

THE SPOILED CHILD.

When Gran-pa takes me on his knee I'm just as glad as I kin be...

By T. A. Daly.

COMPLIMENTS OF MISS MARSHALL.

On a crisp forenoon in October last year a smart, shrewd-looking, handsome young woman...

A minute later she left the house, walked east without hesitation, but almost half a block away put her foot on a doorstep...

At the door of her boarding house she glanced across the street and saw another man, a stranger, in the shadow of the opposite doorway.

Dear Nan, You will be surprised to learn that by the time you get this I will be on a steamer bound for Europe.

She kissed the letter lingeringly and put it with the others. The clerk unlocked the ponderous door, studied her face a moment that he might know her again and bowed her out.

you something about Nan Marshall. There is no need, however, for she is not different from two or three thousand other young women making their living on the stage.

At the door of her boarding house she glanced across the street and saw another man, a stranger, in the shadow of the opposite doorway.

He was shabby, bleary-eyed, yet with the remains of swagger and assurance. With good clothes, clean linen, money in his pocket, without wiskey in his blood, Jim Marshall could still make a figure in certain circles.

"How much have they offered you?" Nan snapped this out suddenly and bent over to see its effect in his face.

"You were in here hunting for papers. You didn't find them, did you? How much did they offer? Come on, Dad, the price!"

"You're all right, Nan. You're all right. Don't get excited. You said you got a license. Why didn't you get married right away?"

"I'll wait till he comes back." "I'll not come back till they've done you up. Don't be a fool, Nan, they'll frame up something on you, drag you into court, smash your reputation and then what good are your letters and your license?"

"You won't get them, Dad. You needn't threaten. I'm too old to be beaten, and you know you can't bully me. When the time comes to deliver, I'll be the one to deliver."

Late in the afternoon Miss Marshall went downstairs and peered out of the hall window before she opened the door. The new shadow was in the usual place.

"The chief wants to see you. Come quietly and there won't be no fuss." "Am I under arrest?" "Not exactly, but if you don't come quietly it will be an arrest. Take it easy and it will be over in a moment and no harm done. Come on, I have a taxi."

"All right. Come on." The streets were crowded. The home rush had begun. Nan edged near a policeman with his back to the sidewalk, touched him on the arm.

"I thought he was a faker," she said as she told the policeman how he had accosted her and of his invitation. "O'Brien was all admiration. 'Say, you're one wise little bird, all right. What's he after?'"

"No," she laughed. "It's real life." "O'Brien reported this at the station. He stopped Nan the next day. 'Why don't you go down to the station and have a talk with the captain? He'd like to hear your story.'"

"Don't be a scared," said O'Brien. "You can trust the captain. He's on the dead level with good girls. He's got three daughters of his own."

"Nan felt this was good counsel. The strain had begun to worry her nerves. She found Livingston's address in the telephone book and wrote him a letter: Dear Sir: I have been to the police for protection against your detectives. They advise me to see you personally and have a showdown. I'm not going to give up Staats or his letters or our marriage license, but I am willing to carry out all your conditions of waiting and not seeing him or any other conditions. I'll make him a good wife. Yours truly, ANNA MARSHALL."

Twenty-four hours later she received a typed note in the third person requesting Miss Marshall to call on Staats Livingston at the same address on Broadway to which she had written.

At the door of the office she hesitated. There might be treachery, but the halls, she noticed, were full of people moving about; the crowded elevators went up and down as regularly as rods in a piston; attendants were everywhere. It would be safe. She entered a large outer office and, giving her name, was ushered in immediately conducted through several smaller offices and suddenly left on the threshold of a small room where an old, white-haired man was sitting before a soft-coal fire in a grate.

"There is no need to restate the facts. We all have spoken except Staats. It is for Staats to speak." "Staats will say nothing," cried Miss Allerton. "Why should we be compelled to listen to this common woman's story? I should think you would rather call in the police and give her up as a blackmailer."

"I had thought of that at first," said the old man. "When Miss Marshall came to me with her story I was strongly tempted to do as you suggest, but I had her story investigated and her story is true. You see what a very complicated situation arose. I did not think we would care to tresh that out in court."

"Then pay her price and send her away!" Nan stood again. Old Staats went to her side, asked her to take her seat. "The trouble is, Ethel, that Miss Marshall refuses every price."

"What does she want?" "I want Staats to tell the truth!" cried Nan. "Yes, let us have the truth," repeated Livingston. "Let's have all the truth. It is true, Ethel, that some one has conspired against Miss Marshall, that she has been tracked and trailed, that her handbag was cut open, that her room was ransacked, that offers of large sums were made to people near her for the license and the letters, that an attempt was made to lure her to some office where she might be searched. She thinks I did all that. I never heard of Miss Marshall till she wrote me."

