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Between Four Walls.

By CURTIS YORKE.

"My dear fellow, you must remember that, as yet, I have no peg to hang my interest on, so to speak," returned Darrell in rather a strained voice. "Am I to understand that you have—fallen in love with Miss Heath?"

He got out the last words sharply and almost roughly, as if they hurt him.

Gilbert paused in the act of lighting his pipe and nodded. "You've hit it," he said then, as he threw away the match. "The thing is—has she—would she think anything of me?"

"Well, I suppose you hardly intend ascertaining her views on the matter in the meantime?" observed Darrell, shortly.

"Do I intend being a howling cad!" was the indignant rejoinder. "Of course I shall wait till we get out of this confounded hole—if we ever do." Then, after a pause, he went on, almost boyishly, "I say, old fellow, do you think I'd have any chance?"

"I see no reason why you should not," was the answer, in an odd voice.

Carruthers leant his elbow on his knee and stared into the fire. Then he said:

"Upon my soul, as she sat there reading and singing to us to-night, with that babyish seriousness in her eyes—bless her!—I tell you, Darrell, I could have taken her in my arms and kissed her, the little darling!"

He stirred the fire into a rousing blaze as he spoke and smiled—a little caressing smile. Darrell altered his position slightly, but he did not speak, and the other proceeded:

"I've fancied once or twice, you know, from her manner and that—that perhaps I might have a chance. Eh? What do you think?"

"How the devil should I know?" returned Darrell suddenly and savagely. "The girl has not confided in me!"

"Well, you needn't flare up like that about it," observed Carruthers, after surveying his companion in undisguised amazement for perhaps a minute. "Dash it all, we've always been chums, and I naturally thought you—. But, of course, it's no matter." he broke off rather huffily.

Darrell laid aside his pipe—it had been out for some time—and rose to his feet. The firelight flashed full on his face, and Carruthers exclaimed hastily:

"I say, old chap, are you ill?" By Jove! you look uncommonly queer!"

"Ill—no," said the other, speaking seemingly with an effort. "I've felt rather done up all day, though, somehow. I think I'll go to bed."

Leslie noticed next morning that Darrell was unusually silent, even for him, and he was never a talkative fellow. She also noticed that his breakfast consisted of half a cup of coffee and nothing more. They breakfasted in the sitting room that morning, for the kitchen chimney had taken to smoking violently.

"I say, Lance," said Carruthers, when the meal was over, and Leslie had flitted away to the kitchen, "are you afraid of the provisions giving out altogether, that you took no breakfast? We've still enough for a day or two. Miss Heath found two more tins of tongue this morning."

"No, it isn't that," said Darrell, who was leaning back in his chair, looking wretchedly white and ill. "But I have a most infernally sore throat, and feel so completely done up I can scarcely move. Don't worry me, there's a good fellow. And don't say anything to Miss Heath."

But Miss Heath saw for herself that Darrell was looking very ill, and that as the day advanced he looked worse. His voice, too, grew hoarse and thick, and finally almost inaudible.

"You have got a shocking cold, have you not?" she said, looking down at him anxiously as he sat shivering over the fire in the winter dusk.

"Yes, I suppose I have," he answered, trying to smile. "I feel regularly floored."

Some hours later, when Leslie had left the room to see about supper, Darrell rose suddenly.

"I say, Gilbert," he said faintly, "I can't sit up any longer. I feel awfully ill; and I don't want any supper. Make my excuses to Miss Heath, will you?"

"Poor old chap! you do look bad," said Carruthers in a concerned voice. "Is it your throat?"

"Partly. Besides, I am horribly sick." "Have some brandy," suggested the other.

"No, thanks. I can't swallow anything." And he went languidly out of the room.

So Gilbert and Leslie had a tete-a-tete dinner, and rather a silent one.

Darrell was very ill all night, and in the morning was quite unfit to leave his bed.

"I can't get him to take anything," said Carruthers to Leslie, after breakfast. "I tried to give him a teaspoonful of brandy—he's been so sick, you know; but I don't think he can swallow at all now. And he seems so awfully weak; he can hardly lift his head. I can't understand his losing strength so in the time."

"I hope it is not diphtheria," said Leslie, speaking almost in a whisper, and turning very pale. "It begins just in that way. And it is such a swift, insidious thing. I had a cousin who died of it; and she was only ill a few days."

