torily toward her guests. "People, allow me to present you in bulk to Miss Pansy Flower of Tallahala, the dearest friend of mine, and of whom I have heard so much I feel I have known her all my life. Pansy, dear, your fellow victims—my house party."

Miss Pansy Flower, standing before an unknown hostess, a fiance to whom she was passionately anxious to do credit, and a set of glittering beings as far removed from Tallahala as the Occident from the Orient, bowed charmingly, and, Mrs. Braithewaite realized amazedly, with no faintest trace of embarrassment. When she smiled she flashed into view very white teeth.

"I'm very glad to meet you all," she told them in a slow, deliciously southern voice. "Only, please, Mrs. Braithewaite," she begged her hostess, in a lower note, "it's not Pansy, but Patsy. Isn't that just life for you? I've been trying for 10 years now to live down that awful name and here, just as I think I've done it, if it doesn't rise up and hit me in the face just when I'm trying to make an extra good impression."

Mrs. Braithewaite had all the sensations of putting out her foot to descend one step and unexpectedly lurching down four. By the time tea was over she was realizing that the act was not proceeding at all as she had anticipated. Major Trenton was beside Patsy. There was quite a little circle about her, in fact, collecting with the quick, facile curiosity of house parties and steamer decks—entertained, amused, but decidedly friendly.

Tony Crissford, who had been lounging in shadowed corner of the fireplace, rose and made his way through the group to her side. "I wonder if I'm going to be fortunate enough to have you remember me, Miss Flower?" he asked her. "I had the pleasure of meeting you last summer—though not for as long as I should have liked—when I was motoring down south."

The faint color in Patsy's cheeks deepened to rose; she knitted thoughtful brows for a moment beanswering-Mister Carrisford isn't it? I knew your face right And then. before audience quite realized what had happened, Tony, murmuring something about a view, had piloted her to a distant window. Mrs. Braithewaite, her lips parting mechanically every other moment in the famous smile, could imagine just what the low, tender voice was saying, what the dark eyes were looking down into gray. It seemed to her the hate in her heart must beat the girl down where she stood.

Later, before her greatest comforter and ally, she sharpened new weapons and shifted several positions. The great mirror gave back ot her encouragingly an image of ivory and gold, as flawless as the famous diamonds about her throat. What had the girl to fight it with, she raised white arms in imperious challenge. Beauty? She laughed scornfully. Cleverness? Merely an amusing way of putting things in a pretty drawl. It was only she was different-there lay the danger. was that that caught Tony, had held the others this afternoon. She must fathom fully the secret of this difference before she could fight it successfully-and then she cleared her brow and turned a smiling weclome toward Patsy's hesitat-

I'm dressed," the girl told her from the threshhold-no boyish Patsy this, but a charmingly feminine little figure in the simplest and airiest of white georgettes. That limited portion of neck and arms Talla hala church standards permitted to show were very young and white, her cheeks very pink, her eyes wide and deepened mysteriously to black. At her belt was a marvelous boquet of buds in which Mrs. Braithewaite recognized Tony's unerring taste. A quaint picture she made-old-fashyes, but dowdy or badly dressed, no. Mrs. Braithewaite ad judged with suddenly compressed lips. Demurely alluring was perhaps the best description. Mrs. Braithewaite came to a swift decision.

She putout her hand and with a gracious gesture drew the girl to her side. "I have a little engagement present here I've been keeping for you. Just lock the door for a moment, will you, dear?"

A moment later, before Patsy's fascinated gaze, still seated at her dressing table, she had pressed a desecrating forefinger into the very heart of one of its ivory roses. The mirror above rolled back as obediently as the robber's cave before Ali Baba, disclosing behind it a small rose-lined opening from which Mrs. Braithewaite, smiling at the alarming dimensions of Patsy's eyes, selected a slender strand of amethysts. Another swift pressure on the rose opposite and the mirror had slid noiselessly back to staid immobility.

"Rather a neat invention, isn't it?" Mrs. Braithewaite smiled up at the girl. "I rather flatter myself the most sophisticated burglar would never think of that."

