



Bertram Wingate closed his desk with a weary sigh as the bell in the courthouse tower struck five. The plans for the Bettler hospital were not going very well. There are times when even a "rising young architect" ceases to feel the stimulus of his upward movement. Wingate paused a moment before the window to look out upon the swirling snow which was fast converting Nicollet avenue into a white desert.

"Wonder if I can have a carriage to go to Minnie Norton's tea?" he thought. "I've had to buy my dinner at the club three nights this week. Every one recovering from Christmas, I suppose, and too tired to entertain. Club dues on New Year's with the usual tips and presents. No, the Eighth avenue will have to do me."

He hurried to the hotel, and after a brief toilet boarded a car for Park avenue. The rooms were crowded when

trying a poor man. I should always wonder how much I weighed in the balance of selection. There's two much of my father in me to want to give something for nothing. Now with Charlie—

"So it is Charlie Leffingwell, after all?" said Miss Redmond.

"Well, yes, if you must know," laughed Margaret. "It's all arranged, but Charlie is putting through a wheat deal for papa just now and it wouldn't do to have our engagement announced yet. I shall give a large reception soon and tell everybody. You will have to come and help me. Let the home and the ladies' Thursday go for once."

"I shall, of course, receive with you, Margaret," replied her aunt. "But about Bertram Wingate, I do not think you are acting right. He seems to care sincerely."

"Oh, not really, I think," said Margaret, lightly. "He just thinks it looks



"MOTHER, HERE'S BERTRAM WINGATE."

he arrived at the Norton home. The heavy odor of roses, the suspicion of charcoal from the samovar, and, above all, the animated chatter from the guests made his head ache, so he was very grateful when Bessie Shaw motioned him into a deep window seat upon pretense of consulting him about favors for the next cotillion. They were hardly seated when some one beckoned Bessie away and she left him with voluble promises to return in a moment.

Wingate leaned back against the cushions and drew the heavy draperies as a screen between himself and the glittering kaleidoscope of the room. Presently there was a rustle of skirts and two ladies seated themselves on a divan beyond the curtain. Wingate had no desire to play eavesdropper, but his position seemed too desirable to leave, so with half-closed eyes he settled himself to await Bessie's return. The first words of his unseen neighbors roused him to instant interest, however, for it was Margaret Little who spoke.

"Now Aunt Midge, what is it this time?" she asked, with a defiant note in her voice.

"Only one question, Margaret," was Miss Redmond's calm reply. "Why have you asked Bertram Wingate to the New Year's dinner?"

"Charity, pure and simple. I assure you, Aunt Midge," laughed Margaret. "He doesn't seem to belong anywhere in particular. New Year's is such a stupid day now that no one receives and he has been very nice to me, you know."

"He has been more than nice," said Miss Redmond gravely. "He has seemed thoroughly devoted for several months. The New Year's dinner has been a family festival with us for many years because it celebrates your father's birthday, as well as the general holiday, and an invitation to that dinner might seem—"

"Nothing of the sort, auntie," interrupted Margaret. "Perhaps it was thoughtless of me to ask him to that dinner, but I am sure Bertram Wingate knows better than to dream he can draw plans for spending papa's money. Why, I wouldn't think of mar-

well to be a good deal at our house. You know he believes that things like that help him in his profession. He lives at the West for the sound of it. Has a little bit of a room at the very top, the boys say. And they say his office boy takes his breakfast to the office from Russell's. He calls it his second breakfast and says he acquired the habit when studying in France—but the boys think—"

"Margaret!" exclaimed Miss Redmond, sharply.

"I didn't mean to gossip, really, Aunt Midge," said Margaret hastily. "I don't care what he does, although it seems foolish for a bright man to try to keep up with things he can't afford. Men wouldn't think any the less of him for sticking to his work now, and when he has succeeded he can put on all the frills he likes. There, I must be going now. You have made me feel quite uncomfortable about that invitation to the New Year's dinner, though truly it was only out of charity. I half expected Mr. Wingate would be here to accept in person, he so dotes on going to teas in business hours, but perhaps the fates will be kind and he'll refuse. Good-by, I must run on. Don't forget your promise about the reception."

As Miss Redmond and Margaret Little moved away Bessie Shaw returned, and it was some time before Wingate could excuse himself from the discussion of cotillion favors and escape into the cold twilight.

