

ing now—well, if this were charity the virtue certainly deserved its place at the head of the list.

The boy, however, still pointed upward, and Audley kept on mounting until he had reached the top, where he was directed to turn in at an open doorway.

The place was in awful disorder and stiflingly hot. The boy had begun quietly to cry again and to clutch at his leg. The man was fain to drop him on the ruckle of rags by courtesy termed a bed and proceeded to make an examination for damages. He was in the middle of the process when women's voices from across the hall reached his ear. Two women, who had been hanging half clad out of the window, were discussing the situation.

"Yis, Mrs. Raferty," one of them was saying, "only this day wake I was telling Tim it would come to this. Took away by the patrol! Lord save us, who's to look out for the boy? The Society'll have to take him. There's too many childer under me fate already—the Lord forgive me for sayin' it. And Earl's a purty boy, the very picter of his pa, God rest his sowl!"

The name struck Audley with a strange familiarity. Wetting the corner of a cloth—whether towel, napkin or dish rag, Audley reeked not—he proceeded to polish the grime from the youngster's countenance, then stood off and gazed at the result.

For the moment he was transported in memory five years back to his room at Old Orange. His room chum was showing him the picture of a chubby little four year old.

"Yes, Dick," he heard Drayton's voice say, "that's your chum as a baby. That's the stuff out of which this particular center rush was evolved. Great mystery this growth, eh, old man? I mean to save this photograph for my son, if ever I have one."

Audley gazed at the atom of God's handiwork, clean now and smiling. It seemed quite natural to him that out of the heat and the rush and the evil smelling slum should have come this replica of his boyhood's friend. He never for a moment doubted the truth of his suspicion, but looked around the greasy walls for the proof he knew was there.

Above the bed, in a little rosewood frame, hung a faded photograph, the photograph Earl Drayton had showed him in their college room ten years before. He leaned forward and took it down, the boy's great blue eyes following his every movement. On the back of the picture in the shaky hand of a dying man was scrawled: "God teach my son a better life than I have known—Earl Drayton."

Audley slipped the photograph into his pocket and raised Earl, Jr., laughing and crowing, to his shoulder. In the narrow, dirty hallway the pair were crushed into the corner by four men carrying a stretcher. The gong had been the alarm of the ambulance, not of the patrol wagon, and little Earl was a real orphan now.

No one heeded the two as they passed out into the street. Such dramatic interest as there was for the people of the Greenwich precinct centered in the cold, stiff thing upon the stretcher up stairs.

For Audley there was no longer any regret over the play he had missed. The principal actor of a more wonderful drama lay snuggled close to his breast in the sunshine.

Matthew White, Jr.

The Bluff That Carried.

I.

THE *Weekly Playgoer* went to press on Wednesday morning. At five o'clock on Tuesday afternoon young Kennedy, the managing editor, scrawled his final "O. K." on the page proofs, lighted a pipe, and began to clear his desk. Ten minutes later there came a message to him from Mr. Tyler, the proprietor. Schultz had withdrawn his advertising, and would Mr. Kennedy make sure that no reference to Schultz's theaters appeared in the text until further notice?

A column criticism of "Brighter Days" was on the first page and had just gone down to the composing room. Kennedy blew frantically through the speaking tube and held a gusty colloquy with the foreman.

"Yes—column three, page one," he shouted. "Kill it. What? K-I-L-L

it! New copy in half an hour. Yes, half an hour. What? I don't care if you're kept till midnight. No, there's nothing ready now. No, the poem will *not* do; it's dead. Send down at five thirty."

He laid away his pipe, squared himself at his desk, and grabbed the end of a penholder. If Mr. Tyler should suspect that the paper was caught without copy, Kennedy reflected grimly, the *Weekly Playgoer* would change its staff.

But what to write about? His notes and newspaper clippings for the week had been torn up and carried away in the waste basket by an office boy with the zeal which attacks office boys at five in the afternoon. It was a dull season in theatricals. Kennedy mopped his brow feverishly.

"If I had only seen some good show lately," sighed the editor, and glared out of the window at an elevated train.

There was no logical explanation of the event, but it was a fact, as he sadly remembered afterwards, that the red lamp of a locomotive flying by on the elevated inspired Kennedy with the subterfuge of a make believe drama. The red lamp was hardly out of sight when Kennedy snapped off the glass top of his ink well.

