THE TEST OF LOVE - - - - From Modern Society.

The house rose up, a beautiful grey pile, dark against the silver moonlight.

Leslie Graham threaded his way cautiously through a twisting side patch that led up to it. He had memorised certain directions which had been sent him in a letter that morning, and went over them now.

"At the left of the verandah, as you approach the house from the back, you will see a small door. All you will have to do will be to turn the handle of it and enter. I shall be just inside wating for you."

He had reached the building now, and without difficulty came upon the door that had been mentioned. He turned the handle as directed, and passed across the threshold with a noiseless step. No word was spoken, but in silence a hand was placed upon his arm and he was led through a maze of passages until at last he was brought into a softly-lighted room.

"I'm obliged to be cautious," said his guide. "There has been a scare of burglars in this neighborhood recently, and the servants, in consequence of this, are all on the alert. But we're not likely to be disturbed here!"

"Scarcely at this hour!" remarked Graham, glancing at the clock, which showed that it was past one. "Was it wise of you to send for me?"

"I felt it was the only thing left for me to do. I was desperate. Besides, there was no other way of seeing you. I could not go to town; every action of my life is watched, every moment of my days is reported. My servants are all my husband's spies. There is not a soul I can trust. But I must not waste time. I must tell you at once what it is I wish to see you about, although perhaps you can partly guess. I want your help!"

"Don't you know that it is always yours?" he answered.

He glanced at her with eager, wistful eyes. He noted how great a change the last two years had wrought in her. She had ben a bright and wilful girl when they had last met. Now she was a woman subdued by sorrows.

Yet she was still strangely beautiful, and as dear to him at this very moment as she had ever been when there was still the hope that something splendid would happen, some unlooked-for chance that would brighten his fortunes and make him eligible in her mother's eyes as a suitor for this girl.

But the elder woman had other plans for her only daughter; she aimed higher than at an unknown barrister. And it had ended in Leslie Graham being present merely as a guest at the wedding of the woman he had hoped to make his own wife.

"I want to put my position to you as clearly and in as few words as possible," Lady Marington continued, speaking at first in a cold level voice which quite suddenly broke with a sob in it; and then self-control deserted her, and tears fell from her eyes that she was powerless to keep back.

In a moment Graham was at her side holding the little trembling hands, seeking to soothe her, scarcely knowing what to say.

"What is it, dear?" he saked. "Tell your troubles to me, just as you used to do when we were boy and girl. What it it, Nell? What can I do for you? How can I alter things?"

"You cannot alter them," she responded, shaking her head sadly. "No one can do that. But you can give me your advice. . . . I'm stupid tonight; yet I meant to be so brave. . . . There! I'm myself again now!"

She paused a moment, and then went on, as Graham resumed his seat, feeling that words of sympathy and comfort were useless and barren.

"You know that my marriage has been a miserable failure?"

He nodded in silence.

"Oh, you might as well say it. I remember you warned me at the time—both me and my mother. But neither of us would listen. People never will listen to advice which seems to be against their own interest."

"I only told you what I knew to be the truth about Sir Denis."

"Yes; but I thought that, whatever his faults, he really cared for me. I believed that his love would protect me, would be a kind of shield to me through life. I did not think that it was from himself I should most need protection!"

"Is your life, then, very unhappy?"

"It is one endless misery! He illtreats me, Leslie. He is a tyrant! He rules every moment of my life. Will; I have none! He has broken it! Hope; that has left me, too! I tremble at the sound of his voice. As a girl I was fearless; now I am an absolute coward!"

"But the law would free you from such cruel bondage."

"Will it? That is what I want to know. Will the law free me? Denis holds our child as a weapon over my head. He would gladly regain his freedom; but it is a divorce he wants, if he could by any chance secure one against me. In that case the custody of the child would be given to him, and that is his great wish."

"But, Nell, if your husband has such a desire as this, and feels so bitterly towards you, why did you run the risk of sending for me at this hour? Couldn't I have called in the daytime? It seems to be the height of folly."

"I dare not have seen you, had you called. But tonight Denis dined in London, where he is staying until tomorrow afternoon. He has lately taken it in his head to be jealous of you, perhaps because he fears that you are the only one who might really be able to help me in my ceaseless battle against his brutal tyranny!"

Leslie Graham looked at her with mystification in his gaze.

