

The Blue Ribbon Pumpkin

By M. QUAD

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A Singular Dress Parade

A Story of the Future

By SADIE OLCOTT

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WHEN THE TIME CAME

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LOST IN THE CATACOMBS

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An Unfortunate Encomium

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The Road to Literary Success

A Story For Those Who Are Ambitious to Write

By JAMES E. HANSON

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It was Moses Smith who founded the village of Unity, in a western state. Moses was the head and front. It was only when the inhabitants got to number 200 that trouble came to him. A church was wanted, of course. For two or three years the people gathered in a barn when the circuit preacher came that way, but the day came when Moses Smith said the day must be ready to make personal sacrifices. Not a family in the village but agreed with him. Each subscribed all, and in some cases more than could be readily afforded. Lumber was bought and piled against the day it would be wanted, and things were arranged along placidly and peacefully in the county decided to hold its first fair. It was to mean much to all farmers and villagers, for each family of the latter had a big garden and could compete for prizes.

The soil around Unity was fine for all sorts of vegetables, but particularly pumpkins. Pumpkins had been grown there that had been the wonder of four counties. As soon as the fair was announced every head of a family in the village at once mentally decided to grow a prize pumpkin for the blue ribbon to be given. They carried this decision to the public meeting called, and at which Moses Smith presided, and said: "Friends, I have sorter planned this thing out for all of us. Aaron Tompkins will grow the prize squash; Felix White will grow prize cucumbers; Sammie Davis will grow prize tomatoes; old Mrs. Tompkins will grow prize beans," and he read the list to the end and announced that he would grow a prize pumpkin as big as a flour barrel.

There was a row at once. Each was to grow a prize pumpkin, and no one was willing to give way. Moses argued and protested, but it was pumpkins or nothing. Moses Smith couldn't positively forbid the others to grow pumpkins, however he might discourage, and the night was pumpkins on every hill and in every hollow. One day it was reported that at night one was to make a raid on every pumpkin patch in the village and break his spite. That night a score of men sat up all night prepared to sell their lives and their pumpkins at any cost. After that the situation became more tense. The circuit rider came again and again, but to find that the church interest had been overshadowed by the pumpkin interest and that most of those who should have formed his congregation were in the fields or gardens. He went to Moses Smith, as the head and front, to see how the church building progressed and was met by the reply: "Nothing doing, elder, and may not be for two or three years to come. I'm sorry to say that the town seems to have backslid, and I shouldn't be a bit surprised to see lightnin' strikin' around us any time."

It was in the year 1920 that the matter of woman's suffrage came to a head, woman agreeing to accept all duties of citizenship the same as men. A battalion of volunteer infantry was organized by the government as an experiment, under command of a major. Trouble began as soon as the matter of uniform came up for consideration. The brunettes strove for a deep red with black facings, while the blonds favored either pale blue or pink. The matter was voted upon, and the brunettes being in the majority, the red won. A pattern for the suit was adopted, the trousers being very full and reaching only to the knee. Since the first decade of the century, when women began to wear hats of different shapes, independence in this matter had been continually growing. It was therefore found impossible to agree upon a uniform hat, and each woman was permitted to wear any shaped head covering she pleased.

The members of the regiment were ordered to rendezvous in camp. The quartermaster, a man who had been charged with the work of establishing the camp, provided only such equipment as he had been provided to providing for men. During the morning of the date of assembly the women soldiers came flocking in, the quartermaster receiving them and instructing them in the uses of the equipment. What was his consternation to see vans, wagons, carts, without limit drive up loaded with trunks, valises and other articles of baggage. The hat boxes alone, most of them prodigious, occupied more space than the belongings of a regiment of men. He telegraphed at once for 500 hospital tents, which gave each woman one for her baggage. Fortunately the tents arrived while the weather was yet fine, and no damage was done by exposure. A dress parade was ordered for 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and people flocked in from city and country to see this popular military ceremony. When the call sounded and the line was formed it was plain that much must be done for uniformity. Here and there a blond had disregarded orders and had her uniform made of plink or blue. Some who were what is commonly called spindle shanked had their trousers made to reach the foot.

