

Her Birthday Present.

By JANE LUDLUM LEE.

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Robertson, the jail breaker, handcuffed king and majestica, was in town. Bill-posters were everywhere announcing his arrival at Peck's Vaudeville theater, telling of the wonderful feats he would perform. Standing before one of these posters was a pale faced, tired girl on her way home from the office. It was incredible to think that a man could do the things advertised—to see a man break out of jail, to unlock the dreaded handcuffs before your very eyes! Oh, no; it was too wonderful to believe! She had often watched a crowd of urchins following a man who had been arrested and once had seen him taken to the lockup, but that a man could get out of his own free will—this seemed incredible.

She gave a final look at the picture of the man on the poster, tucked her novel tightly under her arm and moved slowly toward home. It was her



"I WANT TO GO HOME. PLEASE TAKE ME," birthday, and her mother had given her a dollar to buy herself a present. She still had the dollar, and she thought over to her that she could take a girl friend to the vaudeville tonight and see this wonderful man. Then she recalled that her mother objected to girls going to the theater alone. After eating her dinner she decided that she was too tired. She would stay at home.

The ringing of the doorbell after dinner aroused her from her lethargy. She went to the door and opened it. "Hello, Janet!"

"Why, Billy, won't you come in, or shall we sit on the stoop? It's pretty warm inside."

"I came around to see if you would go with me to Peck's Vaudeville tonight. The handcuff king is there, you know, and today is your birthday."

"Oh, Billy, will you really take me? I've been longing to go ever since I read about him. You sit here on the stoop, and I'll be ready in a jiffy."

Billy sat down to wait, and Janet was soon in the midst of her toilet. She donned her best brown frock and flower trimmed hat because she noticed that Billy had put on his best gray suit and had his cane with him. They found the theater packed and were fortunate in securing two balcony seats. The noisy songs and three-

some dialogues which came before the handcuff king's appearance on the bill seemed interminable. No. 7 finally appeared his number. He came out—not the strong, big man she had pictured, but a little, muscular foreigner, and they chained him hand and foot, locked and relocked the leg irons and handcuffs on and left him there to get out as best he could.

Janet hung over the balcony rail, and Billy's eyes feasted on the bright and happy face beside him. The little fellow on the stage began his act. Slowly twisting, turning and writhing, seemingly in great pain, for several moments he made no headway.

"Billy, he is being hurt! Why don't some one help him?" Janet implored.

"Of course it hurts him, but no one can help him. He must get out alone."

"Yes, but that's cruel. Just see the veins in his arms! Oh, Billy, I can't stand it to see a poor man suffer so! Look, Billy! His face is getting redder and redder every minute!" she cried as she hid her face in her hands.

There was a deathlike silence in the house. You could hear a pin drop in the awful stillness in which the man held the audience. Janet peeked out between her fingers, but dared not really look. Billy leaned a little closer and gave her arm a reassuring pat. It encouraged her to speak. Leaning close to him, she whispered:

"Billy, I'm ashamed to tell you, but I want to go home. Please take me. I'm so frightened."

"Why, of course, little girl, but I thought you wanted to see him get loose."

"I didn't know it would hurt him," she whispered.

Out in the street, with a tight hold on his arm, her feet left her, and when Billy suggested Green's for a plate of ice cream she readily agreed. Away from the atmosphere of the theater and the picture of that writhing, suffering man she was once more herself.

Suddenly Janet stopped eating, her eyes stared straight ahead, and instinctively Billy turned to see who had attracted her attention. It was the handcuff king, not a king after all; just a mortal man thirsting for a dish of ice cream.

"Oh, Billy, I'm so glad he got out. I never could have slept with the picture of that poor man in chains."

"Of course he got out, you silly child. He always does. Janet, your women are a funny lot. You never know what you want. I came home this afternoon and passed you as you were standing there gazing at the poster."

white hands and could hardly blame him.

"I'll take 'em off for you," urged Vincent. "Come on."

"No, thanks. Besides, I've got to go up to town tomorrow afternoon with grandmother."

"I've a good mind to go myself," said Vincent. "This country life's getting on my nerves. What train are you going on?"

"Give it up," answered the boy resignedly. "Grandmother changes her mind every five minutes. But you'll find country life all right after tonight, old man. I'm going to bring my sister back with me."

"Didn't know you had one, Nix. That's jolly. What's she like?"

"The freshest ever."

"Good! Is she pretty?"

"People tell her so. She pretends not to like it, but I bet she does."

"Introduce me to the very first thing?"

"As soon as you like."

Then the boy sighed.

