

THE HOUSE OF MOHUN

By GEORGE GIBBS

Author of "Youth Triumphant" and Other Successes
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WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY

CHERRY MOHUN, up-to-date girl, rich and charming, at once irritated and attracted by

DAVID SANGREE, young American ethnologist and war veteran, amazed by changes in manners and customs he brought with him, but interested in Cherry. His modest funds are invested with her father,

JIM MOHUN, a self-made financial leader. Too busy to think of his children, he leaves them to

MRS. MOHUN, who has successfully cultivated the social side of life.

BRUCE COWAN, a motorcar salesman, of cage-man type of whom Cherry imagines she is enamored.

BOB MOHUN, son, a typically reckless youngster.

GEORGE LYCETT, elderly, sharp, philosophical as the story develops.

JOHN CHICHESTER, whom Mrs.

John would like to call son-in-law.

SHE glanced at him a moment as though startled at his vehemence, and then went on hurriedly.

"Today a thing happened which made me desperate. Oh, you don't know how long I struggled with the temptation not to come. I knew that if I didn't come I might yield to what seemed inevitable—for they had pushed me against the wall, Ramesses."

"Go on," he gasped huskily.

"This afternoon things came to a desperate crisis. A lot of the dressmakers have been threatening me. They can't see to sell me anything, and I'm afraid the other violent-looking women that had smirched and berated and scraped and shattered and long ago. I had to promise them the money from the sale of one of the machines which I am to get tomorrow. But it wasn't quite enough—so I began thinking of what else could be sold or pawned—just enough so I thought of Muzzy. She had, I knew, a small balance. Muzzy was out driving with somebody, but I got the keys to her desk and found her check-book."

She paused and took a deep breath, lowering her tone a trifle. "You won't wonder at my surprise, I suppose, when I say quietly, 'When I tell you that I found out she had a balance of more than eight thousand dollars!'"

Sangree started forward in his chair.

"You mean—?"

"John Chichester," said Cherry calmly. "She'd borrowed ten thousand dollars from him. It was a payment in advance—on me."

He was on his feet, his hands clenched in his pockets, and stepped down on the rug. Silence. Just the gas log sputtering. David stared at it, frowning. But his very quiet, she knew, was deep with meaning. At last he took his hands out of his pockets and turned.

"Surely you're mistaken," he said, almost in a whisper. "I've never heard of such a thing."

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"And yet that's what I am," she said. "That's what I've been trained to be. Curious I've never thought of it before."

"Happiness," he growled, "when she'd you like to a dog!"

"I don't know whether she asked him for it or whether he just offered it, but when a woman asks for it, she wants your sympathy."

"But I can't blame Muzzy for that. She only did it because other mothers did, married in depression. I might have married somebody else, but in the course of time, I might have drifted into it. I would have had something to offer in exchange—money of my own to help pay my way. But don't you have impossible the thing is now?"

"Dolts of home! Somebody must make me what you think I'd be if I married anybody."

David Sangree went to the table and took up his pipe.

"You don't mind if I smoke?"

"No, please do."

The question and answer seemed to put him on a sure footing of his old relationship to her—to eliminate the possibilities of the merely sentimental, and to place him definitely in the role of older friend and friend.

He lit his pipe slowly and then sat in the chair upon the opposite side of the fire.

"Let's face the situation honestly," he said at last. "The burden of it seems to fall upon you. There's always a reason, always is, if you've got the courage."

"I will do anything—anything," she said.

He hesitated for a moment steadily and then spoke deliberately.

"Then you've got to play the game."

"What do you mean, exactly?"

"The greatest man in the world—the greater when the odds are against you. The game—Life. You're just beginning to know what it means."

Mr. Cooke had formed of him the opinion that he had only a little time left. For his name at the bottom of the card of rules draws the bitterness of the game.

I had that bitter feeling many times until I learned that the superintendent had stretched those inflexible rules and regulations to the point of sacrificing his office for unfortunate sent there.

As for the superintendent's wife, Mrs. Cooke, I don't think it possible for a lady to do more. At all hours she's helping some one, even to supplying wants of the families of prisoners.

I have been an inmate of both institutions. My last term the work I did carried me around the residence of the superintendent and completely changed the opinion I had formed of him. For his name at the bottom of the card of rules draws the bitterness of the game.

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Now for a word on behalf of the men prisoners. In all cases I have seen, the greater number cured of drugs and other forms of the tendency to steal, to a term in our city's prisons under ordinary conditions, because they came out weaker mentally and physically.

I know of a case that was an added twelve years with the same result.

On the other hand, there is a failure to climb the ladders he began.

He turned her head away and kept on thinking.

"I'm glad that you don't care for him. That would be bad enough."

"Of course, it's all very terrible. You don't love John Chichester. You can't marry him—that's out of the question." His voice sank a note, the deeper in the vibrations. "It isn't your body only that you'd sell, Cherry, but your immortal soul. Nobody has a right to dispose of that, not your mother—not you."

He took two or three paces away, thinking deeply, and then turned one hand on the back of her chair, thinking her into the fire.

"I'd rather see you dead than married to Chichester," he said. "She turned her head back to look at him, but he went on as though thinking aloud.

"I'm glad that you don't care for him. That would be bad enough. But to marry him just to save a situation or to bring the luxuries which misfortune denies you—that would be abominable!" May be she plainly paused for a moment—"who doesn't sign anything?"

Cherry moved uneasily. It was what Bruce Cowan had meant. But the paradox and a deeper significance from the lips of David Sangree.

"I don't know just what to say to you," he went on, "except—that I've always had faith enough to believe that you would do nothing—ever—unless you were forced to do it."

"I asked you what had happened to the wife of David Sangree?"

"I'm not surprised at your horror of the consequences of such a marriage. You're quite right. You have your own life to live. No matter how much you owe your mother—your father even if you do not owe them as much as that."

He paused for a moment and then said slowly:

"I don't know that you've—or given me the right to question you, but it

THE PEOPLE'S FORUM

Letters to the Editor

Defense of the Constitution

To the Editor of the Evening Public Ledger:

Sir—The editorial in the EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER of December 4, headed "La Follette Asks What Washington Rejected," uncovers one of the great dangers facing our country as a result of the election last month. It is obvious that the majority of voters did not and do not know what these men for whom they voted stand. Therefore, it seems to me that as much publicity as possible should be given to the great offense committed by its views by this paper.

It is evident that the paper will not be returned unless accompanied by postage, nor will manuscript be saved.

Favors Stern Punishment

To the Editor of the Evening Public Ledger:

Sir—Last Friday my automobile was

stolen within ten minutes, while I went in a store to make a purchase. Please

note that the car was drinking whisky fast and with

water.

As I wandered down the street

His hand held out so neat,

the great.

In the sidewalk was a hole to receive a load

of coal.

Which McGinty never saw until too late.

CHORUS

Then down went McGinty to the bottom of

the hole.

And the cart gave the load of

coal a start.

It took a half hour to dig McGinty from the

coal.

Dressed in his best suit of clothes.

Now McGinty was tired and aware.

About his clothes he told no one.

He said that he would kill that man or

else.

He tightly grabbed his stick.

And gave the other a sharp blow over his eye.

Two policemen saw the rags.

Two policemen joined in the fun.

Then John, the boy, became drunk.

He lay down with a smile.

"We will keep you for a while

in a cell to sleep upon a prison bunk."

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