

ACCORDING TO CONTRACT

BY MARY MARSHALL PARKS

ABOUT the county fair," said Mr. Payson. "The boys must go, of course, for Ben has a colt to enter and Billy a pig. Your Aunt Anna expects us."

He paused and looked from face to face, screwing his own into a whimsical knot.

"Now comes the tug of war. I want your mother to go, and she won't go without me."

The girls looked rather blank. Then Sara's eyes suddenly widened, and her face took on a trance-like look. Her sisters knew well, Julie pinched Cora, and whispered in Betty's ear, "Don't you say a word. Sara is plotting something, and it will be more fun than the fair."

"Do go, mother," said Sara, starting out of her reverie. "We girls went last year."

"Old Nero is as good as a lion to protect us," said Julie.

"Rather better," said Ben, dryly. "The lion might take a notion to eat you if tramps were scarce."

"The tramps—and other disreputable characters will all be at the fair," retorted Julie.

"It would be such fun!" sighed Cora. "We've never kept house all alone. It is only twenty miles, and it will be only a week, and Aunt Anna has a telephone."

"What does Bettykin say?" inquired Mr. Payson.

"I'll say my say after I've had a private conversation with Sara," Betty announced.

This conversation took place in the hen-yard, and it was not strictly private, for Cora and Julie were present, to say nothing of the hens. As Ben remarked, sarcastically, the hens had their mouths open for corn and the girls for chunks of wisdom. Sara scattered several handfuls of corn and then turned to the waiting sisters.

"We'll pick the apples," she announced. The girls looked astonished, but not disappointed. Sara's schemes were usually worth far more than their face value. Scattering more corn, she unfolded her plan:

"They were ready three weeks ago, but father has been too busy to think about them. We'll pile them in the apple-shed, and you can imagine father's surprise when he sees them."

"He won't believe we did it!" cried Cora, taking fire. "But do you really think we can?"

"We've helped father always. There are three long-handled apple pickers, one piece for you and Julie and me."

Betty's lower lip dropped, but Sara pretended not to see it.

"We'll take the two little hand-carries and fill one," she went on quickly; "then while we are filling the other Betty can wheel the first to the shed and empty it."

Sara paused and looked doubtfully at Betty.

"It requires great care," she said, artfully. "They have to be handled like eggs, and graded."

Betty swelled like the frog in the fable. "I helped father year before last, and he said I could grade as well as he," she cried, nodding vigorously.

"What do you suppose the children are up to?" Mrs. Payson asked, uneasily, as the wagon rattled down the road through the dim light of early dawn.

"We can trust Sara, I think," said Mr. Payson, equably.

In the house, they had left, Sara was marshaling her forces.

"There won't be much housework for mother has left rats-for-a-regiment in the pantry. I'll take the dishes, Cora and Julie the beds, Betty the hens. Then ho, for the orchard!"

When the little procession of carts and apple-pickers clattered out of the barn-yard the misty morning had blossomed into a perfect golden day. The fair committee congratulated themselves on the fine weather with an air of proprietorship. Old Uncle Billy Peters, the only full-grown man left in Betty township, stretched his rheumatic limbs and thanked the Lord for his share of sunshine. The Payson girls said nothing, but they knew that the very heart of that glorious day throbbed in the dear old orchard, where the fragrant breath of dying grass and clover was spiced with apples, and flocks of birds did a noisy farewell to a favorite summer resort.

It was hard work, but they were strong, young creatures, accustomed to toil. And the October air was inspiring. Mrs. Payson's fears for Betty proved groundless, for the weary child nodded over her plate, and before the others had finished supper dropped a sound slumber on the kitchen lounge, to be haled thence by her sleepy sisters, and dragged, struggling and protesting, up-stairs.

It was Sara who awoke before daylight, and relentlessly yawned the drowsy girls from their warm beds. The days in the orchard were delightful; but, oh, the discomfort of rising and dressing and "choring" in the frosty October dawn, the torment of milking and supper-getting in the chill October twilight, and the crowding weariness of hoisting plump, squirming Betty up the long, dark stairs!

At such times the game did not seem worth the candle, and it took all Sara's unquenchable enthusiasm to keep her mutinous forces at work until the last cart was full, and, laughing and singing, they ran with it to the shed.

"Father will be so pleased!" Sara sighed, delightedly, beaming with satisfaction as she surveyed the fragrant mounds of crimson and gold.

