

The PRICE

By FRANCIS LYNDE

ILLUSTRATIONS by C. D. RHODES

CHAPTER XXVII—Continued.

"I must be going," she said, rising. "If you will give me my envelope?" He crossed to the safe and got it for her. His curiosity was still keenly edged, but he beat it back manfully. "I wish you wouldn't hurry," he said hospitably. He was searching the changeable eyes for the warrant to say more, but he could not find it. He was obliged to let it go at that; but when they reached the phaeton and the horse-holding clerk had been relieved, he spoke of another matter. "I'm a little worried about Kenneth," he told her. "He came down this morning looking positively wretched, but he wouldn't admit that he was sick. Have you seen much of him lately?"

"Not very much"—guardedly—"Did you say he had gone home?" "I don't know where he has gone. He left here about half an hour before you came, and I haven't seen him since."

"And you are worried because he doesn't look well?" "Not altogether on that account. I'm afraid he is in deep water of some kind. I never saw a person change as he has in the past week or so. You know him pretty well, and what a big heart he has?"

She nodded, half mechanically. "Well, there have been times lately when I've been afraid he'd kill somebody—in this squabble of ours, you know. He has been going armed—which was excusable enough, under the circumstances—and night before last, when we were walking uptown together, I had all I could do to keep him from taking a pot-shot at a fellow who, he thought, was following us. I don't know but I'm taking all sorts of unfair advantage of him, telling you this behind his back, but—"

"No; I'm glad you have told me. Maybe I can help." He put her into the low basket seat, and tucked the dust-robe around her carefully. While he was doing it he looked up into her face and said: "I'd love you awfully hard for what you have done today—if you'd let me."

It was like her to smile straight into his eyes when she answered him. "When you can say that—in just that way—to the right woman, you'll find a great happiness lying in wait for you, Edward, dear." And then she spoke to the Morgan mare and distance came between.

As once before, in the earlier hours of the same day, Miss Grierson took the roundabout way between the Raymer plant and Mereside, making the circuit which took her through the college grounds and brought her out at the head of upper Shawnee street. The Widow Holcomb was sitting on her front porch, placidly crocheting, when the phaeton drew up at the curb. "Mr. Griswold," said the phaeton's occupant. "May I trouble you to tell him that I'd like to speak to him a moment?"

Mrs. Holcomb, friend of the Raymers, the Farnhams, and the Oswalds, and own cousin to the Barrs, was of the perverse minority; and, apart from this, she had her own opinion of a young woman who would wait at the door of a young man's boarding house and take him off for a night drive to goodness only knew where, and from which he did not return until goodness only knew when. So there was no stich missed in the crocheting when she said, stiffly: "Mr. Griswold isn't in. He hasn't been home since morning."

Miss Grierson drove on, and the most casual observer might have remarked the strained tightening of the lips and the two red spots which came and went in the damask-pearl cheeks. But it was not until she had reached Mereside, and had gained the shelter of the deserted library, that speech came. "O pitiful Christ!" she sobbed, dropping into a chair and hiding her face in the crook of her arm; "he's done it at last!—he's trying to hide, and that's what they've been waiting for! And I don't know where to look!"

But Matthew Broffin, tilting lazily in his chair on the downtown hotel porch, knew very well where to look, and he was watching the one outlet of the hiding place as an alert, though outwardly disregardful, house cat watches a mouse's hole.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Quality of Mercy. On no less an authority than that of the great doctor who came again from Chicago for a second consultation with Doctor Farnham, Andrew Galbraith owed his life during the two days following his return to consciousness to the unremitting care and devotion of one person.

Seconding the efforts of the physicians, and skillfully directing those of the nurses, Margery threw herself into the vicarious struggle with the generous self-sacrifice which counts neither cost nor loss; and on the third day she had her reward. Her involuntary guest and charge was distinctly bet-

ter, and again, so the two doctors declared, the balance was inclining slightly toward recovery.

It was in the afternoon of this third day, when she had been reading to him, at his own request, the sayings of the Man on the Mount, that he referred for the first time to the details of the accident which had so nearly blotted him out. Upon his asking, she related the few and simple facts of the rescue, modestly minimizing her own part in it, and giving her companion in the cabot full credit.

"The writer-man," he said thoughtfully, when she had finished telling him how Griswold had worked over him in the boat, and how he would not give up. "I remember; you fetched him out to the hotel with you one day; no, you needna fear I'll be forgetting him." Then, with a shrewd look out of the steel-gray eyes: "How long have you been knowing him, Maggie, child?"

