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THE PURPLE RIM



AND OTHER STORIES.

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Ormsbee, Hamilton

THE PURPLE RIM

AND SIX OTHER TALES FOR
... SUMMER READING ...



Published by the BROOKLYN DAILY
EAGLE, at the Corner of Washington and
Johnson Streets, Brooklyn, 1896

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THE PURPLE RIM.

WHITHER?



NOBODY understood it. It was a busy day in the bureau when, by all the precedents, it ought to have been dull. Mondays are always busy there, nobody expects quite full time for luncheon on that day and inquirers frequently swarm the place through the middle of the week. But this was Saturday afternoon, it was only June 1, and the Summer Resort edition of the paper had not yet been issued, yet here were people crowding about the tables studying hotel circulars and time tables as though all Brooklyn was bent on getting into the country before night-fall.

The heat had something to do with it. The city had scorched all the week, and this afternoon would have been stifling in the bureau if it had not been for a Sandy Hook breeze which blew over the city and carromed down into the open windows from the post office tower.

A fat woman in a sailor hat, whose sleeves had been crushed into strings in one of the big stores, steamed in at the open door, caught up an excursion placard from the stock of time tables, and dropping into the nearest rocking chair, murmured, "Well, this is cool, anyhow. Most makes one feel like the country, comin' in here."

"Would you not like a glass of ice water, madam?" asked a lynx eyed clerk stepping to the cooler and drawing one for her. Jones was looking for a raise before the summer season closed and he didn't propose to lose any tricks.

"Well, that is refreshing," the woman said, handing back the clouded glass. "Spouse you've got any boardin' houses on your list where they're as polite as you be?"

"Hundreds of them, madam," returned the dauntless Jones. "Where do you think you

would like to go, to the seashore or the mountains?"

"Well, I don't know exactly. I reckon first I'll go over where some of this breeze comes from," and the woman transferred herself and her improvised fan to a chair opposite the dark haired girl at the typewriter by the open window. "You see, I've got to have half rates for three of the children, and I hope they won't object to dogs. I can't stand mosquitoes myself, they poison me so, and it must be a farm house, where I won't have to dress up the young ones in the afternoon, and there ought to be excursion rates so he can come out for Sunday—"

The bureau had gradually become interested in this unusual list of requirements, but at this point of the recital there was a diversion which left only Jones and the dark haired typewriter to learn the rest of the fat woman's must-haves.

The diversion was a girl. A girl "divinely tall and most divinely fair" after an English model which it would have been almost impossible to match in this country when Tennyson wrote his famous lines. She carried herself lithely as though she played tennis and golf. Her head was well poised and of such good proportions that it was not disfigured by the stiff sailor hat which she wore. Her cheeks were flushed and from beneath the dark hat there escaped crinkly locks of brilliant sunshiny hair, which curled tenderly about the nape of her neck.

The dark eyed young man stepped from the inner room to receive the commands of this radiant being, but the superintendent himself was before his prompt assistant.

"Are you looking for information about summer resorts?" he asked, as he led the way into the inner room, where there were more easy chairs than in the regular office, and where the walls glistened with handsomely framed photographs of hotels, cottages and much of the star scenery of this great country.

"Yes, I suppose so," replied this goddess

of the golden hair. "And yet it isn't a resort, exactly, that I want."

She was a very calm young person and looking at her striped dress of pale green and cream color, with its floating ends of spotless green ribbon, one forgot that the thermometer said 92. Yet calm as she was she seemed to find some trouble in expressing her wishes for the summer. She paused about as long as the reader has been hindered in this narrative and there was a slight additional flush on her richly tinted but slightly freckled cheeks before she looked straight in the superintendent's face and explained:

"I am tired of crowds. I've danced and played tennis and ridden and driven every summer for ever so long" (she looked about 19 while she made this far reaching statement), "and it makes the summer just like the winter. Now I can drive and row and fish and bait my own hook, too, and ride; I love to sketch by myself, and I'm sure it would be a blessing to my mother to get into a farm house where she could wear her morning gown all day and doze in a hammock while I explored the neighborhood. Is the wilderness represented in your bureau?"

"Certainly, mad—" the superintendent stumbled over the conventional phrase. She radiated girlhood so gloriously that madam was absurd, and he couldn't bring himself to use miss.

"How about the Adirondacks?" he asked at a venture.

"And dress for dinner at Paul Smith's or the Ampersand? That isn't my idea of a wilderness, and if I hunted up a hamlet I should run across camping parties with men whom I know. Men would spoil it all."

"Right this way, please, gentlemen. I am quite sure we shall find what you want."

It was the dark haired assistant who spoke and he conducted two young men, one in bicycle clothes, around to the other end of the table at which the superintendent and the girl were talking. The young men must have heard her last sentences, and it was fine to

see the perfect unconsciousness with which the girl continued her questioning.

"Haven't you any farm houses to recommend? Of course I don't mean Berkshire or Adirondack farm houses."

"Vermont is filled with farm houses," the superintendent replied, "and you would find the driving there everything you could ask for yourself and your mother. But about the rowing I don't know. I don't suppose many of those mountain streams stand still long enough to hold boats."

"That sounds interesting, and I've never been in Vermont. But I've always heard that there were beautiful little lakes there. Aren't there farm houses near some of those?"

"Here are some fine rooms at Atlantic City," suggested Brown, the assistant to the two young men. One of these was big and blonde and athletic and looked as if he would be capable of going to a summer dance in his bicycle clothes. The other was slighter, though he was tall and had a large frame, which only needed the filing out of maturity to be handsome. His face was rather thin and framed in dark hair, with a tendency to curl as soon as it got long enough. He looked something like our ideal of poets, and a romantic girl might have called him Hamlet.

"Large double room, sea exposure, table said to be excellent and very reasonable rates," continued the assiduous Brown.

"Atlantic City, and the bathing and the board walk and the dances and the girls," commented the bicycle youth. "It'll be fun. Let's try it for a couple of weeks. What do you say, Bob?"

Bob frowned. He was watching the girl across the room and he had seen her nose contract at his friend's speech. "I don't want it, Bennett," he replied, shortly. "I never cared much for those Jersey caravans, and I'm tired of the sort of thing one gets into there."

Bennett looked thunderstruck and Bob

continued more mildly: "I told you I didn't think we could hit it off together this summer. I want a real sea voyage, not just a day's run on fishing boats, and I don't feel like running into a crowd."

Bennett drew himself up with dignity. "Oh, very well, Ford. As you please. I'm going to have some fun, and a voyage alone with you isn't exactly my idea of hilarity."

"She knows my name now, anyhow," thought the wily Ford. "I wish I was as well informed."

"Here are the pictures I was looking for," broke in the urbane manager. "Lake St. Catharine, Lake Bomoseen and Hyde's Manor, Vermont. I believe they are all in driving distance of each other."

"These are charming," the girl said, turning over some views of Lake Bomoseen. "But I see this is a hotel circular. Do they" —dropping her voice, "do they 'hop' at this hotel?"

"I believe they do," replied the manager, smiling, "but one needn't hop unless one wishes, and there are smaller houses in the neighborhood where I imagine they never hear a fiddle from June to November."

"That promises well. I will take the addresses of all these places," producing from her pocket a note book large enough to be of some service. "I am very much obliged for your kindness," and when she had written her addresses and bestowed a bow and a smile on the office in general rather than upon the superintendent as an individual, the girl went out.

"Pardon me," said Ford walking over to the superintendent with a smile that transformed his rather lifeless face. "But wasn't that young lady Miss Bergen of Flatbush? I have met her once but she did not see me distinctly enough to recognize me to-day."

"Really," the manager replied, "I never saw the young lady before, and she didn't leave her address."

In fact the manager had the card of the girl's mother, and intended to send to her all

the circulars he received about Vermont cottages before July 1, but he was too wise a man to betray the personal affairs of his patrons.

"O, it's of no consequence. I merely thought I recognized her face," and Ford engrossed himself in some circulars of the Yarmouth and Old Dominion steamship lines.

"I don't see what interests you in that big girl," Bennett commented as he jotted down addresses. "She isn't nearly so pretty as the dark haired little girl in the other room."

"No, I don't suppose she is," Ford replied easily. "But I don't care for that particular style of beauty. Beside, I think I know this girl."

"Think you will know her you mean," Bennett retorted. "I want to get some circulars from the other room and then I am ready."

He rattled around for some minutes in the front office, but the girl at the typewriter was busy and never became aware of his presence. Half past five had come, the bureau was closing and Bennett had to retreat in the wake of the fat woman, who bore an armful of circulars, pictures and memoranda prepared for her by the devoted Jones.

II. WHETHER?

It was August 1 and Robert E. Ford sat in the spacious Windsor at Montreal writing. He was much more bronzed than when he had been searching for facts in the information bureau. Hands and face were colored like a sailor's and the high collar and four in hand tie looked out of place next the copper skin. In fact, Ford had only returned to the garb of civilization that morning and still longed for the flannel shirt and loose, high boots in which he had tramped through the fishing villages of Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and Prince Edward's island. A glance over his shoulder as he writes will give some idea of his summer. The letter was to his sister and ran:

Dear Alice—I give it up. I have roamed up and down Nova Scotia, Prince Edward's

Island and Cape Breton for six weeks. I have devoured my Parkman and Longfellow and I haven't got a single idea that's any use to me. The blue noses and red feet are the most hospitable, gentle, kindly people in the world, but they live as though the clock had been set back a hundred years for the most part. I don't sympathize with them and haven't been able to think out even a short story, let alone my hoped for play.

But meanwhile I have gained ten pounds and am in what Bennett would call the pink of condition. Such sleep! Such mutton, such fish, cooked alive almost, and such Cape Breton oysters you never tasted. But they are not brain food for me and so here I am after a sail from Charlotte to Quebec and then up this noblest river. It wasn't quite so fine as the superb trip from Boston to Yarmouth, but Quebec is more inspiriting than Halifax. And for me this city is better than either. I can already hear the wheels of my mental machinery begin to creak and groan preparatory to turning out more copy. I fell in with a queer old spiritualistic medium to-day and my longing to write grew on me at once. He is undoubtedly a crank, possibly an impostor, but he is American. I understand his mental processes and he would be a superb figure for a story. He has been telling me about a spiritualist camp meeting on the shores of Lake Champlain and wants me to stop off with him. I think I'll go. I might pick up the rest of my story there and there are a lot of Vermont summer places I think might offer good material—Lake St. Catherine, Lake Bomoseen, Hyde's Manor; did you ever know anybody that went to them or had put them into stories?

