

INSPIRED BY THE GENIUS OF OUR OWN MARY

Chicago Girls Found an Order Named After the Butte Wonder and Make Her an Honorary Member—One of the Society, Aged 16, Came to Grief and Her Remarkable Explanation of Her Ideals and Likes and Dislikes Upon Being Incarcerated—With Something of the History of the Mary MacLane Club and "Genevieve", Its Beautiful President,

CORRESPONDENCE OF INTER MOUNTAIN.
Chicago, Dec. 1.—Elsie Viola Larsen is a victim of MacLaneism. She is having a bad attack. There are other girls who have had it—more than one could count—but Viola is almost a MacLane.

To be a MacLane one must have a red gullet, a charmingly romantic imagination and a sensitive nature. Viola has all of these; she has more; she has genius. But, come to think of it, so has Mary MacLane. The great difference between Viola Larsen and Mary MacLane is that Mary has a high school education and three more years of experience. Then, too, Mary has attained. Lest someone might question what Mary MacLane has attained, it will be well to state: She has attained the distinction of distracting a very silly girl—a great many silly girls, rather—into thinking they are geniuses. She has attained the suffering of as many anxious mothers and hard-working fathers. She has brought about a tragedy in the Larsen family which it will take years to soften. She has perhaps been the ruin of Viola, who was an ordinary little girl until she decided to be a MacLane.

Is Our Mary to Blame?

The question will naturally arise, is Mary MacLane entirely to blame for this rather serious state of affairs? And, again, is that 19-year-old prodigy from Butte, Mont., worth the sacrifice?

The story of this one girl's ambitions and delusions has come to light through the police court, which returned a verdict of "not guilty" in the case of Viola Larsen, or Elsie Larsen, booked in the Harrison street station as a horse thief. Viola appeared in police court Saturday, November 22, and told a dramatic story of her arrest.

"I could write it and it would be thrilling, if I only had time, but I suppose there isn't time for that?" she questioned of the policeman who marched her down from the annex to the police court.

"No," growled the policeman, not feeling in humor for such nonsense.

Now, Viola had a sentimental regard for all men in uniforms and she was disappointed that the officer of the law did not make conversation with her just as the reporters had done. "Ain't reporters nice?" she guilelessly asked of one.

"I didn't go to steal the horse," she told the judge. "Oh, of course I thought we would be arrested, but then I wanted that for my book. My hero is going to be chased by the police. But I wasn't out for that. I was looking for my heroine. I saw her name in the paper last week about a marriage and I was going to her house to look at her. I could pretend, you know."

She Dared Me.

"When I met a girl in Washington boulevard I asked her where the number was. I was near the 400's and she said it was about a mile. It was near 600. She said she'd ride with me if I did, and I said, 'you take the horse then, if you want to.' 'And she said, 'Oh, you're the oldest; you ought to do it.' So I thought I'd show her I could and did. She ran up into the next block. We drove round Union park and were just coming back when a policeman on horseback and a man in a buggy chased us. Then we got out of our buggy and ran. She hid between two houses, but, of course, I couldn't go there and get her caught too.

"Then a grocery wagon came by and the boy let me in and I told him would he give me a ride and he said 'sure Mike,' and I said just whip up your horse and he did. But the policeman caught up and I was kind of scared then."

"That is just how it came that Viola spent the night in the Harrison street police station. She was taken first to the Warren avenue station, where she gave the name Viola Nersal. When she gave the wrong house address the police failed to find her people and her father searched for her until the next day. Then, frightened, she told the station matron that her mother lived at No. 186 North Green street and her father was summoned to give bond for her reappearance. It was on Thursday that Viola stole the horse; it was Saturday when she finally reached home, proud in her accomplishment and fired with a new ambition.

She is Misunderstood.

"They don't any of them understand me," she said with parrot-like MacLaneism. "They think I am crazy, my people do, but I'm not; I'm a genius. Some day the world will know that. Just now I have not finished my book and I don't want to say anything more about it. What I took it for was to really feel how it would be to do something of that sort and then be chased by the officer of the law on horseback. I am glad I did it; it was a real experience and I am going to put it in my book. I

have just one chapter finished, but I will work hard and pretty soon it will be done. Then I will find a publisher. I guess no one has trouble with that if they have a real good book."

A Mary MacLane Society.