He turned toward Nan and spread out his hands in deprecation of such an accusation. He seemed more of an interested spectator than a participant in the game. "I feel sure," the old man continued, "that Staats can throw some light on these transactions." "Say nothing, Staats," commanded Ethel. "The woman will use it against you."

the next morning, when the whole matter might be arranged. She was at his office on the stroke of the hour. Livingston welcomed her in his usual solemnly courteous manner. He gazed through the window at the bare branches and the white stones and the beautiful temple rising out of them. If the girl could have read that old, world-experienced mind she would have known that he was still working on his amusing problem and trying to guess at the solution.

"What is going to happen this morning, Miss Marshall," he said "may appear theatrical, but I think it will be best for all concerned. We are all to have a—showdown!" He touched a button on his desk. A door opened and a bright, beautiful young woman, about Nan's age, with every mark of the wealthiest simplicity in her air and costume, came in and stood by Livingston. Her race was anxious, haughty, contemptuous. "Ethel, this is the young woman, Miss Marshall, Miss Allerton."

"Please be seated, dear. I am acting only for your own sake. Your father was my dearest, my only friend. I promised him to look after you against all the world, and I will keep my word even if it should be against my own blood. Ethel, you must know exactly the kind of man you are taking when you marry Staats."

"I think I do know," said the girl. "I have told me all this woman's story. You seem to believe her. I do not. Even if true, we know that good men like Staats are often trapped by designing—"

"When Staats comes back from Europe—" Nan had hardly got this far when Miss Allerton laughed. "You see, Guardy, she does not know. Staats has evidently been trying to get loose from her. I do not need to stay any longer, do I? There is nothing more?"

"Just a moment, dear." The button on his desk summoned another clerk. "Has he arrived? Show him in by the other door." A moment later that door was opened and young Livingston stood in the room. "Staats!"

Nan sprang to her feet with a glad cry and held forth her hands. Miss Allerton went over to his side. There could be no doubt of her right of possession. Nan tried to catch his eye and read there that he would explain, take her by the hand and proclaim her. Notwithstanding the other girl's attitude by her lover's side she did not suspect treachery or baseness. Perhaps he was feeble for the strong will of his uncle.

The youth slunk into a chair. Miss Allerton put her hand on his shoulder, the conflict and she had the position of vantage. Nan was the struggling wrestler seeking to break a hold. The old man's voice broke the tensi-

"There are four of us here, my nephew Staats, my ward Miss Allerton, Miss Marshall and myself. I have thought it best to have this situation settled privately and to have each of us know where the other stands and especially that you, Ethel, might choose with your eyes open."

"A showdown without a doubt!" "There is no need to restate the facts. We all have spoken except Staats. It is for Staats to speak."

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convent; yet the rich refined girl had guessed the real situation when she first heard the story, while the sense of it was only now coming to Nan. To Miss Allerton, it was clear, this was a connection of bachelorhood which had got Staats into trouble. She had heard many stories like that about young fellows, and old fellows, too, in her circle. It was very disagreeable that her guardian had projected her into this sorry and sordid situation, but he always had queer, old-fashioned notions about honor and chivalry and playing the game and seemed to think now that it was his duty to show her a page of Staats' private life. If he thought this would lead her to give up her marriage he was mistaken.

All this time Nan had said not a word. Her early sorrow for his deception of Miss Allerton changed into a hot anger as she saw what he had intended against her, and how he had even tried, to the length of a license, to lure her and how when he had failed he had invented the story of his uncle's opposition and then had had her trailed and planned trickery to get the evidence of his treachery. She came to herself as she heard Miss Allerton say:

"If Staats has made a mistake, he is willing to pay. How much do you want?" "Staats," she cried in a whisper. "It's up to you. Is there an explanation?"

"Yes, it is for Staats to end this," said the old man. "Staats, which of these young women do you wish to marry a convict?" "Not me!" cried Nan. "I'd sooner marry a convict!"

"You take him!" she said. "You're rich and can afford the breed. I know the breed but I did not think he belonged. You seem to like him. Take him! Compliments of Miss Marshall!"

"You come out of this with honor," he said. "I wish you all the happiness." "Thanks. I believe you're on the level yourself." So she went out, and she never saw one of them again.

The New York newspapers had many interesting details of Ethel Allerton's marriage to Staats Livingston. They missed this one. The morning of the ceremony, old Staats received a package by express from Newark, N. J., containing an engagement ring, a brooch, a pearl ring, twenty letters to "Dearest Nan" and marriage license. On a slip of paper were the words: "FOR THE BRIDE—COMPLIMENTS OF MISS MARSHALL." By R. A. Farrelly.

Suitable tree planting along public highways, which greatly enhances their appearance and comfort, is most satisfactory done by the community as a whole rather than by individuals, says the United States Department of Agriculture. Interest in country highways in the United States has increased rapidly during the last few years. The greater interest in rural roads is due largely to the growing automobile traffic, a large part of which is pleasure driving in which the most beautiful routes are naturally sought.

While a few States have good laws providing for such planting, the remainder have either indifferent ones or none at all, according to Farmers' Bulletin 1431-F, "Planting the Roadside," just issued.

The traveling public has as much interest in the appearance of the road as a whole as the adjoining property holder. Furthermore, it is usually difficult to get each property holder to approve and act on a given plan. For these reasons, says the department, it is best to place the planting and subsequent care of roadside trees in the hands of a public body representing some such division as the State, county, town, township or parish, rather than smaller units.