Although he had quite convinced himself that he cared for Margaret, rather than John Little's heiress, Wingate found his indignation at her misapprehension of his motives quite swallowed up in the misery of realization that he was being laughed at for the very pretensions which he had flattered himself were assuring his success. He turned away from the handsome house on Park avenue and walked briskly toward the outskirts of the city. There was some satisfaction in crunching the snow under his feet and in feeling the sting of the spitting sleet which cut his cheeks, where the red of angry humiliation burned through the tan so carefully acquired on the Minnesota links. For six years he had struggled for a position

in society. He had dropped old friends and cultivated men in whom he felt no real interest; he had been errand boy for the matrons and cavalier for the bubs; he had joined more clubs than he could afford and had pinched in many ways to make up for the expenditures. He had told countless stories of his life at Harvard, but never spoke of his family in Dakota. He had often referred to incidents of his trip abroad, without hinting that he had been tutor to a rich youth; he had told dreamy tales of a winter in Mexico, carefully concealing the fact that he had been assistant to an invalid architect. He had talked wittily of plays and operas, gathering his ideas from the daily papers rather than from observation. Indeed, he had done everything in his power to seem a man of the world and a favorite in society.

And now—when he had thought his position assured—when he had dreamed of spending John Little's millions with perfect taste and passing his days in an atmosphere of wealth and leisure with the grace of one "to the manner born," he found that he did not "seem to belong anywhere," and was to be given a New Year's dinner out of charity, while little Charlie Leffingwell, who never managed to get beyond his freshman year at Yale, whose only accomplishment was driving an automobile and whose one aim in life was to increase his already large fortune, was to share the Little millions, and "the boys" would no doubt laugh behind his back because he, Bertram Wingate, had angled for them in vain.

The whole shallow mockery, which lay bare to others, for the first time seemed thoroughly contemptible to him. Angry tears smarted in his eyes and his hands were clenched in his pockets with a fierce determination to win an enviable position without the help of society; to live a life too busy for the tolerant patronage of women or the amused contempt of men.

He had walked for nearly an hour before he became conscious that his feet were numb with cold and his face no longer felt the sting of the sleet. Pausing irresolutely to get his bearings before seeking the nearest car line, he stood for a moment in a shaft of light from the window of a pretty cottage.

A young girl, turning briskly to enter the house, exclaimed: "So you have really come to see us at last. This is the place. Come right in. Your mother said she would write and tell you we were here, but we thought she had forgotten. Mabel is teaching, I'm going to the conservatory, Bob's in business college and father's got a good job buying wheat for the Consolidated. Why haven't you been to see us before?"

Wingate murmured something about being very busy, as he meekly followed the girl into the house.

"I suppose you're always busy," commented the girl kindly. "Out this way on some building I guess? I hope you haven't been to dinner."

"Mother, here's Bertram Wingate. He was out this way and has looked us up," she said, ushering Wingate into the cheery sitting room.

He was thankful for the easily assumed explanations and glad to follow the girl into the cosy room. Mrs. Whitcomb greeted him heartily and the whole family gathered about him, pressing him to stay and asking news of his people. There was an air of pleasant affection and a deference for his accomplishments which was soothing to his wounded vanity.

When he took his departure, Mrs. Whitcomb said, kindly, "Can't you spend New Year's with us, Bertram?"

"It would be real charity on your part if I may," said Wingate, flushing warmly at the thought of the other charity dinner he had expected to eat.

"It's nice of you to speak that way, Bertram," said Mrs. Whitcomb, stroking his sleeve, but you know the pleasure will be ours in having a friend from the old Dakota home to share the day with us."

The New Year's dinner was by no means the last which Bertram Wingate ate in the little cottage.

In the spring Molly, the irresponsible, wrote to her Dakota confidante, "Mabel and Bertram Wingate are going together a good deal. He isn't a bit stuck up as some of the Dakota people used to say he was. Father says he has drawn the plans for nearly all the big buildings to be put up this summer. If he's going to be my brother-in-law, I hope he'll plan a cute little house for Mabel. I think mother knows all about it, but she won't tell!"—Washington Home Magazine.

A NEW YEAR RESOLUTION.



Mr. Boozer resolves to celebrate the New Year indoors this time.

Bon-Bon Boxes of Vegetables.

Big turnips, sweet potatoes, beets and small squash answer this purpose capably. Cut off the tops, leaving a slanting edge for a fair-sized paper of candy wrapped in oiled paper. Place this in the hollow vegetable and fit the lid on the top by using wooden toothpicks as tacks. No one would suspect that your bonbonniere is not just a common vegetable.



ITCHWATER was once famous. Now it is an almost unknown spring, in a rarely visited mountain gulch. For many centuries Indians have regarded the place with superstitious awe, and had named it Medicine Water.

Medicine in Indian does not mean medicinal, but anything mysterious which influences life, health or mind.

The water of this spring was "just ordinary drink-water," as "Limpy" Jackson, the scout, said. Its medicine lay in the manner of its flow.

