

# ALL FOR HIS BOY

THE STORY OF A "GRAFTING" POLICE OFFICIAL AND HIS SON

BY C. S. THOMPSON

CAPTAIN BURKE took up the yellow journal, which called his régime "a reign of graft" and "a disgrace to the city."

After reading the big type, he laid aside the newspaper, and took out a black cigar. Then he struck a match, and, touching it to his cigar, steadily watched the flashes of light. When the match had burned out, and the smoke was coming in great, blue mouthfuls, he went back to the black type that denounced his "reign of graft."

Burke had the features and the air of a man who had lived a hard life. He was big, with florid cheeks. His black hair, already gray at the temples, contrasted strongly with his low, white forehead.

He calmly read on about himself.

He was captain of the newest Tenderloin precinct. He had been on the desk twenty-five years. His official home was an old, four-story building of brick and stone, like all the others in the long side street, except for two green door-lamps, and a sign over the transom.

Within a stone's throw of the worn doorstep was an array of ash-cans on the sidewalk, in front of dirty basement shops, together with a scattering of ill-kept children playing in the gutter. Inside, too, there was a depressing atmosphere of darkness, bad air, and time-worn furnishings. The main office was a big, low room with a creaky floor, containing an official high desk and railing. The desk was flanked by two imposing lamps, and presided over by a lieutenant.

At the rear was a room for patrolmen off duty, where they sat playing cards, or reading newspapers. On the right, as one entered the office, was a door leading to the captain's private quarters—a dingy little

room, carpeted years ago, and furnished with a desk, chairs, a waste-paper basket, and a clock on the wall.

It was true enough that his rule knew every known form of graft. His precinct ran from the docks to Broadway, and that meant a rake-off from hold-up men, pick-pockets, confidence men, women of the street; from the dance-halls and the dives, from disreputable hotels, from gambling resorts. Here came the young and the old, the rich and the poor alike, gambling away their fortunes and squandering their lives, only to wind up in the insane ward at Bellevue, or in the black waters of the East River just beyond.

"Half a million by graft."

These words caught his eye, and he let the paper fall into his lap, with no feeling save one of amusement. It was like other attacks on his rule in years gone by, winding up with a demand for his official head.

"Hot air!" said the captain. Nevertheless, he went on to the very end, reading:

Unless otherwise disposed of, this fortune, at the captain's death, will go to his wife and to his only son, John, now a senior at Yale.

Holding aside his cigar, Burke went over the paragraph a second time, deeply annoyed. It was the first time that any newspaper had spoken of them, he reflected, and there was no need of it. He went back to his cigar with a burning resentment.

Then the telephone rang in the outer office. It was a call from the yellow journal, which had been ringing all the morning.

Burke answered for the first time.

"Captain," said the voice on the wire, "we didn't know but you might like to make a statement."

"Say, young fellow," spoke out the captain, "that's just about the size of you newspaper wise guys! Throw a lot of mud into the paper, and then gumshoe around on a telephone-wire to ask if it ain't all true!"

"Have you a photograph of yourself, captain?"

Burke slammed down the receiver.

He took up his cigar, his pulse beating with the black heart of murder—his inheritance from the days of his gang. What if all that they said was true? He was getting the one thing in life he had always held valuable—money!

Money had done everything for him. It had taken him from the squalor of an East Side tenement into the luxury of a brown-stone residence up-town. It had put him into the department, and later on had given him his captaincy. It had always held him his desk in spite of the yellow journals.

With money, he was going to do even more for his boy. His boy! Captain Burke liked to think of him.

As he went on knocking the ashes from his cigar, he gave himself up to framing a mental picture of a red-blooded, fashionable young man, whom he had seen grow up from babyhood. He himself had lived a long, up-hill fight, ignorant and rough; threadbare and half starved, fighting his way with blows; but not so with his boy! His boy would come into manhood well educated, backed by a fortune, and with the polish that comes with the luxury of private schools, the best tailors, and association with other young men of family and fortune. No wish had ever been withheld from his boy—nothing that money could buy.

It mattered not to Burke that his boy had always lived a life more or less apart from the family. What if he did choose to spend his vacation days on Pullman cars, or ocean liners? What if he didn't write, except for money? There was no disputing his boy. His boy knew best; and yet there were odd moments when the father wished it were otherwise.

