

## An Indian Summer Romance.

By MARGARET FOX.

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It had not been an eventful summer for Marion Leigh. She knew it would not be when she saw it looming up in all its inevitability—an invalid aunt, an isolated mountain retreat and herself in the dual role of nurse and companion.

But she was wise enough to recognize the time old truth that "beggars cannot be choosers" and to accept it graciously. As a dependent orphan she had little voice in the ordering of her own career.

But now as she watched the leaves falling silently, somberly, and thought over the long, tedious days she had lived through and the longer and more tedious ones to come her bright courage seemed all at once to leave her.

The proverbial melancholy of the season controlled her mood, and she became introspective.

There had been just one bit of brightness that stood out as a relief against the dreary background of that monotonous summer, and whether she was glad or sorry for it Marion herself hardly knew.

She had welcomed Bruce Wolcott's coming with spontaneous delight, not because it had any special significance for her, but because he stood for all that she had known of youth and freedom and jollity, of which there was so little now in her surroundings, so much still in her natural makeup.

But Wolcott had proved more than merely young and care free and jolly as she remembered him; he was alertly sympathetic and unfailingly generous.

In recalling the many thoughtful, sweet things he had done for her Marion refused to blame herself for misinterpreting them as acts significant of deeper purpose.

The change had come almost in a day, it seemed to her now. It was not that his generosity ceased, but the personal note that had come so near trans-



"YOU MAY READ THE END OF THE STORY—MARION."

forming kindness into love had suddenly dropped out of it.

The comparatively cold courtesy that was left chilled Marion's heart. Her pride nevertheless forced her to accept it as if she noticed no difference.

Her lips trembled now as she felt again the bitterness of the disappointment and the resignation, but she knew that she must not give way utterly. For that, for surrender to unhappiness and despair, there was no time or place allotted in her life's schedule. She must be always ready, always cheerful, always self effaced.

With characteristic determination she attempted to turn her thoughts into other channels, but after reading a few pages in the book she had brought with her out under the trees she closed it with emphatic disapproval.

"I could write a better story myself," was her mental comment. And she was soon deeply engrossed in the experiment.

Some three or four hours later in the day, on his customary way to inquire after Marion's invalid aunt, Wolcott came upon the book and the loose sheets of paper carelessly slipped into it, or, rather, slipping out of it, for the wind was fluttering the leaves energetically.

A chance phrase or two caught his attention. He read on without stopping to think of the breach of etiquette that he was committing, and then, having read through to the last, he turned back to the beginning.

It was an idyllic little fancy.

"In childhood he had been her playmate," Wolcott read. "Whenever she skipped over the green of the fields it was with her hand tight clasped in his. If she slipped on the smooth cross stones in the brook, he pulled her up with a jerk, and they both laughed at her dripping little figure. The other children didn't bear him laugh, to be sure. In fact, they didn't know him, because they never saw him. The little girl kept him all to herself, afraid to let any one else suspect his existence."

"They often wondered—the poor, blind, unimaginative other children—why she liked to play so much by herself. Of course he always walked by her side when they went to school—at first adorably shy, just tagging on behind; later, growing bolder and encouraged by the little girl, he carried her books with a swaggering air of possession that delighted her heart."

"But for some inexplicable reason as the boy's shyness gradually evolved into an attitude of debonair cocksureness the girl lost all her daring and assertiveness. She no longer took the lead. In fact, in no time at all she

found herself following his lead, sometimes with a meekness of which she was wholly unconscious and again with a strange mingling of fear and tumultuous happiness that proclaimed him master of her heart.

"But the boy because his power had come to him so easily was careless of it. Besides, there were so many other things that were more worth while. He told the girl about some of them boastfully, expecting her to share his enthusiasm. And because she seemed to him indifferent and no longer a comrade interested in the same things of life he sought her less and less frequently, and at length they drifted quite apart.

"But the girl never forgot. She followed his career from afar and was proud of all his successes. Yet, much as she admired and revered the man, in her heart it was the boy whose image she treasured. She still imagined him with her, sharing her keen delight in every bit of beauty that she chanced upon, holding her hand tight whenever the turbulent waters came near sweeping her on with them.

"If the man ever remembered—"

And here the fine spun fancy came to a full stop owing probably to some sudden interruption.

For a few minutes Wolcott sat absorbed in deep thought. So she did love him after all! And what he had overheard her tell her aunt coming suddenly along by her open window one day had been all a part of her daily heroism. Her tips had said: "No, auntie; I do not love him. He is only just a friend. He can never mean anything more to me." But her heart had said—

He reread the last part of the confession and then, taking out his pencil, wrote hurriedly.

"If the man ever remembered," he began, continuing the thread of the story. "It was no wonder what had become of his jolly little playmate and to try to recall what it was that had separated them. He was glad that he had done big things, and, although while he was doing them he did not stop to analyze his motive or his inspiration, he knew afterward that he had done them for her in the hope that she might hear of them and be proud. And after they were done and he had earned a breathing space he knew that he should never do anything more worth while until he should find her again and have her near him always to love and to worship.

"He yearned for a warm clasp of her little hand and the sound of her laughter. What a fool he had been to let such priceless possessions pass when they were his for the taking! Would it be possible to regain them now? Would she forgive him and love him and enshrine him again as master of her heart?"

Suddenly Wolcott heard an embarrassed little laugh behind him.

