

In an instant he was back at her side again.

"How kind of John to send his carriage to take us to our little home. We'll get inside while Clive, the man, gets your trunk and puts it up in front."

As he opened the door, she gave a little startled cry, and he exclaimed:

"Flowers! On my life! If John keeps up this kind of attention to my little wife all the way through I'm afraid you'll—"

But he said no more as her head dropped upon his shoulder and she cried softly. Then she looked up and said: "It isn't at all a dream, is it, dear? Don't tell me that it is—that I'm going to wake up in my lonesome little room at Mrs. Stilton's with no lover, no husband."

"Pinch me and see," he answered gaily—giving her own arm a squeeze.

"There," he exclaimed, as she laughed, "I guess I do like you best when you laugh. But I want some tears—of a kind that comes from happiness that's too big for words."

As the carriage rolled down the long boulevard his strong arm was about her and he found more words of tenderness to pour into her ears than he had ever used in all his life before.

Suddenly he peered out of the carriage window and exclaimed:

"Why, here we are almost at John's house! It's the big place with the iron

undertone. 'I'm more afraid than ever. It's just like a palace. I didn't know there was such magnificence in the world.'"

"But you're not going to be afraid of John, are you? He's just—"

"Is there a Mrs. John?" this time the question came in a shaking voice, and he could feel her arm tremble.

Suddenly his face became curiously grave and yet alight with joy and a boyish sort of merriment.

"Yes," he answered and there she is—and he turned her gently about and brought her face to face with her own image in the tall old-fashioned pier glass which reached from the floor almost to the ceiling.

"Yes," he repeated, "there she is—and she's the dearest, sweetest woman in the world!"

But a strange agony of incomprehension was in her face, and he knew that the truth of the situation had not yet dawned upon her. Slipping his arm about her he bent until his lips were near her own and said, in a tenderness and seriousness which could not be mistaken for jest:

"My dear little girl, you're Mrs. John—I'm John and this is your home—your very own."

A little cry came from her lips and in a second she crumpled into his arms, limp and unconscious. When she opened her eyes she was in a chamber more beautiful and dainty than she



A faithful helper.

fence just ahead—the one that takes up the whole block. Wouldn't it be rather nice to stop just a moment—long enough to thank John for sending the carriage and for the flowers?"

"But it's such a grand house—and he must be very rich," she answered, timidly.

"He is," admitted John, "about the richest man I know. But he's been very close to me, dear; we've known each other for years—and he's just as plain and simple as—"

"Would it please you very much?" she asked.

"Yes sweetheart, very much!"

"Then we'll stop—but I'm afraid."

"Afraid of John!" he exclaimed, with a boyish laugh. "It'll all vanish the minute you know him."

Then he called up to the driver, and a moment later the carriage had wound along the white driveway, between banks of shrubbery and under splendid trees. She even caught a glimpse of flower beds, rich with blooms, and of a fountain's spray sparkling under the electric lights.

A servant opened the carriage door and another bowed low and flung open the big door at the top of the wide stone steps.

"We'll go right into the drawing room and John'll be there in a moment. That's the way I always do in John's house. He'd not think it friendly of me if I didn't."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, in a frightened

knew how to dream of; a white-capped maid was vanishing through the door and John was bending over her, kissing her hands and exclaiming:

"Forgive me, dearest. I'm such a bungler of a man. I should have known what a strain it has all been."

"But is it true, dear? All this?" she questioned, eagerly.

"Yes," it's true, Mary. It's your home. It's been mine for years. I'm not simply the boss. I'm the contractor and I only staid on the job because you were there. In fact I haven't had any need to stay in the business for several years. I have more money than we can well spend in all our life together. But I couldn't keep away from the work. I'd lived my life in it, and every now and then the old longing for building would come over me and I couldn't resist. There was nothing to keep me then. Now there is—and I promise never to take a job that will take me away from you for a single week. Do you forgive me for the little deception—I've practised? I didn't think it would be more than you could stand—like this."

And for her answer she drew his face down to hers and closed her arms about his neck.

W. J. Bryan: We hear nowadays that people are losing their love for what is true and right. The same sort of thing is said in every age.

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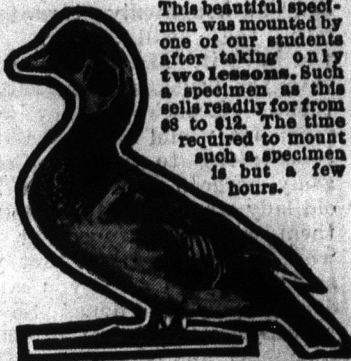
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