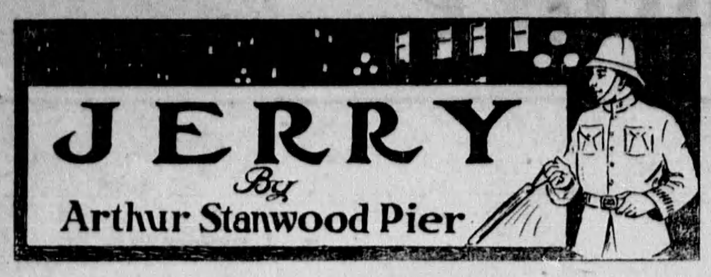

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CHAPTER II.

On Friday and Saturday Mrs. Donohue energetically conducted a house-cleaning; she took up the parlor and dining-room carpets, draped them on a clothes-line in the front yard, and with her head swathed in a blue polka-dot handkerchief, beat them with a rattan stick.

"If he's good enough to go to Congress, he's good enough to have this house fixed up for him a bit," she would say. She could not help exhibiting her pride over the distinction that had been conferred on Jerry. "And it the first chance he's ever had to vote in all his life!" she would conclude. "And a Congressman making up to him right off! Ain't he the lucky boy!"

By Saturday night she had put down the carpets and washed the parlor and dining-room curtains; these on Monday had to be darned, for they were old and did not well endure her vigorous cleansing. On Monday, too, she washed the windows and dusted the furniture, the pictures, the chandeliers—singing all the while. She finished crocheting the tidy and hung it over the stain on the red plush chair. The paper roses on the parlor mantel had become soiled after six months of decorative service; unwilling to throw them away as having outlived their beauty, she went over them, petal by petal, with a bit of damp cloth. No gardener ever tended living roses with more care than that which she had bestowed in trying to preserve the fresh appearance of these flowers. Likewise, though an object of even greater solicitude, had the white memorial dove been grimed and flecked. Against a sheaf of rushes and enclosed in a frame lined with white satin, it hung head down, wings outstretched, transfixed by an arrow which was issuing at its back. Beneath it, worked in red worsteds, was inscribed, "At Rest."

"I declare, Jerry," said Mrs. Donohue, surrendering to despondency on Monday evening, "if there's been one thing that I've tried to keep free from spot and stain since your father's death, it's that dove. But what with the soft-coal smoke, the soot, the dust a-flying in from the street, that dove is no longer the pure white bird it ought to be. I hope Mr. Maxwell won't notice the specks on it, and think we've failed in our duty towards the dead."

"Now stop your worrying," he said soothingly. "You're just played out. You've made the house look fine—but you needn't to have."

Tuesday evening, when Jerry came home from the mill, he found his mother in a state of triumphant exhaustion.

"I did think at one time I never would get through," she said. "I hope I've froze up enough ice cream and fried enough doughnuts. How many do you think will come, Jerry?"

"You mean to say you've been freezing ice cream and frying doughnuts! Well, if you aint' a wonder! Mr. Maxwell didn't mean we should do that kind of thing."

"I don't know as that's Mr. Maxwell's affair," replied Mrs. Donohue with dignity. "If you're going to have folks, be hospitable. I borrowed the Driscolls' freezer, and that along with our own makes four gallons. So it ain't as if you'd been inviting your friends to an empty house. I'll spend the evening at the Driscolls'—and say, Jerry, Mrs. Driscoll asked if we mightn't slip over some time during the party, her and me, and peek through the window—she'd so like to see the Congressman. I told her we could."

"Sure," said Jerry. "And if you'll make some kind of signal, I'll sneak you out some ice cream."

In his black suit and stiff collar, with a salmon pink necktie which flared violently against the deeper pink of his neck and face, Jerry descended the stairs. His mother had just finished putting the dishes away in the kitchen.

"My, but you do look nice!" she assured him. "Now I'm going up to change my dress, so I'll be ready to run over to Mrs. Driscoll's the moment he comes. Don't stir round and get yourself all mussed up and excited, child; just sit still and be calm."

