

A TRAGIC EVENING

No. 7 of a New Series of "Anne" Stories

By L. M. Montgomery, Author of "Anne of Green Gables"

"I AM INVITED to supper tomorrow night with a lady of Summerside," wrote Anne Shirley to Gilbert Blythe. "I know you won't believe me when I tell you her name is Tomgallon. . . . Miss Minerva Tomgallon. You'll say I've been reading Dickens too long and too late. This is the ultimate honor Summerside has to bestow . . . an invitation to Tomgallon House. It has no other name. No nonsense about Elms or Chestnuts or Crofts for the Tomgallons."

"They were the Royal Family of Summerside in their day. And now there is left of them all only Miss Minerva, the sole survivor of six generations of Tomgallons, living alone in a tremendous house on Loyalist street . . . a house with a mansard roof, huge chimneys, green shutters and the only stained glass window in a private house in town. It is big enough for four families and is occupied only by Miss Minerva, a cook and a maid. It is very well kept up, but somehow whenever I pass it I feel that it is a place which life has just forgotten."

"Miss Minerva goes out very little and I never met her until a few weeks ago when she came to a meeting of staff and trustees to make the formal gift of her father's valuable library to the school. She looks exactly as you would expect a Minerva Tomgallon to look . . . tall and thin, with a long narrow white face, a long thin nose and a long thin mouth. That doesn't sound very attractive, yet Miss Minerva Tomgallon is quite handsome in a stately aristocratic style and is always dressed with great though somewhat old-fashioned elegance. She was quite a beauty when she was young, Rebecca Dew tells me, and her large black eyes are still full of fire. She suffers from no lack of words, and I don't think I ever heard anyone enjoy making a presentation speech more."

"Miss Minerva was especially nice to me, and yesterday I received a formal little note asking me to have supper with her. When I told Rebecca Dew she opened her eyes as wide as if I had been invited to Buckingham Palace."

"It's a great honor to be asked to the Tomgallon place," she said, in a rather awed tone. "I never heard of Miss Minerva asking any of the principals there before. To be sure, they were all men before you, so I suppose it would hardly have been proper. Well, I hope she won't talk you to death, Miss Shirley. The Tomgallons could all talk the hind-leg off a cat. And they liked to be in the front of things. Some folks think the reason Miss Minerva lives so retired is because now that she's old she can't take the lead as she used to do and won't play second fiddle to anyone. What are you going to wear, Miss Shirley? I'd like to see you wear your cream silk gauze. It's so dressy."

"I'm afraid it would be rather too dressy for a quiet evening out," I said.

"Miss Minerva would like it, I think. The Tomgallons always liked their company to be nicely arrayed. They say Miss Minerva's grandfather once shut the door in the face of a woman who had been asked there to a ball because she came in her second-best dress. He told her her best was none too good for the Tomgallons."

"Nevertheless I think I'll wear my green voile and the ghosts of the Tomgallons must make the best of it."

It was a dark windy March evening when Anne skimmed up the triple flight of shallow steps, flanked by stone urns and stonier lions, that led to the massive front door of Tomgallon House. Usually when she had passed it after dark it was sombre and grim, with a dim twinkle of light in one or two windows, but now it blazed forth brilliantly, even the wings on either side being lighted up, as if Miss Minerva were entertaining the whole town. Such an illumination in her honor rather overcame Anne. She almost wished she had put on her cream gauze.

Nevertheless, she looked very charming in her green voile and perhaps Miss Minerva, meeting her in the hall, thought so, for her face and voice were very cordial. Miss Minerva herself was regal in black velvet, with a diamond comb in the heavy coils of her iron grey hair.

"Welcome to Tomgallon House, my dear," she said, giving Anne a bony hand, likewise

well-sprinkled with diamonds. "I am very glad to have you here as my guest."

"I am . . ."

"Tomgallon House was the resort of beauty and youth in the old days. We used to have a great many parties and we entertained all the visiting celebrities," said Miss Minerva, leading Anne to the big staircase over a carpet of faded red velvet. "But all is changed now. I entertain very little. I am the last of the Tomgallons. Perhaps it is as well. Our family, my dear, are under a curse!"

Miss Minerva infused such a gruesome tinge of mystery and horror into her tones that Anne almost shivered.

"This is the stair down which my great grandfather Tomgallon fell and broke his neck the night of the house-warming given to celebrate the completion of his new

half-aunt Eliza . . . at least she would have been my half-aunt if she had lived . . . just disappeared when she was six years old. Nobody ever knew what became of her."

"But surely . . ."