They slept late that Friday morning. Then Sara, finding that the "rations for a regiment" had disappeared before the appetites they had brought from the orchard, spent the rest of the forenoon in the kitchen with Betty, while Cora and Julie swept, aired and dusted the neglected house.

By noon everything was spic and span, and after dinner the overwrought young creatures slept again, wherever they happened to fall, Sara on the kitchen couch and Betty on the rug in front of the stove.

Late in the afternoon Sara was awakened by Nero's tremendous howl. As she sat up, staring and palpitating, he broke off with a yelp and ran whining toward the barn. Then came a thundering knock at the rarely used front door.

Turning the reluctant key in the rusty lock, Sara wrenched the door open, and found herself face to face with the blackest frown she had ever seen.

"Mr. Payson here?" asked the stranger, curtly.

"He is not," Sara replied, haughtily, resenting his tone. "He will not be home until late Saturday night."

"Perhaps you can tell me what has become of my apples," said "Black Brow," acidly.

"Your apples?" said Sara, with an indescribable accent.

"Yes, my apples!" retorted the stranger, sharply. "I bought them on the trees two months ago," indicating with his thumb the stripped orchard. Sara's righteous indignation collapsed so suddenly that she felt weak. She turned dazed eyes to the puzzled, scared faces behind her.

"We picked them," she explained, feebly.

"Picked 'em? Well, you've made a mess of it, young woman. I bought 'em on the trees, I tell you, and I've got your father's signature to an iron-clad contract. I've been counting on 'em to fill important contracts of my own. I expected to put men in here Monday. I shall hold you responsible for all damages. I cater to the fancy trade, and I prefer to do my own picking. What do you reckon I pay big wages to a gang of expert pickers and packers for? Where are those apples?"

With proud face but trembling knees, Sara brought the big key and led the way to the shed.

"Jonathans, by Jingo!" shouted the man. "I'd forgot!" He stooped and examined a pile with anxious eye and finger.

"How'd you pick 'em? Shook 'em off and dumped 'em into the shed, I reckon."

"We did not!" cried Sara, with a sudden burst of anger. "We handled them like eggs, and they are graded, as you see."

The man twitched out his watch. "Got a phone?"

"No, but the Wheelers—"

He was gone. Springing on a big black horse that stood at the gate, he rode straight across the meadows, sailing over fences and gates like a bird. As he disappeared round the Wheeler barn, Sara's knees gave way under her, and she dropped limply in the shed door.

"I'm worried to pieces!" she wailed.

"Goodness, gracious, Sara!" cried Julie, impatiently. "There are the apples. Let him come and take them."

"A contract is a contract," moaned Sara, "and we've broken it! I don't know much about contracts, but I know it is an awful thing to break one. All these apple men have their own ways of picking and grading, and we can't tell how much mischief we've done. And if he is a mean man, he can make out that we have done a great deal more than we have."

"He has a villainous face," said Cora.

"And he kicked at Nero," added Betty, hugging the huge head that nestled lovingly under her arm. "And a man that will kick at a dog—"

"I don't know," demurred sensible Julie. "If a dog came at me with its mouth open, I think I'd kick, too—if I dared."

"Father counts so on the apple money!" lamented Sara. "It takes a lot of money to run this place and this family—"

"There are so many of us!" interjected Cora, looking accusingly at her sisters.

"And last year, when the apples failed, we had a very slim Thanksgiving—"

"And no Christmas at all, to speak of!" chimed in Betty.

"I'll go right over and telephone to father!" sobbed Cora.

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Sara, rising and resolutely dashing away her tears. "Father and mother haven't had a real holiday together since they were married, and we won't spoil it."

There was to be no sound sleep for Sara that night, for when, just before dawn, she fell into a troubled doze, she was again awakened by a furious barking. She hurried to the window, and saw a huge, shapeless mass of something just stopping at the barn-yard gate. Straining her eyes, she discovered that the mass was composed of barrels, piled high in an enormous rack. She sped across the hall to the room where Cora and Julie were rubbing their eyes open.

"Girls, there are barrels and barrels at the gate. He has come for the apples!" she cried.

"He knows father isn't here, and he means to get the apples and then settle on his own terms. I'll go right over to Wheeler's and telephone," said Cora, springing out of bed and beginning to dress hurriedly.

In half an hour she was back with tragedy in her face.

"The line is down!" she said dramatically.

"I'll show them!" snarled Sara, with fire in her eyes. "I'll saddle old Billy—"

"You can't do it, Sara," answered Cora, with mournful conviction. "I came past the apple-shed. He has a man at each pile, and it's a sight to see. The apples are hopping into the barrels as if they were alive. And there is another man putting in heads and another loading."

