

THE CASE OF THE PEARL NECKLACE

WILLIAM S. McLEAN

I had been teaching a class in psychology at Turner College for four years, when an incident occurred that threatened to bring the taint of scandal on the whole school. A member of one of the sororities reported the loss of a valuable pearl necklace, which, she thought, had been stolen during the dinner hour. The college officials made every attempt to discover the thief with little success. Suspicion's finger pointed to a young man by the name of Henry Stewart, but there was no tangible evidence upon which to make an accusation. Then Dr. Klinger, the president, asked me to see what I could do. He urged me to prevent the matter from getting into the newspapers.

"Any adverse publicity at this time," he said, "will practically ruin the school."

"But," I said, "I'm no Sherlock Holmes." But in the end I agreed to do what I could.

In class, the next day, I began a lecture on "Association," and pointed out that our memories and recollections are aided by associating what we see and hear with that which we already know. I went on to suggest that I would like to demonstrate what I had said, and that I would do so if they would bring someone who was not a member of the class. Then I asked, in a manner I hoped was casual, if some one would bring his room-mate.

"Mr. Thomas, could you bring your room-mate?" I asked. Thomas was Stewart's room-mate, and I sincerely hoped I was being subtle. Thomas agreed to do so, and I dismissed the class.

No student ever crammed for an exam as I did for that experiment. I was not sure I had the right to attempt what I

planned, much less being sure of its success.

However, the next day Thomas brought Stewart with him and introduced him to me.

"Mr. Stewart, I am glad you came today," I said. "I want to demonstrate a principle of psychology, and I need some one from outside the class to help me. Will you be so kind?"

Stewart grinned rather nervously and said, "Sure. What cha want me t' do?"

I watched him rather closely and noted that he shifted from one foot to the other while he was talking to me. He also kept moving his hands. First, they were in his pockets, and then they were out. His eyes shifted to almost every object in the room, except my own eyes.

"In this demonstration," I said, "I want to show the power of association in the human mind. I shall call the name of some object and I want you to tell me the first thing that comes to your mind. Will you do that?"

This seemed to quiet him somewhat and he said, "Sure," in a firmer voice.

"All right," I said. "Now remember, tell me instantly the first thing that you think of. First, — pencil."

"Paper," he said at once.

"Pen," I said.

"Ink."

"Automobile."

"Date."

And so it went. I gave him quite a long list of common, trivial objects and he seemed to be enjoying himself and lost some of his nervousness. Then I got down to business.

"Streetcar," I said.

"Strap-hanger," he replied.
"Stair steps," I waited, my heart in my mouth.
"Red rug," came instantly.
"Home." (This, so as to not give it away.)
"Dad."
"Trunk."
"Red tile roof." He began to look worried again.
"Sorority." He was definitely worried now.
"Dressing table."
"Pearl necklace." When he said this, his eyes flashed, and he jumped to his feet.

"It's a lie," he shouted. "It's a lie. I didn't do it."

I took him to the president's office and after we questioned him further he confessed to the theft. He had sneaked into the house while the girls were at dinner, and tip-topped up the steps, which were covered with a red carpet. At the landing where the stairs turned there was a window-overlooking the porch, and at the other side was an antique trunk. These things he had noticed, unconsciously, as he went up and down the stairs, and had given himself away when I had led him on in my little demonstration.

THREE STAGES IN MY MOTHER'S LIFE

JOHN WHITAKER

At twenty my mother was a proud, polished, and contemptuous young lady, who was a perfect product of her age — the fabulous nineties. She had graduated from a finishing school and had spent a year in Europe as all proper young ladies do. Her face reflected this. A shadow connected the nose with her arched brow, which gave an aristocratic yet haughty look that was still accented by her long curved eyelashes. Her light brown hair was swept up in a great halo, that furthered her exalted air. The eyes and mouth gave a determined and impatient look that is characteristic of youth as well as of the age in which she was living.

My mother at thirty-five was subdued, and the world was increasingly with her; but the fire of her youth still faintly burned

within her. Her hair was no longer swept up in front. It was now parted in the middle and combed to either side where it fell into one long curl which circled the lower part of the head. This gave her a classical profile although her features were less distinct. Her air was one of calmness and serenity, for she was gaining a truer perspective on life.

Oliva de Cartier was now at fifty a serene, gracious, and philosophical woman. Her graying hair was still parted in the middle and formed a circle about the back of her head. Her once sharp features were now soft if not faint. The mouth was no longer quizzical but rather kind and sweet. A profound love of life could be seen in her eyes, which were turning more and more toward God.