

A Clever Friend

By ALVAH JORDAN GARTH

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He was not her lover—she wished he was—only so far a pleasant, friendly acquaintance. If he cherished the past as did Nellie Alcott, then Ransom Drury thought of her very often. She was expecting to see him again that day, and Nellie flushed consciously as she comprehended that she had taken unusual pains to look her best. She expected him any time after 10 o'clock, and surely before noon, for it was vital that he should appear between those hours.

Nellie was in charge of the office of John Drake, who conducted a real estate, loan and insurance office. In addition to this he did some private banking, and had just put in a safety deposit vault. Mr. Drake was absent for the day, and Nellie was alone in the office.

Ransom Drury had left Hopedale two months previous to settle up a claim in the far West. Mr. Drake had received a letter from him the day previous, stating that he was en route for home and would reach there the morning of the seventh. It was now the seventh, and it was now eleven o'clock, and Nellie began to worry with a good reason!

And this was the reason: The uncle of Ransom had died and had left him what estate he possessed. It included bonds, mortgages and some scattered claims. There was no cash, and to defray the expenses current with his death and cover the necessary western journey, Ransom had borrowed one thousand dollars from a grasping money loaner named Jasper Thrall. The loan was for sixty days, due by noon on the seventh. High interest rates had been charged and the collateral security had been placed in trust with Mr. Drake. Nellie was well aware of the fact that Jasper Thrall was just the man to take snap judgment on the loan, were opportunity offered, which meant that he would be able to fasten his mercenary clutches upon securities worth ten times the amount of the loan. Suddenly the telephone rang. Nellie nearly dropped the receiver and her heart began to beat tumultuously.

"This Mr. Drake's office?" came the challenge from the other end of the line. "Yes? All right—this is Ransom Drury. Say, train stalled at Borden. I've got to take the trolley. It won't bring me to Hopedale before half past twelve. I have the money to meet the Thrall note. At all hazards, protect it."

Protect it! How willingly would Nellie have discounted her salary for the rest of her life to do that! She paled at her helplessness. Twenty-five minutes of twelve! Oh! If Jasper Thrall should come to demand his pound of flesh! Alas! Nellie turned pale and shuddered. A glance into the hall outside showed the money shark approaching.

Nellie thought hard. Had the thousand dollars been in the money drawer she would have unhesitatingly employed it to defeat this bird of evil omen. Forty minutes required by Drury to reach Hopedale, and within twenty Thrall would make his demand! An inspiration came to Nellie.

"Have you seen the new safety deposit compartment, Mr. Thrall?" she asked with elusive sweetness.

"Why, no," came the reply, with another glance at the clock.

"Let me show it to you," and Nellie led her prospective victim through a little passageway and stood aside as she reached a door made of iron bars.

"Well! well! this is quite an improvement."

"Oh, dear!" cried Nellie, as the door banged shut, locking itself. "The key! Mr. Drake has one."

"I say, let me out!" ordered Thrall. "I must serve this legal notice."

But Nellie fled. She closed the corridor door, she sank into a chair well nigh to the point of collapse.

"Oh, what a dreadful thing have I done!" she gasped. Then she counted the minutes. There came to her shrieking hearing the dull echoes of shouts and the shaking of the metal barrier. The town bell boomed out twelve hoarse strokes. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty minutes after twelve! A step she recognized, and, brisk, smiling, tanned with travel, but bright-eyed as ever, Ransom Drury crossed the threshold.

He shook hands with Nellie with a more than brotherly ardor. He was all business. Then! "Am I in time?" At his first question Nellie, excited, trembling, told him of the situation.

"Leave the money," she fluttered. "Oh, you jewel!" exclaimed Ransom, and his eyes snapped with appreciative admiration, and as he departed Nellie went to the vault compartment and unlocked its door.

"Fine work, this!" growled the old money grabber. "Long time in finding the key, it appears to me. Here, accept this paper and hand me the Drury collateral," but Nellie, instead, tendered a package of bank bills.

