



GIRLS' BASKET BALL TEAM OF THE NORMAL SCHOOL AT WOODBINE, Ia.

**Mamma Stirling**

Continued from Page Two.

gauze, and whose odor mounted to his head like the fumes of whisky, an odor in which there was something of everything, of the animal, of the woman, of spices, of flowers, and of something that he did not yet divine.

"And such despotism, imperious, divine kisses were they, when she put her lips to his and kept them there, as if to make him dream of an eternity of bliss, sucking in his breath, hurting his lips, intoxicating, overwhelming him with delight, exhausting him, while she held his head in both her hands, as if in a vise. The carriage rolled on at a quick trot, through the silence of the snow, and they did not even hear the noise of the wheels, which buried themselves in that white carpet, as if it had been cotton wool. Suddenly, however, tired and exhausted, she leaned against him with closed eyes and moist lips. Then they talked at random, like people who are not quite themselves, and who have uncorked too many bottles of champagne on a benefit night.

"She questioned him, and laughed at his theatrical slang, wrapped her otterskin rug round his legs, and murmured: 'Come close to me, darling; at any rate, you are not cold, I hope?'

"When they reached her pretty little house, with old tapestry and delicately colored plush hangings, they found supper waiting for them. She amused herself by attending to him in person, with the manners of a saucy waitress. And then there were kisses, constant, insatiable, maddening kisses, and she exclaimed, with glistening eyes, at the thoughts of future meetings:

"If you only knew how pretty she is! And then, it is nicer than anything else in the world to obey her, to do whatever she wants, and to allow oneself to be loved as she wishes!

"Mamma Stirling was very uneasy, but resigned himself to the inevitable. Seeing how infatuated the boy was he took care not to be too sharp with him, or to keep too tight a hand upon the reins. The woman who had debauched the lad was a fast woman and nothing else, and after all, the old stager preferred that to one of those excitable women of the world, who are as dangerous for a man as the plague, whereas a fast woman can be taken and left again, and one does not risk one's heart at the same time as one's skin, for a man knows what they are worth. Stirling was mistaken, however. Nelly d'Argine—she is married to a Yankee now, and has gone to New York with him—was one of those vicious women whom a man can only wish his worst enemy to have and she had merely taken a fancy to the young fellow because she was bored to death and because her senses were roused like embers which break out again when a fire is thought to be out.

"Unfortunately he had taken the matter seriously, was very jealous, and as suspicious as a deer, never imagining that his

love affair could come to an end. Proud, with his hot gypsy blood, he wished to be the only lover, the only master who paid and who could not be shown the door, like a troublesome and importunate parasite.

"Stirling had saved some money by dint of a hard struggle and had invested it in the funds against the rainy day when he should be too old to gain a livelihood. When he saw how madly in love his son was and how obstinate in his lamentable folly, he gave him all his savings and deprived himself of his stout and gin so that the boy might have money to give to his mistress and might continue to be happy and not have any cares and so between them they kept Nelly.

"Stirling's debts accumulated and he mortgaged his salary for years in advance to the usurers who haunt circuses as they were gambling hells, who are on the watch for passion, poverty and disappointment, who keep plenty of ready stamped bill paper in their pockets, as well as money, which they haggle over, coin by coin. But in spite of all this, the lad sang, made a show and amused himself and used to say to him as he kissed him on both cheeks: 'How kind you are, in spite of everything.'

"In a month's time, as he was becoming too exacting—he followed her, questioned her, and worried her with perpetual scenes—Nelly found that she had had enough of her gymnast; he was a toy which she had done with and worn out, and which was now only worth throwing into the gutter. She was satiated with him, and became once more the tranquil woman whom nothing can move, and who bats her fishing ground quite calmly, in order to find a husband and a fresh start. And so she turned the young fellow out of doors, as if he had been some beggar soliciting alms. He did not complain, however, and did not say anything to Mamma Stirling, but worked as he had done in the past, mastering himself with superhuman energy, so as to hide the grief that was gnawing at his heart and killing him, and the disenchantment with everything that was making him sick of life.