"Why shouldn't I pretend to have seen a good show," he reflected stormily, "and a corking good show at that? The best show I know how to describe—let's see, what would it be like? American and modern, of course."

His thoughts came with a rush, and before he was quite clear what he was about he found that he had filled a dozen big yellow sheets of manuscript with a fictitious criticism of an ideal play. It was interesting work, too, and cleverly conceived. The theme of the piece was the harm and evil done unconsciously and inevitably by a good woman, and Kennedy threaded it with cross motives and illustrated it by a group of contrasted and typical American characters. He suggested with elusive vagueness the simple strength of the situations by which the plot was carried ultimately to a consistent and satisfactory curtain. Then he dissected and commented from the critic's standpoint, and when he scratched a double cross below the last sentence he looked up with a gasp and

saw the foreman of the composing room standing at his elbow.

"Is that the stuff?" asked the man, regarding the manuscript with professional contempt.

"Why, I don't know——" hesitated Kennedy, blinking at him.

"You don't know, hey?" sniffed the printer. "Well, does the poem go? 'Cause I tell you, Mr. Kennedy, if we hang up the presses in the morning the old man'll be hot. And when he gets hot, he burns something."

"Sit down," said the young man suddenly. "I'll give you the copy in a minute."

Kennedy tore off a fresh sheet and wrote:

Last week, at the author's residence, a private and amateur performance was given of Mr. Gustave Wakely's new play, "Bondage." The most conservative among the privileged spectators was forced to acknowledge that Mr. Wakely has bestowed upon our stage a very excellent composition. "Bondage" may or may not turn out to be the great American drama; but, even among the disadvantages incidental to an amateur rendition, it proved itself a masterpiece of the playwright's art.

"There," said the editor, "there's your first paragraph."

He scribbled off a heading. "I'll be back after supper to pass the proof. All right?"

The foreman hurried away grumbling.

II.

"I HOPE there's no such man as Gustave Wakely," remarked Kennedy to his coffee cup in the restaurant across the street. "It doesn't sound a very likely combination."

It comforted him to consider that the circulation of the *Weekly Playgoer* was in its infancy. His spirits rose still further when he read the wet proof of the "Bondage" article by the blue glare of a hissing arc light in the composing room; the type had dignified and enforced his conception and it seemed to him a really good little essay.

"This hoax is a good idea," Kennedy thought. And he went to bed repeating some of the most striking phrases which he had used regarding Mr. Wakely's supposititious play.

Mr. Tyler was not down town in the morning, and Kennedy kept his own counsel and gathered much courage.

Thursday was publication day, and on Thursday at noon Kennedy was summoned to the proprietor's private office. Seated beside his employer, the editor found Mr. Daniel Winterroth. Mr. Winterroth is the greatest theatrical manager in the world and, although Kennedy did not know it at the time, Mr. Winterroth was the financial backer of the *Weekly Playgoer*.

"Kennedy," announced Mr. Tyler, "Mr. Winterroth wants to find out something more about this 'Bondage' production."

The creator of "Bondage" stammered a word or two and clutched the back of a chair. How could he elucidate a joke in that august presence?

"Here's the point," said the theater magnate: "Pinero hasn't turned up with his new comedy for Julia Adams. Now, I've got to have something, and I've got to have it quick. I read your account of that piece by Gustave What's-his-name—never heard of him—but I think the play'll do. It'll fit Adams. Can you get hold of the book?"

Tyler looked expectantly at Kennedy, and Kennedy only cleared his throat and took a fresh clutch on the chair.

"If you can," concluded Mr. Winterroth, "I'll remember your efforts. Bring the manuscript to my office on Saturday morning—Saturday morning, at the latest. Well, you'll excuse me—I'm a busy man—good day."

"Mr. Tyler," said Kennedy, after the door was closed, "I'm afraid Mr. Winterroth will be disgusted when he finds he's asking an impossibility. The truth is—the truth is, I——"

"No, it isn't an impossibility," interrupted Mr. Tyler excitedly. "It can't be an impossibility, that's all. If you secure this play for Dan Winterroth, it will be the most important service you'll ever do in this office. Perhaps he won't accept the book, but never mind. It will mean a lot to us anyhow. If he finds we're useful to him when he's in a hole, our bank account is safe for a year."

"But I must tell you, sir——"

"No, never mind about any other duty up stairs. Drop everything else. Get 'Bondage.' Get it sure. Good by—I've to catch a train for Boston."

