

THE GOLDENROD DYE

By Muriel Chance

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It was the most wonderful experience that Nancy had ever had. For a long time after it happened she could not make herself believe that it was true.

She was weaving in the attic, making the homespun rugs which had become a village industry in the little Pennsylvania town. Her winter's work brought in enough money to buy a few luxuries for her bedridden mother and clothes for Nonie, at school. Suddenly a knock came below and, when Nancy went down, she saw a young man, a stranger, standing at the door.

"I am told that you make the best rugs in the village, Miss McLane," he said. "May I see some of your work?"

She showed him some. Certainly the contours were straight, and not higgledy-piggledy like those of most of the village rugs. However, the young man was interested in other details than that.

"My name is Cyrus Brown, and I am from the rug factory at Altoona," he said. "We want to buy the secret of your vegetable dye—the yellow one."

Nancy laughed. "There isn't any secret about that," she answered. "Everybody here knows that. It's goldenrod. You steep the flowers in hot water and add a little alcohol and—" And Nancy gave him the secret.

"May I come another day when you're making the extract?" asked the young man.

"Yes. I reckon I'll be making some his day next week," Nancy answered.

She promised to say nothing about his visit, though wondering a little. She asked him to have supper with her and by the time he was ready to go she had confided in her that he was paying thirty dollars a week as wages at the factory.

"Seems to me, Nancy," grumbled her mother, when he had gone, "you might have got hold of a young fellow like that instead of that good-for-nothing Jim Penny."

Nancy said nothing. But she sighed a little that night when Jim, out of work as usual, sat glumly at her side and asked, for the tenth time that year, when she would marry him.

Nancy and Jim had been engaged for years. But he never had a posi-



"Hum! I Guess I See Where the Nigger Lay."

tion more than a week or two, and, while the girl felt the bond of old association she had begun to think seriously of the future.

Worse than this shiftlessness was a certain growing sense of proprietorship—a bad humor, coupled with irritability at Nancy's practical views of life.

But Nancy knew that unless Jim