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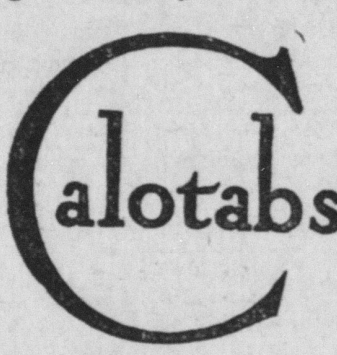
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LADY LARKSPUR

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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"YOU SCOUNDREL!"

Synopsis.—Richard Searles, successful American playwright, confides to his friend, Bob Singleton, the fact that, inspired by the genius of a young actress whom he had seen in London, he has written a play, "Lady Larkspur," solely with the thought that she should interpret the leading character. This girl, Violet Dewling, has disappeared. Singleton, an aviator, has just returned (unvalued) from France. His uncle, Raymond Bashford, had contracted a marriage a short time before his death, while on a visit to Japan. He left Singleton a comparatively small amount of money and the privilege of residing in the "garage" of his summer home, Barton-on-the-Sound, Connecticut. Mrs. Bashford is believed to be traveling in the Orient. The household at Barton is made up of broken-down employees of a New York hotel, where Bashford made his home. Singleton goes to Barton, talking with him the manuscript of "Lady Larkspur." There he finds the household strangely upset, some of its members being suspected by their comrades of pro-Germanism. Antoine, head of the establishment, informs him that he has been perplexed by the somewhat mysterious visits of a stranger, apparently a foreigner, seeking Mrs. Bashford. Antoine has formed the male members of the household into a guard for protection. Singleton reads Searles' play with approval. "Aunt Alice" arrives unexpectedly, meets with a lively reception and turns out to be young and charming. Mrs. Farnsworth is her traveling companion. Torrence, Bashford's lawyer, suspects the two women and warns Singleton "Aunt Alice" may be an impostor. The mysterious stranger, Count Montani, makes a call and is seen to be very much interested in "Aunt Alice's" ostrich-plume fan, which has been repaired by a jeweler in Japan. Singleton is fascinated by "Aunt Alice." Antoine reports a "spy" has been tempting a woman servant to steal the fan.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

I had noticed that she had substituted a tiny Japanese fan for the one that Montani had inspected so eagerly. When I spoke of the change she had said the other was too precious for everyday use, and she meant to keep it locked up.

"I hate to bother you, sir, knowing you—"

The mention of the fan had brought me to an abrupt halt. I resented having the thing thrust at me in the ecstatic mood in which I left the house, but the visit of the German-speaking stranger was serious, and Antoine knew that his story had startled me. He told me further that the man had carefully outlined to Elsie just how she could take advantage of her freedom of the house to appropriate the fan when the ladies were out and the servants off the second floor. She was to be paid for her assistance; two hundred dollars had been promised; even more had been suggested. Elsie and the stranger had left the garage and passed out of earshot before Elsie fully consented; but Pierre had given Antoine the impression that she would make the attempt.

"It was to be for the kaiser, for Germany," declared Antoine bitterly. "And she was to be careful about Flynn. I always thought Flynn was straight—I did indeed, sir!"

"I think Flynn and his wife are both honest, but we'll take no chance. Warn the guards to be on the alert. We don't want Elsie to get the idea that she's being watched; so tell the men to keep away from the garage. I'll keep an eye on the Flynn's. You go home and go to bed. . . ."

The deep calm of the country night had settled upon the shore, and the Flynn's quarters were perfectly tranquil. It didn't seem possible that an international episode was in process of incubation in that quiet neighborhood. I began to think that the general distrust of the German woman by her associates might be responsible for Pierre's story. But, viewed in any light, I had a duty to perform. If Elsie had visited the house and purloined the fan, she would be very likely to get rid of it as quickly as possible, and I determined to keep watch. I drew the blinds, got into my dressing gown and, re-enforcing the lampshade with a newspaper to deaden the light, proceeded to read.

