

### GOD'S MIRACLE OF MAY.

There came a message to the vine,  
A whisper to the tree,  
The bluebird saw the secret sign  
And merrily sang he!  
And like a silver string the brook  
Trembled with music sweet—  
Enchanting notes in every nook  
For echo to repeat.

A magic touch transformed the fields,  
Greener each hour they grew,  
Until they shone like burnished shields  
All jeweled o'er with dew,  
Scattered upon the forest floor  
A million bits of bloom  
Breathed fragrance forth thro' morning's  
door  
Into the day's bright room.

Then bud by bud the vine confessed  
The secret it had heard,  
And in the leaves the azure-breast  
Sang the delightful word:  
Glad flowers upspring amid the grass  
And fling their banners gay,  
And suddenly it came to pass—  
God's miracle of May!  
—Ladies' Home Journal.

### The Return Home

"Hello, Phil, digging away at the old farm yet?"

The speaker, leaning languidly against the top rail of the fence, held a cigarette in the most approved style between his two forefingers, and occasionally puffed slowly at it.

Phil Dryden looked up from his planting and responded: "Why, Ed, is that you? When did you come down?"

"Ran down last night on the early train. Taking a few days' vacation and thought I'd like to see the old place."

Phil glanced rather enviously at the well dressed smoker, and then dropped his eyes a little shamefacedly to his own coarse, ill-fitting and faded clothes.

"Why do you stay down here, Phil, and use yourself up on this old farm?" Ed Spencer continued. "I should think you'd go to the city and get a better job. If you like farming as I always did, you would."

Phil's face flushed a trifle. The contrast between his appearance and that of his old school friend made him uneasy.

"I have thought of it several times," he replied slowly, "but there's so much to do here, and then—"

"Oh, shucks! You hate to make the plunge. So did I. But after the first break it's all so much better. Clean sailing then. I just picked up my things and made the start. And now—well, I'm going to get a raise next month, and then I'll take it easier than now."

"I suppose the work is pleasant," Phil stammered, "and the pay is better."

"Better?" answered Ed a little contemptuously. "Why, you get cash there for your work, but on the farm you don't. I'll bet you haven't seen as much money as this in a year."

Producing a roll of bills, the speaker flipped them carelessly through his fingers, exposing to view several of high denominations.

"That's what you get in the city," he continued. "It's cash—every week or month."

Phil said nothing, but his mind was feverishly active. Suddenly he asked anxiously: "I suppose it's hard to get a good position at first, isn't it?"

"Yes, and no. If you have influence it's dead easy; if you don't you have to hunt around a bit."

Ed Spencer flung away his cigarette, and added confidentially:

"If you're thinking of making the change, let me know. I may help you. I know the ropes a little. Just send me word when you've made up your mind."

Phil kicked a lump of earth with the toe of his shoe. Ed seemed to comprehend the state of his mind, and asked, smilingly: "How are crops, anyway—slow as ever?"

A flash of resentment appeared in Phil's eyes, for he knew the question was asked in well-bred derision.

"Oh, they're pretty good," Phil replied with some dignity. "I'll harvest a good crop this season if—"

"If potato bugs don't eat up everything, and cabbage worms don't finish what's left," laughed Ed, as he turned to leave. "Well, I must be going. I want to see the old place, and get back to the city soon's I can. It's pretty slow here."

He consulted a handsome gold watch which hung at the end of a gold chain. "Remember me to Bess," he called over his shoulder. "I suppose she's well."

When the two separated, Phil Dryden picked up his hoe and stood for several minutes staring at the retreating form. Contending emotions possessed him. The old rebellious spirit rose up to make his thought bitter and disquieting.

Life on the farm was a drudgery, he thought, and a dozen times he secretly longed to leave it behind to begin work in the city. The opportunity had never been presented quite so forcibly as today, and he felt that the decisive moment had come.

"I'll do it," he firmly muttered after the space of five minutes of silent thought. "I'll do it now. Uncle Ned can get along without me. He can hire someone else in my place. I've delayed too long already."

Thereafter the planting progressed slowly. Phil's mind was not on his work and several times he had to go over his hoeing to repair damages carelessly done.

It was late in the afternoon, and Phil cut the day's work short by an hour.

As he trudged up to the old farm house, his face was brightened by the thoughts of his newly formed plans.

"Hello, Bess!" he called, as a slim girl of 16 met him.

"You're back early, Phil," Bess replied. "You can't expect supper yet a while. Why, the sun is an hour high."

"Oh, I'm not after supper," the boy responded. "I've made up my mind to quit for good. Bess, I'm going to the city."