But the greatest irregularity was in the hats. There were small inverted sugar bowl hats, Chinese conical hats, hats with enormous crowns, hats with small crowns, hats with brims as large as cartwheels. Then there were feathers plucked from every bird from the humming bird to the ostrich. The government inspector from Washington put on a pair of spectacles, and as he cast his eyes along the line his brow darkened. But he had orders from the inspector general not to be too rigid with the battalion, which from the nature of the case needed a great deal of latitude. The troops having been brought to an open order and a parade rest, he walked down the front of the line. At the first glaring breach of uniformity he reached he made a few remarks. He did not repeat them. The soldiers whose apparel he had found fault with began a defense, which lasted fifteen minutes and was not even discontinued when the inspector moved on.

As he passed along at the rear his position might be noted by the woman he was behind putting her hand to her back hair. Having gone through the inspection perfunctorily he assumed his original position, and the major commanding was directed to put the battalion through the manual of arms. Her first order was "Attention," the second "Shoulder arms." At the latter order every musket went up and every hat of extra size was knocked off and rolled on the ground. A brisk breeze blowing at the time carried many of them away, rolling them over the parade ground. The situation was very embarrassing to the commander. How to get the hats back on the women's heads involved a puzzle. To break ranks during a dress parade would be unmitigated, yet the hats could not be permitted to remain the sport of the wind. There were boys looking on who might be hired to chase them and pick them up, but only the women knew their own hats. The crowd looked expectant. There were some jeers. The inspector stood in a soldierly attitude, with arms folded. Decisions among soldiers cannot be long delayed, and the major was forced to act. "Break ranks and chase hats!" "Then—yes!" "There was a scurrying over the field by women who were fat and women who were lean, tall women, short women—indeed, all shapes. The fat ones fell on their hats and crushed them; the tall ones on stooping to pick up their property were knocked over by the short ones. Finally the hats were recovered, the women "fell in" and the ceremony proceeded. When the band paraded the drum major, who had been selected, of course, for her height, produced a very marked impression on the spectators. Her headpiece, the size and shape of a flour barrel, was surmounted by a plume resembling a column of smoke. Indeed, those who gazed upon it were obliged to look at the sky as well. But all this happened before the woman question was finally settled.

Mrs. Sarah Drew was a New Hampshire widow. She owned a farm, and Jake White was her hired man. He was a good man and a good worker and had been with the family for three years when Farmer White died. It will never be known to outsiders whether Mr. White, when told that he was to be gathered to his fathers, called Jake to his bedside and said: "I must go, but I am consoled by the thought that I leave Sarah in good hands. Give her a year or so to mourn my loss and then propose matrimony." Three years went by and Jake had not spoken. There were times when he thought he was encouraged to speak out and other times when he was prepared to come in from the field after a hard day's work and learn that the widow was engaged to the sewing machine agent who had that route. The widow, too, had thoughts. It was more than once whispered about that Jake was in love with this or that farmer girl, and she had come to feel that his loss would be a double one.

Mrs. Drew had been a widow for four years and Jake White had done bushels and bushels of thinking when winter came on. When the foot or more of snow which heralded the change of season had got packed down on the highway Providence put it into Jake's head to get out the big hand sled and propose a ride down the long and winding hill. Providence didn't go so far as to put the widow next as to what would happen, but it meant well by both. It had been a long time, and Providence meant to hurry things up a bit. Half a dozen of the neighbors were to take part in that moonlight sleigh ride, but for one reason or another all backed out, leaving the two alone. Probably this was another trick on the part of Providence. About the time the sled was drawn out for the glide Elder Henderson, who lived just beyond the foot of the hill, was saying to his wife: "Martha, I bought ten bushels of taters of the Widder White yesterday." "We'll need 'em all before spring," was the reply. "It was gone for 'em tomorrow, but it's such a nice night that I dunno but I'll yoke up the oxen and jog along now."