"I don't know what it is," said Carruthers gloomily. "I don't like his looks, anyway. His throat has been bad for some days, he says, but he thought it would pass off."

* * * * * * *

"I say, old fellow," muttered Darrell late that night, when the other had been vainly persuading him to have a spoonful of tinted soup he had heated for him, "keep away from me as much as you can. I know what this is now. It's diphtheria, and it's horribly infectious."

"Oh, no, it isn't, old man; it's just a bad cold, you know," said Carruthers hastily. But he felt more alarmed at Darrell's looks than he would have cared to own; and, as a matter of fact, he was beginning to feel queer enough himself, for his own throat was just sufficiently painful to render swallowing a very disagreeable necessity, and his limbs felt as tired and heavy as though he had been walking for days.

"I wish there was anything I could do," he went on in a troubled voice.

The other smiled faintly.

"Leave me alone, there's a good old chap," he said, wearily and indistinctly. "It's no use. I don't think I shall see another night. This sort of thing loses no time, you know."

"I wish you wouldn't talk like that, Darrell," remonstrated Carruthers. "Why, we'll have you as well as ever in a couple of days," he added, with a poor attempt at cheerfulness.

In the morning, however, Darrell could not speak above a whisper, and hardly that. He was not unconscious, but utterly prostrate and powerless. He shook his head when Carruthers brought him a cup of coffee, and altogether seemed so far through that, the other went back to the sitting room with a terribly anxious look in his bonnie blue eyes and a curious, unwonted tightening at his heart. For they had been friends, indeed almost brothers, since their school days.

Leslie looked up quickly as he entered.

"How is he?" she asked in a voice that shook perceptibly.

"Very bad," was the brief answer.

"Is he worse, do you think?" she faltered.

"He's about as bad as he can be," he answered in a choked voice. He bit his lips nervously and then burst out: "Oh, I say, Miss Heath, I can't help thinking it's all up with the dear old fellow. You've no idea how ill he is. He says himself he'll not last through another night. Good God! it's awful to be shut up here—to see him die before our eyes"— He stopped and took a gulp of coffee.

While he was speaking Leslie had half risen from the chair, nervously grasping the table with both her hands.

"Do you mean—that he will—die?" she gasped.

Carruthers rose, too, with a gesture of alarm and dismay.

"Miss Heath—Leslie—good heavens! how white you look? You are not going to faint, are you? Let me get you some water or something."

"No—no," she whispered. "I—I am not ill. Dying—you say! Dying! Ah, no—no. It would be too cruel. Oh, surely you can get some help," she went on, wildly and passionately. "Surely you will not let him die without making an effort, at least, to save him! Why don't you? He will die—he will die! Oh, it is cruel!"

She threw herself into a chair, and covered her face with her hands.

Carruthers grew very white.

"What do you mean?" he said hoarsely. "What is it to you—his life or death?"

She made no answer; but he could see that she was trembling violently.

"Do you mean," he said, speaking very slowly, and with long pauses between the words, "that you—care for him—that you—love him?"

She looked up then, her eyes dry and tearless, but full of a maidenly indignation at the ruthless question.

"You have no right"— she began in a breathless whisper.

"Answer me," he interrupted her harshly.

Then all at once she broke into bitter weeping.

"I don't know—I don't know," she sobbed wildly. "But if he dies—oh, if he dies my heart will break!"

The next moment she was gone, and Carruthers was alone.

He stood quite still where she had left him. The room seemed to grow suddenly dark. He groped his way to a chair and sat down. "If he dies my heart will break!" The sweet, childish tones, vibrating with a new fierce note of woman's passion, rang in his ears still. He had half suspected for the last day or two that Darrell cared for Leslie, but never that she cared for him—never. He hid his face on his arm, feeling curiously tired and sick. He sat quite still for some time, and when he raised his head his blue eyes were a little misty, and his lips were trembling.

Now, if any one had had leisure to think of the weather this morning, they would have noticed that the wind had changed during the night, and that it was thawing rapidly. Carruthers' attention was drawn to this fact by a stray sunbeam shining on the opposite wall, and it strengthened his already half formed resolution.

"Poor little soul!" he muttered, as the girl's great despairing eyes seemed again to look into his. "Well—her heart shall not break if I can help it."

