

Katherine E. Cook. Papers

The Man from Zurich

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THE MAN FROM ZURICH

For one who less than two years ago had made an earnest if unsuccessful attempt at suicide, Robert Sterling was finding life in postwar Washington remarkably livable. Thanks to Dr. John Markus, the man from Zurich, who lived as well as taught the gospel according to the Zurich school of modern psychology, he had been 'born again', a process that was of the essence of psychoanalytical science philosophically distilled and reappearing as the essence of religion.

A wierd and dreamlike struggle, more horrible than any fighting he had seen in France, ^{by and} ~~had~~ begun in the Walter Reed Hospital, had been carried from there to St. Elizabeth's Hospital for the insane, that crowded little community of devil fighters looking down upon the Capitol City from the Anacostia hills, and had been finished -- the final skirmishes won and peace between ^{himself} ~~xxx~~ and his alienated soul declared -- in Dr. Markus' ~~Wardman Park~~ apartment where his physician had invited him to come and ~~be at home.~~

"A hospital for the insane is no place for you, Sterling. I'm going to take you home with me -- if you'll come?" He had looked with distaste upon the walls of St. Elizabeth in whose grounds they were walking while they talked. "It's for those who need it, but -- You're saner by far than nine tenths of our free American citizens. Will you come home with me?"

"It would be an imposition, Dr. Markus! Your wife --"

"Left this morning for New York. Sails tomorrow for Switzerland to investigate the children we left in school over there a year ago. Thinks they ~~may~~ need a bit of maternal overhauling. You may not know it, but you're darn good company, Sterling. Come along and help me hold down and fill up the emptiest place in the ~~world~~!" *universe!*

Robert Sterling accordingly moved from Washington's asylum for the insane to one of its ~~most popular~~ *favorite* asylums for the sane, where without leaving the premises you ~~could~~ *might* buy a tooth brush, order a suit of clothes, go swimming, attend the theater, listen to dinner music or dance to the lilting jazz of the Wardman Park Hotel orchestra. This agreeable change ~~which~~ *his* marked ~~the~~ passing from illness to health ~~occurred~~ in the fall of 1920.

Throughout a mild and open winter golf and horseback riding in Rock Creek Park brought his body back to its prewar vigor; mornings in the reading room of the Congressional Library exploring philosophies, worlds of thought more fascinating than primitive civilizations or polar continents, had given him an insatiable if detached interest in naive humanity so feverishly creating itself; while the theater, significant as a psychological phenomenon quite aside from its artistic value, was at its worst amusing, at its best an emotional outlet comparable to the old-fashioned religious revival or the older fashioned Dionysian orgy.

But the satisfactions of park, library and theater were unimportant compared with the priceless companionship of the ~~man~~

man from Zurich, who was so much more than physician -- more even than friend. How much more than friend Sterling hardly dared admit. As well as any specialist he understood the problem of 'transference to the physician', the 'resolution' of which was the final task of the psychoanalyst in the case of every patient. Psychic energy -- interest, love, libido -- released from the tormenting complexes that had been ferreted out of the unconscious and consciously dealt with and disposed of, was transferred to the analyst who consequently became the more or less embarrassed recipient of the passionateness that since primeval time mankind has poured out upon ^{the} parent, ^{the} woman, and ^{the} god. Acquainted as he was with the processes by which analysts were accustomed to free themselves from an idolatry as unwelcome to them as it was prejudicial to the patient, he wondered that Markus did not make the usual effort to get rid of him. ^{the only possible} There could be but one explanation ^{was that} ~~the physician~~ in this case ^{the physician} desired the friendship of the patient and was leaving to him the responsibility of severing the bond between them at whatever time and in whatever manner he saw fit.

Not wishing to sever the bond Sterling compromised by tempering his devotion. He avoided both worship and sentimentality by allowing his renewed urge toward life to carry him into ~~a deeper understanding~~ of life and of himself. But the parent and son relationship existed between them in spite of the mere decade ^{between} ~~the~~ ~~separated~~ their birthdays, and since Sterling had only fading memories of his actual parents, ~~to~~

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Not wishing to sever the bond Sterling compromised by tempering his devotion. He avoided both worship and sentimentality by allowing his renewed urge toward life to carry him into a deeper understanding of life and of himself. But the parent and son relationship existed between them in spite of the mere decade between their birthdays, and since Sterling possessed no more than fading memories of his actual parents,

he found himself quite childishly loath to make what Markus called 'the sacrifice', youth's renunciation of infantile indolence and freedom at the relentless call of 'biological destiny' -- to sweat and toil under the inescapable lash of maturing ambition and desire. Rejuvenated, snatched so to speak from the scrap heap in his early thirties, Sterling was remarkably content, untroubled by ambition and desire -- for the time being.

Turning the situation over in his thoughts at an April breakfast table, "Markus," he began -- the question had been lying there unasked for months -- "after what I've been through have I a right to marry and have children?"

"Good lord! Yes! Why not?" The clean-cut Markus features were lit by surprise kindling into reassurance. "Nothing hereditary about your trouble. That shocking experience at the end of your childhood -- a tragedy so dreadful you'd never been able to talk about it to anyone till you told me about it -- and even then after twenty years you could hardly get it out. That was what made you so reticent. Excessively aloof from young companionship. Serious. Studious. Much better for your engineering work than it was for you. At the outbreak of the war you were one-sided but not -- certainly not more neurotic than the average American business man. And after the war -- analyze your situation. Professional interests gone. In their place a serious injury. ~~Nothing ahead~~ but a dreary, tedious and intensely painful convalescence the outcome of which was decidedly doubtful, your habitual reticence

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redoubled, you didn't have a handhold on life -- not a handhold. if there'd been a father or mother, brother or sister, wife or child -- or lacking all of these, if you had been less reticent, able to make friends; of if you'd had the religious ~~understanding~~ ^{essential as} you have now, life ~~might~~ ^{would} have been worth the effort. You ~~mightn't~~ ^{wouldn't} have wanted to snuff it out. And that little episode over at St. Elizabeth's -- it was faulty treatment that took you there. Should never have happened. Means no more than anybody's nightmare. I should have told you this before -- not left you wondering. Certainly -- By all means, marry. Who is she, Sterling?"

"Haven't found her yet. Haven't been looking. Only wanted to know -- in case." Sterling poured cream into his coffee, which reminded him to notice whether Markus had had cream.

He had, but was studying his coffee as ^{if} something were wrong with it -- dipping the spoon in and out, observing it critically. Odd. Breakfast, always of the best, came regularly from the hotel kitchen and seemed beyond criticism to Sterling. He tasted his coffee and found it excellent. Curiosity finally broke his silence. "What do you see in that cup of coffee, Markus?"

"Vortices," beamed Markus, continuing ~~with~~ his observations. "Cyclonic storms in miniature, clockwise and counter-clockwise. See! You put your spoon down in -- like that. A little more slanting! That's it! Isn't that pretty?"

"Very." Sterling laughed, quite as fascinated as Markus

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agreed to answer anything they want to ask."

"Stagg affair?"

"No, I've invited the wives. Ever meet Mrs. Oliver?"

"Once. She seemed very intellectual."

"She is, and less orthodox if possible than her husband; and Mrs. Clements is her precise opposite, a feeling type who questions nothing she was taught in childhood to believe."

Sterling came in from noon, bought daffodils and sweet peas with which to dress the apartment, and piling up scattered newspapers and magazines did his best to give the Markus abode that feminine touch that in the absence of its mistress it usually lacked. The dinner was to be served from the hotel kitchen, and he put two tables together and brought the chairs for the ~~two~~ bedrooms in order to seat ^{the} later comers.

As he dressed he wondered what such a mixture of types would find to talk about, but he need not have concerned himself. They talked about their children, a subject of common interest which naturally had not occurred to his bachelor mind. The women began it immediately upon being introduced. They told how many they had, and their names and ages, and ~~just what~~ ~~contagious diseases they had had~~ before their wraps had fairly been laid aside -- and the men listened as if it were interesting. Domesticity was the keynote, and Sterling was amused but decidedly out of his element. And so he busied himself

himself with the waiters and their trays, putting a large bowl of sweetpeas in the center of the damask covered tables which looked quite conventionally like a ~~dining~~dinner table. Everything was as informal as possible and they seated themselves and were served with oyster cocktails, of which Markus was fond,, still discussing they offspring with unabated interest.

"My husband tells me, Dr. Markus, that you are educating your children in Switzerland," said Mrs. Oliver, who might have been forty-five but looked rather younger. Sterling decided that the education of children was undoubted the subject uppermost in her obviously active mind. "Is it because you think the schools over there are better than ours?"

"Partly. They're doing especially well ~~with~~languages -- speak English, French and German like natives. But it wasn't altogether on that account

"How old are your children?" inquired Mrs. Clements who never spoke without changing the direction of the conversation. Her white hair contrasted interestingly with a youthful freshness of complexion which made her age impossible to conjecture. Her question suggested that children of any age should not be separated from their parents.

"The girl is fourteen,,Markus replied. "The boys are ~~twelve and ten~~."

"And so far away?" The minister's lady was frankly shocked. "But of course their mother is with them -- looking

after them."

"She's been spending the winter over there trying to get acquainted with them all over again without being in the way," laughed Markus. "But when she went over last fall she hadn't seen ~~them~~ for a year."

Mrs. Oliver took advantage of the other woman's speechless disapproval to rescue the conversation. "But why, Dr. Markus? You haven't given us your real reason. What are you aiming at?"

"Our aim is to apply the new psychology as we see it to the education of our children. The infantile personality --"

"Dr. Markus --" Mrs. Clements had now recovered her voice -- "Do you mean to tell me that you left those little children away off there alone! for a whole year!"

"Hardly alone, Mrs. Clements. There were many other children, and plenty of high-grade teachers, and friends who could be counted upon in any emergency. But we did give our children a full year in which they were absolutely unhampered by the family relationship."

Mrs. Oliver again took advantage of the speechlessness of Mrs. Clements. "What were you saying about the infantile personality, Dr. Markus?"

"Every child who comes into the world has some sixteen different ways of remaining permanently infantile," laughed the physician of souls. "None can escape all of them, but we want our children to escape as many as possible. It seems

to us that the problem of education --"

"But Dr. Markus!" Mrs. Clements had recovered speech at last. "To break family ties! They're so precious, don't you think? Don't you think the breaking up of the home is the greatest danger of these modern times? The greatest evil?"

"No, I think the greatest danger of this or any other period is the human mania for going to extremes. One generation is whipped indiscriminately for every offense -- whipped at school, whipped again at home for being whipped at school. And another generation is utterly unspanked -- undisciplined in every way. I don't know which is worse. And it's the same with this question of home influence. The children who aren't morally enemic for the want of it are suffocated by an excess of it. With ours -- well, of course it's too soon to say how they'll turn out. It's an experiment."

"But how can you bear to experiment!" Mrs. Clement's mind seemed to bounce about without ever for a moment penetrating anything. "I wouldn't dare experiment with a child of mine!"

"How do you help it?" inquired Mrs. Oliver sweetly trying not to be sarcastic. "Isn't every child an experiment from the day it's born? And isn't every experiment different from every other? Are there any rules that can be trusted?"

"Rules, no." replied Markus. "But there are certain fundamental principles that should be kept in mind."

"That's what I think," agreed Mrs. Clements. "But what can you expect with everybody getting divorced. What are we

going to do with the divorce evil, Dr. Markus?"

"Bring our children up so that their minds can meet the demands of physical maturity. Human bodies mature as early as they did in the stone age, but human minds! What with dependence upon parents throughout the college age -- we don't give them a chance to mature while the urge to maturity is strongest. Our modern ideals of education make the fixation of infancy almost inevitable. And when an adult infant who has been carefully protected from the sweat and labor of human destiny marries expecting to acquire a mate who will also be a parent there's nothing ahead but trouble."

"And they marry too early, don't they!" said Mrs. Clements. "Really --" They shouldn't marry till they're thirty. That's what I always say. They should live a little first."

Dr. Clements ignored his wife's contribution. "Will sending them away to school in childhood insure their escape from infantile fixation? Will it wean them from the parents?"

"Not necessarily, since the school is very parental; but it weans the parents from the children -- gives them the chance to change their attitude, and get over this all too parental manner. So many parents forget how to be anything else with their children."

"How true that is," babbled Mrs. Clements. "I always say, 'Once a mother always a mother.' After the first baby comes you never really know what it is to sleep the night through, but -- It's worth it. That's what I always say. It's the sweetest thing in life!"

At this point ~~in the conversation~~ Dr. Oliver, who had been silently addressing himself to his dinner, boomed into conversation with a fairly startling bass. "The modern child doesn't give you a chance to begin to drop the parental attitude," he objected. "At ten and twelve and fourteen the youngster of this enlightened age has no sense of responsibility, no regard for the rights of other people, no judgment whatever."

"Naturally he hasn't -- if he's been nurtured upon modern sentimentality, this idiotic fad that there must be no inhibitions. Without inhibition there is no sublimation. This age imagines it can reach ~~the~~ enlightenment without passing through the age of taboo. Impossible! It is by way of the taboo that the individual like the race must achieve civilization."

"Then you believe in early obedience?" asked Mrs. Oliver.

"So do I," chimed in Mrs. Elements. "Just as soon as you can reason with them. One should reason, shouldn't one?"

"Yes." Dr. Markus suppressed a smile. "But not to get obedience. One gets obedience in order that one may reason -- in order that the child may ~~begin~~ early to listen to reason. The quicker you get a child into the age of taboo, the quicker you can get him through and beyond it. Every week, every day if possible the child should feel himself older, stronger, freer. Childhood should be short, and sending the children away helps the parents to make it so -- keeps them from lingering in the delights of infancy. If you know you're going ~~to turn your child over to somebody else~~

to turn your child over to somebody else at the age of nine or ten, you won't procrastinate. What you are able to do for him you will do."

"They do grow so fast, don't they!" mourned Mrs. Clements. "My baby is nineteen, but -- I hold her close. She'll always be a baby to me. I believe in holding them close, don't you, Dr. Markus?"

"In some ways -- yes," smiled the psychologist. "My family will be united again soon. We plan a home in Chevy Chase, and I hope for a close friendship with my children -- a very close friendship."

Robert Sterling had listened to this discussion -- the only one of its ~~first of the~~ sort at which he had ever been present -- at first with amusement, then with an unwelcome sense of waking from a delightful dream to the painful realization that he must leave a warm bed and brave the chill atmosphere of an alien world. Markus had ~~never discussed his children before~~ ^{only casually mentioned his children} -- Probably had a principle against talking domesticity except with domestic people, but his silence on the subject had created an illusion. These delightful bachelor months with a man who only appeared to be a bachelor, but was very much married, was soon to bring his family together -- make a home for them in Chevy Chase --

A sudden and intense jealousy of Mrs. Markus and the Markus children was little if any easier to bear because it was understood. What if one was merely suffering from the ~~libido transfer~~

libido transference to the physician!

Had to get out -- that was what it amounted to. Should have cleared out before this, and would have -- except for something very like an infantile fixation. He had not been financially dependent -- but wasn't he shockingly dependent morally and spiritually? He tried to picture Markus with his family about him and found himself hating the family!

Markus, who could fall in so graciously with any human situation -- played idiot's delight with the children from the next apartment with the same enjoyment that he showed in the discussion of Kant, Spinoza and Bergson after the children went home -- could be equally engaging in evening dress or lounging about in his old clothes -- Was there anywhere in the world another human being with such charm -- who could give such charm to life and make the world so warm and friendly?

