

"I almost hate to tell you, it's so inappropriate," was the answer. "Ione Browne," she informed him. "But my friends call me Torchy, because of my hair," giving the head another shake. "Then you are going to Watrous for your holidays," he observed. "I noticed your name in the social column yesterday."

"You've a good memory," she chattered on. "I wish I could retain what I read. Maybe it's just as well sometimes, that I don't. We emancipated young women of the newer generation do read some awful trash sometimes." You haven't told me where you are going. I heard you mention the St. Lawrence. That's a long way to go for a vacation all by one's self."

"I haven't been away from the city very much in years," George replied. "This time I'm resolved to spend the three weeks out of fifty-two in a real city, and so I've chosen Montreal. I want to see Pittsburgh Millionaires cavorting on their new playground."

"The quiet place for me," Torchy declared. "I've got my tennis things, a bathing suit and some mosquito oil, and Manitou Beach is going to have to put up with me for two solid weeks. Telephone operating keeps me busy the other fifty weeks in a city large enough to get worked to death in."

"Maybe it's because I'm so darned ambitious that I'm always looking for something more boisterous and bigger," the young man opined. "I want to see new faces, new sights, in order to come home, fresh for the job."

For a few moments silence fell between them.

"I wonder," mused the girl, "what my telephone man will think, when I don't call him up in fourteen days. Hearing you speak made me think of him. I'll tell you about him, but you'll be the first person I've confided this to."

"Who is this telephone man?"

"My ideal," she laughed. Then seriously, "I think most girls have an ideal." She saw that George was about to speak. "You'll be surprised, I know," the girl asserted, "but as a matter of fact I've never seen him myself. But he has the nicest voice of any man I ever heard speaking. I've been afraid to actually meet him, for fear the illusion would be spoiled. I imagine he's some nice, gentle person, probably married, with two or three kids."

"But why call him your 'telephone man'?" was the puzzled question of George.

"I should have told you," she replied. "About two months ago I had to put a call through for his office. That is, Marks and Berger, the chartered accountants. He answered the phone. I thought about his voice all the rest of that day, and the next thing I knew, I had absolutely fallen in love with it, and was calling him up every day. He got used to it, because regular as clockwork, I'd ring his number and we'd talk for a few minutes. Dear old telephone man. He'll never know who the silly girl was, but I suppose he'll miss me while I'm away. I have a hunch he was glad to hear the telephone announce me, even if it was only to relieve the office monotony."

The engine ahead hooted for a crossing, and then for a station.

"Watrous next!" called a passing trainman.

The girl gathered her things together and put the unread novel in a spacious valise.

"I guess it's 'goodbye,' she told George, turning in his direction. But he was across the aisle, with a golf cap on, and smoothing out the folds of a raincoat he had had the forethought to bring.

"Going to take some air?" she asked, believing he had not heard her.

George lifted a grip and a valise from the rack.

"I think Watrous is good enough for me," he said, somewhat huskily.

The grinding of brakes made speech impossible. He led the way out and helped her to alight.

"You see," he said, "I'm your telephone man."

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