He rose, crossed the hall, and entered the sick man's room. Darrell was lying quite still, seeming to breath with painful difficulty. His eyes were closed, but he opened them as Carruthers came to the bedside. The latter bent over him, and moistened his lips with brandy. Darrell thanked him with a look. He was past speaking now. Carruthers replenished the fire, and went slowly out of the room; then he got on his boots, wrapped himself in his overcoat, and provided himself with a stout walking stick. As he passed the door of Leslie's room he paused, fancying he heard a sound of stifled sobbing. But as he moved away the door opened and the girl came out. Her eyes were swollen and she was very pale, but on seeing Carruthers she flushed up suddenly. He took her hands in his and drew her gently into the sitting room.

"I am going to Princetown to get a doctor," he said very quietly. "It is thawing rapidly, so I dare say I shall manage very well. Shall you be afraid to be left alone—until I return?"

"No—no," she answered with a little sob. "Oh, Mr Carruthers, forgive me for my hasty words!—forget all I said—I did not"—

"My dear," he said unsteadily, "I have nothing to forgive."

"She hesitated a moment, then she said, with earnest, troubled eyes raised to his:

"May I—may I take care of him till you come back? He—he might die there, all alone. And," eagerly, "you need not be afraid of infection for me. I had diphtheria once long ago. And I was with my cousin when she died, and I never took it. There was a pathetic quivering of the tender little mouth that was almost too much for Carruthers. He passed his hand wearily over his forehead.

"It is an awful risk for you," he said in a harassed kind of voice. "But—I must go—it is the only chance for the dear old fellow; and, as you say, he ought not to be left alone. I hope I shall only be away a few hours at furthest; but if I should not get back before dark, will you light the little lantern and put it in the loft window? I don't know that there is much you can do for Darrell," he went on with a half break in his voice, "except give him a spoonful of brandy from time to time, if you can get him to take it. There isn't much, but I will bring some back with me. And—keep away from him as much as you can; there is no use running any needless risk." He tried to look and speak as usual, but he did not succeed very well.

Leslie looked at him anxiously.

"You are not ill, too, are you?" she said.

"Oh no," he answered in a quiet voice. "Now, good-by for a few hours. No, don't come to the door; it is too cold for you."

As he spoke, he pulled his tweed cap well over his forehead, and buttoned his coat up to his neck.

"God bless you, my darling," he murmured under his breath, as he turned away. Then he passed out into the chill air of the winter morning. He had rather the wind had been a little less keen, for his head ached, and his throat felt abominably stiff and sore. But he pulled himself together, and plunged away through the snowdrifts, the first of which took him up to his waist, and the next nearly to his neck. However, a hundred yards or so from the house walking became less difficult, the snow barely reaching his knees.

After a few minutes' hesitation Leslie opened the door of the room where Darrell lay, and went in. It was no time to think of conventionalities, the poor child reflected feverishly. He was ill—alone—perhaps dying, and there a rush of crimson stained her cheeks) she loved him. She had almost loved him before she knew him—this hitherto unknown hero who had saved Uncle Jim's life—and his grave, tender, chivalrous thought and care for her had done the rest. She knew now why the past few days had seemed so strangely happy to her; and why the possibility of his illness ending fatally filled her with such a terrified, dreary sense of desolation.

He opened his eyes languidly as the door opened, and a dark flush rose to his face when he saw who his visitor was. His lips moved, but soundlessly, and he made a weak gesture as though to motion her away from him.

"Hush! you must not try to talk," she said very calmly and steadily. "I am going to take care of you until Mr Carruthers comes back. He has gone to Princetown for a doctor. The snow is rapidly melting, and it has begun to rain, so he will not be very long away. You need not fear infection for me," she added, noting the distressed anxiety in his eyes: "I have nursed people with diphtheria before and never taken it." Then she moistened his lips with brandy, shook up his pillows and gently sponged his face and hands. He was too weak to gainsay her; indeed, he appeared to grow momentarily weaker; his breath came in short, quick gasps, and after a time he hardly seemed to notice that she was in the room.

