

## Perseverance's Pluck

By EDITH SESSIONS TUPPER.

"A police detective," repeated Perseverance. "How kind he was and what a lesson I've learned."

Her spirits rebounded from the effect of her recent unpleasant experience, and she hurried on to the door of the Young Women's Christian association. She stated her errand to the hallboy, who said listlessly, "Fifth story," and Perseverance took her first ride in an elevator.

She was received by a woman of uncertain years and cold, stern face, who, after hearing her story, asked:

"Are you a Protestant?"

"I suppose so," Perseverance said, "though I've never joined any church."

The woman shook her head dubiously and continued:

"Then it's quite useless to ask if you have a reference from your pastor."

"No," the girl said sadly. "I didn't know it was necessary."

"I'm very sorry," said the other, "but our rules are imperative. We cannot receive any girls or women without a reference."

Perseverance thought of the street and the great city with positive terror. She began to realize what the relentlessness of the big town meant, and a sense of utter helplessness rushed over her. She turned mechanically to go.

"Don't you think we might stretch the rules a trifle in this case?" said a sweet voice. "The child looks tired out. I really do not think we should send her away. She is quite at the mercy of unprincipled people, as she is so utterly a stranger."

Perseverance looked at the speaker. She was a beautiful woman of about 30, with a strong, sweet face. Her gown was plain, but fitted her marvelously. Her only ornaments were a cluster of violets, whose breath came to the girl like a waft from the south meadow of her father's farm, and a little silver cross that gleamed on her breast.

"Poor child," went on the gracious speaker, and coming over she passed an arm about Perseverance, who at those words did what every other good girl would do under the same conditions—burst into a passion of tears.

"Hush, hush, dear," said the gentle lady. "There, you are tired out. Come with me. You shall have a room for to-day and tonight at all events. Tomorrow we will talk matters over."

And soothing the girl, she led her along cool, dim corridors to a little room immaculate and sweet. Here she removed Perseverance's hat and set the cold water running so that she might bathe her flushed face.

"Now lie down, dear, and rest," were her parting words, and this daughter of the King went softly out and closed the door behind her.

Perseverance glanced about the pretty room with its dainty belongings and furnishings. She read these words on a little satin banner:

Sleep sweet within this quiet room—  
O thou, who'er thou art—  
And let no mournful yesterday  
Disturb thy quiet heart.  
Nor let tomorrow's cares thy rest  
With dreams of coming ill.  
Thy Maker is thy changeless friend—  
His love surrounds thee still.

From far below rose the muffled roar of the great city's traffic. The bed seemed singularly soft. Into the downy pillows the peachy cheek pressed. Down dropped the tired eyelids, and into the girl's sleep crept dreams of two angels—one with a silver cross gleaming on her breast and scattering the perfume of violets as she walked; the other, a keen-eyed, sharp-faced angel, who whispered in her drowsy ear that he was "a police detective."

Perseverance's heart was beating with excitement as she rang the bell at a modest apartment house up town. It was three days since she came into New York friendless, alone, but full of enthusiasm and ambition to make her way. Nor was she disconcerted by her distressing experience. Perseverance told the whole story to the lovely and gracious lady at the home, where she had been allowed to remain until she

"Ever done any work?"

might find employment. Mrs. Vincent listened in amaze and at its close kissed her tenderly and said:

"Thank heaven, dear, that good man changed to be near."

"But who was he?" Perseverance asked. "He said he was a police detective."

"A detective, dear, on the staff of the great police force of the city. If it were not for these brave men and for the daily press the city would be far more wicked than it is."

"The daily press," Perseverance said slowly. "Mrs. Vincent, I fear you will laugh at me, but I have always wanted to write for the papers. Do you think I could get anything to do in that line?"

"I fancy that most ambitious women have at some time or other the craving to write," the lady answered gently. "It, however, is a very hard life! As I am told by friends in journalism, but I will send you to a newspaper woman I know and ask her to advise you in the matter."

Armed with a letter of introduction to Mrs. Katharine Terry-Town, Perseverance rang her bell one sultry August morning. She followed the janitor up the stairs, as she felt quite inadequate to wrestle alone with the mysteries of an apartment house. Another bell was rung, and a smart, white-capped maid ushered her into a little drawing room, so curious in its appointments that Perseverance's eyes opened very wide indeed. The girl did not know what to make of the extraordinary jumble of bric-a-brac, the sketches in black and white, the thousand and one pictures of prominent actors, actresses and singers crowding the wall. She simply stared in undisguised amazement until Mrs. Terry-Town came trailing in in a black silk Josephine gown. She was a woman in whose face was a curious mingling of kindness and disdain. Tears and smiles met in her eyes. Sometimes the full lips laughed voluptuously; again they took on a pathetic little droop. Perseverance studied her face intently and compared it with the incipidity of Mrs. Verplanck's countenance and the seriousness and spirituality of Mrs. Vincent's features. It was quite another type, and an idea flashed in Perseverance's queer little head that this woman was not very happy, that she had missed something in life.

