

AN EXPLODED ROMANCE.

John Brinkworth had been away for ten years, when he returned to the village. These ten years had made little change in John's native place; in fact, John could scarcely realize that he had been absent for so long a time, every inch of the ground, every shingle on the house tops, seeming just as he had left them. But later, when he met the old familiar friends, and looked into the well remembered faces, he beheld the work ten years had done. Here was a strong young man whom he had left a sickly youth, here a light-hearted, thrifty merchant changed in a decade to a morbid malcontent, whose business tottered on its last legs. A few of the prosperous had fallen from their exalted state, a few of the lowly had risen to the top, still the great majority were just as they always had been.

"But the same old town," mused John, "the same old town."

It was in the young fry, as the returned fortune-seeker termed them, that John noticed the change—the wee lads of 8 and 9 grown into young manhood, the little lasses with curly tresses metamorphosed into village belles with frizzed bangs and long dresses.

"Well, well, well," cried John, as he fixed his eyes on me. "Now who is this?"

"Brown, sir," I replied, with all the majesty I could command. "Hassan Ali Brown, who was one of the small fry" when you left us."

"Well, well, well," repeated John. "Why don't I remember the night you were born young man? Didn't the thunder crash, and the lightning flash and—"

"Yes, yes," broke in my father, rather rudely, I thought, "and off the little dog's tail did slash. But tell us of your travels, John. Where have you been?"

"Australia, principally," replied the other. "But no yarns to-day—I have other things to do."

Ten years previous to the time of which I write John Brinkworth was the most dashing young man in the village, and, like many others of his kind, the ancient burg of his nativity was too slow for his restless nature. So he turned his back upon it, and struck out into the world to seek his fortune.

The story is an old one. Thousands of young men have set forth as John Brinkworth did, to seek fame and fortune, only to find naught but bitter disappointment. At home, in the old town, there is peace and quiet and plenty—out in the world restlessness, wolves and starvation. But who would wish a boy to waste his life in a back-woods hamlet, or on the farm, when ambition calls him out among his fellow-men, where he feels he will reach the top?

I remember a youth with whom I used to play marbles, and who could beat me 99 times out of a hundred. He was one of the smartest boys in the community, and when he grew up ambition spirited him away from his native place. Years afterwards I met him, for a moment only. He had a big diamond in his shirt front, and another set in a ring on his finger, and he was dishing out "beer, wine and other spirituous and fermented liquors," at so much per week.

"I wish," he said, and he looked thoroughly ashamed of his vulgar diamonds, and his vulgar dress, "that I was back on my father's farm just outside the dear old village. It's too late, though. This kind of thing caught my fancy at first, but pshaw, it's sickening now."

When John Brinkworth set out on his still hunt for fortune, he took more than his wearing apparel with him, for he carried away the heart of winsome Mary McWhirter. Mary was the daughter of a farmer who lived a few miles out in the country, and a prettier girl it would be hard to find. But Mary was fond of wealth, and of what wealth would bring, and it was generally conceded that she had considerable to do with the going away of her lover. Mary was ambitious, and felt that if John got out into the world he would soon make a fortune. Then they could get married, and live in style in the city. So her lover set off, as much taken with the idea as his sweetheart.

Of course correspondence was kept up between them, and now and again the villagers got and inkling of John's progress on the road to wealth. It was discouragingly slow, and Mary's face wore a doleful look. For eight years this kind of thing went on, then no more was heard from John. We thought him dead, until he appeared in the village as described.

It was a delightful evening when the young man, after greeting my father and me, turned his footsteps towards the McWhirter farm. We knew the object of his trip, and wondered what Mary would say—what sort of reception the shabbily dressed, unsuccessful fortune-seeker would meet with.

"I'm afraid," mused my parent, "that poor John will get the mitten. Mary McWhirter has no use for poverty, and would rather have Farmer Hobson, with his big bank account, than her old lover with naught but good looks. John should have made a fortune, then 'twould have been different."

