

The Girl at Clancy's Ball

She Had One Short Romance.

By CHARLES ALBERT WILLIAMS
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John Harmon of the Morning Bulletin puffed abstractedly upon his cigar and gazed around the tumultuous hall. It was the night of Boss Clancy's ball. The dancing floor was crowded with rotating men and women. Girls of the shop and factory swayed and gyrated in the clasp of men, coarse featured and unintelligent.

Harmon roused from his contemplation of the noisy scene and turned to his companion, Mowbray of the Recorder.

"If anything's going to break here to-night let it come soon," he remarked. Mowbray shrugged indifferently.

A young girl, her face flushed from the last dance, hurried toward the reporters' table. She was a frail little creature of twenty, blue eyed and blond. Frequently as she approached she looked back and fluttered a frightened glance at a man following her.

"Excuse me," she said half breathlessly, halting before the newspaper men and addressing Harmon. "Help me out of this, please. This man has been annoying me—wants me to dance with him. I'm afraid of him."

"Sit down," Harmon said crisply. He faced her and affected a conversation.

The man came up presently and, pausing only to glare belligerently at Harmon, reached over and seized the girl's arm.

"Never mind your dandy dude friend," he blurted; "spiel this with me." The girl drew back and shook her head.

"Come on," the stranger insisted, retaining her arm.

The girl made a sudden, violent movement and wrenched herself from his grasp. He leaned forward to clutch her, but Harmon caught his hand.

"What's the use?" he remarked, laughing. "You can't make the girl dance. Don't insist. You'll cause a scene."

The stranger turned to Harmon, his mouth drawn into a menacing snarl. "Don't mix in this unless—" He waved his hand threateningly. "Well, you don't want to be sorry, do you?" He became enraged at Harmon's cool glance.

"Who are you, anyway?" he bawled. "Know who I am? I'm one of Clancy's men."

Harmon smiled. "I'm not at all interested in your pedigree," he said. "It seems to me you might let her alone in spite of it."

A malignant light glowed in the stranger's eyes.

"Say," he said, "I do things my own way." His voice rose to a shout. "An' this is my gal, see?"

He placed his hands upon Harmon's shoulders. Before the reporter could rise from his chair he was hurled backward, but he caught the edge of the table and escaped a nasty fall.

With lips compressed in an effort to control an outburst, he scrambled to his feet and stood silent a moment considering what he might best do to avert the fellow's violence and yet assist the girl.

He opened his lips to speak, but was interrupted by the cry of "A fight!" which went up from a nearby table.

There was a scuffling of feet, and a group of eager eyed, expectant men and women gathered about them. Mowbray stepped between the two men.

"Steady, John," he said. "This sort of thing is hardly—"

Harmon felt a ringing blow upon his head, then suddenly he went blind and unconscious.

Later, in the hospital, he opened his eyes wide and staring. He stirred uneasily and rolled his pounding head upon the pillows.

Somewhat indistinctly he saw the many cots and heard the heavy breathing of those about him. He was bewildered for a space, but sensations of dull, pulsating pain assured him he was back in a real world.

He wondered just what had occurred, but, contenting himself with the reflection that he would soon learn all from Mowbray, he fell asleep.

He awoke in a world of sunshine and less pain. Save an occasional intermittent numbness and throbbing at the temples he was comfortable.

From the nurse who brought him breakfast he learned that it was almost midday.

"A young woman called to see you early this morning," the nurse told him as he handed her the tray.

"A young woman?" he asked. The nurse nodded. "She said she'd be back."

Young woman? Harmon was plunged into perplexity by the incident and turned at once to the consideration of this new phase of his adventure.

Of the many young women of his acquaintance he could think of none who might call upon him in his present predicament. One would doubtless visit him upon hearing of his plight, but she had left the city only the preceding afternoon to visit her people in Chicago.

Though he abandoned the enigma after fruitless musings, it recurred to him several times as he lay glancing idly over the morning newspapers.

He was pleased to see that they had omitted any reference to the incident at the ball. For this he mutely thanked Mowbray.

In the evening as the lights were being switched on the nurse announced the return of his visitor.

A few moments afterward she appeared in the doorway. Harmon recognized her in one sweeping glance as she approached his cot—the girl at the ball.

"Well?" he said, repressing his astonishment. She looked timidly down at him.

"You know me?" she asked in a frightened tone. He nodded and smiled to put her at her ease. There was an embarrassed pause.

"I felt I ought to come and thank you," she broke in. He made a careless gesture.

"Quite unavoidable, Miss—" "Rogers—Sadie Rogers," she prompted, a touch of color appearing in her thin, white cheeks.

Harmon lifted his head and bowed an awkward acknowledgment.

"What happened to me?" he asked. "No one seemed to know anything about it," she explained, "except that you were hit with a bottle. They couldn't find out who did it. I'm glad, anyway, nobody was arrested. I'd have gone, too, I suppose."

