

The new doctor sank his chin further into his collar as he heard Mrs. VanNorman opening the kitchen door. The lamp on the table showed but an indifferent light in the living-room—something of a cross between a fireplace and an acetylene gas jet.

"Isn't Mary ready yet, Mr. Herbert?"

"No, not yet," raising his chin and mimicking Jack Herbert's voice, as though his vocal cords had been borrowed to vibrate for the occasion.

He saw the wife shoot a glance at the husband as though to say "I told you so." Then Dr. McAlpin clutched the sides of the chair seat as the mother marched through the living-room to the parlor door, through which she disappeared, evidently to hasten her titivating and dilatory daughter.

But Mack McAlpin waited not on her return, nor the expected appearance of the doubting father in the room. Time was pressing. It would be well to turn the horse's head for the highway gate and the good things at St. Vincent. The fair lady of Netherby Cottage, for that was the romantic name Mary had bestowed upon her father's domicile, would find her young Lochinvar all in readiness.

He had, indeed, taken time by the front tuft, for Mary now ran hastily out and bounded into her place between the cozy coonskins.

"That was nearly a touchdown, darling," Mack whispered, as "B-11," obeying the suggestive flap of the reins, sprang down the lane and was swerved to the right for St. Vincent.

"Oh!" as she felt an arm deliberately running round her form, "you're driving too fast, Mack."

"No time to lose, dear—hullo! I wonder where Herbert is?"

Jack Herbert had bespoken Mary for the tea-meeting. But Mary had not dared tell her father Dr. McAlpin had been promised beforehand. John VanNorman, having once said "yes" or "no," she knew, was as difficult to move as an orthodox Jew. So they had planned that Mack should be sure to be there for her first. Jack always liked to go in when the people were all assembled at any function. He could show off better, especially when he had a pretty girl with him like Mary VanNorman. And all the young men of the whole countryside would have liked to have had Mary. She knew Jack was being shabbily treated, so made no reply to Mack's interrogation, which seemed to be addressed as much to the snow, or to "B-11," who was clipping off the four miles in less than three minutes *per*, as it was to herself.