A ROMANCE OF PICKLES

By H. S. Harrison

Born in dinginess, bred to the uses of adversity, sharpened by the old plain need of something, to eat, he took his apprenticeship in the ways of things and at twelve stood forth a finished and resolute man of his word. Then, having all the facts at his command and the future of his mother to provide for, he made his hard, careful plans for success, and put his determined foot upon the ladder.

There was never anything to do with Tommy except to stand aside and let him rise. This they soon discovered at Hathaway's great factory, where he began by folding circulars and copying letters. When he was nineteen they made him a traveling salesman.

That was the last day that his mother ever did any work. By another week he had moved her uptown. Three years later, when they took him off the road because they needed him in the office, he moved his mother again. By another year they were giving him a salary which he could not think of without blushing.

But Tommy had seen at the start that the way to make money was to save it; and at twenty-three his chance came. Hathaway wanted new capital to enlarge the business, and was discussing the proposed improvements with his partners and Tommy when the latter blurted suddenly, "Why not let me come in?"

The general manager stared. The president, great Hathaway himself, looked out of the window and smiled.

"Why, you see, Tommy," he explained, "this is a matter of such-an-such a sum."

"Yes," said Tommy, undismayed by the size of the figure, "I know. I could bring a certified check for it on Thursday."

"Why, where on earth did you get so much money, Tommy?"

"I have been drawing a lot of money for the last seven years," said Driscoll calmly. "Then I've been awfully lucky on some investments," and he mentioned one or two.

So Tommy went into the firm as treasurer, but he was much more than that. At the end of his second year the earnings of the firm had exactly doubled. Toward the end of the third they had doubled again. By the end of the fifth when crowding competition had brought progress to a standstill, the lines for the great merger—seven big houses from Jersey City to Los Angeles—had already been laid. By the end of the sixth year the merger was an accomplished fact. It was really Tommy Driscoll of Hathaway's who had put the deal through, though the papers did not say so. Then Driscoll bought a few more gilt-edged securities, a little more choice real estate, did a little further figuring and found that he was in a fair way to become a wealthy young man. But suddenly, just when he was making plans for playing business on a really large scale, his commercial career came to an abrupt close.

"Tommy," said his mother one night, as she sat on the side of his bed and gently stroked his great mop of a head, "I want you to give up the factory—and—be a gentleman."

"A what?"

"A gentleman," said his mother softly.

"Yes'm," said Tommy.

"And marry," added his mother, her cheek against his, "some nice girl—a lady."

"A what?"

"A lady," said his mother still more softly.

"Yes'm," said Tommy again.

He took an office in a down-town sky-scraper, engaged a stenographer, and spent an hour there every day, looking after his affairs which prospered largely.

He was approaching twenty-nine at this time, very big and simple, very pleasant to look at, very full of those eager spirits which all these hard years had not been able to crush out of him.

"I believe I'll start and find a lady," he said to himself—"a lady"—and here he smiled, for this was Hathaway's most famous catchword, which he himself had invented "who's 'the best thing going.'"

Then one day his patience was rewarded. She sat in a Victoria with a maid, while a male attendant and some baggage followed in a hansom.

"Smith," said Tommy to his man, who was behind, "follow that man in the hansom to the ticket window. Find out where he's going and buy me a ticket to the same place."

"To Oldcourt, sir," murmured Smith at the designated tryst, handing Tommy the ticket. "The lady and the maid have just gone on. There are two cars, sir, the Laconia and the Latonia. The lady and the maid are in the Laconia. I have got you seats in both, sir."

"I shall ride in the Latonia," said Tommy. "Pack me, Smith," he said, "for a week. Say, four trunks. Tell my mother that I have suddenly been called out of town and will write. Come on with the trunks to-night. I shall be at the principal hotel. Report to me there at noon to-morrow. Tell me at that time where I shall find Miss Belden—Miss Vespasia Belden."

"Very good, sir," said Smith.

With Tommy driving and Smith silent in the tonneau, they whizzed up the beautiful white road, turned to the left and slowed down at a pretty shingled house with low pillars, and wide, well furnished porches.

"The club-house, Smith," said Driscoll sagely. "You are sure she is golfing this morning?"

The man nodded, and, throwing on speed again, Tommy ran along beside the high white wall which surrounds the club grounds on all sides.

"Wait for me here, Smith," he said.

The wall was of such height that a six-foot man might reach with some exertion. Driscoll with apparent ease, laid his hands on the top, pulled himself up and so dropped to the other side.

