HOME

THE NOVEL OF THE YEAR

BY GEORGE A. CHAMBERLAIN

CHAPTER XLII—Continued.

GERRY was puzzled. Why should Alix think he would go to the club? He handed the butler his old hat and strode to the library door. The door was closed. He knocked. Somebody said, "Come in." The words were so low he hardly heard them. He opened the door, stepped inside and closed it behind him.

Alix, dressed in a filmy blue and white house-gown, stood in the middle of the room. With one hand upraised, the other outstretched, she seemed to be poised, equally ready for advance or flight. Her eyes passed swiftly over Gerry's face, swept searching down to his feet and back again to his face. For weeks she had been wondering. Terrible things had come to her mind. Alan and Gerry, with his heartless note, had conspired to mystify, to terrify her. All the joy she had looked forward to in Gerry's home-coming had turned into a bitter pain. They had not known on the Hill how she was suffering. Only Kemp had seemed to understand a little and had brought his drop of comfort to her.

As her eyes searched Gerry the sense of impending calamity left her. He was well, well as she had never seen him before. Except for that he seemed almost weirdly familiar, as though only a good night's sleep lay between him and the morning of three years ago when he had bullied her until she had fought back and overwhelmed him.

A hundred little differences went to make up this solitary change. The flush of too many drinks had given way to a deep healthy glow, the eyes were deep and grave instead of deep and vacant, the broad shoulders that had taken to hanging were braced in unconscious strength. Every line in the body that she had seen start on the road to grossness had been fined down. The body was no longer a mere abode for a lingering spirit. It was not the body of a time-server. Alan's sole word of comfort came back to her. "I never thought the old Rock would ever loom so big." What force had done this thing to Gerry? She felt a pang, half envy, half remorse. If she had been wise, less than that, if she had been merely sage, could she not have saved Gerry to himself and spared her faith the test of the three long years lost out of their youth?

Gerry stood erect by the door, one hand still holding the knob. Why was he waiting? Alix's raised hand went slowly out to him in welcome but he did not move. She smiled at him but his eyes remained steadfast and grave. A lump rose in Alix's throat and then, as pride came to her aid, a flare of color showed in her cheeks. Her lips opened.

What could she say to hurt him enough, to pay him back for this added, unjust rebuff? She knew so little about this new Gerry. How could she wound him?

And then he spoke. "Will you please sit down? There are things I must tell you."

Gerry had blundered on magic words. There is no moment so emotionally tense that a true woman will not drop the immediate issue to sit down and listen to the untold things she has wanted to hear. Alix was a true woman. The flare died out of her cheeks. She sank into a chair beside the dully shining mahogany table and with a nod of her golden head motioned Gerry to a seat opposite her. She watched the easy swing of his body as he moved across the room. Gerry's mind was in sore conflict, but a body in perfect health has a way of taking care of itself.

Gerry sat down and gripped the edge of the table with outstretched hands. He looked steadily into Alix's eyes. The moment he had foreseen had come. Alix sat in judgment. She planted her bare elbows on the table, laid one hand, palm down on the other and on them both rested her cheek. Her head, with its heavy crown of hair, was thus to one side, but also tilted slightly forward. That slight forward tilt gave strength to the pose and intensity. A curious, measuring look came into Alix's eyes. She was silent and she was waiting.

Gerry dropped his eyes to the table and began to talk. "The things I have got to tell you," he said, "began with that day—our last day. I went out and walked for hours and realized that I had been rough and unjust and to blame. I came over to the avenue and was standing looking at some flowers when you passed. I saw you in the plate-glass of the window. I turned around to make sure. I recognized your trunk. I followed you to the station. I saw Alan signal to you. I saw you get into the train."

Gerry stopped. His premise was finished and he found that he had no tongue to tell the things he had thought—the long argument of the soul. He realized that all had been left out. He must confine himself to mere physical facts, let them troop up in the order in which they had come upon him and file naked before Alix. She must dress them as she saw fit, as her sympathies and her justice directed. He would give her but the groundwork, plain, simple words such as he could command, telling the events that had come upon him and how he had met them.

