

# Fresh Air Funds.

By *Lula Johnson.*

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The sun, a great ball of red against a coppery sky, had long since ceased to shine down upon the narrow street and hung lastly upon the line of the western sky as though reluctant to leave a battlefield where he had been a mighty victor. The pavements and even the buildings gave out their scorching heat like a bake oven from which the fumes have been newly drawn.

Here and there some one watered the street with a hose or turned the stream upon the tiny grass plots in front of the houses, but the heat quickly dried up the food, and the humidity served only to add to the general discomfort.

It was a long street of old fashioned high stoop houses, once the home of fashion. Latterly society had been driven out by the resistless march of the city's progress, and the district was given over to the boarding house mistresses until such time as the needs of the growing city should require the space for factories.

Still retaining somewhat of its old fashioned dignity, the street was becoming shabby genteel. Here and there a brownstone front had been replaced by a brick tenement masquerading as a flat house, and here and there the squalor of the poor became apparent. Already the street marked the extreme edge of the residential district, as the boarding house mistress loved to term it, and its chief recommendation was the fact that the boarders could reach their places of employment by walking and so save the tedious cars and the 60 cents car fare that represented an important item in their weekly expenditure.

The boarders thronged the high stoops, gasping in the hot air, not daring to seek their rooms until the heat should abate a little. At Mrs. Marcy's Dudley Thearle shared the top step with Maud Ryerson. Ever since he had come to Marcy's, two weeks before, he had sought a place beside Maud until the other boarders had come to regard the top step as the joint property of the two.

Presently they would make jests on the oddly assorted pair and Thearle's love affair would share with the weakness of the coffee and the strength of the butter, the humorous attention of the other boarders. The coffee was not weak and the butter rather better than the average, but tradition is mighty and has decreed that these jokes shall endure while boarding houses exist. Generally, too, there is some mismatched pair, lost in their own happiness, to offer a third butt of ridicule.

And surely never was there such an oddly assorted pair. Thearle still wore the sunburn and ruddy coloring which proclaimed him a product of field and farm. The fortnight which had passed since he had taken a position offered him by one of last summer's boarders at the farm had not faded the flush of health, nor had the city's burdens bent the strong shoulders.

Miss Ryerson was a commercial nun, wedded to the work which took her youth and beauty and gave naught in return save the pittance which permitted a mere existence with none of the pleasures that are the heritage of youth. She was only twenty-one, but she looked thirty, for since her sixteenth birthday she had been working. Part of that time she had been the support of a younger sister, and the story of privations endured for her sister's sake was written large on the colorless skin and in the weary eyes and bent carriage.

Yet to Thearle she seemed beautiful, for she represented knowledge—knowledge of ways and manners that were strange and new to him—and he worshipped dumbly if not from afar.

Her greatest charm he found in the fact that she did not laugh at his blunders, as the others did. She seemed to him some Lady Gracious, a woman vastly different from all others, a woman most greatly to be desired.

As they sat there in silence, unwilling to make even the exertion that conversation demanded, there came the shouts of children, the complaining grind of heavy motor cars, and presently there rolled past a line of delivery trucks loaded with children as cargo.

"It's the city fresh air fund," explained the girl in answer to Thearle's inquiring glance. "The real fund sends the children to the country. This is an idea of the Evening Spark. The parks are too far for the little feet to walk, and car fare is not for the children of the tenements. The merchants lend their trucks in the evenings, and the children are taken out to the park to run on the grass and get a breath of fresh air. It is a wonderful charity."

"I wish some one would start a fresh air fund for people like me," mused Thearle. "I don't mean just that sort of course, but I sit here on the steps because there seems to be nothing else to do."

"You could go to the park," suggested the girl. "That car on the corner goes straight out past the park into the country. It's a lovely ride, but it costs another nickel once you are past the park."

"But what good is that to me?" demanded Thearle. "I don't know my way around yet. Why can't an accommodating guide come and get us?"

"You are supposed to be able to make acquaintances and arrange picnics," reminded the girl. "You have the peo-

ple at the store and at your boarder's house."

"Will you come?" demanded Thearle, roused to interest. "I didn't suppose that you'd care."

"Gladly," was the smiling response, while the tired eyes lighted with pleasure. "I'll go for my hat."

In ten minutes they were speeding toward the suburbs, exchanging the narrow, ill smelling streets for the broader avenues, past the park, with its soft greens, into the open country, with now and then a suburban tract that in time would be absorbed into the city proper.

And so they came at last to the real fields, free from the advertising boards of real estate firms and patent medicines. Cornstalks cut the velvet dusk with faint green swords of light, and the smell of clover and buckwheat and the fragrant odor of apples fell gratefully upon nostrils long assailed by musty city streets.

