

A SWEETHEART AT THIRTY

The Story of a Woman's Transformation
BY MARION RUBINCAM

Chapter 59.

DECISION.

Four o'clock Sunday found me alone in the house. Violet and James went off together with some of the girls and boys of the village, promising to meet us at Laura's at six. Right after dinner, Jim came around with the youngest horse in the buggy, and took Esther away with him.

I volunteered to clear up the dishes alone, and watched them drive off together. I smiled with satisfaction as I filled the big dishpan with hot water and began on the vast number of plates and cups. If Esther and Jim had only done this sort of thing often—if they had only tried a little to keep up the romance of their youth—we would not all be in the curious position we were now.

"Do I look all right?" Esther said as she left, turning around and round for my inspection. "I went in your room and took some of your powder, and I guess I laced these corsets too tight. I should have worn them before—I bought 'em two years ago, but I hated to begin putting 'em on, and now I'm much fatter."

I told her she looked splendid, and she drove away happy. It was all amusing, but it was pathetic, too. Perhaps, she might, as she said, go to the city with Vi and try the process of rejuvenation that I had tried—but I knew if she did she would never succeed. Meantime, it seemed to me that I was being deprived of my chance to go on with my own upbuilding—that I was being chained here to the country farmhouse, too busy even to read the papers, with never a bit of leisure to cultivate either my body or my brain.

Violet would go on with at least part of another year at college—and perhaps she might marry Bud. That bothered me, for what Bud would become, was very problematical. Vi was the type that is made to love one man and to care for him—not materially as Laura did—but to be the really perfect mate and playmate.

And I—well, I had no future, but what I might share with the girl—and that was being taken from me. After it all, when our money was spent there was nothing to do but to come home to the farm and the hard routine of work.

Of course, there was Mark—there was always Mark, it seemed, now that I didn't want him! But what a fate—to be his wife and housekeeper! Every time I thought of him, I thought of Bud's employer—a man far above me in every way, so far he would never even remember me—but so charming and gracious.

Mark came, and we sat out on the porch. For an hour we talked, while the hot day cooled off and the shadows began to lengthen.

"Do you know, I said when I saw you over at the high school dance that I would never have known you, Enid," he said once. "And I wouldn't now, either. Then you looked so old—and sort of sot, and like you didn't care much about anything. Gosh, I was surprised. I thought it must have been fifty years, not twelve, since you were the pretty girl I was in love with."

I knew it had to come, so I sat quietly and let him talk.

"But I always liked you, and even last year—when you did look pretty old and homely, if you don't mind my saying so," he went on apologetically, "and last year I asked you to marry me. Don't you remember? I wasn't so much myself, I guess. I am 40 and look it and feel it too. But I thought we always got along so well in the old days, and I guessed we'd get along pretty well now."

He pulled out a huge handkerchief and wiped over his hot face. "Anyway, you wouldn't do it," he said. "You had a lot of romantic notions. I thought you were crazy in a woman your age. You said you would not, because I didn't—er—love you, and because you didn't—er—love me, too. I guess that was it, wasn't it? You said it was because I wanted a housekeeper, and because I thought you needed a home. And I guess maybe it was."

I looked him full in the face, in surprise at this confession.

"But it ain't so now," he said suddenly. "I guess maybe you was—were right. There ought to be some love, even if one is 40-odd and the other—well, you don't look more'n 30 now, Enid."

"But what do you mean?" I asked him in genuine surprise.

"Just that," he said, and his voice was really very earnest. "I don't now what you've done to yourself, whether it's clothes, or not working too hard, or living away from Esther—she'd make me old in no time—or what. But anyway, you got me just as crazy about you as I used to be when I was a boy. Enid, do you want me to say I love you?"

So he had said it—that he loved me! So, after all, one man had told me that—for his proposal last year was nothing but an unflattering offer to marry me in order to make me his

Heart Problems

Dear Mrs. Thompson: I have been married for ten years and have a boy four years old. My wife and I have separated. She was so mean to me that I could not stand it. Every time that I came in the house she would fuss with me and raise old Cain until I would go again.

Nothing ever suited her. I never lived in a house that suited her, and I never made money enough to suit her. But she objected when I wanted to work extra to make more money.

I bought her everything I could and I was good to her, but she did not thank me for it. She loved to go to her neighbors and talk about me.

I would like to know if I could take my boy. She is not able to take care of him as she is not very strong. I pay an allowance to her, but I would like to have my boy. I don't want a divorce.

A READER.

