

and found no one to greet him but Maria I verily believe he'd go away again and think he didn't live there at all."

Presently she was gone and we were left together at the mercy of our nerves and our imaginations, until Billy Blight broke out with: "I can stand anything but darkness. Let's have a light on this thing," and with the light he found that both Elizabeth and I were crying.

I think Margaret fed us. I think Billy stayed to dinner. I think we all talked a little in queer, trailing spurts, but I don't remember anything very distinctly until Billy rose to go away.

"And hang it all," he cried, as the personal application occurred to him for the first time, "that boulder of a Thornycroft will work us all to death. How are we going to do in twelve weeks the work that ought to have been spread over nine months. And if we don't make up the stuff he'll throw us all down on the exam. And we'll all be back here next year looking at the dear old Pearsons and knowing that we—for didn't we sign that petition—have shut them out of Spain. Oh, lord!"

I had read of sleepless nights, but I don't think I ever experienced one till then. Hour after hour I revolved the dilemma and studied all of its horrid horns. There seemed nothing to do; absolutely nothing. And yet I was on fire to help my friends and to show John that I could be trusted not only as a safe confidant, but as a resourceful ally. It was six o'clock and the gray morning was looking in through the windows when at last I hit upon a plan and pattered in to awake Elizabeth and discuss it with her.

"Now, what I thought is this," I began as I pulled her eider-down about my shoulders; "we'll just frighten these 'eds' away from Thornycroft and back to poor old Archibald."

"But how?" she questioned.

"I got the idea from Billy Blight. You remember what he said, just before he went, about all the extra work and time which the change would involve and

the likelihood of our losing our diplomas in the end. Billy generally talks nonsense but he was as sensible as a judge then. If we can once get the men students—for that matter—to see this aspect of the case I think you'll see them flocking back to 'Prexy' and declaring themselves quite satisfied with poor old Archibald, who, even if he does not teach us very much, certainly makes no unreasonable demands upon our time and, just as certainly, will give us all an easy exam. and good marks at the end."

"You're a darling and a genius," cried Elizabeth. "It shall be done. We'll make 'em cry for Archibald before the week's over. Now let's sleep a little; it isn't quite time to get up."

When public opinion sets strongly in one direction it is no easy thing for three youngsters, however strong their enthusiasm, to turn it round again. And we had to be very careful. It would never have done to show hostility. We were just plaintively natural; aware of our mental inferiority, crushed by it, but resigned to it.

"Oh, yes, of course," Elizabeth would sweetly agree when some enthusiastic 'ed' was singing Thornycroft's praises. "Of course it's all very well for you. You're clever, but I know I shall not get my diploma this year. I've heard something of Professor Thornycroft's plans." Oh subtle, sly Elizabeth. "He's going to rush us through the whole subject in the next eleven weeks. Then we're to have one week for review and a comprehensive examination to finish off with. It will finish me—dead. There'll be no diploma for me this year. Ah, well, another year seems long, but it will pass."

That was all very well for Elizabeth Alford; young, independent, and with no responsibilities in the world. Her being at college at all was a whim of hers. Her leaving without a diploma and degree, or her staying to work another year for them were matters of pleasure or convenience with her—no more. But to the men, post-graduates for the most part,

with their way to make in the not too affluent world of teaching, the prospect of another year without appointment and salary was a serious thing.

"And I don't think," Elizabeth would add, "that poor old Dr. Archibald is bad enough to make all this necessary. It would be a terrible thing for him to be dismissed like this in the middle of the semester. And hasn't it seemed to you," she would add, with the prettiest air of deference, "that his lectures are getting a little better? Of course, I'm no judge. I'm very ignorant. But don't you think that he is getting in a little more subject matter?"

And the 'ed' would be forced to agree. Billy, in a desperate last attempt to steer us all to Spain, had invited Archibald and Pearson to dine with him and had gently started Pearson on his pet theories. It was impossible for anyone to listen to him unmoved and unenlightened, and Archibald absorbed clarity and power enough to transfigure his two or three succeeding lectures. We worked quietly, but hard. And gradually the leaders in the movement to oust Archibald found themselves with few followers. Faculty meetings generally took place on Thursday, and on the Thursday preceding the Saturday fixed for the laying of the corner-stone John again surprised me by calling in the afternoon.

"I haven't a moment to stay," he explained. "I've just come to tell you of a most extraordinary thing. Nearly all the men and several of the women who signed poor Pearson's death warrant have gone to the president and asked him to reconsider any idea of change in the science department."

"Vox populi changing its tune," said I, preparing to confess to the conspiracy and my part in it, when Elizabeth and Billy Blight, crowned with almost visible laurels, broke in upon us. Billy grasped John's hand and shook it warmly, while Elizabeth gathered me into her embrace. "Isn't it wonderful?" they cried in chorus.

"And isn't Marian wonderful?" Elizabeth added.

"What are you two lunatics talking about?" John demanded, and Elizabeth was so breathless that she allowed Billy to do the talking.

