

right! Don't you forgit when you bose - well - comfortable - aha - ha-ha! Mebby on one cheer aha-ha-ha. And we'll bose take the fence down tomorrow. Mebby all three!"

IV. Suppose She Had Greased Her Hair?

Selfy sauntered confidently up The Hill of Delight upon which Sally's house stood. When within sight of it he polished his hat on his sleeve, set the butterfly necktie straight, felt that the apochryphal diamond was safe, and marched up to the house-only to arrive a little later than a buggy from which Sam Pritz, he was certain, had extracted Sally. If it had not been for thought of his father, which opportunely came, Seffy would have gone straight home-so did his heart fail him.

And then instantly there was another and better reason for staying. Sally had seen him. As he wavered-which she seemed to know-she came hurrying down upon him. It was too late then, even if he had had the courage to retreat from such dear danger. She put her arm within his, and, leaning bewitchingly upon it, led him into the house, chattering fervidly-the most willing of captives to the most beguiling of captors. For Sally had put on all her witcheries for this night of nights.

Once within she added the charm of the accomplished amateur hostessdoing fascinating things which needed no doing-hovering about Seffy like the very spirit of a home-so that he had the intoxicating sense of difficulty in keeping from being entangled in her fluttering arms and garments, For his feet, unused to Elysium, would catch themselves in her whirling skirts-as if they knew better than he their ultimate destiny. All this was a splendid revelation to Seffy. He had never, in all his dreams of her (and they were legion!) fancied this soft and winning domesticity. It went to his head like alcohol-opiumether-making it so light and happy as to be quite useless to him.

So, when Sally finally took the tall hat and went to deposit it in the dark parlor, Seffy followed her, for no better reason than the things in the basin have for following the magnet. And, understanding this, Sally looked over her shoulder at him. And then, snuffing her conquest at a distance, she laughed and mercifully stopped for him to catch up, that she might presently surrender. She got his hand-to lead him. Only that!

"You care a lot for-your hat, don't you, Sef-Seffy? And you want to-to -see"-he couldn't see a thing-"that I—that I—put it at a safe—place? Still by the hand further into the coat. darkness!

And Seffy honestly tried to prevaricate for her a "Yes." But he wasn't thinking of the treasured hat at all, only the hand-that it was deliciously warm and soft and electrical. Suddenly she stopped very close to him. Only he was so dull! He did not know! Heavens! when a girl waits for a youth to come close to her in the dark-what else can she mean? But Seffy actually did not know.

"Sam's over there! I-I-wish-he

To whisper it she had to put one can be to you?" hand on his shoulder. How else could she whisper it? And she laughed a low bubbling laugh-half-confessionhalf-defiance—all invitation!

Seffy stooped to whisper back to her. Sally waited.

"I know!" Only that!-Sally was disappointed. kiss a girl without fail. And could a girl do more than this by way of invitation? You must have perceived that Sally was learned in these matters. And you may be sure she did not forget Seffy's bashfulness and his tnexperience. But surely any one would understand that much-in the dark! It argues heavily for the depth of Sally's affection for Seffy that she kept her temper, for the losing of which she was almost as famous as her father had been for losing his, and only sighed desperately. Any other girl would have left hope-and Seffy -behind. At that moment, happily, Sam was heard to move. She put her hand on Seffy's mouth as if some danger were there. And Seffy, by a sort of instinct, it must have been, kissed it!

"Oh!-Both of Sally's hands went up in real surprise-and Seffy caught and kissed them both!

"Oh!-oh!-oh! She had to stuff her gay little handkerchief into her mouth to keep the joy within. After all, could this Seffy be playing 'possum? Was he deen? I don't know, any more than Sally, how it all happened-except that perhaps Seffy discovered himself suddenly brave in the darkness, and Sally quite defenseless-but presently her head was on his shoulder, and his arm was around her, in quite the way his father had suggested and Sally had expected. And neither of them thought of him or a word he had said -concerning lands, tenements and

hereditaments. Sally's hand crept up insidiously about Seffy's neck. But

then it was fearfully withdrawn. "Please don't grease your hair hereafter," said Sally. But she kissed it! "Hereafter! Hereafter!" Seffy's heart pounded.

