

ENGAGED

"She's engaged again," remarked Polly, nodding her head at the auburn-haired Downing girl, who went sailing by in Abbingdon Dare's new car.

"It's his fifth or sixth trial, too, isn't it?" I asked, shaking out the reins and tucking the rugs under Polly's infinitesimal toes. "Some people never get serious."

Polly looked meditative.

"Well," she remarked, jabbing the pin into her hat more securely, "that depends on what you mean by 'serious.' An engagement may be serious without ending in matrimony."

"Serious for the one who gets left?" I asked, snapping the whip viciously over the back of the roan.

"Nonsense! One always means to be married when one gets engaged. That's what makes it an engagement. Otherwise it would be merely—er—that is—"

"Merely what?" I inquired, looking up sideways under Polly's hat.

"Oh, a flirtation, or an affair." But a real bonafide engagement is nothing more or less than a dress rehearsal for matrimony. Sometimes the original rehearsal company are married at once; but generally the leading man and the leading lady are changed several times before you can find two who just fit the opposing roles."

"Why, Polly Lee, I'm surprised. I suppose all your engagements have proved invaluable experience. Doubtless even this one, with me as leading man, is proving—"

"Invaluable experience," acquiesced Polly, nodding her feathers; "oh, yes; invaluable. I've learned everything about the stage business of managing a man since I became engaged to you. For instance, before then, I used to take the center of the stage on every occasion. I'd let a man sit like a groom or an understudy beside me all afternoon, while I displayed my accomplishments as a whip in hand of letting him show off with a four-in-hand or a tandem, while I played the part of limelight and kept up with the applause. Why, what are you whispering that horse for?"

"Was it?" I snapped, a bit startled. It was the off horse, and it struck me that he was more off than usual that afternoon.

"I was wondering," I snapped, "how many rehearsals it took to make you so letter perfect—I mean how many rehearsals before you graduated at my expense."

"I haven't graduated yet," remarked Polly.

I jumped. "Oh!"

"The commencement exercises don't commence until you go to the altar. That is when the rehearsals end and the curtain rolls up and the tragedy or the comedy or the melodrama begins in real earnest."

"Won't you set the date for the commencement exercises, Polly?" I pleaded softly.

"Have you no regard for etiquette, Mr. Heavyfeather?" remarked Polly. "That was Mrs. Gadsby Victoria, and she saw you."

"Saw me what?"

"Saw you looking at me that way and trying to get hold of my hand."

"I didn't!" I said indignantly and ambiguously.

"A girl's first rehearsal for matrimony," went on Polly, ignoring me, "usually takes place when she is about seventeen. She is exactly like a young actress making her debut in Juliet. She plays with fire, but without police or method. She rants and rages and overdoes. There is nothing subtle about her. If she should marry the man that she thinks at that time she is madly in love with—"

"Well!" I had to prod Polly, for just then we turned a corner in the circle and Abbingdon Dare flashed past us, and Polly turned to stare after them.

"Well," she went on, "there would be about as bad a smash-up as there would be if the man who sold you this team of horses hadn't tried them in harness together before he mated them. Now, suppose both of those were off horses."

I smiled comprehendingly.

"It takes several rehearsals to make a girl letter perfect in the little game of matrimony. The first time a girl falls in love all she knows about a man is that he is a good walker and wears the proper collars, that his hair curls at the edges, and that he doesn't tread on her frocks."

"Was your first leading man like that, Polly?"

"No—that is—I've forgotten. But they're all alike. The girl who marries her first love has a life lesson before her. It's like taking the leading part in a difficult play at a few moments' notice. She knows as much about handling a man as a small boy does about handling a gun. And a man that is badly handled is like a gun. The first thing he does is to go off to another girl."

"Did he do that, Polly?" I said, looking at her sympathetically.

"Who?" said Polly.

"Your first leading man. He must have been remarkably clever. Was he good looking, and did he ever marry any one?"

Polly looked at me wistfully.

"It's this way, you see," she went on. "A girl gets such a good perspective on a man when she's engaged to him. After she is married she is too close to the footlights to take a rational view of him. She ceases to think then. She merely feels and she is responsive to everything he does and says. Now, when you have been engaged a few times you soon learn that what a man has seems far

luncheon has more to do with his temper than the subject of conversation. You learn to keep quiet and play a still part when he is doing anything serious, like reading the political news or strapping a trunk. You can tell an off horse at sight, and if you are an off horse yourself, you choose a conservative high horse, or if you are a high horse you choose somebody with dash and go.

