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MAY, 1904

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WISCONSIN LITERARY MAGAZINE

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VOLUME I

NUMBER 6

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THE CLOSE OF A DAY

The dull red sun, just touching the crest of the distant wooded hill, cast long gray shadows across the valley and burnished the west windows of the little schoolhouse with gold. Over the kine-filled meadows and plowed fields, brooded the peace and quiet of a waning afternoon in May, broken only now and then by the soft chirping of sleepy birds, or by the faint *whoo-oo* of a solitary night-hawk soaring high in the air beyond the reach of eye. A belated farm-wagon, carrying a jaded, dusty woman and sundry packages from the near-by village store, appeared around a bend in the road; lumbered heavily over the little wooden bridge which spanned the creek; and passed out of sight again where the road led through a wood on the opposite side of the meadow. In passing, the occupant of the wagon looked curiously at the figure of a girl who was seated at one of the open windows of the schoolhouse, but her perfunctory nod met with no response.

The girl at the window, on whom the freshness and bloom of some twenty summers had not been spent in vain, sat motionless in the growing dusk, wrapped in reverie. The beauty of the sunset had been lost to her, and the tranquillity of her surroundings had no chastening effect upon the bitterness of her thoughts. The cool evening breeze, blown gently through the open window, played fitfully with the loosened strands of dark brown hair which unheeded brushed over her flushed cheeks, yet gave no relief to her hot forehead.

If the simple tenants of the little valley could have seen her as she sat there in the darkened room, with naught but her own unquiet thoughts for company, and in complete oblivion to everything about her, they would not have thought it strange. It was her way, and that was enough. They would have wondered at it only as one wonders at the powerful instinct of the homing-pigeon, or at anything else which passes the understanding. Not that the good farmers and their wives looked upon the pretty schoolmistress as some alien creature, having nothing in common with them—far from it. Ordinarily she was as sociable and pleasant as could be wished, and she entered into their crude manner of living as simply and naturally as if there were no other. But her silence in regard to herself, her home and her past life, surrounded her with an air of mystery, which the curiosity of the good folk could not penetrate. The look of unrest in the deep blue depths of her eyes filled them with a vague sympathy, and the portly housewives settled the matter secretly, within the narrow confines of their bi-weekly "sewin' circle," by declaring that she was a "likely miss," but that she was "different."

Thoughts of the people among whom she was living, however, were far from the girl's mind. Out there in the gathering twilight, where the frogs and crickets had already begun their nightly clamor, her fixed gaze conjured up visions of the past, every detail of which passed before her mind's eye in panoramic succession, with almost painful distinctness.

She was once more a care-free high school girl of sixteen, in the little, unpretentious city which marked her home. Those days in the blossoming spring time of her youth were days whose brightness was never marred by sorrow, nor sullied by doubt, yet every innocent pleasure, every petty jealousy, every fleeting disappointment, every changing fancy to which a girl of her sensitive nature is prone—all were centered about the figure of a youth, who even now, standing out boldly in the foreground of her thoughts, was painted by her imagination in all the glowing colors of faithfulness and sincerity.

She felt again that unspeakable thrill of happiness which his presence by her side used to cause within her as they walked together along some sequestered by-path or sat side by side in the shade of a friendly oak. In memory, she drifted with him along the willow-fringed edge of the silent river, listening with face all alight to his manly, self-reliant voice as he spoke enthusiastically of his plans for the future, of how he was going to college to specialize in journalism and then become editor of some great daily newspaper, and perhaps—who could say?—perhaps he might some day even write a book! Then he would come back for his “little girl” and they would go away, far away from the dull atmosphere of the sleepy little city into the big, busy world to rejoice over his triumphs together. No thought of possible failure came to lessen the fervor of their youthful enthusiasm, for what boy with a grain of true manhood in him, is not filled with an eagerness to break away from home restraints and go forth among great men and do great things, and what girl is there, who through the rosy mist of love does not see the whole world bowing at the feet of her lover?

Alas! she thought, how often do the air-castles we build in youth slowly fade away with the passing of years, until only an empty memory remains of what was once so real.

The little schoolroom had now become quite dark. Outside, the sky was already studded with countless stars, but

their brightness was dimmed by an intervening veil of clouds. From the woods, came the mournful hoot of a wandering owl, and from a thicket fence far down the meadow was wafted the plaintive cry of a whip-poor-will. The night air had become cool, too cool for comfort, but the still, white figure by the window did not move. She was suffering once more the first real sorrow of her life—the parting with him who had called her his “little girl.” It was a parting full of burning promises of everlasting faithfulness to each other. To him, about to enter a larger field of activity at college, the parting meant only a temporary separation, after which he would come back to claim his own. To her, who could look forward only to years of lonely waiting, it was full of a vague fear that a nameless something might come between them during all that time, or that he might rise to heights so far above her that she could never call him back.

But the frequency and warmth of his letters, written that first year at college, made her fear seem only an empty doubt, and she felt pangs of remorse for having harbored it for even an instant. Then his letters became less frequent, and although the words were kind as usual, yet she imagined that she felt rather than read between the lines a cooling tenderness, mingled with a thoughtful regard for her feelings. An indefinite rumor had reached her ears that a college girl was the cause of his growing indifference to her. As the conviction deepened that this was not idle gossip, the days spent in a fruitless struggle to conceal her care from prying eyes, and the sleepless nights, when her hot head tossed upon her tear-stained pillow, brought lines of pain to her pale forehead. Like some canker-worm lurking within the heart of a fragile flower and blighting its life, so this dark mistrust of the one she loved gnawed at her heart strings until it seemed as if they would break.

At last came a time when he had not written to her for three long months, although she had sacrificed her pride to write him each week a long pitiful letter. Then it was that

she had resolved to fly far away from those scenes, the sight of which brought to her only a feeling of pain and desolation. She had engaged a school in the most secluded district she could find, in the vain hope that by living the life of a hermit she could find peace. But after three years of silent suffering, during which no word came to her from the far-off college, she could bear the suspense no longer. In a moment of deepest depression, she had broken her resolve never to write to him until he had answered her last letter and sent a pathetic little note to his college address, in which she asked him why he no longer wrote to her.

She buried her burning face in her hands as the recollection of this act of weakness crowded in upon her thoughts. What would he think of her after that? If he had really cared for her any more, he would have written, but since he did not, it was her place to play a woman's part, and never, never let him know what suffering he had caused her.

A heavy step on the threshold of the schoolroom aroused her with a start, and then she realized for the first time how dark the room had become and how cold the night air. Before she had recovered from her bewilderment sufficiently to feel frightened at the intrusion of a stranger whom she could not see, an embarrassed "Scuse, me, Miss," told her that it was the voice of the "hired man" who worked for the farmer with whom she was boarding.

"The Missus sent me over with a letter for you," the voice continued.

"A letter—!"

"Yessum. Old man brought it from town this afternoon. The Missus thought it might be important, seein' as how it had a funny stamp on it. She thought somethin' musta happened to you, bein' as you didn't come home to supper. You ain't sick, are you?"

"No—no. Just tired out," she replied, lighting with trembling hands the kerosene lamp which hung on the wall.

She took the letter from his clumsy hand and looked eag-

erly at the address. Yes! it was the same old handwriting she knew so well. She sank into her chair with a glad cry, and began to tear open the letter.

"Mebbe you'd like to walk home with me, Miss," broke in the bashful fellow.

"Oh, thank you, Joe. Don't wait for me. I'll get home all right. I must read my letter now. Good night." And Joe was gone.

She looked at her letter again. At last he had broken the long silence and now once more she was to be happy! The thrill of delight which the sight of his handwriting had caused her was so new, so intoxicating that she almost dreaded reading the letter, lest it might contain something to mar her joy.

She slowly unfolded it with trembling fingers and read it through.

BERLIN, GERMANY.

