

AN OLD MAID'S ADVICE

By M. QUAD
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Her mother named her Cynthia when she was three days old and said she hoped the little darling wouldn't grow up to fall in love and become a wife and mother.

The little darling didn't.

When she was a year old she hadn't smiled yet. When the doctor was appealed to as to what ailed her he replied: "Her name gave her a shock and soured her disposition."

"But will she die young?" was asked.

"Not by a jugful. She is cut out for an old maid, and she will live as long as there is anything that she can meddle with and stir up trouble."

She had got to be thirty-five years old when an event happened. Up to this time they had been incidents and occurrences. This was an event to be spelled with a big "E."

Little Mrs. Larkins was the bride of a year. She had married a nice young man, and the home was a happy one. One day the husband answered her in an impatient way, and soon after he had gone to business Cynthia dropped in to find the wife in tears. The old maid licked her chops. Here was a bouquet of gossip for her. What was the matter?

"It's—It's Henry!"

"Ah-hal I said so when you were married. What's he done?"

"I wanted just a card of books and eyes, and he said he couldn't be bothered with such trifles."

"Well, that's the beginning of the end. In six months there will be a separation."

"Oh, don't say that. Henry was bothered about something and gave me an impatient answer. Maybe he will even bring the books and eyes when he comes."

"Lucy Larkins, prepare yourself and don't be deceived! I can't stop longer today, but I will come in tomorrow and tell you what you must do. Unless you want to lose your husband, this thing must be settled in the bud."

"Why, Cynthia, how you frighten me!" exclaimed the wife.

Mr. Larkins had loaned a sum of money to be repaid at a certain date. When the date arrived the money was not forthcoming. Therefore he was upset.

If Mr. Larkins had owned up about the money the skies would have cleared in five minutes. If Mrs. Larkins had mentioned that the old maid was seeking to make trouble there would have been an explanation. As it was, when Cynthia called next day she found a victim ready for her.

"Did he bring the books and eyes?" she asked.

"No."

"Good! We will now proceed to show that young man a few things to open his eyes. We will let him understand that if he is tired of you you are ditto."

"But I can't believe he is tired of me," she protested.

There was plain talk on the one side and tears and sobs on the other, and at length the wife was won over, and the old maid left the house saying: "Remember that if you sink out you will lose Henry. All you have to do is to keep quiet till I give the word."

Just about that hour the money that Mr. Larkins was anxious about was paid over, and he came home an hour ahead of time to tell the good news and make his apologies.

"Oh, Lucy, dear!" he called as he entered the house.

No Lucy dear.

Then came the note left for him proposing against the clock.

"I have discovered that you no longer love me, and you will never see me again!" it read.

Mr. Larkins jumped two feet high. His heart choked him. His knees wobbled. The room whirled round and round with him. In a minute more he was out of the house calling out in alarm:

"Lucy has committed suicide! Come on to the river!"

The river was at its lowest stage, and a child could have crossed it. Lucy's bedraggled body was not to be seen. There was a mud turtle or two sailing up or down, but no Lucy.

There were orchards and groves, and all night long men were searching. They found no trace of the missing wife, and the next day the ground was covered again with even more care. The result was the same.

As night came down for the second time a score of men gathered at the Larkins home to sympathize, condole and plan anew. Henry Larkins was in tears and the others on the verge when in walked Lucy. She had come downstairs from the garret, where she had been in hiding in compliance with Mrs. Cynthia's orders. She had agreed to stay up there at least three days, but couldn't stand the strain.

Her story was told, explanations made, and after a time of rejoicing Squire Miller rapped for order and said:

"Gentlemen, this meeting has a plain duty to perform. Let us perform it!"

Twenty men filed out and down the street and stopped at the house where the old maid made her home. She squeaked and kicked and scratched, but she was borne to the river and ducked till she did not get her breath before high noon next day. No arrests, no suits for damages. She felt that she deserved the dose.

An Old Time Sea Serpent.

