

THE GIFT WIFE . . .

By RUPERT HUGHES

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SYNOPSIS

On board the Nord-Express, with Ostend as his immediate destination, Dr. David Jebb is bound for America. Accompanying him is five-year-old Cynthia Thatcher, his temporary ward. On the train they meet Big Bill Gaines, former classmate and fraternity brother of David's. He tells Gaines of his mission, and of his one unconquerable vice—an overwhelming desire for liquor. Jebb feels the urge coming to him again, and wants to safeguard the child, whose father is dead and whose mother waits for her in America.

CHAPTER I—Continued

Upon the leaden silence came the fluty ripple of a childish voice: "Hello!"

And an exquisite face peering through a cascade of curls was thrust into the fog of smoke: "Nunkie Dave, are you dere?" Jebb leaped to his feet and caught the child to him in alarm.

"How did you get here, sweet-heart?" "I just come long de hall, Nunkie Dave."

"She calls me Nunkie Dave," he explained. "It's shorter than Mr. Jebb. Cynthia, this is an old friend of your Nunkie Dave's. Miss Cynthia Thatcher, may I present to you Mr. William Gaines? There's a good deal of him, but it's all wool and a yard wide."

"And it washes," said Gaines. He knew better than to patronize the young. He said, without condescension but with perfect gravity, as he put out his hand:

"I'm delighted to meet you, Miss Thatcher. Won't you come and sit on my lap?"

She looked at him in dismay. His fair round capon-lined torso was like a globe. She murmured: "I'm 'lighted to meet you, Mitha Gainth, but you got no lap to thet on." Then she took command. "If you move ober, I like to look out de vinda."

"By all means, Miss Thatcher." And Gaines hunched his bulk aside, far enough for the little queen to establish herself at the pane.

"What did your Nunkie Dave say your name was?"

"My name Thinty Thashel." Gaines threw up his hands in horror. "Thinty Suitcase!"

The child shrieked with joy at the big man's stupidity. She corrected him as if he were an overgrown infant—"Thinty Thashel" was the name and no other.

"That's a beautiful name," said Gaines meekly; "the beautifullest name for the beautifullest girl I ever saw."

She threw a look of confused vanity at Jebb, then flattened her tiny snub of a nose against the pane, most unbecomingly, and watched the quickening sights as the train rattled into a village.

Behind her back the men fell to talking about her:

"Cynthia Thatcher! That's a great name for a child," said Gaines; "she'll be an old woman before she learns to pronounce it."

But Jebb was gazing at her very solemnly.

"Poor little tike! Her history begins with a rush. She's only five, and she has already crossed the ocean, bidden her mother a long good-bye, lost her father forever, been left alone among strangers in a land whose language she doesn't understand. And now she is sent back across the ocean in charge of a—a man like me. We've become great chums already. She likes me, and I—I love her."

"I've never had a child of my own, Billy. I never expect to have. But I've helped dozens of children into the world, and I've had hundreds of them brought to me maimed and twisted and defective and wounded and sick. They've been afraid of me, and I've had to hurt them. And sometimes I couldn't help them at all, and I've had to see them slip away from me like little drowning, frightened things."

"This is the first child, Billy, ever put in my keeping that was sound and well and beautiful and not meant for my horrible knives."

"I was so happy to have her. I scorned the idea of a nurse. Of course my training has taught me more about children than all the nurses on earth. And we set out like two children on a junket. I was her Nunkie Dave and she was my little Cynthia."

"And then that sot lurched into me—damn him!—not—poor dog!—perhaps he's like me—a decent fellow nine-tenths of the time, and heart-broken with an affliction he couldn't any more help than a dwarf can help his size, or a rattlesnake his poison. But he's finished me. It's a tough world, Billy. The only decent thing fate has done for me is to show me you."

He reached out and their hands met—in no secret clutch—but in the firm, frank grip of the universal brotherhood. It was some time before their clasps relaxed.

Meanwhile Miss Thatcher was trying to drown the racket of the wheels under a song which she shouted into

the pane with all the power of her lungs:

"I had a ickel po-nee, Hith name wath Dappie Gway; I len tim to a la-dee To wide a mile away."

She flipped him, she lathed him, She dwove him froo the mire; I would not lend my pony now-wow Faw aw dat la-deeth hi-ah!"