Hullo, I see my ambassador from the spirit world across the room and I must stop and talk to him. Expect me when you see me and when I know of even a temporary abiding place I will send you an address.

With love to mother, the colonel and yourself, ever your own
BOB.

No sooner had Ford addressed this letter than a lanky individual rose, crossed the room and paused in front of him. The stranger had a soda biscuit complexion with an Abraham Lincoln sort of figure about which a suit of shiny black draped itself in wrinkles and creases. He did not remove his soft, wide brimmed black hat, from beneath which thick straight black locks fell to his coat

collar. He would have looked like a rural minister if it had not been for his hair and his shrewd face, which might have belonged to a patent medicine peddler or a traveling clairvoyant.

"Good evening, Mr. Parsons," Ford said, cordially. "Sit down," and he pushed about one of the leather covered chairs with his foot in a negligent way which seemed to his caller highly improper, as if a stranger should dance on the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. "I want to ask you more about Vermont. I have pretty nearly made up my mind to run down among the Green mountains with you."

"I conceived you would come to the camp," his companion replied, slowly. "You look like one that might have eyes for the visions of another world."

Ford laughed. "I'm afraid my visions have been mostly of this world. However, I like my kind and if a man has anything to tell me I'm glad to listen."

"That's the receptive spirit and receptivity is the beginning of faith," commented Parsons glibly. "The worst fools are them that think they know all there is and a leetle over. Now at the camp—"

Ford interrupted. "But, my friend, you told me a good deal about the camp out on the mountain. If you raise my expectations too high I shall be disappointed and your services will fail of their proper effect. Better let them break on me unprepared. There are other places in Vermont I want to find after I leave your park. Do you know about Lake Bomoseen?"

"I have camped there once," Parsons replied: "Castleton pond we called it in them days and we talked about makin' it a meetin' ground. I beat that plan because the mountains there ain't high enough. I wanted it carried to Silver lake, on the very top of the Green mountain range, but they said it wa'n't accessible enough and went and pitched us down on the shores of Lake Champlain,

where all the mountains we see are most twenty miles away. Did you ever notice that the spirits work best in the mountains? High peaks kind o' open folks' minds to the universal, and they listen in a humble spirit. Some of the greatest manifestations have come in the mountains. The Eddys had most powerful materializations in Chittenden, where folks druv for miles amongst the mountains in the night to the see auntses. But down to Worcester they want nothin'."

"Then Lake Bomoseen is in a flat country?" Ford persisted.

"Land, no; there ain't nothin' flat in Vermont, except the ponds themselves. But the hills is what we'd call rollin'. Worse'n that, it's becomin' a fashionable resort."

"Are there large hotels?"

"Well, not like this," and Parsons' eyes wandered admiringly down the long corridor. "But there's hotels and cottages, an' city folks that go drivin' an' rowin' an' fishin' an' tennisin'. All them things is death to the sperit. Of course," and a shrewd, hard gleam came into the black eyes and the lips drew tensely over the irregular teeth, "when you're hard up a drawin' room see aunts is sometimes a necessity. A hotel materialization pans out well, but it's mighty uncertain. There's liable to be young fellers with a worldly sperit and dark lanterns. They always claim to see things an' what they say they see other folks say too, jest like sheep. My friend, did you ever think"—and Parsons brought down his hand with a convincing stroke on Ford's knee—"how many folks would ruther believe the world was paved with cobble stones than with manna and milk an' honey if they had their free choice?"

"And is Hyde's manor paved with cobble stones?" Ford asked.

"Pretty much, I reckon," and the prophet look in Parsons' face relaxed into a smile. "That is, it's in Sudbury, which is high an' mighty rocky an' so far forth favorable to the spirits. But I understand that's fashionabler than the other one. I hain't never been there,

but I've heard tell of four horse teams a cavortin' over them hill roads with folks a singin' an' carryin' on as if it was circus day all summer long."

"And Lake St. Catharine?" suggested Ford, the interest in his voice increasing.

Parsons turned and looked at his questioner intently, the gaunt lines of his face slowly softening into a quizzical, kindly smile. Then he leaned over, dropped his crab like hand on Ford's shoulder and said, lowering his voice beyond any chance of being overheard: "My young friend, you couldn't be curiouser if you was courtin' a gal down in that country and wanted to git the lay of the land 'fore ye went visitin' her."

Ford sprang up and reddened through his bronzed skin and six weeks' beard.

"I didn't intend no offense, mister," Parsons added in a conciliatory tone. "I was jest makin' the kind o' joke that comes nateral talkin' to a man of your age, and I hope—"

Ford had regained his self possession by that time. He had not associated with the frank but kindly Cape Breton fishermen for nothing. He held out his hand cordially, saying: "No offense was intended and there is no offense. Unfortunately I have no girl anywhere whom I've a right to court. But it's getting late, and if we catch that early train for Queen City park we had better turn in. I have been going to bed with the sun for a month and am almost a normal animal in my habits. Good night."

III. WHY?

July went quietly along the shores of Lake Bomoseen. Barbara Appleton and her mother had arrived on the first of the month, found rooms in one of the small cottages and settled down for a quiet summer. Barbara was not usually the head of the family, but she had begged to plan this vacation so earnestly that Mrs. Appleton had consented, at first with the amused tolerance of the parent whose child tries to manage the affairs of maturity for the first time, and later,

with a genuine, restful delight in the sense of being taken care of which she had not known since her babies were little. So Barbara had selected rooms in a small cottage which commanded Bird mountain with only a glimpse of the lake, had hired for the season a good road horse, a covered buggy with easy springs for her mother's back, a well balanced rowboat and had pre-empted the ground about one spreading rock maple on the shores of the lake with a series of stakes so that she could swing her mother's hammock in the shade at any hour in the day.

"Now," the young autocrat declared, "you are to vegetate all summer and let me take care of you. You are not to write a single note; only letters to father and Frank and Helen. You are to take your daily drive and your afternoon nap and a row out on the lake for fine sunsets, and if I don't take you back to papa with plumper cheeks and fewer wrinkles to papa with plumper cheeks and fewer wrinkles since you have undertaken to chaperone us girls every time we want to go out and will insist on getting up for papa's early breakfast—it will be because you are ungrateful and will not mind your doctor. Devitalize yourself, mamma; that's what Mrs. Stebbins is always telling us. I have learned how and look at me. I can row from Hydeville up to this end of the lake without being tired."

For a time Barbara disdained the guests at the hotels. She told her mother that she knew people enough in Brooklyn and unless some of her friends came up she didn't propose to be bothered with acquaintances. She found the resolution hard to keep. Youth is gregarious, Barbara ran across other girls everywhere and it was difficult to resist their friendly advances. Particularly hard to resist was Kitty Matthews, a warm hearted little chatterbox from Brooklyn, who eventually had her own way with everybody she took a fancy to. Kitty pulled up a little boat at the landing, was duly presented to Mrs. Appleton and chattered like a magpie

while Barbara sketched. On one of these visits she brought over an armful of magazines and dropped them at Barbara's feet, saying: "Perhaps you haven't seen the August numbers yet. There are several short stories and I brought them along as a compensation for boring you so much. But it's deadly stupid over at the hotel to-day."

"I didn't suppose it was ever stupid there. There are so many of you, you must be gay."

"O, there were the usual driving parties to-day, but I've seen all the points of interest twice over; the right men have gone with the wrong girls; there are sure to be what my little brother calls 'scraps' before they get home, and if you will extend the hospitality of your tree I would rather read or talk."

"Very glad to see you and not indifferent to the magazines," Barbara said. She was turning over the magazines and handing one to her mother, she added: "Here's a story that looks as if it might be good. It's by Robert Ellsworth Ford and I've read things of his that were amusing."

"O Bob Ford," chimed in Kittie. "I know him. He lives in Brooklyn. I wonder you've never met him. He is a great friend of a friend of mine, Dick Bennett."

"We don't know many literary people," Mrs. Appleton interposed, blandly. "Is Mr. Ford as entertaining as his stories?"

"Entertaining!" and Kitty laughed joyously. "I'm afraid you'll be shocked, Mrs. Appleton, but he's what Dick calls a chump. No other word does justice to his stiffness and solemnity, and I wonder Dick has kept in with him so long as he has."

Mrs. Appleton was beginning to turn the pages of the "chump's" story with an amused smile and Kitty finished her recital to Barbara, swinging her camp chair about out of earshot.

"No, I can't understand what Dick sees in him. Dick's as lively as they make them."

"Mr. Ford's stories don't read as if he were stupid," Barbara suggested.

"No, and I can't see where he gets the

bright conversations. I've met him out with a party of young people, where he didn't say a bright thing all day long, and he would sit mooning and hardly speak for half an hour at a time. Ugh! he gave me a feeling as if I was being made material of and it fairly froze up my tongue, which you can imagine isn't an easy matter. Now, if Dick wrote all those funny speeches, I could understand it. He's just as witty as he can be, but," dropping her voice so that her words might not reach Mrs. Appleton, "he's an awful flirt. So long as you understand him it's all right, but I pity a girl who should believe half his nonsense. You know," sagely, as if with the experience of a matron of 50, "there are men who flirt just for the love of flirting and not at all for the love of the girl. Well, Dick's that sort."

Barbara smiled. "You seem rather cheerful under Mr.—Mr. Dick's evil propensities."

"Oh, I know how to fix him," Kitty declared triumphantly. "Why one evening I went biking with him up to the park, not tandem, you know. We each had our own wheel and we didn't stop even for a plate of ice cream, and you would have thought from all the spoony things that fellow said that he'd been in love with me for ever and meant to propose when he got a convenient chance. Well, two nights later I went to a Poly class day dance and if you'll believe it Dick Bennett had gone there with another girl."

"The wretch," murmured Barbara.

"Oh, well, I got even with him. I was nice—" Kitty's mouth curled into a demure smile here—"to one of the juniors. He was awfully young, and, oh, so fresh! Really a girl of 15 could have had fun with him. At first Dick didn't notice. Then he began to look surprised and that junior showed so plainly that he was having a heavenly time that Dick paid more attention to him than he did to his own girl. He was perfectly miserable and it served him right."

