

LIFE VS. FICTION

By GERTRUDE HESTON

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John felt bitter and discouraged as he banged the door of the pretty flat he had prepared so lovingly a few months ago for his bride.

"It's hard enough to get a living and win success, anyhow," he muttered dejectedly, as he hurried down the street, "but I just know I could if I had the least bit of encouragement at home. Lydia seemed so interested and kind before I married her—I thought she'd care—but now all she thinks of is her career. The coffee's cold, biscuits burned, bacon raw, and everything in disorder.

"What if she did get five dollars for that silly story—maudlin stuff. I wonder editors are fools enough to accept it—I'm left to get along any old way. I suppose she sits and writes all day. I'm sure she does nothing for me. She won't even fix herself up so I'll have something good to look at. I guess the boys were right to laugh at me for putting my head in the noose."

At the office his employer looked critically at him many times that day and frowned at careless, listless work. "Lucky I did not tell him I thought of promoting him. I'll have to look round for someone else," he said to himself.

At home Lydia yawned and stretched herself. Even the soiled wrapper and hair in curl papers could not wholly disguise the fact that she was young and pretty. Pushing the breakfast dishes one side, she got out her writing materials and became absorbed. The "divinely beautiful maiden with coal-black, starry eyes and raven curls, clad in shimmering golden tissue," had just fallen rapturously into the arms of the prince when the bell of the flat rang and Lydia reluctantly went to the door.

It was the postman, and she brought back to her table a pile of rejected manuscript. One after another she read the inclosed printed slips. "So sorry—unsuitable for our publication. This does not mean that they may not possess merit," etc., etc.

One kindly man had written a few hastily pencilled words: "From your story I judge you to be young. My advice to you is to get married and lose yourself in your husband's career; help him win success. You can write later and have something to write about."

Lydia angrily tore up the letter, but the words persisted in her memory. Her pen went more slowly and her thoughts turned from her heroine's starry eyes to the sad, disappointed brown ones of her own John. She tried again to write, but the story became hopelessly mixed in her thoughts with her own life.

"With the fainting maiden in his arms the gallant prince leaped upon his horse and dashed away." "Poor John, he couldn't drink his coffee, and the dinner last night was bum." She opened her wonderful eyes and gazed at him soulfully—"John always used to say I looked so dainty and pretty and now—"

She sprang up and looked at herself in the mirror.

"Well, you are a sight for sore eyes—you'd make them sore! I guess I'm a fool."

She hurriedly seized the manuscripts, tore them into pieces and crammed them into the scrap-basket.

She then dragged off the wrapper and put on a trim working-dress. She was young and energetic, and housekeeping was a game—so it was not long before the whole place was spotless and in order. She went out and bought some flowers, and when John came home that evening his brown eyes opened wide and the light sprang up in them at the dainty, laughing little wife and the festive board.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Sold all your stories? Made a fortune?"

"No," she laughed. "They all came back. I've decided it's more fun to live a romance. We ourselves will be the radiant lovers and our home the enchanted castle where everything is always beautiful and in order. Will I do for the princess?"

"Bet your life," he said eagerly, as he bent and kissed her.

Virtue Its Own Reward.

The business girl was not an official reformer, but she practiced somewhat on a little ragamuffin of a boy. Many times had he slipped off the straight and narrow and as many times had she pulled him back again. When the reformatory threatened she always pleaded with the authorities and kept him out.

Recently the boy came in to call on his benefactress. "Have you been a good boy lately?" asked the B. G. solicitously. "Have I? I should say I have," replied her ragamuffin friend with firmness and fervor. Then, confidentially, he added: "You know, I find you get more."—Chicago Journal.

Statistics About Pins

Until the outbreak of the war no less than 90,000,000 pins were manufactured daily. The largest pin factory of the world is in Birmingham. It produces 38,000,000 pins in a single day. As the consumption of pins is not so enormously large there would soon result a great superabundance of them were not 82 per cent demonstrably lost. The remainder get worn out by use. It has been calculated that pins lost in one day represent a value of \$4,000.

SIDELIGHT ON SYRIAN LIFE

Writer Gives an Insight Into His Life as a Small Boy in That Little Known Country.

