

The Mark

By RALPH ANDRE

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(WNU Service)

JIMMY BEDFORD clenched his teeth to keep them from chattering. For weeks he had tried to summon courage to propose to Janet Ames. It was his last chance, for tomorrow he would sail for South America. He forced himself to look at her. Her lips were parted, her head cocked in that pert little way she had. Bewitchingly lovely, vibrant with health and love of life, infinitely sweet and desirable she seemed.

Her bright glance caught his and held. Something in the misty depths of the soft brown eyes gave him a breathless courage. He had a wild impulse to shout but the tightness in his throat made his voice low and husky. "Janet . . . I—that is—I love you. Will you marry me?"

She retreated a step that brought her face into shadow. Seconds ticked into eternity, became minutes, hours, years, before she answered. "No, Jimmy, I cannot . . . we would always be poor . . . can't you see, Jimmy? It's—it's—because you're so easy going. You're just a mark, a dear lovable mark . . . be like Bernard Wagner. No one imposes on him. He is a man of the world and he uses modern methods . . . bound to succeed . . ."

A smart fellow, Wagner. He had gone into the building contracting business in their home town. Every one knew that "Bunny" Wagner was a comer; a hard-headed business man; a competitor who was hard to beat. Ruthless in his methods but popular, nevertheless. Men hailed him on the street, in clubs, everywhere. They liked his brisk style and easy cordiality. He succeeded at every thing he tackled.

Dumb and miserable, Jimmy watched her; wondered if that firm little chin would relent; knew that it would not. Then dully, slowly, the rest of her soft accusation burned in. His chin came up and the glance from his mild blue eyes was level. His voice was steady as he held out his hand and said good-by.

Jimmy pitched his camp on the bleak mountainside where the icy blasts from the eternal snows on the rugged peaks of the Bolivian Cordilleras hurtled down and tore savagely at his frail tent. He threw himself into his work with grim purpose. He saved his money as never before.

It became a byword that anyone could make a touch from "easygoing Jimmy Bedford." To his Aymara Indians he was "Don Santiago" (St. James). No one knew that the smiling, optimistic Jimmy carried a constant dull ache in his heart. He could not forget Janet Ames, but he stubbornly resisted an overwhelming desire to write to her. The silence between them held for three heart-tearing years. At the latter end of his contract he tore open a letter from Bernard Wagner with cold misgivings as her last words came to him again. "Dear Old Friend Jimmy!" it began. A puzzled frown spread over Jimmy's face as his eyes strayed to the signature at the bottom. He read, bewildered.

" . . . and if you could just let me have a small loan—say twenty-five— "Otherwise, things have been going well for your old pal. You, of course, remember Janet Ames. Well, old boy, I'm the lucky fellow . . . thought: once you had the inside track . . . be married in June. . . ."

The letter dropped from Jimmy's cold fingers and he sat staring . . .

Home, Jimmy swung from the train and looked about the station for his father and mother. They would be along. He was glad to be back. He said it several times as if it were a ritual to which he must cling. It was nice to see old faces, familiar sights. Everything looked the same. Not quite.

His roving glance took in the office and yard diagonally across the street. The windows were dirty and vacant, the yard deserted. A swinging right angle sign creaked noisily in the wind. "Bernard Wagner, Contractor," it said. Jimmy rubbed his chin. "Bunny" would have moved into the new ten-story bank building he had built. Jimmy's eyes strayed to it. A block up the street. It was not yet finished. It, somehow, looked dead.

"Jimmy," said a timid voice at his elbow.

"Janet!"

His heart contracted as he looked at her with wondering eyes. She was making a brave effort although the glistening eyes belied the smile on her sensitive mouth. Her dress was neat but a trifle shabby. Why, it was the same one she had worn that last night! He remembered those pink flowers and the lacy what-you-call-it around the top of it. Her shoes. He realized by her heightened color that he was staring; that she was pitifully aware of her clothes, and he looked again across the street.

"Where's 'Bunny' now?" His voice was wracked with pain. It sounded thin and metallic as it came from the top of his throat.

"He's gone. I—" Her voice trailed off and he wheeled in amazement. She was fumbling in her purse. He could only see the point of her chin. It was quivering. Presently she found what she sought and held it out—an envelope. Dumbly, mechanically, he opened it and drew out a check. It bore his signature; and on the paper it said,

"Pay to the order of Bernard Wagner

"TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS. . . ."

