

# Five Cents On the Belt Line

By GRACE POPE

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THE hot wave had struck Montreal, and Miss Sherbrooke was too warm to think.

She went out on her high bedroom balcony and looked into the night. Her father had gone to New York, and she was going to Newport tomorrow.

Mrs. Presidder was taking her off her father's hands for the season.

But tonight Miss Sherbrooke was making the decision of her life alone.

Two men were coming to her tomorrow for a "yes" or "no," and to save her life she could not choose between them.

It had to be "no" for one. But which one? She hated that it should be for either. She was sure that she loved them both, though much surer that they both loved her. Apart from the question of love there was nothing to consider. Both were clever, both were rich and both were good looking. Both presumably were good; at least she had heard nothing to the contrary. She knew very few women, and men were so noncommittal.

She was uneasily conscious of something her father always said, "You see all the good there is in a man and are as blind as a bat to the evil."

Was she really blind? Surely it did not matter. Her father knew them both and liked them.

She looked out at the waving tree tops. It was blowing somewhere in the open. The wind that saved Montreal every night was saving it now. She should be out. That was it. But where and how?

The long, low cry of a Belt line car came swelling up through the night. She gave one startled look in the direction of the sound and hesitated, but in that hesitation her mind was made up. She looked at her watch in the electric light. It was ten minutes to 11.

The horses were out of the question at that hour, and the servants were all asleep. She had never been out alone in a car at night in her life, and she did not like to go now. But she was not afraid and could break the conveniences on occasion with impunity. And she resolved to do it now.

Ten minutes later, in the most unobtrusive of dresses, she stepped off the pavement at Park avenue and walked out to meet a down car. There was one empty place on the second seat from the front at the inside, and she got into it with praiseworthy nimbleness. Then she settled herself back in the corner with a sigh of satisfaction and waited for the breeze. She knew at once almost by instinct that the man sitting next her was "nice," but in a moment she knew something else that sent her heart to her throat and kept it there, beating thickly.

Was this fate, or what? One of those other two men was sitting on the seat before her. When Miss Sherbrooke had collected her wits she knew that he had



WAS THIS FATE, OR WHAT?

not seen her, and after a furtive reconnoiter she began to observe him more boldly.

More than half the people round her were sitting back in unconcealed lethargy and careless of everything about them but the blessed relief of the wind. Miss Sherbrooke took her cue from that and once and looked out from the ambush of her lashes.

He was sitting bareheaded at the outside of the seat with his masterful side face toward her and his bright hair blowing back softly, and when she looked at his closed eyes she felt a strange thrill of exultation. Yet she knew that their owner was not sleeping, and she knew, too, that once he had seen her she could not deceive him for a moment. He would go home with her from the car, and she should have said "yes" when she got there.

And could any woman regret it? Surely few men could hold a candle to him. She only knew of one. When she

thought of that one she sighed and looked out into the night.

"Poor Swin!" she said to herself. "I believe that I love you best, but Jerry is stronger than you."

Jerry looked very strong at that moment and even a trifle sullen. Miss Sherbrooke began to wish he would smile. She wanted to see the adorable change that a smile always brought to his face.

"Tickets, please—case!" The conductor was swinging down along the footboard, and Miss Sherbrooke discovered, with a shock of dismay, that the twenty-five cent piece she held ready was plugged. She had nothing else but her lucky penny and a five dollar bill. She knew there was nothing else, though she felt again with quiet desperation.

The lucky penny was an ordinary five cent piece with a small gold J on one side. A boy had thrown it to her on a snowball one dark night long ago as she was crying at her nursery window. She had never forgotten his cheery shout:

"Keep it till you want something awfully bad!"

She might give the \$5. For an instant she thought she would risk a loud toned parley. And then Jerry moved a little.

Miss Sherbrooke seized her penny and thrust it into the box in an agony of trepidation.

She saw her penny disappear without compunction and was only glad that the man did not see the gold letter. She was blankly unconscious that the keen eyes beside her had seen it with quick recognition.

"St. Catherine! Change cars east 'an' west!"

There were movement and bustle on the front seat, and an enormously fat old woman stood up and dislodged two sleeping children. Clutching the younger by the arm, she signaled the retreating conductor and in doing so lurched down upon Jerry.

