

THE WESTERN HOME MONTHLY

Winnipeg, March, 1928

Ten Cents a Copy



JOHANN LIND

BY

Laura Goodman Salverson

★ AN OUTSTANDING SERIAL COMMENCING IN THIS ISSUE ★



"Now listen to me, you Madonna-faced sinner, there'll be no talk—you understand? Not a word, not even a whisper. Is that clear?"

JOHANN LIND

BY

Laura Goodman Salverson

Illustrated by J. F. Clymer

OLD HERMAN was keeping his annual vigil by the stormy waters of the Devil's Palm. A strange, silent man, this Herman, steeped in the rugged mold of dwellers in the lonely places. Strange too, this habit of holding tryst each tenth of June at the terrible Palm. More than strange, said those who knew of it, wagging their heads in the wise way of gossipers the world over. The man had something on his mind, of that there could be no doubt—why else had he taken to the hills and the lonely life of a recluse? And this habit! Now what but a bad conscience could drive a man to that evil place?

To none of this Herman gave a moment's thought; his ways were his own, and the world might go on as it cared without him. As to this habit—well, others kept their Easter, their Midsummer's Eve, their Yuletide, why not he his Tenth of June? That was all the explanation to be wrung from him—that and a provoking smile.

So now once more old Herman kept his watch, perched like a solitary cormorant on the highest headland overlooking the Devil's Palm. All around, the gray countryside resembled the ruins of a long-dead civilization. Honeycombed by wind and storm, the crumbling hills stood in their weird formations like empty shells of some once-mighty city; here a ruined keep, shadowy and dim, there a proud rampart high uplifted, and near the sea a temple wall where—so said the fisherfolk—the black elves sang a prophetic dirge whenever a storm was brewing. Nowhere was the least sign of vegetation. To the north rose the flanks of snow-capped mountains, southwest the great fjord and a strip of brown plain, all else was the sea.

Alone, save for the lean hound at his feet, the old man brooded upon the grim scene before him, his face curiously transfigured as if this were a long-sought shrine and he the most pious of pilgrims. And yet, if worship drew him it would seem that Death, not Life, was his God, for on all that wild coastland no reef could vie with the Palm in

treachery. None took a heavier toll of the daring crafts of men. Still, such was its awful grandeur, that even the simple fisher folk, fearing it and cursing it though they did, called it Hela's Paradise. Majestic it certainly was with the awful majesty of unconquerable places. Bold promontories and precipitous cliffs shot up from the boiling waters on every side—a cradle of death if ever there was one—so grim a spectacle that nothing could explain it but a battle of the giants. Yet here, in the midst of unparalleled dangers, like a jade amulet dropped by the gods, lay the Calm Cup—an inaccessible haven, tranquil and beautiful.

To Herman it was a miracle of loveliness reflecting more than the summer sky. A ship's length ahead the dreadful reef reared its ugly pinnacles, stretched forth its hungry talons to taunt and trip the wild green waves. The din they made was never-ending, ever-increasing as the day lengthened. But the Cup remained at peace. That tranquil rock-cradled haven was a Mimir's well to the old hill-man, embracing boundless wisdom and deathless memory. And like the All-Wise Odin he gave of his humble best to get in turn a little of its precious store. Silent and inscrutable he kept his tryst, so still, in fact, that the gulls who had soared at his coming now circled and wheeled above his head in careless abandon. For all the signs of life about him he might have been a figure of stone. Only his dog knew better. Good faithful brute, lifting soft pleading eyes, from time to time, to the face of his deity, seeking, no doubt, the solution to this mystery, but resigned to the whim of his lord.

Thus the hours slipped away one after the other; each a bead in Herman's rosary of bitter-sweet memories. And, with the passing day, the Devil's Palm appeared to sink into the sea; its dreadful iron talons borne down by the mighty sweep of the returning tide. Familiar sight enough though

it was, the old man could not repress a shudder when the last terrible claw disappeared from sight and the mad green waves stamped and thundered in victorious revelry above the submerged reef.

Herman sighed. The last bead was told, the gamut of tender memories run to their finish, and the sun was already far behind the hills. He sighed again as he stretched his cramped limbs, conscious for the first time of an aching weariness. "Ho! Gammur, old fellow," he addressed the now jubilant hound, "your master is on the way to nothingness—something warns me I'm getting old!"

But Gammur thought differently; at sound of the beloved voice he dashed upon his master in such roisterous glee that old Herman was hard pressed to keep his footing. "Nu da, troll that you are; down old fellow! down! or you'll have me in that hell below us ere you know it. To the trail, old fellow, to the trail!"

Never was a command more joyfully received. Provoking a thousand echoes with the wild chorus of his barking, Gammur tore round the perilous ridge, wheeled back once more to fawn upon his master, and bounded down the corkscrew trail boring to the heath where a certain fat old pony dozed patiently, resigned to the ways of men and dogs.

Herman followed the flying animal as fast as might be, a merry twinkle lighting his mild grey eyes. "Nu da," he chuckled. "The old dog smells danger. As I live the rascal knows our little mistress will be in a troll's temper. Ja, poor lamb, and who's to blame her!"

SOME twelve miles back from the shore, over wild and winding paths leading by basalt buttresses and over the shoulders of blackened sandhills, lies the miniature Valley of Shining Eyes. An oasis in a dreary land is this bowl-shaped bit of verdure, so romantically named by Hulda, old Herman's protegee.

Hulda had need to resort to imagination, living alone as she did with an eccentric old man and his eternally bawling sheep. She rarely left the little valley. In its choice isolation she was a prisoner of peace. Each day was like the last, the same dull routine over and over again, the one excitement from a silly lamb strayed from its emerald oasis into the bleak fastnesses beyond. Then, forsooth, Hulda might venture out upon the mountain trails, singing and dancing like a female Pan, rejoicing in the wider freedom of the distant hills. Up and up she would skip, higher and higher until, from a dizzy eminence, she could see far below the patchwork square of a fishing village sleeping by the restless sea.

Thus she might look upon the world who had no part in it—or at best, so very little. Still, it was something that Herman should have taken her once each summer, these five years gone, to the Great Fjord, where the fishing smacks came in from the open sea with the winds of the world at their backs and their sails molten gold in the sun! Something? Nay, it was much!

Joy sang like a harp in her breast at sight of those ships sweeping up from the rim of the Underworld like giant birds unrestrained and unrestrainable; mystery their dominion, freedom their heritage. Oh, she loved them with passionate intensity that stung like a pain! But there were calmer delights also, lesser adventures, that left their pleasant memories. How happy she had been skimming over the blue waters to the Bird Isles, those frowning black buttresses whose brows were crowned with living clouds of happy birds.

How exciting it had seemed to enter that isolated haven where unvarying safety had made the fluffy eider ducks so tame that one had to walk warily lest some lazy fellow be trampled underfoot! And the still more thunderous Dame Troll Cliffs—how awe-inspiring they were, lifted high upon the wild waters to make a resting-place for innumerable birds. So many birds she had not dreamed the whole world harbored! Hundreds and thousands of them, all apparently reconciled to each other's contrary habits! Dignified, solemn Guillemots and the lazy, black-capped Puffins basked no less happily in the yellow sunlight for the noisy screeching of the Tern, the mournful cries of the delicate gulls and the endless commotion of the bold marauding Skuas.

To Hulda it had been delightful beyond description to leap from crag to crag like the wild thing she was, clapping her hands and shouting with glee at the whirling, darting, hissing birds about her. Herman shook his head at this savage abandonment—the like had never been seen in a Northland maid. But Hulda cared not a fig. Her eyes like stars and her heart stirred as never before she had shouted and sung and danced her delight. "See, Grandfather, now I'm a gull!" and away she had whirled in an ecstasy; and now a tern; a mad skua; a pompous guillemot! It had all seemed so entrancing and joyful—a fairyland where no grief might enter in. And then she had learned of the fowler's snare and the cold Factor at the village who valued a dead guillemot above a live one. Laughter died at the thought, and tears from the depths of that passionate heart of hers put an end to rapture. Thus the dark thread crept into the woof of her dreams and life took on a larger meaning.

Nevertheless, to a girl just budding into rich womanhood, it was dull indeed to live alone in the silent hills with only an old man for company. Not that she was lacking in affection for their isolated farmstead. No, indeed! Each tiny green pasture, singing rivulet and cone-shaped hill, was exceedingly dear. More especially the agate cave in the ridge beyond the cottage, a weird, fascinating place, aglow with myriad eyes—so it seemed to Hulda—when the sunlight filtered in to mirror itself in its curious deposits of chalcedony, zeolite and onyx. Because of this mysterious splendor—these twinkling gems in the hills—she had named her mountain home so fantastically. Imagination went farther still rendering doubly dear the smooth round knolls where the Little Gray Folk must once have lived. That they did not live there now Hulda knew for she had ventured to beat the knolls with sticks—a perilous act as every good hillman knows—but all to no avail. Neither good nor evil came of it. The Little Gray Folk had long

departed. And if they had grown weary of the endless solitudes, what could be expected of mere mortals?

Indeed, no one ever entered the Valley unless by accident. When a traveller lost the trail winding by the Blue Jokull down to the fishing hamlet and struck instead the hairline path to Herman's farm, then only had Hulda occasion to don her bright scarf and silk apron. But even then the pleasure was negligible, for these chance visitors were for the most part dull, bearded fellows, on their way to lodge a complaint with the wily Factor or to seek a berth in the fishing fleets. In either case the talk was all of cod and oil and herring, with now and then a dreary notation of death or other calamities. And yet, for all the apparent dullness of their own uninspired ways, never a one of them but marvelled at Herman's isolation and the primitive fashion of his life.

Herman's explanations were ever the same. People vexed him with their endless curiosity, their fretful fears and silly vanities. Sheep were more to his liking though perhaps as foolish, as easily led and freely stamped upon as mankind in general. As foolish they might be, but infinitely better tempered and more tolerant. Yes, on the whole, he much preferred sheep. They offered no objection to his mumbled philosophies, to his disgraceful habit of sunning his feet on a mossy hummock, or to his untrimmed beard. What he said was law! What he thought was his own business! Naturally he preferred such harmonious company to the exacting fellowship of men. That was all he had to say. His guest might take it or leave it.

When his tobacco box had been courteously passed he smoked on in silence, his dotting eyes following Hulda as she set out their simple repast—dried cod, flat-bread and dripping, with cheese and coffee, and perhaps a dish of whortleberries if they were in season. And such was the strange, magnetic personality of Herman that in his company these simple fellows were reconciled, even envious, of his position.

But down in the village, what conjectures there were concerning them! What conjectures there always had been concerning them! Why, the oldest inhabitant could not remember the time when Herman had not lived back there in the wilds! A queer fellow who shunned mankind and only came to the village when necessity drove him. Even the Factor, to whom he sold his wool, fox skins, and the culls of his flock, thought him eccentric and not a little amusing. The good villagers had long supposed him to be a hermit—a man nursing a grudge. It was something of a thunderclap, therefore, to learn how mistaken was their judgment. To be told that instead of living alone, old Herman had living with him a young and very pretty girl—where had he gotten her? Who was she? And why was she hidden away deprived of the benefits of church and the association of her kind? It was monstrous! Something lay back of such behavior! It needed looking into and that shortly! Gossip ran high for a time but Herman went the even tenor of his ways no whit affected. So, for lack of fuel the thing died down again. The harassed fisherfolk had other things to think of—herring, cod, and the sealing. "He's a queer old man," they confided, one to another sagely, "but after all what can you get from a cat beyond his skin"? Which was their way of admitting that as a man is, so God has made him.

