



*His unseeing eyes
still stared stolidly
lakeward, but
they were filmed
with retrospection*

earnings overnight. The "drive" was concluded. Camps had broken. The summer's sultry interregnum was at hand.

The melody that echoed in the man's memory was a different one, of course. He recalled its effect on the girl. The girl's eyes and hair were dark. She sat in the bow of the canoe and trailed one hand in the water. When she heard that music her eyes had brightened and a flush had deepened the charm of her oval cheek.

"I've heard Melba sing that, Bob," she said breathlessly. "Oh, if I could only sing like her! If I could only achieve grand opera! It's too wonderful to hope. The lights and the crowds and applause! And the fame! That's why, Bobbie, I can't say 'Yes.' Any girl I know would be delighted at the chance, I suppose. But I don't want a bungalow in the suburbs, Bobbie. I don't want housework—and—and babies—and things. I want a career!"

A career! Her soft, low voice thrilled and vibrated at the word, as if it were something sacred, something ineffably desirable. A light burned in the big, dark eyes that was not there when the young man had asked the ancient question.

The girl with the soft, low voice and the dark hair worshiped at the shrine of fame. She envied the prima donnas who smiled back at her out of the pages of the Sunday supplements, along with interviews in which they pointed the road to success. She envied them the plaudits of the public, she envied their power to move and thrill their audiences. She craved their chance to be envied, admired and applauded.

The evening shadows lengthened, and the pavilion band ceased to play.

He helped her out of the canoe.

"You're sure about—about that ca-

rear?" he whispered, a trifle unsteadily.

The girl's beautiful eyes were two unfathomable velvet pools in the moon-

light. She essayed to smile, and that tantalizing dimple close up under her eye, the one that added the final touch to her delicious soft femininity, crept into the oval cheek and lingered, momentarily.

"I guess—I guess I'm sure, Bobbie," she faltered. "It's—it's going to be—the career."

Distantly out of the darkness came a high-pitched burst of quavering, demoniac mirth. Its eerie cacophony frightened the girl. She clutched his arm.

THE ROAD

By Laura F. Beall

*"There lies your way, due west."
—Twelfth Night.*

THERE'S a long, brave road to follow,

Straight toward the end of the day;
Above it glides the swallow
And across it darts the jay,
There's a meadow close beside it,
With a wild flower here and there—
Oh, it's only when you've tried it
That you know the road is fair.

It's a good road to walk in
At the rising of the sun;
It's a good road to talk in
When the day is done.
There's a field across the way,
Where the larks sing all day long—
You may listen a summer's day
Nor hear a lovelier song.

The dogwood blossoms mar it
And wood lilies crowd the edge;

"What was that, Bobbie?" she whispered.

The touch of her hand and the subdued perfume of her hair intoxicated the young man. He swept her into his arms, crushing the slender form to him, kissing the soft mouth repeatedly.

"I don't know," he said. "I don't even care."

Careers were not easily achieved, it seemed. Eileen Mayo had a good voice, her friends said. But the great vocal authority, consulted in fear and trembling, listened unemotionally and said that it would take three years at least to train it. His fee would be \$10 an hour. Eileen couldn't pay that much. So she cried when she told Bobbie.

And Bobbie, without apprising her of the fact, saw the great vocal instructor. And then the celebrity's secretary called Eileen up and said that by special arrangement Miss Mayo could be instructed for \$2 an hour.

Eileen never learned the details of that special arrangement. She didn't know that it was Bobbie's shouldering of the deficit that made the \$2 fee possible. She rather surmised that it was the charm of her voice, and the celebrity's concession to talent unquestionable.

It was almost two years before she achieved her first triumph. Perhaps some would have said that it was hardly a triumph. But she sang at a concert and was fairly well applauded. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were brilliant with youth and enthusiasm. A young man in evening clothes led the applause from a box seat.

Bobbie was in the gallery. His mother had been ill. And the \$8 twice a week made box seats unattainable. But he had a box of American Beauties ready to present to her. Bobbie was a good loser. He was going to show the career that he was game!

He didn't give her the flowers. He was standing at the stage entrance, his own pallid face alight with emotion, when a limousine glided up behind him. And the young man in the dress suit was there before him somehow. The girl on the threshold of the career greeted him warmly and allowed him to assist her into the car.

Over his shoulder she espied Bobbie and the flowers. She looked a little startled. Her beautiful face mirrored recognition and something else akin to actual annoyance. Then she nodded quite curtly, and turned to smile at the other man.

Out on the farthest log of the rotting pier the man stared into the starless night and thought of that curt nod.

He thought of the night that he had spent on another pier, wondering why he shrank from ending it all. He thought of his theatrical departure for the great North. He thought of the letters sent, but not answered. His mind swept back through the years when he had watched

eagerly in year-old papers for news of her successes. He had never learned her stage name, and as each new star scintillated into the brief perihelion of operatic glory he could only wonder if it might be she.

Time is supposed to dull the keenest of emotions. But somehow the wilderness never seemed to wear the edge off of his memories. He had only to close his eyes to resurrect the vision of the girl, with her dark eyes bright with hope and wide with yearning for the attainment of the career.

And his slender hands grew calloused and rough and crooked, and his black hair and beard were shot with gray, without there ever ensuing a diminution of the agony of the long night hours in his little cabin, when he couldn't sleep for thoughts of her.

For him there had been no compensation—not even gratitude.

Tonight he had wandered listlessly into the Lumberman's Haven. A stage had been crudely improvised at one end, and to the wheezing accompaniment of the Bucktooth Kid's orchestra a woman was singing in a hard, sexless voice, the refrain of a popular song. Her hair was too brilliantly yellow, even as her black eyes were too cynical and hard. The song dragged to a listless end amid mingled cat-calls and feeble applause.

There was a momentary hush, broken by the raucous voice of the dance caller. The woman strolled down the hall and threw her arm around the Bucktooth Kid's shoulder. He shook the bare arm off, with an irritable torrent of abuse. His disdain was palpable. The woman shrugged her thickly powdered bare shoulders and sneered. The sneer achieved what a smile had formerly been wont to do.

It brought out a dimple high up on one lined cheek, beneath the wide, hard, dark eyes.

The man staggered out into the darkness, with a gray, drawn face.

The career, after the perennial practice of the plans of mice and men, had 'gang agley.'

The moon rose over Sakawan. Its silvery beams plated the tall timbers of the ancient hoist in shimmering silver. It shone upon Sakawan, sprawling like a great, grotesque chameleon among its rock girt islands, responsive to every tone and tint.

It shone on the farthest log of the rotting pier, and on the ripples widening silently on the steel blue water beneath it.

From far out on the lake, as if in fiendish mirth over the recurring tragedies of human frailty, rose in eerie quavering notes the mocking laugh of a loon.

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Her Plan a Fizzle

A VINCENT CLUB girl got this reply from a Boston young man to the following question:

"What is it a sign of when one's lips itch?" asked the dear girl in the parlor scene as she lowered the blinds and seated her person on the end of a sofa built for two.

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied the dense young man, as he folded his arms and tried to look wise, "but I presume it indicates some sort of a cutaneous trouble."

Or Spilled

SHE was very anxious to learn all her new duties properly and to please her mistress. Now, ladies, don't get excited; this is only a story!

"Please, mum," she said one morning as she cleared the breakfast table, "when I bring the dinner in, ought I to say, 'Dinner's ready' or 'Dinner's served?'" The mistress looked up coldly from her sewing.

"Well, if it's anything like it was last night, Mary," she said firmly, "you'd better say, 'Dinner is spoiled!'"