The GLOW of the RUBIES

by FRANCIS PERRY ELLIOTT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

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SYNOPSIS.

Richard Lightnut, an American with an affected English accent, receives a present from a friend in China. The present proves to be a pair of pajamas, a bitter source of surprise to the wearer. Lightnut dons the pajamas and late at night goes out for a smoke. His servant, Jenkins, comes in and, failing to recognize Lightnut, attempts to put him out. Thinking the servant crazy, Lightnut changes his tone, intending to summon help. When he reappears Jenkins falls on his neck with joy, confirming Lightnut's belief that he is crazy. Jenkins tells Lightnut of the encounter he had with a hideous Chinaman dressed in pajamas and a message from his friend, Jack Billings. Lightnut is asked to put up the night for the night on his way home from college. Later Lightnut finds a beautiful girl in black pajamas in his room. Lightnut is shocked by the girl's drinking, smoking and slangy talk. She tells him her name is Francis and puzzles him with a story of her love for her absent room-mate, named Frances. Next morning the girl is missing and Lightnut hurries to the boat to see her off. He is accosted by a husky college boy, who calls him "Dicky" but he does not see the girl. Jack Billings calls to spend the night with Lightnut. They discover priceless rubies hidden in the buttons of the pajamas. Billings has done the same and retires. Lightnut later discovers in his apartment a beefy person in mutton-chop whiskers and wearing pajamas. Jenkins calls the police, who declare the intruder to be a criminal, called "Lucy Grandpa." The intruder declares he is Lightnut's guest and appeals to the latter in vain. He is hustled off to jail. In the morning Lightnut is astounded to find Billings gone, and more astonished when he gets a message from the latter demanding his clothes. Lightnut, bound for Tarrytown, Billings' home, discovers "Frances," the girl in the pajamas, on the train. Lightnut speaks to her and alludes to the night before. She declares indignantly that Lightnut never saw her in black pajamas. At Tarrytown Frances is met by a husky college youth, who hails Lightnut as "Dicky." The latter ignores the boy, who then threatens to thrash him for offending Frances. Lightnut takes the next train home. Billings storms over the outrage of his arrest. He and Lightnut discover mysterious Chinese characters on the pajamas. Professor Deuceberry is called in to interpret the hieroglyphics. He have over what is calm the lost silk of Si-Ling-Chi. The writing declares that a person wearing the pajamas will take on the semblance of the previous wearer. The professor borrows the pajamas for experiment. "Billings" dressed in pajamas is found in the professor's room and is taken home in an automobile with Frances and a woman Lightnut calls "the frump." Lightnut is angered by "the frump's slanderous talk about "Francis." "Billings" is taken to his room. A servant tells Lightnut that a message has just been received stating that Billings was under arrest in New York for stealing a suit of black pajamas. Judge Billings astonishes Lightnut with a tale of Francis' escapades. Lightnut asks permission to speak to "Frances." The judge declares that not another living person would tackle the job, and Lightnut, his mind occupied with the beautiful Frances, is greatly mystified. Policeman O'Keefe returns the black pajamas and Lightnut sends them to Billings' room. Lightnut has an interesting hour with Frances. He tells of the things the judge has been saying about "Frances," much to "Frances'" amusement. Judge Billings refuses to intercede for a man under arrest claiming to be his son Jack. The judge promises Jack to wear the pajamas that night. Next morning Jenkins tells Lightnut he saw him (Lightnut) fighting with a youth in the library during the night.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—(Continued.)

Jenkins proceeded rapidly: "You was cording a dressing-robe about you as you came in and I see a glimpse

of one of your dark suits underneath. And following right behind you was that young Mr. Bi—h'm—pardon, sir, I remember you said I wasn't to mention any one connected with that at—a'm! You know who I mean, sir!" he paused anxiously—"young man, sir—freckled face—and the big let of"—his spreading fingers curved above his head—"awfully yellow hair—as, you know, sir!"