Far away on the hillside was a little plodding group—men, boys and clubs. A bare hundred yards away where a little dancing brook widened suddenly into a miniature lake, rose a splendid oak. Beneath the oak reclined a girl.

Whistling a snatch of song, Tommy drew near to the tree, left off whistling abruptly, and stood looking down at the girl, who at a glance had summoned him to Oldcourt. Miss Belden remained quite silent. She neither screamed nor smiled, neither asked him to be seated, nor to begone, neither questioned his presence nor answered his look of eager friendliness: the reason for all these things was that she was fast asleep.

Presently she moved, brought her slender hands to her eyes, made ready to be roused, and then quite suddenly she opened her eyes, met his friendly scrutiny, and straightened up, startled.

"Why," she cried breathlessly struggling in the mists of sleep—"Why—you! YOU!"

"Yes," he assured her calmly, "it is I."

"You're a real person then! Why—why—why—who are you? Where could I have seen you before?"

Tommy's face fell a little at that.

Really troubled she looked at him, intently striving to speak. And Tommy, because her bewilderment was so enchanting, laughed.

"Oh!" cried Miss Belden, suddenly drawing away a little, but still possessed by the great wonder of it—"Oh! I know you now. I saw you in an advertisement. You are Hathaway's Pickles."

For his picture in a hundred poses, but always with that one delighted smile, had appeared in every magazine in America and upon the vast majority of billboards. He was always shown as a fashionably garbed young man on the point of partaking of a gherkin; and opposite his jubilant mouth invariably hung the famous slogan:

HATHAWAY'S PICKLES
The Best Thing Going

Thus it happened that Tommy Driscoll, eminent from Bangor to San Francisco, as the Hathaway Pickle man, found himself in the most natural way, telling the story of his life to perhaps the most courted girl in America.

"As to those pictures, he ruminated, coming back to them, "I got up that idea myself; always showing one figure and one catch-phrase in our ads, you know. They picked me to sit for them because I looked like a healthy appetite and had the right smile. I used to think it great fun; it was like being a celebrity, you know. I don't mind it now, of course, but my mother does. She wants them to stop using my pictures, but I don't like to make them: it's gotten pretty valuable as a trademark, you see. But mother is quite particular in that way. It was because of her wish that I left the American Condiment Company. She wanted me to give up business and be a gentleman—those are her words: bless her heart!—also to marry a lady.

"Yes," said Miss Belden. "I have been wanting to have you tell me about that. Which?"

"Which?" repeated Tommy.

"Being a gentleman or marrying a lady?"

"Oh, that!" he laughed. "Why," he added, as though this would explain everything, "it was to see you that I came to Oldcourt."

"Oh," said Miss Belden, "then I understand that you don't want to marry me!"

"Well—that is," he hesitated, blushing a little. "I hadn't thought of the matter in that light."

"Now tell me," she said, "Why you wanted to see me, and what that had to do with being a gentleman."

"The connection isn't close a bit, is it?" laughed Driscoll. "But it's this way." And he told her how it had been his pleasure to hunt for the best of things since he had become a man of leisure, and all about his theory of a type of woman different from anything he had ever seen, and how he had sought for it, as part of his delightful investigations, and how unsuccessfully.

"And now that you have—met me," she said, "I suppose I am merely one more disappointment?"

"You!" cried Tommy. "Well, I should say not! I was certain of that the minute I walked over here and looked down at you. I said to myself at once, 'Here she is at last—the best thing going!' and the conviction is strengthened by every word you say."

"I am glad to hear you say that," she said simply. "I should not have liked to know that upon meeting me, you found me disappointing. And I'm glad you came here and talked to me this morning. Now," she said, rising gracefully, "I must say good-bye. You leave Oldcourt this afternoon, I suppose?"

"This afternoon!" repeated Tommy, with surprise. "No, I'm here for a week. What're you going to do now?" which surprised her into answering, "I am going home to dress for a luncheon at 2 o'clock."

"What're you going to do this afternoon?" demanded Tommy.

"After luncheon I shall play bridge until six. Then I shall go home and dress again, this time for dinner."

"What're you going to do to-night?"

"To-night," said Miss Belden, "I go to a tiresome masquerade at the house of my friends—the Vandervoorts."

"H'm!" said Tommy, "masquerade! Well, I'm awfully sorry you're engaged all day, but I'll see you then, anyway."

"Why—I'm afraid not," she said kindly. "It's—it's really quite a private affair, you see, meant particularly for friends of the family."

"I'll be there," he assured her serenely. "It'll be all right. I want to see you to-night, and since you're going to the Vandervoorts, why I must be there too."

