

AN OPAL

of fire shot in a veil of snow,
to April gleam athwart a misted sky.

OUR FIRST CASE.

We were sitting in our little room
waiting at each other. A week or two
we had set up independently.

"Do you think we can afford to stay
in this room?" asked Kathleen.
"Perhaps, one more," I answered.

"And will end in quite an exciting
episode," I added. "The worst of it is the
home amid the peers of our
class, who are expecting us any day."

"We may get a case in the next few
days," I said. "Such things occasional-
ly happen."

"Give me another cup of tea, Agnes,"
said Kathleen. "It is ruinous to the
eyes, but I must have it. If any of my
patients drank half as much as I do, I
could read them a lecture they would
forget, but—"

"The landlady flung open the door, and
Dr. Puckle burst in upon us.
"Ah! I was so afraid I should find
you," he cried. He was Irish.

"We happen to have a holiday," said
Kathleen. "At least we have no very
urgent case on this morning."

"Allow me to give you a cup of tea,"
said I.
"Tea? Tea at this time of day!" He
looked at his watch. "I should have
thought you knew better, nurse. Never
drink tea at 11 o'clock. No sugar, thank
you."

"I settled myself comfortably before
the fire, and sipped his tea, while deliv-
ering myself of a long and strong dis-
quisition on the evils of this habit. Kath-
leen and I corroborated every word he
said.

"Well, now to business," cried Dr.
Puckle. "I came to ask you to undertake
a very painful case. It's old Joe
Hartland. Ever heard of him?"

"No," I answered.
"That man would I've been dead a
week if he hadn't happened to—ah—"

"This time he'll go. Meanwhile I
got a couple of nurses for him, by
hook or by crook. Will you undertake
the case?"

"Tell us some more about him, doc-
tor."

"He lives in Hartland's Hollow. I
suppose you know that part?"

"No," said Kathleen, and Dr. Puckle
relieved.
"Is it a trifle lonely, but I suppose you
don't mind that?"

"Not in the least," said I. "We are
used to a trampled with nerves—in
the case of the tea."

"You'll find no one there but the
old man and his wife, an old couple
who'll have to do everything yourselves,
I'm afraid. When can you be ready?"

"I promised to go that afternoon and
on Dr. Puckle left us, Kathleen and
I had a little celebration in honor of our
new case."

"We found ourselves before a low, ram-
bling building at 4 o'clock that after-
noon. The walls were thickly covered
with ivy and creepers; tall trees sur-
rounded it, which lent an air of mystery
to the place. A solemn hush was on it,
and the chilly afternoon fog was rising.
"I hope there's a good fire," whis-
pered Kathleen, shivering.

"The sound of the bell was muffled and
seemed to come from underground re-
cesses. We had to ring three times be-
fore any one thought of answering our
knocks. Then the door was opened
suddenly, and an old woman peered
out of her spectacles.

"Oh, be you the nurses?" she moun-
ded. "You may come in."

scrub a floor after our hospital training.
She threw open the window, lighted both
the candles on the dressing table and
then declared that it was fit for the
queen.

"But horribly cold," I implemented.
"Well, my dear, till till it's aired
before you shut the window. When that
old hag's lighted our fire, it won't be
half bad."

"It strikes me," said I, "that we may
as well light it ourselves if we want one
at all."

"There seems a superabundance of in-
sects and crawling things," said Kath-
leen, examining the corners of the room.
"I'm rather fond of spiders. Are you?"

"On the whole," I answered, "I pre-
fer my bedroom free of them."

"That is a pity," said Kathleen.
"Let us now go and make the ac-
quaintance of our patient," I suggested.
Our gentle knock was not answered,
so we went in unbidden.

Josiah Hartland was lying in bed
breathing heavily. He was an old man.
His skin was as yellow as a London fog,
his eyes were so sunken under shaggy
brows that at first sight he seemed to
have none. The room was comfortable in
the extreme. The fire was nearly out,
and an untrimmed lamp smoked upon
the table by his bed. He turned and
stared at us.

"Two of you!" burst out a sharp, thin
voice, startling us. "Two! I don't want
two. One's quite enough. I'm not going
to pay two to do the work for one."

