

THE REAL ADVENTURE

By HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER

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Instant Postum
With improved health, and it usually follows, the change made becomes a permanent one. It pays to prepare for the health of tomorrow.
"There's a Reason"

AFTER A VERY SERIOUS TALK WITH HER SISTER PORTIA, WHO HAS SACRIFICED MUCH, ROSE ALDRICH COMES TO THE CONCLUSION THAT MARRIAGE CALLS FOR MORE THAN SHE HAS GIVEN IT

Rose Stanton, student at the University of Chicago, is put off a street car in the rain after an argument with the conductor. She is accosted by a young man who offers help and escorts her home. About two months later, the young man, Rodney Aldrich, well-to-do lawyer, marries Rose and this obscure girl is thrown into Chicago's most exclusive social set. She is surrounded by luxury, but becomes dissatisfied with ease. She tries to help her husband, but he laughs good naturedly at her efforts. Rodney's married sister, Frederica Whitney, and Rose are chummy.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

He saw her when she reached the lower landing, and came to meet her. "Oh!" he said. "I thought you were going to be off somewhere with Frederica this afternoon. It's been a great day. I hope you haven't spent the whole of it indoors. You're looking great, anyway. Come here and give me a kiss."

She hesitated, a little perplexed. Did he mean not to tell her—to "spare" her, as he'd have said? The kiss she gave him had a different quality from those that ordinarily constituted her greetings, and the arms that went round his neck didn't give him their customary hug. But they stayed there.

"You poor, dear old boy!" she said. And then, "Don't you care, Roddy!"

He returned the caresses with interest, before he seemed to realize the different significance of it. Then he pushed her away by the shoulders and held her where he could look into her face. "What do you mean," he asked. "Don't care about what?" It didn't seem like bravado—like an acted out pretense, and yet, of course, it must be. "Don't," she said. "Because I know. I've known all day. I read it in the paper this morning."

From puzzled concern the look in his face tooled on a deeper intensity. "Tell me what it is," he said very quietly. "I don't know. I didn't read the paper this morning. Is it Harriet?" Harriet was his other sister—married, and not very happily, it was beginning to appear, to an Italian count.

A revolution—a sort of sick misgiving—took the color out of Rose's cheeks. "It isn't anyone," she said. "It's nothing like that. It's—it's that case." Her lips stumbled over the title of it. "It's been decided against you. Didn't you know?"

For a moment his expression was simply the absence of all expression whatever. "But how the dickens did you know anything about it? How did you happen to see it in the paper? How did you know the title of it?"

"I was in the court the day you argued it," she said unevenly. "And

somewhere near as often as I win. A man couldn't be any good as a lawyer, if he did care, any more than a surgeon could be any good, if he did. You've got to keep a cold mind or you can't do your best work. And if you've done your best work, there's nothing to care about. I honestly haven't thought about the thing once from that day to this. Don't you see how it is?"

She couldn't see how it was, that was plain enough. What he very reasonably expected was that after so lucid an explanation, she would turn her wet face up to his, with her old wide smile on it. But that was not what happened at all. Instead, she just went limp in his arms, and the sobs that shook her seemed to be meeting no resistance whatever. At last she controlled, rather suddenly, her sobs, sat up, wiped her eyes, and, after a fashion, smiled. Not at him, though; resolutely away from him, he might almost have thought—as if she didn't want him to see.

"That's right," he said, craning round to make sure that the smile was there. "Have a look at the funny side of it."

She winced at that as from a blow and pulled herself away from him. Then she controlled herself and, in answer to his look of troubled amazement, said: "It's all right. Only it happens that you're the one who doesn't know how awfully funny it really is." Her voice shook, but she got it in hand again. "No, I don't mean anything by that. Here! Give me a kiss and then let me wash my face."

And for the whole evening, and again next morning until he left the house, she managed to keep him in the only half-questioning belief that nothing was the matter.

It was about an hour after that, that her maid came into her bedroom, where she had had her breakfast, and said that Miss Stanton wanted to see her.

ed after a straight look into Rose's face, "you look, this morning, as if he'd been just where you ought to be. What's the matter with you, child?"

"Nothing," said Rose. "Nothing that you'd call anything, at any rate."

