

THE PROPOSAL

By MAISIE F. BIRMINGHAM.

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"For goodness sake, can't you fall gracefully to your knees—like this! Seize her lily-white hand—like this! And beg her to be yours with words of burning ardor—like—oh, like Tennyson used to Helen of Troy!"

"Helen of Troy! You ignoramus! Anyhow, if I struck a sprawl like that, Harry Rush, any girl would laugh, let alone such a dainty one as Betty. Get up, and don't be spilling yourself all over the floor! She'd have to use her handkerchief to mop me up if I came any Romeo stuff like that!"

The speaker ended with an erudite flourish that his companion mistook for the beginning of a hostile attack meant to overbalance him as he knelt lover-like at the feet of his friend. In a quick attempt to evade the issue he toppled over in a complete capsize.

"Gosh, Lee, you're a chump!" he stuttered belligerently. "And I'm only trying to help you out of your diffculty. If you can't propose and get it off your chest the way your father did, just read the billboards. They'll tell you the secret. Say it with flowers and have it over with. Bury it! Like a good Christian, bury it! I'm sick of seeing you mooning around. Come on. Let's take a stroll."

Why their way should have led in the direction of Betty's house none could tell but Harry. Yet there they were, before even Lee realized that he stood upon a well-known battlefield. An urgent push from an athletic arm nerved him as, like many a good soldier, he shouldered as he was about to face the coming ordeal.

"Go on in," hissed a voice in his ear. "She's forgotten all about your making such a fool of yourself last night when she had to bawl you out for your incompetency. I'll admit myself you deserved it. As a business man I must say an inefficient lover is the biggest blunder on the sad face of the earth."

With another quick shove he half-supported his pale stricken friend up the veranda steps, rang the bell and disappeared with magician-like swiftness. Left alone, his deserted comrade seemed to be planning desperate flight. However, the quick opening of the door frustrated that plan of campaign.

A dainty little figure entered the room. In another minute a kind little hand was in the grip of the perspiring young man as a soft voice addressed him with melting sweetness.

"Oh, Lee, I got your ring and I'm wearing it, together with your lovely flowers. See, here they are pinned right over my heart. Such a lovely bouquet—violets and pansies. The thought was so beautiful! Who could ever imagine you would be so romantic!"

"Who, indeed?" was all the un-nerved youth could answer in his bewilderment as another soft glance from the wide blue eyes set his heart thumping.

"Yes," went on the loving voice. "This afternoon, just when I was crying my eyes out over having scolded you for your awkwardness, I got your note and the verse is so pretty!"

So saying, she released from the folds of white lace on her bosom a tiny piece of pale pink writing paper, faintly perfumed with violet, blushing as she read:

The violets blue mean Loyalty; The pansies' hue spell Memory; Both these, sweet dove, to you I fling; With them my love, and lover's ring.

A sudden knock at the door interrupted her. She flew to answer the summons, fluttering back with a pretty attempt at matronly officiousness.

SMALL MISS WAS WRATHFUL

Properly Indignant When Careless Boy Spoiled the Result of Her Mother's Hard Work.

Small children, as a rule do not seem to appreciate all the efforts that are put forth in their behalf, merely taking good food, clothing and all other things provided by parents as part of the game, and paying no attention to them. However, there are exceptions, as was shown by a Columbus miss of four years. She was daintily attired in a pink gingham dress, every ruffle and tuck of which was ironed to perfection. While walking on the sidewalk in front of her home she passed two boys who were scuffling and one of them slipped into a puddle, splashing muddy water over her clothes. She gave one horrified glance at her dress, then before the boy could realize what was happening she ran to him and began to wallop him with all the strength her small fists possessed.

"My mother worked hard to iron this dress," she said between blows, "and now it will have to be washed again," and she gave him a final whack of emphasis. —Indianapolis News.

LEARNED WHAT THEY PULLED

Probably Superstitious Auto Riders Will Be Slower to Laugh at Mutes Hereafter.

Last spring, while motoring across a western state, we passed a pair of forlorn-looking mules tied to a post. We passed a few remarks, and I added in rather a loud voice: "I wonder what in the world those old skates can pull?"

A few rods farther on we ran into an innocent-looking chuck hole which proved impassable. The more we tried to get out the deeper we sank in the mud.

