JESS & CO.

By J. J. BELL,

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CHAPTER X.

MR. OGILVY HAS CUSTOMERS.

MISS PERK, having recited a little list of groceries from the page of a small notebook, lingered at the counter and gazed about her as if trying to recollect something she had omitted.

"Naethin' else the day, ma'am?" inquired Mr. Ogilvy politely, and moistened the point of his pencil. "Thae finnan haddies is new in, an' so is the sausages. The sausages is vera fine—vera fine indeed. In fac', the meenister's leddy was in gettin' a bunch the day, an' she said the last yins she had was jist perfection, an' the leddy that's bidin' wi' her the noo, a bonny young leddy an' that nice an' free, said they was simply de-vine."

"A word that should never be employed in referring to a mere article of food," remarked Miss Perk coldly.

"Weel, weel, the young leddy's language was maybe a wee thing extravagant, as it were," the grocer admitted mildly, "but it's no' for me to objec' to a complimentary observation on ony o' ma proveesions. As lang as language is no' profane in a sweerin' sense I can let it pass. But I mind bein' rale horrified yinst when I was in the toon an' gaed into the station baur, or, to be exac', the railway resteyrant, for a gless o' wh—leemonade, an' I wasna richt inside the door afore I heard a young man, a dacent, respectable lukin' young man, cryin' oot to the waiter for deevil's kidneys, an' "—

"Mr. Ogilvy!"

"I beg your paurdon, ma'am, for usin' the word afore ye, but I was tryin' to illustrate to ye the— Are ye no' for ony eggs the day, ma'am?" he asked, realizing suddenly that his conversation was not being appreciated.

"Not today, thank you. I'm sorry to say the last eggs I had from you were not up to the mark, Mr. Ogilvy," said Miss Perk, continuing to gaze about her.

"No' up to the merk?" he exclaimed. "I'm shair I canna conceive sic a thing. Are ye certain, ma'am, that the eggs cam' frae here?"

"My cook told me so."

"What was the taste like, if ye please, ma'am?" he inquired in a tone respectful yet dignified.

"I cannot tell you that, as personally I never eat eggs," said Miss Perk.

"Weel," said Mr. Ogilvy after a short pause, "eggs is things that nae human bein' can guarantee, an' I'm no' gaun to perjure masel' wi' sayin' that I never had the misfortune to sell a dootfu' yin, but I wud jist like to ask ye if yer cook is new to Kinlochan, ma'am."

"Yes. She has only been with me a fortnight," the lady replied, ceasing to gaze about her and fixing a look of inquiry on the grocer.

"An' she cam' frae the toon, I preshume."

"Yes. But why"—

Then the grocer drew himself up with a smile of satisfaction. "Thenk ye, ma'am, for tellin' me. It's jist as I suspected. Yer cook, puir buddy, wasna used to ma eggs. The freshness wud be strange to her. There's a great difference atween an egg laid at a distance an' an egg laid locally, as it were. Wull I no' jist send ye hauf a dizzen, ma'am?"

"Not today, thank you," Miss Perk returned. "By the way," she continued, coming to her point at last, "I was calling at Hazel Cottage on my way here."

"Was ye?"

"I understand you are a friend of the Houstons," she went on cautiously.

"I'm proud to say I am. He's a fine chap, is David Houston, an' as for his guid wife, it's a peety there's no mair like her on the shore—an' on earth, for that maitter. 'Deed, ma'am, every time she comes into ma shop I wish I was her faither. She's that bonny an' blithe an' kind! An' she's clever furbye! It was jist the ither day I got fankled wi' some o' ma accoonts—I was thinkin' o' takin' stoke, an' I hadna tried it for seeven year—an' I was groanin', hauf dementit, ower a dizzen an' eleeven tins o' lobster, finest quality, at seevenpence three fardens the tin, less 5 per cent"—

"But"—

"An' jist then," proceeded the grocer, too interested in his own recital to notice the interruption—"jist then she cam' into the shop as brisk's a bee an' spiert what was distressin' me. 'A dizzen an' eleeven tins o' lobster,' says I. An' she lauched an' lauched till I cudna help lauchin' masel', though I didna perceive the p'int o' the joke, as it were, till a wee while efter. Ye see, ma'am, she let on she thocht I had ett the dizzen an' eleeven tins o' lobster. That was the p'int o' the joke. But at the time I didna perceive it, an' I jist said to her that takin' stoke was an invention of the d—evil yin, an' "—

"Every business man ought to take stock at least once a year," put in Miss Perk.

