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silver which she drew from her gay knitting bag and spread out in her lap. Occasionally she sent a furtive look about her.

There was nobody within sight but the young man, who, like herself, had become a kind of park fixture. He looked lazier than ever. His checked cap was drawn over his eyes, his legs were thrust out and he appeared to doze. Three or four banana skins lay at his feet—another rule disregarded, but discipline became lax at the end of summer.

The girl counted out sixty dollars and some odd change. She folded the bills very neatly, as a girl does who handles much money but seldom, the large denominations on the inside of the roll. She wrapped this in a fragment of paper and put it inside her blouse. Then she put the silver in her little change purse on the side of her belt. Her glance rested on the side of the other park habitue. It strayed to the swans. On her lips a little smile of secret exultation trembled.

A lone park policeman strolled along. The girl opened out the paper she had brought and commenced to read the second page of classified ads., but in an indifferent way, and as from force of habit only. Over the top she watched the "cop's" progress. The young man sat up. He kicked the traces of his late lunch underneath his bench. He was really a very indolent youth thought the girl, for just beyond him a few feet stood a green-painted rubbish-can. The arm of the law disappeared round a corner of the walk.

Then the frolicksome wind sported gaily along. It rustled the little drift of red leaves at the edge of the path. It created a whispering turbulence in the half-naked poplars, it shivered across the pond and the water became dark even in the sunshine. It eddied about the bushes and sent a tiny shower of yellow—Nature's own gold—over the girl's head and shoulders. Suddenly a more voluminous breeze followed the first. This one blew a strand of hair across the girl's eyes and she shook her head backward in smiling impatience. At that instant the paper was snatched from her hands and sent careering over the dry sward in the direction of the city's downtown district. But ten feet or so along in its mad career it brought up against a substantial obstacle, namely, the knees of the dozing youth, who had relapsed into a lounging posture once more.

He started, sat up again and caught the fluttering sheets in both hands. He sent a look at the girl, then got up and took the paper over to her.

"Oh, thanks. But I don't want it," said the girl, with a quick little smile. "Just throw it away—I mean in the can there, as you pass."

The young man had doffed his cap an instant, disclosing curly brown hair. The girl remarked this as she spoke. In turn he noticed that her eyes were a rather nice shade of blue, very clear and unshadowed. He paused, uncertainly.

"Are you out of a job?" asked the youth, abruptly.

"I was," said the girl gravely.

"I asked because I've noticed you here so much—every day, I guess, about."

"I've noticed you, too."

"Then you—you've got a job at last?"

The girl's face flushed. She hesitated an instant.

"Well, perhaps not a job. But I've—found a means of livelihood."

He smiled shrewdly.

"Pretty much alike, isn't it?"

"No, it isn't the same thing at all."

"May I sit down?... Thanks very much."

"What is the difference or the distinction?"

"A job usually means a boss and a time-clock, and the threat of being fired hanging over you if your work doesn't come up to par. The other may mean the same but it can also mean that you are your own boss. You drive yourself. If you want big 'pickings' you must work hard. But then, too, you can loaf at your own discretion."

"I see. 'Pickings'? What does —"

"Oh, I just thought of that term," she cut in with a shrug. "I—I don't pick pockets exactly," and she laughed and looked suddenly away from him and at the water.

The youth was silent for a few moments.

"I wish I had your luck," he said at length. "I've been an out-of-work too all these weeks."

"Have you looked everywhere?" asked the girl, a look of doubt and suspicion in her eye, but which he didn't see.

"Every blamed place in town," he replied, moodily. "I've tramped from six in the morning till three in the afternoon. No use trying to hunt after three."

"No," sighed the girl, reminiscently.

"And I'm not brawny enough yet for a farm, though that's what I'd like best if I only had the strength. Been overseas. Had pneumonia in the spring."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"Maybe you can guess from the fit of these clothes that I've got my only civvies on my back. Soon I'll have to put 'em in hock and go to bed."

"I wish I could let you in on my work. But—it requires deft fingers," said the girl. "And experience."

The policeman came hurrying back. He looked disturbed.

"What's the matter?" asked the young man, rising.

"Lady had her pocket picked," said the cop, pausing.

"Whereabouts?"

"On the avenue, just outside the park. Don't happen to have seen any suspicious looking characters do you?"

"No," said the youth, indolently seating himself again. "How much did she lose?"

"Over sixty dollars she says. She was standing in a crowd listening to a soap-box orator, and must have been jostled, she thinks. Nice how-de-do! Sure you two haven't seen anyone that—"

"Haven't seen a soul."

"Nor I," said the girl, promptly.

