

A Mountain Elopement

By HELEN HARWOOD

There are no mountains in the world as yet which there is so much in song and story as the Alps. Doubtless the reason for this is that they lie in the center of Europe and no one can go from France or Germany down into Italy or farther eastward to Austria without passing over them.

Years ago, before the Alps had come to contain fashionable resorts, there lived at Como, on their southern slope, a gentleman who, having made a fortune in Milan, retired to spend his days in peace on the beautiful Lake Como. He was a widower with one daughter, a charming girl, upon whom he doted. Italians have always arranged the marriages for their sons and daughters, and Signor Attanasio betrothed his daughter, Theresa, to a man more than double her age. Knowing that at his death she would need a protector and considering Signor Attanasio a man of business who would take care of her property for her, he considered that he had done a very good thing for his child.

But, unfortunately for his plan, he died before the marriage could be brought about. After the funeral Rizzuto claimed his bride, who was also his ward, but found, to his disappointment, that she had a lover in the person of Giovanni Esbronni. Rizzuto was not minded to give her up to his young rival and so informed her. Having certain powers over her as her guardian, Theresa and her lover saw that she refused to marry the man to whom her father had given her. He might put her in confinement and persecute her till she consented to be his wife.

The lovers therefore decided to go away together Southward, eastward and westward by Italian territory, the which the guardian could invoke the law. Northward was Switzerland, in which he would have no claim upon her. But to go northward meant to cross the Alps, and that at that time was a difficult and dangerous feat to accomplish. Nevertheless, taking the horses and carriage that had belonged to Signor Attanasio, Giuseppi, the coachman, and Elena, the waitress, both of whom would give their lives for their mistress, they started to go as far as wheels would take them and then endeavor, if they could not find sledges, to pursue their journey on foot.

They set out after they were supposed to be in bed, and Rizzuto did not learn of their departure till morning. Being a very energetic man and spurred to the probable loss of his ward's fortune, he started in pursuit, having learned the direction the fugitives had taken. It was in the latter part of May, and he knew that this being the season of melting snow, was the most dangerous period in the Alps. However, he did not believe that the lovers could go very far in a carriage or that they could secure any further conveyances. Besides, it would be an easy matter to track them by the marks they would leave in the snow.

The lovers reached Locarno, a village on Lake Maggiore, then drove over a gently rising road to the foot of the St. Gotthard pass. On this road they traveled all day and in the evening left it for concealment in a Swiss cabin. Early in the morning they started to go over the pass, leaving the carriage, but taking the horses, on one of which Theresa rode, while the maid rode the other, the men walking. After making a part of the ascent they saw the guardian's carriage coming rapidly up the valley through which they had passed.

They tolled on as rapidly as possible till they came to a point where they were screened from below and where there was a pocket in the mountain. The wind had driven the snow from here, enabling Giovanni to practice a stratagem. He sent the coachman and the maid with the horses on through the pass, while he and Theresa turned into the pocket, which led into the pass again farther on. Rizzuto, reaching this diverging point, hesitated, then went on through the pass, taking up the tracks left by the coachman and the maid.

It was several hours after this that Giovanni and Theresa reached an eminence where they could look over a narrow gorge upon the road on the other side. On this road they saw Rizzuto's carriage. He saw them and called on his driver to stop and, getting out of the carriage, called over to the fugitives to give themselves up since they could not escape him.

He was on a road that had been cut through the side of a mountain, which extended above him thousands of feet. It was one of those balmy days in spring when the air is laden with moisture, though the sun shines bright and warm—just such a day as Alpine dwellers fear the avalanche. Though Rizzuto was half a mile distant as if he were close to them, just as he pronounced the words "can't escape me," Giovanni and Theresa saw the whole side of the mountain opposite seem to slide slowly downward. It gathered rapidly as it sank, and in a few moments they saw it pass over Rizzuto and his party, burying them a hundred feet deep. The snow had been so evenly balanced that it required only the sound of a voice to vibrate the air sufficiently to bring it down.