"But one of us has to sit up with you
at night," said I in a cheerful, soothing
tone.

"What do you want with sleep?" he
growled. "A great, strapping girl like
you ought to be able to do without it.
Has James come in?"

"Who is James?"
"James, he's my coachman, of course.
Who else did you think he was? Ring
the bell, can't you? I tell you I want
James to come up. He's been collecting
my rents. I want to see him about
them."

"It's rather late in the day to be do-
ing business," said Kathleen.

He turned and stared at her.
"Who's that?" he asked, pointing at
her with a bony finger.

"She is your nurse," said I.
"Send her away, then. One's quite
enough. I'm not going to pay two nurses,
I tell you. I engaged you, but I never
engaged her. Send her away!"

"Just now," I answered, "I am going
away, and your second nurse will stay
with you. I shall sit up with you to-
night, so I am going to rest now."

Kathleen followed me to the door, look-
ing slightly scared.
"I wish you joy, dear," said I. "We
have a delightful case for our first!"

When I awoke from my nap, I found
Kathleen by the fire in our room and a
nice little meal waiting for me.

"Don't thank Mrs. Jones for that,"
said she, "or expect to find such things
growing in this house. If you are
hungry, you must go and forage about in
the larder for something to eat. If you
haven't got the genius which distin-
guishes everything I do, probably you
won't find anything. At all events, pur-
sue freely now, for you have a long
night before you."

She was very tired, and I left her to
sleep as best she could in our spider
haunted room.

I was simply astonished at the change
Kathleen had wrought in the sickroom.
The only thing which seemed the same
was our patient, and he looked cleaner.
Kathleen afterward told me that she had
never found it so difficult to persuade
any one to let her wash him.

"Has she gone?" asked Josiah.
"Yes, she's gone to bed," said I.
"Good night! Whose bed? I won't
have her sleeping in one of my beds."

"Yes, it's all right," I said, "and
now you must let me settle for the
night."

"You aren't going to wash me!" he
cried. "The other one has just done it."

"No, no, it's all right. I won't wash
you again tonight."

When he had taken his medicine and
was settled comfortably, I sat by the fire
in the darkened room, and strange
thoughts came to me. How was it that
my life had drifted into this? Five years
ago I was a thoughtless girl, with scarce-
ly a care beyond dress and pleasure and
friendship. My friends thought it eccen-
tric to "waste" my youth like this. They
were amused, and could not see
through my aim to do something use-
ful in the world. However it was, here
I found myself, a girl who had been
shielded from all the roughness and
trouble of life, in the very presence of
suffering and death, playing an impor-
tant part in the tragedy which I felt sure
would end soon, for I knew the look of
death so well that sometimes I saw it
with scarcely a shudder. Our patient
withdrew from the world of his condition,
did not seem conscious of his condition.
He lay there in his large and lonely
house without one friend or relative be-
side him. It was a sad case for our first
case.

that to quiet him I was obliged to yield.
"Where is it?" I asked.

It was down stairs in one of those
horrible deserted rooms.

"Wouldn't you rather wait till the
morning?" I asked.

"No, fetch it now, now! Besides,
then you can look round and see that
there are no burglars about. They know
I'm ill, and that I've got a great sum of
money here. I'm only waiting till I get
better to take it myself to the bank."

His voice grew wilder and wilder. He
urged me on, and I went, for nothing
else could quiet him. I took a lighted
candle with me, and as I found my way
down the creaking stairs my heart
thumped against my side.

I am sure I heard a low growl at the
foot of the stairs. As the flickering light
of my candle moved onward in the dark-
ness it seemed to disperse countless shad-
ows that had dim shapes. I thought I
saw the outlines of a grinning head.

Mrs. Jones had said some of these rooms
were haunted—supposing this one was!
Something scuttled away. I set my can-
dle down, afraid I should drop it, my
hand was trembling so. Something fell
with a thud on the table, and that was
too much for me. Snatching up my can-
dle, I turned and fled. The candle went
out, but the feeble flicker of the lamp
up stairs guided me, and I stumbled on,
not daring to take a breath till I found
myself once more in the sickroom. I
have since found out that the library
was swarming with cockroaches and
mice.