"What's this!" fairly yelled Thrall. "Oh, Mr. Drury has paid in the note money," said Nellie, without a quiver or further explanation, and the discomfited Thrall went his way, never suspecting the trick that had been played upon him.

"I need just such a clever little business woman to guard and bless my life!" Ransom Drury declared, when he saw Nellie home that same afternoon, and she was glad and proud because he said it.

GREAT EVENT FOR MOSLEMS

Gala Day When the "Procession of the Holy Carpet" Leaves Cairo for City of Mecca.

Always picturesque, Cairo is never more fascinating than during the "Procession of the Holy Carpet." In the bazaars we watch the barefooted workmen embroidering, holding the cloth in their toes, which appear to be prehensile, or watch them go to the nearest mosque to bathe five times a day. As many times a day also from the minarets of mosques the muezzins are reminding the natives of the approaching festival, and that "God is great, there is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet. Come to Prayer."

Howling dervishes are dancing in the mosque near the Square of Sitten Hasan, while devout Moslems are engaged in eventide prayer on their housetops. Water carriers are on the way to the Nile for water, or are bearing wine in their goatskins the same as in Biblical times, while aged men in the mosques are appareled exactly as in Abraham's day.

The streets are filled with soldiers, while thousands of civilians attend the ceremonial held in the sacred prophetic enclosure in the great square near the citadel. The enclosure is a pyramidal wooden structure covered with embroidered stuffs emblazoned with gold embroidery and quotations from the Koran. Here the people receive the blessings of the prophet, together with special dispensations and sacred talismans.

The khedive and his dignitaries are all present to formally start the caravan and its military escort toward Mecca, in far-off Arabia. The people press forward to touch the sacred inclosure, kissing it with fervor. Women let down their shawls and face veils from the windows, as the procession at last starts. Following it are the pilgrims who will accompany the carpet to the sanctuary in the mosque at Mecca, and who will return later with the same caravan to Cairo, bearing the carpet of the previous year.

Marriage in Bulgaria.

Since Bulgaria's unconditional surrender to the allies the men of her armies have been straggling homeward and many weddings are being celebrated in consequence.

Bulgarian methods of entertaining before the wedding do not differ materially from those of other nations except that the bride instead of having her trousseau carefully put away in the "hope chest," from which she only takes it for the privileged few, hangs it up on cords which are stretched across the main room of the house. Here it is viewed on the Friday before the wedding by all the matrons of the town, while the bride and the maidens dance before the door and remain there until the matrons have given their full criticism of each garment, and if they disapprove of them the girls must help the bride make them over until "suitable."

Instead of rice, corn as an emblem of plenty, is showered over the bride and groom, who are escorted to their home with many ceremonies and they are virtually imprisoned within its doors.

New Uses of Raw Products.

The Weltmarkt directs attention to new uses of some raw products. In Holland a useful gum or paste is being made from garlic. The bulbs are pressed and the juice or fluid matter so obtained is thickened by inspissation. A good substitute for cork is obtained from certain fungi, which are dried and ground, mixed with cement and consolidated by pressure. In Norway a process has been patented to enable carbide to be used for driving motors. In Denmark a company has been floated to make briquettes from manure. These have a higher heat value than peat. Experiments are being made to use chalk marl, especially that which comes from the Limburg mines, as a manure.

Typhoon Hurt Coconut Trees.

The Christmas typhoon which swept over the southern Philippine islands did considerable damage to the coconut plantations. Trees, especially those along the seashore and places most open to the wind, were either blown down or weakened to such a degree that unless the affected groves are cleaned up and taken care of, the trees still standing are doomed, but for another reason, says the bureau of agriculture. The fallen trunks will become breeding places of all manner of beetles, borers and other coconut destroying pests and diseases. The weakened trees, unable to fight these odds, will sooner or later succumb and thus the farmers will suffer more losses.

Got Him at Last.

