

"I once knew a boy," began Jaimeson, "named Jim Dale, up in Vermont,—nothing very unusual about the boy, but he had a very unusual experience.

"His mother died when he was very young, down in Maryland, and when his father died in Jim's nineteenth year, he had no relatives that he had ever seen.

"His father was a peculiar man, cared nothing about relatives—in fact, didn't even pay much attention to the boy, but bent all his energies to hustling for money, and when he died he left Jim several hundred thousand. Yes, Jim had a great chance, and ought to have made something of a man.

At these words, Perkins noticed an ironical smile flit across his hostess' face, and this perplexed him still more.

"Jim had every chance," continued Jaimeson. "He had money, had a college education, and would doubtless have made a useful man if a girl hadn't turned his head. These girls make a deal of trouble in the world, especially when they are good looking and high strung. Jim fell in love with a bright, pretty girl in his town—her name was Gertrude Grey. In truth, she was as badly off as he, but, to her sorrow, she concealed the fact from him. She was one of those girls who expect a great deal of a fellow, and was afraid Jim didn't love her as she wanted to be loved. So she was continually putting him to tests, but she gave the screw one turn too much. Jim couldn't stand the pressure and I think she has never seen him since, and never will. Jim was lucky to escape from a woman without more sense, but he didn't think so.

"Well, he fixed up his affairs with his lawyer and engaged passage on the Wisconsin, bound for Liverpool, but he couldn't leave without seeing Miss Grey again, so he called on the evening of his departure. Miss Grey had nothing but smiles for him now. She had resolved to atone for her actions, and never treat him so again. Dale was pretty nearly upset, he loved her so much, and came within an ace of breaking his resolve and saying aloud what his heart was saying to this charming woman. However, Dale's will held him in check, until his leave taking—she had followed him to the veranda, when he felt an impulse irresistible, she looked so sweet in the pale starlight; and he took her hand. She left it there, that little soft white hand, in his. One struggling moment passed, and then, so quickly he scarcely knew what he did, he stole a kiss, and with 'Good-bye, Gertrude Grey,' he was gone.