Of the trip out he had nothing to say, but of Pernambuco he told her in detail. Somehow it seemed the least he could do for the filthy and beautiful city that had given him an unquestioning asylum. He told her of the quay, the Linguetta, with its line of tall, stained houses, its vast plane trees and its cobbled esplanade, the stage where the city's life was in perpetual review. Unconsciously he created an atmosphere. A light of interest burned in Alix's eyes. She saw the changing scene. It charmed her to restfulness as it had Gerry.

She smelt the stacks of pineapples, the heaped-up mangoes, the frying fish, and through his eyes she saw the blue skies dotted with white, still clouds and glimpsed the secret, high-walled gardens with their flaring hibiscus, trailing fuchsias, fantastic garden coxcombs and dark-domed mango and jack trees.

She sat with Gerry beside the wreck of a consul, and, later, on the long, slim coasting craft she listened with him to the creak of straining masts and stays and to the lap of hurrying waters. She followed him up the San Francisco, felt his impatience with Penedo, took the little stern-wheeler and learned the fascination of a river with endless, undiscovered turns. They came to Piranhas. Here she felt herself on familiar ground. Letters from the consul's envoy had made this place hers. Unconsciously she nodded as Gerry described the tiers of houses, the twisted, climbing streets, the miserable little inn.

Gerry told of the happy days of ponderous canoeing and of the unvarying stringa of fish. He lingered over those days. Thus far he had brought Alix with him. He felt it. Now he came to the morning when he must leave her behind. He told her of the glorious break of that day, of the sun fighting through swirling mists. She saw him standing stripped on the sandpit. She saw the canoe nosing heavily against the shore and his pajamas tossed carelessly across a thwart. She knew that she had come to the moment of revelation. She breathed softly lest she should lose a word, for Gerry was speaking very low. Then he showed her Margarita, Margarita as he had first seen her, kissing and kissed by dawn.

A hard light came into Alix's eyes. Gerry felt himself suddenly alone. He went doggedly on. He told of the chase and the capture, of how he and the girl had seen the canoe drift into the clutch of the eddy and swirl out into the river and away. He told her of how they laughed, and Alix shrank. Gerry paused, his brow puckered. He wished he could tell in words the battle of his spirit, the utter ruin of his downfall. He could not, and instead he sighed.

There was something in that sigh so eloquent of defeated expression that it succeeded where words might have failed. It called to Alix with the strong call of helpless things. It drew back her mind to Gerry. With him and the girl she threaded the path to Fazenda Flores. Its ruin sprang upon her through his eyes. With him she discovered the traces of an ancient ditch, with him and the old darky she dug along that line through long, hot months. She met Father Mathias and found no flaw in his logic, she grew to know Lieber as the tale went on and finally to love him because of all things Lieber seemed to need love—somebody else's love—most. She amused herself with Kemp and his drawl. She tried to keep her thoughts away from Margarita, and at the coming of Margarita's boy she winced.

As he finished telling of the coming of the Man, Gerry stopped short. The thought came to him with tremendous force that Alix, too, had gone through that for him. The impulse to get up and throw himself before her, and on his knees to thank her almost tore him from his seat, but he fought it down. He hurried on with his story. He told of the coming of Alan and of the revelation he had brought.

And then in a choked voice and only because he had set himself to tell the whole truth he pictured the flood, the death of True Blue and the overwhelming by the waters before his very eyes of Margarita and the Man. Then he arose and with hands braced on the table leaned toward Alix. "I have told you all this so that perhaps you may understand what I am going to tell you now. If the flood had not come—if Margarita and the Man had lived—I would not have come back."

Alix sat very still and studied Gerry's face. He had finished the task he had set himself to do and he was suddenly very tired. His eyes dropped as though from their own weight and then he raised them again to her inscrutable face.

"Well?" he asked after a long pause.

"Well?" replied Alix.

