

THE PLAY.

How a Girl Blundered Into Good Fortune.

(W. R. Rose, in Cleveland Plain Dealer.)

The young woman paused in the doorway. The young man at the table looked up and liked the picture. "Come in," he called. She advanced timidly. "If you have the time," she said, "I would like to submit a play." "So I gathered from the fact that you have the manuscript with you," said the man. "Be seated, please." She looked at him in some surprise. Was this the man she had been warned against, the petulant, irritable, outspoken manager? "It is my first effort," she explained. "I can imagine so," he said. "You can't have been at the business very long." Evidently this was a reference to her youth. "I am twenty-two," she hastily said, "and I have studied the best authors, and seen the best plays." He smiled again. "No doubt your hours have been well spent," he said. "At the same time the influen. . . the best authors and the best plays may hamper rather than assist." Her face clouded a little. "But if we cannot go to them for help and inspiration, where can we go?" "I wish I could tell you," said the young man. She hesitated. "I am taking a great liberty," she said. "In what way?" "I am going to ask you to let me read a little of my play." He looked doubtful for a fleeting moment. "I am considering," he said. "I know it is irregular," she murmured, "but you seem so kind that I am daring enough to take the liberty." "Have you any idea how many plays come into this office every day?" "N-no." "Neither have I. But they total an astonishing number—most of them absolutely impossible." "Yes, it's very discouraging." "It certainly is very discouraging for the hopeful manager." "Do you read all the plays that come into the office?" He laughed. He was much amused. "Certainly not. There are two readers who do nothing else." She sighed. "I suppose it would have been just as well if I had mailed my manuscript. But people say such unpleasant things. They have told me that my play would be thrust away into a moldy cabinet—and never looked at again." "Yes." "Then they said that if there was anything good in my play it would be borrowed." "Stolen?" "Yes." He looked at her flushed cheeks, her sparkling eyes. "You are not writing plays for a livelihood?" "No." "Merely a diversion?" "Yes. Of course, I want to—to do something." He smiled. "A light and easy occupation that can be carried on at home. I see." "I have written a few little plays. One of them was performed while I was at school at Wellesley. It was a fantasy." "I know the variety." "Then I wrote a two-act play for a dramatic club. It was never performed." "That's a pity." "The club broke up during the first rehearsal. There were too many stars, I think." "I know that variety of club." The girl nodded. "And that's the extent of my dramatic experience." "It's not overcrowded," he said, and looked at his watch. The girl leaned forward. "Isn't it true that managers are always on the lookout for good plays?" "Of course it's true." "And that they will take a good play even by an unknown author?" "That's equally true." She sighed again. "That's my only hope," she said. He looked at her curiously. "You take this rather seriously," he said. "Isn't that the right way to take it? I want to succeed. I want to do something worth while. It isn't as if I needed the money. My father is—but never mind that. I have a longing to be famous. Ever since Brewster Allen made his great success I have felt that I could succeed, too." "Brewster Allen, eh?" "Do you know him?" "A little. Are you aware that Brewster Allen tramped up and down the managerial stairs for five years before he could get a hearing?" "Yes. Isn't it a romantic story. And he was so poor, and yet so brave and hopeful. And now he is the most famous of them all—with honors and money just pouring in upon him!" The man laughed. "I told you I knew him a little—although this isn't the office that first appreciated his genius. Would you be surprised to learn that he has quite written himself out—that he is tired and jaded, and harassed by the claims upon him—by the importunate demands upon his pen, and that he is torn with fear lest his next drama

