Loud voices and a renewed uproar were raised in front of the boarding-house.

'What's up now, Judy?' asked Mr. McCaskey.

' 'Tis Missis Murphy's voice,' said Mrs. McCaskey, harking. 'She says she's after finding little Mike asleep behind the roll of old linoleum under the bed in her room.'

Mr. McCaskey laughed loudly.

'That's yer Phelan,' he shouted sardonically 'Divil a bit would a Pat have done that trick if the bye we never had is strayed and stole, by the powers, call him Phelan, and see him hide out under the bed like a mangy pup.'

Mrs. McCaskey arose heavily, and went toward the dish closet, with the corners of her mouth drawn down.

Policeman Cleary came back around the corner as the crowd dispersed. Surprised, he upturned an ear toward the McCaskey apartment where the crash of irons and chinaware and the ring of hurled kitchen utensils seemed as loud as before. Policeman Cleary took out his timepiece.

'By the deported snakes!' he exclaimed, 'Jawn McCaskey and his lady have been fightin' for an hour and a quarter by the watch. The missis could give him forty pounds weight. Strength to his arm.'

Policeman Cleary strolled back around the corner.

Old man Denny folded his paper and hurried up the steps just as Mrs. Murphy was about to lock the door for the night.

IV

The Skylight Room

FIRST MRS. PARKER would show you the double parlours. You would not dare to interrupt her description of their advantages and of the merits of the gentleman who had occupied them for eight years. Then you would manage to stammer forth the confession that you were neither a doctor nor a dentist. Mrs. Parker's manner of receiving the admission was such that you could never afterward entertain the same feeling toward your parents, who had neglected to train you up in one of the professions that fitted Mrs. Parker's parlours.

Next you ascended one flight of stairs and looked at the second floor back at $8. Convinced by her second-floor manner that it

was worth the $12 that Mr. Toosenberry always paid for it until he left to take charge of his brother's orange plantation in Florida near Palm Beach, where Mrs. McIntyre always spent the winters that had the double front room with private bath, you managed to babble that you wanted something still cheaper.

If you survived Mrs. Parker's scorn, you were taken to look at Mr. Skidder's large hall-room on the third floor. Mr. Skidder's room was not vacant. He wrote plays and smoked cigarettes in it all day long. But every room-hunter was made to visit his room to admire the lambrequins. After each visit, Mr. Skidder, from the fright caused by possible eviction, would pay something on his rent.

Then – oh, then – if you still stood on one foot with your hot hand clutching the three moist dollars in your pocket, and hoarsely proclaimed your hideous and culpable poverty, nevermore would Mrs. Parker be cicerone of yours. She would honk loudly the word 'Clara,' she would show you her back, and march downstairs. Then Clara, the coloured maid, would escort you up the carpeted ladder that served for the fourth flight, and show you the Skylight Room. It occupied 7 by 8 feet of floorspace at the middle of the hall. On each side of it was a dark lumber closet or store-room.

In it was an iron cot, a washstand and a chair A shelf was the dresser. Its four bare walls seemed to close in upon you like the sides of a coin. Your hand crept to your throat, you gasped, you looked up as from a well – and breathed once more. Through the glass of the little skylight you saw a square of blue infinity.

'Two dollars, suh,' Clara would say in her half-contemptuous, half-Tuskegeenial tones.

One day Miss Leeson came hunting for a room. She carried a typewriter made to be lugged around by a much larger lady. She was a very little girl, with eyes and hair that kept on growing after she had stopped and that always looked as if they were saying: 'Goodness me. Why didn't you keep up with us?'

Mrs. Parker showed her the double parlours. 'In this closet,' she said, 'one could keep a skeleton or anæsthetic or coal –'

'But I am neither a doctor nor a dentist,' said Miss Leeson with a shiver.

Mrs. Parker gave her the incredulous, pitying, sneering, icy stare that she kept for those who failed to qualify as doctors or dentists, and led the way to the second floor back.

