POOR DOCUMENT

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SOCIOLOGICAL EXHIBIT

By M. McCulloch-Williams

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If Josefa had not had the Morris nose, things might have happened. The Morris nose, understand, was more than a feature—rather, a hall-mark of sorts throughout Rabun county. Whoever owned it was held bound, not only to follow it, but to keep it going in the social lines, marked out by Great-grandfather Morris, a gentleman whose spirit had been as high has his nose.

She was not high-spirited, but instead, meek and lowly in mind, as became her very moderate fortune. Her mother, a born Morris, had married badly. At least the family thought so, and had never scrupled to say that poor Billy Clayton never did but one sensible thing—namely, dying before he had quite wasted his wife's dowry. She had brought him land and money—and the land remained, only a little farm to be sure, but big enough to maintain the widow and her child.

It would take managing, of course—but the Widow Clayton, she that was Anne Morris, was a born manager. That was exact truth. In proof take the fact that when Josefa was eighteen she had been fairly educated, and had had all along clothes quite as good as any of her richer cousins. Moreover, the house was trim and trig, and the small farm ship-shape—in much better condition than the shiftless master had left it.

What wonder then that Cousin Anne, who never whined nor asked for anything—advice least of all—was well liked and wholly respected throughout the whole family connection?

What wonder either that Cousin Maria Dalton, also a born Morris, who, having no children, was a chronic joiner, and daughter of whatever came along, took a violent fancy to Josefa? Maria Dalton was mighty proud of the Morris blood, and doated especially upon great-grandfather. She had a copy of the portrait over the mantel in her front parlor, and had coaxed Lemuel Morris, his eldest grandson, into giving her his commission in the Continental army. That, too, of course, was framed and hung up beside the portrait. Inevitably the next thing was to entertain her fellow daughters upon the occasion when state chapters foregather. And that meant having Cousin Anne and Josefa help in the entertaining, notwithstanding neither of them belonged to so much as one chapter. There were reasons, Mrs. Dalton was careful to explain to the visitors—Cousin Anne was the greatest home body, and Josefa, staying with her dutifully, had no need of belonging.

"Yes—Josefa is going to be my heiress. I believe so in blood," she confided to the lady president. That person pricked up her ears. Mrs. Dalton was rich—and the lady president had a son, a lawyer, just starting to practice in the country town. He needed a wife badly—especially one with expectations and family influence. And he was right on the spot, having come along with the chapter, not only by way of escort, but as speaker of the occasion. He had seized upon it as a chance to show his enthusiasm for local history. His mother, Mrs. Melvin, was inclined to regard the fact in the light of a special providence. She managed to speak with him quietly, a little apart, before he read his paper, and was delighted to hear him throw into the reading solid chunks of enthusiasm for Rabun county and its glorious past.

Before the assembly broke he had met Josefa, and talked with her a good half hour. Next week he called on her—and the next, and the next. Mrs. Dalton was early taken into his confidence, and of course was his warm advocate. "Yes—as you say, Josefa is a Morris, out and out—all but the name—and we'll change that," she said smiling at him. "And remember you are going into politics—I want you to be senator at the very least. No matter how high you go, Josefa'll do you credit. She's going to make the finest sort of woman, if she is so quiet. But don't you fool yourself thinking you can get her just for asking—that is not the way with girls of the Morris blood. Court her like a man, and don't take 'No,' if she gives it to you the first time."

Jack Melvin listened, yearning to grit his teeth. He was not the least bit in love—Josefa was not pretty, for all she was so fresh and wholesome, and he craved beauty above everything. Besides, there was Amelia Ware—but he dared not let himself thnk of her. Since they could not marry, he meant to marry this Josefa. It made him laugh only to think of her saying no to him—how could she, when she knew nobody else, save a few awkward country fellows?

Imagne his state of mind when Josefa did say "No"—the first time, the second, the third—and each time more and more as though she meant it. After the third rejection, he went to Mrs. Dalton. She laughed a laugh of indulgent pride when he had finished, but said emphatically: "I don't blame Josey—not a bit. You've got the name of being a dreadful flirt—whether or no you deserve it, I ain't saying. Other folks are saying Judge Ware's girl is crying her eyes out about you. And she ain't the only one—but that don't matter. I'll go over and stay all night with Cousin Anne tomorrow. You come out the next day—I think you'll find things changed a bit.

