

**BEING INSPECTED**

By HENRY G. WILLING

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In college we were divided into good, indifferently good and bad. I regret to say that I was of the third class—bad. The badness in college boys is usually but a superfluity of health, youth and spirits, and when I look back upon myself at that period I see simply a boy passing into manhood.

As soon as I was graduated I sought the freedom of the wild west. Ranching was my vocation and cowboys were my associates. The only thing that I can remember creditable to myself while a rancher was falling in love with Eleanor Warfield, a visitor at a neighboring ranch. This occurred during my first year in the west and some time before I had been transformed from the grub, youth, into the superior being, man. Miss Warfield returned my proffered affection and consented to be my wife, but on one condition. I must be approved by her uncle. He was rich, and, being a bachelor, she was to be his heir. Nevertheless she was sure that if she married a man displeasing to him he would leave his property elsewhere.

My fiancée, having finished her visit, left for the east. She was to announce her engagement to her uncle and create as favorable an impression with regard to me as possible. Then, the way having been made smooth, I was to go east myself and present myself for inspection.

Miss Warfield wrote me some time after her arrival that she had informed her uncle of her engagement. She was not overhopeful in the matter, for he had asked a number of questions as to my antecedents which she knew very well would not please a critical old gentleman who had never sown his wild oats and whose ideas of a husband for his niece inclined to the clerical professions. What troubled Eleanor was that he asked at what college I had studied, and from my career at the university as I had frankly given it to her she was quite sure he would hear no good of me. She was agreeably disappointed in this, however, for the faculty spoke very well of me, a circumstance which surprised me and led me to believe that these gentlemen consider unmeritorious students more useful of encomiums than those who are meritorious. At any rate, I have found them far more lenient to my faults as a graduate than they were to me as a student.

When the time came for my inspection I wrote my fiancée, giving her the day and train on which I would arrive. On the way I fell in with an old gentleman who was the only person on the train I cared to talk to and whom I engaged in conversation. He was one of those men who have more sympathy with young people than those of their own age. He talked horse, and I was delighted to talk horse with him. He smoked to excess and drank whenever it pleased him to do so. We hadn't been together half an hour before he brought out a flask, cigars and cards. I was not personally averse to any one of the three and preferred them together. Having imbibed and lighted weeds, we proceeded to play. I found the gentleman the best eucher player I had ever met. Possibly my reason for so considering him was because before we reached our destination he had taken out of me all the money I had brought with me for expenses.

"Well," I said, "I'm cleaned out."  
"Come to my bank tomorrow morning," he said, "and I'll cash a draft for you."

Since I needed money from the start, the first thing I did after my arrival was to call at the old gentleman's bank. I found him a very different person there from the man with whom I had traveled. He was dignified itself. He cashed my draft without the slightest reference to the manner in which we had whiled away the time on the train, asked a few civil questions and dismissed me with the remark that this was his busy day.

I felt a trifle groggy, and I feared I looked groggy. Therefore I took a long nap, deferring my call on my fiancée till evening. I was anxious to see Eleanor, but I feared to present a disipated appearance to her uncle.

At 4 o'clock I took a Turkish bath, dined, and at 8, quite freshened, I rang the doorbell at the Warfields. Eleanor received me lovingly, of course, and told me that the account the professors had given of me at college had made her quite hopeful. After chatting for some time she led me into the library to be inspected. An old gentleman rose from an easy chair, and—well, I was appalled.

He was my fellow traveler. He told me to sit down. Then he said that instead of making the inspection of me in his home he had gone west for the purpose of seeing what I really was by taking me off my guard. He was very well satisfied with me and considered me a much better man than I had been represented by the professors under whom I had studied, "or, rather, had not studied," he added.

"What did they say of me?" I asked. "The reputation you left at college was far better than the one I left myself. I don't belong to a studious family myself, and I doubt if you do. I discovered on our trip that you are honorable, your impulses are good and you will turn out all right."

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