

A Student of Foreign Customs

By CAROLINE CLEAVER

...d Ned Collins when he was twenty-one came into a fortune. He laid out the life before him methodically, resolving that he would see the world, then marry on a principle of common sense. It was midsummer when he passed into Siberia, and since he had always heard the territory spoken of as bitterly cold he was quite surprised to find it very tolerable. A part of his plan was to stop over somewhere in the interior and observe the customs of the country, of which he had heard a great deal. Bringing up one evening in a small village the surroundings of which were attractive, he determined to make that his point of observation. He spoke some French and some German, but knew not a word of Russian. The keeper of the little inn at which he put up was a German who had married a Russian woman. He was a sturdy-looking man, sitting all day drinking vodka—since he could not get beer—and smoking his pipe, his wife, who was an energetic body, doing all the work. She was comely, having the fair, delicate complexion of the north, and her daughter, Anna, aged sixteen, was a beauty. Collins was very proud of his knowledge of the German language and anxious to perfect himself in it before reaching Germany, where he expected to sojourn for some time. Therefore he concluded to practice on the landlady and her family, though the wife and daughter spoke it indifferently. Ned began on Schmidt, the landlady; asked him all manner of questions about the country and the people, explaining that he was there for the purpose of observation. He also told the host that if any of those strange ceremonies of which he had heard were practiced during his stay he would be glad to witness them. The landlady said "Jah!" and went on smoking his pipe, not manifesting any interest in the subject. He was a good man to practice on, for he spoke only in colloquialisms, which permitted the guest to do all the talking. But as soon as Ned caught sight of Anna he transferred his practice to her. How he expected to learn German from a Russian girl who had picked up only a few sentences from her father does not appear. Nor is it certain whether he made practice an excuse for making love to the girl, whose eyes and hair and skin were all delicately fair, or whether he really thought he was gaining a knowledge of German that would be useful to him among the aristocrats of Berlin. Be this as it may, he spent quite a while in the village, most of the time with Anna. Probably he did not realize that he was making love. Young men of twenty-one can make love as fast as a horse can trot without intending anything serious. However, Collins, who had formed a resolution that he wouldn't marry before he was thirty and then on common sense principles—which meant at least that the girl should be one of his own class—after spending a month in the place studying the customs of the country through Anna, one day called for his bill, saying that he thought he would depart next day. The landlady looked at him through a pair of bushy eyebrows and said that one of those peculiar Siberian customs he had heard of would take place the next day and if he would stop over he could witness it. Collins asked what kind of ceremony it was, but the landlady was not a good hand at explaining things. He only said that there would be a foot race, but the issue of the race meant a great deal for the winner. Collins, having spent a great deal of time waiting to see something of the kind, concluded to delay his departure. The next morning the landlady offered to conduct him to the place where the ceremony was to take place. A tent was pitched on level ground, and before it Collins saw a bevy of young girls. Just before he reached them Anna left them, looking at Collins as if she wished him to follow her. He did so and just as he was about to join her she laughed and started to run. "Now, Ned had won prizes at the athletic games in America and considering this a challenge game chase. Anna, however, was very good at a short distance run, and Ned was entirely out of training. She led him about over the field for awhile, the lookers-on shouting and clapping their hands till at last she began to lag, and when he caught her she fell into his arms quite limp. Ned supported her to the tent, where a priest stepped out from the crowd and said something that Ned didn't understand. Then the party went to the hotel, where a breakfast had been set out. When Ned was told the meaning of all this he learned that he had been married to Anna. In Siberia at weddings the bride runs from the groom and he must catch her before he can marry her. The landlady had been too smart for the American and secured a husband for his daughter. Ned might have bought his way out of the trap, but he had really fallen in love with the girl and decided to take her away with him, education and all, having no other marriage ceremony performed, at which he would know what he was doing and the legality of which would not be questioned.

LANDED A BIG FISH.

Then He Hooked Nigger Game and Had an Exciting Time.

A singular fish story is told in the East Indian papers. A fisherman started for the river, accompanied by a shikari, carrying a rifle for use in case of an encounter with big game. The fisherman in a short time landed a large fish and then moved up stream to another pool. On his way he passed a ravine and caught sight of an enormous tiger. In a panic the fisherman concealed himself behind a pile of rocks and was flattered himself that he had escaped observation when the fish fell from his hands in full view of the tiger. The fish was floundering in the road, and the tiger instantly pounced on it and carried it off. But the hook still held, and as soon as the tiger felt the resistance of the line he gave his head an impatient shake, which resulted in the harpooning of his upper lip. At this critical moment the enraged animal saw the crouching fisherman, who was totally unmoved by his dangerous position, and actually began to play the tiger as he would a fish. The tiger stopped for a moment in apparent amazement at such audacity, and in that instant the shikari came on the scene with his rifle and sent a bullet through the brute's brain.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat

FRENCH TOBACCO TESTERS.