Woman disposes, man proposes, sometimes fate intervenes. Josefa stood with fate in this particular wrestle. She said "No" again—and in a way that told Jack Melvin, at least, the game was up. But Mrs. Dalton held on stoutly to her plan. Cousin Anne had fallen in with it ardently—for all her thrift, she had aw hile lot of family pride. Moreover, she wanted Josefa to get the Dalton money. So she joined forces with her cousin, and between them they gave the prospective heiress small peace.

Obstinacy, pure and simple—that was what ailed Josefa. So said her two elders in conclave. There could not possibly be anybody in Melvin's way. Josefa had been sent to school, the strictest possible boarding school, when she was barely thirteen. Since she came back from it none of the youngsters round about had done more than speak civilly to her. Not one had so much as come to the house, except Clayton Trigg, who was a far-off cousin, and had come to buy yearlings and fat lambs. In virtue equally of his kinship, and a sudden shower, he had stayed to dinner, and after it had shaken hands cordially with both the ladies of the house. All he had said to Josefa was that if she happened to be at the country fair next fall, he hoped she would look at his saddle horses, Muggins and Milly Boy, as he was sure they would win the blue ribbon.

At fair time, with Joseft still obdurate, Mrs. Clayton had doubts as to going, but Mrs. Dalton overruled the doubts. Thus the three went together in the Dalton barouche, and for the best part of the day Josefa was handed over to Melvin. Just how she managed it she herself never knew, but toward 4 o'clock she slipped away from him and lost herself in the crowd. It was a delicious sensation. All the late summer she had been telling herself she would run away if she had half a chance, but how could she when she had not so much as a dollar of her own? She almost ran until she came to the farther side of the amphitheatre. At the foot of the stairway she found herself stopped, her hand strongly gripped and a frank, sunburned face, with honest blue eyes, smiling down at her, but flushing in spite of its sunburn.

Mrs. Dalton was off with a knot of the daughters, Mrs. Clayton stood rapt in contemplation of prize patch work. Each believed Josefa safe with the other, also that Melvin was a further guard. Therefore, they smiled amiably when the ring-master shouted that there was a new feature—a wedding in the exhibit of Scrollsaw, Varnish & Co., the enterprising furnishing men. A popular young couple had agreed to be married in the parlor arranged by the firm—who meant to show their appreciation by making the newly wed a present of the suite. Mrs. Dalton said to her next neighbor: "Oh, I reckon it's somebody from the back country—it must be—only bumpkins and their sweethearts still tolerate parlor suites."

The neighbor nodded, but added: "Let's go and see. I come to fairs mostly to see that sort of people. They are sociological exhibits, you know — better worth while than anything in the ring."

"Do you think so? Then let's hurry." Mrs. Dalton agreed—but somehow, in spits of hurrying, their progress was slow. They came close enough at last to hear without seeing — after the benediction. The crowd drew its breath, and women in it whispered: "Why, did you ever! The girl looks radiant—and quite the lady! And the fellow didn't kiss her although the squire bade him do it."

"Here they come!" said others, falling apart to make way. Mrs. Clayton had somehow met them—Melvin was across the way with Amelia Ware, her eyes downcast, clinging to his arm. Between them, bright-eyed, head up, walked Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Trigg.

Josefa went straight to her mother, saying demurely, but with the least hard-drawn breath: "We're going on a little trip, mother—but it won't be extravagance—the money for the parlor suite—we sold it before we earned it—will more than pay expenses. You stay dith Aunt 'Ria, please, till we get back——"

"And then we're going to take care of you always" said Clayton Trigg in-of you always," Clayton Triggs interrupted.

Mrs. Dalton was too stunned to speak, but Mrs. Clayton said, composedly: "Well, Joe, I suppose you had to follow your nose—the Morrises always did have their own way."

RULED BY THE RING

By Charles Stiller

Keeler stepped aside to let her pass, and the girl favored him with a smile as she acknowledged his courtesy. He went on up the stairs with a feeling of warmth about his heart. Somehow the Smile of the Girl Across the Hall always affected him that way. He had often wished that he might venture to speak, but there was something about her that held him back.

For about a year now they had been fellow tenants of the old rookery that masqueraded as a studio building. His name, neatly printed, adorned his door, but there was not a sign of an announcement on her own, from which he inferred that she worked for some concern and merely used the office as a wordshop.

He bent over his draughting board all the morning, though the face of the girl somehow would get mized up with the side elevation of the building he was planning, and he was glad when the tiny clock struck twelve, and he had an excuse for stopping for lunch.

He had not yet made his fame as an architect and lunch was an elementary meal; a couple of sandwiches brought down from the house and a cake of maple sugar that he had picked up somewhere. He chipped off a corner of the cake with his eraser.

