

The Bull Whip

HOW EMMA CADBURY LEARNED THAT A DOCTOR'S WIFE
MUST NEVER BETRAY HER HUSBAND'S CONFIDENCE

By Ellis Parker Butler

ONCE in a while you hear some one say that such and such a man ought to take a whip to his wife—that it is the only thing that will do her any good. It is not only men that say this. Possibly I have heard the expression forty times during my life, and at least twenty times women have used it.

Usually the statement, "The only thing that will ever do that woman any good is a sound beating; her husband ought to take a whip to her," is made in an offhand way. It does not mean much. It suggests that the speaker does not know what he would do if he had a wife of the sort under discussion, and he puts forth the whip idea in lack of anything better. If the wife was his, he would not use a whip.

The only case I can recall in which a whip did cure a wife was that of the wife of Dr. Cadbury, of Black Springs. I'll tell you about it.

Cadbury was a rather fine fellow and a mighty good physician. The only practice in Black Springs was general practice, and that, of course, was what Dr. Cadbury had. He came to Black Springs as a young man, rather slender and with friendly eyes, as soon as he finished his postgraduate work at a St. Louis hospital, and was taken in partnership by old Dr. Whitehouse, who was almost ready to retire.

The old doctor died a year or two later, and Cadbury inherited all his practice. Being a bachelor, he had been boarding with Whitehouse, and he continued there. Old Mrs. Whitehouse and her daughter Sally were glad to have him.

This continued very comfortably for something like fifteen years—perhaps a few years more than that. Cadbury gradually secured the best practice in the town and county, had his automobile and his horse

and buggy and sleigh, and trained Hank Stevens to handle the automobile as well as he naturally handled a horse.

The doctor was forty, or close to it, before he married. He was stout but not fat, full-faced, and ruddy in complexion. He wore loose garments, well made and comfortable. He had never worn hair on his face. He was in every way a good, solid citizen, always ready to smile, to shake hands, to exchange a hearty word or a joke. He was an honest church member and a director of the Black Springs Bank. He belonged to three fraternal organizations, and took an active part in their affairs. A good fellow, sound and sane, and an excellent physician, capable of handling any ordinary surgical operation as well as need be. He took time to go to St. Louis and to the Minnesota Rochester, now and then, to keep up to date; and he actually read the medical magazines he subscribed for.

The indications were that in time Dr. Cadbury would be much stouter than he was when he married. He was good-natured and happy and satisfied with things, busy every minute, cheerful when he had to make night calls, and everybody's friend.

He chose as his wife a handsome, well-built woman who came to Black Springs visiting Sally Whitehouse. She was six or eight years younger than the doctor, and as lively as a schoolgirl. She was a great talker, always chatting cheerfully, mingling her talk with good-humored little laughs, and dressing a little better than was the rule in Black Springs. Every one liked her as well as they liked the doctor, and we all thought it was a good match. We all considered Emma Cadbury a worth while gain for the town.

In a town of fourteen thousand people a prosperous physician is an important citi-

zen. He looms large. His wife comes into a social position that is as good as any in the town, if she wishes to occupy it, and Emma Cadbury did wish to.

Dr. Cadbury bought a house that was not too showy, and yet worthy of himself and his wife. He had an office built out from the south side of the house, with a small entry where he could knock the snow from his coat or change his muddy boots. Emma saw that the entry and the office were properly furnished. She even bought a new bronze cuspidor, for tobacco-chewing was the greatest of Cadbury's vices and his worst habit. He found solace in the bad habit during his long, cold country drives, I imagine.

As far as I know, Emma never objected to this habit. She took the doctor as he was, ready made—which is the way one has to take a bachelor of forty years, I imagine. She accepted him, and they fitted together as one hand fits another in a friendly clasp.

Before long the doctor's house was a social center, and Emma was in everything that was interesting. The house was conveniently located and large, there were as yet no children, and it was a delightful meeting place for committees, societies, card parties, and all the pleasant small affairs of a small city.

It was rather fine to see the doctor button his greatcoat and put one arm around Emma, as he kissed her, when he left the house for some call. She had a way of throwing up her chin after she had been kissed that was pretty, and any one could see the two were entirely and thoroughly in love. It would be hard to think of a house in Black Springs that spoke of more solid happiness and content than that house.

