

"I'll tell you in half a dozen words. I met her in a street car at home two days ago. Did her a little service in bouncing a drunk who had got into the car, and we got talking. Found she was on her way down to T—, and decided to go too. I'm all broken up on that girl, Fred."

"But who is she, and what's her name? Where does she hail from?" I queried.

"Now why don't you ask half a dozen questions at once? She was a stranger in town, stopping over to see the place on her way down to T—. Said her name was Miss Robson, and a little white haired chap, who was with her, and whom she called Willie, called her Lily, so I supposed her name was Lily Robson, and he was her brother, travelling with her for company, don't you see. Can't say where she hails from, and worse than that, I was fool enough not to ask for her address at T—. We'll be able to find her out, though, I dare say."

"I hope so, old man, for I'm beginning to feel interested in the young lady myself," I answered, and after a little more explanation we changed the conversation, and by the time the cab landed us at home we had made all arrangements for setting out for T— on the morrow.

In due course of time we arrived there, and were soon located at the principal hotel. Having put things to rights, we started off for a stroll, and were fortunate enough to meet several old friends. Suddenly Nibs grasped my hand warmly and exclaimed:

"A clue, Fred, a clue. Here comes the identical white haired boy of the street car."

"Why, it's Bill Robson, my old school chum, sure as a gun! Who'd have expected to see him here. I never knew that he had a sister though, Nibs. She can't be older than Bill, for he's left his teens years ago."

At this moment Robson caught sight of us, and we were soon in the midst of hearty hand-shakings and congratulations. He

recognized Nibs too, and was on the point of saying something about their meeting, when I interrupted him with

"Yes, yes, I know all about that. But I want to know where you have kept yourself lately. Everything flourishing, old man, eh?"

"Yes, Fred, I'm a grave and dignified lawyer, and a leading citizen, too, now. They say I look young still, and I suppose I'll always be that way. Fred, prepare for terrible news. I've gone and went and done it at last. On my wedding trip now, old man. You must come up and see Lily, my wife. But what has struck your friend?"

I was myself beginning to see through the affair, and on looking around I saw Nibs plunging through a crowd in the direction of the hotel. I had to burst out laughing, while Bill looked on in amazement. At last I recovered my equanimity and managed to speak.

"Nibs all over. Only one more little mistake, Bill. He's used to them by this time, though."

He tried to make me explain myself, but I thought it best to hold off until I saw Nibs about it, and in the meantime I went around with Robson to see his wife, thinking Nibs would have time to cool off before I reached the hotel. I persuaded Bill to say nothing to his better half about Nibs being at T—. She was indeed a charming creature, and, on taking my departure I warmly congratulated her husband on his good fortune.

On reaching the hotel I was met by one of the colored waiters, who handed me a note from Nibs, with the remark:

"Young gemmen tole me to gib you dat letter, sah. Said he had a telegram calling him home suddenly, so he went away on de *Belle* few minutes ago, sah."

I broke the seal and read as follows:

DEAR FRED,—

It was ever thus from childhood's hours. If you ever catch me trying to work such a racket again, kindly shoot me, or put me in the Asylum. You'll have to tell the folks my grandmother is dead, for I am going back on the *Belle* this evening. Pity me Fred, for I'm a wreck. Yours in despair,

NIBS.

I knew Nibs would soon get over it, so