"What's the matter with you, Nix?"

"Oh, just thinking how it will be all over with me after she comes. I can see you falling in love with her now. What does it feel like, Vin, to be in love?"

"Tell you, my child, when I've been there."

"Oh, fudge! You've been there a dozen times."

"Honor, I haven't; thought I was sometimes, of course, just as you will, Nix, when all the girls begin to run after you."

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"Don't you believe it. Girls adore eyes like yours. Are your sister's eyes that same wonderful blue, and has she curly brown hair like yours?"

"Oh, quit it!" Nix replied petulantly and walked off toward the house in the darkness.

The next night, in order not to seem too eager, Vincent let the sun disappear and waited for the young moon to hang up her crescent before he took his usual way up the hill. He discarded the short cut over the fence and made a very proper entrance through the garden gate.

As he neared the grape arbor he could see the white folds of a woman's skirt, and his heart fluttered with anticipation.

"Mr. Vincent?" asked the young girl, standing hesitatingly at the other end of the arbor. "My brother was detained in town. He asked me to—"

"Nix, you witch, come here!" laughed Vincent, crushing the girl to him in all her freshness and kissing away her little gasps of exostulation.

"When did you find it out?" she managed to get breath enough to say at last.

"I knew it all the time," answered Vincent softly.

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed the girl and hid her hot cheeks in her hands. "How did you know it?"

"I had seen you in those charming boy's togs before, little actress, and recognized you the moment I jumped over the fence, though I could scarcely believe my eyes."

"You were at those theatrics?"

"Spit the girl. 'Goodness gracious! You aren't John Vinton, the actor, are you, the one we girls rave over?'"

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The Escape of Sir Archibald Douglas at Poitiers.

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How Foundations of Great Steel Structures Are Built.

The foundations for the great steel structures are built by means of caissons in which the men can work under a great pressure of air. It is a very interesting sight to watch them, and the best of it is that any one may see them at close range from an adjoining sidewalk. The caisson is a hollow steel cylinder open at the bottom and just large enough to permit a man to work. The workman climbs down a ladder in this tube and digs away the earth at the bottom. As the earth is taken away the steel tube is gradually lowered. The earth is taken out by a bucket, which is lowered and raised by a tall derrick at one side. As the caisson sinks, air is pumped into the compartment containing the man. This is to force back any water or dirt that might fill the hole from the outside as fast as the workman removes it from within. The pressure of this air is often so great that a man can work but an hour or so at a time. At the top of the caisson is a steel cylinder with an air tight door at either end, which serves as a kind of vestibule to the tube below.

When one of the caisson workers starts to go to work he opens the door or lid at the top and climbs in, when the opening is once more tightly closed. This door or lid is air tight. After the opening to the outer air has been closed the workman opens the door at the bottom of this steel compartment and lets in compressed air from the caisson below. It takes a few minutes to become accustomed to the breathing atmosphere, for the heavy air makes the head ring. As soon as the workman can do so he climbs down into the funnel below, closing the lower door of the steel caisson as he does so. All this must be done in the dark. If the workman wishes to signal the outer world he may do so by striking the steel sides of his narrow prison with his shovel. He usually signals in this way when the bucket is to be raised or lowered.—Francis Arnold Collins in St. Nicholas.

Also Won a Reputation and Saved Himself Further Trouble.

Press agents, like other individuals, have their troubles, but there is one in Philadelphia who has fewer of them than the ordinary man. Asked one day how he managed so well to get along with everybody, he explained:

"Well, I won a reputation. You see, when a press agent is able to give a man heart disease from which he actually dies his troubles cease! I persons have a proper regard for their lives. I was the press agent for a German singing post. I naturally used the German papers."

"There was one editor who had the idea that he wasn't getting all that was due. Nevertheless he published column after column of type and pictures."

"Afterward the managers of the show received a bill for \$820 'for advertising.' They were in a rage. 'What shall we do?' they demanded. 'Don't get excited, I cautioned 'em. 'I'll fix that all right!'"

"I went to the office of a friend, and, going to the type cases, I stuck the finest billhead you ever laid eyes on. I printed it in two inks. It read, 'The Two Continents Engraving Company; John Smith, manager.' Next I wrote this account, 'To Peter Jacob Schmidtheiser, Dr., to cuts for German festival, \$820.'"

"When Schmidtheiser received the bill he fainted. He revived and sent for me."

"For vot is it you scharge me for der cuts vot I could pay for 40 cents apiece, yet?" he demanded.

"That's all right, old man, I assured him. 'You might buy those cuts from anybody else for 40 cents apiece, but not of me!'"

