

the meaning of home. It was a virtuous home life, this, and a strenuous one. The highest idealism pursued these children relentlessly. Here indeed was a nursery of the civic virtues, just as much as one, every bit, as any of our virtuous New England homes, even though the study of the *grand écarté* took the place of the study of Emerson, and bareback riding the mysteries of the bake oven.

For, after all, it makes no difference what one studies; it is the spirit in which one does it. And I went away remembering the jongleur of Notre Dame, the poor wayside juggler, who, having become a brother, used to juggle before the altar of Our Lady, its being the thing in the world he could do the best. I went away, to my regret, at the moment when a large white horse, which looked the incarnation of all domestic virtues, was being led into the little circus ring for the children to practise at bareback riding. I could plainly see that it was true indeed that nowhere was their education likely to be interrupted, as in less well regulated families. My last picture of them *en famille* was my hostess' brother in law walking to and fro with his little six-year-old son standing on one hand, his little feet curved with perfect grace upright over his little head.

It may be that if I had seen Xavier only as I saw him at the performance that night with powdered face, I might not have recognized him when I saw him again as the finished vaudeville comedian whose art added to the gaiety of nations; but I think there was an airy grace in the way he waved his hand, his manner of walking, and the tilt of his head that must have made me know him anywhere even if I had seen him but once and that under the disguise of a clown. I looked at the name on the program, and naturally enough something besides Xavier Vossinet was there; but just as a shot in the air I sent a card. "How," I wished to know, "do M. and Mme. Vossinet and



He Did It All for the Fun of the Thing.

Julie and Rose-Marie and Yvonne?" It was a take it or leave it thing. If I had made a mistake—why, no harm had been done; but I hadn't.

He came to me radiant, carrying, though, his fooling even into his social life, even into his greeting of me. "You think, Madame," he explained, "that I am Xavier Vossinet; but who am I?" and he told me the marvelous story made up by his press agent. Then he became serious, "But, you know," he said, "my own story may not make so much good reading for you Americans who advertise so well; but it is a better story, a real story. That's the way artists are made; my father's father before me was a clown. It is a tradition in our family that for every family of boys there must be one farceur. You don't make artists here; your big shows—what are they, or your vaudevilles? Our circuses make the performers, and your big circuses suck into them all that is good in ours. A huge, terrible thing, the American circus, an impossible thing, a wonderful thing!"

"Do you ever think how far it reaches?" he asked me. "I am often disturbed when I consider that in Japan they are at this moment training little jugglers to amuse Americans, and that some Chinese magician is even now learning how to make a bamboo tree grow as high as a house in ten minutes, just as I was bred in Var to make you laugh."

"But you are not in the circus," I told him.

"No, not for the moment; but I have been and I must be again. I belong there." Then, with his charming gesture, "You know me by myself, Madame, on the stage. Soon I go on a vacation. Where to? To the Department of Var, to play in my own home, to watch my sister Yvonne—she is a great beauty; unless they look out, your managers will get her—to watch her riding upon the fat white horse. Yes, I am going back to have a vacation at being myself, Xavier, the person I used to be before the managers found me and said, 'Come and make Paris laugh; come and be some one else.'"

## OWNER OF ORRITT FARM

By Louis W. Reilly

FOUR friends were chatting at the club near midnight about pleasant endings to complicated troubles. The doctor had been to the theater and had come back with the story of the drama. In it everybody except the villain was made happy in the last act.

"That's always the way in plays and novels," protested the insurance man. "Now—"

"But in real life," interrupted the broker, "wrong usually wins against right, and even in the exceptional case, when virtue does triumph, it gets only part of its due."

"Don't be such a pessimist," remonstrated the lawyer. "I see human nature at its worst, dealing as I do daily with crime; but I tell you that the world at heart isn't half bad and that there's lots of love left in it. Often and often, too, the good come into their own. Let me tell you a case in point, of which I heard when I went on my last vacation. It has a happy ending; and so we come back to our mutton, as it were, as well as look on the bright side of life. The story is short. I'll finish it before the clock strikes twelve."

"Everybody in Clay County knew the big Orritt farm. It was as fertile a tract as there was in that part of the State. It had fine improvements, the latest machinery, and an abundance of stock. It was well worth fifteen thousand dollars."

James Orritt owned it for thirty-eight years. He and his wife went on it when it was in the rough, and they toiled on it together until they brought it to a high state of cultivation. Then she died—poor thing!—a month after the mortgage was cleared.

"After the wife's death, Orritt couldn't stay on the place. He moved to town, three miles away. He left in charge of the farm his sixteen-year-old son Joseph. The lad had to assist him a man and his wife and two other hands."

For fifteen years Joseph ran the farm; subject of course to his father's direction, but generally acting on his own initiative. He worked early and late. He made good with profitable crops, fat cattle, and increased fertility. For his services he received only his support and a meager allowance of pocket money. But he supposed that, as his father's only child he was practically working for himself. So he made no demand for hire.