"That's true, ma'am, that's true. But it's a sair job when Providence has made ye a grocer. When Mistress Houston cam' into the shop I was gettin' dazed, an' I seemed to behold naethin' but lobsters an' vulgar fractions dancin' afore me. But in aboot twa meenits she had workit oot the calculation for me, an' I was masel' again. An' she cam' back the next day an' workit oot a lot mair sums that wud ha'e turned the schulemaister peery heidlt. Aye, did she! Aw, she's a clever lass, an' David Houston's the lucky lad to get her! Are ye no' for ony smoked ham the day, ma'am? I've some supremely fine"—

"Not today, thank you. I was going to ask you if you knew whether David Houston's business was being affected by the young men who came to Kinlochan recently," said Miss Perk, adding, "Of course you know I take a great interest in the young couple, and I put the same question to Mrs. Houston today, but I must say I found her rather reticent."

The grocer scratched his ear before he replied.

"Weel, ma'am," he said cautiously, "seein' that I've never pit the question masel', I'm no' in the posection for to answer it. But for ma pairt I dinna think the twa young men 'll pit David Houston's business up nor doon. They've jist got the yin job, ye ken—the new hooses."

"But it must have been a blow to David Houston not getting that large piece of work."

"He's got plenty wi'oot that."

"Indeed! I understand he had to dismiss his man Binnie some time ago."

"Aye, but Binnie 'll be comin' back an' anither man wi' him next week," checking an exultant chuckle with a violent cough. "Ye see, ma'am, David Houston has got the contrac' for the new store at the pier heid, an' there's twa-three ither nice jobs that'll come his wey afore the year's oot. Aw, I wudna disturb masel' aboot the Houstons if I was you, ma'am."

"I'm very glad to learn the prospects are so good, Mr. Ogilvy. I had heard that the new store at the pier was to go to the newcomers when they had finished with Mr. Dobbie's houses. In fact, Mr. Dobbie told me so himself."

"Ye ken Maister Dobble, ma'am?" quietly asked Mr. Ogilvy.

"I happened to meet him one day when I was having a glance at his new houses, very nice little flats they are, quite superior to the present tenements in Kinlochan. I'm sure the people in the village will want to remove as soon as possible. Of course I don't know Mr. Dobbie personally, but from what he said I should imagine he would make a good landlord."

"Oh, I've nae doot he'll get his flats filled in time, ma'am. I heard the ither day that Tousie Tam was thinkin' o' takin' yin o' them." Tousie Tam was a disheveled but cheerful, half witted fellow, who occasionally made his bed in Kinlochan outhouses.

Miss Perk was about to reprimand the grocer for unbecoming levity, but before she could speak he continued:

In fac', I believe Tam met Maister Dobble on the road an' spiert the rent. Tam maun ha'e his joke, puir chap, but I understaun' Maister Dobbie got an awfu' rid face, for there was a lot o' folk listenin'."

"Of course," said Miss Perk, changing the subject, "the newcomers will have quite a friendly feeling toward David Houston after his gallant act on the evening of their arrival."

"Freenly? Oh, ma'am, it's mair like britherly! Tew the twa Wilkies an' David Houston are as thick as onythin', an' as for opposecetion atween them, ye micht as weel luk for a fecht atween a pair o' ma kippers an' a finnan haddie. I think I mentioned the fac' that the finnan haddies was mair nor usual delecious the day an' that the meenister's leddy— Na'; it was the sausages she referred to."

"So you think that the Wilkies will not interfere with David Houston's business?"

"I think they'll no'. Furbye, ma'am, the shop they've set up is jist temporairy, so to speak."

"You mean that they will leave Kinlochan when they have finished their work at Mr. Dobbie's houses?"

"No' bein' a soothsayer, as it were, ma'am, I wudna like to express masel' in sic a definite fashion," said Mr. Ogilvy, fearing that possibly he was already expressing himself too freely. "But whatever they dae, it'll be fair. Marmalade's no' the only guid thing that comes oot o' Paisley. An' so ye needna fash yersel' aboot David Houston an' his guid wife, ma'am, if ye'll alloo me the leeberty o' sayin' it."

Miss Perk smiled the least bit unpleasantly. "You seem to have an extensive knowledge of what passes in the district, Mr. Ogilvy," she remarked.

The grocer grinned modestly and shook his head. "It's little I ken," he replied innocently, "for I'm no' vera guid at askin' questions."

If there was any suggestion in his words Miss Perk did not observe it, for she immediately resumed her quest for information.

"I suppose David Houston has made some arrangement with the Wilkies," she said, eying Mr. Ogilvy searchingly.

"Arrangement, ma'am?"

"Yes; some arrangement by which they are not to interfere with his business. They could hardly refuse to agree after"—

But she had touched the elderly man's loyalty—touched it to the quick. He reddened, but met her gaze steadily.

