

The Girl and the Bill

By Bannister Merwin
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS



The joyous moments rushed by. She had crept close to him again, and with her head on his shoulder, was saying: "There is so much for us to tell each other."

"There seems to be only one thing to say now," He kissed her tenderly. "Oh, but there is much more."

"Where shall we begin?" asked Orme.

"Well, to be matter-of-fact, do you live in Chicago?"

"No, dear. I live in New York."

"I didn't even know that," she whispered. "And about me. Our family home has been in one of the suburbs here since I was a small girl. For several years I was sent east to school, and after that I went abroad with some friends. And since then—"

"It can't be so very long," he whispered, "though you speak as though it were decades."

"It is six years. Since then my father and I have spent our winters in the east, coming back home for the summers. Just think how much you are learning about me!"

Orme lifted her hand to his lips. Suddenly the room filled with a light which to their expanded pupils seemed bright as the sun. The door had been opened and an electric light in the reception hall shone in. Framed in the doorway was the outline of a man.

Orme shouted joyfully and jumped to his feet.

"Why—what?" the man began.

Orme helped the girl up, and together they went to the outer light. For a moment they could do nothing



Made Their Way to the Elevator.

but breathe, so good the fresh air of the reception room seemed to them. Then, looking at the man again, Orme saw it was the clerk to whom Alcatrante had made his accusation two hours before.

"How did you come to be in there?" the clerk demanded.

Orme hesitated; then he decided to make no charges. "I got rid of that crazy fellow who was following me around," he said, "and I came back, and this young lady and I went in to examine your refrigerator. The door was ajar, and some one pushed it shut and locked it. We should have smothered if you had not come."

"It was the merest chance," said the clerk. "My work kept me late. As I was leaving, I happened to glance at the thermometer dial here. It registered below freezing. I couldn't understand that, for there is no ice in the refrigerator, so I opened the door to see."

"I broke the coil," explained Orme, "in the hope that the night watchman might be interested in the dial."

"Well," said the clerk, drawing a long breath, "you had a close shave. There isn't any night watchman—at least not in this office. If I had balanced my books on time today, you two would have stayed where you were until tomorrow morning."

"I will come in tomorrow to see Mr. Wallingham and explain everything. I will pay for a new thermometer, too, if he will let me."

"I don't think he will let you do that," said the clerk. "He will be grateful that nothing worse happened."

"Yes, I believe he will," replied Orme.

He glanced at the clock. It was a quarter after seven. Going back into the chamber which had been the scene of both their danger and their happiness, he got his coat and the girl's hat. The parchment papers crackled in his pocket as he put the coat on. The girl meantime, adjusted her hat.

"Say," said the clerk, holding the outer door open for them to pass through, "was that fellow's story about your holding notes of ours—was there anything in it?"

"Absolutely untrue," replied Orme. "He must have had you confused with somebody else."

"He must have," Orme held out his hand. "Many thanks to you for saving

our lives." Then Orme and the girl made their way to the elevator.

CHAPTER XV.

From the Devil to the Deep Sea. "How shall we go?" asked Orme, as they descended to the street level.

"By train. There is no other convenient way, since my car is at home." She looked at him doubtfully, and added, "but they will be watching the railroad stations."

He nodded. "A motor would be safer—if we can get one." He gave her hand a secret pressure while the elevator boy was opening the door for them, and as she passed before him she flashed upon him a look so filled with love and trust that the sudden thrill of his happiness almost stifled him.

At the La Salle street entrance Orme had a fleeting glimpse of the watching Alcatrante. The South American, after one astonished stare, darted away in the dusk. He would follow them, of course, but Orme decided to say nothing about him to the girl.

"I must telephone," she said suddenly, stopping as if to turn back to the building. "Father will be very anxious."

"The booths in the building must be closed," he said. "We'd better try a drug store."

Accordingly they made their way to the nearest, and the girl went to the booth. The door was shut for a long time.

