

trouble, and the love making that clears up the tangles."

"Well, Tom dear," Sylvia replied, "I believe you're right. If novel heroines had more common sense and less silly pride—why, then there'd be no novel, most likely, for the lovers would be married in the first chapter."

"And a good thing, too!" said Tom approvingly.

*Tudor Jenks.*

### THE VICTOR.

"It's an impossible proposition," said Olivia. Olivia in her long sleeved painting apron, giving her canvas little cursory dabs, was ever a lovely sight; Olivia with the light of spirited argument in her luminous eyes, was a wonder and a fascination. Mark looked at her with a fiancé's supreme contentment.

"An impossible proposition," he returned, throwing a calm gaze around Olivia's artistic studio, "is one whose reasonableness cannot be demonstrated. Now, after we are married we shall demonstrate the entire reasonableness of this one, and perceive its beauty as well."

"Mark Williston," said Olivia, "if I understand you—"

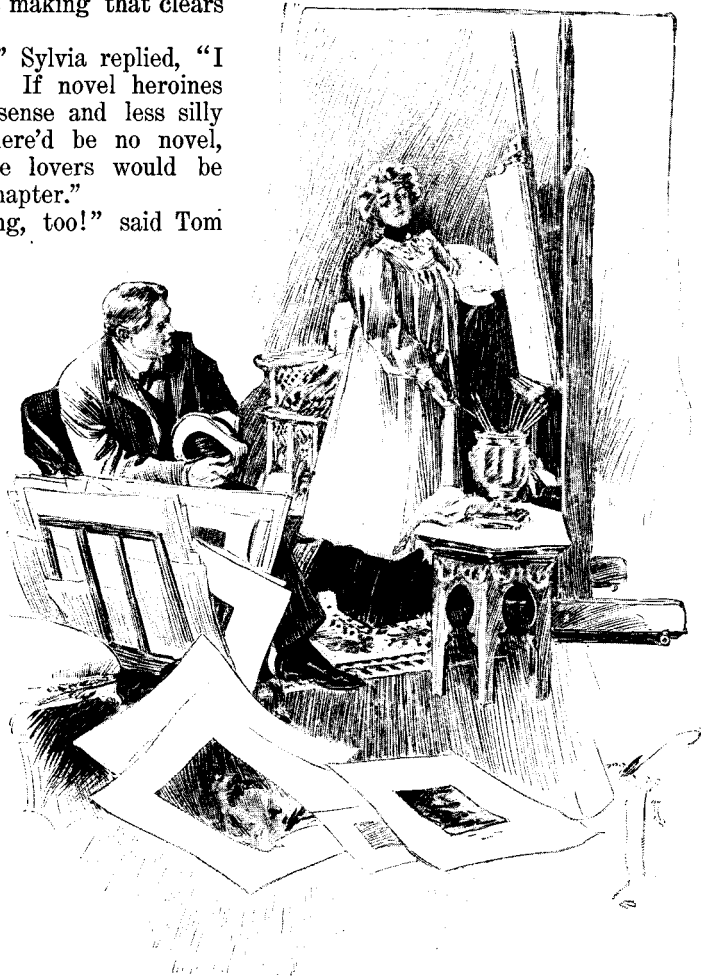
"You understand my every thought, dearest—my remotest sensation;" but his wheedling fell short.

"You wish me," said Olivia, "to paint no pictures after we are married?"

"Not that. But not to paint them for the public, Olivia."

"For whom, then?"

"For a friend now and then, perhaps; and—for me. For me. I love you and your paintings better than the whole world beside loves them; why should you



"IT'S AN IMPOSSIBLE PROPOSITION," SAID OLIVIA.

not make them all for me? I will build a gallery for them, Olivia, when I build a house for you."

"Such a freak!" Olivia commented. "No," she laid down her maul stick. "Every picture of mine represents work—work! And a lot of money for instruction besides. And merely because I am going to get married, am I to paint pictures and throw them away?" She burned to remind him—for the fortieth time—of her two studies, "Reverie" and "Muskmelons," actually accepted and hung in a current exhibition.

"Throw them away?" he echoed with deep reproach.