The trail led over the brink of a short, rocky gulch, perhaps 50 feet deep. One clambered down the slope, went a few rods up the gulch, and there, about four feet above the bottom, was a small shelf of rock, not larger than the top of a hoghead, in a niche of the wall. Water flowed over this shelf out from a crevice, and dripped from its edge to the little basin below.

At irregular intervals the water spurted in a jet as large as a man's finger clear beyond the self, a yard or more. If one were stooping to drink at the basin, or stood carelessly too near, he might be drenched. This jet lasted only a minute, and then died away.

The spurt was accompanied by a long sigh, like a heavy breath of relief, which proceeded from the bosom of the rock, and one might feel a puff of air issue from the crevice. Clearly, thought the Indians, there was a spirit imprisoned in the rock, and this place was "Medicine." An early white hunter

If so, the creature was now gone; besides, he cared little for such beasts. Walking silently down the gulch a little way, he suddenly encountered a deer, probably going to the spring to drink. His rifle sprang to his shoulder, but it took some seconds to catch an aim in that light. As his finger pressed the trigger, he saw, out of the corner of one eye, the head and pricked ears of a lion rise over the edge of the gulch above him.

With the flash and crack of his rifle the deer leaped and fell, and the stretched body of a lioness appeared falling through the air upon Ben. He was driven violently back into the snow, and lay dazed.

Presently he caught his breath and his sight cleared. The lioness stood with one paw on his thigh. Instead of seizing his throat, she screamed an exulting signal to her mate, and watched Letters, who was bounding frantically about her, menacing assaults upon her flanks.

The dog soon ran in valiantly and nipped her tail. She turned head, snarling. This gave Ben a chance. He slyly drew his revolver. At the click of its hammer the lioness started, but too late. He shot her through the head and was trying to rise when the lion leaped from above at the dog, only to receive a ball in his chest as he alighted.

In scrambling out of the way, and firing again, Ben became conscious of a frightful pain in his right leg. He could not get upon his feet, so he crawled to the lioness and sat upon her to examine his hurts. The small bone was broken between knee and ankle. His clothing was torn, and there were long, raw scratches upon his left shoulder and arm. He sat a few moments, thinking.

"Here's a fix," he said to himself. "I shan't be able to walk in a fortnight—maybe a month—and the mail due through day after to-morrow. No help nearer than two days' journey. What ought a fellow to do? First, get to fix this leg myself. Next, get up that deer for provision. Lucky there's lots of wood ready. Guess I can stick it out here till I can travel, if they don't miss the mail and send a scout to look for it. Here you, Letters, quit worrying the lion's ear!"



"GO, LETTERS! GO TO SCOTT'S!"

translated the Indian name correctly into Witchwater.

One day investigation came along with a miner's drill and maul, and would know what made the water act so. The maul broke down the self; the drill penetrated the crevice. A gush of air and water, and it was reduced to a commonplace spring. After that the great trail no longer bent that way, and the place, once thronged with devotees, became waste.

When a few thin settlements began beyond the mountains, Richard Garry took the contract for carrying the mail over the Witchwater route once a month. This route was 93 miles without a habitation. He followed the old trail past Witchwater, the new road being not yet made, and it was generally called "the Witchwater mail."

An accident had lamed Garry, so that his nephew, Ben, a young hunter not half-way through his teens, took out the December mail, starting at day-break with the post-bag, provisions, snowshoes, ax and fur sleeping bag bound on a sledge, making a load of about 100 pounds. His rifle was at his back, revolver on one hip, knife on the other, sledge line of buckskin over his breast, and dog at his heels.

"Ben," said the old postmaster, "this is an extra mail. All the settlers on the other side get their Christmases in this mail. Be careful, lad, and put her through on time. You can do it in four days!"

"Uncle Sam can be sure she'll get there all right if the mountains don't fall on us—can't he, Letters?"

Letters was Garry's small shepherd dog, who barked as if in acquiescence.

"Good-by, then. Snow isn't deep yet. Guess you'll have a fair trip. Luck to you! Good-by, Letters!"

Letters ran up and gravely put up a paw for his customary good-by shake. The ceremony having been duly performed, the postmaster watched them stride over the snow until they disappeared behind a clump of bush.

It was still early to camp when Ben arrived at Witchwater, the second day out. This was the usual camp, and had a little brush hut with plenty of wood piled up, close to the spring. He had only 43 miles farther to go, and two days in which to do it. He was tired. So he lighted a fire, ate supper, made his bed, and slept, with Letters at his feet.

In the night Letters growled and pawed at his master's breast. All the evening a pair of mountain lions had been screaming not far away; but such sounds were too familiar to alarm either Ben or the dog.

Wondering that the dog had roused him, Ben took his rifle and went out. His camp-fire, nearly burned to ashes and close to the gulch wall, was visible a few yards' distance. There was but a faint moonlight down in the gulch, but the rough snowy edges showed distinctly against the sky.

