

SHINING PALACE

By CHRISTINE WHITING PARMENTER

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CHAPTER I

They sat facing each other, separated by thirty-seven years, two utterly different temperaments, and six feet of priceless wine-colored Bokhara that covered the old davenport. James Lambert, who found it difficult to relax when he intended to be unrelenting, sat stiffly, arms folded, at his end of the six feet. Leonora at hers was curled up in the manner of a little girl, her head with its aureole of pale gold hair resting upon a velvet cushion—one small, silver-clad foot dangling against the gorgeous color of the old Bokhara like some barbaric jewel from the Orient.

Though a log blazed cheerily on the hearth, the atmosphere of the room was tense with disapproval—James Lambert's disapproval. Said Leonora, resuming a discussion which dinner had interrupted:

"But that's no reason, Dad. No reason at all."

"No reason!" James paused, presumably to clear his throat but in reality to curb his temper. Past experience had taught him that it was futile to rage at this bewildering foster-daughter. She merely laughed at you. He wondered, the old wound aching for a moment, if the Italian baritone who had lured his wife away from him, possessed that quality. The girl's mother had been quick to anger; but Leonora simply wouldn't get mad no matter what the provocation. She laughed, and that made a man feel foolish—disarmed his dignity; and dignity, James sometimes thought with bitterness, was all he had, unless one counted a fat bank balance. His sense of humor that Nora loved, but which too often raised its head in disconcerting moments, he refused to consider an asset. But dignity was something one shouldn't trifle with, so he endeavored to be reasonable.

"Unless a house is founded upon a rock, my child, it will not survive."

"Nor will one that isn't founded upon love," retorted Leonora. "You can't beat that, Dad."

"In my case," he replied coldly, "love did not prove a firm foundation." And added, not wishing to pursue the subject of his own marital catastrophe: "Be sensible, Nora. That boy will never in the world provide for you." He threw an appraising glance at the silver slippers. "Just face the facts honestly, my dear. He is twenty-seven. By his own unabashed confession he dropped college after a few months merely because it bored him; and what has he accomplished since then, in the years that should have given him a start in life? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Can you deny it?"

A maddening smile curved Leonora's adorable mouth.

"That depends on what you consider a start in life, Dad. He's got some perfectly corking memories." "Memories!" James was obliged to clear his throat again; then said with sarcasm: "You'll find, I fear, that even the most delightful memories won't pay the butcher."

"And a thousand dollars," added the girl naively. "It's in the Farmers and Mechanics Bank downtown."

The sense of humor popped up and grinned at James. His mouth relaxed a little even as he contended: "Is it indeed? An appropriate place for the savings of a—a—a vagabond!"

This brought a laugh from Leonora, a delightful laugh which brightened the whole room.

"Sometimes, Dad," she told him, "you are simply priceless. It's an enigma how so bright a man as you can be so dense. But the truth is, Don earned some of that thousand on a ranch in California. That's farming for you. And down at Santa Fe he worked three months at a garage, driving tourists. If anything's mechanical that ought to be; but you've no idea the amount of history he picked up along the way. And in South Africa—"

James Lambert's hand went up in the forbidding gesture popular with traffic officers.

"Don't go all over South Africa again, I beg of you. All this remarkable young man did there was to get into a diamond rush that netted him nothing. That is," he glanced at her sternly, "nothing but memories. Now look here, Nora. It's no use quibbling. You're blinded just at present by all the fellow's exploits; but you're young and impressionable. You can forget him. I'll send you abroad again if that will help. I'll even go with you myself, though I loathe travel. Ned tells me—"

"I see," interrupted Nora, as one enlightened. "So Ned has been poisoning your mind? I might have known."

She spoke evenly, coldly, yet hot color dyed her face and something told her foster-father that she was nearer anger than he had ever seen her. But he was angry himself as he retorted in a voice like ice: "Is it anything deplorable for a man to

be interested in the welfare of his own sister?"