It was on toward one o'clock and I was dozing when a sound roused me. A door on the Flynn side of the hall creaked; there was silence, then I heard furtive steps on the stair. I snapped out my light and peered out of the window just as Elsie's robust figure disappeared into the shadows. I was about to follow when the creaking of the Flynn door was repeated. In a moment another peep through the shade showed me Flynn himself, and he, too, quickly vanished. Here was a situation indeed! If Elsie was keeping tryst with her co-conspirator of the afternoon and her husband was spying upon her, a row of large proportions was likely to result at any moment. I leaned from the window as far as I dared and saw the woman close to the wall at the farther end of the building. The scene was well set for trouble, and I was wondering what I could do to

avert the disturbance and the exposure of the foolish woman when the whole matter was taken out of my hands.

"You fool! You scoundrel!" she belittled in German. "That you should think me a plaything to commit a robbery for you! That I should steal from my mistress to satisfy you, you piece of swine-flesh!"

I had often heard Elsie vocally disciplining her Irish husband and knew the power of her lungs and the vigor of her invective, but she seemed bent upon apprising the whole commonwealth of Connecticut of the fact that she was vastly displeased with the person she was addressing, who was certainly not Flynn. Amid sounds of a scuffle and the continuous outpouring of billingsgate the light over the garage door flashed on suddenly and disclosed Flynn in the act of precipitating himself into the fray. Elsie had grasped, and was stoutly clinging to a tall man who was trying to free himself of her muscular embrace. Her cries meanwhile included some of the rarer terms in the German dictionary and others—mouthfuls of frightfulness—that I didn't recognize.

When I reached the open Flynn was dancing round the belligerents like an excited boxer, occasionally springing in to land a blow; and all the while Elsie continued to address her captive and the world at large in her native tongue. Flynn was rather more than sixty, and Elsie was not much his junior, while the invader was young and agile. The man had loosened one arm and drawn a revolver with which he was pounding Elsie in the face. I knocked the gun from his hand with my walking-stick and shouted to Elsie to let go of him. Her shouts had roused the guards and, hearing answering cries and the beat of hurrying feet on the walks, he redoubled his efforts to escape. I had hardly got my hands on him when with a twist of his body he wrenched himself free and sped away in the darkness.

I hadn't gone far in pursuit of him before I tripped over the skirts of my dressing gown and fell into a bed of



Flung Him Backward Over the Stone Curbing.

cannas. This would have been less melancholy if Flynn, hard behind, hadn't stumbled over me and, believing he had captured the enemy, gripped my legs until I could persuade him to let go.

The lights now flared on all the walks and driveways, and Antoine was bellowing orders to the guards to surround the sunken garden. I surmised that the fugitive, surprised by the attack, had lost his bearings and was now far from the boundary wall back of the garage from which presumably he had entered the grounds. With the sound cutting off his exit beyond the residence, there was a fair chance of catching him if Antoine's veterans were at all vigilant.

I found Antoine, armed with a club and swinging a lantern, majestically posed at the near entrance to the garden. With a swallow-tail coat over his nightshirt and his nightcap tipped over one ear, he was an enthralling figure. As he strode toward me his slippers slipped weirdly upon the brick walk. "There's somebody in the garden, sir," he whispered huskily. "The troops has it surrounded." No general in all history, reporting in some critical hour the disposition of his army, could have been more composed.

"You have done well, Antoine. Shall you dig in until morning or go over the top now?"

"As you say, sir. It's better you should take charge."

I walked round the garden and found his men well distributed, but the old fellows were exceedingly nervous. "It's a bit suspicious, sir, that he broke for the garden," remarked Antoine.

"He broke for the garden," I suggested, "because his line of retreat was cut off and he had to go somewhere."

"It's queer, though, sir, when Dutch has been sleeping on the long bench down there by the fountain. You know how we feel about him, sir, he being of that race."

"Dutch told me he was camping in the toolhouse," I answered.

"The boys drove him out, sir, and he took to the garden."

"Nasty of the boys, I should say. If that interloper should murder him—"

A yell rose from the midst of the garden, followed by a crash and an instant later by a splash that interrupted another yell. I snatched Antoine's lantern and ran down the steps toward the scene of commotion. When I reached the circular pool the jet was still playing gayly, but the waters on one side were in furious agitation. Two men were rolling and tumbling about as though bent upon drowning each other. I swung the lantern over them just as Dutch got upon his feet, gripping his antagonist by the collar. He flung him backward over the stone curbing of the pool and fell upon him in the walk with a swish of wet garments. The guards from the outer edges of the garden had clambered down and they gathered about us as I began questioning Dutch.