Seeing nothing alarming, Ben supposed that one of the lions had ventured to the gulch cliff directly over the camp, so that the dog smelled him.

would go over the trail until the snow settled.

Three days later came a storm of sleet, followed by freezing weather, which put a strong crust on the snow.

Seeing Letters frolic over this crust gave Ben an idea.

"If I could send a message for help by the dog! Why not? He's used to being sent on errands." So he heated the tongue of a buckle, and burned on a chip these words:

"Xmas mail stopped at Witchwater—broken leg. Send help. Garry."

Paper might get wet. This chip could neither tear nor fade. He tied it to Letters' neck. Then he tried patiently all day to start Letters. But Letters could not understand, although he evidently tried hard. He was wanted to go somewhere; so he went down the gulch, up the gulch, out on the trail, forward and back a mile or so, and returned.

Finally, near night, Ben ostentatiously tied up the chip in a rag, put the package in Letters' mouth, and ordered: "Go, Letters! Go to Scott's! Take it to Scott's! Go!"

Scott was the name of the postmaster where the mail was due. Letters knew him. He looked grieved, it was such a long way off. He seemed to think for a moment; then he laid down the rag and put out his paw for a good-by shake.

Ben shook, then said: "Good-by! Now go, sir! Go to Scott's!" Letters picked up the rag, whined mournfully, and trotted away over the edge of the gulch.

One hour—two—three—the dog did not return. He was gone. Would he keep on the whole 43 miles? Would he get through in spite of the dangers by the way?

When two more days and nights had passed with no rescue, Ben feared that Letters was dead, and resolved to start himself the next morning.

"Bone's knit all right," he thought, after dressing his leg. "Daren't try any weight on it yet, but I reckon I can travel on one foot. Guess I can draw the mail sledge, a few rods at a time, quite a piece in all day. This mail has got to go on somehow."

Thus resolved, he slept soundly. In the night he was awakened by a pounce upon his body. He started up, grasping his revolver.

"Why, Letters?"

The dog barked, pounced, rolled over, stood up on his hind legs, shook hands and manifested delight in every dogish way. But Ben noticed that he did it lamely and with nice care. Making his fire blaze, he saw that Letters was badly scratched with sore scars, besides being very tired.

No doubt the dog had been in a fight with some wild beast a day or two ago. But the chip was gone—evidently Letters had lost it.

Ben fed the dog liberally, and the two lay down together. They would start in the morning, and Letters would help him.

Just after daylight Letters leaped up, barking, and ran out of sight along the trail. Ben heard him barking a long way off. Soon a clear "Hello!" sounded above his bark, and presently Letters reappeared at the brow of the gulch, proudly leading three stalwart settlers.

"Hello, down there!" one cried. "All alive and chipper, eh? That's good! We feared—How's this? We expected to find Dick Garry! Well, well! And you're getting on fine. Boy, you've done a big thing; mighty few men could have managed so well."

Ben shook hands all round. Then came a reaction. He buried his face in his hands and sobbed for several minutes.

"Don't, now!" "Sho!" "Your hard times are all over now, youngster!" "Take it easy!" With such assurances the men soothed him until he became calm.

One of them, busy getting breakfast, broke out: "Well, if the youngster hadn't kept camp nearer a well man! Meat hung up, everything clean and handy, no litter. And he's most too lame to stir!"

"Sho! So he has. But see this here leg, Bill. If there's a doctor can do up a broken limb in a handier job than this I don't know him! Ben, you're a buster!"

While eating, they told Ben how Letters appeared at Scott's, torn and bloody. They inferred he had met and fought off a wildcat. The chip which he carried was read, and three men started as soon as they could get ready. Letters' wounds were dressed; he was fed and given a bed by the fire; but he soon started after the men, and kept with them until they were about a dozen miles from Witchwater, when he dashed ahead alone.

After breakfast one of the men set off with the mail. The other two rigged a litter of two poles, with skins lashed across them, on which Ben lay comfortably, while the men shouldered the poles and carried him.

The mail reached Scott's on the morning of the day before Christmas. What a Christmas eve the settlers made for him!

There was not another stocking in all that region so stuffed as his on Christmas morning, and there were, besides, parcels that it could not hold. He was given a seat of honor at the Christmas dinner at Scott's, and when the toast was given, "The Witchwater Mail," to which Ben was expected to speak, all he could say, being greatly abashed at the cheering, was:

"Ladies and gentlemen. The mail—well—er—the mail—she's bound to get through, if the mountains don't fall on us! Eh, Letters?"

Letters was seated in a chair where he could catch morsels thrown to him. At this appeal he barked right enthusiastically, plainly replying, "Right you are, Master Ben!"—Youth's Companion.