MISS JARDINE'S JELLY

"Just for a short sketching trip, Mrs. Muncie," Gilbert Keith explained, as he looked into the snug sitting room, where his landlady sat, deep in the local paper.

"Where shall I forward your mail, sir?"

She did not express surprise at his sudden announcement. He had boarded with her six years. She was accustomed to his abrupt decisions and hasty departures.

"I'm not sure yet. I'll send you a postal. He [illegible] in a couple of weeks. As for [illegible] Mrs. Muncie.

At the sight of [illegible] heart and quite [illegible] door. For a minute it was [illegible] the door was [illegible]

"By the way, I've packed up [illegible] machine [illegible] them [illegible] box [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] stand at the superscription, opened the envelope and read:

"My Dear Old Friend: I'm coming down to you for a couple of weeks. I have not written to you since I came up to this city, seven years ago to earn my living, with no wonderful accomplishments. But I've found there is no lack of beauty or of humanness, the only wife is not as divine as my friends assured me, and so I settled down long ago to the commonplace but reminiscent employment of putting up fine jellies. I have succeeded. I am doing well. But I want a rest. So, to be a fine strong if I could find a place anywhere near where I'm sure I may impose upon you for a whole. Affectionately yours,

"Margaret Jardine."

A knock came to the door.

"Come in!" cried Mrs. Muncie. "Oh, it's you, Mrs. Wray! Why, how you've caught me just a-trying for silver lace!" The letter in her hands trembled. "Here, Miss Margaret, my dear Miss Margaret, you've heard me tell about so often, an' who I didn't know was dead or alive—writes that she is coming to stay a spell with me. You know I was housekeeper for her folks years an' years when they were the great people of this part of the country, an' lived in that splendid palace on the hill, that looks so forlorn an' neglected now. Her father failed in business, an' the fact killed him. His wife didn't stay long after him. An' there was my dear Miss Margaret—only a slip of a girl of eighteen, flung out on the world to earn her own living. I begged her to stay with me, but she couldn't be dependent. But now, well, there! you may read for yourself."

And she handed her sympathetic neighbor the letter.

Two days later Mrs. Muncie, parting away over some crab-apple marmalade, glanced up at an elegant intruder who had come softly in over her kitchen, a stately, graceful, regionally attired woman with a delicate patrician face, deep blue eyes, and a beautiful mouth.

"Bless my soul!" cried Mrs. Muncie, "if it isn't my dear Miss Margaret!" And then the faithful old soul had Miss Jardine in her arms and was laughing and crying over her at once.

"And so you are putting up preserves!" said Margaret, half an hour later, as she sat sipping her tea. "I'm going to help you. I'm an expert now, you know," laughing. "A professional."

And this despite Mrs. Muncie's half-shocked protestations, she insisted on doing. But when she heard of the jellies Margaret made her admiration was unbounded. "Such lovely colors!" she exclaimed, looking at the jelly glasses. "Such rose and crimson and amber, and all so crystal clear! How did you ever learn to make them like that? You won't be offended, will you, my dear, if I send a box of them to my sister that lives in Jessup county? She's an invalid, an' they would be such a treat to her."

"I shall feel flattered if you do so," Margaret assured her.

So the box was packed an' put in the cellar, and Mrs. Muncie went downtown to engage the drayman to come and get it. But during her absence fate, in the person of Jerry, the porter of the firm of Keith & Co., interposed.

Jerry had been sent to get a box out of Mrs. Muncie's cellar. Margaret, supposing him to be the expressman sent by her hostess, went down the cellar with him, and pointed out the box containing the jelly.

"There is no address on it," she said. "Do you know where it is to go?"

"Yes, miss. That's all right. I've got the card for it in my pocket."

When Mrs. Muncie appeared with a man and wagon, Margaret explained that the box had been called for.

"I declare, that provoking Tom Grimes must have changed his mind," said Mrs. Muncie. "When I spoke to him he told me he had an all-day job, and couldn't come. I must pay him the first time I see him. I didn't need you, Pete. Drive on."

"And she [illegible] March [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[