

she smiled when he put his arm around her, but when he stooped to her lips she shut her eyes, and the smile flickered out in a breathless glory.

When he kissed her, Edwin came back to earth.

"I've got four hundred a month, you've got twelve thousand," he stated, briefly.

"You should have thought of that before," said Angela.

"I did," said Edwin, honestly. "I heard a fellow say at the University Club one night that every fortune-hunter on the Pacific coast was after you—so I made up my mind to go home. Then the old man got appendicitis—"

"Will I have to live on your four hundred?" asked Angela.

"Not if you're too deeply attached to your twelve thousand," said Edwin. "You can buy your clothes, but I pay the housekeeping. Do you get me?"

"I do," said Angela.

She let him kiss her again.

"Tell me," she said at last, "did you do it to make me give in—pretending you weren't going to ask me again, and all that?"

Edwin stared.

"I've got passage on the *Korea* tomorrow morning," he said. "I'm not so foxy as you think."

"I didn't know," murmured Angela.

"If I change my passage to the *Manchuria*—that's two weeks off—will you go home with me?" he inquired.

Angela said he must be crazy; then she said she didn't see how she possibly could; then she said what would people say; then she said she would, and what should she be married in?

"Oh, any old thing," said Edwin, "so long as you're inside of it."

He kissed the lids of her gold-gray eyes.

"I thought you never would—" he whispered, chokingly.

"I thought *you* never would," said Angela.

## Pine-trees

BY JENNIE COKER GAY

THE wind is low and the world is still,  
And sighing trees invite;  
And oh, how brown the needles lie!  
And oh, the sand is white!  
And the steady pines reach up and up  
To stillness and to light.

To stillness and the sun by day,  
The sun so far and far;  
But when the night across the west  
Lets down its somber bar,  
The steady pines reach up and up  
To stillness and a star.

Ah, should you wish to seek the light,  
Whatever it may be,  
Come dwell where slender stems upreach,  
Aspiring constantly;  
Come dwell where silence lends the search  
A fine intensity.



## EDITOR'S EASY CHAIR

THE observer of current literature must be struck by the overwhelming prevalence of fiction in the stream. This is saying the fact so feebly that we should like to say it over again if that would enforce it; but perhaps it will be better if we merely invite the reader to make a recent experience of ours his own. Let him, if he has the money to waste, buy all the magazines of the month, all the newspapers of the day and week, and diligently note their contents. Then he will find that the magazines have so largely, so mainly run to fiction, to stories long and short, that a good half of the best periodicals is often devoted to them. Once or twice a year the most exemplary of our miscellanies issue a fiction number, and eschew fact almost altogether; and many times in the year it is the editor's pride and pleasure to offer the reader six or eight complete short stories in a single issue. At least half a dozen monthlies and semi-monthlies, by no means the worst, are wholly abandoned to different lengths and breadths of fiction; and not more than half a dozen organs of profession or opinion exclude the various forms of fable. The insidious short story and the ophidian serial subtly insinuate themselves into our most serious reviews. Every country newspaper has its story, long or short; every evening paper in every city has its novel or novelette; every Sunday issue of every journal includes in its huge mass whole heaps of fiction.

We have not made an actual count of what we may call libriform fiction published each year, but it is our reasonable conviction that the novels transcend in number all the other books of every kind, and that the short stories of a single month, of every single month, surpass in their sum the count of those Arabian entertainments which have forever recorded themselves as the Thousand and One Nights; that is to say, in a twelvemonth there are twenty-five thou-

sand short stories published. Who reads them all, and, worse yet, who writes them all, and do they represent at least twice as many stories rejected? Think of four thousand short stories written every month, and you have the effect of a conjecture which if it is only in part statistical is prodigious. Say there are only two thousand short stories written in a month, and only a little more than twelve thousand in a year, and you still have a total involving an amount of generous ambition, of trusting toil, of heartbreaking disappointment, which the soul shrinks from appalled. In the horrid prospect, one were willing the whole twelve thousand should be printed and the reader left to take the consequences. After all, it is not a single reader who takes the consequences. Counting only ten readers to each story (there are more, probably fifty or five hundred), there would be enough readers to take the consequences, if they were equally apportioned, without serious structural damage.

In this cheerfuller view (we find ourselves arriving at it, much to our own surprise, from somewhat gloomy premises) we would by no means suppress or abolish the short story, however futile we find it. We live in a world abounding in futilities, including ourselves, and we must not be too hard upon one another. As to the quality of the short stories whose quantity a recent general reading of the magazines has realized to us, our experience of it has not been without an agreeable surprise. With some sense of our temerity in the hazard, we venture to say that their average is much higher than that of short stories in the further if not the nearer past. Their authors really know how to fancy doing them if not actually to do them; their endeavor is in the right direction, and often their performance is parallel with it. As yet the minor morals of their technique leave much to be desired