

tion: This melody is sung very rapidly, starting with two slower and more inflected notes than the rest, and the whole rondeau seeming to me like "teék-caré-l-trill-lu-lill-lill-lillu!" After the last of May the chewink's impromptu is seldom heard, but yet, when caring for the second brood in July, they often become decidedly vocal, and I have listened to them as late as Independence Day.

No one ever seems to visit the Old Swamp's dominion, since everyone appears to regard it as an offensive slough usurping the place of a beautiful meadow, and, perhaps, they are forever recalling, when beholding it, the famous though allegorical Slough of Despond. If a person of such mind will study the swamp in its many aspects of the year, he will surely come to regard it with more favor if that love of all nature has been inborn with his soul. He will soon consider this

swamp as more and more attractive when he probes deeper into its life, learning how in this morass there are things far beyond his comprehension, all working with that perfect harmony realized only in the natural world. Even in such a waste place of the fields, nature has a thousand features to teach the rambler how that he may have higher aspirations, and how that the only thoughts worthy of being entertained are the noble ones. To the stroller who has the power of feeling nature's heart warmly throbbing against his own, she will whisper that all her moods are wholesome and a thousand leagues removed from sensuality.

With the entrance of night, the fireflies sparkle in all the swampy recesses, and the will-o'-the-wisp, to further the magic and mystery, after the light of day has departed, searches over the marsh with his lantern.

A SPECULATION IN ZINC

By Frank Neilson

Mr. Collins, of Collins & Hopkins, Real Estate & Loans, stroked his long "Burnsides" reflectively, and glanced at the despondent Hopkins reprovingly.

"Brace up, Hop," he said. "I'm ashamed of you. Because a young lady declines to sell a half section of Missouri land is no reason why you should tear your hair and smash the office furniture. Look here, Hop. For ten years we've been making profitable deals for other people. Now comes the opportunity to make our own fortunes, and if we can't engineer this deal against a girl we'd better quit the business."

"But what can we do? We've offered more than the market value of the land and she refused to sell 'because pa and ma are buried on the old place.' They'll probably stay there, won't they? Don't expect them to rise from the tomb and hustle themselves off the ancestral domain to accommodate us, do you? And we're out five hundred hard dollars now

for the tip. If his company discovers that Thompson has betrayed them they'll put the girl on before they'll let us get the land. What do you propose to do? Forge a deed?"

"Don't talk nonsense, Hop, and don't talk so loud. The clerks will hear you. I've got an idea. Let's analyze this case. A woman owning a half section of land is not allowed to remain long unmarried, especially in a rural community. Therefore this Miss Minerva Edgerton is young. Her letter indicates some education. Her reasons for not selling show that she is sentimental, therefore susceptible. Born and reared in that out-of-the-way corner she is ignorant of business methods and the ways of the wicked world. Young, ignorant, sentimental and susceptible—why, Hop, it's a cinch—if we can find the right man—one that we can trust absolutely.

"She's beautiful; and therefore to be woo'd. She is a woman; therefore to be won."

The scowl on Hopkins's face was gradually displaced by an expression of hopefulness.

"It might work," he said doubtfully. "But where's the man? How would Richards answer?"

Collins shook his head. "Wouldn't do. Too risky. He has all the city graces to capture a rustic maiden's affection, but we'd have to explain everything to him, and then—well, would he play fair with us? It's a matter of millions, you know."

There was a long silence. Then Collins said decisively:

"I've found the man."

"Who?"

"Well, *I* call him Hop. His other friends call him Charley. His wife insists upon C. Connell Hopkins."

"What—who—I—want *me* to commit bigamy—or get a divorce—from your own sister?"

"Hold on—did I say anything about divorce—or bigamy? You'll not have to marry the girl. Capture her young affections—set the day if necessary—and she'll sign the deed upon your advice. Then you skip. We'll cover up your tracks all right. She'll sniffle awhile and then marry some jay that wants her money. Nothing criminal about it. She gets her money—full market price for farm land. We discover the ore later—by accident. It's the only safe way, Hop. We can't trust anyone, and why should we divide the profits? It's easy, and it means a fortune to both of us."

"I guess you're right," Hopkins said, after a moment's thought. "I don't fancy the job, but I can do it. You arrange the details and I'll take the next train."

