

The Little Authoress

By WILLARD BLAKEMAN

Walter Ewing had just that kind of staidly that is required of the editor of a magazine. When authors came in with their manuscripts he would greet them cordially by the hand, smile upon them, ask them to be seated and listen to their long talks about what they had to offer.

One day the prettiest little girl in the world was admitted to Mr. Ewing's apartment. She came in with a smile not only to greet the one with which she greeted her, but in slang phrase, "to beat the band." He drew up a chair for her close to his rosewood desk and relieved her at once of a package she carried by which he knew her for an authoress. Then he brought his expressive eyes upon her as if to say "Do tell me what I can do for you, my darling to serve you."

Then she began to talk about what? Everything her beautiful face about entering the field of literature the great responsibility that must necessarily rest upon editors, what wonderful powers of discrimination they must have, the characters in her work and the many times she had rewritten certain parts. For half an hour she talked, the editor listening rather to her sweet voice than what she said—he had heard it all a thousand times before—sometimes fancying that she was a bird that had flown into his sanctum to rest him from the hardest work in the world—that of reading one manuscript after another through the long day.

When she went away he had promised her that in order to give her special attention he would take to home with him and read it far away from the interruptions constantly occurring during business hours. For some time after she had gone he sat with her words still sounding sweetly in his ears, then began to write in blue-ink the words "return" on the cover of a pile of manuscripts on his desk, throwing each into a basket beside him, such as is commonly used as a receptacle for soiled linen.

That evening, true to his promise, he took the manuscript home with him intending to read it at an early date, but whether the little authoress had made a deeper impression on him than the bundle or whether he had been so taken with her that he was in no hurry to get rid of her, he put off its examination from day to day. Now and again she would call upon him. He would greet her with the same affability as before, telling her that he was deferring the examination of her novel till he felt in a mood to appreciate its merits. The more delicate the style and sentiment in a story, the more difficult it was of detection. Doubtless within another week he would feel inspired to read the manuscript and decide upon its merits.

The patience, the good nature of the little authoress were inexhaustible. She appreciated the editor's kindness to her, a stranger, and hoped he would not hurry. He invited her to drop in occasionally, since he would always be glad to talk with her about her literary aspirations.

One day when the editor felt "inspired" to read the manuscript he had taken home he looked for it in his room and did not find it. Calling his landlady, he made inquiries and learned that she had gathered up some "old truck" among them a lot of paper done up in a bundle, and it had been taken away by the scavenger.

The editor turned pale. The manuscript of the little authoress had doubtless gone to the dumping ground, whence it would not be recovered. He wrote her at once to know if she had another copy, since he wished a friend on whose literary judgment he greatly relied to read the story and had not yet finished it himself. She replied that she had given him the only copy in existence.

The six months that followed were wearing on the editor. For that period he put the little authoress off with excuses. Then, there being no other way out of the trouble—at least so he put it to himself—he asked her to marry him. When she refused him she took away his last prop. He had a faint hope that the estrangement which usually comes between a man who has refused and the lady who has refused him would lead the little authoress to keep away from him and the lost manuscript would in time be forgotten. But she continued to call for it in person, always with the same good natured smile, never chiding him for the delay, and every time she left him he assured her that by the time she came again he would surely be ready to give her his literary opinion on her work and did not doubt that it would be accepted by the magazine.

The lady's refusal of him made him cognizant of the fact that she was much more to him than he had supposed. After a month more of mental distress he confessed to the loss of the manuscript and that he couldn't possibly live without her.

She clasped her hands in grief. "And I, too, have a confession to make," she said. "Friends of mine had sent you manuscripts which they proved, by sticking together certain of the leaves, were identical without having been read. It occurred to me to try blank paper for you."

However, she concluded to forgive him and come home. And now she is helping him to get rid of manuscripts without reading them.

Reading the Riot Act

What is commonly meant by "reading the riot act" is better known than the origin of the phrase. The historical riot act was passed by the British parliament in the reign of George I. in 1714. It enacts that felony is committed when twelve or more persons unlawfully, riotously and tumultuously assemble together to the disturbance of the public peace, so to continue together for an hour after being commanded to disperse by the sheriff or undersheriff or a justice or the mayor of the borough.

