Bellefonte, Pa., April 20, 1928.

THE SLANDER GIRL.

A good many people called Mrs. Henry Hassard a snob and she did not deny it. She was "proud of her pride," as she put it. To her friends, or rather to those acquaintances who pretended to be friends, she explained candidly and casually that a social position such as hers demanded hauteur, poise, a frigidity of mind and a formality of manner which was likely to be misconstrued; that it involved also the exercise of a certain ruthlessness which was bound to make enemies. If that constituted snobbery, so be it; one could not be a leader and march in the ranks.

Ambitious? Certainly she was ambitious. Ambition, the firm determination to get ahead at whatever cost, always had been and always would be the dominating motive of her life. She had started that way as a girl.

This was quite true. Henry Hassard had discovered the sort of person she was soon after meeting her, and he had been attracted as much by her mental energy as by her un-deniable good looks. At that time she had been working in a western variety theatre, and western variety theatres were not nice places of employment. Drinks were served in the curtained boxes and out of every dollar spent by the patrons for refreshment a percentage went to the "actresses" who promoted this conviviality. Salaries were nominal; nevertheless. some of the girls got ahead very

rapidly. Virginia Hazen, that being her name, was neither better nor worse than her companions, which is a manner of saying that she was no better than she should have been, but she was very much smarter than they, and more important by far, she had a level. Henry Hassard was awake to the danger he ran in making such a girl his wife, but he had never denied himself much of anything, and in those days as well as there young men had a way of marrying whom they chose.

Hassard took the chance. He brought Virginia back to New York quired. with him as his bride and he introduced her as the daughter of a wealthy Montana mining man. Nobody pried into her history, for she promptly made friends of her hus-band's friends. Inside of five years she had become one of the leaders of the social world in which they moved.

Now this success, so immediate and so extraordinary under the circumstances, was by no means entirely due to Virginia's beauty or to her force of character, although they had some-thing to do with it, as did her theatrical schooling. Henry was, in the maintain you in comfort, main, responsible. He drilled her, he you'll have to economize." coached her, he ground her down, he smoothed and polished her until she fitted her new position to a nicety. He practically made her over. She was hard; it was a patient, painstaking job on his part, but good workmen enjoy handling refractory material, it tied to your apron-strings long takes such a high finish and it fits so enough. Put him into business. Othprecisely when it is done.

Nobody runs straighter than a reformed crook, nobody becomes so narrow or so bigoted as the ungodly person who has been "saved," no wonian guards her reputation more carefully than she who repents of some youthful folly. Virginia ran straight, she grew as narrow as the groove in the matrons of Westchester county, none was so careful of her good name and so jealous of her standing as she who had neither name nor standing of her own. She made a splendid wife, and a good mother but she learned to dispense with friends. Friends, her husband had warned her, are likely to become confidantes.

The Hassards lived "up the Hudson," at that time a section favored by some of the smartest families. As the years went by the character of the environment changed; it became less fashionable but more respectable, if such a thing were possible. More conservative, too. The most respectable, the most conservative members of the community were the Henry Hassards, and Virginia became its social dictator. In comman with her better neighbors she looked down upon residents of the newer and less seasoned sections of suburban New York. All this, of course, was a mat-

ter of years in the doing.

The Hassards had one child, a son.

When Henry, Senior, died his widow mourned him sincerely, then settled herself to the earnest task of being a good mother to Henry, Junior, and rearing him to fill the place his father had left vacant. It was as much for the boy's sake as for her own that she refused to surrender the reins of her dictatorship. She adored the boy, he was her idol; she vowed that she would bequeath to him the finest, the firmest, the most respected social position of any young man in New York, and so jealously guarded every ounce of power, every atom of prestige she had gained.

