



"Into the empty window-frame slid the great head of the tigress."

CHINNA.

BY MRS. HOBART-HAMPDEN,

Author of 'The Secret Valley,' etc., etc.

(Continued from page 247.)

'ALL is ready,' said the priest, at last. 'Now, sorcerer, begin.'

And, at that, Chinna drew himself up to the full of his short height, and he looked in a stubborn, yet dignified fashion at his enemies.

'Ye think,' he said, 'that it is for you to give orders. Ye think that ye can deal with me as ye please. Ye forget, and again forget, that I am mightier than you by far. Even now one waits without who will come if I call. One before whose face ye will flee, shrieking, to the uttermost corners of your houses. Shall I call, O, most foolish people? Or will ye be wise in time, and repent you of your misdeeds?'

There was a scornful outcry from the crowd as he finished, an outcry led by the priest. And then some one shouted, 'Now he has sent for his wife without doubt. He would trick us again as he tricked us before. After that will come his cousins, one by one. 'Tis plain he cannot cure the sick man, and but tries to delay his own punishment. Why should we wait longer? To work, brethren, to work.'

'Tis not for my woman I would send,' said Chinna, in a voice so grave, so utterly certain, that it carried conviction with it. 'Tis the mate of one more mighty than I who comes seeking, whose footsteps I plainly hear.'

And now upon the crowd there fell a hush as the people, too, listened, despite themselves, for those footsteps of which Chinna spoke. And, in the hush, the little hunter raised his voice, and called—not to the men before him, but to the darkness outside. And he used no human language, but from his lips there came a long-drawn melancholy cry, the very counterpart of that other which had set the children shivering in the little stone shelter in the old fort. And, behold, from outside there came an answer; from beneath the very window itself.

One endless moment there was while the echoes of that answer died away. And then there came a soft scrabbling and scratching on the house-wall. And into the empty window-frame slid the great head of the tigress, her fierce eyes gleaming in the light of the fire.

CHAPTER XXVI.

'BEHOLD her whom my spirits have sent,' said Chinna, very softly. But there was no need for speech, for every pair of eyes in the hut were fixed on the tigress. She and she alone absorbed the whole attention of the crowd. The people of the village had forgotten their fear of Chinna in this far greater fear, and hardly did they breathe as they waited on the pleasure of this strange and terrible visitor.

Around the hut the tigress looked for that lost mate of hers, and then her lips drew back from her teeth in a sullen, threatening growl. And she slid one paw over the sill as though to reach with it the ground inside, and thus drag herself through the window-frame. And at the sight the people stared no longer, but made with one accord for the doorway, thronging, pushing, until there was scarcely room to move in the narrow

space—jostling, falling into the street outside. And now the hut was empty save for the sick man, the children, and Chinna, and the thing he had summoned from the night. Puzzled and uneasy was the tigress, for she knew from the smell of the place that here her mate had lain, but yet she could not see him. Moreover, she was sure that, but now, he had answered her, and forth she sent again upon the night her searching, solemn summons.

And, as that summons died away, Chinna faced the tigress boldly. His steady eyes fixed themselves on hers until those green globes wavered. And, inch by inch, that threatening head drew back.

'Fetch a brand from the fire,' Chinna ordered, and Brian rushed outside, and snatched up a piece of burning wood. The street was as empty as it had been when the mate of the tigress claimed the headman's house. Every door was shut as tightly as on that other occasion. And, carrying the blazing wood, Brian dashed back into the hut.

The sudden flare of it, the sparking fire was enough. There was no need for Chinna to thrust the brand in the face of the tigress, though he ran to do so. Before he could reach her, she had dropped to the ground outside, and Chinna smiled, well pleased. But soon the smile died away, for he knew that the danger in which they all stood was by no means completely averted. The children and he had yet to make their way from the village to the forest. And, though the villagers were not for the moment to be feared, the tigress in her present angry baffled temper would very likely follow and attack any person who left the village that night, undeterred by a burning torch in the open. And, in the morning, when she would return to the depths of the forest, the villagers would probably turn hostile again.

