

RICH MENS CHILDREN

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SYNOPSIS.

Bill Cannon, the banana king, and his daughter, Rose, who had passed up Mrs. Cornelius Ryan's ball at San Francisco to accompany her father, arrive at Antelope. Dominick Ryan calls on his mother to beg a ball invitation for his wife, and is refused. The determined old lady refuses to recognize her daughter-in-law. Dominick had been trapped into a marriage with Berate Iverson, a photographer, several years his senior. She squanders his money, they have frequent quarrels, and he slips away. Cannon and his daughter are annoyed in Antelope. Dominick Ryan is rescued from storm in uncivil condition and brought to Antelope hotel. Antelope is cut off by storm. Rose Cannon nurses Dominick back to life. Two weeks later Berate discovers in a paper where husband is and writes letter trying to smooth over difficulties between them. Dominick at last is able to visit fellow snowbound prisoners in hotel parlor. He loses temper over talk of Buford, an actor. After three weeks, end of imprisonment is seen. Telegrams and mail arrive. Dominick gets letter from wife. Tells Rose he doesn't love her, and never will. Stormed people begin to depart. Rose and Dominick embrace, father sees them and demands an explanation. Rose's brother Gene is made manager of ranch, and he to get it if he stays sober a year. Cannon expresses sympathy for Dominick's position in talk with Rose. Dominick returns home. Rose exerts herself to please him, but he is indifferent. Cannon calls on Mrs. Ryan. They discuss Dominick's marriage difficulties, and Cannon suggests buying off Berate. Dominick goes to park on Sunday with Rose and family, sees Miss Cannon, bows to her and starts whispering in her ear. In Mrs. Ryan's name, Cannon offers Berate money to leave her husband and permit divorce. She refuses. Dominick sees Rose. Corals Ryan engaged to Jack Duffy. Cannon offers Berate \$10,000 and is turned down. Berate tells sisters of offer. Buford, the actor, makes a hit in vaudeville. Rose tells Dominick that he must attack in wife, and first time acknowledges that she loves him. Cannon offers Rose \$100,000 which she refuses, saying Cannon wants Dominick for Rose. Gene wins the ranch. Berate accuses Rose of trying to steal her husband and tells her of the offer. Rose tells father what she earned about the attempt to bribe Berate and declares that she would never marry Dominick, should he ever be divorced. Exact promise from father to let Berate alone.

CHAPTER XVIII.—Continued.

She leaned down to take his hand. He relinquished it to her with an immense lightening of his heart, and peace fell on him as he felt her rub her cheek against his knuckles.

"So you're not mad at the old man, after all?" he said almost shyly.

"No," she murmured, "not at him. I was angry at what he was doing."

It was a subtly feminine way of getting round the delicate points of the situation—that inconsistently feminine way which separates judgment of the individual from judgment of his acts. But it relieved the Bonanza King of the heaviest weight that had lain upon him for many years, and, for once, he gave thanks for the irrationality of women.

"Well, good night, honey," he said, "no matter what crazy notions you've got, you're the old man's girl all right."

She kissed him.

"And you won't forget your promise?" she murmured.

"Of course not," he said stoutly, not sure just what she was alluding to. "Any promise I make to you stands till the Day of Judgment. Good night."

When she left him, he lit another cigar, sank lower in his chair and stared at the fire.

It was a deadlock. In his helplessness, the enraged helplessness of the man who had ridden triumphantly over all obstacles that fate had set in his path, his prevailing thought was how much he would like to kill Berate. He had done all this. This viper of a woman, the kind to tread on if she raised her head, had baffled and beaten them all. He could not murder her, but he thought with grim lips of how he could crush and grind her down and let her feel how heavy Bill Cannon's hand could be.

It seemed for the moment as if everything were over. They had reached a place where a blank wall stretched across the road. Berate's refusing the money had been a serious obstacle, but not an unconquerable one. Rose tonight had given the whole blot its death blow. With lowering brows he puffed at his cigar, groping in his mind for some way that might yet be tried. He could not brook the thought of defeat. And yet the more he meditated the more impregnable and unscalable appeared the wall that stretched across the way.

CHAPTER XIX.

Friend or Foe.

For some time after Rose had left her, Berate remained on the bench, not moving, her glance resting on that part of the path whence the young girl's figure had faded from view.

