

The ORIOLE

By Booth Tarkington

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PART III—Continued.

"Go on," Aunt Harriet urged. "What did Noble do?"

"Why, his mother said he just went up to his room and changed his shoes and tie—"

"I thought so," Aunt Fanny whispered, hurriedly, but solemnly. "Crazy."

"And then," Mr. Atwater continued, "he left the house, and she supposed he'd gone down to the office; but she was uneasy, and telephoned his father. Noble hadn't come. He didn't come, all afternoon, and he didn't go back to the house; and they telephoned around to every place he could go, that they know of—and they couldn't find him or hear anything about him," Mr. Atwater coughed, and paused.

"But what," Aunt Harriet cried, "what do they think's become of him?"

"Old man Dill said they were all pretty anxious," said Mr. Atwater. "They're afraid Noble has—disappeared."

Aunt Fanny screamed.

Then, in perfect accord, they all turned to look at Herbert, who rose and would have retired upstairs had he been able.

As that perturbing evening wore on, word gradually reached the most outlying members of the Atwater family connection that Noble Dill was missing. Ordinarily, this bit of news would have caused them no severe anxiety. Noble's person and intellect were so commonplace—"insignificant" was the term usually preferred in his own circle—that he was considered to be as nearly negligible as it is charitable to consider a fellow being. True, there was one thing that set him apart; he was found worthy of a suppelative when he fell in love with Julia Atwater. Of all the large and ardent group in like condition, he obtained conspicuousness as "The Worst." Of course, this distinction caused him to become better known and more talked about than in his earlier youth.

However, the eccentricities of a person in such an extremity of love are seldom valued except as comedy; and even then with no warmth of heart for the comedian, but rather with an incredulous disdain; so it is safe to say that under other circumstances Noble might have been missing, indeed, and few of the Atwaters would have missed him. But as matters were, they worried a great deal about him, fearing that a rash act on his part might reflect notoriety on themselves through their beautiful relative—and through the North End Daily Oriole. And when nine o'clock came and Mrs. Dill reported to Herbert's father, over the telephone, that nothing had yet been heard from her son, the pressure of those who were blaming the Oriole more than Julia became so wearing that Herbert decided he would rather spend the remaining days of his life running away from Wallie Torbin than put in any more of such a dog's evening as he was putting in—thus he defined it.

He made a confession; that is to say, it was a proclamation. He proclaimed his innocence. He began the history of it with a description of events distinctly subsequent to the little game with Patty Fairchild, and explained how he and Henry had felt that their parents would not always be with them, and as their parents wished them to be polite, they had resolved to be polite to Florence. Proceeding, he related in detail her journalistic exploit.

Of the matter in hand he told the perfect and absolute truth—and was immediately refuted, confuted and demonstrated to be a false witness by Aunt Fanny, Aunt Carrie, and Cousin Virginia, who had all heard him vehemently declare, no longer ago than the preceding Sunday, that he and his partner had taken secure measures to prevent Florence from ever again setting foot within the newspaper building. In addition, he was quite showered with definitions; and these, though so variant, all sought to phrase but the one subject; his conduct in seeking to drag Florence through the mire, when she was absent and could not defend herself. Poor Florence would answer later in the evening, he was told, severely; and though her cause was thus championed against the slander it is true that some of them felt stirrings of curiosity in regard to Florence. In fact, there was getting to be something like a cloud upon her reputation. There were several important things for her to explain; among them, her taking it upon herself to see that Noble received a copy of the Oriole, and also her sudden departure from home and rather odd protraction of absence therefrom. It was not thought she was in good company. Uncle Joseph had telephoned from a suburb that they were dining at a farmhouse and would thence descend to the general region of the movies.

That word of any sort had come from Uncle Joseph was in a measure reassuring, but the air of perturbation and gloom was not noticeably removed. The general impression might be summed up in the words of his sister

"Nobody knows what that man'll do, when he decides to!" Aunt Carrie said nervously. "Letting the poor child stay up so late! She ought to be in bed this minute, even if it is Saturday night. Or else she ought to be here to listen to her own bad little cousin trying to put his terrible responsibility on her shoulders."

