

The BROWN MOUSE

by Herbert Quick



SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—Jennie Woodruff contemptuously refuses to marry Jim Irwin, young farm hand, because of his financial condition and poor prospects. He is intellectually above his station, and has advanced ideas concerning the possibilities of expert school teaching, for which he is ridiculed by many.

CHAPTER II—More as a joke than otherwise Jim is selected as teacher of the Woodruff district school.

CHAPTER III—Jim, in his new position, sets out to make staunch friends of his pupils, especially two boys, Newton Bronson and "Buddy" Simms, the latter the son of a shiftless farmer. Colonel Woodruff, Jennie's father, has little faith in Jim's ideas of improving rural educational methods. He nicknamed him the "Brown Mouse," in illustration of an anecdote.

CHAPTER IV—Jim's conduct of the school, where he endeavors to teach the children the wonders of nature and some of the scientific methods of farming, as well as "book learning," is condemned.

CHAPTER V

The Promotion of Jennie.

If Jennie Woodruff was the cause of Jim Irwin's sudden irruption into the educational field by her scolding "Humph" at the idea of a farm-hand's ever being able to marry, she also gave him the opportunity to knock down the driver of the big motorcar, and perceptibly elevate himself in the opinion of the neighborhood, while filling his own heart with something like shame.

The fat man who had said "Cut it out" to his driver, was Mr. Charles Dilly, a business man in the village at the extreme opposite corner of the county. Mr. Dilly was a candidate for county treasurer, and wished to be nominated at the approaching county convention. In his part of the county lived the county superintendent—a candidate for re-nomination. He was just a plain garden or field county superintendent of schools, no better and no worse than the general political run of them, but he had local pride enlisted in his cause, and was a good politician.

Mr. Dilly was in the Woodruff district to build a backfire against this conflagration of the county superintendent. He expected to use Jennie Woodruff to light it withal. That is, while denying that he wished to make any deal or trade—every candidate in every convention always says that—he wished to say to Miss Woodruff and her father, that if Miss Woodruff would permit her name to be used for the office of county superintendent of schools, a goodly group of delegates could be selected in the other corner of the county who would be glad to reciprocate any favors Mr. Charles J. Dilly might receive in the way of votes for county treasurer with ballots for Miss Jennie Woodruff for superintendent of schools.

Mr. Dilly never inquired as to Miss Woodruff's abilities as an educator. That would have been eccentric. Miss Woodruff never asked herself if she knew anything about rural education which especially fitted her for the task; for was she not a popular and successful teacher—and was not that enough? So are the officials chosen who supervise and control the education of the farm children of America.

When Jim Irwin started home from putting out his term the day after his first call on the Simms family, Jennie was waiting at the gate to be congratulated on her nomination.

"I hope you're elected," Jim said, holding the hand she had extended; "but there's no doubt of that."

"They say not," replied Jennie; "but father believes in working just as if we didn't have a big majority for the ticket. Say a word for me when on your pastoral rounds."

"All right said Jim, 'what shall I say you'll do for the schools?'"

"Why," said Jennie, rather perplexed, "I'll be fair in my examinations of teachers, try to keep the unfit teachers out of the schools, visit schools as often as I can, and—why, what does any good superintendent do?"

"I never heard of a good county superintendent," said Jim.

"Never heard of one—why, Jim Irwin!"

"I don't believe there is any such thing," persisted Jim, "and if you do no more than you say, you'll be off the same piece as the rest. Your system won't give us any better schools than we have—of the old sort—and we need a new kind."

"Oh, Jim, Jim! Dreaming as of yore! Why can't you be practical! What do you mean by a new kind of rural school?"

"It would be correlated with rural life. It would get education out of the things the farmers and farmers' wives are interested in as a part of their lives."

Jennie looked serious, after smothering a laugh.

"Jim," said she, "you're going to have a hard enough time to succeed in the Woodruff school, if you confine yourself to methods that have been tested and found good."

Pin Stripes Feature an Interesting Frock



This winsome frock for business wear is sure to appeal to women. The model was recently displayed at a New York fashion exposition.

