JOHN ERLEIGH, SCHOOLMASTER

A Gripping Story of Love Mystery and Kidnapping

By CLAVER MORRIS
Author of "John Bredon, Solicitor."

CHAPTER I.

"HARPTREE! Oh, fiddlesticks, Anne. The boy's name has been down for Eton this last seven years." Lady Wimberley smiled—a little sadly. She was a handsome, gentle-faced woman of 33, with dark, quiet eyes and black hair.

For nine years she had been a widow, and her only son, the present marquess, and heir to the great Wimberley estates, had never yet been taken from her charge and care. She had taught him herself until he was seven. Then for two years he had had a governess, and after that a private tutor. But he was now 13, and the time had come for him to leave home for the rougher world of a public school.

"After all," Lord Arthur Meriet continued, stroking his mustache, and staring at his highly polished boots, "one can't do better than Eton. It's the fashion now to run the place down, but I'm hanged if I won't stick up for it. George was there, and I was there, and we've all been there—the whole lot of us—generations back. I know George anted the boy to go to Eton."

"I—I don't think he cared very much, Arthur. He just put Guy's name down—well, as a matter of form."

Lord Arthur laughed. He was a big, broad-shouldered fellow with a bronzed face and keen blue eyes. For two years he had been abroad, shooting big game in Central Africa, and now he had returned he was not unwilling to be dragged into the family councils. As the younger brother of the late marquess and heir-presumptive to the title, he had a certain right to give advice in a matter where a woman was liable to make a mistake.

"What put Harptree into your head?" he queried, after a pause.

"Well, it's so near, Arthur—only 10 miles away from . nksilver. George was one of the hereditary governors, and Guy will be, of course, when he comes of age. It seemed to me——"

"My dear Anne," he interrupted, "Harptree is much too near. I know quite well what will happen. You'll be over there—every day and all day. Fatal for the boy. You'll unsettle him. He might as well be a day boy at a grammar school, and have done with it."

"Oh, Arthur, I promise you——"

"Don't," he said with a laugh. "You'll never keep your promise. If you'll take my advice you'll send Guy to Eton. That's a long way off, even in these days of motors. Harptree! Who on earth has heard of Harptree?"

"Everybody, Arthur, nowadays. They're taking all the scholarships."

"Scholarships? Pshaw!"

"They've two men in the Oxford eleven this year and one in the Cambridge, and they won the racquets and the Ashburton shield——"

"My dear Anne, what does all this matter?"

"And they beat the county in Rugby football last winter," she continued, "and you know, or perhaps you don't, how good the county is."

Lord Arthur threw up his hands. "Spare me," he said with a laugh. "But seriously, Anne, all this doesn't matter. Cricket? Football? Racquets? Scholarships? That for them," and he snapped his fingers. "It's the tone of the place that matters. Eton is—well, Eton, and Harptree will always be Harptree—in this generation, at any rate."

Lady Wimberley sighed and poured out a cup of tea.

"Sugar?" she said gently. "I forget."

"No sugar, thanks."

"Milk?"

"Yes, just a little. Now, look here, Anne. I know well enough what you're driving at. You don't care what the school is like so long as it's close to Monksilver. You can't let your precious darling out of your sight. That's what it amounts to, doesn't it?"

Lady Wimberly smiled and a faint color came into her ivory white cheeks.

"No, Arthur," she said after a pause. "I'm not quite so foolish as that. It matters everything to me what the school is like. If Harptree were 500 miles away from here I should still wish Guy to go there. I think it is the best school in England."

"Oh, really, Anne——"

"Yes," she said firmly, "the best school in England. It's the headmaster that makes a school—its past history doesn't matter. Erleigh has done for Harptree what Thring did for Uppingham."

"Erleigh? Oh, yes, he's a very decent fellow."

"He's rather more than that, Arthur. He's a great man—a man I could trust to look after Guy—and then he's a personal friend of mine."

Lord Arthur sipped his tea thoughtfully, and stared out of the open window of the boudoir at the sunlit lawns, that sloped down to the edge of a great lake. Beyond the broad expanse of water the ground descended again into the valley. Almost as far as the eye could reach the land belonged to the young Marquess of Wimberley. It was a vast and splendid inheritance. Great responsibilities would lie on the shoulders of the landlord. The boy would have to be trained to be a great and honorable man. Up to the present he had been kept in cotton-wool. He was a fine lad, but he knew nothing of the rough side of life. His first experience of that would be at a public school. Everything might depend on the training for the next four years. Lord Arthur's experience of school life had taught him that the masters did not matter so much as the boy's companions. Above everything they must be gentlemen, with family traditions of their own.