"Thornycroft's down and out. Prexy learns that the feeling of the undergraduate body has changed." Told us so in a nice little speech in his office when I went in with two or three other chaps to speak my little piece. It would have drawn tears to the eye of a graven image to hear me telling him how we had all learned to love Archibald; how it was only his preliminary lecture that went a little above our heads."

"Marvelous," murmured John, "marvelous and unaccountable."

"And we can go to West Farms on Saturday with easy minds and consciences," cried Elizabeth. "The Pearsons are safe. If the 'castle' were finished now we four might crave its hospitality on account of the brain strain it has caused us. Oh, you dear old Marian!" she cried, and again threw her arms around me while Billy again shook effusively John's unresisting hand.

"She's a girl in a thousand," Mr. Blight was pleased to assure my fiancé. "She'll make a wife in a million."

"I know it," John acquiesced, "but might I trouble you to explain why you hold her responsible for this change in public opinion?"

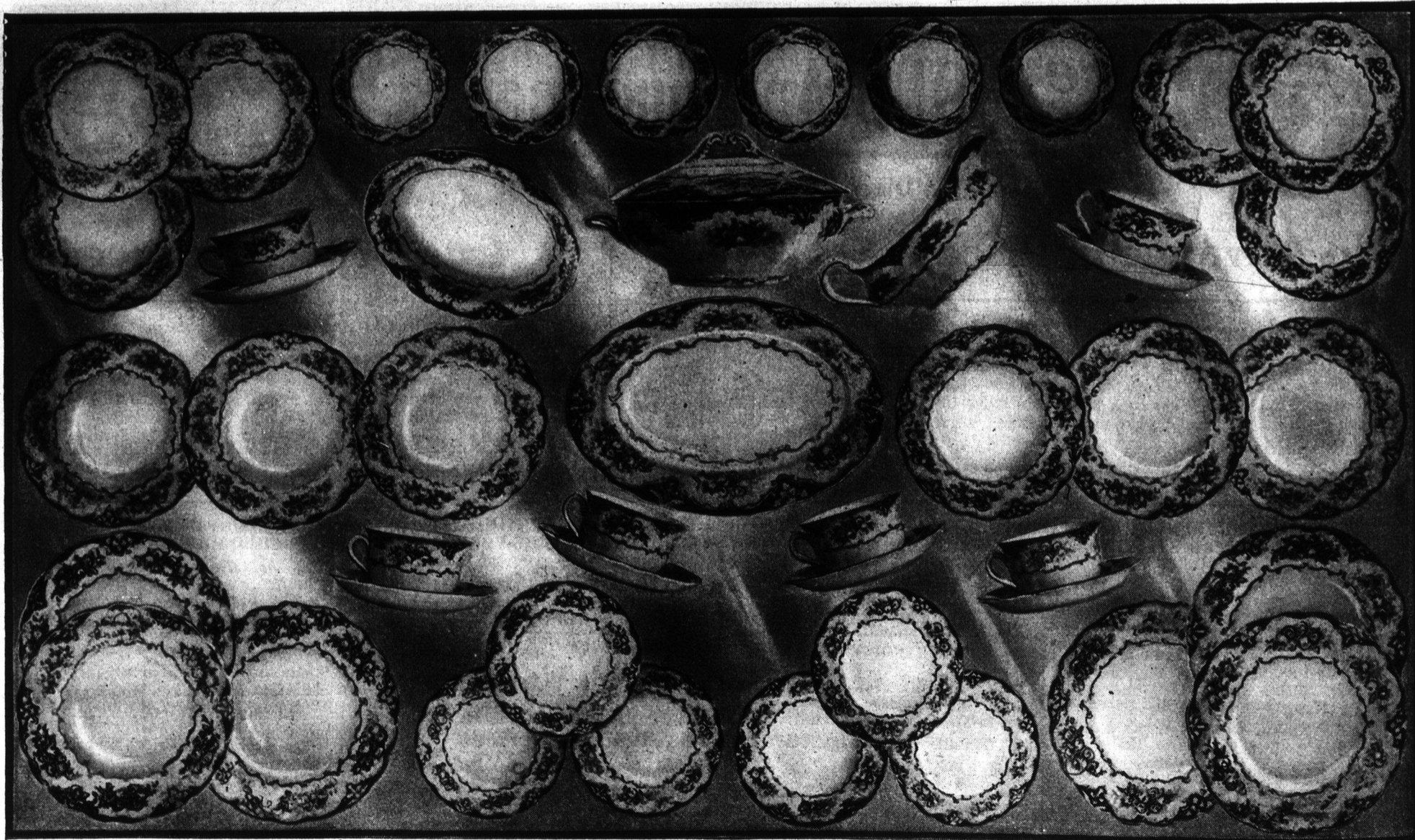
"Oh, it's only their nonsense, John dear," I answered. "We've done nothing at all, except to give a few singing lessons to vox populi."

The Doctor: "Mrs. Brown has sent for me to go and see her boy, and I must go at once."

His Wife: "What is the matter with the boy?"

The Doctor: "I don't know, but Mrs. Brown has a book on 'What to do Before the Doctor Comes,' and I must hurry up before she does it."

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