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### THE MEASURE OF A MAN.

PHYSICALLY he was nothing unusual: fairly tall, fairly strong, neither dark nor fair; eyes grey, mouth hidden by the regulation moustache. Any one meeting him would have taken his measure as a very decent specimen of the average, well-fed, educated young Englishman—informed, observant, not intellectual nor even bookish. Then had he been spoken to, he would have been pronounced a bear, for he would have stared, bowed, and passed on, leaving no hint of the trivial fact that he had not heard what was said.

Those who knew Alan Bancroft measured him differently according to the width of their own foot-rule. His brother and sisters found him a very good fellow as far as he went—a useful family encyclopaedia of small facts to be applied to in argument, in his right place on the shelf. His father thought him a failure because a life's expensive training on the most approved methods had not enabled him to enter the business. Even his mother thought Alan's capacities could not be up to the average, since, in spite of the boasted triumphs of the oral system, he could not lip-read more than the most ordinary commonplaces; really, it was tiresome to write so much, and, of course, she could not permit the manual alphabet on principle. His voice had been rescued, and that was something; but, after all, he had never really lost it, and he seldom used it. He never could be got to mix with ordinary people, or share the every-day pursuits of the young folks around him, and in a matrimonial view he was, of course, though the eldest son, quite ineligible. Perhaps the only person living who gauged him correctly was a little old maiden lady living now miles away, and that was the measure of a woman.

She had come to him as governess years ago, at a crisis of her own life, and the torn tendrils of her heart had twined round the little mortal of four, in mere self-preservation, until, waking one morning to find herself independent, she had found also that she could not wrench them away, kept silence as to her good fortune and remained. She had taught him on a system of her own, which only involved merging all her life in his; entering into his pursuits, cultivating her own talents and giving them to him, fertilising his mind and teaching him to till it for himself. Three talents he had—a retentive memory, an observant eye, and a hand to transfer what he saw to canvas. These she strenuously cultivated, and, finding her own artistic ability unequal to helping his, she obtained an entrance for him to the local art school, which was of a superior order. Here he quickly arrested public notice all the more easily that his father was well known, and then his success was her undoing.

Local wisacres who know so well what other fathers of families should do, began to talk about the lad and question why, with his evident capacities, he should be left to the limited powers of an old-fashioned governess. The oral system was

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