

A Good Catch.

Mr. Ainsley Arbuthnot was the name beautifully engraved on the elegant vesting card which a servant presented to Evelyn Ogden, as she stood before a tall pier glass, admiring the sweep of her white satin train, and the wave of her glossy black hair.

You are ready, I suppose, Sybil? she asked, with a disdainful glance at her shy little cousin, whose modest toilette of wine colored cashmere hardly suited Miss Evelyn's elaborate taste.

Oh, yes! Sybil answered, promptly. I have been ready for some time.

Why don't you put some white lace around your neck? Evelyn asked, critically. You look so—oh so plain. She was going to say consoled, but repented of that and amended her speech.

I haven't any lace, Sybil said, frankly.

I'll lend you my fichu, said Evelyn, less in a spirit of generosity than in a wish to have Sybil look semi-respectable.

Thanks was the gentle reply, but I would rather not borrow any fine feathers, Evelyn, dear. Don't mind me. I couldn't look anything but plain if I tried, and it will suit me better to creep into a quiet corner where no one will see me. I can enjoy your triumphs, cousin, for I am sure you will have them. You look beautiful to night.

Do you think so, said Evelyn, with a conscious glance toward the mirror. I am glad this dress is so becoming. Mr. Arbuthnot adores white.

I almost wish I hadn't said I would go, observed Sybil, looking down at her own plain dress. I am afraid I shall disgrace you, Evelyn. I don't even know how to behave, for I never heard of a progressive-angling party before.

Oh, its simple enough, said Evelyn, buttoning her long gloves. There will be a lot of tubs, or punch-bowls, probably, and we will all have gilt fishing rods and lines, with hooks on them. The fish are hollow and have prizes inside. We all fish for them, and nobody knows what he is going to get till the fish are opened. There is to be a gold ring in one to-night, they say. It will be like wedding cake. But you didn't worry, Sybil; I'll tell you what to do.

Sybil was not worrying. She was perfectly quiet—in fact, so much so, that Evelyn fancied her brilliant escort would not be at all pleased with this unexpected addition to their party.

Sybil had come to the city to try and get a position as a teacher, and Evelyn did not fancy taking her out in society; but Mr. Offden had a tender feeling for his sister's child, and commanded his daughter to show her all the honors due to a distinguished guest.

My cousin, Miss Weir, Mr. Arbuthnot, said Evelyn, presenting Sybil to the gentleman who awaited them in the parlor.

Ainsley Arbuthnot's keen eyes had swept in an instant over the white satin gown, with the mental observation.

Overdressed! They rested now upon the slender, little figure in the soft, rich-colored cashmere, and they lighted with genuine admiration.

I am pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss Weir, he said, with that quiet yet impressive manner which is such a valuable gift.

Sybil murmured something, but her eyelids fell before that magnetic glance.

How handsome he was, and how perfectly self-possessed! It was no wonder that Evelyn was always talking about Ainsley Arbuthnot.

He was rich, too, they said, though Sybil thought very little about wealth, save as some far-away thing which she would probably never possess in all her lifetime.

The progressive-angling went on at Mrs. Bayard's house, where Sybil felt as though she were in fairy-land, among flowers and fragrance, and parti-colored light, that shone on a crowd of elegantly-dressed men and women, who moved about in a scene of rare beauty and splendor.

Must I fish too? Sybil asked, nervously, as she looked shyly at the superb cut glass bowls, in which artificial goldfish were swimming in per-

fumed water. I would rather not.

Don't be afraid, said Arbuthnot, kindly. They all make botches of it.

Aren't you going to fish, Arbuthnot? called out an exquisite youth, who wore a primrose and an eye-glass. It's no end of a lark, pon honor! It's such fun to see those stupid little tin things wriggle!

Is it really? said Arbuthnot, with imperturbable gravity, while the speaker began to dangle his absurd little line in the water.

Do you know what that makes me think of? he continued, in a low tone, which only Sybil heard. It reminds of a definition which I once heard given for a fishing-rod—a stick with a worm at one end and a fool at the other.

Sybil broke out into a merry laugh, which made Evelyn turn around to see what the fun was.

Won't you try now? Mr. Arbuthnot. There are not very many people at the table.

Yes, said Evelyn, sweetly; let us try now by all means. Do you know, Mr. Arbuthnot, there is to be a german after the fishing, and we ladies have to fish our partners out of yonder bowl?

How momentous! Arbuthnot exclaimed. I hope heaven may be kind to me.

Evelyn smiled at him, and Sybil, having a sense of being in the way moved toward the table.

Come, lady! cried the youth with the eyeglass. There are as good fish in the sea as ever was caught.

Allow me! said Dick Travers, a brother of the hostess, to whom Sybil had been presented, and she found herself in possession of one of the gilded willow rods, which were gaily adorned with bows of ribbon.