The conversation regarding the education of the young continued throughout the meal, Mrs. Clements bouncing about in its midst, and Mrs. Oliver persistently and firmly gathering up the scattered fragments, the minister occasionally asking a significant question, and the scientist making ~~valuable~~ *substantial* contributions, but Markus speaking *also* with the authority of a deeper insight and a wider experience. Sterling forced himself back to attention now and again without being able to stay with it. The unwelcome fact that he must leave this pleasant place, should have left before this, kept tugging at his thoughts. It was a wonder Markus hadn't told him to get out!

The dinner arrangements had scarcely been cleared away before other guests began to drop in. Everything was most informal, Markus himself opening the door for each new arrival. Among many Sterling had never met were several Bureau of Standards men -- evidently friends of Dr. Oliver, also Maury the poet, Kern the painter, and two men in the garb of the clergy. The room was pretty well filled, since most of them had brought their wives. Markus sat in gracious informality, at ease with himself and the world, upon the piano stool.

"You've all -- or nearly all -- asked me at one time or another about my religious convictions," he began, "and I've hesitated to answer because -- Well, my religion is a subject that I don't like to discuss at all unless I can be thorough enough to make myself understood. But tonight I'll answer anything you care to ask. And in order that you may be frank, unhampered by the opinions and preconceptions of others, suppose you write your questions -- anonymously."

Sterling assisted in the passing of pencils and paper and then found a seat in the far corner of the room where he might observe with a sense of nonparticipation. His questions had long since been asked and answered exhaustively, and the religion of the Zurich school of psychoanalysis was the very foundation of his renewed existence.

It interested him that there was no conversation whatever, no sound but the rustle of paper as many pencils stated the religious problem from the widely different viewpoints of this

most unusual gathering. Intellectually the group was more or less distinguished even for Washington. Most of the men were members of the Cosmos Club, which required for admission a more than ordinary distinction in science, or literature, or the fine arts, or the learned professions, or the public service. Among them there was probably not one who questioned the theory of evolution or the necessity of adapting religion to the trend of modern thought or else dropping it entirely. What would they ask?

Markus gathered up the questions, took them to the light beside the piano where he looked them over, with hanging them with absorbed attention. "Interesting," he said. "Two thirds of you have asked the same question -- stated differently, but amounting to the same thing. 'What shall we teach our children?' We can neglect the religious problem for ourselves -- or we can compromise ^{between ourselves} between intellectual and emotional riches. But we would like our children to be rich both emotionally and intellectually. Can we give them both intellectual enlightenment and the comforts of religion?

"That's what most of you want to know, but we'll take up the other questions first: 'Do you believe in God? 'Do you believe in immortality?' 'Do you believe in prayer?' 'Do you believe in the divinity of Christ?' 'Do you believe in the unique inspiration of the Bible?' 'Do you believe in the church?'

"Now these are intellectual, not religious questions.

as necessary as breakfast, lunch, and supper, 16

My religion is not at all a belief, it is an experience. Intellectually I have to believe what my reason dictates; but I could change my beliefs indefinitely according to whatever facts I run across without effecting my religion. My religion has to do with longings and aspirations transcending reason.

With deliberate intention Robert Sterling withdrew his attention from the remarks of his friend and physician. Better than any one present, better even than Markus himself, he knew the meaning of religious experience, what it was to lose one's soul -- the disintegration of the personality whose religion was out of order, the descent into hell, the painful process of being 'born again'. He must complete his rebirth. He must sacrifice -- break away from Markus.

The voluntary introversion, which under the teaching of Dr. Markus became prayer, was already second nature to Dr. Markus' friend and disciple. He understood the energetic theory of it. By withdrawing all conscious interest in everything within and without, the psychic energy that is ordinarily expended upon consciousness flows into the unconscious and activates the inner soul processes. But the practice was far more vital than the theory. He had learned to dive into his unconscious at will as one dives into a quiet pool, remain there in a state that differed from sleep chiefly because consciousness could be at any moment voluntarily resumed, and come up again with something of inspiration if it were no more than a peace of God quite literally past all understanding. But

oftener than not he came out of the depths of prayer with very much more than the peace of God -- with something of inspiration intimately related to his practical purposes and problems, but so superior to his conscious thinking that there could be no irreverence in accepting it as the gift of God.

And so, while bodily present and a part of this gathering of the friends of his friend, he withdrew into his own inner kingdom and the company was breaking up when he returned to full awareness. As the door closed upon the last of his guests Markus looked at his watch. "I must be going," he said. "I'm taking the night train to New York -- consultation." He stepped into his bedroom and whistled softly, 'The sidewalks of New York,' and the sounds of a man gathering toilet necessities into a briefcase were audible. "I'll be back Thursday morning," he announced, reappearing.

"I'll be gone when you come back, Markus."

"Gone!?" A look of dismay lived long enough to reassure the guest who feared he had stayed too long. "But of course -- I suppose you must."

"Yes. I've stood on the sidelines long enough. I must get into the game."

"Where you going?"

"About a thousand miles away from this little heaven of yours. If I'm not ready to make a clean break I ought to be."

"Oh, you're ready enough, but -- Lord, how I'll miss you? What you going to do?"

"I haven't the remotest idea where I'm going or what I'm going to do when I get there, except -- I shall follow my dream trails."

"Do they point back toward engineering?"

"Not yet, though of course they may. Just now there's no definite trend, but it doesn't matter so long as I can see the next step. 'Lead Kindly Light' is the only song in my hymnbook."

"You believe it will still lead you on?"

"How can I doubt it? It's brought me out of hell."

"And you mean to reconstruct your life under an exclusively religious and inspirational guidance? Is conscious reason to have no voice in your affairs?"

"Oh -- I don't go so far as that, Markus. But my reason, which used to believe itself supreme has been humbled to the dust. It made a colossal mess of things, and got itself demoted -- nothing left to it but the veto power."

"I see. All new legislation is to come out of the unconscious."

"Yes. Straight from the source of light. It's a religious experiment if you want to call it that. I shall give my untroubled attention to the voice of my creator -- and see what he will create. He's to have his way with me."

"You'll keep a journal, Sterling -- a detailed record."

"Not I. Don't get me wrong. I'm not out to found a religion; I'm out to understand the laws of my own being -- and

obey them if I can. I'm out to find the optimum of life if I can find it -- for myself."

"Surely. I'd be the last to advise you to go about 'doing good'. But no man ~~can find his way to the optimum of life~~ ~~can find the optimum of life without doing good as a by-product, and no one~~ can find the optimum of life without making some sort of a contribution to civilization. That's one of the laws of your being, something you've inherited from a countless multitude of civilization builders."

"All right. If I can't help doing good I'll ~~meddle~~ meddle with as little meddling in the affairs of others as possible, but -- You're going to miss your train, Markus."

"Missing my train is nothing to what I'm going to miss if you don't take a ~~scientific~~ scientific attitude in this matter. A man of your mental calibre -- with your personal experience and training -- undertaking a piece of religious research -- and not --"

"You certainly will miss your train! ~~Run along~~, Markus!"

"Will you write --"

"Sure! Run along, and I'll write a book -- Adventures in Religion, or anything you want to call it. You've just barely time --"

As Robert Sterling pushed his friend John Markus out the door and in the general direction of the elevator, his last vestige of adult courage and resolution oozed away. He heard the elevator door open and close with a childish panic

that was the first threatening breath of a devastating storm of loneliness which tore from him every shread of confidence and beat pitilessly upon his nude and shivering soul as he cowered in the apartment that he had committed himself to leaving before his friend returned. He wanted to run after Markus like a spoiled child begging its mother not to go away. He had talked bravely enough -- and sincerely enough, but -- With Markus gone, everything good in himself seemed also to have gone. He was worth nothing without Markus. He had been an idiot to suppose he could break away! He sat down in Markus' favorite chair and gripped the arms as if the storm sweeping over him were an actual tornado that might hurl him to his death.

Vaguely he realized that this was a regression to his former morbid state -- too reminiscent of what he had put behind him. Vaguely also he remembered the way of escape, ^{by prayer} and by degrees pulled himself away from the conscious disturbance and sank again into the depths of the unconscious from which he was aroused by the ringing of the telephone.

"Sterling speaking."

"It's Markus," said a voice which set his pulse bounding like a lover's. "Thought you'd like to know that I have five minutes to kill before train time. And Sterling -- In my desk -- top drawer -- you'll find a looseleaf note book with my notes on religion. It's yours. Take it along. With you writing this book I won't have to -- and the notes may be sug-

away from me. Put a good thousand miles between us, and -- write to me in six months."

"I'm not ready to cut loose!" Robert knew he was playing the part of the child clinging to the parental hand, and laughed apologetically.

"You're more than ready. You know as much about human psychology as I do -- most apt pupil I've ever had. Nothing I can do for you that you can't do for yourself." He held out a warm and friendly hand. "Good bye, Robert Sterling! I'm going to New York for a week, and I don't want to find you here when I come back. I'll miss you -- you understand."

Understanding perfectly, Robert had ~~packed his suitcase~~ presented the bell boy with ~~such of his belongings as~~ would not go into his one suitcase, had taken a taxicab and gone as far as the station with no plan beyond getting away from the temptation of Dr. Markus's leading strings. He was to make his own decisions -- that was the first principle of the new mental regime -- but here he was, parking himself at the national crossroads, unable to decide which way to go. The train announcements flashed their invitations from the glaring whiteness above the doors that led to ^{the} concourse and the trains. The choice was quite too unlimited: Florida and the South; New Orleans, Texas, and the Southwest; California and the far West; Chicago, St Louis, Colorado; the whole vast middle west; New York, New Haven and Hartford -- Every time the bell clamored, announcing a new announcement he looked and considered. The trouble was it didn't make the slightest difference to

VII

But the night was not entirely sleepless. After reading Alone in the Dark through once more from the beginning and deciding that beyond any possibility of doubt it had been written by his sister, Robert finally dropped into a restless unconsciousness from which he was awakened by the noise of battle which turned out to be Simpson's motorcycle engine. Simpson was at it again, and the morning sun was announcing another day -- the day he was to make the acquaintance of Miss Ethel Melvin, imposter! For if Ethel Melvin was the daughter of her mother she was not the author of her novel! And Robert Sterling, friend of Simpson Klein, Brother of Rosemary, and Psychologist of Loosburg had another role. From now on until this mystery was cleared up he was a detective. But he must detect with extreme care, or another and less welcome role would be forced upon him. Loosburg would decide he was a lunatic and ship him back to St. Elizabeth's!

After a solitary breakfast which he ate alone because he was late, Robert gave his morning to matters of business which interested him not at all. Leaving the United States at the age of fifteen to be educated in England, Robert had been financed by the trust company in whose care his inheritance had been placed. It was not a large fortune that had been left him, but it was ample and it had been well cared for. As a man trained in engineering and engaged in the practice of his profession in so far-away a place as the Argentine, he had seen no

reason for changing the management of his inherited fortune, which in ten years had doubled in size. The same able management therefore, continued throughout the period of the war, had made him a rich man. He didn't fully know how rich, and it was time to look into the matter and take more responsibility for his own affairs. So he spent the morning writing letters, transferring his bank account from Washington to Loosburg, and attending to many small details that had long needed attention. Remembering the milk he was to leave regularly and unobtrusively on the kitchen porch, he wrote, among other things a check to Mrs. Klein for one month's room and board in advance, and placed it in an envelope on the hall table among letters for her left by the postman.

That she was pleased with him not only for having paid so promptly and so far in advance, but also for having done it so painlessly, was apparent at ^{dinner} ~~lunch~~ time in her smile and her whispered thank you. How much it meant to her -- the pretence that all these people were her guests, and she the cordial hostess! She led the conversation which consisted of nothing but neighborhood gossip, and never even brushed the subject of psychology for which Robert was profoundly thankful.

"I see that little Martin girl has got herself into the Bugle again," said the elder Miss Edson.

"Really?" Mrs. Klein seemed interested in everybody. "What's she done now? I didn't read the morning paper -- haven't had a minute."

"Well, you'd never guess!" The elder Miss Edson obviously disapproved of the little Martin girl. "Actually -- she managed to stow herself away on the bumpers or whatever you call them -- any way the place under a freight train that tramps and such people ride on -- and went from here to Lansing -- just like a hobo! They caught her at Lansing and were going to arrest her when they discovered she was a girl."

"Dressed like a boy, was she?"

"Of course, and she jollied them into letting her off. Said of course if they wanted to lock her up they could and she really wouldn't mind, because she'd only done it to see what it was like, and she'd just as soon see what it was like to be arrested only she'd lose her job in Loosburg if they kept her locked up too long."

"They just laughed and let her go. And the Bugle has an editorial about the wildness of the rising generation. The Bugle doesn't approve of the little Martin girl."

"I don't wonder," said the elder Miss Edson. "She ought to be put in a convent, or somewhere where somebody could control her. She -- she's a terror!"

"She isn't either," contradicted the younger Miss Edson. "May Martin is all right, and the Bugle needn't have it in for her so! They always have!"

"Well, she gives them every opportunity! A nice girl doesn't get herself into the papers like that!"

"Unless there's a reason!"

"What possible reason could there be?"

"Well, for one thing, she makes news. She's the only person in Loosburg who has the nerve to make news -- ^{news} that's almost but not quite scandalous. Really, you know, she's never yet done anything that was actually immoral. This business of riding the bumpers isn't immoral. It's just a lark. Curiosity -- that's all that ails her. She just has to find out what things are like."

"She finds out all right." Mr. Clarkson joined in the conversation. "I guess she's the only girl in Loosburg who has ridden in an air plane, or lost money in the races, or gone slumming in Detroit."

"May Martin's all right," declared Simpson who had been busily consuming nourishment. "I like her."

"You keep away from her!" Mrs. Klein warned. "She's the last girl in the world for you to run after! You can get into enough trouble without her help, and -- any way, she isn't good company for you."

"No." Simpson winked at Robert. "She might contaminate my morals! I'm a Little Lord Fauntleroy, I am!" Did you ever read Little Lord Fauntleroy, Sterling? It's my favorite book. I've shaped my life by it, and I'm always careful not to associate with anybody who might brush the bloom of innocence from my character. I shall have nothing to do with the shocking little Martin girl!"

"Oh be still!" his mother laughed impatiently. "You know well enough what I mean! Have you got your motorcycle fixed?"

"You bet! She sings just as pretty!"

"We've all been listening to her music," said the elder Miss Edson, dryly.

"Too bad. Mother says she's made everybody either deaf or crazy. But motorcycles will be motorcycles -- and she's all tuned up now. Anybody like a ride?"

"Oh I would!" exclaimed the younger Miss Edson. "take me. Simpson. I've always wanted to ride in a motorcycle side-car!"

"Sister! You wouldn't!"

"Inded I would! If May Martin can ride the bumpers I guess I can ride in Simpson's Rolls Royce -- come on Simpson, give me a ride!"

The entire family watched their noisy departure.

"A motorcycle," said the elder Miss Edson, "is the most undignified vehicle ever constructed by man. I'd sooner be carried down the streets of Loosburg in a wheelbarrow!"

