

THE OPTIMIST.

I love the play
Of every day
And all the life force that we see;

THE PROFESSOR'S LOVE STORY.

Young Professor Loebler sat in his office overlooking the campus. The girls, he noticed, were on their way to his classroom where, in exactly three minutes by the chapel clock, he was to deliver one of his popular lectures on psychology.

Now, one might reasonably have thought that young Professor Loebler would be pleased to see these tributary streams pouring toward him. For even he, with all his modesty, must have known that he had the favorite course in Riverview College for Women that year.

But instead of showing any measure of pride, the young professor groaned partly to himself and partly to the bust of Minerva on his desk. And having laid this immemorial tribute upon the dark altar of remorse, he buried his face in his hands and groaned again, "I wonder if she'll be here this afternoon."

And then, which is also a very ancient lamentation, and probably as old as the human race, "Oh, what a fool I've been!"

In this, however, a sharp divergence of opinion could be established. For no young man who had attained his M. A. and was now on his way to his Ph. D. could well be described as a devotee of folly. Nor is this all. In the lower left-hand drawer of his desk was the half-finished manuscript of "Conductivity," a new exposition of the human mind in which psychology and behaviorism were artfully blended—not exactly the work, surely, in which you would expect to find a fool engaged.

"Perhaps," continued young Professor Loebler, looking through his fingers at Minerva again—"perhaps she won't come after she reads my letter. I wonder if that letter was too cruel, too brusque. But anyway, she'll soon get over it," he hastily assured himself; and drawing a line from one of his own lectures: "Dissociation of ideas is soon followed by forgetfulness."

He was interrupted by a rap on his door; and half fearfully he called, "Come in!" To his relief, however, it was Miss Koch, instructress of French—and you may understand Miss Koch better if you know that even the young ladies of Riverview couldn't guess her age, although more than one of them had indignantly exclaimed, "What? Those two? Don't you believe it! Why, she's old enough to be his mother!"

dom been in better form. Young, dark, earnest, with a deep voice which could boom at times, he didn't teach psychology that afternoon so much as he preached it. As a corrective of fear, of anger, of bad habits, of inferiority, he proclaimed it. As a guide to courage, to straight thinking, to happiness—aye, even to the regeneration of the human race.

"Who knows?" he exclaimed. "We have compulsory inoculation of children to prevent smallpox. The time may come when we shall have compulsory inoculation of the mind to prevent wrong thinking. How? I am not yet sure. Perhaps by some form of hypnotic suggestion.

"Munsterberg," he continued, "has experimented along these lines. So have Barden, Understreet, Sault, and all that glorious company. But I need not go so far afield. I need not journey to Heidelberg or to the Sorbonne. Professor Abrams, under whom I studied at Eli, less than fifty miles away, cured a number of his class of poor memories by hypnotic suggestion. And once I treated a roommate of mine in the same way for insomnia."

During the first part of his lecture, he kept his glance divided between his notes and an imaginary fly on the window across the room, afraid that he would otherwise catch sight of a wistful, accusing little face which might take his mind off everything else. But presently, forgetting himself, his eyes began to sweep the studios, scribbling, spell-bound ruses before him.

And suddenly he saw her, seated at a desk near the door. But there was nothing pathetic, nothing accusing about her. She was listening rapidly—it could even be said she was listening proudly—and when he caught her eye she smiled a little and made a hurried note in her book.

"Now what do you think of that?" Professor Loebler asked himself. "She's taking it well; much better, in fact, than I had thought she would."

Indeed, at a quarter to six, he was seated at the desk in his office still thinking how well—how extraordinarily well—she was taking it, when a quiet knock sounded on his door.

"Come," he cried. The door gently opened and closed again, and Miss Helen McGuinness, Riverview '32, was in his room.

"Anything that Helen McMonnies shouldn't know?" "I apologized for my conduct last night," he shortly informed her, "and asked you to forget that I had ever told you that—that I loved you. That's all!"

"But I can't forget," she quietly told him. "I've admired you, of course, ever since I came to college nearly three years ago, but this last term—you know as well as I do that—that I care for you."

"The whole thing's impossible!" said he, trying to put a hard note into his voice. "But why? If you cared for me last night, why don't you now?"

"The fact remains that I don't," "But why?" she asked again. "You mean—you mean you only love a girl when you're dancing with her?"

"Nothing of the kind!" he sharply protested. "Then why don't you love me now the same as you did last night? Oh, last night you were wonderful!" she continued in a voice which could easily be described as registering subdued rapture.

"You said that one kiss from my lips was worth more than all the textbooks that were ever written, and—"

"That is all explained in my letter," said the poor man. "But there must be some reason that you can give me now."

"Reason. Yes. The very word!" he almost wildly told her, with a gesture toward the bust of Minerva. "Reason had been shaken from its throne—shaken by the moon—but at last it returned, and I knew 'I'd been a fool!'"

He arose and walked up and down the room, his eyes darker, his face paler than before, and yet, with it all, as striking and handsome a figure as you would have found in all this land that day. The girl watched him as girls have watched men they have loved since time immemorial, and if his conscientiousness only made him the more desirable in her eyes, she would say that she was wrong in this? She drew a deep breath, partly of pride and partly of anxiety, and returned to the business in hand.

ways think that the sooner they are learned the better. I was passing by and saw the light in your window. You will not forget our engagement for dinner this evening at the Bay Tree?"

