

THE DOMESTICATED BIPLANE

BY E. J. RATH

AUTHOR OF "THE MULCAHEYS' BIDDY," ETC.

WHEN Willoughby Prank discovered that his motor had inhaled and puffed away all the gasoline in the tank, he was inclined to be petulant. His temper did not improve when he reflected that he could blame nobody but himself, for he never allowed anybody else to fill the tank. Further, he knew of no place within forty miles or thereabouts where he could exchange money for fluid power. That meant delay in getting home, the missing of a meal, and perhaps, if luck was particularly bad, no place to sleep.

It was mid-afternoon, and his engagement at a cotillion that evening was exceptionally important. If he missed that cotillion, it would be his automatic resignation to any claim upon the attention or consideration of a lady concerning whom he was forming certain opinions that seemed in a fair way to become fixed. So he gave voice to something sturdier than "Piffle!" and more popular than "Jinks!" and began the task of finding a proper place to alight.

For Willoughby Prank was about twelve hundred feet aloft when his engine rested. The problem of descent did not alarm him, for all afternoon the air had been solid and steady; but the country below, for the last twenty miles, had been inhospitable for planes. It was lumpy with hills and wrinkled with valleys, and both hills and valleys were the ideal of forest conservation. Where there was no forest, with mocking pines pointing upward like tacks standing on their heads, there were rock-rent streams, rippling lakes, and pleasant waterfalls. Willoughby's biplane carried no aquatic accessories.

He began descent at the gentlest possible angle, so as to postpone the meeting between earth and plane to the utmost moment. In fact, he slid downward so slowly that there was some risk of losing steerageway, turning over, and descending like

a plummet. But Willoughby Prank had air wisdom and air nerve, and also a stupendous quantity of luck.

Friends constantly congratulated him on the fact that his good luck would eventually conclude his career. So, as the plane glided at minimum speed, he watched carefully for an oasis that was not a lake.

He was about half-way down, and was considering the relative resiliency of pine and birch trees, when he observed a round and smooth-domed hill half a mile ahead. Its slopes were thickly wooded, but its crown looked attractively bald. With about five hundred feet of elevation remaining, a descent without disaster was as good as accomplished.

As he neared the hill, he observed the clearing to be about a hundred yards in diameter, and almost circular; it sloped away easily on all sides from a point in the center. He skimmed the tree-tops at the eastern edge, and for the first time beheld scattered stumps and boulders. He sighed as he estimated their effect upon the best plane he ever owned; then there came a crumpling of rubber-tired wheels, a crackle of metal, a couple of futile hops, and the plane stopped.

Willoughby Prank stopped some twenty feet beyond, arose from the coarse stubble, and fingered a scratch on his nose. Then he stepped back to his plane, examined it with commiseration and disgust, and proceeded to extend the remarks that he had begun a mile or so back.

II

IMMEDIATELY cool and placid words reached his ears.

"Please remove it at once; you are in the foreground."

Willoughby's cap was off in a trice, even before he located the voice, for his manners were of the instinctive type.

"I am sure I beg your pardon," he said hastily. "I didn't see you."

"Oh, I overlook what you said," answered a girl in a very large gingham apron. "My father sometimes says the same things. But I must ask you to take that contraption away immediately, because it interferes with my view."

She had stepped out from behind an easel. There was a palette in one hand, a brush in the other, and a semisavage head-dress of other brushes thrust into her coiled red hair.

"It is not a contraption," he answered severely, for such a word spoken by a young lady impressed him as uncouth.

"My father says they are all contraptions, nevertheless — fool-killing contraptions; and his judgment is excellent. However, you are alive."

"I built it myself," said Willoughby Prank aimlessly.

"Indeed? You are an inventor?"

"I didn't exactly invent it, I suppose. I improved it."

"You have not improved it by bringing it here," she remarked in a judicial way. "The wheels are in a shocking state. But if you will invent a way to remove it, I shall indeed be obliged." Thereat she resumed her seat behind the easel, dabbed her brush into a splotch of green paint, and added: "Please hurry!"

Willoughby sauntered toward the easel and took a position in the rear of the young lady's left shoulder. She painted obliviously for a couple of minutes; then, without turning her head, she observed:

"Is it quite polite to look without being asked?"

"It happens to be necessary," he answered, studying the coil of polished hair. "I wanted to see how far I should have to take it in order to get it out of your foreground."

"Twenty yards will do, thank you."

