

HAPPILY FOOLED

By LOUISE S. CUMMINGS

"My dear," said Mr. Phillips to his wife, "don't you think that Lucy should be thinking about providing for herself by marrying?"

"Lucy marry? Why, my goodness gracious, the child isn't four months past fifteen. She won't be thinking about matrimony for three or four years yet at least, and if she goes to college it's more likely to be six or seven. What has that into your head?"

"Why, I was thinking—you know how much money I have lost lately—this Thomas Harding who came home with her from school the other day will come into quite a fortune when he is twenty-one. If the kids could be united I wouldn't worry about Lucy. As it is I'm constantly wondering what you and she would do in case I should be cut off."

"You're not going to be cut off. At any rate, nothing can be done about marrying Lucy till she has got out of childhood. Why, she's scarcely left off playing with her doll."

"Well, I suppose you're right about it. Lucy is only a child, and she's got her education before her."

Nevertheless the husband's suggestion affected a lodgment in his wife's mind, and she regretted that the children were too young to be brought together. Tommy was a nice boy, and it was known that he would come into a substantial fortune. Mrs. Phillips would have liked to bridge over three or four years for her daughter, though she knew Tommy was but a year older than Lucy. He would need even more than this to develop into full manhood.

However, the matter of uniting the children when they should become older had got into Mrs. Phillips' head, and she couldn't let the matter alone. One day Mr. Phillips said to her:

"What's become of Tommy? I have not seen him around here for a long while."

"He's not coming so much now as he did."

"What's the trouble?"

"Well, it's your fault. You seemed to be so anxious that Lucy should secure her fortune that in order to help the matter out I sort of teased Lucy about him."

"You mean in order to gratify your curiosity?"

"Any way, what I said proved that my claim that she was too young to think about such things is correct. A childish friendship has been broken by suggesting love."

"I see."

"If you hadn't got it into your head that a marriage could be arranged between two children it all might have come about in time of itself."

"Rather if you had stuck to your own opinion and let the matter alone Lucy might have in the end been provided for."

A month or two later another dialogue took place between Mr. and Mrs. Phillips about what the former called "teasing the children off."

"Pa," said the lady, "I think whatever damage I did when I spoke to Lucy about Tommy may have passed. I met them coming home from school the other day, and they were walking together. Tommy was carrying Lucy's books. She looked put out when she saw me. And Tommy handed her her books and went off in another direction. I'm sorry I said anything to make them feel embarrassed. Such things should never be suggested between children. It takes away the freedom, the sweet innocence of childhood."

"I expressed a wish, and you acted upon it, which was the worst thing you could have done. Don't think any more about it. By the time the kids get old enough to marry they'll both have changed and each will marry some one else."

The last conversation between these fond parents was in this wise. Mr. Phillips had arisen and was standing before the glass shaving. His wife had gone forth in a wrapper and cut papers to work Lucy.

"Oh, my goodness gracious, pa!"

"What is it?" turning sharply with a razor in his hand and one-half his face lathered, the other side smooth. His wife staggered to a chair.

"Lucy is not in her room."

"Where is she?"

"She isn't in the house."

"Not in the house?"

"No—pathetically—she's run away."

"How do you know?"

The lady extended a bit of paper, from which she read:

Dear Mamma and Papa—Forgive us. We know we're doing very wrong, but we can't help it. We love each other just too dearly for anything.

"What does it mean?"

"I don't know. If Lucy wasn't so very young I would think she had eloped."

"She has eloped; of course she has! Don't you see she says 'We love each other' and all that?"

A maid entered with a telegram. Mr. Phillips, laying down his razor tore off the corner and read:

We are married. Are we forgiven?

THOMAS HARDING.

Mr. Phillips as he looked up from the message was a-miffed for a comic artist. His suspenders were down behind, half his face was covered with lather, and on it was the smile of one who had been sold, but to his especial satisfaction.

"Ma," he said, "I thought you said they were kids. But Lucy's got a fortune."

The Tourist Autograph Fiend.

