The CURVED BLADES

By CAROLYN WELLS

Author of "A Chain of Evidence," "The Gold Bag," "The Clue," "The White Alley," Etc.

CHAPTER TWO—(Continued.)

"You keep them here? Is it safe, think you?"

"I don't keep them here all the time. Indeed, I got these from the safe deposit only this morning. I shall return them there in a few days. While here, I shall wear them all I can to liven them up."

"You brought a lot of your other jewels, didn't you, Aunt Lucy?" said Pauline, casually. "Why did you? Are you going to a ball?"

"No. I wish to look them over and plan to have some reset."

"But are they safe?" inquired the Count again; "do you not fear thieves?"

"No, we never have such things as robbery in Merivale Park. It is a quiet, well behaved neighborhood."

"But you have a safe?" went on the Count; "you take at least that precaution?"

"Oh, yes, I have a safe in my boudoir. There is really no danger. Count Charlier, would you like to hear me sing? Find one of my records, Gray."

Miss Carrington's singing voice had been a fine one and was still fair. She sometimes amused herself by making records for her phonograph, and Gray Haviland managed the mechanical part of it.

"Which one, Lady Lucy?" he asked, as he rummaged in the record cabinet.

"Any of those pretty love songs," and Miss Carrington glanced coyly at the Count.

"Here's a fine one," and Haviland placed a disk in the machine. "Listen," he said, smiling; "don't miss the introduction."

The needle touched the record, and Miss Lucy's laugh rang out, so clear and true, it was difficult to believe it was a recorded laugh and not a sound from the lady herself. Then the recorded voice said: "This song is one of Carr's favorites, I'll sing it for him." And then, with only a few seconds' interval, Miss Carrington's voice sang: "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms."

It was well sung, and a perfect record, so that the incident of the singer listening to her own voice was interesting in itself.

"Capital!" applauded the Count, as it was finished. "It is indeed pleasant to preserve one's songs thus. May I not some time record my own amateur attempt?"

"Delighted to have you, Count," said Haviland cordially. "Come over some morning, and we'll do up a lot of records."

"Since when have you been master here, Gray?" said Miss Lucy, with fine scorn. "I will give the invitations to my own house, if you please! Count Charlier, if you will come tomorrow afternoon, I will instruct Mr. Haviland to make the records."

It was not so much the words as the manner of their utterance that was offensive, and Haviland set his lips in stifled anger. It was not at all unusual, this sort of rebuff, but he could not endure it as patiently as the two girls did. Haviland was a second cousin of Miss Carrington, and, while he lived with her in the capacity of a business secretary and general man of affairs, the post was a sinecure, for the services of her lawyer and of her social secretary left little for Haviland to do. His salary was a generous one and he was substantially remembered in her will, but he sometimes thought the annoying and irritating fleers he had to accept smilingly were worth more than he was receiving. He was continually made to feel himself a dependent and an inferior.

These trials also fell to the lot of the two girls. Pauline, although her aunt's heiress to the extent of half the fortune, the other half to go to an absent cousin, was by no means treated as an equal of Miss Carrington herself. It seemed to give the elder lady delight to domineer over her niece and in every possible way make her life uneasy and uncomfortable. As to the social secretary, Miss Frayne, she was scolded for everything she did, right or wrong.

Often had the three young people declared intentions of leaving Garden Steps, but so far none of them had made good the threat.

Vanity was the key note of Lucy Carrington's nature, and, knowing this, they could, if they chose, keep her fairly sweet tempered by inordinate flattery often administered. This proceeding hurt their self respect, jarred their tempers, and galled their very souls, but it was that or dismissal, and thus far they had stayed. Matters were nearing a crisis, however, and Haviland's patience was so sorely strained that he was secretly looking for another position. Anita Frayne, whose pretty blonde doll face belied a very fiery disposition, was on the verge of a serious break with her employer, and Pauline Stuart continually assured herself that she could not go on this way.

Pauline was the orphaned daughter of Lucy's sister, and had lived with her aunt for many years. Carrington Loria, the son of another sister, was engaged in antiquarian research in Egypt, where he had been since his graduation as an engineer. He, too, was an orphan and had lived with Lucy in his younger days, and he and Pauline were equal heirs to their aunt's wealth.