"I hope he atoned for his sins soon," Barbara said.

"Well you see," with regretful tone, "it was just before we came up here. The night that Dick came to say goodby the parlors were crowded, and he couldn't do more than squeeze my hand when he said good night. Now that horrid junior is up here. He went on the drive to-day and wanted me to go. Of course I wouldn't, but Dick's vacation is two weeks off, and nobody knows how many girls he's seen since I left. Oh, dear, it's just horrid," and the sprightly Kitty brushed away as many tears as she ever allowed herself to shed.

Barbara did not feel at ease under this load of confidences. The light hearted flirtation of Dick and Kitty seemed strange to her, and if she had been interested in a man to any such extent as Kitty seemed to be she would as soon have said her prayers on Fulton street as chatter about him. As she was thinking what she had better say Kitty sprang up exclaiming:

"O, Barbara, you'll excuse my calling you Barbara, won't you, Miss Appleton, but there's a team driving down to the Prospect house from the north. It must be from Hyde's Manor, judging by the style. They say there's an awfully swell set up there. There are trunks, and it must have guests coming to our hotel. Jump into my boat and row down with me, that's a good girl. It isn't hot on the water now. There may be someone in the party whom we know, and anyway I can take you up to my room and show you Dick's photograph. He's awfully handsome."

Barbara hesitated and the impulsive Kitty turned to her mother: "O, Mrs. Appleton, I want Barbara to row down to the Prospect. You won't mind being left alone for a little, will you?"

Mrs. Appleton shook herself loose from the last paragraph of Ford's story and replied: "Why, certainly not, if Barbara wishes to go." Then seeing the anxious look in Kitty's face, she added: "You haven't been rowing to-day, my dear. Perhaps it would do you good."

Half an hour later the two girls stood before the desk of the Prospect house. Kitty asked for her letters with an ingratiating smile and ran her eye down the entries on the register.

"New York, Albany, New York. Yes, here's a Brooklyn. Yes, it is—why, Barbara, it is Bob Ford whom we've been talking about." Then the animation died out of Kitty's face and a disconsolate tone came into her voice as she added under her breath, "After all, it's only that old stick. If it could only have been Dick Bennett."

Meanwhile a tall, dark haired young man was advancing toward them with a smile of recognition and a half extended hand.

IV. WHEN?

"Really, Miss Matthews, this is an unexpected pleasure," Ford exclaimed.

"Delighted, I am sure," murmured Kitty holding out her hand limply and swallowing the impulsive "Where's Dick?" which she longed to utter. "We were just speaking of you," she continued, "and of your story, 'The Other Fellow' in the Overlook. It's awfully bright."

"O, have they used that thing at last," Ford exclaimed. "I am very glad if you like it. They've held it so long that I had begun to think they were repenting of their bargain. So it's out. Any pictures?"

During this little interlude Barbara had had a chance to recall that Ford was the young man she had met in the summer resort bureau. She had felt rather than seen that he admired her, but she was accustomed to admiration, and had not thought twice about it. Now she tried to recall what had been said about her coming here. Could it be? Of course it couldn't. This was merely one of the summer accidents.

Ford was trying bravely to keep his eyes fixed upon Kitty and to feign unconsciousness of any third person. But he did not succeed. Barbara's presence tingled through his pulses and even while Kitty was telling about the

pictures with his story his eyes would stray over her head to the taller girl. Kitty became conscious of this and turning she said, "Miss Appleton, may I present my friend Mr. Ford? We are all Brooklynites. Perhaps that is becoming vague as a basis of an acquaintance, but surely all the Brooklyn people at one Vermont lake ought to know each other."

"I am happy to meet you Mr. Ford," Barbara said. "I have enjoyed your stories very much, and I left my mother reading 'The Other Fellow' half an hour ago." How well he remembered that tranquil voice. It had an accent of interest to-day which he had not heard before, but it was the same rich, serene tone which had haunted his memory. How well it suited her face and the carriage of her head. While he was noting these things Ford tried to talk commonplaces in a commonplace tone. "I hope your mother will approve of the young man," he said. "To be frank, he's a favorite of mine, and I have been piqued that the editors have not presented him to the public earlier. But now that Gibson has drawn his portrait, all previous neglect is atoned for."

"Really? Don't you sometimes get tired of the Gibson girl?" Barbara asked. "She seems rather monotonous."

"Never," Ford said, warmly. "She is the finest girl in America—on paper," he added, smiling.

Ford's tone more than his words gave this speech a personal tinge, and Barbara had the unpleasant consciousness of having been made to seem fishing for a compliment. She turned to Kitty. "I am afraid we must be going back, Miss Matthews."

Ford's face fell. "Really, then you are not stopping here?"

"O, I am," Kitty struck in briskly. "You are not bereft of all your friends, Mr. Ford. But Miss Appleton is at a cottage a little further up the lake. I persuaded her to let me row her over. Our boat is right here at the wharf," and Kitty moved toward the lawn. Her speech tacitly included Ford in

the group and Barbara could not well say "Good afternoon," as she had intended to do. So they walked down to the wharf chatting.

"That's my boat," Kitty pointed out. "She's not exactly a seaworthy looking craft, but we never have more than a ripple on these waters."

"She looks staunch enough so that I think I can safely offer my services as boatman," Ford said. "My weight will hardly sink her."

"Thank you, but that is quite unnecessary," from Barbara. "Girls here become accustomed to looking out for themselves and Kitty and I both like rowing."

Now, the chief article in Kitty's social creed was to be fair, which she interpreted to mean keeping out of the way of other girls in the case of men whom she did not care for. So she added: "But if you don't mind, Barbara, and if Mr. Ford would be good enough to bring my boat back, I believe I'll stay here. The sun has come out dreadfully since we rowed up and although my complexion isn't anything to speak of, I really think there is a little more of me left to burn up than there is of him," and she looked at the bronzed face, laughing.

"I became sun and wind proof in Nova Scotia," Ford replied, "and this lake looks very tempting."

Barbara took her seat in the stern silently, fearing that her tone might betray her annoyance. "Here I am," she thought, "being rowed home by a man on a fifteen minutes' acquaintance, just as if I were—were Kitty. I suppose he will think I am the flirtatious summer resort girl whom they put in the papers," and Barbara sat very erect.

But Ford did not seem to be thinking of anything except guiding his boat around the dock. When he struck into the straight lake the traces of eagerness which had at first marked his manner disappeared. He talked in the most matter of course way about the lake, the mountains and topics of the moment. That was safe ground and Barbara

realized that she had no reason to visit her annoyance on Ford, who had shown merely a matter of course courtesy. So in five minutes they were chatting as casual acquaintances chat. Ford was entirely impersonal, yet the things he said were not commonplace, and Barbara felt bound to show that she was not a fool.

"But Kitty said he was stupid," she thought. "I suppose because he does not make jokes or personal remarks." By the time the Appletons' cottage was reached Barbara had heard various interesting things about the Eastern provinces and had been betrayed into enthusiasm about the sunrises as seen from the Hubbardton hills. Barbara's enthusiasms were rare and proportionately charming, and Ford received her description so tactfully that she did not become self conscious after it.

"Won't you come up and meet my mother?" Barbara asked, as the boat touched the little landing. "I think she is still in her hammock, and we can have the pleasure of showing you Gibson's pictures for your story."

With Mrs. Appleton "The Other Fellow" served as an introduction. Neither she nor Barbara felt that they were meeting a stranger. There was a good deal of Ford in his stories and they had seen several of them. So the talk ran on until the supper bell rang in the cottage. Then Ford pulled back to the hotel, Mrs. Appleton's invitation to call treasured in the warmest corner of his memory. That night he lay for hours in a boat under the shadow of the island, watching the broad band of moonlight across the lake, like a silvery bridge from Barbara's cottage to his boat. He listened to the songs and laughter echoing over the water from dozens of boats, but he heard the music of one rich, restful voice and he saw brown eyes swept by dark lashes and a beautiful womanly face framed in hair of reddish gold.

"Mr. Ford is very interesting," Mrs. Appleton said, when they were alone. "But don't you think his manner is just a little too devoted? He doesn't stare, certainly, but his

eyes followed you about in a way which seemed peculiar for a casual acquaintance."

Barbara did not blush or drop her eyes, signs which Mrs. Appleton noted with approval. "I think, mamma, that Mr. Ford probably admires red headed girls."

"Oh, Barbara, how can you! You know your hair—"

"I know, mamma, that it is not red, but it certainly verges. And you know what he said about Gibson's drawings, and I suppose I am a variant of the Gibson type. And, mamma, this isn't the first time that Mr. Ford has seen me."

"What! you've met him in Brooklyn and you never—"

"I didn't say that, mamma. But Mr. Ford was in the bureau on that day when I looked up this place. There was no meeting, but he has a rather striking face, you know, and I saw that he noticed me. I thought it one of the inevitable things for a girl with my hair, and should have thought no more about it, but—"

"But what?"

"Well, a week or two later we almost collided in the entrance to Abraham's and I saw that he knew me."

"Barbara, this is rather serious. Mr. Ford learned at the bureau that you were coming here"—

"But he couldn't, mamma. I wasn't coming then."

"But he got a clue or something, which he has followed. As soon as he reached here he rowed you home and sat talking half an hour, just as if you had expected him. He is an author and you can't tell what romantic notions he may have."

"No, mamma, I don't imagine that romantic notions will keep Mr. Ford awake. At best they would make material for another story, for which he would bless me. What little interest he has will evaporate. I won't be in when he calls and that would check a man of fewer resources than Mr. Ford."

Barbara kept her word. At Ford's first call

she was fishing. At his second she and Mrs. Appleton were driving. Fate helped him at last, or more properly, he helped himself. Fate crowned his efforts, which is an obliging way fate has for most of us. He learned that Miss Appleton rowed and fished, so he also rowed. He did not "haunt the lake," because he was unwilling to give the impression that he was following her. But on good fishing days Ford fished as though a rod had always been his best friend.