While he was waiting, Orme glanced through the brilliant window. In the light of an electric lamp across the street he discerned faintly a motionless figure; without hesitation he crossed the pavement, recognizing Alcatrante more clearly as he left the dazzle of the store.

The minister did not budge. His face, as Orme approached, was cold and expressionless.

"Senior," exclaimed Orme, "does your trade include murder?"

"Not at all. Why do you ask, Mr. Orme?"

"Because only a lucky intervention has saved you from the murder of a young lady and myself."

"You are exaggerating, my dear sir," Alcatrante laughed.

"Is it your custom to lock people into air-tight chambers?"

"Air-tight?" Alcatrante was clearly disconcerted. "I did not suppose that it was air-tight. Also, I did not dream that the young lady was there. But this game is a serious game, Mr. Orme. You do not appear to understand."

When one is working for his country, many strange things are justified.

"Even murder?"

"Even murder—sometimes." "Thank you for the truth, senior," he said. "I, too, am working for my country. If you continue to follow us, I shall assume that you have murder in your mind, and I shall act accordingly."

Alcatrante smiled coolly.

"This is fair warning," continued Orme.

He glanced to the drug store and saw the girl coming out of the telephone booth. Hastening across the street, he met her at the door.

"If father had had any idea of such complications when we came west," she said, "there would have been plenty of men near by to help us. As it is, we shall have to act alone. It is not a matter for detectives—or for the police. I—I almost wish it were," she faltered.

Orme wondered again whether this father could have realized what dangers the girl was encountering. But, as if divining his sudden anger against the man who could let his daughter run such risks, she added: "He doesn't know, of course, the details of our adventures. I have permitted him to think that it is simply a matter of searching."

"And now he is reassured?"

"Yes. Oh, you have no idea yet how important it is."

"You were a long time in the booth," he said.

A mysterious smile flittered across her face. "I thought of another person I wished to talk to. That person was hard to get."

"Long distance?"

"It proved necessary to use long distance."

Then she caught a glimpse of the figure across the street. "There's Mr. Alcatrante," she exclaimed.

"Yes, I have just had a talk with him."

Her face showed concern.

"Don't let him worry you, dear," he added. "He will try to talk us. We must expect that. But I think I can take care of him."

"I believe it," she said, softly.

He wondered whether she could guess how relentlessly he was planning to deal with Alcatrante. Would

she justify the course he had in mind? As to her attitude, he felt doubtful. Perhaps she did not agree with the South American that murder was sometimes necessary in the service of one's country.

Moreover, while Alcatrante was undoubtedly serving the interest of his country, Orme had no real certainty that he himself was in a similar position. He had every reason to infer that the papers were of importance to the United States government, but after all he could only go by inference.

The affairs of some private corporation in the United States might have a serious bearing on problems in South America and the far east. He decided to sound the girl for information that would be more definite.

But first the question as to their next move must be answered.

"Do you know where we can get a motor?" he said.

"No"—she prolonged the word doubtfully. "We may have to take a motor cab."

"It would be safer than the railroad or the electric line." Then he asked with great seriousness: "Girl, dear, I don't know much about the meaning and value of these papers in my pocket, and I don't care to know any more than you choose to tell me. But let me know just this much: Are they as important to you as they are to our enemies? Have you really been justified in the risks you have run?"

"You have seen how far Alcatrante and the Japanese have been willing to go," she replied, gravely. "I am sure that they would not hesitate to kill us, if it seemed necessary to them in their effort to get possession of the papers. Now, my dear, they are even much more important to my father."

"In his business interests?"

"Much more than that."

They were walking along the glimmering canyon of La Salle street, which was now almost deserted in the dusk. A motor car swept slowly around the corner ahead and came toward them. It had but one occupant, a chauffeur, apparently. He wore a dust-coat, a cap, and goggles which seemed to be too large for him.

Regardless of Alcatrante, who was following them, Orme hailed the chauffeur. "Will you take a fare?" he called.

The man stopped his car and, after a moment of what Orme interpreted as indecision, nodded slowly.