Dutch, undoubtedly enjoying his victorious encounter, was tearing open the prostrate captive's collar to give him air and with his knees clamping the man's body was disposed to delay the story of his adventures to increase its dramatic effect.

"It happens this evening," he began, spouting water, "that I seen Elsie, who's been sneakin' me meals to the old stables, an' she says to me: 'Dutch,' she says, 'they's all ag'in us here, callin' us Huns, an' we gotta show 'em we's good Americans,' she says. An' she tole me a feller been to see 'er 'at watter 'er to rob the house fer 'im, he thinkin' 'er likely to do ut fer love of the kaiser. She said as 'ow she'd nail 'im when he comes tonight to git a fan she's promised to lift fer 'im. She said that'd prove she wasn't no Dutchwoman and recommended if I got the chance to do the same. I thought nothin' wuz goin' to happen an' wuz sleepin' on me bench here in the garden when the hollerin' at the garage woke me up. I sits quiet, listenin' an' 'tis gub drops into the garden an' I pinches 'im. He wuz fer havin' a fight an' he knocks over one of the big urns an' lit in the tank. He says it's a thousand bones an' ye turn me loose, he says, an' I soused 'im ag'in fer that."

The man was still choking from the sousing and Dutch turned him over and pounded him vigorously on the back, assisted by Zimmerman, the obliging valet, who had seized the occasion to show his hand on the side of the allies. "Shall I telephone for the Barton police, sir?" asked Antoine, with an extreme exaggeration of his professional manner.

This was obviously the thing to do, but I feigned not to hear the question while I debated the matter. It was plain that many things relating to the capture were veiled in mystery; that if Mrs. Bashford and her companion were involved in an international tangle and had in their possession something that vitally concerned the nations at war, common civility demanded that I handle the arrest of Montani's agent in such a manner as to shield them. I was thinking hard and in my perplexity even considered sending a messenger to Torrence; but he was already suspicious and would be very likely to summon Raynor immediately and precipitate a crisis I was not prepared to face. To invite the attention of the American state department to the increasingly complex situation would not be giving my aunt the chance I meant she should have to clear herself.

The captive had got upon his feet and stood dazedly staring at us. He refused to answer my questions, even when I suggested that if he could give a satisfactory account of himself he would be released. He only doggedly shook his head. When I asked if he had been hurt in his bout with Dutch he smiled and extended his arms in denial. He was a very decent-looking fellow, blue-eyed and smooth-shaven, who seemed to accept his plight with a degree of good humor.

I decided that as nothing would be gained by sending him to the Barton calaboose that night, I would assume the responsibility of detaining him until I had groped my way through the haze of suspicions and circumstances that enveloped him.

"Aunt Alice," Count Montani and the mysterious fan.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Heads and Hearts. Some people carry their hearts to their heads; very many carry their heads to their hearts. The difficulty is to keep them apart, yet both actively working together.—Hare.

DADDY'S EVENING FAIRY TALE
By Mary Graham Dowder

SEARCHLIGHT PARTY.

"All up and down a big river," said Daddy, "searchlights were playing from the different boats. They were being played on the city houses and upon each other and upon the shores."

"A boat went along which was to take a long trip up the river and upon that boat there too was a searchlight. As the boat with the searchlight went along there went too the Searchlight Gnome. I will have to tell you about him as I am sure you have never heard about him before. The Searchlight Gnome is a little creature belonging to the Gnome family who loves lights and searchlights above everything. He wears such a dazzlingly bright suit that people cannot recognize him and so he goes everywhere where there are searchlights without being seen."

"If they do see him they do not know him because he is so much like the light of the searchlight. Well, in his little air boat he had been flying from one of the boats which had a searchlight upon it this evening to one of the other boats and then to still another."

"From one searchlight to another had he gone and such a good time as he had had! He had seen so many things from the different searchlights."

"He had seen different houses, different ships, different carriages and automobiles driving along the road which edged the river which was a fine city driveway and he had thought the life of the city looked very thrilling under the bright searchlight."

"But when he had heard that this special boat was making its trip up along the river, past towns and far up



From One Searchlight to Another.

the river, so that a great deal along either shore could be seen, he decided too he wanted to go.

