

An Incorrigible Coquette

By EDITH V. ROSS

In antebellum days there were shooting matches among the gentlemen of the southern states in defense of their honor, the causes of which were usually published to the world. But when a woman was the subject of dispute some other cause was invented in order to keep her name out of the matter. At times when the ingenuity of the participants failed them in inventing a cause they would resort to absurd expedients.

Miss Cary Randolph many years ago was a belle in Charleston, S. C. Among her suitors were Robert Fitz-Hugh and Percy Bryce, both South Carolinians. Miss Randolph was not averse to setting her suitors against one another. It gratified her amour propre. But in this case she went too far.

One day while she was walking with Fitz-Hugh Bryce passed them. The lady smiled on him and invited him to join them. She knew that neither would relish the presence of the other, but this did not trouble her; she wished her friends to see her with one of the men who were known to be devoted to her on each side of her. Having paraded her lovers before her friends she turned in the direction of her home and on arriving there dismissed them. Had she asked them to go in with her there might have been some unfortunate result. Had she asked one of them to it would have been tantamount to an expression of preference. This, too, would have ended the matter, for they were both gentlemen and either would have taken his dismissal as final. Leaving them to walk away together was the worst thing she could have done.

They proceeded some distance, remarking upon the weather and such other makeshift topics; then when they were about to part Fitz-Hugh said to Bryce:

"I was surprised at your intrusion." "The lady invited me." "That was common politeness." "If you think yourself aggrieved you have a right to reparation."

Both men were ready to explode, but Fitz-Hugh repressed his feelings for the time and, turning on his heel, walked away. As he proceeded, seeking the better of him, and, seeking his friend Walter Raymond, he commissioned him to take a challenge to Bryce. Raymond asked the cause and when told of it replied that he would have nothing to do with an affair that would bring in the name of a lady, whereupon Fitz-Hugh told him to make up a pretext to be given to the world as the cause of the duel. Raymond, after some thought, decided that the ostensible reason for the quarrel was to be that Bryce had called Fitz-Hugh a redhead. Fitz-Hugh's hair was auburn. This was not a reason calculated to deceive the public, but Raymond had no inventive genius, and it was the best he could do.

Miss Randolph had made choice between these two men—a very decided choice. She was ready to give herself to one of them. But she desired to prolong the pleasure of being courted by both and make herself more valuable to the man she loved by rendering her winning more difficult.

Despite the effort made to keep the coming meeting a secret from her, she got wind of it. On the morning appointed for the duel she mounted a cob and rode to the grounds, arriving there just in time to see the rivals for her hand standing facing each other with deadly intent. Her presence put a stop to the proceedings. "I have heard," she said, "that one of you gentlemen is about to kill the other. Since I have made up my mind to accept a proposition of marriage from one of you I object to the other killing him."

The rivals glared at each other, but said nothing. The seconds, who were opposed to the meeting, saw an opportunity to stop it where it was.

"Perhaps," said Bryce's second after an awkward pause, "Miss Randolph will deign to remove the cause of the quarrel."

"What is the cause?" asked the lady. Again there was a pause, more awkward than the first, at the end of which Fitz-Hugh's second said that her principal had been insulted by being called a redhead. If Miss Randolph would decide whether Mr. Fitz-Hugh's hair was red it would end the matter.

"Mr. Fitz-Hugh's hair is a fiery red," she said, "but that has nothing to do with my preference."

Fitz-Hugh colored. "Gentlemen," he said, "I see no reason why this affair should not proceed."

"Nor I," added Bryce.

Miss Randolph made no interposition until one of the seconds had given the word "Ready" and the other stood ready to give the signal to fire by dropping a handkerchief. This man, expecting that Miss Randolph would indicate her preference, delayed, keeping an eye upon her.

She smiled at him.

"This is absurd," he said. "Do you intend to risk losing the man you love? Decide."

"How can I," she replied, "in such a public fashion?"

"Gentlemen, shut your eyes," said the second.

Every man except the principals closed his eyes. Hearing a laugh at some distance from them, they opened them to see Miss Randolph walking away with her arm through that of Mr. Fitz-Hugh.

Where Life is Cheap.