"Suppose I'd grease my hair!" said Sally speciously.

The horror conjured up was factitious. Remember where her head was resting. But an alien element was now raised between them. Seffy moved away. Maids should not cavil even at offed hair-so early in their courtship! More fascination was needed-perhaps only a soft cooing

You—you wouldn't like that would you?"-still meekly.

"No!" Seffy answered, puzzled. "My Sunday coat would git greased!' "My sleeve did!"

She inspected a soiled sleeve-in the ray from the hall-which had no snot on it!

"I don't care for the sleeve. It'll wash out. But Sam-he sees

every She laughed and was about to plunge recklessly back into his arms. But her hair was beautiful! And she had made it more so for him. He must see it! She plunged further into the ray from the hall lamp instead and flung it forward about her face. It clung and clustered there like an aureole. Seffy, in his brief life, he

thought, had seen nothing more di-

vine. She looked saucily up at him

out of the tops of her eyes. His adora-

tion made her very happy. "There! ain't that nicer than yourn?" She buried her fingers in the splendid mass, and pushed it into further disorder until it lay closeshining about her face.

"Oh, Sally," said Seffy, approaching her as if she were some goddess, wear it that way always!"

The alien thing was gone! They were in rapport once more!

"They'd have me in an asylum in

no time. But-Somehow, Seffy's arms opened to invite her back and she came with a low reckless laugh. The wild sheaf of her hair lodged again close under his chin. He recklessly thrust his face into it. Its perfume in his nostrils and its movement against his skin were ineffable. He kissed it. Again it was the strange fashion of the cavalier-in those kisses! Where did he learn it?

"Oh, Sally, wear it always so!" he begged again. And-good heavens!he put his lips down upon it once more!

"Just when you come to see me," murmured Sally to the lapel of his

"Sally-Sally, you are an angel!" said Seffy.

And this one little word which came to dull Seffy so happily out of his favorite song made the coquette very

serious. "Not an angel, Seffy, Sef-Seffy," she said with her head a little down. "I don't think you would like me to be such. I'm not! Angels never laugh, you know-nor love. And I want to do a lot of both. But-but-Seffy, I'd like to be something very nice-to you. What is the nicest thing a girl

"A sister!" ventured Seffy, who had never had one.

Sally shivered, then laughed. But

she took herself away from Seffy. The Pressel temper flamed a moment, and certain words began to form in her mind like "Fool!" and "Go!" and "Damn!" For, I think I haven't For it was the custom in that day and | told you that Sally sometimes swore vicinage and in such circumstances to in extreme circumstances. Her father had done so.

She spoke with that trifle of hard brutality which came out now and

"You know what they say at the store-that I flirt and am not nice in other ways, and they're right. But I do want to be nice to you, though not a sister-quite. Ugh! And, you know, one thing they say is true-my



temper. Look out for that! You must always take time to forgive and let me ask to be forgiven."

amende was ever more delicious-con- care! sidering that much of what she said to and for Seffy was meant to and for herself alone? Indeed, before she got through with it, it had affected her quite as if Seffy had pleaded it, and her voice sank to its pretty mezzo, then quivered a bit, and she understood that was answering herself!

"Seffy, I am awfully sorry!" "For what, Sally?" asked Seffy. Seffy, dull Seffy, really did not know

for what. But there is something which God gives the dull, as well as the sprightly witted, that outleaps words to comfort sorrow. And this Seffy had abundantly. It first expressed itself in the strong young arms which again closed in utter silence upon the sorrowing one.

Presently (perhaps you have not forgotten how it is?) in the same silence, Seffy's lips found hers-not as the victor pounces upon the spoil of his conquest-but slowly, uncertainly, unconfidently-as if the lips were a saint's relics; and Sally waited, not as she had waited before, but in the knowledge that her hour had come, and that this kiss-the first this youth had given to woman since his mother's dled in his infancy-must not be received as others had been, but as sacredly as it came; and when it finally fell the lips of the coquette quivered as they received it, and then suddenly sobbed, and did not know why-

Do you?