"What is he doing?" demanded Sara.

"Stenciling the barrels." "You might know he would pick out a nice, easy job for himself!" sneered Betty.

Then they all stole out and peeped into the shed. It was a lively scene, but the apple man's red, waving beard was the banner that compelled their unwilling gaze. He stalked back and forth among the toiling men, flourishing his marking brush, reproving here and commending there, the living embodiment of swift and tireless industry.

Presently the leader dropped a barrel with such force that the head burst out, and the stream of oburgation that flowed from the apple man's ready tongue sent the girls flying to the house.

"He's exactly my idea of Belzebub!" gasped Cora.

Sara perched on the corner of the lounge and, with her chin in her hand, gazed moodily at the floor. It was all in vain that Cora patted her back, Julie smiled encouragingly, and Betty rubbed a comforting cheek against her shoulder. Sara knew herself for a determined queen. They would never follow her so blindly again.

There were long silences, but at intervals they canvassed the situation with increasing gloom; and by the time the apple man had hustled the last wagon out of the yard and dismissed his men the girls had worked themselves into a frenzy of fear, suspicion and dislike.

He strode into the kitchen, and throwing his hat into a corner, drew a chair to the table with an air that enraged Sara.

"Father will be here Monday," she said, frigidly.

"Well, I shan't!" snapped the apple man. "I've sent my men back to Spooner's, and I've got to go over there and keep 'em on the jump. Now, as I said before, I bought those apples on the trees, and according to contract—"

He fumbled in his pocket for notebook and pencil, and began figuring rapidly, speaking jerkily at intervals. Sara's face sharpened pitiously and Betty stopped breathing.

"Don't mind telling you I made a mighty good thing out of this orchard—fine orchard and I understand—reckon your pa did, too—then Eastern crops didn't pan out—and prices have risen, but of course a contract is a contract—"

He twitched the band from a fat pocketbook and took out a roll of bills.

"Now I pay my men by the day, but I know to a dot how many barrels they can pick in a day, so I know to a dot what the pickin' is worth. Did me a mighty good turn, pickin' those apples. Time's money these days, and I'm a month behind. I'd had an extra force on long ago, but hands ain't to be had. Helped me fill some important contracts—especially those Jonathans—my reputation for keepin' my word is dollars and cents to me. Mighty fine job, too. My men wouldn't have done so well, for they're obliged to hurry."

He rose and caught up his hat, leaving a little pile of bills on the table. With eyes like a sleepwalker's Sara looked from one bewildered face to another.

"Of course you understand I ain't obliged to do this," he said, proudly. "A contract's a contract, but I ain't a man to take a mean advantage, and I've added some considerable extra on account of it being such a favor on the orchard turning out so well. Tell your pa I've deposited the contract money to his credit in the Farmers' Bank, as per agreement."

He was gone. The slam of the door awoke Sara out of her doze, and she flew after him.

"Thank you so much!" she gasped. "But do you think we ought to take it? We picked the apples for father."

"They want your pa's apples; they were my apples!" answered the man, testily, swiftly untying his horse.

NEW YORK NOT A COMPLETED CITY.

Mechanically the Most Wonderful Town in the World, But Cincinnati Observer Sees Problems Ahead.

Probably no city in the world just now is making such progress as New York. The metropolis of the Western world has long been a great city. With all its greatness, it has been and still is more or less crude. Notwithstanding its magnificent buildings and its feeling, busy population, the New York of the past two decades has almost invariably impressed the thoughtful visitor as a city in process of construction. The nucleus of the great city was there, but the constant rush of building, of tunnel and bridge construction, has made it apparent that the even moderately completed city was still a dream of the future.

Of course all great cities are constantly changing to a greater or less degree. On this account no place where men reside in great numbers—save a city of the dead—can really be regarded as a completed work. As compared with New York, however, London, Paris or Vienna seems amply rounded out and finished. They change a little. New York is constantly changing a great deal.

Just now New York is passing through the greatest period of mechanical development in her history. The man who visits the metropolis five years from now, after an absence of a decade, will scarcely recognize the place. The recently finished Subway is to prove merely the first step in a vast system of underground railroads which will stretch like a web under the great city. Two or more tunnels will carry passengers under the North River. Others will do the same service for travelers between Manhattan Island and Brooklyn. With all this tunnel work, and with the new electric trolley service which most of the railroads running out of New York are soon to establish, it will not be long before it will be possible for the workers of New York to live in homes purchased at a reasonable figure twenty or thirty miles in the country, and still carry on their occupations in the city, with no more time spent on the cars than the inhabitant of Harlem has devoted to the same purpose in the recent past.

