

Never more be hero of mine or another's tale, oh wretch, who could drink, though dying of thirst, from an uplifted stoneware ginger-beer bottle! But having said it, I will stick to it—hero he is, and, as far as his nature will permit, hero he shall be—and you, friend, who never drink ginger-beer and shudder at the bottle, have *you* never flirted over an ice while your love was out of sight and earshot? Never, of course—I beg your pardon for supposing it.

Next week Vincent sought out the river bank, and looking up its broad tide towards the west, felt as though it were a link between him and Jane. And, joy of joys, he soon found out the F—— Market Gardens, all buds and blossoms, and regular rows of early lettuces setting themselves lessons in perspective, and trying hard to find out the vanishing point at the other end of the long fields.

Here were broad water-meadows, and a comfortable old willow tree with a polled top, like an arm chair, and he could climb up and be very quiet and watch the boats on the river, and listen to the Sunday chimes. Now I'm not going to spoil the truth and make him out perfect, so I will tell you at once that he never went to the church close by, or hummed hymn tunes, or read good books up in his nest; but being of a rather musical turn of mind, whistled certain secular, not to say music hall, ditties. And in the gardens, amid beds of "old-man," looking quite juvenile in the spring weather, and all netted over with sweet peas and a huge honeysuckle with a sturdy trunk, was a neat little house, with Dutch-like oyster-shell walks in front, and a thicket of wallflowers and tulips under the hedge. This abode of bliss was lit by a low little window, as pretty a bit of colour as you could see. Flowers in pots, and a *Canariensis* struggling up the diamond-shaped panes, and a pretty—yes, a *very* pretty face looking out of it! Spoilt, of course, in the getting up, but looking very happy and bright nevertheless.

How would you look—you who dress always in perfect taste—if that taste had deserted you, and with little or no means you were driven to burlesque a duchess *en grande tenue*? I'm afraid you would fail.

But, after all, that is just the task these poor folk set themselves when they essay to imitate *your* elegance!

It is very true, her imitation necklet is an

abominable design, as well as the most transparent pinchbeck, but its clumsiness would be called massive solidity if it were gold; and may not one be rich in aluminium-bronze as well as in the precious metals? A good deal of make-believe is better than a little—besides, it *wasn't* make-believe to Carrie.

So, with her hair in the last fashion (don't ask me to describe it), and with all her face twitching in delight at being left to take care of the house and herself—once her most hated task—little Carrie was a pleasing object, and she knew it. He had seen her once or twice before he found it out, and then it was some time before he knew that he knew it, if you can understand me.

He caught himself walking round that path to get to the plank which formed the connecting link across the broad ditch which ran between the periodically flooded meadows and the rest of the market gardens. This, on reflection, he remembered was quite unnecessary, as the first few Sundays he had jumped the ditch. Revolving the subject, he determined to walk that way slowly, and find out the attraction. Somehow he didn't begin to look out for it till close to the house, and then, suddenly lifting his eyes, found it. "What the dickens is she blushing at?" was his muttered exclamation, feeling rather savage.

A turn of half an hour among the cabbages tamed him down, and a sudden thunder clap completed the cure. Back he hurried, and the rain only just began to come down as he passed the honeysuckle porch.

No one had heard him—he would stand up.

But some one *had* heard him, and opened the door.

He made a sort of constrained bow, and then she asked him to step in out of the rain and he apologised for standing up, all in a breath, and then they stood staring at each other, each expecting not to have to make the next remark. Getting fearfully red, and as if only to break the silence, she repeated, "Won't you come in out of the rain?"

Terrible, wasn't it? If they'd only had the safeguard of some mutual acquaintance who had seen them both once, to have told them each other's names (perhaps wrongly) in a confidential whisper, that would have made all right—but they hadn't. And after