

## THE MAIL

A PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE.

## MARRIED THIS MORNING.

"Married this morning"—how charming it sounds! How splendid it looks in the paper! The bride wore white satin—how perfectly sweet! "And she's like a soft silken vapor." "No cards"—how exclusive that sounds, does it not?

"Nocake"—they're well up in the fashion: And to prove to the world they are true millionaires,

"No presents received," puts the dash on.

"Abroad for a long wedding tour"—that's nice!

We send them off in style; We're all in a flutter awaiting our turn.

For we can't for our lives take it cool.

What letters the fair bride sends back to her friends:

I've read Arabella's and Sallie's;

She writes what—just think of it—in the Old World.

They are dining with lords and with ladies.

"Returned: Colonel —, with his beautiful bride.

From France"—how the journals do laud her!

Their elegant mansion thrown open to-day.

Receptions will now be in order."

True, true, what a recherche time it will be;

Her set will be truly delighted;

The grand double parlors will scarcely hold all—

Dear, dear, shall we girls be invited?

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"But two short years married and now a divorce!"

Law suites! dear, who wouldn't have known it?

I thought from the first 'twas a very poor match.

But somehow I never would own it.

She's no longer the bright shining star that

the social horizon adorning—

Miranda, my love, here's the paper just come,

Now tell me who's married this morning.

Scribner—July.

## Two Purse Companions.

GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP.

Everybody in college who knew them all was curious to see what would come of a friendship between two persons so opposite in tastes, habits and appearance as John Silverthorn and Bill Vibbard. John was a hard reader and Bill a lazy one. John was thin and graceful, with something pensive yet free and vivid in his nature; Bill was robust, prosaic and conventional. There was an air of neglect and a prospective sense of worldly failure about Silverthorn, but you would at once have singled out Vibbard as being well cared for, and adapted to push his way. Their likes and dislikes even in the matter of amusement were dissimilar; and Vibbard was easy going and popular, while Silverthorn was shy and had few acquaintances. Yet, as far as possible, they were always with each other; they roomed, worked, walked and lounged in company, and often made mutual concessions in taste so that they might avoid being separated. It was also discovered that though their allowances were unequal, they had put them together and paid all expenses out of a common purse. Their very differences made this alliance a great advantage in some respects, and it was rendered stronger by the fact that, however incompatible outwardly, they agreed in both, acting with an earnest straightforwardness.

But perhaps I had better describe how I first drew them together. It was on a Sunday, when a good many men were always sure to be found disporting themselves on the ball field. I used to exercise my muscles by going to look at them, on these occasions; and on that particular day I came near being hit by a sudden ball, which was caught by an active, darting figure just in time to save my head from an awkward encounter. I nodded to my rescuer, and called out cordially, "Thank you!"

"All right," said he in a tone meant to be good "naturally modest." "Look out for yourself next time."

It was Bill Vibbard, then in the latter part of his freshman year; and not far distant I saw his comrade Silverthorn, watching Bill in silent admiration. They continued slowly on their way toward an oak grove, which then stood near the field. Silverthorn, a smaller figure than Vibbard, wore a suit of uniform tint, made of sleeky gray stuff that somehow at once gave me the idea that it was taken out of one of his mother's discarded dresses. His face was nearly colorless without being pallid; and the faint golden down on his cheeks and upper lip, instead of being disagreeably juvenile, really added to the pleasant dreaminess that hung like a haze over his mild young features. He was slender, he carried himself rather quizzically, but his gait was buoyant and spirited. At that season the lilacs were in bloom, and Silverthorn held a glorious plume of the pale blossoms in his hand. What the first touch of fire is to the woods in autumn, the blooming of the lilac is to the new summer—a mystery, a beauty too exquisite to remain long intact; evanescent as human breath, yet, like that, fraught with incalculable values. All this Silverthorn must have felt to the full, judging from the tender way in which he held the flowers, even while absorbed in talk with his friend. His fingers seemed conscious that they were touching the clue to a finer life. In Vibbard's warm, tough life, the lilacs would have faded within ten minutes.

Vibbard was stocky and muscular, and his feet went down at each step as if they never meant to come up again. He wore stylish clothes, kept his hands in his coat pockets, affected high colored neckties and had a red face with blue features. When he was excited his face wore a fierce aspect; when he felt friendly, it became almost foolishly sentimental; as a general thing it was morosely inert.

Being in my senior year, I did not see much of either Vibbard or his friend; but I sometimes occupied myself with attempts to analyze the sources of their intimacy. I remember stating to one of my young acquaintances that Vibbard probably had a secret longing to be feminine and ideal, and that Silverthorn felt himself at fault in masculine toughness and hardness, so that each sought the companionship of the other, hoping to gain some of the qualities which he himself lacked; and my young acquaintance offended me by replying, as if it had all been perfectly obvious, "Of course."

After I had been graduated, and had entered the Law School, Silverthorn and Vibbard came to my room one day on a singular errand, which—though I did not guess it then—was to influence their lives for many a year afterward.

