

SWINGING ON THE GATE.

I can see a picture painted. I can smell the drying hay...

Strange how back among the many recollections of the past...

Now my temples fast are gray and my eyes have sober grown...

HE ASKED HER FIRST.

HE must marry somebody," said her mother. "I don't see why she shouldn't...

Monty, in his own peculiar way, was almost as suitable. If he wasn't handsome...

Jack appealed to the romantic side of her character, and had the support of her father...

"You will have to make up your mind directly," said her mother.

"I am afraid I can't, mother," said the girl, helping herself to toast cheerfully.

"If I were a girl, I shouldn't hesitate five minutes," said her father, meaning Jack.

"No more should I," said her mother, meaning Monty.

"I think I shall accept the one who asks first," said the girl, handing in her cup for a second edition of coffee.

"Don't be wicked," said her mother. "Not a bad notion," remarked her father...

She pointed. "I don't quite know," she said. "I think he represents everything that's jolly except the carriage and furs..."

"I want to know, if—," he began desperately. "What about umbrellas?" she asked severely.

"Of course, yes, you were going to ask me a question," she said sweetly. "Now, isn't it funny? Whenever people ask me questions, I always give the wrong answer..."

Her eyes were sparkling with excitement. She had obstinately made up her mind that if he succeeded in proposing, and forced her to give an answer, it should be 'yes'.

"Without giving him a chance to say a word, she chattered on. And all the time she was chattering she was thinking and trying to reconcile herself to the inevitable..."

His wife popped on her bonnet as soon as he had left the house, and stepped round to the nearest telephone office.

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"But I can't stand here listening to you," she said at last, when she found her breath was giving out.

"I haven't asked you any questions," he remarked, and in a few days...

"Nobody is at all likely to call," said the girl lightly. So Mr. Winterwood proceeded to his irritating task...

Margaret sat by his side. "It gets worse and worse," said the old man, sadly. "Some of the notes in the bass are almost dumb."

At that moment Mrs. Bush entered the room with an expansive smile of triumph on her face. "Monty has called, and wants to see you particularly," she said.

"Monty?" said her daughter with a frown. "What brings him here?" Then she remembered with a start her reckless words at the breakfast table, and her heart sank.

"If you are a wise girl you will seize the chance," said her mother; then she added piously, "but I don't wish to persuade you. I think you said you intended to accept the one who asked you first."

The girl sighed, and swept rather angrily out of the room. It was really too bad to have one's words taken up like that. She didn't want to accept any one just now.

"What a funny time to call," said the young lady rather rudely, but she was not in a gracious humor.

"So I am as a rule," he said with a somewhat rapid smile. "But I had a telephone message—"

"Of course, it's awfully nice of you to look in," she said hastily. "You didn't come to the concert last night?"

"No," he stammered. "The fact is I understood that you—you were going with some one else."

She had promised to take her and he had not turned up, so that she had been obliged to go with her parents. Monty had unconsciously scored one, and her mind reverted to the furs.

"I'm just going shopping," she said with sudden energy. "You can come too if you like, and then you can ask us as we go along."

"What about umbrellas?" she asked severely. "Is it likely to rain?" "I don't think so," he said.

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paration he placed his back to the door. "Oh, dear, how slow you are," she said.

"It isn't about the dance," he stammered. "It's about you. I—I want you to marry me."

Nothing could have been more awkward than his proposal, but it reduced her to a state of despair. The piano tuning was going on so amiably.

"Why—what?" he gasped, blinking his little eyes in a bewildered way. "I really must call at the butcher's."

"But—will you?" she asked demurely. "You don't give me time to think."

"I'm awfully fond of you, and—of all that sort of thing," he said, eagerly. "We should be tremendously jolly."

"She looked at him desperately. What was she to do? She began to feel for some queer reason that to accept him was almost impossible, but she had given her foolish little word."

"Suppose I don't love you," she said. "That doesn't matter a bit," he said cheerfully. "If you will promise to marry me, I expect I shall make you love me in time."