Mr. Tyler ran to the street, shoving

his arms into his overcoat as he scurried down the steps, and when Kennedy thoroughly came out of his daze he found himself at his desk, tearing a blotter to pieces with careful calculation.

The first thing he did was to call up the *Evening Chronicle* on the telephone. He remembered that Metcalf of the *Chronicle* had a comedy which in a day or two might be altered so as to bear a very foggy resemblance to his description of "Bondage." A girl in the *Chronicle* office with a sweet, tired voice informed Kennedy that Metcalf had gone to Venezuela, and the editor of the *Weekly Playgoer* felt a little panic tickling at his spinal column.

"Heavens!" he said to himself. "All I have to do is to show up Saturday morning with some sort of a thing signed by Gustave Wakely. That will prove that I'm a hustler. If the manuscript is no good, it may prove I'm a bad critic, but that will be the worst of it. I'll say the lines must have been changed before I saw the show—I'll say something—hang it all, I'll bluff this job through!"

Kennedy snatched his hat from a peg and started up town. On the way to his boarding house he stopped twice. Once was at a second hand bookshop. He emerged with his pockets bulging with yellow covered pamphlets. The second halt was at a theatrical typewriter's, and there a weary young lady took down his instructions on a card. Yes, his copy would be rushed whenever it came in; they were accustomed in their profession to such hurry orders, and would hold an operator all night if necessary. At six o'clock on Thursday afternoon young Kennedy threw a hundred tattered play books on the writing table in his bedroom and sat down to compose the great American drama in thirty six hours.

III.

ALTHOUGH Kennedy, unlike most newspaper men, had religiously abstained from doing his play, he knew how to go to work. The first act was finished before midnight; he came back from the typewriter's whistling, and even indulged in grilled sardines before buckling to again. But the second act was hard

pulling, and the maid servant who brought back his untouched tea and toast to the kitchen in the morning reported that Mr. Kennedy's carpet was littered with half burned cigarettes over which he was wandering up and down, dressed most indecent and talking to himself.

The second act was despatched by a messenger with a request to return the draft of the first, as there were additions to be made to it. Kennedy had forgotten that "Bondage" was merely a make-shift. His tumultuous brain buzzed now with the overwhelming notion that he was writing something worth while. His ideas about a play, bottled up during years of theatrical observation, had been uncorked so explosively that the sudden effervescence swamped him. His mind danced with all the effective situations he had ever seen or imagined.

"It's the chance of a lifetime, too," he shouted to the white reflection of his twitching face in the looking glass. "Never was such a chance. I can give Winterroth just what he wants, and my fortune's made."

Before the third act was completed Kennedy sent word to the perplexed typewriter that he was going to reconstruct the other two. So it went. At seven o'clock on Friday evening he tore up the fourth act and drank black coffee.

At two o'clock on Saturday morning there was a pile of uncouth manuscript on his mantel—sheets bristling with pasted strips of typewriting, blue penciled hieroglyphics, scrawled and blotched patches defaced by pen and ink. And Kennedy was stretched on his bed, kicking wildly at the chandelier eight feet distant, and hunting on the ceiling for a climax to the final love scene.

At sunrise, with a portfolio under his arm, he stumbled into a Turkish bath place and had a plunge.

"Better lie down, sir," said the brawny attendant, looking at him curiously. "Alcohol rub—ammonia cocktail—hot room——"

"Oh, get out of the road, I'm all right," snarled Kennedy, and fell into a hansom.

The attendant shook his head. In reality, however, the cold water had

cleared Kennedy's thoughts. His hat was too small for him, and there was a stinging pain across his eyebrows; but the whirring brain clouds had vanished, and he enjoyed the drive in the morning sunlight. When he ordered breakfast at the fresh white table in his club, he was on earth again and began to wonder what sort of a nightmare he had been giving himself.

IV.

KENNEDY picked up the portfolio and opened it with a groan.

"Genius or drivel?" he muttered, turning over the hodge podge of paper. "We'll let Winterroth decide, for I'll never read this stuff again—so help me, William Shakspeare!"

Then he gripped a stout and lengthy cigar between his teeth and walked to the headquarters of Daniel Winterroth. The great manager's sanctum was a cheery place; a saucy wood fire crackled on the hearth, and in front of it was a capacious leather chair where Kennedy enthroned himself while the office boy announced his presence to the dictator of the American stage. Mr. Winterroth entered with a troubled look on his face.