The sweet briar and hawthorne were in

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WELLS & RICHARDSON CO.,
GENTLEMEN:—It is with pleasure that I give testimony in favor of your marvellous medicine, Paine's Celery Compound. I had

radiant bloom as John strolled along the quiet road he had in the past so often travelled; and the fragrant smell tickled his nostrils and brought up memories of the days of his early courtship, when Mary and he walked this very road, while the lovely fields, the woods, the flowers, fed their nascent affection. Ah, that was ten long years ago, when he was full of hope for the future.

"What will she say," cried John, "I wonder what she'll say?"

A dreamy-eyed bovine, grazing in an adjacent meadow, looked up, and, shaking its head over the fence, bellowed at him.

On a little further he came to a clump of trees where he remembered a refreshing spring used to gurgling forth its cooling draughts.

"I'll have a drink."

There it was, still murmuring as it did a decade ago, and getting down on hands and knees, he put his mouth to the water and took great gulps.

"Ah! that's good."

When he got up the knees of his shabby trousers were besmeared with mud, and the palms of his hands were covered with it.

"Well, well, well. I'm a nice looking object now," sighed John, as he sat down to try to remedy the damage done.

Rub, rub, rub.

"I wonder what she'll say. I wonder what I'll say. I'll say: 'Mary I have come back to you.'"

Rub, rub, rub.

"I have come back to you, Mary, without a fortune!"

Rub, rub, rub.

"Hang the mud. I look like a tramp. Mary, I'm young, and can work for you. I'll rent a farm, deary, and while we won't have the wealth we once dreamed of, we'll be happy together all our lives, won't we Mary?"

Rub, rub, rub.

"Besides, sweetheart, you'd never like the city. The country's the place to live, along with God's lovely work—the flowers, the fields, the woods."

Rub, rub, rub.

"I'll be hanged," cried John, springing up. "If I have't been sitting in the mushy stuff, too. Well, well, what a sight I must be. I'll get in the sun to dry."

Presently the McWhirter house appeared to view, nestling in the valley, and as John drew near the gateway he espied a blue shirt through the fence.

"Mary," he gasped, his heart jumping in to his mouth. But he swallowed it again, and a calamity was averted.

Winsome Mary McWhirter was milking a cow.

John Brinkworth's approach had been so noiseless that the maiden heard him not until he stood beside her and spoke.

"Mary!"

The swish of the milk into the pail ceased, and the young women jumped from her stool.

"John!"

Silently the old-time lovers stood looking at each other—beautiful Mary holding her stool in one hand, the pail in the other while John mopped his perspiring brow.

an attack of la grippe which put me into such a condition that I could not sleep or eat. I was completely run down, had extreme nervous prostration, and lay for days in a half stupified state.

After spending all my money for medicine which did little good, I gave up to die, when one day a paper on Paine's Celery Compound was brought to me. I at once procured the medicine and derived great relief from the first bottle. I slept better, ate better, and digestion improved. After using nine bottles I felt like a new man. I can truly say that Paine's Celery Compound snatched me from the grave and gave me a new lease of life.

I earnestly urge all sufferers to use Paine's Celery Compound, feeling sure it will cure them. Do not spend your money for medicines that cannot cure you.

Yours truly,

JOHN A. CHURCH.

"Oh, John!" she murmured, "you look so shabby. Where's the fortune you went away to get?"

So.

So the terror of John's early childhood, a devil's darning needle, whizzed between them, but he had got over such youthful frights, and it could not have been it that caused the chill to run up his spinal column almost freeze his blood.

"Alas, money is not everything in life."

The girl made a movement to go.

"Come," she said, "to the house, and see me and pa."

Then John aroused himself from his stupor.

"Look here, Mary," he cried, "you've received me cool. I come back for you because I felt that I could live no longer without you. If I have been unsuccessful in piling up a fortune, there are thousands of others like me. I fancied, though, that you'd be willing to marry me, for better or worse, as you used to say."

Mary's head dropped, and John adopted a gentle manner.

"We can rent a farm hereabouts, deary and live happy forever. Is it yes or no, Mary?"

The girl raised her head. Her face was pale and there was a cold look in her eye.

"No."

Without a word John Brinkworth sprang over the fence into the highway, and started back to the village.