At this juncture Viola's mother, a kind-y Swedish woman, appeared at the parlor door. "Where does Genevieve live?" she asked sternly. Viola looked surprised, but doggedly

herself and that of course she could do as well in the country as elsewhere. But she did not agree with her mother that one could have a story without having an experience. Viola is a realist and her mother is rather of the Hans Andersen school.

By Windy City Geniuses.

To go back to the Mary MacLane club; it is the club that first inspired the Chicago genius. It has inspired nine "ladies" to cultivate their geniuses. The nine 16-



ELSIE VIOLA LARSEN.

shook her head; "I can't tell you; that's a secret," she said.

"Who is Genevieve?" asked her mother again.

"She's the president of our order; that's all I can tell you; I am breaking the vows of my order to tell you that."

But Viola's mother was a persistent seeker after the secrets of the order. "It's the Mary MacLane society," she said, indignantly.

A Society of Ladies.

So common a word as society was not for such as Viola. "It's not a society, mamma; it's a court—a court of honorable ladies."

"You call yourselves ladies?" "Certainly; why are we not ladies, pray? Of course, you may persecute me. I expect persecution. But I shall not tell of my sisterhood. I will make myself a martyr first; I will renounce my order. They may cast me out for not appearing at the court when the queen sits. I will suffer in silence, but you shall never bring the secret truth from me. I will be brave; I am the Nersal."

This was a most elaborate speech for a miss of 16 who is addressing her mother, but Mrs. Larsen took it calmly. Indeed, she replied in kind, exhibiting a parity of diction which is frequent among foreign Americans. There was, too, an assumed elegance in her manner which suggested an imaginative love of the drama, from which Viola may have inherited her predilection.

Farm Life for the Genius.

"You may write your book, but not in this city, nor as a member of the club. You cannot have such secrets from your parents. We do not know these girls and we do not know where you meet and we cannot allow that. You will go into the country, where you can rest on a farm. You may write your book there in the quiet. You cannot be what is this MacLane. You must rest and be strong."

"When you were a child I used to tell you fairy tales. I could tell them very well, but I did not write them for publication, as Mrs. Harrison has. I could have mine published probably. My father was a fine story teller. He used to tell continued stories for us when we were children. They came to him like an inspiration. That is the way they have come to me. I do not believe one could plan them out if one had not a real gift for it."

And Viola, being questioned, said she had not planned her book, that it wrote

year-old ladies live on the northwest side, near Milwaukee avenue and Green street. Viola had known Genevieve for some years. They were "intimates." A gentleman loaned Genevieve the story of Mary MacLane. That was in the summer when the great MacLane was a guest of Chicago. The man, who had bought the book out of curiosity, said such a girl must be a "holy show." But the misses of Milwaukee avenue did not agree with him. They chose rather to agree with Mary that she was a genius.

"And we are geniuses," they told themselves. "We will be MacLanes and geniuses."

So they formed themselves into the secret order of geniuses, of which Mary MacLane is an honorary member. Genevieve is the president, and that is as it should be, for it is Genevieve who has chosen to be an actress. The girls think Genevieve is beautiful, and when they are in court session they invite her to "play" for them. She thereupon recites passages from "Ten Nights in a Barroom," which is a play some of the girls have seen five times. When Genevieve reaches the chasm she pronounces the "H" and goes right on as though she had leaped the dizzy height and was safe on the sod of her countrymen.

Prefers to Be a MacLane.

As for Viola she does not care for "actressing." Of course, she would be a "prima donna if she could, but a teacher told her she would need training for that. Besides, she prefers to be a MacLane, to be famous at 19 and to be bored by the world. When Mary was in Chicago Viola read every word about her. She liked the way Mary scoffed at the aristocrats. "She was of as royal blood as they"—and that is what Viola would be. Mary, even in Chicago, was misunderstood, and so is Viola misunderstood. Viola says she knows she is unusual and that she does many things that other people are afraid to do, but a genius cannot be a coward.

"I was very brave at the police station," she explained. "Some of the girls who were there cried, but I did not shed a tear. They thought I was not afraid; of course I was, but I would not let them see it. It was amusing how interested people were in me; of course, they don't understand. What I do I do for literature. I am thinking of being a detective." Viola has not as yet chosen her serious career in life. She and the MacLane both

believe in careers. "I have read a great many detective books," she said, by way of explanation. "I do love detective stories. I should love to be a Sherlock Holmes. I think I could be. I am just as clever as he was. If I was to be a detective I should not be afraid of anything, not if some one pointed a pistol at me. It does not pay to be a coward."

