Beggars CAN Choose

Margaret Weymouth Jackson

THE STORY

Renewing a childhood attachment, Ernestine Briceland, of a wealthy family, is attracted by Will Todd, newspaper artist, son of a carpenter. Ernestine's sister, Lillian, knowing their father would disapprove, urges her to end the affair, but Ernestine refuses. They make a runaway marriage. Briceland is furious, but helpless, as Ernestine is of age. Loring Hamilton, lawyer, wins Lillian's consent to be his wife. Will and Ernestine begin their married life in a single room in a humble neighborhood. John Poole, Will's best friend, gives a birthday party for Ernestine at Ruby Pastano's resort. Pastano irritates Ernestine by criticizing Will for bringing her to such a place. Will and Ernestine have their first quarrel. Conscious of approaching motherhood, Ernestine opens a savings account. Will's father dies suddenly.

CHAPTER VI—Continued

—11—

He kissed her again, and they said goodby. The conversation had washed away a little of her resentment and made her feel better. She had a strong desire to cling to her own family, opposed by the resolution she had taken to harden her heart against them all. She thought of mamma and Lillian and Loring, come in Loring's coupe, standing quiet and in a little tight knot at the funeral. She had taken her own stand by Will and Mrs. Schluss, and Mr. and Mrs. Pryor.

The day after the funeral when Ernestine, with one of Mrs. Todd's aprons pinned over an old silk dress, was experimenting with a broom, Mr. Pastano came, and with him a huge old lady with slow black eyes and a face so round and kind that Ernestine's heart went out to her.

Mr. Pastano had brought some potted plants, which seemed fresh and beautiful after the scent of decay that had come with the funeral sets.

"These are for Willie's mamma," Madame Pastano said haltingly. "We come to make consolation call—to bring you friendship. As the plants grow, so grows the new soul, in Heaven."

Ernestine yielded to impulse, was enfolded on the soft and luxurious bosom of Madame Pastano and kissed her smooth cheek. How strange that all of her haughty resentment was gone, that she actually liked Ruby Pastano, with his slow thick voice and his mottled dark eyes.

"When Willie's mamma is better, you will come to visit us?" the old lady asked, and Ernestine called her husband Willie for days afterward. She promised to come.

Will was worried about money, and Ernestine tried to spend as little as possible. Mr. Todd's lodge insurance had paid for his funeral and left a small balance, which was soon eaten up by the heavy expenses of the mother's illness. Will asked for a raise and got five dollars. At length he was forced to borrow from Mr. Poole, although Ernestine told him she could get money from her father.

"Money!" he burst out passionately. "I don't want any Briceland money! We wanted something real from them. Money's all they have."

"You'll have to increase your earnings, Will."

"It takes time. And I intend to do it on my own job, not in your father's office. Your folks must understand that."

"Lillian says beggars can't choose," she said.

"This beggar chooses," he warned her.

* * * * * * *

Will's mother began to mend a little, the third or fourth week, although she was desperately ill. One day she asked Ernestine how they were managing, and Ernestine confessed that they had had to borrow.

"The Troy street house is in my name," said Mrs. Todd. "Tell Will the deed and all are in his father's box—tell him to have some real estate office sell it. I'll sign the deed—it will be more than enough for my illness."

"But, mother, when you are better, you will need your money."

"I'll not be better. And I'd like to have the nurse all the time now."

So the house was sold, and the few thousand dollars they got for it certainly made a remarkable difference. The doctor brought them a resident nurse. Ernestine and Will agreed that they should spend Mrs. Todd's money only for the expense of her illness.

On the day that Lillian was married Mrs. Todd was able to sit up, and Will consented to go to the wedding. The church was filled with flowers—the bridesmaids made a rainbow—Ernestine had pleaded the excuse of mourning for taking no part in the ceremony. The pews were filled with old familiar faces—the ushers were young men Ernestine and Lillian had known always. Everything was very beautiful and formal, and Ernestine realized that mamma would have liked such a wedding for her.

She was glad afterward, that she had gone, for the weeks and months just passed had been so hard for her that the beauty of her own romance had become a little dimmed. But when she heard the marriage ceremony again, when she stood by Will and watched her sister marry Loring Hamilton, she remembered every word and every kiss of her own marriage day—its storms and turmoil, and she looked at Will, at his clear strong face, at his lean bony body in the shabby suit, at the big square hands resting on his knees, and the richness of her love for him welled up in her like a great tide that would and must carry everything before it.

