

# The Fur-Lined Overcoat

The second violinist handled his bow mechanically and even listlessly. Once or twice he so far forgot himself as to draw the attention of the conductor, who rapped with his baton and glared at the offending player.

The violinist was tired, and when he was tired, which was often the case, the music that danced round his brain was quite different from what he happened to be playing at the moment.

When the musical medley was over, the conductor came up to him.

"I'm sorry, Jack," he said, "but if you don't pull yourself together we shall have to put some one else in your place."

"I was tired to-night," he replied.

As Jack turned into the street he was met by a girl, who clung close to his arm. They walked on in silence for a time, picking their way eastward through the crowded Strand. Close behind them a man with a fur collar



"The Instrument Throbbled Under His Fingers."

turned up about his ears paced musically. The girl turned and saw him.

"If you had only a fur-lined coat," she said to Jack. He laughed.

"I'm much more likely to have no coat at all, Nellie. To-night Griffin told me that if I didn't improve I'd have to go."

"Shame!"

"He's quite right, little girl. I can't somehow keep my attention fixed in that place. But never mind. I have my violin still, and I've nearly finished the opera, and some day we shall be rich. I only had you with me always. But we must wait a little longer."

"Must we?"

"Why—mustn't we?"

"I thought, perhaps," Nellie said, hesitatingly, "that if we married you'd get on better. I wouldn't cost much to keep, and I can make enough for that by a little painting, you know; and then think what I should save by housekeeping."

"But, my dear child, I couldn't think of letting you work like that."

"I should be happier."

"And suppose I lose my place at the end of the week?"

"You'll soon find a better one."

"I'll think about what you've been saying. If we could only manage—"

"I'm sure we could, beautifully. You won't do any more work to-night?"

"I must put in an hour or two."

A few minutes later he left her at the door of a small house in a side street, and then, crossing to the main thoroughfare, he struck into a similar street on the other side. As he opened the dingy door of his lodgings a tall man in a fur-lined overcoat passed. A simple supper was laid out upon his table, which he hardly touched. The room was poorly furnished, though comfortable and clean enough. Across one corner stood a piano. His violin and piano were Jack's chief treasures; they represented possibilities which kept hope alive in him. With their aid he could conjure up visions far more beautiful than anything which reality could show him; they enabled him to express himself—the inner self which shrank from contact with the world. He drew ruled paper toward him and began to cover it with those symbols which sometimes mean so much more than words.

But after a time the creative impulse left him, and he turned to an almost completed portion of his work. Parts he tried over on the piano, for other parts he took up his violin, after each trial altering a note here and there. The time slipped on. Hardly a sound reached him from the dwindling traffic that passed the end of the street—the street itself was perfectly still. With that silence there came a sudden impulse to him to play. "I wonder whether I could manage that sonata to-night?" he said, aloud.

He sat out the music, tucked his violin under his chin, and began to play. The instrument throbbled under his fingers with the acute sympathy and consciousness which only a violinist can understand. He knew that he was playing finely, he knew that the music was good, and he was the maker of both. The thought filled him with exultation. Yet even at that

moment he felt how far above it all was the simple love of the girl who trusted and believed in him. When he laid down the violin there were tears in his eyes. "If I only dared," he thought, "to grasp my fate in both hands."

A man stood on the step, thinly clad and shivering.

"Sir," said a voice, "I saw a light here, and thought that perhaps there might be some one awake who would not refuse me food, and perhaps shelter."

"Come in. I can give you some food, at any rate."

The man followed him into the sitting-room and stood quietly by the door; he carried in his hand a large parcel covered with a kind of waterproof material. Jack glanced at this with curiosity, perhaps suspicion.

"I'm quite honest," said the man. "This does not contain the spoils of a burglary." Jack smiled.

"I didn't suppose it did," he said, "sit down and make yourself comfortable. I haven't much to offer you, but you're welcome to what there is." Jack took out once more his almost untasted supper. "Draw up and eat," he said.

The stranger did as he was bidden, and his host from time to time glanced at him, though always with delicacy and consideration. He observed that the man, although thin and poorly clad, was scrupulously clean, his hair and heavy mustache well tended, his hands white and delicately formed.

