

"K"

By Mary Roberts Rinehart

Copyright, by McClure Publications, Inc.

(Continued from last week.)

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—At her home in the Street, Sidney Page agrees to marry Joe Drummond "after years and years" and talks to K. Le Moyne, the new roomer.

CHAPTER II—Sidney's aunt Harriet who has been dressing with Sidney's mother, launches an independent modiste's parlor. Sidney gets Dr. Ed Wilson's influence with his brother, Doctor Max, the successful young surgeon, to place her in the hospital as a probationer nurse.

CHAPTER III—K. becomes acquainted in the Street. Sidney asks him to stay on as a roomer and explains her plans for financing her home while she is in the school.

CHAPTER IV—Doctor Max gets Sidney into the hospital school.

CHAPTER V—Sidney and K. spend an afternoon in the country. Sidney falls into the river.

CHAPTER VI—Max asks Carlotta Harrison, a probationer, to take a motor ride with him. Joe finds Sidney and K. at the country hotel, where Sidney is drying her clothes, and is insanely jealous.

CHAPTER VII—While Sidney and K. are dining on the terrace, Max and Carlotta appear. K. does not see them, but for some reason seeing him disturbs Carlotta strangely.

CHAPTER VIII—Joe reproaches Sidney. She confides to K. that Joe knows now she will not marry him.

CHAPTER IX—Sidney goes to training school and at home relies more and more on K. Max meets K. and recognizes him as Edward, a brilliant young surgeon who has been thought lost on the Titanic. K.'s losing cases lost him faith in himself and he quit and hid from the world.

CHAPTER X—Carlotta fears Sidney, Christine Lorenz and Palmer Howe are married. The hard facts of her new life puzzle Sidney.

CHAPTER XI.

The supper at the White Springs hotel had not been the last supper Carlotta Harrison and Max Wilson had taken together. Carlotta had selected for her vacation a small town within easy motoring distance of the city, and two or three times during her two weeks off duty Wilson had gone out to see her. He liked being with her. She stimulated him. For once that he could see Sidney, he saw Carlotta twice.

She had kept the affair well in hand. She was playing for high stakes. She knew quite well the kind of man with whom she was dealing—that he would pay as little as possible. But she knew, too, that let him want a thing enough, he would pay any price for it even marriage.

She was very skillful. The very ardor in her face was in her favor. Behind her eyes lurked cold calculation. She would put the thing through, and show those pulling nurses, with their plous eyes and evening prayers, a thing or two.

During that entire vacation he never saw her in anything more elaborate than the simplest of white dresses modestly open at the throat, sleeves rolled up to show her satiny arms. There were no other boarders at the little farmhouse. She sat for hours in the summer evenings in the square yard filled with apple trees that bordered the highway, carefully posed over a book, but with her keen eyes always on the road. She read Browning, Emerson, Swinburne. Once he found her with a book that she hastily concealed. He insisted on seeing it, and secured it. It was a book on brain surgery. Confronted with it, she blushed and dropped her eyes. His delighted vanity found in it the most indiscreet of compliments, as she had intended.

"I feel such an idiot when I am with you," she said. "I wanted to know a little more about the things you do."

That put their relationship on a new and advanced basis. Thereafter he occasionally talked surgery instead of sentiment. He found her responsive, intelligent. His work, a sealed book to his women before, lay open to her. Now and then their professional discussions ended in something different. The two lines of their interest converged.

"Gad!" he said one day. "I look forward to these evenings. I can talk shop with you without either shocking or nauseating you. You are the most intelligent woman I know—and one of the prettiest."

The one element Carlotta had left out of her calculations was herself. She had known the man, had taken the situation at its proper value. But into her calculating ambition had come a new and destroying element. She who, like K. in his little room on the Street, had put aside love and the things thereof, found that it would not put her aside. By the end of her short vacation Carlotta Harrison was wildly in love with the younger Wilson.

They continued to meet, not as often as before, but once a week, perhaps. The meetings were full of danger now; and if for the girl they lost by this quality, they gained attraction for the man. She was shrewd enough to realize her own situation. The thing had gone wrong. She cared, and he

did not. It was his game now, not hers.

All women are intuitive; women in love are dangerously so. As well as she knew that his passion for her was not the real thing, so also she realized that there was growing up in his heart something akin to the real thing for Sidney Page. Suspicion became certainty after a talk they had over the supper table at a country roadhouse the day after Christine's wedding.

"How was the wedding—tiresome?" "Thrilling! There's always something thrilling to me in a man trying himself up for life to one woman. It's—it's so reckless."

