

## TOIL.

Alas, for the young hearts awaking,  
To the hopes and the sin and the breaking  
And the prodigal tears  
Of the burdensome years  
That glow bright in the future with promise!  
Alas, that the dreams which we cherish  
In the fires of fruition should perish;  
That it darkens the sun  
When the real is won  
And we banish the ideal from us!

The story is ever repeated  
Of Youth's aspirations defeated.  
We battle and dream  
Of achievement supreme;  
But, ah! the deceitful to-morrow  
Is forever its promise belying,  
And the tear-drops forever are drying  
On hope's fallen leaves  
Where humanity grieves,  
Clad about with the mantle of sorrow.

The goal where we thought that the burden  
Would fall, and the coveted guerdon  
Of rest would be found,  
Is the desolate bound  
Where a demon of restless endeavor  
Rises up in the bosom to taunt us  
With tasks that still lure and daunt us,  
Till we turn once again  
To the battle with men  
In the glare of the pitiless Never.

Aye; but labor is manfully human.  
Toil, toil is the test of the true man;  
Though success yield him light,  
Though he reel in the fight,  
Though his pathway be sunless and dreary,  
Still he feels for his burden-bent brothers,  
And shrinks from the goodness that smothers  
The feeling divine  
Of the heart-throb benign  
That would hold up the hands of the weary.  
—W. T. Talbot, in *Chicago Current*.

## LIFE IN A FLAT.

BY EMMA A. OPPER.

When the Harrisons decided to move from their pretty, suburban-looking cottage in the upper part of the city into a flat downtown, because it would be nearer to Mr. Harrison's business, several reasons why they should not have decided were immediately discovered.

Mrs. Harrison was certain that there were no ministers downtown who could compare with Doctor Barron, and that she shouldn't enjoy them if there were.

Ollie, the elder daughter, was afraid that Charley Matson, who lived around the corner, could not continue to call five evenings in a week, as was his present habit; and her father was fearful that the rather small parlor of their new abode would not take the place of their pleasant little porch for smoking and ruminating on warm spring evenings.

But Jessie, who was barely out of school, was eagerly enthusiastic concerning the flat. She was positive that of all the charming places to live, a flat must be the most charming; and she could hardly wait to get into one.

Had it not been for Jessie's contagious good spirits, the Harrisons would have been inclined, at the end of their first week of flat-life, to move back up town without further ado.

They had begun to despair of ever becoming accustomed to a flat. Mr. Harrison, being forgetful, was freshly startled every evening when the door opened by apparent magic in response to his ring. But Jessie, by repeated explanations, convinced him that, so far from being a spiritual manifestation, it was the direct result of a small brass handle attached to the kitchen wall.

Ollie, whose hour of rising was not of the earliest, was disturbed every morning by the whistle of the janitor up the dumb-waiter shaft, and the consequent sending down of ashes on the part of the girl. But Jessie grew eloquent over the extreme desirability of this arrangement.

Mrs. Harrison, whose tastes were quiet, was annoyed at meeting people in the hall, and hearing them on the stairs. But Jessie defended these sights and sounds as being remarkably pleasant and sociable.

She herself, however, had one cause of disturbance. She drew Ollie close to the hall door, one morning, with her finger raised.

"There—listen!" she whispered. "It's the gentleman on the floor above. It's just the same every morning."

A quick step was coming down stairs. At their foot it paused, while a feminine voice called down sweetly:

"Good-by, Willy. Be home early—be sure."

And a manly voice responded cheerfully:

"I'll be on hand. Good-by!" and the hall door closed upon the speaker.

"They go through with all that every day," said Jessie disgustedly. "And

once or twice I've heard him call her 'dear'—yes, actually! If there's anything I abhor, it's the public demonstration of young married couples!" she concluded with a shudder.

She stepped to the window hastily, closed the blinds, and peeped through the shutters.

"Yes, he doesn't look more than twenty-four," she announced. "They probably haven't been married long. But that's no excuse—not the slightest. 'Willy' for that immense thing!" she added, scornfully, as she watched the tall figure to the corner.

That afternoon Jessie went up town to call on several of "the girls," and returned at 4, having had the best kind of a time.

She had gone first to Mamie Duke's, and Mamie had gone over to Cora Bradley's with her, and they had all gone on to Myra Sellwin's, where Jessie had entertained them with a vivid description of the flat, and amused them with a slightly exaggerated account of the doings of the amorous couple on the second floor.

She had in fact represented Mr. Sanderson—Sanderson was the name in the slit over the letter box—as being in the habit of shouting "By-by, Tootsey, Wootsey" up the stairs as he departed, and receiving the mystic response of "Nicey picey—oozy boozy goozy."

