

Shifting SANDS

by
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SYNOPSIS

The future of the still youthful and comely "Widder" Marcia Howe, recently released by death from her idling husband, is a conversational tit-bit among housewives of the little hamlet of Wilton. Eligible bachelors and widowers also are interested. Marcia is lonely, and has invited her late husband's niece, Sylvia Hayden, whom she had never seen, to visit her. A stranger, on the verge of exhaustion, tells his way to Marcia's home. Secretly, he asks Marcia to hide a package containing jewelry. She does so. Elisha Winslow, town sheriff, brings news of a jewel robbery nearby. The stranger gives his name as Stanley Heath. Sylvia, by chance, discovers the jewels, and naturally believes Heath is a robber. She realizes that Marcia must have hidden them, and decides to say nothing, putting the gems back in their hiding place.

CHAPTER V—Continued

Prince came bounding into the house from some distant pilgrimage of his own, almost knocking her down in his eagerness for breakfast.

She glanced far up the shore and saw, serenely rocking with the tide, "My Unknown Lady."

As she whispered the name, she was conscious of hot blood rushing to her cheeks.

How ridiculous! Stanley Heath was simply a stranger of a night, he was nothing to her.

Well indeed was it, too, that he was not!

During her hours of sleeplessness the ardor of her faith in him had, to a degree, cooled. True, she still maintained her belief in his innocence; but that belief, she now realized, was only a blind unfounded intuition. Both the circumstances and sober second thought failed to back it up. The man's impatience to be gone, his complete silence with regard to the jewels, although perfectly justifiable, did not strengthen it.

Marcia conceded he had every right to keep his affairs to himself. Had he started to confide his secret to her, she would have held up her hand to stay him.

It was the fact that through the dim hours of the night, while she sat at his elbow trying to make the discomforts he suffered more bearable, he talked of almost everything else but the thing uppermost in both their minds. That was what hurt. She did not want to know. She wanted to be trusted; to help; to feel his dependence upon her. Instead he held her at arm's length.

He spoke with appreciation of the crew who had dragged his boat off the sand-bar, appearing to consider them tremendously kind—as undoubtedly they were! Still, they had not begun to come into the close contact with him that she had.

Marcia caught herself up with a round turn. Here she was being sensitive, womanish. How detestable! Why should Stanley Heath pour out his soul to her? She had never laid eyes on him until yesterday. In a day or two he would be gone never again to come into her life. She was glad of it. It was better so.

This decision reached, she drew in her chin, lifted her head a wee bit and began to get the breakfast.

Even Doctor Stetson's arrival and his subsequent verdict that the patient had bronchitis and would take his life in his hands should he leave his bed, afforded her only scant satisfaction.

So she was to keep Stanley Heath under her roof after all—but against his will. It was not a very flattering situation.

She sent Sylvia up with his coffee and toast, and began her usual round of morning duties.

And then just as they were finished and the clock was striking eleven, he called.

She went up, cheerful but with her head still held high, and paused on the threshold.

Glancing at her he smiled.

"You look like a bird about to take flight. Won't you sit down?"

She went nearer. Nevertheless she did not take the chair he indicated.

"I see you are busy," he said. "I thought perhaps your housework might be done by this time and you might have a moment to spare. Well, I mustn't interrupt. Forgive me for calling."

"I haven't a thing in the world to do," Marcia burst out.

"Good! Then you can stay a little while," he coaxed. "Now answer this question truthfully, please. You heard what Doctor Stetson said about my returning to New York today. I don't want to be pig-headed and take a risk if it is imprudent; that is neither fair to others nor to myself. Still, it is important that I go and I am anxious to do. What is your advice?"

"I think you are too ill."

A frown of annoyance wrinkled his forehead.

"Perhaps you're right. Yet for all that I am disappointed. I want very much to go. It is necessary."

"Can't anything be done from here?" queried she.

"Such as—"

"Letters, telegrams—whatever you wish. I can telephone or telegraph anywhere. Or I can write."

Surprise stole over his face, then deepened to admiration.

"You would do that for me—blind-folded?"

"Why not? I simply want to help. I always like to help when I can."

"Even when you do not understand?"

Piercingly his eyes rested on her face.

"I—I do not need to understand," was her proud retort.

For the fraction of a second their glances met. When he spoke his voice was low—imperative.

"Marcia—come here!"

She went—she knew not why.

"Give me your hand."

Again, half-trembling, half reluctant, she obeyed.

He took it in his and bending, kissed it.

"I will stay and you shall telegraph," was all he said.

She sprang to fetch paper and pencil, as if welcoming this break in the tension.

"I'm afraid I cannot write plainly enough with my left hand," he said.

