

The Romance of a Child

CHAPTER I

"Why do you walk so fast?" panted Robin, a boy of fourteen, as he ran after a fluttering blue skirt and red cap perched upon dark untidy curls of mahogany blue.

The small girl stopped, her blue eyes had learned to coquette from the cradle.

"Because you wanted to catch me," she replied, pouting her childish lips.

He was on his way to the high school she to Mrs. Parkinson's establishment for young ladies. This, their daily walk made the children friends, lovers, comrades and enemies in turn.

"I wonder," said Robin thoughtfully, "why girls always do what you don't want?"

Tottie Turner stepped along, changing her walking trip to a polka.

"I say, there's no hurry, Tot, we've heaps and heaps of time."

"You must not talk, Robbie, this morning. I am saying my lesson; it won't stop in my head a moment if I don't."

"Oh! bother the lesson; just look at the sun and think that it is spring at last—guess that's better than all Mrs. Parkinson's rotten books!"

The bright light caught the brown hair as he spoke, and turned it golden—the red of the child's smooth cheek matched her audacious cap.

Had she purposely placed it sideways because it suited her so well? Oh, no! Tottie Turner was too young surely to study appearances.

So thought Robin, criticising her headgear, as he laid his brown hand on her blue sleeve.

"It's awfully cute that—that hat," he stammered, drawing a sticky paper packet from his coat. "I say, I've got some candy for you, Tottie, those yellow and white ones with purple stripes. What will you give me for them?"

She took the offering and turned it over uncertainly in her small pink fingers.

"I don't know; I haven't anything except a thimble," driving into her pocket with a sudden brightening of the eyes. "Yes you may have the thimble, Miss Parkinson gave it to me on my birthday, and—"

But Robin pushed away the hand that proffered the offering scornfully.

Then drawing her somewhat roughly nearer, whispered:

"I don't want a silly thimble—I want a kiss!"

He pressed the rosy mouth vigorously as he spoke.

The contact was hot and distasteful to the little maid; she wriggled herself free, flushed with the quick temper Robin knew so well.

"You're a horrid boy!" she cried, stamping her foot, and throwing the sweets angrily on the ground: "and I—I hate you!"

He stared at her with sad, remorseful eyes; his slate had fallen unbroken at her feet, his cap also lay in the dust. The spirit of revenge was upon the child, she saw the slate, and with a quick movement stepped upon the surface, listening to the dull cracking, while her heart beat furiously.

Then fearing her cavalier's reproaches, she ran swiftly away, leaving him gazing on the ruin, and those beautiful sweet balls with purple stripes lying in the gutter.

Why, throughout the day had Tottie Turner shunned her schoolfellows, sitting apart, pale, unsmiling, a striking contrast to her usual merry self?

Could it be that she was haunted by the ashes of a dead past, when that past was barely three hours old, and the crime blazing in it merely the breaking of a slate?

Byrington Age cannot realize the woe of a petulant child.

As she walked home she looked instinctively for Robin. He was such a clever boy; they never kept him in school. He must have gone back another way—purposely. Tears of vexation and remorse trickled slowly down the sad little face. She forced her knuckles into her eyes—big violet eyes, with lashes of golden brown, like the curls that hung to her shoulders.

The grass under the hedge looked soft and green from yesterday's rain, and Tottie sat down to rest, her legs curled up under her body, her cheeks still wet.

Robbie was very unkind, he might have known she would be sorry. It was horrid of him not to wait for her. So the tears and the thoughts flowed freely together till Tottie's head sank on a level with the grass, and she lay, a sobbing heap of childish remorse under the sprouting hedge.

"I say—Tot!"

Some one was leaning over her, shaking her elbow.

She started up, her face red and marred with weeping, her hair disheveled, her red cap caught upon the brambles.

"Robbie!"

The blue eyes lowered, though the lashes were fringed with dewdrops.

"Why are you crying?" he asked, fixing on her cap with great consideration, and brushing the dust off her blue frock.