"Of course," he said, after a long pause, "Erleigh has done a lot for the school. Seven years ago there were 150 boys, and now there are, I believe, more than double that number. But what sort of boys are they? A very mixed lot, I should think."

"Young Fauconberg is there, and Dallas and Etchingham; but I don't want Guy to become a snob, Arthur. I'd just as soon he made friends with the sons of local doctors and country clergymen. The tone of the school is thoroughly good. I would rather trust my boy to John Erleigh than to any one else in the world."

Lord Arthur glanced keenly at his sister-in-law, and set his cup down on the table. She had spoken rather more warmly of the headmaster than the occasion seemed to require. Undoubtedly the man had made a great impression on her, and had talked her into sending the boy to Harptree. The young Marquess of Wimberley would be a great asset to the school—a fine advertisement. It might even be the making of the place.

"Well, Anne," he said with a laugh, "you've evidently made up your mind."

She smiled, and he thought how supremely beautiful she was, how young to be the mother of a boy of 13. He had always looked upon her as an ideal mother. There was something strangely pure and saintlike about her life and her devotion to her only son.

"You have asked my advice as a matter of form," he continued, "but you have quite decided to send the boy to Harptree."

"Oh, no, Arthur. I want a man's advice."

"Well, then, I advise you to send Guy to Eton. You can't go wrong if you do that."

She shook her head. She had, indeed, decided that her son should go to Harptree. John Erleigh, a friend—something almost more than a friend—had decided for her. The wonderful personality of the man had moulded her to his will. And even her reason told her that she was doing the right thing. Erleigh had lifted up Harptree from obscurity and had made it a model for all the schools in England. He was one of the great teachers of the age—a scholar, an organizer, a moulder of fine character—a man.

"I think, Arthur," she said, slowly, "for once in a way, we'll get out of the groove."

He laughed. "The groove is dull," he replied, "but it is generally safe. Well, my dear Anne, I'm very much obliged to you for consulting me. And since you won't send the boy to Eton, I may as well tell you that I have the very highest opinion of Erleigh and all he has done for Harptree."

She flushed with pleasure, and Lord Arthur, looking at her again, thought how wonderfully young and beautiful she seemed; when he had left England two years previously she had seemed older than she did now.

"I am sure I am acting for the best," she said simply.

"Oh, I dare say; but look here, Anne, you mustn't be always running over to Harptree and seeing how the boy is getting on. Remember if you do that the other boys will laugh at him. Besides, it's bad for the little chap. He must get clear of his mother's apron-strings.

"Oh, I promise you, Arthur, I—I won't make him feel ashamed of me. I know what boys are—at school."

Lord Arthur rose from his chair.

"Would you like me to see Erleigh for you?" he said.

"Oh, no, Arthur, I really don't think you need trouble to do that."

"Well, I think I'd better. I've got half an hour to spare, and I can catch the train at Harptree. You see, Anne, it isn't as if Guy had a father. Mothers are all very well, but they don't know much about public-school life. I'd like to have a chat with Erleigh and ask him a few questions."

"It's very kind of you," she faltered. "Well, yes, perhaps you might call on Mr. Erleigh. I'd like you to see for yourself that I'm doing right in handing over Guy to his charge."

They shook hands and he took his departure. For a few minutes Lady Wimberley stood by the open window and gazed across the lawns at the sparkling waters of the lake. There was a soft light in her eyes and a faint glow on her cheeks. She might have been a young girl thinking of the man she loved.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN ERLEIGH sat alone in his study at the schoolhouse, a pipe in his mouth and his chin resting on one hand. On the large table before him were spread piles of examination papers. Term was nearly over, and the most arduous part of it came at the end. He took the sixth form himself in classics, and these papers were, so to speak, the harvest of 12 weeks' careful sowing in the best soil that was to be found at Harptree. They represented the promise for the future—the possibility of scholarships and exhibitions at the universities. The whole standard of the school, from an educational point of view, could be judged from them.

