JAMES, THE UNRULY.

A St. Patrick's Day Episode Which Developed a "Cupid."

By CLARISSA MACKIE.

"James Mullin, you may remain after school," said Miss Degan, pointing a long ruler at the freckled faced boy.

Jimmy smiled scornfully and threw another paper wad at the back of his bitterest foe and settled down in his seat.

"Get your hat and coat, James. I am going to take you to your father. Perhaps you will explain to him why you cannot obey me."

When Anna Degan reached Mr. Mullin's office she confronted a tall, handsome man with black eyes much like Jimmy's own, who looked down upon the two visitors with a friendly smile.

"Sit down," he said, bringing forward a chair.

"I am James' teacher—Miss Degan," she began primly. "James is so unruly, Mr. Mullin, that I have brought him with me today to say that unless your influence can be brought to bear upon him or that you can assure me of his future good behavior I very much fear that Mr. Broadman will expel him."

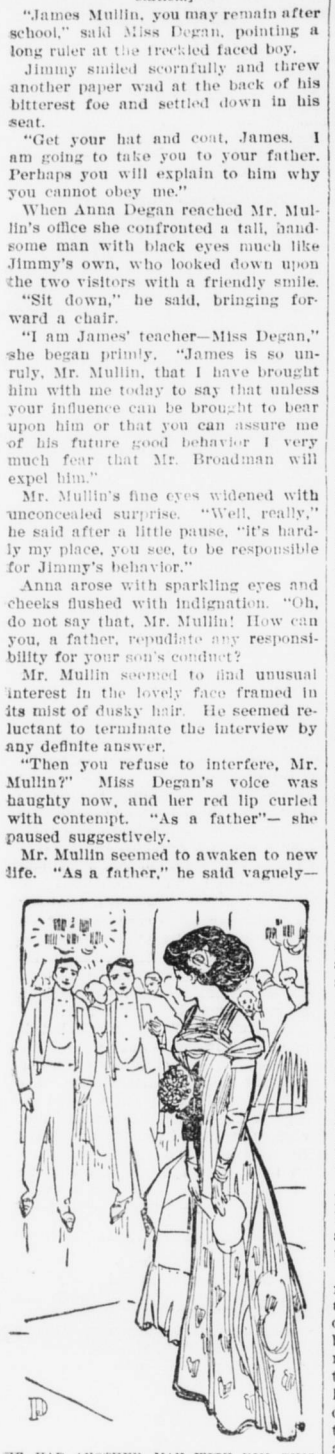
Mr. Mullin's fine eyes widened with unconcealed surprise. "Well, really," he said after a little pause, "it's hardly my place, you see, to be responsible for Jimmy's behavior."

Anna arose with sparkling eyes and cheeks flushed with indignation. "Oh, do not say that, Mr. Mullin! How can you, a father, repudiate any responsibility for your son's conduct?

Mr. Mullin seemed to find unusual interest in the lovely face framed in its mist of dusky hair. He seemed reluctant to terminate the interview by any definite answer.

"Then you refuse to interfere, Mr. Mullin?" Miss Degan's voice was haughty now, and her red lip curled with contempt. "As a father"— she paused suggestively.

Mr. Mullin seemed to awaken to new life. "As a father," he said vaguely—



HE HAD ANOTHER MAN WITH HIM THIS TIME.

"as a father"— He stopped abruptly and shot a fierce glance at Jimmy edging toward the outer door. Then he went on with a return of the friendly smile with which he had greeted her: "I believe you will have no further trouble with Jimmy, Miss Degan. I will take him in hand. He shall not cause you any more trouble. I am sorry he has distressed you. It must be rather a task to keep these young imps in order."

From his tall height he looked down on her in such genial good nature that Anna Degan found herself liking Alderman Mullin very much indeed. "Thank you so much, Mr. Mullin," she said gratefully. "I was afraid to come to you at first because"— She paused in embarrassment and turned to the door.

