

# Beasley's Christmas Party

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

## HAMILTON SWIFT, JR.

**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 "Simpledoria." 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. The reporter learns that Beasley and Miss Apperthwaite had at one time been engaged, and that the young lady had broken the engagement because of Beasley's "lack of imagination."

III—Continued.

"Poor David! Outside of his law-books, I don't believe he's ever read anything but 'Robinson Crusoe' and the Bible and Mark Twain. Oh, you should have heard her talk about it—I couldn't bear it another day," she said. "I couldn't stand it! In all the time I've known him I don't believe he's ever asked me a single question—except when he asked me if I'd marry him. He never says anything—never speaks at all!" she said. "You don't know a blessing when you see it," I told her. "Blessing!" she said. "There's nothing in the man! He has no depths! He hasn't any more imagination than the chair he sits and sits and sits in! Half the time he answers what I say to him by nodding and saying 'um-hum,' with that same old foolish, contented smile of his. I'd have gone mad if it had lasted any longer! I asked her if she thought married life consisted very largely of conversations between husband and wife; and she answered that even married life ought to have some poetry in it. 'Some romance,' she said, 'some soul!' And he just comes and sits, she said, 'and sits and sits and sits and sits!' I can't bear it any longer, and I've told him so."

"Poor Mr. Beasley," I said. "I think 'Poor Ann Apperthwaite!' retorted my cousin. 'I'd like to know if there's anything nicer than just to sit and sit and sit and sit with as lovely a man as that—a man who understands things, and thinks and listens and smiles—instead of everlastingly talking!'"

"As it happens," I remarked, "I've heard Mr. Beasley talk."

"Why, of course he talks," she returned, "when there's any real use in it. And he talks to children; he's that kind of a man."

"I meant a particular instance," I began; meaning to see if she could give me any clue to Bill Hammersley and Simpledoria, but at that moment the gate clicked under the hand of another caller. My cousin rose to greet him, and presently I took my leave without having been able to get back upon the subject of Beasley.

Thus, once more baffled, I returned to Mrs. Apperthwaite's—and within the hour came into full possession of the very heart of that dark and subtle mystery which overhung the house next door and so perplexed my soul.

## IV.

Finding that I had still some leisure before me, I got a book from my room and repaired to the bench in the garden. But I did not read; I had but opened the book when my attention was arrested by sounds from the other side of the high fence—low and tremulous croonings of distinctly African derivation:

"Ah met mah s'istuh in a-maw'nin', She 'uz a-wagin' up de hill so slow! 'Sistuh, you mus' git a rastle in doo time, B'fo de hevumly do's close—iz!"

It was the voice of an aged negro; and the simultaneous slight creaking of a small hub and axle seemed to indicate that he was pushing or pulling a child's wagon or perambulator up and down the walk from the kitchen door to the stable. Whiles, he proffered soothing music; over and over he repeated the chant, though with variations; encountering in turn his brother, his daughter, each of his parents, his uncle, his cousin, and his second-cousin, one after the other ascending the same slope with the same perilous leisure.

"Lay still, honey." He interrupted his inflections to the second-cousin. "Des keep on a-nappin' an' a-breakin' de fesh air. Dass wha's go' mek you good an' well ag'n."

Then there spoke the strangest voice that ever fell upon my ear; it was not like a child's, neither was it like a very old person's voice; it might

have been a grasshopper's, it was so thin and little, and made of such tiny wavers and quavers and creakings.

"I—want—" said this elfin voice, "I—want—Bill—Hammersley!"

The shabby car which had passed my cousin's house was drawing up to the curb near Beasley's gate. Evidently the old negro saw it.

"Hi dar!" he exclaimed. "Look at dat! Hain' Bill a comin' yonnah des ezachy on de dot an' to de vey spot an' instink when you 'quiah fo' 'im, honey? Dar come Mist' Dave, right on de minute, an' you kin bet yo' hah hunnd dollahs he got dat Bill Hammersley wif 'im! Come along, honey-chile! Ah's go' to pull you 'roun in de side yod fo' to meet 'em."

The small wagon creaked away, the chant resuming as it went.

Mr. Dowden jumped out of the car with a wave of his hand to the driver, Beasley himself, who drove through his open carriage-gates and down the drive on the other side of the house, where he was lost to my view.

Dowden, entering our own gate, nodded in a friendly fashion to me, and I advanced to meet him.

"Some day I want to take you over next door," he said cordially, "as I came up. 'You ought to know Beasley, especially as I hear you're doing some political reporting. Dave Beasley's going to be the next governor of this state, you know.' He laughed, offered me a cigar, and we sat down together on the front steps.

"From all I hear," I rejoined, "you ought to know who'll get it." (It was said in town that Dowden would "come pretty near having the nomination in his pocket.")