His sister stared at him in amazement for a moment. Phil continued in explanation of his sudden announcement: "I'm going to get a position in the city, and leave the farm for good. I've just had a talk with Ed Spencer, and he says he can get me a position when I want it."

"Ed Spencer? Is he home again?" asked Bess.

"Only for a few days. He can't stand it here much longer than a few days at a time. It's so slow. I don't blame him, either, for it is slow—terribly slow and dull."

The boy removed his hat and wiped his forehead.

"But, Phil, if you go to the city, what will become of me?" queried his sister in a weak voice.

"You? Why, can't you stay here with Aunt Matty and Uncle Ned?" There was genuine surprise in the boy's voice, and this was increased when he saw that Bess had turned a shade paler than usual.

"Oh, yes, I suppose I could stay," was the quiet answer, "but did it ever occur to you that I might be lonely—and—"

There was a suspicious weakness in the voice, and when it grew husky, the girl stopped and turned her face away.

"Why, Bess, I don't see—why, in time I'd take you to the city, too. I'd get a good position, and work in it, and then we'd live there together."

"Yes, but how many years would I have to wait?" resentfully replied the girl. "Do you think Ed Spencer could support his sister? And if he could, why doesn't he? I'm sure she has a hard enough time to pinch along."

"But—" began Phil in self-extenuation—"I'm not like Ed in some respects, and—"

"No, and I'm thankful you're not," interrupted Bess.

A glow of pride made Phil quiet and more thoughtful. He remembered now

that Ed's sister worked hard at dress-making, besides her duties on the farm, to make both ends meet. In a dim way he seemed to remember several of Ed's selfish ways when they were school companions, and he admitted that he did not treat his sister liberally. The flash of the roll of bills appeared before his mind, and he wondered if Ed would present his hard-working sister with some of the money. Probably they were all for her—a birthday present, perhaps, for Mandy was 16 that month.

"Oh, Ed has his bad points," he replied, "and so has every fellow. But he's doing well in the city, and I don't see why I shouldn't do as well. I was always smarter in my studies than Ed."

"Yes, and in everything else," loyally responded Bess.

"Then why shouldn't I go to the city and make something of myself? I can never do it here."

"Phil, I don't think you would do much better," protested Bess. "In a few years now you—we—will have the farm to ourselves. Uncle Ned and Aunt Matty must turn it over to us—they only hold it in trust until you become of age, you know—and they'll be glad to get rid of the responsibility. Then we can—"

Phil kicked viciously at a stone. This sort of argument did not please him.

"But, Bess, there's no money in farming," he interrupted. "Uncle Ned says that, and everybody else. What's the use of killing yourself on the farm for nothing?"

"But what would you do with it?" gasped Bess in surprise.

"Oh, sell it, or—or let Uncle Ned run it until I become of age. Then—a new light shone in his eyes—then the money will start me in business. I'll have the experience, and—and—"

"Oh, Phil," exclaimed Bess in a pained voice, "how could you sell it?"

"Why not?" stubbornly asked Phil.

Bess did not reply. If he could not understand the sacredness of the associations that clustered about the old homestead, she could not make him. She turned abruptly and walked away, but not until Phil saw a tear glistening in her eyes.

"Girls are so funny and—and—un-reasoning," the discontented boy remarked aloud.

Phil was strongly minded and determined in his way. Once his mind was made up, it was difficult for him to change his point of view. For three years now he had been steadily drifting toward this important decision. He longed for the city, and wished to make his mark in a wider field than farming.

"Bess will be terribly disappointed at



"I'VE DELAYED TOO LONG ALREADY."

first," he reasoned, "and she'll be lonely the first month. But she'll soon see the wisdom of my way. When I can take her to the city she will have a happier time of it than here."

Nothing further was said of his change of plans for a few days, but Phil could not fail to notice the change in Bess's appearance. Her face was pale and denure, and the eyes looked as if she had spent sleepless nights worrying over the matter.

"I wish she wouldn't take it so to heart," Phil reflected more than once. Then a little irritably, "Girls expect so much of brothers. They want to tie them down to their apron strings."

This sort of argument did not tend to convince Phil of his mistaken line of thought.

A week later he had fully made up his mind to carry out his long-cherished plans. One afternoon he walked over to the old Spencer home to get Ed's city address. He would write to his old companion and find what he could do for him.

The Spencer home was a tumble-down, neglected farm of some half dozen acres. The only one of the family, in Phil's estimation in the past, was Mandy; but the odds were against her in the up-hill struggle, and to-day Phil's heart beat sympathetically for her.

