

# MISS LULU BETT



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(Continued from last week.)

## SYNOPSIS

I—APRIL—General factotum in the house of her sister Ina, wife of Herbert Deacon, in the small town of Warbleton Lulu Bett leads a dull, cramped existence, with which she is constantly at enmity, though apparently satisfied with her lot. She has natural thoughts and aspirations which neither her sister nor her brother-in-law seemingly can comprehend. To Mr. Deacon comes Bobby Larkin, recently graduated high-school youth, secretly enamored of Deacon's elder daughter, Diana, an applicant for a "job" around the Deacon house. He is engaged, his occupation to be to keep the lawn in trim. The family is excited over the news of an approaching visit from Deacon's brother Ninian, whom he had not seen for many years. Deacon jokes with Lulu, with subtle meaning, concerning the coming meeting.

II—MAY—Chiefly because of the ripple in her placid, colorless existence which the arrival of Ninian will bring, Lulu is interested and speculative, meanwhile watching with something like envy the boy-and-girl love-making of Bobby and Diana. Unexpectedly, Ninian arrives, in the absence of Herbert, at his business, and of Ina, resting. Thus he becomes acquainted with Lulu first and in a measure understands her position in the house. To Lulu, Ninian is a much-traveled man of the world and even the slight interest which he takes in her is appreciated, because it is something new in her life.

III—JUNE—At an outing which the family takes, Ninian and Lulu become in a measure confidential. He expresses his disapproval of her treatment as a sort of dependent in the Deacon home. Lulu has vaguely had the same thoughts, but her loyalty to her sister and her own diffidence make Ninian's comments embarrassing. He declares his intention of giving the family a "good time" in the city before he leaves. Diana and Bobby, in the course of "soft nothings," discuss the possibility of eloping and "surprising the whole school." Lulu, despite herself, has awakened to pleasant possibilities concerning Ninian's intentions toward herself, the more so because hitherto she has been a practical nonentity in the household, having little to do with its simple social functions. The fact that Ninian had walked home with her causes all sorts of speculations to disturb her slumbers that night.

IV—JULY—Ninian redeems his promise of a "good time," and dinner in the adjacent city, with the attentions shown her by her brother-in-law, is a delight to Lulu. At supper, after the theater, the conversation languishes, and Herbert banteringly suggests reading the funeral service as a rebuke for the dullness. Ninian apparently jokingly urges the substitution of the wedding service, himself and Lulu participating. As part of the joke Lulu repeats the words of the civil ceremony, with Ninian. The laughter subsiding, Herbert remembers that a civil wedding is binding in the state, and inasmuch as he is a magistrate, Ninian and Lulu are legally wedded. The rest of the party is shocked, but Ninian declares he is perfectly satisfied. Lulu is dumfounded but secretly happy. She and Ninian depart at once for their honeymoon, without returning to Warbleton. The Deacons lose no time spreading the news in the home town, though the services of Lulu are sadly missed in the household.

"That's it. So do I. Nothing like a nice sacred piece," Cornish declared. Bobby Larkin, at the end of the piano, looked directly into Di's face. "Give me ragtime," he said now, with the effect of bursting out of somewhere. "Don't you like ragtime?" he put it to her directly. Di's eyes danced into his, they sparkled for him, her smile was a smile for him alone, all their store of common memories was in their look. "Let's try 'My Rock, My Refuge,'" Cornish suggested. "That's got up real attractive."

Di's profile again, and her pleased voice saying that this was the very one she had been hoping to hear him sing. They gathered for "My Rock, My Refuge." "Oh," cried Ina, at the conclusion of this number, "I'm having such a perfectly beautiful time. Isn't everybody?" everybody's hostess put it. "Lulu is," said Dwight, and added softly to Lulu: "She don't have to hear herself sing." It was incredible. He was like a bad boy with a frog. About that photograph of Ninian he found a dozen ways to torture her, called attention to it, showed it to Cornish, set it on the piano facing them all. Everybody must have understood—accepting the Plows. These two gentle souls sang placidly through the Album of Old Favorites, and at the melodies smiled happily upon each other with an air from another world. Always it was as if the Plows walked some fair, inter-penetrating plane, from which they looked out as do other things not quite of earth, say, flowers and life and music.

Strolling home that night, the Plows were overtaken by some one who ran badly, and as if she were unaccustomed to running. "Mis' Plow, Mis' Plow!" this one called, and Lulu stood beside them. "Say!" she said. "Do you know of any job that I could get me? I mean that I'd know how to do? A job for money. . . . I mean a job. . . ." She burst into passionate crying. They drew her home with them.

She sat in Dwight's chair and Lulu sat in Ina's chair. Lulu had picked flowers for the table—a task coveted by her but usually performed by Ina. Lulu had usually picked Sweet William and had filled a vase of silver gossamer from the parlor. Also, Lulu had made ice cream.

"I don't see what Di can be thinking of," Lulu said. "It seems like asking you under false—" She was afraid of "pretenses" and ended without it. Cornish savored his steaming beef pie, with sage. "Oh, well!" he said, contentedly. "Kind of a relief, I think, to have her gone," said Mrs. Bett, from the fullness of something or other. "Mother!" Lulu said, twisting her smile. "Why, my land, I love her," Mrs. Bett explained, "but she wiggles and chitters."