"Ma'am," he said, with a hint of contempt in his tone, "David Houston wudna tak' advantage o' anither man if the ither man owed him a dizzen lifes instead o' yin. David Houston's no' that kind. He's no' like the laddie that catched his wee sister stealin' the jam an' tell't her he wudna ha'e her poachin' on his preserves. Na! There's nae mair arrangement atween David Houston an' the Wilkies the day nor there was afore they left Paisley."

"How can you know?" demanded Miss Perk, irritated at the rebuff.

"I jist ken, ma'am," he answered stolidly. "Of course," he added, "I canna prove it in the meantime onywey, but ye'll see for yersel' later on that Samuel Ogilvy can weegh characters as weel as groceries. Aye!" Here the grocer pursed up his mouth and struck an attitude with his arms folded. Had Miss Perk known him better she would have understood that it was dangerous to attempt further inquisition.

"Perhaps you will kindly inform me," she began.

"Excuse me, ma'am, but I'm oot o' information; naethin' left but proveesions o' the best quality," he returned, with a tight grin.

The grin exasperated the lady. "And impertinence," she supplemented in a low voice.

"Peppermints?" he inquired politely. "Wud ye like the ornar' kind or the dooble strong?"

"I said impertinence," cried she, losing her temper.

"An' I said ornar' kind or dooble strong," he retorted, boiling inwardly, but retaining the tight grin. "Ye're welcome to either, no' that I think ye're needin' ony."

"You forget yourself!" exclaimed Miss Perk, with awesome majesty, gathering up her skirts.

The grocer was not fear stricken, but a sensation of shame at having lost control of his tongue came upon him.

"Aw, weel, ma'am," he began in a tone of defense rather than of apology, "ye micht conseeder ma feelin's"—

The lady, however, left the counter without another word, but at the door she turned and in a freezing voice said:

"I find I shall not require the articles I ordered today, and I shall be obliged if you will render your account immediately and ask your messenger to call for two empty biscuit tins and six empty orangeade bottles."

She stepped from the doorway as if she were shaking the dust of the shop from her feet and left Mr. Ogilvy gaping—there is no other word for it—over the counter.

For nearly a minute he stood motionless. Then suddenly his jaws set, and, raising his clinched fist above his head, he smote the counter such a blow that the structure trembled, and a lofty tower of tins, which he had carefully erected that morning, tottered near its base and crashed in ruins on the outer floor. Three large tins that had formed the base remained, and, with a grunt of rage, he caught them up and hurled them after the others just as Mrs. Wallace entered the shop.

"Whit kin' o' gemm is this ye're playin' at?" she demanded, halting a yard away from the counter. "Is't lawn tennis or manslaughter?"

Speechless and perspiring with shame, Mr. Ogilvy bowed his head and fumbled with his inkpot.

"Whit's ado, man?" she went on severely. "If ye're jist practeecin' fur the shows ye sud shut yer shop afore ye begin. I've nae ambection to get kilt wi' a tin o' corned beef an' never even get a taste o' 't. That's no' the wey to keep yer customers. Tits, man! Luk whit ye're daein' wi' the ink! Whit a mess!"

"Oh, me!" groaned the grocer, laying down the pot and mopping up the flood with wrapping paper. "Oh, me!"

"Maister Ogilvy," said Mrs. Wallace firmly, "wull ye be pleased to explain whit a' this cairry on means? Are ye clean daft or are ye jist no' weel?"

"Oh, me!"

"Oh, me, yer granny's mutch! Whit d'ye mean heavin' aboot yer guid corned beef as if it wis dirt, furbye near cripplin' yer best customer, if no' killin' her fatally, fur life? Eh?"

Mr. Ogilvy at last pulled himself together. "It—It was a—a kin' o' substitute for sweerin', as it were," he said feebly.

"A gey expensive substitute!" she remarked, with a snort.

"Aw, Mistress Wallace, ye—ye canna conceive what I've come through," he murmured, wiping his forehead with his apron.

"Ye luk as if ye had come through a patent mangle."

"That's the wey I feel onywey," he returned seriously. "An' if I hadna had the presence o' mind, as it were, to fling doon thae three tins o' corned beef, shuperior quality, I wud ha'e been compelled to express masel' in shockin' language. It was better to sacrifice ma corned beef nor ma tongue."

"Tongue bein' dearer nor corned beef," put in Mrs. Wallace.

"I meant the tongue in ma mooth," said the grocer, looking hurt. "It's a puir, stammerin' thing, but it'll never be devoted to sweerin' if I can help it."

"Ye maun gang through a lot o' tins if ye're ta'en that wey frequent-like," she observed, picking one from the floor. "Whit's the price o' this yin?"