HULDA, by now almost a woman, found the changeless monotony of her days increasingly irksome. Childish play and imaginings no longer satisfied her. More and more she longed to see the world beyond the jealous hills.

Herman grumbled that it was queer she should take so little interest in her books. His beloved sagas, so full of romance, adventure and deathless glory! But Hulda found them dull; she had no taste for epic grandeur. The stark simplicity of the sagas chilled her hot little heart and with sacrilegious frankness she pronounced them cold and cruel. Horrid stories of savages warring to the death! "My dearie, my dearie," Herman rebuked her in these moods, "can't you sense the heartbeat beneath the chill

armor"? Always she shook her little head, an imp of mischief in her eyes. "No, no, Grandfather. All I feel or hear is the clash of battleaxes on hard skulls," she teased him, which never failed to rouse the old gentleman to righteous anger. "Hulda, for shame! For shame, girl! Where, I ask you, have men fought better for the glorious cause of freedom? Their deeds, my child, speak for them better than their words!" But Hulda was never to be convinced. "I don't care! Cruel and cold—that they were and I hate their Berserks, their battle cries and their vows of vengeance! Hate them! Hate them, Grandfather! It's beauty that I love—the butterfly dancing in a mote of sunlight—the thrush in the sky!"

Yet how she loved the cadence of the old epic poetry! Yet there she offended no less for to each poem she fitted a tune, a strange passionate tune, and sang them as she went about her work. Herman liked to hear her sing, but not that wild abandon in her full flowing voice.

Now he was more often troubled than content. Hulda was certainly changing. Not only had she taken to this passionate singing, but to dancing. He had caught her at it. Herre Gud! the girl was a fairy tossed on the wind! But he liked it not—not he! Why, her feet were bare and that all the way to the knee!

Not many days after that disquieting discovery Herman went to the village and on his return gave Hulda a sedate cloth habit, such as all decent hill-women wear. And to his everlasting horror, what did the young rebel do but slash away a foot of durable homespun, thus effectively defeating his good intentions. Instead of a garment designed to fall discreetly to the ankles, here was a clumsy travesty scarcely hiding the dimpled knees!

To make matters worse, Hulda refused to button the close-fitting bodice. It smothered her, she said, so she wore it like a coat, revealing more than modesty allowed of white chemise that lay but loosely over her firm young breast. Now that was too much! All at once old Herman realized with sinking heart that the child of his affections was mysteriously flown—in her place a fair young woman. And if she was so shameless it must of necessity argue that his duty had been ill-done. Poor Herman sighed in perplexity. "Hulda, my dearie," he mumbled, "you must not display your person that way. It's unseemly—vulgar—a good woman is modest and her worth above rubies . . ."

"What," she demanded pettishly, "is wrong with the way God made me? And who's to suffer for my shame, I wonder? Do the sheep complain, perhaps, or Gammur forget to wag his tail? Or is it you, Grandfather, grown so pious and particular?" What could he say to that—an old man little versed in woman's guile? Indeed he said nothing—only shook his head, muttering helplessly.

"Nu da, so it goes—so it goes—Ja, for ever and ever—"

But on this particular June evening, Hulda awaited her grandfather with growing impatience. She had always resented his yearly visits to that terrible reef. The more so because he refused to give any definite reason for his strange habit. No amount of teasing had the least effect, which, not un-naturally, piqued and angered her the

more. She had to be content with the most foolish and evasive answers. He had made a vow, so he said—sworn an oath, and an oath, he assured her with lowering brows, was an oath. Once she cried at him angrily that most likely it was his conscience kept him tongue-tied. "Most likely you've killed someone," said she, "and flung him into the sea!" But even that had not availed. "Nu, perhaps—who knows," his old eyes had smiled upon her childish anger, "who knows, little Hulda, what I may have flung into that devil's pit."

But now a storm threatened, and a storm in the mountains was a serious thing—serious certainly for an old man. As a matter of fact Herman was only fifty and hale and hearty as a Norwegian pine, but to Hulda this seemed a very great age. He will take his death of cold, his rheumatism will get worse and Fleetfoot is sure to stumble, she told herself, with increasing anxiety. "If you must go up that crazy pass, why don't you buy a younger pony?" she had often urged him. It was bad enough that one of them should be old, she argued.



But Herman laughed at her fears. "You see, dear heart," he defended his foible, "Fleetfoot would never understand my turning to another. It were as bad as a change of wives! No, dear heart, Fleetfoot and I will make the pass together." Foolish old man! Fleetfoot indeed! A nag grown heavy about the withers and stiff in the knees! A fat old horse basking in the glory of departed days! Some day she just knew that he would stumble and break both their silly necks!

With many such troubled thoughts flitting through her pretty head, Hulda got out dry socks for her grandfather—there were rivers to be forded on that journey of his, and she half suspected he delighted in wetting his feet—set the kettle on the blazing hearth, cut sausage and cold mutton and heaped a dish with freshly-made doughnuts. These simple preparations at an end, she sat down upon the doorstep to gaze out over the darkening valley; straining her eyes in the dimming light for an object on the trail that might be a rolling bit of horseflesh called "Fleetfoot" and his indulgent master.

It had begun to rain, with a chill biting wind sweeping down from the hills before she caught sight of them. Safe they certainly were and gay enough they seemed. Fleetfoot's little hoofs keeping runic time to his master's song. Herman always sang when he came from the hills. That, too, displeased Hulda. He ought to have been ashamed, keeping her waiting like this! But no! Silly old man, he sang—Just hear him:

*"—Serve once more thy wine
of glowing hours;
Let thy teeming light
Put my years to flight,
Crown my life with sunshine
through thy showers."*

Hulda stamped her little foot. "Now that," she said to the wind, "is what I have to put up with. But wait. I'll crown him, the silly old man—"

Just then he caught sight of her and waved his hand. "Haw, haw, haw!" he shouted gaily to encourage poor drooping Fleetfoot and bring him home in a brisk canter. But the cheerful sound brought no thrill to Hulda. She was much too cross for that. Even Fleetfoot's gallant effort to forget the fears, stiff joints, and aching muscles in response to his master's beloved voice failed to touch her.

She had been accustomed to pat the faithful pony and slip him a bit of sugar when he thundered home in this proud fashion; but now she called out sharply: "Shame, Grandfather, carrying on so—at your age! Dead, that's what you might be—at the bottom of some gully and me not knowing where to seek you. A fine time, I'll say, to be coming home. What on earth possessed you to tarry this way, and with such clouds a-threatening?"

"Nu, da, so it goes, so it goes," the old man mumbled, as he set about unsaddling Fleetfoot, wiping the water from his flanks with broad and loving hands. "Nu, da, my dearie, the good horse is a bit spent—I must bed him down tonight, poor fellow. But very shortly I'll be with you, eating the tasty dish you've doubtless made for bad old Grandfather. A little while, Hulda—a little while! And yes, dear heart, just you give old Gammur a wee drop of milk—warm milk, my dearie, the poor brute is dripping." But, dripping or not, Gammur turned a deaf ear to Hulda's impatient coaxing. Herman chuckled as the creature bounded after him. "Nu, then, foolish one, you'll get no coddling for that—you're old, Gammur, and lacking judgment!"

A little later when Herman entered the house Hulda was busy setting out his supper. A change of clothing was warming by the fire and, prediction to the contrary, a great bowl of milk and a fillet of fried fish waited Gammur nearby.

The old man sighed, gratitude and affection bringing a mist to his eyes. "Dear heart, what joys you make for an old man! You'll never know,

my child, what a comfort you are." As quickly as possible Herman slipped out of his wet garments, changed his socks, and after somewhat hasty ablutions, settled down to his meal.

Hulda had nothing to say. Righteous anger still ruffled her spirit. Drawing up a stool, she drank her coffee and nibbled a sugary doughnut in wilful silence. She pretended not to see him, to have interest for nothing but the fancy stitching on her little slippers. But she watched, nonetheless, from the corners of her down-drooped eyes. He looked very penitent and humble. And my, how he enjoyed her cooking! Dear old man—smiles crept like the dawn across her passionate face and with a little shriek she flew to his side.

"Kindest, dearest, I'm a pig, a shrew, a wicked wretch! A troll, grandfather—a heartless black troll!" Penitent now, she fell to weeping prettily; shining tears twinkling down her little nose making her the more lovely to Herman, and a little comical. Had he dared he would have laughed—she was such a madcap, this Hulda. But, of course, wisdom forbade. He patted her pretty shoulders instead and—truth will have it—winked at Gammur, who wagged an understanding tail. And then a look of trouble clouded the old man's brow. Sighing heavily, he lifted her tear-stained face in tender hands.

"Nu, ja, you're right, my little one. 'Tis no place for a young girl—this dreary old farm. And I'm no use at all—a lazy old hillman with a madness

"Nu, then, 'twas like this: Just as I was taking the hill road didn't I meet his Reverence coming down from the south—from a christening, I think, or maybe a wedding. Nu, there's a tongue in his head—so there is, and such a chatterer! Rain or wind, what matter to his Reverence? Talk he would and talk he did. And all about you."

"About me?" Hulda was interested but skeptical.

"Ja, no other. And a pretty brew it is! You're in danger of dire sorts, he says, living here alone, without Christian fellowship or benefit of clergy. A terrible to-do—all started by Oli Skram. You mind him staying in the storm last spring? Well, it seems you shocked him dreadfully, my little heathen!"

"What! Don't I say my prayers? Don't I cross myself against the Evil One? Don't I know twenty Passion Hymns and all the Creed? Pouf! That cross-eyed fellow, what knows he more than I?"

"Nu, da, just the same his Reverence is right. I see it now—'twas needed others should open my eyes. You seemed so wee—a winsome chit, a mere baby—until this spring. But now, mind you, it seems you're a woman—a grown woman, Hulda, and not confirmed! Aye, I'm very much afeared the minister is right—you've got to learn the catechism and make peace with the Church."

Hulda stood aghast. "Why, Grandfather! you're gone thick in the head! You're fevered, maybe, and raving. Oh, oh, but it's funny no less. You to carry on so—you who never set foot in church. It's bewitched you are—tell me, was he young, perhaps, and blue-eyed, the minister?"

"What's that, you minx? For shame—is it a question? And who do you suppose cares what a man of God looks like so long as he saves folk from sin and damnation."

Hulda shrieked with laughter. "Damnation, damnation! Oh, ho! that's funny. And where is it, do you suppose—and who to be saved from it"? Laughing like the imp she was she circled round him, singing gaily—"Beware, beware, the Elfin Bells calling thee at sunset—the awful, mystic Elfin Bells calling thee at sunset!"

"Tish, now, with your elf-song, little heathen," Herman admonished her, dodging her teasing arms as best he could. Then he burst into hearty laughter; laughing at her, at himself and that nonsense of the preacher. "Nu, then, so it is, my dearie. Women are a torment and affliction. Why, before this womanhood of yours stared us in the face who ever thought of damnation—out here in the hills"? But that recalled a real grievance.

