

your mother cud saw a cord of wood quick'ern she cud split slivers for mornin' fire but when you see her you'll say she is the purtiest gal alive— She gave a snort and crushed the paper between her hands. But presently she smoothed it out again. She punctuated it. She put in capitals. But no, there was no mistake. He only wanted her to help him with his work. He loved another woman and thought her pretty! She ground her teeth. She crushed the letter again and threw it on the floor. She rose to her feet and—gave it a kick! Fact! Then she paced the floor—just as the novels make them do. Then she took up a newspaper and looked it over; and finally she resumed her seat and her pen and paper and wrote: "Trustees Scrubland School, Gentlemen,—I wish to apply for the position of teacher in your school at the terms mentioned in your advertisement. I have had several years' experience Yours truly, Madeline Grueson."

The day mentioned by Miss Bonair in her letter found her journeying homeward. In Winnipeg, where she had to change cars, she spent some time seeing friends and shopping. When she presented herself at the Northern Pacific station she found that owing to a recent change in the time table, the train by which she had intended travelling had already gone. While speaking to the ticket agent a gentleman entered and enquired for the same train. It was the same who had been so kind to her on the occasion of her starting to Scrubland. They recognized each other.

"Have you also missed the train?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied, "and I was so anxious to get home."

"So am I," he said, "I have been away from home for nearly four months—ever since the day on which we travelled together last."

"Why so have I."

"Indeed! Well we can go yet. If the C. P. R. train will serve you; we have time enough."

"I sometimes go that way. My home is six miles from the nearest station on that line; but as I wrote that I would be home to-night without fail, some one will meet me, no doubt."

They left the station as they were speaking, and taking a street car were soon at that of the C. P. R. There, having some time on their hands, they improved it by getting acquainted. The gentleman introduced himself as Gerald O'Neil. The name was familiar to her. She had heard of him often as a wealthy young Irishman who had been farming for some time about ten miles from her home. He was well and favorably known in that district. He was variously reputed to be the son of an Irish lord, and the descendant of an Irish king; but all agreed that he was a king of good fellows on his own account, and that, unlike many young men from over the water, he was using his wealth wisely and to a good purpose. Time passed quickly, and soon they were speeding westward,

### CHAPTER III.

Mr. Bonair met the train by which his daughter had written that she would arrive. When he reached home without her he found there Mr. Solomon Shure, her old-time lover and would-be proprietor. That gentleman was greatly disappointed, and at once suggested that she must be coming by the C. P. R. He proposed to go and see. But it was uncertain—improbable, they thought—that she should come by that route; a storm was threatening too; snow already falling in scattered, feathery flakes; besides she was well acquainted at the station and could easily stay there over night. So they attempted to dissuade him from going. And all thought when he took his leave it was to go home. But he turned his horse in the opposite direction, and said to himself as he applied the whip:

"What's the odds if it is a little blustery? The house is fit enough to take any girl into now; and we may as well arrange things to-night and have matters settled. Just as well."

Some miles nearer the station, but approaching it by a different road, was Mr. Jonathan Wayback with his team and farm sleigh.

The hours went quickly by as the train rolled westward. So at least thought Mr.