

The Girl From the West

The young man frowned a little over the outlook from his office window. It wasn't what he saw, however, that brought the frown. It was what he heard.

He held the telephone receiver a little closer to his ear.

"Yes," he said, "I understand. You say your Western friend has come? The girl you've been expecting? I remember. What's that? Awfully nice? Oh, nice. Of course she must be. I don't get that? You want me to take her to the ball game this afternoon? Isn't that rather sudden? Yes, I know the club is going West tonight. Eh? You can't go yourself? I'm to go with her alone? Isn't she a stickler for chaperons? No? All right, Mary. I'll sacrifice myself to friendship's altar. Be there at 7:30. Yes. Good-bye."

He hung up the receiver with a fretful jerk.

"Confound it," he growled as he tilted back in his desk chair. "That carrying friendship a little too far. It was anybody but Mary I'd say no to, not!" He picked up a copy pad and flung it down again. "I particularly wanted to enjoy the game today. I'm sure to be a hummer. And here I'm chained to a strange girl who probably never saw a game before—and every time she opens her mouth the crowd will snicker. And there will be somebody close by who knows me. Why doesn't the gentleman with the stick hit the ball instead of missing it?" He suddenly laughed. "Oh, well," he cried, "I'm doing it for Mary and Mary is Jim's sister and she's been very good to me. I'm not going to forget how Jim sent for her and she came to Cambridge when I was bowled over by the fever. It will be a long time before I get even with her for that." He picked up his pencil. "From the West, oh, and never been East before? It makes me shiver."

Nevertheless, he buckled down to his work and resolutely crowded things ahead so he could be spared from the office at an early hour.

At exactly the appointed time he was at Mary Sterling's home quite prepared to wait certain indefinite minutes while the girl from the West completed her toilet.

But, so, she was on the porch with Mary, hat and gloves and ready to go.

"Anna," said Mary, "this is our very good friend, John Remington. John—Mary, John."

John cast a quick glance at the girl from the West as they shook hands. She was above medium height, well built, and carried herself well. She wore a suit of tan linen and her hair was black with a single rose. Her eyes were dark, with big black eyes and when she smiled there were certain elusive dimples about her mouth that seemed to scorn any set definition.

She was smiling when she greeted John Remington.

"You certainly deserve the title of good friend," Mr. Remington, she said. "I have a very strong impression that men do not like to take women to ball games—they are quite sure to say such silly things. I'll try hard to remember this, and you must be very patient with me."

John laughed. There was something really delightful about the childlike simplicity of the big girl.

"I'll promise to behave the very best I know how—at a ball game," she said. "That's the place you know where a man's real nature comes out—where the barbarian in him rises to the top. But I'll do my best to remember."

The girl from the West looked at Mary Sterling.

"You never said a word about this barbarian uprising, Mary dear," she cried reproachfully.

"Run along," laughed Mary. "All the good seats will be gone if you don't hurry."

"It wasn't a long walk to the game and if it hadn't been for the game I should have wished it longer. The girl from the West talked in a lively and pleasing fashion of her impressions of the East and John for the most part listened. There was one thing certain, he told himself, there was nothing about the appearance of this Western maiden that need cause him any uneasiness—quite the contrary, in fact.

It was evident that other people expected the game would be a hummer. When John and the girl entered the grand stand a majority of the seats were taken, but John's quick eye detected two unoccupied places in the front row.

"If you are not afraid of chance fouls," he said, "we will sit here." And then he remembered that it was quite likely the girl knew no more about fouls than she did about San Francisco.

"Do you think I ought to be afraid?" she mildly asked.

He assured her that the danger was slight, and after they were seated he looked around in the hope that he was out of earshot of his friends. To his relief he failed to discover any personal acquaintance in his immediate neighborhood.

Here, he thought, was an admirable opportunity to give the girl a few instructions in the art of playing the game.

Her big black eyes were taking in the field, the stands, the combing of the big scoreboard—and she looked in admiration.

"It's a beautiful scene," she said.

And then he gently called her attention to the details of the game and the rules.

He did this in a painstaking manner, making it as clear as possible and speaking in a guarded voice.

She listened attentively.

"You are very good and patient," she said, "and I will try hard to remember all you have told me. And if I don't remember I will do my best to keep still."

