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1903 March 1903

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Post-Office Bulletin.

Mails Close.

6 00 a m; D & C R R for Points North.
8 10 a m; Q A R R for Points West.
9.45 a m; Q A R R for Points East.
11:45 a m; Steamer for River Points.
1:00 p m; Stage for Preston.
1:00 p m. D & C R R for Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R for Points West.
6:20 p m. Q A R R for Points East.

Mails Arrive.

8:25 a m; Q A R R, from Points East.
10:10 a m; Q A R R, from Points West.
11:00 a m; Stage, from Preston.
11:30 a m; Steamer, from River Points.
11:45 m; D & C R R, from Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R, from Points East.
3:34 p m; Q A R R, from Points West.
7:45 p m; D & C R R, from Points North.

GENERAL DIRECTORY.

County Officials.

Judges of the Circuit Court—James A. Pearce, Chief Judge; Edwin H Brown and William R Martin, Associates. Terms—jury, 1st Monday in April and October; non-jury, 2d Monday in January, 4th Monday in June.

Clerk of the Circuit Court—Charles W. Hobbs.

County Commissioners—James B. Wright, President; Wesley Jarrell and Daniel J. Zacharias.

Treasurer and Clerk to the Commissioners Charles H. Whithy.

Judges of the Orphans' Court—John A. Sigler, Chief Judge; Thomas L. Day and Jesse T. Dennis Associates.

Register of Wills, Robert J. Jump.

School Commissioners—Thomas W. Jones, President; Henry C. Fisher and Albert W. Sisk.

School Examiner and Secretary—W. S. Crouse.

State's Attorney—Albert G. Towers.

Sheriff—Isaac L. Dukes.

Professional and Business Cards.

ALBERT G. TOWERS.
State's Attorney for Caroline County,
Denton, Md.

T. PLINY FISHER,
LAW AND COLLECTIONS,
Denton, Md.

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ATTORNEY-AT-LAW
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JOHN W. CLARK,
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Will sell property in Caroline or any of the adjoining counties.

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and Auctioneer,
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Makes Kidneys and Bladder Right

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A WINNER
So It Is Said

And we are trying to win you by fair dealing.

WE are now snugly fixed in the building formerly occupied by Wm. E Greenly, pretty well loaded up with all good things such as are useful in all families. It is useless to enumerate them, instead, we invite you to call and see.

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Then we are using the Check System with all who deal for cash, which entitles them to something of value in their family. Come and learn of this.

Full line of Groceries, sold as low as any can sell them. Finest line of Confectionery in the county either at wholesale or retail prices.

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One thing more. The Gold Medal Bakery is now turning out the best Bread, Cakes, Pies, Buns, etc., ever offered. Baked fresh daily. New line of goods. We hope to see you coming.

BUTTER AND EGGS TAKEN at market prices. Very truly,

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We have just received a car load of

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Flour which we are selling at $4 00 and $4.25 per Barrel. Made from Spring Wheat and cannot be exelled. Try it and you will be convinced. While coming to see, bring your produce and receive best market prices.

We are also headquarters for prime clover seed, $6 90 a bushel.

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We are nicely fitted up for the accommodation of our customers with new goods of all kinds, and are prepared to serve you at short notice.

GROCERIES, PROVISIONS

are our specialties, and we are keeping up our reputation for handling the best

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For the accommodation of our lady friends we are giving special attention to this department and invite an inspection of our stock.

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A cozy lunch room adjoins our store where Oysters are served in all styles, and a full meal or lunch can be prepared at short notice.

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CONSTABLE AND COLLECTOR,
Concord, Md,

A Knight of the Highway

By CLINTON SCOLLARD,
Author of "A Man at Arms," "The Son of a Tory," Etc.

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Philip Rossiter, a young college-bred man, through lack of determination and will-power, had descended to the level of a common tramp. He has stolen a ride on a freight train and by chance gets off at Illica, a town well known to him in his college days.