The roads were open. Travelers came into our village. Scarcely a night was the guest house in our courtyard unoccupied. I liked to sit with my father and his guests in this room, built after European style with four large windows over which in winter rolled paper was passed to keep the cold out. The walls of the guest room were white and on them were hung the choicest rugs brought back from Kurdistan by my grandfather Mirza.

There were chairs in this room. I was very proud that we should own chairs, but I found them most uncomfortable to sit on. After a few moments my legs began to ache and I slipped down on the cushions. In the alcove of the guest chamber were some old manuscripts bound in course leather. They were holy books with illuminated margins. Among them was a Bible in Syriac. I carefully refrained from touching it. It was too holy. I might perhaps be struck dead for my temerity.

Among the travelers that came along the road was Hady, the singer. He was the ugliest man that I had ever seen, sore-eyed, pock-marked and dirty. But he was very wise. His ivory-handled dagger in its silver sheath was so long that it reached from his chest to his hips. My playmates and I would have laughed and jeered at him, perhaps, if he had not carried this dagger.—Yonel B. Mirza in Asia Magazine.

BARGAIN AT \$30-A MONTH

Chinese Boy With "Exceptional Knowledge of English" Should Have Been Snapped Up Quickly.

The following application for employment was received by a Shanghai firm from a student in the Shanghai college:

"Nothing is of less importance than the age of a person; nevertheless, it is proper to begin that I am in my twenty-first year. Having a firm ambition to do some service in the business world, I grasp this opportunity to insert myself into the sphere. It is true that many are now wandering idly in the market awaiting employment. But it is true to the same extent that many of these, it not all, are good for nothing. To take notice upon them, or to put some duty upon them is to give gun powder to children as a plaything. The danger can be imagined.

"I am now going to give some account of my personal abilities. It is not too much to say that my knowledge of English can hardly be represented to the full color by such a little adjective as 'thorough.' It is exceptionally excellent, to be outspoken. As to the art of typewriting, my hands go on as smoothly as to skate on an icy river. With such intellectual weapons any hard duties can be as easily conquered as an egg shell by a wave. The salary I look for would be \$30 a month.

"Awaiting your answer earnestly, I am, Sir, ————North China Gazette.

Robin Is Inventor.

The robin lives in trees and partly on the ground, so that it sometimes hops, like birds that live in trees, and sometimes walks or runs, like birds that live on the ground. The robin is a plucky little fellow. He will stand up for himself, and refuses to let other birds put upon him. Generally he lives alone, sometimes with a mate, but never do you find robins in flocks.

This little bird can claim to be the inventor of pottery.

Look at a robin's nest and you will see that it is a clay pot, set into a pile of straw. When a robin has finished with a nest, take it and put it on the fire, having first thoroughly dried it. Leave it on the fire until all the straws have been burnt, and if it has not broken, you will find that you have a perfectly good earthen pot.—Pearson's Weekly.

Peculiar Manx Cats.

The origin of Manx cats is now attributed to the arrival of these cats on the Isle of Man from ships belonging to the Spanish armada that were wrecked there. They were probably brought from Japan or eastern Asia. They are a distinct species with short forelegs, and elevated hindquarters, and differ from other cats somewhat in call, ways, and character. They vary in color. People who have owned them for long periods say they are not good mousers or hunters. In character they are rather similar to a dog, being highly companionable and having some of the qualities of a guardian, but they are not considered hunters in any sense of the word.

Sense of Obligation.

"What a wonderful thing it would be if Shakespeare were alive today!" "I wish he were," said Mr. Stormington Barnes, earnestly. "I should like to meet him. I'm sure he would be very grateful to me for the manner in which I have interpreted his poetry."

Her Present Occupation.

"You say that your wife went to college before you married her?"

"Yes, she did."

"And she thought of taking up law, too, didn't she?"

"Yes, but now she's satisfied to lay down the law."

HOW

POSTAGE METER MACHINE DOES AWAY WITH WASTE.

A postage meter machine, first of its kind authorized by the United States Postoffice department for metering and printing postage directly on mail, was recently put into effect in the mailing department of one of the great banks of New York city.