"You find out whether you were intended for the center of the stage or only to play understudy. You learn to speak your lines properly and follow your cues. If you were destined to play up to a star, you lay in a lot of nice little things to say to him that will encourage him to take the center of the stage and make him feel happy in the limelight. Or if you were born to be leading lady, you learn how to keep your leading man in the background without making him feel his inferiority or resent playing seconds. You find out whether you are capable of managing your own company or whether you need a manager. And yet the average girl frets and pines when she is going through her little rehearsals, like a small girl who is made to practice her musical exercises. She does not realize that every time her heart is broken she is one step nearer marital happiness. Oh, yes, being engaged is a wonderful experience," and Polly sighed as we took another turn about the circle.

"And doesn't the man get any experience, Polly?" I asked as we dashed down the avenue on the home stretch.

"Not a bit. A man never learns by experience, anyhow—"

Just at that moment we came upon Abbingdon Dare and the auburn-haired Downing girl driving slowly home in the new dogcart. We bowed.

"Why," exclaimed Polly, "I didn't know that you knew them."

"The auburn-haired Downing girl," I remarked meekly, "was my first leading lady."

Polly jumped.

"And," I went on, "if our first leading man was as good looking—"

Polly turned and stared after the couple in the dogcart.

"Well," she remarked, thoughtfully, "Abbingdon Dare is rather handsome, they say, and he—"

"What?"

"Was my first leading man."

"There is no accounting for tastes," I remarked.

"None," said Polly. "I hate red hair."—Helen Rowland, in Washington Post.

Patti's Generosity.

Though by no means lacking in business instincts, Mme Adeline Patti is not at all niggardly when it comes to spending money. That she is as big-hearted as she is famous was demonstrated by her courtesy to a fellow-artist in San Francisco. Mme Inez Fabbri-Muller, who at one time was in very straitened circumstances, with a mortgage about to be foreclosed on her home. Mme Patti heard about the troubles that beset her old comrade of the operatic stage, and at once arranged for a benefit. For some reason or other it was impossible to prepare for such an event, and the famous prima donna sent Mme Fabbri-Muller a check for an amount more than sufficient to cancel the mortgage that shadowed her home.—Exchange.

Set His Own Novel.

The late B. L. Farjeon was one of the very few writers who had set up work in type without the medium of manuscript. When the novelist first turned to fiction he was editor and publisher of the Otago Daily Times, which was printed at his own offices at Dunedin, and many of the chapters of his novel, *Grif*, were transferred direct to type by the late Mr. Farjeon, who was one of the most rapid compositors of his time. He was a firm believer in charms, and attributed much of his good fortune to a New Zealand greenstone, which he wore for many years on his watch chain.—London Tit-Bits.

Giants' Graves.

The cairns or giant graves at Bosau, near Eutin, Germany, are being excavated under the direction of Prof. Knorr of the Kiel Museum of Antiquities. One grave has already been opened up, in which two urns and a gold bracelet twelve centimetres in length were found. A stone grave three metres long and one hundred and seventy centimetres wide, containing a skeleton supposed to be over three thousand years old, was also laid bare. The work is to be continued, as it is supposed that an ancient cemetery or place of sacrifice existed there formerly.

A Strange Sort of Enjoyment.

A "valued contemporary" says: "A certain young lady in our burg is enjoying herself nowadays by cutting her wisdom teeth." This is certainly a very interesting piece of news, and the reporter who turned it in should have his salary raised without more ado. A live, wide-awake reporter, such as this one is bound to be, is of incalculable worth on any newspaper. He is needed over at Meridian.—Jackson (Miss.) Clarion-Ledger.

Washing Away the World.

An interesting calculation has recently been made public by the French Academy of Sciences. It is to the effect that, taking into consideration the wear and tear on the solid land by the ocean lashing, river erosion, and wind and weather, the world will, by the end of the year 4,500,000 be completely washed away, and the ocean will roll over the present foundations of our great continents.—Exchange.

LIKE MAN, LIKE HORSE.