Cornish never made the slightest effort, at any time, to keep a straight face. The honest fellow now laughed loudly. "Well!" Lulu thought. "He can't be so very much in love." And again she thought: "He doesn't know anything about the letter. He thinks Ninian got tired of me." Deep down in her heart there abode her certainty that this was not so. By some etiquette of consent, Mrs. Bett cleared the table and Lulu and Cornish went into the parlor. There lay the letter on the drop-leaf side-table, among the shells. Lulu had carried it there, where she need not see it at her work. The letter looked no more than the advertisement of dental office furniture beneath it. Monona stood indifferently fingering both.

"Monona," Lulu said sharply, "leave them be!" Cornish was displaying his music. "Got up quite attractive," he said—it was his formula of praise for his music. "But we can't try it over," Lulu said, "if Di doesn't come." "Well, say," said Cornish shyly. "You know I left that Album of Old Favorites here. Some of them we were lulu by heart."

Lulu looked. "I'll tell you something," she said; "there's some of these I can play with one hand—by ear. Maybe—"

"Why, sure!" said Cornish. Lulu sat on the piano. She had on the wool chaly, long sacred to the nights when she must combine her servant's estate with the quality of being Ina's sister. She wore her coral beads and her cameo cross. In her absence she had caught the trick of dressing her hair so that it looked even more abundant—but she had not dared to try it so until tonight, when Dwight was gone. Her long wrist was curved high, her thin hand pressed and fingered awkwardly, and at her mistakes her head dipped and strove to make all right. Her foot continuously touched the loud pedal—the blurred sound seemed to accomplish more. So she played "How Can I Leave Thee," and they managed to sing it. So she played "Long, Long Ago," and "Little Nell of Narragansett Bay." Beyond open doors, Mrs.

"What'd he say?" "Dwight don't like me to touch his mail. I'll have to wait till he comes back." "Lord sakes!" said Cornish. This time he did rise and walk about. He wanted to say something, wanted it with passion. He paused beside Lulu and stammered: "You—you're too nice a girl to get a deal like this. Darned if you aren't."

To her own complete surprise Lulu's eyes filled with tears, and she could not speak. She was by no means above self-sympathy. "And there ain't," said Cornish sorrowfully, "there ain't a thing I can do." And yet he was doing much. He was gentle, he was listening, and on his face a frown of concern. His face continually surprised her, it was so fine and alive and near, by comparison with Ninian's loose-lipped, ruddy, impersonal look and Dwight's thin, high-boned hardness. All the time Cornish gave her something, instead of drawing upon her. Above all, he was there, and she could talk to him.

"It's—it's funny," Lulu said. "I'd be awful glad if I just could know for sure that the other woman was alive—if I couldn't know she's dead." This surprising admission Cornish seemed to understand. "Sure you would," he said briefly. "Corra Waters," Lulu said. "Corra Waters, of San Diego, California. And she never heard of me." "No," Cornish admitted. They stared at each other as across some abyss. In the doorway Mrs. Bett appeared. "I scraped up everything," she remarked, "and left the dishes set." "That's right, mamma," Lulu said. "Come and sit down." Mrs. Bett entered with a leisurely air of doing the thing next expected of her. "I don't hear any more playin' and singin'," she remarked. "It sounded real nice."

"Give us one more piece," she said. "Can we?" Cornish asked. "I can play 'I Think When I Read That Sweet Story of Old,'" Lulu said. "That's the ticket!" said Cornish. They sang it, to Lulu's right hand. "That's the one you picked out when you was a little girl, Lullie," cried Mrs. Bett. Lulu had played it now as she must have played it then. Half after nine and Di had not returned. But nobody thought of Di. Cornish rose to go. "What's them?" Mrs. Bett demanded. "Dwight's letters, mamma. You mustn't touch them!" Lulu's voice was sharp. "Say!" Cornish, at the door, dropped his voice. "If there was anything I could do at any time, you'd let me know, wouldn't you?" That past tense, those subjunctives, unconsciously called upon her to feel no intrusion. "Oh, thank you," she said. "You don't know how good it is to feel—"

"Of course it is," said Cornish heartily. They stood for a moment on the porch. The night was one of low clamor from the grass, tiny voices, insistent. "Of course," said Lulu, "of course you won't—you wouldn't—"



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"Say anything?" he divined. "Not for dollars. Not," he repeated, "for dollars." "But I knew you wouldn't," she told him. He took her hand. "Good-night," he said. "I've had an awful nice time singing and listening to you talk—well, of course—I mean," he cried, "the supper was just fine. And so was the music."

"Oh, no," she said. Mrs. Bett came into the hall. "Lullie," she said, "I guess you didn't notice—this one's from Ninian." "Mother—"

"I opened it—why, of course I did. It's from Ninian." Mrs. Bett held out the opened envelope, the unfolded letter, and a yellowed newspaper clipping. "See," said the old woman, "says 'Corie Waters, music hall singer—married last night to Ninian Deacon—' Say, Lullie, that must be her. . . ."