"He refused to pay the bill, but not long afterward he was stricken with heart disease and died. His executors found the bill, with its balance of \$70 in my favor. They asked me what I'd take to settle, and I told them \$50. They paid it cheerfully, and since then I haven't had any trouble."—San Francisco Chronicle.

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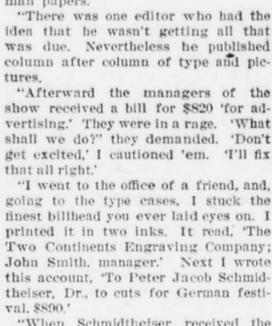
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"You struck it, or rather me, just right, young man, I do like company. What's your name?"

"Nix."

"That's easy to remember."

"Short for Nixon. What's yours?"

"Vin."

"What?"

"Vin—short for Vincent."

"Oh, I see." And the boy laughed merrily and slapped his knee.

"Boarding down at the farm?"

"Yes, and beastly tired of it. You live here all the year around?"

"Good gracious, no! Just staying a few weeks with my grandparents. Dead slow! You're the only civilized man I've seen since I got here."

A brief silence followed, in which Vincent struck a match and lighted a cigarette.

"Have one, Nix?"

"No, thanks."

"Too young, I s'pose. I contracted the habit long before I was your age, though."

"Oh, 'tisn't that," answered Nix carelessly, crossing one well shap'd leg over the other. "But the grandparents, you know—they think it's a crime."

"They won't be out here, will they?"

"Oh, no. But I have to kiss 'em good night. I'm their son's only son, you see—the baby of the family."

Vincent laughed heartily at the boy's tone of disgust.

"Any pretty girls in the neighborhood?" he asked after a puff or two.

"You seen any?" returned Nix.

"Not one—more's the pity."

"You like 'em, then?"

"Bet your life! Don't you?"

"Oh, so-so. I get on better with fellows, though."

"You'll get over that," laughed Vincent. "But I must be going. It's nearly pitch dark, and I'll lose my way down to the farm."

"Coming up tomorrow night?"

"Sure thing! You won't have to waste any more-green apples on me. Good night!"

One night a week or so later, in which time Vincent and his young friend had become great chums, the former proposed a fishing trip over the mountains, but Nixon shook his head listlessly.

"No hit, Vin," he replied. "Never could stand fishing. Gets your hands so messed up taking the flapping things off the hook."

Vincent looked at the boy's fastidious eyes and decided that it would not go out in the evening. So I used to pretend to go to bed early, and then I put on those clothes and climbed down over the shed and—oh, you know the rest!"

"But what made you throw the apples at me?" persisted Vincent, holding her little hands captive.

"Boys always throw apples at people," was her unexpected reply, "and you were the only man—I mean person—in sight."

"It was a lucky hit for me, dear est," commented her lover, drawing her close and kissing her boyish mouth again and again.

A Lucky Hit.

By Martha Cobb Sanford.

Copyrighted, 1917, by Homer Sprague.

A man sat on the brow of a hill and kicked himself. Incidentally he was smoking a cigarette and watching the sunset.

Why, oh, why, had he ever thought that he needed absolute rest and quiet—that he didn't want ever to hear applause again or to look into people's faces? A solid week of this coveted solitude had made him "a sadder and a wiser man." What wouldn't he give this very moment for something to happen?

He jumped up suddenly. Something had happened, something very aggravating. As he stooped down to pick up the little green apple that had hit him square on the shoulder a boyish laugh rang out on the other side of a nearby fence.

He threw the apple back over the fence again and reversed his opinion on the value of absolute quiet.

The next night the same thing happened, only this time when the apple roused him from his reverie the sun had been some time set and darkness and silence were stealing over the hill.

"I'll catch that kid this time," he said, jumping up.

With a run and a bound he made the fence and landed lightly on the other side face to face with a young fellow almost as tall as himself.

"Well, bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "I expected to find a kid. I was coming over to lick you."

"Forget it," returned the youth, leading the way to a seat under a luxuri-



ous grape arbor. "I've been watching you every night; thought perhaps you'd like company, so threw you an invitation."

"You struck it, or rather me, just right, young man, I do like company. What's your name?"

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"Good gracious, no! Just staying a few weeks with my grandparents. Dead slow! You're the only civilized man I've seen since I got here."

A brief silence followed, in which Vincent struck a match and lighted a cigarette.

"Have one, Nix?"

"No, thanks."

"Too young, I s'pose. I contracted the habit long before I was your age, though."

"Oh, 'tisn't that," answered Nix carelessly, crossing one well shap'd leg over the other. "But the grandparents, you know—they think it's a crime."

