

# A Hoosier Chronicle

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

First Novel in the Times Series of Fiction Stories by Indiana Writers

(Copyright 1912, by Meredith Nicholson.)

SYLVIA GARRISON, 16-year-old granddaughter of PROFESSOR ANDREW KELTON, lecturer at Madison College, Montgomery, knows little of her life before making her home with her grandfather, who she was born in New York.

An unusual event of which Sylvia is not to know is the mysterious visit of a strange young man who delivers an unsigned letter to her grandfather, stating an offer which he declines to accept.

Sylvia contemplates going to college and is to make her first trip to the city.

MRS. JACKSON OWEN of Indianapolis, familiarly known by her servants as "Miss Sally"—a practical widow who makes farming her business.

MARIAN BASSETT, Mrs. Owen's cultured and much traveled grand niece, who is attending a Miss Waring's School. Marian's mother.

MRS. MORTON BASSETT, a woman's club in Fraterville, and is a prominent figure in the Fraterville.

ADMIRAL MARTIN, a retired officer of the Navy, the late wife and Rev. John Wray of the Adirondack Country, New York, old friends of Mrs. Owen and the professor, are dinner guests.

The conversation wanders to Marian's father, MORTON BASSETT, politician, and to ED THATCHER, his business associate.

DR. WANDERER, president, curator of Madison College.

Professor Kelton fails in his attempt to borrow \$5,000 for Sylvia's college expenses from

TOM ADAMS, banker, and learns from him that his stock in the White River Canning, of which Morton Bassett was one of the organizers, and which he intended to give as security, is valueless.

Mrs. Owen offers to help the professor financially, and asks him concerning his granddaughter's early years. She learns that he never saw his daughter.

EDNA, alive after her proclaimed marriage.

"Sylvia's very quiet, but I reckon she takes everything in. It's in her eyes that she's different."

"I should like to see Sylvia go high and far; I should like her to have every chance."

"All right, Andrew; let's do it. How much does a college course cost for a girl?"

"I didn't come here to interest you in the money side of it, Sally; I expected—"

"Answer my question, Andrew."

"I had expected to give her a four-year course for \$5,000. The actual tuition isn't so much; it's the railroad fare, clothing and other expenses."

Mrs. Owen turned toward Kelton with a smile on her kind, shrewd face.

"Andrew, just to please me, I want you to let me be partners with you in this. My little Elizabeth would be a grown woman if she's lived; and because of her I like to help other people's little girls; you know I helped start Elizabeth House, a home for working girls—and I'm getting my money back on that a thousand times over. It's a pretty state of things if an old woman like me, without a chick of my own, and with no sense but horse sense, can't back a likely filly like your Sylvia. We'll train her in all the paces, Andrew, and I hope one of us will live to see her strike the home stretch. Come into my office a minute," she said, rising and leading the way.

The appointments of her "office" were plain and substantial. A flat-topped desk stood in the middle of the room—a relic of the lamented Jackson Owen; in one corner was an old-fashioned iron safe in which she kept her account books. A print of Maud S. adorned one wall, and facing it across the room hung a lithograph of Thomas A. Hendricks.

"You've seen my picture gallery before, Andrew? Small but select. I knew both the lady and Daniel had ever seen," she continued, with one of her humorous flashes. "I went to Cleveland in '85 to see Maud S. She ate up a mile in 2:08½—the prettiest thing I ever saw. You know Bonner bought her as a 4-year-old—the same Bonner that owned the 'New York Ledger'—I used to read the 'Ledger' clear through, when Henry Ward Beecher and Fanny Fern wrote for it. None of these new magazines touch it. And you knew Tom Hendricks? That's a good picture. Tom looked like a statesman anyhow, and that's more than most of 'em do."

She continued her efforts to divert his thoughts from the real matter at hand, summoning from the shadows all the Hoosier statesmen of the post-bellum period to aid her, and she purposely declared her admiration of several of these to provoke Kelton's ire.

"That's right, Andrew; jump on 'em," she laughed, as she drew from the desk a check book and began to write. When she had blotted and torn out the check she examined it carefully and placed it near him on the edge of her desk. "Now, Andrew Kelton, there's a check for \$8,000; we'll call that our educational fund. You furnish the girl; I put in the money. I only wish I had the girl to put into the business instead of the cash."