"All right, my boy. Notify me when you've landed her and I'll renew the offer. Send all communications through Orton of Springfield. And not a word of this to Laura. She might write or wire and excite suspicion. In a little town like that nothing can be kept secret. Tell her you're called suddenly to South America—tell her anything except the truth. Good-bye, old boy—and don't miss that train."

Thirty days afterward the ambitious Mr. Collins ripped open a large envelope bearing the Springfield, Mo., post-mark and extracted therefrom a sealed envelope

containing the first report of the absent adventurer:

"New Shanghai, Mo., July 10th, 1901.

Dear Coll: I'm It. She was offish for awhile, but I've got her going now, and any dance, picnic or spelling bee that we miss must be miles away and the roads muddy. Give me two weeks more—then renew your bid. Why not send deed and draft at same time? That will let me off sooner. Can't stand this much longer.

Say, Coll, as an "analyzer" you are a miserable failure. "Young—sentimental—susceptible." O, Lord! Minnie, my own Minnie, (to others she is "Nerve"), is as sentimental and susceptible as a wild buffalo, and if she ever sees thirty again she'll have to begin over. She is a bird—of the Dodo variety. Tips the beam at 185; all bone and sinew. Hands like Swift's Premium. Red hair. Squints. Voice like a fog horn, and the disposition of a demon. For heaven's sake be cautious, Coll, for if this gentle gazelle ever gets into our game you'll need a new partner. O, I'm up against it for sure, but we get that land. I'm going to run up to Springfield for a couple of days' rest and a sight of the upper regions again. My publishers are in Springfield, you know. I'm an author, Coll. Down here getting material for a new book. My name is Charles H. Connell. See? Tell Laura to not worry, and you hustle that deed, etc., in two weeks from date.

Yours sufferingly,

Hop.

P. S.—She didn't write that letter. She got the P. M. to write it. He was sparking her and I had to cut him out. She can't write anything but her name, and she prints that.

H."

Mr. Collins chuckled softly, leaned back in his easy chair, and clasped his fat red hands over his rotund front. With closed eyes he saw castles spring from barren Missouri lands—castles of zinc with turrets of copper. Steam yachts, automobiles, racing stables and all the luxuries of the "gilded gang" passed in review before his ecstatic vision, transporting him to a delicious dream-land from which he was suddenly and cruelly

recalled by the unannounced entrance of Mrs. Hopkins.

Now, if he had been wide awake and more prompt in concealing that letter, or if Mrs. Hopkins's eyes had been less keen, the post office at New Shanghai might not have received a letter, directed to C. Connell Hopkins, bearing upon its upper left hand corner a request that it be returned, if not called for, to Mrs. C. Connell Hopkins, 1313 Lakeview Ave., Chicago, Ill.

And if the postmaster had not been deposed in the affections of Miss Minerva he might not have aroused the demon of jealousy in that lady's bosom by communicating his suspicions.

For many generations the adventurous ancestors of Minerva had opposed the wily savage of the forest and the meddlesome revenue officers of an inquisitive government. Suspicion, caution and prompt action were the natural heritages of the offspring. Minerva resolved to investigate.

The dashing Hopkins returned from Springfield to be informed that his lady-love had been called to the bedside of a distant relative, and to receive from the scrutinizing postmaster two letters similarly addressed and displaying the Chicago postmark. Startled, and following the most natural impulse, he indiscreetly accepted the proffered letters. The next instant he realized his error, but it was too late to amend it, and the postmaster's face was a revelation. Hurrying to his room he hastily opened the letter last mailed.

"You and Tom," it ran, after the usual preliminaries, "think yourselves very clever, but I've fooled both of you; and until you explain your mysterious behavior I intend to write you regularly.

* * * At last I've found a lovely girl, or rather she found me, for she came to the door looking for work. I don't mean lovely to the eye, for she is a giantess, and she squints and has red hair; nor to the ear, for she has a horrid voice, but she's *such* a cook, and *so* kind to the children. They tell her everything. She saw your picture on the wall and asked the children so many questions about you—where you were—how long you had been

gone—your occupation—that I was really provoked when Tommy told me.