Gerry's stalwart figure dropped. "It is quite just," he said, "after all that, that you should not want me. I have spent the last weeks making myself ready for that. You waited for me. I didn't wait for you. If you do not want me I will go away."

Alix rose slowly to her feet. She looked very slim and tall in her clinging gown. To Gerry she looked very cold. "Before you go," she said, "there is just one thing. I wish you would kiss me—once."

Gerry's body straightened and stiffened. He stared at her grave face with wondering eyes. Then he felt a strange tingling ripple through his blood and before he knew what he did he had swept her from her feet, crushed her to him, brushed the crown of hair back from her brow and kissed her eyes, her mouth, her throat. He was rough with her. He was bruising her body, her lips, but Alix clung to him and laughed. Then suddenly all her slim body relaxed and slipped through his arms to a little white heap on the floor. She began to sob. Gerry stooped down, picked her up tenderly and laid her on the great leathern couch. He knelt beside her. On one arm he pillowed her head, with the other hand he sought hers. "Please, Alix," he begged, "please don't cry."

"I'm not crying," sobbed Alix, "I'm laughing."

Gerry smiled and waited. Soon Alix became quiet. Her eyes closed. She drew a long, quivering breath and then she opened her eyes again and her lips broke into the old dear smile, the smile of an opening flower. "I am tired—tired," she said, "but I believe I'm almost hungrier than I am tired."

"I'm glad you said it first," replied Gerry, giving serious thought to the fact that he was faint with hunger himself. "Ever since some funny Johnny wrote 'feed the brute' we men have been shy about echoing our stomachs. It's 4 o'clock. Hours after lunch time."

CONTINUED TOMORROW.

Deep down in the centre of the earth.

At the Earth's Core

is a world not unlike our own, but in certain essential details so different that it strikes an outer-world human being stone cold with terror.

Into this world the fertile brain of

Edgar Rice Burroughs

(Author of Tarzan)

transports Professor Perry, geologist, and David Innes, a young student, by means of a colossal machine, "The Iron Mole," which bores through the earth.

This astounding tale of adventure begins in

Tomorrow's

EVENING LEDGER

It has all the ingenuity of Jules Verne, the breathlessness of Poe, and the romance of EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS.

At the Earth's Core

Begins in tomorrow's Evening Ledger.

THE CHEERFUL CHERUB

TICKETS FOR THE MAHLER PERFORMANCE SOLD OUT

Leopold Stokowski Deluged With Requests for Admission

The demand for tickets to the Mahler Symphony performances by the Philadelphia Orchestra next week has been so great that, with every seat in the Academy sold for all performances, Leopold Stokowski, the leader of the Orchestra, has been importuned to obtain tickets. Mr. Stokowski last night issued this statement:

"Owing to the very large number of letters which I am constantly receiving, requesting me to procure tickets for the Mahler Symphony performances, I wish to announce that it is absolutely impossible for me to procure tickets for any of these performances as every seat has been sold.

"It is a matter of great regret to me, as well as to the Philadelphia Orchestra management, that all who wish to hear this work cannot be accommodated."

GOOD FORM

Owing to the fact that the Evening Ledger is constantly asked questions relating to matters of etiquette, it has been decided to open a column in which queries of this kind may be answered.

The column is edited under a pseudonym; but it is, nevertheless, edited by an authority on social conventions, who is prepared to answer clearly, carefully and conclusively any query which may be propounded.

Good form queries should be addressed to Deborah Rush, written on one side of the paper and signed with full name and address, though initials ONLY will be published upon request.

The question of paying calls when new residents move into a neighborhood was agitated yesterday. Perhaps a few remarks on this matter may be of interest.

An old custom exacts calling on new neighbors within a few weeks of their arrival in a new home. In the suburbs of a city this rule is very strictly adhered to, and it is considered an intentional rudeness if this little courtesy is not complied with. In the case of two families moving into a neighborhood at about the same time, the younger woman should call first on the older. It is never necessary to pursue these friendships if neighbors do not prove congenial, but it is well to be on polite terms with all.

