

Miss Kendall on a Cart

Miss Bertha Kendall stood waiting for her car on the street corner. It was a raw, chilly morning in April, but she preferred the outer air to the stuffiness of the dingy little waiting-room before which she stood. Her tailored gown fitted her fine figure to perfection, and everything about her was absolutely correct. She had an air of distinction and even hauteur, and the man on the seat of the high wagon which drew up to the curb near her was aware of this. However, his horses were restless, and he looked in vain for the usual lounge or small boy, and with some uncertainty and hesitation he addressed the young lady:

"I beg your pardon, Miss—but would you just see if you can get into that waiting-room and see if there's a parcel for me?"

Bertha turned an astonished face upon him. "A—what!" she said, hardly believing her senses.

"A box," he repeated, deprecatingly. "You see I can't leave my team, and—there don't seem to be any parcels around." He watched her half fearfully, expecting to see her amazement turn to anger, but instead her eyes began to dance and her lips parted in a smile.

In a short time she returned and passed up the parcel.

"Thank you ever so much," said the man, gratefully. "I hope I can do as much for you some day." He stopped abruptly and grinned a little foolishly, and Bertha laughed.

"Say, Miss!" he seemed struck by a sudden idea. "I take it you are waiting for a car. Now, I'm going away; why, I'd like to give you a ride—that is, if you don't mind going in such a rig."

"I live out in Wingate, a little suburb, you know—on the corner of Winthrop and Norton."

"I go right there," interrupted the man with enthusiasm, and he reached down his hand to help her.

For an instant she hesitated, then she accepted the invitation in the spirit in which it was given.

"The cart don't smell very good," he apologized as they started. "You see, I go every day and get a load of soil, but I turned the hose on the cart last night, so it's better than it is sometimes."

"What do you do with the soil?" she asked.

"Oh, I keep a lot of pigs. I get paid for carrying off the stuff, so that makes it pretty profitable. I keep the hogs a long way from the house, so it don't smell bad there."

"I see," said Bertha.

The pair of sleek black horses moved briskly, with the quick and easy swing of good walkers. Suddenly the man laughed.

"What'll my wife say when I tell her I took a young lady to ride with me?" he said.

"Well, what will she?" asked Bertha.

"She'll say, 'Why, Noah! what must she have thought of you?'"

Bertha laughed.

"You see," the man's face sobered—"my wife, she's an invalid, and has been for years, and so I tell her about every little thing that I see on my trips, and make as much of a story out of it as I can. It amuses her, and she don't have much fun, staying at home there all the time. So I kept the cart needed for anything that's interesting so to give her something to think about."

"Who takes care of your wife?" asked Bertha.

"Her mother." He made a slight grimace. "I don't spend many days like their mother-in-law, still, she's a good woman, and if she don't do things just to suit me, why, I put up with it and don't say nothing. She's good to my wife, and it's awful nice she can have her mother take care of her. She's more contented than she would be with anybody else, and I ought not to say a word. Still, on Sundays, when the old lady takes one of the horses and goes down to the village to church and to spend the day with her other children—why, wife and I have a regular picnic together. I tell her it's our honeymoon over again. I walk on her, and read stories to her sometimes, and in summer, when it's real warm and mild, I take her out under the trees and we eat our dinner there. Oh, I tell you, I don't know what I'd do if it wasn't for our Sundays. Why, last Christmas I gave mother-in-law the best mackintosh I could buy, so she could get to church, rainy Sundays and all. She was real tickled—and so was I."

"Have you any children?" asked Bertha.

"No. We had one, a little boy, that died when he was two years old. That was the worst thing that ever happened to us. He was awful cunning, as pretty as a picture, and just learning to talk. My wife, she's never got over it, and I've been trying ever since to make up to her for him."

Bertha looked at the man's face, but he gave a queer little choking laugh. "Kinder ridiculous, ain't it, for a big, coarse, homely fellow like me to try to take the place of a pretty child."

"It's awfully good of you," said Bertha, a strange constriction in her throat.

"That's ten years ago," he said, sadly, and I catch, so often about him now sometimes. It's an awful thing for a man to see his wife cry. There was a little silence, then he went on in a different voice, "And so; to make her think of other things, I remember everything I see to tell her about. She's always glad to see the spring coming, and when I go home and tell her I've heard a bluebird or a song-sparrow, she is as pleased as if I'd told her I'd heard that some old friend on the way to see her. She's awful fond of flowers, and what do you think on my way along I see a little bed of anemones side of the road. When I go back I shall let the horses rest at that place and I'll get out and pick a nice bunch of 'em for her. They'll be the first she's seen this year. Well, here's your street. I'd like to talk to you longer, but maybe you've heard enough."