She was pale and thin, and a worried expression marked her face. At the sight of Phil she flushed, and tried to straighten out these stray locks of hair on her head and to arrange her faded dress.

"I've been so busy," she apologized, "that I've had hard time to fix up decently."

Phil laughed and tried to make her feel at ease.

"I've come over to get Ed's address in the city," he said pleasantly, after a few moments of conversation. "I want to write to him."

"I'm not sure I have it," Mandy replied, blushing deeper than before. "Ed has changed it several times lately. He doesn't seem to stay in one place long."

"I've always heard that they move often in the city," Phil answered. "I suppose he's rising so rapidly that he has to change every little while to better quarters."

Mandy tried to laugh at this suggestion, but it was a poor attempt.

"Ed is very restless," she ventured finally. "He lost his old position, you know, and I don't know whether he will like his new one."

"No; I didn't know he had lost the old one," returned Phil slowly.

"Yes, there was something that—that—well, Ed is very restless. I wish he was nearer home, so I could look after him a little."

"I think all sisters want their brothers under their wings," replied Phil, with a laugh. "Bess now doesn't want me to go to the city to work."

"Are you thinking of going?" quickly asked Mandy's Spencer.

"Yes—that is, Ed said he could get me a position if—"

Mandy dropped her sewing, and with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, said vehemently: "Please don't go, then, Phil—for Bess' sake and mine."

"Why—what—"

"Well, because—we'll miss you, and then you'll be happier here, Ed is not doing as well as you think, and—"

"I'm not sure of that. He seemed to have plenty of money with him last week. But I suppose he gave it to you for a birthday present."

"Birthday present? Oh, did you remember that my birthday was last week? I'm so glad. I thought—"

"Didn't Ed remember it?"

Mandy bent over her work and made no reply. She was too loyal to make any confession that would reflect upon her brother.

When they parted a few minutes later, she took Phil's hand, and said earnestly: "Please don't leave Bess—and me. We should miss you so much, Phil."

Phil walked home in an uncertain state of mind. Somehow his desire to go to the city cooled down, and the sight of two anxious faces made him hesitate.

"Ed is about as selfish as ever," he acknowledged. "A fellow with all of his money who doesn't remember his own sister's birthday is a good deal of a—"

He didn't finish the sentence, but he knew pretty well in his own mind what he meant. Suddenly he stopped in his walk. A strangely unpleasant thought occurred to him. Was he also selfish and thoughtless because he ignored Bess' wishes and desires? No; a boy had to make his way in the world—even if he did sacrifice the old homestead.

Phil deferred writing his letter to Ed for a full week. Then something happened that made it unnecessary. In one of the city papers there was a small news item tucked away in a corner that greatly excited the people living in Greenville. It was no less than an account of the arrest of Ed Spencer for robbing his employer.

The details of the case were not given, but one could read on the surface the old story of temptation, weakness and final failure. Phil's heart nearly stopped beating. He could not show the paragraph to Bess, and in his heart he hoped that no one in Greenville would see it.

But this was a foolish wish, for within twenty-four hours the news had spread all over the village and the farming section. Phil thought of Mandy. How would Bess take it if he were the prisoner?

"Oh, Phil, suppose it had been you!" exclaimed Bess, when she heard the news. Then, blushing deeply, she threw

her arms around his neck and stammered: "But of course I know it couldn't have been you."

Nevertheless she sobbed rather nervously for a few minutes, until Phil was tempted to say:

"I don't know, Bess, I—I might have fallen, too. Who knows?"

"No, no," protested Bess loyally.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I'm going over to see Mandy," was the reply.

Without further explanation of his sudden resolve he walked across the fields until he reached the Spencer home. Without waiting for any formality, Phil entered and caught the girl curled up in a heap, with her sewing scattered in a hopeless mass around her.

"Mandy," he said softly.

She raised dull, red eyes to his.

"Mandy," he repeated, "I'm going to the city."

"Oh, Phil!" she cried.

"I'm going," he continued, "to see what I can do for Ed. Then I'm coming home to stay."

"If Ed had only stayed," she moaned. "He will come back—in time," Phil replied.

The girl raised her head and laughed hysterically. "Yes; now he will come home," she said wildly, "and nobody will have anything to do with him. He won't be able to get work again, and we shall have to move away."

Phil twisted his hat nervously, but his voice was clear and firm when he spoke. "He will always be the same to me, Mandy, and if he'll work on the old farm with me, he'll never lack employment. I'm going to stay on it, and keep Ed, too. Maybe in the end it will be a good thing for both of us. We'll make better farmers for the experience."