should show the effect of his mental exhaustion and prove a failure?" The girl shook her head. "That doesn't seem possible," she said. "No doubt he has been feted and flattered too much. It doesn't seem as if the man who wrote 'The Alchemist' could ever do anything poor." She paused. "You have seen 'The Alchemist'?" "Yes." He looked at his watch again and glanced at the volume in limp leather that the girl had laid on the table. "May I read it now?" she asked. He nodded. "You may read the cast and the synopsis. You have a synopsis?" "Oh, yes." She suddenly pushed the volume across the table. "I think you will admit that I have done the mechanical part well." "Very well, indeed. I've never seen a neater piece of work." He laughed. "This makes me tremble for the play itself. Dramatic authors are proverbially untidy." She looked across at him and smiled. "That doesn't hold good with managers, does it?" "Rank flattery," he cried. "Proceed with the reading." She had a pleasant voice and she read well. Presently he checked her. "Am I to point out the faults as you go along?" "Of course." "Freely and frankly?" "Yes." "Then I don't like your cast of characters. You have too many people to handle. Cut the crowd down to nine. Those hackneyed lay figures should be on the ash heap." "Very well," said the girl, but her voice trembled. "I thought they were necessary to develop the comedy." "Never mind the comedy. But if you insist upon it let it be merely suggested. Now for the scenes." The girl read on, and the man found her very pleasant to look at. Then she began upon the scenery. Presently he shook his head. "You attempt too much in your first act. Let the plot work itself out. Too many people are trying to develop it. And I can see that the first act is short in action. You'll have to change all that." The girl looked up. "I—I wanted to make it seem real," she explained. "All sorts of crimes are committed under the name of realism," he told her. "It's a sadly abused word. Go on, please." "Is—is it worth while?" "Of course it is. This is your golden chance. It is quite possible you may never have the opportunity of seeing me again." And he suddenly laughed. "You are very kind," she said. "You are so different from what I feared you might be." "You can't turn me from my high purpose," he said. "I am the inexorable critic. Bear this in mind." "If—if you didn't like the first act, I am sure you can't like the second. It isn't nearly so good." "You mustn't try to prejudice me. You have no right to assume that your second act can be any worse than your first act." She had just resumed her reading when there was a sound of a wild tumult in the hall. The girl stopped to listen. The man suddenly arose. The noise increased. There were distinct shouts. The man opened the hall door. A pungent odor instantly filled the room. The hall was growing dim behind a blue haze. "There seems to be a fire in the building," said the man. He gave the girl a quick glance. She had arisen

and her cheeks had suddenly paled, but she stood firm and erect. "Is there any danger?" she asked, and her voice was steady. "I'll investigate. Don't leave the room. I'll let you know." He closed the door behind him, but in a moment was back again, choking and coughing. He slammed the door behind him. "A good deal of smoke is coming up the elevator shaft and the narrow stairway," he explained. "The elevator isn't running, and it wouldn't be safe to try the stairway." The girl glanced toward the window. "Then there is nothing to do but wait," she quickly said. He looked at her with strong admiration in his quick glance. Then he crossed to the window and raised the heavy sash and looked out. A hoarse murmur came up from the street far below. The haze in the room was growing bluer. "Come," the man quickly called to the girl. "There is plenty of pure air here. Don't look down. Do you see this ledge here and the fire-escape five windows away? Yes? Well, when the time comes—which, praise God, it will not—you and I will walk along that ledge to the escape." "Yes," said the girl. "I understand." "You are splendid," said the man. "I am horribly afraid," said the girl. "So am I," said the man. They knelt together by the window and leaned out across the sill, and both were silent. The crowd shouted, the gongs crashed, and then the smoke seemed to lessen. The man drew back. "I'll investigate," he said. When he came back he was coughing and laughing, too. "Danger's over," he cried. "They checked the fire on a lower floor. Now they are trying to get the elevator up." He looked at her curiously. "Don't they usually faint when it's all over?" She suddenly laughed. She laughed hysterically. "Don't," he gently cautioned her. "You can't imagine what I am laughing at," she said. "It's at a scene in that two-act play I told you about. I thought it wonderfully realistic when I wrote it. But now." She suddenly laughed again. "Sit down," he said. "You are exciting yourself." "I must tell you about it," she went on. "The hero and the heroine are penned in a lofty building and a fire breaks out—just as this did. And then the two show their real natures—just as they would in actual life. She grows sentimental and he curses fate. She remembers her happy childhood and he talks about dying like a rat in a trap. And I thought it was realistic." "Come," said the man, "don't you want to go home?" "Why, no," said the girl. "I want to tell you about the play. You know you said it was very doubtful if I ever saw you again." "I hope I was mistaken about that," he said. And the girl's cheeks suddenly flushed. "I know I have done pretty much everything wrong," she hastily said, "but I want you to hear the whole plot. Let me tell you the third act. I will talk fast." He nodded and she began the relation. She gave the scene with a simple earnestness that was impressive in its unaffected way. "You see what I meant to emphasize," she said. "Here is the young wife wild with anxiety because she fears her husband's honor is in danger. These people who are his enemies, the young husband's stepmother and the stock gambling rival, have come to denounce him. You see the course she takes. She deliberately lies to save the man she adores. Her nature suddenly changes. She lies glibly and artistically. The stepmother and the broker know she is lying, but the husband and the father think she is speaking the truth—and

