

BY PROXY

1.

Bob Montgomery and I were old chums. We had fraternized at school in a truly Damon-and-Pythias manner teaching to witness. We swore eternal friendship in these good old days, and faced the battle of life together when we shook from our feet the dust of that temple of Minerva wherein we had slaked our thirst at the fountain of knowledge.

Being possessed of a literary turn of mind, Bob turned his back on our little Devonshire village and gravitated to London, that Mecca of every literary pilgrim.

My hobby was music—my one desire to win fame by my compositions. What field could offer such scope for the young musician as the Great City? Fired with dreams of future greatness, I followed Bob up to town. We secured lodgings together in a modest little suburb—rent not too high for our somewhat slender means—and settled down resolutely to carve our respective roads to fame and fortune.

After many vicissitudes, Bob secured a fairly good position on a newly-started evening paper, on which I was fortunate enough to get installed as musical critic. Prior to this a couple of my songs had reached the public through the medium of one of the foremost musical publishers, and had "gone down" well.

As Bob himself phrased it, "things were looking up."

The new paper was an undoubted success—it "caught on" after the first six months—a result largely attributable to the energy of its editor, Richard Grahame, formerly sub-editor on the Daily Thunderer.

Grahame was an old journalistic hand (having been connected with the London press for over thirty years), and, owing to his genial manner and thorough honesty, there was not a more popular member of the profession.

He took a great liking to Bob and myself, and we frequently spent very pleasant evenings at his house. He was a widower, with one daughter—a sweet, winsome girl just out of her teens.

It would take a more facile pen than mine to describe Nellie Grahame, so I will not attempt it. I will simply quote Bob's summing up—"As nice a girl as you'd meet in a day's walk"—which is but a meagre description, after all.

Bob, be it mentioned, was always a hot-headed, impetuous youth, so it is not to be wondered at that he should straightway fall head over ears in love with his chief's pretty daughter.

But what was certainly surprising was the fact that I—unemotional, phlegmatic John Adams ("Steady John" he usually called me)—should actually go and do likewise.

I couldn't help it, really. One glance from Miss Nellie Grahame's mischievous blue eyes was more than enough for me, and I succumbed. Eia, not a word did I say to Bob on the subject, having an instinctive dislike to bare my heart to even him, my dearest, truest friend.

I felt somewhat that I cherished a hopeless passion, for did not he worship at the same shrine. What chance could I have—plain (not to say ugly), slow and plodding—against my brilliant chum, so handsome and noble-hearted?

He, on the other hand, made no secret of his ardent desire to woo and win the "dearest girl on earth" (I am quoting him again), which was just a little hard for me to listen to unmoved.

The young lady in question was equally gracious to both of us, her manner being perhaps a little more friendly to myself.

"Of course," I reasoned it out, "she doesn't for a moment imagine I care two pins for her, and she likes me because I am Bob's bosom friend."

And then I would settle down at the piano in our little sitting-room and pour all my feelings into a dreamy nocturne—a habit I had when in troubled mood.

II.

One evening Bob came in looking rather glum, and sat down to tea with a very pre-occupied manner. He answered my occasional queries with monosyllabic replies—not always coherent—and appeared to be in an extremely brown study.

Feeling sure he would get it off his mind in due course, I maintained a most discreet silence for a considerable time, awaiting developments.

Suddenly he looked up and relieved himself thus:

"John, old man, I'm a chicken-hearted donkey."

I looked over him critically, and mentally cogitated whether it was overwork or the hot weather which affected him. I decided finally on the former theory.

"I think you ought to give yourself a rest for a week or two," I observed diplomatically.

"Rest be hanged!" was the energetic and unexpected reply, as he rose excitedly to his feet, kicking over the chair, which fell with a crash. Not heeding it, he continued: "I want your advice and assistance."

"To smash the furniture?" I hazarded.

"Look here, John," said he, coming over and placing his hand upon my shoulder, "we've always been true friends to one another." I nodded inquiringly. "I want you now to do for me what I am too much of a coward to do for myself—will you do it?"

"Bob," said I, grasping his hand with an affectionate clasp, "it is hardly necessary for you to ask. Of course I'll do whatever it is. It must be something

very much out of the common to knock you off your balance like that. Just trot it out and I'm your man."

"Thank you, John," he said, squeezing my hand heartily. "I was fully assured you'd help me over the stile. Are you going over to the Grahame's tonight?"