Outside the old gray-stone house the sun shone brightly on lawns and flower beds. Beyond the garden rose the towering walls of the abbey, to which the school had originally belonged, and which still watched over it. The abbey, as great and beautiful as any cathedral, was now only the parish church of the little town, and the rector had nothing whatever to do with the school. But the proximity of the fine building still seemed to suggest that the foundation of all learning and all knowledge should rest upon the rock of Faith. And in some subtle manner the Church, divorced from the school for over 300 years, had managed to make its influence felt through the changes of fortune. The religious and moral tone of the place had always been good, and if religion and morality alone could make a great public school Harptree would have been in the first rank long before John Erleigh came to rule over it. But something more was required—something more than scholarship and high endeavor—and John Erleigh had supplied it. And it was a curious fact that he was the first headmaster for over 200 years who had not taken holy orders.

But no one who saw him now, seated in his bare and plainly furnished study, intent on the work that was the work of his life, could doubt that he was not only a great organizer, a great teacher, but that he was eminently a good and lovable man. The fine, thin, ascetic face, with its high forehead and firm mouth; the clear, steady, gray eyes; the spare, wiry body; the clean, wholesome, thoroughbred appearance of the man spoke of a life lived carefully and simply. For himself he cared little or nothing. All his energies were devoted to the cause he had at heart—that of making Harptree the first school in England. To the accomplishment of this end he spared neither himself nor those who worked under him. Erleigh's income, apart from his salary, was a considerable one. But he spent very little on himself, and gave freely for the good of the school. The new organ in the chapel, the new pavilion in the playing fields, the new fives courts at the back of the laboratory had all been purchased with his money. The fees and endowments of the school were very small, and the fees could not be raised. John Erleigh had no desire to cater for the sons of the rich. He only wanted gentlemen, boys who had been brought up in good homes, boys with honorable traditions behind them. The better classes were comparatively poor in those days, and the fees had to be kept as low as possible.

There was complete silence in the room as he sat there turning over the sheets of paper—almost the silence of a cloistered cell. It was a half holiday, and all the boys were far away in the playing fields. There were times when the place was noisy enough. Though no one was allowed in the garden in front of the house, the echoes of shouts and laughter came clearly enough from the big quadrangle, into which the garden opened. The sound was music in John Erleigh's ears, but it was not conducive to steady work on examination papers, and the headmaster had chosen this sunny afternoon to get through a considerable amount of his task. It was an afternoon when most men would have taken the opportunity of getting fresh air and exercise after a hard morning's work. But Erleigh had no time to think of his own health.

"Oh, Grimmitt, my dear fellow!" he said aloud, as he marked a few words of a singularly free translation of a passage in one of Sophocles' plays. Then he laughed, and laughter seemed to change the whole of his face. It was no longer grim and stern and ascetic, but the genial face of a man of the world. He leaned back in his chair, holding his blue pencil in his hand, and shook with laughter.

"Grimmitt should write a play himself," he thought. "He is quite original. Upon my word, I believe the boy will write a play."

His prophecy was true enough. In after years Grimmitt, a curious fellow as a schoolboy, was destined to write one of the greatest plays of his century. At present, however, he was only asked to translate another's ideas into English, and his originality lost him five marks.

John Erleigh resumed his task, reading quickly, and marking the paper here and there with figures and crosses. For the most part his face was grave, but now and again his features were lit up with a smile. He was a singularly handsome man, with an attractive and almost a magnetic personality. It was thought odd that he had not married, and people whispered, as people always do, of an old love affair. In any case, so they said, he was well off, and there were lots of women who would be glad to marry him.

The clock on the mantelpiece struck six, and a few seconds later the deep-toned bell of the abbey tolled out the hour. The door of the study opened and a parlormaid entered the room.

"Well?" queried Erleigh without looking up from his papers. The girl came forward with a card on a small lacquered tray.

"I'm busy," he said curtly. "I can't see any one. Who is it?"

"Lord Arthur Meriet, sir," she said, reading the name from the card as though she had not seen it before.

The expression of Erleigh's face changed, and he smiled.

"I'll see Lord Arthur in here," he said. A faint color came into his cheeks, and he fingered the examination papers nervously. But he was quite calm and cool when Lord Arthur entered the room.

"I've come about that boy of my brother's," said the latter when the two men had shaken hands. "I'm on my way back to town, and thought I'd look you up. I hope I am not disturbing you."

"Certainly not, if you've come on any business of Lady Wimberley's. Sit down, won't you? Can I offer you a cigar?"

"Thanks."

Lord Arthur lit a cigar, and, seating himself in a chair by the open window, crossed his legs and glanced at the table.

