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A Mutual Admiration Society

By ESTHER VANDEVEER

Mrs. Middleton-Tranby is a sort of Mrs. Leo Hunter, in whom Dickens satirized a woman ambitious to shine as a literary star and to entertain literary stars, though Mrs. Middleton-Tranby was not the caricature Mrs. Leo Hunter was and lived in the twentieth century instead of the nineteenth century.

Among the literary salons given by Mrs. Tranby (the whole name is too long for repetition) was one where a professor of German literature in a prominent university was to address the company. The professor, who was as unpretentious as his name, which was Brown, did not know when he accepted the invitation that he was to speak to a mutual admiration society. His address was to be in the afternoon, and half an hour before he was to appear on the rostrum he stepped into a trolley car which would carry him direct to the residence of Mrs. Tranby. He seated himself, took a newspaper from his pocket and began to read.

Presently two ladies entered the car, sat down opposite the professor and began to chat. There were various notes connected with the journey, such as the conductor's bell ringing and vehicles rattling over the stones without, and the ladies found it difficult to meditate their voices.

"Have you read Mrs. Middleton-Tranby's latest poem in the — Magazine?" asked one lady, who wore something like a muff for a hat on her head.

"Yes, isn't it lovely?"

"Beautiful! But it doesn't compare with your 'My Rover.'"

"Don't you think so? It's awfully good of you to say so."

"I love dogs, and the close of your poem, when your dog looks up at you so expressively before he dies, is just too lovely for anything."

"Thank you ever so much. Have you been writing anything?"

"Nothing in verse. I have a story I'm going to read at the next meeting of our literary society. I've spent a lot of time over it, which I fear may have been wasted. When I write a poem I dash it right off without thinking, and it's better than when I take pains."

"That's genius. I wish we were going to listen to your story this afternoon at Mrs. Middleton-Tranby's instead of having to listen to that professor. I think our meetings when we read our own papers are so much more interesting."

"So do I. I don't care for German literature. There is so much philosophy mixed up in it."

"Mrs. Englehart's paper on 'Goethe,' read at our last meeting, was very good."

"Good! It was delightful! But then we are all so familiar with the opera of 'Faust' that Goethe has a special charm for us."

"What's the name of the professor who is to lecture this afternoon?"

"Brown, I believe."

"Brown! He isn't the Professor Brown whose loose ideas on marriage have excited so much comment? I believe the trustees of his university asked him to resign—Cuthbert Brown, professor of something or other, I don't remember."

"I think that's the man who is to speak this afternoon, but I'm not sure."

"If it is I shall not remain for the lecture."

"You'd better be careful. You know Mrs. Middleton-Tranby has her fourth husband, all the other three still living."

"I didn't think of that. Ever so much obliged to you for mentioning it. Of course it wouldn't do to offend a hostess. Besides, I rather like to hear what horrid theories people will promulgate."

"I can stand a bit of spice myself. If this man Brown doesn't advocate positive free love I rather think I shall hear him out. But since he is to speak on German literature, perhaps he won't mention his peculiar ideas."

"Possibly not, but so long as he holds them and we have to listen to him it would be disappointing to have him stick to his dull subject."

By this time the car had reached a cross street leading to Mrs. Middleton-Tranby's residence, and the ladies alighted. They were followed by Professor Brown—Charles, not Cuthbert, Brown and a husband and father of six children—who lagged behind them, so that when they entered the Tranby residence they did so without having noticed that he had followed them.

"Let's go right into the lecture room," said one, "and get seats where we can hear. I'm a little deaf."

They took seats in the front row, and when the room had been filled behind them the lecturer, with Mrs. Middleton-Tranby, passed down an aisle and they mounted the platform together.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed the lady with the muff hat.

"It is the man who sat opposite us in the car."

"We must go."

"How can we? It's impossible. We have got to stay it out."

The lecturer, having been introduced by the hostess, cast one meaningful glance down at the ladies directly beneath him, then delivered his lecture. It was considered rather dry by his audience. It contained no reference whatever to marriage, experimental marriage or any of the substitutes which theorists are suggesting for the good old days of domestic love and large families.

Love In the Stock Market

By DONALD CHAMBERLIN

About the close of the last century when shares on the stock market were rising and falling like the waves of the sea under a storm, James Rigdon was for a time a power in Wall street. When it was reported that Rigdon was selling a stock everybody rushed to sell. When he bought the price would rise like the thermometer on a July morning.

Rigdon was a bachelor, and as soon as it became known among his women friends that he knew what stocks were going up and what were going down he received more attention than the handsomest man in New York. One of these ladies, Miss Martindale, he wished to claim as his own, but despite all he could do he couldn't find out whether she had any use for him other than to learn how to make money in stocks.