"They won't be out here, will they?"

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Vincent laughed heartily at the boy's tone of disgust.

"Any pretty girls in the neighborhood?" he asked after a puff or two.

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"Bet your life! Don't you?"

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"Boys always throw apples at people," was her unexpected reply, "and you were the only man—I mean person—in sight."

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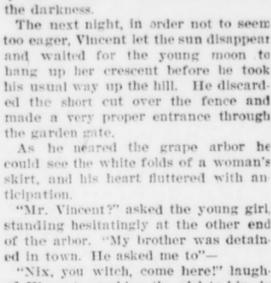
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The Little Red House.

By JEROME SPRAGUE.

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Brady, whizzing along Riverside in his big automobile, was a lonely man. Before he had made his money he had lived on a farm, and in his rips back and forth from town there had been the greetings of good neighbors and the welcome of the farm hands, and at home the sociability of the meals at the great table, where maids and men gathered with the family.

There was no sociability in New York. For days he had wandered into the theaters and through the hotels, avoiding instinctively the men who would have cultivated him merely for what they could get out of him, but finding no friends.

At last, in desperation, he had learned to drive an automobile and spent his days in making long trips into the country, hobnobbing with the farmers who leaned over the fence rails to talk to him and leaving them wistfully when they returned to their toll.

Today as he sped down the drive, with its rows of clifflike buildings, he yearned for some cherry spot where he might eat and drink with a friend. And it was at this moment that his eye was caught by a sign in the window of the little red house.

The little red house was set at the edge of a vacant lot, and it seemed a very shabby neighbor to the stately white apartment house that flanked it on the left. It had a sloping roof, a few vines hung to the porch, and just above the door was the sign that had attracted Brady's notice, and the sign read, "Fresh Cherry Pies."

Brady swept up to the curb and climbed out of his machine. His great form filled the low doorway and shut



out the sunlight, so that at first he could not see clearly the figure behind the counter.

"I came in to ask about the cherry pies," he said. "Can I eat one here or must I carry it away with me?"

There was a ripple of laughter, and Brady moved to one side and saw that the person in charge was a girl, fresh faced, pretty and trim.

"You can eat it here," she said, taking a pie out of the case. "People usually take them away, but there is a little table and a chair, and I could make you a cup of coffee."

"Could you?" Brady's tone was eager. "I'm awfully hungry, and it is so pleasant here."

She was cutting the pie, but she looked up as he said that. "Oh, do you like it?" she asked. "I hope every one will. I am just beginning business, and I want to make a fortune."

Brady, who had made his fortune in oil, was much interested in this more picturesque method.

"Do you sell many?" he asked.

"Twenty yesterday," she confided. "I worked at night to get them ready, but it seemed as if every one wanted cherry pies. The people in the apartment house came, and I have sold out everything today except this one pie."

It was a beautiful pie, with a delicate brown crust overlaid with powdered sugar and all rosy and juicy and delicious within.

"I don't wonder that people came," commented Brady as he sat down at the little table, which she had spread with a spotless cloth.

She was like a child in her delight at his compliment.

"It was the only thing in the world that I knew how to do," she said, "and when I was left alone and had the little income that my father had left me I decided to bake for a living."

She was sitting opposite him, and he liked the unconsciousness with which she gave him her confidence.

"I lived in the country when I was a little girl, and my mother taught me to cook."

"I'm from the country, too," Brady said.

"I thought so," she said, with a wise nod. "I think that is why I could tell you things. One can't always be sure of city men."

"Don't you hate the city?" Brady asked.

She shook her head. "No," she said.

"It would be beautiful if one had friends or any one to care."

"Well, that's what I mean," Brady said. "It's so dead on some."

He had finished his pie, and he got up reluctantly. "I'm sorry," he said, "but I guess I'd better go."

She went to the door with him.

"What a beautiful automobile!" she said when she saw it.

"Yes, it's pretty nice," Brady agreed. "But it isn't much fun driving around by myself."

"No, I suppose not," sympathetically.

There was a moment's silence. Then Brady spoke his thoughts boldly.

She hesitated. "I don't believe I ought," she said.

Brady looked down at her. "Can't you trust me?" he asked.

"Her eyes met his steady blue ones. 'Yes,'" she said simply and went to put on her hat.

"You see," she told him as they went along between the green fields, "if I sell twenty pies a day at 25 cents that will be \$5 a day. I ought to clear \$100 a month." And she leaned back, with a sigh of content.

Brady, whose income was \$100 or more a day, asked with interest, "What are you going to do with all that money?"