"Seeven-pence-ha'penny."

"But it's bashed. I'll gi'e ye saxpence. Ye wudna ha'e the face to sell it to onybody like that."

"Na. An' I wudna like to sell it to yersel', Mistress Wallace, even at the maist drastic reduction," he replied.

"Och, I'm no' heedin' aboot the bashes. I ken hoo they cam' there. Here's anither." She stooped and picked up a second tin. "I'll tak' this yin tae."

"Na, na. I've been affrontit enough the day wi'oot acceptin' yer chairity, Mistress Wallace."

"Haud yer tongue. I'm fur the beef. But ye best come roon an' gether up yer tins. Some of them's no' that bashed, an' ye'll maybe be able to pass them aff on some o' yer customers."

"Weel," said Mr. Ogilvy as he came round from behind the counter, "I'll gi'e ye the twa for ninepence, an' I'll no tak' a farden mair."

"I doot ye're on the road to ruin," she observed and proceeded to help him to collect the tins and set them together in an orderly pile.

"A man never losses his temper wi'oot lossin' somethin' else," she remarked sagely.

"That's an agonizin' fac'," he returned humbly. "I—I'm sair vexed ye seen the deplorable exhibecetion o' ma angry passions, Mistress Wallace," he added, bending over the floor. "I'm sayin' I'm sair vexed."

"Oh, dinna fash yersel'. Yer angry passions made nae odds to me. I wis jist thankfu' ye didna strike me."

"If I had struck you, Mistress Wallace—if I had struck you," he continued excitedly, "I wud deserve to be drawn an' quartered an' hanged on a giblet, an' "—

"You forget yourself!" exclaimed Miss Perk.

"On a whit? A giblet?"

"Aw, I meant gibbet."

"Weel, Maister Ogilvy, ye've evidently no' got back the command o' yer tongue yet, so if ye'll tak' yer place on the ither side o' the coonter I'll dae the speakin'."

The grocer retired to the position indicated. "I hope ye're no' offendit, Mistress Wailace," he said sadly.

"If I wis I wudna be waitin' here fur ye to tak' doon an important order. Weel, ye best begin wi' pittin' doon the twa tins o' corned beef."

Having seen all her requirements recorded, Mrs. Wallace abruptly put the question:

"Whit wis she sayin' to ye to get up yer dander?"

"Wha?"

"Ye ken fine."

"Ye mean Miss Perk?" he stammered.

"Jist that. Whit wis she sayin' to gar ye behave like a ragin' lunattic?"

"But hoo d'ye ken it was her?"

"Man, she kep' me frae comin' into the shop fur near hauf an 'oor, an' "—

"Aw, I wish ye had come in, Mistress Wallace," the grocer fervently sighed.

"Ye've gotten plenty damage wi'oot her an' me addin' mair," said the other, with a grim chuckle. "Na, na; I wisna comin' in when she wis there, so I had a crack wi' postie till she cam' oot. She cam' oot wi' her held up, like a hen takin' a drink, but no' as happy-like. Wis she gie'in' ye a lectur', Maister Ogilvy?"

Mr. Ogilvy shook his head.

"Wis she makin' complaints?"

"She was. But I micht ha'e tholed that. It was her inquiries that bate me. Oh, me, the curiosity o' thon wumman is somethin' stupendous! She seemed to be seekin' information as if she was hungerin' for't—strivin' for to draw it oot o' me. An' as for me, I can only say that I was tried as by a corkscrew!"

"Whit wis she wantin' to ken? The wholesale prices o' yer groceries, or yer age, or yer"—

"She was spierin' aboot David Houston's affairs," he replied, and briefly related his experience.

"I micht ha'e kent that," said Mrs. Wallace, with a wag of her head. "She's been at Jess twicet this week, and Jess thinks she wis offendit the last time at no gettin' a' the answers she wantit."

"But what business has she wi' David's affairs?"

"Spier somethin' easier, Maister Ogilvy. But it's naethin' new. She's been that wey since Jess got mairrit. She's been curious aboot a lot o' folk since I cam' to Kinlochan. She wis curious aboot masel' yinst—jist yinst, though—but she's never been curious aboot onybody like Jess."

"It's maist mysterious," said the grocer, drawing a long breath, "yin o' thae things that may be said to baffle the keenest intellectual investigation. Aye!"

"Baffle yer Aunty Kate! Ye've been readin' mair o' thae detective stories!"

"It has been said by them as is competent to gi'e an opecuion that detective stories is vera guid for trainin' the mind to conseeder problems," said Mr. Ogilvy, nettled into dignity.

