- - - A - - - TRANSITION

By ARTHUR W. PATTERSON

"Good morning, sir!"

"Mr. Margrave, I presume?"

"I am. How can I be of service to you?"

An elderly man received a much younger one in his office. Instead of at once replying to the last question the latter produced a card bearing the name "Alonzo Ericson," then, after being offered a chair, said:

"My visit will doubtless seem strange to you at first, but I trust that I shall be able in time to secure your concurrence with its object. You have a daughter whose life has recently been blighted by the loss of her fiance?"

"I have," replied Mr. Margrave somewhat coldly.

"There are remedies for such blights, and I come to propose one for this case."

Mr. Margrave looked at the stranger, wondering at his impudence.

"Marriage is the remedy I refer to, but you are well aware that marriage is simply the final act, it being necessary to withdraw the concentration of the feelings from the one who is lost and unite them on a living object."

"That in my daughter's case would be impossible."

"But desirable?"

"Certainly. I do not wish her to pass a lifetime in mourning."

"I am an artist by profession, though, being cursed with a fortune in my own right of $200,000, I do not expect to make any great success."

"Well, sir, will you kindly inform me what your profession or your fortune is to me?"

"I will as I proceed. One evening several years ago I saw your daughter at a ball. The moment I looked at her I knew that I saw the woman I wanted for a life partner. I made inquiries about her and was told that she was engaged to a gentleman also present at the ball. The troubles that invariably accompany love were upon me. My first act was to seek the man who had been so fortunate, and I was surprised to see a slight resemblance to myself."

"You are something like him, now you speak of it."

"It is this slight resemblance which is the key—provided I win your concurrence—to the situation."

Mr Margrave had by this time become interested.

"I will give you references as to my social position and as a man among men. As to my fortune, I refer you to my lawyers, Peters & Waters. If after examination you are satisfied to give me an opportunity to win your daughter that is all I ask."

"By what process do you propose to make the attack upon her heart? But, no; I will make the inquiries. Then it will be time to explain your plan, or, rather, to gratify my curiosity, which I admit has been excited."

Mr. Ericson bowed himself out and in a fortnight received a note from Mr Margrave stating that the reports he had received had been eminently satisfactory and if he could resurrect a buried heart he was at liberty indeed, welcome—to do so. In reply the applicant merely asked for a photograph of the man whose place he hoped to take.

One afternoon when Mr. Margrave went home from business he carried with him a present for his daughter It was a portrait in oils of her lost lover. She was delighted with it and pronounced it a speaking likeness. A month from that day while looking at it she discovered something about it that was slightly unlike the original, or, rather, it was like another picture of the original. Another month went by, and still another difference was noticeable. These changes kept occurring from time to time. She began to wonder if her memory of her lover was slipping away from her, if the picture was really defective, though she had not at first recognized its defects. She mentioned the matter to her father, who looked at her curiously, thoughtfully, and suggested that if the portrait was destroying her remembrance of the dead and substituting a painted image perhaps she would better banish it. But to this she returned a decided negative, declaring that she was growing to love the portrait more and more every day.

A year after young Ericson had called on Mr. Margrave he dropped into the latter's office one morning with an oil painting.

"The successive portraits forming a slow transition between another and myself is ended in this picture, which I painted from my reflection in a mirror. You have been very fortunate in removing the pictures and substituting others without your daughter's discovering what you have done. Hang this portrait in the place of the last; then introduce me."

When one evening Mr. Margrave brought home with him a friend to dinner Ethel Margrave, on being introduced to him, caught at the back of a chair for support. It seemed to her that her lover had arisen from the dead and stood before her. Later, when she mentioned the resemblance of Mr. Ericson to the man she had lost, some admitted that there was a similarity, others could see none at all. Nevertheless, her mourning was soon thrown off, Ericson was a frequent caller at the house and within a few months after his introduction she married him.

Ericson has long intended to tell his wife of the plan by which he drew her from the dead lover, but as yet has not done so.

Curious Scientific Prediction.