One of the greatest sources of annoyance to custodians of places of interest is the mania possessed by many travelers to mark their names in conspicuous places. On a recent trip through California and the southwest I visited a number of the historic missions. At Santa Barbara I remarked to the courteous padre showing me over the mission that all seemed so spotless and asked how they kept the walls so white. He told me the mission had recently been whitewashed to cover the hundreds of names of visitors scribbled all over the walls. An old hand carved grill over one of the windows had been broken by an adventurous tourist who used it as a step-ladder to climb to the top of the window to place his name beyond reach of a renovating hand. At another mission tourists had chipped the walls, taken rounds out of historic chairs, and in one place a traveler had tried to purloin a souvenir from a mission museum. It is to be hoped that this deplorable trait of American tourists will be overcome, as they realize the annoyance and expense it involves.—Lee Hee.

A Vine That Turns into a Tree.

The woods of Cuba are wonderful, and their lasting qualities are remarkable. The jagun and couey start as a vine clinging to some large tree. This vine grows to the top and then proceeds to put out laterals around the tree and finally kills it, but by this time it has grown entirely around the tree and has formed itself into a perfect forest tree sometimes four feet in diameter. An unfortunate feature of this proceeding is that the wood is soft and useless for any purpose. The wood stuck in the ground for fencing generally takes root and grows, forming a living barrier. It is a common thing to see a vine which secured to a growing tree which has originated in this manner. This is not true of the jagun wood, which is largely used for fences because of its sturdy qualities. There are some specimens of this wood which are known to have been standing for more than a hundred years and there is no sign of decay or weakness of any kind.—Chicago Journal.

A Natural Ice Mine.

Among the rugged foothills of the Alleghenies, just beyond Coudersport, Pa., one may see a most curious natural phenomenon. In a cave a few feet below the surface there exists a natural ice mine, the ceiling, walls and floor of the cave being perpetually covered with thick ice. Curiously enough, during the heat of summer the ice is much thicker than in the coldest winter. Chemists who have treated the ice pronounce it to be absolutely pure natural ice, but no one has been able to discover the cause of this unusual formation, although several theories have been proposed. Some scientists believe that underground water, rising from great depths, congeals upon the walls, but all theories thus far advanced have been unconfirmed, and the origin of the ice mine remains as much of a mystery as ever.—Wide World Magazine.

Secret Letter Opening.

It is said that secret service agents of certain of the foreign offices and police departments of foreign countries have raised letter opening to a fine art. Some kinds of paper, it appears, can be steamed open without leaving any trace, and this simple operation is followed by reuniting the flap with a bone instrument. In the case of a seal a matrix is taken by means of new bread before breaking the wax. When other methods fail the envelope is placed between pieces of wood with pieces projecting one-twentieth of an inch. The edges of the envelope is first flattened, then roughened and finally split open. Later a hair line of strong white gum is applied and the edges are united under pressure.

Fireless Locomotive.

For use in one of its depots for explosives the British government had a fireless locomotive built. It has a reservoir partly filled with water and is charged with high pressure steam from a boiler placed outside the danger zone. It can work on one charge of the reservoir for several hours of continuous hauling or for a much longer time on ordinary shunting work. It can stand for twelve hours in the open air with only slight loss of steam and can run back to the charging station under a pressure of only fifteen pounds to the square inch.

An Important "But."

"Hub" exclaimed little Edith, after hearing the story of Adam and Eve. "That old serpent couldn't have tempted me with an apple, 'cause I don't like apples."

"But," suggested her small brother, "a snake somebody had told you not to eat apples?"—Chicago News.

Sympathy.

Mrs. G.—My husband walks in his sleep. Mrs. Youngwood—I wish I could get mine to. His daily work is so confining the poor fellow gets hardly a bit of exercise.—London Answers.

Auntie Wants to Know.

City Nephew (on vacation)—I'm studying now for a doctor. Rural Aunt—Do tell! Ain't the doctor able to do his own studying?—Exchange.

The Unfeeling World.

"Did you ever feel that the world was against you?"

"Sure. I felt it this morning when I slipped on the sidewalk."

We always weaken whatever we exaggerate.—La Harpe.

