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Beginning **THE EAGLE'S SHADOW**

BY JAMES BRANCH CABELL

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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THE EAGLE'S SHADOW

THIS is the story of Margaret Hugonin and of the Eagle; and, with your permission, we will for the present defer all consideration of the bird, and devote our unqualified attention to Margaret.

I have always esteemed Margaret the obvious, sensible, most appropriate name that can be bestowed upon a girl child, for it is a name that fits a woman—any woman—as neatly as her proper size in gloves.

Yes, the first point I wish to make is that a woman child, once baptized Margaret, is thereby insured of a suitable name. Be she grave or gay in after life, wanton or pious or sullen, comely or otherwise, there will be no possible chance of incongruity; whether she develop a taste for winter gardens or the higher mathematics, whether she take to golf or clinging organdies, the event is provided for. One has only to consider for a moment, and if among a choice of Madge, Marjorie, Meta, Maggie, Margherita, Peggy and Gretchen, and countless others—if among all these he cannot find a name that suits her to a T—why, then, the case is indeed desperate, and he may permissibly fall back upon Madam or—if the cat jump propitiously, and at his own peril—on Darling or Sweetheart.

The second proof that this name must be the best of all possible names is that Margaret Hugonin bore it. And so the murder is out. You may suspect what you choose. I warn you in advance that I have no part whatever in her story; and if my admiration for her given name appear somewhat excessive I can only protest that in this dissentient world every one has a right to his own taste. I knew Margaret. I admired her. And if, in some unguarded moment, I may have carried my admiration to the point of indiscretion, her husband most assuredly knows all about it by this, and he and I are still the best of friends. So you perceive that if I ever did so far forget myself it could scarcely have amounted to a hanging matter.

I am doubly sure that Margaret Hugonin was beautiful for the reason that I have never found a woman under forty-five who shared my opinion. If you clap a Testament into my hand I cannot affirm that women are eager to recognize beauty in one another; at the utmost they concede that this or that particular feature is well enough. But when a woman is clean-eyed and straight-limbed, and has a cheery heart, she really cannot help being beautiful; and when Nature accords her a sufficiency of dimples and an infectious laugh I protest she is well-nigh irresistible. And all these Margaret Hugonin had.

And surely that is enough.

I shall not endeavor, then, to picture her features to you in any nicely-picked words. Her chief charm was that she was Margaret.

And beside that mere carnal vanities are trivial things. A gray eye or so is not in the least to the purpose. Yet since it is the immemorial custom of writer folk to inventory such possessions of their heroines, here you have a catalogue of her personal attractions. Launce's method will serve our turn.

Imprimis, there was not very much of her—five feet three, at the most; and hers was the well-groomed, modern type that implies a grandfather or two and is in every respect the antithesis of that hulking Venus of the Louvre whom people pretend to admire. Item, she had blue eyes; and when she talked with you her head drooped forward a little, the frank, intent gaze of these eyes was very flattering and, in its ultimate effect, perilous, since it led you fatuously to

By James Branch Cabell

believe that she had forgotten there were any other trousered beings extant. Later, you found this a decided error. Item, she had a quite incredible amount of yellow hair that was not in the least like gold or copper or bronze—I scorn the hackneyed similes of metallurgical poets—but a straight-forward yellow, darkening at the roots; and she wore it low down on her neck in great coils that were held in place by a multitude of little golden hairpins and divers corpulent tortoise-shell ones. Item, her nose was a tiny miracle of perfection; and this was noteworthy, for you will observe that Nature, who is an adept at eyes and hair and mouths, very rarely achieves a creditable nose. Item, she had a mouth; and if you are a Gradgrindian, with a taste for hair-splitting, I cannot swear that it was a particularly small mouth. The lips were rather full than otherwise; one saw in them potentialities of heroic passion, and tenderness, and generosity, and, if you will, temper. No, her mouth was not in the least like the pink shoe-button of romance and sugared portraiture; it was manifestly designed less for simpering out of a gilt frame or the dribbling of stock phrases over

dangerous topic, I decline even to mention. There you have the best description of Margaret Hugonin that I am capable of giving you. No one realizes its glaring inadequacy more acutely than I.

