

The Motorman...

Mrs. Harlan was taking lunch with her sister, Mrs. Banks, that is, a rain had set in at noon, as Mrs. Harlan was about to leave, and Mrs. Banks invited her to stay until it was over, and in the meantime lunch was served. Their mutual sister-in-law, Mrs. Brower, was also a guest, she, however, by previous invitation.

There was more coldness in the atmosphere than the summer rain justified. An outsider might have accounted for it (outsiders are sometimes invidious) by the difference in the gowning of the guests, indicating as it did the antipodes of bank accounts. Mrs. Banks and Mrs. Brower were attired in some kind of rich stuffs, quiet colored, to be sure, as befitted a family luncheon, but Mrs. Harlan's gown was plain, hopelessly plain, only its neatness redeeming it from shabbiness.

After the meal was over the ladies adjourned to the library, where they became confidential—enough so to ask questions and make suggestions.

"Jennie," Mrs. Banks said to Mrs. Harlan, "You are still living in those rooms on—what street is it? I can't remember."

"Maple," Mrs. Harlan answered. "Is the name of the street but I'm not there now. We are in a little cottage near the car line; it is more convenient for George."

"You are a remarkable woman to stick so persistently to George. It's ten years now since—"

"Yes, ten years since he had to sell out his business. But it was dissipation of mismanagement on his part. The security debt you know. Since then—"

"You have been living from hand to mouth; that's what you have been doing since then."

The color came to Mrs. Harlan's face. "George has been doing the best he could."

Mrs. Banks looked down on the hopelessly plain gown. "His best has not been much, I wouldn't stand it; first one thing and then another."

"Oh leave him, Jennie," put in Mrs. Brower, the sister-in-law. "You still have youth and beauty, and there is much ahead of you if you will only reach out your hand and take it."

"I know that to be the case," agreed Mrs. Banks, giving Mrs. Brower a knowing look.

Mrs. Harlan sat in silence looking down on the rug at her feet, which silence was misconstrued, for the ladies kept on with suggestions and advice.

She arose to leave. She had counted on saying bravely the things she had been revolving in her mind, but her voice failed her.

"I cannot tell you what I think; all that I think," she stammered, "but this I can tell you, that I will never leave my husband."

When Mrs. Harlan reached the street, she stood a moment dazed, then turning from the route she would naturally have gone, went the one directly opposite. At length she reached the street down which George's car must come on his down town trip. Others were waiting on the corner, so many that when George stopped his car and they came aboard he did not see that his wife was among them. She walked straight through the car and stationed herself beside him on the platform.

"Why, Jennie, is this you?" he asked, "why are you out here with the motorman?"

"Because the motorman is my husband."

"Well," he laughed, "it's nice to have you with me, but the draught—"

"It's the same draught you are in all day."

"And I can't talk to you; I must look straight ahead and on both sides at the same time."

"I know; I'll help you."

They went spinning down the street slowing up when they reached the thoroughfare, but gaining in gait when the passengers had gone and the houses drifted further apart. At last they reached the terminus, a pretty, shady spot, where there was a half hour's wait before the return trip was begun.

He led her to the rustic bench beneath the boughs of a near-by oak.

"What is it, Jennie?" he asked looking into her face which was still white for all they had ridden against the rain-cooled breeze.

"Oh George," she exclaimed, "they want me to leave you—my sister and Julia. I was with them at lunch today and they said that to me—Do you understand?"

"Yes, I think I do," he replied.

"I said leave you. How can you smile like that?"

"It doesn't concern me what they said," he answered slowly, "but what did my wife say?"

"What did I say? I don't know. I can't remember. It was not what I thought, not all I thought. My voice forsook me, and it's well it did. But one thing I know I said, and that was that I would never leave you."

George put his arm around her and drew her close to him.

"You hate them—loathe them?"

George shook his head. He took her hand in his and looking down on the wedding ring he had placed there years ago.

"I have myself, thought of leaving

you, Jennie."

