

# The IDYL of TWIN FIRES

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## SYNOPSIS.

—5—

I grow tired of my work as a college instructor and buy a New England farm on sight. I inspect my farm and go to board at Bert Temple's. Bert helps me to hire a carpenter and a farrier. Hard Cider, the carver, estimates the repairs and changes necessary on the house. Mike commences plowing. I start to prune the orchard tree. Hard Cider builds bookcases around the twin fireplaces. Mrs. Temple hires Mrs. Pillig for me as a housekeeper, and announces the coming of a new boarder from New York.

When a bachelor, who believes himself impervious to the lovely woman's wiles, reaches the age when he begins to think that marriage is the better state of life for man—and then meets one of those lovely women—he performs in a manner highly amusing to folks already married.

## CHAPTER V—Continued.

"Sure," said Mike, "you'll git it right yet. But I was goin' to put me caulkers there."

I paid "frind Morrissey"—for the town!—as the far-off noon whistle at Slab City blew, and took my lunch down to the brook while the scraper rattled off down the road.

The brook reminded me of the pool I was going to build, and the pool of a vague dream, last night of the new boarder, and then, with the patness of a "well-made" play the boarder herself entered, as it were. That is, I heard the buggy coming, and the voice of Bert. I lay down flat behind the tall weeds and grasses, and remained hidden till the buggy had passed.

Then I finished my lunch, and lay for a quarter of an hour lazily regarding the sky, a great blue sky with cloud ships floating at anchor in its depths, while the indescribable fragrance of May in moist places filled my nostrils and a song sparrow practiced in the alders. As I got up to return to my work, I saw suddenly that the old apple trees in my orchard were showing pink—just a frail hint of it in the veil of young green. A great cumulus cloud piled up like a Himalayan peak in the west beyond my mouse-gray dwelling. To the left, the new lawn was shiny brown, and as I climbed the slopes the smell of it came to me. Out still farther to the left my land was already staked in rows of packed earth, neatly. The scene was beautiful to my eyes, and the imagined beauty of tomorrow made me almost run through the orchard to leave my lunch basket in the kitchen and get my tools for the afternoon's work. At five o'clock, as Joe was leaving the garden, and Mike had gone to the barn to milk the cows, I, too, put up my tools, resolved to enjoy an hour's loaf—my first since I bought the farm!

I scrubbed my hands and face at the kitchen sink in a tin basin which recalled my childhood, took a long draft from the tin dipper, filled my pipe, and strolled down through the budding orchard toward the brook. The song sparrow was still singing. The cloud ships were still riding at anchor. Even with my pipe in my mouth I could smell the odor of moist places in May. Walking beside the brook, I suddenly found the green spears of an iris plant amid the grasses.

I had scarcely gone six paces when I heard the crackle of footsteps on dead twigs somewhere ahead of me, and a moment later the vague form of a woman was visible making her way amid the impeding dead branches. I stood still. She did not see me till she was close up. Then she gave a slight start and said, "I beg your pardon. I trust I am not trespassing."

I looked at her, while my pipe bowl was hot in my calloused hand. She was scarce more than a girl, I fancied, pale and unmistakably not of this country world. I cannot say how she was dressed, save that she wore no hat and looked white and cool. But I saw that she had very blue eyes on each side of a decidedly tilted nose, and these eyes were unmistakably the kind which twinkle.

"Trespassing is a relative term," said I, after this, I fear, rather rudely prolonged scrutiny.

"You talk like 'Hill's Rhetoric,'" she smiled, with a quick glance at the incongruity of my clothes.

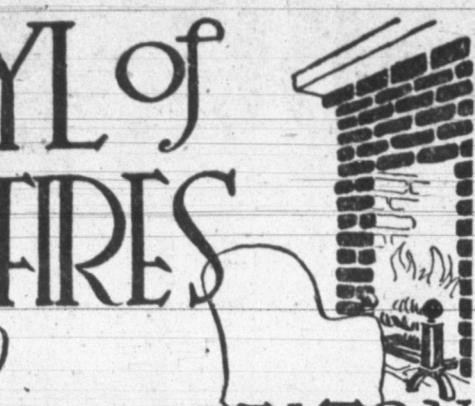
"Naturally," I replied. "It was the textbook I formerly used with my classes."

There was a little upward gurgle of laughter from the girl. "Clearness, force and elegance, wasn't that the great triumvirate?" she said.

"Something like that, I believe," said I. "I am trying to forget."

"And are these pines yours to forget in? It should be easy. I was walking out there in the road, and I spied the brook over the wall and climbed through the briars to walk beside it, because it was trying so hard to talk to me. That was wrong of me, perhaps, but I never could resist a brook—nor pine trees. They are such nice old men."