CHAPTER VII

The Baby for Passenger

Lillian was in Europe. Mamma and papa and grandmother had gone to Langley lake for the month of August. Ernestine entered into a period of waiting, of passing through days of

She Was Satisfied With Her Lot and Herself.

unreality and nights of patient endurance. Sometimes, waking after she had slept, she looked about the walls of the little room with a feeling of enormous surprise. Was this really she, Ernestine Briceland, in this dim room, with the curtains pinned back to admit any vagrant breeze, listening with her heart suddenly quick in the still night for her husband's footsteps?

Mr. Poole came often to visit them. Ernestine began to look for him for late Sunday breakfast. And the Pastanos were kindness itself. Their shining car, with the swart grinning chauffeur, was often at the door.

One day as Ernestine sat reading aloud, Will's mother laid a swollen, creased hand out over the book, and Ernestine, looking up at her, smiled quickly and kissed her.

"What is it, mother?"

They talked a little about the coming baby, and the plans Ernestine and Will had made.

"It is hard for your mother," said Mrs. Todd, with a smile. "I think perhaps it is as great a mistake to be stiffnecked about favors as it is be greedy."

"Perhaps," admitted Ernestine. "It is hard to be exactly balanced. One must choose a direction in which to lean."

They fell into a friendly silence. After a little, Will's mother pressed Ernestine's hand.

"About Will—" she said and hesitated, and Ernestine's heart beat a little faster.

"Be patient with him. He hasn't found himself yet. But he will. You are more mature than Will. Children will increase the distance between your wisdom and his childishness. Just love him. He'll come home."

Ernestine knew no answer, but the words fell into her heart as though there were more significance to them than their stereotyped importance. For an hour or more they sat in silence, Ernestine dreaming of, Mrs. Todd remembering, Will!

Mrs. Todd lived just long enough to see her grandson and to kiss his poppy silk cheek. Will laid him in the hollow of her arms, but after a moment, with a word of entreaty, she asked him to take the baby away. He did so and, calling the nurse to his mother, who seemed to be swooning, he took the little one back to Ernestine.

And so the parlor of the little house was a bower for death. The gray coffin, the room filled with flowers, the worn-out shell of the woman Ernestine had understood so little.

Will acepted his mother's death with more philosophy than Ernestine had expected of him. The long waiting, the clinging, had been harder for him than the final separation. Besides, the new little life cuddled against Ernestine's heart was so much more than any loss—it was such an appropriate compensation.

The baby had finally established Ernestine among her new neighbors. Slowly but surely they had come to respect her, and now, with Peter in her arms, with her house clean and by her own efforts, she found Mrs. Schluss and Mrs. Pryor and others showing her real affection, which she appreciated and respected in full. Ernestine felt that all sacrifice was justified, and they entered into a new phase of life, in their own small home, Will at the oars, Ernestine at the helm, and the baby for passenger.

* * * * * * *

It was harder to maintain the high level of contentment after Lillian returned from Europe and established herself in her new home on the road, out near Loyola. Will went across with Ernestine one noon shortly after their return. Mamma was there. Lillian was charming to Will, kissing him when she greeted Ernestine and the baby and flattering him skilfully.

After Will had left for the Sun the three women followed one another about the house, passed the baby back and forth between them, and talked, talked, talked, all at the same time, all listening and talking, all intent on catching up the old intimacy. It was charming. Ernestine could not remember when she had spent such a happy afternoon. There was no one like mamma—no one!

"I've got to go, because papa is bringing a new stone-merger man home with him for dinner. I am going to put rock powder in the coffee!" Mamma kissed them all goodby, with tears in her eyes.

Ernestine looked at Lillian and realized with a shock how changed she was in the six months since her marriage. She was satisfied with her lot and herself. There was almost danger—a challenge to fate in her complacency. She was gentle and kind to Ernestine, but subtly patronizing. It was especially noticeable since mamma had gone, for mamma kept Lillian in check.

But if Lillian was changed, Loring was startlingly so. He seemed to Ernestine bigger, handsomer. His blond strength was now set in a robust vitality which was very different from Will's volatile excitability. He kissed Ernestine affectionately, told her she looked well and admired the baby.

Mamma had trained a maid for Lillian, and she served in silent competence an excellent dinner, but the bright vivacity of the afternoon was gone. The interwoven volubility of the three women, their constant interruption of one another, their exclamations and cries of astonishment or sympathy, now disappeared, and Loring talked and the two girls listened.

He assumed Ernestine knew all about their European journey. Over there, he said, he had got a new slant on things. It was a good thing for a man to get away from his desk for a while. Now he had decided to forego the idea of the bench and go in for crime.

They laughed and he twinkled at them, but all the same, he insisted, he meant it.