The peace and quiet of Simpson's absence combined with the after effects of a hearty midday meal instead of the accustomed light luncheon gave Robert such a sense of drowsy comfort that he capitulated and spent the afternoon making up his lost sleep. By the time the noise of battle came roaring home again he was much refreshed and dressed for an hour of detective work to the accompaniment of Simpson's clatter and shouting and whistling. What with dashing up and down the stairs, calling to his mother about this and that, and the singing and whistling of an endless medley of tunes, jazz,

sentimental, and sacred, Simpson was only ^{somewhat} less noisy indoors than out. What boundless energy the boy had -- energy that was nearly as difficult to catch and harness as the ocean tides!

Robert was ready and waiting when Simpson Yodled to him from below stairs and told him it was time to go dragon hunting, and found the boy waiting for him with the ubiquitous motorcycle.

"Are we going -- in that?" he laughed.

"Sure! Why not? It won't matter to Ethel, and the dragon's simply got to get used to my ways. She's going to see a good deal of this boat, and the sooner she gets used to it the better."

"Just as you say," laughed Robert and climbed into the sidecar. "There's nothing exactly stealthy about you, is there, Simpson?"

"You bet there isn't!" he replied above the noise of battle. "Do you think you can interest the old lady, and give me a chance, Sterling?"

"I shall make every effort," Robert assured him, and gave conversational right of way to Simpson's motor. as it carried them clatteringly up into the stronghold of Loosburg's aristocracy. His task, as he saw it, was to prove one of two things -- that Ethel Melvin was an adopted child, or that she did not write her novel. Either she was his sister and had written the book, or she was Mrs. Melvin's daughter and had not written the book. Those were the alternatives -- there could be no other.

Simpson parked between a Packard and a Pierce Arrow.

"I'll bet they've got a housefull," he grumbled, looking gloomily at the other cars -- eight or ten of them-- standing parked about the circle that was Mrs. Melvin's garden.

"Naturally," replied Robert. "You wouldn't expect the author of the book of the year to be exactly a hermit, would you? Detroit, and Toledo, and numerous smaller towns are within easy motoring distance, and everybody loves a young lady novelist. She's probably the most sought after girl in southern Michigan."

"Doggone it! I suppose she is!"

Apparently she was, for she was nowhere to be seen. The front porch was colonial formality -- an entrance only, with tall pillars that reached up past the second story windows and supported its high roof with impressive dignity. A butler opened the door, and Mrs. Melvin in black silk was receiving, assisted by her friend and next door neighbor Mrs. McDougal. The two parlors, one on each side of the central hall were humming with the chatter of an afternoon tea. Little knots of people were everywhere but Simpson was obviously looking in vain for Ethel.

Robert found a quiet corner and let him look. The room was interesting. It had the culture and dignity of of an English castle in which nothing new could be imagined. Portraits done in oil, a few landscapes that might well be original masterpieces -- a few pieces of marble. Furniture that was

*Mrs. Melvin &
Mrs. McDougal*

no doubt as genuine as it was antique, rugs and tapestries of a richness and dignity that seemed strange in a middle western town. Poor Simpson! Did he really think he had a chance in such a place as this?

Presently Mrs. Melvin found Robert. "Mr. Sterling," she said. "I promised to talk to you about Ethel's work, and I'm going to keep my promise -- even if there are so many more people than I expected. The last door toward the back on the second floor is my sitting room. If you will just go up there -- and wait for me -- I'll be able to slip away for a few minutes I'm sure."

Robert thanked her, and wandered into the hall and up the stairs. At the far end of the upper hall was an open door, and he made for it. Obviously Mrs. Melvin's sitting room. Much less formal than the rooms below -- a room that was used and lived in.-- but the same atmosphere of English dignity and -- well, it was the utter absence of crudity that distinguished it from most American interiors.

Suddenly, from a large arm chair with its back toward the door, came the slight figure of a girl who stood before him surprised and questioning. "Were you looking for Mother?" she asked. Her voice was low and gentle -- almost childish. She spoke as a child might have spoken, and her face was child-like -- but not her eyes, glass grey eyes with fear in them. Or if it wasn't fear, what was it? She gave Robert the impression of being close to something very valuable and fragile, something that must not be carelessly handled or even approached

without care. It was the bull-in-a-china-shop sensation.

Ethel Melvin! An impostor? Most certainly not!

"You are Miss Melvin?"

She made a childish little grimace.

"The author of Alone in the Dark?"

"Have you read it?"

"About three times in the last two days."

"It's rather good, isn't it?"

"It's amazingly good."

"I don't like being an author."

"Why not?"

"Because -- I don't. I'd like to run away."

"From what?"

"From all the poeple who want to know how I do it."

"How do you do it?"

"I don't, my soul does it."

"Did your soul write alone in the dark?"

"Yes. My soul and I are as different as can be. I never know what it's going to write, and when I read what it has written I'm as surprised as anything. Me, I'm just a -- well, a commonplace sort of person who likes to dance and have parties and be frivolous. I'd like not to be an author at all. What is your name?"

"Robert Sterling. I'm a friend of Simpson Klein."

"O-oh! Mother told me. You're the psychologist!"

"I like being a psychologist just about as well as you like being an author."

"Then why do you do it?"

"Why do you?"

"I have to. I got into it, and I can't get out?"

"How did you get into it?"

"Well -- When I was so very small that I can't remember, I was so foolish as to write verses. I was very young -- irresponsible. I didn't know any better. But it gave mother and everybody the idea that it was sort of my duty to be a genius. They expected it."

"I can see how they would."

"Well, they did. And when I went to school, and genius didn't burn, Mother was so disappointed -- and so was the whole town, and something simply had to be done about it,"

"And so you found your soul, and began to write?"

"Yes, and the more I wrote the more I had to write. It would simply kill mother if I should stop now -- can't you see how the more one is a genius the more one has to keep it up? But why do you have to be a psychologist?"

"That's Simpson's fault. He's given me the reputation for being a psychologist, and I don't know how to live it down. It's almost as hard to stop being a psychologist as it is to stop being a genius."

"I'm sorry for us. I've got to go down right now, and be an author -- right before all those people!"

"I suppose you must. Simpson's down there -- wants to talk with you. Will you be nice to him?"

"Do you want me to?"

"It would be awfully good of you. He wants to take you riding in his motorcycle."

"Lovely! I wonder --"

Mrs. Melvin entered. "Why Ethel! I've been looking everywhere for you! Really dear -- you must go down and talk to all those nice people. Some of them have come from ever so far, you know."

"All right, Mother."

Robert Sterling was perfectly sure that the girl who went obediently but reluctantly down to meet her guests was no imposter. She had written her novel, therefore she must be his sister -- though she was not the type of girl he would have expected Rosemary to become. However, children could change -- she was not yet four years old when last he saw her. How quaint of her to say her soul did the writing! And how true. Such writing as that could be done only by the soul. It was the only thing that sounded at all like Rosemary. But he must not forget his detective role.

"Mrs. Melvin," he said, "I'd like to make a very thorough psychological study of your daughter's development -- from infancy up. Would it be asking too much -- Her undoubted genius would make such a study really valuable."

Mrs. Melvin looked pleased. Her maternal vanity was quite as great as if Ethel had been her own child. There could be no doubt of that. "What do you want, Mr. Sterling? To make

a magazine article or a book of it?"

"That would depend upon the amount of material I was able to collect. I'd rather make a book of it, but if there isn't as much material as that most any of the magazines would be glad to give us the space for it."

"What do you want?"

"Photographs, for one thing. A series of them, from babyhood up. That will add very much to the personal interest."

"I have lots of photographs." She went rather breathlessly to a drawer in her desk, and brought out a handful. These are her baby pictures -- up to four years old. She laid them across the desk in order of age -- one month, three months, six, ten months -- a year, a year and a half, two years and so on. And every picture was Ethel! The girl who had gone down stairs. Ethel was her mother's daughter, and therefore was not the author of Rosemary's book!"

He studied them until he could speak quite naturally.

"They are very interesting, he said. Sometime I'd like to see the rest of them -- her older pictures. Just now -- Have you kept the little things she wrote as a child -- her school compositions? I understand they were quite remarkable."

"Yes. They were. I have them all. I -- I'm not willing to let them out of my hands, Mr. Sterling. I simply can't let you take them from the house. But you may study them here as much as you like."

"Splendid! I wouldn't take them from the house for any thing. Could I have them right here? Now? For a little

while?"

"I'll give them to you. First -- here is my diary of her babyhood. It's a very full account of her development up to the kindergarten age, and only a little less full as she grew older -- there are four volumes, you see, and they ought to be a great help to you. And here are all her school papers -- compositions and things. But first I must show you the little book of verses she wrote before she learned to write -- just dictated, to me you know. They were published in the Bugle and I made this little book of them. I'll put everything here on the table and leave you to study them, for -- I really must go down and see that Ethel doesn't run away from her company any more. She's very temperamental -- very. I have to keep my eye on her."

Left alone, Robert sat thinking. Ethel did not like being an author, but her mother -- her mother was liking it passionately. Was living on it as one lives on stimulants. It was as he had guessed a clear case of the mother ^{with no role of her own} living her persona in the child -- a sinister, a vampire role! The child was imprisoned in ^{a maternal} ~~the mother's~~ web -- strong with passion, sticky with sentiment -- there was something horrible about it.

He ignored the diary of the mother and turned to the compositions of the child. There was nothing remarkable in the earliest of them labeled first and second grade, but in the third grade there was a really astonishing improvement -- little flashes of originality, of whimsicality, of discernment, far beyond the years of a third and fourth and fifth grade child.

and improving steadily all the way up into high school until the resemblance to Alone in the Dark was unmistakable. Any one would know -- but wasn't that exactly what Miss Harrison had told him? Ethel had written these compositions in the school room under the eye of the teacher -- of many different teachers! Ethel was her mother's daughter; she was also the author of Rosemary's book -- or rather her soul was. She had written with the soul of Rosemary! The idea took possession of him -- in spite of him! He did not believe it, and yet he knew it was true!

There was one solution -- an explanation he dared not face. Was he dreaming again? Was he living in another myth? This idea that the soul of Rosemary was living in Ethel Melvin was typical mythical material, but -- And so was the feeling he had about the house! It was a medieval English castle containing a torture chamber -- full of sinister --

Robert Sterling, with a sense of horror as irrational as it was intense, ~~found his way~~ ^{went} down the stairs, out of the Melvin house, and walked home without ceremony. He did not even stop to get his hat.

VIII

Simpson came roaring home to supper just as the family was leaving the table, and followed Robert to his room as soon as he had eaten. He was in high spirits.

"Why didn't you wait for me?" he asked. "And what in the name of marvelous miracles did you do to the dragon? She let me have Ethel for half an hour all to myself! And she talked to me as if I was a human being and actually asked me to come again. How did you do it, Sterling?"

"I don't know -- I wonder -- It must be because she thinks I'm going to write a book about Ethel!"

"A book! What kind of a book are you going to write?"

A sudden fury stirred Robert unaccountably. "I'm not going to write any kind of a book!" he said fiercely. "I'm not going near that place again!"

"The hell you aren't! What's eating you! You can't let me down like that, Sterling! You've got to stay by -- You may have to write a whole set of books, but you've got to keep writing til I get Ethel! See?"

Robert saw. Simpson would be welcome only because of his friend. The boy had a way with him. Possibly -- "Simpson Klein! If I make a welcome for us in the Melvin household -- will you get Ethel away from that woman? Will you take her so so far a way that she'll have a chance to breathe and find herself, and learn what it is to be a separate human being? Will you keep her away from her mother?"

"Will I! Say! You just watch me!"

A tapping on the door, and a voice -- Mrs. Klein --
 "You're wanted on the telephone, Mr. Sterling. Mrs. Melvin wishes to speak with you."

"In just a minute, Mrs. Klein." He lowered his voice and spoke to Simpson. "I'll go on with the writing, but -- For God's sake Simpson, work fast! Elope with her! I'll give you a month!" He went down to the telephone.

"Sterling speaking, Mrs. Melvin."

The answering voice was honey sweet. "You got away without my seeing you, Mr. Sterling. There were so many here. If you could come out in the morning -- we would be alone -- I have some interesting new ideas for our little story of Ethel's life and development. Really -- that's a splendid idea of yours, and there's plenty of material for quite a little book. We ought to push it -- now while the public is so full of interest in Ethel's novel."

Robert had a feeling -- strange and shuddering -- that he was being trapped by the same web that was victimizing Ethel., a web strong with passion and sticky with sentiment. Even if he had not promised Simpson -- could he have escaped it? How would he tell her he had changed his mind -- that he did not wish to write about Ethel? He had the feeling that he could not escape the will of this woman -- that she could use him as a tool! How horribly Ethel, then, must have that same feeling! Ethel, who since the day of her birth had never been free from that sticky passionate compulsion!

"What time shall I come, Mrs. Melvin?"

"Any time after nine o'clock. I'll have Ethel off to her work by that time."

"Very well. I'll be there about half past."

And so in the morning Robert began what was to be the first severe test of his return to mental health and normality. He faced not only Mrs. Melvin, but what was much more difficult his own dreams and imaginings, which had to be kept in their place. The house of the Melvins' was not a medieval castle though it felt like one; it contained no torture chamber, though the sinister atmosphere seemed always about to have its stillness broken by the cry for mercy; Mrs. Melvin was not the embodiment of a cruel and malignant demon, she was simply a selfish mother who was absorbing her child; the soul of Rosemary was not living in Ethel, there was only an incredible coincidence that had come near upsetting his mental balance.

"It was my idea," began Mrs. Melvin, "that our first chapter should contain a short account of Ethel's heredity. The family on my father's side came over in the Mayflower, and has been traced back ever so far into English history. I think that would be interesting, don't you? Heredity is such an important factor." There was a feverish eagerness beneath her calmly businesslike exterior.

"By all means, Mrs. Melvin. Let's begin with the family background. And it has occurred to me -- I think you should be the author of the book. I'll help you get it together, but

it should be the story of Ethel Melvin by her mother. Don't you think so?"

Mrs. Melvin was stunned for the moment -- silent with the magnitude of the opportunity. "But I thought you wanted to do it!" she said softly.

"It's the psychological side, not the literary that interests me -- and I think the book -- coming from you -- would have a far greater appeal."

"Ethel Melvin -- by her mother --" she said in hushed accents, almost a whisper. "By her mother!"

"All right, then that's settled. Give me the genealogical material and I'll see what I can do with it. When I get it in shape you must work it over and make suggestions."

"I had this typewriter moved in here in my sitting room. Do you use a typewriter?"

"After a fashion."

"So do I -- fairly well. I can copy all right even though I'm rather slow."

And so for several weeks the work went on in a way that was satisfactory to all concerned. There was ample material for a really entertaining book about Ethel -- fully as entertaining as the average biography -- and Mrs. Melvin's zeal for the enterprise grew as the work progressed. She worked as if under the lash of some inner necessity. She could not stop. She copied and recopied, handling the ever-growing manuscript as ~~the~~ ^{the} older generation handled the Holy Bible. She was simply, Robert told himself, the typical devouring mother having an

orgy of talking about her child.

And Simpson appeared to be making progress with his suit. He had the run of the house, and was made welcome by both Ethel and her mother. He even succeeded in taking the girl for many a ride in his sidecar, Mrs. Melvin smiling indulgently. "He's very quaint, your friend Simpson, isn't he?" she commented. "He interests Ethel. I've an idea she's studying him with the notion of putting him in a book sometime.. He'd make quite a romantic character in a story, don't you think?"