But the statement had not been fully credited.

She was smiling over the recollection of her afternoon's jollity as she stood in the vestibule waiting the response to her ring.

Whether the gentleman on the second floor, who ascended the steps at the moment, regarded her musing half smile as intended in some degree for himself, or whether he was charmed out of all self-restraint by Jessie's fresh, young face and her pretty, fall costume, was not clear; but he lifted his hat hesitatingly.

The motion was very slight and most respectful, but Jessie raised her chin and regarded the young man with chilling haughtiness.

What business had he to bow to her? He was extremely presumptuous; he was impertinent. If that was the habit of people in flats nothing could be horrider.

Had she not been determinedly regarding one tan-colored kid hand, where it rested on the door knob, she would have seen that Mr. Sanderson's frank face had shown a quick distress and confusion, as he noted the effect of his impulsive act; but she did not look up.

Some three minutes had passed by this time since she had pulled the bell and she jerked it again, impatiently.

A silence of three minutes more, during which Jessie's frown deepened.

Then Mr. Sanderson, with rather a timid "I beg your pardon!" reached across her to his own bell and pulled it.

Another pause. The door did not open; there was not even a demand through the speaking tube of "Who is it?" There was profound silence.

The situation was somewhat embarrassing. Jessie bit her lip, and looked down at the tip of her shoe.

Then she raised her eyes to find Mr. Sanderson's fixed upon her. There was no help for it; they smiled, and rather broadly.

"I have not my latch-key with me," said Mr. Sanderson, apologetically. "It is most unfortunate. I usually carry it."

"I can't imagine what is the matter with Nora!" said Jessie, indignantly. "She must have heard the bell!"

She gave a third emphatic jerk to the handle.

"If I could attract my sister's attention," said the young man, stepping out and looking up at the second-story window.

His sister! Jessie's eyes opened wide. The idea gave a new and not unpleasant aspect to the case.

Perhaps, though, his sister was living with them. But, no; in that case, would he not have wished to attract his wife's attention rather than his sister's?

Two pennies and a lead pencil thrown against the window brought no response, however.

Mr. Sanderson came back into the vestibule, hopelessly.

"It's rather a peculiar situation," he said. "We're aliens and outcasts at our own door."

Jessie laughed.

"I suppose we shall have to wait

till somebody comes in with a key," she said. "How dreadful!"

She went out to the top step, and looked up and down the street anxiously.

Mr. Sanderson followed her. "Oh, we've a last hope!" he said, with a sudden inspiration. "We can ring up the janitor."

He pulled the janitor's bell vigorously.

"What a delightful idea!" cried Jessie; and Mr. Sanderson looked fully rewarded.

The janitor was a good five minutes in getting to the door.

He grinned slightly as he opened it, appearing to take in the situation.

"That bell wire's broke," he observed, indicating the row of handles. "How long you been ringing at 'em?"

"Oh, not long," said Mr. Sanderson, evasively, and joined in Jessie's laugh.

He raised his hat again as he left her at the door, and ran on upstairs; but she did not appear to resent it—she even smiled in return.

"He is not married, after all," she said to her sister, as she took off her "things" in the room.

"Who?" said Ollie.

"Mr. Sanderson—the gentleman on the second floor," said Jessie, emphatically. "It is his sister who lives with him; and he is quite pleasant."

"Jessie Harrison," said her sister, sternly, "what have you been doing?"

She was not entirely satisfied when Jessie had explained.

"Did you ask him to call?" she said, suspiciously. "Yes, I see it in your eye—you did, you dreadful girl!"

"I didn't," said Jessie, laughing; "but it's quite probable that I shall yet!"

The Harrisons grew reconciled to their flat as time went on.

Mr. Harrison grew accustomed to the door, and Mrs. Harrison was no longer disturbed by her occasional encounters with the families upstairs, and Ollie was speedily reassured as to Charley Matson by that young gentleman's faithful appearance five times a week, via the horse cars.

It was some three weeks after this removal that Mrs. Harrison's cook, following a faithful custom of cooks, suddenly deserted her.

Ollie was on a two days' visit to friends just out of town. Mrs. Harrison was not as well as usual, and the household burden fell on Jessie.

That young lady was capable of carrying it.

She was rather pleased with the novelty of having everything in her own hands, for she would not allow her mother to assist her in the remotest degree.

She made out a bill of fare for the day, and her mother having smilingly approved it, started out to market immediately.

On her return, she put on her oldest dress and took down the cook book.