Furthermore, I stipulate that if, in the progress of our comedy, she appear to act with an utter lack of reason or even common-sense—as every woman worth the winning must do once or twice in a lifetime—that I be permitted to record the fact, to set it down in all its ugliness, nay, even to exaggerate it a little—all to the end that I may eventually exasperate you and goad you into crying out, "Come, come, you are not treating the girl with common justice!"

For, if such a thing were possible, I should desire you to rival even me in a liking for Margaret Hugonin. And speaking for myself, I can assure you that I have come long ago to regard her faults with the same leniency that I accord my own.

II

WE BEGIN on a fine May morning, in Colonel Hugonin's rooms at Selwoode, which is, as you may or may not know, the Hugonins' country-place; and there discover the Colonel dawdling over his breakfast, in an intermediate stage of that careful toilet which enables him to pass casual inspection as turning forty-nine.

At present the old gentleman is discussing the members of his daughter's house-party. I omit, by your leave, a number of picturesque descriptive passages—for the Colonel is, on occasion, a man of unfettered speech—and come hastily to the conclusion, to the summing-up of the whole matter.

"Altogether," says Colonel Hugonin, "they strike me as being the most ungodly menagerie ever got together under one roof."

Now, I am sorry that veracity compels me to present the Colonel in this particular state of mind, for ordinarily he was as pleasant-spoken a gentleman as you will be apt to meet on the longest summer day.

You must make allowances for the fact that, on this especial morning, he was still suffering from a recent twinge of the gout, and that his toast was somewhat dryer than he liked it; and, most potent of all, that the foreign mail, just in, had caused him to rebel anew against the proprieties and his daughter's inclinations, which chained him to Selwoode, in the height of the full London season, to preside over a house-party every member of which he cordially disliked. Therefore the Colonel, having glanced through the well-known names of those at Lady Pevensy's last cotillon, groaned and glared at his daughter, who sat opposite him, and reviled his daughter's friends with point and fluency, and characterized them as above, for the reason that he was hungered at heart for the shady side of Pall Mall, and that their presence at Selwoode prevented his attaining this Elysium. For I am sorry to say that the Colonel loathed all things American, saving his daughter, whom he adored.

And, I think, no one who could have seen her preparing his second cup of tea would have disputed that in making this exception he acted with a show of reason. For Margaret Hugonin—but, as you know, she is our heroine, and, as I fear you have already learned, words are very paltry make-shifts when it comes to describing her. Let us simply say, then, that Margaret, his daughter, began to make him a cup of tea, and add that she laughed.



"IT'S NONSENSE," PURSUED THE OLD GENTLEMAN, ' UTTER, BEDLAMITE NONSENSE"

Not unkindly; no, for at bottom she adored her father—a comely Englishman of some sixty-odd, who had run through his wife's fortune and his own in the most gallant fashion—and she accorded his opinions a conscientious but at times a sorely-taxed tolerance. That very month she had reached twenty-three, the age of omniscience, when the fallacies and general obtuseness of older people become dishearteningly apparent.

"It's nonsense," pursued the old gentleman, "utter, bed-lamite nonsense, filling Selwoode up with writing people! Never heard of such a thing. Gad, I do remember, as a young man, meeting Thackeray at a garden-party at Orleans House—gentlemanly fellow with a broken nose—and Browning went about a bit, too, now I think of it. People had 'em one at a time to lend flavor to a dinner—like an olive. We didn't dine on olives, though. You have 'em for breakfast, luncheon, dinner and everything! I'm sick of olives, I tell you, Margaret!"

Margaret pouted.

"They ain't even good olives. I looked into one of that fellow Charteris' books the other day—that chap you had here last week. It was bally rot—proverbs standing on their heads and grinning like dwarfs in a condemned street-fair! Who wants to be told that impropriety is the spice of life and that a roving eye gathers remorse? You may call that sort of thing cleverness, if you like; I call it d—d foolishness." And the emphasis with which he said this left no doubt that the Colonel spoke his honest opinion.

"Attractive," said his daughter patiently, "Mr. Charteris is very, very clever. Mr. Kennaston says literature suffered a considerable loss when he began to write for the magazines."