Round and round in a circle Chinna's thoughts thus went, and sought in vain for a way of escape, and failed to find it. And from the ground the sick man moaned softly, and then began to call for mercy. And Chinna, who had much of the true instinct of a doctor in him, responded mechanically to the appeal. He bent above the groaning form, making weird passes in the air as he did so, and whispering strange-sounding words. And, after a little, he straightened himself, and said in a most confident voice, 'The sickness will depart. On the morrow thou shalt be well again. There is nought to fear.'

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A 'FREE' TRANSLATION.

TWO Englishmen travelling in Spain, who had no knowledge of the language, found great difficulty in making themselves understood. Arriving one day at a wayside inn, they thought that they should like some roast beef for dinner. But how were they to convey their wish to the waiter? 'Oh, I know what to do!' said one of the travellers. 'I'll draw a picture of a cow. The man will be sure to understand that.' So he made a rough sketch of a cow, and placed beneath it the figure 2, meaning of course, 'beef for two.' Then the artist handed his picture to the waiter, who bowed, nodded, and smiled, as much as to say, 'I quite understand.' He went off to execute the order, and presently re-appeared with two tickets for a bull-fight!

A SOLDIER DOG.

PADDY, a black-and-white fox-terrier, was a real soldier dog, for he was actually born on the battlefield during the Soudan war. After a time he became the property of the 15th Hussars, and when that gallant regiment charged at Suakin, over the sand of the desert first and foremost, leading his friends into action, went Master Paddy. The jolly little dog barked and frisked along as if war were the greatest game on earth.

S. BRAINE.

A BIRTHDAY WISH.

WHEREVER laughter is, and love,
And joys that all may share,
And sunshine floods the long, long path—
May you be there!

Wherever happiness abides,
And music thrills the air,
And life is sweet, and roses blow—
May you be there!

SHEILA E. BRAINE.

THE RED STEER.

By HAROLD BINDLOSS.

[A Sequel to 'The Chinaman']

IT was dark and very quiet among the giant firs that rolled down the valley on the Pacific slope of Canada. A belt of wet prairie ran along the creek, and the cattle fed among the tall swamp-grass. The camp fire had burned low, and Jake Winthrop and Tom Dawson sat between a big hemlock's roots. A little black and white terrier crouched at their feet, and Pete, the hired man, lay a few yards off, fast asleep. The boys did not feel drowsy. Perhaps they were overtired, for they had been on the trail since early morning. There were no fences in the valley, the cattle were wild, and a bush-bred steer can push through tangled forest much faster than a man.

Jake's father had sold the cattle, but had cut his foot when chopping a tree, and sent the boys to take the animals to the railroad. He made them take Pete, but warned them they must not trust the latter with the business to be transacted at the settlement. The buyer expected them to reach the stockyards about noon next day, in order that the cattle might rest before they were put on board the train early on the following morning.

There was no moon, and Dawson could hardly see the animals except when they moved, but he heard them tear off the harsh grass, and now and then the bells at their necks made a musical clash. The night was cold, the mosquitoes had gone, and presently the dark trunks got indistinct, and Dawson slipped down between the hemlock roots. He did not know if he slept or not, but after a time he became suddenly alert, for a long howl broke the silence. Then the cow-bells clashed, and he heard a splashing in the swamp. The terrier got up and began to growl.

'Timber-wolves!' said Jake. 'They're not likely to bother us much, but if they hang round they'll make the stock restless, and I want to deliver the bunch in good condition.'

Another howl came across the trees, but it was fainter,

and afterwards all was silent again. The cattle, however, did not begin to feed, but packed together in a compact, shadowy mass, and the terrier stood still, with the hair on its neck bristling.

'I can't understand this,' Jake remarked. 'A cow's not afraid of a wolf, but these beasts are uneasy. And look at the dog!'

Dawson listened, but only heard the soft splash of the creek and the clank of a bell as a steer moved its head. The animals kept together, and he knew this was their habit when alarmed. The terrier would not come when he called, but continued to growl and prick his ears. He threw fresh wood on the fire, and they sat down, without wakening Pete, who did not move. It was a comfort to feel the repeating rifle he put across his knees.

Nothing happened for a time, and then there was a splash and a rustle of grass as the cattle began to move across the swamp. They did not run, but went hesitatingly, as if they were curious and only half afraid. Indeed, he imagined they were going towards, and not away from, whatever it was that disturbed them. The terrier quietly trotted in the same direction.

'Hustle round the swamp and head them off,' Jake said sharply. 'We're going to have trouble if they get into the bush.'