"Ferguson," said Bill, rather shyly, when they had seated themselves, "I suppose you know enough of law, by this time, to draw up a paper."

"Yes, I suppose so; or draw it down, either," I replied. But I saw that my shyness did not suit the occasion, for

the two young fellows glanced at each other very seriously and seemed embarrassed.

"What do you want me to do?" I asked.

Silverthorn now spoke, in his soft light inexperienced voice, which possessed a singular charm.

"It's all Bill's idea," said he, rather carelessly. "I would much rather have the understanding in words, but he—"

"Yes, broke in Bill, growing suddenly red and vehement, "I'm not going to have it a thing to be forgotten. No one knows what might happen."

"Well, well," I said, "if I'm to help you, you'd better fire away and tell me what you're after."

"I will," returned Vibbard, with a touch of that fierceness which marked his resolute moods. "Thorn and I have agreed to stand by each other when we quit college. Men are always forming friendships at the beginning of life, and then getting dragged apart by circumstances, such as wide separation and different interests. We don't want this to happen, and so we've made a compact that whichever one of us, Thorn or me, shall be worth thirty thousand dollars the first—why that one is to give the other half. That is unless the second one already well enough off, so that to give him a full half would put him and me whichever has the thirty thousand. Don't you see?"

The idea is to keep even as long as we can, you know," said Silverthorn, turning over one of my books which he had begun to glance through, and looking into my eyes with a delighted, straightforward gaze.

"That's a very curious notion!" said I, turning over the page, with a caution born of legal reading. "Before we go on, would you mind telling me which one of you originated this scheme?"

I was facing Silverthorn as I spoke, but felt impelled to turn quickly and include Vibbard in the question. They were both silent. It was plain, after a moment, that they really didn't know which one of them had first thought of this compact.

"Wasn't it you?" queried Silverthorn, musingly, of his comrade.

"I don't know," returned Vibbard; "as if so much subtlety annoyed him: "What difference does it make, any way? Can't you draw an agreement for us, Ferguson?"

But Vibbard was so much interested in getting at their minds through this channel that I couldn't comply at once.

"Now, you two fellows, you know," said I, laughing, "are younger than I, and I think it becomes me to know exactly what this thing means before proceeding any further in it. How can I tell but one of you is trying to get an advantage over the other?"

The pair looked startled at this, but it was only, I found, because they were so astonished at having such a construction put upon their project.

"Don't be alarmed," I hastened to say. "I wasn't serious."

But Vibbard persisted in a dogged expression of gloom.

"It's always this way," he presently declared, in a heavy, provoked tone. "My father, you know, is a shrewd man, and everybody is forever accusing me of being mean and overbearing. But I never dreamed that it could be imagined in such a move as—well, never mind!" he suddenly exclaimed, in a loud voice, and with a marked indifference, getting out of his chair. "Of course, it's all over now. I shan't do anything more about it, after what Ferguson has said."

He was so sulky that he had to resort to this putting me in the third person, although he was not addressing these words to Silverthorn. Then he gave his thick frame a slight shake, as if to get rid of the disagreeable feelings I had excited, and turned toward his friend. On the instant there came into his unmoved eyes and his matter-of-fact countenance a look of sententious incongruous as to be almost laughable. "I wish I could have done it, Thorn," he said wistfully.

"Hold on, Vibbard," I interposed.

He paid no attention.

Upon this Silverthorn fired up.

"Hullo, Bill, this won't do! Do you suppose I'm going to let our arrangement drop that way and leave you to be misconstrued? Come back here and sit down!" (Vibbard was already at the door.) "As for you, getting any advantage out of this, it is likely? Why, you are well off now, to begin with; that is, your father is; and I am poor, downright poor—Ferguson must have seen that."

Here was a surprise! The dreamy wistfulness was proving himself much more sensible than the beefy and practical one, Vibbard, however, seemed to enjoy being admired by Silverthorn, and resumed his seat quite merrily. To me, in my balancing frame of mind, it occurred that one might go farther than Silverthorn was very improbable; one might assume that it was Silverthorn who would reap the profit. But I decided not to disturb the already troubled waters any more.

Silverthorn, however, expressed this idea: "You'll be thinking," he said to me, with a smile, "that I am going to get the upper hand in this bargain; and I know there seems a greater chance of it. But then, I have hopes—!" The dreamy look, which I have described by the simile of a haze, gathered and increased on his fair, innocent face, and his eyes quite ignored me for a moment, being fixed on some imaginary outlook very fancious to him until he recalled his faltering voice, to add: "Well, I don't know that I can put it before you, but there are possibilities which may make a coincidence to be overlooked, and I was not long in guessing that there was a tender meaning in it."

"Pshaw! Ferguson."

"Did you know we were here?"

These exclamations were made with some confusion, and Silverthorn blushed faintly.

"No," said I. "Do you often come?"

They looked at each other confidentially.

"We have, lately," Vibbard admitted.

"Then perhaps you can tell me who that girl is that I just passed."

"Oh, you," said Silverthorn, at once.