"But how can he pretend jealousy of me? Why, this is the first time you and I have met since the day of your wedding, two years ago."

"He knows that well enough. But he has heard some old gossip which linked my name with yours. At a loss for something to quarrel about, it suited his humor to hit upon this. Finding nothing in the present that will serve him, he has become jealous of the past. It isn't that he cares for me in the least degree. Love, if it ever lived in him, has died long since. And, terrible as it may sound, I believe that—that he would be glad if he could use anyone, even you, if by so doing he could be free of me, and yet retain the child! He wants the boy to be a copy of himself in the years tocome. Think of that, Leslie—a copy of himself! And if he were to take my boy from me what would my life be worth then? That I know would kill me. I have endured so much, and to be robbed of my child at last would be more than I could bear. It's easy for a woman to submit to everything—insults, neglect, and humiliation—so long as she has her dear child's love. There is no burden too heavy for her; love lightens the load. The hours of her life may be dark as mine are, but a smile from her child can bathe her days in sudden sunshine, can turn what is lead in them to gold!"

Her face lighted up. She looked again the girl of two short years ago.

There was silence between them for some moments.

"You must not be parted from your child!" said Graham, at last. "And I do not think that your husband will have power to rob you of him."

"That is what I want you to take counsel's opinion upon. Tomorrow I will send you a paper relating certain incidents which I think should enable me to obtain a separation from Denis. And that is all I seek. I will not have my name dragged through a divorce court."

"Very well. You may thoroughly depend on me. I will get you the very best advice to be had in all the Temple. And now I had better go!"

He rose and stood before her, a quiet man, yet with something strong in his face, some steadfast light in the deep set, rather sad eyes.

Suddenly she rose also, her eyes fixed, her head held in a listening attitude. Outside there could be faintly heard the soft throb of a motor-car.

"It is Denis!" she whispered, the color fleeting from her face. "Something has brought him back. That is his motor."

She shivered a little, but, controlling her nervousness, moved across to another roor.

"This way!" she said. "Go straight along—at the end of the passage is a door. Open this, and you will find yourself in the garden. Good night! Do your best for me!"

The pleading eyes were lifted to his for amoment. Gratitude shone in them; there was no need for her lips to express formal thanks.

"I promise that I will do my best for you," he said, tenderly.

He pressed her hand and turned as she had directed him. It was quite dark in the passage, but he managed to reach the end of it without mishap when a form unexpected rose before him, and strong arms, in the grasp of which he was utterly powerless, gripped and held him.

"Caught you, have I?" exclaimed a harsh, triumphant coice. "Thought it an easy crib to crack, no doubt! But you came to the wrong shop this time, my fine fellow!"

The situation was revealed to Graham in a flash. This stalwart guardian of the family plate evidently supposed him to be a burglar.

"You idiot!" said Graham, impatiently. "You've made a ridiculous mistake. Let me go!"

But the other's grasp only tightened, and a moment's thought made Graham keep back the angry words that were ready to be spoken.

He offered no further resistance, knowing that it would not only be useless, but absurd as well. He allowed this giant—the butler, probably, or a footman—to force him along, and thrust him without ceremony into a room where there was a single electric light burning. Here his captor released his hold.

"You better not try to get away, he said. "There's no window in this room lower than twenty feet from the ground! Master's a justice of the peace, let me tell you. I'll fetch him to have a good look at you.

Inflated with self-importance the man made a pompous exit.

Graham felt quite at a loss. He had been totally unprepared for any development of the kind. He looked round the room. As the man had said, and a glance confirmed his words, escape from it was not to be thought of. It was a plain, substantially-furnished room, with windows set high up in the wall, and with heavy oak doors which might have once belonged to a mediaeval castle.

Graham waited in miserable anxiety, seeking desperately to find some story that might explain his presence there without compromising Lady Marington. But one and all they sounded too improbable for anyone to be deceived by them, and he was just realising his failure to invent any plausible tale when the door opened and a heavily-built man entered, a little flushed, perhaps, with wine. He shut and locked the door behind him and came forward.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, with a grim smile. "So this is our burglar! I thought there was some mistake! I'm sorry if my unexpected return cut short your post-midnight visit to my wife. You should really have timed your call at a more reputable hour. It was not quite by accident that I came back from town, my dear sir; although a breakdown of the motor on the road delayed me an hour. Women have a foolish trick of blotting their letters, and my valet, a thorough rogue, but a clever one, sees to it that my wife's writing desk is supplied with fresh blotting-paper each morning. But don't let me keep you standing, Mr. Graham. Pray be seated!"

