

The Observer.

MORO, OREGON: FRIDAY, JULY 19, 1907

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How She Got A Position.

Edward Thatcher was station agent on the Union Pacific railroad at a place far out on what thirty years ago were called "the plains." The only houses at this stopping point for trains were the station and Thatcher's dwelling, a few hundred yards away.

Thatcher's daughter, Molly, sixteen years old, was anxious to learn telegraphy. Her father encouraged her, and as soon as she knew her telegraphic letters he ran a wire underground from the station to the house and put in a key for her to practice on.

At first he used the regular key at the station, but Molly's line was an independent one, and she was able to call him at any time. In summer, having little to do, he would sit at the station door trying to keep cool. That he could chat with his well beloved daughter without inconvenience he imagined, and he was accustomed to lounge there as he was accustomed to lounge.

With a view to becoming an operator, one night Thatcher went from his house to the station to attend the passing of two trains, the one going east due at 9:30, the other going west due at 11:15. After the latter hour there would be no trains till morning, and he could pass the night at the house. The first train passed on time. Then Thatcher settled himself for a dose while waiting for the next one, which nearly two hours to wait and not caring to disturb his family, who went to bed early, by going back to the house.

He had scarcely settled himself on a bunk he had in the freight house adjoining and opening into the station, when he heard a distant gallop of horses' hoofs—not one horse, but several.

Passengers did not usually come that way. The agent seemed in danger. Jumping up, he went to the foot of the apparatus and called Molly.

"Are you up?" he asked. "There were a few moments' delay, when the answer came, 'Had gone to bed, but had got up at once.' Thatcher asked for an explanation, but received none, for at that moment the thud of horses' hoofs was directly without the station, and one in advance gave a rattle at the door. Thatcher opened it and a man with a drawn revolver, the muzzle pointing in the agent's face, stood in the opening. Others were dismounting and coming up on to the platform. There was nothing for Thatcher to do but to do nothing.

"Where's your telegraph outfit?" asked the man. "In there in the ticket office." "All right. You go in there." And, covered by the man with three revolvers, Thatcher passed into the freight house, where he was searched for arms and bound hand and foot with a larlet. The men after this made themselves comfortable and waited.

"Is the westbound 11:15 train on time?" asked one who appeared to be the leader. "Don't know. I can find out for you." "How?" "By asking over the wire." "I don't think you will. Where's your red light?"

"It's somewhere around here—in a corner there, I think." Thatcher knew that they would signal the train to stop with a view to holding up the passengers or robbing the express car of a shipment of money. "There are some things about that train," he said, "you'd ought to know." "Well, what are they?" "If you'll let me come in there with you, I'll tell you."

The man loosened the larlet about his legs, and he walked into the other room. One of his captors sat in the chair in which he was accustomed to talk to Molly, and they stood him on the floor a few feet from the telegraph key. He began to tell a plausible story, giving them first the information they wanted—that the conductor of the train was timid and they would have no trouble with him, but the express messenger was a fighter, well armed and with an assistant of the same kind. Then he gave them the information (made up) that \$40,000 was being shipped on that very train. By mingling truth with falsehood he won enough of their confidence to interest them and while talking sidled along till he got a foot on the telegraph key. Then, warming up with his subject to the train robbers to fix their attention, he called Molly and told her of the situation.

"What's that clicking in the ticket office?" asked the leader suddenly, pricking up his ears. "Oh, my key clicks with every dispatch that goes through. Molly will be next by sending his daughter's message to the next station east. This satisfied the robbers. At 11 o'clock a man with a red light went out and waited to signal the train. It was twenty minutes late when it came discharging the signal, pushing to the station, where a dozen men with rifles jumped off and confronted the robbers. All were captured.

Molly with the railroad company, besides being given a thousand-dollar reward.

Provence Roses.

By VIRGINIA TAYLOR.

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It was a mild December day—gray, damp and still. In a quaint old manor garden the yellow and white chrysanthemums continued to hold up their heads bravely, and a few faded stocks and violets tried to give a cheerful aspect to that desolate and mixed border that in late autumn has not yet been set in order for the spring.

Today the color in the scene was supplied by the cap of a small boy and the red petticoats of some little girls. The children were scarcely on the purpose of planting a rose tree grown from a cutting which had been taken from the white Provence rose that bloomed above the mother's faroff grave.

Mr. Harcourt, carefully carrying the rose tree, headed the little procession from the conservatory to a lower garden inclosed by yew hedges and full now of leafless rose trees.

The children gathered after their father, Eleanor, the eldest girl, tried to lead by the hand the youngest child, who was a year and a half old.

"I never see young ladies or old ones either," he returned severely. "You know that perfectly well."

"I know, sir," the clerk answered deprecatingly. "But—"

"I begged so hard to be allowed to see you," interrupted a soft, girlish voice, and both men started and turned to the door to see standing there a maiden of two and twenty or thereabouts.

"Don't be angry with me," she pleaded as her auditors, rendered dumb by her audacity in appearing uninvited in the great man's sanctum, stood staring at her. "I followed him in. Don't send me away. It is so important that I should see you and ask your advice."

She was young and very pretty, and there was something irresistibly pathetic in her voice. The financier was, after all, but a man.

"Well," he answered, smiling, though a little grimly, "since you have contrived to evade the guardians of my privacy, you shall have the reward your courage deserves. Come in."

The clerk retired much relieved. John Harcourt handed the girl a seat and placed himself again before the writing table, facing her. She was slim, graceful, gray-eyed and flaxen haired. But he had seen prettier girls before and was prepared not to allow her beauty to affect his judgment and reason. She was dressed in deep mourning, relieved only by a bunch of white roses tucked carefully into the bosom of her gown.

