An Exchange

What Came of a Man's Unwittingly Appropriating Another's Coat

By WALTER B. STURGIS

I never put on a winter overcoat until the days begin to lengthen and the cold begins to strengthen. One morning about the 1st of January, when the thermometer had dropped to zero, I took out my heaviest outdoor garment and took it to the window to see if the moths had been using it. It did not look familiar to me. I get all my clothes at Darby's, so I looked at once at the tailor's mark under the collar and saw the name of a London maker. I was astonished. The coat was not mine and never had been mine. The most natural and probable explanation was that the last time I had worn a heavy coat the season before I had gone into a restaurant or hotel and hung it up. On going out I had taken another man's coat, leaving him mine.

Thrusting my hand into the pocket, I took out an unsealed envelope with a photographer's printed name and address on it. Within was the likeness of a girl, about which was folded a bit of paper on which was written:

My Dear—I send the picture. Some say it is very good of me; others don't like it. I'm curious to hear what you have to say about it. Your loving MOLLY.

Monday evening.

There was no address on the envelope, and I inferred that either it had not been sent through the mail or, if it had, it had been inclosed in another envelope. The only clew I had to the owner was the name of a tailor in London. I being in America and there not being much likelihood that the maker could tell for whom the coat had been built, I did not think it worth while to try to recover my property or return what I had taken.

When I first looked at Molly's photograph I was not especially attracted by it. But I am free to confess that the faces which have most impressed me have at first made little or no impression on me. Possibly in this case I was later influenced by something I noticed written on the back of the photograph in pencil and which escaped my observation when I first discovered it. The words were, "A peach!"

However, I had changed from indifference to interest in the face photographed before seeing this encomium, which I inferred had been written by the recipient. It was rather a confirmation of my later impression than a creator of it. Being a bachelor and fancy free, together with a bit of romance in my nature, I confess I was on the lookout for a mate. Indeed, it is a question with me if both men and women unmarried are not, though unconsciously, always in their hearts expecting the appearance of a life companion.

At any rate, I put Molly's photograph on my dresser and became very fond of her. It grew upon me that she was one to trust—one who, in case of need, would step to the front, a tower of strength. One evening when I came to my room Molly had disappeared from my dresser. I was surprised at the disappointment I suffered at not seeing her. I moved the dresser to see if the photograph had not fallen and found it on the floor. The incident, though trifling, suggested to me that if the photograph had become so necessary to my comfort, what would the original be.

One evening I went to a function—a bridge party, if I remember correctly—and on leaving stood waiting in the hall, hat in hand and overcoat on, for my sister, who was putting on her wraps above. On changing the direction of my eyes whom should they hit upon but Molly. She was standing in a doorway looking at me curiously, but the moment I fixed my gaze upon her she turned away and passed out of sight.

I did not leave the house till I had learned her address.

Why had she looked at me, whom she had doubtless not seen before, with more than the interest she would take in a stranger? I was puzzled for a reason. I was interested in mental telepathy, believing that there is something in it, and wondered if the interest that had developed in me for her could have communicated itself to her through some mental process not yet laid bare to us.

I had no trouble in making Molly's acquaintance and lost no time in doing so. My sister Ruth managed it for me, first laying a plan for her own acquaintance with Molly, then contriving a meeting between Molly and myself. Molly said she would be pleased to meet Ruth's brother and would like to have her own brother meet Ruth. Of course I cautioned Ruth to say nothing about the photograph which she had seen often on my dresser. I proposed to announce my acquirement of it in my own good time.

There was no reason for me to suppose when I was presented to Molly that she had any knowledge of me whatever except having seen me for a moment in the hall after the bridge party. Indeed, she gave no evidence of remembering having seen me then. I was certainly much more pleased with her than with her photograph and struck with the advantage or disadvantage a living person has over his or her likeness. Character may be stamped on a photographed face, but other attributes are lacking. Molly, for instance, had an extremely pleasant voice, an honest smile, and when her face lighted she was a very different person from when her face was at rest. While she was sedate rather than frivolous, at times she was merry.

From the moment I saw Molly in the flesh I resolved to win her if possible, and I wished to withhold any mention of having fallen into possession of her picture and keeping it on my dresser, falling gradually in love with merely her image, till my proposal, when I intended to make the most of it. Molly accepted my attention. But most girls, I believe, like to keep a suitor in doubt, which they can do without the slightest trouble. All they have to do is to frown occasionally or excuse themselves when he calls on the plea of indisposition and the bottom of his universe drops out immediately. Molly played these little games on me so often that I was discouraged. I thought that if I could only reach a point where I could ring in my long adoration of her photograph her heart would warm toward me at once.

