

FRAN

BY

JOHN BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

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SYNOPSIS.

Fran arrives at Hamilton. Gregory's home in Littleburg, but finds him absent conducting the choir at a camp meeting. She repairs thither in search of him, laughs during the service and is asked to leave. Abbott Ashton, superintendent of schools, escorts Fran from the tent. He tells her Gregory is a wealthy man, deeply interested in charity work, and a pillar of the church. Ashton becomes greatly interested in Fran and while taking leave of her, holds her hand and is seen by Sapphira Clinton, sister of Robert Clinton, chairman of the school board. Fran tells Gregory she wants to come with him. Grace Noir, Gregory's private secretary, takes a violent dislike to Fran and advises her to go away at once. Fran hints at a twenty-year-old secret, and Gregory in agitation asks Grace to leave the room. Fran relates the story of how Gregory married a young girl at Springfield while attending college and then deserted her. Fran is the child of that marriage. Gregory had married his present wife three years before the death of Fran's mother. Fran explains that Fran is the daughter of a very dear friend who is dead. Fran agrees to the story. Mrs. Gregory insists on her making her home with them and takes her to her arms. It is decided that Fran must go to school. Grace shows persistent interest in Gregory's story of his dead friend and hints that Fran may be an impostor. Fran declares that the secretary must go. Grace begins to cry. Fran agrees to let her drive Fran from the Gregory home, but Mrs. Gregory remains stanch in her friendship. Fran is escorted by the Superintendent Ashton to be punished for insubordination in school. Chairman Clinton is present. The affair ends in Fran leaving the school in company of the two men to the amazement of the scandal-mongers of the town. Abbott, while taking a walk alone at midnight, finds Fran on a bridge telling her fortune by cards. She tells Abbott that she is the famous lion tamer, Fran Nonpareil. She tired of circus life and sought a home.

Monizetti, and she persuaded mother to wait with her for the season to open up, then go with Bounder Brothers; they were wintering in Chicago. It was such a kind of life as mother had never dreamed of, but it was more convenient than starving, and she thought it would give her a chance to find father—that traveling, all over the country. La Gontzetti was a lion-tamer, and that's what mother learned, and those two were the ones who could go inside Samson's cage. The life was awfully hard, but she got to like it, and everybody was kind to us, and money came pouring in, and she was always hoping to run across a clue to my father—and never did.

"She paused, but at the pressure of Abbott's sympathetic hand, she went on with renewed courage:

"When I was big enough, I wore a tiny black skirt, and a red coat with shiny buttons, and I beat the drum in the carnival band. You ought to have seen me—so little. . . . Abbott, you can't imagine how little I was! We had about a dozen small shows in our company, fortune-tellers, minstrels, magic wonders, and all that—and the band had to march from one tent to the next, and stand out in front and play, to get the crowd in a bunch, so the free exhibition could work on their nerves. And I'd beat away, in my red coat . . . and there were always the strange faces, staring, staring—but I was so little! Sometimes they would smile at me, but mother had taught me never to speak to anyone. I had to wear a glazed look like this—"

"How frightfully cold!" Abbott shivered. Then he laughed, and so did Fran. They had entered Littleburg. He added wickedly: "And how dreadfully near we are getting to your home."

Fran gurgled. "Wouldn't Grace Noir just die if she could see us!"

That sobered Abbott; considering his official position, it seemed high time for reflection.

Fran resumed abruptly. "But I never really liked it because what I wanted was a home—to belong to somebody. Then I got to hating the bold stare of people's eyes, and their foolish gaping mouths, I hated being always on exhibition with every gesture watched, as if I'd been one of the trained dogs. I hated the public. I wanted to get away from the world—clear away from everybody . . . like I am now . . . with you. Isn't it great!"

"Mammoth!" Abbott declared, watering her words with liberal imagination.

"I must talk fast, or the Gregory house will be looming up at us. Mother taught me all she knew, though she hated books; she made herself think she was only in the show life till she could make a little more—always just a little more—she really loved it, you see. But I loved the books; study—anything that wasn't the show. It was kind of friendly when I began feeding Samson."

"Poor little Nonpareil!" murmured Abbott wistfully.

