

THE ROAD TO LAUGHTERTOWN.

Oh, show me the road to Laughtertown. For I have lost the way! I wandered out of the path one day, When my heart was broken my hair turned gray.

CINDERELLA OF THE BIG 'UN.

For the tenth time that morning the sun-baked man in the mere catboat leveled a pair of binoculars at the opulent steam-yacht that lay in the wide, sun-drenched bay, a salmon among the minnows.

To the casual observer it would have seemed perfectly natural for this gray-shirted khaki-trousered, deep-chested young seaman to be fascinated by the graceful, efficient seven-hundred-and-forty tonner, a vessel well calculated to make the mouths of all good men water when had been born with that mysterious sea feeling which once made Vikings and pioneers, and today fills dreadnaughts and cruisers and destroyers and submarines with the blue-eyed sons of Neptune.

The "Big-Un," as he called her, with complete respect, had won his admiration from the moment that she had anchored opposite the yacht club and he had several times sailed round her to examine her points and finish, in the breathless, envious manner of a mongrel terrier round a majestic St. Bernard.

He had seen her first standing aft, with her hands behind her back, watching the seagulls that played like air-children above the water. It seemed to him that she had been crying, and he resented the fact. She was so palpably a girl who should never be made to cry.

He was not with the impersonal eye of the artist that our young friend looked at the girl whom he now saw so closely for the first time. How could it be? She was the heroine of a story which had become a very vital part of his hourly thoughts.

"He was afraid—that is, it didn't occur to him—to either of us." She caught herself up and hedged, obviously unwilling and afraid to be perfectly frank. "What shall I call you, please," she added.

"I'm known as Jack to my friends," he answered, showing two lines of very good teeth. "What may I call you?"

"Miss Murray, I suppose." Jack shook his head. "Not out here," he said. "I've got my own name for you."

"Are you for hire?" He looked up quickly, hardly believing that the question was intended for him.

"The little old man, who was really only a rather small gray man in middle fifties, with kind eyes and sympathetic mouth, had caught hold of his boat. He was just going to return a laughing 'No,' when a sudden thought struck him that he and his boat might be able to do something for Cinderella."

"Why, yes," he said. "Sure." "Is your boat in good condition?" "Newly built," he said, covering up his half-finished painting with a cushion.

"Are you a good sailor?" He had to let a certain amount of smile go. He had lived many months of every year on a yacht only a very little smaller than his questioner's. "As good as most."

"I see. Well, what's your charge for taking out a young lady every morning, weather permitting, for a couple of hours?"

He had in the word "nothing" just as it was about to escape him. By jove, what a chance to take a place in his imaginary version of his favorite fairy story. What a chance to find out what really was the secret of his little Cinderella's tears and loneliness! "I leave it to you, sir," he said.

The owner of the S. S. Albatross looked about him nervously and even guiltily. The man at the helm was gazing keenly at an object a hundred miles away, but one big ear was strained to catch every word that passed. "Very good. Follow me to the yacht, and the sailings shall commence this morning."

The young artist rubbed his eyes. Had he really heard all this or dreamed it? Was it a fact that he had become the owner of a boat for hire, or was this incident another part of the story that he had weaved round the girl and the "Big-Un"? No. There

was the departing launch cutting swiftly through the smooth glistening water and there was the kindly profile of the little old man and there, silhouetted against the almost unbelievably blue sky, the self-assured yacht and Cinderella waiting eagerly—near the companion.

He sprang up, shoved his canvas in the bunk of his cabin house, put away his shaving-tackle and pajamas, the remains of a loaf and a jar of marmalade, threw the shells of several hard-boiled eggs and the two empty halves of a yellow grapefruit overboard, gave his strip of carpet a violent shaking, wrung out a mop here and there with quick, expert hands, combed his hair, shoved on a sunburned Panama, stuck his naked feet into a pair of newly-whitened tennis shoes, jumped back into the cockpit, hauled up the mainsail, cast off the hawser from the mooring, got under way and made a bee-line for the "Big-Un."