There are 100,000,000 children in China under ten years of age. One wonders how there are so many remaining, for multitudes of children die of through exposure, ill care, starvation and disease. Hundreds of thousands of these children live in the Chinese sampans, which ply the rivers and through the water fronts of the great cities. For generations these boatmen knew no other home than these boats. In case of babies a rope is attached under their arms and if they slip over the side of the sampan into the water they are fished out the best way possible. But life is plenty and cheap in China. "How much, then, is a man better than a sheep?" Not much better in China. A friend of mine, a Brooklyn Judge, who arrived late at the daily public execution in Canton and who could only stay for the day, was told that for \$10 they would secure a special victim to satisfy the American's curiosity. And they proceeded to find a man who for the sake of his family was willing to barter his life for \$10. Of course he got the \$10—and his life.—Christian Herald.

Ancient Halberds.
Halbard is the arms carry'd by the sergeants of foot and dragoons; the head of the halbard ought to be a foot or fifteen inches long; one end ought to be hollow to receive the staff, but the other broad, ribb'd in the middle, edged on both sides and drawing to a point, like the point of a two edged sword. On one side of the head is likewise fixed a piece in form of a half moon or star, and on the other a broad point of four inches long, crooked a little, which is very commodious for drawing fascines, gabions or what ever obstacle happen in the way. The staff of the halbard is about five feet long and an inch and half in diameter, made of ash or other hard wood. Halberds are very useful in determining the ground betwixt the ranks, and for dressing the ranks and files of a battalion, and likewise for chastising the soldiers.—Gentleman's Directory, 1705.

Making Clothes Fireproof.
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"Families should get this solution, keep it in their houses and dip the whole family washing in it," said the doctor. "It would cost about 15 cents a week for an entire family."—New York World.

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Napoleon Bonaparte had no more devoted and disinterested friend than Gaspard Monge, the illustrious mathematician and founder of L'Ecole Polytechnique. On one occasion he demonstrated his regard by giving the great general some unwelcome advice. Napoleon announced his intention of reading a paper to the French institute. Monge frankly expressed his disapproval of the plan.

"You have not time to write a good paper, and you cannot afford to write a poor one. The eyes of the world are upon you. Whatever you write will be severely criticised."

Napoleon was astonished and indignant at this plain speaking, but he never wrote the paper.

Beards in Russia.
It is curious to note that in Russia the beard has always been an object of repute. An ordinance which Yaroslav, son of Vladimir and legislator of Novgorod, then the capital of Russia, published in 1015 exemplifies this. By this law any one plucking a hair from a neighbor's beard was subjected to a punishment four times more severe than that inflicted for cutting off his finger.

A Chinese Superstition.
It is a superstition of the Chinese that a sneeze on New Year's eve indicates misfortune for the coming year, and to overcome this he is obliged to go to three families of different surnames and beg from each of them a little cake shaped like a tortoise, which must be eaten before midnight.

Labor.
Those favored few who by their rank or their riches are exempted from all exertion have no reason to be thankful for the privilege. It was the observation of this necessity that led the ancients to say that the gods sold us everything but gave us nothing.—Charles Colton

Constructive Criticism.
He is your literary club progressing satisfactorily? She—Indeed it is. At our last meeting we had a perfectly fascinating discussion of style. He—Fine. Shakespeare or Shav? She—Neither. Skirts.—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

A Good Example.
Father (in a lecturing mood): You never heard of a man getting into trouble by following a good example. Son (Incorrigible): Yes, sir, I have—the counterfeiter.

Go, Go!
"There's a great difference in the last words of famous men; but their first words were all about the same."—Chicago News.

The Mocking Bird Girl

By F. A. MITCHEL.

One afternoon in April while on a visit to Washington I was sitting on a bench in one of the parks. The leaves were half blown, and among them birds were twittering. One little songster in a tree above my head was now and again giving two melodious notes, the first higher than the second. They suddenly just behind me these notes were repeated by a human voice, followed by a girl's laugh. I cannot say which was the more musical, the imitation of the bird's piping or the laugh. I turned and saw three girls, all with their backs toward me, moving away.

Cupid has many arrows in his quiver, but there is one, called fancy, that he uses more than all the others. At any rate he had let drive at me with such an arrow and pierced my heart. I had been caught by the trifling incident that I have mentioned and was enamored of the girl who had mocked a bird and laughed. I fancied her the embodiment of feminine mischief; her smile between dimples was doubtless expressive of that melodious laugh, and her eyes laughed as well as her lips and her voice.

