

THE REV. MR. DINSMORE

By ROB McHEVINE

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Scroggsfield was to have a new minister. The whole village was interested, for, although there were several churches in the little hamlet, this was the first new minister to appear in a whole generation.

The deacon's committee had divided on the subject, some favoring a young man and some an older and wiser head, but Brother Williams had turned the scale by threatening to withdraw his subscription unless a young and "progressive" man should be called.

Accordingly after much lobbying on the part of the Ladies' Aid society it was announced that the Rev. Mr. Dinsmore, a young student of divinity, had been selected and that he would occupy the pulpit the following Sunday.

Saturday morning came, and as the new minister had not yet put in an appearance the village was on the alert. He would surely come that day.

They were not disappointed. When the 11:30 train pulled into the depot a stranger stepped off and presented himself at the ticket window.

He was a most affable young man and was lamently dressed.

"Good morning," he said, and he put such an emphasis on the first word that it sounded almost like a cheer.

Miss Williams, the operator, looked up from her lunch and quickly slipped a half eaten egg into her apron pocket.

"Can you tell me, madam," said the gentleman, smiling, "everything I want to know about this historic and progressive city of Scroggsfield?"

"I—I—why, yes, sir, I think so. If you please, sir," she stammered, quite overcome.

"Well, that's lucky for me," the stranger exclaimed enthusiastically. "Now, if you will," he continued, "just tell me

"I am the Rev. Mr. Dinsmore," where the new church is located, and I swear, I'll remember you in my daily prayers.

The operator had begun to resent his manner, but now she understood. It was the new minister.

"It's on South Main street, the church is," she said, "right next to Farshaw's drug store and had emporium. But maybe you'd better go down to our house and see papa. He's on the deacon's committee and can tell you anything you want to know."

"Thanks," replied the affable stranger, pushing his Panama on to the back of his head and winking boldly at the abashed and flustered girl.

"Praps I will call, but not specially when your pa's at home. Oh, by the way, Miss—"

He waited.

"Williams," she said.

"Ah, Miss Williams. Well, now, Miss Williams, tell your pa I'll meet the committee at the church this evening at 5. That's a good girl. Thanks. Now, where's the hotel?"

Miss Williams looked askance. "The Temperance House is right across from the church," she said.

The stranger gulped hard and went out.

Within five minutes the deacon's daughter had managed to get the word to her folks, and the village soon knew that the new minister was in town.

When Deacon Williams started around to tell the rest of the committee he met the indignant president of the Ladies' Aid society upon his doorstep.

"What kind of a man is this young Dinsmore?" she demanded. "If he preaches tomorrow you can drop my name from the subscription list."

The deacon started blantly.

"He's been throwing kisses at my daughter from the balcony of the Grandview hotel," she continued, "and, what's more, she's been throwing them back."

The deacon looked pained and refused to believe it. But at the first corner he was stopped by the village postmaster.

"Huh," says he, "that's a nice kind of a minister you've picked up. He's jes' now \$5 off Barney Miller on a dog fight."

The deacon turned to go.

"He says he'll say that church from here struck off the face of the earth with a thunderbolt," called the postmaster.

"They told me Rev. Dinsmore had original methods," mused the deacon, "but bettin' on dog fights ain't sparkin' with the girls in public's too original."

At Brother Andrews' he met three members of the Ladies' Aid society, all talking at once. From the medley of voices he learned that the new minister had been seen to drink five whiskey highballs within a half hour, and that he had tipped the barman 10 cents and that he had asked the buxom widow Carraway to go driving with him.

The ladies were still talking when the good deacon made his escape and set out for the house of another committee man, whither Brother Andrews had already preceded him.

The brethren met him with reproachful silence. Brother Andrews was the first to speak.

"Well, deacon," he said, "you see what your progressiveness has come to."

The deacon shook his head in solemn self-reproach. "Well, Brother Andrews," he said finally, "I'm afraid this young Dinsmore's too progressive for Scroggsfield, but we'll have a chance to sound him. He's asked me to gather the committee at the church this afternoon. That's what I came around for."

The three old deacons started solemnly off for the church. In the street there was a great commotion as two

teams went dashing up and down the town thoroughfare, neck and neck, the drivers hallowing in lusty tones and brandishing their whips.