Virginia spoiled young Henry pretty thoroughly, as was inevitable, but | quaintance. she was too sensible to pamper him. She put him through the most exbody received as thorough training as his mind, and, due more to her ambition than to his, he later became managed to graduate with honors. Nothing less than the unusual would have satisfied his mother, for by now he was more than her idol, he was

Virginia was sorely disappointed that he failed of the distinction of stand it. But the truth is Henry was

good deal about doing something of the sort, but he never quite got around Thanks to Virginia's efforts, he re-

ceived a commission before he sailed. Followed two years of anguish for Mrs. Hassard. She suffered, bled; every day was a torture. Relief work became fashionable and she plunged into it-Virginia always led in "the thing to do." Her home at Tarrytown she filled with sick boys in uniform, she lived the life of a trained warmed the objects of her concern.

All her love was centered upon her constantly. Only the mother of a his wife." thoroughly spoiled child can under-"In oth stand her selfish agonies. She was sorry for these lads, to be sure, she provided lavishly for their ease and their comfort and she made a slave of herself in their behalf, but she would have sacrificed them all for Henry. This vast expenditure of strength, of time, of money she regarded not as a voluntary sacrifice but as a -well, as a sort of insur-

ance premium upon her son's safety. It was a bribe to God. When the news of the Armistice came she collapsed. The bribe had taken. Henry re-

turned home in perfect health and as quite a hero; nevertheless he was changed. In some ways he was almost a stranger to the woman who believed she knew him best. Virginia was slow to admit the change even when it came up for comment one day in the office of Dexter Wood, her attorney. She had consulted Wood with increasing frequency of late, for the Hassard estate, never, so large as it was reputed to be, had shrunk alarmingly during the war and now in the post-war readjustment period it was shrinking still further.

"Isn't it time Henry settled down and went to work?" the attorney in-Virginia shrugged. "I don't know. Remember, he went through a lot. It left him fagged."

"He has had a year to rest up. Does he understand the condition of your affairs?

"Certainly not. Why spoil his fun?" "He'd be the last one to jeopardize your future security—or so I assume—but that's precisely what he is doing. And you're doing him an injustice by allowing him to run on. Figure it out for yourself, Virginia: there's barely enough income left to maintain you in comfort, and at best in the musical shows.

The lawyer smiled. "They always go first. Now, then, Henry has been er young men have made good in spite of their advantages and he can do so if he puts his mind to it. The trouble is to get him to put his mind on anything. What is it the war did to our boys? It made men of some mighty poor timber and-it spoiled a lot of promising material. Henry seems to have—well, to have lost which flowed her daily life, and of all compression. He's like a motor that give me if-"

"He's the best boy in the world," Virginia declared with conviction, "and I refuse to be alarmed. I'm having my troubles and he's having his. He is readjusting himself physically,

mentally, psychologically-"Morally, too, I hear." "And I'm going through a similar experience, finanically. Our boys lived fast and furiously over there; everything was brutal, abnormal. I presume you mean Henry is learning to slow down, trying to get in step again. Well, what of it?"

That was not what Dexter Wood had meant but he let it pass. As a matter of fact, it seemed to him that Henry Hassard was speeding up instead of slowing down. "Of course the simple and the direct way to solve his problem and yours, too, is to marry him off to some rich girl. With your social acquaintance and your technique that should be a simple matter."

Virginia smiled at her attorney. "Naturally, I don't share your prejudice against marriages of that sort, Dexter, for mine turned out so well. Frankly, that's precisely what I have in mind for the boy and I dare say I must get it at once. But as for his -indolence, I think he has been loafing largely to please me. He knows I want him near me."

When his client had left, Wood sat frowning for a awhile. Virginia was the smartest woman he had ever known, but she was blind on one side. If he was any judge of human nature Henry Hassard, Junior, was as nearly no good as any young man of his ac-

Mother and son had a frank talk thereafter and Virginia was a little pensive private schools, where his dismayed at the willingness with which Henry offered to go to work. Somehow she got the idea that he was relieved to escape from the monotony captain of the Princeton crew and yet of home life and to evade her espionage. When she sounded him out on the subject of matrimony she got no-He was lackadaisal; the mere where. thought of marrying, whether for love or for money, rather bored him.

