

Beaver & Gephart

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A TERRIBLE TEMPER.

"If there is anything especially obnoxious to me," avowed Miss Murphy, in solemn conclusion, "it is interference with the affairs of others; but in this case I said to myself, 'Duty, Mary Anne Murphy, duty!'" "Oh!" gasped Jessica. She had sunk back in her rose-ribbed rattan rocker in quite a tremor of dismay. A very charming room this suburban parlor into which gold bars of sunshine slanted through the half-closed Venetians. Worthy even of pretty Jessica—it, with its tiled hardwood floor, its silver-froed and bearskin rugs, its Madras-draped windows, its quaintly modern mantle of polished oak, its eccentric chairs, its grotesque tables, its dainty aquarelles, its Chinese cabinets, its slender but admirably chosen collection of bisque and Limoges. And surely eye, however critical, craved no sweeter picture than little Miss Ray made in her pale blue surah tea-gown, cascaded with Valenciennes, and all her bronze-bright ripply hair braided in childish fashion down her back. But just now the lovely face was curiously colorless, the purple-blue eyes wide and startled under their long lashes.

There was silence after that sharp exclamation of Jessica's. Miss Murphy could afford to be silent. She had dropped her small shell and it had exploded with the most satisfactory report. She sat rigidly erect in the consciousness of duty done, every fold of her black silk visiting costume stiff with propriety, every pompon on the brown beige bonnet bristling with respectability.

"I don't believe a word of it!" declared Jessica, slowly. If impolite, the remark was in no degree insolent. It was simply the utterance of a conviction. Miss Murphy was not offended. She removed her gaze from a gem of Van Elton's on the opposite wall to fasten it on the agitated little lady in the rocker. It took some endurance on Jessica's part to sit meekly under the scrutiny of those faded blue eyes—eyes tolerant, placid, beaming, as those of a benignant old cow.

"It is true, my dear. He said it. I heard him with my own ears!" This really was unanswerable. "They were in the front parlor," pursued Miss Murphy, folding her plump, tan-gloved hands with aggravating leisure and serenity. "I sat sewing just behind the portiere. I never would have stayed could I only have foretold what was coming. They had been talking about other things, and were silent for awhile. 'Suddenly my Ned burst out laughing. 'So you've seen her,' he said, 'and you don't fancy her, eh? Fancy her?' echoed Jack. 'Well, I should say not!'" "Well?" urged Jessica, steadily. She would hear it out, she told herself—she would—every word of it!

"Well, then," slowly, to heighten by suspense the effect of her narrative, "Ned said, 'The boys around here all like her immensely. Roy Pates says she's a daisy!'" "Oh!" moaned Jessica. "You must excuse that nephew of mine, my dear; you really must. Ned but repeats what he hears. Besides, you know he is only a boy yet—just eighteen. What Ned said is of no importance. Please go on." She sat erect again very pale and imperative, indeed. "If you insist on hearing," hesitantly, Jack replied, "Well, I don't. I did just at first. I confess for a while she deceived me. But a few days gave me enough of her." Ned said, "Why, we all thought you were in great luck to get her." "Luck!" cried Jack in answer so loud, my dear, I fairly jumped. 'Luck! Yes, the most confounded piece of bad luck I ever struck!' I am ashamed to say, my dear, but to be veracious I must say that here Ned, quite carried away by his youthful sympathies, inquired, 'Can't you get out of it? And Jack said, 'Confound it, no! That's the worst of it. I can't break such a contract with any honor to myself. But I only wish some other fellow stood in my shoes just now. I've promised to take her and I've got to do it, but it's a deuced hard bargain—oh, my dear Jessica, you're not going to faint!'" Jessica put out her hand with a slight repressing gesture.