He had a father's love, and sometimes he wanted to make it known. It was a feeling which he could make plain only by taking his boy in his arms, and holding him to his heart, as he went on saying:

"My boy! My boy!"

Burke's eye went back to the newspaper. "A reign of graft!" He took up his

cigar again, smiling, yet hard of heart. What if all they said was true? He was getting money for his boy. He couldn't bear to think of his boy suffering what he himself had gone through.

So it was, all that day, to the slow ticking of the clock on the wall, that he could sit facing the black head-lines, more or less unmoved. Friends came with loyal hands—patrolmen, district leaders, gamblers, crooks, and those higher up in the department. To one and all, he had only one bit of comment upon the newspaper article.

"Hot air!" he told them.

Late in the afternoon there came another knock on his door. It was the desk lieutenant announcing a young man who wouldn't give his name. The stranger was a swell, the lieutenant said, with blue eyes and red cheeks; and immediately the captain knew the description. It sounded like John—his own boy.

Burke went to the door, and beheld his boy—a well-groomed young man, gloved and altogether immaculate, but with the same unsympathetic eyes as of old. He had a father's impulse to take the boy in his arms and to his heart; but his boy gave him only a formal word of recognition, and slowly the paternal feeling died away, as usual, unspoken.

His own boy, proudly reflected Burke, as he sat watching the young man take off his gloves. Father and son, and yet they were a world apart, it seemed. The father asked himself if it was so with all children.

Burke could see that something was troubling his boy. What was it—this mud-throwing?

"Well, John!" began the father, trying to appear unconcerned. "What brings you down to the city?"

His boy sat partly facing the other way, slapping his gloves on his knee.

"I guess you know, don't you?" he said quickly. "I see you've got a morning paper there."

It was just as the father had expected.

"John," he hastened to reply, "that ain't nothing to worry about!"

The boy went on slapping his gloves, with a growing impatience, which the father knew might end with a show of temper.

"John, my boy," said the father, "you weren't around, were you, the last time these fellows had their fling, four years ago? You were on the other side, I guess.

Anyway, they had the same thing then. They've been handing out this hot air for years, but they don't ever get anywhere. No, John, they can't reach me!"

"Well, if they can't reach you, at least they've put their dirty fingers on me!"

"How so, John?"

"If you took the trouble to read the article, you'd see how. At the very end—"

"What's the matter?" spoke up the captain, throwing away his cigar stub. "Some of them swell young fellows up there been throwing it into your face about the old man?"

"If you want the full story, I can give it to you," answered the boy, still facing the other way. "In the beginning, if I do say so, I travel with a pretty good crowd up there. They're leaders in the class. This morning, when I went to breakfast, they were all there waiting for me. A couple of them had the paper spread out on the table. One of them began to joke about my name being Burke, and wanted to know if I knew what the old man was up to—"

"Who are they?" put in the father. "I suppose some of them swell young fellows up here on the avenue whose old men are running around the Broadway joints, when they ain't robbing the people down in Wall Street—"

"It was only a joke, I tell you," declared the boy. "At that time they hadn't read the article through. Of course, I tried to laugh it off, but I couldn't; and so, after a while, I left the table."

"I'd like to get my fingers on their dirty throats!" cried the captain.

"Wait, will you, till I get through? Afterward, when they got to the truth of it, every single man of them came to my room, one by one apologizing, and saying that it couldn't make any difference in their friendship for me."

"It's all right, then, ain't it?"

"No, it isn't all right," answered the boy, with downcast head. "No, if you want the truth, their sympathy and pity hurt me all the more, and now—well, I'm down here to see what you are going to do about it."

"John, there ain't nothing to be done."

"Yes, there is, and you know it!"

"I tell you, John, there ain't nothing—"

"I know better!" answered the boy, flaring up.

"What do you mean?"

"These articles have got to be stopped."

"Say, look here, John!" said the father quietly. "You ain't forgot I'm your father?"

Young Burke got up, his cheeks aflame. He slowly drew on his gloves, still facing the other way.

"You may be my father," he said, "but let me tell you one thing—I've never boasted of the fact."

Burke stood up, humiliated, with a rush of blood to his forehead. He tried to speak. But he couldn't find the voice. After all, there wasn't anything to say.

