never been a part of life. I've only been an educator in a narrow routine. I've had my board and a few hundreds a year. I've had no parents, no sisters, no brothers, no knowledge of what a home is. No woman can do without a home. My soul has yearned for it. I want a place where I can walk through rooms and rooms and rooms and call them mine; where I can pick all the flowers I want from a garden and put them into all sorts of jugs; where I can take books from shelves and leave them scattered over tables; where I can see fine linen on mahogany, and order meals and invite nice people to eat them—people who don't know a word of French!" She broke off suddenly with a laugh that had tears in it.

"Excuse me. I meant to be business like, and I've only been melodramatic. That wasn't my cue. But I had to show you why I too couldn't throw away so much money without a thought. When you asked to meet me it seemed impossible; but I had to see what you were like, before I made up my mind to go back to French plays and laying away ten dollars at a time to keep me from starvation in my old age."

Harley had heard her story on his feet. At its end he turned to her gravely. "I think your case is more exigent than mine. In view of the existing circumstances, do you think you can make up your mind to pour coffee for me out of my mother's urn for the next thirty years or so—Anne Chisholm?"

For the first time in their strange interview the woman flushed hotly. She covered her feeling with her quick smile. "I'll promise the cups shall be always hot," she answered. Then she held out her hand with the frank reserve that was her charm.

Harley took and held it. "I believe you may trust me," he said almost gently. Then his manner took on its usual insouciance, as he turned to the electric bell. "Shall we call our sun dried chorus to jog back through that green door and congratulate us?" he asked.

Trufitt delivered his formal congratulations, and escorted the pair to the elevator. He was only legal as he bowed his farewell; but the human grin of genial interest crept over his face again as he turned away.

ANNE CHISHOLM'S wedding announcement brought a shock to all Harley Grange's friends. He had found an heiress, courted her, and married her before his world had even heard of her existence. But the world as soon as it knew her found her very charming. The new home was, by choice of both, in the country. All through the spring it knew an unending succession of guests. Both were happy. Anne filled her rooms with flowers, and covered her table with all that was beautiful of linen and silver and china. Harley, in his placid enjoyment of life, as his friends smoked his tobacco and drove his motors over smooth country roads, felt Anne's presence at the head of the table as an added reason for his deep and hearty content with a home in which to rest his travel-weary legs, a home that was never a cage but always a refuge.

Except as one among many Harley saw little of Anne. When they were occasionally alone he found her a perfect comrade, as sympathetic with silent moods, as quick of comprehension of his half-uttered whimsicalities. Slowly a friendship without a strain grew up between them, a laughing camaraderie that kept them to the surface and did not touch the deeper things of life.

HARLEY watched Anne's face one morning as she sat behind his mother's urn, making him a cup of most delectable coffee. For once they were alone. Her fitness for her surroundings struck him anew, her expansion of spirit and nature since she had been released from bonds.

He tried rather clumsily to put his feeling into words; but he was not much used to dealing with sentiment in the open, and was soon driven back under his cover of half-indifferent jesting.

Anne laughed at him. "Don't pity me. That life has gone forever, and all my days now are in green pastures. I wasn't wholly fair, either, when I described my college life. I was hot against it, and all spontaneity had been ground out of me. I told the very worst. Plenty of the girls weren't stupid, and I liked lots of them. I was happy enough."

"Are you happier now?" asked Harley.

"Yes," she answered, with a quick, shy glance.

"So am I," said Harley slowly. "I have found something I had supposed Utopian, a home, and it's even nicer than it was said to be."

"It is worth living years without things to realize an ideal finally," said Anne. "That makes me think. The

Continued on page 14

THE FLYING EMERALD

By MARY STEWART CUTTING

IT was so utterly unexpected, incongruous, incredible! Our only mail that morning was a small sealed package which I brought from the village and tossed over to Pauline as she stood by the table washing dishes in cold water; for we had no maid, and I was still a novice in the art of tending fires. We had been married only two weeks, and had come to this cheap little furnished cottage fifty miles from town, where we knew nobody, but where there was a beautiful, undulating stretch of sea coast for me to transfer to canvas, and earn enough money to live somewhere else. We had few friends and scant funds, but plenty of hope.

"A parcel for me?" she said, gladly leaving her dishes to come and sit on the arm of my chair. "I did not know you had given our address to anybody but Mr. Taviston."

"It is probably one of Taviston's jokes," I said. "You'll find lozenges inside."

"It is a joke," she replied. "Look at the paper!" She was unrolling layers of it. "Stupid thing! Yes, there's something hard inside. Come out, whatever you are!" She shook the paper vigorously, and what looked like an enormous emerald rattled down among the coffee cups on the table, and we both laughed.

"What a wonderful imitation!" said I. "Heavens! how it sparkles!"

