

stories, were the first tangible recompense my pen brought me.

"It is a start, and I mean to keep on," I find written in my old journal of that year. "Oh, I wonder if I shall ever be able to do anything worth while in the way of writing. It is my dearest ambition."

After leaving Prince of Wales College I taught school for a year in Bideford, Prince Edward Island. I wrote a good deal and learned a good deal, but still my stuff came back, except from two periodicals the editors of which evidently thought that literature was its own reward, and quite independent of monetary considerations. I often wonder that I did not give up in utter discouragement. At first I used to feel dreadfully hurt when a story or poem over which I had laboured and agonized came back, with one of those icy little rejection slips. Tears of disappointment would come in spite of myself, as I crept away to hide the poor, crumpled manuscript in the depths of my trunk. But after a while I got hardened to it and did not mind. I only set my teeth and said "I will succeed." I believed in myself and I struggled on alone, in secrecy and silence. I never told my ambitions and efforts and failures to any one. Down, deep down, under all discouragement and rebuff, I knew I would "arrive" some day.

In the autumn of 1895 I went to Halifax and spent the winter taking a selected course in English literature at Dalhousie College. Through the winter came a "Big Week" for me. On Monday I received a letter from *Golden Days*, a Philadelphia juvenile, accepting a short story I had sent there and enclosing a cheque for five dollars. It was the first money my pen had ever earned; I did not squander it in riotous living, neither did I invest it in necessary boots and gloves. I went up town and bought five volumes of poetry with it—Tennyson, Byron, Milton, Longfellow, Whittier. I wanted something I could keep for ever in memory of having "arrived."

ON Wednesday of the same week I won the prize of five dollars offered by the *Halifax Evening Mail* for the best letter on the subject, "Which has the greater patience—man or woman?"

My letter was in the form of some verses, which I had composed during a sleepless night and got up at three o'clock in the wee sma' hours to write down. On Saturday the *Youth's Companion* sent me a cheque for twelve dollars for a poem. I really felt quite bloated with so much wealth. Never in my life, before or since have I been so rich!

After my Dalhousie winter I taught school for two more years. In those two years I wrote scores of stories, generally for Sunday School publications and juvenile periodicals. The following entry from my journal refers to this period:

"I have grubbed away industriously all this summer and ground out stories and verses on days so hot that I feared my very marrow would melt and my gray matter be hopelessly sizzled up. But oh, I love my work! I love spinning stories, and I love to sit by the window of my room and shape some 'airy fairy' fancy into verse. I have got on well this summer and added several new journals to my list. They are a varied assortment, and their separate tastes all have to be catered to. I write a great many juvenile stories. I like doing these, but I should like it better if I didn't have to drag a 'moral' into most of them. They won't sell without it, as a rule. So in the moral must go, broad or subtle, as suits the fibre of the particular editor I have in view. The kind of juvenile story I like best to write—and read, too, for the matter of that—is a good, jolly one, 'art for art's sake,' or rather 'fun for fun's sake,' with no insidious moral hidden away in it like a pill in a spoonful of jam!"

It was not always hot weather when I was writing. During one of those winters of school teaching I boarded in a very cold farmhouse. In the evenings, after a day of strenuous school work, I would be too tired to write. So I religiously arose an hour earlier in the mornings for that purpose. For five months I got up at six o'clock and dressed by lamplight. The fires would not yet be on, of course, and the house would be very cold. But I would put on a heavy coat, sit on my feet to keep them from freezing, and with fingers so cramped that I could scarcely hold the pen, I would write my "stunt" for the day. Sometimes it would be a poem in which I would carol blithely of blue skies and rippling brooks and flowery meads! Then I would thaw out my hands, eat breakfast and go to school.

When people say to me, as they occasionally do, "Oh, how I envy you your gift, how I wish I could write as you do," I am inclined to wonder, with some inward amusement, how much they would have envied me on those dark, cold, winter mornings of my apprenticeship.

(To be continued.)

WHAT HE REQUIRED

Some time back a gentleman advertised for an hostler, and mentioned that a returned soldier would be preferred. Soon a hard-faced fellow put in an appearance seeking the billet.

"Do you smoke?" asked the gentleman.

"No," was the reply.

"Swear?"

"No."

"Are you a member of the Church?"

Seeing that an answer in the affirmative was required, the other said he was.

But when the gentleman asked, "Are you a total abstainer?" it was rather too close quarters for the returned hero.

"Look 'ere, mister," he said, "strike me if yer knows wot yer want. You had advertised for an 'ostler, but you bloomin' well wants a hark-angel, that's what yer wants," and walked away in disgust.



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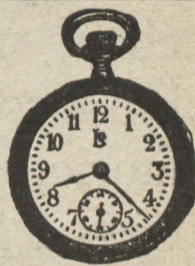
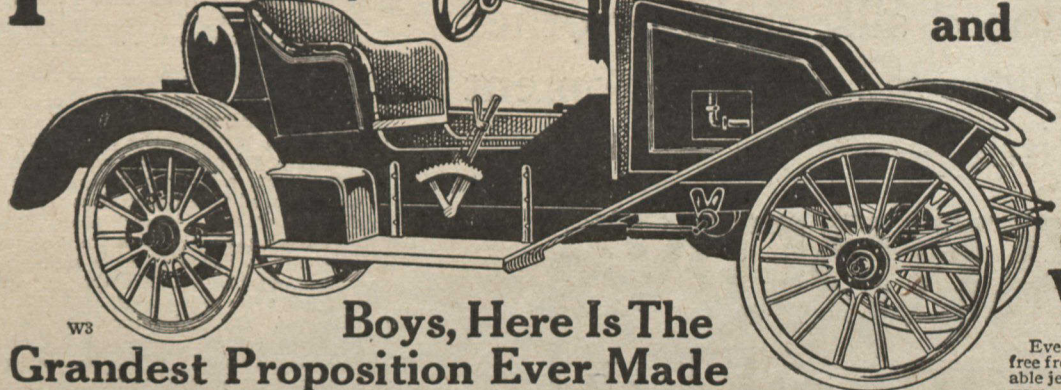
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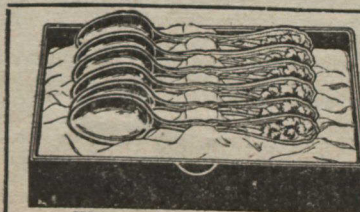
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