

HIS OWN AT LAST.

CHAPTER VI. (CONTINUED).

"At length, 'Marry You!' says the Brat, in a deeply accented tone of low and awed disbelief. 'Why, he was at school with father!'"

"I wish to heavens that he had never been at school anywhere!" cry I, in a fury. "I am sick to death of hearing that he was at school with father. Will no one ever forget it?"

"He is forty-seven!" said Algy, at last closing his mouth, and speaking with slow impressiveness. "Nineteen from forty-seven! how many years older than you?"

"Do not count!" cry I, pettishly; "what is the use? not all the counting in the world will make him any younger."

"It is not true," cries Bobby, with boisterous skepticism, jumping up from his seat and making a plunge at me; "it is a hoax! she has been taking us all in. Really, Nancy, for a beginner, you do not do it badly."

"It is not a hoax!" cry I, scornfully, standing scarlet and deeply ashamed, facing them all; "it is real, plain, downright truth."

Another pause. No sound but the monotonous, unemotional clock, and the woodpecker's fluty laugh from the orchard.

"And so you really have a lover at last, Nancy?" says Algy, the corners of his mouth beginning to twitch in a way which looks badly for the keeping of his oath.

"Yes!" say I, beginning to laugh violently, but quite uncomfortable; "are you surprised? you know I always told you that if you half shut your eyes, and looked at me from a great way off, I really was not so bad looking."

"You have distanced the Begums!" cries the young fellow, joining in my mirth, but with a good deal more enjoyment than I can boast.

"So I have!" I answer; and my sense of the ludicrous overcoming all other considerations, I begin to giggle with a good will.

"Let us look at you, 'Nancy,'" says the Brat, taking hold of me by both arms, and bringing the minute impertinence of his face into close neighbourhood to mine. "I begin to think that there must be more in you than we have yet discovered! I never looked upon you as one of our most favorable specimens, did we?"

"Do not you remember old Aunt Williams?" reply I, merrily; "how she used to say, 'I was not pretty, my dears, but I was a pleasant little devil!'" Perhaps I am a pleasant little devil!"

"Poor-dear—old fellow!" says Barbara, in an accent of the profoundest, delicatest, womanliest pity. "How sorry I am for him! Nancy, how will you break it to him most kindly? I am afraid he will be sadly hurt! will you speak to him, or do it by letter?"

Barbara had risen. We are all standing up, more or less; it is impossible to sit through such news; Barbara's garden hat is in her hand. The warm and mellow sun, that is making Africa's dreary expanse in the map on the wall one broad, fine sheet, is unkindling, too, the silk of her hair, the flower petals of her cheeks, the blue compassion of her eyes. My pretty, tall Barbara! Let them say what they like, I am sure that somewhere—somewhere—you are pretty now!

"If you write," says Algy, still laughing, but with moderation, "I should advise you to depute me to make a fair copy of the letter; else, from the extreme ambiguity of your handwriting, he will most likely mistake your drift, and imagine that you are saying yes."

"How do you know that I am not going to say yes?" I ask, abruptly.

Rivers of additional scarlet are racing to my cheeks, over my forehead—in among the roots of my hair—all around and about my throat; but I stand, looking at the assembled multitude full in the face, fairly, well, and boldly.

"Listen!" I continue, holding up my right hand in deprecation; "let me speak—do not interrupt me, Bobby, I know that he was at school with father—Algy, I know that he is forty-seven—all of you, I know that his hair is gray, and that there are crow's feet about his eyes; but still—"

"Do you mean to say that you are in love with him?" breaks in Bobby, impressively.

Instances of enamored humanity have been rare in Bobby's experience. With the exception of Toothless Jack, he has never had a near and familiar view of an authentic specimen. I therefore, see him now regarding me with a reverent interest, not unminged with awe.

"I mean nothing so silly," I answer, with lofty petulance. "I am a great deal too old for any such nonsense."

"There I go with you," says Algy, not without grandeur. "I believe that it is the greatest humbug out, and that it rarely occurs between the ages of sixteen and sixty."

"Father's and mother's was a love-match," says Bobby, gravely. "Did not Aunt Williams tell us that they used always to sit hand-in-hand before they were married?"

