."

"You need not have the slightest fear," he assured me. "Why, you eat poisons every day. When the Chinese want to commit suicide, one of their favorite plans is to take half a cup of salt."

"Common salt?"

"Yes, in large quantities common salt is a violent irritant. It sets up severe inflammation of the stomach, and kills as surely as arsenic."

"Saltpeter, that colors bacon and corned beef an attractive red, is a powerful poison. One ounce has killed a person in three hours. Many people have been poisoned by this salt."

"You must know that your Christmas pudding and the icing of your wedding cake are incomplete unless flavored with bitter almonds. I am not sure how many bitter almonds it takes to kill a man, but they contain a good deal of this prussic acid that you object to."

"Oxalic acid, with which foolish people so often commit suicide, is the salt which gives rhubarb and sorrel their pleasant flavor. It is a violent irritant and dreadfully painful poison."

"Need I tell you that caffeine, the exhilarating principle of coffee and tea, is a poison?"

"In nearly all our condiments we eat poison. The oils of nutmeg, cloves, black pepper, cinnamon, peppermint, caraway, horseradish, thyme, etc., are all poisonous in large doses. Black pepper contains a fiery, volatile oil, capable of burning a hole in your stomach, if it was not moved on, while its piperine is a sure poison. Cayenne pepper, or capsicum, is still more irritating."

"But, besides poisons which we take from choice, there are others which it is impossible to avoid swallowing in these days of complex feeding. Arsenic is a very common ingredient in beer, jam, sweets, etc., made with glucose. Fortunately, the liver acts more or less as a filter and saves us from serious consequences."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Probably Actor Still Wonders. In London lately, where Charles Frohman revived "Peter Pan" for the ninth consecutive season, J. M. Barrie came into the Duke of York's theater one day toward the end of the rehearsal period. Mr. Barrie even in a theater housing one of his own successes has more the manner of an obscure understudy in the company than the author of the play. But this day, catching sight of him, a prominent actor in the company trotted over to the playwright with this idea on his lips: "I say, Mr. Barrie, I have now been playing this part for eight years; might I not be featured on the program during this tour; say, as a reward, a sort of cordon bleu, you know?" "Featured?" asked Mr. Barrie, who in reality is not at all familiar with the idioms of the stage. "Yes," continued the actor. "Can't I have the word 'and' before my name so that the program will read 'and Mr. Barrie?' " "Why not 'but?'" replied Mr. Barrie without moving his eyes a hair's breadth from their steady, far-away gaze out into the dark, empty auditorium.

All Bets Off. There is a certain New York celebrity noted for three things—his size, which is tremendous; his apparel, which is dazzling; and his appetite, which beggars description.

On a certain morning he went into a swaggy Fifth avenue restaurant and ordered, among other things, a double portion of ham and eggs, some country sausage, mush and milk, corned-beef hash and buckwheat cakes with maple syrup.

All these things were brought to him at once. He put them all on one enormous platter and proceeded to slice everything up together. Two women watched him in horror from the next table.

"My dear," said one, "that is the most appalling thing I ever witnessed! I'll wager a box of candy he eats that mess with his knife."

"I'll take the bet," said the other. "He is dressed like a gentleman and, despite his barbaric taste in food, I wager he'll eat it with a fork."

They both lost. He ate it with a spoon.—Saturday Evening Post.

Can't Down the Irish. An Irishman just landed got work on the New York Central as flagman at Tarrytown. His first day on the job he waved the red danger signal before the Empire State express. The brakes screamed down. The train stopped, and the crew ran up.

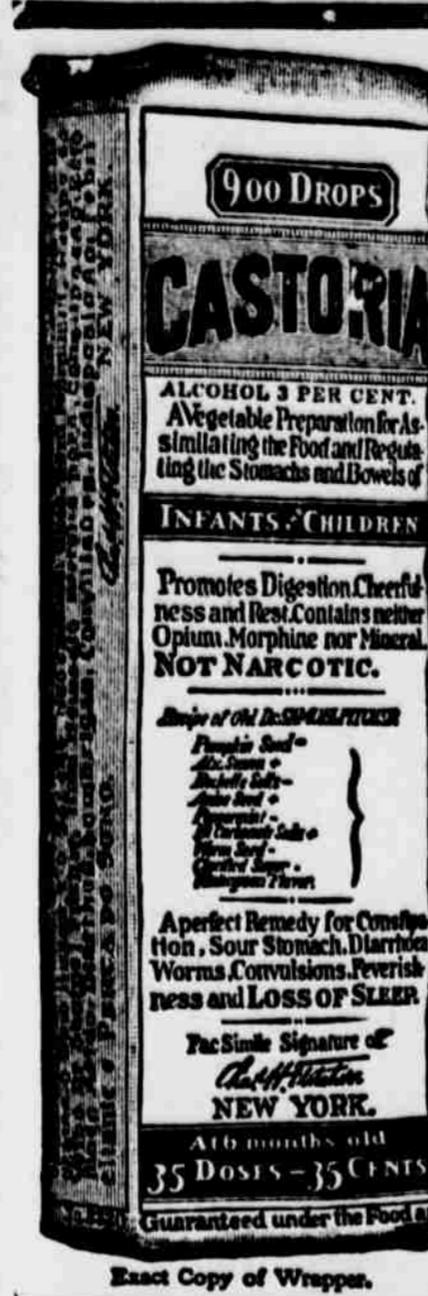
"What's the matter? Why did you stop this train?" the conductor demanded.

"Well—" began the flagman.

"Don't you know it's a state's prison offense to stop a train without cause?" the conductor exclaimed. "Why, we're 20 minutes late now."

"That's just it," was the answer. "Where have you been the last 20 minutes?"

