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Would End Her Misery.

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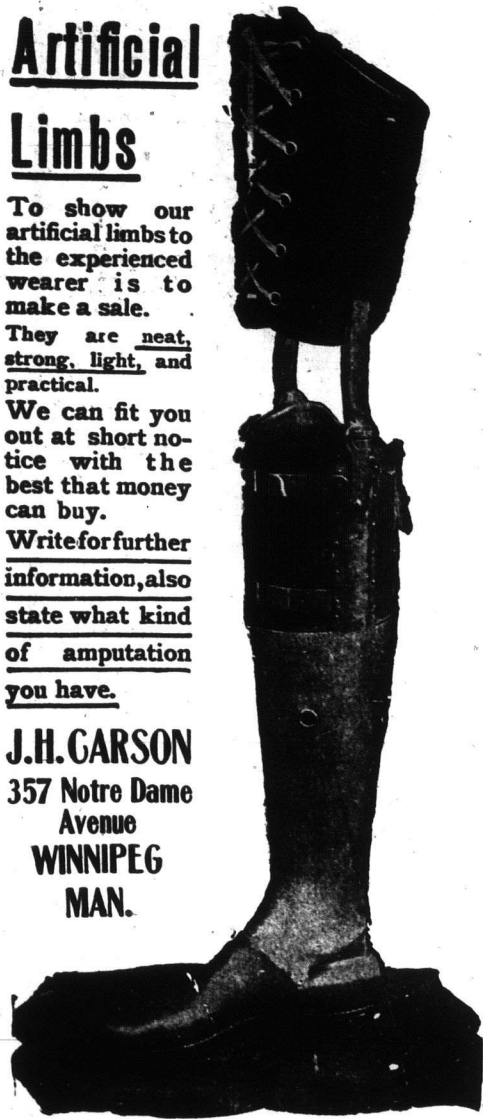
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Young People

Fine Feathers and Fine Birds

By Harriet Lummis Smith

"Shine 'em good, Reddy. Don't stop till you can see your freckles in 'em, same as if they were looking-glasses."

The small bootblack grinned. He did not resent the title by which Tom had addressed him, though his mother called him Jim, and on the whole he preferred the name. He bent the red head, which could hardly fail to attract attention, even if it passed without comment, over his kit, and set to work with a will.

Tom Alden was undergoing a transformation, which his mother and sisters found mystifying. Only a year or two before, it had been necessary to use frequent arguments and a mild form of force to induce him to pay sufficient attention to his toilet, to be presentable. He clung to shabby coats and patched shoes with the loyalty due friends old and tried. He sneered at those of his acquaintances who gave thought to neckties, and rebelled outright at the suggestion of wearing gloves to church. Now the change had come, and if Solomon, in all his glory, was more splendid than Tom, it was because Oriental styles gave that old-time an advantage.

Tom stood with one hand in his pocket, while Jim, alias Reddy, pushed hard at Tom's shoes, and his glance was complacent as he looked himself over. His new

the miscellaneous collection to be expected, but no glittering gold piece appeared. The search was still in progress when a big policeman walked upon the scene. "Hello!" he exclaimed, "what's this?"

Tom explained. Jim looked up at the officer, and he was very pale under his fiery thatch of hair. "Never seen his money. Didn't hear it fall, nor nothin'."

The case was puzzling. Jim's facilities for the concealment of stolen property seemed inadequate. He wore no shoes; a shirt and a pair of ragged trousers were his sole garments. Yet the gold piece had disappeared. The smooth cement of the sidewalk sloped to the asphalt of the street. There was no crack in which a coin might disappear, no tuft of grass behind which it might hide.

"Swallowed it, like enough," frowned the policeman; "they're up to all tricks of that kind." He turned to Tom, "Sure you had it when you took out your money, are you?"

"I'm as sure as I am that I'm standing here. It is one of the new kind, and when I pulled out my change I saw the eagle, first thing, and I meant to put it in another pocket; it slipped through my fingers, and that was the last of it, as far as I know."

"And I don't know nothin'," said the bootblack, doggedly.

The policeman paid no attention to his disclaimer. He discussed the question with Tom a few minutes, then turned on Jim with a forbidding frown, "Get out of



Playing Horse.

spring suit was of a delicate gray shade, which once he would have despised; and the bottoms of the trousers were turned up far enough to show the dots of violet silk on his socks. The silk handkerchief, which flaunted itself ostentatiously from his upper right-hand coat pocket, was bordered with violet. He carried a pair of light gloves in his hand. It was hard to believe that less than a year before his sister, Juliette, had been moved almost to tears on the subject of his finger-nails.

Jim had finished, and Tom looked the job over with care. At length he nodded in a manner that expressed himself satisfied, and drew a handful of change from his pocket. Then, as he fumbled for a nickel, he cried sharply, "Say, look out! Where did that go to?"

"Where did what go to?" Jim inquired. He was still on his knees, and he looked up with a puzzled stare.

"That five-dollar gold piece. It slipped through my fingers just this second. You must be kneeling on it."

Jim got to his feet. Together they examined the cement sidewalk, without discovering the missing coin. Tom's face lost its smile.

"See here, Reddy," he remarked, after they had consumed five minutes in profitless search, "if you've got that in your pockets, you might as well hand it over this minute, as later; because that didn't sink into the sidewalk, you know."

"Honest, mister," Jim protested, "I hain't touched your money; I hain't seen it. You may look in my pockets if you like, but you won't find nothin'."

After another five minutes' hunting, Tom accepted the offer. The tattered pockets were turned inside out, displaying

this," he exclaimed, "and stay off my beat if you don't want to get into trouble."

Tom went home in disgust. He told his story at the dinner table, and received the sympathy of the family. Then he went upstairs to dress. There was to be a party that evening, and the hostess, one of his school friends, had asked him to come early to assist her with some arrangements which were to be kept a secret from the others. The occasion was accordingly of double importance, and Tom's toilet was bound to be a slow process.

Something tinkled at his feet, as he brushed his gray trousers, preparatory to hanging them away. He looked down and saw a golden disk staring up at him from the carpet. It was a moment before he understood what had happened.

In turning up the bottoms of his trousers he had formed pockets, into one of which his coin had dropped when it had slipped through his fingers. And there it might have remained indefinitely, had not his newly-formed habit aided in its discovery.

A moment later an excited boy was at the telephone. "It's me—Tom." It was no time for grammatical accuracy. "I'm sorry, Mabel, but I can't come early to-night. I don't know when I can come. I've got something to do first."

"Why, Tom Alden, what do you mean?" Mabel's voice sounded as if she might be pouting.

Tom plunged into the story of the afternoon. "And now, you see, I've got to find him," was his conclusion. "I've got to hunt up the policeman and tell him it was a mistake, and I don't know how long it will take me. But I'll come as soon as I can."

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