The lovers retraced their steps and were married at the bride's home.

LAYING OUT A ROAD.

Billings Was in No Hurry, So the Work Was Done Right.

A good many years ago C. K. G. Billings, who made his millions in Chicago gas, bought a good sized plot of ground on the heights overlooking the Hudson river at the upper end of Manhattan island. Some time later he put up a house which still remains the pride of "seeing New York" guides.

When the land had been bought the question arose as to the best means of laying out a roadway up the steep and rocky hill, at the crest of which the house was to stand. Mr. Billings was puzzled. He wanted to make it as easy a climb as he could. He mentioned the problem to his friend W. C. Muschenheim, a New York hotel proprietor. Mr. Muschenheim, who was familiar with the hills and dales of that part of New York, gave the following advice:

"You aren't in any great hurry, so why don't you have it done right? Put one of your cows on that land and give her time to lay out a path up that hill. Trust her to find the easiest and most comfortable grade."

Mr. Billings followed the suggestion, and in the course of time the cow made a path which has long since been developed into a permanent, winding, slowly ascending roadway.—Saturday Evening Post.

BIRTH OF A LETTER.

The Way "W" Came to Take the Place of the Old "VVV."

The printers and language makers of the latter part of the sixteenth century began to recognize the fact that there was a sound in spoken English which was without a representative in the shape of an alphabetical sign or character, as in the first sound in the word "wet."

Prior to that time it had always been spelled as "vet," the v having the long sound of u or of two u's together. In order to convey an idea of the new sound they began to spell such words as "wet," "weather," "web," etc., with two u's, and as the u of that date was a typical v the three words above looked like this: "Vvef," "vveather," "vveh."

After while the typesetters recognized the fact that the double u had come to stay, so they joined the two u's together and made the character now so well known as w. There are books in which three forms of the w are given. The first is an old double v (vv), the next is one in which the last stroke of the first v crosses the first stroke of the second, and the third is the common w we use today.

Real Literary Crumbs.

The librarian opened the book wide and shook it hard.

"Looking for possible love letters and mementos?" a visitor asked.

"No, breadcrumbs," said the librarian. "Subsequent readers do not mind love letters, but they do object to breadcrumbs. Half the books brought back have crumbs tucked away between the leaves. That shows what a studious town we are. Our people are so enamored of literature that they can't stop reading long enough to eat; also it shows what a lonely town we are. Only people who live alone a great deal read anything except the newspaper at mealtimes. And it shows what a slovenly town we are. In the interests of hygiene and aesthetics those voracious readers who cram their heads and their stomachs at the same time ought to clean their books of crumbs, but they never do."—New York Press.

Hindu Casts.

The four grades of society among the Hindus are the Brahmana or sacerdotal class, who are said at the moment of creation to have issued from the mouth of Brahma; the Kshatriya or Chutties or military class, sprung from the arm of Brahma; the Vaisya or Bala or mercantile class, from the thigh of Brahma, and Sudras or Sooders or servile class, from the foot of Brahma. The business of the Sudras is to serve the three superior classes, more especially the Brahmana. Their condition is never to be improved. They are not to accumulate property and are unable by any means to approach the dignity of the higher classes. These divisions are hereditary, impassable and indefinite.

Precedent For "Governess."

Albert VII, archduke of Austria, married Isabella Clara Eugenia, infant of Spain, who brought to him as dowry the sovereignty of the Low Countries, etc. When Philip IV, of Spain ascended the throne in 1621 he took from his aunt the sovereignty of the Low Countries, but left her the title of governess. Her husband died soon after, whereon she took the veil, though still retaining the reins of government. She died at Brussels in 1633, aged sixty-six. Here there is precedent for the use of the word governess when a lady holds the post.—London Notes and Queries.

Franklin on Long Grasses.

Ben Franklin found the long grasses used by his father before and after wheat very tedious. One day after the winter's provision had been salted he said, "I think, father, if you were to say grace over the whole cask once for all it would be a great saving of time."—Life.