CHAPTER II.—While lounging on the river bank next day he hears a cry for help and saves a young man, Joe Becraft, from drowning. The latter seeing what Rossiter is and wishing to help him asks Philip to accompany him to the hop-fields where he is going to work. Philip consents to go with him.

CHAPTER III.—They go to a barber in town who improves Philip's appearance and later, in company with Joe's mother, sister and brother, they leave for Mr. Merton's hop-fields.

"Ma ain't over particular," said Joe, but as Rossiter insisted, they turned up at the side of the hotel and sought the stables, where the vagrant made the desired alteration. He could but smile to himself as he was affecting this, the experience was so novel to him. It was many a long day since he had given much heed to what anyone thought of him.

The hotel stood upon a corner, and on two sides of it there was a wide veranda, at one end of which mother and daughter were sitting. The girl was a plain, shy miss of 17, while the mother proved to be a woman of ample proportions, with a worn but kindly face which showed that her path through life had not been among the roses. Her manner towards Rossiter was at first marked by a decided reserve, but when her son explained that he was indebted to "the gentleman" for a very particular favor, she thawed perceptibly, and later, when Rossiter contrived to compliment Joe while the latter was not listening, she quite beamed upon him, and thereafter the new-comer was fully established in her good graces. Though her experience in the world had been limited, like her elder son she was a person of observation, and treated Rossiter with something akin to deference, detecting in him a superiority of breeding.

It was not long before the clock in the city hall not far distant proclaimed the hour of noon, a fact that was reiterated by sundry whistles of different tones in various parts of the city.

"You might as well be gettin' the lunch out, Mamie," said Mrs. Becraft to her daughter. "I presume the boys are ready for it, we had such an early breakfast."

Rossiter now rose, remarking that he would join them later.

"No, you don't," announced Joe Becraft. "You ain't goin' to run off like that. We've got enough for ourselves an' two or three more. Besides, you'll offend Ma if you skip out when they's any eatin' goin' on. She'll take it as a slight to her cookin'."

There was a general laugh at this, and as Mrs. Becraft assured Rossiter that her son knew her failings, he was without much difficulty persuaded to resume his seat. Mamie Becraft soon emerged from the hotel parlor (thus designated by a little strip of painted tin fastened above the door) bearing a capacious basket, which was found to contain an abundance of bread and butter, doughnuts, and cookies. Joe darted across the way and purchased a bag of peaches from a fruit vender, and then the al fresco feast proceeded with much gusto.

"You see what I have to provide for, Mr. Rossiter," said Mrs. Becraft, smiling at Jim, who was rapidly making away with his fourth fried cake. "But, dear me, their appetite now is nothin' to what it will be when we get into the hop fields. I don't know what Mrs. Merton will say when she sees how her pies an' things disappear. Did you ever hear of the Mertons? It's to their place we are goin', you know."

"He's goin' too," put in Joe.

"Oh, indeed! I didn't understand," said Mrs. Becraft. "I suppose mebbe you're acquainted with the people?"

"No, I'm not," said Rossiter.

"Well, Mr. Merton is one of the largest hop growers near Hintonville. His farm is about 2½ miles from the village."

"You've been there, then?"

"Yes, last year, Mamie an' I, but the boys never have."

Soon others began to arrive at the hotel, and by half-past one as many as 25 people—men, women, boys and girls—had gathered on or about the piazza. A few were acquaintances of Mrs. Becraft and her daughter and there was a slight interchange of talk. A subdued air of expectancy, however, pervaded the company, and the eyes of many, of the male portion more particularly, were constantly turned in the direction of Kenesco street. Just before two there was a cry of "Here he comes!" followed by a general movement towards the railing on the part of those upon the veranda. Over the heads of two boys who had crowded in front of him Rossiter beheld a long wagon with seats running longitudinally, drawn by two powerful horses, moving leisurely towards the hotel. The driver, perched upon a seat considerably higher than the body of the wagon, swayed from one side to another as the clumsy vehicle rattled over the cobble-stone pavement, the smooth asphalt having not yet been laid in front of the Cottage hotel.

"It's Jack Parmelee," Rossiter heard Mamie Becraft say to one of her brothers. "He's Mr. Merton's brother-in-law, an' oversees the farm."

