

# A MAN'S WAY

By RUBY M. AYRES

Author of "The Fortune Hunter," "A Bachelor Husband," etc.  
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THIS BEGINS THE STORY.

John Harden is a successful business man, but he is not a very young man, and a bit of a bachelor. He has a charming daughter, but she is not a very young girl, and she is not a very beautiful girl. She is a good girl, and she is a good daughter, and she is a good wife. She is a good woman, and she is a good mother. She is a good friend, and she is a good neighbor. She is a good citizen, and she is a good patriot. She is a good person, and she is a good soul. She is a good woman, and she is a good mother. She is a good friend, and she is a good neighbor. She is a good citizen, and she is a good patriot. She is a good person, and she is a good soul.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES.

HARDEN had loved Lillith—loved her still. Beyond that fact she could see nothing, realizing nothing, but was there before her mind like a shining sword.

He had married her for some reason of his own, not in the least because he cared for her; not in the least because he wished to have her for his own. Harden touched her arm.

"Molly, we are just at the hotel." She looked up with wide eyes. "I want to go home; let me go home. I can't stay with you. I must go home."

His face hardened. He frowned.

"You're talking nonsense," he said roughly. "Please remember that I am your father. I will talk to you directly. Please be sensible."

But Molly was past reasoning with him. She realized that it was not an telegram as his reception of it that had roused the slumbering suspicion in her heart. She followed him into the hotel mechanically. She stood by in the big lounge while a porter brought in their luggage. Then Harden spoke again, and she found herself moving with him across the hall and up the stairs.

A smiling maid met them. She looked at Molly interestedly. Molly wondered if every one knew that they were newly married. She glanced down at her ring. It seemed to hang like a weight on her finger.

She went over to the window of the room into which she had been shown and looked out into the street. It was a quiet, ugly street with rows of houses that all looked alike; their high roofs and bare trees and dingy windows gave everything a dreary aspect.

Harden came into the room behind her. He closed the door and followed her to the window.

"Molly," he began. She turned. He was looking at her anxiously. "Well!" he said with a smile. "What am I to say to forgive you? What can I do to convince you that there is nothing very terrible in my life after all? The banter of his voice hurt her. She understood now that he had always treated her as a child, never as a woman. She had grown very wise during the last hour.

For a moment she did not answer, then suddenly she found her voice.

"If Mr. Fernald had died a month ago, you would never have married me, would you?" she asked.

The hot blood rushed to his face; his eyes fell.

Molly turned away and groped for a chair. She felt as if some one had struck her. She dropped down on the floor and hid her face on her arm. She looked a forlorn little bride sitting there in the wedding finery of which she had been so proud.

Harden walked a step away and came back.

"Molly," he said gently. He knelt down beside her, and tried to make her look up. "Listen, Molly, and I'll tell you the whole truth. I should never have told you—some day—anyway. It's only that you will hear it a little sooner."

He took the hand that lay in her lap; the hand that wore his very new ring.

"I knew Mrs. Fernald was coming before she was married. I—the—we were engaged—just for a little while, a few months. I was a poor man then. Molly—not rich enough to buy her all the frocks and pretty things she wanted; and so—so she threw me over."

He stopped, and for some moments there was silence. Then he began once more.

"I never saw her from the day she sent me away till I met her with you in Little Helpton, when you were looking over the house next yours. You must have seen that the meeting was not a happy one for me."

Molly made a little convulsive movement. She knew she had been blind—blindly blind not to have guessed then.

"Meeting her like that," Harden went on with difficulty, "reopened all the old sores. I—I suppose I cared for her more than you ever cared for me; at any rate, you saw her again, and I knew that I had never really forgotten."

Molly's hand was torn suddenly from his, she lifted her head and looked at him with wild eyes.

"And you never cared for me; you just made use of me. Oh, why didn't I guess? Why didn't I guess?"

CHAPTER XXV  
The Beginning of a New Life

Molly pushed him away when he would have touched her; she rose to her feet and began pacing the room.