"Oh, for quite a long time," she hastened to say. "He came here, sick and helpless, one day last spring, and—well, there isn't any hospital here in Wahaska, you know, so we took him in and helped him get over the fever, or whatever it was. This was his room while he stayed with us."

Andrew Galbraith wagged his head on the pillow.

"I know," he said. "And ye're doing it again for a poor auld man whose siller has never bought him anything like the love you're spending on him. You're everybody's good angel, I'm thinking, Maggie, lassie." Though he did not realize it, his sickness was bringing him day by day nearer to his far-away boyhood in the Inverness-shire hills, and it was easy to slip into the speech of the mother-tongue. Then, after a long pause, he went on: "He wasna wearing a beard, a red beard trimmed down to a spike—this writer-man, when ye found him, was he?"

She shook her head. "No; I have never seen him with a beard." The sick man turned his face to the wall, and after a time she heard him repeating softly the words which she had just read to him. "But if ye forgive not men . . . neither will your father forgive . . ." And again, "Judge not that ye be not judged." When he turned back to her there were new lines of suffering in the gray old face.

"I'm sore beset, child; sore beset," he sighed. "You were telling me that MacFarland and Johnson will be here tonight?"

"Yes; they should both reach Wahaska this evening."

Another pause, and at the end of it: "That man Broffin; you'll remember you asked me one day who he was, and I tell't ye he was a special officer for the bank. Is he still here?"

"He is; I saw him on the street this morning."

Again Andrew Galbraith turned his face away, and he was quiet for so long a time that she thought he had fallen asleep. But he had not.

"You're thinking something of the writer-man, lassie? Don't mind the clavers of an auld man who never had a chick or child of his ain."

Her answer was such as a child might have made. She lifted the big-jointed hand on the coverlet and pressed it softly to her flushed cheek, and he understood.

"I thought so; I was afraid so," he said, slowly. "You say you have known him a long time; it canna have been long enough, bairnie."

"But it is," she insisted, loyally. "I know him better than he knows himself; oh, very much better."

"Ye know the good in him, maybe; there's good in all men, I'm thinking now, though there was a time when I didna believe it."

"I know the good and the bad—and the bad is only the good turned upside down."

Again the sick man wagged his head on the pillow and closed his eyes.

"Ye're a loving lassie, Maggie, and that's a' there is to it," he commented; and after another interval: "What must be, must be. We spoke of this man Broffin; I must see get him before Johnson comes. Can ye get him for me, Maggie, child?"

The sick man promised, and as she was going away she turned to repeat the caution. Andrew Galbraith's eyes were closed in weariness, and he did not see that she was standing with her back to the wall while she admonished him, or that, when she had gone to send the visitor up, the earpiece of the house telephone set had been detached from its hook and left dangling by its wire cord.

Miss Grierson went on into the library after she had met the detective at the door and had told him how to find the upstairs room. When the sound of a cautiously closed door told her that Broffin had entered the sick-room, she snatched the receiver of the library house phone from its hook and held it to her ear. For a little time she anxiously wrote its sign manual in the knitted brows and the tightly pressed lips. Then she smiled and the dark eyes grew softly radiant. "The dear old saint!" she whispered; "the dear, dear old saint!" And when Broffin came down a few minutes later, she went to open the hall door for him, serenely demure and with honey on her tongue, as befitted the role of "everybody's good angel."

"Did you find him worse than you feared, or better than you hoped?" she asked.

"He's mighty near the edge, I should say—what? But you never can tell. Some of these old fellows can claw back to the top o' the hill after all the doctors in creation have thrown up their hands. I've seen it. What does Doc Farnham say?"

"What he always says; 'while there's life, there's hope.'"

Broffin nodded and went his way down the walk, stopping at the gate to take up the cigar he had hidden on his arrival.

"So Galbraith's out of it, lock, stock and barrel," he muttered, as he strode thoughtfully toward. "I reckoned it'd be that-a-way, as soon as I heard the story o' that shipwreck. And now I ain't so blamed sure that it's Raymer a-hoidin' the fort in them pretty black eyes. The old man talked like a man that had just been honeyfugled and talked over and primed plum' up to the muzzle. Why the blue blazes



"He's Trying to Hide and That's What They've Been Waiting For."

can't she take her iron-molder fellow and be satisfied? She can't swing to both o' 'em. Ump!—the old man wanted me to skip out on a wild goose chase to Frisco in that bond business, and take the first train! Sure, I'll go—but not today; oh, no, by grapples; not this day!"