"It's just like the Arabian Nights," Patsy told her breathlessly, "Everything If this carpet were to rise up and carry me right out through the window I shouldn't be in the slightest surprised."

I hope it won't," said Mrs. Braithewaite hospitably. "I should be heartbroken to lose you so soon.' She clasped her necklace about the girl's throat with a sudden jealous pang at its firm youth, and stepback ostensibly to admire the effect. "It goes beautifully with your coloring," she announced. That's a sweet dress you have on, Patsy, but I wonder-I do so want you to look your very best for Tony tonight." Crossing the room swift-ly, she rolled back one of the tall glass doors that guarded row after row of costly garments. "This is a gown belonging to a little cousin of mine. It had just arrived when she got word of her mother's death. Of course it will be out of style when she is out of mourning, so she left here and told me to do what I wanted with it," Mrs. Braithewaite concluded carelessly her elaborate explanation; she had gone to a good deal of trouble the past week buy-"She's just about your size, I imagine. Do slip it Patsy, and let's try it. I know Tony would just love you in it. And it's exactly the shade for the neck

Patsy held up the costly, sequined thing, glittering like opal against the light. "It's beautiful, simply beautiful," she said, honest admiration in her voice. "And it's darling of you to want me to wear it. Don't think for a momen I have any feeling about any one else's clothes-no poor minister's daughter could have that, goodness kows. been fetched up in secondhand garments. It's just-well, that dress just isn't me, you see wouldn't be myself at all. I'll love to wear the necklace-I do think it's so sweet of you to give it to me-it's my very first engagement present. But the dress I - just couldn't feel comfortable in a gorgeous think like that. I made this myself," she ended in a lighter tone, eyeing ruefully her simple e. "Tallahala all over, isn't She gave her merry little toilette. "It's a good thing nobody shrug. but Tony cares what I wear or what I'm like."

It was then that Mrs. Braithewaite realized the "difference" she had been trying to plumb-the point of view that had enabled this untrained girl from Georgia to enter with charming ease a strange drawing room and to face with shining. wholly fearless eyes her first formal dinner. It had evidently never so remotely occurred to her that people were judging, perhaps condemning her. Her outlook on life was so wholly outward that no fleeting, disturbing thought of a Miss Flower of Georgia ruffled for an instant its serenity, its joyous interest in any one and every one she met. Here was a difference with a vengeance from every other woman underneath her roof-and a situation Mrs. Braithewaite, with all her wide social experience, had never tered before.

"Are you afraid?" she heard Tony murmur to his fiancee just before dinner was served, and caught the astonishment in Patsy's eyes.

"Afraid—of these nice people? You can ask that of a person who's led mothers' meetings and had to make church socials go when half the people there weren't speaking to one another! At least every one here would mean to be kind," said simple hearted Patsy. "And as they don't know that I'm—perhaps—going to marry you, they won't care at all what I'm like anyway."

care at all what I'm like anyway."
"Take back that 'perhaps,'" she heard Tony's ardent command as she bore down upon them with a sulky looking yong Viking with dark red hair and very blue eyes below frowning brows.

"I'm going to let the Gold Brick take her in tonight," she told Tony in a smiling aside. "But I'll put you where you can watch her."

An enemy flanked on one side by the Gold Brick, on the other by old Mr. Sturtevant, was quite a stroke of genius, Mrs. Braithewaite flattered herself. Even the dauntless Patsy—so innocently confident of the kindliness of this world—might find it difficult to reflect credit upon a critical flance under such circumstances. And Tony could certainly find no fault with the situation. Had she not generously given Patsy the most eligible man present on the one side and the very concentrated, if fossilized, essence of blue blood on the other?

The Gold Brick, indeed, more than fulfilled her highest hopes. His elbow on the table, his back flatteringly toward Patsy, ruthlessly oblivious with his far-famed rudeness of all social obligations, he exchanged horse pedigrees with Alicia Van Sittart, a resplendent blonde. But Mr. Sturtevant, at once the pride and despair of hostesses, whose name added luster to invitation lists and whose dinner partner reeled exhausted from the table, who had sat through 10,000 dinners

impregnable to every known kind of conversational assault, was cruelly failing a too trusting hostess. Incredibly, he was talking to Patsy Flower of Georgia.