"I have brought you the manuscript of Wakely's piece," said Kennedy, rising and speaking slowly. He had rehearsed the speech in the cab.

"Ah," replied the manager. "Sit down, won't you? Fine morning, isn't it?"

Kennedy nodded doubtfully.

"Look here," proceeded Winterroth, "I ought to apologize to you, Mr. Kennedy. I've been giving you trouble for nothing. Only last night I had this cable from my London agent. 'Pinero has delivered the goods and I've closed with him.' Had to do it, according to contract. So, you see, really I don't—I don't need——"

During a moment's silence the fire snapped out a miniature shower of sparks. They fascinated Kennedy.

"So you don't need 'Bondage' after all?" The young man, winking at the sparks, finished the manager's sentence.

"That's right," went on Winterroth uneasily. "I hope you haven't put your-

self out. You look sort of fagged. I'll square it with you—depend on that."

Kennedy felt as if some one had lifted a tight iron ring from off his forehead. He gave a little squealing laugh, like a schoolgirl's, spread open the portfolio, and dumped the contents on the blazing logs.

"What the devil!" cried Winterroth. "Is that Wakely's play?"

"No," said Kennedy, gulping down a foolish and hysterical giggle; "there wasn't any Wakely and there wasn't any Wakely's play. If you'll give me a match for this cigar, Mr. Winterroth, I'll explain the whole affair."

The yarn lost nothing in the telling. During its recital the managerial smile expanded and the fat managerial hand slapped the managerial leg so vigorously that the diamond finger rings flashed like a lambent flame.

"Now, don't worry, my boy," said Mr. Winterroth finally. "I'll fix it with Tyler and you'll stand stronger there than ever. Say, wouldn't this thing make a lively short farce—a thirty minute curtain raiser? Why don't you try it?"

"No," replied Kennedy thoughtfully, "I'll let Wakely try. But I think maybe it would make a pretty fair story."

Perhaps you agree with him.

Edward Boltwood.

Out of the West.

WHEN Perry received his call to Arbordale, Los Angeles County, I was radiant. I had read all about the place in the S. P.'s beautiful folder, and dwelt longingly upon the lovely photographs. Southern California! Oh, enchantment!

Perry was delighted, too, for he isn't strong, and he was sure that Providence had had special thought of him in selecting Arbordale as the scene of his future labors. His farewell sermon in Vernon was on the twenty third psalm, and it was wonderful—particularly the part about the "lying down in green pastures."

To make a long story short, we reached our present home after a long, hard, and dusty journey. At the station some of the parishioners and elders met us—

and from that moment my beautiful illusions began to fade.

It was the dry season, and the dust set Perry coughing and got into my hair and eyes—which always makes me irritable—and all the while the delegation told us how fortunate we were to come to Arbordale, what a wonderful town it was, how many oranges they grew, and what the S. P. did to them in the way of transportation rates. I was sick and weary. We drove through acres of orange orchards, mathematical rows of hateful little trees with white paint on their mean little trunks, miles and miles, like illustrations in the "rules of perspective." The elders told us every time we passed one of their misshapen, bulgy cottages, how many thousands or hundreds of dollars it cost to keep up its mangy little lawn; and by the time we reached the parsonage I was depressed.

The house wasn't so bad, though it looked as if it had been cut out by a little boy with a circular saw. But the ground about was perfectly bare and dry, with a few rose bushes growing here and there. Of course *we* couldn't afford to buy water for grass, and the dust—I'm still combatting the dust! We were left alone at last, invited out to tea, of course, and a fatherly old soul promised me that his wife would find me a servant and get us settled. And here I come to the awful point of my story—the servant question!

I won't go into the other troubles—and Heaven knows they were numerous enough—I'll just stick to servants. At first I said I wouldn't have a Chinaman in the house. I was afraid of them. I found an Irishwoman who got drunk. Oh, I can't describe it! Then I engaged a Swede, and she stole all my little trinkets and the fine old lace Grandmother Champney left me. Mrs. Selby, the wife of the fatherly elder, told me that we would have to put up with what we could get, because, of course, *we* couldn't pay for servants with references, and bragged about what *she* gave her house boys. She employed Japs, and paid the cook fifty dollars a month. At first I couldn't believe my ears, but very soon I had to realize what real Western conditions are, and I grew thin over them. I begged, borrowed, and stole servants, but