

# A LIFE FOR SALE

BY SYDNEY HORLER

"I confess I shall be glad to know what you intend to do with me." He decided that it would be just as well, for the present at any rate, to meet suavely with suavely.

"The worst of youth is that it is so impetuous," smiled the other. The Colossus pulled out a pocket-book bulging with bank-notes, counted out several of these, and passed them over. "Here are fifty pounds," he said; "please regard them as a first instalment of payment. Now I will answer your remark. To-night I intend you to leave this place. You will go to some quiet and homely lodgings in Hampstead. Fitzroy Street is a secluded thoroughfare in the neighborhood of the Heath. You will find Mrs. Perkins a comfortable old soul, who will endeavor, I feel sure, to make you thoroughly happy."

Creighton did not know whether to smile or swear. Because the ludicrousness of the situation was irresistible he smiled.

"You are most kind, Mr. Jones," he commented.

A light of warning flashed from the man's eyes.

"If you will permit me," said the Colossus, "I will do what talking is necessary."

Again came the overwhelming desire to lash out at the speaker with both fists. In spite of his magnificent presence, Creighton felt there was something reptilian about the man. He had an evil aura.

Somehow or other he kept himself in check. Nodding, he waited for the other to proceed.

"To Mrs. Perkins you are a young engineer who has recently returned from South America. You have a little money, but you are seeking an opportunity to follow your profession in London. All that you will be required to do at No. 13, Fitzroy Street, is to await instructions, which will be sent to you. No restriction will be placed upon your liberty—you can roam the glorious Heath at will, for instance—but I must warn you that any attempt to leave your comfortable lodgings will be frustrated. Mr. Creighton, that, as your employer, I require some security. I must safe guard my own interests. That is why—a thin, suggestive smile edged the speaker's lips—"I state that it would be very injudicious, not to say ill-advised, for you to make any attempt to—forgive the vulgarity—clear off."

"You need not worry on that account, Mr. Jones. I intend to stay by my bargain." Yes, he was certainly going to do that.

"Very well." The zone of the Colossus was incisive.

The thought had flashed through Creighton's mind that possibly he might be able to discover, when leaving the place, where this house of suspicion was situated, but this object was frustrated in a very effectual manner.

"You will travel to Fitzroy Street by car," announced the Colossus, "and—producing a black silk scarf—you will go there blindfolded."

There was nothing to do but to submit, and apart from the fact that Mr. Jones' niece, Miss Smith, did not accompany them, this night drive, although longer, was similar to the one he had taken nearly twenty-four hours previously.

His senses rendered acute,

Creighton speculated as to the type of woman Mrs. Perkins might be. He found her just the comfortable old soul the Colossus had described. She bustled about from the moment of his arrival, evidently almost painfully eager to please her lodger.

"But that my poor, dear husband died last year, I don't think I could ever have brought myself to take in young men, 'lowever respectable they might be," she announced to her somewhat bewildered guest; "but the insurance money was small, and a lonely woman 'as to do something in these 'ard times. So when Mr. Dropstick, 'im as was at the gas office, left me at the age of forty-nine to get married, I was forced to advertise for another lodger. The Mercury is such a respectable paper if you want anything, and, sure enough, I had a very nice reply from your uncle, Mr. Jones."

While the garrulous widow stopped to collect her breath—they had reached the second landing by this time—Martin wondered what she would say if she knew the real character of Mr. Jones, and how he himself had come to her humble abode with his eyes melodramatically blindfolded.

Mrs. Perkins continued. "Mr. Dropstick always said that no one ever made him more comfortable, so what he wanted to go off and get married for, all in a 'aste like that, I can't tell. I only saw her once, but she seemed to me to be one of those bits of 'ussies, showing more legs than sense. Not at all the sort of wife I should have chosen for Mr. Dropstick—and 'im being at the gas office all these years. He was a very nice man, Mr. Dropstick; most particular about his carpetslippers, and was scarcely any trouble—just drank up his cup of cocoa at ten o'clock every night and then off to bed."

