The Room on the Roof

limousine. I know you better than you know yourself. Romance isn't your mil q1. the asphait." You'll come back to

Harwood thought it unnecessary to do more than smile and say, "Perhaps." He by no means wished to argue.

"She's taken in by the money," Mrs. Belknap pursued evenly. country kid in a city candy shopeyes popping. You've told her she can have the whole shop if only she'll stay inside all her life. She's tickled pink with the proposition now: but you know how long that'll After one good gorge she'll loathe candy. Lollypops by the ton wouldn't keep her. A quite exemplary young woman, I hear-respectablly brought up in a village cottage, on cottage cheese and a villige dance once in six months; no affairs at all. That's all the worse, you know. She hasn't had her turn at the main table yet, and they say she's trade marked for that. As soon as she understands that she's missing it, your work'll be cut out. If she's already had a divorce and a black eye or two it might answer. But her goods won't swop on even terms for any candy you can give her until they've been well shelf worn. Apparently she's still in the original package. Those unspoiled young appetites are very vigorous. You'll be busy filling the tray until she says, 'Now I'll have some of that'-with a finger to the main table where your credit isn't good." Mrs. Belknap laughed, not unmelodiously. "I foresee a pleasant time for you."

He had expected, when he started for this house, that he was going to have a disagreeable time, and had made up his mind to face it. But the time was more disagreeable than he had anticipated. He perceived now that she was stung to strong anger and letting herself go. A woman of vulgar manners would have shouted and gesticulated. Her manners were different, but it came to pretty much the same thing.

"I hate to see it, too," she went on with that cool, candid manner. 'I don't know why I should be fond of you, but I am. You look so awful sensible, Nat, and yet you really aren't. Paradoxes are always interesting. I knew you had no sense about business, for ex ample; but I rather liked you for I'm almost the only firstthat. rate business man I know who's first rate at anything else. I didn't mind your making ducks and drakes of the Cutter money, but if you make ducks and drakes with the other hand, too, it'll be an awful mess."

He shrank and winced from that -behind a faintly smiling face. Surely Letitia was building a hot fire under him-placing the faggots, with uncanny accuracy, just where they would burn deepest. That is, by bringing up the Cutter money.

He knew well enough that there are many ranks, or castes, in the hierarchy of finance, and that it is characteristic of those in any one caste to exchange confidences freely about those in castes below. Among themselves the dukes discussed the affairs of the barons with greatest freedom and the barthe ons likewise talked over the affairs of the knights. He was only a baron, really, while Mrs. Belkr belonged to the ducal rank. He could fairly hear Bryam Holt. chairman of the Consolidated bank. or John Tillitson saying casually to Mrs. Belknap, "Yes, Harwood's been getting in wrong lately on so and so and so"-with full details. That was vinegar to the rawest spot in his pride-his essential inferiority to the dukes of finance. was penetrated by the idea that Letitia knew all about his financial misadventures. But Mrs. Belknap was tossing another handful of faggots on the fire:

to the asphalt and climb into the somewhat-her tone subtly changed also

> "You've made me look such a fool. Letitia Belknap, aged 44, weighing 165, in the role of lorn maiden, jilted by her lover! You can't wonder it amuses all my friends so much. I suppose we all have to be fools about something. Maybe I was a fool about you.

> "I meant to marry again, for 1 found that not having a husband was a worse bore than having one. You pleased me much better than anybody else. I think it's because you're such a nice boy-always bright and pleasant and wonderfully sensible-and yet without having much sense at bottom. could look around behind and see that you were just a nice boy playing at being wonderfully sensible." She laughed with a kind of "You pleased me much" fondness. better than anybody else. I didn't want any beautiful colt, to get dotty over and finally have my ribs kicked in for my pains. I We were wanted a good partner. both honest about it-neither of us quoting Romeo and Juliet that we'd looked up in the book half an hour before.

Her dark eyes held his, with composed power, for a moment, and she added:

"It was all honest. If you've decided to toss it in the waste basket, there's nothing more to be said. But you'll get into a mess with this For one thing you like money girl. tremendously, but haven't the knack of getting it. At any rate, I could do that for you."

He perceived that she was, tentatively, holding open a door-or. at least, indicating where the door was. She was ready-he felt sureto renew the betrothal. Kindly, but with decision, he said:

"It's settled, Letitia. I wouldn't be honest with you if I said less. I've treated you badly, and I'm sor ry, but I'd be treating you worse if I didn't say now that it's settled."