Who would have dared to say that he was going by accident, without any effort of his own, to have the delight of bringing a smile into the wistful eyes of the little girl whose loneliness had stirred his imagination and whose beauty had put him clean off his work? Let no grinning skeptic ever say again that the proper welcome to a new moon doesn't bring luck. The impossible comes to pass far more often than dramatic critics and the dry-brained people of Missouri can ever be made to believe. To him a smile into young eyes, that would be a good deed in a hard world!

Cinderella jumped into the catboat the very moment it ran alongside. It seemed to the hired man that she almost flew into it like a bird let out of a cage. The little old man, the captain and the mate watched from the yacht, and the eyes of several sailors were on her as she sat down in the cockpit and waved her hand. On all those different faces there was the same human look of gladness. It was all very peculiar.

And then, leaning over, the little old man gave out a warning. "Mind, not longer than two hours, Angela dear!" "All right, papa . . . two hours. How glorious to be free for two hours!" She added these strange words in a low voice in which there was a little quiver and with the long intake of breath of an escaped prisoner.

Clear of the Albatross, the artist gave his sail a good full and beat to windward, on the starboard tack, the tiller under his left arm. There was a fair breeze from the north and a hot sun, a sky as clear and blue as a healthy eye, and away across the rippling bay a gap through which the sea sparkled and glistened in a merry mood. What a day for youth and joy!

It was not with the impersonal eye of the artist that our young friend looked at the girl whom he now saw so closely for the first time. How could it be? She was the heroine of a story which had become a very vital part of his hourly thoughts. He was a young and golden thing who had set his sympathy afloat, worried and disturbed and interested him, and moved him to a growing desire to help and serve, and as he looked at her enthroned in his cockpit he metaphorically flung the good word up to the sky.

And by the way, she was a girl looking at, with her coral-colored hair, wide wistful eyes, little pointed nose, full red lips and round sweet chin. Why paint seascapes ever again, he thought, when there was such a face to reproduce? And as to loving—good Lord, it was the only thing to do in life!

"Do you like sailing?" he asked. "Yes, thank you," she said. "Why didn't you get the little old man to take you to the yacht?" "I mean your father to fetch me before?"

"He was afraid—that is, it didn't occur to him—to either of us." She caught herself up and hedged, obviously unwilling and afraid to be perfectly frank. "What shall I call you, please," she added.

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"I see. Well, what's your charge for taking out a young lady every morning, weather permitting, for a couple of hours?"

He had in the word "nothing" just as it was about to escape him. By jove, what a chance to take a place in his imaginary version of his favorite fairy story. What a chance to find out what really was the secret of his little Cinderella's tears and loneliness! "I leave it to you, sir," he said.

The owner of the S. S. Albatross looked about him nervously and even guiltily. The man at the helm was gazing keenly at an object a hundred miles away, but one big ear was strained to catch every word that passed. "Very good. Follow me to the yacht, and the sailings shall commence this morning."

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were tied up and began to see how I was getting on through glasses." "Um," said Jack. "One thing's as plain as a pikestaff. You're a better artist than I shall ever be, Cinderella. You know things where I can only guess them."

"It was quite easy," she said, with something like a sob. Jack bent forward and touched her arm. "Is there any little thing you want to tell me?"

"Not today—not yet. It may be unlucky, and I've had so much bad luck that I'm afraid."

"All right. There's plenty of time and we're both young and life's long, thank God. And now collar hold of the tiller, Cinderella, and I'll make a seaman of you."

And so it went on. Morning after morning the hired man ran his catboat alongside the "Big-Un" and took the little bird out of her large cage for two delightful stolen hours, watched always by the little old man, the captain, the mate and many of the crew—and all of them trusted Jack implicitly, they didn't know why—and were as glad as he was to see Cinderella smile. But they never guessed that there was a third person seated in the cockpit—a blind passenger with a chubby face, a bow, and a quiver full of very sharp arrows. Only one of them all knew all this, and that was Jack, because one of those arrows had gone clear through his heart and filled the world with joy.