Men Who Find Smoking Anything but an Agreeable Task. The French government's official tasters of tobacco form a category of civil servants of whose activity little is known outside their own department. Tobacco is a state monopoly in France, and these experts are employed under the ministry of finance to report on all classes of tobacco that are permitted to be sold in France. The men are mostly superannuated inspectors of tobacco factories. Their hours of business are from 9 to 5. As a rule, it is the lower grades of tobacco that need the most careful attention. They have to report not only on the cigars, cigarettes and pipe tobacco put on the market by the French Tobacco Regie, but also on all imported tobacco. Smoking when compulsory is any thing but an agreeable duty, these employees say. They are in constant danger from the causes by the excessive use of tobacco, and they combat these by taking large quantities of black coffee, which is also said to assist them to differentiate between the various kinds of tobacco on which they have to give their opinion.—Exchange.

How Seeds Travel. They have been discovering some extraordinary plants in England plants which puzzled the botanists to whom they were either utterly unknown or known as growing only in far distant lands. One naturalist picked on the grounds of the Bradford saw-logs works 160 species of foreign plants. Among these were several Australian burrs, Jimson weed, prickly poppies from Mexico, others native to Peru, Siberia and the Azores. A few of a prickly nature. Investigation proved that the dust from wool combing establishments was being used as fertilizer, and the washings of wool were run into the sewers. The burrs of these foreign plants had come in the wool and had grown. Other plants had sprung from green in rags and others brought in soil on foreign timber. New York World.

Level of Two Seas. When attention was first called to the practicability of a canal from the Mediterranean to the Red sea by the first Napoleon a corps of surveyors was sent out to "run the levels." They reported that the scheme would necessitate a level of the Red sea was thirty feet six and a half inches higher than that of the Mediterranean. That report put a damper on the canal project for several years. In 1847, however, some "doubting Thomases" prevailed on the great powers to resurrect the route. England sent Robert Stephenson, Austria M. Talbot and France Signor Negrelli. They found that the two seas had exactly the same level, and the Suez canal was the result.

The Weight of the World. A cubic foot of earth weighs about five and a half times as much as a cubic foot of water. A cubic mile of earth then weighs 25,000,000,000 tons. The volume of the earth is 259,800,000,000 cubic miles. The weight of the world without its atmosphere is 6,866,250,000,000,000,000 tons. If we add to this the weight of the atmosphere given above we get a grand total—6,866,258,100,000,000,000 tons.

She Used Them. "Does your mother take an interest in your father's business?" asked the lady visitor. "Indeed she does," replied the boy. "And what is your father's business?" "He's in the shingle business."—"Yonkers Statesman.

So He Did. "Indians, you know," said the widely read man, "are very stoical. They're never known to laugh." "Oh, I don't know," replied the pig-painter. "The poet Longfellow made Minne-ha-ha."—Catholic Standard and Times.

The two powers which in my opinion constitute a wise man are those of bearing and forbearing.—Epictetus.

A FOREIGN METHOD

By LUCY B. TAYLOR

There is a greater difference between the social life of Europe and America than in any other respect. In Europe blood is everything; in America it is nothing. Where blood is valuable it is kept up, and it can't be kept up without the inheritance, money. Marriage is made abroad, especially in France, with respect to blood and money. Therefore it is a business transaction. In other words, it is in the hands of the parents. A young man wishing to marry a girl would as soon think of herring as to ask the girl before gaining permission of her parents. Jean Le Frore, a young Frenchman, came to America, went into business and determined to make his home here. He was a very thoughtful chap—a Frenchman—and considered well every thing he was about to do. One bit of good sense he showed especially. Being young, that if he purposed to grow a part of the Great American nation the best thing for him to do would be to marry a Yankee girl, he cast about him for a wife.