No Danger.

Blobs—I heard Tightwad boasting today that he had money to burn. Blobs—Well, I wouldn't be in any hurry to call out the fire department if it were you.—Philadelphia Record.

To be overpolite is to be rude.—Japanese Proverb.

CAUGHT A TARTAR

By ARNOLD DUNCAN

A man in a pepper and salt suit and a felt hat got on a train at a way station, settled himself comfortably in his seat, took a morning paper from his pocket and began to read. When the conductor came around for his ticket he thrust his hand into his pocket for his wallet and looked very much chagrined. Then he went through his other pockets, and, not finding it, he said:

"Conductor, just before leaving my hotel this morning I changed my suit, putting the one I had been wearing with my money in the coat pocket in my trunk. What's worse, my trunk did not reach me at the station and is to come by a later train. If you'll let me go through to B, when we get into the station I'll telephone for a friend to bring me my fare and will give it to you."

"Ticket," was the conductor's laconic reply.

"I have said all I have to say," continued the passenger. "I have no money to pay now, but I'll have plenty at the end of the route."

"You'll have to pay your fare or get off."

"Not here, I trust, in this swampy country. You will at least carry me to the next station."

"Not unless you pay your fare from the one where you got on."

"Are your orders such as warrant you in such inhuman action?"

"Our orders are to put those who refuse to pay fares off the train."

"Well," said the passenger ruefully, "you'll have to put me off. I've left my money behind and have nothing to pay with."

The conductor pulled the bell, and the train stopped. The passenger made no resistance, but walked to the platform and got off into a swamp. The train went on, leaving him standing on the track looking after it. Then, first looking up and down the line of the road, he started on foot to pursue his journey.

A few days later the passenger who couldn't pay his fare went into the office of the road and asked to see the general superintendent. He waited half an hour, then was ushered into the room of a sleek looking man who asked him what he could do for him. He told the story of being put off the train and said he had come to effect a settlement for damages or be would sue for them. The superintendent said that if he would call in at room No. 7 he would find the official who adjusted all claims. The passenger went in there, had a talk with the claim officer, who got out of him all the information he desired, asked him what he would settle for, got him to put it in writing, took his address and said he would write him about the matter.

The passenger never heard from him. Not long after this it was evident that there was manipulation in the stock of the road. No one, not even the president, could find out who was at the bottom of it. The price of the securities would go up a bit, then gradually would then rise again. But the general tendency was upward. The affairs of the road were known only to a few, who could see no reason for an advance. Indeed, business was falling off dreadfully. Two feeders, one at either terminal, were diverting their business to other roads. Then the price of the stock began to go down like lead. Finally it reached a point where the fluctuation ceased.

The president of the road communicated with the feeders, asking what had caused them to divert their business from his line to others. He received no satisfaction. Nevertheless the diversion ceased and trade began to flow again over the line where it had flowed originally. The president was puzzled. He sent for some of the principal stockholders and asked them if they knew anything about the matter. They didn't, but admitted that during the recent flurry in the stock they had sold most of their holdings.

One morning the president took up a newspaper and read in the financial columns that a new railroad magnate had appeared. John Talcott, a man who had achieved some success at re-organizing roads in the west, had come east and with associates had bought a controlling interest in two lines, and it was suspected that he had picked up in open market a majority of the stock of a connecting link between the two. That connecting link the president knew to be his own line.

That morning, when he went to his office, he found a note from the new railroad star inviting the president to call upon him. He did so and found the party so busy that he was obliged to wait an hour before he could gain admittance. When admitted he saw a plain western man, who said to him in a plain western fashion:

"Next month occurs the annual election of directors of your road. Two-thirds of the stock belongs to me and my friends. I have sent for you to give you notice that neither your servants nor those of your principal officers will be needed for the ensuing year. If you will inquire of your official in charge of claims you will find my name there as one who offered to settle damages for being put off one of your trains for a few hundred dollars."

