

### The Vengeance of Henry Jarroman

By ROY VICKERS

Must the Woman Always Pay?

Henry Jarroman gave an affectionate snort and handed her a plate of evil-looking food.

"When a woman who had known both me and me as babies turned up, a soul—Mrs. Jarratt—she said she would visit you when you were in jail, in that home you were sent to."

"Oh! I remember 'er!" exclaimed Ned, and launched into a pithy denunciation of her benefactress.

"Yes, that's Mrs. Jarratt," nodded Henry. "She meant well. She knew I wasn't Penelope Jarroman and she was afraid I'd be imposed on. But she was an evening when Wilfred was home, and he saw by my face, I suppose, that I had known before, and she'd gone home—he—"

"Went out the deep end," suggested Ned helpfully. "So you ain't yer own 'ere? Wot made yer come 'ere?"

"I felt I ought to be here, and I thought you wouldn't mind," answered Ned simply. "I've no money unless I can earn it. This place is all I can really afford. I didn't think you were coming back, of course, when the house in Crescent street is really yours."

Ned swung her worn velvet shoe on the extreme edge of her foot.

"Where does yer ol' man come in?" Ned prompted.

"By now he knows why I kept silent. I just wanted to be out of the way while he found out, and to be by myself a little, and especially to be able to tell him I'd got work when I see him again."

"And when'll that be?"

Ned's foot swung reflectively.

"I said next week."

**Ned's Thinking**

"Here, I nearly made the biggest mistake of me life up there—and I've made a few in my time. Yer know wot I did? Well, I cocked me eye at a real gent—leastways, 'e weren't far off, and it wasn't 'is fault 'e wasn't born rich. Came an' near as axing me, I did, to give 'im Ben the chuck on account of 'im. Not that I thought about 'im like I did about Ben, mind yer, but 'e was a gent, and Ben—well, yer've seen Ben. But I soon found out as Ben's my sort and the other bloke weren't. Wasn't 'is fault. Blame it on ter me, if yer like, but there it is. An' look 'ere. There was a bloke come to see Ben yesterday. Know wot 'e was? Sez 'e comes from me dad and sez 'e's going to set Ben up in the 'ard-ware in the Ol' Kent road with as much stock as 'e can cram into the place, and a year's rent p'd."

"Splendid!" said Ned, laying her slender hand on Ned's. "You'll help 'im in shop, won't you, Ned?"

"Desert I shall, but that ain't wot I'm talking about," said Ned, gripping the hand. "It comes to this 'ere. You an' 'ere ol' man wouldn't give a thank yer for that little business wot's going to be ours. An' I wouldn't give yer a thank yer, neither, for that there Rawson 'agin' around and watchin' yer while yer eatin' yer dinner. I set ter fair give me the creeps 'e did. An' they're all like 'im," she added with profound conviction.

Ned was in a confiding mood. For

of lightning. The tragedy of the night had been—

Forty-eight! And he had learned by heart all that the flesh could teach him. He had hated and loved and suffered. And now had come this last glittering coin of knowledge—that he could sustain the loss of Nadia in her physical person and know that he had lost nothing. He could never have held her soul in his arms save in the sense that he held it now and would hold it always.

Forty-eight and freed from the domination of financial necessity! Could society find him no work for which it would pay him in human happiness?

Young men, he had observed, took notice of him and listened to what he had to say. They knew he knew nothing of their games, but they knew, perhaps instinctively, that he knew something of the greater game behind it.

Wilfred to begin with. That fellow 'arronade. He was undoubtedly going to be a force in the state. He and the crowd of energetic youngsters he was recruiting. They could meet at Doucester House.

That, of course, was the solution of the Doucester House problem. He would live in it himself and keep it up decently on his twenty odd thousand a year. It could be the informal headquarters, the private club of the New Party.

He filled his lungs with the breath of his new youth.

Outside in the corridor Nadia's voice—Wilfred's laugh!

They must be persuaded to keep the house in Crescent street. In their softened mood they would not refuse him that one gift, surely.

The door opened. Nadia was smiling at him.

"You and I didn't have any lunch," she said. "I'm so hungry I can't wait

for tea—I want to go straight on to dinner. We've laid the table and there are going to be omelettes. That nice servant says Lady Doucester showed her how to make them. Coming?"

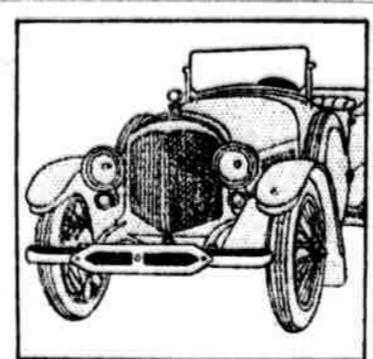
"Coming," said Jarroman.

**THE END**

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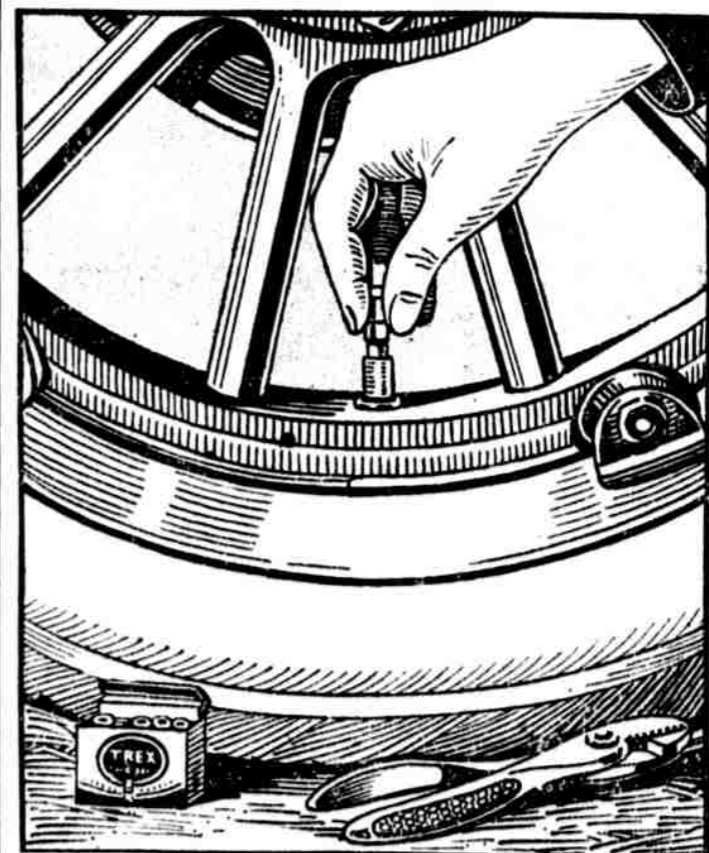
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