"Mercy me! Then ye canna ha'e read suffeecient, Maister Ogilvy," she retorted crushingly. "But," she continued seriously and with less asperity, "I've been thinkin' aboot Miss Perk, an' I've got a"—

"A clew?"

"I've got a"—

"A theory, Mistress"—

"Can ye no' keep quate? I've got a notion."

"A notion, Mistress Wallace?"

"Aye. D'ye no' ken whit a notion is? Weel, if ye'll haud yer tongue I'll tell ye whit I think. In the first place, ye ken I wudna say a guid word fur onybody if I cud help it, an' in the second place I dinna like thon Miss Perk ony better nor she likes me. But I think she is rale fond o' Jess, though she has a gey stupit wey o' showin' her fondness, an' furbye that I think she's got it intil her heid, an' canna get it oot, either, that David's affairs is in a bad wey. Noo, Maister Ogilvy, whit think ye o' that notion?"

"I—I think ye're an exceedin' fair mindit wumman," replied the grocer, "an' yer theory, or notion, is—is unco nice. I jist wish I had thocht o' it a wee while syne."

"Na, na! Ye wis faur better to dae as ye did. Miss Perk's no' gaun to help Jess by gaun roon Kinlochan an' spierin' aboot David's affairs," said Mrs. Wallace.

"I'm shair I tried for to show her that David's affairs was flourishin', but she wudna believe me. She"—

"Aye; I tell't ye she has gotten it intil her heid an' canna get it oot. She's a stupit buddy, fur she micht ha'e kent at the vera beginnin' that a young lass new mairrit an' wi' ony speerit wudna pit up wi' ony leddy aye pokin' her nose intil her man's affairs, no' even if she kent the leddy meant weel."

"D'ye no' think she's maybe gotten a spite at Jess noo?"

"No' a real spite. I think if Jess wis ever needin' her help she wud gi'e it quick an' kindly. But she's wild at Jess the noo fur bein' independent. Hooever, we'll maybe see if I'm richt some day. Whit did ye say she wis sayin' aboot thon penny masher Dobble?"

Mr. Ogilvy supplied the details in full, finishing up with the hope that he had not said too much to Miss Perk.

"Ye micht ha'e been mair discreet wi'oot bein' ta'en fur a complete dummy," Mrs. Wallace replied. "But I dinna think ye've did muckle damage. That wis a guid joke about Tousie Tam," she laughed. "I'll ha'e to gi'e him jeely on his piece the next time he comes to ma door. Weel, ha'e ye had a crack wi' the Wulkies since I seen ye?"

"Aye, Mistress Wallace, but of course I was careful what I said. But them an' me's gettin' rale pack. They're dacent lads, an' they're baith that ta'en up wi' David an' Jess. What dae ye think o' them yersel' noo that ye've got better acquaint wi' them?"

"I think thon jumpin' jake Dobble cudna ha'e pickit oot waur men fur his dirty wark."

"I'm gled to hear ye say that!"

"I wis speakin' to the lads the day, an' they're comin' to their teas at ma hoose on Friday. I'll be pleased to see yersel', Maister Ogilvy," she added graciously, "if ye can thole shuttin' yer shop sae early."

"I wud shut ma shop at ony 'oor for sic a pleesure," he returned, beaming with delight. "It's rale kind o' ye to invite me, Mistress Wallace, an' I'll be richt prood to attend. Ma satisfaction is vera acute, an' I may say I"—

"Is 't settled that David's to get the job o' the new store at the pier?" she interrupted.

"It's settled, but it was a close shave. I was jist in time."

"Hoo did ye manage it? Did Maister Murdoch no' think ye had an' unco cheek ringin' his bell last nicht?"

"Maybe he did, but I wasna heedin'. I jist catched him in time to keep him frae tellin' his manager to gi'e the 'ob to the Wilkies. He wasna gaun to see me at first, but I sent him word that I was on an errand o' justice, as it were, an' at last I seen him. He wasna pleased at me for interferin', though."

"Whit did he say?"

"I said it wud be a roaring shame no' to gi'e the job to David Houston."

"An' whit did he say?"

"He spiert if I hadn't plenty to dae in ma shop, an' he rang the bell dootless to get me pit oot."

"Weel?"

"Then, in the strictest confidence, ye ken, I gi'ed him a hint aboot Dobble's gemm. It maun ha'e been some freen o' Dobble's that askit Maister Murdoch to gi'e the job to the Wilkies. It wasna Dobble hissel'."

"An' whit happened then?"

"Oh, then I kent it was a' richt for David. Efter a few questions to see if I wasna leein' he offers me a ceegaur an' says, rale pleesant like: 'I'm gled ye tell't me in time, Ogilvy. The job's Houston's, an' if I had the use o' ma legs'—he's lame, puir man—'I wud like a kick at that deevil Dobble!'"

