

more mush-mush, no more love stories, or I'll refuse to recommend you for re-election; but if you'll show one atom of originality, I'll guarantee you my job next year."

I had often seen Brooks sigh and pale and raise a window for air, as he ground his way through a manuscript; but never before had such an explosion of sentiment been known to ruffle his bland serenity.

"Why," he continued, "I just got a letter from an old Grad. begging us in the name of Heaven to take a brace and get out one decent *Stiletto*. Now Maurice, you're the only man on the board who can save us. Clifford turns out nothing but poetry, and that only under miraculous inspirations; Loomis, why confound it, I should have to ask him six months in advance to get anything; Bud is busy with locals, and Jack has his hands full with athletics, and I can't get one spare minute, myself. If you'll give us something bright and fresh, Maurice, I'll—I'll love you as I do my Dutch girl over at Shingletown; and the next man that calls you lazy is a devilish liar."

Brooks had sworn by his sacreddest oath, and his look was so appealing, as he turned his mild, innocent blue eyes on me, that I recklessly promised to try. Instantly he sprang up and grasped my hand, with a heart as light as that of a spring lamb frolicking in the Barrens. And then, with the air of one whom wine has made careless of expense he roared:—"Gad, how I'd love to see our 'chronic kicker' when he gets the next issue of the *Stiletto*! He'll perish on the spot. It will contain another one of Thurlow's love stories; a story in which he tells, under the title of 'Her Tangled Heartstrings,' the romance of a little wayside flower, 'a lonely, brown-haired, solemn-eyed child, with the heart of a poet, and an inexpressible yearning for affection,' into whose life there came a youth from the outside world; how this youth had sought to please her, because she was 'so crudely quaint, so honest, so tenderly innocent, and he wished to find out of what stuff she was made;' and how, 'the tense-strung little girl had thrilled beneath his carelessly grave words;' and then when the Summer was over, he had departed as quickly as he had come, without a word or token to break the desolate aftermarth of silence; and she had come to know 'the pain of an expanding soul.' 'The Kicker' will read that and curse all mankind because someone has not ditched the source of suicides by inventing a mental