And now that Margaret has spoken, permit me to call your attention to her voice. Mellow and suave and of astonishing volume was Margaret's voice; it came not from the back of her throat, as most of our women's voices do, but from her chest; and I protest it had the timbre of a violin. Men, hearing her voice for the first time, were wont to stare at her a little and afterward to close their hands slowly, for always its modulations had the tonic sadness of distant music, and it thrilled you to much the same magnanimity and yearning, cloudily conceived; and yet you could not but smile in spite of yourself at the quaint emphasis fluttering through her speech and pouncing for the most part on the unlikeliest word in the whole sentence.

But I fancy the Colonel must have been tone-deaf. "Don't you make phrases for me!" he snorted; "you keep 'em for your menagerie! Think! By gad, the world never thinks. I believe the world deliberately reads the six best selling books in order to incapacitate itself for thinking." Then, his wrath gathering emphasis as he went on: "The longer I live the plainer I see Shakespeare was right—what fools these mortals be, and all that. There's that Haggage woman—speech-making through the country like a hiatus politician. It may be philanthropic, but it ain't ladylike—no, begad! What has she got to do with juvenile courts and child labor in the South, I'd like to know? Why ain't she at home attending to that crippled boy of hers—poor little beggar!—instead of flaunting through America meddling with other folks' children?"

Miss Hugonin put another lump of sugar into his cup and deigned no reply.

"By gad!" cried the Colonel fervently, "if you're so anxious to spend that money of yours in charity why don't you found a Day Nursery for the Children of Philanthropists—a place where advanced men and women can leave their offspring in capable hands when they're busied with mothers' meetings and educational conferences? It would do a thousand times more good, I can tell you, than that fresh kindergarten scheme of yours for teaching the children of the laboring classes to make a new sort of mud-pie."

"You don't understand these things, attractive," Margaret gently pointed out. "You aren't in harmony with the trend of modern thought."

"No, thank the Lord!" said the Colonel heartily.

Ensued a silence during which he chipped at his eggshell in an absent-minded fashion.

"That fellow Kennaston said anything to you yet?" he presently queried.

"I—I don't understand," she protested—oh, perfectly unconvincingly. The tea-making, too, engrossed her at this point to an utterly improbable extent.

Thus it shortly befell that the Colonel, still regarding her under intent brows, cleared his throat and made bold to question her generosity in the matter of sugar, five lumps being, as he suggested, a rather unusual allowance for one cup.

Then, "Mr. Kennaston and I are very good friends," said she with dignity. And having spoiled the first cup in the making, she began on another.

"Glad to hear it," growled the old gentleman. "I hope you value his friendship sufficiently not to marry him. The man's a fraud—a flimsy, sickening fraud, like his poetry, begad, and that's made up of botany and wide margins and indecency in about equal proportions. It ain't fit for a

woman to read—in fact, a woman ought not to read anything; a comprehension of the Decalogue and the cookery-book is enough learning for the best of 'em. Your mother never—never—"

Colonel Hugonin paused and stared at the open window for a little. He seemed to be interested in something a great way off.

"We used to read Ouida's books together," he said, somewhat wistfully. "And how she did revel in Chandos and Bertie Cecil and those dashing Life Guardsmen! And she used to toss that little head of hers and say I was a finer



"BUT I DON'T WANT TO MARRY ANYBODY"

figure of a man than any of 'em—thirty years ago, that was. And I was then, but I ain't now. I'm only a broken-down, cantankerous old fool," declared the Colonel, blowing his nose violently, "and that's why I'm quarreling with the dearest, foolishest daughter man ever had. Ah, my dear, don't mind me—run your menagerie as you like, and I'll stand it."

Margaret adopted her usual tactics; she perched herself on the arm of his chair and began to stroke his cheek very gently. She often wondered as to what dear sort of a woman that tender-eyed, pink-cheeked mother of the old miniature had been—the mother who had died when she was two years old. She loved the idea of her, vague as it was. And, just now, somehow, the notion of two grown people reading Ouida did not strike her as being especially ridiculous.

"Was she very beautiful?" she asked softly.

"My dear," said her father, "you are the picture of her."

"You dangerous old man!" said she, laughing and rubbing her cheek against his in a manner that must have been highly agreeable; "dear, do you know that is the nicest little compliment I've had for a long time?"

Thereupon the Colonel chuckled. "Pay me for it, then," said he, "by driving the dog-cart over to meet Billy's train to-day. Eh?"

"I—I can't," said Miss Hugonin promptly.

"Why?" demanded her father.

