

## OUR SHORT STORY

## "Mr. Augustine Dobbs' Wooing."

Mrs. Steyn-Browne threw herself back upon the mossy cushions of the lounge, and allowed herself the luxury of a hearty laugh.

"It is really too ridiculous—the idea of that sympathy in mustard-colored darning to warm me against myself," she murmured.

She took the letter which had so aroused her merriment and reperused it.

"My dear Mrs. Steyn-Browne," she read, "May I so far trespass on our friendship as to offer you a word of warning. You know something of me now. But you do not know me so well as I know myself. I may truthfully say that my knowledge of mankind has been gained by dint of much study in a mirror of my own personality and in the process I have naturally arrived at a certain idea of my own perfection. This you will say is vanity. I disagree. Vanity is the child of ignorance and cannot be born of knowledge. So much by way of explanation of what follows. I know, unfortunately, that to some women I am undoubtedly attractive. I cannot help it. I cannot be other than myself. I possess a most irksome duty. At the risk of being misunderstood, I feel it a point of honor to warn you against myself. I am a dangerous man, as you know, the more hours for love's sake, and I would not that one esteem so highly as yourself should find unhappiness through me. I cannot say that I shall be entirely unregretful if you tell me that I have misconstrued the message your eyes have given me at our frequent meetings."

"Of course, if I did not esteem you so highly, I should neither have dared nor troubled to have penned these lines, but as it is in your own interest, in the interest of my own peace of mind, in the interest of the movement, I venture to most earnestly entreat you to beware of me."

"Yours very sincerely,  
"AUGUSTINE DOBBS."

Mrs. Steyn-Browne had not known Mr. Augustine Dobbs for long. The acquaintance dated from the time of her introduction to "the movement." Now what the movement was may be easily explained. It is within easy memory of every one that not long ago socialism was within an ace of becoming fashionable. Politicians wagged their heads wisely, declaring that "we are all socialists now," and quite a number of people with balances at their bankers and a superfluity of leisure became mild-mannered as regards the fabric of society. Among such socialism was too crude a term for every-day use, so they referred to it as "the movement," and the similarity of the word to "the movement" was in their minds synonymous with a condition of benighted ignorance almost medieval.

Naturally many of the recruits to the movement were women, some of them young, more of them of uncertain years. In the former category was Mrs. Steyn-Browne; in the latter was Miss Steyn-Browne. The ladies were sisters by marriage, and the similarity of their names was the only point of resemblance between them. Physically, the dividing line was a vast one. Mrs. Steyn-Browne was a tall, slender, gray-eyed, well-groomed matron of two and twenty, while Miss Steyn-Browne was a short, sturdy, black-haired and brown-eyed maiden of forty-one, whose lack of grace was woefully accentuated by the liberty gown she mostly affected.

In the movement Mr. Augustine Dobbs was undoubtedly a shining light. Whenever and wherever he lectured, whether at a working-class club in the East End or in the drawing-room of an up-to-date clergyman in the West, he had his own particular bevy of feminine admirers. They did not send him slippers, as would have happened had he been a clergyman, but they took the form of treating his utterances upon any subject as the last word of wisdom in regard to the subject. Truth to tell, he had a pretty turn for paradox, which invested his speech with a fictitious smartness, and made him an agreeable novelty in drawing-rooms where conversation languished.

Of his hand of admirers Miss Steyn-Browne had speedily become a member, and at her request, with the ostensible object of setting the feet of a number of recruits upon the path of economic salvation, he had made his first appearance in Mrs. Steyn-Browne's drawing-room. There, by the hundreds of devices known to the feminine mind, Mr. Augustine Dobbs was made to realize that he was a welcome guest.

Mrs. Steyn-Browne had a reason for her cordiality, but it was one less flattering to Mr. Dobbs than that gentleman imagined. She looked upon him as a socialist, and she was a dragon.