The policeman hurried on.

"Wrong premise," remarked the young man, as he watched the officer disappear.

"He's hunting for a 'suspicious-looking character' when it is more than likely

the pickpocket is a well-dressed individual with a bold front and a swagger. Gee! You look kinda white! He didn't startle you as much as all that, surely."

"I—I guess I'm faint with hunger. Hadn't any lunch."

"Is that so? Why—come to think of it neither did I."

The girl got up.

"Let's go somewhere and have a good square meal," she suggested.

"You're on. But what'll I hock?" asked the youth in some dismay. "All I own I have on my back. And it's chilly today."

"You won't need to hock anything. It's my treat," said the girl firmly.

"I couldn't stand for that."

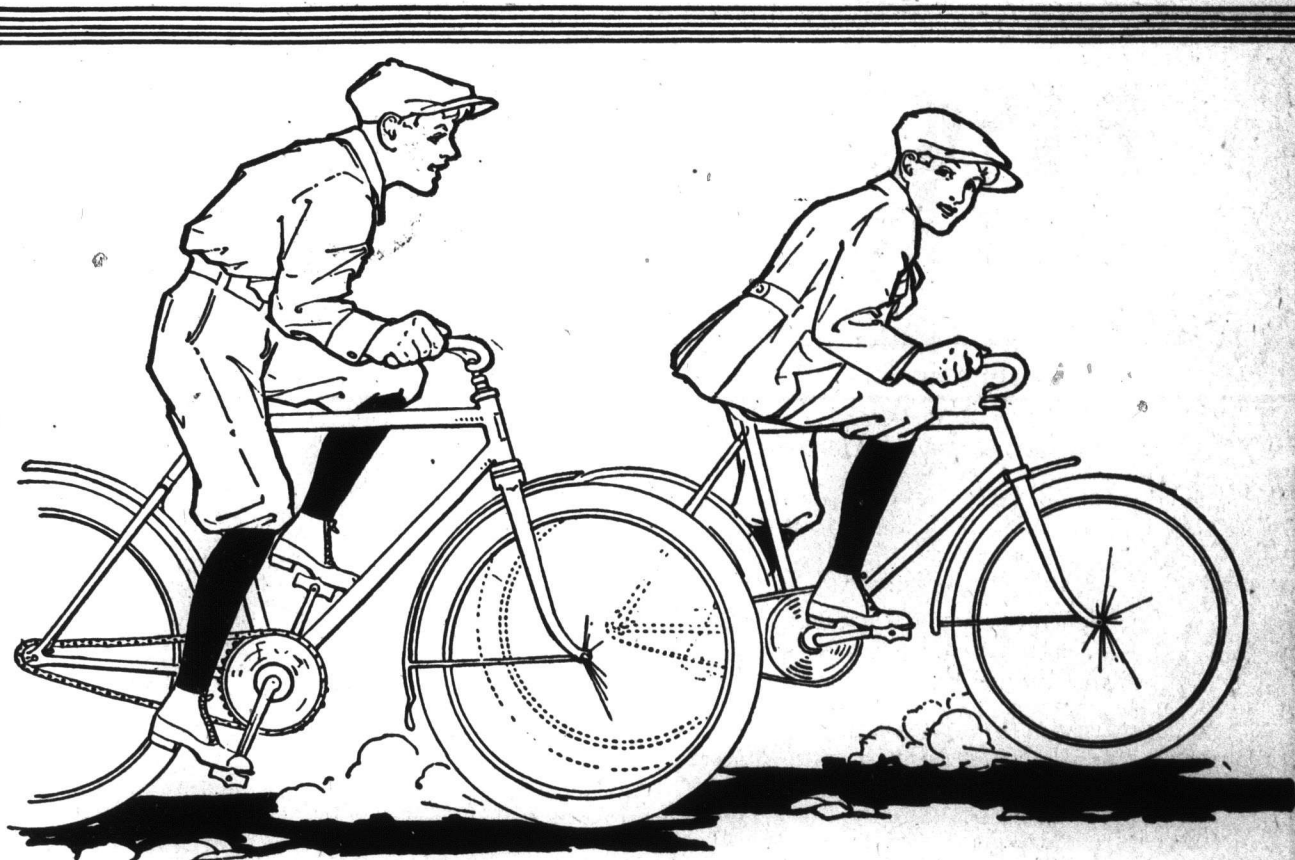
"You must. I hate eating alone."

"You don't have to. I'm sure you have plenty of friends."

"I haven't one in the city."

The youth, for all his seeming laziness, was shrewd.

"You mean you have, but you've



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