"Every search was made but nothing was ever discovered. It was said that her mother . . . my step-grandmother . . . had been very cruel to an orphan niece of my grandfather's who was being brought up here. She locked it up in the closet at the head of the stairs one hot summer day for punishment and when she went to let it out she found it . . . dead! Some people thought it was a judgment on her when her own child vanished. But I think it was just Our Curse."

"Who put . . ."

"What a high instep you have, my dear! My instep used to be admired, too. It was

not long survive her son's tragic death. She had a very bad heart after my great-grandfather's death and when another son, my great-uncle James, shot himself in the cellar the shock killed her. Uncle James did that because a girl he wished to marry threw him over just before they were to have been married. She was very beautiful . . . too beautiful to be quite good, I am afraid, my dear. Beauty is a great temptation. I heard she bragged she could get any girl's beau away from her, and I am afraid she was responsible for many a broken heart."

Miss Minerva marched Anne ruthlessly over the whole huge house, full of great square rooms . . . ball room, conservatory, billiard room, three drawing rooms, breakfast room, no end of bedrooms, and an enormous attic. They were all splendid and dismal.

"Those were my great-uncle Ronald and my great-uncle Reuben," said Miss Minerva, indicating two worthies who seemed to be scowling at each other from opposite sides of a fireplace. "They were twins and they hated each other bitterly from birth. The house rang with their quarrels. It darkened their mother's whole life. And during their final quarrel in this very room, while a thunderstorm was going on, Reuben was killed by lightning. Ronald never got over it. He was a haunted man from that day! His wife," Miss Minerva added reminiscently, "swallowed her wedding ring."

"How . . ."

"Ronald thought it was very careless of her and wouldn't have anything done. It was never heard of again. It spoiled her life. She always felt so unmarried without a wedding ring."

"What a beautiful . . ."

"Oh, yes, that was my Aunt Emilia, not my aunt really, of course. Just the wife of Uncle Alexander. She had a very delicate and spiritual face, but she poisoned her husband in a stew of mushrooms . . . toadstools, really. We always pretended it was an accident because a murder is such a messy thing to have in a family, but we all knew the truth. Of course, she had married him against her will. She was a giddy young thing and he was far too old for her. December and May, my dear. He denounced her with his dying breath and she went into a decline soon afterwards. They are buried together in Charlottetown . . . all the Tomgallons bury in Charlottetown. This picture was my sister-in-law, Barbara. She was the best hand at a sponge-cake I have ever seen. This was my brother Andrew's wife. She died young and was buried in her wedding dress, poor thing. That was my Aunt Louise. She drank laudanum. The doctor pumped it out and saved her, but we all felt we could never quite trust her again. It was really rather a relief when she died respectably of pneumonia. Of course, some of us didn't blame her much. You see, her husband had spanked her."

"Spanked . . ."

"Exactly. There are really some things no gentleman should do, my dear, and one of them is spank his wife. Knock her down . . . possibly . . . but spank, never! I would like," said Miss Minerva very majestically, "to see the man who would dare to spank me!"

Anne felt she would like to see him also. She realized that there are limits to anyone's imagination. By no stretch of hers could she imagine a husband spanking Miss Minerva Tomgallon.

"This is the room my poor brother Arthur and his wife quarrelled in the night he brought her home after their wedding."

(Continued on Next Page.)

COLORFUL CEREMONY AT WINDSOR



The Mayor and members of the Corporation of Windsor with the Dean and Canons of St. George's Chapel on the way to present loyal addresses to the King.

home. He fell there . . ." Miss Minerva pointed a long white finger so dramatically at a tiger skin rug in the hall that Anne could almost see the departed Tomgallon dying on it. She did not know what to say, so said merely, "Oh!"

Miss Minerva ushered her along a hall, hung with portraits and faded photographs, into a large, high-ceilinged room where the walnut bed was covered with such a splendid silk quilt that Anne felt it was a desecration to lay her hat and coat on it.

"You have very beautiful hair, my dear," said Miss Minerva admiringly. "I always liked red hair. My Aunt Lydia had it. She was the only red-haired Tomgallon. One night when she was brushing it in the north wing it caught fire from her candle and she ran shrieking down the hall wrapped in flames. All part of the curse, my dear . . . all part of the curse."

"Was she . . ."

"No, she wasn't burned to death but she lost all her beauty. She had been very handsome and very vain. She never went out of the house from that night to the day of her death, and she left directions that her coffin was to be shut so that no one could see her scarred face. Won't you sit down to remove your rubbers, my dear? This is a very comfortable chair. My sister died in it from a stroke. She was a widow and came back home to live after her husband's death. Her little girl was scalded to death in our kitchen by a pot of boiling water. Wasn't that a sad way for a child to die?"