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"Gee! I shall have to say something in a second," thought Jack. The little old man who really did look old and little at that moment, came forward. "My dear," he hurried to say, "don't you think it would be better and kinder—"

The large lady returned the last word full, as though it were a tennis ball. "Kinder?" "Yes, kinder," cried Jack, stepping forward and facing her up squarely. "I've got to say something although I'm only an old boatman. I don't flirt with the ladies I take out for a sail and I don't need long sight to see that this one could have you up for cruelty to animals, and if you don't altar your ways right now I'll have the Humane Inspector pay you a visit and your name shall go down to history among infamous stepmothers. Do you get me?"

The words tumbled out of his mouth and he stood with bare head and square shoulders and hands tight clenched and a cloud of indignation all about him like smoke. Every man in hearing—nearly sixty—swore to stand him as many drinks as he could swallow. ("A regular feller," thought the skipper.) Then, in the amazed pause that followed, he looked round quickly, caught ever so many eyes, including the blazing ones of the large lady, who now seemed to be perfectly huge, became hideously self-conscious, turned on his heel, got somehow or other into the famous catboat, shoved off, hauled up his sail, and the hired man, caught the wind and long-legged it out toward the sea. And as he went he swore.

Of course he had settled the hash for Cinderella. He knew that—driving idiot that he was. He should have stayed in his boat, sneaked away and held his peace. Under those circumstances there might have been a thousand-to-one chance that the little old man would have disobeyed orders again. As it was, the odds were a million to one. The large lady's voice could be even louder than he had heard it—he could see it in her eyes. Probably one or the other of the ugly sisters would be told off to spy on Cinderella and her smile would fade and die. "My word," he cried aloud, to the intense astonishment of a passing gull, "save the world from stepmothers. Who said Siberia?"

Gee, but he was angry and sick. Suppose—just suppose—that his tactless outburst had the effect of presently making Cinderella turn her wistful eyes toward Marshall as the Prince who could take her out of the kitchen and the beetles—he meant the "Big-Un" and its crew.

It was almost dark when he returned, hungry and full of schemes, to his mooring. He had no food on board. That meant putting on decent clothes and going into the town. He was just about to dive into the cockpit-house to change when he caught sight of the yacht's dinghy coming in. He went in, flung open a cupboard, caught up a piece of note paper and a pencil and wrote this: "Hang a towel out of your porthole at eight o'clock tonight and stand by for me. Jack." He addressed an envelope to Miss Angela Murray and went into the cockpit-house to sprang on the quay and waited for the dinghy; and as it came alongside sat down and put his feet into it.

"Will you do something for me?" he asked. The boy grinned, a gold tooth glistening in the uncertain light. "Sure. Name it, broder."

"Take this note to Miss Angela and see that she gets it when nobody's looking. I'll post that mail for you."

"Fine," said the lad. "She shall have it, bet your life. Say, you're some boy!"

"So are you," said Jack, pushing the note into the dinghy. "So-long, old man."

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minutes to eight, undressed, got into his bathing suit, dived overboard and swam strongly toward the "Big-Un," which lay like a fairy ship, with the reflections of her many lights dancing round her.

Making as little splash as possible he breast-stroked to the starboard side of the yacht. He had seen the large lady and the two ugly sisters and the little old man sitting forward under the canopy. A victrola was playing the music of "Katinka."

From one of the portholes a towel gleamed in the moonlight. He swam to it. "Cinderella!" "Cinderella!" he called softly.

And Cinderella's beautiful face was instantly framed. "Oh, Jack, there may be sharks!" she cried.

He knew that she would say that. What a little mother she was, the darling! "Cinderella, you won't see me till the end of the week."

"Oh, why?" "I'm up to something. Trust me, go on smiling whatever happens and wait. I love you."

"And I love you, Jack." "Then throw me one of your shoes. Never mind why. Throw it."

In a moment a little white shoe floated on the water and Jack pounced on it, and tucked it through an armhole into his bathing-shirt with a chuckle. "Catch," he said, and kissed his hand, and she caught it and pressed it to her lips.

"Till the end of the week, Cinderella. I love you. Trust me."

"I shall love and trust you, Jack, if the end of the week never comes."

"God bless you, Cinderella." "God bless you, Jack."