'Eight dollars?' said Miss Leeson. 'Dear me! I'm not Hetty if I

do look green. I'm just a poor little working girl. Show me something higher and lower.'

Mr. Skidder jumped and strewed the floor with cigarette stubs at the rap on his door.

'Excuse me, Mr. Skidder,' said Mrs. Parker, with her demon's smile at his pale looks. 'I didn't know you were in. I asked the lady to have a look at your lambrequins.'

'They're too lovely for anything,' said Miss Leeson, smiling in exactly the way the angels do.

After they had gone Mr. Skidder got very busy erasing the tall, black-haired heroine from his latest (unproduced) play and inserting a small, roguish one with heavy, bright hair and vivacious features.

'Anna Held'll jump at it,' said Mr. Skidder to himself, putting his feet up against the lambrequins and disappearing in a cloud of smoke like an aerial cuttlefish.

Presently the tocsin call of 'Clara!' sounded to the world the state of Miss Leeson's purse. A dark goblin seized her, mounted a Stygian stairway, thrust her into a vault with a glimmer of light in its top and muttered the menacing and cabalistic words 'Two dollars!'

'I'll take it!' sighed Miss Leeson, sinking down upon the squeaky iron bed.

Every day Miss Leeson went out to work. At night she brought home papers with handwriting on them and made copies with her typewriter. Sometimes she had no work at night, and then she would sit on the steps of the high stoop with the other roomers. Miss Leeson was not intended for a skylight room when the plans were drawn for her creation. She was gay-hearted and full of tender, whimsical fancies. Once she let Mr. Skidder read to her three acts of his great (unpublished) comedy, 'It's No Kid; or, The Heir of the Subway.'

There was rejoicing among the gentlemen roomers whenever Miss Leeson had time to sit on the steps for an hour or two. But Miss Longnecker, the tall blonde who taught in a public school and said 'Well, really!' to everything you said, sat on the top step and sniffed. And Miss Dorn, who shot at the moving ducks at Coney every Sunday and worked in a department store, sat on the bottom step and sniffed. Miss Leeson sat on the middle step, and the men would quickly group around her.

Especially Mr. Skidder, who had cast her in his mind for the star part in a private, romantic (unspoken) drama in real life. And

especially Mr. Hoover, who was forty-five, fat, flushed and foolish. And especially very young Mr. Evans, who set up a hollow cough to induce her to ask him to leave off cigarettes. The men voted her 'the funniest and jolliest ever,' but the sniffs on the top step and the lower step were implacable.

• • • • •

I pray you let the drama halt while Chorus stalks to the footlights and drops an epicedian tear upon the fatness of Mr. Hoover. Tune the pipes to the tragedy of tallow, the bane of bulk, the calamity of corpulence. Tried out, Falstaff might have rendered more romance to the ton than would have Romeo's rickety ribs to the ounce. A lover may sigh, but he must not puff. To the train of Momus are the fat men remanded. In vain beats the faithfullest heart above a 52-inch belt. Avaunt, Hoover! Hoover, forty-five, flush and foolish, might carry off Helen herself; Hoover, forty-five, flush, foolish and fat, is meat for perdition. There was never a chance for you, Hoover.

As Mrs. Parker's roomers sat thus one summer's evening, Miss Leeson looked up into the firmament and cried with her little gay laugh:

'Why, there's Billy Jackson! I can see him from down here, too.'

All looked up – some at the windows of skyscrapers, some casting about for an airship, Jackson-guided.

'It's that star,' explained Miss Leeson, pointing with a tiny finger. 'Not the big one that twinkles – the steady blue one near it. I can see it every night through my skylight. I named it Billy Jackson.'

'Well, really!' said Miss Longnecker. 'I didn't know you were an astronomer, Miss Leeson.'

'Oh, yes,' said the small star-gazer, 'I know as much as any of them about the style of sleeves they're going to wear next fall in Mars.'