MY DEAR MATIE: Your kind note of some months ago reached me only yesterday. It was forwarded to me from my old address at college. I need not tell you how pleased I was to find that you have not entirely forgotten your old friend. You will notice by the heading of this letter that I am at present in Berlin, where I expect to remain a few months before returning to New York to take charge of the *Journal*. It may be possible for my wife and I (you doubtless heard of my wedding, which took place the month after I graduated) to visit my old friends at Greenwood for a day or so, on our return from Europe. In that case, I should certainly be disappointed at not seeing you, for I remember with much pleasure the little playmate of my *childhood* days.

With best wishes for your success in whatever you may undertake, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

H. M. CURME.

The letter dropped from her limp hands to the floor, and she buried her head in her arms on the window sill. No sound escaped her lips, no tremor shook her body, but when the little, smoky lamp on the wall had burned out, and the room was once more shrouded in darkness, the bowed figure by the window still sat without motion.

—*Fred. W. MacKenzie.*

THE WAGER

Caryl had been letting the boat idly float for some time. The water had become so calm and peaceful, the air so drowsy and the cushions so inviting that, quite unconsciously, she had drifted off into the shadowy land of dreams and dream fancies.

The sound of her own name called from the bank roused her suddenly to the realization that it was growing dark, that she was alone, and that the pier of Weir Inn was yet quite a little distance off. Glancing toward the bank in the direction of the call, she could distinguish in the gathering dusk, the dim outline of a man's form.

"It's too tall for Tom, and it didn't sound like Dick's voice, and yet he surely called my name. Who can it be?" thought Caryl.

For a moment she sat up very straight, making no motion to pick up the oars. Then, giving way to the abnormal amount of curiosity which she had always been accused of having, she seized the handles of the oars with a firm hold and, with a few deft strokes, brought the boat within speaking distance of the bank. Looking up she saw, doffing his cap to her, a young man in yachting suit, tall, broad-shouldered, with a face which seemed to be all smiles and brown eyes.

Before Caryl could recover from her surprise at finding herself confronted by a stranger, the young man stepped a little nearer the water's edge and said, still holding his cap in his hand: "This is Miss Caryl Pritchard, of Weir Inn, is it not?"

"Why—yes," answered Caryl, looking still more surprised, "but—"

"I—I beg your pardon, I am Phillip Kirland, art student, friend of Thomas Barker, staying at present at the Delaunuck club house just east of Weir Inn."

"Oh, then you're Tom's artist friend that he has been talking about for the last week," exclaimed Caryl in a somewhat

relieved tone. Her face had assumed a more natural, although still slightly perplexed expression.

"I believe I have that honor," he said. Then he added, "Miss Pritchard if you will bring your boat just a little nearer, I should like to explain this—a—well, impromptu introduction, I suppose we might call it."

Caryl could not repress a faint smile as she rowed the boat nearer the bank.

"You see, it's this way," he began, "I just came a couple of days ago, and yesterday afternoon Tom made a wager with me that I wouldn't be able to get acquainted with the fair inmate of Weir Inn inside of a week, and that I wouldn't get one ride in the 'Acanaugua,'" glancing at the boat, "during my month's stay here. Well, as the fellows were all gone over to Highland this afternoon, and I happened to see you out in your boat, all alone, I—well, consequently I am here and—and at your mercy."

Caryl, whose face had undergone various changes during his recital, now looked up and said, smiling: "But how do you know whether I have any mercy or not?"

"I don't," he returned, "but I am naturally of a rather optimistic turn of mind and—"

"Oh—and you expect the princess in the fairy-tale to be—?"

"To be of a gracious disposition and—and," looking rather longingly at the cushioned seat in the other end of the boat, Caryl followed his glance but repeated calmly "and—?"

"Is there an enchanted key or a secret password or something of that sort in possession of which I might gain my request of the princess?" he asked, moving dangerously near the water's edge.

Caryl smiled tantalizingly. Then she said quite suddenly: "Yes, there is. On one condition I will grant your wish."

"And that is?" he asked eagerly.

"That is that you will tell no one about it," she said slowly.

The next moment the cushioned seat at the further end of the boat creaked under the heavy weight of a man.

—*L. Maude Raymond.*

HOGAN'S ANNIE

"Annie! Annie! Come on in here and ready up this table, I've got to go milk. Get a hustle on you and don't stand around all night." The speaker, a tall lank German woman in a faded calico wrapper whose sleeves, rolled to the elbow, showed her work-tanned arms, slipped her feet into a pair of wooden clogs and tramped away across the hard-baked yard toward the big barn. Annie stood by the gate talking in low tones to a broad-shouldered fellow who seemed deeply interested in what he was saying. When her mother called she started slowly toward the house but turned around before going in to say, "Well if you'll come real early I'll go with you, but if you're not here by eight o'clock, I'll go with Henry."

"You know I'll come as soon's I can, but I've got to do chores all alone to-night," was the reply as the big fellow started up the road with long easy strides.

Annie turned reluctantly to the work before her. Her eyes would wander to the athletic figure just disappearing over the top of the hill.

"Oh dear," she sighed, "if he wasn't such a farmer he'd be 'most as nice as Henry. Maybe"—but the rest of the sentence was finished only in thought. The cheerful clatter of the plates was the only sound for a few moments.

"Why don't pa like Henry better? He's such a heap nicer than the other fellows. Anybody'd know he'd been to college. Oh! I wish—but I never even went to high school."

A few minutes of silence, then as she poured the hot water over a panful of dishes—

"Won't the girls stare when I come in with him?"

She walked slowly to the big bureau across the room, knelt, and took a dish towel from the lower drawer, rose, and looked idly from the window.

"I wonder how I'd like to live in town. Pa'll never let me go. Oh dear."

She would have kept on with her dreams without paying much attention to her work if her mother had not clattered through the yard with her apron full of corn for the pigs. This roused her to some idea of time. She glanced at the clock, rushed hurriedly into the parlor, and peered anxiously out through the blinds. No one in sight. Not a sign of a team as far as she could see.

“Oh, why don’t pap come! Why did he go to the old fair anyhow! He’ll get full, I just know he will. Oh, what shall I do if Henry comes and finds him drunk! Why don’t he come, it’s after seven and he’s always home before this time.”

She hurried up stairs to dress for the party, but before she had half finished she heard the rumble of the heavy lumber wagon as it came over the crossing a little way up the road. A look of relief passed over her face, but was quickly followed by one of despair and disgust as she heard her father’s voice roaring out the chorus of a rough Irish song that showed plainly that her fears were but too well founded. Annie ran to a window overlooking the yard, and as the wagon rolled in she saw the big man lurch to one side and fall heavily into the bottom of the box. Two of the younger boys slipped up carefully and began to unhitch the dripping horses, which were puffing from their hard drive.

The team had been carefully cared for before Mrs. Hogan came back from the old log hut where she had been feeding the pigs. She gave one glance at the prostrate figure in the wagon, then began, in the harsh, scolding tone grown natural through years of almost constant use.

“Ach Gott! Full again! I might ’a known it. Just so quick as I let him go alone to town he gets in with them old fools and don’t know when he’s got enough. He hain’t got no more sense ’an a ten-year-old.”

During this tirade she scrambled into the wagon, grasped the huge shoulders and dragged the limp, resistless body to the back of the wagon.

“Now you lazy lout, git out. Take that for a few you’ve given me. I said I’d pay you back.”

She lifted her heavy wood-shod foot and deliberately rolled him to the ground. But her well-earned revenge was destined to be short lived. Perhaps he had not been so completely numbed as she thought or perhaps the fall roused him from his stupor, but at any rate he rose unsteadily to his feet, staggered, looked dazed, and, as his mind became slightly clearer, he burst forth into a stream of profanity which grew more and more sulphurous as he realized the indignity which had been put upon him. His anger soon rose to such a pitch that his formerly valiant wife decided that she would be safer elsewhere, and left in all haste. While Mr. Hogan was explaining, in forcible language, his opinion of wife, family and the world in general, a light buggy turned the corner and drove into the yard, and a slender, fair-haired young fellow stepped to the ground and started for the front door. He stopped quickly, however, when he heard the loud, angry voice, as if surprised, and first a puzzled and then a disgusted look came over his face as he began to understand the meaning of the uproar.

Annie left the window and ran down to the front door the moment the carriage came into sight.

