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From a Bench in the Park

BY ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL

PART I.

This was a joke! The girl on the park bench shivered. It was a shivery joke. She laughed-she would laugh, she would!

"I feel a draft!" laughed she.





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additional humors of her penniless from that time up to two short weeks estate and the Landlady Kimmer's ago when she had been caught in the

more funniness than that! rible solidity upon the poor little Tom and Dick and Harry. trunk containing all that was mortal | She had not been able to go back them but not Landlady Kimmer.

time, dear," the girl said with a very foolishness, she had given no address little smile. Little smiles helped out, and so had received no answers. you smiled them often enough.

f'r the two wakes ye've e't me vittles as long as a year! She absolutely an' drink!" She could hear Mrs. Kim- refused to shiver again. This parmer even out there on the chilly park ticular park bench was well situated for watching a gay stream of theatrebench.

"But I 'e't' so few 'vittles an' goers turn in at a playhouse across a drink,' Mrs. Kimmer! I-I scrimped. patch of park lawn and a street. Besides I'll pay just as soon as I find Shirley watched. The motors edg-

another job-The girl who was a Stanley had

managed a final little attempt at ed Shirley's way. She watched and lightness. "But trunks are so hard outside!

My petticoats and nightgowns are nice and soft-if you'd just take an inside seat-"

Poor old creature! Just being a was pitiful enough, having no sense of humor was worse; and on top of these to have her boarders lose their jobs-no wonder she sat herself solidly on the trunk as her only hope of redress.

"I'm glad now I went back and told her how sorry I was," mused the girl. Br-rr-r! It was growing chillier. Well, hadn't she always wanted to sleep out of doors? Hadn't she once tried her best to have Martha Mary to have a little outdoor coop built on

to the old house? "My heart!" sighed she at thought of the old house. All the rooms and the fireplaces going to waste in it tonight." And wood in the woodshed to burn!"

Not even Martha Mary was in the old house to-night. Where was Martha Mary? She wondered between shivers. "But, for that matter, where am I? It's just as well and a good deal well--the dear heart!"

This would never do! If she called Martha Mary a dear heart againone more time-she'd cry and no long- ley's voice was gravely sweet. er be a Stanley. But Martha Mary was no longer a Stanley-

She must not begin on that. It will be something to tell my grand- blankets?" children. They'll love it. Tell us Or it would make a good chapter in white profile. my book when I write one. 'What I

She was twenty-one, this girl. Her "Oh, you are cold!" she cried. "It Mary had been a Stanley, a year ago, my petticoat isn't any too thick." before-

Ah, the befores-and the afters! that anyone else could ever have a sound of it. that very thing. While she was away sweaters." visiting a school chum! Had come and Shirley could no longer make a play off. With a fighting chance .- . The "terrible sens'tive to the cold." girl on the park bench tightened a "I am so sorry! Couldn't I put my laughed fiercely in her slim white up it would be almost thick-" throat.

"I'm a pretty good fighter!" she of us freezing in our tracks." said aloud to the empty darkness. "But you can't sit-she can't sit What if she had hurt Martha Mary here all night!" in her fighting! Instantly the laugh "Watch an' see us sittin'!" cackled gentled, grew tender. Silly old Martha the dreadful young laugh. "We ain't Mary to be fallen in love with at thirty-three! Thirty-three was so old to twenty-one. A curious thing in the girl's musings over that year-old happening, something she had never acknowledged to herself, was that Young ladies to take a

part in the falling in love. root, hurt-she had gone proudly, pital, Toronto.

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rooted-uply, hurt-ly. Never would she be dependent on this heartless stranger who had-had taken advaninto thirty-three-year-old foolishness.

In her twenty-year-old zeal she had lost no time. Straight to the city marched Shirley. The work she had found for herself she must begin upon at once, they told her. Shirley began pride in her tone. at once. Her steady young hand on The rest of her thought she put into the plow, she had no idea of turning back. And it had been a straight clean little furrow she had plowed ponderous image. You couldn't ask general exodus from so many of the work places of the city. Turned loose Landlady Kimmer had sat with ter- with the rest of them-Shirley and

If it were not sufficiently funny to of the girl's possessions. Furs and to Martha Mary. But, of course, all be sitting out here—on a bench—at finery that she'd been obliged to part along she'd written cheerful letters, eight o'clock at night, there were the with at least had been spared that carefully designed to keep Martha humiliation. Fate had "sat upon" Mary from worrying. But because she had adhered so firmly to her own "You departed this life just in independence and twenty-one-year-old

So that was that. The girl was a Stanley. No Stanley "And this is-this!" smiled Shirley on her bench. My, but a year could "It's here I'll set until yez pay me be as long as an age-and two weeks

ing up to the sidewalk for a moment "It's here I'll set. No expressman'll disgorged their happy loads and went be gettin' yer trunk out froom und- on to find parking space. Honks and her! It's trunk or cash. That's what." faint laughter and even appetizing smells from a nearer restaurant drift-

gently sniffed and persisted in calling it all a joke. One touring car drew up directly across the patch of parkway and she interested herself-because she wanted to forget that she was cold and landlady "intil" her hair turned white hungry-in the rather curious actions of the man behind the wheel.

"He's going to the show-no, he isn't going! He doesn't know whether he's going or not! Lonesome-that's the trouble. There, he has decided to

She watched him disappear in the "She almost got off the trunk then!" gay little stream. Well, she'd have to A moment or two later when she chanced to look back at the spruce lit-

tle car which had acted as if it were moving on, there it was! The owner -or chauffeur-was hunching down comfortably as if for an indefinite

"He likes to sit and watch, same as I do," concluded Shirley. "But I must say he has a softer seat." She stirred into a new position and then for the first time noted that she had company on her hard seat; a woman holding a clumsy bundle. The woman did not seem even to breathe, so still did she sit there at the further end of the er Martha Mary doesn't know things bench. There was something disturbing about her stillness. Shirley decided to make her move.