A shout of laughter at our parent's expense greets this piece of information. "All married people grow to hate one another after a bit," say I, comprehensively; "it is only a question of time."

"But if you do not love him now, and if you are sure that you will hate him by and by," says Barbara, looking rather puzzled, "what makes you think of taking him?"

"It would be such a fine thing for all the family," I could give all the boys such a shove," say I, with homely shrewdness.

"They killed seven hundred head of game on his big day last year; I heard him tell father so," says Bobby, with his mouth watering.

"He has a moor in Scotland," throws in the Brat.

"He must ride a stone heavier than I do," says Algy, thoughtfully, "his horses would certainly carry me; I wonder would he give me a mount row and then?"

"I would have you all staying with me always," I cry, warming with my theme, and beginning to dance, "all except father; he should come once a year for a week, if he was good, and not at all, if he was not."

"What will you call him, Nancy?" asks the Brat, inquisitively. "What shall we call him?"

"He will be Tou Tou's brother," cries Bobby, with a yell of delight.

"Hush!" says Barbara, apprehensively; "he will hear you."

"No, he will not," I answer, composedly. "A person would have to bawl even louder than Bobby does, to make him hear; he has gone away for a week; he said he did not wish me to decide in a hurry; he has given me till this day week; I wish it were this day ten years—"

"This day week, then," says Algy, walking about with his hands in his pockets, and smiling to himself, "we may hope to see him return in triumph in a blue frock-coat, with the ring and the parson; at that age one has no time to lose."

"Haste to the wedding!" cries the Brat, at the top of his voice, seizing me by both hands, and forcing me to execute an uncouth war-dance, in unwilling celebration of my approaching nuptials.

"I hope that there will be lots of almonds in the cake!" says Bobby, gluttonously.

CHAPTER VII.

The week's reprieve has ended; my Judgment Day has come. Never, never, surely, did seven days race so madly past, tumbling over each other's heels. Even Sunday—Sunday, which mostly contains at least forty-eight hours—has gone like a flash. Morning service, afternoon service, good books, sermon to the servants, supper, they all run into one another like dissolving views. For the first time in my life my sleep is broken. I fall asleep in a fever of irresolution. I awake in one. I box Bobby's ears in one. My appetite (oh, portent!) flags: in intense excitement, who can eat yards of bread and butter, pounds of oatmeal porridge, as has ever been my bucolic habit? Shall I marry Sir Roger, or shall I not? The birds, the crowing cocks, the church bells, the gong for dinner, the old pony whinnying in the park, they all seem to say this. It seems written on the sailing clouds, on the pages of every book that I open. Armies of *ros* wages battle against legions of *cons*, and every day the issue of the fight seems more and more doubtful.

The morning of the day has arrived, and I am still undecided. I press in a perfect storm of doubts and questionings. I put on my own, without the faintest idea of whether it is inside out or the reverse. I go slowly down-stairs, every banister marked by a fresh decision. I open the dining-room door. Father's voice is the first thing that I hear; father's voice, raised and rasping. He is standing up and has a letter in his hand; from the engaging blue of its color, and the harmony of its shape, too evidently a bill.

"I regret to have to hurt your feelings," he is saying, in that awful voice, at which we all—small and great—quake, "but the next time that this occurs" (pointing to the bill), "I must request you to find accommodation for yourself elsewhere, as really my poor house is not a fit place for a young gentleman with such princely views on the subject of expenditure."

The object of this pleasant harangue is Algy, who, also standing, with his face very white, his lips very much compressed, and his eyes flashing with a furious light, is fronting his parent on the hearth-rug. Behind the tea-urn mother is mingling her drink with tears, and making little covert signs to Algy, at all rates to hold his tongue.

My mind is made up, never to be unmade again. I will marry Sir Roger. He shall pay all Algy's debts, and forever dry mother's sad, wet eyes.