"And often when the show was being unlofted, I'd be stretched out in my sleeper, with a school book pressed close to the cinder-spoked window, catching the first light. When the mauls were pounding away at the tent-poles, maybe I'd hunt a seat on some cage, if it had been drawn up under a tree, or maybe it'd be the ticket wagon, or even the stake pile—there you'd see me studying away for dear life, dressed in a plain little dress, trying to look like ordinary folks. Such a queer little chap, I was—and always trying to pretend that I wasn't! You'd have laughed to see me."

"Laughed at you!" cried Abbott indignantly. "Indeed I shouldn't."

"No?" exclaimed Fran, patting his arm impulsively.

"Dear little wonder!" he returned conclusively.

"I must tell you about one time," she continued gaily. "We were in New Orleans at the Mardi Gras, and I was expected to come into the ring riding Samson—not the vicious old lion, but the cub—that was long after my days of the drum and the red coat, bless you! I was a lion-tamer, now, nearly thirty-

teen years old, if you'll believe me. Well! And what was I saying—you keep looking so friendly, you make me forget myself. Goodness, Abbott, it's so much fun talking to you . . . I've never mentioned all this to one soul in this town . . . Well—oh, yes; I was to have come into the ring, riding Samson. Everybody was waiting for me. The band nearly blew itself black in the face. And what do you think was the matter?"

"Did Samson balk?"

"No, it wasn't that. I was lying on the cage floor, with my head on Samson—Samson the Second made such a gorgeous and animated pillow!—and I was learning geology. I'd just found out that the world wasn't made in seven United States days, and it was such surprising news that I'd forgotten all about cages and lions and tents—if you could have seen me lying there—if you just could!"

"But I can!" Abbott declared. "Your long black hair is mingled with his tawny mane, and your cheeks are blooming—"

"And my feet are crossed," cried Fran.

"And your feet are crossed; and those little hands hold up the book." Abbott swiftly sketched in the details; and your bosom is rising and falling, and your lips are parted—like now—showing pretty teeth—"

"Dressed in my tights and fluffy lace and jewels," Fran helped, "with bare arms and stars all in my hair . . . But the end came to everything when—when mother died. Her last words were about my father—how she hoped some day I'd meet him, and tell him she had forgiven. Mother sent me to her half-uncle. My! but that was mighty unpleasant!" Fran shook her head vigorously. "He began telling me about how mother had done wrong in marrying secretly, and he threw it up to me and I just told him . . . But he's dead, now. I had to go back to the show—there wasn't any other place. But a few months ago I was of age, and I came into Uncle Ephraim's property, because I was the only living relation he had, so he couldn't help my getting it. I'll bet he's mad, now, that he didn't make a will! When he said that mother—it don't matter what he said—I just walked out of his door, that time, with my head up high like this . . . Oh, goodness, we're here."

They stood before Hamilton Gregory's silent house.

"Good night," Fran said hastily. "It's a mistake to begin a long story on a short road. My! But wasn't that a short road, though!"

"Sometime you shall finish that story, Fran. I know of a road, much longer than the one we've taken—we might try it some day, if you say so."

"I do say so. What road is it?"

Abbott had spoken of a long road without definite purpose, yet there was a glimmering perception of the reality, as he showed by saying tremulously: "This is the beginning of it—"

"He bent down, as if to take her in his arms. But Fran drew back, perhaps with a blush that the darkness concealed, certainly with a little laugh. "I'm afraid I'd get lost on that road," she murmured, "for I don't believe you know the way very well, yourself."

"She sped lightly to the house, unlocked the door, and vanished."

CHAPTER XII.

Grace Captures the Outposts.

The next evening there was choir practice at the Walnut Street church. Abbott Ashton, hesitating to make his nightly plunge into the dust-clouds of learning, paused in the vestibule to take a peep at Grace. He knew she never missed a choir practice, for though she could neither sing nor play the organ, she thought it her duty to set an example of regular attendance that might be the means of bringing those who could do one or the other.

Abbott was not disappointed; but he was surprised to see Mrs. Jefferson in her wheel-chair at the end of the pew occupied by the secretary, while between them sat Mrs. Gregory. His surprise became astonishment on discovering Fran and Simon Jefferson in the choir loft, slyly whispering and nib-

CHAPTER XI.—Continued.

