

# The DIM LANTERN

By TEMPLE BAILEY

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## CHAPTER IX—Continued

The babies, arriving presently in a rollicking state of excitement over the advent of Auntie Jane, showed themselves delightful and adoring.

"Junior," said Jane, "are you glad I'm here?"

"Did you bring me anything?"

"Something—wonderful!"

"What?"

She opened her bag, and produced Towne's box of sweets. "May I give him a chocolate, Judy?"

"One little one, and just a taste for baby. Jane, where did you get that gorgeous box?"

"Frederick Towne."

"Really? My dear, your letters have been tremendously interesting. Haven't they, Bob?"

Her husband nodded. He was sitting by the bedside holding her hand. "Towne's a pretty big man."

The nurse came in then, and Jane went with Bob and the babies to the dining-room.

After dinner, Junior went to sleep in Jane's arms, having been regaled on a rapturous diet of "The Three Bears" and "The Little Red Hen."

"They're such beauties, Judy," said Jane, as she went back to her sister. "But they don't look like any of the Barneses."

"No, they're like Bob, with their white skins and fair hair. I wanted one of them to have our coloring. Do you know how particularly lovely you are getting to be, Janey?"

"Judy, I'm not."

"Yes, you are. And none of us thought it. And so Mr. Towne wants to marry you?"

"How do you know?"

"It is in your eyes, dear, and in the cock of your head. You and Baldy always look that way when something thrilling happens to you. You can't fool me."

"Well, I'm not in love with him. So that's that, Judy."

"But—it's a great opportunity, isn't it, Janey?"

"I suppose it is," slowly, "but I can't quite see it."

"Why not?"

"Well, he's too old for one thing."

"Only forty—? Rich men don't grow old. And he could give you everything—everything, Janey." Judy's voice rose a little. "Jane, you don't know what it means to want things for those you love and not be able to have them. Bob did very well until the slump in business. But since the babies came—I have worked until—well, until it seemed as if I couldn't stand it. Bob's such a darling. I wouldn't change anything. I'd marry him over again tomorrow. But I do know this, that Frederick Towne could make life lovely for you, and perhaps you won't get another chance to marry a man like that."

Life for Evans Follette after Jane went away became a sort of game in which he played, as he told himself grimly, a Jekyll and Hyde part. Two men warred constantly within him. There was that scarecrow self which nursed mysterious fears, a gaunt gray-haired self, The Man Who Had Come Back From the War. And there was that other, shadowy, elusive, The Boy Who Once Had Been. And it was the Boy who took on gradually shape and substance fighting for place with the dark giant who held desperately to his own.

Yet the Boy had weapons, faith and hope. The little diary became in a sense a sacred book. Within its pages was imprisoned something that beat with frantic wings to be free.

Evans, shrinking from the program which he compelled himself to follow, was faced with things like this. "Gee, I wish the days were longer. I'd like to dance through forty-eight hours at a stretch. Jane is getting to be some little dancer. I taught her the new steps tonight. She's as graceful as a willow wand."

Well, a man with a limp couldn't dance. Or could he?

A Thomas Jefferson autograph went therefore to pay for twenty dancing lessons. Would the great Democrat turn in his grave? Yet what were ink scratches made by a dead hand as against all the meanings of love and life?

Evans bought a phonograph, and new records. He practised at all hours, to the great edification of old Mary, who washed dishes and scrubbed floors in syncopated ecstasies.

He took Baldy and Edith to tea at the big hotels, and danced with Edith. He apologized, but kept at it. "I'm out of practice."

Edith was sympathetic and interested. She invited the two boys to her home, where there was a music room with a magical floor. Sometimes the three of them were alone, and sometimes Towne came in and danced too, and Adelaide Laramore and Eloise Harper.

Towne danced extremely well. In spite of his avoirdupois he was light on his feet. He exercised constantly. He felt that if he lost his waistline all would be over. He could

not, however, always control his appetite. Hence the sugar in his tea, and other indulgences.

Baldy wrote to Jane of their afternoon frivols.

"You should see us! Eloise Harper dancing with Evans, and old Towne and his Adelaide! And Edith and I! We're a pretty pair, if I do say it. We miss you, and always wish you were with us. Sometimes it seems almost heartless to do things that you can't share. But it's doing a lot for Evans. Queer thing, the poor old chap goes at it as if his life depended upon it."

"We are invited to dine with the Townes on Christmas Eve. Some class, what? By we, I mean myself and the Follettes. Edith and Mrs. Follette see a lot of each other, and Mrs. Follette is tickled pink! You know how she loves that sort of thing—Society with a big S."

