

RECOMPENSE.

Straight through heart this fact to-day By Truth's own hand is driven;

I did not know in earlier years This law of love and kindness;

But time this truth has taught me; No least thing from my life can go

It is the law complete, sublime, And now with faith unshaken,

No matter if the crushing blow May for the moment loom me;

MONEY OR HER LIFE.

Excuse for what Eileen did there may be none; save, perhaps, that excitement is the cream of life,

She was fashioned to achieve her full share of it, too, being equipped with a charming, if slightly tiptilted nose,

Especially those sinister moths that are to be found in that part of downtown Chicago which is known as the Loop because elevated tracks encircle it.

"Loop-hounds," was Eileen's generic classification of these, and to deal with them she was equipped too—without appealing to a policeman, either.

But Jimmy Sturgis was not that sort of moth. Eileen knew that from the first, for all that his method was much the same as theirs.

They met as informally as Adam and Eve did—with no more introduction, that is—of a November morning as Eileen walked to work.

"A closed car, which suggested a private one but which, as she afterwards discovered, was not, crept to a standstill at the curb just ahead of her.

"Ride?" Jimmy grinned at her, his engaging head stuck out. Eileen surveyed him with eyes that dripped disdain.

"I'd like to drive you—for mine," he persisted cheekily. With a man of whom Jimmy plainly did not approve.

"That was not true. But she knew that it would carry a double sting in its tail for Jimmy. It did. He swallowed something. But not his wrath.

"If you go out with him," he announced, in a tone that should have caused shy April hurriedly to return South, "I'm through. Absolutely and forever."

The result was what any man might have foreseen—but what no man ever does. Eileen would not have considered Mister No-Goods' invitation to dine for anything. It had become a point of honor with her.

An error that. For the Mister-No Good was obviously all that Jimmy had suggested and worse. She decided, even before they reached the salad course, that she was not going back to Chicago with him in his car.

"I've watched you every morning for weeks," he added impudently, as he set her down before the office-building in which she worked. "I will you ride again sometime?"

At the moment she hedged. But of course she rode again lots of times. Especially evenings when he was free and they took swift, soaring trips along the North Shore where the great estates lie either side of the road.

"I'm going to have one of those myself, one of these days," he assured her purposefully. That was in December when Jimmy was beginning to display certain well-known symptoms.

Nice—but full of hog, like most men. Such was her mental reservation. All men talked big that way. Jimmy's vision was of a fleet of cars of his own. That sort of stuff—as if Chi wasn't so full of taxis now that you couldn't move without taking a chance of getting run over!

This she didn't tell him then, however. They didn't know each other well enough as yet for the brutal frankness that develops later.

And he was a perfectly good boy friend—so far. The only trouble with him was the common masculine one. At Christmas he gave her a wrist watch which must have set him back a plenty and which she told him she couldn't possibly accept but finally did. After that he began to act as if he owned her. And she didn't belong to him or any other man, thank the Lord. She wanted something more

out of life than a three room flat—even with him. The time came—in late January—when she told him so.

"Not a lot of money, necessarily—though I wouldn't pass up a chance at a million." "Yeah—I'll bet you wouldn't," cut in Jimmy with exceeding bitterness.

"But I do want enough to enjoy life a bit and not be cramped at every step," she finished definitely. That should have settled it. But of course it didn't. They still saw each other. But not even Jimmy's eyes, now hot and tortured, now placating and penitent, could swerve her from that decision.

"Nothing doing," was her unvarying answer. "You try to run me too much as it is. It's bad enough having a boss during working hours without taking on an all-time one."

Whereupon Jimmy, who a moment before might have been making love as passionately as Romeo could have, would savagely assure her that she was heartless—hard-boiled.

"Ch-Chicago?" the aunt who had reared her in a little Michigan town had echoed when Eileen had announced her intention of moving thither. "What will you do there?"

"Get me a job," Eileen had retorted coolly. "But there are thousands of girls looking for jobs," her aunt had protested.

There were. Particularly stenographers. But not, most of them, as pretty as Eileen, or even as competent, for all that she had no more than a small town high-school training. In Chicago Eileen, then, a collected, confident twenty, had got herself a job easily and quickly.