As the foremost team passed the three deacons, Brother Andrews recognized the widow Carraway, smiling gaily from her place beside the dauntless Dinsmore. In another instant the sporting parson had turned his horses and was drawing up at the church door.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, slapping the deacons one by one upon the shoulder. "I'm just in time, I see. Fine church this. He waved his hand affably. "Come in, come in. I'll not detain you but a minute." And he led the way into the little anteroom, where the rest of the committee sat awaiting an opportunity to pass on Rev. Dinsmore.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, turning and shifting his hat to the back of his head, "I called you out here to talk to you about the salvation of this church. I tell you, gentlemen, you're to be congratulated and congratulated in having had so fine an edifice to the glory of Scroggsfield. But, I tell you, gentlemen, you've built this church in defiance of eternal laws—laws that were not to be defied by man. I wonder, gentlemen, that our magnificent building hasn't been struck down by a thunderbolt from heaven."

A meek mannered stranger, wearing thick glasses and carrying a badly scuffed grip-sack, had entered the door and was approaching timidly. The speaker stopped in the midst of his harangue, and the newcomer stood looking for a moment at another.

"I am the Rev. Mr. Dinsmore," he said apologetically. "Can you tell me—"

"What?" cried the six, starting to their feet.

"Dinsmore," said the stranger faintly.

"Then who are you?" demanded Deacon Williams of the first stranger.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen—my card," and the speaker graciously presented one to each of the committee.

"J. P. Rowser, Esquire," he went on proudly, "representing the greatest lightning rod establishment in the world."

"I tell you, gentlemen, your magnificent building is in eternal danger from the fierce and vengeful ravages of—"

But the committee were busily engaged shaking hands with each other and with the Rev. Mr. Dinsmore.

THE PROFESSIONAL EATERS.

Indians Employ Substitute to Consume Food For Them.

One of the most striking customs of the past that are preserved by the Indians of today is found among the tribes on the Devil's Lake reservation in North Dakota.

An official of the Indian service gives the following account of this peculiar practice:

"From time immemorial the Devil's Lake Sioux have adhered to an old custom in regard to the treatment of a guest. According to their etiquette, it is the bounden duty of the host to supply his guest with all the food he may desire, and as a rule the appropriation set before the visiting Indian is much in excess of the capacity of a single man.

"But by the same custom the guest is obliged to eat all that is placed before him, else he grossly insults his entertainer. It was found that this practice would work a hardship, but instead of dispensing with the custom the Indian method of reasoning was applied, and what is known as the professional eater was brought to the front.

"While the guest is supposed to eat all that is placed before him, it serves the same purpose if his neighbor assists in devouring the bountiful repast, the main object being to have the plate clean when the meal is finished.

"It is not always practicable to depend upon a neighbor at table to assist in getting away with a large dinner, and in order to insure the final consumption of the allotted portion visiting Indians call upon these professional eaters, whose duty it is to sit beside them during a meal and eat what the guest leaves. The professional eaters are never looked upon in the light of guests, but more as traveling companions with a particular duty to perform.

"These eaters receive from \$1 to \$2 and even \$3 for each meal where they assist. It is stated by the agent of the Devil's Lake reservation that one of the professional eaters had been known to dispose of seventeen pounds of beef at a sitting. That they are capable of eating an almost fabulous amount I myself can testify."—Hygienic Gazette.

"SLEEPY" WOODCHUCK.

The Little Animals Are Far More Alert Than They Appear.

If there is any one of our native animals that looks slow, clumsy, lazy and generally unfit to survive in the struggle for existence it is the woodchuck. After his long, rather torpid existence, he comes, in the middle of the season, but no one supposed that there had been any trouble between Miriam and him, and she was at least spared the infliction of curious questions.

For a few days she pretended to herself that she did not care. She flirted deprecatingly with Jack Holworth, who loved her deliciously, but his tender speeches lacked the inflection of sincerity, and by the end of a week he bored her. No word came from Calvert, and soon she began to worry. To ask questions would be to admit that she did not know where he was, and this would subject her to comment. She could only wait and hope.