In the "reading" of the British riot act, which is a necessary preliminary to its being put into operation, it is not customary to recite the whole of the statute, which is rather a long one, but only the following proclamation, which it contains: "Our sovereign lord the king chargeth and commandeth all persons being assembled immediately to disperse themselves and peaceably to depart to their habitations or to their lawful business upon the pains contained in the act made in the first year of King George for preventing tumults and riotous assemblies. God save the king!"

Lincoln's Book Friends

A few fine books, well known, like a few fine friends, are worth more than many mere acquaintances. The Bible, "Aesop's Fables," "Robinson Crusoe," and "Pilgrim's Progress" were Lincoln's real friends. He used to lie on the floor and laugh over the "Arabian Nights." When his stepmother saw that books meant a great deal more to him than they did to any of her own children she took to particular care, as she said, "not to disturb him in the quiet of his own accord." She honored his private bookcase between the logs next to his bed, and the big fires he used to build to read by at night. She knew that he carried a book out to the fields so that he could read while his horse was resting, and often she would find him copying out, with his turkey buzzard pen and a brier root ink, some favorite part to remember. "A boy like that deserves to have his chance," she would say to herself.—Arlingne Gilbert in St. Nicholas.

A Sismarek Duel

A duel, in which Bismarek was once engaged, had a very amusing origin. It occurred when he was chief secretary of the Prussian legation at Frankfurt. He went much into society and one Christmas attended a big ball. During the height of the festivities Bismarek's attention was directed to an exceedingly pompous individual who strutted about the room. This was M. de Ciancy, a noted French duelist. Later on this important individual took part in the dance, but having omitted to leave his hat at the proper place had performed to hold it out at arm's length while he danced. The spectacle tickled Bismarek immensely, and, as the Frenchman came sailing majestically along, Bismarek stepped forward and dropped a coin into the hat. A duel was one of the next day's events. Though it was with pistols Bismarek escaped unhurt, while his adversary was wounded.

Positive Proof

A New York lawyer said in Washington of a certain exposure: "The proof was positive—as positive as the proof against the barber." "There was a barber who was accused of secret inebriety, but his old patrons refused to credit such a charge." "A stanch old patron went to his barber to be shaved one morning. The barber in silence began to lather him, and then suddenly seized him by the nose." "Lathering away, the barber gripped the nose so firmly that his owner grunted in pain." "Here, let go my nose!" "But the barber, still holding on tight, said as he lathered steadily on: 'Can't I if I did I'd fall down.'"—Washington Star.

He Adored Whitaker

Whitaker, of immense fame, would seem to have been a better known name than that of the poet John Greenleaf Whittier. The poet was once presented by a man who followed him to his rural retreat, declaring that he adored his works and wanted his autograph. He exhibited overwhelming enthusiasm and "Yet all the time," said Whittier, "he called me Whitaker."—London Standard.

Home Work

"Willie, why couldn't you find the result of these examples you took home?" Inquired the teacher in a sharp voice. "Please, ma'am," replied the shaking boy, "my father says they wuz too hard for him, an' would you mind giving me a few easier ones to do?"—Woman's Home Companion.

Making Him Comfortable

"I would box your ears," said a young lady to her stupid and tiresome admirer, "if—"

His Joke

"Brown got off a great mother-in-law joke the other night." "That so? What was it?" "He said 'What was it?'" "Detroit Free Press.

Tempting Fate

"Pop, what does tempting fate mean?" "Tempting fate, my son, means wearing a high hat in snowing time."—The Boston Herald.

Never Help the Man who will Help You

Never help the man who will help you.

A DOCTOR'S STORY

By RYLAND BELL

After a meeting of our medical society we separated into small groups, some discussing a paper that had been read, some idly chatting and some telling experiences. In our group we fell to talking about leaving patients in the hands of nurses we were not sure of, and one of our number told the following story.