The weather of paradise is gone back to paradise. This day is very earthly. There has been a sharp, cold shower, and there is still a strong rain-wind, which has snapped a score of tulip-branches. Poor, brave *Tou Tou*! Prone they lie on the garden-beds, defiled, dispirited. Even the survivors are strained and dashed, and the sweet Nancies look pinched and small. If you were to go down on your knees to them, they could not give you any scent. I am walking up and down the room, in a state of the utmost agitation. My heart is beating so as to make me feel quite sick. My fingers are very hot, but hardly so hot as my face.

"For Heaven's sake do not make me laugh: do not!" cry I, nervously; "it would be too dreadful if I were to receive his overtures with a broad grin, would not it? There! it is gone. Do I look quite grave?"

I take half a dozen hurried turns along the floor, and try to think of all our most depressing family themes—father, Algy's college bills, Tou Tou's shrunk face and thin legs; nothing will do. When I stop before the glass and consult it, that hysterical smile is there still.

"Do you remember the day when we were all children, that we all went to the dentist?" says the Brat, chuckling, "and father gave Bobby a New Testament because he had his eye-tooth out? Does to day at all remind you of it, Nancy?"

"I had rather rather had both my eye-teeth out, and several of my double ones, too," reply I, sincerely.

"I must not keep him any longer," cry I, desperately. "Tell me!" (appealing pitifully to them all) "do I look right? do I look pretty natural?"

"You do not look middle-aged enough," says Bobby, bluntly.

"Put on your bonnet," suggests Algy. "You look twenty years older in that, particularly when you cook it well over your nose, as you did last Sunday."

"You are all very unkind!" say I, in a whimpering voice, walking toward the door.

"And if he becomes too demonstrative," says the Brat, overtaking me with a rush before I reach it, "say:—"

Unhand me, greybeard loon!"

Then I go. As I know perfectly well that if I give myself time to think, I shall stand with the drawing-room door-handle in my grasp for half an hour, before I can make up my mind to enter, I take the bull by the horns, and whisking in suddenly and noisily, find myself *de-a-tete* with my lover.

Certainly, I never felt such a fool in my life. How awful it will be if I burst out laughing in his face! It is quite as likely as not—I shall do it out of sheer hysterical fright. Oh, how different! how much nicer it was when we last parted! I had taken him to see the jackdaw, and the little bear that Bobby brought from foreign parts; and Jacky had bitten his finger so humorously, and we had been so merry, and I had told

him again how much I wished that he could change places with father. And now! I feel—more than see—that he is drawing nigh me. Through my eyelids—for I am very sure that I never lift my eyes—I get an idea of his appearance.

Under his present aspect I am much more disposed to be critical, and to pick holes in him, than I was under his former one. Any attempt at youthfulness, any effort of *smartness*, will not escape my vigilant reprobation—down-eyelid and red cheeked as I appear to be. But none such do I find. There is no false juvenility—there is no trace of dandyism in the plain and quiet clothes, in the hair sparsely sprinkled with snow, in the mature and goodly face.

An iron-gray, middle-aged gentleman stands before me, more vigorous, more full of healthy life than two-thirds of the puny youth, nourished on sherry and bitters, of the present small generation, but with no wish, no smallest effort to take away one from the burden of years that God has laid on his strong shoulders.

There is no doubt that I shall not speak first, so for a moment there is a profound silence. Then I find my hot hand in Sir Roger's, where it has so often and so familiarly lain before, and I hear Sir Roger's voice addressing me.

"I am an old fool, Nancy, and you have come to tell me so!"

Somehow I know that the bronze of his face is a little paled by emotion, but there is no sawny sentiment in his tone, none of the lover's whine. It is the same voice, as mainly as subtle bear. And yet, for the moment, I am physically unable to answer him. Who can answer the simplest question ever put with a lump the size of a cocoa nut in their throat? My eyelids are still hopelessly drooped over my eyes; but, by some sense that is not eyesight I am aware that there is a sort of shyness in his face, a diffidence in his address.

"Nancy, have I come back too soon? am I hurrying you?"

I raise my eyes for an instant, and then let them fall.

"No, thank you," I say, demurely, "not at all. I have had plenty of time."

And then, somehow, there seems to me something so ludicrous in the sound of my own speech, that I tremble on the verge of a burst of loud and unwilling laughter.

