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know that I'm going to Mrs. Morpont's to-night and you know I don't want my name in your society column to-morrow. Naturally, all your instincts are against putting it there. Yet I suppose it's considered news and it's your professional duty to do so."

"You seem to have a grain of sense at last! But I guess you've never had much to do with the newspaper business. Now listen to me. I'm as much of a lady as anybody and—"

"I said so, Miss Tompkins. I said so," interrupted her visitor.

"But this talk about a good, husky, young fellow like you hating publicity just makes me sick. Does it occur to you that if Mrs. Morpont can stand it to have her name in the paper as giving the ball, you could stand it to have yours in as going to it?"

"Well, yes, I suppose I see that," conceded Johnny. "But of what interest to the public is it, anyhow? Why is it news?" He put the question with great mildness, turning upon the lady pleasant, innocent looking eyes.

Miss Tompkins gave him a look in which one might have seen astonishment beginning to drive away anger.

"You are a wonder!" she began. "How you ever got on so in this great big city without knowing anything about it, I don't see. Don't you know that the list for this ball to-night at Mrs. Morpont's is supposed to fix who's in society and who isn't?"

"Why, I think I've heard people say something about it," fathered Johnny.

"You ought to be tickled to death to be going."

"Oh, I'm pleased, of course, I'm awfully pleased."

"It isn't every day that young men from Akron, Ohio—"

"Oh, I know, I know."

"Most people who didn't get mentioned among those present would come in and complain, instead of doing what you're doing."

"Really?" in surprised tones.

Yes, really. Why, Mr. Fairchild, there are people who would pay me to keep running their names in my column."

"They would?" Johnny's astonishment grew, and the innocent-looking eyes opened wider.

"But I'm not a grafter."

"I should think not," cried our young man enthusiastically. "I should think anybody was a great fool who tried to play any tricks on you."

"Well, I guess," assented Miss Tompkins. The atmosphere had grown warmer and more genial, and the pause that followed Miss Tompkins' speech was not awkward. Johnny broke it, emerging from an engaging, shy boyishness.

"Do you know, Miss Tompkins, I've an enormous admiration for women who earn their own living, as you do. I'm sorry"—he hesitated, with a trace of embarrassment—"I'm rather ashamed of having come in to make a row the way I did. I apologize. I think I see things more plainly now. Of course it's your business to get up that social column, whether you like it or not. And after all, as you say, I suppose there's no such awful harm in being in the papers. Look here, Miss Tompkins," he went on, in a kind of burst of generosity, "I don't mind; if it's any good to you you can put me in. You can talk about Wheatoatlette and the old man, and how I'll be the only breakfast-food boy at Mrs. Morpont's to-night. Run my photograph if you want to, though of course," he added modestly, "that would be carrying it too far."

Miss Tompkins made a note on a pad of paper at her side.

"Send me the photograph will you?" she asked in a businesslike way. "I've got a half page on 'Eligible Bachelors' in the Sunday paper. I can run you, I think."

"Eligible Bachelors!" exclaimed Johnny. "Great Scott, Miss Tompkins. I don't quite know—I didn't mean to let myself in for all that." Then he smiled; and, as has been hinted, Johnny's smile is very pleasant. "Well, here goes. Only, Miss Tompkins, not one other paper in this town shall ever have my picture."

"All the better for the New Yorker."

"All right. I'll fire it down to you. But," and here he started laughing, "this certainly makes me look pretty foolish. And it will stir up a warm time for me out in Akron when my mother sees the New Yorker. When I think what I came in for and—"

"Well, you can't always expect in this world to get what you start out to get," commented Miss Tompkins philosophically.

"No," said Johnny reflectively, as he turned to go; and the air of innocence was again very noticeable. "I never get what I start out to get."

As to this, one may leave the reader to judge.

To complete the anecdote of Johnny, it remains to copy down a letter that he sent the morning after Mrs. Morpont's ball:

"Dear Mrs. Morpont: After having passed quite a dull evening by myself last night, I find to my astonishment, on reading the account of your ball in the morning's New Yorker, that I was there! I'm very puzzled, and what I'm writing for now is to ask you whether by any chance an invitation was sent to me that I have had the horrible bad luck to miss somehow. If that happened my name would be on your list, if you gave it to the newspapers, and the thing would be made clear. I did call on you, and so you had my address and the thing is possible, though it seems to me too good to be true.

"For really, I thought you had utterly forgotten me, although you told me to 'swim back against the current,' if I could, that awful afternoon of the reception for the opening of the Creche. I didn't imagine that you could remember.

"In any case, I want to apologise for whatever strange cause got my name in the New Yorker, if I wasn't asked. If I was asked, of course, I'm in despair at having missed it. At any rate, I am,

"Yours most sincerely,
John Fairchild.

In reply this came:

"Dear Mr. Fairchild: It's all very mysterious, but at any rate, I do remember you perfectly now. The current isn't so very strong in Fifth Avenue late, about six. Why not swim in to tea some day, say Tuesday next, perhaps?"

"Yours sincerely,
Eva Morpont.

This is how Johnny opened the way. It is the beginning of history.

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