It was possibly an hour beyond Broffin's visit when Margery, having successfully read the sick man to sleep, tiptoed out of the room and went below stairs to shut herself into the hall telephone closet. The number she asked for was that of the Raymer Foundry and Machine works, and Raymer, himself, answered the call.

"Have you heard anything yet from Mr.—from our friend?"

"Not a word. But I'm not worrying any more now. I've been remembering that he is the happy—or unhappy—possessor of the 'artistic temperament' and that accounts for anything and everything. I'd forgotten that for a few minutes, you know."

"Well?" she said, with the faintest possible accent of impatience.

"He has gone off somewhere to plug away on that book of his; I'm sure of it. And he hasn't gone very far. I'm inclined to believe that Mrs. Holcomb knows where he is—only she won't tell. And somebody else knows, too."

"Who is the somebody else?"

"Though the wire was in a measure public, Raymer risked a single word. "Charlotte."

None of the sudden passion that leaped into Margery Grierson's eyes was suffered to find its way into her voice when she said: "What makes you think that?"

"Oh, a lot of little things. I was over at the house last night, and there is some sort of teapot tempest going on; I couldn't make out just what. But from the way things shaped up, I gathered that our friend was wanted in Lake Boulevard, and wanted bad—for some reason or other. I had to promise that I'd try to dig him up, before I got away."

"Well?" went the questioning word over the wires, and this time the impatient accent was unconcealed.

"I promised; but this morning Doctor Bertie called me up to say that it was all right; that I needn't trouble myself."

said the voice at the Mereside transmitter. "Excuse me, as Hank Billingsly used to say when he happened to shoot the wrong man. Come over when you feel like it—and have time. You mustn't forget that you owe me two calls. Good-by."

After Margery Grierson had let herself out of the stifling little closet under the hall stair, she went into the darkened library and sat for a long time staring at the cold hearth. It was a crooked world, and just now it was a sharply cruel one. There was much to be read between the lines of the short telephone talk with Edward Raymer. The trap was sprung and its jaws were closing; and in his extremity Kenneth Griswold was turning, not to the woman who had condoned and shielded and paid the costly price, but to the other.

"Dear God!" she said softly, when the prolonged stare had brought the quick-springing tears to her eyes; "and I—I could have kept him safe!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Pendulum-Swing. To a man seeking only to escape from himself, all roads are equal and all destinations likely to prove uniformly disappointing. Turning his back upon the iron works in the day of defeat, with no very clear idea of what he should do or where he should go, Griswold pushed through the strikers' picket lines, and, avoiding the militant suburb, drifted by way of sundry outlying residence streets and a country road to the high ground back of the city.

In deserting Raymer he was actuated by no motive of disloyalty. On the contrary, so much of the motive as had any bearing upon his relations with the young iron founder sprang from a generous impulse to free Raymer from an incubus. If it were the curse of the Midas-touch to turn all things to gold, it seemed to be his own peculiar curse to turn the gold to dross; to leave behind him a train of disaster, defeat and tragic depravity. The plunge into the labor conflict had merely served to afford another striking example of his inability to break the evil spell, and Raymer could well spare him.

On the long tramp to the hills the events of the past few months marshaled themselves in accusing review. No human being, save one, of all those with whom he had come in contact since the day of dragon-bearding in the New Orleans bank had escaped the contaminating touch, and each in turn had suffered loss. The man Gavitt had given his name and identity; the mate of the Belle Julie had sacrificed what little respect he may have had for law and order by becoming, potentially, at least, a criminal accessory. The little Irish cab-driver had sold himself for a price; and the negro deckhand had earned his mess of fried fish. The single exception was Charlotte Farnham, and he told himself that she had escaped only because she had done her duty as she saw it.

And as the bedeviling thing had begun, so it had continued, losing none of its potency for evil. In the little world of Wahaska, which was to have been the theater of Utopian demonstration, the curse had persisted. The money, used with the loftiest intentions, had served only as a means to an end, and the end had proved to be the rearing of an apparently impassable wall of bitter antagonism between master and men. And the secret of the money's origin and acquisition, which was to have been so easily cast aside and ignored, had become a soul-sickness incurable and even contagious. Griswold was beginning to suspect that it had attacked Margery Grierson; that it had subconsciously, if not otherwise, thrust itself into Charlotte Farnham's life; and the days lately past had shown him into what depths it could plunge its wretched guardian and slave.

Now that the plunge had been taken and he had been made to understand that he must henceforth reckon with a base and cowardly underself which would not stop short of the most heinous crime, he told himself that he must have time to think—to plan.

