"THE ROAD TO THE LEFT"

"Three leagues, then the road ran, and turned into a puzzle... David stood, uncertain for awhile, and then took the road to the left." —O. Henry.

A slip of yellow paper fell from nervously working fingers and rested lightly on the floor. But its few heavy words were driving like steel spikes into the inner section of Howard Coban's brain. Each thought hammered them deeper and deeper. Yet he could not stop thinking.

Thoughts would struggle even through the roar and den of heavy tumbling sounds and the deafening hollow ring of steel words beating at his brain. Yet he jumped at the faint sound of a turning door knob. Instantly in a panic of self-conscious deceit he rattled the telegram into its hiding place.

"Was your business trip the best yet, Daddy-boy?" Virginia Coban called through the half opened door, her fluffy bobbed hair circled with silver ribbon. "And you may have a fine easy evening all to yourself, Pull and I are going to the show."

Howard Coban did not move in his chair. Through the clutter and roar of his brain he could only hear him self say uncertainly: "Phil?"

"Oh, did I say Phil? How foolish—Dar!" Here Virginia stagged a well practiced little laugh which grated harshly on her father's ear. "You would think I was deceitful. But you don't really care if I go with Dan now, do you, dear Daddy-boy?"

He did not answer. And she was gone.

Howard Coban was stunned in the wreck of his own life. He considered the telegram as the post into which he had deliberately driven. The dizziness and ache of his brain slowly centered into one thought, and that of Virginia. He had positively forbidden her going with Dan—and she had deceived him. He started from his chair as if to call her back. Deceit—where had Virginia learned that word? He fell into his chair again, limp from utter helplessness. Howard Coban could answer his own question.

When accelerated mental suffering reaches to the highest point of human endurance where to go on would be death, it sometimes recedes hastily into an exhausted peace of mind. So Coban found himself strangely quiet.

And into the stillness and peace of his thoughts came the scene of his childhood. He was a boy again. He could almost feel the warm sunshine filtering through quiet green leaves of a giant oak that stood in the back yard of the little country home. The tree—strong, stately, immovable—was a playhouse for him then. It furnished swings, acting poles, hiding places, shelter and shade to numerous small boys through many summer days.

On one dark day, however, he climbed to the tip top of it when the wind was beating the branches wildly. From its swaying top he gained a rather distorted view of his small world—a view which was never to be quite clear again.

Just ten years old, shy and sensitive, he had played marbles under the tree in the back yard, with a little pal. They were not playing for keeps, but his friend had won and had kept. In angry tears Howard sought an older brother.

"A cock-eyed dog could fool you, Howard Coban," his brother said. "Everybody in the world is not going to ring true, and you needn't expect them to."

So Howard climbed the tree to think it out. He had no idea what a cock-eyed dog was like, but the term made a terrible impression. He was not going to be fooled by a cock-eyed dog. He was not going to have every one laughing at him. He did believe people, but he could not any longer. He would be careful after this.

Howard Coban was spending another day of self-analysis. It was years later. He was looking for the truth. Always suspicious, never quite sure—he hated himself for being that way.

He was in love, exquisite torture to him. But this involved his life and her life; he must be sure. He would think it out, try it out, jury fashion, consider it from every point of view, and then decide. If this unsettled feeling kept on it would drive him mad. Coban laughed and wondered if anybody else in the world ever settled a love affair this way.

First, what made him like Nida Turner, he had thought about her for weeks in spite of all he could do. Well, Nida was attractive. She was almost beautiful. Nida was also bright and vivacious. She could talk well. She was original, and she was sensible. Coban knew all these things, he had figured them out before. Now he summed them up with a glowing face. Nida was certainly his ideal of a girl. He had never expected to find his perfect girl, and here she was; and above all, she seemed to like him. She chose him from all his frat. brothers to talk to that first night, he remembered, after he had sung a snatch of their new song. Finally, was she sincere? She was, he knew she was. He could talk to her five minutes and tell she was an extraordinary girl.

