

ANOTHER FELLOW'S GIRL.

How Geoffrey Halkett Was Cured of His One Failing.

There was a man once—Geoffrey Halkett by name—of few failings, but chief among them was the ineradicable conviction that he understood the innermost workings of the mind of a girl.

"A clever beggar I once knew," he explained one night to his old intimate, Paddon—"in fact, about the cleverest beggar I ever did know—once said to me: 'If you know one thing thoroughly you hold the key to everything.' It didn't strike me particularly at the time. I had no reason for testing it, but it's awfully true, Jim. I can see it now."

It was in Jim Paddon's rooms in Gray's Inn that this sententious remark was uttered. Jim Paddon was at the moment keenly interested in wondering whether the cork of a soda water bottle would come out easily, like a tooth with gas, or would require extracting with a wrench. The gas gained the day.

"Well," he said, content now to dally with trivialities, "and what if it is?"

"Well, I'll tell you. Sometimes this knowledge is very useful to you, and sometimes—well, it's just amusing. I don't think I'm particularly conceited, but I flatter myself that I have always had a knack of understanding girls. It isn't a thing a man cares to talk about much. In the first place ninety-nine people out of a hundred would put anyone down as a fool who said this—possibly, I am rather femininely minded. In any case, I often used to think I could see things from their point of view better than most fellows and argue their cases in their own way. Now, since I have thoroughly understood one girl, I know I can do this. And what is the consequence? Why, they never astonish me now."

Paddon took his pipe from his mouth and attempted to realize an old ambition, and blow a second smoke ring through a first.

"My experience," he said, when failure tripped him up remorselessly, "is that they vary too much. No two are alike and they always get mixed up, and to try to put them right is the worst of all." Whether he was alluding to smoke rings or girls was not very clear.

"Look here, old fellow," he said, "you've either had one whisky too many or too few."

Paddon adopted the only course open to him.

"Who's the poor girl you've experimented on? Do I know her?"

"That's rather a brutal way of putting it, but I suppose it's Kate."

"Then," said Paddon, "isn't it almost a pity that you are not going to marry her instead of me?"

Halkett smiled. He was not a marrying man.

When next the two friends met it was at the home of Kate Temple, the maiden who, after being analyzed by one man, had perverted herself in love with another. Halkett, too philosophical to be jealous, had only found in the circumstance of her preference for his friend a further proof of the well-known law that ideals must be lowered half-mast high when science passes by. In short, he liked her still, but his attitude now might best be described as one of slightly contemptuous sympathy.

The circumstances under which they all met were now rather depressing. James Paddon had many weaknesses, and one of them had just attained an alarming prominence. Sir McDermott Ballarat, who doubled the parts of eminent specialist and family friend to the Temples (for Kate had one incumbent—she was garrisoned round about by a maiden aunt with fads), had just discovered that his dear young friend Paddon possessed only one lung instead of the normal number, and that that interesting relic must on no account be allowed to winter in England. It was now September. The young man might take his lung to Davos Platz or to Colorado, but he must be off without delay.

Halkett, like most people, was at his best in emergencies. The one cheering fact to the Temples on this last depressing evening was his quiet announcement to Kate that if Jim liked her he would go with him and look after him. He had previously arranged it all with Paddon, who was pleased. This almost reconciled Kate to her lover's going to the further country. Jim Paddon did not feel ill, he said, whereas if he went to a place haunted by invalids he would grow worse out of sympathy.

The good-bys that night were said in chapters. Geoffrey Halkett left first and Kate's eyes were eloquent when she thanked him. She did not say much, but he was satisfied. It was at that moment that the eminently feminine thought occurred to her: "What a pity Geoffrey should not marry some nice girl!" Then old Mrs. Temple said good-bye to all and discreetly left the lovers to settle the rest. This took two hours and three-quarters, during which time Geoffrey leaned against a lamp-post smoking and thinking it rather a pity that Kate's eyes should be wasted on Jim. He was aroused by Jim rushing down the steps, almost knocking him down and swearing at him. They walked to London that night, by way of getting up strength for the journey. The next day they started.

Ruskin, who advocated once a period of lengthened probationary absence for the young man in love, probably foresaw the advantage of taking steps which would cancel fifty per cent. of first engagements. Paddon was not to be relied upon with impunity. His lung grew lusty and strong in the bracing air of the Rocky mountains, but he fell in love with a settler's daughter just before the time when he should have returned to Kate. Halkett had noticed this emotion in his incipient stages, but Paddon had not, nor had it even tinged his letters to Kate, when he contracted a prevalent form of fever and the settler's daughter nursed him through it. As soon as he became convalescent he bestowed on her a new Colorado edition of his old love for Kate.

Now, Paddon's illness had been Halkett's opportunity. Whatever swore in him, it was never his loyalty to his friends. He wrote to Kate regularly, reporting the invalid's health. When Jim regained convalescence it was promptly brought home to him that he should resume management of his own affairs, but his new sentiment barred the way to this. At this crisis it seemed good to Jim Paddon, whose simple brain was not capable of dealing with two sets of emotions, to unceremoniously depart with the settler's daughter and marry her. He considerably left a note requesting Halkett to deal with his honor as he thought fit.

