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**Wainwright's Experiment.**

By Constance D'Arcy Mackay.

Copyright, 1907, by M. M. Cunningham.

It was noon. The July sun blazed down over the hayfields and flickered across the group of men who lolled beneath the trees enjoying their first rest after a morning of toil. Wainwright sat a little apart from the others and mopped his forehead. The muscles of his arms and shoulders ached from unaccustomed labor. Yet as he looked at the close cut field his feeling was one of pleasure.

Two months before as assistant professor of political economy in an eastern college he had longed to put certain problems to the test, to learn from actual experience those things which other men were content to take from the text books. So while his brother professors spent their vacations in Europe or at the seashore Wainwright tramped the highways of New England, knapsack on back and notebook in hand. Routine and conventionality were forgotten. And so much is man a part of his mode of living that after his first two weeks on the road not one of Wainwright's old conferees would have recognized him. His clothes had lost their hall marks of good tailoring and become frayed and dusty. His



"PLEASE DON'T STOP!" SHE CRIED.

shoes were out at heel, his hat almost rimless and his face tanned to a deep bronze.

But Wainwright was young and vigorous and had a keen relish for adventure. He liked the freedom of the highway, the quest of picking up odd jobs at the scattered farmhouses along the route, the deep sleep of the travel weary in dim, sweet scented haylofts or, oftener still, in the open, with the stars shimmering through the branches of the trees.

It was the harvest season. There was work in plenty, and in time Wainwright quitted his hand to mouth vagabondage for the sobering occupation of harvester on the Rolfe farm, where he was to receive a dollar a day and bed and board. The first morning's labor had proved more exhausting than he had anticipated, but Wainwright kept on doggedly, though each hour added fresh blisters to his hands and made the scythe seem heavier to wield. The midday rest brought an ecstasy of relief.

"This," thought Wainwright as he stretched himself in the shade—"this is worth a dozen hotel verandas!" The rustle of leaves, the talk of the men near by and the drone of insects through the warm air all blended into a confused murmur. An unconquerable drowsiness stole over him.

"Won't you have some dinner?" said a voice beside him, and Wainwright, opening his eyes, looked up at a girl who might have been Priscilla, so demure was her blue dress and white kerchief. She wore a frilled sunbonnet, and Wainwright wished that he might see the face it hid, but his desire remained ungratified, for after serving him the girl turned her attention to the next man and from that went impartially down the line. The men fell to at once. Wainwright alone stared after the sunbonneted figure that tripped across the field and took the orchard path leading to the Rolfe farm.

That night as he took his seat among

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the harvesters that clattered around the Rolfe's supper table he saw with quickening interest that the girl of the noon hour was flitting about the kitchen, passing huge platters of bread and stone jugs of foaming milk. Wainwright had leisure to observe that she had brown eyes and wavy brown hair coiled low upon her neck.

When supper was over the other farm hands strolled off toward the barn. Wainwright lingered.

"Your daughter must be a great help to you," he ventured.

"My daughter!" laughed Farmer Rolfe. "Why, she ain't my daughter! She's the hired girl, though I will say," he added, "that if ever I'd had a daughter I'd ha' liked one like Mary Carter. She's as quick and handy as she can be, and my wife thinks a heap o' her. Took to her from the first when the girl come from over by Coopersville way lookin' for work. She's so slim and slight you wouldn't think she could do much. But, land, she's a buster!" Indeed, so absorbed was Mary in her work that Wainwright only saw her at mealtimes. Even then she merely stopped for a pleasant word or nod.

But one Sunday night when Wainwright sat alone on the back porch strumming at a guitar a white dress glimmered in the doorway, and presently Mary came out and sat down.

"Please don't stop!" she cried as Wainwright smothered the last chord of a college glee. "I'm very fond of music!"

"What else are you fond of, I wonder?" thought Wainwright, and he deftly led her on to speak of herself. She was fond of reading, she confessed, and knew many of the poets by heart. Her taste in literature was as simple as it was fine, and the more she spoke the more Wainwright wondered, for she seemed utterly content with her present occupation.