"I'm only his half-sister," the girl corrected, "and there are times enough when he wishes I wasn't. Oh, I know what a good egg Ned is—in his own way; but he hasn't a spark of imagination. He never sees the other fellow's side. He's content to eat breakfast at precisely the same time each morning, and to know where he'll be every hour of the twenty-four. He's perfectly satisfied with Corinne and her beautifully kept house which changes with every changing style so you can't find your way around if you happen not to go there for a month. Corinne never does anything that isn't done, you know; but she makes him comfortable, and that's all Ned asks of life—comfort, plus an increasing bank balance. He's a superb example of the successful, white-collared American business man, like—"

Nora paused, suddenly inarticulate; and James finished her sen-



Nora paused, suddenly inarticulate.

ence with a question: "Like his father?"

"You're not his father," began the girl, then stopped, fearing to hurt him. "I—I mean—"

"I've been Ned's father longer than I've been yours, Nora," he reminded her with unaccustomed gentleness. "The boy was less than two years old when I married his mother; and he's been compensation, as far as such a thing is possible, for all the trouble that came later."

"Meaning—me?"

She shouldn't have said just that, of course; but her lip trembled a little, and James forgave her. He responded instantly: "Don't be a goose, dear! I've never regarded you as a trouble—not for a minute. A problem, perhaps, because I don't always understand you, and you often rub me the wrong way. But I want you to be happy, Nora, and safe; and I can't see safety for a woman, or happiness either, unless there's a certain stability in the man she chooses. Don Mason hasn't got that stability; and I doubt if it's possible for him to acquire it now. I don't call him a ne'er-do-well, though—"

James stopped. The curtains at the door had parted, and a maid announced: "Mr. Mason is in the reception room, Miss Nora."

"Ask him to step in here, please," replied the girl. Then to her father: "Perhaps you'd better tell Don how you feel. Ned and Corinne made their attitude quite plain last evening at the Country Club. It hurt me frightfully. That's why I blew

up just now. If I felt that Ned really cared about me it would be different; but he's never cared, not like a real brother—not as—as you care, Dad. Sometimes I feel—Oh, hello, Don! Come in. Dad wants to see you."

The young man paused on the threshold. He did not speak, yet one knew instinctively that he was asking: "Is this a declaration of war, or a friendly counsel?" It was, perhaps, only a few seconds that he waited in the illuminating silence, but, facing him, James Lambert was conscious of a pang of envy. Here was Youth! Youth at its best and brightest. What arguments could a man of sixty use, he asked himself, to counteract the sense of high adventure which this boy brought with him into the quiet room.

Years afterward James was to recall every detail of that scene: how as Don stood there his hair seemed to be blown back from his forehead by a mountain breeze—how tanned his neck had looked above the collar—how broad his shoulders—how strong his hands. And how, as the girl came forward, his eyes which had been shrewd and questioning, changed, softened, lighted as if by magic . . .

"You wish to see me, sir?" James thought: "I wish I may never see your handsome face again," but he gripped the outstretched hand in not unfriendly fashion as he replied with crisp finality: "Only to say that I'm taking Nora abroad for the next year."

For one startled moment Don's eyes met Leonora's—held them. What he read there James never knew. He said, a smile curving his engaging mouth: "Our tastes are similar! I meant to do that very thing myself."

"Indeed?" There was a world of sarcasm in the lifted eyebrows. "On a thousand dollars?"

Don said, quite seriously: "It shouldn't take a thousand, Mr. Lambert. I've been from Persia to—"

"See here," James broke in with impatience, "it doesn't in the least matter where you've been. I've no doubt you traveled steamer—roughed it—even mixed with the darkies as a deck passenger. May I ask if you ever traveled with a woman?"

"Oh, Dad!" warned Nora; but the young man silenced her with a laugh.