Geoffrey Halkett was a gentleman by instinct, and at the best but an amateur liar. He had the British aversion to taking away a man's character to a girl. After much deliberation he said to himself: "If I know Kate—and I flatter myself that I do know her—she would rather retain her faith in a dead Jim than lose her faith in a living Jim." So he wrote that Jim had got worse and died. He did not consider himself in this, which was to his credit.

Then, being no longer required in Colorado, he followed his letter home.

On the way home common sense argued with him and brought home to him very forcibly that he had made a mistake. Sooner or later Kate must learn the truth. It would be better for her to hear it from him now than to have it brutally broken to her later, when it might injure her life more. It was not a pleasant mission, this mission of confession on which he went a short time after his return, but he confronted himself with the thought that she would at least acknowledge that all he had done was out of consideration for her.

Geoffrey Halkett never told anyone what happened at that interview. As a matter of fact, the girl heard him all through, and then, white and trembling with indignation, infinitely scornful with herself for having allowed anyone to defame her lover while she listened, she turned and left him—not, though, before she had pointedly suggested that he should never enter the house again. "She had never trusted him from the very beginning," so she said, "and now—"

Halkett took up his hat and went.

This man, who had thought himself never to be astonished again, was an obstinate man, but not too obstinate to acknowledge himself astonished. He wasted no time over useless arguments or letters, but he went abroad and some time subsequently he met Jim Paddon. The interview was short, but satisfactory. All it appeared, that Halkett required of his former friend was a letter written to Kate, telling her how matters stood. Paddon demurred, and Mrs. Paddon thought Halkett a nuisance.

"I may be a sneak," said Jim; "but I'll be—if I'll write myself down one."

Halkett declined to enter into the distinction. "You can put it in a gentlemanly way if you can," he said.

A man with only one lung and a bad case is no match for a man with two lungs and a good case and a rapidly developing passion for a woman. In less than a month Halkett was home with the letter.

"Kate is devilish obstinate when she's in a bad temper," he said to himself. "I know what she'll do now; she'll refuse to see me, and I'm not going to trust the letter to the post." Still, he wrote and asked her to make an appointment. She replied by return, naming a day and hour. Halkett gasped a little at this, but went for a walk to think how he should meet her.

He need not have troubled about arranging speeches or lines of conduct. Kate took the initiative at the interview, as he might have known she must. She was very civil, only rather distant, and asked him why he wanted to see her.

"I have brought you a letter," he said.

She held out her hand.

He gave it to her. She looked at the writing, murmured an excuse and left him.

When she came back there was little changed about her except a hesitancy in her speech.

"Don't make me apologize," she said, "but, of course, I knew you were right when you told me, only I wasn't going to allow anyone but Jim to say such things about himself, was I?"

"Certainly not," said Halkett, too blinded by the sentiment of the sentence to consider its grammar. "It is I who have to apologize."

So they parted good friends and the student of women went home satisfied, and on the whole rather pleased than not with the sensation of astonishment to which he was now becoming quite accustomed.

After a decent interval of these friendly relations he asked her to marry him.

Then the friendly intercourse snapped like a pipestem and she told him he had insulted her. "You ought by this time," she said, "to know me too well to imagine that I could ever love again."

This finished off Geoffrey Halkett. He spent a miserable month making up his mind whether to go abroad or to the devil, and he finally decided on a combination, when this letter came:

DEAR MR. HALKETT—Have we annoyed you in any way? If not, why do you never come to see us now? We shall both be in, and very pleased to see you any afternoon this week if you care to look us up again. Very sincerely yours,
KATE TEMPLE.

P. S.—Aunt says she may have to go out Wednesday, but every other afternoon she will be at home.

Geoffrey Halkett read this letter, but not all his experience could make him look as though he had expected it. After a little while he smiled and lit his pipe, and was happy. He might not understand women, but he understood that letter. On Wednesday morning he spent twenty guineas on a ring, on Wednesday afternoon he called at the Temples and saw Kate.

After all, now that he was cured of his chief weakness, he was a very good fellow, and there is never a better wife than the girl who is capable of astonishing you on occasion. — San Francisco Examiner.

ORIGIN OF "HURRA."

It is said to be derived from the German Interjection "Hurra."

A writer in the London Times claimed that the exclamation "hurra" was of Slavonic origin. Subsequently Dr. C. A. Rushton, of King's college, London, alluding to the statement, wrote, saying: "I presume your correspondent must have some authority for this assertion, but I hope you will allow me to point out that, as far as I know, the word is of purely German origin. It is generally assumed to be derived from the initiative interjection hurr, describing a rapid movement, from which word the middle high German hurren, 'to move rapidly,' or rather to hurry, has been formed. Hurra is therefore nothing else but an enlarged form of hurr, and, as I said, of purely Teutonic origin. In Grimm's 'Worterbuch' we find the interjection quoted from a minnesinger. It also occurs in Danish and Swedish, and it would be interesting to know when it was first introduced in this country in the Anglicized form of 'hurry.' In Germany it was frequently used during the Napoleonic wars by the Prussian soldiers, and it also occurs in some political and martial songs of those days. Since then it seems to have been adopted also by other nations, even by the French in the form of hurra. That the interjection did not become so popular in Germany as a cheer at a convivial gathering as in this country is probably owing to the circumstance that preference was given here to the brief exclamation 'Hoeh' forming respectively the end and the beginning of the phrases 'Er lebe hoch' and 'Hoeh soll er leben.' Of late the word hurra seems to have become rather popular in Germany. It is just possible that the English reimported it there, or that it was revived through the magnificent poem of 'Hurra, Germania!' written by the poet laureate of German people, Ferdinand Freiligrath."

