

with it—all kivered with pink flowers! An' he's went an' gone an' bought his sister, Sairy Ann, a gol' ring with reely di'munds in 't, an' it shines just like everythin'. An'—an' the's a grea' big box o' candy; an'—an' a dress fer Sairy Ann too! An'—an' I heerd 'm say as he wuz agoin' to git new carps an' fix the house up purty! An'—an'—"

But at this point the strain of such a prolonged speech without interruption and reproval by and from those in authority so embarrassed the excited Jemima that mere words failed her in the hour of need and she subsided, gasping for breath.

"Laws! He must've got quite well off," commented Mrs. Pratt with interest.

"Wait till ye see the clo'es he's got on!" nodded the Mayor, with a pleased smile. "I declar' I ain't seen sech a spic-an'-span young hoss in—member that there drummer the gals all raved over here las' summer? Well, ef Tom Emerson ain't got him beat out in the first heat—well, purt' nigh!" Mrs. Pratt looked fondly across at his elder daughter, Susie, who blushed prettily, and followed it up with a sly wink at her mother, who smiled confidently.

"I think, Pa, I'll jest run over in the mornin' an' see ef Mis' Emerson can't come an' take tea with us to-morry night," said the latter. "You know, we be'n agoin' to ast her—"

Mr. Pratt nodded readily. "I hev a'ready invited the young man, Tildy," he announced with the calm assurance of a man who knows that for once his action is beyond criticism. "An' what's more to the p'int, he's a-comin'—with pleasure, he'sed."

Thus it began. And because Mrs. Councilman Hendricks knew Mrs. Mayor Pratt of old; because Miss Clementina Hendricks was as pretty as Miss Susie Pratt (oh, bless you, every bit!); because, furthermore, Mrs. Councilman Hendricks also had for a long time been going to ask Mrs. Emerson in for tea—because of these things it came about that Mrs. H. and Mrs. P. reached the Emerson gate at one and the same moment next morning. And once the leaders of Tiverton society had stepped forward, the rank and file trotted after like a bleating flock of very fluffy and very curious baa-baas.

And it is safe to say that never in all her born days had dear old Mrs. Emerson heard so many kind words or received so many apologies for so many things; certainly never so many invitations to dinner and tea. It quite bewildered her to keep track of them; so that finally she had to jot them down in the back of the little book where she kept her grocery accounts. For of course nobody would hear of such a thing as a refusal—not for the tiniest of minutes!

More than this, they coaxed the little old lady into donning the new silk dress, with the bonnet to match; and Sarah Ann put on hers, too, and stood near the window so that the sun could make the diamond ring sparkle for their individual and collective delectation, after which everybody ate a candy out of the big, flowery bon-bon box. Never were such candies! Never was such a ring! Never such dresses and bonnets!

And the Widow Emerson sat herself down in the old rocker, her faded cheeks glowing with pride as she told of what Tommy was going to do to fix up the house; how years ago when he went away from home and was kissing her good-by he had said that some day he was coming back, all fixed up in fine clothes, and would bring her this very silk dress and this very bonnet when he had become a man and famous in the big cities. At which Mrs. Pratt kept bobbing her head and murmured: "Won-der-ful!" And Mrs. Hendricks kept bobbing her head and remarked: "How-nice!" And all the others kept bobbing their heads and relieved themselves of similar comments. Never was such a boy!

He knew many things, did Mr. Ashberry Emerson; that was why, after shaking hands with Mesdames Pratt and Hendricks, he skipped out the back way and fled to the shelter of the Bugle office, where Editor Bill Bassett, in a particularly dirty shirt, sat with his long legs crossed on a particularly rickety old table, smoking an equally dilapidated cob pipe, tied together with string and plugged beneath with a cork. It was foggy inside, due to eruption of said pipe, and Mr. Bassett was deeply engrossed, being up to his ears in admiration of a literary masterpiece the

preparation of which had kept him up most of the night.

