

# Boys and Girls.

## Jerry's Trial Service.

BY SALLY CAMPBELL.

Jerry Elliot had just ended his first visit at home since he entered college. He was on his way back to the station and had stopped off at Antoinette Marcy's gate to say good-bye again.

"Aren't we proud and imposing?" laughed Antoinette. "We are not going up tremblingly to examinations. We are a 'college man,' full-fledged; now we can hold our head high, and assume airs."

"I have not assumed an air," retorted Jerry. "You know I have not. I have been as humble-minded as if I were nothing in the world but a simple little country girl."

Antoinette flashed a withering glance at him. Then suddenly, her expression chang-

"Maybe they will some time. Then what?" Jerry looked toward the station, and pulled out his watch.

"I've got to catch this train, you know." "So I will answer for you in order to save time. When they need you, then you will remember how nice you are, and how clever you are, and how many advantages you have had, and that you ought to be equal to occasions. It entails responsibilities to own anything so superior as that bag."

The bag in question was certainly shabby enough. But it bore the railway mark of all the big European cities, and was the pride of Jerry's heart. He glanced at it, and laughed, and said he "didn't know what the evidences of foreign travel had to do with leading prayer-meeting."

"Everything has to do with letting your light shine. And anything like style is so

This was how Jerry came to lead the class prayer-meeting. On his next visit home, after a day or two, he said to Antoinette:

"You have not asked me whether I ever took your advice and turned parson."

"I know I haven't."

"Why?"

"I didn't like to nag."

"Have you been reforming, too?" he asked, impertinently.

"You did lead the prayer-meeting, then?"

"I did, indeed."

"And it was not so bad, after all, was it?"

"Wasn't it? They say Providence mercifully hides some things from us beforehand. This was one of them. I suffered tortures; and so did everybody else."

"I am sorry," said Antoinette, regretfully. "But it will be easier next time."

Jerry laughed. "Nobody that wishes to be discouraged need ever apply to you, Antoinette." Then his face grew sober. "I dare say there will be 'next times.' At first I declared there never should be. The devil made the most that he could of my injured vanity. You know he does a big business in humble pie sometimes. But if Providence is clever at hiding things, it is just as clever, I guess, at revealing them."

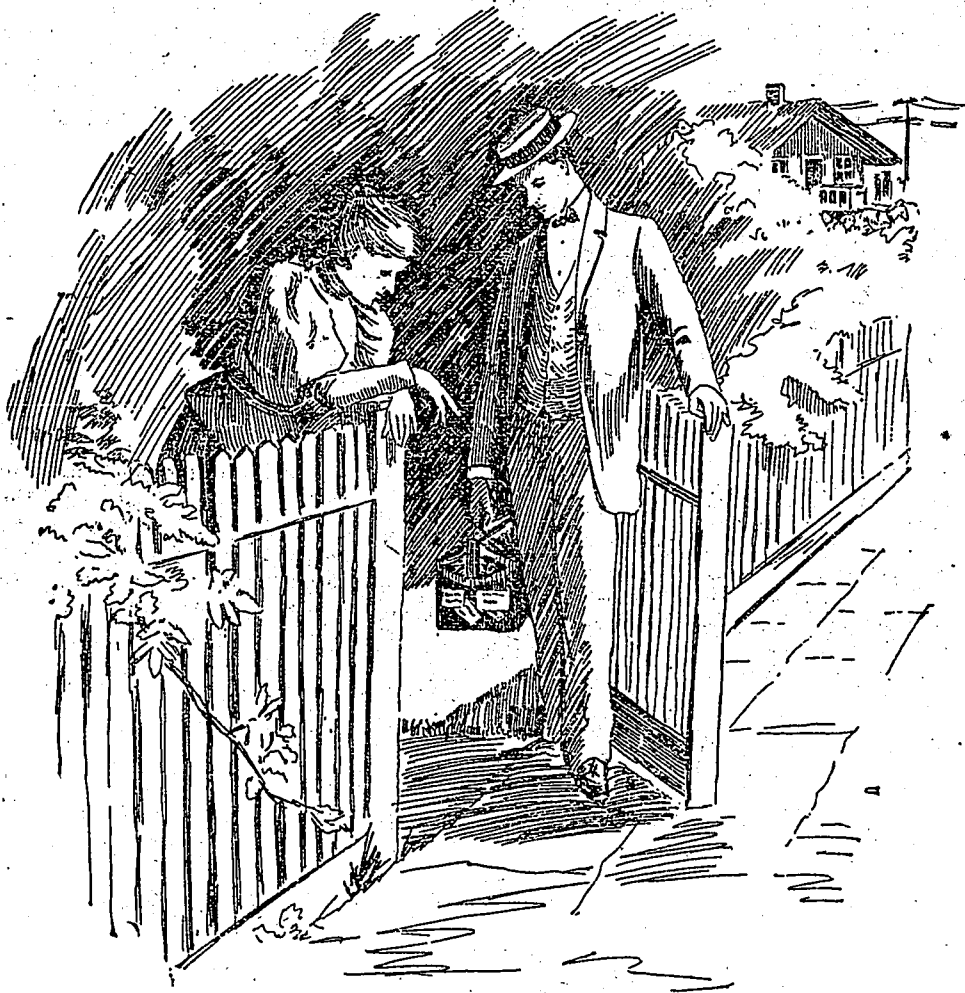
"What did it reveal?"