Characteristics of the Owner Often Shown in the Animal.

"I've always had a notion that the horse is like the man—in other words, that the horse is often what his owner makes him. Recently I came across the following bit of wisdom in a farm paper," says a writer to the *Detroit Journal*, "and, as the writer's ideas are exactly my own, I cannot refrain from quoting his thoughts to-day:

"The excitable horseman," he says, "will have horses just like he is himself. The man without horse sense will have a horse with the same poor sense. The man who is loud when driving will have a boisterous horse, and no one ought to blame the horse. The man who stops his team with a drawing 'w-h-o-a' will have a team that will stop in the same manner—that is, they will take two or three steps after they are told to stop."

"I might quote more, but enough is enough. You get the idea. What's more, you all know living examples of the kind of horsemen referred to. You of course, aren't built that way; but the other fellow often is. Too often. And usually he blames the horse for some fault that in reality is his own. It isn't fair. Train or drive or use a horse properly, and nine times out of ten that horse behaves himself and does all that is expected of an animal."

Seems to me there ought to be a training school for the driver as well as for the driven. For instance, I know of several promising horses that have been practically spoiled by poor driving. I have in mind, in particular, two horses—one is driven by a man, the other by a woman. Both drivers have the habit of nagging and fussing—of saying "G-long" or "Glt-up" every half minute regularly, accompanying the words with a gentle tap of the whip. The result is that both horses pay no attention to either command or whip, and it takes a "regular earthquake" or a first-class thrashing to move 'em out of a slow jog trot.

Another spoiled horse has been allowed to acquire the habit of "starting up" the moment he is unhitched. His owner will get a broken neck or limb some day, if I'm not mistaken, but—why I don't know—he makes no effort to conquer the fault. "Break him of it," I advised. "Well," he drawled, "it would be a lot of bother. I've kind of let him get into the habit, I guess, and as long as he's got it, what's the odds, any way? I don't mind it particularly. I'm spry about getting in."

"You may not mind," I retorted, "but some day somebody else may try to drive that horse. Then something will happen. Or, perhaps, some day you'll forget to be 'spry' as usual, and—say, how much accident insurance do you carry, neighbor?"

He laughed. "Not a cent's worth. Don't need any."

"No; but your heirs may."

Well, I didn't convince him, and he shows no sign of reforming, but I hope everybody else will not be so stubborn and shortsighted. I tell you, friends, there's a splendid field for an accident insurance agent in my part of the state.

Water in the Bush.

Nine years ago water at the Westralia gold fields was dearer than beer in London. At special times half a crown a gallon was paid for newly condensed water, still warm from the condenser, and at the best of times no one grumbled at a shilling a gallon. The publican passed the whiskey bottle over for his customer to help himself, but he measured carefully the amount of water mixed with the whiskey. The popular system of bathing was to have a bucket of water with a false bottom held over your head. The bottom was removed with a jerk, and the water ran down into a tub on the floor. There it was carefully collected to serve for the next customer, as it had probably served for half a dozen before you. This cost half a crown. Scarcity of water and badness of food brought on the great typhoid fever epidemics, from which the gold fields suffered to this day, and laid hunting for wealth died off as though the hand of God had passed in anger over the place.

Western Australia is a colony of bold men. They saw that nothing but radical treatment would avail for this scarcity. Hence the water scheme, running about 300 miles to Kalgoorlie, carrying nearly 6,000,000 gallons a day, and largely solving the matter, so far as the supply for human beings around the main centres is concerned.—London Mail.

Shouted as Loud as Li.

There was much rudeness in Li Hung Chang's manner, but if he was answered back in his own coin he melted into graciousness. Once a junior member of a British consulate was sent to interview the Viceroy on some matter. In the vast audience hall he found no one to receive him, so he took a chair near the door. Eventually Li and his following appeared at the other end of the hall on some lofty seats, and the Viceroy started shouting to him in the difficult Anhui accent. To the utter dumbfounding of everyone present, contrary to all principles of Chinese etiquette, the young Englishman shouted back his answer in the same loud, rough voice, as far as he could imitate it, in which Li had spoken to him. Everyone in the suite was stricken with horror. Even Li started and spoke lower. Gradually the conversation assumed a conventional tone and after a bit Li, with a humorous smile, beckoned the young man to come up higher and sit down beside him. They soon became excellent friends.—Men and Women.