The father of the three Carrington sisters, having become angered at his two daughters, who married against his wishes, had left his entire fortune to Lucy, his only remaining child. Thus her niece and nephew were her only direct heirs, and, save for some comparatively small bequests, the Carrington estate would eventually be theirs.

Pauline well knew that if she left her aunt's roof it meant complete disinheritance, for Lucy Carrington was proud of her beautiful niece, and, too, was fond of her in her own way. But the ungovernable temper of the lady made her home an almost unbearable abiding place.

Since childhood years Carrington Loria had lived there only during his college vacations; but had been back occasionally for short visits from his now permanent Egyptian occupation. He had always come laden with gifts of oriental products, and the rooms at Garden Steps showed many rare specimens of cunning handiwork and rich fabrics and embroideries.

To break the awkward pause that followed Miss Carrington's rude speech to Gray Haviland, Pauline picked up an antique scarab and drew the Count's attention to its inscription.

He expressed a polite interest, but cast furtive glances at his hostess, as if afraid of a further outbreak.

Nor were his fears unjustified. Miss Carrington administered a scathing reproach to Pauline for intruding herself upon the Count's attention, and bade her put aside the scarab and hold her tongue.

"Don't speak to me like that, Aunt Lucy; I am not a child!" And Pauline, unable to control herself longer, faced her angry aunt with an air of righteous wrath.

"I'll speak to you as I choose, miss! It is for you to mend your tone in addressing me! If you don't, you may have cause to regret it. Count Charlier came here to see me, and I refuse to countenance your clumsy attempts to engage his interest in your silly babble!"

"But—I insist—" stammered the greatly embarrassed Count; "allow me, madame, let me say, I call on you all—all——"

"Nothing of the sort!" declared Miss Lucy; "you came, Count, to play bridge with us. Our opponents behaved so rudely and played so badly it was impossible for us to continue the game. Nor can we enjoy music in this inharmonious atmosphere. Let us stroll in the conservatory, you and I."

She rose, trailing her heavy silks and flashing her sparkling jewels, and the Count, a little hesitatingly, followed her. They crossed the great hall, and, going through a reception room and the delightful sun parlor, came to the warm, heavily scented conservatory.

"Poor old Charlier!" said Haviland, as the pair disappeared; "he's in for it now! Do you suppose the palms and orchids will bring him up to the scratch? 'Nita, I'll bet you a box of gloves against a box of simple little cigarets that he doesn't propose to the lady tonight."

"Done!" cried Miss Frayne, who was sparkling again, now that the dread presence was removed. "I doubt he can help himself. She has him at her mercy. And he's too good mannered to disappoint her wish."

"He'll propose," said Pauline, with an air of conviction. "He's a typical fortune hunter, that man. Indeed, I am not sure he's a Count at all. Do you know, Mr. Illsley?"

"I know almost nothing of the man, save that he's a guest of the Frothinghams. That's not entirely in his favor, I think."

"Right you are!" agreed Haviland. "Those people are—well, they're to be queried. But I say, Polly, if the two do hit it off, it's grinding poverty for us, eh?"

"It may be a blessed relief, Gray. She'll give us something, of course, and send us away from here. I, for one, shouldn't be sorry to go. She is getting too impossible!"

"She is!" put in Anita; "every day she pounds us worse! I'd like to kill her!"

The fierce words and would-be menacing glance of the little blonde beauty were about as convincing as a kitten declaring himself a war lord, and even the stately Pauline smiled at the picture.

"She ought to be killed," declared Haviland, "and I say this dispassionately. I wouldn't do it, because killing is not in my line, but the eternal fitness of things requires her removal to another sphere of usefulness. She makes life a burden to three perfectly good people, and some several servants. Not one would mourn her, and——"

"Oh, stop, Gray!" cried Pauline; "don't talk in that strain! Don't listen to him, Mr. Illsley. He often says such things, but he doesn't mean them. Mr. Haviland loves to talk at random, to make a sensational hearing."

"Nothing of the sort, Polly. I do mean it. Lucy Carrington is a misery dispenser, and such are not wanted in this nice little old world."

"But perhaps," Pauline looked thoughtful, "the fault is in us. We don't like her, and so we see nothing good in what she does. Now, Carrington Loria adores her. She had a letter from him today——"

"Yes, Loria adores her!" interrupted Haviland, "because he doesn't live with her! She sends him love letters and money, and he doesn't know the everlasting torture of living under her roof, year in and year out! But he caught on a little the last time he was here. He said—well, in his quaint Oriental fashion, he said: 'Gee! she's the limit!' That's what he said."