"Speak out all your thought to me, whatever it is," he says, in a tone of grave entreaty, moved and tender, yet manly withal. "Look at me with the same friendly, fearless eyes that you did last week. I know, my dear, that you always think of others more than yourself, and I dare say that now you are afraid of hurting me. Indeed, you need not be. I am tough and well seasoned; I have known what pain is before now—it would be very odd, at my time of life, if I had not. I can well bear a little more, and be the better for it, perhaps."

I stand stupidly silent. One's outer man or woman often does an injustice to one's inner feelings. As he speaks my heart goes out to him, but I can find no words in which to dress my thoughts. "Nancy!" in a tone of thorough distress. "I can bear anything but seeing you shrink and shiver away from me, as I have seen you do from your father."

"You never will see that," replied I, laconically, gathering bravery enough to look him in the face as I delivered this encouraging remark.

"Do you think," he says, beginning to walk restlessly about the room—(long ago he dropped my limp hand)—"that all this week I have had much hope? Every time then, I have caught a glimpse of myself in the glass, I have said, 'Is this a face likely to take a child's fancy? Do you bear much resemblance to the hero of her story-books?' My dear—(stopping before me)—you cannot think my presumption more absurd than I do myself."

"I do not think it at all absurd," reply I, beginning to speak quite stoutly, and to be rather diffuse than otherwise. "Perhaps I did, just at first, when they were all laughing, and saying about you having been at school with father; but now I do not in the least—I do not care what the boys say—I do not, really. I am not joking."

At my words he half stretches out his hand to take mine; but, as if repressing some strong impulse, withdraws it again, and speaks quietly, with a rather sober smile.

"I am afraid that one's soul ages more than one's body, Nancy! Even at my age it has seemed difficult to me to be brought into hourly companionship with all that was most fresh and womanly, and spirited, and pretty."

"Pretty!" think I. "I wish the boys could hear him! they will never believe me if I tell them."

"And not wish to have it for my own, to take and make much of. I, that have never had anything very lovely nor loveable in my life. And then, dear, it was all your good nature, you did not know what you were doing, you seemed to find some little pleasure in my society—even chose it by preference now and then. My talk did not weary you, as I should have thought it would have done, and so I grew to think—to think—Bah!" (with a movement of impatience) "it was a foolish thought! what can there be in common between me and a child like you?"

"I think that there is a great deal," reply I, speaking very steadily, and, so saying, I stretch out my hand and of my own accord put it in his again! He cannot well return it to me, so he keeps it.

"And yet it is impossible!" he says, with hesitating interrogation, while his steel-blue eyes look anxiously into mine. "Is it?" say I, a wily smile beginning to creep over my features. "If it is, what was the use of asking me?" I have the grace to grow extremely red as I make this observation.

"Nancy!" seizing my other hand, too, and speaking in a hurried, low voice that slightly shakes with the force of his emotion: "what are you saying? You do not know what you are implying."

"Yes I do," reply I, firmly. "I know perfectly. And it is not impossible. Not at all, I should say."

Upon this explicit declaration an ordinary lover would have had me in his arms and smothered me with kisses before you could look round; but my lover is abnormal. He does nothing of the kind.

"Art you sure," he says, with an earnest gravity and imploring emphasis, "that you understand what you are doing? Are you

certain, Nancy, that if we had not been friends—if you had not been loath to pain me—that you would not have answered differently? Think, child, I think well of it! this is not a matter of months, or even years, but of your whole long young life."

"Yes," say I, gravely, looking down. "I know it is."

And, put thus solemnly before me, the idea of the marriage state seems to me hardly less weightily oppressive than the idea of eternity.

"How should I feel," he continues (he has put a hand on each of my shoulders, and is looking at me with a serious yet tender fixity), "if, by and by, in the years ahead of us, you came and told me that by selfishness—taking advantage of your youth—I had destroyed your life?"

"And do you think," say I, with a flash of indignation, "that even if you had done it, I should come and tell you?"

"Are you quite sure that among all the men of your acquaintance—men nearer you in age, more akin in tastes, men not gray-haired, not weather-beaten, not past their best years—there is not one with whom you would more willingly spend your life than with me? If it is so, I beseech you to tell me, as you would tell your mother?"