The individual in question, an energetic appearing man of about 45, his hat pushed back upon his head, the dust clinging to his brown beard and causing it to seem flecked with gray, presently pulled his horses up before the hotel and surveyed those gathered upon the sidewalk and veranda.

"All here?" he demanded, his gruff voice sounding as though it might have proceeded from his boots. "Well, pile in!" he added, not giving anyone time to answer. "Any trunks?"

Those who had belongings hastened to load them into the wagon; then there was a good-natured scramble for seats. Rossiter assisted Joe with the two satchels and large basket containing the possessions of the Becraft family, and then found himself seated between the two brothers, with Mrs. Becraft and her daughter opposite.

"All right there?" inquired Jack Parmelee, surveying the load from his superior height with a glow of satisfaction.

"Right!" cried someone.

"Get up!" cried the animated Jehu. The big horses braced themselves; the heavy wagon moved; and the journey to the hop fields was begun.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE MERTONS'.

It was a long and wearisome ride. There had been a protracted season of drought, and beyond the city the fields lay scorched and sere, while a white coating of dust covered everything by the roadside. Even the leaves of the trees, motionless in the sultry air, seemed burnt and lifeless. Overhead hung a blazing sun. As they plodded forward, the horses being unable to move faster than a walk, owing to the heavy load, clouds of dust rose about them. The very atmosphere was permeated with floating particles, and the distance was blurred and vague.

For nine miles the road ascended gradually, part of the time following the course of the abandoned Susquenango canal, part of the time in close proximity to the track of the Suswego and Eastern railway. There was little conversation. Occasionally one of the young men near the driver's seat was heard to berate the heat in a subdued, hopeless fashion, and there was a rare interchange of chaff between these same young men and a lone yokel shouting from a farm-yard by the highway. Once or twice a pugnacious sheperd dog rushed out and barked at them, but no one gave heed to the implied challenge.

It was nearing five o'clock when they reached the shady park at Hintonville. Very familiar this spot looked to Rossiter, for it was at the institution situated upon the lofty hill a mile and a half from the pretty little town that he had spent the four years of his college life. There was the church in which he had once taken part in a prize contest before an audience made up chiefly of beaming and fluttering maidens and their escorts. How very far away it all seemed! Quite like another existence. And he was coming back to the scene in a hop-wagon! It was not much as he had pictured his return when he had lingered one night in the moonlight by yonder fountain a few weeks before his graduation.

He glanced about as they passed up the residence side of the park, thinking he might recognize some of the townsfolk, for he had known quite a number of the citizens when he was in college, but there were few to be seen, and among them he distinguished no one whose figure he remembered. Beyond the trees and the strip of greensward, a baggage-man was driving at an ambling gait in the direction of the station, but it was not the eccentric little Irishman, "Barney," who had been wont to deliver his trunk in the old days at the top of three flights of stairs with so many remarkable expletives. A feeling of disappointment and loneliness seized upon Rossiter, a sense of being apart and aloof from the rest of the world. This was the one place of all places where he had felt that there was sure to be some one to greet him cheerfully should he ever return, yet he beheld no one who stood out clear in his memory. Doubtless there were those whom he would know and who might recall him, but they were not in evidence, and he had expected that they would be.

Joe Becraft noticed the dejection in his face, and, misunderstanding the cause of it, appealed to his mother to know if she had not said that their journey's end was but a short distance beyond Hintonville.

"Well, it ain't an awful sight further," she answered, "but it's mostly hill."

Mrs. Becraft had been wielding a large, loosely jointed fan energetically for most of the nine miles they had traversed, and was well-nigh in a state of collapse. A little rill of perspiration was making its way down her rounded face just in front of each ear. There was a ring of heat about both of her eyes, and yet she did not complain."

"You look about done up, Ma," said her elder son, transferring his attention from Rossiter.

She smiled at him resignedly.

"I don't know's I'd care to go on many more miles like this," she said. "I guess we'll all be glad to get there."