'Well, really!' said Miss Longnecker. 'The star you refer to is Gamma, of the constellation Cassiopeia. It is nearly of the second magnitude, and its meridian passage is –'

'Oh,' said the very young Mr. Evans, 'I think Billy Jackson is a much better name for it.

'Same here,' said Mr. Hoover, loudly breathing defiance to Miss Longnecker. 'I think Miss Leeson has just as much right to name stars as any of those old astrologers had.'

'Well, really!' said Miss Longnecker.

'I wonder whether it's a shooting star,' remarked Miss Dorn. 'I hit nine ducks and a rabbit out of ten in the gallery at Coney Sunday.'

'He doesn't show up very well from down here,' said Miss Leeson. 'You ought to see him from my room. You know you can see stars even in the daytime from the bottom of a well. At night my room is like the shaft of a coal-mine, and it makes Billy Jackson look like the big diamond pin that Night fastens her kimono with.'

There came a time after that when Miss Leeson brought no formidable papers home to copy. And when she went in the morning, instead of working, she went from office to office and let her heart melt away in the drip of cold refusals transmitted through insolent office boys. This went on.

There came an evening when she wearily climbed Mrs. Parker's stoop at the hour when she always returned from her dinner at the restaurant. But she had had no dinner.

As she stepped into the hall Mr. Hoover met her and seized his chance. He asked her to marry him, and his fatness hovered above her like an avalanche. She dodged, and caught the balustrade. He tried for her hand, and she raised it and smote him weakly in the face. Step by step she went up, dragging herself by the railing. She passed Mr. Skidder's door as he was red-inking a stage direction for Myrtle Delorme (Miss Leeson) in his (unaccepted) comedy, to 'pirouette across stage from L to the side of the Count.' Up the carpeted ladder she crawled at last and opened the door of the skylight room.

She was too weak to light the lamp or to undress. She fell upon the iron cot, her fragile body scarcely hollowing the worn springs. And in that Erebus of a room she slowly raised her heavy eyelids, and smiled.

For Billy Jackson was shining down on her, calm and bright and constant through the skylight. There was no world about her. She was sunk in a pit of blackness, with but that small square of pallid light framing the star that she had so whimsically, and oh, so ineffectually, named. Miss Longnecker must be right; it was Gamma, of the constellation Cassiopeia, and not Billy Jackson. And yet she could not let it be Gamma.

As she lay on her back she tried twice to raise her arm. The third time she got two thin fingers to her lips and blew a kiss out of the black pit to Billy Jackson. Her arm fell back limply.

'Good-bye, Billy,' she murmured faintly. 'You're millions of

miles away and you won't even twinkle once. But you kept where I could see you most of the time up there when there wasn't anything else but darkness to look at, didn't you? . . . Millions of miles. . . . Good-bye, Billy Jackson.'

Clara, the coloured maid, found the door locked at ten the next day, and they forced it open. Vinegar, and the slapping of wrists and even burnt feathers, proving of no avail, someone ran to 'phone for an ambulance.

In due time it backed up to the door with much gong-clanging, and the capable young medico, in his white linen coat, ready, active, confident, with his smooth face half debonair, half grim, danced up the steps.

'Ambulance call to 49,' he said briefly. 'What's the trouble?'

'Oh yes, doctor,' sniffed Mrs. Parker, as though her trouble that there should be trouble in the house was the greater. 'I can't think what can be the matter with her. Nothing we could do would bring her to. It's a young woman, a Miss Elsie – yes, a Miss Elsie Leeson. Never before in my house –'

'What room?' cried the doctor in a terrible voice, to which Mrs. Parker was a stranger.

'The skylight room. It –'

Evidently the ambulance doctor was familiar with the location of skylight rooms. He was gone up the stairs, four at a time. Mrs. Parker followed slowly, as her dignity demanded.

On the first landing she met him coming back bearing the astronomer in his arms. He stopped and let loose the practised scalpel of his tongue, not loudly. Gradually Mrs. Parker crumpled as a stiff garment that slips down from a nail. Ever afterwards there remained crumples in her mind and body. Sometimes her curious roomers would ask her what the doctor said to her.

