

A Ballad.

WHEN lyfe was not as it nowe is,
It happened upon a time
That there was a youthfule mayden
Who found she could make a rhyme.

She dreamed of her comynge glorye
Till her braine was fair askewe,
And she sayde, "I'll dwell in an attike,
As all of ye poetes doe!"

She thought of ye town that wayted,
And ye worlde beyonde ye town,
And hied her up to ye rafters
To worke up a greate renowne.

But—thyngs were not as they nowe are—
It alsoe happened to be
That there dwelt in that verye gable
A mouse and his familie.

And neither ye town that wayted,
Nor ye worlde beyonde ye town,
Heard aughte, they saye, from ye attike,
For ye poetesse—came downe.

And she only quoth in answer
To everye inquirye:
"Too greate were ye odds besettyng
Ye pathwaye of poetrye!"

Catharine Young Glen.

The Hero Who Escaped.

THE hero of a novel as yet unfinished escaped from the sheets of manuscript in which he had been lying, and darted from the author's study, intent upon one thing—to escape the heroine whom he foresaw the author intended him to marry. "The author calls her pretty, but his ideas of beauty and mine are not the same. He says that she is witty, but if so, why has he put no wit in her mouth? As for being married to her in the last chapter, and having my taste called in question by a lot of critics who know nothing beyond their calling, I simply won't stand it." And he walked out into the street and was lost in the crowd.

Meanwhile the author came to his desk, ready to begin his daily grind; for he had made such a reputation on his first novel that his orders would keep him busy for seven years, and he kept his thought-mill working day and night. He was at work upon the nineteenth chapter, in which the hero was absent on a visit, and the morning wore away before he noticed that he had escaped. Then he was in a great pother. He felt that it would be no use to put the matter into the hands of the detectives, for in his inmost heart he knew

that his hero was so like every other romantic hero of the last decade that he could never be distinguished either in a crowd or alone. There was but one course open to him—to declare the hero dead, and have the heroship descend to the next in line. But, unfortunately, the next in line was his brother and his rival, and to make him hero and give the girl to him would be contrary to the scheme of the novel.

She might have married the villain, but the author was too popular to risk being as unconventional as that. No; there was but one course open: to kill the girl in the twentieth chapter, and so make a tragic novel of the book. But tragic novels are poor sellers, and one poor seller might cause the canceling of orders for his future novels.

Canceling his orders! The driven author laid his aching head in his hands and pondered. Cancellation would mean freedom from the ceaseless grind, the eternal hunt for characters and incidents and plots and romanticism. Yes, he would kill the girl and accept the consequences with unruffled heart.

And so it happened that the heroine died of grief for the hero—in the twentieth chapter. And the capricious public, waiving for once their desire for a happy ending, accepted the book with acclamations, and the poor author received orders fourteen years ahead.

And he went crazy and went on writing in his cell, and now his novels please only certain of the critics, who declare them mystical.

As for the escaped hero, he was now in real life, and as such a hero could never, by any chance, exist in real life, he died in a few days, and that was the end of him.

Charles Battell Loomis.



"CATCH YOUR SKATES, QUICK! THE OCEAN IS FROZEN OVER."

(TIMOTHY COLE'S ENGRAVINGS OF OLD ENGLISH MASTERS.)

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