His boy—the boy he loved beyond everything else in the world—opened the door and went out. As the father stood at the desk, alone, he heard the outside door close with a bang.

After a while, the captain sat down again, with the knowledge that he was driving his boy away—still farther away. He knew that something would have to be done; just what, he didn't know.

Only once in his official life had he gone through a similar experience. That was some twenty years before, when this same newspaper first opened fire on him, and his wife begged him to give up the system which had made graft a thing of his life. His fancy drifted to a gentle, white-haired woman. He had answered her appeal with an emphatic refusal. He knew better than she did, he said.

As a matter of fact, he had really answered her appeal with money. He replied by giving her more money for her East Side charities.

Burke clung to the solitude of his private office, with his black cigar aflame, trying to plan a course of action that would satisfy his boy. He couldn't come to any decision, because he knew that the terms of a truce with the newspaper were not for him to dictate.

Accordingly, that evening, giving up his uniform for a civilian suit of black, he went to the office of the yellow journal. He knew the man with whom he would have to do business. It was an old reportorial friend—Keenan, who had since risen to the city desk.

On arriving at the office, he asked for Keenan, and the boy at the door departed with his message. Beyond the railing, where the captain waited, was a big, low-ceiled room, with a scattering of incandescent drop-lights, which hung close to flat-

top desks. At the desks young men sat in shirt-sleeves, hammering away at typewriters, or idly reading newspapers. There was a constant opening and shutting of doors, and from one corner there came the regular beating of telegraph-sounders.

## II

KEENAN was but little changed since the days of his reporting. He was still very thin, and perhaps a little whiter in the cheek; nevertheless, he had the same keen, penetrating eye as of old.

"Good evening, captain," he said, holding open the gate. "Come right in, won't you?"

Burke sat down beside the city desk. His stubby fingers were itching, so to speak, to get at the imaginary throat of this little, weak man.

"Say, Keenan," began the captain, pushing his hat on the back of his head, "do you know what I feel like doing? I feel like taking hold of your dirty little wind-pipe, and holding on till you get black in the face!"

The city editor looked up, sickly white, straight into the eyes of the captain.

"You're the man to do it, Burke," he answered, with a smile. "It wouldn't be the first time, either, that you held a throat until the man quit breathing!"

Burke held his tongue. The city editor pushed aside a pile of copy.

"Come, Burke," he said, "let's get down to business. What can we do for you?"

"Keenan," quietly answered the captain, "somebody down here got me on the phone this afternoon, asking if I didn't have something to say for myself. You know—a statement. So I took it into my head I'd come down, and talk things over."

"Burke, it's the only thing to do."

"Tell me, Keenan, how long are you fellows going to keep up this mud-throwing?"

"You saw what we had this morning? We'll have another page like it to-morrow morning, one the morning after, and one the next."

Burke had been afraid of that very thing.

"Let's have a talk on the level," he said. "What's the trouble, Keenan? I know you, and you know me. Is it a case of slipping you fellows something?"

"No, Burke. When you talk that way, you don't know me, and I doubt even if you know yourself. You ask me what the trouble is. I can tell you. There's only

one trouble. Listen, Burke—you're in wrong. You've always been in wrong, and I suppose you will always be in wrong, until some one helps you out."

"What are you getting at?"

"Just what I'm telling you. You're in wrong, Burke. I know it, and down in the bottom of your heart you know it, too. Come, own up to it, and then perhaps I can help you."

"I don't want anybody's help!"

The city editor turned to his desk, waving aside a young man who had come to speak with him.

"Burke," he said, "if that's the way you're going to talk, we can't do any business."

"What would you have me do, Keenan?"

"Quit the desk."

"What—under fire?"

He wasn't prepared to pay such a price. It wasn't in keeping with his record. He couldn't help but think of his record, of which he had always boasted—his untarnished record since the days of his gang. He had never shown the white feather to any man. If he quit under fire, what would the gang say? And those higher up? Wouldn't they call him a coward? No—not to his face. Still, they would think it of him, and he could never take them by their puny white throats, and hold on until they were black in the face.

"Keenan," he said, "you don't know me!"

"Burke, I know you better than you know yourself. You're in wrong, and you know it, too. Only you won't say so. Never mind; in the end, mark my words, we'll get you."

