

There was nothing especially romantic to contemplate about Claude Melnotte Dabbe, village grocer, unless it were the first two-thirds of his name. When his dotting parents prefixed the cognomen of Bulwer Lytton's hero the drama, "The Lady of Lyons," to his family name, it may have been an augury or at least an influence; for C. M. Dabbs, while sticking to the hard facts of life and wringing success from his career as a tradesman, nevertheless had romantic yearnings-desire to see existence through "the mists of

true to the extent that C. M. partici-pated in a romance in real life that had chivalry, adventure, mystery, beauing and delightful people and experifying proportions as anyone could wish. Right in a little town in Pennsylvania, the local butter and egg man became the chief actor in a drama of life in which his humdrum affairs were tinged by that aura of enchantment existing early, with mutiny in her heart. in "perfumed light stealing through the mists of alabaster lamps."

educated in New Jersey and lives at had time to study it. Rockwood, New Hope, in Bucks county, Pennsylvania. She has written several moving pictures for the big producers. theaters, moving pictures or other

THE STORY

CHAPTER I .- With a stranger, whom he introduces as his nephew, Ned Carter, Claude Melnotte Dabbs returns from New York to his general grocery at Peace Valley, Pa. To "Aunt Lyddy," his housekeeper, he explains that Carter is a chance acquaintance, veteran of the World war, whom he had met and taken a liking to.

CHAPTER II.—Carter tells Aunt Lyddy he has broken with his family and his sweetheart because of his resentment of their ultra pacific tendncies. With Dabbs Ned visits Clover Hollow, abiding place of a "collection of good-natured cranks," according to the grocer. They almost run over a og belonging to a girl whom Carter grocery order, and in his absence the girl, Dorothy Selden, reveals that she knows him to be Ned Carter Rangeley, son of Loren Rangeley, New York

CHAPTER III.-Next day Ned commences work as a "grocer's boy." At a residence, the "White House," he delivers an order marked "Johnston." There he meets a girl who tells him she and her mother are alone in the louse, the servants having left them ecause of the "loneliness." He promises to try to procure household help. Meeting Dorothy Selden, his erstwhile sweetheart, he baffles her attempts to discover the reason for his presence n Peace Valley. Arrangement is made for a cook to go to the Johnstons

CHAPTER IV .- The cook being un able to begin work at once, Ned visits the White House to inform Miss Johnston of the fact. Explaining the situation to her mother, the girl, "Mary," is astonished by that lady's emotion at the mention of Dabbs' name. The cook arrives, and Mary, with Ned, goes to the village for groceries. They are seen by Dorothy Selden. Mrs. Johnston, worried over financial troubles is bothered by Dorothy, who warns her there is something suspicious about

CHAPTER V.—There is something about Mary vaguely familiar to Dabbs, and he is highly interested in village gossip concerning the mother and daughter. Mrs. Johnston accompanies sees Mrs. Johnston and is obviously perturbed. He informs Ned he has something on his mind that he would like to tell him.

CHAPTER VI.—Claude reveals to Ned a romance of his early life. He had married, while at college, and under peculiar circumstances, and his wife left him the day after the ceremony. He is convinced "Mrs. Johnston" is his wife, "Polly," and naturally wants to know, Who is Mary?

CHAPTER VIL-Mrs. Johnston tells Mary they are practically penniless, through a trustee's defalcation. She plans an appeal to Loren Rangeley, her banker, and Mary endeavers to dis-suade her. While with Ned, Mary falls into a pool Ned gets her out, unhurt, but the incident reveals to him the real CHAPTER VIIL-In an attempt to

clear up the situation. Dabbs sends Mrs. Johnston \$500, which he had from the money, satisfying Dabbs she is his wife, but, Who is Mary? Mrs. Johnston and her daughter go to New

CHAPTER IX.—Mrs. Johnston tells her daughter something of her early life and poverty, and acknowledges that Dabbs is Mary's father. The girl is pleased, declaring she likes Dabbs. CHAPTER X.—Claude, at a meeting with Mary, is overjoyed when the girl gladly acknowledges their relationship. He has for some time been convinced the girl is his daughter. She tells him she and her mother are sailing to Europe next day. Dabbs promises to meet Mary there. She tells him her mother

is in financial straits, but declines his offer of pecuniary assistance, believing him a comparatively poor man. CHAPTER XL-In Venice, Ned, after some shrewd maneuvering, meets Mary. His strenuous lovemaking some-what disconcerts the girl, and to make matters worse he steals a kiss while they are in a gondola and hidden from public view. She is of course, out-

wardly furious, but in her heart-CHAPTER XIL-Mary, unknown to her mother, takes dinner with her father and Ned. Arriving home, she tells of the dinner and of her meeting with her father in New York. Polly, who middle-aged country grocer, is for leaving Venice at once, but Mary rehas made up her mind to divorce Dabbs and marry Rangeley for his money, Mary warns her such a move will mean their separation.