Old Josiah had fortunately fallen into
a doze, so I settled myself in my chair
again, having gently made up the fire.
Would this awful night never pass? It
was now 2 o'clock, and it seemed like
the beginning of eternity.

Tick, tick, tick! What was that?
Tick, tick, tick!

I knew—it was the death spider. I had
heard of the horrid thing before, and had
not believed in its existence. But I had
never before spent a night with a
dying man in a haunted house. Lately
softly to the bedside, but he was sleep-
ing nicely. He had several days to live
still.

"Well, how did you get on? What sort
of a night had you?"

Kathleen was like a breeze. Her voice
swept off the vapors of the night.

"Beautifully," said I. "I have had a
delightful night."

"When shall I get better?" asked our
patient. "What's the good of paying a
couple of nurses and a doctor if they
can't cure me quicker than this? Why
can't you speak, doctor? Answer me."

"Hartland, it is time to prepare your-
self for another world. You cannot get
better."

"I must—I must. I've a great sum of
money in the house that ought to be
banked. And James hasn't got in all the
rents. He's a fool at it. Send him up to
me at once."

Dr. Puckle told us that this perpetual
worrying about his business was hasten-
ing the end. He said it could not be far
distant now, and Kathleen and I deter-
mined to try to get the poor man to
think of other things more appropriate
at this solemn time.

"You cannot take your money with
you," I said, "so why worry about it
now? You are dying, Mr. Hartland.
Surely you can leave your money mat-
ters alone. What importance can they
possibly be just now?"

"Much you know about business,"
sneered the old man. "Business is busi-
ness, whether a man is dying or not."
Then he burst out crying like a child.

"All my life," he wailed, "all my life
I've spent in getting it, and now I've
got to leave it. It isn't fair. Send James
up to me at once. I want to know what
he's made that villain Richards pay
up. Why, the fellow owes two quarters
it's infamous."

I looked at Kathleen in despair.
It was always like that. Sometimes
he cried and sobbed, sometimes he rail-
ed against the justice of life. His one
and only idea was still his money, that
money which he had made himself, and
which he loved with a concentrated pas-
sion. He looked at the cold, useless
thing, and never missed the warm, hu-
man faces that ought to have been round
him now. He had no relations, no
friends. His money had come between
him and all the softer joys of life, and
in dying he cared for nothing except that
he had to part with it.

Kathleen started at the little heap of
salt she had split.

"What's the matter, Kathleen?"

"Oh, nothing," she answered, start-
ing. "Of course I don't believe in any
such nonsense, but I saw a crow this
morning—now I've split some salt."

"Throw a pinch over your left shoul-
der," I suggested, laughing at her.

thing about the Stock Exchange which I
did not understand.

Then all was silence, but for the beat-
ing of my heart.

There came a tapping at my window.
I sat up straight, clenching the arms of
the chair. Death himself might have
been knocking for admittance! I knew,
I was sure, that it was but a bird, but I
had heard that when a sparrow taps at
the window it means death. A few
minutes after there sounded a loud crash
down stairs, and I sprang up and rushed
into our room, having just presence of
mind left to see that our patient had not
been disturbed. Kathleen was sitting
up in bed.

"Did you hear that noise?" I gasped.

"Ye-es," said she, through chattering
teeth. "Do you think there's a burglar
here?"

"Well, perhaps you'd better go and
see," said I. "I would, but I cannot
leave Mr. Hartland."

"Oh," said Kathleen, "I would, but
I'm not dressed. What's the matter, Ag-
nes?"

I took her shoes, which she had left
on the table by accident, and threw
them down. She started.

"I—I tumbled up stairs yesterday,
Agnes," she said, seizing my arm.

There was another crash. I had knock-
ed over a hand glass!

Next morning a large picture of Josiah
Hartland was found on its face in the
dining room. Mrs. Jones said it had
fallen several times before, for the cord
was rotten and kept breaking, but Mr.
Hartland wouldn't buy a new one. We
said it had better not be hung again, as
we did not like going to see what was
the matter in the middle of the night.
She seemed surprised and evidently
wondered what we were here for.

