

ON THE YEAR'S LAST DAY.

(Copyright, 1904, by T. C. McClure.)
 "I'm very sorry, but there's not a chair left in the parlor car." The Pullman conductor looked really distressed. Somehow the Gibsonsque figure of Stella Mayhew seemed utterly incongruous with a day coach for a background. It was the aftermath of the Christmas rush, with family parties and numerous single tourists returning from a week's pleasuring in the big city. That was all the reason why he hated to see Miss Mayhew doomed to the day coach. It would be crowded to suffocation.

"I'll see what I can do," he said courteously as he turned to assist her into the coach behind the parlor car. "Perhaps some one may fail to turn up and a reservation may be forfeited."

"Thank you," said the girl graciously, and, followed by the porter and her suit case, she disappeared into the day coach.

It was as the conductor had feared crowded. She passed down the aisle and had about decided that she would have to go in a car behind when the sound of her own name, spoken in a surprised voice, brought her to a standstill.

"Jack Moreland!" she cried in wonder and held out both hands impulsively, utterly unmindful of the interested passengers and the grinning porter. Moreland took both her hands, then suddenly remembered and dropped them without speaking. Flushing his bag from the seat next the window, he made room for her. She, too, had recovered from the unexpected meeting, though her cheeks were flushed a trifle.

"Perhaps you were saving that seat for some one?"

"No; I think my good angel must just have warned me of your coming."

He settled her luggage and dropped into the seat beside her.

"This is great luck," he remarked. "And to think that I have been dreading this trip!"

"You don't deserve meeting me. Here I have been back a fortnight, and you haven't been near the house!"

She did not add, even mentally, that she had missed the flowers which had come from him daily before her trip abroad.

"I have been very busy," he said gravely, at which she smiled quizzically.

"Planning a barn dance for the Pennfield-Browns or steering some pretty western woman through the shoals of New York society?"

"Neither," he said shortly. "That is not my line just now."

"Oh!" she looked out of the window. He had changed, and yet he had seemed very glad to see her.

"Did you make the mistake of failing to have a seat reserved in the parlor car too?"

"No; I have taken to riding in day coaches lately."

She glanced at him quizzically.

"Don't tell me Jack, that you're going in for literature and are studying types."

Then she hadn't heard. Why should he tell her now, with a thirty mile run through paradise before him?

"Types are interesting. Don't you think so? Rather different, these people, from the sort you'll see at the Brandon's tonight. I suppose you are going out to spend the week end with them."

"Yes. And you too?"

"No, I'm bound for Poughkeepsie."

He bent over suddenly to pick up a violet which had fallen from the great bunch at her belt.

"These must seem mighty poor imitations after seeing the real thing in Italy," he said as he straightened up.

Stella looked from him to the flying landscape.

Poughkeepsie! And he was so anxious to change the subject. She had heard rumors of his interest in Dick Farrar's young sister. Perhaps she was in Vassar college. No, not now during the holidays.

Jack went on talking quietly about her trip, asking her questions, which she answered half mechanically. A little country schoolteacher seated across the aisle watched them curiously. They made her think of a frontpiece in a novel illustrated by Christy.

Suddenly he glanced at his watch.

"By Jove, how time has flown! We'll pull into your station in five minutes."

Stella Mayhew watched him gather up her luggage as one in a dream. For her the time had dragged, and it was his fault. He had changed, while she—

"When we come back to town I hope you'll find time to call." She put an odd little emphasis on the word "time."

"Thanks awfully, but I'm not going about much, and—"

He saw the look, half wondering, half hurt, which crept into her eyes, and he turned to her abruptly.

His face had gone a bit white and his voice had lost its even quality.

"I thought you knew. No, I lacked the courage to tell you," he said calmly. "I took a business cropper, and I'm going to Poughkeepsie to sell derricks for the Graham people. And I'm riding in a day coach because I can't afford Pullmans."

She was staring at him with wide eyes.

"Jack, I—I don't understand. Oh, why didn't you tell me this before?"

"Because I was a blooming coward." The train was slowing up.

"And now you'll see why I'm not playing the social game very strong this season." He was standing in the aisle, her suit case in his hand.

"Remember me to the Brandons, awfully nice couple."

She nodded her head and followed his straight, square shouldered figure from the car. The Brandon footman was waiting for her.

"Jack," she said suddenly. He had swung back on the train. She caught her breath sharply as he lifted his hat and nodded to her cheerily; then she turned toward the depot and the waiting carriage.

