

Beasley's Christmas Party

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

BEASLEY

SYNOPSIS—Newcomer in a small town, a young newspaper man, who tells the story, is amazed by the unaccountable actions of a man who, from the window of a fine house, apparently has converse with invisible personages, particularly mentioning one "Simple-doria." Next morning he discovers his strange neighbor is the Hon. David Beasley, prominent politician, and universally respected. With Miss Apperthwaite, he is an unseen witness of a purely imaginary jumping contest between Beasley and a "Bill Hammersley." Miss Apperthwaite appears deeply concerned.

III.

I do not know why it should have astonished me to find that Miss Apperthwaite was a teacher of mathematics except that (to my inexperienced eye) she didn't look it. She looked more like Charlotte Corday!

I had the pleasure of seeing her opposite me at lunch the next day (when Mr. Dowden kept me occupied with Spencerville politics, obviously from fear that I would break out again), but no stroll in the yard with her rewarded me afterward, as I dimly hoped, for she disappeared before I left the table, and I did not see her again for a fortnight. On week-days she did not return to the house for lunch, my only meal at Mrs. Apperthwaite's (I dined at a restaurant near the Despatch office), and she was out of town for a little visit, her mother informed us, over the following Saturday and Sunday. She was not altogether out of my thoughts, however—indeed, she almost divided them with the Honorable David Beasley.

A better view which I was afforded of this gentleman did not lessen my interest in him; increased it rather; it also served to make the extraordinary diodes of which he had been the virtuoso and I the audience more than ever profoundly inexplicable. My glimpse of him in the lighted doorway had given me the vaguest impression of his appearance, but one afternoon—a few days after my interview with Miss Apperthwaite—I was starting for the office and met him full-face-on as he was turning in at his gate. I took as careful notice of him as I could without conspicuously glaring.

There was something remarkably "taking," as we say, about this man—something easy and genial and quizzical and careless. He was the kind of person you like to meet on the street; whose cheerful passing sends you on feeling indefinitely a little gay than you did. He was tall, thin—even gaunt, perhaps—and his face was long, rather pale, and shrewd and gentle; something in its oddity not unremindful of the late Sol Smith Russell. His hat was tilted back a little, the slightest bit to one side, and the sparse, brownish hair above his high forehead was going to be gray before long. He looked about forty.

The truth is, I had expected to see a cousin german to Don Quixote; I had thought to detect signs and gleams of wildness, however slight—something a little "off." One glance of that kindly and humorous eye told me such expectation had been nonsense. Odd he might have been—Gadzooks! he looked it—but "queer?" Never. The fact that Miss Apperthwaite could picture such a man as this "sitting and sitting and sitting" himself into any form of manly or madman, whatever spoke loudly of her own imagination, indeed! The key to "Simple-doria" was to be sought under some other mat.

As I began to know some of my co-laborers on the Despatch, and to pick up acquaintances, here and there, about town, I sometimes made Mr. Beasley the subject of inquiry. Everybody knew him. "Oh, yes, I know Dave Beasley!" would come the reply, nearly always with a chuckling sort of laugh. I gathered that he had a name for "easy-going" which amounted to eccentricity. It was said that what the ward-healers and camp-followers got out of him in campaign times made the political managers cry. He was the first and readiest prey for very fraud and swindler that came to Wainwright, I heard, and yet, in spite of this and of his hatred of "speechn-making" ("He's as silent as Grant!" said one informant), he had a large practice, and was one of the most successful lawyers in the state.

One story they told of him (or, as they were apt to put it, "on" him) was repeated so often that I saw it had become one of the town's traditions. One bitter evening in February, they related, he was approached upon the

street by a ragged, whining and shivering old reprobate, notorious for the various ingenuities by which he had worn out the patience of the charity organizations. He asked Beasley for a dime. Beasley had no money in his pockets, but gave the man his overcoat, went home without any himself, and spent six weeks in bed with a bad case of pneumonia as the direct result. His benefactor sold the overcoat, and invested the proceeds in a five-days' spree, in the closing scenes of which a couple of brickbats were featured to high, spectacular effect. One he sent through a jeweler's show-window in an attempt to intimidate the some-wholly imaginary pursuers, the other he projected at a perfectly actual policeman who was endeavoring to soothe him. The victim of Beasley's charity and the officer were then borne to the hospital in company.

