

Torrance Herald

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The One who forgot

By RUBY M. AYRES

BEGIN HERE TODAY

PETER LYSTER loses his memory on the Western Front. Upon his return to London he fails to recognize...

NAN MARRABY, the girl to whom he was engaged before going to France. She leaves her friend...

JOAN ENDRICOTT, and returns home when news comes of her stepmother's death. There she meets...

JOHN ARNOTT, fellow officer with Peter, who has brought the latter to the home of his sister for a rest. Peter also fails to recognize...

HARLEY SEFTON, a money lender, who has been to Nan's home several times to see her father. Today, however, he is calling upon her. Their conversation is interrupted by Nan's three young stepbrothers. Nan takes them away to make them presentable. They tell her that Sefton is the man who hit them with his riding whip.

NAN did not know what to say for a moment, then she said briskly: "Well, I dare say he thought it was just as well to teach you a lesson. You might have been killed if the horse had knocked you down."

She would not allow further argument; she hustled them downstairs again and into the school-room, where tea was laid.

Sefton was standing back to the fireplace, looking round him with quizzical eyes. "Thinking how shabby the place is, I suppose," Nan told herself indignantly; she went into the kitchen to fetch the cake; when she came back the three boys were standing in a defiant row, eyeing their visitor with unfriendly eyes.

Nan broke what seemed to be an embarrassed silence. "Tea—tea!" she said gaily. Sefton came forward; he took the cake from her.

"Let me carry that to the place of honor," he said. His fingers touched hers as he took the dish, and Nan gave a little shudder.

She looked at his hands, and quickly away again—strong, rather cruel-looking hands they were; the sight of them strengthened her dislike of him.

"How dare he hit the boys—the brute!" was the indignant thought in her heart. "It's just exactly what I should expect of him. No wonder the boys won't shake hands with him. I don't blame them."

Tea was hardly a success, though Sefton did his best to be entertaining.

He tried hard to make the boys talk, but beyond answering in monosyllables when compelled to by Nan, they sat silent, all three of them on one side of the table, staring at Sefton from under their shaggy hair.

Even the offer to take them for a ride in his car exacted no better response than a sort of grunting acquiescence, and yet Nan knew that if there was one thing in the world for which the boys longed it was to ride in a car.

Afterwards, when the meal was ended and the boys had rushed off, glad to get away, Sefton said with an ironical note in his voice: "The only success seems to have been the cake."

Nan could not help laughing. "The boys were rude," she said. "I fear that I ought to apologize; they're not always like this—they can be perfect darlings if they like."

There was a note of appeal in her voice. "It's an odd thing, but children never like me," Sefton said candidly. "It's rather a sore point with me, I must admit."

"Really?" Nan was not at all sympathetic. "Children are queer little things," she said. "They get a like or dislike into their heads and stick to it, no matter how you try to dislodge it."

"And, apparently, I am to be one of their dislikes." "Oh, I hope not," Nan said politely. She was wishing that he would go. She looked at the clock on the shelf and sighed.

Presently he dragged forward a chair and sat down opposite her. "The subject of loss of memory opens the road to endless possibilities," he said, irrelevantly.

Nan tried hard to hide the start she gave, but she knew he must have seen it. "A good subject for a novelist, is that what you mean?" she asked lightly. "Novelists must be having the time of their lives with this dreadful war on, what with air raids and missing men turning up months after everyone believes them dead—" She broke off with a little hard laugh.

Her voice had sounded flippant, and she hated herself for it, but she knew she could not be serious with this man. "I suppose you don't write books by any chance, do you?" she asked flippantly.

"No—it's a thing I've never tried my hand at," he answered seriously. "If I thought I should succeed I might perhaps be tempted now."

"Why now?—because of the war, you mean?" "Not altogether—I was thinking of the case I told you about the other day, and of Lyster, too, of course."

"You think Mr. Lyster looks ill?" He seemed to consider the question. "Not exactly ill," he said at last. "But greatly changed—of course, it gave me a shock to find that he did not know me. I went up and spoke to him in the ordinary way, and he was quite annoyed—seemed to resent it. Of course, I understand now, but at the moment,

considering what great friends we used to be..." He paused. "Were you great friends?" Nan asked indifferently. She was sitting back on her heels, her hands clasped in her lap; there was a little eager light in her eyes, and her cheeks were flushed. Sefton laughed—there was a peculiar note in his laugh. "Were we not!" he said with faint sarcasm. "Surely Peter has told you?" She shook her head. "He had never mentioned you to me until that night we met."

