MADELINE'S SELFISHNESS

BY MARAVENE KENNEDY

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Her indolent grace irritated Harding. Even her serene, audacious loveliness found no favor in his eyes today. Her big, gray eyes looked out from under the sweeping lashes mockingly.

"Your silence means that I am going to be scolded shortly. Don't. I may mistake your interest and think you're in love with me. With all your wisdom and recondite philosophy you're only thirty-one, you know."

Harding reddened uncomfortably. "If you only would fall in love with me!" she wheedled. "Think how it would develop your character to put the tender emotion underfoot! And how instructive to me to see your convolutions, to know that not even love could make you condone my indolence and selfishness!"

"And your conceit," he added caustically. "I'm thinking of my own affairs, not yours, unfortunately." A sudden weariness smote his eyes. "Madeline, I shall have to make an assignment and go out of business. Rob's failure has involved me deeply. Could I pay Mercer I could pull through, but I can't raise even \$1,000 with the other claims against the stock. Money is very close now. 1 shall have to go to the city and take a position for awhile unless"-

"When do you assign?" she interrupted calmly. "Next week. I'll give myself every hour's grace I can. Something may

happen, but it's a forlorn hope." be free from your rebuking tongue. But I'm truly sorry, Duncan, that you



HE CRIED SHARPLY.

meditatively." She held out her jeweled fingers and laughed joyously. The piled up gems is offered to you at Bargain that flashed under Harding's tired eyes were no more heartless than their Prices. beautiful owner, he thought savagely. Selfish as he had always believed her, he was yet stunned by her indifference. friend and had promised him on his deathbed six years before to keep a has achieved a reputation for watchful eye over his mother, a gra-

tapering, pink nailed fingers. The oth- balance of our Summer Stock er half was tied up so she could not handle it or she would have weighted ably fixed, but it was only by careful financiering and good management that mother and daughter could live in the comparative luxury they did. Mrs. Rives spoiled Madeline as only a doting mother can, but then every one, save Harding, took a hand at spoiling Madeline. She was so very lovely and so irresistibly sweet despite the selfish- The Stock is Broken. ness Harding so greatly deplored.

Harding was hurt, He ignored the jeweled fingers and strode angrily toward her mother, who was approaching from the other end of the wide, comfortable veranda. Madeline's smile was enigmatical as she gazed at the big, broad shouldered figure towering above her mother and openly disdainful at his whispered command on leav-

"Don't tell your mother. She's unselfish enough to care." Mrs. Rives looked at Madeline disap-

provingly as Harding tramped angrily down the long walk. "Why will you persist in quarreling with Duncan?" she rebuked gently.

"No brother could be kinder." "I don't like paragons," said Madeline shortly. "It does him good to be disagreed with once in awhile and to lose his temper. He should be grate-

ful to me, and"-"He's not," concluded her mother impressively. She shook her head sadly. She had hoped things would be different between Duncan and Madeline. As day after day passed and Duncan Continued on Third Page.