Portia smiled ironically. "I'm still the same old dragon, then," she said. And then—"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say that, either. I've had a rather worrying sort of week."

"What is it?" said Rose. "Tell me about it. Can I help?"

"No," said Portia. "I've thought it over and it isn't your job." She got up and went to the window and stood looking out where Rose couldn't see her face. "It's about mother," she concluded.

Rose sat up with a jerk. "About mother!" she echoed. "Has she been ill again this week? And you haven't let me know! It's a shame I haven't been around, but I've been busy"—her smile reflected some of the irony of Portia's—"and rather miserable. Of course I was going this afternoon."

"Yes," said Portia, "I fancied you'd come this afternoon. That's why I wanted to see you alone first."

"Alone!" Rose leaped sharply forward. "Oh, don't stand there where I can't see you! Tell me what it is."

"I'm going to," said Portia. "You see, I wasn't satisfied with old Murray. I thought it was possible, either that he didn't understand mother's case, or else that he wouldn't tell me what he suspected. So a week ago today, I got her to go with me to a specialist." Her voice got a little harder and cooler. "Mother'll never be well, Rose. Her heart is getting flabby—degenerating, he called it. He says we can't do anything except to retard the progress of the disease. It may go fast, or it may go slowly. That attack she had was just a symptom, he said. She'll have others. And by and by, of course, a fatal one."

Still she didn't look around from the window. She knew Rose was crying. She had heard the gasp and choke that followed her first announcement of the news, and since then, irregularly, a muffled sound of sobbing. She wanted to go over and comfort the young, stricken thing there on the bed, but she couldn't. She could feel nothing but a dull, irresistible anger that Rose should have the easy relief of tears, which had been denied her. Because Portia couldn't cry.

"He said," she went on, "that in this climate, living as she has been doing, she'd hardly last six months, but that in a bland climate like southern California, if she's carefully watched all the time to prevent excitement or over-exertion, she might live a good many years."

"So that's what we're going to do. I've written the Fletchers to look out a place for us, and I've sold out my business—took an offer that I refused a month ago. As soon as we hear from the Fletchers, we'll begin to pack. Within a week, I hope."

Rose said a queer thing then. She cried out incredulously: "And you and mother are going away to California to live! And leave me here all alone!"

"All alone with the whole of your own life," thought Portia, but didn't say it.

"I can't realize it at all," Rose went on after a little silence. "It doesn't seem—possible. Do you believe the specialist is right? Can't we go to someone else and make sure?"

"What's the use?" said Portia. "Besides, if I drag mother around to any more of them, she'll know."

Rose looked up sharply. "Doesn't she know?"

"No," said Portia in that hard, even voice of hers. "I lied to her, of course. You know mother well enough to know what she'd do if she knew the truth about it. Don't you know how it's always pleased her when old people could die—"in harness," as she says?"

The ordeal, or the worst of it, was over. Rose was drooping forlornly forward, one arm clasped around her knees, and she was trying to dry her tears on the sleeve of her nightgown. The childlike pathos of the attitude caught Portia like the surge of a wave. She crossed the room and sat down on the edge of the bed. She'd have come still closer and taken the girl in her arms, but for the fear of starting her crying again.

"Yes," Rose said. "That's mother. And I guess she's right about it. It must be horrible to be half-alive—to know you're no use and never will be. And you've gone through this all alone

—without ever giving Rodney and me a chance to help. I don't see why you did that, Portia."

"Oh, I saw it was my job," Portia said, in that cool, dry tone of hers. "It had to be done, and there was no one else to do it. So what was the use of making a fuss?"

"Well, there's one thing," Rose said. "I believe it'll do you as much good as mother. Getting a rest. . . . And a nice little bungalow to live in—just you and mother. . . . I—I sort of wish I was going, too."

Portia laughed—a ragged, unnatural sounding laugh that brought a look of puzzled inquiry from Rose.

"Why, nothing," Portia explained. "It was just the notion of your leaving Rodney and all you've got here—all the wonderful things you have to do—for what we'll have out there. The idea of your envying me is something worth a small laugh, don't you think?"