the truth is abhorrent. The father, bowed and broken by her falsehoods, denounces her. To him she has always been an innocent, truthful child—the thought that she may be lying is absurd. And the husband, equally stupid, turns from her and goes away with the unhappy father. To add to her wretchedness the stepmother tells her the sacrifice was thrown away—that her husband had been proved innocent of the charge against him." The girl paused and looked at the man. "Is there anything in that?" she asked. He was staring at the ceiling. "I am trying to see the scene," he slowly said. "It's a little hazy. I like it. I like it better as it grows clearer." The girl watched him with eager eyes. He quickly looked down at her. "What do you say to collaborating on it?" he abruptly asked. Before she could reply to this astonishing question the door suddenly opened and a stout man entered. He paused and stared from the girl to the man. Then his face lighted up. "Why, Brewster Allen," he joyously cried, "I am delighted to see you! I would have been up sooner, but that fire on the sixth floor kept me fuming in the street. Did it scare you? And have you got a play for me?" The eminent dramatist laughed. He had reached across the table and drawn the girl's manuscript toward him. He threw a quick glance at the title page. "Miss Thorne," he said, "let me present Manager Follansbee of twenty theatres or more. Miss Emily Thorne, Manager Follansbee." The girl stared from the great playwright to the great producer. And she had stupidly taken the one for the other. Her fair face slowly flushed. "When I came into your office," said the dramatist, "I meant to tell you that I was tired out and had an immediate European trip in view. But I have changed my mind. I have asked Miss Thorne to collaborate with me on a four-act drama, and if she consents you shall have the finished product in just six weeks." The great producer looked from the man to the girl. But he was too wise to make any comment. "Fine," he cried. "Consider the collaborated drama accepted. My congratulations, Miss Thorne." The dramatist turned to the girl. "The principal difficulty having been removed," he said, "it only remains for us to begin work at once." The great manager stared at the leather bound manuscript. It evidently had played an important part in this strange little comedy. The girl suddenly put out her hand to Brewster Allen. "At once" she said.

CAN YOU PRONOUNCE?
There lived a man in Mexico,
Who all his life did battle
To rightly spell such easy words
As Nahuatlacatl.

He wrote the names of all the towns—
It took of ink a bottle.
But could not spell Temoctillan,
Nor plain Tlacacocotl.

He went to spelling school each day,
And, though a man of mettle,
He could not conquer Topiltzin,
Nor Huizilopochtli.

He dwelt some time in Yucatan,
And there, at Tzompantilli,
He learned to spell one little word;
'Twas Ziuhonopilli.

The joy of spelling just one word
Did all his mind unsettle;
But, spelling still, he failed at last
On Popocatepetl.

FOOLED HIM.
Katie, who had been taught that the devil tempts little girls to disobey, was left alone in a room for a time one day with the admonition not to touch a particularly delicious plate of fruit that stood on the table. For a while she bravely withstood the temptation. Finally, however, her resolution wavered and she took a big red apple from the plate. She walked away with it, but before putting it to her lips her courage returned and she quickly replaced the apple on the plate, saying as she did so, "Aha! Mr. Devil, I fooled you, didn't I?"—The Housekeeper.

THE ROSE AND THE FAIRY.
Once upon a time there lived a fairy named Flutterby. One day she saw a lovely golden butterfly and she chased it from flower to flower. At last she found herself in a strange wood. She started to cry, but she thought she would ask the flowers around her to help her. So she went to a lovely lily and asked for a night's lodging. But the lily only shut her petals tight and would not let her enter. She then tried the other flowers, but they all did the same. Just as she was going to give up she came to a rose and asked for a night's lodging. The rose opened her petals wide and let the fairy enter. In the morning the fairy awoke and asked the rose what she could do for her. "Make me a fairy," said the rose. The fairy granted her wish and they lived happily in fairyland ever after.—Elizabeth MacAlpin, in the Brooklyn Eagle.

THE RACE.
Once upon a time there stood in the hallway a great tall grandfather's clock. This clock had a very large face with big black numbers standing for the hours and long pointed hands and quite a long pendulum that swung back and forth very slowly and said tick, tick, tick, tick, as told by Genevieve Kenner, in the Kindergarten Primary Magazine.

And over the mantel sat another clock, only it was much smaller. Its face was smaller and its hands were smaller, too, and it didn't have any pendulum at all, because it didn't need any, and it said tick, tick, tick, tick very much faster than the grandfather's clock.