Her eyes narrowed. "That's not exactly the Law and the Prophets, is it?" "It's the truth. To think of selecting out of all the world one woman, and electing to spend the rest of one's days with her! Although—"

His eyes looked past Carlotta into distance. "Sidney Page was one of the bridesmaids," he said irreverently. "She was lovelier than the bride."

"Pretty, but stupid," said Carlotta. "I like her. I've really tried to teach her things, but—you know—"

She shrugged her shoulders. Doctor Max was learning wisdom. If there was a twinkle in his eye, he veiled it discreetly. But, once again in the machine, he bent over and put his cheek against hers.

"You little cat! You're jealous," he said exultantly. Nevertheless, although he might smile, the image of Sidney lay very close to his heart those autumn days. And Carlotta knew it.

Sidney came off night duty the middle of November. The night duty had been a time of comparative peace to Carlotta. There were no evenings when Doctor Max could bring Sidney back to the hospital in his car.

Sidney's half-days at home were occasions for agonies of jealousy on Carlotta's part. On such an occasion, a month after the wedding, she could not contain herself. She pleaded her old excuse of headache, and took the trolley to a point near the end of the



"Pretty, but Stupid," said Carlotta.

Street. After twilight fell, she slowly walked the length of the Street. Christine and Palmer had not returned from their wedding journey. The November evening was not cold. Sidney was not in sight, or Wilson. But standing on the wooden doorstep of the house was Le Moyne. The almanac trees were bare at that time, throwing gaunt arms upward to the November sky. The street lamp, which in the summer left the doorway in the shadow, now shone through the branches and threw into strong relief Le Moyne's tall figure and set face. Carlotta saw him too late to retreat. But he did not see her. She went on, startled, her busy brain scheming anew. Another element had entered into her plotting. It was the first time she had known that K. lived in the Page house. It gave her a sense of uncertainty and deadly fear.

She made her first friendly overture of many days to Sidney the following day. They met in the locker room in the basement where the street clothing for the ward patients was kept. Here, rolled in bundles and ticketed, side by side lay the heterogeneous garments in which the patients had met accident or illness. Rags and tidiness, filth and cleanliness, lay almost touching.

Far away on the other side of the whitewashed basement, men were unloading gleaming cans of milk. Floods of sunlight came down the cellarway, touching their white coats and turning the cans to silver. Everywhere was the religion of the hospital, which is order.

Sidney, harking back from recent slights to the staircase conversations of her night duty, smiled at Carlotta cheerfully.

"A miracle is happening," she said. "Gracie Irving is going out today. When one remembers how ill she was and how we thought she could not live, it's rather a triumph, isn't it?"

"Are those her clothes?" Sidney examined with some dismay the elaborate negligee garments in her hand.

"She can't go out in those; I shall have to lend her something." A little of the light died out of her face. "She's had a hard fight, and she has won,"

she said. "But when I think of what she's probably going back to—"

Carlotta shrugged her shoulders. "It's all in the day's work," she observed indifferently. "You can take them up into the kitchen and give them steady work paring potatoes, or put them in the laundry ironing. In the end it's the same thing. They all go back."

She turned, on her way out of the locker room, and shot a quick glance at Sidney.

"I happened to be on your street the other night," she said. "You live across the street from Wilsons, don't you?"

"Yes."

"I thought so; I had heard you speak of the house. Your brother was standing on the steps."

Sidney laughed.

"I have no brother. That's a roomer, a Mr. Le Moyne. It isn't really right to call him a roomer; he's one of the family now."

"Le Moyne?" He had even taken another name. It had hit him hard, for sure.

K.'s name had struck an always responsive chord in Sidney. The two girls went toward the elevator together. With a very little encouragement, Sidney talked of K. She was pleased at Miss Harrison's friendly tone, glad that things were all right between them again. At her floor she put a timid hand on the girl's arm.

"I was afraid I had offended you or displeased you," she said. "I'm so glad it isn't."

Carlotta shivered under her hand.

Things were not going any too well with K. True, he had received his promotion at the office, and with this present affluence of \$22 a week he was able to do several things. Mrs. Rosenfeld now washed and ironed one day a week at the little house, so that Katie might have more time to look after Anna. He had increased also the amount of money that he periodically sent east.

So far, well enough. The thing that rankled and filled him with a sense of failure was Max Wilson's attitude. It was not unfriendly; it was, indeed consistently respectful, almost reverential. But he clearly considered Le Moyne's position absurd.

There was no true comradeship between the two men; but there was beginning to be constant association, and lately a certain amount of friction. They thought differently about almost everything.