'Let that be,' she would answer. 'If I can get forgiveness for having heard it I will be satisfied.'

The ambulance physician strode with his burden through the pack of hounds that follow the curiosity chase, and even they fell back along the sidewalk abashed, for his face was that of one who bears his own dead.

They noticed that he did not lay down upon the bed prepared for it in the ambulance the form that he carried, and all that he said was: 'Drive like h – l, Wilson,' to the driver.

That is all. Is it a story? In the next morning's paper I saw a little news item, and the last sentence of it may help you (as it helped me) to weld the incidents together.

It recounted the reception into Bellevue Hospital of a young woman who had been removed from No. 49 East – Street, suffering from debility induced by starvation. It concluded with these words:

'Dr. William Jackson, the ambulance physician who attended the case, says the patient will recover.'

V

A Service of Love

WHEN ONE LOVES ONES ART no service seems too hard.

That is our premise. This story shall draw a conclusion from it, and show at the same time that the premise is incorrect. That will be a new thing in logic, and a feat in story-telling somewhat older than the Great Wall of China.

Joe Larrabee came out of the post-oak flats of the Middle West pulsing with a genius for pictorial art. At six he drew a picture of the town pump with a prominent citizen passing it hastily. This effort was framed and hung in the drug store window by the side of the ear of corn with an uneven number of rows. At twenty he left for New York with a flowing necktie and a capital tied up somewhat closer.

Delia Caruthers did things in six octaves so promisingly in a pine-tree village in the South that her relatives chipped in enough in her chip hat for her to go 'North' and 'finish.' They could not see her f –, but that is our story

Joe and Delia met in an atelier where a number of art and music students had gathered to discuss chiaroscuro, Wagner, music, Rembrandt's works pictures, Waldteufel, wall-paper, Chopin, and Oolong.

Joe and Delia became enamoured one of the other or each of the other, as you please, and in a short time were married – for (see above), when one loves one's Art no service seem too hard.

Mr. and Mrs. Larrabee began housekeeping in a flat. It was a lonesome flat – something like the A sharp way down at the left-hand end of the keyboard. And they were happy; for they had their Art and they had each other. And my advice to the rich young man would be – sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor – janitor for the privilege of living in a flat with your Art and your Delia.

Flat-dwellers shall endorse my dictum that theirs is the only

true happiness. If a home is happy it cannot fit too close – let the dresser collapse and become a billiard table; let the mantel turn to a rowing machine, the escritoire to a spare bedchamber, the washstand to an upright piano; let the four walls come together, if they will, so you and your Delia are between. But if home be the other kind, let it be wide and long – enter you at the Golden Gate, hang your hat on Hatteras, your cape on Cape Horn, and go out by Labrador.

Joe was painting in the class of the great Magister – you know his fame. His fees are high; his lessons are light – his high-lights have brought him renown. Delia was studying under Rosenstock – you know his repute as a disturber of the piano keys.

They were mighty happy as long as their money lasted. So is every – but I will not be cynical. Their aims were very clear and defined. Joe was to become capable very soon of turning out pictures that old gentlemen with thin side-whiskers and thick pocketbooks would sandbag one another in his studio for the privilege of buying. Delia was to become familiar and then contemptuous with Music, so that when she saw the orchestra seats and boxes unsold she could have sore throat and lobster in a private dining-room and refuse to go on the stage.

But the best, in my opinion, was the home life in the little flat – the ardent, voluble chats after the day's study; the cosy dinners and fresh, light breakfasts; the interchange of ambitions – ambitions interwoven each with the other's or else inconsiderable – the mutual help and inspiration; and – overlook my artlessness – stuffed olives and cheese sandwiches at 11p.m.