MARRIED IN FANCY DRESS.

At One Wedding They Were All Dressed as Convicts.

A novelty in fancy-dress weddings was that held in Nottingham, the bridegroom being a naval officer, whilst the bride also came of a nautical family. Accordingly she appeared at the church dressed in a costume made of a union jack, the bridesmaids wearing similar attire, and the groom and his best man being in full naval uniform.

After the ceremony had been performed the happy pair drove to the bride's house on a gun carriage drawn by a party of bronzed tars.

The shepherd's wedding at the church of St. Madeleine at Versailles in 1894 is worth recording, because, from the appearance of the guests, it might have been supposed one had taken a retrograde step into prehistoric times.

The bridegroom, whose name was Portal, had been a shepherd when he had suddenly inherited a large fortune, so it was elected on the occasion of his marriage to a well-known society lady shortly afterwards that every one should appear in garments made of sheepskins.

A convict wedding was celebrated in a Yorkshire town. Both the bride and bridegroom had for some paltry offence previously come within reach of the law, and when it was announced that the best man had also seen the inside of a jail, it was resolved to commemorate the coincidence.

Accordingly the male guests, the bridegroom included, put in an appearance in convict garb, on which the broad arrow predominated, and the women likewise wore drab dresses with the government hall-mark upon them.

As soon as the ceremony was over the party were driven to the bride's home, where a breakfast of prison fare was provided.

At this juncture the officiating clergyman, in toasting the couple, made it known that he had himself endured a day in a penitentiary for exhibiting undue exuberance of spirits at a boat race years before.—*Stray Stories*.

Admiral Sigbee, Speechmaker.

It is the first plunge that counts, as every sailor knows who ever learned to swim or make a speech. Admiral Sigbee has a horror of speechmaking. A reporter once asked him why he did not like to make speeches. He replied:

"Because I never know what I am going to say until I get on my feet, and then when I get on my feet I know less than I did before."

Shortly after the Spanish-American war, President Harper, of the Chicago University, was in charge of the arrangements for a great banquet to be given to President McKinley at the Chicago Auditorium. He invited Admiral Sigbee to visit Chicago. The admiral, suspecting a speech was in store, declined. President Harper expressed his regrets, and President McKinley said he would have "ordered" him to Chicago.

Sigbee was about to take command of the Texas, when he received a remarkable telegram from the secretary of the navy.

"You will take the next train to Chicago to attend a banquet in the Chicago Auditorium to the President of the United States, and you will be prepared to respond to a toast to the navy."

This was an order which it was impossible to decline. The admiral reached the Auditorium just as the opening exercises began. He had never made a speech in his life. There were probably seven or eight hundred people at the table, and thousands in the boxes. When the moment came, the admiral, by a happy inspiration, read his telegram. This proved to be a good starter, and he got through fairly well.

Upon another occasion he was cornered and forced to say a few words to an audience composed of several hundred clubwomen. On getting up, he declared that a sailor on shore could do only three things thoroughly well. First, he could ride a horse. Second, he could manage a farm. Third, he could hold a baby.—*Collier's Weekly*.

Japanese Wives Nonentities.

The position of the Japanese wife is not that of equality with her husband. He is the Hegge lord, to be obeyed by her in the most servile manner. He exacts from her the little attentions that an American woman expects and usually gets, from her husband.

Without so much as a murmur of complaint from his spouse, who must always receive him with bows and smiles, and ever have her mind and eyes on his comfort, he goes and comes when he pleases.

When he fares forth socially he does not take her with him when he receives gentlemen in his own house—a rare thing, by the way—madame seldom presents herself, unless in some menial capacity.

And while such a thing as conjugal love must exist in Japan, it usually escapes the notice of the foreign sejourner, the people considering it vulgar to exhibit emotion of any kind in public.—*Smart Set*.

Judge Thyself with the Judgment of Sincerity, and Thou wilt Judge Others with the Judgment of Charity.

A COOK FOR JUDITH

Judith, with her inexperienced fingers webbed like a duck's toes with the stickiest of bread dough, cast appealing glances at her immaculate brother-in-law, a well-favored bachelor of twenty-eight.

