

# “ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL”

By Dorothy Canfield

IT was in a shady nook on “Flirtation,” where the rocks sloped directly from their feet to the Hudson. With a reckless disregard of regulations, the cadet had unfastened the top hook of his collar and, with his hands clasped behind his head, was gazing meditatively at the girl who was opening a box of candy. It looked like the regulation arrangement on “Flirtation,” but it was not. The girl was from New Hampshire, and had a sense of humor.

Besides, she was evidently expectant. She arranged her skirts comfortably, tilted her parasol at an angle which shaded the cadet’s head as well as her own, and then said, “Now, Allan, you promised you’d tell me all about it. There’s no reason for putting it off.”

The cadet rubbed his close-cropped head thoughtfully. “I’ll tell it on one condition—that you don’t interrupt. I don’t believe you can help it, but I warn you now, that if you break in a single time I won’t finish the story.”

The girl laid the candy-box on one side, crossed her heart, and, raising eyes to the Spring-blue sky, chanted solemnly:

“Honest and true, honest and true,  
Lay me down and cut me in two!”

The cadet laughed, and then grew serious. “You’re not in the proper frame of mind. This is the story of my engagement I’m going to tell you. It’s no funny business—being engaged to be married! Makes a fellow do some thinking.”

“Well, if I were the girl, I must say I’d enjoy having you take such a funeral view of it!”

“That,” said the cadet, as he reached for the candy-box, “is the last speech I won’t count as an interruption.

“I’m going to start in by saying that you don’t know the girl, but that she’s a wonder! It all happened about a year and a half ago—when she’d been coming up to the Point for several months, to hops and things. She was the gayest little ‘fem’ you ever saw—always cracking jokes and laughing like a chime of bells.

“You know our set of six fellows, and how we always hang together. Well, we were together on this proposition all right! We thought she was about the funniest little girl that ever came along. She was always saying something you didn’t think she was going to. I remember she was the only girl I ever saw who had something new to say when we told her we called our room-mates our ‘wives.’ And I tell you no ‘spoonoid’ had any chance around her. She’s got the prettiest eyes, that look as though they’d be just great for looking soft, but she kept them snapping so with fun that there wasn’t any use trying to do the spoon.

“Well, a year ago last Fall, when I was a second-class man, I was sitting in my room one evening, boning on math. I’d been working like a horse trying to ‘max’ my calculus, and I was as grouchy as a bear. My ‘wife’ was not any company, for he’d been ‘doing area’ ever since two o’clock, and had turned in so dead tired you couldn’t have waked him with an ax. I was getting lonesomer and lonesomer, and feeling more and more as though I wanted a blow-out of some kind to

put some life into me, when there was a whoop at the door and the five fellows of the gang came in, all talking at once. Puddenhead had a letter, waving it in the air, and the only thing I could get out of them was that Helen was engaged. I had two Helens on the string about that time, and I was considerably excited till after about five minutes they got smoothed down enough for me to make out that they meant this girl I'm telling about. I hadn't thought of her at all. She wasn't the kind you'd ever think of as sobering down enough to get engaged. Puddenhead had had a letter from a girl in Bridgeport, where Helen lived, and she said Helen's engagement to a 'cit' named Beardsley was just announced. Well, we were great pals of Helen's, and we were sore that she hadn't told us anything about it. Puddenhead said, 'Think of her nerve! She's coming up to a hop to-morrow night just as though nothing had happened. She thinks she's going to fool us. We'll just let her know that she can't get ahead of us with her practical jokes. Let's meet her as the 'bus comes up to the top of the hill and shout out "congratulations!" till they can hear us on the other side of Parade Ground.'

"I was just going to say I was game for that, when 'Big' Marshall began jumping up and down and hollering, 'I got you beat! I got you beat! I got an idea that beats that all to frazzles! Let's all six of us never let on we've heard a thing, and then all propose to her, heavy-tragedy style, during the hop—take on as though we were broken-hearted, and then have the laugh on her the next day.'

"Say, that struck us all right, all right! We just went into the air. I could just see Helen's funny eyes crinkling up into her jolly laugh when we told her the next day. We laughed so, fixing up our different proposals, that we almost went into fits, and I was so tickled when I went to bed, I just lay there and shook. To think we could turn the joke on Helen that way!

