

# Her Masterpiece

By MATIE K. NAWN  
Copyright, 1906, by Italy Douglas

Coming through the hall Fred Dickson stopped to examine the long envelope lying on the hall rack. In one corner was printed "Barber's Publishing Company." He smiled in brotherly derision.

"Oh, Marge," he called, "I guess this is your manuscript. Back from Barber's," he added maliciously.

Marge went to the door of her room and called down irritably:

"Well, you better publish it!"

"No! It would be just if they did," flung back her brother.

"It's funny," he mused, "but the things you don't want published are always getting into print, and the things you want to see in print end up in the 'masterpiece' trunk." This in reference to an old box in which his sister was wont to deposit her effusions after they had gone the rounds.

Marge came downstairs, digging her heels viciously into the carpet at each step.

"Where is it?" she asked.

"With an obvious desire to be as annoying as possible her brother replied, 'Where's what?'"

Marge treated him to an eloquent silence. Suddenly she spied the envelope and pounced upon it. Then she flung it into the sitting room and flopped angrily down on the rug before the fire.

For half an hour she sat there, reading and tossing aside the pages. The loud ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece sounded with increasing monotony through the long, conscientious perusal. Finally she sighed.

"It wasn't any good," she confided to herself. "It was too long and too prosy, and the idea was old. Still," she added in self-justification, "I've seen just as bad stuff as that published."

Her mother entered the room. Marge looked up at her with grievous eyes.

"I came back," she said in explanation of the pile of paper at her side, "and they'll keep coming back as long as I stay here. I'm tired of the city. If I could get away into the country where I could be absolutely alone day in and day out I could collect my thoughts."

Her brother chuckled irreverently.

"I could collect my thoughts," she repeated. "My brain is just seething with ideas, but the more I think the more I get back to my work, the inspiration is gone. And," she added somewhat bitterly, "here I'm elbow to elbow with the everlasting economies we're forced to practice. It's always material things that receive the most thought here—stamps, the gas or something else of the kind. If I could get out into the country for a couple of months, for a month even, where nobody knew me, where there was nothing to remind me of the interest and the water taxes, where I could get away in my life that writing was a recreation and not a grind, I could write a story that would be worth while. I know I could."

Mrs. Dickson stood silent during her daughter's tirade. The look of sympathy and understanding in her eyes gave place to a harmonious twinkle. "Marge is very young," she reflected, "and she certainly was never meant to be a writer."

Marge had been a stenographer to a successful author, but had lately resented herself and kept the family in luxury by writing. Mr. Bergen wrote little stories without beginning or end, for which he received fabulous checks. It was easy. She could do it too. She had "written," but her stories had all come back, and now she demanded to go away.

Mrs. Dickson sighed. "You were such a good stenographer," she said, but stopped abruptly at sight of her daughter's face. She took refuge under cover of the "previous question." "I don't see how we can manage it, dear," she said gently. "There are so many bills to be met and soon the insurance money falls due. We might let that stand for a month or so," she said, avoiding her son's eyes.

"We can't do that," he said with asperity. "Marge can't get home as long as I'm in the country. She rattles on about the 'artistic temperament' and its 'requirements' and all such nonsense. I've heard her at it time and again. Now, I don't know anything about the 'artistic temperament' and I don't want to, but up to date I've furnished the 'requirements' and the 'environment,' and that is where the 'artistic temperament' has got to sit up and take notice. As far as I can see, the 'artistic temperament' is a constitutional inability to turn brains into money. If Marge had had any sense she would have stuck to her typewriting and stenography. She was a good stenographer."

The girl's eyes filled with tears.

"And," her brother went on, "it isn't too late yet. You can write your 'masterpieces' on the side," he added humorously. "Tell me what Marge," he continued more gently, "why don't you go to work for a couple of months and save enough for this trip?"

Mrs. Dickson brightened at the suggestion.

"But I've lost my speed," said Marge dissuasively.