"Yes. Very."

"I'm glad to have him keep her busy." she smiled meaningly. "I mean out of the way while we're working. Though of course -- we can do most of the work ~~mornings~~ when she isn't here."

Robert was a little startled at her secretiveness. "

"Doesn't Ethel know what we're doing?"

"No. I don't mean she shall. Ethel's very temperamental about publicity, but of course she's got to have it. She doesn't always know what's good for her. In everything but her writing, Mr. Sterling -- You must see it as plainly as I do, but Ethel is nothing but a child -- a little girl."

"How old is she?"

"Twenty-four."

"Has she ever been away from you -- to college, or away at school?"

"Never! We've always been quite inseparable, Ethel and

I. ~~I question very much~~

I. This going away to college -- the breaking of home ties at just the impressionable age -- It never seemed a good thing to me."

"At what age would you break the home ties, Mrs. Melvin?" he asked. "It's a part of life, isn't it? To break the home ties and make new ties. Ethel is old enough to be a mother in her own home isn't she? Don't you want her to marry?"

"Of course. Ethel is practically engaged, you know. She is going to marry Kent McDougal, who lives next door. But there's lots of time for that -- she's such a child!"

"I haven't met Kent, have I?"

"Perhaps not. He's in and out, but -- Really he's very busy. He wants to make good, you know -- for the best of reasons."

"What is he doing?"

"He's in the real estate business, and doing real well. I wanted him to go into the Bugle office -- take charge of the advertising department -- but he's an independent youngster, and I admire him for it. He said he didn't want to depend upon any sort of "drag"."

"You own the Bugle, I believe?"

"Yes. Mr. Melvin started it -- the first and only newspaper in Loosburg. If it wasn't for the Bugle -- and Kent and his mother -- I wouldn't be living in Loosburg at all. With her writing all all, Ethel -- Well Ethel belongs in the east. We ought to be in New York, but we never will.

"The Bugle anchors me and Kent anchors Ethel."

Another week passed. Robert saw practically nothing of Ethel, but Simpson with his characteristic enterprise managed to see more and more of her. He caught her coming and going and with colossal assurance gained admittance to her studio -- the place where nobody, not even her mother, was ever allowed to intrude. A new novel was nearly completed, and Ethel usually went to work in her sanctum in the Post Office Building at nine o'clock, and often did not return until five. She telephoned for her mother's car when she wanted it, and the colored chauffeur went for her when Simpson didn't bring her home. But Simpson made the responsibility of the colored schauffer very light..

"How did you manage to to get into Ethel's study?"

Robert asked. "I thought it simply couldn't be done. I thought her name wasn't even in the telephone book -- that even a tele-
phone ^{was} call never allowed to disturb her privacy."

"It isn't. Just try to get her. And it's pretty neat the way she keeps the old lady out. The old girl thinks she's so temperamental that she has to be alone -- doesn't want any one even to see the place. And she keeps away because she's in terror of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs!"

"Well how are you getting along?" Robert was feeling even more than was usual the sinister strength of the web he was daily allowing Mrs. Melvin to spin. More and more she seemed to have a claim on him. ~~xxx but the book was not more than~~
~~not one~~ "Your month is ~~more than~~ up!"

Simpson grinned. "Your book isn't finished."

"Damn

"Damn!" said Robert, ending the conversation.

Next day, about two o'clock in the afternoon, when Mrs. Melvin was writing inscriptions for the photographs in the order in which they were to appear and, and Robert was clicking away by the two finger method on the typewriter, Ethel came walking in upon them. There had been no warning of her approach which was usually heralded by the clatter of Simpson's motorcycle. She was very white, and her eyes smoldered. "What are you writing, -- what are you doing with my photographs, mother?"

"Now Ethel --" There was a dangerous coldness in Mrs. Melvin's voice. "Is that the way to speak to your mother?"

"Simpson says your writing a book about me!" she charged.

"Well? Is there any reason why we shouldn't write a book about you?" The coldness increased, and Ethel stood and looked at her mother utterly unable to cope with the coldness unable to touch her mother through the gulf of aloofness her distance and reserve created. "Is there?"

"Yes. I don't want it! I won't have it! You shan't do it!" Something stronger than her fear of her mother seemed to wring her protest from her. "You shant do it!"

"Ethel! Go to your room!" She spoke as she might have spoken to a child of six, and Ethel obeyed her.

"Wait, Miss Melvin!" Robert called her back. He was appalled by the whiteness of her face, the look of tortured helplessness in her eyes. "I want to say, Miss Melvin, that so far as I'm concerned -- I'm through! I wouldn't for the

world go on with anything that was so objectionable to you!" But Ethel had fled to her room.

Furious, Robert turned to Mrs. Melvin. "It's wicked! Wicked! How can you --"

"Why, Mr. Sterling! Can't you see that the child is simply temperamental?"

"I can see that you dominate her! That she ought to get away from you and live her own life!"

"And what kind of a life would she live -- without her mother, Mr. Sterling? Can't you see from the story we have been writing that if I hadn't insisted upon it -- actually insisted -- her genius would never have developed at all? Surely, more than any one who has ever attained to great things, Ethel can say that all she is she owes to her mother. I think you are most unfair to me!"

"I can't help it. I'm through. I won't be party to any more of --"

But Mrs. Melvin had left the room, and Robert seemed to know that she had gone to Ethel -- was putting on the screws, making the girl pay for her insubordination in whatever way was most effective. He almost expected to hear the girl call out for help, and then laughed at himself bitterly. The thing for him to do was to get out. That would put an end to this book business, for Mrs. Melvin would never be able to get it into publishable form alone. He had been a fool ever to have started it with her. He was on his way following the winding road down the hill when he heard flying footsteps and Ethel's

breathless voice.

"Mr. Sterling!"

He stopped and waited for her. "Come sit down on the grass and rest," he said. "You're all out of breath."

She sat down with him on the grass. "I'm -- sorry, Mr. Sterling," she began as soon as she could speak for breathlessness. "I was very foolish -- and very rude. I hope you'll forgive me, and go on with your work with Mother." She was even whiter than before, and the look of desperation in her eyes had changed to smoldering despair. "I hope you will."

"I will not. You are asking it only because your mother forces you!"

"No. I want you to go on. I can't explain, but -- It will make me very miserable if you -- don't go on."

"You mean it will make your mother miserable."

"It's exactly the same thing," Mr. Sterling, it's just -- exactly -- the same thing!" Her eyes grew big with the loneliness of her unshared woe, her unshed tears.

Suddenly he had her in his arms, was kissing her with a passion that seemed to be the accumulation of all the tension not only of the the weeks in Loesburg, but of the years and years behind that. What was he good for if he couldn't stand between this girl and her devouring mother -- this girl with the soul of Rosemary!

Rosemary! He had forgotten about Rosemary! "I must go," he said hoarsely, but she clung to him.

"You'll come back -- and go on -- with Mother?"

"Yes," he said miserably. "I'll come back."

IX

Instead of going home Robert followed a ~~foot~~^{like} path that wound beside ~~a~~ brook at the foot of ~~the~~ Melvin hill, and led him into a small patch of wooded ~~picnic~~ ground known as McDougal Park and accessible to town and countryside by way of a shady drive above which virgin forest trees met and whispered together. This thought of Rosemary -- why had it thrust itself between himself and Ethel! Why --

Poor little Rosemary whose life had gone out so long ago! Of whom he had dreamed so disconcertingly! He was allowing the irrational side of himself too much sway! He must come out of that dream and the fog it created all about him! Coming out of the fog, what did he see? First of all himself in love with Ethel -- wanting fiercely to possess her, but even more fiercely to protect her. Wanting the role he had so unthinkingly left to Simpson. Wanting to take her away from the Mother who was consuming her. He saw all that very clearly -- and something else. Ethel had ~~begged him to come back.~~ She had given herself unresistingly to his arms -- accepted his caresses -- Unresistingly? More than that -- she had clung to him and begged him to ~~to~~ come back. Would she have behaved in that way if she cared a straw for Simpson? If Simpson had a chance with her?

As if chiming in with his thoughts of Simpson came the 'put put put' of a motorcycle, growing louder and louder approaching by the woods road from town. It was Simpson, and he

was not alone. In the sidecar, talking animatedly above the noise of the machine was a girl -- a bobbed headed blonde! They were so interested in each other that neither of them saw him, and their passing left him beside himself with rage. He had no idea why he should be so angry -- he simply was. What was Simpson doing with that silly little towhead when he was courting Ethel! The more he asked himself that question, the angrier he became -- and then the 'put put put' approached again! They were coming back. No, Simpson was alone. Robert stepped out into the road and stopped him.

"Get off that damned thing!" he ordered.

Simpson grinned and got off.

"Take off your coat!"

"What for?"

"Because I'm going to kill you if I can!" Robert was removing his own.

"Ouch!" said Simpson, and removed his coat.

Dread fight
~~His~~ ^Prage prodded by the boys flipance Robert plunged blindly at him, but found himself no match his opponant. In less than a minute and a half Simpson had him down and was sitting on him.

"Now," said Simpson, "the corpse would like to know what it's all about." He got up and put on his coat, and was offering Robert his.. "What was the motive for the crime?" Then, aware that Robert was in no mood for ~~far~~ levity his expression changed. "What's eating you, old man?" he asked hadning Robert his coat.

Robert took the coat grimly. Physically he was no match for Simpson, but morally -- "What are you doing with that towheaded flapper -- when your only excuse for existence is to get Ethel Melvin out of this?"

Simpson seated himself dejectedly on a picnic bench. No one would have guessed that he knew how to smile. "Sterling, he said -- I'm in a whale of a jam! I -- I guess I'm in love."

"Well I certainly hope so!"

"I don't mean Ethel. I -- It's another girl, Sterling. Ethel -- well I guess she fell for me a little too -- too easy. Gee, but I feel like a cad!"

"I should think you would!"

"I don't know what to do, Sterling!"

Robert's spirits rose as Simpson's declined. "Are you engaged to Ethel?" he inquired.

"No. But --"

"Have you proposed to her?"

"N-no, but I've come so near it -- Doggone me! I've told her ever so many times that I was going to propose, and -- of course she expects it, and --"

"And now you want another girl. Of course -- you would. You can't stick to anything longer than it takes to get it. Soon as you think you've got one girl you want another!"

"That's the way it looks, but -- Honest, Sterling -- I never was in love with Ethel! I liked her, but --"

"It was her money you wanted, was it -- a mealticket?"

Simpson turned a brick red and said nothing.

"You came home to live on your mother until you could marry Ethel and live on her! Is that it?" he pursued mercilessly.

~~"I'm afraid it was."~~ *still silent*

"And this other girl -- can she support you in the manner to which you've been accustomed?"

"Oh, let up! No! She hasn't anything -- not even a very good reputation in this town. But it isn't her fault! She -- she's just the finest -- the sportiest -- I -- I don't suppose she'll have me, Sterling, but -- I'd wash windows or lay bricks for the rest of my life to get her! But I -- I'm all sort of committed to Ethel."

"I wouldn't worry about Ethel, if I were you."

"But she thinks I'm in love with her, and -- She expects me to propose! I've all but proposed about fifteen times. It's rotten to -- to drop her cold! And it's rottener to go on pretending --"

"You're so busy thinking about what you're doing to Ethel that you never suspect what she's doing to you. Has it ever occurred to you that she was studying you -- just using you?"

"How do you mean studying me?"

"Well -- If you want my opinion -- She's going to put you in a story. She hasn't the least idea of marrying you, and never has had. Simpson you're all kinds of an ass!"

"How do you know?"

"It sticks out all over you -- thinking a girl like Ethel --

"Oh, cut it out! How do you know Ethel doesn't -- doesn't --

"Doesn't want you? Well, for one thing I've got it straight from her mother that she's observing you because you're quaint, and would make an amusing fiction character."

"'Quaint!' Well I'll be darned!"

"Her mother would have to be pretty sure that you were nothing but a joke to Ethel -- to let you run around with her so much -- wouldn't she?"

"I wondered about that -- her mother not having any objections at all. Sterling, I -- I believe you're right! But how can I be sure? How can I get out from under?"

"You're already out. All you have to do is to keep out. Just keep altogether away from Ethel."

"So-o-o! I begin to see -- the motive for the crime -- Sterling, you're going to take her off my hands! Lord, what a relief!"

"Yes, but get this straight, Simpson! I haven't taken her off your hands because she's never been on your hands -- never for a minute!

"Oh all right! All right! I get you, and I don't give a darn whose hands she's on, just so they aren't mine! I wish you luck, Sterling!

"Same to you Simpson? Who is the little towhead?"

"Towhead, nothing! Her hair is pure gold in the sunlight -- pure gold! Her name is May Martin."

"The girl who rode the bumpers!"

"Yes." Simpson's eyes grew dark and angry. "She's the only person in this town that doesn't get a square deal -- can't get a square deal no matter what she does."

"Why can't she?"

"Because the Bugle is our only newspaper, and the Bugle is down on her -- never misses a chance to ~~in~~ insinuate and give her just the sort of publicity that a decent woman doesn't want. It's been going on now for years -- ever since high school days -- until the really nice people of this town don't have much to do with her. It's been clever -- subtle. Just a phrase here or a paragraph there -- making everything she does just a little questionable without ever really telling anything that you can lay your finger on. It's -- well its diabolical, Sterling!"

"But why should the bugle want to hurt her reputation? It seems very strange --"

"It isn't strange at all. Ethel's mother is the Bugle -- even though she doesn't appear to be. She owns the paper, and what she says goes. And she hates May because Kent McDougal likes her better than he likes Ethel. He does yet, Darn him. He's my rival -- and yours too, so long as Ethel stays under her mother's thumb. Mrs. Melvin is set on having Kent for a son-in-law, and it's made a devil out of her -- a regular she-devil!"

"Is Kent still after her?"

"Yes. He wants to marry her and take her away somewhere,

and she won't go -- says she won't be chased out of town by a yellow newspaper. I think -- If Kent would marry her and fight the Bugle -- right here in Loosburg -- I think she'd have him. But he won't do that -- he wants to run away from it. That's how things stand."

Robert made due allowances for Simpson's state of mind. In love with May Martin, he would naturally defend her, but it seemed highly improbable that Mrs. Melvin would take such an underhand method of fighting for Kent. And yet -- If she could bring about the marriage of Ethel to Kent it would give her the permanant control of Ethel's life. The one thing she hadto fear was Ethel's marriage to a man who would carry her off. Simpson might be right.

Robert's
But that was Simpson's affair -- ~~his~~ own problem was enough for him. He must win Ethel from under her mother's nose before her mother suspected what he was about. Ethel and her mother must be separated, and it could not be done gradually. It must be done in one big and final crisis if it was to be done at all. "Simpson," he said, "I want an automobile. I want one immediately."

Simpson grinned. "You bet! A nice little two-seater -- a coupe. I've been wondering why you didn't get a car."

"I haven't needed one -- but I do now. I don't much care what kind, but I want it quick."

"If you don't mind a used car -- I know a little peach-ine that you could have in fifteen minutes. It's a bargain."

"Take me to it."

Five minutes in Simpson's sidecar, driven as Simpson drove it, brought them to a bleak-looking farmhouse, behind which a man was plowing. Regardless of bumps and ruts, the motorcycle dashed into the yard and down to the edge of the spring plowing. "Yo-ho, Ed!" yelled Simpson, and added to Robert. "Friend of mine. Up against it. Broke."