"Then old man Orritt fell in love with Widow Hasper. He pressed his suit with ardor. He won her troth to marry him."

"I'm the happiest man on top of the footstool!" said he when the widow gave her consent and he kissed her as his bride to be.

"When Joseph learned of the old man's engagement, he took it as notice to get out and do for himself. Accordingly he asked his father to settle up with him for the last ten years, since he was of age."

"Orritt senior flew into a rage, refused to give Orritt junior a dollar, upbraided him as a thankless cur, and ordered him off the farm."

"As there had been no agreement for wages and Joseph had accepted without demur what was given him year after year, there was no law for him to collect a cent, even if he had been willing to sue his father, which he was not."

WHEN the wedding day drew near, the prudent widow requested Orritt to put into writing in the form of a marriage settlement his pledge to endow her with half his property. This had been one of his inducements to persuade her to take him, and she was keen enough not to become dependent on his bounty. When she reminded him of his promise in the matter, he exploded with wrath, broke off the engagement, and made exasperating charges of greed.

"'Before I'd sign over half my property to you,' he shouted, 'I'd see you in Jericho or farther!'"

Widow Hasper had a temper of her own. When the gossip of the whole county had irritated it beyond endurance, she sued her recreant lover for breach of promise. She laid her damages at twenty thousand dollars.

"Orritt went to see a lawyer about the case. But when the attorney advised him either to make up with the widow or to try to effect a compromise with her out of court, assuring him that she was almost certain to win out, he went into another tantrum."

"'I'll never give the old hag one red cent! I'll let her sue and be dinged to her! Everybody's against me and after my money. Even my own lawyer's for the other side. I won't take any such advice. I'll manage my affair myself.'"

When the trial took place at the county seat, the widow's attorney made out her case. There was practically no defense. The verdict was for fifteen thousand dollars and costs.

"Promptly the widow levied on the Orritt farm and all the property pertaining thereto. As it was not the defendant's homestead, he having a domicile in town and voting there as his legal residence, the plantation was subject to judgment. So Mrs. Hasper, with the Sheriff's help, took possession of the place and went there to live.

"Speechless with indignation, James Orritt went back to his room in the hotel in town. Wife was gone. Home was gone. Son was gone. He had only two hundred dollars in bank."

MEANWHILE young Orritt had lost his heart to Bertha Hasper, only daughter of the widow. His love was returned. Thinking 'a plague on both your houses' and not even waiting to see what would be the result of the trial, he married the girl and took her to the county seat, where he had found employment in a store. "The next event in this kaleidoscopic narrative is

that Widow Hasper was stricken with pneumonia. She lay ill for a week, nursed the while by her loving daughter. Then she died.

"Two days after Mrs. Hasper fell sick, moved by a premonition, she summoned her lawyer and made her will. She made various bequests of her possessions. To her daughter Bertha she left the Orritt farm and all it contained."

"The day after the funeral Bertha drove to town by herself, consulted her mother's lawyer, and, prompted by love and a sense of justice, thinking in her partial way that he was best of all entitled to it, conveyed to her husband Joseph all her right, title, and interest in and to the Orritt farm aforesaid, together with all its appurtenances."

"When Joseph was informed of what his wife had done, he took her in his arms and said, 'The clergyman told me when he married us that Bertha meant bright and beautiful; but I say it means the sweetest wife that ever was.'"

"Next, the young man, with the full consent of his wife, invited his father to forgive and forget, and offered him a home for life."

"The father, crushed in spirit but improved in temper by the experience that had impoverished him, meekly accepted the invitation and the offer."

"It was five months to a day from the time that James Orritt with bitter imprecations drove his son away from the farm that he himself returned to it, a pensioner on the filial bounty of the young man. That's the end of my story."

"Well," commented the doctor, "that beats the drama for a happy solution all around."

"And the best part of it," said the lawyer, "is that all of it is true."

### TWO-DIMENSIONAL VISION

MOST people do not know that they ought to be very thankful for having both eyes in one plane instead of having them one on each side of the head. If the latter obtained, no one could tell that an object had more than two dimensions until experience and the sense of touch educated the brain to it. Anyone can try it for himself. Shut one eye and look at different objects. They appear flat. With binocular vision two views of each object are obtained, and neither is exactly like the other; so the idea of depth comes in.

The most easily shown example of the difference is as follows: Take a ring and hold it about two feet from the eye. With one eye closed it will take at least five trials to thrust a pencil through the ring, whereas with both eyes open it can be done on the first trial.

All animals with eyes on opposite sides of the head labor under this disadvantage, as do all insects. It is called two-dimensional vision, as the idea of depth is not possible. All this is on account of the image thrown on the retina of the eye being in only two dimensions.