He drew the horses and gave Bertha a steady hand to help her down.

"Wait a minute," she said, "I want to send something to your wife." She went swiftly up the walk to her door and went in, returning almost at once with a handful of beautiful, heavy headed, long stemmed carnations in her hands.

"Oh, thank you—thank you a thousand times!" he cried, his eyes sparkling as he took the flowers. "She will be pleased with these, now I tell you. I guess I won't get those anemones till to-morrow."

Bertha held out her hand. "I thank you for my ride," she said, smiling up at him as he shook it, but there were tears in her eyes as she stood watching him go down the street.

"Bertha Kendall!" a chorus of indignant protest from mother and sisters

greeted her as she returned to the house. "What have you done now?"

Bertha held her head high and smiled unconcernedly. "Why, I rode home from Burton street with Mr.—er, Mr. Noah. I sent some flowers to his wife."

"You rode on the cart!" Their horror and disgust was intense.

Bertha smiled. "Yes," she said, "and some days I may ride home with him on his load of soil to see his wife, and she ran upstairs, laughing."

She was busy the rest of the day, there were letters to write and callers to entertain—so that by the time she began to dress for the evening she had forgotten all about the episode of the morning. Other thoughts were crowding upon her, and she was very serious and a little nervous as she stood before her mirror.

Hugh Norcross was to call that evening. Bertha had known for some time that a proposal of marriage from him was imminent and to-night she felt that she could ward it off no longer. She was not altogether sure that she wanted to. He was a pleasant fellow, and she liked him very much and her family expected her to marry him, while he was certainly most devoted to her.

When her father was announced, she went down to him with her mind made up and the important question settled after serious deliberation.

But something in the aspect of young Norcross was surprising to her. He looked distinctly vexed and displeased. "Something is troubling you," she said at once in the direct way she had.

"Yes," he answered gloomily, "something is troubling me."

"Can you tell me about it?" she asked. She motioned him to a chair and sat down opposite, looking at him with sympathetic eyes.

"I think you know what it is as well as I do," he said in an aggrieved tone.

Bertha looked at him wonderingly. "I'm sure I don't know what you mean."

"I saw you out riding this morning," he said accusingly.

Bertha's eyes widened, then a look of understanding came into them and her lip twitched.

"I was thunderstruck," the young man spoke rapidly. "I couldn't believe my eyes. I never would have believed it if anyone had told me that it was possible for you to do such an outrageous thing. I'm not the only one who feels this way about it; your mother and sisters are as disgusted as I am."

"So you've been talking me over with them," said Bertha coldly.

"And they told me you gave him the flowers I sent you last night. My flowers given to an old hobo like that?"

"He appreciated them," said Bertha.

"Appreciated them?" he burst out wrathfully. "Well, I'll tell you one thing: if I want people of that class to have flowers I'll send them to their first hand. You won't have another chance to insult me that way right off."

Bertha was silent, her eyes cast down.

"How many of your friends saw you this morning, do you suppose?" he went on.

"I don't know, and I don't care," said Bertha quietly.

"Well, I care," he retorted. "I was walking along with a friend of mine and he saw you and commented on you. And who do you think he was?—Preston Ames! I've told you what a fine fellow he is, and I was going to bring him to see you, but of course it is out of the question now. You were so taken up with your friend—the word was a sneer—that you didn't see me. You can imagine I was relieved at that. Suppose you had bowed to me—and it would have been just like you, if you'd seen me—and I'd had to explain to my friend who you were! As it was, I was ashamed that I wanted to go through the sidewalk."

"What had you to be ashamed of?" she asked. "You were not riding on the cart."

He looked at her in speechless indignation, then got up and walked excitedly about the room. He scolded and ranted a while longer, and Bertha watched him with a kind of curiosity and speculation in her eyes. "I wonder," she thought, "if Mr. Noah ever talks to his wife like that. And if Hugh speaks me like this, now, what would he be if we were married? I guess it wouldn't be much different from mother and the girls. I am always doing things to bring down their displeasure on my head."