At 10.10 p. m., his duties apparently ended, the ticket taker, who was entering Harvard next year, was on the point of joining the gay company within the Vandervoort villa, when a tall figure in a black domino stepped upon the berugged veranda and put his foot upon the threshold.

The orchestra was playing. Everyone in the great room was dancing except an elderly couple, and a Sister of Charity who sat alone opposite the entrance. Tommy crossed over eagerly and bowed before her.

"Little Sister," he said, "won't you dance?"

She arose gratefully and as they moved off he cheerfully ventured, "You looked a little lonesome, I thought."

"I was," she admitted.

"Maybe," he hazarded, "you're a bit of an outsider like me."

"Yes," she faltered, "I am an outsider." Driscoll laughed. "I don't know a soul in this room, but one, and how to find her I haven't the faintest notion.

"I do belong here either," she replied desperately. "I'm a stenographer from Boston and came here on my vacation. Then this afternoon I—I picked up an invitation to this on the beach, and I thought I'd come. But oh, I wish I hadn't. I think they suspect me. I'm having—I'm having a perfectly ghastly time."

He danced next with a gorgeous Princess of the Empire, who knew that she had never met him before and flirted with him outrageously. The third time around his eye fell on the little Sister seated alone in a corner of the room.

He asked the Princess why this should be.

"Haven't you heard?" she replied languidly. "Why, we're almost sure that she's one of those Ruthvens from Chicago. That's so like Mrs. Vandervoort's liberality, isn't it?"

"Well, isn't she nice, then?" asked Tommy, curiously.

"Nice," she echoed. "Oh, I suppose so, but she's a rank outsider. She's impertinent to come here at all. Please tell me who you are!"

"Are you sure you don't recognize me?" parried Tommy, before detaching himself from the Princess and making his way over to the little Sister for their third dance.

"You simply mustn't sit there polishing the wall like that," he remonstrated. "You must mix among them. There isn't a thing to be afraid of. Why they all think that you're one of the invited guests—Miss Ruthven of Chicago, whom they are cutting."

"But—I can't go about among the people as you say. I can't. I'm afraid to."

"Then," said Tommy earnestly, "you must give me the rest of your dances."

"No, no. I'm not so selfish as that. You must not miss such a chance to dance with these rich and distinguished people."

"Are they better to dance with than you?"

"Why," said the little stenographer in her low scared voice, "don't you want to get into society?"

"How do you mean?" asked Tommy, puzzled. "Bless you, I have all the society I want. Give me the next one, anyway, won't you? And let me take you to supper?"

Ladies of quality gorgeously appareled, danced the fifth and the seventh with him, and he prospered with them famously. During this his troubles began. A short, stout man waltzing with the Princess of the Empire, circled by him and hearkened to his chatter.

"Why," he exclaimed, "hang me if that black domino isn't young Driscoll, who made a fortune out of pickles in New York! I'd know that laugh among a thousand. Well! who will we be meeting next?"

"Really?" said the Princess. "That one! Well, I don't care. He's fascinating—ever if he is so taken with that Ruthven girl."

The short, stout man knew Tommy in New York, and liked him, but he felt, naturally that the functions of the chosen must be kept untarnished from the herd. He mentioned this latest instance of Mrs. Vandervoort's laxness to his aunt. Like wildfire, the scandal spread, the result being that when Tommy presently re-entered the ballroom from the veranda, a giggling, suppressed but violent, sprang up behind him. The orchestra was just starting a new dance—the ninth. He sauntered to the line of people seated in chairs along the left hand wall, tendered his arm to a decorated Bo-Peep, and was emphatically refused.

"She's spotted me for an outsider," he concluded cheerfully—remembering now that he had had some difficulty in securing a partner for the eighth—and summoned next an Old Virginia belle of the Colonial Period, who also, pointedly, declined him. Passing on he presently espied the Empire Princess among the silent group of maskers, and he was quite sure that she would dance with him. And then, behind him, suddenly echoed a note of suppressed laughter. As he turned in the direction from whence it came a similar cackle sprang up from the other side. Then another and another and other upholders of tradition until a score or more were sharing in the unseemly mirth. Tommy felt that every eye in the great room was fastened upon him.

"What's the joke?" he demanded pleasantly. "It seems to be on me, anyway."

He was standing in the middle of the floor, trying absurdly to inspect his own back, the unembarrassed cynosure of a hundred unfriendly eyes.

As his back was turned to the door he did not see the Sister of Charity when she suddenly appeared at the threshold. She stood there a second, taking everything in at a glance before moving swiftly down the room, plucking at her mask as she walked.