"I suppose I couldn't expect you to really care for me—after her," she said gaspingly. "I know I'm not pretty like she is. I know that we aren't—aren't anybody." The words came with little hysterical pauses between them. She wrung her hands in anguish.

Harden took her by the shoulders.

"I've told you the truth, hoping that you'll forgive me," he said. "I did care for her; it's no use denying it. But now Molly, I swear to you—she could not break away from him. But she turned her head away with a little gesture of repulsion. He had never believed that she had so much depth of feeling. For the first time he saw a glimpse of the passionate woman in the little girl he had so lightly wooed and won.

"I suppose you knew I liked you," she went on, sobbing. "I suppose I let you see it. I was a fool—a fool! But I thought you liked me too. I thought—Oh, I did think so; I did—I did!"

"Molly," said Harden sharply. Her voice had broken off with a little sobbing wail, as she tumbled forward helplessly against him.

He laid her back in the big chair and swung the window wide. He bathed her face and loosened her pretty frock. He cupped his hands in her white hair.

He had told her that he was taking her from shadows into sunshine, and already he had brought her into the greatest shadow.

"Do you know that he had been utterly selfish; that all along he had really thought only of himself; that he had had this girl to protect himself and his love for another woman. It had been his man's way. He had sacrificed a girl for whom he did not care to save the sake of a woman whom he loved with his whole heart."

## THE GUMPS—Ting-a-Ling! Ling! Ling!



Stanny Smith. I've watched the antics of that leader woman and know positively she isn't fit to marry Uncle Zin. She should have another one of those boys, those lips, those eyes, those nose on the other side of her head.

Come on, come on, show her up to Stanny and end our agony.

Yours with a heart throbs,  
Gelle Gordon.

Dear Sid - You're some cartoonist but as a cupid - ha-ha - L.R.E. Phila. 2.12.22

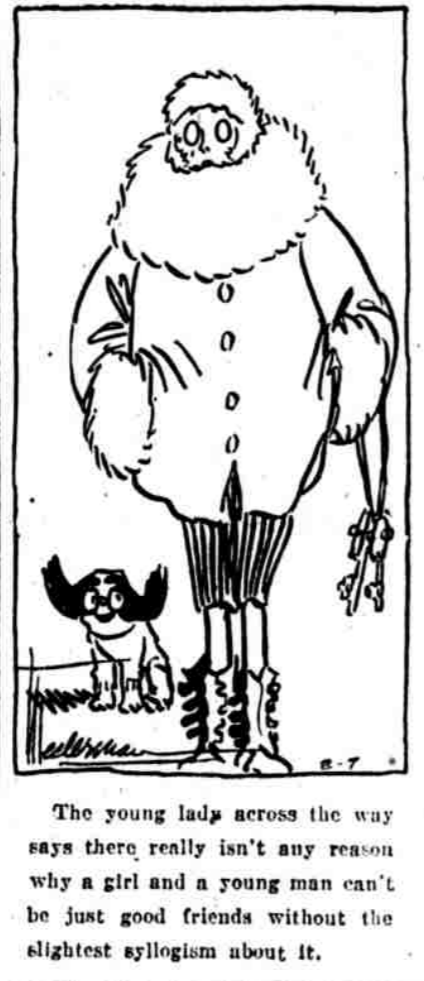
## SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Lunch Postponed



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By Hayward

## The Young Lady Across the Way



The young lady across the way says there really isn't any reason why a girl and a young man can't be just good friends without the slightest syllogism about it.

## When a Young Lady Could Murder Her Small Brother



The young lady across the way says there really isn't any reason why a girl and a young man can't be just good friends without the slightest syllogism about it.

## SCHOOL DAYS



The Ghouls

## PETEY—At Palm Beach



By C. A. Voight

## GASOLINE ALLEY—Keeping It Dark



## GASOLINE ALLEY—Keeping It Dark



## GASOLINE ALLEY—Keeping It Dark



## GASOLINE ALLEY—Keeping It Dark



By King