Coban's fingers rested on an unopened letter. He was thinking of Nida Tanner so intently that he had even forgotten to open his mail.

"Cobe, while you're in Medford, you might meet up with an old friend, I might say the proverbial "old sweetheart of mine." She is pretty—I always fall for pretty ones—and just as attractive as she can be. But don't get caught, old man, she shoots the same line to every boy she meets.

(Continued on page 2, column 2)
knows the time is short, and makes
enough to cease to be company. "He"
they last. You aren't at home lone
naturally holds a greater thrill while
Hoses. But Spring Holidays just
some. June, the month of Brides and
girl at present.

rpot upon the horizon of every L. C.
bination it makes! That's the bright
of "holidays." Then put the two to-
Holidays will be greater. Summer
ed, the definition of "spring" and

 conservatism. It's too good to be true. Hang
risk! I'd be a fool to seek gain at such a
risks. He thought he had triumphed, if only he could be
sure. Occasionally the fear of a
tioned to himself. "Too big a risk,
be left unfinished, unless, cf
investigations himself, but blue prints
to enveigle him into some scheme.

being too urgent at this time
Coban could go to Chicago and make
a smooth talking fellow sent down

indecisive. "A cock-eyed dog can fool you,
Howard Coban." The words startled
him. Did some one speak them? Or
did they sound from an undercurrent
of memory that echoed and re-echoed
him. Did some one speak them? Or

Howard Coban. The words startled
him. Did some one speak them? Or
did they sound from an undercurrent
of memory that echoed and re-echoed
him. Did some one speak them? Or

"SPRING"; HOLIDAYS"

"Spring"—season when all nature
takes on new life, when a young
man's (and woman's) fancy lightly
turns to love; when flowers bloom,
and balmy zephyrs stir the newly
budded leaves; comes once a year.

"Holidays"—occasions when the
regular routine of work is pushed
aside; when school is the least of
one's worries; when everybody in gen-
ral, and you in particular turn every-
thing loose, for one more good time.
No set time for holidays; always come
too seldom.

There you have somewhat elaborat-
ed, the definition of "spring" and
of "holidays." Then put the two to-
gether and see what a glorious com-

happily against them. He thought
he had triumphed, if only he could be
sure. Occasionally the fear of a
great calamity befalling him, due to
his own short sightedness, his own
inability to judge people about him,
depressed him and almost wiped out
his already shaken faith in others and
in himself.

Coban walked miles in the cool
night air trying to shake off his de-
pression, and trying to run away, if
possible, from a new decision that
confronted him. After all, he was
doing well. His position with Cole
and Funt, Architects, was secure, he
thought, and promising. Honest
drudgery had won something for him.
There were his family and his home.
How proud he was of them! His wife
had been a partner to him from child-
hood. How suddenly he had realized
her great worth, after he had return-
ed home from Medford and a great
disappointment in another girl.

Coban thought of all this before
he met the real question. That morn-
ing he had been perfectly happy, now
he was in the mire of indecision. An
opportunity had come, an opportuni-
ty to leave the small town and go out
to do bigger things. By chance he
was offered the place of a retiring
architect in Chicago. A representa-
tive from the firm called on him that
morning, painting in vivid colors
this wonderful "piece of luck." It
was a venture. If he did not make
good, he would lose everything. The
next morning he was to give his de-
cision whether or not he would se-
riously consider the place.

"It's too big a risk," Coban mut-
tered to himself. "Too big a risk.
Better to keep a safe middle course.
No home, no position, no prestige! I
have my family to think of. Why,
I'd be a fool to seek gain at such a
risk!

"But such an opportunity, exactly
what I've dreamed of, what I've pray-
ed for all these years, that I might
give my wife and daughter the very
best. It's too good to be true. Hang
it! I don't know what to do!"

And Coban leathern himself for his
indecisiveness.

"A cock-eyed dog can fool you,
Howard Coban." The words startled
him. Did some one speak them? Or
did they sound from an undercurrent
of memory that echoed and re-echoed
so distinctly at intervals in his life?