Nan looked away into the glowing heart of the fire. "You have known him—some time, then?" she asked, after a moment. "Yes."

There was a short silence. Sefton moved his chair a little more forward. "There is something about which

My father has never borrowed money in his life."

"I should like to ask your advice," he said then. "I wonder if I may?" Nan looked up. There was a sort of childishness in her face at that moment, and her eyes met his with a sort of puzzled pathos that stirred his heart strangely.

"Ask my advice—you!" she said. "Yes, because I think you may perhaps be able to help me." He stopped, and went on again abruptly. "Miss Marraby—do you know anything about me?" "About you? What do you mean?"

"I mean did Peter tell you anything? Or have you heard anything since?" "No," she looked at him anxiously. "Peter hardly mentioned you at all after we parted that night. Why?"

"Because there is something in your manner that makes me think you have been told something that has set you against me. Am I right?"

"No," said Nan. "I am glad of that," he answered, "because I want you to like me—I want you to let me be your friend."

Nan sat very still. "And for two people to be friends—real friends," Sefton said, presently, "it is necessary for them to know—well, a great deal about one another."

Nan scrambled to her feet. "Really, Mr. Sefton," she began hurriedly. "I'm sure I—" but he stopped her. "Listen to me for a moment."

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He had risen to his feet, too. "I told you just now that I was a business friend of your father's—you did not ask me in what way—or what my business was."

"I know what it is," Nan said directly. "You are a money lender. Mr. Arnott told me."

He looked a little taken aback by her candor. "Then you probably understand what my business relations are with your father," he said, smoothly. "With—my father!" Nan echoed his words; a slow flush crept into her face.

"My father has never borrowed money in his life," she said, with impetuous anger. "How dare you even suggest such a thing... how dare you!"

She was breathless with anger; her eyes flashed. Sefton spread his hands deprecatingly. "If you are going to take that attitude—of course, it is useless my saying any more, but..."

"Quite, quite useless," she interrupted scornfully. "I should not believe it—and as for your offer of friendship..."

Sefton colored. "My friendship was good enough for Peter Lyster," he said. "I don't believe you were anything but an ordinary acquaintance of his," Nan cried in a rage. She felt as if he had goaded her past endurance. "If you had been—he would have told me—he told me everything; we never had any secrets from one another..."

Her voice shook. Sefton's voice changed. So she still loved Lyster—that was the thought that flashed into his mind; still loved him in spite of this engagement which she declared had been broken off long before Peter was wounded. An odd sort of rage consumed him.

"Told you everything, did he?" he echoed with a faint sneer. "Then, of course, it will be no news to you to hear that Peter owes me a very large sum of money—more than he

can ever repay—and certainly more than I can afford to lose."

Nan stared at him blankly. The man—his voice, his eyes, his whole attitude—seemed to have undergone a swift transformation; she felt as if she looked at the face of a stranger; she fell back a step from him.

"Peter—Peter owes you money," she said breathlessly—then suddenly her voice rose. "I don't believe you—I just don't believe you," she stammered. "It's a lie—a cruel lie, which you know he can't deny..."

She forgot that she was no longer anything to the man she was defying; she only realized that Sefton was deliberately lying to her about the person she loved best in the world.

(To Be Continued)

LOCAL NOTES

Mrs. A. J. Tibble of Los Angeles was an overnight guest Wednesday of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Edwards of Weston street.

Mr. and Mrs. William Haworth of Arizona street attended Hoyt's Theatre Sunday evening.

Mrs. A. Oliver of Los Angeles was a weekend visitor at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Fred Dudge, of Narbonne avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Sprout of Chestnut street spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Pitt of Los Angeles.

Mrs. Harry Porlewiaz and Mrs. C. F. Farquhar were Long Beach visitors Saturday.

Oh, look! Fence lumber, \$15 per 1000. Consolidated Lumber Co. —Adv.

Guests Friday of Dr. and Mrs. H. L. Hess of Poppy street were Mr. and Mrs. William Young and Mrs. John Morgan, of Los Angeles.

Dinner guests Sunday of Mr. and Mrs. George Bryant of Narbonne avenue were Miss Annie M. G. Draper and Miss Louise Aldrich, of Long Beach.

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