A Gift of Flowers

That Were Thrown Out of a Window

By F. A. MITCHEL

Being invited to spend the week end with my friend Mary Morrison at her cottage by the sea, I was about starting from the house when I received a telegram, as follows:

Tiny will meet you at the station. Bring her along.

I had heard Mary speak of Tiny Archibald, who rejoiced in the more euphonious name of Gwendolin, but whose baby nickname had stuck to her through childhood and youth. I had never seen her, but had been told that she was a very attractive girl. But how was I to recognize her? Mary had not told me that she would carry her handkerchief in her left hand or that she would wear a sprig of geranium in her belt. Doubtless she had spoken of Miss Archibald to me so often that she supposed I had met her cousin.

I went to the station expecting to find a young lady on the lookout for some one she didn't know and in order to prepare for a little attention bought some violets, which I carried in my hand. I had no sooner entered the waiting room than I noticed an attractive looking woman walking back and forth, staring at every man she passed. I was sure she was the person I was to meet, so I walked up to her, lifted my hat politely and was about to ask her if she was not Miss Archibald when she gave me a meaning look and said in a quick low voice:

"Not a word till we are on the train."

I confess I was surprised. What could be the necessity for such mystery since I was simply to escort her on a short journey? However, it was she who was making the mystery, not I, and it behooved me to do as she said and find out the cause when she chose to tell me. I relieved her of a satchel she carried and conducted her to a parlor car. When we were seated I politely handed her the violets. The day was hot, and a window was open. What did she do but throw the flowers out on to a side track.

Never in my life have I been more astonished at the reception of a gift. The expression on my face betrayed how deeply I felt the insult, and the lady hastened to explain. But the explanation only added to my amazement.

"We are observed," she said; "the violets will give us away."

"Give us away?"

"Yes. Mary knows that you were to carry violets, and she may have let it out."

"Mary knows! She mentioned nothing by which"—

"Hush! The man opposite is listening."

Of all the receptions I ever had from woman this certainly was the most remarkable. Surely there was something missing that would have made all this clear. I have it. Mary has written me a letter that I have not received. In that letter she developed something in which I am expected to take part. The telegram was supplementary.

"I suppose you know where you are to take me?" said my companion in a low voice.

"I do," I replied, retiring within myself and determined to let the story proceed without giving away the fact that the only instructions I had received were to take her to Mary Morrison's seaside residence.

"Will Arthur meet us at the station or somewhere else?"

This was a point blank question that I proposed to parry. "I have not been instructed as to that. Doubtless we shall be advised when we arrive."

"Surely."

"Pleasant," I remarked to myself. "This ease with which I satisfy the lady. I wonder if I'll get on as well with the rest of the questions she asks me."

"I don't dare continue this any longer," she said suddenly after looking through the car suspiciously. "I will take another seat."

She did as she said she would do. I didn't mind her mysterious actions up to this point, but now to be deprived of the company on which I had counted was positively annoying. I thought I would give up my part in the play, follow her and ask her what the dickens it all meant. I was rising to do so when she saw me and with knit brows and a commanding look ordered me to remain where I was.

The train stopped at a station at which a number of persons got on. I happened to look at Miss Archibald and noticed that she had pulled a thick veil down over her face. I didn't think very much of this, for the car was full of dust. Not having any one to talk to, I lay back and closed my eyes. A boy selling candies went through the train crying his wares. He ceased to shout at the end of the car where Miss Archibald was sitting, and not long afterward I felt a tap on my shoulder. Looking up, there was the candy boy holding out a pasteboard box to me.

"Don't want any," I said testily.

"Lady at other end of the car sent 'em to you, sir."

I took the box, removed the lid, and there on top of some bonbons lay a folded bit of white paper. Opening it, I read:

"The gentleman in the white vest and glasses knows me. Should he get out at our station don't leave the car on any account. Go on to the next."

"This beats me," I remarked to myself, reading the note over a second time to make sure I had read it aright.

I surveyed the gentleman referred to and detected him looking over the top of his newspaper at Miss Archibald, as if trying to make out whether or not he knew her.

"Well," I said to myself, "I'm not having the companionship of a young lady, but I'm having a lot to think about. I wonder what he has to do with it all."

But Miss Archibald kept the veil over her face, and there was no show for the man to claim an acquaintance, which I inferred the play that was going on wouldn't admit. I had a notion to go and sit by him and engage him in conversation, with a view to pumping him, but on second thought desisted.