"How much by the hour?" asked Orme.

The chauffeur held up the ten fingers of his two hands.

Orme looked at the girl. He hadn't that much money with him.

"If I only had time to cash a check," he said.

"All right," she whispered. "I have plenty."

They got into the tonneau, and the girl, leaning forward, said: "Take the Lake Shore drive and Sheridan road to Evanston."

Again the chauffeur nodded, without turning toward them.

"He doesn't waste many words," whispered the girl to Orme.

While the car was turning Orme noted that Alcatrante had stopped short and was watching them. It was some reason for surprise that he was not hunting for a motor in which to follow.

Perhaps his plans were so completely balked that he was giving up altogether. No, that would not be like Alcatrante. Orme now realized that in all likelihood the minister had foreseen some such circumstance and had made plans accordingly.

He was more and more inclined to believe that Alcatrante had but half expected to keep him long imprisoned in Wallingham's office. Then what had been the purpose underlying the trick? Probably the intention was to make Orme prisoner for as long a period as possible and, in any event, to gain time enough to communicate with Porfiro and the Japanese and whatever other persons might be helping in the struggle to regain the papers. The probabilities were that Alcatrante had been using the last two hours to get in touch with his friends.

And now those friends would be informed promptly that Orme and the girl were setting out by motor. This analysis apparently accounted for Alcatrante's nonchalance. Orme and the girl seemed to be escaping, but in truth, if they approached their destination at all, they must run into the ambush of other enemies. Then the nearer the goal, the greater the danger.

As the motor slid smoothly northward on La Salle street, Orme looked back. Alcatrante had made no move. The last glimpse that Orme had of him showed that slight but sinister figure alone on the sidewalk of the deserted business street.

They crossed the Clark street bridge. "Keep on out North Clark street until you can cross over to Lincoln park," said Orme to the chauffeur.

The only indication that the order had been heard was a bending forward of the bowed figure on the front seat.

Orme explained to the girl. "It will be better not to take the Lake Shore drive. They may be watching the Pere Marquette."

"You are right," she said. "As a precaution, we'd better not pass the hotel."

"How surprised I was to find you waiting for me there last evening," mused Orme—"and how glad!"

"I never called on a man before," she laughed.

"I had made up my mind only a little while before," he continued, "to stay in Chicago till I found you."

"I'm afraid that would not have been easy." She returned the pressure of his hand, which had found hers. "If it hadn't been for those papers, we might never have met."

"We were bound to meet—wasn't it?"

he said. "I have been waiting all my life just for you."

"But even now you don't know who I am. I may be a—a political adventurer—or a woman detective—or—"

"You may be," he said, "but you are the woman I love. Your name—your business, if you have one—those things don't matter. I know you, and I love you."

She leaned closer to him. "Dear," she whispered impulsively, "I am going to tell you everything—who I am, and about the papers—"

"Wait!" He held his hand before her mouth. "Don't tell me now. Do as you planned to do. Be simply 'Girl' to me for a while longer."

She moved closer to him. Their errand, the danger, were for the time forgotten, and the motor hummed along with a burden of happiness.

"You haven't looked at the papers yet," said Orme, after a time. They were turning east toward Lincoln park.

"Do I need to?"

"Perhaps not. I took them from the envelope which you saw at Arima's. But here they are. I did not look at them, of course."

He drew the parchments from within his coat and placed them in her hand.

While she examined them, he looked straight ahead, that he might not see. He could hear them crackle as she unfolded them—could hear her sigh of content.

And then something occurred that disquieted him to a degree which seemed unwarranted. The chauffeur suddenly turned around and glanced swiftly through his goggles at the girl and the papers. The action was, perhaps, natural; but there was an assured expectancy in the way he turned—Orme did not like it. Moreover,

search for the hidden papers. "We'd better give him further directions," said the girl.

But the chauffeur turned north at the corner and put on more speed.

"He's taking the right direction," she laughed. "Perhaps his idea is to follow Sheridan road till we tell him to turn."