"Are you a musician?" asked the stranger, pushing away his plate and nodding toward the piano and violin.

"Yes," said Jack.

"Was it you—forgive my curiosity—who were playing before I knocked?"

"Yes," said Jack.

"It was a fine performance; at least, it appeared to me to be so. It was the music which gave me courage to knock. Does that surprise you?"

"No; I think I understand."

"And whose work were you playing?"

"My own." As Jack made this confession he was anxious for the stranger's approbation. Their natural positions were reversed.

"It's a strange world," said the other; "that a man who can write such music as that should live—" He paused and reached out a hand toward Jack's manuscript.

"May I look?" He drew the manuscript up toward him and ran his eye along the score. Jack watched him in growing amazement.

"Can you play?"

"The violin—a little."

Jack excitedly thrust the violin into his hands.

"Try it," he cried.

"If you wish it as a return for your charity—"

"No, no; not that! I want no return."

"Out of pure compliment to you, then," said the stranger. He rose, drew the bow softly across the strings and glided into the sonata. Jack, hearing his own work played by another hand for the first time, was carried away by its possibilities; yet, excellent as the stranger's rendering was, he felt that he was holding himself in check—deliberately keeping back the highest power of expression that was in him. When he laid down the violin, Jack said:

"Thank you. But if you had chosen you might have played still better."

"You think, then, that I only paid you a half-hearted compliment?"

A clock striking 3 reminded them that the situation had reached an embarrassing stage. The stranger appeared to look to Jack for the next move.

"When you came in," said Jack, with hesitation, "you said something about shelter. I have only one bedroom here, but that is at your service."

"Sir," cried the other, "is there another man in London at this moment who would do as much for an absolute stranger?"

"Many, I hope," said Jack.

"Not one, I solemnly believe. I will accept shelter, but not your bed. This couch will serve my turn perfectly. You can trust me?"

Jack made up the fire, brought a pillow and a rug, and left his curious guest to rest. He himself lay awake for some time in a condition of wonder, not unmixed with vague excitement. When he slept it was profoundly and to an unusually late hour. He rose to find his guest departed. His music had vanished, and in its place was the stranger's parcel.

At first he was too overwhelmed for action; he could do nothing but blindly suffer under his misfortune. His landlady was able to give him no information beyond the statement that she had heard the front door close before she got up. Her curiosity as to the contents of the parcel was greater than her appreciation of Jack's loss. He told her angrily to open it and satisfy herself that he had been woefully tricked. Under the string she discovered a note, addressed simply to "My Entertainer." It ran thus:

"I have not stolen your work, but merely borrowed it. If you will meet me at 2 o'clock outside the Shamrock restaurant I hope to convince you of my integrity. In the meantime perhaps you will accept the contents of my parcel as a guarantee of my good intentions, the more particularly as the weather is cold. The garment was honestly come by."

As Jack's eye reached the close of this extraordinary communication a cry from his landlady caused him to look up. She was examining, in an attitude of intense admiration, a magnificent fur-lined overcoat.

"You don't seem pleased," said the woman.

"Don't you suppose my music was worth more than this?" he said.

"You know best sir, of course; but if that overcoat's worth a penny it's worth £50. I know, because my poor man was in the line."

"I don't want his overcoat," groaned Jack. Then, glancing again at the note, he brightened up. "I'll run round and see Nellie," he said.

Nellie listened to his story with wide open eyes, and fewer interruptions than might have been expected. When he had finished, she said:

"You must keep this appointment, and if I were you I'd wear the overcoat."

"I will if you'll come with me."

"But you'll be expected alone."

"Never mind; I want you to see this extraordinary person."

"And the missing music," said the girl. "I shall like him, I know I shall, because he had the sense to see that your sonata was great."

"I didn't say he thought it was great."

"No; but I'm sure he did think so."

Jack tried on the coat, but after careful consideration of its effect, both decided it was too magnificent for the rest of his attire.

"We'll have it made into a cloak or something for you, Nellie," he said.

"No, no. You will soon be rich enough to wear it."