Farmhouses were few and far between, and just as we had decided that one of us was going to leave a nice long hike, an old man came up with the two old mules, who looked much better in our hour of need.

To our surprise they pulled us out with no difficulty at all, to the tune of \$10.

We paid the man, and as he walked away he said: "And that's what they pull—pocketbook strings." —Exchange.

Sarah's Idea of Security.

Sarah and her mother had gone to a neighbor's for a few days to help cook for the thrashers. Sarah had to go home one morning to do the chores, but she returned in a surprisingly short time, very well pleased with herself.

"Well, Sary, did you git through with the work already?" asked her mother.

"Yes, ma, I milked the cow, put the milk away and fed the chickens, and then I come right over. I locked the door, too."

"Well, that's a good girl, Sary. What did you do with the key?"

"Hung it on the door knob, ma." —Youth's Companion.

Superlative Comparison.

A young man alighting from an Illinois Central train at Woodlawn station was met by a friend who escorted him to a nearby lunch room for a little breakfast before going up to the house. The conversation naturally concerned the old home town and its people.

"And how is Miss Plumpty?" asked the host. "Is she about the same as ever?"

"No, Gee, she is as skiny as a snake. I never saw such a transformation in any one. You wouldn't know her. She isn't much heavier than your wife." —Publisher's Auxiliary.

The Thinnest Thing.

The thinnest thing in nature is the black spot that appears on a bubble before it bursts. That black spot is the center of a number, usually five, of concentric rings on the skin of the bubble, which form as the skin weakens. The thickness of these rings decreases by regular steps toward the center, and there the bubble is so thin that it cannot reflect light, and therefore appears black. It is about seven molecules thick. But mica has been split by man into layers only one molecule thick.

GREAT VARIETY IN CURRENCY

Fifty-four Different Designs of Various Denominations Are in Use in This Country.

It might be possible to buy almost every one of the fifty-seven famous varieties of pickles made in Pittsburgh with a different kind of paper money. Everybody knows that we have numerous kinds of paper currency, national bank notes, gold and silver certificates and others. But, observes the American Banker, "It is doubtful if many realize that in all there are fifty-four different designs of various denominations."

"Of ones, twos, and one thousands, there are five kinds; of fives, fifties and one hundreds; six kinds; of tens and twenties, seven kinds; of five hundreds, four kinds; of ten thousands, two; and of five thousands, one. "Naturally, this makes counterfeiting easier, and treasury officials are discussing ways to reduce the variety. This should include printing all notes of the same denomination in the same color, with a distinct and different color for each denomination. No one then would have to scan into a bill to determine its value, and there would be no possibility of raising a note of low denomination to a higher one."

OUR TIME TO BE FUNNY

Joker in Decided Hard Luck in Choosing Occasion for Giving Humorous Imitation.

We have a friend who, though not visiting us frequently, never lets us know when she is coming, to see us, but always arrives unexpectedly. A peculiar habit of hers is, when just admitted, to say: "Well, the cat's come back." This expression, pronounced in a high, nasal voice, always amuses us.

One time I thought I would be a good joke to pretend I was this friend. It was during the summer and the front door was open. I marched boldly in and, imitating the nasal tones as best I could, I exclaimed: "Well, the cat's come back."

Not recognizing the expected burst of laughter, I looked around to find out why. There, sitting in grim silence, was this friend, who could not possibly have mistaken the significance of my remark. —Chicago Tribune.

The Three Gauges.

"Railroad troubles," scoffed the old timer. "Why, you don't know what railroad troubles are!"

He paused deep in thought. "When I was a youngster there was a great railroad building boom. People, counties, states crowded each other in the great rush to buy railroad stocks and bonds. Then came the crash. Many of the proposed roads were never built; in fact, there never had been any intention of building some of them. The whole thing was a stock-selling scheme. Of course this made it all the harder for the legitimate companies. So hard, in fact, that a public speaker of the day characterized the situation in a way that I will always remember.

"Railroads are built of three gauges," he stated. "These are broad gauge, narrow gauge and mortgage." —New York Post.

No Escape.