"Exam. papers, eh?" he queried with a laugh. "I wish you'd had some of mine to deal with. They'd have either driven you off your head or made you die of laughter. Depends on which way you looked at 'em."

Erleigh smiled gravely. "I find a good deal of fun in them myself," he said.

Lord Arthur nodded approvingly. He liked the look of this schoolmaster fellow. A sensible chap, he thought, and likely to get on with the boys.

"Well, it's about young Wimberley," he said, after a pause. "His mother has practically decided to send him here, if you'll have him."

"I'd be jolly glad to have him, Lord Arthur. He's the type of boy we want."

"I suppose he is," said Lord Arthur dryly.

Ehleigh took no offense. "Not because he is the Marquis of Wimberley," he retorted, with a pleasant smile, "but because he's a thoroughly good sort, with no nonsense about him. I know the boy well and like him."

"I think he's a bit of a mollycoddle myself. He's been tied too much to his mother's apron strings."

"Well, that kind is easier to deal with, Lord Arthur; more impressionable. We have a good many boys here who've never known a mother's love, and they're the hardest to squeeze into the mold."

"I didn't want the boy to come here," said Lord Arthur slowly. "I'll be quite frank with you. It seemed a bit too close to his home. Temptation to be always running over. My sister-in-law has promised to leave him alone, but you know what women are. Of course, that won't do."

"Of course not," said Erleigh quietly.

Lord Arthur began to ask questions about the school, the hours of work and play, the holidays, the food, the punishments, and a dozen other things that occur to a man with a memory of his own school days. John Erleigh answered everything quite frankly, but every now and then a puzzled look came into his eyes. He was wondering why Lord Arthur had come to him at all. Every one of these questions had been asked before by one who had a better right to ask them. And Lord Arthur himself must have been quite well aware that headmasters of public schools are autocrats, and do not allow themselves to be catechised on the details of their system.

At last it seemed as if the visitor's desire for information had come to an end. Lord Arthur stared at the floor and pulled at his mustache. For a few seconds there was an awkward silence. Erleigh saw that there was something further to be said—some matter of real importance to be discussed—some topic that Lord Arthur found it difficult to embark upon.

"If there is anything else——" said the headmatser tentatively.

"Well, yes—there is something else—I'm rather afraid you'll laugh at me—but I can assure you it is no laughing matter."

"Then I shall certainly not laugh, Lord Arthur. Please be quite frank with me. If there is anything about the boy—anything his mother does not know——"

"That's just it, Mr. Erleigh. It is something that his mother must not know. This young nephew of mine must be very carefully watched."

John Erleigh frowned. "We look after every boy here, Lord Arthur," he said quietly. "There is no spying on them, of course, nothing secret of that sort, but——"

"You misunderstand me," Lord Arthur interrupted. "Let me try to explain. My nephew is going to be a very rich young man one of these days. I suppose he'll have quite a hundred thousand a year, possibly a good bit more. He'll hold a big position."

"I hope to fit him for it," said Erleigh with a grim smile.

"Er—yes, I hope so. But don't you see—er—the position and the money would be very useful to one or two other members of my family."

"I'm afraid I don't quite see, Lord Arthur."

"Well, to put it bluntly, then, it would be worth some one's while to get rid of this lad and step into his shoes."

(TO BE CONTINUED TOMORROW.)

LINER ASHORE; 25 LOST

Dutch Steamship Wrecked Off Portuguese Coast.

LONDON, Dec. 14.—A Lloyd's dispatch from Oporto says that the Dutch steamship Bogor, from Amsterdam for Buenos Aires, is ashore north of Leixoes, on the Portuguese coast, and is a total wreck.

It is believed that 25 lives were lost. The Bogor, which belonged to the Rotterdamsche Lloyd Line, was of 3621 tons and was built at Hamburg.

Dies of Dog Bite Month Ago

NEW YORK, Dec. 14.—Nathan Jacobs, 3 years old, of 1470 Washington avenue, the Bronx, who was bitten on November 9 by a fox terrier, died from rabies early yesterday morning in the Willard Parker hospital. Milton Glustein, 6 years old, of 1385 Washington avenue, the Bronx, was bitten by the same dog on the same day. In his case the Pasteur treatment was administered immediately and the boy quickly recovered.