There was a splash and he was gone. Lots of things happened before the end of the week. The catboat was deserted. No old Panama and gray shirt could be seen on her by Cinderella through her glasses. The John B. Brownings arrived at their house with John B. Junior, and motor-cars from all sides filled the wide drive, and among others one from the hotel in which sat the large lady, the little old man and the two ugly sisters.

John B. Junior was not, however, at the tea-party. Then Saturday came and with it George Marshall from New York, who, with all his baggage, was taken aboard the "Big-Un." Cinderella met him fearlessly, because Jack loved her and was up to something. Her smile led the large lady to say that "at last this queer child has seen sense." But it made the little old man more nervous than ever. Angela, the wife of that man! It was unthinkable.

At half-past four on Saturday afternoon, just as the tea was being served on the deck of the "Big-Un" and George Marshall, in a very new suit of brown, and white shoes, was talking soft-stuff to Angela, his stiff collar digging into his baggy chin, the sail of the catboat was hauled up, Angela saw this happen and, with her heart in her mouth, she jumped up and ran to the rail. It was the end of the week and she trusted Jack. There were three people in the cockpit of the boat which had given her those happy stolen hours—three strangers. A charming lady, a fine-looking strong-faced man and—who was the young man in the blue flannel clothes, the spic-and-span straw hat and the blue-and-white tie? Jack—it was Jack!

Running alongside, and secured by the gold teeth and the friendly and astonished grin, the little party came aboard. The large lady hurried forward. "My dear Mrs. Browning," she said, "this is indeed a pleasure, and Mr. Browning, too. Welcome to the Albatross." Butter melted in her mouth.

Introductions followed. George Marshall on his best behavior, Angela with her face like a flower. And then Mrs. Browning, with her hand on Jack's arm, and a rather curious smile on her face—she and her boy had no secrets—said: "Mrs. Browning, I want you to meet my son."

It was Angela who laughed. She had to. She couldn't help herself. The sight of the large lady and the ugly sisters as they turned to see the hired boatman—their amazement and chagrin, the awkward pause, the thrill of drama—was enough to make a sphinx turn up the corners of a pessimistic mouth.

With consummate coolness, although his heart was beating hard, Jack came to the rescue. "How do you do, Mrs. Murray? This is a great pleasure. How do you do, sir? We've met before, haven't we?" He bowed to the ugly sisters and to George Marshall and to Angela and then with a quick smile at his mother he added: "By the way, we've got something which I believe belongs to someone on the yacht," and out of his pocket he brought a little white shoe. "Is it yours, Miss Cora? No, it's just a bit too small, I see. Yours, Miss Enid? No, on the small side too. Then it must belong to Cinderella, I suppose."

And he went down on one knee in front of Angela, who, seeing now why he had asked for it, slipped her foot forward. It fitted like a glove.

"Cinderella!" The familiar word was echoed inwardly in the brains of the large lady and the two ugly sisters. The little old man looked almost big and young. George Marshall's lips shaped themselves into an oath. The story of the old nursery fairy-tale came back to them all. This sun-tanned young man, the hired boatman, the catch of the season, was playing the part of the Prince. Words failed! It was a great moment for the blind passenger who used to sit in the catboat.

And then, as the party sat round the tea-table, trying to be bright, Jack went aboard the hired boat with Angela. "Will you excuse us?" he called up. "We don't want tea." George Marshall's face was not good to look at.

And presently as the sail filled, Jack spoke: "Take the tiller," he said. "George Marshall will be down this week, will he? Right. Mother, I know what to do. Cinderella shall have the fairy tale I weaved about her played out to the end. Who shall be the Prince? Well, that's easy."

He didn't dine at the big hotel, after all. He bought bread and pickles and ham in cool slices and several bottles of beer, loaded his pockets and returned to the quay. All these he arranged on the small table in his cabin-house and then, at exactly seven

off to look for other young people. Busy fellow that, eh?—By Cosme Mamilton, in Hearst's.

Health and Happiness

"Mens sana in corpore sano"

An ache in the back, and a pain in the head. That's the gripe! A choke in the throat and a yearning for bed—

That's the gripe! A river of heat, then a shiver of cold, a feeling of being three hundred years old.