"Oh, how . . ."

"But at least we knew how it died. My

said a stream of cold water could run under it . . . the test of an aristocrat."

Miss Minerva modestly poked forth a slipper from under her velvet skirt and revealed what was undoubtedly a very handsome foot.

"It certainly . . ."

"Would you like to see over the house, my dear, before we have supper? It used to be the Pride of Summerside. I suppose everything is very old-fashioned now, but perhaps there are a few things of interest. That sword hanging by the head of the stairs belonged to my great-great-grandfather, who was an officer in the British army and received a grant of land in Prince Edward Island for his services. He never lived in this house but my great-great-grandmother did for a few weeks. She did

For a new delight in Tea try
Salada Orange Pekoe Blend

"SALADA"
TEA

(Continued from Page Twenty.)

she just walked out and never came back. Nobody ever knew what it was all about. Some people said she only married him because she couldn't hurt his feelings by saying 'no' and repented when it was too late. It ruined my poor brother's life. He became a travelling salesman," said Miss Minerva tragically. "No Tomgallon had ever been a travelling salesman. This is the ballroom. Of course it is never used now. But there was any number of balls here once. The Tomgallon balls were famous. People came from all over the island to them. That chandelier cost my father five hundred dollars. My Aunt Patricia dropped dead here one night . . . right there in that corner. I think she was really dead but poor grandmother always thought she was buried alive and would wake up in the night crying about it. Patricia had fretted a good deal over a gentleman who had disappointed her. I cannot imagine any girl breaking her heart over a man. Men," said Miss Minerva, glaring at a photograph of her father, "have always seemed to be such trivial creatures! We have an old legend that in grandfather's time, when he and grandmother were away from home, the family had a dance here on Saturday night and kept it up too late. And . . ." Miss Minerva lowered her voice to a tone that made Anne's flesh creep on her bones . . . "Satan entered? There's a queer mark on the floor in that bay window . . . very much like a burnt footstep. But of course I've never really believed that."

Miss Minerva sighed, as if she were very sorry she could not believe it. The dining room was in keeping with the rest of the house. There was another ornate chandelier, an equally ornate gilt-framed mirror over the mantel, and a table beautifully set with crystal and silver and Crown Derby. The supper, served by a rather grim and ancient maid, was very good and bountiful and Anne's healthy young appetite did full justice to it. Miss Minerva kept silence for a time and Anne dared say nothing for fear of starting another avalanche of tragedies. "Do have some more of the peaches, my dear. You've eaten nothing . . . positively nothing." "Oh, Miss Tomgallon, I've enjoyed . . ." "The Tomgallons always set a good table," said Miss Minerva complacently. "I think the only person my father ever really hated to see come to our house was his sister Mary because she had such a poor appetite. She just minced and tasted and he took it as a personal insult. Father was a very unrelenting man. He never forgave my brother Richard for marrying against his will. He ordered him out of the house and he was never allowed to enter it again. Father always repeated the Lord's Prayer at family worship every morning but after Richard flouted him he always omitted the sentence, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us.' I can see him," said Miss Minerva dreamily, "kneeling there, leaving it out." After supper they went to the smaller of the three drawing rooms . . . which was still rather big and grim . . . and spent the evening before the huge fire . . . a pleasant, friendly fire enough. Anne crocheted at a set of intricate dollies and Miss Minerva knitted at an afghan and kept up what was practically a monologue composed in great part of doleful Tomgallon history. This one had told her husband a lie and he had never believed her again . . . that one had all her mourning made in expectation of her husband's death and he had disappointed her by getting well . . . well, not disappointed exactly but, you know, when she had all her plans made . . . Oscar Tomgallon had died and come back to life . . . "They didn't want him, you know, my dear," lowering her voice, "that was the tragedy." Claude Tomgallon had shot his son by accident. Edgar Tomgallon had taken the wrong medicine in the dark and died in consequence. David Tomgallon had promised his jealous dying wife that he would never marry again and then had married and was supposed to be haunted by the ghost of the jealous Number One. "His eyes, my dear! Always looking past you at something behind you. People hated to be in the same room with him. Nobody else ever saw so perhaps it was only his con-

A TRAGIC EVENING

science. Do you believe in ghosts, Miss Shirley?"

"Why, I . . ."

"Of course we have a real ghost, you know, . . . in the north wing. A very beautiful young girl . . . my great-aunt Ethel . . . who died in the bloom of life. She longed terribly to live . . . she was going to me married. This is a house of tragical memories, my dear."

"Miss Tomgallon, didn't any pleasant things ever happen in this house?" said Anne, achieving a complete sentence by a mere fluke. Miss Minerva had to stop talking long enough to sneeze.