"Will you take down the message?"

"Certainly."

"Mrs. S. C. Heath."

Her pencil, so firm only an instant before, quivered.

"Have you that?"

"Yes."

"The Biltmore, New York City."

"Yes."

"Everything safe with me. Do not worry. Marooned on Cape Cod with cold. Nothing serious. Home soon. Love, Stanley."

"Got that?"

"Yes."

Had something gone out of her voice? The monosyllable was flat, colorless. Heath looked at her. Even her expression was different—or did he merely imagine it?

"Perhaps I would better just glance over the message before you send it—simply to make sure it's right."

"Let me copy it first," she objected.

"Copy it? Nonsense! What for? Nobody's going to see it."

He reached for the paper.

Still she withheld it.

"What's the trouble?"

"It isn't written well enough. I'd rather copy it."

"Why?"

"It's wobbly. I—I—perhaps my hands were cold."

"You're not chilly?"

"No—oh, no."

"If the room is cool you mustn't stay here."

"It isn't. I'm not cold at all."

"Will you let me take the telegram?" She placed it in his hand.

"It is shaky. However, that's of no consequence, since you are to phone Western Union. Now, if you truly are not cold, I'd like to dictate a second wire."

"All right."

"This one is for Currier," he said.

"Mr. James Currier, The Biltmore, New York City. Safe on Cape with My Lady. Shall return with her later. Motor here at once, bringing whatever I need for indefinite stay."

"Stanley C. Heath."

"Got that?"

"O. K.," nodded Marcia.

This time, without hesitation, she passed him the paper.

"This, I see, is your normal handwriting," he commented as he placed the messages side by side.

Taking up the sheets, he studied them with interest.

"Haven't I better go and get off the messages?" suggested Marcia, rising nervously. "The station might be closed. Often it is, at noontime."

"It doesn't matter if they don't go until afternoon."

"But there might be some slip."

He glanced at her with his keen eyes.

the brick, which fitted so tightly that its adjustment was a process requiring patience, care, and time.

Flustered, frightened, she jammed the jewel case into her dress and frantically restoring the brick to the yawning hole in the hearth as best she could, she fled up the back stairs at the same moment Marcia descended the front ones.

Once in her room, she closed and locked the door and sank panting into a chair to recover her breath.

Well, at least she had not been caught and in the meantime the jewels were quite safe.

She took the case stealthily from her pocket. Now that the gems were in her possession, it certainly could do no harm for her to look at them—even try them on, as she had been tempted to do when she first discovered them. Probably never again in all her life would she hold in her hand so much wealth and beauty.

Accordingly she unwound the handkerchief and opened the box.

There lay the glistening heap of treasure, resplendent in the sunshine, a far more gorgeous spectacle than she had realized.

Going to the bureau, Sylvia took out the jewels, one by one.

She clasped the diamonds about her neck; fastened the emerald brooch in place; put on the sapphire pendant; then added the rings and looked at herself in the gold-framed mirror.

What she saw reflected dazzled her. Who would have believed jewels could make such a difference in one's appearance? They set off her blond beauty so that she was suddenly transformed into a princess.

Slowly, and with conscious coquetry, like a preening bird, she turned her head this way and that, delighting in the creaminess of the neck the gems encircled, and in the fairness of her golden curls.

She really ought to have jewels. She was born for them and could carry them off. There were myriad women in the world on whom such adornment would be wasted—good and worthy women, too.

Then a voice interrupted her reverie. It was Stanley Heath calling.

She heard Marcia reply and come hurrying upstairs.

Guiltily Sylvia took off her sparkling regalia; tumbled it unceremoniously into its case; and slipped it into the drawer underneath a pile of night-dresses. Then she softly unlocked the door and sauntered out.

It was none too soon, for Marcia was speaking to her.

"Sylvia?"

"Yes."

"How would you feel about going over to the village for the mail and to do some errands? The tide is out and you could walk. Prince needs a run."

"I'd love to go."

"That's fine. Here is a list of things we need at the store. You're sure you don't mind going?"

"No, indeed. I shall enjoy being out."

Then suddenly Sylvia had an inspiration which she instantly acted upon.

"Why don't you go?" she inquired.

"You didn't sleep much last night, and a walk might do you good."

"Oh, I couldn't," objected Marcia with haste. "I've a hundred and one things to do. Thanks, just the same."

"Well, you know your own business best. Is this the list?"

"Yes. There are quite a few items, but they won't be heavy. Here is the basket. Prince will carry it. That is his job and very proud he is of doing it. Good-by, dear."

"She's dreadfully anxious to get us out of the way, isn't she, Prince?" commented young Sylvia as she and the setter started out over the sand.