A Bachelor's Complaint

By F. A. MITCHELL

I am a bachelor, and I propose to remain a bachelor. Heaven forbid that I should be tied by unbreakable chains to one of those paradoxical, unreasonable, illogical creatures, a woman.

Why my bosom friend, Jim Brown, had to put a firebrand between himself and me I can't imagine. We were inseparable. I never felt at home with any other person as with him, and without me he did not know what to do with himself. Suddenly there popped up between us—what? Clothes—many clothes, clothes varying in cut with every season. And within these clothes was a woman.

There is nothing unreasonable about me. I would have been perfectly willing that Jim should go to see this much adorned grownup child once a week and stay till 8 in the morning if he liked. I certainly would never have thought of being jealous of one who is not endowed with a spark of manliness. But she was not satisfied with this. She wanted him all the time. And Jim, poor beggar, was so under her thumb that she did what she liked with him.

Then she must needs nag at him to bring me to see her. Why she wished to meet me was a puzzle. I certainly had no desire to meet her. "Do bring your friend. He must be a lovely man since you are so fond of him." And Jim was fool enough to believe that she wanted to meet me because I was "a lovely man."

Just as soon as they were engaged there was friction as to the evening she wanted Jim and those I wanted him. I, being a reasonable creature, was willing to divide Jim's evenings with her. Not so she. If Jim made an engagement with me she would make him break it.

Despite all this pulling and hauling for Jim's companionship, he must bring that "lovely" friend of his to see her. I refused to go. This frightened Jim, for he said that it would create an enmity between her and me that would be unpleasant all round. I gave in to Jim—not to her.

Considering what she wanted me for, her treatment of me was remarkable. You would have thought she was in love with me instead of Jim. "I'm awfully glad to see you," she said, all smiles. "I've heard so much about you that it seems I have known you a long while. You have no idea how fond Jim is of you. You must come and see me often. Any one that Jim speaks of so highly must be very nice."

If you had heard the intonation she gave the words "very nice" you would have realized the irony between the beginning and ending of this sentence.

Mind you, I didn't see through all this then. I confess I was fooled while she was showing plainly that she had an object in fooling me. No one but a woman can cuddle a man and let him know that she is stuffing him without repelling him. Instead of repelling she winds him round her finger while she is feeding him poison.

But I knew it all now. Jim was married, and when he returned from his wedding trip he tried to grasp my hand with fervor, but it was not the same fervor as before. I know that I had been supplanted, and more than this I knew that his wife had underlined his good opinion of me. Then it became apparent why she wished Jim to bring me to see her. She couldn't attack one she had never seen, or if she did her onslaught would have had no weight. She must have something tangible to attack.

"So this is the wonderful man," I doubt not she said after seeing me, "that you have been lauding to the skies. Why did he not say some of those bright things that you have so often spoken of? Didn't feel well enough acquainted? I suppose I shall have to wait till he does. Some day when he feels more at home here I presume he will deluge us with his wit."

What a melancholy awakening Jim must have had after this first inspection by his ladylove of his bosom friend to discover that I was after all a commonplace person! And how singular it is that these creatures, who do not know the difference between a syllogism and sole leather, can produce on a man of intellectual vigor the effect they require by mere irony! Jim had known me intimately for years, and yet by a few words a woman had shattered his idol.

Jim has a relapse occasionally and drops into my room for a bit of "old times," as he calls them. But he knows they are not old times; they are altered times. Doubtless he thinks that for him they are changed for the better; that he is leaving me in a stationary position, while he has advanced. At any rate, I have noticed that those things I continue to enjoy or think I enjoy, are beginning to bore him. If I speak of a new play on the boards he will turn the subject to the smart sayings of his little Jim. Then, too, he has become absorbed in piling up money for his wife and children after he has gone. He says it is awful to think of leaving them without support. It seems to me that in getting married he gave up all the fun there is in life to make a slave of himself.

Sometimes I wonder whether if Jim and I had grown old as bachelors we would have maintained the same interest in each other. I fear not. Men develop on different lines. Some men don't develop at all. At any rate, I find that association with any one does not interest me as it once did. I wonder if I will some day regret not having put my head in one of those pestiferous matrimonial nooses.

