

The Destiny of Horace Greeley Jenkins

By Leander Richardson.

GRACE GREELEY JENKINS was under a handicap from birth. Having emerged upon the world in New England a few years before the moment when the Civil War was engaged in making its progress elsewhere, he was made involuntarily the recipient of a name at the sound of which the nation tingled—the uppermost end in exultation, the nethermost end in the mute resentment that goes with a cause that is lost but not forgotten.

Horace Greeley Jenkins' father and mother, immediately after the surrender at Appomattox, removed with their offspring to Indiana. Their action at that period was an exceedingly drastic piece of enterprise, in many of the more conservative quarters of England, indeed, the proceeding was considered an exhibition little short of that spirit of unwholesome adventure which turns the son of a substantial and sedate citizen into an irresponsible adventurer—a tramp, maybe.

I might pause to my own satisfaction as



"I regret to say that your good wife is beyond my skill."

a veracious chronicler of incident to tell in detail the history of Horace Greeley Jenkins' forefathers and mothers—how they burst away from the ties of mother England with fine spirit, and came to daughter New England and sat down.

But that would be mere dry and uninteresting history.

The fact is that Horace Greeley Jenkins, at a very early age, had banded out of New England and banded into the then trackless wilderness of Indiana by his parents, in whom some spirit of ancestry had suddenly and sufficiently awakened the tendency to get up and move.

Indiana was a hot spot, neither North nor South, but betwixt and between, as the saying goes, so that Horace Greeley Jenkins, as he grew up, found himself receiving the checkbacks of the North and entertaining the checkbacks of the South.

He met the situation unmoved.

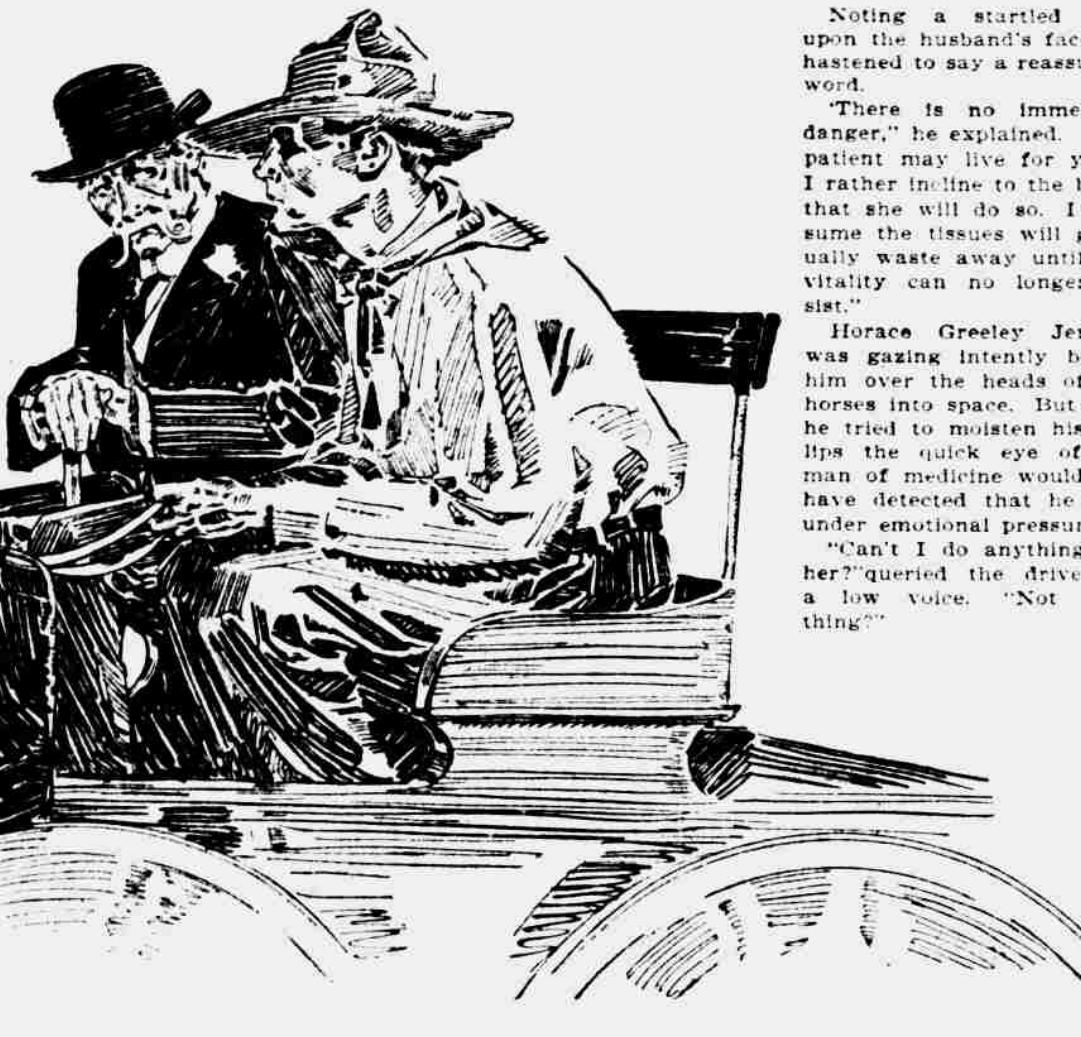
He was still a youth, not knowing so very much what it was all about, his parents one after the other were claimed and duly accounted for by malaria, the omnipresent Indiana life-lust, and Horace Greeley Jenkins was alone in the possession of a quarter-section ranch, fairly well equipped for profit.