"Igh!" she exclaimed, eyeing her imprisoned hands with repulsion. "It's getting colder and clammy and stickier every minute."

"Where's Bridget?"

"I discharged her. I gave her a week's warning, but the mean, inconsiderate thing went at once and left me, literally, with the bread on my hands. I never cooked anything in my life; but I thought any goose could knead bread. Oh, that's just like a man—to laugh when one's up to the elbows in trouble."

"I'd help you if I could," said Philip, peering helplessly into, but keeping a safe distance from, the floury bread pan. "But what can I do?"

"You could go somewhere and find me a cook; if Edward were home—"

"I'll do that," returned Philip, visibly brightening. "What sort of a cook? Any choice in the matter?"

"Yes, indeed. I'm very particular. She mustn't be too big, because this kitchen's so tiny, and if she's very tall she won't be able to go down the cellar stairs without doubling backward. She must be neat in appearance, and Philip, do try to select one that will look well in a cap. Bring her right home with you. Simply insist on her coming—Edward had Bridget here in just an hour and a quarter from the moment he left the house."

"I'll beat him," declared Philip, from the doorway. "You'll see me back, perspiring but triumphant, and with Bridget's successor at my heels, in exactly sixty minutes."

Philip, who entertained a great opinion of his own executive ability, sought, without loss of time, the nearest employment agency.

"I'm looking for a medium-sized cook," said he, to the woman at the desk. "One that would look well in a cap."

"Come this way," said the woman, repressing a smile, and leading the young man to an adjoining room.

Eldredge looked, with a critical eye, at the long row of waiting applicants. Under his earnest scrutiny three of them blushed, two giggled, and a sixth frowned resentfully. Perhaps it was an off day for cooks, but the assortment offered was not promising. One of the gigglers, however, displayed a good set of teeth.

Philip, whose faith in his ability to return with a cook was beginning to falter, and almost decided in her favor, when he remembered Judith's cellar stairs.

"Would you mind standing up," he asked, courteously.

The maid with the teeth again showed them in a generous smile, as she obligingly rose to a height of six feet two.

"I'm afraid you wouldn't fill the bill," said Eldredge, apologetically. "I'm sorry, but my instructions were very exact."

As Eldredge was wavering between a red-headed German girl with an alarming pompadour and a thickset Irishman with a phenomenal upper lip, the door opened, a neatly dressed young woman entered, and, after a moment's hesitation, seated herself in the vacant chair at the end of the row.

"Why! You're just the girl I've been looking for," cried Philip, joyfully, as he caught sight of the newcomer. "Not too stout, not too tall, not too anything. You'd be adorable in a cap."

"But," objected the girl, "I'm—"

"We'll pay you bigger wages. Here," said Eldredge, thrusting a dollar into the agent's palm, "is your fee. I'll take this one—she suits me right down to the ground."

"But," began the girl, "I'm—"

"Now don't say a word. My sister-in-law, Mrs. Eldredge, wants you at once. I'll explain as we go along—come, please, we must catch the next car. You see, it's a case of—of bread. I left poor Mrs. Eldredge up to the elbows in dough—she's not accustomed to dough—and she must be rescued at once."

"I see," said the girl, suppressing a riotous dimple as she followed her impetuous employer to the street. "But please, sir, how do you know I'll suit?"

"I like your looks," said Philip, candidly. "You're neat and intelligent—and short enough to go down the cellar stairs. You see Mrs. Eldredge gave me the plans, dimensions and specifications, for the desired cook, and you fit them exactly. Here's our car."

Eldredge, well satisfied with his expedition, seated himself beside his prize, leaving, as a concession to conversation, a proper space between them.

"I was instructed," said he, with a sudden accession of dignity, "to ask you a few questions. First of all, can you make bread?"

"Yes—I mean, yes, sir."

"Can you cook—er—other things? Salads, you know, and—er—soup?" Eldredge was plainly out of his element.

"Yes—sir."

"Um. How long were you in your last place?"

"Four years—sir." The young woman choked down an emotion that Eldredge classified as grief at parting with her late employers.

"When did you leave, and why?"

"This morning. I was dragged away—I mean I—I was wanting a change—"

"Of course. Now what is your nationality?"

"American to the last n—Hum—I was born in America, if you please, sir. In Boston."

