

By BLANCHE WELLS HOWARD. (MADAME VON TEUFFEL) AUTHOR OF "GUENN ONE SUMMER 9-96"

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SYNOPSIS.

Richard Burgdorf, a young German artist, whose nickname is "Prince Charming," and his friend, Florio, a literary student, in the course of their "Wanderjahs" through Germany, have reached the end of their resources, and find themselves, weary, footsore and hungry, by the wayside near a German town. Richard, in whose artistic ability Florio has great faith, sinks down and can go no further. Florio tries to get him to get up, but to a boot for his friend. After one or two reverses, he kneels at a promising looking door. A kindly old German woman receives him, gives him food for himself and Richard, and advises him to put on a bold face. He goes through the vineyard, makes friends with an old workman, to whom he justly talks about his master, "Prince Charming." The old man takes the remark seriously, and Florio is inspired with the idea of using his supposed master's name as a recommendation. In the manner of "Puss-in-Boots," the plan is successful, and Florio obtains work and secure temporary lodgings for himself and his friend, who is ignorant of the subterfuge. Florio also poses as a famous caricaturist in disguise. He gives a trial before a manager, repeating a comical frog song of his boyhood days, and is engaged at a good salary. He produces a picture of a man that Richard is Prince Charming, a wealthy painter, and obtains painting materials for his friend.

PART V.

Armed with the glittering ribbon on his cap, together with Johannes Mezler's recommendation, Florio engaged the rooms without difficulty.

"You are not playing, are you, old fellow?" Richard asked suddenly one night as Florio came in. "You cannot be. How? Where? What in the deuce do you mean?" "Why—cards, of course." "Oh, cards. Well, that is an idea. Cards? Heaven forbid." With a great laugh, Florio said: "Don't be afraid, little one. After awhile, with beautiful candor, 'It is merely some work I am doing for a man who cannot give me as much as I am worth while.' He pays me well, so it's worth while." "Charming never inquisitive, still weak and greatly preoccupied, troubled his head no more about his friend's nocturnal engagements, and somehow got the fixed impression that it was of a literary nature—writing at dictation, revision or something of the sort." "He seems to be a rabid smoker of tobacco," the lawyer once murmured, drowsily, from his pillow, and Florio chuckled as he pulled off his shoes. Again later, in the studio one day, the reviser, glancing at a newspaper, exclaimed, with a certain resentment: "Why, here's a chap pretending to sing a frog song. Willy Winkler is his sweet little totem name. Promontious success, it says. I don't believe he can hold a candle to you. Let's go and hear him." Florio, his back turned, made a very

quondam contours which the years had kindly obliterated—when Florio would shoot a sneaking glance at the worthy old couple in their cottage porch, as such a look as that, "It's only his little eccentric way," and they would nod astutely. But Florio enjoyed exquisite moments of compensation. He liked to stand at an open window, the cigarette box in his hand, and inquire in the most solicitous and devoted manner conceivable: "Does your Highness deign to smoke?" His Highness, working away as usual at a picture, would rarely lower his head, but merely say, in his pleasant, low voice: "What an incorrigible ass you are, quite smoking like," the gardener told his wife.

PART VI.

