

## An Angel In Disguise

By Virginia Lella Wentz

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At Twenty-third street Kennard turned dlamly from Broadway into Fifth avenue. Saturday afternoon and nothing to do! Thanks to that confounded cotton broker, who couldn't be seen till Monday, he was obliged to remain in town over Sunday. Well, he might as well walk up to his hotel—a constitutional of thirty odd blocks would do him good.

It was the first week in May, and in local swedion wooden boardings were already beginning to go up and hideous green shades were appearing down the entire length of drawing room windows. Outside the florists' shops tissue papered pots of blossoms still remained, savoring of Easter and April, but the doors stood open revealing a rich vista of bloom against backgrounds of palms. Once Kennard noticed some fashionably frocked women standing within, choosing the last of the season's violets.

"Bah!" he said, deliberately turning his head away and looking at the spires of St. Patrick's cathedral instead. "Why do women all love those foolish flowers?"

Now, once there was a girl, a neighbor of his, down on an old Mississippi plantation, whose eyes in certain lights matched the velvety heart of violets, and often enough down by the bawling little brook where the colony of violets grew he had told her so. But always it had been her way to shake her head with a tantalizing little smile and say: "That's because you write books and are inclined to be poetic!"

Pretty much the same answer she had given, too, that night when the mocking birds were singing in the moonlight and he had laid his love—

"Hello, you!" cried some one in the brightest of voices, suddenly coning abreast of Kennard. "Well, if this isn't luck! Instead of catching the 1 o'clock train today, as usual, I ran up town on an errand for my wife!"

"Oh, so you have, haven't you?" drawled Kennard, with apparent irrelevancy. "Let's see, sent you a wedding gift from London, didn't I, old man?"

"A beauty, too!" ejaculated Dan Archer. "My wife wrote and thanked



A GIRLISH FIGURE WAS LEANING OVER THE RAILING.

you, I'm sure. But you're never seen her, and you must. Though she isn't very well at present; nervous, lonely and that sort of thing, you know; has to have a companion. Look here, why not come out with me tonight and spend Sunday? I'll cheer her up, and Sunday's a beastly day in town, you know."

Kennard's protests that it was too short notice for Mrs. Archer, etc., were not accepted, and at 5 o'clock, having spent an hour or so at Archer's club and sent a telegram as precursor, the two men took a train from Jersey City and flew speedily over the country toward a particular little suburban town. A slight drizzle had set in, and the landscape wasn't especially cheerful.

A suburban town on a rainy Sunday! Good heavens, what had he put himself in for? Behind his paper Kennard yawned, recalling gloomily a multitude of jokes at the expense of Sunday suburbanites. Besides, dear old Dan was a Benedict now. Already he fancied he saw the change, and they wouldn't have much opportunity to pal together. "Pshaw," he broke out mentally, dropping his paper and looking out at the whizzing telegraph poles, "another good man spoiled! Why do men want to marry, anyhow?" (Gradually, since that night down on the old Mississippi plantation, when the mocking birds were singing in the moonlight, Kennard had grown to disparage matrimonial blessings and had ceased to write epithalamium verses.)

He found Mrs. Archer a gay, vivacious little creature, pretty with the prettiness of a Dresden shepherdess, but, as Dan had intimated, inclined to "nerves" and dependence. They dined alone that night, the three of

them. Her companion, it appeared, was suffering from something very unusual for her, a violent headache, and had kept to her room.

"We don't breakfast till 9 on Sundays," announced Dan as they finished their last game, "so you can lie abed as late as you've a mind to, old man. For a commuter it's a relief, I can tell you, from our ordinary 7 o'clock rushed affairs."

The next morning, however, Kennard was up betimes. The rain of the night before had vanished, save for the last light shimmer of silver on the grass and under the almond bushes adroop with their slender pink branches. And such a morning—all scintillating with olive green and gold sunshine!

Kennard stole on tiptoe from his close apartment, which seemed to breed all the fever driven extravagances of an overexcited world into the freshness of the May air. The garden, like the house, was obsequiously awaiting a signal to wake. The flowers seemed still motionless, holding in their perfume that a breath might not disturb the sleepers whom the resplendent rising sun itself could not attract. But beyond the garden, through a hedge of trees where the honeyed trickle of song came from the throats of wild birds, a path led to wide awake fields and meadows.

Fowls were crowing, cackling, gobbling, gabbling, in matutinal exuberance; calves were bounding outside the milking pen, hungrily bleating at the sight of the usurpation of their rights within; in the pastures the sheep were grazing industriously.

To Kennard as he walked along there seemed to be a vague, expectant quality in the morning. As if, he said to himself, the very freshness and grace of it all were preparing the way for something splendidly alive and debonaire!

His path suddenly merged into a little bypath, largely screened by thickets. At the end was a dilapidated summer house, fastened between three trees on a bank overhanging a gurgling stream. A girlish figure was leaning over the rickety railing, apparently looking at the pebbly, variegated mosaic of the stream's bottom. She had thrown off her hat, and her chin was resting in the cup of her two hands. He could see nothing of her profile because of the mass of dark hair coiled over the back of her head.