At about the twentieth repetition of the little epic the pony stuck fast in the mire, for the train joggled up to a short stop. Outside the window was a small station. Some trifling accident, or a train dispatcher's signal had caused the delay. The crew did not descend or open the doors. The guards had no explanations to vouchsafe, though timepieces were whipped out of pockets in all the compartments and passengers were worrying lest the halt compromise their chances of making the boat to America.

Jebb was most nervous of all. He raised the window and poked his head out. There was no one to question. He went into the corridor to ask the guards. His only answer was a blunt "Weiss nichts" accompanied by a convincing look of stupidity. Jebb went back to his seat and played a devil's tattoo on the leather.

"I hope to the Lord, nothing happens to hold us here long, Billy," he wailed, almost childishly. "I'll not feel easy till I'm safe on shipboard."

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brandished them with one hand while the other plunged into his pocket. He had no small money. He found a bill. The woman went for the change. Her motives for leisuireliness might be suspected. Gaines suspected them. He kept calling her and dancing impatiently. Eying the engine always he did not notice that a guard passing through the train and finding the vestibule door open, growled, and slammed it from within.

Suddenly the train started. Gaines left the change to the woman, dashed to the door, found it closed without handle or foothold. Like a melon on a stream, his disgusted face was swept past the window and past the staring, horrified face of Jebb. Jebb thrust his head out and watched the smooth long side of the train glide with increasing speed past the bewildered Gaines, who searched and clutched in vain, and was left staring, the costly golden apples dropping from his hands and bouncing uselessly about the platform.

CHAPTER II

In the hurrying crisis of his affairs, the loss of his protector stamped Jebb's usual self-control. His sorrow for Gaines' mishap was nothing to his sorrow for himself and the child. He dashed into the corridor, shouting to the guard to signal the train to stop. The guard was slow to be found and slower to understand; and once understanding, was aghast at the lese-majeste of stopping one of the Kaiser's trains simply to pick up a passenger. Besides, had not the passenger all the by the government ordained rules disobeyed and from the iron-road-wagon without permission descended?

Jebb would have stopped the train himself, at whatever risk of fine and imprisonment, but there was no bell-ropes to pull, and he had failed to note the device installed. His wrath and his anxiety and the necessity of putting them into German, choked him. He was frantic with fear, not for himself, but for the child, whose destinies were once more entirely in his untrustworthy hands.

Cynthia had come out into the corridor and was staring at him in such bewilderment that she forgot to bemoan her oranges. Jebb's face was pitiful. He was in the ultra-lonely and fearsome plight of one who cannot trust his own soul.

As he stood, alternately wringing his hands and pleading with the wooden-headed guard, the train, leaping forward toward full headway to make up the lost time, took a sharp curve at high speed, and lurched round it, hurling the child violently along the corridor. Jebb put out one arm to catch her. He put his other hand against the nearest support to steady himself, just as the whipcord snap of the cars sent a heavy door sliding shut.

Its whole impact fell on Jebb's thumb. He managed to pull the door back enough to release his hand. He was used to the sight of other people's wounds, but the vision of his own lacerated flesh, and the peculiarly exquisite anguish of a mangled thumb, sent a queasy thrill to his stomach. His knees turned to sand. He fainted and went toppling and bumping to the floor, where the careening train rolled him like a loose barrel.

Cynthia screamed. Passengers appeared at all the doors and jammed the corridor. A woman wrapped her arms about the distracted child, who was sobbing:

"Nunkie Dave's dead! Nunkie Dave's dead!"

"I know just how you feel, honey," said Jebb, "but I'm afraid to risk it."

Gaines, whose heart was as soft and big as his bulk, smote his fat knees with his fat hands, and rose:

"I'll get you the oranges, Miss Thinty Sashel."

Jebb checked him uneasily. "Nonsense, Billy, she doesn't need them. She oughtn't to have them. She—"

"Nonsense yourself. I can't see a lady perish like Miss Tantalus with oranges just out of her reach."

"But the train may start."

"I'll bet my hat we'll be here for a week. This is just the sort of place where a train always stays a long while. Anyway, it's just a few steps."

He had squeezed through the door and was brushing both sides of the corridor before Jebb could restrain him. The car was vestibuled, but Gaines knew how to manipulate the door from within.

The anxious Jebb saw him appear on the platform outside, glance forward and aft, and satisfy himself of the train's intention to remain.