"Might as well, I guess, but look out that the taters don't get frostbit. You know how nightsighted you are in the moonlight. If you hear sleighbells you'd better give 'em the road." "Nightsighted!" he indignantly sniffed. "Don't you go to makin' out that I'm a hundred years old. Why, I could pick up a pin on the darkest night you ever saw. I've got just the same rights as anybody, and I'm dinged if I give more'n half the road." The oxen were yoked in due time and started out. There were bags to hold the potatoes and blankets to cover the bags, and any old sport would have given odds of two to one that the elder, the oxen and his cargo would arrive at the top of the hill right end up after a climb of twenty minutes. The wager would have been made without taking Providence into consideration, and the old sport would have lost. The Widow White was bundled up and seated on the sled. In fact, she was strapped on. Jake sat close behind her, dragging the foot that was to steer the sled a straight course. As they were ready to start it came over him to speak of his love. A feeling came to the widow that he was going to, but the time was not ripe. Providence figures those things down to minutes and seconds. As Jake started his mouth on his words and shut the sled Elder Henderson, near the foot of the hill, started singing a hymn. He not only led the sound of his singing, but he thought the oxen ought to be encouraged. His voice came floating up the hill, and as Jake caught it he said: "Mrs. White, that's Elder Henderson."

"Yes." "He's probably coming after those potatoes with his oxen and sled." "Well?" "He'll be in the middle of the road, and as our sled is already getting away from control there's going to be a smashup. I want to say to you that I have loved you for the last three years and to ask you if you will marry me?" "Oh, Jake!" "It's the elder and the oxen for sure. Yes or no?" "It's so sudden!" "Right in the middle of the road, and we'll be into them in ten seconds." "Must I—?" "Five seconds more!" "Then—yes!" Elder Henderson was marching ahead of the oxen, a hero leading the way. He was struck and sent flying and his tune cut short. Then the sled struck the oxen and flung them into the ditch and made a long jump over the other and a minute later was at the foot of the hill and Jake was saying: "We might say the first of next week for the wedding!" "It didn't come off quite as quick as that, as they waited for the elder's cuts and bruises to heal so that he could be a guest, but things came all right in a little time, and a favorite saying of the elder's is: "All the hand of Providence, sir. If I hadn't set out to sled them taters home that night there might never have been a marriage."

When I was a boy reading stories of Rome in connection with my studies the great desire of my life was to visit the Eternal City and the localities at which the incidents I read about occurred. I wished to go over the seven hills on which the city had been built; I wished to see the Forum, the home of the vestal virgins, the spot where Castor and Pollux appeared, marked now by the ruins of their temple; I wished to see the Coliseum, the triumphal arches, the Pantheon. Above all, I desired to go down into the catacombs where the early Christians secretly deposited their dead. The time finally came when I reached the object of my desires. I visited Rome. On the steamer crossing the Atlantic and later steaming over the Mediterranean I met Marlan Chambers, and sitting on deck moonlight nights with her, I caught from her a fever—the fever of love. By the time we reached Gibraltar I was down, and during the whole voyage from there to Naples I was very ill with this irritating disease. I was cured on the homeopathic principle that like cures like. The love of the girl given in gradually increased doses put me in a normal condition. By the time we reached Rome I was ready to enjoy the sights I had counted on seeing ever since I began to study Latin. And now I had a loved companion to visit them with me. The catacombs that had interested me most I reserved till the last. Marlan and I had a fancy for slipping away from those we traveled with and going sightseeing together. One morning we took a carriage, drove out on the Appian way and stopped at the entrance of those subterranean passages I had long wished to explore.

