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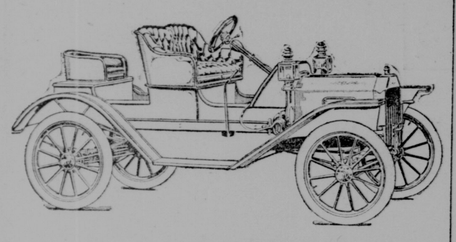

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The Fairy Godmother.

By JEROME SPRAGUE.

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Bubbles didn't care whether it was appropriate or not; she wanted it, and she was saving up her money to get it.

Every morning when she went to the store she found the girls talking of their summer hats.

"What kind are you going to have?" they would ask her, and Bubbles would laugh—the gay bubbling laugh that had given her her nickname—and would say, "Wait and see, girls; wait and see."

"Oh, pifle!" one of them said on a certain June morning. "I don't believe you're going to get a hat."

"Wait and see; wait and see," said Bubbles provokingly.

And then after the store was closed she went around the corner and looked at the hat with the white feather.

The price was in plain sight—$10.

Bubbles earned $4 a week. Out of that she paid her aunt $2.50 for board. Fifty cents went for car fare, and the rest she had for herself. Since last summer she had managed to save $9.50, and the other fifty would add the complete amount necessary to buy the hat with the white feather.

She decided to tell Alice Forbes about it.

Alice was at the ribbon counter, while Bubbles sold notions. Their acquaintance rose from the fact that they walked home in the same direction.

"I'll have to wear it with all my old blue suit," Bubbles said as she went along. "But I don't care. I've made myself a white net waist, and it's awfully becoming."

"Ten dollars is a lot for a hat," Alice said quietly.

But Bubbles laughed, with her head flung up and her bright eyes shining. "Oh, what's the use of living," she said, "if a girl can't have something pretty now and then?"

Alice nodded. Her blue eyes were wistful. "That's what I think," she said. "Now, there's a remnant of ribbon at my counter. It's white, with bunches of pink roses on it. It would make a lovely girdle, and I could buy a white dress for 15 cents a yard and a little wreath of pink roses in the millinery department, and then I could be bridesmaid for Millie Drake."

"Does she want you to be?" Bubbles asked, with interest.

"Yes," Alice said. "Jimmie Bryan is to be best man."

"Oh!" Bubbles was silent for a moment. Then she asked, "Don't you think you can afford the dress?"

"No," Alice said quietly, "I can't. And I told Millie last night to ask you, Bubbles. I knew you wouldn't mind being asked second, because I'm her oldest friend. I laid the piece of flowered ribbon away this morning, so that if you wanted it you could have it. You could make a white net skirt to your new waist. It would be awfully pretty with the pink roses."

But Bubbles was looking at her curiously.

"Don't you mind," she asked—"I mean not being bridesmaid?"

"Yes, I do," Alice said, and Bubbles saw that her eyes were full of tears. "But I have to give all of my money to mother now that father is sick and can't work."

"Well, it's a hard old world," Bubbles remarked as they reached the corner where they separated. "If I decide to take the ribbon, Alice, I'll let you know in the morning."

At the next corner Bubbles met Jimmie Bryan.

"Jimmie," she said, with her gray eyes challenging him—"Jimmie, are you going to be best man at Millie's wedding?"

"Sure," answered Jimmie—"cutaway, white flower in my coat and all the rest of the agony."

"And me to walk up the aisle with you?" said Bubbles.

Jimmie looked at her in surprise.

"I thought Alice was going—was going to do it," he said.

"Alice can't get the clothes," Bubbles informed him, "and if I wasn't a selfish pig I'd get them for her, but I want a white feather in my summer hat."

Jimmie hesitated. "Look here, Bubbles," he said a little awkwardly, "ain't there some way you could make Alice think you were getting her dress and let me pay for it? I'd like to do it."

Bubbles caught her breath quickly.

"Why, Jimmie!" she said.

Jimmie flushed. "She has an awful hard time," he said.

"Yes, she does," Bubbles agreed abstractedly. She was a little white, but she still smiled at Jimmie.

"So you don't want me to be bridesmaid with you?" she teased, still with a funny catch in her breath.

"Aw, Bubbles," he stammered, "you know I think you're about the nicest thing ever"—

"But you'd rather have Alice walk up the aisle with you," was her quiet reminder.

"I wouldn't," he declared stoutly, "but I'm sorry for Alice."

"Of course," Bubbles agreed, and then she went on to plan. "I could get her the things and tell her the money had come to me unexpectedly."

"I am afraid that wouldn't do," was Jimmie's worried response. "She'd feel as if she had to pay it back. You get the things and send them to her and don't have any mark on the box, and she'll never know where they came from."

"Well, I can't get the things we talked about," Bubbles said, "or she would know right away. Do you care how much you spend, Jimmie?"