There was a moment's dead silence. Then her brother strode out of the room and slammed the door.

"Don't mind him, dear," said her mother. "Men are all like that."

Shortly after lunch next day the Bell gang and Mrs. Dickson opened the door. A small boy confronted her.

"They're a telephone for Miss Dickson at the drug store. She's at all her brother up," he said and was gone.

"Marge, oh, Marge," cried Mrs. Dickson.

"Yes, mother?"

"You're to call Fred up at once. The bag just came with the message. Marge came downstairs and took her hat from the rack."

"I wonder what he wants," she said and left the house.

Fifteen minutes later she returned, breathless. "Fred met Mr. Roberts at lunch, and he told Fred he was in an awful fix. His stenographer had been taken very ill and had gone home, and he asked Fred if he knew a good girl who could substitute until she was well. Fred told him I would help him out, and it's his \$18 a week," she finished excitedly.

Her mother sighed, but there was a contradictory twinkle in her eyes. "It's too bad you haven't kept up your

speed, or course you won't be able to take the position," said her mother.

"Won't it? I guess I will! He wants me right away. It's the Mr. Roberts," said Marge loudly.

Mrs. Dickson smiled. "And you can go to the country now, dearie," she suggested.

"Yes, if his stenographer only stays ill long enough—poor girl," she amended, feeling that her remark was more human than humane.

For a month Mr. Roberts' stenographer lay ill. When she came back, late in May, Marge probed her trunk and found the long envelope to "write her masterpiece."

Her letters home were frequent. In one she wrote:

"The country is glorious at this time of year. It grows lovelier each day. This morning as I sat beneath a fine old maple tree awaiting inspiration was startled by a familiar voice, and who do you think it was? Mr. Roberts. He said he was city tired and wanted a whiff of pure country air. He doesn't know how long he'll stay. He says it all depends. I find him very congenial, although he laughs at the idea of women writing in the country. I intended working this afternoon, but he has asked me to take a walk, so I shall have to postpone work until tomorrow."

Her letters glowed with accounts of pleasure trips taken with "Mr. Roberts," but only in the first was there any mention of work.

Mrs. Dickson remarked this to her son.

"Don't worry, mother," he said knowingly. "The little came around all right. She's the writing bee in her bonnet, and she's sitting close, but she's sitting just as tight, and the treatment she's talking now will effect a permanent cure."

His mother sighed.

"She was such a good stenographer," she said.

Two weeks later Marge came home, rosy and bright, with a new happy light in her eyes.

"The vacation has done you good, dear," said her mother. "I have never seen you looking better or happier," she added reflectively.

"Did you do any writing, dear?"

"Yes, and you know what you've written, she" said Fred.

"I—I that is, well, it isn't in shape yet to be read," replied Marge nervously.

Fred winked at his mother.

"But can't you give me some idea of it?" he persisted tenaciously.

In the evening the "city tired Roberts" called. Marge met him at the door. His first words were, "Have you told them, dear?"

Marge hesitated.

"Well, Billy, I couldn't," she said at last. "I tried to, but Fred was horrid and teased me about my 'masterpieces,' and mother thought I had been working all the time I was away, and I couldn't tell them. You do it, Billy," she said imploringly.

And Billy did.

Percentage of a Famous Joke.

Two attempts have been made by a contemporary to trace its source a well known law courts judge. The first credited Sir Frank Lockwood with the wit, the second made the then Mr. Henry Hawkins its father. As a fact, the joke seems to have originated with the first Lord Chelmsford, then Frederick Thesiger. Sir Crosswell Crosswell was trying a case in which the name of a vessel was frequently introduced. When mentioned by Sergeant Channell, the vessel was the Helen; when alluded to by Thesiger she was the Helen, "Stop!" cried Crosswell presently. "I have got on my notes the Helen and the Helen. Which is it?" In his bluntness she was the widow of a Chicago wholesale grocer and had taken the trip abroad at the instance of her brother Tom, who was a silk buyer for a New York house and who would soon be with them. It came out the same way that the judge had retired from the bench in New York and was now taking it easy abroad while his bonds were right on piling up interest. They found themselves agreeing on almost all subjects, especially on the greatness of Chicago and the purity of American politics, and now then the landlord looked out to smile and turn to his wife with:

"Marie, compliment me on my magnificence. The widower and the widow are becoming more and more interested in each other."

