

THE ENCHANTED BARN

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Shirley settled back in her seat and leaned her head against the window sash wearily. She felt so tired, body and soul, that she would have been glad to sleep and forget for a little while, only that there was need for her to be up and doing. Her room had been oppressively warm the night before; and Doris, who slept with her, had rolled from one side of the bed to the other, making sleep well nigh impossible for the elder sister. She felt bruised and bleeding in her very soul, and longed for rest.

The car was passing through the thickest of the city's business thoroughfare, and the noise and confusion whirled about her ears like some fiendish monotonous music that set the time for the mad dance of the world. One danced to it whether one would or not, and danced on to one's death.

Around the city hall the car passed, and on up Market street. They passed a great fruit store, and the waft of air that entered the open windows came laden with the scent of overripe bananas, late oranges and lemons; a moment later with sickening fumes it blended into a deadly smell of gas from a yawning hole in the pavement, and mingled with the sweat of the swarthy foreigners grouped about it, picks in hand. It seemed as though all the smells in creation were met and congregated in that street within four or five blocks; and one by one they tortured her, leather and paint and metal and soap, rank cheese in a fellow traveler's market basket, thick stifling smoke from a street engine that was champing up the gravel they fed it to make a new patch of paving, the stench from the cattle sheds as they passed the railroad and stock yards, the dank odor of the river as they crossed the bridge, and then an oilcloth factory just beyond! The faint sweet breath of early daffodils and violets from an occasional street vendor stood no chance at all with these, and all the air seemed sickening and dreadful to the girl as she rested wearily against the window with closed eyes and cried to think.

They slipped at last into the subway with a whir and a swish, where the cool, clean smell of the cement seemed gradually to rise and drown the memory of the upper world, and came refreshingly in at the windows. Shirley had a passing thought, wondering whether it would be like that in the grave, all restful and sweet and quiet and clean, with the noisy, heartless world roaring overhead. Then they came up suddenly out of the subway, with a kind of triumphant leap and shout of brakes and wheels, into the light and sunshine above, and a new world. For here were broad streets, clean pavements, ample houses, well trimmed lawns, quiet people walking in comfort, bits of flower boxes on the window sills filled with pansies and hyacinths; and the air was sweet and clean. The difference made Shirley sit up and look about her, and the contrast reminded her of the heaven that would be beyond the grave. It was just because she was so tired and disheartened that her thoughts took this solemn form.

But now her heart sank again, for she was in the world of plenty, far beyond her means, and there was no place for such as she. Not in either direction could she see any little side streets with tiny houses that would rent for \$15 a month. There were such in the city, she knew; but they were scarce and were gobbled up as soon as vacant.

But here all was spaciousness, and even the side streets had three stories and snug porches with tidy rockers and bay windows.

She looked at the great plate glass windows with their cobwebby lace draperies, and thought what it would be if she were able to take her mother and the children to such a home as one of those. Why, if she could afford that, George could go to college and Doris wear a little velvet coat with rosebuds in her bonnet, like the child on the sidewalk with her nurse and her doll carriage.

But a thing like that could never come to her. There were no rich uncles to leave them a fortune; she was not bright and

gifted to invent some wonderful toy or write a book or paint a picture that would bring the fortune; and no one would ever come her way with a fortune to marry her. Those things happened only in story books, and she was not a story book girl; she was just a practical, every day, hard working girl with a fairly good complexion, good blue eyes and a firm chin. It was eating into her soul, and she could feel a kind of mental paralysis stealing over her from it, numbing her faculties hour by hour.

The car glided on, and the houses grew less stately and farther apart. They were not so pretentious now, but they were still substantial and comfortable, with more ground and an air of having been there always, with no room for newcomers. Now and then would come a nucleus of shops and an old tavern with a group of new groceries and crying competition of green stamps and blue stamps and yellow stamps posted alluringly in their windows. Here busy, hurried people would swarm, and children ran and shouted; but every house they passed seemed full to overflowing, and there was nowhere any place that seemed to say: "Here you may come and find room!"

