

FRAN

BY JOHN BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY O. IRWIN MYERS

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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 further in search of him, laughing during the service and is asked to take a seat. Abbott Ashton, superintendent of schools, escorts Fran to the seat. He tells her Gregory is a wealthy man, deeply interested in charity work, and a pillar of the church. Ashton becomes greatly interested in Fran and while taking leave of her, holds her hand 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 her 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 explains that his present wife three years before the death of Fran's mother. Fran takes a liking to Mrs. Gregory. Gregory 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 home. Fran declares the secretary must talk by Fran from the Gregory home. About, while taking a walk alone at midnight, finds Fran on a bridge telling her fortune by cards. She tells Abbott that she is the famous Hon. James Fran Nonpareil. She tired of circus life and sought a home. Grace tells of seeing Fran come home with a man. She guesses that of the story and surprises the rest of them. She decides to ask Bob Clinton to go to Springfield to investigate Fran's story. Fran enters Ashton's office and tells her name. Fran offers her services to Gregory as secretary during the temporary absence of Grace.

more to my mother than to her," she said, catching her breath. "No, the secret must be kept—always. Father—I must never call you that except when we are alone—I must always whisper it, like a prayer—father, let me be your secretary."

It was strange that this request should surround Fran with the chill atmosphere of a tomb. His embrace relaxed insensibly. He looked at his daughter in frightened bewilderment, as if afraid she had drawn him too far from her security for further hiding. During the silence, she awaited his decision.

It was because of her tumultuous emotions that she failed to hear advancing footsteps.

"Some one is coming," he exclaimed, with ill-concealed relief. "We mustn't be seen thus—we would be misunderstood." He strode to the window, and pretended to look out. His face cleared momentarily.

The door opened, and Grace Noir started in, then paused significantly. "Am I interrupting?" she asked, in quiescent accent.

"Certainly not," Gregory breathed freedom. His surprise was so joyful that he was carried beyond himself. "Grace! It's Grace! Then you didn't go to the city with Bob. There wasn't any train—"

"I am here," began Grace easily—"Yes, of course, that's the main thing," his delight could not be held in check. "You are here, indeed! And you are looking—I mean you look well—I mean you are not ill—your return is so unexpected."

"I am here," she steadily persisted, "because I learned something that affects my interests. I went part of the way with Mr. Clinton, but after thinking over what had been told me, I decided to leave the train at the next station. I have been driven back in a carriage. I may as well tell you, Mr. Gregory, that I am urged to accept a responsible position in Chicago."

He understood that she referred to marriage with Robert Clinton. "But—" he began, very pale.

She repeated, "A responsible position in Chicago. And I was told, this morning, that while I was away, Fran meant to apply for the secretaryship, thus taking advantage of my absence."

Fran's face looked oddly white and old, in its oval of black hair. "Who told you this truth?" she demanded, with a menacing gleam of teeth.

"Who knew of your intentions?" the other gracefully said. "But this is no matter. The point is that I have this Chicago opportunity. So if Mr. Gregory wants to employ you, I must know it at once, to make my arrangements accordingly."

"Can you imagine," Hamilton cried reproachfully, "that without any warning, I would make a change? Certainly not. I have no intention of employing Fran. The idea is impossible. More than that, it is—it is absolutely preposterous. Would I calmly tear down what you and I have been building up so carefully?"

"Then you had already refused Fran before I came?"

"I had—hadn't I, Fran?"

Fran gave her father a look such as had never before come into her dark eyes—a look of reproach, a look that said, "I cannot fight back because of the agony in my heart." She went away silent and with downcast head.

through window-screens," he explained.

Miss Sapphira gave something like a choked cough, and compressed her lips. "Abbott," she said, looking at him sidewise, "please step to the telephone, and call up Bob—he's at the store. Tell him to leave the clerk in charge and hitch up and take me for a little drive. I want some of this June morning myself."

Abbott obeyed with alacrity. On his return, Miss Sapphira said, "Bob's going to fight for you at the board meeting, Abbott. We'll do what we can, and I hope you'll help yourself."