"I don't quite like it," said Orme, thoughtfully. "He's a bit too sure of what he's doing."

The girl hesitated. "It is funny," she exclaimed. "And he's going faster, too." She leaned forward and called up to the chauffeur: "Stop at this corner."

He did not seem to hear. She repeated the order in a louder voice, but the only answer was another burst of speed.

Then Orme reached up and touched the chauffeur's shoulders. "Stop the car!" he cried.

The chauffeur did not obey. He did not even turn his head.

Orme and the girl looked at each other. "I don't understand," she said. "I'm afraid I am beginning to," Orme replied. "He will not stop until we are where he wishes us to be."

"We can't get out," she exclaimed. "No. And if I pull him out of the seat, the car will be ditched." He puzzled vainly to hit on a method of action, and meantime the moments sped.

They passed the university grounds quickly. Orme retained an impression of occasional massive buildings at the right, including the dome of an observatory, and at the left the lighted windows of dwellings.

He saw, too, the tower of a lighthouse, a dark foundation supporting a changing light above; and then the road turned sharply to the left and, after a few hundred yards, curved again to the north.

Suddenly the chauffeur slowed down. On either side were groves of trees. Ahead were the lights of an approaching motor.

Orme was still at a loss, and the girl was awaiting some decision from him. When the chauffeur at last turned and spoke—three short words—Orme realized too late the situation he and the girl were in.

"We stop now," said the chauffeur. And the girl, with a horrified gasp, exclaimed: "Maku!"

Yes, it was the Japanese. Calmly he put on the brakes and brought the car to a standstill by the roadside; then, removing his goggles, turned to Orme and the girl and smiled an inscrutable smile. There was an ugly bruise on his forehead, where Orme had struck him with the wrench.

But quick though Maku was, he was not quick enough to see a motion which Orme had made immediately after the moment of recognition—a motion which had even escaped the notice of the girl. Perhaps it accounted for the coolness with which Orme met his enemy's eyes.

To be continued.

REPORT OF THE CONDITION OF THE Bank of Cass County, of Plattsmouth, Nebraska.

Charter No. 642, Incorporated in the state of Nebraska, at the close of business February 17, 1911.

RESOURCES

Loans and discounts.....\$32,710 30
Overdrafts, secured and unsecured..... 2,329 27
Bonds, securities, judgments, claims, etc..... 1,000 00
Banking house furniture and fixtures..... 9,300 00
Real estate other than banking house..... 4,385 55
Current expenses and taxes paid..... 647 40
Cash items..... 132 41
Due from nat'l, state and private banks..... 53,142 43
Checks and items of exchange..... 111 23
Currency..... 7,025 00
Gold coin..... 9,910 00
Silver, nickels and cents..... 2,087 94
Total.....\$102,069 21

LIABILITIES

Capital stock paid in.....\$50,000 00
Surplus fund..... 30,000 00
Undivided profits..... 3,449 21
Individual deposits subject to check..... 122,902 79
Time certificates of deposit..... 161,445 70
Cashier's checks outstanding..... 4,854 18
Due to other national, state and private banks..... 5,377 33
Notes and bills re-discounted..... 23,000 00
Total.....\$402,069 21

STATE OF NEBRASKA, ss I, T. M. Patterson, Cashier of the above named bank do hereby swear that the above statement is correct and a true copy of the report made to the State Banking Board. T. M. PATTERSON.

Attest: CHAS. C. PARMELE, Director, Subscribed and sworn to before me this 21st day of February, 1911. ZETTA BLAWS, Notary Public. Seal My commission expires Mar. 12th, 1915.

A FORMER PIONEER CITIZEN VISITS HERE

From Tuesday's Daily

Mr. A. M. Story of Bisbee, Arizona, and wife, who have been visiting Mr. Story's brother-in-law, L. H. Oldham, and family, for a few days at Murray, accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Oldham to Plattsmouth today and dined with Mrs. Dora Moore. Mr. Story was one of the pioneer settlers of Rock Bluff, going there with his parents in 1858; he was also a member of the Second Nebraska regiment during the civil war. Mr. Story has been a resident of Arizona for some years, but occasionally gets back to visit his old-time friends.