One cloudy, misty day he went trolling for pike, trolling giving him more warrant for patrolling the lake than rod fishing would do. As he rounded the point of the island he saw another boat with a slight figure wielding a light rod. It was Barbara and she was having good luck. Almost as Ford first saw her she landed a good sized perch and baited her hook like a practiced fisherman. She did not see him and while he was admiring her supple figure a gamey little bass took the hook and ran out the line, jumping viciously. Ford balanced his oars and watched the contest. She played the fish skilfully and finally landed him with a deft stroke of her net. Ford's pulses were tingling with sympathy and after she threw her line again he stole softly nearer until he could see the rich color in her cheek. Barbara's back was toward him and she was absorbed in her sport. He knew he ought to speak or withdraw but he lingered. Just as he had decided upon the sportsman's salutation, "What luck?" Barbara's rod gave a quick, sharp bend and he heard the reel hiss and rattle as the line spun through the leaders. The girl rose and the bass leaped well above the water some rods away.

Ford saw that it was a big one, five or six pounds, he imagined, and he also saw that the reel was almost empty when Barbara began to wind it in.

"Play him, play him," he shouted, eagerly. "You'll lose him that way."

Barbara did not look around, but she dropped the point of her rod and put the

check on her reel. The strain on the tip relaxed and a moment later the bass dashed to the surface much nearer the boat. Quick as a flash the girl began to take in the slack.

"She knows her business," Ford thought, but he swung clear of his own line and backed in near Barbara's boat with noiseless strokes.

"Want any help?" he asked, softly.

The girl shook her head. His bass-ship was a good deal nearer the boat, but he showed no signs of giving up the fight, making short but vigorous rushes through the water, Barbara playing him like a veteran. After ten or fifteen minutes his struggles grew weaker and Barbara again reeled in slowly and carefully. There was little resistance this time and she drew her prize within a few feet of the boat where his bronze back gleamed through the water. Then the fish made another vicious plunge, carrying off a hundred feet of line. Barbara had never handled so large a fish before, her arm was beginning to shake with the excitement and strain and Ford saw that she never could land him by the rod.

"Throw me your net," he called.

Barbara tossed him the net with her left hand. In a moment Ford was upon the bass and about to pass the landing net under him. Then the fish gave another plunge and he had to repeat the manoeuver, that time successfully.

When he had netted the fish, he found that he had forgotten to ship his oars, and they were floating out in the lake. Barbara pulled the boats together and Ford deposited the gamey captive at her feet.

"Thank you," Barbara panted. "I should have lost him but for you, and isn't he a beauty?"

"He is, indeed, and a stubborn fighter. Any fisherman might be proud of him."

"It is a joint capture though, and I can't take all the credit."

"Unfortunately, I am afraid you will have to take more. I have lost my oars and must

ask you to take me as well as the bass into your boat until I can pick them up."

"Don't land on my precious bass," Barbara said, smiling. "Bring over your chain and I will tow your boat till you find the oars."

It is idle to attempt to maintain formality after an incident like that. Ford speedily recovered his oars, but he did not return to his own boat. When Barbara's cottage was reached he tied both boats and carried the fish, insisting that he must find proper fish scales to weigh the monster. Whether the scales had been adjusted to summer resort proportions I do not know, but they recorded a weight of $6\frac{3}{4}$ pounds.

This was only the second week in August. The capture was followed by other excursions. Barbara no longer tried to evade Ford's attentions and Mrs. Appleton said nothing. She knew her daughter and was wise enough to draw conclusions without asking questions.

In the last week of the month Ford and Barbara sat in the shadow of the big maple, he in the hammock and she in a camp chair close by. Mrs. Appleton had retired to the cottage, the lights twinkled softly up and down the lake, the plash of the oars was borne through the night air and the songs of boatloads of young people:

Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me.

Sang a quartet far down the lake. Barbara hummed the alto softly and as the voices passed out of hearing she asked:

"And must you really go in the morning, Robert?"

That use of his name thrilled Ford deeply. It was new and it seemed tender as a caress.

"I am afraid I must, darling. This offer is very sudden and a sub editorship on the *Overlook* is something not to be trifled with—especially now," with an emphasis on the last words which sent the blood softly flushing through Barbara's cheeks and made her glad of the shielding darkness.

"And you will see father as soon as you have arranged with the editor?"

"And as soon as I can get up my courage. Do you think he will receive kindly a poor devil of a sub editor who comes to steal his precious jewel? Really, Barbara, you must pity me a little when I go to meet your father. I ought to be so consumed with the egotism of my own happiness that I could see nothing else. Perhaps it is my habit of trying to put myself in the other fellow's place, but I can't help seeing your father's side of it, too. I shouldn't blame him if he treated me like a robber, and yet I must have you."

"Dear father," Barbara murmured. Then rising she stood in front of her lover. She reached her hands down upon his shoulders.

"Tell him," she whispered, "that I love you very, very dearly and that if he remembers when mother was twenty he will understand."

"My darling," Ford murmured, tears springing to his eyes. And as they stood clasped in each other's arms there came forth out of the darkness of the lake a tenor voice singing:

Across the hills and far away,
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world, she followed him.

FOR SEVEN DAYS A TRAMP.



DON'T like the rut. That's why I set off, alone, not very long ago, with just a dollar in my pocket, to spend a week as a tramp. There was nothing of the genteel amateur about the experiences I encountered in that week. I worked with the tramps, slept in jail with Weary Wraggles, starved with Wandering Willie, beat the freights to Philadelphia, was a camel driver and an Egyptian in Barnum & Bailey's show, earned a dollar and a half as a mason's laborer and returned as strong and as healthy as a horse and with an appetite that was the despair of my landlady for weeks.

The secret of my rather novel trip was my own. I rigged myself out as nearly as I could like some decent young fellow, down at heel, out o' pocket, more unfortunate than vicious and struck out from Boston early one fine summer morning, the objective point as the end of my adventure being Philadelphia. I reached Worcester, Mass., forlorn and weary, about 8 o'clock that night with 10 cents and a chew of tobacco in my pocket. I dined sumptuously and luxuriously on a schooner of beer and the tobacco, and, after a stroll through the pretty little Massachusetts town, I went to the police station and asked for lodging for the night. The sergeant on duty eyed me closely for a moment and then gruffly demanded my name, my age, the place of my birth, where I had come from, where I was going and then he rang a bell. A policeman answered the call. He grabbed my cap, thrust me against the wall and roughly went through my pockets, taking all I had. Then I was shown into a big cell with a long, double sort of shelving platform running the whole distance.

That, the officer said, was my bed. It was occupied by twenty or thirty tramps, some of them so drunk they had taken off everything before flinging themselves on the rough, bare

planks, and nearly all of them with the indelible marks of debauch and infamy stamped upon them. As the night wore on, other tramps were flung into the cell and as the heavy iron gate clanged on each new visitor a muttered curse was thrown at him for disturbing the heavy slumber of the other occupants of the cell. The night passed uneventfully except for a fight.

At 5 o'clock in the morning the sleepers were awakened and led up to the guard room, where they were each handed a mop and a pail and ordered to clean out the building. Then we were all treated with a luxurious breakfast of crackers and water and sent about our business.

Clinton wasn't very far away and I determined to foot it thither. My early lunch consisted of a saloon sandwich and a glass of beer. That left me without a penny, but the day was glorious and my spirits rose with the sun. At Clinton Barnum's circus was in town for the day and I applied for a job. Arrangements were just in progress for the usual street parade and one of the hands had fallen sick. I got his place temporarily. He played the distinguished part of a Bedouin in the parade and in the show itself. They rigged me out in a gay dress and many colors with sashes and a pair of gaudy, flowing pantaloons, daubed some reddish powder over my face, stuck a huge turban on my head and lo, I was a child of the desert. The camels were hitched two abreast and led by other Bedouins so that all we sons of the desert had to do was to sit on the humps and look as fierce and as picturesque as we could. If you have never ridden a camel over the hard, stony street, don't do it.

The march was all very well when the big, clumsy beasts strode leisurely along in the parade, but when there came a gap in the line and they were started on one of their long, wobbling gallops the agony to the man who had never played at being a son of the desert on a camel's back before was almost unbearable. The camel's back is broad and my legs were short, not to say

lumpy; its hump was hard and at every leap and wobble I came down severely on the hard hump. I clung desperately to the saddle, but still, at every leap I came down hard and determinedly and with unerring precision on the same place. In this way we traveled through the streets of Clinton about a mile and a half. Then I was given a hearty dinner with the rest of the Bedouins and the ladies of the harem and Roman warriors. I was scarcely able to move and, chiefly for my own convenience, ate my dinner standing up. That camel's hump still lingered with me. I mounted the beast again for the slow parade in the tent. That was easy, though, and all I had to do after that was to look devilish, brandish a spear and shout "Hurrah!" when Rome fell. I got half a dollar for the day's work and then gave up my professional career without a sigh.

I was stiff and sore the next morning, although I had spent the night in a bed for which I paid 30 cents. I meant to linger there for the best part of the day, but about 9 o'clock a virago of a woman came up to my room and routed me out. She appeared desperately anxious to know what I expected for 30 cents.

I limped painfully out of town and took to the railroad tracks.

The exercise presently brought me some relief and at a road house I made an excellent meal of home made bread and butter and milk, for which I paid 10 cents.

Singularly enough, I had not met any of the noble fraternity of tramps, although I had read that the railroad ties were full of them. When I had got over about twenty miles of ties, however, I stumbled across a shabby looking fellow of about 40, asleep on a bank. I woke him up and asked him if he knew of any place where I could get work for my night's lodging.

"Work be —," gruffly exclaimed the tramp. "Take a sup out o' this," and with surly hospitality he produced a little black bottle of villainous whisky. Then he became sociable

and told me that about five or six miles down the road there was a farm where I might get an odd job. He volunteered to accompany me, but firmly declined to work. He said he wasn't going to take any chances. He waited some distance away while I went up to the farm and asked for a job. At the request of the owner I tackled a cord of stiff wood and then I weeded out the front garden until arms and back ached. But I got a quarter for my labor, with a big cheese sandwich and permission to sleep in the barn.

