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THE TICKLER

now. This house is a bungalow, the inhabitants are fond of fresh air, they keep their windows open. This fact, of course, did not escape your attention, and your proficiency with the stock whip gave you an inspiration. It was an easy thing for you to creep into the garden with the whip under your dress and switch on the electric light through Miss Conningham's bedroom window. Then you could help yourself to what jewels you wished. I suppose you thought you were perfectly safe and that nothing would be found out, and really, I must compliment you on your audacity last night, and on the skilful way in which you possessed yourself of Miss Conningham's necklace. I haven't much acquaintance with the word fear, but just for a moment last evening I was almost frightened. Now the thing is explained it seems simple enough. But that remark applies to most clever things. I don't take any credit to myself for making this discovery, for fortune has been on my side. But for an accident you might have got away with those jewels, and nobody would have been any the wiser. I don't know what Miss Conningham proposes to do—

"Oh, nothing," cried Marie. "For the sake of my mother I should like to have this affair hushed up if possible. Of course, I shall have to tell her later on. Still, at the same time, I don't want to lose my jewels, and, if you think—"

"Oh, you are not going to do that," Parke said grimly. "You shall have all your diamonds back. This is a grossly immoral proceeding, and as an old Government servant I ought to be ashamed of myself for becoming a party to any such thing. Now, Miss Fladbury, you hear what Miss Conningham says. Let us have the diamonds back, and you are free to go your own way. It is not too late for you to get to Sandmouth to-night, and your belongings will be sent on to you."

The woman rose from her chair. She was quite cool and collected now, quite free from any sign of shame or degradation.

"I'll go and fetch them," she said. "I think not," Parke said drily. "If you don't mind, I'll come with you. It is just as well that we should conduct this in a businesslike manner."

He opened the door and stepped aside for the woman to pass. He came back presently with all the missing jewels in his hand. So far as Marie could see there was absolutely nothing wanting. Cheserworth had vanished for the moment. He was outside trying his whip, the crack of the lash could be heard inside the hall.

"And now," Parke smiled, "now that you are satisfied, I suppose I had better be off back to town again."

Marie hesitated just for a moment. "I think you had better stay," she said softly. "I want somebody to look after my diamonds, and—and myself."

"Oh, in that case," Parke smiled, "of course—"

**A Wet Day in a Dry
Country**

By HELEN GUTHRIE

MANITOBA—the land of Sun! Day after day of uninterrupted, bright, glorious sunshine! The Wind may rise, and blow one almost out of existence, but still the Sun shines on! A Whirlwind may try to throw dust right into His eyes, but He only beams more broadly than ever! A Thunder-cloud momentarily succeeds in hiding His face, triumphantly battering down the big rain-drops to mark the event, but it passes in no time, leaving the ever-

present Sun shining more gloriously than ever!

Nothing could be more delightful, but yet—alas for the never-satisfied human nature—one *does* sometimes long for a good, honest, old-fashioned "rainy day," particularly if one is a woman!

There is a joy—a decided joy—in watching the raindrops chasing one another down the window-pane, until they join in a tiny rivulet and drop gleefully over the sill, to the big world beyond. There is a delight—an unmistakable delight—in waking in the morning to the measured sound of pattering rain on the roof. *What a day for odd-jobs!*

The question is, what to do first—and you spend the first half-hour after breakfast, wondering if you will turn out those old treasure-boxes in the attic, or whether it would not be better to sort the jam-cupboard! This is a weighty matter, requiring deep thought and wise consideration, and yet, the seldom-seen umbrellas in their various stages of brownness and greenness, passing your window, all agloss and adrip, are so diverting, that you find great difficulty in pinning your mind either to jam or to attic flights.

Finally, the claims of the attic assert themselves, and soon you are seated on the dusty floor of that sanctuary, deep in the mysteries of old lace, old books and old letters. The time flies so, that you simply cannot believe it when the gong sounds for lunch. "Dear me!" you say, "I have accomplished simply nothing!"

You go down stairs, to the commonplace dining-room, rather impatient of such a sordid, every-day affair as lunch, but soon the little dainty dish, made by cook, "to tempt your appetite on this dull, dismal day, ma'am," goes to the right spot, you feel more normal, smile at cook's view of your wet day, and—take a second helping!

After lunch, more shining, dripping umbrellas—they really begin to grow monotonous! You take a casual glance at the alluring jam-cupboard, and decide, after all, to let Jane sort it. As for you, you simply *must* trim up that gray hat to wear on wet days—you really require just such a hat! And so pins and wings and flowers and velvet and chiffon are in requisition, and with a mirror before you, and a mirror behind you, you concoct "just the sweetest little hat in the world!"

It really is very becoming, particularly when you try it on finally, in company with the rain-coat you got in the spring, but have never yet worn—"They match so well, and are *so* in keeping!" You pin the little gray hat on *very* firmly, considering that you are only trying it on. The effect is really excellent! How glad you are that you trimmed it!

But, what is the use of having wet-day clothes, unless one wears them? Why trim a little gray hat, just to put away on a shelf? Why, indeed?

Before you know what you are doing, you are shaking out your little ivory-handled umbrella, drawing on your wet-day gloves, and down-stairs you go! You rather apologise to Jane who is busy at the jam-cupboard, by explaining that you are "going over to see Mrs. Clark, who has not been very well, poor thing! She will need cheering up this wet day!" And then, just before you snip the latch on the front door, you pop that little gray hat inside and remark to Jane of the Jam, "If it *should* happen that I did not come back to dinner, Jane, will you ask Mr. Knight to come over for me?" And, as you run down the steps and hail a tram, you say to yourself: "One must have a *little* diversion on a long, wet day!"

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