Finally the family began to notice her appearance. They declared that a change of scene was what was needed. Then her mother decided that California was the place for her, not knowing what reflections that country would bring up.

Out on the Arizona plains the train was drawn up on a siding to permit the eastbound Overland to pass. The passengers of the westbound grumbled at the delay, but Miriam slipped off the train to see if she could find any subjects for her camera.

There was a large group of cacti beyond the switch, and she trudged down to get a good viewpoint just as the belated train came speeding along. She thought it would be a good chance to try the speed of her camera by getting a snapshot of the moving train and, stepping to one side of the track, held the little box in readiness.

But the anticipated snapshot was never taken. There on the observation platform of the rear car was Calvert, as much surprised as she at the rencontre. With quicker thought than she had ever given him credit for he slipped over the guard rail and, hanging to the rail for a second, dropped to the track. He fell sprawling, but was up in an instant and was coming toward her with outstretched hands.

"Miriam!" he exclaimed joyfully. "It's awfully good to see you! You see I have learned my lesson and was chafing at the loss of three days it would take me to reach home, and here you are out in Arizona to meet me. He folded her in his arms and kissed her. She would no resistance.

"Well, you needn't have risked your life just to say you're glad to see me," she said sardoniously as soon as speech was possible. He laughed.

"The train wasn't going fast enough to make it a dangerous accomplishment,

Calvert's Conversion

By EPES W. SARGENT

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"I think," remarked Calvert very slowly, "that I should like to go to California."

Miriam agreed that California would be a very pleasant place in winter. She even declared that she would like to go there herself. With Calvert it was necessary to give more than was received. He was no conversationalist. Now he pondered over Miriam's admission as though this opened a new field for thought.

"It would be pleasant," he said presently, "to go there on one's wedding trip."

"Yes," assented Miriam. "It would be a very pleasant trip."

"Suppose then," he said, getting very red, "that we go there—together. You want to go. I want to go. We want to get married. Very simple, isn't it?"

Miriam sprang to her feet. "Charles Calvert," she said excitedly, "I could just shake you. He started back as though he feared she would carry her threat into execution. "Is that any way to ask a girl to marry you? One would think you had been brought up in an atmosphere of personally conducted fairs."

"Really," he stammered, "I didn't mean to offend you, don't you know? I really thought we were going to be married some day."

"We never will until you learn how to talk," she snapped back. "No woman with any self-respect would accept a proposal like that." There was infinite scorn in the voice.

Calvert blinked. He had known Miriam ever since they had played dolls together. Even then he had announced to their parents that they were going to be married shortly. They had persisted long after the usual course of boy and girl love affairs.

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ment, and I didn't want to have to follow you. Absence has made me more intelligent. It couldn't make me more appreciative. I promise you that from now on you will have no cause for complaint."

There was a new tenderness in his eyes, a new deference in his attitude that proclaimed him the lover, not merely the old companion who took everything for granted. She held out her hands with a happy smile.

"I believe you, dear," she said softly, "I shan't put you to the test. I'll accept the old proposal and take a bridal trip to California."

He caught her in his arms again, and for a moment they were oblivious of everything around them. Then he looked up whimsically. "I hope the walking's good," he said reflectively. "She goes a-cry. There in the distance the westbound train was fast receding. No one had noticed her leave the train or had observed Calvert. They had simply gone on.

"Well," said Miriam, "let's walk. And they started for the Golden Gate."

NEW ZEALAND GEYSERS.

Among Them Is Said to Be the Biggest Spouter in the World.

Yellowstone park is reputed to have the most magnificent geysers in the world, but their reputation is based upon the statements of travelers who have never been to New Zealand and who know nothing of its natural wonders.

Leaving Auckland by a fast express train, a journey of eight hours brings one to Rotorua, where there has been the most splendid geyser which is probably to be found anywhere in the world. To give one some idea of the magnitude of the geyser I need mention only the height of some of the surrounding objects. Over the "Inferno crater," which contains a seething lake of water, is a small shelter shed 450 feet above the plain. The surface of the water in the geyser basin when at rest is about forty feet below that point. The height of the eruption must often be about 500 feet. This is by no means exceptional. Higher "shots" have been recorded. Higher eruptions are shot upwards at 1,200 feet. Some months ago the area of the basin was measured in a small boat by a Mr. Buckridge and a guide. They found that the area is about two and a half acres, from which it may be inferred that this geyser may well be called the largest in the world.