Wilson began to bring all his problems to Le Moyne. There were long consultations in that small upper room. Perhaps more than one man or woman who did not know of K.'s existence owed his life to him that fall.

Under K.'s direction, Max did marvels. Cases began to come in to him from the surrounding towns. To his own daring was added a new and remarkable technique. But Le Moyne, who had found resignation if not content, was once again in touch with the work he loved. There were times when, having thrashed a case out together and outlined the next day's work for Max, he would walk for hours into the night out over the hills, fighting his battle. The jangling was on him to be in the thick of things again. The thought of the gas office and its deadly round sickened him.

CHAPTER XII.

When Palmer and Christine returned from their wedding trip Anna Page made much of the arrival, insisted on dinner for them that night at the little house, must help Christine unpack her trunks and arrange her wedding gifts about the apartment. She was brighter than she had been for days, more interested. The wonders of the trousseau filled her with admiration and a sort of jealous envy for Sidney, who could have none of these things. In a pathetic sort of way she mothered Christine in lieu of her own daughter.

And it was her quick eye that discerned something wrong. Christine was not happy. Under her excitement was an undercurrent of reserve. Anna, rich in maternity if in nothing else, felt it, and in reply to some speech of Christine's that struck her as hard, not quite fitting, she gave her a gentle admonishing.

"Married life takes a little adjusting, my dear," she said. "After we have lived to ourselves for a number of years, it is not easy to live for someone else."

Christine straightened from the tea table she was arranging.

"That's true, of course. But why should the woman do all the adjusting?"

"Men are more set," said poor Anna, who had never been set in anything in her life. "It is harder for them to give in. And, of course, Palmer is older, and his habits—"

"The less said about Palmer's habits the better," flashed Christine. "I appear to have married a bunch of habits."

She gave over her unpacking, and sat down listlessly by the fire, while Anna moved about, busy with the small activities that delighted her.

Christine was not without courage. She was making a brave clutch at happiness. But that afternoon of the first day at home she was terrified. She was glad when Anna went and left her alone by her fire.

The day's exertion had been bad for Anna. Le Moyne found her on the couch in the transformed sewing room, and gave her a quick glance of apprehension. She was propped up high with pillows, with a bottle of aromatic ammonia beside her.

"Just—short of breath," she panted. "I—I must get down. Sidney—is coming home—to supper; and—the others—Palmer and—"

That was as far as she got. K., watch in hand, found her pulse thin, stringy, irregular. He had been prepared for some such emergency, and he hurried into his room for amyl nitrate. When he came back she was almost unconscious. There was no time even to call Katie. He broke the capsule in a towel, and held it over her face. After a time the spasm relaxed, but her condition remained alarming.

Harriet, who had come home by that time, sat by the couch and held her sister's hand. Only once in the next hour or so did she speak. They had sent for Doctor Ed, but he had not come yet. Harriet was too wretched to notice the professional manner in which K. set to work over Anna.

"I've been a very hard sister to her," she said. "If you can pull her through, I'll try to make up for it."

Christine sat on the stairs outside, frightened and helpless. They had sent for Sidney; but the little house had no telephone, and the message was slow in getting off.

At six o'clock Doctor Ed came panting up the stairs and into the room. K. stood back.

"Well, this is sad, Harriet," said Doctor Ed. "Why in the name of heaven, when I wasn't around, didn't you get another doctor. If she had had some amyl nitrate—"

"I gave her some nitrate of amyl," said K. quietly. "There was really no time to send for anybody. She almost went under at half-past five."

Max had kept his word, and even

Doctor Ed did not suspect K.'s secret. He gave a quick glance at this tall young man who spoke so quietly of what he had done for the sick woman, and went on with his work.

Sidney arrived a little after six, and from that moment the confusion in the sickroom was at an end. She moved Christine from the stairs, where Katie on her numerous errands must crawl over her; set Harriet to warming her mother's bed and getting it ready; opened windows, brought order and quiet. And then, with death in her eyes, she took up her position beside her mother. This was no time for weeping; that would come later. Once she turned to K., standing watchfully beside her.

"I think you have known this for a long time," she said. And, when he did not answer: "Why did you let me stay away from her? It would have been such a little time!"

"We were trying to do our best for both of you," he replied.

Anna was unconscious and sinking fast. One thought obsessed Sidney. She repeated it over and over. It came as a cry from the depths of the gris new experience.

"She has had so little of life," she said, over and over. "So little! Just this Street. She never knew anything else."