A father cannot take his child from his mother unless there is a very good reason. I hardly think you have sufficient claim. Probably your wife is disagreeable because she is not well. Why don't you let her do some of the planning. She should be consulted in regard to the house you live in. If I were you I would try living with her again, letting her feel that her opinion counts too and that you will follow her suggestions as far as possible.

housekeeper. And now he was in love—really in love—with me! Somehow, I could not get over the surprise of it.

I looked at him curiously. After all, would he be possible, even if he really cared for me? Was this the end of my brief career—to marry this man? If he loved me, he would be fairly generous. He was good natured, and he had many likable qualities. I would be able to persuade him to send Violet all the way through college—and perhaps to give James a helping hand. But while I thought it over, I knew my decision was already made for me.

Tomorrow—Bud's Letter.

College Hill School To

Dedicate Honor Roll

Exercises dedicating the bronze honor roll at College Hill School will be held at 2 p. m. Sunday, December 26. The following program will be given: "Star Spangled Banner," Community; Invocation, Arthur Porter; Unveiling the Tablet, Miss Nolder; Soldiers' Chorus, (Gounod), School; Address, Dr. J. J. Rae; Loyalty to the U. S. A., School; Taps, Ella Van Etten; Benediction, Dr. J. J. Rae; Music under the direction of Mrs. Stegall; Miss Ethel Hoover, pianist. The boys to be honored are George Stidham, David Hoover, Lawrence Schutte, Ira Toney, Harold Cutler, and Gurney Stedham. Miss Cora Nolder, Prin.

Briefs

It's Time to Insure
DOUGAN-JENKINS CO.

Easthaven Patients

To Enjoy Celebration

Preparations have been made at Easthaven for appropriate celebration of Christmas, the Sunday following, and New Year's day. Moving pictures, socials and devotional services have their place in the program. It follows:

Christmas Eve
7:30 p. m. Moving Pictures
Christmas

9:30 a. m. Distribution of Presents
8:00 p. m. Employees' Social
Sunday, December 26
1:30 p. m. Religious Services
Rev. J. J. Rae
Wednesday, December 29
7:30 p. m. Patients' Social
New Year's Eve
7:30 p. m. Patients' Dance
9:30 p. m. Watch Party
New Year's Day
2:00 to 4:00 p. m. Open House

Christmas Greetings

We take this occasion to thank you for your loyal support during the past year.

It is only through your co-operation that we grow and prosper.

Heartily we wish you
A MERRY CHRISTMAS

Bowen & Fivel
610 Main St.

Greetings

To our valued customers—to all you whom we hope to include as patrons the coming year—to our employees, without whose co-operation and loyal efforts we could not have gone through our Christmas season—to our business contemporaries—

We extend a sincere
hearty Christmas
Greeting

Just a word to those who received Neff & Nusbaum Footwear for Christmas: If you don't like the style or the fit—if for any reason you desire something else in its place, don't hesitate to bring it back. We'll exchange anything gladly. We want you to become better acquainted with N. & N. methods of doing business.

We Are at Your Service Always
"MERRY CHRISTMAS"

Neff & Nusbaum

Christmas Greetings

Myself and employees extend to our many friends and patrons our wish for

A Merry Christmas
and
A Happy New Year

12 N. 9TH ST.
Jay
QUALITY JEWELER

Cottages A-B, C-D, E-F, K-L, 1-2
Triplet 12-13 and Hospital Groups.
Sunday, January 2
7:30 p. m. Moving Pictures

DOMESTIC SCIENCE CLASS

GIVES CANDY TO PUPILS

OXFORD, O., Dec. 24.—For several days past mysterious actions have

been going on in the domestic science rooms of the public schools. No one but Miss Jessie Jackson, instructor, and a few seniors knew what was going on, and they wouldn't tell.

Thursday afternoon when school closed for the holidays the mystery was explained. Each pupil—big and little—was given a box of candy

which had been made by the seniors in the domestic science class.

NAGLE SERVES SAUERKRAUT
OXFORD, O., Dec. 24.—Councilman Fred W. Nagle gave a unique dinner at his home last evening for a number of gentlemen guests. The menu consisted largely of sauer kraut, pigstails and dumplings.

We Wish You

A Very Merry
Christmas

and a

Prosperous
New Year

The Hoosier Store

Cor. 6th and Main

Palais Royal

RICHMOND'S DAYLIGHT STORE

Our Earnest
Wishes
to All
for a Hearty
Old Fashioned
Christmas Season
with Health
and Prosperity
throughout
the
New Year