Harmon nodded comprehension. "How did you find me?" he went on.

"Your friend told me who you were and where they had taken you," she replied, smiling.

She had been standing with her hands behind her as they chatted. Suddenly she made an impulsive little movement and thrust forth a small cluster of roses.

"Will you take these? They help me say 'thanks,'" she said.

Harmon looked at her in surprise and for the first time observed closely her appearance. There was no health in her cheeks, and she looked worn and weary.

The cheap finery of the previous evening had vanished, and in its place had come a coarse black skirt, an ill fitting blue jacket and a broad, flat hat that seemed to accentuate her pale, blue eyed wistfulness.

"It's nice of you," he said at length. A queer little smile flashed across her face, and she placed the flowers in his hand.

Sadie, faint voiced and diffident, called at the hospital each day thereafter. Her visits were brief and uneventful. She remained for a few moments to exchange the usual commonplace with Harmon. Always, despite his protests, she brought a cluster of fresh roses.

In the beginning Harmon had decided not to permit her to continue to see him, but she sounded a sympathetic note in his nature, and he found himself unable to send her away.

Though she seemed a poor, pitiable bit of drift, she revealed traces of uncultivated intelligence and refinement, and he became interested in her. In the end he resolved to learn more about her and, if possible, to help her.

"You are going home tomorrow?" she asked on the evening of the last day.

"Not really home," he replied, laughing. "I hail from the country." Her tired face brightened.

"Indeed! I'm from up state myself." "You're all alone here?" he inquired. She nodded slowly.

"Tell me about coming here—everything," he invited.

She placed a jacket button and seemed reluctant to answer, but after a moment said: "Well, father wasn't a much account man, so when mother died I hired out. We had folks up from New York, and I heard so much about the city I thought it was a great place. So I came."

"I'm not a fool," she continued, with a dispirited smile. "Up in the country I went to school as long as I could, but when I got down here it didn't help me any."

"What could I do? I didn't know anything about offices. I wasn't a type writer, and there wasn't much time to decide, so I went into one of the big stores."

"What I make just about goes round for room and meals and something to wear. Once in awhile there's a moving picture show."

"Clancy's ball was free, so me and a couple of girls went there. But I'll know better next time."

"You know, I'd like to do better, to learn something that'd help me. I tried night school, but I couldn't stand it after working all day. And I can't learn from library books," she concluded, sighing.

Harmon was intent upon every expression of her face.

"Wouldn't it be better if you married soon?" he asked.

She shrugged her shoulders wearily. "I've thought a lot about that," she said slowly, "and I don't think I can marry the kind o' men I meet."

Harmon looked at her in thoughtful silence.

"Suppose I could help you in a way," he said directly, "would you let me?" "How?" Her glance was quizzical.

"A young woman at one of the settlements—she's money and could help you that way. She'd fix it so you'd have time to study. Later on you could get a place in an office, and then better things would be possible."

Sadie's wistful blue eyes shone with sudden interest; then she frowned her doubt.

"You're sure she could do it?" He nodded. "Yes, she's soon to be married and give up her work. She'd be delighted."

"She's going to marry you, maybe?" she asked, dropping her eyes.

"Yes," he answered.

Her voice fell to a whisper. "Oh, I see," she said. She bowed her head and stared at the floor. Then she raised her face and, smiling, extended her hand. "Goodby," she said.

CHARM OF THE BIBLE.

Its Poetic Beauty and the Marvel of Its Word Pictures.

Then some of us who cared for literature took up the Bible casually and found its poetic beauty. We read the book of Job—which, by the way, Mr. Swinburne is said to have known by heart—and as we read it even the stars themselves seemed less wonderful than this description of their marvel and mystery:

Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

Or we read in the thirty-seventh chapter of the book of Ezekiel of that weird valley that was full of bones—"and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to bone"—surely one of the most wonderful visions of the imagination in all literature.

Or we read the marvelous denunciations of Jeremiah and Isaiah or the music of the melodious heart-strings of King David. We read the solemn adjuration of the "King Ecclesiast" to remember our Creator in the days of our youth, with its haunting picture of old age, and the loveliness of "The Song of Songs" passed into our lives forever.

To this purely literary love of the Bible there has been added within the last few years a certain renewed regard for it as the profoundest book of the soul, and for some minds not conventionally religious it has regained even some of its old authority as a spiritual guide and stay. And I will confess for myself that sometimes as I fall asleep at night I wonder if even the most picturesque of modern writers has written anything to equal the Twenty-third Psalm.—Richard Le Gallienne in Phoenix.

When the World Is Full.

The mean decennial rate of increase in the population of the world is 8 per cent, and at this rate the 23,000,000 square miles comprising the fertile regions of the earth, which Ravenstein computed can only support 207 persons per square mile, will have their maximum population of 5,994,000,000 persons in the year 2072. This estimate allows fourteen persons per square mile in the 18,000,000 square miles of steppes and deserts.