Every one is familiar with the story often told of the great naturalist Cuvier to the effect that, given a single bone, he could reconstruct the animal to which it belonged. That a somewhat similar law of organization runs through the various species that form families in the animal world is indicated by a quaint case of scientific prediction to which attention has again lately been called. It appears that Ehrenberg when engaged in a study of the minute animals called diatoms found that many species were distinguished by the number of rays they possessed. In the series of specimens that he had, however, he could find none having, respectively, twenty-seven, twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-one, thirty-seven, thirty-nine, forty-one, forty-two, forty-four, forty-five, forty-six, forty-eight and forty-nine rays. Still, he predicted that the missing species would some day turn up. This prediction has already been verified, for ten of them have since been discovered, leaving only three to be accounted for.—Chicago Record-Herald.

A Knowing One.

Miss Maude Annesley in her book, "My Parisian Year," tells an excellent story to illustrate the way French restaurant keepers try to "do" the traveling Englishman.

She once went to a very well known restaurant with an Englishman who had lived nearly all his life in France He wished to give a dinner for eight. He studied the menu, decided on what he wanted and then asked the price per head.

"Forty-five francs, monsieur," said the maitre d'hotel.

Miss Annesley's friend looked steadily at him and remarked, "I am French."

The maitre d'hotel pretended to make another addition, then said, "Well, monsieur, we will do it for 40 francs!"

The other replied calmly, "I am still French!"

"Thirty-five francs, then," said the maitre d'hotel.

"I have not changed my nationality," was the retort, and Miss Annesley says that the price finally paid was only 22 francs per head.

The Curious Grapple Plant.

Plants have varied and ingenious ways of scattering their seed. Some with wings like those of tiny aeroplanes are blown by the wind; some are thrown out of the seed pods by explosions; others, by means of hooks, attach themselves to passing animals and are carried long distances. Of this last class is the fruit of the gourdlike grapple plant that grows in the deserts of the Transvaal and Orange river colony. From the hard pod of this plant project clawlike runners that are armed with sharp pointed hooked thorns, and when a springbok or some other animal steps on them they pierce the hoof and start the animal galloping madly away. As the pod often sticks to the animal's foot for several days the seed of the plant is likely to be widely distributed. This contrivance of nature seems unusually cruel, for the animal that is so unfortunate as to tread on the grapple plant not only suffers intense pain, but often becomes an easy victim of its enemies.

Fulminate of Mercury.

A peculiarity of fulminate of mercury is that it produces a shock to which all other substances are sensitive, and its supreme value as an explosive rests in this fact and in the known liability of all explosives to be detonated by more or less distant explosions. There is a current of sympathetic influence in these terrible chemical compositions that is as strange as it is dangerous. What is required to produce explosion is the rapid generation of great heat along with large quantities of oxygen. In gunpowder, for instance, the nitrate of potash (saltpeter), which is the chief ingredient, is practically imprisoned oxygen, and when it is decomposed along with charcoal an immense heat is developed, which causes the gases to expand suddenly, hence explosion.

Mournful.

Emma sent her plate back three times to be filled with turkey, and she was helped bountifully each time. Finally she was observed to look regretfully at the unfinished portion of her dinner.

"What's the trouble, Emma?" asked Uncle John. "You look mournful."

"That's just the trouble," said Emma. "I am more'n full," and then she wondered why all the others laughed.—Youth's Companion.

The Return.

"I believe," said the cheery philosopher, "that for every single thing you give away two come back to you."

"That's my experience," said Phamley. "Last June I gave away my daughter, and she and her husband came back to us in August."

Lucky.

Dentist (prodding a patient's gum in search of a fragment of root)—Funny, I don't seem quite to feel it. Patient (ironical in spite of the pain)—You're in luck!

Bringing It Home.

Her Father—What are you and young Shortleigh going to live on in case you marry? His Daughter—Well, if you must know, papa, look in the mirror.

Summit of the Rhine.

She—And when you visited Germany did you go up the Rhine? He—Rather, right up to the very top, and a magnificent view there is from the summit!

There's nothing but what's bearable as long as a man can work.—Eliot.

A New Year's House Party

By JOHN R. MORRISON

We were two boys and three girls in our family, the youngest fifteen, the eldest twenty-six, when we gave the New Year's house party that proved a turning point in my life. Every room in the house was occupied, some of them by three persons. We had scarcely got together when we began a series of practical jokes on one another, at which the girls were far more adept than the boys. The very first night the sheets in every fellow's bed were scotched, and the next day at luncheon there were cream cakes on the table filled with cotton provided by the girls. One fellow swallowed his cake, cotton and all, rather than confess himself stung.