Mrs. Steyn-Browne, and the dragon once conquered, she cared very little as to what should happen to the knight. Truth to tell, there was little love lost between the two ladies. Sophia Steyn-Browne had deeply, though silently, resented her displacement as head of her brother's household by his marriage, and could not find it in her heart to forgive her sister-in-law either her youth or her beauty. In return Lillian Steyn-Browne heartily wished that her husband's sister could be persuaded to set up an establishment of her own, instead of domiciling herself for three parts of the year as a guest in her house, an affliction to which she found it difficult to take exception, because her husband invariably met her with a laugh and the remark, "Poor old Sophia! She's not a bad sort. We must give her a chance of getting married, or it will soon be too late!"

To Mrs. Steyn-Browne the remark had seemed ridiculous. She had been married at eighteen, and naturally looked upon a spinster of 41 as hopelessly upon the shelf. Needless to say, however, Miss Steyn-Browne did not share this view, and the appearance of Mr. Augustine Dobbs upon the scene of her existence

had renewed a hope that had become a little threadbare.

Mrs. Steyn-Browne had been delighted. The possibility of once and for all freeing herself from the incubus had aroused in her the pleasantest anticipations. She had determined to assist in the progress of such an eventuality by every means in her power.

But, unfortunately, her interest had been mistaken by one of the most subtle of her solicitors. Mr. Augustine Dobbs had feared that another victim had succumbed to his attractiveness. No sooner had he awakened to this fact, as he thought it, than his mind became greatly exercised as to the course of action befitting one of the leaders of the movement. Half a dozen times, at least, he had attempted to broach the subject conversationally, but at the last minute when he had looked into Mrs. Steyn-Browne's bright eyes—his courage had failed him. So as a last resource he had determined to write to her a letter which should reveal to her the real magnanimity of his nature. "She is a woman of infinite intelligence, infinite sympathy," he had mused when the letter was written; "she will understand the sacrifice I am making, and will esteem me the more. He had felt that he had performed a noble action. He had posted the letter himself, and his pulses had throbbled with the consciousness of the noble deed he had placed in the pillar-box. His duty had been performed. He could not be accused of taking advantage of her youth, for he would have warned her of her peril. She would not be able to blame him afterward, or accuse him of having deceived her.

His equanimity would, however, have received a shock could he have been present when the epistle was opened by Mrs. Steyn-Browne. That lady's first attitude was one of profound astonishment; the second one of profound indignation as she became sensible of the innuendo of the phrases "love's sake" and "the message of your eyes," but finally amusement overwhelmed all other emotions.

Her first impulse was to share the joke with her husband. But he was not in the house. Her sister-in-law, then, no, Miss Sophia Steyn-Browne might fail to see the humor of the situation—might, indeed, imagine that the irresistible Augustine had caused to her the warning, for when Mrs. Steyn-Browne paused to consider the matter she remembered that her sister-in-law's manner for the past few days had betokened by its extra acidity the birth of jealousy.

"Perhaps the letter was meant for Sophia," she mused as she laid it again upon the table. She looked at the address closely and again scrutinized the opening sentence. "Mrs. Steyn-Browne," she read, "I have stood for 'Miss' in Mr. Augustine Dobbs' hasty calligraphy. But the envelope was unmistakable. Besides, a second letter, delivered by the same post, addressed to the same handwriting to Miss Sophia Steyn-Browne, lay upon the table."

"I wonder if Sophia has been warned, too," thought Mrs. Steyn-Browne. The bridge between the desire to know and the attainment of the knowledge was already in existence. The envelope was only loosely fastened. It yielded to the gentle coaxing of a paper knife.

Mrs. Steyn-Browne's envelope contained merely a summons to the meeting of a committee upon which she served for the benefit of the movement, and for the better behoof of Mr. Augustine Dobbs.

"I am sure this letter must have been meant for Sophia," said Mrs. Steyn-Browne, "and I am sure, too, that Sophia would not have liked me to have seen it."

She slipped the letter into Miss Steyn-Browne's envelope with the official notice and refastened the flap.

"I think I will leave his punishment to Sophia," she murmured, as she tore the envelope, and tossed the fragments, "and if my estimate of Sophia's temper is in any way correct, I really think the punishment will be equal to the offense."

But events proved that she had not yet experienced sufficient to warrant her in dogmatizing upon the effects of such an epistle upon the mind and heart of a mature maiden of 41. The gun upon the envelope was hardly fired when Miss Steyn-Browne entered the room.