"Had I known," said the president, "I would have—"

"But you did not know. I was one of those defenseless creatures—the passenger."

FIRE DANGER AT SEA.

How Flames Can Sweep the Inside of Even a Metal Ship.

The danger from fire on a transatlantic liner is more serious than is generally believed. It is much greater than the danger from collision and is becoming more and more dangerous with the increased outlay upon luxury and display. The main structure of the ship and most of its essential parts are of metal, but many of the fittings, nearly every feature of ornament and every trapping of luxury, are highly inflammable.

No one who has not been aboard the Spanish wrecks at Santiago can conceive how fire can sweep the inside of even a metal ship. Admiral Cervera described to me the experience on board the Teresa in these words: "The second shot that came on board set us on fire. The fire main was damaged. Soon we were unable to cope with the fire. It swept through her from bow to stern. There was not a space as big as the palm of your hand where life could have been sustained. An insect could not have lived on board. We had to get overboard or be burned." It is true the Spaniards had not cut out their woodwork and thrown aboard all unnecessary inflammables, as we had in the American fleet, but the inflammability of one of their warships was much less than that of a luxurious ocean liner.—Captain Richmond Pearson Hobson in Engineering Magazine.

PINEAPPLE PLANTS.

They Do Not Die After Fruiting, but Reproduce Themselves.

Pineapples do not grow on trees. Imagine a plant four feet in extreme height from the ground to the tip of leaves, a single stalk at the surface, but dividing at once into swordlike blades or leaves, fifteen in number, from the center of which appears a stiff, upright stem, at the top of which is the fruit. This stem is short, and the crown of the fruit when fully grown is a foot or more below the points of the leaves.

At the end of a year and a half from planting each plant produces a single fruit, even as a cabbage plant produces a single head. But the pineapple does not die after fruiting once. Down on the stem below the fruit and among the long, narrow leaves a sucker appears. If allowed to remain this will soon become the head of the plant, and within another year it will yield another fruit. This process may go on for a term of years. In the meantime, however, other suckers will make their appearance.

These are broken off, and when stuck into the ground they put out roots and become other plants. Thus a single pineapple plant may produce a dozen or more others while it is yielding fruit from year to year.

The Intruder.

A certain boat coming up the Mississippi one day during a flood lost her way and bumped up against a frame house. She hadn't more than touched it before an old dark rascal rammed his head up through a hole in the roof, where the chimney once came out, and yelled at the captain on the roof. "What's your gwine wid dat boat? Can't you see nothin'?" First thing you knows you gwine to turn dis house ober, spill de old woman an' de children into de flood an' drown 'em. What you doin' out here in de country wid your boat, anyhow? Go on back yander froo de co'nfilds an' get back into de ribber whar you b'longs. Ain't got no business serv' miles out in de country foilin' roon' people's houses nohow." And the boat backed out.—Life.

The Largest Described Snake.

Speke in his narrative of the journey to the source of the Nile describes the largest snake that has ever been seen by man. "I shuddered," he says, "as I looked upon the effects of his tremendous dying strength. For yards around where he lay grass, bushes and saplings—in fact, everything except full grown trees—were cut clean off, as if they had been trimmed with an immense scythe. The monster when measured was fifty-one feet two and one half inches in extreme length, while around the thickest portions of its body the girth was nearly three feet."

Looking Ahead.

It was the first sight of a new play. "I say," remarked the author to the manager, "that scene after other there is a most peculiar looking fellow." "Yes, he's an Eskimo," said the manager. "An Eskimo! What on earth made you take him on?" "Oh, I thought it would be a comfort to see one happy face if the play turns out to be a frost!"

Cases in Point.

Rivers—Brooks, that's the second time I've heard you use the phrase 'aching void.' I wish you would tell me how a void can ache.

Brooks—Well, not to speak of a hollow tooth, don't you sometimes have a headache?—London Telegraph.