The car that the man showed them looked new, as if it had not been used at all. He was asking eight hundred for it.

"What did it cost you -- new?" Robert asked.

"Twelve hundred. I was a fool ever to buy it. I've got to get -- as much of it back as I can right away." He looked positively sick over his loss.

The speedometer registered ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ eight hundred and twenty-seven miles. "I'd as soon have it as a new car," said Robert, "but I'm not willing to profit by your misfortune. You haven't taken a hundred dollars out of it. If you'll give me possession now and stay with me until I have a license to drive, I'll give you what you paid for it."

Edward Boyd was very quiet in his gratitude and went at once to take his horses from the plow. "Thanks, Sterling," said Simpson. "He's a good friend of mine and -- Well, honestly, he can't afford to spend ten cents for tobacco let alone an automobile. He must have been drunk.." Guess I'm going. You won't need my limousine any more." And he put put putted away disappearing from sight long before he disappeared from sound.

7400, slow

Acquiring the title to the automobile, which had been
 by Ed Boyd
 purchased with a small ~~initial~~ ^{returning} payment to be followed by monthly
 payments he could not meet, practicing until he had refreshed
 his memory and drove with confidence, acquiring a driver's
 license, and ~~taking~~ ^{and} a very grateful Edward Boyd back to his
 home ~~to~~ ^{the Klein} an even more grateful wife, took the remainder of Robert's
 afternoon. He arrived at ~~home~~ with his new car just as supper
 was over, ate alone, and went to his room to study a new role.
 -- Lover to Ethel Melvin. He must make no mistakes.

"Yes." Simpson was the one to talk to, of course. Nobody else was so fond of him. Nobody else believed in him so ^{this time} thoroughly. Only Simpson must keep his mouth shut. "Sit down Simpson. I want to tell you something."

Simpson sat down sullenly. "If you're going to say any thing about May Martin," he began.

"Not a word. I want to ask your advice about my own affairs. Only -- Can you keep your mouth shut? This is very personal, and -- very important."

"Sure I can keep my mouth shut. What's eating you?"

"Then listen carefully.."

And Simpson listened to a minute account of little Rosemary the sort of child she was, her mischief, her pretty singing voice, her little gift of story telling, her irrepressible and ever recurring taste for adventure, her last day at the assylum, in which she was sent to bed without her supper for her disobedience -- and then her terrible end.

"It's Ethel's story!" He exclaimed.

"Exactly. What do you make of it?"

"Make of it! She's your sister, Sterling, and -- I've got the biggest kind of a hunch that I can prove it! I -- I'll see you tomorrow!" And with that Simpson was gone.

Put in
share dig, at
my heart,

friends and neighbors, they went to the next town and were quietly married. His parting instructions regarding the management of her finances and such other advice as seemed necessary ~~was~~ brief.

"But let me drive you back," she said.

"No," he said. "It will be easier if we don't let ourselves get that married feeling. I'll go home on the inter-urban."

They looked deeply into eachother's eyes, and then to the amazement of the little group of by-standers in the parsonage door she drove away without him and he watched her out of sight.

It was noon when he arrived in Loosburg, and he went to dinner at Mrs. Klein's. After dinner he went to his room to think things over. On his table lay the book Alone in the Dark, and he picked it up -- Ethel's book -- Ethel was his wife! And in those opening pages was Rosemary, coming between himself and Ethel with a vividness -- forcefulness that left him once more bewildered, almost questioning his sanity. He had called it coincidence, when he was with Ethel. Now, with the book before him he felt it could not be coincidence. It could not. For the sake of his own sanity he knew he must have a confident. He had to talk to somebody -- but to whom? Miss Harrison? No, Miss Harrison was too rational. He could not talk to her.

A clatter on the stairs and Simpson appeared. "Mother said you wanted to see me," he said suspiciously.

free. I will ask only that you write me now and then, at my present address. Let me know that you are well and happy, and -- let me know immediately if anything goes wrong. There's the long distance telephone, you know -- whenever you like. And I -- I know you have plenty of money, but I'd like to finance you."

"That's a husband's privilege," she said added with a little catch in her voice, "and you certainly aren't asking -- much! I wonder if I have any right to let you do so much for me. You've opened my prison doors, but --"

"There are no 'buts'. In fairness to yourself and to your mother and to me -- you must walk out into the freedom that she should have given you years ago."

Quite as usual he dropped her at her home and drove to the Kleins'. Simpson was waiting for him in his room. "Mr. Sterling," she said anxiously, "I wish you'd talk to Simpson! I'm terribly, terribly worried!"

"What's wrong with Simpson, Mrs. Klein?"

"He's been getting into bad company -- that little Martin girl! She a wayward, wild little thing, without a principle in her character! She's been the talk of the town since she was fifteen! And she has an awful influence on him. He's bought a revolver and carries it around with him! He's been shooting in the back yard this afternoon! He's going to get into trouble just as sure as the world! I wish -- You have more influence over him than anybody else. I wish you'd talk with him. He -- shoots true, Mr. Sterling. And he's

Can to garage to drop her

face!"

Robert smiled a little grimly. "I've lived in an insane asylum, you know. I've seen the unbalanced mind from the inside out and from the outside in. I suppose Simpson has told you all he knows?"

"All and more. But I think he's right believing that it wuld do us all good to be recreated as you have been."

"I don't know how thoroughly I've been recreated. But this plan of mine -- if you'll concent to it will be my test. If I can do what I want to do with your mother -- if I can stand up under the responsibility, and --"

"And teach her how to raise her own blackberries?" suggested Ethel with tears in her eyes.

"And teach her to raise her own blackberries, and sweeten her own oatmeal -- If I can do that, Ethel, I'll be more sure of myself. I'll claim you with confidence when the time comes."

"Just what do you want me to do -- and when?" she asked him.

"I want you to pack your suitcase *tomorrow morning* and be ready to leave without saying anything whatever to your mother. It will be easier for her if she knows nothing about your leaving until it is irrevocable. Can you get out of the house with a suitcase without arousing her curiosity?"

"Easily. I often ~~take~~ *carry* things *back and forth* to the cleaners -- she's been at me about having some things cleaned."

"Very well. We'll be married in the morning and you will go at once -- alone -- wherever you wish. Absolutely

order to be your mother's son, and also -- I want the right to go to you at a moment's notice if ever you needed me. But I shall not claim you until you know what it is to belong to yourself. ~~and it is~~ only too easy to transfer such a bondage as yours from a mother to a husband. I couldn't bear that."

"Would you be satisfied with me if I ~~didn't~~ ^{were not a writer} write -- if I never wrote at all?"

"More than satisfied. I don't care what you do, if only you cut the cords and find you own independent way -- whether it takes you one year or ten."

"There are things you ought to know about me."

"Never mind them. You may tell me anything you like before our real marriage -- whenever you are ready for that. But now -- the marriage I'm asking for now is a matter of form -- nothing more than the conventional red tape that will make me a member of your family and give me a certain authority with your mother. You can strengthen that authority by having no communication with your mother except through me. That will make it necessary for her to accept me.-- if you can bear to do it."

"Bear to do it? Oh, my dear! I'd be glad if I might never see her again. I hate her! It's my own hate of her that has so frightened me -- I -- I've lived for years with murder in my heart -- murder mixed with a sort of love that made me cling to what I loathed! But how can I go and leave ~~this~~ this dreadful thing with you. Have you any idea what you'll have to

"Yes. I know. You love me. You would love me -- no matter what -- happened. And I love you. Every time I look you I ^{want to say} say to myself -- 'Thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God.'"

For a moment he could not speak. "Then you'll marry me?" he asked.

"How can I marry! To marry and live at home with mother would be to tear me in two! You couldn't bear it! And how can I leave her! If she had anyone else -- if I had brothers or sisters -- if Father were living -- But how can I leave her alone?"

"You can't. It would wreck her. She would probably become insane. Ethel, I have a very unusual proposition to make. I want to marry you and send you on your wedding trip alone -- the trip of your dreams. I will stay at home and look after your mother, while you cut all the cords at once and go where you like and get acquainted with yourself. And when you have found yourself, and what you like and want -- uninfluenced by anything but your own wishes and dreams and discoveries -- and when your mother has learned that she must live her own life, not yours -- we'll see what sort of a performance we can put across, playing opposite each other."

"You love me enough to do that!"

"I must set you free before I let myself love you in any other way. If we were to do the usual thing you would go from one bondage to another. I'd be glad if you could go entirely free -- unmarried. But I must be your husband in

my life," she told him across the table, her eyes shining.

"Why do you suppose it is such fun?"

"I've always wanted to. I've always thought --"

"What have you thought?"

"It's been a sort of dream. It seemed as if -- If I could drive a car -- If I could pack a few things in a suitcase, and go all by myself -- away from everybody and everything I have ever known -- I've always thought I could get acquainted with myself. I don't know -- I really haven't the least idea what I'm like -- what sort of a person I really am. I don't know what I would like to do ^{or} and learn ^{or} and be."

"It's a real idea," said Robert meditatively.

It was mid-afternoon when she gave him the wheel and he drove home, slowly and reluctantly. "May I call in the morning and take you to work again?"

She laughed in wholesome merriment, and told him that ^{left her} he might, and he ~~xxxxxxhome~~ knowing that one of the cords that bound her had been cut.

For two weeks they had been spending their days together. She had her driver's license and they took turns at the wheel, driving wherever the roads invited ~~their~~ and their whims accepted. And then, one afternoon, he drove a little out of road where the woods made a shade above them and around -- or was it a lake sparkled through the green beyond, and the road and all it led to was put from sight behind.

"Ethel," he said, "I think you know -- I love you."

which the ~~life-giving~~ mother snips day by day as the child is
 individual
 born into his own ~~independent~~ existence and learns to breathe
 more and more deeply the bracing air of independence. And when
 they are all snipped she sends him out to be a man, to live his
 life and play his part. And when he stubs his toe and comes
 crying back to her she comforts him as quickly as she can, and
 shows him it is only his toe he has stubbed, and suggests that
 he run along and ~~learn to pick up his feet~~ *watch his step*, and see what a big
 old world it is."

"I see," said Ethel. "And the devouring mother doesn't
 cut the cords. She strengthens them and winds them tighter and
 tighter --"

"There are a hundred -- a thousand ways of doing it,
 Ethel. It can be done by selfish love of dominance, by senti-
 mentality and tenderness, by protection and indulgence, or --
 or by excessive personal ambition. The result is the same.
 The child cannot escape, he remains a part of the mother --
 an abortive crippled human being -- unless he finds some way
 of cutting the cords himself."

Ethel looked straight ahead of her down the long ribbon
 of road that stretched bright in the morning sunshine. "Teach
 me drive," she said at last.

She learned rapidly, with ~~the~~ eagerness of one who being
 famished partakes of food. By noon she was beinning to have
 have the confidence that makes driving a simple matter. They
 found a tearoom with the sign of the three A's, and went in
 for refreshments. "I have never had so much fun -- never in
 my life," she

He drove rapidly for an hour and a half in which time very little was said. "Do you like it?" he inquired after a long interval of silence.

"Yes -- better than anything else."

"Wouldn't you like to drive?"

"I don't know how. I've never driven."

"Wouldn't you like to learn?"

"I've always wanted to, but Mother would never let me even try. She's afraid."

"Well, we're a long way from Mother this morning -- suppose you have a lesson?"

She ~~answered~~ ^{hesitated} a moment in doubt, and laughed a little nervously. "I'm never a long way from Mother, Mr. Sterling. I seem to take her with me everywhere I go. Other people are not that way -- are they?"

"A great many are, Ethel. There are two kinds of mothers, ^{dreams} and always have been. As far back as the ~~memory~~ of man can be traced through his mythology both kinds have presided over his destiny, and his fate hangs upon his ability to obey the one and escape the other. The life-giving mother and the devouring mother --"

"Devouring!" she exclaimed under her breath. "Devouring!"

"Yes. Devouring. When a child is born, he ceases to be physically a part of his mother, but the mental and moral and spiritual cords are still unsevered. They are left for the mother herself to cut -- hundreds of them. Little strands

X

Robert was early at the Melvins' next morning, to Mrs. Melvin's obvious relief. "I'm so glad you thought better of it," ^{just a little} she said. "I was afraid you had taken Ethel's tantrum seriously and wouldn't want to go on with our work."

"Before we do any more with our work work, Mrs. Melvin, I must get better acquainted with Ethel herself. Do you realize how little I have seen of her? It's rather absurd, don't you think, to attempt to write a book about a person you have studied only at second hand -- when there is every opportunity for first hand observation?"

"Perhaps you're right, but -- Well, I suppose I could be making a nice clean copy of what we've finished, but -- Ethel is so busy with her new book, couldn't we go on with ours during her busy ^{time} hours?"

"Perhaps -- later. But I have a little business of my own that needs attention, and I think -- but I'll call for Ethel each morning and manage to see all I can of her. I have a new car -- Is she ready to go?"

Ethel was ready and they drove off together. "I'm not going to take you to your office," he said.

"No," she agreed quite simply. "Are you going to take me for a ride?"

"Yes. Where would you like to go?"

"I don't care -- ever so far. Anywhere that feels far away."

XI

By a very circuitous route Robert walked to Melvin Hill and arrived late without any definite idea as to the coming bout with the mother he had acquired. Mrs. Melvin with the evening Bugle in her hands was anxiously watching from the front steps. The last of her ^{afternoon callers} ~~guests~~ were driving away, leaving her alone, a tense little figure -- but cold, as if all outer warmth were inwardly directed, focussed upon an inner lurid heat of maternal passion. "Where is Ethel?" she asked icily. "She should have been at home long ago. She has disappointed the guests I invited here to meet her."

"Ethel is not coming home tonight."

"Not coming -- home! Mr. Sterling, Ethel knows that I prefer her to come home! She always comes home! Where is she?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know? Where did you leave her? We must send for her -- find her -- at once!"

"No. We must leave her alone -- let her go. She's on her wedding journey and must not be disturbed."

Dumbly Mrs. Melvin stared at him -- unbelievably. Only the tightening of her pale hands upon the newspaper she held indicated the tumult within her.

He took her arm. "Come inside and sit down," he said. "I have a great deal to tell you."

Mechanically she allowed herself to be led inside and seated on a sofa in the parlor. "Kent --" she began faintly -- "Ethel has -- gone -- with Kent -- has married him, and never

told me?"

"She didn't marry Kent; she married me."
Mrs. Melvin

Again she stared at him dumbly -- unbelievably.

"From now on, Mrs. Melvin, Ethel belongs to me. I've sent her on her wedding journey alone. That will seem very strange to you, but -- In my opinion she needs to be alone. She needs a vacation from belonging to somebody else. She needs a long vacation in which she will belong only to herself -- go where she pleases, do what she pleases, think what she pleases."

"If this is true, it's madness, Mr. Sterling! You don't know what you're doing! Ethel's a child! She's never been anywhere alone! She isn't safe! Something will happen to her! Where have you sent her? What arrangements have you made for her?"

"Ethel is not a child, Mrs. Melvin. You have tried to keep her a child -- that is why I must send her away. She is a married woman. I have given her my car, and she is to go where she likes, and make her own arrangements."

"Your car! Who is driving it!"

"Ethel is driving it."

Mrs. Melvin gasped. "But she can't -- she's never been allowed to drive! Oh --"

She drives very well indeed. I've been instructing her, and I assure you she's safer than your William on the road.
driver's permit
She's had her ~~license~~ for a month."