"Because—" said Miss Hugonin; and after giving this really excellent reason, reflected for a moment and strengthened it by adding, "because—"

"See here," her father questioned, "what did you two quarrel about, anyway?"

"I—I really don't remember," said she reflectively; then continued, with hauteur and some inconsistency, "I am not aware that Mr. Woods and I have ever quarreled."

"By gad, then," said the Colonel, "you may as well prepare to, for I intend to marry you to Billy some day. Dear, dear, child," he interpolated, with malice aforethought, "have you a fever? Your cheek's like a coal. Billy's a man, I tell you—worth a dozen of your Kennastons and Charterises. I like Billy. And besides, it's only right he should have Selwoode—wasn't he brought up to expect

it? It ain't right he should lose it simply because he had a quarrel with Frederick, for, by gad—not to speak unkindly of the dead, my dear—Frederick quarreled with every one he ever knew, from the woman who nursed him to the doctor who gave him his last pill. He may have got his genius for money-making from Heaven, but he certainly got his temper from the devil. I really believe," said the Colonel reflectively, "it was worse than mine. Yes, not a doubt of it—I'm a lamb in comparison. But he had his way, after all; and even now poor Billy can't get Selwoode without taking you with it," and he took his daughter's face between his hands and turned it toward his for a moment. "I wonder, now," said he in meditative wise, "if Billy will consider that a drawback?"

It seemed very improbable. Any number of marriage-able males would have sworn it was unthinkable.

However, "Of course," Margaret began in a crisp voice, "if you advise Mr. Woods to marry me as a good speculation—"

But her father caught her up with a whistle. "Eh?" said he. "Love in a cottage?—is it thus the poet tunes his lay? That's nonsense! I tell you, even in a cottage the plumber's bill has to be paid, and the grocer's little account settled every month. Yes, by gad, and even if you elect to live on bread and cheese and kisses you'll find Camembert a bit more to your taste than Sweitzer."

"But I don't want to marry anybody, you ridiculous old dear," said Margaret.

"Oh, very well," said the old gentleman; "don't. Be an old maid and lecture before the mothers' club, if you like. I don't care. Anyhow, you meet Billy to-day at twelve-forty-five. You will?—that's a good child. Now, run along and tell the menagerie I'll be downstairs as soon as I've finished dressing."

And the Colonel rang for his man and proceeded to finish his toilet. He seemed a thought absent-minded this morning.

"I say, Wilkins," he questioned after a little, "ever read any of Ouida's books?"

"Ho, yes, sir," said Wilkins; "Miss 'Enderson—Mrs. 'Aggage's maid, that his, sir—was reading haloud hout hof Hunder Two Flags honly last hevening, sir."

"H'm—Wilkins—if you can run across one of them in the servants' quarters—you might leave it—by my bed—to-night."

"Yes, sir."

"And—h'm, Wilkins—you can put it under that book of Herbert Spencer's my daughter gave me yesterday. Under it, Wilkins—and, h'm, Wilkins—you needn't mention it to anybody. Ouida ain't cultured, Wilkins, but she's mighty good reading. I suppose that's why she ain't cultured, Wilkins."

III

AND now let us go back a little. In a word, let us utilize the next twenty minutes—during which Miss Hugonin drives to the neighboring railway station in, if you press me, not the most pleasant state of mind conceivable—by explaining a thought more fully the posture of affairs at Selwoode on the May morning that starts our story.

And to do this I must commence at the very beginning, with the foundation of Selwoode, and, chief of all, with the nature of the man who founded it.

It was when the nineteenth century was still a hearty octogenarian that Frederick R. Woods caused Selwoode to be builded. I give you the name by which he was known "on the Street." A mythology has grown about the name since, and strange legends of its owner are still narrated where brokers congregate. But with the lambs he sheared and the bulls he dragged to earth and the bears he gored to financial death we have nothing to do; suffice it that he performed these operations with almost uniform success and in an unimpeachably respectable manner.

And if, in his time, he added materially to the lists of inmates in various asylums and almshouses, it must be acknowledged that he bore his victims no malice, and that on every Sunday morning he confessed himself to be a miserable sinner, in a voice that was perfectly audible three pews off. At bottom I think he considered his relations with Heaven on a purely business basis; he kept a species of running account with Providence; and if, on occasions, he overdrew it somewhat he saw no incongruity in evening matters with a check for the church fund.