For answer she twined her soft arms around Robin's neck and kissed him, lovingly though shyly whispering:

trim, semi-detached villa, greeted her with sharp words and vigorous reproaches.

"If you were not kept in then for being a naughty girl, you've been straying about with the common children," laying a great stress on the word, and rearing her tousled head indignantly. "I tell you, Tottie, I wouldn't have it; you've got to keep yourself to yourself, so there! and only school friends with Mrs. Parkinson's make friends with Mrs. Parkinson's school children. I won't have you gabbling about in the streets with the public school kids."

She administered a box on the ears at the close of her lecture before the child had time to plead that her companion was Robbie, the organist's son, who went to the high school, and "was goin' to be a gentleman!"

But in spite of the scolding Tottie was happy, and though deprived of her customary jam at tea, she smiled sweetly to herself.

What did the jam matter? She had made it up with Robbie!

CHAPTER II

The following day the boy looked for his sweetheart, but there was no sign of a blue frock.

He walked by the hedge under which they had plighted their troth the previous evening and marveled at her absence.

Was she faithless, or had measles broken out at Mrs. Parkinson's? Evidently that worthy lady's establishment continued its monotonous routine of scales, for to this Robbie's ears testified as he passed the door.

Scales did not sound like illness, and on his way home he met many of the pupils walking two and two, but, no! Tottie Turner was not amongst them.

Robin's heart sank with hope deferred, the running gutter, the green hedge, everything reminded him of the little girl, and the soft clinging arms which had hugged his neck. Yet, that was the spot where she threw away the sweets, thus the curb on which she broke his slate; Tottie Turner was in the very atmosphere itself, so thought this strange unboyish boy, as he walked slowly home.

Day after day passed, but still no sign of the child.

He dared not ask for her, or even mention her name, fearing the ridicule of his elders, or the scorn of younger souls who could not understand.

So the miserable mornings dwindled by, and a great blank settled on his life. Then suddenly the reason of her absence came across him like a flash.

Of course, Mrs. Turner had heard of their courtship, disapproved, and taken Tottie from the school. She was probably cooped up with some horrid old governess at home, and not even allowed to walk abroad. The idea matured in his mind till he saw in fancy his sweetheart as a pale, was captive, confined in her home.

The thought gave him courage—it was Saturday afternoon, and he would go himself and beard Mrs. Turner in her den.

Fortified by love he rang the bell with trembling hands and asked a very red-faced maid if he might see Mrs. Turner or Miss Tottie.

The girl gaped at him, and replied with harsh candor:

"Miss Tottie is dead!"

Robin had been too preoccupied with his own thoughts to notice the drawn blinds, and he stared at the servant girl as if she were mad. Then as the horrible fact broke slowly over his shocked senses, the boy's heart seemed to burst with sudden pain.

"Dead!"

What did it all mean? Dead! The beautiful bright child he had loved—dead!

"Well?" said the maid, as he still stood white and speechless staring in dumb agony, with eyes like a wounded animal, choking back a rising sob with painful violence.

"It's not true!" he cried at last; "you're a very wicked woman, and I won't believe you."

He pushed by her rudely, but the sickly scent of white flowers greeted him with ghastly reality.

"You are a rough, ungentlemanly little boy," said the girl vindictively. "I shall tell Mrs. Turner."

Robin's voice sank to a whisper in the darkened hall.

"Yes, fetch Mrs. Turner at once."

Fain of a child, overwhelming fear of the dark enemy Death, he drew himself up against the wall, shivering with nervous horror, white to the lips.

The rustle of a gown, and Mrs. Turner, mopping her streaming cheeks with a wet handkerchief, appeared on the staircase. But still the boy's heart cried inwardly, "It is not true!"

He looked up at Mrs. Turner with tearful yet burning eyes, and asked bluntly:

"Is Tottie dead?"