Mrs. Steyn-Browne watched her from behind a volume of Pabian facts while she opened and read the missive. To her surprise Miss Steyn-Browne's plain features, after the first incredulous, expressed unmitigated delight. She had expected to see her sister-in-law furious. Instead, that lady appeared not merely elate but triumphant.

Mrs. Steyn-Browne made an effort towards enlightenment.

"Some good news in your letter, Sophia?" she inquired, sweetly.

Miss Steyn-Browne hesitated a moment before replying. "No, only a message from Mr. Augustine Dobbs asking whether he may rely upon my support for a proposal he is bringing before the committee this evening."

"Is that the only proposal he would like you to accept?" queried Mrs. Steyn-Browne, mischievously. "I have thought of late that the frequency of his calls was a sign of something more personal than the progress of the movement."

Mrs. Steyn-Browne supplied proof that there are occasions upon which forty can blush with the abandon of seventeen.

"Oh, Sophia! Sophia! May I really congratulate you?" cried Mrs. Steyn-Browne.

"Really, Lillian," she declared, "you should not be so ready to jump at conclusions. I have the best of reasons for my interest in him."

"I am glad you have called Mr. Dobbs. We were just speaking of you. You talk of angels, don't you know?"

"The gossip in heaven must needs be of angels, I suppose," he said, gallantly. Obviously he had acted rightly; there was no appearance of annoyance in her manner. She had even

been discussing him with her sister-in-law. He hoped, however, that she had not taken Miss Steyn-Browne into confidence. That would complicate matters. He would make an attempt to discover. I suppose I may not offer my assistance in your deliberations?" he inquired.

Mrs. Steyn-Browne accepted the offer with a smile. "What we were discussing was this: Miss Steyn-Browne was declaring that you were a confirmed celibate. That you had consecrated your life to the movement. Isn't that so, Sophia?"

"I heard so on good authority," said Miss Steyn-Browne, with emphasis. "My contention was that such a standpoint meant either that you have not yet met the woman you would care to marry, or else that you have met her and you fear that she is unattainable."

"Mr. Augustine Dobbs seized the opportunity to pose as a martyr. 'Perchance the unattainability of my ideal makes it so alluring,' he said."

"No woman is unattainable," replied Mrs. Steyn-Browne, with a bewitching upward glance of her eyes that set Mr. Augustine Dobbs' heart throbbing beneath his Jaeger shirt.

It seemed clear that she had received his warning and equally apparent that she had determined to disregard it. The responsibility was hers. He wished that Miss Steyn-Browne would leave them alone to finish the conversation. He was disappointed. It was Mrs. Steyn-Browne who rose suddenly and begged to be excused, as she had just remembered that she "had a most important letter to answer."

"Meanwhile," she said, "Sophia will give you some tea and prove to you that the unattainable has its limits. The important letter to answer. His letter! Heaped into a brown study and paid no attention to Mrs. Steyn-Browne's coughs and delicate flutterings. Even the words with which his companion broke the silence fell upon deaf ears. She repeated them.

"I agree with Lillian, no woman is unattainable by a man of—of you—!" She paused in some slight confusion.

Mr. Augustine Dobbs smiled condescendingly as he replied to her assurance.

"I should indeed be happy with your assurance."

"If—if, then, my assurance can make you happy, you have it," she continued.

Mr. Augustine Dobbs looked upon her with amazement. Surely Mrs. Steyn-Browne had not taken her sister-in-law into her confidence. Miss Steyn-Browne mistook his silence for the difference of the opinion which he held with incredulity at his good fortune.

"You did well to write. I should have replied at once, only you followed so fast upon your letter that I have not had the opportunity. See, I had just read it when you arrived. She held up the missive as she spoke.

"You have received my letter. I did not think—!" His hand was thrust out as if to grasp it.

With a playful assumption of girlishness Mrs. Steyn-Browne held it behind her back. "No, you shall never have it. I will always keep it to remind me that I must not be exacting in my demands upon your time."