"I have never kissed no one but mother," said Seffy, who felt helnous, "I don't know how! I don't know what made me do it-I couldn't help it. It won't happen again-

Whereat Sally laughed and clung about Seffy's delighted neck and cried to his puzzled heart:

"Yes, it will!" And kissed him back!

"Sally," said Seffy with solemnity,

do you mean it? You not mad?" "Seffy," said Sally, "I am not worth it. I have been kissed by everybody who wanted to kiss me-and I have kissed everybody I wanted to kiss!" "I am sorry for you, Sally," said Seffy, not meaning at all what she thought he meant-nor anything quite clear to himself, except that she had recklessly squandered something precious.

"I am, too, now." And then-

"I shall never kiss no one but you, no more.

"Nor I anybody but you, Seffy." And, strange as it may seem, in

that moment, Seffy was the greater, braver and stronger, and Sally but the waiting, willing woman-as she ought to have been. Indeed, Seffy was courageous enough to have put that question which might, perhaps, transmute the pasture-field into one of those that lie within the borders of Elysium.

Rut Sam moved-with decision They flew apart. Though he did not at once enter it was too late-the rapport was broken. Nevertheless, such things can be mended, if there is time. It is quite certain that if they could have continued a little longer in that dark parlor, with only the small ray of the lamp from the hall to lighten it, everything the sleepless old man at home so ardently wished might have been accomplished and might have taken down that line-fence the next day and then have lived happy ever after-quite in the way of the old-fashioned story-books. For Seffy was still brave to audacity, and Sally was yet at his mercy-and happy to be so.

And here, if we were not arrived at a climax, I would venture to halt this history for a moment that we might discuss a bit those trifles in life which the ancients called Fate; and for which, or the lack of which, life often goes awry!

But while Seffy's courage grew again, and Sally's hope, the door on the other side of the room opened and the odious Sam came through.

٧. Seffy's Sitting-Up-and Down Again. However, there was another doorand Sam arrived only to hear it close upon Seffy, whom Sally had just pushed through it.

"Yes!" answered Sally, quite unable to keep the joy out of her voice, "he's just come, and gone out to the spring -for a-drink!" prevaricated Sally. "He'll drink something."

"Seffy?" asked Sam casually.

By which Sam meant some kind of

an animal, with his water. "Nothing but water!" said Sally meaningly. Sam perceived instantly "how the land lay," and made his conning plans. Sam was not dull. He returned to the sitting room with Sally-where Seffy presently followed, 1 am sorry to say, like a conquering hero-at which Sam gloated.

Unfortunately for Seffy, rural etiquette, as everybody knows, gave Sam precedence. "First come-last go." s the illogical rule. But you are to be informed that the late comer is at liberty to "outsit" his rival, if he canor to dislodge him, if he can-by strategy. But every rustle lover attempts this at the greatest of ricks. To fall is equivalent to losing castenot only with the indy in question, but also with the fickle world. For no girl of any spirit would look upon a swain who had ignominiously failed at such a crisis, unless he should rehabilitate himself-which means to accomplish the almost impossible.

Sam took all this into consideration as he watched Seffy-reclining in the easy chair which Sally had injudiclously and invidiously placed for him him-grow drowsy.

"Sally," said Sam at the right moment, "play something."

"I don't care to!" protested Sally. But then she turned prettily to Seffy.

"Shall I, Seffy?" "Yes," smiled Geffy, from his Elysi-

Now, I beg to ask you whether an | um, secure and confident. "I don't

"And," said Sam insidiously, "we'll all sing. You air, me tenor, Seffy bass. "I can't sing no bass!" said Seffy

set here and-and-enjoy myself." This was the direct rustic challenge, with aplomb! Sam might choose his weapons! It made no odds! And

easily, "and Sam knows it. He can't

make no fool off of me. Go on, I'll

Sally had to take it up for Selfy. This she loyally did. Unfortunately, when Sally went to the organ Seffy was at her back and in the shadow-the lamp had to be

moved-and in that sleepy-hollow chair. But she had all possible confidence in him-and, alas! he had in himself. For a while he feasted his eyes upon the exquisite back she had turned to him-and then, with a thrill of possession, inventoried the hair he had kissed—a little disordered—the lips-the waist he had embracedhow glorious that was! It seemed almost impossible now that he had done it. And the hands-what? He was lost for a moment. Then he was plowing opposite his father. The voice which had so sweetly-what was it exactly it had said-what?-he was nearing the line stake-still plowinghe could hear the voice guite distinctly-many of them-a choir-"I want to be an angel." Sally seemed mistily there—but he was still plowing—now he stopped-more and more mist-

Sam stopped his tenor that Sally might hear him sleep.

