

On the Edge.

By BARRY PRESTON.

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"You are very much in love with him, dear, aren't you?" Mrs. Brevort inquired, not without a certain doubtful note in her tone, which seemed to hint that such possibly might not be the case.

The girl who stood by the window, looking out at the uneven pavements of the Roman street, turned slowly and smiled. In that smile were weariness and subtle understanding and patient resignation.

"Yes, I am very much in love with him, Aunt Elinor," she said in a colorless voice, as if she were saying the words more because they were expected of her than for any other reason.

Mrs. Brevort smiled her open approval. The little frown of doubt which for the past few moments had wrinkled her brow suddenly disappeared. She crossed the room to the girl's side and threw an arm about her.

"Of course, dearie," she cooed, "your happiness is my first, I might almost say my only, concern. No one realizes better than I the portent of this step—that all your future, all your lifelong happiness depends upon it. No one, I think you'll admit, too, is more averse to the majority of these marriages than I am, but the duke is so utterly different from all the other eligible men we have met. He is not seeking your money, dear, for he is immensely wealthy in his own right. He is an upright, honest, splendid type of another like our own men in America. I think, than any one we have seen. Isn't that your impression of him?"

"Yes," said the girl in the same colorless voice. Mrs. Brevort's pale face grew rather eager. "Somehow I have felt from the first that your destinies were linked, yours and his," said she. "But when he talked with me this afternoon I gave him no definite answer. I let him understand that the matter rested primarily with you; that it was your happiness that was at stake.

"He didn't seem quite to understand my attitude at first, but he was perfectly charming about it, as he is in everything. He said I was to speak to you and that he would call for me this afternoon at 4 in the road car, and while we went out to the aqueduct I could give him my final decision, or, rather, yours."

The girl had turned again to the window. She was looking abstractedly at the passing crowd in the street below. Her brow was furrowed by a little disquieting frown. Her lips were set tightly together. Her eyes were troubled.

"So I suppose I am to give him a favorable answer, am I not?" Mrs. Brevort suggested tentatively. The girl was silent. The troubled look in her eyes grew more pronounced. Her aunt watched her narrowly and with growing impatience.

"Peggy, dear, I asked you a question," she reminded her niece. "Is it a favorable answer I am to give?" The girl shrugged her dainty shoulders. "Yes, yes; oh, yes!" she said hurriedly. "It doesn't matter." Her voice suddenly choked. "Nothing matters!"

Mrs. Brevort elevated her brows. "Really, Peggy?"—she began chidingly. But the girl turned swiftly and left the room, waving back the older woman, who started to follow her. Something like a smothered sob sounded as the door closed behind her.

Mrs. Brevort looked rather angry for a moment. Then she recovered her usual composure and smiled. But there was something distinctly unpleasant in that smile.

She glanced at the bronze clock ticking unobtrusively on the mantel. It pointed to half after 3. She went to a desk near the front window and from a drawer drew out a bundle of letters. They were all directed in the same hand—Peggy's hand. And they were all addressed to Mr. William Hale, at some outlandish Spanish sounding town in Ecuador, South America.

Mrs. Brevort smiled again. It had cost her a pretty penny to circumvent the mailing of those letters, but there are many itching palms in Rome, and what good money will not accomplish, if it is judiciously placed, is not worth accomplishing.

An open fire burned dully in the grate beneath the mantel. Mrs. Brevort stepped briskly over to it and fed the bundle of letters to the flames. She watched grimly until there was nothing left of them save a few gray white ashes.

Then from another drawer she took out another bundle of letters. They were thick letters, all of them. The sprawling superscriptions were all for Peggy, and they were postmarked with the name of the Spanish town in Ecuador.

Other itching Roman palms had been soothed in the conventional way to bring those epistles into Mrs. Brevort's possession.

These, too, she consigned to the grate, watched them burn and then arrayed herself for her appointment with the duke.

At precisely 4 he came in the road car. She descended the stairs, greeted him effusively, and together they whirled off toward the aqueduct.

Scarcely had Mrs. Brevort taken her departure when there came to the hotel a brisk, broad shouldered young man. Unmistakably he was American, and unmistakably he had been enduring recently all the discomforts of continental travel when such travel necessitates haste.

He glanced at the register, saw thereon a certain name and heaved a mighty sigh of relief, but even as he searched his pockets for his cardcase the owner of the name that had caused his recent sigh came tripping down the stairs arrayed for a walk through the autumn streets, and, turning around, the young man stood staring open mouthed at Peggy in all her glory.

The girl's eyes, too, lighted suddenly. She gave a little gasp of surprise. In an instant the young man was beside her, and both her hands were in his own.

"Peggy, Peggy!" he was saying breathlessly. "Billy," she was saying in a low, shaken voice, "where on earth did you come from?"

