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SELECT STORY. MARRIAGE AND FLIRTING.

BY LILLIAN STANLEY.

I've a theory—and I consider it, like all my theories, a very good one—about flirtation and matrimony being very compatible.

I mean to publish it some day in a large quarto edition, illuminated, and in the meantime, merely to excite your curiosity sufficiently to induce you to purchase the book (when I do publish it) I will give you a little outline of this astounding theory.

In the first place, it is well known that married men will frequently persist in being frightfully handsome, less frequently, perhaps, but yet sometimes they will be shockingly agreeable and melancholy, as the fact may be; once in a while there is one who will be irresistibly gallant.

On the contrary, it is a proposition which will need no illustration that young men are frequently not only ugly—but more frequently notoriously so—and more frequently notoriously unbearable. With these two facts staring us in the face, what is the great army of young womanhood to do?

Unhappily, she is to do nothing. She is to marry, and she is to be miserable. I had, and the remembrance of it was the only thing which cast a shadow over my flirtation with Mr. Duane.

I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past; and judging by the past, there was a possibility of an attack, should any young lady who intended going deep into the question of matrimony and flirtation, that is, practically, to learn the noble art of self-defense from some professional adept.

I confess that I once or twice scanned the lady of my gallant a little and, as you know, I have been likely to get in a personal encounter. But the lady did not seem at all belligerent; on the contrary, she took things with amazing quietude.

Probably, thought I to myself, she is used to it. Ned came in one morning, with his face elongated at an angle of twenty-three and a half degrees, stretched himself at full length on the carpet, and while I brushed out my hair exclaimed: "Cousin Ned!"

"Well, Cousin Ned, what is it?" "You know that this whole house is in an uproar about your going on with Mr. Duane?"

"Good!" "Silence, you vixen, and hear me; do you know that the married women have held an indignation meeting, at which Miss Skimpole presided, and read you a report of the party?"

"Capital!" "Do you know Mrs. Duane is inconsolable, sitting up nights a crying, and filling the house with her lamentations?"

"Mollie Winters!" exclaimed Ned, indignantly, "what do you suppose will be the end of this?"

"I've not the slightest idea, Cousin Ned. I'm not one of those gifted ones who can see the end from the beginning, and I'm not given to trying. I'm for fun."

"As to the white wine, for to-morrow's at once; Heigho! not to be tedious, Ned, there's a darling!"

"But I tell you, Mollie, I shall continue my duty to the end of the world, if this thing goes any further."

"Cousin Ned, I wish you were in Pam!" "Softly, softly! Mollie mine, there is no use of blustering, we shall, probably, have a case of suicide in the house if you do not stand by me and see poor Mrs. Duane devoured by a green and yellow melancholy, pining away to a shadow, because her villainous husband—"

"Ned Winters, you need not apply such words as that to Mr. Duane."

"It's a scam!" "You're a scandal monger!" "He deserves the pillory!" "And you the gallows!" "Public opinion ought to denounce him!"

"As it has already done you."

"Come, Ned, I wish you had made about three miles and were all pretty well done up. They had half an ounce of alcohol in a pet of tea for dinner. Went ahead and soon struck what seemed to be the main river again. Here four of the party broke through the ice in trying to cross, and fearing most for the stoutest, carrying two one ptarmigan and there was soup for supper. On Sunday, the 9th, Nora and Nidderman were sent ahead. The party crossed a creek, broke through the ice and got wet. Dinner consisted of half an ounce of alcohol, but three ptarmigans afforded soup for supper. They found a canoe and found partial shelter for the night.

The entry for Monday, October 10, is thus: "Last half-ounce alcohol at 5.30. At 6.30 sent Alexy off to look for ptarmigan. Eat deer skin soup. Fresh ptarmigan and deer skin foot tips. Under way at 8. In evening creek got wet. Built fire and dried out. Ahead again till 11. Used up. Built a fire and made a drink out of tea leaves and from the alcohol bottle. On again at noon. Very hard going. Ptarmigan tracks plentiful. Hunted for ptarmigan. Craved a hole in the bank. Alexy in quest of a spoonful of glycerine. All hands weak and feeble, but cheerful. God help us!"

"Tuesday, 11—S. W. gale, with snow. Unable to move. No game. One spoonful of glycerine and hot water for food. No more wood in our vicinity."

"Wednesday, 12th—Breakfast, last spoonful of glycerine and hot water. For dinner a couple of handfuls of Arctic willow in a pot of water and drunk the infusion. Craved a spoonful of glycerine and hot water. Hardly able to get firewood. S. W. gale, with snow."

"Thursday, 13th—Willow tea. No news from Nidderman. We are in the hands of God, and unless He relents we are lost. We cannot move against the wind, and staying here means starvation. Afternoon, went ahead for a mile. After crossing another river, or the head of the big river, missed Lee; went down in a hole in the bank and camped. Sent back for Lee. He had lain down and was waiting to die. All united in saying Lord's Prayer and Crech. After supper strong gale of wind; horrible night."

Breakfast on Friday consisted of willow tea and one-half spoonful of sweet oil. On Saturday breakfast consisted of willow tea and two old boots.

him to be a sort of a grave, moral, and, perhaps, even religious man, from which, he exceeded even my anticipations. He invited me to ride the next morning, which I did with uncomely pleasure, as, whilse we were driving off, I saw the face of Mrs. Duane at the window of her room. She was not dressed yet. Oh! this shocking married woman, thought I; no wonder their husbands flirt. If they only knew anything they would see why they cannot retain the power over their dim bands. Mornings wrappers and frizzled hair have been the end of more than one man's love.

"Oh! dear," thought I, and I actually sighed a little as I thought it, "if Mr. Duane was my husband do you suppose I could ever let him see me looking otherwise than tidy? No, a thousand times no!"

The ride was followed by a ramble in the afternoon, during which Mrs. Duane sat on the veranda, with a young gentleman beside her, and watched it till out of sight. I can't recall the name of the young man, but I recall a little, and I was once actually foolish enough to put my hands up to the back of my head to see if some one wasn't about to pull it. You may think I was exceedingly and foolishly nervous; but perhaps you have never had the remembrance of it was the only thing which cast a shadow over my flirtation with Mr. Duane.

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