

>> From the Life <<

By IBBY HALL

>> Blackmail

SHE had come running in from the warm gay street to her clean and empty little flat (where, no matter how industrious she was, something always watched her coldly); and had soberly started his dinner. Glancing over her shoulder, occasionally; listening, once in awhile. When she heard the knock.

It was a sharp knock, but confidential, and sounded only twice. But she was struck so still and looked around her with such terror at the small shadowed rooms that she seemed to be imploring—God, perhaps, or the something that always watched—for escape. For a long time, one minute, two, she did not move, then she turned her head stealthily to see, from where she stood in the doorway between kitchen and sitting room, the kitchen clock. In half an hour, in fifteen minutes maybe, he would be home. There was no time, she thought, feeling suddenly sick, and she ran into the kitchen quickly, snatched her pocketbook from the table and hurrying to the door of the flat flung it open.

A man with a fat face and small eyes close together looked her up and down—silently. Seeing the pocketbook held tightly against the crook of her bare arm, he began to smile, and stepping inside the doorway closed the door.

"Lookit here," he said in a thin, hard voice, "I ain't got no time for foolin', an' you ain't neither." He glanced behind him at the door. "Gimme what you got your hands on an' I'll be gettin' out. An' keepin' quiet," he ended.

She moved around behind a chair and looked at him. "You said last time you wouldn't—wouldn't—"

"Yeah?"

"Wouldn't come around again."

The fat man leaned towards her across the chair. "Well, this ain't last time, see?" he said impatiently. Then recollecting himself, "Or do I set an' wait for the old man?"

She opened her pocketbook at that and fumbled for the money. "Here," she said, her face white.

The fat man counted it and stared. "Say," he said with sudden anger, "you got more 'n this. You think I c'n wait all day? Why, you—your old man makes this much heelin' shoes a day!"

"No," she said trembling, and the blood rushed to her head. If she didn't feel so sick, if just to remember it—and see her husband coming home. "No,"

she said desperately, and knew that she would do it.

But the fat man miscalculated. She needed further frightening, did she? And at the moment of her refusal he drew back his pudgy hand and met her answer with a blow across the face.

As she felt the sudden lash and smart of that blow she stared and screamed. And as she screamed a strange and terrifying change came over her.

"Hold your noise," snarled the fat man, starting towards her as she backed in the direction of the door. But still she screamed in amazement, in triumph. For with the sound of her own screaming she was no longer sick, she was not frightened any more. She was feeling taller—braver—louder. And she opened the door and plunged into the hallway crying "Help! Police!" and screaming.

When she could be quiet again the door was closed, the charges had been made, the fat man had been taken off.

"Well, that is over," said her husband, staring at her.

She thought: she had been living with him nine years, and now she would find out what he was like. Was he going to kill her now? And so they stood looking at each other, two strangers each waiting for the other one to speak.

"You had a baby?" said her husband at last. He was a big man, dark and quiet, who mended shoes for a living.

She nodded, afraid of nothing any more; answering this stranger.

"You never had my baby," said her husband gently, and she shook her head. "My fault, maybe," he said out loud to himself.

Still they went on looking at each other.

"She's ten years old," said his wife with difficulty, as though he had asked her. "I never saw *him*. Only that once. This fellow here—he got the story from them that take care of her."

They watched each other doubtfully, incredulously. They looked around them at the flat where those two people, themselves, had lived for nine years.

"Well, that's over," repeated her husband, thinking it out. "And that's maybe what's been in your mind, always wanting that baby."

She nodded, something choking her; something burning behind her eyes.

"Well, now we'll get it," he said quietly. "We'll go to law and get it."

So they sat and looked queerly at each other for awhile. This was her husband This was his wife.

Wet Strategy at the Polls

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wet movement is the incidental education in practical politics which it is affording our best people. Nowhere is this more strikingly illustrated than in Massachusetts. Boston folk have been spellbound at the picture of Mrs. W. Lothrop Ames, head of the Massachusetts Women's Organization for Temperance Reform, lined up with Mayor James M. Curley and that Back Bay bug-bear, "Honey Fitz."

While the most significant wet contests are those in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Massachusetts, there is hardly a state this year in which prohibition is not an issue. Major Curran predicts that the wets will gain more than forty Congressmen, giving them approximately one-third of the House of Representatives. They will pick up four or five Senators. But if they are to win quickly, the wets must have the Administration. This is a skirmish. The battle comes in 1932.

Football's Cult of Melancholy

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who happen to be enrolled under the rival coach's banner. Even when such talented players as Kaw, Pfann and Hansen led Cornell to an unbeaten season in 1923, Dobie refused to smile.

Of late years the dour, thin-lipped apostle of gloom has had good cause to cry. Material at Cornell has been subnormal, yet Dobie drilled it smartly. After one Pennsylvania defeat, Pop Warner button-holed his contemporary in the dressing room. "Sorry you lost Gil," said Pop, "but it was a technical treat to see your backs get off their marks—I never saw quicker starters."

Dobie wasn't to be consoled. "That's just the trouble," he replied, "they got to the tacklers too soon."

Perhaps the most amusing of the "Doleful Dobie" yarns concerns the red-feathered Cornell graduate who burst into Franklin Field House just after seeing his Alma Mater humbled 49 to 0. "Wasn't that sad, Mr. Dobie?" he muttered for something to say.