One day these two clocks were talking together and the clock on the mantel said, "It has always seemed strange to me that you should go so very slowly, for it is such a long way around your face. It must take you ever so long to go around even once. I have often listened to your tick, tick, tick, tick, and wondered how you ever keep any time at all, you move so slowly."

"Well," said the grandfather's clock, "this is the way I have been ticking for a great many years, and people have always said that I kept very good time."

"Maybe people do think so," said the little clock, "but you can't possibly keep as good time as I do, for I move so much faster and haven't nearly so far to go around." Just then a lady came in and laid her small gold watch down on the table.

"What is that I hear you talking about?" said the watch.

"Oh," said the little clock, "I have just been telling our tall friend over there that he could never keep as good time as I do because he moves so slowly."

"That's nothing," said the watch, "neither of you can go half as fast as I can. You move slowly enough," said the watch, looking at the little clock, "but as for that grandfather's clock it must surely be hard for him to even try to keep the time."

"Well," said the grandfather's clock, "we will have a race and see which one keeps the best time. When I strike twelve we will start and see which one gets around to one first."

"This is very foolish," said the watch, "but then I may as well show you two clocks how much faster I can go."

Dong, dong, dong twelve times went the grandfather's clock.

"We're off," he cried and all three started ticking, just as fast as ever they could. The big clock went tick, tick, tick just as it had always gone and the watch went tick, tick, tick, tick just as fast as ever it could, but try with all its might it just could not go any faster than it always had. But they all went on ticking just the same and pretty soon the watch was almost at 1 o'clock.

"I've finished," cried the watch.

"So have I," cried the little clock.

"Dong!" went the grandfather's clock. All three of them finished at just the same time. "Well, I nev-

For the Younger Children...

er," said the watch, "how did you ever do it?"

"I don't know," said the grandfather's clock; "I guess I must have taken very much longer steps at each tick than you did."

"I guess you did, too," said the small clock on the mantel.

TOBY AND TABBY.
Toby was a little brown rat terrier, who lived at Farmer Brown's, and whose especial business it was to prevent the increase of rats and mice at the stables and barns. But just now Toby had a family of four puppies, and found it very difficult to keep watch of the rats when her family required so much of her attention.

Old Tabby looked on disgusted. She had four kittens, which no one would think of comparing with these pups, and she was not at all "set up" over them. But kittens were rather an old story with Tabby, and this particular set were the cause of a great deal of trouble. Tabby had been allowed to lie under the kitchen stove before they came, and she did not see why she could not keep her kittens there. Again and again had small Jennie Brown carried them to the woodhouse and fixed as cozy a nest as any sensible cat could ask, but Mrs. Tabby would carry them back to the kitchen stove. One rainy day, when it seemed that everything had gone wrong at the Brown home, it rained so hard no work could be done in the garden, and the old hen who had hatched turkeys took them walking in the rain, when, if she had an atom even of hen sense, she should have known that turkeys could not stand that. The chase after the old hen and her turkeys had exhausted the last mite of Mrs. Brown's patience when, as she came into the kitchen, she saw the old cat with her kittens under the stove again. It was too much. Mrs. Brown seized the broom and swept cat and kittens out into the yard. My! how surprised and angry Tabby was. She stood up and took a look at the kittens, and no doubt thought, "This is all your fault." Then she shook her feet and walked back into the kitchen and sat down under the stove. Toby had witnessed the affair, and when the mother cat walked off, leaving her babies in the rain, she could not understand it. She walked around the crying kittens, and then went whining to the open door and looked at Tabby. But Tabby only blinked and looked determined. She was comfortable under the kitchen stove, and she did not propose taking care of kittens that made so much trouble. Toby walked back and forth between the crying kittens and the door, whining and trying to make the old cat see her duty, but all to no purpose. Tabby had enough of those kittens. Then Toby picked the kittens up one by one, and put them in the nest with her puppies, and never again did the old cat go near them. Toby raised both pups and kittens, and seemed as proud of the adopted babies as of her own.—Home Herald.

MILDRED'S SURPRISE.
One bright June morning Mildred was awakened very early. She sat up in bed to rub her eyes, and heard something moving near her. She lifted her pillowcase and there, in a tiny bunch, was something gray. It wriggled out and came up to where Mildred sat. At first she was frightened, but seeing he did no harm, she began to pet him.

The door to the bedroom opened, and Mildred's mother came into the room.

"Happy birthday, Mildred," she said, coming up to her.

"Oh, mamma, see this funny little muf that I found under my pillow this morning!" exclaimed Mildred.