It was just before the peach Melba that Jimmy Peyton, alias the Gold Brick, discovering with disgust that Miss Van Sittart did not know as much about horses as she had pretended, took down his elbow, veered about in his seat, and likewise abserved the miracle.

"By Jove!" he demanded casually. "How did you get the phonograph started? It has been run down for over 60 years. The old fellow," he elucidated further to Patsy's uplifted eyebrows. "No one has ever been able to make him peep before. How in thunder did you manage it?"

"Maybe my having you on the other side, might account for it," Patsy suggested. "Probably in his generation they taught him it was only polite to address a few words—of some description—to whoever was sitting beside you at a dinner party. You wouldn't believe it, but we're still so old-fashioned we cling to that funny old custom in the south. I can see you've outgrown it in the east."

"Wow!" said Jimmy Peyton. "Biff and bang! Say I haven't heard anything as frank as that since freshman year at Prep school." He was wheeling around now, fixing upon her his moody, scowling, curlously alert gaze. "Was I rude?" he demanded of her. "I believe I'm always considered so at dinners."

"The record certainly wasn't broken tonight," Patsy told him calmly, "though perhaps I'm not a good judge, as this is my first dinner up north and my first really formal dinner anywhere. But down south I can assure men have been lynched for less. Do you reckon I'll meet many like you?" she asked him apprehensively. "Or are you the only one of your kind extant?"

"O, I say," Mr. Peyton protested, albeit feebly. "I'm not quite as bad as that, am I?" He grinned at her somewhat sheepishly. You would never believe how different he could look when he smiled, Patsy noted with interest. "I was talking about horses and then I always forget everything," he condescended to explain. "If I hadn't started on them I'd have probably remembered to say something to you."

"How I should have cherished it!" 'Patsy remarked with a meekness which made Mr. Peyton suddenly sit up very straight and fix a suspicious glance upon her. "I heard what you said about horses," she continued placidly. "You are entirely wrong about Lady Belle. She belonged to a great friend of my uncle's, and I've ridden her often myself. You made several other mistakes, too."

"By Jove, what were they?" Mr. Peyton was beginning hotly when Patsy waved aside his interruption.

"Perhaps some time I'll brush up your education along those lines," she encouraged him. "But right now—I do want to know why you are so rude. I really am 'right smart curious' on the subject—as my old mammy says. I never saw anything like in before! it just doesn't see human."

"I go out and have a good time, don't I?" Jimmy Peyton, somewhat to his amazement, found himself explaining gruffly. "Not to do any little sunbeam act or philanthropically brighten the atmosphere! Not on your life! They needn't ask me to their old dinners if they don't like it. Lord knows I'd enough sight rather they wouldn't."

"That's just the point—why do they?" Patsy asked him with sincere bewilderment. "I'm sure if I were your hostess I'd never ask you more than once." A sudden thought awed her tone and rounded her eyes. "Are you by any chance famous?" she demanded breathlessly. "Do you do anything awfully worth while?"

"Nothing but kill time and spend money," he reassured her moodily, "and make more or less of a damned idiot of myself most of the time."

Patsy continued to transfix him with wide, mystified gray eyes. "But there must be a reason when they put up with you," she insisted practically, "Do tell me. If you don't I shall have to ask some one slee."

else."

"O, I'd just as soon tell you myself." There was a curious reckless bitterness in his young voice. "Perhaps I can explain it better by telling you they call me the Gold Brick—double compliment to hair and purse—also I believe a delicate tribute to my social assests. When you land me you are apt to be stung. I'm damnably rich, you see—got all kinds of money. That's the reason anyone would always put up with anything I might do."

up with anything I might do."
"Just for that?" asked Patsy incredulously. "That's curious, isn't it? I'm learning so many new things tonight. You see, in the south we don't think just being rich so very important—the only really important thing is for a man to be a gen-

There were three men whose thoughts Miss Flower occupied quite extensively during the after-dinner scance of cigars and masculine conversation. Old Mr. Sturtevant's thin lips wore a smile of reminiscent pleasure, Tony Carrisford's had lost for the moment their usual cynical curve, while Jimmy Peyton's grim young mouth was set in a straight line as he stared at the wall opposite with very blue eyes which from time to time blazed rather alarmingly.

