that I've driven the thought of four and it's small fault of yours that so much as a whisper of the word aunt makes the soles of my feet grow cold and the hairs of my head rise up on end. If you'd known my father's sister Dasheen you'd never wonder! Maybe the four of these are nice old bodies?"

"And maybe they're not!" remarked the duke. "Gad, but I'd give a thousand-pound to have them hear you calling them nice old bodies. Clarissa, now-

He gave such a shout of laughter that the off bay swerved.

"Are they just young aunts then?" Biddy inquired hopefully.

"Beautiful, wait till you see them! They're not aunts at all, heaven help us—they're sisters! One of their noses would make four of yours, and every last one of them is more like Queen Elizabeth in her prime than any one going around England these days. They have fine bones and high heads and eyes like icicles and tongues like serpents' tails dipped in vine-

"Have they now," remarked her grace pensively. "Well, 'twill not be dull at Gray Courts, I can tell that from here. Was Elizabeth the cross heathen that snipped the head off the pretty light one home from

"I wish I'd had your history teacher," said the duke with em-phasis. "I spent years on end learn-ing less about the ladies than you've put in a dozen words. I was a cross heathen myself till 9:30 last night."

"Never say it" cried his Biddy. "You've a heart of gold and a tongue of silver, and I'm the girl than knows. "Tis likely they'll love me no better than the cross one loved the pretty one, then?"

"'Tis likely they'll love you less," prophesied the duke accurately, since they can't snip off your

Biddy's laughter was a flight of silver birds.

'Then since it's sorrow we're goin' to," she begged, "let's go easy. Make the horses step soft and slow, darlin'; 'tis the prettiest evening in all the world, and I'm that high up I can see clear over the great green hedges into the wee green gardens. I doubt if it'll smell any better in heaven!'s

'I doubt if It'll smell half as sweet," he said. "If we go slow we'll miss our dinner."

"Ah, let's miss our dinner," she begged. "Did we not eat all those little fat quail and those great fat peaches for our lunch? I'd rather sup on the lights that'll be coming out behind the windowpanes while we pass and the stars that'll slip through the sky while we're not looking, and the smell of gilly-flowers and lavender warm against the walls. Maybe if we go slow, we might have a slip of new moon for dessert—maybe if we go slower than that, the horses will know what it's all about, and let you hold one of my hands.'

And so the horses did, and so he did, and it was long past dinner when the duke and his duchess drove through the gates of Gray Courts, and swept up to the door where grooms and butlers and housekeepers and maids and men enough to start a republic came sedately to greet them. The duke stood them off with a gesture and held out both hands to help his duchess down and she laid her finger tips in his and reached the threshold high on her toes.

pride that made his former arrodutie with a gance seem humility, grace."

He swung her through the carved doors in the great stone hall with the flagged floor and the two fire-places. She looked smaller than a child and brighter than a candle. dun-colored hound blinked twice and rose slowly, in his huge grace, and strolled to where she stood gleaming, thrusting his great head beneath her hand.

"Oh, the wonder he is!" she cried.
"What will I call him?"
"His name is Merlin," the duke

told her. "He knows a witch as well as the one he was named for.

Layton, where are my sisters?"
"Their ladyships have retired to
their rooms, your grace."
"Good!" replied his grace dis-

tinctly. "Where are my sons?"
"Their lordships drove over this afternoon for a dinner and theatricals at the marquis of Dene's, your

"Better!" said his grace. "Then shall we go to our room, Biddy? We've not eaten; send some claret and fruit and cold fowl-what else. Biddy?"

"Some little cakes stuffed full with raisins, if there're any about," suggested her grace hopefully.

"Cakes," commanded the duke of Bolingham in a voice that would have raised cakes from the stone flags. "Will you have a maid,

"Whatever for?" inquired Biddy with candid interest. "I've still the use of all 10 of my fingers, and

you'd be there to help if I broke one, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," said the duke, his arm closing fast about her. "No maid. Is the room ready, Layton?"

