

ON BEING LATE

By R. H. WILKINSON

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BARBARA WILLIAMS is the sort of person who never arrives anywhere on time.

If you have an appointment to meet her on a certain street corner at a certain time, you can depend upon her being at least a half hour late, and safely regulate your own time of arrival accordingly.

No matter what the circumstances or how important the function Barbara concerns herself not with promptness.

Of course she is always full of excuses and apologies, and actually gives the impression of being frightfully sorry that "something intervened so she just couldn't make it."

Moreover, she is a wholly lovable person, possessed of an incredibly sweet disposition, and delightful company.

And when she looks at you with deep concern and pleading written in her rather attractive brown eyes, you are apt to cover your annoyance with a forgiving smile and hope that next time she'll make an effort to be more accommodating.

There have been numberless suggestions offered for cures for people having this being-late fault.

But most always these suggestions are offered by persons who don't have to live with folks like Barbara Williams.

It is quite simple when you are not dependent on a Barbara Williams for one thing and another, to suggest tyrannical methods of effecting a cure.

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Dick Williams, who is Barbara's husband, is an easy going sort of person, and for a time after their marriage in 1928 his wife's tardiness didn't bother him a great deal.

But as their wedded life progressed, the thing began to get on his nerves.

After a year of meeting Barbara downtown once each week on Thursday nights in order that they might dine out together, and having to wait 30 minutes beyond the scheduled time, he spoke of the matter, at first casually, then more seriously and finally in an outburst of anger.

And on such occasions Barbara would turn the full power of her large brown eyes on him and nod her head in sad agreement.

"I don't blame you, darling," she'd say. "Not a bit. I should try to be on time, shouldn't I?"

And Dick would rage: "You certainly should! Why, it's positively selfish. Insulting. Folks invite you places and you can't even pay them the courtesy of arriving on time! You ought to be ashamed!"

"I am," Barbara would admit humbly. "I am ashamed, precious."

And "precious" would get up and take her in his arms and kiss her and tell her he was sorry he had talked to her so, but something really ought to be done about it.

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Which would bring the matter to a close, and Barbara on the day following would accept an invitation to a bridge party at three in the afternoon and would arrive at 3:30, having forgotten or disregarded her firm resolutions made in Dick's presence on the night before.

The thing at length reached a point where Dick, driven to exasperation, his nerves on edge, his pride injured, determined that some drastic step would have to be taken to effect a cure.

It must end.

He loved Barbara, he knew, more sincerely and deeply than did the average husband in this day and age.

She had no other faults that were worth mentioning.

She qualified in every respect as a wife and companion and helpmate in his chosen profession.

Yet, despite everything—everything, by golly—she had to be cured of this one deficiency, or one, perhaps both of them, would go crazy.

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And forthwith Dick set himself down to think and scheme and plan to the best of his ability.

And after an hour of deep mental labor, he hit on an idea.

Today was Tuesday. Friday next would mark their second anniversary. It meant a lot to Barbara. A great lot.

She had been talking about it, planning on it for weeks. She had bought a new frock in which to celebrate.

She had selected the place where they were to dine, chosen the theater which they would attend afterward.

It was, in fact, a big day in her life.

A thrilling, romantic, cherished hour during which she could be alone with her husband and tell him how perfectly adorable he was and how happy she'd been during the past two years.

Dick's plan, taking all the above into consideration, was, on the surface, cruel.

And yet he told himself savagely it was no more than she deserved.

It would, he wagered, cure her once and for all of her great fault.

And so, having decided to promote his brilliant idea, Dick advised his wife that on Friday evening he would meet her on the corner of Tremont and Boylston streets at exactly five o'clock.

He would, he said, leave the office early in order to get there.

This would allow them plenty of

time for dinner, without having to hurry.

Barbara was thrilled. She thought he might have forgotten.

The fact that he had voluntarily mentioned the great day increased her happiness 100 per cent.

She kissed him tenderly and agreed to the time and place of the meeting.

During the intervening days before Friday Dick felt rather low.

He hated to resort to such tricks; he hated to make Barbara unhappy if it could be prevented.

She was so wholly loveable and trusting. Yet he must go through with it. It was the only way.

She must be cured.

And so when, at last, Friday rolled around, Dick left the office early as previously planned, but instead of driving in town toward the agreed meeting place, he turned his car toward the suburbs and home.

He drove slowly, moodily. Once or twice he almost changed his mind, but the traffic was heavy and turning about would be difficult.

He parked his car in the garage which he rented, a couple of blocks from the house, and sat in it a few moments, unhappily contemplating the blank wall ahead.

It was now 5:15, and he judged that Barbara would just about be arriving at Tremont and Boylston.

He couldn't conceive of her being more than a quarter hour late on their anniversary.

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Presently he climbed from the machine, closed and locked the garage doors, sighed heavily, and started home. It was, he reflected, going to be a pretty trying scene when they faced each other later that evening.

He pictured her now, standing on the corner, looking about for him, an anxious expression in her big brown eyes.

He saw her garbed in her new gown, the dress she had bought and preserved for this occasion.

He saw the eager anticipation in her face; the growing disappointment and despair when he didn't come.

"It's no more than she deserves," he told himself savagely.

"I'll cure her once and for all of this habit of being late. She deserves it!"