Good Bishop Pontopidan in his celebrated "Natural History of Norway" tells the story of a boat's crew of eight sailors under a certain Captain De Ferry who encountered a formidable looking sea serpent off the Norwegian coast along the middle of the eighteenth century. The animal, according to all accounts, was some 600 feet long or about the size of a modern battleship. The crew at first endeavored to entice the monster into the boat, but the wily beast responded by tashing the water so furiously with its tail that one of the men was carried out of the boat on a wave at least 100 feet high, which the serpent with the incessant beating of its tail kept repeating rigidly in the air for nearly ten minutes. Meanwhile the seaman slid safely down the other side and the crew began an assault upon the monster, which they maintained with such fury that the beast turned tail and fled according to the captain, he went so fast that he "disappeared on the horizon twenty miles away almost on the moment that he began the retreat."

Waking From Sleep.
That is the test of robust health—the manner in which you rise from your bed in the morning. When a man is in perfect health he awakens naturally by his body has been sufficiently refreshed by its rest. The hours of repose are a matter of habit and temperament. In many cases, mental activity is at its height in those first minutes of waking. Poets and authors have conceived brilliant ideas in those moments of perfect physical repose, the brain alert and the organs and its sense toned up after their rest. Resistance to leave the bed is not a good sign—a really healthy man is too full of vigor to lie still. Quality, not quantity, is the ruling factor in sleep. The broken nightmare or fitful slumber is not rest, for at such times neither brain nor body is in repose. Four hours of sleep with all feeling or thought in oblivion are worth more than nine hours of restlessness.

Knew Him as Well.
A certain cantankerous old gentleman not long ago advertised for a coachman, who was required, among other qualifications, to possess an intimate acquaintance with the neighborhood. But to his great surprise he received not a single application for the vacant post.

"I cannot understand it at all," he said, as during a chat one day with an old outlier at the local livery stables he had mentioned the fact.

"Let me see," said the latter, as a gleam of intelligence flitted across his face. "Ye had advertised, I believe, for one as 'must be well acquainted with the neighborhood,' didn't ye?"

"I did," replied the old gentleman shortly. "I want some one who knows his way about."

"Ah, that explains it," was the answer. "Ye see, they who know the neighborhood well knows ye too!"—Exchange.

His Pretty Compliment.
When the Dowager Queen Margherita of Italy was the lovely young bride of the crown prince this anecdote of her reception in one of the hill towns was widely told in the press.

The little boy who was to present the usual bouquet was the son of a distinguished literary man, and he had been taught a pretty poem of a few lines in graceful praise of the princess. But when the moment came to recite it he stood mutely gazing at her, too overcome to speak. After a moment, in order to relieve the situation, the princess smiled and held out her hand for the flowers. The little fellow held back for a moment, then to the delight of the assembly, explained confidentially as he gave the flowers to her: "There were verses, but you are so beautiful I can't remember them."

Schumann, the Composer.
Robert Schumann, the great composer, tried to become a lawyer to please his mother and failed after two years of wearisome study. At Heidelberg university he made the acquaintance of Wilhelm Alexis, who had already trodden the path Schumann was destined to follow—that through the law to music. And the eminent jurist whose classes he attended, A. F. J. Thibaut, was an amateur musician of high attainments and the author of a work on precisely that aspect of music to which Schumann was peculiarly sensitive—namely, purity in musical art.

A Soft Answer, Etc.
Young Wife (pettishly)—You always seemed to have plenty of money before we were married. Loving Husband.—It was only seeming. I had very little. Young Wife—And you told me you expected to be rich. Loving Husband.—I am rich, my dear; I've got you. She subsided.—Yonkers Statesman.

Women as a Power.
If ever the time comes when women shall come together simply and purely for the benefit of mankind, it will be a power such as the world has never dreamed of.—Matthew Arnold.

Barkless Dogs.
There are three varieties of the dog that never bark—the Australian dog, the Egyptian shepherd dog and the "lion-headed" dog of Tibet.

Voting in Switzerland.
In Switzerland every citizen, whether he is a householder or not, is entitled to a vote on attaining the age of twenty.