Some Literary Opinions.

Being a literary person—unless the detective gets the upper hand of the literature—Viola ventured some literary opinions. She has read largely and, one might say, wonderfully. She likes "Huge" Conway's works. She likes them all, some of them she has read twice.

"I think 'Bound by a Spell' is the best book that was ever written. I like the way it is put together. Some things I like in books and some things I don't. I don't like love; that's silly. Still there are good things in 'The Duchess.' Of course every one has read 'The Duchess.' One has to be up, so to speak. I have a dog named Duchess. Come Duchess," Viola continued.

And the Duchess came, wagging her tail across a mangy back. Young in months, old in name and experiences, the Duchess is the relic of a strenuous young life. Her legs wobble pitifully under the burden of endearments her mistress heaps upon her. "Beloved one, come to me," said the mistress, and the Duchess came.

Some Absurd Things.

"I do not believe in love," said the mistress, tucking the Duchess under her chin. "I do not believe in marriage, it's absurd. I shall never love, nor shall I marry. The one thing which I disapprove of in Mary MacLane is her falling in love. They say she has; she should not do it. I should never care for any man except my father and my brother and I can't understand it in Mary. Of course, there is another thing about her I don't like, she talks too much about the devil. I can't see that she means much of anything, but it is foolish to write like that. I am writing a novel that is better than hers. It will be thrilling, but there will be no love in it, only adventure, and the hero is a villain. When he flees from the law the mounted police give chase. He will not be a coward. He will have stolen beautiful gems from a duchess, but he will be captured and put in jail. He will suffer. I know how it is now and I will picture it."

Would Be No Mere Shop Girl.

Viola's companion in this venture was another member of the club. She refuses to divulge the name, but that is not necessary. The girl was in court Saturday morning, very much interested in the affair and evidently proud of her leader. This girl is just past 14 years. She has decided to be a lawyer or she would be a detective if Viola urged. "I do not propose to be a mere shop girl," said this miss when she was questioned. "I will be somebody people will know and admire. I must honor my club."

After this fashion the Mary MacLanes have each chosen a profession; none of them will be a "mere shop girl," each one must be an honor to the club. But ever since Thursday the MacLane of the MacLanes has been she who defied the police and was not afraid to go to jail. She is the heroine of at least nine girls, each of whom wears a grimy slip of newspaper bearing an account of the theft and the flight, the capture and the imprisonment, carefully pinned inside her waist.

Secrets Unearthed.

While Viola was spending the night in jail her mother searched her bureau drawers for some key to her whereabouts. It was in that way she discovered the existence of the MacLane club. The literary devotee had a top drawer full of notes, on many of which were references to the club. Although the club has been in existence for three months and has met one night a week since its establishment, no one except the members and possibly Genevieve's mother knew of it. The club has met at Genevieve's house and in Genevieve's room and every effort has been made to keep its purposes from the "unkind outside world," among whom Genevieve's family were classed with the rest of the mothers and fathers of the club.

At the time of the inauguration of the club Viola was a switch girl in the central office of the telephone exchange.

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS.

Washington, Dec. 4.—The report of the secretary of agriculture has been given out.

The secretary opens his report with a reference to the educational work of the department, which he says has grown in effectiveness since his last annual report. He finds that the demands of many public institutions for men to conduct research in scientific fields and for ability to manage agricultural enterprises encourage young men to take advantage of the opportunities thus afforded. The teaching of the science of agriculture and of the sciences relating to it are receiving more attention in the colleges instituted for the purpose, many of which have neglected their full duty in the past.

Research into the principles governing the growth of plants has resulted in increased varieties to select from. The department is helping the people in many localities to an intelligent knowledge of their soils, and of the most profitable uses to which they may be devoted. The department's explorers are continuing to search the Old World for valuable plants which may be successfully transplanted here. The purpose is to help toward the production in our own country of everything that soil and climate will permit, and to avail ourselves of our new island possessions to grow such products as demand tropical conditions.

Warnings for Rural Mills.

