By HARRIET LUMMIS SMITH.

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From the first Ferguson had disliked the pug. The sight of the fat, wheezy little animal following at the heels of his pretty next door neighbor awoke in him an unreasonable desire to prod that pampered pet with his walking stick. All of which goes to show that first impressions are not to be trusted.

Ferguson's interest in the girl next oor was fast approaching the critical rtage. Perhaps the natural attraction which beauty holds for youth was ned by the fact that the girl ned unaware of his existence. Feron almost resented the blankness of gase, the indifferent tilt of her He had a feeling that if she look once she might find it orth her while to look again.

The pug took a hand in the game licious spring day when Fergua, who was supposed to be studying w in his room, was in reality watchthe blue of the sky and feeling his beart a vague, exquisite re-

All at once the current of his this was changed by an asthmetic ng in his neighbor's back yard. A black kitten shot across the grass to the shelter of the peach tree. The waddled after and stood guard be-, coughing violently as a result of his unusual exertions. Then Fergu-son's puises thrilled at the sound of a tritish voice raised in reproachful sums, "Punch, you wretch, come here this instant!

The law books had no chance after hat. Even the peach blossoms became black kitten in the branches howled singly. The pretty girl below illed her in dulcet tones which would



HE TOOK HER IN HIS ARMS AGAIN. have tempted Ferguson to dare any danger She brought out a saucer of milk, but even this lure proved unavailing. Then suddenly Ferguson started so violently that the book on his knee fell with a thud to the floor. "By Jove," exclaimed the young man,

"she's going to climb the tree!" With an instant realization that this was his opportunity, Ferguson went down the stairs in a headlong manner, which gave his landlady the impression that the house was on fire. Explanations delayed him unwarrantably, and when he burst out of the door the kitten was in Miss Morrell's arms, and Miss Morrell was in the peach tree.

Ferguson hesitated, then advanced, halting at a respectful distance. "Might I be of assistance?" he asked.

"I-I think you might," said the girl doubtfully. "You see, it's so much easier getting up than getting down. If only you would take the kitten, I think I could manage."

Ferguson climbed up beside her and attempted to relieve her of her charge, but the black kitten had its own opinion regarding the transfer. It struggled. It spit. It elevated the hairs along its spine. It clawed Ferguson's wrist as if it suspected him of being an emismary of the pug dog.

"Oh, dear, now she has scratched you!" exclaimed the girl. If she had been pretty before she was entrancing now, looking at him through the peach

"I'm sure I can get down now," said the girl, and Ferguson set the kitten on the grass and politely looked in another direction. A long minute passed Then there was a shrick, and Ferguson turned to see the lady of his dreams clutching an overhanging bough and dangling some distance above the

ground. The young man rushed to her assistance. For a heavenly instant he had her in his arms, and then he set her on her feet. Her face was as pink as the peach blossoms, and her shy eyes found difficulty in meeting his, but there was no lack of gratitude in her tone as she

said, "I don't know how to thank you!" Ferguson went home with the feeling that he was walking on air. As he passed the window he saw the pug looking out, but his expression no longer seemed sardonic, but rather benev-

"I owe you a silver collar for this, old boy," Ferguson thought gratefully, for Miss Morrell had given him per-

mission to call. It was some time before it was neces-

sary for the pug to interfere again. Without his good offices the acquaintance progressed rapidly. Miss Morrell's callers were very likely to find a dark, well dressed man sitting on the hammock beside her or occupying one of the rustic chairs on the porch or smoking in the library with the air of one who feels at home. Most of them took the hint. There was one exception, however, an obtrusive young fel low, Randall by name, who continued his visits, though Ferguson did his best to make it clear that they could be quite content without him.

Unfortunately Miss Morrell did not second these efforts as she might have done. She continued to treat her persistent caller with a consideration which Ferguson thought distinctly unnecessary. When he came one night prepared to take her driving and found she had gone boating with Randall be gave a harsher name to the act. His did not sleep that night, and when h presented himself next evening he wa in the worst of humors.

Had Miss Morrell been concillato" all might have been well, but instersie wore an air of studied indifference and when she did not resent his reproaches she laughed at him. Accord ingly in fifteen minutes the interview terminated abruptly.

"In that case," said Ferguson, risin, to his feet, "the best thing for me to do is to take my hat and go home." And Miss Morrell replied, "I quite

Gree with you."
Only one thing interfered with carry ing out this programme immediately— Ferguson could not find his hat. "Good evening," said Miss Morrell in the back ground as if weary of waiting for him to take the initiative.

"I beg you not to imagine that I am delaying intentionally!" exclaimed Ferguson, with indignation. "But even you can see that it is impossible for me to leave the house bareheaded."

"You put your hat on the chair. I saw you," said Miss Morrell. "I am quite aware that I put it there," returned Ferguson stiffly, "but it is easy to see that it is not there

For some minutes he hunted. Miss Morrell laid aside her offended dignity sufficiently to assist in the search. All

at once she started nervously. "I do hope Punch didn't find it!" she exclaimed. "He's so mischievous some

times.' But when the hat was discovered it was in Punch's society. Moreover, it had lost its resemblance to a hat. The brim was missing, and the crown was fast disappearing. Punch surveyed them over the wreck and grinned complacently.

The two young people looked at each other, and Miss Morrell's lips twitched Ferguson thought she was on the point of laughter, and he smiled encouragingly. Then she surprised him by turning her face to the wall and burst ing into tears.

"My darling girl," exclaimed Ferguson, almost beside himself. "My dearest Ina, I beg you won't give a thought to the worthless thing."

"But you were going away angry,"

said a stifled voice. "Angry with you?" cried Ferguson.
"Never!" He took her in his arms again as he had done under the peach tree, but he did not let her go as quick-And that wise old pug left the ruined hat on the rug and waddled away to the window seat, as if satisfled that they were once more capable

of managing their own affairs. Punch is older now and divides his mistress' devotion with a small pink and white rival said to resemble Ferguson, but he wears a silver collar. and no one grudges him his place as an honored member of the household. Whatever Ferguson's faults, he is not

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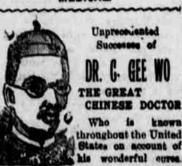
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