Something like a hopeful expression entered the stricken girl's eyes.

"Phil—if you could bring him home now, I—you know they're not going to prosecute him. Mr. Barrows has discharged him, but he will not have him imprisoned for the—"

"I understand," Phil replied. "I shall bring him home right away, and we'll run the farm together."

The door suddenly opened and Bess appeared on the threshold.

"Bess!"

"Mandy!"

And the two girls were sobbing in each other's arms. Phil looked on with wet eyes, and then whistled softly.

"I guess," he said finally, "with two such sisters, Ed and I ought to keep straight. If we don't, we deserve something worse than a thrashing, and I'll be the one to do the flogging."

"Why, Phil, what are you saying?" demanded Bess, wiping her eyes.

"You've been talking to yourself while we—we were—"

"Acting like two silly school girls," prompted Phil. "But I'm off now! I'm going to the city, Bess—going at last!"

"To stay?" demurely asked Bess.

"Until I can bring Ed home," responded Phil, as he pulled the door softly shut behind him.—Country Gentleman.

### A BIT TOO SHREWD.

One Venture in Which the Captain Overreached Himself.

One of Uncle Sam's customs officials, noted for his success in unmasking smugglers, said the other day in a discussion of a custom officer's duties:

"One must be shrewd, but not too shrewd; otherwise one overreaches oneself, like Captain Harrow of Islesborough."

"Captain Harrow of Islesborough was trading at Key West in a small vessel. Business took him up the coast to Tampa Bay, and he bought twenty dozen chickens from a farmer at \$4 a dozen."

"The chickens were all sizes—some a few days old and no bigger than canary birds; some fat and large, like turkey gobblers. The captain expected to make a lot of money out of them. He was very shrewd at a trade."

"Well, at Key West a hotel man came aboard and looked the chickens over."

"They are fine birds," he said. "How much?"

"If you pick them out yourself, I'll have to charge you \$6 a dozen. If I pick them out, I can let you have them for \$3."

"All right. You pick them out," said the hotel man.

"Captain Harrow picked out a dozen chickens of the canary bird size."

"Here you are, twelve prime broilers," he said, with a leer.

"Go ahead," said the hotel man calmly; "another dozen."

"The next dozen was of necessity larger."

"Go on," said the hotel man. "Keep on picking them out."

"And the third dozen was larger still. The captain looked at his patron anxiously."

"Keep right on."

"The next dozen was fine and plump, and the next comprised the biggest and fattest of the chickens."

"Keep right on picking them out, captain."

"Then at last Captain Harrow saw how he had overreached himself. The hotel man bought his whole lot of chickens at \$3, and thus the captain lost on the speculation \$20 in cash, to say nothing of feed and labor."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

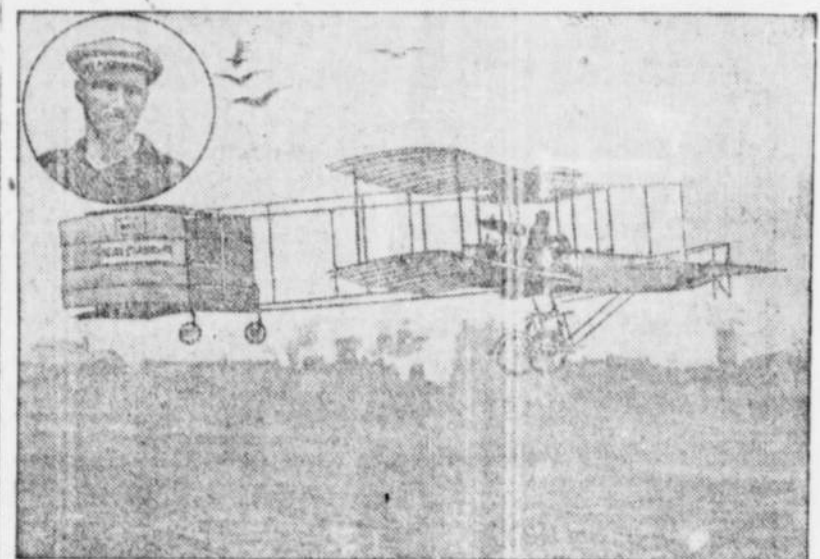
### Chivalry Is Not Dead.

"My roommate reminds me of Sir Walter Raleigh."

"In what way?"

"He put his coat in soak so that he could fuss his queen better."—Yaf Record.

### MAN FLIES AT LAST.



HENRY FARMAN AND HIS AEROPLANE.