As he looked into her eyes, all sense of the abnormal disappeared. "I have the imagination, Fran," he exclaimed impulsively, "if it is your life."

"In spite of the lions?" she asked, almost sternly.

"You needn't tell me a word," Abbott said. "I know that one need know; it's written in your face, a story of sweet innocence and brave patience."

"But I want you to know."

"Good!" he replied with a sudden smile. "Tell the story, then; if you were an Odysseus, you couldn't be too long."

"The first thing I remember is waking up to feel the car jerked, or stopped, or started and seeing lights flash past the windows—lanterns of the brakemen, or lamps of some town, dancing along the track. The sleeping car was home—the only home I knew. All night long there was the groaning of the wheels, the letting off of steam, the calls of the men. Bounder Brothers had their private train, and mother and I lived in our Pullman car. After a while I knew that folks started at us because we were different from oth-



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ers. We were show-people. Then the thing was to look like you didn't know, or didn't care, how much people stared. After that, I found out that I had no father; he'd deserted mother, and her uncle had turned her out of doors for marrying against his wishes, and she'd have starved if it hadn't been for the show-people."

"Dear Fran!" whispered Abbott tenderly.

"Mother had gone to Chicago, hoping for a position in some respectable office, but they didn't want a typewriter who wasn't a stenographer. It was winter—and mother had me—I was so little and bad! In a cheap lodging house, mother got to know La-

PETRIEFED FALLS IN ALGERIA

Remarkable Mineral Formation Which Puzzles Scientists Called "The Bath of the Damned."

With all the beauty of a cataract of living water, there is in Algeria a remarkable petrified waterfall which recently has been engaging the attention of scientists.

This is the Hammam-Meskutin, which means "The Bath of the Damned," and is located 62 miles from Constantine, on the site of the ancient town of Cirta. This solidified cascade is the production of calcareous deposits from sulphurous and ferruginous mineral springs, issuing from the depths of the earth at a temperature of 95 degrees Centigrade.

"The Bath of the Damned," even from a near viewpoint, looks for all the world like a great wall of water dashing into a swirling pool at its foot, yet its gleaming, graceful curves and the apparently swirling eddies at its base are as fixed and immovable as if carved from the face of a granite cliff.

Many centuries have, of course, gone to the making of the deposits, and the springs were well known to the ancient Romans. The name Hammam-Meskutin was given to the stone cataract in an allusion to a legend that the waterfall was petrified by Allah, punishing the impiety of unbelievers by turning all the members of a tribe into stone. At night, so the story runs, its stone dwellers of the remote past are freed from their strange fetters, come to life and resume their normal shapes.

More Treasures Leave England.

One of the best preserved masterpieces of Elizabethan interior decoration in England is doomed to be dismantled in order to adorn the mansion of some American magnate. A West End firm has acquired, lock, stock and barrel, the Elizabethan building, with its Queen Anne additions, known as Rotherwas, the seat of the Bodenham family, situated about two and a half miles from Hereford. The mansion had descended in unbroken line from George Bodenham, who lived in the reign of

Henry I. to Count Lubinski Bodenham, who died last year. The superb panelling—Elizabethan, Jacobean and Queen Anne—of thirteen of the apartments is now to be taken to New York. Rotherwas is mentioned in Domesday Book.—London Globe.

Age and Celebrity.

"In a few days," says a letter in a Vienna paper, "Adelina Patti, born in Madrid of Italian parents, will reach the age of seventy. Since her seventh years, when she made her first appearance on the concert stage, she has been known the world over, and although she is now the Baroness Cederstrom we know her still as Patti. She was only a little girl when, in 1859, she appeared in 'Lucia di Lammermoor,' and as Rosina in 'The Barber,' but she never, in the course of her long stage career, received greater applause than she did on those occasions. I heard her when she came to Vienna for the first time, in 1863. I remember it so well, and also my enthusiasm, that it seems difficult to think of the singer as seventy years old—except when I look in the mirror.

HAD NO DELUSIONS AT ALL

Sweet Angelina Did Not Give the Sweet Response Henry So Ardently Expected.

Love's young dream is indeed a beautiful thing. Sweet Angelina and Henry thought it hardly possible such bliss could be theirs as they sat on the river bank in the cool of an August evening.

