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E. J. WRIGHT
JEWELER & OPTICIAN
Denton, Md.

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POP

Search For a Dead Son Reveals a Living One.

By REINETTE LOVEWELL
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Edith Arnold, walking around by the water on her way to work, saw a forlorn figure on a bench by the sea.

The gulf of Mexico sends into the harbor of Havana many a strange piece of driftwood, but this white haired old man, so obviously from a northern land, seemed startlingly incongruous there in the Cuban city.

"I can't understand how he got here or why he sits there," she said to one of the men in the office. "He looks for all the world as if he had just got off a cracker barrel in a grocery store up home."

She hung up her hat and sat down to her typewriter.

"I've seen him there day after day on the same bench, looking out to the water," she added.

She started in on a long invoice, but all down the pages between the amounts for materials and labor she kept seeing that old man down by the busy little harbor, where, in the midst of all the craft of commerce and mighty men-o'-war at anchor, the dark hulk of the sunken battleship was pulled up to the searching sunlight.

"YOU'RE AN AMERICAN GIRL, AIN'T YOU?"

He was still on her mind as she sorted out the carbons mechanically just before she went out for 11 o'clock breakfast.

In the Cafe Europa she sat and adulterated her coffee with hot milk half heartedly, when she noticed the same old man at one of the funny little marble topped tables.

An English speaking waiter went to him.

"What you want today, sir?" he asked.

The old man looked and spoke loudly. "I want coffee," he said, "and some pertaters, real pertaters, fried."

The waiter understood, put down a big glass of water and went away.

As the old man lifted it to his mouth Miss Arnold noticed that his hand shook violently. As she watched he looked up and saw her for the first time.

"For the Lord's sake!" he exclaimed. "You're an American girl, now, ain't you?"

The incredulous joy expressed went straight to the girl's heart.

"I am," she said, "the real thing, and I know you are an American too."

"There's something about you that sets me in mind of Silas Joslin's girl," he went on with the air of pleasant discovery, "and I dunno when anything ever took me back more than to see you a-setting in this place."

He moved his thin hand with a gesture of great disdain.

"How comes it that you are here, child?" he asked.

"I'm down here to do shorthand," she said simply. "But I'm going home pretty soon. It's too hot for me."

"What's your name?" he asked after a little.

"Edith Arnold," she answered him, looking over at the clock to see that forty minutes of the breakfast hour still remained.

"I'm Hiram S. Perkins," he returned, "and I live in Vermont."

"Have you been in Havana long?" the girl questioned.

"About three weeks," he replied.

"Then it was cold before you came down?" the girl broke in eagerly.

"We only had one or two cold snaps. The ground was froze hard when I come away, and the roads were terrible rough," he said reminiscently.

"I love the cold," she said wistfully. "The heat is certainly awful here."

"I read in the papers from home that they'd had snow," he went on.

"Do you have pines where you live?" the girl asked eagerly. "Pines and spruces? The snow looks so pretty piled up on them!"

"There's two spruce trees in my front yard at home," he told her. "But the snow allus blows clean out from under them and drifts out toward the barn."

He paused and sipped his coffee.

"I don't suppose there's any path shoveled out," he went on. "I took the cow and the calf to the neighbor's, and everything's locked up."

A pleasant memory came to his weak blue eys.

"That was the smartest little calf ever you see," he added.

The constant chatter and gesticulating of argumentative Cubans lunching and drinking seemed a faraway thing to them both.

"You've been here three weeks?" Miss Arnold asked again.

"Seems like three year," he said. "I can't talk, and I can't eat, and I can't sleep, and it's so awful hot," he complained.

Miss Arnold was hot, too, and she felt an impulse to stroke the tired old white head.

"What did you come to Havana for?" Miss Arnold broke out bluntly.

He answered slowly.

"I had a boy on the Maine when she went down," he said, "and there's been so much in the papers lately—about—about finding"—

He stopped, and the girl spoke quickly.

"I know," she said very softly.

"And last summer his mother died and left me alone and there didn't seem to be much to keep me at home, and I thought I'd like to be—near."

The girl did not reply, but she put one hand upon the wrinkled old one that lay beside her on the marble top of the table and stroked the ridges of veins.

"There ain't nothing I can do, or hear though."

"Didn't you have any others?" Miss Arnold asked.

"The other one ran away, too," he answered her. "We never got no trace of him. He never sent no word."

Miss Arnold rose reluctantly.

"I've got to go," she said. "but I want to see you again. Where are you staying?"

"I put up with a feller I met on the boat coming down," he answered. "He's got his family down here, and they rent me a room, but most of the time I set down at the end of that park place. I can see the harbor from there, and it's cooler."

"I'd like to come down and sit with you for awhile after I get through work," she said. "Wait for me tonight, will you?"

Miss Arnold returned to the office of Bedell & Bottomly, contractors, where for five months she had toiled away in the heat of Havana.

She had made very few acquaintances on the island.

Over at the American boarding house where she lived she knew better than any of the rest a man named Evans.

He was a big, good looking soldier of fortune, who spoke Spanish like a native and knew the customs of the country as if he had always lived there.