"Oh, true enough, Grandfather—we're so dead here in the hills that thoughts flee us. Dead, dead—so we are, and terribly dull. But why can't we both go to the village? Yes, why not? What's to hinder? I'm strong—I can work at the cod—"

He shook his head sadly. "No, Hulda, I belong to the hills. The bustle of the village would harry me to death. But you shall go. The Reverend Hans has promised to arrange a place for you. It is even probable that Fru Lind may be needing a maid. Now that would be fine. Think, little one, how grand it would be to live in the Factor's splendid house! And Fru Lind, now there's a lady for you, capable in management—respected like a queen. Such music, too, 'tis said she makes with that wonderful instrument of hers—a queer box-like thing with shining keys—brought all the way from Copenhagen."

"Grandfather! Grandfather! it can't be true. It must be a dream—oh, but how splendid! And will there be concerts . . . and dancing and other young folk? Oh, say that there will—say there'll be dancing, at least! Yes, yes, I shall watch Fru Lind—I shall watch her so carefully. Think,

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She sat down upon the doorstep to gaze out over the darkening valley; straining her eyes in the dimming light for an object on the trail that might be a rolling bit of horseflesh called "Fleetfoot" and his indulgent master

for the sea. A foolish old fellow, fit companion for sheep. But now 'twill all be different . . . Yes, my child, there'll be an end of it—"

"What!" she shrieked, "are you then so tired of me? I'm not such a comfort after all! It's my cooking, maybe, that's amiss—and isn't it all in that Danish book? Isn't it? Cheese, bread, doughnuts and all. Or perhaps the wool goes dirty to market? Don't I do as well as the girls in the valley? And don't I love you, you foolish old man?"

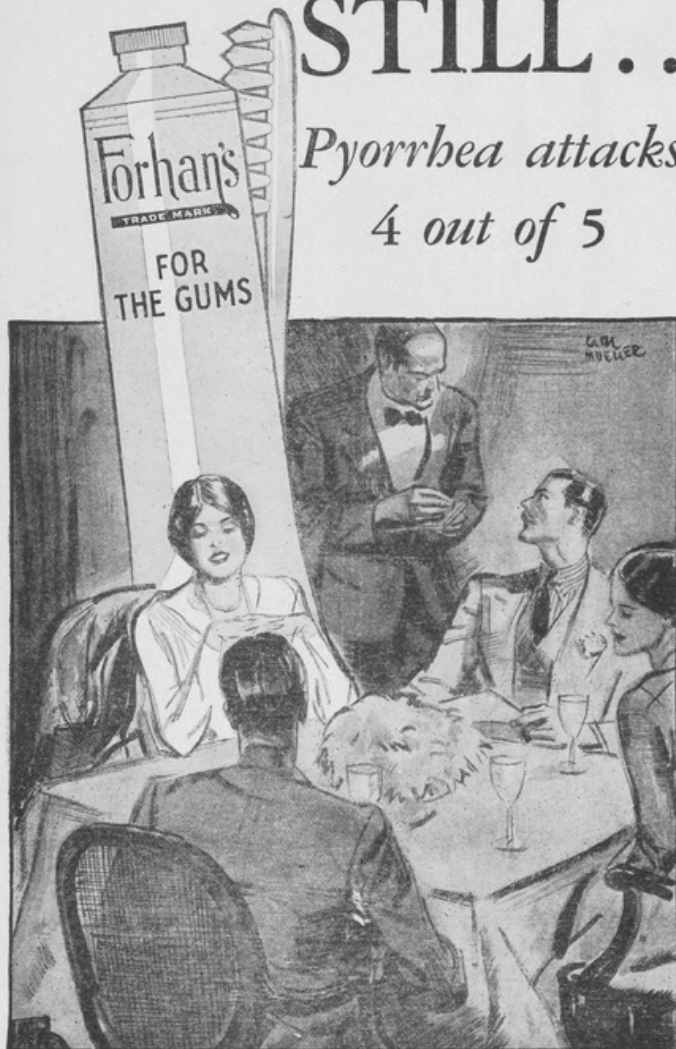
"Quite so, quite so! But mark my words, hasty temper never solved a problem. Tish! Now listen. You've gone on a tangent and never even asked what kept me so late." Hulda dabbed at her eyes with the corner of her apron. "Much good 'twould do me when you've been to the sea. Why you do it I'll never—"

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MORE THAN A TOOTH PASTE . . . IT CHECKS PYORRHOEA

Johann Lind

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Grandfather, some day, perhaps, I, too, shall be a factor's wife with many servants and a musical box!

"Nu, da, not so fast, dear heart, not so fast. First you must learn the Christian principles—and the ways of good young women . . . That accomplished . . . well, who can tell—at least it's safe to say that some honest fisher lad will come along to make you a fair husband—"

"Nay, I won't have him!" Hulda stamped her little foot. Never, never! I feel in my heart I could never love a clown! Puff! Pig eyes, pig ears, pig bristles—we've had them here! No, no, Grandfather, I'll die first." A fleeting cloud of childish sorrow crossed her animated face and she burst out anew—"Oh, dearest, kindest—tell me now of my people! Who are they? Where are they? Grandfather, surely my mother was sweet and lovely . . . and my father . . . he was brave and true? They'll ask me—down there in the village. I know it. What, then, shall I say—what can I tell them?"

Here was that vexations question once again! Herman scowled, mumbled something about foolish curiosity, avoiding the eager young eyes. "There's nothing to tell, child, nothing at all. Where folk live by the sea there's many an orphan knows naught of its parents. Dreams—that's what's troubling you, lamby, only dreams."

"You're putting me off. It's always so. Oh, why must you be so cruel? You know it's not true—this tale of fisherfolk. It's lies! Sometimes my heart tells me even you're no kin. I can't understand you, nor the sober folk who cross the mountain—cold, cheerless, dull. Oh, sometimes I think the sea's own madness is in me and I long to fling myself upon the rocks, to feel their sharpness and to die! I'm sick of dullness, of endlessly bawling sheep—of everything!"

"Nu, then, dear heart, fret no more about it. All that you say is true. You shall go to the village—to laugh, to dance, to sing. Yes, my dearie, you shall be young as long as you like, and happy always. Nu, then, that is better, smile at Grandfather—so it is well. Your smile, dear heart, is as the sun upon the sea."

"NOW is Satan afoot for certain!" whispered the cook to her assistant, as she raised her eyes from the crack in the door, "afoot and dancing a measure!"

Laughter, piercing and shrill, broke upon their astonished ears. Laughing in the face of the Fru! What impertinence! It frightened the good women and they fled down the corridor to the cook-house.

"I have long thought her wrong in the head," said the cook, "the airs she has, and such shamelessness! The very devil lies in her feet. If she's not a changeling, she's at least bewitched. My soul! What's to come of it, I wonder?"

Back in the wool-room consternation reigned. Fru Lind had come upon her husband kissing the maid! They faced her brazenly enough. Herr Lind twiddled his watchchain and smiled indulgently upon his wife's anger. Except for that hysterical burst of laughter, Hulda was silent; yet there was a kind of defiant wilfulness about her shame.

Fru Lind glared at the offenders in terrible silence, her long thin face a livid question mark rising from the nun-like draperies of her gown. Like a dreadful apparition of evil conscience she confronted them, more terrible in her soundless fury than explosive rage. But it is certain that no one was more relieved than she herself when pride came to the rescue and she could muster wit to cry out sharply:

"So! This is gratitude! This my reward for all that I have done. This is the thanks I get for taking to my house a doubtful character—a shameless nobody!"

Herr Lind's eyes narrowed—a sign of concentration in him; he cleared his throat, left off twiddling his watch chain and, with the deceptive laziness of a cat, crossed to his wife's side. To the hate in her eyes he replied with a laugh—low and curiously velvety. Then, as one coaxes a child, he took her rigid arm in gentle fingers, saying in mock seriousness:

"My dear, surely you've forgotten what the doctor told us—excitement, pray reflect, is not the best thing for your heart."

She shook herself free from him angrily. Herr Lind shrugged, laughed again that hateful laugh of his and bowed respectfully. She could have killed him. Herre Gud, what insolence! The man was heartless—shameless—inhuman! Self-control to the winds, she whirled upon Hulda, her fingers biting deep into the soft flesh of the young girl's bare, white arm. "Contemptible creature! How dare you stand there gloating in your shame? Out you go! Now—at once! I'll not tolerate your presence in this house another moment. Pack your things and away with you!"

Again Herr Lind cleared his throat—but he did not smile. His face was expressionless as granite. "Hulda," said he—his voice padded steel—"Fru Lind is not always herself—nerves, you know, and all that. An unfortunate condition . . ." He turned his mocking eyes upon the tortured woman. "Forgive me, my love—betraying your little weakness—" he shrugged, "but under the circumstances—"

Poor Fru Lind! Exasperated beyond endurance she tore at her neck-band as if it choked her. Hate lay like a sword across her brows, yet it was weakness she feared. He would egg her on to deeper self-betrayal and increased humiliation. She knew Herr Lind! Her suffering was his main pleasure—well, if it killed her she'd cheat him of this joy. With the courage born of desperation she forced herself to speak—"You are right, Herr Lind—as always. I am not myself today."

He bowed, and turning to Hulda continued suavely: "You have heard? Madam admits that the tongue plays tricks at times. In fact, my dear Hulda, Fru Lind had in mind a promotion. Only this morning she spoke of it . . . I am right, am I not, my dear? I did not then quite see the point—but now—now it is certainly clear that Fru Lind anticipated justice."

Hulda laughed, lifting her black head roguishly and her wide violet eyes met his veiled glances bravely. Fearless, unabashed, she endured his cold speculative scrutiny—nay, it raised her to higher exaltation. Something in her wild impassioned nature delighted in the hardness of the man. Thus they measured arms; she smiling and high-hearted; he cold and inscrutable. Just for an instant a strange expression, at once tender and fierce, crossed his face. He smiled: "You understand?" was all he said.

"I understand, Herr Lind," she echoed softly, her voice rich and throaty—"everything!" Swift and graceful as a bird she darted from the room.

Herr Lind turned a cold eye upon his wife. "You forget yourself, madam. Never had I thought to find a fishwife's temper in the daughter of Herr Anderson."

Something more deadly than mockery colored his voice. She shivered, chilled in heart and marrow—how terrible he could be, this smiling tyrant!

Already she regretted her temper—her hasty judgment. What, after all, was a kiss? The girl was a witch for looks—and men are only men.

"Perhaps I was hasty," she forced herself to say.

He waved this aside—"Let us hope none of the servants heard you."

"Heard me?" she gasped, shocked to faintness by this new unreasonableness. "Heard me? What of yourself, Herr Lind? What of this—this—person—this Hulda?" Who, pray, is to bridle her tongue?"

"Madam, leave that to me."

"Oh, you are unspeakable!"