Mr. Mullin's eyes twinkled. "Alderman Mullin's bark is worse than his bite," he said dryly as he opened the outer door and accompanied her to the elevator.

At the farther end of the corridor James, the unruly, was engaged in a silent, furious wrestling match with the office boy. At Mr. Mullin's sharp whistle they disentangled themselves and approached.

It was then that Mr. Mullin gripped one of Jimmy's generous ears and so led him, walking stiffly, into the inner office and closed the door.

In the long ride uptown Anna Degan tried to forget the interview with Alderman Mullin. It had turned out much better than she had expected, and yet there had seemed an instant when he was about to refuse to take any part in the discipline of his own and only son. She had been surprised to find the father of James such a young and amiable looking man. She had heard such stories of his fiery, dominant nature she had hesitated to bring a complaint before him. She had feared for the boy—Jimmy had always spoken in tones of almost terror of his father—and yet—

She gave up the problem and tried to think of the pleasure that awaited her that evening. It was the 17th of March—St. Patrick's day—and she was going to the big ball of the Loyal Emerald Knights. Mr. Mullin had worn a sprig of shamrock in the lapel of his well fitting coat. Anna blushed redly and remembered with a certain fierce exultation the day that Jimmy's mother, "Mrs. Alderman Mullin," had visited the school. The recollection of her rubicund face and good natured and voluble flow of conversation quite drove away the picture of Jimmy's good looking father. After that she thought of nothing save the ball.

The orchestra was playing "The Kerry Dance" when Anna entered the ballroom with her sister and brother-in-law, and her little foot beat time to the swinging measure with anticipated delight.

Her gown was a triumph of tender love for the mother country and affection and loyalty to the new republic that had opened its arms to her people. Anna had planned it weeks before, and her skillful fingers had made it—green silk gauze embroidered with little golden harps, folds of white chiffon inside the low cut bodice, and inside the chiffon against her snowy neck three folds of chiffon—red, white, and blue.

The entrancing music of old Irish melodies, the polished floor crowded with brilliant gowns and the handsome uniforms of the Emerald Knights, the eager spectators in the gallery overhead, all formed a beautiful picture that Anna Degan never forgot.

She danced again and again with old friends and new ones whom her brother-in-law, Larry Fane, brought up to her. As she sat resting, her face aglow with exercise and pleasure, Larry approached with a large red faced man, black of brow and with scowling black eyes. His smile was pleasant, however, and seemed to indicate that the scowl was but a bad habit.

Anna's heart seemed to stand still when Larry spoke, "Anna, let me introduce Mr. Mullin—Mr. Alderman Mullin of the Seventh ward."

Then Larry disappeared, and Anna found herself permitting Mr. Mullin to scrawl his name against the next vacant space on her dance card, which proved to be the one she was sitting out, and so presently she was whirling about in the stiff embrace of Mr. Alderman Mullin, who growled a few sentences above her head, stepped on her pretty green shod toes without apologizing and finally left her breathlessly sitting on a divan in a corner far distant from her little group of friends.

She was glad of the respite to think over the startling situation. If this gentleman was Alderman Mullin, the father of James, the unruly, who, then, was the gentleman who had impersonated the alderman and made himself responsible for the behavior of James?

Across the room a couple revolved stiffly in the girations of a waltz; Anna recognized the burly form of the now familiar Mr. Mullin and also that of the lady she had known as Jimmy's mother. As for the other man—her face grew hot with indignation, and she looked lovelier than ever when Larry found her out. He had another man with him this time.

"Mr. Alderman Mullin's cousin, sis—another Mullin and a gentle knight—a good friend of my own! George, my sister, Miss Degan!"

Larry left the two facing each other in the quiet corner, the man, resplendent in green and white satin and gold, looking tenderly down on the young girl in green and gold.

Miss Degan looked him squarely in the face and with contemptuous shrug turned away, but he caught her little gloved hand in his own with a swift gesture.