Caring nothing for its roughness, he followed the country road into a valley forest of oaks. After an hour of aimless tramping he began to have occasional near-hand glimpses of the lake; and a little farther along he came out upon the main-traveled road leading to the summer resort hotel at the head of De Soto bay.

Still without any definite purpose in mind he pushed on, and upon reaching the hotel he went in and registered for a room. Here he drew the window shades and lay down, and since the week of strife had been cutting deeply into the nights, when he awoke it was evening and a cheerful clamor in the dining room beneath told him that it was dinner time.

It is a trite saying that many a gulf, seemingly impassable, has been safely bridged in sleep. Bathed, refreshed and with the tramping stains removed, Griswold went down to dinner with the lost appetite regained.

Early on the following day he sent a note to Mrs. Holcomb by one of the inn employees; but the copy of the Daily Wahaskan laid beside his breakfast plate made it unnecessary to telephone Raymer. The paper had a full account of the sudden ending of the lock-out and the resumption of work in the Raymer plant, and he read it with a curious stirring of self-compassion. As he had reasoned it out, there was only one way in which the result could have been attained so quickly. Had Raymer taken that way, in spite of his wrathful rejection of the suggestion? Doubtless he had; and on the heels of that conclusion came a sense of deprivation

that was fairly appalling, and the healthy breakfast appetite vanished. Griswold knew what it meant, or he thought he did. Margery Grierson was gone out of his life—gone beyond recall.

After that, there was all the better reason why he should grapple with himself in the fallow interval; and for two complete days he was lost, even to the small world of the summer resort, tramping for hours in the lake shore forests or drifting about in one of the hotel skiffs, and returning to the inn only to eat and sleep when hunger or weariness constrained him. On the whole, the discipline was good. He flattered himself that the sense of proportion was returning slowly, and with it some saner impulses. Truly, it had been his misfortune to be obliged to compromise with evil to some extent, and to involve others, but was not that rather due to the ineradicable faults of an imperfect social system than to any basic defect in his own theories? And was not the same imperfect social system partly responsible for the quasi-criminal attitude which had been forced upon him? He was willing to believe it; willing, also, to believe that he could rise above the constraining forces and be the man he wished to be. That he could so rise was proved, he decided, on the morning of the third day, when he chanced to overhear the hotel clerk telling the man whose room was across the corridor from his own that Andrew Galbraith still had a fighting chance for life. In the pleasant glow of the high resolve the news awakened none of the murderous promptings, but rather the generous hope that it might be true.

It was late in the afternoon of this third day, upon his return from a long pull in the borrowed skiff around the group of islands in the upper and unfrequented part of the lake, that he found a note awaiting him. It was from Miss Farnham, and its brevity, no less than its urgency, stirred him apprehensively, bringing a suggestive return of the furtive fierceness which he promptly fought down. "I must see you before eight o'clock this evening. It is of the last importance," was the wording of the note; and the heavy underscoring of the "last," and a certain tremulous characteristic in the handwriting, stressed the urgency.

It was still quite early in the evening when the inn conveyance set him down at the door of his lodgings in upper Shawnee street. To the caretaking widow, who would have prepared a late dinner for him, he explained that he was going out again almost at once; and taking time only for a bath and a change, he set forth on the cross-town walk. It lacked something less than a half hour of the time limit set in Miss Farnham's note, but he attached no special importance to that. He knew that the doctor's dinner hour was early, and that in any event he could choose his own time for an evening call.

It nettled him angrily to find that the premonition of coming disaster was still with him when he crossed the courthouse square and came into the main street a few doors from the Winnebago entrance. Attacking from a fresh vantage ground it was warning him that the town hotel was the stopping place of the man Broffin, and that he was taking an unnecessary hazard in passing it. Brushing the warning aside, he went on defiantly, and just before he came within identifying range of the loungers on the hotel porch an omnibus backed to the curb to deliver its complement of passengers from the lately met northbound train.

Griswold walked on until he was stopped by the sidewalk-blocking group of freshly arrived travelers pausing to identify their luggage as it



Deftly the Man Catcher Worked Them Open.

was handed down from the top of the omnibus. Alertly watchful, he quickly recognized Broffin among the porch loungers, and saw him leave his tilted chair to saunter toward the steps. Then the fateful thing happened. One of the luggage sorters, a clean-limbed, handsome young fellow with boyish eyes and a good-natured grin, wheeled suddenly and gripped him.

"Why, Griswold, old man!—well, I'll be dogged! Who on the face of the earth would ever have thought of finding you here? So this is where you came up, after the long, deep, McGinty dive, is it?" Then to one of his fellow travelers: "Hold on a minute.