"May I make a suggestion?" The young lady's pink ears were getting a trifle pinker at the tips. "Just this," he continued, unabashed by her failure to respond. "Your picture would be immensely improved with my plane painted upon it, in that bare spot in the lower left-hand corner. It would give a sense of action. It's just a suggestion, however."

"Art suggestions are valuable sometimes," she said, with a half turn of her head which enabled him to note that her

complexion was excellent. "That is, when they come from artists."

"Oh, but aviators are artists," he replied, pleased to see that her hands were remarkably well shaped, even though somewhat painty.

"Impressionists, I fancy," she remarked evenly, glancing at the furrow plowed by Willoughby's plane. "But as this is not an impressionistic canvas, will you please act on my suggestion at once, and—take—your—contraption—away?"

"Certainly!" As Willoughby hastened to obey, he mentally photographed a profile that had certain positive merits. "But don't forget that I made a good suggestion!" he called back. "Landscapes need life, action, vigor. Mustn't be too peaceful, you know!"

While the young lady went on painting, Willoughby Prank toiled with his wounded plane. Broken wheels and other damaged underpinning made even twenty yards a difficult distance.

"Would you mind lending a hand?" he called presently.

She put down her palette and brushes, and shook out her apron.

"What shall I do?" she asked with a sigh.

"Just come around to this end and help me lift. It only needs a bit more strength."

First at one end of the plane and then at the other they lifted and carried, and by a series of zigzag swings they grapevined it out of the foreground. The first lift enabled Willoughby to discover that her eyes were gray and pleasant. During the second, he silently indorsed the contour of her nose. At the third, he decided that her mouth was well shaped, and that while it was set in firm lines just then, it might easily soften under a different mood.

At the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh lifts he made other notes of equal value, so that when the moving of the machine was finally accomplished he had catalogued and indexed practically everything but the girl's name.

"You're strong," he said, panting.

"Very," she agreed impersonally.

"My name is Willoughby Prank. You will have to accept a verbal card."

She nodded, and started back toward the easel.

"I don't fancy the name very much myself," he continued. "It strikes me as sort of silly."

"Yes," she agreed.

Willoughby jerked himself together, and stared at her retreating figure. He felt his scratched nose thoughtfully, then grinned and followed her.

"May I ask on whose property I am trespassing?"

"Oh, yes, if you like."

"Whose?"

"Mine."

"And—"

She laid down her palette and brushes and looked at him through calm and steady eyes, while she said, slowly and with great distinctness:

"Mary Josephine Brown, age twenty-two, height five feet four, native-born, white, daughter of Zachary W. Brown, banker and broker."

"Never heard of him, I'm sure," murmured Willoughby, somewhat overwhelmed at this flood of information.

And that was perfectly true, for the world of finance and Willoughby Prank had no acquaintance. His father had made some important discoveries there, but Willoughby was familiar only with the product thereof. He passed from college to aviation without a struggle. Being a wizard of the winds, the wherefores of wealth concerned him not.

He seated himself where he could watch the deft hand of Mary Josephine Brown as it put lifelike branches on a painted tree, and wondered if she always shuttled between the extremes of monosyllabic curt-ness or ironical verbosity. Now and then he swept the country with a calculating glance, seeking to discover a plan for getting his plane out of a preposterous situation. It was going to be difficult to start it on rough and sloping ground, even when repaired; and then it would be impossible to surmount the trees that fringed the clearing.

Suddenly he asked:

"Whose shanty?"

"It's a studio."

"I beg pardon. You work here regularly, then?"

"Yes."

"Landscapes?"

"Yes."

"Live near?"

"Yes."

"Interested in flying?"

"No."

"Oh!"

Silence resumed, and more branches attached themselves to the tree.

"Mary Josephine Brown," said Willoughby Prank, "you are rather difficult to talk to."

"Probably."

He strolled over to the studio and glanced in.

"Utterly feminine," he remarked for the benefit of his own ears.

A few unframed canvases were scattered about. There was a table in one corner, supporting a tea-set and an alcohol lamp. Swinging across the broad porch was a hammock. She kept her books mostly on the floor.

"Is there a wagon road up this hill?" asked Willoughby, returning to the immediate neighborhood of the easel.

"Only a footpath."

"You see, I'm trying to figure a way out of here," he explained. "The trouble is, even if I get the plane in shape, I can't rise out of here because of these trees. There isn't room to start. When I built this machine I didn't allow for taking it apart, because I didn't think it would ever be necessary. I'm just about as well fixed as a frog in a bait-can. I can't get her down a footpath through the woods. I'm afraid I'll have to cut down some trees and dig up some stumps."

