

STELLA DALLAS

By Olive Higgins Prouty.

SYNOPSIS.

After seven years separation Stella Dallas is requested by her husband's attorney to get a divorce on the ground of desertion. When she refuses she is told the alternative will be an action in which she will be charged with immoral conduct with Alfred Mann, an old admirer from whom she received attention while her father, Stephen Dallas, in New York. She indignantly denies wrongdoing and declares she will fight. Stephen is desirous of freedom so that he may marry Helen Morrison, a widow, but after threat by Stella, under advice of her attorney to name Mrs. Morrison as correspondent in a counteraction he tells the latter marriage is impossible.

(Continued from Yesterday.) They hunted until it was dark on Stag Island and paddled back by the light of a slowly rising July moon. They hardly talked at all. Richard was aware of a high current of feeling that seemed to be coursing through this mysterious girl ever since the first moment that she had noticed that her wrist was bare. It awoke and silenced him.

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"Marked. You must think a lot of that watch." She replied, "I'll never forget you're coming to help me find it."

"But we haven't been successful." "That doesn't matter. I'll never forget it. Never, never, never, never."

A similar high current of feeling coursed through Richard, too, at the sound of her low voice, earnestly repeating the single word to him.

It was after 9 o'clock when Laurel and Richard reached the pier for the second time that evening. It was deserted. So, too, Laurel observed, with a fresh wave of gratitude for the boy who had saved her, and her mother also, were the rustic seats.

"L'm going in by a side door," Laurel said to Richard, as they walked toward the lighted hotel. "You go in the other way. You see the crowd. I want to go right up to my mother as quickly as I can."

"But you'll be down again?" "Not tonight." "You haven't had any dinner?" "I'll have some sent up."

"Please." "Shan't I see you again tonight?" "When shall I see you again?"

In ten or fifteen minutes, when "the crowd" told him, he wouldn't want to see her ever again.

"Tomorrow," she managed to smile. "Yes. Don't forget. We're going to have lunch together tomorrow."

"I've only four days left," he went on eagerly, "give me the morning before lunch, too, will you? Please. We've so much to talk about, and I've only four days left. We'll go somewhere alone."

They had reached the rear door now. Laurel had one hand on the knob. "Will you? Please answer. Will you?"

Laurel turned and looked up at him, and nodded. "Right after breakfast?" She nodded again. "Promise?"

For the third time she nodded, then suddenly reached out her free hand and touched Richard Grosvenor on his arm, drew her hand back quickly, and whispered, "Good night."

Her eyes were as black as the lake beneath the moon. "Laurel!" Richard moved toward her, but she had turned, she had gone. The big door with its heavy spring closed softly upon him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Laurel found her mother propped up in bed. "Well, of all things! Where have you been?" she exclaimed as Laurel came into the room.

"Didn't any one tell you?" "Not till just about half an hour ago; then that Mrs. Grosvenor sent a heliograph with a note, saying not to worry, you had test something and had gone back to the island with her boy to hunt for it. What did you lose, Laurel?"

"My watch." "Your watch? Why don't you remember you said this morning you wouldn't wear it because it might get wet? There it is on the bureau!"

"Why, that is so." "Gracious! What's the matter with you?" "I must be losing my memory, I guess," smiled Laurel, wanly.

She crossed the room and slipped the watch onto her wrist. "Had a good time today?" Stella inquired. "Wonderful."

"You must tell me about it. Every word! I'm crazy to hear."

"I will. How have you been, mother?" "Where have I been, you better ask."

"Well, where have you been?" "Downstairs," she announced with a triumphant nod of her head. "Downstairs?"

"It's a wonder you didn't see me. I saw you. The doctor was here this morning, and said it would do me good to get up and around as soon as possible now. At first I thought I better not till tomorrow morning. Then I said to myself it would be fun to surprise you. So I dressed about 4 o'clock, and sat around on the veranda for a while. I felt just fine, and when I saw all your party coming down the lake in the canoe, I walked down to the pier to meet you. I saw you when you went off with that young man, heaven knew where. I supposed you would be right back. I waited for over an hour in that little summer house at the end of the pier. I thought it would be so nice to meet him like that, offhand, and I was looking rather well."

Laurel, occupied before the mirror

—pulling off the lavender sweater over her head, removing the soft felt tam-o-shanter that matched it, giving her half gentle little presses and pokes—laughed casually. "Did you stay downstairs to dinner?"

"No, I didn't. Though I felt all right. But I thought, this way—it would be nicer to meet all your friends when you were around to introduce me. I'll go down to breakfast with you tomorrow morning. I feel just great."

"Then you didn't meet anybody?" "Not yet."

"Mother," she remarked 10 minutes later, "you must lie there in bed and watch me pack the trunks."

"Pack the trunks?" "We're leaving this place tomorrow morning, at half-past seven."

"What are you talking about?" "We're leaving. We're going."

"What do you mean?" "What I say. I've just been downstairs and told the clerk."

"Have you lost your mind, Laurel?" A faint smile drifted across Laurel's features, softened for a moment her firm jaw and chin.

"Oh, I'm sorry, mother! I'm ever so sorry."

"What's happened? What's the meaning of this?" "Oh, I just don't like it here any more."

Stella's eyes narrowed. She nodded her head, slowly up and down. "Humph! Sounds mighty like a quarrel with your young man to me."

