

legs and his face became rosy, for he was very shy.

"Indeed I am," he said, "ever so much. And thank you for asking."

"I'm tired," said the old lady, "of seeing you always sitting by yourself, dead tired of it. I shall come for you this afternoon at four in my carriage, and take you for a drive....."

"It was abrupt," Mister Masters wrote to his mother, "but it was kind. When I had done blushing and scraping with my feet and pulling my forelock, we had the nicest little talk. And she remembered you in the old days at Lenox, and said why hadn't I told her before. And then she asked if I liked Aiken, and, seeing how the land lay, I lied and said I loved it. And she said that that was her nice, sensible young fellow, or words to that effect. And then she asked me why, and I said because it has such a fine climate; and then she laughed in my face, and said that I was without reverence for her age—not a man—a scallawag."

"And do you know, Mrs. Hotchkiss is like one of those magic keys in fairy stories? All doors open to her. Between you and me I have been thinking Aiken's floating population snobbish, purse-proud and generally absurd. And instead, the place seems to exist so that kindness and hospitality may not fail on earth. Of course I'm not up to genuine sprees, such as dining out and sitting up till half past ten or eleven. But I can go to luncheons, and watch other people play tennis, and poke about gardens with old ladies, and guess when particular flowers will be out, and learn the names of birds and of hostile bushes that prick and of friendly bushes that don't."

"All the cold weather has gone to glory; and it's really spring because the roosters crow all night. Mrs. Hotchkiss says it's because they are roosters and immoral. But I think they're crowing because they've survived the winter. I am....."

AIKEN took a great fancy to Mister Masters. First because Aiken was giving him a good time; and second because he was really good company when you got him well cornered, and his habitual fright had worn off. He was the shyest, most frightened six-footer in the memory of Aiken. If you spoke to him suddenly he blushed, and if you prepared him by first clearing your throat he blushed just the same. And he had a crooked, embarrassed smile that was a delight to see.

But gradually he became almost at ease with nearly everybody; and in the shyest, gentlest way enjoyed himself hugely. But the prettiest girl in Aiken had very hard work with him.

As a stag fights when brought to bay, so Mister Masters when driven into a corner could talk as well and as freely as the next man; but on his own initiative there was, as we Americans say, "nothing doing." Whether or not the prettiest girl in Aiken ever rolled off a log is unknown; but such an act would have been no more difficult for her than to corner Mister Masters. The man courted cornering, especially by her. But given the desired situation, neither could make anything of it. Mister Masters' tongue became forthwith as helpless as a man tied hand and foot and gagged. He had nothing with which to pay for the delight of being cornered but his rosiest, steadiest blush and his crookedest and most embarrassed smile. But he retained a certain activity of mind and within himself was positively voluble with what he would say if he only could.

I don't mean that the pair sat or stood or walked in absolute silence. Indeed, little Miss Blythe could never be silent for a long period nor permit it in others, but I mean that with the lines and the machinery of a North Atlantic liner, their craft of propinquity made about as much progress as a scow. Nevertheless, though neither was really aware of this, each kept saying things that cannot be put into words, to the other; otherwise the very first cornering of Mister Masters by little Miss Blythe must have been the last. But even as it was way back at the beginning of things, and always will be, Beauty spoke to Handsome and Handsome up and spoke back.

"No," said little Miss Blythe, upon being sharply cross-questioned by Mrs. Hotchkiss, "he practically never does say anything."

Mrs. Hotchkiss dug a little round hole in the sand with her long black cane, and made an insulting face at little Miss Blythe.

"Some men," said she, "can't say boo to a goose."

If other countries produce girls like little Miss Blythe, I have never met a specimen; and I feel very sure that foreign young ladies do not become personages at the age of seventeen. When she met Mister Masters she had been a personage for six years, and it was time for her to yield her high place to another; to marry, to bear children and to prove that all the little matters for which she was celebrated were merely passing phases and glitterings of a character which fundamentally was composed of simple and noble traits.