Had I been a trifle less fanciful and more practical I would have arisen and hurried after the girls to get a view of the one who had bewitched me. But by the time I became aroused to the situation it was too late. I went after them, but the park was full of people, and they were lost in the crowd.

A few evenings later I was attending a reception at the White House. I was standing near the opening to the conservatory with a married lady to whom I was indebted for invitations. Suddenly from within the conservatory I heard the musical laugh that had charmed me. But unfortunately high growing plants were between me and the person who laughed, and I could not see her.

I would have given all I possessed if I could have left my companion and hurried around what screened the girl I longed to see. But no. Conventional lady she was. To leave a woman standing alone at a function would be unpardonable. And what excuse could I make for such an act? Could I say: "I admire, pardon me, there is a mocking bird girl behind these palms with whom I am enthralled. I must leave you to go to her?" Such a course would be to commit social suicide, for I have observed that of all the women in society the most sensitive to the attention shown them are those who have husbands. I remained at my post, but heaven knows what it cost me to do so. Later I would have tried to find her, but how could I do so never having seen her face?

The next time I heard my mocking bird laugh I was at the capitol, up in a gallery under the dome. Directly below me walked a man, a woman and a girl. I could see the tops of their heads and shoulders, but nothing more. Then up came the laugh. It was the same I had heard twice before. I would know it among a thousand.

I was tempted to jump down fifty or a hundred feet and land before my charmer. Instead, I turned and ran down the stairs so fast that I fell and when I tried to rise found it impossible to do so. I had broken my leg.

I cursed my fate for many reasons, but the principal one was that I must give up hope of ever finding my charmer—that is, if she was a stranger in Washington. If not, I would remain there as long as I lived in order to find her.

I did not get the use of my leg again till July, and then it was too hot to remain in one of the hottest cities in America. I would have done so, but I didn't believe the girl I was looking for would be there. With a heavy heart I went northward.

In October I returned to prosecute my search. I accepted all the invitations I received, hoping to meet my mocking bird girl. I was doomed to disappointment. Everywhere I went I listened and never heard a girl laugh that I did not feel a pang because it was not the one I longed to hear. I was introduced to so many girls, but none of them could fill the gap in my heart.

One evening, I was assigned to take a certain young lady out to dinner. She was very pretty. Her eyes were liquid, her smile flattered by dimples. I passed a delightful period chatting with her. For there was between us that wireless something which tells two persons that they like each other. I parted with her under the impression that she might make me forget my laugh girl.

I met this young lady again and asked permission to call. It was granted, and during the first evening I spent at her home I made a discovery. She began to play the piano, and this set a canary bird in another room to singing. "I once heard a girl," I remarked, "imitate a bird to perfection." "I can do that," she said and straightway reproduced some of the canary's notes. Whether it was the expression on my face or what it was I know not, but she laughed.

I sprang toward her and took both her hands in mine.

"I've been hunting you since last April," I exclaimed. "I heard you imitate a bird in the park and laugh. That laugh made me your slave for ever."

And I spoke the realistic truth. We have been married ten years, and I have never yet had my way in a single instance.

Human Errors.

All man made machinery runs with wheels. Yet there is not a single wheel in the human body. And the human body is the most perfect piece of mechanism in the world. It seems strange that man has developed mechanisms along all lines but those with which his own body works. Practically every motion we make is performed by the direct operation of brain and living creatures are the only machines so built. Almost all these human levers are of one kind; they are called the third. There are three kinds of levers: (1) that in which the fulcrum is between the power and the weight or resistance, as in a pair of scissors; (2) that in which the weight or resistance is between the fulcrum and the power, as in an ear; (3) that in which the power is between the fulcrum and the weight, as in a pair of grass clippers. It is true that each of these forms of levers is used in the human body, but so great a mechanism has ever been built on the purely lever principle.—New York World.

Japan's Hekey Pekay Man.
Japanese children are amused by the rice jelly mold, or amesaku, or, as American children are by the Hekey pokey ice cream linerant. Beating a drum, he goes up and down city streets with a small box on his bamboo pole or on a small cart, paper flags of various colors decorating his outfit. Amesaku is a kind of jelly made from rice, of which all Japanese children are extremely fond. The same seller stops when the children gather round him, and he amuses them by molding all kinds of shapes, from a fish to a bird, which he sticks on a piece of bamboo and sells to his audience for a mere nothing. He can blow up the same like a glass blower, making a globe or a large sized animal or fish, as he wills, and each child chooses the object he most fancies. Each object created is painted with a vegetable coloring in lifelike colors, and with each purchase he gives away a paper flag. He is a picturesque figure at all temple festivals.—Bulletin of Japan Society.