His face bore marks which give evidence of years misspent. But the eyes were level and blue, bluer, perhaps, because the skin was as brown as that of a white man can become.

He had told her one night in a way he had not told any woman before of his wayward, wandering life—of days spent in India, in China and the Philippines—and of his closer acquaintance with the Latin countries. Mexico and South America he knew well, he had been at Panama and nearly lost his adventurous life in Porto Rico.

After she left the office that afternoon she saw Evans leaning in the open doorway of a barber's shop.

As she walked up the ridiculously narrow sidewalk of O'Reilly street he sauntered up behind her and fell in step.

"How's the girl?" he said. "Got most money enough to retire and go home?"

She turned and looked up at him with troubled eyes.

His linen suit was white and his canvas shoes as immaculate as if there were no dirty streets in Havana.

"I believe you said last time you didn't want to see me any more," he went on, "but I know you didn't mean it. I'd been around before, only business kept me busy."

"I can't understand what you do," she said. "You don't seem to have any special line."

The big brown man with the blue eyes laughed.

"No, dear, I don't," he said lightly. "I only do dishonest things. They pay better."

She recalled hearing of a gambling game he had promoted and of his escape from arrest, and a burst of disapproval sprang from her lips, bringing with the words threatening tears that were hot and hard to control.

"So you don't want to be a missionary lady; you don't want to save a lost soul. You're just down here to get poor old Cuba's collateral and go home with it and forget the land and all the folks frying up down here."

The look in his eyes was not as careless as his words.

The tears went back where tears go when they are unshed, and silently they walked up through the park, westward, until the sea wall was reached.

Behind them rose the earth defenses, and across the water the softening afternoon light fell on Morro and Cabanas.

"You're such a little country kid," he said. "Someway you just got hold of me. You don't belong with this bunch. I wish you'd go home."

"I shall in another month or so," the girl declared with conviction.

"There's quite a lot of boats in the harbor," he went on. "I was out to the wreck again yesterday. Look at that gray warship over there. It's a Chinese outfit, and see, over behind—that's the Saratoga. I might go north on her."

"Really!" the girl exclaimed in a surprised tone. "Didn't you say you hadn't been in the United States in eighteen years?"

"I haven't," he said slowly, "but I've begun to wonder if I could shake all this, wipe my whole slate clean and start over again up there. I thought I'd ask you. Do you think I could prove I'm white?"

The girl did not reply, but her eyes, reflecting the water, were very bright.

"I've got a little bunch of money," he went on, "and I thought I'd go home and see the old folks—if they are there—and see if I could get a fresh start."

Impulsively the girl caught his hand and squeezed the strong, brown fingers, but Evans did not return the pressure.

"And maybe," he went on slowly, "I might get to where I could meet your boat when it gets in to New York and then"—

He leaned down and looked straight into her bright eyes—"I'd say—and do—what I can't now."

A childlike joy rose within the girl. At last she said:

"I'm so-o glad!"

Evans folded his arms across his breast and stood looking far away at the sails on the sea and the pink painted sky.

"You don't realize what you've given back to me," he said, with his mouth in a grim line. "You can't."

Miss Arnold looked up shyly at the big white clad figure leaning there beside the old sea wall.

Her breath came a little more quickly, and paradise itself was reflected for her in the sunset flushed sky and sea.

A great boat appeared for out on the water.

They watched it for a time in silence, and as its approach became certain they walked to meet it, following closely the surf splashed barricade.

At the Malecon they paused, and Miss Arnold's eyes fell upon the forlorn figure she had seen so often before sitting alone and gazing out at sea.

She remembered, with a start, the conversation of the noon hour.

The far end of the promenade was almost deserted.

"Oh, I forgot all about him!" the girl exclaimed, with quick remorse.

She hurried toward the bowed shoulders of the old man who sat there.

"Hello, Mr. Perkins!" she said cheerily.

The gray head turned quickly toward her at the words with pleased recognition.

"I thought you warn't a-coming," he said.

"I met a friend," she said in apology, "and it made me late. But I'm so awfully glad you haven't gone."

Evans stood a little distance away with his level eyes fixed on the rugged old Yankee face.

The girl sat close beside the old man, smiling.

"One of my boys was allus possessed to catch snakes," he went on. "'Twarn't the one out there," he said, moving his head toward the black, derrick hung mass in the harbor, "but the other one. He'd have the greatest lot of little green snakes in his pocket ever you see, and one time I remember he had his ma jes' about crazy."

"What did he do?" the girl asked.

"He up and emptied out the best sugar bowl and put a lot of them in it that he wanted to keep," he went on reminiscently, "and ma had company come unexpected for supper one night. 'Twas the minister and his wife, and she set out the sugar bowl and says, 'Have some sugar in your tea, Mr. Peasley?' 'If you please,' says he, real polite. And ma takes off the cover, and up comes them pesky little snakes."

"POP!" HE SAID ACROSS TWENTY YEARS OF SILENCE.

The big man in white came nearer.

Old Mr. Perkins, raising his head, regarded the stranger inquiringly.

Then the gaze of the dim blue eyes fixed itself steadily upon the brown face and did not for a moment waver.