"Oh, that!" I said with contempt, for I knew he meant that mucker Scoggins. Then incredulously: "Oh, I say, you don't mean I was talking to him? And asleep?"

Jenkins eyed me reproachfully. "Not asleep, sir," he remonstrated gently.

"But I tell you—"

"Mr. Lightnut, sir, it was the punch!" He shook his head. "If you'll excuse me for mentioning—"

"Oh!" I remarked weakly, falling back upon my pillow. "Jove, Jenkins!" And I just looked at him stupidly—fact!

"Go on," I said. "Tell me all!"

"Yes, sir," resumed Jenkins, "as I was saying, you came in with—you know—er—the young fellow. He kinder slouched in, looking a bit sulky.

"'I've been watching for you to get back from the dog-fight,' you says to him; 'sit down, I want to talk to you.' But the young fellow just stood square in the middle of the floor and just kinder scowled black.

"Then you says, pleasant-like: 'I've been talking with a friend of yours, my son, who thinks I haven't treated you quite fair.'

"'O!' says this young fellow, and seems kinder surprised. Then he got red.

"'And so, my boy,' you went on, tightening your glass as you looked at him, 'if I've been harsh I'm sorry—suppose we start all over again—what do you say?' I don't want to cross you in anything if I can help it—I want to help you.'"

My abrupt ejaculation halted Jenkins an instant, then he proceeded:

"'I say, do you mean that?' asks young Mr. Bi—I mean, this young fellow"—Jenkins stirred nervously—"and you says, kinder laughing: 'there's my hand on it!' and then you both shook.

"For a minute,' says the boy, still looking kinder puzzled and uncertain, 'I want to know what about Frances. How do we stand about that?'

"You just laughed sorter and went up and clapped him right on the shoulder, and you says: 'Why, to you can, my son, just go in and win her. I don't care!'—and you said it hearty-like. You went on: 'I haven't a word to say—in fact, I'd be only too glad to see you succeed.'"

Here I straightened with almost a screech:

"What? I said that? Oh, now, Jenkins, you—oh, you're mistaken!"

Jenkins eyed me sorrowfully.

"Your words, sir, exactly, and then you went on, kinder persuadingly: 'Why, I haven't meant to stand in your way at all!'"

I groaned.

"Go on!" I breathed through my teeth. Then I straightened forward. "What did the judge call that punch—"what kind?"

"Heidelberg punch, sir,"—a sympathetic pause as I swept my hand through my hair. "Yes, sir, it certainly must be something nigh—oh, awful, sir!"

He went on as I dipped my head at him. "Then this young chap catches you by the hand and he says, 'Why, you're a brick, after all!' And you says: 'Yes, we'll get along better now, my boy, and you want to be mighty grateful to Dicky Lightnut for it.' And this young fellow says, kinder smiling: 'Indeed, I am!' And then him and you just shook hands again all over."

Jenkins stopped for breath, but I didn't say a word. By Jove, it all made me a bit sick, don't you know. Oh, I must have been maudlin, that's what —maudlin. I managed to wag my head to start him off again; couldn't speak, you know!

"Yes, sir." Then you says: 'That's all right, now, my boy; so you run along, because I'm awfully busy. Tomorrow we'll talk some more.'

"'Bully!' says the chap. 'Good night, old man!' Then he turns back, kinder smiling sidewise. 'It's sure on the level, is it, that you're going to let me have a clear road with Frances?'

"'Oh, bother Frances!' you says laughing. 'Yes, yes, and when you win her, she'll be to me as my own girl. And I know I'll have her love, too.'

"'What's that?' says the young fellow, kinder frowning. 'And you says, easy-like, 'Why, we'll just be one happy family.' Then you chuckled like you was mighty pleased and says: 'And I think she is learning to like me pretty well already.' Why, do you know what she did tonight? She came right up to me and in the sweetest way kissed me good night.'"