Meanwhile another little romance that I cannot develop here was going on between my sister Ruth and Molly's brother. Molly had noticed it and spoke to me about it, but I was so interested in my own affair that I had no thought for any others. I didn't happen to meet Molly's brother, but I was not slow in making up my mind that he was the person to whom she had given the photograph. A brother would not be likely to write "A peach" on the back of a sister's picture, but the brother in this case might have had a friend who admired the sister.

One thing I noticed in Molly's treatment of me that I construed favorably. Whenever she would give me the cold shoulder she would follow up her act by being especially gracious. After one of these fits of graciousness I resolved to bring matters to a crisis. I did not begin with so unromantic a matter as an exchange of overcoats. I led up to the subject by telling her that I had been familiar with her lineaments before I had ever seen her. She evidently saw what was coming, not from my words, but my manner. When a man has a proposal on his mind and trying to find words in which to make it there are few girls who do not know the inevitable result. I might just as well have said nothing after making the start, and what I did say was not what I had intended to say. At any rate, I forgot to tell her that her likeness had been on my dresser for a long while before I had met her. Her reply to my proposition was startling.

"Why haven't you returned Bob's overcoat?"

I drew aside to get a better view of her expression. She was toying with some ornamental work on her skirt, her eyes cast down. Nevertheless I detected a slight quirk to the corner of her mouth.

"Wh-a-at do you mean?" I asked.

"Come; don't pretend what's not true," she replied. "You know you have had a picture of mine that didn't belong to you."

My astonishment, my curiosity, went down before the desire of my life. I told her that fate had thrown into my possession a picture which from the day I first saw it had grown upon me, had enthralled me, had been the beginning of my first and only love. Fate had thrown it in my way—

"You mean fate threw Bob's overcoat in your way, the overcoat happening to contain my photograph."

This matter of fact reception of my outburst somewhat cooled me.

"How did you know about the exchange of coats?" I asked.

"Bob had his coat taken the day I sent him my likeness. I knew the pattern of the cloth well and have been looking for it ever since. The moment I saw you at the breaking up of the bridge party standing in the hall with Bob's coat on, I recognized it at once."

"And Bob?"

"I saw by the way you were looking at me that you had recognized me and had done so by my photograph. I inferred that you would seek me and kept my own counsel. I haven't yet told Bob or any one else that you have been wearing his coat."

I looked at her steadily for a few moments, then broke out again, but in a different vein.

"I've been nursing this matter for months, intending a pleasant surprise, and now you've taken the wind out of my sails. Ever since I met you you've known that I had been in possession of your picture. There's no use in a man trying to impress a woman by chicanery or concealment. She'll beat him every time. When I saw you look at me the evening you first saw me I fancied that some telepathic process had informed you that I and you were destined—"

"It did. I saw admiration in your glance."

"Oh, that was it! Anyway, the game has all been in your hands. I count for nothing. I am only a beggar."

She was touched by my disappointment, the abject position in which I found myself. She felt for my hand and drew closer to me. My victory came through defeat, but since I had achieved all I had set out to achieve I did not repine.

What was my gain was another's loss. The man—a chum of Bob's—who had written "A peach" on the back of Molly's photo was an aspirant for her hand when I appeared on the scene and was obliged to withdraw in my favor. Bob and Ruth are married, and Molly and I are engaged. It's all out now, and Bob and I have re-exchanged coats. As Molly's likeness grew on me before I had seen her and as she grew on me before we were engaged, she is now growing on me in our betrothal. I wonder if she will continue to grow on me after we have been married. I believe she will.

SNAPSHOTS AT CELEBRITIES

J. F. Hill, New Republican National Chairman.

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Dr. John Fremont Hill of Maine, the new chairman of the Republican national committee, has been the acting head of that body since Frank M. Hitchcock retired to enter the cabinet of President Taft as postmaster general. He has long been prominent in the political activities of the Pine Tree State, having twice been elected governor as well as serving in both branches of the legislature.

The new chairman is a native of Maine and has just passed his fifty sixth birthday. Though a graduate of two medical colleges, he has devoted little time to the practice of medicine. For more than thirty years he has been engaged in the publishing business, in which he acquired a large fortune. He is also largely interested in electric railroad development and in various industrial and financial enterprises in his native state. His home in Augusta is considered one of the finest in Maine.

An Arizona Statesman.

As a result of the success of the Democrats at the first state election held in Arizona Marcus Aurelius Smith, long a picturesque figure at Washington, will be invested with the toga. Both Mr. Smith and his colleague, Henry F. Ashurst, were nominated for the United States senate, and as the legislature is safely Democratic their election is assured.

