

house.

That evening after Speckle had taken his milk he hung the empty pails on the fence and went around to interview each of the boys privately. He suspected that by seeing them separately he could best appeal to their individual weakness. He bribed Dick Hutchinson with a dozen of his rarest tin tobacco tags, all with euphuistic names such as "Rose Leaf" and Lilly of the Valley," which his uncle had sent him from Florida. He won Reinhold Birker with promises of many a solemn funeral cortege for Mary Eliza's deceased pets, and charmed "Shorty" Thompson's ears with stories of the puffs from old Jenkin's bakery. Over Jimmy Templeton he had no hold, Jimmy being of that peculiarly odious species of humanity that is thoroughly upright and without secret weakness. So he merely told him of the consent of the other boys and used his personal influence for all it was worth.

"All right, if you fellows say so," Temp replied gravely. He was soaking cat tails in the kerosene can preparatory to a torch-light procession of the Speckleville Republican Club. "I won't be the man to kick, but you mark my word, Speckle, she'll spoil the town. Girls always spoil everything a boy's got if you give 'em a chance."

That night after Speckle's mother had annointed his sunburned back with cold cream and he had climbed into bed and was reposing peacefully on his stomach, enjoying the only real comfort he had had that day, he heard a violent "tic-tac" at the window at the head of his bed.

"Hello, Temp, is that you?" he called.

"No, Speckle, it's me. Did you make them?" whispered Mary Eliza.

"Yes, I made them," replied Speckle, rather wearily.

"O, Speckle, you are a dandy! I just love you, Speckle!" and Mary Eliza pounded and scratched joyfully at the screen as she departed.

The next day Speckle vacated his piano box, the largest and most commodious structure in his town, and fitted it up for Mary Eliza with a lavishness which astonished his comrades. In the afternoon Mary Eliza made her triumphant entry into Speckleville with an old-fashioned carpet sack in one hand and a Japanese umbrella in the other.

She was all smiles and sweetmeats and showed neither resentment nor embarrassment at her chilling reception. She set forth her cream puffs and chocolates and in half an hour the Delmonico restaurant was the centre of interest and commercial activity.

I shall not attempt to rehearse all the arts and wiles by which Mary Eliza deposed Speckle and made herself sole imperatrix of Speckleville. She made it her business to appeal to every masculine instinct in the boys, beginning with their stomachs. When first a woman tempted a man she said unto him, "Eat." The cream puffs alone would have assured her victory, but she did not stop there. She possessed cunning of hand and could make wonderful neckties of colored tissue paper, and stiff hats of pasteboard covered with black paper and polished with the white of an egg, which she disposed of for a number of pins. She became the star of the circus ring, and it was considered a great sight to behold Mary Eliza attired in blue cambric tights with an abundance of blonde locks made by unraveling a few feet of new, heavy rope, flowing about her shoulders executing feats of marvelous dexterity upon the flying trapeze.

Indeed, Mary Eliza possessed certain talents which peculiarly fitted her to dwell and rule in a boy's town. Otherwise she could never have brought dis-

aster and ruin upon the town of Speckleville. For as boys will admit, there are some girls who would make the best boys in the world—if they were not girls.

It soon befell that Mary Eliza's word, her lightest wish, was law in Speckleville. Half the letters that went through Speckle's post office were for her, and even the phlegmatic Reinhold Birker made her a beautiful little tombstone with a rose carved on it as an ornament for her centre table.

Meanwhile Speckle—poor deposed Speckle, sat by without demur and without more than an occasional pang of jealousy and watched the success of his protege, learning, as many another monarch had done before him, how pleasant it sometimes is to serve.

Now, alas! it is time to introduce the tragic motif in this simple chronicle of Speckleville, to bring about the advent of the heavy villain into the comedy. He came in the form of a boy from Chicago, to spend the summer with his aunt just across the street from Speckle's home. From the first he found small favor in the eyes of Speckleville boys. To begin with, he invariably wore shoes and stockings, a habit disgustingly effeminate to any true and loyal Specklevillian. To this he added the grievance of a stiff hat, and on Sundays even sunk to the infamy of kid gloves. He also smoked many cubeb cigarettes—corn-silks were considered the only manly smoke in Speckleville—and ate some odorous confection to conceal his guilt to his mamma. The good citizens of Speckleville all looked with horror upon these gilded vices—all, save one, perhaps.

The first time the New Boy visited the town he bought a cream puff of Mary Eliza, and on being told that the price of the same was ten pins, he laughed scornfully, saying that he did not carry a pin-cushion and had not brought his work-box with him. He then threw down a nickle upon the counter. Now to offer money to a citizen of Speckleville was an insult, like offering a bribe, and the boys were painfully surprised when Mary Eliza accepted that shameful coin, bestowing upon the purchaser a smile more desirable than many cream puffs.

After that the New Boy came often usually confining his trade to the Delmonico restaurant, where he hung about telling of his trip on Lake Michigan and his outings in Lincoln Park, while the proprietor listened with greedy ears. He persisted in paying for his purchases in coppers and nickles, and Mary Eliza persisted in accepting the despised currency, while the Speckleville boys went about with a secret shame in their hearts, feeling that somehow she had disgraced herself and them. They began to wonder as to just what a girl's notion of the square thing was, a question that has sometimes vexed older heads.

As for Mary Eliza, although she sometimes joined with the boys in a laugh at his expense, she by no means shared the general dislike of the New Boy. She thought his city clothes and superior manners very impressive, and she felt moregrown up and important when in his company. Even his letters, which were always written on real note paper with a monogram at the top and signed "Semper Idem" seemed vastly more dignified than the rude scrawls of the other boys.

She had tact enough to know that this fine young gentleman would never wear tissue paper neckties, so she made him a red paper rose, which he wore, daily perfuming it with Florida water. Speckle had noted the growing discontent in his town, and sought to conceal Mary Eliza's disgraceful conduct and shield her from open contempt by asking her to make him a paper rose. But she laughed heartlessly with a wink at

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