One morning when making my round of visits I was going upstairs to the room of a sick lady when I heard the words:

"Doctor, my nurse is killing me!" I stopped and listened for a repetition. I did not doubt that it came from the sickroom; though the patient had not complained of her nurse, whom I had recently placed on my list of those I recommended. But I did not hear the words again, so resolved to keep my own counsel and went on to the sick chamber, knocked and was admitted.

Now, I am enough of a scientist to know that an investigator is very easily worked upon by his theories. Before entering the room I had explained in my own mind the words I had heard. A former patient of mine had once, while I was bending over her, whispered to me, "For heaven's sake, take away that nurse!" I at once made an excuse to do so, and the patient, whose nerves were shattered, told me that the woman domineered over her. I did not completely side with my patient in the matter, for she needed a firm hand. But I gave her another nurse.

Nevertheless that case influenced me in the second one, and realizing that I was influenced by it, I resolved to banish it and get at the facts without a word with the patient or the nurse. I found the nurse somewhat agitated, though the patient did not give evidence of anything unusual having happened. The nurse had just come into the room through a door opening off a back-stairway and carried a tray, on which was the invalid's luncheon.

There was no opportunity to speak to the patient alone during my visit, for the nurse did not leave the room. It has always seemed to me that for a doctor to send a nurse from the room reflects upon her, indicating that he wishes to say that to the patient which he does not wish the nurse to hear. At any rate, I once offended one of my best nurses by doing that very thing. So in this case I went away without having acquired any further information about the matter.

On my next visit I made a pretext to send the nurse out of the room to bring something I wanted, but she foiled me by going to a closet for it. I couldn't think of any other excuse and went away as uninformed as before. On my next visit I had scarcely entered the house before I again heard the words:

"Doctor, my nurse is killing me!" This time, since I had not gone up stairs, the sound was farther away from me and less distinct. It seemed to come from directly over my head, though I paid no attention to this, for the ear does not give us the direction of sound. I hurried upstairs and into the sickroom without knocking, hoping to learn something by taking them by surprise. I found the nurse arranging the patient's pillow. Neither showed a consciousness of anything disagreeable between them.

But despite my remedies my patient was getting worse. Probably this turned the scale in my mind against the nurse. At any rate, I determined to remove her without offending her. I told her that I had another case in which she alone would satisfy me and I would send a substitute, she reporting at the new place that evening. Then I left without saying anything to her charge about the change, intending to do so after it had been made and at the same time give her my reasons for relieving her of her nurse.

What was my astonishment at my next visit to hear on ascending the staircase the words:

"Doctor, my nurse is killing me!" I had only an hour before left the nurse who had had charge of the case with another patient, and here was the same complaint. I resolved to investigate on my own account. Avoiding the sickroom, I opened every door in a small room directly over the front door was a parrot on a perch beside the window where he could see my carriage drive up and see me alight and enter the house.

Here was the explanation, or a part of it. Still keeping my own counsel, realizing that I had removed the nurse unjustly, I returned to the house where I had placed the suspected woman and told her what had happened.

"Doctor," she said, "the morning you called when I was carrying in the patient's breakfast I had just passed the room where the parrot was kept and heard him say, 'Doctor, my nurse is killing me!' I was in terror when I saw you enter for fear you had heard him and would suspect me. Upon inquiry I learned that a former patient had been delirious in that house and had repeatedly accused her nurse of trying to kill her. That's where the parrot picked up the phrase and whenever he saw you enter repeated it."

I was so disgusted at the way I had been fooled that never since will I permit a nurse to remain in any house where I have a patient. There are other ways than the one I have mentioned that may influence what is taking place in a sickroom. At any rate I don't want one about.

Signing the Pledge

"New York is a town of pledge signers," said a transplanted Bostonian. "People sign pledges to refrain from about every vice and pleasure known to the human race. Pledges striking a death blow at intemperance and profanity, of course, are most popular here, as elsewhere, but they are only the top liners in a varied list of abstinences."

