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South Bend Valentine

Phinias ("I'm Dynamite") Dobbin, who hails from Bahston is not to be confused with the Brahmins of that area. Don't confuse him with anyone; he's confused enough already. Today he is very low. The reason: he didn't get any valentines -- from the South Bend Junior League, the Bendix league, or any other league. Until yesterday, he thought he was a big hit. Today, he's mad at the entire locality. No one loves him, he is sure. He has a good notion to go out in the garden and eat worms.

It was at Walgreen's, or Kewpie's, or some other local social high spot, last year, that Prunella of the village first fanned his interest with her long eyelashes. In no time at all our young Lochinvar of the campus had his feet under her dining room table, and his big teeth in her mother's best roast -- progress he called it, satisfactory progress. The menu ripened into romance. Even her dad went into convulsions of courtesy -- "Here's a chap that might amount to something, someday; might even support a wife!"

There was one fly in the local soup -- Dobbin had a girl-friend back in Bahston. And so full was his big mouth of mashed potatoes, he forgot to mention this detail to the local throbber. Meantime, the un-suspecting Prunella gave herself top billing -- thought she was Number One on his hit parade. Accordingly, as he demanded more and more of her time, she centered her interest on Dobbin. She withdrew from local social activities, gave less and less time to life-long friends, even dropped membership in her sorority; in short, she had no time for anyone but Dobbin. Together, they withdrew into the little circle of themselves, and built a dream-world future of their own.

Then Dobbin went East for the Holidays in his senior year, was chided by the home girl for neglect; but he talked fast, and sealed the pact with a ring. It was then that the school romance cooled with the January weather. Prunella wondered, as Dobbin came up with evasive answers about setting a date for June, or even August. Finally he admitted losing interest. With Dobbin absent from the table, she lost her appetite, wondered, and worried about what she had said or done. Finally our Lochinvar hid out in Sorin Sub, lest her father come asking for an explanation.

Next thing he knew, the girl out East heard of his philandering in the village here, regarded him as untrustworthy, returned the ring, and took a look at Harvard.

Then the world crashed about Dobbin. "It ain't fair," he moaned in his best Bahston wail. "I'm being persecuted. What did I do to deserve this treatment?"

Dobbin took offense at the Padre's estimate of the case, when he doubted that Dobbin had been as honest as he might have been -- "It was all in fun, Father, this South Bend romance. Can't these Hoosiers take a joke? Whadda you mean, a 'Two-Timer!' How was I dishonest? Whadda you mean, spoil the life of a girl? How was my conduct a lie? She didn't have to stop dating others just for me. Take it easy, will you. I wasn't deceitful. Whadda you mean, I mis-led her? How am I a cad? I'll never come to you again for help, that's sure. You're not very sympathetic, not at all."

Tonight, our Lochinvar is very lonesome, and sad -- and hungry! No "Dynamite" now.

Moral: Let the village swains sway the village dames. It's a good way to protect them from the hazards of broken hearts, and bent fenders, and campus Lochinvars who talk glibly with tongue in cheek, and woo local lovelies in an accent foreign to the Hoosier ear. Percentage-wise, South Benders have a better future in corn than in codfish. But a lie is still a lie, even when one party thinks it's fun.