Blair Porter came up from Union this morning to look after some business matters, and was a caller at Journal headquarters. Mr. Porter recently sold his farm two miles south of Union, in Otoe county, and will soon move to the one he bought one mile west of Union.

QUIET AND PLEASANT HOME WEDDING

Miss Ida Egenberger and Mr. Emil Baumgart United in the Holy Bonds of Matrimony.

From Wednesday's Daily.

At the pleasant home of the bride's mother, Mrs. J. V. Egenberger, on South Sixth street, this afternoon at 3 o'clock occurred the marriage of Miss Ida Egenberger and Mr. Emil Baumgart. The ceremony was performed by Canon Burgess, rector of St. Luke's church.

The wedding was a quiet one, the guests including only the immediate relatives of the contracting parties. The ring form of the ceremony was observed, the wedding march was played by the bride's sister, Miss Florence Egenberger. The bride was gowned in a traveling suit with hat to match, while the groom wore the conventional black, and the happy couple were unattended.

The rooms were tastefully decorated with roses and carnations throughout, and potted plants located here and there, which presented a beautiful appearance.

A bounteous dinner was served at 4 o'clock, the table groaning with palatable viands and delectable dishes; cake and fruits in abundance were served. The happy young people departed on the north bound Missouri Pacific train for a ten days' trip.

This popular young couple have hosts of friends in this vicinity and throughout the country, who will be more than pleased at the announcement of these nuptials. The bride is the charming daughter of Mrs. J. V. Egenberger and possesses a legion of friends in the city. She is a native of Plattsmouth, having grown up here, attending the public school, at which she graduated with honors three years ago, and has taught since in the schools of the county, giving very excellent satisfaction where she could be prevailed upon to take a school.

The groom is a prosperous young farmer and a son of Mr. Fred Baumgart and wife of this county, and has a large circle of acquaintances and friends throughout the county, in whose estimation he stands very high.

On their return Mr. and Mrs. Baumgart will reside on a farm four and a half miles west of this city, where they will be at home to their numerous friends.

The Journal joins with their large circle of friends in wishing Mr. and Mrs. Baumgart much happiness in their journey through life.

CUPID IS FOILED BY THE LACK OF SPECIE

The Omaha Evening News of Tuesday contained the following:

"Luckless but loving swains, two in number, who sought marriage licenses in the office of the county judge Saturday came down to earth with a d. s. thud that shattered their roseate vision of vine clad cottages and all that sort of thing when they were called upon to pay the \$2 license fee that the unsentimental state requires."

"Neither swain had sufficient specie to induce Clerk Greer to part with the little baby blue slip which is so essential a thing if a man would take the leap in Douglas county."

"The wife-to-be of one went to the front for him and from her purse made up the deficiency of his own exchequer. The other was less fortunate and he, with his bride-to-be, was-to-have-been and the maybe-will-yet, left the court house licenseless."

"Ross Collins of Bellevue, aged 23 years, and Miss Bertha Augustus Kaufman of Plattsmouth, just turned 19 years, answered satisfactorily all questions regarding their legal competency to wed. The license was made out. Two dollars, please," said Mr. Greer. Well, it was just awful. Mr. Collins said he was under the impression the fee was \$1 and that was all he had with him. Mr. Greer called in County Judge Leslie to bear him out in the statement that \$2 and not a cent less was the price. "A sadder but wiser couple, then, left the county building. This noon the Collins-Kaufman license still is unclaimed."

Considers Proposition to Move.

Don Despin, a former Plattsmouth boy, now owner of the Lincoln ball team, has been offered \$14,000 bonus to remove the team to Oklahoma City. Don is to retain ownership of the team and conduct its affairs just the same as before, and only change the location of the team's home.

Mr. John Gorder drove in from the farm today and looked after business matters in the city for a time.