He confessed that he had been pretty well spoiled by girls and that the being voted the most popular man of ones his mother thought highest of his class, and she could not under- struck him as particularly uninteresting. It would be pleasant, without as hard and as highly polished as his mother, and, like her, he had the knack of exciting admiration but fortunes large enough to share with completely lacked the ability to make anybody were either too dumb or too intelligent, too slow or too lively to After his graduation Virginia set suit him, and only a few were goodabout arranging a suitable marriage for him, and naturally she aimed had good friends.

To be frank, she aimed so high were goodlife something was not done immediatelught him and only a few were goodlife something was not done immediatelught had called several times during the had called several times during the rying the creature. Could a worse afternoon and was waiting.

"Marry whom you choose, of calamity befall a woman in Virginia's "How dare you disturb me?" Virginia's

that there was no target to shoot at.

Then came the war. Some of Henry's college friends went over with the Canadians. Others later joined the Foreign Legion, and he talked a your heart to marry the wrong sort."

Then came the war. Some of Henin the Canadians. Others later joined the Foreign Legion, and he talked a your heart to marry the wrong sort."

The som married to a girl ginia cried. "How dare anybody intrude at such—"
She paused, straightened herself, for a figure had appeared her. So! this way behind the butler. It was the answer to how proved the answer to how proved the unwellance caller."

The som married to a girl ginia cried. "How dare anybody intrude at such—"
Dexter Wood had finally secured a purchaser for the Hassard place. His are way to how proved the unwellance caller. The way in the area of the purchaser for the Hassard place. His purchaser for the Hassard place. His purchaser for the Hassard place. His area of the purchaser for the Hassard place. His purchaser for the Hassard place are the purchaser for the Hassard place. His purchaser for the Hassard place. His purchaser for the Hassard place are the purchaser for the Hassard place. His purchaser for the Hassard place are the purchaser for the Hassard place ar "I presume not."

"You have a name, position, and to it. He did go across finally, but not until America had entered the struggle and he had been drafted. Beware of any girl who love, the hopes to Viscoinia's offerts he will be a lane, position, and let want for an iner satrinces. Better plain and limitatire, girl sat upon to woods once in a concerted family you're supposed to be comfortably if Henry had fallen in France! The her as it rests upon a child, and she effort to beat down the price. Mrs. love, the hopes, the ambitions of a moved as if a great weariness bore magnificent sable coats, the finest you promise?"

"I promise," Henry laughed.
"I mean that figuratively and literally as well. I know theatrical women. I was one." Virginia's lips compressed themselves. "And don't think too lightly of money. That's wither her old age. the improvidence of youth. I don't mean to imply that money is everynurse and ran the place like a hos- thing, but it is a great deal more than pital. Those boys were soul-sick as we consider it, at twenty-five. Povwell as body-sick and many of them erty is degrading. Money is a safeyearned for a little something more than food, amusement, professional to do so many nice things and to lorded it these many years! She solace, but Mrs. Hassard was an au- know only the nicest people, Henry, tomoton, there was a remoteness to her sympathy that chilled instead of tainly would kill me if you married a-a common girl, for it would prove your own small caliber. The surest own son and about him she worried way to measure a man is to measure screamed.

> "In other words, a man is judged by the woman he keeps?" "Exactly! That's why I worked like a galley-slave to make something of myself. The only questionable thing your father ever did was to marry

woman in the county."

"I admit it, my dear. That's why our marriage turned out so well. I made it succeed. Not many women could do as much and so again I urge you to marry well. It's the best insurance in the world." Henry Hassard found a job. With

a bond house, of course. As time went on he took to living at one of his clubs and his mother saw him only at week-ends, for commuting wearied him. By and by even those visits became infrequent and Virginia began to consider selling her Tarrytown place and taking a house in town. But the home was heavily mortgaged and Henry argued against such a move. Bond selling, as he explained, was a peculiar business; it involved a deal of night work and it called for personal contacts. A fellow had to fit his habits to those of his moneyed friends. If Virginia came to town it would handicap rath-

er than help him.
In order to avoid completely losing touch with her son Mrs. Hassard made it a practice to go to the city once a week and have luncheon or dinner with him. Sometimes they went to the theatre. She did not care much for the theatre, for it aroused memories too long ignored, too thor-oughly stifled; it was like visiting the grave of some indiscretion. Moreover she did not aprpove of the modern stage, for the frankness of the spoken drama caused her to cringe and she could see little except vulgarity

