

THE FROZEN ROSE

By M. J. PHILLIPS
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They were dancing in a circle on the tracks of the electric line. Her heart gave a little throb as McCarron appeared, striding along homeward. He seemed to enjoy breathing the wind. His head was up and his broad shoulders back.

A smile on his face, he stopped a moment to watch the boys at their play. The early darkness of winter, at length beginning to thicken, and the shouts of joyous young America prevented sight or sound of a heavy car until it was almost upon the merry celer.

Then the boys fled in panic, all but one little lad, who slipped on the smooth wet bricks and scrawled like a mouse across the rail. The motor man banged the gong and twisted the brake frantically, but the momentum of the car still carried it forward at erud speed.

With a sudden sick horror and yet with a thrill of joy, too, Marcia, straining her eyes through the gloom, saw McCarron dart from the walk into the street, saw him brush the little figure clear of the rails and then go down himself beneath the rush of the car.

She must have fainted in her chair, for the next she remembered the room was full of men and McCarron, dusty, bruised and senseless, lay on the couch beside her. Old Dr. Gillings in tones of professional cheerfulness was speaking to her father. "Unconscious just now, of course, but he's not dangerously hurt. A broken leg is the worst of his injuries. I never saw a nobler act, and I'm more than happy it isn't going to cost him his life."

The frozen rose of love in Marcia's heart had burst its icy bonds of doubt at McCarron's brave deed and bloomed in splendor on the instant. She dropped her knees by the couch and kissed McCarron's blood-stained lips.

Quickened into life by the caress, his eyelids fluttered, opened. He fixed a glance of wonder, then comprehension, on the girl. "This has given me your pity, Maury, at last," he whispered.

The feeble tones expressing so much of contentment and affection and the old dear name of childhood gusted the ready tears to overflow. "Not pity, Maury," she answered, "not pity, dear heart, but love."

The Fur Trade.

The fur trade of North America has always been largely conducted on the principle of barter, writes Duncan MacArthur in the New England Magazine. The transactions with the Indians are carried on in a very simple manner. When a hunter brings in a collection of furs to any trading post, which he usually does twice a year, in October and March, he is taken to the trading room, where the official in charge carefully examines, classifies and values each skin, and when the whole pack is gone over he hands the Indian a number of talies, or small pieces of wood or metal, each representing the value of a "made beaver," and the whole representing the value of the entire catch. The Indian then proceeds to the storeroom and selects such articles as he requires—blankets, capots, guns, knives, tea, tobacco, etc.—in payment for that which he hands back. His talies are put in all glass and tin, and the hunter is satisfied. He then departs, another trader takes his place and is dealt with in a similar manner, and so on until all the furs in possession of the whole band of Indians have passed into the hands of the trader. Formerly it was customary to give a good hunter a "dram" and some small presents in appreciation of his industry.

Great Grief and Head Shaving.

Among the ancients shaving the head was a very common mode of expressing great grief or sorrow. Sometimes it was done by the priest or some other religious functionary formally cutting off the hair, sometimes by violently pulling it out. In extreme cases among men the beard as well as the hair was either cut off or plucked out. The idea seems to have been that mourners should divest themselves of that which under ordinary circumstances was considered most beautiful, ornamental and becoming. Lucian and he is not the only one who gives points on this queer mourning custom. Says the Egyptian explorer, "The hair upon the death of their gods Apis and the Syrians acted in the same manner at the death of Adonis. Olympiodorus remarks concerning Job 1, 20, that the ancients among whom long hair was regarded as an ornament cut it off in times of mourning, but that those who commonly wore it short suffered it upon such occasions to grow long."

A FEARFUL PEST.

The voracious mosquitoes that swarm in Scandinavia.

Humans find the mosquitoes a terrible pest in parts of northern Scandinavia. One writes: "The warmth of the sun is rousing our deadly enemies, the mosquitoes, into active warfare. Attacked as we are by a few score of venomously pipping skimmers from the mighty host, we have before advancing to look to the joints of our harness and don our gamuts; then in descending the long slope toward our bivouac the scores of the foe are gradually multiplied to hundreds, the hundreds to thousands, the thousands to myriads, till we are at length enveloped in a dense cloud of winged fiends. The horses are a distressing sight. From nose to tail, from hoof to withers, their unfortunate bodies are covered with what might be taken at a casual glance for gray blanket clothing, but which is really a textile mass of seething insect life, so closely set that you could not anywhere put the point of your finger on the bare hide."