The judge rather took charge of Mrs. Chatham after the first day. They rode out together, they boated together, they climbed the hills together. The subject of love wasn't even hinted at, but there were other persons than the landlord who smiled in a knowing way.

There was just a bit of mystery about the brother. He was to arrive at such a time and such a time, but he didn't arrive. It was all the fault of the silk men, he wrote. They were taking things easy and refused to be hustled. He would be along in good time, however, and in one of his letters he wrote that it would be a pleasure for him to meet the judge. The judge smiled grimly when this extract was read to him. He seemed to doubt it.

After their acquaintance had lasted two weeks and one day just after a telegram had been received by the widow the judge strolled into the railroad depot and found her about to take a train—that is, he thought she was. She had no baggage and appeared to be alone.

When she saw that she was discovered she made some excuse and left the depot in his company. She was a bit glum for awhile, but soon rallied and was very gay that evening. Two days later a telegram announced that Brother Tom was ill at home. The widow said that she would run over there for a day or two, and the judge said he would accompany her. He had a curiosity about the silk mills, and this could be a good time to gratify it. The judge said he would like to see the silk mills, but she had her fair share of glibly affection, but Tom was one of those fellows that always played lally even with a cold in the head.

Two mornings later the judge took his usual morning walk. It was a day or two before breakfast. He walked down to the depot to see the 6:20 train go on. He was on time, and he saw the Widow Chatham there. She dodged him and slipped to the hotel instead of taking the train. When they met at the hotel neither one said anything about their walk, but the landlord rubbed his hands and smiled and said to his wife:

"Marie, my magnificence grows. The widower and the widow were out for a sunrise walk this morning. That means love and matrimony. I was the one to introduce them and bring two happy hearts together. Of course it will go into both hills as an extra."

There is a pretty fair mountain at Lausanne. It is high enough to have precipices and rugged enough to put a man out of his mind to climb it. When you have followed "Lovers' walk" far enough you strike into "Heart's high

# An American Widow

By LOURENE RICHARDS  
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It was at Lausanne, Lake Geneva, and at one of the small and quiet hotels, that Judge Fordham, U. S. A. was told by the landlord:

"You will be glad to learn that I have a compatriot of yours here. She has been here a week. She is a widow. I believe she comes from Chicago, Canada."

"Sure it isn't Philadelphia, Montana?" asked the judge.

"I will at once find out all particulars," his excellency.

"Never mind just now. I'd like a few hours' rest before meeting the widow, American or otherwise. If you will be so kind, you needn't mention to me anything about the matter."

"Where do I come in?" she asked after awhile.

"You don't come in. Tommy did the embalming, and you simply ran away with him. So far as my instructions go, you are to be left behind here in Europe to enjoy yourself as best you can. Do not do anything to pay your bills with, but I was not instructed to arrest you. I was simply keeping tabs on you until the papers were ready for Tommy. Is there anything else?"

"No, I do not know you," answered the widow as she arose and started down the path by her bedroom.

"And so you go away to Lyons?" repeated the landlord after the judge had announced his intentions.

"I will be in Lyons, I have been there for some time. I have been in Europe to enjoy myself as best you can. Do not do anything to pay your bills with, but I was not instructed to arrest you. I was simply keeping tabs on you until the papers were ready for Tommy. Is there anything else?"

"No, I do not know you," answered the widow as she arose and started down the path by her bedroom.

"I have the utmost felicitation in presenting Judge Fordham to Mrs. Chatham."

