



By Robert Stead

FROM the hilltop where Clara stood she watched the sun sink slowly into his bed of snow. Her vantage point was the only elevation for many miles in all that as far as eye could reach, broken only by the groves of box-elders and Russian poplars, now leafless and shrunken, which the settlers had planted about their steadings. Clara was glad to climb it for the exhilaration, the vastness, the sense of infinity which it gave her.

At least, that was the explanation she offered when explanations were necessary. Her custom of walking to the top of the hill every evening before sunset could not escape observation and comment in a community where the doings of neighbors constituted the chief topic of conversation. "Saw that Carson girl on 'the knob' again tonight," Bert McVain remarked at the supper table after her return from the market town where he had been delivering a load of wheat. "She's getting crazier every day."

"Too bad," Bert's mother commented, with a sigh. "She used to be so bright. It must be a great trial to Mrs. Carson."

And so the talk ran through the neighborhood. Clara Carson was "a little off." Echoes of that gossip did not fail to reach the Carson homestead, where Clara had been taken strictly to account for her wanderings. "Dar, Mother," the girl protested, "so long as I don't neglect my work—and I don't—why shouldn't I walk up 'the knob' if I want to? The exercise and fresh air are good for me after all day in the house."

"Just the same, it don't look right," her mother argued. "People are beginning to talk."

"Let them," said Clara. And because she was twenty-two, and had a will of her own, the weeks continued and the gossip grew.

"Oh, why can't they let me alone!" she exclaimed to herself, as she watched the sun dip into his bed of snow. "Fred, Fred! Do you know—can you understand—how I am keeping my promise?"

The red light, mingled with that bluish-white reflection which artists find in untrodden snow, touched her cheeks with its feathery brush, painting them with the glow of buoyant health. Under the lam which sheltered her pretty head her eyes shone with a sunset luster even while they looked for an answer from the infinite.

For six months she had kept her trust; six months to a day, for was not this the twenty-fourth of December? On that year night half a year ago Fred had held her in his arms as this very spot while he told her of the urgency which took him East. The death of his father demanded his immediate return. "And, Clara," he said then, "I know what their plans are. There is a match all made for me. It may be a condition of the will; I

catch your message. If a radio station can send its waves around the world, surely your mind—your soul—can do much more!"

So she had promised, and for six months she had kept her promise, while the neighbors concluded that the Carson girl was "a bit off."

On this Christmas eve, from her pinnacle of sublime loneliness, she watched the last red rays pour over the bluish-white snow, touching to color tattered remnants of cloud adrift in the western sky. She wondered if it could be possible that her yearnings were in some way reaching her lover, strengthening his heart for the fight with the wealth and pride of his family.

Suddenly her reverie was interrupted by the sound of sleigh bells on the road at the foot of the hill. A team and cutter were swinging sharply southward through the gathering dusk. As she watched, the horses were reined in, the cutter stopped, one of the occupants got out, and a man came running toward her. The next moment she was in his arms, breathless, laughing, almost too excited to speak.

"I knew I would find you here," he cried. "If we made it on time!" "But tell me, Fred, how does it come? Explain," she murmured at length.

"I will—at the house," he answered.

She hesitated, and a shadow swept her glowing face. "You know what my people think," she reminded him.

"I know what they thought," he laughed. "They thought that because



"But That's a Secret—Until After the Wedding!"

I was rich I could not be serious. But when they hear how I have lost all my money—"

"Lost your money?" she echoed. "Does it make any difference, dear?"

"All the difference in the world," she cried, exultantly. "Now I can marry you, and no one will say it is because you are rich! But what about her?"

"At the house," was all he would answer. He seized her arm, and together like children they rushed down the hill.

"It was like this," he explained, to the assembled Carson family after supper. "My father left me a million or so and a request that I should ask Julia France to be my wife. Uncles, aunts, cousins, my mother—everybody interpreted that request as a command. 'It was such a suitable match,' they said. Julia, it seemed, shared that opinion."

"I delayed my proposal until I could think it over, and one day, just at sunset, came a bright idea. Perhaps it started on Knob Hill!" He glanced appreciatively at Clara, who blushed, but kept her counsel. "Then I rushed to my brother."

"How long does it take to lose a million dollars on the stock market?" I asked.

"Many people do it quicker than they expect," he replied. "Well, lose a million dollars for me as soon as you can. There is no time to spare." I told him my reason and, like a good sport, he promised to do his best.

"I bought a comfortable life annuity for my mother, but everything else went into the mill. Cash, bonds, stocks, securities, deeds—they poured into that broker's office like shavings into your separator, Mr. Carson, and all the time they kept clamoring for more. At last I was sold out. They even threatened bankruptcy proceedings. It was quite a scandal, I assure you. Then I proposed to Julia, just as my father said, and was turned down cold. So here I am, offering to make you a Christmas present of a brand new son-in-law."