"He said he couldn't sing bass!" grinned Sam.

Seffy slept.

Sally's hand flew to her heart. She had been trilling, if not with the art, yet with the feeling, of a lark. It was simply the joy with which Seffy had filled her-only joy, vast and free. The red flamed in her cheeks at what she saw. I shall not describe it. No lover was ever more abject-no lady was ever more furious! We see the comedy of it only. We would not have been hurt, eh? But we did not live then or there nor under Sally's curious small conditions-nor with Sally's temper. Curiously enough, this Scripture came to Sally's mind:

"Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

You know what strange and inopportune things come into the distressed, unguarded mind.

Sally rose with a dignity which even Sam had not suspected, and said: "Gentlemen, good night."

> VI. The Clothes-Pin Cure.

The old man had plowed six times around the six-acre field the next morning, singing and whistling his unearthly tune as he went, when Seffy unlimbered at the bars and started the big bay around in the opposite direction. The first time they passed his father only winked mysteriously and continued to whistle. The next time he stopped.

"We won't go home tell morning. hah, Sef? I usen't to myself. Saylooks like somesing occurred after all, hah? No one don't stay tell morning unles

Seffy was silent.

"That's right. Kiss but nefer tell. him out-say! Why, you're a winner, For telling breaks the spell. If you've | Seffy! I'm proud of you!" had one and want another-kiss but shut your head up. Say-you don't want to be no anchel now, I expect, hah? Mebby you own one?" But Seffy and the mare had disap-

pointingly passed on.

"Well! Gee-wo-way-gee! Git along!" And he also made another furrow-in a less happy temper. When they met again:

"Whoa!" roared the old man, and the mare stopped-trembling in her tracks. He laughed. Betz still responded if Seffy did not. "Sef-Seffy, did anysing occur?"

Seffy faltered guiltily a moment. "Yes," he said, then briefly, "something always occurs." "Sef-Seffy, but about the pas-

ture-Seffy started the mare.

"Whoa!" roared the old man again, with the same result. But he did not laugh this time. He sat on the handles of his plow and regarded his son. He was vaguely disturbing.

"Say-" he began ominously, "you didn't git sot out?"

"Uhu," answered Seffy. "What! Why, you durn-" But then he laughed. "Shiny hat no good?"

Seffy said no. "Nor the diamond, nor the hairgrease, nor nossing? Oh - gosh-a' mighty! Gee-wo-way!"

But before they met again, his gaiety had given way to an immense disappointment. The tragedy of the situation had prevailed with him, too. Seffy sullenly kicked a clod to pieces. His father looked off toward the coveted pasture and sighed. It was a superb piece of land. And it had never tooked fairer. The sun was on its velvet green-the sun of the morning. A few thick-girthed, wholesoms oak trees punctuated it. A stream laughed through it. Goodly cows stood chewing in the water and swishing amiably at the files. The fences were intact. It would have been a delight to the eyes of any farmer on earth. The old man sat on the handles of his plow until it all got in his head once more.

"it's a nice field, Sef-Seffy." he sighed. "I nefer seen no such clofer And she's a nice gal. I nefer seen no such gal, bose nice. Oach! they belong together. Well, gee-wo-way! They belong to us!"

They always slopped for a word when they met. The next time the old man said, quite caresslagly: "Come yere, Sef!"

He patted one plow-handle, which Seffy took, while he took the other.