"Well, she is," pouted Anita. "I can't do a thing to suit her. Today I wrote a letter over six times before she was satisfied. And every change she wanted made was so foolish she wanted it changed back again. She nearly drove me crazy!"

"But I have to put up with her morning, noon, and night," sighed Pauline. "You have your hours off, Anita, but I never do. She even wakens me in the night to read to her, or to help her plan her new gowns.

"It is awfully hard for you," began Mr. Illsley, and then all stopped short, for the object of their discussion returned to the room.

It was plain to be seen Miss Carrington was in a state of suppressed excitement. She giggled almost hysterically, and tapped the Count playfully on the arm with her fan, as she bade him say good night and go.

The interested ones watching her could not learn whether the Count had declared himself or not. The presumption was negative, for, had he done so, surely Miss Carrington would have told the good news.

Charlier himself was distinctly noncommittal. Debonair as always, he made his adieux, no more demonstrative to his hostess than to the others, and went away. Illsley followed, and the household dispersed. The clock struck midnight as the ladies went upstairs.

Following custom, they all three went to Miss Lucy's boudoir. It was by way of reporting for tomorrow's orders, and was a duty never neglected.

The exquisite apartment, from which opened the bedroom and bath, was softly lighted and fragrant with flowers.

"How do you like Count Henri Charlier?" Miss Carrington quickly demanded of her satellites.

"Charming," said the voluble Anita. "Just a typical French nobleman, isn't he? And how he adores our Lady Lucy!"

The whole speech rang false, but the vanity of the lady addressed swallowed it as truest sincerity. "Yes," she returned, "he is infatuated, I have reason to think. But—we shall see what we shall see! Curb your impatience, girls! You shall know all in due time."

"Can I do anything for you, Auntie, tonight or tomorrow?" asked Pauline, and, though she tried to speak with enthusiasm, her tone did sound perfunctory.

"Not if you offer in that manner," and Miss Carrington looked at her niece coldly. "One would think, Pauline, that it must be an irksome task to do the smallest favor for your aunt and benefactor! Do you feel no pleasure in doing what trifles you can for one who does everything for you?"

"I would feel a pleasure, Aunt Lucy, if you were kinder to me. But——"

"Kinder!" shrieked her aunt; kinder! Girl, have you taken leave of your senses? I give you a home, fine dresses, money, everything you can want, and you ask me to be kinder to you! Go! Never let me see you again, after that speech!"

"Oh, auntie, don't! I didn't mean——"

"You didn't mean to exasperate me beyond endurance? No, of course you meant to stop short of that! But you have done it. I mean this, Pauline: tomorrow you go elsewhere to live. No longer will I give a home to such a monster of ingratitude!"

"But, Miss Carrington," and Anita Frayne's soft voice implored gently, "don't be hasty. Pauline didn't mean——"

"What!" and Lucy Carrington turned on her, "you take her part? Then you go, too. I want no ingrates here. Leave me, both of you. This night is your last beneath this roof! You are two unworthy girls, to scorn and slight the hand that has fed and clothed you and given you luxury and comfort such as you will never see again! Go, I've done with you! Send me Estelle. She, at least, has some small affection for me."

The two girls left the room. The scene was not without precedent. Before this they had been ordered to leave the house forever, but always forgiveness and reinstatement had followed. This time, however, the Lady Lucy had been rather more in earnest, and the girls looked at each other uncertainly as they turned toward their rooms.

Anita summoned Estelle, the French maid, and then told her to hasten immediately to Miss Carrington.

"Don't undress me," said the mistress as the maid appeared; "I'm not retiring at once. Get me out of this gown and give me a negligee and slippers."

"Yes, mademoiselle," and Estelle deftly obeyed orders and brought a white boudoir gown edged with swans-down.

"Not that!" cried Miss Carrington. "Bring the gold embroidered one—the Oriental."

"Ah, the green one, from Monsieur Loria?"

"Yes, the one my nephew sent me at Christmas time. My, but it's handsome, isn't it, Estelle?"

"Gorgeous!" declared the maid, and she spoke truly. Young Loria knew his aunt's taste, and he had sent her a typical Egyptian robe, of pale green silk, heavy with gold embroideries. In it Miss Carrington looked like one attired for a masquerade.