As Abbott went down the fragrant street with its cool hose-refreshed pavements, its languorous shadows (athwart rose-bush and picket fence, its leafy weeds already peering through crevices where plank sidewalks maintained their worn-out right of way, he was in no dewy-morning mood. He understood that those wise nods had meant, and he was in no frame of mind for such wisdom. He meant to go far, far away from the boarding-house, from the environment of schools and school-boards, from Littleburg with its atmosphere of ridiculous gossip.

Of course he could have gone just as far, if he had not chosen the direction of Blubb's Rifle—but he had to take some direction. He halted before he came in sight of the stream; if Fran had a mind to fish with Simon Jefferson, he would not spoil her sport.

He found a comfortable log where he might study under the gracious sky. He did not learn much—there seemed a bird in every line.

When he closed his books, scarcely knowing why, and decided to ramble, it was with no intention of seeking Fran. Miss Sapphira might have guessed what would happen, but in perfect innocence, the young man strolled, seeking a grassy by-road, sedulous, pedolent of brush, tree, vine, dust-laden weed. It was a road where the sun seemed almost a stranger; a road gone to sleep and dreaming of the feet of stealthy Indians, of noisy settlers, and skillful trappers. All such dreadful bits of life had the old road drained into oblivion, and now it

Ashton," she said with a curl of her lip, "I mean when we are alone."

"While we're together, and after we part," he quoted. "Fran, surely you don't feel toward me the way you are looking?"

"Exactly as I'm looking at you, that's how I feel. Stand there as long as you please—"

"I don't want to stand a moment longer. I want to sit with you in the buggy. Please don't be so—so old!"

Fran laughed out musically, but immediately declared: "I laughed because you are unexpected; it doesn't mean I like you any better. I hate friendship that shows itself only in private. Mr. Chameleon, I like people to show their true colors."

"I am not Mr. Chameleon, and I want to sit in your buggy."

"Well, then get in the very farthest corner. Now look me in the eyes."

"And, oh, Fran, you have such eyes! They are so marvelously—er—unfriendly."

"I'm glad you ended up that way. Now look me in the eyes. Suppose you should see the school-board sailing down the road, Miss Sapphira through it. What would you do?"

"What should I do?"

"Hide, I suppose," said Fran, suddenly rippling.

"Then you look me in the eyes and listen to me," he said impressively. "Weigh my words—have you scales strong enough?"

"Put 'em on slow and careful."

"I am not Mr. Chameleon for I show my true color. And I am a real friend, no matter what kind of tree I am—"

He paused, groping for a word.

"Up!" she suggested, with a sudden chuckle. "All right—let the school-board come. But you don't seem surprised to see me here in the buggy without Mr. Simon."

"When Mr. Simon comes he'll find me right here," Abbott declared.

"Fran, please don't be always showing your worst side to the town; when you laugh at people's standards, they think you queer—and you are to me. Just how much you are to me."

"Huh!" Fran sniffed. "I'd hate to be anybody's friend and have my friendship as little use as yours has been to me."

He was deeply wounded. "I've tried to give good advice—"

"I don't need advice, I want help in carrying out what I already know." Her voice vibrated. "I'm afraid of losing your position if you have anything to do with me. Of course I'm queer. Can I help it, when I have no real home, and nobody cares whether I go or stay?"

"You know I care, Fran."

Fran caught her lip between her teeth as if to hold herself steady. "Oh, let's drive," she said recklessly, striking the dashboard with a whip, and shaking her hair about her face till she looked the feline child he had first known.

"Fran, you know I care—you know it."

"We'll drive into Sure-Enough Country," she said with a half-smile showing on the side of her face next him. "Whoo! Here we are. All who live in Sure-Enough Country are sure-enough people—whatever they say is true. Goodness!" She opened her eyes very wide—"It's awful dangerous to talk in Sure-Enough Country." She put up her whip, and folded her hands.

"I'm glad we're here, Fran, for you have your friendly log."

"That's because I really do like you. Let's talk about yourself—how you expect to be what you'll be—you're nothing yet, you know, Abbott; but how did you come to determine to be something?"