Rose's head drooped lower. She buried her face in her hands. "I do envy you," she said. There was a

enough pocket money. But the idea of an old unpaid grocery bill made me sick. I talked things over with mother the next day—told her I wasn't going to college—said I was going to get a job. I got her to let me run all the accounts after that, and to attend to everything. And I got a job and began paying my way within a week."

"If I had a thing like that to remember," said Rose unsteadily. "I'd never forget to be proud of it so long as I lived."

"I wish I could be proud of it," said Portia. "But I couldn't help making a sort of grievance of it, too. In all these years I've always made mother afraid of me—always made her feel that I was somehow contemptuous of her work and ideas. I grubbed away until I got things straightened out, so that her income was enough to live on—enough for her to live on. I'd pulled her through. But then . . ."

"But then there was me," said Rose. "I thought I was going to let you go," Portia went on inflexibly. "But things didn't come out that way—at least I couldn't make up my mind to make them—so you went to the university. I paid for that, and I paid for your trousseau, and then I was through."



Rose was trembling, but she didn't flinch. "Wh-what was it," she asked quietly, "what was it that might have been different and wasn't? Was it—was it somebody you wanted to marry—that you gave up so I could have my chance?"

Portia's hard little laugh cut like a knife. "You have always thought me cold," she said. "So has mother. I'm not, really. I'm—the other way. I don't believe there ever was a girl that wanted love and marriage more than I. A man did want me to marry him at last, and for a while I thought I would. Just—for the sake of marrying somebody. He wasn't much, but he was someone. But I knew I'd come to hate him for not being someone else, and I couldn't make up my mind to it. So I took you on instead."

"I stopped hoping, you see, and tried to forget all about it. And in a way, I succeeded. I was beginning to get real jobs to do—big jobs for big people, and it was exciting. That made it easier to forget. I was beginning to think that some day I'd earn my way into the open, big sort of life that your new friends had had for nothing. And then, a week ago, there came the doctor and cut off that chance."

"And yet—" she leaned suddenly forward, and the passion that had been suppressed in her voice till now, leaped up into flame—"and yet, can you tell me what I could have done differently? I've lived the kind of life they preach about—a life of 'noble sacrifice.' It hasn't ennobled me. It's made me petty—mean—sour. It's withered me up. Look at the difference between us! Look at you with your big, free spaciousness—your power of loving and attracting love! Why, you even love me, now, in spite of all I've said this morning. I've envied you that—I've almost hated you for it."

"No, that's a lie! I've wanted to. The only thing I could ever hate you for would be for falling. You've got to make good! You've had my share as well as yours—you're living my life as well as yours. I'm the branch they cut off so that you could grow. If you give up and let the big thing slip out of your hands the way you were talking this morning, because you're too weak to hold it and haven't pluck enough to fight for it . . ."

"Look at me," said Rose. The words rang like a command upon a battlefield.

Portia looked. Rose's blue eyes were blazing. "I won't do that," she said very quietly. "I promise you that." Then the hard determination in her face changed to something softer, and as if Portia's resistance counted no more than that of a child, she pulled her sister up in her arms and held her tight. And so, at last, Portia got the relief of tears.

The breach of misunderstanding widens between Rose and Rodney. Rodney longs for his old free life and Rose thinks that she is a useless butterfly. An unusually interesting scene is described in the next installment.

Analyzing Waters.
Mineral waters are easily analyzed by means of the spectroscope, as shown by M. Jacques Bardet, and this is likely to prove one of the best methods for this work. He sends a beam of light through the water to be analyzed and thence through the spectroscope prism, in order to permit of examining the spectrum, this method revealing very minute traces of metals. He finds the most varied metals in different samples of mineral water, and even the rarest metals, such as germanium and gallium, which are very rarely found in nature.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



"What Do You Mean?" He Asked.
when I found they printed those things in the paper, I kept watch. And to say . . ."
"Why, you dear child!" he said. And the queer, ragged quality of his voice drew her eyes back to his, so that she saw, wonderingly, that they were bright with tears. "And you never said a word, and you've been bothering your dear little head about it all the time. Why, you darling!"

He sat down on the edge of the table, and pulled her up tight into his arms again. She was glad to put her head down—didn't want to look at his face; she knew that there was a smile there along with the tears.