We were in time to join a party about to descend, each given a wax taper, and a monk in a white cowl, who was to pilot us, led us down a stone staircase at the bottom of which were the catacombs. We followed the taper light procession for awhile, but finally—at the time I would not tell how it happened, but now I am an old married man I will admit that I was never happy for half an hour at a time without a kiss from my Marlan, and I led her away from the others for the purpose of taking one. As soon as this object had been accomplished we started on, after the others. Immediately we came to a split in the passage, and the party had gone so far that we could not tell which of the two avenues they had taken. Making choice of the left hand passage, we ran as fast as we could, only to find new splits and turns, and corners, but not the party. We were lost. "People have been lost before in these underground burial places and have narrated their experiences. In our case there is something different from any of them. I had a box of matches with me in my pocket that I carried for cigar lighters. We also had two tapers. As soon as I realized that we were lost I put out both the tapers, and being in a small open space where was a Christian's skeleton in a sarcophagus, we sat down on the latter to think. What would be the result of our thus being lost underground? We would not be missed by the party we had joined, for we knew not one of them. Parties were going through the catacombs every day, but would they happen to come our way? Besides, we might starve before we were discovered. There was nothing whatever for us to subsist on. We might try to find our way out, but there were many miles of these subterranean passages, and we were liable to wander further from the entrance. The result of our deliberations was to remain where we were. I will pass over some twenty hours of our captivity without attempting to describe our feelings. The most hopeless part of it was that our friends did not know where we were. We passed most of the time in the dark, for I wished to save our tapers and matches for any opportunity that might occur. While sitting on the sarcophagus something ran on my foot. I scratched a match, and its flame revealed the two glistening eyes of a rat.

I at once lighted a taper, and while Marlan held it I tried to catch the rat. If he would serve no other purpose we might need to eat him. I didn't have much trouble getting my hands on him. I think he knew we were lost there and was willing to help us out. Then an idea occurred to me. Scribbling a note on a letter I had in my pocket, stating that we were lost in the catacombs, I held the rat while Marlan tied the note with a strip torn from her handkerchief around the little fellow's neck. Then we put him down. He gave us the most knowing look in the world and ran away. Half an hour later I felt the rat running over my feet. I lit a taper and saw that he was without either the note or the strip by which it had been fastened to him. This gave us hope that it had been removed by a human being. Ten minutes later I heard a halloo. I replied, and after a number of calls we could see the dim light of tapers, then a party coming to search for us. They had received the message, but had not missed us when the party we had started with returned. We brought the rat out with us. He sleeps at night in a cage and by day goes where he likes.

Very Awkward. "Your Albert is going bald, ain't he, Mrs. Smithers?" "Yes, Mrs. Peters, 'e certainly is gettin' 'igh 'ended, and it makes it very awkward for the pore dear. When 'e washes 'e 'as to keep 'is 'at on 'is 'ead to tell where 'is face finishes"—London Mail. Never Hits It. Gadsby—That fellow Nosceds is a regular fortune hunter. Raynor—Well, he's a mighty poor shot.—Judge. REAL GOODNESS. It is not easy to be good. If it were, goodness would be worth very little. It would not mean struggle, persistence, aspiration, development, character, as it does now. Real goodness is valuable because of what it costs day by day, and it never comes as a bargain. Bad Enough. Magistrate—Do you know that drink drives a man into bad company? Prisoner—Yes, your honor. It brought me before you.—Philadelphia Times. Always Lucky. McConnell—Sure, isn't Larry always the lucky boy? Murphy—Lucky, do ye call him, when it was only yesterday that he fell, breakin' his leg an' his arm? McConnell—Faith, an' wasn't he lucky on that occasion, wid th' accident takin' place within twinty fate of th' hospital?—Chicago News. Economy in the Home. "What the land needs is an era of economy in the home." "Yes?" "Yes. Don't you agree with me?" "Certainly, but—er—" "Well?" "Would you mind going home past my house and telling my wife about it?"—Houston Post. Feminine Chronology. Stella—How old is Mabel? Bella—Old enough to be younger.—New York Sun. One of Those Questions. "It was his third attempt at suicide." "And didn't he succeed at either of the others?"—New York Press.

