

The Bayou Bridge

By NELLIE CRAVIE GILMORE

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With head bent and lips tightly compressed, Matilda hurried swiftly past the camp, down a steep clay road and on to the bayou bridge that led to rural delivery box No. 33, on the other side.

It was a gusty, disagreeable day. At intervals, the rain whipped down in sheets, alternately slackening to a sticky, penetrating drizzle. The wind tore at the willow branches that dipped into the stream, and the waters of the bayou writhed under its violence.

Half way across the bridge an aggressive gust suddenly seized the girl's umbrella and flung it viciously into the turbulent black water. Turning involuntarily, with a futile grasp at the flying parachute, Matilda abruptly twisted her foot sideways, catching the heel of her boot in a crack between the planks. Just then an angry cloudburst broke relentlessly upon the unprotected head of the hapless prisoner, and with hands tightly gripping the railing of the bridge, she waited, with all the patience she could command, for its fury to subside.

Presently the wind ceased, the rain shrank back into the clouds, and the lead of the sky broke up in patches of blue and silver. With renewed hope, Matilda scanned the road from east to west. And then, glory of glories! a man was just heaving into view on the brow of the hill opposite. She watched him eagerly, thankfully. But as he came nearer, near enough for her to recognize the broad, straight shoulders and the massive head under the dripping Panama, her eyes widened and the blood began to pound in her throat and temples. Mallory Cheatham—the very last person on earth she wanted to encounter!

In her hand was the still unposted letter, addressed to him. It contained only a few lines, but it had taken her half the night to make up her mind what to say, and the other half how to say it. She had refused him, firmly and finally.

When he was almost up to her, Matilda's face grew scarlet with blushes. Held like a criminal in the pillory, she returned his look of consternation with one of belligerent silence.

After Cheatham comprehended the situation, a smile struggled through his astonishment.

"I was beginning to grow impatient of your answer, dear."

"Do get me out of this!" she interrupted petulantly, flinching with pain as she gave her foot an impatient twist.

Full of solicitude, Cheatham stooped, and with a few deft manipulations, succeeded in loosening the imprisoned heel.

"And now," said he, rising and looking ardently down into Matilda's decidedly cross face, "don't I deserve something for that?" He eyed the letter covetously.

But the girl said nothing, and she did not yield up the letter, either.

"It's addressed to me, isn't it?" urged Cheatham in a crestfallen tone.

"Yes, but—Oh!" Just at that juncture an accommodating zephyr lifted the envelope from her fingers and tossed it out on the water, where a still more accommodating current bore it swiftly into the eddies.

Cheatham thrust his hands into his pockets and stood staring at her, mingled curiosity and alarm showing in his good-looking face.

"You—you've changed your mind," he said at last, very gravely, after his recent exuberance.

The guilty crimson flushed over Matilda's face, and without a word she turned and began to retrace her steps back toward the camp.

As they came in sight of the campers' tents, Cheatham paused and looked sternly into the face of the girl at his side.

"Mallory!" The exclamation was sharp, indignant, but Matilda's eyes lifted their sober curtains long enough to emit a lambent little flash that was nothing if not contradictory.

"If you care to come into the camp until I can change these rags," she said demurely. "I think—I think we can talk better."

Cheatham divested himself of his raincoat and left it on a bench in the yard. Inside he roamed about the little "reception parlor" of the tent, waiting, like a caged lion, for the girl to make her appearance.

She came in at last, gowned in some diaphanous white thing that Cheatham thought made her look exactly like a star floating in a gauzy silver cloud. She was smiling, and her eyes, as he held them in his own, were soft and dreamy with their subtle confession.

Cheatham reached forth eager arms to draw her into them, but the apologetic entrance of an ebony-faced individual caused him to reconsider for a moment.

"I begs pardon, but somebody wish to speak to Miss Driscoll on de 'phone."

"Be good enough," said Cheatham, "to tell the gentleman that Miss Driscoll is—is engaged."

When the door had been closed, humbly and obsequiously, he turned to Matilda for corroboration.

The next minute he was holding the white cloud against his breast, and the star seemed to have no objection to its new firmament.

HUN BOOBY TRAPS

Left When Armies Were Driven From France.

Detection of Contrivances Which Had No Part in Civilized Warfare Was Made Work of Special Organization.

Detection by British army investigators of German "booby traps" saved the lives of many an officer or man of the British armies during the period when the Germans were retreating from France.