"Wait, please," he said gravely, and Miss Degan waited for his explanation. It came after a little while, haltingly, as from a man who is not accustomed to explain his actions:

"When a little lad is afraid of his father, Miss Degan, he naturally turns to some man whom he knows is fond of him and will stand by him in trouble. Jimmy confessed to me this afternoon that he was afraid to take you to his father—his father would thrash him, and that is all the good it would do! So the lad brought you to me and trusted me to understand the situation and to stand by him. I didn't get on to his little game till after you went, though I understood from his looks he was in trouble, so I let it go, hoping to see you again and explain matters to you. I had a talk with Jimmy, and he's going to be good. In fact, I've told him I shall call at the school every week and find out what his deportment is. I hope you do not mind, Miss Degan."

Anna listened to the long speech with downcast eyes and trembling lips. She was glad that she had spared Jimmy a whipping from his stern father and that this kind hearted cousin had masqueraded before her as Jimmy's parent. He had a good face, and, after all, Jimmy would improve and room No. 12 might be a credit to the grade after all!

She smiled gratefully up at Mr. George Mullin and dashed a tear from the corner of her eye. "I am very glad you did not disillusion me. I was so tired and cross just then I might have taken Jimmy down to his father's office, wherever it is."

"He'll be a good boy after this," promised Jimmy's big cousin as they glided into a waltz. Sweetly, alluringly, came the strains of "Kathleen Mavourneen," and they did not speak again until it was over. After a little while Mullin asked softly:

"And I may come to the school once a week and look at Jimmy's report, Miss Degan?"

Anna's fingers touched the little golden harps on her pretty fan, and they seemed to give forth strange, sweet music—happy music that fell in cadence with his deep, melodious voice:

"Yes, come," she said demurely. "I think it is a very good idea."

Jimmy Mullin never could understand why, after that, his cousin, George Mullin, always called him "Cupid."

The White Shark.

The shark of sharks, the real "man eater" and the one most dreaded, is the white shark. This variety reaches a length of thirty-five feet and a weight of 2,000 pounds. Its head is long and flat, and the snout far overhangs the mouth. Its six rows of teeth are sharp as lancets and notched like saws. Its mouth is very large, so that one has been known to cut a man's body completely in two at a single snap of its cruel jaws and another to swallow one at a gulp. Near Calcutta one of these sharks was seen to swallow a bullock's head, horns and all. From the stomach of another a bull's hide was taken entire, and the sailor who made the discovery insisted that the bull had been swallowed whole and all except the hide had been digested. From the stomach of another was taken a lady's workbox filled with the usual contents, scissors and all. It is commonly the white shark which follows the vessel at sea day after day and week after week.

Let no man presume to give advice to others who has not first given good counsel to himself.—Seneca.

THE KEY OF DEATH.

A Story of Italian Methods In Mediaeval Times.

By F. A. MITCHEL.

When Venice was mistress of the maritime world she attracted many young men desirous of profiting by her commercial advantages. Among them was one Giuseppe Pessero, who went there from Rome. Pessero was of good family and had been intimate with the Borgias, the Farnese and other great families at a time when the Italians were very skillful in getting rid of those who stood in their way by means of poison.

One afternoon, while being pulled in a gondola from St. Mark's down toward the Rialto, Pessero passed a barge in which sat a vision of loveliness.

"Giovanni!" exclaimed Pessero when the two boats had passed. "Who is that lady?"

"That, signor," replied the gondolier, "is Signorina Francesca del Prombo."

"Turn, Giovanni—turn at once and follow."

The gondola was swung around and pulled to a flight of steps leading to the square of St. Mark's. The lady had embarked and entered the square when Pessero's gondola drew up to the steps. In a few minutes he saw the Signorina Francesca join a party of gentlemen and ladies who were sitting idly, some reading, some playing on lutes, others chatting. Pessero, seeing one among them he knew, spoke to him and was introduced to the group.