With a choking sob she went back to the sitting room. There was nothing she could do—nothing. Only wait. Almost mechanically she cleared the breakfast table, and turned her attention to the fire, which had burned rather low. Carruthers would be cold and wet when he came back, she remembered. "When he came back" Would he get back in time? Could he? She absently crumpled up a piece of an old newspaper, and was about to thrust it between the bars of the grate, to coax the dying fire, when a few of the printed words caught her attention. Smoothing out the paper, she hastily scanned the paragraph, which ran thus:

"The value of common flowers of sulphur in cases of malignant sore throat is becoming daily more fully recognized by the medical faculty. Even in the last stage of diphtheria, when used as a gargle, or in extreme cases—where the patient is unable to gargle—sprayed upon the throat, it has been known to eat away the false membrane which is the peculiar characteristic of this disease, and give speedy relief." Then followed directions as to use, etc.

Leslie dropped the paper, and rose quickly to her feet. She stood quite still for a minute or two, pressing her hands to the sides of her head in confused, anxious thought. Where had she seen a little paper packet labeled "Flowers of Sulphur?" In another moment she was in the kitchen, wildly rummaging in the drawers. After searching in vain for some time, she suddenly, and with a quick little cry, pounced upon a small, crushed up paper packet at the back of one of the shelves. It was labeled "Flowers of Sulphur." There was not much, but there was enough. She put a teaspoonful in a wineglass, and filled it up with water, for milk she had none. The sulphur obstinately floated on the top, of course; so she mixed it after a fashion with her finger. Then she went back to Darrell. He shook his head when she explained to him what she wanted him to do. He was feeling too horribly weak to desire anything but to be left alone.

"But see," she pleaded, "I don't want you even to try to swallow it. Just hold it in your mouth, and let it lie on your throat only for a few seconds. I will lift your head. Ah! will you not try—just to please me?"

Her eyes were full of tears; and Darrell seeing them—and because he loved her so he could have refused her nothing—did as she bade him, not once, but many times. Without going into further medical details, I may say that the remedy had the desired effect. In the course of a few hours he was able to speak, though only in a whisper, and in another hour could swallow a little soup. This last was painful to him beyond expression, but he would not for worlds have grieved his gentle nurse by saying so. He asked anxiously once or twice if Carruthers had returned, and Leslie went again and again to the outer door to see if there was any sign of him. But all was still, save for the drip of the fast melting snow from the roof and the surrounding outhouses.

The day wore on and died; and still Carruthers did not come back. Leslie lit the little lantern and placed it in the loft window. Then she made herself a cup of coffee, for she had tasted nothing since breakfast time.

"I am horribly anxious about you," Darrell murmured restlessly, when he had watched her light the candle, sweep up the hearth, and prepare to torture him with more sulphur. "I ought not to allow you to come near me, but"—

"But you can't help yourself, you see," she said with a miserable little attempt at gayety, as she lifted his head on her arm.

"Dear little child!" he whispered, looking up at her with a sad tenderness in his sunken eyes. "How can I thank you for all you have done for me! If I get well—I shall owe my life to you."

Leslie laid his head gently back on the pillows again. Then, quite suddenly, she burst into tears and ran out of the room. Darrell thought she was anxious about Carruthers' safety, and he turned over and hid his face on his arm with a weary sigh. For himself, he didn't much care just then whether he got well or whether he didn't. Indeed, if he had had any choice, he would probably have preferred the latter, being weak to wretchedness, and woefully heart sick besides.

Eight o'clock—nine—ten. Still Carruthers did not come. Leslie fancied Darrell's voice and pulse had grown perceptibly weaker, though, after the last application of sulphur, his breathing had been much easier, and he could swallow liquids with less difficulty. But the girl was between the adjacent states for its anxiety.

A GIRL'S MISTAKE

By MRS. G. BIGG-WITHER.

I.

A youthful pair of lovers, whose united ages only made thirty-six years, were clinging in a last embrace. The evening sun had grandly set, its last beautiful beams almost melting in the far stretched sea, which reflected in its deep waters the ever changing tints.

Even the dark, stern pine wood took a tender shade, as one by one the exquisite colors faded to be succeeded by others. It touched the girl's face, so childish in expression, so dainty in coloring, lighting up with ruddy tints the nut brown hair, the dark velvety eyes, the fine sun tinted skin, the full pliant figure. In a word, it threw into bold relief that charming little personage, Carmen Massingbird.

The boy's face was handsome, sensitive, visionary, beautifully modeled, like some Greek Apollo, and his figure, though now loosely knit, gave promise in the years to come of a grand development. His arm tenderly encircled the young girl, but his face was sad and wistful.