Mr. Scarborough and I are very good friends—very good friends indeed. The question is whether we shall be more than friends. We like each other pretty well, but for my part there is one other that I'm not sure I love better than I love him. One day Mr. Scarborough and I went out in a boat, and it was evident before we had been together long that our minds were on the great question, "Shall we be more than friends?" We were very practical about it, exchanging views with a frankness not usual in such cases. "For my part," he said, "I feel I love you better than any other person in the world excepting one. That person, I confess, I do not approve of—one whose intellect is not by any means of the highest and whose good intentions are often not carried out." "How singular!" I exclaimed. "You have spoken my case as well as your own. There is one whom I prefer to you. But, gracious, how faulty! I confess I am often put to the blush on account of Frank's shortcomings." "Selfish?" "Selfish at times beyond measure." "That's just the way with my Winnie."

"How is it, then, that we prefer these unworthy persons to each other?" I asked. There was a brief silence, at the end of which he asked: "How long have you known this person?" "Many years." "I have noticed that the longer I have known Frank the greater selfishness I find." "Same here. We have been companions since we were wee little things. My theory is that it is propinquity. I have known my Winnie and you have known your Frank so long that association has begotten love." "But love is blind. If this is love we feel for those persons how is it that we see their faults so plainly?" "Are what we see in them really faults?" "What do you mean by that?" "I will explain. I snatched a kiss from you. You are angry and blame me. In other words, you consider that I have committed a fault, whereas I have simply been following a natural instinct. Now, your Frank may place you in an embarrassing position without any intention to do so, yet you consider him at fault." "That may apply to your Winnie, but not to my Frank. I confess you are much more worthy of my love than Frank. My love for Frank I admit is inexcusable, and yet I can't help it." "And I will admit that my Winnie's thoughts and acts are gross in comparison with yours." "How can you love such a person?" "I would rather call it preference than love."

"There again we agree; it is preference in my case too." While we were talking a cloud had been gathering behind us. Our backs being turned toward it, we did not see it. We were sitting in the stern of the boat, while I held the main sheet in my hand. Suddenly a squall struck us and capsized the boat, which sank. Three of us were in the water together, Mr. Scarborough, I and one life preserver. Mr. Scarborough could not swim at all, I a very little. A few strokes took me to the corks. Mr. Scarborough could not reach them, though they were not a man's length from him. He went down, and when he came up, by a desperate effort, I reached him with the life preserver. "Take hold of it," I cried. "No; it will bear but one of us." "I can swim." "Not enough to save yourself." He went down a second time. When he came up I fought to get the preserver around him. He was unconscious, and I partly succeeded. Then a boat's nose poked itself against us. The rain and the wind beating up the waves had concealed it from us. A hand grasped each one of us and dragged us into the boat. I hung over him anxiously until we got him to shore, where we applied the usual restoratives in such cases. After awhile he showed signs of life and finally came to himself. The same evening, after having been revived, we resumed the talk that had been interrupted by the squall. But we now chatted under very different conditions. We had been dumped in the water with—so far as we knew at the time—a chance for but one to be saved. Each had preferred that the other have that chance. We sat locked in each other's arms. "It has been proved conclusively today," he said, "that these other lovers of ours must take a back seat. I would not have done for Winnie what I did for you."

"Nor I for Frank." "It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good! The squall blew us into the water, but it blew away at the same time our indecision between each other and these two other lovers." "Thank heaven for that. I was awfully tired of it. But tell me who is this Winnie that has been my rival?" "Who is Frank?" "Tell me and I'll tell you." "My name, as you know, is Edward W. Scarborough. Winnie is not Winnie, as you suppose, but Winslaw. I thought I loved myself better than you."