'Quite ready, your grace." Layton seized the great black dressing case and the little snakeskin jewel case that Biddy had pounced on in Bond street that morning, James swung up the huge pigskin bags of his grace, and Potter appeared from somewhere with fruit nd wine, and Durkin appeared from nowhere with a silver basket of small cakes, and a very young gentleman called Tunbridge appearwith candles that were larger The duke and the duchess followed this procession up the dark splendor of the stairs, with Merlin padding superbly behind his witch. When they reached the landing the procession swung to the right.

"Here!" called Bolingham, "Which

"The damask room, your grace." No," said his grace. "No." He did not raise his voice, but his fingers crushed down desperately on the light ones lying in his. "We'll use the blue room.

The agitated voice of the house-keeper cried: "Oh, your grace, it's not ready!"

"Make it ready-flowers, candles, linen. Be quick.'

Feet ran, handle flew, while the duke and his duchess stood waiting in the room in which a king had slept and a prince had died, and which for a hundred years had stood empty of life, save when some awed visitor tiptoed across the threshold, marveling at its more than royal beauty-its walls stretched with velvet blue and deep as night, its great bed around which the velvet curtains swept, brave with their golden Tudor roses; quick hands now brought other roses, wine-red in silver bowls, to sweeten the air, and sticks of wood to light a fire to warm it, for even August turned chilly in that magnificence; they spread a gay feast efore the flames and fine linen on the bed; they brought high candelabra wrought of silver, more of them and more of them, until the shadows wavered and danced, and the new duchess clapped her hands and danced, too.

"That enough?" the duke asked

"Oh, 'tis enough to light the way from here to the pole! I'd not have said there were so many candles in

"Right," said the duke to his servitors briefly. "That's all, then. Good night."

And the quick-hands and the quick feet were gone, and the duke was left alone with his duch-

"It's not too cold?" he asked. "No, no!" she said. "It's fine

'It's not too dark?" "No, no-it's fine and bright!" 'You little heart, you don't hate You're not afraid?"

"Afraid?" cried his heart, alight with laughter. "Afraid with you by me? Am I mad?"

He knelt at that and put his arms about her. Even kneeling his black head was higher than her bright one.

"It's I who am afraid. Biddy, what if I made you stop smiling? Biddy, Biddy, don't ever stop smil-

ing! "Never fear!" she cried. "Never fear, my dear love. I'll never in this world stop smiling—" She caught her breath, and shook her curls, and laid her laughing lips gayly and bravely against his. "Nor gayly and bravely against his. "Nor in the next one, either!" said her

She kept her word. That shining mischief of hers never wavered -nothing touched it, not the froz-en hatred of the four outraged ladies or the surly insolence of the three dark boys, or the indifferent the blank indignation of the court. He watched over her with terrer and rage in his heart; they, they to scorn his miracle!

That first dinner, with the ladies Pamela, Clarissa, Maude and Charlotte, looking down their high noses at the radiant intruder-

"Say the word," he told her through his teeth, safe in the sanctuary of their beautiful room, "and the four of them shall walk to

"Well. if they crawled there, 'twould be no more than they de-serve," said her grace with deci-"The cross faces they have, and the mean tongues! They'd wear the patience out of a saint.

They can start packing now," he cried, and made for the door.

"No, no!" Her laughter checked him like a hand. "What does it matter at all, since I'm no saint? I'll not need patience; all I'll need is grace to keep a straight face and a civil tongue. Let them be, darlin'; 'tis a thousand pities my Aunt Dasheen died without laying eyes They're like her own sisters. Did no one ever give that fine Roddy of yours a good cuff?"

'I'll give him two and a strap ping," said the duke. "The glowering young cub!"

"You'd never steal such pleasure for yourself," she implored. "In no time at all they'll be gone to their schools and colleges, and I'll set what mind I have to growing tall enough to reach their ears if. I stand on my toes. Would you like me better if I reached up higher?"