II

ONE evening Dr. Cadbury came home from a visit to a patient. It was summer, and he wore his linen duster and automobile goggles—which were still in style with him, because the summer roads were so dusty. He did not go around to his own entrance, but walked up the steps of his front porch, opened the screen door, and went in.

Emma was entertaining a visitor—Mrs. Blake, from across the way. The doctor greeted her in his usual good-natured way, pulled off his gloves, took off his goggles, and seated himself in one of the green wick-

er chairs. He said he was tired, but did not say it in a way to indicate that he was overtired, and he chatted with the two women until Mrs. Blake had to go home to get supper. Then he turned to his wife.

"Emma," he said, "you're fine! I bless the day I set eyes on you, and I bless every day since then. You're a splendid wife for me. I wouldn't trade you for any wife in America. You know it, I guess."

Emma looked at him. For the first time she noticed that his face was solid, if that is the word. She had always thought he was good-looking and well built, but now she noticed that he had a strong mouth behind the smiles, for he was not smiling. He was serious.

She was not frightened, but she felt an inward gasp, as if her heart was gasping. It was not much—about the sort of gasp a woman's heart gives when she has something on the stove that she does not want to have boil dry, and suddenly remembers it after she has forgotten it. Something was the matter, and she did not know what it was.

"Yes, Ben?" she said questioningly.

"Well, it's just this, Em," he said. "A doctor's wife is in a peculiar position, in some ways. She is all the better for being friendly, but she can't talk too much—or, I ought to say, she can."

For a moment Emma looked amazed, almost frightened.

"Ben!" she cried. "Have I been talking? Have I been saying something I should not?"

"Seems like, Emma," he answered, still seriously. "I don't want you to feel hurt or anything, but a doctor has to be close-mouthed most of the time, and his wife the same way."

"Oh, I know that, Ben!" Emma exclaimed. "I do know that! Have I—have I told something terrible?"

"Well, no—no," he said, but still seriously. "No, Emma, I would not say quite that. Just careless words; but I don't like to have things about my patients come back to me as having been told by my wife. It is a thing that must not be. You can understand that, Em. If it gets around Black Springs that it doesn't do to go to Doc Cadbury, because his wife talks about the patients—you can see that, as well as I can. It doesn't do. A doctor's wife must not talk."

"I'm so sorry!" she said honestly.

"Of course. I just spoke of it, Em, because these things are better if we talk them over—have it out clean and sweet. So that's all of that. What's for supper this evening? I'm starved!"

Dr. Cadbury did not worry any more. His wife did worry. She was afraid of her own tongue, and she was right in being afraid of it. It had always been her most unruly member. Sometimes she was amazed to remember the things she had said.

Some men and women need no wine to intoxicate them; talk does the work for them. The effect of hurried and eager conversation has exactly the same effect on these people that alcohol would have. They become excited, their pulse quickens, their cheeks glow, a trapdoor seems to close the thinking part of their brain, and the remembering part pours out its contents, hit and miss, helter skelter, in a flood. It is all innocent, it means no evil, but it often does grave harm.

Emma Cadbury was weak in that way. Her tongue sometimes ran away from her and said things she would never have said if she had time to consider them. In one sense it was because she was generous. She felt, when conversation was hot, that she ought to give as much as she got, and more.

A week or so after the doctor's first suggestion that it might be as well for Emma to be a little careful, he had to mention the subject again.

"Emma," he began, but there was no need to say more.

The moment she saw his mouth and heard the tone of his voice she knew what he was going to say.

"Oh, Ben, Ben!" she cried. "I've been talking again!"

"Yes. I'm sorry, Emma, but you have been."

She put her head in his lap and cried. There was no make believe about it. She cried hard, and it was from her heart. She was disgusted with herself, ashamed of herself.

Dr. Cadbury was as kind as he felt he ought to be. He talked to her seriously, while he stroked her hair.

She asked him what it was she had told, and he explained, giving all the details this time. It was nothing very bad in itself, but that did not relieve Emma. She blamed herself as sincerely as if her careless tattling had resulted in death.

Cadbury was glad that she took it seriously, and hoped that this would end the trouble; but it did not. The next matter was far more serious. It was this next matter that led to the use of the bull whip—not because it was so heinous, but because the doctor felt that he must either end the thing then and there or come to hate the wife he loved so dearly.