"We could hardly wait for the hop,

and when my dance with Helen came I proposed to sit it out on the balcony overlooking the Hudson, and I fairly shivered for fear she'd want to dance; but she didn't, and we went down the stairs together, me beginning to put on the proper solemn air.

"It was moonlight—a warm October evening. The Hudson looked like a black diamond with rubies all around it where the lights of the shore gleamed. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and just the sweetest Autumn smell in the air. Oh, it was the proper stage-setting, all right! I lifted Helen up to the broad balustrade—same way I had lots of times before—and then I turned and gazed down the river, trying to look romantic. There never was a Doanes from Alabama who couldn't look romantic, when he put his mind to it, and I reckon I came up to the family standard. Helen was looking some romantic herself—staring down at her hands in her lap. I tell you, she looked pretty—any girl would, out there in the moonlight—but she looked like a regular little fairy.

"Well, I drew a long breath and started in. 'Helen,' I said, in a deep voice—I had to speak very low because there were lots of other people sitting out dances all around us—'Helen!' Then I went down about an octave, 'dear!' I thought right there was where the fun would start, but Helen never stirred—just sat and looked down at her hands in her lap.

"That made me mad, 'cause I was sure she was thinking so about that 'cit' Beardsley that she didn't even hear me. So I took on a load of Alabama fireworks, and whirled in in good earnest. Say, I won't tell you what I said to her, but you can just bet it was red-hot! I was going to give her her money's worth. I told her she was the only one in the world for me—that I had my future all fixed up with her in the midst of it, and it would be the death of me to unfix my ideas, that I would quit the service if there wasn't any hope for me—oh, you just imagine what an Alabama Doanes would do, turned loose with his imagi-

nation and without any fear of consequences, and you'll have *me!*

"Helen never said a thing—she couldn't, I was executing such a rapid-fire effect in my delivery—and when I lowered down my voice to nothing at all and said in a breath, 'Helen! Helen! Helen!' getting in an extra thrill every time, she just gave a little shiver, and that was all.

"By-and-bye I got through—even a Doanes from Alabama, can't keep it up forever!—and, besides, our dance was not going to last for all time, and I wanted to give the other fellows a chance. There was a long silence, and then Helen raised her head and looked at me.

"Say, it was a good thing I was leaning up against the balustrade, 'cause if it hadn't been for that I'd have fallen right down in a fit. The hills on the other side of the Hudson began to waver up and down, and in a minute they sprang right up and hit me on the head. Helen was looking at me with eyes like stars, and they changed every minute and got softer and softer till I was just melted and floated away in 'em. You wouldn't think she ever could have laughed out of them, they were so sweet and solemn. Her lips moved, and I could just hear her say, 'Allan, my Allan!'

"Then she did the prettiest thing I ever saw a girl do. There were a lot of 'spoonoids' sitting around, and we couldn't either of us do anything without their seeing us. She just brushed her lips with the tips of her fingers and then dropped her hand down on mine as it lay on the balustrade. It was the sweetest thing—but honest, it's no joke, I felt an electric shock that made me see stars. I was about the most startled and scared individual you ever saw, and what with that and my general feeling of goneness, I know I must have turned pale. She leaned over toward me and said, in the prettiest, lowest voice, that just went through me like a knife, 'Why, Allan, you must have known how I felt!'

"I gasped out something about her always jollyng so a fellow couldn't

know *what* she felt, and she said, reproachfully, 'Oh, dear boy, that was only to shelter myself. I was so afraid you would know and despise me.'