The first show Henry took her to was one of the latter sort. It was "Oh, I've made a start in that direction. I've cut my charities to the bone."

was one of the latter sort. It was good and he was not getting ahead. For the first time Virginia did not volunteer to aid him. She suspected Hardened theatergoers gasped at "The Slanders" and nudged their neighbors and askea what next. Naturally, it was a great success. It was advertised as a sumptuous eye and ear entertainment.

Virginia conceded that much and more. As she told Henry, it was an eye, ear, nose and throat entertainment: a bust, body and thigh show. She could have sat through it with the boy's father and taken a certain sophisticated enjoyment out of its lavish splendor, but with Henry, the younger, here beside her she suffered runs idle but won't pull a load. For- an attack of extreme self-consciousness. She wondered what emotions in him were excited by those beauteous white bodies so nearly naked. Was it an esthetic enjoyment he derived? She could not make herself believe that it was.

> sion of a bewildering ballet, an enormous jewel box opened, exposing a perfectly nude girl. Perfect and nude would better describe her, for in face and figure she was exquisite-Virginia had never seen a more beautiful creature. For a full minute she posed against a background of purple velvet, then, as a roar of applause broke forth, the scene was suddenly blacked

> but Henry informed her:
> "That's Myrna Sloan. You must gravures. They call her the Slander

"Poor child!" the mother murmured.

Henry faced about and raised his brows. "What? What do you mean?" "I was merely thinking of the price she pays for this applause. I dare

say she cries a good deal."
"Nonsense! You were a professional, Mother. You must know how they look at such things. It's all in the business."

"The business has changed since my time. And the people, too. Why, the toughest dance-hall girl in the wildest western mining-camp was a prude compared with that creature.' then shrugged and turned his face

towards the stage. One day Dexter Wood felt called upon to tell Mrs. Hassard that her son was behaving badly. He was drinking too much and working not at all. He was living on borrowed mon-Nor was that the worst; every night he was to be seen in the com-

pany of Myrna Sloan, a show girl. Mrs. Hassard paled, a sickness assailed her. Myrna Sloan! The Slander Girl! Henry was in love with that—that naked body! Wood answered the mother' questions frankly; yes, the affair was serious and there was no telling how far it had gone or where it would end, for the young people were crazy for each other. It had already gone far enough to excite a deal of scandalous gossip and on the hill her butler announced that

was the answer to her prayers, the reward for all her sacrifices. Better don't bring me a-a chorus girl. Do tered by that-strumpet! It was too frightful. Then something like terror smote her as she saw agin the milk-white body of the Slander Girl "What does this me in all its devastating beauty. To her you?" she demanded. distracted mind it was the ghost of her own passionate youth risen to

> Of course, Henry was not to blame. The creature had trapped him; she had used her flesh for a lure. Without doubt she planned to marry him. What a morsel for the people Vircould hear their snickers. It was their turn now; the pedestal she had so laboriously built for herself was fallhusband of a harlot! She could have

Panic-stricken, she telephoned for Henry and commanded him to come at once to her. He inferred that she had learned the truth and he came prepared to have it out with her. He had never learned to tolerate criticism or to brook interference and so they promptly clashed. Flint struck steel "Ridiculous! You're the cleverest and sparks flew. Henry as much as told his mother to mind her own business and when she refused to do so he warned her that if she persisted in calling him to account for his personal conduct he would leave the house and never return. He was free, white and twenty-one and his life was his own to do with as he chose. What right had she to disparage a girl she knew nothing about?

Virginia declared that she knew enough about Miss Sloan. She would never have her in her house, she

would never recognize her.