Then I rejoined my companion and that night he taught me how to jump a freight. This is rather a dangerous operation. The conductors of freights on the main lines are constantly on the lookout for tramps, especially at the stations, where they fling their unwelcome visitors off without ceremony. We caught our freight about a quarter of a mile from the station, where it necessarily slowed up, and my companion swung himself on to a buffer with the skill of an artist. Then he gripped me by the collar and assisted me to an equally comfortable seat. In this way we rode through the night, the big, lumbering car bumping me in my risky perch till I thought it would shake every bone in my body loose. We alighted near Wayne, about sixteen miles out of Philadelphia, and here I made the luckiest hits of the week. A big contractor in Wayne had gone on a fortnight's debauch and his men, for the most part, had left him, because they couldn't get their pay. His wife very readily gave me a job as a laborer on a cellar, which was nearing completion. I was to get \$1.25 a day. I thought it was great fun at first. When a mason yelled out: "Bricks!" I had to fill a wheelbarrow with bricks and take them to him. When another cried: "Mortar!" I had to shoot off in hot haste with a barrow full of mortar.

This went on all day and when night came I was fairly dead beat. I had been working all day under a blazing sun and the sharp edges of the bricks cut into my hands which were all unused to such labor and my back

seemed as if it would break. But I had a glorious appetite for supper, which, by the way, I had to get myself. The contractor's wife had a great brood of hens and chickens and she had three killed. She killed one by sticking a long thin knife through its neck and then she directed me to slaughter the other two. I stuck the first one through the neck as directed, and then set it down. To my amazement and dismay the bird hopped away and began to pick up crumbs as unconcernedly as if it hadn't been stuck at all. "That's all right," explained the woman, "it'll drop in a minute." But that chicken didn't drop at all and when it continued to meander around the yard with a hole in its neck, she directed me to take an ax and chop its head off, which I did. One man held its neck over a block, the head dropped at a blow, but the headless chicken wobbled about the yard for a moment and then it dropped dead. A little later we ate it.

The next day there occurred the most pathetic scene of all my week's vagaries, and it brought me home. A freight car with a truck load of petroleum was laid over on a siding for the night. Toward morning it caught fire mysteriously and the whole train was soon ablaze. The flames reached the petroleum and the fiery liquid added to the horror as well as to the brilliancy of the spectacle. The horror of the thing consisted in the wretched fact that three unfortunate tramps were in the closed car. They had stolen a ride and their bones, charred almost to a cinder, were discovered in the car when the fire had burned itself out. I wrote the story of the tragedy for a Philadelphia paper, got \$5 for it and came home in luxury.

The experiences of the week were novel and on the whole exciting. They taught me at least this: That there were people more wretched in the world than I could ever hope to be, that misery likes company, and that it is always open hearted and unfailingly ready to share with you the bit of comfort or the gleam of sunshine that comes to it.

A SCORCH WITH A PHANTOM.



HAD been touring awheel in Eastern Pennsylvania and two days of my outing remained when I put up at the hotel in the little town of W—— one fine afternoon in September.

A journey of fifty miles had served to exhilarate rather than fatigue me, for it was a golden autumn day when animate and inanimate things seemed to possess alike a thrill of life. Supper eaten, I found myself an object of interest to the little knot of loungers that gathers round the porch of every country inn at evening. Casual inquiry as to the condition of the roads roundabout elicited ready information that they were in fine shape and lay across a rolling country. An hour's chat whiled away the interval between dusk and darkness and I watched the moon thrust first a silver rim and then a nearly perfect disk up over the hills in the East.

"Do you have to carry a lamp to ride here nights?" I asked.

"'Tisn't necessary," said the hotel keeper.

I went into the office, stripped my wheel of its bulky luggage carrier and trundled it out into the road.

"If you're lockin' for a good ride," said the proprietor, "follow this road and keep turnin' to the right at all the junctions. It'll take you round in a twenty-mile circle and land you back here."

"Thanks," I called back as I dropped into the saddle. A few minutes later I was skimming past the isolated houses on the outskirts of the village. The night was an ideal one for a cyclist. The breeze was cool and gentle, and as the moon climbed higher flickering black shadows danced to and fro on a road of milky whiteness. I passed a couple of merry wagon parties and then as I sped along the winding pike the signs of civilization grew fewer until only the well kept thoroughfare

served as a reminder of the hand of man. Now the woods on either side of the road became more frequent and I shot along under long archways of trees. Steep hills seemed to melt away into gentle slopes and I whirled down the inclines in the full enjoyment of a glorious night.

Soon I entered another avenue of trees. I hummed softly to myself a few snatches of song and was in the gayest of spirits. Then I became aware of a presence at my side.

I swerved violently and missed by a hair's breadth a collision with a wheelman who had noiselessly overtaken me. So startled was I that I uttered an angry exclamation as I recovered myself. The strange rider shot ahead a few feet and then dropped back at my side. A sharp rebuke was on my tongue, when I checked myself and sought a closer glimpse of my unbidden companion. He held his place at my side with no apparent exertion, although our pace was rapid, and I soon became aware that his conduct was, to say the least, peculiar.

Bent low over a pair of racing handle bars, his face was screened from view in the uncertain light. As accurately as I could discern, he was garbed in a suit of black tights. On his head was a close fitting cap. His figure was tall, slender and athletic. But what most attracted my attention was his wheel, which seemed to be of such marvelously fine construction that it slipped along without the click of a chain link or the creak of a saddle nut. He rode so close to me that I could have touched him by putting out my hand, yet never once did he raise his head or by word or sign give indication that he was aware of my presence.

Side by side we shot out into an open stretch of road. That I was being used as a pacemaker soon became evident. It nettled me when I found that every time I slackened speed he did likewise and every time I pedaled more rapidly he held his position at my elbow. His conduct and his silence disturbed my peace of mind, and I

decided to rid myself of his company. I increased the pace slowly at first and when we reached a slight incline I let out a few links more and shot up the grade at top speed. My emotion upon reaching the top of the hill was that of chagrin when I found him still at my side, his head bent low, his legs working with ease and precision of piston rods. I held the pace until I panted for wind, but the black rider was apparently tireless. A dozen times I was on the point of speaking and finally I blurted:

"Fine night."

He made no answer, nor even turned his head. I was astonished beyond measure and felt my anger slowly rising. The pace did not slacken; rather it increased, yet never for an instant did our positions vary an inch. Through woods and over hills we flew. The perspiration rolled off my forehead and into my eyes until they smarted, yet the stranger gave no signs of distress. A heart breaking hill loomed ahead and I summoned energy for a supreme effort. My wheel swayed and shivered under the strain as I shot up the incline, but my companion never faltered. When we reached the summit he was still gliding at my side, like a shadow. A steep descent followed and we rushed down at unabated speed.

I looked ahead and perceived several hundred yards in advance a small lake which the road encircled after an abrupt turn to the right. I also perceived that a narrow foot-bridge devoid of hand rail crossed the pond where the highway curved. I glanced at the strange rider. His gaze seemed bent upon the ground, as though he were oblivious of any impending danger. The situation was becoming critical. We could never make the turn at the speed at which we were traveling, yet the grade was so steep and the distance so short that to slow down was impossible. To cross the bridge was the only chance, yet there was room for but one abreast and who would give way? Dogged and angry, I resolved that I would not. Fif-

ty yards more and we would be upon it. I bent lower and rode like a demon. Twenty-five yards and I had gained not an inch.

"Give way," I called hoarsely and I gripped my bars until it seemed as if the steel must crumble in my fingers. Five yards more and then disaster must come. Suddenly the stranger shot out and with a clatter and never a check in our furious career we were upon the narrow structure, my wheel lapping his by several inches.

Then to my horror the black rider sat erect and slackened speed. I yelled with terror and back pedaled until my chain screeched and groaned over the sprocket as though it would part. The wheels now lapped by a foot and the crash would be in an instant. I remember seeing the black rider turn and sway in his saddle like a drunken man, there was the flash of a ghastly white face and I shut my eyes and waited for the shock.

Loose boards rattled under my wheel, there was a jolt and I felt myself shoot out upon the road. I glanced back. There in the cold, white moonlight was the marshy lake, the narrow footbridge, the nodding trees. Nothing more. The black rider had vanished.

A wild terror seized me. How I reached the hotel I could never afterward remember, for I went over the same road two days afterward and it was utterly strange to me. All I recall is that I reeled into the yard. Then there was a blank until I found myself lying on a bench with a curious crowd of men gathered around me.

"You fellers always ride fit ter kill yerselves," said a man. "What? You came over the little bridge? There was a city feller drowned in that pond one night last summer. We found him and his wheel in three foot of water th' next day."

MY FRIEND DESCALLE.

IT is said that most men have made their way in the world by minding other people's business, but it was not so in my case. The other clerks in the store said I was too reticent for any use, and some declared I was too high toned, as they expressed it, to indulge in small gossip. Left at an early age to support myself, I had risen by strict attention to detail, from the useful, but not lucrative place of errand boy in carrying bills of lading, to become the head of a department in the big retail store of Dash & Blank. From the store after business hours I had gone to the Young Men's Christian association rooms to read or take a whirl in the gymnasium, where I had a reputation as an all around athlete. I did not seek friends and had only one acquaintance, Victor Descalle. He was a handsome fellow of uncertain age, and he had a past of which he often spoke in a desultory way in walks after our boarding house dinner. We had met there as fellow boarders a year before this history begins. He had rich parents living in Brooklyn, but they had disowned him, he said, for his wild ways, first in the East and afterward in the far West. His life story was a series of adventures. When I expressed surprise at his recitals he would only laugh, and so good humoredly call me a tenderfoot, that I was fain to conclude that he was not half so bad as he seemed, and that he was magnifying his exploits. Yet, at times, there would be a gleam in his eyes when he was angry, and my suspicions would be aroused again. He had a strange fascination for me, however, and I could not imagine why he chose to fraternize with a commonplace, humdrum sort of a commercial person such as I believed myself to be.