The perspiration gathered upon Mr. Augustine Dobbs' brow as he at last grasped the truth of the situation. By some unfortunate chance his letter had reached the wrong person, and, moreover, that person had chosen to read it in its disquieting phraseology. He cleared out of the difficulty, for he could not explain the mistake which had arisen. He must make it clear that he had really meant to adhere to his word and that the whole thing was claimed by the movement. He drew closer to Miss Steyn-Browne.

"I was foolish of me to write such a letter," he began.

"No, no," interrupted Miss Steyn-Browne, "I am sure that in your heart you must have been aware that the mating of two kindred souls would prove no drawback to your life work. I knew at once that you merely wished to test me. Oh, Augustine!"

Augustine Dobbs rose hastily from his chair at the sound of his first name from the fair Sophia's lips. Every word he spoke seemed to increase his entanglement. Exultation seemed impossible. He made one last despairing attempt.

"Miss Steyn-Browne—" he commenced.

"No, Sophia," she whispered, coyly, as she, too, rose, and advanced towards him.

"Miss Steyn-Browne," he repeated.

Again she interrupted him. "That is unkind, Augustine."

He tried a third time. Miss Steyn-Browne was very near him. He felt his eyes. He polished them nervously. "You must listen to me," he said, wildly. "This is terrible. A—A scene like this agitates me horribly. You must let me explain, Miss Steyn-Browne."

"Sophia to you," she corrected, gently.

"Well, Sophia, then," he repeated out the name in a sound that sounded like a snarl.

Mrs. Steyn-Browne probably thought that emotion had changed his voice, for, heedless of anything but the fact that his lips had syllabied her name, she threw herself at him.

Augustine Dobbs stretched out his arms to protect himself. Miss Steyn-Browne fell into them literally as well as figuratively, and to prevent herself from falling, entwined her arms about his neck. To save himself from strangulation he had perforce to support her.

"Suppose anyone were to come into the room," he began, "suppose—"

There was no need for any further supposition. As he spoke the door opened, and Mrs. Steyn-Browne and her husband entered.

She gave one glance and retired. But her presence had been noted. It was the climax of Mr. Augustine Dobbs' embarrassment; from that time he gave up the struggle.

Miss Steyn-Browne withdrew from his unwilling embrace, and hid her face in her handkerchief. "Oh, Augustine," she murmured, "How could you? What will Lillian think?"

Augustine Dobbs was far beyond words. Events had been much too rapid for him. He could only stare, and wonder how much longer his dream would last. He was still voiceless when Mrs. Steyn-Browne re-entered, announcing her husband's arrival.

"I would have intruded upon you only Harding will be bringing in the tea directly, and I thought that you would rather I disturbed you than one of the servants. You must not mind me. Mrs. Steyn-Browne and I are sure Sophia will not. I suppose I may congratulate you both? I am so glad that I am able to be the first to do so."

There was no help for it. As Augustine Dobbs told himself afterwards, "Memento like these make fatalists of men." He smiled. The smile was a watery one, but nevertheless it was a smile of acceptance.

Mr. Augustine Dobbs has still a bevy of feminine admirers, but there is no longer any need to write to them for the purpose of warning them of his attractiveness. Mrs. Steyn-Browne is his shield. He is not, however, unhappy. His delight in paradox enables him to sustain with some plausibility the position of a Socialist with an assured

income derived from a wealthy wife. In fact, he has long since come to the conclusion that the miscarriage of his letter was one of the luckiest things that could have happened to him. — London Truth.

## JAPANESE WRESTLERS

Their Physical Development Is Something Truly Remarkable.

(Medical Record.)

Although the American is willing to concede to the Japanese the possession of a mental capacity almost, if not quite, equaling that of the majority of white races, he is apt to form a somewhat slighting opinion of him as viewed from a physical standpoint. The specimens met with in this country do not tend to convey a favorable impression of their athletic powers. After, however, reading an account of the physical measurements of some of the most prominent Japanese wrestlers, a more respectful attitude regarding the muscular development of these little men will probably be taken. The Jiji Shimpo has recently published a table giving the measurements of six of the foremost Japanese fighters. From this table it is gathered that the most bulky of these modern gladiators weighs at the age of 22 years about 300 pounds; height, 5½ feet; girth of chest, 53 inches; lung capacity, 4,450 cubic centimeters; upper arm, 18 inches.