Very well. That ended the discus-Henry refused to argue the matter one way or the other or to combat his mother's rock-ribbed prejudice. But as for his "disgraceful affair," this "sordid infatuation," to quote her words, he proposed to follow his own desires as far as he pleased and to account to no one. So that was that. If there was nothing else to talk about he'd get back to town and go to bed. He'd had a pretty rough night and was feeling rotten. Naturally that encounter ended Mrs. Hassard's trips to the city and Henry's visits to Tarrytown. They saw nothing of each other for some time. Then the mother's yearnings proved too much for her and she sent for him on some business pretext. She managed to get him out several

He was not looking well and each time she saw him he looked worse than before. He was haggard and nervous, he was irritable and his hands shook. He had no appetite. Business, he confided, was none too uspected

nourish the vampire that fed upon ia knew the breed. suffering and at his impending break-down, telling herself that the sooner it came, the sooner she would get him wrong with him; his ills were men-tal. No wonder he was looking like a death's head; what jealous lover

expose her body to the world? The professional view-point, indeed! What man could share in that? The spectacular climax of this "edition" of "The Slanders" occurred in tinue very long. Henry had too the second act when, at the conclumuch pride, he was too finely bred.

but not to the shelter of her arms. but not to the shelter of her arms. difference to us. Why, we're the only The crash occurred without warning. ones who loved him." A strange voice called Virginia over the phone at four o'clock one morning and it began by warning her to "The—the only ones will prepare herself for a shock. She di-You don't mean that." When the house lights came on, vined what was coming and although Mrs. Hassard turned to her program, she felt herself upon the point of from him. At the church today noswooning she managed somehow to body cared. They came out of cling to the instrument and to listen. spect for you. Oh, how I cried! It have seen her pictures in the roto- She even asked a few questions in a was so lonely for him, lying there thin, reedy voice. When had he been stricken? How? Why had not she "I can't believe—I

been summoned? It had come swiftly. There had been no time to send for anybody . . A doctor? Oh, to be sure! And he had done all that was possible Henry had not suffered greatly. Everything was being attended to. Did she have any directions to offer?

Dexter Wood rang up twenty min-utes later but was told by Virginia's agitated maid that her mistress was prostrated. The doctor was on his For two days thereafter Mrs. Has-

sard sat like a woman of stone. She Henry opened his lips to speak, was stunned, she was utterly numbed in mind and body and this merciful trance persisted even through the funeral services. That funeral was an imposing affair. The church was crowded, the streets for blocks were lined with

cinity, most of Westchester county and a considerable part of New York | him." city, it seemed, turned out to honor the son of Virginia Hassard. Special writers and camera-men from the newspapers covered it and the list of

mournful and impressive. Late that afternoon as Mrs. Has-

unwelcome caller. She was small and brought his wife and two daughters plain and immature; grief sat upon moved as if a great weariness bore her down. Unsteadily the elder woman rose; with an effort she controlled harassed them, so it appeared. her voice.
"What does this mean? Who are

The girl had paused inside the pect me to pay a big price for an esthreshold and was turning a pathetic face this way and that as if looking sonable." It was Beilman speaking. for someone. She extended a slim He shook his head vigorously, settled hand and touched the nearest chair, back in his chair and meditatively

caressed it "I am Myrna Myrna Sloan."

Mrs. Hassard's eyes widened, they gleamed ominously and a faint color rose to her cheeks. Her torpid mind stirred itself, currents of thought, stagnant these last two days, began to move Calamity had damped the condition, the house, Mr. Wood. Honest, the repairs it needs is terrible."

"Possibly! But it commands a priceless view of the Hudson." to move. Calamity had dammed those Virginia Hassard's son the channels and they had backed up, filled with bitter waters, but now they opened. Even so she stared at her caller for a moment in speechless surprise. This drab little thing with the shade that price a dollar." stricken eyes could not be the dazzling creature she had seen, the statue of snow and gold-But yes. The face was the same.

Virginia regarded her with a fixity of expression at once curious and baleful. With a gesture she dismissed the scandalized servant, then when she had gone she inquired gratingly: "What are you doing here?"