"Yes, it is beautiful," said Pauline dreamily. "If it were only real!" She picked it up and held it a moment in her hand, and we both exclaimed; for the pulsating light in its clear depths made it seem a living thing. Then I spied a slip of paper with some writing on it, and together we read these words, with wonder, incredulity, terror:

It is as a last resort that the inclosed is confided to your keeping. The utmost secrecy must be observed in its defense; for tremendous issues hang upon the success of this plan. If it is kept safely until the afternoon of the third, a reward of ten thousand dollars will be paid you by the owner, who is compelled to trust in the courage and honesty of a stranger.

These lines were written in a peculiarly cramped hand, and signed only with an odd, curving mark.

As we finished this letter our eyes met; but we could say nothing. It is impossible to describe all I thought and felt in those few seconds. Pauline began to tremble unaccountably, and I held her closer to me, as if to shield her from impending danger. We looked at the jewel that lay among our poor little breakfast dishes, sending forth a flashing light of green and rose stars. It must be of untold value. Why should it be sent to us, of all people? I feared that we had been made the unwilling accomplices in a thieves' plot; but Pauline said, "Jerry, I feel, I know, that this paper tells the truth. I can't tell why, but I feel it."

We talked long and earnestly. It was evident that we must run a terribly large risk to have such a sum offered in payment. And what guaranty had we that the reward would ever be paid, and by whom? But Pauline said, "Fate has strangely thrown a chance in our way, Jerry; let us grasp it with both hands."

So it was decided, though against my better judgment. This was the first of February. Well, we ought to be able to hold the jewel for two days.

We went wandering over the house looking for the perfect hiding place. Our bare little rooms seemed pitiably open to research. We tried to take up a plank under one of the homemade rugs, and succeeded in chipping off the wood while the board remained immovable. We could suggest no place within doors that did not seem to invite inspection, and the ground outside was frozen. But when I made up the fire an inspiration seized me. I wrapped the gem in paper, carried it out in my shovelful of ashes to a little heap in the back yard, and marked the spot with an oyster shell. It would be safe there.

"It Is Probably One of Tavis on's Jokes," I Said.

I took a view of our surroundings before going in. Our cottage stood at the very end of the straggling village street. The doctor's cottage was to the right of us, open ground behind, woods in front, and woods on the left which came up close to the house and spread along the beach. There was no one in sight, and no sound in the still, frosty air but the far off booming of the surf upon the shore. Who had ever thought of sending a priceless jewel here?

THE day was a long one, and broken by no incident save one. I woke in the late afternoon from a doze in the sitting room, to feel that someone was looking at me. "Pauline," I said, "is that you?" and peered into the dusk. I called again, and Pauline answered me from upstairs. I went outside; but there was no trace of footsteps on the frozen ground. Then I cleaned up my pistol and cursed the owner of the emerald.

That night our lamp went out rather early. Pauline had forgotten to fill it. The other lamp was also empty, and we had no candles; so we sat in the firelight, basking in the warmth, forgetful of the emerald, with long silences between our words. Suddenly we were aware of a tiny, scraping sound, as of someone digging with an iron spoon in gravel. In an instant I was at the window, firing off my pistol, while Pauline shrieked. Our neighbor, aroused by the racket, threw up his window, and an animated conversation ensued. I explained that I feared burglars, and a few minutes later we were patroling the yard by the light of a Chinese lantern hastily caught up by the doctor, while Pauline clung to me with her eyes shut. But before this I had examined the ash-heap. Someone had been digging there: the ashes were scattered around. I felt for the treasure—it was there intact. I hastily pocketed it, and we went the rounds.

I borrowed the lantern and a couple of candles from the doctor, and Pauline and I sat downstairs for the rest of the night, and kept up the fires, and drank coffee. We tried to be gay. Pauline played on the mandolin, and I sketched her by the flickering candlelight; but it was eery work. We looked at the emerald: it scintillated like a green witch light, and I cursed the sender anew. I felt that I had been foolish in making a disturbance that would convince the spy that we had the jewel. Yet my blood was up. I would defend the thing now with my life, and outwit the creeping, stealthy influence I felt at work around us! And I was for the first time touched by the confidence reposed in me. How many men would have coveted the treasure for their own? But I could be trusted to hold it for another.

THE next day was a long strain upon the nerves. Nothing whatever happened; but the air was fraught with strange suggestions. I did not leave the house until late in the afternoon, for necessary supplies; while the doctor, who thought me extraordinarily agitated over the last night's scare, stayed with Pauline. I had kept the emerald in my pocket all day; but left it behind at her entreaty.

The crisp, bracing air did me good, driving away all uncanny feelings, with the aid of common sense. As I came back from the village the woods beyond were quite dark; but our own little house was bathed in the last beams of the setting sun. As I was admiring the picture I suddenly beheld some thing that held me spellbound,—a gigantic, wavering shadow projected from the farther side of the house, and, stretching half across the narrow road, the shadow of the body and head of a man. I felt for my pistol and crept cautiously up; but the shadow had disappeared before I could reach it. There