"Oh, I suppose so?" said Miss Minerva, as if she hated to admit it. "Yes, we used to have gay times when I was a girl. They tell me you're writing a book about everyone in Summerside, my dear?"

"I'm not . . . there isn't a word of truth," began Anne annoyed.

"Oh!" Miss Minerva was plainly disappointed. "Well, if you ever do, you are at liberty to use any of our stories you like."

"And now I must be . . ."

"Oh, my dear, you can't go home tonight. It's pouring cats and dogs and listen to the wind. I don't keep a carriage now . . . I have so little use for one . . . and you can't walk a mile. You must be my guest for the night."

Anne was not sure she wanted to spend a night in Tomgallon House. But neither did she want a long walk in a March rain-storm. So they had a game of parchesi and then Miss Minerva insisted on her having a bed-time snack; and finally took her up to a guest-room which Anne, at first, was glad to see was not the one where Miss Minerva's sister had died of a stroke.

"This was Aunt Annabella's room," said Miss Minerva. "She was the handsomest of all the Tomgallon women. That is her picture above the mirror. She made that crazy quilt on the bed. I hope you'll be comfortable, my dear. Janet has aired the bed and put two hot bricks in it. And she has aired this night dress for you . . ." pointing to an ample flannel garment hanging over a chair and smelling strongly of moth-balls. "I hope it will fit you. It hasn't been worn since poor mother died in it. Oh, I nearly forgot to tell you . . ." Miss Minerva turned from the door . . . "Aunt Annabella hanged herself in that closet. She had been . . . peculiar . . . for quite a time and she wasn't invited to a wedding she thought she ought to have been and it preyed on her mind. Aunt Annabella always liked to be in the limelight. I hope you'll sleep, well, my dear."

Anne did not know whether she would sleep well or not. This was really a terrible old house, full of the ghosts of dead hatreds and heart-breaks. Too many women must have wept here. The wind wailed very eerily in the spruces outside the window. For a moment Anne felt like running out, storm or no storm. Then she took herself resolutely in hand and commanded common sense. If tragic and dreadful things had happened here, amusing and lovely things must have happened, too. Gay and pretty girls had danced here, babies had been born here. There had been weddings and dances and music and laughter. The sponge cake lady must have been a comfortable creature and the unforgiven Richard a gallant lover. "I'll think on these things and go to bed. What a quilt to sleep under! I wonder if I'll be as crazy as it by morning."

Anne uncoiled and brushed the hair under the very nose of Annabella Tomgallon. She bravely opened the closet door, half expecting any number of skeletons to tumble out, and hung up her dress in it. She sat down calmly on a rigid chair, which looked as if it would be insulted if anybody sat down on it, and took off her shoes. Then she put on the flannel nightgown, turned out the gas, and got into the bed, pleasantly warm from Janet's bricks. For a little while the rain streaming on the roof and the shriek of the wind around the old eaves, prevented her from sleeping. And finally she forgot all the Tomgallon tragedies in dreamless slumber.

"I've enjoyed having you so much," said Miss Minerva, when Anne left after breakfast. "We've had a real cheerful visit, haven't we? I did not tell you yesterday that it was my birthday and it was very pleasant to have a bit of youth around. There is nobody to remember my birthday now" . . . Miss Minerva gave a faint sigh . . . "and once there were so many."

"Well, I suppose you heard a pretty grim chronicle?" said Rebecca Dew that night.

"Did all those things Miss Minerva told me about really happen, Rebecca?"

"Well, the queer thing is, they did. It's a curious thing, Miss Shirley, but a lot of awful things did happen to the Tomgallons, though maybe no more than you could scare up in most old families for five gen-

erations. But they really did seem under a curse. Almost every one of them died a sudden or violent death. Of course, there was a streak of insanity in them . . . everyone knows that. That was curse enough."

"Miss Minerva seems rather proud of their curse."

"Poor thing, it's all she has," said Rebecca.

That night Anne wrote to Gilbert:— "I thought Tomgallon House was a sleepy old place where nothing ever happened. Well, perhaps things don't happen there now but evidently they did. Of course I think Miss Minerva has all the Tomgallon liking for the spotlight and gets no end of satisfaction out of her 'tragedies.' They are to her what husband and children are to other women. But oh, Gilbert, no matter how old we get in years to come, don't let's ever see life as all tragedy and revel in it. I shall never forget my night at Tomgallon House. And for once in my life I've met a person who talked me down."

