

wrong with the 'Bunch?' nodding his head toward a fine lot of horses feeding along the shore of the lake. "I can't say that I do," replied Ned, unless it is that I don't see the big black." "Yes, that is it. I sold him today," said Dick. "That buyer who was in town was passing in a motor today, and saw him. In fact, wouldn't go away without him, and" heaving a big sigh, "I parted with Dixie, he parted with a four-hundred-dollar cheque."

"Well!" said Ned. "Dixie is a dandy. But that was a good price." "Yes, I know," said Dick, raising his arms, and folding his hands behind his head. "But when a fellow lives alone, everything around the ranch seems to become dearer to him. Especially a colt like Dixie. But that wasn't all the misery he caused me." Ned hitched his chair around a little, and with a laugh said. "Why, did he give you a good price for something else?" "No," said Dick, and now that he was going to tell it to someone else, he began to see the humorous side of it and one of his old time smiles broke over the face that had all the evening been so solemn. "He had forgotten his fountain pen. So I brought him in to the desk to write the cheque, and after he had given it to me, he looked around and said. 'I suppose Mrs. McClure and the children are away for a visit just now.' I suppose it was the surprise, but anyway, I must have looked pretty glum, as I replied, 'There is no Mrs. McClure,' for with that he caught my hand and clasped the other on my shoulder, and said, 'My good fellow, I am sorry. You must forgive me. You know that I am a stranger in these parts. I did not know that you had lost her.' As soon as I could, I told him there never had been a Mrs. McClure, then he said, 'Well! Well! Bless my soul! Living in a house like this and you a bachelor?' Then his face brightened up and he said, 'Well! Well! Now I see. There will be a Mrs. McClure soon. There is nothing like it. You're getting along, but there is nothing better than a good wife. Nothing better. Well! Well! I'll bid you Good-day.' Then picking up his cane, he came out here and began to wave it to two of his horsemen who were riding up the trail and they took Dixie back to town with them. I don't know whether it was the loss of Dixie or of Mrs. McClure and the children, or what it was, but I never was so blue as I have been this afternoon."

Ned's good hearty laugh rang out on the clear air, and pulling his stetson forward on his head, he said, "Never mind, old chap. The darkest cloud always has the brightest lining, so cheer up. I must get home now. Dad wasn't extra well today. I'll get a letter off to Miss Browne on Friday," and with a big smile, he held out his hand. "Put it there, Dick, may you never have to take my housekeeper off it." Then with a good grip and shake, he turned and was soon galloping away on "Starlight."

Dick turned to go into the house, hesitated, and then went back to the hammock. "What's the use, I can't sleep yet, he thought."

He lay there, his eyes gazing out along the mountains, still discernible in their blue, white and gray coloring in the calm evening dusk.

Dick's gaze was on the mountains, but his mind had turned away back East, and as he gazed his vision was that of a sweetfaced girl, of about sixteen or seventeen summers, dressed in a pretty brown suit, and a brown hat, sitting in a certain pew in the old stone church, just as he had seen her all those long years ago. It was a warm night and she was waving a pretty fan in such a way that it benefited the elderly lady by her side more than herself. Their own pastor was away, and in his place stood a small man preaching on Chinese Missions. Dick had listened for some time, but at last, with a shrug of his broad shoulders he thought disgustedly, "What a subject for a hot night," and turning away, his eyes fell on the sweet face he had seen so many times since in his dreams. "Brownie," he named her on that very instant, and taking a small tablet from his pocket he began to sketch her as

she sat with her eyes on the minister. She, probably tiring as Dick had done, turned her gaze and had seen clearly that Dick had been looking at her. She turned away rather shyly and again gave her attention to the minister.

Dick had noticed her glance, but had been so intent on his drawing, that he paid no attention to the fact. He was almost finished when she turned her eyes again and met his. She had blushed and was just about to turn haughtily away, when something had held her glance, and blushing still deeper, she had smiled the sweetest smile Dick had ever seen, as she bowed her head, for the minister had said, "Let us pray."

This had brought Dick to himself and now flushing furiously, he crushed his drawing in his hand and dropped it to the floor. Taking care that he did not again look that way during the singing of the last hymn. But the desire had been stronger than he, and he had glanced again, just as he turned to leave the church. This time, however,

the face was turned to the lady by her side, and Dick had passed out into the twilight with the vision that was to stay with him forever. And tonight it had come back. He lay there for more than an hour, and then, pulling himself together, he thought, "Oh, Dick! God knows where Brownie is," and went slowly up to bed.

The next morning, he had coaxed "Fred" with a tin of oats, and had run in the six plough horses, and having fed and harnessed them, he went in to his own breakfast. After he had finished he pulled out the red and yellow tobacco pouch. "I guess I'll have a pipe before I go out today," he thought. Strange thoughts were mixing, "his Brownie" and Ned's Miss Browne today, and as he lit his pipe his eye fell on some letters that had come in the mail the day before. Then taking them up, he exclaimed, "Gee Whiz! Here is a letter from Belle and why, one from Claire too. Gosh! and I thought they were the usual business duns and so forth," and tearing Belle's,

his eldest sister's, open first, he began to read. Then his brow began to pucker and "What's this? What the dickens is she talking about?"

"I'm sure it will do her good, and I am sure it will be good for you, and little Billie will be such company," he read.

Then dropping Belle's letter he opened Claire's, and then the frown quickly disappeared, and turning to the phone he rang. Whr-r-r-r. Whr-r-r-r.

A moment later he called cheerily, "Good morning, Mr. Oliver. Is Ned in the house? Just gone out has he? Well, say! Will you ask him to call me up at noon? Yes, it's Dick speaking. Good-bye."

Already the old springy step had returned, and it wasn't long until the furrows were turning up smooth and black, as the six big horses, the plow and Dick passed on before.

Dick had not been long at his dinner when the "two short and one long" of the telephone bell brought a bright smile as he thought of the sur-

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