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BYRON

By LOUISE M. ADDELSON.

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Elinor Worth, rushing downstairs in answer to the furiously ringing doorbell, found her chum and next-door neighbor, Alice Gloring, in a wild state of excitement.

"He's coming!" panted Alice, thrusting a slip of yellow paper into Elinor's hands.

"Byron?" breathed Elinor, quite awed.

"Byron! Isn't it wonderful? Elinor, you'll just adore him. If I were not engaged myself I'd—be such a dear!"

Elinor did not doubt it. For two years she had heard praises of Alice's wonderful cousin. For two years she had listened to the recital of his many perfections; of his kindness, his generosity, his good looks, until in her youthful imagination he had become a god. Even his name appealed to her romantic fancy. A man named Byron, she felt, could never be commonplace.

"We'll introduce you tomorrow after church," promised Alice.

And, as her friend had predicted, the following day being Sunday, Elinor was introduced after church. Mrs. Gloring performed the ceremony with a little flutter of pleasure. She was fond of Elinor, and matchmaking was her hobby.

"My nephew, Byron, dear Elinor, just returned from service. Byron, darling, Alice's best friend, Miss Worth."

Elinor lifted her eyes. She tried to say something pleasing and polite, but her tongue refused to obey her. Something was wrong with the world. The sunshine became hateful, the songs of the birds a mocking chorus. For Byron, the Byron of her imagination, the poetic creature of her maiden fancies, had taken unto himself wings and fled; and in his place stood an odious, long-limbed, quite un-Byronic creature with sandy hair, light blue eyes, a wide mouth and a nondescript nose.

"Isn't he just too sweet?" murmured Alice in Elinor's ear.

Elinor flushed, not so much at Alice's words as at the sudden twinkle in Byron's eyes.

The days wore on. Elinor survived the shock she had received. She met Byron frequently and even learned to like him. That gay twinkle in his eyes seemed to relieve his plainness. But she felt that Fate had played a cruel joke on her, nevertheless, and that she would not be the same again. The real Byron could never attain a truly Byronic place in her imagination. But he had been in service and it was her duty to be kind to him, so she helped Alice entertain him. She walked with him, talked with him, drove with him and felt herself very magnanimous in doing it.

A few weeks after his arrival a French army officer came to see Byron. The girls were curious as to the object of his visit, for Byron foretold nothing, merely smiling with that exasperating twinkle in his eyes. And the surprise of the ladies was great when the young Frenchman pinned a medal on Byron's chest as a mark of favor from the French government for unparalleled bravery and fortitude on the field of battle and for chivalry and kindness to French widows and orphans.

That night, when Byron invited Elinor out for a walk, she was strangely shy. It had come over her suddenly that Byron was a personage.

"Elinor," said he, after they had walked a few minutes in silence, "don't you think you could like me a little, though I am not all that you had hoped for?"

"All I—hoped for?" stammered Elinor.

"Yes. You see, I know my aunt and Alice have a way of raving over people, and I could tell they'd given you a wrong impression of me. Also, my name has been a stumbling block all my life. I don't know what my parents had against me when they named me Byron. It isn't so bad with men, but girls have had a habit of judging you by name. Confess, now, didn't you rather expect to meet a shaggy-haired poet, instead of a plain John Jones?"

"Who has been decorated by the French government," said Elinor, softly, "and who never said a word about it, though he knew the decoration was coming?"

"Oh, as for that—"

"As for that," said Elinor, "I realize that poets could never have won the war for us, and that I'm a very foolish person."

"If you'll forgive my being un-Byronic," said Byron, with his humorous twinkle, "I'll forgive your being foolish. In fact, I'm pretty well pleased with you as you are."

Elinor stopped and made him an old-fashioned curtsy.

"The sentiment's mutual," she said.

Which pleased the un-Byronic Byron very much.

Land Clearing Shown in Pictures.

Movies of the first land clearing school ever held in the United States, that conducted by the Marinette county (Wis.) Land Clearing association, and the University of Wisconsin last spring at Cedarville, in Marinette county, are now being shown by Secretary Livingstone of the association. These pictures were taken to supplement the educational land-clearing movies lent to the association by the university. They show actual farmers actually performing the operations directed by the best practice of land clearing.

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