There was bitter mockery beneath the suave tines. The loose and brutal mouth hung down in evil lines. The inflamed eyes sparkled with malice.

Sir Denis Marington took a chair himself, but Graham remained standing.

"I hope your chat with Lady Marington was an interesting one!" observed Sir Denis. "I'm sure it must have been between two such old friends. In a moment of indiscretion, a weakness my wife rarely permits herself, she told me one day that you were the only man she had ever cared for. An unfortunate admission, which I fear may go against her in the action I intend to bring!"

"What action?"

For the first time Leslie Graham broke silence. Sir Denis picked up a pen from his desk, and twirled between his fingers.

"An action for divorce," he answered. "You appear surprised! What other step is there for me to take? I return home unexpectedly after giving night. I am already dware that my out that I should not be back that wife means to take advantage of my supposed absence in sending for her old sweetheart, instructing him to come here secretly when the household has all retired, so, in consequence, I slightly alter my own plans, and return. I find him leaving the house like a thief, for which he is mistaken by my servants, who capture him and bring him before me. Oh, you two most foolish people! You have both played into my hands with a simplicity that is absolutely childish!"

He leant back in his chair, thoroughly enjoying the situation, which was in admirable agreement with his own cynical humour.

An overwhelming sense of pity stirred in Graham's heart for the woman he loved. He felt that the very cause which he had hoped to serve was now lost. This man had first of all broken her heart, and ruined her whole life. Now he would add shame and dishonour to the many other cruelties and injustices he had forced upon her.

Suddenly an idea came to him, born in an instant, quickening to life in that same second.

He drew himself up. He looked at the other—looked straight into his eyes with a challenge of his own.

"It was as a thief I came here, Sir Denis Marington; it was as a thief, I tell you! I broke into your house for the purpose of robbing you!"

Sir Denis laughed.

"Ah, admirable! A most ingenious explanation! You possess a quick invention!" He clapped his hand. Then he leaned forward, and uttered a little angry snarl that wiped away the smile from his features.

"That won't serve your purpose," he said. "Not a soul would believe you! I don't, to begin with; because I know who you are. Otherwise, it really sounds quite plausible!"

Leslie Graham dropped his gaze.

"In that case," he said, "you and all the rest of your people had better know the truth. I did come here at this strange hour to see your wife. It is unnecessary for me to tell you that I have loved her since she was a young girl. If she had been a little braver, and her mother a less mercenary woman, I should have married her. But that is all past and done with now. You have been a brutal husband to her, Sir Denis, as I warned both her and her mother you were likely to prove. I knew something of your character even in those days!"

"Pray spare me your moral reflections upon my conduct!"

"You have grown tired of your wife, and would like to be rid of her. Lady Marington sent for me to come to her tonight, not as an old friend, but as a barrister, to give her my advice!"

"Are you a barrister? I accept your word. But I cannot recollect ever having heard your name mentioned in legal circles?"

"I do not practise!" returned Graham, smiling at the paltry insult. "Perhaps my abilities as a barrister are poor ones. But I am this at least, Sir Denis Marington, and that is something you will never be—I am a man! I am not a cowardly blackguard who ill-treats his wife, and uses her child as a means of forcing her to submit to his brutalities!"

Sir Denis's face flamed a brick-red, and he half rose from his chair. But, choking down his wrath, he sank languidly back in it.

"You called yourself a man just now, and me you called a blackguard! The last does not matter, but I see an opportunity for you to prove your boasted manhood. I am assuming that you would make any sacrifice for the sake of my wife, who is the woman you happen to love? Any? Of course. Very well, then, I will accept the explanation you gave me just now. Everyone shall suppose, as my servants already do, that you are a burglar. You can give to the police any alias you choose. Only if you accept this position you must accept also whatever punishment goes with it!"

Leslie Graham looked at him with amazement.

"There would be a hue and cry raised among your friends at your disappearance, I suppose?" added Sir Denis. "That is the only obstacle I see."

"Really," he said; "these transpontine speeches may be very effective in court, but I confess I find them a little tedious! I suppose, however, I am to understand that my wife has been making complaints of me?"