III

THERE was in Black Springs a family that had never seemed to do very well. George Miller was a well-intentioned man, but he had been bitten by one of those queer religious bugs that come into existence from time to time in out-of-the-way places like Black Springs, India, and New York. He was a Low Chanter.

The Low Chanters were good people, and harmed no one. Their leading oddity was a belief that a certain verse in the Bible ordered them to chant continually in a low voice. There were not more than twenty of them in Black Springs, but George Miller was their leader, and people looked on him as a freak. He wore his hair long and chanted unceasingly, interrupting himself, when asked a question, only long enough to say "Yes, yes!" or "No, no!"

The chant was a sort of singsong crooning, not unpleasant, but rather a serious drawback from an employer's point of view, if a man happens to be a clerk in a store. George Miller dropped out of the commercial life of Black Springs and took up whitewashing, wood sawing, and such other odd jobs as could be done while he crooned. With his large family and his slight physique he did not get on very well in a worldly way.

His third daughter was May Miller. She was a pretty girl, and a little rebellious because of her distaste for the crooning of her father and mother. One evening she got into rather serious trouble.

Partly because she was a good stenographer, and partly because he wished to help the family in any way he could, Joe Hendricks, the cashier of the bank, had given May a job. It was a fine thing for the family and for May, and it came at a time when she needed money if ever a girl needs it, for Chester Brown was looking her way with rather loving eyes.

Chester was a young man and a clean one, upstanding and thoroughly fine in every way. He belonged to one of the

churches and to the Y. M. C. A., and was of the clean-cut religious type, and yet not particularly bigoted. Every one liked him, and when he began paying attention to May Miller she was more than happy.

She was ready to fall in love. She was the sort of girl that inevitably would fall in love, and Chester was the best man in the world for her to fall in love with. As soon as he looked her way, she was ashamed of several things—of her uncouth clothes, and of the way in which she had let herself drift toward another young fellow.

Getting the position in the bank was a fine thing for May. Dr. Cadbury, who kept a somewhat careless but interested eye on most of the people in town, was pleased in an unexcited sort of way. May was none of his particular business, but he was glad to see a good-natured, pretty girl, such as May was, trend toward something better rather than something worse.

The young man who might have been Chet Brown's rival was Dare Brown, Chet's cousin. He was one of the town "sports"—easy-going, all for a good time, and not worth much one way or another.

Now the chances are that a girl who has had a good home training, with sound and sane religious experience at the base of it, will be right and stay right. It is the same with a boy, for that matter. It is different with a girl or boy who has been brought up in a home where some freak belief has obsessed the parents.

If that girl or boy has a trace of skepticism—as youth should have in its attitude toward oddities—there is going to be more or less desire to get away from the thing that has made the home folks seem odd. Sometimes an unsound religion drives youth to say that it has no use for any religion. Sometimes, in getting away from what it is ashamed of, youth takes to a sound, helpful, stabilizing belief. Which it is to be depends quite a little on the companions the boy or girl happens upon.

May Miller had happened on Dare Brown, and that was bad for her. Her father and mother scolded her about Dare—which made her like him all the better. He was the representative of the come-easy, go-easy life. Before she knew it, he had May thinking in terms of extra short skirts, and red hats with showy red plumes, and late night motor parties.

Then Chet began to notice May. It changed her entire view of life. It made

the Dare Brown sort of thing seem tawdry and cheap.

One night—a Saturday night—May told her mother she was going down town. In Black Springs our main street is quite gay on Saturday night, and nearly every one goes down to promenade up and down once or twice. It is the custom. May wanted to see Dare Brown, for what seemed to her a very good reason. She wanted to see him in order to tell him that she did not want to see him any more.

It was not until about ten o'clock that she saw him. She had given him up, and was on her way home, when he ran his automobile up beside her and hailed her.

"That you, May?" he asked. "Get in!"

"No," she said, "I'm going home now. I've been looking for you. I must go home now."

"I'll take you there."

When she went close to the car, to get in, she saw that there was a couple in the rear seat. Dare threw open the fore door, and May got in. Then Dare swung the car to the middle of the street and stepped on the gas. He stepped on everything that would make the little car jump over the road. It passed May's house in a flash.

"Dare!" she exclaimed. "You said you would let me out!"

"That's all right," he said. "In a minute. I'm just going to take these two home first."

May looked over her shoulder at the two in the rear seat. They were a man and a girl, and were asleep, apparently, flopped one against the other. As the car passed a light, May had a fairly good view of them, but she did not know either.