Dawson picked up his rifle, and a few moments afterwards caught his foot under a fallen branch and came down. Then he blundered into a thicket, and, failing to push through, tried the edge of the swamp. His feet sank in the boggy soil, and the long grass wrapped about his legs; but he made some progress, although he could no longer see his comrade or the cattle. Pete shouted to him across the swamp, and soon afterwards a curious cry came out of the dark.

He stopped, and felt his skin creep, for he knew the cry. It was not clear like a wolf's howl, but was rather a hoarse snarl, broken by a kind of grunt. Only a Pacific-slope panther made a noise like that, and he had once killed a panther with his axe. He had done so when wildly excited, in order to save Jake's dog, and did not want to meet another in the dark.

Trying to locate the spot from which the noise came, he threw up the rifle and fired two shots. The snarling stopped, the echoes of the reports rolled across the trees, and then there was a rustle of undergrowth and a snapping of low branches as the cattle plunged into the bush.

'Quit shooting!' Jake called out. 'You won't make things better by plugging the cows.'

Dawson ran on cautiously, but the noise the cattle made got fainter, and, knowing that he could not overtake the animals, he went back to the fire. He was glad he had thrown on fresh wood, or he could not have found his way.

'We have got to wait for daylight,' Pete remarked breathlessly when he came back. 'Guess we'll find the trail in the morning, and the beasts won't run far. I'll allow it's the first time I've known a panther get after a bunch of stock.'

Dawson said nothing. He had not long left England, and the others knew the forest and the habits of the animals that roamed in it.

'The thing's curious,' Jake agreed. 'When bush cows get scared they roll up close with their heads to the danger, and mill round if they think it moves. In this part of the country the wolf-packs don't bother



"Dawson caught his foot under a fallen branch, and came down."

them, and a panther generally hunts alone. He wouldn't have a fighting chance against a band of milling stock: besides, a hog's his favourite meal.

'They've stampeded, anyhow,' said Pete.

'Do you think the shooting frightened them?'

Dawson asked.

'It might help to keep them on the run, but they set

off before you began. Then I'm puzzled about the dog. He knew there was something about, but he looked suspicious, not scared, and when he scents a panther he keeps close to me.'

Dawson knew this was so. The terrier had not forgotten how he had been mauled, and his hair had scarcely grown across the scars a panther had made.

'Well,' said Pete, 'I guess that panther had got a cold.'

Jake nodded, and Dawson, noting his thoughtful face as the fire blazed up, thought he understood. The noise a panther makes has a husky note, and sounds something like a cough, but in the cry he had heard this was rather marked. Pete had hit it when he said the animal had a cold.

'But if the brute was trying to creep up to the cattle, it wouldn't have made a noise,' he said.

'I sure can't figure out the thing,' Jake owned. Anyhow, as we can't get busy until the morning, we'd better go to sleep.'

They lay down, but Dawson wakened now and then, and saw by the light of the fire that Jake was not asleep. He could understand this, and sympathised with his comrade. Mr. Winthrop had entrusted them with a band of valuable animals, and they had let them run away. It hurt their pride, and might mean a serious loss to the rancher. They got up at daybreak, and for an hour or two followed the cattle's trail through the trampled underbrush. Then they heard cow-bells, and soon afterwards found the stock feeding quietly, although one had gone.

'That red steer's the best of the bunch,' Jake remarked. 'You two, drive the others back and get breakfast. I don't feel I want much food until I track the beast.'

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THE STORY OF SOME ORDERS AND DECORATIONS.