"I expect you thought I shifted the subject pretty briskly the other day?" He glanced at me quizzically from under the brim of his black felt hat. "I meant to tell you about that, but the opportunity didn't occur. You see—"

"I understand," I interrupted. "I've heard the story. You thought it might be embarrassing to Miss Apperthwaite."

"I expect I was pretty clumsy about it," said Dowden, cheerfully. "Well, well—" he flicked his cigar with a smothered ejaculation that was half a sigh and half a laugh; "it's a mighty strange case. Here they keep on living next door to each other, year after year, each going on alone when they might just as well—" He left the sentence unfinished, save for a vocal click of compassion. "They bow when they happen to meet, but they haven't exchanged a word since the night she sent him away, long ago." He shook his head, then his countenance cleared

an orphan without any kin. That was about seven years ago. Well, sir, this last summer he and his wife were taking a trip down in Switzerland, and they were both drowned—tipped over out of a rowboat in Lake Lucerne—and word came that Hamilton Swift's will appointed Dave guardian of the one child they had, a little boy—Hamilton Swift, Junior's, his name. He was sent across the ocean in charge of a doctor, and Dave went to New York to meet him. He brought him home here the very day before you passed the house and saw poor Dave getting up at four in the morning to let that ghost in. And a mighty funny ghost Simpledoria is!"

"I begin to understand," I said, "and to feel pretty silly, too."

"Not at all," he rejoined, heartily. "That little chap's freaks would mystify anybody, especially with Dave humming 'em the ridiculous way he does. Hamilton Swift, Junior, is the curiousest child I ever saw—and the good Lord knows He made all children powerful mysterious! This poor little cuss has a complication of infirmities that have kept him on his back most of his life, never knowing other children, never playing, or anything; and he's got ideas and ways that I never saw the bent of! He was born sick, as I understand it—his bones and nerves and insides are all wrong, somehow—but it's supposed he gets a little better from year to year. He wears a pretty elaborate set of braces, and he's subject to attacks, too—I don't know the name for 'em—and loses what little voice he has sometimes, all but a whisper. He had one, I know, the day after Beasley brought him home, and that was probably the reason you thought Dave was carrying on all to himself about that jumping-match out in the back-yard. The boy must have been lying there in the little wagon they have for him, while Dave cut up shines with 'Bill Hammersley.' Of course, most children have make-believe friends and companions, especially if they haven't any brothers or sisters, but this lonely little feller's got his people worked out in his mind and materialized beyond any I ever heard of. Dave got well acquainted with 'em on the train on the way home, and they certainly are giving him a lively time. Ho, ho! Getting him up at four in the morning—"

Mr. Dowden's mirth overcame him for a moment; when he had mastered it, he continued: "Simpledoria—now where do you suppose he got that name?—well, anyway, Simpledoria is supposed to be Hamilton Swift, Junior's, St. Bernard dog. Beasley had to bathe him the other day, he told me! And Bill Hammersley is supposed to be a boy of Hamilton Swift, Junior's, own age, but very big and strong; he has rosy cheeks, and he can do more in athletics than a whole college track-team. That's the reason he cut-jumped Dave so far, you see."

"I'm glad there's somebody in that house at last with a little imagination."

"I think, 'Poor Ann Apperthwaite!'" Retorted My Cousin.

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

"Do you mind telling me?" I inquired. "Is his name 'Simpledoria'?"

Mr. Dowden threw back his head and laughed loudly. "Lord, no! What on earth made you think that?"

"I told him. It was my second success with this narrative; however, there was a difference: my former auditor listened with flushed and breathless excitement, whereas the present one laughed comically throughout. Especially he laughed with a great laughter at the picture of Beasley's

coming down at four in the morning to open the door for nothing on sea or land or in the waters under the earth. I gave account, also, of the miraculous jumping contest (though I did not mention Miss Apperthwaite's having been with me), and of the elfin voice I had just now overheard demanding "Bill Hammersley."

"So I expect you must have decided," he chuckled, when I concluded, "that David Beasley has gone just plain insane."

"Not a bit of it. Nobody could look at him and not know better than that."

"You're right there!" said Dowden, heartily. "And now I'll tell you all there is to it. You see, Dave grew up with a cousin of his named Hamilton Swift; they were boys together; went to the same school, and then to college. I don't believe there was ever a high word spoken between them. Nobody in this life ever got a quarrel out of Dave Beasley, and Hamilton Swift was a mighty good sort of a fellow, too. He went East to live, after they got out of college, yet they always managed to get together once a year, generally about Christmas time. You couldn't pass them on the street without hearing their laughter ringing out louder than their sleigh-bells, maybe over some old joke between them, or some fool thing they did, perhaps, when they were boys. But finally Hamilton Swift's business took him over to the other side of the water to live; and he married an English girl,

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## FUR AS TRIMMING

Bands of Peltry Add to Attractiveness of the Wrap.