Martin Creighton, who felt by this time that he had known the estimable Mr. Dropstick from the day of his birth, now coughed. "I am afraid, Mrs. Perkins, that I cannot promise to be in bed every night at ten myself." His landlady turned from her task of smoothing the bed-cover.

"And I'm not askin' you to, beggin' your pardon, Mr. Creighton, sir. I'm old enough to know that there is some as likes a quiet life and there is others who prefer a bit of hexcitement. My poor, dear husband was a rare one for 'is bit of hexcitement—once a week reg'lar he went to the Odd-fellows 'All to play draughts with that Mr. Muggleton, who 'as only one leg. But there"—breaking off—"I mustn't stay here gossiping any longer; you'll be wanting your supper. Would you fancy a nice slice of fried 'am with a couple of eggs?"

"I certainly should, Mrs. Perkins," replied Creighton. By this time the humor of the situation had returned to him, blotting out, for the time being, the rush of turbulent thoughts. Of the two, he certainly preferred the company of this talkative relic of the lamented Mr. Perkins to the subtly evil presence of Mr. Jones, who had so considerably turned himself into an uncle.

Whatever her fallings as a conversationalist might be, Mrs. Perkins proved herself an admirable cook. Martin ate an excellent meal, dur-

ing the course of which he learned that his "uncle" had agreed he should pay the weekly sum of two guineas for his board and lodging. After supper the need for fresh air became insistent. He had had no exercise since the previous day, and he felt that a good walk was a much needed luxury.

"I am going out for an hour," he informed Mrs. Perkins.

Leaving the house, he looked around carefully to see if he were being shadowed, but beyond a workman returning home from an obvious visit to a neighboring public-house, the quiet street was deserted.

He climbed the slope to Hampstead Heath, and feeling now the invigorating air upon his face, he struck off down the road leading to the Spaniards. Some time before he had reached the famous inn he felt braced and fit to meet anything that might happen along. Indeed, his one wish now was to run across a creature of Mr. Jones', and thus give himself an opportunity to get at something of the truth.

But it seemed that he had the whole glorious expanse of rolling heathland to himself. Had it not been for the thousands of lights that twinkled below him, he might have imagined that he was hundreds of miles away from the greatest city in the world. Here, with the soft night wind playing about his temples as he stood bare-headed, he was lapped in peace. The quiet serenity of the deserted heath enveloped him. And yet, not many miles away, the man to whom he had sold himself sat in his luxurious spider's den, weaving a web of—what? Somewhere near this man was a beautiful girl, whose deep brown eyes were, perhaps, once again haunted with terror.

Creighton clinched his hands, and walked rapidly back to No. 13, Fitzroy Street. He moved so quickly that he did notice the slinking form that, gliding out from behind a bush, shadowed him to his lodging.

The next morning Martin went into the West End. He had a debt to pay to Luigo.

He arrived at Rimini's just before one o'clock. The well-known restaurant was filling up rapidly, but Luigo, his face smiling a welcome, piloted him in person to a seat usually reserved for the great and distinguished.

"I really came in to thank you for all you did for me two nights ago, Luigo," he said.

The maitre d'hotel bowed inimitably. Then his expressive face became serious.

"Pardon, M'sieu," he said, "but I trust M'sieu took my warnings? That man with the streaks in his hair—I think he is no good to M'sieu. And the woman . . . Ah! she is very beautiful . . . but very dangerous, M'sieu."

Creighton unrolled his napkin.

"Luigo, you know everyone. Who are these people?" he asked.

The other shrugged his shoulders.

"A million pardons, M'sieu, but I do not know. That was the first time they had come to my restaurant. What I have told you I have said on what you call the instinct. It is my knowledge of the human face that caused me to say it. Be warned, M'sieu, I pray you."

Creighton pressed the man's arm in a little affectionate action.

"Thanks to you, Luigo, I am warned all right; you needn't be afraid. I—"

He broke off so suddenly that Luigo stared. The young man was looking fixedly across the room.

Creighton had a difficulty in keeping his seat. He was

literally struck dumb with amazement.

Walking by the side of a tall, distinguished-looking man, a girl had just entered the restaurant.

Creighton stared again. There was no possible mistake.

