

nymphs approaching the paying teller's window.

The dear creatures brought into our subdued and unromantic atmosphere an air of frivolity and two or three different brands of perfume. They crowded about Charlie and buzzed and laughed and chaffed him and were chaffed in turn.

Charlie was deeply in love this week with the one in shell pink. Last week it had been the one with yellow hair, who invariably wore blue. Next week, I made no doubt, it would be the tall juno in apple green. But when he loved he loved with a vengeance. He bore all the earmarks of a sighing and despairing Romeo. Janes, turning about suddenly to locate a missing sheet of blotting paper, caught the glances Charlie bent upon Mabel and Pearl and Gladys—especially Gladys. Janes glared.

Love in its most acute stages, like a bad attack of the mumps, always seems highly humorous to the average unsympathetic onlooker. But in temperaments like that of Janes, it awakens nothing but savage gloom.

"Sour grapes," I murmured aloud to a handful of bank bills I was sorting.

"Is this a bank?" growled Janes, "or a clearing-house for debutantes?"

"Sorehead, sorehead," I chanted.

"I wish a mouse would happen along just about now," he said, as he refilled his pen.

"You're jealous," I returned, "why don't you go get a girl of your own?"

I told him that love was the greatest thing in the world and I pointed out to him the lovers of history, those beings of immortal fidelity with whom all fine literature makes us familiar—Dante and Beatrice, Orlando and Rosalind, Petrarch and Laura, Romeo and Juliet, Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, Gabriel and Evangeline.

But he retorted that Dante was a drivelling idiot, Orlando a lovesick jack-ass and that as for Gabriel it was a blessing he and Evangeline did not marry for who knows what sort of a life she might have led him and then Longfellow would have had to cook up a very different plot for his great poem!

It was just a few evenings later that Bateson and I happened to sprint for the same car going home, and as we bumped and jolted out to the suburbs, little did either of us foresee all that would transpire from this chance companionship. Although we both lived out north, we very seldom managed to travel together. As we crossed an intersecting car line, whom should we see standing upon the curb, waiting for his car going west, but old Janes, who had left the bank early.

"Look at the Herr Professor," remarked Charlie, with a sidelong nod. "See that tome under his arm? Gibbons, I bet anything. Or maybe it's Carlyle or George Borrow or the addresses of Daniel O'Connell. He's been to the Carnegie literature larder and now he's going to spend a profitable evening eating that strong mental fodder. Then sharp at ten-thirty he'll close the volume with a reluctant sigh, turn out the gas and retire."

"You seem to know his habits pretty well."

"Sure. And I'm only a guesser, too. His life is all systematized. He knows to a minute just what he is going to do."

"Some people work to live, others live to work," I mused aloud. "I wonder if he really gets any pleasure out of life!"

"I doubt it; mental pleasure perhaps, but no other kind."

"He only lives with one-half of his nature," I said, "and yet the other side of him, though somnolent now, might be capable of immense development."

"How do you mean?" asked Bateson, who was only half listening, his eyes being on the alert for pretty women entering or leaving.

"I mean he is one of those very intense people. He feels strongly. He must have a heart. With all his scoffing, he's the kind who, if he ever did fall in love would fall so hard that the concussion would jar all his ideas to fragments."

"A sort of mental earthquake," chuckled Charlie, "and wouldn't I like to witness it! May I be there, so help me, Mulligan!"

We spoke of other things, among them our approaching vacation. Two weeks each we were allowed, but were obliged

to take our holidays as the Chinese walk—one after the other.

"Janes goes first—the second and third weeks in July," remarked Bateson, taking off his hat to a couple of girls passing along the street. "There go a pair of peaches, Bert. Pipe the one in the blue suit."

Following his glance, I caught a fleeting glimpse of a trim feminine form just rounding a corner. "Another of your numerous," I had begun. But he spread out his hands deprecatingly.

"No sir! She's refused me eleven times and I'm beginning to think she doesn't want me," he said, with unconscious humor, and a look of regret in his eyes. "To be frank, Bert, she's older than me by a couple of years."

"Who is she?"

"First cousin of mine—Margaret Alison by name, but usually gets 'Madge.' She's a teacher in the Vincent Street Collegiate."

"Ah, brainy, I suppose, and all that."

"Somewhat. But she's a bit of a cut-up too. We used to make mud pies to-

gether, and quarrel and make it up a dozen times a day. She's awfully quick-witted and she can read character as you and I read the printed page."

"A sort of Miss Sherlock Holmes," I murmured distastefully, "and of course plain—though what I saw of her figure was very fetching."

"Plain?" echoed Charlie. "Do some more thinking! She's a pippin I tell you."

I smothered a yawn and pulled out the evening paper. After a few moments Charlie spoke again.

"Where are you going for your holidays?"

"Don't know yet. Where are you going?"

"Oh, up at my usual haunt in Muskoka. I come at the tail-end but I'll get the September fishing. By the way, the place is kept by an aunt of Madge's—Mrs. Bradley. Guess you've heard me speak of it."

"Hemlock Cove?"

"That's it. It's a regular tourists paradise. Swell spot."

"I heard you recommending it to the boys the other day. Janes in particular seemed greatly taken with the trawling."

"His specialty. He's going up there. Sent in his application yesterday."

"I suppose he'll trawl with the line in his teeth and a volume of Bacon's Essays propped up in front of him."

Charlie grinned.

"Bert, old chap," he said, after a moment, "did you see me wink at you the other day? I was thinking what a great wheeze it would be to get some girl to propose to old John, just to see how he'd act. Listen and get an earful. I think I'll put Madge wise to him—she spends most of the summer up there you know—and I know she'll be game. She'd enjoy a mild flirtation like that."

"He'd be about as responsive as a hitching post," I said, without enthusiasm. "Well, here's my corner. So long!"

It was some days after this that the foregoing conversation, which I had completely forgotten, was recalled to my

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