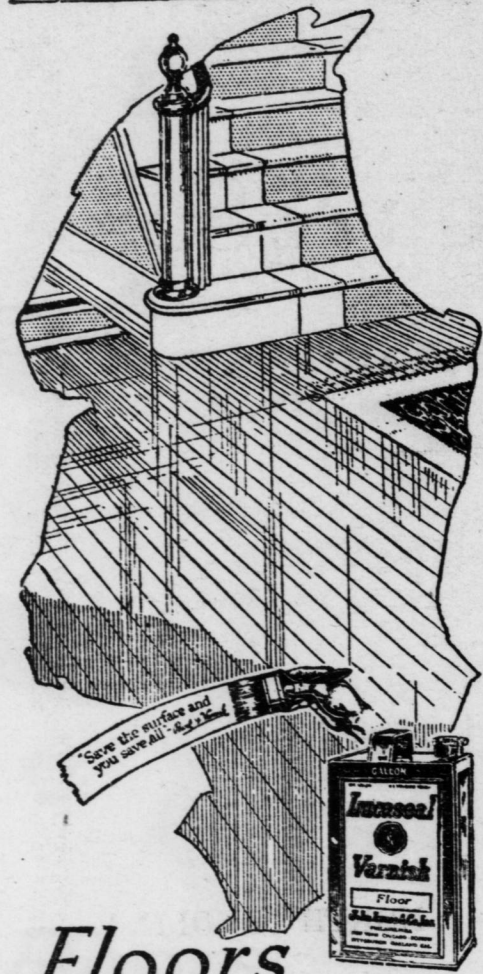


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He who thinks straight does more.



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Lost his wallet,  
Gone fishing,  
Broken his neck,  
Bought a house,  
Committed suicide,  
Shot a cat,  
Been away,  
Come back home,  
Moved his office,  
Taken a vacation,  
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Got licked,  
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It's news—  
SEND IT TO THE EDITOR.  
—Columbia Alumni News.

"Stealing My Thunder."  
An old playwright, John Dennis, of the Seventeenth-Eighteenth century, appears to have coined the expression when he wrote in the Gentleman's Magazine, "They will not let my play run, and yet they steal my thunder."  
—Exchange.

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## AMBITIONS

By RUTH LONG

(©, 1923, by McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

The alluring promise of fall caught at the heart of a young woman swinging lazily in a hammock under the trees. A book of French studies lay open on the ground.

That morning she had received an offer of the position of French teacher in the local high school. But the first burst of enthusiasm over that had passed. Now she was asking herself whether it were wise to settle down in her home town.

The cheery greeting of a young man interrupted her thoughts. He vaulted over the fence opposite, covered the space between them in three steps and sprawled himself at her feet.

"Hello, old bookworm," he smiled. "I hear you've landed a position. Congratulations."

Mabel Turner nodded. "Wait, Horace. I was just debating whether it weren't ambitionless to take the first offer—and that here at home."

"Why get city ambitions, Mabs? This may lead to something else," the young man suggested. "I've landed a job, too. Old Uncle Harvey is to initiate me into his woolen business. Pretty soft."

"I hope you'll settle down, then," she scolded. "You never took life seriously—"

"Which reminds me of my errand, Mabs," Horace interrupted, sitting up, his arms about his knees. "I've fallen in love."

"And you just out of college? When, pray, did you fall?"

"Almost overnight. You know Almee Dupont, the little French girl who was here last summer? She's back, visiting her aunt. She's bowled me over. Surprised!"

"Rather. And where do I come in?" "Your French. The language and I quarrel. Almee chatters in it most of the time, and I haven't told her my predicament. Can't you teach me the essential—conversation? I know the grammar. Come!"

"Are you sure she isn't after the money your father left you?" Mabel asked candidly.

Horace frowned. She knew she hurt him, but it was for his good. She patted his shoulder then and picked up the French book.

"The key to love," she laughed. "I'll do my best as a locksmith."

The lessons began next day—the most disquieting lessons mald ever gave to man. When Horace stumbled, Mabel's eyes softened. She watched his face when he spoke, missing his pronunciation.

Sometimes he would return her glance with the old boy-look crouching in his eyes, then turn abruptly away with a jest.

One evening he sent word that Almee wanted him. The lesson must wait.

When Mabel asked for Almee the next day in her best conversational French, Horace replied in the curtest possible English. He accused Mabel of being peevish, and she told him he was out of sorts. He was, and showed it. Mabel missed his teasing, too—the surest proof of their good fellowship. Almee absorbed him. Mabel was a rebellious means to the end.

When the lesson was to begin that evening, Horace was surprised when Mabel threw the book on the table.

"Are you disgusted with my stupidity?" he asked.

"I am disgusted with everything," Mabel confessed. "We are wasting our time, Horace. Why not give up the lessons?"

"This is a new side of you, Mabel, I never knew this side in college. Never really knew you. It's like getting acquainted with a new girl."

"Woman, you mean, Horace," Mabel corrected, frozen a little by his formal use of her name. "You knew the girl at school."

"I'm a bit afraid of the woman. She's so—elusive. It's almost as if a man could never offer you anything worth while enough to hold you away from the heights. Such a contrast!"

"To whom?" She half knew what he would say by the flood of warmth that gladdened her.

Horace evaded. "I might have been engaged to Almee this minute if it hadn't been for you. She tried hard enough to lead me on. I have learned to 'count time by heart throbs' rather than to murmur 'par ici'; to carry away the memory of your eyes, the tone of your voice rather than 'je vis en espoir,' as I thought I did for Almee. Mabs, dear, is there the ghost of a show for a poor clumsy chap like me? Or are your ambitions beyond marriage?"

Mabel wondered if Horace could hear her heart singing. "Maybe, after all, women are made to fill a sphere that men can't," she admitted. "Woman holds her place even though she doesn't speak in congress or discover a new mineral. Children are crying all over the world for love, tenderness and a home. That is woman's place—to open her arms and take them in. My ambition is high enough, but when I look around, I'd rather be queen in my own home, reigning over my family, than be president of all the confederations in the world."

"In that case," Horace conceded. "I'll loan you to the school for a little while. But," taking her hands, "don't teach them what you have taught me."

"We don't teach love," Mabel smiled. "It just reaches out and takes possession."

And that is what Horace did, too.

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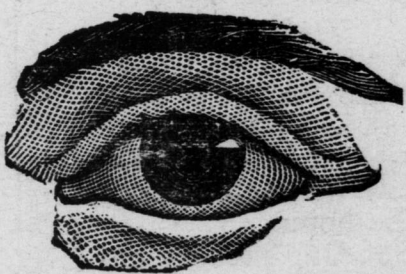
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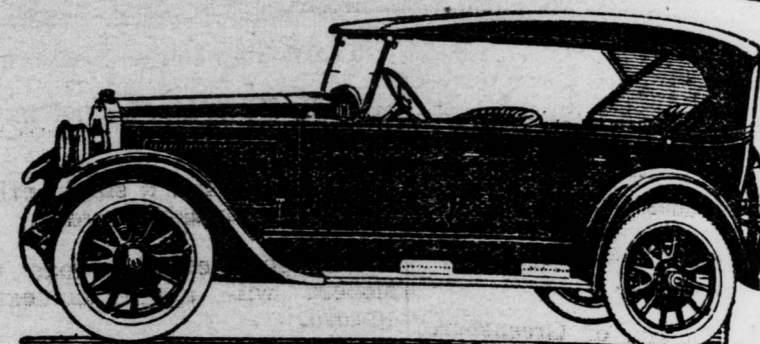
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