"Shall I take down mademoiselle's hair?" asked Estelle, lingering.

"No. I want to be alone. I will read awhile. You need not return. I will do for myself."

"There is your glass of milk, ma'mzelle, on the bed table."

"Silly! I suppose I can see it for myself."

"Yes, ma'am. And you will have your tea at 8 in the morning?"

"Of course, my tea at 8, as always. You might remember that mueh yourself. But nobody remembers things for my comfort."

"Pardon, but sometimes it is 8, and, again, it must be 8:30."

(Continued Next Week.)

THOUSANDS OF YANKS SEE PARIS EACH DAY

Paris (by mail).—Probably the biggest problem that the Young Men's Christian Association has to face in the city of Paris is the housing of soldiers who flock to this city in thousands for 24 to 48 hours leave. Every American boy who comes to France is eager to see the cit yof Paris, and the prices of accommodations at the French hotels is beyond their slender purses. The Y. M. C. A. has several hotels where for one franc a night they can get a bed and a shower. Meals are served at cost.

The Pavillion is the largest of these hotels, and the other night was full to overflowing. The other hotels in the neighborhood on the overflow list were also crowdd to the limit. The office also has a long list of rooms which French families will rent to soldiers. The list was exhausted. Yet the men kept pouring in. Seventy-six mn took off thir coats, rolle dthem up, made them into pillows and slept on the floor of the "lounge room." At 11 all lights were out.

At 11:30 p. m. Miss Elizabeth Gilman, of Baltimore, Md., who has charge of the canteen service at the Pavillion thought she would call it a day's work and go to bed. But just as she was starting up stairs, she heard a pounding on the door, and went to see what it was.

She opened the door to find 34 enlisted men who ha dtraveled 18 hours on a railroad train. They wanted cover for the night, and "for the love of Uncle Sam, sister, food of some sort." She let them in, went upstairs and called another canteen worker. Together they wnt into th kitchen and stol the bred that was hidden in the closts for morning. They found a key to the storeroom and dragged out canned meat to make into sandwiches. They started a fire in the stove and made hot chocolate, and the 34 boys were fed.

Thent he two women went into the dining room with the tables all set and ready for breakfast, and cleared away those tables, and the men were only too glad to roll up on them and on the floor and sleep the sleep that only tired, war weary soldiers can sleep.

This is a situation that the Y. M. C. A. meets from day to day, in spite of the fact that it is renting every available vacant hotel in the city.

MANY ITALIANS MAY EMIGRATE TO U. S.

BY HENRY WOOD.
United Press Correspondent.

Rome, (by mail)—With the close of the war, one of the most vital and important questions Italy will have to settle is that of emigration.

The basis on which this will be adjusted between the United States and Italy already is receiving the most careful study and attention by the highest emigration and labor authorities of the two countries.

Despite the heavy losses Italy has suffered during the war, she will nevertheless finish the great European conflict with something of a surplus of male citizens, who heretofore have constituted her greatest exportation to foreign countries. This is due to a number of reasons.

With the outbreak of the was in 1914, Italy, to be prepared for any emergency, immediately forbade departure for foreign countries of any of her sons of military age. This restriction ever since has been in force, with the result that Italy has within her borders the hundreds of thousands of men who, but for the war, would have emigrated during the last four years.

In addition, with Italy's entrance into the war, she called to the colors hundreds of thousands of other sons who already had emigrated to foreign countries. These responded to a remarkable degree, and have gone to swell the number of men within Italy's borders who with the close of the war may desire to emigrate.

While the final basis on which Italian and other foreign emigration to the United States probably will not be established until a long time after the war, Italy in the meantime is asking for two concessions on behalf of her emibrating workingmen.

The first of these is that all Italians who returned to Italy from the United States in response to Italy's call to the colors be allowed to return without restriction or discrimination of any sort, except for sanitary reasons.

The second concession Italy desires at once is that the present clause in the American emibration law, forbidding entrance of any emigrant who comes under a labor contract, be set aside provided the contract is one that has been approved in advance either by the American Federation of Labor or by the state employment agencies of the various states.

With these two concessions Italy feels that she can tide over the difficult situation that will attend the demobilization of her millions of sons, until such a time as a more complete emigration basis can be established with the United States.