"Oh, well!" said Olivia, shrugging, with a smile to take the edge off the shrug. There was always a smudge of

paint on one cheek or the other. "It is the principle. I wish my work to bring me its just equivalent."

"And my love would be no equivalent?"

"But my paintings," said she—and because of a haunting dubiousness on that very point she said it with the more firmness—"have their price, their actual market value."

"As to their price," he answered, "all I have will be yours, Olivia—all, all!" And there he scored a point, for his all was a highly substantial consideration; mainly in hereditary railroad shares. "Olivia," he pleaded fervently, "it would humiliate me to have my wife painting pictures for money she didn't need in the least degree, for Tom, Dick, and Harry!"

Such flagrant absurdity—such perversity! "I am not your wife—yet," she murmured, her eyes raised with factitious blandness to a skull in yellow plaster, leering in a Russian hat.

He wriggled where he sat. "Nor would I urge you to be, if your desires and mine are so antipodal."

"Your notion," she corrected him, "your—nonsense!"

And upon the word, with appalling unexpectedness, with all the ravaging suddenness of a hurricane, the argument waxed stronger, sharper. Impatience grew to exasperation; reproach became accusation; haughtiness and implacability blew a stiffening breath over all. And in fourteen minutes by Olivia's Chinese clock the front door shut with echoing hardness—and Olivia stood alone, hot of cheek and cold at heart; staring at her left hand, naked of the diamond that had flashed there. And the yellow skull grinned brutally.

For the next ten days Olivia plunged into a maelstrom of artistic toil and artistic dissipation. She went every day to see "Reverie" and "Musk-melons," and took squads of her friends. She began four new pictures. She attended studio teas, and gave one. Art! It was sublime, illimitable.

It absorbed mind and heart, and banished all lesser, meaner considerations.

As for example, Mark Williston. Olivia told herself with icy decision, many times every day, and through sleepless nights, that Mark Williston and all things pertaining to him were matters of such absolute indifference to her that the very thought of him was a weariness.

And on the tenth day a florid man reading a paper beside her in a trolley car—obviously an ignoramus about art, a Philistine and dweller in darkness—dropped a remark:

"Seems the F. and T. railroad has gone up with a bang. Went into a receiver's hands yesterday."

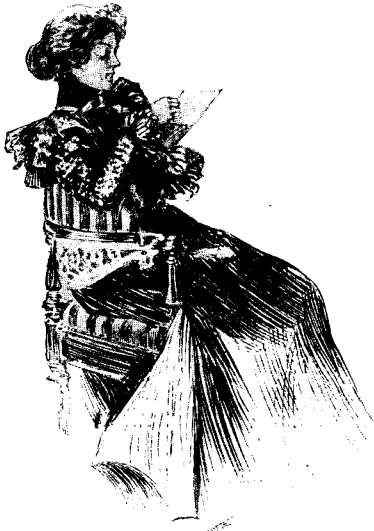
The F. and T.—Mark's road! Olivia bought a paper. Yes, it was authentic. The F. and T. was financially a wreck; and the high potentate who had for his own baleful purpose worked its ruin was more than hinted at. But Olivia gave heed to no detail. The main truth pierced her.

She went home, and sat in her studio in ghostly darkness and pulsed with distressful thought. Mark ruined! Mark, who



"THE F. AND T. RAILROAD HAS GONE UP WITH A BANG."

had never known pecuniary limitation. She saw him in a distinct series of visions, which haunted her inexorably. By morning these had grown to be all but unbearable. She beheld him standing alone in the friendless solitude to which poverty condemns a man. She saw him



"REVERIE" AND "MUSKMELONS" WERE SOLD.

giving up his horses, his club, his yearly shooting; she saw him removing from his hotel to a boarding house hall bedroom, and wearing ready made clothing and obsolescent hats.

Mark! Her Mark! No; hers no more. What mattered that? Her woman's heart knew no such paltry barrier. She bled with pity. If he could know how she pitied him! If she could help him! She paced the room; the roses she had aimed to paint drooped in their Wedgwood jar.