"But I don't need the money yet; I shan't need it till fall," he protested.

"That's all right. Fall's pretty close and you'll feel better if you have it. Your note? Look here, Andrew Kelton, if you mention that life insurance to me again, I'll cut you acquaintance."

She dropped her check book into a drawer and swung round in her swivel chair until she faced him. "I don't want to open up that affair of Sylvia's mother again, but there's always the possibility that something may happen. You know Edna's dead, but there's always a chance that Sylvia's father may turn up. It's not likely; but there's no telling about such things; and it wouldn't be quite fair for you to leave her unprepared if it should happen."

"There's one more circumstance I haven't told you about. A letter was sent to me by a stranger, offering money for Sylvia's schooling. The whole thing was surrounded with the utmost secrecy."

"So? Then some one is watching Sylvia; keeping track of her, and must be kindly disposed from that. You never heard anything before?"

"Never. I was asked to send a verbal answer by the messenger who brought me the letter, accepting or declining the offer. I declined it."

"That was right. But there's no hiding anything in this world; you must have some idea where the offer came from."

"I haven't the slightest, not the remotest idea. The messenger was a stranger to me; from what Sylvia said he was a stranger at Montgomery and had never seen the college before."

"It's queer; but you'd better try to forget it. Somebody's conscience is hurting, I reckon."

Kelton lingered to smoke a cigar in the open. He had enjoyed tonight an experience that he had not known in

years—that of unburdening himself to a kindly, sympathetic, and resourceful woman.

While they talked of her, Sylvia sat in her window seat in the dark above looking at the stars. Sylvia was very happy. She had for a few hours breathed the ampler ether of a new world; but she was unconscious in her dreaming that her girlhood, that had been as tranquil water safe from current and commotion, now felt the outward drawing of the tide.

## CHAPTER V

On the day following the delivery to Andrew Kelton of the letter in which money for Sylvia's education was offered by an unknown person, the bearer of the message was to be seen at Indianapolis, in the law office of Wright & Fitch, attorneys and counselors at law, on the fourth floor of the White River Trust Company's building in Washington St. In that office young Mr. Harwood was one of half a dozen students, who ran errands to the courts, kept the accounts and otherwise made themselves useful.

Wright & Fitch was the principal law firm in the State in the period under scrutiny, as may readily be proved by an examination of the court dockets. Mr. Wright was a Republican, Mr. Fitch a Democrat, and each of these gentlemen occasionally raised his voice loud enough in politics to emphasize his party fealty. In the seventies Mr. Wright had served a term on city attorney; on the other hand, Mr. Fitch had once declined the Italian ambassadorship. Both had been mentioned at different times for the governorship or for the United States Senate, and both had declined to enter the lists for these offices.

Daniel Harwood had been graduated from Yale University a year before we first observed him, and though the world lay before him where to choose, he returned to his native State and gave himself to the study of law by day and earned a livelihood by serving the "Courier" newspaper by night. As Mr. Harwood is to appear frequently in this chronicle, it may be well to summarize briefly the facts of his history. He was born on a farm in Harrison County, and his aversion to farm life had been colored from earliest childhood by the difficulties his father experienced in wringing enough money out of eighty acres of land to buy food and clothing and to pay taxes and interest on an insatiable mortgage held somewhere by a ruthless life insurance company that seemed most unreasonably insistent in its collections. Daniel had two older brothers who, having satisfied their passion for enlightenment at the nearest schoolhouse, meekly enlisted under their father in the task of fighting the mortgage.

Daniel, with a weaker hand and a better head, and with vastly more enterprise, resolved to go to Yale.

Daniel's choice of Yale had been determined by the fact that a professor in that institution had once addressed the county teachers, and young Harwood had been greatly impressed by him. The Yale professor was the first graduate of an Eastern university that Daniel had ever seen, and he became the young Hoosier's ideal of elegance and learning.

Daniel had acquired at this time all that the county school offered, and he made bold to approach the visitor and ask his advice as to the best means of getting to college.

