

Her Decision

By BEATRICE STURDEVANT

When Farmer Merion died his wife had been dead several years—his daughter Lucy was seventeen years old. Every one said what a pity it was that she didn't have a lover so that she could be married and thus be provided for. She did have a lover, but he had gone away, no one knew nor cared where, for he was a wanderer, and the old girl, worthless but he was near factotum. It was the express wish of Lucy's age and the only one who had made love to her. That he was her only lover is not remarkable, for she had almost too young to have one. And indeed he did fulfill the inexperienced as she was her heart all of the dead for before the end of went out to him, and when he departed there was no one of us able to bite his he took it with him.

But Providence at the time Lucy was left an orphan raised up a friend in her Stephen Woodbridge, a neighbor that five years old tried a woman to go into the Merion home and remain there with Lucy until she could form a plan for her future. Stephen did more than this. He had her father's farm appraised by several good men in the neighborhood and bought it at a larger price than the appraisement, but even with this help Lucy was left with nothing, because her father had died heavily in debt.

What was the poor child to do? A friend of Stephen's said to him one day, "Why don't you marry her? You are alone in the world and she needs to be provided for." A great joy at the mere suggestion welled up in Stephen's heart. "I'm too old for her," he replied. But, though he knew this, he did not act upon it. He went to Lucy and told her that if she could be satisfied to be his wife her problem would be solved.

Lucy had been thinking a great deal during her trouble about James Tucker, her lover and wished he were there that he might help her. But he was not there, and she had no expectation of his coming. So she accepted Stephen Woodbridge's proposition. Stephen had his doubts about the arrangement, realizing that she was barely out of childhood and fearing that she would not be happy with one who to her must seem an old man. He deferred the wedding for some time, leaving Lucy and the woman he had provided for her in the house where she had always lived.

It was nearly a year after her father's death before a day was set for the wedding. Stephen was very happy, for Lucy to all outward appearances seemed at least not averse to the marriage. Stephen provided funds for a wedding outfit and made improvements in his house preparatory to the reception of his bride.

But a few days before the wedding all these plans were upset by the appearance of James Tucker. Finding his sweetheart about to marry another, he reproached her. This situation caused her such unhappiness that she could not help showing it. Stephen knew that Tucker had returned and was informed that he had been devoted to Lucy his informant adding that it would be well for Stephen to look out for the younger man. This was said not only for Stephen's sake, but for Lucy's since Tucker's worthlessness was well known.

But Woodbridge, far from looking out for Tucker, went to Lucy and told her that he was ready to give her up. Lucy seemed much distressed, but made no reply. "If Jim has nothing with which to support you," added Stephen, "you have means of your own, for since I bought your farm a railroad has been projected to run close beside it and it is now worth double what I paid you for it. This excess I will return to you."

Still Lucy remained silent and Stephen went on. "Everything having been provided for a wedding it may as well take place with a chance of success. Unless you wish to do the contrary I will give orders to that effect. If I hear from you during today I will send my offer accepted."

He left her in great perplexity. That afternoon Tucker came to see her to say good-bye, he said. When he went away he had received permission to go to Woodbridge and tell him that his proposition to Lucy had been accepted. It was a great blow to Woodbridge, but he bore it manfully and set about completing the arrangements for a wedding at which he was to have been the groom, but was now to be replaced by one whose age was more in keeping with that of the bride.

The evening before the wedding was to take place Stephen sat down in his lonely home before a fireplace, threw on some logs and gave himself up to despondency. He had met with the disappointment of his life. At that same hour the next evening the girl who was to have been his wife to be wedded to another.

When he was sitting there Lucy was trying on the wedding dress that he had provided, to see that all was right. She stood looking at her reflection in a mirror but she was not thinking of her apparel. Suddenly a resolution came to her. Skimming down a staircase, she left the house and ten minutes later opened the door of the room where Stephen Woodbridge sat and, kneeling beside him, threw her arms about him.

An hour later Lucy in her home was married to Stephen Woodbridge, after all, the man of her choice. Her course may not have been admirable, but it was human. Moreover, it is to be remembered that she was half child, half woman.

Filled Them All Full.

Old Lord Forgiven, the Scotch Judge, died in 1727. Dr. Clerk, who attended his lordship to the last, calling on his patient the day he died was admitted by the Judge's old servant and clerk David Reed. "How does my lord do?" inquired the doctor. "I hope he's well," responded the old man, whose voice and manner at once explained his meaning. With tears streaming down his face he conducted Dr. Clerk into a room where there were two dozen bottles of wine underneath the table. Other gentlemen presently arrived and having partaken of a glass of wine, they all rose to depart. "No where, for he was a wanderer, and the old girl, worthless but he was near factotum. It was the express wish of Lucy's age and the only one who had made love to her. That he was her only lover is not remarkable, for she had almost too young to have one. And indeed he did fulfill the inexperienced as she was her heart all of the dead for before the end of went out to him, and when he departed there was no one of us able to bite his he took it with him."