"Certainly not," said Miss Brown, leaning back in her camp-chair and eying her work critically.

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that I will not permit any trees to be cut down. I enjoy them, and they are mine."

"But you said you wanted me to get that con—that plane out of here, didn't you?"

"I do. That's your task."

"But why be unreasonable? Why make it impossible?"

She shrugged her shoulders, and then said, as if it was an afterthought:

"If my father sees it, he will be angry. He hates them."

"Does he come up here often?"

"Occasionally."

"Then your house must be near by?"

"Yes."

"How about a village? Does the country afford one?"

"Three miles, over there," replied Mary Josephine Brown, pointing suggestively with her brush. "You'll find the path that way. It leads into the road half a mile

below. The road is almost straight. You can't miss it."

"In that event, good afternoon," said Willoughby with a formal bow. "I am compelled to leave my plane here overnight."

Just a short nod.

"But I'll be back in the morning."

"Good day," said Miss Brown, adding some pink frills to a cloud.

III

As Willoughby reached the edge of the clearing, he looked back. The coil of red hair glowed in the afternoon sun. Now it bent closely over the canvas, now it swung back, while Mary Josephine tested her perspective. Mr. Prank chuckled and strode forward on the path that led down-hill. All the way to the village he had spells of laughter.

The lady in the gingham apron was at work when Willoughby stepped into the clearing the following forenoon. Her "Good morning" was so perfectly non-committal that he went off and puttered a while with his plane. Eventually he drifted toward the easel.

"It's going to take time, I'm afraid," he said.

"Yes, it will take years at that rate," she assented.

"I perceive," he noted with approval, "that you distinguish the real from the make-believe."

"Sometimes."

"I've wired for my trunk and some clothes," he continued. "Not a bad little hotel down below."

"Will it take as long as that?" demanded Miss Brown, and she almost permitted herself to look startled.

"It may. Besides, these flying clothes are pretty warm for this weather, when you are aviating afoot. I'll be glad of a change."

She frowned as Willoughby lighted a cigar.

"Have you thought any more about my suggestion for the picture?" he inquired.

"Please don't be annoying, and please get that thing off my hill, Mr. Prank."

"Has your father seen it?"

There was no answer to this. As Mary Josephine Brown was palpably averse to conversation, Willoughby sat silent for half an hour and then tracked for the village.

He was sitting in silent contemplation of

his plane, next day, when she brought her easel out from the studio.

"I have a scheme," he said, as she noted his change from leather to gray flannels with a dubious look.

"Yes?"

"I'll bring a gang of men up here, with some lumber, and we'll build a runway. I can get a start on that, and probably clear those trees."

"I thought of that yesterday," she said.

"Why in the world didn't you say so?"

"It can't be done."

"Why, yes, it can—easily."

"I won't permit it."

"Indeed! Will you permit anything?"

"I don't propose to have my hill cluttered up with lumber and carpenters and noise," said Miss Brown. "It's bad enough to have a broken aeroplane hanging around."

"But this is ridiculous," protested Willoughby. "You want my machine out of here, and you won't let me get it out."

"You had no business to bring it here in the first place."

"Then, why don't you put up a sign? 'Mary Josephine Brown's hill—keep off'—or something like that. I couldn't help landing here, anyhow. I couldn't deliberately spit myself on a pine-tree, could I?"

Miss Brown puckered her forehead.

"Perhaps not," she ventured doubtfully.

She was studying her canvas now, and soon she astonished Willoughby by stepping off a little way and studying his plane. From all angles she viewed it appraisingly. Then she looked at him with entire and amazing friendliness.

"Too bad it isn't a monoplane, isn't it?"

"Too bad!" he repeated. "Certainly not. Let me tell you something about monoplanes. In the first place, they're—"

"They're more artistic, more beautiful, more poetic."

Willoughby subsided.

"And beauty and poetry are what we seek in pictures."

"What? Do you really mean—"

"Yes; I really mean. I've changed my mind. Isn't that odd?"

"Help me move it back," commanded Willoughby. "I knew you'd see the point."

She smiled inscrutably, but she helped him move it back into the foreground.

"Under the circumstances, I think I have a right to watch you paint," he said, when

she had resumed her camp-chair at the easel, and she did not say him nay.

"May I suggest?" he ventured, at last. She nodded.

"Those planes—you are getting them a bit too long?"

"But they look better."

"Granting that, they are not correct, you know."

"This is art, Mr. Prank."