Little Miss Blythe had many brothers and sisters; no money, as we reckon money; and only such prospects as she herself might choose from innumerable offers. She was little; her figure looked best in athletic clothes (low neck didn't do well with her, because her face was tanned so brown) and she was strong and quick as a pony. All the year round she kept herself in the pink of condition ("overkept herself" some said) dancing, walking, running, swimming, playing all games and eating to match. She had a beautiful clean-cut face, not delicate and to be hidden and coaxed by veils and soft things, but a face that looked beautiful above a severe Eton collar, and at any distance. She had the bright, wide eyes of a collected athlete, unbelievably blue, and the whites of them were only matched for whiteness by her teeth (the deep tan of her skin heighten-

ed this effect, perhaps); and it was said by one admirer that if she were to be in a dark room and were to press the button of a kodak and to smile at one and the same instant, there would be a picture taken.

She had friends in almost every country-clubbed city in America. Whenever, and almost wherever, a horse show was held she was there to show the horses of some magnate or other to the best advantage. Between times she won tennis tournaments and swimming matches, or tried her hand at hunting or polo (these things in secret because her father had forbidden them), and the people who continually pressed hospitality upon her said that they were repaid a thousandfold. In the first place, it was a distinction to have her. "Who are the Ebers?" "Why, don't you know? They are the people Miss Blythe is stopping with."

She was always good-natured; she never kept anybody waiting; and she must have known five thousand people well enough to call them by their first names. But what really distinguished her most from other young women was that her success in inspiring others with admiration and affection was not confined to men; she had the same effect upon all women, old and young, and all children.

FOOLISH people said that she had no heart, merely because no one had as yet touched it. Wise people said that when she did fall in love sparks would fly. Hitherto her friendships with men, whatever the men in question may have wished, had existed upon a basis of good-natured banter, and prowess in games. Men were absolutely necessary to Miss Blythe to play games with, because women who could "give her a game" were rare as ivory-billed woodpeckers. It was even thought by some, as an instance, that little Miss Blythe could beat the famous Miss May Sutton once out of three times at lawn tennis. But Miss Sutton, with the good-natured and indomitable aggression of her genius, set this supposition at rest. Little Miss Blythe could not beat Miss Sutton once out of three or three hundred times. But for all that, little Miss Blythe was a splendid player and a master of strokes and strategy.

Nothing would have astonished her world more than to learn that little Miss Blythe had a secret, darkly hidden quality of which she was dreadfully ashamed. At heart she was nothing if not sentimental and romantic. And often when she was thought to be sleeping the dreamless sleep of the trained athlete who stores up energy for the morrow's contest, she was sitting at the windows in her nightgown, looking at the moon (in

and settle down. First because she couldn't go on playing games and showing horses forever, and second because she wanted to. But with whom she wanted to marry and settle down, she could not for the life of her have said. Sometimes she thought that it would be with Mr. Blagdon. He was rich, and he was a widower; but wherever she went he managed to go, and he had some of the finest horses in the world, and he wouldn't take no for an answer. Sometimes she said to the moon:

"I'll give myself a year, and if at the end of that time I don't like anybody better than Bob, why....." Or, in a different mood, "I'm tired of everything I do; if he happens to ask me to-morrow I'll say yes." Or, "I've ridden his horses, and broken his golf clubs, and borrowed his guns (and he won't lend them to anybody else) and I suppose I've got to pay him back." Or, "I really do like him a lot," or "I really don't like him at all."