"During my six months' residence in New York I have been approached by emissaries from humane societies, patriotic societies, physical culture clubs and every kind of benevolent institution the town affords, asking me to pledge myself to refrain from doing any of the things these organizations condemn. At pledge headquarters they even attempt to regulate your literary and musical tastes by obtaining your promise not to read certain books or listen to certain kinds of music. No matter how freakish a pledge may seem to the average citizen it finds hundreds of supporters, and as all pledges really tend to regeneration it is not unnatural to expect the millennium to strike New York most any day."—New York Times.

When Amundsen Reached the Pole

In Amundsen's "South Pole" he tells of his three years' sojourn in the antarctic and gives this account of the supreme moment of the trip:

At 3 in the afternoon a simultaneous "Halt!" rang out from the drivers. They had carefully examined their sledges meters, and they all showed the full distance—our pole by reckoning. The goal was reached, the journey ended. I cannot say—though I know, it would sound much more effective—that the object of my life was attained. That would be romancing rather too barefacedly. I had better be honest and admit straight out that I have never known any man to be placed in such a diametrically opposite position to the goal of his desires as I was at that moment. The regions around the north pole—well, yes, the north pole itself—had attracted me from childhood, and here I was at the south pole. Can anything more topsy turvy be imagined?

Medicine and Law

Medicine stands in this strange contrast to law, that while the public is clamoring for the lawyers to advance the lawyers themselves as a class offer the chief resistance. The medical profession constantly outstrip and leads the public imagination in devices to check disease. Although much at the start was due to laymen, the campaign against tuberculosis, against infant mortality, against malaria and typhoid fevers, is largely captained and manned by doctors, who have the hearty support of the profession as a whole. Of two Rip Van Winkles awakening today the physician would find his old methods as rust eaten and useless as his instruments. The lawyer, after a few hours with new statutes, would feel at home in any of our courts.—G. M. Stratton in Atlantic Monthly.

A Cruel Injustice to MacNab

One morning at breakfast, when Dominic Thompson, the tutor, was present, Sir Walter Scott was going on with great glee to relate a story of the Laird of MacNab, "who, poor fellow," premised he, "is dead and gone."

"Why, Mr. Scott," exclaimed his good lady, "MacNab's not dead, is he?" "Faith, my dear," replied Scott, with humorous gravity, "if he is not dead they have done him great injustice, for they have buried him."

The joke passed harmless, and unnoticed by Mrs. Scott, but hit the poor dominie just as he had raised a cup of tea to his lips, causing a burst of laughter which sent half the contents about the table.—Dyer in "Great Men at Play."

Slaves in Old Rome

In Rome, in the golden age, a laborer cost only \$100, and sometimes, after a great victory and an influx of captives into the capital, it was possible to buy strong, capable slaves for \$5 apiece. Skilled slaves, men with trades, brought higher prices. Cicero paid \$1,000 for a scribe. Catiline had a cook that cost him \$2,500. A gardener was worth \$300, a blacksmith \$750, an actor \$5,000, a physician \$10,000.

A Modern Limer

"How are you going to amuse yourself this afternoon?" asked the first passenger.

"I'm going to a moving picture show in the main cabin. Better come."

"Can't I've promised to take my wife for a taxicab ride on the upper deck?"—Pittsburgh Post.

Majesty

"My wife adores the majesty of the Alps, whereas I adore the majesty of the ocean," said Pref. "And your daughter?" inquired a friend.

"Oh, she just adores majesty by itself."—Lustige Blätter.

Didn't Like the Combination

Woody Walker—I allers know'd it. Tired Tatters—Know'd wot? "Wot dat sign over de way sez—'Cleaning and Dyeing.'" "Well, wot erbout it?" "Why, I allers know'd dey went ter gether."—Boston Post.

Willing to Oblige

Lawyer—We want you to be willing to waive immunity in this case. Willing to waive immunity in this case. Willing to waive immunity in this case. Willing to waive immunity in this case.