"What shall I do!" she murmured. "If pap sees Henry coming after me he'll—why I believe he'd kill him if he could, and what will Henry think when he hears him goin' on so. He'll know just what he is, and he won't want a girl with such a father." The young man's face was enough to convince her.

"Henry, ain't he awful?" apologetically. "He don't do it often, sure he don't. And he ain't near so bad as he sounds."

"Oh never mind him, he's a brute," the young fellow answered. "Come on, get ready and we'll go."

"Oh! but Henry, I can't leave now. Wait just a little while and maybe he'll go to sleep. I can't leave ma now. If I should go, and with you, he'd get so mad he might hurt her. He says she's to blame for it all anyhow, and it would make him hate you worse than ever."

"I most certainly shan't ask you to go if your father does not approve of me. I'm so sorry I don't come up to his standards. I wouldn't advise you to have anything to do with me."

He turned toward the buggy.

"Henry, Henry! don't go! I didn't mean that, really I didn't. But I mustn't go. Can't you see?"

"Oh very well, stay at home if you want to. If you don't prefer my company to that of a drunken sot of a father, why I certainly shall not urge you. Better get Pete to come and stay with you. He belongs to your father's class. You, no doubt, would rather have him."

He started to get into the buggy. For an instant Annie stood perfectly still. The shock to her pride had been enough, and her eyes flashed.

"Go on then, and don't you ever dare come back. If you don't care enough for me to respect my father a little bit, why I don't want you near me." As the carriage started down the road she raised her voice to call after him.

"Pete is all right. Maybe he hain't been to college; maybe he don't know much, but he's more of a gentleman than you are anyhow. He wouldn't go and leave me. Why did you ever come here? Oh, I hate you! I just hate you!" she screamed, as she threw herself upon the steps in an agony of mortified tears.

The sounds of hoof beats and the rattle of wheels were receding into the distance. Unheard by Annie the front gate opened, and some one walked quickly up the path and seated himself quietly upon the steps beside her.

"Don't cry Annie, he ain't worth it," and in Pete's voice sounded a new timidity decidedly at variance with his nature.

"And Annie, I heard what you said."

The sobs were less frequent now, and his own arm was around her.

"We don't care what does become of him and the party, do we dear? We'll stay with the old man."

—B. M. S.

THE THREE YEARS' CORPSE

What good, think you, your ready spade
Will work by seeking what lies slain?
The earth too long has been arrayed
Above the spot where this has lain,
*(Which has no life, which feels no pain,
For all was said that could be said);*
I rede you all your toil is vain—
The three years' corpse is surely dead.

The oyster-world awaits the blade
Of him the gods cannot constrain,
Of him who glad and unafraid
Holds all the past in his disdain.
Have you no castles left in Spain
That you must think on this instead?
The clay of which your heart was fain—
The three years' corpse—is surely dead.

Fortune is no unfriendly jade—
She hath great stores by land and main—
She gives to every man her aid
Who seeks her that he may obtain;
And if she oft hath proved the bane
Of him who followed where she led,
Withal he learned this brave refrain,
“The three years corpse is surely dead.”

ENVOY.

Ho, Prince, the rot grows with the rain,
What good to mourn for what is sped?
The dead past comes not back again—
The three years' corpse is surely dead.

Horatio Winslow.

JIMMIE WING'S SUBTLETY

“Well, she’s a good old friend of yours anyhow so you’ve got that advantage. All the rest of the bunch that’s troubling you’ve only known her a little while.”

“Old friend! old friend!! old friend!!! old friendship be eternally damned. What’s friendship anyway but a pallid sort of thing, that’s good for nothing but getting in the way?

“I don’t want friendship; I want love! Now if it weren’t for this childhood playmate business, I could make things pretty plain. I’d pay her lots of attention and sit in corners and mope when she was with someone else, and she’d realize what ailed me; result—either an understanding or a throw-down.”

“But now! Little Willie sends flowers, ‘how kind of my old friend Clarence to remember me!’ Willie takes her to parties, ‘it’s awfully nice to go to Hops with dear old Clarence, he isn’t foolish or silly,’ or Willie (that’s me, understand) sits around and mopes in a corner when she isn’t near him, ‘why you poor Clarence, you ought to do something for that indigestion! Do take the advice of an old friend and’—fudge! also pooh! pooh!

“The only way I can make her see, is to tell her I’m in love with her, and that means either a total eclipse of hope or an engagement. I’m dead afraid of the first and I haven’t any business to think of the second, for although I love May like four of a kind, my prospects for three years after graduation don’t justify my asking any girl to bind herself to me.”

Cressler kicked the waste basket across the room, growled savagely, paced back and forth a few times and then snapped:

“Well! can’t you suggest something! Don’t sit there like a pifflicated mummy in an opium dream.”

“I have the case under advisement,” gravely returned Cressler’s all patient roommate, Wing, “and such steps will be taken as seem expedient. At present it is ‘me for the

dog wagon,' wilt 'accept a sandwich upon me, oh man of multitudinous woes?'"

For months Cressler's usual joyous optimism had been clouded by fear and half despair, and the vague rumors which reached his ears a few days after the talk with Wing, did not tend to illumine the chill gray vapors of apprehension. Acquaintances sidled slyly up to him and whispered: "Heard the news? May Hemingway—Jack Blestar—engaged. Heard it on good authority! What do you think?" Friends consolingly grasped his hand, and suggested it was a "blooming shame, Blestar was a cad," and girls who knew Cressler looked pityingly at him whenever he passed.

"Evidently it's up to me to do the 'congratulations-may-you-ever-be-happy-' act, pretty soon," he confided to Wing in a day or so, "but I'll be hanged if I'll congratulate Blestar; he's lucky, but he's a mistake, and I won't tell him I'm pleased, et cetera, et cetera!"

"I'll go down and see May though; she's happy, of course, but it certainly takes blame little to make her so if Blestar can!" Cressler gave his necktie a vicious jerk, and putting on his coat stalked out of the room; wandered aimlessly about the streets, and in some occult manner found himself turning in at the Hemingway's gate; he wheeled abruptly and started up the street again, but in five minutes he walked absently up to the house door and rung the bell, then like a halloween joker, ran down the steps toward the fence, but May opened the door and called him back.

Like a naughty child he returned shamefacedly, and greeted her, awkwardly twirling his hat in his hands, then after she led him into the library he sank dejectedly into a heavy leather chair, sighed sepulchrally, retwirled his hat, and ventured, "It's—it's a nice day."

May averred that the weather was passable, even pleasant, after which she waited, smiling. Cressler tried to glance casually at her left hand, but this was buried in the tassels of her chair, and he caught no glint of a solitaire.

"I,"—he essayed, "am—that is I have—," silence resumed its sway for another two minutes.

"Clarence," said May, "is it lock-jaw or too many cigarettes. As an old friend let me advise—"

"Old friend—humph!" grunted Cressler in an almost audible aside,— "May, you've—you've, I'm proud to congratulate you, and I hope you'll be happy! Blestar is a fine fellow and—well all that sort of thing, and—and, I'm proud to congratulate you, and I hope you'll be—"

"You're bearing double false witness," gurgled May, "that is, you're repeating a lie twice! You're *not* proud to congratulate me, you *don't* think Jack Blestar is a fine fellow, and lastly I'm *not*, never *was*, and never *will* be engaged to him."

Clarence, you're a credulous idiot, and if you weren't such an old friend!—"

There was a snort of rage from Cressler, and forgetful of manners and good demeanor, he jammed his hat on his head, snarled "'old friend'—eternally, eternally and everlastingly I hear 'old friend'"—and ducked out of the door, while May half angry, half frightened, and all amazed, looked on with "lips ajar."

Wing, placidly reading, was suddenly leaped upon by a savage muttering madman, who rolled him out of his chair, banged his head against the floor, and finally tried to make him swallow two pillows and a blanket.

"Confound your cheap soul, anyway," shrieked Cressler, vigorously slamming Wing against the bed, "why didn't you tell me she wasn't engaged to Blestar, I suppose you think it's a funny joke to let me go down and make a fool of myself congratulating a girl who isn't engaged! Probably it's your idea of subtle humor to have me make a futile ass of myself? Bah!" and he gave his roommate one last, long, lingering shake, and dropped into a chair.