But after awhile Art flagged. It sometimes does, even if some switchman doesn't flag it. Everything going out and nothing coming in, as the vulgarians say. Money was lacking to pay Mr. Magister and Herr Rosenstock their prices. When one loves one's Art no service seems too hard. So, Delia said she must give music lessons to keep the chafing dish bubbling.

For two or three days she went out canvassing for pupils. One evening she came home elated.

'Joe, dear,' she said gleefully, 'I've a pupil. And, oh, the loveliest people! General – General A. B. Pinkney's daughter – on Seventy-first Street. Such a splendid house, Joe – you ought to see the front door! Byzantine I think you would call it. And inside! Oh, Joe, I never saw anything like it before.

'My pupil is his daughter Clementina. I dearly love her already. She's a delicate thing – dresses always in white; and the sweetest,

simplest manners! Only eighteen years old. I'm to give three lessons a week; and, just think, Joe! $5 a lesson. I don't mind it a bit; for when I get two or three more pupils I can resume my lessons with Herr Rosenstock. Now, smooth out that wrinkle between your brows, dear, and let's have a nice supper.'

'That's all right for you, Dele,' said Joe, attacking a can of peas with a carving knife and a hatchet, 'but how about me? Do you think I'm going to let you hustle for wages while I philander in the regions of high art? Not by the bones of Benvenuto Cellini! I guess I can sell papers or lay cobblestones, and bring in a dollar or two.'

Delia came and hung about his neck.

'Joe, dear, you are silly. You must keep on at your studies. It is not as if I had quit my music and gone to work at something else. While I teach I learn. I am always with my music. And we can live as happily as millionaires on $15 a week. You mustn't think of leaving Mr. Magister.'

'All right,' said Joe, reaching for the blue scalloped vegetable dish. 'But I hate for you to be giving lessons. It isn't Art. But you're a trump and a dear to do it.'

'When one loves one's Art no service seems too hard,' said Delia.

'Magister praised the sky in that sketch I made in the park,' said Joe. 'And Tinkle gave me permission to hang two of them in his window. I may sell one if the right kind of a moneyed idiot sees them.'

'I'm sure you will,' said Delia sweetly. 'And now let's be thankful for General Pinkney and this veal roast.'

During all of the next week the Larrabees had an early breakfast. Joe was enthusiastic about some morning-effect sketches he was doing in Central Park, and Delia packed him off breakfasted, coddled, praised, and kissed at seven o'clock. Art is an engaging mistress. It was most times seven o'clock when he returned in the evening.

At the end of the week Delia, sweetly proud but languid, triumphantly tossed three five-dollar bills on the 8 by 10 (inches) centre table of the 8 by 10 (feet) flat parlour.

'Sometimes,' she said, a little wearily, 'Clementina tries me. I'm afraid she doesn't practise enough, and I have to tell her the same things so often. And then she always dresses entirely in white, and that does get monotonous. But General Pinkney is the dearest old man! I wish you could know him, Joe. He comes in sometimes

when I am with Clementina at the piano – he is a widower, you know – and stands there pulling his white goatee. "And how are the semiquavers and the demi-semiquavers progressing?" he always asks.

'I wish you could see the wainscoting in that drawing-room, Joe! And those Astrakhan rug *portières*. And Clementina has such a funny little cough. I hope she is stronger than she looks. Oh, I really am getting attached to her, she is so gentle and high bred. General Pinkney's brother was once Minister to Bolivia.'

And then Joe, with the air of a Monte Cristo, drew forth a ten, a five, a two and a one – all legal tender notes – and laid them beside Delia's earnings.

'Sold that water-colour of the obelisk to a man from Peoria,' he announced overwhelmingly

'Don't joke with me,' said Delia – 'not from Peoria!'

'All the way. I wish you could see him, Dele. Fat man with a woollen muffler and a quill toothpick. He saw the sketch in Tinkle's window and thought it was a windmill at first. He was game, though, and bought it anyhow. He ordered another – an oil sketch of the Lackawanna freight depot – to take back with him. Music lessons! Oh, I guess Art is still in it.'