The problem of getting away from life becomes increasingly difficult by any other means than ending it, and, if Sir Oliver Lodge be right, even that is a futile method. Mail, telephone and telegraph find you out wherever you may go. For a time there was hope in the aeroplane, but Marconi experiments in London have dashed that. Passengers flying across the English channel have been hailed and talked to by wireless from London. Conversations have been held between planes 300 miles apart. There seems to be no escape. —Denver News.

The Human Dud.

While he was making his way about his platoon one dark night a sergeant heard the roar of a "G. I. Can" overhead and dived into a shell hole. It was already occupied by a private, who was hit full in the wind by the non-com's head. A moment's silence—a long, deep breath, and then: "Good lord, is that you, sarge?" "That's me."

"Thank heaven! I was just waiting for you to explode!"

He Knew Mother.

William Wallace is generally called Bill by his mother and father. The other day he was playing in the yard with a neighbor boy. It was near lunch time. Mother called: "William." (No answer.) "William Wallace?" Then she heard him regretfully part with his playmate in this fashion: "Well, Jim, I gotta go now. When my mother calls me by my regular name she means business."

Considerate.

John, age five, had put in an unpleasant evening trying to keep himself amused, while his father and mother were entertaining company. The evening wore on with no one paying any particular attention to John, who, in desperation, finally approached his mother and said: "Mother, we'd better go to bed. These people want to go home."

Exceeded the Speech Limit.

"So your car got into the police court. Were you exceeding the speed limit?"

THE STRANGE GIRL

By MILDRED WHITE.

(Copyright, 1920, Western Newspaper Union.)

The women guests were chatting on the veranda of Claremont house as the "strange girl" approached.

"The Strange Girl" is the name they gave the little creature, gossiping among themselves concerning the affairs of folks who patronized this exclusive Woodside Inn. Nan humming softly, and unmoved if aware of their hostility, changed her intention of passing among them and made her way in her checked gingham frock to a rear door. She carried a hamper in her arms and waved aside a friendly attendant who would have relieved her of the burden. Mrs. Van Vout leaned excitedly toward her neighbor.

"It is my opinion," she said, "that the girl is working out her board here—a rural relative or something of the sort of Manager Hastings, else why should she be allowed to eat at the guest tables in the great dining room?"

"I will tell you something," she said. "This morning as I went out early to the garage with my husband—we were going away in his car—there, back in the barnyard, was your strange girl in her short gingham dress, feeding the chickens."

"Really?" Mrs. Van Vout exclaimed. "Chickens?" laughed Madame Rensater. "I must go and tell Homer." Miss Van Vout said gleefully, and was off. A tall man, who had been silently smoking a cigar around the head of the veranda, arose wrathfully. How they picked her to pieces, the genteel, shy creature who slipped in and out through all their display so unobtrusively.

"Tends to her own darned little business, if it is feeding chickens," he muttered, and strode hastily past the rickety chairs and across the lawn. "Such an interesting personality!" Mrs. Van Vout whispered as he passed; "decidedly western, of course, but picturesque."

"It's his money, my dear, that is picturesque," Madame Rensater dryly remarked. "They say this Jim Brent has made his millions."

The westerner reached the barnyard as the strange girl, Nan, was bending over two white hens hungrily engaged in disposing of their dinner. She had loosened the tight-planned braids from her head, and they fell rebelliously waving, red gold, to her waist. Startled, her soft eyes glanced up at him.

"Say," Jim Brent said awkwardly, "let me do that for you while you go in and get on that white dress for dinner. The bell's going to ring in a minute."

The girl smiled. "Why, that's nice of you," she said, "but I can't trust Biddie's feeding, or Jerry's, to another person. You see?" she caressed the white fowls—"they are about all I have to love. I brought them with me."

"Brought them?" gasped Jim; "from your home farm?"

Nan arose, straightening her gingham skirts. "I haven't any home or folks," she said wisely. He waited later until the strange girl was properly seated at her own place in the great dining room. Then Jim Brent crossed the floor and paused with a bow of deference before her.

"I wonder," he asked, "if you'd let me sit here with you. I am lonely and I reckon you are. They—he motioned toward the fashionable assembled throng—"they don't fit, some way. Hastings will tell you that I am all right."

"And I wish," Jim Brent was saying to Nan the following morning, "that you'd let me carry your hamper for you to—wherever you are going. Wherever you go every day you work too hard. You looked white and tired yesterday when you returned, and your gingham dress was all torn. "Nan—little girl"—big Jim gulped—"I wish you'd stop it all and come away with me. I love you, Nan."