Yes, anybody could fool him. He
writhed under the thought. Perhaps,
after all, this "big chance" was only
a smooth talking fellow sent down
to enveigle him into some scheme.
Coban could go to Chicago and make
investigations himself, but blue prints
were by far too urgent at this time
to be left unfinished, unless, of
course, he was practically sure of
making a change.

(Concluded on page 3. Column 1)
“The Road to The Left”

(The continued from second page)

The proposition appeared safe enough on the surface. He knew the man who had spoken for him. Some of his plans had by chance shifted into the Chicago architect’s hands, and been highly approved. But this easy-going, smooth-lipped fellow was most too flattering. He was also in too big a hurry. Why did he want Coban’s answer in the morning? Not a final answer, of course, but an approximate one. It was almost the same. The man said a second appointee was already in view. Trying to scare Coban into the place, was he? Well, Coban would show him.

“A cock-eyed dog could fool you, Howard Coban,” his lips murmured the words. “It’s a lie! It’s a lie! I’m not a fool.” And Coban ground his heel on the pavement as he turned toward home.

Work, work, work for forty years brought Howard Coban a small fortune. But he was growing weary of his labor. People wondered why he clung to the little town, the little office, the little bungalow. His plans covered half the state. They were of a small type, however, he did not try for anything big. He had succeeded in a small way to be sure. The name in the newspapers of a famous Chicago architect constantly reminded him of the success he might have made.

Then a second opportunity came. Coban decided at once. The more he put into it the more he would get out of it. Other fellows were getting rich, why could not he? His old age would be lonely, now, and he needed the comforts of the rich. He was especially anxious to give his motherless daughter every advantage possible.

Questions of doubt came into his mind but he crowded them back. For once he would be strong! Besides, he felt that he deserved good fortune.

It was six months later that he sat alone with the telegram in his hand. Virginia, his daughter, was out with Dan Sherrald, a fellow whom he heartily disliked, but he had too wanted and disturbed to stop her. For two hours he sat motionless, thinking, thinking. He had felt this hour of darkness and ruin approaching for years, but had hoped it was only a feeling. Now it was a reality! Once he faced a problem carefully, thoughtfully; he suspected the man who offered it; he kept to the safe course. Then he missed the great opportunity of his life! Again he met an offer. This time he decided firmly, quickly, trustfully. The telegram which he held was the answer, a yellow sheet of paper was in gain. With trembling, aged hand Coban read: “Blue Ribbon mine sunk. Complete loss. Move details later.”

“It’s useless to think back over his past life, and analyze the causes of his failure. He could do this, he knew, for there were the reasons—in his own life. He blamed not one else. He had simply misjudged. Once more he would begin, and this time——.”

A bell rang. Coban went to the door.

“Telegram,” said a boy.

“Dan and I were married at 8:40 p. m. Will write tomorrow from Chicago. Virginia.”

“Ne’er The Twain Shall Meet”

Pork chops sputtered on the stove for luncheon. Old Abram Rantor was suddenly missing from his chair beside the window in his room. He left there less and less now, and never without the help of Joel, his servant.

“Mrs. Bruce, the old man’s gone, he’s nowhere to be found. He’s not in his room!”

“A bell rang. Coban went to the door.

“Telegram,” said a boy.

“Dan and I were married at 8:40 p. m. Will write tomorrow from Chicago. Virginia.”

“It’s like my own heart was frying with them pork chops. It’s been insults like this since that “schopshoff” persuaded my daughter, my own beautiful daughter, into marrying him. I can’t stand to face my pure, good wife in Heaven when I let that insulter of my religion—own religion

(Continued on page 4, column 1)
Old Abram sank into his accustomed chair, his long, white beard falling on his chest as if his very heart had melted from utter despair.

Ronald Bruce never dreamed when he married Natasha Kantor two years before that his life and hers also would be tormented by that strange, outrageous belief of his father-in-law. He loved his wife for her beauty—her dark exotic beauty, but how was he to endure these nightly quarrels?