This girl, so elegantly dressed, so thoroughly sure of herself and her surroundings, was the same as he had seen crouching in piteous terror before the hideous Zoab, in Mr. Jones' house of mystery, two nights before.

Finding his voice, he turned to Luigo.

"That girl"—he stared, tensely—"who is she?"

The maitre d'hotel lowered his voice.

"M'sieu, I regret I am not familiar with the lady's name, but her companion is a well-known patron of mine. He is Lord Belshaven, the Foreign Secretary."

CHAPTER VIII

She must play for time. That was the decision to which Margery had come. The fate threatening her father was so terrible that, although she hated the thought, she was forced to temporize with this polished blackmailer who called himself a Seeker of Secrets.

That was why, at the second interview she had had with the man, she had pretended to be ready to listen to his proposals. The Colossus had been suavely itself.

"Believe me, my dear Miss Steers, I have no desire to be harsh or even inconsiderate. It would distress me beyond measure to be forced to use the threat I have already mentioned. All I ask is for you to perform a simple service, and your father will never be troubled."

Hating herself, she had to act.

"I realize that you have me in your power," she replied, "but what you call a 'simple service' will be very difficult. I am not sufficiently in Lord Belshaven's confidence to know his private affairs, and if I were caught the consequences—"

The man interrupted her. "Please do not worry yourself about such a contingency," he replied. "When the time comes, as it will very shortly, you will find that I have made all the necessary arrangements. And now"—smiling as a fond father might smile at a favorite child—"seeing that we understand each other more thoroughly, there is no reason why you should not return to your normal life. You must be prepared, however, to obey instantly and without demur any orders that I shall send to you. Refusal to do this, or any other foolish conduct on your part, and—"

The speaker did not finish the sentence, but the gesture he made with his hands was painfully expressive to the overwrought girl.

The second interview took place after tea.

"You may return home immediately," announced the Colossus. "In order to protect yourself from an impulse you will not be allowed to see where this house is situated, but the sensation of being blindfolded need not cause you any unnecessary alarm. Just one final warning: Do not attempt to deceive me in any way, Miss Steers. The consequences would be very serious."

The girl who had lured her to this place now came in. For all her beauty and arresting grace, Margery felt that she was as treacherous as a snake. Yet she made no resistance when a black silk scarf was placed over her eyes and knotted at the back of her head.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

A NEW SAUERKRAUT

From time immemorial, cabbage has been the product from which sauerkraut has been made. Now comes the United States department of agriculture with the information that first-class kraut may be made of turnips. Medium-sized purple-top turnips that are firm, sweet and juicy are selected and the flesh is ground, shredded and mixed with salt at the rate of four ounces of salt to 10 pounds of turnips. It is then packed in stone jars, weighted down and allowed to ferment. The product is said to have a sharp flavor closely

resembling that of good cabbage kraut. The turnip flavor is lost when fermentation begins.

SUBSTITUTE FOR MINERALS

If plenty of meat scrap and skim-milk is included in the ration for chicks from hatching time to 10 weeks of age, there is need for but little mineral materials in the ration. Meat scraps contain 30 to 35 per cent of lime and calcium, the two minerals that make up 75 per cent of the ash in chickens, and one-tenth of the total solids in skim-milk is phosphorus and calcium.