If the power to do hard work is not a talent it is the best possible substitute for it.—Gardell.

A Preliminary Test of Skill

By MARK HAMMERTON

"I will pig stick you!"

The words were addressed to me by a lieutenant in the German army. He was very young, his beard just sprouting, and since there had been no war between Germany and any other power since long before he was born he had had no way of letting off his surplus vim. We were in a beer garden, and he had been sitting at a table near one at which I sat with a party of American friends.

Getting up from his table, he walked past us, and my foot being in his way he took pains to stumble against it. Then, glaring down at me, he said in English:

"I will pig stick you!"

"What does the fellow mean?"

"You're being challenged to fight a duel," said Washburn, an attaché at the American legation. He had lived in Berlin a number of years and knew the ways of the inhabitants.

"He can send all the challenges he pleases," I said. "I'll pay no attention to them."

"In that case," Washburn replied, "you must give up the social stand you have prepared to take in Berlin."

"Shouldn't I like to put you forward as a prize unless you either fight or buy the Imperial family, or find some way out of the matter?"

"What way out of the matter is there?"

"I'll think it over. I've helped several Americans out of such scrapes by the bye. I think I'll try the plan by which I saved Albertson from getting a sword thrust between his ribs."

"What plan?"

"I didn't explain it till the affair was settled, nor will I tell you. Put your self in my hands, ask no questions, and I think I can bring you out of this with honor, probably with ecstacy."

I assented, and he took a message from me to Donhoff. I was an American, and Americans did not fight duels. However, I was willing to fight under certain conditions, or, rather, I would prove myself more skillful than he. We would fire at a hen's egg at twenty paces. If he hit the egg oftener than I, I would stand up and permit him to shoot at me as long as he liked. If I hit the egg more times than he, he was to submit himself as a target for me.

The hot headed youngster accepted the conditions. Indeed, he was rather pleased at the novelty of the plan. Washburn arranged for a test of skill in a fencing academy and brought a basket of eggs to the place, which were to serve as targets. The affair being an unusual one, none of the safeguards common in duel preliminaries were taken. Washburn fixed the target, suspended the egg by a thread. Donhoff and I tossed for order of trial, and I won. Each principal was to deliver five shots, and the one who shattered more eggs than the other won.

The day before the test I could scarcely hit a barn door, but I practiced sufficiently to hit an egg at least once in five shots. On the trial I spent longer the contents twice. Donhoff, who like all German army officers was a good marksman, looked upon my work with evident contempt. I missed the first and second shots, and as soon as I had done so he seemed to lose all interest in the contest. He had doubtless made a previous trial and discovered he could hit the egg every time.

I had been instructed by Washburn that when I beat Donhoff—and Washburn assured me that if his plan worked I would—I was immediately to renounce my right to make a target of him. He fired somewhat carelessly and missed. He was surprised especially at seeing the egg vibrating from the wind of the ball. He fired a second shot, this time aiming carefully. Again he missed, and again the egg danced. If now he hit the egg at every remaining shot he could still beat me. Though he took a long time to aim before the third shot, he missed it.

He could now only tie me. But he had become so irritated with himself that he was not capable of doing as good work as before. He missed the fourth and fifth shots, the egg at each successive shot vibrating less, indicating that his aim had grown less accurate. On missing the fifth shot he threw his pistol down with an oath.

Washburn shot me a glance, and I cried, "I renounce the right I have won!" and, hastening to Donhoff, put out my hand. He took it, muttering imprecations on himself for having become so clumsy. Then he and his party thanked me for my magnanimity and left the academy.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Washburn, sinking into a chair. "If those fellows had exercised one-tenth the care they would have taken in an ordinary duel I would have had to leave Berlin!"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You fired at a solid egg. Donhoff at a shell from which I had drawn the contents. No ball will hit an empty eggshell. The wind will drive it aside every time."

We had won by a Yankee trick, but since it was merely to avoid blood spilling our consciences did not trouble us. I entered Berlin society under Washburn's wing with great ecstacy. I feared that I would be called upon to maintain my championship, but was not severely alone.