But it was Francesca that he wanted. Seizing the earliest opportunity, he devoted himself to her, though without encouragement. Francesca was betrothed to Luigi Sansovino, one of her own rank and high in favor with the doge. Disregarding this, Pessero persisted in his attentions and after an acquaintance of a few weeks made bold to ask for Signorina del Prombo's hand. It is needless to say that his suit was rejected.

That was a far different age from this. While the people had attained a certain refinement, they seemed still to retain the traits of their barbarian ancestors. It was not an uncommon thing for a man rejected by a woman to revenge himself upon her.

HORROR STRICKEN, HIS BRIDE BENT OVER HIM.

Pessero resolved that no one except himself should possess Francesca. But he bided his time. He heard of the preparations making for her wedding with Sansovino, how the looms were spinning fine fabrics for her wedding gown and how the most delicate lace was being woven for her adornment. He showed no sign of dissatisfaction. He was engaged most of the day and at times far into the night in a little workshop that he had fitted up in his home.

When the day for the wedding came Pessero stood at the entrance to St. Mark's church, where the ceremony was to take place, among a crowd of people eager to see the beautiful Francesca del Prombo attired for the bridal. The groom as he passed in saw the face of the man who had aspired to his place wearing the look of a fiend. Pessero was on the inner edge of the crowd, and the two men touched as the procession passed. Sansovino looked away and in another moment felt a sharp pain in his breast. Before he had entered the body of the church he fainted. Horror stricken, his bride bent over him, endeavoring to recall him to consciousness—all in vain. In a few minutes he was dead.

Francesca's quick eye had detected the malevolent face of Pessero in the crowd, and she was seized with an indefinable dread. From the moment her lover had sunk down on the marble pavement she divined that he had been stricken by the hand of her rejected suitor. She was carried to the canal, placed in her barge and rowed to the family palace. As soon as she came out of the frantic condition into which she had been thrown by the tragedy she cried:

"He was killed by Pessero!"

"Pessero!" exclaimed her father and mother in a breath.

"He was at the church. He rubbed against Luigi as we passed. The fiend killed him!"

Signor del Prombo consulted with his most intimate friends, and it was considered possible for Pessero to have stabbed his victim by means of a blade so thin that no blood would flow. A surgeon was directed to carefully examine the body, with a view to discovering if the mark of any instrument of death had been left upon it. The examination was made and the report awaited with intense eagerness.

"Well," said Signor del Prombo when the surgeon came to report.

"He was assassinated."

"How? Stabbed?"

"Not exactly. A small steel needle was injected into the flesh."

"How? By whom?"

"That I cannot tell."

"Was death caused by this instrument?"

"There may have been poison on it."

"Could you detect poison?"

"There were no traces of anything on the needle."

The Del Prombo family were sure that the needle had in some mysterious manner been injected by Pessero into the breast of the murdered man. But who was to give evidence of the fact? Nor were the courts of that time overburdened with justice. More than that, the detective methods of the present day were then unheard of. So there was nothing to do but suffer and permit the murderer to go his way.

Francesca, feeling that her life had been blighted, decided to go into a convent. The palace of St. Mark's and its gay company knew her no more. She disappeared entirely from the world.

One day not long after her retirement Pessero succeeded under the guise of a mendicant in gaining access to her. Before she was aware of it she was in an apartment alone with the murderer of her lover. Throwing off his disguise, he knelt at her feet and implored her to take pity on one who loved her better than life.

He was greeted with a look of horror, of detestation and with but one word:

"Murderer!"

He attempted to plead, but Francesca raised a cry for help, and in a moment the room was filled with nuns. Pessero, foiled, slunk away. But as he departed he gave Francesca a look that froze her soul. It was love changed to hate, and with it was mingled triumph.

He had no sooner gone than Francesca quickly placed her hand on her breast. The expression on her face told those about her that something serious had happened. Then she began to tear open her bodice, and there on her bosom was a drop of blood. In a word she told them that she had been stabbed by the man who had killed her lover.