Great Cathedral Hailed

One of World's Wonders

The mosque of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, readers will recollect, was originally a Christian cathedral. It was founded by Constantine, and after suffering from several devastating conflagrations was rebuilt permanently in 532-37 by Justinian the Great, famous as the author of the Byzantine legal code.

Procopius avers in his Secret History that Justinian was of infernal parentage on the male side; but the emperor's devotion to at least the outward forms of religion suggests some prejudice on the part of the historian.

The edifice Justinian constructed on the ruins of its immediate predecessor, destroyed during a political row in the capital, was accounted one of the major wonders of the medieval world. Gibbon relates that "Anthemius formed the design and his genius directed the hands of 10,000 workmen, whose payment in pieces of fine silver was never delayed beyond the evening;" and he recounts how "the emperor himself, clad in linen tunic, surveyed each day their rapid progress and encouraged their diligence by his familiarity, his zeal and his rewards."

So the great cathedral was completed in five years, eleven months and ten days at a cost of what would amount to about \$5,000,000 in modern money, an immense sum in the Sixth century. "And," says Gibbon, "in the midst of the solemn festival Justinian exclaimed with devout vanity 'Glory be to God, who hath thought me worthy to accomplish so great a work; I have vanquished thee, O Solomon.'"

Gold in Quantity Dug

From Hills of Wicklow

Bracelets and necklets of pure gold, and 1,500 years old, which came from Ireland, have been discovered on a farm at Towadnack, St. Ives, Cornwall. Such finds are treasure-trove and become the property of the crown, but the finders will receive practically the full value of the gold after it has been examined by experts. The gold was obtained from the Wicklow hills. Gold has been obtained from the same source in large quantities until comparatively modern times. In September, 1795, the Wicklow nugget was found. It weighed 22 ounces, and was made into a snuff box for George III. One of the richest finds of Irish gold was the great Clare find of 1854. Four laborers were working on a new cutting for the Limerick & Ennis railway when one of them turned over a pile of gold. One man was so excited that he dropped his spade, filled his hat with gold and dashed off to Newmarket—the nearest town—and sold his find for \$150. This hatful was worth \$2,000.

Not All Chinese "Coolies"

The original coolies were unskilled laborers from China, India and the Orient in general who first were imported into western countries under contracts according to which they bound themselves at a low wage to a certain term of service, at the end of which they were entitled to free passage back to their native land, says Pathfinder Magazine. The name is believed to be derived from Chinese "koo," meaning strength, and "lee," to hire. Hence a coolie was a hired laborer. During the decade between 1850 and 1860 more than 40,000 Chinese coolies were imported into California. It is incorrect to refer to Chinese immigrants in general as coolies.

Musical Note

Concerning the difference between a xylophone and a marimba, Harry Forbes writes as follows: "The marimba is built in a similar way to the xylophone, except that the compass is considerably lower. While having a very beautiful, mellow tone, the marimba is used only with soft beaters and for slow or sustained numbers. It is not suitable for the same class of work as the xylophone. There is an instrument now on the market which can be used for both soft-hammer and hard-hammer playing, known as the marimba-xylophone, having part of the marimba compass and also the range of the xylophone notes."—Washington Star.

John Smith the World Over

The good old American name of John Smith goes through some curious transformations when it is used in other languages, relates the Albany Ledger: For instance, John Smith in Latin becomes Johannes Smithus; in Italian he is known as Giovanni Smith; in French he becomes Jean Smeet; the Russians call him Jonoff Smittonski; the Poles know him as Ivan Schmitt-welski; the Welsh as Jihon Schmidt; the Hollanders as Hans Schmidt; the Greeks as Ion Smitkon and the Spaniards as Juan Smithus, while in Turkey he is disguised as Yoe Seef.

Selenium's Odd Property

Metallic selenium is a nonconductor of electricity when in the dark, but on exposure to light it becomes a conductor. This remarkable property has led to the selenium cell, the basic principle of which depends upon coating with a thin film of selenium a conducting metal, such as copper. When a selenium cell is connected in the circuit of a motor or in the firing circuit of a cannon it acts as an open switch as long as it remains in the dark. When light falls upon it, it becomes a conductor and permits current to flow to the motor.