Yet as he swung into the walk and unlocked the front door, a feeling of utter misery swept over him.

He felt like a cad, sneaky, utterly unhappy. He wished mightily that he had decided against the idea.

It was an underhanded thing to do, a pretty low way of getting back.

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He entered the living room, flung his hat on the divan and slumped dejectedly into a chair.

Guilt and shame and misery were written on his face. And suddenly he gave way to the urge he had been fighting against.

He leaped to his feet, glanced at his watch, discovered it was exactly 5:35 and decided that if he hurried he could get in town in ten minutes. He could offer some excuse. A flat tire. Engine trouble. Anything to explain—

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Abruptly he stopped, stared, swallowed, rubbed his eyes.

The bedroom door had opened. Barbara stood there, resplendent in her new gown, her hat on her head, gloves in her hands, bag tucked under her arm.

At sight of him her eyes widened. She rushed across the room.

"Darling! Oh, precious, how sweet of you to think of coming home to get me! I wondered if you were intending to let me ride in on the dirty street cars. And you got here just in time, too. I was just about to leave! Another moment and I would have been gone!"

Dick stared and blinked and tried to adjust his confused thoughts.

Five thirty-five his watch had said. And she was just about to leave! And on their anniversary, too!

Rage seized him.

He opened his mouth to speak, checked himself, saw her big brown eyes looking at him so tenderly, so lovingly, so adorably.

A feeling of helplessness, utter, stark helplessness took possession of him. He wondered what he'd better do, wondered what he could do, wondered what anyone else in his place would do. And then decided that, under the circumstances, there was only one thing he could do. And he did it. He drew her toward him, folded his arms about her and kissed her.

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Switzerland Has Much Snow

Switzerland is an inland mountainous country in the central portion of the Alps and has an area of 15,976 square miles. The northwest of the country, bounding France and Germany, consists of some of the parallel ridges and valleys of the Jura mountains. Between Lake Constance on the Rhine and the Lake of Geneva on the Rhone, are the Lakes Neuchatel, Zurich, Lucerne, Brienz and Bienna, which all drain to the Aar. Lake Geneva and Lake Constance each exceed 200 square miles in area. Owing to its elevation, much of Switzerland is under permanent snow.

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Ostrich Fast Runner

The ostrich, one of the swiftest creatures on earth, uses its outspread wings to help it in running, and it can thus reach an amazing speed. Unfortunately for the bird, it does not run straight, but in large circles, so that a hunter mounted on a horse much less swift than the ostrich can cut corners and thus get within gunshot of his quarry. The ostrich feeds mostly on grass and vegetable matter, but it will eat almost anything, including small animals and birds.

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Common Colds Cause Loss of Working Time

It is estimated, says Scientific American, that the 36,000,000 wage earners in the United States are absent from their work because of illness at least 250,000,000 working days per year. A life insurance company found that common colds are among the chief sources of lost time (6,700 employees) amounting to 420.7 per 1,000 employees for the year.

In view of the recognized anti-infective value of vitamin A, it seemed logical to consider the possibilities of decreasing the lost time of those dependent upon industrial employment for a livelihood by supplementing the dietary with material rich in vitamin A. Accordingly, an investigation has been conducted to determine whether using cod-liver oil as a supplement to the usual home diet would be of definite economic value for decreasing lost time caused by colds and similar infections. The results of the experiment are reported in "Industrial and Engineering Chemistry."

One hundred and eighty-five persons served as subjects of the experiment (115 women and 70 men). The

control group of 128 persons contained 88 women and 40 men. The members of the experimental group were given one tablespoonful of cod-liver oil daily, during the morning or afternoon rest period, as a supplement to their usual home dietary.

What Girls Talk About

Do you know what the principal topic of conversation is with girls and young women? The opposite sex, of course. Yes, sir, take them in high school, college, office, factory, or where you will, it is always the same. And more especially is it true of working girls. The industrial health research board of London, England, "listened-in" on the discussion of girls working at monotonous occupations for 54 weeks. Boys (men) came in for the most talk, then movies, dresses, and so on down the line.

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Ancient Proverb

He that has a head of wax must not walk in the sun.

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...and what does it mean to you?

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Like other South Sea Islanders, the Maoris believe in the tapu, or tabu. They are taught not to touch the things that are forbidden, and if the

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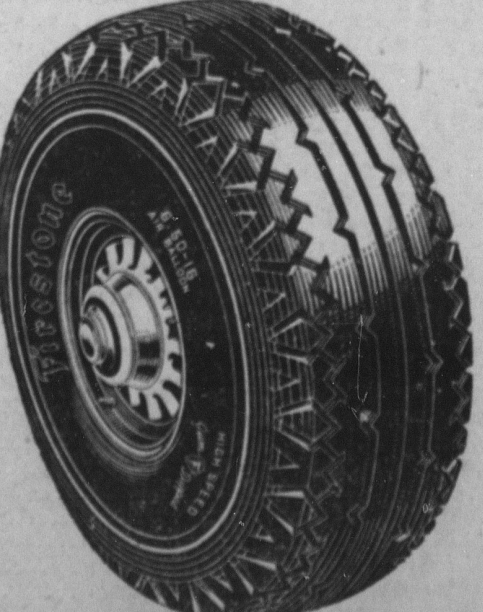
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