Mrs. Melvin sprang to her feet, twisting the newspaper in her hands. "I don't believe a word of this, Mr. Sterling. I'm going to put the matter in the hands of the police. They will find Ethel for me!"

"Wait a minute Mrs. Melvin -- before you make yourself and Ethel ridiculous. I have our marriage certificate in my pocket. Would you like to see it?" He held it before her and she sank back upon the sofa.

"You've married -- my little girl!"

"Yes. ~~She belongs to me~~. It will seem cruel to you that we did this without your knowledge, but it was the easiest way for all of us. You made it necessary by regarding Ethel as a child. When a mother will not allow her daughter to grow up the daughter has to take the matter in her own hands."

"But she is a child, Mr. Sterling! You -- you don't realize what a dreadful thing you have done! Ethel has no more idea how to take care of herself -- Why she -- She won't even know how to choose her friends! I've been so careful -- I've had to be! Why -- If I hadn't interfered, this girl -- this dreadful little Martin girl would have been a close friend of hers all the way up! And see!" She unrolled the Evening Bugle and held it with trembling fingers before Robert's eyes. May Martin, in large black letters was named corespondant in the divorce proceedings of Mrs. Maggie Boyd against Edward Boyd, her husband. Poor Simpson! That could hardly be framed against the girl by the Bugle! Robert wished

he had had more time for the role of friend, but just now the role of son-in-law must come first.

He threw the paper down. "Ethel may -- probably will -- make mistakes," he said. "But at any cost she must have her opportunity to cease being a child. She must have her chance to grow up, and ~~to do that~~ she must be separated from you. For the present you have lost your daughter, but I'd like you to feel that you have gained a son. Would you like me to remain here with you, or shall I go back to my rooms at Mrs. Klein's?"

Mrs. Melvin again rose from the sofa. "Is doesn't make the slightest difference to me where you go," she said in a shaking voice and leaving him alone in the parlor went up the stairs and shut herself in her own room.

Robert decided to stay. Mrs. Melvin had not forbidden him the house -- that was something, and he'd better establish himself there while the opportunity was open to him. He found Mattie, the house-maid, and showed her the marriage certificate -- explaining that Miss Ethel had gone on her wedding trip while he remained to take care of her mother. Strangely enough Mattie seemed not only to understand but to approve.

"Shall I make up a guest room, or -- Would you like to -- Perhaps you'd like to use Miss Ethel's room."

"Yes." Robert turned away and walked to the window. Ethel's room, across the hall from her mother's sitting room,

was familiar to him as a view from the hall. He would like to go there, and shut the door, and be with the entire past of Ethel herself. That would be something -- on his wedding night. But he could not talk to Mattie about it.

"Dinner will be served in half an hour," she said.

Robert sat down with the mussed and twister Bugle, smoothed it out as well as he could and read the sordid and ugly account of the Boyd divorce proceedings through from beginning to end. It was the usual thing of its sort, such as can be read in any newspaper anywhere at any time, but it hopelessly smattered the already none too immaculate reputation of the girl Simpson had been so attracted too. She would no doubt leave town -- could hardly want to stay in Loosburg after this. Evidently the word slum was not altogether inappropriate for that part of town in which she spent her leisure. And she wouldn't be likely to hold her job in the post office building. It would be a good thing for Simpson to find out what she was, and better yet if she left town.

Mrs. Melvin did not come down to dinner, and Robert ate alone, served by the quiet Mattie. Then he went to Ethel's room, closed the door and locked himself in -- to be alone with the fragrance of the girl he loved ~~X~~ and wanted. His wedding night! There was daintiness about the room and the little bath adjoining it. There was an intimacy in being there locked in. On the bed were ~~the~~ toilet articles -- everything a man would need. Mattie was thoughtful. How strange those masculine furnishings looked in that little virgin room. On the dresser was a framed photograph of Kent McDougal. Easy to guess

who put it there. He was on the point of throwing it out the window, but changing his mind, took it into Mrs. Melvin's sitting room and left it on her desk. Kent should not be present on his wedding night -- not ^{even Kent's} ~~his~~ shadow upon cardboard.

Again he locked himself in Ethel's room. Where was Ethel? He would ~~gladly~~ ^{at once and forever} have given ~~ten years of life~~ to be sure that she was safe. Not that he regretted sending her away, but -- Where was she? And who was she? Wife or sister? If she was his sister, of course she was not his wife. That was a mystery that would have to be solved before he could claim her. How inexpressibly horrible if she were his sister -- to feel about her as he did! What did Simpson know about it? What could Simpson know! Simpson had a hunch that Ethel was his sister. Simpson was intuitive -- quick -- his hunches were likely to be sound. What did he suspect? The possibility that Ethel might not be his wife -- might never be -- weighed upon him in proportion to the hope he tried to keep alive.

Nine o'clock, by the boudoir clock on Ethel's little book case. Better read something. He looked over her books. Fiction Writing, The Men who Write Our Novels, Handbook of English, The Art of Story Writing, The Thirty-six Dramatic Situations, The Art of Inventing Characters, The Future of the Novel; How to be a writer, The Art of Fiction -- Robert was aghast. He knew only too well who had put these books in Ethel's room -- forced her to study them! Rosemary or Ethel -- at least she should be free. There should be no more of

this. Wasn't there even one book that a girl could love? He found none. Probably her mother had expurgated everything that might distract her attention from the course marked out for her. In the closet -- the door was ajar and he opened it far enough to see -- were dainty garments, faintly fragrant with the suggestion of perfume that clung to what she handled more than to herself. He closed the closet door, and sat for a long time in the dark.

Finally, still in the dark, he undressed and went to bed -- lying awake for hours where Ethel had no doubt so often lain awake -- Ethel or Rosemary. Toward morning he slept and it was broad day when he opened his eyes. Sunday morning. Well, he was pretty late even for Sunday. Ethel's room looked different with the sun streaming in. It was too much like the rest of the house. Probably Ethel had had very little to do with its furnishing, but the fact that she had spent so many hours there, made it hers. He was glad he had taken possession of it. If Ethel were Rosemary this was all he would ever have of intimacy. He knew he could not be a brother to her.

He noticed as he went into the hall that the door of Mrs. Melvin's sitting room was closed. She had shut herself in, and his breakfast like his dinner was eaten in solitude, served by the quiet Mattie. But after breakfast Mrs. Melvin came down stairs, evidently dressed for church. She said good morning coldly and picked up the Sunday Bugle from the table in the hall. From the telephone room under the stair landing came persistent ringing, answered by Mattie who ~~re-~~ appeared almost immediately

appeared directly with the announcement, "Miss May Martin -- wants to speak with Mrs. Melvin."

"Tell Miss Martin that I do not wish to speak with her."

"She says it's very important, Mrs. Melvin."

"Tell her that nothing she has to say can possibly be of the slightest consequence to me."

"I'll talk with her," said Robert. "It may be just as well to hear what she has to say." He went into the telephone room and closed the door. "This is Robert Sterling," he said, and then added, "Mrs. Melvin's son-in-law."

There was a moment of silence long enough to indicate that she had hung up. Then -- "You are -- married -- to Ethel!" Was she shocked, or merely surprised.

"Yes," he said. "I'll give Mrs. Melvin any message you have for her."

"I'd rather tell you, Mr. Sterling." The voice was low but agitated. "Neither Mrs. Melvin nor Ethel must come to church this morning. Mattie said Ethel was out of town is that true?"

"Yes."

"Then that's all right, but -- Keep Mrs. Melvin at home this morning. She always goes to church, but this time she -- she just mustn't!"

"Why not, Miss Martin? I'll have to give her a reason."

"I can't tell you the reason, but -- Keep her away! It's for her own sake. She's no friend of mine, but -- I've got to

warn her." The click of her receiver on the hook ended her word of warning.

Perplexed and troubled, Robert went back to his Mrs. Melvin. "Miss Martin warns you to stay away from church this morning. It's decidedly mysterious, but -- She sounded very sincere, and if I were you I'd stay at home."

"My goings and comings are no business of Miss Martin's, and -- I always go to church."

"You would be wiser not to." Robert thought of Simpson and his revolver. Surely that was not -- But the boy might be quite beside himself, and -- The telephone was ringing again and he didn't wait for Mattie to answer. "Sterling speaking," he said, after closing the door.

"Good! Thought you might be there!" It was Simpson, and he sounded anything but murderous. "I only wanted to tell you to come to church without fail. It's absolutely necessary for you to be there. That's all!" He hung up with a characteristic bang, and there was no use rattling the hook at him. But what in the world -- Had he discovered -- Was there to be some sort of public exposure -- Ethel and her mother warned away -- It looked -- But how keep Mrs. Melvin at home. Out in front the car was waiting for her -- William in it -- She had gone for her coat and hat --

Robert snatched his hat and went out. "I'll drive this morning, William," he said, and William got out. Instantly Robert was in his place, starting the car, leaving ^{it - since} her behind. She would hardly walk, and if she called a cab she would be

too late. It was already almost church time.

A properly reverent and religious town was on its way to meeting. From here and there all roads converged on Sunday morning and came to an end at the commodious stone church. Robert drove by many cars along the curb, and parked two blocks away. People were greeting each other, talking quietly as befitted the sabbath day in the shadow of the house of God. The organ was already playing. Robert looked vainly about for Simpson. To get a word with him -- to find out what was impending beforehand. But the boy was nowhere to be seen. Perhaps he was already inside.

But if so Robert, standing in the back of the church was unable to locate him. "May I show you a seat, Mr. Sterling," inquired an usher, and Robert followed him to a seat well toward the front. And still he could not locate Simpson. A real sense of danger -- of suspense -- weighed upon the friend of the Simpson, the brother of Rosemary, the husband of Ethel, the son-in-law of Mrs. Melvin. He had a profound impression that something was about to happen -- something which was to him personally of the greatest importance -- something crucial.

People were still coming in, the seats were filling. Kent McDougal and his mother were taking the seat across the aisle -- and with them -- Yes, it was Mrs. Melvin. Little and proud and stubborn, so cold without, so passionate within -- she had found a way to come to church in spite of him. Well -- he done all he could short of locking her up. Where could Simpson be? If only --

The congregation was rising for the doxology, and remained standing for the prayer. Robert began to feel more at rest in his mind as the regular opening of the service proceeded under the dignified direction of the reverend Dr. Sigourney. Dr. Sigourney certainly wouldn't allow anything very dreadful to occur to Mrs. Melvin ~~at~~ his Sunday service. There were hymns, the collection was taken up while the choir sang softly, there were announcements of various kinds. Prayer meeting on Wednesday evening, a church supper Thursday, a poor family in the country to be cared for -- another hymn.

Now would come the sermon. Dr. Sigourney turned the leaves of the Bible on the desk to find his place, and arranged his sermon beside it. He was about to announce his text when a rustle of astonishment went through the church. Simpson at last! Striding down the aisle in a manner quite too brisk and businesslike to be in keeping with the place and hour -- headed straight for the pulpit.

An usher stepped forward to head him off -- to keep him from intruding upon divine services.-- but Simpson produced his revolver and the horrified usher fell back several paces.

"Sit down, everybody! And sit still!" Simpson commanded. The usher obeyed, and so did everybody else. If Simpson was crazy, and apparently he was, there was nothing to do but humor him.

"What do you want, Simpson?" asked Dr. Sigourney mildly, quite unafraid. "What do you want?"

"I want to conduct these services, Dr. Sigourney."

There was a determined grimness about Simpson, a grimness very definitely accentuated by the revolver in his hand. He gave the impression that he would not hesitate an instant if it were necessary to use the weapon -- but his attitude toward Dr. Sigourney was one of utmost courtesy and reverence. "I want to conduct these services. My text is James 1.11 7-8. Will you read it, Dr. Sigourney?"

"Certainly, Simpson." Dr. Sigourney turned the leaves of the pulpit Bible, found the place, and read:

"For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed and hath been tamed of mankind.

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

"Thank you, Dr. Sigourney. The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison -- and the newspaper is the tongue of the town. The Loosburg Bugle is the tongue of this town, and it is very full of deadly poison. Last night's edition was particularly poisonous, more than usually deadly -- and the evil it did must be undone! That is my apology for coming here and interrupting this service. You will all realize that there are only two ways of reaching the ear of Loosburg -- through the Bugle, and through this Church. You will all see that I have no choice but to use the church.

"Mrs. Boyd, will you please come forward?"

There was a rustle of interest throughout the church, as all eyes focussed upon a cowering woman in a pew at the left. She shrank back hid her face from the curious gaze of

her fellow townsmen. "I'm sorry to embarrass you, Mrs. Boyd, but it's absolutely necessary for you to tell this town why you brought the name of May Martin into the quarrel between yourself and Ed -- just how much you were paid for doing it, and by whom. Please come forward."

The woman was sobbing with fright.

"Perhaps," said Simpson not ungently, "Perhaps you'd prefer to have me tell it. If I make any mistakes you can correct me. Your quarrel with Ed was about an automobile -- ^{he} nothing else. You wanted one, and couldn't afford it, and you threatened to leave him. Then a representative of the Bugle arranged this other thing. So long as you wanted a divorce, the grounds didn't particularly matter -- and a thousand dollars was a lot of money, and the girl whose reputation was at stake was nobody of any consequence and her reputation wasn't so white that a few more spots on it seemed to matter. That's all Mrs. Boyd -- if you want to go home now you may."

There was a dramatic pause while Mrs. Edward Boyd fled sobbing from the church.

"And now --" There was a real menace in Simpson's voice, and the revolver in his hand made a significant gesture. "Mr. Harold Weaver, of the Bugle staff --" All eyes turned to the other side of the church, where Weaver sat paralyzed, not daring to move. "I won't ask you to come forward, I'll merely ask you to correct me if I am inaccurate in any of my statements. But be very careful, Mr. Weaver. The truth is going to come out -- every bit of it, and what comes out here in

Church won't have to come out in court. ~~As I understand it~~ -- you'll correct me if I am wrong -- you have been for years under instructions from higher up to injure in every way possible the social and moral standing of May Martin. And you have done it very cleverly. There has hardly been a month in which her name has not appeared in some disagreeable connection -- with many disagreeable implications. Not one of these attentions alone would have done her any great harm, but the lot taken together during the ten years since she entered the Loosburg high school have made her -- well not quite an outcast, but certainly a social undesirable. During the last month your orders from higher up have been urgent. You were told to finish your job with something so disagreeable that May Martin would leave town. So you fixed up this thing with Mrs. Boyd, who was going to get a divorce any way, and could use a thousand dollars on the side. ^{May Martin} You had her pretty well framed -- but Ed Boyd is an honest man and he made his wife tell the truth. Thank you, Mr. Weaver.

"And now," Simpson was warming up to his task, a dynamic, compelling, personality in a situation which put him at his best -- fearless, perfectly at ease. "And now, Kent McDougal, will you speak for yourself -- or shall I testify for you, too?"

Kent McDougal, crimson from collar to hair, was in his turn the target for all eyes. His panic of embarrassment was pitiful. "All right," said Simpson with exaggerated friendliness. "I'll be glad to tell your part in this. Ever since

"And now --" Simpson was warming up to his task, . A dynamic, compelling personality in a situation which put him at his best -- fearless and perfectly at ease -- he addressed himself to Kent McDougal. "Kent, would you like to take your mother and Mrs. Melvin home?"