The past year affords gratifying evidence of the value of forecast warnings of the weather bureau in saving life and property. Ample testimony is afforded that the value of property thus saved from loss amounts to many times the cost of maintaining the bureau. The secretary urges the desirability

of extending the distribution of daily forecasts co-extensively with the rural free delivery. Of the 10,000 rural free-delivery routes existing August 1, 1902, it has been found possible to serve only 1,000. To make the distribution co-extensive with the rural free delivery would, he estimates, cost about \$100,000.

Interest in forestry and a perception of its possibilities as a great national resource have developed so swiftly in the United States that the discrepancy between the capacity for government service of this branch of the department and its opportunities was never so great as now. During the past year the bureau of forestry has notably increased its store of knowledge, on which all forestry depends, and has made large gains in introducing practical management of forests of both public and private ownership. Its field work has engaged 162 men and has been carried on in 42 states and territories.

Thirty-seven applications were received during the year, asking advice for the management, in accordance with the working plans of the bureau, is 372,463 acres. A plan is in preparation for a tract in Southeastern Texas, comprising an area of one and one-fourth million acres, the largest holding of timber land in the United States.

By the request of the secretary of the interior, the bureau of forestry has become his official adviser in matters of forest policy for the national forest reserves, covering over 60,000,000 acres.

Irrigation.

The distribution and use of Western rivers requires legislation on the irrigation industry, which, in turn, renders it necessary that there should be a better understand-

ing of the subject than now exists. The department is securing information as to the quantity of water used, where it is used, how much water is required to the best advantage. Much has been done to educate farmers and ditch managers as to the direction in which improvement in the method of practice must come. They have made plans, have shown the need of better work in constructing and maintaining canals, and have shown that the loss of water through leakage in transit is far greater than is generally supposed. The large problems which the complete use of Western rivers is destined to create and the measure of public control which recent legislation renders inevitable give added interest to the department's studies of the legal and economic phases of irrigation.

Through the courtesy of government officials in Egypt the representative of the department was enabled to become fully acquainted with the administration of laws governing the use of the Nile. Allowing for differences in conditions, the lesson of one of the oldest irrigated countries in the world can not fail to be of interest and value to one of the youngest. A number of the arid states co-operate with the department in these studies of sociological and legal problems.

Remedy for Sheep Poisoning.

The losses to sheep owners on the great stock ranges of the Northwest from poisonous plants aggregate annually \$400,000. The study of these poisonous plants has developed an antidote for some of them, not only effective but which can be rapidly applied.

The bureau of animal industry has continued its investigations in contagious diseases with a view to their prevention or

remedy. Over one and one-half million doses of the black-leg vaccine were distributed during the year. Reports show that its use reduced the loss of cattle to 0.31 per cent of those vaccinated. The use of this vaccine has thus saved to stock raisers many thousands of head of cattle.

The increase of prairie dogs as a natural result of the destruction of their enemies, the coyotes and larger hawks, called for special investigation, and assistance was sent to the various points in the afflicted area, from Montana to Texas, resulting in the collection of much valuable information.

Bigness of American Agriculture.

The secretary concludes his report with some interesting figures illustrative of the magnitude of the agricultural industry. In 1900 the fixed capital of agriculture was about twenty billion of dollars, or four times that invested in manufacture. In that year there were nearly five million seven hundred and forty farms in the country, covering eight hundred and forty-one million acres, four hundred and fifteen millions of which consisted of improved land. According to the returns of the last census, about forty million people, or more than half of the total population in 1900, resided on farms. Of the twenty-nine million persons reported as engaged in gainful occupations, ten million—more than a third—were employed in agricultural pursuits. The produce of American agriculture in 1899, including farm animals and other products, aggregated nearly five billions of dollars. The most valuable crop was Indian corn, \$828,000,000; then hay and forage, \$484,000,000; then cotton, \$324,000,000; wheat returned \$370,000,000, and oats \$217,000,000. The animals sold and

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slaughtered during the year were valued at over \$900,000,000, the products of the dairy gave \$472,000,000, while poultry and eggs returned over \$281,000,000. The concluding statement of the secretary is that results in the work of the government for agriculture are justifying expenditures, and "the future will still further show the value of science applied to the farm."

May Help the Canal Bill.

Panama, Colombia, Dec. 4.—The report that President Concha had been relieved of his appointment has raised hopes here that the Panama canal negotiations will take a more favorable turn. It is re-

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ported that some more ample instructions will be cabled from Bogota.

An examination of candidates for substitute in the Butte public library will be held in the high school building December 6 at a o'clock p. m. For particulars inquire of the librarian.