Great Auk Extinct.

From the Baltimore American.

Eggs of any kind are expensive enough nowadays, but those of the great auk are so high—and not on account of the war either—that only a millionaire could afford to buy a dozen. Indeed, it is doubtful if there are more than that many in the world.

The great auk was a sea fowl that in former days had its most important breeding place on a rock called Funk Island, 32 miles off the Newfoundland coast. Whalers provisioned their ships with the birds (which were so fat that they are said to have been utilized as fuel), and fishermen stole their eggs by wholesale.

In consequence of such depredations the species became extinct about 70 years ago, and today to represent it there are only a few stuffed specimens and skeletons in museums.

Envoy Ol' Clo' Man.

From the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

M. Beitler, bolshevist minister to Sweden, has retired to private life, according to an official telegram from Stockholm recently, which added:

"He has opened a tailor shop and published an advertisement saying that he makes old clothes as good as new, and that his prices are low."

Used to It.

From the Minneapolis Journal.

"I'm used to carrying everything before me."

"And how do you like being a waiter?"

CANADA'S NEW DEVELOPMENT

After the War a Period of Prosperity.

It is evident that the Government of the Dominion in its programme of reconstruction and development is undertaking a work of tremendous importance. There will be available the labor for work that has been silent since 1914, and the rehabilitation of this labor will entail the thought and energy of most capable heads. The transition period from war to peace will be rapid and thorough, and, instead of Canada sinking into a state of lethargy, there will be a continued period of wakefulness that will give employment to the unemployed, and render to the capitalist and producer ample return for his money, effort and enterprise.

The agricultural potentialities of the great Canadian West possess illimitable acres of the best of soil, capable of producing millions of bushels of the best of grain. The cost of growing this is lower than any place on the continent. There will be a greater demand than ever for these lands, the consequent production will be heavier and the profits attractive. Cattle industry will be one of the chief developments, and the encouragement of it will lie in the continued high prices that beef products will bring. European countries have been depleted of cattle, and the demand for beef, cattle and dairy products will tax the efforts of the producer for years to come.

Western Canada offers unequaled opportunities for development in this line.

In the Canadian West plans are being laid for the development of electrical power which can be produced cheaply. There is an abundance of coal and water power that could be used in developing this useful energy. What cheap power produced in this way will mean to the farmer and development of industrial enterprises cannot be estimated in figures.

More extensive development of the water power at Niagara, on the St. Lawrence and at waterfalls all over the country, is ready to be launched.

Peace will see new mine fields opened up, and it is equally certain that shipbuilding, railway equipment, steel production, and many of the industries will go forward with a bound.

Canadian industries will be required in the reconstruction of Europe, and already the Canadian Government has sent across the seas a commission for the purpose of securing orders. Canada took an early and prominent part in the war, and in the days of peace will be found equally active. She feels that by the valor and loyalty of her people she has earned a large share of the business and prosperity that will follow the war period, and she proposes to get it.—Advertisement.

Crushed.

Artist—Just a little daub of mine, you see, madam.

Lady—You are entirely too modest. I call that quite a big daub.

The prices of cotton and linen have been doubled by the war. Lengthen their service by using Red Cross Ball Blue in the laundry. All grocers, 5c.

A locomotive engineer has to wh[illegible]tle for his pay.

Many of our American women were unable to take up the duties of nursing at the front, but they should know how to take care of their own at home, and for this purpose no better book was ever printed than the Medical Adviser—a book containing 1,008 pages, and bound in cloth, with chapters on First Aid, Bandaging and care of Fractures, Taking care of the Sick, Physiology, Hygiene, Sex Problems, Mother and Babe, which can be had at most drug stores, or send 50 cents to the publishers, 663 Main St., Buffalo, N. Y.

The women at home, who are worn out, who suffer from pain at regular or irregular intervals, who are nervous or dizzy at times, should take that reliable, temperance, herbal tonic which a doctor in active practice prescribed many years ago. Now sold by druggists, in tablets and liquid, as Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription.

Send 10c to Dr. Pierce's Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., for trial package.

Sick people are invited to consult Dr. Pierce by letter, *free* of charge. All correspondence is held as strictly private and confidential.

Colds Grow Better

surprisingly soon, throat inflammation disappears, irritation is relieved and throat tickling stops, when you use reliable, time-tested

PISO'S