CHAPTER XIII.—Next day Mary

regard to Loren Rangeley, whom Mary hurt when Ned admits his relationionaire and that Rangeley, who is coming to Venice to see him, is in a way his paid servant. Dabbs leaves the girl with Ned while he goes to see Polly.

With the pulling together process, Mary hardened her heart. If Mother all, about Ned Carter, especially as head. she had remembered thus late in the Ned joined them. Claude looked at sion?" tiful women and all sorts of interest- day Dorothy Selden's warning. Mary him critically. would like to know now just what it "Mary told me about you." was Dorothy had hinted. But Polly | Mary gasped. Father was terribl Johnston barred every avenue of ap- direct. with its typical and lovable characters, proach, and continued to keep the "If there has to be a husband bars up during luncheon. So Mary right away," Claude observed to th went to the Accademia twenty minutes | Bellini in that room, "I'd rather it

Ned stood waiting in the doorway. Margaret Turnbull, author of this en- His face was turned from her as she gaging story, was born in Scotland, alighted from her gondola, and Mary of that big, thick woman, who's been coolly, but avoiding Mary's eyes.

It was extraordinary, the effect this kiss you." successful novels. Her "Looking After man had upon her. She did not like Don't be sickening," Claude warned Sandy" is still a popular favorite. Her it. She was used to men, and to their him, as they moved away toward the play, "Classmates." was and still is a attentions. Why should this good- entrance. "Where can we three go big success. She has done a number of looking grocer's assistant stir her in to talk about our lives in general, The story, "Alabaster Lamps," was this manner? For one moment she and have a little privacy. written at Rockwood, on a hill above contemplated flight. The next moment churches, no palaces, and no picture the Delaware river, far removed from she rejected the thought as cowardly. galleries," he warned. "My feet ache accompaniments of city life; hence its Ned caught sight of her, and the look at the very thought of them, and they peaceful atmosphere and fine strain of on his face revealed to Mary the ex- are all full of gabby guides." He tent to which this young man was paused near the gondola steps, and emotions, she felt a sudden sense of

> "Anything wrong?" Ned inquired, scanning her face anxiously. "Everything! Where can we go and talk quietly until Father comes?" "We could take a gondola."

"No! We could not!" "Oh I say-" Ned began. Mary interrupted. "I simply won't Do be sensible and help me. What shall I say to Father? Mother found out last night. She was waiting for me when I came in." "I thought her far too clever to be fooled long," commented Ned.

Mary continued: "Mother sent for -er-telegraphed to Mr. Rangeley, Mr. Loren Rangeley, to join her here.' Ned's exclamation made her look up, surprised. "How can you know



Ned Stood Waiting in the Doorway.

"I-I'm not quite sure," Ned man-"It means that Mother will try to divorce my father and murry that at me?" cold-blooded fish--"

Only Ned's strong arm saved Mary to her. from stumbling, perilously near the

canal. "How can he be your father?

marry Loren Rangeley's son."

"Mary! You don't mean that." did it before you ever saw me."

"I'm going to him."

ley, which the girl knows means she the fees. Claude and Mary went up

grew nim into a little room at one side, empty of sightseers for the moment. She noticed, with extreme annoyance, that it contained two or three paintings by Bellini. She feared she would always forget their beauty and only associate them with this most troublesome day of her life. "Mother knows," she said in a low voice. "Well, that's all right," Claude an-

swered easily. "Polly must know, sooner or later. I meant, what's the trouble between you and Ned?" Mary decided that her father would be safe. "He wants me to marry

Claude looked at her. "The young devil! But I hardly blame him."