"Leaving me! Oh! George—"

"—yes, I thought of going some place where I would get rich and come back to pour gold into your lap. You see the tales of the nursery still lingered in my mind, and when the wealth of the Klondike was heralded far and near I thought of going. Oh, Jennie, he continued after a little pause in which he had turned his face from the scrutiny of her eyes. "It has gone hard with me, harder than you ever knew, to have you share my poverty. Oh, I have seen it all, Jennie your work, your management and efforts to conceal and bitter still your faith in me. Had you complained or blamed me for your lot, I might have borne it better. I might have steeled myself against your words, but this, this silent suffering was a daily stab. Perhaps it was cowardly, but I thought to go away."

"Oh George, you were not going away to leave me? How could you?"

"That's it—I couldn't. My plans would come to nothingness right there. I couldn't leave you. Moreover, the good thought came to me, that those whom 'God hath joined together' ought to stay together, and that good thought has never left me. But it is all over now, my poverty is past. We can get along well on my wages if you can live out of the swim."

"The swim," Jennie laughed, "Oh! I can live out of it. I don't mean exist, I mean live, and have, moreover, for company a goodly number of goodly people."

"My time is up," he interrupted—"I must be going back." Her hand was in his; together they arose and walked toward the car.

"Wait Harlan," called a man running, regardless of walks and flower beds, across the sward of a near-by home. "wait, I want to go back with you."

"That's Peyton Turley," George said to Jennie, "he has taken a great fancy to me. I've had a hard time breaking him from standing by me at the motor, and now he takes it out in sitting with me here during my half hour's wait. Poor fellow, I wish he would come home tonight as steady on his legs as he is now on leaving."

But alas! he did not return as steady on his legs. He had hardly any use of them at all, and George had quite a time of it getting him through the dark grounds of the old colonial home. In one window burned a lamp, bespeaking his valet's care, not wife's or mother's; for Turley had never married and his mother had been dead for many a year.

The following day Turley was on the bench under the oak, taking his mid-day smoke.

"Come here, Harlan," he called when the motorman alighted from

his car; "come here," and he made room for him on the bench. "I was not so far gone as not to know you last night. I was a little wobbly in my locomotion to be sure, but I had some sense in my pate. That was a clever turn you served me—"

"Well you had better leave off getting in that condition," interrupted Harlan, "I'll not promise to do the like again. You may have to lie in the yard all night next time."

"Well, the yard's not such a bad place, such weather as this, said Turley, mopping his forehead with his handkerchief. "Think I'd like it."

"Yes, it might do well enough—a flower bed for a mattress on a summer's night; but when winter comes—what about that? One night then in the yard, a half night even in bitter weather might mean death."

"And do you think you would let me lie out in the yard and freeze to death?"

He laid his hand on Harlan's knee and looked straight into his eyes. Harlan turned his face away—he knew it would belie his threat. "Scare me with something worse than that, old fellow. You'll not let me freeze to death. Tell me I'm killing myself—on a precipice and such like, but not the lie you just told. Lies don't fit your mouth."

"Oh, Harlan, I'm on to you. I sized you up the first time I saw you. I was aboard the cars and so was poor old Bently too drunk—old Bently this time, not I—to do anything but sit slumped up in a corner like a pile of overcoats. I saw you take him back and forth with you four times and pay every time his fare out of your own pocket. I reckon you thought I was a little off myself, to make all those trips, but I wasn't, I was watching you. A spotter. You didn't know that I was a spotter?"

"No; I never took you for one."

"Well, I spotted you, didn't I?"

Harlan laughed as the circumstance in its vividness came back.

"You'll tell you what you are, Harlan. I've been watching you. I've spotted you more than once. You have a lot of grit and muscle and sense into the bargain, but for all that you are 'soft,' you are what they call a 'mark' and if I had some champagne here, I'd drink it to your health. I like marks. I'd say: 'Here's to the mark—long may he live and his tribe increase!'"