Mechanically New York is already the most wonderful town in the world. It still has problems of politics and art rather more formidable than those which confront the capitals of the Old World. Twenty years from now there will still be plenty of work requiring courage and skill ahead of the people of New York. Probably the problems of the future will be far more subtle and hard to solve than the mechanical problems in which New Yorkers are so much interested to-day. All of her tunnels and her bridges and her parks will not profit the greatest city in America a great deal if her political situation grows worse instead of better while these great feats of finance and engineering are being performed. The energy and courage with which the people of New York are meeting their present problems render justifiable the hope and belief that the problems of the future will be met as energetically and as successfully as those of the past have been.

New York is a remarkable city, well worthy of the study and, in some respects at least, the admiration of outsiders. What will it be like a century from now? The question is one well worth the attention of those who like strenuous exercise for their imagination.—Cincinnati Times-Star.

All Bight at the Last.

Before President Angell, of the University of Michigan, had attained to his present high position, a young hopeful entering college was recommended to his consideration.

"Try the boy out, professor; criticize him and tell us what you think," the parents said.

To facilitate acquaintance the professor took the boy out for a walk. After ten minutes' silence the youth ventured: "Fine day, professor."

"Yes," with a far away look.

Ten minutes more, and the young man, squinting all the time, ventured: "This is a pleasant walk, professor."

"Yes."

For another ten minutes the matriculant, late-boiled to his bones and then burst out that he thought they might have rain.

"Yes." And this time the professor went on: "Young man, we have been walking together for half an hour, and you have said nothing which was not commonplace and stupid."

"True," answered the boy, his wrath passing his modesty, "and you indorsed every word I said."

Then they laughingly shook hands, and went home from the professor that the boy was all right and that they were great friends.—Detroit News.

Military Postage Stamps.

The Italian Government is issuing what might be described as military picture stamps. Each regiment of the Italian Army is provided with a special stamp for the use of the soldiers here, longed for it. The designs are, of course, all different and of the most varied nature. There is one which shows the name of a colonel of the regiment; on another a design of rifles supporting the royal arms. The military district of Ivrea has a stamp on which a view of the town of Ivrea; on that of Milan is a representation of a military council; on that of the Twenty-second Regiment of Cavalry are the arms of Catania with the regimental motto. On the regimental stamp of the Sixtyth Bersaglieri are the notes of the regimental bugle call and motto.—Chicago Journal.

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KEYSTONE STATE CULLINGS

PROPOSED RAILROAD

New York Capitalists Willing to Finance the Road Providing Free Rights of Way Are Secured.

A meeting was held in Washington in the interests of a railroad to be built from Bishop to Waynesburg. The principal address was made by Jesse H. Wise, of Pittsburgh. Mr. Wise represents New York capitalists who will finance the road if free rights of way are secured. The road, as proposed, will be a spur of the Washburn railroad, and will be built for the purpose of tapping the rich coal fields of Greene county. A letter from George J. Gould, president of the Washburn, was read, in which he assured his company's co-operation. A committee of 25 of the representative property owners along the proposed route was appointed and will meet with the New York capitalists. Similar committees were appointed in Greene county.

Two stations on the Pittsburg division of the Pennsylvania railroad have been abolished. Increased traffic on the local division is given as the reason for cutting out the stations. G. W. Creighton, general superintendent at Altoona, issued a circular announcing the abolishing of the following stations on the local division, including the Southwest branch: Ruth, Davidson, Wheeler, Ferguson, Stambaugh, Evans, Lacolle, Conemaugh Furnace, Sang Hollow and Allegripus. The majority of the stations which were abolished were only small points and none but the local trains stopped there. The freight traffic on the Pittsburg division has reached such proportions that it became necessary to do away with some of the less important stations.

Miss Anna Brown, 19 years old, by her father and next friend, Michael Brown, of Pardoe, Mercer county, entered suit for \$5,000 damages against Edward Lewis, of Butler, for breach of promise to marry. Miss Brown declares that last August she promised to marry her and that now he refuses to fulfill his promise, although urged to do so.

John T. Dailey, a boss employed at the stables of the Dunbar Furnace Co., was brutally beaten and robbed. While going from his home to the company's stable he was accosted by two negroes, who ransacked his pockets, obtaining only a few cents. Afterward he was given a severe beating for not having in his possession more money.