"The judiciary qualities are excellent, but not remunerative—unless one becomes a corrupt judge, from which fate Heaven deliver me! The criminal lawyer is the important lawyer of today. He is the man with power in the courts. It will be a new kind of litigation for our office, but if I can get the business I can handle it. I went to see that Greek chap—Pastano—this afternoon, and recalled to him our acquaintanceship and our mutual friends. He remembered me perfectly and asked about you. He seems much interested in you and Will. He's the man to see, Tom Kelly told me, at the City hall. He has the say about all that Clark street colony. There's no end of money there and I'm going to dig some of it out for us."

Ernestine's face was flushed. She could not deny her anger.

"But it seems inconsistent to me," she said quickly, "for you to take advantage of his friendship for Will when you disapprove so of our knowing him. I don't understand."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Abundant Proof That Animals Change Color

Though many an animal in the Arctic regions will change its coat to white for the winter months, there are few animals who turn gray, as human beings do, from old age. Animals are, however, susceptible to fright and shock, and this may cause their hair or fur to change to white, just as in the case of human beings. Domestic pets are naturally more susceptible to this than animals who are used to fending for themselves in the wild. The black coat of a dog will sometimes turn practically white if the dog has a fit or falls victim to a very bad bout of distemper. Cats are not immune from shock. Horses' coats often seem to change quite appreciably in color, but this may be only a matter of clipping. A horse that has been turned out for some time and then brought in to be clipped will become a light fawn color after the operation, when before it he seemed a dark chestnut. You wouldn't know he was the same horse!

Licorice Water Has Value

For generations nonalcoholic drinks made from water infusions of licorice root or paste have been popular throughout southern Europe. This sounds much like the anemic concoction of our childhood days, "lickerish water," which was carried around in a bottle and shaken at frequent intervals to make it froth. This mixture of licorice root, water and sugar, so beloved of children, really has medicinal value, for the virtue of licorice as a tonic and blood purifier has been long recognized. In many factories of France, especially in the iron and steel mills, it is given to workers for drinking purposes instead of plain water.

The SANDMAN STORY

ABOUT THE FIREWEED

"COME," said the members of the fireweed family, "we must take some beauty and color to those black, burnt sections where the fires have raged."

So the members of the fireweed family followed along as members of the fireweed family always have.

"It was Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Grandmother Fireweed who started the idea in the first place," said the tall young member of the fireweed family, who was talking for the others.

"Maybe I should add a few more Greats' there, but you understand what I meant—that it happened a long, long time ago.

"I shall just speak of her as Great-Grandmother, for it would be hard to

"Glorious Trees in the Forest Had Been Destroyed."

say all those 'Greats' each time I spoke.

"Now, Great-Grandmother heard of a terrible fire that had taken place.

"Word came to the members of the flower and weed families that there had been a terrible fire.

"Glorious trees in the forest had been destroyed, ferns and shrubs, trees of all kinds, moss—all had been destroyed.

"Only ugly, charred stumps had been left behind.

"The flowers all trembled when they heard the news. They even heard of the little wild flowers of the woods and of the forests which had been destroyed.

"'But what can we do about it?' the flowers all said. 'Burnt ground is so terrible. It is hard and dry—oh!' and they shivered again.

"'I will go and do what I can,' said Great-Grandmother Fireweed, 'and I hope my sons and daughters and my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will help me.'

"'We'll help you, dear Great-Grandmother,' they all shouted, for she was a great favorite.

"'We will learn to grow where the ground is dry and burnt. We will learn that secret.

"'Just as some people have the wonderful power of helping those who feel sad and are in trouble, so will we learn to help the burnt forests.'

"Great-Grandmother called for a coach. The Breeze Brothers carried her message to the Fairies and they brought her a coach.

"She climbed into it, and so did many of the children and the grandchildren.

"Then she went to the burnt forest. Oh, it made her flower heart ache to see the poor burnt trees. She sent the coach back for more of her family, and more, and more.

"The coach kept coming back and forth. The ponies of Fairyland drew it along, and you know the ponies of Fairyland can run so fast and can even fly over meadows and fields and valleys when they get a proper start.

"Then Great-Grandmother talked to all of her family.

"'It is enough that the people should have to see their forests destroyed,' she said. 'They have enough to bear in that. Let us do what we can to make it look less sorrowful and forlorn.'

"So Great-Grandmother started Fireweed housekeeping right then and there.

"She told us to begin at the bottom of our stems and open up our flowers until we reached the top, making the hillsides and desolate places gay with our bright crimson dresses and suits.

"Then she told us how to leave the seed vessels down along our stems, ready and waiting to split open when the autumn came, so that they could be blown far and wide, and settle where other ground was burnt and dry.