SANTA'S MAIL BAG FILLED WITH PLEAS OF HOPEFUL KIDDIES

Many Fear Patron Is Hard Pressed This Year and Are Modest—Generous Invited to Add to His Pack.

Santa Claus is poor this year. This statement can be verified by many of the little children of Philadelphia and the surrounding towns.

Their parents have told them, and their parents generally have this information at first hand. Knowing that their old benefactor is badly pressed for toys and candies, many of the children have written to him to remind him that they will expect him even if he can't make Christmas as large and as merry a one as in previous years.

Letters addressed to Santa Claus at the North Pole, in the Arctics and other parts of the world are being received at the Philadelphia Postoffice. If one is inclined he can get one of such letters and play Santa Claus. There is many a man without kith or kin who can make the little ones happy on Christmas Day. He can get the address of some child, play Santa Claus and make himself happier even than the child.

Stephen Babyak, of 1236 South Napa street, writes: "I hope you will come and see me Christmas. Mother says you won't. We have had a lot of sickness, and father is not working. I hope you will remember us. Stephen, Irene, Elizabeth, Treasa, Emma, Albert and Johnnie."

Here is another letter: "My dear Santa Claus—Will you kindly send me a coat and a pair of shoes. My father have not money to buy for. I am 10 year-old girl and my name is Helga Linds. Adaress Bryn Mawr, Pa., and I like you very much."

Sarah Dorothy Welsh lives at 3010 Comly street, Wissinoming. Sarah writes: "Dear Santa Claus, I would like you to bring me a little doll, and a doll's bed. I want you to bring me a sewing machine. Come on Christmas Eve."

Robinson and John McKinley, of 1832 Orthodox street, want candy and fruit. Robinson writes: "I am very good boy and am going to be better." John makes no rash promises about his future behavior and does mention his past conduct.

George McElroy, of 2419 Montrose street, in behalf of himself and brothers and sisters, has addressed a letter to Santa's Shop, North Pole. He wants an automobile and games, a baseball and some candy and an orange each for the members of the family.

Addie Buckley, who does not give her address, sends a courteous note to her patron. She wishes him the best of health, explains that he visited her last year, and then, again inquiring about his health, she naively in a postscript says: "I would like to have a tricycle, locket and anything that you think fit."

ZUDORA

A GREAT MYSTIC STORY By HAROLD MacGRATH

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SYNOPSIS.

Zudora is left an orphan at an early age. Her father is killed in a gold mine he has discovered. Half an hour after learning of the death of her husband Zudora's mother—a tight rope walker with a circus—is seized with vertigo, falls, and is killed.

Zudora and the fortune from the mine, which grows to be worth $20,000,000, are left in the guardianship of Frank Keene, a circus man. Zudora's mother's brother, Zudora, giving promise of great beauty, reaches the age of 18. The uncle, who has set himself up as a Hindu mystic and is known as Hassam Ali, decides in his greed that Zudora must die before she can have a chance to come into possession of her money, so that it may be left to him, the next of kin, and he prevails upon the girl to leave her money in his hands three years longer and say nothing to any one about the fortune. Hassam Ali sees an obstacle to his scheme in the person of John Storm, a young lawyer, for whom Zudora has taken a fancy, and he commands the girl to put the man out of her mind. Storm comes to ask Hassam Ali for the hand of his niece. At first the crystal gazer will not listen to the proposal, but Zudora insists that if she cannot marry Storm she will marry no one.

"Well, well," says Hassam Ali, "if you take such a stand, I'll compromise. Solve my next 10 cases and you can marry him; fail in a single case and you must renounce him."

Zudora, using the knowledge gained from years of association with her uncle, unravels two baffling mysteries and wins her first two cases.

CHAPTER III

The Mystery of the Cheese Maker.

IN a kind of cellar, under a window, a man sat, bent over a peculiarly constructed machine of small wheels, that spun with lightning rapidity. Every now and then he paused and scrutinized the minute object he held in his fingers. At length he seemed satisfied, rose, stopped the machine, and shuffled over to a cupboard. Then he sat down on a cot and began to figure in a small notebook. The result of his mathematics evidently pleased him.

In a corner, behind curtains, stood a furnace, a crucible, with powerful bellows and chimney. It looked adaptable to tremendous heat pressure. The machine previously referred to was an unfamiliar one to any but the eyes of those who have watched similar machines in Amsterdam and Rotterdam in Holland. It was a diamond cutting and polishing machine. What the unusual crucible brought forth remained to be seen.