"Quite so! And you, my dear, somewhat boring, except at the piano. But come, enough of this. You shall play for me—coals of fire, shall we say, on the poor sinner's head." Courtesy personified, he offered his arm. But to Fru Lind it seemed an added injury. There was no way of escape—disdain, protest, temper, nothing availed. With a helpless shrug she submitted to fate. Besides, whatever happened she must show a bold front to the servants. Detestable creatures, she knew that every crack and keyhole had its vortary!

Herr Lind, apparently, had quite recovered his equable nature. He recalled a dozen happy incidents of the day—friends he had met and so on. By the time they had reached the comfortable living-room where the cook was laying the cloth for afternoon coffee, he was laughing amicably.

Without protest Fru Lind took her place at the piano which, black and ponderous, filled one corner of the room. As she played, if not like a genius, at least like the conscientious artist she was. No one but Herr Lind would have dared to criticize such a performance. But Herr Lind dared most things. "My dear," he drawled, "with your natural ability that rendering might be improved. Forgive me, Milde, but the score went rather badly. Suppose we try Peer Gynt; you're wont to be fond of that." Pride alone sustained Fru Lind through that. She bit her lip—flung her head high. Let him laugh! Let him mock! Neither humiliation nor anger should make her cringe before the servants—no, not though it killed her. She never knew how she played or what she played—presumably it was Peer Gynt—blindly, desperately, she struggled on. Even the cook pitied her.

"He's a devil, that man," she confided to her crony when she went to the cookhouse for the coffee urn. "A very limb o' Satan, may the Lord punish him good and proper!"

WITH Hulda gone to the dairy farm three miles away Fru Lind breathed freely again. She had never liked the girl. During the two years Hulda had spent with them she had come to recognize in her something peculiarly distracting and independent. She was not like the other peasant girls who came to work in the village. There was a freedom and an arrogance about her which the Danish lady found difficult to tolerate. Discipline was impossible. Beyond the province of her labors Hulda would not be persuaded; her duties done, she claimed the right to use her leisure as it pleased her. Neither crochet nor letters claimed her. Wild as a gipsy she wandered the heath and the hills. Untamed, untamable—a little savage devoid of piety, that was Hulda! There was no reverence in her; neither for the church, the clergy, nor for her mistress.

Naturally, Fru Lind congratulated herself on being rid of such a nuisance. Certainly she had shown creditable wisdom in handling a ticklish situation as she did. A less astute woman would have dismissed the girl outright. She had known better—an angry servant makes a bitter enemy. Nonetheless, as time went on she became aware that all was not right in her household. Time

and again she surprised her servants in the most suspicious activity. Oh, she knew them! They never worked like that unless mischief was brewing. Someone had a pretty kettle of gossip! And the way they fell silent on seeing her was proof enough that the chatter had been more than usually impertinent and personal.

Even to herself Fru Lind would admit no reason, but one fine day she suddenly decided to ride out to the farm. There a like condition prevailed. Helga, the young woman in charge, was all aflutter at the sight of the mistress. She hemmed and hawed, stammered and stuttered—acted, in fact, like a plain idiot. An ugly suspicion dawned on Fru Lind. But no, it could not be—it was impossible! Deny it as she would, every nerve in her body seemed to jangle with conviction. She tried to laugh away the foolish feeling—making a jest of Helga's shyness, accusing her of being in love and demanding to know the worst. Helga turned scarlet, opened her mouth, shut it again and looked about furtively. Fru Lind shrugged impatiently. "On my word, Helga," her voice was sharp and sarcastic, "you look guilty of murder. Come, my good girl, what's on your mind?"

Helga shook her head. "It's just the shame of having you see the place upset—there's been so much doing."

Fru Lind frowned. "You can't fool me, Helga, you're worried—"

"No, oh no! What's to worry me? The lambing's good, the cows fat as butter—ja, you shall see—you shall see the cheeses and the curds in the milk-house, Fru Lind—Ja, that'll say if I should worry."

Fru Lind was not convinced. It was too apparent that Helga wanted to be rid of her—wanted, at least, to get her away from the cottage. She smiled, and decided to stay. "That'll not be necessary. You know, my good Helga, that we have always had perfect confidence in all you do. Indeed I much prefer to rest. But you might make a cup of coffee. The trip was rather dusty and trying."

Helga's guileless countenance betrayed only too well her consternation. Fru Lind was seized with a desire to laugh. The poor girl was so funny in her crestfallen, hang-dog attitude. Whatever had she been up to, she wondered. Out loud she asked a seemingly irrelevant question. "And how do you like the new girl, Helga?" Poor Helga squirmed, blushed an even deeper red and, seeing her mistress was bent on staying, tardily offered a chair.

"She's no trouble, I hope—?" Fru Lind, you see, was persistent.

"No, no, Fru Lind—never a bit! Clever, she is, that one—"

Fru Lind flicked the dust from her riding boots. "I'm glad to hear it, Helga. I might as well confess that I had my doubts. The farm is apt to be lonely—would seem so at least, to a restless spirit."

Helga mopped her red perspiring face. "There's some is used to loneliness, Fru Lind—I've no wish for better help."

"That is good. I'm glad to hear it—perhaps I have been unjust."

And then, just as Helga was beginning to breathe freely, hoping that all would be well, didn't the evil Fates convene to bring poor Hulda round the corner of the house, a bucket of freshly-washed wool in her hand, a new and strange tranquility in her lovely, passionate face. Though all the Trolls had deliberately contrived against her, she could not have made a less welcome appearance.

Fru Lind's small dark eyes glittered like beads in the angry pallor of her face at sight of the girl. Fool that she had been not to heed the voice of intuition—her worst suspicions were

Continued on page 50

Who are they.... these irritable mothers?



WHEN youngsters begin to ask questions Mother must know every answer. And often kiddies falter, dumb questions in their eyes, when Mother cries "don't bother me." How can they know that Mother isn't talking—it's Mother's tired, jangled nerves set on edge by the use of drug stimulants such as tannin and caffeine found in tea and coffee. No wonder Mother is irritable!

Tannin and caffeine found in tea and coffee are harmful. With you these agents may work fast or slow. But sooner or later their poisonous effects are certain, sure.

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Carrie Blanchard's Offer

"I want you to try Postum for thirty days. I want to start you out on your test by giving you your first week's supply (sufficient for 21 cups).

"It seems to me that it would be a wise plan for mothers, particularly, to think of this test in connection with the health of their families.

"Will you send me your name and address? Tell me which kind you prefer—Instant Postum, made instantly in the cup, or Postum Cereal (the kind you boil). I'll see that you get the first week's supply right away."



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Tired people

SO MANY women, so many men, can't last through the day. Even mid-afternoon finds them listless and spent. Hopelessly tired.

What a difference it would mean if they but realized how constipation saps health and energy. How it steals youth. Mocks beauty. Kills ambition. How it leads in the end to untold diseases.



And it can be so easily relieved. So surely and safely prevented. Kellogg's ALL-BRAN is guaranteed to relieve it promptly and pleasantly. To prevent it ever beginning its deadly work.

Why "all-bran" is necessary

To relieve constipation *naturally* the system must have plenty of bulk. ALL-BRAN, because it is 100% bran, furnishes bulk in generous quantity. It carries moisture through the intestines—exercising them, gently sweeping out poisons and wastes. There is seldom enough bulk to properly do this work in a part-bran product. That is why doctors recommend ALL-BRAN—the 100% bran.

Farewell, dangerous drugs

How much better is ALL-BRAN than the habit-forming pills and laxatives—whose dose must be constantly increased to remain effective. Kellogg's ALL-BRAN is a pleasant, healthful cereal food. Don't you agree that it is far safer and far better to correct constipation in this natural way than to risk pills, drugs or part-bran products?

Kellogg's ALL-BRAN is delicious with milk or cream—with fruits or honey added. Use it in cooking too. Sprinkle it into soups. Mix it with other cereals. Just eat two tablespoonfuls daily—chronic cases, with every meal.

Don't run risks with part-bran substitutes, which, at best, can be but partially effective. Insist on Kellogg's—the original ALL-BRAN. Sold by all grocers. Served at hotels, restaurants. On diners. Made by Kellogg in London, Ontario.

Kellogg's ALL-BRAN is sold with this definite guarantee. Eat it according to directions. If it does not relieve constipation safely, we will refund the purchase price.



Kellogg's
ALL-BRAN

Johann Lind

Continued from page 47

more than justified. She was momentarily stunned, terrified out of measure at the thought of what might follow. Not that Hulda's shame touched or surprised her—such things had happened to servant girls—but that the shadow of reproach should fall upon her household; upon her, the daughter of Herr Anderson—there you had the tragedy!

In the terrible moments she stood transfixed, staring at the silent girl before her, a flood of wild thoughts swept through her mind. She had borne much in silence since marrying Herr Lind, small indignities, refined torments—oh, a thousand petty miseries! They burned her now like the tongues of avid flame. Yet she had loved him at first, that smiling tyrant of hers, and excused him in her heart. He had been embittered in his poverty-stricken student days—even her father had admitted his injustice to the young Norwegian student beginning business life in the offices of the Anderson Shipping Company. She had been proud, too, when in the first flush of success Herr Lind had desired her hand—proud because he had made no secret of his hatred for her countrymen.

Strange that she should remember now how she had laughed at him—attributing his dislike to the foolish prejudice existing between their countries. And he had kissed her slender white hands with the lazy grace of a prince.

But all this was changed; married life had become a game of endurance with her. A gentlewoman does not leave her husband; that thought had kept her patient.

Helga grew frightened at the ominous silence. "Fru Lind," she implored, "come in with me. You look ill. Dear Fru Lind, I beg you—"

A wave of hot resentment rushed over Fru Lind. With cruelty born of humiliation she brushed the girl aside impatiently, turning upon Hulda the flaming passion of her mounting hatred:

"Ungrateful creature, shame upon you! Shame and sorrow and the contempt of decent folk! Oh, I marvel you dare stand before me—you, who eat the bread of my providing and reward me with disgrace. Herre Gud! that this should come upon me—Milde Andersen—I who treat my people with charity and kindness! Impudent girl, tar and feathers were none too bad for you—you wrecker of homes! As for you, Helga, I'm sadly disillusioned; there's none to be trusted. Oh, why didn't you warn me? Why did you let this scandal noise abroad? To think that for all my charities I'm nothing but a thing of jest to my own servants!"

"Oh, dearest Fru Lind, forgive me, forgive us all!" Helga whimpered tearfully. "Tis young she is, and ignorant—what can you expect with only a foolish old man to rear her?"

"Be silent! I'll have no defence of such behavior. Only Herman to rear her? Poor old man, nursing an adder in his bosom! So you think that's an excuse, do you? A trusting old man and the good clean hills—these were the cause of her miserable conduct? And where, may I ask, could one better retain the purity of innocence than in such a convent-like seclusion? Oh, fie on you, Helga, get out of my sight—begone, both of you; take her back to the hills, get her away at once! But stay!" she cried, as Hulda was about to slip away, her face white as death, her eyes dark pools of unshed misery. "Now listen to me, you Madonna-faced sinner. There'll be no talk—you understand? Not a word not even a whisper. Is that clear?"