QUEST FOR A NEW BLUE DYE

The world has plenty of bluebirds, blueberries, bluefish, blue grass, blueprints, blue laws, blue songs and just plain blues, but it has long suffered from a limited choice of blue coloring matter for painting, printing and dyeing. A good blue is discovered about once a century. The latest blue, "monastral," was announced and named recently in England.

Dyes have made history, both ancient and modern. The classical instance is that of indigo, originally made from the fermented sap of a tropical plant. It even has a classical name derived from the Latin indicum, meaning that it was obtained from the Indies. It also had a Sanscrit name, niti, derived from nila, meaning dark blue. That name has survived in the terminology of modern chemists. Just before the turn of the century German chemists discovered how to make indigo, as well as other colors, synthetically from coal tar, and named them aniline dyes.

Other shades of blue were developed with difficulty. Ultramarine came into use early in the eighteenth century. Originally made by grinding lapis lazuli, a gem, it is now produced from a combination of cheaper ingredients. The other most widely used pigment, Prussian blue, was discov-

ered in 1726. The newly discovered dye is said to be fast under acid, alkali, heat and light.

BARGAINS!



A limited number of Gilson "Snow Bird" Demonstrator Washers. Latest Models. Refinished. Good as new. Full factory guarantee. Either Electric or Gasoline Engine. A wonderful opportunity. Less than cost. Easy terms if desired. Act quickly. Write today.

Gilson Mfg. Co., Ltd.
38 York St., Guelph

SAPHO PUFFERS

Sold Everywhere
ANTS—ROACHES—FLEAS
Safe About Foods
Harmless To Animals



MURINE

FOR YOUR **EYES**



Murine relieves and relaxes tired, burning eyes. Cleanses and soothes red-dened, irritated eyes. Easy to use. For adults or infants. Use Murine daily.

10,000 FREE SAMPLES to help LEG SUFFERERS! New Remedy Offers Quick Relief!

FOR years the only treatment available for varicose veins and the resulting leg troubles usually referred to as "Bad Leg", has consisted of bandaging, lotions, ointments, rest and operation, but there is now available an entirely new remedy which treats these distressing ailments through the blood.

Elasto

REGISTERED

A Natural Way to Recovery

Long and patient research and study have been given, searching for the true cause of these troubles and Elasto, the new treatment which finds its course through the system, is the result. Elasto aids in restoring elements that are missing or have been depleted, thus assisting Nature to effect repair in a perfectly normal manner.

Every sufferer should test this splendid Remedy for deficiency ailments. Elasto is the result of exhaustive research, and brings ease and comfort and creates within the system a new force which aids in overcoming leg troubles and in improving the circulation of the blood. Elasto is prepared in tiny tablets, which dissolve instantly on the tongue and is pleasant, wholesome and convenient; it is not a drug, but a vital cell-food which should be present in the blood to ensure complete health.

Take Elasto to aid in correcting: Varicose Veins, Leg Troubles, Varicose Veins in the lower end of the bowel, Bad Circulation and kindred ailments.

Here's Good News! You Can Test Elasto Free!

We have set aside a number of free samples of Elasto for readers of this paper. To secure one of these all you have to do is to fill in Coupon below and post it without delay to The New Era Treatment Co., Ltd. (Dept. 5-J), 455 Craig Street West, Montreal. Early application is advised so mail your Coupon NOW—while you think of it. This offer is too good to be missed.

What Users of Elasto Say:

- "Can now walk long distances with ease."
- "A great improvement in my legs since I have taken Elasto."
- "Elasto saved me many dollars."
- "My skin is as soft as velvet, thanks to Elasto."
- "I feel younger and more active."
- "As soon as I started taking Elasto I could go about my work in comfort; no pain whatever."

THE NEW ERA TREATMENT CO., LTD.
Sole Proprietors of Elasto (Dept. 5-J),
455 Craig Street West, Montreal, Can.

COUPON

for Free Trial Sample of Elasto

THE NEW ERA TREATMENT CO., Limited.
(Dept. 5-J) 455 Craig St. West,
Montreal, Can.

Please send me Free Sample and Special Free Booklet fully explaining how Elasto acts through the blood.

NAME _____
(Please Print in Capital Letters)

ADDRESS _____

Don't long for relief—get Elasto and be sure of it!

You are to be married on—

The happy day is your own choosing. But customs, rules and procedure are all made up for you. At last our new marriage book is available. Printed in colors. It gives authentic marriage etiquette from engagement to honeymoon—marriage customs—400 personal names and their meanings—12 birthmonth characteristics, quaint rings of history—and many pages of valuable legal marriage information. This booklet sent anywhere for 3c in stamps. To insure receiving in confidential plain sealed envelope. Write today. Proctors, Fine Diamonds, Dept. FH, 282 Yonge St., Toronto.