He was a large, dapple-gray, sensible-looking horse. It was his task to pull a baker's wagon from house to house in a district on the North side, as the driver dodged in and out of the houses with his basket of bread and cakes.

"Fritz," called out the driver as he ran down the porch steps, intending that as a notice to his faithful friend to move on down the street. The horse did not move.

"Charlie," spoke up the driver again, and the old dapple-gray stepped off promptly.—Indianapolis News.

Uncle Eben.

"Owin' to de way smarter men can I is got mixed up in arguments," said Uncle Eben. "Whenever anybody 'splains de league o' nations to me, I jes' says 'yessir' an' goes on 'bout my business."

A Wild Adventure

By WALTER JOSEPH DELANEY

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About once a year Nancy, wife of Aleck Forbes, had "a tantrum." Looking back over a full decade, Aleck could recall many of these fitful spells. For a day or two Nancy was unmanageable, complaining, nagging. Suddenly the spell would disappear and Nancy would be "good as pie!" She never expressed penitence, and the renewed sun of her graciousness made Aleck forget to allude to her spasm of ill nature.

"I don't dare to face her!" he groaned. "She's due for her regular outbreak. If not, what I have done will hasten it. Oh, dear! The loss of the two hundred dollars worries me but when I think of what Nancy will say about it I'm scared!"

This had happened: Aleck had collected two hundred dollars. Nancy knew all about the transaction and was to have half of the sum to buy a new set of furniture. About four o'clock Aleck had come home, found her absent and had loitered about town.

Returning, he had made an appalling discovery. He had lost the money! Hastily he retraced his way but found no trace of the missing roll of bank notes. His heart sank to his boots. He dared not face Nancy. A new suggestion came to him. He would take the first train for Adrian, where lived a brother who might loan him two hundred dollars, but the last local for the day was gone when he reached the railroad station.

As he passed the village garage he recognized a farmer just ready to start out. The man could take him as far as the cross roads, four miles from Adrian. The automobile was an open roadster, the evening was chilly and Aleck had felt his chronic hoarseness coming on by the time he reached the cross roads. He was stiff and shivering as he started on his long walk. This side of Adrian, about two miles, Aleck made out the lights of the little town of Leesville. He started a short cut in the dark, got mired in a swampy stretch, fell over a great log and lay insensible for nearly half an hour.

When Aleck regained consciousness he could not find his hat, he limped from a sprained ankle, he could feel a great abrasion on one side of his face and, a thoroughly wretched and nerve-racked being, he reached the road to be nearly run down by an automobile containing some wild spirits bound in the opposite direction. He had not proceeded half a mile when he came across a hat, evidently blown off the head of one of the hilarious crowd. It was a soldier's hat, with the regulation band about it. Aleck was glad to put it on. Then he made for the gleaming village lights. With chattering teeth and shaking limbs he made for a brightly lighted room at the rear of what seemed to be the town billiard parlor. Half a dozen young fellows stared at him as he bolted in upon them, craving warmth and well nigh exhausted.

Aleck must have fainted away, for when he again opened his eyes some one was pouring a powerful stimulant down his throat. A sense of rare relief and comfort came over his befogged consciousness.

"He's a soldier," spoke an unsteady voice, "you can see that by his hat. Say, fellows, our expected chum from the front hasn't shown up. We'll show the honors of war to this hero, eh? Here, old fellow, we're going to banquet you. See? Up to the groaning table with the victim," and Aleck was carried to a chair before a bewildering supper layout. He tried to speak. He could not. Only a hoarse monotone responded to the effort. His old ailment was upon him, he had temporarily lost his voice.

"Hey! give me a text for a speech," nudged the lively young fellow beside him, amid the jangling of glasses. "Voice gone, my friends, evidently from exposure in the trenches. Here, write something," and given pencil and paper, Aleck wrote:

"Treated rough."

"An! my friends," cried the orator grandiloquently, "they treated him rough over there!"

"Lost in a swamp, crippled!"

"Think of his sufferings in behalf of his beloved country! He's getting another chill. Prime him up with another dose!"