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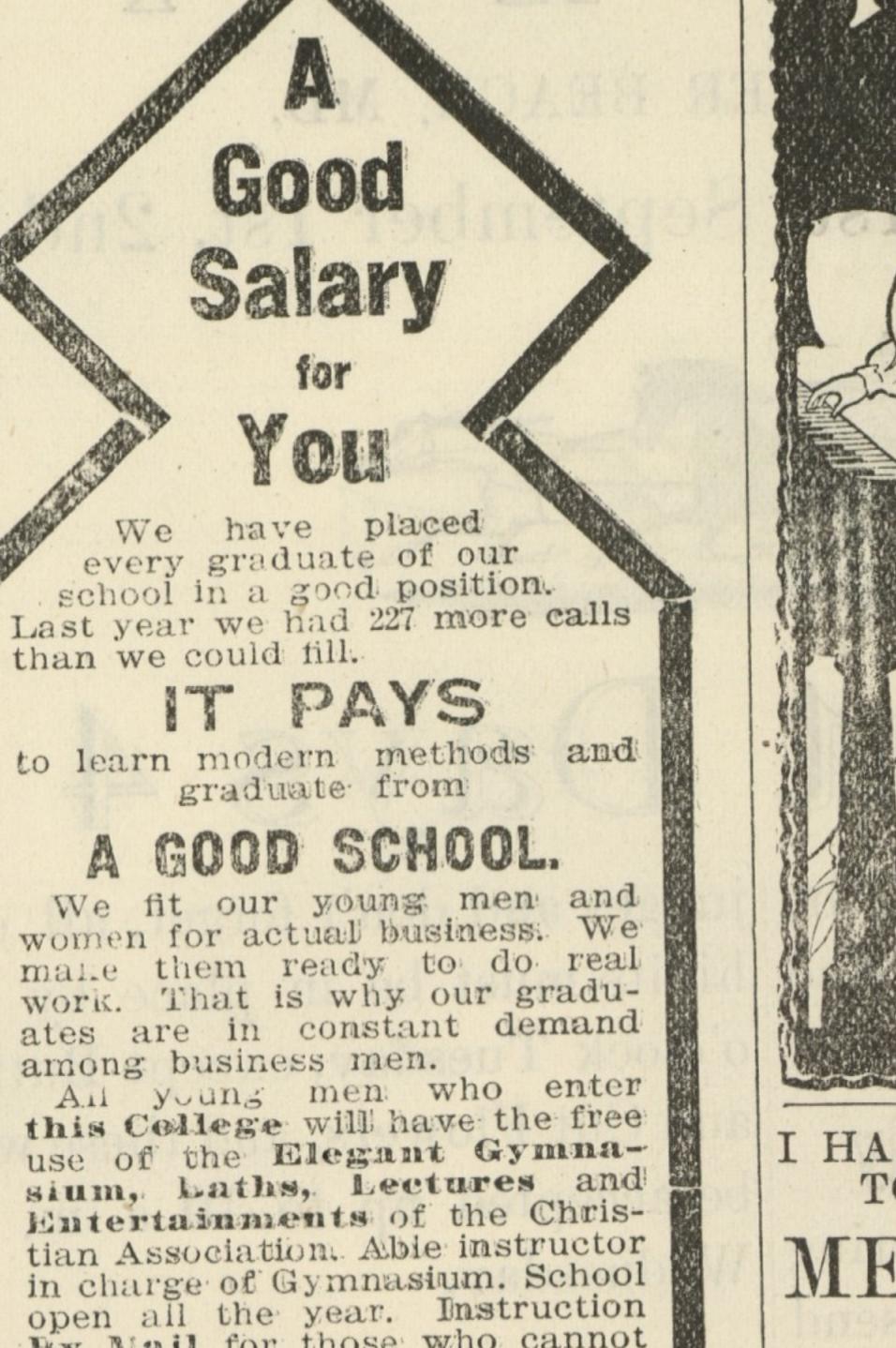
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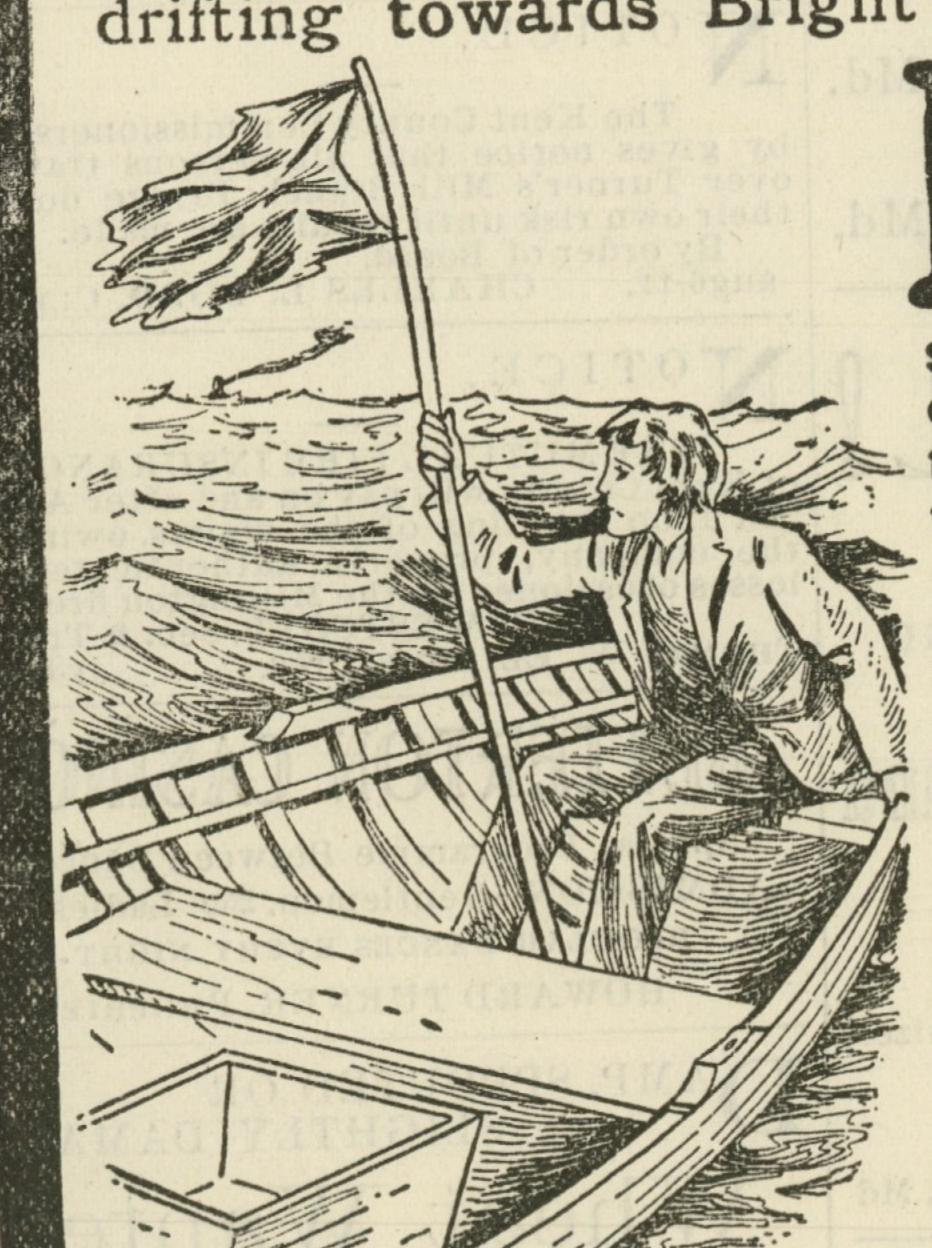
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