"Any work that is done well is beautiful," she declared earnestly, and, though her allusions to herself were delicately reticent, Wainwright found it easy to picture her primitive life, primitive and yet not humdrum. Her love of nature and beauty forbade that. "What a wonderful country it is," mused Wainwright, "where even the rustics have ideas of their own and a vivid way of expressing them." Mary's personality was the most challenging and illuminating one that he had discovered so far, and descriptions of her covered several pages of his notebook.

In the days that followed he found that if he helped Mary with the supper dishes the longer they would have to sit on the porch in the cool of the evening. So while she splashed the suds he polished plates and cups and quoted his favorite authors. Afterward they would stroll together down the orchard path, watching the first stars and listening to the eerie notes of the whippoorwill, a pleasant state of affairs destined to end abruptly, for Wainwright returned from the fields one evening to find Mrs. Rolfe alone in the kitchen. Mary was gone.

"Had a letter from one of her folks," said the farmer, "and she went right off. Wouldn't take a cent of her pay 'cause she left so sudden."

Wainwright looked blank. "Didn't she leave any address?" he queried.

"Said she'd write," answered Rolfe laconically.

"But wasn't there any message?" persisted Wainwright.

"Not a word," said Farmer Rolfe cheerfully.

Mrs. Rolfe had some of her famous biscuits for supper, but Wainwright had lost his appetite. He stood on the back porch in the afterglow, and everything seemed strangely deserted. Mary had gone, and something of the joy of living had gone with her. Existence seemed suddenly very tame and dull to the young professor. He was conscious of emotions not classified in his notebook.

"I must have overworked," he said listlessly to himself as he sat on the Leffingwells' veranda a week later. It was sundown. A breeze swept up from the Hudson, and a tall glass of lemonade tinkled pleasantly in Wainwright's hand.

Mrs. Leffingwell, of whose house party he was a guest, sat near him in a wicker chair and chatted irrepressibly.

"We've had an inkling of your exploits," she said, "and will expect a full account of them. Tonight there's a girl coming to dine who's awfully fond of that sort of thing. She spent the summer working on a farm where she met the most extraordinary young harvester that—There she is now!"

Mary, in a white lace dress, was coming slowly across the lawn.

"You didn't leave me any message," said Wainwright reproachfully the moment after their hostess had left them alone together, "but I have one for you. I wonder if you will care to hear it?"

"You might try and see," suggested Mary demurely.

When dinner was at its gayest, Mrs. Leffingwell turned to Wainwright.

"Do you think," she said, "that your experiment was a success?"

Wainwright's eyes met Mary's in a comprehending flash.

"The greatest I've ever had," he answered, smiling.

**A NEW YEAR EXPLOSION.**

**New Year Morning Explosion—Wrecked Building—Shock Felt in all Parts of Village.**

New Year's Day was ushered in by an acetylene explosion which roused the slumbering citizens and startled those who were up and doing. The big roughcast building occupied by Mr. George W. Collins, druggist, and Mr. John Herbert, merchant tailor, is badly wrecked. Mr. Collins was in Toronto, having gone down the day before. The explosion took place about 7:30 a. m., before the occupants of the building were up and the bed in which Mrs. Collins slept was turned up side down, and Mrs. Collins had to climb out on the kitchen roof through a window, the debris from the wrecked walls and ceiling blocking the stairway so as to prevent egress by that passage. The walls of the heavy building were lifted off the foundation and bulged out, the floors were blown up and the plaster on the ceilings and walls was knocked off and fell in masses. The partition wall between Mr. Collins' and Mr. Herbert's was blown into the latter's side and their sideboard thrown down and the contents smashed. The explosion was a terrible shock to the inmates of both houses and left Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Herbert shivering for hours with fright. Fire started immediately after the explosion, but was put out before doing much damage by a copious drenching with water. The Public Library, which was situated in Mr. Collins' side of the building, was wrecked and the books scattered in all directions. The only theory of the explosion is that escaping gas came in contact with fire in the furnace. The gas plant was not injured excepting the pipes running to the burners. The amount of damage cannot be estimated until Mr. Collins returned home. The contents of the drug store were blown to atoms or broken by falling from the shelves and counters. Mr. Herbert has moved to the building north of Mr. Wm. McFarlane's and Mrs. Collins' furniture was taken to the Maunce.