The Salty Atlantic.

Some odd disparities have been found to exist in the saltness of the sea water in different oceans and bays. For a number of these a vessel was in his book. "Eber den Salzgehalt des Meeres, presents ingenious explanations. The Atlantic ocean is known to be about one-sixtieth more saline than the Pacific and two-sixtieth more so than the Indian ocean. This is in spite of the fact that it receives considerably more fresh water drainage in proportion to its extent as a parent anomaly. But points out the scientist, the Atlantic itself supplies are alone in the world and she needs to be provided for." A great joy at the mere suggestion welled up in Stephen's heart. "I'm too old for her," he replied. But, though he knew this, he did not act upon it. He went to Lucy and told her that if she could be satisfied to be his wife her problem would be solved.

A Problem at Cambridge.

When Lord Rayleigh the British scientist, was a student at Cambridge, the examiners set among other problems one which they based on an article in a German mathematical periodical supposed unlikely to have penetrated to Cambridge. One two men solved it, Mr. Sturt (Lord Rayleigh) and another. The examiners asked the other man about this problem. "Oh," he said, "I took the (mentioning the name of the periodical) and I was very glad to find that, thanks to an article in the last number that problem came out quite easily. When Mr. Sturt's turn came they expected a similar answer, but he astonished them by replying, 'The fact is gentlemen that I sometimes contribute to and I could not help feeling greatly flattered that you should have thought my little problem worthy of a place in this examination.' He was awarded the prize."

A Stump in Kisses.

A Frenchman who apparently has a good deal of time on his hands has been amusing himself by reckoning up the number of kisses he has given his wife during the last twenty years of his married life. He finds that in the first year he dispensed about a hundred kisses a day, or, say, allowing for birthdays and holidays about 36,700 in the year. In the second year this number was reduced by half and in the third year his better half had to be content with two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. What happened after the fifth year is wrapped in mystery, but at the same rate of "progression" he probably arrived eventually at one kiss on the 1st of January every year.

"Counselor Therefore."

Sergeant Kelly a celebrity of the Irish bar had a remarkable habit of drawing conclusions directly at variance with his premises and was consequently nicknamed "counselor therefore." On one occasion he thus addressed the jury: "The case is so clear gentlemen, that you cannot possibly misunderstand it and I should like your understandings a very poor opinion if I dwell upon it for an hour or more. Therefore I shall at once proceed to explain it to you as minutely as possible."

Great Combination.

Sutor—I cannot boast of wealth, but I have brains. The member of my literary club will tell you that you'd have the smartest debater in town for a son in law. Father—And I can assure you, my dear fellow that you'd have the greatest lecturer in the town for a mother in law.

A Practical Reason.

"I wish this fellow wouldn't send you so many chocolates," said the other suitor. "Why are you so?" "Are you jealous?" "No, but I prefer to eat mar-mar-mar Iowa."—Kansas City Journal.

Travel.

All travel has its advantages. If the passenger visits better countries he may learn to improve his own, and if fortune carries him to worse he may learn to enjoy his own.—Johnson.

In the Swiss Mountains.

"Ethel, that awfully handsome girl, kissed me a moment ago. Do you think I ought to deduct something from his pay or add to it?"—Fleegs Blatter.

God rights the man that keeps silence.—From the Persian.

A Cabman's Experience

By EDWIN BRINSLEY

John Burns, taxicab driver was sitting behind the steering wheel of his vehicle on one of the principal streets of New York. It was nearly midnight and a fine sleet was falling about him. But John Burns was far more interested in catching a nap than in looking upon the marvelous electric display. But soon he heard his car door open and shut and a man's voice say: "Wake up."

John Burns turned and looked through the glass behind him upon the features of a very old man. The only part of his apparel that was not covered by his cloak was his hat, which struck the cabman as something remarkable. It was what is called a "crown" with a large curled brim and covered with a short fur. The hanging electric displays lighted the wear on his face showing a combination of old and young but there was an evil twinkle in the eye.

"Northward," said the passenger. "On what street?" "The Bloomingdale road." "The what?"