We sat up so late nights and some of us were stirring so early in the morning that we were ready to fall asleep at any moment. One evening when playing the game of "twenty questions" I was sent into another room while the others chose something for me to guess. There was no light in the room where I waited, but there was an easy chair. I sat down in the chair and fell asleep.

I was awakened by a kiss. I grabbed a girl, but she got away from me, though only after a fierce struggle. When I had once lost her it was not easy to find her, though the rustling of her skirts was a disadvantage to her, while my greater weight, rendering my tread heavier, was constantly betraying me. She dodged me for some time, when all became quiet. Then suddenly I heard the door open and close. Since the adjoining room was also dark I knew that the others had turned off the lights to enable the girl I was after to escape. The escape having been effected, I went to the door to go out. I found it locked.

It was some ten minutes before it was opened, and I joined the others, the room having been relighted. I cast my eyes from one girl to another with a view to discovering who had kissed me. The first girl I looked at had a scratch on her nose. But the second also had a scratch, and the third. Indeed, every girl was scratched. I looked at the fellows and saw that they were all laughing at me.

Now, among our guests there was one girl for whom my heart had begun to beat. I would have given a kingdom if I had had it for proof that Maria had done the kissing. Whoever had done it had doubtless been dared. Whether my preference for Maria had been noticed by the other girls and when I was found asleep she had been chosen to play the joke on me I didn't know. If she had done the kissing she certainly showed no evidence of the fact—that is, any more than the rest of the girls—a scratched nose. But there was one thing that led me to suspect her. While every other girl in the room was keyed up to the highest pitch of mischief, their eyes dancing, their lips, cheeks, every other feature smiling, Maria seemed simply unconcerned.

At 2 a. m. I went to bed no wiser as to the identity of the kisser than before. But the next morning after having dressed, noticing that I needed to change my handkerchief, I jerked it from the outside pocket of my coat and heard something land on the floor. Stooping, I picked up a stickpin.

It at once occurred to me that during the scuffle of the evening before the pin had fallen from the lady's apparel, probably from about the neck, and caught on my handkerchief. Unfortunately it was a very inexpensive article with an imitation pearl for a head and did not identify any particular girl. I realized the importance of keeping my find a secret. Going down to breakfast, I found that three different girls wore pins that were duplicates of the one I possessed. They were the most likely to be suspected, and among them was Maria. Doubtless if there had been enough such articles to go round every girl would have worn a stickpin as well as a scratched nose. By and by it occurred to me that when the pin was in transit from the girl to my pocket it had made the scratch on her nose.

The problem was now narrowed down to three girls, for doubtless the girl who had done the kissing was among those who wore pins. It seemed to me that I must make her betray herself or the victory would be with the girls. I sat down to the breakfast table, ignoring my find. But while the girls were rinsing their dainty fingers in their finger bowls I said:

"I have found something that belonged to the girl who kissed me last night."

Every girl expressed by her behavior a keen interest in what I said except Maria, who took advantage of rinsing her fingers to bend over the little glass bowl before her. I made up my mind that I was getting "warm," as the children say in hide and seek, and concluded on a bold stroke. I continued:

"You may think that a little stickpin she lost when trying to get away from me is what I refer to. It is not."

Every girl stopped smiling and looked serious. I could see Maria wince.

"The girl who kissed me I love," I went on, "and I am ready to proclaim it here before you all."

I fixed my gaze on Maria. A hot flame sprang into her cheeks. To conceal it she turned away and presently threw up the sponge by covering her face with her napkin.

The next year Maria and I entertained the same party in our own house.

Why Chinamen Are Poor Soldiers.