Then he skipped, as the fat skip, to the refreshment counter. The woman in charge was out of sight. She was not easily summoned. She did not understand Gaines' German. He picked out three oranges and

A man knelt and raised his head. "He's fainted, that's all. Has anybody got any brandy?"

As Cynthia was withdrawn from the scene, a Frenchman produced a flask:

"Je n'ai pas de brandee, mon-sieur, mais voice du cognac." "Meme chose, monseer," said the American, as he pried Jebb's set teeth apart and poured a liberal portion into his clenched throat.

A shiver quaked through Jebb's whole length; he strangled, gulped, opened his eyes, looked about feebly.

"What's the matter?" "You smashed your thumb, old boy, and keeled over. Monseer here had some brandy handy and I forced it on you."

"No, no!" gasped Jebb helplessly, "not brandy!"

"Yes, and good, too, by the sniff of it. You look a little green, old man. Have some more."

"No!" cried Jebb as he pushed it away.

"You better," said the Yankee, holding it under his nostrils.

"Yes," said Jebb, with a deep breath. He seized the flask greedily and took a generous draught. He offered it back, but as the Frenchman put out his hand, Jebb reconsidered and set the bottle to his lips again.

"En servez-vous!" said the Frenchman ironically.

Jebb took him literally and helped himself liberally.

"You must have a copper-lined throat," said the Yankee, "to swig it straight!"

Jebb gave a further demonstration of his prowess. He sat up on the floor of the car and, winking conceitedly at his fellow-countryman, drank his good health.

When the flask was again in his hands, the Frenchman turned it upside down with a rueful countenance. Only a drop or two leaked from it. With angry irony he said:

"J'en vous remercie."

"Huh?" said Jebb.

The Yankee interpreted with a laugh as he got Jebb to his feet.

"Monseer says he's much obliged for the flask."

Jebb threw his victim an ugly look, drove his fist deep into his pocket, and with a sneer offered a handful of money to the Frenchman.

"I pay for what I drink. How much?"

The Gaul understood without translation. He struck Jebb's hand aside, and the money jingled on the floor. Jebb was for trouncing him then and there, but the Yankee restrained him, pacified him, and guided him along the corridor to his own compartment.

Jebb swayed a good deal, but it may have been the train. He dropped into his seat dazed. But it may have been the dizziness of his suffering.

The Yankee brought to him the scared little girl and the coin, which he had gathered up in the corridor with the instinct that leads people to pick up other people's runaway hats for them.

Jebb thanked him for the little girl but waved the money away magnificently.

"What's a little silver to me?" he said a trifle thickly.

The American laughed and, laying the money on the seat, vanished to his own compartment.

With complete disregard of all his asepticism, Jebb wrapped his unsterilized handkerchief about his bleeding thumb. It was shrieking and throbbing, but an unleashed demon within him was shrieking and throbbing too. He was sick, sick, too grievously tormented to bind his own wound properly.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Cleveland Twins Edit Paper for Sick Mother

CLEVELAND.—The House News, published almost weekly by young Neal Smith, has perhaps the greatest reader interest of any paper in the country—and the smallest circulation.

It has an unflinching circulation of one. The staff of the House News consists of Editor Neal Smith and his dark-eyed star reporter Virginia—who also is his 10-year-old twin.

The News may not fare so well financially as papers go, but it is successful, nevertheless.

It is a labor of love, written exclusively for the mother of the devoted twins, who is in poor health.

The little paper is printed in pencil by Neal, who does the art work. "The big story this week," said the little boy, working hard to get out the edition, "is about Nellie—she lives on the next street—who fell off the porch and scratched her face. We're bannering it!"

Most of the time the paper is four pages—one sheet of writing paper doubled in two, but sometimes, when there is a big story, it is eight.

When Mrs. Wallie Warfield and King Edward VIII were front-page news the world over the two children were just as busy as metropolitan editors.

"The Name Is Familiar"

BY FELIX B. STREYCKMANS and ELMO SCOTT WATSON

Solon

WHEN we want to say that a man is wise we call him a solon and we call lawmakers solons, too. This doesn't mean that we think all lawmakers are wise men—heaven forbid! The reason is that the world's original lawmaker on a big scale was a very wise man and his name was Solon.