They met only at week-ends, for he was a toiler in the city, and he found it cheaper to lodge near his work.

And now the blessed week-end spent at home was here, and he could see nothing but uninterrupted happiness till Monday morning. He slipped his arm round his sweetheart's waist.

"Dearest!" he said.

"Darling!" he murmured again, drawing her towards him. "Can you guess why I come home every Saturday?"

"Yes," was the scarcely whispered answer.

"What is it, dearest?" he asked,

anxiously waiting for the sweet reply that he felt sure must be hovering on those pretty lips.

"It's—it's for your clean clothes, isn't it?" she queried softly.

Turkish Slaves.

Abdul Hamid's view that the slave in a Turkish household is much better off than a servant girl is fully supported by Mr. Duckett Ferriman in "Turkey and the Turks." The chief points urged are that the owner is responsible for the slave's maintenance and cannot turn her adrift, that she is treated as one of the family, has light duties, and is taught accomplishments, and that she has chances of a rich marriage. An Englishwoman, governess and companion in a house on the Bosphorus, was asked by some English visitors who were the charmingly dressed girls they saw. "Servants," she said, meaning to spare the girls' feelings. But when the visitors had gone the girls bitterly reproached her for "shaming" them. "You are a servant. You are paid, we are not. We are slaves, not servants. Why did you tell a falsehood to shame us?"

It was as if Abbott had suddenly raised a window in a raw wind. His temperature descended. The other's manner of saying "That Fran!" obscured his glass of the future.

Mrs. Gregory said quickly, "Fran leave the house at half-past eleven," impossible.

"How do you know," Abbott asked, "that Fran left the house at such a time of the night?" The question was unfair since it suggested denial, but his feeling for Fran seemed to call for unfairness to Grace.

"I will tell you," Grace responded, with the distinctness of one in power. "At the time, I told myself that even Fran would not do that. But, a long time afterward, I heard another sound,

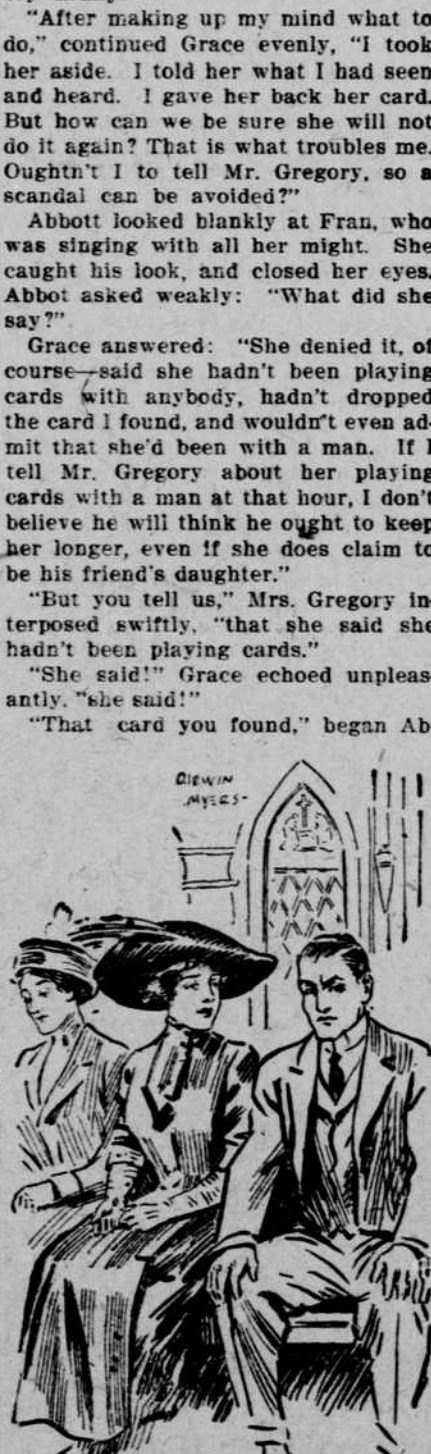
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Origin of the Hall Mark.