"No," he told her with the recklessness of the skilled laborer who earns his $3 a day; "no, I don't."

"Then I'll get a robe dress of pink mull with a wreath of silver roses. She'll look like a dream, Jimmie."

"I hope she will," Jimmie said, and Bubbles sighed.

"Goodby, Jimmie," she said as she came to the tenement where she lived on the third floor.

He looked at her anxiously. "You're not cut up about not being bridesmaid, are you?" he asked.

She shook her head. "No," she answered bravely.

"Well, you're pretty nice, Bubbles," he said heartily, and then he went on his way.

When Bubbles reached home she took out her hoarded store of money. With what she would add on her next pay day she would have $10, and she could buy the hat with the white feather.

She fingered the money for a moment, and then she dropped her head on her arm with a sob, for Bubbles had wanted that hat to wear to church on Sunday morning when she sang in the choir with Jimmie Bryan. It had been for Jimmie's admiration that she had craved the pretty hat. And, after all, it was Alice that Jimmie cared for.

Two days later Alice came to her counter breathlessly.

"Oh, Bubbles," she said, "such a wonderful thing has happened!"

"What?" asked Bubbles innocently.

And then Alice told her of the wonderful gown and the dainty accessories that had come the night before in a big box.

"I can't imagine who sent them."

"It must have been a fairy godmother," said Bubbles demurely.

"And now I can be Millie's bridesmaid," caroled Alice when she had exhausted all her conjectures as to the giver. "You won't mind, will you, Bubbles?"

"No," said Bubbles steadily.

And as she sold needles and pins and hooks and eyes and whalebones and a hundred and one other things that day she told herself that she did not care. Why should she want to walk beside Jimmie Bryan when he preferred to have Alice?

She passed the window with the hat with the white feather that night without a glance, and on Sunday she wore a plain little black sailor with a cheap red rose, and she looked prettier than ever in it.

"Alice thinks you're a fairy godmother," she told Jimmie after service.

"Say, did she like it?" he demanded.

"Of course she did," said Bubbles. "Who wouldn't?"

But Jimmie did not answer immediately. He stood looking down at her. "Say, little girl," he said presently, "you look mighty nice in that hat."

"It cost just $1.98," Bubbles informed him glibly, "marked down from $2."

"I don't care what it cost," Jimmie stated. "You look mighty nice."

Bubbles couldn't resist saying, "But not half as nice as Alice will in that pink robe."

"Bubbles, I believe you're jealous," flashed Jimmie unexpectedly.

Bubbles' cheeks flamed. "Why, Jimmie Bryan!" she faltered.

"Look here," Jimmie demanded, "did you think I was in love with Alice?"

Under his keen scrutiny Bubbles was forced to admit, "I couldn't very well help it, could I?"

"I was afraid you would," Jimmie said, "that day when I planned to get her the things, but I had promised. Oh, look here, Bubbles, you come out to the park with me, and I'll tell you about it."

And all the way to the park Bubbles' heart sang, and she seemed to walk on air, and she was glad that she hadn't bought the hat with the white feather. She was glad she hadn't been extravagant, for Jimmie seemed to like her just as well in the black sailor with the red rose.

In the park the beds were full of jonquils and tulips and hyacinths and crocuses, and under the flowering almond tree Jimmie and Bubbles sat down to talk.

"You see," Jimmie explained, "there's Bob Travers, and he's in the navy, and he's away on a three years' cruise, and he made me promise that I'd look after Alice—they've been in love with each other since they were kids—and when Alice's father got sick I tried to help, but they wouldn't let me, and it seemed as if getting her the dress would be what Bob would want me to do, and now he's going to get home in time for the wedding, and I told Millie she'd have to have him for best man."

"Oh!" cried Bubbles, aglow with happiness.

"And then I told her how much I thought of you, and she wants us to be in the wedding party, and— Oh, well, look here, Bubbles." And in the shadow of the flowering almond he held out his arms.

And Bubbles, having wept a little weep of joy on his broad shoulder, sat up and wiped her eyes. "Ain't I glad I didn't spend all my money for that feather, Jimmie?" she said. "I'll get the white net skirt and wear the rose-but ribbon"—

"And a diamond ring," interrupted Jimmie.

"A diamond ring! What for?" demanded Bubbles.

"Because we're engaged," said Jimmie rapturously.

The Wooing of the Woodcock.

The wooing of the woodcock is one of those sights to witness which a lover of nature in all its moods will make a journey of miles. The scene is enacted at twilight, and the setting is of willow or alder bushes whose branches are just beginning to show the tender green of early spring. Suddenly from the damp ground a bird form shoots upward like some swamp spirit until it is outlined against the gray of the evening sky. Then it circles above the branches, and the song of the wooing begins. Hidden in the darkness of the thick lower growth is the object to which this love song is directed. The bird above circles perhaps a score of times, then drops back to the damp thicket, making a sound which can be likened only to the dropping of water into a woodland pool. Again the bird soars and circles, singing still the love song. This is repeated time after time until the last gleam of light has faded and night's darkness comes down.