"He's Loren Rangeley's son." "He couldn't help that. Don't you like him, Mary? Ned has sudden ways, but he's a nice boy." "Father," announced Mary irrelevantly, "if you'll come behind that easel

I'll kiss you."

"Sure," said Claude. They came from behind the easel, presently. Claude studiously avoided a glance at the painting, which he love getting away from me." privately thought too ugly for words. "Don't ask me to look at any more big, fat women who wouldn't take any exercise, lost their figures, and yet would have their portraits painted," he begged Mary. "Let's find Ned." But Mary protested. "He can wait. You don't know everything yet, Father. Mother's sent for Loren Rangeley. She's going to marry him for his looked down.

"Loren's got quite a pile," Claude was going to shut her out completely, agreed calmly, "but then, there's me. she could not, of course, confide in | She'll have to get rid of me, first. Un-Mother. Ordinarily she might have less she has?" He cocked an inquir-And his dream came true. Yes, came told her mother a little, if not quite ing eye at Mary shook her "Well, have you talked me over thor-

"If you'll come behind the picture

enamored. Along with all the other considered a moment. "We can take

He was unprepared and a little startled by the mirth of his companions, but continued gravely and without waiting for an explanation, "and go to my sitting room."

He handed Mary in, and turning to Ned, surveyed him cooly. "On second thoughts, which are often best, we'll yourself, and slowly. I've something you think I'd hurt you, or let Polly to say to Mary, and," he added with down for any man?" a look that quelled Ned's tendency to | "Father, it's all perfectly horrid. rebel, "there are times when a father I'm so mixed up. I love you, and and daughter actually like to be do trust you, but Mother-well, she's alone together, though you don't seem | mother."

helped Ned to interpret these re- hadn't muddled things up. It's the marks and to withdraw with better children who suffer from mixed mograce than Mary expected.

know, unless you happen to want to." | give Mr. Rangeley, the elder, some will put his foot down. He knows and talk to your mother." Mother's money's gone. I'm only a Mary gasped. "Mother will never poor grocer's daughter."

"Pretty nearly. That's why she's said Claude, and was gone. considering Loren Rangeley." Claude considered her gravely. "Do you mind the grocery business, very

don't Only, Father, you're foolish to spend so much money traveling. When I go back we'll need to alter things a little. I can save you money by waiting behind the counter or keeping the books, until we see what I'm best fitted for. I do hope you'll let me ride around in the car with you

when you deliver orders." Claude's arm tightened about her. "You're my girl, all right," he said with husky voice. "But that isn't necessary. As a matter of fact, Loren given All Business. Write or Call or will jump at the chance of getting my daughter for his son. Ned, of course, doesn't know this," he added quickly. Office "Ned thinks he's asking you to put up with what he's got. He has some of his mother's money, and he can earn more. He quarreled with Loren, you know." "Why should Loren Rangeley 'jump'

Her father looked at her. She was "Mary, don't! Loren Rangeley's my so pretty, so lovable, and so unlike Polly, in that money meant so little

"You see, daughter, I'm 'SCOUR-EEN' the 'Dirt Destroyer'." Then, in answer to her look of amazement: we are able to fli glasses without hav "I'm Ned Carter Rangeley. I quar- "You've seen the signs, surely. ing to depend upon what the patient reled with my father. I told you all They're everywhere. It's a good ar- may say. York, on Dabbs' money. Dabbs tells
Ned he knows he is Rangeley's son,
and the two men arrange to follow the
women. "Polly" informs Loren Rangeley she and Mary are going to Europe.

See, I wanted you to love—the grocer's
ley she and Mary are going to Europe.

That is, I told
ticle, too. I invented it out of Mom's
old kitchen cleaner recipe. Then I
had an idea for a fancy tin can. It
ley she and Mary are going to Europe.

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had an idea for a fancy tin can. It
ley she and Mary are going to Europe.