"Oh, Carmen, think of me when I am gone; be true to me!"

"Be true to you! Oh, Allen, of course I will. If I am to be your wife to-morrow I must be, you know. All wives are true to their husbands."

"Not all," he answered with superior wisdom. "And then, dear, you are so beautiful, and I have nothing to shield you but my love, and alas! I shall be thousands of miles away."

The girl, for want of a comforting answer, leaned her head lovingly on his shoulder.

"Is not this sunset perfect? I shall never forget it, our last, perhaps, for years. See, Carmen," he continued dreamily, "how those opal tints fade into the rosy ones, and then how they all melt in the calm, beautiful sea. Oh, sweetheart, whenever you (see such a sunset think of this night; let it be a sign betwixt thee and me."

"I shall always remember you, Allen, without the aid of sunset or sunrise. But, dear, do try and make this fortune as soon as you can; three years, four at the outside. Why? I shall be quite old—21! And when you come back we will have the loveliest home imaginable. I quite know how everything ought to be. Now, never mind the sunset," as her boy lover lingered, his mobile face full of poetic feeling, for the beauties of nature to him were a great reality. He loved the young girl at his side, who was as fresh and fair as a spring morning. But he idealized her. She was not poetical, not yet at least; in fact she was—material.

"Are you quite sure everything is arranged for to-morrow morning?"

"Everything," answered he, rousing himself. "I have your wedding ring, and a keeper, which is my own design."

"Oh, do let me see it, Allen!"

"No, dear. Wait till to-morrow."

She made a little grimace, but being sweet tempered, only gave her pretty shoulders a little shrug. "Hark! There is the supper bell. I must go. Do you know, sir, I am supposed to be learning my recitation in the privacy of the grounds?"

"What is it, Carmen?" said he with interest.

"Oh, a piece from the 'Golden Legend.' It begins:

"Onward and onward the highway runs
To the distant city, impatiently bearing
Tidings of human joy and disaster,
Of love and hate, of doing and daring."

"Yes, I know," said Allen eagerly. "It goes on!

"This life of ours is a wild Æolian harp
Of many a joyous strain,
But under them all there runs a loud perpetual
wail
As of souls in pain.

"That is just it, Carmen. I feel the wail and the pain in my heart, a foreboding I cannot throw off."

"Allen, dear! do for goodness sake try and be cheerful! You know the poem says:

"All through life there are wayside inns
Where may may refresh his soul with love.

I shall always love you, dear."

"Ah, Carmen, it is the parting I dread, the long separation. Shall I find the rivulet fed by springs from above in the hemisphere I am going to? Who knows? You will write, dear, every mail; promise me." And he looked into her very heart with his eyes so full of boyish love. "Think what it is to lose you. You are everything, remember, in this world to me. How I shall hunger for your letters."

"I will write, dear," and his sadness affected her, for her eyes were full of tears. "But, oh, Allen, how proud I shall be when I can let every one know that I am 'Mrs. Allen Fitzclare.' It's such a pretty name! So much prettier than Carmen Massingbird."

"Ah, but your name suggests Spain with all its romance; the 'Cid,' the Alhambra, the poets."

"Dear boy! Never mind the poets. Let us think of ourselves. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "they have lighted up the school room. You can just see through the trees," as the light shone out, bright and vivid in the gloaming. "I must fly or some of the girls will be out to look for me, or worse, the governesses. Good-by, dear, then—till to-morrow," and putting her warm young lips to his, she kissed him lovingly, and swiftly passed through the pinewood out of his sight.

With a heavy sigh he slowly made his way down the zigzag pathway into the town, whose lights were twinkling in the summer night. Certainly, he did not look like a bridegroom-elect.

Allen Fitzclare was an orphan, the last of his race; a race that had in the years gone by been powerful and rich. Now they were absolutely unknown. A distant relative, recently deceased, had left him £300. And with this majestic fortune he intended to go to the colonies and make it bring forth a hundred fold, to be laid at the feet of his beautiful Carmen—for hope with goodly prospect feeds the eye, shows from a rising ground possession high." He was only 19, and with the charming confidence of youth imagined himself a poet in embryo, and a fit mate for the only daughter and heiress of Col. Massingbird, now in India.