"For such small creatures mosquitoes exhibit an astonishing amount of character and diabolical intelligence. They dash through smoke, creep under veil or visor and like a ferret into a rabbit hole and when they can neither dash nor creep will bite their time with the cunning of a red Indian. We were told that the gloves articles with which they could have had no previous acquaintance, and yet they would follow each other by hundreds in single file up and down the seams, trying every stitch in the hope of detecting a flaw."

And the same writer concludes: "The problem presents itself, why are these pesky pests more likely to bite us than perfectly formed sucking blood? It is one of the great mysteries of nature. On the unblotched stretches of Finland they must as a rule exist on vegetable diet, the chances of blood so rarely occur."

Christmas Times in Dixie.

Oh, Christmas come to do for cotton—Bet you 't be in de world forgotten—

Look away.

For de Christmas times in Dixie.

Don't fear de weather fair or murky—Fog fat possum in a gobblin turkey—

Look away.

For de Christmas times in Dixie.

—Frank Stanton in Atlanta Constitution.

ZEKE SHARP'S COMPROMISE

By A. A. PATRICK
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Mrs. Miranda Bilks was a widow—that is to say, Mr. Bilks had suffered demise from the effects of a too hearty meal on peach cobbler, thus leaving his spouse, Miranda, and his daughter, little Miranda, to live as best they might off his none too generous estate, which same was comprised of an ax, a hoe, a spade, a pair of soles shoes and a pair of trousers, with sundry reparings for and aft.

Mrs. Bilks therefore did not desert her calling, but continued to bend over the washbasin and rub and scrub from morning until night. And so the years slipped away, bringing Mrs. Miranda to middle age and enclosing Miss Miranda with the cover of sweet sixteen.

I use the word "dower" advisedly. It was not until this time that Miss Miranda was thinking seriously of matrimony, and nothing under the sun had she but just sweet sixteen. The real cause of her cogitations so important a matter was to be found in the person of one Zeke Sharp, a mill hand, and going widowed with six children. Zeke was not burdened with

the girl. "This has given me your pity, Maury, at last," he whispered.

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Mrs. Bilks grew suspicious. There was a lurking fear in her mind that the association of Zeke and Miss Miranda was more congenial than she had believed, or, for that matter, more than they had cared to reveal.

To verify these suspicions Mrs. Bilks ensconced herself behind a door near where the couple sat in order that she might watch the drift of their conversation. What she heard satisfied her beyond question that she had surmised correctly. With much dispatch, therefore, she set aside the washbasin, donned the fire under the kettle with water and, donning her best frock, hurried to the office of the county clerk, where, with a long pointed finger, she warned that gentleman not to be guilty of any levities to Miranda Bilks and that rascalion Zeke Sharp.

Then she returned home in a very compliant humor with herself for having forestalled the elopers. She was hardly prepared, though, for the consequent developments, and it was with much surprise that she herself received a visit from Zeke Sharp.

Zeke jangled lightly on the front door. Mrs. Bilks answered that she had coldly informed him that "Mirandy wasn't home."

"If he you I was a wantin' to see, anyways," responded Zeke in a feeble voice.

At this piece of news Mrs. Bilks eyes widened perceptibly as she regarded her caller for a moment. It wasn't necessary, however, for her to invite him in, for Zeke was already in and seated.

"I shore wuz sorry, Miz Bilks, 'cause you wouldn't let me an' Mirandy have them licenses." And Zeke sighed wearily.

"Licenses be fudged!" snapped Mrs. Bilks. "Things air a-comin' to a purty pass when a man wants to lope off with a gal 'tain't more'n sixteen an' ain't never had bread'n stitched a stitch, 'specially when she's a bona fide 'jun' full of children, like you already got. Seems to me you'd a picked a woman a little higher yer own age an' one what knows how ter do somethin'."

Mrs. Bilks smoothed out a garment on the ironing board, took up an iron and worked industriously as she waited for Zeke to reply.