Now Aleck could never remember now he got back home, but, carrying the banquet bouquet, he entered the house the next morning. Nancy stared at him, astonished.

"Flowers for you," croaked Aleck.

"You've been drinking!" said Nancy seriously.

"They poured it down me. I wasn't responsible. I lost that \$200—"

"Well, I found it in the kitchen. I've taken my share, yours is in the clock. Now give an account of yourself."

Sobered Aleck. It delighted him to hear the merry laughter of Nancy as he detailed his adventures.

"So you were afraid of me!" she said.

"Well, after this, when I feel a spell coming on, I'll go and stay with my sister till it's over. You poor man! To fall in with that bibulous crowd of reckless rolstersers. You must sign a pledge as an evidence of good faith, and next time you feel afraid of me come and tell me your ridiculous story over again, and its very funniness will make me good natured!"

THAT ROCKING-CHAIR SHRINE

Place Where Mother Sat Is Forever Sacred in the Memories of Her Children.

By the window in the sitting room stood the old chair. It was "mother's chair"—otherwise it would have been just a chair. With mother in it, however, it became a shrine to which flocked her devoted little worshippers.

In the rocker, as we sat on mother's knee or at her side—for the chair was generously made—the bumped head and the bruised heart were healed, says a writer in the People's Home Journal. Frightened, we found there a safe retreat, a refuge from every harm. At night the bedtime story was told to the rhythm of its soothing swing. Joys, sorrows, all were brought to its encircling arms. Mother's chair, rocking, rocking, rocking by the window.

The old chair, we think, had a hand in the making of character. Maybe it was more effective in this service than we realize. Seated in it, we watched the needle in quick, nimble fingers, glinting in and out among the frayed edges tirelessly; we heard our childish perplexities explained over and over again, with no hint of vexation; we sang the songs which taught us some of the beauty of life; we listened to stories of bravery and truth. Industry, patience, beauty, courage, honesty—they can be traced back through a golden pathway straight to mother's chair.

The old chair has seen valiant service. Old-fashioned, scarred and worn, it still stood in the familiar place by the window. Why is it not refinished—the scars smoothed out, the worn places covered? What! Cover the marks which little hands have made, the worn spot where mother's tired head rested, the scars made by tiny, restless feet? Such a question came from one who did not understand. To him the old chair was mere wood and paint—just a piece of furniture, not a shrine.

We do not say it aloud—our greatest longings are not spoken—but sometimes when life gets tangled we find ourselves going again to the old chair to have the knots untied. When grief comes we sob it out there. When joy comes we run to tell it there. When we fall, when we win, our thoughts take us to the old chair. And at night the little hissing prayers come begging to be said, and we send them, along with our grown-up petitions, up to heaven by way of that sacred shrine.

Simple Resistance Units.

To a British firm goes the credit for introducing a very simple type of resistance unit which possesses numerous and important advantages. The wire or strip member is supported on a single rod passing through the center section of each leg of the zig-zagged wire or strip. Among the special advantages claimed are: Very large radiating surface for a given capacity; small weight for a given capacity; absolute freedom for expansion; owing to the large surface and small bulk of metal they cool very quickly; they are absolutely unaffected by vibration or jolts; units can be run red-hot without danger of sagging; repairs can be effected on separate units; tapping can be taken off anywhere along the center clamp; the number of units being small compared with a grid resistance of equal capacity, there are not many joints to cause trouble.—Scientific American.

Congress Shoes Come Back.

There has been a very decided revival of the old "congress gaiter," with its elastic insert at the sides, which were very generally worn more than a quarter of a century ago. The explanation rests in the fact that American shoes are now being extensively worn by the natives of Japan. The more rapid adoption of the western styles of lace and button shoes is made difficult by the native custom that requires that shoes be removed before a person enters a home or inn. In some cases it is even required that the shoes be removed or at least covered with cloth protectors before entering shops, theaters and similar public buildings. This custom has led to the quite general adoption of the old-fashioned but convenient "congress" boot by those who wear occidental footwear during business hours.