Lobster salad was the programme for lunch, and a lobster salad of exceptional merits was presently produced.

It was rather annoying, to be sure, stopping every two or three minutes to answer the dumb-water bell and call "All right!" down to grocery, meat market, fish store and bakery boys, but that was a necessary result of her rather extensive marketing.

She was looking over the plentiful supply of eatables before her and wondering whether to have peaches for lunch and grapes and pears for dinner, or grapes and pears for lunch and peaches for dinner, when the dumb-waiter bell jingled again. She opened the door impatiently and looked down.

A red faced man stood below, staring up with some aggressiveness.

"Throw down the key of your cellar, and I'll put your wood in," he said not too gently.

"Wood?" Jessie repeated with a frown for his gruffness. "I don't want any wood."

"A lady ordered it in the street just now," said the man, raising his voice. "One barrel of kindling wood, for twenty five cents, and cheap, too. First flat, she said. Throw down your key."

"It couldn't have been the first flat," said Jessie, preparing to shut the door. "No lady has ordered wood for the first flat."

"I know what I'm talking about," the man retorted, loudly. "And I don't propose to be cheated out of an order. You can throw down that key as soon as you've a mind to, and the money, too."

Jessie returned his fierce gaze doubtfully. She was not frightened, but she was somewhat at a loss. How should she get rid of him? Where was the janitor?

"I'm awaiting for that key," said the man threateningly.

The door above opened at that moment, and Jessie, looking up, saw two heads appear in succession—a pleasant Irish face surmounted by a dark cap; and that of the second floor gentleman, in hat and overcoat.

"Is there anything the matter?" said Mr. Sanderson, meeting Jessie's upturned gaze, with much concern.

"Oh, dear, yes!" Jessie responded, with a smile of gratitude. "This man is behaving very disagreeably. He says somebody ordered wood for our floor, and I am sure nobody did."

"Take your self off, then," said the young man sharply.

"I ain't going out of this cellar till I've put in that wood," was the fierce response.

"I'll settle with him," said Mr. Sanderson, looking down at Jessie reassuringly.

Before she had realized his intentions, she had heard a rapid descent of the two flights of stairs, and quick steps in the cellar, and saw the man below turn angrily.

She hurried to the head of the cellar stairs and listened with startled intentness. There was a slight scuffle, and then a hasty retreat toward the basement door, with an accompaniment of sullen mutterings.

Jessie ran downstairs. Mr. Sanderson was standing near the dumb waiter. His hat was lying on the ground and he was holding one hand to his face.

"He has hurt you!" cried Jessie, distressedly.

"He tried to," said the young man, picking up his hat hastily. "It's nothing."

"I am so sorry!" said Jessie, earnestly. "It was all on my account."

"There couldn't have been a better incentive," said Mr. Sanderson, gallantly.

"It was so kind in you!" murmured Jessie.

"I was only too glad to be of service to you," Mr. Sanderson insisted.

They had reached the top of the stairs. A pretty young lady in hat and jacket stood there.

"Dear me, Willy!" she cried; "you aren't hurt? I just came in, and Maggy has been telling me about it. I ordered wood of that horrid man, and I said the second flat as plain as anything. You are hurt. Come right upstairs and get some arnica."

And, with a friendly nod and a smile at Jessie, she dragged the second floor gentleman away.

It was not surprising, after this occurrence, that the second flat should have called on the first flat only two evenings later, that the first flat should have returned the call, and that the acquaintance should have grown into an intimacy.

The astonishing part was that only six months later Miss Sanderson fulfilled an engagement of long standing, and that Jessie, trying her best to seem matronly, and failing ignominiously, as eighteen-year-old brides generally do, became the mistress of the second flat.

Certainly it was most natural that she should occasionally have thrown her young husband a kiss from the top of the stairs as he took a reluctant departure; and certainly it was most unkind in Ollie, who witnessed the harmless act one morning, to observe, audibly:

"If there's anything I hate it's the public demonstrations of young married couples!"

### The Canon is Loaded.

Canon Farrar is soon to lecture in London on his "Impressions of America." The Americans paid Mr. Farrar about \$25,000 to get those impressions on his mind, and now he is going to make the Englishmen pay him to get them off. The canon is, so to speak, loaded at both ends.—*Chicago News*.

### Hjardly Piermissible.

The name of the new Swedish minister to the United States is Kjolt. He isn't as skittish as a young ejolt, but is said to have a powerful hjolt on the English llanguage.—*Indianapolis Journal*.

Intemperance is a vice to be abhorred by all decent workmen. Temperance is a virtue to be cultivated by all who aspire to manhood.