

Winnipeg, May, 1910.

the kind, wise face smiling at him than a frozen pool can refuse to obey the warmth of the April sun.

"All right, I'll be there," he said briefly; and forthwith took up his abode in the dark room of her rear tenement on Water Street.

The unaired closet in which his bunk was put was separated by the thinnest of partitions from the other one in which Apple Annie kept her wares. The smothering scent of bananas and apples, the close air of the tenement, and the whiffs of salt miraculously penetrating the place from the thick-masted river beyond—the blending of all these would have been fatal to nostrils and lungs more delicate than Fogerty's. Even he was driven to commend upon it.

"Say, de fodder's pretty strong, ain't it?" he said as he ate bacon and bread and drank coffee with great gusto on the first morning of his tenancy.

"Ye'll get used to it," answered Apple Annie placidly, from the side of the oil-clothed table nearest the shining cook-stove. From her seat of vantage she could reach the steaming coffee-pot and the spider in which the reserve supply of meat still sizzled. The room was gay with religious chromos on the walls and with the dazzling patchwork quilt upon the big bed in the corner. Fogerty surveyed his surroundings approvingly.

"I guess I will," he said. "Say, this room is all right!"

"I've no fault to find wid it," said its owner comfortably.

"Well, if ye'll give me me key, I'll be goin'," announced the boarder; and equipped with that tie to his new home, he left.

The queer alliance thus begun lasted several months—until the appearance on the scene of the zealous Mr. White and the ardent Miss Webster, already chronicled. Mr. White's mission church was in the neighborhood. He stumbled upon



Fogerty scowled and answered in monosyllables.

Apple Annie's apartment when he was looking for that of one of his own parishioners. Apple Annie had made him welcome with the easy tolerance she showed to almost all comers. She dusted a chair for him to sit upon while she went forth to inquire throughout the tenement if the Baxters had left any address when they moved. She was full of kindly regrets when she came back to announce that they had not taken the precaution to leave a clew to their present whereabouts. She was quite willing to talk with the young man about the neighborhood and the weather and the needs of the city. By and by it was borne in upon her that he was waiting for some other purpose than mere conversation with her.

"The truth is," he said awkwardly, when her questioning gaze made some explanation of his prolonged call necessary, "that one of—one of—a district visitor of our church—a young lady—was to meet me at Mrs. Baxter's. We were to arrange for sending that little cripple boy of hers to a hospital," he added in a businesslike manner. "And I don't wish to go before she—the young lady—comes. I could wait in the hall, though, and—"

"Not at all! Not at all!" declared Apple Annie hospitably. "Sure, I'll open the door into the hall there, an' we can see the young lady when she comes in. It would be a pretty how-d'ye-do if you was to have to wait in the hall. An' a cup o' tea'll do her no harm after climbin' the stairs an' all. I'll have the kettle boilin' in a jiffy."

When Viola, blushing, breathless from haste and mounting unfamiliar stairs, finally arrived at the Baxters' deserted threshold, she was greeted by a rosy, smiling old woman who bore her into a gay kitchen and poured bitter tea for

her. She and Archbold looked at each other across the rims of the flowered gift cups in which the beverage had been served. Their eyes said:

"Isn't she dear and quaint? Isn't this a lovely adventure? What can we do to maintain the friendship thus inaugurated?"

What they decided to do was to come back some time when they could see Fogerty, about whose sullen braggadocio Apple Annie had told them with much tender humor.

A faint misgiving stirred Apple Annie's heart when they had departed. She hoped that they would have no scheme for parting her from Fogerty. Since, one by one, her own had gone from her, she had unconsciously expended upon the world in general the affection which had once been given to them; but for none of those who had come within the circle of her warm-hearted kindness had she had quite the feeling which she reserved for Fogerty.

"Not that he's like anny of me own," she said to herself, when she reflected upon the emotion with which the stunted little gutter urchin inspired her. "Thank God, they was different—not wid their hands always clenched to hit an' their eyes always cocked for trouble. But—maybe it's that he's a lonely poor thing; an' when all's said an' done I'm a lonely poor thing meself. Annyway, it'd go hard wid me now if he was to leave me. But I don't think he will. I don't think he will. An' I don't think the young minister or the young lady'd be wantin' it. Sure they've no call at all to interfere with my affairs. 'Twould be poor thanks for the cup of tea I give them!"