The night slowly deepened, impregnating the gray atmosphere with a velvety depth of shadow that oozed through it like an infusion of a darker, denser element. Lights came out. First sporadically, here and there blooming through the opaque dusk, but suddenly, but with an effect of graduality, as though the air was so thick it took some time to break through it. Then came more. Rows of windows appeared in long, magnified splatters. All round the plaza there was a suggestion of effaced brightness, as of a painting which had once been sharply outlined and brilliant, but was now rubbed into a formless, impressionist study of shadows and undefined, yellow blurs. The

golden halos of lamps blotted the dark at intervals, and now and then the figures, which had occupied the benches, passed into the circles of vaporous illumination, and passed out of them, as if they had been crossing the stage of a theater.

Berate did not move and did not notice the increasing chill of the hour or the moisture beading on her clothes like wintry rime. She was sunk in an abyss of thought, a suspended trance of contemplation, of receptivity to new ideas. In one hour her basic estimate of human nature, her accepted measurement of motives and standards, had been suddenly upset. Her point of view was like a kaleidoscope, which is unexpectedly turned. Sitting motionless on the bench she saw the familiar aspect of life fallen into new shapes, taking on alien forms.

She realized that Dominick had never been happy with her, and, for the first time, she understood the gulf between them. She saw what the life was that he had wanted to lead, and that he could have led with the other woman. It would have been that very form of existence which Berate had always derided, and thought an outward expression of the inward dullness of people who had children, looked shabby, and did not care for money. Now she felt unsure as to whether her scorn of it was not foolish and unenlightened. As in a sudden forward

shot of a search-light, she saw them—Dominick and Rose—happy in a way she had never dreamed of being happy, in a world so far from hers that she had never before had a clear look at it, a man and woman concentrated upon the piece of life that belonged to them, living passionately for each other, indifferent to all that seemed to her of value.

She brought her mental vision back from this upon herself and felt shaken and slightly sick. Seeing beyond the circle of her own experience and sensation for the first time, she would have said to any companion who might have shared her thoughts: "No wonder Dominick didn't get on with me!" For a dispassionately-contemplative moment she saw herself in Dominick's eyes; she saw their married life as it had been to him. She felt sorry for both of them—for him in his forced acquiescence with the conditions around him, for herself because of her ignorance of all he had wanted and expected.

"I couldn't be any different," she whispered to herself, "that's the way I am."

She never could be any different. She was one kind of woman and Rose Cannon was another, and Dominick belonged to Rose Cannon's kind. She did not know that it was so much better than her kind but it was different. They made her feel like an outsider in a distant world, and the feeling gave her a sensation of deadly depression. The burning heat of resentment that had made her speak to Rose was gone. All the burning heats and angers of the last two months seemed to belong to the past. An icy, nostalgic ache of loneliness had hold of her. The accustomed sense of intimacy and warm, enjoying interest in the world—what we mean when we talk of "living"—had been completely drawn out of her.

The cold, biting in to her marrow, at last woke her to a realization of her surroundings, and she sat upright, looking blinking to the right and left. The half-lit plaza lay like a lake of shadow surrounded by a circlet of light and girdled by noise. It was like the brightness and animation of the

table where the Spanish women sat, unloading his cargo there, as he set it out exchanging remarks with the women in their own language and showing no haste to Berate's summons. She moved in her chair and muttered angrily. The man behind the lace curtain advanced his head and through the interstices of the drapery tried to look directly at her. In this position he could only catch a glimpse of her, but he saw her hand stretched forward to take one of the red beans from the glass saucer in the middle of the table. It was an elegant hand, the skin smooth and white, the fingers covered with rings. She again beckoned, this time peremptorily, and the waiter came. The listener could hear her voice distinctly as he watched her reflection in the glass.

"Why didn't you come when I beckoned?" she said sharply.

"Because I had other people to wait on," said the waiter with equal asperity. "They was here before you."

"What's the matter with the dinner tonight? It's all bad."

"I ain't cooked it," retorted the man, growing red with indignation, his swollen eye glaring fiercely at her. "And no else's complained. I guess it's what's the matter with you?"

Berate made an angry movement—sometimes alluded to as "founcing"—and turned her head away from him.

"Get me an enchilada," she said peremptorily, "and after that some frijoles. I don't want anything else."

The waiter moved away and the man behind the curtain, as if satisfied by his long survey, also turned back into the general room. Close to the opening there was an unoccupied table, and at this he sat down, laid his hat on the chair beside him, and



She hurried by the Market Stalls.

world flowing round her but not touching her, as she sat alone in the darkness.