I married an unconscious beauty. Now, everybody knows that beauty if it is unconscious is a very nice thing, but as soon as it becomes conscious it breeds vanity, and vanity is the mother of a large brood of troubles. My wife and myself—we are both Vans—belong to the older aristocracy of New York. None of our ancestors would have thought of associating with the ancestors of persons who are now in the swim and to whose circle we were not admitted. They care nothing about our ancestors, though many of them have heard of my father, who was a distinguished commodore in the navy, and my wife's grandmother, who was a celebrated New York belle. The places once occupied by these worthy people are now filled with the descendants of those who sold them oysters and fish, and whose wealth runs away up into the millions.

But my wife and I were happy until a certain remark was repeated to her. One of our old family connections who owns a box in the "diamond horseshoe"—so called from being that gallery of the Metropolitan Opera House occupied by the multimillionaires—gave us the use of it for one night. The favor nearly caused our ruin. Soon after that night at the opera Gertrude's cousin, who gave us the box, said to my wife: "The Earl of Chapperton, recently from London, asked me who was the lady in my box on Thursday night, saying at the same time: 'She's the most beautiful woman I ever saw. London could not furnish anything equal to her?'" The remark was not only repeated to my wife, but was talked about at every function held by the golden set. It finally came to Gertrude, added to in this vein: "What a pity that Mrs. Van Valkenburg doesn't take the position in society that half a century ago was occupied by her grandmother, the beautiful Betty Van Wyke."

From that moment my dear wife got the society bee in her bonnet. "Our family has always kept up in the world till the present generation," she said. "We have \$10,000 a year, and on that we could get on in society. Connections of ours in the swim would introduce us, and our special associates would be of the older aristocratic set who are not so rich as these new commercial people." "My dear," I protested, "our \$10,000 income would not keep us in the swim a month." "Not with your management," she retorted, "but a woman can always make money go further than a man. Let me try. I will show you what I can do." Like a fool I was persuaded. My wife had no trouble in penetrating the society skirmish line because of the remark of the Earl of Chapperton, which was on every one's lips. She received a number of invitations, but found that she must make considerable outlay for costumes before she could accept any of them. And since the costumes she must rival cost all the way from several hundred to several thousand dollars, and she must have a different costume for each function, the amount soon ran up to a third of our total income. Since our ordinary necessary expenditures required the other two-thirds, it was evident we would soon run upon the rocks. But what is the one matter of a woman's costumes, expensive though they be, compared with the thousand and one other luxuries that must be provided by people of fashion. One dinner alone we felt obliged to give cost us \$500, and it was considered plain at that.

We permeated the outer social line and were making some headway into the inner circle. We were both disappointed in discovering that we must be civil to a number of the wives of young multimillionaires who had married actresses, and my wife had discovered that society was not composed of such persons as her grandmother had shone among. Then something happened that called a halt to our advance. A certain Mrs. Van Valkenburg, whose income was some \$2,000,000 a year and who was as homely as a hedge fence, caused it to be given out—for a consideration, the price being invitations to certain social climbers to her soirees—that a mistake had been made in reporting Earl Chapperton's remark as to the most beautiful woman in New York. The Mrs. Van Valkenburg referred to was the lady with the \$2,000,000 income. Everybody sneered, but as all understood that to gainsay this edict would cost them the enmity of one of the most powerful women in New York society no one dared to lift a word to the contrary. The earl had returned to England and was not to be even questioned on the subject. The moment his lordship's compliment was appropriated by another my wife ceased to be an object of curiosity and, as she had no other claim to be admitted to society, was dropped. Besides, any further attention to her was sure to be resented by the other Mrs. Van Valkenburg. When the battle was over I discovered that we had eaten upon our capital sufficiently to reduce our income one-half. I was thankful that we were beaten off before all was exhausted. When my wife grumbles at the halving of our income I never mention the cause. I have a regard for the tuft of hair on the top of my head. Patriotism. It is the duty of every man who desires to carry on his business in peace and safety to take his share in the defense of his country.—Sir Walter Besant. Economy in the Home. The rule in carving holds good as to criticism—never cut with a knife what you can cut with a spoon.—Charles Buxton. One of Those Questions. "It was his third attempt at suicide." "And didn't he succeed at either of the others?"—New York Press. Feminine Chronology. Stella—How old is Mabel? Bella—Old enough to be younger.—New York Sun.