Gown for Dansant

Dear Deborah Rush—Will you please tell me what is the proper gown to wear to an afternoon the dansant?

LILLIAN.

It is proper to wear either a suit with a lacy waist or an altogether gown of cloth, silk or crepe de chine. A hat is always worn at an afternoon affair. Of course, if you are to receive, a more dressy gown is in vogue. At present the custom is to wear evening frocks in the afternoon at dansants if you are of the receiving party.

Theatre Etiquette

Dear Deborah Rush—By what rule of etiquette or conventionality is a man permitted to put on his hat at the close of a play and march out of a theatre, as if he were out of doors? This is a common occurrence in this city; rather it is unusual to see a man that does keep his hat off until he is outside.

Is it that Philadelphia men are particularly disrespectful to the women, or is it a country-wide custom in America? In Europe a man who would put his hat on while inside a playhouse in the presence of women would be ostracised.

FOREIGNER.

There is, of course, no excuse for a man to put his hat on in a theatre.

Is an Apology Due?

Dear Deborah Rush—Here is something that has been perplexing me for a long time. I was so glad to note, when perusing your splendid page the other night, that you have opened your valuable columns for public use on table manners.

What I want to know is this: When one is visiting and spills something on the tablecloth, should he ask the hostess' pardon or should he try to hide the spot? I have noticed that sometimes it is embarrassing for the host and the guest when the pardon is asked. Please do tell me, because I am a constant spiller. L. N.

There is no rule of etiquette in this matter. Circumstances usually govern these things. If the accident is very noticeable, it may be well to apologize; if not, it is probably better to overlook it. But I would not try to hide the spot, by displacing your plate, etc.; that would be very noticeable.

DEBORAH RUSH.

A Case of Logic

Dear Deborah Rush—Why did'nt you tell Iconoclast in this evening's LEDGER to apply his "reasoning" to his own position? He thinks if a lady becomes a "suffragist" she ceases to be a lady. Why is it not true that when a man becomes an "antisuffragist" he ceases to be a gentleman, when he forgets to act as a gentleman should by observing the time-honored custom of showing respect to the opposite sex at all times, in all places? M. K.

February 23, 1916.

Perhaps Iconoclast will see this and take it to heart.

Marion Harland's Corner

All communication addressed to Marion Harland should inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a clipping of the article in which you are interested. Persons wishing to aid in the charitable work of the H. H. C. should write Marion Harland, in care of this paper, for addresses of those they would like to help, and, having received them, communicate direct with these parties.

Wild Pigeons of North America

"IS IT true that the species of pigeon called, I believe, 'passage pigeon,' is entirely extinct? About 40 years ago these pigeons used to fly all over the country in early spring, in flocks so large that they looked like a big black cloud, and did great damage to the farmers' fields of tender grain. The writer heard a statement made a short time ago to the effect that there was not a bird of this species in the United States or in any other country, and that there has not been one for years. Can you inform me if this is true? A. B. W."

"Passenger pigeons," otherwise known as the wild pigeons of North America, were so common 50 years ago that their disappearance is almost an unexplained mystery to naturalists. I recollect that in my childhood their periodical visitations of certain regions was a veritable pest. Trees were broken down by the weight of thousands roosting in the forest overnight, and the whirring wings not only obscured the sun by day, but were like a rushing mighty wind in volume of sound. Will our students and professors of natural history and specialists in ornithology tell us what has become of the species?

Met Generous Response

"To Cornerites offering to send baby clothes in response to my request: I have written to each one of you personally and should like to express through the Corner my heartfelt thanks for the offers. I had no idea so many kind friends would respond to my appeal so generously, and I cannot find words to express my feelings as to how I felt when I received them.

"MRS. C. W. S."

Marking Quilt Patterns

"I have a number of quilts to be pieced. I have had some made up by church societies. They find trouble in marking them for quilting. Lead pencils make such a black mark and crayon makes a greasy looking one. Please ask Cornerites for some other method. W. F. M."