"I don't mind just when they make eyes," she had informed Jimmy. "They all do that more or less. But when they begin with their hands—good night. I get red-headed. I can't help it."

Of that Jimmy approved. Absolutely. Although he saw no reason why she should get red-headed at him, which she did on this April afternoon when he sought to slip a comforting—and perhaps optimistic—arm around her.

"Cut it," she commanded sharply. "I'm not in the mood to be pawed by anybody." This was true. At four o'clock that afternoon she had told her latest boss where he got off and chucked up her job. Not that that bothered her—she could get another—but she was still red-headed.

Jimmy tried to remember that and, to ease the strain, suggested a little ride that night. But that only precipitated a real quarrel, a regular stand up and knock down affair, metaphorically, centering around the fact that Eileen had a previous engagement. With a man of whom Jimmy plainly did not approve.

"I'm telling you straight," he assured her heatedly, "that that guy's one bad hombre—and I don't mean maybe. A regular Mister No-Good—where did you meet him, anyway?" "Oh, he picked me up, too," Eileen replied coolly.

"That was not true. But she knew that it would carry a double sting in its tail for Jimmy. It did. He swallowed something. But not his wrath. "If you go out with him," he announced, in a tone that should have caused shy April hurriedly to return South, "I'm through. Absolutely and forever."

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"I'll walk first," she promised herself. The possibility of its coming to that and the problem this presented sufficed to detach her from the atmosphere of general excitement which surrounded her and which normally would have engrossed her. An atmosphere to which the life, the color and the liquor to be found in one of the smartest—and most notorious—night clubs that lie within the outer arc of Chicago's radius each contributed its charm.

Even her escort was momentarily ignored until he bent toward her, his sleek hair glistening, his eyes humid with liquor consumed. "Aw, e'm'on," he wheedled. A little drink will loosen you up.

As he spoke his feet had sought once again to capture one of hers in the silly amorous fashion men sometimes followed. "Cut that out," she commanded angrily.

Instead he persisted and Eileen, losing her temper, kicked his shin vigorously. He colored darkly. "If you think you can get away with that with me," he threatened thickly, "you don't know who you're dealing with."

"Neither do you, I should say," she cut in coldly. Surprisingly, that silenced him for a second. But he recovered himself enough to bluster it out. "You'll pay for that," he announced.

The orchestra, silent for a space, swung into action, horns and piano, drums and strings blended in a rhythmic barrage. From tables

around them men rose, dragging scant-skirted silken girls to their feet. Eileen's escort also rose, but not to dance.

"Gotta telephone," he informed her briefly, but with a red hate for her in his eyes. "Back in a minute." Ten minutes passed, twenty, before Eileen realized what a goop she had been not to guess what he must have had in mind—ducking out, leaving her with the check to pay.

"Somewhere between twenty and thirty dollars, I'll bet," she computed hazily, "and I have a single dollar bill and some small change." From her hand bag she drew compact and lip-stick. Opening the compact and surveying herself in its tiny mirror, she deftly powdered her charming nose, coolly re-etched the adventurous line of her lovely mouth.

No one, to see her, would have guessed that beneath the smart little hat and the smart little dress she wore so cockily—and decoratively—her nimble brain was working furiously.

Even the two men who sat a few tables removed did not suspect that, for all they had been watching her this last hour, "I tell you," announced the older, "that she's the girl we're looking for. She fits the description and I was told we'd probably find her in some place like this."

"Maybe—but if so what's she doing with the guy she came in with?" cut in his companion. "I tell you he's one of Big Mike's little bad boys. He does a lot of hi-jacking now and then and I wouldn't put machine gunning by him. You may know Boston, old top, but I know Chicago. Take your time—sit tight."

They sat tight. And so did Eileen—catching her breath in the hush of the storm. Excitement was what she craved, always, else she would not be here. But just now—

Now, from a corner of her eye, Eileen saw the waiter drawing in. "The gentleman who was with you," she suggested—"is he coming back?"