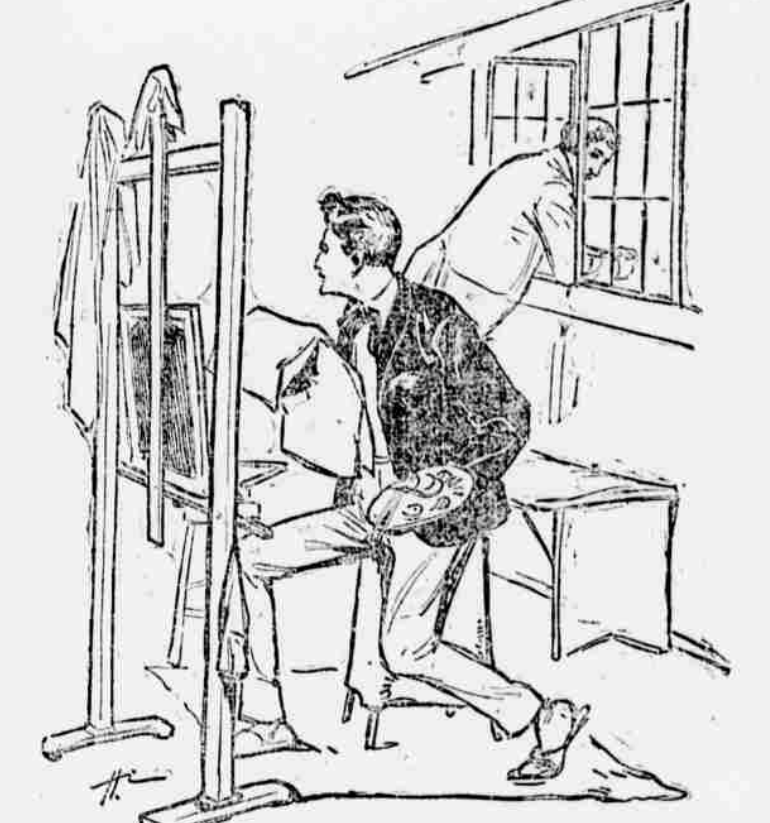
Chardo, not being an infant, a convict or a maniac, could hardly be locked up for safe keeping. Like other young men, he had the inveterate habit of going where he pleased. When Florio found the rooms deserted he would pace them restlessly until he saw Richard striding in with still unclouded brow. He not unnaturally attracted into picture exhibitions, chatted with painters, now and again, to Florio's grin despair, went of an evening to drink a glass of beer in a cheerful place frequented by the fraternity. If a stray artist chanced to walk into the studio he always found that other fellow unseated, if not surly. Police-men and inspectors in the innocent discharge of their duties, occasioned Florio many not insignificant frights. In every reasonable and unreasonable way did he seek to avert the ever impending disaster. The invaluable advice of Burgdorf and Prince Chardo, at least until the former young gentleman had built up a reputation upon legitimate foundations. Florio, the conspirator, fared better than his deserts, and escaped with his fears and forebodings. Luckily for him, Richard, for the most part, desisted nothing better than to slum mankind and talent. Reserved, sensitive, moody, inspired by large hopes, and chafing at the prolonged delay in their fruition, proud of Florio's successes, Chardo, who had his own shares of their burdens, he worked unceasingly, bled his time, lived the life of a hermit, and cared for no society but that of his fellows. Yet if the painter so much as stepped to look at something in Johannes Mezler's window, Florio shivered with apprehension, and would resort to the most violent expedients, the longest way around to avoid that street. "I saw Prince Chardo yesterday," Mezler announced one morning with some complacency. "I had a good stare at him."



HE WALKED OFF AND STOOD AWHILE ALONE.

Mezler, covertly watching the transformation, felt warm and stout of heart, and repented his naughtiness. But as he was slaving much in those days with his writing and his nauseating night occupation, besides plotting his fits—and Chardo was now fortuitously launched, it happened that the star known as Willy Winkler disappeared suddenly from the firmament, to the chagrin of the public, still more of the artist, who desisted with pensive he would engage him again "at any time and on his own terms, for the Frog or any new creation." Willy Winkler thanked him and bade him farewell amicably as one who may look in on the morrow, for Florio reflected, in the marvelous variety-entertainment which we call life, it is always well to have, as sailors say, something "to wind up" one's career. Soon he was heard in the studio jovially humming: "U-g-l-u-o, U-g-l-u-o, kerchunk, U-g-l-u-o." For now he loved his frog again, and that is human nature. "How jolly good that sounds!" exclaimed Chardo. "Do you know, you've not sung it an age?" "Hardly a score of months from the day the frogs were coming to town, the sat one evening on the deck of a Messagerie steamer bound for the Far east, their way and work clearly appointed under sufficiently liberal conditions. Chardo's first real picture had been snapped up by the Dresden Gallery—one of the incredible events which occasionally compound the prudent, and even on them becoming a habit, together too abundant. It was dark and quiet Florio opened his heart, and made clean confession. Who he had finished, Chardo was silent. "I thought it might amuse you. Somehow it doesn't sound very funny. Still Chardo did not speak. "Length Florio said, with curious shyne: "I hope you don't mind too much, Chardo. Of course it was awfully low down. But so were we. And, oh, didn't it?" But Chardo, viewing the long perspective, saw neither fun nor fibs. Something of which Florio was quite unacquainted, and he revealed nothing upon the vista and revealed nothing petty or base. The painter reached over and wrung his friend's hand, and he walked off and stood awhile alone, he muttered, much moved: "I wish I could exhibit in my window."