Caught on It's years since I've been

JULIAN T. POWER, caught on. It's years since I've been "It would be much easier than to a poor grocer. At first I kept quiet about it-well, because of Polly. I was fool enough to fancy she'd come "I do. How could that be the rea- back, if I had money. I thought I'd son for calling yourself 'Carter'? You keep it dark and go and find her myself, and surprise her. But I never "I was tired of being just my fa- did. There was a time, when I had ther's son. I wanted Claude to like no money, when I really wanted to me for myself. Mary, you must be- find her; but after considering everything-well, I just couldn't. Remem-

"I see my father," Mary interrupted. ber, I didn't know about you." "It kept piling up." Claude con-"Not until I-Mary, marry me now, tinued. "The money, I mean. If a and then your mother won't marry my man failed, and I as agent, mind father, and Claude will have his you," and he twinkled at Mary over this time-honored joke, "loaned him "Utter and complete nonsense!" money, blamed if his business wouldn't "It isn't nonsense. You know it boom. He'd be paying it back to me isn't. Mary, look at me Is it such ut- in no time and I'd have all that spare cash on my hands. Money breeds "Father!" called Mary, moving money. I've spent all I wanted to, in in her mind pictures Dabbs as a fat, quickly forward. "Here we are." a quiet way. I lived behind the grocery mostly to keep Aunt Lyddy happy, but I've had fun building and remodeling houses to suit me. The White house you and Polly lived in was one of them. I own nearly all of Clover Hollow. But, till I met Ned here, I never really enjoyed traveling about and using money on myself. I'm

a kind of timid man about some things. With Ned, it's been grand. And you! When I knew about you, I knew what the money was for. Think of the fun I'll get out of just buying things for you! Now that Polly knows you know me, can't we go and do some shopping? I want to buy you all the things I've wanted to hang on somebody—and didn't know you were waiting for me."

"Father, we mustn't be reckless. I can't take it quite all in. How many thousand have you?" "It runs nearer to millions, Mary."

"Mercy, what will Mother say?" Claude, watching her face, saw it "What are you afraid of?" he asked

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But Mary could not, or would not, say. Her father helped her from the

When they entered the sitting room, he said: "You're not afraid of me?" Mary shook her head. "I simply love you!"

"H'm, I'm always afraid of those I

He watched her remove her hat. and then move about the room. It was lovely, she told him, to be in his rooms. Still Claude had a feeling she was not at rest.

"If it's Ned, you needn't be uneasy," he told her, cryptically. But Mary apparently did not hear. Claude went to the balcony and

"Here's Ned now. Pretty prompt, you are. I said half an hour." "It seemed half a century," Ned told him, coming straight toward Mary. oughly, and come to the right conclu-"Funny, isn't it," drawled Claude,

as he saw Mary color, "but we had other things to talk about. When Mary mentions it, we'll take up your case. The question to consider just now is, are you prepared to face your "Father! Coming here?"

Claude nodded, surveying Ned cide what we're going to do-and pull the strings." Ned, still astonished, looked at him

in silence. He wondered, confusedly, whether this could be the explanation. No Was Claude Dabbs the agent for Loren Rangeley? There was no time to follow that train of thought at present, but he would return to it. "I see. Take the wind out of Mrs. Johnston's sails, eh!" Mary rose with decision. "I'm go-

ing back to Mother. Father, you can see that I can't-" "Can't join in with a lot of men to let a woman down, you mean?"

Mary looked at him dubiously. "Iwell, something like that, only-" "Only you wouldn't have put it that way. That's called sex-antagonism, daughter. Don't you trust me any leave you to find your way there more than that? I'm a man, but do

"Sure," agreed Claude. "It would

A fatherly squeeze of Ned's arm all be quite plain and simple if Polly tives and marriages. Well, my girl, "What a comfort you are, Father." | we'll make it plain and simple again. "You don't have to marry Ned, you All I ask of you is to stay here and "Don't worry! Loren Rangeley tea, and keep him waiting while I go see you!"

"Is your mother's money all gone?" | "I think better of Polly than that,"

(Continued Next Week)

Mary patted his arm. "Of course I INDUKANCE

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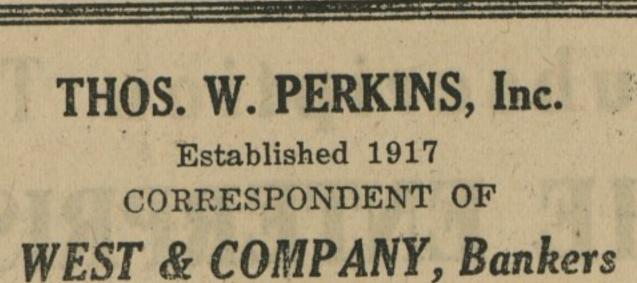
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