

Typhoid laid him low in the midst of certain negotiations, which, being thus abandoned half through, landed him in an unfortunate position.

Several dubious transactions came to light, during the unlucky eclipse of his illness, and Rogers was disposed to put off the unpleasant ordeal of facing the music by prolonging his convalescence as long as his hospitable host would stand for it.

Curly Carlton's home was a pleasant place to repent in. You could keep cool and comfortable there in the hottest and dustiest of summer days, and Eileen managed to make enforced teetotalism positively pleasant with harmless iced beverages, and little cool snacks between meals, that kept him going between the very substantial diet that his returning appetite appreciated very fully. Eileen said he was so long he required a lot of building up again. She was a rare cook, was Eileen, and a born nurse. As cool as a cucumber, and as quiet and restful, yet withal as companionable a presence as a convalescent could wish for; and when one is comfortably tired of repenting in a Morris chair, between meals, there is perhaps no nicer way of passing the time, than to sit on one verandah with the nicest girl you ever met, and pour into her sympathetic ear your intentions for the future.

It is very pleasant, too, to relate a Bowdlerized version of your past, with a few embroideries to replace the parts you can't very well tell to a nice girl; and watch her grave, tender face, and her eyes looking at you under dark lashes, and rejoicing soberly as over a brand snatched from the burning. Rogers made wonderful progress. His appetite returned in amazing force, and he did justice to the pies and cakes and bread that Eileen made just like mother used to.

"Guess the late Mrs. Rogers must have been fonder of work than her son," snorted old man Carlton. "For a fellow that reckons to be an invalid, he does mighty well at pie."

"But that's just because he's an invalid, Dad," explained Eileen eagerly. "He said himself that when he's well he hardly eats any breakfast at all."

"You bet that's right too," said her father dully. "When I see a chap jibbing at his breakfast, and opening an egg as if he expected to find a viper inside of it, I know just how to size that fellow up."

"It seems to me you are very hard to please," sighed Eileen.

She was whipping up egg-water for her invalid's inter-meal refreshment, and the old man, in blue overalls and his shirt-sleeves, was cleaning up the kitchen. He had been used to clean up for his wife—he cleaned now for his daughter. He was of opinion that cleaning floors was no work for women.

While scarcely concurring in this idea, Rogers much preferred the arrangement, which left Eileen at liberty to minister to his wants. He was stretched in the hammock on the verandah, nicely shaded, and out of the Chinook, which was blowing up. Rough, stretched under the hammock, fumbled deeply as Eileen approached, and provoked a kick that felt amazingly like a pat from an unbooted foot.

The stump of tail wagged joyously. The muttered curse did not take the gilt off Rough's gingerbread. Rogers was strong enough to kick again! The kick seemingly exhausted the invalid's powers. Drawing up the extended leg he watched Eileen arrange the egg-water handy with a straw on a little table at his side, and pick up his pipe, magazine, and a litter of mail-matter, from different corners of the verandah. Eileen scanned his features anxiously.

"You don't look so well as you did this morning, your face is looking thinner and your nose is peaky. Something has been worrying you. You oughtn't to open business letters for another week at least."

"Needs must"—Rogers said lightly, "I can't afford to let any more time get past me. I must get around and hustle—right now—tomorrow—or—"

"Tomorrow!" Eileen cried in distress. "Oh, you mustn't think of it. Why, just think how shaky you were, only moving from your room to the hammock!"

"A man never knows what he can do

till he tries," said Rogers, sententiously. "I'm telling you in confidence, Eileen,—you won't think any worse of a fellow for having got into a jackpot?"

"Ah, thanks! That's nice and cool. Got a dash of brandy in it, eh? I thought so. Wonder who'll mix me a cocktail tomorrow, when you've forgotten my existence?"

"I—I shan't forget," murmured Eileen.

"I know you won't. Eileen, I've had a regular snorter of a mail. The fact of the matter is, if I don't want to turn over that new leaf of mine in the pen, I shall have to quit Diamondville pretty sharp. I'm going tonight."

"How dreadful!" cried Eileen. "Is it so very serious, then?"

"I've been playing the fool, that's about all there is to it. It's up to me to cut all that out, and make a fresh start."

"I know—oh, I know you'll do it!" breathed Eileen. "Dad says you've lots of sand in you if you'd only pull yourself together. And it's such a waste for a good man to be lost for want of trying."

"Sure thing, I'll do it," Rogers said, taking a long pull at the straw. "When you see me again, Eileen, you'll see me in a very different financial position. I'll make good this time or bust. Is that your father going across lots?"

Curly Carlton "raised no kick" when he heard of the departure of his guest. Rogers announced that he was starting on a protracted tour, vaguely directed to "points east," the points in question being left to the imagination for obvious reasons.

"But he's coming back, Dad, when he's made good. He's coming back before long!"

Eileen was rosy and happy. She was not a good hand at keeping secrets from the old man. Rogers frowned a warning.

Curly guessed out loud that it was time he got a move on, if he hadn't struck root. Rogers chose to take it in good part. He had a grip in each hand, and Rough was rejoicing dumbly at his heels because they were booted once more.

"Where are you going, Eileen?" demanded Curly with a snap. Eileen had come out with a scarf twisted about her head.

"Only to the depot, Dad, to see Mr. Rogers off," she said.

"Then you go right plumb to—bed, Eileen. Rogers is able to find the depot without you. It's twenty of twelve right now, siree. Hike."

"G—Good-bye!" faltered Eileen.

"S'long!" said Rogers. His grips were in both hands. He neither raised his Fedora, nor heeded her outstretched hand. But he nodded comprehensively.

"G—Good-bye, Rough!"

The dog rumbled a surly rebuff, and trotted out into the night.

"You're a d— little fool, Eileen," said Curly but his voice sounded husky and strange, and he kissed her tenderly.

"So you've lost your roomer?" observed Guest of the City police the next day. "Some time before we see Rogers back in Diamondville, I guess."

"Will it?" asked Eileen uneasily.

"I hope so," sniggered Guest. "I wouldn't care to be round when he found out about his dog, you bet."

"What's come to Rough?" asked Eileen eagerly.

"Why, Rogers left him on the depot. I guess he didn't have the cash to take him with him on the train. He left him on guard over a banana skin."

That's some dog too, you bet your life. He had the arm half pulled out of the baggage man, and this morning he boarded the Westbound and scared the conductor into a fit. Rogers would be some mad if he knew, but there's nothing else for it."

"But—what have you done to him? Tell me?"

"We roped him in and took him down to the pound, and his waiting to get a nice dose of strychnine at sundown. And a good end for Rough, too, quite as good as he ever deserves."

"Oh, please! Please!" said Eileen.

She opened her eyes wide in appeal. Irish eyes they were, with tears in them, and it would have been a harder-

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