"That one." The speaker pointed to Broadway. "Cabby put on the power and turning at the corner entered that part of Broadway lying north of the first second street and now the first part of upper New York. After reaching a less crowded position of the thoroughfare he asked the old gentleman behind him just where he should take him and received orders to turn into One Hundred and Fourth street. From that time the passenger kept pointing out the way till he pulled up before an old fashioned house situated among modern edifices. The fare opened the car door and supporting himself with a staff, hobbled up the walk to the front door.

From that point John Burns in telling the story appears confused. He does not remember whether the house was lighted or in darkness. He can't say that he saw the old man go into the house. His impression is that there were no lights in the windows and if his face went inside he must have gone right in through the closed door. The only thing John Burns remembers distinctly is that the wind blew aside the man's cloak which reached to his ankles and exposed a pair of legs no bigger than those of a skeleton.

However this may be the cabman, who it has been said, was in need of rest soon began to doze in his seat. He was awakened by a blaze of light coming through the doorway of the house before which he was stopping and saw distinctly two persons there. The one was his passenger—the other a lady. The latter was dressed very much in the present mode of high street fashion and—

The man who was bowing himself out doorknocked his feet rowed but bowed very low and soaped excessively with his feet. After a number of such ceremonies which made John Burns wonder he came down the walk turning to throw a kiss to the lady who still stood in the doorway. Then the illumination seemed to go out all of a sudden and the passenger stepped into the cab closed the door and said: "Down the Bloomingdale road."

Having learned that the Bloomingdale road meant Broadway, cabby asked no questions but trotted southward. He received no orders to leave the thoroughfare or to go to any particular place as he drove on past the junction at Broadway and Third Street and then straight southward through what is now lower Broadway.

The life of the city grows pale and less and less pronounced till it becomes the twilight of a great city. It happened as they passed the city hall park a woman with a coat of the same color as the "crown" hat that he saw the passenger get into a cab at the head of Wall street. Burns was directed to turn into Horser street bordering the park and on the south.

"Stop," said the stranger. John Burns drew up to the curb. "I am under obligations to you," said the passenger in a tone that sounded to John Burns very pompous. "You have taken me to call on my wife at her residence and I am now going to pay a visit to a gentleman whom I was reluctantly obliged to punish for some annoying remarks he made about me. Good evening."

With a flourish of the best crown hat in town of a fare the strange man seemed to get up the side of a stone wall through an iron railing and disappeared before with a movement located but a few feet beyond the rail.

Whether John Burns awoke from a dream or was so astonished that he doubted he felt to make it appear as to what he did the next day to get up the matter he is explicit. He mentioned up to the dwelling where he had taken the stranger and asked of one passing who lived there.

"Don't know," was the reply. "That's the Jewel house. She lived in the early part of the last century and married Aaron Burr in his old age."

"Who was Aaron Burr?" "Former vice president of the United States. He killed his political rival in a duel."

From the Jewel house John Burns drove to Trinity church and, entering the churchyard, went to the monument overlooking Rector street. On the stone is cut:

IN MEMORY OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

KING FOR A DAY



The First Thanksgiving Proclamation

It is a mistake to suppose that the annual Thanksgiving proclamation of the president of the United States is always written or dictated by the president. As a matter of fact about all the president has to do with it is to sign his name to it. The actual composition of the Thanksgiving proclamation is the work of a specialist in the state department at

Washington. He endorses, year after year, to express practically the same sentiments in an entirely new way or "at least" without repeating "verbatim" anything that had been said in previous Thanksgiving proclamations. And, as may be readily understood, this task is becoming more difficult with each successive annual call for a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving.

The first Thanksgiving proclamation was submitted but it was finally allowed to stand, as shown in the accompanying reproduction of a portion of the original proclamation.

The proclamation was issued on Jan. 1, 1789, and set apart the following Feb. 19 as a day for thanksgiving and prayer.

Any one who desires to see all the Thanksgiving proclamations issued by presidents of the United States will find them preserved in red leather volumes in the state department. While George Washington originated the custom many of his immediate successors did not follow his example and it was not until Abraham Lincoln became president that the annual Thanksgiving as a November holiday became a regular institution in the United States.

Deeply penetrated with the sentiments of George Washington President of the United States he recommends to all religious teachers and sermons and to all persons whatsoever within the United States to set apart and observe Monday the nineteenth day of February next as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer and on that day.

A Federalist. "I noticed a young man in eastern part of the city that had a good deal of money and a Cleveland man coming. He seemed led to my attention the fact that it takes a dollar at the usual rate of interest more than two years to earn a dime. You can see the effect. Every time I spend a dime I think of that trifling dollar spinning away in the dark somewhere. The dime I spend means more than two years of steady application, and yet I let it go as if it were of too small value to be at all considered. Why, it takes a dollar more than a year to earn 5 cents! Think of that when you slip the next nickel across. It really makes me feel uncomfortable. I wish I hadn't read the stupid thing."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Debt Recognized. "The world owes me a living," shouted the excitable theorist. "Well," replied the serene citizen, "you're alive aren't you?"—Washington Star.