"That's Ida Winwood, the daughter of the superintendent here at the mills."

"She is a very striking girl," I said.

"Who knew her, of course?"

"A little."

Vibbard enlarged upon this; it was a curious habit they had fallen into, each waiting for the other to explain what should more properly have been explained by himself.

"Thorn's father, you know," said Vibbard, "was a great mechanist, and so he had acquaintances around the mills in different parts of the state. She—that is Ida, you know—is only sixteen now, but Thorn first saw her when he was a boy, and came here once or twice with his father."

Silverthorn nodded his head, with a quick, confidential glance, as much as to say, "Don't disturb that idea. Let him think so." But the next moment his features were as inert as ever.

It turned out, on inquiry, that only Vibbard was of age; his friend being quite young, had entered college early, and nearly two years stood between him and his majority; so that, if their contract was to be binding, they would have to defer it for that length of time. I was prepared for their disappointment, but Silverthorn, after an instant's reflection, seemed quite satisfied. As they were going, he hurried back, leaving his friend out of earshot, and explained himself—

"You see, Vibbard has an idea that I shall never succeed in life—financially, that is—and so he wants to fasten this agreement on me, to prevent pride or anything making me back out, you know, by and by. But I like all the better to have it left just as it is for a while, so that if we should ever put it on paper he needn't feel that he had hurried into the thing too rashly."

"Oh, time enough—time enough," said Vibbard, good-humoredly.

Remembering that I must hurry back to catch my train, I suddenly found that I had been in an abstracted mood, for I was still standing with my hat off.

"Well, let me know how you get on," I said, jocosely, as I parted from my comrade.

Yet, for the life of me I could not tell which one of them it was that I should expect to hear from as a suitor for the girl's hand.

It was within a fortnight after this

freshness of spirit. "At any rate," I said, "I won't allow myself to go adrift into cynicism as long as they keep faith with their ideal."

From time to time during the two years I encountered the friends casually; and I remember having a fancy that their faces—which of course altered somewhat as they matured—were acquiring a kind of likeness; or, rather, they were exchanging expressions. Silverthorn's grew rounder and brightened a degree in color; his glance had less movement in it; he looked more commonplace and contented. On the other hand, Vibbard, through mental exertion (for he had lately been studying hard and the society of his junior, had modified the inertia of his own expression. The strength of his features began to be mingled with gentleness. But this was only at later time.

Near the end of the two years' limit, when the boon companions were on the eve of taking their degrees, I found that another element had come into their affairs. We don't want this to happen, and so we've made a compact that whichever one of us, Thorn or me, shall be worth thirty thousand dollars the first—why that one is to give the other half. That is unless the second one already well enough off, so that to give him a full half would put him and me whichever has the thirty thousand. Don't you see?"

"I will," returned Vibbard, with a touch of that fierceness which marked his resolute moods.

"Do you know," I said boldly, "that I am very much puzzled as to which of you was more interested in her?"

They took it in good part, and Silverthorn answered:

"That's not surprising. I don't know, myself."

"I'm trying," said Vibbard, bluntly, "to make Thorn fall in love with her, but I can't seem to succeed."

"No," said his friend, "because I insist upon it that she's just the woman for you."

Vibbard turned to me with an expression of ridicule.

"Yes," he said, "Thorn is as much wrapped up in that idea as if his own happiness depended on my marrying her."

"You're rivals, then, after a new fashion," was my comment. "Don't you see, though, how you are to settle it?"

"No."

"Why, each of you should propose in turn, for the other. Then Miss Winwood would have to take the difficulty into her own hands."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Vibbard. "That's a good idea! But suppose she don't care for either of us?"

"Very well. I don't see that in that case she would be worse off than yourselves, for neither of you seem to care for her."

"Oh, yes, we do!" exclaimed Silverthorn.

"Yes, we care a great deal," insisted Vibbard.

They both grew so very earnest over this that I didn't dare to continue the subject, and it was left in greater mystery than before.

At last the time of graduation came, and the two friends parted to pursue their separate ways. Silverthorn had a widowed mother living at a distance in the country, whose income had barely enabled her to send him through college on a meager allowance. He went home to visit her for a few days, and then promptly took his place on a daily newspaper in Boston, where he spent six months ofretched failure. He had great hopes of achieving in a short time some prodigious triumph in writing, but was beginning to think that he had perhaps inherited from his father. I gave him a new aspiration when I learned that this new turn had led him to Stansby, where he procured a position as a sort of clerk to the superintendent, Winwood.

After some months I went out to see him there. In the evening we went to the Winwood's, and I watched closely to discover any signs of a new relation between Silverthorn and the daughter, Mr. Winwood himself was a homely, perfectly commonplace man, whose face looked as if it had been stamped with a die which was to furnish a hundred duplicate physiognomies. Mrs. Winwood was a fat, woolly sort of woman, who knitted and rocked in her rocking-chair, keeping time to her needles. A smell of tea and choco came from the adjoining room, where they had been having supper; and there was a big, hot-colored lithograph