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White men from foreign lands have lived years in Arabia, only to have this boll appear upon their return to civilization, where its presence is embarrassing and hard to explain. May be it was "date boll" that Job had. Once a British consul at Aleppo lost almost his whole nose from one of these bolls. Nearly every Kurd of the time you met has this "date mark" on his face.—National Geographic Magazine.

A Substitute For Spectacles.
At a meeting of the Academy of Medicine in Paris Dr. Leger recommended a novel method for reading print for the use of those who happen to have forgotten their spectacles. The method is to take a piece of paper and perforate it with a pin, making numerous small holes. This paper must be held close to the eye and the reading matter at a distance from the eye. A test of this method shows that it slightly enlarges the print to be read and that a book or newspaper can be held further away from the eye than would ordinarily be possible to a near sighted man who had mislaid his glasses. However, the method is useless for prolonged reading, being valuable only when one must read a few paragraphs.—

Neighborhood Melody.
"Please, ma'am," said the little girl from next door, "mother wants to know if you will lend her your new mechanical tune player this afternoon."

"What an extraordinary idea! Is she going to give a dance?"

"No, ma'am. We're tired of dancing to it. She wants to keep it quiet for a couple of hours so that the baby can sleep."—Washington Star.

Sugar Water.
Eau sucree is said to dispel thirst more efficaciously than any other drink, and it is simplicity itself. Put three large lumps of sugar in a tumbler with a tablespoonful of water and allow the sugar to dissolve, then fill up with more cold water. The French say that the perfection of this drink consists in letting the sugar first melt slowly in a small quantity of water.

Longest Sentence.
"It says here that the longest sentence in the English language contains 140 words," observed the old fogy.

"That's wrong," replied the grrouch. "The longest sentence contains only one word."

"What is that?" asked the old fogy.

"Life," replied the grrouch.

Back to Earth.
Rankin—Have you never been to Niagara falls? Phyle—Yes, but I want to go again some day and see the scenery. The first time I went I was on my honeymoon.—Judge.

Early Artillery.
The earliest artillery guns were made from wrought iron bars, bound together or like the staves of a cask by the shrinking over them of iron hoops.—London Tit-Bits.

The love of self increases with the self.—Juvenal.

A Village Tale

By M. QUAD

It was when Uncle Eben, Ebenezer was postmaster at Hopewell, Mass. Ebenezer Thompson and Ben Goodbody sat at the postoffice one evening, and as they sat around and whittled and talked for the mail to come in Ebenezer said:

"Eben, you're bound to Cat Hill a hundred times a week, and just how do you call it from Hopewell?"

"Just as far as it is," answered Eben after thinking for about three minutes. "And that's ten miles."

"Who said it was?"

"I say so," I carried the mail on that road for three long years, and I reckon I know the distance pretty well. I asked you because some one said you call it only nine and a half miles."

"And that's what I'm sayin' this mornin'. It's nine miles and a half to an inch."

"Say, Eben, didn't you measure it with a party short tape?" asked Ben Goodbody as he whittled away.

"It's just nine and a half," answered Eben in a stogged way.

"It's exactly ten."

"Not as much over nine and a half."

"Not as much under ten miles."

"Eben, are you crazy or a born fool?" asked Eben as his hair began to curl.

"It ain't a big matter to call it nine miles and a half to Cat Hill," replied Eben in reply.

They jawed about it half an hour longer, and they putted and fiddled in the course of two or three days Eben put up a sign reading, "Cat Hill—Nine and a Half Miles," and so now all who heard of it he put up another reading, "Cat Hill—Ten Miles." That made things worse, and a half dozen families were mixed up in the quarrel. Almost every night in the year the two men sat at the postoffice, and though they wouldn't notice each other, they had their ways of hurting each other's feelings. Silas would look around to see Ben Billings and giggle and chuckle and say:

"Did you hear that Cat Hill big moved inland a half a mile, Ben? It used to be ten miles from Hopewell, but she moved up to nine and a half to accommodate certain mean folks."

Eben would be hurt and want to get even, and he'd look at Ebenezer and say:

"Heard about that catnip man, Ben? They say he's measuring the road from here to Cat Hill with a tape string and that it keeps him crazy because he can't make but nine and a half miles of it."