And in the midst of it the morning mail brought her a communication. "Reverie" and "Muskmelons" were sold—sold, both!—and the check therefor was inclosed. The purchaser, the note stated with brief incompleteness, admired her work and would have pleasure in acquiring more of it.

Olivia waved the check aloft, then burst into a shower of tears. A fraction of her emotion was pride and gratification, and for the rest it was gladness for a dearer cause. She flung circumspection to the winds; she dashed away her tears, and with tender impetuosity indorsed the check and penned a little yearning, trem-

ulous, anonymous note wherein to convey it to Mark. And ran out and posted it that instant, with her own hands.

This at nine o'clock. At two somebody was admitted below, and a step came up the stairs buoyantly, a step Olivia knew, and whose sound transfixed her with held breath and leaping heart. It came swiftly; the door was opened by a strenuous hand.

"Mark!" Olivia gasped.

"Olivia!" he said. And by some strange method he had in one instant transferred to his own cheek the daub of blue paint which marked Olivia's, and the blossom on his lapel lay a crushed ruin. Such words as he meanwhile uttered were singular and unrecognizable as English.

Then Olivia disengaged herself. "I could not help sending it," she faltered, "and you—you must take it. Oh, poor boy, I am sorry, so sorry!"

"Blessed girl! About the F. and T., you mean? I—er—the fact is, Olivia, I don't lose anything. Not a cent. I smelled a rat and pulled out of it six months ago, by the roots; though of course I haven't done any talking——"

"Oh-h!" said Olivia; and her point of view slowly and with difficulty readjusted itself. "If I had known it!" said she.

"I throw up my hat that you didn't, dear," he answered. "See what it has done for us!" And he would have damaged his carnation yet again, but that she evaded him.

She gathered her forces. She bent upon him a kindling look, a look of dawning triumph. "You see," she remarked, with caution, but with firmness, "I sold my pictures—both."

"Good enough."

She drew courage from his serenity. "And whoever bought them wants more."

"He knows a good thing when he sees it," he declared gallantly.

It was the golden opportunity. "I am likely to find a market for my paintings," she suggested, stepping carefully.

"Of course you are," he agreed; and she marveled while she rejoiced at the ease of her coming victory. "This same person—suppose he kept you busy?"

"I fancy he is old and rich and a great collector," said Olivia blithely.

"It's possible, Olivia," he confessed, with a thoughtful bearing. "I don't think I should mind if you sold your pictures to

him. It is he that has brought us together again, Olivia; and I am grateful to him. I admire him."

"And I," Olivia breathed.

"And he may want all you can do," he hazarded hopefully.

"Dear me, no! Another study or two, perhaps."

"But you would let him have it if he should? You'd never refuse him? He is our friend, Olivia!"

"If he *should*. But——"

"You promise it?"

"Oh, yes; I am safe in promising," she laughed. "As if any man alive would want everything! As if I were Fortuny."

"But he does, he does! He would rather have your pictures than Fortuny's a thousand times."

She was struck suddenly speechless.

"A million times," he reiterated fondly.

"Mark," she cried with a faint voice, "did you buy those pictures?"

"Olivia, could I let any other man buy them?" he questioned; and his tone was moving appeal, but his gaze was shameless triumph. "No, I should have searched

him out and slain him. They are mine, Olivia—mine. I shall hang 'Reverie' over my desk and 'Muskmelons' between the west windows. And—dear, you have decided it; you have promised me, Olivia, you have given your word—they will be the nucleus of my collection. *Our* collection," he said, in an unblushing fullness of joy.

"Shall I bear it?" said Olivia. It was maddening!

But after all, under the tender and potent influence of a lover's smile and with the satisfying support of a lover's warm embrace, it is possible to feel resignation even under crushing defeat.

*Emma A. Oppen.*

#### AN OLD BEAU.

THERE was a musicale at one of the cottages, and the music came across the grove in intermittent breaths. It was all quite informal, for it was very hot—one of the hottest nights of the season.

People from the hotel came in, sat long enough to eat an ice, and then went back



SHE HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP IN THE GAY SET WHERE MANNERS ARE OUT OF FASHION.