The most extraordinary feat yet performed in the navigation of the air was accomplished at Issy, near Paris, when Mr. Henry Farman covered the circular kilometer with his aeroplane. It is not the first time that Mr. Farman has flown a kilometer, but his former experiences were unofficial. Recently he competed formally for the Deutsch-Ardenne prize of £2,000 for covering a circular course of a kilometer with a machine heavier than air, and he won it after a perfectly successful flight.

### WHY THEY WED TITLES.

#### American Heiresses Want Men of Letters, Not Business Men.

The reason Gladys Vanderbilt married Count Szechenyi was that she wished to escape the fate of marrying an American man of business. Thus spoke Karl F. Linba, the Austrian vice consul at New York, who is a personal friend of Count Szechenyi, commenting on this great social event.

"Do I think Miss Vanderbilt the count will be happy?" he repeated, in reply to a question by a reporter as to whether, in his opinion, the marriage would culminate in the same manner as the Marlborough and De Castellane unions. "Well, suppose you had \$2,000,000, as has the count. Then suppose you were to marry a girl, with twelve odd millions. Do you think you would be happier with those fourteen

### WEAK SPOT IN FARM SCHOOL.

#### Teachers Must First Be Taught How to Teach Business of Farming.

The idea of teaching farmers' children something about farming is taking hold of the people, but rather slowly and apparently without any well defined lines of operation. The boards of education in the different States have different ideas on the subject. Few of them have given the matter any thing like the consideration it deserves, and the result is an unsatisfactory condition of teaching in the rural schools.

In some States educational boards are political, and the only object they have in introducing farm education is in the hope that it may influence the farmer vote. In very few instances, even where the course of study is along correct lines, teachers are utterly unfit to teach it. Most teachers in the rural public schools come from the towns and cities, know nothing of farming, care less and have no particular interest in that branch of their work.

How is it possible to teach a farm boy or girl anything more about their father's business than they already know, unless teachers are employed who know more than the farmers do themselves?

Farm education will never be successful until there is a uniform course of study adopted which leads direct to the agricultural college and which is taught by teachers who are competent and who have been educated at agricultural colleges themselves.

In Chicago, a town that spends \$12,000,000 a year on its public schools, it is found that the things taught in all the grades are for the large part absolutely useless to children who have to depend upon what little education they can get in the public schools.

It was developed recently that in certain grades, where the children were from 13 to 16 years old not one was able to do an example in simple interest. They could not tell what the interest at 6 per cent on \$100 for one year and thirty days would be. But they knew all about stringing beads and cutting paper squares.

Unless the present methods of teaching farmers' children are changed we may expect similar results in the country schools. The real fault lies in the indifference of the people. We are not stingy in providing money for the support of public schools, but we seem to think that nothing more is necessary. School boards and school officers are selected without care and this most important work in the life of a nation is the most neglected.—Farm World.



GLADYS VANDERBILT.

millions than you would be on the reportorial staff of your paper?"

The vice consul's left eye closed, and he laughed.

"Seriously speaking, though," he continued, "I do not believe this wedding will be attended by the disagreeable features of those you mentioned. The count is a splendid type of manhood; his family is one of the oldest and best in Austria, he is wealthy, heroic, kind and gentle. But you Americans are such a hurry-up lot. You rush off to business in the morning, eat your lunch standing up in about two minutes, and rush off again to commercialism. Want kind of a home can such an American give a wife? It is because you run off to your business and leave your wives to their own amusement that your wealthy girls who love travel and easy living resort to foreign noblemen for husbands."

"The vice consul denounced the American impression that nobles of other countries crossed the seas to exchange soiled titles for American gold."

"It is untrue that our nobility come here to capture American fortunes and give nothing but a soiled name in return," he declared. "Over in my country we say the same thing about you. Your people come over there and buy our titles with your money. This talk about all marriages with nobles being unhappy also is false. There are more unhappy marriages in New York than in any city abroad."—Utica Globe.

### Crushing a Bore.

Young Borem (back from traveling in Europe)—And so, you see, I didn't take the advice of that fellow who said, "See Naples and die!"

Miss Sharpe (with a yawn)—What a pity!

### Hub, Bub, in Germany.

Theater Official (to students)—You are not allowed to join in the chorus, gentlemen. Students—Don't you worry. We are singing something quite different.—Flegende Blatter.

Don't get discouraged, girls. According to the women's departments of newspapers and magazines, if a girl starts out with determination and a pickle, it is no time till she is owning and running an immense pickle factory.

### Double Blessings are all right if they do not come in the guise of twins.