Later, in the drawing room, Jimmy Peyton hovered near Patsy with obvious impatience, ready at the first opportunity to dash in and snatch her away.

"Look here," he told her abruptly, his face almost as read as his hair, "I don't wonder you don't want to talk to me, but please do let me get this out of my system, won't you? I was mad as hops at first over what you said—and—well, I've been thinking it over—and—well, I wish you'd give me a chance to try to show you we can be gentlemen in the north, too. I'm more or less of a spoiled pup myself, I know, but don't judge everyone by me—anyway, even I know better than that. My mother died when I was only 14 but she managed to teach me a few

"Mine died when I was 12," said Patsy, her voice and eyes suddenly very gentle. "And I wasn't so awfully polite myself, come to think of it. I'm ever so sorry I was so

"You were absolutely O. K.,"
Jimmy Peyton assured her roughly. "I like a person who hits straight from the shoulder like that.
I never saw a girl before who did."

"I have three brothers," Patsy explained. From a long experience with unruly and penitent boys she plunged into more practical matters before any rebellious reaction from unaccustomed emotion could attack the remorseful Gold Brick. "About Lady Belle," she decreed, "you were certainly wrong about her grandsire."

After that it seemed only half an hour before Tony was snatching a reproachful 10-minute good-night with her in the sunroom. "No—no—you mustn't kiss me," she begged him, her young face a tumult of happy emotions. "We're not engaged, you know. We've got to be sure first, Tony—ever and ever so sure."

"I'm ever and ever so sure I'm going to thrash that Peyton cub if he monopolizes you again like that. Patsy—you little Georgia witch—do you know you were the belle of the ball? What do you do to people?"

Whatever she did, there was no doubt that in the next few days she had made a unique place for herself in the restless, emotionseeking, chronically bored gathering at Braithewaite Lodge. Not the belle of the ball by any means; as Tony had said, people didn't toast Patsy, they just loved her; but rather as household mascot, confident-inchief, and, to her own astonishment, as prize entertainer. She was always obligingly willing to while away an empty hour from a versatile and unexpectedly successful repertoire of darky lore; quaint tales inimitably told, melancholy religious ditties, amazing clogs, while her audience rocked

manded encores. Then, of course, was her zest of life—that greatest of gifts from the gods. Poor Mrs. Braithewaite! What mattered if Patsy knew nothing of winter sports-h fore seen more than a shovelful of snow-when she could fling herself with so radiant an enthusiasm into any new experience! Her intrepid and wobbling efforts at skates and skis meant more to her laughing companions than catalogs of expert knowledge. And then, of course, if any one were still inclined to be unduly superior, she could ride. 'Lord, how she can ride," Jimmy Peyton boasted proudly.

with merriment and insatiably de-

Patsy was still persisting in her new attitude towards her fiance holding him at arm's length determinedly, meting his ardo with a formality half teasing, half wistful, subjecting his invitations to the same rigid impartiality she showed the rest of the house party-with the exception of Jimmy. With him she was openly and delightedly "pals." That unwilling smile which That unwilling smile which could so incredibly illumine the Gold Brick's face was growing quite a frequent visitor these days; he even unearthed a boyish, infectious laugh which proved very pleasant to hear. Impervious to snow and cold, he and his new mentor daily raced gloriously through the frosty, bloodwhipping Adirondack air. Even better than that, Jimmy liked the silent, glistening paths where they had to walk their horses guardedly and where, amazedly, he found himself pouring out things he had never dreamed he could tell any one excepting that dead motherlistening, too, with unexpected decility to Patsy's indignant rebuttal of the suspicious, bitter outlook on life his undisciplined, overindulged boyhood had engendered.