"Now what do you suppose she has on her mind? She's up to something. Marcia isn't a bit of an actress. She's too genuine."

Marcia, standing at the window watching the girl, would have been astonished enough had she heard this astute observation.

She did want Sylvia out of the way. The girl had read her correctly.

She must telephone the messages to the stationmaster at Sawyer Falls, the adjoining town where the railroad ended and the nearest telegraph station was.

She got the line and had no sooner dictated the telegrams than she heard Heath's voice.

During the interval that had elapsed since she had left him, both of them had experienced a reaction and each was eager to make amends.

Marcia regretted her flippancy. It had been childish of her to give way to pique and punish Heath simply because it was proved he had a wife.

Why should he not be married? No doubt the absent Mrs. Stanley Heath was a dashing, sophisticated beauty, too, who lived in luxury at the great city hotel to which the first wire had been sent.

Heath had been quite frank about the message and its destination. Of thinking matters over, it occurred to Marcia he might have considered this the easiest way to inform her of things he found it embarrassing to put into words.

And she?

Instead of appreciating his honesty, chivalry, gentlemanly conduct as she should have done, and receiving it graciously, surprise had betrayed her into displaying resentment.

She was heartily ashamed of herself. No matter how much it humbled her pride, she must put things right. Fortunately it was not too late to do so.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Many Lands Send Sugar

It is usual to think of the foreign source of sugar used in the United States as being limited to Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Philippines, yet fairly large quantities come from other sources.

The Rogues' Gallery



With a tax collector stationed at every cocktail party this source should bring the treasury ample funds with which to finance all of the President's appropriations.

A BOX OF PIN-HEAD TAX

By NINA WILCOX PUTNAM

RIGHT now the government seems to be taxing everything, including our patience.

There once was a day when, if you heard the word "tax," you thought of a small box full of little demi-tasse nails which bit you when you tried to pull one out to mend the window shade.

Now when anyone asks if you have some tacks in the house, you rush for the desk drawer and pull out a handful of final notices.

Of course, these only represent the sort of taxes which come to visit you in the home, and range in size from the big, burly Federal Income Tax Return counterpane, down to the little tizzy-bitzy two-dollar poll-tax. Just why I should ever receive the latter, I have never understood. Poll-tax indeed, when I've never even priced a parrot, much less kept one.

I pay my dog tax, though. They call it a license, of course, but it's a tax on my pocketbook no matter what they call it. I suppose the tax on shoes is the real dog tax . . . oh well, that one is at least my own, poor thing!

The first fast one the government put over on us in a big way, was that intelligence test, the income tax, and what a crossword puzzle that turned out to be! At first it wasn't so popular, but now the fixed date for the annual March contest, and the everybody goes at it in a spirit of catch-as-catch-can and rather likes it. They say "it's fun to be fooled" but it's even more fun trying to fool the Collector of Eternal Revenue.

The states, many of them being a lot of old copy-cats, got out a second edition of the above mentioned. The State Income Tax may be a state affair but it is also that in the plural—a state of affairs—and if you don't believe me, just wait until you have to pay yours this year!

The whole country is now like midtown New York at mid-day: taxis, taxis everywhere and you can't make a move in any direction without running into 'em.

Of course the gas tax is a good thing in a way because it keeps a lot of people in their homes. But it's a shame it don't apply on the floor of the house of representatives.

While as for this sales tax they have got in a few states such as California and New York, well, it's funny how people are. When the government allowed that 24 per cent beer was legal, the folks kicked because it wasn't strong enough. But a 2 per cent sales tax is so strong they claim it knocks 'em for a headache. Oh well, it takes all kinds of people to make a world and then what have you got?

The beauty who's getting all the attention just now is the inheritance tax. Around where I live, they call it the New Inheritance Tax. Well, I must say that years ago, all I inherited from my Uncle Bill was a lot of taxes, so if they think inheritance taxes are something new, they are goofy! I admit there was a farm attached—quite heavily attached—to the taxes Uncle left me, but it was so well snowed under that by the time I dug off the last line I had to slip it back again to keep the roof from caving in from age. If the inheritance tax goes far enough, we won't even be sure of our own tombstones.

As well, taxes never come single in spite of all Henry George said. The only people they really help are the newspaper cartoonists. With the rest of the population they have given rise to a lot of prejudice. Why, my brother, for instance, don't like to be known as a taxi-driver, because he's afraid people will think he's a revenue man.

Now I am not narrow-minded or unpatriotic about this tax business.

I realize the poor starving politicians cannot be allowed to go on home relief. Probably their homes would have no sense of relief at all if they stayed home all day. Also I am perfectly well aware that the office holders have a short season of it, even four years isn't much, so naturally they have to provide for their lean years while they can, or some day they might have to go to work.