On the broken half a yellowish glint caught his eye and he further dissected his portion. It was a ring, a slender band of gold with "T. H. to A. G., 1904," engraved inside. Plainly some girl's engagement ring, this. Perhaps some little country girl was bewailing her loss even yet. He caught up the box with its gaudy label. It bore an address, and that evening he posted a letter addressed to Thomas Gillespie, Wycoma, Vt., in which he explained the discovery of the ring and announced his willingness to return it on a proper description.

With his own little romance of the Girl Across the Hall, Vance Keeler felt interested in all romances, and as he slipped the letter into the box he sent after it a wish for good luck.

But sometimes blessings, like curses, come home to roost. He was beginning to fear that there would be no answer to his letter; that perhaps the label was but an evasion of the pure food law, when there came a knock at his door, and in answer to his "enter" there appeared the girl from across the hall, blushing rosily.

"I believe that you are Mr. Vance Keeler," she began, as Vance sprang to his feet and dusted off the company chair.

"You have the advantage of me," he suggested, "since I do not know your name."

"I am Agnes Gillespie," she explained. "My father wrote me to see you about a letter you sent him."

"And you were working right across the hall all the time?" he cried. "Rather a roundabout way, isn't it? I suppose you can describe it."

"It was a plain gold band," she said. "The initials were T. H. and A. G., and the date 1904."

"The initials are right," he agreed, "but the date is wrong. It's 1904."

"That is because the ring has been worn so long," she explained, the red suffusing her face. "The eight is partly erased."

The blush convinced him, and his heart sank as he drew out the ring. Perhaps she was bashful about admitting her engagement, but it was 1904. He could swear to that.

Her face broke into smiles as he drew it from his pocket and passed it to her.

"I never thought that I should see it again," she ran on. "It dropped off my hand last year while I was helping with the sugaring. I never realized that it might be in the sugar until it had all been shipped."

She slipped the ring on her finger and Vance noticed that it was a perfect fit.

He breathed silent vengeance on "T. H." as he held the door open for her, but took satisfaction in the thought that he at least knew her name.

After that when they met on the stairs they exchanged greetings, and several times she had to run in to borrow a rubber or some material, and once she had shown him her studio where she worked over designs for a wholesale house. She was always frankly friendly and he respected the rights of "T. H."

But to keep from loving was quite another thing. Even before he had known her he had fallen in love, and acquaintance had only strengthened the feeling. More than once he thought of moving away out of temptation, but before he decided the fateful moment came.

He was working with his door ajar, and, chancing to look up, he saw a puff of black smoke blow in. He sprang to his feet and rushed into the hall. The stairway was crackling merrily, and two floors below the flames had full possession. Theirs was a rear building, built in the yard of the higher structure. It would be a hard fire to fight, and all chance of escape by stairway or fire escape was hopeless.

He ran to Agnes's door and burst in when there was no answer to his knocking. He knew that she was in, for he had seen her pass. One glance showed that he was right in his fear. She was stupefied by the smoke, and he had to drag her out.

There was a scuttle to the roof, and from there an emergency ladder led to the top of the next building a climb of twenty feet. Desperation lent him strength, and somehow he got her through the scuttle, and was just lifting her over the edge of the adjoining roof when the flames burst through the roof he had just quit.

In the jostling she had received the smoke had ben forced out and the air into her lungs, and as he laid her upon the roof she opened her eyes.

"What is the matter?" she cried. "I—I remember now. I saw the smoke in my room and I fainted. You came for me?"

"Sure," he smiled. "It wouldn't be neighborly to leave you behind, would it?"

"Behind? There?" Her glance wandered to the pillar of flame that rose through the ever-widening opening, and she shuddered convulsively.

"It was splendid," she cried, with glowing eyes. "You must have had a terrible time. How did you do it?"

"To tell the truth," he laughed, "I don't know. I just remeniber that I climbed up, and that's all."

Her hands were clasping each other nervously, and she looked down at the ring. "Do you know," she began, and then caught herself with a blush.

"What is it?" he asked curiously. She shook her head.

"I was thinking of an old tradition of the ring."

"It's too new to have traditions," he protested.

She took it off and held it toward him. "That is 1804," she insisted. "It was my great-grandmother's. Thomas Hall rescued her from drowning. She gave it to her eldest daughter when she was—"

"Rescued?" demanded Vance. He scented the tradition. "How was your mother rescued?"

"A runaway," she answered, with averted head.

"And there is no T. H. in your case," he demanded. "You are not engaged?"

"No," she said wonderingly. "Whatever gave you that idea?"

