

THE ENTERPRISE.

OREGON CITY, OREGON, OCTOBER 29, 1875

Bibbs: A Love Story.

There was no doubt about it; John Weare was perfectly wretched that night. He had quarrelled with Jennie Bell and he wasn't going to make it up. The fact was she was a little too many airs, and he didn't mean to send it any longer. He didn't care if she was pretty; that was no reason why she should let half a dozen fellows at a time hang about the shop or stroll in on a time and, leaning on their elbows, chatter and snicker and smile over the counter, eadlets and officers, wild young fellows, who only did so for their own idle amusement, and would no more dream of marrying her than they would of inviting her to the ball that was coming off next month. To be sure he was only a common cavalry soldier, but then he had been in the service a good many years now, had an excellent character and a good trade at his back, and, moreover, his father had died not long since, and there was the cottage all ready for Jennie to walk into, and there might settle down at once and be only be sensible. Jennie acted as shop-woman for her sister, Mrs. Evans. A very poor little shop it was, very small and badly stocked, for Mrs. Evans had only managed to get a few pennies' worth of things with what had been subscribed for her in the garrison after the fever had carried off her husband. The speculation answered pretty well at first, for many of the officers' wives, knowing what an industrious woman Mrs. Evans was, made a point of buying their tapes and cottons and sticks of sealing-wax of her. Then Jennie's pretty face was seen behind the counter, and the shop was filled from morning to night with officers and frisky young cadets, and the original customers took flight—though Mrs. Evans did not know it for she, being the business to be safe in the keeping of Jennie, worked hard at the dressmaking (she had three children to support, and the shop alone would not do it.)

sent for, neither was he invited to tea, and his spirits began to wax low. "If she'd cared about me she'd have got in my way somehow before this—trust a woman," he thought. The idea of not being cared for was not cheerful. That night he strolled carelessly by the shop, but on the opposite side of the way. Nothing was to be seen of Jennie. He walked on in a brow study, then crossed over, and went deliberately by the shop, with only one eye, however, turned in his direction, but not a sign of Jennie. He went back to his barracks in a dejected frame of mind. "It's an awful pity—such a nice girl; and there's the cottage all ready for her to step into, and me ready to retire from the service and a good trade at my back; it's too bad all along of that Captain McGee too. And the fruit in the garden of the cottage all ripe and no one to pick it." The very next morning John Weare walked deliberately into the shop and asked for a penny newspaper, and he had the felicity of being served by Mrs. Evans. "Quite a stranger, Mr. Weare," she said, but that was the only remark she made, and for the life of him he could not screw up the courage to ask for her sister. "That night John Weare was miserable. 'She can't care a rush for me,' he thought, and marched all over town, and nearly to Greenwich and back, in his excitement. The next day was a lucky one for John. He came across Bibbs. Bibbs was Mrs. Evans' eldest boy. No one knew what his real name was, or why he was called Bibbs; but he was never called anything else. "Bibbs," said John Weare, "come and have some fruit," and he carried him off in triumph to the cottage, and still he with gooseberries till he couldn't move, and with black currants till his mouth was as black as a crow. Then he carried him inside and stood him on the table, and sat down before him. "How old are you, Bibbs?" "He thought it better to begin the conversation with a question. "Five and a half. Is that your sword or there?" "Yes. Who gave you those bronze shoes, Bibbs?" "Now he knew Jennie had given them to him, but he wanted to hear her name. "Annie. She's going away soon," he added. "Let me look at your sword now." "Where's she going?" he asked in consternation. "D'youshire. Do let me try on your sword." "Why is she going?" he asked with a sick feeling at his heart. "She's ill, I think; and she's always crying now; one day she was crying over her silver thing you gave her, and kissing it like anything." "The 'silver thing' was a little heart of about the size of a shilling, which he had bought at Charleston Fair last October, and timidly requested her to accept it. John Weare jumped up and showed Bibbs his sword, and carried him on his back all over the place, and entreated him to have more black currants in his delight. But Bibbs declined. "Annie Jennie's going to bring me some from Elliam to-night," he said. So Jennie was going to Elliam, was she? John Weare took Bibbs home, and on his way presented him with a woolly lamb that moved on wheels and squeaked, and a monkey that went up a stick on being gently patted. "Crying over her silver thing?" said John Weare. "I'll go and hang around the Elliam road till I see her and beg her pardon." And he went, and Jennie met him, and pouted, and declared she hadn't once thought of him, and then broke down and cried. And John begged her pardon, and declared that he had been a heartless brute; and then Jennie contradicted him and said it was all her fault, and told him how Mrs. Danlop, the colonel's wife had one day walked in and told her, in the kindest possible manner, that she was spoiling her sister's business, for the ladies who had been interested in her welfare kept away because of Jennie's flirting propensities, which filled up the shop with idle officers, who were always in the way; and how she had been so ashamed and wretched, and so cut up at the desertion of John Weare, that she had determined to go back to Devonshire. "But you won't now?" he said, as they leaned over the stile leading to the Elliam fields. "You'll get ready at once, and we'll be married as soon as possible, before the fruit in the garden is spoiled." It took a long time to talk her into it (about three quarters of an hour), but then she was very happy at heart and chattered like a young magpie, and told John how she had snubbed Captain McGee, and had thrown all the flowers out of the window. "And it really was all through that dear Bibbs that you waylaid me to-night," she asked. "Certainly." "Why, but for him I might never have seen you again!" "Perhaps not." "I'll give Bibbs a regular hug when I get home," she thought. And she did; and the day before she was married she bought him a rocking-horse, which he delights in to this day.—"Assell's Family Magazine."

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