Flowers as Decorative Feature and Joy-Giver

The joy that flowers can give in the house has never been appreciated quite so thoroughly as it is now. The homes are few, indeed, where flowers do not appear fresh and lovely at such frequent intervals that they seem always present.

No longer is the vase of flowers confined to a formal bouquet for the living-room and a few blossoms for the dining-room table. Hall, porch, sun parlor, breakfast-room and kitchen each has its place for flowers, which vie with those in the other rooms. Of course, flowers are seldom found in every room in the house at one and the same time, but they appear now and then in different rooms as an inspiration to those who remain at home during the day and as a happy note of greeting to the tired home-comer at the close of the day.

Along with this growing feeling for flowers as a decorative feature and joy-giver, it has been discovered that the beauty of even the loveliest blossoms is greatly enhanced by selecting appropriate receptacles and by the proper arrangement and combination of the flowers that are used.

The worst sin one can commit in flower display is to crowd the blossoms tightly into some unsuitable container. An overcrowded vase is as unlovely as an over-dressed woman. It is best to err on the opposite side, if such a thing is possible.

The clever use of a single flower or of a few sprays goes a long way to make up for a scarcity of flowers, which flat and apartment-house dwellers suffer from, unless fresh ones are bought constantly.

Interesting Features of Accepted Fashions

Salient points of the mode can now be summed up with a certain degree of assurance that the clothes we buy now will be in style for at least six months—and what more can one desire?

There is, for instance, the question of skirts. These for day and street wear are fairly tight and therefore of necessity somewhat short. Evening frocks, if of the period type with wide, full skirts, are angle length. If slim and straight they are not quite so long.

The long sleeve for day frocks is almost the rule, and while in many instances it is tight there seems to be a rapidly increasing tendency to feature the bell sleeve with an undersleeve of lingerie, lace or silk.

Blouses are loose, with a rather casual line, which ends somewhere from a few inches below the waistline to a point about at the knees.

The wide expanse of neck that has been such a dominant feature of the modes of the summer season has disappeared. Many women who go in for the most extreme styles have taken to high collars, but the general choice inclines toward the Chinese neck, with its straight, upstanding collar. It is extremely smart, but not always becoming.

The new three-quarter length coats have been enthusiastically received.

Printed and Plain Gowns.

Printed and plain materials combine to make some of the smartest of the new frocks—a mode not only becoming but economical as well, because it lends itself to the use of remnants or the remaking of an old dress. In one instance, the foundation is a straight-line model so simple that it needs practically no making, to which are added applied front and back panels and a cape back that may be left off if one doesn't care for it—though cape-backs are good this year, and for the figure that curves against the mode's decree, such an artifice is well designed. The rolled giraffe, too, is used, but one may substitute a narrow belt if one prefers.

"But the old methods," urged Jim, "have been tested and found bad. Shall I keep to them?"

"They have made the American people what they are," said Jennie. "Don't be unpatriotic, Jim."

"They have educated our farm children for the cities," said Jim. "This county is losing population—and it's the best county in the world."

"Pessimism never wins," said Jennie.

"Neither does blindness," answered Jim. "It is losing the farms their dwellers, and swelling the cities with a proletariat."

For some time, now, Jim had ceased to hold Jennie's hand; and their sweet-heart days had never seemed farther away.

"Jim," said Jennie, "I may be elected to a position in which I shall be obliged to pass on your acts as teacher—in an official way, I mean. I hope they will be justifiable."

Jim smiled his slowest and saddest smile.

"If they're not, I'll not ask you to condone them," said he. "But first



"Good Night," said Jennie curtly.

they must be justifiable to me, Jennie."

"Good night," said Jennie curtly, and left him.