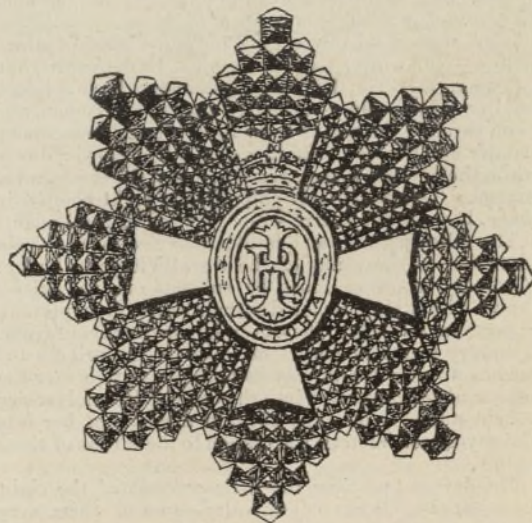
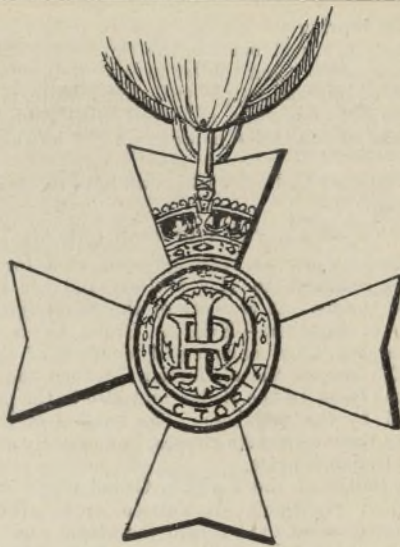
IV.—ORDERS OF CHIVALRY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

(Concluded from page 246.)

THE most eminent Order of the Indian Empire was instituted by Her Majesty Queen Victoria on January 1st, 1878, being further extended and enlarged at her first Jubilee, ten years later. It consisted then, as now, of the Sovereign and twenty-five Knights Grand Commanders (of whom the Grand Master is the principal)



The Collar, Badge, and Star of the most eminent Order of the Indian Empire.



The Badge and Star of the Royal Victorian Order.

and of fifty Knights Commanders and Companions. It was originally formed to commemorate the proclamation of the English Queen as Empress of India.

The magnificent Collar of gold is appropriately formed of elephants, lotus flowers, peacocks (with outspread tails) and Indian roses. The centre is occupied by the Imperial crown, the whole being united by chains of gold. The Star of the Knights Grand Commanders has alternating rays of gold and silver, five in number, issuing from a centre of gold. Hanging thereon is a royal effigy of the Sovereign surrounded by a purple ring on which, in letters of gold, is inscribed the motto 'Imperatoris auspicio' (Under auspices of the Emperor), above which is the Imperial crown in gold. The Badge consists of a golden rose with five leaves enamelled red,

each leaf bearing a letter of the word India; here again we find a crowned bust of the Sovereign, the purple band and motto being similar to that of the Star. The mantle, of Imperial purple satin, lined white, is fastened by a purple and white silk cord with golden tassels. The Star of the Order is worn on the left side of the mantle.

Yet another Order for which we have to thank Queen Victoria is

THE ROYAL VICTORIAN ORDER,

instituted by her in 1896 and conferred for personal services rendered to Her Majesty and her successors on the throne. It consists of the Sovereign and five classes of members—Knights Grand Cross, Knights Commanders, Commanders, and members of the fourth and fifth classes, the distinction between the last two divisions lying in the Badge and also in the precedence enjoyed by the members. The knights of this Order rank, in their respective classes, immediately after those of the Indian Empire.

The Badge of the Knights Grand Cross is a white enamelled eight-pointed Maltese cross, which bears upon its crimson oval centre the Royal and Imperial cypher encircled by a blue enamelled band inscribed with the motto of the Order, 'Victoria,' in golden letters, this again being surmounted by a crown of Empire. The Badge is suspended from a dark blue ribbon with a narrow edging on either side of three stripes—red, white, red—the ribbon being worn from left to right. The Knights Commanders have a Badge smaller in size and attached to a narrower ribbon, and so on through the rest of the classes, the Badge becoming smaller and the ribbon narrower as it gets lower down, while the cross in its centre is of frosted silver instead of enamel. The Star, silver chipped and eight-pointed in shape, bears in the centre a reproduction of the Badge.

The following are the qualifications necessary to gain admission to the ranks of the Royal Victorian Order: 'Ordinary members must be subjects of the British Crown who having rendered extraordinary, or important, or personal services to the Sovereign, merit royal favour. Honorary members consist of those foreign princes and persons upon whom it may be thought fit to confer the honour of being received into the Order.' Its anniversary is kept annually on June 20th, in memory of her late Majesty Queen Victoria's accession to the throne of these realms.

This brings to a close the little account of the eight great British Orders of Chivalry—two of them very ancient, the others comparatively modern; but none the less all are alike conferred for *service rendered*, which, as you will remember, is the true meaning of Chivalry and Knighthood. Next we will consider Orders of Merit.