"Yes, dear, that squirrel is your birthday present from papa."

"I must hurry up and dress, so I can thank him for it," she said.

"What are you going to name him?" asked Mildred's mother.

After a few moments she replied: "I guess I will call him 'Muf' because he looks just like one when he curls up."

When she was all dressed she ran up to her father and thanked him for the squirrel.

"I forgot that to-day was my birthday," she said, "but after this I guess I shall always remember."—Helen Janson, in the Brooklyn Eagle.

Bad Debts.
Credit is the beginning of progress, prosperity and bad debts. Front implies foolishness, and bad debts are the fruitage.

Bad debts are an exception to the law whereby cold contracts and heat expands. They are contracted or expanded simultaneously, and in all seasons alike.

Bad debts are eventually paid by good people. They are the inheritance tax which the meek have to pony up before coming into their own, for the earth falls to no man until he has been cheated out of at least three times as much as it is worth, in proof of his humility.

Bad debts have brought motoring within reach of the masses, not to mention the lesser blessings of peace and plenty, with nothing to give up for these but the fanciful comfort of a clear conscience.—Puck.

The dress of the Japanese woman shows her age.

A Code For the Automobilist.

Automobile Conventions.
As a gentlemen's agreement, more binding than legal chains, Tip, of the New York Press, offers an automobile code. It is permitted—

1. To run over a woman with a baby in her arms, but not over somebody's hat which has blown off.
2. To cut off a pedestrian's head, but not to spatter his clothes with mud.
3. To break up a funeral by cutting through it, but not a dog fight.
4. To smash into a carriage, but not to take the injured occupants to a hospital.
5. To wreck a machine when it is full of chorus girls, but not to admit they were picked up.
6. To commit perjury in court, but not to pay the fine in counterfeit money.
7. To go joy riding if the owner of the car is home, but not if he is in Europe.

Penalties For Violations.

MINOR CONVENTIONS—

(a) It is considered unsportsmanlike when you run over a man and see that he is not dead to go back and run over him again. By his survival he must be regarded as having earned a reprieve for the rest of that day only.

(b) Civility to those whose way you block absolutely prohibited.

(c) Special favors to blind and one-legged people not to be tolerated.

(d) Violations of the code, particularly in fear of the police, must be promptly reported in formal charges to the committee empowered to punish offenders and any owner convicted of gentlemanly conduct.

PENALTIES—

Failure to observe the code and the conventions, as a first offense, will subject the offender to the penalty of being allowed to commit only two killings a day for the next three months.

For the second offense the penalty will be a life sentence to only one killing a week.

SCIENCE & MECHANICS

The solar orb would appear blue to anybody who should view it outside of this planet's atmosphere.

In Australia there are ants which build their nests along a north and south line so accurately that a traveler may direct his course by their aid.

The results of experiments at the Government farm at Pusa, India, in rearing silk worms were highly successful. Last year 150,000 worms were fed on leaves of the castor plant. The silk produced was valued at \$26.50 per eighty pounds.

Recent findings of a Buffalo physician who has been studying cancer for seven years indicate that the disease is due to a parasite of the earthworm, transmitted to human beings from the surface of vegetables that are eaten raw, such as lettuce and celery.

A wealthy European amateur astronomer offered a prize for the best computation of Halley's comet's orbit submitted before the close of 1909, and a competing ephemeris for this year and next indicates a very different route from that expected, showing that the perihelion passage in the middle of June instead of the middle of April, 1910.

An ingenious method of measuring the moisture in corn is to convert the kernel of the corn into a battery cell. The instrument is supplied with two pins, one of copper and the other of zinc, which are forced into the kernel of corn, and serve as the electrodes of the battery, while the moist germ of the kernel is electrolyte. A tiny current is thus generated, and its value is read by means of a galvanometer. In this manner it is possible to determine the amount of moisture in the corn. In a similar way, wheat and other grains are tested, but as it is impossible to penetrate the kernels, the grain is packed tightly in a vessel and two large plates are used for the electrodes. In some cases a current is passed through the grain, and the moisture is determined by noting the electrical resistance with a Wheatstone bridge.

Great Enemies of Peace.
Five great enemies of peace inhabit us, namely, avarice, ambition, envy, anger and pride, but if those enemies were banished, we should enjoy perpetual peace.—Petrarch.

Hopeful.
"Hope," said Uncle Eben, "is a blessing when you's willin' to back it wif a little hard work 'stid o' lettin' it play itse'f out on a policy ticket."