Not wishing to intrude or disturb the girl's evident reverie, Kennard would have retreated, but at that instant, hearing a twig snap under his feet, she turned.

She felt his immediate recognition and calmly faced him.

"I reckon you are a bit surprised," she admitted quietly. "Well, it's the simplest sort of a story. The old estate down there yielded nothing, and for three years now I've been earning my own living. At present I am Mrs. Archer's companion."

"For three years, Gwendolen?"

"Yes, you've been in England most of that time, haven't you? And you've written several mighty successful books. Oh, I haven't lost complete track of my old friends, you see."

There was still that inimitable flash of rallery in the beautiful eyes, Kennard noticed. And still that dear, blessed little smile.

As Gwendolen's glance met the quick flame that spread across the man's opaque pupils all the playfulness went out of her own, and the spirit of earnest and parry went out of her soul. Another spirit, guarded against, often crushed out, leaped in again.

"You—you are still the same old Bob, aren't you?" said she, with adorable incoherence. But Kennard was very grave. He was looking now where the girl had been looking before—at the mosaic bottom of the clear water.

"Yesterday, Gwendolen," he said, "I saw some women buying violets. Ever since I've been haunted by the eyes of a girl I once knew, a girl whom I've tried, oh, so vainly, to forget. Do you remember, dear?"

She made a little impulsive, forward movement as if to stop his words. He, seeing it, held out both his hands.

And then they—well, all at once she knew that the question he had put to her down in Mississippi when the mocking birds were singing hadn't been a mere poetic sentiment any more than his thought of her eyes had been, and he, for his part, illuminatingly realized that the answer she had given him that moonlight night hadn't been an ultimatum.

The morning air was giving Gwendolen Moore the repose and refreshment denied by a sleepless night, but withal she looked pale and a little tired.

"We'll have to change all that sort of thing, sweetheart," Kennard was saying an hour later as they sauntered happily toward the house. "And you were not at dinner last night—you were ill. Was that?"

"Your telegram, sir," she broke in with mock severity, while the dimples went rioting. "Look, there are Mr. and Mrs. Archer coming down the garden to meet us."

"Why, Mr. Kennard, you know Miss Moore?" cried Mrs. Archer-foolishly.

"Well, rather. And, Dan," cried Kennard, turning boyishly upon that astounded individual, "you were a brick to bring me out here to spend Sunday. You were an angel in disguise—that's what you were."

**Table Daintiness.**

I could better eat with one who did not respect the laws than with a sloven and unrepresentable person. Moral qualities rule the world, but at short distances the senses are despotic.—Emerson.

## What Bowser Knows of Cats

Gives His Wife the Benefit of Some Investigations In Natural History.

### FLY LIKES OUR SOCIETY

This Is Why Little Pest Seeks to Enter Houses—Queer Things About Horses and Cows.

[Copyright, 1906, by C. H. Suteiff.]

MRS. BOWSER'S general demeanor was paternal as he came home to dinner and hung his hat on its accustomed peg. Mrs. Bowser was assured that it presaged something, but just what she could not guess. He treated her with fatherly consideration all through the meal, and it was not until its finish that he said:

"Mrs. Bowser, we have a family cat. You have no doubt seen her lie down many times?"

"About a million, I think," she replied.

"Then you must have noticed her turn around in a circle two or three times previous to lying down?"

"Yes."

"Why does she do it? Why do all cats do it?"

"Looking for a soft spot, I suppose."

"That's about the way I expected you to answer. Perhaps forty out of fifty men would have answered the same way. We have the lessons of nature right under our eyes all the time, and yet how few of us give them any attention! We look upon a naturalist with the greatest awe, and yet he is only a man who keeps his eyes open."

"If you had a house to run you would find that you had something else to do than to speculate as to why cats turn around," said Mrs. Bowser as she thought of the work she had done that day.

**Why Cat Turns Round.**

"I am twice as busy as you, and yet I speculate. I not only speculate, but I ascertain facts. The cat, as I may



HE WAS STRUCK BY THE WHEEL.

tell you, is descended to us from a wild state. She has never lost all her savagery. In her wild state she turns and surveys the locality for danger before seeking repose. That trait continues with her into domesticity. There you have it, and I hope you will remember it. In case a lady calls and there is a conversation about cats—

"There will be no conversation about cats," she interrupted.

"Then remember what I have told you for your own good. You have seen hundreds of flies trying to get into the house, haven't you?"

"That reminds me that we ought to have three new screens."

"Don't try to switch off on any tangents, Mrs. Bowser, but answer me why a fly wants to get into the house. He has all outdoors to himself. No traps or fly paper awaits him there. He can roam from Maine to California, and yet he is fool enough to want to get into the kitchen and be knocked down by the cook. Why is it? Did you ever give the matter a thought?"

"Several thoughts, Mr. Bowser. The fly finds a greater variety of food in the house. You don't find 'em in an empty house."

