

"Then I think I'll go home. With all due respect to you, Mary dear, I am being frightfully bored here."

"Doesn't John Millspaugh please you?" queried Mary.

Mildred stifled a yawn before she answered. "He's too intense. I never could stand a jealous man."

"But I thought you loved him," retorted Mary.

"Now don't say you told me so, Mary. I did love him sincerely for a while, better than any of the others, but I have grown tired of him."

"I really believe, Mildred, that you have no heart."

"Just what he said. Please don't scold, Mary; it worries me. I have just come from a most tiresome interview with him, in which he accused me of being soulless, and heartless, and everything disagreeable he could think of; and I think I'll go home."

"Very well; I ought to be used to your caprices by this time, I suppose. When are you going?" asked Mary indifferently.

"Tomorrow morning. You are very good to me, Mary, and I do love you," she added with a sudden, rare impulse of affection, and left the room.

In a few minutes the door was pushed open, and John Millspaugh came in.

"I have come to say that I must leave here tonight, Mrs. Nichols. I have loitered too long now."

He was very pale, and there was a suppressed look on his face which she did not like, but she tried to smile as she said, "I am sorry you must go. I want to congratulate you upon your success. The plan worked beautifully, did it not?"

"Yes, I have you to thank for the suggestion, Mrs. Nichols. You were correct in your estimate of Miss Hamilton's character. It was a choice between her heart and mine—and hers was spared;" and he left her abruptly.

"If I ever," solemnly promised Mrs. Nichols to herself, "interfere in any more love affairs, I shall give myself up to some institution for the feeble minded!"

*Myra Williams Jarrell.*

## TWO LETTERS.

THERE were several letters on the tray which Marion Harcourt's maid carried up to her one dull November noon. Of all the year, it was the last day when one would expect anything to happen. It was dull and chilly outside, with rain falling on dead leaves; inside it was so dark that the gas must be lit if Marion was to write. And writing must be done, no matter what was the weather or the state of her feelings. She left her hero in a muddle, and turned to her luncheon and her letters. There were two bills, one invitation to dinner, three friendly letters, and—a proposal of marriage! This envelope was opened last, and Marion read it as she drank her chocolate and trifled

with her bread and fruit. Then she put it on the mantel, and turned to her afternoon's work.

It was a pleasant, manly letter, and it deserved better treatment than Marion gave it. Almost any other girl would have taken out her best note paper and gold pen, and would have written an answer, accepting Roy Manning. This was the letter:

MY DEAR MARION:

I would give all I ever expect to have in this world to be certain just how this letter will strike you; whether that handsome face of yours will wear a look of scorn or of tenderness as you read it. But, although I have no idea what your answer will be, I beg you, dear, to be my wife. I have loved you for a long time, but I could not declare myself, for I had next to nothing to offer you. Now circumstances make it possible for me to give you a good home. A promotion, and a windfall from a distant relative, have changed everything. Will you come to me, Marion? We may be the happiest man and woman in the world if you will only let your woman's heart speak. Answer me, dearest, and God bless you, whatever your verdict may be.

ROY.

Marion wrote on till dinner time. It was raining too hard to accept her cousin's invitation to dinner, even if she had the time to spare. The rent was due, her winter cloak was shabby, and there were bills clamoring for payment; her pen could not rest. She ate her simple dinner, then wrote again for an hour or more. By eight the copy was finished, and Susan was sent to post it.

Marion was lame and stiff from her long day's work at her desk, and she rose and walked to and fro for exercise. As she passed the mantel her eye fell on Roy's letter. She would answer it later, when she had had more time to think. As she paced the long room she was conscious of a feeling of annoyance that her quiet had been disturbed. Despite the anxiety and the toil involved in the task of making both ends meet, she had been very happy in this shabby room, with her books and pictures and music, and her wood fire—her only extravagance—on the hearth. What right had any man to say "Follow me"? She could not follow; she had had her own way for so long—twenty six years, nearly. No; she would stay by her fireside, and she paused in her walk to put her hand on a shelf full of pet books, which she always kept near her. It was enough; she wanted no change. She would live out her life here in her own way.

Marion drew her favorite low chair up to the fire. Laddie, her Gordon setter, came and put his head against her knee. The dog's evident affection touched some tender chord, and she found herself thinking more kindly of Roy Manning. What if she were like other women after all, with a craving for love? At any rate, it would do no harm to let herself dream a while. The dream could not have been unpleasant, for her expression changed and softened, and her face looked almost beautiful in the firelight.