"One circumstance that I don't like—she gave her name as Mary Smith, but to-day I heard her muttering to herself, when she didn't know I was about, and she said, 'I'll fix him before to-morrow night or my name ain't Minerva Edgerton'"—

Here the shriek of an incoming train startled the stupefied Hopkins into immediate action. It occurred to him that a train that comes in almost invariably goes out, and he started toward the station with great earnestness, leaving behind him a large roll of fake manuscript and numerous clouds of dust. He carried with him an intuition amounting to a conviction that a cyclone was scheduled for that immediate vicinity and was almost due. The direction of the train was immaterial to him so that it went away from New Shanghai and went at once.

Half way to the station he suddenly executed a lateral movement and cast his panting form behind the shelter of a friendly hedge. A tall, bony female had swung round the corner ahead of him. She was dusty and travel stained. A straw hat decorated with fluttering blue ribbons and surmounted by a mass of faded artificial red roses was perched upon one side of the fiery head and pulled far down over the corrugated brow. The lower jaw protruded aggressively, and the voluminous mouth opened and closed regularly with suggestive gnashing of teeth. As she strode rapidly along the dusty road her gaze was fixed with savage intensity upon the distant village, and her massive right hand, grasping a frayed carpet bag, rose and fell in agitated motion as though threatening an invisible foe.

The apparition had barely passed him when the locomotive signaled departure, and Hopkins arose and sneaked hurriedly along the hedge. A recumbent pig noisily voiced his protest at being roused from repose, betraying the fugitive. Hopkins, glancing backward fearfully, heard a howl of fury and saw a tall figure enveloped in clouds of dust sweeping down upon him. Then Hopkins threw

his whole soul into his legs. Minerva ditto. As they sprinted by the station, passengers, train-crew and loafing villagers shouted encouragement.

"Hit it up, 'Nerv, you're a gainin'. We're bettin' on you."

"More steam, old boy. She'll git you in three more jumps."

Lucky it was for Hopkins that he succeeded in grasping the rear platform as the train pulled out. Even then the mad, wild gallop of the avenger might have

carried her to victory had not the engineer been in haste to make up lost time. As the gap widened a long right arm swung upward like the beam of a catapult and a carpetbag hurtled through the air, materially assisted the exhausted Hopkins in his efforts to open the coach door.

That night Mr. Collins awoke trembling from a hideous nightmare. He had been crushed to death by the crashing downfall of a mighty castle, a castle of zinc with turrets of copper.

THE ROMANCE OF THE ONION

By W. C. Russell

Undoubtedly the onion is the oldest vegetable known to mankind. The native plant, the *allium cepa*, the parent of all cultivated onions, is not a native of this country. Cortes, when relating incidents of his brilliant conquest in Mexico, is reported by Humboldt to have said that he saw onions in the market place of the ancient Tenochtitlan, and that the Mexicans called these onions xonacatl. But careful inquiry shows that the name xonacatl does not apply to our cultivated species of *allium*. In the seventeenth century only one single *allium* was reported from Jamaica, and that was our species, and was in a garden with other vegetables from Europe. Acosta, in his "Natural History of the Indies," says expressly that the onions of Peru were brought from Europe. To Europe, then, we must go on the track of the first onion, and any European will say that onions have always been cultivated there.

Shakespeare mentioned the onion. In his "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Bottom the weaver, giving final direction to Quince the carpenter, Flute the bellows-mender, Snout the tinker, and Starveling the tailor—all humble folks who were about to present a play before the duke and his party—after telling them to go home and attend to this and the other, says:

"And, most dear actors, eat no onions, nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy."

When Helena, at the close of the "All's Well That Ends Well," finds at the same time her husband and mother, old Lafeu exclaims:

"Mine eyes smell onions; I shall weep anon!"

In the introduction to the "Taming of the Shrew," the lord sending instructions to his page to enact the part of wife to the drunkard whom they are to befool, says:

"Bid him shed tears
And if the boy have not a woman's gift,
To rain a shower of commanded tears,
An onion will do well for such a shift."

Shall we find our first onion in England? No; its very name tells us that it is not a native of Britain. Onion is merely the English way of pronouncing the French *oignon*, and by the French, at some time or other, the onion bulb was brought into England. Chaucer, writing five hundred years ago, mentioned the onion as a well-known domestic vegetable. Another three hundred years takes us back to the Norman Conquest, and I think we may take another two hundred and say that a thousand years ago the onion was