

She Stayed an Hour; but  
Her Eager Pleasure in  
Her Dress Was Gone.



vidently, a shaft of warm, yellow sunlight falling across the floor, the woman walking nervously about, wringing her hands at last.

She turned sharply at the sound of footsteps, and said, "Oh, Aunt Mary, my baby's dying! He's dying!" Aunt Mary had just left her and looked down at the child; then anxiously she took it out of the grandmother's arms and laid it in the cradle.

"Nonsense," she said sharply. She turned her head toward Mrs. Ponsford. "Nancy, you get a tub quick's you can, an' hot water, and cracked ice for his head, an' be quick."

It was long after dark before the old doctor came. He nodded to Aunt Mary as he strode toward the cradle. "Oh, you here? You'll be good naturally. For a moment he watched the baby lying with wide, rolling eyes, and nervously shut his eyes. The doctor turned to Aunt Mary. "What's the matter?" he asked abruptly. "Put him in a tub hot's he could stand, an' ice on his head," she said and turned.

"Hump!" he growled, but his grim look relaxed. Aunt Mary looked at him. "Don't you say 'hump' to me, James," she said. "You know they wa'n't a-skin' me to say that."

He chuckled and drew a chair to the cradleside. "You're getting wiser, Aunt Mary," he told her, and his eyes twinkled. "My 'hump' means a good many things." "Like your own nose," she reported, and he chuckled again.

For forty-eight hours Aunt Mary did not go home.

She scarcely ate or slept; she wasted herself on the child with prodigal recklessness. In the gray dawn of the first morning she slipped out into the yard for a moment. High in the east the morning star glowed in the quiet sky. The air was fresh and cool; here and there a bird had begun to twitter sleepily the first notes of the morning chorus.

Aunt Mary lifted her eyes to the serene heavens; a cooling wind brushed across her hot face and tired eyes. "Oh, Lord," she whispered, "save the baby, an' I'll never forget ye again—never, not a moment! For my sake—an' his mother's," she added. "Amen!" Then she went back to her vigil.

IT was on the afternoon of the second day that she at last went home, happy in the assurance that the baby would live. In her great weariness of mind and body she could scarcely walk; but her face glowed joyfully, for the mother's kiss was on her brow, and her thankful blessing sang in her heart. Ebenezer met her at the gate and brushed against her, arching his back. She stooped wearily and gathered him up in her arms.

"You poor thing!" she murmured. "What you had to eat?"

She fed him, borrowing milk from a neighbor, and then, weary as she was, went to the bureau where the silk reposed and, carefully wrapping it up, put on her sunbonnet and went down to the store. Captain Joel was there alone.

Aunt Mary laid the parcel on the counter and looked

up at him. "Joel," she said nervously, "I know it's askin' a good deal, but I want you to take that silk back. It's just as you said: I couldn't feel natural in it a minute, an' other folks wouldn't seem the same, either. I know it's foolish; but I'd never take a bit of comfort in it. It ain't as if you'd cut it off a piece: it was all there was, you know."

"What's the matter, Aunt Mary?" he asked. "Don't it suit ye?"

"I don't suit myself, that's all," she answered.

"All right," he said. As he returned her money, he said slyly, "Now, don't go an' spend it foolishly, Aunt Mary."

She hesitated a moment; then turned to him suddenly. "Joel," she said, "I know you can keep a secret, an' I feel's I ought to tell you, seem' you're so good to take that silk back. Cousin Josiah Davis left me that money, an' I got a notion I'd like a black silk dress. I never had one. Well, I'm cured, an' I guess the Lord done it. Now I'll tell you what I'm goin' to do." And she told him.

He stood in thoughtful silence for a moment. "Why, Aunt Mary, I understand how you feel," he said; "but that don't seem just right. You need it, an' deserve it, an'—"

She stopped him with a gesture. "I've made up my mind, Joel," she said firmly. "Mebbe it's foolish; but it's how I feel."

ON Sunday night, in the First Church, Mr. Paddleford, after a long and eloquent sermon on the beauty of giving to the Lord,—giving life, service, wealth,—closed with this announcement, "During the week I received a sum of money from an unknown giver, accompanied by a single short sentence, 'This money has blessed me; I give it to the Lord.' It is hard to understand what the writer had in mind; but I am reminded of the old phrase, 'passing the torch.' Perhaps, in the light of God's wisdom, through temptation resisted or by its power to do good, this money has been a torch in the darkness for the feet of the giver. We cannot know; only the nobility of purpose of the giver is clear. In behalf of the officers of the church, I accept the gift for the service of the Master, and here publicly return my heartfelt thanks to the generous giver. His or her blessing will not cease with the passing of the torch. The gift would not be considered large for the wealthy; but something in the peculiarity of the sum leads me to think it was large for the giver. It was exactly one hundred and three dollars and thirty-four cents."

