

CHAPTER XL

Many an honest penny was turned, with the assistance of the romantic Temple Barholm case, by writers of paragraphs for newspapers published in the United States. It was not merely a romance which belonged to England but was excitingly linked to America by the fact that its hero regarded himself as an American, and had passed through all the picturesque episodes of a most desirably struggling youth in the very streets of New York itself, and had "worked his way up" to the proud position of society reporter "on" a huge Sunday paper. It was generally considered to redound largely to his credit that refusing "in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations," he had been born in Brooklyn, that he had worn ragged clothes and shoes with holes in them, that he had blacked other people's shoes, run errands, and sold newspapers there. If he had been a mere English young man, one recounting of his romance would have disposed of him; but as he was presented to the newspaper public every characteristic lent itself to elaboration. He was, in fact, flaringly anecdotal. As a newly elected President who has made boots or driven a canal-boat in his unconsidered youth endears himself indescribably to both paragraph reader and paragraph purveyor, so did T. Tembarom endear himself. For weeks, he was a perennial fount. What quite credible story cannot be related of a hungry lad who is wildly flung by chance into immense fortune and the laps of dukes, so to speak? The feeblest imagination must be stirred by the high color of such an episode, and stimulated

to superb effort. Until the public had become sated with reading anecdotes depicting the extent of his early privations, and dwelling on illustrations which presented lumber-yards in which he had slept, and the facades of tumble-down tenements in which he had first beheld the light of day, he was a modest source of income. Any lumber-yard or any tenement sufficiently dilapidated would serve as a model; and the fact that in the shifting architectural life of New York the actual original scenes of the incidents had been demolished and built upon by new apartment-houses, or new railroad stations, or new factories seventy-five stories high, was an unobstructing triviality. Accounts of his manner of conducting himself in European courts to which he had supposedly been bidden, of his immense popularity in glittering circles, of his finely democratic bearing when confronted by emperors surrounded by their guilty splendors, were the joy of remote villages and towns. A thrifty and young minor novelist hastily incorporated him in a serial, and syndicated it upon the spot under the title of "Living or Dead." Among its especial public it was a success of such a nature as betrayed its author into as hastily writing a second romance, which not being rendered stimulating by a foundation of fact failed to repeat his triumph.

T. Tembarom, reading in the library at Temple Barholm the first newspapers sent from New York, smiled widely.

"You see they've got to say something, Jem," he explained. "It's too big a scoop to be passed over. Something's got to be turned in. And it

means money to the fellows, too. It's good copy."

"Suppose," suggested Jem, watching him with interest, "you were to write the facts yourself and pass them on to some decent chap who'd be glad to get them."

"Glad!" Tembarom flushed with delight. "Any chap would be'way up in the air at the chance. It's the best kind of stuff. Wouldn't you mind? Are you sure you wouldn't?" He was the warhorse snuffing battle from afar.

Jem Temple Barholm laughed outright at the gleam in his eyes.

"No, I shouldn't care a hang, dear fellow. And the fact that I objected would not stop the story."

"No, it wouldn't, by gee! Say, I'll get Ann to help me, and we'll send it to the man who took my place on the Earth. It'll mean board and boots to him for a month if he works it right. And it'll be doing a good turn to Galton, too. I shall be glad to see old Galton when I go back."

"You are quite sure you want to go back?" inquired Jem. A certain glow of feeling was always in his eyes when he turned them on T. Tembarom.

"Go back! I should smile! Of course I shall go back. I've got to get

busy for Hutchinson and I've got to get busy for myself. I guess there'll be work to do that'll take me half over the world; but I'm going back first. Ann's going with me."

But there was no reference to a return to New York when the Sunday Earth and other widely circulated weekly sheets gave prominence to the marriage of Mr. Temple Temple Barholm and Miss Hutchinson, only child and heiress of Mr. Joseph Hutchinson, the celebrated inventor. From a newspaper point of view, the wedding had been rather unfairly quiet, and it was necessary to fill space with a revival of the renowned story, with pictures of bride and bridegroom, and of Temple Barholm surrounded by ancestral oaks. A thriving business would have been done by the reporters if an ocean greyhound had landed the pair at the dock some morning, and snap-shots could have been taken as they crossed the gangway, and wearing apparel described. But hope of such fortune was swept away by the closing paragraph, which stated that Mr. and Mrs. Temple Barholm would "spend the next two months in motoring through Italy and Spain in their 90 h. p. Panhard."