Descalle was running in my mind as I sat on the deck of the Atlantic liner St. P— on a bright day in June, bound for a short

tour abroad in my vacation. Descalle ran in my mind, I say, because he was a link in the chain of events that brought me where I was. I had not intended to go so far as Europe in my outing. In fact, I could not afford it, but I had determined to go in order to forget myself and all thoughts of a lovely face. One day Descalle and I were going to New York, and were standing on one of the platforms of a bridge car. It was a foggy morning. The car was crowded and he and I were talking of collisions. Suddenly we heard shouts in front of the train and there came that curious, confused murmur that foreruns a disaster. The next I saw was the opening of the door of the car in front of us and there stepped out of it the loveliest being I had ever seen. I had time to note her perfect blonde type. Just then there was a jolt, a crunching sound and then a sudden stop. What happened next I never could explain, but I had caught the young woman just as she was about to pitch forward between the cars. I soon discovered that she was not one of the fainting kind and she released herself from me, though I could have held her for a dozen collisions. In the confusion, I was conscious of keeping panic stricken brutes of men from knocking us down and was able to at last place her on the platform at the New York end. She expressed her thanks to me with tears in her eyes, and said I had saved her life. That seemed putting it rather strong, and I told her I thought it was scarcely true, but she insisted, and refusing further aid, went on her way. Descalle had disappeared on the first shock of the collision and I saw him scrambling to the platform just as the fair stranger had gone. Descalle caught sight of her, however, stopped, gazed again, grew pale and then red and demanded, with what I considered more abruptness than was necessary, what I had been saying to her. I told him all that had happened. He absorbed every word with breathless attention, and after I had finished, I asked him if he knew

my fair divinity. "Do I know her!" exclaimed Descalle, who had gathered composure as I told my tale, "Why did such a notion take possession of you?" he replied, with a stare. As he became suddenly uncommunicative and fell into a rattle and chatter over the bridge accident, I let the question pass.

In the weeks that followed I tried to forget the incident but found it impossible. I tried to argue with myself over the absurdity of being in love at first sight. That did not work a cure, for my dreams were visited by that fair face and I awoke morning after morning with a cry and found my arms outstretched to grasp the phantom form that ever fled tantalizingly before me. My health began to suffer and I applied for a vacation and it was granted. This was, of course, after I had used the old expedient of advertising by way of personals in the papers, but there was no reply. Descalle, whom I persistently prodded to tell me something of what he knew shut me off by asking me what my troubles were to him, in a way that was intended to be taken jocularly, but which I felt was true. I didn't, therefore, confide to him my intention to embark on the steamship.

So, heartsick and with no pleasant anticipations before me, I sat that day on the steamship's deck and took little note of the din that arose from the transfer of baggage from the pier to the lofty steamer beside it. I had sought a remote spot on the starboard side, beyond the captain's cabin. With my steamer chair arranged at an obtuse angle I was buried in a newspaper, when a voice nearby went through me like a knife. It was the voice of the woman I loved. For a moment I could not move and then I dared not look for fear of breaking the illusion. With my paper still before my eyes I heard her saying, as in a dream:

"Now, papa, you know you'll be ever so much better for a summer abroad. We will just sip a little sweetness wherever we find honey and just flit on to the next flower."

Then with a sigh, "If only dear mamma had lived to go with us. You musn't think I hurried you, you old blessed, just because I wanted you to catch this steamer."

"Well, Imogene, I did think you were a little importunate," said the father. I nearly fell off from my chair. He was my employer. So that was his daughter I had met that day in the bridge car, and my heart sank for she was an heiress and could never consent to link her future with those of an employe in her father's big establishment. All this flashed through my mind in less time than it requires to write it and, as I lowered my newspaper at the sound of my employer's voice Imogene's eyes met mine. She started and then blushed in the prettiest way. Her father was saying:

"Now, there's the business I must leave. If young Ruthven were to remain I would feel that matters would go on all right, but he's going away, too."

I had heard the mention of my own name with pleased surprise. It was the first time I had heard his opinion of me, and Imogene cast a swift look at me over her shoulder and it spoke volumes, only I was so dazzled that I could not read between the lines.

"Well, upon my word."

The familiar accents of Descalle sounded in my ear and a hearty whack on my shoulder roused me.

"Trying to hide yourself away, eh! You'll soon be dragged out of this corner. Eh? You didn't know I was going over? That's not very strange, as I didn't know it myself twenty-four hours ago."

The sound of Descalle's voice had evidently reached Imogene and her father as they had half turned back to retrace their steps. The girl gave a startled look of recognition at Descalle, then she said something to her father and they turned again and were lost in the crowd.

"Gad, old fellow," Descalle rattled on, pretending he had seen nothing of what had been going on, "it cost me something to get

off on this boat, but I was bound to do that when I learned old moneybags and his daughter were going. I s'pose you are looking for a little flirtation yourself, but it won't go; see! Pretty clever it was of you to track them down here, Ruthy, my boy. Didn't think you were up to it. Does you credit, and all that sort of thing—but I'm a little ahead of you. I've been paying slight attentions that way myself, *verbum sap.* The old man has made his will giving her every cent he possesses."

I knew Descalle too well to show the indignation I felt and replied in monosyllables until he drifted off, as he said, to look after his baggage, and afterward do the agreeable to Imogene. Something about Descalle's manner made my blood boil, and as he disappeared there seemed to settle a blank despair over my life. I had fled to avoid trouble and had only made matters worse. As we moved away from the pier and down the glorious upper bay I took little note of events. In the Narrows, however, I noticed a rapid tug put off from quarantine and approach, with two men on deck, and as the ship was going at reduced speed the men caught on and clambered on board. They were so evidently belated passengers that I dismissed the incident from my mind.

Day after day passed. Descalle was playing poker most of the time in the card room. Imogene and her father rarely came on deck and when they did Descalle was all attention, but he seemed making little progress with Imogene. The last night before we were to arrive at Queenstown I was restless and sought the most secluded spot I could find. It was far aft. A huge ventilator screened me from the view of pedestrians. Suddenly I heard the voices of Descalle and my employer. They were approaching, talking more and more excitedly. The old man was denying Descalle something, and he in turn was pleading that Imogene would learn to love him if her father would consent to their marriage.

"Victor," he broke out, "I know your father and mother. They are of God's nobility, but you—you—no, no, it cannot be!"

Descalle had reached a spot opposite me and I could see his eyes gleam in the darkness. He was carrying a sword cane and the weapon flashed out of its sheath. An instant more and the blade would have passed through the old man's body and he would have been lifted and thrown over the bulwarks into the waves rushing past us. Two bounds and I was between the men trying to grasp the sword. I missed, and got a thrust through the shoulder that seemed as though a hot iron had pierced me. I could see three shadows glide up as everything began to waver and grow black before my eyes.

"Ruthven tried to stab the old man," said Descalle, coolly, to two men and Imogene, as they came up. "He jumped from an ambush and I prevented him by seizing his sword and pressing him back with it."

"That gold brick yarn won't pass current this time, Descalle," said one of the men, at the same time picking up the sword. "Seems to me I saw this sword once down in 'Frisco. It was said that it laid out Broncho Pete at Sally Dolore's dance house. The game is ended, Descalle. We want you for raising a check in New York the day before we sailed and afterwards some people out West would like to see your handsome face.

Descalle had edged near to the bulwark while the detective had been speaking and suddenly dashed away and attempted to scale it and sprng overboard. He was quickly grasped by the other detective, who muttered:

"That's insultin', that is, Descalle; did you think we don't know our business?"

With folded arms and head on his bosom Descalle was led away to be locked up. Meanwhile Imogene's father had hastened for the ship's doctor. She had spoken my name in the moment that the detectives came and had said:

* * * * *

Mrs. Ruthven has detected me writing this and has put her small white hand over the characters at the foot of the page, and said: "That's all right, Ruthy, dear; never mind what I said. It's nobody's business but ours. But I'll let you tell that I got papa to go on the steamer because I couldn't bear to have you go away. Of course after the accident I found out who you were, though you couldn't find me, goosey."

"But I can tell how you nursed me back to health?"

"Nonsense, the ship's doctor did it; but you can tell how you have become the head of the firm and how

"—— and how my wife tyrannizes over me?"

"Why, certainly, and how you are the dearest of dears."

IN CAMP CEDAR CLOVE.

OF course, the back yard was a large one and it had currant bushes and one or two apple trees, and a wee barn with glass windows. But it was a city yard just the same and hardly a stone's throw from a busy thoroughfare, where the ice wagons came on particularly cold days and coal carts trundled to and fro on sweltering occasions with that perversity of tradesmen's vehicles that makes town life a condimental variety and a joy forever. Years ago the place had been a farm until the land boomer and the ubiquitous trolley transformed things, leaving this block of verdant land to shame the folks who turned clover fields into twenty foot lots at \$200 down and \$5 a month, with a grand piano and a lamppost thrown in.

Why this particular spot should have escaped the real estate man was a subject of considerable discussion in the Queen Anne monstrosities and the frame apartment houses surrounding it, but the fact really was that Farmer Stickinthemud had held this acre of ground to grow more valuable, and had lost all the money he made on the rest of his farm trying to pay taxes on it. Farmer S. has moved to Flatlands with the trolley after him, and an alderman has bought his little remnant and will sell it to the city government for a couple of hundred thousand dollars for a park, while Farmer S. sprinkles tacks on the side path in Flatlands and votes for a new administration every year.

Anyway, my wife and I lived for a time in the little white frame cottage the farmer had lost on the mortgage, and the two children used the diminutive barn for a play house. In mentioning the fact that I was a reporter the accompanying fact that I was not wealthy goes without saying, and when the summer came and a wild desire to spend a couple of

weeks' vacation camping out was broached the painful thought loomed up that, beside the vacation, we had nothing to spend. It was just as economical to talk of the Adirondacks as the Thousand Islands, and much of the pleasure of anticipation was used up in discussing the special advantages of these places. Finally we quarreled over the mosquitoes and insects of the Adirondacks and the too formal and aristocratic requirements of the Thousand Islands. A compromise was necessary. My wife declared Brooklyn was good enough for her. But my mind was set on camping out if I had to borrow the last cent the restaurant man at the office had. I would not stay in that stuffy home and sleep in a comfortable bed and have my meals on a table with chairs to sit in any longer. This monotony of comfort was palling on me, and as for Acca, my wife, she was growing thin and pale warning the butcher she would trade elsewhere if he would persist in presenting his bill. All the tradesmen had a horrible habit of presenting bills just as some dinner to a reporter newly elected to the legislative staff took my last cent.