It was due in part to recollections of this legend and others of a similar character that people laughed when they said, "Oh, yes, I know Dave Beasley."

Altogether, I should say, Beasley was about the most popular man in Wainwright. I could discover nowhere anything, however, to shed the faintest light upon the mystery of Bill Hammersley and Simple-doria. It was not until the Sunday of Miss Apperthwaite's absence that the revelation came.

That afternoon I went to call upon the widow of a second-cousin of mine; she lived in a cottage not far from Mrs. Apperthwaite's, upon the same street. I found her sitting on a pleas-



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ant veranda, with boxes of flowering plants along the railing, though Indian summer was now close upon departure. She was rocking meditatively, and held a finger in a morocco volume, apparently of verse, though I suspected she had been better entertained in the observation of the people and vehicles decorously passing along the sunlit thoroughfare within her view.

We exchanged inevitable questions and news of mutual relatives; I had told her how I liked my work and what I thought of Wainwright, and she was congratulating me upon having found so pleasant a place to live as Mrs. Apperthwaite's, when she interrupted herself to smile and nod a cordial greeting to two gentlemen driving by. They waved their hats to her gayly, then leaned back comfortably against the cushions—and if ever two men were obviously and uncontestedly on the best of terms with each other, these two were. They were David Beasley and Mr. Dowden.

"I do wish," said my cousin, resuming her rocking—"I do wish dear David Beasley would get a new car of some kind; that old model of his is a disgrace!" I suppose you haven't met him? Of course, living at Mrs. Apperthwaite's, you wouldn't be apt to.

"But what is he doing with Mr. Dowden?" I asked. She lifted her eyebrows. "Why—taking him for a drive, I suppose."

"No. I mean—how do they happen to be together?"

"Why shouldn't they be? They're old friends—"

"They are!" And, in answer to her look of surprise, I explained that I had begun to speak of Beasley at Mrs. Apperthwaite's, and described the abruptness with which Dowden had changed the subject.

"I see," my cousin nodded, comprehendingly. "That's simple enough. George Dowden didn't want you to talk of Beasley there. I suppose it may have been a little embarrassing for everybody—especially if Ann Apperthwaite heard you."

"Ann? That's Miss Apperthwaite? Yes; I was speaking directly to her. Why shouldn't she have heard me? She talked of him herself a little later—and at some length, too."

"She did!" My cousin stopped rocking, and fixed me with her glittering eye. "Well, of all!"

"Is it so surprising?"

The lady gave her head to the waves again. "Ann Apperthwaite thinks about him still!" she said, with something like vindictiveness. "I've always suspected it. She thought you were new to the place and didn't know anything about it all, or anybody to mention it to. That's it!"

"I'm still new to the place," I urged, "and still don't know anything about it all."

"They used to be engaged," was her succinct and emphatic answer. I found it but too illuminating. "Oh, oh!" I cried. "I was an innocent, wasn't I?"

"I'm glad she does think of him," said my cousin. "It serves her right. I only hope he won't find it out, because he's a poor, faithful creature; he'd jump at the chance to take her back—and she doesn't deserve him."

"How long has it been," I asked, "since they used to be engaged?"

"Oh, a good while—five or six years ago, I think—maybe more; time skips along. Ann Apperthwaite's no chicken, you know." (Such was the lady's expression.) "They got engaged just after she came home from college, and of all the idiotically romantic girls—"

"But she's a teacher," I interrupted, "of mathematics."

"Yes," she nodded wisely. "I always thought that explained it: the romance is a reaction from the algebra. I never knew a person connected with mathematics or astronomy or statistics, or any of those exact things, who didn't have a crazy streak in 'em somewhere. They've got to blow off steam and be foolish to make up for putting in so much of their time at hard sense. But don't you think that I dislike Ann Apperthwaite. She's always been one of my best friends; that's why I feel at liberty to abuse her—and I always will abuse her when I think how she treated poor David Beasley."

"How did she treat him?"