And then Miss Sherbrooke saw a change come over Jerry's face with a vengeance and heard four electrifying swear words. Her face and her heart hardened fiercely. She had a fine taste in swear words, and this outrageous travesty was unpardonable.

"And to a woman!" she said to herself. "Jerry Danberry, that is enough." But more was to come very soon. A wave of people swept forward and up on the footboard. A humpback dressmaker girl jammed fast against Jerry at the entrance and strove to pass with her parcel. There was room, and to spare, on the inside, but the poor little soul never reached it.

The deliberate resistance of Jerry's legs and the threat of his half closed eyes were too much for her, and she dropped back among the crowd and made room for stronger climbers.

The car ran down into the town and soon reached the low Craig street crossing. Some people crowded out of the front seat, and a man climbed slowly into their place.

Miss Sherbrooke's face barely hid a passion of welcome and relief. What a fool she had been to compare them! Fancy Swin speaking so to a woman! And she laughed in her heart as she watched him drop solidly in front of his rival.

His smooth, dark face was toward her, with the old deprecatory droop of the mouth and the brown eyes that hid half their challenge, and Miss Sherbrooke surrendered at discretion.

But there was no challenge hiding there now. It was plain that he did not see her or even notice Jerry there before him, and Jerry's face was coolly contemptuous.

How white Swin looked and how tired! He had been playing too long in the sun again. As she watched him he leaned slowly outward to the shallow support of the side rail and rested against it inertly. The conductor swung up his box and waited, but he did not move.

"Tickets, please!" the man said again shortly. The brown eyes stared at him with an odd, helpless look, and Miss Sherbrooke grew seriously frightened. He had surely had a sunstroke or something, and Jerry was not stirring to help him. Indeed, it was only too plain that Jerry was rejoicing at his condition.

The conductor grew impatient and spoke loudly, and at last Swin said something inaudible.

"Can't find one?" the man exclaimed, smiling. "All right, I'll come back again then."

The car stopped, and in the hot silence a woman's voice sounded clearly: "I thought they were always quarrelsome or noisy."

And a man's laughing undertone answered:

"He is too far gone to be either."

Miss Sherbrooke gave one despairing look at the faces about her, and her own turned as white as her ribbon. The truth had come on her like a thunderbolt. Swin was drunk. She did not move, nor did she faint, as the man beside her half expected, but set her teeth and sat watching the pitiful sight before her. The conductor came back and shook him, and at last Swin turned his head slowly.

"Put in 5 cents," said the man. A puzzled frown went over the smooth forehead, but the right hand went mechanically to his pocket.

"Five cents or a ticket." The hand reappeared with a miscellaneous handful and among it a bit of blue paper. Slowly and painfully, as though he were moving in a dream, Swin singled this out from the rest and held it out. Miss Sherbrooke recognized it at a glance, and she knew that Jerry did the same. It was an amateur blue print of herself. The conductor put it back with a grin and selected 5 cents apiece. And then Miss Sherbrooke saw Jerry's adorable smile.

The car swung round into Anberry street, and Swin's heavy body swayed outward. Two girls near the front

screamed and giggled, and an old lady clutched in the air.

"Let him fall!" cried Miss Sherbrooke in her heart, but her rage died out slowly in horror. Must she see his white face on the rails in that rabbit wren darkness?

Swin's face!

A rush of pity almost choked her. He was only a boy. After all he was only a boy, and Jerry would smile again when he saw him fall. She shut her teeth tighter and waited.

He was totally helpless now, and only his own heavy weight seemed keeping him upright.

The conductor retreated to the rear after a few backward glances and seemed to think there was nothing to fear. The front seat gradually emptied save for those two, and still nothing happened. Was he possibly safe, after all?

A sudden jerk of the car brought her heart to her throat. Swin's heavy body failed to respond as usual, and, with one sickening plunge, he was over. In falling his hand struck the rail and caught it, and he hung out unconscious, with his feet on the footboard.

The next moment the young man by Miss Sherbrooke was over the back of the front seat and out on the footboard beside him. And he was not a moment too soon. As his arm touched the heavy body the clinched hand slackened and let go, and it was well then that the arm was strong.