"And you thought I was worrying about it," he persisted, "and that I'd be unhappy because I was beaten?" He patted her shoulder consolingly with a big hand. "But that's all in the day's work, child. I'm beaten

CHAPTER IX.

The Damascus Road.

It argued no real lack of stately affection that Rose didn't want to see Portia that morning. Even if there had been no other reason, being found in bed at half-past ten in the morning by a sister who inflexibly opened her little shop at half-past eight, regardless of bad weather, backaches, and other potentially valid excuses, was enough to make one feel apologetic and worthless. Rose could truthfully say that she was feeling wretched. But Portia would sit there, slim and erect, in a little straight-backed chair, and whatever perfunctory commiseration she might manage to express, the look of her fine eyebrows would be skeptical.

But Rose's shrinking from a talk with Portia that morning was a mild feeling compared with Portia's dread of the impending talk with Rose. Twice she had walked by the perfect doorway of the McCrea house before she entered it, because she shrank from the ordeal that awaited her in there.

They had been seeing each other with reasonable frequency all winter. The Aldriches had Portia and her mother in to a family dinner pretty often, and always came out to Edge-water for a one-o'clock dinner with the Stantons on Sunday.

Mrs. Stanton had taken a great liking to Rodney. His manner toward her had just the blend of deference and breezy unconventionality that pleased her. He showed an unending interest in the Woman Movement—never tired of drawing from his mother-in-law the story of her labors and the exposition of her beliefs. Sometimes he argued with her playfully in order to get her started. More often, and so far as Portia could see, quite seriously, he professed himself in full accord with her views.

The reason why these family parties were at an end was what Portia came to tell Rose this morning. She hoped she'd be able to tell it gently.

Rose greeted her with a "Hello, angel! Why didn't you come right up? Isn't it disgraceful to be lying around in bed like this in the middle of the morning?"

"I don't know," said Portia. "Might as well stay in bed, if you've nothing to do when you get up." She meant it to sound good-humored, but was afraid it didn't. "Anyhow," she said—

dull, muffled passion in her voice. "Why shouldn't I envy you? You're so cold and certain all the time. You make up your mind what you'll do and you do it. I try to do things and just make myself ridiculous."

"You've got a husband," said Portia in a thin, brittle voice. "That might count for something. I should think."

"Yes, and what good am I to him?" Rose demanded. "He can't talk to me—not about his work or anything like that. And I can't help him any way. I'm something nice for him to make love to, when he feels like doing it, and I'm a nuisance when I make scenes and get tragic. And that's all. That's—marriage, I guess. You're the lucky one, Portia."

The silence had lasted a good while before Rose noticed that Portia had not stirred; had sat there as rigidly still as a figure carved in ivory.

Becoming aware of that, she raised her head. Portia wasn't looking at her, but down at her own clenched hands.

"It needed just that, I suppose," she heard her older sister say between almost motionless lips. "I thought it was pretty complete before, but it took that to make it perfect—that you think I'm the lucky one—lucky never to have had a husband, or anyone else, for that matter, to love me. And lucky now, to have to give up the only substitute I had for that."

"Portia!" Rose cried out, for the mordant, alkaline bitterness in her sister's voice, and the tragic irony in her face, was almost terrifying. But the outcry might never have been uttered for any effect it had.

"I hoped this wouldn't happen," the words came steadily on, one at a time. "I hoped I could get this over and get away out of your life altogether without letting it happen." But I can't. Perhaps it's just as well—perhaps it may do you some good. But that's not why I'm doing it. I'm doing it for myself. Just for once, I'm going to let go! You won't like it. You're going to get hurt."

Rose drew herself erect and a curious change went over her face, so that you wouldn't have known she'd been crying. She drew in a long breath and said, very steadily: "Tell me, I sha'n't try to get away."

"A man came to our house one day to collect a bill," Portia went on, quite as if Rose hadn't spoken. "Mother was out, and I was at home. I was seventeen then, getting ready to go to Vassar. You were only seven—I suppose you were at school. Anyhow, I was at home, and I let him in, and he made a fuss. I knew we weren't rich, of course—I never had quite