After that she could have painted the planes an inch wide and a mile long and Willoughby would have uttered no word of technical protest. As he was bidding her "Good afternoon," she actually asked him a favor.

"Would you mind—to-morrow—wearing that leather suit?"

"Honest? You intend—"

"Honest, I intend."

"I'll wear it if it's a hundred in the shade," said Willoughby.

IV

Now, that was the beginning of days and days of leather, when Mr. Prank would have been far more comfortable in flimsy flannel.

"You want me to sit in the seat and hold the levers, I suppose," he said as he appeared for his first sitting.

Mary Josephine Brown was engaged in measuring off a distance, and did not answer just then; but soon she beckoned.

"It was right here, I think."

"What?"

"Where you arrived."

"Heavens! You don't mean that way?"

"It will give a sense of action, you know," she said. "I think that was what you suggested. Now, if you will kindly get on your knees, put your head on the ground, sprawl your arms forward—"

"Absurd! Impossible! It'll look ridiculous."

"But you did look ridiculous," she answered truthfully. "Utterly foolish. And my picture demands it."

"I suppose you want me to swear, too," said Willoughby. "That was part of it, too, if you remember."

"That will not be necessary, unless it will help you to pose more naturally. I can't paint a noise. Now, please take the pose."

"Never!" said Willoughby, folding his arms. "You are guying me."

"Please!"

"You'll call it 'The Dying Flying Man,' or 'The Aviator's Exit,' or something like that, and I'll never hear the end of it."

"Please!"

"And you'll put it in an exhibition," continued Willoughby accusingly, "and tell everybody how—"

"Please!"

Three "pleases" in a row from the lips of Mary Josephine Brown, accompanied by glances from gray eyes that represent pleading, and gestures that indicate coaxing, and an attitude that plainly bespeaks unhappiness and disappointment, always close a debate.

"Show me where you want me," sighed Willoughby.

"Here—on your knees; that's right. Fall forward. No; that's not natural. Put the other hand out. Better! Now, wait till I study it."

She stepped back a few paces.

"I'll never be able to hold this," he called, screwing his head around. "I'm no contortionist. Can't I lie down?"

"Try it," she assented.

He stretched himself on the hilltop.

"I believe that's better, after all," she said, after a survey. "It's more tragic, anyhow. But your arms and legs need arranging."

She arranged them in compliance with art, and then for one hour and a half she painted a limp likeness of Willoughby Prank on her canvas. He was a wonderfully good model—he was asleep. She poked him in the ribs with a brush handle when the day's sitting was over, and Willoughby blinked at her in dull surprise.

"I beg pardon," he said. "Did I spoil the picture? I'm sorry."

"On the contrary. I'll make you tea, if you like."

Tea in the studio seemed to soften the severities of Miss Brown, for she let him ramble about aviation, and motors, and ailerons, to his own complete happiness.

"But, do you know, I think this is going to be bad for my nerves," he asserted.

"Tea? No, indeed."

"I mean this posing. You see, I dreamed it."

"Dreamed what?"

"That it really happened. That I was—er—smashed."

"Really?" Her eyes opened wide in interest. "That was curious, wasn't it?"

"No, I don't think so. You see, it started when I was awake. I got to thinking about it. You arranged me mighty realistically, you know. I suppose it was the environment—matter over mind, perhaps. When I fell asleep I just naturally dreamed it—falling."

"Hum!" commented Miss Brown, looking thoughtful.

The tea treatment had to be administered to Willoughby's nerves every day he posed, and every day he protested that he was getting worse. Not that he grudged the good flying days that came and went while his damaged plane rested where it fell. There would be plenty more. But he deplored the mental suggestion of his new occupation.

"I'll have to quit, I'm afraid," he said apologetically one afternoon. "If I fall asleep, as I have done three times, I dream it. When I stay awake, I think about it. That's bad. I never had it enter my head before. Now it has wiggled into a corner of my brain and I can't get it out."

Miss Brown looked sympathetic.

"Have some more tea," she suggested.

One morning he found her perched in the aviator's chair, under the shade of the upper plane. She uttered exclamations of delight when he appeared.

"It's famous!" she said. "I just thought of it. These levers are just right for my canvas. The seat is awfully comfortable, and I don't have to bother with my sunshade. Why, it was built for a studio! And I'm glad it isn't a monoplane, after all."

"You have given me a great idea," said Willoughby Prank. "I shall make you famous. You will paint pictures that nobody ever dreamed of."

Miss Brown looked expectant.