"And I never even said I was sorry."

That night she cornered her host in the library.

"Mr. Brandon, what does it mean when you come to a cropper in business?"

"That depends on the man, girlie. Who has been coming croppers?"

"Jack Moreland."

"Moreland, eh?" said Mr. Brandon, flicking the ashes lightly from the cigar. "Well, the young cub was a fool. After his father had been dead four years—four years, mind you—it was found that he had—er—hypothecated certain funds belonging to estates for which he was trustee. Beautiful piece of work the old man did— took four years to unearth it, and even then the thing could have been fought out in the court, and his heirs would have won on a technicality. But young Moreland lost his head and threw up his whole share of the estate to cover what he chose to call his father's dishonor. Nearly drove his mother crazy. The old lady has plenty to live on and has gone to London, where she will not be forced to realize too soon the fact that her son is selling—er—derricks."

"She was very cruel—and he—her only boy," said Stella musically.

"And he was a fool, according to up to date business methods. Better come into the billiard room. They're playing pool."

"No; thanks. I—I want to run up to my room for a few moments."

And when she came back she carried a letter, which she asked a servant to take to the village for the early morning mail. It was addressed to "Mr. John C. Moreland, Care Graham Contracting Co., Duane St., New York City," and it ran:

Dear Old Jack—Forgive me. I didn't understand. I thought you were not glad to see me back. You after seeing the real thing in Italy," he said as he straightened up.

Stella looked from him to the flying landscape.

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WHEN MY LADY DAINTY COOKS.

Since culinary accomplishments are again rated high in favor, the wardrobe of the housewife must contain fittings for her acceptations into the kitchen, and these she contrives shall be as becoming and as clever in their way as her toilettes for more public occasions. Little aprons that do for parlor cooking will not answer for more serious things. The long painter's apron or the sacque shapes or allover's should be chosen for these occasions. The picture shows a full

long apron shirred into a strap at the bust line, connecting straps holding it in place over the shoulders. It buttons below the waist in the back, and two pockets add a jaunty touch. Half sleeves that slip on over the dress sleeve accompany this apron; they are gathered in by elastic bands at top and bottom. The heavy white cotton called "Indian head" is much liked for these long aprons. It is inexpensive and has much the appearance of heavy linen after it is laundered.

A VERY GRAVE CHARGE.

Ottawa, Dec. 29.—Alderman F. G. Black is out with a serious charge against Mayor Ellis. He states that the latter made an improper alteration in a bye-law authorizing the expenditure of \$200,000 for the purchase of the consumers' electric light plant, whereby \$3,000 was lost to the city. He says, after arguing that he and not Mayor Ellis is entitled to the credit for the plant.

"However, I have now reached that chapter in the history of this electric question which I make public with the greatest regret and reluctance. It is now necessary for me to make a charge against Mayor Ellis. It is, I believe the most serious charge that has ever been made against the Mayor of any Canadian city. It is not a theoretical charge, but one that can be established beyond dispute from the records of the city hall. I have no desire to ruin Mayor Ellis, and I have waited until the last opportunity has passed for Mr. Ellis to retire before making this public. To remove any possibility of his election, and to restrain him from further mischief is the only reason that compels me to disclose to the public what is known to less than a dozen people up to this moment. I hereby charge Mayor Ellis with falsifying bye-law No. 2,503 by removing and adding words which have caused an actual loss of over \$3,000 of the people's money and endangered the safety of the entire bye-law for which \$200,000 of the people's money has been paid out."

If Ald. Black's charge is true lawyers say that Mayor Ellis has committed a criminal offence and the bye-law which he altered is worthless.

FIGHT WITH AUSTRALIA.

Ottawa, Dec. 29.—If Australia enters the field in order to try and divert to its own lands the tide of immigration now flowing to Canada, the Government here will put up a vigorous fight. That is the statement made in official circles. The emigration propaganda will be conducted more energetically than ever, and emigration agents will be instructed to redouble their efforts so that Canada may not only keep the current of immigration in the present channel, but further increase the accessions of population from without. In a pamphlet recently issued by New South Wales, depreciatory references to the Canadian climate and the opportunities for making a living here, as compared with Australia, are made, but there is a genuine recognition of the fact that since Sir Wilfrid Laurier took hold of public affairs remarkable results have followed the adoption of the new emigration policy.

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