Presently, the train slowing up at a station, I saw Tiny glance through the window, give her hand a quick little shake at some one outside, then look meaningly at me and gather her belongings as if to leave the train. I followed suit. She came past where I was sitting and whispered: "It's all right. *They are on the platform.* Come."

Whether to come or escape from I knew not what by remaining on the train I was uncertain. Curiosity prevailed, and I passed out just behind Tiny. On the platform were a young man and a girl. Tiny and the man greeted each other with a loving though somewhat excited look.

"Where's Fred?" he asked.

"Here." She turned toward me.

"That's not Fred."

"Not Fred!"

"No."

There was a tableau not describable in words.

"Why, he carried the violets," stammered Tiny.

It was time for me to say something, and I did.

"There has been a mistake here. I expected to meet a young lady at the station whom I had never seen, and I carried some violets that I proposed to bestow upon her. This young lady, through a mistake, of course, accosted me, and we got on the train together, when she threw my violets out of the window"—

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Tiny.

The young lady and the young man smiled.

"Never mind," said the young man. "All's well that ends well. Permit me to explain, sir. You have unintentionally got mixed in an elopement. A friend of mine was to have met my fiancee at the station and escort her to me here. She has missed him, and since you have performed his part thus far I would be pleased to have you finish it by serving as my best man. This is Miss Darton, who is to be bridesmaid."

I bowed politely to Miss Darton, who vainly endeavoring to repress her merriment at the absurd outcome of the affair, returned my salute.

"Come on," said the groom. "We have no time to lose. I have a carriage waiting."

He hurried us off to the carriage, he and his fiancee engaged in too serious a business to be affected by the ridiculous feature of the affair. But Miss Darton was convulsed, and I boiled over with suppressed emotion of a similar kind.

"I wonder who got my girl," I remarked.

Miss Darton exploded at this, and it drew something like a smile to the lips of the groom. The bride refused to see anything to laugh at.

"Perhaps Fred got her," remarked Arthur.

"I trust she didn't throw his violets out of the window," I remarked.

At this the bride to be gave a nervous little laugh and said: "I trust you will pardon me. I was very much rattled."

"Naturally. One doesn't elope every day in the year," I replied.

By this time we had driven to the door of a pretty little church, where we all alighted and entered. We passed down the center aisle to the chancel, where the couple were married. The bride and groom went out together, I following with the bridesmaid. Then we re-entered the carriage and were driven back to the station. A train soon took away the bride and groom, leaving Miss Darton on the platform with me, she intending to go in the same direction as I.

"Who is Mary?" I asked.

"I am Mary. I arranged this elopement." [illegible] returned at the mere mention of the affair.

We boarded the next train, and I parted with her at my station, but not before I had received permission to continue the acquaintance begun in such an unusual manner.

When I reached my proper destination I drove up to Mary Morrison's cottage. She looked at me anxiously and asked:

"Where's Tiny?"

"Married," I replied laconically.

"Come, don't talk that way. Tell me why you haven't brought her."

I told the story and when I had finished was informed that Tiny was a poodle. She had been left in the city, and a maid was to have met me with her at the station.

I met Miss Darton later on—of course I didn't leave her without taking her address—and we enjoyed very much talking over the episode that had occasioned our acquaintance. More marriages occur between groomsmen and bridesmaids than those officiating at any other function. Miss Darton and I happened to make one of these cases. But we didn't elope, and there was no poodle to mix up anyone else on our wedding.

Red Tape in Germany.

The following is an illustration of the beauties of bureaucratic administration in Germany:

It appears that in the postoffice department at Berlin, if a clerk wishes a new lead pencil, he must turn in to the proper authority the stump of the one that has become too short for further use. In one case a clerk received his new pencil without returning the end of the old one, and before this error was discovered this clerk had been transferred to another office. Shortly after the assumption of his duties at his new post this clerk received an official intimation that he had neglected to turn in his pencil end. By this time, however, the end had disappeared. In order to avoid official reprimand, the resourceful clerk purchased a new pencil, cut off a piece about the length of the missing end and dispatched it to the stationery department. Everybody was accordingly satisfied.—Harper's Weekly.

When Swinburne Was Ready.

A diverting picture of Swinburne, his frock coat bulging with manuscript, waiting to be asked to read aloud his latest poem, is given in Edmund Gosse's "Portraits and Sketches."