He thoughtfully pulled the boy's shirt time! Lie a little, hah?"

into place. "Sef," he said, "tell me about it. I'm sorry I laughed! But I lofe that pasture and you lofe Sally. Let's not be fools, but git 'em. I expect you feel a little bad. But mebby you'll feel better if you talk about it. That is the way wiss me, I know; when anysing occurs I like to gabble about it-and go and do it again-better." He let do it." his hand rest kindly on Seffy's shoulder. To this his son responded.

"I fell asleep," said Seffy, sniffling ominously. "Of course," said his father, with a

comforting movement of his hand. "That's right." Seffy was amazed—and comforted.

"I expect I snored---"Er-yas-you do snore, Sef. Eferybody does. It's the Lord's fault, I expect."

"In a nice cheer-" "Yas-you oughtn't 'a' set in no nice cheer, Sef; somesing uneasy is better."

"Where was you then, Sef?" "In the cheer-Sal-Sally's cheer, The words stuck pitifully in his

"Didn't wake up till daylight."

"Yas-" said the old man, looking away, "I don't blame you, Sef." "It was a pasteboard thing-like a

tombstone-pinned on my bosom---"Vat!" cried his father-the "w" would become "v" in cases of sudden emotion.

"Pasteboard - tombstone!" Seffy's head dropped in shame. "With things printed on it-Sephenijah P. Baumgariner, Junior, Went to His Rest, June 10th, 1871, in the 20th year of his age. Gone Not, But Forgot-Read Backwards.' "

His father stifled a laugh. It was an old trick to him. "What-what did you do then?" he

asked in as matter-of-fact a voice as he could command. "Sneaked home. It was daylight!"

"Gone not, but forgot-read backwards, hah?" He couldn't quite make it out. That was new. Seffy helped him.

"Forgot, but not gone." There was no restraint to his father's laughter now. After it had

subsided he asked: "What did you do wiss the tombstone?"

"Left it there."

"That's bad, Seffy. He'll put it up at the store an' you ken nefer go there no more." Seffy's look of horror was a re-

minder to his father that it would bave been better not to say that. But Old Baumgartner had tremendous aplomb. "Nefer mind-nefer mind. Mebby

he won't sink of that"-though he knew the store clerk would be certain to think of it. Upon a sudden thought the old man

leaped up. "And where was Sam? Say! When

you woke up?"

"I don't know." "But-he wasn't there-at Sally's?" "No," said Seffy hopelessly.

His father clutched his shoulder and set him on his feet. "Well-you dam' little idjiot-ahaha-ha-don't you see that you did set

Seffy started and looked a little less

inert. His father laughed hugely.

"I knowed you'd do it! Aha-ha-ha! Nobody ken beat a Baumgartner courting a gal! What's sleeping-if you stayed! Huh! You stayed tell daylight! Sef-I'm laughing! Why, I used to sleep when I set up wiss you' mammy efery time another feller was there. I done it a-purpose! And she'd wake me up when the other feller was gone and it came time for me to go. Why-say-I stayed and slept all night-tell broad daylight and go home wiss the cows in the morning-many a time! Yassir! Chust like you, Sef! Sef, you're all right. Goshens, but you had a narrow excape though! Chust suppose you'd 'a' woke up and forgot what you was up to-you do that, sometimes, Sef, when you're dreamyand gone home before you remembered that you was out-setting him! He'd 'a' had you dead, Seffy, dead and buried in the family lot. But you got him, Seffy, ol' boy-and Sally, too, begoshens! Shall we get at the fence to-day?" Seffy did not respond. And his father knew better than most of us where suggestion should stop.

"All right. We bose busy to-day Mebby we better let it be tell to-morrow.

Of course Old Baumgartner was well aware that his logic would not bear the least scrutiny. And he regarded Seffy anxiously as he raced through it. But dull happy Seffy saw no flaws in it. He agreed with his father that he had out-sat Sam. And, if it had not been too plainly accidental, he would have adopted the fancy that he had had a heroic purpose in it-so convincing was his father's logic to his little mind.

The old man rattled on. Seffy must not think much.