"Well, that's rather a superfluous question, considering we drop over there nearly every night."

He turned away from me and stood for a few moments staring out through the window. Then he spoke abruptly, his back still turned to me:

"I want you to plead my cause for me to Nellie Grahame."

Had a thunderbolt landed in the room I could not have been more astounded. Fortunately, he did not look around, for my face must have betrayed me. After a slight pause he went on:

"You know I love her sincerely. I have for weeks past endeavored to put my thoughts into words, but when I am in her presence all my courage oozes out, and I feel a little veritable coward. The long and the short of it is—I cannot do it. Will you do it for me?"

She looks upon you now as an old friend—I winced a little—"and I am sure you could put things to her in a nice way and make it all plain sailing. I think she does care for me just a little"—"There seems to be no doubt about that," I acknowledged mentally—"and I am sure, John, for the sake of our long friendship, you'll do this much for me."

I felt a mist gather in my eyes as he spoke, for if ever one man loved another I loved Bob Montgomery—dear old Bob.

My thoughts traveled back to the old schooldays. I remembered how he had fought for me against the two or three bigger fellows who wanted to bully me. I thought of the time when he had saved my life at the risk of his own when, with a batch of other youngsters, we went swimming in the old mill pond.

On the tablet of my memory was recorded the vow I made on that never-to-be-forgotten day—a mental vow to lay down my life for him if such a course should ever become necessary.

I closed my eyes a moment to shut out the face of Nellie Grahame, which seemed to rise as through a mist.

"Well, John?"

With a start I jumped up, to find he had turned and was watching me anxiously. For a moment my glance avoided his, and then I had made up my mind.

"Will do it, Bob."

"Thank you, old man," was all he said, but his look expressed more than the simple words. Rather hurriedly I donned my outdoor habiliments and sallied from the house, determined upon immediate action.

III.

On reaching the Grahame's domicile I found that Mr. Grahame was out and his daughter alone in the drawing-room. She came forward to meet me with a frank, winning smile, and as I gazed for a moment into her bright eyes my heart rose up in hot rebellion against the thought of pleading for another suitor.

"Good-evening, Mr. Adams. What has happened to your bosom friend that he is not with you?"

"He is not well; that is—I mean he's unable to accompany me," I stammered in rather a halting fashion, as she looked at me inquiringly. "In fact, Miss Grahame, he did not come because I wished most particularly to have a private conversation with you on a most vital subject."

She opened her eyes wide at this rather potent announcement, and mentioned me to a seat. I drew over a chair and sat down beside her. "Now for it," thought I, setting my teeth together with a resolute snap.

"Were you ever in love, Miss Grahame?" I hazarded, not exactly knowing how to come to the point.

She blushed a little and turned her head aside, asking, after a slight pause: "Why do you ask such a strange question?"

"Because I—he—that is—I mean—I stopped in some confusion. She shot a quick glance at me but said nothing.

"Miss Grahame—Nellie," I went on hurriedly, "there is a certain gentleman whose dearest wish is to call you his; from the day upon which he first met you he has loved you. He hopes his love may not have been in vain, but that it has touched a responsive chord. Is that hope futile?"

She grew rosy red, and played nervously with the bunch or seals on her chain. I moved my chair a little nearer and laid my hand on hers. It trembled in my clasp like a prisoned bird fluttering in its cage.

"Nellie, will you answer me?"

She gave me a shy look, that nearly made me forget that I was pleading for another person; but I thought of poor old Bob anxiously awaiting the return of his ambassador, and I conscientiously endeavored to plead his cause honestly. Without giving her time to frame an answer, I plunged on:

"He's the noblest-hearted fellow on earth and well worthy of you. I would stake all I possess—my life even—on Bob Montgomery's honor."

She snatched her hand from mine and turned on me a glance of most thorough surprise. Her face grew pale as she queried in a low tone:

"Am I to understand, Mr. Adams, that what you have just said is on behalf of Mr. Montgomery?"

"Why certainly, Miss Grahame," I answered hastily. "I must not have made my meaning sufficiently clear. I thought you understood me."

She gave me a look, half pained, half angry, and turned away without speaking, very much to my discomfort.