"Oh!" I said, digging my fingers into the bedclothes. "Oh!"

"Yes, sir!" said Jenkins chokily. He went on: "This young fellow just marches right close up to you and says, speaking kinder quiet and his eyes shining, 'You say Frances kissed you?' And you sorter gave a laugh and dug him in the side and you says, 'I do believe the boy is jealous! Yes, you rascal, she certainly did—she kissed me!'

"'Well, it's a lie!' he says back, pointing at you with his finger. 'Because it ain't like her.' And he got closer.

"'See here,' he says, 'have you just been trying to get gay with 'me to-night? Huh!—well, I'm just going to box your jaws for luck!'

"'What?' you gasps—'what's that?' —and you storms up to him—'Why, you young puppy, do you know who you're talking to?' you says.

"'Bah!' he says, and he just goes up and snaps his fingers in your face. You chokes kinder, and then you yells at him: 'Why, you young ruffian, I've spanked you before, and I can do it again—'

"'Yah!' he says, making faces at you. 'You spanked! You hit me when I wasn't looking. My foot slipped.'

"'Foot slipped, you blanked fool!' you shouts at him, and then—" Jenkins wiped his forehead—"Then the next thing I see, you mixed."

"Ah!" I breathed with relief. "That's better!"

I chuckled. Then suddenly I felt remorseful.

"Where did I hit him this time, Jenkins—did you notice? Was he hurt much?"

Jenkins looked down, avoiding my eyes. "Um, not exactly, sir," he said; "in fact, it was—er—kinder the other way."

I stared, aghast.

"You don't mean, Jenkins—"

Jenkins evidently did! His eyes expressed both pity and embarrassment.

"What he did to you,"—he rolled his glance upward, trying to shape the idea—"I believe, sir, it's what you might call"—his voice dropped—"I believe it's what they do call wiping up the floor with."

I Sat There a Moment Swallowing Hard.

"Finish!" I whispered, feebly flipping my hand at him.

"He left then, sir, but the noise brought Wilkes and we helped you upstairs. You wouldn't go any farther than the door of the judge's bedroom —wanted to tell him, we supposed. When we got that far, I noticed Mr. Jack Billings' door—it's right opposite, you remember, sir—was standing just a little open. He called out very anxiously and shrill: 'Oh, do be very careful of the pajamas! My! my! I hope the pajamas are not hurt!'

"And at that, you just bangs inside the judge's room and in about two minutes, he stuck his head out, looking kinder towsled and mad like he'd been waked from a sound sleep, and he fires a wrapped-up parcel at the door opposite and yells:

"'There are your pajamas, you unnatural, heartless prodigal! Pajamas, indeed, at such a time!' And then I see Mr. Jack's arm come out and fish the package inside.

"Then the judge turns on me and Wilkes and ordered us to clear out and go to bed. And Wilkes said we'd best do it because the judge would take care of you and get you to your room quietly. And the last thing I heard before he slammed inside his room was:

"'There's one thing; I've got a daughter!'"

I looked at Jenkins miserably. He was right; he did have a daughter and I wanted her. But just now, I wished with all heart that she was somebody's—anybody else's daughter —than that of the man who had witnessed my humiliation.

How had he managed to get me to my room? And had she seen or heard me? Oh, she must have!

Well, nothing mattered now—nothing could ever matter any more. It was some miserable comfort to feel, and know, that nothing worse could ever happen!

Why, there was nothing worse left in all the world. By Jove, I was sure of that much!

And just then a knock sounded.

CHAPTER XXIX.

I Touch Bottom.

"Pardon, sir, for not waiting till you came down," the butler was saying, "but Mr. Billings was just so set on me bringing this to you, I had to." He had entered, responding to Jenkins' invitation, bearing in his hand a gray paper parcel.

"For me?" I questioned, as he laid it on the table, and I eyed it ominously. Yet it could not be the same I had sent Billings myself—I could see that —for it was smaller, more compact, and in a different wrapper. But I was afraid to examine it.