Some of the young men were anxious to pause for a drink of beer, but the driver informed them that if they did so they would have to follow on foot, as he should not wait, consequently no one quitted the wagon. As they left Hintonville behind the ground began to rise in a long slope, for instead of pursuing their way along the valley in which the town nestled they bore to the left towards a lofty range of hills. The sun was slowly westering, and beyond the brooding vale where the winding Oskenonto flowed, on the crown of the first abrupt rise Rossiter saw the slanting rays kindle to golden fire the spire and vane of the old college chapel. At the sight of the shifting wind-indicator one of his student pranks flashed into his mind, a thing that had dropped from his memory for years—how in the lazy spring afternoons he used to place a chair in the deep window of his bedroom and, having lowered the upper sash, pepper away with his revolver at the veering arrow.

"Now that I'm so near," he thought, his eyes still upon the spire and the trees that hid the other college buildings, "I must walk over some Sunday and have a look at the dear old place."

A little breeze sprang up as they ascended, stirring the leaves in the apple-orchards, and causing the foliage of two ancient poplars that towered where the road forked to glisten here and there like quicksilver.

"Do you see those trees?" exclaimed Jack Parmelee, suddenly turning to his weary wagon load. "Well, from the way they act we're goin' to have rain afore to-morrow mornin', an' a mighty big blessin' it'll be too!"

A peacock with spread tail paraded its vanity before them as they passed this point, and as they were bending to the right gave a long, raucous cry which was the occasion of a vast amount of amusement among many of the young people who had never heard the bird's peculiar call before.

"Now, we're sure of it," said Jack Parmelee, "Mister Peacock's an authority on the rain question. It's luck all around—better hops an' better pickin'."

"What good'll the rain do the hops now?" one of the prospective pickers inquired. "They ain't goin' to grow any more, be they?"

"It'll cool the air an' keep 'em from mouldin'. I've been mighty scart of 'em for a day or two," answered the driver. "Such a spell o' heat raises thunder with 'em sometimes."

Several hop fields had already been passed, and there was now a yard upon either side of the road. Everyone began to regard the vines, each pole with its hops like a swarm of bees at the top, with an increased interest. When these fields had been left behind Mamie Becraft and a number of others commenced craning their necks as though they thought that their destination must be in sight.

"There's the house!" cried one.

"I can see the hop-kiln!" exclaimed another, and in spite of the uncertain motion of the wagon over the stony road several mounted the seats for the purpose of obtaining a better view.

"Yes," Jack Parmelee remarked, "we're about there, and I reckon supper'll be ready."

This announcement was hailed with various comments of satisfaction. The jaded horses seemed to realize that they too were about to be rewarded for their part in the tiresome journey, and struck into a brisker walk. Everyone forgot, for the instant, the heat and the discomfort, and became animated and alert. Rossiter caught something of the excitement of the moment, and rose partly from his seat as the wagon approached a large, white farm-house set midway in a spacious yard. In front were several tall locust trees; in the rear, upon the nearer side, stood the barns, the hop-kiln with its queer ventilator upon the top, and various other outbuildings. Beyond, there appeared to be a garden and orchard, while directly opposite was a huge hop field.

As they entered the yard a robust, smooth-shaven man came out upon the piazza at the side of the house, closely followed by two women. The man, who was in shirt sleeves and wore a ribbonless wide-brimmed hat of straw, paused with his lips parted in a smile, his hands upon his hips, and his feet spread wide, and surveyed the wagonload. The women, sisters evidently, slender, kindly faced, and rather short of stature, shaded their eyes and examined the new-comers with curiosity and interest.

"There's Mr. and Mrs. Merton," said Mrs. Becraft to Jim. "That's Mrs. Merton this way; the other's her sister, Miss Parmelee, who lives with 'em. They's a daughter, but I don't see her."

"All right, Jack?" asked Mr. Merton, descending the porch steps.

"Yes, all right," returned Parmelee, leaping from his perch and giving himself a shake.

"Must 'a' had a pretty warm an' dusty drive."

"Golly, guess we did!"