And now the car left the paved and built up streets, and wandered out between the open fields, where trees arched lavishly overhead, and little new green things lifted up unfringed heads, and dared to grow in the sunshine. A new smell, the smell of rich earth and young green growing things, of skunk cabbage in bloom in the swamps, of budding willows and sassafras, roused her senses; the hum of a bee on its way to find the first honey drops came to her ears. Sweet, droning, restful, with the call of a wild bird in the distance and all the air balmy with the joy of spring. Ah! This indeed was heaven! What a contrast! Truly, this was heaven! If she could but stay, and all the dear ones come!

She had spent summers in the country, of course; and she knew and loved nature, but it had been five years since she had been free to get outside the city limits for more than a day, and then not far. It seemed to her now that she had never sensed the beauty of the country as today; perhaps because she had never needed it as now.

The road went on smoothly straight ahead, with now a rounding curve, and then another long stretch of perfect road. Men were plowing in the fields on one side, and on the other lay the emerald velvet of a field of spring wheat. More people had got into the car as it left the city. Plain, substantial men, nice, pleasant women; but Shirley did not notice them; she was watching the changing landscape and thinking her dismal, pitiful thoughts. Thinking, too, that she had spent her money—or would have when she returned, with nothing to show for it, and her conscience condemned her.

They were coming now to a wide, old fashioned barn of stone, with ample grassy stone coped entrance rising like a stately carpeted stairway from the barn yard. It was resting on the top of a green knoll, and a great elm tree arched over it protectingly. A tiny stream purred below at one side, and the ground sloped gradually off at the other. Shirley was not noticing the place much except as it was a part of the landscape until she heard the conductor talking to the man across the aisle about it.

"Good barn!" he was saying reflectively. "Pity to have it standing idle so long; but they'll never rent it without a house, and they won't build. It belongs to the old man's estate, and can't be divided until the youngest boy's of age, four or five years yet. The house burned down two years ago. Some tramps set it afire. No, nobody was living in it at the time. The last renter didn't make the farm pay—too far from the railroad, I guess—and there ain't anybody near enough 'round to use the barn since Halyer built his new barn," and he indicated a great red structure down the road on the other side. "Halyer useta

use this—rented it for less'n nothing, but he got too lazy to come this far, and so he sold off half his farm for a dairy and built that there barn. So now I s'pose that barn'll stand idle and run to waste 'til that kid comes of age and there's a boom up this way and it's sold. Pity about it, though; it's a good barn. Wish I had it up to my place; I could fill it."

"Make a good location for a house," said the other man, looking intently at the big stone pile. "Been a fine barn in its time. Old man must uv had a pile of chink when he built it. Who'd ya say owned it?"

"Graham, Walter Graham, big firm down near the city hall—guess you know 'em. Got all kinds of money. This ain't one, two, three with the other places they own. Got a regular palace out Arden way for summer and a town house in the swellest neighborhood, and own land all over. Old man inherited from his father and three uncles. They don't even scarcely know they got this barn, I reckon. It ain't very stylish out this way just yet."

"Be a big boom here some day; nice location," said the passenger.

"Not yetta while," said the conductor sagely; railroad station's too far. Wait 'til they get a station out Allister avenue; then you can talk. 'Til then it'll stay as it is, I reckon. There's a spring down behind the barn, the best water in the county. I useta get a drink every day when the switch was up here. I missed it a lot when they moved the switch to the top of the hill. Water's cold as ice and clear as crystal—can't be beat this side the soda fountain. I sometimes stop the car on a hot summer day now, and run and get a drink—it's great."

The men talked on, but Shirley heard no more. Her eyes were intent on the barn as they passed it—the great, beautiful, wide, comfortable looking barn. What a wonderful house it would make! She almost longed to be a cow to enter this peaceful shelter and feel at home for a little while.

The car went on and left the big barn in the distance; but Shirley kept thinking, going over almost unconsciously all the men had said about it. Walter Graham! Where had she seen that name? Oh, of course in the Ward Trust building, the whole fourth floor. Leather goods of some sort, perhaps, she couldn't just remember yet; yet she was sure of the name.

The man had said the barn rented for almost nothing. What could that mean translated in terms of dollars? Would the \$15 a month that they were now paying for the little brick house cover it? But there would be the car fare for herself and George. Walking that distance twice a day, or even once, would be impossible. Ten cents a day, 60 cents a week—twice 60 cents! If they lived out of the city they couldn't afford to pay but \$12 a month. They never would rent that barn for that, of course; it was so big and grand looking; and yet—it was a barn! What did barns rent for, anyway?