He wanted a plain answer to his question and was not prepared for the torrent of information and commonplace detail that poured from the mother's lips. What did it matter to the half-stunned schoolboy how they had treated the sudden attack of pneumonia, what they had thought—said—done? All he knew was that Tottie—his sweetheart—lay in the next room, cold and lifeless as the stones on the road!

was death! He had never faced it. A white, unspoken form, that you could not talk to or rouse, something pale and distant like the moon, something terrible in its very beauty.

He looked up. How cold and damp his hands had grown! He was standing by a little bed, and there lay Tottie, just like a pretty wax doll, so still, yet smiling in her long last sleep. So this was that horror of horrors that men call Death.

The boy watched her without a word. Mrs. Turner drew his attention to the profusion of flowers already sent by sympathetic neighbors, but he said nothing, and never took his eyes from Tottie's face.

He longed to stoop down and kiss the brown curls, but natural shyness kept him back. Mrs. Turner would think it unboyish, oh, she would only go and leave him alone with his sweetheart.

His eyes were bright, he could not have cried; his was the suffering that is too acute for tears.

He stood over the child's fair form in a listening attitude, as if half-expecting her to speak, till at last conscious that Mrs. Turner was waiting for him to go, he followed her out with compressed lips and bent head. He moved awkwardly, turned furiously red when she asked him what he thought of her darling, and left the house without answering.

"What an unsympathetic, cold, feelingless boy!" complained Mrs. Turner. "Not a tear, not a word, never even said he was sorry."

The maid nodded assent. "They are all heartless little brutes at that age," she retorted.

Robin walked home through the dull, bleak streets, which an hour ago had appeared so full of Saturday afternoon holiday life and bright spring sunshine.

"Hullo, Robbie, where are you going?" asked his father, meeting him at the corner.

"To play cricket," he replied, choking back a sob and strangling his emotion.

But Robbie turned into the green lane, where Tottie had wept under the hedge.

SCHOOL OF EMBROIDERY.

The glory of Vienna is the government art school of embroidery, the classes of which are under the direction of Mme. St. George, perhaps the most accomplished designer and needlewoman in the world, writes a correspondent.

The entire course of instruction, which is quite free, lasts five years, but many pupils leave after two or three years, especially ladies who do not intend to make art work a profession and are satisfied with knowing the rudiments of either lacework or art embroidery, for every year has its special course. Every year's course has its special room and instructor, and the pupils cannot go from one to the other until the year expires.

The pupils of the last year's course were busily mending a magnificent canopy, the work of the Empress Maria Theresa.

An idea may be formed of the magnitude of the task when it is said that ten girls under Mme. St. George's superintendence has been working at it for ten years already, and she expected it would take two years more to complete it.

Every kind of embroidery, including Persian, Indian, Japanese, Turkish, etc., is done here, and I was astonished to see some beautiful samples of the "nan-duty," or spider's web, made by the Guaran women of Paraguay, and rarely seen in Europe.

This lace is made of the fibre of the aloe, and it is so fine that it is made inside the huts, with the door shut, so that not the least breath of wind can touch it. I was still more surprised when Mme. St. George assured me that the sample before me was not really Paraguayan, but copied by her principal assistant. This lady has been equally successful in copying old Venetian, Irish, Brussels, homion, etc.—in fact, every kind of lace of all countries.

AT THE CYCLE CLUB.

First Member—How would it do to agitate for a law allowing bicyclists to use the sidewalks and compelling pedestrians to walk in the middle of the street?

Second Member—Well, that idea seems a little premature, just now. After a time we might demand such a law on the principle of the greatest good of the greatest number.

THE NEW TEACHER.

How do you like your new teacher, Wallie? asked his aunt.

Like isn't the word, replied Wallie. Oh! Then you love her, do you? I do, said Wallie, and then after a long pause, he added, Not!

THE SMARTEST BOY.

A boy of six years, who attends a private school where prizes are given on every sort of provocation, but as yet had never earned a prize, came home one afternoon and exhibited proudly one of these rewards of merit.

Good, said his mother, but how did you gain it?

I was first in natural history. Natural history at your age? How did that happen?

Oh, they asked me how many legs a horse had.

And what did you say?

I said five.