Every meal proved harder to stand. Silence—the naked silence of Old Abram, the high-tensioned silence of Natasha, and the tired silence of Ronald Bruce.

For two years Old Abram had kept husher—separate dishes of food, set at a separate end of the table. Old Martha, that melting pot of races, the cook, realized the necessity of two stoves in the kitchen, two shelves in the pantry. To Bruce this husher business proved more tantalizing with every meal.

In course of one of Old Abram's infrequent wanderings about the apartment, he chanced upon Bruce's watch. No doubt, Bruce had forgotten it that morning, thought the old man, but there was that crucifix.

Ronald Bruce was a Romanist and always the small crucifix hung on his watch chain.

"Fine," was all the old man could say in regard to anything belonging to a "schophoff" like Bruce.

Bruce was earlier than usual that night from work, and he hoped that he could spend one night without the regular quarrel.

But as he entered, "Look! a husband he is! Come to him, a snake in the grass, which bites the hand what feeds him, that's what he is!" As usual, would life ever be a bit happy for him? Bruce came in to the room where his wife stood trying to calm her father. The stench of garlic assailed his nostrils! Always—that garlic!

Bruce frowned, amazed exclaimed:

"There's something got to be done! I can't stand this! Either you leave or I leave!"

Natalka pleaded, her arms outstretched to her husband, "You won't turn my poor, dear father out of the house! You can't send him away; you can't! I won't let you!"

Bruce remained firm. He had gone his rope's end!

"Ah sail!" Old Abram cried and commenced to rant anew.

"Sniff! sniff!"

"Oh, my God, there's that ham again! Ham in my daughter's house! Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Beating his chest wildly, he struggled to the floor, and unsteady though he was, he managed to reach the open window, leading out onto the fire escape—a refuge for his tortured heart.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Natalka rushed over to catch her father's arm to hold him back; but oh! Old Abram stumbled, falling against the railing, and fell! A horrible sight! Seeing her father fall, she screamed and rushed wildly down the stairs, followed by Bruce.

She saw her father—a broken heap—on the side walk outside. Turning quickly to her husband, she exploded with all her wrath, "You brute—you—you've killed my father! Go! I never want to see you again! No—never!"

Bruce left but he knew not where. Amazed, stunned, he walked block after block towards—what?

A year later Ronald Bruce was summoned by Natalka to come to her home with her lawyer to attend to some details concerning a divorce. He and the lawyer ascended the stairs of the Rosedale apartments. The door to the fifth floor apartment opened. Mrs. Bruce, pale faced, tired and hollow-eyed, sat staring out the window.

The cry of a tiny baby from an adjoining room, came to them as they entered. Bruce started, turned, and ran towards the cry.

He fell down beside the bed and awkwardly—yet tenderly placed his arms about the child. Trembling with a strange feeling, he knew that this child was his. His bread shoulders unable to bear this sudden burden. Then—a hand was laid gently upon his shoulder. Immediately the shaking ceased, and Bruce looked up into the face of his wife.

Somehow Bruce was passionately drawing Natalka to him, "Natalka, my own little wife, my darling! They belong to each other like two frightened children. All thoughts of divorce had vanished.

For several days Bruce was really happy, the first time he had been happy for nearly three years. But suddenly—a boomerang—"Today—one year ago—my poor dear father died! Oh, that miserable death!"

came to him from the lips of Natalka. Silence! Silence—hiding the dreadful surges of torture arising in Bruce's brain? Would Old Abram ever cease to be a destroyer of their happiness?

In the cool moonlight his lips were white. While his were vivid carmine shade; Our hero felt the call to arms, And joined the colors, unafraid.—Ex.
ed slowly along the seashore, searching for shells which to the child looked like pearls. As a reminder of her life was for flawless pearls and flawless pearls demand a flawless setting.

While other children had romped and played Sheila Colburn had walked slowly along the seashore, searching for shells which to the child looked like pearls.