The judge found the widow to be a woman not much over thirty. She was bright and keen and self-possessed. She found the judge to be a man of about forty-eight, hale and hearty and inclined to be frank spoken. Of course they became interested at once, and after a few minutes the landlord reentered the office to say to his wife:

"Today, Marie, I have done a noble thing. The widower will marry the widow, and when they return to America they will probably live in New York, Arizona, and be happy all their days. Did I not tell you when we were married that as a landlord I should be a magnificent success?"

Next day the Widow Chatham nor Judge Fordham had a story to tell. It came out casually in conversation that she was the widow of a Chicago wholesale grocer and had taken the trip abroad at the instance of her brother Tom, who was a silk buyer for a New York house and who would soon be with them. It came out the same way that the judge had retired from the bench in New York and was now taking it easy abroad while his bonds were right on piling up interest. They found themselves agreeing on almost all subjects, especially on the greatness of Chicago and the purity of American politics, and now then the landlord looked out to smile and turn to his wife with:

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# Cozy Cornering Mother-in-law

By BELLE MANIATES  
Copyright, 1906, by E. C. Everett

"There is no use talking, love is awfully blind," soliloquized Mrs. Peters as she knuckled the bread dough into shape. "Since Dan began to keep company with Myra he's always telling me how they have this and that over at Martin's. The idea! Our house is just a mansion compared to their rookery, and our carpets and parlor set alone cost more than everything in their house. Myra's a good girl, but she's too fancy about her work to be thorough. If she thinks she's going to come here to live and put all her finery and bric-a-brac into my elegant parlor, she's mistaken."

"This concluding, Mrs. Peters made another onslaught upon the dough with a vigor that would have put to shame any housewife in the country.

"Mentime her son Dan was sitting before the fireplace of the Martins' living room (they had no parlor) placing his hand and heart at Myra's disposal.

Myra loved Dan deeply, but she was a wise young woman. She knew the value of the diamond of the honeymoon and was, she thought, wise to have a good match for her white-washed walls.

So Myra said Dan was, and he was white and hurt. He divined the reason for her refusal, and he frankly told her so.

"I know you don't like mother and her ways, but you've never seen the boy's side of her. The farm is mine, but father kept it always to mother live there. She wouldn't be happy anywhere else, and I couldn't leave her there alone."

Myra could not but admire such dutifulness. "I'm just right in the matter, Dan, but—well, I simply can't. We'll be friends just the same, though, Dan."

"No! We can't! I can't!" he said, and then he went away, grieved and resentful, leaving Myra remorseful and wondering.

The mother needed only one glance at his face.

"Have you and Myra quarreled?"

"No," he replied slowly. "I asked her to be my wife, and she refused. There's that matter down at Penton to be looked after. I am going there now."

He was gone for a week, but he had not forgotten his mother's question, and he made comment on the first subject, so she began talking in a matter of fact way about the business at Penton while she poked his valise. When he had gone she told his appreciation of the reason of Myra's refusal. "I'm just right in the matter, Dan, but—well, I simply can't. We'll be friends just the same, though, Dan."

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# DETERMINING LEVELS.

Method by Which Every Man May Be His Own Surveyor.

A simple way of roughly determining levels, and one which can readily be practiced by any one and which has the advantage of not requiring any special apparatus, is by means of a spirit level and a board with a straight edge. The way to go about it is this: First determine on two points the levels of which you wish to know and drive stakes into the ground. Then take a board with a straight edge and tack it to a tree, if one happens to be available, in a line with these two stakes. Put the board at such a height that you can readily sight over it and carefully level this board by means of the spirit level. Then sight it over toward one of the stakes, having some one at that stake who will, by means of a small piece of paper, locate the point at which your line of vision cuts it—in other words, where a line projected from your sighting board would strike the stake. Make some sort of mark at this point and then sight to the other stake in the same way and mark the point where the line would strike it. By measuring distances that these two points are above the ground you can get the difference in levels with reasonable accuracy. For instance, if your line of vision has cut one stake five feet from the ground and the other one five feet from the ground, then obviously the difference in level is three feet, or, in other words, the vicinity of the stake on which the mark is five feet from the ground is three feet higher than the other stake, and you will have a three foot fall from draining from this point to the other.—Farming.

