

money matters. I had a sort of impression that she possessed sufficient to keep her going in a modest way, and I knew that the house we lived in was her own. But I found her, one morning in early September, sitting at the breakfast table staring wide-eyed and white-faced at a letter, the official-looking blue envelope of which lay torn upon the white cloth. It was a "call" upon some shares which had dropped from thirty shillings to less than thirty pence all in a week's time, a fact of which Aunt Eliza had been wholly ignorant until that moment, for the investment, which represented practically the source of her whole income, had been made by her husband, now twelve years dead, and had been regarded by poor Aunt as a sort of minor Bank of England. The letter stated that no dividend could be paid, and that in order to save the situation the directors made a "call" of five shillings per share, which in Aunt's case amounted to £250.

I shall never forget the two days which followed. Even the sunshine seemed to have lost its gladness. Aunt was absolutely helpless. It had taken her all her time to make both ends meet hitherto, and I knew—though she would have died rather than said it herself, and would have been mortally angry with me had I put my thoughts into words—that it had taken much more to keep two than it would have taken to keep one. We talked it over as best we could. I was shrewd enough to see that, even if the money could be raised, it might be throwing good money after bad, yet how could I advise her to risk the total loss of her capital by refusing to pay? The house must be sold—and it would do well if it fetched the required £250 in that lonely neighbourhood.

Then, on the third morning, a miracle happened. Oh, yes, miracles do happen still, occasionally. I got a letter, too. That was not a miracle—but the offer it contained was!—£300 for "The Kiss"! I rushed upstairs to Aunt Eliza's bedroom and flung myself upon the counterpane laughing and crying.

"What is it, love?" cried my aunt in fresh alarm, thinking that I was hysterical.

"I—I—I've got an offer—of—three hundred pounds for 'The Kiss,'" I gasped.

"Three hundred pounds for a kiss, child?" she said blankly.

"It's my picture—my picture," I cried, holding the letter before her eyes. "Somebody in London has instructed these people, Freebody, Wilkins and Hodge, Solicitors, Lincoln's Inn—to offer me three hundred pounds for my picture."

Then it was Aunt Eliza's turn to gasp. "Well," she said, "I never did hear the like! It's more than your uncle gave for the house—a good deal."

"Yes," I said, "and it'll save you from selling the house, dear heart, and be some little compensation for all your goodness to poor useless me!"

Then Auntie cried, which was rather an unconventional thing for her to do under those peculiar circumstances.

"It never rains but it pours" is a great "fib" in nature and a great truth in life. We had scarcely got free from the terrible incubus of pressing and immediate need of cash, and begun to think of ways and means for the future, when the front door opened and in walked Jock Tremloe. I heard the handle turned, and a step on the tiles of the hall, and I went to the door of the sitting-room and popped my head through the curtain that screened it. My! how my heart jumped when I saw him. He didn't see me for a moment, and I had time to note his curly hair, and his bronzed face, and his sombrero hat, and his big manly frame. He was the same Jock—but he had "grown up" since I saw him last.

Then he saw me. "Madge!" he cried; "Madge!" Madge! and he took both my hands and drew me into the light. "Eh! It's good to see you," he laughed—"Good! Good! And how's Aunt Eliza?"

Then Aunt Eliza herself, hearing voices—and especially a man's voice—came from somewhere in the rear, and Jock gave her a kiss, and told her she grew younger and better-looking than ever. It was really surprising how he plumped right

into the heart of the family circle again, especially when one calls to remembrance the fact that he had left us—or rather me—in high dudgeon, and that we had never heard a word from him since. But his jolly way carried all before it, and made it impossible, even if it had been desirable, to stand upon dignity.

It rained that night and we stopped indoors with Auntie and talked until it was time for Jock to go to the "Red Lion" at the village a mile away, where he was staying. But he was with us early next day, and the afternoon was lovely. He asked me to show him the old spots—and I did. But we didn't get sentimental. Oh, no. We talked like sensible beings. We had tea at a farm across the



"There stood Jock in the picture—in the path between the growing corn."

Moss and then we walked home with our backs to the flaming west.