And, if it could be had, could they live in a barn? What were barns like, anyway, inside? Did they have floors, or only stalls and mud? There had been but two tiny windows visible in the front; how did they get light inside? But then it couldn't be much darker than the brick house no matter what it was. Perhaps there was a skylight, and hay, pleasant hay, to lie down on and rest. Anyhow, if they could only manage to get out there for the summer somehow, they could bear some discomforts just to sit under that great tree and look up at the sky. To think of Doris playing under that tree! And mother sitting under it sewing? Mother could get well out there in that fresh air, and Doris would get rosy cheeks again. There would not likely be a school about for Carol; but that would not hurt her for the summer, anyway, and maybe by fall they could find a little house. Perhaps she would get a raise in the fall. If they could only get somewhere to go now!

But yet—a barn! Live in a barn! What would mother say? Would she feel that it was a disgrace? Would she call it one of Shirley's wild schemes? Well, but what were they going to do? They must live somewhere, unless they were destined to die homeless.

The car droned on through

the open country, coming now and then to settlements of prosperous houses, some of them small; but no empty ones seemed to beckon her. Indeed, they looked too high priced to make her even look twice at them; besides, her heart was left behind with that barn, that great, beautiful barn with the tinkling brook beside it, and the arching tree and gentle green slope.

At last the car stopped in a commonplace little town in front of a red brick church, and everybody got up and went out. The conductor disappeared, too, and the motorman leaned back on his brake and looked at her significantly.

"End of the line, lady," he said with a grin, as if she were dreaming and had not taken notice of her surroundings.

"Oh," said Shirley, rousing up, and looking bewilderedly about her. "Well, you go back, don't you?"

"Yes. Go back in 15 minutes," said the motorman indolently. There was something appealing in the sadness of this girl's eyes that made him think of his little girl at home.

"Do you go back just the same way?" she asked with sudden alarm. She did want to see that barn again, and to get its exact location so that she could come back to it some day if possible.

"Yes, we go back just the same way," nodded the motorman.

Shirley sat back in her seat again, and resumed her thoughts. The motorman took up his dinner pail, sat down on a high stool with his back to her, and began to eat. It was a good time now for her to eat her little lunch, but she was not hungry. However, she would be if she did not eat it, of course; and there would be no other time when people would not be around. She put her hand in her shabby coat pocket for her handkerchief, and her fingers came into contact with something small and hard and round. For a moment she thought it was a button that had been off her cuff for several days. But no, she remembered sewing that on that very morning. Then she drew the little object out, and behold! it was a 5-cent piece. Yes, of course, she remembered now. It was the nickel she put in her pocket last night when she went for the extra loaf of bread and found the store closed. She had made johnny cake instead, and supper had been late; but the nickel had stayed in her coat pocket forgotten. And now suddenly a big temptation descended upon her, to spend that nickel in car fare riding to the barn and getting out for a closer look at it, and then taking the next car into the city. Was it wild and foolish, was it not perhaps actually wrong, to spend that nickel that way when they needed so much at home, and had so little? A crazy idea—for how could a barn ever be their shelter?

She thought so hard about it that she forgot to eat her lunch until the motorman slammed the cover down on his tin pail and put the high stool away. The conductor, too, was coming out of a tiny frame house, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand and calling to his wife, who stood in the doorway and told him about an errand she wanted him to do for her in the city. Shirley's cheeks grew red with excitement, for the nickel was burning in her hand, and she knew in her heart that she was going to spend it getting off that car near that barn. She would eat her lunch under the tree by the brook! How exciting that would be! At least it would be something to tell the children about at night! Or no! they would think her crazy and selfish, perhaps, to waste a whole day and 15 cents on herself. Still, it was not on herself; it was really for them. If they could only see that beautiful spot!

(To Be Continued Next Week)

Praises President's Style.
From the New York Times.