Most girls seal their engagement with a diamond, but Anthony Colburn had slipped a creamy pearl on Sheila’s slim white finger. She had said it looked like a large, glistening tear. Once married it had become Anthony’s custom to give his wife a perfect pearl each birthday and Christmas. Sheila would accept no other gift.

Resting her elbows on her dressing table, she gazed intently at a dainty little calendar, for a moment. Only two weeks until her birthday. A smile of anticipation curved her lips.

A single large pearl was needed to complete her string. Anthony should have purchased it by now. The pearls would make their initial appearance at her birthday dinner. She had already made out her lists of guests for the occasion.

Absently the woman picked up a brush. Anthony’s! She laughed a brittle little laugh. No one really understood Sheila Colburn until she understood Sheila Colburn. How like Anthony to have some personal effect in her room. It was detestable, having one’s privacy invaded in such a manner. How had she ever imagined herself fascinated with the big, practical man. At the age of twenty-eight Sheila Colburn had found herself disillusioned, unhappy. That she could leave her husband never occurred to her. To leave comfort and luxury was unthinkable. After all, she cared for Anthony, no doubt, as much as it was in her complex nature to care for any one.

A tiny clock chimed the hour. Sheila started slightly. Her intended shopping tour had been almost forgotten.

An hour later an exquisitely dressed woman stood entranced before Tiffany’s windows. Delicate hand flitting to quickly beating heart, fluttering nostrils, darkening eyes, half-parted lips, brightening color, indicated that a string of magnificent, perfectly matched pearls, was the object of her gaze. Somehow she found herself inside the store.

“The pearls—what price?” she gasped in a voice she hardly recognized as her own.

“$10,000, Madam, and quite a bargain at that. They are part of a famous string of pearls which was divided to settle an estate,” came the reply.

Sheila left the store in a daze. Friends passed and spoke, cheerily. The greeting was not returned. $10,000! Her private account amounted to a bare $2,000. Vaguely she remembered that Anthony had been strangely depressed of late. His business was not going well. No matter! She must possess those pearls, at any price. Suppose they were sold that day. Her steps quickened. She must hurry home and think out some plan.

The fragrance aroma of Anthony’s special brand of Havana’s filled her nostrils as she opened the door. Anthony home to lunch! That was unusual. For once she was glad.

Anthony Colburn was standing before an open window, gazing meditatively out into the street. He was a large man, but his shoulders drooped, and as he turned to greet his wife, his steel blue eyes had a strained, weary look. He too, was disillusioned. Sheila had long ago killed his love for her, and had left a sting in its place.

“Sick again, I suppose, Anthony.” Sheila feverishly removed her gloves. “I didn’t know you would be home to lunch, and gave the cook today off.”

“It doesn’t matter,” he told her, listlessly. “I’m not particularly hungry. Came home to get that insurance policy. The premium falls due tomorrow and I haven’t got the money to meet it. I’ve decided to cancel it and take out another when business gets better,” he sighed heavily.

“I can make you some cinnamon toast and tea,” his wife offered. She felt a nervous necessity for occupying her time while she thought of
Anthony raised his eyebrows in surprise. It was unusual for Shelia to perform the smallest service for him.

Shelia saw a broken wine glass on the pantry shelf, when she reached for the box of cinnamon. How careless and untidy of the cook. What was that story she had just read of Maupassant's—with cakes—split open—broken glass—

The toast was soon prepared, and Anthony deciding that he "was rather hungry, after all," ate heartily.

"The sugar seems unusually coarse," he remarked, as he ate his cinnamon toast.

"Yes, I noticed it this morning," Shelia replied. "I must see that some more is ordered before dinner.

Dr. Gray bent over the prostrate form of Anthony Colburn. A nurse, crisp and efficient, stood near. Shelia looked on pale but entirely composed.

"Gastritis again, Mrs. Colburn. It's taken an acute turn—I'm afraid—. The doctor's face set in lines of defeat.

Shelia's beauty bloomed afresh in the most fashionable of mourning.