HE WALKED OFF AND STOOD AWHILE ALONE. bearing erect, his eye calm, his laugh jolly and his large picture grew apac. Florio, covertly watching the transformation, felt warm and stout of heart, and repented his naughtiness. But as he was slaving much in those days with his writing and his nauseating night occupation, besides plotting his fits—and Chardo was now fortuitously launched, it happened that the star known as Willy Winkler disappeared suddenly from the firmament, to the chagrin of the public, still more of the artist, who desisted with pensive he would engage him again "at any time and on his own terms, for the Frog or any new creation." Willy Winkler thanked him and bade him farewell amicably as one who may look in on the morrow, for Florio reflected, in the marvelous variety-entertainment which we call life, it is always well to have, as sailors say, something "to wind up" one's career. Soon he was heard in the studio jovially humming: "U-g-l-u-o, U-g-l-u-o, kerchunk, U-g-l-u-o." For now he loved his frog again, and that is human nature. "How jolly good that sounds!" exclaimed Chardo. "Do you know, you've not sung it an age?" "Hardly a score of months from the day the frogs were coming to town, the sat one evening on the deck of a Messagerie steamer bound for the Far east, their way and work clearly appointed under sufficiently liberal conditions. Chardo's first real picture had been snapped up by the Dresden Gallery—one of the incredible events which occasionally compound the prudent, and even on them becoming a habit, together too abundant. It was dark and quiet Florio opened his heart, and made clean confession. Who he had finished, Chardo was silent. "I thought it might amuse you. Somehow it doesn't sound very funny. Still Chardo did not speak. "Length Florio said, with curious shyne: "I hope you don't mind too much, Chardo. Of course it was awfully low down. But so were we. And, oh, didn't it?" But Chardo, viewing the long perspective, saw neither fun nor fibs. Something of which Florio was quite unacquainted, and he revealed nothing upon the vista and revealed nothing petty or base. The painter reached over and wrung his friend's hand, and he walked off and stood awhile alone, he muttered, much moved: "I wish I could exhibit in my window."



"I DON'T BELIEVE HE CAN HOLD A CANDLE TO YOU. LET'S GO AND HEAR HIM."

Under the pledge of secrecy he confided Prince Chardo's name, even the long Latin one, to the gardener, and urged the necessity of leaving the high-born gentleman entirely to his own devices, for, although of winning and amiable character, he was singularly eccentric, and, particularly to preserve his incognito, would hesitate at nothing. The gardener sagely replied that sovereigns and such had mostly nowadays a screw loose in the upper story. All he and his old woman cared about was steady pay and a quiet tenant on the premises, for a carousing painter, such they'd last had, they could not abide. Florio found Richard doubled up in a state of concentrated gloom. "Here, little one! Now show the stuff you're made of!" Chardo sprang up glorified. "I don't ask you where you got it. I don't mind care if you stole it. Look! Just look at them, thrusting under his friends' noses some mantled black streaks which to the artist meant two bare-legged urchins bathed in spring sunshine and fishing in a brook. "Aren't they beautiful?" he cried ecstatically. "I'm fairly aching to get at them. If you could have seen the light this morning. They are coming tomorrow. 'Till he then waiting on the opposite bank, and you've got me all these things? Oh, Florio, I was just ready to curse God and die. I cannot live unless I paint." "Live and paint, Chardo! Paint some sketchy little things and I swear I'll sell them for you, every one. Then you can paint the great one. Now you and I are going to have a grand Christian supper and some beer. Hear the chink-chink! I earned it."