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**Vickers.**

Miss Mary Wise and two sisters, of Port Huron, are guests of Miss Mary Wise here.

Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Burnett, of Durham, spent New Year's Day with the latter's sister, Mrs. Wm. Livingston.

Miss Maud Cuff spent the holidays with friends in Toronto.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Vickers returned to Toronto last week after spending a few days with the former's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Vickers.

Mr. David Donnelly spent the past week with his brothers in Peterborough.

Mr. Herb Hunt was in Guelph recently.

Mr. and Mrs. Will McCulloch spent one day last week with Mr. Robert Lindsay, of Glenelg.

Mr. Wes. Pearson, of Medical College, Toronto, visited friends in this vicinity Sunday last.

Mr. George Miller, of Aberdeen, ate his New Year's dinner with his brother, Mr. Harry Miller.

Herb Hunt sold one of his Standard bred colts to Bob Scott, Durham. Bob knows the good ones when he sees them and knows how to make them go.

**FROM THE ANTILLES.**

**Chamberlain's Cough Remedy Benefits a City Councilman at Kingston, Jamaica.**

Mr. W. O'Reilly Fogarty, who is a member of the City Council at Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies, writes as follows: "One bottle of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy had good effect on a cough that was giving me trouble and I think I should have been more quickly relieved if I had continued the remedy. That is why beneficial and quick in relieving me there is no doubt and it is my intention to obtain another bottle." For sale at Parker's Drug Store.

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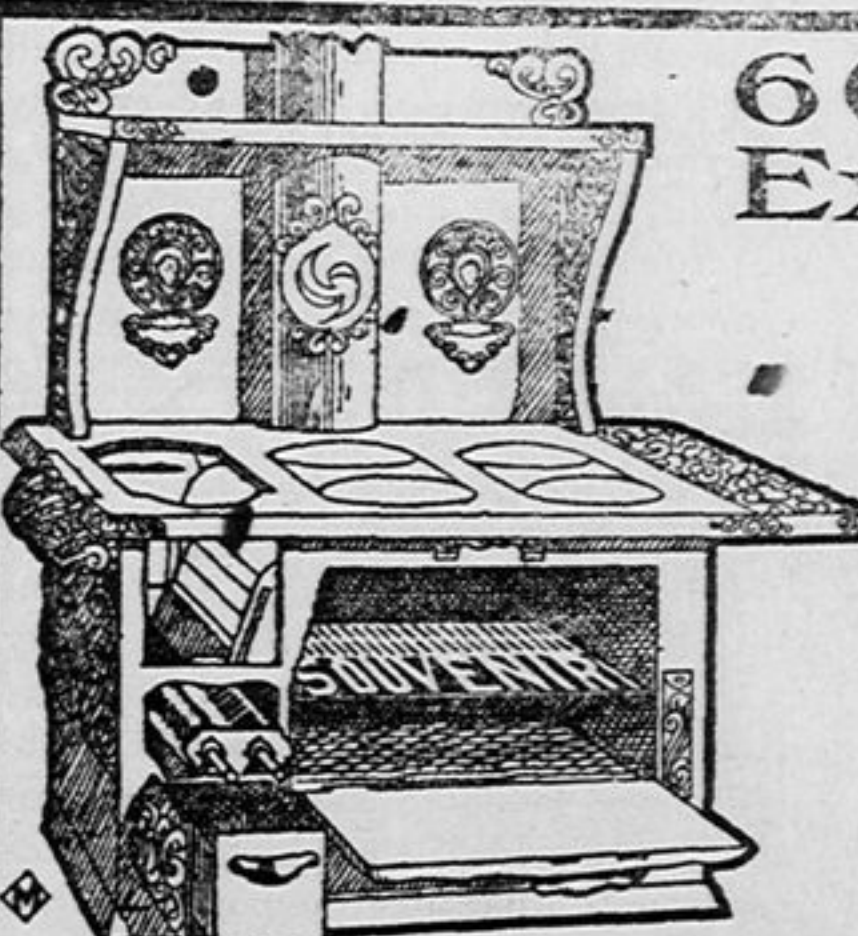
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