"I am convinced," says one officer, "that we nipped many of the Hun's favorite plans by capturing near Bray a little factory where he made his 'booby traps.' When we occupied it we learned much from the partly completed traps we found lying about the place.

"One of them was an iron plate. This the wily Hun dropped in a roadway so that it would likely be trod upon by soldier or horse of our advancing troops. The plate was in two parts, with a spring inside, and usually contained a detonator connected with a heavy charge of explosive. When the weight of the foot was removed the spring slipped into place and exploded the detonator, and the damage was done.

"These spring detonators were the Germans' specialty. They consisted of a tube containing a little spring with a hook at one end. Attached to the hook was a string or wire connecting with the explosive charge. Any arrangement by which the spring could be distended and then suddenly contracted served to jerk the string, and the charge was exploded.

"One night I received a call from our lieutenant colonel who had spent the day directing movements from a recently captured German dugout. He told me he was nervous, and believed he was associating with a 'booby,' and asked me to send him a squad of engineers to look it over. I went myself.

"The colonel sat in the dugout, about ten feet down, on a chair by a table. Directly in front of the chair was a petrol can, and it was the can he feared. He had noticed it early in the morning when the dugout was first occupied, but had no time to examine it until evening. Then he found nothing, but he had a 'hunch' that it was a trap and wanted expert assistance.

"I dug a little trench around the can, but could find no wires, and then tapped it, but received no sound other than that which might come from any old empty can. There was nothing to do but open it, and, borrowing the colonel's can opener, I went at it as gingerly as I could.

"It was partly filled with about eight pounds of one of the most deadly powder explosives known to science. This I removed very carefully, and in the bottom of the can found the spring detonator. It had been fastened to the bottom of the can in such a way that if the can had been lifted from the floor of the dugout the charge would have exploded, and the colonel and his party would have been blown to bits.

"The colonel paled a little when I showed him just what he had been associating with all day, and very fervently thanked himself for obeying his 'hunch' to let that can alone."

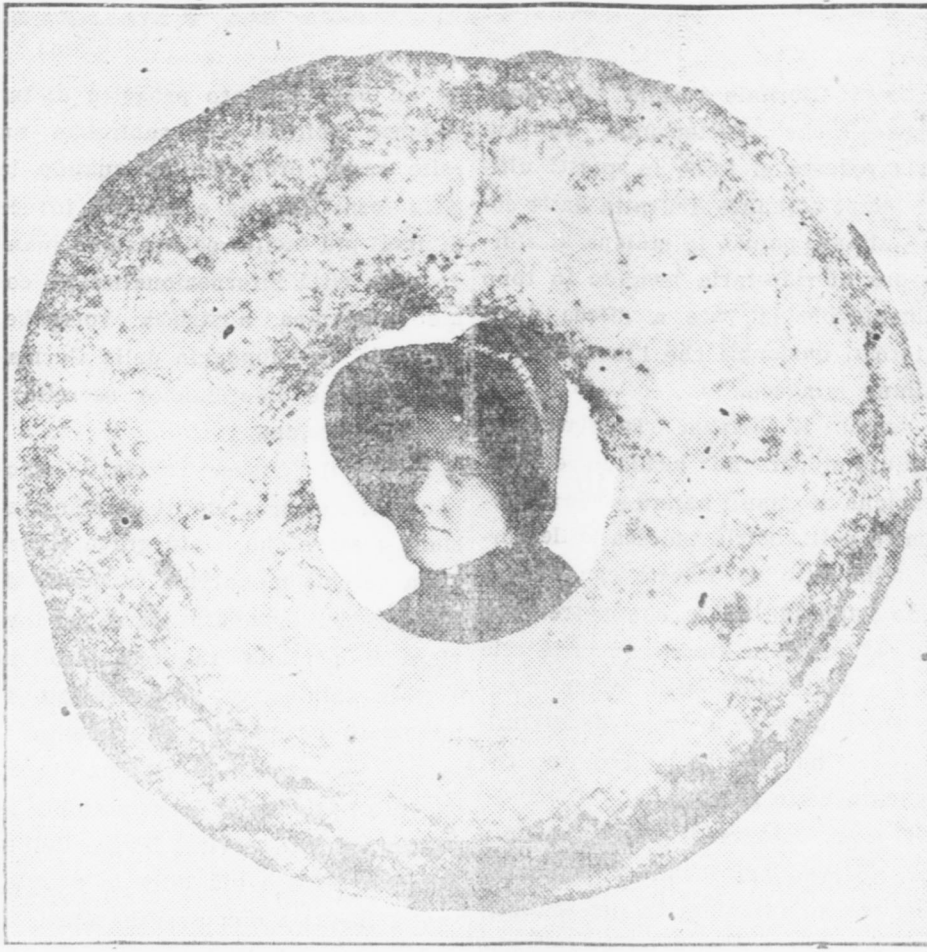
Jet.
If you have made the trip to the bottom of a coal mine and have seen how the black lumps are made ready for use, perhaps you know that jet, the shiny black substance that you see so often, made into pretty ornaments, beads, buttons, etc., is closely akin to coal. The history of the formation of jet is much like that of coal. Thousands of years ago, masses of wood were carried down into the sea by the rivers, and there waterlogged, it sank and became embedded in the mud. Pressure and heat and the salt water wrought the change in the wood. Even now traces of the wood structure can be detected in the jet itself. In years gone by jet used to be found in lumps off the coast of Yorkshire, the jet incased in shale known as jet-rock, washed up by the sea; but now that supply is not sufficient and jet has to be regularly mined. In Whitby, Yorkshire, the best jet is produced, but there are also important mines in France and Spain, and America, too, has quantities of the shale, though it is not systematically mined.