"Why!" she cried in a voice very different from the frightened gurgle of the little Boston stenographer. "This is outrageous—insufferable!"

Voices rang out all over the room. "Why, it's Vespasia—Miss Belden, upon my soul!"

She came to Tommy with eyes shining, cheeks flaming scarlet; and before them all, knelt down proudly on the polished floor and removed from his skirts a picture—that of a good-looking young man delightfully dallying with a gherkin.

Tommy took it, smiling, and crumpled it in his hand, as he led the way into the dimly lighted conservatory, leaving behind them a roomful of people, astonished, somewhat crestfallen, and even a bit ashamed.

"Thank you for coming to the rescue," Miss Belden," he said, as the voices died behind them.

"I was frightened," she confessed, "and—indignant. They had meant to unmask in another minute and catch you—with Mrs. Vandervoort at hand to say that you wasn't invited. I want you to go now.

"Go!" echoed Tommy. "Why, I'm having a perfectly ripping time!"

"But," she hinted delicately, "there are other things to be considered than that."

"Oh!" he flushed. "I understand. You mean it would embarrass you—my being here without a card, and all that. Of course it would—I never thought of that! I'll go this minute."

"When you go home," she said at last, gently withdrawing her hand, "you tell your mother from me—no from a little stenographer that you were kind to one night—that you already are one."

"That I already am one, what?" demanded Tommy.

Miss Belden turned away and began slowly unfastening her Sister of Charity robe.

"I don't want you to go," she said then, in a curious voice. "I've changed my mind. You promised to give me supper, did you not? Put away your absurd black domino. I am going to take you in and introduce you to Mrs. Vandervoort."

"That would be nice," he said cordially. "I really owe her an apology, I suppose, for coming here uninvited this way."

Oldcourt is a curious community. It runs strongly to fads, to lions. This time, beyond any doubt, it was Tommy Driscoll with his splendid alertness, his magnificent good looks, his gay and wonderful innocence, and, most incredible of all about him, the fact that he so obviously did not want to get into society, who was the success of the season.

But while his visit to Oldcourt was prospering, Tommy was not unmindful of his promise to his mother, who was not sharing these pleasant things with him. On the seventh day, at twelve in the morning, his trunks packed and gone, his ticket in his inside pocket, his mission in brief, triumphantly done, he rose for the second time in the Belden drawing-room to tell its single other occupant goodbye.

"Good-bye," said Miss Belden and her voice now was curiously reminiscent of the little Sister of Charity.

"And now," she went on, "that you have done half of—of what your mother wanted of you—for even she must now feel that that part is finished—splendidly—I hope with all my heart that you will prosper as well with—the rest of it."

"Marrying a lady?" laughed Tommy. "Oh, pshaw! I never think of that, of course! I've always felt that those things come in their own time and way. Haven't you?"

"I always used to think that I did," said Miss Belden. "I suppose that I think so still."

He took her hand and gazed down at her from his great height, and there was affection in his honest eyes—real, deep, abiding affection—and Miss Belden saw it and paled.

"What a brick you are!" he said huskily. "And what luck for a chap like me to have you for a friend."

"Good-bye," said Miss Belden once more. And Tommy was off to catch his train.

On the platform, he glanced at his watch; it was still ten minutes to train-time. From his pocket he produced presently a telegram from Hathaway's and read it again with pleasant sensations; the message saying that his offer for the famous trademark was accepted and that his portrait would adorn the bill-boards no more. He would never have thought of making that offer. She has sugested that, had told him how well worth doing it was.

Then suddenly he was not glad any more, but strangely and terribly depressed, as he had never been before. In the wink of an eye, as at a signal heavy gloom, unaccountable, unreasonable, settled down upon him. Vast despondency wrapped around his being.

He sprang up and began pacing restlessly about. The grizzled baggage agent eyed with some wonder the resplendent young man who strode so frowningly about the platform, muttering strange things to himself. Presently Tommy's eye fell upon him, and he drew near, struck by a sudden thought.

"Have a cigar, my man?" he said, striving to speak in an easy conversational tone. "Er—what does it mean, do you suppose, when you're leaving a place where you've only spent a week, and you feel, by George, ha, ha! as though you were going to die?"

"Well, sir," said the agent pleasantly, but privately marveling anew at the odd ways of cottagers, "well, sir, if it was me, I'd say, beggin' your pardon, sir, as there was a lady in the case."

"A lady in the case!" repeated Tommy. "A . . . lady . . . in . . . the . . . case!"