We need not trace the devious course by which, after much burning of oil during half a dozen winters, Dan Harwood attained to a freshman's dignity at New Haven, where, arriving with his effects in a canvas telescope, he had found a scholarship awaiting him; nor need we do more than record the fact that he had cared for furnaces, taken the night shift on a trolley car, and otherwise earned money until, in his junior year, his income from newspaper correspondence and tutoring made further manual labor unnecessary. It is with profound regret that we cannot point to Harwood as a football hero or the mainstay of the crew. Having plowed the mortgage acres, and tossed hay and broken colts, college athletics struck him as rather puerile diversion. He would have been the least conspicuous man in college if he had not shone in debate and earned up such prizes and honors as were accessible in that field. His big booming voice, recognizable above the din in all varsity demonstrations, earned for him the sobriquet of "Foghorn" Harwood. For the rest he studied early and late, and experienced the doubtful glory, and accepted meekly the reproach, of being a grind.

History and the dismal science had interested him immensely. His resolute attention to the classes of Professor Sumner had not gone unnoticed by that eminent instructor, who once called him by name in "Chapel St." much to Dan's edification. He thought well of belles-lettres and for a time toyed with an ambition to enrich English literature with contributions of his own. During this period he contributed to the "Lit" a sonnet called "The Clam-Digger" which began:

"At rosy dawn I see thine arseous; and which closed with the invocation:—

"Fair tides reward thy long, laborious days."

Harwood was liked by his fellow students in the law office. Two Yalensians, already established there, made his lot easier, and they combined against a lone Harvardian, who bitterly resented Harwood's habit of smoking a cob pipe in the library at night.

Harwood was busy filing papers when Mr. Fitch summoned him to his private room on the day indicated. Fitch was short, thin, and bald, with a clipped reddish beard, brown eyes, and a turn-up nose.

He was sitting before the immaculate desk he affected (no one ever dared leave anything on it in his absence) when Harwood entered. The lawyer's chair was an enormous piece of furniture in which his small figure seemed to shrink and hide. His hands were thrust into his pockets, as they usually were, and he piped out "Good Morning" in a high tenor voice.

"Shut the door, please, Mr. Harwood. What have you to report about your errand to Montgomery?"

He indicated with a nod the one chair in the room and Harwood seated himself.

"I found Professor Kelton without difficulty and presented the letter."

"Well?"

"No is the answer."

Fitch polished his eyeglasses with his handkerchief. He scrutinized Har-

wood carefully for a moment, then asked—

"Did the gentleman—whose name, by the way, you have forgotten?"

"Yes, sir; I have quite forgotten it," Harwood replied promptly.

Fitch smiled. He was a rare smile, but it was worth waiting for.

"What did the trip cost you?"

Harwood named the amount and the

lawyer drew a checkbook from his immaculate desk and wrote.

"I have added \$100 for your services. This is a personal matter between you and me, and does not go on the office books. By the way, Mr. Harwood, what are you doing out there?" he asked, moving his head slightly toward the outer office.

"I'm reading law."

"Is it possible? The other youngsters in the office seem to be talking politics or reading newspapers most of the time. How do you manage to 'ave'—"

"I do some work for the Courier from time to time."

"Ah! You are careful not to let your legal studies get mixed with the newspaper work?"

"Yes, sir. They put me on meetings, and other night assignments. As to the confidences of this office, you need have no fear of my—"

"I haven't, Mr. Harwood. Let me see. It was of you Professor Sumner wrote me last year; he's an old friend of mine. He's a great man—Sumner. I supposed you absorbed a good many of his ideas at New Haven."

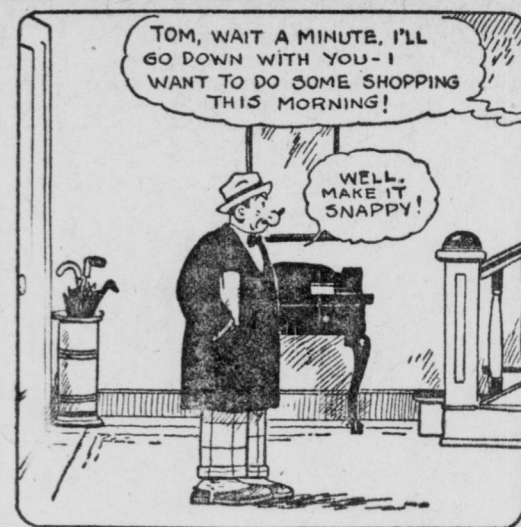
"I hope I did, sir; I believe in most of them anyhow."