Two and Four Tined Forks.

A writer in the Washington Post tells of an old lady who remembered dining at the White House with Mr. and Mrs. John Quincy Adams. Mr. Adams ate with his fork, and Mrs. Adams apologized for it, saying that he had acquired the habit during his sojourn in France. Mrs. Adams and the other guests used their knives. All this is a comment on changing manners. But it should be noted that Mr. Adams ate with a four tined silver fork, while the other guests had only two tined forks, which then were the common kind. Without the development of the four tined fork the habit of eating with one's knife would not have been so rapidly discarded. As between a four tined fork and a knife the fork is to be chosen for convenience's sake, but as between a two tined fork and a knife on many occasions the latter would be actually the more serviceable.—Springfield Republican.

Power of Lightning.
It is hardly possible to use instruments for the purpose of figuring the forces of lightning, yet there are many other ways of calculating familiar to every mathematician. The amount of light given by a single lightning flash is enough to illuminate an area two miles square. The bolt itself would be visible several miles farther off, but the remotest part of the region mentioned would have as much light as would be given by a candle—quite enough to read by. To produce such a light it would be necessary to expend 35,000 horsepower for a second. These figures appear very large, but the time is short. The flash might be for only one-thousandth part of a second, but the impression on the eye would continue for a tenth of a second anyway. Figured down to an exact hour this amount of force would mean only about four horsepower.—Electric News.

An Effective Rebuke.
Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria is not one of the most conventional of monarchs and sometimes rebukes his officials in a fashion which comes perilously near a practical joke. On one occasion the emperor sent a message to the official who was responsible for keeping his roads in order, stating that in a couple of days a royal carriage would be sent to convey him to the castle of Lainz. On the day appointed the emperor's coachman drove the official at full gallop over the worst roads in the district, splashing him from head to foot in mud. When he eventually arrived at the castle he began profuse apologies for the state of his clothes to the grand duke, but was met with the prearranged reply: "Oh, that's nothing! The emperor comes home like that every time he goes out for a drive." The official's roads were soon put in perfect order.

Games Carving.
Carved art and is being taken up by many young men and women of this city as a fascinating recreation. It is rather an expensive fad, and it is interesting to watch one of these skilled amateur craftsmen at his bench executing a difficult model. All the tools used by the carver are but a handful. The worker sits before a wheel turned by a pedal and the little, pointed instruments, resembling those used by dentists, are placed in the corner of the small table on which the worker's hand rests while he holds the shaped stone or shell beneath the needle-like drills. The drills vary in thickness according to the portion of the design to be executed. On account of the high nervous tension the amateur carver works but a short time each day.—New York Sun.

Talking to the Wrong Man.
While Judge Dooly was holding court in Washington county, Ga., a certain General Hanson, who was famed as a blowhard, came in and sat down at the side of the judge and he began to tell him about the vast amounts of property he owned.

"Stop just a moment, general," said Judge Dooly. "Mr. Sheriff, call in Jones, the receiver of tax returns."

In a few moments that worthy appeared.

"Mr. Receiver," said the judge, "come up here and make an inventory of General Hanson's property. He has mistaken me for you."

Deserved the Mead.
Departing Guest—Out of this sum give each of the waiters 10 sous and Henri 5 francs. Head Porter.—But Henri has just now entered our employment. He has not yet served you. Guest.—And therefore he is the only one who hasn't annoyed me.—Helter Skelter.

Remote Connection.
Scottish Elder (to loafer)—Well, Mr. McDonald, what church do ye belong to? McDonald.—It's like this, Mr. McPheerson: I canna rightly be said te gang te any kirk, but it's the auld kirk I stay awn' frae.—London Express.

Portugal.
Portugal was formerly known as Lusitania. The present name is derived from Port Callo, the ancient name of the town now known to us as Oporto.

Ebony.
Ebony is always soaked in water for from six to eighteen months as soon as cut. It comes chiefly from Mauritius and the East Indies.