The diamond cutter rose again and once more approached the cupboard, and gloated over his treasure, which consisted of half a dozen perfect gems, perfectly cut and polished, but small.

"I shall be rich some day."

Then came sudden transition from joy to gloom. He dared not go forth openly to sell these gems, for he feared that he would be looked upon as a thief. The fact that these diamonds were not registered would act against him. The least they would do would be to hale him before the customs officials as a smuggler. And if he told the truth his wonderful discovery would become public property, and he would be ruined.

"I am unlucky," he groaned. "I see how it is. I must divide with some one in order to get anything. I will sound Hassam Ali."

He had disposed of several gems among pawnbrokers who were known not to ask questions, but in these transactions he had received but a fourth of what the gems were worth. These things contributed to his sudden rise and fall of spirits. He was also something of a madman.

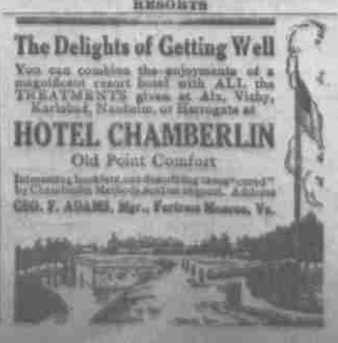
Presently he sniffed. There was a faint odor of curds in the air. Beyond the wall was a cheese maker's shop, and there one could buy anything from a Camembert to what is known as a Dutch cheese. The diamond cutter discovered that he was hungry. So he left his den, bought some cheese and rye bread and returned now to begin his labors again. During certain intervals of silence he heard without apparent notice slight scratching sounds. The furnace began to glow, throwing weird lights upon his lined and ecstatic countenance.

When night came he went again to his treasure and gave a cry of anguish. A gem was gone! He searched thoroughly, but could not find it. It could not be possible that he had made a mistake in the original counting. He would go and have his friend Hassam Ali look into his crystal.

The next day after Zudora had gone forth—to meet her lover, Hassam Ali was assured—Hassam Ali retired to the mystic room. He was curious to see how long his sister's face would keep forming in the heart of the crystal. He was intensely superstitious without realizing the fact. Yet again he saw the face, the same appeal in it. His heart swelled with fury and hate. He was beginning to hate his niece; for we invariably hate those we have wronged or intend to wrong. Whenever he saw her slender white throat a horrible, almost irresistible, desire laid hold of him to take that white throat within his fingers and crush the life out of it. At the same time he became vaguely alarmed lest at some time or other he should surrender to this mad desire. No, no! A thousand times no! He must follow without deviation the plans he had mapped out. Sooner or later he would gain his ends without incriminating himself. She suspected nothing. One side of her was all keenness and insight, but the other side of her was as guileless as a child, and to this side he always played. He must wait, tedious as waiting might be. Gold, gold, yellow gold, the most beautiful thing in the world, millions of shining discs, all his. He suddenly shook himself. He must smother these thoughts, this rampant desire, or he might overstep. Misers are full of strange cunning.

Zudora had given her word to say nothing about her great inheritance, and her loyalty to her word was as strong as hoops of steel.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW.)



UNDERFED CHILDREN ENLIST IN BATTLE AGAINST POVERTY

Many Under Fourteen Years Plead for Permission to Work and Provide for Relatives.

Children whose parents have been without employment for many weeks applied today to the Bureau of Compulsory Education for permission to enter the battle against starvation.

The voice of Henry J. Gideon, chief of the bureau, who has become more or less used to such conditions through many years of experience, grew husky when he was obliged to turn away many of the underfed and nervous applicants because they could not produce legal proof they were at least 14 years old.

The first child to apply was standing at the door of the building at 1522 Cherry street at 8 o'clock this morning, an hour before the office was opened.

"My father ain't had work for two months," she complained, "and my mother is so sick the doctors say she'll never get well. The neighbors have been giving us meals, but think that I should go to work and earn something. My brother is in the navy, and he sends us money; but what he sent this month has been all used up." When investigation showed that this youngster was but 13 years old she was led to the door sobbing hysterically.

"It's the law," said Mr. Gideon, "and I have no power to change it. Unfortunately the statutes do not deal with individual cases and we must treat one child as we treat them all.

An Armenian girl, of olive complexion, straight black hair and a bright countenance, told Mr. Gideon she was a member of a family of four that had been living on $5 a week. That amount was earned by her aunt and herself at needlework. Her uncle and brother were discharged from their jobs a month ago.