Mr. Smith is a native of Kentucky, a graduate of Transylvania university, Lexington, and a lawyer by profession. In 1881 he went to Tombstone and hung out his shingle, and from that time on Arizona was his watchword.

MARCUS A. SMITH

He represented his territory as a delegate in six congresses and was the means of passing a statehood bill through the house in three of them admitting Arizona into the Union. The senate on each occasion failed to concur. He bitterly fought the plan to join Arizona with New Mexico into one commonwealth and was instrumental in making valueless thousands of fraudulent Spanish land grants in the territory. While in congress Mr. Smith was one of the most popular of men, and it was often said of him that if Arizona ever achieved statehood he would be one of its first senators, a prediction that is about to be fulfilled.

General Wood's Record.

General Leonard Wood, now chief of staff of the United States army, was graduated in medicine from Harvard and got his military start as a surgeon. When he was made chief of staff the wife of an officer who had been considered for the place remarked acridly:

"His hottest ammunition has been disinfectants, and he has had more experience with the mouths of bottles than with the mouths of cannon!"

Which remark, while biting and unkind, was not true. Wood has seen the roughest kind of service in the field, especially as a colonel in Roosevelt's rough riders in the Spanish-American war.

ROMANCE OF A MIDSHIPMAN

Won a Wife by Posing as a Hero Done In Wax.

"Where did you first meet your wife, Halstead?"

The question was asked by a guest of Austin Halstead after dinner, when the wives of the two men had retired to the drawing room and cigars were brought to the dining table. A smile passed over Halstead's face.

"That's a funny story," he said.

"I hadn't been out of the Naval academy a year and was as full of nonsense as the day I left Annapolis. Our ship was ordered to the Brooklyn navy yard for refitting, and, having a good deal of time on my hands, I spent it in New York. I found the Eden Musee a good place to get away with an afternoon and spent not only one but several there. One day—I was in uniform at the time, having been ordered on some official duty in New York connected with the ship—I strolled into the show of wax figures along with one of our fellows, Tom Anderson. Tom was on leave and in mufti. We went through the place and sat on a wooden settee to rest and watch the people. A friend of Tom's went by, and Tom left me temporarily to go to speak to him.

"I noticed that several persons looked at me scrutinizingly, suspecting that since I was in uniform I might be a wax figure of some great naval hero, but as soon as they perceived that I was merely a real live middy they lost interest in me and passed on. Presently I saw coming a young girl of sixteen, whose dresses had not been let down to the length for women, in the care of a French maid. She was one of the piquant kind, full of animation. This was evidently her first visit to the show, and she was intensely interested in everything she saw. She gave me an inquiring glance, then asked her maid in French whether I was flesh and blood or wax. Not getting a satisfactory reply, she came nearer and fixed her sparkling black eyes upon me.

"Of course it was a mean thing to do, but what can you expect from a youngster who has also the disadvantage of being a sailor ashore? I looked straight before me. Tom Anderson was standing at a little distance, talking with his friend, and saw the girl trying to make me out. He smiled and called his friend's attention to the pantomime. Tom had as much devilry in him as I and was equally culpable. Tipping the wink to his companions, he led the way toward me.

"'Did you ever see Admiral Farragut as a young man?' he said, loud enough to be heard by the girl. 'Here he is just as he was at twenty-one.'

"The two stood before me while I stared at vacancy. The girl drew near to hear all about the great admiral.

"'This waxwork,' Tom continued, 'was made after photographs taken at the time.'

"'No one would suppose,' said Tom, 'that the great naval hero could have been such a miserable looking specimen of humanity in his early days. Look at that nose. Did you ever see such a proboscis?'

"'I think he was very handsome,' said the girl to her maid indignantly.

"'Then his hands—big enough for a No. 10 glove. And his feet—they'd cover the quarter deck of a line of battle ship.'

"The girl tossed her head and turned her back on the speaker. How I ever retained my gravity I don't know. I remember that I felt a horror of laughing, for it would have revealed a terrible slight upon the young girl. I had already had enough of the joke and wished that Tom would go away and the girl would pass on without knowing how we had fooled her. When she looked away for a moment I gave Tom an appealing look, which he understood and drew his friend to another curiosity.

"As soon as they had gone the girl entered upon an animated dialogue with her maid, in which the former did nearly all the talking.

"'Those men ought to be ashamed of themselves to talk that way. We've been studying about Admiral Farragut at school, and it's a disrespect to speak so even about his wax figure. I think he was lovely.'

"My heart melted more and more to my charming defender, and I was becoming dreadfully ashamed of my deception. The maintaining of a fixed position was tiresome, but I would rather die than reveal myself.