"Sit tight, my dear. Your father's not insulting me. He's merely point-

ing out the fact that a feminine companion complicates things on a journey. He's right, of course; but as it happens, Mr. Lambert, I did travel for ten days with a girl I picked up outside of Shanghai. We—"

He paused because James Lambert had made a strange sound in his throat. Nora recognized it as the forerunner of a storm—a sort of distant thunder. If possible that storm must be averted, and she said hurriedly: "Don didn't mean, Dad—"

"And do you mean," blazed her father, thoroughly roused, "that you'll consider marrying a fellow who admits traveling with strange women—'picking them up' here, there, God knows where? Do you understand, child?"

To his amazement a short laugh came from Don.

"Calm down, everybody," he pleaded. "Calm down. The lady in the case was above reproach. This adventure of mine which sounds so wicked to you, Mr. Lambert, occurred during a Chinese rebellion. The girl got separated from her family and I took her under my brotherly wing, as it were, until we found them. Would you have had me leave a fellow countrywoman to the tender mercies of the bandits who had wrecked our train?"

Nora laughed; while her father experienced the unpleasant sensation of appearing foolish. This made him angrier still, and he exploded: "Why didn't you say so in the first place?"

"I'm under the impression," replied the young man suavely, "that you didn't give me time. What I started to tell you, Mr. Lambert, is that we got on famously despite unnatural conditions and innumerable hardships. She was a sport, that girl. I've often wondered why I didn't fall for her—that is, I wondered till I met Nora."

James, still slightly ruffled, snorted like an angry horse.

"Very pretty. Very pretty indeed; but you must consider the fact that my—that Nora has been accustomed to every luxury. Hardship is something she doesn't dimly glimpse. You're twenty-seven, and according to Nora you've accumulated only a thousand dollars. If she's mistaken, I apologize. If she's right, what, may I ask, have you to offer her compared to what dozens of the men she knows could offer?"

So it was war! The young man comprehended.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Migratory Birds Change Their Habits When They Take Up Quarters in South

Change of habitat frequently brings changes in the actions and food habits of migratory birds. Some that we consider desirable and entertaining summer residents are looked upon as obnoxious when they reach their southern range. They may be weed seed and insect destroyers while they remain with us, thereby establishing their economic importance to agriculture in the North, but when they reach the South they become crop destroyers.

This is apparently what happens with the colorful red-winged blackbird of our marshes and swales, writes Albert Stoll, Jr., in the Detroit News. While it may eat some grain in farmers' fields during the spring and summer, by far its greatest diet consist of insects and weed seeds found near its marsh home. This is the principal reason federal officials placed the blackbird on the list of protected birds by a special order.

However, when this species migrates to the South, and takes up its winter residence in Louisiana and Texas, it becomes a different bird in food habits. It has proved so injurious to rice fields that the gov-

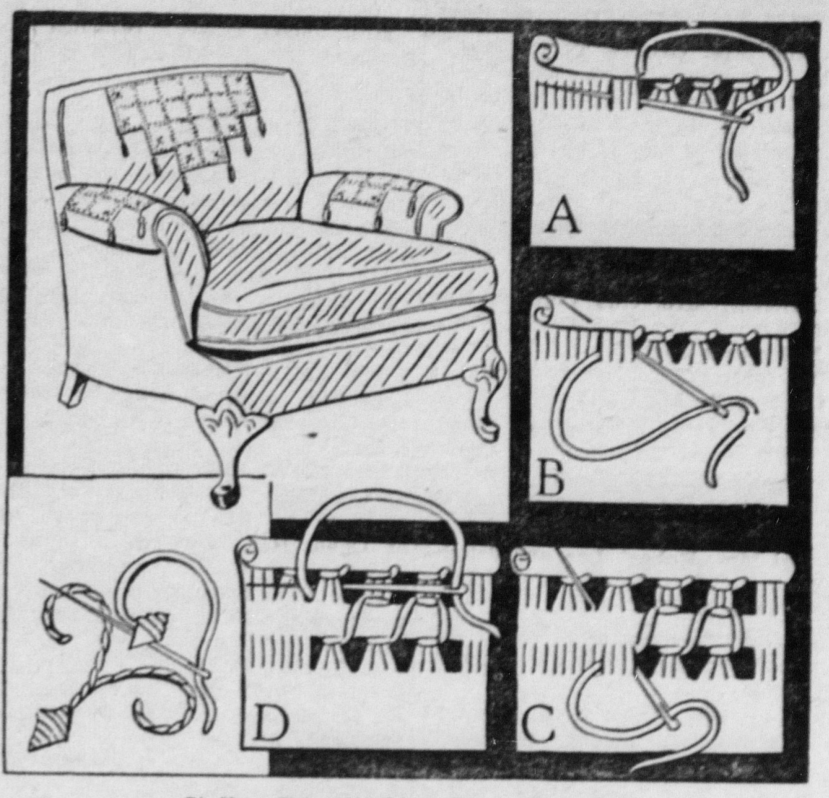
ernment, after exhaustive investigation, has found it necessary to allow rice growers to kill the birds by the thousands. In the South they display nomadic habits. They make daily trips to the rice fields, feeding on the shocked grain in flocks of many thousands and return to their marsh homes to roost at night.