So that at his death it was said of him that he had, in his day, sent more men into bankruptcy and more missionaries into Africa than any other man in the country.

In his sixty-fifth year he caught Alfred Van Orden short in lard, erected a memorial window to his wife, and became a country gentleman. He never set foot in Wall Street again. He builded Selwoode—a handsome Tudor manor, which stands some seven miles from the village of Fairhaven—where he dwelt in state, by turns affable and domineering to the neighboring farmers, and evincing a grave interest in the condition of their crops. He no longer turned to the financial reports in the papers; and the pedigree of the Woodses hung in the living-hall for all men to see, beginning

gloriously with Woden, the Scandinavian god, and attaining a respectable culmination in the names of Frederick R. Woods and of William, his brother.

It is not to be supposed that he omitted to supply himself with a coat-of-arms. Frederick R. Woods evinced an almost childlike pride in his heraldic blazonings.

"The Woods arms," he would inform you with a relishing gusto, "are vert, an eagle displayed, barry argent and gules. And the crest is out of a ducal coronet, or a demi-eagle proper. We have no motto, sir—none of your ancient coats have mottoes."

The Woods Eagle he gloried in. The bird was perched in every available nook at Selwoode; it was carved in the woodwork, was set in the mosaics, was chased in the tableware, was woven in the napery, was glazed in the very china. Turn where you would, an eagle or two confronted you; and Hunston Wyke, who is accounted something of a wit, swore that Frederick R. Woods at Selwoode reminded him of "a sore-headed bear who had taken up permanent quarters in an aviary."

There was one, however, who found the bear no very untractable monster. This was the son of his brother, dead now, who dwelt at Selwoode as heir presumptive. Frederick R. Woods' wife had died long ago, leaving him childless. His brother's boy was an orphan; and so, for a time, he and the grim old man lived together peaceably enough. Indeed, Billy Woods was in those days as fine a lad as you would wish to see, with the eyes of an inquisitive cherub and a big towhead, which Frederick R. Woods fell into the habit of cuffing heartily, in order to conceal the fact that he would have burned Selwoode to the ground rather than allow any one else to injure a hair of it.

In the consummation of time, Billy, having attained the ripe age of eighteen, announced to his uncle that he intended to become a famous painter. Frederick R. Woods exhorted him not to be a fool, and packed him off to college.

Billy Woods returned on his first vacation with a rudimentary mustache and any quantity of paint-tubes, canvases, palettes, mahl-sticks and suchlike paraphernalia. Frederick R. Woods passed over the mustache, and had the painters' trappings burned by the second footman. Billy promptly purchased another lot. His uncle came upon them one

morning, rubbed his chin meditatively for a moment, and laughed for the first time, so far as known, in his lifetime; then he tiptoed to his own apartments lest Billy—the lazy young rascal was still abed in the next room—should awaken and discover his knowledge of this act of flat rebellion.

I dare say the old gentleman was so completely accustomed to having his own way that this unlooked-for opposition tickled him by its novelty, or perhaps he recognized in Billy an obstinacy akin to his own; or perhaps it was merely that he loved the boy. In any event, he never again alluded to the subject; and it is a fact that when Billy sent for carpenters to convert an upper room into an atelier, Frederick R. Woods spent two long and dreary weeks in Boston, in order to remain in ignorance of the entire affair.

Billy scrambled through college, somehow, in the allotted four years. At the end of that time he returned to find new inmates installed at Selwoode. For the wife of Frederick R. Woods had been before her marriage one of the beautiful Anstruther sisters, who, as certain New Yorkers still remember—those grizzled, portly, rosy-gilled fellows who prattle on provocation of Jenny Lind and Castle Garden, and remember everything—created a pronounced furore at their debut in the days of crinoline and the Grecian bend; and Margaret Anstruther, as they will tell you, was married to Thomas Hugonin, then a gallant cavalry officer in the service of her Majesty the Empress of India.

And she must have been the nicer of the two, because everybody who knew her says that Margaret Hugonin is exactly like her.

So it came about, naturally enough, that Billy Woods, now an *Artium Baccalaureus*, if you please, and not a little proud of it, found the Colonel and his daughter, then on a visit to this country, installed at Selwoode as guests and quasi-relatives. And Billy was twenty-two and Margaret was nineteen.

