

tude, as though he lay on the rack, troubled her.

One morning, in the dews and scents of the hour before dawn, she heard a horse clattering furiously through the village.

"It will be Mrs. Stiles at the Leas," she said to herself, "and John Stiles is riding for the midwife. I pray the poor soul may not be mortal bad, he rode at such a rate."

But it was not Mrs. Stiles, for John Stiles was in for his beer next morning and reported his wife still up and doing.

Mr. Jones went off as usual about half an hour before noon, walking on air, said the gossips, who leaned through the door of "The Spotted Lamb" to look after him.

About 12 o'clock there was another sensation, for a magnificent coach, with postillions and footmen, drove up to "The Spotted Lamb," and the postillions and footmen and coachmen all had powdered heads and were dressed in liveries of scarlet fine enough for a duke or the Lord Mayor of London.

One gentleman rode in the coach. He wore no powder, but his head of curls fell about his handsome, fleshy face, and his clothes were even finer than Mr. Jones had made them used to at "The Spotted Lamb."

Mrs. Lumley went out, all curtsies, to the side of the coach. The gentleman asked for Mr. Jones, and was told he was out; he then asked if he might have a private sitting room to await his return.

"The Spotted Lamb," and, indeed, the village for the matter of that, was all in a flutter. The servants who came with the coach soon told the name of their master. Mrs. Lumley was quite overcome, and vowed that nothing would induce her to enter the parlor, where he waited, because she would surely faint on approaching him.

So she had hartshorn to her nose, and in the safe hiding place of the store closet lay back in a chair listening to the impatient pacing to and fro of those august feet.

At last word was brought to her that Mr. Jones was returning. She hastened out as fast as her trembling feet would carry her to warn him of who awaited him. But he passed her by without a word. What had come to him? The good woman could have screamed outright at his face, that put even her news out of her head.

It was fallen in a mass of haggard lines and shadows. If ever Despair sat on a face it sat there. Although he would not wait for her to speak, he walked slowly and heavily. His white silk coat was stained, as though he had lain with it in the grass before the dews were dried. The laces at his wrists were torn and dangled in a few shreds. Blood trickled down his chin, where he had bitten his lip through.

"Lord love your honor, what has happened to you?" she cried.

He went on as though he had not heard her, and passed within the parlor, whence so often she had heard the song of Dolly.

The door closed slowly. She heard the shout inside:

"Why, Jack, I have come for you!"

She flew to the store closet and laid her ear to the wall—a day or two before she had discovered a tiny hole where a knot of wood had fallen out.

"I spoke in anger, but now I withdraw it. Dear Jack, the wine is sour without you. There is no one to set the table in a roar. Almack's is deserted. The pretty women are inconsolable. Come back with me to the town. You look as though you were tired of your country whim."

"I will go where you like." Mr. Jones's voice had the strangest sound of suffering. "Only let me make a hasty toilet. I am not fit to be seen with your highness."

"You won't escape me again? Then I shall let you go. Upon my honor, Jack, I was deucedly sorry I said it. I can't make excuses,

Workers of Iniquity.

Clare Howard, in The Columbia Literary Monthly.

"It's 10 o'clock," said Bob, suddenly breaking off a chapter of "Oliver Twist" that she had been reading aloud.

Tonie turned rather yellow. "I suppose it's time to gargle," he said, hopelessly.

"Your time," corrected Bob, with relish.

Tonie got up with the air of a Sydney Carton, and advanced toward the washstand, where the murky goblets were standing side by side.

"Soda first?" he asked, in a hollow voice.

"No, borax," said Bob, advancing briskly.

"Are you ready?"

Tonie took down an ample bath towel and solemnly stuffed an end around his neck. It covered his small, slim frame from head to foot. He gave a slight hitch to his sleeves and grasped the goblet.

"Ready," said Bob, and extended one arm with her hand crooked in the shape of an Egyptian pillow. Tonie nodded his head, gulped at the goblet, and, stiffening to rigidity, fell back like a post. Bob supported the back of his neck by her crooked hand, while from his throat blood-curdling sounds assured her that he was not shirking his duty as a gargler. This complicated action was repeated with the soda, after which Tonie, with many reminiscent shudders, took off the towel and put the clock in a position so prominent that he could not fail to mark the time when Bob's turn came around.

The meaning of this is that while Bob, a tawny haired, lanky tomboy, had been visiting at the home of her friends, Belle and Tonie, all three of them had developed sore throats, and as diphtheria had been in the neighborhood, there was much alarm in the house of Gordon. The prospective invalids were quarantined in their rooms on the top floor, where the younger members of the family might receive no harm from them, and were commanded to gargle regularly every hour.