The postage meter is licensed for use under special rules issued by the United States Postoffice department. Permit to use the meter must be secured from the third assistant postmaster general, division of classification, Washington, D. C. Application must be made through the local postmaster on postoffice form.

The machines are leased to users by the manufacturers. The lessee purchases the amount of postage and the postoffice department marks the amount on the register of the machine. For example, should \$100 worth of postage be bought, the meter would be placed at 5,000, which would designate the amount in value of two-cent stamps. When these are used the meter is then taken back to the postoffice to be reset at the amount desired by the user.

The register door is locked and sealed by the postoffice after each setting. Each meter prints impressions corresponding to the denomination and color of the adhesive stamp for which it takes the place.

The inventor says that it is mechanically impossible to waste metered postage, as the register will not record unless an imprint is made on a piece of mail. A set of interchangeable steel type for the date and hour of mailing is furnished with each meter. With stamps many thousands of dollars are wasted annually.

OF INTEREST TO MECHANICS

How Hardened-Steel Wheels of Glass Cutters May Be Sharpened With Little Trouble.

The hardened-steel wheels of glass cutters can be sharpened without removing from the handle in the following manner: Hold the cutter against an emery wheel so that an angular face of the former is parallel with the grinding wheel. The handle will be ground away at the point far enough to bring the cutter into contact with the emery wheel, but this will not weaken it, as, when cutting glass, pressure is applied to it from the opposite direction. After rough grinding the cutter, it should be held in contact with a wet grindstone to insure a smooth, fine edge. Caution should be used in the rough grinding operation. Dip the cutter in cold water frequently to prevent it from getting too hot and losing the temper. The cutter will revolve when it comes in contact with the grinding wheel and will be ground evenly.—Popular Mechanics Magazine.

Why Crow Is Called Criminal.

The Agricultural department issued a biography of the crow in which it says:

"Its ability to commit such misdeeds as pulling corn and stealing eggs and fruit and to get away unscathed is little short of marvelous. Much of the crow's success in life is due to cooperation, and the social instinct of the species has its highest expression in the winter roasts, which are sometimes frequented by hundreds of thousands of crows. From these roasts daily flights of many miles are made in search of food.

"The insect food of the crow includes wireworms, cutworms, white grubs and grasshoppers, and during outbreaks of these insects the crow renders good service. But chiefly because of its destruction of beneficial wild birds and their eggs the crow must be classed as a criminal."

How Regions Get Name.

Ultima Thule (Uppermost Thule) was a name given in ancient times by the inhabitants of southern Europe to the remote regions of the unknown north. The Greek navigator Pytheas made a voyage from the coast of Britain and wrote an account of what he learned about the Shetland Islands and Orkney Islands and possibly the north mainland, calling the region Thule. The name became vague in its application, especially under the form Ultima Thule.

Norway, Iceland, etc., bore the title in their turn, and many strange superstitions were current regarding the region.

How Japan Makes Water Bags.

A government expert who has been investigating the wonderful papers of Japan reports that the Japanese make water bags of rice paper, which are held to be more durable as well as less expensive than similar articles made of rubber. Between the layers of paper, which is soft and flexible, resin is used, and the outside is covered with lacquer.—New York Herald.

Why His Visits Were Frequent.

"Young man, before things go any further, I must ask you what you mean by spending every evening with my daughter. Are your intentions serious?"

"Well, er—to tell the truth, Mr. Jones, I've cold everywhere else, and you keep it so nice and warm here, that I simply can't resist the opportunity."—Jones.

TESTING AIR IN OLD MINE

Of All Methods, the Lowering of a Miner's Safety Lamp Is Acknowledged to Be Safest.

Raising and lowering a bucket several times, to bring into a long-drawn mine fresh air from the surface, is common practice. Methane may be expected in abandoned shafts or pits driven in coal measures or carbonyl gases, or where a heavily timbered shaft is mostly filled with water. If methane is suspected, it is best to lower nothing but a miner's safety lamp. If the light is not extinguished, the descent can be considered reasonably safe. When no safety lamp is available, and it is necessary to test with an open light, care should be taken to immediately withdraw all persons in close proximity to the shaft or pit as there may be an explosion.