But a horse hasn't five legs, child. I know, but all the other boys said six.

PIECES AND WHOLE.

Proprietors of stores where musical instruments are sold say that many people seem quite unable to discriminate between such establishments and those in which printed music is dealt in.

PERILS OF A KLONDIKE JOURNEY.

C. F. Miller's Account of His Journey Overland Shooting the Canyon.

Men who are thinking of going to the Klondike gold camps will find an interesting account of the hardships and terrible sufferings that must be endured in a letter written at Circle City by C. F. Miller to William Buermann, of Windom, St. Louis county, Mo. Mr. Miller was a farmer at Rock Mill, St. Louis county, and sold his farm in 1895 and went to Alaska in August of that year to seek a fortune in the gold fields. He says in his letter, speaking of the journey:

"One goes from Juneau by steamer to Dyea, the head of navigation on the coast north of Juneau, and then begins the perilous journey over the mountains. Each man starts from Dyea with about eight hundred pounds of supplies, including provisions, and also tools, with which to build a boat. These supplies must be hauled on a hand sled in the snow by the man himself if he has no Eskimo dogs. It is a terrible load over the strangest country it has ever been my lot to travel. One man can haul on his sled only about 200 pounds at a load. He takes that about four or five miles, unloads, and then returns for 200 pounds more, and so on until he has his outfit moved to the spot where he left his first load.

"This tedious method is pursued until one reaches Chilkoot Pass, which is 3,500 feet above the sea level, and through which the trail crosses the coast range of mountains. This mountain pass is covered with

GLACIERS AND SNOW.

Steps are cut in the ice up the sides of this pass. Here the traveller to the gold region meets with difficulties that try his nerve and patience. One must pack on his back from fifty to one hundred pounds of supplies at a time, which he carries to the summit, and then returns for more, until his 800 pounds of outfit is carried up the mountain. All this must be done in blinding snowstorms, as it snows and blows all the time except in the two summer months.

"Crater Lake is on the north side of this pass and it remains frozen all summer. We crossed this lake on our way down to the mountains to the series of lakes below, and then continued our journey for 300 miles before we found suitable timber for building our boats. We camped at the head of the Grand Canon one night, and then we ran the canon in our boats the next morning. This canon is three quarters of a mile long and only 60 feet wide, and the walls rise 200 feet high. The river is one-half mile wide above the canon. The terrible suction draws the water to the center, causing it to be much higher in the middle.

"On this central upheaval of water leap and whirl frightful and dangerous breakers. We prepared to make this awful run through the canon on the morning of June 11, 1896. We arranged everything in good order. We lashed the steering oar fast, discarded our coats and boots, and bade goodbye to the boys on the shore. We shoved off and the fast increasing current carried us quickly to the mouth of the canon, and there our boat for an instant seemed to pause, as if afraid to proceed. But it was only a moment's stop, for, as quick as a flash, we shot into that hell of boiling waters. All we could do was catch our breath as we were picked up and slammed through the clouds of blinding spray. But before we had time to get scared and in a state of danger, and had run that three-quarters of a mile through the canon in two minutes and ten seconds.

"The scene that lay before us as we merged from the seething waters of the canon was grand indeed. We sailed along quietly between gently sloping banks that were covered with wild flowers of brilliant colors. But there was something lacking. Not a single bird song could be heard. That beautiful picture was set in a desolate country over which reigns

THE STILLNESS OF DEATH.

"I saw an old man who has been in the vicinity of that canon for ten years, and he says he will die there. But he says he would like once more to hear a bird sing, to hear a rooster crow, and see a pretty girl, and then he would be ready to lie down and die. The ground here is frozen to unknown depths. Several bodies were recently removed from the old graveyard to the new one out in Forty Mile creek, and they were in the same state of preservation as when buried. The ground only thaws a few inches from the surface in the summer.

"I have been presenting the dark side of the picture, but there is another. There is gold here, and it is in paying quantities, but it takes time to find it. Men have taken out from \$1,000 up to \$25,000, but the latter amount is the most that any one man has ever taken out of the ground. The seasons are so short and food is so high in price that it takes a long time to accomplish anything.