"Of course," said Eileen. "He just stepped to the telephone." Her eyes met his squarely, coolly; yet in his suspicion deepened. "He's a long time about it," he commented, with a new note in his voice she did not care for at all. "I guess I'd better spare for the head waiter."

The head waiter appeared presently and addressed her without pretense or diplomacy. "The man you came with drove away twenty minutes ago," he said curtly. "That little trick has been tried before and it doesn't work here. Either you pay the check or—"

"Just how much is the check?" a suave voice intervened. They turned, surprised; Eileen even more so than her tormentors. The elder of the two men who had been watching her for so long had risen and come to the rescue. Why, she had no idea.

"Twenty-two eighty-five," supplied the waiter. Sheer bewilderment kept Eileen silent as the amount was paid, and if her mouth was open when the newcomer seated himself at her table it was not that she might speak.

"Now that that's settled," said he soothingly, "don't you think you'd better let me take you back to your grandmother?" "My grandmother?" echoed Eileen. She must have had one—two, in fact. But both had died before she was born; even the aunt who had reared her was now no more.

"I suppose that's not a picture of you," he retorted easily, drawing a photograph from an inner pocket and passing it over to her. Eileen glanced at the picture. She had never had a dress such as the girl in the picture wore, but otherwise, feature for feature—even eyes for eyes and tooth for tooth—the picture might have been of her.

"Let's get out of here anyway," he suggested abruptly, as her startled eyes met his. This, at least found Eileen responsive. She couldn't get out of the place any too quickly.

He was making a mistake, of course, but she decided it might be as well to delay his discovery of it for the time being.

The other man trailed him and joined them in the car that was waiting outside. Eileen suffered a momentary qualm before she trusted herself to it, but her suspicions were allayed by the directions given the chauffeur. She decided, again, that she might as well let herself be carried back into the city before she took up the question of mistaken identity.

So not until the car had swung into the brilliantly lighted Loop did she break the silence. "I may as well tell you," she began, "that—"

"Tell it to your grandmother," suggested the elder man humorously. "She's here in Chicago and—"

The car came to a standstill; the uniformed starter of one of Chicago's great hotels sprang to open the door. "But," protested Eileen desperately, "you're all wrong."

A hand, half persuasive, half peremptory, was thrust under her arm. "Remember that your grandmother could have had you arrested," she was informed. "You might as well come along peacefully."

Eileen, glimpsing the crowded lobby, decided that she might as well. So she let herself be led to an elevator which shot them all upwards.

A long carpeted corridor, then a door which, in answer to a knock, was opened by an early maid. "Oh, Miss Sally!" gasped the latter involuntarily. Eileen did not answer. She was in the parlor of a suite. Beside a drop-light sat a sardonic-faced, bitter-eyed woman of more than seventy, whose all spare figure the years had never bowed nor bent. She glanced coldly at Eileen and for a moment the room seemed shrouded in abysmal silence. Then she spoke inclusively to her maid and the detective. "Leave the room!" she commanded curtly.

Evidently she was used to being obeyed. They left promptly. "Well, who are you?" this terrible old woman then demanded of Eileen. "I'm beginning to wonder myself," confessed Eileen.

There was a full minute of silence. Then, "Sit down," she was commanded. Eileen sat down, prepared for anything save the bewildering cross-examination to which she found herself subjected. It was all very well to remind herself that this woman didn't own her and she needn't answer her, but she answered just the same. Sarah Ames Thaxter had been born on Beacon Hill, Boston, and was used to having her questions answered.

"H-m," she commented presently. "You have no family ties, nothing to keep you in Chicago. You look enough like my granddaughter—the thin lips were briefly compressed 'to fool almost anybody. If you will return to Boston with me, keep your mouth shut and ask no questions—"

"Boston?" echoed Eileen uncertainly. "—and do as I say, I will see that you are liberally rewarded," finished Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter. Eileen hesitated. Boston? To her it suggested only beans and high-brows. Why should she go there? But again, why not? She was, after all, but twenty-two and the red adventurous line of her lovely mouth indexed her truth.

"I'll try anything once," she replied recklessly. "You talk," commented Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter, "in very much the same deplorable way my granddaughter does. Her name, by the way, is Sally Thaxter. It will be yours, for the present at least. You are not to speak to anybody and if anybody speaks to you do not answer. Simply give the impression that you are sulking—in silence."