"It is about the Finnish Fishtail shares that I want to ask you," she began.

His face contracted slightly, but he did not speak. He merely inclined his head to intimate that he was listening.

She wanted to know if he advised her to invest her money in them. She had some of the shares, but she was not sure she was to do so. She was at liberty to do what she would with it, and of course she and her mother were very anxious to get as large an income from it as possible. The Finnish Fishtail company offered so much business and railroads.

"Only," she added, looking confidingly at him, "sometimes when you put your money into companies you lose it."

His face contracted again, but again he only nodded assent, his eyes fixed on the white roses tucked into her gown. They stirred some vague memory within him while he listened to her story, she went on to tell him of a friend of her mother's, a widow with many children, who had put her money into the Bannan-Jelly company and had lost it all.

John Harcourt had made money by the Bannan-Jelly company in a perfectly legal way. He would make money, also in a perfectly legal way, by the Finnish Fishtail company, whether others lost or won.

OUR TROUBLES.

They Are of Three General Kinds, and There is a Remedy.

Troubles are of three different kinds: The troubles you have had, the troubles you are looking for, and the troubles you are suffering from.

The first of these three kinds of trouble will not press heavily upon the philosophical mind. It is a cloud which hangs over the head of a man, and on the principle that he has to get out of it, he has to get out of it as soon as he can.

He walked out of his office financially a much poorer man than he had been for many years. Morally? He inhaled the fragrance of the roses and that for that day at least murmured, "Thank God."

John Harcourt knew himself. He knew that moreover he would probably regret his action and curse himself for a sentimental fool, but tomorrow it would be too late. The deed would be done, as far at least as the Finnish Fishtail company was concerned.

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The Elixir of Life.

(Original.)

At the Dilworth Parlor wedding I met my old college chum Disbrow. We hadn't met since we left college, twenty-five years before, and would not have known each other had we not been introduced. Disbrow was known to me by reputation, for he had become eminent in physics. I also had followed science in his school, and his reputation in bacteriology. When the bride and groom entered the drawing room for the ceremony, Disbrow and I followed.

"What a perfect picture of youthful beauty!" I whispered to Disbrow, referring to the bride.

"How old would you take her to be?" he asked.

"Twenty-two or twenty-three." A singular expression passed over his face.

"Do you think her older than she is?" "Suppose I should tell you that I was forty?"

"At this point the marriage service commenced and our remarks ceased. When it was over and we had offered our congratulations, Disbrow and I went to the supper room to partake of the delicacies displayed there. Helping ourselves, we found a cozy couple, and Disbrow said to me, 'I'm going to celebrate our meeting after so many years by letting you into a secret. We are brother scientists; therefore I don't consider what I am about to tell you a breach of confidence, or, rather, I consider the professional confidence superior to the individual obligation. Do you understand?'"

"Perfectly." "Well, the girl we have just seen married in forty-two years old. I gave a gasp of astonishment.

"But I must go back to the beginning. You know when I left college something was expected of me. I have applied it as no one else has applied it. Now, you know that from the moment we begin to live we are attacked by microbes. Cancel the microbes, and you cancel old age. From experiments on insects I found that by exposing them to a ray since called radium I arrested decay. But at the same time I arrested growth. From insects I experimented on frogs, kittens, dogs and other animals. I have a pet collie fifteen years old as lively as a puppy."

"Disbrow, has your learning made you mad?" "No; I am as sane as you. I know that if I offered any such ideas to the world I'd be put in limbo, and as I dread lunatic asylums and value my freedom I have kept my mouth shut."

"For heaven's sake, go on." "This is no place to give you anything more than a preface to what I have proposed to tell you about the elixir I did make. My discoverer known to one man, old Vollmar, our professor of chemistry at college. That was just as I had made up my mind to try to arrest decay in human beings, I met a man named Vollmar, who told me that two millionaires desired to join their vast fortunes by the marriage of a son of the one to a daughter of the other, but the boy was but two years of age, when he died, and the girl was but a year old. I was therefore obliged to put the subject in a receiver and exhaust the air."

"Come, come, Disbrow, what nonsense is this?" "You incessantly demonstrate the necessity of keeping my secret. If you tell it sooner or later they'll have me behind closed doors. You haven't the scientific head old Vollmar had. He tumbled to the idea at once."

"I'm not going to try to arrest the clatter of dishes and voices to tell you my process. I will only say that the stumbling block in my way was the fact that the electrons discharged from radium are charged with their passage through air. I was therefore obliged to put the subject in a receiver and exhaust the air."

"What means death?" "Ah! There's where the wonderful power of radium comes in. It is sufficient to keep life in the subject for an indefinite period."

"But where did you get your apparatus? Sufficient radium for the purpose would cost the price of a fortune."

"The girl's father opened his bank account to me." "Well?" "My subject was a bit frightened and her father—the only one except himself in the secret—was beside himself with fear. But the desire to pile up gold even for posterity was too strong for him, and he did not interfere with the experiment. Within twenty-four hours I had made up my mind to try to arrest decay in human beings. I was therefore obliged to put the subject in a receiver and exhaust the air."

"Our conversation was interrupted by the announcement that the bride and groom were about to leave, and, entering the marble vestibule, Disbrow and I went up with the rest to bid them adieu. When the bride took leave of Disbrow, she gave him a look indicating the possession of a common secret."

"Her Chief drawback?" "Husbands are dreadfully hard to understand."

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