"This is very discouraging to many who come here. I shall try it here this winter. The miners in the winter burn holes down to bed rock and drift out the pay dirt. The pay dirt is wet and out in the spring.

"This letter would be incomplete without a word about the mosquitoes. They are thicker and larger than in any other country, I believe, on earth. They never let up on a man in the summer. They have actually driven men to commit suicide. I stood on a mountain side the 22nd of June and saw the sun set at 11.45 in the evening and dip behind the horizon and set then rise again at 12.15 midnight.

"There is no night here at this time of the year, but it will soon change and then there will practically be no day."

SOME NEW INVENTIONS.

WHAT INGENIOUS MAN HAS BEEN INVENTING LATELY.

A Hand Street-Sweeper—Machine for Cleaning Wool—New German Printing Press—For Closing Punctures in Pneumatic tires—A New Invalid Bed.

A citizen of Washington, D.C., has patented a hand street-sweeper, consisting of a skeleton frame mounted on wheels, a brush-roll, and an endless chain of buckets, which empty the sweepings into a receptacle.

A constant smoker of Allegheny, Penn., is the inventor of an economical match-box. An inclined false bottom has a groove which will admit the passage of only one match at a time, the match being ejected by pulling a handle attached to a slide.

A quill tube mouthpiece for cigarettes or cigars has one end turned inside out and doubled over one or more times on the body so that it is less easily bitten through.

In a new bicycle electric lamp the battery, which can be carried in a tool-box, is connected by wires with the lamp, and will furnish a continuous and brilliant light for 40 hours.

An improved machine for cleaning wool has a hollow, tapered revolving drum, covered by a perforated screen. Attached to bars within the drum are a series of teeth or pickers, against which the wool is driven as the drum revolves. Fan blades within the drum keep up a constant agitation of the air and drive the impurities through the screen into receptacles below.

An improved stamp canceling machine consists of a chute with a false bottom for supporting the envelopes, and provided with an automatic spring tension. As the envelopes slide down to the proper point they are seized by pins, drawn to the canceling dies, canceled and ejected from the machine.

A New Zealander has invented a spraying machine which may be carried, like a knapsack, on the back, or made larger and moved on wheels, the device consisting of a tank for the spraying fluid, an air tube and piston, the fluid being ejected by pneumatic pressure.

A German process for producing tin oxide which is pure white, not poisonous and gives a bright, white enamel, consists in heating the tin in an air-tight vessel to about 1,200 degrees Centigrade and when at that temperature air is admitted freely to the molten metal by opening all the doors. The slag is skimmed off, the oxide removed, and after being again heated, is washed or passed through a fine sieve.

In a new German printing press and oscillatory printing cylinder is so arranged as to rotate first in one and then in an opposite direction, each movement actuating one of two impression or feed cylinders, thus obviating the disadvantages arising from the constant revolution of cylinders, in one direction.

In an improved coffee roaster the perforated outer cylinder containing the coffee is heated by an inner cylinder, larger at one end than the other, which contained a coiled gas pipe also tapering towards one end.

An automatic method of closing punctures in pneumatic tires, consists of a longitudinal cell or passage on the under side of the inner tube, which cell is filled with a semi-liquid substance, such as the boiled glue and molasses used for the printers' rollers, which will ooze through a puncture and harden on the surface.

An electrical attachment for musical instruments, operated on the plan of the perforated music roll, feed mill, revolving drum, etc., the same being actuated by electric power instead of Italian elbow grease.

A convenient holder to prevent dropping pencils from the vest pocket consists of a plate with a curved strip of metal and a hollow rubber band holding the pencil and a pin for attaching it to the vest.

A removable cover for break handles especially designed for motor cars, consists of a hood, preferably of rubber, which slips over the upper knob of the handle, and a flap for the longitudinal portion of the same, thus protecting the hands of the motorman from electric shock and from the injurious effects of handling metal, especially in cold weather.