In the Mountains.

"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.—John Muir.

Punishment For Whom?

Boss Barber—What? You have cut the gentleman four times? Well, just for punishment you must shave him all over again right away!—Flagrant Blatter.

HOW TO WIN A GIRL

By EMERY R. TALBOT

"Kent," said Edgar Wharton, "I wish you would tell me how to win a girl. You have lots of luck with girls and everybody says it's because you know how to treat them."

"Oh, it's easy enough if you know how to do it," said Kent Martin.

"There is, a girl I'm sweet on, and if you put me on how to do the trick, I don't mind telling you that—in confidence, of course—she's Maggie Selfridge."

Kent Martin restrained an expression of surprise that came very near breaking forth of its own accord and said:

"Maggie Selfridge, eh? Maggie is a nice girl. Has she given you any encouragement?"

"There's the trouble. I know so little about girls that I don't know whether the way she treats me means anything or not."

"They are queer creatures and no mistake. Well, I'll give you a pointer on Maggie. She is one of the kind that need to be handled without gloves occasionally. You might get into a bit of a wrangle about something. She is very positive in her opinions, and you must be just as positive as she and let her understand that she's got to back down."

"I shouldn't think that would make her love me."

"Not that alone, but the making up. Besides, a girl doesn't care for the man she can wind around her finger. She wants to be managed with a curb bit, spurs and a riding whip."

After this homily on the art of love Wharton proceeded to put it into practice. The first time he went to see Maggie she got into an argument as to whether the world was getting better or getting worse.

"I think it's getting better," said Maggie.

"It is getting worse," said Wharton in a tone indicating that his statement was not to be disputed.

Maggie looked up at him, surprised. "Why do you say that?" she asked.

"You wouldn't understand me if I told you. Women don't know anything about logical sequences."

"Oh, they don't?"

"I never knew one that did."

"I will convince you that I do. I will give you a categorical syllogism. You tell me that I am not logical in a very rude fashion. I tell you that without an apology I don't care for any further acquaintance with you. These are the premises. The resultant is a separation between us."

Wharton smiled. "That's what you call logic, is it?" he said contemptuously.

"The conclusion is fact," she replied, "and, rising, swept out of the room, leaving the young man master of the field."

But how was the other part of the matter to be brought about—the making up? He hadn't thought of that and sought his coacher.

Martin listened to his account of the affair and at the end said that he had made a good beginning; all he had to do was to follow it up properly. "You don't want to pay any more attention to her," he said, "till she shows signs of weakening. You can tell me just how she treats you from this on, and when I see anything that looks like a desire for a makeup I'll explain it to you. You wouldn't recognize it your self."

"Why not?"

"Because it's more likely to be a display of bitterness than a direct expression of repentance."

"I see."

But weeks passed, and there was nothing for Wharton to report to his coach. When the former met Miss Selfridge she spoke to him but coolly and did not make the slightest advance toward a reconciliation. But one day he was surprised to receive a note asking him to come and see her. Somehow he had lost confidence in Martin's theories as to how to win a woman and did not believe from the tone in which the note was written that it was for the purpose of drawing him back into the fold of her friendship. In fact, he was ready to eat humble pie.

"I never supposed," she said to him, "that I should like as big a fool as you."

Wharton stood speechless.

"I only got at the bottom of your behavior yesterday." Kent Martin told his sister; her sister told Ethel Jones, and Ethel told me.

"W-w-what did she tell you?"

"That Kent was instructing you how to make love."

Wharton stood the picture of embarrassment. His face was as red as a boiled lobster.

"Do you know what Kent did the other evening?"

"No. What?"

"Had he not taken this mean advantage of you I would not tell you. He proposed to me."

"The deuce he did!"

"Meanwhile he was telling you what to do to effect a breach between us. If you wanted me why didn't you tell me instead of him?"

"I didn't know."

"Your stupidity is the most attractive thing about you. But when you have occasion to call me that!"

CATS AS THEY FALL.