The love of these two young people was like an arcadian poem, there was nothing material about it; it was love, pure and simple. They never troubled themselves as to any probable anger of relatives, it was their own delicious secret. And to-morrow even if they separated, on the threshold of their marriage, they would still occupy the exalted position of man and wife.

Next morning they repaired to the registrar's and were made one. The registrar shook hands with them and wished them every happiness; but

She kissed him lovingly.

he thought, as he pocketed his handsome fee, "they were the youngest (and handsomest) couple he had ever seen who had reached the mature age of 21 years." And with this reflection he dismissed them from his thoughts.

II.

A year had passed. Carmen Massingbird was to leave school. Her education, so far as actual school work was concerned, was completed.

Col. Massingbird had returned from India, entered parliament, and was now anxiously awaiting the companionship of his cherished daughter and only child.

Carmen had greatly improved this last year. She was now above the medium height, and her figure perfectly proportioned; a tall, graceful woman. She heard constantly from her young husband, letters full of love and enthusiasm. He had entered into partnership with a man at a bush station, and hoped to realize the great fortune which was ever present in his imagination. Carmen wrote pretty frequently. Now that she was leaving school for her father's house, arrangements had to be made about the letters that came so regularly. So her school friend, Emily Landsaid, undertook to forward them, under cover of her own (though this young lady was in happy ignorance of the relationship of the two correspondents). This satisfactorily accomplished, Miss Massingbird dismissed from her mind any further thought of the matter.

What an event it is in the lives of all school girls the day they leave school! One foot, as it were, on the brink of the lovely, unclouded future. What grand possibilities exist for them! What unraveling of future enigmas, all the more delightful for being so vague.

Thus it was the day dawned for Carmen. One of the governesses was to escort her safely to her new home. She felt any regret at parting from the scene hallowed by the memory of Allen Fitzclare!

Not in the very least. She was instead eagerly looking forward to all the delights promised her. Her life for many years had been passed at school, and except for the episode of her short love affair, had been singularly quiet, not to say dull. And Carmen was essentially of a gay, pleasure loving disposition. Her companions envied her, but they loved her nevertheless.

It was the height of the London season—early June in all its beauty. And the charming little house in Mayfair was a worthy abode of the pretty daughter of Col. Massingbird.

An elderly cousin of her father's was to act as chaperon and housekeeper, out to all practical purpose Miss Massingbird was to be the mistress of the house.

"Is papa at home, Cousin Adela?" asked Carmen, as she crossed the threshold of her new home.

"No, my dear. He is at the house, but you will see him at dinner. It grieved him not to be able to receive you in person."

"How I long to see him. But now, Cousin Adela, I want to examine everything. Let us make the tour of the place."

"Have tea now?"

"Oh, no, cousin, presently will do for that."

"Had you not better see your new maid then, my love?"

"Of course! Where is she?"

"In your own apartment. Your boudoir is charming; your dear father has made it a very labor of love. He says nothing is too good for his Carmen."

"Darling old dad." And the tears came into the girl's eyes. "I will try and make him happy, Cousin Adela, indeed I will."

"Well, dear, I think you ought. I am sure it is surprising in these days to see what is done for young people; so different to what it was in my time. We had to take what we could get, and be thankful. I sometimes wonder if you are any the better for it, if it does not make selfish young men and women."

"Now, Cousin Adela, that's quite too bad! It's just like being at school; no moralizing, I beseech you." And giving an affectionate hug to her relation, she ran lightly up the richly carpeted stairs, slowly followed by her more massive cousin (who was stout of limb and short of breath).

Carmen made at once for her boudoir. It opened on a balcony covered over and round with striped awning, filled with choice flowers and tall palms and ferns. The room was hung with dainty blue chintz. Soft, low lounges, many hued rugs, a piano, books, paintings on the walls, charming little details scattered everywhere. A pert little canary suspended his song to inspect his new mistress as she entered upon her domain. But he very lovingly came to the side of his cage when Cousin Adela's large form loomed in the background. In truth it was a very bower of beauty.

"How lovely it is! How I long for papa to enjoy it with me!"

"Here he is, then!" said a hearty voice, as the tall figure of Col. Massingbird pushed aside the soft plush portiere and entered the room. Carmen ran into his arms and embraced him with all her heart.

"Ah, you darling father! It is simply perfect!"