The Chinaman is a poor soldier. Not that he is lacking in courage, for on occasions he cheerfully sells himself as substitute and goes willingly to the executioner's ax in order to provide his parents with the small sum necessary to support them through life. The strength of an army is in team work, and here is where he fails on account of his aversion to being ordered. This is found in his domestic and industrial work. A general line of policy or desired results can be laid down, and he will faithfully work in accordance therewith, but he dislikes to be followed up through the details of the work with frequent orders. He will produce excellent results, but they must be accomplished in his own way; hence the essence of good militarism—prompt and unquestioned obedience—comes in direct conflict with his nature and makes him a poor soldier. However, this trait is not entirely wanting in other nationalities, as every business man knows to his sorrow, and the difficulty of getting employees to do a thing in the prescribed way is one of the constant anxieties.—H. H. Windsor in Popular Mechanics Magazine.

A Doubtful Introduction.

In Rubinstein's "Reminiscences" we read how the illustrious pianist went from Berlin to settle in Vienna, fortified by letters of introduction to various celebrities given to him by the Russian ambassador at the Prussian court. He presented several of them without any beneficial result, and it then occurred to him to tear open those which remained and read them. They all ran, he says, as follows:

"Dear Countess—Our position as ambassador and ambassadress imposes upon us the tiresome duty of patronizing and introducing all kinds of compatriots, who are often most importunate in their solicitations. I therefore now venture to introduce to you a certain Rubinstein, the bearer of this communication."

After that experience Rubinstein threw all his letters of introduction into the fire, and he got on a great deal better without them.

An Actor's Qualification.

Among the London Lyceum company of Irving's day was Evergreene Howe, a Quaker, of whom this story is told in the "Life of Marion Harvey."

"Howe went to see Kean at Richmond and explained his desires. Kean listened more or less patiently, and Howe used to deliver his verdict, imitating his manner.

"'Why, Cockie, you are a Quaker, eh?' Kean said.

"'Yes,' admitted Howe.

"'And you want to go on the stage, do you, eh?'

"Again Howe admitted the accuracy of the estimate. Kean turned to him in his inimitable way and asked:

"'Well, Cully, can you starve?'

"'Not an encouraging suggestion,' Howe used to add. 'But Kean knew something of starvation as a passport to the stage,' he used to conclude grimly."

When Harmonies Are Exhausted.

Once during a conversation on music, when James Hinton, the English physician and philosophical writer, was among the company, some one suggested that "owing to the unlimited number of musical compositions a time would come when all music would only be a repetition of exhausted harmonies. Hinton remarked that then would come a man so inspired by a new spirit that his feeling would be not that all music has been written, but that no music has yet been written." Mr. Havelock Ellis cites the saying in "The Task of Social Hygiene," applying it to the domain of love.

Ancient Glass.

In the Slade collection at the British museum in London the most ancient specimen of pure glass the date of which can be approximately fixed is a small lion's head, bearing the name of an Egyptian king of the eleventh dynasty. That is to say, at a period which may be moderately placed at more than 2,000 years B. C. glass was made with a skill which shows that the art was far from new.

Through the Earth.

If there was a tunnel through the center of the earth and an iron ball was dropped into it where would the ball come to rest? Unless it was retarded by the resistance of the air the ball would go through to the other side and then fall back to its starting point, repeating this operation forever. If retarded by the resistance of the air it would ultimately come to rest at the center of the earth.

Why They Preach.

The distinction between a good preacher and a bad preacher has not changed much since Archbishop Whately declared that "a good preacher preached because he had something to say and a bad preacher because he had to say something."

Pure Malice.

"The boys in my neighborhood broke a window last night."

"The playful exuberance of youth, of course."

"Nothing of the sort. It was my window."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Her Dear Friend.

Miss Homeleigh—Perhaps you won't believe it, but a strange man tried to kiss me once. Miss Cutting—Really? Well, he'd have been a strange man if he'd tried to kiss you twice.

The Choice of a College.

Knicker—Does your son want an education? Bocker—He says he is willing to be a quarterback in the electoral college.—New York Sun.

A MOONSHINE LEGISLATOR

By M. QUAD

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"It was ten or twelve years ago when our member of the legislachur turned agin moonshine whisky.

"That meant that somebody else must be elected in his place, and what did the pesky people around yere do but cum to me and want me to stand. They cum to my cabin a dozen at a time, and they shook hands and called me an honest man and all that, and the mo' I hung back the mo' they wanted me to run. When they got me into a tight co'ner I says:

"'I can't skassly read, and I can't skassly write, and yo' all know that I can't get up before that legislachur and speak ten words, and what good could I do down to Nashville?'