Figure It Out.

Here is an arithmetical puzzle that it might amuse some one to "figure out" before looking at the answer below:

A poor woman carrying a basket of apples was met by three boys, the first of whom bought half of what she had and then gave her back ten; the second boy bought a third of what remained and gave her back two, and the third bought half of what she now had left and returned her one, after which she found that she had twelve apples remaining. What number had she at first?

The answer is simple enough. From the twelve apples remaining deduct one, and eleven is the number she sold the last boy, which was half of all she had; her number at that time, therefore, was twenty-two. From twenty-two deduct two, and the remaining twenty was two-thirds of her prior stock, which was therefore thirty. From thirty deduct ten, and the remainder of twenty is half of her original stock; consequently she had at first forty apples. See?—St. Louis Republic.

Fish and Fungus.

Every one knows that fishes of almost every sort are, when fresh caught, slippery and hard to hold. This slipperiness is due to a sort of mucus exuded through the scales and is of the greatest importance to all slimy creatures. One of the important functions of the fish's slimy coating is to protect it from the attacks of fungus, a form of plant life found in all waters. If the fish is so injured that some spot becomes uncovered by the slime, a barely visible fungus will be likely to lodge there, and when it is once lodged the process of reproduction is very rapid. It soon extends over the gills and kills the fish. The primary cause of the slime of the fish is to reduce its friction when in motion through the water and thereby increase its rate of speed. It also serves as a cushion to the scales, which it protects from injury.

Mars and its Moisture.

Science now seems to hold that the moisture in the atmosphere of Mars is not uniformly distributed, which we had a right to expect, but also that, unlike the earth, whose tropical air is laden with moisture, but whose temperate and polar regions are comparatively dry, Mars has little moisture at the equator, while the water vapor in creases very largely near the borders of the snow cap. It is therefore the evaporation of moisture from the melting snow which replenishes the dry air of Mars with its aqueous vapor. The poles are the storehouses of the water supply on Mars. There are no equatorial oceans and therefore no source of supply by evaporation under a tropical sun. To the polar snows Mars must look for its water.

Right to the Point.

One of the shortest summings up on record is believed to be that delivered by the late Commissioner Kerr at the Old Bailey in a case where a man was charged with being in the unlawful possession of a gold watch and chain. The appearance of the prisoner certainly did not correspond with the legitimate possession of such costly ornaments, but he asserted his innocence of the charge and declared that he had found the watch and chain on the pavement. The judge looked at the man in the dock and then at the men in the box. "Gentlemen of the jury," he said, "I have walked over the pavements of London during the last forty years, and I've never found a gold watch and chain there yet. Consider your verdict!"

The French Foreign Legion.

No other regiment in any existing army undergoes such Spartan training as the French Foreign Legion. When at their headquarters, Sidi-bel-Abbes, the legionaries are marched off for occasional training trips of 300 miles or more, in continuous daily stages of twenty-four miles, with only five minutes' halt every six miles. General de Negrier, who commanded them in Madagascar, said, "Some soldiers can fight; the legionaries can die." Their record shows how they fall in action. In the Crimea, in Mexico fighting for Maximilian and in Spain their losses were enormously heavy. Of 4,000 legionaries sent to aid Queen Christina, in 1636, against the Carlists, only 500 returned to Algeria.

A Suicide Machine.

It is said there formerly existed in India a machine for the use of the would-be suicides whereby they could cut off their heads. It was half moon shaped, with a sharp edge, was fastened at the back of the neck, chains being attached to the ends. The man who donned this instrument of death put his feet in the chains, gave a sharp jerk downward and severed his head from the body.

That Was Different.

"I'm surprised to see you associating with Wombat."

"Why?"

"A few years back you were calling him a rascal."

"Oh, that was during a political campaign."—Pittsburgh Post.

Honors Were Even.

Ethel (tossing her head)—A kiss? Certainly not. I never kissed a man in my life! Jack—You've nothing on me. I never did either.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Exploded Theory.

"Nature abhors a vacuum."