The younger man took a step forward, paused and spoke:

"Pop!" he said, across twenty years of silence.

The tall, gaunt figure on the green iron bench stood erect.

The wind from the harbor blew long locks of his white hair about his bare head, and his old knees trembled as he stretched forward his hands.

"Jimmie!" he answered.

Literary and Musical Pillage.

Bernard Shaw's defense of literary "pillage" was anticipated by his fellow countryman, Balfe, the composer of "The Bohemian Girl," who used to borrow generously from other people's scores. On one occasion, the London Express recalls, he was rehearsing a new opera at Drury Lane and the first fiddle, an Italian, was horrified to come upon page after page of familiar music. "Mr. Balfe, Mr. Balfe," he said in horror, "dat is Mozart." "And a capital man, too," was the Irishman's reply. "Get on with the rehearsal."—Indianapolis News.

A Japanese and His Wife.

A lady residing in Pasadena was recently asked by her Japanese gardener for the three days' wages due him, as he was about to leave for Japan with his wife and baby. His written explanation was: "Will you please give me, if you can, as my wife is want the wages, and buy some things you know—I do not like to say such small thing, but every woman's mind are very small. My wife is more small."—Exchange.

Success Without Bitterness.

Success in industry, in art or in love is saved from bitterness and disappointment because we regard our achievements far more symbolically than we know and rest far more than we are aware upon the backing of God.—Dr. Richard C. Cabot.

The Scrap Book

It Woke Up.

J. B. Benton, a veteran engineer and mechanician, who was associated with Thomas A. Edison a generation ago, at the time when the phonograph was just beginning to evolve as a commercial proposition, recalls, with a chuckle, the following historic incident to the memory of the "Wizard":

"TALK, BLAST YOU!"

One of the first machines that went out of the laboratory was delivered to Charley Cheever, son of a well known belting manufacturer. Charley couldn't make it work and finally sent for Edison. The inventor himself worked over the phonograph, reciting "Mary had a little lamb" into it distinctly for nearly an hour without audible result. At last he lost patience and slammed the thing down with a jolt, exclaiming: "Talk, blast you! Why in blazes don't you talk?"

Then suddenly the phonograph broke its long silence and squeaked out:

"Blast you! Why in blazes don't you talk?"

Plays.

Alas, how soon the hours are over
Counted us out to play the lover!
And how much narrower is the stage
Allotted us to play the sage!

But when we play the fool how wide
The theater expands! Beside,
How long the audience sits before us!
How many prompters! What a chorus!
—Walter Savage Landor.

Paid Before He Dined.

"When I lived in my young days in the Latin quarter," said Robert Henri, the painter, of New York, "I had some friends from Philadelphia who used to frequent a tiny restaurant off the Boul' Mich'. The rule at this restaurant was pay before you eat.

"The only dish served there was a thin but very palatable broth, price 2 sous.

"Well, a young Philadelphian took offense one day at the suspicion and even ignominy implied in the pay before you eat rule, and he resolved to break it. Accordingly when the waiter placed his great, deep bowl of soup before him he fell to forthwith.

"PAY BEFORE YOU EAT."

"'Pay before you eat!' cried the waiter.

"'Not I!' the Philadelphian retorted, taking a firm grip on his bowl with both hands.

"But a snake-like something flashed before him, and—presto!—his bowl was empty, and the triumphant waiter stood flourishing a vast syringe.

"'Pay before you eat, monsieur.'

"'Oh, very well,' grumbled the Philadelphian, and he laid his 2 sous on the table reluctantly, and the waiter squirted his soup back from the syringe into his bowl again."

Found a Better Place.

Mark Twain said: "Once when I was going out to visit some friends I told George, my negro servant, to lock the house and put the key under a certain stone near the steps. He agreed to do so. It was late at night when I returned. I went to the stone under which the key was supposed to have been hidden. It was gone. I hunted around for about fifteen minutes, but still no key. Finally I went to George's house—he roomed outside—and rapped vigorously upon the door. A black head, which I had no difficulty in recognizing as George's, popped out of an upstairs window.

"'Where did you put that key, you black rascal?' I roared.

"'Oh, massa,' answered George, 'I found a better place for it!'"

No Arks Needed.

Up in a certain part of the Puget sound country the average rainfall in a year is 142 inches. It rains almost all the time. A missionary came among the Indians in that section and began preaching to them. He held the interest of the inhabitants until one day when he preached to them about the flood. He told them it rained forty days and forty nights and that the world was engulfed, describing the adventures of Noah and the Ark.

He was much distressed when his congregation rose and left the place while he was yet telling about the flood.

"What's the matter?" he asked one of them. "Why did they all go out before I had finished my sermon?"

"Huh!" said the Indian. "No believe! Rain here 100 days and 100 nights and no flood yet!"—Saturday Evening Post.

A Sad State.

"No, I am not altogether happy, now that I am rich."

"Why not?"

"Being rich, of course, I can not go into the kitchen as I once did. Yet servants are still careless."

"Well?"

"So I spend many sleepless nights worrying about the drip pan under the refrigerator."—Louisville Courier-Journal.