One evening while with her she impromptu him to give her a tip on some stock that was about to be "put up." He explained to her that when he boomed a stock, if it were known that he was booming it, it would rise in value, but the trouble was that when he wished to unload, the moment it was known that he had begun to sell, down would go the market and he would be left with a lot of "undigested securities" on his hands. He was about to put up the market price on a certain stock, but he could not take her into his scheme, for if it were known that she was buying and selling by his advice it would result disastrously for him.

"But I won't tell," she said.

"Can I rely on you?"

"Certainly."

"Very well. Buy Onarora Copper. It is selling at 7 cents a share."

"How awfully kind of you!"

"I can rely on you?"

"Surely."

She gave him a special pressure when he left her and, running to the telephone, ordered him to purchase 1,000 shares of Onarora Copper. He did so without disturbing the market price of the stock half a point. Then she fell to thinking that her father and her brother and her sister would be delighted to participate in her good fortune, so she told them she had bought Onarora. There was no need for them to ask her why, because they knew she had for a long while been endeavoring to get a tip out of Mr. Rigdon. Surely there was no breach of confidence in this.

So the Martindale family put what spare money they had in Onarora Copper, and each told his broker his reasons for doing so. Each broker had a number of speculators hanging about his office who were given the tip. The stock rose slowly and beautifully like a balloon sailing up toward the sky. Now and again it would fall back, a few thousand shares being thrown upon the market.

"Manipulation," said those in the secret. "The price is rising too rapidly for him. He hasn't got all he wants. Wait a bit."

By and by these sales grew smaller, and for some time the stock ceased to be offered. Miss Martindale asked Mr. Rigdon if it were not time to sell. He replied, "Not yet." And the stock went higher. Then suddenly it began to tumble. Every one who had been speculating on the Rigdon tip began to get "from under" except the Martindale family. When Onarora had sunk to the price they paid for it Miss Martindale sent for Mr. Rigdon and asked him if the boom was over.

"Yes, it is," he replied, "and I haven't unloaded all I had, some 40,000 shares, at a fair price."

Miss Martindale looked appalled.

"I supposed," she said coldly, "that you were to let me know when to sell as well as to buy."

"That would not have accorded with my plans. I told you when to buy, and you told others. I knew you would and that your tips to others would put up the stock. If I had told you when to sell it would have spoiled my scheme."

"In other words, you have used me to your own advantage. You have not only disappointed me, but you have induced me to disappoint others."

"How have I induced you to disappoint others?"

"Why, they knew I bought the stock and surmised that I did so by your advice."

"And you did not tell them the secret. Well, you had no occasion to tell them. I believe that, in all, you and your family hold 3,000 shares. Am I right?"

"You are."

"Well, when the stock reached its highest stage I sold 3,000 shares for your account and also sold 3,000 shares more for you to be delivered within thirty days after the sale. You and your family have made on the rise of the stock \$12,000, and as much more on the fall."

Miss Martindale stood looking at Mr. Rigdon with astonishment, the cold look on her face breaking into a smile. Then she put out her hand. Mr. Rigdon improved the opportunity by putting the other hand around her waist and, drawing her to him, kissed her, at the same time proposing a new deal by which she should always profit by his operations.

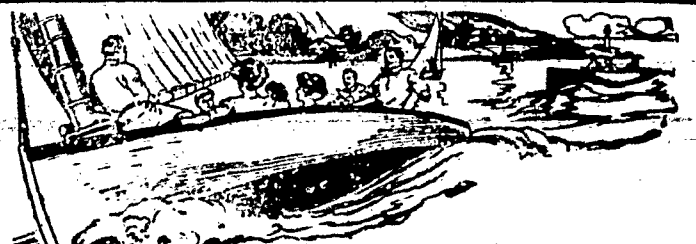
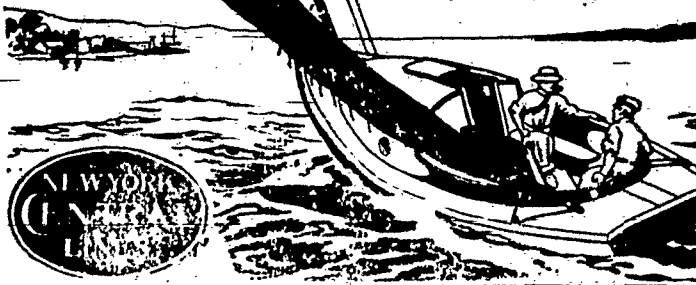
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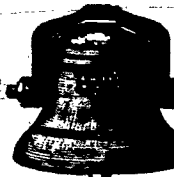
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