Wing calmly arranged his disordered garb, brushed his tousled hair, then he made reply:

"Thou art far too impatient in thy haste, mine impetuous brother; hadst thou waited but a little moment ere leaving me, a short time since, I would have set thee right. For was I not then about to say that it was Zach Hestor and not Jack Blestar to whom thy old friend May was betrothed. But thou gavest me no time to speak. Learn thus the folly of haste."

"Wing, if you're mistaken or lying this time, I'll break you into eighteen small portions. I'm going back to May's now and make my proper apologies. I must say that Hestor comes nearer deserving her than any one else, save one whom we will not mention; I go, but I shall return!"

Cressler made a profound bow as he backed gracefully out of the room. Wing heard the house door slam, and peered out to see a tall lithe figure which certainly looked like Cressler's, fleeing down the road on the dead run. "The plot succeeds," he chuckled, and took up his book again, from which he seemed to gather much quiet amusement, considering that it was Macbeth.

Cressler rang the bell madly. "Want to see May," he half shouted to the startled maid who opened the door, "don't stand there gaping, call her! I'll wait in the library!"

The servant opened her lips to speak. "But, but sir—"

"Call her, please, I say" commanded Cressler and rushing into the library plumped down in a chair.

"You are somewhat perturbed this evening Clarence," a quiet voice full of laughter caressed his ear; he looked up to see May sitting within four feet of him and smiling gleefully. "You seem so nervous and—and abrupt, you're usual suave ease—"

"May, I want to beg pardon for my fool blunder this evening and to tell you how much better your real choice is, you see Blestar and Hestor sound a good deal alike and so—well I hope you and Zach will be happy, he's as worthy of you as anyone can be and—"

"But Clarence, you're talking so foolishly; Mr. Hestor and

I aren't engaged, I don't understand where you heard all these queer reports."

"Perhaps", said a deep voice from across the room, "the report may yet be true and I may say I hoped—"

"I beg your forgiveness Mr. Hestor, for not introducing you before, but I was so excited by the way Clarence popped in here that—Mr. Hestor, have you met my old friend Mr. Cressler?"

"O, I know Hestor," said Clarence, nodding casually, then he turned determinedly to May.

"You say you're not engaged to Blestar or Mr. Hestor?"

"Nor to anyone else," said May tersely.

"But I hoped—Hestor interpolated.

"Then see here May, I'm tired of being an 'old friend' and 'dear, kind comrade,' I'm in love with you and have been, I guess, since we were little tots, I didn't realize until I heard these crazy rumors how much it meant to lose you. May, I haven't many prospects or much to offer, but I'm honest and clean and I want you, and I guess I'll take care of you somehow. May, is it yes or no?"

The firelight threw a soft flickering radiance upon the three, —Cressler, his hands outstretched, his face eager and eyes shining, the other man bewildered, and his lips working with pain, May slender and beautiful, her face lit by the glow from the fireplace and her eyes aflame with the light that conquers all darkness of soul or heart.

"Clarence" she said, and her eyes met his, "it is yes."

"I—I, guess I must go. I promised to be—, that is—good night Miss Hemingway," and with quivering lips, Mr. Hestor left the room. At the door he turned, "good night" he said again, but the two by the fire did not hear him.

Mr. Hestor took his hat from the hall rack, stepped out on the porch and stood there for a long time, looking across the silent street. Then as the cold wind blew upon his bared head, he put on his hat, and walked slowly homeward.

“Wing,” said Cressler as he entered the room, “your mind is tortuous and sinuous as that of the heathen Chinese, but I don’t see that you evolved any scheme to help me out of my despondency. I had to take matters into my own hands at last,—and she’s mine, Wing, mine!”

“Have you any idea where those reports originated?” asked Wing, carelessly.

“No. What do I care, they led me to speak so—”

“Thought you took matters into your own hands.”

“Well, you see I was rather disturbed—Wing, you old Machiaevelli, you started those, bless you. I see light now. Rumor, like charity, sometimes begins at home.

“Wing, you’re a genius, a double distilled quintessenced purveyor of mendacity. What’s this? Letter from Crosby—wants me to join his stock company next fall, heard about my amateur work—whoop!

“Wing, I hereby appoint you my press agent, ’enceforward, evermore!”

—A. B. Braley.

THE PASSING OF A MAN

It was Saturday night and the main street of Esmeralda was very much alive. Every saloon and gambling house and dance hall was brilliantly lighted and crowded with people. Indeed, if one had sat in the Arcade, the pride of Esmeralda, and listened to the constant hum of conversation, the clatter of the chips and the monotonous call of the dealer, he might have been able, for a time, to forget the never ceasing roar of the stamp mills which made Esmeralda somewhat unpopular with those of nervous disposition. In front of the Arcade’s roulette table there stood a man who might well have attracted attention in any company. He was a big, powerful looking fellow with a square jaw and a firm, hard mouth, but the apparent strength of his face was marred by a slight droop of the eyelids, and a queer expression in the eyes themselves—the look of a brave man who saw nothing in the

future that was good and much that was not. There had been a time when "Big Jack" Everts was known as the greatest half-back of the year and the most popular man in college; now he was a loafer in a mining camp.

He laid a dollar, tentatively, on the square labelled twenty-seven. The wheel spun, the little ball shot round and round, then popped under the slot twenty-seven. The dealer handed out thirty-five chips, while Everts said to himself, "If I can only make it a hundred, I'll leave this cursed mining region and go back to a steady job in 'God's Country.'" Perhaps he might have done so, but fortune's wheel is fickle and the Arcade's wheel was worse. At eight o'clock Everts turned to the bar, gulped down a tumblerful of raw whisky, and passed out of the Arcade without a penny in his pocket.

He swung himself into the saddle and cantered off down the valley, smiling grimly to himself as the memory of the days when his name had been one to conjure by, came back to him. Nothing had been too good for him then. When he left college he had gone West. He had been an engineer at first, in the Cœur d' Alene; later, he had gone prospecting. At one time or another he had tried nearly every calling that was open to him, from fireman on the Overland to dealer at a faro bank. And he had been a failure in them all. Just now he was a road agent, and though he had been successful in his new occupation, he knew that there could be but one end—cold lead. To-night he had received word that the Wells-Fargo box was to bring the silver from the East to pay off the mining men employed by the great "Amalgamated" company. A party of young college men who were coming out to do their first practical work were to be in the same stage. He would show them, he thought to himself, that the hold-up men were not a myth.

* * * * *

As Everts lay hidden in the rocks at a turn in the road he could distinguish the faint sound of singing in the distance. Gradually it came nearer. Now they were just across the

valley on the down grade. Wasn't there something familiar in that song? He listened intently, but it had died out, and he heard nothing for several minutes. Then suddenly there came through the darkness, clear and strong, the words of the old college football song.

The man beside the road trembled. His face went white for a moment and then the blood came flooding back. Again the snatch of song broke out. The memory of his triumphs on the football field came back to him with a rush. He buried his head in his hands. The stage came slowly up the hill, the horses straining and the young men laughing and talking. In another moment they had passed the danger point. Everts raised himself up and looked after them. It was a hundred yards away now and he had let his chance slip by. Of a sudden the stage stopped. There was the sound of angry voices. He picked himself up and ran quickly toward the party. As he came within a few yards he jerked loose the heavy Colt's Peacemaker that hung at his hip.

A spurt of sudden flames split the darkness and a heavy gun roared out. Everts whirled half round then stood and fired at the man who held the horses' heads. The fellow sank down but still clung to the plunging animals. The express messenger reached up behind him and pulled down a sawed off shotgun. There was a quick fusilade; one of the road agents threw up his hands, spun on his heel and fell flat on his face without a sound. The rest ran for cover and it was all over.

The party of excited young men climbed down out of the stage and found Everts lying in the road.

"Sing it again," he gasped.

"What?" said one.

"Sing—"

"I see," said another, "all together now fellows."

They sang one verse, started another, their voices broke and ended weakly. "Big Jack" Everts was dead.