Precisely what happened I am unable to tell you. Billy Woods claims it is none of my business; and Margaret says that it was a long, long time ago, and she really can't remember.

But I fancy we can all form a very fair notion of what is most likely to occur when two sensible, normal, healthy

young people are thrown together in this intimate fashion at a country-house where the remaining company consists of two elderly gentlemen. Billy was forced to be polite to his uncle's guest; and Margaret couldn't well be discourteous to her host's nephew, could she? Of course not: so it befell in the course of time that Frederick R. Woods and the Colonel—who had quickly become a great favorite, by virtue of his implicit faith in the Eagle and in Woden and Sir Percival de Wode, of Hastings, and suchlike flights of heraldic fancy, and had augmented his popularity by his really brilliant suggestion of Wynkyn de Worde, the famous sixteenth century printer, as a probable collateral relation of the family—it came to pass, I say, that the two gentlemen nodded over their port and chuckled, and winked at one another, and agreed that the thing would do.

This was all very well; but they failed to make allowance for the inevitable quarrel and the subsequent spectacle of the gentleman contemplating suicide and the lady looking wistfully toward a nunnery. In this case it arose, I believe, over Teddy Anstruther, who, for a cousin, was undeniably very attentive to Margaret; and, in the natural course of events, they would have made it up before the week was out had not Frederick R. Woods selected this very moment to interfere in the matter.

Ah, *si vicillesse savait!*

The blundering old man summoned Billy into his study and ordered him to marry Margaret Hugonin, precisely as the Colonel might have ordered a private to go on sentry-duty. Ten days earlier Billy would have jumped at the chance; ten days later he would probably have suggested it himself; but at that exact moment he would have as willingly contemplated matrimony with Alecto or Medusa or any of the Furies. Accordingly he declined. Frederick R. Woods flew into a pyrotechnical display of temper and gave him his choice between obeying his commands and leaving his house forever—the choice, in fact, that he had been according Billy at very brief intervals ever since the boy had the measles, fifteen years before, and refused to take the proper medicines.

It was merely his usual manner of expressing a request or a suggestion. But this time, to his utter horror, the boy took him at his word and left Selwoode within the hour.

(Continued on Page 22)

A Night's Enchantment

The Adventure of the Lady in the Closed Carriage

BY HAROLD MACGRATH

Author of *The Puppet Crown*

SO MUCH depended upon every one's utter lack of nervousness and embarrassment that Shaw, the stage manager, decided that my presence at the final rehearsal would only add to the

tension, and was therefore unnecessary. The "star" complained that her efforts to interpret my lines to my satisfaction were wearing her thin, while the "leading man" declared that he could not enter naturally into the spirit of the comedy so long as he knew that I was watching from across the front. To tell the truth, I was not unagreeable. There were many things that I wanted to change, and I knew that if I once got headway I should have to write the play all over; and that was not in the contract. My room was better than my company. So Shaw gave me a card to The Players and left me there in the care of a distinguished fellow-dramatist.

We had a capital dinner, and our exchange of experiences would have made a book equal in length to the Revelations. What a time a fellow has to get a manager to listen to a better play than he has yet produced! I'm afraid that we said many uncomplimentary things about actors in general and managers in particular. The actor always had his own idea, the manager had his, and between them the man who wrote the play was pretty well knocked about. But when the play is produced every one's idea proves of some use, so I find.

Notwithstanding the good dinner and the interesting conversation, I found myself glancing constantly at my watch or at the clock, thinking that at such and such a time to-morrow night my puppets would be uttering such and such a line, perhaps as I wanted them to utter it, perhaps as they wanted to utter it. It did not matter that I had written two successful novels and a popular comedy; I was still subject to spells of diffidence and greenness. A great deal depended upon this second effort; it was, or it was not, to establish me in New York as a playwright of the first order.

I played a game of billiards indifferently well, peered into Booth's room and evoked his kindly spirit to watch over my future, smoked incessantly, and waited impatiently for Shaw's promised telephone call. The call came at ten-thirty, and



I FELT MY HEART STOP AND THEN THROB VIOLENTLY

Shaw said that three acts had gone off superbly and that everything pointed to a big success. My spirits rose wonderfully. I had as yet never experienced the thrill of a curtain call, my first play having been produced while I was abroad.