"Nothing of the sort, or she would not give some people the power to talk."—Baltimore American.

Two Kinds of Sovereigns

By DONALD CHAMBERLIN

Aaron Skinner, an American, traveling abroad, found himself one day at a little inn in the dukedom of Hesse-Meinungen. It was the fall of the year, and Skinner was a Nimrod.

"Any shooting about here?" he asked of the landlord.

"A little, herr—that is, the preserves of the grand duke are near here, and sometimes the birds fly out into the woods near by. One can occasionally pick off a brace that have strayed."

"Can you lend me a fowling piece?"

"Certainly, herr."

The landlord got the gun and apparatus and handed them to the American, saying:

"Be careful, herr, not to trespass on the grand duke's grounds, for if caught there you would be arrested for poaching, and it might go hard with you."

Skinner went forth to pick up "a few crumbs from the rich man's table." One may stray a long way after game without knowing it, and he had been wandering an hour without realizing how far he had gone or how many walls or fences he had passed over when suddenly, having crawled under a rusty wire netting, he found himself amid a plentiful supply of pheasants. He had brought one down and was picking it up when, hearing a footstep, he looked around and saw a man with a gun in his hand looking at him.

"A good shot," remarked the other.

"Oh, that's nothing. I learned to shoot in America, where we still have some wild game left. That's shooting. This is merely execution."

"Indeed! How do you happen to be shooting birds here?"

"I am a tourist, stopping at the inn. The landlord told me I might happen to get a few birds in this wood that have flown out of the grand duke's preserve. The duke seems to be losing a good many hares about."

"He can spare them; he has more than he could shoot in a lifetime. So you are an American?"

"I am."

"And every American is a sovereign, I hear."

"He thinks he is."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Didn't you know that we have kings and queens in America?"

"No; how do you make that out?"

"An American king is the political boss controlling the region in which he lives."

"And the queen?"

"Our queens are our wives and sweethearts. The boss makes a man believe he has a lot to say about the government, and the wives and sweethearts make us think we are ruling them with undisturbed sway."

"And you think that the sovereignty of the boss is preferable to that of a king?"

"Decidedly. He doesn't have a royal family to support."

"But he bleeds you through jobs."

"Certainly, but he can't plunge us into a war whenever he likes, which is far more expensive."

The man smiled. "You have a pungent way of putting things, my friend. I confess you entertain me. I have a shack near here. I would be pleased to have you take luncheon with me."

"With pleasure."

Stuffing the bird he had shot into his game bag he went with the man through the wood till he came to a sumptuous lodge, about which persons in gorgeous livery were moving. When the butlers came up to them they saluted respectfully, and the man told one of them to take the guest to a room for a toilet. When the visitor was ready the two sat down to luncheon. The principal dish served was a brace of pheasants.

"I presume these birds originally belonged to the grand duke," remarked Skinner.

"They did."

"What kind of a chap is he?"

"He's not a bad fellow. Suppose I were to go to America. Do you suppose I could become one of your boss kings?"

"I don't think it would pay you to be one of our princes of the blood. They usually originate, like the oyster, on a muddy bottom and work up to a surface of slime."

"But don't you object to being governed by such persons?"

"Oh, no. At least nobody does except the reformers."

"Who are the reformers?"

"They are the persons who are trying to get into the bosses' places."

"But haven't you any real reformers in America?"

"Not ordinarily. The people haven't time for reform; we're too busy. Occasionally on a big job, like breaking up swindling places, races, for instance, we all butt against it together. But we don't follow it up. We're rich. We can afford to stand to be robbed."

"Then you don't think it would pay me to give up my job here and go to America as one of the rulers there?"

"What is your job?"

"Grand Duke of Hesse-Meinungen."

Skinner was raising a glass of wine to his lips when this announcement was made. He paused and looked at his entertainer.

"And I was shooting in your preserves?"

"Yes—You had doubtless got into them unintentionally, but you were quite welcome."

"No," said Skinner after some thought. "It wouldn't pay you, and it wouldn't pay us."

Feeding the Stomach.