Mr. Carson sucked at his pipe. "Well," he remarked at length, "any fellow that's fool enough to lose a million dollars for a girl deserves what he gets. Take her!"

"Gee, won't Bert McVain be mad?" shouted Clara's young brother Bob. "He always wanted Clara himself!"

Later, when the Carson family had obligingly retired, Fred held Clara's hand close to his own. "The joke of it is," he whispered, "I didn't lose a million dollars. I made a million and a half. But that's a secret—until after the wedding!"

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Observe Three Yuletides Within Twelve Months

There is one place where Christmas is kept three times a year—in the Church of Nativity at Bethlehem, the reputed site of the Stable of the Inn, the Roman, Greek and Armenian Greek bodies have each their respective section of the church, but their Christmas celebrations do not occur on the same day. The Latin Christmas is celebrated at the Roman Catholic altar on December 25. Thirteen days later the Orthodox Easterns perform the Greek rite. Another 13 days later the Armenian church keeps its own ceremonial of Byzantine faith—Montreal Herald.

SAYS SERVICE IN TIME OF PEACE IMPORTANT AS RECORD DURING WAR

"A record of service to the community in years of peace as a member of The American Legion will in time constitute as proud a service record for the veteran as that given the nation in time of the World War," Harley A. Schroeder, commander of the Legion declares in an appeal for all those eligible to renew their 1929 membership at once. "The American Legion is an organization into which no amount of money, political pull, nor social standing, will admit one. Only an honorable discharge from the service during the World War makes it possible to belong, regardless of whether the applicant served as a general or a 'buck private' in the rear rank."

"Service to God and country constitute the purpose of The American Legion. Every veteran is proud of service rendered in 1917-1918 and the service he rendered to buddies of war days and to the community as a result of the Legion now is second

only to that war time service. Millionaires and laborers rub elbows on common ground in Legion halls."

"The Legion has before it an ambitious program for the good of all veterans and there should be no gaps in its ranks the coming year. The Legion is the veteran's advocate. It represents him in the halls of Congress, in the State legislatures, and in local affairs. Every line of legislation upon the statute books of Congress for the benefit of World War veterans has been placed there by Legion effort."

A new telephone exchange in the city of London has been named Gladstone in honor of Great Britain's noted statesman. Another exchange has been named for Livingstone and still another for Macaulay.

A white people, the Alnus, inhabited the Japanese archipelago before the brown man came; they are now nearly extinct.

Believing trees to house spirits the Austrians, when they fell a tree, beg your pardon, before felling

A Merry Christmas

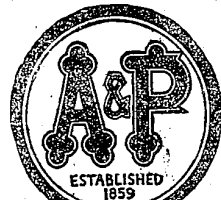
I wish to express my appreciation to the people of Farmington for their patronage during 1928 and to wish everyone a

Happy New Year

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Greetings of the Season!

Values at the A&P for all!



Our Policy!

Our policy for 69 years has been that the customer must be satisfied. Our business was founded on this principle and we attribute a great measure of our success to the close adherence to this policy.

We stand back of our merchandise and if not satisfactory we will gladly make the proper adjustments or refund your money.

Shop Now!

Cigarettes

5 Popular Brands

carton \$1.10

Jell-O

All Flavors

4 pkgs 29¢

Sliced Bacon

No Rind—No Waste

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Jack Frost Sugar

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5-lb pkg 33¢

Pure Lard

2 lbs 25¢

Calumet Baking Powder

Famous Shortening

lb can 23¢

Crisco

or Pillsbury Flour

lb can 21¢

Gold Medal

Fancy 1928 Crop

24 1/2-lb bag 95¢

Mixed Nuts

100% Filled

lb 25¢

Bunte's Candy

Bulk

lb 29¢

Hallowi Dates

California Navel

lb 10¢

Oranges

100 size 49c

216 size, doz. 33c

Nutley Oleo

Unusual Values

lb 15¢

English Walnuts

Soft Shell

lb 35¢

Baker's Coconut

Fresh

4-oz. pkg 12¢

Palmolive

or Lux Toilet Soap

3 cakes 20¢

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ESTABLISHED 1859



"Do You Believe That I Will Come Back to You?"

don't know; but condition or no condition I'll be back for you as soon as I can put affairs in order. It was to escape her I came out here—and toward you! Do you believe that I will come back to you, dearest?"

She assured him with her lips. "I will have a fight of it, dear," he went on, "and I will need your help. You don't know what it is to have all your people set against you. They think it's for the best, of course; Julia is a nice enough girl, and comes of an old and wealthy family, and they can't understand my objection—"

"Why don't you marry her?" Clara interrupted, eager to hear again his fervent defense. "She is rich, beautiful; she would make you happy."

"That's just it wouldn't. Why should I marry a rich girl, when I have already enough for two? And as for beauty—no one who has seen you would call her beautiful!"

He held her again in that still June night as though he never would let her go.