Now, Jean was a gentleman in his native land, and a gentleman in one country is a gentleman in all others. He had come to the United States to take a position in the banking house of his uncle, Le Frore Freres, and would undoubtedly be shoved upward rapidly. The consequence was that he was no bad catch for a spinster, and Miss Ethel Jones, whose acquaintance he had made and with whom he seemed much pleased, knew it. Jean determined to try for her. She was an orphan; consequently Jean could not very well conform to the French custom of asking her parents for her, so he was obliged to apply to her direct. "Mademoiselle," he said, "I find myself in a very embarrassing position. 'What's the trouble, M. Le Frore?'" "You have no fadder, no mere, no guardian."

"I should suppose that to be my trouble, not yours. I can take care of what property I have without one." "You do not understand. I have a proposition to make which should be made to one of these. But they are not."

"I don't see but that you'll have to make it to me." "It makes me much ashamed to do so, mademoiselle, but I cannot help myself. Well, to begin, I have a salary of \$2,000, and I have an income from property left me by my father of \$3,000."

"That should pay all your club expenses and leave you plenty for champagne and cigars." "Le Frore looked at the imperturbable young woman who made this observation somewhat set back. But he went on: "I expect preferment in the house of Le Frore Freres. Indeed, I was brought to America to take its place of my Uncle Francois, who expects soon to retire and go back to France. My interest in the business will bring my income up to—"

"You can then keep an automobile and possibly a yacht, can't you?" "Oh, ma chere Miss Jones, you do not understand. It is not an automobile I wish or a yacht. It is something far more adorable."

"Not an aeroplane?" "An aeroplane! What would I do with an aeroplane?" "Go up in the air. That's what my brother says he does when he treads on his wife's toes. An aeroplane is the bachelor's only chance for that."

"Pardon, mademoiselle, we get very far from the subject. I am very unfortunate that you have no fadder. He would understand."

"I'm not a man, and I'm not my father. Couldn't you say something fitted for my intelligence?" "I say no more about the settlements. I may take up to see families."

"What family?" "To one to which I have to go to honor to belong. One of my ancestors was a marshal to Napoleon the grand."

"But I go farther back than that. My great-great-grandfather was master of se horses to se grand monarch Louis XIV."

"Did he ride the king's horses to water?" "Ride seem to water! Oh, mademoiselle, that was not his duties. Ze office was an honor."

"What has he or the marshal to do with what you have to say to me?" "Mademoiselle, if you do me the honor to listen to a proposal for your hand I'll first thing I would say to your fadder."

FLED FROM HIS BRIDE.

Romantic Story of the Marriage of General Sam Houston.

In "As I Remember—Recollections of American Society During the Nineteenth Century," is a romantic story of General Sam Houston, whose appearance was patrician and courtesy that of the laborer gentleman. "I have spoken of General Houston's appearance. I now wish to refer to his fine sense of honor. He was married on Jan. 22, 1820, to Miss Eliza Allen and separated from her directly after the marriage ceremony in it, is said, the most painful circumstances. The wedding guests had departed and General Houston and his bride were sitting alone by the fire when he suddenly discovered that she was weeping. He asked the cause of her tears and she told that she never loved him and never could, but had married him solely to please her father. "I love Dr. Douglas," she added, "but will try my best to be a dutiful wife to you."

"Miss," said General Houston, even waiting the fact that he had just married her, "no white woman shall be my slave (and night)." "It is said that he mounted his horse and rode to Nashville, where he resigned at once his office as governor and departed for the Cherokee country where and elsewhere his subsequent career is well known. Having procured a divorce from his wife, he married Margaret Moffette in the spring of 1840.

ON THE GREAT WHITE WAY. How New York's Grill Room Prices Hit the Blue Grass Brother. After his brother had been in New York a little more than a year a Kentuckian decided to pay him a visit (hoping to surprise his brother), the Kentuckian did not apprise his brother of his intentions. Arriving at 9 o'clock in the morning he asked to be directed to a good eating house. The taxicab pilot offered him his course for the largest, costliest and most fashionable hotel grill room on Broadway.

Being a stranger in a strange land and hungry the Blue Grass brother ordered a regular home meal. When he got the check from the waiter his size staggered him. He wasn't accustomed to New York hotel prices. After verifying the correctness of his bill at the cashier's desk and being insulted by the waiter for tipping him 25 cents, the visitor started out to look for his brother, whose office he found about 1 o'clock.

In response to his inquiries as to his brother's whereabouts a clerk said: "He's over eating at the Black hotel's new grill room."

He's slow friend. Only a million will cover what the Black hotel bills. I know, because I had breakfast there myself this morning. Louisville Times.