The strange girl lifted a responsive white head into the hamper. Then she closed its straw lid.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS

Necessity knows no law and is usually too poor to hire a lawyer.

Be sure you are right, then hold the stakes while the other fellows bet.

You cannot build a reputation on the things you are going to do.—James J. Hill.

Some women, like some horses, can never be broke to trot in double harness.

"I will," is the motto of Chicago. "I can," is the motto of the fruit preserver.

Evasion is unworthy of us, and is always the intimate of equivocation.—Balzac.

If you can't shine yourself, wipe the shadows out of the life of some one else.

Handsome is as handsome does, none good looking girls are anything but hand-some.

He that rises again quickly and continues the race is as if he had never fallen.—Moliereux.

The greatest evil of modern education is the evil which it inflicts on health.—O. S. Fowler.

The man who failed to secure the nomination may have cause to rejoice the day after the election.

No man ever solves the problem of how to become rich. He wants a few dollars more than he ever gets.

DO BUSINESS OVER COFFEE

In Asiatic Cities the Merchants Gather in Shops to Discuss Affairs of Trade.

Streets in the hazy districts of Asiatic cities are only eight to ten feet wide. The larger shops are eight by ten and the smaller ones five by six feet. In each bazaar is a khan for every ten or twelve shops. These khans are two stories high, with an open court in the center and rooms on the four sides all opening into the court. A door leads from the open court into the street. Rooms are let to different stockkeepers for storage purposes.

Each bazaar has a coffee shop, which is a large, open place covered partly by a roof, where are a number of wooden settees ranged in rows. Any visitor who sits is first given a cup of Turkish coffee and then a margarine or native pipe filled with Shirza tobacco. The charge for coffee and the use of the pipe is about 2 cents. Here the merchants gather to discuss trade bills, and bank representatives to check the number of bills to be taken up and secure data for exchange rates for bills and foreign coin. Rates are practically determined in the coffee shops.

No Doubt About It.

"We have called on a very serious matter, sir," said the spokeslady of the group who had invaded the Penula tavern. "It is rumored that the piano tuner and the woman with him who are your guests are not married."

"Mizus Chin and ladies," replied the landlord, "if you'll excuse me, you're barking up the wrong tree. Them folks are married, all right enough. Ever since they have been here they've both found fault with everything the other'n has done.

"If you'll step to the foot of the stairs now you can hear 'em yelling and cursing as usual. There ain't any doubt about their being married." —Kansas City Star.

A Long Story.

"Tommy, do you mean to tell me it took you a whole hour to go from here to the corner grocery and return?"

"Yes, ma. It wasn't my fault that a man in a big car ran into a man in a little car, 'n' th' man in th' little car called th' man in the big car a bad name 'n' th' man in th' big car got out an' said he'd hit th' man in th' little car 'n' th' man in th' little car said, 'Just you try it!' 'n' then a cop came, 'n' then—"

"Never mind. I'll telephone the grocer to send up that pound of butter." —Birmingham Age-Herald.

Causes of Eye Strain.

The efficiency of the eye as a working instrument is reduced materially by the presence of a distracting object in the field of vision, more particularly if near to the eye and close to the line of sight. Such objects are the dark and prominent rims of torse-shell glasses, curved-eye shades with dark linings, and the like. By tending to cause the eye reflexly to adjust for them rather than for their work, these objects subject the eye to unnecessary and harmful muscular strain, eye experts declare.

A New Definition.

"What is a widow?" asked the teacher of a Sunday school class, the subject of the day's lesson being the widow of Ham.

There was silence until she nodded to a little boy on her left, and said: "You know what a widow is, don't you?" for she knew that the little boy's mother was one.

"Yes'm," he answered, "it's a lady what takes, in washing." —Edinburgh Scotsman.

Puzzles.

"What gets me," said the carpet, "is why a man thinks it is the worst thing that can happen to him to be flooded."

"And what puzzles me," replied the clock, "is how on earth it can worry a man to fear his hands will strike."

More Work, Less Talk.

Some foolish person says that what we need in this country is more active brains. A little more activity in the muscles would be infinitely better. —Toledo Blade.

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