She cast in her line, and almost immediately the others were cast alongside.

I am fishing for you, Miss Weir, said Dick boldly. I want a good partner, and you look as though you danced divinely.

I am very fond of it, Sybil said, modestly; but I don't know much about the german. I think I would be most afraid to try.

Evelyn frowned and bit her lips. What a fool the girl was!

Why Sybil! she said pettishly. You are fishing on my side. I want that little fat fish. I'm sure he's got something nice in him.

You are welcome to him I'm sure, said Sybil, abandoning her game very pleasantly. I'd rather have that slim little fellow. Perhaps he hasn't anything in him, and then I shall be allowed to look on.

Alas! cried Dick, whose skilled hand had hooked up the first fish.

What have we got there? No. 17—Amy, what is No. 17—gentlemen's prize?

You dance with Miss Irwin, said Mrs. Bayard, putting a box into her brother's hand.

Dick groaned.

Never mind, said Arbuthnot, laughing. We are going to have six figures. Let us see what you have got.

Dick produced a very pretty pocket-book, which they were all admiring, when Miss Evelyn's cry of triumph riveted attention on herself.

I've got him! she exclaimed, lifting the fish out of the water.

But great was her chagrin when she found no prize at all, and the name of somebody whom she did not like.

I'm afraid I shall not catch anybody, said Sybil, who found it quite difficult.

You don't go at it right, said Dick. Drop your hook down deep, and then bring it up slowly—this way. Try the little fellow over there. That's right. Gently now. There—ah. What did I tell you? That was well done, wasn't it. Ainsley?

Excellent, said Ainsley. Open him, do. I am consumed with curiosity. Sybil obeyed, laughingly, expecting nothing.

By! Jove Dick cried, She's hooked the gold ring.

Sure enough, inside of the slim little fish lay the shining band which every one coveted.

It is like the Arabian knights she said in astonishment. How pretty it is and see this French motto inside—*Mariau femme l'anne portrait.*

That means that you will be marri-

ed in a year, said Arbuthnot, sailing into her shy, little, flushed face.

I don't think that's likely, Sybil replied. But I never dreamed of getting the ring. I wonder how I ever happened to.

There is no great mystery as I can see said Evelyn, with a disagreeable laugh. A brother of Mr. Bayard's ought to be able to prompt one effectively.

Miss Ogden, said Dick, quickly, I hope you do not think that I knew where the ring was?

Oh, of course not, was the sarcastic rejoinder. Ah, Captain Clyde, is this you? The music is playing. I suppose we may as well go into the ball-room.

Dick Clyde smothered an exclamation as he turned to Ainsley with a curious look.

You have not finished yet, he said. There is plenty of time, Arbuthnot answered. There is Miss Irwin, Dick. She looks appealing.

You always have your own way, Ainsley, Dick said, resentfully, and went off to find his partner.

Sybil and Mr. Arbuthnot were left alone by the table.

Aren't you going to fish? she asked.

No. I am to lead the german, and it is my peculiar privilege to choose a partner. Will you dance with me, Miss Weir?

Oh, Mr. Arbuthnot, I shall disgrace you.

I will run the risk, he said, offering his arm, which she took shyly. How pretty that ring looks on your hand! Do you know I have a strong desire to put it on with a wish?

Well, I haven't any objections, said Sybil, blushing faintly.

So Ainsley took her small white hand, and put the ring on it.

It will come true in a year, if it comes true at all, he said. Now, come! The german begins at ten, and I must tell you what figures I have chosen.

Everybody wanted to know who that quiet little thing was who danced with Ainsley Arbuthnot; and the next day Dick Travers brought a friend to call. He found Evelyn Ogden alone in her glory.

Miss Weir has gone out to hunt a place, she said viciously. She wants to teach school, I believe.

Ah, you don't say? said Dick's companion who was the youth with the primrose. Do you think she would take me for a pupil? I am not much on most things, but the fellows say I am the very deuce at geography.

A month slipped by, and Sybil went home disappointed. It was the wrong time of year, they said. She might get a place in the fall, but there was none vacant now.

I'm afraid I'm not of much account, Aunt Hannah, she said, despondently as she sat by the little old study-lamp thinking it all over. I might as well have stayed at home, and not spent the money going to town. Indeed, she added, with a sigh, it would have been a great deal better.

It was an odd answer to her observation, that there came just at that moment a ring at the bell, which brought her face to face in the doorway with Ainsley Arbuthnot.

I have followed you, he said, holding the hand which she gave him. I found that I could not be happy away from you, and I came to ask, Sybil, whether I might not stay with you always?

Come in, she said, leading him into the parlor, where only the firelight shone. Excuse me, she added, hastily, I will get a lamp.

This will do, he said, detaining her. I like this best, Sybil, you know what I came for. I love you. Will you marry me?

She was a natural girl, without any art of coquetry, and she answered him, out of her heart:

Yes.