"Threw him over out of a clear sky one night, that's all. Just sent him home and broke his heart; that is, it would have been broken if he'd had any kind of disposition except the one the Lord blessed him with—just all optimism and cheerfulness and make-the-best-of-it-ness! He's never cared for anybody else, and I guess he never will."

"What did she do it for?"

"Nothing!" My cousin shot the indignant word from her lips. "Nothing in the wide world!"

"But there must have been—"

"Listen to me," she interrupted, "and tell me if you ever heard anything queerer in your life. They'd been engaged—Heaven knows how long—over two years; probably nearer three—and always she kept putting it off; wouldn't begin to get ready, wouldn't set a day for the wedding. Then Mr. Apperthwaite died, and left her and her mother stranded high and dry with nothing to live on. David had everything in the world to give her—and still she wouldn't! And then, one day, she came up here and told me she'd broken it off. Said she couldn't stand it to be engaged to David Beasley another minute!"

"But why?"

"Because"—my cousin's tone was shrill with her despair of expressing the satire she would have put into it—"because, she said he was a man of no imagination!"

"She still says so," I remarked, thoughtfully.

"Then it's time she got a little imagination herself!" snapped my companion. "David Beasley's the quietest man God has made, but everybody knows what he is! There are some rare people in this world that aren't all talk; there are some still rarer ones that scarcely ever talk at all—and David Beasley's one of them. I don't know whether it's because he can't talk, or if he can and hates to; I only think the Lord he's put a few like that into this talky world! David Beasley's smile is better than acres of other people's talk. My Providence! Wouldn't anybody, just to look at him, know that he does better than talk?"

He thinks! The trouble with Ann Apperthwaite was, that she was too young to see it. She was so full of novels and poetry and dreaminess and high-flutin nonsense she couldn't see anything as it really was. She'd study her mirror, and see such a heroine of romance there that she just couldn't bear to have a fiance who hadn't any chance of Kenosha in disguise! At the very least, to suit her he'd have had to wear a "well-trimmed Vandylke" and soo sonnets in the gloaming, or read "On a Balcony" to her by a red lamp.

"Well, sir, Dave's got something at home to keep him busy enough, these days, I expect."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Is New Fur Effect

Mole and Seal, Ribbon and Braid Evolve Striped Model.

Novel Standing Collar Made of Tubular Strips Braided to Form Desired Width.

Our own American designers are doing some wonderful things with furs, observes a fashion correspondent in the New York Tribune. A new treatment in furs, particularly mole and Hudson seal, is achieved by joining vertically narrow strips of the fur with grosgrain ribbon and then applying soursouth braid to the center of the ribbon, thus evolving a striped effect throughout the garment. The grosgrain ribbon is of the same shade as the fur, whereas the soursouth is of a contrasting color. Only the latter is visible. For instance, a coat of moleskin has the skins joined with taupe ribbon and is combined with green soursouth. Another, of Hudson seal, is joined with black ribbon and trimmed with white braid. A novel standing collar on a moleskin coat is made of tubular strips of the fur braided to form narrow strips often are used as a trimming on mink coats. An interesting example is a short jacket which shows this trimming around the collar, cuffs and band which encircles the hips. The tails, being of a darker shade than the remainder of the animal, make a really lovely trimming.

Embroidery for years has been trying to invade the realm of furs. It started by making itself conspicuous on the linings of fur coats. Now it appears on the pelts. A blousing afternoon wrap of Hudson seal is embroidered about the waistline with silver threads and jet beads. The same model in moleskin shows metal embroidery and steel beads.

A fur very much used this year for both sports and street wear is Iceland kimmer. For street wear it is being dyed in light and dark gray and

FINE FOR THE LITTLE WOMEN



This rich, warm coat of chinchilla has a luxurious shawl collar of natural 'coon and snug up with an all-round buckle belt. Five rows of fine stitching finish the hem.

THE NEW GLOVES AND HANDBAGS

Accessories That Match Is One of the Latest Fashions; Silk and Leather Used.

The shops show most interesting changes in gloves. Real innovations, not just a different cut or a different stitching.

For one thing, there are gloves and handbags to match. They are made of silk and leather, so far as the bags go, and of leather with fancy stitching, and sometimes silk facings, so far as the gloves go.