CONSTANCE M. FOOT.

WANDERERS IN THE WAR.

By A. A. METHLEY.

(Continued from page 243.)

ROGER scrambled quickly from rock to rock and from bush to bush, but it was growing very dark now, and in his haste he did not pause to choose his way. In a few minutes he was obliged to stop short on the brink of a little precipice, and when this had been skirted and he reached level ground, he found that he

was on the opposite side of the hill from that on which he had made the ascent.

He was standing still, breathing quickly after his exertions, and wondering which direction it would be best so take, when suddenly he caught sight of a red glow shining through the trees. Going forward a little, he peered between the close-set trunks, and soon saw, not far away, the silhouette of a house with a high, pointed roof and ruddy firelight streaming from an open doorway.

Roger's heart gave a great bound of joy and relief, for somehow, after his late adventure, the prospect of spending a night in the dark, lonesome wood did not seem very inviting. He began to walk forward, but stopped after a moment, remembering that it would be better to find Jules first, who, being French, could speak to the inhabitants of the house and make arrangements.

Just as he was turning back, the gleam of light suddenly disappeared, as if the door had been shut.

Roger looked round, carefully noting a fallen fir and a strangely shaped rock which would serve as landmarks, for the house itself was so surrounded by trees as to be almost invisible; and then he set off at a brisk pace with visions in his mind of soft beds, a savoury supper, and the cosy, home-like flicker of firelight.

He felt sure that the day's adventures were going to have a happy ending after all.

It took some time to find Jules, and when he was found, fast asleep with Toto in his arms, it was not easy to rouse the little boy or to make him realise the situation. 'Maison, over there; bon maison, and supper—what do you call it? Souper, manger. Come along, Jules, it isn't far. Quick, vite!'

It was hardly surprising, perhaps, that Jules had some difficulty in understanding this speech, but he seemed to catch the drift of it at last, when Roger had had recourse to the language of signs, and sat up, yawning and rubbing his sleepy eyes with tightly clenched fists. He looked very small and babyish, in spite of the thirteen years of which he had boasted, but Roger dragged him to his feet relentlessly, and, after what seemed a very long walk through the woods, for it was quite dark now, they reached the house. It proved to be a tumble-down building, surrounded by a huddle of sheds, and standing in a dirty, ill-kept yard.

A dog growled and rattled his chain as the travellers entered through a broken-down gate; and Jules picked up Toto and held him tightly in his arms, but there was no other sound to be heard. The place seemed to be deserted, but there was a sign hanging over the door which showed that it had, at least, some pretensions to be called an inn, and faint gleams of light could be seen through the cracks of shuttered windows.

The boys knocked at the door, rather timidly, for they felt oppressed by the darkness and silence, and after some minutes it was opened, and an old woman with a shawl over her head peered out. She proved to be very deaf, and not only deaf but disagreeable, for in answer to Jules' questions she shook her head violently, declared that she had no rooms to let, and tried to shut the door in the faces of her would-be guests.

Roger, however, was beginning to feel desperate now, as the prospect of rest and food seemed about to disappear, and, setting his foot firmly across the threshold of the open door, he pushed Jules forward. 'Hurry up, old man, tell her we must come in. Remember,

"souper," "diner," or whatever you like to call it. We shall simply starve if we can't get something to eat."

Thus encouraged, Jules did his best, and a brisk argument followed, of which Roger did not understand a word. The woman, deaf as she was, seemed to be able to hear Jules' clear, shrill voice, but still she shook her head resolutely in answer to his pleas for shelter and supper.

No, no; it was impossible. The house was already full. She had guests, and had promised them that no other visitors should be admitted. They were foreigners, her two boarders, and they wished to be quiet here—to have the place to themselves. She had given her word, and what could be done? She was only a poor old woman, and these people paid well; she could not afford to displease them.

"But we will disturb no one, madame, my friend, Monsieur Roger, and I. We will be quiet—oh, but quiet as two mice; and it is so little that we want. Only some food and a place to rest. We are tired and starving. Madame, dear good madame, will never be so cruel as to turn us out to sleep in the dark forest."