If they called me before the curtain my cup was full; there was nothing left in the world but to make money, all other thrills having come and departed. All at once I became determined

to run uptown to the theatre and steal in to see the last act. So I called for my hat and coat, apologized to my friend, and went forth into the night—and romance!

Gramercy Park is always still at night, quiet even in the very heart of turmoil. Only an indefinable murmur drifted over from the crowded life of Broadway. I was conning over some lines I thought fine, epigrams and fragmentary philosophy.

"Hurry! We have only half an hour!"

The voice, soft and musical, broke the silence ere my foot had left the last step. Amazed, I looked in the direction from whence came this symphony of vocal allurements. A handsome coupé, with groom and footman, stood at the curb. A woman in evening gown leaned out. I stopped and stared. The footman at the door touched his hat. I gazed over my shoulder to see if any one had come out of the club at the same time as myself. I was alone.

"Hurry! I have waited at least half an hour. We haven't a moment to waste."

Some one in the upper rooms of the club lifted a shade to open a window, and the light illuminated her features. She was young and very handsome. A French wit once said that the whisper of a beautiful woman can be heard farther than the loudest call of duty. Now, I honestly confess that if she had been homely, or even moderately good-looking, I should have politely explained to her that she had made a peculiar mistake. I was somebody else. As it was, with scarce any hesitation I stepped into the carriage, and the footman closed the door. To this day I cannot analyze the impulse that led me into that carriage: Fate in the guise of mischief, destiny in the motley and out for a lark, I know not which, nor care.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting," said I.

"I thought that you would never come."

THE EAGLE'S SHADOW

(Continued from Page 3)

Billy's life, you see, was irrevocably blighted. It mattered very little what became of him; personally, he didn't care in the least. But as for that fair, false, fickle woman—perish the thought! Sooner a thousand deaths! No, he would go to Paris and become a painter of world-wide reputation; the money his father had left him would easily suffice for his simple wants. And some day, the observed of all observers, in some bright hall of gayety, he would pass her coldly by, with a cynical smile on his lips, and she would grow pale and totter and fall into the arms of the bloated Silenus for whose title she had bartered her purely superficial charms.

Yes, upon mature deliberation, that was precisely what Billy decided to do.

Followed dark days at Selwoode. Frederick R. Woods told Margaret of what had occurred; and he added the information that, as his wife's nearest relative, he intended to make her his heir.

Then Margaret did what I should scarcely have expected of Margaret. She turned upon him like a virago and told Mr. Frederick R. Woods precisely what she thought of him: she acquainted him with the fact that he was a sordid, low-minded, grasping beast, and a miser and a tyrant, and, I think, a parricide; she notified him that he was thoroughly unworthy to wipe the dust off his nephew's shoes—an office toward which, to do him justice, he had never shown any marked aspirations—and that Billy had acted throughout in a most noble and sensible manner, and that, personally, she wouldn't marry Billy Woods if he were the last man on earth, for she had always despised him, and she added the information that she expected to die shortly and she hoped they would both be sorry *then*; and subsequently she capped the climax by throwing her arms about his neck and bursting into tears and telling him he was the dearest old man in the world, and that she was thoroughly ashamed of herself.

So they kissed and made it up. And after a little the Colonel and Margaret went away from Selwoode, and Frederick R. Woods was left alone to nourish his anger and indignation, if he could, and to hunger for his boy, whether he would or not. He was too proud to seek him out; indeed, he never thought of that; and so he waited alone in his fine house, sick at heart, impotent, hoping against hope that the boy would come back. The boy never came.

No, the boy never came, because he was what the old man had made him—headstrong and willful and obstinate. Billy had been thoroughly spoiled. The old man had nurtured his pride, had applauded it as a mark of proper spirit; and now it was this same pride that had robbed him of the one thing he loved in all the world.

So, at last, the weak point in the armor of this sturdy old Pharisee was found, and Fate had pierced it gayly. It was retribution, if you will; and I think that none of his victims in "the Street," none of the countless widows and orphans that he had made, suffered more bitterly than he in those last days.

It was almost two years after Billy's departure from Selwoode that his body-servant, coming to rouse Frederick R. Woods one June morning, found him dead in his rooms. He had been ailing for some time. It was his heart, the doctors said; and I think that it was, though not precisely in the sense they meant.