"Having a lot of money sure does bring you bump up against the shams of life," he told Patsy. "Sometimes it seems to me you're the only real person I've ever met."

"But you see everyone all wrong," the girl protested. "All those delightful people up at the house, for instance—they aren't shams."

"O, aren't they!" he laughed Take Mrs. Braithewaite, to begin with! How'd you ever come to visit her anyway-she's not your Looks like an angel, doesn't sort. she? Talks like one, too, with that sugary voice of hers. Never in all her life did a single kind or decent thing that anyone's ever heard of. Treats her poor husband like a doormat-decent sort he is, too. He never has time even to show up at her parties, he's working so hard, while she plays around every minute with that tame cat of hers-Carrisford-he's always playing under her foot. That kind of a thing makes me so sick."

"O!" Patsy flashed at him with a passion that left him breathless. "What hateful, cruel, wicked things you say! They aren't true! I hate you for saying them!"

An instant later, at imminent risk of horse and life, she was tearing down the snowy path, a tense little figure with blazing eyes and trembling mouth. Peyton, thundering behind her sick with fear, managed at last to catch her bridle.

"What the devil!" he exploded, passionately angry at his own emotion. "Look here, Patsy, if you don't care a whoop for your own life, you might at least have an eye to Square Star's. I'm rather fond of him."

"I'm sorry," she choked contritely, "I ought to have thought of him. It's only—you did make me so angry."

"Why, Patsy," he adjured her in bewilderment, "you aren't crying over any fool thing I said? What was I saying? O yes, about Mrs. Braithewaite and Carrisford! Well, they're a pair of tin angels—haloes as big as the moon, both of them, and I'm a plain nut. Does that suit you any better?"

She managed then a little laugh at the boyish apology. "It's all right," she ended the matter briefly. "Only don't ever say anything like that again to me. It's so unkind, so unfair — so dreadful—to think things like that about people. And they happen to be my own friends if they aren't yours." She flung a final shot over her shoulder. "If I felt that way about a person I certainly wouldn't visit her!"

"I'd visit mighty few places, in this precious set of mine," he gave back, "explore that interesting region just as soon as you go home. Don't understand how I've neglected that part of my education so long."

She had managed to fling the horrid thought from her during the end of the ride, but it rushed in upon her again as soon as they entered the living room and she saw Tony leaning with indolent grace over the back of Mrs. Braithewaite's chair.

Alone in the luxurious rose and white bedroom, whose marvels still left her breathless, she forced the spectre in front of her and faced it with the steady courage her father had taught her. If any one had said that to her but Jimmy Peyton—honest, blunt Jimmy, who with all his roughness and bitterness and lack of consideration, rang so true! She had thought it beneath notice when Alicia had hinted the same thing two days ago.

This thing that Alicia had laughingly shrugged her shoulders over, that Jimmy had hurled his honest scorn against—was it possible that there could be anything so incredibly ugly in life? And if all the world cried it out against Tony was not that more triumphant test of her faith? She had championed him fiercely enough to Jimmy, but here, alone in the silent room, it was the doubt in her own sick heart that terrified her.

Mrs. Braithewaite was also doing some very serious thinking. A precious week had slipped away and ground had so far only been lost instead of gained. Downstairs, when she had left, the major was hunting for Patsy, starting on his last evening a clamorous call for a promised repetition of Mammy's famous matrimonial advice, beginning, "Chile, when you gits married be suah you picks a man wid a face what you likes—kase dey's all alike inside."

The subdued, gauche little outsider Mrs. Braithewaite had so confidently mocked her unbearably in those friendly laughing appeals for the "Tallahala Duse" sent up from below. The situation was Intolerable, she told herself passionately. In her blackest imaginings she had never pictured such a fiasco as this; the absurd interest the Sturtevants, of all people, had taken in the girl—driving day after day across the trail to make her ponderous visits; the intimacy Alicia Van Sittart accorded her; the amused admiration of the major; the Gold Brick's frank

e major; the Gold Brick's fr (Continued on Page Seven.)