"How?"

"Why, by keeping at you."

"Ain't you fellows been after me going on twenty years?"

"Burke, we may, or we may not, be able to drive you off the desk. But that isn't the point. The point is we're going to do something a good deal worse. We're in a position to make life very miserable for you and yours."

He could tell them that even now they were beginning to make his life miserable. His eyes wandered about the room. The sight of these young men at work, some of them bending to their copy with pencils, and others pounding away at typewriters—the click of their machines, and the sound of urgent voices—all this activity recalled

the second blow they were aiming at him, and filled him with a greater fear.

"Burke, tell me one thing," went on the city editor. "Why don't you give up the desk—of your own free will? Here you are going on fifty-five, with only a few more years at the longest, and then—why, then, Burke, whether you want to or not, you'll have to quit. Have you ever stopped to think of that? Yes, some day, Burke, it will all be over, and then what are you going to do? You don't know? No, of course not. There's only one thing we're more or less sure of, Burke, and that's the life we're living right here in this world—yes, right here in this little city room, this very minute. Now's the time, then, to ask yourself the question—are you getting all there is out of life?"

Burke made no answer, because he didn't know what to say. After all, could it be that he was in wrong? Had he always been in wrong?

"Come, Burke, if you're not going to open up," said the city editor, going back to his copy, "we simply can't do business together."

"Keenan," said the captain, with the blood warm in his cheeks, "am I in wrong, as you tell it, when I can show up half a million?"

"Half a million?" cried Keenan, looking up with fixed eyes. "Good Heavens, Burke, what is that half-million doing for you this very minute? Is it making life any easier for you? Ask yourself that question. No, Burke! It's the very fact of your having this money that is leading us to go on pounding you, as we will go on pounding you, until you own up that you're in wrong. No, your half-million isn't going to bring you any real happiness!"

"How do you know, Keenan? Are you wise to what I'm doing with it? You've been giving it to me that I'm in wrong. Am I? Maybe so, to your way of thinking; but your way ain't my way. Even if you hit it right, what's the difference, so long as I'm getting money for what I want?"

"You want money? What can you do with it? You can't take it with you when you die. What can you get with it here on this earth? Only a few things which in the end will make you all the more miserable. I dare say you think that with all this money you'll be able to make life easier for yourself, or perhaps for your boy.

Isn't that it? Come, Burke, I know what's in your mind. You've lived a long, hard fight, haven't you, and you've been promising yourself that you won't let your boy suffer the way you've suffered? Isn't that it? You're giving him an education, to begin with, and then you're going to hand him over the money? That's all right, my dear Burke, but listen.

"Do you know what you're doing by giving your boy that education? You're teaching him to think. You're educating him to a finer sense of feeling, to a finer sense of moral responsibility, and do you know what that means? Burke, just stop and think. It means that you're giving him the very worst weapon in all the world with which he can torture himself. Do you know what a finer sense of feeling is? Burke, it means that every time we strike you a blow in the paper, we're hitting him an infinitely harder blow, and one he'll never forget."

Burke saw the point of the argument, and was about to say so, when the moment went by.

Keenan then drew up his chair.

"Only one word more, Burke," he went on, in a lower tone. "You've taken blows all your life. You are used to them. Anyway, there won't be many more for you, Burke. But with your boy! He's only at the beginning of life, and is he going to suffer because of you? That's the question to ask yourself. What are you really doing for him? You're starting him with a bad handicap, the heaviest handicap in all the world—the inheritance of a bad name. Burke, you're a grafter, and no matter what he does, no matter where he goes, no matter what kind of a life he tries to live, people will forever point him out as your son. The son of a grafter! His money will be called blood-money. Take my word for it, there isn't any escape for him. This thing will follow him to the grave. Oh, I tell you, there's one thing in this world we can't beat, Burke, and that's the game of life. You've got to live it right, or you lose!"

Burke had never thought of these things. He sat in the warm, used-up air, uncertain of his balance, breathing heavily, as he watched the yellowish spots of light swim around the room.

"Keenan—" he faltered, with a sinking heart.

He couldn't get any farther, and as he turned his head away, seeing himself



beaten, big man that he was, a rush of tears came to his cheeks.