He had not gone far when he heard a rustling of skirts behind him, but he did not decrease his speed.

"John, oh, John!"

She was beside him, and, with running her face was flushed.

"Oh, John," she cried, "don't think too bad of me. I could not bear to be poor, John, and live a half-starved life on a rented farm."

Never a word did John answer, but, waving her aside, walked on, while the girl stood and looked after him until he was lost to view.

It was dark when John reached the tavern. "I say, Lannigan," he cried, "send a wagon down to the station for my trunks. Here are the checks. Have your dining room table spread for as many as you can get around it—then go out and invite the villagers to dine here to-night at 9 o'clock. Here, this will pay you for the grub and liquors."

Diving down in his pocket, John drew forth a huge roll of bills, which he tossed to the astonished landlord.

That night the dining-room of the village tavern was crowded to suffocation. At the head of the table sat the host of the evening—John Brinkworth. But instead of the shabby, unsuccessful fortune-seeker, we saw a handsome man, elegantly attired.

But let me quote the editor of the local paper in a subsequent issue of his publication.

Last Wednesday, at Lannigan's Hotel, an affair, unequalled in the history of this town, took place. In the morning of that day there arrived amongst us a travel-stained, shabby individual, in whom we recognized

John Brinkworth, who left X—ten years ago to seek his fortune. But instead of being as we all expected, the unsuccessful fortune-seeker returning to his native place, full of disappointment, Mr. Bankworth was playing a practical joke on us, and the grand denouement of the affair took place on Wednesday night at Lannigan's Hotel, when as many of the villagers as could crowd into the room sat down to a jolly repast, with Mr. Brinkworth as the host of the evening.

The Honorable John Brinkworth, Premier of Kingsland, Australia—for no less a person is our former townsman—has been sent out by his government to endeavour to come to some arrangement with the Canadian authorities whereby the trade relations between Australia and Canada may be extended to the advantage of both countries.

The Hon. Mr. Brinkworth, who is not yet 33 years of age, has had a most phenomenal experience since leaving his native town ten years ago. Going direct from here to Australia Mr. Brinkworth was favored by Dame Fortune, and to-day is one of the wealthiest and most influential man in Kingsland, his principal source of income being the Royal Bonanza gold mine, considered one of the greatest producers in the world.

On Thursday last Mr. Brinkworth left for Ottawa, and we notice that his reception at the Capital has been a most cordial one.

We are sure that we give expression to the sentiment of all the people of X—when we wish the Hon. John Brinkworth, Premier of

Kingsland, Australia, success in his mission to Canada and continued prosperity in his adopted home.

Spring Weather Weakness.

It's not the weather that's at fault. It's your system, clogged with poisonous materials, that makes you feel dull, drowsy, weak and miserable. Let Burdock Blood Bitters clear away all the poisons, purify and enrich your blood, make you feel bright and vigorous.

The March Canadian.

THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE for March is a handsome and interesting number. Jean Blewett, Charles Lewis Shaw, Fergus Hume and Winifred Graham contribute entertaining stories. Thomas Hodgins, Q. C., writes of "British and American Diplomacy Affecting Canada," showing how Canada lost the territory now known as Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. John A. Cooper reviews McCarthy's Life of Gladstone. Pierre Marot writes of Dreyfus, Zola and France; and Thomas E. Champion gives the first of three historical articles on the Anglican Church in Canada. The illustrations are numerous and include a fine pen and ink sketch of a hockey match. Everybody should read this national publication.

Dr. Chase's Cures Catarrh after Operations Fall.

My boy, aged fourteen, has been a sufferer from Catarrh, and lately we submitted him to an operation at the General Hospital. Since then we have resorted to Dr. Chase's Catarrhal Cure, and one box of this medicine has made a prompt and complete cure.

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Foreman, Cowan Ave. Fire Hall.

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For favors is no more than right. Therefore, we thank our many customers for their patronage during the past year, and solicit a continuance of the same in future, and we trust through honest dealing and our very low prices for cash or produce only, to gain many more. Wishing all a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

We are yours,

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