"Who are they?" she asked Dare.

"Nobody much," he said. "They're due back at Milltown."

"Dare!" May exclaimed. "You're not going to take me all the way to Milltown before you take me home? I won't have it!"

"Don't know how you're going to help it," he replied.

Neither did May know. She did know that Dare had been drinking. Milltown was a mere thirteen miles from Black Springs—twenty-six miles there and back—and the car would take less than an hour. She needed an hour to tell Dare what she wanted to say, she thought.

She began to tell him. It was that she

did not want to see him any more, and that if he thought they were engaged she did not want him to think so.

Dare hardly listened. Almost as soon as May began to speak, he began to sing; and when he sang the car did about what it chose to do on the road.

"Please don't!" May begged. "Please attend to your driving!"

"Then don't give me any of that nonsense," Dare said.

May kept silence. What she wanted to say would have to wait.

They had almost reached Milltown when they passed Dr. Cadbury's car, jogging along at its safe pace of twenty-five miles or so. They reached the outskirts of Milltown, dodged around the cars of the homeward bound farmers, turned into the main street, and—hit a telephone pole.

May and Dare were thrown out of the car and onto the sidewalk, and the two in the rear seat were thrown forward against the seat in front of them. Altogether it was a rather minor accident, but it drew a crowd instantly.

Dare lay unconscious. May Miller was on the pavement beside him, groaning with pain and holding her arm, when Dr. Cadbury drove up. He jumped out of his car, pushed through the crowd, and got ready for business. Half a minute assured him that there was nothing the matter with Dare, who was regaining consciousness.

"Get him into my car, Hank," he told his man. "I'll look the other patient over a little."

"They got what was comin' to them, all right!" one of the bystanders said.

"That so?" the doctor asked, as he kneaded May's arm, trying it for a broken bone. "How do you mean, friend?"

"Joy riders," the man said. "This guy I don't know, but that feller in the car is a drummer—sellin' brass earrings or something, I guess. He's been at the Commercial House a week or so. Him and this feller has been riding these hotel girls around every night—hittin' it up pretty lively, too, I guess."

"Just so!" said Dr. Cadbury, getting up from his knees and helping May to rise. "Well, we'll just move on now, I think."

He looked at the two in the car.

"Hurt any?" he asked, and they denied that they were.

May was leaning against the telephone pole, rubbing her elbow and weeping gently.

"Dare," the doctor said, "it's a good thing you've got a head like a steel box. You can see that these two get to the hotel, or you can leave them here. They don't interest me—not much, anyway; and I guess you can get home by train, if your car is out of shape."

"That's all right, doc," Dare said.

"I'm going to take this lady home," the doctor went on, taking May by the arm. "I'm not quite sure about her arm. You don't mention her name—you understand? You've forgotten she was with you."

Dare grinned.

"I'm mum!" he declared. "And I'm awful sorry, M—"

"Hush!" growled the doctor.

"That's right," Dare said. "I'll keep my mouth shut."

He tried to say how grateful he was to the doctor, but Cadbury had no time to listen. He had driven out to see one of his "chronics," and he must make the call, cutting it short and hurrying back to Black Springs with May.

On the way May told him how she had happened to be in the car, and the doctor swore a little. He believed her, but he knew what even the most distorted gossiping can do to a young girl's reputation.

"You'd better let me do some white lying for you, May," he said. "I don't think that arm is bad. I'll have a look at it when we get to Black Springs. How would it be if I just said I had picked you up to bring you home? No bad lie there, is there? And I'll get around that arm somehow. What if I was to say this door of mine is always acting up? It is, ain't it? And nothing about Milltown or our young but gay friend. Better that way, I guess!"

IV

AND it might have been all right if Dare Brown had been utterly bad. Unfortunately, he was man enough to worry about May. He telephoned to ask how she was, guessing rightly that the doctor would take her to his office for a look over. Mrs. Cadbury received his message, knew his voice, and told him that neither May nor the doctor was there.

"He went to Milltown to see a patient," she said.

"Yes, I know," Dare said. "All right—never mind!"

The doctor entered the house almost immediately. May was quite herself again,

but was inclined to hold her arm with her hand. He took her into his office, looked at the arm, laughed at it, and then opened the door and called to his wife.

"I've got May Miller in here," he said. "She bumped her funny bone, and I've been having a look at it. I'll run her around home, Emma, and be right back."

