

vice. The girls were very nice about it; they knew it to be a bad time of the year to collect, but were it ever so little it would help; they themselves had not been ashamed to give twenty-five cents each, and later they were going to get up a social.

Of course the gentlemen were but too pleased to help, though they feared it would not be so much as they would wish. And now Andy's eyes were laughing. Would it not be the crowning part of the joke to give Bill's five dollars. Bill said he could keep it. It was too good a chance to lose. Yes, he would do it just this once and then he would cease.

Bill was thinking that, all things considered, one dollar would be about the decent thing; if the other fellows gave half that amount the debt would be more than raised. He was about to make a move to produce his money, when he stopped with a gasp as he saw the graceless Andy walk deliberately to the cupboard and returning lay in the palm of the astonished Miss Barton his identical five dollars.

Andy cautiously looked up to see how Bill was taking it, but instead met the deep, earnest eyes of the girl he thoroughly respected and who touched sacred things reverently. A blush of honest shame overspread his face as he realized that she understood something of this by-play.

And Bill rose to the emergency. Making pretence of hunting in his pocket for what he knew was not there, he waited to see just what his unscrupulous partner would do, and was relieved to see he gave but one of the bills. Not having found anything in his pocket but nails, for which the ladies had not asked, he proceeded to his trunk, and though it came near, very near, the bottom of his cashbox, produced five dollars, at the same time looked squarely at Andy, saying in manner, "Well, you did not outdo me this time, you little rat."

The girls stayed a little time, in which Andy contrived to show his home photos, for being of a good stock, he wished somebody to see that if he was wicked his relations were not. He always liked to show his photos, but to-night for more reasons than one. He was right. A girl lays much value on the family a man is of. And Bill did not suffer by this move, for he had some very fine photos as well.

As the ladies rose to leave, Andy suggested that Bill go to the next farm on an errand. They would need the sledge soon, he said; was sure that ladies would give him a ride, and he could open the unruly wire gates and pilot them over the culverts if their horse was skittish. The prairie girl nearly spoiled the scheme by laughing, for their horse had long ceased to be skittish and made no move without due warning. However, Bill went.

While he was searching for his hat, which was at length discovered in the bed, where it had been hastily covered, the prairie girl made a thrust at the individual whom she plainly saw had things too much his own way.

She knew well that had an hour's notice been given, the shack would have presented a very different face, and willfully drew attention to that which the owner wished to pass unnoticed. Letting her demure gaze fall on the towel, which was but partly concealed behind the wash box, and though by sore experience she knew well a bachelor's towel, quietly remarked, "You have scrubbed lately, for your floor cloth is not put away yet;" whereupon Miss Barton, who thought, indeed, that it was the floor cloth, enlarged on the hardships of keeping a house clean, until Andy was sore pressed to make suitable reply.

Bill did not return until late that night, having escorted the girls home, but forgotten his errand.

"Did you get the sledge, Bill?" asked Andy the following morning. "No," trying to think of a possible excuse. "He was not through with it." "I suppose so," was the quiet answer, "for he brought it back last night after you left." Bill gazed a moment at the incorrigible Andy and then, because he was happy, laughed, and Andy, because

he liked to see him so, laughed too.

And well might Bill laugh, for this was but the beginning of a series of visits that did not cease until the section lost a teacher and the bachelor gained a wife.

And Andy? He is a good boy now; but with such a mother and sweetheart it must come some time.

'Twas the other day his wife said, "Andy, do you remember the time we went to your shanty collecting for the old organ? You and Will Sinklaw gave us ten dollars. What was it about that money? I know you were up to something naughty, but you never told me." Andy, with much laughing, confessed. The little woman looked him over earnestly and said, "I'm afraid, Andy, you are not very sorry about it." And he, returning the gaze, from which there was no escape, replied, "To you, little girl, and but one other I ever told the truth. I am afraid I am not."

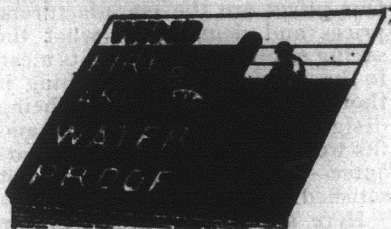
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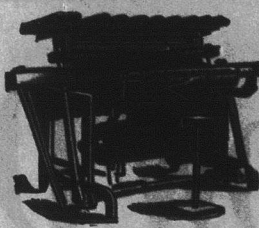
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