"Did he say deevil?"

"Aye, did he, an' waur nor that. But her hert's in the richt place, an' his jobs for David 'll no' likely end wi' the new store, I'm thinkin'."

The grocer could not help looking toward Mrs. Wallace for a sign of approbation.

"Ye did no' sae bad," she said quietly and smiled.

And he was satisfied.

"Weel, Maister Ogilvy," she said later after some further conversation, "I'll awa' to Hazel Cottage, fur I'm kin' o' anxious aboot Jess. She's no' as weel as she ocht to be. She's never got ower that nicht when David gaed intil the sea efter the Wulkie lads. Her speerits is ower changeable—up an' doon' wi'oot ony guid reason."

"I'm vexed aboot that. Wull she no' ha'e the doctor? She winna? That's a peety. I ken David was troubled the last time I had a crack wi' him, but he didna tell me. Wull she no' tak' a tonic, as it were?"

"Weel, ye see, Maister Ogilvy, I didna want to frichten the lass aboot hersel', an' I've never said to her I thocht she wisna lukin' weel. But I doot somethin' 'll ha'e to be dune if she disna get better quick. She'll no' tak' care o' hersel'. She works aboot the hoose like a powny, an' then wee Katie's needin' her mair every day—I'm jist gaun alang to haud the wean fur awhile—an' Jess disna sleep weel at nicht. She's aye waukenin' up an' wantin' to dae things. David, puir lad, tell't me that the ither nicht, or early in the mornin', he waukened an' missed her, an' he got up an' gaed to the paurlour, an' there she wis, workin' at his books. I never seen a man as vexed as David. An' he disna want to frichten her either."

"That's terrible!" said Mr. Ogilvy sympathetically. "She maun be made to tak' care o' hersel'. Does she no' understaun hoo weel her man's daein'? Ye sud tell her aboot the store. I wasna gaun to tell David, for he'll likely get the offeecial intimation the morn. But guid news is better nor medicine, ye ken. Tell her, Mistress Wallace."

"I'll dae that. But Jess has a great notion in her young held—I'll tell ye aboot it some day—an' she canna help striving' fur it. Weel, guid day to ye, Maister Ogilvy, an' see an' get us some extra nice ham fur Friday nicht."

"Depend on me. Be shair an' tell her aboot Maister Murdoch speakin' aboot ither jobs furbye the store, but dinna let on I had onythin' to dae wi' the business."

Left to himself, Mr. Ogilvy paced up and down the floor behind his counter. "Twa customers this efternune—an' what a difference! Samuel Ogilvy," he moralized, "ye're the lucky yin—gaun to yer tea on Friday! But, oh, that Miss Perk! Job hissel' wud ha'e cried oot at her impiddence! But I'm vexed I lost ma temper. Loss yer temper, an' ye loss somethin' else—Mistress Wallace never said a truer word. I've lost a customer, no' that I'm gaun to greet aboot that, for she was yin o' the girnin' sort, aye complainin' an' never satisfied wi' perfection an' wantin' credit for auld bashed tins that I've got to fling oot on the shore. An' there's her orders lyin' on the coonter, an' she's no' gaun to tak' them noo. It's a peety I weeghed them oot, but she aye liket to see her groceries weeghed. Oh, me, some leddies is ill to dae wi'! But I'm gaun to ma tea on Friday nicht. That's whaur the siller linin' comes in. 'Deed, aye!"

He gathered the items of Miss Perk's countermanded order together and made them into one parcel, on which he wrote, "Mrs. Donald, from a friend."

"The goods is sold, an' I refuse to tak' them back," he muttered. "I—I dinna deserve to be paged for them onywey. Miss Perk was maybe no' as bad as I thocht she was, an' nae doot Mistress Wallace was richt aboot her. An' it's no' for Samuel Ogilvy to think evil o' onybody that's fond o' Jess Houston. An' it's a puir hert that never rej'ices, an' I canna help rejicin' to think"—

His meditation was interrupted by the entrance of his message boy.

"Laddie," he said, "d'ye ken whaur Mistress Donald bides, her wi' her man awa' at the hospital?"

"Aye."

"Aweel, tak' this paireel, lay it on her doorstep, chap at the door an' rin awa' as hard's ye can. If she catches ye I'll think twice aboot raisin' yer wages next year. Awa' wi' ye!"

• • • • • • •

To Mrs. Wallace's great but concealed relief she found her niece in a cheerful humor.

Jess was busy in the kitchen and in reply to her aunt's inquiry regarding the whereabouts of the baby laughed and said:

"Katie's in the parlor with her nurse."