Because of the intimate relationship between road construction and maintenance and the upkeep of the roadside, the closest co-operation between the highway department and those having the trees in charge is needed. Suggestions relative to planning for the trees, planting and spacing them, kinds to plant, pruning, arrangement of shrubs and perennials, and other phases of the work are given.

A copy of the new publication may be obtained free, as long as the supply lasts, upon application to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

There is a distinction between "curing" and "fermentation" as applied to vegetables treated in brine. Curing refers to the changes which vegetables undergo in brine as a result of osmosis by which brine largely takes the place of the vegetable juices, with resulting changes in cellular structure. Fermentation relates to the action of certain bacteria in changing the sugar content of the vegetable juices into acids and other end products. In a weak brine (5 per cent or less) bacteria are not inhibited and the process is largely a fermentation. In a moderately strong brine (10 per cent.) both processes go on about equally. In a strong brine (15 per cent. or over) bacteria are inhibited and the process is almost entirely a salt curing.

Because of the ever-increasing number of automobiles in the United States, and partly because of traffic discussions of the 1926 convention of road builders at Chicago, wider highways are being adopted throughout the nation as a means of safeguarding the lives of motorists and relieving traffic congestion. S. T. Henry, newly elected vice president of the American Road Builders' association, states. This will please those motorists riding about on Sunday.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

DAILY THOUGHT. Give with kind words. Possess knowledge without pride. Be merciful as well as just. Be liberal in proportion to your wealth.

The Old People's Valentine Club was, in fact, an anomaly, as it was composed of five young girls of a small country town. Its purpose, however, was, according to the imposing constitution, "to bring into the lives of the old some touch of the romance and sentiment of other and earlier Valentine days."

Early in February the newly formed club held an exciting business meeting, at which all sorts of valentines were displayed. The most interesting part of all was the comparing of valentines and the revelations of character made by the differences between them.

Practical Elsie had, as usual, thought first of the utility of her valentines. She had chosen five old ladies from the Home for the Aged, from a list given her by the matron. To each she presented a small woolen shawl, to which was pinned a card bearing simply the words, "To my Valentine."

Anna, the domestic, "stay-at-home" girl, had devoted herself to cookery. For each of her valentines she made a large heart of hard, old-fashioned peppermint candy, on which, in chocolate, were written the recipient's name and the date. She had discovered that among all the club there were just five grandparents, and "by permission," as she said, they made up her list.

Florence, the artist of the group, had secured photographs of all her old people—all more or less distant relatives—and colored them. She then passepartouted them, and presented them, being careful that none should receive his or her own portrait, but should get that of a favorite companion, now, perhaps, far away.

Frivolous, lovable Grace vindicated her title of "the flirt" by devoting herself entirely to five old gentlemen of her acquaintance. For over a week she had been busy with antique almanacs, fashion books of 1850, lace paper, gilt paper, beading and water colors in an endeavor to make an exact reproduction of the valentines of their youth. She had succeeded beautifully, and it was hard to believe that her valentines really were the product of half a century later.

Winnie, by far the poorest girl of the group, had done—rather, do—do—the most beautiful thing of all. She had assiduously hunted the woods for the first signs of spring, and had been rewarded by a whole armful of "pussy willow." This she had divided into five sections, each tied with a bow of narrow red ribbon, to which was attached a card bearing a merry valentine greeting. She had planned her work so as to spend all the afternoon of February 14 in the local hospital, and devote an hour to each of the aged persons there, leaving her gift as a memento of her visit. That visit was sure to prove a success, too, for who could be at once so witty, so entertaining and so tender as Winnie?

All the other valentines were sent anonymously, a small brother being paid five cents each by the girls to deliver them. Each gift was wrapped and addressed as daintily as possible, even the handwriting being disguised to add to the pleasant mystery and excitement of it all.

That Valentine's Day was one long remembered among the old folks of X—. Many a long dead memory was revived, and many a man or woman grown almost indifferent toward the old members of the family suddenly resolved to form a Valentine Club of his or her own.

Meanwhile, the work of the original Valentine Club still goes on, though several years have passed since its foundation.

For a round table an effective decoration is a huge centerpiece of red roses at each corner to serve as mats for slender candlesticks of silver with delicate hand-painted shades surmounted by in shape of a heart, and similar hearts cupids.

Between the corners are silver bonbon dishes or baskets filled with iced cakes and bonbons in heart and dart shape. Where the silver holders are not forthcoming, baskets are easily shaped from cardboard and covered with silver paper.

As a souvenir at each plate have a heart of red roses for the girls in a silver paper quiver, and a boutonniere of the roses for the men made emblematic by a silvered dart run through them.

A pretty canopy decoration is made by running gilt cord from the chandelier to the edge of the table so that a plate comes between every two ropes. To these suspend dangling paper hearts in various sizes and hung by different lengths of the cord. The tone of these hearts should correspond to the table decoration, which is quite as often pink as red on Valentine's Day.