Poor Hulda bore it all bravely and unflinchingly. Except for that extreme pallor, she seemed little altered or anyway affected, that is, when the pale lids hid the black despair of her eyes. One look into those deep wells of puzzled misery and the coldest heart must wake to pity. Even Fru Lind shrank back shocked at the things she saw or imagined she saw when, with the courage of native honesty Hulda raised those agonized eyes to the face of her tormentor. Herre Gud! the girl was fey, thought the lady and shivered despite herself. And indeed, there was a strange transparency about that girlish face as though the fires of the spirit were fast consuming the frail flesh. She seemed at once ethereal and fiercely alive.

Fru Lind's pity faded quickly. After all the girl deserved to suffer, ought to suffer. Simple justice demanded it. "You understand me," she reiterated sharply, beginning to draw on her gloves, "no more gossip—no names—silence!"

"I understand, Fru Lind."
"Let us hope you do! And now, Helga, bring my pony—has he been to the watering-trough?—very well. But before I go I'll again repeat that I'm disappointed in you. I shouldn't have thought it of you, Helga. It makes one wonder if fidelity is a thing of the past. Well, that's that! And now remember you're to take that girl to the hills. I'll not have her about any longer."

"Dear Fru Lind, not now! Not just now. In a few weeks—a little while—"
"I said at once!" snapped Fru Lind, flinging herself into the saddle, "at once, or I'll report her, myself, to church and county!" With which angry retort she whirled away in a cloud of yellow dust.

Hulda had reached the end of endurance; without a sound she fell in a shuddering heap where she stood. Helga screamed, flew to the unfortunate girl's side, and, satisfied she had suffered no great injury, dashed to the house for water. All a-tremble and in tears she bathed Hulda's ashen face, crooning the while as to a hurt little child:

"There, there, dear one, see, Helga loves you. Helga will go with you. Oh, Jesu, have pity! Bad luck on that heartless woman."

Hulda's eyes fluttered open eventually, and, smiling sweetly into the anxious face above her, she whispered her gratitude: "You're good, dear Helga—good, good."

"God be praised! It's dying I thought you'd be. Look now, take firm hold of me—that's right, up you go and into bed. Not a word I'll have against it—it's a rest you've got to get if we're to make the hills shortly."

"We?" questioned Hulda with soft tears gushing to her eyes. "We?—but you must not go. It would cost you your place, Fru Lind never meant for you to go."

"Did she not, then? And is it a mind-reader she thinks me that she says one thing and means another? Go, she said, and go I will. What's more, it's myself will stay as long as you need me."

HELGA was not without her refuge in times of stress; Ole Boen opened a ready heart to all her troubles. That he should have happened to be at the farm when Fru Lind paid her stormy visit never ceased to impress Helga as a mark of God's especial favor; for Ole willingly agreed to accompany the women into the hills.

As a matter of fact Ole welcomed any fate that removed him from the tiresome labor of farm and field. Now a sharp turn with the sea—that was

another matter and one he took a berserk joy in; but this making hay and shearing sheep, Herre Gud! what man could abide such women's work?

By virtue of his undoubted seamanship he was in reality chief coast-guard, and thus honorably noted in the factor's big black book. His duty was to keep an open eye for driftwood and whatever gifts the stormy sea might find fit to bring ashore. And in case of tragedy—the all too frequent tragedy of the north seas—his was also the grimmer duty of manning the rescue boats, rendering first aid when the fates were kind, and bringing in the dead.

But, when the sea was quiet, lying in silky, sun-kissed ripples out to the farthest horizon, then poor Ole's boredom began. At such times he was no more than Fru Lind's "jack of all trades"—in a sickly Hades at that! "Troll take her, and her housewifely acumen!" So he not infrequently expressed himself to Helga, whose sympathy was never-failing. In her heart Helga hated the sea but such is the guile of women that poor Ole never guessed it. In fact, all that made these depressing intervals bearable were his visits to Helga and, incidentally, what occupied his mind the most was the problem of ever-ready and convincing pretext to take him to the farm. Once there everything righted itself—so far of course as anything can be righted on shore. Over a cup of fragrant newly-roasted coffee, he generally found his tongue along with his good nature. Many were the tales he told his sweetheart—to whom he was Sampson and David in one—tales of hardy whalers off on the rarest sport—"Ja, Helga, that's the play for you—two irons buried to the sockets in a giant whale lashing the sea with his flukes and fighting to kill! Ja, ja, there's the sport for you, with a stiff breeze, a choppy sea and more like the boat leaking badly in the bow planks!" Even the retelling brought fire to Ole's eye and color to his cheeks—Ja, the sea was the only place for a man, and as full of whimsies as a pretty woman! Full of mysteries, too, was the sea, and haunted by ghosts of merchantmen lost none knew where nor why—sliding from port to port under a leaden moon with death at the helm and terror in their wake!

Queer, too, Ole told Helga, how from the start some ships are marked for death and followed day after day by that devil's favorite, the loathesome shark. Yes, Ole loved to linger over the telling of such tales—give him an angry sea, a wind-torn sky and a seasoned boat, and life were worth the living once again! Of such things he spoke; but seldom of the intrepid part he often played, of the lives he saved, or of the dangers he selflessly incurred to snatch some rigid body from the hungry deep that it might lie decently between two crosses in the barren churchyard at the village end. A great, good-natured giant, was Ole, slow of mind and indifferent to a degree. Yet he had his firm convictions; to him all things were predestined; luck was the gift of the gods and failure a fore-ordained condition. Naturally, nursing so simple a creed, he had no difficulty in sympathizing with Hulda, especially when he learned of her misery from Helga's rosy lips. "M-m, the gale's gone against her, poor brig! We'll have to tow her to port somehow," said he. And that concluded the matter so far as he was concerned.

While he loaded the pack-horses, he mused on the tenderness of his Helga. Good, capable, godly soul that she was, and pretty—why a Lofotten fishing smack, all sails set and gleaming in the sun was no fairer in his eyes! His tender-hearted Helga—worse luck he had no grievous sin to confide to her ready sympathy.

Whence ever the favor, his going

on that sad little pilgrimage proved lucky for the poor woman for, when they were less than half way up the pass, one of those unforeseen storms that harrass the north country burst upon them. The terrible wind, ripping and tearing over hill and dale, came at them in mighty breath-taking gales round each bend in the trail, howling and whistling and scattering sand and scree in a blinding cloud before it.

Poor Hulda had difficulty in clinging to her seat; with stiffened fingers she clutched the pony's mane, her senses reeling in maddening unison with the crazy world about her. Her companions watched her anxiously but there was nothing they could do; their lives depended upon the ponies and they, noble brutes, knew it well.

The zig-zaggy trail, scarcely more than a goat-path, led on and upward; at its end lay rest and safety. The sturdy little beasts pressed on, over shifting sand and cruel scree, bracing themselves miraculously against the terrific blast that every moment threatened their safety.

At last the weary travellers discerned, through a blur of fog and whirling sand, the indistinct huddle that was Herman's little house; wind-swept, seemingly shrinking into the ridge behind it, its small window, like a single yellow eye, blinked helplessly upon the furious world round about it.

Ole hallooed loudly, bellowing into the teeth of the wind with the fury of a Troll. Sharp and shrill, ripping the air like a sword, came the answering of Gammur's noisy greeting. A little moan—the first that dreadful day—broke from poor Hulda on hearing that familiar sound and she almost pitched from the saddle. "Gammur, Gammur!" she shrieked, and Gammur bounded forward in an ecstasy. In the same instant Herman flung open the door.

"Who comes! Who comes in God's name!" he cried, peering out into the storm, incredulously hand to his eyes, the warm yellow light of the cottage a mellow screen behind him.

Ole bellowed again with all his seaman's lungs: "Tis ourselves, Herman! Ourselves, and hungry as sharks!" Despite the cheerful outcry a sudden premonition of impending ill paralyzed old Herman for the moment. He couldn't move, couldn't think, couldn't understand—what meant this shouting and roaring and that heart-rending cry in the storm? Whence, and who, these gray ghosts filing in sudden misery into his sand-strewn yard? Who . . . "Ja, Herre Gud!" With the cry of a wounded animal the old man stumbled forward, comprehending at last, and bitterly afraid. "Hulda, my dear one, Hulda, my own—" But though he came swiftly, his eager arms wide he was barely in time to catch her as she tumbled from the saddle—the most pitiful prodigal ever turned home.

Into the little house they passed, a sadly chastened company, worn and weary and too miserable to talk. Old Herman was grateful to be spared the whips of speech—some things are better left unsaid. Tender as a woman he helped Hulda to her old bed, removing her rain-soaked habit and sodden boots and piling her round with quilts and cushions. All the while her eyes never left his face, clean childish eyes filled now with strange new terrors and mute contrition. He could have wept to see the like in her once proud face.

"Nu, da, little one," he mumbled huskily as he dropped down beside her to pillow her head on his shoulder, "nu, da, dear little heart."

Ole blinked, blew his nose loudly and cursed the wind and the devil who perverted it—"The horses! Ja, I'm a fine one to forget the horses—I'll be seeing to them this minute," he roared and, thankful for a way of escape,

Continued on page 52

No greasy film

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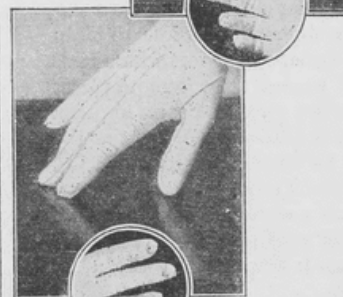
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Johann Lind

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plunged into the storm. Helga's housewifely soul took refuge in action. The heart might be breaking but simple duties continued. Besides, something warned her that all their forces would soon be needed. With a sigh she turned her attention to the fire and the kettle.

When Ole returned the odor of coffee sweetened the air and the old brass kettle hummed a merry tune. Helga did her best to cheer her troubled friends. They would be the better for a little food and drink. Hulda especially had need of strengthening nourishment. But the suffering girl shook her head stubbornly. She could not eat, could not drink—wanted nothing but to be left in peace. From time to time she shivered, tormented alternately with nervous chills, and cruel fever that poured through her body in needle-point showers. At last she could bear no more and with a low whimpering cry of sudden despair flung herself face downward on the bed. Come what might she could do no more. She was spent in strength and broken in spirit.

Herman and Ole went out to the barn while Helga helped the tormented girl undress. She grew steadily worse but made no sound or protest. Helga marvelled at such fortitude. It seemed so alien to the character of the emotional girl she knew—the Hulda who shuddered at suffering in others and stood but ill the hardships common to their daily toil. But there it was—in the grip of pain that never a man could bear, Hulda refused to make an outcry; only that one little beaten whimper of despair escaped her bloodless lips. To Helga it was a miracle and in her dim way she perceived that there are many kinds of courage and that each soul strives according to its understanding.

Just before dawn Hulda's baby was born, a lusty-lunged boy, thinking poorly of the world he entered and saying so vehemently.

Some blossoms there are that endure but a little—day-lilies, waking to life with the sun, dying with his passing, and there are natures much like that, exotic children of the sunlight. Hulda was one of these.

Toward noon she wakened from the merciful sleep that had swept her into its kindly oblivion and called Herman. Like a sleep-walker fleeing some dreadful nightmare he stumbled forward and fell at the bedside. Out of her weakness she smiled a whisper of a smile that transfigured for a fleeting moment the cameo stiffness of her little face. "Grandfather, I'm glad its over . . . you will not cease to love me . . . and the hills will hide me forever." Very weary, very childlike was the once vibrant voice.