"Save it and buy a cottage in the country, with a fireplace and a cat and a dog and a cow."

Brady's soul was stirred by this picture of domesticity, and he asked enthusiastically:

"Will you bake cherry pies?"

"Yes," she planned. "I am going to have a cherry tree and an apple tree. You have never tasted such apple tarts as I can make."

Brady turned in his seat and looked at her. "I am going to taste them," he informed her. "I am going to come and see you in your cottage."

She laughed. "Such air castles!" was her way of settling the question.

But Brady's chin was set with squareness, and there was determination in his tones. "I don't see how I shall do it myself, and there shall be a fireplace—such a fireplace—with two big chairs on the hearth"—he paused expressively—"and a cat, a comfortable tabby cat, and a nice, confiding dog, and a mild eyed cow, and I am going to invite you to my cottage to make my apple tarts."

She smiled at him without self-consciousness. "What dreamers we are!"

"Well, maybe you think it's a dream"—Brady's tone was dogged—"but some day I shall ask you to come."

There was no mistaking what he meant.

"Please don't," she begged.

Brady gave her a whimsical glance.

"Well, I suppose it is too soon to talk about it," he agreed. "But that cottage will need something besides a cow and a dog and a cat for me to be happy. It will need a wife and a woman worth loving—and until today I hadn't seen such a woman."

"You have known me but three hours."

"Three hours or three years! What's the difference when I know I have found the one I want?"

They were back again on the city drive, and the little red house was in sight.

"We don't have to settle anything now," Brady told her quietly. "Of course I couldn't expect you to feel the way I do. But what I want to know is this—may I come again?"

She hesitated; then, as he lifted her out of the car with his strong arms, she smiled up at him.

"Yes," she said, "if you like you may come again."

HOW THE MOON LOOKS.

Queer Variance in Impressions as to the Same Object.

I asked my men to compare the size of the full moon to that of some object held in the hand at arm's length. I explained the question carefully and said that they were to describe an object just large enough when seen at arm's length to cover the whole moon. My list of answers begins as follows:

Quarter of a dollar, fair sized cantaloupe; at the horizon, large dinner plate; overhead, dessert plate; my watch, six inches in diameter, silver; hundred times as large as my watch, man's head, fifty cent piece, nine inches in diameter, grape fruit, carriage wheel, butter plate, orange, ten feet, two inches, one cent piece, schoolroom clock, a pea, soup plate, fountain pen, lemon pie, palm of the hand, three feet in diameter—enough to show again the overwhelming manifoldness of the impressions received.

To the surprise of my readers perhaps it may be added at once that the only man who was right was the one who compared it to a pea. It is most probable that the results would not have been different if I had asked the question on a moonlight night with the full moon overhead. The substitution of the memory image for the immediate perception can hardly have impaired the correctness of the judgments. If in any court the size of a distant object were to be given by witnesses, and one man declared it as large as a pea and the second as large as a lemon pie and the third ten feet in diameter it would hardly be fair to form an objective judgment till the psychologist had found out what kind of a mind was producing that estimate.—Professor Hugo Munsterberg in McClure's.

Clean Chopsticks Sure.

"Seeing these quip toothpicks done up in paper envelopes in the hotels here," said the man from the far east, "reminds me of the Japanese eating places. In the bigger hotels or restaurants they hand you the chopsticks done up in a sealed envelope. This is with the idea of convincing you that they never have been used before, which is not always so. In the cheaper restaurants they have a much better plan for setting your mind at rest. There you get a piece of wood as long as one chopstick split to within an inch of one end. When you take this piece of wood you split it the rest of the way, and there you have the two sticks. You can be sure then that no other person has used them."—New York Sun.

The City of Glorious Sunshine.

Of all the living works of man which I have visited I think none is the equal of Moscow in interest and beauty. It is a city of glorious sunshine, of golden domes and silver crosses and of multicolored cupolas, of palaces and temples. In it are found all the refinements of the west and all the curious fascinations of the east. Even the incidents of ordinary commonplace civilized life are touched by a flavor of romance.—Wide World Magazine.

Compensation.

"But suppose you awake from your dream to find that the feet of your idol are but clay?"

"That will be all right if I find the rest of him turned into dust."—Houston Post.

Luther said that if a man were not strong at twenty, handsome at thirty, learned at forty and rich at fifty he never would be strong, handsome, learned or rich.

Curious Westerland Custom.

A strange custom is observed yearly in the small hamlet of Week, in West morland, in commemoration of an incident that happened in the year 1841. That year there was a plague of wasps