"'I don't see,' the girl remarked, 'how it is possible to make wax look so lifelike. See the color in the cheeks, the veins. Those eyes can't be glass. I wonder if he is a wax figure after all.'

"At this juncture a fly lighted on my nose and made my position intolerable. The girl came very near and examined me critically. Then she raised her taper finger and touched me on the cheek. This was too much. I broke into a smile and said as kindly as I could:

"'Mademoiselle, you have made a mistake.'

"'Oh, goody gracious!' she gasped, drawing away as from redhot iron.'

"I would have apologized, but she turned and ran away as fast as she could go, followed by her maid."

"And the second time you met?" asked the dinner guest.

"Oh, that was three years later at a ball on board the flagship. She recognized me and laughed at the incident. I fell in love with her, and we were married. But there's nothing funny about that."

The Invalid

A Russian Nobleman Injured While Hunting Is Entertained by a Charming Woman

By GEORGE BECKWITH

A party of gentlemen were hunting in the province of Tula, in Russia. One of them, Count Radimoff, a man about thirty-two and of a very artistic mien, was thrown from his horse and injured. On an eminence near by appeared a castle of modern build, and the count's servant was sent there to inquire if his master would be welcome until he might recover from his injuries. The servant rode to the castle, asked for the owner and was ushered into the presence of a young and beautiful woman.

"My master," he said, "Count Radimoff, while hunting in the forest below has fallen from his horse and sent me to learn if he may beg a lodgment here until it can be determined if he is able to proceed to the capital."

At the name Radimoff the lady started. When the man had made his request she called for the master of her stables and ordered him to get out the most comfortable conveyance for an invalid, go with the lackey and bring the count to the castle. Before the departure of the carriage she said to its driver:

"Answer no questions concerning me." Then calling her household together, she said to them: During the stay in the castle of the gentleman who is coming you are to remember that I am Mme. Murienlet and am to be addressed solely as Madame."

On the count's arrival madame met him at the steps and herself assisted him into the castle. Her reception of him was full of sympathy, even tenderness. She placed him on a lounge in the great hall or living room, where, his head resting on pillows and covered by an afghan, she bid him remain quiet until the arrival of a physician for whom she had sent. She met the doctor without on the porch and said to him:

"Doctor, I have received as my guest a gentleman who has been injured by a fall from his horse. Whatever his condition, you are to tell him that he will not be able to leave the castle for at least a week."

The doctor carried out his instructions, and when he left his patient madame went into the room where the count was lying and bent over him sympathetically.

"That rascally doctor says I must thrust myself upon you for a whole week," said Radimoff.

"You shall be my welcome guest for that time and longer."

"But the hunt—I shall miss that."

"I am sorry for you, but I shall endeavor to make your enforced stay here as endurable as possible."

"I shall be needed at the capital. I hold a position at the palace, and his majesty has given me leave for but a few days."

"His majesty, if he values you, will not risk your life by calling for you to come before your physician gives permission. I will write an explanation for you."

"Nonsense! I can write perfectly well. Indeed, I don't believe a word that stupid doctor says. I can certainly go to St. Petersburg, even if it is not best for me to continue the hunt."

She brought writing materials, but his reclining position was not conducive to scribbling, and his hand trembled. So she did the work for him.

"And now," she said, "as your hostess it is my bounden duty to relieve, so far as possible, the tedium of your captivity. There are chess, checkers, cards and books. Which shall it be?"

The count, touched by her kindness, apologized for not having shown his appreciation of it before and said that he would prefer the books. So she went to her library and selected several volumes, which she brought to him and read to him the titles, that he might designate one he would prefer. He selected a novel, and, drawing a chair close beside the lounge, she began to read from it.

Madame devoted herself continuously to the count. His bedroom was directly off the living room and on the same floor. Every morning her servant dressed him and assisted him into the living room, where he at first took to the lounge, but soon insisted on an easy chair. Madame read to him, played games with him and cooked dainties for him with her own hands, studying continually how she might administer to his comfort. There is no more certain way for a woman to win her way to a man's heart than by caring for him in his illness. In the present case there was but one drawback to the lady's method—the count was perfectly well.

The doctor called every day, felt the patient's pulse, examined a black and blue spot on his leg, took his temperature, looking wise and thoughtful all the time, and at each departure madame slipped 10 rubles into his hand. At the end of the week, before entering the so called sickroom, he said to her:

"The count will probably ask me, now that the first week has passed, if he can be moved. What shall I tell him?"

"He will not ask you, but if he does tell him he must remain another week."

"Just so," remarked the doctor and [illegible]