One item of her description of himself the badgered Herbert could not bear in silence, although he had just declared that since the truth was so ill-respected among his persecutors he would open his mouth no more until the next day. He passed over "bad," but furiously stated his height in feet, inches and fractions of inches.

Aunt Fanny shook her head in mourning. "That may be, Herbert," she said gently, "but you must try to realize it can't bring poor young Mr. Dill back to his family."

Again Herbert just looked at her. He had no indifference more profound than that upon which her strained conception of the relation between cause and effect seemed to touch; and, from his point of view, to be missing should be the lightest of calamities. It is true that he was concerned with the restoration of Noble Dill to the rest of the Dills so far as such an event might affect his own incomparable misfortunes—but not otherwise.

He regarded Noble and Noble's disappearance merely as unfair damage to himself. He continued to look at this sorrowing great-aunt of his, and his thoughts made his strange gaze appear to her so hardened that she shook her head and looked away.

"Poor young Mr. Dill!" she said, "if someone could only have been with him, and kept talking to him until he got used to the idea a little!"

Cousin Virginia nodded comprehendingly. "Yes, it might have tided him over," she said. "He wasn't handsome, nor impressive, of course, nor anything like that, but he always spoke so nicely to people on the street. I'm sure he never harmed even a kitten, poor soul!"

"I'm sure he never did," Herbert's mother agreed, gently. "Not even a kitten. I do wonder where he is now."

But Aunt Fanny uttered a little cry of protest. "I'm afraid we may hear," she said, "any moment!"

And the most tragic news of Noble Dill these sympathetic women could have heard would have surprised them



And Under That Light Sat Noble Dill.

little; they had unanimously settled their expectation in so romantically pessimistic a groove. But if the truth of his whereabouts could have been made known to them, as they sat thus together at what was developing virtually into his wake, with Herbert as a compulsory participant, they would have turned the session into a riot of amazement. Noble was in the very last place (they would have said, when calmer) where anybody in the world could have madly dreamed of looking for him! They would have been right about it. No one could have expected to find Noble tonight inside the old, four-square brick house of Mr. H. I. Atwater, Senior, chief of the Atwaters and father of the disturbing Julia. This was an old man of rigidly limited sympathies; and his opinion of Noble Dill had become almost notorious; here was no bosom of refuge for a lorn Noble needing solace, nor was his house for any moment hospitable with Julia out of it. Moreover, Mr. H. I. Atwater, Senior, was not at present in the house; he had closed and locked it yesterday, giving the servants a week's vacation and telling them not to return till he sent for them; and had then gone out of town to look over a hominy mill he thought of buying. And yet, as the wake went on, there was a light in the house, and under that light sat Noble Dill.

Returning home, after Florence had

placed the shattering news within his hand, Noble had changed his shoes and his tie. He was but a mechanism; he had no motive. The shoes he put on were no better than those he took off; the fresh tie was no lovelier than the one he had worn; nor had it even the luddity to be a purple one, as evidence of grief. No; his action was, if so viewed, "crazy," as Aunt Fanny had called it. Agitation first took this form; that was all. Love and change of dress are closely allied; and in happier times when Noble came home from work and would see Julia in the evening, he usually changed his clothes. No doubt there is some faint tracery here, too indistinct to repay contemplation.

When he left the house he walked rapidly down-town, and toward the end of this one-mile journey he ran; but as he was then approaching the railway station, no one thought him eccentric. He was, however; for when he entered the station he went to a bench and sat looking upward for more than ten minutes; then rose and went to a ticket-window and asked for a time-table.

"What road?" the clerk inquired.

"All points south," said Noble.

He placed the time-table, still folded, in his pocket, rested an elbow on the brass apron of the window, and would have given himself up to reflections, though urged to move away. Several people wishing to buy tickets had formed a line behind him and they perceived that Noble had nothing more to say to the clerk. The latter encouraged their protests, and even went so far as to exclaim, "For heaven's sake! Can't you let these folks buy their tickets?" And since Noble still did not move: "My gosh, haven't you got no feet?"