Here is one illustration of the destructiveness of the red-wing in the South. One rice farmer with 230 acres of stacked sheaves used 4,500 shot gun shells costing \$135, in keeping the birds out of his fields. This expense, with labor involved in patrolling, was necessary to protect a crop of 2,600 sacks of rice. Judging by experience this farmer estimated that his crop would not have exceeded 1,000 sacks if the birds had not been controlled and driven from the fields. He estimated his total expense at \$250 for control work, but was able to save rice worth more than \$7,800.

Similar experiences are recorded among other rice growers and they were able to convince the government that control measures were necessary if they were to remain in business.

HOW to SEW

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS



Italian Hemstitching for a Chair Set

THE chair set shown here is made of an even meshed cream linen, marked off in squares of Italian hemstitching. Tiny scrolls in outline stitch with two diamonds in satin stitch are embroidered in all the outside corners. The scroll motif is shown at lower left. The tassels are made by raveling strips of the material and then rolling them.

pairing; also table settings; gifts; and many things to make for yourself and the children. If you like hand work you will be pleased with this unique book of complete directions for every article illustrated. Postpaid upon receipt of 25 cents (coin preferred). Just ask for Book No. 2 and address Mrs. Spears, 210 South Desplaines St., Chicago, Ill.

The chair back piece measures 15 by 10 inches finished, and the chair arm pieces 7½ by 7½ inches. Allow ¾-inch at all edges for the rolled hems. The hemstitched squares measure 2½ inches. Mark them in pencil. The method of hemstitching the rolled edges is shown here at A and B. Remember that a moist thumb always helps in rolling an edge evenly. Italian hemstitching is really just two rows worked together as shown at C and D. To prepare the rows, draw two threads, skip four and then draw two more.

Readers who have received their copy of Mrs. Spears' book on Sewing, for the Home Decorator, will be pleased to know that Book No. 2 is now ready. Ninety embroidery stitches; fabric re-

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'Safe upon the solid rock the ugly houses stand; Come and see my shining palace built upon the sand!'

The "shining palace" was a sanctuary for Nora and Don Mason . . . a refuge for two veteran globe trotters . . . a place to hang their hats when new sights and sounds became tiresome. It was to this "shining palace" that Nora invited James Lambert, the strong-willed stepfather who loved her but vowed never to forgive her elopement with the globe-trotting Don Mason.

James Lambert did not come . . . not until Nora's valiant spirit had almost been broken in the face of terrible adversity. But his belated coming brought forgiveness and new courage to a despairing couple.

"Shining Palace" by Christine Whiting Parmenter is a sincere story that abounds with adventure and romance . . . a serial you'll remember for years to come!

SHINING PALACE—Follow it serially in this paper