"I took another brace, and murmured some disjointed questions about the 'cit' Beardsley, but she caught me up short. 'You didn't believe that gossip! How little you can have known how—why, Allan, dear, sometimes when the slow old 'bus has been crawling up the hill from the station I've been fairly faint to think I should see you so soon. Do you remember that shoe-string you broke off, one afternoon, down on "Flirtation"?' Now, listen, I'm going to tell you how foolish I am. I went back the next day and picked it up, and I've always kept it—think! all I've ever had of yours!' *Poor Helen!*

"I was just dissolving in thin air all this time—I was, for a fact! I couldn't feel the ground under my feet, and I had to hold on to the balustrade, hard, I was so light-headed and dizzy. Just then 'Big' Marshall came running out to get Helen for the next dance. I helped her down, and she gave my arm a little hidden pat, that couldn't have hurt worse if she'd hit me with a hammer! I watched her walk away with 'Big,' feeling meaner and meaner, till, as she turned and gave one backward look toward me, I just shriveled up to nothing at all. I moved around the corner to a place where I knew nobody'd come, and fell down on a chair, and took my head in my hands and did some tall thinking! First off, I took about an hour calling myself bad names. I'd think of the light in her eyes as she had looked at me, and curse myself for about the lowest, meanest specimen of humanity that ever drew breath. Then I lost my head for a while, I was so wild at the thought of what it meant to *me!* There I was—I wouldn't even be out of the Academy for two years, with fourteen years after that to wait for a captaincy—at least fourteen—and already engaged! I thought of excuses I could make—couldn't I tell her we had insanity in the family, or that I was

already engaged, or that—then I'd think of her voice as she had said, 'Allan, *my* Allan!' and feel too low-down to live, for having the heart to think of anything but how to make it up to her for the beastly thing I'd done. But you know me—I'm the kind, who, the minute he's tied to anything, *anything*, is wild to get loose—*me* engaged to be married, before I was even a second lieutenant! Then I'd think of Helen again, sweet, jolly little Helen, with all the fun gone out of her eyes and just the lovelight in them, and I'd brace up for a minute—only the next I'd think of always and always living up to what she thought I meant and never for a minute letting her know, 'cause an Alabama Doanes couldn't do less, and then I'd feel suffocated and as though I couldn't—I just *couldn't!* I groaned, out there by myself, as though I were going to die, and I felt as though I were—I wished I could!

"I was all in a tremble when I stood up finally, but my mind was made up. I was a Doanes from Alabama, and I wasn't going to go back on the woman who loved me—if it killed me! So I marched up the stairs to the hop, and found 'Army Blue' just being played, and in a minute the drums sounded and everybody was rushing around to get his girl home and himself back to barracks before taps. I tried to see Helen, but she was going home in the 'bus, and I only had a chance to say good night. All the other fellows were there, and all of a sudden I remembered about them! How could I ever explain to them so that they wouldn't know what had happened? They, of course, must have gone right on with the programme and had no idea it was not Beardsley she'd refused them for, but me! They went up and said 'Good night,' kind of melancholy, still carrying out their parts, and then we all stood together after the 'bus drove off. Helen was sitting on the end, and what do you think she did? Right there before all those fellows, she leaned out of the open door and blew a kiss to me! Say, that finished me all right.

When I came to, I found the other fellows had gone on, and I walked over to barracks alone, making resolutions every step I took. If a proud, sensitive girl like Helen goes so far as to show her feelings like that, there is only one thing for a gentleman and a cadet to do, and that is to come up to the scratch.

"That's what I kept saying over all night. I tell you, I didn't sleep much, and I didn't need reveille to wake me up in the morning. I was planning what I would say to Helen when I saw her the next afternoon. The first time I saw her would be the worst. After chapel, though, her aunt—her aunt is Captain Wadleigh's wife—told me that Helen had been telegraphed for to come to New York to see an uncle off on the steamer, and that she had left on the first train. Say, maybe I didn't feel like a reprieved prisoner! I caught the first long breath I'd had since the night before. But in a minute I knew I'd have to write; and that's what I did! All that afternoon I wrote and tore up and wrote and tore up, trying to fix just the letter she ought to get. I tried to think what I'd want a fellow to write if I were a girl just engaged to him, and then I'd write it. I threw in some, for good measure, but every time I read it over I was sure that wasn't the way a Doanes from Alabama would do it, and I'd tear it up and start all over again. Once I caught myself thinking what a shame it was to spend a whole precious Sunday afternoon doing that—and then I laid down the pen, and just groaned and groaned! For it came over me like a crack of thunder that it wasn't only *that* Sunday afternoon, but every single one for always and always that I couldn't have to myself. But I gritted my teeth, and thought of Helen's face as she leaned out of the door of the 'bus, all soft and quivery with joy, and I went on writing.