The whole car was on its feet with a rush and confusion of cries. But Jerry



SWIN STARED WITH AN ODD, HELPLESS LOOK.

looked on with a sneer. As he moved to allow the young man and the conductor to assist Swin back into the car he said something with a laugh, and Miss Sherbrooke caught the word "swine." But Swin neither saw nor heard, and his rescuer guided him to the inner corner.

As Jerry turned his head after them he looked into Miss Sherbrooke's eyes. He turned white to the lips and made some incoherent attempt to speak, but her stare was pitiless. Jerry Danberry knew he was beaten and turned and stepped quietly from the car. And Miss Sherbrooke was left with the two men facing her alone.

To her inexpressible relief, the stranger began speaking at once in a cheerful, everyday tone.

"Now, Swin, old man," he said, "you have had a touch of sun. Lean back there now and keep still." And Swin leaned back obediently and shut his weary eyes.

Miss Sherbrooke felt two soft hands come suddenly over her eyes.

"You naughty girl!" said Mrs. Presidder in her ear. "I could not make you see me before. I wanted to introduce Jack to you—my nephew, who comes with us tomorrow. I see he has picked up an old friend. He played with him once in Toronto. The poor fellow seems quite done up."

And so Mrs. Presidder rattled on with the ready tact that left no need for reply, and Miss Sherbrooke pulled herself together. She was grateful to Jack Presidder and his aunt, but neither deceived her for a moment. She went through the rest of the ride with a very brave face and laughed gaily, when she bade her escort good night, but to this day the scent of new hay as it blew from the mountain that night brings an odd, sick pain to her heart.

And it took three long moonlit weeks at Newport, with all Jack Presidder's eloquence, backed up by his aunt's tact and cunning, to wipe out the cruel stain of that horrible ride on the Belt line. But Mrs. Jack Presidder now wears the lucky penny as a pin—a penny that was ably recovered from the Montreal street railway that night while Miss Sherbrooke lay desolate on her bed and wept for her broken idols.

## A Siberian Mammoth.

The wonderful antediluvian mammoth discovered eighteen months ago in Siberia has at last, after twelve months of labor and great expenditure, been safely secured in the museum of the Imperial academy in St. Petersburg. It was discovered on the left bank of the river Beresovka, in a region that for ages has been the scene of great landslides at the melting of the snows in spring. The discovery was made by a Siberian hunter, who secured one of the tusks for sale. It was of almost incredible size. Scientists estimate that the beast, entombed by a landslide, had been laid up for quite 200 centuries in the ice, which has so preserved it that the hair and hide are still intact.

# The Novannovotococcus

By P. J. TANSEY

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THERE'S a fellow 'at can't sweat off. He ain't got nothin' to swear off on—don't drink nor smoke nor swear nor fight nor nothin'. He must be a lonesome on today."

So Bill Evans commented to the rest of the gang at Johnson's corner grocery in Jarnesville, and in no low and guarded tone either, as Percy Deery passed. The young man spoken of could not help hearing the remark, and he blushed deeply as he kindly bade his playmates of past years good morning and a happy new year. He was medium sized, blond and boyish, with a budding mustache. He was attired in the height of fashion.

"Goin' callin'?" asked Ike Maddox with a grin. The young man stopped politely to answer that he was.

"Mam know it?" asked another of the gang.

Conscious of the intention to offend young Mr. Deery blushed again to the roots of his hair before he answered:

"I have no secrets from my mother, of course."

The corner gang roared, and Jim Smith, the first to recover from the general spasm of merriment, asked the greatly embarrassed Mr. Deery, honor bright now, if he was not going over to Oliver street to call on the Misses Wilson.

The questioned one felt as keenly as any honor jealous knight of old could have felt it that this was an outrageous trespass on forbidden ground, but he remembered his mother's precepts, and he replied, searing alike evasion and resentment:

"I am going to call on Miss Mary Wilson."

The laughter had hardly had time to begin again when Bill Evans raised his hand to check it. His face was very grave.