Hugh had ceased speaking and was coming toward her. There was that in his face that showed he was now ready to forgive her and that he was prepared to be very magnanimous and kind, and perhaps before he left her there would be a perfect reconciliation and understanding between them.

"There," he said gently. "Perhaps I have said more than I ought and scolded you too much, but you see I was awfully upset by it, and I don't want to see you doing such things any more."

The last of the sentence sounded somewhat patronizing, and Bertha's eyes flashed, but she spoke quietly. "I don't see why it was such a dreadful thing to do," she said. "If I had been driving out with the Gordons' coachman, would you have been ashamed of me?"

"Of course not."

"Well, this man was a self-respecting, independent farmer. He's much more interesting than a coachman."

"That has nothing to do with it," he said, irritably, then smoothed his voice, carefully again. "I do wish you wouldn't do such things, Bertha." He had never called her by her first name before and she noticed it. "Promise me you won't any more."

Bertha stood up and looking at him very steadily and somewhat defiantly. "I shall promise no such thing," she said. "If my conduct displeases you, you are not obliged to have anything to do with me. You need not even recognize me on the street if you feel ashamed of the acquaintance. To save you further embarrassment I shall not be at home to you in the future. I bid you a very good evening." With that she left him and went to her own room, where she cried a little, laughed a little, and then became very serious.

"Oh, Mr. Noah," she said aloud, "I owe you a debt of gratitude which I can never repay, for you have saved me from great disappointment and unhappiness."

As soon as young Norcross recovered sufficiently from the stunned condition to reason at all, he decided that the best thing he could do would be to take himself out of the way for a month or two and allow absence to make the heart grow fonder.

It was two months later that he returned. He had reasoned it out that in all this time Bertha must have missed him, and that if he should write her a very humble and apologetic note she could not refuse to welcome him back.

The first acquaintance he met was Preston Ames, who shook his hand cordially, then turned and walked with him toward his boarding place. "I want to talk with you," he said, and Norcross invited him to his rooms.

As he turned on the lights and looked at his visitor, Norcross was struck by an expression of such buoyant happiness as he had never seen on his friend's face before. "What's happened to you, Preston?" he asked curiously.

"That's just what I wanted to tell you," said Preston. "I am engaged to the dearest girl in the world."

"Is that so?" said Norcross smiling cordially. "I'm delighted to hear it. Who is she? Do I know her?"

"Why, yes; she's a particular friend of yours, I think I've heard you say—Miss Bertha Kendall."

Norcross turned away so that his friend did not see his face grow suddenly white. "Indeed!" he said. His voice sounded strange to himself, but Preston Ames did not appear to notice.

"It all happened rather suddenly; in fact, it was a case of love at first sight on my side," he ran on. "Do you remember that day I came home from the west and you and I were walking along together? Well, maybe, you remember my commenting on a young lady I saw riding on a cart. I don't think you saw her, or you would have told me who she was. I was so struck with her beauty and the something better than beauty that I saw in her face—sympathy, intelligence and kindness—that I really lost my heart to her then and there. Fortunately for my peace of mind, I met her a day or two later at a friend's house, and—well, we are engaged. Her family were very much shocked because she rode with that man—he is a friend of ours, now—but I glory in her independence and her scorn of appearances. There is altogether too much sham nowadays, but she is absolutely genuine. Well, I'm on my way to see her, and I'll be going. Come along with me, some evening; she'll be glad to see you back again."

For a long time after he had gone, young Norcross sat very still, shading his eyes with his hand, for the light was rather strong.



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OLD IBBETSON'S MONEY

The Senior Section of Loving Workers' Circle of the Society for the Distribution of Clothing Among the Native of Senegambia was to meet that afternoon at the home of Mrs. Deacon Forsyth. For a week she had been drawing funds in dribbles from the unwilling deacon, and for two days she had been hard at work preparing for the supper that was an important feature of the society's meeting.

She had been helped in her work by her niece, Esther Dolbear, who was visiting in Brookvale for the summer. The front room had been carefully dusted, and the old papers that covered the haircloth furniture had been removed, although even this detracted little from the funeral gloominess of the room.

The members were slowly gathering, and the gossip was going on apace. As each member came in she was greeted with effusion by the chief already there, while she mentally calculated the amount of gossip that had been going on about herself.

This amusement had almost been exhausted when one member brought up a new sensation by asking if anyone had heard what young John Ibbetson had done, although she was already there, while she mentally calculated the amount of gossip that had been going on about herself.