Winsome Decoration for the Winter Coat May Be Had at Slight Expenditure.

Fur is the accepted trimming for the longer coats, says a fashion writer in the New York Times. By using this for a trimming you can have the most luxurious sort of a wrap with the slightest expenditure of money. If you were to have a fur wrap of this distinction, this width and this length, you would find yourself involved with hundreds—no thousands—of dollars. But you can have a cloth wrap with the wide bands of fur trimming and the price will not be too startling for a winter costume.

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## JACKET FOR MORNING WEAR



The short jacket allows freedom. This model is chic in every line from the smart cut of the sleeves to the close fitting hip-line. Brown astrakan is used in this.

and the coat with its hat makes an arrangement of which any woman could be justly proud. The color of the coat is not by any means too light and airy. It is a deep tone of mauve that almost verges upon gray, and the contrast of that soft and exquisite shade against the thick black fur is something that makes the loveliest sort of a winter effect. At the same time the youthfulness and charm of the light color and the soft material are kept intact.

A three-quarter coat with a cape is made of one of the homespun tweed materials that are so soft and thick and so extraordinarily warm. Its color is gray with a band of blue running through it, lined with a soft blue satin that repeats the tone of the wool crepe dress worn with it. The cape is lined with the same tone of blue and the effect of the costume is excellent.

## Gay Linings for Fur Coats.

Linings in the new fur coats are a revelation of the wonderful work that is being done in the silk industry. There are linings of matelasse, of heavy silks brocaded in metal, heavy silks bordered in beautiful color tones that glitter with metal, moired metallic fabrics, metallic cloaks, silver lames, all-over prints showing Byzantine tracery and Persian designs. Among the velvets, those printed in Eastern designs, stand out along with lovely chiffon velvets in Paisley patterns interwoven with gold and silver threads.

## Twills for Street Wear.

Poiret twills for street wear are the dominant note for tailored wear. Some of the frocks have touches of embroidery in gold designs, while scarlet and Persian effects are developed, in other models. Fur is used to trim some of the frocks. For the velvet frocks, ermine is consistently used, especially on the black velvets. In the case of brown frocks, matching furs are used discreetly for finishing edges at neck and sleeves.

## CAPE STILL HOLDS FAVOR

Flowing Wrap Has Countless Friends Among the Women; Many Are in Bright Coloring.

"What about capes?" was an oft-repeated question at the beginning of the season. For the cape has many a friend and no enemies among women. True, it seemed to be holding an over-long reign in the fashion world, the designers agreed that it was time to displace it with some other wrap, but the fact that women bought the capes exactly as they had been bought in the past, and asked for them insistently gave them a place in the fashion world. For evening the cape is supreme; it is fashioned in fur, in velvets, brocades, metal cloth and fur, in matelasse, in duvety and all kindred soft pile fabrics.

A great many velvet capes have yokes shirred or smocked in deep points. A lovely green one seen recently was shirred to represent a chrysanthemum, another black velvet cape was shirred yoke depth and finished by a padded roll about the hem. Short capes (meaning hip-length and knee-length capes) are, of course, a part of the smart coat-dress costume. The cape of metal brocade is trimmed in deep fur bands, as this fabric does not take the soft folds of velvet.

The bright shades of velvet capes, orange, purple and green, give a delightful dash of color to ever-'g affairs. These capes are lined with silver cloth veiled in chiffon or crepe of contrasting hue. Matelasse, too, is one of the much-chosen fabrics for evening wraps. Capes appear in many variations from straight ones gathered very full to circular capes of

graceful line, and capes that gather into a band, giving the effect of being gathered into a puff at the hem line.

## Tailored Dress Fabrics.

Twill cord and broadcloth are two featured fabrics in the tailored dress line used in a limited color range of brown, navy and black. In coats, gowns and panvelaine, in black, navy, souched, marten, kit fox and Hawaiian blue are the favorite tones. A particularly interesting coat in Hawaiian blue panvelaine, shows the flat back and front with a slight fullness exactly at the waistline, stitched into a yoke belt. Bands of black and gold and a lighter blue embroidery are applied in military effect, along the top of the sleeve, and head the wide circular cuff of taupe nutria. A large round collar of nutria completes the fodel.

## Straight Lines Now.

Further manifestations of straight-line silhouette favoritism are shown in the prize award in the fashion contest of the Fashion Art league convention in Chicago. Straight lines won the day in a dress of navy milanette, with slashed sides revealing a foundation of platinum-gray canton crepe.