The old-fashioned chalk method was to mark the pattern with chalk and trace the outline by basting it with fine cotton thread, which could be easily pulled out. Have quilt makers wiser and more modern methods to advise which are not subject to the inconveniences complained of by our needlewoman?

Musty Flavor of Canned Fruit

"If possible, will you tell me through the Corner why canned fruit, sealed perfectly tight and without any mold, should have a musty flavor. I have been troubled a great deal in this way and cannot solve the problem. Heating does not seem to overcome the taste. If any other woman has a similar experience, I should like to hear from her. F. A. U."

What you characterize as a musty flavor is rather the "close" taste imparted by want of air. If the air be left in the jar, the contents ferment. If it is excluded entirely the peculiar odor and flavor of which you complain are often perceptible. To rid the contents of the can of this, open it several hours before it is to be used, and leave it where the air, and, when practicable, the sunshine, can visit it freely. I make this rule invariable in the use of canned foods of all kinds. Those which are to be cooked need less airing than those which are to be eaten cold, such as potted meats, lobster, crabs, oysters and sweets. Attention to this simple rule will dissipate the close "tang" which, more than anything else has begotten with some epicures a prejudice against this invaluable class of foods.

FARMER SMITH'S RAINBOW CLUB

MORE ABOUT THRIFT

Dear Children—Don't you think I have been good not to talk to you about "thrift" for such a long time? Well, in the meantime, nine of our boys from the South 8th Street Squad have $22 in the bank, as we told you before, and the Cedar Grove, N. J., Branch of The Rainbow Club has $7 in the Robert Morris Trust Company, Philadelphia, and the Jefferson Branch has sent us $1.50, which is also in the Robert Morris Trust Company.

The accounts are "in trust" and the dear children have really truly bank-books and really truly checkbooks. What DO you think of that?

The first thing you know you will see right here that the Rosewood Branch has some money in the bank, for it is going to give an entertainment at the Comique Theatre at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning.

FARMER SMITH,
Children's Editor, EVENING LEDGER.

Wanita and Kawasha

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

Two little white children were stolen by the Indians when they were very young. Their skin was dyed brown and they did not know that they were not really Indians. One day they set out for a marvelous cave about which they had heard the chiefs talk. They discovered it. While they were exploring the cavern Kawasha, the little boy, fell and sprained his ankle, and a small fire which they had built at the mouth spread all over the cave. Wanita, the little girl, dashed out through the flames and called to a white man, John Marshall for aid. He succeeded in putting most of the fire out, but when he rushed into the cave Kawasha was gone. Finally they discovered him unconscious in a secret room of the cave. The white man carried him out. When Kawasha regained consciousness, John Marshall put the two children in his canoe and proceeded to take them to his camp which was located on an island in the middle of the river. Half way across they spied Great Chief Red Feather, the terror of the Mohawks, standing on the shore of the island.

The children hid in the bottom of the canoe. Soon a volley of arrows was whizzing around John Marshall's head, but by paddling up the river a piece he managed to make the Chief think he was not going near the island. In the meantime he told the children that he must go back to the island, because on it, in his tent, there is concealed the map of a cave where a treasure is hidden. Wanita told him that it is the cave they have just been in.

When the white man was sure the Indian Chief was no longer watching them he brought the canoe back to the island. Placing Kawasha, whose foot still pained him, on a mound of soft grass and leaving Wanita with him, he stole quickly to the tent, some distance back, to get the map. At the very door of the tent stood Great Chief Red Feather.

Chief Red Feather did not know this was the same man he had seen paddling up the river, and he did not know that the two Indian children were now on the island. Suspecting the white man to be owner of the tent where he knew the map to be hidden, he demanded of him that he should surrender the map. Upon Marshall's refusing, the Indian called his six braves, who bound the white man to a tree.

(Continued)

In the meantime, Wanita and Kawasha stayed quietly by the riverside. The great sun that speaks the same message to all little children was gently bidding farewell to day, but for once the little Indians forgot to wonder at the glory of a gold-stained western sky. They were talking of the white man, of his kindness to them and of——

Just then they heard the wild Indian shriek.