"Always we have done as she asked. Only one more thing she said before she finished the talk that day, and it was this:

"'When we do what we can to help, won't people do all they can to prevent forest fires?

"'We cannot be everywhere, nor do everything, and though we're gay and bright, we're not as the great trees of the forest are—splendid, after years of growth.

"'So won't people do all they can to see that there is never a picnic fire that is left without being entirely put out, and that never a lighted match or spark is left to do harm? We ask that of people, in behalf of the great, noble trees.'"

(Copyright.)

George Bancroft

George Bancroft, the popular player, has Doris Kenyon as his leading woman in his latest picture, "The Caveman," a story of a battling hero in the steel mills. Bancroft has been featured in "Ladies Love Brutes."

For Meditation

By LEONARD A. BARRETT

NECESSITIES VS. LUXURIES

BUSINESS economists inform us that the first step in making a market for a new product is to create a demand for it. Jobbers must become acquainted with the product, and retail storekeepers must know all about it. One of the suggested ways for a new product to find a ready market is by a group of persons going from store to store asking for that particular article. Of course, they do not find it, but they set the storekeeper thinking. "What is this new thing?" they ask. In Doctor Conwell's celebrated lecture, "Acres of Diamonds," he recalled an early experience of his boyhood days. When clerking in a country store a person came in, asking for a jackknife. There were no jack-knives in stock. Presently another customer made the same demand, then a third came with the same request. After this third demand the store was supplied with plenty of jackknives for sale. Keeping a supply on hand proved to be a necessity. Not long since a representative from an insurance company called upon the writer to sell life insurance. He was informed that all was being carried that could be conveniently paid for. But the representative was wise at the game. It was only after he succeeded in making clear that additional insurance was necessary for adequate protection, that a new policy was written. "Necessity" won the argument.

L. A. Barrett.

We hear these days about the demands luxuries make upon us. Truly money is spent for luxuries, more so, perhaps, than for necessities. But necessities come first because they are essential. Luxuries are nonessential. Much money is spent upon luxuries because people have surplus money to spend. A wise man might be willing to borrow money to buy necessities, but he is a very foolish man who will borrow in order to buy luxuries.

Nature also cares only for necessities. You cannot find a single thing in nature that might be classified as a luxury. She refuses to have anything to do with the nonessentials. Anything that is not necessary to development is automatically shuffled off.

Luxuries, while enjoyable, should not be necessary to health, life or one's happiness.

Necessity is the mother of invention.—Farquar.

There is no virtue like necessity.—Shakespeare.

Dear Editor:

RANDOM shots of a trip down South.

Roadside stands selling fresh melons and fruit right from the field. More fun than an oyster bar.

Sign in Arkansas: "Coffins and caskets." Dig your own. Another sign: "We buy, sell and trade mules." Sounds like a risky business.

I was surprised to see what a big thing a Mississippi river levee is. Having had my back yard graded once, I can imagine what it costs to move so much dirt.

There's a house with a gas well in the front yard. Hard to beat that for service.

I wish some one would invite me down a coal mine. But maybe I wouldn't have the right thing to wear. —Fred Barton.

(Copyright.)

SMILES

GABBY GERTIE

"When you consult a rheumatism specialist you can expect to be soaked for your pains."

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How It Started

By JEAN NEWTON

"MEETING HOUSE"

THROUGHOUT the United States, in the thousands of little villages that dot the country, we find in each a meeting house. And in almost every case, the meeting house is the church. And so deep seated is this institution that the words church and meeting house have in these communities come to be synonymous.

Just why this is so is an interesting survival of American history.

The first churches built in any numbers in America were erected by the Puritans. In the beginning, they were, of course, simply houses of worship only. Afterwards, however, as the communities grew, as it became necessary to formulate laws of government and as various other communal problems arose, problems that inspired discussions, debate and the general interchange of ideas, it became necessary to have a place in which to gather.

What more natural than that after prayer meeting, the church, which was as a rule the most pretentious and most roomy structure in the community, should be turned into a meeting house, by which name it soon came to be known and called.

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SIX CYLINDER SENTENCES

By DR. JOHN W. HOLLAND

To the average youth a sane holiday is an insane one.

America's forward urging cry seems to be, "Higher and Drier."

Most any patriot, when singing "America," can sing, "I love thy rocks."

Now that we have the radio, let some political genius arise and give us wireless politics.

Patriots are discovering that they cannot vote a straight ticket with crooked men upon it.

If the American people succeed in holding onto Almighty God, they will be mighty enough to hold together.