That seemed final enough, and she so accepted it, waiting only a moment, then rising and saying in a tone as composed and polite as that with which she greeted him:

"Then there's nothing more to be said except good-bye. It would be pleasanter if I could get out of town for this winter. But I'm no good at running away. I'll stay and face the music. If you hear that I've acted like a cat here and there. you'll know why. They'll presently give up scratching me." She was smiling a little as she said it. -

Harwood's position was intensely uncomfortable. He'd let her in-a proud woman-for a humiliating experience. Fatuously he mumbled:

"Oh, yes; they'll soon give it up. I'm sorry." With a vague little With a vague little smile he held out his hand. A moment later he was fleeing from her, aware that he'd cut a sorry figure. He got himself out of the house. After all, the great thing was to get it over with, and he had got it over with! It hadn't been well done, with one clean, sure stroke; he was leaving the victim a good deal mangled and still writhing. Some sense of that was in his mind as he briskly crossed Letitla's lawn. Yet the thing was done; and that was what mattered most.

There was uneasiness in his mind, also. Letitia's dark, steady eyes at the moment of parting sort of haunted him. It seemed to him that and had irical lurked in them. Was she, perhaps, meditating some vengeance upon him? He was aware that he had an exposed flank-first in the matter of that money of his daughter's which he had made ducks and drakes of, and for which he was legally accountable; second, in his immediate financial position. He had taken an option on some motion picture stock; he owed the Consolidated Bank a hundred and forty thousand dollars. Letitia Belknap might launch an attack on that exposed flank-for example, by stirring up the Sam Cutters to stir up Mathilde to ask for an accounting: or through Bryam Holt, chairman of the Consolidated Bank. Letitia had many strings in her hands; she might make it very uncomfortable for him just at this moment when his affairs were so unsettled. He might have temporized with her-in vulgar words, "strung her along" in respect of Bess. But he got consolation in the reflection that had acted as honorably as the circumstances permitted. And, of course. Letitia wouldn't atack that exposed flank-that would be too How she had lit into him. low! though, flaying him in her cool way! That gave him a new idea of what life with Letitia might have been like! She'd let him alone-now. By the time he reached his own house his sanguine temper was painting the picture to his taste. She'd let him alone. This afternoon's talk would be the last of it.

finally he'd cut a sorry figure. But the great consolation was near at hand-the anodyne that drowned all humiliations and disappointments. He telephoned to Bess; could she come for a little ride?

(Continued From Page Three.)

Once more the miracle worked. She was ready at the hotel door when his car drew up at the curb. She came tripping down the steps, radiant, her eyes sparkling into his eyes as they shook hands on the sidewalk. He handed her into the car, and as he sat close beside her the bewitching fragrance of youth and beauty enveloped him. It seemed to him her charm had never been so potent, and nothing else mattered. Let Letitia go hang!

She was gay during the ride-for one thing telling him again all about the pictures. She went to with him for tea and his house stayed to dinner. She had never before been so close to him, never quite poured herself out to him so freely, never before so sweet, with swift, thrilling little touches of tenderness that were new to him. It seemed as though she wished, this evening, to let him know what being loved by her was really like.

She had, in fact, been thinking it over. Always there had been a certain reserve in regard to himas though they might kiss only by rote, with due propriety. There was by no means an overwhelm. ing compulsion in her feeling for him-by no means a passionate abandon. She was fond of him: felt sure she quite loved him-sensibly, with decorum. She had been thinking all that over. She was going to marry him. He was giving her very much. And there was going to be no cheating about it; she was going to make it all up to him as much as he could wish. Something like that-thought out and resolved upon-gave her manner toward him this new color of the rose.

She even looked around the house with a somewhat different sense of it. Heretofore she had pretty frankly coveted it. The thought of being the mistress of this handsome place, and all the accessories that went with it, fluttered her breast very much as the discovery of a gold mine might have done. Tonight she was trying to see the house, not as her acquisition, but as a partnership.

The sweeter charm carried Harwood beyond himself. Sitting beside her in the library, before a grate fire, he felt an exultation at once tender and fierce. Letitia Belknap might indeed go hang! The pictures and the fortune and the drive might all go hang! He would take her against all the world and exult. It was the highest moment of his life. There was a little breathless uncertainty in his voice as he said:

'When shall it be, Bess?"

Obviously he meant their marriage. She looked back at him with clear eyes and answered simply: 'Whenever you wish."

It might be next week, then, or in a fortnight. But something whispered in his ear. No desperate hurry; there was the exposed flank; announcement of an engagement now might stir Letitia to action. Even for Bess' own sake he must be reasonably prudent.

"Thanksgiving?" he asked.

Krom said nothing to that, but began opening the window blinds. It struck Harwood that there was something especially unsatisfactory about the fellow this morningsomething phlegmatic and sullen, like a man deeply irritated. He had stepped over and shut the door behind Harwood as soon as the lawyer entered the room.