"Get right down, all o' you," said Mr. Merton. "Mrs. Merton will look after the women, and Jack, here, will take care of the men. Hey, boys!" he cried, motioning to two farm-hands who were standing in the door way of the horse barn, "hurry up and give us a lift."

"It was a great relief to Rossiter to stretch his cramped limbs. As he glanced about, he saw evidences of thrift everywhere, in the neat yard, in the trim sheds, in the overflowing mows, and in the recently painted, ramblingly spacious house. His vagabond experience had trained his eye in these matters, and he could usually read from the exteriors what treatment he was likely to receive. Here he knew that he should fare well. He was already glad that he had decided to come.

Having seen the hop-wagon unloaded and the team led away by one of the farm hands, and having watched the women and girls disappear in Mrs. Merton's wake, Rossiter whirled about to find the male portion of his companions gathering up their possessions preparatory to following Jack Parmelee. He had his own small bundle in his hand, and having joined the Becraft boys, who had been assisting their mother and sister, the three went forward together. Mr. Merton's right-hand man led them along the driveway to the rear of the house, where he struck into

"WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT?" ASKED JOE.

a path which traversed a small orchard that was separated by a high picket fence from one much more extensive. At the left-hand lower corner of the lesser orchard, and within a stone's throw of the farm-house, was a long, rather low one-storied building.

"Here's your sleepin'-quarters," said Jack Parmelee, throwing open the door and revealing a double row of snowy cots. "You'll have to do your washin' up to the barn. I'll show you after you pick your places and stow your traps," and therewith he left them.

The floor was scrupulously clean; there was mosquito-netting at all of the windows; and there were three lamps, with reflectors, for lighting the room. Rossiter and the two Becrafts secured cots at the farther end of the apartment, and then, having made themselves acquainted with the basin and towel arrangements at the barn, went in to the large kitchen, which had been cleared for an eating-room, to a plentiful supper.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Joe Becraft, as he and Rossiter strolled, smoking, down the road in the afterglow, having satisfied to the full their by no means slender appetites. "I say it's the slickest thing I've ever struck, by long odds."

"I don't fancy we shall find much to complain of, unless it's the hop-picking. What's that like?"

"Oh, that's fun. There's no work about it. All you do is just to strip the hops from the vines, that some chap called a 'pole-puller' brings you, an' chuck 'em into your box. You mustn't put many leaves in, though. They dont' like that."

"It doesn't sound difficult."

"Difficult! Well, no; but I can tell you it's quite a trick to pick so that you can turn out your three boxes a day. They used to allow you to put some leaves in, an' then a fellow could manage four or five, but now it's different. They're darn particular."

"Let's see, what do we get?"

"Thirty-five cents a box an' 'grub.' If you boarded yourself, you'd probably get 50. They usually have a lot of people who pick after that fashion come up from Hintonville, so I understand. That's how they manage in most yards hereabouts."

"I'm really quite keen on it," said Rossiter, with a touch of Joe's enthusiasm.

"You must try and get at a box next to ours. You see four boxes are generally joined together, made so, consequently there's only room for our family at one of the combination things," announced Becraft.

"Oh, that's how it is!"

"Yes, that's the way they work it."

The little breeze that sprung up just before their arrival had died with the going down of the sun, and the fever of the day was still in the air. Far away beyond the western hills a black cloud was beginning to invade the sky, and Rossiter concluded that the prophecy of the silvering popular leaves and the trumpeting peacock was likely to be fulfilled before morning. In the parched and dusty grass at the roadside a cricket chorus was ringing clear and cheery, and a late locust was violining in the stubble of a barley field. They walked for perhaps half a mile before they turned, Becraft commenting in his frank way upon the pleasure he was anticipating in his sojourn of two or three weeks in the hop-fields, and telling Rossiter of the monotony, the colorlessness of his ordinary daily life.