General Pershing's Religion.
General Pershing was understood to be a Presbyterian, but according to published reports, he has later been confirmed as a member of the Protestant Episcopal church. The Living Church, an organ of that faith, states that the confirmation service took place in France, and was conducted by Rt. Rev. Charles H. Brent, bishop of western New York. It is said that General Pershing desired to unite with the Episcopal church in memory of his wife, who was of that faith. She and their three daughters lost their lives in a fire at the Presidio military buildings at San Francisco, August 27, 1915.

Not Walking.
"Do your troubles make you walk the floor?"
"No," answered the irascible man. "That's the worst of it. My principal trouble is gout."

Real Philosophy.
"Can you see any reconciling factor at all in this increased tax on incomes?"
"Oh, yes; that I have an income to tax."

She Followed the Line We Sent Over the Rhine



The familiar figure in blue uniform and poke bonnet is back home to serve, after four years in khaki with the boys "Over There." Salvation Army lassies served old-fashioned American doughnuts in the front line trenches, and now that the war is over they will be found again in the slums and dark places of our great cities, ready to give a helping hand to men, women and children who are on the down grade. The Salvation Army Home Service Campaign for \$13,000,000 opens May 19, to last one week.

IN THE NIGHT

By JACK LAWTON.

Marcia, ready to turn out her light for the night, paused again, at sound of a strange, haunting cry. Regularly for three nights it had come echoing through the stillness. What could it be?

There was no other boarder upon the third floor of the boarding house. She had come to the city in a spirit of courage with "a heart for any fate," determined to do her best to become an illustrator.

Clad in her blue apron, sketching, and singing the while, she was more content in the big room on the empty third floor. But that cry left her vaguely troubled. Last night she had been sinking off into sleep when it sharply aroused her. Mrs. Shannon assured her in the morning that there were no boarders in the house beside those seen at table, yet Marcia could see that the question confused the landlady.

Now she determined to investigate the low moaning sound. Marcia found a small inner chamber, in the center of which, upon a crumpled bed, lay a child, blinking at her in surprise. He was a beautiful boy with dark, tear-stained eyes and golden curls.

"Oh!" he said, "you'd better shut the door quick before Mrs. Shannon comes. Or maybe you'd better go out. I've had the sickness that's catchin', you know, an' she put me up here, so the boarders wouldn't get scared an' go. Now—" the child's voice broke off in a wail, "the sickness has done something to my ear, an' it pains."

"You poor little thing," cried Marcia, the candle was on the old dresser now, and she was smoothing the boy's head.

"Who takes care of you, son?"
"No one," the child answered resignedly, "cept Mrs. Shannon when she has time. They's a good many stairs to climb, you know, an' Mrs. Shannon's pretty fat. When she can, she comes up. Now she's gone to bed."

"I never heard of such a thing," indignantly murmured Marcia; quilt and all she lifted the lad in her arms, rocking him gently in a broken arm-chair.

"Who are you, dear?" she asked, "and how do you come to be here?"
"I'm Ted," the boy replied. With a little grateful sigh he cuddled against her cheek. "My mother's in heaven. Father don't like me because she led to go when I came here. So he had me with Mrs. Shannon. Mrs. Shannon used to work for my mother." Ted explained, "before I came into the world."