Generally, there is no physiological warning of oxygen deficiency in the air. The first decided feeling is one of extreme weakness accompanied by dizziness, better described as partial paralysis, and the victim collapses practically without warning. To guard against this danger, a man should not enter old workings without having a rope tied around his body and at least two men on the top. The rope should be kept taut. Then if a distress signal is given, the explorer will not only be prevented from falling, but can be quickly pulled to fresh air and his life saved.

RELICS OF AGES LONG PAST

England Has Three of the Most Remarkable That the Whole World Has to Offer.

A lot of bread more than 500 years old, it is said, is to be found at Amberton, in Derbyshire, England. It was included in a grant of land from the crown in the reign of King John, and has remained in the Boar family ever since.

Almost as great a curiosity as this is a house 1100 years of age, and yet fit for habitation. This old dwelling, the oldest inhabited house in England, was built in the time of King Offa of Mercia. It is octagonal in shape, the walls of its lower story being of great thickness. The upper part is of oak. At one time the house was fortified and known by the name of St. German's Gate. It stands close to the River Yea, and only a few yards from St. Albans abbey.

A marriage proposal 5,400 years of age is in existence in the British museum. It is the oldest marriage proposal of which there is any definite record. It consists of about ninety-eight lines of very fine cuneiform writing, and is on a small clay tablet made of Nile mud. It is a marriage proposal of a Pharaoh for the hand of the daughter of the king of Babylon. It was written about the year 1800 B. C.

Making the Hammer Safer.

The hammer is a useful tool, but its use is not quite free from danger to the user or from injury to materials. The flat, highly polished surface is likely to glance off the nail unless the blow is squarely delivered, and when the nail is of cast metal, its head often flies off and inflicts quite severe injuries.

One firm has ingeniously acceded to this cause, and some of the men were permanently injured. Thereupon, the managers tried hammer heads with scored faces as an experiment, and owing to the success of the experiment, the polished-faced hammer has been abolished in that firm's factory, except for special classes of work.

When the hammer's face is scored or roughened it is very much less likely to glance off the nail head. The fact that this type of hammer has proved so conspicuously successful and safe, has encouraged many manufacturers to place it on the market.

The Beaver.

A family that figures prominently in the annals of New York owes the origin of its great wealth to a humble but industrious rodent, the beaver. The same rodent has conferred its name upon a downtown street in that city. There survives the tradition of a Beaver-brook that once meandered in its picturesque way through what is now the downtown section.

But the beaver himself is a vanished species in this country. The beavers that inhabit the little ponds in the zoological gardens are immigrants from Canada.

In these restricted areas, surrounded by high wire fences, these citizens of adoption are as busy as were their ancestors, who once ranged along the streams that watered the woods.—Chicago Journal.

Could Drink a Big Fog.

It takes a big block of fog to make one good swallow of water, says Dr. W. J. Humphreys of the United States weather bureau at Washington. The densest fog off Newfoundland banks contains some twenty thousand droplets in a cubic inch. Dr. Wells and Dr. Thomas of the bureau of standards found: To get one gill of water enough fog to fill a space 3 feet by 1 foot by 100 feet long would have to be condensed. At a fog of that size there are 60 trillion particles of water or three times as many particles as the number of dollars spent by the United States during the world war. "It would take about a half hour to count an inch of fog particles," says Dr. Humphreys. "Placed side by side 2,500 to 3,000 droplets would be needed to fill that space."

How Mr. E. Solved The Problem

You will have a very good idea of what the problem was if we give you the details.

Mr. E. is 64 years old. His health is excellent, his mind as clear as ever was. Some years ago when he made his will, he set aside a considerable sum of money for the benefit of various institutions and persons in which he is interested. In recent years he has had a constantly increasing desire to enjoy—during his lifetime—the sensation of being useful to others, and in what way these institutions and societies will be benefited by his contributions.

The Solution. By transferring certain property to the Trust Company as trustee, Mr. E. has been able to make his money work for him. It is used for a variety of purposes. In some cases, the beneficiaries do not know the source of the money, and reach them at regular intervals. In others, they do. In every case, Mr. E., through the Trust Company, specifies the purposes for which donations are to be made, and the money is used in the most respected manner.

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