"They purtended to give in at that, but what did the critters do but put me up to be voted fer when the time cum, and the fust thing I knowed I was 'lected by 400 majority. When I heard the news I told it to the old woman and said:

"'Waal, what am I gwine to do about it? I've either got to hunt for a cave and hole myself up or go to Nashville.'

"'Yo'll go to Nashville,' she says.

"'And what'll yo' do?'

"'I'll go with yo'.'

"Waal, we started off one day and got aboard of the railroad kyars. I was a little narvous, and the old woman braced her feet and hung on with her hands, but we got along without any calamity. In about an hour, when she dared to open her eyes and draw her breath, she says to me:

"'Zeb, how many houses have yo' seen since we left home?'

"'More'n a hundred,' says I.

"'And how many people?'

"'More'n a thousand.'

"'Shoo! Then we must hav got clear around the world and back home ag'in!'

"When we got down to Nashville that was so many people and so many houses and such a movin' around that I got the old woman behind me and prepared to fight to the death, but not a critter laid hands on us. Some of 'em laughed at my cowhide boots, and some of 'em grinned at the old woman's poke bonnet, but everything was good natured. We went to a tavern to git board, and when the old woman seen the carpets on the floors, the stuff cheers standin' around and the lookin' glasses as big as a tablecloth she turns pale and puts her arms around me and says:

"'Zeb, I kin see now why thar air so many sinners in this world. If a critter kin hev all these things he don't keer a peaky drat about gwine to heaven. I'm afeared we'll be had 'auf to steal hawgs in a week.'

"At the end of three days the legislachur opened, and I had to go up to the statehouse. Lordy, stranger, but I'd rather tackled three old b'ars at once! I had goose flesh as I struck that crowd, and the old woman wasn't around to incourage me. I went into the statehouse with the crowd, and I'd just found a seat when a feller comes around and says:

"'Excuse me, but ain't that a rifle yo've got thar?'

"'She be,' says I. 'It's a rifle which has killed mo' b'ars and wildcats than yo' could count in an hour, and she's still ready fer the next varmint.'

"'But yo' can't bring no deadly weapin' yere,' he goes on. 'This ain't no jumpin' match nor hoss race, but the legislachur of Tennessee.'

"I told him I knowed whar I was, but that I should keep tight holt of that rifle till I knowed I was out of the woods, and he goes away growlin' to himself. Mebbe it was half an hour arter that when a feller stands up on a platform and looks at me and says:

"'Does the honorable member from Beaver Cove expect to find any b'ars on the floor of this house?'

"'I ain't sayin' as I do,' I answers, 'but if thar is a riot over moonshine whisky I might want sunthin' better than a club!'

"Bimeby that same feller stood up ag'in and says, as slick as yo' please:

"'Mebbe the honorable member from Beaver Cove would like to be excused for half an hour while he takes his gun home.'

"'Do any critter yere want to pick a fuss with Zeb White?' says I as I stands up.

"Everybody laughs and claps his hands, but no one comes nigh me, and I puts on my cap, shoulders my rifle and says as I walks out:

"'It's an onery crowd, and thar ain't a man among yo' whe kin pull a rabbit out of a boiler log!'

"I went straight to the tavern, and thar I found the old woman shivarin' and shakin' fur her life.

"'What's the matter?' says I.

"'They've put piller cases trimmed with lace on our bed,' says she, 'and the gorgeousness of it will bring on heart disease! Zeb, fur the Lawd's sake, let's go back home!'

"'But I'm here to watch moonshine,' says I.

"'Never mind moonshine nur nothin' else on the face of this airth, but let's be a-gittin'. This world ain't fur us, Zeb. We is like two lost children wanderin' through the woods and expectin' to be eat up any minit, and I'm so skeart and flustrated that I shan't live two days longer! Zeb, if yo' love me, come home!'

"'I'll do it,' says I. And she got on her poke, packed our carpetbag, and we was out of the town of Nashville befo' sundown, never to go back."

Burying a Water Lemon.