"If it's to wait till then the moths will have swallowed it. But, I dare say, if it's really worth a lot of money, we could sell it, and then, with what furniture we have already, we might—"

"Yes," said Nellie softly.

At 2 o'clock precisely they approached the Shamrock restaurant in considerable trepidation. As they paused near the entrance a closed carriage drove up, from which stepped Jack's guest of the night before.

"Why that's the man in the fur-lined overcoat who was walking behind us in the Strand last night," Nellie whispered. He was transformed; in place of thin and weathered garments, he wore the conventional garb of the prosperous. At a sign from him the coachman drove away.

"Permit me," he said, saluting Jack. "to return to-day the hospitality so generously offered to me last night." Jack could hardly collect himself sufficiently to introduce Nellie.

"My name," said the stranger, as the embarrassed violinist paused helplessly, "is McLaughlin."

When Jack heard the word it seemed to him that all Pleadilly rang with it, for it was the name by which a great impresario was known.

"I took away your sonata this morning," said McLaughlin, "because I wished to hear it played by a greater performer than either you or I. He has already tried it; in fact, I left him at an hour ago. I think I can promise you that he will play it in public within a month."

Jack gaped, nor for some minutes could he find appropriate words of thanks.

In the meantime Mr. McLaughlin busied himself in ordering lunch, for which purpose he consulted Nellie about the choice of dishes of which she had never in her life heard before.

"You are, I believe, violinist in the orchestra."

"Yes," Jack answered.

"I think, if you will allow me, I can find you a better post. You appear bewildered."

"I'm so much bewildered that I doubt my own existence."

"I owe you an explanation, certainly. Last night I was in the stalls at the — I had made a bet with a friend that I would get food and a night's lodging for nothing, merely by using my knowledge of character. He scoffed at the idea. I saw you and decided to follow you up. I walked down the Strand after you, and overheard—forgive me—some of your conversation. My carriage followed a few yards behind. Having seen your home and marked the house, I returned to my carriage, where I had prepared such a disguise as I conceived would best suit my purpose. The rest you know. I am under a double obligation to you. You justified my belief in human nature, and you made me acquainted with a man whose work I shall be proud to see produced."

"And the coat, Mr. McLaughlin?"

"That, as my note pointed out, was left as a guarantee. If you like to put it so, it may be considered as payment on account of future fees."

"I can't find words to thank you," Jack stammered.

"The lady's face is sufficient thanks," and the great impresario raised his glass. Now to lunch, though nothing we eat to-day will taste so good as your cold mutton did last night."

Only one of the party succeeded in doing justice to that meal; but, afterward, when Jack and Nellie were joined in the happy bonds of matrimony, the three enjoyed many a good lunch together.

## FRENZIED AGRICULTURE.

SOME OF THE PHANTASMAGORIAS OF A NEW JERSEY SPECIALIST.

New Farm Science Which Makes Easy Cross-Breeding of Distinct Species and Combining the Animal and Vegetable Worlds.

The startling results of the science of animal and plant life are graphically portrayed by Artist McCord, of Newark, New Jersey. This expert believes, from results already accomplished by cross fertilization, that in the very near future it will not be necessary for the boarding-house keeper to separately prepare corned beef and cabbage, as the plant physiologist will have combined the two into a single garden product.



Cross fertilizing the egg plant and the chick weed will likewise produce young broilers, which, if the summer rains are frequent and proper attention is given to cultivation, will mature into profitable layers. By a reverse fertilization with the flower garden cockscomb, various poultry types may be produced.



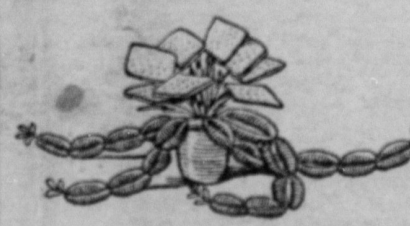
Again, by careful cultivation and enrichment of the soil, a single rhubarb or pie plant can be coaxed to yield in a season ten full-sized pies. Any kind of pie can be obtained by crossing the plant with the fruit tree or bush desired, apple, cherry, raspberry, peach, anything but mine. Lemon pie, of course, cannot be grown in the North where the nights are cold. Meat potpie can be obtained by breeding with magpies.