Into Abbott's smile stole something tender and sacred. "It was all 'no-mother' he explained simply. "She died before I received my state certificate, but she thought I'd be a great man—so I am trying for it."

"And she'll never know," Fran lamented.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

"Of course you are lonely, child, but that is your fault. You are in this house on a footing of equality, and all seem to like you, except Miss Grace—and I must say, her disapproval disturbs you very little. But you won't adopt our ways. You make everybody talk by your indifferent behavior—then wonder that the town shuns your society, and complain because you feel lonesome!"

Fran's eyes filled with tears. "If you believe in me—if you try to like me—that's all I ask. The whole town can talk, if I have you. I don't care for the world and its street corners—there are no street corners in my world."

"But, child—"

"You never call me Fran if you can help it," she interposed passionately. "Even the dogs have names. Call me by mine; it's Fran. Say it, say it. Call me—father, father. I want your love."

"Hush!" he gasped, ashen pale. "You will be overheard."

She extended her arms wildly: "What do you know about God, except that He's Father. That's all—Father—and you worship Him as His son. And you want me to care for your religion. Then why don't you show me the way to God? Can you love Him and deny your own child? Am I to pray to him as my Father in Heaven, but not dare acknowledge my father on earth? No! I don't know how others feel, but I'll have to reach heavenly things through human things. And I tell you that you are standing between me and God."

"Hush, hush!" cried Gregory. "Child! this is sacrilege!"

"No, it is not. I tell you, I can't see God, because you're in the way. You pray 'Our Father who art in Heaven' . . . give us this day our daily bread. And I pray to you, and I say, My father here on earth, give—give me—your love. That's what I want—nothing else—I want it so bad. I'm dying for it, father, can't you understand? Look—I'm praying for it." She threw herself wildly at his feet.

Deeply moved, he tried to lift her from the ground.

"No," cried Fran, scarcely knowing what she said, "I will not get up till you grant my prayer. I'm not asking for the full, rich love a child has the right to expect—but give me a crust, to keep me alive—father, give me my daily bread. You needn't think God is going to answer your prayers, if you refuse mine."

Hamilton Gregory took her in his arms and held her to his breast. "Fran," he said brokenly, "my unfortunate child—my daughter—oh, why were you born?"

"Yes," sobbed Fran, resting her head upon his bosom. "Yes, why was I born?"

"You break my heart," he sobbed with her. "Fran, say the word, and I will tell everything; I will acknowledge you as my daughter, and if my wife—"

Fran shook her head. "You owe no

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seemed to call on Abbott to share their fate, the fate of the forgotten.

By the road lost its mystic meaning when Abbott discovered Fran. Suddenly it became only a road—nay, it became nothing. It seemed that the sight of Fran always made wreckage of the world about her.

She was sitting in the Gregory buggy, but, most surprising of all, there was no horse between the shafts—no horse was to be seen, anywhere. Best of all, no Simon Jefferson was visible. Fran in the buggy—that was all. Slow traveling, indeed, even for this sleepy old road!

"Not in a hurry, are you?"

"I've arrived," Fran said, in unfriendly tone.

"Are you tired of fishing, Fran?"

"Yes, and of being fished." She had closed the door in his face, but he said—as through the keyhole—"Does that mean for me to go away?"

"You are a pretty good friend, Mr.

He understood what those wise nods had meant.

He answered almost tragically. "Board meeting, tonight."

Ordinarily, teachers for the next year were selected before the close of the spring term; only those "on the inside" knew that the fateful board meeting had been delayed week after week because of disagreement over the superintendency. There was so much dissatisfaction over Abbott Ashton—because of "so much talk"—that even Robert Clinton had thought it best to wait, that the young man might virtually be put upon good behavior.

"Tonight," the young man repeated with a thrill. He realized how important this meeting would prove in shaping his future.

"Yes," she said warningly. "And Bob is determined to do his duty. He never went very far in his own education because he didn't expect to be a school-teacher—but ever since he's been chairman of the school-board, he's aimed to have the best teachers, so the children can be taught right; most of 'em are poor and may want to teach, too, when they're grown. I think all the board'll be for you tonight, Abbott, and I've been glad to notice that for the last month, there's been less talk. And by the way," she added, "that Fran-girl went by with Simon Jefferson just now, the two of them in Brother Gregory's buggy. They're going to Blubb's Rifle—he with his weak heart, and her with that sly smile of hers, and it's a full three miles!"