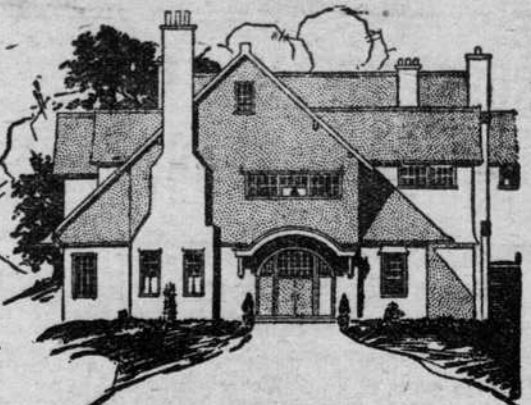
Upon the literary quality of the president's address to congress, coming so soon after his inaugural address, it has pleased some university jurists to sharpen their wits. They have passed from one to another their little quips and catchy questions about Mr. Harding's use of words. Finally, as was inevitable, M. L. Menckon has started in to make rather ponderous fun of the president's style.

The game is easy, but is it worth while? What do the fastidious critics think to be the object of a presidential utterance? It is to reach and win the greatest number of people.

This being so, it may be boldly maintained that Mr. Harding's official style is excellent. It carries where finer writing would not go. Its merits are obvious.

Your New Home

should be made artistic, sanitary and livable.



These walls should be Alabastined in the latest, up-to-the-minute nature color tints. Each room should reflect your own individuality and the treatment throughout be a complete perfect harmony in colors.

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How much better, when you have a new home, to start right than to have to correct errors afterward from former treatment with other materials, when you come to the use of Alabastine, as does nearly every one sooner or later.

Once your walls are Alabastined you can use any material over it should you desire, but having used Alabastine you will have no desire for any other treatment.

Alabastine is so easy to mix and apply—so lasting in its results—so absolutely sanitary—and so generally recognized as the proper decorative material in a class by itself that it is becoming difficult to manufacture fast enough to supply the demand.

Alabastine is a dry powder, put up in five-pound packages, white and beautiful tints, ready to mix and use by the addition of cold water, and with full directions on each package. Every package of genuine Alabastine has cross and circle printed in red.

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to break it up and get them back in condition. Twenty-seven years' use has made "SPOHN'S" indispensable in treating Coughs and Colds, Influenza and Distemper with their resulting complications, and all diseases of the throat, nose and lungs. Acts marvelously as preventive; acts equally well as cure. 50 cents and \$1.15 per bottle. At all drug stores.

SPOHN MEDICAL COMPANY, GOSHEN, IND.



Come Again.

Marybeth was looking over her birthday presents, among which was a pretty hand-embroidered dress from her aunt.

Her mother said, "Aren't you going to give auntie a nice kiss for your dress?"

She replied, "Oh, yes, thank you, auntie. Many returns of the day."

Shave With Cuticura Soap
And double your razor efficiency as well as promote skin purity, skin comfort and skin health. No mug, no slimy soap, no germs, no waste, no irritation even when shaved twice daily. One soap for all uses—shaving, bathing and shampooing.—Adv.

CONDENSATIONS

The emerald is the most precious of gems.

Industry does not have to make wishes.

White camels are about as rare as black sheep.

Baboons sometimes throw stones at their enemies.

Letters carried by air mail are put in asbestos bags.

The president of the French republic has an official airplane.

Buddhists in Japan maintain a regular Buddhist Salvation army.

No, Luke, bright children don't always develop into smart men. Some develop into women.

The love of the mosquito for a bare arm is surpassed only by the love of a fly for a bald head.

Of course, the man who thinks as much of himself as we do of ourselves is conceited.

Women are estimated to outnumber men to the extent of 2,000,000 in England and Wales.

The culture of tea existed in China in the Fourth century and in Japan in the Ninth century.

He Corrects Them.

"Our first impressions," says a philosopher, "are full of errors." But old Father Time is a good proof reader.

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The culture of tea existed in China in the Fourth century and in Japan in the Ninth century.

A ninety-mile walk on snowshoes was accomplished by a Canadian woman last winter.

(To Be Continued Next Week)

There's a Reason Why Grape-Nuts

makes a helpful breakfast and a profitable lunch for the worker who must be awake and alert during the day.

Grape-Nuts is the perfected goodness of wheat and malted barley, and is exceptionally rich in nourishment.

It feeds body and brain without tax upon the digestion.

"There's a Reason"