"Could we do that this afternoon?" Harwood persisted, at Krom's back.

"Gotta fix the patent, first thing," Krom grumbled, without turning around-he was opening the blinds at another of the high, round win-"Something I want to talk dows. to you about."

Harwood wished to retort impatiently, "Hurry up then! Never mind those shutters." But he was naturally a patient man and courteous, so he merely remarked, "I've an engagement at a quarter to twelve." It was then twenty-five minutes past eleven. Harwood was thinking, "If you wanted to talk to me why didn't you get to the office earlier?" But he kept that to himself.

Having opened the blinds at three of the windows, Krom crossed the room and shut off the electric lights -still something phlegmatic and sullen about him, Harwood thought. He then took a further step and made sure the door was closed. That done, he swung a chair near to Harwood's and sat down-with deliberation. The eye with the cast in it seemed especially to fix itself upon the lawyer with a sort of fishy stare.

"The invention's done now," the "You can inventor began slowly. hurry things along you can use the apparatus we already got for models-send 'em down to Washington with the applications for patentswind it all up in a few days."

"No doubt," said Harwood, to hur ry him along. But Krom was not to be hurried. He reflected, put his palm up to his smooth check, looked gravely down and gravely up again. before he said:

"I want to sell out to you for cash. I gotta dig out of this."

Harwood was half amused and half annoyed. "Plenty of cash as soon as we get the patents," he replied lightly.

"Royalties and all that," Krom returned. "Take a long while to get all that going. I want to sell out for cash. I gotta get away." "Why?" Harwood asked, with a faint smile.

Krom put a hand up to his brow with an unusual gesture, and was silent a moment; then again the eye with the cast in it seemed especially to fix itself, upon the lawyer.

"I had some bad luck," he said deliberately. "I killed Steinman up at Slow River last Tuesday night." He gave a sign, but his face was composed; while Harwood, with a thrill of horror, stared at him.

"Of course, I didn't mean to." Krom explained, looking at the floor. "But I might as well tell you, first as last, because you'll be wanting Steinman's signature-I suppose; wanting him to sign the patent applications and fixing up the contracts and so on. So I might as well tell you, first as last."

As Harwood stared he thought. "The fellow is lying!" Yet there was no real conviction in the thought-only a catch at a straw

By Will Payne

In the pause that followed Krom again audibly drew breath-a long, sighing inhalation. Again he shifted his glance from the floor to the lawyer's face.

"It made me sore as hell-all that silly fuss about old Curlin. I'd been arguing with Steinman all after I kept looking good natured, noon. but it was making me sore as hellso unreasonable, you know. And Steinman looking so much like a monkey. Long about half past eight he broke out all over again-when it was pretty near time to start.

"What he wanted all along was to go to Curlin and buy him off-tell him we'd got the invention and we was going to settle up with himwhatever was fair. Then he thought Curlin would let him alone. was an awful coward-Steinman was-wanted to buy him off, bribe him to be good. Of course I knew well enough that if Curlin ever got his mitts on the invention, or knew where it was, he'd raise the devil.

Well, as I say, long about half past eight Steinman broke out all over again-about going to Curlin. I'd been drinking right along. He said I wasn't sober enough to drive the car to Valley City. He was bobbing around-in one of his fits agin, . pawing his whiskers ad sputtering away in that lingo of his. Just an old idiot, bobbing around-wouldn't go to Slow River."

Krom again studied the floor moment and looked back to the lawyer.

"It happened all of a sudden-like a flash. It wouldn't have happened if I hadn't been drunk, or if he hadn't looked so much like a damned old monkey. I'd finished a bottle, you see, and I tapped him on the see that yourself. If you want to head with it. All in a flash. It was all so ridiculous, you see. I gave him a crack with the bottle. 'What the hell?" and bing! like that?" He made no gesture as he described it. his hands lying in his lap. But he now moved a hand in order to lay a finger at the base of his skull, back of his car.

"It caught him right there. Probbly I hit harder than I realized. I suppose the old man's skull was kind of soft, or brittle. Some people have skulls like that. In a minute I saw he fas dead as a door nail-like a stroke of lightning. Naturally it sobered me up. 1 told you we took something out of Curlin's shop when we left there last spring. What we took was a camera. It really wasn't worth a damn, but the old man thought it was great stuff; and he might use ie, you see, to make trouble-starting lawsuits over the patent and so on. I thought we'd better have it, so I took it away. It was a fool thing, pretty near as big as a shoebox.

"I'd had it in the cellar up there at Slow River-under that mess of broken-up crates and stuff. But after Curlin and young Whiteside broke into the factory that day I buried it. So I dug it up and put Steinman in the trunk and buried him in the celler. It's just a dirt floor you know. You can dig anywhere.