"No, Miss Murphy, I am not going to faint. Is that all?" Miss Murphy was rather disconcerted. Her shell had exploded noisily, it is true. But now that the smoke was clearing away she, at whose feet it had been flung, was not dead—not even wounded. "Yes, I believe that was all, for just then some one summoned Jack. But as he went out, he called back to Ned: 'I'll see you at Blyane's to-morrow

night and talk this unfortunate blunder over again. Be in my study at 10. I'll meet you there.'" "And that really is all?" queried Jessica, quite her own possessed self again. Miss Murphy stared. To once more drop into smiles her balloon which had sailed up so straightly and securely at first had suddenly collapsed and was falling with startling rapidity. "I should think," severely, "it would be quite enough."

"Enough?" airily. "That's it! It's too much! You know an overdose of poison occasionally counteracts the effect of a lesser quantity, and I think," with a smile charmingly confidential, "it is something the same way with gossip—don't you?" It was Miss Murphy's turn to gasp. Such a girl! But then one never could understand Jessica Ray. Miss Murphy thought it was time to go. With the cessation of conversation concerning personal affairs her interest died a natural death. She was averse to wading in foreign waters. The inodoriferous pool scummed over with village scandal sufficed her. She feared aught else.

"Good-by, my dear," with a bewildered shake of the tulleed bonnet. "I am so sorry I had to tell you. Life is full of unpleasant duties. I never like to interfere in other people's affairs. 'Charity,' I always say; 'charity and silence.' If there is any I particularly detest it is tale-bearing. Well, as I said, I must be going. Good-by, my dear. I'm so glad you don't mind."

"Good-by," cordially. "We all thought," pausing at the door for a parting thrust, "that it was to be not only a marriage de convenience, but a genuine love affair on both sides."

"Indeed!" said Jessica, brightly arching her pretty brows. And then at last the door closed on her visitor's broad, black-silk back. The blitheness born of brayado died out of little Miss Ray's face. She went slowly back to the rose-ribbed rocker and sat down therein for a good heartick, contented, mortified, miserable cry. When she had been very young and charming, and Jack Sutherland an awkward lad of ten, their fathers had planned a marriage in the future. The planning stood, by the way, upon an agreeably substantial basis, looking at the affair from a financial point of view. Soon after Jack's father had died and Jack had gone to live with his mother's relatives in England. He carried with him the memory of a pair of sweet eyes, for all the world like big, blue, dew-wet forget-me-nots, for wee Jessica had parted from her playmate with a particularly tender and protesting farewell. Twelve years passed. Neither chafed—as in novelistic traditions bound—against the paternal decision of their childhood. No fair English maiden displaced his first love in Jack's loyal heart. As for Jessica, she had grown to think of Jack as a hero who was coming across the sea to claim her. When she anticipated that coming before her mind's eye forth pranced a snowy charger bearing a plumed knight.

One day just two weeks ago it was she went down to the drawing room in response to the servant's announcement. A gentleman standing in the window turned at her entrance. He came swiftly forward, both hands extended, his face brightening with gay admiration. "It is—it is—little Jessica!" She knew him then. Without everted no splendid steed. By his side swung no jeweled scabbard. Around his neck was slung no mandolin. From his shoulder fell no cloak of roby velvet. Not stalwart statured was he, nor raven haired, nor flashing eyed. Not the grand creation of her girlhood's sweet foolish dreams, in truth, rather, his rivals would have said, a very ordinary young man. But he had come! Jessica's heart gave a great throb. A true woman though, ergo, an arch-hypocrite, she put her hand in his with an air of cool surprise, a touch of well-bred reproof in her greeting.

"And you are—Mr. Sutherland!" Neither had in any way suggested the odd relation in which they tacitly stood to each other. Both felt the chain that bound them, for all its massive golden links a very frail and brittle one in the passionate strength of youthful impulse. Neither would be slow to fling it off if the bandage proved oppressive. However, it did not. The childish, ignorant, romantic affection which had been smoldering in their hearts since the sorrowful parting of the playmates, at a word, a touch, a look blazed up into a pure, and strong, and steady flame. Of his courtship Jack Sutherland made short work. Putting aside the understanding between their fathers like the man he was, he wooed her for her own sweet sake. Just two nights ago he had told her in his quiet drest fashion how

dearly he loved her. And Jessica—well last evening had come the sapphire ring that—only last evening and to day this!

