

The man gazed directly into the eyes of the girl before him. "Were her eyes hazel, violet, azure? One never could tell." He wondered how it was a gingham shirt waist and tweed skirt was the most stunning costume he knew of.

"I have put in rather a hard day, Miss Glenning. Then, to finish up with, I took a short cut and rowed across five miles to the other camp, and have just returned. I consider myself most fortunate to find you here."

The girl looked at the great trestles and arches of steel and concrete, the massive structures, the waters chained, the great bridge over which would pass thousands of human lives. She saw hundreds of men retiring to their camps, or going on nightshift, as their laboring hours. All these were receiving their employment, which gave them their daily bread, from the man beside her. His every request was made in the same deep voice of perfect assurance. She asked her own heart, "Could it be possible that this man made teaching the camp children in the little log school a pleasure, and made this kind of wild, free life so glorious?"

"Mr. Gordon, they tell me the breaking of the dam will delay you two months."

"Well, yes, Miss Glenning. But you do not look to be very sorry over it, though."

Her answer came: "I see no sadness in your own face, Mr. Gordon."

"I may as well tell you, Miss Glenning, we have the contract for another great work, and if I thought you would come with us to teach the campers' children. I might regret the loss of those two months, caused by the breaking of the dam, otherwise the time will pass all too quickly; furthermore, I notice there has been mail addressed to you in a masculine hand with prevailing regularity, and I have been dreading the time when you would give in your resignation."

"Well, Mr. Gordon, you just try writing a contract that I will have the teaching of the school at every encampment you have in the future, and see how quickly I will sign it."

He wondered what made the fragrance in the air tonight; how, all at once, the whole world seemed to be going just right. He wondered how it was the massive structures of steel and concrete sent a glow of pride through his heart.

In his own mind he whispered, "I know of more than one lady of affluence and position that can make a gorgeous display of dry-goods, who are most cordial in their reception of me. Can it be possible this little girl is necessary to my happiness? Oh, what a rapturous little beauty she is! I wonder if it is she who makes this kind of life a joy of late?"

A great shock, followed by moans, a lot of men hurrying to where the rock had been blasted by dynamite, brought the bridge-builder back to thoughts of the works.

"What is the matter?"

"McDougall is badly hurt. Don't see how it happened; he was always so careful."

"He is seriously injured," said the camp doctor, as they carried the bleeding, moaning McDougall to the camp hospital; "and, I guess, Greydon is pretty badly hurt, too."

Never did the girl look more beautiful to Clifford Gordon than when she bared her beautiful arms to the elbows and worked with the doctor for hours over the injured men.

Then came the night watchman to the hospital door. "Mr. Gordon, what's to be done with the horses across the stream? Jim Carson's over there alone with them, and he is kind of out of gear, as he was kicked by that broncho devil yesterday; but Jim's made of iron."

"I will go with you; and we better row across the short cut," said Clifford Gordon.

At twelve o'clock Miss Glenning was still keeping her vigil with the doctor beside the moaning men when the night watchman came to the door again. "Doctor, this sure is a night of terror. The boss decided to take Tim Brady over with him, instead of me, and leave Tim stay over there with Jim and the horses, and row home himself. It's a blessing it's moonlight, and I could see the boat coming down the stream, not far from the shore; and it looks as though the

boss had one arm disabled and is not able to guide the boat. It will not be long before it gets into the rapids, and it's all off with him."

The girl sprang to her feet, saying, "Let me go with you."

Crashing through underbrush and wading through puddles of water, they tore their way to the bank. Sure enough, Gordon had one arm disabled, and, in a few moments, the boat would be in the rapids.

"What's the matter, Mr. Gordon?" called the man.

"Got a kick from a horse, and my arm is disabled. It is beginning to look pretty risky for me just now. Suppose you can swim like a stone—downward."