"Feet? Oh, yes," said Noble gently. "I'm going away." And went back to his seat.

After a while he sought to study his time-table. Ordinarily, his mind was one of those able to decipher and comprehend railway time-tables; he had few gifts, but this was one of them. It failed him, now; and he wandered back to the ticket-window, and, after urgent coaxing, eventually took his place at the end instead of at the head of the line that waited there. In his turn he came again to the window, and departed from it after a conversation with the clerk which left the latter in unconscious accord with Aunt Fanny Atwater's commiserating adjective, though the clerk's own pity was expressed in argot. "The poor nut!" he explained to his next client. "Wants to buy a ticket on a train that don't pull out till ten thirty-five tonight; and me fillin' it all out, stampin' it all and everything, what for! Turned out all his pockets and couldn't come nearer eight dollars short of the price! Where you want to go?"

Noble went back to his bench and sat there for a long time, though there was no time long or short for him. He was not yet consciously suffering greatly; nor was he thinking at all. True, he had a dim, persistent impulse to action—or else why should he be at the station?—but for the clearest expression of his condition it is necessary to borrow a culinary symbol; he was jelling. The state of shock was slowly dispersing while a perception of anguish as slowly increased. He was beginning to swallow nothing at intervals, and the intervals were growing shorter.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

INVENTOR OF VANE UNKNOWN

But Devices for Showing the Direction of the Wind Have Been in Use for Centuries.

The origin of the weather vane is unknown. One of the most ancient of which there is any record is that mentioned by Vitruvius, and the ruins of the Tower of the Winds, of which he speaks, still stands in Athens. This building was erected about a century before the Christian era. He writes: "Those who have paid most attention to the winds make them eight in number, and particularly Andronicus Cyrrhestes, who built at Athens an octagonal tower of marble and cut on each face the figure of the several winds, each looking to the quarter from which that wind blows."

"On the tower he placed a marble column, on which was a Triton of bronze holding a rod in his right hand. And he contrived it that the figure moved round with the wind so that it constantly stood opposite it, and the rod, which was above the figure, showed in what direction the wind blew."

Effigies of many creatures have found duty as vanes. Man himself has not escaped. The female form divine even has not been spared this indignity. Such a sentiment as is expressed in the sentence, "Woman sickle as the wind," may have been in the mind of Theodosius the Great when he erected at Constantinople, in the fourth century, the vane called the "Lady of the Winds."

Don't think that target practice will enable you to shoot folly as it flies.

HOUSEFROCKS AND APRONS; BLOUSES IN GAY COLORS

THE Christmas carolling of the shops becomes a spring song, almost overnight. In the interval between Christmas and New Year's, windows are filled with summery clothes and fabrics, and the housewife makes her annual excursion in the pursuit of stuffs for house frocks and aprons, children's clothes and household "linens," which are cotton of course. She cannot take winter seriously, with thoughts trailing off to spring; it is summer in the house.

House frocks and aprons are distractingly pretty this season, having long since turned from utility unalloyed to take on charms of their own. They are most cheerful in color, to say the least, and at the same time they are refined in style. Above all they have attributes that are distinctly novel.

These new style-features include the combination of two different materials in one blouse, an emphasis placed on the peasant cuff (a more or less narrow wrist band) the ingenious employment of decorative slashes, especially in sleeves. Many-colored embroideries, of various kinds, put a resource in the hands of designers that is inexhaustible.

For fancy blouses the materials used



Simple and Attractive Housefrock.

Their durability goes without saying, and both manufacturers of goods and designers undertake to contribute attractions to these matter-of-fact belongings. With combinations of plain and checked ginghams, or by touching up with organdie the heavier cottons, they have turned out crisp, smart, simple frocks that everyone wants because they are pretty. One of the simplest and most attractive models is pictured here, made of checked gingham, easy to slip into and as neat as wax. The narrow leather belt, supported by slides at the sides, is a new and very worthwhile style note in it.