### III

THE city editor looked the other way, while the telegraph-sounders went on beating a nervous tattoo, and the young men in shirt-sleeves kept on hammering away at their typewriters, filling up another page for the morning paper.

"Burke," said the city editor, at length, "there's only one thing to do. You're going to quit—yes, under fire, so that there won't be any more mud-throwing. When your boy finds it out, mark my words—when he finds out just how much you've done for him, Burke, he'll be proud of his father, and he'll come to your arms, and say so."

Burke was strangely upset. Would his boy come to his father's arms? At that price, he would be willing, even glad of the chance, to resign.

"If it's the only way, Keenan," he said bravely, "I quit."

The city editor put out his hand.

"You understand, Burke?" he said. "I'm sorry!"

At first, Burke ignored the proffered hand.

"I'll shake," he said, after a moment. "But say, Keenan—I don't want no pity." Pity? No, he wouldn't have it!

He made his way to the street, buoyed up with the purpose of his resignation. He was doing what he could for the happiness of his boy, and what else mattered? Never any more mud-throwing, he told himself, with a great satisfaction.

He entered the subway, impatient of delay. He had good news, and he wanted to make it known. Soon the up-town express was flying along the straightaway, and bounding on the curves. It couldn't go any too fast for him, as he went on saying: "No more mud-throwing!"

On leaving the subway, in the darker side street of brownstone house-fronts, he quickened his pace, uplifted by the message he was bearing home. Quitting under fire? What did that matter? He was doing it for his boy!

He entered the house, took off his hat and overcoat, and passed on, he didn't know just why, to the upper hallway leading to the boy's room. He saw that the room was in darkness, but the door was partly open.

He pushed open the door, and, turning on the electric light, stood staring at the sight before him. The room was altogether upset. The drawers of the bureau were thrown open, also those of the writing-desk, and their contents scattered about. On the floor, and on the bed, were clothes, shirts, collars, and ties, shoes, pipes with a package of tobacco, cigarettes, and a great number of letters and papers, torn up and thrown into a pile.

After a while, wondering what had happened, Burke returned to the lower floor, where he found the boy's mother. She was sitting alone at the table, one side of her head in deep shadow, with only a rim of light from the table-lamp touching her white hair. She was staring into space.

She was a picture of gentleness—that is, the gentleness of a broken spirit. Her eyes were red, and the reason was plain. At her feet was the yellow journal, calling out to her in big, black type: "A reign of graft," "A disgrace to the city—"

He slowly picked up the newspaper, and put it away, though not without a touch of shame. He was thinking of the words she had once uttered. Had she forgotten?

"Martha," he began with an effort, as soon as he became seated. "Martha, there won't ever be any more of this dirty mud-throwing. I've just been down to the office and fixed it up with them. I've quit the job!"

He waited with curious eyes to see the effect of his words; but she made no reply. She went on staring into space, without even letting him know that she heard him.

"Ain't you glad, Martha?" he asked.

"Yes, James, if you are."

Her lack of interest hurt him more than any one thing he could remember.

"Martha," he said, with a lump rising in his throat, "has John been here?"

"Yes, James," she answered, with uncertain lips. "He was here to-night for dinner."

"What did he—have to say?"

"He said he'd been to see you this afternoon, and he was afraid, James, he'd been rather cross with you. He was afraid he'd never been a very good son to you—to either of us, he said."

"There, mother," he hastened to say. "Didn't I always tell you he'd come around some day, and see what his dad was doing for him?"

She let his comment go unanswered.

"Martha," he went on, uplifted, "has he gone back to college?"

"No—not back to college."

"Where has he gone?" he asked, at length.

"He's left the city, James. He didn't know just where he would go—"

She put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Martha," her husband said, fearful lest something had happened to his boy, "he ain't left the college for good?"

"He's left his home, James. He's gone West, where he says he'll take a new name, and live his own life. He said that after what was in the newspaper this morning, he couldn't stay around here, and look any one in the face."

"He's leaving his home, you say?"

"Yes, and without any money," she returned, as she went on weeping. "He wouldn't take any—no, not another cent, he said, even if he had to starve!"

Her words came to Captain Burke like a blow.

"Martha," he stammered, "I was only getting the money for him!"