"That's jes' what I come to see you about," replied the cock man. "You know if one bands was set me an' Mirandy, could I go down to Hornetville an' get the licenses, Mirandy's a good gal, an' I think a heap of her, but she's so young an' delicate-like I'm afraid she'd not set much store by the children, an' you know I want somebody that'll be a mother to 'em. I thought of you lots of times, Miz Bilks, 'cause you're so chipper an' handy 'bout the house, but I didn't expect you'd care to take the responsibility."

"I guess you never axed me," returned Mrs. Bilks.

"You shore would fill the place," continued Zeke. "You're not more'n thirty-five."

"Jes' thirty-four, an' I guess they ain't many widows that can get around as spry as you do so much work as me neither," flashed Mrs. Bilks proudly.

"If you wouldn't mind," went on Zeke, "we might as well hitch up an' try double barness awhile anyways."

"I shore you're a talkin' sense," declared the widow, "an' they ain't no use a-waitin' here if we're goin' to get married. I reckon that horse an' team will be a real attention but 'nough now. I guess Mirandy'll ride a high loss when she finds we're spliced."

Mrs. Bilks brushed to the roof of her hair.

STOCKHOLM.

The City of a Thousand Islands and Rocky Reefs.

Stockholm is built on a series of islands formed by Lake Malaren. It is, indeed, the city of a thousand islands and rocky reefs, which are soon broad, east many miles beyond the mainland, where the lake and river join the sea. The steamers which ply up and down the lake afford endless excursions. Seaward you may sail a day among the islands until you reach the long, low reefs on which the Baltic beats.

In spite of their cold climate the Swedes delight in the open air. After the indoor life of English or American cities it is a great pleasure to take one's meals out of doors, although it may sometimes be necessary to dine wrapped in an overcoat. We have seen people dining in the Tivoli gardens beneath awnings and umbrellas in the rain. This habit may explain the health and vigor of the Swedes.

THE TOY INVENTOR.

His Hardest Task Is to Catch the Fancy of the Public.

The small inventor is an important factor in the mechanical toy business, and he earns all of the living he gets in thinking up devices. He is most concerned with the small mechanical toys, and in addition to the prime requisite of putting forth something novel, he must get something which costs as little as possible and which catches the fancy of the multitude. This last point is one which is most difficult to cover. No student of the subject has ever yet been able to discover or deduce the cycle in which the public taste moves, and it is still hit or miss as to whether a name which walks on its hands, an airship with wings or an aerobot who works by gravity will be the best sell.

Then, when the invention has been achieved, the inventor has still the problem of finding the maker who will buy it and pay a fair price. The inventor and maker are in much the same position as the writer and publisher, both go through the same mental turmoil as to the timeliness of the output and both take the same risks.

The inventor who has been in the business long learns at last the best places at which to offer his wares and has more or less of an idea of what they ought to bring him, and once he has acquired this knowledge his entire energy is devoted to keeping up with the demand for novelties. Something absolutely different from anything else previously offered is in general better than an improvement of an old idea, and that is why in mechanical toys the same device is seldom seen two seasons in succession. Philadelphia Record.

VARIETY IN CHEWING.

Gum and Tobacco Are Not the Only Materials Utilized.

Gum chicle, which forms the basis of most American chewing gums, is by no means the only chewing material, though chewing gum has spread over a large portion of the world.

Among the old fashioned gum of the spruce tree of English or American districts near the great spruce belts drive a thriving trade in the brown lumps.

Although the chicle comes from the tropics, it is seldom used as a chewing gum there, unroasted rubber being the fashion. In Peru "caca," or cocoa leaves, form the staple chew, the plant being a powerful stimulant, since from its leaves cocaine is extracted. In the east the beet root is chewed in preference, the root being prepared with lime. To it might be accorded the place of first prominence, since because of the composition of population practically one-tenth of the human race give it their preference.

One of the oldest chews is the leaden bullet which the English soldier used to chew before the introduction of the jacketed bullets now in use. They declared that it lessened their thirst and to some extent deadened their hunger on long marches.

And then there is tobacco.

ODD THINGS ABOUT WORDS.

When the word "lunch" was first used it meant a "lump."

