

Was It Better?

By S. Annie Frost.

"Better in every way!"

I think if Amy Randolph had whispered these four words to herself once, she had fifty times, as she paced up and down her narrow bedroom, trying to solve the hardest problem her life had offered her.

She was a slender, fair girl of nineteen, with large, dreamy brown eyes and nut-brown hair. Her face was one that would attract little notice from a passerby; but when you knew it well, when the large eyes and sensitive mouth had taken every varying phase of expression, as you touched the girl's poetic mind and tender heart, the pure loveliness of the countenance grew upon you till it became most beautiful.

And to Guy Chester Amy's face had become so. He knew how the little mouth could smile or quiver, how the large eyes could soften or flash, how winning and lovely every change became.

And he loved her—not as she loved him, with every thrill of her heart, every pulse of her being, but in his easy-going, vacillating fashion, as the most perfect little gem of womanhood he had ever met.

And he was Guy Chester, heir to Chester Hill, if ah! that little word makes or mars so many destinies!—if he pleased his mother. And she was Amy Randolph, his third cousin, and his mother's companion. She had been educated at a boarding-school, where she taught younger children in part payment for her own tuition, and had been offered her choice, when she graduated, of going to Chester Hill as Mrs. Chester's companion, or returning to her grandparents who barely supported life upon a miserable little farm in Pennsylvania.

And Mrs. Chester, who was a bad-tempered, exacting woman, had so thoroughly cowed and terrified the timid girl that she seemed to her a pale, uninteresting nonentity, useful in writing letters, reading aloud and sewing, but utterly unattractive. She never saw the exquisite oval of the young face, the delicacy of the features, the dreamy poetry of the eyes.

"What Guy could find to admire in that washed-out girl!" she could not discover. She worshipped her only son, but she was too innately selfish to give him his way when it interfered with her own.

And her own way, at that time, required Guy to marry a wife whose money would support his many extravagances, and leave his mother's purse full for hers. For they were extravagant, living in New York all winter in fashionable circles, and filling their country seat with visitors all summer.

And the very wife Guy wanted, in his mother's opinion, was ready to wed him for his asking. True, she was loud-voiced and vulgar, inclined to be fast, with rather a masculine cast of beauty, a sunflower of a girl, as Amy was a violet. But her father had left her a large fortune, and she had fallen in love with Guy Chester, making no secret of the fact to his keen-eyed mother.

That she had disgusted him at the very outset of his acquaintance with her by her frankly avowed preference for his attention and society, troubled her but little. She had been brought up in the belief that money was the attraction; no man could resist, and she had money. If she wore diamond earrings to breakfast, and a velvet riding-dress in the country, was not her wealth so proven? And if her complexion was often as red as the roses in her hair, so decided a brunette could bear a high color.

Altogether she felt herself a prize in the matrimonial circle, and Mrs. Chester encouraged her in her delusion.

And when she had accepted Mrs. Chester's invitation to spend a month at Chester Hill, in the spring, when

the house was not full, when Guy had remained at home ever since his return from the city, and everything promised well for the mother's scheme she was coolly asked to accept Amy Randolph for her daughter-in-law.

Had she been a judicious as well as a loving mother, she would have seen that Guy, under Amy's gentle influence, was developing nobler traits of character than he had ever shown in his life before, that he was thinking of higher aims than the possession of the fastest horses and finest wines in his set of friends.

But she was blind to all this, and equally blind to the prospect that Guy, at home, in quiet domestic happiness with a wife so careless of finery and gayety as Amy, could never make the inroads upon her income that Guy, as the most extravagant bachelor of his "set," made annually. She had set her heart upon Guy's marriage with Laura Marcy, and she was furious at the obstacle presented to her.

But Guy Chester was not the man to say "please, mamma," and then submit without protest if mamma did not please.

He had never been crossed from the time he shrieked for tops and candy, and it was scarcely probable he would accept the first opposition after twenty-five years of unchecked pleasure.

"You can do as you like," he said, shrugging his shoulders, as his mother threatened to turn Amy out of doors, "but I shall marry Amy, be sure of that. As for Laura Marcy, I should as soon think of living with a stable-boy—a great, coarse, blousy woman!"

"With half a million dollars!" "Ten million dollars would not make her a lady!"

"And pray what is supposed to support you when you marry Amy? Remember, my money bought you this place, though it bears your father's name, and my money supports your extravagances! Your own income would not keep you in gloves and neckties."