"Good evening-neighbor!" Shir-The woman stirred but did not nib-

ble at the sociable little bait. "Don't you feel a draft?" asked "This is a joke," she said firmly to Shirley. "I do! Don't you wish the her shivery self. "All this is a joke. city fathers furnished good warm

At that, the woman at the other bout the night you slept on a park end of the seat turned and-she was bench, Grannie!' They'll tease for it. not a woman but a girl, with a sharp,

"What's a good warm blanket?" she Know About Park Benches.' Not asked in a strange voice that made every author speaks from experience. Shirley shiver worse than ever.

name was Shirley Stanley. Martha blows so round one's legs! I guess "My petticoat's round the baby."

"Round the-baby?" This was the after. Before, they had "Yes. An' my sweater. Everythin' lived in the old house together, she I've got. She's asleep now but Lord and the older sister who had cared for knows what'll happen if she wakes and mothered her all the days she up! She's terrible sens'tive to the could remember. She had had her cold, Maudie is. Do you know the Martha Mary all to herself and had kind o' kids poor folks'd ought to have been a-pig! Of course, she had been whose men get kicked out o' their one. But it had been so dear, being jobs?" The thin voice broke into a a pig! It had never occurred to her sorry laugh. Shirley shrank at the

right to love her Martha Mary. Then "Fleece-lined kids! That wouldn't someone had come along and had done need their mother's petticoats an'

taken unfair advantages-she's been out of this park-bench episode. It given no fighting chance to ward him was no joke when there was a Maudie

small fist in its shabby glove. She petticeat round her, too? Doubled all "No. Keep it on. No need of all

Martha Mary might have done her General Nursing Course in the Ontario Hospital, 999 Queen Street West, Well, she had not kept - Martha Toronto. \$25.00 a month with board, Mary from marrying, had she? Not uniform, and laundry, for the first to any great extent! She had merely year, with Increase each year afterreared her young Stanley chin mili- wards. Applicants must be healthy, tantly and gone forth into an inde- and under 30 years of age. Apply to pendent life of her own. Pride, up- Medical Superintendent. Ontario Hos-

goin' to any charity place. I'm bringin' her up respectable. Freezin's respect-

"Don't laugh!" begged Shirley, a great new tenderness welling up in her. Let's talk about-about when the baby grows up.

"Lord! Grows up!-Well then, Maudie's goin' to marry a fur coat an' muff an' a automobile with a fur laprobe! An' her man's goin' to work in a big fact'ry that don't never shut down! Hear that, Maudie? She's dreamin' of it now!"

"What factory was it that shut down," questioned Shirley. She must say something.

"Tim's fact'ry." She gave a name that had no significance for Shirley. tage of her and beguiled Martha Mary "You better ask what one ain't shut down! Tim's did hold out a spell— Tim's my man." The white-faced mother of Maudie spoke of her man with a curious little undernote of

"She likes him," Shirley thought.

"How could he go away and leave I suppose he has gone away?" "He'd be here freezin' with us if he hadn't. Or he'd set fire to the benches

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to keep us warm! That's Tim! But he's off job huntin'. The landlord turned me an' Maudie out to-night." "I know him!" cried Shirley almost growing warm with indignation. "I know that landlord-his tribe is Kimmer! When I get my new place-"

"When Tim gets his job-" "Yes, then we'll settle with the Kimmers, Tim and I!" Shirley leaned toward the other girl with an eager little impetus of friendship.

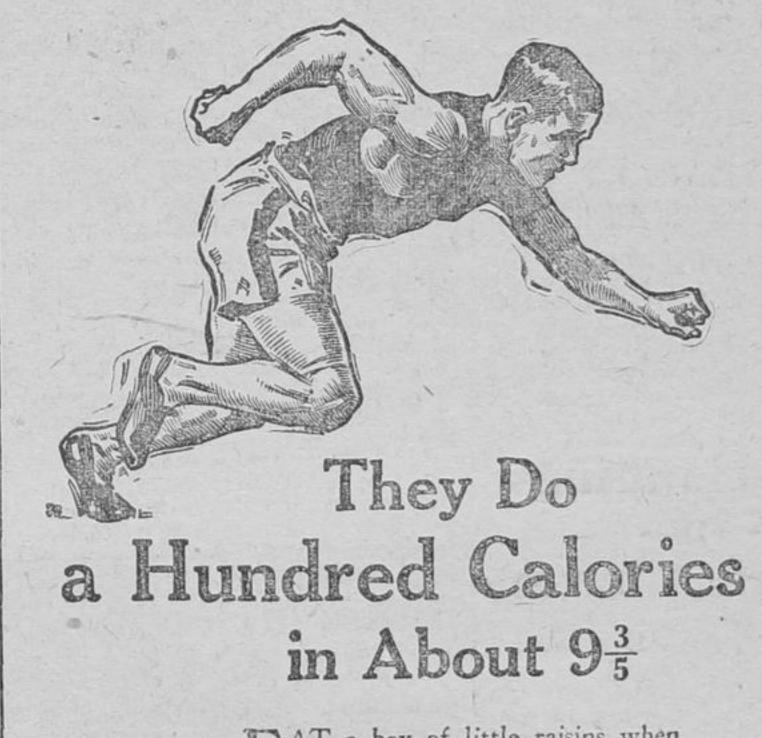
"My dear, if we can just stand tonight-don't you think we feel a little warmer when we talk?"

But the other girl did not answer. Shirley, repulsed in her friendly advance, remained silent, too. Then it happened.

(To be continued.)

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