He went back to his suit-case, sat down again, and fell to thinking deeply . . . and as when a lamp is flashed sharply into a dark room, so now light, new and wonderful, suddenly flooded the hidden corners of his soul.

The way of life and its utmost meaning rolled out before him: a face framed itself marvelously upon the green hillside where his eye was fastened; and Tommy, face to face with the best of . . . his best things, found himself at the end of his explorations at last.

In two minutes—for it took no longer than that—he sprang up, laughing, and laid hold upon his suit-case . . . and when the train came panting in, the baggage agent wondering more than ever, saw the strange young man who had so restlessly waited for it, start hurriedly away.

"Hey, there!" he called good-naturally. "Here's your train, sir—going this minute."

"Train! I don't want a train!" cried Tommy over his shoulder—never checking his swift pace, for it seemed to him that there was not another second to lose—"I want—the best thing going!"

WANT A CURB ON FLIRTS.

Asks Trade Board to Curb East End Pittsburgh Flirts.

PITTSBURGH.—In the capacity of censor of morals the Pittsburgh Board of Trade in Shady avenue is considering a communication it received condemning the loitering on the curbs along Penn avenue. It ask that the trade organization put an end to the practice which has led to remarks being directed to women who walk along the streets. The ogling is so marked as to be uncomfortable for women who are passing by, either accompanied or alone.

Little Johnny Jones found a switch and took it to his teacher, but it happened to be one that she dropped in taking off her peach-basket hat.

The Motor Dealers' Contest Association of New York will not hold any more track contests this year, but now plans to have a number of reliability events.

SHE SEES AGAIN AT 84 YEARS

Woman's Sight Is Restored in Miraculous Manner.

Sioux Falls, S. D.—After having been blind for a period of more than four years, Mrs. Mary Carpenter of Roberts County has had her sight restored in an almost miraculous manner. She is 84 years of age. Her sight left her Dec. 11, 1909, and for more than four years she was totally blind. Recently while she was holding her little grandson on her knee her sight suddenly was restored. She now is able to see as well as at any time during her lifetime.

SECRET RAIDS.

Made on Dens Where Opium Cigarettes Were Manufactured.

CHICAGO.—The invention by a Chinese chemist of an 'opium cigarette," the enactment of a Federal law making its manufacture or sale a felony, secret raids on dens where the new cigarette was being made, the indictment of seven Chinese and one white man, summarize a story revealed here.

The invention of the chemist was discovered several months ago and the law against it was passed. The chemist escaped, and plans which he had made to spread the opium habit lapsed until recently.

The raid was made several days ago in the greatest secrecy, and the story came out in connection with the return of indictments.

It is claimed that marriage is a lottery, but it can not be true, else the law would take hold of it.

Time robs us of many things, but wounds our vanity first by introducing wrinkles and the double chin.

Toe the mark; but, when you are chopping wood, also mark the toe.

Our Next Serial

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Secured at great expense, this will be the best story that has yet appeared in this paper. Watch for the opening chapters of

PHILIP STEELE

By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

Author of "The Danger Trail", "The Horror of the Big Snows", Etc., Etc.

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD.
Author of Philip Steele.

If there is anything in the theory of heredity, it is not surprising that James Oliver Curwood is the author of some of the most notable adventure novels of today. On his father's side he is a direct descendant of Captain Marryat, the author of those immortal tales which three generations have gloated over.

Mr. Curwood has made one quarter of the globe—the vast Canadian northwest—peculiarly his own, and he knows that mighty wilderness as Kipling knows India. Although he is an American, born in Michigan and educated at the State University, he stands high in the esteem of the Canadian government, and every year spends several months in the trackless wastes of the Hudson Bay country, traveling as far north as the sixtieth degree and entering the Arctic Circle. He is the only American ever employed by the Canadian government as an exploratory and descriptive writer. His collection of photographs of great game in its native habitat (taken by himself) is the largest in America.

Mr. Curwood began his career as a newspaper man, being the editor of the Detroit News-Tribune. Possessed of a breadth of imagination, he early turned his attention to fiction, using Canada for his locale. The result of his unique acquaintance with this country is embodied in those stirring stories, "The Courage of Captain Plum," "The Wolf Hunters," "The Gold Hunters," "The Danger Trail," "The Honor of the Big Snows," and his latest effort, "Philip Steele."

The story is of especial interest, as it tells of the stirring career of a wealthy young Chicago clubman who joins the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. Mr. Curwood has spent much time at the isolated posts of this unusual police force, going over records and hearing at first hand of the lives and deeds of these men. "Philip Steele" is original, stirring and romantic—a novel which is bound to make a tremendous appeal.