THE STORM AT THE SHORE.

Pretty Description of a Gale on the Massachusetts Coast.

It was a superb storm. Its deprivations and disasters by land and sea are elsewhere counted in another reckoning, but there was a joy in the splendor of the gale, seen from a high and quiet center, beside a gray wood fire, while the trees lashed like green waves and the gray waves of ocean were springing into white trees of spray against far rocks and headlands, says the Boston Transcript. The rain poured, poured, poured all day long; the surf on the shore boomed in harmonious thunder, and far out there were white caps bigger than anything Neptune could ever wear, better to be calked white gowns, tearing to tatters high above the deep, quiet home whence no mammals stirred. The sweep of the changing wind and the breaking away of the nearer and the farther fers brought in sight no brave sail. Wise mariners of pleasure had put into safe harbors, and the few sailing vessels on duty bound beat their way reluctantly beyond the horizon's close boundary. A big storm at the seashore has its compensations, even when it drives all but the most adventurous souls into rocking-chairs beside sea-looking windows. There are always the adventures also in these thousands of homes beside the sea, marauders in tall rubber boots and macintoshes, who break into nature's outside yet esoteric secrets of the storm and bring them home untold. Indeed untellable, after the wrestle with the winds on the cliff, while the sweet fresh waters from the heavens and the high dashing fringes of salt spray beat upon adventurous peering faces, and leave to incautiously talking mouths some taste of the bitter and the sweet.

TAKE A BEECH TREE.

It is considered the safest for shelter in a Thunder Storm.

The danger of taking refuge under a tree when caught in a thunderstorm is one of which we are constantly reminded; but, when we have to choose between getting wet through with its attendant discomfort and the (apparently) small chance of being struck by lightning while under the shelter of the tree, it is only natural that we should decide in favor of the latter, says the Paris Figaro.

Under such circumstances it is of advantage to know which is the best tree to choose for shelter. A certain Herr Wockert tells us that we should select a beech tree, and gives us the following reason:

It is always advisable to select those trees whose leaves are hairy or ciliated in preference to trees with smooth leaves. The danger of being struck by lightning depends not only upon the height of the tree, but also upon its power of conductivity, determined by the amount of sap and its electric tension.

Most of us know the tendency of points to attract electricity, the most notable example of the application of this principle being the lightning conductor. The hair, or cilia, of leaves set the part of natural lightning conductors, and thus prevent the formation of a very strong electro-motive force; therefore it stands to reason that there is less danger in sheltering under a beech tree than under an oak or trees of a similar kind.

A Strange Wedding Custom.

During medieval times a woman who had nothing when she was married escaped responsibility for her debts. Women were then often married in a single garment to relieve themselves of indebtedness. A young and noble German lady of the sixteenth century, to make assurance doubly sure, had the marriage ceremony performed while she was standing in a closet, entirely divested of clothing. She put out her hand through the crack of the door and was thus married. As soon as the ceremony was performed the groom, clergyman and witnesses left the room, she came out, arrayed herself in clothes provided by her husband and took her place at the marriage feast.

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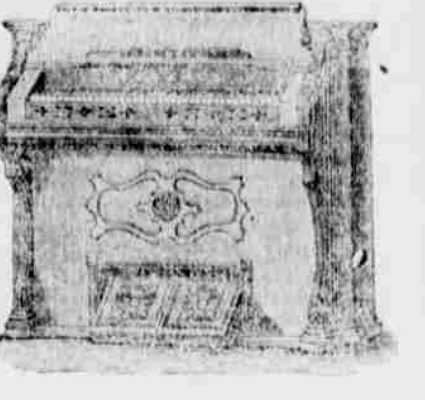
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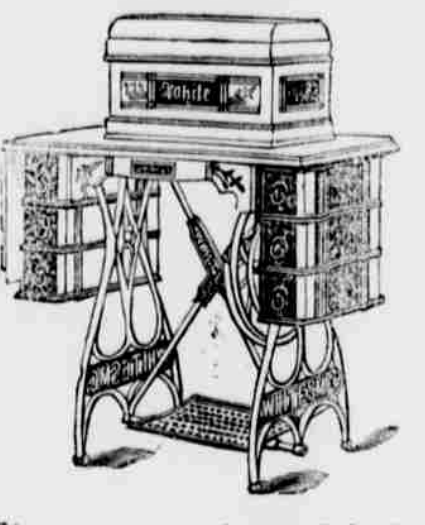
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