"So it suits my little queen, does it? Not so little either. Let me look at you, Carmen!" and he held her at arm's length and critically examined her. "You will do, Miss Massingbird. I shall have all the young fellows of my acquaintance making up to me now, and no mistake. Ah, little one, you are nearly as beautiful as your mother. If she could only have lived to see her little Carmencita grow up! Yes, you have her eyes exactly, but your skin is fairer, your hair lighter, and you are much taller."

"That's after you, dad."

"But I can't think," continued her father, "where you got that saucy, aggressive nose! It is quite original. Tip tilted is the poetical way, I believe, of describing it."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

(Deferred from last week.)

The New York *Sun* of the 11th inst. contained two columns of experience of one of its reporters who traveled on what s known as the "Trenton Peddle" freight train, which runs at night between Jersey City and Trenton, starting at 11 o'clock, reaching Trenton at 5 next morning. The article is illustrated with vignettes of conductor Titus, engineer Palmer, head brakeman Charley Clark, of this city, and middle brakeman Phillips. After referring to the movements and delays on the route, the reporter gives some opinions and experiences of the train men, in which Clark is quoted as follows:

Clark had received a good squeeze once between two cars of different heights and bruised a leg, but he was nimble and fearless, notwithstanding.

"Do I like braking on a freight train better than on a passenger?" repeated Clark with a slight "hudduh," when asked the question. "Most decidedly. I tried passenger braking once, and got tired of being kicked around. I'm not a-goin' to be any pub ic lackey and wear a dude's uniform. Nothin' like independence, you know. To be sure, we fellows work ten times as hard as the passenger men, and the weather runs pretty bad sometimes. But we get better pay, and I like it better, too. There's a certain fascination about that I can't account for. Once a railroad man always a railroad man. After being at it several years I gave it up for a good position at book-keeping—clean work and easy, you know. I used to live out along the line o' the New Jersey Central, and as I traveled back and forth every day and saw the old boys, a hankerin' that I couldn't resist came over me to try my hand again. It wasn't long before I was back at it, and I'll probably never do anything else."

A charming number of a charming magazine—such must be the general opinion of the April issue of *Our Little Men and Women*. The magazine is as admirably adapted for school supplementary reading as for home use. It is a treasure box of pictures and stories for the little ones beginning to read. Send 5 cents to the publishers, D. Lothrop Company, Boston, for a sample back number. Subscription price $1 a year. *Babyland* by the same publishers, for April is overflowing with good things for the toddlers, with many nice pictures and little stories and jingles suited to baby's eye and ear; it would be difficult to suggest to fathers and mothers a way of investing fifty cents (for a year's subscription) whereby an equal amount of pleasure can be given to the little ones.

After two years of trials and experiments the Pennsylvania Railroad Company has adopted a system for heating the passenger cars by steam, which experts declare to be the best, safest, and surest mode of heating yet devised. By this method of heating every desirable point is gained. A sufficient amount of heat can always be secured, and it can be regulated to any desired temperature. There is no hot water in the pipes to scald or burn in case of accident, and an ample supply of pure fresh air is supplied through the apertures for ventilation. It is expected that all of the passenger cars of the Pennsylvania Railroad will be fitted with this appliance before another winter.

THE NINTH NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS.—General J. Madison Drake's History of the Ninth New Jersey Volunteers, comprising over six hundred octavo pages, will be ready for delivery to subscribers about the middle of April, as a circular from the general announces to his comrades and the public. The history is said to be of a most accurate and complete character, from the date of muster out of the gallant 9th, and abounds in admirable portraits and illustrations of scenes in which the regiment participated. Copies may be obtained from Lieut. Wm. E. Townley, Treasurer, Elizabeth, N. J.

Hon. J. A. Geissenhainer has received from the Navy Department at Washington a communication stating that a vacancy exists in the Naval Academy, from this district. This vacancy may be filled at the recommendation of Mr. Geissenhainer and applications should be made to him on or before the first of May. Applicants must be not under 15 years, nor over 20 years of age when examined for admission, and actual residents of this Congressional district. Accepted candidates will be required to report for examination at the Naval Academy at Annapolis on the 15th of May next.

Connecticut has passed a strict and commendable law to prohibit the filthy and injurious cigarette smoking habit among the boys. It not only fixes a fine