The man found him seated before his great carved desk, on which his head and shoulders had fallen forward; they rested on a sheet of legal-cap paper half-covered with a calculation in his crabbed old hand as to the value of certain properties—the calculation which he never finished; and underneath was a mass of miscellaneous papers, among them his will, dated the day after Billy left Selwoode, in which Frederick R. Woods bequeathed his millions unconditionally to Margaret Hugonin when she should come of age.

Her twenty-first birthday had fallen in the preceding month. So Margaret was one of the richest women in America; and you may depend upon it, that if many men had loved her before they worshiped her now—or, at least, said they did, and, after all, their protestations were the only means she had of judging. She might have been a countess—and it must be owned that the old Colonel, who had an honest Anglo-Saxon reverence

for a title, saw this chance lost wistfully—and she might have married any number of grammarless gentlemen, personally unknown to her, whose fervent proposals almost every mail brought in; and besides these, there were many others, more orthodox in their wooing, some of whom were genuinely in love with Margaret Hugonin, and some—I grieve to admit it—who were genuinely in love with her money: and she would have none of them.

She refused them all with the utmost civility, as I happen to know. How I learned it is no affair of yours.

For Miss Hugonin had remarkably keen eyes, which she used to advantage. In the world about her they discovered very little that she could admire. She was none the happier for her wealth; the piled-up millions overshadowed her personality; and it was not long before she knew that most people regarded her simply as the heiress of the Woods fortune—an unavoidable incumbrance attached to the property, which divers thrifty-minded gentlemen were willing to put up with. To put up with! At the thought her pride rose in a hot blush, and, it must be confessed, she sought consolation in the looking-glass.

She was a humble-minded young woman, as the sex goes, and she saw no great reason there why a man should go mad over Margaret Hugonin. This decision, I grant you, was preposterous, for there were any number of reasons. Her final conclusion, however, was for the future to regard all men as fortune-hunters, and to do her hair differently.

She carried out both resolutions. When a gentleman grew pressing in his attentions she more than suspected his motives; and when she eventually declined him it was done with perfect courtesy, but the glow of her eyes was at such times accentuated to a marked degree.

Meanwhile, the Eagle brooded undisturbed at Selwoode. Miss Hugonin would allow nothing to be altered.

"The place doesn't belong to me, attractive," she would tell her father. "I belong to the place—Yes, I do—I'm exactly like a little cow thrown in with a little farm when they sell it, and *all* my little suitors think so, and they are very willing to take me on those terms, too. But they sha'n't, attractive. I hate every single solitary man in the whole wide world but you, beautiful, and I particularly hate that horrid old Eagle; but we'll keep him because he's a constant reminder to me that Solomon or Moses, or whoever it was that said all men were liars, was a person of *very* great intelligence."

So that I think we may fairly say the money did her no good.

If it benefited no one else it was not Margaret's fault. She had a high sense of her responsibilities, and therefore, at various times, endeavored to further the spread of philanthropy, and literature, and theosophy, and art, and temperance, and education, and other laudable causes. Mr. Kennaston, in his laughing manner, was wont to jest at her varied enterprises and term her Lady Bountiful; but, then, Mr. Kennaston had no real conception of the proper uses of money. In fact, he never thought of money. He admitted this to Margaret with a whimsical sigh.

Margaret grew very fond of Mr. Kennaston because he was not mercenary.

Mr. Kennaston was much at Selwoode.

Many people came and gossiped of great causes and furthered the millennium. And above them the Eagle brooded in silence.

And Billy? All this time Billy was junketing abroad, where, every year, he painted masterpieces for the Salon, which—on account of a nefarious conspiracy among certain artists jealous of his superior merits—were invariably refused.

Now Billy is back again in America, and the Colonel has insisted that he come to Selwoode, and Margaret is waiting for him in the dog-cart. The glow of her eyes is very, very bright. Her father's careless words this morning, coupled with certain speeches of Mr. Kennaston's last night, have given her food for reflection.

"He wouldn't dare," says Margaret to no one in particular. "Oh, no, he wouldn't dare after what happened four years ago."

And, Margaret-like, she has quite forgotten that what happened four years ago was all caused by her having flirted outrageously with Teddy Anstruther, in order to see what Billy would do.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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