Their world was in that roomits four blue walls, held all their heaven and earth. From its windows they saw dawns break and nights fall; when they crossed its threshold they stepped uder a spell that held them safe from all disaster. No one had ever loved any one as he loved his little golden duchess; sometimes he smiled gravely and indulgently when he thought of the poor travesties that passed

When winter hung the world in silver frost they piled the fire higher and drew the curtains closer and sat in dreaming happiness while the winds roared and lashed over

"Shall I take you to London?"

he asked her.
"London?" she cried in wonder. "Oh, whatever for?" "You're not dull here? You're not

'Dull? With you? Lonely-lonely with you?

After awhile she lifted her head d locked her fingers fast in his and asked.

"When is your birthday?"

'In July-the 25th. Why?" "I'll have a grand present for u," said her grace, "A baby. A baby that'll have a yellow head and a twinkle in both his eyes. A baby that'll grow tall enough to thrash the wickedness out of his black brothers and have sense enough to laugh instead of doing it."

He bowed his head over the linked

"Biddy, what more will you give me, you who have given me all the

"Tis a small thing," she whisper-ed. "July. That will be a year since you came to see me dance?" "A year, my heart."

"How many days are there in a year, did you say?'

"Three hundred and sixty-five." "A day— a day is a poor short thing," said her grace. "If I had a wish, I'd wish them longer, 'Tis cold in here, with the wind roaring down the chimney. Hold me closer-hold

With spring her wish was granted and the days were longer; not long enough to hold the joy they poured into them-but filled to the brim with pale sunlight and primroses and hawthorn hedges. And it was June, and they were longer still flooded with golden warmth and the smell of yellow roses and life and magic, and the taste of honey. And it was July, and it was his birthday-and the world stood still.

Her grace gave him the yellowheaded baby for a birthday present. When they brought him his son he looked at him with strange eyes and turned his face away and asked them in a voice that none would

"How is she now?" The great doctors who had come hurrying from London shook their

"Bad. Her heart was in a shockcondition-she had not told

No-no, she had not teld him. Well, we must hope; we must

But soon they could no longer hope. For all their dignity, for all their learning, they could only give her drugs to make it easier to die; they could only prop against the pillows in the great Tudor bed, and smooth the dark coverlet, and tiptoe from the room, leaving her to her duke. She sat there still and small, her hands on his black head where he knelt beside her, with so little breath left to tell him of her love that she sought the shortest words, she who

had been a spendthrift of them.
"Darlin'." He did not stir, even at that. "Never grieve. I've knows it a great while, they told me London before you twould be no more than a year. And my Aunt Dasheen, she was wise before they 'Wed at 17, dead at

"Biddy," he whispered, "I've kill-

ed you-I've killed you."
"Oh, what talk is this? You, who gave me my life? I never minded the dying—'twas only when I thought how lonely it would be, with no one caring whether I came or west. I've forgotten what loneliness is with you by me. Look up at me.

He raised his head-and her eyes were dancing.

"Has it yellow hair?"

"Will you teach it to laugh?" "Biddy-Biddy-

Twill be dull in heaven without you," she said. "But 'twill be gay hen you come." She leaned toward him, her lips curved to mischief. "Wait till they tell my Aunt Dasheen-Saint Peter himself will have to laugh. Woman, there's someone just come asking after you-a little one even on her toes. She says her name is Biddy and she's duchess of Boilingham-

The faint voice trailed to airy mirth and with that music echoing still about her. Her grace closed her dancing eyes, and closed her laughing lips, and turned her bright head away and was gone, as lightly swiftly as she had come. (Copyright, 1923.)

