

# A Hoosier Chronicle

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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"The way of peace they know not; brats a wind harp. Was this merely and there is no judgment in their goings; they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Tramping in Adirondacks. Baptized Elizabeth at Harris."

It was almost like eavesdropping to come in this way upon that curiously abrupt Ware-like statement of the minister: "Tramping in Adirondacks. Baptized Elizabeth at Harris."

The discussion in the parlor had become heated and occasionally words in a voice not Ware's reached Sylvia distinctly. Some one was alternately beseaching and threatening the minister. It was clear from the pauses that he was yielding neither to the importunities nor the threats of his blustering caller. Sylvia had imagined that the storms of life had passed over the retired clergymen, and she was surprised that such an interview should be taking place in his house. She was about to retreat to the dining room to be out of reach of the voices when the parlor door opened abruptly and Thatcher appeared, with anger unmistakably showing in his face, and apparently disposed to resume in the hall the discussion which the minister had terminated in the library. Sylvia rose with the book still in her hand and walked to the end of the room; but only one in the house might have heard what Thatcher was saying.

"That's the way with you preachers; you talk about clean politics, and when we get all ready to clean out a bad man, you duck; you're a lot of cowardly dodgers. I tell you, I don't want you to say a word or figure in this thing at all; but you give me that book and I'll scare Mort Bassett out of town. I'll scare him clean out of Indiana, and he'll never show his head again. Why, Ware, I've been counting on it, that when you saw we were in a hole and going to nose, you'd come down from your high horse and help me out. I tell you, there's no doubt about it; that woman's the woman I'm looking for. I guess it's the night you told that story up there in the house-boat."

"Quit this business, Ed," the minister was saying; "I'm an old friend of yours. But I won't budge an inch. I'd never breathed a word of that story before and I shouldn't have told it that night. It was so far back that I thought it was safe. But your idea that Bassett had anything to do with that is preposterous. Your hatred of him has got the better of you, my friend. Drop it; forget it. If you can't whip him fair, let him win."

"Not much I won't; but I didn't think you'd go back on me; I thought better of you than that!"

Thatcher strode to the door and went out, slamming it after him.

The minister peered into the library absently, and then, surprised to find Sylvia, advanced to meet her, smiling gravely. He took both her hands, and held them, looking into her face.

"What's this you've been reading? Ah, that book!" The volume slipped into his hands and he glanced at it, frowning impatiently. "Poor little book. I ought to have burned it years ago; and I ought to have learned by this time to keep my mouth shut. They've always said I looked like an Indian, but an Indian never tells anything. I've told just one story too many. *Mea maxima culpa!*"

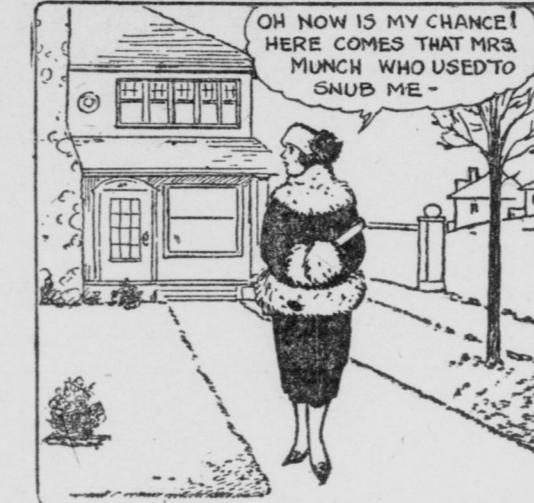
He sat down in the big chair beside his desk, placed the book within reach, and kept touching it as he talked.

"I saw Mr. Thatcher," said Sylvia. "He seemed very much aroused. I couldn't help hearing a word now and then."