Bacon Sandwiches. Wispis of breakfast bacon, delicately broiled, make the most appetizing of sandwiches, especially if put between toasted sippets of graham bread. The small shreds of bacon must lie on lettuce and be seasoned with paprika or red pepper. These are as appetizing cold as hot.



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A Yonkers, N. Y., physician had a negro cook who was a chronic complainer. One day she came in growling with a misery in her side and the doctor offered to prescribe for her.

He went to the dining room, poured out a spoonful of game sauce, stirred in some English mustard and sprinkled on some cayenne pepper, and handed the dose to the sufferer, telling her to take it down at once.

It was two weeks or more before Mary turned up with a new pain. This time it was in her other side. Her employer offered to mix her another dose of his medicine.

"No, no," said Mary, firmly. "I'm much obliged to you, doctor; but I've done got my mind made up never again to drink nothin' what water won't quench!"—Saturday Evening Post.

FOR EVERY FAMILY MEDICINE CHEST

To the head of every family the health of its different members is most important, and the value of an agreeable laxative that is certain in its effect is appreciated. One of the most popular remedies in the family medicine chest is a combination of simple laxative herbs with pepsin that is known to druggists and physicians as Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin. This preparation is mild and gentle in its action on the bowels, yet positive in its effect. A dose of Syrup Pepsin at night means relief next morning, while its tonic properties tone up and strengthen the muscles of stomach, liver and bowels so that these organs are able in a short time to again perform their natural functions without help.

Druggists everywhere sell Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin in 50c and \$1.00 bottles. If you have never tried this simple, inexpensive, yet effective remedy, write to Dr. W. B. Caldwell, 201 Washington St., Monticello, Ill., and ask for a sample bottle. Dr. Caldwell will be glad to send it without any expense to you whatever.

Might Not Get the Children. A young lady of ten was discussing her future with her mother.

"Yes, mommie," she said, "I shall get married and I shall have four children."

"That will be nice!" commented the mother.

"No!" continued the young lady after a minute or two of deep thought. "Maybe I won't have four children. I might marry a bachelor!"—Saturday Evening Post.

Her Chief Characteristic. Miss Green, who was giving the class a lesson in mythology, turned suddenly to one untidy little fellow and said:

"Brownman, tell me for what virtues Diana was especially celebrated."

"For takin' baths," replied Brownman promptly.

Mrs. Whitlow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, 25c a bottle.

If money talks it must be in silvery tones, for we are told that silence is golden.

Perhaps the surest thing in this life is the friend you can't depend on when you really need him.

Don't make shipwreck of your health when a course of Garfield Tea can cure you of indigestion.

Many a man is kept busy during his spare time in explaining things to his wife.

Tired of It.

The four-year-old had taken his reproof in a gratifying spirit, had admitted his fault, and sued sweetly for pardon. Encouraged by his receptive attitude, his mother ventured to add a few general ethical truths; but with the first hint of transition from the concrete to the abstract a mild resentment dawned in his eye.

"Mother," he demanded, respectfully but firmly, "when is this conversation going to stop!"—Harper's Bazar.

An Exception to the Rule. "Jinks is a man who has his hammer out on all occasions."

"I bet there is one occasion where he hasn't."

"What's that?"

"When it's time to put down the carpet."

A Quarter Century

Before the public. Over Five Million Free Samples given away each year. The constant and increasing sales from samples prove the genuine merit of Allen's Foot-Powder, the antiseptic powder to be shaken into the shoes for Tired, Aching, Swollen Tender feet. Sample free. Address, Allen S. Olmsted, Le Roy, N. Y.

Saving Steps. Gibbs—But the house is over a mile from the station, you admit.

Agent—Yes, but the rooms are so small you will only have to walk the baby eight feet from his little crib.—Harper's Bazar.

To remove nicotine from the teeth, disinfect the mouth and purify the breath after smoking, Paxtine is a boon to all. At druggists, 25c a box or sent postpaid on receipt of price by The Paxton Toilet Co., Boston, Mass.

As soon as a woman discovers that she is unable to reform her husband she begins on her neighbors.

FOR THE WOMAN WHO THINKS AND FEELS.

Some women complain that they periodically suffer from dull and heavy feelings, or dizziness in the head, nervousness, pain and bearing-down feelings which should not occur to the normal healthy woman. But most every woman is subject to these pains at some time in her life, due to abnormal conditions in life, such as corsets, over-taxed strength, bad air, poor or improper food, wet feet, sluggish liver, etc. A regulator and female tonic made from native medicinal roots with pure glycerin, and without the use of alcohol, called

DR. PIERCE'S FAVORITE PRESCRIPTION,

has proven its value in thousands of cases, like the following:

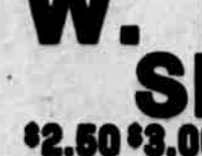
Mrs. DONA M. MASTON, of Auburn, Mebr., Route 1, Box 64, says: "I thought I would write you in regard to what your medicine has done for me. I have used them for thirty years for female trouble and general weakness with the very best result, and they have saved me hundreds of dollars in doctor's bills. I buy the Favorite Prescription and Golden Medical Discovery and take them together. I never was disappointed in your remedies and take pleasure in recommending them to any suffering lady. I am now almost fifty years old; at forty-five I took your medicine, both kinds, and I passed that period very easily and left me fat and healthy. I feel like a young girl."

If any lady cares to write me, I will gladly tell her more about the good work of your medicines.

Dr. PIERCE'S GREAT FAMILY DOCTOR BOOK, The People's Common Sense Medical Adviser, newly revised up-to-date edition—of 1008 pages, answers hosts of delicate questions which every woman, single or married, ought to know. Sent free in cloth binding to any address on receipt of 31 one-cent stamps, to cover cost of wrapping and mailing only.



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