In a masterful manner he led her to the street. Once outside they both began talking as fast as they could. "Not a word from you all this time," he declared, "not one single, solitary word. I couldn't stand it any longer. I left the bridge building down there and my chances for eternal fame and fortune with it, all in the hands of Johnson, and came over here to learn the worst. I even had to cable north to Daniels to find out where you were."

"Billy, what do you mean?" she asked in disbelief. "I have written and written and never had one single answer from you."

"Eh? What's this?" said he. "I've written every day of my life. You haven't got them?" His eyes grew suddenly dark. "Where's that precious aunt of yours?"

And suddenly Peggy remembered in the midst of her new found happiness just where her aunt was. "Oh, heavens, Billy!" she said. "Why didn't you come before?"

"Why?" she repeated. "Why, indeed! Aunt Elinor is out motoring this afternoon with the Duke of Selena. She has gone with him to tell him I'll marry him. I thought—I thought—when you were silent—when I didn't hear from you—"

His teeth came together with a click. He faced her there in the Roman street, with the Roman sunshine flooding it with mellow warmth. "To tell him you'll marry him," he repeated. "Peggy, you're not going to, are you?"

She looked at him archly. "It's the only offer I've had recently," she said in mocking happiness. "You'll have another right away," said he, with determination, "one that I dare you to turn down," he added, with a boyish laugh.

"But the duke," she said breathlessly. "I'm probably engaged to him by this time. Aunt Elinor wastes no time."

"I'll attend to the duke and your aunt, too," said he grimly. "What shall we do?"

"Almost any minute now," said she. "Come, let's go back. We mustn't miss them, must we, Billy?"

A Grateful Boy. A gift always opens the door of an Eskimo heart, declares Knud Rasmussen in "The People of the Polar North," and then tells the story of a little orphan boy whom he ran across in his travels.

I had a little pocketknife in my pocket, and I presented it to him in order to establish our acquaintance.

It was assuredly the first time in his life that the boy had ever had such an experience as to receive a present. I assured him that I really meant it. Then, without a change of expression, he snatched the knife out of my hand and ran off. I did not think that I should see any more of him and was just going into our tent when he came running up with a piece of walrus meat, which he pressed into my hand.

"Thou gavest, see; I give, too," said he, and his face shone with grease and pride. But from that day forth we were friends.

Kajoranguaq had no relatives at all to look after him. He was everybody's drudge and slept in an old ruined building, where he said he was very comfortable. He could not have been more than ten years old at the outside, although there was little of the child about him, but after he came to live in our tent we noticed that he began to sing when alone, and after awhile he would best time to his singing on a little tin box, so in spite of a life of neglect he got a little joy now and then.

An Essay on Man. Man that is born of woman is small potatoes and few in a hill. He rises up today and flourishes like a ragweed, and tomorrow or next day the undertaker bath him. He goeth forth in the morning warbling like a lark and is knocked out in one round and two seconds. In the midst of life he is in debt, and the tax collector pursues him wherever he goeth. The banister of life is full of splinters, and he slideth down with considerable rapidity. He cometh home at eventide and meeteth the wheelbarrow in his path. It riseth up and smiteth him to the earth and falleth upon him and runneth one of its legs into his ear. In the gentle springtime he putteth on his summer clothes, and a blizzard striketh him far from home and flieth him with ruff words and rheumatism. He buyeth a watchdog, and when he cometh home from the club the watchdog trotteth him and sitteth near him until rosy morn. He goeth to the race course and betteth his money on the brown mare, and the bay gelding with

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HE STARVED TO DEATH

One-Time Tammany Leader Had No Food, But Kept the Suit He Wore When Presented at Court of King Edward—Friends Were Summoned Too Late.

New York, Feb. 2.—Smith Edward Lane, who was once one of the wits of the Century and Union clubs, an after-dinner speaker at the banquets of the Sons of the American Revolution and the St. Nicholas societies and in the administration of Mayor Smith Ely, a park commissioner of the city, died alone in his room in a tenement house.

Though there was no fire in his room and the shelves of his cupboard held nothing but empty boxes and jars that had once contained food, the court suit of silk and silk stockings that Mr. Lane had worn at a levee of King Edward in 1902 were hanging in his closet, together with two suits of evening clothes and the state sword that he had carried at his side when presented to royalty.

One of the two friends that Mr. Lane had left in the world said that Lane's pride had been with him to the end and that few persons knew that the one-time leader in Tammany, lawyer and clubman, had been a recluse for ten years where none could see his shame in poverty.

Mrs. Arnold, caretaker of the house where Mr. Lane had lived for seven years, knew that her solitary tenant had been ill for four weeks. He was in his eighty-first year, and though he tried bravely to conceal his infirmity, he had been forced to admit that during recent weeks he had been to see a doctor. But four days ago he had been unable to leave his bed, and Mrs. Arnold sent word to former Mayor Ely, one of the two friends that Mr. Lane had.

Monday Mrs. Arnold knocked at Mr. Lane's door. He answered. A half hour later Charles D. Bergen, secretary for Mr. Ely, knocked at the door. He had come to remove the sick man to a hospital.