A surgeon who attended the nuns when they were ill happened to be in the convent at the time. He was hurried to Francesca. In as few words as possible he was told that something was doubtless underneath the tiny wound, and he probed for it. In a few moments he extracted a steel needle.

By this time Francesca was losing consciousness from the effects of the wound, and the surgeon, believing that the needle had been poisoned before being injected, used such antidotes as he was acquainted with. For several hours Francesca's life hung in the balance; then slowly she began to revive and in a few days was restored.

In the present case Pessero was known to have been with his intended victim at the time she was stricken, and this, taken with the circumstances of Sansovino's death, was strong evidence against him. Francesca's father had concealed the cause of the death of Sansovino and the suspicion that rested on Pessero. Desirous of getting other evidence, he directed that the murderer should be kept in ignorance of what was known of his methods. Pessero, who had stricken Francesca in a moment of passion and knew from her greeting that the circumstances connected with the two tragedies would be sufficient to convict him, fled.

Signor del Prombo no sooner learned that his daughter was out of danger than he sought Pessero. Not finding him and learning that he had been seen pulling in a boat for the mainland, Del Prombo followed, caught the murderer and, single handed, brought him back to Venice. Pessero was thrown into prison and his home searched. There in his workshop were found a number of parts which together made up the implement used in his crimes.

It was a large key, in appearance very simple, but really very complex. The handle, being turned, exposed a spring which, when pressed, sent from the other end of the key a poisoned needle of such fineness that it entered the flesh and buried itself there, leaving no external trace.

There is a bridge in Venice called the "Bridge of Sighs." It spans a narrow canal leading from a prison to the palace of the doges, where court was held. It is generally supposed that in mediaeval times political prisoners passed over it for trial. It was, however, a passage for common malefactors. Visitors in Venice may now go from the palace over the bridge to the prison and down into its dungeons. In one of these dungeons Pessero was confined. He passed over the "Bridge of Sighs" to his trial and, after his conviction, passed back over the same bridge to await his execution.

It is said that Francesca, whose life he had turned from one of happiness to a cloister existence and who had, under the influence of the sisters, been turned to piety, wished to petition the court to spare Pessero's life, but was dissuaded from doing so by the mother superior on the ground that the church did not interfere with justice. Pessero was hanged.

Francesca never left the convent in which she had sought a retreat when the world paled before her. After the death of her father she inherited a fortune, which she gave to the poor. The waters of the Grand canal wash the steps leading to the palace of her family, but it is now occupied for commercial purposes. The glory of Venice and her former home have vanished.

Cuba's New Stamps.

Stamp collectors will probably be interested in the new issue of Cuban postage and revenue stamps which have been printed in New York city. The Cuban government has discarded the old design that has been used for several years and has substituted the portraits of the men who distinguished themselves in the military service of the country. The stamps range in denomination from 1 cent to $1.

Eskimos For South Pole Dash.

Eskimo drivers, with their dog teams, are to accompany the American south polar expedition, according to Professor Donald B. McMillan, who was one of Commander Peary's chief assistants in the latter's successful north pole search. In a lecture at Biddeford, Me., Professor McMillan said that during the coming summer he and Captain Robert Bartlett will go to Etah to secure Eskimos and dogs for the south pole dash.

Partridges For Fockefeller Estate.

The Hamburg-American liner Pennsylvania, which reached New York recently, brought a consignment of 1,880 partridges for John D. Rockefeller's Pocantico Hills estate, 1,000 canaries, 50 squirrels and 1,000 white mice.

Work of The Black Hussars

CAPTAIN GROOME.

THE calling of the Pennsylvania state constabulary to Philadelphia recently to help maintain order in the big trolley strike there has directed considerable attention to this organization from all over the country, and much is being written about it.

