

"You need a fur coat—one o' them new dog-skins, now."

He stopped in the face of Tom Graham, who had come in for his lunch. Ann, sensitive about her shabbiness, choked over her egg and got out quickly.

Later—an hour after Tom Graham had left the counter—she came back with twenty nickels in her humpy, frayed black purse. It was nearly all the money she had. She talked to the mixologist with a red face.

"Here is the money for the eggs. Of course I expected to pay it as soon as I could. Very, very much obliged. I know there were just twenty, for I kept track. Perhaps you'll let me add something, just to even things up?"

The mixer plucked at his celluloid collar, wiggled his shining patent-leather shoes, and turned away.

"I didn't mean any offense about that coat," he said over his shoulder.

"Of course not. It *is* getting cold."

"Well, and I wasn't responsible for those eggs, either. It was the man with the velveteen pants. He paid me for 'em

in advance one day, after you went out. I was to slip in three dozen, one by one, as long as you came in here."

Ann's finances were in that critical state when the loss of a dollar makes the whole difference; so she closed "honorable mentions," blue ribbons, and wrecked hopes into a home-bound trunk that evening, and thought out a note to Tom Graham meanwhile. She lacked the nerve to go and thank him.

When she opened the door to a man's thumping, late in the evening, she even lacked the nerve—or the food—to stand up. Tom Graham was breathless after a climb of three flights, but he caught her to save a fall, and then, to save an explanation, he told her he loved her.

It was enough for Ann when he said passionately that he couldn't see her grow pinched for food any longer if he had tried, for "women of your sort don't go hungry where I come from." Then he drew hasty sketches of the mountains on his Colorado ranch all over her white paper.

They have built a studio there now.

An Incident on the Bridge

BY BURKE JENKINS

IN the grim light of early dawn, the man peered over the low rail of the bridge and looked long into the reflection given back by the dull waters.

Sunk deep, as even this crude mirror showed, lay the tired wrinkles about the eyes—wrinkles that told their own tale of struggles against odds; of struggles in the cause of an ideal against the heavy odds of practical, material poverty; for the man was young—little more than a boy—and he was an artist.

The hour of dawn is a trying one. Ask those who have stood a like vigil. At that time even muddy waters, sluggish in the slow, seaward tide, hold their own enticing invitation of oblivion. And the man was very tired.

The sharp clatter of a pair of over-driven bays whirled the man at the bridge-rail to instinctive avoidance of the wheels. The carriage passed.

In the very second of its passing it seemed as if the faint light of morning jumped a notch toward brightness, to give the man at the rail a full vision within.

What he saw in there was the face of another man—a face wrinkled, yes; but wrinkled into telltale lines which the deep-sunk, shadowed eyes corroborated. Thin eyebrows were lifted in the inane leer of sodden debauch, with cheeks and nose bloated to the habit.

The man in there was rich; but he was evidently no artist—even in his own sorry line.

The carriage clattered on, leaving the man at the bridge-rail alone with a rising sun.

"Why," said he, "I'm better off than he is. I need only money!"

Then he squared his shoulders and took the same direction as the carriage, back into the city.

THE ROOM BEYOND

BY MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

AUTHOR OF "HIS FATHER'S SON," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY T. VICTOR HALL

CAROTHERS had been sitting with his head on his hand. It was a habit that was growing on him. In the last few weeks he was more and more frequently to be found in that position, pulling himself together with a jerk at the banging of a door or the entrance of his clerk. He had grown thinner, and there were whispers of nightly dissipations that left their mark the next morning in congested eyes and nervous hands. But the men who knew Carothers knew better.

The clock in the square chimed two, and he came to himself with a start. His watch, lying on the desk in front of him, was open at the back. Carothers looked guiltily at the door and snapped the watch shut. Then he took his hat and went out.

When he reached the hospital the doctor had not arrived. Carothers remembered the proverbial tardiness of the profession and cursed his own punctuality. Everywhere around him were the hush, the bare cleanliness, the dreary



"YOU HAVE SEEN HER LATELY, DOCTOR. IS—IS SHE MUCH CHANGED?"