She rose suddenly, determined to escape, if such were possible, from her gloomy thoughts, and walked toward the upper end of the square, directing her steps to the Spanish and Italian section of the city which is called the Latin Quarter. She walked slowly, not knowing where to go, only determined that she would not go home. She thought for a moment of her sisters, where she could have din-

ner and find the cheer of congenial society. But on consideration she felt that this, too, was more than she could just now bear. They would torment her with questions and she felt in no mood to put them off or to be confidential. Finally she remembered a Mexican restaurant, to visit which had at one time been a fashion. She had been there with Hazel and Josh, and once in a party with some of the bank people. She knew where the place was and felt that she could dine there with no fear of encountering any one she knew.

With an objective point in view, her step gained decision, and she moved forward briskly, leaving the plaza and plunging into the congeries of picturesque streets which harbor a swarming foreign population. The lights of shops and open stalls fell out into the fog, transforming it into thick, churning currents of smoky pallor. Wet walls and sidewalks showed a gold veneer, and lingering drops, trembling on cornices, hung like tiny globes of thin yellow glass.

People and things looked magnified and sometimes horrible seen through this mysterious, obscuring medium. Once behind a pane of glass she saw lines of detached, staring eyes, fastened glaringly on her as she advanced. It was the display in an optician's show-window, where glass eyes were disposed in fanciful lines, like a decoration. She looked at them askance, feeling that there was something sinister in their wide, unwinking scrutiny. She hurried by the market stalls, where the shawled figures of women stood huddled round the butcher's block. They looked as if they might be grouped round a point of interest, bending to stare at something lying there, something dreadful, like a corpse, Berate thought.

When she saw the Mexican restaurant she felt relieved. The strange atmospheric conditions seemed to have played upon her nerves and she was glad to get somewhere where she could find warmth and light and people. The place, a little shabby house dating from the era of the projecting shingle roof and encircling balcony, stood on a corner with windows on two streets. It was built upon a slope so sharp that the balcony, which in front skirted the second story, in the back was on a level with the sidewalk. The bright light of gas-jets, under shades of fluted white china, fell over the contents of the show-window. They were not attractive. A dish of old and shriveled oranges stood between a plate of tamales and another of red and green peppers. There were many flies in the window, and, chilled by the cold, they stood along the inside of the glass in a state of torpor.

Berate pushed open the door and entered. The front part of the place was used as a grocery store and had a short counter at one side, behind which stood shelves piled high with the wares demanded by the Mexican and Spanish population. Back of this were the tables of the restaurant. The powerful, aromatic odors of the groceries blended with the even more powerful ones of the Mexican menu. The room was close and hot. In a corner, his back braced against the wall, a Spaniard, with inky dark hair and a large expanse of white shirt bosom, was languidly picking at a guitar.

Berate knew that there was an inner sanctum for the guests that preferred more secluded quarters, and walked past the counter and between the tables. An arched opening connected with this room. Coarse, dirty, lace curtains hung in the archway and, looped back against gilt hooks, left a space through which a glimpse of the interior was vouchsafed to the diners without. It was smaller than the restaurant proper, and was fitted up with an attempt at elegance. Lace curtains—also coarse and dirty—velled the windows, and two large mirrors, with tarnished and fly-spotted gilt frames, hung on the wall opposite the entrance.

Just now it was sparsely patronized. In one corner two women in mourning and a child were sitting. They glanced at Berate with languid curiosity and then resumed a loud and voluble conversation in Spanish. A party of three Jews, an over-dressed woman and two young men—evidently visitors from another part of town—sat near them. On the opposite side there was no one. Berate slipped noiselessly into a chair at the corner table, her back against the partition that shut off the rest of the dining-room. She felt sheltered in this unoccupied angle, despite the fact that the mirror hanging opposite gave a reflection of her to any one standing in the archway.

The cloth was dirty and here and there showed a hole. Her ineradicable fastidiousness was strong in her even at this hour, when everything that was a manifestation of her own personality seemed weak and de-talized. She was disgustedly clearing away the crumbs of the last occupant with daintily-brushing movements of her finger-tips, when the waiter drew up beside her and demanded her order. It was part of this weird evening, when natural surroundings seemed to combine with her own overwrought condition to create an effort of strangeness and terror, that the waiter should have been an old, shriveled man of shabby and dejected mien, with a defect in one eye, which rendered it abnormally large and prominent under a drooping, reddened lid. In order to see well it was necessary for him to hold his head at a certain angle and bring the eye, staring with alarming wildness, upon the object of his attention. His aspect added still further to Berate's dissatisfaction. She resolved to eat little and leave the place as soon as possible.