"If there were," reply I, smiling broadly, a smile which greatly widens my mouth, and would show my dimples if I had any; "I should indeed be susceptible. The two curates that you saw the other night—the one who tore his gloves into strips, you know, and the other who ate so much—Toothless Jack—these are the sort of men among whom my lives have lain. Do you think I am likely to be very much in love with any of them?"

My speech does not seem so altogether reassuring as I had expected.

"I am very suspicious," he says, half apologetically, "but you have seen so little of the world, you have led such a nun's life! how can you answer for it that hereafter out in the world you may not meet some one more to your liking? You are a dear little, kindly, tender-hearted soul, and you do not tell me so, but you do not like me much, Nancy. Indeed, dear, I can far better do without you now, than see you by and by wishing me away and yet be unable to rid you of me."

"People can help falling in love," say I, with matter-of-fact common sense. "If I belonged to you, of course I should never think of any one else in that way."

"Are you sure?"

"I wish that you would not ask me any more questions," say I, interrupting him with a pout. "I am quite sure of everything you can possibly think of."

"I will only ask you one more—are you quite sure that it is not for your brother's and sister's sakes—not your own—that you are doing this? Do you remember" (with a smile, half playful, half sad) "what you told me about your views of marriage on t at it is day when I found you in the kitchen-garden?"

"I hope to Heaven that you did not think I was *hinting*," say I, growing crimson; "it certainly sounded very like it, but I really and truly was not. I was thinking of a young man. I assure you" (speaking with great earnestness) "that I had as much idea of marrying you as of marrying father!"

Looking back with mature reflection at this speech, I think that it may be safely reckoned among my unlucky things.

"No," he says, wincing a little, a very little. "I know you had not; but—you have not answered my question."

For a moment I look down irresolute; then, through some fixed belief in him, I look up and tell him the plain, bare truth. "I did think that it would be a nice thing for the boys," I say, "and so it will, there is no doubt; you will be as good as a father to them; but I like you myself besides—you may believe it or not, as you please; but I like, quite, quite true."

As I speak, the tears steal into my eyes.

"And I like you!" he answers, very simply; and, so saying, stoops, and with a sort of diffidence kisses me.

"Well, how did it go off?" cries Bobby, curiously, when I next rejoin my compeers. "Did you laugh?"

"Laugh!" I echo, with lofty anger, "I do not know what you mean. I never felt in the least inclined." Then, seeing my brethren look rather aghast at this sudden change in the wind, I add, gayly: "Bobby, you must never again breathe a word about Sir Roger's having been at school with father; let it be supposed that he did without education."

CHAPTER VIII.

This is my wooing: thus I am disposed of. Without a shadow of previous flirtation with any man born of woman—without any of the ups and downs, the ins and outs of an ordinary love affair. I place my fate in Sir Roger's hands. Henceforth I must have done with all girlish speculations as to the manner of man who is to drop from the clouds to be my wooer. Well, I have not many day-dreams to relinquish. When I have built Spanish castles—in a large family one has not time for many—a lover for myself has been less the theme of my aspirations than a benefactor for the family. One who will exercise a wholesome repressive influence over father has been more than anything the theme of my longings, on the unlikely hypothesis of marrying at all. For, oh friends, it has seemed to me most unlikely; I dare say that I might not have been over-difficult—might have thankfully and heartily loved some one not quite a Bayard, but one cannot love anything—any odd and end—and, say what you will, the choice of a country-girl, with a little dowry, and a plain face, is but small. For—do not dislike me for it, if you can help—I am plain. I know it by the joint and honest testimony of all my brethren. I have had no trouble in gathering the truth from them. A hundred times they have volunteered it, with that healthy disregard of any sickly sensitiveness which arms one against blows to one's vanity through all after-life. Yes, I am plain; not offensively so, not largely, fatly staringly plain, but in a small, blonde, harmless way. However, Sir Roger thinks me pretty. Did not he say so, in unmistakable English? I have tried darkly to hint this to the boys, but have been so decisively pool-poohed that I resolve not to allude to the subject again. Not only am I plain now, but I shall remain plain to my life's end. Unlike the generality of ugly

heroines, you will not see me develop and effloresce into beauty toward the end of my story.