Mr. Ibbetson was the son of an old resident of the town who had been cordially disliked, as by his shrewdness and niggardly habits he acquired a considerable fortune, and a collection of documents that represented first mortgages on many of the farms of the town. The son had left home as soon as he was of age, not being able to stand the old man's miserly habits of living.

In a few years he had amassed a fortune, and the chief subject of debate in the church circles and at the grocery store. Among the men the financial standpoint was considered, as the work meant employment for the townspeople among whom ready money was a somewhat scarce commodity.

The church itself looked at the probability of getting a large share of the estate, as the young man's personal wealth was close to a million. Each of the missionary societies saw in itself the only proper outlet for using the money. The women, especially those having marriageable daughters, had their own views of the situation, each one secretly hoping that one of her own brood might catch the fancy of the young millionaire.

But to return to the meeting. To the frantic entreaties of the women Mrs. Jones stated that she had information showing that great changes were to take place in the Ibbetson estate. Mr. Ibbetson had brought plans that called for the rebuilding of the old homestead and the building of a garage, and two or three other buildings, the character of which had not been ascertained.

Every mechanic in town had been hired and a gang of ten Italians had arrived that day. To crown the mystery, he ordered ten bags of tennis and a hundred tennis balls, and a beautiful mountain. Is it there still?—Megendorfer Blatter.

arose and in a few eloquent words told of the needs and hopes of the suffering poor in the tenement districts and the poor children who seldom saw a blade of grass.

Little attention was paid by the women to the remarks, and at that moment in strode John Ibbetson with the three shrinking, dirty, neglected looking boys. Simultaneously three angry women reached for the boys, but John drew the boys to him and emphatically expressed his opinion of mothers who neglected their own offspring for the children of Senegambian mothers. The meeting closed in haste and as the door closed it was seen that Esther Dolbear was in it.

As they rolled along the road, John said: "Esther, I have been looking for you ever since you disappeared from the settlement work in the tenements." The bewildered girl could only say: "I did

Fun for Times Readers

His Way.
"That orator says he feels that he can never repay his constituents for the honor they have conferred on him."

"Yes," answered the voter, "that's his polite way of telling us we needn't expect much from him in the way of actual work."—Washington Star.

Offended Dignity.
The \$250 hen looked at her surroundings.

"This chicken coop didn't cost more than \$3, all told," she said. "It's an insult to ask me to lay high priced eggs in such a shack."

Whereupon she shut down.

A Lie Nailed.
Employer—Is it true that when the clock strikes six you put down your pen and go home?
Employee—No, sir. If it gets so near to six I never begin the word at all.

By Contrast.
Miss Pycote—How do I look in this hat?
Elder brother—Under it, you mean, don't you, sis? You look pretty small.

Strategy.
"Gracious!" exclaimed the anxious mother, "why did the teacher tell you about the dreadful giants when she knew the stories would take your breath away?"
"Please, ma'am," responded small Tommy, "the whole class had been eating onions."—Chicago News.

Not Wrapped Up.
Mr. Jawback—How you women do love to see yourselves in print!
Mrs. Jawback—Print, indeed! No, sir—silk for ours, if you please.—Cleveland Leader.

Time's Changes.
Absent-Minded Professor (discussing an Italian town with a friend)—And in the background there was a beautiful mountain. Is it there still?—Megendorfer Blatter.

not know that John Ibbetson, the slum worker, was the rich Mr. Ibbetson! I left New York because I lost my position." Slipping one arm around her unresisting form, John drew her to him and whispered: "Esther, your absence showed me how much I loved you. I am having my old home made into a country place where I can spend my summers and enjoy helping others. I am building a house for a large dining hall, and am going to put up tents for a hundred children, and spend father's money in giving poor children a taste of country life, close to God and nature."

"Will you marry me to help the work along?" Drawing still more closely to him, she replied: "No, John; not solely for that. But I will marry you because I love you." And with never a thought of the poor Senegambians, they rolled along the dusty road filled with a happiness pure and serene.—Boston Post.

Rather a Compliment.
"I don't like the looks of that young man you had in the parlor last evening," said the irate old gentleman.

"He's a nice young man, pa," hastened the pretty daughter.

"Well, I had the pleasure of calling him a 'young squirt' to his face."

"Oh, he didn't mind that, pa; he took it as a compliment."