From Jail to the Bench. James Pemberton, 1857, was imprisoned in the Fleet for debt on his father during a period of youthful extravagance. While in jail he applied himself to the study of law and came to be regarded as a kind of legal oracle by his fellow prisoners, who nicknamed him "counselor." With the fees they gave him for legal advice he bought books to continue his studies. He then prevailed upon his creditors to grant his release from prison that he might the sooner earn money to pay off his debts. (Called to the bar in 1854 after a brilliant career in the palace court at Westminster and subsequently in the house of lords he became a peerage judge. He was knighted in 1875 and ultimately, on the dismissal of Sturgis, was made lord chief justice in 1881.—London Standard.

Spaniards Cut Words. The most amusing instances of laziness in speaking are to be found in Spain. The Spaniards have made it a practice to cut down every word to its primitive minimum of sound. Take the word for "son," which has, as we know, its etymology from a Latin "filius." That was original, the Latin "filius." The French made it "fils," the Italians "figlio" (filio). The Spaniards could not be bothered with the "f" at the beginning or the "i" in the middle, so they simply pronounced the two vowels with a guttural noise, which comes natural to them, in between. "ee-oo"—London Mail.

Almost Perfect. "How are you getting along with your stenography, Bella?" "Splendidly. I've been at it only six weeks and I can write 150 words a minute with perfect ease."

"Then you are ready to look for a job?" "Er—yes, or I will be just as soon as I've learned to read my notes"—Chicago Tribune.

Paradox. "It's what's a paradox?" "It is when the impossible happens." "Then we had a paradox here this evening. Ma said you couldn't possibly be expected home before midnight because you had an excuse for staying downtown."—Pittsburgh Post.

Envoisgement. "I'm a little bit, that's the best game o' govt I've ever played. Sarcasitic and Overburdened Candy-Dinna let that discourage ye.—World of Getz.

For the Children

A Pillar of Rock Carved by Nature.



Fifteen miles south of Lexington, Ky., on the banks of the Kentucky river, stands "Chimney rock." It is on a bank that extends almost perpendicularly downward for 200 feet to the water and upward from the rock for nearly 100 feet more. The height of the rock is about seventy-five feet. The distance through the base is only about six feet, but at many points above the diameter is much greater. Why the air and water acted upon this limestone cliff to form a figure in just this shape is not easy to discover, but it is probable that the top is of a harder substance than the surrounding rock and has thus formed a kind of umbrella-like protection against the rains. Geologists have computed the age to be about 45,000 years, so that this rock may be much the same as it was ages ago. One can see at a glance that with a comparatively slight tremor of the earth this huge structure would topple over. For this reason we have here nature's record of the absence of earthquakes in that region for many ages past.—St. Nicholas.

Christmas Tree Decorations. A number of pretty decorations may be made for the Christmas tree quite as attractive and much cheaper than they can be bought. A very effective drape for the tree is made by cutting long strips about four inches wide of tissue paper then cutting it closely nearly across the width, making fringes. If the strips then be dampened and held over a hot stove the fringed edges will curl and make it quite ornamental. Strings of popcorn and cranberries are also much used for drape as well as chains of gold and silver paper unrolled and chains made of little interwined rings of bright colored glazed paper. Nuts wrapped in tin foil or gold paper and empty eggshells adorned with decorative pictures make pretty ornaments.

Christmas Colors. Holly and mistletoe are the historic Christmas foliage, and they have established the colors for holiday decoration—green, white and red. Boughs and chains of cedar gracefully festooned over cornices are very generally used, and ground pine is very effective when it only can be obtained. When holly berries for brightening up the green trimmings are not procurable a good substitute is "rustic coral." Melt two drams of vermillion in an ounce of rosin and paint the mixture over some pretty large twigs; hold them over a hot fire, turning them around until the varnish gets smooth, and you have an excellent substitute for the red berries.

Voila's Explanation. Little Viola wished a very large doll last Christmas, but as it was quite expensive she was given a smaller one. Playing contentedly with it on Christmas day, she suddenly stopped and said: "Mamma, I know why I didn't get that big doll."

"Why?" asked mamma. "Cause our chimney's too little. Santa Claus couldn't bring the big one down. I wish he had known the way to our front door."

Catandrama. What is the difference between a funny fellow and a butcher? One deals out wit, the other wit-ties (victim).