They Can Land on Their Feet No Matter How They Drop.

It is a common saying that if a cat is dropped in any way whatever it will always alight on its feet. Since a man cannot lift himself by his boot straps or a boat cannot propel itself through the water except by pressing against the water in some way one may well wonder whether this is not one of the common sayings which are fallacious. The general principles involved are of such interest that the question was taken up a few years ago for consideration at a session of a French scientific society.

It is a fact that it is dynamically possible for a cat to turn over, no matter how dropped, and experiments have shown that they actually do it. If a balloonist or air man should fall from a great height and should fall that he were descending so as to strike on his head he could turn himself over so as to strike upon his feet if he knew the proper means of accomplishing it. But the distance he would have to fall in order to have time to turn over would be so great that he could have only an academic interest in striking on his feet rather than on his head. For the final result to him would be the same in either case.—Popular Mechanics Magazine.

A GENEROUS BANDIT.

The Double Action Trick That Was Turned by Cartouche.

Old time bandits were much more attractive than those of today. There is nothing chivalrous about the automobile robbers of America and France, as there was about such men as Cartouche. Here is an anecdote of which Cartouche was the hero:

One evening he was crossing the Pont Neuf, in Paris, when he saw a poor wretch about to leap over the parapet into the Seine. The brigand stopped him and asked why he wanted to bid adieu to life. The would-be suicide informed him that he was on the point of bankruptcy and that he preferred facing death to facing his creditors.

Cartouche was touched and told the man to call his creditors together on the morrow and they should be paid in full.

The creditors assembled. Cartouche went over their accounts, paid them all, got their receipts and said goodby to his grateful beneficiary.

It is almost needless to add that when the creditors left Cartouche met them and relieved them of all he had given.—Exchange.

Legend of the Sunken Bells.

Somewhere beneath the soil of Sussex, England, there lies a peal of bells, while in the church near by a solitary bell calls to prayer. In the middle ages, it is said, a certain valiant knight wished to present to the church a peal of bells that should be of use and perpetuate his memory as well, but the vessel that brought them careened on approaching the harbor, and the bells fell out and sank into the mud. Thereupon the donor declared: "Never shall the church have a chime until that peal I give it be dragged from the sea by a team of four milk white oxen."

The oxen seem to have been difficult to obtain. At any rate, the fact remains that to this day the edifice to which the pious knight made his benefaction has never possessed more than a single bell.

The Wild Horse.

The wild horse, which until recent years was comparatively plentiful in the southwest and west, was the offspring of the horses introduced into the western continent by the Spaniards. When Pizarro and Cortes invaded Peru and Mexico they took with them the horses (the first ever known in the new world) from which sprang the droves of mustangs and broncos that used to roam in unfettered freedom over the plains of Texas, California and New Mexico and the wide pampas of South America. Some of the wild horses were of good size and very beautiful, but most of them, owing probably to lack of proper breeding, were of the pony variety.—New York American.

Bow Legged Men.

Do not revile the bow legged man, for he plays an important part in the world. It is estimated that 40 per cent of mankind are bow legged, so numerically this class is entitled to great respect. Bow legs invariably accompany a robust physique. We find them one of the conspicuous features of athletes. Comedians are almost always bow legged. Of the bow legged geniuses to which humanity points with pride the most illustrious examples are Caesar, Horace, Napoleon, Wellington, Schopenhauer and Cavour, the celebrated Italian statesman.—London Answers.

Where Did They Put It?

Yes!—When they do housecleaning at home I have the greatest trouble in finding anything. Crimsoak—Me too. They cleaned house at my place the other day, and when I got home, do you know, I couldn't find the key-hole for the longest time.—Yonkers Statesman.

The Difference.

"Who is the more contented—a man with a million dollars or a man with six daughters?"

"The man with six daughters. The man with the million wants more."

The arrows of sarcasm are barbed with contempt. It is this spite in the nature of the thing that galls and wounds.—W. Chesnut.