"The "black hussars," as this formidable body of fighting men is called, is under command of Captain John C. Groome, its superintendent, and was organized five years ago under an act of the Pennsylvania legislature. It comprises four companies or platoons. Each company is made up of a captain, a lieutenant, five sergeants and fifty privates.

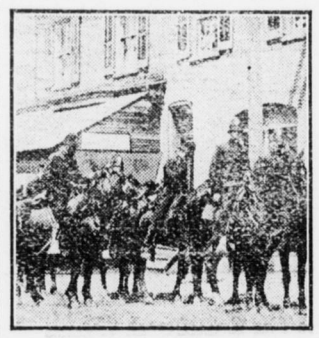
Ever since organization the men have been in the saddle, so to speak, patrolling the mountains and woods on the routine duty of enforcing the game laws and of fighting forest fires, riding off in small groups to make turbulent villages behave and occasionally assembling as a squadron of cavalry to take charge of a city like Philadelphia. At McKees Rocks and Mount Carmel they went about as individuals, making house to house searches of the shacks and tenements of the miners to confiscate dynamite and firearms. But, in spite of the dangerous character of their service, only two of the force have been killed and only nine seriously wounded in the last four years.

Of the black hussars 90 per cent of the men have served in Uncle Sam's regular army, most of them in the cavalry, and there are several ex-soldiers of the British army, so the men have fought the Boxers in China, the Spaniards in Cuba, the Boers in South Africa and the Moros in the Philippines, to say nothing of the striking Polish miners at McKees Rocks and other hotbeds of trouble in the western part of Pennsylvania.

The black hussars in their five years of service as state police have traveled by train and on horseback nearly 300,000 miles, and they have rendered service in fifty-four counties and 1,683 towns and villages, sometimes merely riding in and out again as a warning, sometimes demonstrating that their long ash riot sticks are harder than the skull of the average rioter and sometimes shooting to kill.

The nickname "black hussars" was given them on account of their uniform, which from helmet to puttees is a dead black. Even the metal pieces bearing the state coat of arms on their helmets are oxidized, so that there is a gray blur instead of a glitter. So are the shoulder bars on the captains and the lieutenants, and so are the spurs. There is nothing to flash until the long forty-fours spit fire.

The trooper's black overcoat is so long and cumbersome that it makes him look as much like a monk as a soldier, except for the fact that there is room below the bottom of it to see the spur and the lower spiral of the strap that binds the riding legging. But there is a special reason for that, as there is for every detail in the equipment of the state police. The troopers come from sections of the state where



BLACK HUSSARS READY FOR ACTION.

the snow is still several feet deep. They ride many miles in zero weather in the course of their patrol work, and when a trooper is in his saddle the skirts of that long coat spread out as a protection for his horse's flanks and his own knees.

Terms for enlistment in the state constabulary are for two years unless sooner discharged for cause, and with the long waiting list at headquarters the troopers have to lead rather exemplary lives to hold their positions. When Captain Groome began the examination of men to enlist a force of 232 he had more than 1,000 applications. It is not to be wondered that this duty is attracting the best noncommissioned officers from the regular army. The work is more exciting, the men have a chance for more initiative, and they are paid quite handsomely. A private of constabulary receives $720 a year, his horse, uniform and a house to live in. A sergeant receives $1,000 a year, a lieutenant $1,200 and captains $1,500. No married men are accepted. A trooper must be absolutely fearless. If he shows the white feather once his usefulness is ended and the force has no place for him. The motto of the organization is, "Get your man, no matter what the cost."

Exchange of Courtesies.

One of the keenest of journalists and wits, Moritz Gottlieb Saphir, had the better of the irate stranger against whom he ran by accident at the corner of a street in Munich. "Beast!" cried the offended person without waiting for an apology. "Thank you," said the journalist, "and mine is Saphir."

American to Judge Canadian Music.

Earl Grey, governor general of Canada, has appointed Howard Brockway, the composer, a native of Brooklyn, as judge for the Earl Grey musical and dramatic competitions which are to be open to all Canada and to last a week.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED.