"Ye mean David? I thocht he wis extra busy the noo."

"So he is—just rather too busy. But he's not in the parlor. Katie has got a new nurse."

"What's that?" asked Mrs. Wallace, not looking overpleased.

"Old Angus."

"Angus! Mercy on us! Ye're no leavin' the wean to him, Jess, shairly! He'll no' ken whit to dae wi' her."

"Oh, but he does. He's been coming for the last few days and sitting with Katie on his knees and telling her queer old stories, as if he thought she understood. I wasn't quite sure of him at first, but if you saw him with her for half a minute you would know he was a born nurse."

"I'll see fur masel'," muttered Mrs. Wallace. "Ye sud be mair careful aboot the wean," she added sternly as she hurried from the kitchen.

But she returned ere long, the severity gone from her countenance. "Fur impiddence he gi'ed me aboot haudin' a wean yin day when ye an' David wis awa' I wis feart Katie wud come to hairm. I wunner when he learnt to nurse."

"Laddie," he said, "d'ye ken whaur Mistress Donald bides?"

"He told David he used to carry his wee sister when he was a boy," said Jess gently. "And you know he took care of her until she died this year."

"Aye, aye. Puir auld Angus! It's mony a year since he wis a laddie. Weel, Jess, an' hoo's things gaun wi' ye?"

"All right, Aunt Wallace."

"Is yer man dacin' his duty an' peyin' attention to his business?"

"David always did that," said Jess, a trifle haughtily.

"An' whit aboot the future—the future ye're aye thinkin' aboot, ma dear?" asked Mrs. Wallace, with unusual tenderness in her voice as she laid her hand on her niece's somewhat thin arm.

"Oh," cried the young woman softly, "if—if I could only be sure!"

"Are ye still faur awa' frae whit ye want, Jess?"

"No, no. But I'm so frightened something will happen to spoil everything just at the very last. If I could only be certain of a little more I would be able to tell Davie all about it at the new year. But I can't be certain."

"But I think ye can," said her aunt quietly.

Jess smiled sadly and shook her head.

"Davie's doing his best, and I'm trying to do mine, but it would take something big in the way of work to make the little more of profit."

"Jess," said Mrs. Wallace, "ye've never let yersel' get bate yet."

"And I don't mean to get beat," returned Jess, looking up, with a defiant laugh. "But I—I'm a wee bit stupid just now. I make things out worse than they are. But I won't give in!" And she laughed again.

"Weel, my brave lass, I'm gaun to tell ye somethin' that'll gar ye lauch wi'oot ony tryin'. Listen to this." And Mrs. Wallace told her little tale of good news forthwith.

But when Jess had heard it all she sat down on the nearest chair and wept helplessly.

[To be CONTINUED.]

Substitutes For Tobacco.

Sailors on long cruises sometimes exhaust their tobacco. Thence untold misery and many ingenious efforts to create a tobacco substitute. Tea and coffee make the best tobacco substitutes. They smoke freely in pipe or cigarettes, and their taste and aroma are not unpleasant. But they burn the mouth and rack the nerves. Rope yarn—the untwisted parts of rope and oakum—is smoked by sailors as a last resort. Bark, peeled from the hoops of salt beef and pork barrels, is also smoked when the limit is reached. These things smoke abominably, and the black fumes that they give forth from the sailors' mouths are always accompanied by oaths and imprecations. Yet many a desperate sailor has smoked them in the hope of appeasing his tobacco hunger.

St. Maurice.

St. Maurice, in Switzerland, is the name of a little station on the railway that leads up the Rhone valley from the lake of Geneva. The place gets its name as follows: Maurice was the officer second in command of the Thebaic legion, which the Emperor Maximian marched over the Alps in A. D. 302 to quell a rising in Gaul. At Octodurum (Martigny) the legion, every man of which was a Christian, was ordered to sacrifice to the Roman gods for the success of the expedition. Headed by Maurice, they refused, marched off to Agaunum (St. Maurice) and there were twice decimated to enforce submission. But they still refused, and finally the remainder were surrounded and cut down by the rest of the army.

MURDERED AT HIS DESK

Hiram W. Holladay, the Aged Millionaire, Found Dying in His Office by His Secretary.

HIS DAUGHTER SUSPECTED OF THE CRIME

Circumstantial Evidence Points Strongly to Her Guilt—Her Strange Conduct at Hearing Before the Coroner—Mystery Bafiles the Police—Young Lawyer's Brilliant Coup—Kidnaping and Pursuit Across the Seas as Told by Burton E. Stevenson in The Holladay Case, the New Story of Mystery Which We Shall Begin to Publish in a Few Days. Get the First Chapter and You Will Find It Easy Going Afterward.

