

Forty-one

By EVELYN GILL KLAHR.

Copyright, The Frank A. Munsey Co.

Mr. Johnson Bennett nodded to himself most hearty approval of the young man who had just left his office.

He had seen to it personally that young Chapwell be promoted from kitchen utensils in the basement of the Johnson Bennett department store to be floor-walker of ladies' suits on the third.

He knew, too, that young Chapwell wouldn't linger long there—linger long anywhere, for that matter—on his persistent upward climb. It wouldn't be long before he was buyer; nor would he stop there, either.

Young, Chapwell, too, was confident of all this, and more, as he walked home that evening to his boarding-house.

But that did not in the least interfere with the fact that his present promotion was very good news—news that couldn't be carried in a heart without making it swell somewhat.

But what is the use of good news unless there is some one to whom to tell it?

That's what young Chapwell thought. So he started out early next morning, that he might stop and tell Kittles about it.

Kittles, of course, was already in his little antiques shop.

He was giving the place its morning sweep when young Chapwell arrived, brushing up a little of the flour dust from under carved tables and from between mahogany chair-legs.

"You don't tell me!" Kittles exclaimed, smiling his wrinkly, neighborly smile at young Chapwell's news, for Kittles had brought to New York exactly the same neighborly heart that years ago, back home, had been so concerned about old lady Cooper's sick cow or Nathan Picken's new barn.

"You don't tell me! Why it don't seem more than a jiffy ago since you was an independent, uppish little chap, just startin' in bein' a cash-boy! You're like Ira Briggs, back home. He started out sweepin' up in Al Hastings's feed and grain store. That was fifteen years ago. Now he's got a third interest in the store. Where're you goin' to stop?"

He beamed affectionately on the youth and then added: "Bet you'll go and get married now."

Young Chapwell regarded Kittles with candid, boyish eyes. "No, I'm not goin' to get married," he gravely assured Kittles. "Yes, you will," old Kittles insisted. "And I tell you what: you come to me when you set up housekeepin'. There's a lot of good things I've kep' out of sight, savin' 'em for my neighbors. Neighbors come first."

Young Chapwell moved toward the door. "But I'm not," he protested. Kittles laughed scornfully. "Don't you tell me," he said.

Young Chapwell looked very grave as he walked down the street.

As a matter of fact, he always intended to marry when he reached that particular salary, and here was the salary and yet no girl.

But it was no use. And, fortunately, that first morning in the new department he had no time to brood over it, for a special reduction sale of fall suits was advertised.

Young Chapwell was too busy getting the stock arranged and the sale started to give even a word of instruction to Number Forty-One, Miss Everman, the saleslady starting new that morning.

Miss Murdock, the head saleslady, had, however, reassured him on that score, and had promised to have an eye to the new one herself.

The morning was half over before he really saw Forty-One, and then he caught sight of her standing with Murdock over by the glass-case where the high-priced suits were kept.

And oh, what a girl!

Sweeter and younger and dearer than ever he had dared to hope! The dressiest and most coiffured ladies on the floor became nonentities beside her in her plain little dark blue serge with its white collar.

But the morning wasn't offering him leisure to marvel at his miracle. Indeed, that very moment there entered a stout, peremptory matron with three snobbish-looking misses in her charge. "Forty-one!" he called.

She looked at him but made no move. Apparently she had forgotten her number. Poor little thing! She didn't belong in a place like this, anyhow.

He motioned for her. Her eyes opened a little wider, but still she did not come. He motioned again, and this time she came, a deep flush mounting to her cheeks and a queer, little one-sided smile on her lips.

"Did you want me?" she asked.

"This lady will show you what you want, madam. The special sample suits? Right over there."

A few minutes later he made a point of passing that way again to see how she was making out, and was tenderly amused to hear how bravely she was recommending the garments in Miss Murdock's own special manner.

"That fits you lovely. Perfectly lovely, lady. Believe me, madam, I'd never want you to take it if it didn't. Presently Miss Murdock, a blue velvet costume thrown over her arm, came back to the glass-case of the ex-

pensive suits, gave a bewildered glance round, caught sight of Forty-One with her customers, gasped, and said—young Chapwell heard her distinctly—"Oh, my glory!"