It was T. Tembarom who sent this last item privately to Galton.

"It's not true," his letter added, "but what I'm going to do is nobody's business but mine and my wife's, and this will suit people just as well." And then he confided to Galton the thing which was the truth.

The St. Francesca apartment-house was a very new one, situated on a corner of an as yet sparsely built but rapidly spreading avenue above the "100th Streets"--many numbers above them. There was a frankly unfinished air about the neighborhood, but here and there a "store" had broken forth and valiantly displayed necessities, and even articles verging upon the economically ornamental. It was plainly imperative that the idea should be suggested that there were on the spot sources of supply not requiring the immediate employment of the services of the elevated railroad in the achievement of purchase, and also that enterprise rightly encouraged might develop into being equal to all demands. Here and there an exceedingly fresh and clean "market store," brilliant with the highly colored labels adorning tinned soups and meats and edibles in glass jars, alluringly presented itself to the passer-by. The elevated railroad perched upon iron supports, and with iron stairways so tall that they looked almost perilous, was a prominent feature of the landscape. There were stretches of waste ground, and high backgrounds of bits of country and woodland to be seen. The rush of New York traffic had not yet reached the streets, and the avenue was of an agreeable suburban cleanliness and calm. People who lived in upper stories could pride themselves on having "views of the river." These they laid stress upon when it was hinted that they "lived a long way uptown."

The St. Francesca was built of light-brown stone and decorated with much ornate molding. It was fourteen stories high, and was supplied with ornamental fire-escapes. It was "no slouch of a building."

Everything decorative which could be done for it had been done. The entrance was almost imposing, and a generous lavishness in the way of cement mosaic flooring and new and thick red carpet struck the eye at once. The grill-work of the elevator was of fresh, bright blackness, picked out with gold, and the colored elevator-boy wore a blue livery with brass buttons. Persons of limited means who were willing to discard the excitements of "downtown" got a good deal for their money, and frequently found themselves secretly surprised and uplifted by the atmosphere of luxury which greeted them when they entered their red-carpeted hall. It was wonderful, they said, congratulating one another privately, how much comfort and style you got in a New York apartment-house after you passed the "150ths."

On a certain afternoon T. Tembarom, with his hat on the back of his head and his arms full of parcels, having leaped off the "L" when it stopped at the nearest station, darted up and down the iron stairways until he reached the ground, and then hurried across the avenue to the St. Francesca. He made long strides, and two or three times grinned as if thinking of something highly amusing; and once or twice he began to whistle and checked himself. He looked approvingly at the tall building and its solidly balustraded entrance-steps as he approached it, and when he entered the red-carpeted hall he gave greeting to a small mulatto boy in livery.

"Hello, Tom! How's everything?" he inquired, hilariously. "You taking good care of this building? Let any more eight-room apartments? You've

got to keep right on the job, you know. Can't have you loafing because you've got those brass buttons."

The small page showed his teeth in gleeful appreciation of their friendly intimacy.

"Yassir. That's so," he answered. "Mis' Barom she's waitin' for you. Them carpets is come, sir. Tracy's wagon brought 'em 'bout an hour ago. I told her I'd help her lay 'em if she wanted me to, but she said you was comin' with the hammer an' tacks. 'Twarn't that she thought I was too little. It was jest that there wasn't no tacks. I tol' her jest call me in any time to do anythin' she want done, an' she said she would."

"She'll do it," said T. Tembarom. "You just keep on tap. I'm just counting on you and Light here," taking in the elevator-boy as he stepped into the elevator, "to look after her when I'm out."

The elevator-boy grinned also, and the elevator shot up the shaft, the numbers of the floors passing almost too rapidly to be distinguished. The elevator was new and so was the boy, and it was the pride of his soul to land each passenger at his own particular floor, as if he had been propelled upward from a catapult. But he did not go too rapidly for this passenger, at least, though a paper parcel or so was dropped in the transit and had to be picked up when he stopped at floor fourteen.

The red carpets were on the corridor there also, and fresh paint and paper were on the walls. A few yards from the elevator he stopped at a door and opened it with a latch-key, beaming with inordinate delight.