"Perhaps it would be better to talk it over another morning," she suggested. "No, no, tell me now," he said. The piano tuning had suddenly ceased.

"I'm awfully fond of you, Margaret. The fact is you—you have fairly bowled me over. I can't say exactly what I mean, because I am not much of a hand at talking, and all that sort of thing, but—"

"There was a gentle knock at the door, and Monty muttered something under his breath which no British printer would set up in type."

"Good morning, miss," he said. "I hope I haven't disturbed you." "Not at all," she said, beaming with pleasure.

"Oh, I found something of yours is the piano," said the little man. "Something of mine?"

"Yes, it's a letter. No wonder the bass notes were nearly dumb. Good morning, miss."

She took the envelope, and tore it open. It was addressed to her as Jack's handwriting.

"Dear Maggie"—it ran—"I expect you'll be wild with me for not turning up to take you to the concert. But, have been summoned into the country by telegram."

"Good-bye, dear little girl, or rather an revoir. This is my birth day, and I made up my mind a long time ago that I would ask you to-day to share my lot."

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OLD FAVORITES

"I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen." I'll take you home again, Kathleen. Across the ocean wild and wide...

To that dear home beyond the sea. My Kathleen shall again return. And when those old friends welcome thee...

The maid who binds her warrior's sash. That smile that well her pain dissembles. The white beneath her drooping lash...

The mother who conceals her grief. While to her breast her son she presses. Then breathes a few brave words and smiles...

The wife who girds her husband's sword. Mid little ones who weep or wonder. And bravely speaks the cheering word...

The brave at home. The maid who binds her warrior's sash. That smile that well her pain dissembles...

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QUER STORIES

The oldest graduates of Yale and Harvard are ministers. A Japanese bride gives her wedding presents to her parents as a slight recompense...

The power of an engine in India is sometimes given in elephant instead of horse-power, an elephant-power being equal to twenty-two horse-power.

In England, the annual consumption of Southern fruit amounts to fifteen pounds per head. In Germany it averages not quite three pounds per head.

The average passenger haul on steam railways has increased from twenty-three to twenty-seven miles since electrical lines have been competing for suburban business.

The botanical papers report that De Vries, the great Dutch experimental evolutionist, has by long continued selection produced a variety of clover which has normally four leaves.

India was in possession of a steel secret once, which is lost now. This was the alloying with gold of steel blades in such a manner that the strength of the blade was not impaired nor its temper spoiled.

An investigation of the Obi and Yenesel Rivers, made under the auspices of the Russian government, has revealed the fact that these streams are navigable by ocean steamers for a distance of 1,000 miles from their mouths.

A Chelsea (England) hospital is mourning the loss of a bequest of \$3,000 through a legal informality. The testator signed his will in his bedroom, and the witness thoughtlessly carried it into another room before signing it, thus making the document invalid.

An English watchmaker has just finished making a tiny watch in the form of a shirt stud. Its dial is two-sixteenths of an inch in diameter, and it is to be worn with two other studs. By turning the upper stud the watch is wound, while by turning the lower one the hands are adjusted.

More than 8,000 women are employed in the various government offices in Washington, 2,044 of whom have entered the service after competitive examination. Nine hundred of them are paid salaries ranging from \$1,000 to \$1,800 a year, the others being paid the compensation of ordinary clerks—\$9.00 to \$60 a year.

"Conscience money" in Great Britain now amounts to thousands of pounds annually. The first sum noticed was on March 30, 1783, when \$1,800 was carried to the public account in consequence of a note received by the chancellor. The writer with troubled soul implored him, "as an honest man, to consider the money the property of the nation, and to be so just as to apply it to the use of the state in such a manner that the nation may not suffer by its having been detained, and thus to ease the conscience of an honest man."

INSURES HER LIFE FOR A CLUB. Chicago Woman Evolves a Strikingly Original Plan of Finance. Mrs. Pauline Harriette Lyon, secretary of the Woman's Athletic Club, of Chicago, has evolved a strikingly original plan to provide the club with a permanent and palatial home of its own.

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