There was no response. Mr. Lane was dead. "Don't say that Mr. Lane died of starvation," said Mr. Ely's secretary, later. "That wouldn't be right. I think he died of pride; that was all."

Has Majority of About 16,000 Over John Walker, of Illinois. Indianapolis, Feb. 2.—For president of the United Mine Workers of America it is conceded that President Lewis has been re-elected by a majority of about 16,000. John Walker, of Illinois, announced that he would not contest the election if he is defeated.

Believes Husband Was Murdered. Newark, N. J., Feb. 2.—Lying in his home, with a bullet wound in the head, the dead body of Frank Wilhelm, a real estate dealer and justice of the peace, was found by his wife. It is believed by Mrs. Wilhelm that her husband was murdered, and the police are searching for an Italian who is said to have threatened him with death.

President Declines \$10,000 Legacy. Boston, Feb. 2.—President Roosevelt in a letter to the attorneys for the administrator, declares that under no condition will he accept a legacy of \$10,000 left him by the last will of Benjamin Hadley, an East Somerville reclus, who died Dec. 16, 1907. The will disposed of property valued at \$150,000 and provided for a legacy of \$10,000 to the president of the United States.

Old Pair Die in Street. St. Louis, Feb. 2.—While summoning aid for his wife, who had dropped dead in the street from heart failure, Sebastian Stoll, sixty-seven years old, died beside the body of his helpmate of nearly fifty years.

CONDENSED NEWS ITEMS.

Wednesday, January 27. Short in his accounts \$600. Postmaster J. W. Kennedy, of Searchlight, Nev., blew out his brains.

The annual reunion of the United Confederate Veterans will be held in Memphis, Tenn., on June 8, 9 and 10. Henry Miller, yardmaster at the Reading railway yards at Mahanoy City, Pa., was run down and killed by a train.

An explosion of natural gas at Bradford, Pa., wrecked the plant of the Tuna Valley Pressed Brick company and seriously injured R. C. Gordon and Phillip Derry.

Thursday, January 28. The senate ratified an arbitration treaty with Brazil. Wilson Heckdom, a miner, was struck and killed by a train at a crossing fifteen miles north of Lebanon, Pa.

William Spooner, a farmer, and his ten-year-old son, Wilfrid, were killed instantly at the Monroeville street grade crossing, Kingston, Ont.

Curtis N. Buzbey is under arrest in Philadelphia, charged with embezzling \$4000 from his employers, Vance & Peters, a hardware firm. Frank Clarke, a chemist, was shot and mortally wounded in a quarrel with Clyde Butterfield, a mail carrier, in a hotel at Fort Henry, N. Y.

Friday, January 29. William Robinson, of Philadelphia, was struck and killed by a train at Elkton, Md. Melancholy over domestic troubles, William Gaffney, an iron ore miner at Belvidere, N. J., shot and killed himself.

Lumber prices in Ancon, B. C., have advanced \$2 per 1000 feet on common grades, and within a short time there will be an advance affecting all outside points.

Since the "devil tracks" were first reported in South Jersey it has been noticed that not a chicken roost robbery has been reported, although previous to that time hardly a night passed but that a number of chicken robberies were not reported.

Saturday, January 30. The treasury has purchased 100,000 ounces of silver for delivery at New York, at \$1.520 per fine ounce. One man was killed and four others seriously injured in a collision between a freight and construction train on the Pittsburg & Lake Erie railroad at Beaver Falls, Pa., near Pittsburg.

Theodore Adams, of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., was arrested and charged with the murder of his brother-in-law, John Kliff, of that place, after Mrs. Kliff had accused Adams of robbing her.

Monday, February 1. The Kansas house passed a bill prohibiting the making or selling of cigarette papers. Caesar Mattucci, of Slateford, Pa., has started suit for \$2000 against the Lackawanna railroad for the loss of an eye.

Fire starting in the White Front dry goods store at Freeport, Ill., destroyed three business houses. Loss, \$100,000. A fire which destroyed their home, near London, Ont., cost the lives of Philip Vansickle, his son, daughter and son-in-law.

Charged with embezzling \$4000 received as license money, former County Clerk William W. Wallace, of McMinnville, Tenn., was arrested in California.

Tuesday, February 2. Two children of Nathaniel Workman were burned to death in a fire that destroyed their home in Bath county, Ky. Charles H. Brent, Protestant Episcopal bishop of the Philippines, was elected chairman of the international opium commission at Shanghai, China.

President Roosevelt has accepted an invitation to attend a farewell meeting of the congregation of Grace Reformed church in Washington on the evening of Feb. 15. Panic stricken because of the presence of scarlet fever in the institution, thirty students of the Mercersburg (Pa.) academy broke the quarantine and fled in a body.

With the gas radiator turned on full, Frederick Vahey, forty years old and his wife, Marie, were found dead from asphyxiation in their apartment in Jersey City, N. J.

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