And finally K. took it up. "After all, Sidney," he said, "the Street is life; the world is only many streets. She had a great deal. She had love and content, and she had you."

Anna died a little after midnight, a quiet passing, so that only Sidney and the two men knew when she went away. It was Harriet who collapsed. During all that long evening she had sat looking back over years of small unkindnesses. The thorn of Anna's inefficiency had always rankled in her flesh. She had been hard, uncompromising, thwarted. And now it was forever too late.

K. had watched Sidney carefully. Once he thought she was fainting, and went to her. But she shook her head.

"I am all right. Do you think you could get them all out of the room and let me have her alone for just a few minutes?"

He cleared the room and took his vigil outside the door. And, as he stood there, he thought of what he had said to Sidney about the Street. It was a world of its own. Here in this very house were death and separation; Harriet's starved life; Christine and Palmer beginning a long and doubtful future together; himself, a failure, and an impostor.

When he opened the door again, Sidney was standing by her mother's bed. He went to her, and she turned and put her head against his shoulder like a tired child.

"Take me away, K.," she said pitifully.

And, with his arm around her, he led her out of the room.

(Continued next week.)

A Judicial Decision on Cats.

Pittsburgh, March 17.—It is not a crime to steal a cat in Pennsylvania, according to the decision of Judge Henry C. Quigley, of Centre county, in criminal court here this morning.

His decision was given on a motion to quash an indictment against Charles E. Ryan, of Carnegie, charging him with the larceny of two \$50 Persian felines from the cattery of Miss Hattie Geis, of Verona.

Ryan's attorney contended that cats were not subjects of larceny of common law, and have not been made such by statute, and Judge Quigley upheld him.

The quashing of the indictment did not mean freedom for Ryan, for he has been charged with entering a building in connection with the theft of the cats.

—Subscribe for the "Watchman".

CASTORIA

Bears the signature of Chas. H. Fletcher. In use for over thirty years, and

The Kind You Have Always Bought.

EVERYTHING HAS NOT GONE UP IN PRICE

All the goods we advertise here are selling at prices prevailing this time last season.

MINCE MEAT.

We are now making our MINCE MEAT and keeping it fully up to our usual high standard; nothing cut out or cut short and are selling it at our former price of 15 Cents Per Pound.

Fine Celery, Oranges, Grape Fruit, Apricots, Peaches, Prunes, Spices, Breakfast Foods, Extracts, Baking Powders, Soda, Cornstarch. The whole line of Washing Powders, Starches, Blueing and many other articles are selling at the usual prices.

COFFEES, TEAS AND RICE.

On our Fine Coffees at 25c, 28c, 29c, 35c and 40c, there has been no change in price on quality of goods and no change in the price of TEAS. Rice has not advanced in price and can be used largely as a substitute for potatoes. All of these goods are costing us more than formerly but we are doing our best to Hold Down the Lid on high prices, hoping for a more favorable market in the near future.

LET US HAVE YOUR ORDER

and we will give you FINE GROCERIES at reasonable prices and give you good service.

SECHLER & COMPANY,

Bush House Block, 57-1 Bellefonte, Pa.

Shoes.

Shoes.

Big Reduction on the Price of Shoes

YEAGER'S SHOE STORE

For One Day Only, Saturday, March 24th.

I will reduce the prices on certain lines of Shoes. This reduction does not cover all Shoes, just Shoes listed below. It is a case of I need the money, you need the Shoes.

Table listing shoe types and prices: Soft-sole Shoes for the baby (20c), Men's \$4.00 Dayton Shoes (\$3.00), Men's \$3.50 Moose-hide Shoes (\$2.50), Men's \$3.50 Scout Shoes (\$2.50), Boys' \$3.00 Scout Shoes (\$2.25), Ladies' \$4.00 Nurse Shoes (\$3.00), Child's \$2.50 Tan Shoes (\$1.75), Men's \$7.00 Dress Shoes (\$5.00).

This is a bonafide reduction; every pair of shoes is worth just one dollar more than I am selling them for on this special day. Remember the day—

SATURDAY, MARCH 24 ONLY.

YEAGER'S,

The Shoe Store for the Poor Man.

Bush Arcade Bldg. 58-27 BELLEFONTE, PA.



A Bank Account Is the Gibraltar of the Home!

If you are a man of family you must have a bank account. A BANK ACCOUNT IS THE BULWARK, THE GIBRALTAR, OF YOUR HOME. It protects you in time of need. It gives you a feeling of independence. It strengthens you.

It Is a Consolation to Your Wife, to Your Children

THE CENTRE COUNTY BANK,

BELLEFONTE