For it was not often that Editor Bill had opportunity worthy of those far flights of which his fancy was capable when it really got going; when Mr. Bassett straddled Pegasus in the glow of a "big story," he was good for much more than a hundred yards. That he considered the arrival in their midst of Mr. T. Ashberry Emerson, Private Secretary, occasion for a loud and long blast from the Bugle was as obvious as the galley-proofs in his hands. Not only was there a full column of eulogy in the editor's best classical vein; but in addition there were interviews with all of Tiverton's old-timers, recalling the days when the "honored son of an honorable father and a gracious mother" had spagged about in his bare feet at the head of a horde of young scamps, a fact significant of those qualities of leadership which had been so amply exemplified in the successful career which he had carved for himself despite the exigencies of twentieth-century competition, etc., etc.

"Think she'll do?" queried Bill as he wiped his inky hands on his trousers and gingerly picked a cigar from the silver-mounted case which his visitor proffered. "I c'd do a lot better 'n that, if I wasn't so all-fired busy 't I had to dash her off any kind o' a way," he apologized mendaciously.

"Mr. Bassett," replied T. Ashberry with enthusiasm, "I venture to say I couldn't do it better myself. But what is all this about a banquet in the Opera House? I haven't heard anything of that."

"Well, I 'low you will," averred Bill, with a knowing grin. "Anythin' the Bugle prints, Mr. Emerson, c'n be th'r'ly relied upon as bein' stric'tly 'cordin' to fac'. We gets our noos in advance; else w'y be a noospaper at all? I says. Ther'll be speechifyin', an' the ladies is goin' to provide the 'freshments, an' the shindig'll wind up with dancin'—jest like the Bugle says. An' you're to be the guest o' honor, an' the town pays fer the light—jest like the Bugle says."

And sure enough, the Bugle was right, even to the prediction that the affair would be marked by that unqualified success which alone could be in harmony with the proud achievements of their honored guest. In fact, Tiverton outshone itself so completely that everybody was vaguely surprised at everybody else; and it was a very delicate question indeed as to which looked the nicer—Miss Susie Pratt or Miss Clementina Hendricks, both being resplendent in new dresses, be-ribboned and befrilled.

"'S like chicken," facetiously remarked Mr. Bassett, nudging Miss Arabella Robb. "Some's fond o' the light an' some's fond o' the dark, but both is chicken. 'Pears lik' he's ekelly fond o' both. See them winnin' smiles, Miss Robb? When Mark Antonio c'n handle two Cleopatros—well, statesmanlike tac', I calls it."

"An' he has such a classic profile!" chirped Miss Robb, who was taking a correspondence course in art.

Thus from the time old Ben Groat, who was "deef as a post," had bitten a piece out of the first sandwich under the misapprehension that the parson had already asked the blessing—from the very first to the very last, T. Ashberry Emerson, Private Secretary, sat, ate, spoke, and danced in the focus of the public eye, in the white light of public favor. Breathlessly they listened while he told them of that vast Dominion to the north; of political campaigns which had necessitated him travelling thousands of miles in company with Premier E. B. Knowles; of how once they had been stuck in a snow-bank for three days in the northern part of the province and might have suffered untold hardships had it not been for the fact that they always travelled in the Premier's private car, which was kept constantly well-stocked with luxurious comforts of all sorts.

The trainmen had managed to keep the engine alive in order that they might have steam in the pipes. So that there they were, snug and cozy as could be, with Jepson, the steward, serving sherry bouillon, fricassee of calf's sweetbread, sliced California tomatoes, and other unseasonable delicacies; while outside the snow was jammed level with the cab windows of the engine, and a blizzard howled furiously and filled the air so full of flying snow that once outdoors you couldn't see your own nose, let alone anybody else's.

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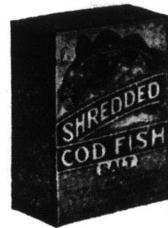
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Per 1000 Calories



57 Cents
Per 1000 Calories



54 Cents
Per 1000 Calories



78 Cents
Per 1000 Calories



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Per 1000 Calories

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