—*L. H. Cary.*

THE GIRL IN THE DARK

Smithson had been on Miss Jennings' trail all summer, vainly striving to make his proposal. Time and again the decisive words had trembled on his lips, only to be repressed by some totally unforeseen diversion or intrusion that mocked his pains.

He was of that type of men who, if opportunities are not ready to their hand, make them, and in this particular instance his activity was little short of the miraculous. But unfortunately though he wrenched all the known rules of etiquette in his endeavors to impress upon his fellow men that good old proverb: "Two is company, three's a crowd," all his efforts in this direction seemed useless.

Once when he had Miss Jennings out boating, a party of their friends in a gasoline launch came shooting around a curve in the shore, and stayed with them the remainder of the afternoon. On another occasion they were driven from a mossy log, conveniently situated in a silvan retreat, by the incursion of a party of picnickers. Again, one night when the parlor of the hotel was without other occupants, and the supreme moment seemed at hand, the entrance of Smithson's cousin, Richard, cut the carefully elaborated speech off short. Without question, Smithson played in exceedingly bad luck. To cap his misfortunes, he learned on the afternoon of August 18th, that Miss Jennings proposed to depart from the resort on the morrow.

No wonder then, that five o'clock of that same afternoon found Smithson a desperate man. No wonder that the squirrels in the little grove behind the hotel were petrified with horror and the blue jays shamed to silence by the shocking language, which, at that hour, disturbed the quiet woodland. Nor scarcely was Smithson to be blamed. To tell the truth he was on the verge of nervous prostration. For a man to screw his courage up to the requisite pitch for proposing is

one thing, difficult though it is, but for a man to accumulate time and again sufficient grit to broach the "question" is perfect heroism. But heroes are only mortal after all and the effect on Smithson was positively nerve-wrecking.

The unfortunate man spent the remaining hours of the afternoon and those of the early evening in an agony of disappointment and despair, intermingled occasionally with a flash of his pristine hope. He had endeavored forthwith he heard the dire tidings to find Miss Jennings, but was speedily reduced to impotent tooth-gnashing on learning she had not been seen that afternoon. His anguish was not allayed by the reflection that his cousin Richard was also missing. He put two and two together and feared the worst.

It was after seven o'clock when the couple reappeared in a boat from down the lake. The looks of neither were unusual and Smithson breathed easier. Miss Jennings seemed so cool and dainty and lovely as she stepped ashore, that Smithson's heart pumped violently with emotion and he resolved with a determination all his own to bring matters speedily to a climax.

Apparently the opportunity presented itself an hour later. Miss Jennings had left the veranda, and alone was walking slowly up the beach. Her slender, lissome figure and dark, auburn hair showed off to advantage in the golden light still shed by the western sky. With a haste scarce beseemly Smithson was at her side. Sad experience had taught him that one must not dally over subtle introduction and ambiguous phraseology, if one would propose to the prettiest girl at a summer resort; and in his fear of interruption, Smithson threw aside his tact and plunged bluntly into his subject.

"I hear you are going to leave us to-morrow, Miss Jennings," he said, with more of a quiver of concern in his voice than he was aware.

"Why, yes, Mamma has written that I must come home. Aunt Maria has come to visit, you know; and we are all so

fond of Aunt Maria. I wouldn't think of disappointing her for the world. In fact I'm her favorite, and as she has always been so kind to me, it couldn't look well if I stayed away, unless I was absolutely obliged to—" and she continued in this fashion.

Smithson was puzzled and annoyed. Alice—secretly she was always Alice to him—had never talked in this running, silly way before. Was she striving simply to stave off a conversation that would be painful to her? He grew angry at the thought, and was about to do something rash, when cousin Richard again serenely appeared.

"You two look very pretty here together," he said smilingly. "I hope I have not disturbed you; but really I couldn't resist the temptation to make one of the picture."

Smithson realized as he had never realized before, how much he disliked Cousin Dick.

"Oh, confound it," he snarled savagely, "really this is too—too outrageous."

"Why, Mr. Smithson," cooed Alice, "we're delighted, of course, to have Mr. Dick's company."

"Mr. Dick!" Her affection was apparently very strong for the interloper. She never called *him* "Mr. Harry."

Smithson subsided into a sullen silence. His chance might come later. Meantime he would give Dick no opportunity of cutting him out. He stuck to the trail. And when Miss Jennings in her artful, feminine way, put in a soft word or two, this, with a glance from her blue eyes, completely mollified Smithson. And he was in love deeper than ever.

At length the trio returned to the hotel and sat for awhile on the veranda with the other occupants of the hotel, admiring the red beams of the waning moon as she slowly climbed the eastern sky. The waves of the lake danced silvery and lapped soothingly on the pebbles.

"How lonely everything is to-night," breathed a low voice in Smithson's ear.

He turned. It was Alice Watson, a pretty little brunette

with black eyes and sparkling teeth. Smithson sighed. He did not care for brunettes. He was disappointed. He had thrilled at the wrong voice, mistaking it for another.

"Yes," he answered patiently.

Presently he arose and took a few turns on the beach. When he returned Miss Jennings was gone. So was Dick. Rage and despair smote his heart. He doubted no more; all was lost. He began to walk away, to get anywhere from that noisy, merry throng on the veranda in front. The veranda ran round three sides of the building. Smithson sought its remotest corner. As he dropped into the little vine-covered retreat at the farther end, he was aware of a presence that made the blood leap through his veins like fire, and throb dizzily in his head. Only the white and scent of her gown were apparent to his senses, but they alone were as stimulating as ever. Never had anything seemed so easy. Some inner force, independent of himself seemed to actuate him. And for once he found her wonderfully acquiescent. A mere word, the utterance of a name, and he had her in his arms.

A ripple of mirth brought them back to the world with a start. Some one was on the lawn beneath.

"Come let us go," whispered Alice hastily.

They stepped from their place of concealment and as they turned the corner of the veranda, before them in the moonlight stood cousin Dick and Miss Jennings! Dick's arm was around her waist. A thousand emotions were battling in Smithson's soul. The revulsion of feeling was for the moment terrible. Then as he glanced at the merry, smiling face and neat shape at his side and then toward Miss Jennings' somewhat thin and angular figure, he drew in a deep breath, and kissed Miss Alice Watson with a fervor that was inspired by her own pretty little self.

Smithson was satisfied with fate.

—*W. T. Walsh.*

THE COMING FISHERMAN

He was a short, round, roly poly youngster of four, with a tousled brown head, gray eyes, and a mischievous, red mouth. A very attractive little fellow he was, as a rule, but, just at present, his attractiveness was somewhat hidden by several layers of dirt. The boy was busy, very busy. His brother had promised to take him fishing upon condition that he would get the bait, and Johnnie, whose greatest ambition was to catch a fish, was occupied in searching for the largest and fattest angleworms. Down upon his bare, brown knees he squatted, in the middle of the recently plowed garden, and poked here and there with his grimy little fists. His face was serious, so serious indeed that one would not have thought for the moment that he had just returned from chasing his sister with a particularly tempting worm. His mother, seeing his solemn face, would have accused him of plotting another impish trick, but such was not the case. He simply realized the gravity of his situation. Whether he went fishing or not would depend entirely upon himself. The thought made the dirty fists work faster. When he found a large, well-fed earthworm his face lighted up with satisfaction. Holding it up before him, he watched it squirming with pride and then deliberately dropped it into the jagged-edged tomato can beside him with a murmured "Dats nice un." The poking, stirring, and digging soon unearthed the necessary number of writhing victims. Johnnie peeped over the edge of the can and saw that he had bait enough. Scrambling to his feet, he picked up the rusty can and, with a jubilant, "Me do fis'n' now" raced off to his brother.

—O. R. S.

A PATERNAL CELEBRATION

It was not often that Billy Daly got drunk. Not that he was a teetotaler, or a member of any temperance organization. He had never taken a pledge to abstain in any degree from the use of intoxicants. It was simply that he did not care to go to an extreme in his drinking. And yet not one of the men at Barton's was more regular in taking his noon-hour glass and after-supper settler than was this same Bill Daly. But there was one occasion on which all caution was thrown aside, and Bill became as jovial in his cups as any of his mates..