It irritated him exceedingly to see how she stood and stared at Forty-One. The girl was doing splendidly, young Chapwell told himself. And suppose she didn't make a sale?

What of it? Murdock needn't think she could get naggy about it. She'd better be careful.

When the peremptory matron and the three snobbish misses left without buying he managed to be near to give her a friendly smile. She was standing and looking a little dejectedly at the array of suits scattered over chairs.

"That's all right," he assured her kindly. "How 'em on and get ready for the next one. Better luck next time."

A few seconds later, from another part of the floor, he caught at the re-entrance of Miss Murdock as he saw her join Forty-One and talk long and excitedly with her.

"She'd better let her alone," he muttered to himself.

Then he saw Miss Murdock begin to explain to her about charge accounts and credit slips, and felt easier.

But when shortly after, that head saleslady motioned to him that the stout matron who had gone out without purchasing had been one of her best customers, and other seasons had often bought as many as four suits in one afternoon, why then he couldn't even trust himself to reply.

It was surprising how many opportunities the day offered for talking with her.

First of all, he discovered on a chair over by the glass-case of the expensive suits a soft little velvet hat and a blue serge coat in a heap, and he knew in a thrilled instant where they belonged.

"Forty-One," he called sternly.

And when she came he pointed a reproachful finger at the heap, but in spite of himself he couldn't keep his eyes stern; they kept laughing in tender amusement at her.

Forty-One flushed adorably and picked up the coat and hat.

"Never, in all my experience in this store—" he began, genuinely trying to be stern.

"I don't know where to put them," she interrupted.

"You certainly must have been told," he chided her. "Take them to Miss Murdock and she will show you."

And as he walked on his eyes still refused to fill in line with his dignity.

Again she came to him to say that the \$18.75 suits were going pretty fast and Miss Murdock wanted to know where there any more in stock.

"No," he told her, a little dizzy over the joy of talking to her again. "I telephoned not five minutes ago."

"But people will keep asking for them," she protested. "Couldn't you—couldn't we reduce some of the fifteen-dollar suits to eighteen seventy-five?"

Not until she laughed did it strike him funny. "You've got a lot to learn," he said.

Then they both looked each other full in the face and laughed and laughed—silently, of course, but with convulsive shoulders, until young Chapwell felt that never before in his life had he been so deliciously and intimately well acquainted with any one.

But in thinking it over afterward he didn't feel very sure why they had laughed, because it really wasn't very funny, after all; just \$15 suits reduced to \$18.75.

She had always something to tell him whenever he came near.

She had almost lost her life in trying to keep a re-haired lady from buying a mulberry suit; and didn't he think she ought to discourage the middle-aged, stout ones from buying the very tight skirts?

And when they looked rather foolish, ought she to let them buy the draped skirts that were sure to go out before another season?

And weren't they having a good day of it? He could scarcely trust himself to answer that.

Their relations had traveled so amazingly for this day, with only chances and smiles and a bare handful of words for milestones, that he was awed with the wonder of it and, consequently, more and more concerned over her white tiredness.

"She's not used to it," he thought. "Poor little kid! And just as soon as I decently can—"

He found that he wasn't the only one that kept watching her.

During the day he saw the saleswomen in little groups staring at her, and was annoyed with the curiosity or jealousy, or whatever it was, that prompted it.

He found himself under observation, too; and more than often met stares that were curious and amused.

For himself, he didn't mind— he had encountered a little of that every time he had gone to a new department—but he was indignant for Forty-One's sake.

The worst thing of all happened right after lunch. He had felt, rather than seen, a new epidemic of excitement suddenly spread over the department, and his eye, searching the cause, had found Mr. Bennett himself, standing there on the floor, staring, staring, staring at Forty-One.

Whether the girl was aware of it or not couldn't be told, for she went right on showing twelve dollar suits to an undecided, shabby, middle-aged customer.

Young Chapwell walked away with an angry scowl.

Bennett himself! Bennett, Bennett, who owned the whole place! He didn't pretend to understand, but he didn't like it.