A new invalid bed has as independent central section resting on a movable auxiliary frame which may be raised or lowered at will by a wheel and chain. The head or foot sections can be elevated or depressed at any angle, and a removable attachment is provided for sustaining water bags or slings for fractured limbs.

In a German improvement in shifting or reversing gear, especially applicable to fluid-operated engines, the piston rods of two compressed air cylinders are connected with push rods or links, whose free ends are attached to a block movable longitudinally on a guide rod fixed at each end of the frame. A valve box contains a separate induction and suction port for each cylinder, the fluid pressure being regulated by slide valves. The apparatus is applicable to reversible machinery of all kinds.

An improved German apparatus for sterilizing and packing surgical bandage material consists of a paper mache or card board tube with perforated sides in which the bandages are placed, sterilized by a current of steam, and hermetically sealed by hinged end pieces lined with gum which fit over the ends of the tube.

AN ANOMALY.

Agitator—Don't you know, sir, that in this country the rich are growing richer and the poor poorer?

Patrick—Then it's rich Oi must be, fur Oi'm a moighty richt better off than Oi waz when I wended.

HELPLESS FOR A

Bowed Down With Rheumatism Sciatica.

From the Post, Sackville, N. Records like the following viction with them, and in sense it might be said that the age of miracles, Mr. Ed. ney, of Macon, N.B., says ney, a resident of Cumberland some years. I have been sufferer from upwards of with severe pains which would become almost unbearable. I think I suffered almost every man can suffer and live. I pled that I could not work over the time was not able to about. I became so weak, a tem so run down that I do ever getting better. My case almost hopeless one, and as and one year. I heard of Dr. Pink Pills and I was induced give them a trial. In a short began to recover and my pains left my back and limbs I was enabled to walk out. Before I had used more than dozen boxes I was completely a hard day's work. I had quite and began to gain flesh like a new man. I am free from and pains and have Dr. Pink Pills to thank for it. A porter could not help feeling Downey's case was a striking figure, straight lined and his movements as a young twenty.

THE MARKED DOOR

Long ago, when the children in the poplars' greenness of shade.

Or danced at will through hall, Where the flickering shades leaves fall.

Never a birthday brought To the lightsome hearts of the boys.

But they marked their he old hall door, To compare with the hatches ed before.

Every fleeting and happy Has left the trace of its pas There is the first-born's four—

The earliest mark on the old And again at six, and eight, Ah, me! How tall he has then!

The stern, grave soldier in Might surely pass this through.

Yet he stands to-night by chair, With his mournful eyes on hair.

A lad of ten summers for Charmed out of the past by door.

The upward rows of the tw The last mark down in the year.

And, between them, their s and fair, With calm blue eyes and br

One lad has written his boy After years of toil on the But the grave of the other And the girls are mother

Yet they're here unchanged grown no more. Since the last mark made hall door.

Long long since have strayed, From the farmhouse old shade.

One by one they have slip The nest is empty of all. Hardly the mother her eye Where are the children of Here alone, at the old hall In the hour of twilight the more.

And the mother, at rest old chair, Has all her darlings around

Men and women no lon Are here, but the children With their old time frok and noise.

Their April grins and joys, Their fresh, young hopes a of truth.

Their fair ambitions an youth. Oh! mother-heart! They have grown.

So tall and strange they own. Always the same as in d You may find them still door.

L. M. Belmont, P. E. Island.

IN TEXAS.

New Pedagogy, fresh I know exactly what you them. You do not w consequential facts cran children's heads. You teach the young idea b President of the S. H. Institutionally.—That's it

A RUNNING A

How long since Broke here? asked the strang I don't know exactly, years, but I know it's ty grocer since he settle

EXPERT CR

Why this sign not ticular piece of statu umbrella! asked a v exhibit. Because, snapped a you could only do it as.

NOT RO

Actress, who thin diamonds stolen for r raiment—fine ar robbed at this hote Guest, summer bo friends, have. We eanation to settle also