Johnson; I want you to shake hands with an old newspaper pal of mine from New York, Mr. Kenneth Griswold. Kenneth, this is Mr. Beverly Johnson, of the Bayou State Security bank, in New Orleans."

Thus Bainbridge, sometime star reporter for the Louisianaian, turning up at the climaxing instant to prove the crowded condition of an overnarrow world, much as Matthew Broffin had once turned up on the after-deck of the coastwise steamer Adelantado to prove it to him.

While Griswold, with every nerve on edge, was acknowledging the introduction which he could by no means avoid, Broffin drew nearer. From the porch steps he could both see and hear. Bainbridge, cheerfully loquacious, continued to do most of the talking. He was telling Griswold of the streak of good luck which had snatched him out of a reporter's berth in the South to make him night editor of one of the St. Paul dailies. Johnson was merely an onlooker. Broffin's eyes searched the teller's face. Thus far it was a blank—a rather bored blank.

"And you are on your way to St. Paul now?" Griswold said to the newspaper man. Broffin, whose ears were skillfully attuned to all the tone variations in the voice of evasion, thought he detected a quaver of anxious impatience in the half-absent query.

"Yes; I was going on through tonight, but Johnson, here, stumped me to stop over. He said I might be able to get a news story out of his sick president." Bainbridge rattled on. "Ever meet Mr. Galbraith? He is the bank president who was held up last spring, you remember; fine old Scotch gentleman of the Walter-Scott brand."

"When did you leave New Orleans?" Griswold asked; and now Broffin made sure he distinguished the note of anxiety.

"Two days back; missed a connection on account of high water in the Ohio. Might have stayed another 12 hours in the good old levee town if we'd only known, eh, Johnson?" And then again to Griswold: "Remember that supper we had at Chaudiere's, the night I was leaving for the banana coast? By George! come to think of it, I believe that was the last time we foregathered in— Say, Kenneth, what have you done with your beard?"

Something clicked in Broffin's brain. The final doubt was cleared away. Griswold was the man he had seen and marked when the two were saying good-by on the banquet in front of Chaudiere's.

Broffin's right hand went swiftly to an inside pocket of his coat and when it was withdrawn a pair of handcuffs, oiled to noiselessness, came with it. Deftly the man-catcher worked them open, using only the fingers of one hand, and never taking his eyes from the trio on the sidewalk. One last step remained; if he could only manage to get speech with Johnson first—

During the trying interval Griswold had been fully alive to his peril. He had seen the swift hand-passing, and he knew what it was the Broffin was concealing in the hand which had made the quick pocket dive. He knew that the crucial moment had come; and, as many times before, the savage fear-mania was gripping him. In the cold vise-nip of it he had become once more the cornered wild beast.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Whooping Cough. The Bureau of Laboratories of the New York board of health has been conducting an extensive investigation of whooping cough, and Dr. Paul Luttinger recently reported to the Medical association of the greater city of New York some of the results of that inquiry.

Among the most interesting conclusions reached is that the early part of the disease is the most infectious. The bacillus that is believed to cause it is rarely found in the sputum after the first week of the paroxysmal, or whooping, stage, so "there would seem to be no necessity for the child to be kept in the house for more than a week after the whoop appears."

Doctor Luttinger says physicians underestimate the seriousness of the disease and fail to report cases. Only 26 per cent of cases in a certain area were reported, and "probably not more than 10 per cent are reported in Greater New York."

Good Men Are Scarce.

Col. E. Polk Johnson of Louisville, who fought for the Confederacy, read something in the dispatches from the front the other day that reminded him very much of what happened when he was serving in the western army in the Civil war. "I remember it was a wet, cold, rainy night in the middle of winter," said the veteran, "when a long, lean chap in my regiment was ordered to go on picket duty. He thought the situation over for a minute and then he turned to the sergeant who had brought the message. 'You go right straight back whar you come from,' he drawled, 'and tell the cap'n I jest natchally can't do it. I got a letter from Gin'ral Bragg this mawnin', and he said good men was gittin' almighty skeerce in this here army, and for me to take good care of myself.'"

Respirators for Air Raids.

As a result of the police warning advising people to keep all windows closed in the event of an air raid on London, and thus prevent the admission of deleterious gases, there has been a rush to buy respirators. Stores were sold out within an hour or two. The most popular form was that made of either nonflammable celluloid or rubber, except the mouthpiece. They have motor goggle fittings to protect the eyes.—London Globe.