He had picked most of the other young men in the surrounding country. That was by reason of the invading spirit of his ancestry. Many New England young men try to tickle their new-found fellows. Some succeed.

Horace Greeley Jenkins ultimately married a young girl from one of the Carolinas, whose parents had proceeded from the desolation of the South at about the time his own people had isolated themselves and him from the triumphant affluence of the North.

She was a sweet girl. She loved her husband gently, if not blindly. She bore him a son, but he died of an infection of frontier country with fortitude and without complaint. The young wife had been reared in a luxury that was snatched from her by the ill fortune of war, but she did not give herself up to futile repining. In truth, when Therese Rittenhouse became Mrs. Horace Greeley Jenkins, she put resolutely behind her all the life and traditions of her parents and made herself an active and helpful part of his career.

There were no troubles in the Jenkins



"Yes," responded the surgeon, decisively. "Your wife is a lady born and reared. Find one of her own kind to attend upon her. Such women understand and help one another. No man I don't care who or what he is, can take the place of one good woman to another who is helpless. Good night, sir."

The doctor was gone, and Horace Greeley Jenkins, sorely perplexed, turned his horses homeward. What should he do? Where was the woman? He knew instinctively she must not be merely a woman. She must be the woman.

For several days he said nothing of what the doctor had told him, until one afternoon Therese, whose intuition had already informed her that some unusual condition had arisen, said to him quite bright and smiling:

"Horace, dear. Come sit by me for a moment."

He obeyed, with an abashed look upon his face, a look that betrayed his secret perplexity.

"Tell me, sweetheart," the invalid went on, coaxingly. "What was it the good doctor told you to do for me that you don't understand how to begin?"

With some difficulty Horace Greeley Jenkins repeated the substance of the conversation that had occurred on the road to the railway station.

"Why," said Therese, as if the idea were filled with the keenest delight to her, "that will be splendid. I am sure you won't have having someone in the house who is dear to me—you are so kind and unselfish. May I write to my cousin, Horace?—you remember, she was at our wedding. I know she will be glad to come, poor girl. The world hasn't been as sweet to her as to me."

So it was arranged, and Henrietta came to Indiana and took charge not alone of Therese but of the entire household. Although Horace Greeley Jenkins didn't know it, she took charge of him along with the rest. She did it all so deftly, and graciously, and with such genuineness of purpose that the Jenkins establishment went along right smoothly and serenely, excepting for the ever-present, always-haunting fact that Therese was fading, slowly fading into the great illimitable shadow.

Cousin Henrietta knew it, and nursed her very, very gently. Horace Greeley Jenkins

Noting a startled look upon the husband's face, he hurried to say a reassuring word.

"There is no immediate danger," he explained. "The patient may live for years. I rather incline to the belief that she will do so. I presume the tissue will gradually waste away until her vitality can no longer sustain her."

Horace Greeley Jenkins was gazing intently before him over the heads of the horses into space. But that he tried to molest his dry lips the quick eye of the man of medicine would not have detected that he was under emotional pressure.

"Can't I do anything for her?" queried the driver in a low voice. "Not anything?"

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