'I'm so glad you've kept on,' said Delia heartily. 'You're bound to win, dear. Thirty-three dollars! We never had so much to spend before. We'll have oysters to-night.'

'And filet mignon with champignons,' said Joe. 'Where is the olive fork?'

On the next Saturday evening Joe reached home first. He spread his $18 on the parlour table and washed what seemed to be a great deal of dark paint from his hands.

Half an hour later Delia arrived, her right hand tied up in a shapeless bundle of wraps and bandages.

'How is this?' asked Joe after the usual greetings

Delia laughed, but not very joyously

'Clementina,' she explained, 'insisted upon a Welsh rabbit after her lesson. She is such a queer girl. Welsh rabbits at five in the afternoon. The General was there. You should have seen him run for the chafing dish, Joe, just as if there wasn't a servant in the house. I know Clementina isn't in good health; she is so nervous. In serving the rabbit she spilled a great lot of it, boiling hot, over my hand and wrist. It hurt awfully, Joe. And the dear girl was so sorry! But General Pinkney! – Joe, that old man nearly went distracted. He rushed downstairs and sent somebody – they said the

furnace man or somebody in the basement – out to a drug store for some oil and things to bind it up with. It doesn't hurt so much now.'

'What's this?' asked Joe, taking the hand tenderly and pulling at some white strands beneath the bandages.

'It's something soft,' said Delia, 'that had oil on it. Oh, Joe, did you sell another sketch?' She had seen the money on the table.

'Did I?' said Joe. 'Just ask the man from Peoria. He got his depot to-day, and he isn't sure but he thinks he wants another parkscape and a view on the Hudson. What time this afternoon did you burn your hand, Dele?'

'Five o'clock, I think,' said Dele plaintively. 'The iron – I mean the rabbit came off the fire about that time. You ought to have seen General Pinkney, Joe, when –'

'Sit down here a moment, Dele,' said Joe. He drew her to the couch, sat down beside her and put his arm across her shoulders.

'What have you been doing for the last two weeks, Dele?' he asked.

She braved it for a moment or two with an eye full of love and stubbornness, and murmured a phrase or two vaguely of General Pinkney; but at length down went her head and out came the truth and tears.

'I couldn't get any pupils,' she confessed. 'And I couldn't bear to have you give up your lessons; and I got a place ironing shirts in that big Twenty-fourth Street laundry. And I think I did very well to make up both General Pinkney and Clementina, don't you, Joe? And when a girl in the laundry set down a hot iron on my hand this afternoon I was all the way home making up that story about the Welsh rabbit. You're not angry are you, Joe? And if I hadn't got the work you mightn't have sold your sketches to that man from Peoria.'

'He wasn't from Peoria,' said Joe slowly

'Well, it doesn't matter where he was from. How clever you are, Joe – and – kiss me, Joe – and what made you ever suspect that I wasn't giving music lessons to Clementina?'

'I didn't,' said Joe, 'until to-night. And I wouldn't have then, only I sent up this cotton waste and oil from the engine-room this afternoon for a girl upstairs who had her hand burned with a smoothing-iron. I've been firing the engine in that laundry for the last two weeks.'

'And then you didn't –'

'My purchaser from Peoria,' said Joe, 'and General Pinkney are

both creations of the same art – but you wouldn't call it either painting or music.

And then they both laughed, and Joe began:

'When one loves one's Art no service seems –'

But Delia stopped him with her hand on his lips. 'No,' she said – 'just "When one loves." '

VI

The Coming-out of Maggie

EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT the Clover Leaf Social Club gave a hop in the hall of the Give and Take Athletic Association on the East Side. In order to attend one of these dances you must be a member of the Give and Take – or, if you belong to the division that starts off with the right foot in waltzing, you must work in Rhinegold's paper-box factory. Still, any Clover Leaf was privileged to escort or be escorted by an outsider to a single dance. But mostly each Give and Take brought the paper-box girl that he affected; and few strangers could boast of having shaken a foot at the regular hops.