"That's all right, Sylvia. I've known Thatcher for years, and last fall I went up to his house-boat on the Kankakee for a week's shooting. Allen and Dan Harwood were the rest of the party, and I happened to tell the story of this little book—an unfinished story. We ought never to tell stories until they are finished. And it seems that Thatcher, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, has been raking up the ashes of an old affair of Bassett's with a woman, and he's trying to hitch it to the story I told him about this book. He says by shaking this at Bassett he can persuade him that he's got enough ammunition to blow him out of the water. But I don't believe a word of it; I won't believe such a thing of Mortons Bassett. And even if I did, Thatcher can't have that book. I owe it to the woman whose baby I baptized up there in the hills to keep it. And the woman may be living, too, for all I know. I think of her pretty often. She was game; wouldn't tell anything. If a man had deceived her she stood by him. Whatever she was—I know she was not bad, not a bit of it—the spirit of the hills had entered into her—and those are cleansing airs up there. I suppose it all made the deeper impression on me because I was born up there myself. When I strike Adirondacks in print I put down my book and think a while. It's a picture word. It brings back my earliest childhood as far as I can remember. I call words that make pictures that way mouse words; they jump up in your memory like a scared mouse in a thicket and crash into the woods like a cavalry charge. I can remember things that happened when I was three years old: one day father shot a deer in our cornfield and I recall it perfectly. The general atmosphere of the old place steals over me yet. The very thought of the pointed spruces, the feathery tamaracs, all the scents and sounds of summer, and the long, white winters, does my soul good now. The old Hebrews understood the effect of landscape on character. They knew most everything those old chaps. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." Any strength there is in me dates back to the hills of my youth. I'd like to go back there to die when the bugle calls."

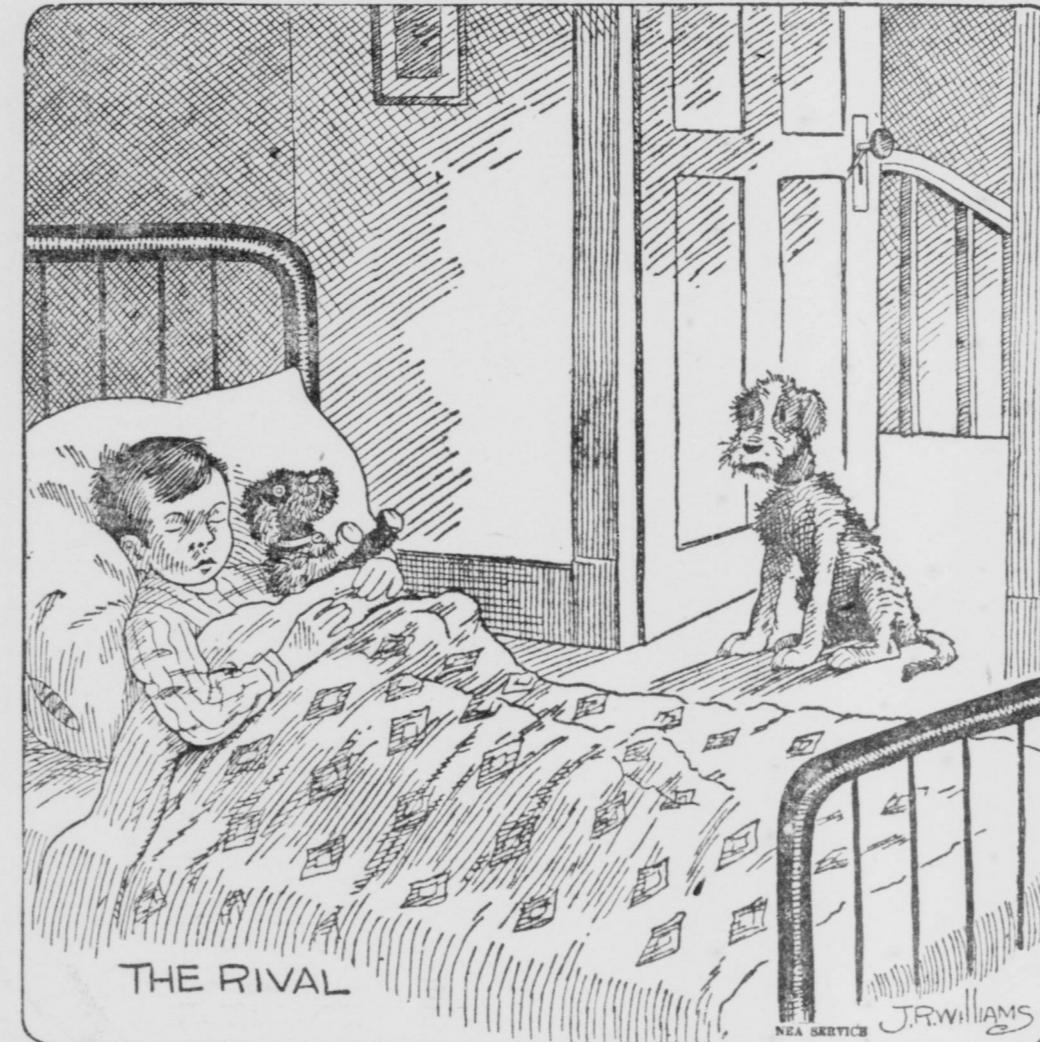
Mrs. Ware had not yet come in. Ware lighted the lamp and freshened the fire. While he was doing this, Sylvia moved to a chair by the table and picked up the book. What Ware had said about the hills of his youth, the woods, the word tamarac that he had dropped carelessly, touched chords of memory as lightly as a breeze vi-