Abbott did not volunteer that he had seen them pass, but his face showed the ostensible integrity of a Jan-child, who for once finds himself innocent when missing Jan is mentioned.

She was not convinced by his look of guilelessness. "You seem to be carrying away your books."

"I want to breathe in this June morning without taking it strained



My Unfortunate Child—My Daughter—Oh, Why Were You Born.



He Understood What Those Wise Nods Had Meant.

QUEER THING IS THE TURTLE

Scotch Naturalist of Wide Repute Declares It is Neither Fish, Flesh Nor Fowl.

According to Macdonald, a Scotch naturalist of wide repute, the turtle is the strangest of all living things and the most unfishable. He can live in the water as well as out of it and can seemingly go for indefinite lengths of time without air or food or light.

He is neither fish nor flesh nor fowl, and yet he has the characteristics of all three. As for his eating, it seems quite superfluous, for he can remain shut up in a barrel for a number of weeks and emerge at the end of the time apparently none the worse for the lack of food and light and air.

The baby turtle seems also just as indifferent to its surroundings as its parents are. As soon as it comes forth from the egg it settles off to the sea. It has no sense of touch or sight. It has no sense of smell. It has no sense of hearing. It has no sense of taste. It has no sense of color. It has no sense of direction. It has no sense of anything.

and feeds unmolested until its armor gets hard.

By the time that it weighs 25 pounds, which occurs the first year, it knows that it is far from all danger, for after that no fish, however hungry, or well armed with teeth, can interfere. The turtle immediately withdraws its head into its neck between the two shells, and all intending devourers struggle in vain to impress it.

Sudden Change.

To illustrate the difficulty which attends any attempt to part the average man from his money for a church purpose collection, Bishop Murray recently told this story at a gathering in the Green Spring valley. It seems that a certain church had a very well-kept cemetery surrounded by a good fence, which fence was one night blown down by a violent storm. A meeting of the church members was held to consider the rebuilding of the fence, and the vote of sixty-five to five. This point being decided, the minister announced that contributions to pay for the rebuilding would be next in order. The announcement

was received in unenthusiastic silence, broken at last by a member who rose to object to the rebuilding of the fence.

"If you think it over," he argued, "you will see we don't need that fence. For, gentlemen, those who are inside the cemetery can't get out, and those outside certainly don't want to get in, so what use is a fence after all? I move to recall the vote."

And recalled it was by a vote of 100 to 0.

JOHN WINK.

Why She Was Quitting.

A famous Ohio humorist says that a new rich family in Cleveland, who were beginning to put on a lot of airs, hired a colored girl just arrived from the south to act as their serving-maid. Her new mistress insisted that all meals should be served in courses. Even when there wasn't much to eat it was brought to the table in courses.

At the end of a week the girl threw up her job. Being pressed for a reason for quitting so suddenly, she said: "I'll tell you, lady. In dis yere house dere's too much shifting of de dishes fur de twoness of de vittles."

FEET TAKE PLACE OF HANDS

English Woman, Born Without Arms, Has Taught Herself to Sew, Cook and Write.

At Eastbourne, says an English paper, resides a woman probably without an equal in the country. She is born minus arms yet she can do almost anything with her feet. Her name is Mrs. Peirce of Tower street, and recently she attended a dinner given to the old people of the town by the local lodge of Buffaloes.

She surprised everybody present by placing her feet upon the table, and picking up the knife and fork with marvelous dexterity commenced to enjoy the feast. She manipulated the knife and fork quite as well as any ordinary person would with her hands, and although she looked very uncomfortable with her feet on the table, she was quite at ease.

One had to look very closely to discern that Mrs. Peirce was actually using her feet, and had any one been looking round and had not known of her infirmity, they would have passed without noticing anything, so natural did she look.