Mrs. Terry-Town read Mrs. Vincent's note and then said kindly:

"I shall be very glad to help you in any way I can, but first you must let me ask you a few questions. Do not be alarmed. They will be quite different from any asked you at the home. I shall not bother about your religion or references. How did you come to think you could do newspaper work?"

"I have read of the success of so many women in this line," Perseverance answered. "I thought what others have done I might do."

"You have read of these startling successes in country newspapers, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"I thought so," rather contemptuously, and Mrs. Terry-Town muttered something about "imbecile correspondents" which Perseverance did not understand.

"Have you ever written anything for publication?" was the next question.

"I wrote one piece for our home paper, and every one seemed to like it," said Perseverance simply.

Mrs. Terry-Town smiled, but it was a sad little smile.

"You must not say 'wrote a piece,' but 'wrote a story,'" she said very gently.

"But this wasn't a story," said Perseverance; "it was more like an essay."

"Never mind. In newspaper offices everything is a story, from an account of a railway accident to a paragraph about a strawberry festival."

"That's queer," said Perseverance.

"Yes, my child, there's a lot of queer things," said the lady enigmatically.

"Now, another question. Do you think you can endure having your heart broken regularly every day for the next ten years?"

"Why, what a strange question! Why do you ask that?"

"Because it's a heartbreaking business. If I were to advise you according to my judgment, I should say take the next train back to the old farm and the little red schoolhouse and never dream of the newspapers or New York again. But you wouldn't do it. You've got the fever like many others, and you'll have to try it. You will go through the same round of disappointment, disillusion and dreary waiting. You will drag through snow and rain, wind and hail, to earn a few dollars here and a few there. You will have doors shut in your face by people your inferiors in every way. You will put your best and most conscientious labor on a piece of work only to have it returned, 'declined with thanks.' You will go on day after day living in feverish hope that good luck is coming this week. You will see other women less brainy, less capable than yourself succeed where you do not, and every night you will heartily wish you were dead. And you ask me to help you to all this, and I'm going to do it."

This strange woman dipped her pen in the silver inkstand and scrawled a hasty note.

"Take this," she said, "to The Cyclone office. Ask for the city editor's room. Wear your best clothes, and don't tell him you are a novice. If he asks you if you've done any work, say 'a little.' That's not a lie. If he gives you an assignment, take it and may God have mercy on you," she concluded with a laugh.

"Oh, thank you," began Perseverance.

"Don't thank me," was the quick answer. "If you get an order and don't know how to fill it, come back to me and I'll help you out. Goodbye! And Perseverance was gracefully bowed out.

Next morning she climbed the stairs to The Cyclone office, and after waiting 1 hour and 45 minutes was at last shown into the presence of the city editor of that paper, a nervous, fussy man, with a cold glance and irreproachable clothes. He gave one look at the contrived costume of the pretty girl, which evidently enlightened her as to its shortcomings. However, she bravely met his glance and stated her errand as briefly as possible.

"Ever done any work?" The question was barked at her like the explosion of a toy cannon.

"A little," was the quaking answer. "Well, do you think you could write a story about an opium joint?"

Perseverance was staggered.

"I would try," she said timidly, thinking that Mrs. Terry-Town would probably tell her what a joint was.

"We want a rattling good story about a joint; scenes and incidents; describe the people you see, the process of hitting the pipe, etc. Of course you can't go alone. Be here at 9 o'clock tonight, and I'll send a reporter with you. If you make a good story of this, I will put you on the staff, good morning."

"An opium joint?" cried Mrs. Terry-Town in disgust. "Well, I think it out-

rageous of that odious little beast to send a girl like you on an assignment of that sort. However, if he wishes to sicken you of journalism first off, I'll forgive him." The lady went on to explain the character of the mission Perseverance was to essay. The girl grew pale as she proceeded.

"Is all newspaper work like that?" she asked sorrowfully.

"Oh, no. Some of it is very delightful and entertaining. But you can't pick and choose. You must take what comes, for if you refuse there are a dozen waiting to snap at the morsel. The indispensable woman journalist has not yet appeared on earth," continued Mrs. Terry-Town cynically. "Take this assignment. Write the story just as you would tell it. Make it as pathetic and dramatic and as simple as possible. Of course you will be well protected. The reporter will explain everything to you. Don't ask him too many questions, and he will never dream how unsophisticated you are."

At 9 o'clock Perseverance tapped at the city editor's door.