Danger in Imported Earth.

For a long time a great many ships coming from Europe into the port of New York have been dumping earth ballast along the shores of East river, Hudson river, and elsewhere around the bay. This is a source of risk of the entry of undesirable plants and plant pests, in the opinion of the United States department of agriculture, and an inquiry has been started to determine the extent of this risk and to provide safeguards against it. There is a possibility of the introduction of soil-infecting diseases, injurious nematodes, and hibernating insects, any of which, unless preventive measures were taken, might spread over the country or considerable parts of it.

National Forest Area Reduced.

The president on February 25, 1919, signed a proclamation eliminating 31,779 acres from the Helena national forest, Montana. The lands affected are situated along the exterior boundaries of the forest and a large portion of the lands excluded are already in private ownership.

This action is based on the recommendation made by the secretary of agriculture as a result of the land classification done by the forest service. It was found that the lands had practically no value for national forest purposes.

The Helpers

By T. B. ALDERSON

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The young man at the drug store window stood gazing reflectively out upon the rain-swept street. It was a wretched locality and those hurrying by were manifestly of the poorer class. He was Adrian Howard, a lawyer of five years standing, and he had wandered casually to the neighborhood because he had been named as a candidate for the judgeship on a new reform ticket.

A survey of the field had convinced Adrian Howard that the opposition controlled a large majority in the district. For all that he had become interested in viewing the conditions about him. Idleness and crime went hand in hand and poverty and hunger haunted the great rows of cheap fire-trap tenements. A little girl, ragged and unkempt and dripping with rain, her broken shoes soaked, hugging close a tattered shawl and chilled and shivering, attracted his attention by her forlorn appearance. She handed a slip of paper to the druggist and sat down wearily upon a stool to await the preparation of a prescription she had brought. When the clerk appeared from behind the case with a bottle, she voiced weakly:

"Please, sir, for Mr. Gray, who is very sick, and Miss Arline says she'll pay you next week."

The druggist drew back the extended bottle. "You'll have to find the cash for this prescription," he said crossly.

"Yes, sir, please, sir, but Mr. Gray is very sick, and Miss Arline will surely pay you."

"Well, let some of his friends provide the money. He's done enough for them when he was well."

The little child began to cry, bound by strands of loyalty and love to the sick man. Adrian stepped forward, asked the charge, paid it, and the little one directed at him a grateful glance, seized his hand in an impetuous way and kissed it. The druggist looked half-shamed and said apologetically:

"Don't think me hard-hearted, but if you should see my books you would understand that I am well near to bankruptcy from trusting these unfortunate people about here. The Grays deserve a heap, but I have done my limit in helping them out. Old William Gray has been a kind of world father to the poor and distressed, but I fancy he and his daughter have fallen on hard lines."

"Wait," spoke Adrian, as the child gathered the rag of a shawl over her shivering shoulders, "maybe I am going your way and you can share my umbrella."

It was thus that Adrian Howard came to know the Grays, father and daughter. It was thus that for the first time in his life he got down to the core of the problems of the poor and unfortunate. The little girl had led him to a tenement in the poorest part of the district, and in two clean but poorly furnished rooms he found an aged man, feeble, fevered and wasted away, and his daughter, a girl of about twenty, hovering over him like some ministering angel.

The scenes Adrian had passed through in reaching the place had placed heart sympathy and an open purse at any call that might arise, but he dared not even suggest charity to the dignified old man or his daughter, in those faces he traced the evidence of undoubted gentility. Adrian awkwardly told of a passing interest in the rain-battered child, asked if he could be of any assistance, and departed reluctantly, the sweet, patient face of Arline Gray indelibly impressed upon his memory.

He found an excuse for gazing upon it again, and in cementing a closer acquaintance with Mr. Gray. The latter was the idol of the more sedate class of workers in the district. His skill as a fair artist had decreased as he grew older, but he received occasional orders, and until he fell ill he had managed to earn a living, his daughter co-operating with some pastel work for the big city stores.