"But," began Eileen, "I don't quite understand—"

"There is no need that you should," she was assured curtly. "You look intelligent—do as you're told." "She can't eat you, anyway," Eileen assured Eileen, privately. "Stick around and see what happens."

Eileen's first discovery was that as Sally Thaxter she was cut off definitely from her own life. She was not even permitted to return to her own room. A messenger was dispatched the next morning to pay her rent for the next month and order her things held for her.

"But—I'll need clothes," protested Eileen. "They will be supplied," she was informed.

They were. Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter disdained to shop, shops were brought to her. Telephones rang, curt orders were given and messenger boys appeared, bearing boxes of all sizes. And so, at the end of two hours Eileen, freshly equipped and exquisitely attired from the skin in—was ready to start East.

"My adopted grandmother may have her faults," she told herself, "but stinginess is not among them." Nor was it. She had six frocks any one of which would have cost her a month's salary, and the final casual contribution to Eileen's wardrobe had been a squirrel coat that must have cost a thousand if it cost a cent. Eileen was positively enamored of herself in it.

"If Jimmy could only see me now," began her thought—but was checked. This was not the time to think of Jimmy. Or to wonder what he would think when she turned up missing.

The Twentieth Century bore her eastward that noon, a drawing-room and compartment having been secured. Eileen shared the compartment with the elderly maid.

As the Twentieth Century coursed through the night Eileen slept only intermittently. This was excitement—the cream of life. "It ought to be like that million-aire-for-a-day stuff," she mused contentedly.

But it was not to turn out just that way. At a little after noon the next day her new life began. Only a glimpse of Boston and scarcely more of the house whose roof now sheltered her had been vouchsafed her. She had, naturally, expected magnificence. Yet what she had glimpsed as she had been conducted up the stairs was oddly reminiscent of the lodging-house in which she had roomed when she first came to Chicago.

A high-studded, narrow hall, a steep stairway, an atmosphere of ancient stiffness and general depression of spirit. The room she occupied, which had obviously been the mysterious Sally's, was not so bad. It was beautifully furnished. But—the door was locked. From the outside.

"You will stay here," her pseudo-grandmother had informed her curtly, "and neither ask questions nor answer them." Whereupon the strange old woman—Eileen trusted she wasn't crazy—had departed, locking the door.

"And what do you know about that?" Eileen had gasped as the key had clicked.

For a second she had stood at a loss. Then it occurred to her to remove her hat and coat. The latter provided immediate diversion as she held it at arm's length and let her eyes adore it.

Presently a key clicked in the lock. The elderly maid appeared, followed by a butler carrying a tray, with luncheon for one.

"Oh, well, I'm housed, clothed and fed anyway," ruminated Eileen philosophically as she ate of what had been prepared for her. "I hope, though, I get taken out for an airing now and then—if only on a leash."

The butler, returning for the tray, had a message for her. "Madam requests you to be ready at four to go calling with her," he announced.

"The plot thickens," commented Eileen—but not aloud. "It looks as if I were going to meet Boston's best high-brows. I wonder if I'm going to keep on being sulky—and dumb. I

guess I'd better or I'll spill the beans." At three the maid appeared. "Have you bathed?" she asked primly. "I haven't even washed behind my ears," retorted Eileen, forgetting her role for an instant.

The car—the same one that had brought her from the station—was waiting outside. In it Eileen and Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter set forth. Presently the car stopped.

Eileen glanced inquiringly at the inflexible profile of her companion. The latter did not move. But the chauffeur disengaged himself from behind the wheel, stiffly mounted stone steps and rang a bell. When a maid appeared he touched his hat, handed her cards and returned to set the car in motion again. This performance was repeated a dozen times.

"Well, if this is the social whirl, gasped Eileen, "you can give me a merry-go-round. You can at least make a grab at the brass ring." Long before six she was back again "in solitary."

"Is there anything you wish?" the chill aloof old terror had asked her. "Well, a newspaper might help break up the monotony a bit," Eileen had replied briefly.