## OF INTEREST TO FARMERS

### DRYING GARDEN SURPLUS

The wide farm housewife plans her garden to provide a surplus of fruits and vegetables. Some of these will be used for canning, others will be made into preserves and jam, some will be pickled. Some kinds—and these are our subject here—can very profitably be dried. Drying is the oldest method of food preservation. Primitive man discovered that meat left exposed to sun and wind dried out and could be put away for future use. In caves, heat from fire hastened the process; and in the case of meat, smoke changed the flavor and probably increased the preservation action—but that is another story. Colonial housewives dried corn, apples, peppers, beans, and stored them away across the chimney and among the rafters above, where they furnished decoration as well as a winter food supply. Since those days, canning, preserving and pickling have tended to replace drying as a method of home preservation. But drying is so simple and requires so little outlay in equipment that there is a tendency to fall back upon it in hard times. In the report last year from many rural sections is noted with interest an increase in drying. During the war the urge to conserve led to much drying. The small bulk of the dried product and the ease with which it is stored make an appeal in sections and at times when funds for special containers are not available. The wartime experience showed many gaps in our knowledge of drying, but experience gained during those days furnished sounder information upon which to base a program today. Drying preserves foods by removal of water. Micro-organisms that cause spoilage can grow only in the presence of water. The bulk of the products is reduced by drying to from one-quarter to one-ninth of the original volume, depending upon the amount of water originally present. Vegetables must be drier than fruits to keep successfully; also they need to be stored more carefully, since they take up water more easily if exposed to moist air. But there are other difficulties to be avoided in keeping foods. Enzymes are responsible for the ripening of fruits and vegetables. These same enzymes in fresh fruits and vegetables cause color and flavor changes that are increased when the surfaces are cut and exposed to air. The more rapid the growth of the fruit or vegetable, the more active the enzymes they contain. Successful drying and the keeping of the product after drying are complicated by the enzymes. Fruits and vegetables for drying yield an inferior product as to flavor and color unless these changes can be stopped by drying. There are two ways of doing this—precooking and sulphuring. Under most household conditions it is simpler to dry only such products as do not need much preliminary treatment. The drying in itself tends to check these changes, but in quick-ripening vegetables the very active enzymes are difficult to destroy and the changes tend to continue very slowly after the material has been dried, with deterioration in both color and flavor. Vegetables that are used in the immature form and the stage of most rapid growth are to be avoided for drying, since they lose so much in flavor and appearance on storage. On the basis of these facts, the list of the products that can be dried successfully in the home narrows down. It is difficult to state definitely what foods will dry successfully, since they vary as to both kind and variety. Fruits and vegetables that may be dried are listed here. Fruits are easier to dry than most vegetables. The higher sugar content makes them easier to preserve and they give up water more easily than do vegetables. Apples, pears, peaches, apricots, cherries, plums, figs and berries are the best fruits for drying. Among the vegetables, corn, mature beans and peas, celery, okra, and sweet potatoes are best for drying. The quick maturing varieties, such as green snap beans, immature green beans, asparagus, cauliflower, broccoli and spinach, are difficult to dry successfully. With preliminary steaming or hot dip and quick drying, a fairly satisfactory product may be obtained, but some tend to be woody and others all tend to lose flavor and color if held too long. Other methods of preservation are suggested, therefore, except in case of green beans in late summer or fall. These may be dried if not held too long before using—that is, if used before Christmas. Any surplus of green beans earlier in the season should be canned for use in the late winter. Potatoes, turnips, beets, parsnips, carrots, cabbage and onions can all be dried successfully, but they store so well and so simply that it seems uneconomical to preserve them in any other way. Sweet potatoes also store out they dry so easily and successfully that any surplus in harvesting may well be included for use in the late spring. Pumpkin and squash both dry successfully. Corn properly dried compares in flavor and palatability with canned corn. Sliced okra may be dried successfully for soup,