The Course of Events After They Had Parted.

By VIRGINIA COOMBS HILL.

Sheldon McAllister left the courtroom a free man—free after five years of married life. Yet somehow he didn't feel quite proud of his success. It had been easier than he expected, for Sadie had not entered a cross bill, as he had feared she would. In fact, she had not even appeared in court at all.

He had really dreaded it, feeling so uncertain about the result, for he knew very well that she had had the best of reasons for deserting him after she had discovered that "little affair" of his. How well he remembered it all—how she had taken Laddie and gone back to her father's and how strangely lonesome the house had seemed till he had concluded to go on the road for that New York house. He thought he should feel better after that, but somehow he didn't, although he had written to her, inclosing a deed of their cozy little home.

But now, he assured himself, everything would be all right. Fritz had

"MERCIFUL HEAVEN, IT IS SADIE!"

said so, too, and Fritz ought to know (his wife had resumed her maiden name and gone on the stage). Of course Sadie was not that kind of woman at all, but he had had a generous allmony settled on her. Still, "desertion"—it did sound pretty bad, and he hadn't another thing against the girl. He began to think of what his mother had always said—that he was so impulsive and slow to forgive.

He paused in front of an art store to take in the window exhibit. He had always been fond of a really good picture, and Sadie—she had quite a talent along such lines and before their marriage had done some really creditable little things in oil. He had been proud of her and thought her quite a genius. But she had really disappointed him there, for after Laddie was born she painted only at rare intervals. He had often complained about it, but she always looked hurt and said she no longer had the time for it. The baby, to be sure, had been mighty cross day and night till Sadie was almost ill herself, and when it did forget itself and go to sleep she had had to rush about and catch up with her household duties.

But when he came home early one day and caught her putting away her easel and brushes to turn her little studio into a nursery he had been severe, justly so, too, he thought. And she had cried and cried, but was just as stubborn as she could be about it.

"What! Down in the mouth a bit, old man?" came Fritz's voice over his shoulder, and he felt himself suddenly whirled about and brought face to face with his own fair bigness in a mirror belonging to the next window display.

"There, look at that!" continued Fritz. "What has that handsome fellow to complain of anyway? Why, I'm happy even with this!" blandly surveying his own reflection, which was so ugly as to be almost comical.

"Why, do you know, Mac," he continued confidentially as they strolled up the avenue, "my wife's company is playing in town this week, and I went the first night for the express purpose of testing that part of my anatomy where my heart is supposed to be located. But, say, didn't I stand the test all O. K.? And this morning, too, I met her driving in the park with one of her adoring swains, no doubt. So, you see, old man, it's simply a matter of a short time only and a little manly grit. And to a handsome cuss like you a little matter such as a divorced wife in the background ought to be no handicap whatever."

"Handsome! Oh," said McAllister disgustedly, "good looks have been a curse to me. I only hope that that kid of mine will grow up as homely as a"—

"Nonsense! Hear the boy talk!" put in Fritz; then, pausing in front of his hotel, "Just come into the grill room here and have a nice little dinner on me, with some extras to top off on, and you'll feel like a new man."

* * * * * * *

Five years later Sheldon McAllister, on his semiannual trip west, was detained in Chicago for a few days. On the night before his departure he found himself standing in the middle of his room studying the handwriting on a faintly perfumed note he held.

In the past five years he had avoided all women with a stubbornness which had won for him the everlasting contempt of his former friend Fritz, and when that gay Lothario had gradually let their friendship cool he had laughed quietly to himself with the real relief of it. But this dainty little note somehow struck him quite irresistibly as he read:

Mr. S. D. McAllister:

Dear Sir—You will, I fear, consider it the height of presumption for a stranger to write and ask a favor of you, but I trust you will judge leniently of the eccentricities of a white haired woman who is wedded to her art. This is the favor. Will you call at my studio some afternoon this week and grant me a half hour pose? I am a magazine illustrator, and your type suits the subject matter better than any other I have yet discovered.