"And snoring! Hab! Nossingnossing at all! I could gife you les sons in snoring. And you' mammy use' to say that she liked it. It wasn't so lonely and she knowed I was or deck and alife. Sporing! Aba-ha-ha-ha! What's that-if you are sure of the

Seffy ahemmed several times and looked less like a condemned male factor-though still far from suborned

"That dam' molasses-imper-he's got to be licked-and if I got to do it myself-though I ain't much of a lick or. The whole county'll know about that-to-to-" he turned away to smile-"tombstone. I bet he's got it hanging up in the store now! We got to let 'em know that you set him out Sef! Yas-stayed tell daylight! Woke up and stayed! Sleeping was chust to ketch him! You was awake all the

His father was proud of this last.

As they drew apart he called back: "If she don't like snoring, Sef, wear a clothes-pin when you set up wiss her-one of them wiss a spring-not? Aha-ha-ha!" And then: "You all right, Sef-yassir! you all right-you the conquering hero comes! Go right back-mebby to-night-you entitled to

"Begoshens, I will!" said Seffy in his father's own slogan.

Seffy would have pressed his suit even without this, I think-because of those moments in the dark parlor. One does not soon forget that sort of thing.

"Now," advised his father, "you know well enough what kind of a temper goes wiss her hair-I use to haf hair enough onct—and it was red! All right when it's on your side. But hell when it's ag'in you. Them red-heads always regrets-I do and she does! Say-Sef-Seffy, don't you let her regret in vain-ketch her while she's at

So, Seffy went up the hill againnot that night-which was a mistake -he could not quite bring himself to that—but the next. And he had washed the grease out of his hair and left the hat at home as well as the butterfly tie and the boots and, if I do say it, he was a very handsome fellow, worth at least a dozen of his rival.

But Sally, watching for this very thing, saw him coming and hardened her heart, as Pharaoh did in the face of proffered felicity, and, by a good deal of forcible instruction, she succeeded in getting the little maid to say that she was not at home. The maid's untutored face showed Seffy that she was not telling the truth, however, and she was not sorry for it. She would never have treated Seffy

Seffy shifted his hat from one hand to the other and then said:

"Tell her-tell her-when she comes home-that I'm sorry-" He did not exactly know what he was sorry for, and so said good night and went.

"He knowed you was at home!" reproached the little maid. "He was sorry for you." "What did he say?" demanded Sally

savagely. "To tell you that he was sorrywhen you got home."

"When I got home? Then I better

stay away, I expect. That's what he

SETTY-THE WELLINY-ANDATOMIE meant, did he? Well, I'll show him!" But the maid understood Seffy's rustic chivalry and she did not laugh with her mistress.

Yet, Sally went back to her window and again watched, hoping Seffy would look back. She was not quite sure what she would do. Perhaps she would get angry-perhaps-But if he would only look! He did not, and Sally understood that he had accepted his conge as she had given it. And quite as the old man had said, she did regret, now, and she had regretted that other night. But there was more penance than he had said or thought. Yetthere was the Pressel temper! And it did not await the subsidence of the sorrow, but rose at once. What bustness had he tamely to accept the situation?

I am satisfied that there is some connection between red hair and temper. And I am, further, satisfied that there is even more between the associated ideas of red hair, temper and regret. But my difficulty is to determine just where each stands. Logically, the regret ought to come last. But, to Sally, and in this case, it came in the middle. For, she began and she ended without it, but she distinctly remembered having had it. Therefore, it

must have been in the middle. And Sam administered Seffy's coup de grace! Perhaps it was accidental. But I think it must have been nothing less than spying and then devilish invention-it was so entirely apropos.

As Seffy descended the Hill of Delight on which Sally's pretty little house stood, Sam ascended it, singing, as he passed Seffy;

Napoleon, with a thousand men,

Marched up the hill and down again." From his own darkness, Seffy saw a golden shaft of light burst from the door at the top of the Hill of Delight, and, in it, he saw Sam mount to where was his heart's desire.

VII. The Poison-Spring in the Cotton Woods.

They met on the damp country road one evening-Sally and the old mantwo weeks later. She was walking with drooping head, and, when she suddealy raised it, as he ahemmed, he was quite sure that she had been

him!" said Seffy's father, as if they had been discussing Seffy. "Who?" asked the girl tremulously

"I don't know what's the matter wiss

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-though she knew-"he ain't sick?"