The COAST of CHANCE

by ESTHER LUCILE BRADERLAIN

CLEVERLY retold by Ida Bellow

Experiment made by Schutt—PHERIA CO.

SYNOPSIS.

At a private view of the Chatsworth Art Gallery, Kerr Mallory, a young artist, is completely fascinated by Flora Chatsworth. Flora, however, is engaged to Hamilton Clark, a wealthy young man, and Kerr, realizing the hopelessness of his love, tries to forget it. Flora, during the course of a week's visit to the Chatsworth home, is a constant source of interest to Kerr, who finds her a bewildering combination of childish frankness and subtle coquetry. Flora has a friend, Mary Harris, who is also a guest at the Chatsworth home. Mary is completely fascinated by Hamilton Clark, and Flora, realizing this, tries to help her friend. Kerr, however, is unaware of Flora's plan, and misinterprets her actions. Flora, during the course of a week's visit, has become very much interested in Kerr, and is disappointed when he does not show any interest in her. Kerr, however, is unaware of this, and is completely fascinated by Flora. Flora, during the course of a week's visit, has become very much interested in Kerr, and is disappointed when he does not show any interest in her. Kerr, however, is unaware of this, and is completely fascinated by Flora.

CHAPTER IV.

Flowers by the Way.

Flora liked this funny little dining room with walls as frail as box boards, its low-ceiled and flooded with sun. It recalled surroundings she had known later than the mining camp, but long before the great red house. It seemed to her that she fitted here better than the Purdues. She looked across at Kerr, sitting opposite, to see if per haps he fitted too. But he was fre gan, decidedly. He kept about him still the hint of delicate masquerade that she had noticed the night before. Out of doors, alone with her, he had lost it. For a moment he had been absolutely off his guard.

She rose from the table with the feeling that in an hour all three of them had become quite old friends of his though without knowing anything further about him.

We must do this again," Mrs. Purdie said as they parted from her in the garden.

"Surely we will," Kerr answered her.

But Flora had the feeling that they never, never would. For him it had been a chance touching on a strange shore.

But at least they were going away together. They would walk together as far as the little car, whose terminus was the edge of the parade-ground. But as the outside of the gate he stopped.

"Do you especially like board walks?" he asked.

He was an instant before she took his meaning. Then she laughed. "No. It has green paths."

He waved with his cane. "There is a path yonder, that goes over a bridge, and beyond that a bench."

"And at the top of that shotter can," Flora finished him.

"Ah, well," he said, "there are flow ers on the way, at least." He looked at her whimsically. "There are three purple irises under the bridge. I no ticed them as I came down."

She was pleased that he had no ticed that for himself—pleased, too, that he had suggested the longer way.

The narrow path that they had chosen branched out upon the main path, broad and yellow, which dipped downward into the hollow. From there came the murmur of water. Green alcoved through the white grass of last summer. Sauntering between plantations of young eucalyptus, they came to the arched stone bridge. They leaned on the parapet, looking down at the marshy stream beneath and at the three irises Kerr had remarked, blue-deep in swamp ground.

Now that I see them I suppose I would them," Flora remarked.

"Of course," he assented. Then hold all these."

He put into her hands the loose bundle of sprines and rose plucked for her in the Purdies' garden. Laid his hat and gloves on the parapet, then with an eye for the better bank, walked to the end of the bridge.

She watched him descending the steep bank and turning into the path by the shallow banks of the stream's way. The sun was still high enough to fill the hollows with warm light and nod low the doubles of trees and grass in the stream. In this landscape of green and pale gold he looked blond and tall and angular. The wind blew longish locks of hair across his fore head, and she had a moment's pleased and timorous reflection that he looked like Satan coming into the Garden.

He advanced from towards to too luck. He came to the brink of the water. The fillies waved what seemed but a hand's breadth from him. But he stooped, he reached— Oh, could anything so foolish happen as that he could not get them! Or, more foolish still, plunge in to the shower? He straightened from his fruitless effort, drew back, but before she could think what he was about he had leaned for ward again, flashed out his cane, and with three quick, cutting slashes the irises were sawed. It was deftly, dis tantly, accomplishingly done, but it gave her a singular shock, as if she had seen a hawk strike its prey. He drew them sinuously toward him by the crook of his cane, took them up dexterity in his fingers, and returned to her across the shallow valley. She watched him with mixed emotions.

"Oh, how could you!" she mur mured as he put them into her hand.

He looked at her in amused as tonishment. "But aren't they right?"

They were so—so—clipped off and so perfect to if the distinct hand had plucked them.

"Oh, yes," she admitted, "they're lovely, but I don't like the way you got them."

"I took the means I had," he ob served.

"I don't think I like it."

His wanle face was sparkling with interest and amusement. "Is that so? Why not?"

"You're too—too"—she cast about for the word—"too terribly resource ful."

"I see. He said. If she had feared he would laugh, it showed how little she had gadged the limits of his laughter. He only looked at her curi ously more intently than he had before.

"Ha, my good child, resourceful ness is a very natural instinct. I am afraid you read more into it than is there. You wanted the flowers, I had a stick, and on my pocket knife I could to strike clean and straight. I am really a very simple fellow."

Looking him in the eyes, which were of a clear candid gray, she was ready to believe it. It seemed as if he had let her look for a moment through his manner, his crouse, his armor of indifference, to the frank foundations of his nature.

"But, you see, the trouble is you don't in the least look it," she ar gued.

"So you think because I have a long face and wild hair that I am a sinister person? My dear Miss Gilley, the most dangerous character I ever knew was five feet high and wore mutton chop whiskers. It is an uncertain business judging men by their ap pearance."

As soon as silence fell between them she saw that wave of possession ion which had submerged him during their walk from the parade ground to the Purdies' rose, ebbed him again and floating him away from her. He no longer even looked at her. His eyes were on the ground, and it was not until they had crossed the open expanse of the shallow valley and were climbing toward the avenue of cypress that she found courage to put her question.

"Have you and Mr. Creasy met be fore?"

He raised his head with a jerk and looked at her a moment in astonish ment.

"Do you mind if I answer your ques tion American fashion by asking at least a half of yours—towards next time? Did you put into your head that we may have met before?"

The way you looked at each other at the club, and again this noon at Kerr shook his head. "You are an observant young person. The fact is I've never met him—of that I'm sure. But I believe I've been him be fore, and for the life of me I can't think where. At the moment I had myself I was trying to remember."

Was it in this country?" Flora prompted, hopeful of finding some thing definite out of this vagueness.

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"Oh, Harry's been in England," she said quickly, and then, with a flash, she thought, came to her the one scene Harry had mentioned in his English experience. Was it at a ball? The question came to her lips, but she checked it there. She remembered how Harry had stopped her the night before when she had given a look from mentioning that very thing.

So you're not going to tell me?" he asked, and again with a look from his embarrassing young friend