Herman shrank as from a whip to hear it. "Nu, da, dear heart, hush—our Lord is merciful and we are all poor sinners."

Again she smiled her most heart-rending smile. "Kindest, I am not afraid. But—it must be sad—lying forgotten—in the little cold graves." Emotional still, the thought made her shudder and catching convulsively at his hand she pressed it close to her cheek. "So cold, Grandfather—so lonely to the dead—"

"Hush, hush, my own. One speaks not of death—it is God's own crucible."

She sighed at that bravely and turned her face away. They thought she slept. But, with the slow hours fear crept upon them. Why, they could not have said—some look upon the girl's face; some subtle instinct stirred by the closeness of death. Helga became panic-stricken. Someone must go for the pastor. Someone must get him and that immediately.

Ole welcomed the suggestion, and at

once saddled two ponies, that he might ride the faster with no need to spare his mount. Fortunately the capricious weather favored him this time and at midnight he returned with Pastor Hans.

To the simple hillfolk the minister puts on the favor of God when he dons his black habit. In his robe he is a man no longer, but God's messenger, the mortal overshadowed by divinity and imbued with Divine mercy. It is consoling to sufferer and sinner alike to receive his ministrations.

Pastor Hans was a kindly man, pity tempered his justice. He was come as a confessor, it is true, but not to offer reproaches though he might have reminded the dying girl of laxity in many things—momentous things to his way of thinking. The time for that had passed and a more portentous duty confronted him. But, much to his amazement, he discovered that Hulda seemed nothing concerned about herself. Her assurance was perplexing. Herman had forgiven her, she told him with weary patience—what Herman could do, naturally God could do also—and what were words to the Maker of Hearts? Nonetheless, to please the anxious ones about her, Hulda repeated the prayers good Pastor Hans thought fitting to her need and pleasing to his God. That done she sank back upon her pillows with a weary sigh of relief, her hand fast in Herman's, her lovely eyes bravely smiling.

A country pastor has many duties; a sudden wail from the newborn infant recalled a pressing one. Pastor Hans groaned in spirit and wished fervently that life were less exacting. He did his best to be tactful: "My daughter," he began huskily, "my dear child—'tis God's to give and God's to withhold . . . it may be that His wisdom calls you forth—sets you free—but there's the babe—you will not leave him nameless—it were so far from justice."

Hulda closed her eyes, weary of sight and sound—of everything. The pastor's droning voice reached her dimly as from a vast distance and it annoyed her a little—like the buzzing of persistent insects. But strangely enough the insistent droning swelled and deepened to the crooning voice of the Sea. Ah, it had guessed her love and then called her home to its heart! Mysterious, mighty Sea! How close it seemed, how comforting! A responsive mirror reflecting the Omnipotent Mind. God's mirror . . . and the God therein reflected was a tolerant God. All undisturbed, He observed the sins of men, their petty wickedness, their puny goodness; alike calmly He listens to prayers and blasphemies; to the singing child and the drunken wretch, and hides it all in the depths of His Eternity. Of the tolerant God of the Sea she had no fear—His voice was the Sea's voice . . . Oh, now she remembered—the road to dreams, to the far-flung worlds, was a golden thread on the heart of the Sea—lovely, too, how the little fisherboats skimmed the green billows—the white-winged schooners fled before the wind—timeless, tractless Sea, with the song of Life on its lips and the secret of Death in its bosom! Ah, that she might dream forever, lulled to eternal rest by its intonations—

But all at once the dying girl remembered the sombre cliffs out beyond the great fjord, and saw again the hundreds of wheeling birds that long ago had filled her heart with sheer gladness. How safe they had been, how secure! Was it true that gulls are the souls of dead sailors? Poor sailors, how they loved the sea; nor living nor dead they could not forswear it! How good to be as they . . . to sing and to

soar . . . free flying birds, singing and soaring . . . But what was that nagging sound coming to disturb her white peace—?

"Child, child, you must try to rouse yourself—"

"Dear heart, dear heart, Hulda, it is Grandfather asks you—hear us, beloved. 'Tis not right the little one should suffer. Hulda, my beloved, hear us for his sake—"

Surely that was a familiar sound, that last, a kindly sort of sound—a sweet music? Something strong, with the strength of eternal things, responded. "Grandfather, Grandfather . . . dearest, kindest, you will not forget me—you will love me still—a little"?

And some while later, smiling faintly into his grief-stricken eyes—"You will call him Johann Lind."

When the first rays of sunlight crept into that humble house they fell upon Hulda's strong young hands crossed above her silent breast. And the yellow glow from the white candles at her head made upon her beautiful face the illusion of a smile.

But they who watched beside her saw none of this. They were praying for the peace of her soul.

A GOOD deal of whispered gossip and idle speculation went on at the Factor's when the news of Hulda's death reached the village. The kitchen buzzed with it and now that the girl was dead only her merits were remembered.

"A bright wee thing," said the cook, wiping her eye on a dingy apron, "a gladsome thing. Mind how she sang all through the weaving and what an eye she had for pretty colors? Stakels pige!"

"A good-natured girl, a bit wild-like but willing," amended her faithful aid and shadow.

"Wild! nu, da, it's wild you'd be yourself, Ragni, with only the winds for company back there in the crazy hills—and never a mother, God pity her soul! But what's to become of the wee one? It's no likely—"

"Tist!" interrupted Ragni, "the mistress has a quiet foot, and she's no too gay these days."

"Tish! 'Tis a bad conscience stirs her—the cold one, sending a woman creature up the pass at such a time."

"Tist, tist! Woman, you're daft—have you a mind to be cast on the town and winter nigh upon us?"

"Nu, da, I'll say my mind and no mistake, if she ask me, Fru or no Fru."

But Fru Lind had no intention of asking anything but obedience of her servants. And if these disagreeably persistent rumors disturbed her she never betrayed it by look or action. Though, to be sure, there was that morning when Herr Lind dashed home with a particularly fixed smile on his handsome face—that afternoon she kept the privacy of her chamber and her sympathetic husband told the maids she was suffering one of her frequent headaches.

There came a day, however, when the very servants shivered. It was the day following Hulda's funeral, when Pastor Hans sent word that he would expect to find Herr Lind and his lady home that evening. Herr Lind, in his usual nonchalant manner, told the messenger—loud enough for all listening to hear—that his was all the pleasure should the Pastor condescend to come in time for dinner.

The little maid waiting table that memorable night, confessed to her eager audience in the kitchen that she feared to drop every mortal thing. "It's awful in there," she whispered to Ragni and the cook, "awful—awful—the mistress sits like a thing of brass and Herr Lind keeps mocking the Pastor over his wine glass."

It was a dreadful dinner. Pastor Hans felt his anger rising in a smothering tide despite his determined effort

to be unbiased and sensible. Unrighteous or not, he longed to let fly at the man laughing so derisively in the face of tragedy. But the spell of Herr Lind's burning black eyes was upon him. He had a way, that man, of enslaving everyone! Fru Lind, with head high and spots of scarlet in her cheeks, added little to his comfort. Throughout the many years of their acquaintanceship he had always considered her the most righteous woman—given to charities and the well-being of her household. Now he saw her in a new light, a cold impartial light revealing much, and the poor fretted man found himself growing critical in that quarter also. Yes, he saw now that a little self-righteousness with more mercy. . . .

"You will have sugar, Pastor Hans?"

"If you please, Fru Lind." What may not the sound of the human voice embody! The poor man shivered, so steely chill and biting was the lady's tone. Herre Gud! How had he ever thought her kind?

"Not for me, my love," Herr Lind's velvety voice struck like a leopard's paw upon the hateful silence. "No coffee tonight, Milde, thank you. Red wine for me on all high occasions—some fly to women, Pastor Hans," he smilingly explained to the exasperated guest, "to warm the chill of life away, but I hold wine to be less treacherous and more constant."

Pastor Hans gasped, smiled feebly and mopped a perspiring brow. There must be an end to this, he admonished his shrinking courage, there must—he'd have to do his duty though he died for it. Thus fortified he drew a deep breath and burst forth: "Pardon, Herr Lind—Fru Lind, but I'm here on a difficult errand. A disagreeable errand, perhaps—yes, I'm sure of it—we'd better spare Madam—"

Herr Lind lifted his glass that he might better admire its shining contents through half-closed eyes. His face was an impenetrable mask; cold, passionless, irreproachably handsome. "Ah, you do Fru Lind an injustice, Pastor," he drawled at length, "unintentionally, of course. She, my good Shepherd of Souls, would be the last to leave the ship in stormy weather—I am right, am I not, Milde"?

Milde Lind tried to rise but meeting her husband's eyes thought better of it. Her face was ashen but she managed to smile as she poured herself a second cup of coffee. "Go on, Pastor Hans. Herr Lind is always right," she said.

"Thank you, my love!" he mocked her, bowing gracefully. "Well, then, suppose we proceed. The court is in session and the prisoner in the dock—"

"Herr Lind! Herr Lind!" the distraught pastor broke out imploringly. "Your levity has gone too far! I beg of you to refrain from further jest. The thing's indecent—you may know my errand—You know how a short while ago my duty took me to the grave of that most unfortunate girl—a death that might have been averted—and now her nameless infant must be cared for."

Fru Lind shot up from her chair, anger like a sword in her eyes. "Pastor, it is a weakness with your kind to presume—to expect too much. Are you not forgetting that we continually help toward such things"? Her voice was labored and her nervous fingers toyed with the heavy silver chain round her neck. "Surely," she resumed, trying to speak lightly, "the child will be safe in trust with the county."

"Madam, we happen to know that the father is more than able to provide—you know the law in those matters—it is strict."

"Quite so—naturally!" Herr Lind agreed blandly, "quite so, and justly."

Pastor Hans flushed hotly, scarcely able to credit his senses; unstrung by

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Johann Lind

Continued from page 53

sudden relief his retort sounded feeble and hollow.

"You understand, then?—there's no need to say more? The child can be christened publicly and before witnesses so soon as we can fetch him from the hills?"

Fru Lind could contain herself no longer. "What's all this nonsense, Pastor Hans? This mystery—these hints? Has it come to this that the very clergy runs about at the instigation of gossips? And what, pray, has this christening to do with us? Have we not suffered enough through our kindness to an unprincipled nobody?"

A surge of angry red swept across Herr Lind's face and the look he cast upon his wife was no gentle one. "Spare your judgment for the living, Madam, if you please," he said, the velvet of his voice not quite hiding the biting steel beneath. Then, shrugging his handsome shoulders, he got up and walked to the window. In the few minutes he stood there the minister heard, distinctly, the solemn ticking of the clock, and the distressing sound of Fru Lind's breath whistling through her teeth. He pitied them both just a little.

When Herr Lind faced them once again he was his usual enigmatic self. "So! You are naming the child—well, naturally I shall have pleasure in doing what I can."

"Herr Lind! I must confess my vast relief . . . my gratitude—yes, I am deeply grateful!"

"No need to be, Pastor; as I said before, naturally it will be a pleasure . . . One does not see a first and only son christened every day of the year!"