"So do I, Mr. Harwood."

Fitch pointed to a huge pile of manuscript on a table by the window. It was a stenographic transcript of testimony in a case which had been lost in the trial court and was now going up on appeal.

(To Be Continued)

## DOINGS OF THE DUFFS—



## Tom Gets Bawled Out



## —By ALLMAN

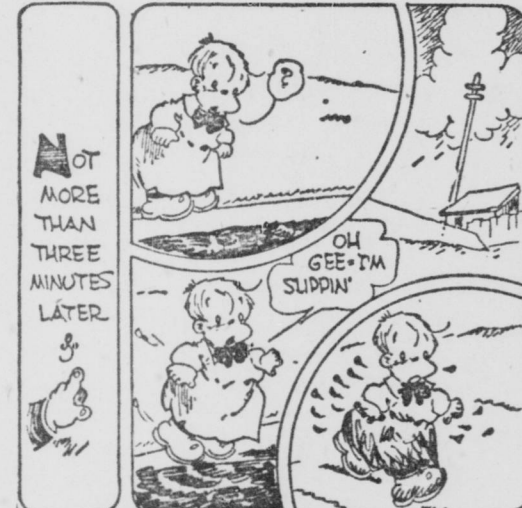
## OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



## THE WINDUP

J.R. WILLIAMS

## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



## Handle This On Your Harp

—By AL POSEN

## THEM DAYS IS GONE FOREVER—



## THE OLD HOME TOWN—By STANLEY



## MARSHAL OTEY WALKER JUST CAME OUT OF BARRYMORES WITH AN ARMFUL OF CHAIRS FOR THE LODGE SUPPER WHEN A PASSING RIG THREW A WHEEL

He indicated with a nod the one chair in the room and Harwood seated himself.

"I found Professor Kelton without difficulty and presented the letter."

"Well?"

"No is the answer."

wood carefully for a moment, then asked—

"Did the gentleman—whose name, by the way, you have forgotten?"

"Yes, sir; I have quite forgotten it," Harwood replied promptly.

Fitch smiled. He was a rare smile, but it was worth waiting for.

He was sitting before the immaculate desk he affected (no one ever dared leave anything on it in his absence) when Harwood entered. The lawyer's chair was an enormous piece of furniture in which his small figure seemed to shrink and hide. His hands were thrust into his pockets, as they usually were, and he piped out "Good Morning" in a high tenor voice.

"Shut the door, please, Mr. Harwood. What have you to report about your errand to Montgomery?"

He indicated with a nod the one chair in the room and Harwood seated himself.

"I found Professor Kelton without difficulty and presented the letter."

lawyer drew a checkbook from his immaculate desk and wrote.

"I have added \$100 for your services. This is a personal matter between you and me, and does not go on the office books. By the way, Mr. Harwood, what are you doing out there?" he asked, moving his head slightly toward the outer office.

"I'm reading law."

"Is it possible? The other youngsters in the office seem to be talking politics or reading newspapers most of the time. How do you manage to 'ave'—"

"Yes, sir. They put me on meetings, and other night assignments. As to the confidences of this office, you need have no fear of my—"

"I haven't, Mr. Harwood. Let me see. It was of you Professor Sumner wrote me last year; he's an old friend of mine. He's a great man—Sumner. I supposed you absorbed a good many of his ideas at New Haven."

"I hope I did, sir; I believe in most of them anyhow."

"So do I, Mr. Harwood."

Fitch pointed to a huge pile of manuscript on a table by the window. It was a stenographic transcript of testimony in a case which had been lost in the trial court and was now going up on appeal.

(To Be Continued)

(To Be Continued)

(To Be Continued)