"Do you know," he said, with a wave of his hand, "if it wa'n't for somethin' like this every year or two, I'd be a fit subject for an asylum. It often seems, when I leave the mill at night, as though I was never goin' to get the clatter o' machinery out o' my head. I hear the wheels hummin' in the dark, an' see the straps spinnin' round an' round. Then I begin to think o' the country, the smell o' things"—and he drank in the pungent aroma of the hop-fields with infinite content—"an' after a while I'm all right. There's nothin' like havin' somethin' free an' healthy to look forward to."

"You'd thrive on a farm, wouldn't you? Haven't you ever thought of trying it?"

"Oh, yes! But there's no money in farmin' unless you've got a good-ish-sized place, an' then my girl—I've got a girl, you know," he interjected—"she don't take much stock in livin' out away from folks."

Reticent as Rossiter was in regard to his own affairs (and he felt that he had good cause to be), it was very pleasant to have this young man, to whom he had been an utter stranger until that morning, talk to him in this confiding strain. It made him have a new and surprising sense of half-confidence in himself.

As they were silent for a moment, they became conscious that a vehicle was approaching behind them. They glanced back, and saw not far distant, and drawing near at a rapid rate, a pair of large sorrels attached to a light surrey. They retreated farther into the grass at the road-edge to avoid the dust from the passing carriage, and, glancing up as it swept by, observed that it contained a driver and two young ladies. The one who sat upon the side nearest them let her eyes rest upon them for an instant, then she, her companion, and, indeed, the whole conveyance, were lost in a whirl of dust. Rossiter watched the traveling cloud until the horses and the surrey emerged from it at the Merton's gate.

"Did you notice that girl?" remarked the younger of the two men.

"Yes, I did."

"Gee, but wa'n't she a hummer!"

"She certainely was," agreed Rossiter, amused at his companion's tribute to feminine beauty.

The calm of the growing dusk now cast its influence over them, and there was little said as they retraced their steps to the farm.

CHAPTER V.

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

A gruff clamoring from without, and a tremendous thumping on the side of the building, awakened Rossiter the following day. The unusual sensation of finding himself in a clean and comfortable bed created for a brief space a great wonder in his mind, and it was not until he espied Joe Becraft sitting upon the edge of his cot yawning and stretching himself that he became fully aware where he was lying. The instant he scrambled out upon the floor he knew that the air had changed during the night, for a fresh breeze swept in an adjacent window. Drops of rain glistened in the pale dawn on the grass where it was not sheltered by the trees, but Rossiter discovered when he went towards the barn for a morning scrub that it was only the edge of he shower that had touched the Merton farm. The atmosphere, however, had cleared and the dust was laid, so that everyone was in excellent humor.

As he came out from breakfast with the Becrafts two men were bearing the last double hop-box into the yard across the way where the picking was to begin. Presently Jack Parmelee appeared and announced that everything was in readiness, whereat there was a general movement towards the yard. The women and girls had provided themselves with great sun-hats and cotton gloves, and Rossiter observed that some of the boys had also procured a protection for their heads.

"Does one need gloves of any sort?" he inquired of Joe Becraft. "I don't see that you have any."

"Jim an' I never use 'em," was the reply. "If the vines bother you at first, you'll find your skin'll get toughened to 'em after a little."

Jack Parmelee had the apportionment of the pickers, and at Rossiter's request he was placed at a box adjoining his friends, where he could talk across the rows to them. He had for his companions a carpenter from Illica, who was out of a job, and his wife and son, a boy of Jim Becraft's age. He fell into pleasant conversation with them, and as they had frequently been in the hop-fields before, they gave him such simple instruction as was necessary in regard to picking. Shortly after operations began an additional 15 pickers arrived from Hintonville, and the scene became an animated one. Cries of "Hoppole!" rang up and down the field. The pole-pullers, with their hop-dogs (an instrument for pulling poles consisting of a toothed clamp attached to a stout strap hung about the neck), hastened hither and thither supplying the needs of the pickers, stripping and stacking the poles as fast as the hops were removed from the vines. Acquaintances shouted greetings and gossip from one box to another. Then, as the sun grew high, awnings were suspended for those who objected to the heat.