"Lady Marington has told me something of what her life has been since you married her. She suggested this secret visit because you have taken every means of cutting her off from old friends who might otherwise have protected her against your violence!"

"Perhaps I realise now that it was a mistake not to give my wife greater liberty. However, your one visit to her, so strangely timed, will serve my purpose. Believe me, I shall have an excellent case to bring into court. The rightly-incensed husband, whose suspicions have been aroused, returning home to find an old lover visiting his wife. The sympathy of the court will be absolutely mine. A sapient judge will give me the reward of virtue, which, in this case, will assume the strange shape of a decree nisi!"

"But, Sir Denis Marington, I cannot think that even you would be so utterly inhuman as to inflict this last great wrong upon a woman whom you must once have loved, who is the mother of your child!"

Sir Denis got up from his chair.

"That is my intention!" he said. "Unless——"

He broke off in his speech and took a step nearer Graham, a grimly humorous smile upon his face.

"No, I have few friends. I am almost a recluse. And it is my custom to go off for months at a stretch without any warning. But what you propose now is no more than a whim!"

"Do you think so? I call it a rather novel kind of sport. Perhaps it is something more than that with me. Perhaps it is revenge—only revenge is out of date—revenge on a man whom my wife still loves; revenge on the woman who has never loved me, the man she married at her mother's bidding, merely for what he could give them both in the way of wealth and position. Anyhow, do you accept this?"

"Are you really in earnest?"

"Entirely so!"

"But—but if I do this, will Lady Marington know?"

"Certainly not! She would spoil it all. She would look upon it as her duty to sacrifice herself, as she would call it. She has a pronounced sense of duty—it is one of her most uncomfortable traits. Besides, it must be part of the proof that I have asked you to give me that you are a man, as you have proudly called yourself, for her to think that you have failed her, when, I assume, she reckoned on your help!"

"That will be the hardest of all to bear!"

"Well, you can refuse it, of course. If you do so there will be the scandal, and my wife will lose her child!"

Leslie Graham hesitated some moments.

Then he saw, as in a mental picture, Nell's pleading hands, her broken voice, broken with love, as she spoke of her child. Could he sacrifice himself for her sake?

But did love count anything as a sacrifice? Could he, who loved her with all his heart and with his very soul, count this as one?

"Very well!" he said. "If you demand this of me as the price of keeping your innocent wife's name free from dishonor, I give it. God knows it is little that I would not do for her sake, and——"

Sir Denis Marington looked bored.

"Please be sparing of your heriocs. Adelphi melo-drama died somewhere in the last century!"

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Six weeks ago "George Brown" was sentenced by the district magistrate to a term of eighteen months' imprisonment for breaking into Sir Denis Marington's house, with intent to steal its owner's valuables. The prisoner offered no defence.

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But when the weary time had been served in darkness and solitude, and he stepped forth once more into the glad light of day, into the freedom of recovered liberty, a woman was there at the prison gates to offer him afresh the gift she had once taken from him, a gift that meant all the treasure of the earth to him—the gift of her love.

"My husband died two months ago," she said, simply. "He was killed in the hunting-field. Before the end he told me everything. You were right, he said, he was whatever you had called him, and you were indeed a 'man!'"

AN APRIL FOOL'S PARADISE - Edith Morgan Willett in Lippincott's Magazine.

Bud Bennington was responsible for it. So, naturally, was the First of April—our ancient feast day sacred to the observance of practical jokes.

It must be explained just here that Bud was a born joker, having a sense of humor which might truly be called "saving," from the fact that he invariably practised it at other people's expense. On this particular morning, for instance, literally no pains had been spared.

The day was still young, the hour being eight a. m., but already in order to celebrate it properly old Miss Skipworth, a fellow-boarder, had been operated upon with most satisfactory results.

Miss Skipworth hated travelling and had a cat-like horror of rain. And it was a rainy morning. She had also been overheard referring to Bud as "an empty-headed young idler." Therefore an imperative telegram from her lawyer had just arrived, summoning her to New York on "urgent business." And even as the author of it sat by his cosy sitting-room fire, he could hear from the next room the sounds of excited feminine bustle, and a shrill voice issuing unintelligible directions.

From time to time other tones shimed in, too, at which Bud looked a little pensive; for that second voice belonged to Miss Skipworth's niece and his own Best Girl,—the sole reason, in fact, why he at twenty-one, with a fortune and an automobile, was wasting both at a suburban family hotel instead of disporting them at Newport or at Palm Beach.

