

# A MAN'S WAY

By RUBY M. AYRES  
Author of "The Fortune Hunter," "A Bachelor Husband," etc.  
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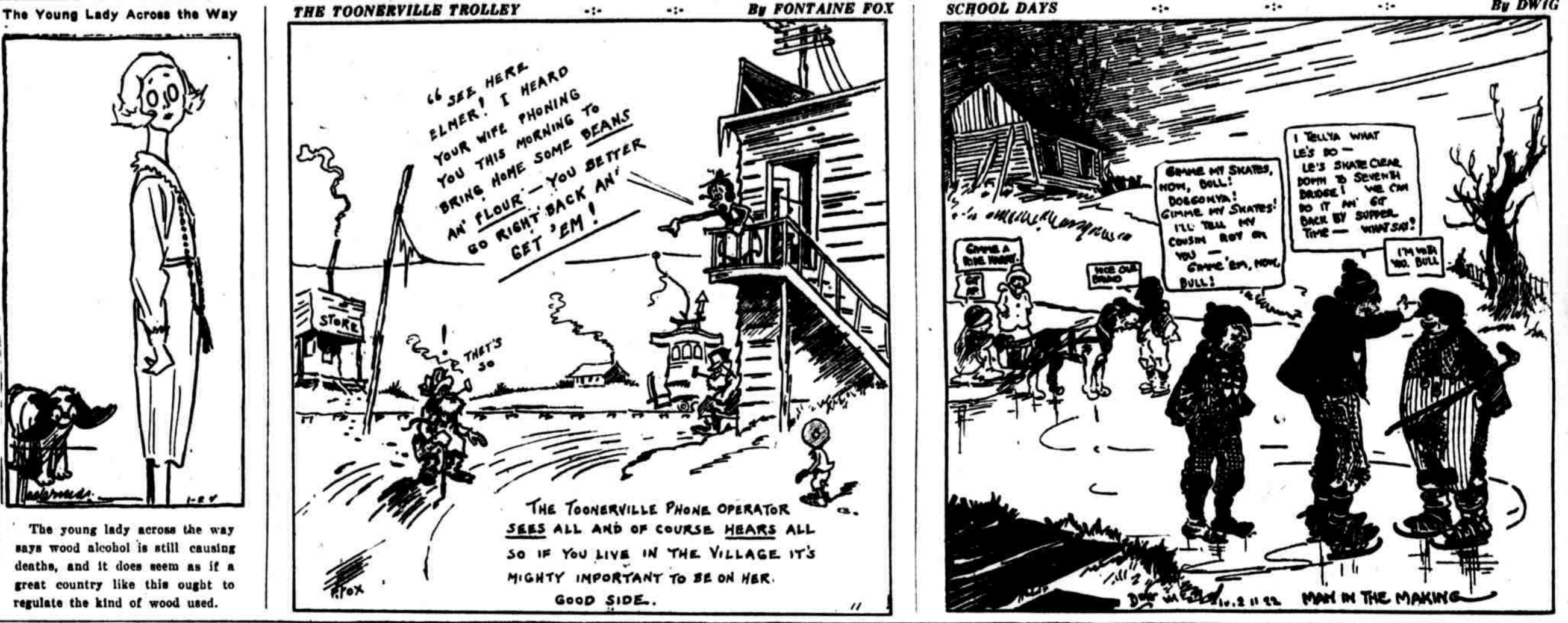
**THIS BEING THE STORY**  
Harden is a successful business man who has just returned from a long absence. He is a bachelor and has a very large fortune. He has a young daughter, Molly, who is very beautiful and is being courted by a young man named John. Molly is very fond of John and has been waiting for him to propose. However, John is a bit of a playboy and has been seen with other women. Molly is very jealous and is determined to marry John. She has been looking for a way to do this and has finally found one. She has decided to marry John and to have a very large wedding. She has been looking for a way to do this and has finally found one. She has decided to marry John and to have a very large wedding. She has been looking for a way to do this and has finally found one. She has decided to marry John and to have a very large wedding.

**AND HERE IT CONTINUES**  
"I'll look after the boys," as told her. "You're such a dear," Molly answered. He looked away guiltily. "I was telling Mrs. Fernald this morning how wonderful the mood you had been to us all," Molly went on simply. "It all seems like a dream to me—I'm still afraid that some day I shall wake up and find it's never been real—any of it."  
"You won't do that," he said. "She moved closer to him; they were sitting together in the garden of the White House—a garden tidied now out of all recognition, with a lawn smoothly shaved and paths innocent of weeds. "Mr. Fernald said that I was a 'lucky girl,'" she told him. "She said that she wished she was half as happy as I am."  
Harden made no answer. "Her husband has been so ill again, you know," Molly went on sympathetically. "She was up with him all last night and she looked quite worn out this morning." "What do you say?"  
"Nothing—I didn't speak."  
Molly leaned her chin in her hand. "Wouldn't it be awful if he died?" she said in a hushed tone. "Whatever would she do?"  
Harden rose to his feet. "He won't die," he said roughly. "You know what they say about creaking hinges. . . . he'll live for years and years and then die of something else altogether." He took off his hat and ran his fingers through his hair. "So it's settled about our wedding day," he said with a change of tone. "You think the twentieth will suit you quite well, do you, Molly?"  
Molly nodded with her eyes shone. "I can't believe it's true," she said. "That I shall really be called Mrs. Harden and have to manage your house."  
"Do you know," she said simply, terrified of all your servants?"  
He smiled. "You'll get used to them, and Mrs. Barnes will help you with the house-keeping; there won't be much for you to do except amuse yourself."  
"Oh, I shall be able to amuse myself all right," what did Mr. Wharton say when you told him? When I told him—what?"  
"About—us—you know."  
"Oh—I forgot—as a matter of fact I don't think I told him at all—but he knows—everybody knows by this time."  
"Yes, I suppose they do." She walked beside him to the gate. "How many more days to the twentieth?" she asked suddenly.  
"Nine, I think—and, Molly, if you want any more clothes, perhaps you had better run up to London for a few days. Mrs. Ashford will take you, I am sure, if your mother doesn't feel equal to the journey."  
Molly made a grimace. "Mother never goes out. I should like to go with Mrs. Ashford."  
"And so it was arranged, and Molly went off in a motor car, and after an afternoon with Mrs. Ashford for three days shopping.  
Harden saw them off at the station. "Take care of her," he said to Mrs. Ashford. "She's such an excitable young lady." He looked at Molly. "And don't lose your purse or get run over," he admonished her teasingly.  
"As if I should! Oh, are we really going?" Her eyes were dropped; she stood up, leaning out of the window. "Good-by," she said.  
It was impossible not to kiss her. Harden touched her soft cheek with his outstretched hand and a moment later she was out of sight.  
He walked out of the station with a feeling of relief. He was free for three days at least.