Obediently, but with an uncomfortable consciousness of his collar, Jerry sat in the parlor and endeavored to give his mind to "Ben Hur." The door-bell jangling violently summoned him.

A brewery wagon was waiting at the curb; the teamster was waiting at the door.

"Two kegs for J. Donohue," said the teamster. "This the place?"

"Yes, but I didn't order any—"

"Sent by John Maxwell."

The steamster strode down to his wagon and lifted a keg out in his arms. Jerry held the door open for him dumbly.

"In there." Jerry pointed to the dining-room.

"Jer-ry!" The call came from upstairs just as the teamster had departed for the second keg. "Did you got to the door?"

"Yes, mother."

"Who was it?"

"Oh, just a—just a mistake."

The brewery wagon was turning away when another wagon drew up at the curb. At the door Jerry waited apprehensively. The driver lugged a bushel basket filled with tumblers up the steps.

"In there," Jerry murmured, pointing to the dining-room.

On a second trip the man brought in four quarts of whiskey and two boxes of cigars.

Jerry closed the dining-room door upon these contributions; then, as if at a loss, he inserted his forefinger down the front of his collar and gave his chin three or four meditative hoists. He returned gravely to the parlor and resumed his reading of "Ben Hur."

His mother descended the stairs. "What in the world have you been tramping about so for, when I told you to sit still and be calm?" she demanded. "I thought the house was coming down.'

"Oh, I wanted to make sure everything was all right," he answered. "And it is. Now I'll read you a chapter out of this book."

And thus placidly were they engaged when the jangling bell proclaimed the first arrival.

"I guess I won't wait to see Mr. Maxwell after all," said Mrs. Donohue nervously, "unless this is him."

From the stairs, whither she retreated, she saw Jerry open the door and admit Dave Scanlan and four or five other friends. Then she took her departure undetected by the guests.

Until the arrival of the candidate, there was an atmosphere of dismal decorum. The young men, asembling at last to the number of twenty-five, conversed in funerally low voices.

At last an automobile puffed up the street and stopped before the house. Instantly the two front windows were blocked with heads; the front door was flung open.

"It's him!" Jerry announced with excitement.

Mr. Maxwell was a believer in dash, in "snap." He ran up the plank walk and divested himself of his fur overcoat as he ran.

"Hello! hello! hello!" he cried; he grasped Jerry's welcoming hand and tossed his overcoat into a corner by the door. "Say, old man, I'm sorry to be late. I've brought with me these friends of mine—Mr. Donohue, this is Mr. Tracy, Mr. Jenks, Mr. Tiffin. Darned good fellows, the whole bunch. And, say"—he caught Jerry's arm and dropped his voice to a whisper—"there are half a dozen more coming up the hill now—saw my machine, gave me a cheer, and invited themselves. One of them's Jimmy Burns, running for the Legislature. You won't mind letting 'em in? I guess there's stuff enough for all."

"Oh, sure," said Jerry. "The more the merrier."

He was quite exhilarated; the candidate's bounding manner reassured him after the gloomy tension of the last half-hour.

"Now introduce me all round," said Mr. Maxwell. "And then," he added in Jerry's ear, "open up the stuff."

It was wonderful how Mr. Maxwell's entrance invigorated the assembly. "Well, boys, here we are again," was his happy, general greeting. To individuals he was more than kind; he held hands affectionately while he endeavored to recall the Christian name. To his host he vouchsafed an ecstatic moment, calling him "Jerry." "And I remember you too," he said to Dave Scanlan. "You were with Jerry the other day at Grady's—and you're—Scanlan. Yes, to be sure, Scanlan. I tell you, I don't often forget a face—though sometimes I go a little shy on names."

Jerry flung open the door into the dining-room.

"Fellows," he announced, "Mr. Maxwell has kindly provided some liquid refreshments and cigars for this evening; if you will kindly step this way."

"A-ay!" cheered the crowd, surging forward.