"Oh, I—I didn't realize you were here," Marion was saying in almost stammering confusion. "I came out to get a book I left here this morning."

"Yes, I found it," Bruce acknowledged awkwardly, the written sheets scattered in telltale fashion about him.

"You didn't dare—" began Marion, blushing and turning white and blushing again in a way that kept Wolcott staring at her in fascinated admiration.

"Yes, I did, but I'll play fair," he answered, smiling at her with all his old engaging frankness. "You may read the end of the story—Marion. I took the liberty of finishing it."

He watched her closely while she read it and noticed, with a great bounding of joy in his heart, how her hand trembled as she came to the last words.

"But it isn't finished, is it?" she asked gently after a little pause.

"You are the only one who knows, dear," he answered tenderly. "Am I by any chance the little boy in your heart—the boy you've always loved, Marion?"

He was holding her hand now, and he felt the sudden tightening of her clasp.

"The boy I've always loved," she answered softly, "and—the master of my heart."

A Busy Ten Dollar Bill.

Mr. Brown keeps a boarding house. Around the table sat his wife, Mrs. Brown; the village milliner, Mrs. Andrews; Mr. Black, the baker; Mr. Jordan, a carpenter, and Mr. Hadley, a flour, feed and lumber merchant. Mr. Brown took \$10 out of his pocket and handed it to Mrs. Brown with the remark that there was \$10 toward the \$20 he promised her. Mrs. Brown handed the bill to Mrs. Andrews, the milliner, saying, "That pays for my new bonnet." Mrs. Andrews in turn passed it to Mr. Jordan, remarking that it would pay for the carpenter work he had done for her. Mr. Jordan handed it to Mr. Hadley, requesting his receipted bill for flour, feed and lumber. Mr. Hadley gave the bill back to Mr. Brown, saying, "That pays \$10 on my board." Mr. Brown again passed it to his wife, remarking that he had now paid her the \$20 he had promised her. She in turn paid Mr. Black to settle her bread and pastry account. Mr. Black handed it to Mr. Hadley, asking credit for the amount on his flour account. Mr. Hadley again passed it to Mr. Brown, with the remark that it settled for that month's board, whereupon Mr. Brown put it back into his pocket, observing that he had not supposed a greenback would go so far. *Osceola (Ia.) Sentinel.*

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**Deliberation in Marrying.** Without waiting for a decision in the debate going on all over the country as to the lowest limit for income desirable in married life, a Harvard professor and a Boston preacher have undertaken to fix a limit dogmatically. It is reported that the professor holds it to be a "sin against the country" for a man to marry unless his income is at least \$800 a year, and that the preacher will refuse to perform the ceremony for a man whose income is less than \$12 per week. The justification for the limit is essentially the same in each case.

The professor holds that children cannot be properly brought up on an income less than \$800 a year, and an attempt to do so would "lower the standard of American citizenship." The preacher thinks that marriage on less than \$12 a week "tends to the increase of poverty." These views are noteworthy at a time when restrictions are being placed upon marrying in haste. The restrictions, however, have to do with the legal status of the union. The taking out of a license leads to some deliberation and is not without moral effect. As a rule all who are interested in the marriage of any particular couple, except sometimes the candidates themselves, favor deliberation. Restrictions, therefore, are not likely to become unpopular unless they tend to discourage wedlock. Strangely enough, this tendency of ours to place restrictions of one sort and another upon marriage is contemporary with a movement in France to abate long standing restrictions which are believed to have discouraged marriage and worked harm for the country and for society. Perhaps there is a healthy middle ground and we shall reach it after a stage of experiment.

**A Little Japanese Fiction.** It must have required some clever coaching to work the present generation of Japs up for the hearty welcome they recently gave our battle fleet. The keynote of the welcome seems to have been that the Americans brought greatness and prosperity to Japan and that the demonstration of 1908 was only an answer to the call of Commodore Perry fifty years ago, when Japan was opened up to the world.

Now, the Japanese hate the foreigners today as heartily as their ancestors did when Perry somehow convinced them that it would be a good thing to mix with the world. It has never been made clear whether it was the size of Perry's fleet and guns or an appreciation of the big land behind the fleet and guns that converted the Japs in 1858 or Perry's diplomatic way of putting the whole question. It was not unanimous then with the nation. Civil strife followed. Finally the Liberals won, although they had to concede about everything to the universal prejudice against foreigners. How this could have been explained to the present day Japs, who worship their ancestors and are not inclined to forget the past and "let bygones be bygones," is a riddle. Perhaps there is a Japanese fairy lore in which the American smile and the American touch always work right for good Japs.

**Tradition and Farming.** The part that science can play in successful farming is up for discussion. We are even told that agriculture is all a matter of science, whether the boy learns it at college or behind the plow. The ways of nature have to be mastered somehow, and it is plain that science cannot change them. Professor L. H. Bailey of the Cornell Agricultural college says that mere knowledge of the laws underlying production will not make a man a good farmer. He must see the laws at work.

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Aeroplanes will not be likely to supplement autos as Christmas presents until it is more clearly determined what they are good for.

Building up a folklore about General U. S. Grant's cigars is in much better taste than rehashing that black bottle story.

A national health department doesn't mean that you can ring up Uncle Sam when suffering from a green apple diet.

**Loose?** "I should think a doctor with so many friends would have lots of practice."

"But he won't treat his friends. He says he hates to lose them."—*Kansas City Times.*

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