**CHAPTER XIX**  
**Molly Goes to London**  
Molly had the time of her life in London. She had never stayed at a hotel before and had had money to spend. Now she had so much that she did not know what to do with it. "It's a dream, of course it is," she said fifty times a day to Mrs. Ashford. "I know it's too good to last. I'm a sort of second Cinderella, and I shall wake up one day in rags."  
Mrs. Ashford laughed. "I think it's very real," she said kindly. "And I hope it will last all your life."  
Molly wrote long epistles to John Harden. She was a little doubtful how to begin them; she was not sure what manner of address he would prefer. Finally she left it till the end and added it with a rush:  
"Dearest and Best . . ."  
She thought that was a lovely way to begin; she had copied it from a book she had read. After all he was her dearest and best—the most wonderful man in the world. She told him how many frocks she had bought—how that they were all either black or white, and that she hoped he would like them; she said she had bought ever so many beautiful hats and that she never knew until now how nice her feet could look. She included the menu of their first night's dinner at the hotel, and marked it "glorious"; there was only one thing wanting for her complete happiness, she told him shyly on the last page, and that was that he was not with her.  
He smiled and smiled as he read the letter; she was so young—something in its wording, with its childish delight in everything, made him ashamed. He was not treating her fairly—he was deceiving her, leading her to believe that he loved her, whereas he had nothing more to give than a man's affectionate toleration. He signed himself Yours ever—it seemed the easiest way out of it, and entirely noncommittal.  
He put the letter away in his desk and answered it briefly.  
He was glad she was enjoying herself—she must be sure to let him know by what train she would be returning, so that he could meet her—he signed himself Yours ever—it seemed the easiest way out of it, and entirely noncommittal.

**CHAPTER XVIII**  
**A Receipt for John Harden**  
Mrs. Ashford had been right when she said she did not think Harden would be married in Little Helpton, for within a few days of the announcement of engagement it was common knowledge that the wedding would be held quietly in London and at the Hotel Helptonites were disappointed, because they were disappointed. Harden was not very proud of his new wife, they said; no wonder he took her off to London and tied her away from every one who knew him; poor man, of course he had married the whole family! Already it was rumored that he had made arrangements for all the boys to go to a boarding school, and he paid of the mortgage on the White House so that the Dangerfield could live there till the end of her life, and drink as much tea as she liked at his expense. "I should like to know how they managed it," said the disappointed mother of three daughters, spitefully. "Of course, he's been had!"  
Mrs. Ashford hid a smile. "I don't think Mr. Harden is at all kind of man to be 'had,' as you put it," she said sweetly. "And really you must admit that Molly is a most attractive little thing."  
A series of eloquent, if unadmirable, words went round the vicarage drawing room, and Mrs. Ashford changed the conversation.  
"They were so jealous they did not know what to do with themselves," she said to her husband afterward. "Poor Molly! It must be rather galling after the way they have always snubbed her and her family, because now she is quite the first lady in Little Helpton. I wonder what attitude she

will take with them when she is married."  
But Molly was not worrying her head in the least about anybody, she was much too busy and happy with her own affairs.  
Harden had given her a great many presents, and had had a marriage settlement drawn up in correct style. "You really needn't have worried about it," Molly told him when he tried to explain it to her. "I shan't want much money to spend; you can buy all my clothes, and if I might have—perhaps ten shillings a week to spend?" She made the suggestion apologetically; she shillings seemed such an exorbitant sum to have mentioned.  
Harden laughed; he laughed much more frequently lately, and Molly's mother declares that he was looking younger already.  
"And he really is a most distinguished looking man," she added with a shade of condescension.  
"What a modest little girl you are," Harden said, laying his hand on Molly's. "Ten shillings a week! Why, whatever will you do with it all?" he asked mockingly.  
Molly flushed. "I can give some to the boys."  
"I'll look after the boys," as told her. "You're such a dear," Molly answered. He looked away guiltily. "I was telling Mrs. Fernald this morning how wonderful the mood you had been to us all," Molly went on simply. "It all seems like a dream to me—I'm still afraid that some day I shall wake up and find it's never been real—any of it."  
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CONTINUED MONDAY