face as at some nauseous compound, and replied, with his head out of the window: "We cannot afford luxuries, just yet, can we, little one? Besides, the man is probably a blank idiot." "No doubt," assuaged his serene Highness. "Sometimes all things work together for the benefit. Florio's frivolous masculine hall experiences suggested to him a series of sketches which he called "Behind the Scenes." The first of these papers he submitted in person to the editor of a large journal, the day after the Frog's debut. The great man happened to be suffering from a plague of atrocious contributions. He was of a robust and sanguine temperament, and his young colleague floundered in pessimism. As Florio entered his sanctum he was roughly asserting that Schopenhauer, von Hartman and even Nietzsche were well enough in themselves, but no fitting food for journalistic babes. Besen he accordingly admitted, but could shoot in cold blood for the huge mental indigestion he had caused among feeble-minded disciples. As for Max Nordau somebody ought to write his little book. "Vital, full-blooded things are what I want." At this moment in came Florio, whatever he lacked, pre-eminently vital, his article no less. The great man raised his eyebrows, smiled, liked it and its author, gave him suggestions, counsel and, still better, regular work. The relationship proved of value to both. Chardo, fully persuaded his friend was one of the most brilliant young men the world has ever seen, was yet astonished that his first journalistic work was so remunerative, for they waited for nothing. Nemesis ought obviously to have overtaken Florio, but in this instance was unpropitious. The classic dame sometimes misses one modern connection. It is true he imagined her dogging his footsteps, and he frequently had to realize that the way of the transgressor is hard. But just as his perju-



OFF HE WENT AT A GREAT PACE—TWO MILES STRAIGHT UP A HILL, AND TWO MILES DOWN AGAIN.

Mezler might have some occult method of recognizing his own works—Florio brought it down as a matter of course. "I thought perhaps you might like to see this. It is one of Richard Burgdorf's sketches. The prince has several at his room just now." "Oh, that is a good thing, I like that. I wish I could exhibit in my window." "Well, I don't know. I must ask the prince, of course, I suppose I can leave it an hour or so." Mezler met him upon his return with the somewhat embarrassed air of a man who had taken a fancy to the little painting—particularly when informed it was by a young painter of note, protégé of His Highness, Prince Chardo. "I hardly know what to say. I suggested a pretty high price, just as a dumper you know. She instantly declared she'd pay it. She's a person I don't like to disappoint. I explained it was not put into my hands to sell, and she refused to part with it, with Prince Chardo, but that only made her wild." "Well," said Florio, despondently, "I suppose all I can do is to go and ask him." "Off he went at a great pace two miles straight up a hill and two miles down again, and exercised heroic self-control not to break in a war dance in the public thoroughfares, for beyond all things he longed that Chardo, after his struggles, his long illness, helplessness, enforced restraint and charming of the bit, should have the joy of selling a picture and feeling his own strength. "His Highness has not the least objection, Florio reported, and he pronounced, blandly. "He might perhaps have kept the sketch himself, but that is no matter. No price is intimated, and the artist may as well be as possible. Of course, it's a slight thing. Still, it's a Burgdorf. The prince thinks, under the circumstances, you ought to set rather a high value on it. It's a handsome commission for yourself, of course." "Hurray! Won't I! And if by hook or by crook you get me a rather little Burgdorf, you'll be doing me the greatest possible service, for I know a woman who will neither eat nor sleep until

she has one of a size larger than the "Boys Fishing." "Count upon me, Mezler." "The twain concocted a prize which the lady proudly paid in solid coin of the realm. Two more charming little Burgdorfs the delighted Mezler sold at fantastic rates. Discreet, but strongly commendatory remarks about the young artist now began to appear simultaneously in many papers, and were largely copied by exchanges. Mezler kindly showed them to Florio, but those journals never lay about the studio. From the day the "Boys Fishing" was sold, Chardo seemed to take a new lease of life. His step became buoyant, his

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Hotels. The two young men stood silent vasty content with their lot and each other, and listened to the throb of the ship bearing them onward toward their brave hopes. At length Florio, half laughing, yet not quite at ease, remarked: "Your Highness need not henceforth be anxious about me. It's not a chronic complaint, you understand. I really don't think the disease has struck in deep. Apparently it has not set seized my vitals. It was only an acute attack of— "Of the literary quality," suggested Chardo, cheerfully. (The End.)

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ONLY HIS LITTLE ECCENTRIC WAY. ries seemed on the point of being found out, some fresh burst of inspired impudence would rescue him. His propensity for prospering amazingly well, he endeavored to do so by the means of putting his progenitor to shame. His most precarious task was to manage the prince, who, as his health improved, and his spirits rose, would persist in slapping Florio on the back at inopportune moments, throwing an affectionate arm across his shoulders, as the friends strolled toward evening in the garden, even condescending to call him "old boy" or "Dumpling"—a nursery name resulting from certain