"You blushed so when I said that the date was 1904. And to think that all this time I have said nothing—on account of T. H.—who was married a hundred years ago. Do you think that you could learn to—well, to bow to the rule of the ring?"

"I think I could," she said, softly. "No, I don't think. I know. I have liked you for a long time, and it's not because I am superstitious that I am saying 'yes.'"

It was a quarter of an hour later that a blue shirted fireman toiling over the roofs with a hose discovered them.

"Are you the people that was in the top floor?" he demanded.

"We were," agreed Vance.

"Well, please go down and tell the chief it's all right," he said. "They're getting ready to dig you out."

"I should say it was all right," laughed Vance. "I'll tell the chief with pleasure."

HOW GRADY WORE THE GREEN

By I. L. Forrester

(Copyright, 1907, by M. M. Cunningham.)

When the construction gang took possession of Sackett Junction Kitty O'Rielly took possession of the construction gang.

Kitty's father read the daily papers, and followed the movement of the current events. The construction gang which was laying the new branch line of railroad from Bud's peak to Alvarez was the very latest thing in current events, and by the time it landed at the Junction Old Mike O'Reilly was ready for it.

"They're a fine lot of men, and a hearty lot, Kitty, even if they are a lot of guinnies and greasers and such foreigners. 'Tis from the stranger within our gates that we get the goods, Kitty, and if he won't give them to us of his own free will, then we take them from him by gentle presuasion Kitty, you are the gentle presausion of Sackett Junction. You go right over and talk to whoever's the king of the whole bunch, and tell them you're the finest cook in Arizona, and your dad can furnish meal tickets to the whole crowd of them at a price that would bankrupt any chink cook this side of Sacramento. Go on with the winning ways of you, Kitty O'Reilly, and God bless you."

So Kitty and her winning ways had tripped blithely across the wash to where the tents of the construction gang showed on the side of the hill. And she delivered the message of her father in her own sweet way to the king of the bunch, and the king was neither guinny nor greaser, but Tom Grady from Kansas City. Tall was Thomas, six feet two, with the shadowy blue eyes of Erin, and the curliest of sunset tinted locks.

Kitty glanced sideways out of the corners of her eyes at him, in a way she had, and she was glad in her heart of hearts that the consctruction gang had seized upon Sackett Junction as its base of operations.

"We will eat with you, tell the old man," said Tom Grady, and while his manner was sedate, and his tone most respectable as befitted a five minute's acquaintanceship, yet his eyes told Kitty that she was the fairest creature he had2looked upon in all his life. "We will eat any old thing he gives us to eat, and the road can pay for it. Tell him to feed us hearty."

"I do the cooking," said Kitty, and the way of her smile and voice was most bewildering to a man with a free heart under his coat.

"Heaven bless the cook," laughed Tom, and he stood on the hillside, looking after her as she tripped back across the wash. "And, sure, you can cook for me all my life with the sweet smile of you, and the tender glance of you. It's fried doormat I'd be eating with a relish if you gave it to me," he said to himself, and he sang as he went back to the gang:—

"Oh, and when you're dreaming,
Molly darling,
Don't forget to dream of me."

Two months the gang were to pitch their tents on the hillside and Mike O'Reilly made it pleasant for them. He had the largest and coolest house at Sackett's, and Saturday night he would throw it open for a dance for the boys. And it was at the third dance that Tom asked Kitty did she love him a bit.

Kitty sat on a window sill, cooling herself in the fresh, sweet night air after "a grand right and left come-all-ye."

"Ask me tomorrow morning, Tom," she said softly.

"'Tis tonight you'll be telling me, and not later," answered Tom, and the masterfulness of him did her heart good, for the wayward woman loves best the man who makes her mind him. "You don't have to tell me at all, for I've been knowing it a month past. Your eyes told me even while they tried to hide it with the darling long lashes you have on them. And your voice said it when it trembled, and your blessed little hands said it every time they gave me the finest bits to eat of their own cooking. Your lips don't need to be telling me what's the truth I know already, Kitty, angel heart of mine, but they'll tell me all the same because I want to her them say it. Do you love me?"

"Sure I do, Tom, you know I do," whispered Kitty, and the tear drops glistened on her long dark lashes for the joy that swept over her.

Tom stood up straight and glanced over his shoulder at the long dining room that had been turned into a dance hall. The piles of dishes were stacked up on the bare tables at the sides, and the smoke was thick. Down on one of the bare tables old Mike was doing an unsteady jig, and singing "Donnybrook Fair." There was a lull in the dancing. It was just past midnight, and St. Patrick's day was at its dawning.

