

A HERO.

We saw the colors on parade. A most imposing sight he made. His swelling chest, his bearing proud, His voice percussive and loud, With awe inspired the gazing crowd.

TWO KISSES

By MARGARET VAN METRE

MAMMA, look, there's Tom Patterson," said Marion Haddon. "Why, so it is," answered her mother.

"He must have come out from the city for a summer vacation. Well!" And she settled down in her chair with the ever present mending at her side, while she looked with slightly questioning glance at her daughter.

"Well," echoed Marion to herself. But she said nothing, and soon wandered into the yard, took in hand, to the hammock which swung idly out under the trees.

Marion Haddon and Tom Patterson had been playmates ever since, as one old neighbor used to express it, Marion was knee high to a grasshopper. They had played together, gone to school together, and through it all had been friends.

Then Tom had gone away to college, and after a year or two at an eastern university, had gone to New York city where he had been ever since employed in the office of a noted architect; for Tom was an expert draughtsman and as such had secured a fine position. Always a bright youth, he had settled down to his chosen business with a spirit of energy that showed plainly that he was serious in the choice of a profession; and with a persistence that had surprised even his closest friends, he had continued at the same work, in the same office, until now four years had passed since he had taken a vacation of any sort and since he had revisited the scenes of his boyhood trials and pleasures.

During these years, Tom had paid little attention to the girls. In his early days the people of Martinsburg thought he was rather in love with Marion Haddon; but he had stayed away so long, and Marion had been so happy and lively in the company of various other of the village youths, that it was decided by the wise ones of the town that there wasn't anything in it after all. But when it was rumored on this beautiful July day that Tom Patterson was in town, there were not a few who, like Marion's mother, thought questioningly of her and wondered.

Marion herself wondered, too. "Tom in town! I wonder how he looks. And how will he think I look? I wonder if he—" The pause was suggestive of some deep question, but Marion did not finish, even to herself, the thought that was in her mind. She sat for some time thinking. She thought of all the good times she and Tom used to have together. How she hated to have him go away! And he said he was sorry, too. Did he mean it? She wondered again. Her earliest memory of him recurred to her mind, such a provoking recollection that was, and always so vivid a one. Try as she would, she could never quite forget it.

She was a very little girl then, and unusually bashful at that. A crowd of little people were playing in Tom's yard one hot afternoon in summer. The game was "King William." Most of those in the game were older than Marion and evidently thought it would be fun to play a little trick on her. Tom was in the center. Around him the others circled, singing as they went: "King William was King James' son, Upon a royal race he ran; He wore a star upon his vest; That points the way to the governor's breast."

Round and round the little company circled, still singing, all alive to the fun of the occasion except Marion; she alone, shy and uneasy. "Go to the east, go to the west, Go choose the one that you love best; If she's not here to take your part, Go choose another with all your heart."

As these words were sung, Tom, as if by a hint from one of the older girls, pointed to Marion, who slowly, shrinking, took her place in the center at his side. Persistently the song went on to its inevitable end: "Down on this carpet you must kneel As sure as the grass grows in the field, So kiss your bride, and kiss her sweet, And now you may rise upon your feet."

When the last words were sung by the gleeful little crowd, Marion was seized by Tom and kissed—kissed there before them all! This was more than she could stand, and with tears of wounded pride filling her eyes, making her stumble as she went, she hurried home. That was an insignificant incident and evidently quite forgotten by all concerned, but in the mind of Marion it remained and rankled.

So Tom was home. Did she care? She wondered if she did, and was just going to admit that she believed she did

—a little,—when the gate opened and up the long path, straight to where she swung in the big hammock under the trees, walked the very one of whom she was thinking, Tom Patterson. And in that moment she admitted to herself that she cared—a great deal.

She rose and smiling a welcome, came to meet him. "Why, Tom, how you've grown. You hardly look the same to me."

"But I am the same to you, Marion, if you would only believe it."

Tom's glance said more than his words. Marion blushed and seated herself in the hammock, while Tom flung himself with careless grace on the grass at her feet.

