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"Remember, Jack, I always love like this," she sighed, as she nestled a little closer to him.

"Yes!" murmured he, absent. "So I've heard! So I've heard!"

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ASTHMA

The BROWN MOUSE

by Herbert Quick



CHAPTER XX—Continued.

As the latest-coming visitors moved forward, they heard the schoolmaster finishing his passage at arms with the salesman.

"You should not feel exasperated at us, Mr. Carmichael," said he in tones of the most complete respect. "For what our figures show, you are unfortunate in the business proposition you offer this community. That is all. Even these children have the facts to prove that the creamery and school offer is not worth within two thousand dollars of what you ask for it, and that it is very doubtful if it is the sort of gift we should need."

"Oh, you a thousand dollars!" began Carmichael hotly, when Jim waved him down.

"Not with me," said Jim. "Your friend, Mr. Bonner, there, knows what chance there is for you to get even a thousand cents with me. Besides, we know our facts; in this school, we've been working on them for a long time."

"But your life we have!" interjected Newton Bronson.

"Before we finish," said Jim, "I want to thank you gentlemen for bringing in Mr. Carmichael. We have been reading up on the literature of the creamery promoter, and it is a very fine thing to have one in the flesh with whom to—demonstrate, if Mr. Carmichael will allow me to say so."

Carmichael looked at Bonner, made an expressive motion with his head toward the door, and turned as if to leave.

"Well," said he, "I can do plenty of business with real meat, if you want to make the deal I offer you, and I can show you from the statistics I've got at the hotel that it's a special deal just to get started in this part of the state, and carries a thousand dollars of cut in price, you'll leave these children and this, he school-ma'am and get something done."

"I can't allow you to depart," said Jim more gently than before, "without thanking you for the very excellent talk you gave us on the advantage of the co-operative creamery over the centralizer. We in this school believe in the co-operative creamery, and if we can get out of Mr. Carmichael, without buying your equipment, I think your work here may be productive of good."

"He's off of three or four points on the average, in the Wisconsin co-ops," said Newton.

"And we thought," said Mary Smith, "that we'd need more cows than he said to keep up a creamery of our own."

"Oh," replied Jim, "but we mustn't expect Mr. Carmichael, to know the subject as well as we do children. He makes a practice of talking mostly to people who know nothing about it—and he talks very well. All I'm for, thanking Mr. Carmichael please say 'Aye.'"

CHAPTER XXI

A New Era Dawns.

There was a rousing chorus of "Aye!" in which Mr. Carmichael, followed closely by Mr. Bonner, made his exit. B. H. Haman went forward and shook Jim's hand slowly and contemplatively, as if trying to remember just what he should say.

"James H. Irwin," said he, "you've saved us from being misled by the smooth-tongued snake that I've ever seen."

"Not I," said Jim; "the kind of school I stand for, Mr. Haman, will save you more than that—and give you the broadest, purest any school ever gave. A culture based on life. We've been studying life, in this school—the life we all live here in this district."

"He had a smooth partner, too," said Columbus Brown. Jim looked at Bonner's little boy in one of the front seats and shook his head at Columbus warningly.

"If I hadn't herded 'em in here to ask you a few questions about co-operative creameries," said Mr. Talcott, "we'd have been stuck—these pretty near had our names. And then the whole neighborhood would have been asked in for about fifty dollars a name."

"I had gone in for two hundred," said B. H. Haman.

"May I call a little meeting here for a minute, Jim?" asked Ezra Bronson.

"Why, where's he going?"

"They're some other visitors come to," said a little girl, pulling her apron in embarrassment at the teacher's absence.

Jim had, after what seemed to Jennie an interminable while, seen the county superintendent and her distinguished father, and was now engaged in welcoming them and endeavoring to find them some—quite a possible thing at that particular moment, by the way.

"Don't mind us, Mr. Irwin," said

CHAPTER XXII

And So They Lived—

And so it turned out quite as if it were in the old ballad, that "all in the merry month of May" and "all in the merry green wood" there were great dangers about the bold little promontory where once stood the cabin on the old wood-lot where the Simms family had lived.

The brook ran about the promontory, and laid it at its feet on three sides a carpet of blue-grass, amid clumps of trees and wild bushes. Not far ahead on either side came the black corn-field, and up and down the bluff sides of the brook for some distance on both sides of the King dragged highway, ran the old wood lot, now regaining much of the original character it when Jim Irwin had drawn upon himself the gentle rebuke of Old Man Simms for not giving a whop from the big road before coming into the yard.

The cabin was gone, and in its place stood a pretty little bungalow, about which blossomed lilacs and peonies and roses and other old-fashioned flowers furnished by Mrs. Irwin. For it was the teacher's house or schoolhouse for the new consolidated, Woodruff district, and the old Simms wood-lot was henceforth to be the glebe-land of the schoolhouse.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

restitution of The Knave Unhappily every morning."

"It was more like a circus than I've ever seen it, daddy," said Jennie, "and less like a school."

"Don't you think," said Doctor Brathwayt, "that it was less like a school because it was more like life? It was life. If I am not mistaken, history of this community was making it that schoolroom as we entered."

"You're perfectly right, Doctor," said the colonel. "Jim's got too big for the district, and so we're going to enlarge the district, and the schoolhouse, and the teaching force, and the means of educational grace generally. That's as sure as can be—after what took place this morning!"

"He's rather a wonderful person, to be found in such a position," said Professor Gray, "or would be in any region I have visited."

"He's a native product," said the colonel, "but a wonder all the same. He's a Brown Mouse, you know."

"Is—?" Doctor Brathwayt, was plainly astonished. And so the colonel was allowed to tell again the story of the Darblshire brown mice, and why he called Jim Irwin one. Doctor Brathwayt said it was an interesting Mendelian explanation of the appearance of such a character as Jim. "And if you are right, Colonel, you'll lose him one of these days. You can't expect to retain a Caesar, a Napoleon or a Lincoln in a rural school, can you?"

"I don't know about that," said the colonel. "The great opportunity for such a Brown Mouse may be in this very school, right here. He may have big an army right here at Simms never had. The Brown Mouse is the only judge of his own proper place."

"I think," said Mrs. Brathwayt, as they motored back to the school, that your country schoolmaster is rather terrible. The way he crushed that Mr. Carmichael was positively merciless. Did he know how cruel he was?"

"I think not," said Jennie. "It was the truth that crushed Mr. Carmichael."

"But that vote of thanks," said Mrs. Brathwayt. "Surely that was the bitterest irony."

"I wonder if it was," said Jennie. "No, I am sure it wasn't. He wanted to leave the children thinking as well as possible of their victim, and especially of Mr. Bonner; and there was really something in Mr. Carmichael's talk which could be praised. I have known Jim Irwin since we were both children, and I feel sure that if he had had any idea that his treatment of this man had been unnecessarily cruel, it would have won him a lot of praise."

"My dear," said Mrs. Brathwayt, "I think you are to be congratulated for having known for a long time a genius."

"I think you," said Jennie. And Mrs. Brathwayt gave her a glance which brought to her cheek another blush; but of a different sort from the one provoked by the uproar in the Woodruff school.

There could be no doubt now that Jim was thoroughly wonderful—not that she, the county superintendent, was quite as thoroughly a little fool. She is to be put in authority over him! It was too absurd for laughter. Fortunately, she hadn't hindered him much—but who was to be thanked for that? Was it owing to any wisdom of hers? Well, she had decided in his favor in these first proceedings to revoke his certificate. Perhaps that was as good a thing to remember as was to be found in the record.

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