The thought of Phylys Folsom, on this especial morning, however, was not entirely welcome, as it reminded Bennington of some ons else in the house, and he became suddenly, irritably conscious of noises coming from the verandah underneath his room.

"There's that Pomeroy now!" he mused disgustedly. "Tramping about and mooning up at her window, as usual. Oh, the unutterable fool! Just because Phylys is kind enough to notice him occasionally, when I'm not 'round, he has the brass to fall in love with her! Or rather,"—satirically,—"he hasn't the brass, with only a miserable law business to depend upon."

Mr. Bennington stretched himself luxuriously in his silk-lined dressing-gown and continued his reflection.

"I suppose the truth is, Phylys is sorry for Pomeroy. . . . Well, who wouldn't be? . . . What a life! Every day hard at work in the city—grinding away half the night over his law-books! Gee! I wonder what the poor devil would do if some one left him fortune—or a fake fortune! Jimminy Crickets! How's that for an April fool?"

Chewing his pencil excitedly, he sat, revolving a scheme that was positively diabolical in its inspiration.

And yet, Bennington was not the fiend incarnate, merely young, considerably in love, and —Pomeroy was his rival. Though the youthful Bud would not have admitted this for worlds.

"Now, the question is," he meditated rapidly, "how can one come into a nice little sum of money unexpectedly—say a few thousand, for instance. Let me see,—'Will of a defunct relative? . . The fellow hasn't any relatives. 'Stock dividends.' Never owned any stock. 'Bad debt?' . . . That's the style! Pomeroy's father was one of those unpractical chaps who are always lending money."

Pulling a piece of paper toward him, hes selected a pencil with care and began to write:

NEW YORK, April 1, 1906.

My Dear Sir:

I have just deposited to your credit at the Fifth Avenue Bank of this city the sum of $2,500, the amount, with interest at 6 per cent., of a loan made to me by your father ten years ago. I regret very much that I was unable to repay it during his life-time, but am only just in condition to discharge an obligation which has laid very heavily on my mind.

Believe me, with sincere regards,

Very truly yours,

DOUGLAS WALLACE.

"Good old name," commented Bennington complacently, as he made the signature. "Suggests ancient Scottish chiefs—and modern bankruptcy. No one could succeed nowadays with a name like that!"

Pursing his lips thoughtfully, he now proceeded to forge a check, and then, cramming the letter with its enclosure into a business envelope, turned the latter over in order to write on its back in tiny letters two meaningful words appropriate to the season.

"Perhaps he'll see them when he doesn't find the money at the bank," Bennington surmised, with a grim chuckle," and then won't he be ripping!"

He was still hard at work five minutes later when a knock at the door made him start guiltily. But it was only one of the numerous "Buttons" in the house, bearing a steaming, smoking, breakfast tray. Bennington hailed both jubilantly. "Got a job for you, Sam," he announced. "Just put the things by the fire and close the door. Let me see:—mail's in already, isn't it? and a registered letter's out of the question. Jehoshaphat! I've got the idea! Yes, and the special delivery stamp, too! Now listen, my boy."

Wheeling around, he dropped his voice to a few whispered directions. Therew as the clink of coin, followed by the gleam of African teeth, and a fervent "T'ank ye, sah. Trus, me, sah!"

Following his chocolate-colored ally to the staircase, Bennington now peeped over the banisters, noting with dismay that the hotel 'bus was already in front of the door waiting to take passengers to the nine o'clock train. What if Pomeroy got off without reading his letter!

Gazing anxiously at the dining-room door, Bennington saw it open suddenly.

"Dear, me!" cried a familiar high-pitched voice. "Here's the trap already! Phylys, dear, just get me my bag; hurry. Oh, se how it's raining! Those tiresome lawyers!"

"Those tiresome lawyers' will be a good deal surprised to see her," mused Bennington, as Miss Skipworth disappeared under an umbrella.

"Ah! there's Pomeroy!"

He glanced down at a tall young man putting on his hat in the hall, and then drew back, with an irresistible chuckle, as the form of Sam appeared solemly in the door-way holding out an envelope, with these portentous words, "Special-deliberate lettah, sah!"

Pomeroy took it! So far, so good!