He wished he could take her away that very evening—but he supposed people had to know each other a few days before that sort of thing.

He begrudged even those few days. Then when closing time came she sought him out to say "Good-by"; and that, he knew, must be quaintly and dearly like her.

"Good-by," he said; and hoped she knew how much more than "Good-by" he was really saying.

She took a deep breath and smiled up to him. "Good-by! Haven't we had a glorious day?"

Then she was gone, but he knew that she did know.

And all the way home he was weaving vivid, wonderful dreams that became more real every minute.

So he stopped in at Kittles's dusty, cluttered store, this time not because Kittles was a good neighbor-soul, but now because the dusty contents of the store held for him a new and mysterious—these were the things that he had made a home.

Kittles shook a coquettish finger as he noted Chapwell's new interest. "Aha! You ARE goin' to get married, ain't you?"

"Yes, I am," young Chapwell replied with his usual frankness.

"Well, well, well," Kittles mused. Then with a sudden air of mystery he went to the back of the store and presently appeared with a pink-headed, gold-edged tea-set which he impressively displayed on the counter.

"Jinks! That's some class!" Chapwell breathed with admiration.

"I've been savin' that for a bridal couple," Kittles confided, "and I'll make you a wedding present of that for ten dollars."

If young Chapwell didn't reply at once it was because he was caught with a vision of her ecstasy over them. Dear little kid! Guess she'd open her eyes some at a tea-set like that!

Kittles misinterpreted his silence. "No, sir! I am going to make it eight," he corrected himself. "That's how big a fool I am over bridal couples."

Besides the tea-set, young Chapwell bought her a work-box and a tea-kettle and a gilt frame mirror.

It was not until he was about to leave that he saw the little mahogany rocker, which Kittles assured him was the best veneered rocker in the place.

It wasn't the veneering or the finish that caught young Chapwell's fancy, but rather a picture in his mind of that chair, by a window, and an eager girl waiting, watching—for—HIM!

With the exception of sixty-five cents in small change, young Chapwell had already emptied his pockets, but Kittles promised on his honor and under no circumstances whatsoever to sell it to any one else.

"Give my best to your missus," Kittles called facetiously as young Chapwell left.

"Thank you," young Chapwell responded gravely.

He could scarcely wait to get back to the store next morning to see her. Arrived there, he eagerly sought the face of each entering saleslady. She was late. Very late. Even by eight-thirty she had not come.

He went to Miss Murdock. "Where is Miss Everman?" he demanded.

Miss Murdock grinned in evident enjoyment and pointed to the tall blonde with the unpleasant, bold eye.

"I mean Forty-one," he corrected.

"That's her."

"But where is—" He stopped, stammering.

"That young lady you was calling Forty-one"—with what glee she rubbed it in—"yesterday happened to be Miss Minerva Bennett, and she was selecting a hundred-dollar velvet costume from her father's store, though she most generally has all her gowns made in Paris, as was that very dress she had on yesterday. And her father gave her a third interest in the store on her eighteenth birthday, and besides when her mother died she got a fortune which she couldn't spend if she was to take all her time to it."

He remembered how he had pictured her ecstasy over the tea-set—she, who could have bought out Kittles with a little of her loose change!

"She'll think she's dreamin' fairy stories!" he quoted himself bitterly.

None of these excuses did he make even in his own heart.

With a dull apathy he remembered the gilt mirror and the work-box and the tea-kettle.

He remembered, too, the veneered mahogany rocker at Kittles's—the one that was to have stood by the window.

That night after supper he walked wearily around to Kittles's to tell him not to save the rocker.

So immersed was he in his heart-aching gloom that he didn't hear his landlady from her doorway call, "Hi, Mr. Chapwell!"

Nor, of course, her subsequent assurance to the slim young girl in dark blue who stood on her doorstep, "Hurry on, miss! You'll catch him easy."

But it was not easy to catch him, though the girl in dark blue hurried and hurried and hurried.

Now and then, when the passers-by were not noticing too much, she took little running steps, but even then she did not turn in Kittles's door.