Another one weighs over 250 pounds; height, 5 feet 5 inches; girth of chest, 48 inches; lung capacity, 6,000 cubic centimeters; upper arm, 16 inches. The smallest of these fighting men weighs most than 200 pounds, measures in height 5 feet 7 inches; while in lung capacity he exceeds them all. There are few wrestlers in this or any country who attain to these dimensions, and those who have seen some of the best exponents of Japanese wrestling are willing to back them when pitted against the pick of the European or American experts, as it is said that they are as skillful as they are powerful.

## QUEBEC BRICKLAYER

Falls Back on the Old Statement — "Dodd's Kidney Pills Cured Me."

A Sufferer From Lumbago for Two Years — Completely Disabled and Couldn't Work—Three Boxes Gave Him a New Back.

Quebec, Sept. 25.—John Ball, a bricklayer, of this city, living on 57 Little Champlain street, says he was cured of Lumbago by Dodd's Kidney Pills. Asked how a kidney medicine would cure him of Lumbago, Mr. Ball said:

"Because Lumbago is the most direct symptom of Kidney Disease. Lumbago is Rheumatism of the back. Rheumatism is uric acid in the system. Uric acid is caused by poor work on the part of the kidneys—that is, if the kidneys worked right they would sift it out and there'd be no trouble—that's the way it was explained to me. Dodd's Kidney Pills are simply supposed to make the kidneys work right, and they certainly do that all right."

"I had Lumbago for two years. Couldn't do my work. Had to get up every little while in the night to urinate, couldn't get a decent night's sleep. I heard of what Dodd's Kidney Pills had done so I got some. I thought I felt better after the first few doses and kept on. Sure enough three boxes of Dodd's Kidney Pills cured me, and I want everybody to know it."

ON THE MARCH.

Down the canon of the street,  
Hear the muffled marching feet!  
Hear the thousand-throated hum  
As the soldiers nearer come!  
Eagerly the people crowd;  
Faintly now, to now more loud,  
While we listen, breathless, dumb,  
Comes the droning of the drum.

Marching down the western light,  
Hursts the column on our sight!  
Through the myriad golden notes  
Splendidly our banner floats!  
Then the sudden, swelling cheer,  
Voicing all we hold most dear,  
Unmistaken, swelling waves of sound,  
Till the whirling drum is drowned!

Now the marching men have passed  
We have watched them to the last,  
Till the column disappears  
In the midst of sudden tears.  
Loves and hates beyond unguessed  
Tremble in the troubled breast;  
Loves and hates, and hopes and fears  
Waking from the sleep of years.

—Herbert Muller Hopkins.

Thomas W. McKee, of Windsor, formerly owner of the British-American Hotel, died at 12:30 this (Friday) morning, of heart failure. He had been a prominent figure in Ontario for many years. He was born in Haldimand county 55 years ago.

Railways and Navigation

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY SYSTEM

Annual

Western

Excursions

September 28, 29 and 30, 1899

London to

Port Huron or Detroit, Mich., and return \$2.00

Cleveland, Ohio, and return 4.50

Saginaw or Bay City, Mich., and return 8.00

Grand Rapids, Mich., and return 6.00

Chicago, Ill., or Cincinnati, Ohio, and return 8.00

St. Paul or Minneapolis, Minn., and return 33.00

Good going Sept. 28, 29, 30, 1899, and valid to return until Monday, Oct. 16, 1899.