There was the crisp rending of paper, followed by silence.

One minute passed. Two! Outside, the horse clamped impatiently; but Pomeroy, reading his letter with his back turned, seemed oblivious to the flight of time and trains.

At last some one looked in through the front door, a girlish figure in a white duck suit. "I hope you haven't any bad news, Mr. Pomeroy?" asked a voice that made Bennington start consciously.

Pomeroy started too. "No, indeed, Miss Phylys," he stammered; "but I—I don't think I'll go to town today. You see—"

He finished his explanation on the piazza, while the 'bus rattled off and Sam in the door-way waited respectfully.

"Dere's a boy hyar dat brought de lettah, sah," he ventured at length, with a discreet cough, "an' he wants a quarter."

It was just here that a wonderful thing happened. Bennington saw it over the banisters, and then slipping into his room, he closed the door noiselessly and subsided quite suddenly on the floor from pure emotion.

"A one-dollar tip!" he gasped. "Pomeroy giving dollar tips."

Convulsed at the sheer absurdity of the situation, he checked himself all at once, and pricked up his ears at the passage-way. Then, stealing to his key-hole, he listened intently. The expression of bewilderment on his face gradually changed to one of incredulous, startled indignation.

"Are these Cedarhurst Conservatories?" a guarded voice was asking at the telephone across the hall.

"This is 'Grey Gables'—Mr. Walter Pomeroy. Just send over three dozen of your finest American Beauty roses at once, please, C. O. D.. That's all. Good-bye." And the speaker rung off.

That pauper venturing to send Phylys flowers from a swell florist! In his horrified dismay Bennington felt strongly inclined to fling the door open and hurl at the idiot outside that not undeserved epithet, "April fool!"

But he restrained himself. After all, Pomeroy was a man—and a rival. Let him reap the full consequences of his folly. Let the joke go on.

"It's getting pretty costly, though," reflected the joker complacently, as he settled down to his neglected breakfast.

"Roses are selling at two dollars a dozen. That makes seven dollars spent in fifteen minutes. Why, Pomeroy will be dead-broke before he gets through the day. Great guns! I wonder what he's going to do next."

Bennington was not destined to be left long in doubt. He was completing a lengthy toilet an hour later, when something—a mysterious, prophetic something—made him glance out of his front window, through which the April sun was now shining effulgently. Its beams lay in golden shafts over the shaven lawn, and across it, from the direction of the hotel, could be seen strolling leisurely a man and a girl! There was no mistaking them. Pomeroy had stolen a march on Bennington, or—what was worse—a walk with Phylys.

It was an unprecedented state of affairs. In vain Bud reminded himself that a day of reckoning was coming for the Fool. His Paradise would soon be ended! Alas! The unpardonable fact remained that, for the time being, Pomeroy was in Paradise!

The rest of them orning semed interminable to Bennington. It had cleared off beautifully, after all, with a turquoise sky above, and under-foot a hard earthiness that positively cried for motoring. But Bennington's machine stood neglected in the garage, while its owner tramped moodily up and down the hotel piazza smoking frequent cigars and wondering when that couple would return. They had not come back by luncheon, which meal Bud devoured hastily, stationing himself immediately afterward in his front window, where, with an impatience whica turned gradually into positive alarm, he sat scanning the drive as the minutes rolled by.

What had happened? What could have become of them?

At three o'clock a distant whistle proclaimed the New York train, and some minutes later the hotel 'bus drew up in front of the door, depositing Miss Skipworth, not to mention her umbrella, waterproof, valise and sundry parcels.

"Such a nice day as I'vehad!" she announced cheerfully to a little group assembled on the hotel piazza. "Whom should I meet as I got out at the Grand Central Station but my old friends, the Allertons, just in town for the day! We lunched together at the Waldorf and had a delightful talk. But, what do you think? Mr. Selfridge and his partner were both out of town and the office closed! Isn't it the most extraordinary thing about that telegram?"

"She's had a lovely time, however, thanks to it," thought Bennington, rather sadly. Somehow, although his jokes were brilliantly successful, they had not turned out quite to his satisfaction.

Grimly he watched a certain pair come into sight at last along the drive, the girl swinging her hat, while the youth ambled beside her with a jauntiness that struck Bennington as positively asinine. Listening anxiously he heard them come into the house, and a moment later steps ascended the stairs and stopped at Bennington's door.