"Photographs," continued Willoughby, "have been made from aeroplanes—lots of them. They're common. But nobody ever painted from one. I'll rig up another easel for you and another seat. We'll go up and you will paint yourself immortal. And here's another idea—we'll take the tea-set, and you can make tea in the air!"

Miss Brown shook her head pleasantly.

"Not until I have finished my series, at any rate."

"Series?"

"A series on 'The Tragedy of the Air.' I've been mapping it out for several days. Do you think you could manage to hang it up in that tree—the plane?"

His eyes followed her pointing finger.

"This is to illustrate," she explained, "an aviator dashed into a forest by a gale. He is hurled to the ground, while his machine hangs between earth and sky. There will be gray, scudding clouds. I can put those in on a rainy day."

"But my nerves!" said Willoughby pleadingly. "You certainly do invent the most suggestive ideas."

"Do you think we can get it up there?" repeated Miss Brown.

"I'll see," he grumbled.

"The Tragedy of the Air" was a wonderful conception, and it grew swiftly into execution. But days of torment came to Willoughby Prank. It took strenuous maneuvering with block and tackle to put the plane into a pine-tree at an artistic angle, but they did it. Then it took new persuasion to prostrate Willoughby at the foot of the tree. Miss Brown did that.

"Stop talking about your nerves," she admonished him a dozen times a day.

V

AFTER that one, there were more episodes of disaster. She hung Willoughby Prank from a limb, like a blanket thrown over a line, and painted him. Even in the rain she hung him, to get proper storm lighting and other moist effects, while she, sheltered under the plane, stayed dry and cheerful.

She suspended him in mid air, dangling at a rope's end, to represent "The Falling Flier." Ten minutes at a time in this posture was his physical limit, and when she lowered him to the earth for rests he always discussed his nerves. Once his belt broke, and he descended according to the law of Newton. After that she tied the rope around his body.

Of course, it demanded coaxing and diplomacy and constant praise of his devotion to art. She ordered the biplane to the roof of the studio, and she put Willoughby Prank perilously close to the eaves, crumpled and unhappy, while she fixed him on the canvas. She made him crawl under an overturned machine, where the hill dropped off steeply, for three consecutive afternoons. She bemoaned the fact that there was no lake. Canvas after canvas went into the studio to dry.

Now and then there were days when neither Willoughby nor the plane was needed as a property. On those occasions she swung her hammock between the uprights,

and Willoughby shifted the machine so as to keep her under the shadow of the upper wing. She abandoned her easel for the conveniently arranged levers in front of the pilot's seat.

She even made a suggestion that caused Willoughby to toil back from the village with several gallons of gasoline. After that, when the afternoon was hot and windless, he would start the engine, and she would sit in the wake of the propeller. They dragged the plane at a proper distance from the studio veranda and swept that sheltered spot with an artificial breeze which Willoughby learned to regulate to a nicety.

In fact, she had more uses for a biplane than most girls have for a hairpin. But Willoughby's air nerve was going stale.

"Look here, Mary Josephine Brown," he declared earnestly one afternoon, "I'm in a funk!"

"Nonsense."

"Really, I'm serious—a nasty funk! Here's the championship only two weeks away."

"What championship?" asked Miss Brown, perking her ears.

"The Amateur International—flying, you know. And I haven't been in a machine for weeks." She nodded in confirmation. "And my new machine's finished. Did I tell you I had ordered a new one? Well, I did, just as soon as I saw you needed this one. Instead of flying, I've been playing dead."

"You're not dead in all the pictures, you know," she corrected. "Not where you dangled from the rope, or on the roof. You're only damaged in that one. And in one of those on the ground you're only dying."

"I thank you for that. But do you know what?"

"No," said Miss Brown, sitting up straight in the hammock. "What in the world."

"I'm afraid!" His voice was in mourning.

Miss Brown looked incredulous.

"Fact! I'm afraid. My nerve is gone. I get gooseflesh when I think of it."

"Have tea?"

"No; we'll have this out now," said Willoughby grimly. "I've got to fly anyhow; I'm entered. I can't let 'em know that I'm scared. They'll laugh. But if I smash, you'll know who's to blame."

"That isn't fair."

"If I get smashed so they can't identify me—"

"Mr. Prank!"

"And I'm picked up—"

"Stop!"

"And carried off—"

"I won't listen! You're getting ghastly."

"And when they send flowers and—"

Mary Josephine Brown jumped out of the hammock and stamped her foot.

