

Coming from these picnics, dinner parties, *musicales* and so forth, it generally fell to his lot to do escort duty for Mary Miller, for her mother, shrewd old general that she was, contrived that no opportunity of their being together should be wanting.

Ah, those balmy moonlight summer nights! How many lovers' rhapsodies thence receive their inspiration! How many soft speeches have been uttered, vows plighted, hearts won only to be broken, since Juliet was wooed by Romeo! Really we must admit that moonlight plays the mischief with young people's hearts. Can there be any truth in the popular belief that the soft rays of the orb of night have a weakening effect on human brains?

It would not have been very strange then, if Frank Byrne had talked nonsense to his lovely companion under the moonbeams. But he did not. Nothing was farther from his mind than love making, yet he possessed, all unknown to himself, a fascination of manner, and dangerously winning way, which threw a glamour over his slightest words and actions. Was it surprising, then, that Mary Miller's gentle heart should have succumbed to the charm of his voice and manner?

Frank himself was conscious of the pleasure he felt in her society, but this he ascribed to her being more sensible, and less affected than other girls of his acquaintance. He could converse with her without descending to the inanities which constitute the ordinary small talk of society. They both loved music, too, not as it is "adored" by those who can jingle a piano and sing a few false notes, but with a genuine sympathetic appreciation of the beauties of the divine art. Frank had a mellow, tenor voice, which old Professor Lacoste at Oshawa had delighted to train; Mary who was leader of the choir at St. Columbia's, played charmingly on harp or piano. So the former found himself frequently of an evening in Mrs. Miller's cosy parlor, listening with delight to the sweet soprano which sang for him his favorite old Scotch ballads, or blending his voice with hers in some tender love-song whose meaning he felt not, yet gave passionate expression to in his tones.

Mrs. Miller generally absented herself

on the plea of household duties, but occasionally she would join them in a game of whist, and a shrewd observer would have noticed that this was always the case when Frank's cousin, Stanley McKenzie, was present.

At last Mrs. Miller determined to give a ball which should be the event of the season in Felixburg. The most elaborate preparations were made, numerous invitations issued, and the Officers of the F. F. B. (Felixburg Field Battery) offered the services of the brigade band for the occasion.

As Frank Byrne tied his cravat before the mirror on the evening of the ball, his thoughts were not altogether of so complacent a character as is generally the case with young men of the period on such occasions. In short, he was beginning to realize that for a young man about to enter the seminary, he had not, to say the least, spent his time very wisely.

It was now the first of September. The preliminary arrangements must be made by the fifteenth, and he had not yet even signified his intention to his parents! What would they think of him? And yet he had not intended to defer it so long. They probably fancied that he did not wish to think of work for some months yet, and therefore had not questioned him.

Frank had already begun to find reflection taste bitter. At any rate, his dissipation, not of a very serious nature after all, he thought, had about run its career.

At the ball he noted with pleasure that Mary Miller declined all partners who requested her hand in a waltz. To testify his approval, he walked through a couple of quadrilles with her himself, though not fond of dancing.

But he found more amusement in watching the other dancers,—the burly Lieutenant Colonel of the F. F. B. for whom it was a prodigious exertion to keep his sword from going through his partner's train; the slim dandified Major whose whole exterior was redolent of self-conceit and cologne; the two captains, one short, exceedingly pompous, and apparently convinced that the letter 'h' had been guilty of *lèse-majesté* or "high treason" as he, despising French, would himself have called it; the other excessively tall, thin