"Kawasha," cried Wanita, "they've seem him; they'll kill him!" She sprang up, with sudden resolution. "Kawasha, stay as you are. Do not fear for the white man; he saved us," her little voice rang with noble feeling; "I am going to save him." And, with that, the brave little Indian maid dashed through the twilight and the trees, straight to the call of the war-whoop. On, on she went, her light feet scarcely making a rustle on the carpet of leaves.

"Chief Red Feather does not know," she said to herself, "that our white man is the same man he saw paddling up the river, and, of course, he does not know that Kawasha and I are here to save him."

At last, through the branches of the trees, she spied the small white tent. Carefully she approached and hid behind a nearby tree. Low mumbles and grunts told her that the Indians were tormenting the white man. Then, suddenly, a gruff voice sounded through the evening air. It was Red Feather himself who spoke:

"We give until sunrise tomorrow; if you do not give map then, you die. 'Till then you are bound to a tree; then death—see?"

Horrified, Wanita looked out from her hiding place. "Bound to a tree!" the words rang in her ears, for there, tied tightly to an oak tree, she beheld her beloved white man.

Sunrise—the map—her white man to die!—all these things rushed like a tornado through the bewildered brain of Wanita.

What was she to do?

(To be continued.)

LOOK WHO'S HERE

A Special Children's Matinee will be given at the Comique Theatre, 2410 South Broad street, at 11 a. m., Saturday, February 26, for the benefit of the Rosewood Branch of Farmer Smith's Rainbow Club of the EVENING LEDGER.

The Farmer will appear in person and Charlie Chaplin will appear in Pictures. DOUBLE SHOW. Admission 10 cents, with this Ticket only 5 cents. Bring THIS TICKET and save 5 cents.

Doll carriages checked free. Airships on the roof. Automobiles cared for.

COME EARLY AND BRING SOME LAUGHTER

Do You Know This?

1. Build as many words as you can from INGENUITY. (Five credits.)
2. What is a mint? (Five credits.)

Our Postoffice Box

This is George, the first horse that has galloped into our column. He is mighty fond of John Wilson, South 22d street, the little boy who is riding him, and he has good reason to be. When George was sick John walked up and down every day to help nurse him back to health, and we know the horse is very happy to return this kindness by allowing our Rainbow to ride on his broad back.

JOHN WILSON

Leo Keenan, East Dauphin street, sent a pretty painting of Washington that arrived too late to have a place in our art gallery. Justin Herman, Wayne avenue, is another able artist. He drew a very lifelike picture of your editor on the farm, which we have hung in a place of honor on our desk. Clever drawings came from the pencil of Edward White, Hermitage avenue. We mention the word pencil particularly because if those lovely roses had been drawn in ink they would surely have been printed in the club news.

Sarah Kolonsky, Carpenter street, is one of our most faithful readers. John Finavelli, South 13th street, has been ill. He is all well again, and we are happy to have him back. Abraham and Sam Savrin, North 6th street, wants to know if there is anything they can do for us. Yes; make some little wooden doll furniture, which we can send to the Babies' Hospital. If you do not know how, write us.

Five brand new Rainbows from Selingsgrove, N. J., Mary Salem, Bessie Fisher, Dorothy Fisher, Mildred Pottinger and John Salem. Many welcomes to you, and may you make active members.

FARMER SMITH,
EVENING LEDGER:

I wish to become a member of your Rainbow Club. Please send me a beautiful Rainbow Button free. I agree to DO A LITTLE KINDNESS EACH AND EVERY DAY — SPREAD A LITTLE SUNSHINE ALL ALONG THE WAY:

Name .....
Address .....
Age .....
School I attend.....

FOR SALE

CHEERFUL POSTCARDS—One cent, 2 cents, 3 for 5 cents and 2 for 5 cents, by a Rainbow who wants to make money for the poor. Address Rose Fisher, in care of Farmer Smith.