She slipped in the door, too, and stood within, leaning against it, too breathless for the moment to speak.

"I thought I'd never catch up," she gasped, her boyish eyes smiling into his.

Speechless, he stared back at her. She went on.

"I wanted to apologize for yesterday—that trick I played—but I couldn't do it in the store in front of every one. Could I? So I got your address from the manager, but when I got there you'd just left, and you wouldn't turn once to look back, or slow down, or anything. I thought I'd never catch up!"

Then Kittles, displaying chairs to a woman customer in the rear of the store, turned and saw them.

"Blest if there he ain't now!" he exclaimed in delighted surprise.

He left his customer and came forward, nodded with businesslike politeness to the girl, and then spoke confidentially to young Chapwell.

"Now, look here," he said, "you know that chair you're going to buy for your young lady? Well, I got a customer back here that wants it bad. Wouldn't care to give it up, would you?"

"She can have it."

Kittles's face dropped with disappointment.

"But I told her she couldn't!"

"She can have it," young Chapwell repeated. "I've decided not to get it."

"But I want you to have it," Kittles persisted. "Even if you ain't got the money now, it's all right."

"No—" young Chapwell began to object, but Kittles wouldn't let him do it. He returned back to his woman customer.

"I'm goin' to hold it for you," he warned young Chapwell.

The young girl drew a bit nearer to the dusty onyx table and to young Chapwell, a little of the gay dairing and the brightness gone now from her eyes.

"I wish you'd let me buy it for her," she begged.

"Don't!" he stopped her sharply. The girl's mouth drooped with her hurt.

"I know," she said, "that you're awfully put out about yesterday, and I'd like the chair to be a peace offering and—a sort of thank you for the awfully nice time I had yesterday."

She looked at him anxiously. "You ARE cross, aren't you?" she asked.

He shook his head. No, he wasn't cross.

He would have answered if he could. "Of course, I shouldn't have done that yesterday," she admitted. "But it WAS fun, selling things, and I've always wanted to. I think it's in my blood. You see," she explained simply, her boyish frank eyes upon his until they gave back to him for the moment the strange illusion that she was again Forty-One, some one of whom he might take care and make happy with pink and gold tea-sets and mahogany rockers—

"You see," she was continuing "when my father met my mother, she was clerk in a dry-goods store and he was in a grocery. I was born above a little five and ten, the first store my father owned. And we'd never in this world be where we are now if mother's brother hadn't died in Alaska and left us some gold—that and father's nerve and luck."

"And 'waitin' on trade' is in my blood just as some folks have rheumatism and others natural piety. And Paris and check-books can't take it out, either. I'm more Forty-One than you'd think. And there are heaps of things I've always wanted to do—she drew little circles on the dusty onyx as if to indicate the heaps—

"and I couldn't do them. I don't know just why, except that I couldn't."

"No one expected me to, because I'm an heiress person. And then yesterday when you called me it suddenly seemed as if there was one thing I wanted to do that I could do. You made it possible for me to do it. And we did have a good time, didn't we?"

He didn't answer.

"Didn't we?" she persisted.

"Yes," he managed to get out.

"So that's why I want to give you the chair, for—" she faltered a little—for HER. She'll like it. It's a nice, honny little chair."

"Please don't," he blurted out in agony.

She regarded him gravely.

"You aren't angry NOW?"

"No, he wasn't angry."

"You are going to get married, aren't you?"

"Don't make things worse?" he begged.

Her eyes opened wider, puzzled.

"How worse? What do you mean?"

He shook his head wretchedly.

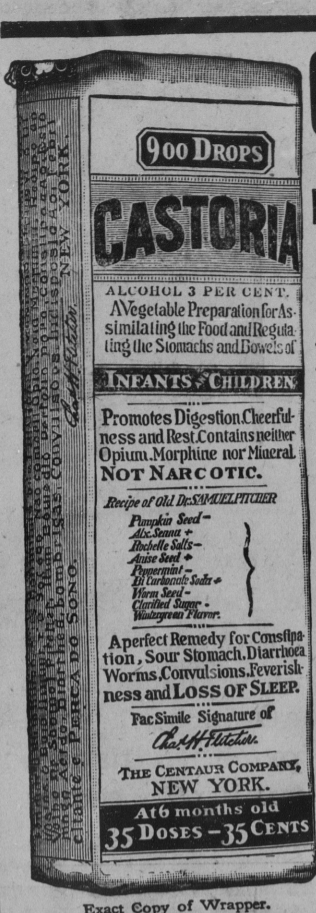
"You must explain. Can't you see that you must?" she demanded with grave dignity.