#### Auto Wheel Guard for

Protection of Pedestrians A safety wheel guard has been designed which the inventor believes will make it impossible for an automobile to run over a person. guard consists of two strips of angle iron just raised above the outer rim of the tire and starting from the highest point of the wheel. The strips, attached by metal to the hub and the wheel rim, are curved, concentric with the hub. From the low er edge of the strip, a piece of metal working on springs curves outward, reaching one or two inches above the ground. Should the car run into any object the curved spring would keep on pushing the object in front of it until the car could be brought to a stop. If the car were being swerved by the driver the wheel guard would push the object out of the way entirely.

## Steam-Driven Airplane

Operates at Low Cost Experiments are being made in Germany of a steam-driven airplane. The craft is constructed throughout of duralumin. The engine is an adaptation of the Diesel engine and burns a combination of crude oil and other oils, which is broken up under a forced air feed and sprayed against the boiler. Here it ignites, giving terrific heat considering the relatively small quantity of oil consumed in the operation. Ten gallons of oil are said to be sufficient to run the plane's 750horsepower engine for eight hours.

### Telephone Device Used to Determine Grade of Win

Among the newest inventions France is wine testing by telephone By means of electric current linked up to a phone, the true characteristics of the wine are revealed. Wine that is pure conducts the current, with the result that sounds in the telephone are heard and interpreted. Should the wine be adulterated with certain chemical salts. then the current has difficulty in passing through and the telephons interpretations are unsatisfactory.

To have an invention protected all over the world, it is necessary to take out merely 70 patents in as many different countries, the esti-mated cost of which is about

# **How Many Pounds Would You** Like to Lose in a Week?

f you are fat and want to ight. I will send you a sample of you be sample of you be sample of you be so not send any moneyir name and address to Whin horatories, 2225 Coca Cola Bidg., K

On Ole Stage Coach Days ABE MARTIN



"ashin' Andy's Election in th' O'e Stage Coach Days.

Many o' th' habits an' customs o' th' early stage coach days are still in Vogue regardless o' th' airplane, th' radio an' other means o' rapid transportation an' communication. Lots o' folks still consider "60 days" cash. In th' ole days when a feller bought a pair o' boots an' some calico it really required about 60 days t' go t' town Saturday night t' pay fer them. Besides, most things wuz paid fer in skins, or pelts, an' pelts wux tain frosty seasons. It took a feller a month t' call on his gal once a week. Weddin's wuz dated away ahead so a feller could git home after a proposal an' dress up an' git back. If th' weather wus bad, smow too deep or somethin', th' weddin' wus put off. Some times

a weddin' wuz set fer a certain month instead of a certain day, an' sometimes they took place upon proposal, thereby savin' th' groom a long, lonely ride thro' th' Injun infested woods. A girl generally married the handiest girl t' call on. Looks an' disposition cut no ice. Availability wuz th' watchword. An' we must confess a purty good, rugged citizenship wuz th result. A couple jest had t' stick t'gether an' make th' best o' things. Ther wuz no stores fer th' girls t' work in, an' only skimpy cabin homes t' return to, an' th' husbands jest reasoned that they couldn't do no better without droppin' ther work an' groping around fer months thro' th' wilderness an' run-nin' th' chance o' gittin' lost. Th' custom of our presidents takin' ther seats four or five months after

elected is a relic o' th' ole stage coach days, when long, weary months wuz consumed in tryin' to git th' returns from fer distant settlements like Vincennes, Jamestown, New Amsterdam, Ft. Wayne an' Sandusky. Even after th' votes wus in an' counted it generally took a month by fast stage fer a president t' reach th' capital. T'day th' whole world knows whether Marietta, Ohio, Saint Louis, Aurora, Indianny, and Haverill, Massachu- L. J. LANE setts, went democratic 30 minutes after th' polls close. We think a president should at least take his office in time fer Christmus. An' this thing of a young couple gittin' married in June an' not bein' at home till September is another relic o' stage coach days. Even with a second-hand car they ought t' be at home an' settled down in 10 days. (Copyright, 1923.)