Suddenly an idea struck me. These things always strike suddenly. A clump of ever-green trees in the back yard concealed a dilapidated chicken coop. Why not set up a tent there? Half the enjoyment of a vacation is imagination. Who would sleep on a hard bed, with suggestions of last year's corn field in its mattress, and eat vegetables that come from the nearest town in cans, if ignorance did not create the bliss that makes wisdom foolish? Ha! Here was an Adirondacks, Lakewood and Long Island all in one and as isolated as if it were miles away.

That night two A tents came home in an express wagon. Acca took hold in great shape, and as for the children they were delirious with joy. My vacation was several weeks off and lots of time was at my disposal to properly take possession of Cedar Clove, our camping ground. Bridget, the washerwoman, was very enthusiastic over it,

and wanted to come too, and promised to pay her own transportation. No one spoke of the place without a far away expression and a Saratoga trunk smile. So perfectly did we deceive ourselves, that the clump of cedars seemed as far off as pay day on Wednesday night. We looked at the spot through the large end of opera glasses, and "Trilby" and the Brooklyn Eagle gave place to "Robinson Crusoe" and the "Swiss Family Robinson." One day we organized an exploring expedition and descended upon the place in bicycle costumes to give an outing air to the trip. It was ideal in every way but one. There was no trickling stream or murmuring brooklet. This had to be remedied. That night I bribed the office boy to write up the prize fight I was assigned to, and taking a wheelbarrow and the jubilant Bridget with me descended upon an unfinished house nearby and appropriated to my building fund more rocks than ever went into such a fund before. These rocks were artistically piled up around an iron water pipe that stood near Cedar Clove and the crevices were filled with dirt and sprinkled with grass seed. A trench was dug, even Acca taking a shovel and standing by while Bridget and I finished the mountain stream's bed. Another raid upon the house nearby and a lot of shining pebbles were secured, and when all was ready the faucet was turned on and out gushed a spring of natural water.

It was a great success, and we immediately christened the place Minnehaha falls. To be sure the grass wouldn't grow, but the weeds grew wild and so did Acca when Bridget brought two young kids and several chickens. The chickens were a great success, too. They helped us raise vegetables where they never came up before. They also caused several gardens of flowers to come up, and the goats raised cane generally, so that Camp Cedar Clove soon became quite tropical. As for me, I knew this vacation would be a grand one, for I was more worn out already than I had ever been on any other one. I

could easily calculate that it would take another winter of work to rest me after this little relaxation, and Acca said she never saw me look so much as if I had been on a vacation before.

Well, at last the day came and we tramped forth from our houses, the two kids drawing a carriage with the other kids in it. Bridget was loaded in several ways and Acca and I carried a miscellaneous assortment of the most useless household utensils we could find. After us came Rory, the dog, and bringing up in the rear were our live stock—three ducks, a rooster, some fine young chickens and a hen who had seen better days. These were all contributed by Bridget, who possessed a fascination for them that was touching. They were constantly expecting to be fed and lived in persistent pursuit of that deceit with a fidelity that brought visions of the installment agency to my mind, which were dispelled, however, by the charms of Camp Cedar Clove.

At the rate of a foot a mile we were sixty miles from the house and calculating fourteen feet in the party, including the dog's, we found we were actually 840 miles from home. Tents were pitched in the circle of cedars, the mountain torrent turned on and Acca and I sat down to enjoy the primitive pleasures of our rural retreat. The chicken coop was demolished and a fire started with its remains. The first prosaic break occurred at this point, when a rude and unromantic policeman appeared and wanted the fire extinguished and hesitated whether he had not better arrest the whole family as lunatics. I was compelled to descend to the mean realities of ordinary life for a moment and convince him I was sane by promising to write a real nice puff about his brave capture of a tramp who was asleep in our barn.

Acca meanwhile had gone to the kitchen tent, where the eatables were stowed, and now she came rushing forth, tears of joy streaming down her cheeks as she threw her arms around my neck.

"Austin, Austin, this is just too natural for anything!" she cried. "The sugar is already full of ants and a gigantic black spider has been drowned in the milk. If we only had a little seashore for the children now."

I smiled and pointed to a corner of the yard where, the night before, Bridget's husband had dumped two or three loads of white sand. Budge and Toddy, the children, were already digging away in it. A cry of joy came from Budge as he picked something up and came dancing toward us. It was a clam. The butcher's boy had been ordered to bury a bushel there every other day. Many other harmless deceits of this kind added to the event and helped out imagination.

Even Budge and Toddy entered into the thing with a vim and wondrous were the tales they told of huge animals and "drefful snakes" that dwelt in the bushes back of the barn. Now Acca didn't altogether fancy this imaginative trait of the children but I reproached her with suggestions of the graphic correspondent of Cuban wars Budge would one day be with such a training. Well, Acca and I have had many fine vacations since then, stuffy with white flannel suits and lace dresses, but we never forget the thrilling days we spent in the forest in our back yard, bright with the light that never was on sea or land. When people ask where this wonderful camp was, a vague expression enters the eyes of the family ensemble and Budge and Toddy whisper, "And there was wild animals and drefful snakes and booful brooks what papa turned on."

THE HILLS OF TENNESSEE.



N exquisite perfume of laurel and pine came to me on the fresh morning air. From above the range of great, bold mountains we had circled for the hour

and more, the sun was peeping, veiled in the amber mists that yet filled the valley with uncertain shadows—hanging there as if loth to leave the bosom of the river that wound its way amid the rocky hills like a silver chain flung upon a lady's dressing table. Through the night, as our train crept slowly up the grade to the table of the Cumberland, I had drawn in each breath an added sense of life I had not felt in years—a sense that needed but the light of dawn to kindle into perfect being.

Penned in the city's close confines, I had for years struggled to gain footing in my chosen profession. Never before had I felt it possible to lay down the fight for a change of scene and—rest. But the urgent appeal had come for me to spend a fortnight—"as long as I liked"—the letter ran, with a fellow member of my profession and my alma mater. How he came to be buried in the mountains of Tennessee I did not know, or stop to question then. I had heard in the years since leaving college of his work, of his scientific investigations, and rapid rise in his profession. I had even come across a paper or two of his—but in the reading I saw hints of strange theories and other thoughts the trend of which I felt beyond me. But that aside, I had accepted his invitation, and there he stood beside the station as I stepped from the train.

The greeting over, I took time to look at him as we tramped up the steep, past the little settlement and beyond the cabin he said he had pre-empted. I saw the years had left their trace upon him in spite of youth. Deep lines showed about his eyes and mouth.

The hair was thickly streaked with gray, the shoulders bent, the figure lean. The eyes—I could not see for ever were they turned elsewhere.

Within the cabin—clean and comfortable for such a place—a hickory fire crackled cheerily upon the hearth. About were books and many instruments suggestive of his calling.

“You wonder, old man,” he began, as we stretched our legs before the blaze with pipes well aglow, “why I am here—why I have been here for two months and more.”

I admitted frankly that I did.

“I came for rest.” He took from a case as he spoke, a quaintly carved box and fumbled with the lock. “I came for work. I came that I might be nearer nature’s heart. I came to escape the tangle of men’s lives.”

He had opened the queer box and sat stroking one of the two vials it inclosed. Taking it in his hand he held it toward the fire, and the light seemed to glow afresh in the liquid it contained.

“See how it sparkles,” he mused, as if not for my ear. A strange brightness came into his eyes. The expression of his face was one of rapture. “It is the essence of all things—life. I made it here—here, where all is purity, where man may touch the hidden sources of all that is. It is mine. With its precious drops I stop the onward stride of time; cry halt to the worm of decay and death is not.”

He had arisen and stood before me with his strangely lighted eyes gazing intently into mine. Then he laughed, laughed his old hearty laugh as if it were all a joke and one well played upon me. It was more comfortable to hear him as he talked of the other vial and its contents. The strange light had faded from his eyes and he might have been before his clinic. The change puzzled me.

“I have come to be a sort of crank, I guess,” he said, with his old frankness, “at least, as far as the study of disease germs is concerned. Indeed, I think we medical men have tipped but a corner of the truth so far.

Here I have bottled a combination of microbes that once infused into poor humanity would baffle in effect all the skill of which we boast. These I gathered in the haunts of men—in our great centers of humanity. This,” and he turned the other vial toward the fire again, “I discovered here among God’s footstools. Life and death, I call them,” and he smiled again.

* * *

She had become a familiar object in my tramps about the mountains and as she stood leaning against the gray boulder beside the little rivulet that leaped in foam and mist from the ledge above, the picture was not displeasing. The mellow sunlight seemed to touch and linger about her face, burnishing to deeper hues the sheen of her yellow hair. Beneath her rich brown skin the blood came full and strong flushing the cheeks and tingling the half open lips. A bright colored kerchief knotted about the throat was the one bit of relief to the somber tone of her plain, homespun dress.

She handed me the cup with its sparkling contents and I drank laughingly to her grave, serious face.

“What a pity such a one must live here in these benighted hills. Yet, I suppose, she has known naught else and is content.”

I said it as we sat before the fire, my host and I.

“And why not?” he answered.

“But she seems above her station—I mean fitted for the polishing and refinements of a higher plane of life.”

“And why higher? Ah, my boy, it is but the veneer society puts on that hides the monstrous rottenness beneath. The people of these mountains are what you see—genuine. She—” he stood up and, walking to the window, gazed out into the silver moonlight.

“You are hardly the man to arraign society in so harsh a way, courted as you have been and favored. Upon my soul, you had better give up this strange life of yours and come back to your proper sphere.”

He turned and walked to me.

"I am never going back."

There was something in his voice that sounded earnest and decided. When he spoke again it was with a tenderness that startled me.

"I shall stay here with her."

Turning his intense gaze upon me he went on with an earnestness that held me silent: "I love her. Here we are to live on and on while the world spins out its fitful span. Through all the ages that have been before she was destined here for me and I for her. It matters not that in the changes she should be here amid these simple mountain folk. Fate led my work and my journeyings to these great rugged hills for she was here—strong and unsullied as they themselves. Death cannot part us, for to me there is no death. I have unlocked the secret for which the ancients labored long ago and she shall share it with me—but no other."