"Why, then," I asked, "are the little virgin birches always running away from them?"



through the glass doors. The low sun was streaming in through the west window and disclosed the old oak beam across the ceiling. Hard Cider had erected the frame of the bookcase and double settle, which would perfectly match the mantels as soon as the molding was on. One side of the settle faced toward one smoky old fireplace, the other toward the second.

"Two fireplaces! What luxury!"

"You see," said I, "when I get tired of reading philosophy at the east fireplace, I'll just come around the corner and read 'Alice in Wonderland' at the west chimney nook."

"Double fireplaces—twin fireplaces—twin fires! That's it, Twin Fires! That ought to be the name of your house."

"You're right!" I cried, delighted. "I've never been able to think of a name. That's the inevitable one—that's Flaubert's one right word. You must come to my christening party and break a bottle of wine on the hearth."

She smiled wistfully, as she turned away from the window. "I must surely go to supper," she said. "Goodby, and thank you for your wonderful concert."

We walked to the road, but to my surprise she did not turn toward the village but toward Bert's. A sudden light came.

"Are you the broken-down boarder?" I cried.

The gurgle welled up, and the blue eyes twinkled, but she made no reply.

"Just for that," said I, "I won't carry back Mrs. Bert's basket."

As we entered the Temples' yard, Mrs. Bert stood in the kitchen door.

"Well, you two seem to have got acquainted," she remarked in a matter-of-fact tone. "Miss Goodwin, this is Mr. Upton I told you about. Mr. Upton, this is Miss Goodwin I told you about."

"Mrs. Temple," said I, "you are another. You didn't tell me."

"Young man," she retorted, "where's my basket?"

"I left it behind—on purpose," said I. "Then you'll hev ter come home to yer dinner tomorrow," she said.

"Well, I'm willing," I answered.

"I guess you be," said she.

At supper she returned to the theme, which appeared to amuse her endlessly. "Miss Goodwin," she said, "I want ter warn you that Mr. Upton's terrible afraid somebody's goin' ter advise him how ter build his garden. He's a regular man."

I replied quickly: "Your warning is too late," said I; "Miss Goodwin has already begun by naming my place."

"You can change the name, you know," the girl smiled.

"How can I?" I answered, with great sternness. "It's the right one."

Whereupon I went up to my work, and listened to the sounds of soft singing in the room across the hall.

## CHAPTER VI.

## The Ghost of Rome.

"Stella Goodwin." "It's rather a pretty name," I thought, as I read it on the flyleaf of a volume she had left in Mrs. Bert's sitting room. The volume itself amused me—Chamberlain's "Foundations of the Nineteenth Century." Fancy coming to the country for a rest, and reading Chamberlain, most restless because most provocative of books! I was idly turning the leaves when there was a rustle on the stairs, and Miss Stella Goodwin entered with a cheerful "Good morning."

"See here," said I, "what are you doing with this book, if you are off for rest? This is no book for a nervous wreck to be reading."

"Who said I was a nervous wreck?" she answered. "I'm just tired, that's all. I guess it's really spring fever. I saw a spear of real grass in Central park, and ran away."

"From what?" I asked.

"From the dictionary," she replied.

"The which?" said I.

"The dictionary. Would you like me to sing you a song of the things that begin with 'hy'?"

She laughed again, and began to chant in burlesque-Gregorian, "Hyponotamus, hyoscapular, hyoscine, hyoscymus, hyoscyamine, Hyoscyamus—"

"Stop!" I cried. "You will have me hypnotized. See, I'm on the 'hy's' myself! Please explain—not sing."

"Well," she laughed, "you see it's this way. I have to eat, drink, and try to be merry, or tomorrow I die, so to postpone tomorrow I am working on a new dictionary. Somebody has to work on dictionaries, you know, and justify the pronunciation of America to man. I'm sort of learned, in a mild, harmless, anti-militant way. It isn't fair to keep the truth from you—I have a degree in philology! My doctor's thesis was published by the press of my kind university, at \$1.50 per copy, of which as many as seventeen were sold, and I'm still paying up the money I borrowed while preparing it. I stood the dictionary pretty well down to the 'hy's,' and then one day something snapped inside of me, and I began to cry. That wouldn't have been so bad, if I hadn't made the mistake of crying on a sheet of manuscript by a learned professor, about 'Hyoscymus' (which is a genus of dicotyledonous gamopetalous plants), and the in ran. Then I knew I should have to take a rest in the cause of English, pure and well defined. So here I am. The doctor tells me I must live out of doors and saw wood."

