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was seriously bent upon potatoes was not a man to be feared. She found a half-sheet of note-paper, and wrote—

I lived in a small village before I came to London, but I am afraid I do not know much about farming. Are you a farmer?

The answer came—

*hav ben most Every thing
farmed a bit in Kent*

Smith

As she read this the seamstress heard a church-clock strike nine. "Bless me, is it so late?" she cried; and she hurriedly pencilled "Good-night," thrust the paper out, and closed the window.

But a few minutes later, passing by, she saw yet another bit of paper on the cornice, fluttering in the evening breeze. It said only "good nite," and after a moment's hesitation the little seamstress took it in and gave it shelter.

After this they were the best of friends. Every evening the pot appeared, and while the seamstress drank from it at her window Mr. Smith drank from its twin at his; and notes were exchanged as rapidly as Mr. Smith's early education permitted. They told each other their histories, and Mr. Smith's was one of travel and variety, which he seemed to consider quite a matter of course. He had followed the sea, and he had worked a bit at the docks. Now he was foreman, and he was prospering. In a year or two he would have enough laid by to go home to Rye and buy a share in a boat-building business. All this dribbled out in the course of a jerky but variegated correspondence, in which autobiographic details were mixed with reflections, moral and philosophical.

A few samples will give an idea of Mr. Smith's style:—

*i was one voyage to van demens
land*

To which the seamstress replied—

It must have been very interesting.

But Mr. Smith disposed of this subject very briefly—

it wornt

Further he vouchsafed—

*i seen a chinese cook in
hong kong could make puddings
like your Mother
a mishnery that sells Rum
is the monest of God's crechers
a bulfite is not what it is
cract up to Be
i am 6.13
but my father was 6 foot 4*

The seamstress had taught school one winter, and she could not refrain from making an attempt to reform Mr. Smith's orthography. One evening, in answer to this communication—

*i killed a Bare once 600
lbs weight*

she wrote:—

Isn't it generally spelled Bear?

but she gave up the attempt when he responded—

*a bare is a mene animal any
way you spell him.*

And all this time Mr. Smith kept his vow of silence unbroken, though the seamstress sometimes tempted him with little ejaculations and exclamations to which he might have responded. He was silent and invisible. Only the smoke of his pipe and the click of his mug as he set it down on the cornice told her that a living, material Smith was her correspondent. They never met on the stairs, for their hours of coming and going did not coincide. Once or twice they passed each other in the street—but Mr. Smith looked straight ahead of him, about a foot over her head. The little

seamstress thought he was was a very fine-looking man, with his six-feet-one and three-quarters and his thick brown beard. Most people would have called him plain.

Once she spoke to him. She was coming home one summer evening, and a gang of corner-loafers stopped her and demanded money to buy beer. Before she had time to be frightened Mr. Smith appeared—whence, she knew not—scattered the gang like chaff, and, collaring two of the human hyenas, kicked them, with deliberate, ponderous, alternate kicks, until they writhed in ineffable agony.

When he let them crawl away she turned to him and thanked him warmly, looking very pretty now, with the color in her cheeks. But Mr. Smith answered not a word. He stared over her head, grew red in the face, fidgeted nervously, but held his peace until his eyes fell on a rotund policeman passing by:

"I say, Bobby!"—ard.

The constable stood aghast.

"I ain't got nothing to write with," thundered Mr. Smith, looking him in the eye. And then the man of his word passed on his way.

And so the summer went on, and the two correspondents chatted silently from window to window, hid from sight of all the world below by the friendly cornice. As they looked out over the roof they saw the green of Tompkins-square grow darker and dusker as the months went on.

Mr. Smith was given to Sunday trips into the suburbs, and he never came back without a bunch of daisies—or, later, asters—for the little seamstress. Sometimes, with a sagacity rare in his sex, he brought her a whole plant with fresh loam for potting.

He gave her also a reel in a bottle, which, he wrote, he had "maid" himself; also some coral, and a dried flying-fish, that was somewhat fearful to look upon, with its sword-like fins, and its hollow eyes. At first, she could not go to sleep with that flying-fish hanging on the wall.

But he surprised the little seamstress very much one cool September evening when he shoved this letter along the cornice:—

Respected and Honored Madam:

Having long and vainly sought an opportunity to convey to you the expression of my sentiments, I now avail myself of the privilege of epistolary communication to acquaint you with the fact that the Emotions, which you have raised in my breast, are those which should prompt to Connubial Love and Affection rather than to simple Friendship. In short, Madam, I have the Honor to approach you with a Proposal, the acceptance of which will fill me with ecstatic Gratitude, and enable me to extend to you those Protecting Cares, which the Matrimonial Bond makes at once the Duty and the Privilege of him, who would, at no distant date, lead to the Hymeneal Altar one whose charms and virtues should suffice to kindle its Flames, without extraneous Aid

*I remain, Dear Madam,
your Humble Servant and
Ardent Adorer, J. Smith.*

The little seamstress gazed at this letter a long time. Perhaps she was wondering in what "Ready Letter-Writer" of the last century Mr. Smith had found his form. Perhaps she was amazed at the results of his first attempt at punctuation. Perhaps she was thinking of something else, for there were tears in her eyes and a smile on her small mouth.

But it must have been a long time, and Mr. Smith must have grown nervous, for presently another communication came along the line where the top of the cornice was worn smooth. It read:—

*If not understood will you
marry me*

The little seamstress seized the piece of paper and wrote:—

If I say Yes, will you speak to me?

Then she rose and passed it out to him, leaning out of the window, and their faces met.