"No, no," he said, "you must ask all questions you care to ask. I don't want to spoil your enjoyment, and it would be spotted if things happened that you couldn't understand."

John felt that he was very magnanimous in this, his magnanimity being considerably strengthened by the fact that the people about him were strangers.

"Very well," said the girl. "And I ask anything too dreadful you must give me a barbarian look and care me back into silence."

The out-of-town team came on the field and went through its practice and John pointed out the players and explained their special lines of play. The girl gave him close attention.

"I have seen the names of these men in the papers," she said, "and it's a pleasure to have them pointed out. I want to tell you Mr. Remington that I am enjoying it more than I can say. There is something about the scene a hypothesis of action. I don't wonder that men are here and under the circumstances it is very good of them to be ladies come too."

As long as she talked like this John was contented. He was afraid of what might happen after the play began.

Then the gong sounded and the game began. John pointed out the players and the catcher.

"Do you know the tall young man who is just opposite us?" she asked. "I looked at the player and then I looked at his score card."

"That must be the young Westerner who has just joined the team," John said. "He gets his first chance in a game today. His name is Garth and he is what is called a phenomenon. He is a player who had done wonderful things."

"I hope he will do wonderful things too," said the girl.

"That's surely to be hoped," laughed John. "He will be up against the heaviest hitting team in the league and the chances are that he will lose his nerve long before the time to over."

"That would be too bad," said the girl. "He looks so young and hopeful."

"According to the papers," John went on, "he should be good for about a inning. In the seventh he is altogether likely to go to pieces."

"Let's hope the papers are wrong," said the girl, sympathetically. "I can't see that the game will mean so much to him."

"It will," John answered. "If he makes a good showing his place in the long run is assured. If he falls down and there is no present hope for him, he will have to turn to his bush and work and wait for another chance."

The girl nodded.

"Do you know," she said, "and of course it's presumptuous, but I think the young man will stay."

John laughed at this exhibition of sympathy.

"There's very little sentiment about baseball," he said. "If the boy can do those big hitters he's good enough for the fastest company but the big hitters will make no allowance for his youth and inexperience. They will hit the ball as hard and far as they can hit it."

"How do you think the game will go?" she asked.

"You are quite sure you know about men and their positions," said John by way of warning.

"I think so." She suddenly laughed. "I know which the umpire is, any way."

John looked around, but nobody seemed to have heard her.

"You don't mind," said the girl with quick look at him. "If I devote myself closely to the game and ask very many questions?"

John said he didn't mind and a sudden look of relief overspread his face. It was a good game, a very good game. If there was anything that he liked it was batting. The home team appeared powerless against the visiting pitcher who had so often defeated them at his mercy.

And the tall young man whose hour of ordeal was at hand acquitted himself manfully. Try as they would the hitters failed to solve the mystery of his delivery.

"If he will only last," muttered John Remington, and the words were fervently echoed by thousands of eager watchers.

"Our young man is doing pretty well, isn't he?" the girl presently asked.

"Wonderfully well," John answered. "But can he last?"

"He must," said the girl. "And some day, in the excitement, John failed to make the emphasis of the remark as it should be made."

Neither team had scored when the eighth inning opened. The young man faced the heavy hitter at the head of the enemy's batting list. The pitcher met the first ball pitched and over it over the second baseman's head. Then the visitor's coach wakened. His glib tongue began a wild ride that was calculated to rattle the nerve of a stoic. The youngster in the pitcher's box could not steel his nerves against these shrill gibes and oars. The first ball he pitched went wide, and but for a superhuman effort on the part of the catcher would have passed.

John Remington looked at the girl. She was leaning forward, her lips parted, her eyes shining. As the catcher stepped the wild pitch she gave a sudden gasp.

The batter swung hard at the second ball and drove it far over the center field. But the fielder was awake and pulled it down after a fierce run. There was no denying the fact that the youngster was weakening, and the bellowing coach danced around in an ecstasy of delight.

The third batter had only to wait and walk. The fourth batter struck once imprudently, and then waited, and the bases were full with one out and the hardest batter in the team at the bat.

The young pitcher looked about him. His glance rested a moment on the bench. The signal he may have expected did not come.