When her soup came, a thin yellow liquid in which dark bits of leaves and herbs floated, she tasted it hesitatingly, and, after a mouthful or two, put down her spoon and leaned back

against the wall. She felt very tired and incapable of any more concentration of mind. Her thoughts seemed to float, disconnectedly and indifferently, this way and that, like a cobweb stirred by air currents and half held by a restraining thread. To her dulled observation the laughter of the Jewish party came mingled with the tinkling of the guitar outside, and the loud-continuous talk from the Spanish women in the corner.

The waiter brought fish—a fried smelt—and she roused herself and picked up her fork. She did not notice that a man was standing near her in the archway, the edge of the lace curtain in his hand, looking about the room. He threw a side glance at her which swept her shoulders, her hat, and her down-bent profile, and looked away. Then, as if something in this glimpse had suddenly touched a spring of curiosity, he looked back again. His second survey was longer. The glance he bent upon her was sharp and grew in intensity. He made no attempt to enter or to move nearer her, but any one watching him would have seen that his interest increased with the prolongation of his scrutiny.

As if afraid of being observed he cast a quick surreptitious look over the room, which in its circuit crossed the mirror. Here, reflected from a different point of view, Berate was shown in full face, her eyes lowered, her hands moving over her plate. This man scanned the reflection with immovable intentness. Berate laid down her fork and pushed the fish away with a petulant movement, and the waiter drew back behind the lace curtain. Through its meshes he continued to stare at the mirror, his lips tightly shut, his face becoming rigid in the fixity of his observation.

The waiter entered, his arms piled with dishes, and she made a beckoning gesture to him. He answered with a jerk of his head, and, going to the

unfastened his coat. To the servant who came for his order, he asked for a cup of black coffee and a liqueur glass of brandy. He also requested an evening paper. With the show open before him he sat sipping the coffee, the slightest noise from the inner room causing him to start and lift the paper before his face.

He sat thus for some fifteen minutes. The Spanish women and the child emerged from the archway and left the restaurant, and a few moments later he heard the scraping of chair legs and Berate's voice as she asked for her bill. He lifted the paper and appeared buried in its contents, not moving as Berate brushed back the lace curtain, and passed him. Her eyes absently fell on him and she had a vague impression of the dark dome of a head emerging from above the opened sheets of the journal. As she rustled by he lowered the paper and followed her with a keen, watchful glance. He did not move till the street door closed behind her, when he threw the paper aside, snatched up his hat and flicked a silver dollar on to the cloth.

"No change," he said to the waiter, who came forward.

The surprised servant, unaccustomed to such tips, stared astonished after him as he hurried down the passage between the tables, quickly opened the door and disappeared into the darkness of the street.

Berate was only a few rods away, moving forward with a slow, loitering step. It was an easy night to follow without being observed. Walking at a prudent distance behind her, he kept her in sight as she passed from the smaller streets of the Latin Quarter into the glare and discord of the more populous highways, along Kearney Street, past the lower boundary of Portsmouth Square. He noticed that she walked without haste, now and then glancing at a window or a passer-by. She was like a person who has



The Glance He Bent Upon Her Was Sharp and Grew in Intensity.

no objective point in view, or at least is in no hurry to reach it.

But this did not seem to be the case, for when she reached the square she took her stand on the corner where the Sacramento street cars stop. The man drew back into a doorway opposite. They were the only passengers who boarded the car at that corner, Berate entering the car at the interior, the man taking a seat on the outside. He had it to himself here, and chose the end seat by the window. Muttering imprecations at the cold, he turned up his overcoat collar and drew his soft felt hat down over his ears. By turning his head he could see between the bars that cross the end windows, the interior of the car shining with light, its polished yellow woodwork throwing back the white glare of the electricity. There were only three passengers, two depressed-looking women in dingy black, and Berate on a line with himself in the corner by the door. He could see her even better here than in the restaurant. She sat, a small, dark figure, pressed into the angle of the seat, her hands clasped in her lap, her eyes down. Her hat cast a shadow over the upper part of her face, and below this the end of her nose, her mouth and chin were revealed as pale and sharply-cut as an ivory carving. She seemed to be sunk in thought and sat motionless; the half of her face he could see, looking very white against her black fur collar.