After a little she sat up. "How silly of me!" she said aloud. "I am no nearer a decision than I was this morning. Why could not Roy have been sensible enough to leave well enough alone? I did enjoy having him for a friend, and now he has spoiled the friendship. If I say no, the time may come when I shall be lonely and regret it. If I marry him I shall often wish myself back in this dear old den with you, Laddie, and my books and pens."

The fire died out, but Marion took no notice. The clock struck ten, and roused her. She went to her desk and wrote two letters, sealed them, and addressed both to Roy Manning. They were addressed exactly alike, but the contents of the envelopes were very different. One letter ran thus:

MY DEAR ROY:

I am a strange woman, and no doubt you will be sorry that you wrote that letter. Still, you wrote it, and I must believe you when you insist that you love me. I think I love you—perhaps enough to marry you. At any rate, I cannot let you go quite away from me. Will you come to me tomorrow evening at nine? I shall have put away my pens by that time.

Affectionately,

MARION.

The other letter was as follows:

ROY, DEAR FRIEND:

I shall not let you make the great mistake of your life by marrying me. I am a selfish woman who will never make a good wife, and you deserve a good wife, my good Roy. I must think better of myself since I know that you love me enough to ask me to marry you. I thank you for your belief in me, and I hope I shall be a better woman because of it. But we are not to be married, you and I, Roy. There are a dozen reasons for my decision, but there is no use in going over them. This is final, so please don't come to see me. After you stop caring, and we can be just good friends again, then come. Believe me that I am your friend when I refuse to let you be anything more to me. Don't come to me—remember!

MARION.

She put on her hat and jacket. It was late, but she would slip out and post one of the letters. Which one she would not know till tomorrow evening at nine. If Roy came she would keep her word and marry him; if not, she would go on with her old life. Which life she wanted she did not know; there were arguments for and against both. Yes; she would leave the decision to chance. She took up the letters and shuffled them, then she threw both into a table drawer, and shutting her eyes, took up one. Three minutes later it was in the letter box, and Marion was rushing back through the rain. The day was cast.

She did not close her eyes till five o'clock in the morning, and then she slept heavily until ten. No; she would not work that day. She dressed to go out, and spent a couple of hours in a picture gallery, lunching alone at a quiet little restaurant. Then she walked, or browsed among old book stores, till the darkness fell. After her solitary dinner she pretended to read for a while; then she went to dress for nine o'clock.

There was one gown in the not very full wardrobe which Roy liked particularly well. It was of a deep garnet color, trimmed with velvet of a darker shade, and set off at the throat and wrists with a bit of old lace. The dress was old fashioned, and almost threadbare, but it suited Marion. Roy once said that she looked like a picture in it.

She dressed her hair in the fashion he liked, and then sat down to wait. There was yet half an hour before the clock would strike nine. She went to the piano and played fitfully—snatches of old tunes, gay waltzes, bits from the operas. Still ten minutes to wait! At nine she would know which letter she had posted. She paced the floor, she stood at the window, she poked the logs on the hearth, she listened for the bell. Why, she was growing nervous, she told herself. Actually, Marion Harcourt nervous! Oh, why had Roy Manning disturbed her peace of mind? It began to mean so much, his coming or not coming.

Three minutes more! If he came he would be on time; he would count the moments till he could come to her. Was that the bell? No; but the clock struck nine. Roy was not there. Perhaps his watch might be slow; even if it were not, he would not be likely to come exactly on the stroke of the hour. Marion went to the door. "Susan, if any one calls, I am in, you know."

Five, ten minutes past nine! The clock surely must be fast. Ah, the bell! She had sent the letter which said yes! She was sorry for it. She couldn't, oh, she couldn't give up the old, free life. A knock at the door; it was not Roy, but Susan, saying, "Miss Charlock sent back the books she borrowed."

It must have been the other letter, after all. It was half past nine; Roy would not come now. Marion dropped into the nearest chair, feeling that she had suddenly grown old. What had become of the brightness of the room? Everything was old and shabby, and she was a lonely woman who had thrown away all that a woman should long for, in exchange for what?

She walked the floor till she became tired, then sank down in an arm chair. Her face was bowed on her folded arms, and for the first time since her childhood Marion shed tears. They overflowed her eyes, and ran down on her dress. There was no reasoning them away, no explaining them; they simply came welling out. She could no more help shedding them than she could change the color of her eyes. What had she done in her pride and hardness?

"Yes; she is in. Walk right in the study, if you please," Susan was saying.

How Roy crossed the room so quickly Marion never knew, but she found herself crying again; but instead of crying on the table cloth, she was shedding tears upon Roy's overcoat. She seemed to be dizzy, and she heard him say, between kisses, "I got your refusal, and I began to pack like mad to go away. Just before nine the second letter came, and I rushed over

here. I don't pretend to understand it all, but the last letter is all I care for. You have been crying, poor child. Was it because I did not come? Do explain the mystery of those two letters. No, never mind the explanation; it does not matter now, and we'll have a lifetime to explain in."