Not After Permanent Impressions.

"Do you expect your constituents to believe all you tell them?"

"Believe it!" exclaimed the man who dislikes to be put on record. "I hope they don't even remember it!"—Washington Star.

"The Least Of These"

By LULU JOHNSON.

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Betty shuddered as the heavy iron gates clanged behind her and she realized that she was actually within the prison yard. It was her first visit to a penitentiary, and, though she found it not half so forbidding as she had anticipated, the atmosphere sent a chill through her whole girlish figure.

Instead of rock piles, with convicts monotonously breaking the stone, here were flower bordered walks and swards of softest green. But for the high walls and the barred windows she might well have imagined herself in a municipal park or on a million dollar estate.

When she reached the office her basket of delicacies was consigned with others brought by loyal friends for the delectation of other convicts, but the keeper looked curiously from the tag on her basket to Betty's face.

"No. 11,806 hasn't had a visitor since he came here five weeks ago," commented the man significantly. "Are you a relative?"

"No," said the girl simply. "He was just good to me when I needed help."

"He was good to lots of folks," grunted the warden, "but somehow they seem to have forgotten it. He's in the hospital."

The warden made a sign to a trusty, and with fast beating heart Betty followed the man in the direction of the great gray building, in one wing of which was located the hospital.

Moreton, ex-boss of the —th district, was propped up in bed, and at sight of Bessie Vynne he smiled radiantly.

Five weeks he had lain there fighting grimly for the life that he had begun to think was hardly worth the saving, for Moreton had indeed been through the valley of political humiliation. Less than two years before it had required two husky men to guard the door of his headquarters and keep back the crowd of importunate callers who wanted financial help, influential word or perhaps just the chance to fawn upon the powerful political leader.

Moreton had been the boss of his district, ruling with a rod of iron. He had controlled the machine through sheer force of will power.

His enemies both without and within the party had fought doggedly to break his sway, but the boss had gritted his teeth the harder at each fresh attack and b[illegible] the malcontents into submission.

But there had come [illegible] end to his rule, as to almost all one man control. The opposing party had secured the services of a political revivalist. "In the interest of good government," they had explained, but the whole city knew that it was a ruse to rid the district of its dominating boss. It meant turning the district over to another clique as bad, but less experienced in municipal villainy.

And the political world had sat back and watched the warfare with grim smiles. Perhaps, after all, the boss would win again. But in this they were wrong. By a mere quip of fate the wheel spun the other way.

The boss lost, and after loss of power came scandals and lawsuits. The latter took most of the fortune he had filched from the city, much of which he had spent on the care of those who needed it more desperately than the taxpayers from whom he had filched it so remorselessly. In reality the boss when the blow fell could have counted his fortune only in thousands when his enemies ran it up to tens of thousands.

When he left the civil court room almost penniless he found himself face to face with criminal charges. Stoically he had accepted his sentence of five years in the penitentiary. Stoically he had accepted his desertion by those who had fawned upon him in prosperity and power. A child of the streets who had started carrying the water bucket for the marching club, he had become a ward heeler, a lieutenant and finally the boss without the aid of family ties or family influence. Stoically he had accepted the decision of the hospital staff. He had an incurable disease. He probably would not live out his sentence.

Yet at sight of Betty Vynne's face his stoicism vanished, and after the radiant smile of welcome came a tenderness almost pathetic.

"What are you doing here, child?" he asked as he stroked the hand that clasped his. "Sing Sing's a good way for a girl to come who's only making her eight a week."

The girl laughed, but her voice was shaky.

"Just listen to the man! And I'm getting ten—right in this town. I read in the paper—about—about your being so lonesome"— The man smiled grimly. So the papers were commenting on the fact that he was a deserted as well as deposed leader of men. "And I saw the ad. of a lawyer up here who wanted a stenographer, and I came and got the place. I like it much better here than in town. And I can come to see you once a week."

Moreton, deposed boss, leaned over and looked into her face.

"You—come—up—here—to be near me?"

The girl nodded her head.

"And I've got the nicest boarding place with a widow, and you ought to see her flower beds"—

Just then a physician in white uniform came toward them.

"You can stay only five minutes," he said without waiting for the formality of an introduction. "I cannot have my patients unduly excited. In a few weeks we shall have him in fine trim, I hope, but we don't want our treatment upset by too much company."

Moreton's lips set in grim lines. The young doctor evidently did not know that this was his first visitor.

"Dr. Lindsay, this is one of my best friends, Miss Betty Vynne, and her coming can't hurt me. Why, say, I feel like a two-year-old right now."