"It's the horrible detestable money he wants. It isn't me!" And then a face with clear brown eyes and a kind grave smile arose before her and she broke down crying afresh. But after awhile she sprang up rubbing two small resolute fists in two very pink eyes. "I won't see him to-night. And I'll be in the library at 10. And I'll hear what else he has to—No, I won't! I won't evesdrop. But I'll meet him there and give him back his ring. When I break it he can get the money without taking me. He's welcome to it. I hate it! But I'll look my very loveliest—I will—I will!"

And she did. As she came up to the parlors at Mrs. Bryant's "small and early" Miss Murphy—always first on the field—looked at her in amazement. Quite a bewitching vision little Miss Ray to-night, rose lipped, star-eyed, smiling, her slim, dusk draperies of lace trailing softly behind her, a huge cluster of violets at the bosom. It was after 10 before she could escape from her companion and make her way to the library. Her hand on the portiere dividing the apartment from the morning room, she paused. Voices. She didn't intend to eavesdrop. Of course, it was unintentional—all was said and over so quickly. Equally of course it was dishonorable, but I think as a rule we are apt to consider questions of honor with extreme nicety when our hearts are very sore.

"skittish," bringing out the hateful word with a jerk, "and—and a deuced—bad—bargain," slowly, and if I've got a ter—ter—here's your ring!" She had wrenched it off at last. But Jack did not take it. His dumb dismay had turned to uproarious mirth. It was well a noisy polonaise was in progress in the drawing-room. He laughed. He kept on laughing. Suddenly the whole ludicrous misunderstanding bursting on Ned he struck in with a very howl of delight, and they fell into each other's arms like a couple of crazy boys and supported each other and laughed.

But recollecting Jessica standing there, Sutherland explained, between shameful relapses into laughter, "It was—a horse. I thought I knew all about horseflesh. I knew nothing. I have to take her—the idioy is mine. I fondly fancied I had found a Maud S. Sim Smiley's famous nag could beat her. I gave a thousand for her. She's worth—ah, now you understand!" For Jessica had sprung forward, mouth and eyes three sweet, rancorous "O's?" "Jack—Jack! And how I talked just now!" all riotous blushes. "I think—I'm afraid—I flared up so—I must have, after all, a—a—kind of a temper you said the horse had!" "I'll risk it!" laughed Jack.

Headless of Mrs. Bryant's small nephew, who had entered and stood stockstill an exclamation point of inquisitive delight; heedless of Ned, who clung in silent, spasmodic convulsions to the portiere; heedless even, this rash young man, of Miss Murphy—that ancient virgin who, rigid and frigid, glowered at him in an access of scandalized modesty, he took his sweetheart in his arms with a good, long, loving kiss, and thus adoringly addressed her: "Doubted me, did you? You—contemptible little—wretch!"

All faintness banished, Jessica leaped to her feet, her soft, quick cry of alarm mingling with that muffled roar of rheumatic agony. "That's aunt!" gasped Ned. "Jessica!" cried Jack. He strode forward and flung aside the portiere. The light from the library poured into the shadowy morning-room. It fell on Jessica standing just within very white and trembling, and it showed on the floor a large and ungraceful heap of crushed drab silk and bugles, disordered "front," and gruesome groans. "For a moment they stood and stared—speechless. But Miss Murphy kept on gaoating. "What is it all about?" queried Ned bewilderedly, helping his aunt to rise.

"I—I," faltered Jessica, "sat down on Miss Murphy!" "What?" cried Ned. "We were eavesdropping," confessed Miss Murphy, with venomous candor, "and Jessica took me for a footstool and—"

Life of a Dakota Maid.