## New Shape in Fans.

Among the novelties in dress accessories are the square fans of painted silk, mounted on tortoise-shell frames. These are big, the square measuring perhaps eighteen inches.

## Bertha Collars.

Smart and new are deep bertha collars of embroidery organdie put together with flit and Irish lace.

## The Kitchen Cabinet

(Copyright, 1922, Western Newspaper Union.)  
Between the printed words that are so wise  
And march so easily across the page,  
Sometime quite suddenly I catch the looks  
Of him who wrote, tolling in lowly guise  
To keep his pen undulled by woe or age—  
And then I think, "What precious things are books!"—Hilda Morris.

## SOUPS AND GARNISHES

Soups will never grow passe, for with too many a soup is the attractive dish of the meal. There are such varieties that he is indeed hard to please who cannot find one to his liking.

**Vermont Chicken Soup.**—Take six cups of well-seasoned chicken stock, add a little grated onion, a head of lettuce shredded and one cupful of peas. If the peas are fresh, simmer until they are done. Beat an egg, add enough bread crumbs to make a paste and shape into balls. Drop the balls into the soup and simmer until well heated; serve hot.

**Quick Bouillon.**—Cut fine one pound of fresh beef and a slice of fat pork. Put into a saucepan with one cupful of cold water, one carrot, one onion finely minced, and cook fifteen minutes; then add two cupfuls of boiling water. Simmer for an hour, then press through a fine sieve. Season with salt, pepper and celery salt.

**Cheese Balls.**—Take one-half cupful of flour, half a cupful of milk, a tablespoonful each of butter and cheese. Mix in a double boiler, cook until smooth and thick, add one egg well beaten and cook long enough to set the egg. Set aside to cool. Form into balls the size of hickory nuts, drop into boiling soup, cook five minutes and serve immediately.

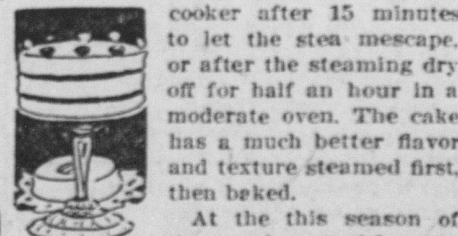
**Leftover Meat Dish.**—Put through the meat grinder two or three medium-sized potatoes, season well, add one small onion also ground through the meat grinder. In a little pork sausage fat cook the potato and onion until well scalded then place in a well-buttered baking pan with a layer of chopped roast beef and garnish with halves of cooked pork sausages. Bake until the potato and onion are cooked. Serve from the dish. See that all the potato water and onion juice is added for it will be needed for moisture.

**Rice Soup.**—Cook one-fourth of a cupful of rice in three cupfuls of boiling water with one teaspoonful of salt, one slice of onion and a stalk of celery. When the rice is cooked add two red pimentoes and press through a sieve; add two cupfuls of cream and the same of chicken or veal stock, one-eighth of a teaspoonful of pepper and three tablespoonfuls each of butter and flour cooked together and added to bind the soup. Bring to the boiling point, sprinkle with chopped celery and serve piping hot.

We may live without painters  
Or writers or mummors,  
But civilized man cannot  
Live without plumbers.  
—The Contributors' Club.

## ALL KINDS OF THINGS

When making the fruit cake for the winter use any recipe desired, place in round pans or use the cooker after 15 minutes to let the steam escape, or after the steaming dry off for half an hour in a moderate oven. The cake has a much better flavor and texture steamed first, then baked.



At this season of the year bacon with green peppers makes a most appealing breakfast dish. Wash the peppers and cut them in rings, removing the seeds. Soak for twenty minutes in salted ice water, drain, dry and fry in the bacon fat. Keep the well-drained bacon hot in the oven and serve the peppers when tender in the center of the platter with the bacon arranged around them.

Gluten gems are liked by others than those who find it necessary to diet. To two cupfuls of gluten flour allow a teaspoonful of salt, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, two tablespoonfuls of sugar, one egg and two cupfuls of milk or half milk and half water. Sift the dry ingredients, beat the egg, add the milk and flour and beat again until light and foamy. Mix the pans hissing hot when the mixture is poured in.

When the appetite needs coaxing cut the bread for toast in finger-sized pieces, toast and butter and pile log-cabin fashion when serving.

A sprinkling of salt on the breakfast grapefruit is an improvement in serving instead of sugar. The salt brings out the flavor of the fruit. This is good news to those who are denied sugar.

**Almond Bread.**—Make a sponge at night with a quart each of water and gluten flour, add a yeast cake dissolved in a little water, let rise in a warm place overnight. In the morning add two teaspoonfuls of salt, one cupful of blanched almonds finely chopped and enough gluten flour to mold. Knead well, mold into loaves and bake when light. This makes two loaves.

Nellie Maxwell