Followed Suit.
The prima donna fell down in the opening to that aria. "Laudy days! So did our cook!"—Baltimore American.

HOUSE HUNTING

By LAURA R. TURNLEE

MacElligott returned from his vacation, and when he entered his bachelor home—a single room, which was all he needed—it seemed lonelier to him than ever. In a country hotel with women and children about him he had had an advantage. None of them belonged to him; but neither he nor they had any thing to do all day long, and he could see as much of them as he liked. But now he was back again to the same desolation.

"I've a mind to take a house," he said—"a small house, but a whole house. I'll have room to ask friends to come and stay with me. I can walk about in the rooms."

So the next day he went house hunting. After visiting a number he came upon a cozy place just about big enough for him. But somehow his enthusiasm for housekeeping had been replaced by common sense. "No one can make a home without a woman in it," he muttered to himself. "My friends won't come to keep me company, and I wouldn't want them any way." While he spoke he pushed the button at the front door. A moment before it was opened a young woman of prepossessing appearance came up the steps. An elderly woman appeared at the door, and MacElligott drew back. The lady who had just appeared said:

"I understand that this house is to let furnished. Can I see it?"

"Certainly."

Supposing the two had come together to look at the house, the keeper of it led the way into the living room, a dainty little apartment, neatly furnished, and from there through the rooms on the first floor. On reaching the second floor she threw open the door of the best bedroom, remarking, "Any couple who couldn't be happy in this room couldn't be happy at all."

MacElligott and the lady both looked very sober at this, for the keeper said it as if having mistaken them for a married couple. MacElligott looked at the ceiling, and the lady looked at the floor.

"And here," continued the speaker, opening a door communicating with a smaller room, "is a convenient room for a child. The crib over in that corner will be left with the other furniture."

Neither the gentleman nor the lady showed the expected appreciation for the child's room or the crib, but the conductor passed on to other chambers, expatiating on what they were for, and how convenient they were, finally passing down into the living room again. She was about to make an effort to rant the house when there was a ring at the doorbell, and she left them while she answered it. The lady stood looking down to the floor. It was very stupid of the keeper to go about talking to them as if they were married when they had not even met before.

MacElligott thought it time to assure the lady that he wanted the house, but he would not think of standing in her way. After an hour he did so.

"Taking a house is only a passing fancy of mine," she replied. "I'm tired of boarding and would like a house, but I have no one to occupy it with me, and I doubt if I should improve my condition by housekeeping. True, it would give me occupation to take care of it, but I should have to take in a woman as a roomer for company, and I dislike having persons about in whom I have no interest. Besides, a woman would be no protection."

"I am in the same fix," replied MacElligott. "I'm a bachelor, and if I should take a house it would soon be a sorry looking place, with no woman to look after it. Without constant scrubbing, brushing and putting things to rights any house will run down."

"That's very true, but you could hire a housekeeper, some elderly person, whose presence wouldn't—wouldn't excite comment."

"Hm! I would prefer one whose presence would excite comment."

At this the lady's eyes dropped again to the floor.

"How would it do for you to take the house and rent a room to some old man, whose presence would not cause comment? He would serve perhaps for protection."

There was no reply to this, the lady keeping her eyes on the floor, but her features said very plainly, "I'd rather have a man about my own age."

Meanwhile the keeper was showing another person through the house, and MacElligott, hearing them coming downstairs, said:

"May I make bold to ask your address? I may be able to suggest a plan for you. I have a cousin who—"

"He is not spoken. The keeper was coming. The lady hurriedly gave her address in a low tone and passed out. MacElligott waited till the third party had gone, then made a bargain for the house.

"When would you like possession?" asked the woman.

"I don't know."

"I take it your wife is much pleased with the house."

"Very much pleased."

MacElligott paid the rent on the house for three months, then one day called with the lady he had met there and made arrangements for its occupancy. The keeper still spoke of her as "your wife," but caused no embarrassment, because by this time the couple were engaged.

Curiosity of an Empress.

Mme. de Heggermann-Lindencrone in her reminiscences, "In the Courts of Memory," relates an amusing experience which took place at one of her visits to the court of Napoleon III.

