

[Geneva Street]

October 14, 1939

Geneva Street

Newton, N.C.

Ethel Deal, Writer

Lila J. Bruguiera, Reviser Original Names: Changed Names:

Geneva Street Minerva Boyd

Madge Street Polly Boyd

Lucy Street Grace Boyd

Osce Blankinship Dan Seymore

Mrs. Herman Mrs. Ballard

Johnson City Freeman City

Asheville Merryvale

Mitchell County Pelham County

Newton Brompton

Whenballs Mills Whiteford Mills

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The boarding house stood on a level lot close to the street. It was painted white and spread over the green lawn like a mother hen trying to cover her chicks. Shrubbery surrounded the wide porch and flowers bloomed beside the walk that led from the street. In the living room a pretty girl with dark curly hair and blue eyes sat in a chair beside the window. As she talked to me she turned frequently to look out at the pleasant picture of lawn and trees flooded with the declining sunlight of a summer afternoon.

“My name is Minerva Boyd. I am twenty-two years old and I was born on my father's farm in Pelham County. He owned two hundred and ninety acres up there but it didn't bring in much. Money was scarce and our family was large. There were eight girls and no boys. We girls had to take the place of boys in the farm work, but we didn't mind and we had a happy home. Father and mother were quiet people and asked nothing more of their crowd of girls than to be Christians and be an aid and comfort to their neighbors and friends. Large families are lots of fun. The house is never dull where there are eight lively girls and when our work was done or on rainy days our time was our own. I was the book worm and my sisters always let me have the best chair. Polly liked to sew and made pretty things for 2 us all. Grace had talent for drawing. She would keep the whole family laughing over her pictures.

“When I was ten years old I tore a leader in my leg. Somehow it just wouldn't heal and after weeks of treatment in a hospital my leg had to be amputated. Father didn't buy me an artificial leg until I was sixteen because I was growing all the time and we were too poor to have a new one every year. For six years I was on crutches. That's why my sisters always gave me the best chair.

“My first job outside the home was in a hosiery mill in Freeman, Tennessee. I made fifteen dollars a week but I wasn't satisfied because my one desire was to take a course in beauty parlor work. I saved my money and when I had five-hundred dollars I went to Merryvale and took a course at the Academy there. I wanted to open a shop of my own but I didn't have the money so I got a position as operator in another woman's shop. I liked the work

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fine but I had to stand while working and the pressure on my leg was too great. It got bruised and I had to have another operation and two more inches taken off. My salary at the Beauty Parlor averaged twenty dollars a week. That's more than I can make at the Hosiery Mill but there I can sit down to at my job. I'll never be able to do anything that requires standing all the time.

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"When I was taking the Beauty Parlor Course in Merryvale I met a young school teacher named Dan Seymore. We spent long hours together driving over the mountains and picknicking along the way. Dan had a car and it was fine for me because I can't do very much walking. We plan to be married soon and Dan is building a home for us. It's nothing fine, just a four room cottage with bath and electric lights and screened in porches. I think it's lovely. It stands on a high hill and has a beautiful view from every part. I am saving all the money I can to help in the furnishing.

"I don't mean for our marriage to be a two way affair. We're going to pull together and make it a success. The first thing a couple seems to think about these days if things don't go to suit them is getting a divorce. I don't believe in divorce and if it wasn't so easy to get there would be fewer separations. The Bible allows a divorce for only one thing and that's adultery. When a couple wants a divorce today they hire a lawyer and frame each other to get it. Half of them don't know what the Bible says and the other half don't care.

"Since mother died I have been on my own. Father remarried and I didn't care to stay at home. Things are different after you lose your mother. I've been here in Brompton seven weeks. I work for the Whiteford Mills and 4 make fourteen dollars a week. My board costs five fifty a week. I dress myself and save something besides. My life is very quiet. I spent so many years on crutches I got out of the habit of going places. I can't take part in active sports but I'm fond of croquet and play a good game. I've taught myself to like puzzles and cards but most of my spare hours are spent in the public library reading books and magazines. Our folks are all Baptists but Dan is a Methodist and I'll join his church if he

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wants me to. I'm a Democrat. I like our President fine. He's on the side of the working man. I hope we don't have to get mixed up in this war. If we do Dan may have to go but I'll send him off with a smile and do my moaning and groaning while he's gone. I love him too much to make a coward of him.

Mrs. Ballard, the boarding house keeper, had entered the room while Minerva was speaking.

"That's a silly thing to say. I've been married four weeks and I wouldn't think of letting my husband go to war."

Mrs. Ballard didn't look like a bride. She weighed two hundred and six pounds and wore a washed out cotton dress, of undecided color about two sizes too small for her.

"No sirree, my man's not going to any war. If the President wants to send men over there and have them butchered for fun he can't send mine."

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"Probably not," said Minerva sweetly. "Your husband is past the age limit."

"He's only forty-five. I'm fifty two. It takes a good looking woman to ketch a man that age."

"I agree," said Minerva.