A Wise Child. Governess—Tommy, what is the future of "I diagnose?" Physician's Child—"I operate."—Mim.

Hotel's Own Hearses. Some of the hotel keepers "on the other side" have peculiar ways of advertising their houses, and one of the most singular of these methods is the statement in their advertisements that the hotel is equipped with a hearse! Inasmuch as the American hotel keeper is only looking for "live ones" it is not of record that hearses have been used as attractions in this country as yet. One of the English catering journals, in speaking of this custom, recently said: "We have on several occasions commented upon the unaccountable up of the funeral traffic business with hotel keeping—an unholy combination to be met with in some northern parts of Ireland. Apropos, here is an enticing advertisement from a Sligo paper calculated to bring quite a rush of guests anxious to test the accommodation. 'Mrs. —, proprietress of life — hotel, begs to announce that she has added to her establishment a glass hearse.'"—Steward.

One on the Spy. Rev. Evan Jones of Carnarvon wrote his reminiscences for a Welsh paper. One of the best is that of a wealthy church member who was suspected of not contributing as Providence had prospered him and was approached upon the subject by a cousin's brother. "It was noticed," he said, "that you placed two halfpennies in the collection box." "Did you find half a sovereign in the box also?" "Yes," replied the censor. "Did you find two half sovereigns there?" "No," was the reply. "Well," replied the suspect, "if you must know it, I put that half sovereign between the two halfpennies, and I advise you in future to ask your spies to use spectacles when they pry into their fellow worshippers' affairs."

A Rain Preventer. About fifty years ago an invention was announced which would be claimed with joy just now. A German, Horetius Otto, stated that he had discovered a means of preventing rain. He built a platform on which were placed some very large balloons worked by steam at a high pressure. These were supposed to blow away any clouds gathered above. Otto maintained that these "pluvifers" distributed throughout a town would enable the authorities to insure dry weather for so long as they thought fit. The inventor bore a high reputation in the scientific world and his pluvifuge attracted attention. But it never proved practicable, and after a few months' experiment Otto gave up trying to fight the weather.

A Test of Big Heartedness. The Countess von Voss recorded this human little story of the charming Crown Princess Louise. Frederick William II presented her with the new summer residence of Oranienburg (which he had had newly decorated for her on her first birthday as crown princess). At the end of the day he asked her if she still had a wish ungratified. The only thing left for her to wish for said Louise, was a handful of gold for the poor. "How big" asked the king. "As large as the heart of my generous papa," was her answer, and she had no reason to be dissatisfied with the result. This princess, who was so much loved when queen consort, was one of the two lovely daughters of Prince Charles of Mecklenburg. "A Märitze on the Prussian Throne."

"White" a Misnomer. The fallacy of the average Englishman who regards black as white has been noted by Mr. G. K. Chesterton, the English writer. "People," he writes, "never ask whether the current color language is always correct. Ordinary sensible phraseology sometimes calls black white. It certainly calls yellow white and green white and reddish brown white. We call white 'white wine' which is as yellow as a Bluecoat boy's legs. We call grapes 'white grapes' which are manifestly pale green. We go to the European, whose complexion is a sort of pink drab, the horrible title of 'white man'—a picture more bloodcurdling than any specter in Poe.

Bedridden. "Yes, ma'am," said Harry the hobo. "I know I look like a strong man, but out of my fifty years of life I've spent over sixteen years in bed." "Why, you poor man!" replied the lady sympathetically, banding him a quarter. "What has been the trouble, pa'my?" "No ma'am," said Harry, "jest a regular habit of sleepin' eight hours a day ma'am."—Harpers.

A Bright Idea. Theater Manager—I can't use your play, sir. It's too long for the stage. Amateur Playwright. But I say—aw look here, aw can't you lengthen the stage yet, aw?

The Reason. "I think the picture lacks atmosphere," said the kindly critic. "Fact is," said the artist, "I had a hard time raising the wind while I was painting."

Merely a Hint. Kitty—Harry says he loves me for myself alone. Bertha—I suppose that's his way of saying your mother must be kept out of the family.—Exchange.

Such an Aid. Young Wife—Somehow I cannot get my bread to rise. Hub.—Why don't you set the alarm clock?—Boston Transcript.

ROMANESQUE