## DOINGS OF THE DUFFS—



NEA SERVICE  
T.R. ALLEN

OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



THEM DAYS IS GONE FOREVER—



THE OLD HOME TOWN—By STANLEY



BY THE TIME OLD GENERAL HAD PASSED  
MAPLE STREET ALL THE ONLOOKERS WERE SURE  
THE MYSTERIOUS BOX OF FREIGHT, BELONGING TO  
AUNT SARAH PEABODY, WAS DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION—

threes, or here and there a dozen, were speculating and plotting. He had personally projected Ramsey's name one night in the hope of breaking the Bassett phalanx, but the only result was to arouse Thatcher's wrath against him. Bassett's men believed in Bassett.

He was making the fight of his life, and he was beyond question a "game" fighter; the opposition newspaper

most bitterly opposed Bassett, tempering their denunciations with this concession.

And so pondering, it was no wonder that Dan brought no joy to John Ware's library that night. The minister himself seemed unwontedly preoccupied; Sylvia stirred at the fire as though seeking in the flames answers to unanswerable questions. Mrs. Ware fought vainly to bring cheer to the

company. Shortly after 8 o'clock, Sylvia rose to leave.

"Aunt Sally got home from Kentucky this afternoon, and I must drop in for a minute, Dan, if you don't mind."

Sylvia hardly spoke on the way to Mrs. Owen's. Since that night on the lake she had never been the same, or so it seemed to Dan. She had gone

back to her teaching, and when they met she talked of her work and of personal things. Once he had broached the subject of marriage—soon after her return to town—but she had made it quite clear that this was a forbidden topic. The good comradeship and frankness of their intercourse had passed, and it seemed to his despairing lover's heart that it could never be regained. She carried her head a

little higher; her smile was not the smile of old. He shrank from telling her that nothing mattered if she cared for him as he believed she did. She gave him no chance, for one thing, and he had never in his bitter self-communing found any words in which to tell her so. More than ever he needed Sylvia, but Sylvia had locked and barred the doors against him.

To Be Continued

Used cars in India are not much in demand. Half price is a good price.

The other day an Australian horse sold at auction for eleven times as much as a five-seated used car of American make.

Unemployment in England is on the increase, jumping 50,000 during November alone. The new Parliament considers it its greatest domestic prob-

Helen Scores a Point

—By ALLMAN

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



—By AL POSEN



OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By AHERN



POOR BUB!—YOU MIGHT AS WELL GET A SEVEN YEAR LEASE ON A COZY DEN IN SOME HOSPITAL NOW—YOU'LL GET BOW-LEGGED TRYING TO CARRY ENOUGH RABBITS HOPS TO OVERCOME THE LONG TIME JINX!

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