Kent nodded, spoke to his mother, who in turn spoke to Mrs. Melvin and followed her son from from the church. Mrs. Melvin however seemed not to have heard her friend or to have noticed that she was being left behind. She sat motionless, staring straight ahead of her as if unaware of what was going on. Simpson looked at her for a moment and his face hardened. He had given ^{the} her chance to escape what was to come. "I think you all know," he began slowly, "that Kent McDougal and Ethel Melvin have been intended for eachother ever since they were born -- by mothers who didn't realize that in the United States such things are not arranged by parents. But you may not know that Kent has been interested in May Martin since they both began high school together, and that it was on account of this interest in her that the Bugle considered her undesirable -- has tried to make the town too uncomfortable for her. For several years Kent has been trying to persuade her to marry him and go away, but she has refused to be run out of town by a yellow newspaper. And so Kent worried along, seeing very little of her -- until just lately. Lately he's had a rival which stirred up the man in him, and he's been going after what he wanted a little harder -- a little more conspicuously.

Some of you may have noticed. At any rate the Bugle noticed and proceeded to do its worst.

"That's the end of part one, friends. Part two will follow immediately.

XII

With a fairly impish smile Simpson turned upon his friend. "Sterling, you told me something yesterday, in strictest confidence. Come on now -- right up here in front -- and whisper your secret into the ear of Loosburg. Tell 'em just what you told me."

Too surprised to speak, Robert stared at him, and Simpson continued. "Sorry, old man, but -- Loosburg has to know, right now and here. ^{It would hurt me} ~~I hate~~ like the dickens ^{have to} to betray a confidence, but if you won't tell --"

Robert rose, his indignation neutralized by the suspense born of his own mystery and Simpson's purposeful publicity stunt. That Simpson had sufficient reason for all this he felt sure; it was the part of friendship to cooperate. And if his story was to be told he preferred to do the telling.

"Thank you, Sterling," said Simpson. "Come on up front, where everybody can look and listen. Fellow citizens, My friend, Robert Sterling, has a little story to tell you -- a little mystery story that will interest you very much. Mr. Sterling."

With a graceful suavity Simpson stepped back but remained standing while Robert told simply and informally but very fully the story of little Rosemary -- her appearance, her mischievous exuberance, her last day, her tragic end. "And so, you see," he said in closing, "when I read Miss Melvin's story, Alone in the Dark, I couldn't help feeling that the little Mary Rose

was a faithful portrayal of my little Rosemary -- even to the name. I was sure it had been written by ^{my} sister -- that she was still living, and that the book was the story of her escape, and to some extent, perhaps the story of her later life. Consequently I came to Loosburg expecting to find that Ethel Melvin was an adopted child, believing confidently that I would be able to identify her without serious difficulty as my sister.

But when I discovered that Miss Melvin was not an adopted child, that she was ~~not~~ ^{neither in appearance nor temperament} at all the type of young woman my little sister would probably have grown to be -- And when I also found that the book was unquestionably her work, since from childhood she had shown remarkable literary ability, and her childish compositions contained much of the delicacy and whimsicality characteristic of the book -- Well, I didn't know what to think. Finally ^{when} I asked her regarding the inception of the character of little Mary Rose, and she told me that it 'came out of her soul, her 'lost soul', as she whimsically put it, I was forced to the conclusion that I had stumbled upon a remarkable coincidence and nothing more."

Robert turned to Simpson. "Is that enough?"

"Not quite." Simpson put a detaining hand on his friend's arm. "Rosemary," he said, addressing the rear of the church with triumphant tenderness. "Rosemary, come here and meet your brother -- Robert Sterling."

In the hushed stillness of the church Robert strove to quiet the tumult of his own heart. May Martin was coming

swiftly down the aisle -- Simpson's tow-headed flapper! Her face though very white was strong, fearless, but sensitive, and the little swirls of hair escaping from beneath a small felt hat were as Simpson had said, pure gold. The eyes, which seemed to carry her to him by the very intensity of their eager interest, looked up into his face -- deep wells of azure incredulity. Then this dramatic meeting staged by Simpson Klein was as surprising to her as to her brother. "I didn't know --" Her speaking voice was low but full, a musical contralto, like a song. "I can barely remember -- There was a boy. He sang funny little songs to me, and I cried when he went away."

Robert forgot the congregation as he took her two hands in his. Little May Martin -- Mary Rose, alone in the dark, fighting her own battles, refusing to be persecuted out of town by the poisonous tongue of Loosburg, standing her ground, winning at last with the help of Simpson Klein! Had she written Ethel's book? Impossible unless she had also written Ethel's school compositions, which could hardly be. What lay behind all this, and what was this performance of Simpson's going to do to Ethel, ~~who was his friend's wife?~~ But -- one thing at a time. "I can see," he said, studying the interesting young face, "I can see Rosemary in you."

"Yes. When Uncle Joe found me in the back of his car, and asked me my name, I told him I was 'Oh May.' He didn't see the use of the Oh, so he called me May. But the right name must have been tucked away in my unconscious or I wouldn't

have thought of Mary Rose for the little orphan's name. Rosemary! It's a beautiful name! I -- I'm very proud to be your sister -- Rosemary Sterling."

"Wait a minute! Wait -- a -- minute!" Simpson put an arm about the girl, pulling her away from Robert. "You go back and sit down, Sterling! Your sister's real name is Mrs. Simpson Klein." And with his free arm he waved the mere brother back to his seat while astonishment stirred and then silenced a breathless congregation.

"We've been married exactly ten days," Simpson informed with naive enjoyment and pride, his arm still holding Rosemary. "And that's the end of part two. Part three's the Confessions of a Wife. Will you confess, Rosemary, or shall I do it for you? The story of your life is the next thing on this program, and you can put it over with a lot more kick than I can, but --"

"You sit down, Simpson. I'll tell it."

Simpson seated himself near her on the front seat and the girl stood before her assembled townsmen as fearlessly as he had stood. They were much alike, Robert told himself, except that the girl had been more disciplined by life. There was in her face a strength and purpose that in Simpson had never been called into action. Rosemary's eyes rested for a moment on the straight little figure, sitting alone in the McDougla pew. She was face to face with her enemy, the enemy she had vainly forewarned. A flashing pity left her young face stern, and Robert read in it the determination to ignore

the woman ^{who} would not be advised, to speak precisely as if her enemy were not present.

What was she going to do to Mrs. Melvin? What could she do more than had already been done -- unless she was about to strike the mother through the daughter! Ethel too had been warned to keep away! What was Rosemary, his sister, going to do to Ethel, his wife?

"I needn't tell you anything more about my adoption by Uncle Joe." The low voice filled the church with no apparent effort. "And it won't be necessary more than to mention now his wife died when when I was only five, and how he started off with his flivver and his books and his violin and me to find some place where his music would be more in demand than ever it had been in Pennsylvania, nor how we wandered, trying Cleveland and then Detroit, and finally coming to Loosburg to try truck gardening, because vegetables were more necessary than music, and because Uncle Joe wasn't very well, but mostly I think because he wanted me to settle down and go to school.

"Most of you will remember Uncle Joe as gentle old man who brought vegetables to your kitchen door, often with a little girl at his heels. But you didn't know him at all for what he really was -- an accomplished musician, speaking eight languages fluently, marvelously at home in the literature of each of the languages he spoke, but without a practical hair in his kindly dreaming head. The Uncle Joe you knew was

a soft-spoken old man with potatoes and onions and lettuce and tomatoes; but the Uncle Joe I knew was a university.

'I can never send you to college, May,' he used to tell me, 'but I'll begin now while you're little and seed you down with delights of higher learning as we go along. Who knows but those delights, if we plant them now in your growing mind, may not grow as you grow. Perhaps a college education that is planted early and allowed to grow may be even better than one that is manufactured and and purchased later as an after-thought.' And so from the time I could talk he taught me languages, and literature, and such philosophy as he could impart as we drove about from town to town, as we settled down to coaxing vegetables out of the Loosburg ground, and cooked our simple meals and washed our dishes and kept our house. And in the evenings he used to play for me, and teach me to play his violin.

But what Simpson wants you to know about is the whole story of my friendship with Ethel Melvin. When we came to Loosburg I knew how to read and write, and though I had never been to school they put me in the third grade -- with Ethel. Of course there were other children in the grade, but to me she was all that mattered. She was made of different stuff -- a finer, sweeter, more beautiful stuff than had gone into the making of any of the rest of us. And before I tell what Simpson says you all must know I want to say that that feeling for Ethel has never changed except to prove itself again and

again and again.

"We were intimate friends from the beginning. I admired her so much that I did my best to copy her pretty manners, her winsome gentleness, even her penmanship, which I admired intensely. I succeeded much better with the penmanship than with the imitation of her other excellencies, and when ~~xx~~ after much persevering effort I was able to write as prettily as she, we decided to test my imitation on the teacher. I put her name on my compositions and she put my name on hers, and we handed them in to see if the teacher would notice. We were able to do this because Ethel led the class in deportment which automatically made her the captain of her row and collector of the papers. It was such fun -- made such a fascinating secret -- that we kept it up and the teacher never caught us at it. Our joke was very nearly discovered several times, but never quite. And it didn't seem like cheating to us because we both invariably got high marks -- exactly the same marks.

"About the middle of the year I learned that Ethel's work -- her composition work -- was not satisfactory at home. She told me all about it at recess in the far corner of the playground. Under the inspiration of her mother's suggestion she had written little verses in her infancy -- little verses that had been published -- and everybody, most of all her mother, expected her to become a genius. And she was disappointing the expectations. In first grade, in second grade, and now in third grade she was able to produce nothing more than was produced by some half dozen other children -- just good school compositions that met the expectations of the teacher. The

pressure at home, increasing with each year of disappointment in her attainment, was making her miserable -- so miserable that she wept in my arms as she told me about it -- and I accepted the challenge. Her compositions must be different -- they must be distinguished -- and I would make them so! There was no question of cheating now. We were standing together against ~~adultr~~injustice -- the weak against the strong, and anything was fair.

It was natural for me to think fiction, fairy story and allegory. I had always amused myself with such things and I knew well enough that if I put my own ideas instead of those planted by the teacher into the compositions they would at least be 'different'. The first one, handed in under Ethel's name, made a sensation. Ethel's genius was coming to the surface again, and everybody was delighted with her, and she and I enjoyed our little joke and kept it up. We were very careful. When she was not captain of her row we dropped it, but under my own name I wrote only the regular school stuff, suggested and expected by the teacher. Of course that made lapses in Ethel's genius, but nobody thought anything of that. You couldn't expect a little girl of eight to be a genius all the time.

Outside of school hours we were inseparable -- as inseparable, that is, as we could manage. But the Dowager Queen -- the mother of my princess was to me always the Dowager Queen because she was so dignified and unapproachable --

she decided that a little vegetable girl was not a fitting companion for a gifted little princess, and we were forbidden to associate. It was a dreadful blow.

" When I went home I was sent home from the royal castle by the Dowager Queen herself, and told that the princess would be busy and I must not come again, that I must play with little children children of my own set, -- Uncle Joe noticed my despair. 'Don't look so like a lost soul, child!' he exclaimed giving me an idea -- an enchanting idea. I was a lost soul -- the lost soul of the beautiful princess -- and Kent McDougal, in our grade at school and privileged to be with the princess constantly, should be Sir Oracle, the court magician, and help the beautiful princess to find her lost soul. The Dutchess -- Kent's mother was always the Dutchess in our play, -- was as particular about his associates as any Dowager Queen, and he was not allowed to play with the rough, unpolished little boys about town -- he was allowed to play only with the princess. So the two royal children would wander out together to play on Melvin Hill and thereabout, and so long as they ran off together and came back together it was assumed that they had played only with each other. Neither Dutchess nor Dowager Queen knew of the Cave of the Lost Soul, deep in the woods behind McDougal Park.

And so the Princess and the Oracle and the Lost Soul grew into a permanent organization, far more entrancing than if it had not been a secret of secrets. The three of us grew up together with an intimacy ~~that~~ no one guessed, a wholesome intimacy with each other, and with squerrels, birds and flowers.

During our grade school days I never spoke either to the Princess or the Oracle when I met them on the streets of Loosburg, and at school it was a part of the game to pretend that they were nothing to me. We created an atmosphere of mystery and intrigue by appearing as strangers to the eye of the world.

"But when ^{we} reached high school age the Oracle objected. He liked me and wanted to take me to parties and dance with me. And the Princess thought she ought to write her own composition. There were lengthy discussions in the Cave of the Lost Soul, only a part of which were known to the Oracle, for the secret of Ethel's 'genius' had not been shared with him, and was ^{only} whispered cautiously when he was beyond hearing.

"There was such a falling off of genius in that first year of high school that the Dowager Queen became desperate. The Princess was in disgrace, and her punishment grew more and more unbearable as the months went by. Finally she was allowed to attend no parties, nor was she granted any week-end play or recreation unless the week had produced some creditable -- more than creditable -- bit of writing. And so we regressed to our former adaptation -- the weak against the strong, with anything fair if only it would work -- and the Princess's genius again came to the surface. Our writing was still alike and exchange was easier than in the grades.

"But the open friendship with Sir Oracle brought disaster. It was observed and viewed with consternation by both Duchess and Dowager Queen, and the royal Bugle began to sound taps for the little vegetable girl.

I think I understand it. To those in court circles I wasn't a real person at all -- any more than ~~than~~ the enemy he kills in battle is a real person to the soldier. He couldn't run his bayonet through a real person, so he must make vermin of those he has to exterminate. And so I became vermin -- something disgusting that must be done away with.. If we had had money it could not have been done. If either Uncle Joe or I had been better known it could not have been done. But we were very poor and very busy. Uncle Joe spent all his spare time on my education, and I spent all mine with the Princess and the Oracle in such rendezvous as a lost soul was able to devise. And so it was not too difficult to make vermin of me. I was watched for evidences of the disagreeable.

"The psychology of rumor is interesting. If you start a story without telling the whole of it, your listeners will automatically if quite unconsciously finish it in their own imaginations -- according ~~the the suggestions and~~ implications your beginning suggests. A man reported by the Bugle as reel-
ing down the street could be regarded as a town drunkard within a week, though it were only the icy pavement that made him 'reel'. Then what of a girl wandering at ~~a late~~ hour of the night in the outskirts of Loosburg in the company of an unidentified man -- used as the text for an editorial recommending the enactment of a curfew law for the protection of our youth!

"It's a terrible thing for a girl to have the tongue of the town poisoned against her; but it's more terrible for the

man who loves her without being able to protect her good name. Uncle Joe -- He was shocked and angry at the first attack, himself being the unidentified man with whom I had roamed the outskirts of Loosburg. He went to the Bugle office where he was treated as a joke.

"At the second attack upon me he was beside himself with rage and rushed blindly off --" Rosemary paused for a moment to control her voice. "You may remember the story as the Bugle told it. The picturesque old vegetable man, rushing through the streets apparently intoxicated had been struck by an automobile and fatally injured.

"And so Uncle Joe was gone and I was alone. Ed Boyd, who was farming next us, and had known Uncle Joe was appointed my guardian. Of course I couldn't run the truck farm and finish high school too, so he undertook to take care of the garden on shares. Living so near by he could do it along with his own -- by hiring a little more help. By my living alone in the old house -- and Ed helping so much -- Well, some of you may remember what the Bugle did with that, and how skillfully. The high school investigated me and found nothing wrong but that fact was published inconspicuously among the advertisements with no heading to speak of, and few saw it.