"May I come in?" inquired a masculine voice. And without waiting for permission Pomeroy entered the room—a beaming, glorified, altogether incomprehensible Pomeroy.

"Hello!" he said, grinning idiotically, "haven't seen you before today."

Here, quite unnecessarily, he strode across and shook Bennington warmly by the hand. "Well, old boy—"

The reserved, diffident Pomeroy calling any one "old boy!"

"Fork out your congratulations—every one of 'em. She accepted me. I tell you, man, Phylys has accepted me!"

What else he said in his exuberant frenzy the stricken Bennington could not quite take in. There was a good deal about Miss Folsom's angelic characteristics, Pomeroy's own incredible good fortune, and then a confidential out-pouring on the subject of an unexpected couple of thousand that had drifted in that morning—the very capital he had "wanted for so long in order to get into Green & Waldrop's real estate office."

"And, do you know, Bud," Pomeroy volunteered huskily, as he at length verged toward the door, "if it hadn't been for that blessed money coming, I don't believe I'd ever had the courage to propose. It just made everything possible."

Oddly enough, it was these last words that settled Pomeroy's fate, up to that time hanging on the balance of his listener's distracted mind.

For a moment after the door closed on his happy, unconscious victim, Bennington stood struggling fiercely with the resolution that was gaining possession of him.

Then, squaring his shoulders determinedly, "Yes," he said, between his teeth, "It's the only thing to do now—the only thing for a gentleman to do."

And, seating himself at his writing-desk, Pomeroy's involuntary benefactor, with a few strokes of the pen, converted an April Fool's Paradise into a tangible bank account.

SOLOMON, A YOUNG PUBLISHER - By Catherine Frances Cavanagh in the American Magazine.

Among the several office-boys employed by the Galaxy Magazine shone Solomon, a Jew of about sixteen years of age, with small, spider-like body and close-set, glittering eyes, in which lurked all the cunning of a fox. In spite of his youth, he possessed "the wisdom of the serpent," and, while I cannot compare his meekness with that of the dove, I must acknowledge that he knew when to be meek, to whom to be meek, and how to be meek—and that served Solomon. He was not a favorite with the others of the office force, and because he received hourly snubbings I did my best to show him that I, at least, had no "Christian" prejudices to prevent me being interested in one of his race. Before I saw the last of him, however, he reminded me forcibly of a wretched cur that a friend of mine once rescued from a muddy canal, which showed its gratitude by wiping its dirty, shaggy coat all over her white dress, causing her to regret that she had extended a helping hand.

But, for all his faults, Solomon was a bright, intelligent chap, who absorbed knowledge as a sponge does water. He had had very little schooling, as he informed me—"I was kept outer school to mind de kids. Dere's sixteen of 'em, and dat means sixteen juels in my mudder's crown in heaven."

Solomon was a diligent reader and could converse upon all the topics of the day. The yellow journals were his ideals and he believed everything they printed. He was a born anarchist and confided to me that, if he had his way, every machine in the world would be blown into atoms, "for they take the bread out of our mouths," he passionately asserted. I tried to show him that this was not true, and called upon him to think how the world has progressed, and how much better we live than our ancestors ever dreamed of doing, but he would not be convinced. He had a dogged distrust of corporations, and never lost sight of the coin—the cold, glittering coin. When I explained that it was but a medium of exchange and had no value, he eyed me with distrust, as with palms wagging upward, he said sarcastically—"Go tell dat to the Indians; dey'll tell you de glitterin' coins make a bluff, anyway."

I had been on conversational terms with Solomon but a short time when, one morning before the rest of the force had arrived in the editorial department, he asked me if I would not subscribe to his periodical; the subscription price being but twenty-five cents a year, payable in advance. It was news to me that he had a periodical, and I said so. He then pulled from his unsanitary coat pocket a little pamphlet, about the size of a pocket-dictionary, with cover of Manila paper on which was printed—

THE YOUNG MAN'S MONITOR,
Published by
SOLOMON GOLDENBERG.

The twelve inner pages were of a cheap, grayish-white paper, which, Solomon confided to me, was "tea-paper, given by a friend that works in a wholesale grocery-store, who's willin' to help me out." The press-work was done by an "amateur's press," purchased with money which Solomon earned doing odd work before and after office hours, for, like a dutiful little Jew, he turned every penny of his

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