

fection. He knew that she respected him, looked up to him. He hoped she returned his love.

But now! Before he could have offered her a fairly comfortable home. With the additional burden of the children, however, how could he ask this lovely girl to help him share their care and economize himself down to a humdrum life and the bare necessities of existence? No!

"Good-by to my dream of dreams!" he repeated mournfully, and fell into a reverie wondering if some new field of professional activity might not offer better recompense.

"Shoo! Shoo!" suddenly aroused him.

Nella uttered the somewhat startling cries. She had sprang from the side of the children, nearly upsetting them. Edison saw her run up to the vines that half covered the side of the house. She was wielding a fan as a weapon. There was the flutter of a bright-winged bird driven into sudden flight.

Then Nella was down on her knees. Edison saw her lift a small, squirming object from the ground.

"Poor thing!" Nella cooed in her sweet, sympathetic tone. "The bird nearly caught you. Oh, what a rare little beauty!"

His curiosity and interest aroused, Edison hurried to the front door and thence into the garden.

"What is it?" he asked, and Nella showed a beetle-shaped bug lying in the palm of her hand. It was an unfamiliar specimen to Edison, profound entomologist as he was. The bird had slightly pecked it and the little creature was partly disabled.

"I can't imagine where it came from," observed Edison.

"Do you notice that it is of a bright bronze?" suggested Nella. "Can't you mend it? Perhaps it's suffering."

"We will try," smiled Edison readily. "It is a rarity. I should like to study and classify it. Certainly it is a stranger to this country," and he took it into his library, poured some

healing oil upon its shattered wing, and made a soft cotton nest for it, which he placed under an open globe.

Sorrowful as Vance Edison was over his money prospects and consequently those of love, he was cheered at seeing more of Nella than ever. The little ones clung to her constantly. The bronze bug became a positive institution with the family group. It seemed as though it had a mind to appreciate kindness and recognize its friends. As it was nursed back to normal strength it refused to leave the house, even the room. It became domesticated in a sort of playhouse that Edison constructed for it, more for the gratification of the children than anything else.

There was a tiny trough for bathing, a swing, a diminutive step ladder. To all these novelties the strange insect accommodated itself. For hours Nella and her two child proteges would watch the glossy bug.

One day an old messmate of the dead sailor called upon Edison. "Just to talk over the best friend he ever had," was the way he put it. He brought some gifts for the two little orphans. He chanced to see the bug.

"Shiver me!" he exclaimed noisily. "Where on earth did you get a Malacca finder?"

"You know what it is?" interrupted Edison eagerly.

"Why surely," replied the old salt, "for they're thick as bees in Malacca. They get their name from going after other insects bold and pushing, ferreting them out of all kinds of queer cracks and crannies. They are credited with a very acute sense of smell. Why, say, this specimen must have been imported here in some of your uncle's old truck."

Apparently this was true, for when the beetle was first discovered it had probably crawled on to the window to the attic where the chest and other belongings of the dead sailor were stored.

The visitor departed two days later. A week after that the bronze bug was