

tual advice you might offer would fall on fertile soil. So I shall ask you to excuse me and hereafter to time your calls more opportunely."

"Try for the laity," said John, who was an old Rugby football player.

The poor old soul looked so shocked and bewildered I was tempted to violate my pledge and go back to fibbing, but I stayed firm and shut the door as gently as I could, but no less decisively.

"The next propaganda?"

"This afternoon Mrs. Merrill brought that boy of hers over and planted herself for the usual two hours, while her infant destroyer should roam at large among my bric-a-brac. She has done that same thing, John, until she has worn my patience to a nervous frazzle. I don't know why people never appreciate the value of other people's things. They let their youngsters roam about like mad, and if you reprove them or attempt to check their impetuous destructiveness, you get a frosty cough and a "Come, Jack, I think it is time for us to go," with the emphasis on the "us." Now, Mrs. Merrill's boy has married and broken all of my property I intend he shall, so when she came this afternoon I was all on edge to tell her a few truths."

"First act."

"She said she couldn't stay a minute, and proceeded to take off all of her things and Jack's, and set him down right in front of that mahogany cabinet with the vases on it. Then she forgot all about him and untied her bundle of gossip for me to look at the patchwork. In the meantime Jack pulled down a Sevres vase that mamma gave me and broke it into a thousand pieces."

"Then you said it didn't matter, that it was a cheap little thing and you didn't care for it in the least?" suggested John.

"Did I? Well, I don't recall it if I did. I said, "Mrs. Merrill, that is about the tenth time that ill-reared child of yours has broken some one of my prized possessions. It isn't accidental; it's simon-pure, inexcusable inquisitiveness and ill-behavior. I am always glad to have you come here, but I don't like that boy of yours, and I don't think his bringing-up reflects much credit on you as a mother. Unless you can teach him to keep his hands off my things, I shall ask you to leave him at home."

"About how high did the balloon go up?"

"She was torrid, I tell you. She snatched Jack up and kissed him—imagine kissing a child who has done a trick like that!—and said if I would get their things for them it would probably be the last time I would have that pleasure, with the shading on the "pleasure." Oh, but she was sour! She set my teeth all on edge with a glance, and the air tasted like acid. And she flounced out like an offended goddess, carrying that unruly child as if he were rare china."

"Any more pages in the book of truth?" asked John.

"Mrs. Buzzell came in about 5 o'clock to ask me about music lessons for Jane. John, I was honest as could be with her. I told her that Jane had no talent for music, but that she did have some for dressmaking and millinery, and that she would better make a good milliner or dressmaker of her than a poor pianist. There wasn't anything so awfully bad about that, was there?"

"Mrs. Buzzell struck the ceiling there, near the chandelier?" he inquired.

"Whew! John, I was frightened. Did you ever see a quiet old hen ruffle up her feathers and attack a dog that was nosing about among her chickens? Well, John, she was Mrs. Quiet Hen. She flew at me, and said I didn't know a nocturne from a soup ladle. Yes, she did say nocturne, John; and you needn't laugh, for it wasn't funny a bit. I wish it had been you instead of me. Why, John, she would have scratched me, I do believe, she was so angry. "After fifteen years of friendship," she said, "to have jealousy creep in and destroy it all, and you an old married woman, too." She shot out like a gasoline explosion, and talked back at me for half an hour while I was trying to explain."

"That's about three tries and a goal for the home team," observed John thoughtfully. "Is that all?"

"I think that's all, John. There hasn't been anybody in since dinner."

"We will pray together that no one comes," suggested John dryly. "And to-morrow. Does the campaign of truth go on? Will the red flag of honesty wave in the public face?"

"I don't know, John," doubtfully.

"Did you ever hear of Alexander Selkirk, Mollie?" asked John, after a short pause.

"Why, yes. He was all alone somewhere, wasn't he?"

"Exactly. He was all alone somewhere. Do you pine for solitude, and to be known as the female Alexander Selkirk?"

"Why, no. Certainly not."

"Then this night we will call off the dogs of truth, and to-morrow morning, bright and early, the social fib will be restored to its former first place among the Lares and Penates, will it not?"

"Well, if you think it best. But there are a few other persons I would like to meet before—"

"There, there," said John, putting his arm about her lovingly.—Exchange.

MULLINS'S RECOMMENDATIONS

"What is a man to do in a case like this?" demanded Mr. Perham, head of the commercial department and bursar of Pine Grove Seminary, as he sat in his office the morning after graduation day, pen in hand and a sheet of paper before him.

"What is the case?" asked Mr. Clarke, of the classical department, who had just entered the room.

"Well, you know Mullins?" began Mr. Perham.

"Mullins, the young giant. Yes, I know him slightly, of course, though he has never come under my instruction."

"Fortunately for you," declared the bursar. "Well, Mullins has finished here at last, and he wants me—"

"Why, he hasn't received a diploma, has he?" interrupted Mr. Clark.

"Of course not. It is my belief that he couldn't get a diploma if he spent the rest of his natural life here. But he has wisely made up his mind to take his leave without one, and in lieu thereof he wants me to write him a recommendation. I hate to refuse him, but what can I say? He is a good fellow, honest as the day, and with plenty of muscle. I could recommend him for a place on a coaster or in a logging camp. He has earned by hard labor the money to come here. But he wants a business career, and he would certainly be a failure in an office or a store, just as he has been in the school. I have tried to tell him as much in a delicate sort of way, but he doesn't take the hint. He will have to find it out for himself. Meanwhile, I suppose that I shall have to write something for him."

"You might take pattern by an old-time president of the college where I was graduated," said Mr. Clark. "In a somewhat similar case, so the story goes, he wrote a testimonial after this fashion; "This is to certify that Mr. So-and-So has finished his course at this college, with equal credit to himself and to the institution."

Mr. Perham smiled, but made no reply. He began his task, however, and soon completed it as follows:

"To Whom It May Concern: The bearer of this note, Mr. David Mullins, has been for some time past a student in the commercial department of Pine Grove Seminary, and I cheerfully commend him as a young man of irreproachable character and fine physique. While circumstances prevented his completing the course, the time that he spent here was amply sufficient to enable a student of industry and ability to acquire a substantial business education."

"Charles G. Perham."

"There," he said, after reading it aloud, "that is literally true, it can do no harm, and it will satisfy Mullins."

It certainly did satisfy Mullins.

"Why, professor," he exclaimed joyfully, when he read the recommendation, "I didn't know you would feel like saying so much for me! I thank you kindly, professor." Then he added, with a little catch in his voice, "I hope I may have a chance to do as much for you some time."

Mr. Perham winced a little, partly, no doubt, but not wholly, on account of the grip of a strong right hand with which the honest youth had emphasised his gratitude.

Mullins had chosen a thriving city in a neighboring State as the scene of his business career, and the next week he was on the ground ready to begin.

It seemed, however, that the business men of the city were just then very well provided with clerks, and he spent several days in visiting offices and stores without once being invited to accept a position.

But at last, in a modest sixth-floor office, he found a man who was at least willing to talk with him. This was Mr. Ray, a young insurance agent.

"You were educated at Pine Grove Seminary, eh?" said Mr. Ray, with a show of interest. "I know one of the teachers there very well—Perham, head of the commercial department, I think."

"Yes," said Mullins eagerly. "I have a fine recommendation from Professor Perham in my pocket."