And Tom, turning from the smoke and the crowd at the table, where Mike danced, bent over Kitty as she sat in the shadow, and kissed her.

"We'll be married next month," he told her, "and Mrs. Thomas Grady shall spend her honeymoon gayly in a construction tent, but wait till the railroad's put through, and we go on to Kansas City——"

Kitty laughed happily, and put her hand over his mouth. And the two of them sat there in the shadow beside the open window talking and saying nothing at all sensible for half an hour. When they stepped out on the floor for the last dance, Tom held his head high and proudly. He had a right to. He had won his mate, and in all the world she was the sweetest girl he had ever seen. And on his coat, just above the heart, was pinned the favor she had given him. It was only a little shamrock made of wire and green silk, the kind they sell on the street corners St. Patrick's day, but Kitty had worn it in her hair all the evening, stuck in sideways like the coquette she was, just above her pretty ear, and it was the sign of both his victory and her thraldom to Tom Grady.

But suddenly as the two stepped out on the floor to take their places in the reel, a figure appeared in the doorway, and old Mike gasped and swore under his breath. Then the old man ducked under a table, and quietly, soberly prepared for sudden death. It was a picturesque figure in its way, tall, but not so tall as Tom, slender and dark, and the "chaps" he wore were splashed as from a fording, and dusty from heavy riding. Straight up to where Kitty stood he walked, and flipping the sombrero he wore from his head, he cast it at her feet. In its cord was stuck a shamrock of wire and green silk.

"There's mine," he said. "And I've ridden two hundred miles to claim the promise you made me last year on it."

Tom laughed.

"You're too late in the coming, my boy. She's made me a fresh one tonight, and she's going to keep it. By the shamrock on me coat this minute, she's going to keep her word to me."

"She's a flirt," cried the other. "What right has she to give two of these things, with two promises?"

"She can do just as she pleases," said Tom, loyally. "I don't care if she scatters shamrocks from Sacramento to Key West, but she's going to marry me next month. Now, see here, I'm sorry for you, my boy. You've come a long ways, and you're in a divil of a temper, and I don't blame you. I'd be thes ame if I was as near losing Kitty O'Reilly as you are this night. But I'll play you fairly for her, although I know she's mine, and I'd take her away from you even if you did win. But, anyhow, I'll play you this game. Let's step out where the smoke isn't so thick and the moon shines. And you wear the shamrock in your cap, and I'll wear mine where it is, over my heart. And if you hit the shamrock I wear, well, never mind. But if I hit the one you wear, then you make tracks peaceably and decently back to where you came from. Will you do it?"

"I will," said the youngster gamely, and the two went out in the moonlight with the crowd, while Kitty tried to drag her faher from under the table, where he was praying alternately for the repose of his own and Tom's soul.

And the rest, they tell us along the line of the K. C. and S., when they tell of the construction gang at Sackett's Junction. How the two men fought the duel of the shamrocks out in the soft dawn, with the first rose light breaking over the foothills, on St. Patrick's day. Bob Owen, the boy from the Quigley mines, two hundred miles away, had first shot, and he aimed for the shamrock over Tom's heart. But the ride had unnerved him, and so had the look in Kitty's eyes as she had gazed at his rival, and he missed his shot.

"Hold up your head, lad, and take your medicine," called out Tom, as he raised his hand to aim, and the youngster did as he was told, white faced and closeclipped, with his gaze on the coming sunrise. But the strength of Kitty's love was with Tom Grady, and his wrist never trembled as he aimed at the cream-colored sombrero, and shot the green shamrock off it neatly and cleanly, without even scorching the hair on the boy's head.

"Don't mention it," he said joyously, as the lad drew his breath, and brought his thoughts back to earth and O'Reilly's. "Sure, I don't blame you a bit for loving her. And I don't blame her for thinking a fine boy, toe, but t'was a year ago, don't you see! Before she saw me! So back with you, boy, to Quigley's, and mind, next time you win a shamrock from the girl you love, be sure her heart goes with it."

GONE AT FIVE

By L. M. Errifield

"And, now, ladies and gentlemen, we have this fine old piece of black walnut. Must have cost at least $75 fifty years ago. Just observe the hand carving, will you. Every one of those bunches of acorns is hand-carved. Mirror real French bevel. See that initial hand carved right into the wood on top? That capital K. stands for Kittredge, and this here bureau is part of the original black walnut, marble-topped bedroom suite that old Grandpa Kittredge bought in Boston fifty-two years ago. Ain't that so, Mrs. Kittrdedge?"