He was furtively surveying her, when she started, glanced out of the window and signed to the conductor to stop. The man on the front dropped to the ground and stole lightly round the car, so that its moving body hid him from her. Emptiness and silence

held the street, and he could easily follow her as she walked upward along the damp and deserted sidewalk. Half-way up the block a building larger than those surrounding it rose into the night. A mounting line of bay-windows broke its facade, and a few steps above the level of the pavement, a line of doors with numbers showing black on illuminated transoms revealed it to the man opposite as a flat building. Here Berate stopped and without hesitation, evidently as one who was familiar with the place, mounted the steps and walked to the last of the doors.

The man, with soft and careful footsteps, crossed the street. As he drew nearer he saw that she was not using a latch-key, but was waiting to be admitted, leaning as if tired against the wall. He had reached the sidewalk when the door opened, vouchsafing him a bright, unimpeded view of a long flight of stairs carpeted in green. Berate entered and for a moment, before the door closed, he saw her mounting the stairs. She had not asked for any one, or indeed made a sound of greeting or inquiry. She was therefore either expected or an habitue of the place. When the door was shut he, too, mounted the porch steps and read the number on the transom. He whispered it over several times, the light falling out on his thin, aquiline face with a sweep of dark hair drooping downward toward his collar.

Satisfied with his investigation, he left the porch and walked rapidly down the street to the corner. Here there was a lamp, and halting under its light he drew from his pocket a leather wallet and took therefrom Dominick Ryan's card with an address written on it. The penciled numbers were the same as those on the door he had just left, and he stood looking fixedly at the card, an expression of excitement and exultation growing on his face.

CHAPTER XX.

The Actor's Story.

The afternoon of the next day Dominick came home earlier than usual. His New York friend, who was en route to Japan, had but a couple of days in San Francisco, and again claimed his company for dinner. The theater was to follow and Dominick had come home to change his clothes and incidentally either to see Berate and explain his absence or to leave a message for her with the Chinaman.

He felt rather guilty where she was concerned. He had seen nothing of her for two days. The only time they met was in the evening after business hours, the only meal they took together was dinner. With every spark of affection dead between them, their married life the hollowest sham, she had so long and so sternly trained him to be considerate of her and keep her in his mind, that he still instinctively followed the acquired habit of thinking of her comfort and arranging for it. He knew she would be annoyed at the two lonely dinners and hoped to see her before he left and suggest to her that she telephone for one of her sisters to join her.

The flat was very quiet when he entered, and after looking into one or two rooms for her he called the Chinaman, who said Mrs. Ryan had gone out early in the afternoon, leaving no message except that she would be home to dinner. Dominick nodded a dismissal and walked into the den. He carried the evening papers in his hand, and looking at the clock he saw that he had an hour before it would be necessary for him to dress and leave the house. Berate would undoubtedly be home before then; she was rarely out after six. Meantime, he thought that she was not in and that he could read the papers in unmolested, uninterrupted silence caused a slight sense of relief to lighten the weight that was now always with him.

He had hardly opened the first sheet when a ring at the bell dispelled his hopes. It was one of his wife's habits never to carry a latch-key, which she looked upon as a symbol of that bourgeois, middle-class helpfulness that she had shaken off with her other working-girl manners and customs. Dominick dropped the paper, waiting for her entrance, and framing the words with which he would acquaint her with the fact that he was to be absent again. Instead, however, of the rustle of feminine skirts, he heard the Chinaman's padding steps, and the servant entered and presented him with a card. Traced on it in a sprawling handwriting was the name "James Defay Buford." Dominick remembered his invitation to the man to call, and realized that this probably was the only time that the actor could conveniently do so. There was an hour yet before dinner would be served, and turning to the servant Dominick told him to show the gentleman up.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Billiards in the Country.

While Hoppe, the billiard player, was discussing in New York the question of summer vacations, "I like summer vacations," he said, "in the heart of the country. The only trouble with the heart of the country is that you can't get a good game of billiards there."

"Maybe you've heard about the two chaps, summering at Sunapee, who complained that they couldn't tell the two white balls apart, as neither of them had a spot. But the proprietor explained to them that it would be easy, after a little practice, to distinguish the balls by their shape."

"Another chap up at Sunapee asked for a game of billiards, and when the balls were brought, gave a loud, bitter laugh of disgust."

"Look here," he said, "it's balls I asked for—not dice."—New York Tribune.