Fogerty had fallen into the habit of occasionally appearing at the tenement shortly after supper-time. He averred that trade was dull between the time of the homeward-scurrying workers and that of the emptying theatres. He allowed himself to be persuaded to sit at the table and have a bite or two of whatever Apple Annie had had for supper. Then, fearful lest she should think the visit planned merely for the sake of free food, he offered to reimburse her for all meals not included in their original contract.

"Go on wid ye!" said Apple Annie, laughing. "Sure, it's the queer little piece of impudence ye are! Drop in to supper when ye like. I'll have no extra thing for ye, so what would I be takin' yer money for? An' for the matter of that, I'm glad of yer company." Then Fogerty, still unable to comprehend giving for the sake of mere kindness, solved the problem by bringing home tidbits to supplement the meal. Now it was a frankfurter, and now doughnuts; or again an ear of hot corn would be borne triumphantly in from the corner merchant. And sometimes a dripping, paper-wrapped block of ice cream.

As he discovered this method of return Apple Annie's hospitality, the proud and independent Fogerty availed himself more often of her invitation to drop in as soon after tea-time as possible. And as Apple Annie discovered this tendency on his part, she gradually put the hour of the evening meal forward, in order to meet her lodger's habits.

They were dallying over a late supper of this composite sort on the evening when the Rev. Mr. White and Miss Webster returned for their call on Fogerty. Fogerty had been discoursing, with an open-heartedness new to him, of affairs in general, and especially those in his own business, when the callers arrived. Their appearance was the signal for him to fall into the old silent, suspicious attitude. His chin sank into his collarless shirt, his eyes met no one's except furtively. He scowled and answered in monosyllables the questions addressed to him.

Poor Annie was quite distressed by the impressions he was sure he made upon the visitors. When they had made their voluble, over-friendly way out she rebuked Fogerty for his sullenness.

"Aw," said Fogerty, "g'wan! Wot d'ye take me for? They wants somethin'; they ain't comin' to see ye because it's wot they'd rather do—ye can put that in yer pipe an' smoke it. It's some con game, that's wot it is. So long. I'm goin' out."

Out in the street Viola was saying to her lover: "Oh, how dreadful, how dreadful, for children to be brought up like that! Poor little chap, he wouldn't be

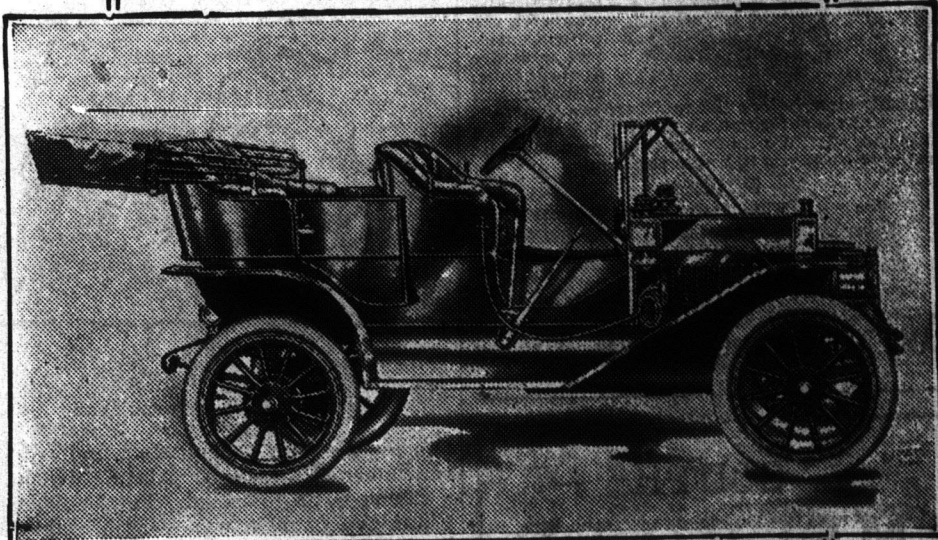
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