"My brother, sir, is such an excellent chauffeur," she exclaimed. "He made $18 a week, but times were hard and his employer sold the automobile. My uncle is a paperhanger, and he, too, can find no job. My parents are dead." This girl was unusually fortunate. She was granted a certificate and an hour later had a position as cash girl in a department store. This was procured through the influence of a neighbor who had heard of her plight and was acquainted with the store manager.

WILL SHINE SHOES.

Little Edward G. was perhaps the most cheerful lad ever to enter the doors of the bureau. Informed he could not have a certificate because he could not read well, he walked to the door half singing and half laughing. "If I don't get a certificate I can shine shoes after school, anyway," he reflected. "Pretty soon pop will have his job again and then it'll be pretty soft for mom and all of us."

"Last year my sister Katie—she's 8 years old—said she was sure there was no Santa Claus," was the story of another applicant. "No wonder she thought so, 'cause she didn't get a thing. I'm going to see that she changes her mind this year and I want a paper allowing me to be a program boy in a movie theatre. I want some money and I'm sure I can get the job."

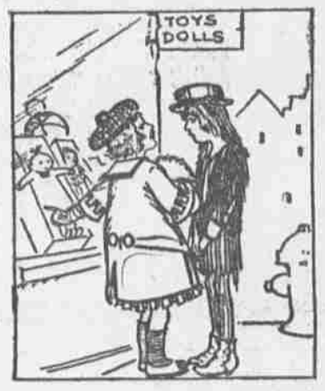
He was put to the reading test, stuttered a bit and almost failed in the attempt, but he finally satisfied the officials that he was not illiterate. He was given the certificate.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

The Doll They Both Liked Best

ONE day shortly before Christmas the big windows of a downtown store were filled with dolls—dolls of all kinds and sizes.

There were blonde dolls with blue eyes and black-haired dolls with eyes of brown, father dolls, mother dolls and babies. Mexican dolls, Paris dolls, Japanese dolls and circus ladies. Oh, I am quite sure that you never in all your life saw so many dolls in one place at one time. And just to show that nothing was forgotten, way down in the lower front corner of the window was a cunning little rag doll. She was



"Do you want one?" asked the rich little girl.

about 12 inches tall, and she wore a blue gingham dress and a blue and white sunbonnet, and she had a comfortable little smile painted on her cloth face.

"Never you mind about all the finery in this window," she seemed to say. "After all, I'm a very comfortable sort of a doll to play with, for I don't muss up!"

All through the day children stood before that window of dolls: big children, little children and children who had grown up, but who wished they could play with dolls again.

Along in the afternoon a little rich girl stopped before the window and looked at the dolls displayed. Now, next to being poor the worst thing in the world is to be rich—very rich. You don't have any chance to want anything. And not wanting anything is almost as bad as not having anything.

This little girl looked lazily over the window of dolls and saw nothing as good as she already had, for she had so many dolls she was tired of naming them, and she very much wished Santa Claus wouldn't bring her any more.

Just imagine!

Then as she was turning away she spied the rag doll.

"Mother, look at that doll," she cried. "I want that doll!" and she fairly danced with the fun of wanting something.

"You don't want that doll," exclaimed her mother, scornfully. "You don't want anything so common as a rag doll!" and she sniffed a regular "limousine sniff" at the very idea.

But the rich little girl did want, and she wanted it so badly she stayed right by it till she rubbed the elbows of a very poor little girl who stood before the window.

"Do you want one?" asked the rich little girl.

"Do I want one?" exclaimed the poor little girl, and all the hunger of her play-starved soul shone in her eyes. "Don't I jest! I know I can't ever had none o' those" (pointing to the gorgeous display), "but I do wish I could have this'n!" And she looked longingly at the rag doll.

"That's the one I want, too," said the little rich girl sociably. "It's the most comfortable doll of all!"

The little girl's mother looked at the two bright-eyed children before her, and quite suddenly she forgot her "limousine sniff" and remembered she was a mother and this was Christmas—and—you know the rest!

(Copyright, 1914—Clara Ingram Judson.)

Tomorrow—The Lost Necklace.

HELLO!

Did YOU ever help Santa Claus? Would you like to? Of course, you would!

Come to his storehouse, 608 Chestnut street!

Bring a toy—or a jolly little five-cent piece—to make some other girl or boy happy.

Will you?