The door opened into a narrow corridor leading into a small apartment, the furniture of which was not yet set in order. A roll of carpet and some mats stood in a corner, chairs and tables with burlaps round their legs waited here and there, a cot with a mattress on it, evidently to be transformed into a "couch," held packages of bafflingly irregular shapes and sizes. In the tiny kitchen new pots and pans and kettles, some still wrapped in paper, tilted themselves at various angles on the gleaming new range or on the closed lids of the doll-sized stationary wash-tubs.

Little Ann had been very busy, and some of the things were unpacked. She had been sweeping and mopping floors and polishing up remote corners, and she had on a big white pinafore-apron with long sleeves, which transformed her into a sort of small female chorister. She came into the narrow corridor with a broom in her hand, her periwinkle-blue gaze as thrilled as an excited child's when it attacks the arrangement of its first doll's house. Her hair was a little ruffled where it showed below the white kerchief she had tied over her head. The warm, daisy pinkness of her cheeks was amazing.

"Hello!" called out Tembarom at sight of her. "Are you there yet? I

don't believe it."

"Yes, I'm here," she answered, dimpling at him.

"Not you!" he said. "You couldn't be! You've melted away. Let's see."

And he slid his parcels down on the cot and lifted her up in the air as if she had been a baby. "How can I tell, anyhow?" he laughed out.

"You don't weigh anything, and when a fellow squeezes you he's got to look out what he's doing."

He did not seem to "look out" particularly when he caught her to him in a hug into which she appeared charmingly to melt. She made herself part of it, with soft arms which went at once round his neck and held him.

"Say!" he broke forth when he set her down. "Do you think I'm not glad to get back?"

"No, I don't, Tem," she answered, "I know how glad you are by the way I'm glad myself."

"You know just everything!" he ejaculated, looking her over, "just every darned thing--God bless you! But don't you melt away, will you? That's what I'm afraid of. I'll do any old thing on earth if you'll just stay."

That was his great joke,--though she knew it was not so great a joke as it seemed,--that he would not believe that she was real, and believed that she might disappear at any moment. They had been married three weeks, and she still knew when she saw him pause to look at her that he would suddenly seize and hold her fast, trying to laugh, sometimes not with entire success.

"Do you know how long it was? Do you know how far away that big place was from everything in the world?" he had said once. "And me holding on and gritting my teeth? And not a soul to open my mouth to! The old duke was the only one who understood, anyhow. He'd been there."

"I'll stay," she answered now, standing before him as he sat down on the end of the "couch." She put a firm, warm-palmed little hand on each side of his face, and held it between them as she looked deep into his eyes. "You look at me, Tem--and see."

"I believe it now," he said, "but I shan't in fifteen minutes."

"We're both right-down silly," she said, her soft, cosy laugh breaking out. "Look round this room and see what we've got to do. Let's begin this minute. Did you get the groceries?"

He sprang up and began to go over his packages triumphantly.

"Tea, coffee, sugar, pepper, salt, beefsteak," he called out.

"We can't have beefsteak often," she said, soberly, "if we're going to do it on fifteen a week."

"Good Lord, no!" he gave back to her, hilariously. "But this is a Fifth Avenue feed."

"Let's take them into the kitchen and put them into the cupboard, and untie the pots and pans." She was suddenly quite absorbed and businesslike. "We must make the room tidy and tack down the carpet, and then cook the dinner."

He followed her and obeyed her like an enraptured boy. The wonder of her was that, despite its unarranged air, the tiny place was already cleared and set for action. She had done it all before she had swept out the undiscovered corners. Everything was near the spot to which it belonged. There was nothing to move or drag out of the way.

"I got it all ready to put straight," she said, "but I wanted you to finish it with me. It wouldn't have seemed right if I'd done it without you. It wouldn't have been as much OURS."

Then came active service. She was like a small general commanding an army of one. They put things on shelves; they hung things on hooks; they found places in which things belonged; they set chairs and tables straight; and then, after dusting and polishing them, set them at a

more imposing angle; they unrolled the little green carpet and tacked down its corners; and transformed the cot into a "couch" by covering it with what Tracy's knew as a "throw" and adorning one end of it with cotton-stuffed cushions. They hung little photogravures on the walls and strung up some curtains before the good-sized window, which looked down from an enormous height at the top of four-storied houses, and took in beyond them the river and the shore beyond. Because there was no fireplace Tembarom knocked up a shelf, and, covering it with a scarf (from Tracy's), set up some inoffensive ornaments on it and flanked them with photographs of Jem Temple Barholm, Lady Joan in court dress, Miss Alicia in her prettiest cap, and the great house with its huge terrace and the griffins.