Standing near the veranda steps was Grandma Kittredge, slender, erect and dignified in her mourning. Her sweet old face was tear-stained, but courageous, as she watched her precious furniture go under the hammer, piece by piece. It was hard, nobody knew how hard, but they were all kind to her, and even old Billy Masters, the auctioneer, was making it just as easy for her as he could; and, standing next to her, one arm around her waist, and the other hand holding hers in a close clasp of loving comfort, was Kitty—Kitty for whose sake the old home and all it held was being sold.

With that soft, young hand holding hers, the strength came back to her as she remembered what it meant for Kitty's sake each time one of the old dear things was sold, and now, even when the first piece of her wedding suit was put up, she smiled bravely, closed her eyes to force back the tears, and answered:

"That is so, Billy."

They had bought it on their wedding trip, the black walnut "set," as she called it. It had been made to order in Boston, and she remembered how proud she had been of even the initial on each headpiece, the initial that she had taken for her own through life only a few weeks before.

"There's nothing too good for my bride to take home with her," Tom Kittredge had said proudly. "And you shall have the marble tops, too, Kitty darling."

Marble tops! And today old Billy was telling her neighbors to bid up, that even the marble tops were worth buying for gravestones, real, good, flawless marble was getting too scarce. The tears forced their way through her lashes this time, and Kitty, Jr., seeing them fall on the hand she held, raised it to her lips and kissed them away.

"Don't cry, grandma," she whispered, "I'll win it all back for you, dearest, don't you cry."

Then while Billy's voice sounded far off, she closed her eyes to shut out his figure standing on one of her dining-room chairs, shut out the scattered crowd of old neighbors and strangers that spread out over the lawn in front of the big colonial Kittredge homestead, and reasoned it all out with herself again, how it must be for Kitty's sake, Kitty the Third, as they had called her when Kitty the Second had laughed and cried the first time her baby daughter was laid in her arms by Kitty the First. And today Kitty the Frist was only poor old Grandma Kittredge and Kitty the Second lay up under the pines in the judge's family lot on the hillside, next to the judge himself, and only little seventeen-year-old Kitty was left.

It was right that the girl should have the full benefit from the old place, Grandma Kittredge told herself over and over again. She, too, would be sleeping up under the pines before long, and then only little Kitty the Third would be left, and what good would all the old-fashioned furniture be to her. Dudley liked new things and they were going to live in New York after they were married. She had heard him telling Kitty how artistically and effectively he would furnish up an apartment ofr her, "all in mission style."

Grandma Kittredge had wondered vaguely what the mission style was, but she said nothing. It was perfectly natural for Kitty to want her own things, just as that other Kitty years ago, had wanted to go to Boston, and have he joy of buying her own things for the home wonderful. Of course, Kitty the Third couldn't understand how she loved each piece of furniture. She was too young. How could she feel sad over the old bureau without the memory of the little baby garments that had ben tucked away in its drawers years and years ago; of the dear old solid mirror that had reflected the face of that other bride from Boston, and beside her, bending over her shoulder, the laughing, merry, tender-eyed Tom Kittredge, fifty-two years ago it was, but how could Kitty understand? But it was for the best; surely it was all for the best, Grandma Kittredge kept telling herself, for the young people wanted to go to New York to live, and she was to go too. They were very, very kind to her. She could not stay in the old house all alone, and then there was no money to keep it up with.

Money? She had hardly ever bothered about the word until the judge had died. There had always been plenty of money. She had never even asked how much, or what was left. The judge was the judge, that was enough. His father had owned the big, white colonial mansion up on the hill before him, and even the new trolley line that cut across the front lawn in the interests of modern improvements had not taken the beauty and dignity away from the old place.

But after that last quiet ride in the spring sunshine out to the pines on the hillside, they had told her gently and carefully, so as not to worry her too much, that there was no money left, that the judge had left nothing except the old home, and the land it stood on.

She had tried so hard to reason it out for herself. It was not like Tom to let things go along like that, and never tell her. And they had always had plenty. Kitty had gone to college with the other girls, there had never a word been said of money.

"Going, going, gone—to Miss Podmore for five," Billy's voice broke in on her reverie. "Better take that glass right off, Miss Podmore, and the marble, too, so as it don't get smashed. Dick, here, will help you. And you might as well bid up on the rest of the set. It's a shame to break it."

"Land, I don't want the heavy old stuff," exclaimed Sue Podmore, staring blankly at the big old bureau. "My ceiling's too low for that top piece, and it's so heavy to lug around. I only bid up five because it did seem such a pity. I felt as if we were fairly insulting the old thing, cheapening it so. But I don't want it."