As a housewife, Mrs. Peirce is truly wonderful. She cooks the dinner, cleans the house; in fact, she fulfills—and very creditably, too—all most all of the duties of a housewife.

Theater Used as a Stable.

The Turkish theater of Mustapha Pasha is, in the opinion of convey experts, the most convenient stable they have found in the length and breadth of the peninsula.

The pit boxes serve for mules, horses, or oxen; the galleries are crammed with hay and straw; the balcony is a reservoir for oats; the stage is a surgical center for operations on wounded animals, while the green room is a special haunt of buffaloes.

Her Grief.

He—Why don't you give me a dance before midnight?

Young Widow—Well, you see at 11:30 tonight it will be a year since my husband's death. I must honor his memory properly, and not dance until after the year is up.

GOOD USE FOR WASTE

Conservation of All the Products Raised on Farm.

Department of Agriculture Devotes Much Time Toward Solving Problem of Much Importance for Farmer and Fruit Grower.

For several years the United States department of agriculture has been devoting a great deal of time toward solving one of the most important questions before the American farmer and fruit grower today. This is the conservation of all products on the farm, letting nothing go to waste. Special trains with leading government experts in charge have been sent out through the country to demonstrate and lecture on the various ways by which the enormous waste of this country can be turned into profit. While many subjects of great interest were discussed there was, perhaps, nothing of greater importance than the subject of caring for the millions of dollars' worth of fruits and vegetables that go to waste every year, by the canning process.

The advisability of canning the surplus at home or on the farm, where produced, was explained by these experts and steam canning outfits were shown so that the farmers and their wives could see how easily this work can be done. As the heat of boiling water is not sufficient to properly sterilize such foods as vegetables,

GREATEST ENEMY OF CHICKS

That Which Causes More Loss Than Anything Else is Chilling—Vermin is Next Important.

The greatest enemy of the chick, and that which causes more loss than any other one cause, is chilling; the second enemy in importance because of amount of loss is lice; both lice and chilling are the indirect cause of bowel troubles, because both sap the vitality and life of the chick, making it impossible for the little fellow to resist the organisms of disease which are always ready to attack it.

Dusting the setting hen helps, but some lice are quite sure to escape, and can later be found on the head of the chick. Rub a little dab of lard on top of the chick's head, getting it into the down thoroughly, and you will get these; repeat the dose in a week, and if the hen is furnished a good dusting place, the lice are not likely to give any more trouble; but whenever you see a chick that seems unhappy, eyes closed, droopy, look for lice.

The brood crops should be thoroughly sprayed before using with some coal-tar preparation, sheep dip, white-wash, or a mixture of four parts coal oil and one part crude carbolic acid. It pays to be ahead, and that explains why so few of us are making anything on our poultry; we neglect these little things; because of neglect disease gets the start of us, we become discouraged because of the losses, and give up and blame our luck, when all the bad luck might have been prevented by a little careful preparation.

Give the checks a clean place, all the heat they can stand, keep them free from vermin, and you can safely count them before they are raised.



Instructing Farmers How to Can Their Surplus.

AROUND THE HONEY MAKERS

All Falling or Slow Queens Should Be Changed Promptly and Bred Only From Very Best.

Comb honey that is to be sent to a distant market should be shipped before cold weather, since the combs become extremely fragile when cold. Change all falling or slow queens promptly, and breed from the best you can secure, thus raising the standard of your stock step by step and improving the average year by year.

The young bees, hatched from August 1 on, constitute the colony to be wintered, and for this reason it is wise to see that much brood is ready, even if you have to resort to stimulative feeding.

As a rule bees cast a prime swarm as soon as the first queen cell is sealed, unless prevented by bad weather; therefore, the first young queen may be expected to emerge on the eighth day from the first swarm. When the hives are well distributed in a certain space, their inmates can be more easily handled. It seems to improve their disposition, especially if there are some trees, shrubs, or the like about it. Robbing is not so prevalent, either, and the absence of that always helps to make the bees better natured.

BAD PRACTICE OF FARMERS

One Cannot Afford to Burn Corn Stalks and Put Nothing Back in Form of Humus.