Good Pastor Hans felt himself turning a fiery red—oh, but the man was heartless—shameless—cruel! And his wife—poor, poor woman . . . Herr Lind laughed softly. "Why so doleful, Pastor? Surely you do not doubt that Fru Lind will make an admirable mother?"

"Herr Lind"! The agitated pastor leapt to his feet. "Herr Lind, you go too far, Sir—you do, indeed"! He might not think the lady altogether blameless, but to the simple country minister this refinement of cruelty passed endurance. He saw with rising pity how the stricken woman clutched the arms of her chair as though to save herself from falling—but what could he do? Herr Lind had the unholy power of freezing the words on one's lips!

Again that velvety voice taunted him gracefully: "Oh, why such haste, my dear Pastor. . . . But of course, I forgot a Shepherd of Souls is always busy. Allow me to help you . . . Ah, you have taken to seal, I see; there's nothing finer to break the wind . . . Well, ours is the loss, Pastor, but, as the saying goes, the best of company must part. You will find your horse at the east entrance—good-night!"

"Herre Gud! how he hates her"! gasped Pastor Hans, as he drew in the welcome freshness of the cool night wind. "Poor soul . . . I wonder why—a woman like that, well-born—rich—and the Factor himself a gentleman"! What was the reason of it? Where would it end. Round and round spun the troubled thoughts, arriving nowhere, availing nothing. As he told his solemn wife that night—it was all past belief and beyond human understanding.

HERR LIND forgot to reckon upon one established fact. Women are constant in their inconstancy. His wife had learned obedience; he had seen to that. But, she had never forgotten the smallest injury nor forgiven the slightest offence. All the wounded

pride, anger and pain of long-gone time still smouldering in her heart, burst into fierce flame at this fresh indignity contemplated against her. Never, not for a moment, did she intend to submit to it, nor entertain the least doubt as to her action. The habit of years fell away before the rising determination as if it never had enslaved her, and with a strength of purpose that even her husband might have feared, she began laying her plans.

The following day she went straight to the kitchen—a weakness she had never indulged—and frankly questioned the maids.

"Ragni, is it true that Helga left the dairy and is at Herman's farm?"

Ragni shifted about nervously, not knowing what to expect from this unaccustomed friendliness—'twasn't like the Fru to engage the servants in idle talk.

"Well"? Fru tried hard to keep her voice light and friendly.

"Yes—I—I—'tis said so," stammered Ragni, red as a beet and spoiling to be off.

"And is it true that she and Ole Boen are betrothed?"

"Yes—Fru."

Why didn't the woman stand still, Milde Lind asked herself impatiently, and why didn't she talk as though she had some sense! "And they are thinking of marriage, I suppose?"

Ragni sniffed at that and recovered some of her customary tartness. "Nu, da, what else, Fru Lind—not that 'tis said for certain."

Fru Lind smiled charmingly. "Thank you, Ragni, that is all I wanted to know," and away she went.

"Nu, da, can you explain that?" demanded Ragni of her friend the cook, who, during the singular interview had pretended an all-absorbing interest in her butter-making without losing a single word.

"A queer household this," was her cryptic rejoinder, "but good feeders."

Fru Lind's next move was to interview Ole. She found him even less inclined to humor her than Ragni had been. He refused to say whether his intentions were matrimonial or not.

"You know, of course, that we are very fond of Helga," the mistress began by way of encouragement. "We'd like to see her established in a home of her own."

Ole eyed the clock on the mantle hopefully. "There's driftwood on the shore," said he, "an' time's slipping."

"Let it slip," she laughed. "There are things I want to talk of—things that should interest you. Ole, have you never heard of the land they call Canada?"

"Yes, Fru Lind, often enough—who hasn't?"

"And did it never occur to you that there was a place for a young man's dream to come true? In a country where opportunities are so many and all men have an equal chance?"

Despite his distrust of the lady Ole grew interested. "Nu, ja, it sounds good enough, Fru, but there's money needed for such dreaming."

Fru Lind nodded, her sharp, bead-like eyes lighted by a strange exultant gleam. "True enough, Ole—but, some of us have money—others the dream. Well, what would you say then if such a one offered you the passage to that land of opportunities—and, say, two thousand kronen besides?"

Ole laughed loudly. "What'd I say to the like o' that? Nu, da, I'd say the hull had sprung a leak—ja, someone gone crazy!"

Madam's sallow face flushed faintly, but she smiled in determined effort to be agreeable. "That may be so, Ole, but listen carefully to what I have to say. For a little service—a very little

service, I offer you all that and more. Your passage, Helga's passage, and money to begin life for yourselves."

Ole's eyes bulged in his head. She was daft; that's what she was, clean daft and talking riddles. Fru Lind could have boxed his ears—the stupid clod!

"Well"? Her voice was slightly acid. "You've understood, I suppose?"

Ole squirmed, looked at the clock and down at his feet. "Ja, but the service—'tisn't likely I'll have the wit for it."

He won a more graceful smile for that. "I happen to think otherwise, my good Ole. As for your part it's simple to a measure. All I want you to do is to take that child—Hulda's child—away with you. And yes, you must go from the North—till then all of you had best keep to the hills."

"But Fru—"

"Ole, don't be a fool! Why hesitate? It's not likely such an opportunity will repeat itself. Away with you to your Helga. She, I've no doubt, will appreciate what I'm offering you."

He knew that she spoke the truth but doubted her word nonetheless. Why should she do this thing? What could be her purpose? What the good? Everyone knew the parentage of the child. And then his thoughts flew to old Herman, brokenhearted and disconsolate, clinging pathetically to the tiny infant—all that was left to him of the girl he had so loved. The poor old man would never give his consent to this crazy scheme, never!

"You're forgetting the old man, Fru," he blurted out roughly. "Tain't likely he'll give up the young one."

Fru Lind changed color. The old man? She had forgotten him! Well, no matter, nothing must, and no one should prevent the execution of her finely conceived plans. She frowned and, as was her habit when greatly annoyed, tapped the floor nervously with a neatly-shod foot. How disagreeable these common folk could be, she reflected irritably, forever precipitating chaos with their silly sentiments—always spilling over! Nevertheless she'd find a means to her end, she must, for never should Herr Lind bring that infant to her house! Never! never, not if it cost the peace of heaven and every penny of her private fortune! She was the more determined because of a small accusing voice haunting her from the long dead past.

In a terrifying flash she had understood her husband's purpose when he made that cruel statement to Pastor Hans. . . . More, for the first time she saw how insatiable revenge may be—yes, it must be that—Or, why, of all things should she have thought just then of that magnificent creature in the Copenhagen hospital? Fool that she had been to think that he had ever forgotten. No, though it had been for his best interest he had never forgiven her for disillusioning him about that penniless Madonna of the Wards.

And yet, how far would he have gotten even with his looks and breeding had it not been for Milde Andersen and her father's money?

No, for all that he owed her, his rise to wealth and influence, he had never forgiven her; nor punished her sufficiently. Funny how many things she remembered now—oh, long ago, in the days when he was still human enough to be honestly angry he had flung out viciously that to her he owed the death of his heart—she had robbed him of love and faith in virtue and honor!

Well, even if she had to buy off twenty old men, she'd do it. Herr Lind should never make an idol of that child just to torture her and bring the Andersen pride to the dust! She may have wronged him—but not enough for that.

Ole waited, shifting about uneasily whilst these reflections troubled the

high-handed lady. And at last she faced him, resolute once more. "Well then, Ole, if what you say be true we'll have to persuade Herman to go too. Yes, that's much the best way—best for him—best for the child, best for all of us. It's quite simple after all; I can arrange for the sale of the farm through my agents. All you have to do is to be ready when I send you the money. . . . But, as I said before, you must leave from the North—no one on this side the mountain must know of your going."

Poor Ole was not accustomed to making quick decisions, but her fervor carried him off his feet. Yes, yes, he saw that she was right. It was all for the best and he would play his part to the utmost. He would be faithful to the last degree, and if she wished, would go at once to the hills. Fru Lind emphatically wished nothing so much.

All the way to the farm Ole rehearsed the tale, and the more he dwelt on it the better it became. But to Herman and Helga it seemed the maddest of fancies. For a moment Helga thought her hero had been drinking, but of that she was soon happily disillusioned. Just the same it was all incredible and wild. Why in the world should the woman want to spend so much money to get one poor little baby out of the country? Why didn't she ignore the whole affair, let the thing die down as many a better woman had done? After all, though Herr Lind should see to its maintenance, it needn't cause the mistress such alarm—that, too, had often enough been done by bigger men than he!

"Nu, da, it's a queen she thinks herself, that woman!" snorted Herman angrily; "a queen indeed, to exile us like that. Nay, I'll have naught to do with her tricks—enough I've suffered for her and her household. Yes, it's myself will go down and tell her so!"

"Hush, nu, Herman dear," cautioned the practical Helga. "Here, let me give you more coffee. . . more like my Ole's twisted in his speech but at that I'm beginning to see there's something to be said for the scheme—Ja, just think, what life will be for Hulda's wee one if the law gives it to the Linds? You know the mistress—" And Helga wiped a ready tear on the edge of her apron.

"Eh, what's that! What'd you say, woman?" Herman bawled out angrily. "Law? What law's to take my little one from me? Ja, tell me that, will you?"

"Nu, da, Herman, you know how it is. It's not yourself will live forever and these law-people have it always to please them, one way or another—Ja, Herman, 'tis true that's what comes of so much learning!"

That won the day; once convinced that in leaving the land of his birth and the solitude he loved meant safety and love for Hulda's baby, Herman submitted to the strange fate destined to change the course of life drastically.

CAME, then, a shining morning when the little party set out sadly from the small green valley hidden in the purple hills. Herman, turning for one last lingering look down its tender slopes, heard to his distress Gammur's mournful howl and imagined that old Fleetfoot shook his mane accusingly.

At the Northern Port everything was ready for them; Fru Lind had been better than her word. Once aboard the ship Ole and Helga flung off regret and gave themselves over to dreams and happy speculation. Helga beamed at her new husband—they had been married an hour before—and Ole felt his heart swell with exultant pride and rich new happiness. Life just then took on a roseate hue; the glorious sea lay ahead, a gleaming

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Johann Lind

Continued from page 55

causeway leading to the land of promise, and beside him smiled the Helga of his dreams.

Nor did the little Johann detract the slightest from their simple joys. Why should he? Was he not their good angel? "Dear little Johann," his foster-mother encouraged tenderly, "look well now at the fjord and the hills—you'll not be seeing the land of your fathers for a long time to come . . . poor little man!"

"You'll need a weather eye for that one, my Helga," Ole warned her merrily as he thrust a huge finger into the soft folds of the baby's neck, "a weather eye and all sails tacking!"

"Oh, well, what could you expect?" his bride answered absently, her blue eyes misty and tenderly intent upon the majestic snow-encrusted Norway mountains. "What could you expect of Johann Lind?"

A little way off old Herman leaned upon the ship's rail watching the path the vessel made through the waves—for all its noise and tumult but a wavering ripple on the face of the sea—and to his philosophical soul it seemed significant of the transitory state of things. Life was no more than that—a ruffle on the deep of things—a passing illusion. Like an old Viking sailing from shore in his burial ship, Herman squared his shoulders, and baring his greying locks to the dear Norway wind, stood in dignified silence watching the purple slopes and jeweled peaks of the land he loved receding forever into the grey fringe of the ocean's mist. "Nu, da," he muttered to himself, "so it goes, ja, on and on forever."