In a place in New Jersey the town officers had just put some fire extinguishers in their big buildings. One day one of the buildings caught fire, says the Philadelphia Ledger, and the extinguishers failed to do their work.

A few days later at the town meeting some citizens tried to learn the reason.

After they had freely discussed the subject one of them said, "Sir, Chairman, I make a motion that the fire extinguishers be examined ten days before every fire."

First Duke. Why don't you travel incognito as I do? It's far pleasanter. Second Duke—Yes, but my wife always goes with me, and I married an American.—Pick Me Up.

Look follows the hopeful; all luck, the fearful. German proverb.

LACKAWANNA RAILROAD  
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In Effect Jan. 1, 1906.  
TRAINS LEAVE DANVILLE

2:07 a. m. daily for Bloomsburg, Kingston, Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. Arriving Scranton at 9:22 a. m. and connecting at Scranton with trains arriving at Philadelphia at 10:30 a. m. and New York City at 11:30 p. m.

10:30 a. m. weekly for Bloomsburg, Kingston, Wilkes-Barre, Scranton and intermediate stations, arriving at Scranton at 12:25 p. m. and Philadelphia at 1:30 p. m. and New York City at 2:30 p. m.

2:11 weekly for Bloomsburg, Kingston, Wilkes-Barre, Scranton and intermediate stations, arriving at Scranton at 4:50 p. m. and Philadelphia at 6:00 p. m. and New York City at 7:00 p. m.

TRAINS ARRIVE AT DANVILLE

9:15 a. m. weekly from Scranton, Pottsville, Kingston, Bloomsburg and intermediate stations, leaving Scranton at 6:55 p. m. where it connects with trains leaving New York City at 10:30 p. m. and Philadelphia at 12:00 p. m. and Buffalo at 8:30 a. m.

12:41 p. m. daily from Scranton, Pottsville, Kingston, Bloomsburg and intermediate stations, leaving Scranton at 10:15 a. m. and connecting there with train leaving Buffalo at 8:30 a. m.

4:20 p. m. weekly on Scranton, Kingston, Pottsville, Bloomsburg and intermediate stations, leaving Scranton at 1:10 p. m. where it connects with train leaving New York City at 10:30 p. m. and Philadelphia at 12:00 p. m. and Buffalo at 8:30 a. m.

7:05 p. m. daily from Scranton, Kingston, Pottsville, Bloomsburg and intermediate stations, leaving Scranton at 4:55 p. m. where it connects with trains leaving New York City at 10:30 p. m. and Philadelphia at 12:00 p. m. and Buffalo at 8:30 a. m.

T. E. CLARKE, Gen'l Supt.

T. W. LEE, Gen. Pass. Agt.

A colored preacher took some candid dates for immersion down to a river in Louisiana. Seeing some alligators in the stream, one of them objected.

"Why, brother," urged the pastor, "can't you trust the Lord? He took care of Jonah, didn't he?"

"Yes, your honor," admitted the deacon, "but a whale's different. A whale's got a memory, but one of dem 'gators' was ter swallow his nigger, he'd 'ter go ter sleep day in de sun and ferret all 'bout me."—Woman's Home Companion.

"My wife," thought Hannah, as she went down the road to Martin's. "She must be very sick to want company." Myra came gladly, unthinkingly upon to do something to atone.

"I've not been sick in bed for years," said Mrs. Peters abruptly, "and I thought I'd go crazy lying here idle months, but now I believe now that there is, and that life remains long enough for me to do something to atone."

So Myra drew up her chair beside the bed and took out her work, a bright red shawl she was crocheting. She was a pretty, attractive, dainty looking girl.

"That the kind a fair fellow like Dan?"

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