Arline did not resent the offer of some sickroom delicacies for the invalid, and the old artist was prevailed upon to accept a small loan as against a sum owing him from a slow client. Adrian, as Mr. Gray grew stronger, brought him some paying commissions from friends. He learned that the old man was guide and adviser to several humble neighborhood clubs and his word went very far with his loyal following.

For two weeks Adrian did not see much of the Grays. He was engrossed in his campaign among voters in higher circles. The slum wards his friends had little hope of, and he himself was fairly astounded when, the morning after election, he read his name among the successful judicial candidates.

"And the slum wards did it," announced a friend. "Why, half the district went for you."

William Gray had done it, and Arline, and little Maggie Casey, and her friends, and theirs. In his quiet, forceful way the old artist had convinced his following that the upright young lawyer was a man of and for the people.

There were better days in store for the poor and lowly, for Adrian Howard became their champion, and brighter days for the old artist, for Adrian saw to it that he was provided with a studio, and happier days for charming, faithful Arline, for she became mistress of his home and heart.



ROADS IN NATIONAL FORESTS

New Law Makes Available for Expenditure \$9,000,000 for Roads and Trails.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

The development of the national forest road systems is given great impetus by the terms of the post office appropriations act which the president has signed. Besides increasing by \$200,000,000 the total fund available under the federal aid road act, the new law makes available for expenditure by the secretary of agriculture \$9,000,000 for roads and trails.

The law also authorizes the secretary of war to transfer to the secretary of agriculture, material, equipment and supplies suitable for highway improvement and not needed by the war department. While most of this will be distributed among the highway commissions of the states for use on federal aid road projects, not to exceed 10 per cent may be reserved by the secretary of agriculture for use in building natural forest roads or other roads constructed under his direct supervision.

The \$9,000,000 fund may be used for maintenance as well as survey and construction. The new legislation, like the federal aid road act, authorizes the building of roads and trails necessary for the use and development of national forest resources or desirable for the proper administration, protection, and improvement of such forest, or co-operative local contributions can be obtained, but in addition it contains a new feature of much importance.

This new feature permits the secretaries of agriculture without the co-operation of local officials to build and maintain "any road or trail within a national forest which he finds necessary for the proper administration, protection and improvement of such forest, or which in his opinion is of national importance." In the view of forestry officials this law is the most important step ever taken for rapid development of national forest roads system, and will be of inestimable benefit to the local public.

"The measure gives us much broader scope for a fully developed program than we have had before," says Henry S. Graves, chief of the forest service, in commenting on the new law. "Un-



Good Road in One of Our National Forests.

der the federal aid road act we had for roads within or partly within the forests, \$1,000,000 a year, available until expended. Owing to the war, which practically halted the work, we have an accumulated balance of \$2,500,000 unexpended and another \$1,000,000 which will become available July 1.

"This legislation will not only make it easier to protect the forests without costly expenditures to fight bad fires in inaccessible localities, but will also help enormously the many small communities and scattered settlers in and near the forests who now suffer for lack of roads. It will also enable the construction of important trunk-line roads crossing the mountains, with suitable provision of subsidiary roads. One result unquestionably will be a marked development of recreational use of these great national playgrounds with their wealth of too little known attractions. Altogether, the opening up of the forests to more complete and varied use by the public, which is the fundamental object of their administration, will be tremendously advanced."

Under the law preference is given to the employment of honorably discharged soldiers, sailors and marines for the required labor.

KEYSTONERS VOTE FOR ROADS

Out of 504,029 Votes Recently Cast 384,780 Were in Favor of \$50,000,000 Bond Issue.

Out of 504,029 votes cast in the recent Pennsylvania election on the \$50,000,000 bond issue for good roads, 384,780 were in favor of the bond issue. Pennsylvania is over two to one for proper, permanent highways, and is willing to pay for them.