After floating about the room and greeting his host and hostess with many little becks of the head and affectionate smiles and light wavings of the fingers, he would settle at last upright on a chair, or by preference on a sofa, and sit there in a state of rigid immobility, the toes of one foot pressed against the heel of the other. Then he would say in an airy, detached way, as though speaking of some absent person, "I have brought with me my 'Thalassius' or my 'Wasted Garden' (or whatever it might happen to be), which I have just finished." Then he would be folded again in silence, looking at nothing. We then were to say, "Oh, do please read it to us! Will you?"

Pairing Off For Dinner.

The custom of walking to the dining room arm in arm, "taking a lady in to dinner," strange though it may seem, is comparatively modern, as prior to the middle of the eighteenth century it was the custom for the hostess to go in to dinner first, the ladies following in order of rank and the gentlemen after, all in single file, also in the order of rank, the host being last. This, however, gave rise to so many duels on questions of precedence both among the ladies and the gentlemen that the custom of "pairing off" was begun in order that no dispute might arise, it being one of the customs of society that no duel challenge could be given in the presence of the lady concerning whom the dispute had arisen.—New York American.

Medical Fees In Bygone Days.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the usual fees to physicians and surgeons in England were "to a graduate in physick, his due is about 10 shillings, though he commonly expects or demands 20 shillings. Those that are only licensed physicians, their due is no more than 6s. 8d., though they commonly demand 10 shillings."

"A surgeon's fee is 12 pence a mile, be his journey near or far, 10 groats to set a bone broke or out of joint and for letting blood a shilling; the cutting or amputation of any limb is £5, but there is no settled fee for the cure." The system of regulating the fee according to the pocket of the patient is almost as old as history.—Westminster Gazette.

The Old Bedlam.

Bethlehem (pronounced Bedlam), the London lunatic asylum, was originally founded in 1247 as a priory, but is spoken of as a hospital for lunatics in 1472, and when the church was despoiled it was granted to the city of London as such an asylum. At one time the wretched inmates were exhibited to the public like so many wild beasts, as Pepys notes in his diary and Hogarth shows in one of his sketches. Patients that were harmless or half cured were given badges and released to beg on the streets. Edgar in "King Lear" impersonates one of these wandering Tom-o'-Bedlams.

Man's Dual Nature.

The professorial mind for all its acuteness is liable to occasional lapses, like less highly trained intellects. One amusing case in point is reported in the Philadelphia Public Ledger:

A certain professor was struggling to make the point that both parents have an equal influence upon a child.

"For," he continued gravely, "a man is as much the son of his father as he is the daughter of his mother."

Law and Poetry.

A lawyer can put 1,000 words together and make them worth $1,000. That's legal ability.

A poet can put 1,000 words together and make them worth fifteen plunks, payable on publication. That's poetry.—Washington Herald.

Corrected.

The Doctor—But, my dear sir, you must masticate your food. What were your teeth given you for? The Sufferer (calmly)—They weren't given me. I bought 'em.—London Sketch.

A Chinese Oath.

"In China the oath of brotherhood is taken by breaking a cup."

"If that worked in this country our cook would be sealed to us for life."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

What It Was.

Gusher—Everybody is crazy about this house. Busher—What is it—a swell hotel? Gusher—No. It's a private lunatic asylum.—Chaparral.

First Night Critics.

In an article in the American Magazine, Walter Prichard Eaton writes:

"The theater door man is an important person on first nights, because as he passes out return checks between acts he hears the comments of the audience. His ears are wide open on such occasions, and, mingling with the crowd in the lobby, are other attaches of the theater, all seeking to overhear the comments, and all rushing to report to the manager. Not long ago the last act of a play in New York was entirely changed after the opening night solely because the women in the audience, as they left the house, were [illegible] complaining of the tragic [illegible]. When a piece hangs in the balance between success and failure, these [illegible] perhaps turn the scale [illegible] overheard in the lobby [illegible] are of [illegible] importance to author and manager. In other cases they are a [illegible] of success or failure, though the ultimate test, of course, is the [illegible] attitude of the audience in the auditorium, its spontaneous enthusiasm or its coldness and signs of boredom."

A Household Maneuver.

"And what," asked the caller after he had been shown all over Mr. Bobbs' new house, "is that pretty little article hanging over the piano?"

"Don't you know?" answered Mr. Bobbs enthusiastically. "Why, that is a handy match receiver, made by Mrs. Bobbs. I scratch a match and use it. It must not be thrown on the floor. There is the receiver. Holding the burned match carefully in my fingers, I move the piano away from the wall to the center of the room. Then I go down in the basement and get the stepladder. I place the stepladder against the wall, mount it, deposit the match in the receiver, climb down again. I then return the stepladder to the basement, come back and move the piano into its former position. There's nothing like having these things about the house. It makes neatness and discourages smoking."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Recipes For Long Life.