The ball went high. A groan arose from the crowd, and the opposing coach wowed like a wild man.

The pitcher had run forward to prevent a possible steal. As he took the ball from the catcher a clear voice thrilled his ears.

"The girl from the West with a quick start."

"Steady, Teddy, steady, steady," she chanted.

The youngster suddenly smiled.

"Steady, Teddy, steady, steady!" Those who were nearest caught the words, and quick to respond, chanted with the girl. The chant spread and swelled, louder, louder. It grew to a roar.

The irritating shriek of the coach was drowned in that rhythmic shout of encouragement.

"Steady, Teddy, steady, steady!" The boy was smiling as he faced the batter. He raised his hand to the crowd.

Then he retired the batter with three consecutive balls.

And the third man went out on a fly that the catcher secured.

The tension was slackened, the boy found his nerve again.

As the fly dropped to the catcher he chanted stopped and a wild roar rose a tribute to the triumphant warrior.

He pulled off his cap to a shameful way as he passed to the bench—hereat they roared again. The boy's face slackened and his keen eyes searched the lower row of seats. Suddenly his cap lighted and he pulled off his cap once more.

John Remington stared at the girl. "Or just a moment he was dismayed and hurt by the prominence she had given herself. And then the progress of the exciting little drama made him forget all else."

The girl looked around at him. Her face was still flushed, her eyes still shining.

"Shocked?" she asked.

"Not seriously," he stammered.

"Teddy's all right now," said the girl. "You'll see."

And he was all right. After that attack of the nerves he braced up and pitched a perfect game—a game which took eleven innings and a time run by the second baseman of the home team to finish.

It was a wildly delighted crowd that swarmed from the grounds, and a fane of the new pitcher was seen.

"Will you wait a moment or two?" said the girl. "I know I've misbehaved, and I'm sorry for it."

John suddenly laughed.

"I know that you have sent 1000 people away from here happy," he said. "How can I upbraid you?" He asked at her sharply. "You know you're a young pitcher?"

"Yes. We are from the same college. I came to the game to see him play."

John's face flushed a little.

"And you let me think you know nothing about baseball?"

"You seemed to take it for granted, will admit that I have played the game. That sounds funny doesn't it? But we girls had what we considered a very fair team for the woolly West. Of course we all knew about Teddy Garth and his weak spots. We made that chant to put heart and life in him at critical moments—and it never failed."

A young man was stretching up his hand to the girl.

"You did it, Anna," he cried. "It came at the exact psychological moment. The old chant stunned me at first, then I laughed and the danger was passed."

The girl touched John Remington's sleeve.

"Mr. Remington," she said. "I want you to meet that promising young pitcher, Teddy Garth. In addition to his other good qualities he has the advantage of being my cousin."

Pitcher Garth shook his head at her.

"Tell them all about it when you write home," he said. "Good-bye."

As the girl and John passed up the street she suddenly smiled.

"Am I forgiven?" she asked.

"On one condition," he answered. "You must give me further opportunities to instruct you in something which you already understand very much better than I do."

And the girl from the West laughed.

W. R. Rose, in Cleveland Plain Dealer.

AMERICAN CRACKERS.

Pilot Bread the First Variety Made in the United States.

The first cracker produced in the United States, so far as known, was pilot or ship bread, a large, round, slummy, crisp affair, which supplied the demand of the merchant marine for an article of food that would, unlike ordinary bread, keep for a prolonged period.

Later another variety was originated, the cold water cracker, which differed from the first chiefly in its smaller size, more compact texture, and greater hardness. For a long time these two were the only goods known to the trade.

They were both made of unleavened dough, mixed and kneaded by hand, and each cracker was rolled out and shaped separately before being placed, one at a time on a long handled sheet iron shovel or peel, and transferred in order to the floor of the oval shaped tye oven there to use. It was not until some time later that raised or fermented dough was used in the manufacture of crackers, and it is only within the past seventy years that any great variety has been produced.

The Most Ancient Man.