"We can live on very little. Amy does not care for gayety, and I mean to take up my law studies in good earnest. I'm going to drop fast horses and bachelor suppers, mammy, and go in for legal honors. When I'm Judge of the Supreme Court, you can thank Amy for rousing my ambition, and making a man of me."

But Mrs. Chester was not inclined to thank Amy for anything that thwarted her own plan. She could not resist Guy's caress, or his pet name of "mammy," and she was shrewd enough to see that active opposition would probably hasten the catastrophe she dreaded. Guy was just the man to walk off with Amy to church and come back bound for life, if he saw any prospect of separation. So the mother smiled and said:

"You headstrong boy! You always have had your own way, and I suppose you always will!"

"That's a dear mammy," was the quick reply. "Tell Amy it's all right. I'll not interfere till you settle it all."

Then he had walked off whistling, and Mrs. Chester had sent for Amy.

There was no anger on her face when she bade the shy, gentle girl sit beside her, only a heavy shadow as if from terrible grief.

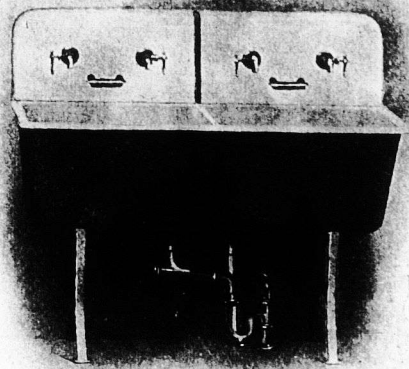
"Amy," she began, and her tone had none of its habitual ring of imperious command, "I have just had a long, serious talk with Guy, and made no impression upon him. So I have resolved to make an appeal to your good sense and generosity."

Amy's lips quivered a moment like a grieved child's, but she made no reply.

"You think Guy is wealthy," continued Mrs. Chester, "because the estate bears his name, and I supply his purse from my own, but he has less than a thousand a year! If he mar-

STANDARD IDEAL FIXTURES ENSURE PERFECT SANITATION

In the Bathroom, the Kitchen and Laundry. Standard Ideal ware is a guarantee against Doctors' bills. It is made after a process which makes the Porcelain enameling practically a part of the iron. It will not chip, it will not crack, it will not discolor. It is always snowy white in appearance. Durability, purity, and beauty of design are the combinations which have placed STANDARD IDEAL in the front rank.



STANDARD IDEAL Laundry Tubs are great labor Savers. They are on legs, two-part design and cast in one piece. They are nicely enameled with porcelain and have 12-inch porcelain enameled backs.

SEND FOR CATALOGUE

The STANDARD IDEAL COMPANY, Ltd.

PORT HOPE

ONTARIO

WINNIPEG OFFICE: 24 Telfer Building.

Some Solid Facts About Washing cloths and the machine to use.



EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE **GEE WHIZ** WASHING MACHINE **WHY?**

Because ninety-nine out of every hundred that try them, find them to exceed any other washing machine made, and to save 75 per cent. of the labor required to wash by hand on the board. They will positively wash clothes clean without the use of the washboard; this includes neckbands and wristbands of shirts.

A washing can be done on the GEE WHIZ in half the time it takes to do it on the other machines. It will wash a handkerchief as well as a bed quilt or a length of carpet.

The washing is done by the force with which the hot soap suds are driven through the clothing. The machine is ingeniously constructed to do this and is so easy to operate that a child can run it.

TO SEE IT IS TO TRY IT
TO TRY IT IS TO BUY IT

The clothes are not subject to grinding or rough usage, and are washed thoroughly clean, too, without having to resort to the Wash Board to finish them.

And to give you double assurance, the GEE WHIZ is guaranteed to fulfil these claims.

Insist on your merchant getting a Gee Whiz for you and if he will not write us giving his name, and he will be pleased to send you full particulars.

PRICE \$12.50

FOR BOOKLET AND FULL INFORMATION WRITE

E. H. Briggs Co., Ltd.

Winnipeg,

Man.

THE GENUINE **SMITH STUMP PULLERS**
W. SMITH GRUBBER CO.
CATALOG FREE-DEPT. 86, LACROSSE, WIS., U.S.A.

POST CARDS 20 Colored Comics 10 cts., 15 N. Y. City views 10 cts., 15 U. S. views 10 cts., 10 Colored Jamestown Exposition 20 cts., 10 Colored Artistic 10 cts., assorted. Catalog free, K. Schwagerl & Co., 225 West 35 St., New York City.