Nevertheless the young doctor stood near the door, and when the five minutes were up he led Betty from the ward.

"You can come again, as often as the rules permit, but do not stay too long."

The next time he made the rounds Dr. Lindsay found Moreton oddly quiet, his fever reduced, his pulse normal.

"Doctor," he said, with a smile, "that girl's coming did me more good than all your dope. It's good to know that there's one person that hasn't forgot you."

And then the young doctor saw that something more than an organic disease was aiming for the old boss' heart.

"Daughter of an old friend?" he asked casually.

"Not much—just a kid I picked up in a tenement; took her from a sodden old thing who was beating the life and spirit out of her. I turned her over to the sisters. They did the rest."

Lindsay smiled, but he understood. It was the ex-boss who had paid the sisters for the girl's care and put her through a business school and set her on her feet, saving a girlhood like his own boyhood from the slums and the gutter.

After that Moreton slowly but surely began to mend. There was no curing the disease, but there was every chance to prolong his life for years if he wanted to put up the fight. And every time that Betty Vynne came to the hospital he seemed stronger for the fight.

For a time Dr. Lindsay watched the case with purely professional interest, but gradually this feeling became distinctly personal. He generally met Betty in the reception room of the hospital, lingered near Moreton's bedside during her stay and escorted her to the entrance when she departed.

And, oddly enough, he found many excuses for sitting with Moreton and learning more about "the kid's" plucky fight for education and self support.

Before the first year of his sentence had passed the ex-boss read young Lindsay's secret, and one night after Betty had paid her usual call the two men talked it over.

"Mind you, she ain't anybody. Neither she nor I know where she sprung from. So it's up to you," said Moreton warningly and yet with loving anxiety in every word.

Young Lindsay studied the cracks in the flooring for a few seconds, and then he turned resolutely to his patient.

"She's true blue. There are not many like her, no matter what sort of blood was behind her, and I'm going to take chances if she'll have me. And, what is more, I am going down to see her tomorrow when I'm off duty."

"Is it all right, Betty?" inquired the ex-boss as he stroked her hand tenderly the next time she came. "Is it all right, little girl?"

The girl smiled into his anxious eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Moreton, do you think I'm half good enough for him?"

"Mind that, will you?" inquired the invalid, as if addressing an audience; then he drew the girl close. "Let me tell you something, Betty. He wouldn't let me tell you before for fear you'd think you owed him something. He wanted you to love him for himself. See? But Dr. Lindsay's got some of the boys started, and it looks like a pardon, Betty; it certainly does."

She sank on her knees beside the bed.

"Oh, that is too good to be true."

"And that ain't all, Betty. I had some shares in a gold mine; thought it was a dead one, but Lindsay he's been looking into it, and mebbe—well, just mebbe I can take you and Lindsay on a wedding trip over to Germany. Lindsay says the springs over there would do wonders for me, and Lindsay needs a change, and—well, Betty, I'd been dead by this time if it hadn't been for your coming."

He looked up to meet the shining eyes of young Dr. Lindsay.

"Say, Lindsay, ain't there something in the good book somewheres about the least of these? I want to find that verse. I'm going to learn it. I certainly am. Ah, there is so much for me to learn and so little time!"

The Bible's Good Use of Words.

The Bible as a standard for the correct use of words has been urged upon readers by Professor Lounsbury of Yale, writing in Harper's Magazine. "Make up your mind," says Professor Lounsbury, "that the Bible is a guide to be followed grammatically as much as it is morally. The language of our version belongs to the sixteenth century. It therefore naturally contains expressions which, though proper at that time, are not in accord with the common usage of our day. When it was originally translated, which was generally the relative pronoun referring to persons. Hence we say, 'Our Father which art in heaven.' More than this, the subtle distinction found in the employment of shall and will had not then become established in the language But these do not affect the correctness of its procedure in regard to expressions still met with everywhere. In such cases accept its authority without question and conform your practice with it."

The Life Saving Service.

The first stations of a life saving service in this country were established by the Massachusetts Humane society at Lovell island and Cohasset. All efforts for saving life and property in cases of shipwreck were made by this society till 1837, when the president of the United States was authorized to employ ships to cruise along the shores and render assistance to distressed navigators. In 1848 congress passed a law creating a few life saving stations between Sandy Hook and Little Egg harbor, New Jersey. From this has grown the splendid system which now takes in all the coasts of the country. —New York American.

A Watch Tip.

"So you lost your watch in the crowd, eh?" Lecoq, the detective, sneered. "Well, I'm ashamed of you.

"You ought to know after your long friendship with me that there's only one safe way for a man to carry a costly watch—in the right hand vest pocket, with the chain running into the right and left pockets.

"The thief always snatches at the left pocket, and of course by my system he gets only a key or a cheap compass."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.