"Sad," echoed Dobie, his lean, ascetic face worthy of a Gustave Doré etching, "Young man, you don't know what sorrow is—wait till next year!"

Yes Dobie is the man to preside at meetings of the Melancholy Cult, with Alonzo Stagg at the Gloom Sachem's side. Like the shepherd boy who shouted "wolf!" Alonzo lived to see the day when the catch phrase "Stagg fears Purdue" no longer has an ironic implication.

>> José Iturbi <<

By PITTS SANBORN

LITTLE giants of the piano—giants in their art and sometimes in their tone—are no rarity. One thinks immediately of Josef Hofmann, Rafael Joseffy, Moriz Rosenthal, Eugen d'Albert, Vladimir de Pachmann, small men all and great pianists. Now we have a much younger man in our midst who qualifies for the category. He is José Iturbi, a Spaniard. Iturbi is short, his muscles are of steel, and he has been hailed as a master-pianist in Europe and the two Americas.

With respect to the arts, outlanders look upon Spain as the country of a great literature, a great line of painters, and a native school—or, rather, several native schools—of the dance. When Spanish music is mentioned we are apt to recall a rhythm and a cadence and to let our speculation stop there. As Cecil Gray, the English critic, has observed, Spanish music is always pleasant to listen to, but reveals no distinctive personality. "Spanish national music," Gray continues, "has so far produced no Borodin or Moussorgsky, but only three Rimsky-Korsakovs—which is three too many. To English ears, their work all sounds like endless variations on one Spanish folk-song, provided with an elaborate accompaniment of castanets and similar exotic percussion instruments."

It isn't necessary to agree with the critical swashbuckler in annihilating Rimsky-Korsakov in order to appreciate his meaning. And one remembers that, after all, the music which spells Spain for most of us is the work of certain Frenchmen—Bizet (*Carmen*), Chabrier (*España*), Lalo (*Symphonie Espagnole*), Debussy (*La Soirée dans Grenade; Ibéria*), Laparra (*La Habañera, La Jota*, songs, instrumental pieces), Ravel (*Rhapsodie Espagnole; L'Heure Espagnole*). Only then do the names of certain Spaniards occur to us, especially Isaac Albeniz.

Nevertheless, Spain has given the world a number of distinguished interpretative musicians. Sarasate, one of the greatest of violinists, stands out as historic. There is the conductor Enrique Fernandez Arbos, who, by the way, began his career as a violinist and was once concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. There is that surpassing cellist, Pablo Casals, who likewise wields the baton. The vocalists have been many—one of them, Lucrezia Bori (adapted from Lucrecia Borja), is a of our own Metroolitan. And there

have been eminent pianists before Iturbi—Albeniz himself and the ill-fated Granados among them. The mighty Teresa Carreño, "Valkyr of the piano," was also of Spanish blood, though by birth a Venezuelan. Thus the



Wide World

JOSÉ ITURBI

artistic lineage of José Iturbi is impressive.

Iturbi was born some thirty-five years ago at Valencia, which was likewise the birthplace of Mme. Bori. His talent was discovered early and the municipality of Valencia recognized its extraordinary nature by sending him to the local conservatory. Among mature artists who took an interest in the child prodigy and exerted a helpful influence on his career were Emil Sauer, the famous German pianist, and a young Polish woman who happened to be none other than Wanda Landowska, the authority on eighteenth century music and reviver of the harp-

sichord. After Valencia Iturbi continued his studies at Barcelona, the most musical of Spanish cities, and at the Paris Conservatory, whence he was graduated with highest honors at the age of seventeen.

All was not smooth sailing for the young Spaniard, however. Before his tours had won him favor in the concert halls of Europe and South America, he was obliged for a while to play in cafés in Paris and Zurich. In due course he was relieved of any necessity of that sort by the appointment as head of the piano faculty of the Geneva Conservatory, a post once held by Liszt. At the end of four years his concert work had grown so that he had no further time for teaching. It was not till late last year, however, that he visited North America, making his first appearance as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Philadelphia, playing Beethoven's G major concerto, and following that up with a New York début as soloist of the Philharmonic-Symphony in the D minor concerto of Mozart and Liszt's *Hungarian Fantasy*.

Short, dark, and of an engaging childlike vivacity, Iturbi in public is one of the best-groomed of musicians, and he keeps himself in physical trim with gymnastics and boxing. The big money that he makes he spends with relish, buying motor cars and Havana cigars, lavishing five-dollar bills on beggars. His laugh is a gurgle of irresistible gayety. But in an instant his snapping eyes go grave and his features are all serious concentration. Asked which composers he puts before the rest, he answers: "Bach, Beethoven, Wagner; Wagner, Beethoven, Bach. They stand with Dante, Michelangelo, Spinoza, Shakespeare. Schumann may sometimes speak to my emotions as nobody else does. But those three are the giants."

"I admire enormously what our modern composers can do. Take Hindemith. I bow before the colossal musician just as I marvel at certain of your skyscrapers. But the modern composer, for all his prowess, somehow fails to reach my heart. His knowledge is enormous. He is like a walking library. But there is something that I miss and crave. So I return to my giants—mine, even though Wagner composed so little for the piano."

Iturbi has a twelve-year-old daughter in Paris, where he makes his home. Her ambition is to be a pianist, too, but her father says he really doesn't care whether she becomes one or not. It's too uncertain a life for him to egg her on in her ambition. Meanwhile, his own career being irrevocably chosen, he pursues it earnestly and joyously.