Simply the girl told her, "I came to weep with you." There ensued a considerable pause. Twilight was near, the house was still. Outside, the evening hush had fallen and it grew deeper, as if unseen ears waited to hear what the mother

had to say.
She broke the silence finally but not in her accustomed voice; another, stronger breath than hers expelled her scornful words and they came forth discordantly.

"You? You weep with me?" "Yes. I was Henry's wife. I loved

"Oh, no! Not his wife. That can't "But it is. We were married before you sent for him that time and-

and quarreled over me. He wanted to tell you the truth but—"
"So! You got him to marry you. At least he had the decency to hide it. But don't tell me you loved him. If you had loved him you'd never have married him, ruined him. He'd be alive today. You—killed him."

The caller uttered a piteous little cry of protest, she flinched and turned he head as if Virginia had cut her with a whin but the delerance.

with a whip, but the elder woman ran on. Those waters of marah which had been slowly rising within her and vainly seeking outlet, had broken forth and they were in turmoil; she could hear nothing but her own harsh, rasping voice reviling this Jezebel, there was room in her brain for but one emotion. She concluded her outburst by declaring:

"You robbed me and you robbed that he and the Sloan girl were ac- him, but much good it will do you. tually living together and she could You stole his honor and his self-re-not bring herself to encourage the spect, but that's all he had. You'll liaison. She would have given him get nothing more. He had no money her last dollar, gladly, but reasoned and neither have I. There won't be

that to do so would merely serve to a penny for you. Not a crumb! 'I gave more than I took," the Slan-Better to starve the creature der Girl declared. "His honor'? He until she let go, dropped off. Virgin- had lost that long before I met him. He had no self-respect or he would Secretly she rejoiced at her son's not have let me go on working while he lived off my earnings.

Furiously the mother blazed: "Do not talk like that! I won't let you. back. There was nothing physically Slander Girl, indeed! You slander the dead."

"I tell you only the truth." "He was evrything fine and noble could endure to have his light o' love and true and-

"Does it matter in the least what he was? I don't think so. We both loved him. You loved an ideal, a counterfeit of your own making. tinue very long. Henry had too loved the real man, in spite of his much pride, he was too finely bred. faults and the failings, in spite of He'd snap eventually. He'd come the way he treated me. My love was great enough to endure abuse and to Henry Hassard, the Second, did make allowances for a hundred weaksnap finally, but not in the manner his nesses. Surely yours is as unselfish mother had expected. He came home, as mine. The truth can't make any

"That's not true. You—you're trying to torture me!" Virginia gasped. "The—the only ones who loved him? "But I do. His friends had turned

"I can't believe-I won't . . . I nursed him at my breast. I raised him to manhood. Do you think you knew him better than I?" The girl nodded. "Much better. You

were only his mother . . . I nursed him, too-when he was drunk. You undressed him and put him to bed when he was a baby. I did so when he was a man, a helpless, senseless beast. I bathed him, fed him when he was something to be pitied, not petted. He was indifferent to you; he was cruel to me. But you loved him just the same and so did I. And he loved me, in his way. Yes, he loved me and he didn't want you to think badly of me. That's why I'm telling you all this; I'm sure he'd want you to know the truth.

"Don't you understand that it was come home!" for your sake he kept our marriage secret? You think it was shame over private cars, all Tarrytown and vi- me that preyed upon his mind, and that doesn't make the slightest difthat I turned his friends away from him." The speaker smiled faintly Again the speaker laughed happily and shook her head of bright silken and her listener marveled. "By the hair. "He had no friends when I way, Dexter, you must make it a married him-nothing but creditors whom he feared to meet. He forced those present was a roster of names prominent in the social life of the metropolitan area.

As such things go, it was deeply those present was a roster of names bought whisky with the money I gave him. The papers said he died of pneumonia but it was bootleg liquor.

As myrna's number promises to opens. Myrna's number promises to open number promises to o Towards the last when he learned that I couldn't pose much longer he took to drinking anything—"
"Towards the last?" the mother

echoed. "But-why?" "He didn't want any children . . It's very sad that we who should have loved him least are the only ones who

name was Beilman and he had to Wood's office in a concerted family

"Positively it's my last offer. If the place exactly suited me it's one thing, but it don't. You shouldn't explucked a hair out of his nose.