"I've not been a success," replied Harlan. He did not look down as he said it. He held his head up and looked straight into Turley's eyes, as he would have done in announcing any other fact. The day had been when this confession would have embarrassed him, but that day was gone.

"I don't mind it for myself. I did mind it for my wife, but she doesn't care. You can't conceive this maybe, but she doesn't."

Do you mean to say you are not a success with such a woman as that for a wife?"

"A business success," Harlan corrected.

"Oh! I see—you mean you are not a success at money-snatching, hoodlugging and such like. Well I think you are a sample, or rather we are illustrations each, that money is not an essential to happiness. I have it, and am not happy—you haven't it, and are. I was born with it, and as far as that matter is concerned, so were you, and you can beat me out in the assertion that it is not worth what men part with to get it. All this brings me to my point. This occupation that you are at is confining. I want to do something for you in a business way, you know."

"Never mind me, Turley. You said the other day that I had grit and muscle, and so I have. There are many men who haven't—and maybe they are not to blame,—men who might accept your help. I'm doing well where I am. Let me stay. If we went into some business, we'd maybe lose. I don't always understand; sometimes when I do understand, I'd scorn to use successful methods, and you—"

"I'll Ha-ha! I'm not worth a—straw. (I'd like to have said something off-color!) The whole thing would go to Halifax if I were to run it a day, a single day. We'd part company—the business and I, if I should undertake it. No, no," he laughed again, "don't misunderstand me—no business in mine! But you were talking of a patent you had in your head?"

"Yes, the invention has passed muster at the Washington Patent Office, but I'm not willing yet to risk your money."

Some months later Turley boarded Harlan's car down town. "I'm on my way to the races, Harlan, anybody else going out today?"

"Oh, you'll not be lonesome."

"I've worked them pretty steadily this week—the races."

"Have you?"

"Why don't you show some interest in a fellow—ask if he's lost or won?"

"I don't know; I sometimes think the man was right who said if a fellow lost at gambling it was a misfortune but if he won it was a calamity."

"If that be the case, I've been having misfortune straight along, and no calamity. But here I'm going back today; not, however, to bet—just to be a looker-on. But I brought eight hundred with me—"

Here, Turley," said Harlan, turning and looking him directly in the face—they were waiting till the cars in front, released from blockade, should again be set in motion—"suppose you

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apply that eight hundred to the patent scheme? You might as well lose it on the patent as the races."

"Agreed; it's a 'go.' I'll give it to you now."

"How shall this firm be styled any way?" asked Turley of Harlan some months later as they were setting some minor questions of the partnership, "Harlan & Turley" or "Turley & Harlan?" If you can tell which it should be you will end the old controversy of precedence; brains or money, money or brains?"

"Your name goes first," Harlan answered.

The beginning was slow and cautious. Turley would have fain brought to it some race horse methods, but his partner held him back.

"It's a fine thing, Harlan, fine thing, the more I think of it, the finer it seems. Put on steam old boy, and let her fly! I want these old close-fisted ducks around town to see what they missed in not discovering and encouraging an ambitious, energetic fellow, lying around waiting for a job." Here he put his hand on his breast and smiled. "I'm in earnest, Harlan!" he continued; "put as many men on the road as the road will hold."

"No, no; let us go cautiously as I did when I was at the motor."

"I'll own up to you, Harlan," Turley said one day four years later, as they walked through the factory. "It's a new sensation and a good one too, for a fellow to realize that his money is doing something worth while. That's a feeling of respectability creeping over me, a feeling that the old family plate, the colonial home, lions-at-the gate and all, never brought. I had no idea that the buzzing of belts and hum of wheels could make such music." They stopped a moment and listened.

"You are right," Harlan agreed; "you are right, it is music not only to our ears, but to hundreds of others', the wives' and children's as well as the workmen's themselves. Of course our dividends would be larger if the expenses were less, but that shall never be. Every workman is paid living—I mean good living wages, such as I would like if I were in his place. And the little town of cottage homes we are building hampers us right now, but it will all come back some day—if not in money, in something better."