I had never seen Mr. Royce, our junior, so deeply shaken, so visibly distracted, as he was when he burst in upon us a moment later, a newspaper in his hand. Mr. Graham, startled by the noise of his entrance, wheeled around from his desk and stared at him in astonishment.

[From The Holladay Case.]

Ash Pans Don't Lie

Large chunks of partly consumed coal in an ash pan simply mean that the stove is not doing its work right. If a good grade of coal is used, the ashes from a Wilson Hot Blast Heater are always fine—proof conclusive that every atom of fuel has been thoroughly consumed.

The reason Wilson Hot Blast Heaters differ from all other heaters is because they are made on the *patent* Hot Blast Down Draft principle by which the draft is taken *from the top of the heater* as (shown in illustration). The

WILSON Hot Blast HEATER

alone has this marvelous scientific feature which perfects the draft, causing an even, steady fire, burning all the fuel and in addition turns into heat all the gases which in other stoves escape, thus effecting a great saving in fuel consumption. Start a fire in a Wilson and in ten minutes it will be roaring—yet it can be regulated to hold fire for 36 hours.

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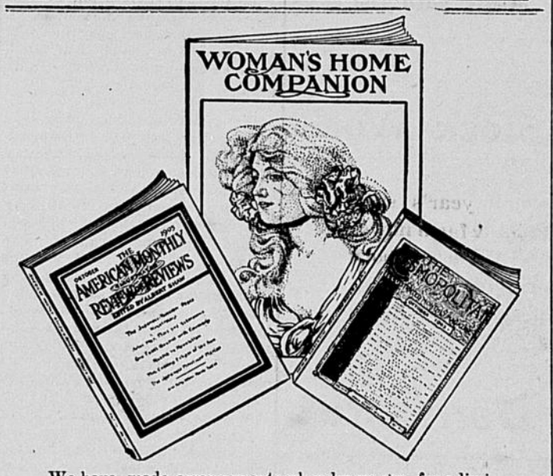
Made in different styles for soft coal, and also for wood. Picture shows the soft coal heater. If your dealer does not sell Wilson Hot Blast Heaters write us. We will tell you where you can get them and send you a book on house heating, free.

SIMMONS HARDWARE CO., St. Louis, Mo.

Wilson Ranges are built correctly for even, perfectly distributed oven heat.



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Manchester & Oneida Ry.

TIME TABLE.

Train No. 2 leaves Manchester at 5:00 a. m. arrives at Oneida at 3:30 a. m. Connects with west bound C. G. W. No. 5. Returning leaves Oneida at 5:40 a. m arrives at Manchester at 6:05 a. m

Train No. 4, leaves Manchester at 7:15 a. m arrives at Oneida at 7:45 a. m., connects with east bound C. G. W. No 6. Returning leaves Oneida at 7:50 a. m., arrives at Manchester at 8:20 a. m.

Train No. 6, leaves Manchester at 8:45 a. m., arrives at Oneida at 9:24 a. m. Connects with the north bound C. M. & St. P., No. 22. Returning leaves Oneida at 9:25, arrives at Manchester at 9:45 a. m.

Train No. 8, leaves Manchester at 2:00 p. m. arrives at Oneida at 2:30 p. m. connects with C. G. W., No. 4, east bound, and No. 9, west bound Returning leaves Oneida at 3:22 p. m. arrives at Manchester at 3:45 p m.

Train No 10, leaves Manchester at 4:45 p. m. arrives at Oneida at 5:15 p. m. Connects with south bound C. M. & St. P., No. 21. Returning leaves Oneida at 5:25 p. m., arrives at Manchester 5:45 p. m.

J. L. KELSEY,
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ILLINOIS CENTRAL R. R.

TIME TABLE.

Main Line Passenger Trains.

WEST BOUND	MAIN LINE	EAST BOUND
No 1* 12:13 a m	..Fast Train..	No 2* 3:42 a m
No 3* 2:18 p m	Thro Express..	No 4* 3:16 p m
No 83 †6:05 p m	....Clipper....	No 84† 9:00 a m
No 5 * 9:00 a m	Local Express	No 6* 8:40 p m
No 93* 2:00 p m	.Way Freight.	No 94 11:45 a m

CEDAR RAPIDS BRANCH.

North Bound —Arrive—	Bet Cedar Rpds and Manchester	South Bound —Leave—
No.206 6:00 p.m	...*Passenger...	No.305 9:10 a.m
No 334 6.40 a.m	..*Passenger...	No.335 6:20 p.m
No. 369 1:00 p.m	... †Freight...	No.366 3:30 p.m

All above trains carry passengers.
*Daily.
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