Bill's Best Beloved.

By Hilda B. Morris.

It was on the opening day of the little girls' kindergarten that Bill Lawrence first met his Best Beloved. That was not her real name, or course. Her real name was Dorothy Lucretia Patterson, but it was the name that Bill's uncle, Thomas Lawrence, bestowed upon her when he first heard of Bill's devotion.

Bill's younger sister, Althea Antoinette Lawrence, went to the kindergarten class, and when in the spring they had their annual Prize Day, Bill was forced into a despised best suit and a red necktie to go and hear his sister recite a poem about "Rover and I."

It is needless to tell how Bill fought against going. His mother was unconquerable. She insisted. It was necessary for the honor of the family that he be there. It did not matter that Bill had heard "Rover and I" at home every day for the last three weeks. It did not matter that the other fellows scoffed at him for going to the girls' school. It did not matter that his time was valuable; that he had promised to help "Pirate Pete" build a den that very afternoon. It did not matter that his best knickerbockers were prickly and that red neckties were disgraceful for men of his age, when tied in enormous bows that completely concealed the shirt front. Nothing mattered. Bill must go for the honor of the family, and Bill went.

He displayed but little interest when the curtain went up, disclosing a broad stage, and he felt positive disgust when three pig-tailed maidens appeared and chanted a song about "Little Birdies:" He turned his face away when another little girl lisped through a piece about "Old Mother Hubbard," and he began to make desparate plans for escape when Althea appeared with a captivating grin that displayed all the places where teeth should have been, and recited her idiocy.

Bill whispered a few pleading words in his mother's ear. She shook her head. Then Bill settled down into despondency, and the sat, also into the prickly knickerbockers and the realisation of the red tie.

But with the next performer his mood changed. She was entirely different from the rest. She did not have absurd pig-tails, nor a grin and vacant jaws. Neither did liam! she recite a poem which had flowed from an idiot's pen. Her hair was curled in beautiful auburn curls; she looked earnestly at the audience instead of grinning. Her jaws were recitation was not nonsensical.

Bill was charmed. It charmed ship further than that. him the more that she lisped a lit- Bill's devotion was all absorbing.

regret. He resolved to see her thrilled his heart till now. again. All through the rest of that Life holds many problems, for vain sustained him.

alias "Pirate Pete," had lately be- had come to him. come enamoured of certain fair in his heart that perhaps he, too, might one day boast.

He saw the fair object of his desires trot down the aisle, and be dered. met by her mother and a nursesmiled. The maid began to clothe ed red and angry when Bill's moher in a fawn-colored coat and a Pale green hood.

Bill watched his chance. The lady walked away and began to talk with some other ladies. Bill approached with a manly air.

"What's your name?" he demanded of the little girl in rather tion by to ponder on. a patronizing air, his hands in his

The little girl looked up in surothy Lucretia Patterthon." Then Thomas.

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she smiled a charming little smile We have a choice List of both red kindergarten chair on which he that revealed two little dimples, one in each cheek.

"Mine's William Preston Lawrence." he volunteered. She smiled again, and said:

"Do you like sweets, William?" Bill thrilled all over with delight. How fine to hear her call him Wil-

"Yes," he said. She thrust a piece of sticky peppermint into his hand and smiled again, as her nurse led her off.

Bill yelled "Thanks!" after her, filled with little white teeth. Her and stood looking rather rueful. He had meant to carry hi

tle, a very little. That was her On his way home he could think of only flaw in Bill's eyes, and it nothing else. Dorothy Lucretia Proved that she was human. She Patterson! It was a very long looked at him once or twice with name. Bill thought it an impor-Out a smile or pause. One other tant sounding name, and, of course, little girl had grinned idiotically at a beautiful name. Bill wondered why he had never fallen in love be-Bill felt a thrill of genuine plea- fore. He had seen many other sure. He watched her bow grace- girls, more or less charming, but fully and depart, with a feeling of that strange devotion had never

intolerable programme the thought both young and old; but the young that he had not come altogether in ponder most upon them, and so it was that Bill pondered and thrilled Tim Jones and Bobby Brown, with delight at the new joy which

At the supper table Bill's mother young ladies, and boasted in Bill's asked him a question. Bill, roused tables were turned. Christine Elpresence. Bill allowed hopes to arise from his absent mood, replied in liott lived in Green Street. confusion: "Dorothy Lucretia Patterson."

Uncle Thomas roared. He thun-

For Bill this was another probmaid. Her mother patted her and lem. Uncle Thomas, who had flushther had asked him a question about "those flowers he sent to Christine Elliott." Why, then, if it heart to me perhaps I can assist was a rage provoking matter, you." should he laugh at mention of Bill's Beloved name? Bill, too, flushed red and angry as he put the ques-

"Where does your fair one live, Pockets and his feet spread far Willy?" asked Uncle Thomas cruelly.

Bill thought a moment. prise. Even then she did not grin Thomas's words hurt him. He or blush. She simply replied: "Dor-knew, now, how to hurt Uncle

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"Where does yours live? In Green Street?" he inquired politely. Uncle Thomas saw that the

Bill's father and mother cham-

pioned him. "That's right, Bill," his father said, "give him tit for tat." But Uncle Thomas was on his

feet again. "Willy-boy," he said, "she does.

I know how it feels to fall in love.

Bill's mother. But Uncle Thomas did not heed. "Stop calling me Willy-boy and I

will," Bill caught himself. He had not meant to say he would. "William, then. William, tell me

the history of your love for Dorothy Lucretia Patterson." Bill was fairly caught. He had

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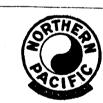
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