In the silence of the room, which began to pall on him, the captain somehow got to his feet, intending to try to get in touch with his boy.

"Did he say what train he was going to take?" he asked, reaching for his watch.

"Yes, I believe it is the ten o'clock express for Chicago."

The captain's watch showed the hour hand passing ten.

"I can send him a telegram on the train," he said, moving toward the door.

"No, James—wait!"

He waited at the door.

"James, he said not to come after him."

"What if he did say so?"

"No, he said—never to come after him."

"Never? But, Martha, he don't know—"

"Oh, James, he said if you did follow him, against his wishes, he'd blow his brains out!"

"My boy?"

He stood in the doorway, stupefied.

"Martha," he said, after a while, his head bowed with shame, "I drove him out, didn't I? My boy!"

He spoke without raising his voice. No tears came to his cheeks. He was like a child now, still standing there, alone, waiting for something to happen.

Then the telephone rang. It was the yellow journal again—Keenan, saying

something about a photograph. He asked the captain, as a personal favor, to pose for one, either at home or at the station-house.

Burke had no feeling about the matter, one way or another. He put on his hat and overcoat, and departed for the station-house.

He stupidly entered the border-land of his precinct, at an hour approaching midnight, when Broadway is a fairy-land of electric signs, under the great black dome of the sky. Men and women in evening dress were coming out of theaters, and the air was filled with the sound of automobile horns, as the parade of cars moved along the asphalt. He recognized a fringe of pickpockets, confidence men, and women of the street, but he avoided the eyes of one and all. He was no longer a part of the system, and he chose to go his way alone, with the despair which comes to a man when, for the first time, he sees the world moving on without him.

#### IV

At the station-house, once more sitting in the solitude of his dingy office, he heard the roll-call of the desk lieutenant for the midnight detail, the answers of the men, and finally the steady tramp, tramp of patrolmen marching into the night—his men no longer. His heart welled up in his throat.

He took out a black cigar, touched a match to it, and picked up the yellow journal, staring hard at the big, black type. "A reign of graft." Presently, as the paper fell into his lap, he had a vision of a boy on a lighted train, speeding along the level stretches of the night.

He knew the cause of all the trouble now—too late! He was in wrong. That was the one hard thing about life. It was all a mistake—his life; and just because he was in wrong at the beginning. He threw his cigar away, only half finished.

After a while, reaching to his hip pocket, he took out a revolver, which he put before him on the desk. It was a thirty-eight caliber, self-repeating, seven-shooter. As he took the weapon up, sick at heart, and seeing only the uselessness of life, the reflected light on the barrel caught his eye, and for the moment held him spellbound. Was he about to play the rôle of quitter? There was no one to run away from, he told himself, except—he had almost for-

gotten, a gentle, white-haired woman. He had always found her waiting for him. As he thought of the good she was doing with her life, the pistol fell from his fingers, and he suddenly buried his face in his arms on the desk.

Then the door opened. As he looked up with misty eyes, he beheld his boy standing before him.

The boy was breathing heavily. His cheeks were aglow, his white hands were ungloved.

"Father," he stammered, as he took off his hat, "mother says she told you about my going away."

"Yes," said the father.

"I got to the train, but I—oh, well, father, I couldn't go without first coming to see you!"

Burke was suddenly made happy.

"John," he said, standing up, afraid lest he should say the wrong thing, "ain't there anything I can do for you? Ain't you going to be in need of money?"

His boy slowly shook his head.

"Father, haven't you done enough for me already? Why, mother has been telling me just how much you've done—that you've resigned for my sake, so there won't ever be any more mud-throwing."

"John, my boy, all I have is for you—if you want it. All I think of—is you!"

"You say that—after this afternoon?"

The boy turned away with downcast head. "This afternoon," he said, "remember, I said I'd never boasted of you as a father, and you—you didn't say a word. Instead, just for my sake, you went down and quit—under fire. Why, father, if you'd only done the right thing, you would have struck me down on the spot! But there, it's all over now, isn't it, and you'll forgive me before I go?"

"Forgive you, my boy? Why, John, there ain't nothing to forgive."

The boy put out his hand.

"Father," he said, after a moment, "give me your hand! I'm proud of you!"

Burke had a choking sensation in his throat.

"Proud of me?" said he.