The geyser plays about twenty-two times each night, is very erratic and gives no warning when it is about to erupt. The theory is advanced that the basin is somewhat like a funnel and that when the water and stones are ejected the larger stones are ejected in the neck, thereby choking the outlet, so that an enormous pressure of steam must shift them. When the pressure is sufficiently great to blow out the obstructions it naturally would eject water to a great height. The theory, however, is at best rather fanciful.

This geyser is not the only one to be seen in the vicinity. Others may be mentioned, such as the Pohutu, Waturo, Feather, Papakura and others, besides mad volcanoes—Scientific American.

HAMLET'S MALADY.

A Study of the Melancholy Dane and His Moods.

The tragedy of Hamlet is that a man of a peculiar introspective temperament is called upon to settle a practical crisis. In the neck, thereby choking the outlet, so that an enormous pressure of steam must shift them. When the pressure is sufficiently great to blow out the obstructions it naturally would eject water to a great height. The theory, however, is at best rather fanciful.

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The women got out at Durham and left us alone. We passed Darlington and were still the sole occupants of the compartment. Mr. Arnold, as he had given his name, had been sitting opposite me for an hour. As the train cleared Darlington, however, he rose up and yawned and said:

"I am sleepy, and yet I can never get a wink of sleep on the train. By the way, I found a curious coin on the street at Morpeth today. Can you make anything of it?"

He had a coin in his fingers as he stepped over to me. I reached out my hand to receive it when he seized me by the throat with both hands and had me on my back in a second. I was no match for him in strength. He gripped my throat so suddenly and so fiercely that I was deprived of all powers of resistance. Bending over me, with his knee on my chest, he finally let up on his clutch and said:

"Don't be foolish now! I know you and an after those diamonds."

He drew a wicked looking knife and held it in his teeth, while he used some

An Order For Diamonds

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The house of Shone, Saunders & Co., London, had received a letter from Sir James Blankton, living about a mile out of the village of Morpeth, asking them to send down a man with diamonds for marriage presents. It was added that his carriage would meet the man at the station at 6 o'clock in the evening. I was the one selected to go, and I reached Morpeth on time with \$5,000 worth of diamonds concealed about my person.

A carriage awaited me, but I had hardly taken a seat in it when I had queer feelings. The outfit was too common to be owned and publicly used by such a man as Sir James Blankton, and the two men on the box didn't appear at all like servants. I made bold to say:

"See here, men, I think there is a mistake. I think I have got Sir James Blankton mixed up with Sir James Dashton. It is the latter who owns a large interest in a Manchester cotton factory, isn't it?"

"It may be, but I dunno," replied the man who was driving as he pulled up his horses.

"Well, you see, I wanted to show him some of these new dyes for cottons."

"Is that your line, sir?"

"Yes, I have ten new colors just out. I am sorry for the blunder, but I am willing."

"Then what the bloody blazes did you get into this tarnation for?"

"To see Sir James Blankton, of course. I got it in my head."

"Oh, blow your head and your eyes too! Jim, turn about and drive the bloody wad back to town!"

"I'll be shot if I do!" replied Jim. "He can get right out here and take 'emself back on his own legs and be blown to him!"

When I had walked the two miles and reached town, I went to a hotel. I was a put up job to rob the London house through me, and it had been put up with the aid of some one at Sir James Blankton's house.

I started for London by the 9 o'clock train. The night had come on dark and stormy, and there were but few passengers from Morpeth. There were two plain women ticketed to Durham and a man about forty years old of pleasing address and genteel appearance. The four of us were ushered into the same compartment. As soon as we fell into conversation the man gave me to understand that he lived at Beverly, a town about fifty miles down the line, and from certain words I gathered that he was a prominent public official of the place. I didn't exactly recall that I was in the dye line, but he probably inferred as much from what I said. I was glad of his company. He was well posted, a fair talker.

The women got out at Durham and left us alone. We passed Darlington and were still the sole occupants of the compartment. Mr. Arnold, as he had given his name, had been sitting opposite me for an hour. As the