"There will be just our crowd and Mrs. Laramore for dinner, and after that a big costume ball."

"I shall go as a page in red. And Evans will be a monk and sing Christmas carols. Edith Towne is crazy about his voice. He sat down

at the piano one day in the music room, and she heard him. Jane, his voice is wonderful—it always was, you know, but we haven't heard it lately. Poor old chap—he seems to be picking up. Edith says it makes her want to cry to see him, but she's helping all she can."

"Oh, she's a dear and a darling, Janey. And I don't know what I am going to do about it. I have nothing to offer her. But at least I can worship . . . I shan't look beyond that . . ."

"Love to Judy and Bob, and the kiddies. And a kiss or two for my own Janey."

Jane, having read the letter, laid it down with a sense of utter forlornness. Evans and Eloise Harper! Towne and his Adelaide! A Christmas costume ball! Evans singing for Edith Towne!

Evans' own letters told her little. They were dear letters, giving her news of Sherwood, full of kindness and sympathy, full indeed of a certain spiritual strength—that helped her in the heavy days. But he had sketched very lightly his own activities.—He had perhaps hesitated to let her know that he could be happy without her.

But Evans was not happy. He did the things he had mapped out for himself, but he could not do them light-heartedly as the Boy had done. For how could he be light-hearted with Jane away? He had moments of loneliness so intense that they almost submerged him.

Evans frequently played a whimsical game with the old scarecrow. He went often and leaned over the fence that shut in the frozen field. He hunted up new clothes and hung them on the shaking figure—an overcoat and a soft hat. It seemed a charitable thing to clothe him with warmth. In due time someone stole the overcoat, and Evans found the poor thing stripped. It gave him a sense of shock to find two crossed sticks where once had been the semblance of a man. But he tried again. This time with an old bathrobe and a disreputable cap. "It will keep you warm until spring, old chap!"

The scarecrow and his sartorial changes became a matter of much discussion among the Negroes. Since Evans' visits were nocturnal, the whole thing had an effect of mystery until the bathrobe proclaimed its owner. "Mist' Evans done wot dat e'vy day," old Mary told Mrs. Follette. "Whuffor he dress up dat ol' sca'crow in de fel'?"

"What scarecrow?"

Old Mary explained, and that night Mrs. Follette said to her son, "The darkies are getting superstitious. Did you really do it?"

His somber eyes were lighted for a moment. "It's just a whim of mine, Mumsie. I had a sort of fellow feeling—"

"How queer!"

"Not as queer as you might think." He went back to his book. No one but Jane should know the truth.

And so he played the game. Working in his office, dancing with Edith and Baldy, chumming with the boys, dressing up the scarecrow. It seemed sometimes a desperate game—there were hours in which he wrestled with doubts. Could he ever get back? Could he? There were times when it seemed he could not. There were nights when he did not sleep. Hours that he spent on his knees. . . .

So the December days sped, and it was just a week before Christmas that Evans read the following in his little book. "Dined with the Prestons. Told father's ham story.—Great hit. Potomac frozen over. Skated in the moonlight with Florence Preston.—Great stunt—home to hot chocolate."

Once more the Potomac was frozen over. Florence Preston was married. But he mustn't let the thing pass. The young boy Evans would have tingled with the thought of that frozen river.

It was after dinner, and Evans was in his room. He hunted up Baldy. "Look here, old chap, there's skating on the river. Can't we take Sandy and Arthur with us and have an hour or two of it? Your car will do the trick."

Baldy laid down his book. "I have no philanthropies on a night like this. Moonlight. I'll take you and the boys and then I'll go and get Edith Towne." He was on his feet. "I'll call her up now—"

The small boys were rapturous and riotous over the plan. When they reached the ice, and Evans' lame leg threatened to be a hindrance, the youngsters took him between them, and away they sailed in the miraculous world—three musketeers of good fellowship and fun.

Baldy having brought Edith, put on her skates, and they flew away like birds. She was all in warm white wool—with white furs, and Baldy wore a white sweater and cap. The silver of the night seemed to clothe them in shining armor.

Baldy said things to her that made her pulses beat. She found herself a little frightened.

"You're such a darling poet. But life isn't in the least what you think it."

"What do I think it?"

"Oh, all mountains and peaks and moonlight nights."

"Well, it can be—"

"Dear child, it can't. I have no illusions."

"You think you haven't."