Mad with jealousy, Steven Czintel shot and killed his wife and then himself at their home in Dorothy, a little mining village a mile west of Latrobe. The couple was married three months ago. Czintel was aged 23 and his wife aged 26. The husband was insanely jealous of an Allegheny butcher, and had stated he would kill either him or himself.

Plans are being completed for the construction of five new furnaces, open hearth and Bessemer, for the production of pig iron at the Bethlehem Steel Company's plants. It is stated that the total daily production of these furnaces will be 2,500 tons. A rolling mill is also to be installed for the manufacture of structural steel.

While smoking a pipe, which he had purchased the evening before, Frank Porter, the six-year-old grandson of Joseph Siskatuse, of the Wilmington road, near New Castle, is alleged to have set fire to the latter's barn, which was destroyed. Mr. Siskatuse was severely burned while getting his horses out of the building. The loss is about \$3,500.

Mrs. Minnie Salow, of Erie, convicted of manslaughter and performing a criminal operation, was sentenced by Judge Walling to nine years' solitary confinement in the Western Penitentiary. She was charged with leaving a newborn infant in a cold wash-bowl until it perished.

The Mahler glass plant at Du Bois, which was started up for the season's run about one month ago has shut down and it will not be operated again this season. The reason given by T. P. Welch, the lessee, is the demoralized condition of the glass market.

Ten mills of the Shenango tin plant, which have been idle for the past six months, will start up, giving employment to 1,000 men. The other 20 mills of the Shenango have been working steadily.

The Donora council has granted a franchise to the West Shore Street Railway company which proposes building a line connecting Donora with Monessen, Charleroi and other river towns.

Elizabeth Henderson, of Beaver Falls, died in the hospital at Sharon, from the effects of a fall while visiting at the home of her brother in Wheatland. She was 64 years old.

Mrs. Daniel Wellfey, 43 years old, was thrown out of a buggy near Donegal, Westmoreland county, and killed. A husband and three children survive her.

At Brookville, Wesley Entertine, convicted of the killing of G. B. Griest at Coolspring on August 25, 1905, was sentenced to 25 years in the Western penitentiary.

Senator Boies Penrose has engaged a suite of rooms at the Commonwealth annex for the coming extra session of the Legislature. The Senator will come to Harrisburg in January to co-operate with Gov. Samuel W. Pennypacker for the enactment of the proposed reform legislation.

The Lawrence glass works at New Castle, which started up a week ago with four blowing machines, will operate in full with four more machines. The plant employs 400 men now.

John H. Weiss, prominent judge of Dauphin county, was stricken with paralysis November 18 and never rallied.

Never Thaws.

The soil of Siberia at the close of the summer is found still frozen to 46 inches beneath the surface and the dead that have lain in their coffins for 150 years have been taken up unchanged in the last.

FITS permanently cured. No fitious nervousness after first day's use of Dr. King's Great Nerve Restorer, \$2 trial bottle and treatise free. Dr. R. H. Kline, Ltd., 931 Arch St., Phila., Pa.

Forest Gate, England, has a three-year-old swimming champion.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children Teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, 25c a bottle.

Emperor William was recently photographed again.

Do not believe Piso's Cure for Consumption. Write for the particulars. F. J. Bozox, Trinity Springs, Ind., Feb. 15, 1907.

The heat produced by the firing of heavy guns is remarkable.

Not every little slang word or phrase is put into Webster's International Dictionary, published by the G. & C. Merriam Co. It is this conservatism, backed by the scholarship of the editor-in-chief, Wm. T. Harris, Ph. D., LL. D., U. S. Com. of Education, and hundreds of others of the greatest educators which has made the International a standard in the U. S. Supreme Court and in all the courts of the nation, also in colleges and public schools.

The Japanese Government is printing a complete record of the war.

Jury Subbing.

Mexico has an ingenious plan for facilitating verdicts in jury trials. Two supernumerary jurors are drawn to sit near the Jury box and listen to the evidence and arguments. If any of the regular jury falls ill or is otherwise disqualified from going on, one of the "spares" takes his place. In this way they avoid what is often seen in American courts—a long trial rendered useless when it is nearly finished by the sudden illness or death of one juror.

There is more Catarrh in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and until the last few years was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors pronounced it a local disease and prescribed local remedies, and by constantly injurious cure with local treatment, pronounced it incurable. Science has proven Catarrh to be a constitutional disease and therefore requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is the only constitutional cure known to the medical profession. It is taken internally in doses from 10 drops to a teaspoon. It reaches directly