"My last year in school was a bad year for the garden. It didn't bring in anything, and I had to have a little money, so I got the job of violinist in the Loosburg picture theater. That was when we first had movies -- in the old Post Office

just after the new building was finished. Phil Benson was playing the piano for the pictures and it was more interesting, more like a movie orchestra, to have the violin.

But playing for the pictures made me more conspicuous than vermin can safely be, and -- Well -- The Bugle interests had acquired the mortgage on Uncle Joe's property, and when it was impossible for me to keep the interest up they -- Perhaps you remember that everything was sold at public auction. They didn't even leave me Uncle Joe's violin.

"That infuriated Kent, and he bought it in with his savings and gave it to me. He meant to be kind, but -- Well, it was suggested in the Bugle that a very objectionable spot in a questionable neighborhood had been 'cleaned up'. It was the worst thing that had been reported and I wasn't wanted any more in the movie theater. They were nice about it -- didn't believe a word, and all that -- but --

"And so, with no roof over my head and only about ten dollars in my pocket, I was out of a job. I went around to Miss Annie's Milinery shop -- she'd always bought vegetables and been good to me -- and asked her to give me a cot in her store room on the top floor of the new bank building, and let me work for my keep until I finished school.

"She said that under the circumstances it would hurt her business to let me help her in the shop, but if I wanted to keep out of sight I could work in the storeroom, and if I could learn to make hats nicely she'd teach me the business, and then I could go to some other town and start in for my-

self. "And so I learned to make hats and after finishing high school I kept on making them -- up on that almost unused top floor of the bank building -- and nobody knew what I was doing, which was suspicious in itself.

By this time the princess and the oracle both realized that it was because of them that the lost soul was so hopelessly lost, and that the more they tried to do about it the more complete was the loss. So for a long time communications were practically cut off. But occasionally, just out of loneliness both the princess and the lost soul used to go back alone to scenes of of happier days in the woods, and one day they happened to meet there..

It was a shock to me to learn how badly things were going with Ethel. Genius was no longer burning, and as we might have foreseen the Dowager Queen was striving to stimulate it by methods of her own devising. Now that school days were over, genius must do something real. A novel was demanded, and privileges and pleasures, even freedom itself, were to be conditioned by the progress of literary endeavor. Hadn't she shown that she could write? Then write she must!

It was an impossible position for a girl who never for a moment had been allowed to be anything but a child. Her literary ability was the heart and core of her mother's life -- her pride, her ambition, her sole thought by day and dream by night. We had never foreseen this as the outcome of our childish prank. Such an obsession, combining the passion of mother-love with the passion for literary ~~passion~~ fame, was a consuming flame that could no more be reasoned with than a forest fire.

We discussed the probable effect of the confession that the so-called genius of the little princess belonged to the little vegetable girl. I was afraid of it because of what it might do to her; and she was afraid of it because of what, through renewed vengeance of the Bugle it might do to me. And so in the end, we not only kept our secret, we went on with it.

"I'm not saying we did right. Probably we were wrong, but -- A princess can be terribly at the mercy of a queen. Anyway, right or wrong, it was the most natural thing in the world for us to go back to the old game -- and so easy, once we put our minds on it. Ethel told her mother that it was her soul that did the writing, and that she couldn't find her soul at home. If she could have a work-shop -- a place of her own choosing that nobody else ever entered or came near -- perhaps she would be able to find her soul again.

"That was such a temperamental idea, so clearly the eccentricity of genius, and the literary situation had become so acute, that the royal permission was granted, though of course there was no inkling that the retreat of genius was to be next to a millinery storeroom, where an outcast vegetable girl had turned her attention to hats! There was a door between the two rooms which made us safe in case the royal agreement should be disregarded, but it never was. The renaissance of genius, evidenced by occasional chapters submitted for the royal approval was too precious to ~~be~~ be jeopardized by interference.

"We thought, at least I did, that the novel would be a failure and prove that Ethel was not meant to be a genius.

And so I wrote, and since while I wrote I also had to live, Ethel made the hats. And she made them much better and much faster than ever I had been able to do. ^{she's the author of} I suppose half the hats in this church right now. Miss Annie raised my wages again and again.

"There's not much more to tell, except of our dilemma when the novel was not a failure, and Ethel publicly committed to a literary career. We've spent hours and hours discussing how we were to untangle the web our little game had spun about us. It took Simpson, who refused to be awed by the eccentricities of genius and penetrated our sanctuary, and finally discovered -- only yesterday -- who it was that wrote the book, to cut the knot we didn't know how to untie.

"There's only one thing more -- when the next novel comes out you'll see why I simply had to ride the bumpers and do some of the other unusual things the Bugle has reported. And you won't think too badly of me for doing them. They weren't exactly -- vicious. Really -- In all my life I've done only one very wicked thing. When I was little -- about four years old -- I caught, and painted, a neighbor's cat. I painted it bright green."

A ripple of laughter filled the church and subsided as Rosemary continued. "That was the worst thing I ever did -- except of course setting fire to the orphan assylum, which was accidental; and the best thing I ever did, for myself at least, was to marry Simpson. We're the two black sheep of Loosburg,

wanting admission into the fold. We'll be at home to our friends in our own little house, the one that used to be Uncle Joes.

Simpson was now standing worshipfully beside her, and hand in hand they bowed to assembled Loosburg and walked up the aisle together. It seemed the most natural thing in the world when the organist filled the church with the triumphal melody of the wedding march. The incongruous roar of Simpson's motor cycle as he drove away with his bride scarcely caused a smile in the now quiet church.

Perhaps the attention of the congregation was moving toward the motionless figure sitting alone in the McDougal pew. Perhaps they realized as Robert Sterling was realizing so poignantly that there sat real tragedy, unrelieved by humor or by hope -- the inexorable tragedy of the human being who after living ~~has lived~~ paricitically, usurping and appropriating the life-role of another is torn from the accustomed source of life, an uprooted scrap of humanrodder. One drama had come to its happy ending, another was at its crisis. "God help me," thought the son-in-law "to plant her in some honest soil." ~~There~~ "Let us pray," said Dr. Sigourney.

which does not reason, but which we suppress and neglect at our peril. Religion has to do with longings and aspirations transcending reason. Therefore I shall throw these questions out as irrelevant -- intellectual rather than religious -- though I think they will be answered in our further discussion.

"We'll begin with the seventh question, 'Is religion necessary to mental health?' Emphatically, yes. Religion is a psychic function -- just as digestion is a bodily function. If your religion is not functioning properly you will have disagreeable symptoms which may be more or less serious. Where religion functions normally there will be no psychogenic disturbances. Did you have a question, Oliver?"

"Yes. I came across the statement recently that there's no such thing as a psychogenic disorder -- that all mental disorders were of physical origin, diseases of the brain structure. You don't agree with that?"

"Jung reports that ~~that~~ during a period of four year 1325 patients were treated at Burgholzi for mental disorders. In one fourth of them there indications of brain deterioration, but in the other three fourths no physical explanation for the mental disturbance could be found. That of course does not prove that such causes were nonexistent, but the fact that so many serious cases have with ^{properly} proper treatment been brought back to normal health is very significant. And there is overwhelming proof of functional abnormalities extending over a long period of years before the serious outbreak of mental disease. There seems to be no proof in any case that the brain

deterioration or anatomical lesions came first and were the cause of the functional symptoms, and there are many proofs that the bad mental habits and morbid functional tendencies where the brain is normal, exist and can be completely corrected. The Zurich school therefore teaches that there are psychogenic disorders which if uncorrected over a long period may be the cause of brain deterioration. It is difficult to prove these things, and they are being studied from both angles, but our practical experience shows that where physical causes cannot be found, psychological treatment in multitudes of cases works the regeneration of the patient and brings him back to normal life.

"And as I was saying, the cause of all neurotic disturbances is at bottom a defect of the religious function."

"I thought it was suppressed sexuality," came from the other side of the room.

"In Vienna, but not in Zurich. If suppressed sexuality were the cause, then where sexuality is not suppressed there would be no neurosis. That is not the case. I've treated many neuroses where the cause of the trouble was undoubtedly the suppression of man's latent sense of decency. To us in Zurich the problem the problem is far less simple than in Vienna, where the sexual theory accounts for everything. We see the sex urge clearly enough -- but we also see the urge to decency. We are still animals, I grant you, but animals who aspire and yearn and suffer and sacrifice to be something more than animals. If you suppress the animal excessively,

and by unwise means, you will upset a necessary balance -- but no more certainly than that same balance is upset by suppressing the yearning and the aspiration to be something more than animal. There is an animal in us, but there is also a god in each of us, and only religion can reconcile the two and bring them to terms. The animal in us must serve the god; the god must domesticate and tame the animal -- not despise it, as Christianity has done. But the conflict in the each individual life is much bigger than sexuality versus decency -- it is the collective versus the individual; the practical versus the spiritual; the worldly versus the other-worldly. We cannot escape it. The collective, practical, worldly needs are compelling because we have to live; the individual, spiritual, inner needs keep us always wanting something more. It is the divine dissatisfaction, the yearning and aspiration, which has never allowed man to rest content as the animal rests content with what he has. If our needs, our imperative necessities did not conflict life would be simple -- we could reason it out logically and would have no need for the religious function. But our imperative necessities as as conflicting in a hundred ways as sexuality and decency, and life is not simple, and it cannot be logically reasoned out. Therefore the religious function -- the function of man's aspiration and longing and inspiration and creativeness is indispensable. We must have religion -- of a sort.

"Dr. Clements, you still cling to the belief that the Bible is inspired, do you not? I mean that it is unique --

inspired as no other book has ever been inspired?"

"Yes, I do. I don't cling to the belief that it must be interpreted literally. Much of it is symbolic -- teaching by fable and parable -- but to me it is the inspired word of God nevertheless."

"And how do you picture to yourself this process of inspiration by which the Bible was given to us? Did God stand before its writers and dictate as I dictate to my stenographer?"

"No. I don't think of it that way. I think God put the ideas, even the words perhaps into the minds of the men who wrote."

"Just as he now might suggest a poem to our friend Maury, here? Or a new scientific truth to our friend Oliver in his laboratory?"

"I wouldn't grant that the poem or the scientific truth came from God -- as the Bible did. That would be bringing the Bible down to the merely human plain."

"Would it? Or would it be lifting man and his creative efforts up to the level of God? You believe in the fatherhood of God -- that he loves us and cares for us and is concerned about us. Granting that conception of God -- for the sake of the argument -- Is it conceivable that such a father, having the ability to inspire his children, to whisper helpful words and put beautiful and inspiring and constructive ideas into their minds, would give them the Bible and then -- silence! Nothing more? That is inconceivable to me. The God in which

I can believe would be quite impartially fair to his children and would speak to you and me as freely as he spoke to St. Paul -- provided always that we knew how to listen.

Just what God is is a matter of intellectual speculation. There are tons of books upon the subject, and I won't go into it. But inspiration is not only a fact -- it is a matter of experience, religious experience. Anybody can have it who earnestly wishes for it and goes after it -- and the success of the quest for inspiration is the measure of the religious life. God, to me, is the source of inspiration, and inspiration is the part of us which is creative -- which pushes on, toward that which is further from the animal and satisfies man's aspirations and longings -- as the poem satisfies the poet, as the new bit of knowledge satisfies the research man, as the intuitive understanding of her child and its needs satisfies the mother.

"When I say that religion is necessary, I mean that the inspired life is necessary, the creative life -- that we are in constant need of that which conscious thought and reason cannot give us. The uninspired life starves the soul of man, and the starved soul is an anarchist which rises in rebellion and destroys the mental balance, wrecking the personality.

"So it doesn't matter in the least to me what my children believe about God, so long as they experience God -- so long as they know how to live the inspired creative life, and to listen for the whisperings of aspiration and to find satisfaction for the divine longings that are in every human being

and have lifted humanity by its own striving out of that which was less good to that which is better.

"My children are brought up from the first to experience God through prayer."

"Now I lay me?" asked Mrs. Oliver quizzically.
have excelled

"Not exactly. Their prayers may not ~~excel~~ that little classic as poetry, but the psychology ^{was} ~~is~~ better. And as soon as they ^{had} ~~have~~ the idea of prayer as a source of inspiration they made their own.

"Just what did they say -- to start with -- when they were little?"

Dr. Markus laughed. "They prayed morning and evening. In the morning they said:

Dear God who lives within my heart
Teach me this day to play my part;
And when it's hard to make a choice
Help me to hear the inner voice.

"This gave the first principles of the inspirational life in understandable form. It personified for them the sources of inspiration that lives in every human heart -- regardless of our intellectual conceptions. Religiously it implies the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. God, the source of inexhaustible strength, and courage and peace and inspiration of every conceivable sort lives within ^{us} ~~them~~, and can be called upon in every sort of difficulty or problem -- if we do but listen."

"Dr. Markus, If I should teach my children that --" Mrs. Oliver was still quizzical -- "The God whose voice they would hear would invariably be telling them to do just as they

liked -- and what could I say in the face of God?"

"Simply tell them that they are certainly mistaken. That the voice of God is invariably of a different nature, and they have been listening to some naughty little angel."

"That might do. Give us the evening prayer."

"The evening prayer was just to put them to bed with the thought of the inner strength and inspiration uppermost in their minds:

Dear God who lives deep in my heart,
And always helps me ~~play~~ my part,
And makes things bright when I am right,
Thank you -- good night.

"The point is that you couldn't possibly make one of my children doubt the reality of the God they have experienced, or question the effacacy of prayer -- the kind of prayer they are accustomed. They have, of course, never prayed for material benefits -- only for strength, courage and inspiration, and the wealth of the inner life."

"But what about Christianity?" asked Dr. Clements. "Do you teach them that Christianity is nothing but mythology?"

"I don't like your ~~nothing~~ but'. I teach them that ^{all} all collective religions are mythology, but that mythology is the dreaming and aspiring of inspired humanity -- the best part of us, expressed in symbolic and beautiful forms that ~~are~~ are full of meaning for us if we don't make the mistake of interpreting them literally. But I don't give them any other religious instruction until I know that they have experienced God within themselves so vividly that they will never ~~make the~~

fall into the error of the literal interpretation. They know that the descent into hell is something psychologically real, and they understand the psychological meaning of the lost soul -- the terrible anguish of my patients whose souls are lost. They also know something about the disintegrated life which brings one to the spiritual longing for rebirth. The symbolism of the dying god is also clear to them, as well as the religious or psychological meaning of sacrifice. And so when they go to church the symbolism has for them a significance far more real than it has for the orthodox Christian. I've taught them that ~~all~~ mythology, which we have studied together, comparing the other great religions quite impartially with the Christian, is full of significance -- being the dreams of mankind. This is clear to them since they have been brought up to understand the significance of their own dreams. I've taught them that in the beginning the Christian religion was based upon the dreams of Christ -- that now it is the dreams of Christians about the dreams of Christ -- that we must use our own judgment as to which of these dreams are valuable and which are worthless, as we do in the considering our own dreams. But most of all I've taught them that it is their privilege to dream their own dreams, and that they should depend upon the dreams of others only when other people's dreams are better or more beautiful than theirs."

purpose

With deliberate ~~intention~~ Robert Sterling withdrew his attention from the religious discussion going on about him.