"And," shouted Jerry, "there ice cream and doughnuts on the house."

Mr. Maxwell got inside the dining-room door. He worked his way into the corner where Jerry was ladling ice cream out of a freezer.

"Jerry," he said, "I'll bet this was your mother's doing."

"It was that."

"Well, I want some of that ice cream in a moment."

He turned; some one passed him a glass of beer.

"Gentlemen! Friends!" Mr. Maxwell raised his glass above his head, and they all listened. "I want every one here to fill his glass and then join me in a toast that I will propose."

The activity in the neighborhood of the kegs was resumed. But at last every one was supplied.

"All ready, Congressman," shouted Dave Scanlan.

Mr. Maxwell mounted a chair. "Gentlemen, I want you all to know that Mrs. Donohue with her own hands froze this ice cream and fried these doughnuts for you boys to-night. She wanted you and me, coming here to-night to welcome each other, to enjoy ourselves; and so she did all this for us. Now I say that when the women come into the campaign and give us their support in this way we're bound to win. And I want to propose the health of Mrs. Donohue—God bless her!"

There was great cheering; they all drank with avidity. Jerry in his gay excitement accidently slapped a chunk of ice cream on the floor. He gathered it up with his hands and chucked it into the freezer upon the salted ice, complimenting himself meanwhile on his discretion in withholding from his mother knowledge of the beer. Now knowledge could come to her unaccompanied by any sting of disappointment or disillusion.

(To be continued.)

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And always sit me down
At night in peace and comfort,
Happier than king with crown,
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In every little town.

I wish there was a WALKER HOUSE
In each place where I go.
The comforts of my dear old home
While on the road I'd know.
The meals—the Cheerful Service, too,
Would leave no cause to frown,
If there was just one Walker House
In every little town.

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SPONGE BOX AS KITCHEN COMMODITY.

A home-made sponge box or bread raiser will prove a great convenience in the wartime kitchen. It enables the housekeeper to keep her sponge or dough at the right temperature so that it will rise in less time. A sponge box or bread raiser, therefore, takes much of the uncertainty out of bread baking. It can be made from an ordinary dry goods packing box, and the government has sent out directions for making it, as follows:

A box 26 by 20 by 20 inches is a convenient size. About ten inches from the bottom of the box a shelf made of slats or strips of wood rests on cleats fastened to the sides of the box. A second shelf is placed four inches above the lower one. The shelves can be removed when cleaning the box. Below the lower shelf a sheet of galvanized iron slightly wider than the shelf is inserted. It is curved in order to make it slip in and stay in place securely. This prevents scorching of the lower shelf when a lamp is placed below and also helps to distribute the heat more evenly. The door is hinged and fastened with a thumb-latch or hook and staple.

Several small holes are bored in the lower and upper parts of the sides and in the top of the box to promote circulation of air. A cork which has been bored through the centre to admit a straight thermometer is inserted in one of the holes in the top of the box. A Fahrenheit chemical thermometer that registers as high as 100 degrees can be used. Such a thermometer may be ordered through a hardware dealer or directly from an instrument dealer.

To avoid all danger of fire, the box should be lined with asbestos or tin when a kerosene lamp is used for heating the box. If an electric light is used the lining is not necessary. A sixteen-candle power light will heat the box nicely. A small and inexpensive night lamp is placed in the bottom of the box and a shallow pan of water is placed on the lower shelf so that the air in the box will be kept moist.

The bowl of sponge or pans of dough are placed on the upper shelf. The temperature of the box should be kept as near 86 degrees F. as possible (80 degrees to 88 degrees F.) when bread is being made in the quick way. If a sponge is set over night 65 to 70 degrees F. is the better temperature until the dough is made in the morning, after which the temperature may be increased to 86 degrees F. The temperature in the box may be varied by raising or lowering the flame of the lamp or by using warm or cold water in the shallow pan.

Honey a Sugar Substitute.