Tonie was very grateful for Bob's companionship during this idle, indoor life. He, the chieftain, the pathfinder in expeditions which included the climbing of trees, the construction of rafts and other pursuits where physical prowess and trousers gave him the advantage, now, like the melancholy mediæval baron in time of peace, sat in walled solitude, and had to be amused. He could not yet read fast enough to please himself, a fact which delighted

even to you, though I love you, man. It shall not occur again, I promise you, on the word of a prince."

"I had forgotten it, I assure your highness." The voice of utmost dejection brought the tears to Mrs. Lumley's kind eyes.

An hour later the splendid coach was again at the door of "The Spotted Lamb." Mr. Jones had clad himself again in the sober fineness of his early days. The blood was washed from his lip. He looked no more now than careworn and old.

Mrs. Lumley was in tears. Mr. Jones was coming back no more. A man would be sent to fetch away his belongings. He had left more gold on the table than would pay for a year's lodging, and Mrs. Lumley did not care to take it up.

Just at the last he paused in the narrow inn passage where the great person preceded him, and turned aside into the little brown parlor. There had been stocks and gillyflowers when he came. There were now Mary lilies and the last of the roses. A sheaf of lilies in the brown room was sharp as the flash of an angel's sword.

"After all," he said, "you were wise, you kind soul. She chose the lad and rode with him at daybreak. Goodby." He kissed her cheek and was gone.—(The Sketch.

Bob, as she was thus free to impose on him whatever books she chose to read aloud. She had long burned to douse him with "Oliver Twist," and this she now proceeded to do at the rate of ten chapters a day.

Belle, the third prisoner, listened intermittently to "Oliver Twist," but often stole away to write love letters, for at the age of twelve she put out new shoots of sentiment every week. This state of mind in Belle had alienated her from her brother, whose aversion to the tender passion was so great that Bob was always obliged, before telling him any story she had read, to expunge from it any "heart interest" it might retain. But even Bob, though not bigoted like Tonie, had no sympathy with Belle's love affair.

Bob and Tonie therefore drew together and wore away the hours in varied fashions that suited both equally. For instance, they untanked their pet turtles and placed them on a racecourse made of two parallel walls of books. When the turtles were started with a finger tip, bets of five kopecks, two centimes, sixpence, were made with Uncle Gordon's collection of old coins. They shot with airguns at armies of paper Indians set out on the floor.

Now it may have been owing to this unnatural indoor life, or to the influence of "Oliver Twist," but all their amusements ran to some perverted end. The friends bickered over the turtle race because Tonie took to nudging his turtle when it stopped for meditation on the racecourse. From shooting paper Indians they took to firing at a good boy in the window of the house across the way. And for a bad end, finally, did they use the harmless postage stamp.

During their quarantine Tonie had a revival of passion for stamp collecting. He unearthed his album and his catalogue, and put the collection in good order. But there were many gaps still to be filled, especially in the species known as watermarked. The long and mournful contemplation of these gaps inspired our hero to perfect a strange invention. He placed a bit of coarse cotton cloth on the floor, laid a stamp on that, and put one leg of a chair on top of all. He then sat on the chair and wriggled with all his weight. When the stamp was drawn out it had on its back an impress that looked fairly like a watermark. Tonie was most enthusiastic. He treated all sorts of stamps in this

way. Bob was invited to add her weight to the chair, and to beg some more cloth from Belle.

"What do you need my duster for?" Belle asked, suspiciously.

"Tonie wants it," answered Bob, and by this evasion she made the first step toward unhappiness. Not that she was conscious of doing any wrong. It was as natural to shield Tonie's actions from his unsympathetic sister as it was to conceal from Tonie Belle's secret reading of love stories.

The manufacture of watermarks soon took all Tonie's attention. So busy was he with his machine that he refused to listen to the delicious wit of the Artful Dodger. Bob wished the postage stamp trade had never been thought of.

One day some boys, callous to the danger of sore throats, paid Tonie a visit. Tonie showed them his now magnificent collection of stamps.

"This is a mighty rare one you've got," said his friends, handling a home made watermarked specimen. Tonie's eyes glistened with pride. He had been about to reveal his device, but their credulity altered matters. He allowed them to go away thinking he was the owner of

a stamp worth \$25. Bob, who was present, was proud of his workmanship.

The next time they were alone Tonie divulged a plan. Since this stamp of his now seemed so valuable, why not have papa take it to a stamp dealer? "With \$25," said Tonie, prancing, "I could buy that Tripoli set I've wanted so much."

"But suppose the man sees what's been done to it, and tells papa. He would be awful mad," mused Bob.

"I don't believe he'll know the difference," answered Tonie, lovingly handling his masterpiece. "And just think of the Tripoli set." Bob thought of it with longing and weakened. So Tonie gave the stamp to his papa, and that was

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