Giving a patient's stomach a rest by feeding him through a tube that passes down his throat and completely through his stomach is one form of medical treatment. The tube is not removed after each meal, but is left in place for days, and even in some cases for a few weeks, as it is not long before the patient becomes accustomed to it and feels no great discomfort from its presence. The main purpose of tube feeding is to stop all digestive operations in the stomach and so give an opportunity for the healing of sores, such as ulcers, but it has been used for other stomach ailments also. Tubes are designed that may be swallowed easily, and they have a little golden bucket at the lower end. It has been found possible in most cases to get the bucket to pass completely through the stomach in the course of a night. Food must be carefully prepared for patients undergoing this treatment, because the stomach is not allowed to do its part in digestion. Warm and strained milk, eggs and sugar of milk, poured into the tube in small quantities every two hours during the day give sufficient nutriment to the patient.—Saturday Evening Post.

Belgium's National Anthem.

The national anthem of Belgium, "La Brabanconne," is set to lighter music than the dignified British and Russian compositions. Its author and composer were both Belgians, and the song was written to meet the public need at the time of a great crisis in the country's history, the revolution of 1830, when Belgium separated itself as called "amalgamation" with Holland.

The music was the work of a reputable musician of the time, Francis van Campenhout, a violinist, a fine tenor singer and a composer. "La Brabanconne" constitutes Campenhout's principal claims upon posterity. Campenhout concentrated his efforts upon giving the soldiers of the revolution a good marching tune, one which would carry along the burning enthusiasm of Fenimore's words without emphasizing any of their deeper qualities. He caught something of the impulse of Rouget de Lisle in the composition of "La Marseillaise" and even reproduced a hint of the rhythm of the great French song.

Dutch Hyphenated Names.

I believe, writes a correspondent, that it is the custom in country districts in France for married women to retain their names in association with those of their husbands for shop signs when they are in trade, or more especially when the lady has succeeded to the business. In Dutch society the custom is for the lady to use her name hyphenated with that of her husband's. A circular about a loan exhibition at the Hague which I have contains some examples. For instance:

Mme. Huyssen de Kattandijf-de Breugel Douglas.

Mme. de Karnebeek-Baronne de Wassenaar.

Baronne Swerts de Landas Wyborg-Smith.

In each case the lady's maiden name follows that of her husband. In France, on the other hand, the opposite order is followed.—London Spectator.

Balancing to Music.

One of the most difficult trials that an equilibrist of any kind can undertake is to give an exhibition without the aid of an orchestra. Good, stirring music is of immense assistance to the performer in more ways than one. In the first place, it encourages and gives confidence to an extent which would astound any one who had never before experienced it. By always performing to one tune the artist is able to take his cues from it, and he keeps time much as a step dancer does. The music enables the performer to confine his attention to what he is doing by drowning any small noises among the audience which might distract him. Most equilibrists during what they consider their crowning feat dispense with the orchestra, and this adds considerably to the danger.

Floor of the Ocean.

The ocean floor is an interminable desert of grayish ooze, largely composed of minute shells, in which, if one were to walk over it, the feet would sink deeply. There is no plant life whatever, even the sea lilies being merely animals resembling flowers in appearance. It is believed that most of the deep-sea animals—not the fishes, but the lower forms—live by eating the ooze or mud on the bottom. Digesting the organic matter it contains. The mud eaters, many of which are of gigantic size, are the common prey of sharks and other rapacious fishes.

She Was Willing.

He—Do you know that as long as I have known you I have never seen you dressed in white? She—Indeed! Are you, then, so partial to the color? He—Not exactly that, but whenever I see a girl dressed in white I am always tempted to kiss her. She—Will you excuse me for a quarter of an hour?

He Got His.

"I love you," said the flippant youth.

"Do you get me?"

"No, I do not get you. I wouldn't have you," retorted the sensible girl.—Kansas City Journal.

No Such Good Luck.

Nervous Old Lady (for the seventh time)—Oh, captain, is there any danger shall I be drowned? Exasperated Skipper—I'm afraid not, ma'am.—London Mail.

Peace rules the day where reason rules the mind.—Collins.