FAMILIAR PHRASES.

A Few of the Many Gems We Get From Alexander Pope.

With the exception of Shakespeare, Pope is the author of more familiar phrases than any other writer of modern times. Here are a few of his gems:

"Shoot folly as she flies." "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." "Man never is but always to be blessed." "Whatever is is right." "The proper study of mankind is man." "Grows with his growth and strengthens with his strength." "Order is heaven's first law." "Worth makes the man and want of it the fellow." "Honor and shame from no condition rise; act well your part—there all the honor lies." "An honest man's the noblest work of God." "Thou wert my guide, philosopher and friend." "Woman's at best a contradiction still." "Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined." "Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" "A little learning is a dangerous thing." "To err is human, to forgive divine." "Beauty draws us with a single hair." "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." "Damn with faint praise." "The many headed monster."

TOOK AWAY HIS BREATH.

When Davison Heard Morgan Wanted Him For a Partner.

"Mr. Morgan wants to see you in his library at 3 o'clock," was the message received one day by the vice president of a New York bank.

He hadn't the slightest idea what the veteran financier could want with him. He had met Mr. Morgan, as most other financiers had, during the parous days when the master mind of them all was trying to stem the 1907 panic, but had not seen anything of Mr. Morgan until the spring of the following year when, with Senator Aldrich and other members of the monetary commission, he had spent a Sunday at Mr. Morgan's London home. Between then and the receipt of the above message in the fall of 1908 he had seldom spoken to Mr. Morgan.

Promptly at 3 o'clock the young banker, wondering what the matter could be, rang the bell of the famous Morgan library. On being ushered in he almost collided with Mr. Morgan at the entrance to his private room.

Mr. Morgan shook hands and bade the puzzled visitor be seated.

"Do you realize it is pretty near the 1st of January?" he asked.

The young banker, very much at sea, agreed that it was. This was about the middle of November.

"Are you ready?" asked Mr. Morgan. "Ready for what?" queried the astonished visitor.

"For what?" echoed Mr. Morgan. "You know I want you to come and join my firm on the 1st of January."

"You never said anything about it, Mr. Morgan."

"I thought you knew by my expression what I thought of you," said Mr. Morgan.

"Mr. Morgan, have you ever fallen from an eighteen story building?" It was Mr. Morgan's turn to be astonished.

"No," he replied, scrutinizing his visitor.

"Well, I never have before, and it will take me a minute or two to catch my breath."

Mr. Morgan laughed.

And that was how Henry P. Davison, then only forty, was notified of his selection as a partner in the greatest international banking firm in the United States.—B. C. Forbes in Leslie's.

The Day of the Carver.

Carving was once a serious thing. The sixteenth century carver was a professional. He had to make the joint fit the guest. The size of his slices was the thing. Then he had to know his guests and cut accordingly. A lord, for instance, at the table, and a pike was dished up whole. Smaller fry, and the pike came on in slices. The same procedure with pig. The rank of the diners decided whether it should appear at table in gold leaf or naked, whole or sliced. With bread, too, there was a difference. New or three days old baked was at the discretion of the carver as he sized up the visitors. And as for the apportioning of the titbits according to precedence there was no end. The old time carver, in fact, was born and then made.—London Standard.

Difficult Feat.

Two boys stood in front of the entrance gate of a football field. They had no money, but they were determined to outwit the gatekeeper somehow and get in and see the game. They suggested scheme after scheme to one another, and finally the older boy said:

"I got it now! We'll walk in backward, and he'll think we're comin' out."—Exchange.

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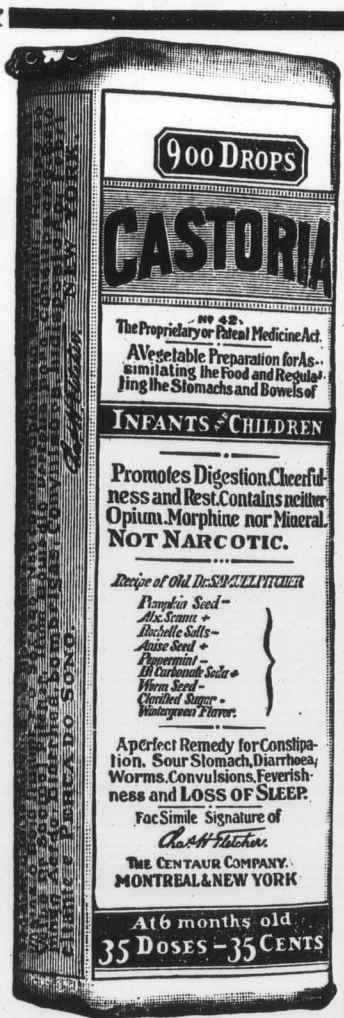
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