A broad-shouldered, compactly-built young woman, with brown face and hard hands sat in the Lake Shore depot last evening waiting for the departure of a train for the East. She had just arrived into town from Dakota. "We won't waste any time in foolishness out our way," she said to a young man who seemed to be acquainted with her. "There is no love-making on my half section. It's nothing but No. 2 wheat from May to August. That's what we are out there for. Now, I own and manage a farm of 520 acres, and this year I took out a crop of eighteen bushels to the acre and sold it, got the cash, put it in the bank, discharged all my men but one who will look after things this winter and I'm off for a little fun down East. 'Marriage?' said she, in response to some remark by her companion; 'that's what all the good-for-nothing cranks of men that I see from plowing time to harvest can talk about.'

"What do I want to get married for? There are more than 300 of us girl farmers in Dakota, and we will hold a convention some time. I never saw a man yet that I would have around. I intend to farm until I get money enough to live on comfortably, and then I'll see. I'm in the habit of doing about as I please. There was a nice young fellow in my neighborhood; last July he tried to be very gallant, and wanted to help me whenever I did any work. If I chopped a little wood he wanted to do it. If I went after a pale of water he wanted to carry it. If I put a bag of grain on my shoulder he insisted on giving me a lift. He was a pretty, nice boy, but he made me tired. One day I wanted the hay-rick on the wagon, and I took hold of one end and clapped it up on the wheel so quick that it made him dizzy. 'Let me, say he, but he only threw the whole thing down in trying to get the other end up. He didn't have the strength.'

"Says I: 'Oh go away. You don't eat enough No. 2 wheat.' Then I put the rick up in good style."

The World's Largest Organ.

A recent number of the English Mechanic reports the completion of what is said to be the largest organ in the world. It was built by Walker, of Ludwigsburg, and has been placed in the cathedral church of Riga. This colossal instrument measures 93 feet in width, 32 feet from back to front, and is 65 feet high. It contains no less than 6826 pipes, distributed among 124 sounding stops. Most of the pipes are constructed of metal, but many are of wood, especially the larger ones. They are of all shapes and sizes, from the giant tube of thirty-two feet to the tiny whistle of an inch. Almost every variety of tone and pitch can be produced by this "king of instruments," the trumpet and the trombone, the fiddle and the flute, and many other instruments are all represented. Human power is not called upon to supply the capacious lungs of this musical giant, the bellows—feeders being worked by means of a water engine of four horse power. In glancing over the list of stops some fine-sounding names occur, and if the sounds which they yield are as beautiful as their names would suggest it will be readily admitted that the instrument is capable of producing heavenly music. Among such names are vox, angelica, harmonia, ethrica, voix, celeste, etc. It is open to question, however, whether the above is really the largest organ in the world, and it certainly is not if we take the total number of pipes as a standard of comparison. Our own Albert hall organ contains 7428 pipes full 111 stops, not to mention the Rosevelt organ in Garden City, N. Y., with 7081 pipes and 115 sounding stops; and perhaps one or two others might be mentioned as containing more pipes, though fewer stops.

An Anecdote of Bob Ingersoll.

Says a correspondent of the Chicago Mail: President Charge, of the Illinois Central Railroad, told me a good story about Bob Ingersoll that has not yet been in print. A long time ago it was, when many counties in the southern part of the State were under township organizations, and the supervisors sat as judges in certain cases. "Bob" was arguing a case before one of these tribunals, of which the judges were evidently more familiar; with crops than law practice. He brought all his eloquence to bear on the point, that the case in question was a great injustice to his client, and should be "thrown out of court." Continually returning to that argument, he reached the climax with a burst that, as usual, carried everybody by storm, ending with the same appeal to "throw it out of court, sirs! out of court." It brought the judges up "all standing," and the presiding one slowly reached over, gathered up the papers in the case from the table in front of him, and as he gave them an energetic flip out of the window, turned to Ingersoll with a relieved smile and said: "Bob, she's out!"