That name isn't just a first name or a last name—it is all the name the man had and all he needed. He lived so long ago that the population was small enough to let men get by with one-word names. Solon was one of the original Seven Wise Men of Greece and was born in Athens about 640 B. C.

He wrote or rewrote practically all the laws that were in existence during his time and was the first lawmaker to devise a code that gave people rights instead of merely prohibiting them from doing this or saying that they must do that. Besides regulating private and public life, his code reformed the calendar, the system of weights and measures, the monetary system. It relieved the burdens of debtors without curtailing the rights of creditors. (He could be elected on either ticket today!)

His laws were crudely written on wooden cylinders and set up in public places for everybody to read. This must have been just a matter of form, because in his day about the only ones who could read were the ones who wrote the cylinders.

Kelvin's Law

THE kelvin, a commercial unit of electricity; Kelvin's law for measuring the most economical diameter of an electric wire; Kelvin, or absolute, temperature scale, which begins at 561 degrees below zero Fahrenheit; and the Kelvinator, the first electric refrigerator for household use, were named for Lord Kelvin of Largs, Scotland, one of the greatest and most practical scientists of all time.

He invented flashing signals for lighthouses; designed an oil-floated self-leveling magnetic compass which allowed this instrument to be used on steel ships; invented the ultra-sensitive detecting and recording apparatus that made the trans-Atlantic cable possible—and became chief executive of the cable company to supervise its laying; reduced temperature to a mathematical basis and announced absolute zero where there is no heat and where molecules stand still.

His name was William Thomson and he was born in Belfast in 1824, the son of a professor of mathematics at the Royal Academical Institution of Belfast. As early as 1852 he foresaw the practicability of heating and cooling buildings by means of currents of air. When he built a mansion of his own in 1874 on the Scottish coast, he built in heating ducts and ventilating facilities. When he died in 1907, he had received every degree a scholar could obtain and had made a fortune of many millions of dollars.

'Rich as Croesus'

WHEN a man is so rich that he actually reeks with wealth, we call him a Croesus. The word is pronounced like those things in a man's trousers—and we don't mean wrinkles, like in ours.

But don't misunderstand—we don't call a rich man a Croesus because he is the only one who can afford them in his pants. Perhaps we never should have brought the matter up.

Croesus is a word for a rich man and goes 'way back to 560 B. C., when the original Croesus, a Greek king of Lydia, was born.

He was richer than any king before him, hence the use of his name. Living in the time when men wore togas, you can see that he didn't even wear pants—or did they wear pants with togas? Now we are sorry we brought the matter up.

Lydia, at the time Croesus was king, included practically all of Asia Minor, and his wealth was obtained mainly from the mines and gold dust of the river Pactolus. Proud of his treasures, he carried his love of splendor to extravagance and thought he was the happiest of men.

All of which proves it isn't the number of pairs of pants you have that makes you wealthy.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Ask Me Another

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. The United States-Canada boundary line is the longest unfortified boundary in the world. How long is it?
2. Is the name "Confucius" Chinese?
3. How long have advertising mediums been used?
4. How many gallons of maple sap have to be evaporated to produce one of sirup?
5. Which President made the shortest inaugural address?
6. What animals change their fur or plumage to white in winter?

The Answers

1. It is 3,898 miles long.
2. "Confucius" is the Latinized form of K'ung Fu-tze, "the philosopher or master k'ung."
3. Egyptian picture advertising over 4,000 years old have been discovered. The earliest newspaper advertising is said to have been in Germany in 1591.
4. About 35 gallons.
5. Washington. His second inaugural address consisted of but 134 words.
6. Ermine, ptarmigan, Arctic fox, and polar hare.



Solon



Lord Kelvin



PAUL COLLINS, President of Boston-Maine Airways, Inc.

SCIENCE points the way and the experience of millions of smokers confirms it: For the important extras in smoking pleasure, stay on the slow-burning side. The slower-burning cigarette that gives you extra mildness, extra coolness, extra flavor—and extra smoking per cigarette...per pack—is Camel.

In recent laboratory tests, CAMELS burned 25% slower than the average of the 15 other of the largest-selling brands tested—slower than any of them. That means, on the average, a smoking plus equal to

5 EXTRA SMOKES PER PACK!



FOR EXTRA MILDNESS, EXTRA COOLNESS, EXTRA FLAVOR—

CAMEL the Cigarette of Costlier Tobaccos