The interval between my betrothal and my marriage is but short. On April 22nd, I put my hand into Sir Roger's. On May 20th, I am to put it into his for good. When the bridegroom is forty-seven, and the bride one of six, why should there be any delay? Why should a man keep and lodge his daughter any longer than he can help, when he has found someone else willing to do it for him? This, I think, is father's view. And, meanwhile, father himself is more like an angel than a man. Not once do we hear the terrible polite voice that chills the marrow of our bones. Not once is his nose more than becomingly hooked. Not once does he look like a hawk. Another long bill comes in for Algy, and is dismissed with the benevolent comment that you cannot put gray heads upon green shoulders, I dare every day now; and father and I converse agreeably upon different topics. Once—oh, prodigious!—we take a walk round Home Farm together, and he consults me about the Ber-shire pigs. Then comes a mad rush for clothes. I am involved in a whirlwind of haberdashery, Brussels lace, diamonds. It feels very odd—the becoming possessed of a great number of stately garments, to which Barbara has no fellows—Barbara and I, who hitherto have been stitch for stitch alike. And meanwhile I see next to nothing of my future husband. This is chiefly my own doing.

"You will not mind," I say, standing before him one day in the drawing-room window, and speaking rather bashfully—somehow I do not feel so comfortably easy and outspoken with him as I did before the catastrophe—"you will not mind if I do not see much of you—do not go out walking—do not talk to you very much till—till it is over."

"And why am I not to mind?" he asks, half jestingly, yet a little grave, too.

"You will have quite enough—too much of me afterward," I say, with a shy laugh, "and they—they will never have much of me again—never so much, at least—and" (with rather a tremble in my voice) "we have had such fun together!"

And so Sir Roger keeps away. Whether his self-denial costs him much, I cannot say. It never occurs to me at the time that it does. He may think me a very nice little girl, and that I shall be a great comfort to him, but he cannot care much about having any very long conversations with me—he that has seen so many lands, and known so many great and clever people, and read so many books. He has always been most undemonstrative to me. At his age, no doubt, he does not care much for the foolish endearments of lovers; so, with an easy conscience, I devote myself, for my short space, to the boys, to Barbara, to Vick, and the jackdaw. Once, indeed—just once, I have a little talk with him, and afterward I almost wished that I had not had it. We are sitting under a horse-chestnut tree in the garden—a tree that, under the handling of the warm air, is breaking into a thousand tender fashions. We did not begin by being *de-a-tete*; indeed, several lately occupied chairs intervene between us, but first one and then another has slipped away, and we are alone.

"Nancy!" says Sir Roger, his eyes following the Brat, who is lightly tripping up the stone steps, looking very small and agile in his white-flannel cricketing things, "what is that boy's real name? Why do you call him the Brat?"

"Because he is such a Brat," reply I, fondly, picking up from the grass a green chestnut bud that the squirrels or the rooks have untimely nipped. "Did you ever see anything so little, so white and pert? He has sadly mistaken his vocation in life; he ought to have been a street Arab."

"One gets rather sick of one's surname," says my companion. "Except your father, hardly anyone calls me Roger now! I should be glad to answer to it again."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Lime and Soot.

"A Subscriber" writes that he has six barrels of slaked lime and three barrels of soot every week, and asks us which is the best use to which he can put them on the farm. The lime can be applied directly to any soils that contain a considerable amount of vegetable matter. It is especially valuable on wheat lands, and is spread at the rate of 50 to 150 bushels to the acre. It is also found beneficial on grass lands. Lime may also be used with muck, to form an excellent compost, and soils and other vegetable matters may be composed with it. Soot contains salts of ammonia equal to from one to five per cent. of ammonia. Applied to wheat at the rate of 50 to 100 bushels or more to an acre, it has given good results, and is also useful on grass lands. It is regarded as especially useful for potatoes. Applied in the liquid state, two quarts of soot to a barrel of water, it is an excellent stimulus for garden vegetables and for pot plants, and will be disagreeable to insects.