Next day the Black Springs newspaper had a brief item saying that Dare Brown had been summoned in Milltown for reckless driving, and fined ten dollars. In a day or two it was generally known that he had been going the pace in Milltown for several days. It became quite a scandal.

Then Dr. Cadbury began to hear that May Miller was the girl with whom Dare had been going the pace on his trips to Milltown. One thing followed another. Joe Hendricks, the bank's cashier, told the doctor he had had to let May go—the bank's customers demanded it.

"Nothing in that story," the doctor said. "I know about it. Deny it, Joe!"

"Well, I don't know, doc," Joe said doubtfully. "Seems to be pretty straight. Comes from a reliable source, I may say. Matter of fact, doc, they seem to have got it from your wife."

"Huh! That so?" the doctor asked. "Well—all right!"

He was not angry. At no point of the affair was the doctor angry. He was hurt and ashamed and worried, but not angry. With a word here and a word there he tried to correct the story about May Miller. He told the whole thing as it had happened—as May had told him it had happened; but what chance was there of correcting what every one believed to be true?

When the news reached George Miller, humming away at his low chanting, he stopped chanting. He had a session with May, and it was not in a low chanting voice that he told her that she had disgraced him and all the Low Chanters.

The next day May was gone. It came to be known, weeks later, that she had gone to an aunt in Dubuque; but no one knew that then. It was supposed she had gone to Chicago, where most of the disappearing girls went, and the worst was thought of it.

Dr. Cadbury went to George Miller and asked the Chanter what he knew. All that the doctor got was—

"Hum de dum, dum de day—don't know—dum de day, hum de dum—don't care—dum de dum, de dum de day."

The doctor felt responsible, since it had been his wife who had said the words that seemed to have ruined May's life. He said he guessed he would run over to Chicago and brush up a little on his appendicitis methods. New ideas never hurt one. He wasn't quite satisfied with the way the operation on Mrs. Garzey had turned out, and there might be something new.

He gave Dare Brown the third degree, and was satisfied that the young man had no idea where May was. He spent a week looking for May in the city in which she was not, and then came home, tired and worried. Hank was at the station to meet him; Emma had sent the car.

As the doctor got off the train, Will Garzey, standing on the platform, hailed him genially.

"Back home, hey, doc? Learn a lot more? But I guess you always do. Not that you don't need it," Garzey laughed. "Understand your good wife says you weren't quite satisfied with that operation on my wife; but you're the only one that ain't. She's fine as a fiddle!"

"That's good, Will," the doctor said. "I never worried about your wife. I just thought maybe those swell surgeons over there had figured out some new fancy trimmings. Operation was all right enough."

"Suited the old lady and me, anyway," Garzey agreed.

Dr. Cadbury frowned as he got into the car.

"Hank," he asked, "how is Emma?"

"Oh, fine! Fine and dandy!" Hank said.

"Yes," the doctor said. "All right—we'll go home."

It was just after they turned away from the station that the doctor saw the bull whip lying in the street.

"Wait! Stop, Hank!" he said, and got out of the car and picked up the whip.

"Some whip!" Hank observed.

It was some whip. It was two yards long and a good inch and a half wide at the butt, made of stout cowhide, tapering to a cruel lash at the end. It was as flexible as a snake, black—the whips used to be called "black snakes"—and the butt was loaded with a slug of iron or lead. A man's cranium could be cracked by a blow from the butt of the bull whip. A bull could be knocked down with it.

The doctor held the whip in his lap and studied it and another matter as the car

went through the streets to his home. Emma came to the door to meet him, throwing her arms around him and kissing him, and he returned the greeting with no sign of declining affection. Hank carried his suit case into the hall, and went out.

"My! What is that?" Emma cried, laughing, as she saw the whip. "What a hideous thing!"

"I picked it up in the street," the doctor said.

He put the whip on the couch and began getting out of his coat. Emma helped him. She asked something about his trip, but the doctor did not answer.

"What is wrong, Ben?" she asked. "Aren't you well?"

"Yes, I'm well, Emma. I'm sick, too. Sit down—I want to talk to you."

"Ben! I've been talking? May Miller—is that it?"

"Yes, that's it, Emma," he said sadly. "I want to talk to you about that."