Jennie, I am obliged to admit, gave scant attention to the new career upon which her old sweetheart seemed to be entering. She was in politics, and was playing the game as became the daughter of a local politician. Col. Albert Woodruff went South with the army as a corporal in 1861, and came back a lieutenant. His title of colonel was conferred by appointment as a member of the staff of the governor, long years ago, when he was county auditor. He was not a rich man, as I may have suggested, but a well-to-do farmer, whose wife did her own work much of the time, not because the colonel could not afford to hire "help," but for the reason that "laid girls" were hard to get.

The colonel, having seen the glory of the coming of the Lord in the triumph of his side in the great war, was inclined to think that all reform had ceased, and was a political stand-patter—a very honest and sincere one. Moreover, he was influential enough so that when Mr. Cummins or Mr. Delliver came into the county on political errands, Colonel Woodruff had always been called into conference. He was of the old New England type, believed very much in heredity, very much in the theory that whatever is is right, in so far as it has secured money or power.

A very respectable, honest, American tory was the colonel, fond of his political sway, and rather soured by the fact that it was passing from him. He had now broken with Cummins and Delliver as he had done years ago with Weaver and later with Larrabee—and this breach was very important to him, whether they were greatly concerned about it or not.

Such being her family history, Jennie was something of a politician herself. She was in no way surprised when approached by party managers on the subject of accepting the nomination for county superintendent of schools. Colonel Woodruff could deliver some delegates to his daughter, though he rather shied at the proposal at first, but on thinking it over, warmed somewhat to the notion of having a Woodruff on the county payroll once more.

(To be continued.)

Windsor Chairs.

Perhaps the best chair for use in either living room or dining room is that of the Windsor type. These come in various shapes, some with rush seats, and either with or without arms.

Few Aliens in New Zealand.
At present in New Zealand less than one-half of 1 per cent of the population consists of aliens, according to a recent report to the Department of Commerce from Vice Consul John E. Moran, Wellington. Of the 5,440 aliens, more than four-fifths remained in North island, where climatic conditions were more to their liking. The majority of the Syrians, centered in Dunedin, are merchants and manufacturers of clothing, while the Indians follow no particular occupation. Of the 3,270 Chinese registered, 21 per cent are merchants, 39 per cent market gardeners and 12 per cent laundresses. The aim of the New Zealand government is to enforce the immigration restriction act and prevent as far as possible an undue increase over the present percentage of any aliens.

Fourteen Miles in Nine Years.
Augusto Baldenweck, a merchant of Colmar, Germany was in Metzval on August 5, 1914, and from there mailed a postcard to a friend, Paul Hatz, officer of the One Hundred and Seventy-first regiment of infantry at Munster, a small town near Colmar. The card never reached its destination, but on July 7 of this year it was returned to the sender in Colmar, thus taking nine years to travel 14 miles. The distance from Metzval to Munster is about three miles, and from Munster to Colmar it is 11 miles.

Wasting Pencils.
With twice the population of the United States, Europe uses only half as many pencils a year. This is the statement of Lothar W. Faber, one of the leading pencil makers of the world. Why should the American use four times as many pencils as the European? Mr. Faber says the prime reason is waste. The American throws away a pencil when it is only half used. He cuts off a lot of it in unnecessary sharpening. It is thoughtless, careless. The European holds on to the pencil to the last fraction of wood and lead.

Lower Berths for All.
Spaciousness and comfort both day and night, and a lower berth for everybody, are provided in an ingenious new design for sleeping cars proposed by M. C. Krarup, consulting engineer, and described in Popular Science Monthly. Two rows of seats, of the design of armchairs, are proposed for each side of the car, these doubling its seating accommodation in the daytime but without crowding. At night, partitions similar to Venetian blinds divide the car into compartments and the chairs are converted into berths by lowering the back cushions and extending the seats. Each compartment would contain comfortable headroom, a wash basin and a large mirror.

CALL FOR COUNTY WARRANTS

All general fund warrants of Morrow County, Oregon, registered prior to June 10th, 1923, will be paid on presentation at the office of the County Treasurer on or after December 22nd, 1923, on which date interest on said warrants will cease.

Dated at Heppner, Oregon, December 12th, 1923.

LEON W. BRIGGS,
2 Issues County Treasurer.

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