"Well spoken, but not the facts. A fly, Mrs. Bowser, is an insect of sentiment. He is not generally so taken, and that's where people make their mistake. While he appreciates the company of other flies he appreciates that of human beings more. If barred from human beings he takes to the horse or cow. His sole object in entering a house is to be near the cook or members of the family. Every time he is repulsed his feelings are hurt. I don't say you are guilty of murder every time you kill a fly, but I do contend that if people appreciated the situation of affairs there would be less fly killing. Take it and remember it that the fly would keep far from you if he wasn't lonely and did not wish for human society."

"And it's the same with the mosquito, I suppose?" she queried.

"Exactly. I am glad to see your interest increasing."

"But if the mosquito is seeking hu-

man sympathy why did you jump out of bed the other night and do all that swearing? Why did you bat at two or three in the room with the pillows?"

Why didn't you hang out a sign of 'Human Sympathy Found Here'?"

**Can't Blame Mosquito.**

"Don't run things into the ground, Mrs. Bowser. If the mosquito takes a bite or two while looking for human sympathy it's all in the way of graft and can't be blamed. I have no recollection of any such incident as you name. We have owned horses and cows."

"Yes."

"You have had every opportunity of studying them both."

"I remember when one of our cows kicked you over, and when one of the horses ran away with you."

"And you are probably sorry I didn't get killed. However, can you tell me if both lie down and get up the same way?"

"I should say they did. If they don't, what of it?"

"What of it? If you go to the store to buy tea and they give you catnip, what of it? A horse neighs and a cow bellows, and you might as well ask what of it. Can you answer the question I asked you?"

"They both lie down and get up the same way."

"They do nothing of the sort. A horse sinks down behind and a cow in front. A horse rises on his front legs and a cow on her hind ones. If a lady should ever call here!"

"We shall talk about the heathen, probably, instead of horses and cows."

"But why do these animals lie down and get up in different ways?" persisted Mr. Bowser. "You should learn for your own benefit."

"I'm sure I don't know."

**Ways of Horse and Cow.**

"Then I will proceed to inform you. A cow sinks down on her knees first that she may examine the grass and see if there are any bumblebees' nests around. A horse sinks down behind first that he may take a last look at the clouds and see what the weather is to be. In rising a cow is still looking for those nests, and the horse wants to know if there is going to be a thunderstorm that day. I ask no credit for what I am telling you, though it has cost me many years of observation. For instance, how many persons in this town could tell you why cows and horses switch their tails?"

"They do it to keep the flies off, of course."

"Ha, ha, ha! That was the very answer I expected. It is the very one most people would give, and yet it's wrong. The tail switching is an involuntary motion and is practiced when there isn't a fly within a mile. Let a man stand still, and he will put his hands into his pockets. Let him sit down, and he will cross one leg over the other. These are things you should think of, Mrs. Bowser. Any time you want to ask me any questions about natural history I—"

**Mrs. B. Asks Questions.**

"I want to ask a couple now. How many teeth has a horse, and why has a cow teeth only on one jaw?"

Mr. Bowser was bowled over in a minute, but he didn't stay bowled. He rallied and answered:

"A horse has thirty teeth, and any fool knows that a cow has teeth on both jaws."

"The male horse has fourteen teeth and the female only twelve, Mr. Bowser, while the cow has teeth only on one jaw, and that is the lower one. Can you tell me why this is so?"

"Because it isn't. It isn't so within forty rods."

"But it is. Any veterinary surgeon or work on anatomy will tell you so."

"Woman, don't try any tricks on me!" shouted Mr. Bowser as he turned red and white. "I sit down here this evening to give you a few lessons in natural history, and you try to turn the whole thing into sarcasm. You talk of corroboration. I will now go out and get such proofs that I am right and you are wrong as will bury you right out of sight. By thunder, but you have cheek!"

Mr. Bowser went to the butcher and was told that Mrs. Bowser was right. He went to a livery stable and was told the same thing. He went to a grocer, who had been a farmer, and was sat down on some more. As a last resort he visited his family druggist and got it in the neck again, and the druggist added:

"Bowser, make a thorough job of it and find out how many teeth an ass has got!"

He left the store boiling over and seeing red, but salvation was at hand. A boy and a wheelbarrow came running down the sidewalk at a 2:40 gait, and as Mr. Bowser didn't get out of the way he was struck by the wheel and rolled into the street, and when assisted home by two kind pedestrians he knew that Mrs. Bowser's solicitude for his welfare would prevent her having another word to say about horses or cows.

M. QUAD.

**Keeping Him a Lover.**

Mrs. Sharptongue—D'ye mean to say you've been married ten years and never had a quarrel with yer husband? Fair Stranger—That is true, madam.

"And ye always let him have the last word?"

"Yes, madam. I wouldn't for the world do anything to lessen my husband's love for me. He might get careless."

"Careless?"

"Yes. We are jugglers by profession, and at two performances every day I stand against a board while he throws knives."—New York Weekly.

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