Without a word, the girl tore off her tweed skirt; the silken underskirt would be weight enough. She forgot she was the champion rower in her college crew, forgot she was the prize swimmer, forgot herself, forgot all but the man in the boat. She gave a plunge into the dark, cold water, and called to him to keep the boat in one place as much as possible. Then, with steady strokes, it only took her a short time to reach the boat. What alacrity of motion, what fairy-like movement did she use when he put out his strong arm to help her into the boat, and, like some sea nymph, she seemed to glide into the boat beside him. She took both the oars in her strong, young arms. As the current was becoming very strong, she had difficulty enough in turning the boat and reaching the shore. She then threw the rope to the night watchman, who steadied the boat until they landed.

Clifford Gordon drew his coat around the shoulders of the shivering, drenching girl, and started with her to her boarding camp. But she was tired and cold, and her feet caught in a great tangle of moss and vines. She would have fallen were it not for the strong arm that supported her. The strong man raised the girl in his powerful arm and carried her to the camp.

When Mrs. Brewster had helped her into dry clothes, she left her alone to lie on the lounge beside the fire and talk to Clifford Gordon.

He took her hand in his and said: "Little girl, words are tame, commonplace affairs with us; that depth of feeling cannot be expressed in words. We must hunt a new teacher now, for I want my wife in the home with me always. What say you, little girl?"

For answer, she folded her arms around the neck of the man of strength. And who would blame them if their faces were very, very close together for an unusual length of time?

A few months more and the great bridge was completed; and it would be a few weeks before the next one was started.

Away amongst sunny slopes a train is winding its way towards orange groves and hydrangea walks. In one of its parlor cars is a man decked in the latest fashion; he holds a paper in front of his face and yawns: "This whole world is getting blasé." I do not know what is the matter; it is just monotonous to be in the company of ladies one meets any more. Now, with Kathleen, it was all different. It is an age since I heard from her. What a little piece of metal she was! What a cad I must have appeared to her! How she put that costly diamond in the fire and said good-bye! She was worth the whole of womankind put together."

He then went to the dining car. "Say, what is all that special outlay on the next table?" he asked of his well-tipped waiter.

"That is for a bridal party," answered the waiter. "The man is one of the kings of finance. They call him one of the builders of the empire. They say he is a man of great mental and physical force, and he sure has the dough." The smile showed the waiter had received a generous supply of the same dough. "You should see his wife, though," he continued; "she is a stunner—a perfect beauty."

Further conversation was brought to a close by the entrance of the bridal party.

"It is Kathleen! By all the powers!" exclaimed Chesley Randolph, under his breath.

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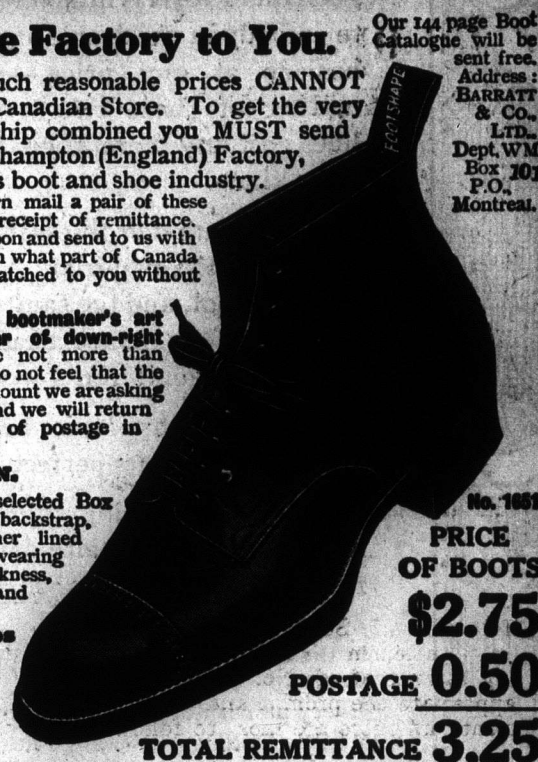
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