The late John Bigelow, the patriarch of diplomats and authors, and the no less distinguished physician and author Dr. S. Weir Mitchell were together several years ago at West Point. Dr. Bigelow was then ninety-two and Dr. Mitchell eighty.

The conversation turned to the subject of age. "I attribute my many years," said Dr. Bigelow, "to the fact that I have been most abstemious. I have eaten sparingly and have not used tobacco and have taken little exercise."

"It is just the reverse in my case," explained Dr. Mitchell. "I have eaten just as much as I wished, if I could get it; I have always used tobacco, immoderately at times, and I have always taken a great deal of exercise."

With that ninety-two years shook its head at eighty years and said: "Well, you will never live to be an old man."—Lippincott's.

A Free Hotel.

At Miramar, on the island of Majorca, in the Mediterranean, is a free hotel, where accommodations may be had for three days upon application to the agents of the Archduke Luis Salvator of Austria. It is a beautiful spot, and the entire neighborhood is full of attractions to the traveler. Attendants in charge look after the welfare of guests, who must, however, provide for their own food. Beds, linen and table appointments they receive gratis, and bread and wine can be obtained very reasonably. It is said that this provision is due to the gratification the Austrian owners felt years ago when they first came to live at Miramar. Such peace and such loveliness, they felt, should be shared by all lovers of nature who passed that way.—Argonaut.

One of the Antiques.

"There," said the man who had purchased a pedigree that reached back to the "coming over" of William the Conqueror, "is a gold snuffbox that was used by one of my great-great-grandfathers."

"Very interesting," replied the gentleman who was examining the thing. "Very interesting, indeed. I had no idea that the 'made in Germany' mark had been in use as long as that."—Chicago Record-Herald.

A Sad Mistake.

The wife cooked a dish of prunes, which appeared to find no favor with members of the family. The prunes "went begging" for a day or two until the husband, tired of seeing them, decided to get rid of them.

The next evening he found a big dish of prunes at his place.

"You liked those other prunes so well," said his wife, "that I thought I would cook some more."—Indianapolis News.

He Took After Mother.

The star pupil arose at the school entertainment to declaim his piece.

"Lend me your ears," he bawled.

"Huh," sneered the mother of the opposing but defeated pupil, "that's Sarah Jane Doran's boy. He wouldn't be his mother's son if he didn't want to borrow something."—Exchange.

Again.

Marie—I hear that you are going to be married again. Edith—Again? Why, I've never been married yet. Marie—No, but I can't recall the number of times you were "going to be."

Reserved.

Thomas—That Miss Wadleigh is rather reserved, isn't she? Jack—Very much so. I reserved her for life last night.

Love, a cough, smoke and money cannot long be hid.—French Proverb.

The Lonely House

Which Has Wonderful Healing Powers

By CLARISSA MACKIE

"Lonely House, situated at the head of a beautiful glen. Absolute solitude guaranteed. Admirably adapted for sufferers from melancholia. Complete recovery guaranteed. Excellent table. Farm products. Address Mrs. Mook, Lonely Glen, N. Y."

"I'm not exactly suffering from melancholia, but I have a longing to be entirely alone for awhile," said Paul Gerrick, throwing aside the newspaper with a yawn. "I believe I'll pack my grip and take my fishing rod and camera and try the month at Lonely House."

He sat down to write a letter to Mrs. Mook, attracted by the oddity of the advertisement. That absolute solitude might be a cure for melancholia had never impressed him before, and he felt a strong attraction for the Lonely House, and he was curious to know just who his companions might be.

Paul Gerrick had a whole month's vacation to spend as he chose. He had slaved all through the spring months in order to obtain this four weeks' vacation from his desk in the big insurance company where he was a minor official. He was to spend the vacation at Sandy Point, the summer home of the Belthorpes, on Massachusetts bay. He was deeply in love with Nancy Belthorpe, and when he accepted the invitation to become one of the large house party he had counted on the visit for an opportunity to tell his love to the girl whom he was sure was not indifferent to him.

The very first night at Sandy Point there had been a dance on the lawn, and after he had waltzed with Nancy to the tune of one of Schubert's most alluring melodies he had left her in the shade of a rose arbor while he brought her an ice. When he returned she was standing there in the doorway, her back toward him. The moonlight fell on the white curve of her neck and the gleam of her golden hair. He set his small tray on the ground.