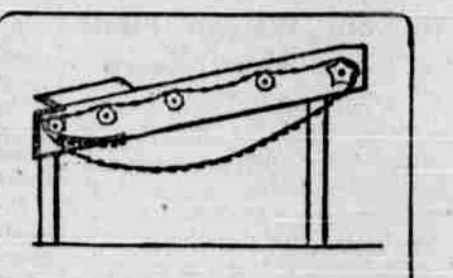
It always makes me feel sad to see smoke arising from the burning corn stalks in the field, because the farmer is burning up his land and doesn't know it. How can we expect to burn up stock which the soil produces and put nothing back in the way of humus, and then hope to keep our soil in good condition?

Maybe I'm wrong when I say that farmers do not know what they're doing, for doubtless some of them do know that it is a bad practice, but burning stalks is easier than disking or cutting them up, and they are a nuisance to plow them under. Some farmers say there is no benefit in plowing under stalks, but I cannot figure it out that way, because I do not see how we can go robbing our soil and keep up the fertility. It costs very little to keep a sheep and a flock of 50 sheep is worth money.

HANDY IN SORTING POTATOES

Smaller Tubers Fall Through Holes in Revolving Screen—Work Done With Rapidity.

A New York man has designed a machine for sorting potatoes, and here it is. A frame, with one end higher than the other, has a hopper on one end and angular rollers rotatably supported in it. A belt that passes over these rollers is formed of strips of wire so interwoven as to make a rather large mesh. Across the frame and just beneath the hopper is a chute. To sort the tubers they are poured into the hopper and spread



Potato Sorter.

PUMPKINS STORED IN FIELDS

Piled in Row and Covered With Hay Protection is Afforded and Balanced Ration Formed.

You needn't expect to reap much profit from gorging your hogs and cattle on pumpkins for a few days during the harvest season; then cutting off their supply of this valuable feed for another whole year. Store your pumpkins in the field.

Pile the pumpkins in a row, as high and as wide as you wish, cover with hay and set up fodder on each side to a thickness of three or four feet. This not only affords ample protection from the cold, but also enables you to form a most profitable balanced ration by adding "the fruit of the vine" as you feed out the corn and fodder. Try this.

Source of Contamination.

Cracked or badly worn utensils are a great source of contamination for milk and cream, as they afford a harbor for various objectionable ferments which ultimately cause considerable trouble.

Most Profitable Feed.

With hogs, especially the feeding that produces a steady, speedy growth, is the most profitable. A pig that is stunted in the early days of its life should never have a place in the breeding herd.

Labor Saving.

If taken at a year yearly age chickens can be taught to come and go at certain times, to feed in a certain way and do other things that will save time and annoyance.

Setting Peach Trees.

A great many people set peach trees too deeply. The ground should be plowed very deep, but the holes for the trees should only be deep enough to cover the roots well.

over the revolving belt. All the smaller potatoes pass through the openings in the belt, roll down the incline to the chute and are ejected at the side of the frame. The larger vegetables remain in the belt and are carried to another receptacle. This method is not only more rapid than sorting by hand, but it makes sure that there are no mixed sizes in the different lots.

For Lawn-Making.

The best fall months for lawn-making are August and September. If the soil is well prepared, deep, and rich and mellow, the grass will usually secure a good start, and with a little protection after the ground freezes will continue to make roots during mild intervals, and by spring will be much in advance of a lawn made at that time and which, owing to a late season, may have to be deferred beyond the usual seed time.

Disinfecting Whitewash.

An excellent disinfecting whitewash may be made as follows: Slake 25 pounds fresh lime in sufficient water to make a paste, sprinkle in 15 pounds of flowers of sulphur, add 30 gallons of water, and boil for an hour. Then add enough water to make 50 gallons and apply with a spray pump, using a bordeaux nozzle.

Forage for Ducks.

Do you know that a patch of ground sown to turnips now will in a few weeks provide forage for the ducks? They are so fond of this that they often eat young turnips right out of the ground.

Lime Prevents Disease.

Scatter the air-laked lime everywhere in the poultry-house during damp weather, and on the yards, too, and it will do much to prevent roup. Back of this, however, must be cleanliness and dry quarters.