The tense rigidity of the girl's pose relaxed. She settled back more comfortably against the seat. She no longer fought with the breeze in its struggles to destroy the prim severity of her hair, which now began to curl in loving tendrils about her low white brow.

"It's like a little visit to heaven," she breathed softly. "It is perfect out here."

"You should see my home," he answered. "It's right on the lake. The meadows slope down to the water, and just along the beach there's a little growth of young pines. I tell you it's fine in the summer to lie on the pine needles and watch the water. Then you go in and get a drink of milk and go to bed. We sleep under blankets there. It never gets so hot that we can't sleep."

"Back of the house the farms go clear over to the purple mountains, miles and miles away. There aren't any theaters or picture shows, but you don't need 'em when you have a horse and a boat."

"It must be lovely," cried the girl. "There's a little lake just off the line here. Some of the girls went there for a picnic once."

"Let's go and see it," suggested Thearle as the car came to a stop.

The girl sprang from the car and led the way down the dusty road to the trolley park, her eyes shining with delight. As the scene burst upon them in a blaze of light she gave a little cry of pleasure and paused that he might enjoy the scene.

Thearle laid his hand upon hers as they leaned against the top rail of the fence.

"It's pretty," he conceded, "but it's a city lake. My lake is wide and long and deep. It hasn't any electric lights, but there's the moon, which is better. You couldn't see the moon here for the lights. We don't have lights on the trees either. It's all soft and cool and dark and still. It's real country."

"I'm sorry," said the girl gently. "I thought that you would like it. Shall we go back?"

"I do like it," explained Thearle. "It's pretty—for the city. The lights are like jewels, but don't you see—it isn't real. You're shown me your lake, and it's like everything else in town—artificial. Won't you come with me and see the life that's real?"

"I couldn't! Think of the scandal!" she cried, shocked at the idea.

"Not if we were married," he explained. "And we'll live there always, except when we come to the city to see what we have escaped. We've known each other only two weeks, little girl, but you can trust me, can't you?"

For answer she placed her hand in his.

"You asked me to be your fresh air fund," she said, with a happy little laugh. "but, after all, you're the fresh air fund."

### Religious Partnerships.

Two men formed a partnership for the prosecution of evangelistic work in Manhattan and Brooklyn. At the end of two months they separated, and each proceeded to reform the world in accordance with his own theories.

"I could have told you in the beginning," said an experienced church worker to one of the men, "that it was useless to form a partnership with anybody, but it seemed best to let you learn the futility of the plan for yourself. Of all partnerships that men can enter into the religious combination is usually most short lived. Earnest laborers in that field are particularly deep set in their convictions and are likely to resent advice. I have tried several such partnerships myself, and I have seen others try them, but none of the deals lasted long. Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey traveled together for a good many years, but with that exception most persons who combine to conduct a religious campaign, whether preacher or singers or both, soon become dissatisfied with each other's tactics and conclude that they can accomplish more by going it alone."—New York Times.

### Jenny Lind and Goldschmidt.

When Jenny Lind first sang in Leipzig she appeared at a Gwandhaus concert under Mendelssohn's direction. Naturally there was a great demand for tickets, despite the fact that the prices were raised. It was therefore decided that the students of the conservatorium must waive their usual right to free admission to these concerts. But the students objected with vigor. They were as anxious as anybody to hear the "Swedish nightingale." A protest was made, and young Otto Goldschmidt, aged sixteen, was the student deputed by the others to interview the authorities. In the end he won the day. He little thought that in half a dozen years he would be equally successful in winning the singer herself.

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### ASSESSOR'S NOTICE.

**ASSESSOR'S NOTICE—(EQUALI-** zation of 1908 Assessment). To the Taxpayers of Clatsop County, Oregon: Notice is hereby that the Board of Equalization for Clatsop County, Oregon, will convene at the Clerk's office at the Court House in Astoria on the 19th day of October, 1908, the same being the third Monday in said month and the time fixed by law for the meeting of said Board of Equalization, which will continue its sessions from day to day, exclusive of Sundays and legal holidays, until the examination and correction and equalization of the assessment rolls for said year shall be completed which said Board will continue in session for one month from said date, unless the labors thereof are sooner completed. Petitions or applications for the reduction of a particular assessment shall be made in writing, verified by the oath to the applicant or his attorney and filed with the Board during the first week it is required by law to be in session, and any petition or application not so made, verified and filed shall not be considered or acted upon by the Board.

T. S. CORNELIUS, Assessor for Clatsop County, Ore.

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**HOWARD M. BROWNELL** Attorney-at-Law Deputy District Attorney 420 Commercial Street

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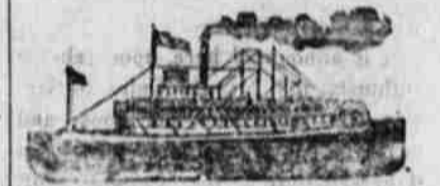
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