Prissy's Quest

By HELEN ST. BERNARD

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THE Wednesday afternoon Ladies' Aid society of Midhill was stunned into silence. Eleven pairs of hitherto busy hands were idle. Eleven flannel-ette night gowns for the small inmates of the Orphans' asylum were forgotten. The twelfth member of the "Aid," Priscilla Pratt, was standing at the door, her hand on the knob, her round face flushed, her eyes shining. In her other hand, she held some gaily colored, descriptive circulars, the covers of which bore a picture of a "minutive steamer."

"Think of it," and her voice was husky with emotion. "Four months of romance! Panama—Honolulu—Japan! Cherry blossom time in Japan! India—and the Taj Mahal! Egypt! The Nile and the Pyramids! Italy and Vesuvius—Venice! St. Marks and the pigeons! Monte Carlo and the Rock of Gibraltar! Mine . . . for . . . four . . . whole . . . months!"

Prissy had read the literature of The Golden Tour thoroughly.

Mrs. Carruthers, the minister's wife, was the first to speak.

"We are glad you had the money left you by your uncle, Prissy. You have worked so hard taking care of your folks. Getting along in years . . . and never having married. Money . . ."

The newly made heiress started to button on her coat, her eyes traveling from face to face. She spoke slowly and distinctly. "Yes, all that! Getting along in years . . . never having married . . . and that is why I am going to spend part of the money Uncle Charlie left me . . . going around the world! I'm going to see things! Beauty, life! I'm going to find that romance they talk about."

Priscilla Pratt, the staid demure little spinster of Midhill—going around the world!

"A trip around the world!" and Mr. Smiley clicked his teeth. "My, my. If you should change your mind, Prissy, you might take a nice little trip down to Pittsburgh. It's only a day's ride from here, and there are lots of theaters and pictures and big stores."

"I am going around—the world! You don't understand, none of you! I want romance! Something I have never had."

John Blake, Midhill's carpenter, was a regular caller at Prissy's little cottage on Main street. He lived across the apple orchard in the home he had built many years before, when he had first asked Prissy to marry him. John had always made things easy for Prissy. He had told her at that time, that he would wait—always.

Prissy had the circulars ready to show John when he came that night. His face was ruddy red from the cold and he held his hands out to the stove.

"Winter has set in now, Prissy and you'd better get in another ton of coal while Jeff has it. And I told Watkins to leave you a few of his Hubbard squash when he passes . . ."

Prissy was sitting very straight in her little rocking chair.

"I don't think . . . I'll need any more coal, John . . . nor any of the squash, although his squash are fine, I know."

John looked up quickly. "No?" he drawled.

"You have been a good, true friend, John . . . and I have thought, perhaps, some day I could repay you for all your kindness."

"It's been nothing, Prissy." John was embarrassed. "You remember what I told you twenty years back? When you were ready to come to me . . . I'd be waitin'? I ain't changed, Prissy . . ."

"I know, John. Life has been hard for me . . . and it would have been harder if it hadn't been for you. All my life I've dreamed of romance . . . and beauty. Life!"

John hitched his chair closer and leaned forward. He placed his big hand over hers. His voice was gentle: "Prissy, life is hard . . . if you haven't anyone to care for . . . or care for you. Hard . . . and lonely. And I love you just the same."

Prissy reached out for her sewing that lay on the window seat. She dropped it over the gaily colored circulars in her lap and her hands were folded on top of it; idle, just as eleven pairs of hands had lain idle that afternoon on sewing, at the Aid society. She met John's kind gray eyes, so near. He smiled at her.

"I'll do my best to make you happy Prissy. I'll try to bring all the beauty I can into your life. All the romance and the happiness . . . that comes with love, Prissy dear. I'll love you . . . always."

She smiled at John and his hand tightened over hers.

"Do you suppose I could give you all the romance and happiness you have wanted all these years?" he asked gently. "Do you, Prissy? We might take a trip down to Pittsburgh for two or three days, but Peters is anxious to get the plaster on his walls so he can move in next month."

"Life wouldn't mean much if you don't have some one to love you . . ."

"Would you like to honeymoon at Pittsburgh, Prissy?"

"I have always wanted to go to Pittsburgh, John, since I was a little of a girl. Always!"

Massachusetts Held as

Nation's Apple Nursery

Massachusetts is the cradle of American horticulture, according to records in the division of horticulture at the Massachusetts State college. Studies conducted at various times by the college fruit specialists indicate that a total of 142 named varieties of apples have been developed in that state by fruit growers and breeders.