"Grief stricken—so brave—poor girl—bears up wonderfully—" was the concensus of opinion among friends.

It had not taken long to collect her husband's insurance policy. The company in which the policy had been taken had a home office in the city in which Shelia resided.

The wonder, the unearthly glory of the pearls—the pearls. They caught and held the splendors of the sun— the sunset, the Orient, and reflected a thousand lights. Shelia slipped them through her burning fingers, again and again, with volupitous delight. The cool, smooth, silky feel of them! Holding them to her breast she sat and crooned softly to them as to a child. Her eyes shone with an elfish gleam.

The scrub woman stood in the hall talking to the elevator boy, in a loud voice.

"De Doctor's in dar, now. I so:il for him, myself. Dat air woman's been er settin' in dare lookin' at dem' white things dese here fo' days. Talkin' to 'em and a laughin' like a crazy parson. The cook say she ain't et nothin' since her husband died. I tell you she had off."

"A plain case of malnutrition, Miss Bert. Husband's death, no doubt, brought on this nervous disaster. Better keep those pearls out of her sight."

Shelia sat up weakly, gazing about with a glassy stare. The pearls—where were they? Rising unsteadily she tottered to the dressing table. There they were safe in her jewel box.

"P. S.—Your husband was inside of it."—Ex.

We have just heard of a man with a very tender heart. Here is what he wrote on one occasion:

"Dear Mrs. Rich: Your husband can't come home today, because his bathing suit was washed away."

"P. S.—Your husband was inside of it."—Ex.

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Women hurried to and fro, and with flowers were piled around; men and women hurried to and fro, and with touch after touch seemed to transform the rooms into houses of beauty. The spacious old house took on mystical airs. There was a delicious odor coming from the back of the house where marvelous things were being put into and taken out of the oven.

Even from the outside of the Spencer home one would think that something was going to happen. But every one in the sleepy little Southern town was wide awake to the fact that Carol Spencer and Rodney Copeland were to be married the next day at high noon.

There was something about the new girl in the big Lorell-Nixon department store which made it impossible to merely ignore or overlook her. Lorell-Nixon had long been the bustling western city and many people noticed the new clerk. Perhaps some even came the second time just to see her. She had been there only three months, and she was different from the other girls.

There was something about the new girl in the big Lorell-Nixon department store which made it impossible to merely ignore or overlook her. Lorell-Nixon had long been the leading department store in the big, bustling western city and many people noticed the new clerk. Perhaps some even came the second time just to see her. She had been there only three months, and she was different from the other girls.

No one, not even the manager, knew much about her. To be sure, on the register was her name, Ellen Gray; and her boarding place, Miss Blair's, which didn't even pretend to be pretentious. But these things told very little, and the girl herself seemed to know nothing more; or she was uncommunicative.

"Going to lunch?" Number 22 came out of the dressing room behind Ellen Gray, and the two went together to Mr. John's for a quick lunch.

A sandwich and a cup of tea isn't much over which to go into raptures, but two very attractive young girls were evidently enjoying such a lunch. Every one in Mr. John's remarked that they looked very happy. They were laughing more than usual—indeed, Number 22 remarked afterwards that it was the first time she had seen new little Ellen Gray really laugh.

They hadn't noticed the stranger at the next table looking their way. They hadn't noticed either that he glanced from them to something he held in his hand. They were astonished when this grave-looking man came up to them.

"I beg your pardon; I am Detective McAfee and I am now handling a very peculiar case. I cannot give you all of the details, but you—" he nodded towards Ellen—"bear such a resemblance to the picture of the person I am trying to find that I would like to ask you a few questions."

He showed them the picture—the exact likeness of Ellen—and surely little gray hat she wore was the same as the one pictured. But the names; the girl in the picture was Miss Carol Spencer; and certainly the detective couldn't question Ellen's own name. But Ellen was unable to answer some of the questions:

"When were you born?"

"Are your parents living?"

"Where did you live before coming here?"

"Have you ever worked before?"

Number 22 gasped when she heard...
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