"Why should I believe it, Tom? You've been saying pleasant nothings to me ever since I was a little girl. Why should I believe you now any more than in those other days?" And Marion began to swing lightly and fro, looking at Tom with a half-mocking smile, but thinking at the same time what a fine fellow he was and how glad she felt that he had come back, if it was but for a visit.

But Tom was speaking, and when she recovered her thought she discovered with a thrill, that he was answering her mocking question with serious deliberation. "The reason, Marion, why you should believe me now, is that this time I mean it. No, that's hardly what I mean. I've always meant it, but I never dared say anything very serious now that I have shown that I can earn enough to make a home, I have come to ask the only girl in the world if she will share it with me."

"Why, Marion, I've loved you ever since that day—of course you don't remember—a day when you were a little girl and I a year or two older. We were playing King William and I was 'it.' There was a far away look in his eyes, so Marion had a chance to steal a glance at him before he turned again toward her.

It was your first game, and someone suggested you as a good one to choose. I didn't need to be told that, however, for I had you all picked out; I had chosen you the minute I got in the game. Of course they didn't know, so when I caught you and had that first kiss—he paused significantly—"they thought it a great joke."

"I felt dreadfully sorry when you felt so bad, and cried; and I wouldn't play any more that day. But I said to myself then, and have said it many times since, that some time I was going to have another; though of course I wouldn't want it if it should affect you as that first one did." He looked for some sign from her, but Marion did not stir. All this time she had sat with face turned away, her eyes shining and her cheeks rosy.

At last Tom began to grow fearful of the prolonged silence and broke it with: "Now I have dared. I have come. Don't send me away, for I have always wanted you."

"Send you away? I wouldn't dare." Marion turned toward him a face all smiles, but eyes dimmed with tears. "I wouldn't dare because, well—because I've always loved you, too, Tom, at least since that day we played 'King William' and you gave me my first kiss."

And then Tom had his second, and another, and another. But that's beyond our pale; we were to stop at the second. —National Magazine.

A JAP'S ODD DESCRIPTION.

Tells How a Cat Escaped the Jaws of a Ferocious Brindle Dog.

"It happen one day when you gone off for whole week. I work in kitchen at window. I see one white silk puss cat come creopy, creopy in the yard. I no see his collar, his neck so fluff, but I hear one little bell go tinkle, tinkle, tinkle. Pret soon a missy come round the corner all creopy, creopy, too, with chopbone in her hand, and she call so soft: 'Come, puss-cat, puss-cat, puss-cat.' But puss-cat he no care for dead chop when he can catch grasshoppers."

"Then quick before I think, whoop! scat! the dogs go scooty 'cross the grass, and puss-cat he all stick out and spit, and then he shin up tree like fury. And Bringle-Boy, he rush at missy all mad, and grab her skirts and stockings, and pull-tug, and growl and bite like he eat her all up."

"The beast!" exclaimed Barry. "What did you do?"

The little Japanese man drew himself up with pride till he almost reached his master's shoulder, says Eleanor A. Hallock, in Lippincott's, "I grab big broom and rush out to save."

"What did she do?" Barry persisted, kicking angrily at the chair. "Did she scream bloody murder?"

The little man's pompous bravery seemed to suddenly wither away. "What she do? She just put back her head and laugh all teeth and cry out: 'Isn't he just too sweet for anything?' and silly like that, and as I lift up broom to club that dog's head, she threw him lamb chop quick, and he stop bitey her feet, and she sit down on grass and cry, cry, all whitey. And Bringle-Boy, when he fling that chop he come lick her hand so nicey, and missy she kind of tuck up her cry and run home. But white silk puss-cat he no come down out of that tree for two days, and bull-dogs they go round so sad and cough up white fluff for all time."

"Did they eat her cat?" Barry inquired, as a matter of natural politeness. He hated cats.

The Japanese man resumed his fatuous smile. "They try hard," he acknowledged. "They bitey deep and often, but they do not hurt white silk puss-cat, he live far inside."

Easily Discouraged. "Do you consider marriage a luxury or a necessity?" asked the sociologist. "Neither," answered the man who had just secured his second divorce. "It's a crime."—Chicago Record-Herald.

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