It was thus we came to the cornfield. I thought Jock wouldn't remember. But he stopped in the path between the walls of gold, and I stopped too, and we turned and gazed in silence into the green quivering ether of the sun's after-glow. Then he turned and clasped me in his arms. And what big strong arms they are! I gasped for breath and shut my eyes.

"My love! My darling! My little—little sweetheart!" he said.

And I opened my eyes and saw him looking down, down into mine, and I felt that he was lifting me from my feet—and he kissed me.

"It's the picture!" he said. "Madge! Madge! Little woman"—and he kissed me again—"it's the picture."

Then I remembered myself and struggled free. "What do you know about the picture?" I said.

"Why, I saw it at the Academy. And," he said slowly, and with a break in his voice, "it broke—my heart. It did, Madge. I had thought all these years that you would never forgive me, but when I saw the picture I just came right along here to see if we could make it real—and—we have—Madge—we have."

There was such a note of glad, humble triumph in his voice that a lump came surging into my throat, and the tears into my eyes, and—well, I've said more than I intended to say already, so let there be an end to all detail.

"And Madge," Jock said a little later, as we

went towards our gate, "it's Auntie too this time. Don't forget that. I've done pretty well out yonder and there's enough for three of us and a bit to spare."

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I've nearly finished. There's only one other trivial circumstance to relate. Jock asked me six weeks later—he had been to London several times in between for longer and shorter periods—if I would like to go across the Moss again and visit Slea Grange, which had long been empty, as he had obtained permission to view it. Of course I was delighted, for Slea Grange was reputed to be quite a show place, and we went together.

It was in the hands of workmen and caretakers evidently, and there were great alterations in progress. We were the only visitors and were allowed the free run of the fine old house. Oh! the furniture! the china! the pictures! I nearly died of envy.

"Oh, what a lovely room!" I cried presently.

"Isn't it?" said Jock. "The caretaker tells me that the new tenant has had it specially set apart for an old aunt of his wife's who is coming to live with them."

"Lucky woman!" I said.

At last we got right to the top of the house. "Why!" I cried, "here's a studio!" And there was, sure enough, with a splendid top light and all sorts of delightful accessories. "The new man must be an artist," I said.

"No," said Jock, with a queer smile, "but his wife is, I believe."

But I did not twig. How should I? I stepped forward, and then I think I should have fallen if Jock had not caught me as I swayed. I was too surprised for words. There was my picture "The Kiss" in all the glory of its Academy frame, standing on an easel in the centre of the room.

"Jock," I said, "The Kiss!"

"Yes," he said, coolly suiting the action to the word. "The man who owns this place bought it. He took a great fancy to it, and especially to the girl in it. But he thinks the portrait isn't a patch on the original."

"Jock," I cried, a glimmering of the truth beginning to struggle into my mind.

"Yes, that is the name which his sweetheart and his chums call him by," he said, stroking a wisp of hair from my face, "but his real name is John Philip Tremloe, late of Argentina and now of Slea Grange—at your service."

He bowed solemnly, and then danced a horn-pipe around the studio. And that's all.

What more would you want? There's really no use in having a tragedy when a good serious comedy would do quite as well.

## The Farmer and the Daily

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ANY person who is not in close touch with the farmers of Ontario, will probably find it difficult to believe how many daily papers find their way into the rural homes. As lecturer to the Farmers' Institute for the Provincial Department of Agriculture, I have occasion to visit many farmhouses during the winter months, and I have come into contact with all the best farmers in the older and more thickly populated counties. It is a rare thing to find a farmhouse without a daily paper. I would say that fully eighty per cent. of these farmers receive a daily newspaper.

They do not depend entirely on the post-office. Distribution occurs through the rural mail delivery where such exists. Otherwise, the distribution is made through the cheese factories. The bundle of newspapers is handed in to the factory and from there distributed by the drivers who collect the milk, usually on the return trip. The farmers do not take the daily merely for the market news, but mainly because they want to know what is going on in the world. Moreover, they are becoming great readers of monthly magazines and agricultural weeklies, which is different to what it was before both small and big dailies began to be so widely circulated.