"I'll see that you get it," she had been assured. It came with dinner and Eileen promptly propped it up against the sugar bowl.

She saw as she glanced almost incredulously at it that there were no pictures on its first page. The heavy type emphasis was held within a single column and was devoted to something Congress might or might not do with regard to certain legislation, all of which was nothing in Eileen's young life. The rest of the first page was devoid of interest.

"Everybody knocks Chicago, but something happens there anyway," thought Eileen. "If this is Boston—good night!" And she tossed the paper aside.

Yet, finished with dinner, she turned back to it in pure desperation. It couldn't be as dead as it looked. And there, she discovered, pictures inside. The one that held her interest—'ongest was of four debs who, it appeared, were graciously helping make some charity bazaar a success.

"They may go big at a charity bazaar in Boston," mused Eileen, impressed, "but they certainly wouldn't need the reserves to protect them from the rush at any dance I ever went to in Chicago!"

Beneath the picture was a column bearing legend "Society." She started to read this, seeking to discover what this society she had called upon this afternoon, but was yet to see, might be like.

Then swiftly her interest focused. Mrs. Sarah Ames Thaxter, (she read), has returned home from Chicago where she went last Tuesday to bring back her granddaughter, the charming and popular Sally Thaxter who has been visiting friends there. Mrs. Thaxter and her granddaughter are to sail for Europe within a few days for an extended stay there.

Europe! Eileen caught her breath. Did it mean that she, Eileen, was to travel? That was one of the things she had always wanted most. The very word travel suggested life to her. It filled her with visions of the things she craved nebulously, yet so poignantly as to deafen her ears to all Jimmy's pleadings.

"I don't want to stick in one place all my life," she had told him. "I want to see the world." "Looking for a millionaire?" he had jeered.

"Just give me a chance at one—or his million, anyway," she had retorted calmly. Now, for a second, the vision seemed close. Perhaps she was to be adopted and—But there she checked herself.

"I wouldn't take you," she informed herself firmly. "Or even if she did, she'd probably keep you locked up in a cabin." She let the paper slip to the floor and glanced at her wrist watch. The Christmas present from Jimmy that she had told him she could not accept, but had. It assured her it was not yet eight o'clock.

Yawning like a bored kitten she rose and moved around the room. She inspected the frocks hanging in the closet—loads of them—and then opened bureau drawers to see what might be in them. Lingerie mostly. After that she turned to the writing desk. In the cubbyholes were letters which she virtuously refrained from reading though she would have liked to, mightily. But when she found a frayed clipping she saw no reason why she shouldn't look that over. And so:

One of the most exclusive and inflexible upholders of the ancient regime in Boston, whose august presence only the ultra elect may enter without fear and trembling, is due to suffer severe shock ere long, we fear (she read). The personage in question, rich in years but far from her dotage, has a charming, if willful granddaughter to whom she looks to carry on the family glory. The granddaughter, whose parents died some years ago, is now being prepared for her debut in a school outside Philadelphia.

So far so good. But hark! Almost daily the damsel, a keen devotee of riding, cantering forth to the most romantic of trysts. These are quite sub rosa, naturally, for her Romeo elect is but a groom on a neighboring estate. "This said that he was gallant in war as well as in love is the possessor of a D. S. O. An Englishman, we gather, and a personable one. Older than our little sub-deb in years and experience, and having come to our shores to seek his fortune, hopeful perhaps that he has found it.

But alas, in America as well as in England, rank is the guinea's stamp and though a man may be a man, for all he's a groom, he cannot either here or there be considered a desirable part. This being so, we predict that some day soon the grandmother, who holds the purse-strings, will awake to what is hap-

pening and will descend like a blight upon this budding romance. Did the clipping refer to the missing Sally? Eileen wondered. If so, had she eloped with the groom?"

"I'll bet she did—or is going to," she decided. "That's why her grandmother had detectives on her trail. But then why did she stop searching and bring me back instead?" This puzzled her for a second. And then she caught her breath. "She wouldn't—couldn't dream that she'd have a chance of getting away with anything like that!"