E. DE LA HOOKE, C. P. and T. A.; "Clock" corner Richmond and Dundas streets; M. C. DICKSON, D. P. A., Toronto.

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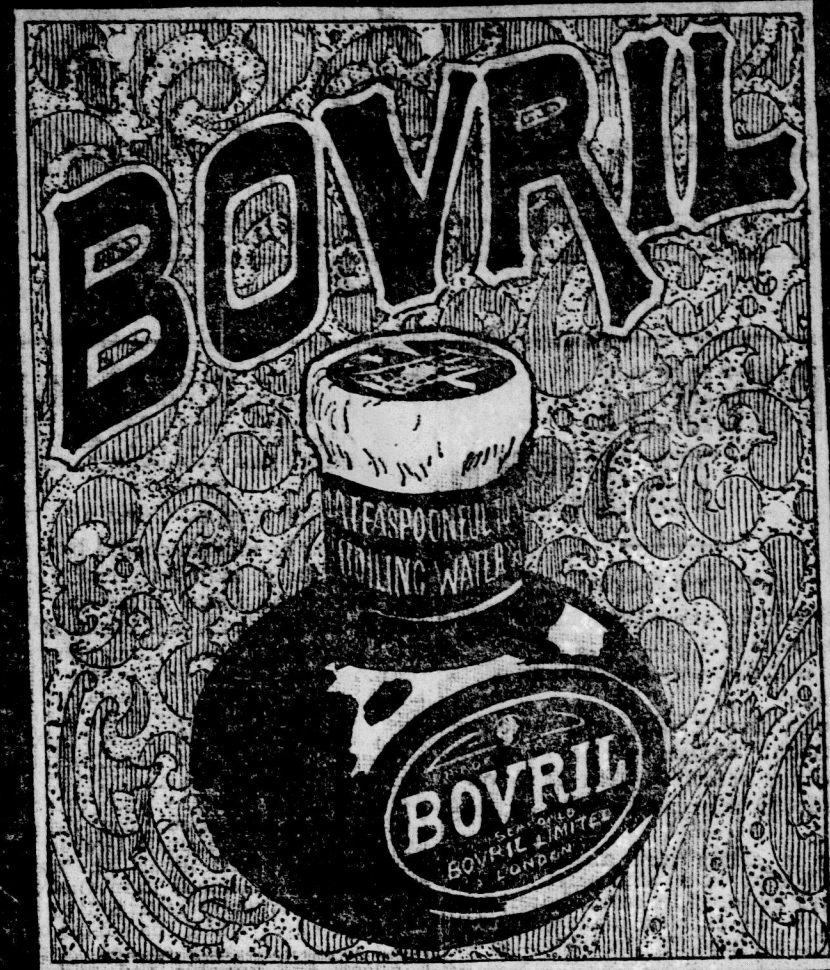
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Saginaw and Bay City.....\$ 5.00

Detroit..... 2.00

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Grand Rapids..... 6.00

Chicago..... 8.00

Cincinnati..... 8.00

Cleveland..... 4.50

St. Paul and..... \$34.50 Lake

Minneapolis..... \$34.00 Rail

Good going Sept. 28, 29 and 30. Good return

ing until Oct. 16.

Full particulars from any Canadian

Pacific Agent, or A. H. NOTMAN, Assistant

General Passenger Agent, 1 King street east

Toronto.

T. HOSKIN, City Passenger Agent

161 Dundas street, corner of Richmond.

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New York to Liverpool via Queenstown

"S.S. MAJESTIC, Sept. 27..... Noon

"S.S. TEUTONIC, Oct. 4..... Noon

"S.S. GERMANIC, Oct. 11..... Noon

"S.S. OCEANIC, Oct. 18..... Noon

"S.S. CYMBRIC, Oct. 24..... Noon

"S.S. MAJESTIC, Oct. 25..... Noon

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INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY

On and after Monday, June 19, 1899, the

trains leaving Union Station, Toronto

(via Grand Trunk Railway) at 9

a.m. and 9:30 p.m., make close

connection with Maritime Express and

Local Express at St. Lawrence Depot,

Montreal, as follows:

The Maritime Express will leave Montreal

daily except on Saturday, at 7:30 p.m., for

Halifax, St. John, N. B., and points in the

Maritime Provinces. It will run on Saturday to

Halifax, stopping at St. Hyacinthe and other

points.

The Maritime Express from Halifax, St. John

and other points east, will arrive at Montreal

daily, except Monday, at 6:30 p.m. The Mon-

day train will be from Lewis and intermediate

points.

The Local Express will leave Little Metis

daily, except Sunday, at 4:30 p.m., and arrive

at Montreal at 6:30 a.m.

Through sleeping and dining cars on the

Maritime Express. Sleeping cars on Local Ex-

press.