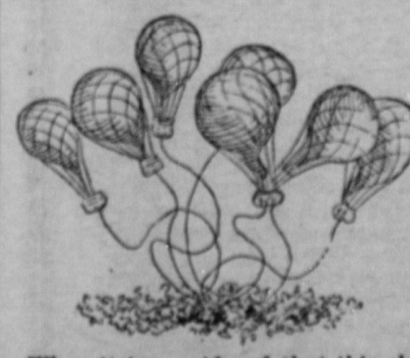
A perfected milk weed is an easy result of the plant wizard's touch. It seems strange, indeed, that the investigators of old experimented and wrote for centuries on the subject of making the milk weed a useful plant, and yet never were able to accomplish anything practical.



What is known to plant science as Wieneria is the result of hybridizing dog fennel and common pig weed. This peculiar plant has the unique characteristic in the vegetable world of producing two distinct food products, upon a single stem—the toothsome sausage, and dog biscuits—one of a nitrogenous or muscle-forming nature, and the other fat-producing.

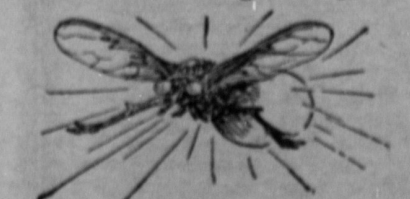


But of all the marvels in nature that have been accomplished by the plant physiologist and hybridizationist, the most astounding results have been accomplished with bacteria. Bacteria enter into every form of life, and not only have government troubles grown out of nitrogen-producing bacteria, but fair-sized balloons can be produced in a single season from the common hydrogen bacilli.



When it is considered that this class of scientific research is, in reality, but in a formative and primordial stage, the human mind stands amazed at the possibilities held out by the future.

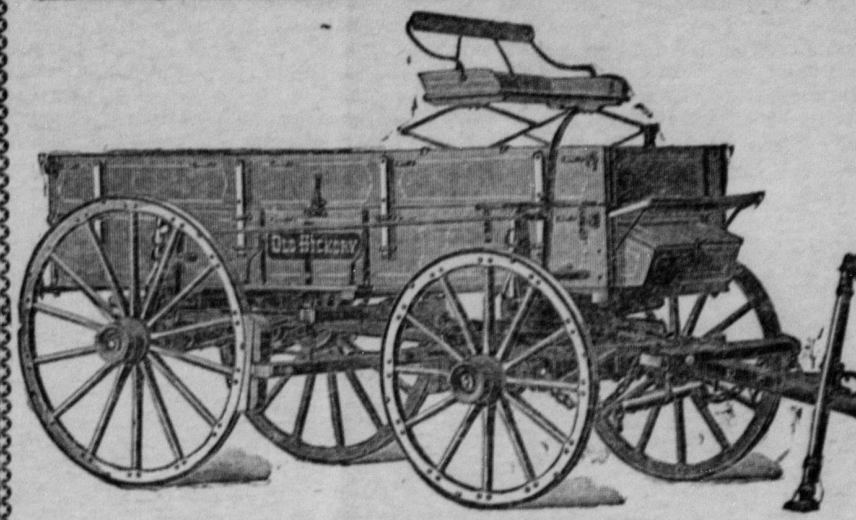
While the discoveries above mentioned have been the result of more or less persistent and systematic research, it seems that the lightning-bug bee, which is enabled to gather honey during the entire twenty-four hours, was the result of pure accident, the result of a boyish prank in placing some innocent fireflies at the entrance to a beehive to see them get stung.



## NO OTHER WAGONS APPROACH

In Perfect Adaptability Under all Conditions to.

## The Strong Old Hickory

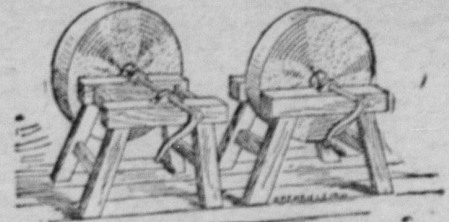


MANUFACTURED BY  
**Kentucky Wagon Manufacturing Co.**  
LOUISVILLE, KY.