"And now you see, how it all turns out. Steinman and 1 had planned to go away. I told 'em at the boarding house we-were going away, and I told Peter Green. Everything was fixed for it in advance. I don't know; a man's brain does queer things sometimes. Maybe knowing that everything was all fixed up for 't in advance was somewhere or other in my mind when I hit him that lick with the bottle. You never can tell." He seemed to ponder that psychologictl point a moment, and again drew a long sighing brath, and concluded, grave-'Well, anyway, that's the way it stands, and you can see why I want to get settled up with you and clear out of here right away. They've got a 'ot of curiosity in those little towns. They may be prying around any day and find something. I ain't satisfied-entirely-about Peter Green. Maybe he's got something on his mind about Steinman I gotta get away you see.'

"I knew Mathilde very well. That's why she and 1 would get on like two peas in a pod. She has great respect for me. Mathilde inherited a great deal of her character from her grandfather Cutter. She isn't sentimental. She'll be wanting to know one of these days."

That was all, but it was enough. Mathilde, of course, was the legal owner of two-thirds of that Cutter money which he had made ducks and drakes of. In due time she would want to know exactly what became of it. For at least two years Harwood had been mournfully aware that his daughter was capable of making no end of a row if her will was crossed.

"I'm sorry," he repeated. "Truly I am. I hope you'll forgive me. All I can say is. I never meant it-it just happened."

She took a moment to absorb that repetition. Her dark eyeswhich were about all that remained of former beauty-seconed to soften

He felt, however, bruised and wounded from that talk in which

she said, readily.

That was six weeks away; his affairs would be in impregnable ordør then.

Next morning he went down to the office in high impatience to see for himself those two pictures of which Bess had spoken so enthusiastically. But two hours passed before Krom came leisurely into the cabinet. Harwood would have gone upstairs with him at once, but Krom said it would take a quarter of an hour to prepare the apparatus, put up the shutters and so on; the lawyer might as well wait until the show was ready.

When Harwood did go upstairs the room was prepared as when Bess had seen the pictures. He took the chair in front of the projecting machine, to which Krom pointed ;the two views that Bess had talked of were thrown on the screen. The spectator watched with hot satisfaction. There were, indeed, the fresh, vivid natural colors and the effect of depth and roundness which one sees in stereoscope views. But he was disappointed; te two views that Bess came to an end-only five or six minutes, he thought; a few hundred feet of film.

Krom, turning on the electric lights again, explained that: "What we wanted was to be sure we had it right, you know. We're just as sure with a thousand feet of film as we would be with a million."

"I'd like to take a picture up in Lincoln park now," Harwood suggested cagerly; "get this autumn foliage and the cars and so on."

"It was an accident," Krom repeated, eyes to floor. "It wouldn't have happened, only I was drunk at the time. We'd got it finished. It was all done, you see. Of course, I felt good over that. I had half a case of whisky left up there-in the cellar. I inherited a taste for liquor. Every so often I go on a bat. I was drinking all the afternoon, steady.

"Steinman, you know, was a nut -aside from inventions. He was more like a monkey than any man I ever heard of. Childish about a lot of things-no more nerve'n a rabbit. You see, he'd got it in his nut about old man Curlin; thought Curlin'd be sure to kill him. Curlin did come up there and broke into the factory one day-scared Steinman stiff. I told you about it."

He looked gravely up at Harwood for confirmation, and the lawyer nodded. His lips felt dry.

"Well, now that we'd got the in vention done, Steinman was nuttier'n ever about Curlin-hadn't anything else to thnk about, you see. So I told him to skip up to Saginaw and stay a couple of weeks until we got the patent all fixed up and then he could got to Germany if he wanted to. Anything to keep him quiet, you see. He agreed to that before dinner. He had kind of a Curlin fit on. I went over to his boarding house and got his dinner for him so he wouldn't have to go outside. And I was going to drive him up to Valley City in the evening, where he could take a train. We had it all fixed up."

(To be Continued.) (Copyright, 1922.)

The boiling point of lead is 1000 degrees C., that of water 100 degrees C., that of carbon dioxide 80 degrees C., and that of air, 252 degrees C.

A new copper process makes it possible to weld together iron and steel parts. The copper penetrates into the fine pores of the iron and forms a firm weld.

A machine has been invented that automatically cuts and dips ice cream bars in chocolate sauce. The machine has a capacity of nearly 12,000 bars in eight hours.

An English chemist claims to have invented a method for rendering airplanes useless as weapons of war. With a huge beam of fire, his discovery, it was said, will dissolve the steel structure of a plane as high as five miles in the air.