A Story of the Last War With England

By T. TOWNSEND SMITH

We had good luck in meeting British merchantmen and had secured some prizes, a few of which we carried into port, and some we let go, they not being of much value. We were sailing in longitude west from Greenwich 22 degrees and 40 minutes, latitude 35 degrees 15 minutes, when in the direction of the Bermudas, to the windward of us, appeared on the horizon a sail. She had a good breeze, while we were nearly becalmed. She made straight for us and came up with us, breaking the British flag. She was altogether too strong for us, and after a short fight we surrendered.

I was put down between decks with the others, who, being tired with several days' constant activity ending with a fight, were all very soon asleep. Somehow I couldn't sleep and sat watching our guards, who were as fagged as we. One by one they dropped asleep. There wasn't much use of their keeping awake, for we couldn't run away, and it would have been madness for us to attempt to capture the ship.

But when I saw the last man dozing on a coil of rope with his cutlasses across his lap I concluded to take a walk. I didn't expect to get very far, but I found that all hands, having been on duty for several days without sleep, had succumbed, and I didn't see a person awake. Forward I found the bodies of several men who had been killed during the fight, laid out for burial. That is, I saw the sacks in which they were inclosed. The idea occurred to me that if we were near enough to land to swim ashore I might escape by taking a body out of one of the sacks, getting in myself and being slid overboard. I knew we were headed for the Bermudas and I might somehow get to land.

I would need a knife, but had none, and while I was making up my mind to take the risk I thought I would look around for one. A sailor who was sleeping like a log had one in his belt, and though I risked his killing me if he awakened while relieving him of it, I took the chance and succeeded. I don't believe he would have opened his eyes if I had kicked him.

Having the knife gave me nerve, and I resolved to make a break for liberty. The great difficulty was getting a body out of a sack and tossing it overboard. There was an advantage for me in that the sailors, not realising sleeping near the dead men, gave them a wide berth. I was some time at the job, but finally I had a bag ready and crawled in. I couldn't face the opening from the inside and wondered what this might lead to.

I lay perfectly still till morning, when I started by sounds near me and words that were spoken that the burial was about to take place. I heard a man say, "Here's a sack not closed," and felt him closing it. Then he tied a cord about my ankles, and after that a chaplain read the burial service. That ended, I heard something slide on a board, and presently I was taken up, and was sliding rapidly, plunging feet foremost into cold water.

It seemed that I had gone down a hundred yards before I succeeded in cutting open the bag and two hundred more before I cut the rope that bound my ankles to the sinking boat. When I commenced to rise, slowly at first, but soon quite rapidly, my breath was gone when I reached the surface, but I knew that if I sank again I would take in water, so I started myself and got a few breaths. I didn't sink again and pretty soon was able to look about me.

To be was the ship not fifty yards from me and another body just shooting over the side. Fortunately I was astern, and those engaged at the burial work did not see me. I swam for the rudder and as there was but little breeze succeeded in reaching it and hanging on to the chains.

There wasn't much sea on or I would soon have been washed from my hold. I had had nothing to eat since the morning before and hadn't much strength, but during the morning the cook threw some refuse from the galley, and I was enabled to gather some pieces of bread and a few bits of meat. That helped me considerably.

About noon I saw land on the port quarter and knew we were approaching the Bermudas. Would I be able to leave the rudder and appear as some one else than a Yankee tar? All I could do was to wait for an opportunity. Once or twice we approached so near the land that I was tempted to let go and swim for it, but feared I would be seen from the ship.

Then we ran into the harbor, and a man fishing in a small boat was for a few minutes within a hundred feet of me. Before he saw me I dived and came up directly before him. He was too astonished to say anything for a few moments, then helped me into his boat.

I told him that I was one of the crew of the ship that had passed. My clothes didn't give me away, for there were very few clothes left on me, and they were of a most ordinary character. I won the man's sympathy by telling him I had been fagged nearly to death for some slight delinquency, and he took me ashore to his house, where he kept me for several weeks, at the end of which time I found a small vessel leaving for Charleston and got on board it.

A concealed spark is more to be feared than an open fire.—German proverb.

Which Falls Quicker?

If one marble be snatched horizontally from the top of a table and another be dropped from the same height at the same instant, which reaches the floor first?