Her hair was so abundant and so curly that no one would believe her coiffure was natural. The Empress Eugenie asked: "Where can one buy such lovely curls as you have? Are they real or false? You won't mind telling me. Some people have made bets about it. How can we know unless you tell us?" The American visitor replied: "My hair is all my own, your majesty, and if you wish to make sure, I am perfectly willing that you should see for yourself." And, "Removing my helmet," says Mme. Lindencrone, "I took out the comb and let my hair down. Every one crowded around me and felt and pulled my hair about until I had to beg for mercy. The emperor, looking on, cried out: 'Bravo, madame!' and gathering some flowers on the table, handed them to me, saying: 'Your success hangs by a hair, does it not?'"

Nothing to Be Said.
Prospective tenant talking with the janitor standing on the steps of a flat-house on a cross street near an avenue on which there is a trolley line.

Prospective Tenant—Can you hear the cars plainly here?

Janitor—Oh, my, no; you can't hear the cars here at—

But at this moment there came rumbling, grinding down the avenue at forty miles an hour a big trolley car that passed this street with a roar that would have made a double jointed earthquake falling down a steep and rocky mountain canyon—sound like somebody in the distance playing a piccolo.

The prospective tenant looked at the janitor for just one moment, sadly and reproachfully, and then she turned and went away.

And the janitor? Well, the janitor just let her go without another word, for he realized that this was a case in which there was nothing further to say.—New York Sun.

Feeble Minded Children.
Economic incompetence often goes by the name of laziness, thriftlessness, shiftlessness. In every village we find some of this "worthless sort," and they usually get scant sympathy and still scantier interpretation. Be careful of your own diagnosis of these cases, reader, or you may make the mistake of the ignorant parent who actually beats a feeble minded child, thinking the child will not obey, when, as a matter of fact, the child cannot obey. There may be a kind of laziness which will respond to moral suasion, but there is another important kind which is due to incurable deficiency of will. Feeble mindedness is a blight which not only affects the intellect, but may also weaken the instincts which are at the basis alike of play, work and thrift.—American Magazine.

Oddities In Print.
An enterprising exchange has collected the following oddities in print:

A butcher's sign reads as follows: "John Jacobs kills pigs like his father."

A tailor had a bill in his window to the following effect: "Wanted—Several thin coat makers. This is a fine chance for spare tallors."

One advertisement was headed, "Two sisters want washing." So do a good many brothers. Another advertisement was: "Wanted—A boy to sand paper."

The following extract from a medical advertisement is perhaps correct, "Consumptives, cough while you can, for after you have taken one bottle of my mixture you can't."

Profanity Once Indispensable.
Swearing was at one time regarded as an indispensable accomplishment. Evelyn Ashley once told Sir Algernon West that on his father becoming Lord Shaftesbury, Lady Caroline Need, his sister, said to him in all seriousness: "Now that you have come into the title, you must learn to swear. Your father always did and gained great respect by it in the county."—London Spectator.

His Visit From Royalty.
"Lived in the Latin quarter in Paris, eh? You say you had a prince in your rooms one day?"

"Yes."

"And how did you happen to receive a visit from royalty?"

"He came in there to avoid his landlord."—Washington Herald.

"On Time" In Earn Work.
A good engineer brings his train into the station on time. It is the sign of a good farmer if he rounds up the day's work before dark. It is just as much to his credit if he does that, too, as if he were doing his work at the throttle of an engine.—Farm and Fireside.

Say, Teacher!
Any time you get it into your head that you know a few things just so we against some of the questions the average little schoolboy can ask you.—Florida Times-Union.

Always Out.
Miss Gush—And were you ever out after big game, colonel? Colonel Highler—Yes, indeed, I have been "out" after every big game I was ever in.—Town Topics.

Dainty Skin.
Remember that rich foods are enemies of a delicate skin. The rose leaf skin of the baby comes from its simple diet.

Let no one do what he pleases but what he ought to do.—Gustavus Vasa.

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