Honey is much more easily digested than sugar, and much more quickly assimilated. It has the peculiarity of retaining moisture, keeping bread and cakes, for instance, fresh and soft for a long time. It is delicious on dry cereals of all kinds, even dry bran. In combination with most fresh fruits and nuts, there is no sweet like honey. Try it with baked apples, baked peaches, sour cherries, boiled or baked quinces, grapefruit, cocoanut, almonds and Brazil nuts and you will surely want it a second time. Raisins, spices and spicy seeds blend well with honey.

Honey cakes, as we have said, are noted for their keeping qualities. For this reason, the use of honey is recommended for wedding or black fruit cake, while it gives a richness of flavor and texture to even a plain raisin loaf like the following:

Honey Plum Cake.—½ cupful shortening, ½ cupful brown sugar, ½ cupful honey, 1 egg, ¾ cupful milk, 2 cupfuls pastry flour, 1 teaspoonful soda, ½ teaspoonful salt, ½ teaspoonful ginger, ½ teaspoonful nutmeg, ½ teasponful cloves, 1 teaspoonful cinnamon, 1 cupful raisins or mixed fruit. Cream the shortening and brown sugar together, add honey and egg well beaten. Mix and sift together all the dry ingredients, reserving a little of the flour to dust over the raisins. Add dry ingredients alternately with the milk to the first mixture; beat well, add raisins and bake in a well-greased and floured loaf pan in a moderate oven.

Honey is unequaled for making small cakes. The following will keep indefinitely:

Nutlets.—1 cupful shortening, 1 cupful honey, 1 cupful brown sugar, 1 cupful chopped nut meats, 1 egg, 2 scant teaspoonfuls soda, 1 teaspoonful salt, 1 teaspoonful cinnamon, 4 cupfuls pastry flour. Sift the dry ingredients together, beat the egg well, and mix in order given. This will make a stiff batter; drop by teaspoonfuls on a greased pan and bake in a moderate oven, as cakes made with honey will burn easily. This recipe makes about eight dozen small cakes.

Honey Hermits.—½ cupful shortening, ¾ cupful honey, ½ teaspoonful mixed spices, 1 cupful chopped raisins, 1 egg, 1 teaspoonful soda, ½ teaspoonful salt, about 3 cupfuls pastry flour. Heat the shortening and the honey together until the shortening is melted, add the mixed spices, using cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg. Allow it to cool. Then add the egg, well beaten; raisins, and two cupfuls of flour in which the soda and salt have been sifted. Add more flour if needed to make a dough stiff enough to roll out. Roll, cut in squares and bake in a moderate oven.

FEWER STIFF COLLARS.

Better Uses Are Found at This Time For Starch and Linen.

The separate starched collar was invented about ninety-two years ago by the wife of a blacksmith of Troy, N.Y., who made one for her husband. Since then it has grown in popularity until there is probably nobody who has not worn a starched collar at some time or other. Now its popularity is on the decline again, partly on the score of comfort and partly as a result of the war.

The crux of the matter does not lie with the collar itself, though that is made from material which is useful for bandages. It's the starch that is to be saved—valuable foodstuff that ought not to be wasted on collars.

A permanently stiffened collar is being introduced which is not celluloid, but is a regular fabric collar treated with a kind of varnish that makes it possible to clean it under the tap or with a damp cloth. Automobilists should be among those who appreciate this new fabric, for in spite of road dust, it is always possible to "feel clean" in a clean collar. A collar of this kind will last from two weeks to a month.

Eradicate cedar trees growing near orchards to keep down apple rust. It is chiefly a foliage disease, but also attacks the fruit.

Cats are supposed to kill rats. Possibly some do but most cats do not kill rats. Every cat will kill birds, and as the birds kill insects, every cat is an insect protector. Get rid of useless cats to protect the birds that protect crops from destruction by insects.

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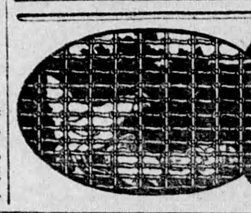

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