"Miss Grahame," I said, hurriedly, "I'm afraid I have made rather a mess of it, but really I didn't mean to. I thought myself you had a very strong liking for my friend, who is really a thoroughly good fellow. I am sure he worships the very ground you walk on, and no wonder—that is, I mean—"

She smiled a queer little smile and put out her hand, the rich color again lighting up her face.

"You must excuse me now, Mr. Adams. I must think over what you have said. You have taken me by surprise."

"I hope I have not offended you," I murmured apologetically as I took the proffered hand in mine.

"I am not easily offended," she returned smilingly, adding as an afterthought: "I do not think you could say anything which would offend me."

"Thank you"—and, moved by an irresistible impulse, I stooped and kissed the little hand I held. She blushed furiously, her fingers trembling in mine, and said hurriedly:

"Don't think me rude if I send you away now. I will write you by an early post. Good-bye."

I murmured some kind of confused adieu and took my departure, feeling not too well pleased with the manner in which I had carried out my delicate mission. I found Bob striding up and down the little sitting-room as if in training for a pedestrian handicap. Before I was well inside the door he had seized me by the shoulder and queried:

"What news?"

"Indefinite," I returned briefly. "Miss Grahame has promised to think over it and write"—with which he was forced to remain content.

IV.

For the next couple of days poor old Bob was in a condition of nervous tension, which proved rather a strain on my usually steady nerves.

Every step in the quiet little street in which we lived resulted in a headlong rush to the window to see if the newcomer was a postman bearing the all-important epistle—so anxiously awaited, so long delayed. But the postman came and the postman went, morning, noon and night, without result.

On the third evening, however, the familiar double knock was heard reverberating through the house. Bob at once rushed out on the landing and looked over.

"For the little gentleman, sir," said the trim little servant maid, tripping upstairs with a small parcel in her hand. Bob was so disappointed that he forgot to say "thank you" as he seized the parcel and tossed it across the room to me.

A small, neat package it was, addressed "John Adams, Esq.," in a handwriting distinctly feminine. I cut the cord and opened up the brown paper covering, bringing to light a small blue and gold bound volume bearing the legend "Longfellow's Poems" stamped on the back.

Bob's curiosity was aroused, and, reaching over, he picked up the book. As he did so a folded sheet of paper slipped from it and fluttered to the floor. I seized it, spread it out and read the following:

"See page 113 for my answer.—N. Grahame."

In a moment I had snatched the little volume from him and eagerly turned to the page quoted. The leaf was folded down—it was the "Courtship of Miles Standish"—and four lines were marked with blue pencil.

"But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent language, quite forgetful of self, and full of praise of his rival:

Arched the maiden smiled, and with tears overrunning with laughter, said in a tremulous voice, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

The book fell from my hand as I realized the significance of that last line:

"Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

The twilight sky seemed to glow with all the radiance of noon. I seemed to hear the music of birds in the air. My heart beat tumultuously with an ecstasy of sudden joy. Utterly oblivious of Bob, I started up and, seizing my hat, rushed from the house straight to the Grahame's.

Fortunately, Nellie was alone, when I entered unbidden—not waiting to be announced.

As I crossed the threshold she turned to greet me, and I read that in her eyes which—blind fool as I was—I had failed to read before.

One shy, sweet glance, one tender smile—and I had folded her to my heart.

"Poor Bob!" said I some time after, when we had descended to things subterranean. "what will he think of me?"

"You did the best you could for him, John, dear," said Nellie, with an arch smile; "it was not your fault that I did not accept him. I am very sorry for the poor boy, but, you know, I wouldn't give you up, John, for all the Bobs in Christendom."

Now, what answer could I make to that?—Pearson's Weekly.

WHITE SANDS.

The sands at Blackpool, in Lancashire, England, are said to be the whitest in the British Isles. From Penzance to the Land's End, on the coast of Cornwall, the sand on the seashore is very white; while in St. Mary's, one of the Scilly Islands, the sand on the shore is exceedingly white and glistening. On the other hand, the sand about Plymouth is bluish-grey in color, probably owing to the shells of mussels broken and mixed with it; and on the coasts of the North Sea the sand of the seashore is yellowish-brown or reddish. The sand on the coast of Argyllshire, in Scotland, is remarkable for its whiteness.

Stone: "I spoke to the chemist and he advised me that I should—" Doctor (interrupting): "Oh, he gave you some idiotic advice, I suppose." Stone: "He advised me to see you."