The name of hall mark derives from the ancient monopoly of Goldsmith's Hall in establishing the standard of gold and silver articles. In the present time the marks are more commonly known as place marks. These are in four items, a mark designating standard or quality, one indicating the office at which the assay was made, the mark indicating the year of assay and the private mark of the manufacturer. So important are these marks on old plate that there has arisen a knavish industry of cutting out old marks from insignificant old pieces and embedding them bodily in modern fabrications. The more recent work on the subject is Chaffer's "Handbook to Hall Marks on Gold and Silver Plate," which makes it quite easy to read the record ciphered in these signs.

Only Three Classes of Cheese.

Not less than 156 distinct kinds of cheese made in Europe and America were described many years ago, but the slight variations of these kinds are almost innumerable. In a new work, Prof. H. H. Wing of Cornell university roughly divides the many kinds into three general classes. These owe their leading characteristics to: (1) the amount of water removed, giving hard and soft cheeses; (2) the addition or subtraction of fat in the form of cream, and (3) the peculiar germs of fermentation, which give rise to the multitude of flavors.

Close Shave at That.

Jack—So the doctor said you had tobacco heart. Have you told your fiancée?

Tom—Yes, and she's given me the marble one.

Oh, My, Yes!

Griggs—I hate to play poker with a hard loser.

Driggs—It's a handed sign better than playing it with an easy winner.

Defined.

"What's a coquette?"

"The girl you can't get."

Two is company, but three is a multitude when father butts in.

Strange.

Strange things happen. The other evening we were kept awake for an hour or so by two men arguing a certain question and for once the man with the loud voice was right.

Did Him Injustice.

Old Lady—I heard you swearing just now. You have a bad heart.

Tramp—You do me injustice, mum. It isn't a bad heart; it's a bad tooth.

Some Pitcher.

She—My! Isn't the man who throws the ball for our side just wonderful! He throws it so they hit it every time.—Puck.

Don't Be "Grouchy"

just because your Stomach has "gone back" on you. There's a splendid chance for it to "come back" with the aid of

HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS

It soothes and tones the tired nerves, promotes bowel regularity, aids digestion and will help you back to health. Try it.

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Treat Them to the treat of treats—always welcomed, by all, everywhere—

Coca-Cola

Sparkling with life—delightfully cooling—supremely wholesome.

Delicious—Refreshing Thirst-Quenching

At Soda Fountains or Carbonated in Bottles.

THE COCA-COLA COMPANY, Atlanta, Ga.

"Cinema."

The protest against the popular pronunciation of "Cinema" is just too late. Mr. Kebble Howard has spelled it "Sinnemer," and he is so far right by the ear of a London listener. And Mr. Filson Young has worked by the eye and found that the correct pronunciation should be indicated as "Kyneema," which—if we are able to talk Greek—is right. But unfortunately there is no royal mint for words, and the new thing is generally christened and nurtured and ennobled by the talk of the street. Any one may throw a new word on the counter and say it as he pleases. The street boy has triumphed with his "Sinnemer."—London Chron-icle.

Had Gone Too Far to Change.

Little Helen and Jack had grown up together, and when Jack finally outgrew dresses and donned his first trousers Helen insisted that she, too, be allowed to have a pair. But Jack said: "No, you don't, either, 'cause you started out to be a girl and you've got to keep it up."—Chicago Tribune.

Comforting Companion.

"So you went to the big outing?" "Yes," replied Mr. Growcher, "and I want to say that there is nothing like a picnic to make a man realize what a nice cool place his office is."

Body That Does the Work.

"Who presents people at court, pop?"

"In this country, my son, it is generally done by the grand jury."

Good Reason.

"Does Larkin boast of his family tree?"

"No. It's too shady."

Water in bluing is adulteration. Glass and water makes liquid blue costly. Buy Red Cross Ball Blue, makes clothes whiter than snow. Adv.

When you come to a fork in the road, take it.

"I will, if it is a silver one."

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children (teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic). 30c a bottle.

It was feminine curiosity that led to the discovery of Moses in the bull-rushes.

LEWIS' Single Binder, straight 5c—many smokers prefer them to 10c cigars. Adv.

Luck may be merely a case of not being found out.

Libby's Pork and Beans

Delicious - Nutritious

Plump and nut-like in flavor, thoroughly cooked with choice pork. Prepared the Libby way, nothing can be more appetizing and satisfying, nor of greater food value. Put up with or without tomato sauce. An excellent dish served either hot or cold.

Insist on Libby's
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