The Supreme Court of Illinois has decided that no man is obliged to clean the sidewalk opposite his own house. This is as it should be. The keeping the sidewalk clean is and ought to be a part of the duties of the Corporation, more especially so when one thinks of the unfair and partial manner in which the snow bye-law is administered. The corporation, in muddy weather, sets its men to clean off the roadway; on dusty days its water carts lay the dust; why should not the corporation attend to the sidewalk and clear off the snow in winter as it does the mud in spring, and the dust in summer? Why not attend to the sidewalks which it puts down and keeps in repair? Of course, if everybody was to sweep before their own door we would have clean streets; but unfortunately everybody doesn't, and it is not always the most flagrant offender that suffers most; moreover any action for damages that may result from accident will be against the corporation, not against the individual who neglected to clear off the snow. The snow bye-law is persistently ignored by many, doubtless on principle, believing that they have no more right to clear off the snow than they have to clear off the mud or water the streets; and the only way to obviate the difficulty is to place the snow clearing business where it properly belongs, on the shoulders of the Corporation.

The Tramp and the Dog.

A big lonesome-looking dog sat at the gate of a house recently, eyes full of tears and his whole body shaking with cold. A tramp, who had neither overcoat nor mittens, and whose bare toes peeped through his boots, was making his way up the street in search of the right kind of a side entrance when he espied the dog and crossed over and said:

"Well, now, this is an unexpected pleasure! Upon my soul I have found one living thing in this town as poorly off as myself. Say, old fellow where do you hang out?"

The dog looked at him through his tears, but had nothing to say.

"Tough, isn't it?" continued the man. "I look old and seedy, and you are the homeliest dog I ever saw. That strikes a fraternal chord and we meet on the level. I haven't had a square meal for a week, and you haven't seen a bone for the past ten days. Even again, eh?"

The dog shivered and whined and got up and sat down, and the tramp drew closer and said:

"No home, eh? Neither have I. No one to whistle for you? Same here, That's even again. I can warm up my shakes with whiskey, while you have to grin and bear it. That's where I've got the dead wood on you. I can talk through my nose and tell fifty different stories to excite sympathy and bring out cold victuals, while you have nothing to say for yourself and must take bones or go hungry. That's another for me. On the whole I'm ahead of you, and although you are only a dog I'm glad on it. It's something to feel that you are one peg higher than an old yaller, homeless, hungry cur. So long, old fellow."

As the tramp started to go the dog reached out and snapped his leg and then took a run for it.

"Say, there, hold on!" called out the man as he wheeled around. "I said I was ahead, but I'll take it back! You can lurch on my legs, while I'll see this country tottally busted to New Jersey if I don't die of starvation before I come down to eating dog! Even, old fellow—just about even on the average, and no use of any hard feelings over it!"—*Detroit Free Press.*

A Dog's Revenge.

A large Newfoundland and a Gordon setter have for the last week occupied quarters next to each other, on account of their non-combative dispositions. Half a dozen yards away is the temporary home of a two-year-old collie, who has the privilege of wandering about the yard without restraint. On Friday last he took the liberty of poking his nose into the feeding-pen of the Newfoundland, a liberty that was resented by a sound thrashing. The collie seems, as subsequent circumstances proved, to have determined upon a plan of revenge from that moment.

He went into his kennel and remained there the best part of the afternoon. Towards evening he came out, and going to a corner where there is a pile of loose bricks, he seized one with his teeth, carried it cautiously over to the Newfoundland's box, and succeeded in dropping it in front of the opening without being detected. After night-fall, when the big dog had curled himself inside to go to sleep, the little collie continued his work.

He had carried no less than sixty of the bricks and deposited them in front of his enemy's house before he was discovered by the proprietor of the establishment, who had occasion to go into the yard for water. The animal's actions were watched for nearly twenty minutes before he was disturbed. He dropped as many bricks inside the kennel as the space between the opening and the occupant would admit of, and piled the rest up outside. Then he stationed himself in front and barked with all his might. The Newfoundland responded to the challenge with a deep growl and made an effort to come out, but the bricks prevented him, while the collie jumped about and gave vent to his delight in shrill yelps.—*Philadelphia Press.*

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