Of those the Baldwin apple probably is the most prominent today. This apple originated in Wilmington about the year 1740, so far as can be determined from old records, and today constitutes the principal variety in New England commercial orchards. Hubbardston is a variety which takes its name from the town in which it was originated approximately 100 years ago.

Benoni, mother, fall orange, roxbury russet, and Tolman sweet are other Massachusetts bred varieties that are still prominent today.

The oldest planted fruit tree in America is a pear tree between Danvers and Salem on the farm once owned by Gov. John Endicott. There is some evidence to indicate that the tree was brought over from England in 1630 by Governor Winthrop.

Hand of Time Falls on

Historic Scottish Oak

The old "Conventaners" oak at Dalzell, Scotland, which has weathered the blasts of storm and time for centuries, met with mishap recently. A violent windstorm bereft the famous and old oak tree of Dalgell of much of its ancient grandeur. The "Preacher's oak," as it is sometimes called, is shown to visitors and picnic parties in the beautiful seat of Lord Hamilton of Dalzell as an object of great historic interest. In the troublous times of long ago it is on record that the ousted minister of Dalzell is sheltered and protected by the old Dalzell as far as possible, and at he secretly visited the parish and reached to his people from the great k in front of Dalzell house. The fat branches of the tree—each the size of an ordinary tree—grew from the top of the stem, which at four feet in half feet from the ground is ten feet in circumference.

Good Reading

A good book is like a symphony. Some messages will strike one as glorious, & the first hearing, which a second reveals as commonplace, whereas its movement, this chapter, which is only blurry, at the second hearing deepens into the most exquisite music of the afternoon.

The plain fact is, as every reader knows that sometimes an interesting "notion" will elude one and never be found again. Perhaps it is just as well. It is good to know, in small affairs, that our searching is not always fruitful, that we cannot always be successful. Failure is just as inherent in the scheme of things as success. The great book of common sense teaches one that.—Charles E. Tracewell, in the Waington Star.

Pioneer Mince Pie

Edison states that mince pies were originally oval in shape, to represent the cradle in which the Holy Child was laid, and the medieval cooks filled them with the choicest and costliest meats, all shredded and minced together, as emblems of the gifts of the three Wise Men. For centuries they occupied the place of honor on the banqueting table, and in an old Fourteenth century manuscript we find the following recipe: "Take a pheasant, a peacock, and two pigeons, take out many bones as may be, and chide up fine, add the livers and hearts, two kidneys of sheep, salt, pepper, and vinegar. Put the meat in a crust made carefully into the likeness of a bird's body, close it up and bake."

Law of Little Value

A long-established American custom permitting works of art over one hundred years old to come in free of duty customs duty has not been entirely nullified, but several countries have lessened its value by censoring exportation of antiques. Italy has strict rules and Spain has recently strictly forbidden sales of such objects abroad. If works of art over one hundred years old are not permitted to leave their countries of origin, it is of no value to have them duty-free for exchange.

Topsy-Turvy Woman

A woman who lived in a topsy-turvy world, who wrote, read, and spelt backwards, mentioned in the British Medical Journal. She was admitted to the Don County mental hospital suffering in fits and suicidal tendencies. It was found that in writing she reversed words and when she drew pictures she drew them upside down. When she wanted to read she turned the book upside down. When she was asked to spell a word she spelt it backwards.

Swedish Capital

Heisingfors the Swedish name of the capital of the Finnish republic, which failed in Finnish "Helsinki." Finland was a grand duchy under the Russian empire until the World War, when it became an independent republic. The city of Helsinki is located in the southern end of the peninsula which constitutes the republic of land, on the north side of and across the Gulf of Finland from Leningrad Russia.

Criminals are halted, disabled but not wounded by a knock-out pistol designed by a Paris, France, inventor. It consists of a cone-shaped attachment, filled with a quantity of special powder, that can be fitted to almost any ordinary revolver. When a blank cartridge is fired the powder in the cone explodes, causing an air shock that knocks out the victim.

Six automobile accessories are combined in a single new attachment installed on a car's front fender. There is a driving mirror and signal arrow to indicate turns, a side floodlight, a small white lamp providing a parking light that can be reversed to serve as a trouble light, and the entire unit is a fender guide.

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