He winced as he brought it out. "It—it was you I planned to marry when—"

"When I was Forty-One?"

He nodded.

For a moment there was silence and trembling nerves. Young Chapwell felt his bones turn to cobwebs.



CASTORIA

For Infants and Children.

Mothers Know That Genuine Castoria Always Bears the Signature of Dr. J. C. Fletcher In Use For Over Thirty Years CASTORIA

Linoleum Logic No. 4

High Grade Merchandise
The policy of stocking only high-grade merchandise is back of our recommendation of
Armstrong's Linoleum
Careful investigation carried conviction. All materials are tested and every inch is inspected before it leaves the factory. The new patterns and colors put Armstrong's in a class by itself. Patterns for every room in the house.

Joseph L. Tressler

Funeral Director and Embalmer
Meysdale, Penn'a.

Residence: 309 North Street
Office: 229 Center Street
Economy in tone. Both Phones.

For Good Looks

a woman must have good health. She can do her part by helping nature to keep the blood pure, the liver active and the bowels regular, with the aid of the mild, vegetable remedy—

BEECHAM'S PILLS

Largest Sale of Any Medicine in the World. Sold everywhere. In boxes, 10c., 25c.

Anyone in need of a first-class Slate Roof, write to J. S. WENGERD as we have

No. 1 Bangor or Sea Green Slate

in stock at Meysdale and can give you a good price on slate

GALVANIZED ROOFING at the lowest prices

We have a good stock on hand and prices will be higher when this is sold, also Spouting.

Write for Delivered Prices to any Railroad Station

J. S. WENGERD

R. D. 2 MEYSDALE, PENNA.

R. REICH & SON

THE HOME FURNISHERS
Complete From Cellar to Attic
120 Center St., Meysdale

CATARRH CANNOT BE CURED.

with LOCAL APPLICATIONS, as they cannot reach the seat of the disease. Catarrh is a blood or constitutional disease, and in order to cure it you must take internal remedies. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally and acts directly on the blood and mucous surface. Hall's Catarrh Cure is on a quick medicine. It was prescribed by one of the best physicians in this country for years and is a regular prescription. It is composed of the best tonics known, combined with the best blood purifiers, acting directly on the mucous surfaces. The perfect combination of the two ingredients is what produces such wonderful results in curing Catarrh. Send for testimonials free.

Send for testimonials

F. J. OHENEY, & Co., Toledo, O. Sold by all Druggists, 75 cents per bottle.

Take Hall's Family Pills for Constipation.

How to Cure a La Grippe Cough.
Lagrippe coughs demand instant treatment. They show a serious condition of the system and are weakening. Postmaster Collins, Barnegat, N. J. says: "I took Foley's Honey and Tar Compound for a violent lagrippe cough that completely exhausted me and less than a half bottle stopped the cough." Try it. Sold everywhere.

Wm. C. Price

Successor to W. A. Clarke

Funeral Director

Business conducted at the same place. Prompt attention given to all calls at all times. Both Phones.

CROUP AND WHOOPINGCOUGH.

Mrs. T. Neureuer, Eau Claire, Wis. says, "Foley's Honey and Tar Compound cured my boy of a very severe attack of croup after other remedies had failed. Our milkman cured his children of whoopingcough." Foley's has a forty years record of similar cases. Contains no opiates. Always insist on Foley's. Sold everywhere.

Hundreds of health articles appear in newspapers and magazines, and in practically every one of them the importance of keeping the bowels regular is emphasized. A constipated condition invites disease. A dependent physic that acts without inconvenience or griping in Foley Cathartic Pills.

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA