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R-I-P-A-N-S

Literature.

WOODED BY PROXY.

Cyril Holcroft went to this dinner engagement at Tara Lodge with mixed feelings. The memory of that absurd affair of the morning stung him whenever it occurred. What sort of a reception would Ada give him—kind or satirical? Yet, no matter how she looked at him, it would be a joy, as it ever was to see her sweet face. In the hall of Tara Lodge he straightened his spectacles, but forgot other details, and went manfully to his fate in the drawing-room.

The elfish urchin, Ada's young brother Gwynn, grinned at him the moment he appeared. He was too conscious of it. But Dr. Granby, Ada's father, clasped his hand warmly enough, with a real welcoming smile; and Ada herself started him briefly with an expression in her sunny eyes that seemed new to him—bewilderingly adorable besides. The others did not matter. At first, that is.

But just before the pairing time, young Gwynn sidled up to Cyril and asked if he was dry yet.

"I hope so," said Cyril, forcing a laugh. "I—didn't know," the lad whispered on. "I've got to cut it till you're at dessert. Do hurry up to it, won't you? And I say, Cyril, old man, see that fellow with the shiny bald head? It's Peter Weston, Esquire, from the country; he's very sweet on Ada. He's got thousands a year. She likes him awfully, and he's promised me a pony when she says 'Yes.' Nuts for me, isn't it?"

He had still more to say, but his father suddenly gripped him by an ear and expelled him.

"Will you take Ada in, Holcroft?" said Dr. Granby. "You're none the worse for your escapade of this morning, I hope?"

"Not in the least," said Cyril.

Ada herself put the same question to him on the way to the dining-room. He did this with characteristic inefficiency; trod on the gown of a lady in front, and bumped Ada against the dining-room doorway. He felt worse about it than he need have felt, when Ada laughed at Miss Braycombe's little joke on behalf of the gown, and exclaimed: "It's all right, Mr. Weston, it wasn't your fault." Weston was escorting Miss Braycombe. These two gave Cyril a look wholly free from amiability. At the soup Ada repeated her question.

"You didn't tell me how you were," she said, "unless pulling up Miss Braycombe like that was an answer."

"Oh, said Cyril, "you know I'm all right. Don't I look it?"

She viewed him quickly, and a formidable ironic twitch came to her lips.

"You—don't," she said softly. "You've got a church steeple to your hair. Comes of getting it wet out of due season, I suppose."

Other discomfitures followed when Cyril had flattened that church steeple with unobstructive vigor. Ada gave Mr. Weston, her neighbor to the right, two-thirds of her conversation. She was chatty with him, too. Tom Russell, the stock-broker, inquired loudly across the table about the heroism people were saying he (Cyril) had been guilty of; and the general pause that ensued was gall and wormwood to Cyril. He blushed and replied that he hadn't a notion what Mr. Russell meant. Like the good fellow he was, Dr. Granby broke the inquisitive silence on his behalf.

And then what must Ada do but whispered to him:

"What a coward you are!" "I know," he assented; and he had little appetite after that. Her emphasis upon the words was horribly convincing. Never had her blue eyes lured him more fatally. And she called him coward—and meant it!

As soon as the ladies had gone, that young imp Gwynn showed in the doorway. He slipped into a chair next to Cyril, and helped himself to a banana.

"What is this about your saving a poor creature from a watery grave, Holcroft?" now asked Tom Russell impatiently.

"It didn't happen to be a poor creature at all!" said Cyril. "I was the poor creature. I got wet for nothing—that's all!"

"Really! What was it, then?" Young Gwynn popped in his oar.

"I'll tell you," he said. "Mr. Holcroft was taking his constitutional along the canal side when some chap threw a scarecrow into the water from the bridge. It had petticoats and other things on, you know, and looked just like a woman when it spread out. And, being short-sighted, old Cyril—Mr. Holcroft, I mean—took a header after it. And—he can't swim a bang, that's the joke of it. But our Newfoundland dog, Hector, and me—all right dad, and I—we were close by, and Hector hauled him out by the neck. That's all. He swallowed a lot of canal

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water and went home, just as he was. He looked—ripping!"

"And dripping, I wager!" said Tom, amid the prevalent laughter.

"It was due to my short sight," he explained, with amusing gravity. "Well," said Peter Weston, checking his mirth. "I call it a thoroughly plucky thing to do. It was a heroic."

Cyril felt particularly annoyed by Peter Weston's mirth.

Dr. Granby again turned the conversation. He appreciated the danger signal in Cyril's red cheeks.

"He's chaffing you, Cyril," whispered Gwynn; "and pass the sweets, will you?"

Afterwards, in the drawing-room, Cyril did little except talk mathematics with a young lady from Cambridge. He astonished her by his earnestness. But he watched Ada and Mr. Weston all the while. Even when Ada came to him and said smilingly, "Do give Miss Carter a rest, Mr. Holcroft. I'm sure she gets enough binomial theorems at college—even then he saw nothing but contempt for him in the suggestion. He gave Miss Carter a rest, and was thankful when the carriages were announced. It chanced that Ada was alone when he said 'Good-night' to her. Impulse, disappointment, bitterness, and several other emotions produced a curious corollary to his farewell.

"May I venture to congratulate Mr. Weston?" he said, with dimmed glasses. She started, and decided not to understand him.

"I call that cowardly of you, too!" she said, with a lovely rush of color to her cheeks, "Good-night!"

Two days later young Gwynn rang the bell of Cyril's snug little house while Cyril was at breakfast, meditating about his literature since the dinner party.

"What's the matter?" Cyril asked when the boy bounced into room, cap on head.

"Something ghastly!" said Gwynn, looking it. "What do you think? We're ruined. I wasn't to say a thing about it to anyone, but we are. Dad's been speck'ing—you know, and he's lost."

Cyril pushed away from the table. He readjusted his glasses. His thoughts were all upon Ada Granby.

"Your sister—" he began. "Oh, it's just about squashed her flat, though you wouldn't think so to look at her!"

"Has it?" said Cyril feebly, but with a glowing soul.

"Yes; of course it has. No one knows what men are. And Weston's not the chap to marry a girl who—"

"I see!" exclaimed Cyril. "The scoundrel!"

"Yes; I know. But I can't wait. I'll be late. And don't split on me."

The lad ran off, and Cyril dropped into an arm-chair and thought rapidly. He possessed that great blessing known as ample means. It was dreadful to think that Ada's happiness might thus be wrecked, and very soon he was writing a strange, unworried letter to Dr. Granby, offering him his purse to any extent.

With his own hand he put the letter into the box at Dr. Granby's house, trembling lest he should see Ada herself. Though he imagined he had lost all chance of her, she was still too much to him.

But instead of Ada, he met Peter Weston. That gentleman was coming down the road with a consequential air that impressed Cyril unfavorably even before he recognized him.

"Good-morning!" he said with a smile, which seemed to Cyril offensively reminiscent of his smiles at the dinner party. Cyril stopped in a quick fever.

"Good-morning!" he said. "Excuse me, but I would be glad to be assured about something. My interest in the Granbys urges me to speak."

"What do you mean?" Mr. Weston asked.

"I refer," said Cyril, "to Miss Granby and yourself. I—"

But Mr. Weston showed impatience.

"That is my business!" he exclaimed. "Miss Granby is nothing to me!"

"Ah," said Cyril, hot with righteous wrath, "then you are no better than a scoundrel, a fair-weather acquaintance who—"

Hands off, sir! He not only fung off the hand of the astonished Mr. Weston, but struck him—even knocked him down. In falling he hit his head against the wall, and now he lay as if stunned. And it was thus Dr. Granby himself

came upon them, his victim's head supported in the arms of the distressed Cyril.

"Give me a hand with him," said the doctor, after a brief examination of him; and together they carried Mr. Weston into the house. And then Cyril just fled away.

"The man's mad!" said Dr. Granby, looking after him.

By and by when he had read Cyril's letter, he said, "He must be mad!" Ada coming into the room, he gave her the letter, and asked her what she thought of it.

"It—it's just like him, father," said the girl quietly. "I hope Mr. Weston is not really hurt—and I'm going out."

But she waited first for her brother Gwynn. She caught that subtle youth by the ear, and held on until she had the truth out of him.

"What if I have been ragging him!" exclaimed the boy. "He is such an old softy!"

"Very well," said Ada. "You'll come right along to his house and tell him everything, or else papa shall make it warm for you."

"I don't care, only I must be sharp about it," said the boy.

Again he bounced in upon Cyril, now in the midst of the depression that had followed his attack on Mr. Weston.

"I say, old man!" he exclaimed, "I've been cramming you a bit. Sorry, but I have. And—that's all." It had to be more before he went.

"If you'll tell a lie like that, Gwynn, lad," said Cyril, "you'd tell others. Mr. Weston—no doubt—still—your sister Ada and he, I mean—"

"Oh, bother!" cried the boy. "It's all a made-up tale from the first, you donkey. She refused him. She brought me here this minute to tell you so. You are such a thickhead, Cyril. For a chap of your age you're awful ridiculous. Anyone can see she's sweet on you, though it's a thing no fellow can understand."

He went off laughing. His sister was outside with a pained face. And it was thus that Cyril found her when he had snatched up his hat to pursue Gwynn to ask some more questions. The lad took to his heels laughing, and only Ada was left to him.

And now for the first time the girl's heart spoke out for her, as she gave Cyril her hand and looked him full and tenderly in the eyes.

"How could you?" she said. "You ought to know me—better—and my little wretch of a brother!"

"Really!" he whispered, as if he were out of breath, gazing at her. "You love me?" His hand tightened on hers.

"Well, yes, I do," said she. And then she, too, laughed like Gwynn himself. "I'm sorry to say I can't help it. And now do come and apologize to poor Mr. Weston.—London Answers.

AN OLD STORY.

So much is being written nowadays about the nefariousness of worry that one grows accustomed to, and accordingly heedless of, the many warnings. No greater truth, however, has been promulgated in any age or among any people. For all classes of workers the mottoes "Won't Worry" and "Don't Fear" have incalculable value, but for the housewife, the real woman of affairs, these mottoes are a veritable treasure trove.

How often have I seen women sitting at their sewing or busied over dishes or dusting with knit brows and troubled gaze! Why? They were worrying. And the result was a headache and afterward a lot of unsightly wrinkles!

"Perhaps mother's worries are well grounded," you say. Yes, on the face of it that statement seems reasonable. Perhaps she is worrying about John's lack of application at school, or if he be a youth of older growth she is worrying over his "wild oats." Poor mother! And yet did ever a worry bring a cure? Isn't it, after all, the mother, who has firm and cheerful faith in her boys and girls, who finds in after years that she didn't neglect them when she refused to sit down and worry over them?

Whenever we let in the seeds of worry we also admit the companion seeds of distrust. A modern writer says "fear is a highway robber and worry is a sneak thief," and no sage of old ever gave utterance to a greater truth.

Just sit down, my dear housewife, and make a mental list of the things that have worried you for the past seven days! You will be amazed, if not appalled, at the list. And when you consider that every one of those worries and fears has stolen from your supply of vitality and good health you will wonder that you have lived through it, and perhaps, bless your dear heart, begin to worry over that.

The best cure for the worry habit is cheerful, optimistic concentration on whatever work you are doing.—Farm and Fireside.

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A Circus for Houlton.

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Sir Thomas Lipton, who is spending \$500,000 annually in his efforts to "lift" the America's cup, is said to be worth about \$50,000,000. Twenty-three years ago he stood behind a counter waiting on customers. Thirty years ago he worked in the rice fields of South Carolina, and was so poor that he slept with the negroes in the woods.

Owing to the large number of suburban trolley cars which have been held up by highwaymen recently, the Oregon Water Power and Railway Company at Portland has armed all its conductors and motormen with revolvers.

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"Kidney disease was, no doubt, the cause of all my suffering, and sometimes the urinary trouble would be so bad that I would have to get up five or six times during the night. Fortunately, I began using Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, and they cured me completely. I am 79 years old, and quite well now, but still occasionally use these pills to keep my system in good order. Several persons to whom I have recommended Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills have been equally benefited."

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