It was late when at last they took off their skates and Edith invited them all to go home with her. "We'll have something hot. I'm as hungry as a dozen bears."

The boys giggled. "So am I," said Sandy Stoddard. But Arthur said nothing. His eyes were occupied to the exclusion of his tongue. Edith looked to him like some angel straight from heaven. He had never seen anyone so particularly lovely.

## CHAPTER X

So Christmas Eve came, and the costume ball at the Townes'. There were, as Baldy had told Jane, just six of them at dinner. Cousin Anna-bel was still in bed, and it was Adelaide Laramore who made the sixth. Edith had told Mrs. Follette frankly that she wished Adelaide had not been asked.

"But she fished for it. She always does. She flatters Uncle Fred and he falls for it."

Baldy brought Evans and Mrs. Follette over in his flivver. They found Mrs. Laramore and Frederick already in the drawing room. Edith had not come down.

"She is always late," Frederick complained, "and she never apologizes."

Baldy, silken and slim, in his page's scarlet, stood in the hall and watched Edith descend the stairs. She seemed to emerge from the shadows of the upper balcony like a shaft of light. She was all in silvery green, her close-clinging robe girdled with pearls, her hair bobbed with mistletoe.

For a moment he stood admiring her, then: "You shouldn't have worn it," he said.

"The mistletoe? Why not?"

"You will tempt all men to kiss you."

"Men must resist temptation."

His tone was light, but her heart missed a beat. There was something about this boy so utterly engaging. He had set her on a pedestal, and he worshiped her. When she said that she was not worth worshipping, he told her, "You don't know—"

She was unusually silent during dinner. With Evans on one side of her and Baldy on the other she had little need to exert herself. Baldy was always adequate to any conversational tax, and Evans, in spite of his monk's habit, was not austere. He was, rather, like some attractive young friar drawn back for the moment to the world.

He showed himself a genial teller of tales—and capped each of Frederick's with one of his own. His mother was proud of him. She felt that life was taking on new aspects—this friendship with the Townes—her son's increasing strength and social ease—the lace gown which she wore and which had been bought with a Dickens' pamphlet. What more could she ask? She was serene and satisfied.

Adelaide, on the other side of Frederick Towne, was not serene and satisfied. She was looking particularly lovely with a star of diamonds in her hair and sheer draperies of rose and faintest green. "I am anything you wish to call me," she had said to Frederick when she came in—"an 'Evening Star' or 'In the Gloaming' or 'Afterglow.' Perhaps 'A Rose of Yesterday'—"

she had put it rather pensively.

He had been gallant but uninspired. "You are too young to talk of yesterdays," he had said, but his glance had held not the slightest hint of gallantry. She felt that she had, perhaps, been unwise to remind him of her age.

She was still more disturbed, when, towards the end of dinner, he rose and proposed a toast. "To little Jane Barnes, A Merry Christmas."

They all stood up. There was a second's silence. Evans drank as if he partook of a sacrament.

Then Edith said, "It seems almost heartless to be happy, doesn't it, when things are so hard for her?"

Adelaide interposed irrelevantly, "I should hate to spend Christmas in Chicago."

There was no response, so she turned to Frederick. "Couldn't Miss Barnes leave her sister for a few days?"

"No," he told her, "she couldn't."

She persisted, "I am sure you didn't want her to miss the ball."

"I did my best to get her here. Talked to her at long distance, but she couldn't see it."

"You are so good-hearted, Ricky."

Frederick could be cruel at moments, and her persistence was irritating. "Oh, look here, Adelaide, it wasn't entirely on her account. I want her here myself."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## Explain Distance Computations by Astronomy

Sometimes the uncertainty in the measurements of the distances of the stars disturbs us, writes Isabel M. Lewis in Nature Magazine. One of the most difficult facts for the human mind to grasp is the immensity of space and the difficulty that we encounter when we attempt to measure it in ordinary understandable terrestrial units. It is an easier matter when we deal with our own little family of planets and their satellites.

The distance from the earth to the sun, only 93,000,000 miles, furnishes an excellent yardstick. The outermost planet, Pluto, is only about 39½ of these units distant from the sun, and light, with its velocity of 186,000 miles a second, comes from the sun to the earth in about 8½ minutes. It reaches the orbit of Pluto about 5½ hours after it leaves the sun. But 4½ years pass before that beam of light reaches the nearest star, and the distance of that star from the earth is as great as the distance, in general, that other stars are from their nearest neighbors. That is why so few stars have close heavenly encounters even though they are all in motion.