For reasons best known to Fru Lind the exiles were bound for the new world via Copenhagen; the ship conveying them that far being one of Herr Andersen's Trading Fleet, a somewhat dingy merchantman, smelling strongly of sardines and cod liver oil. But, for her purpose, it served very well, and since the travellers knew no better they did not complain. At Copenhagen Herr Andersen's agents booked them to Liverpool on another trader and there left them to shift for themselves.

Poor Helga was overcome at the size and sounds of the great seaport. Such crowds! Such noise! And never a word of honest Norse in the whole babel! No wonder she clung to Ole like Aaron to his rod, for he alone could speak English of sorts. A queer jargon, picked up from the sailors who had made port from time to time when needing supplies from the Factor; but marvellously effective for all that. Never had Ole appeared in so fine a light, seemed so worthy of respect and worship. In fact, it was all part of a great adventure for, secure in their wealth, they experienced none of the privations and dark terrors that customarily fall to the lot of lonely immigrants. Ole grumbled sometimes over the exorbitant prices extorted by the steamship company's hotel, but enjoyed the expenditure nonetheless. It gave him such a delightful sensation of power to be able to pay as well as to grumble. Herman alone, hating crowds as he did, really resented the experience; bewailed the precious time lost at the amazing city.

But even this prolonged delay came to an end and, at last, they found themselves steaming away from the great harbor with its endless noise and nervous bustle, in the palatial ship—thus catalogued in the Trans-Atlantic company's beautiful pamphlets—guaranteed to provide all the comforts of home.

There was truth enough in the beneficent statement if not applied too literally where the steerage quarter

was concerned. There a very great deal depended upon healthy imagination. However, it must be owned the place was cleverly designed. It consisted primarily of dirty cabins of four bunks each, destined to accommodate as many families, no matter what their number. Needless to say the result was not always a happy one. Nonetheless, in pleasant weather this humble place had its better aspects, for then the crowded immigrants gathered in the open to sing and dance and recite their rosy ambitions one to another. Given good weather the joy of the journey depended the most on happy companions.

In this the Boens were destined to be lucky. They discovered to their immense relief that only two strangers were billeted with them—two most amiable Canadians, disposed to immediate friendship. Helga liked them at once, especially "Beel," as she called him, for his face was ruddy like her Ole's and had an honest, open look. Mike she wasn't so sure of, for he had an unfortunate habit of staring at the ceiling when addressing anybody; that impressed her badly. But of course she was ready to excuse him—it might be the custom among the folks "over there." Both Bill and Mike admired Helga profoundly—such a pleasant smile she had and such a maker of coffee! They were delighted to find that Ole could understand them fairly well and very soon took occasion to explain what to them was rare good fortune.

"Man, let me tell you," began Mike, staring hard at a greasestop on the ceiling, "tain't often you travel steerage this way. No sir! Most times it's worse'n hell . . . 'Scuse me, missus." He darted a flying look at Helga and immediately returned to the grease spot. "Scuse me, but them's the words. I've come afore across the pond. Yes, sir! Twenty men, women and young 'uns, there was of us that time. Yes, sir! and the weather like h—'Scuse me, missus, but that sure was one messy corral for you, by gum! And I says to Bill: 'Now pard, this time we sticks for air, see? Sticks, strong as—well, good'n strong. And we did, by gum! Yes, sir! What's the good o' all this trappin', says I to Bill, if it ain't goin' to buy us a little air for oncet! Yes, sir! and here we is fine as fiddin'."

To Ole it seemed just another mark of especial favor and, as he told his Helga, he entertained no doubts whatever as to the future. Everything pointed to happy Providence. They must be on the right road to fortune at last. And then, to his everlasting dismay and anguish, what did Helga do but lose all interest in the things of this life and, turning her face to the grimy wall, prepared to give up the ghost without a struggle. Seasick! His Helga was seasick, and that after only a few hours in a pleasantly choppy sea! Somewhere in the depths of his being he had nursed the notion that women were unaccountable creatures. Now he was sure of it. As he said to Herman: how on earth could anyone be sick on board such an elegant ship? Why, it was for all the world like being jiggled in a nice easy rocking chair!

With Helga so unpleasantly engrossed, the care of little Johann fell to the men, and each was fussily eager to do his best. Despite the best, however, it was just as well that he was a remarkably sensible baby, accepting their administrations with the humor of an optimist. Bill and Mike—no one ever troubled about surnames—grew extremely fond of their little charge as they jounced him about in their alarming fashion, and declared upon more than one occasion that he was

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THE WESTERN HOME MONTHLY, WINNIPEG

darn near as cute as a grizzly cub—yes, sir, darn near as spunky, too.

The only friction occurring between the erstwhile nurses came about through the heated argument as to which was better nourishment for babies, mashed potatoes or bean soup; throughout which heated fracas Herman stubbornly insisted that only over his dead body should either be fed to this baby—that milk and only milk should be fed to Johann Lind. On milk they therefore compromised. And it was just as well for the peace of their souls that Helga never knew what prodigious quantities they forced upon the helpless infant in the extremes of their enthusiasm. Truly, that was a nerve-racking time for all concerned.

Nonetheless, in spite of these strange and absorbing duties, the new friends smoked many a fragrant pipe under a cloudless star-hung sky, for the weather continued remarkably good throughout the entire voyage. In these happy moments they made the most of the ancient habit of criticism. They marvelled at the follies and foolishness of other people. They wondered where on earth some of the outlandish passengers had come from; where they were going and what they could possibly be good for . . . narrow-shouldered, under-nourished, ill-clad men and women, most of them! Poor things, thought Herman, the like of them had never known the hills. Poor underlings, bred in tenements, their sallow skins having the unhealthy look of cellar plants. What was to come of them in that strange new country? But sometimes criticism took a milder turn, for here and there were men and women with the healthy glow of Nature's giving in their strong young faces.

In fact, the ship carried the usual medley of peoples, Britishers, Scandinavians, Germans, all alike in one respect, at least: their faith in the golden land ahead was similarly childlike and pathetic.

Mike shook his head, staring harder than ever aloft as he thought of it. "Poor devils!" said he, "none of 'em knowin' nothin'. Yes, sir! they're all like kids a-playin' button, button—and like as not none of 'em ever finds what they're seekin'! Yes, sir! Now look at them skinny women dewdaddled out in flimsy trumpery—much good it'll do 'em in Canada!"

Ole didn't know just how to accept these ruminations; he suspected that more was hidden than revealed; but of the climate he had no fear. Mike must have read the perplexity in his

face, for he removed his pipe from the brown stubs of his teeth and grinned good-naturedly. "Man, let me tell you, it ain't all paradise out there, nor it ain't all hell—a little of both, maybe. But dont' you go a-worryin', you and your missus'll be all right. Scandinavians is mostly tough. Yes, sir! And by and large, it's a great country—ain't never see'd better wildcats in my life! Yes, sir! by'n large it's a great little old country but not for favoring weaklings. She likes 'em tough, does Canada, stuff to make men outo'—salt o' the earth like them Selkirk settlers—"

Ole had no difficulty in agreeing with his friend; in his secret heart he always had considered weaklings grave slips on the part of the Almighty. But of the settlers Mike so evidently approved he knew nothing. "Man!" began Mike, both eyes riveted on space, "man, you sure surprise me! Now, there was quality—but you'll have to read it yourself. 'Tain't in me to tell o' their likes. Kicked out, that's what they was, from their own Scottish hills . . . Oh, well, the ways o' Providence is doggone queer—'twas that injustice forced 'em away to become the builders of a great province. Yes, sir! You'll have to read about their comin', Ole—the like ain't ever to come again—Man, it'll twist the heart out o' ye—that trek from the frozen North—women a-followin'—little children stumblin' along—babies born in the snow—the dead left to the wolves . . . Yes, sir!" Mike concluded dramatically: "the fear o' the Lord was in their hearts and a piper led 'em—yes, sir! Nuthin' could stop them Scotchmen nohow!"

In this way Ole learned that his future country had her harsher aspects; that her need was for strong hands and stout hearts; that as yet external refinements were non-essentials. Patience, endurance, honest effort, that was the thing! To such as these she bared her bosom rich with life and latent glory. Pathfinders, adventurers, toilers—to these her first love—after them, whosoever might follow.

And so Ole, Helga and Herman bring the baby to Canada. To our beloved West they come at a time when Winnipeg was reached by steamboat and Regina and Saskatoon merely outposts of civilization. You will be thrilled to read of the tenacious spirit of the early settlers and their belief in the Prairies, next instalment in the April issue; or, if you prefer to read the story at one time, we suggest holding the next few numbers.

(Continued next month)

Winter Birds on the Prairie

Continued from page 40

visitors. As the taller trees and other suitable building places have been destroyed, that district will probably never be able to call them a breeding species again.

The black-and-white woodpeckers appear at intervals all winter and, knowing their summer food, we wonder what they can possibly find to subsist upon. However they come and seem cheerful even when hammering away in some small willow or clinging to the slender branches of the dogwoods. If the observer is lucky he may see the rarer Arctic three-toed woodpeckers. They are often extremely tame which, I regret to say, is evidence of their ignorance of man and his ways in their northern homes. Northern birds which see human beings rarely and are practically never molested, are usually friendly, so that it looks as if we had to thank ourselves for the wildness of the feathered creatures.

Pinnated, sharp-tailed and ruffed grouse remain with us all winter on the plains. The sharp-tailed is the boldest and cheerfully feeds in the farmyards and round the buildings, even venturing up to the door-yards of the houses. Ruffed grouse are liable to appear anywhere for once these erratic birds start to fly they often forget when to stop and so turn up in the most unexpected places.

Pine grosbeaks, white-breasted nuthatches, northern shrikes, blue jays, goshawks and even gyrfalcons are on our winter bird-list so that although we are not likely to see all of them in any one winter the cold seasons on the plains are not so dead and silent as people living in more favorable spots seem to think. The keen observer can find lots to interest him even if the mercury is coyly hidden out of sight and his toes and fingers tingle.



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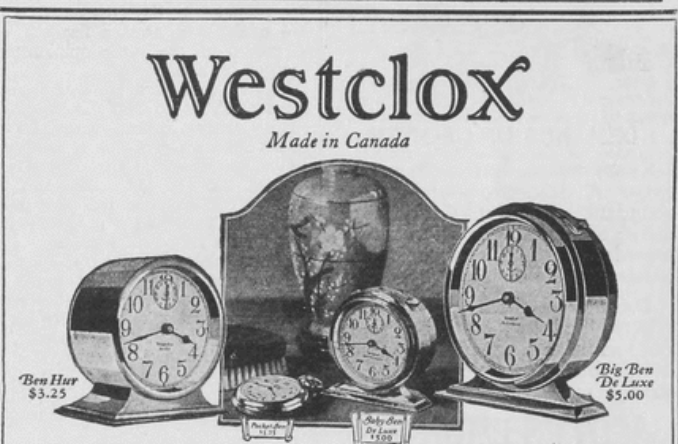
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