Marcia held him closer to her heart tears filled her eyes.

"Oh!" she breathed, "the pity of it!" But Ted was rambling on.

"I've a nice daddy," he said; "he comes up here even when I'm sick. An' he brought me things, an' tomorrow he's going to bring a good doctor who doesn't scare little boys and who brings them candy."

"Indeed!" answered Marcia—her caustic tone escaped the child—"he does then have some idea of responsibility."

"What is daddy's name, Ted?" she asked.
"It's Mr. Langley," Ted responded. "Mrs. Shannon says daddy's her best boarder."

Marcia was staring straight ahead in the candle light. "Mr. Langley!" she gasped, and for a long time the two sat still. It was so hard to believe. Why—she had not known of John Langley's marriage—much less of his little neglected son. He, who had seemed to the lonely girl in the city so kind and manly, was but a poor thing after all.

"Mrs. Shannon's best boarder." A stab of pain shot through Marcia's

heart. She had been so strange and diffident among them all, and in so many ways he had helped her. Later, those evenings at the theater or the opera in his company had become her one looked-for pleasure.

Mrs. Shannon, who had vouched so emphatically for his worthiness, had forgotten to mention the fact of his injustice to his own child and the loss which had embittered him. And only last night—before the awakening of the cry which had led her to the truth, John Langley had asked Marcia to be his wife. She had not given him an answer, she wanted to wait—and make sure for them both. Sadly Marcia planned that answer. And then the candle flared as the bedroom door was softly opened.

Before her stood John Langley himself, he whom Ted's loyal heart had called his nice daddy.
"You!" the man exclaimed, his eyes lighted joyously. "So you found him Marcia, the poor little waif. He doesn't know that he is to undergo an operation tomorrow upon his ear. I'm going to stay and see Ted through. Motherless, with a heartless father roaming around the globe, he is in need of friends. I came on him quite accidentally and we've had secret meetings up here ever since. I was going to tell you about him, Marcia."

"But you—" murmured the girl perplexedly, "he calls you his daddy."
John Langley laughed. "It pleased Ted to adopt me," he explained. "Father doesn't like me," Ted said, "so I don't like father. You'll be my daddy."

Gently Marcia put her sleeping burden back in his bed, then she turned to the man with outstretched hands.
"John," she said, "you and I, we must both see Ted through."
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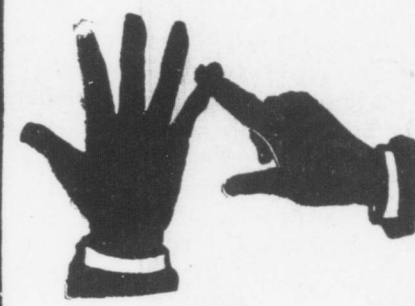


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In spite of the old adage to the contrary, some things done by halves are done most satisfactorily, as for example the much-used Quinsigamond bridge at Worcester, Mass. Here traffic suffered a minimum of interruption by completing and putting into use one longitudinal half of the new structure before the other half was built.

Little Things.
Life is made up of little things. It is but once in an age that occasion is offered for doing a great deed. True greatness consists in being great in little things.

Grandmother's Economy.
Another reason why your dear old grandmother didn't think she could afford silk stockings was because she thought she ought to wear six or seven petticoats.—Dallas News.

To Kill Plant Lice.
To kill insects on a cactus plant spray it with a very weak solution of alum—1½ to 2 per cent. This solution is said to be perfectly harmless to the plant but to kill the plant lice.

The First Gas Respirator.
The first apparatus to enable persons to enter a noxious inflammable atmosphere was called an "aerophore" and was the invention of M. Denayrouse, a French inventor and scientist. It was first tested at Chatham, England, 44 years ago, and was reported successful. Vast improvements on this device, which comprised an air-pump, lamp and flexible tubing, have since been made and these have saved the lives of hundreds in mine accidents and other disasters where rescue work would be impossible without their use.

The Village Stocks.
The curious old habit of punishing offenders by placing them in the public stocks seems very far in the shadowy past, yet a number of these old wooden machines may still be seen in England. Usually they stand, or they stood, on the village green, near the church; and it is not such a long while since stocks ceased to be used in the land.

Cathartic Thought.
The question is divided if it is a good or bad thought.