"I got some sort of a letter done, and was just starting out to post it, when Captain Wadleigh's orderly came up and said that Miss Helen had left a note for me and wished me to go over

to the house and get it. I started over there and posted the letter on the way. When I got to the gate I saw Puddenhead and 'Big' going up the walk, and two of the other fellows were looking out of the windows. I thought, 'Oh, Lord! Helen's probably left a note for all of them announcing our engagement. I won't have to put up a bluff or anything!'

"Mrs. Wadleigh was sitting inside talking to the fellows already there, and in a minute in came Adams, and there we were, all six. Mrs. Wadleigh got up and went over to her desk. 'You boys and Helen are such jokers!' she said. 'I don't know what the joke is this time, but I suppose it is some of Helen's nonsense. She asked me to give you all one of these.' With that she began handing around some little notes. I knew what it meant all right, and I waited a minute before I opened mine, for I didn't feel as though I had any right to read what Helen had written there. When I broke the seal an engraved card fell out and, as I looked at it, I got the shock of my life.

"Mr. and Mrs. ——— request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter Helen to Eugene Beardsley———"

"My heart turned over five times in rapid succession, and I had a goneeness that would have made an elephant feel weak. When I came to, there were all the other fellows sitting there as though somebody had knocked 'em on the head with a club. I heard myself saying, feebly, 'But she kissed her hand to me . . . ' when all the others

came out of their trance to say, 'Why, that was for *me!*' 'For *me!*' 'For *me!*'

"Just then we heard a funny noise, and there was that 'wife' of mine back of us, just gasping for breath, and so full of laughter he was black in the face. As we turned around and looked at him kind of dazed and fish-eyed, he was so tickled he gave a whoop, and fell on the floor in a fit. That blamed scalawag hadn't been asleep at all that night, and he had gone and told Helen all about our scheme; and say, what do you think? The little actress, she'd accepted the whole six of us the same way she had me!"

At this point the girl from New Hampshire, who had been listening seriously, broke into a shout of delight and laughed till the tears rolled down her cheeks. She checked herself for an instant to ejaculate: "Talk about poetic justice!" and then went off into another peal. Finally, still shaking with mirth, her handkerchief at her eyes, she inquired: "What happened to your 'wife'?"

The cadet helped himself to a large chocolate-drop. "It was the funniest thing about him! We were all so sort o' weak and shaken by our scare and the sudden relief, that we never thought to take it out on him! Blessed if he didn't get off scot-free! But the next time Helen came to the Point"—here there was a pause as he thoughtfully finished the chocolate-drop—"well, on the whole, I reckon I'd better not tell you about the next time Helen came to the Point!"



## AFTERMATH

MADGE—I made quite an impression at the reception, didn't I? Everybody seemed to be talking about me.

MARJORIE—They talked about you more after you left.

July 1904

## A MOWING SONG

SWING and sway in rhythmic measure,  
 Kings might envy us our pleasure,  
 Mowing is but play;  
 Far the golden grain is sweeping,  
 Slowly to the west is creeping  
 The rich-freighted day;  
 Then swing and sway.

Swing and sway, no stroke abating,  
 Other harvest-fields are waiting,  
 Onward! do not stay;  
 Joyous blood each vein is filling,  
 Action every nerve is thrilling,  
 Labor is but play;  
 Then swing and sway.

Swing and sway—beneath our scything  
 Like a foe the grain is writhing—  
 Conquer while we may!  
 Hour by hour the shadows lengthen,  
 Every muscle now must strengthen,  
 Swiftly flies the day;  
 Then swing and sway.

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH WELLS.



## AN EYE TO BUSINESS

BRIGGS—I saw the name of that clairvoyant in the papers, and consulted her.  
 GRIGGS—Was she very good?  
 “She was a good advertising medium.”



## ONE BETTER

FIRST BOY—We’ve got a new attachment on our piano.  
 SECOND BOY—That’s nothing! We’ve got one on our house.