What if he had, by some strange power or chance, unearthed the secret of which he talked. I had labored long and unremittingly in the studies of my profession and with the unfolding of new truths and principles had come, sometimes, strange uncertainties and imaginations that tottered reason and bid me halt this side the verge. But no! He had gone beyond. These strange thoughts of his—the vials—so easily called up might be dispelled by healthful reasoning; but as for the love I saw he felt for her—there was the danger. That he should stoop so far below him to choose a mate seemed more a pressing calamity than the hallucinations of his brain. How would his family look upon her as an annex? Pure and good she might be; beautiful, in a measure, I knew her, but what in common with him could she have—this daughter of the mountains?

So did I argue safely with my host. So might I have argued with the granite of the hills that towered high above our cabin home.

Within the days that followed I saw her as before. In my zealousness for his good I had planned to speak to her of him, to ask her for his sake to go away beyond his reach. But when her tender eyes were raised to mine and the grave face flushed at some trivial word of kindness I could not muster up the words in brave enough array to speak. So ran the days of my vacation, almost up to their close.

The glory of the hills with all their myriad tints of autumn, the murmur of the mountain stream and the sunlight sifting through the changing mists that came trooping up the valley was upon me, and to sit and dream alone upon the porch of our little cabin was bliss enough. The far away drum of some diligent woodpecker came to me, and near at hand the chirps of a cricket seemed almost too sharp and bustling for the time. Was it losing so much of life to live on so forever?

My host came up the path.

I noticed through my half closed eyes that he, too, felt the influence of the day and place. I noticed, too, the quaint, carved box beneath his arm.

He had been absent since the early morning; but I had come to learn that there were times he would rather be alone and so we came and went as fancy moved us and apart.

Through half open eyes I saw him sit there on the grass and fondle the treasure box, as he was wont to do. I saw him open it and stroke the shining vials. I saw him lift one high toward the sunbeams as they came filtering down through the leaves above, that he might gaze again at his fancied potent liquid. And then——

The cry I heard drowned the murmur of the water and the drumming in the far away wood. The cricket ceased to chirp.

When I reached his side he sat there quivering, all life gone from his face; all horror shining in his eyes.

He did not speak to me, but over and over I heard him whispering to himself—"Death! death! death!"

The vial still trembled in his palsied hand. Instinctively I saw the seal was broken. Some inkling of the truth came to me. Had he given her—

He seemed to know at last that I was there—to read my thoughts.

“I would have had her live on with me forever,” he moaned. “She did not know! Some simple ailment troubled her. She let me minister. In my longing to give her of my life—My God, man! Don’t you see? Don’t you understand? The wrong vial!”

He sprang to his feet and cried it at me like a soul possessed.

“Two hours ago! Two little, worthless hours in all the time that could have been to her and me! Why don’t you go to her? Can’t you, with all your science, save her?”

He laughed and my blood stood still to listen.

“Ha, ha! Save her? No power in heaven or earth can save her now.

Upon the instant the fatal vial was at his lips. I dashed it from his hand and far down the rocks below I saw it strike and shatter.

By her humble bed I labored with all the skill at my command. Night and day was I there; watching the fatal malady draw close about the slender thread of life the folds that baffled all my cunning. Patiently she bore it all and when I went to the cabin up the slope the lonely occupant waited hopelessly for encouragement he knew would never come. Stripped of his strange delusions, love for her had supplanted all else in his heart and soul.

And she—her great, tender eyes would follow me about the room, and when I sat beside her bed her hand stole out to mine and pressed it, oh, so tenderly, and when I put it down upon her breast it was so cold.

He knew when I went back to him that day that all was over. But he has never known what I saw in those tender eyes before they closed forever. Silently she gave me what I had never dreamed worth the seeking—the love she never could have given him.

He is still there by that grave in the granite hills of Tennessee. His letter is here before me now—an invitation for another fortnight—“or as long as you will.” I can’t spare the time for a vacation now; but I’ll send some flowers for a grass grown mound up in the hills of Tennessee.

INTERRUPTION IN IDLENESS.

CHE iron steamboat for Coney Island touched at the Crescent club pier, half a dozen young men leaped from the rail, the bell rang in the engine room, and the boat was off on its interrupted way to the democratic merry-go-round on the beach. Joseph Bertram sat on the wide veranda of the club house and watched the men as they walked rapidly up the pier. He wondered why people would be so foolish as to exert themselves unnecessarily. Bertram was noted for abstinence from this kind of folly. There were several other kinds, however, for which he did not have so great dislike. The new comers were active, vigorous and enthusiastic. Bertram had as great antipathy to continuous enthusiasm as he had to unnecessary activity. He did not see why a man should be enthusiastic over a good cigar, a golf stick, or a racing shell, or a boxing glove, or a fencing foil, or a bicycle tire. Such folly was a needless exhaustion of energy which should be reserved for a worthy occasion. But Bertram would never tell his friends what such an occasion was. So he got the reputation of being indolent and indifferent, a reputation as undeserved as any which even the most lazy man who worked ten hours a day ever acquired for industry. The active young men who had got off the boat had little respect for him. They were working that at some future time they might be lazy. He did not have to work. His ancestors had accumulated enough money to make it possible for their descendants to follow the bent of their inclination. Bertram was considerate, however, and he seldom told the men who made good natured sport of him what he actually thought and why he loafed and invited the waiter to fill his glass. When Williams, the first man to reach the club house, remarked, "You are working as hard as usual, I see?" he smiled good naturedly and nodded his head. It was

easier to nod than to open his mouth and use his vocal organs. The men sat on the porch near him, and after resting their eyes and their brains by gazing in silence for a minute or two at the glowing sky in the west and the trail of gold and crimson light that led from the beach at their feet across the waters to the distant horizon and the gates of heaven, they began to talk of their coming vacation. One was going to make a bicycle tour; another intended to charter a canal boat, fit it up with cots and rugs and cool hangings and take a trip on the Delaware and Hudson canal through the mountains of Ulster, Sullivan and Orange counties; a third thought of going to Europe to amuse himself in the places that had known men for thousands of years. He preferred the haunts of the swallow-tailed coat to the lair of the honey bee and the nesting place of the robbin. Bertram listened to the animated conversation for several minutes. Then he slowly turned in his chair and remarked in his usual lifeless way:

"Boys, I have concluded to take a vacation this year as well as the rest of you."

The laughter which followed this announcement echoed through the house and made the idler about the tennis court in the rear wonder who had brought a new story across the bay from the dusty city.

"You may laugh if you choose," he said, "but I think you might better save your strength for business to-morrow. It is a useless waste of energy. I repeat, though that is unnecessary, that I propose to take a vacation. If your minds were not running in ruts all of the time you would follow my meaning instead of keeping to one track like a stupid trolley car. What is a vacation? It is an intermission in a stated employment or procedure. I am going to take a vacation. That makes the third time I have said it. I am as much entitled to it as any of you."

After this speech of unusual length for him, he rose slowly from his chair and strolled into the building. That was the last seen of him that night or for many days. Nobody knew where he had gone. He left no word

about the time when he would return. The men who spent their evenings at the house missed him. It is true he did not talk much, but he gave the others some amusement by his good natured inaction. They made fun of him when they felt blue and disgusted and sometimes they would get cynical as they thought of him spending his days there while they were rushing about the courts or muddling their brains with figures or trying to decide whether they ought to buy or sell the securities of the Consolidated Pneumatic Stock Watering company, limited. A week passed and he did not return. But early in the second week he was found in his accustomed place on the porch watching the shipping on the bay and sipping mineral waters stiffened up occasionally with a little brandy. Everyone was glad to see him again and had a word of pleasant banter to offer. He took it all good naturedly—it would have been too much trouble to resent anything of so trivial a nature. He offered no word of explanation of his absence. The men to whom he had announced his intention of taking a vacation had not thought to speak of it again and until they arrived on the iron steamboat as usual, everyone was wondering why he had been absent. If he had been an ordinary man no curiosity would have been excited. As Williams and his companions approached the house that evening and saw Bertram on the porch the conversation of the previous week came back to them and Williams exclaimed:

“Hello, Bertram is back from his vacation.”

When they reached him they began to ask him what sort of a time he had, where he went, what he saw, what he did and why he did not let them know where he was going. He looked up at them and smiled indulgently.

“Well, the truth is,” said he, “I wanted to be alone and I succeeded. I am glad to get back, though. Everybody is glad when his vacation ends, isn’t he, Crowden?”

This remark was addressed to a man who had announced with considerable enthusiasm the year before that he was going to ride to Buffalo and back on his bicycle. It rained every day while he was away, and the roads were so muddy that he could not ride, so he spent his vacation in a little hotel at Fishkill rather than come back and admit that he had not succeeded in what he undertook.

"Where did I go?" he continued. "Not very far away. If you fellows would only try to find amusement and relaxation near home you would get rich sooner and learn many things about the world which you do not know. I don't know whether my vacation did me any good or not. I feel inclined to talk a little to-night because of it, and talking is a waste of good breath which might be used in expanding the lungs or in inhaling the smoke of a good cigar. Where did I go? Oh, haven't I told you yet? Well, I visited that unknown territory that lies between Ridgewood and Richmond Hill. I know every paving stone between the car tracks and every tree and every house on each side of the road. There are some fine trees there. I spent my vacation as the conductor of a trolley car collecting the toll which one set of men levies on another for carrying them where they want to go. I learned that there were more kinds of fools in this world than Commodore Vanderbilt ever dreamed of when he was talking of one of his sons-in-law. I shall not go into details," he hastened to add, as some one asked him to tell about the fools. "I found out too, that the people who ride on the suburban trolley cars belong to the same race as those who ride in carriages; of another kind. You wanted me to give you a lecture on the fools I have met. I did not want to be personal so I declined. I shall not talk sociology or socialism either. I have told you what I did. I will bet the price of a box of cigarettes that I had just as much fun as any of you fellows will have this sum-

mer and I know that it was a vacation because it was a serious interruption to my stated occupation. Interruptions cause friction and friction wears a man out. I do not propose to be interrupted in that way again. As you have seemed interested in my return I shall show how I appreciate your attentions. My new yacht will be completed on the fourth of July and I now invite you all—let me see, there are not more than a dozen of you here now are there? the yacht is big enough for that number—to come along with me and have a good time. My crew is large enough, so that not one of you will have to exert himself unnecessarily and if any of you want it I will have a suction pump adjusted near you so that you will not have to use any of your own breath in smoking your cigars.”

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