"Dearest," he began softly, his arm about her, when she turned suddenly and released herself. "Why, Paul Gerrick," exclaimed the girl, "you getting sentimental in your old age—and with me?"

He looked aghast into the laughing face of Grace Addis, a girl who was engaged to young Belthorpe, Nancy's brother. There within the arbor [illegible] Nancy, her face pale in the moonshine, her eyes sparkling dangerously. There was no time for explanation. Jim Belthorpe came up, the ices were served, another partner carried Nancy off, and he could not have another opportunity to speak to her that night.

The next morning he [illegible] the rose garden before breakfast [illegible] he espied Nancy cutting flowers down a sunny path. He approached her diffidently.

"Nancy," he began humbly, but she turned a severe profile toward him, and her dark eyebrows went up quizzingly.

"There is something I must say to you if you will listen," he went on desperately.

"I am quite sure there is nothing that you can say that would interest me, Mr. Gerrick," she said indifferently, and his pride stung him. He had bowed formally and departed. It was easy to arrange for a recall to town, and before sunset he had left Sandy Point, and there yet remained thirty days of his vacation.

He had dined at his club, and after the lonely meal he picked up the newspaper and there read Mrs. Mook's odd advertisement. Two days later he had her reply, and shortly afterward he was on his way to Lonely Glen, deep in the heart of the Catskills.

A long, wobbly looking stage was backed up to the platform of the tiny station, and Paul, who was the only passenger for Lonely Glen, entered the musty vehicle with very much the same sense of depression that might have assailed him had it been a hearse.

"Lonely House, eh?" queried the ancient driver from the corner of his mouth. "I guess Mrs. Mook's got a house pretty near full by this time. I've been carrying boarders there day in and day out for nigh a week now."

"How long has Mrs. Mook been taking boarders?" inquired Paul absently, one eye on the beautiful panorama of woodland, rocky glens, waterfalls tumbling into moss rimmed pools and steep winding road showing cool vistas of mingled light and shade.

"Five or six years. And the funniest part of it is there's more folks get engaged and married there at Lonely House than I ever heard tell of in any other place. Here you be, sir!"

The house was a low, rambling affair painted a soft wood brown that mingled with the bark of the trees and seemed to become part of the forest. A wide piazza encircled it, and there were little rustic summer houses scattered among the trees. As he went up the front steps the door opened and a tiny little lady stepped forth. [illegible] ed in its depths. [illegible]

[illegible] "I am glad to see you, [illegible]" she said simply. [illegible] "Thank you, Mrs. Mook," he [illegible] heartily. "I'm mighty glad I [illegible] here, but, honestly, I'm [illegible] ing with [illegible]

He placed [illegible] down on the [illegible] with his hat.

"You're not [illegible] rick," [illegible]

"No, indeed [illegible] know why [illegible] those who [illegible] is that they [illegible] ried."

He smiled [illegible] She laughed [illegible] with just [illegible] it. "You've [illegible] Hopp," she [illegible]

"If Tobias [illegible] plead guilty."

"Yes, that [illegible] sour old bachelor [illegible] thought of in [illegible] Lonely House [illegible]

Paul Gerrick [illegible] isn't a—er— [illegible] embarrassed [illegible] scrutiny.

"No, it isn't [illegible] It's just this [illegible] I don't wonder [illegible] situation as T[illegible] fore you. I [illegible] immediate [illegible]

She laughed [illegible]

"Oh, I'm [illegible] very well," [illegible] tings of [illegible] to the [illegible]

[illegible] are plenty of people in the [illegible] have [illegible] which they want to fight out. The very [illegible]

[illegible]

"For hearts?" he echoed, [illegible] how the advertisement had appealed [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] fully cool [illegible] which a [illegible] was [illegible]

[illegible] through the green [illegible] waterfall [illegible] light that he discovered he [illegible] alone.

A girl stood [illegible] waterfall intently [illegible]

[illegible]

"Nancy," he [illegible] though she could not have [illegible] voice, she must have [illegible] for she turned and saw [illegible] eyes [illegible] they [illegible] Nancy [illegible]

"Yes," she sobbed. [illegible] there after I [illegible] you [illegible] Grace Addis [illegible] knew you thought it [illegible] was so horribly jealous [illegible]

"How long have you been here in the Lonely House?" asked [illegible]

[illegible] faces as they came up the path.