"Come in," somebody yelled. Perseverance entered.

A very good looking young man, with a soft, curly, blond bang hanging over his broad brow, with big, frank, fearless eyes, and as clean shaven as a priest, was the only occupant of the room. He jumped up as she entered and said:

"I fancy you're the young lady I'm waiting for. Joint stuff, isn't it?"

"Joint stuff," echoed Perseverance. Then seeing a look of merriment coming in the blue eyes she hastened to add:

"Yes, I suppose so. At least I was told to visit a joint this evening and write it up."

"I'll be hanged," Dunning said afterward, "if she didn't say it as calmly as if it was a flower show or a prize baby contest. I liked her pluck, I want you to remember."

Perseverance's first assignment was one never to be forgotten. The foul and depraved sights she witnessed nauseated and frightened her beyond measure. Her escort was kindness itself and protected the girl with as splendidly a patronizing air as did Pendennis the pretty Fanny Bolton at Vauxhall.

"Bring your copy in early tomorrow," he said as he bade Perseverance good night at Mrs. Terry-Town's door, for it had been arranged she should sleep there that night lest her tardy coming should undermine the foundations of the home, as its rules for reasonable retiring were absolute.

"What did he mean by copy?" Perseverance asked her mentor, who in charming dishabille received her. "Must I make an extra copy of this nasty stuff?"

Mrs. Terry-Town shrieked with laughter. "Oh, you adorable little goose," she cried, "copy is the stuff, material, article, story, piece, you would call it. But, tell me, how do you like the newspaper business?"

"It was a dreadful evening. The only pleasant memory will be Mr. Dunning's kindness," said the girl shyly.

Mrs. Terry-Town looked at her thoughtfully a moment. Then a soft smile leaped in her eyes.

"Yes, he is a nice chap," she said. "But come, go to bed, dear."

For six months Perseverance tried her hand at newspaper work. Thanks to Mrs. Terry-Town, who looked after her, giving her points and tips on the routine, technique and vernacular of the newspaper office, the girl made no serious breaks. She made friends in the office, was looked upon as "a nice little girl" and got on very well with "the boys," especially with Harold Dunning, the young reporter who had accompanied her on her first assignment. Dunning, who had the face of an angel, was yet an experienced and sophisticated youth. He had come to The Cyclone from the staff of a western newspaper, and the metropolitan work he had done had been marked with originality and a breezy vigor which had speedily attracted attention. The boy had received so much flattery and praise that it was small wonder his head had been turned a bit or that he counted himself quite irresistible. In spite of all these adolescent characteristics, he was a good fellow at heart and possessed both sense and discrimination. He could not fail to admire the pluck of this little country girl who had struck out so bravely for herself. Something of her history was made known to him by Mrs. Terry-Town. The rest he drew from her bit by bit. Sympathy stirred the crust of cynicism which this youngster had tried to form over his naturally kind heart, and we all know to what sympathy between a handsome young man and a lovable girl is liable to lead.

Dunning fell in love with pretty, plucky Perseverance. He had, however, all the end of two century ideas and fancied he could not marry until he had money enough to give his wife the luxuries which his own sylphlike nature demanded. So he drifted along, seeing the girl as often as he could, keeping a watchful eye on her, helping her in her work and making himself as much as possible a feature of her life.

A new world had opened to the simple country girl—a world which fascinated her with its picturesque and feverish life. She plunged into this existence heart and soul. The daily assignments which sent her one day to a poverty stricken tenement, the next to the luxurious rooms of a pet of the mimic world, she accepted with absolute relish.

Mrs. Terry-Town, her guide, philosopher and friend, looked on with a languid interest. "It's new to her, poor child!" she said to herself. "She's just smelling printer's ink and thinking it's the odor of roses. Only another illusion! Ha! How she'll hate it one of these days!"

Mrs. Terry-Town was not slow to see Dunning's admiration for Perseverance and did all in her power to promote the affair. "She's too pretty and too innocent to be knocking about the world," said that lady to Dunning one day. "Why don't you marry her and take her out of this feverish existence? You

know perfectly well that one of these days she will get a blow that will stagger her and smash all her fine airy castles. Why not save her from it?"

"I would if I had any money," said Dunning savagely.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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The law passed by our legislature last winter, having for its purpose a reasonable regulation of the stock yard business of the state, should have gone into effect Friday the 9th. But, like the maximum freight rate law, it is now hung up in the United States court and the chances are another legislature will come and go before the corporations will permit a decision to be had. When the republican politicians and their gold bug democratic allies fail to "do" the farmers at the polls and in the legislative halls, all they have to do is to go into the supreme courts and the federal courts and from those places of refuge they have succeeded in laughing ordinary people to scorn.—Platte County Argus.

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