Didn't want it, when it was worth its weight in gold to her. Grandma Kittredge crossed over to where Dick Lane was trying to take the screws out of the mirror, the screws that had not been loosened for fifty-two years, and came out hard.

"It's fearful hefty, Mis' Kittredge," he said, tipping it up against a tree to get at the back better, and then something happened—something so amazing that it stopped the whole Kittredge auction, for as Dick's hands pulled on the hard-carved, acorn-trimmed bottom piece along the side, it gave way in his grasp, and fell out, and there in the bright sunshine lay exposed Judge Kittredge's private home bank.

"Of course, grandma, you'll do just as you please," Kitty the Third said, after everyone had gone, and Billy and Dick had carried all the precious unsold things back to their places in the house. "But Dudley and I would love to have you live with us in town."

Grandma Kittredge smiled happily to herself, and swayed gently back and forth in her little low sewing rocker that Miss Podmore had kept her eye on ever since the sale had begun.

"Well, it's real sweet of you to say so, dearie," she answered, "and I know you both mean it, but as long as there's the means to keep it with—how much did Dudley say your grandpa had put in that drawer—twelve thousand and some odd? Well, I kind of think that I'll stay right here. You can come out to visit me often, and there may be others to consider, you know."

"Others?" said Kitty the Third, inquiringly. "Others, grandma?"

"There may be Kitty the Fourth some day, dear heart, who would love the old place, and even the furniture, some day, dearie, when you are old, too, and I am up with grandpa on the hill, and black walnut furniture has come in style again."

And while she folded her arms about the girlish figure kneeling beside her, the sweet old face was full of a half-merry, quizzical tenderness, as she added. "Some day when mission style's gone out of date, dearie, so we'll keep every dear old piece that came from Boston years ago."

PAYING THE PRICE

By Louis J. Strong

As Ordway dodged through the stream of traffic at the crossing, merry greetings saluted him from a crowded auto car that just missed him as it chugged by. He bowed gravely to the smiling occupants, observing that she was of the number, and then he passed on to the business appointment that had prevented his being in the party. It was an appointment that he might have easily evaded, but that he felt the need of time to consider an astonishing revelation, which had been made to him that morning.

"Because I think it has gone far enough—or, too far, for that matter—and to save you the pain of a refusal, I tell you this open secret;" the informer had declared magnanimously" — for it is an open secret in our crowd, where all have conspired to keep it from you, that Miss Annabelle Mills, before she met you, wagered a box of gloves with the girls, that she would bring you to the point of proposal — you, the hitherto invulnerable — in three months."

Ordway had taken the blow without flincing. He had thanked the considerate revealer of secrets without comment, to the mystification of that individual who felt cheated of his anticipated sensation. It was instinctive-self-defense in Ordway— who knew Cathcart's interest in one of the fair wagerers, and suspected the magnanimity was but an effort to help her to win. But he could not doubt the truth of the communication, in the fact of the evidence given.

His reflections were exceedingly bitter, as he plunged along in an absorption that drove all thoughts of business from his mind. He had been an easy victim, he had not resisted, but had succumbed almost at once to the wiles of the beauty. From the moment of meeting she had stood to him for all that is lovely, charming and true in woman; and he had early acknowledged to himself the desire to win her if possible, and the determination to endeavor to do so. And he had soon became aware of the fact, incredible as it had seemed to him, that she was not wholly adverse to the winning. He had, at last, felt sure of that beyond peradventure, and his heart had thrilled with the inspiring certainty of success; a success that he regarded with reverent gratitude, and vows of greater worthiness. The sly raillery from their common associates, upon his evident and entire subjugation he had taken as a matter of course, to be borne with the equanimity of the victor; never dreaming they were scouting him as an easy, an amusing victim, nor suspecting that her adorable yielding was insincere.

He had come to love her with all his power to love woman! Losing her he would go through life alone, and the wound of her falsity would never heal. He had given his all for the furtherance of a vulgar wager, had yielded the soul of his manhood a puppet in a game! In the just anger that presently surged over him, for the moment searing his pain, he felt that she was little better than a murderess. She had known from the first—he had not tried to conceal his love—she had deliberately lured him on to the wrecking of all that was best in him—she was unworthy of the slightest respect. He wondered that he could have so loved one so utterly false! But some inner consciousness cried out at this harsh judgment of her. As he thought over all that their intimate association had shown him of her character, it seemed impossible that she could be the frivolous, cold-hearted coquette which the situation declared her to be—and yet—and yet—with a weary sigh he abandoned the effort to understand.