For instance, there is one set. The bag is of black suede with red embroidery, set in a carved ivory frame. The gloves are of black dressed kid, with deep gauntlet cuffs, lined with red kid—and the embroidery are in a sort of henna shade.

And there is another set consisting of a bag of gray watered silk embroidered with black. The gloves of black show gray silk facings in the cuffs and gray stitching.

And a set of beige suede gloves stitched with black and faced with black, in the deep gauntlet cuffs has a bag of beige silk with black suede cutouts and a black framework of a composition.

For the frock that is sleeveless or nearly so, there are old-fashioned mits, Silk lace ones, that come down over the knuckles and up toward the elbow, in black and white, gray and beige. These are lovely on the bare arm, and serve to break the length of the bare arm that is too thin.

From France come fabric gloves of the pull-on type, showing the long wrists printed, with a conventional

MINK WITH BROCADED SATIN



This is a winsome new creation of mink fur coat; one of the latest in dress coats; it is lined with brocade.

brown made up into smart jackets. In white, its natural color, it is charming for sports suits. A particularly lovely skating suit consists of a hip-length straightline jacket having full sleeves, with deep cuffs and a large rolling collar, knickerbockers and a tam-o-shanter. The entire costume is lined with natter blue brocade silk.

Persian lamb will be more popular than ever this season. The Russian influence is expressed in a hip-length coat of this fur which blouses over a tight band at the hips. It is trimmed around the high rolling collar, the wide sleeves and around the bottom with applique motifs of red kid edged with black soursouth and further ornamented with tiny nickel buttons. Vivid colors blend with metal in the lining of this model.

SOME OF THE HAT STYLES

Bows of Ribbon, Rosettes of Silk and All-Over Lace Veils in the Millinery Mode.

Even if you have no new clothes, you can at least have a new hat. Well, let it have some of any of these general tendencies and you will be all right so far as fashion is concerned.

Bows of ribbon are charming and entirely indicative of the modern fashion.

Rosettes of silk hand-made flowers are just the sort of thing to pose on the side of broad brims.

Rosettes of cream-colored lace are nice against the background of a dark panne velvet.

All-over lace veils are very much in the running. The tricorne is coming into fashion again with all the full skirts.

In Brocaded Effects. The vogue of jacquard and brocaded effects in fabrics has been attractively carried to the field of knitted enterprise. One of the loveliest fabrics of this description noted in the fabric exhibits was a fibre silk and wool knitted fabric in jacquard handling introducing two colors and a wide variety of patterns.

THE COLORS ARE DISCREET

Black Has Not Been Abandoned; Some Combine It With Brown or Gray; Many Greens.

Colors are discreet for street wear. Black has not been abandoned, for some designers are still using a great deal of it, while others compromise by combining it with color, more often brown or gray than the bright shades. The browns, in the whole range from deepest seal to putty, are in the lead. There are greens in almost all collections, from deep myrtle to almond. One designer fancies light forest green for her Russian, tailleurs. There are a good many grays, more often smoke shades than the pale tones.

Many gowns have rich reds in trimming notes, and the rust of mahogany reds are strong. Doucet has given up his favorite combination of gray and yellow for a new one of smoked gray and mahogany. All this applies to daytime wear. In the evening we have a riot of bright shades, with a great deal of white, and more silver than gold. Here and there is a note of rich purple. Royal blue is used by some, frequently combined with black.

New Colors in Millinery. In millinery there is a vogue for the one-color turban. The most popular colors are Chinese blue, bittersweet, blue spruce and chestnut.

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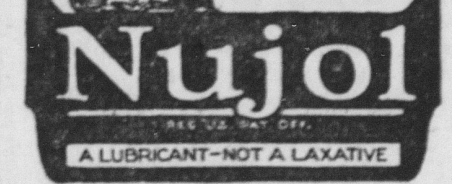
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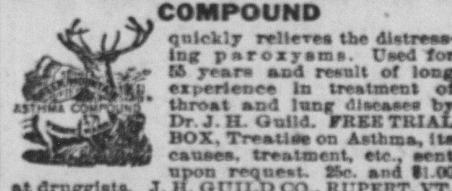
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