SAUSAGES FOR DYEING

NOVEL USES OF SOME WELL-KNOWN ARTICLES.

Rotten Eggs for a Shampoo—Milk is Now Used in the Paving of Streets.

A purveyor of sausages in Swaziland has made a great fortune owing to the large demand for his goods for dyeing garments. He was greatly astonished at the vast demand which sprang up for his German sausages. On inquiry he found that the sausages were so full of aniline dye that the women were coloring their garments a bright vermilion with the water in which they had been boiled.

It is a fact that a great many of our most fashionable youths are wearing waistcoats which have been dyed by microbes. Most beautiful colors are produced by certain microbes, and at some time it will be possible to buy a delicately microbe-limited tie, and to eat microbe-dyed food. Some of our most highly esteemed foods owe their delicious flavor to the presence of microbes.

Not long ago a firm of oil merchants in Munich forwarded samples of their goods to a large landowner and agriculturist in the neighborhood. The sample consisted of a bottle of a new waterproofing oil, which they were bringing out, and they sent it in order that he might try its effect upon boots, harness, and so on.

Some time after they wrote to him again asking him if he would be good enough to favor them with his opinion as to the merits of the oil. They received the following reply: "I was exceedingly pleased with the oil; it gives a better flavor to a salad than anything of the kind I have used before. I am not, however, quite clear as to

THE USE OF THE BRUSH, which you also inclosed, and thus am not able to give you any opinion as to its quality."

A new use for rotten eggs was shown at a police-court some little time ago. A man was charged with being in possession of rotten eggs, and his defence was that his wife broke the eggs in order to shampoo the children. In reply to Mr. Mead it was stated that ancient eggs are very good for the hair.

A new use has been discovered for mummies. They are dissolved into paint, and an artists' color manufacturer states that they have a distinct commercial value when ground up. Properly treated, they make a rich, light-brown color, which is in great favor amongst artists. Some of the most delightful pictures exhibited on the Royal Academy walls owe their richness to the presence of ground-up mummies.

A new use has been discovered for milk in the paving of streets. The milk is solidified, and the streets are then paved with the solid substance, thus supplanting flagstones and macadam.

Treacle forms an excellent bear-trap. Maple syrup is poured over heaps of fallen leaves. The bear then comes down to lick up the syrup, and gets his eyes covered with the leaves. The moment the bear tries to get the leaves out of his eyes the tighter they stick to his face and so

HE IS EASILY CAPTURED. An ingenious Texan tailor has discovered a new way of using barrels. One of his specialties is the pressing of gentlemen's attire, and he has fixed a large tub outside his shop, to which he has fastened the very striking announcement: "For Men Only. Stand in our Barrel while we press your Pants for 15 cents."

A novel use of carrots is that of a table decoration. The prosaic carrot is by no means to be despised for decorative purposes, especially when flowers are so scarce and dear. The green part is cut low, and then the carrot is sliced off at about half an inch above the shoots. Afterwards it is planted in small pots of silver sand, and when kept moist a very pretty, fern-like plant shoots up.

Newspapers are very useful in getting rid of moths. Moths detest the smell of printers' ink, so that when wolens are wrapped up, the newspapers form an effective moth preventative; the cheaper the newspaper the better, for the cheap ink is better than the more expensive variety.

Banana skins are coming into great favor at large hotels for cleaning brown boots. A most excellent polish is obtained by the use of the skins. A new use has been discovered for tobacco pouches, which may save many a life when remembered. Most towns have now adopted the overhead electric traction system for the tram-cars. It is no common occurrence for the wires to break, and "live wires" have caused many deaths. The ordinary

RUBBER TOBACCO-POUCH, of the crescent-shaped variety forms an admirable non-conductor. If the fingers are placed in one-half and the thumb in the other, the broken wire may be safely handled, and placed out of harm's way.

Another valuable hint is that a half-penny may often act as a life-saver. A halfpenny wrapped in a handkerchief, and bound tightly around the wound, will stop the bleeding in any case of the bursting of a varicose vein. Binding such a place up with rags or a towel is perfectly useless, as the article only soaks up the blood and the bleeding continues. A halfpenny, of even a three-penny bit, put on the wound and bound to it very tightly, will save many a life.

The number of deaths caused by the use of oil lamps is the source of a terrible death-roll. Yet it is stated that if oil lamps are used for lighting purposes there never need be an explosion or an accident of any kind. In order to prevent lamp accidents the whole of the burners used in the lamp should be boiled once a week in weak vinegar.—Pearson's Weekly.