I told Kathleen that she looked pale,
and she said I looked ghastly. I asked
her whether she thought we could en-
dure another night of it, and she said
she could not, but if I liked I might
stay, and she would give me the
poultice.

There was no need for us to stay.
Mr. Hartland insisted on looking at
his rentbook to see whether James had
collected all the rents. I brought it to
him, and he groped about with his hands
to feel it.

"I can't quite see," he moaned. "My
eyes—they aren't so good as they used
to be. Read it to me, you nurse. What
are you here for, wasting my money, if
you can't read it to me?"

"Let me read something else," I en-
treated, feeling tears rising in my eyes.

"Kathleen, bring me a Bible."

"Business is business," gasped the
dying man. "Read the last page to me.
I want to know—whether—that villain
—that was I saying?"

Kathleen came nearer. We looked at
each other.

"What do you know about—business?"
He glared at us and struggled with
his breath. His hands wandered over the
quilt. They touched the wrinkled face
and fixed there. His eyes rolled and shut.

"Agnes, now we can go home," whis-
pered Kathleen, creeping to my side.—
All the Year Round.

The Preservation of Foods.

The great advance in the preservation
of foods is perhaps most clearly shown
in a recent article in a French magazine.
The article discusses the preserving of
provisions from the military standpoint.
It states that 40,000 rations of vegeta-
bles can be stored in a cubic space of 40
inches each way; that millions of rations
of solid soups and preserved meats are
continually stored in Paris, while the
quantity of flour and biscuit is fabu-
lous. Milk during the last siege of Paris
was worth its weight in gold. Now the
method of "pasteurizing" milk and
putting it in hermetically sealed cans is
found to preserve milk indefinitely and
insures against suffering those classes of
the community that suffer most from
scarcity of milk—the feeble, aged and
infants.

Compressed fodder and the silo system
are the safeguards used by the govern-
ment to protect animals in case of siege,
while an enormous cold storage ware-
house at La Vilette insures fresh meats
for a long period. The application of
science to the food problem has reduced
the perplexities of families living on
small incomes, but it may force a com-
plete change in military maneuvers,
starvation of the besieged being made
almost impossible.—Outlook.

A Wonder in Minute Writing.

A recent writer on the subject of wave
lengths of light, in describing the ap-
paratus used for taking measurements of
such lengths, mentions the "Nobert
test plates." These plates are made of
glass and have the scale thereon so finely
graduated that there are often as many
as 150,000 lines to the inch. Such in-
finitesimal magnitudes are totally be-
yond our powers of conception, yet much
more wonderful things in that line have
been accomplished. An artist of the
name of Webb, a regular manufacturer
of these "Nobert test plates," once tried
his hand in microscopic writing on glass.
The specimen turned out, which is
now in the Army Medical museum at
Washington, is the whole of the Lord's
Prayer on a piece of glass which is only
1-294 of an inch one way and 1-440
of an inch the other. In the Lord's
Prayer there are 227 letters, and, as
shown above, they were put on a
piece of glass having an area of but
1-129,655 of an inch. Had an entire
inch of space been used at the same rate,
the engraver would have put no less than
29,431,458 letters upon it. The entire
Bible, Old and New Testaments, could
have been written on that inch of space
eight times over.—St. Louis Republic.

FOR LITTLE FOLKS.

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD POET.

She Has Never Learned a Line of Verse,
but Composes It Cleverly.

There is a Hoboken tot who will some
day shine among the women poets of
the land if her precociousness at the
present time counts for anything. Ger-
tie Walker is the little girl's name, and
all day long, from the time that her big
blue eyes peer lazily from behind her
long brown lashes, to the moment when
the sandman comes scattering his slum-
ber potions, Gertie is busy making
rhymes—not mere childish nothings,
mind you, but good, sensible rhymes



about the things she sees about her—the
sky, a dog, a trolley car, a ferryboat—
everything that goes to make up her
narrow world.