Lulu threw out her hands. "There!" she cried triumphantly. "He was married to her, just like he said!"

## FARM NOTES

—An outbreak of the lip and leg disease affecting sheep has been found in southern Pennsylvania by field agents of the Bureau of Animal Industry. The disease, which should not be confused with the hoof and mouth disease affecting cattle, is more or less prevalent in western States but it has not been found to any extent in Pennsylvania for a considerable time. The disease is not necessarily fatal but it may be easily spread and for this reason steps have been taken to prevent it from becoming prevalent in the flocks in the section in which it has already been found. It is generally believed that the disease was brought into Pennsylvania by sheep purchased in the west.

—So very little is generally known regarding the origin, composition and consumption of commercial fertilizers that the Division of Chemistry calls attention to the following facts: The fertilizer business is the largest group of the heavy-chemical industries. More than 90 per cent. by weight of the ingredients which enter into the composition of the fertilizers consumed in South Carolina—the largest fertilizer-consuming State—are strictly chemicals. It requires approximately 6½ million tons of chemicals to supply the annual demand for fertilizer in the United States—the other 10 per cent., or 750,000 tons, consisting mostly of cottonseed meal, packinghouse tankage, fish scrap, blood meal and lesser tonnage of garbage tankage, processed leather and other waste products.

Organic ammoniates, such as garbage, scrap leather, feathers, hair and felt are processed either by digestion with acid or by long-pressure cooking in order to convert the complex nitrogen compounds into forms readily available for plant use. Phosphate rock, from a tonnage point of view, is the most important raw fertilizer material. About 23 million tons of phosphate rock were consumed in producing the 7½ million tons of fertilizer consumed in the United States in 1914. It takes approximately 1,100 pounds of phosphate rock and 1,100 pounds of sulphuric acid to produce a finished ton of acid phosphate.

Ammonia nitrate is the original chemical produced at Muscle Shoals. Cyanamid is made in this country only at Niagara Falls. —For the first time in the history of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, a special report on the condition of the apple crop of the State, based on the varieties of apples, has been secured. The report has been presented to Secretary of Agriculture Fred Rasmussen by L. H. Wible, statistician for the department. The report shows the condition of the various varieties of apples on September 1. The figures indicate that the Stayman Winesap, one of the most popular varieties of apples, both with Pennsylvania growers and consumers, came through the frosts of last spring least well of any of the varieties, the condition of this variety on September 1 indicating a yield of 43 per cent. of a normal crop.

The following table shows the per centage of each variety as compared with a normal crop:

All varieties	58%
Fall varieties	69%
Winter varieties	57%
Stayman Winesap	43%
York Imperial	53%
Baldwin	60%
Northern Spy	55%
Ben Davis	57%
Jonathan	60%
Grimes' Golden	70%
Rome Beauty	52%

The report covers thirty-five counties of the State, in which Pennsylvania's commercial and farm apple crop is largely raised. The condition of the apple crop, according to the latest report of the Bureau of Statistics of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture indicates a yield of 11,486,000 bushels as compared with 1,766,000 bushels last year. It is indicated that this year's crop will run considerably above the average crop for the past ten years, the average for that time being 7,911,000 bushels.

—The great interest that is being taken during recent years in the improvement of the potato crop has resulted in a closer observation of the growing crop everywhere. One of the questions that is constantly being asked of the Bureau of Plant Industry, is why so many of the hills "miss." As this was a very common occurrence in potato fields this season, mention of some of the causes for missing hills may be of interest to potato growers.

(1) Perhaps the most important cause of missing hills in Pennsylvania is the fungus Rhizoctonia which winters as black specks on the tubers and then attacks and destroys the young shoots before they can get above ground. A sprout may be killed and start again five or six times before it at last gets a weak, sickly shoot out of the soil, and often the sprout is altogether suppressed. Seed treatment will prevent this type of miss.

(2) A few misses are due to the inefficiency of the planter. (3) A few misses result from bad cutting of seed, for a seed piece without an eye will not grow. (4) Severe seed treatment may cause misses by killing the buds in some eyes. (5) A few cases of failure may be due to the attacks on the sprouts of insects underground. (6) Storage conditions are not always given the importance that they should receive, and after a cold winter seed is apt to be so badly damaged that some of the eyes will not grow. (7) Misses are caused by the rotting of the seed-piece in the ground by various organisms. It is suspected that many misses this season were due to late blight rot carried over the winter from last year's epidemic. The ground is too wet after planting; it favors misses of this kind. (8) Finally, poor seed grown on poor land from weak, diseased stock is likely to develop a far larger per centage of misses than healthy, vigorous, well nourished seed.

## Ancient Myth of the Forget-Me-Not.

How the forget-me-not was named goes back to an old, old myth. A knight and his love were walking by a lake when she saw at the other shore some beautiful blue flowers and expressed her wish for some of them. For her to wish was for him to obey. He dashed into the lake, swam to the opposite bank, plucked the flowers and was returning to his love. Near the shore his strength gave out. He threw the flowers to his beloved, crying, "Forget-me-not," and then sank.