The next year George received a letter from Turley, who had gone East for the summer: "Do you remember that I told you once that I was about to be married and—had trouble; my fault, of course. It's all made up. I've the dear, sweet girl again, the prettiest and best woman in the world—no, I don't except your wife—and we are to be married. I'd ask you to drink to my health, were it not that I'm not drinking now. I left off the habit the day the sign 'Turley & Harlan' went up on the factory, and have never since resumed it. Won't that old home look good with her in it? I've written to the housekeeper to light it up the night we are expected, 'from turrent to foundation stone.' See that more chandeliers are put in, and turn on the factory plant. Might put some bulbs in the flower beds, and arc lights in the trees!"

"Sincerely, Harlan, a new leaf has been turned for me. I'm another man and am leading another life, and I know before they reach me that I have your congratulations."

That day when George reached home, he found Jennie reading a letter.

"Sister is in trouble, George, and wants your help."

"She shall have it," was the prompt reply.

"—and humbly asks our forgiveness."

"She has mine, and—yours, yours of course?"

Jennie was silent.

He went over to where she sat and put his arms around her. "Is it possible that my dear wife, who does so many things that the Master bids, is going to fall at this—which is so

important?"

After a little while she answered, slowly but earnestly, "Yes, you are right, I must forgive her, I do forgive her and I hope you will help her all you can."

"Harlan, what kind of a will are you making, what are you doing with your money, asked Turley one day years later at the end of one of their conferences—or is it any of my business?"

"I expect to dispose of the greater part of it right along while I'm living. I shall not defer it's work till I'm gone; and then, too, that project's growing on me."

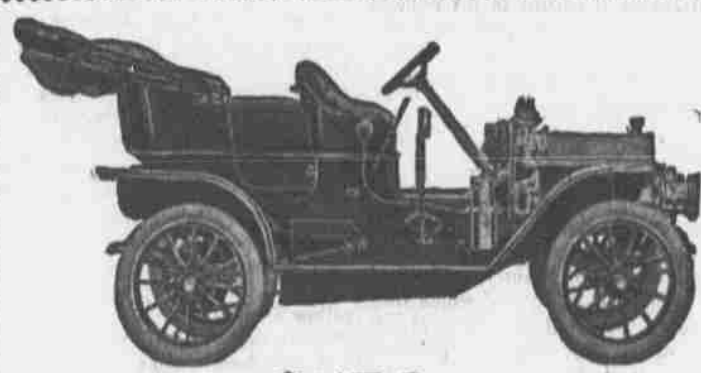
"What project? or rather, which project?—you have so many."

"The 'Home' I'm building in my mind—the Home for Failures, the Softs, the Marls; men who felt their feet tremble and could no longer stand; whose hands grew nerveless and could no longer hold; men who in journeying to some 'Jericho,' fell among thieves; men who would not in connection with it. The secretary 'boost' a fake, or 'work' a worthless may send the report to Congress at selem; who would not launch an enterprise that they had themselves scuttled before it left port, and knew would go down in mid-ocean—men, who to reach success would not overreach their neighbor."

ST LOUIS TO GULF 3 t

WASHINGTON, April 24.—With in a month the board of engineers of the War Department expects to have taken final action on the report of the survey of the Mississippi from St. Louis to the gulf. The report was made by a special board of army and civil engineers authorized by law to estimate the cost of constructing a deep waterway to the gulf from St. Louis.

The board of engineers has considered the report at a formal meeting and individual members are now at work on it. Another formal meeting will be held soon when the board will decide what course to recommend to the Secretary of War, shall be taken among thieves; men who would not in connection with it. The secretary 'boost' a fake, or 'work' a worthless may send the report to Congress at selem; who would not launch an enterprise that they had themselves scuttled before it left port, and knew would go down in mid-ocean—men, who to reach success would not overreach their neighbor."



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