The woman began to show signs of relenting; perhaps the pale, weary face of little Jules pleaded his cause even more strongly than his coaxing voice. She opened the door wider, and the boys had a glimpse of a great open hearth on which logs were burning brightly. A black pot, from which a savoury smell came, was suspended over the flames, and on a table near at hand could be seen a long loaf of bread and some plates.

Jules tried to push his way in with an ingratiating smile, but the old woman still barred the way.

She had no rooms, they were both occupied by her present guests, and even food must be paid for. A poor old woman could not be expected to give things away. Money—perhaps, if the young gentlemen had money—something might be arranged.

"Argent." Roger caught at the word, and pulling his purse—or, rather, Sam's purse—out of his pocket, he produced a new five-franc piece. The firelight flickered brightly on the large silver coin, and it seemed to awaken an answering sparkle in the innkeeper's black, beady eyes. After a little more hesitation and a furtive glance over her shoulder in the direction of a staircase which wound upward from a corner of the room, she clutched at the money and thrust it into her own pocket. Then she stood aside and allowed the boys to enter, shutting and bolting the door carefully behind them.

Very well, she would give them some food, and they might spend the night by the fire; but there must be no noise, and they must leave early in the morning before her other lodgers were awake. They were upstairs now, the other lodgers, in their sitting-room—she had taken up their supper—and they must not on any account know anything about the new arrivals.

Jules, now that he had got his way, paid little heed to the grumbles of their hostess, and Roger understood nothing of what was said. In a few minutes the boys were comfortably established by the fire with cushions at their backs, footstools under their tired feet, and large plates of stew out of the black pot on their knees. The woman bustled about, making coffee and cutting slices of bread from the large loaf, and altogether Roger thought that it was the most delicious meal that he had ever eaten.

This was an adventure indeed, and no less delightful was the night that followed when, having been provided with some pillows and ancient blankets, the hostess took her departure, and stumped upstairs to the upper regions, leaving them to curl themselves in front of the fire that still blazed brightly on the hearth.

It was very hot, of course, but that did not matter, for the flickering flames added to the charm of this novel experience; and long after Jules was sound asleep Roger lay awake, watching them, and thinking over all the events of the past day.

His strange experience on the hill-top came in for its share of meditation; but by this time Roger had thought of a solution of the mystery that seemed to him to be quite satisfactory. It must have been bees, that queer, buzzing noise that he had heard—wild bees, that had established themselves in the trunk of the great tree. Most likely the tree was hollow, dead trees very often were, and the bees had been swarming, or something of that sort. Certainly he had always thought till now that bees swarmed in the daytime; but French bees might be different from English ones, and anyway he did not know very much about them.

The boy's thoughts drifted away to the rustling sound that he had heard after the buzzing had ceased. Could it have been a bear? Those animals, he had heard, were fond of honey, and he remembered that, in geography books, bears were still included among the wild animals of France. Roger made up his mind that he would question Jules on the subject, and he fell asleep at last wondering what the words, bear, bee, honey, and hollow tree, would be in French.

CHAPTER IX.

AT dawn on the following day Roger and Jules were still sound asleep, and they never stirred when the old inn-keeper made her way heavily down the narrow staircase and lumbered into the kitchen.

The first thing she did, after flinging open the shutters and letting in a stream of bright sunlight, was to rouse Jules by seizing his shoulder, shaking him violently, and repeating her instructions of the previous night.

They must wake up at once, he and his friend, and be off before the other lodgers made their appearance. It was early yet, but she herself had to go out; there was the cow to milk and the pigs to feed—a poor, hard-working woman could not afford to lie in bed. But there must be no delay. The lodgers were strange folk, and the gentleman would be angry, furious, if he found out that other travellers had been in the house. He and the lady would leave at once, and she would lose her money.

She went off at last, still grumbling, and with a great clatter of tin pails; but Jules was still stiff and sleepy after his long tramp of the day before. Instead of waking Roger he yawned, and lay down again in his warm nest of cushions for a final nap.

Once again there was silence, broken only by the even breathing of the two boys and the murmur of farmyard noises outside; but before long there came the sound of another footstep on the creaking wooden staircase, followed by a loud, horrified exclamation.

Roger started up and found himself confronted by a woman, not their old hostess, but quite a different person, a young woman with fair hair and a pair of round, indignant blue eyes.

(Continued on page 258.)



"Roger started up and found himself confronted by a woman."