This question is sent to the Scientific American by a correspondent, and the editor of that magazine answers it as follows:

Sir Isaac Newton stated three laws of motion which from his time to the present have been universally accepted as true. The second law is, "A given force produces the same effect whether it acts upon a body at rest or in motion, whether it acts alone or together with other forces." You will see that the second part of this law covers the case of a ball dropped from a table and another ball shot horizontally from the same level at the same instant. The first ball falls by the force of gravity alone. The second ball has, as you say, two forces acting upon it. The ball obeys both forces at the same time. It falls as if gravity acted alone. It goes by the blow as if the blow acted alone. Both balls reach the floor at the same instant.

The Milk in the Coconut

South Africa natives along the Orange river have a way of producing "milk" which, primitive as it is, vies in ingenuity with the method of those who believe in the synthetic production of what the journalist, hardup for a synonym, has been known to call "the lactical fluid." After cutting the top from a coconut, the native plucks the nut over hot ashes, so that the warmth may cause the fat and "water" contained in the husk to be absorbed by the milk. This change the milk's quality and gives it a palatable taste. In order to deal with several nuts at a time the natives construct rough "holders" from old iron hoops. The ashes are placed under the nut, and the nuts set in it. Obviously, there must be no actual fire beneath the nuts or they would be burned away and the milk be lost.—Argonaut.

The Matterhorn

Many mountains which long enjoyed a reputation of being absolutely inaccessible are now considered as almost ordinary excursions. The Matterhorn for many years repulsed men who were among the foremost mountaineers of the day. Professor Tyndal and Edward Whymper were the first to climb it on more than a dozen occasions. But on July 15, 1865, with Lord Francis Douglas, Hudson and Hadow, Mr. Whymper eventually reached the summit, and it was in descending that the fatal slip occurred which cost the lives of his three English companions as well as of Michel Croz, one of the most competent of Swiss guides. Now, almost the peak is constantly ascended (with the help of guides by tourists who have no pretensions to be mountaineers at all).—Dundee Advertiser.

Queerest Town in England

The most curious town in England is Northwich. There is not a straight street nor, in fact, a straight house in the place. Every part of it has the appearance of an earthquake. Northwich is the center of the salt industry in Cheshire, England. On nearly all sides of the town are big salt works, with their engines pumping hundreds of thousands of gallons of brine every week. At a depth of some 200 or 300 feet are immense subterranean lakes of brine, and as the contents of these are pumped and pumped away, the crust of earth is correspondingly weakened, and the result is an extraordinary "pulling" effect on the surface buildings, and they are drawn all ways and give the town an extremely distorted appearance.

Puzzling Scottish Terms

There are many puzzling differences between Scottish and English law terms. For instance, bankruptcy in Scotland is an "act of sequestration," a solicitor is either a "writer" or a "law agent," the argument in a case is the "debate," the assize is the jury, a wrongdoer is a "delinquent," an idiot in Scottish law is "a fatuous person," and burglary is (with true Scottish caution) "housebreaking with an aggravation." Finally, an author is in Scotland not a person who writes, but the vendor or seller of real property, from whom the title to it is derived.

Willing to Help

Justwedd (to father-in-law)—Ahem! You remember, sir, you said that after we were married you'd assist me in furnishing a house. Father-in-Law—And so I will, my boy. Come down to the corner and I'll introduce you to a friend of mine who is in the installment business.—Boston Transcript.

Too Willing

Old Lady (in tears, to chemist)—Will you poison my dear little Elsie? He's in such—such agony. Chemist (politely)—With pleasure, madam. Old Lady (indignantly)—With pleasure, you nasty, unfeeling man! Then you shan't do it!—London Answers.

Two Ways

A woman always compliments another woman's gown. A man glances casually at a new suit of clothes and says, "Where was the fire?"—Phyllis Ledger.

To Know Later On

"Can you manage a typewriter?" "Ask me in about a year. We've all been married a month."—New York Herald.

Tut, Tut

"Not all who are ought to," said a "tumbler," said she; "they are ought to be!"—Ladies' World.