"Ain't she a looker?" Tembarom said of Lady Joan. "And ain't Jem a looker, too? Gee! they're a pair. Jem thinks this honeymoon stunt of ours is the best thing he ever heard of-- us fixing ourselves up here just like we would have done if nothing had ever happened, and we'd HAD to do it on fifteen per. Say," throwing an arm about her, "are you getting as much fun out of it as if we HAD to, as if I might lose my job any minute, and we might get fired out of here because we couldn't pay the rent? I believe you'd rather like to think I might ring you into some sort of trouble, so that you could help me to get you out of it."

That's nonsense," she answered, with a sweet, untruthful little face. "I shouldn't be very sensible if I wasn't glad you COULDN'T lose your

job. Father and I are your job now."

He laughed aloud. This was the innocent, fantastic truth of it. They had chosen to do this thing--to spend their honey-moon in this particular way, and there was no reason why they should not. The little dream which had been of such unattainable proportions in the days of Mrs. Bowse's boarding-house could be realized to its fullest. No one in the St. Francesca apartments knew that the young honeymooners in the five-roomed apartment were other than Mr. and Mrs. T. Barholm, as recorded on the tablet of names in the entrance. Hutchinson knew, and Miss Alicia knew, and Jem Temple Barholm, and Lady Joan. The Duke of Stone knew, and thought the old-fashionedness of the idea quite the last touch of modernity.

"Did you see any one who knew you when you were out?" Little Ann asked.

"No, and if I had they wouldn't have believed they'd seen me, because the papers told them that Mr. and Mrs. Temple Barholm are spending their honeymoon motoring through Spain in their ninety-horse-power Panhard."

"Let's go and get dinner," said Little Ann.

They went into the doll's-house kitchen and cooked the dinner. Little Ann broiled steak and fried potato chips, and T. Tembarom produced a

wonderful custard pie he had bought at a confectioner's. He set the table, and put a bunch of yellow daisies in the middle of it.

"We couldn't do it every day on fifteen per week," he said. "If we wanted flowers we should have to grow them in old tomato-cans."

Little Ann took off her chorister's-gown apron and her kerchief, and patted and touched up her hair. She was pink to her ears, and had several new dimples; and when she sat down opposite him, as she had sat that first night at Mrs. Bowse's boarding-house supper, Tembarom stared at her and caught his breath.

"You ARE there?" he said, "ain't you?"

"Yes, I am," she answered.

When they had cleared the table and washed the dishes, and had left the toy kitchen spick and span, the ten million lights in New York were lighted and casting their glow above the city. Tembarom sat down on the Adams chair before the window and took Little Ann on his knee. She was of the build which settles comfortably and with ease into soft curves whose nearness is a caress. Looked down at from the fourteenth story of the St. Francesca apartments, the lights strung themselves along lines of streets, crossing and recrossing one another; they glowed and blazed against masses of buildings, and they hung at enormous heights in mid-air here and there, apparently without any

support. Everywhere was the glow and dazzle of their brilliancy of light, with the distant bee hum of a nearing elevated train, at intervals gradually deepening into a roar. The river looked miles below them, and craft with sparks or blaze of light went slowly or swiftly to and fro.

"It's like a dream," said Little Ann, after a long silence. "And we are up here like birds in a nest."

He gave her a closer grip.

"Miss Alicia once said that when I was almost down and out," he said.

"It gave me a jolt. She said a place like this would be like a nest. Wherever we go,--and we'll have to go to lots of places and live in lots of different ways,--we'll keep this place, and some time we'll bring her here and let her try it. I've just got to show her New York."

"Yes, let us keep it," said Little Ann, drowsily, "just for a nest."

There was another silence, and the lights on the river far below still twinkled or blazed as they drifted to and fro.

"You are there, ain't you?" said Tembarom in a half-whisper.

"Yes--I am," murmured Little Ann.

But she had had a busy day, and when he looked down at her, she hung softly against his shoulder, fast asleep.