"Yes, sir—he's very bad this morning, sir; the—er—that is, something last night seems to have excited him."

His eye roved eloquently between Jenkins and myself. He continued soberly:

"He's locked me and Perkins out of his rooms again, and wouldn't open the door only wide enough to stick this through. And his message"—hesitatingly—"he said just tell you you had better get these pajamas back where they came from just as quickly as you could—you would if you were wise, he said."

"Oh!" I uttered, dazed by this new blow. So it was her pajamas.

But there was more of the message —I could see it in Wilkes' eye.

"Yes, sir," he went on as I gave him a nod. "Mr. Billings called through the door-crack—and his voice was particularly shrill—screechy-like —very unnatural, sir—and he said: 'You tell him I say he'll find it very dangerous to keep them by him a moment; tell him my advice is to return them immediately!'"

Here the butler hesitated an instant and added: "And he said for me to try to remember three letters I was to mention—said you would understand."

"Three letters?" I repeated dully.

"Yes, sir, three letters—I did remember 'em, too, because they happened to be the initials of a young woman I—h'm! Q. E. D., sir."

"Q. E. D.?" I said, puzzled and miserable. "What's Q. E. D.?" And then an idea startled me.

"Oh I say, you mean—er—P. D. Q. —eh, Wilkes?" It sounded like Jack!

But he seemed sure he didn't, insisted on Q. E. D. When he had withdrawn, I sat there a moment, swallowing hard. By Jove, when a chap has had the hardest blow of his life, and that, too, from his best friend, it's devilish hard to come up smiling.

Presently I pulled myself together. Jenkins, as he helped me dress, eyed me in a frightened way, his face kind of pale and greenish. Neither of us said a word, but I knew I had his sympathy, poor fellow—and it helped! Then, with the parcel in my hand, I marched slowly down the stairs, forgetting even some instructions I should have given Jenkins.

She was there in the living-room—she and the frump. And when I saw her dear face and realized what disaster had come between us, I felt things whirling around me like a jolly what's-its-name and dropped my hand on a chair-back hard, until I could stiffen and smile up. But, by Jove, she was on!

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The SUITORS OF Mrs. MERRIWID

BY KENNETT HARRIS

MELISSA WOULD NOT LEAN ON A PERFECT STICK.

Mrs. Merriwid, yielding to a certain impetuosity of temper, flung the book that she had been reading into a corner of the room, and then impelled by her love of order, arose from the couch on which she had been reclining and picked the book up again. Her sense of humor caused her to laugh as she did so.

"I'm surprised, Melissa!" said her maternal maiden aunt Jane, emphatically.

"It wouldn't be polite of me to tell you that you're not," said Mrs. Merriwid. "Don't you mean that you are pained and shocked and grieved, auntie, dear? Surely not surprised! Well, I suppose I oughtn't to take it out on a poor, inoffensive book, but the woman is such a fool I couldn't help it."

"What woman are you talking about?" inquired Aunt Jane.

"The amiable art square of a heroine," Mrs. Merriwid replied. "I'm a perfect lady, I hope, and I've got a perfectly disgusting and a sweet nature, but if any husband of mine undertook to use me as a doormat in the way hers did, I would certainly bite a piece out of his heel."

"How can you talk so?" Aunt Jane reproved. Then she added tentatively, "Mr. Trimble would certainly never give you any occasion to complain of brutality."

"No, dearie," answered Mrs. Merriwid, "he never would, I'm sure. If he did, I wouldn't bite him; I'd spank him."

Aunt Jane almost lost her temper. "I must say I think it's a shame to say things like that about a nice man like Mr. Trimble," she declared. "It's indelicate and ungrateful. I don't see how anybody could be more devoted than he is or try harder to make himself agreeable. I think any woman he married might call herself lucky."