Rossiter thoroughly enjoyed it all. The odor of the hops was delightful to him, and erelong he found his fingers growing nimble, so that he was gratified to see from the pile in his box that he was holding his own fairly well with his fellow-toilers. By and by, shortly after half-past eight, some one shouted "Hop-sack!"

"My goodness!" exclaimed the carpenter's wife, "that's quick work! They must have 'dumped.' Suppose we try it, Ben, and see how much we've got."

To "dump," Rossiter discovered, meant to empty the hops from one partially filled box into another, so that they should have less time to settle. The carpenter at once proceeded to carry out his wife's suggestion, but when he had finished they still lacked two inches of having one level box.

"Let's hustle," said he, "perhaps we'll get the second." They made their fingers fly, and soon he, too, was yelling "Hop-sack!"

Jack Parmelee speedily appeared with several bags of coarse stuff under his arm, into one of which he emptied the hops from the now brimming box. Then he handed out a strip of card-board upon which was printed

ONE BOX OF HOPS.
RICHARD E. MERTON.

This the carpenter, with much evident satisfaction, slipped into one of the pockets of his vest. By 11 o'clock Rossiter also had the pleasure of pocketing one of those little tickets, and he began wondering how many he should be able to accumulate during his tarry at the Mertons'.

The afternoon picking had been but a short time in progress when Rossiter noticed two farm hands crossing the road carrying a hop-box arranged for two pickers. This was placed a few rows in advance of his own. Erelong he saw two girls emerge from the house and come towards the hop-field. A glance told him that they were not ordinary frequenters of the hop harvest, and then it flashed into his mind that they were the young ladies who had passed Joe Becraft and himself the evening before. As they advanced he had an excellent view of them, for he was facing in the direction from which they were approaching. The one whose beauty he and Becraft had remarked upon was tall and slight, and carried herself with a singular grace and charm. The great hat which shaded her features and was tied beneath her chin showed her countenance as though in a frame—the delicately arched brows, the appealing eyes, the refined and sensitive mouth. Her skin was unnaturally pale, as though from illness, yet she betrayed no further evidences of ill-health, laughing and chatting with the one who accompanied her in an animated way. The other girl—Rossiter judged that both might be 24 or 25—was much shorter and plumper than her companion. There were roses in her checks, and while with some she would hardly have passed as pretty, there was about her a wholesome attractiveness.

Rossiter was tempted to turn and watch them, but restrained himself from doing so. He chanced to look towards the Becraft box and caught Joe's eye. That young man gave a little emphatic nod of his head which told its story of admiration.

"I shall have to threaten to report to his sweetheart," thought Rossiter.

"What can they be doing in the hop-yard?" he mused.

His unspoken query was answered an instant later by the carpenter's wife, who said to her husband:

"That's Miss Merton, the one with the red cheeks, and the other's a Miss Densmore, a cousin of the Merton's from Illica, who's come out to pick for her health. I heard Mrs. Merton tell some one so last night."

During most of the afternoon the face of Miss Merton's cousin was before Rossiter, although he did not actually see her again till towards the time for the picking to cease, when she and Miss Merton passed on their way to the house. It was her eyes especially that haunted him—the searching tenderness in them. That he should dwell upon her thus was quite as ridiculous, he confessed to himself, as was Becraft's display of susceptibility. Rossiter had long considered women, at least those of the class with which he had once associated, as having gone out of his life forever. Indeed, from the time, a year and a half before he had cut loose from his kin and all social ties, when, on learning that his fortune had vanished, the girl to whom he had given his heart had thrown him over, he had regarded the sex from an isolated standpoint. The love of beauty in its many forms which had been born in him, and which no series of experiences could eradicate, had often, in his vagabondage, riveted his attention upon a lovely woman, but he had always considered her from the artist's position. That, after all this time, a face should so take hold upon him struck him with a sense of the preposterous, he who had sunk to the level of the veriest dregs of humanity—a common tramp. He was inclined to shout aloud with mirth.

Two days before he would have sworn that such a thing was beyond the bounds of possibility, but even in the life of a vagrant two days

(continued on 4th page.)

Health

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