The two men never came to blows, but they never met without trying to hurt each other's feelings. If one ignored anything the other opposed it, and they were country imposters, religion and all public improvements. One day Eben got buried in his well by a cave-in, and though Silas helped to dig him out the chaos was one to say:

"Maybe this narrow escape from death will make him turn to the truth in the future and admit it's ten miles to Cat Hill."

It wasn't four weeks after that when Silas had a saw log roll over him, and as he lay there all flattened out Eben came up and looked on him and said:

"He seems to be a gone, but if the Lord let him live it will be that he may take half a mile off the distance to Cat Hill and save his soul from perdition."

Folk thought the dispute might wear itself out in a year or two, but it didn't. It kept right on for twenty long years and never grew cold. Eben would have gone to Indiana to live, but he didn't want to leave Silas behind to grow over him, and Silas would not go to Syracuse to run a sawmill for the same reason. At length Eben lay on his dying bed, and just the minute the doctor told him his case was hopeless he sat up and said:

"Then I want you to send for Silas Tompkins. I've got something I want to say to him before I die."

Silas didn't hang back about coming, and after he'd arrived and said he was sorry Eben said to him:

"Silas, how far is it to Cat Hill?"

"It's just ten miles, Eben, just ten."

"But I'm a dyin' man."

"Yes, I know, but it's just ten miles."

"It's only nine and a half, Silas, and you are as big a fool as you was twenty years ago!"

"Ten miles!"

"Nine and a half!"

Silas went away, and Eben died, and a year later Silas was called to go. When he realized it he said to his wife:

"Martha, don't let anybody bluff you when I'm gone. It's ten miles to Cat Hill, and you stick to it if you have to live on cold taters."

"I'll do it, Silas," she answered.

In a day or two he was dead and buried, and as the usual crowd met at the postoffice in the evening the talk was all about the two men and their lifelong dispute. Some said one was right, and some said the other. There was a stranger present, and by and by he was pricked up his ears and asked:

"Was you folks talkin' about the distance to Cat Hill?"

"We was," says Moses Campbell, and he goes on to explain about Eben and Silas.

"Why, they were both blamed idiots," says the stranger when he had the facts in hand. "In the man who opened and surveyed that road, and he's just exactly nine and three quarters of a mile long."

OUR BIOLOGICAL SURVEY.

It has been estimated that there are 100,000,000 children in China under ten years of age. One wonders how there are so many remaining, for multitudes of children die of through exposure, ill care, starvation and disease. Hundreds of thousands of these children live in the Chinese sampans, which ply the rivers and through the water fronts of the great cities. For generations these boatmen knew no other home than these boats. In case of babies a rope is attached under their arms and if they slip over the side of the sampan into the water they are fished out the best way possible. But life is plenty and cheap in China. "How much, then, is a man better than a sheep?" Not much better in China. A friend of mine, a Brooklyn Judge, who arrived late at the daily public execution in Canton and who could only stay for the day, was told that for \$10 they would secure a special victim to satisfy the American's curiosity. And they proceeded to find a man who for the sake of his family was willing to barter his life for \$10. Of course he got the \$10—and his life.—Christian Herald.

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"No, ma'am. We're tired of dancing to it. She wants to keep it quiet for a couple of hours so that the baby can sleep."—Washington Star.

Sugar Water.
Eau sucree is said to dispel thirst more efficaciously than any other drink, and it is simplicity itself. Put three large lumps of sugar in a tumbler with a tablespoonful of water and allow the sugar to dissolve, then fill up with more cold water. The French say that the perfection of this drink consists in letting the sugar first melt slowly in a small quantity of water.

Longest Sentence.
"It says here that the longest sentence in the English language contains 140 words," observed the old fogy.

"That's wrong," replied the grrouch. "The longest sentence contains only one word."

"What is that?" asked the old fogy.

"Life," replied the grrouch.

Back to Earth.
Rankin—Have you never been to Niagara falls? Phyle—Yes, but I want to go again some day and see the scenery. The first time I went I was on my honeymoon.—Judge.

Early Artillery.
The earliest artillery guns were made from wrought iron bars, bound together or like the staves of a cask by the shrinking over them of iron hoops.—London Tit-Bits.

The love of self increases with the self.—Juvenal.