Japanese crepe in bright colors, with applique trimmings made of cotton cloth in contrasting colors, makes gay and practical house frocks and aprons. These applique trimmings, of conventional flowers and fruits, are used on

are crepe de chine, crepe chenette, crepe satin and georgette. These are all lovely mediums for the high colors that are gracefully gay, and therefore destined to be popular. These colors are pretty in cotton goods also and so successful that they serve for blouses patterned after those of silk, made in about the same styles and enchanting colors.

All this news of spring blouses is welcome just now to those women who forestall their summer needs, at this season while they are spending much time indoors. Blouses are among the things that the home dressmaker is most successful with.

One of the two blouses shown here sounds familiar style notes, presenting the over-the-shirt treatment and the kimono sleeve, but it adopts a new neckline and is gathered up along the



Spring Blouses in Gay Colors.

black sateen for aprons that slip over warmer dresses, and they are in present demand. Unbleached cotton with applique of plain materials or cretonne make their cheerful contribution to the stock of utility aprons. For less responsible service dotted swiss aprons trimmed with grey cretonnes in borders and pockets are a pleasure to their wearers and everyone else.

Many of the new models in dresses and aprons have elastic waist bands that keep them neatly adjusted and make them comfortable. Thrice welcome are the newly ar-

LAND OF WEALTH

Potentialities of Western Canada Abundantly Proved.

Prizes Taken at International Live Stock Exposition Show What Land Is Capable of Producing.

Forty years ago the first sale was made of lands acquired by the Canadian Pacific railway. This is but a short span in the lives of many, and there are those who look back upon that period as it being but of yesterday. Yet when one glances back it is to marvel at the accomplishments of that period. One of the most striking of these is the progress that has been made in Western Canada since that day, forty years ago, when an official of the railway placed his signature to the document that gave possession to the new owner of a section of land. This was the first sign of the wealth that in time would be added to the wealth of the world in forty years, this single section of land being the base upon which the future would be built. The potential wealth was but in embryo; today it is a big, living reality. Among the many things that reveal this, may be seen the winnings made by Western Canada exhibitors at the International Live Stock show held in Chicago in 1921. These were so marked in their number as to give to the world—the American world—a splendid idea of the excellence of the products of the farms of the new but rapidly developing country lying to the north of the international boundary line.

The results of the exhibition show, according to the Manitoba Free Press, that in live stock and grain exhibits the three prairie provinces of Canada made something like 150 winnings. Every animal sent from the province of Alberta won a prize. Exhibits included Shorthorn and Hereford cattle and Percheron and Clydesdale horses. An Alberta-bred heifer got fourth place in a class of eighteen outstanding individuals. In grain, Alberta made simply an astounding record, securing the sweepstakes for oats, and eight or nine prizes before even the American exhibitors secured a placing, and while the grand championship for wheat went to Montana, the prairie provinces took 23 out of 25 possible placings. The first prize for alfalfa seed was awarded for seed grown at Brooks, Alberta, in competition with 43 entries. Alfalfa-growing in Western Canada has been increasing by leaps and bounds, and this victory will give it and the dairy industry, which is always linked with it, a further impetus.

In live stock classes alone Saskatchewan had sixty entries and took sixty-four ribbons.

The winning of the grand championship for Clydesdale stallions by a Saskatchewan horse, for the second time in succession, was almost exceptional. He was bred on a Western Canada farm, fitted and prepared for exhibition there, and able to win over horses shown from the studs of men who have unlimited money to spend on the breeding and preparation of their exhibits. This is proof positive that the farmers of Western Canada are not only in a position to breed their own horse power, and that of a very high quality, but to breed horses that will be saleable in any market of the world.

Manitoba takes just pride in the fact that a Percheron stallion, first in his class and Canadian-bred champion, was bred by Vance, of Crandall, Manitoba. Manitoba took 64 places outside of the grain exhibits.

When all is said and done, the real triumphs are the wins of both live stock and grains actually produced in the great Canadian provinces.

Commenting upon the enterprise of agriculturists of Western Canada in sending exhibits to the International Live Stock Exposition at Chicago, the New York Herald in a recent issue said: "Western Canada is encouraging diversified farming in a way certain to bring an increased flow of dollars into the pockets of agriculturists, who at one time devoted their energies exclusively to the raising of grain crops."—Advertisement.

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