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## Ballentine Dry Goods Co.

PORT HURON, MICHIGAN

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## A Man and His Mirth

By ANNE WHITFIELD

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The sealing boats were coming into Grand bay. Four months they had been at sea, hunting the harps and hoods all the way up the rocky, ice-bound shore of Labrador. They were coming in laden with pelts.

Old Henri Bedard counted them through his glasses from the top of the cliff. Twenty—that was right! No, only nineteen! Was it nineteen or twenty? If it were nineteen that meant tragedy, never far from those seafarers' lives. He could not discern clearly, and went on counting.

Along the shore, and by the edge of the tiny pier, those who had stayed at home shook their heads at one another.

"What will Georges Racine do when he learns that his brother Pierre has married the girl he was engaged to?"  
"Will he try to kill him?"  
"Hey, they are very well matched, that pair. It would be bull against bull."

Marie Racine, the bride, who had turned from the one brother to the other after her first lover's departure on the sealing voyage, sat at the door of her cottage, trembling. She loved her husband, but she had always been terribly afraid of Georges. That was why she had got engaged to him. Georges had demanded that they be engaged, and she had not had the strength to refuse him. Besides, Georges had dominated her, as he dominated every one in the port, by his mental and physical prowess.

What would Georges do? The watchers pictured his elemental wrath, the furious fight that would ensue, though it would be too late. Too late to unjoin those whom the priest had joined. But Marie trembled.

"Take thy revolver or thy knife, dear Pierre," she begged. "But not to hurt him, only to protect thyself."

"Ho, I am not afraid of Georges!" boasted Pierre, as he swaggered out of his cottage toward the wharf. "I am as good a man as he is—better, else thou hadst not married me—eh, little Marie?"

He kissed her noisily.  
"Perhaps that plan is better," sobbed the bride. "But it will be terrible to face him."

"Ho, there will be no need for thee to face him!" answered her husband. "If he as much as casts a black look at thee or me I shall hammer him into pulped wood with my fists."

Marie looked in admiration after the stalwart figure of her husband as he swaggered along the sandy road toward the pier. He passed toward the pierhead, and the crowd, watching the boats, turned their heads and said: "Here comes Pierre Racine."

"What will happen when they meet? Would it not be better to send for the cure?"

"No, let them fight it out."

"Suppose they kill each other?"

"That can hardly be. If they have knives, we must disarm them. Bad blood gets worse by keeping; let them fight it out and be friends."

"That they will never be. Both brothers loved the girl almost to madness."

They listened to Pierre, who was boasting, perhaps because he was secretly uneasy, and wished to keep up his spirits. "Friends, I have nothing but my fists, but I married my wife fairly, and I'll hold her! If my brother Georges so much as casts a black look at me, I'll hammer him into pulped wood."

They looked at him in admiration. There was no one in the village could stand up to either Georges or Pierre.

Pierre roared with laughter. "It will be amusing to watch his face when he learns," he said. "And I shall tell him. I shall say, 'Eh, Georges, dost thou remember the little Marie to whom thou wast engaged?' 'Well?' he replies, 'And now she is married.' 'Married? Show me the dog—' 'It is I, Georges.' That is all. And, as I said, it will be amusing to watch his face."

The sealing boats were quite near now. They came on with the sun shining on their canvas sails, forming in line as they moved up the harbor, each toward its place on the side of the pier. Foremost came the vessel of old Henri Bedard's son, and there was old Henri, waiting to meet it.

The sails came down, the ships were almost alongside. Voices exchanged hallo. Pierre Racine stood near the head of the pier, scanning to find his brother's ship.

"Eh," croaked old Henri, "there are nineteen of you, not twenty. Who is missing?"

"Eh, yes, to pulped wood, if he interferes with me. I shall tell him," Pierre declaimed among his cronies.

Some one was shouting, "Eh?" The crowd suddenly grew silent. "Georges Racine's ship. Lost in the ice. Georges and his boy. Eh, there would be no fight after all. It was lucky Georges had not left Marie a widow."

Pierre stopped in the midst of his bragging and stumbled homeward. It was almost as if Georges had beaten him after all.

### Strategic Sentiment.

"When Josh went to school," remarked Farmer Cornstassel, "I gave him a fountain pen and made him promise to use it every time he wrote to us dear old folks at home."

"That was nice and sentimental."

"Kind o' practical, too. That fountain pen'll be wore out in a week or so, an' then Josh is goin' to find it slow an' troublesome to write home for more funds."—Washington Star.

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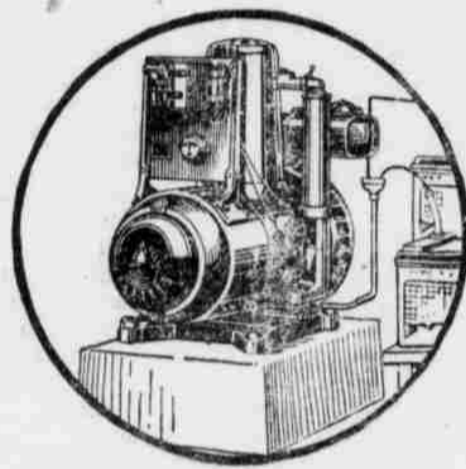
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