Perhaps if a census of persons who are scribbling were taken it would be found that half the educated people of the United States are trying to write for the other half. If the careers of authors of fiction are looked into it will be found that those who have achieved any enduring success nearly all gained it under similar circumstances. They began young, usually in the employ of some magazine or newspaper. Many of them became readers of manuscripts submitted for publication. In this atmosphere of mingled literature and publication they pass years occasionally trying to do some work for themselves.

Melville Ostrander at twenty-five, having been graduated at college and taken a number of postgraduate courses, determined to devote himself to literature, confining himself to fiction. Possessing an income sufficient to support him, it was not essential that he at once make money out of his profession. He reasoned that he was in the same position as other professional men who must expect to wait a reasonable time for an income. There are persons, especially literary persons, who claim that the highest grade of fiction is that in which there are no incidents. The characters are expected to talk their way into the interest of the readers. Ostrander first fell under the influence of this school. He wrote novels in admirable English, in which his characters told their own story—if they had any to tell, which they had not—indirectly in conversations and by giving their own thoughts. His novels were always returned by the publishers as unavailable, except in one instance in which the work appeared with a sale of only a thousand copies—not enough to pay the cost of publication. Ostrander, hearing that while the retrospective novel was the highest form of literature—so considered by critics—if he wished to succeed peculiarly he must enter upon a more lively school. Henceforth he made his characters love madly and go through fire and water for one another. After writing a number of these stories without success he became discouraged. Spring coming on about that time, he concluded to go south for a trip.

In Florida he met a middle aged lady—he had by this time arrived at middle age himself—who had come to the south to recuperate from over-work. Miss Easton was in the employ of a publishing house in New York. In other words, she was one of those persons, already mentioned, who read the manuscripts of other people submitted for publication, at the same time trying to turn an honest penny by doing a little scribbling for themselves. Miss Easton happened to be one of those women whose personality appealed to Mr. Ostrander. A man always sympathizes with a woman who is obliged to work, and especially one who works so hard as to endanger her health. Together they took part in those out of door amusements that may be enjoyed in the south even in the dead of winter. They boated together and drove together, finding something in the palmy tropical winter atmosphere and luxurious plants to warm the emotions even of middle age. When a practical man discovers that he wants a woman he begins at once to find good and sufficient reasons why he should marry her. Mr. Ostrander in thinking the matter over concluded that Miss Easton would be a helpmeet to him in more ways than one. She could be a reader for him, correcting his manuscripts, making suggestions here and there and giving him hints in the practical or business part of his profession. So one day when they were sitting among the palms and the flowers and the other reminders of spring he told her that he would be glad to lift the burden from her delicate shoulders to his own stronger ones. He had just enough income to get on with, but had his time to devote to literature and was determined to succeed in it. When he did doubtless they would have money to spend, not in travel for recuperation from hard work, but for pleasure. They would go abroad where he would be able to draw from new scenes and other peoples what would give him still greater fame.

Miss Easton in accepting his offer fell into a practical vein herself—indeed, a more practical vein than that of her lover. She told him that in order to succeed an author must make a market for his wares. He must write what the public wish to read rather than what the critics approved. It was not impossible that he might make a sudden high flight, but it was not probable. Usually time was required. In this way Mr. Ostrander, a highly educated man, learned from Miss Easton, who had but common school training, that in all things sold for money there are certain fixed business rules that—though brilliant exceptions may occur—are practically inexcusable. Soon after their return to the north they were married. Mrs. Ostrander then told her husband that the publishing house she had been with was getting out a simple little story of hers in book form. It turned out that this simple little story had a very large sale and made the author's reputation. And the result. The man who had taken up literature as a profession became the publisher of the former drudge and fortune was achieved for both.