"But, Ben—please! Not now! Not the minute you have come back! Wait until after dinner, at least, please, Ben! I'll listen to all you have to say then. Don't spoil our first dinner after you have been away from me—please! We've got ready such a nice dinner, Annie and I—everything you like best, Ben."

As if to add to her plea, Annie came to the door just then to announce that dinner was ready. It is an indication that the doctor was not angry, but only just and sad, that he agreed to wait until after dinner. He had quite made up his mind.

As Emma went before him into the dining room, he looked at her. No blow of the whip should strike her above the waist. If she held her hands high, they would not be hurt. Her skirts would be torn, no doubt, for the whip would cut like a knife. Perhaps they would be torn quite from her. Luckily, Emma was not a feeble woman; she could stand punishment.

V

THE dinner was not gay.

"Now, Ben," Emma said, when they had finished, and she led the way into the living room.

"Emma," the doctor said, "I am not angry. I am not even cross. See, my hand does not tremble. I could go into an operating room and perform an operation at this very minute. And you know I love you."

"Oh, yes, Ben—yes!"

"I never loved you more than now," he said. "You know that, too?"

"Yes, yes—I'm sure of that!"

"But this business of telling a doctor's secrets must stop," the doctor said. "It must be cured. Emma, I cannot let it go on until I lose faith in you, wish you were not my wife, despise you and hate you. I must cure you. You have tried—"

"Oh, I do try!" she moaned.

"I know—I know just how it is. It is something you can't help. It is something that has not been broken out of you—something like a bad fault in a colt, Emma. Love hasn't been able to break it out of you, and sense hasn't been able to break it out of you. I am going to whip it out of you."

Emma turned deathly white.

"Not with—that!" she gasped.

"Yes—I brought it for that."

She opened and closed her hands, and looked toward the door. Then she put her hands on her bosom and bent her head.

"Yes!" she whispered. "I must be cured, Ben—yes!"

She covered her face and came to the center of the room. The doctor picked up the whip and drew the right sleeve of his coat a little higher on his wrist.

"Hold your elbows higher," he said.

He swung the whip and brought it against her just below the waist, where the long stays protected her. The bull whip curled around her waist, and the lash caught on some button or bit of trimming and clung there.

From the dining room, just across the hall, there came a roar like the roar of a wild beast. A hand clutched the doctor's arm and swung him around, staggering him. Emma screamed, and leaped to grasp the whip, but Annie, the maid, had wrenched it from the doctor's hand.

"You hit my lady?" she shouted, her eyes tiger wild, and she raised the whip and brought the lash singing and stinging against the doctor's cheek. "You take whip to my lady?" she cried, cutting him across the legs.

She was strong; she was a powerful woman. When the doctor, trying to hide his head between his shoulders like a turtle, tried to close in to wrench the whip from her, she sent him staggering backward with a push of her big hand and brought the mighty whip down on his back. She waled

his legs and larruped his arms. The three of them, at times, were locked together, but Annie pushed them away and swung the whip again and again.

"Annie, stop!" Emma cried again and again, but Annie would not stop.

The whip hissed and sang through the air and lashed the doctor's legs. Big welts began to stand out on his hands and face. He was being unmercifully beaten. Emma wept and pleaded, and the doctor struggled and swore, but big Annie was crazed with anger and would not stop.

"Run! Run, Ben! She'll kill you!" Emma screamed.

The doctor did not run, but put down his head and charged at Annie. Very deftly she shifted her grasp on the whip with a quick turn of her wrist, and met his charge with the loaded butt. It caught him on the side of the head, gently enough and with a soft, sodden sound. The doctor drooped down and lay on the floor. He was out.

"Huh!" Annie said, breathing hard. "Whips! I drive ox in old country!"

Then the unconventionality of her action seemed to strike her, for she added, with dignity: "I guess that be 'bout all. If you please, missis, I like to give notice I quit when comes two weeks. Maybe him don't like me much no more!"

Emma was kneeling by the doctor. She saw him open his eyes and look around dazedly.

"Oh, sweetheart! Dearest!" she cried, and kissed him again and again.

He took her hand.

"Emma, dear!" he said.

Then Mrs. Cadbury, gently stroking the doctor's bruised face, looked up at Annie.

"No, Annie," she said, "you shall not go. The doctor will bear no ill will; neither of us will. You must stay. But, Annie, remember this—not a word of this to anybody! Nothing that happens in a doctor's house, nothing that is seen or heard in a doctor's house, must ever be breathed outside the doctor's house—never! Never! Never!"