"View! A bank would lend Mark Beilman how much on the view? "There's no use of arguing. When Mrs. Hassard went abroad to live she

that Mark offers cash. Sometimes I bet even Mrs. Vanderbilt could use all cash money.'

set a price on the place and I can't

Wood shook his head. "Impossible! She left no foreign address. She wouldn't be bothered. Why, none of her friends have heard from her in. months. She closed the place after her son's death and-"

"Another thing! People dying in a house is bad. Maybe it ain't so very healthy—" "Mamma!" The elder Miss Beilman broke in resentfully. "For heaven's sake, don't be so cheap. Mr. Wood knows we want the place and intend

to have it. What difference does ten thousand dollars make?" "Exactly! You wish to afford your daughters certain social advantages. This is your oportunity. You'll never have another like it."

Mr. Beilman uttered a plaintive moan. "A fine way to close a deal! I could cheaper buy a new chain of stores than a stylish residence. All right! But it ain't a bargain."

An hour later Wood emerged from the Broadway subway and walked west on a street in the fifties, stopping finally at a theatrical boardinghouse. It was a rather dingy, highstooped house, typical of the neighborhood. He mounted two flights of stairs, knocked at a door, and Virginia Hassard admitted him. She was bright of eye, the lines had vanished from her face, she looked younger than her years.

"What news?" she inquired eager-"Good news. The best in the world. I closed with Beilman at your price

and I have a check in my pocket. Virginia laughed in delight. She took Wood by the hand and fairly danced with him across the room and to a chair beside a window. It was a sunny, cheerful sitting-room, there was an agreeable, homelike disorder about it.

Dexter began speaking in dued tone but Mrs. Hassard told him: "You needn't lower your voice. The King has had his nap and Myrna's at. rehearsal. Listen!" From the adjoining room came the fitful gurgle of a contented baby. "He's the dearest thing. I have him all to myself every afternoon."
"Well, I found the one man in the

world who was willing to meet your price. Your name doubled the value of the place, of course. It means you have nothing further to worry about.

Your future is provided for."
"Bosh! My future! It means the baby's future. It means he'll go to Princeton and captain the crew, as his father did. Dexter, you should see that baby's back. It's marvelous!. Why don't you have dinner with Myrna and me and watch me bathe him? It's my night—we take turns, you know. He adores cold water, and I fill the tub with toys—boats and ducks, and floating dolls and—"

"See here, Virginia! Haven't you anything further to sav about the sale? Or about the sable-coated tribe of Beilman? There was a hundred and fifty thousand dollars in fur on those three women. They've bought your home, your furniture. Think of it! They own the things you used to love. Haven't you any pangs. Any regrets? Have you completely abandoned your life and your old friends?" "Why, Dexter! I've just found my

old friends; the only ones I ever had. I'm too happy to think of anything or anybody except Myrna and the baby."
"Good Lord! 'Happy'! Here, among bearded ladies and jugglers and-and the smell of cooking!'

"Exactly! It's where I belong, where I always belonged. There's a family of acrobats in the rear—the Trumbling Tempests—and they're lovely people. Every night after the show they have us in for weenies and near-beer. Casino, the Card King, and his wife are on the floor below. You've seen him, I presume, and his mystifying tricks. I'm teaching them bridge, but he's the dumbest man about cards. The house is full of professional people and they were all so sweet and so considerate when Myrna had her baby that they won my heart. They took me right in, just as she did—that's because I used to be in the business. Pangs? Regrets? Good heavens, no! I-I've

"Don't they know who you are?" "Some of them do. But bless you, ference with real, genuine people." point to see the new Slanders when it opens. Myrna's number promises to a mother."

-Rex Beach in The Cosmopolitan.

Judge: "Have you appeared as a witness in a suit before."
Witness: "Yes sir, of course."
Judge: "What suit was it?" Witness: "My blue serge."