

The evening passed pleasantly also, and when Mrs. Marston and her brother were at last sitting alone before the fire for a little chat before going up stairs, she felt that her wishes were on a fair way to fulfillment. Teacher Ruth's eyes had certainly shown an unwonted sparkle that evening. This being the case, her anxious friend felt that she might safely turn to her own affairs for a brief while, and forthwith she began to pour into her brother's ears an account of some of the usual domestic problems.

He gazed into the fire as she talked, and at last seized the opportunity of a pause to ask with a considerable show of interest, "Where did you find her, Nan?"

"At an intelligence office in New York," replied his sister. "She was well recommended and—"

"At an intelligence office! Do you think I am referring to your cook?" "I had been speaking of her," was the meek rejoinder.

"Well, I didn't hear you," and Ned Gordon seized the tongs and turned over a burning log with unnecessary energy.

old, yet she assures me solemnly with hand on heart that she has never known a thrill."

"A thrill?" queried the young man with another thrust at the sputtering log.

"Oh, I suppose you are totally ignorant on the subject of thrills," replied his sister with sarcasm, "but I am willing to commission you instructor to Ruth in the matter. I don't care to have you break her heart, you know, or carry away her scalp to hang over your mirror—I am too fond of her soft golden crown for that—but I want her to know something of the fun of a—well, a flirtation, perhaps. I'm glad you are a little interested in her. It will make your task more easy."

"Nan, you are growing frivolous in your old age. What do you intend to do with Mary when she arrives at woman's estate? I think you will need a guardian by that time."

"Perhaps so," returned Mrs. Marston, dryly. "Will you serve in that capacity?"

"I take it she is not very used to masculine society," went on her



Ned Gordon looked up and saw the slender gray figure on the landing.

"Did you mean the waitress?" asked Mrs. Marston with mischief twinkling in her eyes.

"Didn't see her."

"Then perhaps you referred to Ruth. Oh, I didn't find her; she found me. She was lonely in her first boarding place and I hadn't the heart to refuse her when she asked if she might come here."

"I don't wonder," was the laconic response.

"Isn't she sweet!" exclaimed Mrs. Marston, forgetting to tease in her enthusiasm.

"Sweet! She is adorable," returned the Princeton man with fervor. "Her soft 'thees' make me feel as though I were a Frenchman."

"The French only use 'thee' as a term of endearment or intimacy; very warm friends, lovers, husbands and wives—am I not right? Ruth uses it to everyone."

"I suppose so."

"Ned," Mrs. Marston leaned forward in the firelight, "that dainty little Quakeress deserves to be set down in the history of womankind as a wonder. She is twenty-three years

brother, ignoring the sarcasm, as he settled back in the chair. "She isn't forever making eyes at a fellow."

"Mary? Oh, no; she is too young. Stop!" as a sofa pillow was wafted in her direction. "You mean Ruth?"

She paused and reflected mentally. "I mustn't let him feel too sure of his powers," then murmured aloud, "Well, I can't say. She knows the words of 'Fair Harvard,' which is more than most of the 'gentle sons' of that university can boast; and she mentioned the other day that violets were the flowers of Yale."

"But the 'thrills'?" queried the Princeton senior.

"Oh, she may have forgotten all about those. Ruth is very much absorbed in her work. Come, young man, it is time to go to bed."

The next day passed as Mrs. Marston had planned, and if Harold and Jack were a little disappointed in Uncle Ned's visit, their mother was

not. After tea the guitar was pressed into service, and when the children had been delighted with "Polly Doodle" and the peanut song

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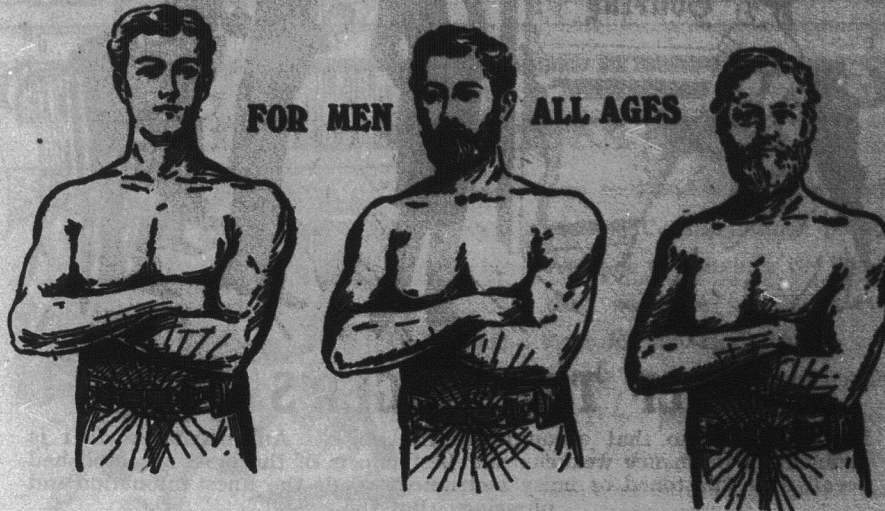
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