A crowd of rough workmen from the Foundry stood about the bar of Gelding's place, drinking, laughing, and discussing the topics of the day according to their understanding of them, when the barroom door suddenly opened to admit a new comer. He entered with a hop, skip, and jump which took him to the side of a card table which stood near the center of the room, and with the agility of one whose life is devoted to strength and activity, he leaped upon the table. The men turned in surprise at the conduct of their usually quiet companion, and as they did so they saw that his hand was raised as a signal for attention.

"Boys," he said, his voice giving unmistakable signs of suppressed excitement, "Boys, you've heard talk around here for a long time about 'Bill Daly's girls;' now I want every man here to order his favorite, on me, and drink to the health of Bill Daly, Junior."

His words were received with a cheer of congratulation, and a moment later the speaker had been dragged from the table, and was receiving handshakes and raillery with equal pride and good will. This was followed by a general gathering before the bar, and men drank liquors which seldom touched their throats when the bill was to follow the order. Then came speeches and toasts, and the number of healths

drunk that night to the foreman's son and others, must have been discouraging to the demon of disease.

As the clock behind the bar at last indicated the hour of midnight a large gong gave forth a single clang, the glasses were emptied for the last time that night, and the men, after a final shaky congratulation of the honored one, filed out through the door and started for their homes. They went off in groups of two's and three's, some unnaturally silent and others unnaturally boisterous, but all sure that there was no better fellow in the world than Bill Daly.

As for Bill himself, he was in a state of ecstasy that had been heightened by his evening's celebration, but in spite of this he noticed that a change had taken place in the general order of things. Well known landmarks were peculiarly unstable in their positions, and it bothered him more than a little to keep accurate note of his whereabouts. But the fresh, cool air soon thinned the mists before his mental landscape, and he found that he had already covered almost half the distance home. His companions left him now, and it occurred to him that he could save a considerable part of his journey by crossing the river on the trestle instead of going way down to the bridge and coming back on the other side.

Acting upon this plan, he now turned to the right, and a few steps brought him opposite the piers. But here a new difficulty presented itself. He had never noticed it before, but now he found that the ties of the bridge had a decided tendency to move about from place to place, so that he could not be sure when he took a step that his foot would strike upon anything more solid than the night air. Under these conditions his progress was necessarily slow, but he kept steadily on until he reached the center of the structure, where he stopped for a moment or two to rest. He soon started forward again, but had taken only a few steps when the tie on which he had expected to place his foot suddenly shifted its position. He made a frantic effort to reach it by leaping, but lost his balance, and the next instant everything

was swallowed up in blackness. And then, from across the river, came the long, clear whistle of the midnight express.

* * * * *

The sun rose brightly the next morning; but it quickly drew a veil of clouds over its face, as if to shut out the spectacle disclosed by its own light. The river, flowing about the piers of the bridge, darkened in sympathy with the sky, and threw up little jets of water, as if trying to catch a glimpse of the sight at which the great luminary refused to look. And a flock of gossiping sparrows, perched upon a stripped telegraph pole which stood beside the trestle, chirped and twittered in derision at the sight of respectable Bill Daly, foreman of the main room at Barton's, lying dead drunk on the ties, his clothing stained yellow from contact with the rusty spikes which had been left at the tearing up of the rails three months before.

—*Don E. Giffn.*

CASTLES OF SAND

High heaped in the yard behind a low, rambling house stood an inviting pile of white sand. In it squatted two children. The one was a round, roly poly youngster of about five with short, sturdy legs and cheeks which would have shamed any but the reddest pippin. The other, judging from her motherly way, was evidently his sister, and appeared to be a few years older. She had reached that stage when the chief aim in life is to grow, and, like the young seedling which sprouts too rapidly to make it anything but slender she looked so frail that it almost seemed as if the first light wind would blow her away.

The boy was building houses, so he said. Placing his bare, chubby foot in front of him, he eagerly scooped over it the moist sand, patted it down with his grimy fist, and then, slowly and carefully, tried to withdraw his foot. Alas, for the hopes of the young architect! When the foot was half out

a toe wiggled, and the roof caved in. Again and again the young man persevered, but for some unknown reason, the toe would prove unruly.

"O dea', I fink ouu jus' mean" the boy frowned vindictively at his mischief-making workman. "I jus' tant make anyfin' 'tall". With an impatient hand he quickly swept away all vestiges of his work, and turned disconsolately toward his sister.

She, with loftier ideals, was attempting to construct a building which the numerous ramparts and entrances seemed to indicate was intended for a castle. In the center court of these fortifications she heaped up a large pile of sand, and, when all was smooth and rounded, burrowed into the base like a gopher, hollowing out a commodious room.

The brother watched in silence until all was completed. Then he rose, stuffed his hands in his pockets and, with a lordly air, strutted around to view his sister's palace from all sides. Having completed his critical survey, he assumed a judicial manner and, in a tone of deep commiseration said, "Dat ain't nuffin." The girl looked up, wonderingly. He repeated, this time scornfully, "I say, dat ain't nuffin." "See"—and, before she could prevent, the small tormentor jumped through the castle roof. Next, his destructive little legs swept in all directions. Walls, ramparts, courtyard, everything, vanished, as if blotted out by a tornado.

"Now Eddie," scolded the sister, "What'd you do that for?"

"Tus I wanted to," giggled the imp.

"Well, I think your naughty's you can be an'—I ain't goin' to play with you no more, so there." The young lady hurried tearfully to her mother.

"My" squealed the delighted Eddie rolling convulsively around in the sand, "Wan't s'e jus' awsul mad, do."

—O. R. Smith.

JACKSON'S WAY

Jeremy Jackson, stretched in a Morris chair with holiday abandon, was watching the color-play of spring gowns in the street below, for it was Decoration day in the widest sense of the word. His cigar smouldered and there was a streak of ashes on his vest. But suddenly his meditations resolved themselves into a definite idea, and he said aloud:

“Verily, I say unto you no woman buyeth a hat and putteth it in a secret place, or under a bushel, but on her head, that those who pass by may see the hat.”

“Jeremy Jackson, are you on earth?” exclaimed his wife, turning from her mirror and staring at him between the crimped strands of hair hanging over her face.

There was a curious smile at the end of Jeremy’s cigar, as he held up an ignited match and began to puff.

“If Ma ’ud ever hear you blaspheming things in the Bible—”

“She’d raise Cain good and proper,” Jeremy added promptly, as he flicked the ashes from the cigar. “But that isn’t the point.”

Mrs. Jackson now brought up her hair into a graceful knot, and could look at Jeremy with greater effect. “You just want to spoil the holiday again, that’s all,” she said with infinite reproach.

“On the contrary Marion, I’m trying to glorify it,” Jeremy answered with a yawn of imperturbability. He knit his fingers behind his head, smiled up at the ceiling and repeated:

“Verily I say unto you, no woman buyeth a hat and putteth it in a secret place or under a bushel, but on her head that those who pass by may see the hat.”

Marion threw down her comb in an unmistakable manner. “I know perfectly well what you’re hitting at. If that millinery bill—”

“Had been lots bigger I’d enjoy paying it just the same,”

Jeremy interposed with a voluminous chuckle. "But that isn't the point."

"Well, what is the point, then?"

"It's too deep for you, dear," Jeremy allowed with another chuckle.

Mrs. Marion Jackson could only appreciate certain jokes at certain times, and as a consequence a certain stiffness crept over her features, and a coldness into her eyes. She swished in and out of the room with a towering dignity that Jackson studied from the corner of his eye, and which again and again expressed to him, "I am monarch of all I survey, and you are my vassal."

But there was nothing vassal-like in Jeremy Jackson's composition. He did not believe in the divine right of queens.

"Say Marion, you'd better hurry up, if you want to hear Hon. S. Hitchins. It's almost two," he said with the tiniest hint of authority.

There was no response from the blue accordion pleated creation before the mirror in the room opposite.