"I was going off on one of our banjo club concerts, and I got mixed up in the time. I had half an hour extra on my hands. So I went outside, and put my grip under my head, and lay down to wait. Pretty soon I heard voices. There is a fellow in our class by the name of Burton, a quiet sort of a chap, with nothing much to say for himself, except at recitations."

"Rather a convenient exception, I should think," put in Antoinette.

"You ought to know," said Jerry. "You have a great deal of experience in exceptions to that rule. This man Burton was saying to Ted Moran, 'Shorty Fordyce has been after me again to lead the class prayer-meeting.' 'Shorty will have to be gagged,' said Ted. 'He is worse than a book agent. I hope you told him so.' 'No, I didn't, I told him I would. I ought to have done it before.' Ted whistled. So did I, softly, under my hat brim. 'Who will be the next?' said Ted. 'You fellows are getting awfully righteous.' Burton laughed his nervous little laugh, and coughed a nervous little cough—that is the way he does, you know; he is one of the tremulous, apologetic kind. 'No,' he said, 'I am afraid I am not righteous. You see, when a person who has lived in the country all his life, like myself, gets among a lot of you boys that are used to everything that he isn't, it makes him feel queer, and conscious, and tongue-tied. It is ridiculous, of course, and I am ashamed of myself, but sometimes when I have seen Jerry Elliot swing along the college walks with that European bag in his hand, I have wished I could run and hide my face in the woods forever.' I was too astonished to move, and apparently Ted was too astonished to speak." "Go on," said Antoinette, much interested.

"Tell the rest." "Pretty soon Burton began again. 'My conscience,' he said 'has been telling me that I ought to take my turn at the meeting. But I would not listen. I tried to make the excuse that I was not any more obliged to do it than some of the others. The fact was that I was afraid I might not make a good display. And now I am mean enough to think that if anybody like Elliot, who has been everywhere and seen life, could get as scared as he did last Wednesday night, why, a plain farmer's boy like me might risk it, too.' 'Jerry did get pretty well winded,' Ted said. 'No doubt it will be the same



BIDDING ANTOINETTE GOOD-BY.

ing, she leaned her arms on top of the gate, and bent toward him to ask:

"And, Jerry, are you being a good boy at college?"

"Yes, ma'am, I'm trying."

"What do you do?"

"Learn my lessons, and keep straight, and try to be on the right side of things. I go to meetings, too, a-plenty."

"To your class prayer-meetings?"

"Indeed I do," triumphantly. "Somebody thought she had me then. I always go. I am perceived to be a pillar."

"Do you make remarks?"

"Indeed I do not! Not by any means?"

"Why?"

"Because it wouldn't be to the edification of my listeners."

"Are you sure?"

Jerry nodded.

"It makes my teeth chatter to think about it. I should catch my death of cold if I tried. Honestly, I can't speak; and then, besides, lots of the other fellows can. I tell you we have some mighty good talking at our class prayer-meeting. They don't need me."

very influential. Evidences of foreign travel will make exceedingly nice evidences of Christianity, if they are given the chance—try and see."

It was perhaps as much as two months later before Jerry thought seriously of all this advice of Antoinette's. He was sitting one day in the reading room of the college library, when Shorty Fordyce came in, looking warm and tired.

"Hallo, Shorty," said Ted Moran; "you look as if you had been lining off the equator."

"I tell you," said Shorty, with as much eloquence as the muffled tone of the place would permit, "you fellows don't know what it is to be a prayer-meeting committee. I have asked every man in the class that ever did such a thing in his life, to lead for me to-morrow night, and I can't get anybody—not anybody."

His mates consoled with him, all except Jerry, who sat still for a time, considering. At last he cleared his throat and said:

"See here, Shorty, I might do that for you, if you like. Perhaps it would be better than nobody, though I doubt it."