A "lunch," etymologically, is just a lump. In the sixteenth century a "lunch of bacon" meant merely a slice or lump of it. So Burton speaks of bread and cheese "diced about in lanches," and Scott records that "little people were running a huge luncheon of pie crust into his mouth." While in modern times "lunch" is an abbreviation from "luncheon," the latter was originally an elongation of "lunch." A philologist shows how the old "noon eatin'," noon drink, came to mean noon eatin', and to appear as "nuncheon," and the development thereafter of "luncheon" from "lunch" was very natural.

Curious changes of words sometimes take place between two languages. Thus English has borrowed the French "pousser" and has given to France "snob" in trade. Frenchmen have a way of taking a polysyllabic word and using half of it. Thus of "steeples" they have appropriated the "steeple," and the French sportsman speaks of "mounting a steeple" when he means to ride a race over the customary obstacles. A smoking jacket is with him a "smoking" and a sleeping car is a "sleeping."

Very Different Trials.

Tess Arden's going to choir rehearsal tonight. Jess. No, Tess. You'd better. We're going to give that new hymn a trial. Jess. Can't. I am going to give a new him a trial myself.

Harrah, or huzzah, is the oldest and most common exclamation in all languages.

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DARING OF LIONS.

Incidents to Prove That the Brutes Are Not Cowardly.

It has been said many times that lions are cowardly brutes, but of the many lions with which I have had personal dealings, expected and unexpectedly, the epithet cowardly is the last I should consider appropriate in describing them. I have been charged by a lion, and he certainly did not look cowardly. I have come face to face, at a distance of some twenty feet, with a family party of half a dozen, fortunately full of them. They stood, with quiet dignity, looking at us, and then slowly moved away, stopping every few yards to stand and look again. There was neither fear nor meanness in their appearance or behavior.

I have seen lions stalking game, and I have myself been stalked by them. If I could have encouraged myself with the conviction of their cowardness when I was the quarry and they the hunters, it would have put a different aspect on the situation. We were at this time living in a station over seventy miles from the nearest connecting link with the outside world, and when man eating lions took possession of the one road which led to this link things became serious.

A large troop was reported, and the natives maintained that this troop ran along in the grass parallel with the caravan road (a path some ten inches wide, and having selected the most edible member of the caravan, jumped upon him like a flash, and seizing him, disappeared as quickly as they came. Our mail runners, attached to whom were a couple of native police armed with rifles, were several times attacked. Finally, as the wall party was camping one night, fortunately for it, with a native caravan, the lions became so bold that, in spite of fires, they sprang upon a native and carried him off into the bush. Mrs. S. L. Hinde in Blackwood's Magazine.

ASPARAGUS.

Its Relation to the Famous Asphodel of the Early Ages.

As a tickler of the palate asparagus has come down the ages with all the weight of Greek and Roman approval. Plato ate it by the plateful, and Aristophanes, the humorist, regarded it as a great aid in digesting the crank philosophies of the day.

It is an odd fact that this culinary plant is closely related to the famous asphodel, which was supposed by the ancients to be the leading flower in the gardens of the Elysium, the Greek purgatory or paradise. A part of the quaintness of this lies in the fact that the roots possess purgative qualities. The roots and fruit of both were formerly much used in medicine for this purpose.

According to the superstition of the Romans, the names of the dead fed on the roots of the asphodel. They planted it, therefore, in and around the cemetery; hence to this day it covers with its beautiful globe blossoms as profusely as dandelions the Apulian hills and valleys, and the sheep feed on it greedily.

It belongs to the same natural order of perennials, and the only difference between the asparagus and the asphodel appears to be in the fruit and the color of the flowers. So abundant is the wild asparagus in the steppes of Russia that cattle eat it like grass, just as Italian sheep devour its botanical cousin.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

How soon we learn that the average man's bark is about all there is to him. When people say anything good about you, ever notice what a few are present?

We all of us claim to be natural, but we all of us know that the only time when we are not putting on is when we are asleep.

Somewhat the hundred dollars some other man has always looks larger and as if it should go further than the hundred dollars you have.

There are not many sights more depressing than to meet a farmer's wagon on a country road going out from town with a coffin in it.

When a man says he got up nine times with the baby six nights in succession it means that one night he woke up and heard his wife get up—

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