But the hurt remained, and deepened as he recalled his appointment with her for that evening, an appointment which meant that the hour had come for the asking and answering of the question more important to him than life itself. And by the look in her sweet eyes, when she granted him permission to come, he had felt assured that she understood and did not repel him.

Did it mean to her but the crowning of her mean victory? Well, she should have the poor gratification of winning the senseless wager! It mattered little to him—nothing mattered to him now! He tried, numbly, to outline a future that would take him to distant lands, and new associations, where he would strive to forget—and also strive to regain his faith in humanity. Some time he might, perhaps, feel scorn of himself that he could not scorn her openly, and fling her puerile duplicity in her face.

As he neared her house he saw with surprise that it was lighted up, and as he entered the hall he hard familiar voices and laughter. She was in haste then to flaunt her victory, and had assembled her confederates in readiness. He set his teeth and resisted the impulse to retreat, to leave her vainly waiting, the butt of her triumphant allies. The humiliation through which it seemed she designed to drag him ought surely to be the death blow to his love. For that, if for no other reason, he would endure it.

He waited her in the library, formulating his speech in the fewest words possible, and the least expression of sentiment, that would give her the victory for which she had demeaned herself.

"I am taking you from your friends," he began as she entered. "I will keep you but a moment. I wish to ask you——"

She came to him swiftly, with raised hand.

"Hush," she entreated. "Say nothing. I have a confession to make, and then I want you to go away quietly, and leave town tonight, that none of them may know that you have been here. It is the last—but I have not—you cannot understand until I have—" she faltered, her shame-dyed face drooping—"Before I met you I—the girls—I—I can scarcely voice the shameless—You had been represented as one singularly indifferent to—to—one who had never been interested enough in any woman to sue for her favor—it was predicted that you never could be brought to the point of offering yourself—to—" she stammered pitifully and caught her breath—"I was challenged to try my power, with exultant prophesy of failure, and it led—to—to a silly wager. I accepted the dare—all this before I had seen you—when I met you"—again she faltered—"I tried to withdraw—I was derided and goaded constantly with—oh, I have no excuse to offer!—I am utterly ashamed of myself, and despise myself as heartily as you must, now you know—and I have failed. They came unexpectedly tonight, the last night of the wager, to gloat over my failure. Go now, and try to have some pity for a silly girl who did not realize what she was——"

He caught her hands, interrupting eagerly. "You have not failed, for I now make you an offer of my hand. I ask you to marry me."

She twisted her imprisoned hands and cried brokenly:

"I thank you for your generosity—but you cannot mean it—you cannot have even respect for one—"

"I mean it from my heart," he broke in, something in her manner, her humble face, and trembling tones sweeping away everything but his love for her, and restoring his faith and trust in her, "from the moment I met you I have had no thought but to win you to—"

"Think of what I am guilty," she whispered tearfully, with a shy glance that made his heart leap.

"I can thing of nothing but that you are—you have been sincere, that you love—"

There was a rush and commotion in the hall, with calls for her, and an impatient rap upon the door; then it burst open, disclosing the crowd, and a girl cried: "How unfair of you, Annabelle, to summon him here at the last moment to wring a—"

"Come in, all of you," Annabelle interrupted gaily, slipping her hand in Ordway's, her radiant eyes seeking his, "come in and congratulate me. Mr. Ordway is going to buy my gloves in the future."

WEIGHED UPON HIS FATHER.

When Mr. Finnerty returned after a day's outing with Michael, the only son, his face was long and doleful and quickly drew inquiries from the mother.

"I misthrust Micky is not long for this world," said Mr. Finnerty, with a deep sigh. "I misthrust there's a spell over him already, and he'll not be long with us."

"Arrah, what are you talkin' about?" demanded his wife as she removed some light brown sticky decorations from the countenance of the sleepy Michael. "He's one o' the long, thin kind, but he's got his good health and a fine pair o' loongs in him."

Mr. Finnerty shook his head with stubbodn conviction.

"You can say what plazes you," he remarked sepulchrally, "but I've got this to tell you, woman: On the platform o' the station there was a large, big scales, an' I stepped on, holdin' Micky by the hand. They tipped an' balanced at wan hundred sivinty-two pounds. Then I lifted Micky up an' hild him in the air—all free of the platform, mind ye—and, woman, thim scales niver dropped a pound. There was only a bit of a trimble. I'd hardly the stringth in my legs to walk home."

NOT ASKING MUCH.

London bachelors expect their women friends to entertain them, they accept their hospitality, but they rarely offer anything in return. Even a cup of tea and a stroll in the park, or to a picture gallery, is all that is required.—Queen.