The Wonderful Tree. There is a tree so wonderful it springs up in a day. When all the earth is chill with frost and summer's far away, for brighter than the rainbow shines this rare and wondrous tree. With silver wreaths and golden vines that glister far and free. And secrets hang upon its boughs in wrappings gay and smart. You gaze at them with wistful eyes and longing, beating heart.

As in the light of tears bright the trees in all shades. Ah, now you smile, and I suspect you've found out its name! But can you tell who planted it? To blossom, was a year. And bring to children every where the world's first tree? 'Twas the Christ child so meek and mild, who, in a manger born, then spoke his love to little folk on every Christmas morn.—Teeth's Companion.

The Man That Figured

By M. QUAD

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It was a May day when the man that gave his name as Esquiel Harper arrived in the village of Oakville, and told the landlord of the tavern that he wanted rest and might stay for a couple of months. At the end of three weeks the village constable, the justice of the peace, the leading merchant and others had a meeting at which it was resolved that a stranger that wouldn't tell his name about himself was probably hiding from the law. This resolution was handed to Mr. Harper by the constable, and after reading it two or three times the newcomer carelessly said: "I kinder want a rest and I kinder want to figger something out."

"But we don't like it. We don't like it," announced the man of the law. "Well, I dunno what you are going to do about it."

Neither did the constable nor anybody else. Mr. Harper paid his board every Saturday night in good and lawful money, and if he was a fugitive from justice he didn't do any skulking. Soon after he had been told what the public thought of him he bought a tape line at one of the stores. Of course the clerk that sold it to him asked him what he was going to do with it, but Mr. Harper refused to give out any information whatever. This nearly resulted in another public meeting. It was for the fact that the man was measuring the distance from the schoolhouse to the bridge the meeting would have been held and at least three different resolutions adopted.

And the next day Mr. Harper measured the distance between the tavern and a mudhole a hundred feet away. A day elapsed. It was spent by Mr. Harper in figuring, and he took great care that his figures should not be seen by other Deacon Smythes. Deacon Smythes had great good luck in pursuing strangers, and he was called upon to exercise his talents on the man of mystery. He took a seat beside him on the tavern veranda and began: "Mr. Harper, this town of Oakville is inhabited by plain people."

"Y-es."

"We have nothing to conceal."

"No."

"Then I shall expect you to answer a few questions concerning yourself. Where do you come from?"

"I believe they call the place Hades row, but that hasn't changed the temperature any."

"Sir! Sir! This to me!" shouted Deacon Smythes.

"Please don't bother me—I want to figger."

When it became known how Deacon Smythes had been turned down that second public meeting was held. The resolutions were bold and red hot. The landlord must give Mr. Harper notice to quit. He must also make oath as to what suspicious things he had observed. Mr. Harper must tell why he came to Oakville instead of stopping at Mount Ivy. He must also make a clear report of the tape line and measuring affair. If not—But he was. The committee named proceeded to the hotel and reached the place just as Mr. Harper returned from measuring the distance between the cooper shop and the frog pond.

"Sir!" said the undertaker, who was chairman by virtue of having the deepest voice. "We must know all about you or there will be consequences. For one thing the landlord will turn you out."

"Then he'll get a suit for damages!" was the reply.

"But, sir, it is a consensus of opinion that you are a—"

"Suspicious character?"

"Y-es—ah—yes. Y-es, sir, that is it."

"Thanks. Tomorrow I will begin suit against each and every one of you."

That shot told. The committee left, and the landlord had nothing to say, and for three days men shivered when they thought of damage suits. Then Mr. Harper packed his trunk and left. In leaving he placed a written explanation in the landlord's hands to be read to all interested parties. It read as follows: "The distance from the schoolhouse to the bridge is just 200 feet and 7 inches. What I was figuring on was the distance it would be if about forty old coakers and laxybones in this town had to let whisky alone and go to work."

"The distance between the tavern and the mudhole down the street, which is just a mudhole for forty years, is just ninety-seven feet and four and a half inches. I was figuring on how a shovelful of that mud could get into the coffeepot—every morning at breakfast."

"The distance between the cooper shop and the frog pond is exactly 234 feet and 1 inch. What I was figuring on was how much less it would be if all the billfogs came ashore and helped the people of the town to poke their noses into knotholes to try to find out other people's business."

"I was going to measure the distance between Squire Hampton's spotted dog and Deacon Smythes's onion bed, but not wishing the community to suffer agony I have determined to take my departure."

The above explanations went from man to man and from house to house, and every man and woman was wiser enough to say: "There, didn't I tell you he was all right, but you were just idiot enough to differ with me?"