Aunt Mary walked home from church with Deacon Armstrong's wife. It seemed to her that she trod the air. "I liked that what Mr. Paddleford said about passin' the torch," once she broke the silence to say. "It's a beautiful thought."

Mrs. Armstrong's mind, naturally, was more concerned with the identity of the giver. "I do wonder who it could be?" she mused. "The ain't many folks here can afford to give that much, or want to hide it."

"Well, they didn't say," replied Aunt Mary composedly. "I suppose the person didn't want to be known."

Presently she went on alone. The night was dark, and as she neared the Harbor Road and turned up Bay-st. she saw the light on Old Field break into view across the dark water. She stopped.

"Why, it's like that too," she exclaimed, "'passin' the torch!' The light of our lighthouse carries the sailor to the next, an' so he goes up an' down the coast, always safe. It's wonderful! Well, I got my blessing."

She lifted her rapt face to the stars. She was old and poor and far from profound; but she had read the riddle of her life after her own fashion, and in its solution found peace.

## "WE BEG TO SUGGEST—"

BY JAMES HAY, JR.

ASKING to certain college professors and cosmologic wizards, the American public, devoted to speed, sparkle, and splash, has struck the down grade to ruin and is laughingly talking its last run to a fatal wreck. This nation, says the indictment of the students, is engaged in a nerve racking, head splitting, soul killing chase of the dollar. We are overworked. Dreaming by night of riches and power, we profane the day with burning toil, insult our digestion with gigantic pie, and curdle our brain with gigantic schemes. Even in our amusements, we have neither constant nor calm, neither recreation nor rest; for we have put off the habits of repose, and we are running on our nerves.

But the indictment is not true. Those who made it never met the noble band that marches under the gorgeous banner bearing the legend, "We beg to suggest—". They are the people who destroy and cast to the four winds of heaven all this talk and palaver about the burning machine, no peace, no gentle, amusement in words and laughing minks. Unseen by the common man, unseen, untraced by the inventors of games, they have invented and perfected our leading indoor sport, our most beloved weather pastime. The thing has

been done far from the clamor of the bleachers and remote from the disturbing uproar of ill advised applause. And now the safety valve of the United States, the real mild amusement of the ninety millions of our people, is in full swing; played every day, incessant in its blessed benefits to all.

The new indoor sport is the art of writing letters to rulers,—not commonplace, cut and dried epistles, but flaming, intellectual effort, the result of quiet meditation, rumination, and reflection.

One day not long ago William H. Taft, dropping his napkin lightly on his breakfast table, walked happily into his office, and found that his morning's mail consisted of sixteen hundred letters. On the same day Champ Clark, Speaker of the House, had his bulging brow and sturdy form enveloped in the swirl of more than six hundred communications, sent to him from all parts of the country. And the Vice President figured as the stopping place for about four hundred letters, postcards, and telegrams.

There you have the whole refutation of the charge that we have no commonplace amusement, no reasonable outlet for our mounting spirits and unconquerable strength. When we have nothing else to do, when we seek pleasure, we dally along the blossomed lanes of literature or become the presiding genius of Delphi. Taking our pen in hand, or our pencil or typewriter, "we beg to suggest—" Advice and wise counsel flow in mighty streams toward Washington, heating their

way through the rural routes and the railway mailcars and struggling toward the ocean of political agitation, Washington; for, when "we beg to suggest—" we advise, protest, commend, praise, and condemn with lavish generosity. There is limit of neither space nor subjects when the game is on in full blast.

"We beg to suggest" that the farmers' free list is all wrong, or the best thing imaginable. "We beg to suggest" that the Canadian reciprocity move will land us in the poorhouse or slum us on to the pearly streets of a new Paradise. "We beg to suggest" that Dicky Jones, candidate for postmaster in Dark Hollow, is an unacknowledged king of patriotism, or a prince of darkness. "We beg to suggest" that the last speech the President made was an exalted utterance, or babbling bunk. In fact, "we beg to suggest" anything, everything.

The brigade of "We beg to suggest—" is always busy. Some of its members make themselves regular correspondents of the President, the Vice President, and the Speaker. There is one man in the city of New York who sends to Washington once a week a long letter written in Greek. When Joseph G. Cannon gave up the Speaker's office, he left in one corner of a closet six pounds of this Greek composition; which, it was said, contained a description of a world-shaking secret. A woman in a Western State wrote repeatedly to the Capital, asking that a bill be passed appropriating enough money to educate her son, because the Government owed that much to every young man. The President gets