"But I want to tell you, Roy. I did write two letters, but I meant to mail only one. I thought I would let chance decide which it would be, you see, and your coming or not coming at nine this evening would tell me which letter I sent. I can't understand how the other letter came to be mailed. I left it in the table drawer. Let's see if it's there now."

It was not there; but the mystery was forgotten while they talked of other things. Perhaps Marion would not have been so tractable if Roy had not found her with tear stains on her face.

"Susan, did you mail a letter for me yesterday?" Marion asked next morning, when the maid brought in her breakfast.

"Yes, ma'am; when I went in the left hand drawer of the study table for court plaster—you remember telling me to look for a piece when I hurt my thumb—I saw a letter all stamped, and says I to myself, 'Miss Marion has forgotten it,' and as I was going out to see about the laundry, I dropped it in the mail box. I hope it is all right, ma'am."

"Quite right, Susan. It was a very important letter."

*Adelaide L. Rouse.*

### PETER: A STUDY IN RED.

PETER was a Maricopa—only an Indian, that's all. He had no sense whatever. He'd allow his squaw to work two weeks weaving a basket which he would finally sell for four bits. Peter, on the other hand, would make a bow and brace of arrows in an hour and sell them for a round dollar; but he turned his hand to no other labor, and rarely to this. The Great Spirit, in His inscrutable wisdom, had created squaws and palefaces for the purposes of toil. In this dispensation He had overlooked the red man.

The philosophy was comfortable. Peter believed it soulfully, and he would let down one suspender, and sit in the shade, and smoke, and watch Mrs. Peter weave, her thumbs all bloody from the awl and the sharp rushes.

Peter's sensibilities were blunted. If he poured oil on the wounds, it was simply to heal them over so that more baskets could be turned out, and not, particularly, to soothe Mrs. Peter's pain. In short, in the bright lexicon of the Maricopa brave the definition of the word "squaw" was *nil*.

As before hinted, Peter smoked. This ennobling habit he borrowed from the white man, thereby getting even with Sir Walter Raleigh for borrowing it originally from the Indian.

Peter also drank whisky. This habit he likewise borrowed from the white man; borrowed it never to return; so, for this particular habit, he got even with nobody.

But why is it that, on the mesa overlooking the Hassayampa River in southern Arizona, there has been reared a great, white cross bearing the name of "Peter," and sacred to the memory of the Peter of this narrative?

The story is short, and here it is:

The Hassayampa is a modern Pactolus. Its whole bed is a placer mine. A company was formed, two immense dams were thrown across the stream, and a lake covering fourteen acres was artificially made. A terrific "head" of water was thus produced, and the kind of mining known as "sluice" mining was successfully prosecuted.

The company had expended thousands, but cent per cent was being returned on the investment, when there came a cloudburst which swept away the dams and sent a tidal wave one hundred and ten feet high rushing down the valley.

The melancholy fates ordained that Peter should be in the track of that onrush of water. He was mounted on a swift pony. For a moment he listened to the low hum of the waves, and then struck spurs into his pony's flanks and laid the rawhide quirt in stinging lines along his shaggy sides.

The mesa was some distance away, but Peter knew he would win in his race with death. On bounded his horse. A moment later, however, Peter pulled him in with a strong tug at the horsehair bridle. In front of the Indian, her face pallid as death, and her straw hat, spilling full of golden lilies, lying unheeded at her feet, stood a white girl.

She spoke wildly, passionately. Peter understood her not.

She folded her hands and raised them above her head, turning her blue eyes to heaven. Then Peter knew; her peril flashed over his dull mind in an instant.

Two could not ride to safety—one might.

Could he have reasoned, at that critical moment, with the fineness of his white brother, would he have dismounted, assisted the fainting white girl into the saddle, and then cut his pony across the flank with his quirt? This is what Peter did, and whether any one else would have done as well, perhaps it would be better if we do not question.

After the flood had passed, they found the Indian. He was dead, of course, together with some forty others.

It was the father of the blue eyed girl—president of the company whose fortunes had been wrecked—who raised the cross with its carved inscription; and when it was done, the mound was watered with tears from blue eyes, and in the fair heart of one woman, at least, was reared a greater monument to the redskin's memory, one enduring to the end of time.

Mrs. Peter married again, and wove baskets and made pottery ollas for another lord.

Peter's children were sent to the Indian school near Phoenix, Arizona.

And some people grumble at the government for such an instance of "misplaced charity"!

*William Wallace Cook.*