Annie shrugged her shoulders scornfully.

"Huh!" she said. "I should talk!"

BONES OF BOCCACCIO

[It was recently reported from Florence that the bones of Boccaccio had been discovered in a suburban villa]

BONES of Boccaccio! *Corpo di Bacco!*

Sounds like an oath—what a strange piece of news!
Found by some workmen, delvers in Florence—

Gently, oh, delvers! Dear son of the Muse!
Yorick! Poor *Yorick*—his skull, the mad fellow!
So here those old merry tales once had their home!
Who knows one is left in some corner or cranny,
Some laughter still lurking inside that old dome?

Petrarch's own brother, scholar and poet,
Here housed the learning that once like a star
Lighted Dan Chaucer in far-away England;
Spoils for the sexton, poor skulls that ye are!
Fair *Fiammetta's* delicate ashes,
Did they not stir at the news that we bring?
Blown dust thy hair is, and blown dust thine eyelids;
Blown dust the bosom this dust once did sing.

Skull of Boccaccio! Bones of the master!
Gather them softly and find them a place
Where cypresses wave in his Florentine garden;
Leave them to dream of her perilous face.
And I in the lamplight take down the old volume,
The merry old tales of the "Master Bocace";
And I think of those workmen yonder in Florence,
A skull on their shovels, and whisper "Alas!"

Nicholas Breton

The River's Daughter

HOW THE SWEET SINGER OF THE BARGE MISSED THE CAREER
THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN HERS

By Marian Graham

WHEN Stephen Wentworth's wife left him, leaving also a rather hysterical note pinned to his collar box, and ran away with Benny Freeman, she broke her husband's heart. It is a strange and sentimental thing to say of a man like Wentworth, who was generally assumed to be heartless, but it is nevertheless the truth. He fled New York immediately, and buried himself, for five years, in some forlorn and unknown outpost. Five years, and a rather unusual incident, effected a complete cure, although they added something of cynicism to the forthright character of the man.

The incident occurred in a small city, somewhere in the region of Wentworth's burial place. He had gone there to transact a little necessary business, to buy supplies, and to hear some good music. Then he firmly intended to return to his refuge.

It was with a sensitive shiver that he allowed the local lawyer, a round, cheerful fellow, to take him to a cheap vaudeville show. Wentworth had heard the concert violinist, and was in a hurry to get away; but only outright discourtesy, of which he could never be guilty, would allow him to decline the lawyer's invitation.

The lawyer, in his way, was a bit of a rounder. He liked the thrill of meeting the feminine performers after the show. It was easy to do so, for the house manager at the theater was his friend. He wanted to show Wentworth a good time. Instead, he showed him something quite different.

Before recording that incident we should say a word about Benny Freeman. Benny had met Alicia Wentworth at a rather bohemian studio party she had attended in Stephen's absence from the city. Skilled in nothing else, Benny was at least an adroit flatterer; and Alicia was an ideal subject

for that sort of hypnosis. She had long been convinced that as a modern woman she should have a career. Because she was rather vain of her slender little body, she elected dancing as her medium of self-expression.

Stephen did not oppose her in any way, but he did insist, knowing something about it, that she must study and work and practice hours and hours before thinking of making her debut. If you had known Alicia, you would know that the thought of work was enough to give her a headache. She liked to call herself "brilliant." She had the notion that something she possessed—variously labeled "personality," "soul," and "temperament"—was enough to make her greater than Pavlowa or Duncan. All she needed was inspiration and a chance. Stephen supplied neither, and so she began to say that he did not understand her.

"Ah, but I love you!" he would reply, laughing, in order to stem one of her outbursts, which were becoming more and more frequent.

Benny Freeman was like Alicia in that he also thought he was "brilliant." He sedulously noted down the smart epigrams in books, plays, and magazines, and appropriated them as his own. In a vague way he was supposed to be a "theatrical man." No one knew him to do anything more theatrical than to use free tickets on first nights; but he called all the celebrities by their first names, except when he met them, and was an encyclopedia of the stage.

He was just the sort of man Alicia needed to understand her. He did. He understood her so well that he got her to leave Stephen, secure an unopposed divorce, and accept the ten thousand dollars that Stephen insisted upon giving her. Then he promptly spent eight of the ten thousand,