

warned me of his approach. He arrived hatless, excited, incoherent, and I gathered that he supposed the barn to be in flames, but he required no explanation, for his whole soul was consumed with desire for the sleeping-bag. Take the granny-phone, Mr. Merry-well, and every dashed thing he had, he implored, but give him back his——

But before I could reply a buxom little figure darted out of the encircling blackness beyond the glow of the fire. "Oh, Mr. Merry-well, don't give it to Joe!" screeched Jenny, and before I could draw breath to speak, her arms were clasped around that person's neck, and she was wailing with heart-rending pathos: "You'd rather have *me*,—wouldn't you, Joe?"

Now I don't know how Joseph responded, but the last glimpse I got of him he was standing like a fence post, his face illumined with that utterly silly grin which with him means perfect bliss. I don't know how he reassured her, I say, for just then I fled like a startled gazelle out of sight and hearing. At such a time one doesn't wait to reason why, but I suppose my action arose from a mixture of motives; among which, per-