A williness even to do as you're told— That's the gripe! —Somerville.

Number 31. CATCHING COLD.

One catches a cold, says Dr. J. H. Kellogg, in Good Health (Battle Creek), because for some reason the skin lacks resistance. Apply a cold-water compress to a person's head for several hours, and he will begin to complain that his forehead is sore and painful; he will have neuralgic pains in his forehead; the skin and the flesh become sore. This pain is called "rheumatism," for lack of a better term. It is simply a painful, sensitive condition due to the lowering of the blood-temperature which permits waste matters to accumulate in the tissues, causing the nerves to become abnormally sensitive. He goes on:

"Thus in a general way we may say that the cause for taking an ordinary cold is lowering of temperature of the blood, either locally or generally. If a person has been perspiring from exercise and sits down and lets the wind blow on him he soon begins to feel chilly. While he was exercising, his muscles were generating heat.

"For a muscle generates heat, just as a dynamo generates electricity. By its action, heat is generated, just as by the revolution of the armature of the dynamo electricity is generated—and, in fact, in a very similar way; not in the way a stove generates heat, but in the way in which a dynamo generates electricity.

"If a person expires when exercising, it is because he generates more heat than is needed to keep the body warm, so it is necessary that the body should be cooled, and perspiration is simply the effort of the body to cool itself off. Bathing the skin with water and allowing the water to evaporate also have the effect of cooling the skin.

"Now, when the perspiring individual ceases to exercise and sits down, the effect is that of putting out a fire or blowing out a light. The extra generation of heat ceases, so the evaporation goes on without any extra heat being produced, because the skin is wet and the clothing contains moisture and the evaporation causes a chilling of the body.

"It takes but a few minutes to produce this result; then in order to warm the body up, the muscles are set into spasmodic contraction. There are shivering and sneezing, which are signs of a kind of general spasm.

"When one sneezes, he does not sneeze with his nose, but through it. It is the entire body that is exercising. Every muscle contracts. The feet are lifted up from the floor. There is a jump of the whole body. It would be quite impossible to hold anything steady in your hand when you sneeze; but the motion is particularly of the expiratory muscles.

"There is a sudden contraction of these muscles, with an explosive effort of nature to warm the body up.

"When you sneeze, you say, 'Oh! I am taking cold.' That is a mistake. You have taken cold. Your temperature has been lowered, and you are ready have the cold and the muscular spasm is the effort of nature to cure it.

"Now if you want to help Nature, the best way is to keep right on exercising. You feel a little shiver started here and there, and you feel chilly. Now set your muscles to work as hard as you can. That is the quickest way to stop the shivering.

"Certainly one can prevent himself from taking cold. One sits in church and a draft blows on the back of his neck. He says: 'I am going to get a cold. I shall have a stiff neck tomorrow.'

"You do not need to have a cold. Just make the muscles contract as hard as possible; keep them working so they will keep the skin warm, and you will not take the cold.

"And the best of it is that one does not have to take gymnastic exercises or walk in order to exercise. One can sit perfectly still and work so hard as to make himself perspire freely—by making every muscle of the body tense. The hands can be kept straight at the sides, with the muscles perfectly rigid. Make every muscle of the body rigid and you will see pretty soon that you are breathing hard. Pretty soon you are taking deep breaths.

"You may see that it is hard to do that, but nevertheless one can sit quietly in church or other gathering and look the speaker in the face, and at the same moment work as hard as though he were running to catch a train, or one may sit at his desk and dictate important letters or papers and at the same time be doing hard physical work.

"Thus one does not need to take cold because he is sitting still, for one does not need to be idle and relaxed just because one is sitting still."

Everybody Cured.

"What became of Flubbud?" "Oh, he quit. His business ran out years ago."

"What was his business?" "He used to peddle a cure for bashfulness."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Always Well Behaved.

Farmer Bilkins—The 'ere pig I bought from 'ere last week 'as bin an' died!"

Farmer Giles—Wull! wull! thet's funny. 'E niver cut any of them capers when I 'ad 'un.—Cassell's Saturday Journal.