"As a compliment?"

"Yes; he belongs to our volunteer fire department."—Chicago News.

Rather Particular.
Missionary—I don't mind being eaten for a good cause, but—
Cannibal—But what?
Missionary—Please be careful about your table manners; I should feel terribly bad if I were eaten with a knife.

Had Seen Her.
"There are great things in store for you," said the fortune teller to the young man; "but there will be many obstacles to overcome. There is a woman continually crossing your path, a large woman with dark hair and eyes. She will dog your footsteps untruly."

"Yes; I know who that is."

"Ah, you have seen her?"

"Yes, she's my washerwoman."

Lighter Than.
"You did say Atlas held up the world?"

"I did."

"Yes, sir."

"He must have been a remarkably strong man. No man could do that nowadays."

"But things are different now."

"In what way?"

"Well, you see, there was but a small part of the world discovered when he held it up."

EVERY TIME.
"If he said, doctor, that you treated your landlord for liver trouble and he died of stomach trouble?"

"Infamous slander! When I treat a patient for liver trouble he dies from that! Understand!"

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There is a little schoolhouse where
In fact she looks a little long ago,
With rosy cheeks and fluffy hair
And eyes I never shall forget;
She used to often look my way
When foolishly I oared not why;
But I discovered all one day
I made the pretty teacher cry.

To her it may not matter now,
She may have ceased long, long ago,
To think of me or wonder how
I had the heart to treat her so;
But looking back across the years
I see her as she bowed her head,
Her long, dark locks wet with tears,
Because of something I had said.

Perhaps she would not, if she might,
Be as she was that afternoon,
A maiden still, and young and slight,
With May-time coming overhead,
But if I might be there again
With that sweet satisfaction I
Would claim the joy I turned from when
I made the pretty teacher cry.

She had requested me to stay,
I was as tall, indeed, as she;
The others had all gone away,
And tender she looked at me;
I had not broken any rule,
And I had learned my lesson well;
We stayed alone, we two in school,
Until the evening shadows fell.

She may have little beauty now,
Gray strands may glimmer in her hair;
Perhaps her eyes are looking old;
But if it might again occur
I'd back to youth we two could fly,
This I could gladly promise her.
The pretty teacher would not cry
S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

The Song of Bridge.
With eyelids heavy and red,
With cheeks that flush and burn,
A woman sits in her gladder rags
Playing her cards in turn.
Bridge, bridge, bridge!
Daytime and night the same;
And still with voice at excitement's pitch
She sings the "Song of the Game."

"Play, play, play!"
But she is playing through;
"Play, play, play!"
Till the milkman's almost due,
Morning, noon and night,
The same thing every day—
What is it, then, that men call work,
If this be only play?

"Play, play, play!"
For we must be in the swim!
"Play, play, play!"
Till the hearts grow blurred and dim,
Diamonds, hearts and clubs,
All in a mist they seem,
Till when I am alone I fall asleep
And still play on in a dream!

"O, but for one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
When I played my round of golf a day
And looked for a hearty meal,
A day on the links I would dearly love,
But at home I needs must stay,
For they must have another hand,
So I play, play, play!"

"O men with sweethearts dear!
O men with sisters and wives!
But look! those women are playing out
It's not the rubber you're playing out
But look! those women's lives!
Nervous, tired and worn,
Excited, flushed and pale,
Paving at once a double price
In health as well as in cash!"

With eyelids heavy and red,
With cheeks that flush and burn,
A woman sits in her gladder rags
Playing her cards in turn.
Bridge, bridge, bridge!
Winter and summer the same,
Till the breakdown comes, as come it will,
She will make the double and play, and still
Will sing this "Song of the Game."—Life.

Undressing.
Sometimes, when father's out of town,
At bedtime mother brings my gown
And says to me:
"The fireplace is warm and bright,
You may undress down here to-night,
Where I can see."

So then I sit upon the floor,
And mother closes every door,
Then in her chair
She rocks, and watches me undress,
And I go just as slow, I guess
She doesn't care.

And then I stand up in my gown,
And watch the flames go up and down
As tall as me!
But, soon I climb on mother's lap,
And listen to the fire snap,
So comfy!

Then mother rocks and cuddles me
Close in her arms, where I can see
The coals shine red,
I don't feel sleepy, but some way,
When I wake up, them it's next day,
And I'm in bed.
—Century Magazine.

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