I know, too, that the Government Machinery has to be supported although why it can't come down to earth instead, is beyond me. Oh heck, what I mean is, I know that taxes are necessary for the Public Weal. Or maybe it's the Public Veal—you know, killing the fat-head calf. Aw, pepper-mints; I'll quit trying to be high-hat about it and admit that all I know is you've got to pay 'em or else—

So as long as taxes have got to be paid, why not make them popular? Nobody minds giving up their dough for something which gives them a thrill—why, they will even give up other people's dough for that. So in my simple feminine fashion, I propose that we quit taxing necessary things and tax according to what is known as the Putnam Plan.

To begin with, this plan would take the tax off of theater tickets and put it on to wives who take singing lessons at home. Don't cheer, boys, this won't stop them.

The plan says further that there shall be a tax on every spectator at all sensational divorce or murder trials.

All malicious gossip shall be taxed at a rate of 20 per cent of the net income of the gossipier. And a tax of 5 per cent of the gross income of the gossipee.

All smoking room stories over one year old shall be taxed at the rate of 50 cents per repetition. With a tax-collector stationed at every cocktail party this source alone should bring the treasury ample funds with which to finance all of the President's appropriations and leave enough over for a bromo seltzer.

Practical jokes shall be taxed on a sliding scale. That gives me an idea! Can you just picture a fat woman stepping onto a sliding scale? Huh! Sd you won't laugh, eh? Oh well, what do I care? But this is a rich idea, this taxing practical jokes. And what I really started out to say was, the jokes would be taxed in proportion to their cleverness and originality. The dumber the joke the higher the tax. Joe Cook, for instance, would get off practically free.

The list of properly taxable things could go on practically endlessly, beginning with visits from mothers-in-law and ending with buttered parsnips, and such a tax list, far from making Mr. Taxpayer, the Forgotten Man and Mr. Average Citizen feel even more gloomy than they look from their pictures in the papers—well, far from making them feel oppressed, it would have them practically laughing out loud.

Nobody could object to seeing a guy pay a tax on a stale egg, or shell out ten bucks to the government for having said "Olive Oil" or "Abyssinia" as farewell to a pal.

In fact, this Perfect Putnam Plan if carried out properly, might even result in the happy populace digging up the tax money for their taxed brethren voluntarily, with song and dance, instead of giving the government a song and dance about not being able to pay at all, the way a lot of them do now.

But all this depends on my plan being carried out, and I don't mean feet first, either.

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In Advance Class

"I thought you finished your correspondence school education."

"I did. Now I'm taking a parcel post-graduate course."

Billings Child Knew Just Where That Clam Went

The Billings child on her Sunday visit to the beach picked up a clam-shell and regarded it meditatively.

"Now I wonder where that clam has gone to?" she inquired.

Neither parent responded. Four-year-olds are always wondering something, and Billings was busy resting in the hot sand, while Mrs. Billings was busy rubbing sunburn oil on her person.

"I wonder where that clam has gone to?" repeated the Billings child. No answer being forthcoming she demanded loudly:

"Mommie, do you want to know where that clam has gone to? Daddy, do you want to know where that clam has gone to?"

Both parents averred absently that they did.

The Billings child tossed aside the empty shell, picked up her pail and shovel and started for the water. In departing she remarked:

"It's crawled into an oyster shell and is going around fooling people."

—New York Sun.

What a Blessing If they could only devise some way to tax talk!

What a Blessing If they could only devise some way to tax talk!

Find Out

From Your Doctor if the "Pain" Remedy You Take Is Safe.

Don't Entrust Your Own or Your Family's Well-Being to Unknown Preparations

BEFORE you take any preparation you don't know all about, for the relief of headaches; or the pains of rheumatism, neuritis or neuralgia, ask your doctor what he thinks about it—in comparison with Genuine Bayer Aspirin.

We say this because, before the discovery of Bayer Aspirin, most so-called "pain" remedies were advised against by physicians as being bad for the stomach; or, often, for the heart. And the discovery of Bayer Aspirin largely changed medical practice.

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Bayer Aspirin

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Nervous, Weak Woman Soon All Right

"I had regular shaking spells from nervousness," writes Mrs. Cora Sanders, of Paragould, Ark. "I was all run-down and cramped at my time until I would have to go to bed. After my first bottle of Cardui, I was better. I kept taking Cardui and soon I was all right. The shaking quit and I did not cramp. I felt worlds better. I gave Cardui to my daughter who was in about the same condition and she was soon all right."

Thousands of women testify Cardui benefited them. If