Very truly, VERA SHELDON.

Studio No. 6, 44 Blank street.

It is needless perhaps to say that McAllister accepted his singular invitation, staying over in order to call the next afternoon. He had always been a haunter of studios and had many a friend among the artists. This, to be sure, was an exceptional case, being a woman, but then she was "only a little, white headed old lady," he remarked complacently to himself, "old enough probably to be my mother."

So he sauntered on up Blank street, looking for her number. When he found it he entered.

The door he looked for stood open, and he paused for half a breath before knocking. Through the rope hangings of a small anteroom the large inner studio looked like a picture in a frame—draperies and rugs from the orient, luxurious pillowed divan and window seat, a cozy 5 o'clock tea table, statuettes and graceful bric-a-brac and pictures, pictures everywhere. Near the great north bay window she stood at her easel, her back toward the door.

Simply gowned in black, her figure looked young in spite of its regal crown of lovely white hair, which the western sun touched softly with a peculiar halo-like radiance. A singular little pain clutched at his heart. She turned, and "Merciful heaven, it is Sadie!" he cried, springing toward her.

She met him with hands outstretched, placing them in his; then he would have caught her up to him impulsively had not an undefinable something forbade him.

"Sadie! My wife, my wife!" he cried, crushing her hands between his.

"No, not that, Sheldon, any more, but—I wanted to see you once more—forgive the subterfuge—and—I had to keep one of your names; Vera is my middle name. It is the name, Mrs. Vera Sheldon, that I have gone by ever since I came here three years ago to try to forget—that which is unforgettable."

He stood there, looking at her in a bewildered way. What had happened? In one lightning flash he saw it all. What a fool he had been—what a fool! There was no other woman like her, and he loved her—yes, he loved her; he knew now that he had loved her through it all. And he had been so impulsive, so blind, so unrelenting. He poured it all out to her—passionately, penitently, yearningly—all the pent-up emotion of those five long, long years. And she—she listened, very gravely for a time; then she reached up and laid her hands against his broad shoulders and smiled.

He caught her to his heart with a long, low cry:

"Oh, oh, can I ever forgive myself? And you—oh, of course, you will not—you cannot!"

"You might at least ask and not take everything for granted!" she pouted, trying to turn away from him, ever so slightly.

"And Laddie," he asked, a few moments later, "our little Laddie, where is he? Surely he"—

"Laddie is at school, but will be home presently. He is quite a big boy now, dear." And she smiled up at him again. How very dark her eyes looked beneath her wonderful hair, far more beautiful, hair and eyes both, than ever before, though at what grievous cost he shuddered to think. Somehow as he looked at her he was reminded of great purple-black pansies caught under an untimely snowdrift. He touched the fluffy whiteness reverently, almost fearfully, as if it might chill his fingers. He could not speak some way, but his eyes did it for him.

"Yes," she said gravely, looking down, "sorrow has made an old woman of me. I am sorry"—

"Hush, sweet! It is not for you to apologize."

After a little he espied over by another window a second easel, quite small, upon which stood a very creditable sketch of a handsome Scotch collie dog. Crossing over, he scrutinized it approvingly.

"What have you here—the work of some pupil?"

"Yes," she answered proudly; "that is the work of my favorite pupil—Laddie!"

"Indeed!" he exclaimed, with enthusiasm. "What—our little Laddie? Why, the dear little fellow couldn't have done anything that would have pleased me more."

When Laddie came in from school an hour later he found mamma, with such a happy look in her dark eyes, pouring tea at the tiny table, and—yes, his papa standing by her with his hand on her glorious white hair and looking just as if he did not know whether to cry or be happy or both at once.

"The half hour's sitting" was, strange to say, forgotten, but Sheldon McAllister proved his "leniency toward the eccentricities of a white haired woman" by insisting on a flying visit to the county clerk's office, and when he came back he brought a minister with him.