"I don't," Mrs. Merriwid disagreed. "It isn't a good thing for any woman to have a husband who strives to please. Too much devotion makes her conceited and bossy, and when a man isn't over five foot seven and there isn't anything noticeable between his lower lip and his Adam's apple, it won't be long before she's taking him around to a department store to buy him a hat."

"No man can help his height or his chin," said Aunt Jane.

"That's true," admitted Mrs. Merriwid. "I would be the last to blame him for either. He can't help having eyes of a mild, milky blue, with a wistful, pleading look in them, or that thin, reedy little voice and timid manner. I can't really blame him for falling in love with me, but I could never be more than a step-sister to him. I haven't the least desire to tie his whiskers up with pink ribbons and I can't help feeling that he would be deeply hurt if I didn't."

"Nonsense," said Aunt Janes. "He would just be kind and considerate."

"Dearie," said Mrs. Merriwid, "haven't I told you that I know he would be? I know exactly how kind and considerate. He would always wipe his feet when he came into the house and he would go outside to smoke, if he ever smoked; he wouldn't dream of bringing a friend home to dinner without my express permission, nor complain about the meals, nor, forget to match my samples or mail my letters. If I asked him to beat rugs he'd beat them without a murmur, and he wouldn't stay down-town nights or call his soul his own."

"I really don't see what more you could ask," said Aunt Jane.

"Life would be one grand, sweet song without a discordant note," agreed Mrs. Merriwid. "The only trouble is there are times when I don't like music. It would get on my nerves to have a man looking at me with a dumb, wistful appeal and jumping to do anything I wanted him to do. I honestly believe Mr. Trimble would wait for me to get through with the morning paper before he even looked at it himself, and a man who will do that will let you open his mail. Just think of the monotony of living with a husband who never thumped the table with his fist and said 'damn.' Even poor Henry Merriwid would do that once in a while, and he disagreed with me on almost every subject."

"Oh, of course, if you like to jangle," said Aunt Jane.

"I don't, dearie," said Mrs. Merriwid; "but I don't want to have my temper soured and spoiled by exercising it on a man who won't talk back except to say, 'Yes, my dear,' and 'Certainly, my love.' If two souls haven't any more than a single thought between them, I'm sure it isn't going to be complimentary to either one of them. Furthermore, I'm no sturdy, storm-defying oak with sheltering branches and a rough bark for Mr. Trimble's tender little tendrils to cling to. If there's any clinging to be done, I stick for the vine part, with reservations, or I don't sign the contract. You see, I haven't got the protective instinct, auntie, and I don't feel called upon to stand between Mr. Trimble and the rude assaults of a rough and tumble world. He's got to clear his own path of brambles and strew his own roses, or else get some lady with an aquiline nose and an incipient mustache to undertake the job. That's what he'll get eventually, too. His kind always does."

"I don't understand you at all, Melissa," said Aune Jane, plaintively. "You don't like a man to be overbearing and wouldn't tolerate one who was, and at the same time you seem to think life wouldn't be worth living with a husband who didn't use bad language and break dishes. Aren't you just a little inconsistent, my dear?"

"I hope I am," said Mrs. Merriwid. "I don't like consistent people, but there's nothing particularly inconsistent in my idea of a husband. I wouldn't mind if he smashed an occasional dish, but I wouldn't want him to make a regular practice of it, and he's got to understand the difference between Haviland and queensware.

"There Isn't Anything Noticeable Between His Lower Lip and His Adam's Apple."

I'd like to have him put his foot down as long as he didn't put it down on my pet corn—if I had one, which I assure you I haven't. In other words, I would want the blessed assurance that no matter how virile and forceful he might be I would have a fighting chance if the worst came to the worst."

"You'll go all through the woods and get a crooked stick at last," Aunt Jane predicted.

"He may be crooked, dearie, but he won't be any stick," said Mrs. Merriwid.

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Tragic Consequence of Solitude.