LARGEST PRODUCERS OF FARM WAGONS IN THE WORLD

## THE RACYCLE SPROCKETS

Like No. 2 Grindstone are Hung Between the Bearings



No. 1 (Bicycle) No. 2 (Racycle)

Which Stone will Turn Easier?

The Racycle Rides Further with one-quarter less work

**MIAMI CYCLE & MFG. CO.**  
MIDDLETOWN, OHIO.

## THE CUREW ORDINANCE.

No young boys or girls are allowed to run about the streets of St Paul after 9 o'clock at night.

This law has been in effect for several years, and it has produced excellent results. Of course, the police use discretion in the matter and do not actually arrest every youngster they catch after hours, but they give them



friendly warning which almost invariably is obeyed. This regulation ought to be in force in every big city in the land. To have the freedom of the streets of a city at night has been the ruin of many a boy and girl who might otherwise have led lives of usefulness and gladdened the declining years of fond parents.

## A Tension Indicator

IS JUST WHAT THE WORD IMPLIES.

It indicates the state of the tension at a glance. Its use means time saving and easier sewing. It's our own invention and is found only on the

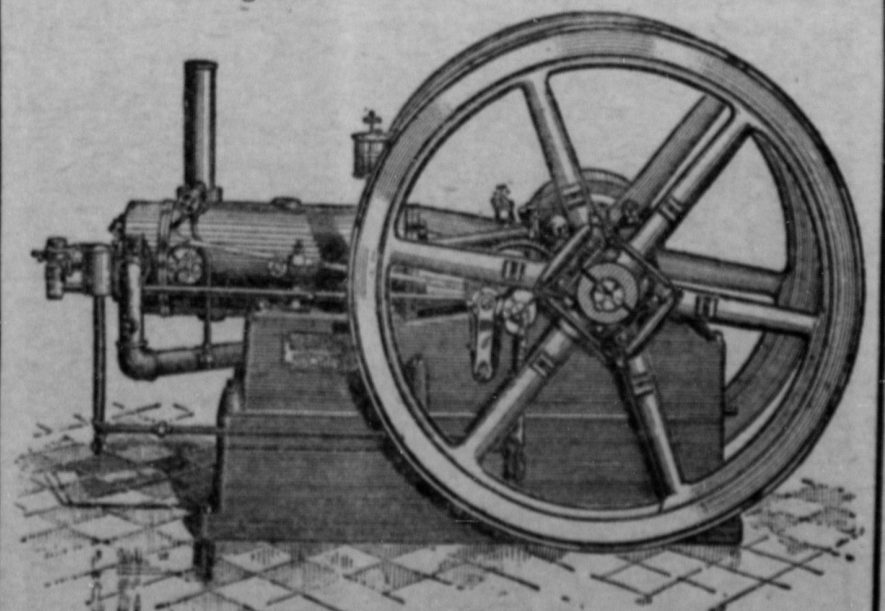
**WHITE**  
Sewing Machine.

We have other striking improvements that appeal to the careful buyer. Send for our elegant H. T. catalog.

**WHITE SEWING MACHINE CO.**  
Cleveland, Ohio.

## International Harvester Co. GASOLINE ENGINES

When equipped with an I. H. C. gasoline engine, the farm, the dairy, the mill, the threshing machine, or the husker and shredder can be operated more economically than with any other power. Farmers who have water to pump, wood to saw, feed to grind or corn to shell, can do this work at a minimum cost with I. H. C. engines.



## I. H. C. HORIZONTAL ENGINE

I. H. C. gasoline engines are made in the following sizes: 2, 3 and 5 H. P., vertical type, stationary; 6, 8, 10, 12 and 15 H. P., horizontal type, stationary; and 6, 8, 10, 12 and 15 H. P., horizontal type, portable.

WRITE FOR GASOLINE ENGINE BOOKLET.  
**International Harvester Co. of America**  
(Incorporated)

7 Monroe Street Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.