

at auction, but it was a passion with him, as it had been with his father before him.

He had never before made quite so ridiculous a purchase as a soda fountain, but he never acquired anything worth while. He bought cheap for the love of buying, things so old or useless that no one else would bid.

Were it not for the little shop that Mrs. Caldwell kept in the front room for the benefit of the neighbors, the mortgage would have been foreclosed years ago. As it was, she kept up the interest with the meagre profits of the little store and the egg and butter money.

This and some of the grocery money had gone into this ugly, useless fountain. In the fascinations for the sale all else was forgotten.

The next morning Hiram hailed a passing acquaintance and together they installed the fountain behind the tiny counter that had once been part of McQuiston's store before the sheriff had seized the goods.

It was several weeks before Mrs. Caldwell was satisfied, but at last she had to admit that the gleaming marble with its polished spigots, gave 'tone' to the place.

When the days grew warm the ice box was filled, and lemon soda and home-made birch and ginger beer were dispensed to the youngsters of the neighborhood.

Then came a day when one of the big red automobiles that went flashing down the road on the way to the falls, stopped in front of the yard. A leathern-clad man tramped up the gravel walk and returned to the car with three glasses of birch beer.

When he came back with the empty glasses he drained two more himself and threw down a quarter.

'You ought to have a bigger sign,' he said, as he set down his glass. 'I barely made out the place myself.'

'I guess I will,' said Mira, as she laid down fifteen cents. 'That's worth five cents a glass,' he said. 'You'll never make money at two cents a glass. You'd better raise your price and begin with me.'

He pushed the money back to her, and with a courteous doffing of his cap he was off.

Mira was slow of thought but quick of action. When the auto sped down the road on its way back to the city a huge sign decorated the fence. Mira had sacrificed one of her scanty store of sheets, but already she had sold twenty glasses of soda at a net profit of eight cents.

Her visitor of the morning drew up again. 'My sisters enjoyed the soda so much that we want more,' he said with a smile. 'I see you have the sign out.'

'Made it with stove blacking,' said Mira proudly. 'I didn't have any paint.'

'It does first-rate,' he declared. 'Had any result?'

'This makes a dollar sixty,' said Mira. 'That's more than I take in usually in a week.'

'Advertising is the secret of success,' he pronounced. 'Keep it up and you'll be needing some assistance soon.'

It was several days before that particular auto stopped in front of the weather-beaten gate. This time the driver was alone. He drank a glass of ginger ale and asked for a sandwich.

This was a new demand, but there was part of a chicken left from Sunday, and presently Gertrude came in with a dainty sandwich that brought fresh praise from the visitor.

'You'll have to make a new sign,' he said, as he set down the empty plate. 'With home-made bread, fresh butter and chicken that never heard of the beef trust, you've an article that can't be beaten. Look here,' he added, 'why don't you start a real inn? There are hundreds of autos in town. The road to the falls is the best hereabout and there's no chance to buy decent food. Put some tables out under the trees. Put in a stock of syrups and a tank of soda. Add some ice cream and cake—and keep everything as home-like as you can.'

Gertrude clapped her hands. 'We'll do it, mother,' she cried. 'Can't you see what he means? Thank you so much for your suggestion.'

'Look here,' he said. 'That old stump by the gate is no use, is it?'

'We're going to have it pulled when Hiram gets the time,' said Mira, apologetically. 'We've been meaning to do it ever since the lightning struck it.'

'Don't do it,' her patron almost shouted. 'I've got a fine idea. Let me be the godfather of the place, and I'll make a sign out of the tree for a christening present.'

He was back again early the next morning. He smiled appreciatively as he saw half a dozen small tables scattered round

under the trees. The grass had been mowed, and the place looked fresh and inviting.

Under his direction a man he had brought with him began to hack at the tree.

An auto party came up just then and took possession of one of the tables. Gertrude went off to wait on them, and by the time they had taken their departure the wood carver had completed his task.

The old stump, denuded of its bark, stood splintered and torn, but with a smooth oval on its face.

'That doesn't seem to be anything,' said Gertrude, as she regarded his work.

'It will be a work of art before I get through with it,' he explained, or my name isn't Ernest Paynter.'

'Is it? Are you really Mr. Paynter, the artist?' she asked, finding that fact of greater interest than the sign.

'Bless my heart,' he exclaimed. 'I seemed to know you all so well that I forgot you did not know my name. I am Ernest Paynter, and very much at your service.'

She extended her hand with a forced little 'Glad to meet you, Mr. Paynter,' that made them both laugh, and still holding her hand he drew her into the road where she could see the front of the sign. On the panel, in raised letters, were the words, 'Good Luck Inn.'

'That's the name of the place,' he explained.

The sign seemed all that was needed, for trade grew to proportions undreamed of. A soda manufacturer sent a waggon out once a week with a load of tanks for the fountain. Hiram scoured the country for poultry and eggs, and instead of the long drive to the creamery each night it was not long before they bought cows to supply their own increased needs.

Paynter was out almost every day, and it was he who kept the prices at a point that sometimes worried honest Mira Caldwell's conscience. A dollar for a meal seemed reasonable, but Ernest held out for two dollars a head, and very soon they had to establish a waiting list.

By the time the motoring season closed and there were only occasional calls for hot coffee and sandwiches, Mrs. Caldwell was glad of the rest.

Long before most of the hard work had been delegated to hired girls and she had contented herself with running the kitchen, in which a new range had been established, but these had been busy times for all, and even now there was enough to keep Gertrude busy, so there was a new teacher at Mink's Crossing.

'We don't have to worry about the mortgage,' laughed Gertrude. 'That's paid off, and there's plenty in the bank.'

'And to think your father claims that the fountain was a mascot,' sniffed Mira. 'That Ernest Paynter was the real mascot.'

'He was wonderfully good,' said Gertrude softly, as she moved the ladder over to the chandlier.

'That's what he was,' was the emphatic response. 'Gertrude, when you get married, I want you to marry a man like Ernest Paynter.'

'Yes, ma'am,' Gertrude answered dutifully.

'I made my mistake when I married Hiram,' ran on Mira. 'I want to see you married right. Why, I remember—'

Her reminiscence was cut short by a cry from Gertrude. Ernest entering the room had caught her on the ladder, and was holding her securely in his arms.

'I didn't mean to eavesdrop,' he said, laughing as he faced Mrs. Caldwell, his arms still about the girl. 'But since you and I are agreed as to the man she ought to marry, suppose we hear what Gertrude has to say?'

Mira did not hear Gertrude's reply, but, as she surveyed her tear-stained face, she needed no verbal assurance.

'Catholic Marriages.' The book of the hour. Single copies, 1s posted; 12 copies and over, 8d each, purchaser to pay carriage. Apply Manager, 'Tablet,' Dunedin.

SAFE AND SURE FOR BRONCHITIS PATIENTS.

TUSSICURA (Wild Cherry Balm) is an exceedingly successful remedy for Bronchitis, Asthma, Lung and Throat troubles.

Says a well-known medical man to-day in speaking to the proprietor:—'I think most highly of your TUSSICURA, and may add that leading analysts look upon it as a very valuable discovery.'

TUSSICURA cures coughs and colds at once. Stops the tickle and affords easy expectoration. All stores.