Jeremy stretched himself at a comfortable length, closed his eyes and waited. Precisely at the stroke of two the expected arrived. The accordion pleated creation swished by his chair several times, then stopped directly before him.

"Jeremy, you're outrageously horrid to-day. Now couldn't you dress in time to go along with me; but you'd never do a person a favor."

"I don't know about that." Jeremy opened and closed his eyes sleepily.

"Put on your collar and tie, and I guess you'll be all right."

"Oh pshaw,"—with a profound yawn. "I don't care about going. You just go with Mrs. Leigh and enjoy yourself."

This was too much for Mrs. Jeremy Jackson. Without another word she turned and rustled through the door.

Jackson was just beginning to smile when the door opened again and a very calm face peered in.

"Jeremy, you might look up the fourth verse in the forty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. There's a red line around it."

"Certainly, dear."

"True love surely never ran smooth," Jackson allowed as he watched Marion walk fiercely up the street, her every step a little expression of wrath.

Then he rummaged among the books and papers under the center table, and finally found the pocket Bible presented to him by his mother-in-law on his last birthday.

He had no difficulty in finding the verse with the red line around it.

"Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck an iron sinew, and thy brow brass."

"That's putting it rather strongly," Jackson thought as he turned the pages and traced his finger down the tenth chapter of Proverbs.

Jeremy Jackson never took things very seriously; he was rather one of those rare individuals who make mole-hills out of mountains. Besides he had a sort of second-sight understanding of Marion, and took pride in his own private philosophy on the "pursuit of happiness."

He lit another cigar and sat listening to the patriotic sallies of the band that led a long procession of veterans and flower-laden carriages down Farnell Avenue to Forest Home.

"I'm not very patriotic by the looks of things," he confided to his shortening cigar. "But it can't be helped this time."

Here he produced a tiny box and scrap of paper from the depth of his pocket, scrawled a few lines, best legible to a certain pair of eyes, and placed all conspicuously on the edge of the table. Then he put on his collar and other traveling accessories and drew his valise from the dark depths of the closet.

It was not yet three o'clock when Marion returned. After listening patiently to the explanations of the landlady, who handed her the key, she decided that there was no doubt whatever of the villainy of her husband. He was obstinate, insincere and everything else. She dropped herself on the sofa, and looking solemnly into vacancy, contemplated her

miseries. But by and by her eye traveled to the table. She started up and seized something as though it were the very key to Elysium. The next second a brilliant diamond beamed up at her, while she smiled and smiled over it. When her transports had subsided a little, she smoothed out a scrap of paper and read:

Let this remind you of your twenty-fourth birthday anniversary. Very urgent business calls me away. Won't be back till Monday. Be good and don't worry. By the way you might look up the twelfth verse in the tenth chapter of Proverbs. There's a blue line around it. J. J.

Marion seized the Bible on the table and feverishly turned the pages. Finally her eye caught the blue pencilling.

"Love covereth all sins."

"Oh, the dear man," she said aloud; as she rubbed one eye and with the other glanced joyfully at the sparkling ring on her finger.

—*Emeline Zeicher.*

BALANCED

"The villain," snapped Vera, as she hung up the receiver with a bang. "He's no more going to Chicago than my hat's going to Jerusalem."

She shot back into her room, dropped herself in the window and burrowed in the pillows. Vera had been raised under the "sheltered life" system, with a Solicitous Mama, a Financial Papa, and a Devoted Circle of Friends. That's why she found some things disagreeable at college.

From the floor below came the inevitable smell and buzz that betokened fudges, and Vera expected to hear the girls call her every moment. Just now she was holding an emotional conference with herself and longed for immunity from disagreeable company. Between intervals of mortifying conjecture she looked at the dimple-chinned, auburn-haired reflection in the tilted glass opposite.

Vera made a list of all the objectionables in her circle, and now one Sammy Smithers stood at the head of that list. It

was true, he danced capitably, rejoiced in a euphonic name, and always looked spruce, but as for real attractions,—Bah. Anyway, where her heart was concerned he couldn't compete with a certain other handsomest fellow not in town. Here Vera looked more triumphantly at the dark-eyed, dimple-chinned reflection in the tilted glass, then immediately frowned because Smithers had gotten hold of one of those miserable photos.

“If she only hadn't condescended to ask him,” she mused further. She had wished to do him a favor, and now—, she turned toward the window on which large drops of rain pattered occasionally and played a lively and reckless tattoo on the glass with a stray hat-pin.

“Smithers bilked—Smithers guyed somehow,” began running through her mind.

“If Daisy had asked him?” Vera started up and sat erect. The very audacity of the thing struck the color from her cheek.

“Vera, do come down, we've got the dandiest fudges,” sounded from below.

“Oh, girls I've got the fiercest headache.” Vera bit her lip. She had said the wrong thing. Half a dozen girls came bounding up with a heterogeneous collection of fudges and quinine and smelling-salts. Vera applied everything, and leaned back supinely, while the girls sat around her Chinese fashion, now and then dropping a word about the inter-sorority leap-year party.

“So you're really going with Jef Bolton, Daisy?” asked Vera, raising her head on her hand with a sort of languid interest.

“Yes, why shouldn't I?”

“I'm sure you should, but I was just thinking about Sammy Smithers.”

Daisy laughed and thought Smithers always managed to get along.

Vera gradually let her head sink deeper into the pillows

and breathed regularly. Then the girls stole out to their respective study-quarters.

Vera remembered with a smile that it was Saturday night, and that her room-mate had strayed off to the Hall after dinner. She pushed an electric button with a force that betokened resolve, then noiselessly unearthed a "tam," slipped on her raglan, and glided out into the drizzling night. For several blocks she turned corners recklessly, then entered a dim, little grocery store on a side street. She held a nickel over a worn counter for some candy—any kind would do,—and asked:

"Use your 'phone, please?"

"Certainly," said the grocer. "Right there behind them barrels."

Vera made her way through a wilderness of cracker boxes and pickle jars, then behind a flour barrel.

"674, please."

The grocery man steadied his ears. "Smithers," was the only word he could distinctly hear.

When Vera emerged again, there was a definite smile on her face. She left her candy on the counter, was deaf to the grocer, swept out and made short cuts with excited feet.

The next week was quiz week, everybody would be busy, and for once Vera failed to sigh over the fact. She suddenly became very chummy with Daisy Manners, for it was dangerous to let Daisy stray out by herself. Once they met Smithers on the Hill. With his inevitable cigarette he looked wonderfully controlled, and Vera puzzled as to whether Jef Bolton had been blowing about his bid.

* * *

It was almost eight o'clock on the evening of April 16. Vera lay in the window seat with a slightly sprained ankle. The swish of new gowns, the buzz of anticipation and the roll of carriages filled her ear, but did not affect her inwardly. At other times she would have lamented her condition, but now she looked down on the pavement with the hint of a smile in

her eyes. Now and then one of the girls dropped in, sat gingerly on the edge of a pillow, and with hurried words of regret and condolence swept out again. At last Daisy appeared.

"Daisy, you do look beautiful," Vera exclaimed.

"I'm awfully sorry you can't go," said Daisy. "I imagine Carson is awfully disappointed too."

"Oh, Daisy, there's your carriage," cried Vera, glancing out into the lighted street. "That's Jef ringing."

The next minute Vera heaved a sigh that ended suspense. The carriage below rolled away with Daisy and Jef. Almost all the girls had gone now, and Vera alternately watched the ormula clock and the street below. She knew something of Smithers' style, but when the university clock struck nine, she turned from the window, dug her face savagely in the pillow, moved the sprained ankle carelessly, and concluded that Smithers had smelled the pudding.

A sudden echoing twang of the doorbell caused Vera to sit bolt upright. She listened sharply.

The chaperone's voice sounded very distinctly from the hall.

"There must have been some mistake, Mr. Smithers. Miss Manners left half an hour ago."

Here Vera's heart gave an exultant thud. She saw a man in a smart derby and raglan dart into a carriage, and a carriage swing around the corner with a terrific jolt.

"Happy Smithers," she laughed, and nestled more comfortably in the pillows. Then her thoughts veered away to the certain handsomest other fellow not in town, and she pictured herself telling him in more settled days, how she had balanced a score with one Sammy Smithers.