"No, no; I shan't forget," said the professor again. "Suppose I call for you at seven o'clock. That won't be too late?"

"Seven o'clock. I call it the perfect hour. Till then, au revoir, mon ami!" And in a clearer, slightly ringing voice, "Good-by, Miss McGuinness. I hope you soon feel better."

"Wednesday night," thought Helen, as the door closed. "And they have dancing at the Green Bay Tree on Wednesday night!" A small reflection, you may think, but the straw on the camel's back, you may remember, was no large matter, either.

"There!" exclaimed young Professor Loebler, inexpressibly relieved to find that at last his office was quiet again. "Would you like me to take you to your dormitory now, Miss McGuinness?"

Helen turned; and whether it was because of his air of relief (which did indeed have something comic in it) or whether it was because of vagrant recollection of Miss Koch's earrings (which had been fashioned like parrots perched on hoops), all at once she started laughing, and the more she tried to stop herself, the more she found herself looking at Professor Loebler's started expression and thinking of Miss Koch's earrings, and then she laughed louder than ever.

"Please, Helen!" exclaimed the professor in new alarm. "You'll be hysterical in a minute if you're not careful!"

The word "hysterical" in his ears was like a finger on a button, opening shutters and setting intricate machinery into operation. For hysteria, you must remember, is a branch of psychology; and psychology was the corner stone of young Loebler's career.

In the treatment of this mysterious malady, first the cause must be determined and then firmness used. Well, he could guess at the cause—and now for the firmness—

him with a fixed unseeing focus. expression was blank, and just a bit bewildered. "I've done it! I've done it!" exclaimed the young professor; and although he glanced for a moment toward his notebook, he was afraid to break the spell by turning away.

"You hear me?" he asked in a gentle voice, following the technique of Professor Abrams. "Yes," she said, in a whisper so low that it was almost inaudible. "And you see me?"

"Yes." He drew a full breath as he approached the test which would tell him surely whether or not she was ready for the next step.

"Give me your hand," he quietly commanded. "Now, remember. What I am going to do next won't hurt you. It will not hurt you. I repeat: it will not hurt you."

And taking her little finger he gradually bent it far, far back, meanwhile watching intently for any change in her expression. But if there was any change at all, she seemed to be smiling vaguely at him. Certainly she showed not the least indication of pain.

"I've done it! I've done it!" exclaimed the young professor again; but hiding his triumph as well as he could, he continued aloud, "There. That didn't hurt you, did it?"

"No," she faintly murmured. Whereupon he arose; and so did little Miss McGuinness. "Remember now," he told her. "You will do exactly as I say."

"Last night," he continued, "while we were looking at the moon—" "At the moon," she repeated in a flat voice. "I didn't tell you that I loved you."

"That I loved you," she repeated again; and before he could stop her, she had swayed and fallen limply into his arms.

snapping his fingers and giving his curt commands. Yes, no matter what he did, she continued her ceaseless circuit of the room, announcing from time to time in that curiously dead voice of hers, "I am Wilson the Walker, and I am walking."

It may have been the phone upon his desk which gave Professor Loebler his next idea. Keeping one eye upon his peripatetic subject, he put through a call to old Eli, for Professor Abrams.

"Oh, hello; hello!" he was eagerly calling through the transmitter a minute later. "Is this Professor Abrams? Oh! You say this is Professor Abrams' assistant? Well, this is Professor Loebler of Riverview College for Women. I am in a predicament here, sir! I have hypnotized one of my students—a young lady—and I cannot get her out of it. I say I cannot get her out of it!"

He swallowed hard and continued: "Will you please get in touch with Professor Abrams at the earliest possible moment and ask him to come to Riverview immediately? Tell him to get here as quickly as possible. Tell him, please, that he will find me either in my office, or possibly walking around the campus—er—with the subject. I say with the subject, sir; the subject of my unfortunate experiment!"

He hurried into his hat and coat then, for he knew that the janitor would be working on the door knob at any minute. And taking little Miss McGuinness by the arm, he started down the corridor and straightway came face to face with Charlie at the top of the stairs, a can of metal polish in one of his hands, a strip of outing flannel in the other.

"Oh, good evening, Charles," said young Professor Loebler. "Good evening, sir," said Charlie, his glance, however, full on Helen.

"I'm Wilson the Walker," she told him in her listless monotone, "and I'm walking from Portland—" "Yes, yes; come on," quickly interrupted the professor; and although he pretended not to notice it, he knew that Charlie was watching them down the stairs, watching with eyes which almost stuck from his head like those of a crab.

Around the campus, then, they started together—Professor Loebler and she who said she was Wilson the Walker. Past Ranford, Winslip, Banning, and Howe. Down Benham Avenue and around by Mohegan; in past the gym again. Then past Ranford, Winslip, Banning, and Howe.

"Fifty miles to Eli," thought the Professor once. "And I telephoned Abrams at half past six. If he gets my message before seven o'clock, he ought to be here by nine. I think we can manage to keep walking till then."