I led her to my new south door, proudly showing my new lawn and the terrace, and telling her where the roses were to be, and the sundial, and dilating on the work my own hands had done. With a silly, boyish enthusiasm, I even displayed the calluses and invited her to feel of them, which she did as one humors a child, while I thrilled quite as childishly at the touch of her finger tips. Then we peeped

Do you think Miss Stella Goodwin is too much of a highbrow to make a first rate wife? Or are highbrows just as human as the rest of us once they've tasted real life?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## MERCY WORKERS IN WAR DOING GREAT SERVICES

All Countries Striving to Improve Conditions Surrounding Wounded.

## WORK OF AMERICANS LAUDED

Motor Ambulance Service Does Invaluable Work in Transporting Wounded Soldiers—French People Touched by Volunteer Work of Americans.

## PRISONERS BACK OF THE ENGLISH LINES



German prisoners taken in the first days of the battle of the Somme and held back of the English lines. The photograph shows the British trenches and dugouts.

cer, who told them that a wounded soldier, shot through both legs, was lying almost in the German lines. It was so dangerous a mission that the officer wouldn't order the ambulance to go! He just told them where the man was, and left them to decide. They went. They crawled, without lights, along an unknown road in the darkness; got almost within the German lines, where they found the man and brought him back to safety. That wounded soldier had lain there for days and would most certainly have died had he not been rescued that night.

In this modest and voluntary way the motor ambulance came into its own without one penny of cost to the government!

"Today," went on Mr. Stanley, "there are about 1,000 motor ambulances and cars at the French front alone. Another 1,000 are scattered about with the troops in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Saloniki, Malta, East Africa, etc. We have three ambulance convoys—each one consisting of some sixty cars and a radiographing convoy working in France. We have a number of cars in Italy. We have a number of cars in Petrograd and on the western Russian front, while we recently sent a small convoy as a present to Grand Duke Nicholas in the Caucasus."

These motors and ambulances have been provided, and their upkeep maintained, entirely by volunteer subscriptions.

"Up to the present," said Mr. Stanley, "we have collected over \$20,000 for the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance society. The money comes in at the rate of about \$5,000,000 every six months. This shows the public appreciation of the work. Our support comes from all sections of society."

"As an instance of the diversity of our work, it may be interesting to note that we arranged the other day to send motor boats to Mesopotamia and 'Charlie Chaplin' films to Malta, this latter for the amusement of the convalescent soldiers!

"One of the outstanding features of our organization has been the splendid work done by the women."

Mr. Stanley mentioned, by the way, the excellent artificial limbs for maimed soldiers produced by American manufacturers, both in the United States and especially at a factory established near London, where many disabled men are themselves employed.

While the women of all nations at war have been working courageously in aid of their men, American women also have come out brilliantly in the labor of mercy. At the commencement of the war a group of American women, nearly all married to Englishmen, met together to consider how they might best render assistance to the soldiers of the king. The result was the birth of the American Women's War Relief fund, of which Lady Paget became president, with Mrs. John Astor as vice-president, the duchess of Marlborough as chairman and Lady Lowther and Mrs. Harcourt as honorary secretaries. Other women closely identified with the work were Lady Randolph Churchill, Mrs. Whitelaw Reid and Hon. Mrs. John Ward.

**Work of American Women.**

The American Women's War Relief fund began by sending a motor ambulance out to the front. "Friends in Boston" subscribed for another—it was actually the seventh—which was duly presented to the war office in London. Down in Devonshire, at Paignton, near Torquay, there is an American woman's war hospital, where thousands of wounded soldiers have been nursed back to health. Not content with these activities the American women in question have opened workrooms in various parts of the British capital to enable girls thrown out of work to learn other trades, and so to become self-supporting, in spite of the war.

Americans are busy helping in France as well as in England, and the American Relief Clearing house, in Paris, is also an institution of very considerable value and importance. It represents the American Red Cross, and its distributing committee has already apportioned more than 4,000,000 parcels, from bales of cotton, clothes—for men, women and children—shoes, hospital accessories, surgical instruments, and countless other useful things. No less than 2,000 hospitals in France have been fitted from the American Relief Clearing house, which has Joseph H. Choate for its president.

"I have visited most of the war hospitals in France," said a society woman who has gone through the war as a brancardiere of the French Red Cross, "and I have never seen such wonderful work—many of the cases are simply terrible, worse than anywhere else—as that performed at the American Ambulance, Neuilly. There they treat daily the most critical surgical cases. Some of the wounded men—poor fellows—seem almost blown away, so little remains for treatment."