though the color of the fresh product is not retained if held too long. Celery dried serves as a source of flavor, and may be used as a vegetable alone or in combination with other vegetables. Beans and pea may be allowed to mature on the vine, but even these are stored more successfully after a short treatment in the dryer. It is to be strongly urged that more beans and peas be planted and used. They add both variety and food value to the diet. A variety of flavor is obtained if some are gathered and dried when the seeds obtain full size but before the pods have turned yellow. Some of all varieties, including field peas, black-eyed peas and Lima beans, can be treated this way to advantage. Drying is simply a removing of water. Any fresh food, if exposed to the air, dries out. The rapidity with which it dries depends upon the amount of water in the air—humidity, we call it. The warmer the air the more water it takes up before it becomes saturated. When saturated air is cooled it gives up water, as we see in dew and the sweating of a pitcher of iced water on a humid day. The faster the air passes over food the more rapidly it dries. These principles are applied in drying vegetables. In climates where there is plenty of sunshine most products can be dried successfully by exposing them to the sun on a porch shelf, a roof or a platform of some sort. Such products should be lightly covered to prevent access of insects and trash. The use of these makes drying independent of weather conditions and extends the drying season into the late fall, when certain varieties of fruits and vegetables especially desirable for drying are available. Select the product as carefully as if for table use. Material that is inferior before drying will still be inferior afterward. Most products should be of the right stage of ripeness for immediate use. The preparation varies with the product, as indicated in the table giving drying directions. Portions should not be too thick to give up water readily and slices of the same thickness dry more evenly. A short cooking either in steam or by dipping into water is recommended for most products to set the color and stop enzyme changes. In apples, color changes can be retarded by dipping into salt water as soon as pared and sliced—three to five teaspoons of salt per gallon of water. Generally speaking, flavor and cooking quality are best preserved by rapid drying. Low temperatures not only lengthen the process but encourage changes that may result in deterioration of color and flavor. On the other hand, too high a temperature, while it shortens the process, may injure the cells, cause leaking of valuable cell material, and charring. The optimum temperature conditions vary with the material that is being dried. All products dried in air or sun should be given a final heating at 165 to 170 degrees F. before being stored, to kill any micro-organisms that may be adhering. Any carefully regulated oven can be used for this. Store, as far as possible, in airtight tins to prevent access of dust and absorption of water. Friction-top tin cans, tin coffee cans or any cans with a tight lid can be used successfully. A heavy paraffined paper container that can be tightly closed is satisfactory.

### VALUE OF IN-ARCHING

Inarching is a type of surgery often serviceable to the amateur fruit grower and frequently of practical value to the commercial orchardist. The treatment for the ordinary rodent girdling is bridge grafting. Inarching differs from bridge grafting in that it is employed where portions of the roots of a tree have been killed by disease or mechanical injury and it becomes necessary to develop a new root system, either partially or entirely. Seedling trees or nursery trees are set alongside the original tree as near the trunk as practicable. The top of a small tree is then grafted into sound wood some distance above the dead area. The graft union is formed in the same manner as is employed in the common bridge graft. The nearer parallel the little tree is to the old tree the better the union is apt to be. It is rather difficult to make a firm union if the angle at which the graft is inserted is very acute. It is well to tack the branch in place before covering with wax. Where whips are used for this work it is usually only possible to make one union for each small tree used. If the tree to be repaired is a mature tree then two-year-old nursery trees are preferable. The number of trees required for inarching depends upon the portions of the root system it is necessary to replace. Two-year-old nursery trees, having large root systems and several branches which may be used for grafting, reestablish the normal relationship between top and root system more quickly than small trees. Inarching is one of those practices only vaguely understood by most fruit growers, but it is with a simple means of preserving valuable trees.

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### "Race Day" Covers

#### For Collectors Planned

Goshen, N. Y. —(UP)—A special postal cachet, announcing the winner of the forthcoming Hambletonian Stake, \$60,000 feature of the Grand Circuit meeting here, August 17, is to be made available to stamp collectors of "fifty covers," according to Frank Kenney, editor of Wallace's Trotting Horse Register.

"Aside from being the first 'cover' ever to deal with a sporting event, it probably will be one

of the most attractive," Kenney said. They will be mailed immediately following the trotting of the stake. The cachet, therefore, actually will announce the result of the world's richest light harness racing event.

The cachet design is a particularly attractive one, drawn by Bob Dickey.

### Ton of Fossils

#### Shipped from Nebraska

Crawford, Neb. —(UP)—A ton of fossils has been shipped from

Crawford and Harrison already this summer.

C. W. Gilmore, of the Smithsonian Institute and George F. Sternberg and Marie B. Walker, of Hays, Kan., have excavated the fossils from the beds around Crawford.

About 1,200 pounds of fossils left here and 900 pounds from Harrison. Most of the bones are those of prehistoric horses.

### TANDEM PROPELLER

Rushville, Mo. — Charles L. Brown has obtained a patent on an

airplane which features a tandem propeller are said to be elimination of vibration and torque, and production of slower and more efficient propeller speed in relation to engine speed. The propellers revolve in opposite directions.

### One Long Laugh

From the Humorist.

"You know, I'm the sort of man who doesn't mind laughing at himself when he says anything ridiculous."

"Well, all I can say is you must lead a frightfully lolly life!"