"Some time afterward, when there was to be a special display for the officers, seeing Nelly d'Argine there in a box surrounded by her usual admirers, appearing indifferent to everything that was going on, and not even apparently noticing that he was performing and was being heartily applauded, he threw his trapeze forward as far as he could, at the end of his performance, and exerting all his strength, and certain that he should fall beyond the protecting net, he flung himself furiously into space.

"A cry of horror resounded from one end of the house to the other, when he was picked up disfigured, and with nearly every bone in his body broken. The unfortunate young fellow was no longer breathing, his chest was crushed in, and blood-stained froth was issuing from his lips, and Nelly d'Argine made haste to leave the house with her friends, saying in a very vexed voice:

"It is very disgusting to come in the

hopes of being amused, and to witness an accident!

"And Mamma Stirling, who was ruined and in utter despair, and who cared for nothing more in this world, took to drinking, used to get constantly drunk, and rolled from public house to public house, and bar to bar, and as the worst glass of vitriol still cost a penny, he became reduced to undertaking the part which you have seen, to dabble in the water, to blacken himself, and to allow himself to be bitten.

"Ah! What a wretched thing life is for those who are kind, and who have too much heart!"—From the first complete edition in English of the works of Guy de Maupassant, published by Mr. Walter Dunne, New York.

**An Apt Pupil**

Teacher—James, you were late yesterday morning.

Pupil—Yes; but, as you were saying to the class today, we should let bygones be bygones.

Teacher—But have you no excuse to offer?

Pupil—In that same talk you said that one who was good at excuses was usually good at nothing else. Under the circumstances, I think it better for me not to do anything that will lower me in your estimation.

**Needlessly Alarmed**

"John!" whispered Mrs. Swackhammer, hoarsely. "John, wake up! In the basement—hear them—they're—they're workin' in the basement—"

"Wh-wh-what!" gasped Swackhammer. He dived under the pillow and clutched his pocketbook. "What is it?"

"B-b-burglars!" chattered Mrs. Swackhammer. "Don't you hear them—"

"Aw, rats!" said Swackhammer, as he lay down and prepared for sleep again. "You scared me nearly to death. I thought it was plumbers."—San Francisco Bulletin.

**Too Much for Him**

"Don't want any poetry," snapped the editor.

"But—this isn't poetry."

"Well, stories, then; can't use 'em."

"But—this isn't a story."

"Well, we don't take translations, and, besides—"

"My dear sir," interrupted the smiling

visitor, "I merely came to ask your acceptance of my check for \$50, tendered in appreciation of your editorial in this morning's issue on—"

But the words had fallen on deaf ears. The editor's age was 86 and he was buried with the highest honors.—Atlanta Constitution.

**The Dropped Letter**

"You made quite a mistake in my article on the modern hotel," said Mr. M. Inehost to the editor.

"I'm sorry to hear that. What was the error? We will try to correct it."

"Well, where I wrote, 'The problem of feeding the corps of attendants and attaches has grown to be one of great importance,' your printers made it read 'the problem of feeling.'"

"Oh, that's nothing," said the editor, turning again to his work. "I thought at first that we had made some misstatement of fact."—Judge.

**The Wooden Foot**

As the car struck a curve the man with a strap lurching forward and stepped clumsily on the sitter's shoe.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "I didn't mean to step on your foot."

"Don't apologize," replied the sitter, smiling; "it isn't mine."

"Isn't yours?" asked the stander, raising his eye brows.

"Not yet," replied the sitter. "You see, it's wood and I'm buying it on the installment plan."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

**Now Respectable Citizen**

Drummer—What became of old Tuffnut, who formerly owned a disreputable dive on Blank street?

Merchant—Oh, he reformed several years ago and is now one of our most honest and respected citizens.

Drummer—What business is he in now?

Merchant—None at all. He made a fortune out of his dive and retired.—St. Louis Star.

**A Women's Way**

Mr. Thompson—Jones told me a secret today.

Mrs. Thompson (anxiously)—What was it?

Mr. Thompson—The one I told you last week.

Mrs. Thompson—Oh, dear me! that Mrs. Jones is such a tattler. I'll never tell her anything again.—Judge.



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