"Then everything's all right," Eldredge, having carried out Judith's instructions to the letter, retired, with dignity, behind the morning paper, thus intimating, gently, that the conversation was finished.

Suddenly Eldredge looked up to meet a pair of dancing brown eyes. The dimple he had surprised in the nearest rose-tinted cheek whisked itself, in some mysterious fashion, out of sight, and the dark eyes became instantly sedate.

"Poor thing," thought Eldredge, complacently, "she's delighted at finding a situation so quickly. Gad! it's a shame for such a pretty girl to be compelled to earn her own living. With a little education, she'd adorn any station in life."

Philip opened the front door with his latch key and led the new cook straight to the kitchen. Judith, still plentifully besprinkled with flour, and laboring under a mistaken impression that she was kneading bread, was poking reluctant fingers into an unwieldy mound on the bread board.

"I've got her," announced Philip, "and I guess you'll admit, Judith, that I know a good cook when I see one. It took just fifty-nine minutes!"

"Good!" cried Judith, wheeling about.

"Why, Helen?"

In another instant, mistress and maid, locked in each other's arms, were industriously exchanging kisses. Philip, petrified with astonishment, gazed in open-mouthed wonder at the pair. The maid whispered explanations into the ear of the six months' bride, whereupon both young women went into gales of musical laughter.

"I wish," demanded Philip, somewhat humbly, "that you'd explain your joke—if it is a joke."

"This," said Judith, over the cook's shoulder, "is my dearest friend, Helen Hunter, of Boston."

"Not the Hunters?"

"The same."

"Then what was she doing among those—"

"Looking for a waitress for my aunt, Mrs. Blake," explained Helen, demurely. "I meant, when my errand should be finished, to come here to surprise Judith—thank you so much for your assistance. When you mentioned Judith's name, I knew at once who you were or I should never have permitted you to carry me off in that unceremonious fashion, although I'm not sure you wouldn't have used force if persuasion had failed. Afterward I couldn't resist deceiving you—you wouldn't let me explain, you know—but do forgive me."

It is probable that forgiveness was forthcoming, for a few weeks later, the heiress of the Hunter millions signified her willingness to become, not Judith's cook, but Judith's sister-in-law.—Carroll W. Rankin, in What to Eat.

Their Titles Their Own.

It is generally supposed that an English woman can only become a baroness or a countess by marrying a baron or an earl, but such is not the case. Ten English women are peeresses in their own right.

Four of them—Lady Burdett-Coutts, Lady Cromartie, Lady Hambleton, and Lady Macdonald of Barncliffe—were given their titles directly by the late Queen Victoria. The other six—Ladies Beaumont, Berkeley, Berners, Conyers, Gray and Kinloss—hold ancient titles which, by special provision, descend in the female line in default of male heirs. Of the six Lady Conyers is the only one who has gained another title by marriage. She is the Countess of Yarrowburgh.

Of the four ladies upon whom peerages were directly conferred only one earned the honor by her own achievements—the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. The late Queen Victoria admired her philanthropic work so much that she broke through all precedents and made her a baroness.

Lady Hambleton was made a viscountess on account of the great services of her husband, the late W. H. Smith, who preceded Mr. Balfour in the leadership of the Conservative party in the House of Commons. He had been "slated" for promotion to the House of Lords, but died before that honor could be conferred upon him.

The Countess of Cromartie and Baroness Macdonald of Barncliffe also enjoy the posthumous honors of their illustrious husbands.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Buying the Opal.

The most important point in buying opals, says a contemporary, is color. Red is in the keenest demand, or red in combination with yellow, blue and green. Pattern is a second consideration in valuing the stone. Harlequin is the rarest and most exquisite of all, and when the color squares of red, yellow, blue and green are regular and distinct its beauty is a revelation of symmetry and light. The flash opal, though not so rare as the harlequin, is scarcely less attractive, particularly when its color veins are of the true ruby or pigeon's blood hue.—London Globe.

Roman Antiquities in England.

The British Society of Antiquaries' research at Silchester has just been rewarded by the unearthing of the greater part of a large Roman public bath, with all the various apartments, hypocausts, pillae, heating chambers, etc. Within the area where digging operations have been carried on an unincised Roman altar was also discovered. Further careful search is in progress.