The gift for versifying came to Gertie
quite naturally, and some of her simple
childish stanzas put on paper make very
pretty reading. Indeed you would never
suspect that the verses were made and
originated by a mere babe of five short
summers. You see, little Gertie has
never learned how to read and could
therefore never know just what poetry
means.

Just the same she goes on making her
rhymes almost always in perfect time
and always about the beautiful objects
of nature. At no time is the bright lit-
tle damsel more happy than at night-
fall, when she sits in her tiny rocker
and builds air castles of verse to the
amusement of those who are listening
to her. We may all hear from this tot
over in Hoboken some day.—New York
Recorder.

A Brave Little Bugler.

Every war brings out stories of hero-
ism that last long after many other in-
cidents of the conflict are forgotten.
Boysish bravery in the heat and smoke of
battle in particular is always told of
and seems to have more distinction than
that of the older soldier, who is trained
to do his duty under all circumstances.
From the Japan-China war has come a
story of a brave little bugler that is like-
ly to be told over and over again. It was
on one of the battlefields, which were
not frequent in that war, when the Jap-
anese troops were somewhat panic strick-
en and were retreating before the Chi-
nese, that the little bugler was mortally
wounded.

Stricken and dying as he was, the
brave lad did not forget his duty. He
saw the troops flying and knew that the
Chinese were gaining a victory. With
splendid courage he raised himself, and
grasping his bugle sounded a loud and
stirring "charge." The troops heard
and rallied under its message, charged
valiantly in obedience to it, and the day
was theirs. But the little bugler had
died as they fought and did not even
know that his effort had been successful.
His comrades knew, however, what he
had done, and they bore him from the
field in triumph, and already the "uta,"
a poem of honor, has been written in
his memory, while his mother has ar-
rayed herself in robes of state and honor,
and wound her hair with flowers, the
proudest woman in the empire, that her
only son should have thus distinguished
himself.—New York Times.

A Good One.

How is this for a conundrum from a
boy of five years old:
"Mother, what is it has four legs
and only one foot?"
Mother—It must be some strange ani-
mal.

Boy—Give it up?
Mother—Yes.
Boy—A bed.

The boy was using the foot of the bed
for a horse, which suggested the conun-
dram.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Little Ben's Request.

Little Ben lives in a new house, one
of the most modern of modern houses,
where light, water, heat and other
things are all to be had by turning a
knob or touching a bell. He lives in a
state of perpetual marvel over these
things, and the other night when suffer-
ing from a headache the little fellow
said to his mother, who sat beside him:
"Please turn on the dark, mother. My
eyes hurt me."

Frank and His Shoe.

Frank slid his foot hastily into his
button boot and shouted:
"Quick, mamma, hand me the shoe
key. I want to lock my shoe."—Youth's
Companion.

Ann, Mamma, Mona, Mike.

In an empty room we three
Play the games we always like
And count to see who "it" shall be—
Ann, mamma, mona, mike.

Round and round the rhyme will go
Ere the final word shall strike,
Counting fast or counting slow—
Barcelona, bona, strike.

What it all means no one knows,
Mixed up like a peddler's pack
As from door to door he goes—
Hare, ware, frow, track.

Now we guess, and now we doubt,
Words enough or words we lack,
Till the rhyming brings about,
Welcomed with a farewell shout—
Halloo, halloo, we-wi-we wack, out!
—Toronto Truth.

MIMICRY AND REASON.

Indication That This Monkey Is Endowed
With a Share of Each.

"That the monkey possesses intelli-
gence to a considerable degree is proba-
bly true," said a hotel proprietor who
has a small menagerie on his premises.
"I believe, however, much of the intelli-
gence with which that animal is cred-
ited is due to his love of mimicry.

"The other day two young men with
two girls were at the monkey's cage
feeding him peanuts. One of the girls
was chewing gum, and one of the men
suggested that she give the monkey
some, expecting that if he took it in his
mouth it would stick to his teeth, and
he would make sorry work of trying to
show it. The girl at once parted with
the sweet morsel she was so industriously
chewing, extending it toward the
sage. The monkey grabbed it instantly
and put it into his mouth, but instead
of chewing it, or attempting to, began
pulling it out in small ribbons, as chil-
dren are frequently seen to do. When
he had it all out of his mouth, he rolled
it into a compact ball between his
hands, threw it into his mouth and be-
gan the operation again. He appeared
to enjoy the performance as much as his
visitors. That was imitation."