Two units are used in measuring

star distances. One is the light year—the distance that light travels in a year at the rate of about 186,000 miles a second, which is about 63,290 times the distance from the sun to the earth. The other unit is the parsec, which is 3.26 light years. The word is a combination of the first syllables of "parallax" and "second," and expresses the thought that it is the distance of a star with a parallax of one second of arc. No star is close enough to the earth to have a parallax that great. Proxima Centauri, a faint star a fraction of a light year closer than the well known star of first magnitude, Alpha Centauri, has a parallax of only 76 hundredths of a second of arc, which means that if at the distance of this star, we could view our solar system and see our planet earth—which, of course, we could not possibly do even with the aid of any telescope in existence—then the distance between sun and earth would be only this fraction of one second of arc in angular measure.

Poet Killed by Grape Seed According to Pliny, Anacreon, the lyric poet of Greece, met his death by choking on a grape seed.

## Ask Me? Another

A Quiz With Answers Offering Information on Various Subjects

- ### The Questions
1. What was the Holy Grail?
  2. What is meant by fiscal year?
  3. Does the term dirigible refer only to aircraft?
  4. Do landing or starting planes have the right of way at an airport?
  5. Are the stars motionless in space?
  6. Why can a fly walk on a ceiling without falling?
  7. What is the difference between a chuckle, a giggle and a laugh?
  8. Why don't ducks get wet?
  9. A bale of cotton weighs how many pounds?
  10. What is the difference between a buffalo and a bison?

- ### The Answers
1. The platter or cup which, according to legends of the Middle Ages, was used by Christ at the Last Supper.
  2. A year which starts at a designated date for financial figuring.
  3. No. Dirigible means capable of being directed, as an automobile or bicycle.
  4. Descending planes have the right-of-way.
  5. No. If there is anything in

the universe that is actually motionless astronomers have not yet discovered it.

6. The fly has suction cups on its legs.
7. A chuckle is a small noise, giggling comes in short spasms, and a laugh is everything.
8. Because of oil in their feathers.
9. A bale of cotton weighs 480 pounds.
10. Buffalo is the general term given to many species of wild oxen, including the bison. The American buffalo may properly be called a bison.

## And the Mistress Grew Red With Indignation

The housemaid was under notice to leave, and her mistress summoned her to tell her a few truths. "So I'm a flirt, am I?" demanded the maid, after a few preliminaries. "Well, I know them as flirts more than I do. And another thing, I'm better-looking than you. Your husband told me."

"That's enough!" snapped her mistress.

"Oh, no, it ain't," the girl went on. "I can kiss better than you can, too. Do you know who told me that?"

"Don't you dare to suggest that my husband—"

"Oh, no," interrupted the maid,

## By Number

Several American towns are named with numbers, such as Six, W. Va.; Seventy Six, Ky., and Ninety Six, S. C., according to Collier's. A species of fish in South Africa is named Seventy-four after the 74 guns on Nelson's flagship, the Victory; and a toilet water is named 4711 after the street address in Cologne, Germany, where it was first compounded.

## Uncle Phil Says:

**Making Good the Boast**  
Typical Americans think they are better than the average. That's what makes America great.

"Waves of indignation" are public opinion in motion.

**Wouldn't We All?**  
A painstaking editor would like to read his funeral sermon in order to blue-pencil the errors in it.

Work is a great sedative, but it doesn't necessarily bring happiness. If you stop to bemoan, down you go!

A nervously over-wrought man may be entertaining, but you are sorry he hasn't more repose. After all, people that "rest" you are the most agreeable.

**Can Human Ingenuity Do It?**  
Abolish poverty and end at least half the unhappiness in the world. On a day when beautiful cloud forms are seen, there really seem to be mansions in the sky.

Kings are those who have a great many privileges which they think it best not to exercise.

Those who comment most learnedly on being rich seem to be those who haven't any money. Few millionaires have time to be philosophers.

## Wise and Otherwise

Tell the modern girl she's all the world to you—she'll reduce. Half of the world is keeping secrets—and the other half is trying to find them out.

The breadwinner's biggest worry is a family that wants cake.

The bashful lover is always in hot water when trying to break the ice.

The difference between the moon and the honeymoon is that the latter is fullest only when it is new.

Some people don't care whether they're on top of the world or not, as long as they can keep sitting.

## THE CHEERFUL CHERUB

I like hand-organ music  
And I like green onions  
too.  
So if your not a  
cultured soul  
I'm just the guy  
for you.



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