Maggie Toole, on account of her dull eyes, broad mouth and left-handed style of footwork in the two-step, went to the dances with Anna McCarty and her 'fellow.' Anna and Maggie worked side by side in the factory, and were the greatest chums ever. So Anna always made Jimmy Burns take her by Maggie's house every Saturday night so that her friend could go to the dance with them.

The Give and Take Athletic Association lived up to its name. The hall of the association in Orchard Street was fitted out with muscle-making inventions. With the fibres thus builded up the members were wont to engage the police and rival social and athletic organizations in joyous combat. Between these more serious occupations the Saturday night hops with the paper-box factory girls came as a refining influence and as an efficient screen. For sometimes the tip went 'round, and if you were among the elect that tiptoed up the dark back stairway you might see as neat and satisfying a little welter-weight affair to a finish as ever happened inside the ropes.

On Saturdays Rhinegold's paper-box factory closed at 3 p.m. On one such afternoon Anna and Maggie walked homeward together. At Maggie's door Anna said, as usual: 'Be ready at seven, sharp, Mag; and Jimmy and me'll come by for you.'

But what was this? Instead of the customary humble and grateful thanks from the non-escorted one there was to be perceived a high-poised head, a prideful dimpling at the corners of a broad mouth, and almost a sparkle in a dull brown eye.

'Thanks, Anna,' said Maggie; 'but you and Jimmy needn't bother to-night. I've a gentleman friend that's coming 'round to escort me to the hop.'

The comely Anna pounced upon her friend, shook her, chided and beseeched her. Maggie Toole catch a fellow! Plain, dear, loyal, unattractive Maggie, so sweet as a chum, so unsought for a two-step or a moonlit bench in the little park. How was it? When did it happen? Who was it?

'You'll see to-night,' said Maggie, flushed with the wine of the first grapes she had gathered in Cupid's vineyard. 'He's swell all right. He's two inches taller than Jimmy, and an up-to-date dresser. I'll introduce him, Anna, just as soon as we get to the hall.'

Anna and Jimmy were among the first Clover Leafs to arrive that evening. Anna's eyes were brightly fixed upon the door of the hall to catch the first glimpse of her friend's 'catch.'

At 8.30 Miss Toole swept into the hall with her escort. Quickly her triumphant eye discovered her chum under the wing of her faithful Jimmy.

'Oh, gee!' cried Anna, 'Mag ain't made a hit – oh, no! Swell fellow? Well, I guess! Style? Look at 'um.'

'Go as far as you like,' said Jimmy, with sandpaper in his voice. 'Cop him out if you want him. These new guys always win out with the push. Don't mind me. He don't squeeze all the limes, I guess. Huh!'

'Shut up, Jimmy. You know what I mean. I'm glad for Mag. First fellow she ever had. Oh, here they come.'

Across the floor Maggie sailed like a coquettish yacht convoyed by a stately cruiser. And truly, her companion justified the encomiums of the faithful chum. He stood two inches taller than the average Give and Take athlete; his dark hair curled; his eyes and his teeth flashed whenever he bestowed his frequent smiles. The young men of the Clover Leaf Club pinned not their faith to the graces of person as much as they did to its prowess, its achievements in hand-to-hand conflicts, and its preservation from the legal duress that constantly menaced it. The member of the association who would bind a paper-box maiden to his conquering chariot scorned to employ Beau Brummel airs. They were not considered honourable methods of warfare. The swelling biceps,

the coat straining at its buttons over the chest, the air of conscious conviction of the super-eminence of the male in the cosmogony of creation, even a calm display of bow legs as subduing and enchanting agents in the gentle tourneys of Cupid – these were the approved arms and ammunition of the Clover Leaf gallants. They viewed, then, the genuflexions and alluring poses of this visitor with their chins at a new angle.

'A friend of mine, Mr. Terry O'Sullivan,' was Maggie's formula of introduction. She led him around the room, presenting him to each new-arriving Clover Leaf. Almost was she pretty now, with the unique luminosity in her eyes that comes to a girl with her first suitor and a kitten with its first mouse.