"Oh, don't say my young man, mother."

"There you go! Just like your father again! Criticizing my language every other minute! Well, then Richard Grosvenor, sounds mighty like a quarrel with Richard Grosvenor, to me."

"Mother," said Laurel. "I never want to see Richard Grosvenor again as long as I live."

"I know it! I know it! Come, Laurel, don't be a little goose. Mercy, I never saw such a peepshow! You can't fly out of a hotel like this, on a moment's notice, just because of

a little lover's quarrel. Heaven alive! You come to bed and sleep on it. You'll feel entirely different in the morning. So will he. Gracious, I know how those things work. Quarrels make the heart grow fonder. There's a saying something like that. You come to bed, Laurel."

"Not till the packing is finished," said Laurel.

She turned her back upon Stella, crossed the room to the bureau, pulled out a lower drawer, and removed a pile of underclothes.

"You don't mean to say you're going to pack up and clear out of the only place we ever had a 'lookin' at'?"

"Yes, mother."

"Where do you think we're going to at this late date?" "Why, back to the apartment."

"Back to the apartment in July?" "Yes, mother."

"Do you mean to say, Laurel, you're thinking of putting me in a train in the condition I'm in?"

I stopped and asked the doctor, he wouldn't hurt you to travel, he thought.

"And what about the expense of this room?" "The clerk said we wouldn't have to pay for it. But even if we did, it wouldn't make any difference. Oh, mother, don't talk. Don't argue. We're going, anyway."

Laurel was emptying all the bureau drawers now. Stella, from the bed, stared at her speechless, as helpless, as powerless as if she were the child. She recognized that look in Laurel's eyes.

"I've brought you up all wrong," she sighed.

Laurel made no reply to that. Swiftly, effectively, she sorted and piled, she packed, effectively began filling the trunks.

"Laurel, you're doing a crazy thing," Stella broke out afresh, "and for the life of me, I don't know how to stop you."

"Don't let's go all over it again." "You're throwing away the best

chance you've ever had. Listen to me. Most of these people here come from Philadelphia. I had it all worked out in my mind that if we got the right sort of a start with them this summer, here, we might take an apartment down around Philadelphia somewhere next fall. Then you'd have some of the right kind of friends to play around with, and when the time comes for you to come out, why—"

(Continued in The Morning Bee.)

Martha Allen PROBLEMS THAT PERPLEX.

"W H Y do the majority of men choose baby dolls with wondrous eyes or blondest young things for wives?" inquires one who signs herself Rose. "I have two friends who are fine noble girls, good looking enough for any man to be proud of them. Yet, they remain single. The frivolous girls seem to walk off with all the eligibles."

Choice of wives is a puzzling thing. Rose, it is something that cannot be figured out on paper. Some of our wisest students of mankind haven't found out just why superior types of women are cast aside for the women of inferior type. Young women who could be companions and even inspirations do seem to be lost to sight by the men who rush the type of girl who is artificial, vain and tricky.

This isn't always the case with men, I am glad to say. There are too many superior women happily married to say that it is always true. Many men are pretty brainless

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women because their own brains seem colossal in comparison. They like to dominate the weak women. They never like to be on an equal footing or even look up to wives. Their ambition to be heroes in woman's eyes is fulfilled if they marry women who are not too brainy. Personalities with contrasts appeal to them, probably.

Some men prefer to listen to opinions that are stupid to making an effort to seek character and penetrate deep thoughts.

The artificial woman, less perfect in herself doesn't in turn demand perfection. The superior woman, in contrast, asks the man to put the brakes on his instincts.

Fortunately, this choice of a life partner is usually made upon mutual attraction, not by one class dominating another. The women of superior morals and physical grade do marry men of a class who are of a higher type themselves.

Puzzled—No harm in inviting the girls to your party and telling them

to bring their own partners. This is often done, especially at a leap year party.

C. J.—Spats, galoshes and wools have seem to be worn this winter just as much as last.

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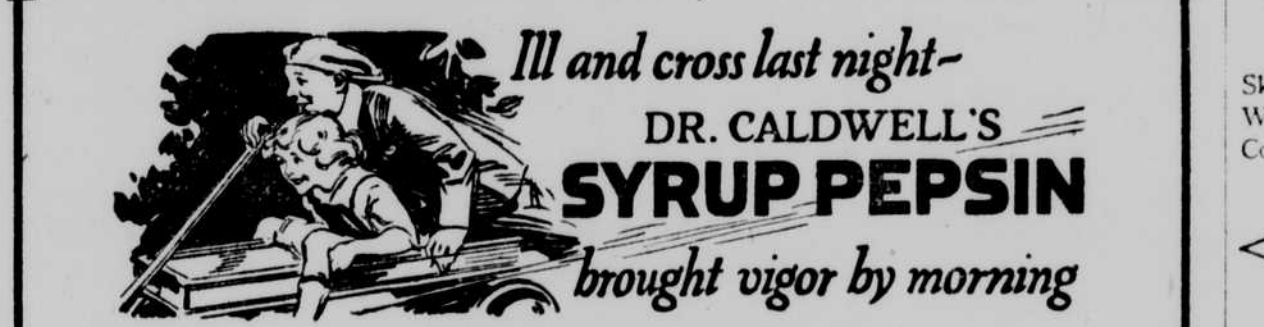
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