"Look a-here, Percy," he said. "We're friends of yours if we do guy you once in awhile. Now, don't go to Wilson's today on any such business. Your boss has just gone up there in his buggy, an' everybody but you knows he's sweet on Miss Mary. You know Dick Holloway. You ain't been in his dry goods shop a year without knowin' that when he's drinkin' he's a terror for swearin' an' fightin'. An' of course old man Wilson will fill him up. Dick's after Miss Mary, an' he's been drinkin' a little today already, it bein' New Year's. So if he meets you up there he might hurt you, an' he'd surely give you the bounce tomorrow. So don't you go while Dick's there anyhow see?"

The gang all nodded serious approval.

"William," replied Percy after a moment's hesitation and with tears start



"I AM GOING TO CALL ON MISS MARY WILSON."

ing in his eyes. "Your intentions may be of the best, and I thank you, but I'm going to Mr. Wilson's." And with a little bow and a little smile, he left them and continued his walk to Oliver street, and there now on his cheeks.

"Oh, why did I say his intentions 'might' be of the best? Why did I not credit them with being surely the best?" was the burden of his thoughts. The gang discussed him. "That is what comes of havin' a fellow's father die when a fellow's young," said one. "It's a wonder that the cows don't bite him," remarked another. "It was the name he got that made a milkshop of him," thought a third. "How could anybody amount to anything with such a Willie boy name as Percy Deery?"

"Never youse mind," remarked Bill Evans. "There's somethin' in that, duck if it could be only got out. I say any chap that ain't scared to let on that mommer besses him is all right. If that feller could only get a few bad habits now, he'd be all right. He'd come out strong. Better get under the 'savin' fellers. Here comes the snow." Down came the snow, causing Percy Deery to turn up the collar of his new

overcoat and turn his steps into a path across lots to make the way shorter to Oliver street.

He rang the bell of Mr. Wilson's door, entered and paid his respects and the season's compliments to mother, father, the two daughters and to Mr. Holloway. They were all glad to see him except Holloway.

Poor Mary! She liked Percy, almost loved him, but she dreaded to compare him with the bluff and rough and ready Holloway, much as she disliked the latter. He, being Percy's employer, was her father's choice for her also on the score of wealth. Holloway had been calling elsewhere, and he was plainly a little the worse for liquor. He was about thirty years old, brawny, red haired, red mustached and well dressed.

"Did you look in at the store coming up to see if everything was all right, old man?" asked Dick of him as soon as there was a lull in the conversation.

"I did not, sir," replied Percy, glowing red in his consciousness of the vul



"VERY PROPER, LEMONADE FOR BOYS."

gar display of authority in the question.

"Well, if you're passing that way in half an hour you might see if the fire's all right. Come, Mary; play me something on the piano."

The younger man turned white. He began to tremble.

"Let me first offer Mr. Deery a glass of lemonade," she said, advancing with it and trembling also and as white as he was.

"Very proper; lemonade for boys. Hard stuff for you and me, eh?" chuckled Holloway, nudging Mr. Wilson, who was poor enough to stand the fellow's insolence just because of occasional addiction to the cup.

Mr. Wilson laughed a little uneasy laugh, and Holloway roared.

Mary felt herself shrink under the insult. Percy took the glass and, turning full to his employer, said, glaring at him:

"Yes, lemonade is for boys—and men!"

What was the matter with that New Year's microbe?

Even politeness could not prevent the pause and the silence. Could it be possible?

"Perhaps he'll take a smoke, though," sneered Dick, bent on making Percy ridiculous. "Offer him the box, Mr. Wilson."

Percy took a cigar. He held it in his left hand while he sipped his lemonade and chatted with courteous Mrs. Wilson. He began to grow brilliant and bold. Mary's eyes brightened. She was getting proud of him. Presently Mr. Wilson said something about politics to Holloway, and they differed. Holloway grew loud in his disputation. Turning suddenly to him, Percy said:

"Mr. Holloway, stop! You are quite mistaken."

Even Dick was silent in his astonishment. Mary grew fairly radiant.

"Will you have just a little wine, Mr. Deery?" asked Mr. Wilson, rising with a new and joyous inspiration. There might be good stuff in this chap, after all, according to his views of good stuff.

"From Mary's father I will not refuse to take it," was the astounding reply.

Tears stood in Mary's eyes. She had been so proud of his sudden show of spirit, but now he was going too far. She shook her head at him secretly. It was enough. As Mr. Wilson poured out the wine for him he arose, took her hand and, raising the glass, declared that he was about to propose a toast.