"That's all right," rejoined another,
"but I had an experience with that
same monkey wherein he displayed in-
telligence. I was by the cage smoking
one day, and I thought to annoy him by
blowing smoke in his face. I was much
surprised to find that, instead of being
annoyed, he enjoyed it, as was evi-
denced by his edging up as near me as
possible to receive the smoke in larger
volumes. Soon he began scratching
himself at the point where most of the
smoke came against him. When I had
smoked one side for a few minutes, he
would turn squarely round to have the
other side treated in the same way.
Then he sat up directly in front of me
and received the smoke squarely in the
face and neck. I don't know whether
he held his breath, but he did not cough,
sneeze or wince a particle. To complete
the job he then sat with his back toward
me, and it would have done you good
to have seen him throw his hind feet
over his back and scratch. It made me
think of the kickers of a hay tedder in
motion. Now that monkey knew,
through some sort of intelligence, that
nothing will send fleas and other insects
to the surface or stupefy them as effec-
tively as tobacco smoke."—Utica Ob-
server.

COLLEGE GIRLS AND MARRIAGE.

Bits of Confession That Throw a Light on
the Question.

I have no doubt that the remaining
cause of the low marriage rate is that
many men dislike intellectual women—
whether because such women are really
disagreeable or because men's taste is at
fault I shall not try to determine. And
even among those who like them as
friends many feel as the young man did
who made this confession:

"I never expected to marry the sort of
girl I did. You know I always believed
in intellectual equality and all that
and had good friendships with the col-
lege girls. But, you see, you girls hadn't
any illusions about us. After you had
seen us hanging at the board on problems
you could work and had taken the same
degrees yourselves, you couldn't imagine
us wonders just because we had gone
through college, and when I met a dear
little girl that thought I knew every-
thing—why, it just keeled me right
over. It was a feeling I had no idea of."

And the college woman answered:
"I will betray nothing to you. Lots
of us are just as unreformed as you. We
want just as much to look up to our hus-
bands as you want to be looked up to.
Only of course the more we know the
harder it is to find somebody to meet the
want. Probably the equal marriage is
really the ideal one, and everybody will
come to prefer it some day. But per-
sonally I like men to be superior to me.
Only I'll tell you what I don't like in
them—the wish to keep ahead of us by
holding us back, like spoiled children
that want to be given the game and
then admired for their skill. If men
would encourage us to do our very best,
and then do still better themselves, it
ought to be good for civilization."—
"The Marriage Rate of College Wom-
en," by Millicent W. Shinn, in Century.

No Precedent.

During a session of the territorial leg-
islature of Montana, held more than 30
years ago, a measure was introduced
which appeared to some people to in-
volve serious constitutional questions.
One man, who was supposed to possess
great oratorical powers, declaimed fierce-
ly against the measure, claiming that it
was "clearly in opposition to the great
principles of Magna Charta, which the
brave barons in days of old had wrested
from King John, a blessed result of a
bloody conflict."

A lawyer, more famed for his sturdy
common sense than for erudition, rose
immediately to reply to this burst of
fiery eloquence, evidently bent on mak-
ing it clear that he for one was not to
be overcome by high sounding words or
obscure allusions.

"It's of mighty little importance
what the opinions of King John and his
man, McCarthy were," he announced
firmly, adding that it was high time for
legislative bodies of Montana to think
and act for themselves without any refer-
ence to the principles which governed
the remote authorities quoted by his
colleague.

The first orator's speech had made
some impression, but the retort was re-
ceived with the enthusiasm which it
deserved, and it was owing to his in-
fluence rather than that of his more
brilliant predecessor that the measure
was defeated.—Youth's Companion.

Consoling Him.

Old Bullion—It galls me to think
that my money goes into your spend-
thrif hands when I die.
Young Bullion—Never mind, gov-
ernor, it won't stay there long.—In-
dianapolis Journal.