"Yes, proud of you, father; and there's only one thing more I want to ask of you. First of all, there's mother for you to think of; and then some day I shall want you to come out West, both of you, and see what kind of a man I've made of myself—you know, alone, without any help. I only hope you'll have reason to be proud of your boy!"

Burke started to put out his hand; but as he made a move forward, all at once, he took his boy in his arms. There, as he held him to his heart, patting him on the shoulder, he went on crying out:

"My boy! My boy!"

## DEAR TIRED HANDS

Your toil-worn hands, how dear they are—how dear!

How terrible their dearness has become,  
When all their services are added up,  
And I stand here, sore stricken at the sun!

Your toil-worn hands—well I recall the day  
When, softly white, you gave them to my care;  
How reverently I clasped them then—but now  
So holy have they grown, I cannot dare!

Your toil-worn hands, scarred by the many tasks  
Of wife and mother through the patient years;  
And now, too late, the one you served the most  
Can pay you but the tribute of his tears.

Dear, tired hands—how tenderly I cross  
Them here upon the stillness of your breast,  
And pray to God that He will give them now  
Their well-earned guerdon of eternal rest!

*Gladys Hall*



# THE FEAST OF COLETTE

BY IZOLA FORRESTER

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"POOR kid!" Ramon interjected. "I cannot censure him, Colette. Either he knows not our airy custom of welcoming strangers, or else he has not the price of a feast to satisfy you cormorants. In any event, I—I who have suffered—pity him. He looks not like—how do you say, Colette? A quitter, that is it; he is no quitter, that lad!"

Colette's nose tilted at an even more acute angle than a capricious mood of nature had intended. She took the coziest heap of cushions before Ramon's fireplace, and wrapped herself in a scarf of spangled net, black, with silver moths imprisoned in its mesh. Very thoughtful was Colette of accessories. Ramon had set the tea-tray beside her on an Indian tabouret, and she was dispensing tea to his usual Friday afternoon callers. Ramon watched her quizzically.

"You do not like him?"

"He is too cold, too detached," she flashed back. "He barely speaks to the rest of us."

"And his work?"

"Strong, De Vignerons says, but crude. It lacks tenderness. He has never been in love, we surmise."

Every one laughed at the pensive sorrow and solicitude of Colette's tone—every one excepting McCartney, smoking in a corner, and scowling at Ramon's latest study of De Vignerons's street model. It was a Neapolitan girl this time, spinning a tambourine in the air, and dancing in the sun. And the face of the girl was that of Colette, dark, piquant, warm, and sweet with the passion of the Southland as one of her own home flowers.

"Teach him, *ma petite*," laughed little Bellew, blowing curls of pearly smoke toward Colette's troubled face. "Teach him inspiration. Wake him up!"

"I do not care to wake him up. I only want him to give us a feast," replied Colette.

"Greedy little *poulet*, forbear!" put in McCartney's rolling bass. "I misdoubt the lad's ill intentions. I'm thinking, Colette, that knowing your capacity for *pâtés*, and *entrées*, and *café parfaits*, and wondrous Nesselrodes—"

Colette threw a cushion deftly, swiftly, and caught him fair on the nose.

"Be still, Père Grouch! He is stingy. He does not care for any of us, and we will teach him a lesson, but only one. It will suffice!"

"Go lightly, lass," growled back the Scot. "He has a clear and a canny eye; likewise the chin of a warrior."

"But I shall not offend his chin," laughed Colette, tucking an orange silk cushion behind her own dark head. "Tomorrow night we will give him a surprise-party in his studio. We will procure all our own refreshments, and teach him our tastes. We will smother him in friendliness and hospitality. He had been cold and proud with us, his comrades of the *atelier*; so will we teach him brotherly love, and the heavenly truth that every *pâté* should travel in pairs—never alone. Only a dog or a beggar gnaws a bone in secret."

"I misdoubt the lad's taking it as a kindness," quoth McCartney. "What's your grudge against him, lass?"

Colette flushed at the shrewd glance from the corner, and laughed wickedly.

"The first morning when he came to the *atelier*, I was sorry for him, and offered him one of my roses. He refused it."

"Why? Tell us why, Colette?" called the crowd merrily.

They knew Colette and her charms, also the dubious joy of being her latest favorite.