Then there came into this young woman's life Mister Masters. And he blushed his blush, and smiled his crooked smile and looked at her when she wasn't looking at him (and she knew that he was looking) and was unable to say as much as "Boo" to her; and in the hidden springs of her nature that which she had always longed for happened, and became, and was. And one night she said to the moon: "I know it isn't proper for me to be so attentive to him, and I know everybody is talking about it, but—" and she rested her beautiful brown chin on her shapely, strong, brown hands, and a tear like a diamond stood in each of her unbelievably blue eyes, and she looked at the moon, and said: "But it's Harry Masters or—*hust!*"

MR. BOB BLAGDON, the rich widower, had been content to play a waiting game; for he knew very well that beneath her good nature, little Miss Blythe had a proud temper and was to be won rather by the man who should make himself indispensable to her than by him who should be forever pestering her with speaking and pleading his cause. She is an honest girl, he told himself, and without thinking of consequences she is always putting herself under obligations to me. Let her ride down lover's lane with young Blank or young Dash, she will not be able to forget that she is on my favorite mare. In his soul he felt a certain proprietorship in little Miss Blythe; but to this his ruddy, dark mustached face and slow moving eyes were a screen.

Mr. Blagdon had always gone after what he wanted in a kind of slow, indifferent way that begot confidence in himself and in the beholder; and (in the case of Miss Blythe) a kind of

panic in the object sought. She liked him because she was used to him, and because he could and would talk sense upon subjects which interested her. But she was afraid of him because she knew that he expected her to marry him some day, and because she knew that other people, including her own family, expected this of her. Sometimes she felt ready to take unto herself all the horses and country places and automobiles and yachts, and in a life lived regardless of expense to bury and forget her better self. But more often, like a fly caught in a spider's web, she wished by one desperate effort (even should it cost her a wing, to carry out the figure) to free herself once and forever from the entanglement.

It was pleasant enough in the web. The strands were soft and silky; they held rather by persuasion than by force. And had it not been for the spider she could have lived out her life in the web without any very desperate regrets. But it was never quite possible to forget the spider; and that in his own time he would approach slowly and deliberately, sure of himself and of little Miss Fly.....

But, after all, the spider in the case was not such a terrible fellow. Just because a man wants a girl that doesn't want him, and means to have her, he hasn't necessarily earned a hard name. Such a man as often as not becomes one half of a very happy marriage. And Mr. Bob Blagdon was considered an exceptionally good fellow. In his heart, though I have never heard him say so openly, I think he actually looked down on people who gambled and drank to excess, and who were uneducated and had acquired (whatever they may have been born with) perfectly empty heads. I think that he had a sound and sensible virtue; one ear for one side of an argument, and one for the other.

There is no reason to doubt that he was a good husband to his first wife, and wished to replace her with little Miss Blythe, not to supplant her. To his three young children he was more of a grandfather than a father; though strong-willed and even stubborn, he was unable half the time to say no to them. And I have seen him going on all fours with the youngest child perched on his back kicking him in the ribs and urging him to canter. So if he intended by the strength of his will and of his riches to compel little Miss Blythe to marry (and to be happy with him; he thought he could

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## Our Lady of Twilight.

When day is past and the shadows grow  
Our Lady of Twilight steals soft and slow  
From the starlit gardens of Paradise,  
Bringing her dreams to weary eyes.

The misty, moonbeam paths are sweet  
With the silvery chiming of her feet,  
And the dusk is full of murmurings,  
Faint and lovely, of unseen wings.

In the garden close at sight of her  
The tall white lilies are all astir,  
And she walks among them with dreaming eyes  
Filled with the joy of Paradise.

So, nightly adown the moonbeam stair,  
With the winds of slumber in her hair,  
Bringing her dreams to weary men,  
Our Lady of Twilight comes again.

NORAH HOLLAND.

hers) and weaving all sorts of absurd adventures about herself and her particular fancy of the moment.

It would be a surprise and pleasure to some men, a tragedy perhaps to others, if they should learn that little Miss Blythe had fancied them all at different times, almost to the boiling point, and that in her own deeply concealed imagination Jim had rescued her from pirates and Jack from a burning hotel, or that just as her family were selling her to a rich widower John had appeared on his favorite hunter and carried her off. The truth is that little Miss Blythe had engaged in a hundred love affairs concerning which no one but herself was the wiser.

And at twenty-three it was high time for her to marry