Most redskins are provident enough and store a supply of food for winter use. The Kaffirkin, native stock in a kind of jumping melon, is quite as thrifty as the rest of the race, but it is singular in this—that it requires no food, but water. The melon is found most generally in arid regions in which the dry season lasts six months, during which time not even a drop of dew falls. In these regions, however, there grows, just at the close of the rainy season, a bitter but extremely juicy melon. As soon as it is ripe the jerboa gnaws through the stem, digs away the earth beneath it and lets it drop into the hole thus formed. The wind soon covers it with sand, which not only conceals it, but also protects it from the heat. On the coming of the drought the jerboa digs out one after another of these natural water barrels and sucks its liquid out of them until the rainy season sets in once more. As the jerboa lays up a supply of from forty to fifty melons, there is no danger of its ever running short.

How Mark Twain Introduced Himself.

"Ladies and Gentlemen—By the request of the chairman of the committee I beg leave to introduce to you the reader of the evening, a gentleman whose great learning, whose unerring accuracy, whose devotion to science, and whose veneration for the truth are only equaled by his moral courage and his majestic presence. I allude in these vague and general terms to myself. I am a little opposed to the custom of ceremoniously introducing a reader to the audience, because it seems unnecessary where the reader has been properly advertised. But, as it is the custom, I prefer to make it myself—in my own case—and then I rely on getting in all the facts. I have not had any introduction myself, and to me just the thing, and the gentleman was not acquainted with me, so there was no nonsensical lie said. Ladies and Gentlemen—I shall want your time in this introduction. I know only two facts about this man—first, he never has been in state prison, and second, I can't imagine why!"

The Disposed Chief.

Not many years ago the highways of Mexico, and especially that of southern Java, were infested with tigers, which usually stopped all travelers they met. Whenever a traveler entered the capital with the news he was taken for a member of the victim of the brigands and presented them to me as a substitute for his own garments of which he had been deprived. The situation of the tiger became unbearable, and a delegation of bery having been commissioned to visit the chief out troops to put an end to the malefactors. The leader of the band was captured, bound, placed on a horse and escorted to the city. The president sent for the chief of police, who was not forthcoming.

"Does any one know where he can be found?" asked the president.

"Why, yes, sir," the man replied, "he is in my stable."

Goldsmith's Showy Clothes.

Goldsmith was ridiculously fond of showy clothes. When he went to take orders in Ireland he went to see his bishop in a pair of sky-blue breeches. While studying medicine in Edinburgh he wore "sky-blue satin," "fine sky-blue shalloon" and silver hat lace. Before Johnson, Reynolds and Garrick he strutted about bragging of his blown extravagance, and when his reputation had been made by his two principal poems he blazed forth in purple silk, gold-laced clothes, a scarlet greatcoat and a physician's wig. He carried a gold-headed cane, and a sword hung by his side, a weapon so disproportioned to the diminutive stature that a contemporary who passed him in the Strand called out to his companion to "look at that fly with a long pin stuck through it."

An Omitted Story.

The reminiscences of the late Matthew Prior, the English artist and correspondent, do not contain, for obvious reasons, perhaps the best story told of that irrepressible little man. At a dinner given to Mr. Prior the chairman, Sir Evelyn Wood, who was seated next to the guest of the evening, concluded his speech thusly: "Our honored guest, Mr. Prior, has been in twenty-six engagements." Prior, prompting, "Twenty-two, my lord, twenty-two." Sir Evelyn continued, "In twenty-two engagements and has never seen a shot fired!"

The Lava Lake of Hawaii.

One of the large volcanoes in Hawaii has a large lake of liquid lava in its crater or hollow. This molten boiling mass looks like redhot boiling glass to the naked eye, but under the microscope pieces of the original matter of very minute size may be detected. Where it has cooled in curious formations along the "coast" it resembles slag from some mammoth furnace.

Scars a Boomerang.

"My wife made me promise to quit smoking before she would marry me," remarked Mr. Meekton.

"And now?"

"I'm doing my very best to get her to promise not to begin."—Washington Star.

Its Only Use.

Grinder—I see that a fellow over in England has invented a wire nothing guard that will prevent automobiles from spattering mud on pedestrians. Grouch—But what's mud for?—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is small.—Book of Proverbs.