The average reader does not see much difference in age between human remains found in the beds of the Pleistocene and the Pliocene, but to the geologist the difference is very great, only he cannot express it in years of centuries. Until recently the oldest remains of man known dated back to the middle of Pleistocene. Among these are the celebrated relics from Lantardthal, Spyn and other places. But in October, 1907, a lower human jaw was found in deposits attributed to the early Pleistocene, or even the late Pliocene. This would give it a greater antiquity than any of the others, and entitle it to be ranked the oldest remains of the human species. The teeth are well preserved. The most remarkable feature of the jaw is the absence of a chin. The canine teeth are not unduly prominent and the dimensions of the teeth are within the limits of variation in living man.

A Well-Built Instrument.

When the concert was over and the pianist was driving along the snowy road to the Burnham Inn, where he was to spend the night, he ventured to ask his host of the evening if he had enjoyed the playing. "You did first-rate," Mr. Burnham told him. "That's my opinion."

"Yes," he went on after a minute. "You certainly did first-rate. You showed power and strength beyond anything I ever expected to listen to, and you was lightning quick into the bargain."

"Anybody that heard you could tell you worked hard and long and steady to get your trade. But I tell you who else had ought to have some credit—that's the man that made the piano you played on."

"Isn't every instrument that would stand the strain you put on it, not by a good deal."

"I should call it the praise ought to be divided pretty even betwixt ye."

The Photography of Words.

Mons. Devaux-Charbonnel has lately photographed the variations of current in a telephonic circuit, by the aid of a Blonod oscillograph. The photographs are reproductions of the syllables pronounced by a human voice, and it is expected that they will be of use in the solution of various problems in telephony. In studying the impressions made by syllables, an experimenter found that each syllable is composed of 30 to 40 complete vibrations. The beginning and the end of the syllables are modified by the impressions of the consonants, and the modifications cover only 4 or 5 periods, so that each syllable has 20 to 30 regular vibrations corresponding to its vowel. The method permits the study of the higher harmonics which give character to words.

The Lady Who Danced the Minuet.

The minuet was ever the aristocrat of dances. Before the lady of the eighteenth century elected to step the sixty measure she had many points to master, for to dance the minuet was court criticism. The plunge taken, wore a lappet on her shoulder to the company she proposed to take or mar her ballroom reputation. Another point of etiquette lay in the eyes. A soiled pair was good enough for the country dance, but an absolutely new pair had to adorn the fair lady which graced the minuet. And the lady of the eighteenth century dancing bent set out with two pairs in her satchel.—London Chronicle.

Eskimos and the Telephone.

"One of the most amusing incidents in all my experience with Eskimos as when I first showed them a telephone," Gen. A. W. Greely, the Arctic explorer, says:

"They absolutely could not understand it. They tried in every way to understand the trickery. First I talked to one and he was sure I was fooling him in some way. Then I put one each end of the phone and let them talk to each other. It was here that mystification knew no bounds."

The Carnegie Cactus.

The big cactus of Arizona, which attains a height of 50 to 60 feet, and which has heretofore been known as the Carnegiea gigantea, has been found by Doctors Britton and Rose to be the type of a new and hitherto undescribed genus. It is not a Carnegiea, they say, and they propose to call it the Carnegiea gigantea.

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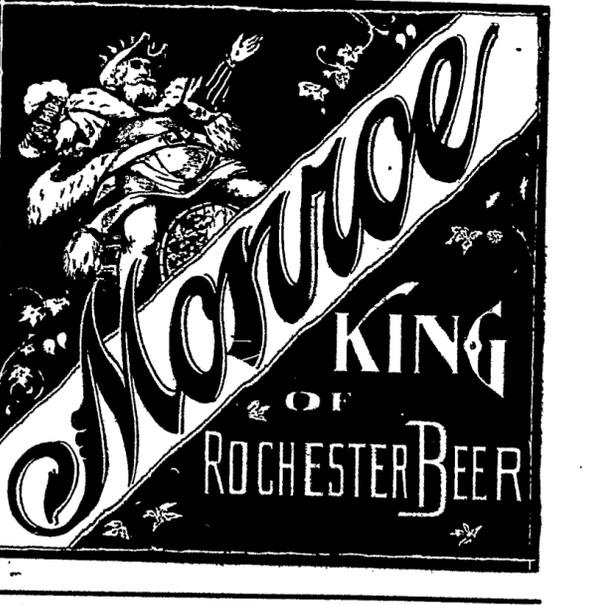
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