—*Mac.*

THE FOOL'S RECOMPENSE

Oh, to be born 'neath a tricky star!
The buffet of roguish fate;
To be lured by lights that glimmer afar,
Yet lead to the fool's estate.

To be crossed in love till the weary heart
Grows sick in its futile quest,
Yet ever at some new face to start
And to nourish a new unrest.

To forget our tasks while our fellows chide,
And pity us moon-struck clowns,
To muse how the glossy knot is tied
That some grace's young head crowns.

To be madly gay while the moon rides high,
To rhyme in freakish art,
To pursue with vain regret and sigh
The dream of a hungry heart.

Yes, this the soul of a straighter mold,
May count but a fate untoward,
As it daily tells o'er its growing gold,
And deems it the wiser hoard.

But the large wild life of fancy's field,
Its magic of mead and wood,
The thrill at nature's heart revealed
When she bids us with her brood.

Does it end at last where all began?
No, no, hints the patron sky;
Yes, yes, sneers the earth, oh, foolish man,
Let the witching gauds go by.

Ah, welladay, let me have my dreams,
Their gold sure none can steal;
The ore of sunset, the silver of streams
Is largess to him who can feel.

Let me have my dreams; take thou thy gold,
Come love, that dost not chide,
Though poor our store yet behold, behold,
The sunlight flood the tide!

—A. Barton, '96.

THE DISCOVERY OF AN UNSTAKED CLAIM

"Hello stranger, what be you doing in these parts?" asked Hal, proprietor and bartender of the "Sunday School."

"Searching for a gold mine," responded the stranger, removing his panama, and wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Do you hear that, citizens of Loury Butte," cried the proprietor turning to the assembled crowd. "This here feller is prospecting, searching for a gold mine in Loury Butte, ha, ha, ha, why, kid, all the dirt in Loury Butte hez been turned over and sifted. What's paying hez been claimed."

Here the bartender assumed a serious air and eying the new comer critically, continued.

"Be keerful, boy, don't be keerless, Loury Butte is a park, we are all 'deer' to each other and we don't allow any disturbance. The Constitution of Loury Butte provides that there be no shootin' within its boundaries. Only once hez the rules bin disturbed and that was when Bill Benson, up from southern Arizona landed in these parts and begin a cuttin' up. We kinder respected the kid because he had three gold teeth what showed up tolerably well when he laughed. We warned him to go easy or else we told Bill, we'd make a gold mine of him. Well! Bill didn't pay much attention to this and went along his own way. You don't know old Ebb Thornton, do yez? He lived in these parts and owned the biggest gold hole in Nevada. Well! What I'm gittin' at is he had a daughter Jess what was down somewhar's in the East buyin' education. If Ebb had not died last winter, why, the Constitution would never have been broken, but his dying brung Jess home. When Bill saw her he began prospecting in love. But she hated the coyote. Well! To bring the story short we ketched him a runnin' off with her. We hated to do it but we made the gold mine out of Bill. He is in

eternal rest off thar in them ridges to the west. Ez I said before, be keerful, take my advice and go back home. Thar's no gold mine to be had in Loury Butte."

Here Hal ended his bit of history and turned to the citizens of Loury Butte to see if he had voiced their sentiments. They nodded their heads affirmatively and then looked to the stranger for the effect. He had surmised the object of Hal's words and said:

"I don't intend to jump a claim, but there is one here that has not been staked out yet, and that is the one I am in search of and—"

"I tell you what I'll do with yer, stranger," interrupted Hal, excited at the confidence the new arrival displayed, "I'll bet yer a hundred dollars that you'll never find it here."

"I'll go you a hundred better," added the stranger, smiling.

"Make it five hundred," from the crowd.

"Agreed," said Hal, taking the money from the cash drawer and slapping it down on the bar.

"All right, as you please," the other said, producing the necessary amount.

"Now show your proofs," cried the crowd, lead by Hal, enthusiastically.

"I have them, and will show them at sunrise in the morning. Be here at that time, and I will furnish the necessary document."

* * * * *

It was sunrise next morning. The citizens of Loury Butte were all assembled before the "Sunday School" anxiously awaiting the stranger with the proofs of his claim.

"Here he comes," cried a voice excitedly.

Suddenly the muffled plunge of hoofs sounded upon their ears. Into plain sight, coming directly toward them, appeared not one horse but two, one bearing a man and the other a girl. Without diminishing their speed the horsemen dashed up to the excited group.

"My gold mine," he said, gently, turning with due regard to the girl.

"Jess!" exclaimed Hal, "who would ever thunk it?"

—*Irving P. Schaus.*

HOW SHE WENT TO THE CIRCUS

She was a little girl with big brown eyes that looked out upon the world in so wistful a way that people asked her mother, "Are you sure she's quite well?" And now as she stood before the big billboard her eyes had lost none of their wistfulness, but had gained much of wonder, for there were beautiful ladies in silk dresses, pink, green, blue and yellow, and galloping horses, and a man with a whip, but he wouldn't whip the horses; daddy said so. There was the clown too, holding up a big hoop, and the white horses seemed to move, move, move, and the lady in pink to come nearer, nearer, nearer the big hoop, and was going to jump through right now, now, now.

The vision was gone, for the first small figure had been joined by a second, shorter and broader, whose lips suggested a pout as she said, "It's going to be just lov'ly and I can't go," adding with sorrowful spite, "Neither can you."

Her eyes were no longer wistful but flashed in a determined way while the small mouth settled into a line as she said, "I'm going," and turned away. She would not look back; she would not run. What cared she if Phenie called: "You can't go neither." She knew.

She would go to the circus; and now she'd go to the best place, her place, up, up, up to the top of the wood shed, across the roof to White's shed, and then to the little sheltered corner where the roof of daddy's barn joined White's shed roof.

She was a small heap now and the eyes were dreamy. She was thinking, thinking, thinking. She knew what she'd do; she knew the circus place on the island; she knew the big tent; daddy drove about there this morning; she saw the men put up the canvas; she saw the seats for the people; she saw the space between the tent and the ground. She'd go to the circus, she'd see the horses, the man with the whip, the beautiful ladies, the clown. She'd go alone, yes she would; no she wouldn't, she'd take Phenie.

Across White's shed, across daddy's shed she ran; across

the street; across Phenie's yard to the play house, and there was Phenie to whom she told the plan. That very afternoon they'd go to the circus; they'd crawl under the tent; she'd go first; Phenie must go; she'd take her; she'd take Julia, and Melia, and Lessie too, even though he was little.

That afternoon no one noticed four little girls and one fat little boy as they went to the side of the big tent. Others didn't know, but she did, how fast her heart was beating; nor did they know that she almost wished she hadn't come when her dress caught, and when Lessie cried; but she wiggled on under the canvas, under the seats, with never a word excepting a whispered encouragement to Phenie; up to the very front seat where she sat down followed by the others.

A man was coming, he was asking how they got in. She felt queer; just the way she did when mamma asked how the jelly came on her white apron, but she'd tell, mamma always liked it best when she told. The man laughed and said they should stay.

The band began to play, the horses to gallop, the clown to talk. All Phenie could say was "Isn't it lov'ly," all she could do was to squeeze Phenie's hand. It was such a good circus; better than the pictures, better than the dream near the billboard, better than the play house, better than going to the woods with bread and butter in a basket.

At last the races were over, the music had stopped, the clown had gone, and they went out with the crowd, away from the enchanted land, out of the tent toward home. Daddy met them and took her by the hand; he looked just the way he did when mamma was sick, and when they reached home mamma looked just the way she did when grandma broke her leg; and everything was so quiet.

That night she sat on mamma's lap a long time, and mamma had her tell the whole story, and then mamma told her a story and it made her feel sorry, for she knew that while she was having a good time, mamma and daddy felt badly for they thought they had lost her. Then she heard music way, way off and her eyes closed and she went to sleep, sorry because they had been sorry, and saying: "Poor mamma, poor daddy, but it was just lov'ly."

—*Ellis F. Walker.*