'Maggie Toole's got a fellow at last,' was the word that went round among the paper-box girls. 'Pipe Mag's floor-walker' – thus the Give and Takes expressed their indifferent contempt.

Usually at the weekly hops Maggie kept a spot on the wall warm with her back. She felt and showed so much gratitude whenever a self-sacrificing partner invited her to dance that his pleasure was cheapened and diminished. She had even grown used to noticing Anna joggle the reluctant Jimmy with her elbow as a signal for him to invite her chum to walk over his feet through a two-step.

But to-night the pumpkin had turned to a coach and six. Terry O'Sullivan was a victorious Prince Charming, and Maggie Toole winged her first butterfly flight. And though our tropes of fairyland be mixed with those of entomology they shall not spill one drop of ambrosia from the rose-crowned melody of Maggie's one perfect night.

The girls besieged her for introductions to her 'fellow.' The Clover Leaf young men, after two years of blindness, suddenly perceived charms in Miss Toole. They flexed their compelling muscles before her and bespoke her for the dance.

Thus she scored; but to Terry O'Sullivan the honours of the evening fell thick and fast. He shook his curls; he smiled and went easily through the seven motions for acquiring grace in your own room before an open window ten minutes each day. He danced like a faun; he introduced manner and style and atmosphere; his words came trippingly upon his tongue, and – he waltzed twice in succession with the paper-box girl that Dempsey Donovan brought.

Dempsey was the leader of the association. He wore a dress suit, and could chin the bar twice with one hand. He was one of 'Big Mike' O'Sullivan's lieutenants, and was never troubled by trouble. No cop dared to arrest him. Whenever he broke a push-cart man's

head or shot a member of the Heinrick B. Sweeney Outing and Literary Association in the kneecap, an officer would drop around and say:

'The Cap'n'd like to see ye a few minutes round to the office whin ye have time, Dempsey, me boy.'

But there would be sundry gentlemen there with large gold fob chains and black cigars; and somebody would tell a funny story, and then Dempsey would go back and work half an hour with the six-pound dumb-bells. So, doing a tight-rope act on a wire stretched across Niagara was a safe terpsichorean performance compared with waltzing twice with Dempsey Donovan's paper-box girl. At ten o'clock the jolly round face of 'Big Mike' O'Sullivan shone at the door for five minutes upon the scene. He always looked in for five minutes, smiled at the girls and handed out real perfectos to the delighted boys.

Dempsey Donovan was at his elbow instantly, talking rapidly. 'Big Mike' looked carefully at the dancers, smiled, shook his head and departed.

The music stopped. The dancers scattered to the chairs along the walls. Terry O'Sullivan, with his entrancing bow, relinquished a pretty girl in blue to her partner and started back to find Maggie. Dempsey intercepted him in the middle of the floor.

Some fine instinct that Rome must have bequeathed to us caused nearly every one to turn and look at them – there was a subtle feeling that two gladiators had met in the arena. Two or three Give and Takes with tight coat-sleeves drew nearer.

'One moment, Mr. O'Sullivan,' said Dempsey. 'I hope you're enjoying yourself. Where did you say you lived?

The two gladiators were well matched. Dempsey had, perhaps, ten pounds of weight to give away. The O'Sullivan had breadth with quickness Dempsey had a glacial eye, a dominating slit of a mouth, an indestructible jaw, a complexion like a belle's and the coolness of a champion. The visitor showed more fire in his contempt and less control over his conspicuous sneer. They were enemies by the law written when the rocks were molten. They were each too splendid, too mighty, too incomparable to divide pre-eminence. One only must survive.

'I live on Grand,' said O'Sullivan insolently; 'and no trouble to find me at home. Where do you live?'

Dempsey ignored the question.

'You say your name's O'Sullivan,' he went on. 'Well, "Big Mike" says he never saw you before.'