"I forbid you!" she cried wrathfully.

"It's your fault," growled Willoughby.

"Many a man, when there was nothing the matter with his plane, went wrong because he lost his nerve."

"Then why do they fly?" she inquired.

"What else can they do?" he demanded.

That seemed to be a poser, for she pursed her lips doubtfully and made no reply.

"Yes, I've got to fly," he said gloomily.

"And I don't want to. I shall inevitably get thinking of one of those horrible pictures while I'm about a thousand feet up, and then—"

"I'll burn them," declared Miss Brown promptly.

"That won't help. It's done now. I don't believe you're even decently sorry, at that."

This was ungracious, and Miss Brown turned away to gaze into the sultry mists of the landscape.

"Yes; my nerve's gone, and—Mary Josephine Brown! Are you laughing?"

She shook her head.

"Yes, you are; you're laughing. You don't care a whoop. I think you did it deliberately. You knew what was going to happen. I actually believe you don't want me to fly!"

Miss Brown turned a steady pair of eyes at him and said, in a surprised tone:

"I don't."

Then she remembered something, and took to her heels in the direction of the studio. She had covered twenty-five yards when Willoughby Prank also remembered something.

"We'll turn it into a summer-house!" he cried, as he went in pursuit.

Mary Josephine ran faster.

"We'll hang the pictures in our library!" he yelled, gaining a few yards.

Mary Josephine was sprinting.

"And when we get old, we'll tell our—"

At this point it becomes certain that Willoughby Prank will overtake her, so the race is of no further interest.

COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENSE*

BY LEROY SCOTT

AUTHOR OF "TO HIM THAT HATH," ETC.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

DR. WEST, who has superintended the erection of a new water-works system for the city of Westville, is accused of accepting a bribe in connection with the installation of a filtering-plant. The doctor is a scientist of high repute, a student and something of a recluse; and the management of his defense falls mainly upon his daughter Katherine, a Vassar graduate, who has studied law, and who has been engaged in legal work for the Municipal League, a New York civic association.

Dr. West's chief accuser is Dr. Sherman, a young clergyman who is the leading preacher in Westville; and so strong is the general sentiment against him that he has difficulty in finding a lawyer willing to appear for him in court. Katherine appeals to Harrison Blake, the leader of the local bar, who was her suitor in her college days; but he also declines the case. In desperation, she determines that she herself will act as counsel for the defense.

In that capacity she investigates every possible source of information, but can find no evidence to rebut Dr. Sherman's charge that her father took money from an agent of the Acme Filter Company. Finally, on the day before the trial, she goes to ask advice from Harrison Blake, telling him that she believes the accusation to be part of a plot to discredit the city water-works and the whole movement for municipal ownership. Blake is so much disturbed by what she says that she becomes convinced that such a conspiracy is afoot, and that he is concerned in it. She has no proof of this, however, and can make no use of her theory when her father's case comes into court; though when she explains it to Arnold Bruce, editor of the *Westville Express*, he is convinced that she is right.

At Dr. West's trial, in spite of all that his daughter can do to assert his innocence, she has no means of breaking down the prosecutor's case, and her father is found guilty. Judge Kellogg sentences him to a fine of one thousand dollars, and to six months' imprisonment.

XII.

ON the following morning Bruce had just finished an editorial on Dr.

West's trial, and was busily thumping out another on the local political situation—both the Republican and Democratic conventions were but a few days off—when, lifting his scowling gaze to his window while searching for a word, he saw Katherine passing along the sidewalk across the street. Her face was fresh, her step springy; hers was anything but a downcast figure. Forgetting his editorial, he watched her turn the corner of the square and go up the broad steps of the dingy old county jail.

"Well, what do we think of her?" queried a voice at his elbow.

Bruce turned abruptly.

"Oh, it's you, Billy! D'you see Blake?"

"Yes." The young fellow sank loungingly into the atlas-seated chair. "He wouldn't say anything definite—said it was up to the convention to pick the candidates. But it's plain Kennedy's his choice for mayor, and we'll be playing perfectly safe in predicting Kennedy's nomination."

"And Peck?"

"Blind Charlie said it was too early to make any forecasts. In doubt as to whom they'd put forward for mayor."

"Would Blake say anything about Dr. West's conviction?"

"Sorry for Dr. West's sake, but the case was clear—trial fair—a wholesome example to the city—and some more of that line of talk."

Bruce grunted. The reporter lit a cigarette.

"But how about the lawyer, eh?" He playfully prodded his superior's calf with

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