Yet here was she, Eileen, being used deliberately to impersonate the missing Sally. "That's why she's keeping me locked up," her thoughts raced on, at another tangent. "And why I'm not to speak to anybody—But she can't keep me locked up forever."

Then she remembered what she had read about Europe. "For an extended stay there" the newspaper had said.

It all fitted together, anyway. Her own identity had been stripped from her as completely as her clothes. The paper had announced that Sally Thaxter had returned from Chicago. Besides which, she, as Sally Thaxter, had called, if only vicariously, on her grandmother's friends that afternoon.

"Gosh, how that woman must be able to hate!" mused Eileen thinking of her pseudo-grandmother and wondering what the abandoned Sally would say to all this. Then, swiftly, her thoughts took a further leap. The real Sally would probably be disinherited. If so—gosh! "I may be going crazy myself," she assured herself, "but if this is my chance at a million—lead me to it!"

The more she thought of it—and it was after two when she finally fell asleep—the more possible it seemed somehow.

Breakfast, served at eight, broke her slumbers. The visions of the night before began to lack credibility and the morning dragged interminably. At luncheon, however, she was informed that Madam was taking her to the Symphony rehearsal that afternoon. She quickened at that. Music! That was another of the gifts Eileen craved from life. But would she really hear it?

"It would be just like her to have the chauffeur leave the tickets at the door and come home," she reminded herself.

Nothing like that happened, however. Eileen sat surrounded by music-lovers that afternoon, digesting a new discovery. And that is that real music, like lives, requires a taste that must be acquired. A little of it will, until then, go a long way.

"I'd rather hear Jimmy play his old uke," she confessed frankly to herself.

Of many curious glances cast toward her she was conscious. And when the rehearsal was over, a girl rushed up to her.

"Oh, Sally—why didn't you stick it out!" she was asked, in an impetuous whisper. There was no chance for Eileen to answer. But her mind returned to the riddle. In the limousine once more she stole a glance at the rigid old woman beside her but found no answer there. "Supposing the real granddaughter should show up!" conjectured Eileen suddenly. "Gosh, what a mix-up."

Afterwards, she considered what had been a perfect premonition. The moment they entered the house she guessed that exactly that had happened. The butler, opening the door, had lost some of his wooden imper-turbability. His mistress gave him a swift glance at that silenced him.

"Go to your room," she commanded sharply to Eileen. Eileen started obediently up the stairs. But as she made the turn at the top she heard the hard, imperious voice demand: "Well, where is she?"

"In the drawing-room, Madam." "And little Eileen is on her way out," supplemented Eileen. "Good-by, million."

Even so, the next move was not yet up to her. And so, back in the room that was hers, yet was not, she marked time. Until she realized that the door, not locked, was opening.

"Can I come in?" asked a gay voice. "I—" The owner of the voice stopped short to stare wide-eyed. "My heavens," she breathed. We are regular Siamese twins, aren't we? It's uncanny—like looking in a mirror."

It was; Eileen's eyes were as wide. So this was the real Sally. "Gosh!" Sally was saying. "I believe grandmother could have got away with it at that. I couldn't resist the temptation to sneak up and take a look at you when she told me that I could not be her granddaughter—that any of the servants would tell me that her granddaughter was in her room."

"You don't mean to say," began Eileen, "that she—"

"Gave me the cold and fishy stare? She sure did. Oh, I could call her bluff if I wanted to—but I don't. It's not worth it. I'd have to give up Gerry—and I won't!" "Gerry?" asked Eileen uncertainly. "I've married him and believe me I'm going to stay married," announced Sally blissfully. "No annulments for me! Of course if you want to believe what grandmother says—that he's just a rotter who is after her money—"

"I don't think any such thing," protested Eileen. "I just—"

"Of course," Sally went on, ignoring the interruption, "he was—well, just a groom when I met him but that was because he was English and the war busted him and he'd never been trained to earn a living. And he is positively fascinating. I was crazy about him from the first. Fixed it up so we met a lot. Just so it would seem an accident, you know." Eileen did know. For all that she had snubbed her Jimmy there had been times, at first, when she had used the same device. "I guess I was pretty indiscreet," (Continued on page 3, Col. 1.)