FROM BONNIE SCOTLAND

NOTES OF INTEREST FROM HER BANKS AND BRAES.

What is Going on in the Highlands and Lowlands of Auld Scotia.

At Hawick a farm servant was observed to fall on the pavement, and the police, thinking he was drunk, gave him the frog's march to the police station. There it was found that the man was dead.

The County of Sutherland Association is issuing a magazine to bring the working inhabitants of the county more into touch with modern methods of life. The Duchess of Sutherland and Mr. Carnegie are contributors.

Arrangements are being made in different parts of Scotland and in England and in Wales for getting up a testimonial to Mr. Roderick MacLeod, the well-known vocalist, in consideration of his great services to Gaelic by his rendering of Gaelic songs.

Dundee Water Committee is prepared to give an augmentation supply of water to St. Andrews for 6d. per 1,000 gallons thereafter, the annual minimum payment to be £250, on condition that they lay a pipe along the Tay Bridge and between Wormit and St. Andrews, which will cost about £13,000.

Craigie Works, Dundee, belonging to the estate of the late Mr. William Gibson, jr., Dundee, were exposed for sale publicly. The establishment consists of a jute mill and factory, with ponds and warehouses, and was purchased at the upset price of £20,000 by Mr. J. K. Caird, manufacturer, Dundee.

A proposal is on foot for union between the North and East United Free churches in Kello, the opportunity for such union having occurred through the resignation of the charge of the North church by the Rev. John Watson, M.A., who recently accepted a call to return to mission work at Amoy, China.

The engineering department of the Edinburgh University has just moved into new buildings, which have been equipped in the most modern manner. The cost has been defrayed by the University Court from the Carnegie grant. Part of the new laboratories consists of the old high school buildings at High School Yards.

The final meeting of the Hugh Miller Centenary Committee, formed three years ago, was held a few days ago. The Institute erected in Cromarty as the result of the centenary movement was handed over to permanent trustees along with the endowments. Including Mr. Carnegie's gift the sum of £1,800 was raised by the committee.

Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., unveiled the memorial to the officers and the men of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, who fell in the South African war, which has been placed in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh. A guard of honor of 50 men, with the regimental colors and the band of the regiment from Dublin took part in the ceremony.

The death took place on the 16th inst. of one of Glasgow's oldest medical practitioners, Dr. James Gray, who passed away at the age of 86. Dr. Gray, who was a member of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow, was born and brought up in the city of Perth, his father being manager of the Perth water-works. About ten years ago he practically retired from active business.

MANY MISSING HEIRS.

Several People in America Among Those on Whom Fortune Waits.

During the year just closed a large number of inquiries for missing heirs, legatees, relatives and other persons who may hear of things "greatly to their advantage," have been made by kinfolks, lawyers and chancery officials in the agony columns of the English press. There are a great many people, many of them, doubtless, hard up, for whom money is waiting in London. They have only to claim it to get it, but they don't know their luck.

The London Times the other day published the annual summary of a well-known claims' agent of those on whom good fortune awaits. It is impossible to tell just how many of them may now be living in America, but the following are specifically referred to as having been last heard of there: C. G. Salmon, who left for America in 1893, is entitled to leasehold property; R. Hook, who went to America from England in 1878, is among the beneficiaries sought; J. A. Miles, who emigrated to America in 1879, has something due him from his father's estate. The heirs are wanted of James Stuart and Marie Millon, whose daughter left for America in 1862. William Paget, who lived in Wandsworth before he went to New York, is sought that he may learn of "something to his advantage," and Richard Cave, who was employed as a printer in a newspaper office in 1891, is wanted for "something greatly to his benefit." Among the persons inquired for by order of the courts of chancery are Thomas and Mary Baile, formerly of Liverpool, and last heard of in America in 1826. Money is due to certain shareholders in the West New Jersey Society on whose stock no dividends have been paid since 1692. John E. Finlayson is wanted for an estate in America. Robert Bridgman, who is said to have deserted from the army while stationed in Nova Scotia in 1882, may benefit by making his address known. Possibly there may be some relatives in America of George L. Wilson who recently died intestate, leaving an estate valued at \$875,000. This is the biggest windfall of the year awaiting claimants,