"To the girl I love, Miss Mary!" he cried, and, putting down the wine under the reminder conveyed with pressure of her hand, he took up his lemonade and quickly gulped it down. Mary pressed his hand again in warm approval.

The younger Miss Wilson made a "ace" to her mother which expressed the opinion that Mr. Deery was making a tinnity of himself. The younger Miss Wilson, by the way, had no sweetheart.

"That's what I call a down—hic—right insult to Mr. Wilson!" bellowed Holloway. "Come, young fellow, I'll drive you downtown. I guess I'd better take you home before you make any more bad breaks." He lighted his cigar as he stood up.

Percy dropped Mary's hand and looked grimly at him. The whole family protested that nothing wrong had occurred, but goodbyes and renewed

good wishes were said, and Mr. Wilson and his guests went out to the shed where the horse was standing attached to the buggy.

"Mr. Wilson," said Percy, "give me a match, please. I'm going to smoke my first cigar. I'm going to be just a little bit devilish. I'm going to be a man!"

"Pretty near time," sulkily broke in Holloway.

"—a man fit for your daughter, sir, and so I feel called upon to apologize for the rudeness!"

"That's more like it," broke in Dick again.

"—of this fellow's smoking in presence of your wife and daughters, sir," continued Percy, not noticing the interruption. "If it were not for the place you stand in, Holloway," cried he hotly, "I'd punch your face!"

"Why, you white livered little!"

"Crack! The fist of the younger man caught Holloway on the jaw, and down he went in a heap. And down beside him, purple faced, fell Percy, roaring out as he fell:

"Damn you, anyway!"

Both lay unconscious in the light snow.

"Well, this is nothing serious," said old Dr. Morris, examining through a microscope a drop of his patient's blood; "a mild rush of blood to the head, that's all—the effect of novannovotococci in the blood."

"Novan—what is that, doctor?" timidly asked weeping Mary, who stood by the lounge on which Percy still lay unconscious. Dick, with his broker jaw bound in white swathing, was being assisted into his buggy by Mr. Wilson just outside the window, but she had no eyes for him.

"The novannovotococcus," replied the doctor, smiling, "is the bacillus of New Year's vows, as the name implies. Look through the glass. See those squirming creatures? One got into this young man's system somehow this morning, and he made a vow to reform."

"Oh, doctor, he could not. He had no vices. He was an angel until he came to our house today, and then—and then he began to (sob)—began to improve. Oh, oh, oh!"

"Ah, I see," said the wise doctor. "Now we force this drop of medicine into his mouth, so, and he begins to revive. Good. Now, miss, the peculiarity of the novannovotococcus is that at first and while it is not numerous in the system it inspires to good, but suddenly changes the bent of the person toward the old Adam when its progeny has multiplied sufficiently. You must have seen again and again how good resolutions made on New Year's day lead straight to mischief. So this young man drank a little wine perhaps?"

"No, doctor, though he was just about to do it, but in all other ways he grew all of a sudden so bold and manly and grand! Now, will this last—this tendency to be a little wicked?"

"Oh, yes; the bad effect always lasts; becomes constitutional, as we say. But it will never turn him to drinking if he has the same antidote constantly with him." And the old doctor's eye twinkled.

"Thank God!" She raised her clasped hands and looked upward devoutly. Glancing fondly down on Percy Deery, she was ashamed to find him looking and smiling up at her.

"I heard you," he said, stretching his arms to her.

She knelt beside the lounge. They whispered, and there was the sound of a kiss. The doctor turned away, with a little cough, and began packing up his medicines and bandages.

"A happy new year, doctor!" cried Mr. Wilson, coming in. "I had not time to say it before. And how's the young man?"

"As you see, father," said Percy, sitting up and reaching out his hand, which Mr. Wilson shook heartily.

"I'm proud of you, my son. Come, let's fill up, doctor—on lemonade—and drink a happy new year to the young couple and to us all. Lemonade for me hereafter!"

"And to the novanno—what's his name?" added Mary, with a sly glance at Percy. "I'd do believe father has got one too."

"The novannovotococcus," said the doctor, raising his glass.

"The largest university in any English speaking country is Harvard, which has 5,576 students."



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