A formerly well-to-do Swiss family, consisting of four young children and parents, built a chalet near the summit of the Uri-Rostock (Eastern Switzerland), 8,620 feet high, in order to economize. The alpine isolation, solitude and strain turned the mind of the woman, who wanted to kill her husband and children. The husband, realizing the danger, descended, the other day, to the valley of Isenthal in search of a doctor and to inform the police authorities. During his absence the woman set fire to the chalet, but with great bravery saved her four children, though she herself was badly burned. When the husband, doctor and police climbed to the mountain top the chalet was burned to the ground, the four child-ren saved, and the mad mother was dancing around them.

Women and the Farm.

It is not so much because the farmer's boys sought the cities as because his daughters refused to stay on the farm that the rural population has dwindled. At least, the council of the National Bankers' Association, in session in Westchester, came to the conclusion that the greatest drawback to inducing men to undertake farm work lies in the objections made to it by the women folk. The work in farm households is undeniably heavy. One remedy proposed, and already in operation in some of the western states, is a co-operative chain of laundries. They carry off the week's wash and return it at trivial cost—10 cents is the carrying charge, according to report—thus saving one day's hard labor for the women.—New York Times.

Scribe Took No Chances.

The Ocala (Fla.) Star has a discreet reporter. He met a well-known fisherman on the street. When he returned to the office he wrote: "Mr. S. told a Star reporter that he caught a catfish either weighing twelve pounds or twelve feet long—the scribe can't remember which."

That's the kind—Libby's—There isn't another sliced dried beef like it. Good? It's the inside cut of the finest beef sliced to wafer thinness.

Libby's Sliced Dried Beef

stands supreme. The tasty dishes one can make with it are almost numberless. Let's see! There's creamed dried beef, and—but just try it. Then you'll know!

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Put up in sterilized glass or tin containers

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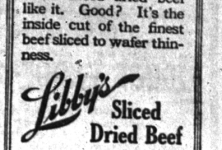

Pa's Rather Indefinite.

"Pa, what is an anachronism?"

"Oh, that's something or other smart people are always finding in Shakespeare's works. Now, run along and play."

Badly Frightened Fish.

"It was never so known before," says Rankin Dunfre, local angler, who wasn't angling on the occasion in point. "I was crossing the bridge near home swinging my lantern, for the night was dark. I heard a great splash, got down on the bank with my lantern to see the cause, and lo and behold a 16-inch fish lay floundering in the weeds. The lantern must have scared him out of the water—don't you think?"—Philadelphia Record.

What He Bought.

A Syracuse business man living in one of the suburbs decided to give up his spacious back yards to the raising of currants as a profitable side issue. So, wishing to absorb all the information he could acquire on the subject of the currant industry, he went down town one Saturday afternoon recently and returned with his arms full of books.

"Well, Teddy," inquired his enthusiastic spouse, as he dumped the volumes on the table, "did you succeed in getting what you wanted?"

"Sure, I did!" he replied, proudly pointing to the books. "I bought a whole year's edition of a standard work on current litgrature."—Exchange.

In the Meantime.

There had been a row at recess time, and Miss Martin had called in all of the pupils, and had a sort of a school court, which lasted until time for school to be dismissed. The trouble had started with some of the older boys in a misunderstanding over a game. After hearing both sides of the question, she decided proper punishment for the combatants, and told them to remain in their seats after the others had gone home. She remembered something she wanted to say to a little boy who did not take part in the affray, so she turned to him and said:

"Now, in the meantime, Guy—"

"I wasn't in it, Miss Martin," Guy interrupted hastily.

"Wasn't in what?" asked Miss Martin.

"Why, in the mean time," said the eight-year-old. — Mack's National Monthly.

A Triumph Of Cookery—

Post Toasties

Many delicious dishes have been made from Indian Corn by the skill and ingenuity of the expert cook.

But none of these creations excels Post Toasties in tempting the palate.

"Toasties" are a luxury that make a delightful hot-weather economy.

The first package tells its own story.

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