"He had taken the trip before, but not nearly often enough. He was such a busy little gnome and there were so many searchlights and searchlight parties he wanted to go on that he hadn't half the time he wanted to have for all the things he wanted to do."

"You know," he said, "I cannot understand how it is when people say they wish the time would fly and that they wish the time would pass and all that sort of thing."

"I simply cannot understand. Why I never have half enough time. I'm never trying to kill time either. That's a dreadful thing to do."

"Of course I know it is merely an expression meaning that folks want to do something to make the time pass in a hurry because they want something else and more exciting to turn up."

"I can see how folks are anxious to have great days come like Christmas and so forth, but I don't just see how any one can say they want the time to pass quickly just because they're tired of things."

"It's not appreciating time and time can be so nice. It can have so much within it to enjoy. I mean all the moments are such fun to enjoy as we go along."

"As I don't believe in being unhappy. I am happy enjoying the time and in not letting it pass me by without enjoying it in some way, in merrymaking, or rest so that I can enjoy more merrymaking."

"Ah, now my fine air boat has brought me to this fine boat. And now I shall see the sights."

"The Searchlight Gnome had a beautiful time. He watched everything that was going on. He saw the houses light up all along the way. He saw the shores and the beautiful gardens looking so strange and yet so beautiful in the bright light."

"He saw people along the shores and he saw beautiful scenery of fields and mountains and little hills and lovely trees. After awhile he heard some voices. 'Well,' he said, 'if here aren't all my searchlight gnome relatives. Are you coming on the searchlight party?'"

"Indeed, we are," they said, "if you do not mind."

"I am so glad," said the Searchlight Gnome, "to have others enjoy these beautiful sights with me. Oh, aren't searchlights the most wonderful things? They're like great secrets of beauty being shown to us."

"Where it is dark and where otherwise we couldn't see the searchlight sets us see all the beauty that would otherwise be hidden there!"

"This is a gorgeous searchlight party," they all said, as they rode along upon the searchlight with Searchlight Gnome."

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Try Freezone! Your druggist sells a tiny bottle, sufficient to rid your feet of every hard corn, soft corn, or corn between the toes, and calluses, without one particle of pain, soreness or irritation. Freezone is the mysterious ether discovery of a Cincinnati genius.—Adv.

Of Course Not. Diners at a certain city restaurant are getting much enjoyment out of a warning sign recently placed in a conspicuous place behind the counter and reading, "Not responsible for Wearing A Pearl or packages."

If You Need a Medicine You Should Have the Best

Have you ever stopped to reason why it is that so many products that are extensively advertised, all at once drop out of sight and are soon forgotten? The reason is plain—the article did not fulfill the promises of the manufacturer. This applies more particularly to a medicine. A medicinal preparation that has real curative value almost sells itself, as like an endless chain system the remedy is recommended by those who have been benefited, to those who are in need of it.

A prominent druggist says "Take for example Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, a preparation I have sold for many years and never hesitate to recommend, for in almost every case it shows excellent results, as many of my customers testify. No other kidney remedy has so large a sale."

According to sworn statements and verified testimony of thousands who have used the preparation, the success of Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root is due to the fact, so many people claim, that it fulfills almost every wish in overcoming kidney, liver and bladder ailments; corrects urinary troubles and neutralizes the uric acid which causes rheumatism.

You may receive a sample bottle of Swamp-Root by Parcel Post. Address Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y., and enclose ten cents; also mention this paper. Large and medium size bottles for sale at all drug stores.—Adv.

Her Idea. Edith—I like an engagement with some snap about it. Maud—One that breaks easily, eh?

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Each package of "Diamond Dyes" contains directions so simple that any woman can diamond-dye a new, rich, fadeless color into worn, shabby garments, draperies, coverings, whether wool, silk, linen, cotton or mixed goods.

Buy "Diamond Dyes"—no other kind—then perfect results are guaranteed even if you have never dyed before. Druggist has color card.—Adv.

Its Class. "What steed do you suppose was most popular in the days of chivalry?" "It must have been a knight-mare."

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The Verdict. "Do you think my son is now ripe for musical honors?" "Ripe? No, sir; he's rotten."

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Vivacity is fine when you don't want to just rest.