Then my wish will come true, he said, lifting her hand and kissing it where the gold ring spanned her pretty finger. Do you know what I wished, darling? The ring said that the year would bring you a husband, and I wished it might be me.

It is needless to say that Sybil did not look for any further position.

She ought to be satisfied, said Evelyn Ogden, when she heard of the engagement. It is astonishing what good fortune some of those plain girls have. Mr. Arbuthnot is the best catch of the season.—*Saturday Night.*

W. C. T. U. COLUM.

HOW MUCH IS YOUR BOY WORTH?

A TALL Kansan said: 'Put me down for \$20; I have six boys, and if necessary will make my subscription more; to save them, a \$100 bill would be a small amount.' He was a hard-working farmer; but he loved his boys and as a consequence hated the liquor-traffic.

A New York merchant said: 'To my astonishment I found out that my eldest boy had taken a drink of beer.' That was enough; every energy of that business man is brought into active service to protect his son from the liquor trade.

How much is your boy worth? First: He is worth asking to sign the total abstinence pledge.

Second: He is of sufficient value to be sent to a Band of Hope, or a Temperance School, to be instructed as to the effects of alcohol upon the human system, and the sin of intemperance.

Third: He is of sufficient importance for you to know where he spends his evenings and who his associates are.

Fourth: He is of more value than many household pets, and is entitled to more of your time and attention.

Fifth: To say nothing of the value of your boy's good character, he has cost you for food, raiment, and education more than what the average saloon-keeper pays for his license.

Sixth: 'As the twig is bent the tree is inclined.' It will be of great importance to you whether your boy is a valuable citizen or a curse to you and the neighborhood in which you reside. If he turns out good he will be worth his weight in gold; if otherwise, better he had never been born.

Seventh: Being immortal, he is worth a life's work to prepare him for a happy hereafter.

No license was ever made high enough to cover the lowest estimate that you can put on your boy if there's a spark of Christianity or humanity in your heart.

Nebraska virtually says its city boys are worth \$1,000; altogether too low. New York City puts the price of her boys at \$75; less than the price of a city railroad horse. An insult to every mother!

What is your boy worth? Tell me the value of his soul, and I'll name the price of the privilege to sell intoxicants.

THE EMPTY ARMS.

We were thinking to-night of the tired mothers all over our land, who some of them, sometimes, grow irritated and fretful to the little ones God has given them to train for Him.

We remember sitting one evening holding a restless infant, with whom we would have to be up during the night, while another child was ill in the next room. A neighbor came in—years older than myself—who said to me: 'Now is the happiest season of your motherhood, while you can gather your little ones all within your arms. Oh, if I could only do so with mine!' We knew that her eldest son was growing reckless, and that her daughter had married badly, yet we said:

'We shall be glad when our children are grown.' Yet, alas! one departed ere he was grown, and the other, just as she had developed into something very lovely, spread her soul-wings and went to that land "whose inhabitants never say they are sick."

To-night, sitting with empty arms, we would give all the world—were it ours to give—for the soft tattoo of dimpled fingers upon our cheeks, for the pressure of a head with tangled curls against our breast, a tired sleepy little one to nurse within these arms. Yet are we comforted with one thought they have passed beyond temptation, while thousands of other mothers are watching to-night with lacerated hearts, the return of their sons from the saloon.

God pity such mothers! Your sorrow is greater far than ours, and we will strive to overcome our own sorrow by working to gain the restoration of these other mothers' sons to the true nobility of manhood.

Near by us we know of one boy who, drinking glass after glass of hard cider, staggers into the school-room unable to study; sitting in a drunken stupor when he should be laying up a store of knowledge. His is not an isolated case. There are

hundreds of our boys, yes, thousands, who are learning to become drunkards upon cider. We look out upon the extensive apple orchard of Ohio, with a grown apprehension that they may prove our greatest curse. Apples are plenty, market over-stocked; "We will make them into cider," say the thrifty farmers, so the cider mills multiply with the years, and every cellar is well stocked. Talk to the larger share of the inhabitants about the danger of cider drinking and they will laugh you to scorn.

THE EVILS OF GIFT GIVING.

Sham and snob, perplexity, annoyance and extravagance have crept into the customs of gift giving. Though one may make a gift out of the heart, and do it becomingly and unassumingly, yet it seems as if a dozen influences were bearing on him to force him into greater expense than he can afford, or to give where he is reluctant to do so, or where he must make a show of the article given. Quiet, unostentatious, spontaneous giving shines brightly, when we find it amid the dreary heartlessness the gaudy show and the heartburnings that often accompany the formal giving that is a part of social life.

The reader may call to mind some wedding or birthday anniversary that she is invited to help celebrate. The problem of all problems even outranking the common, what shall I wear, then is, what present shall I send. It is not enough to go and participate in the social duties and to be cordial in well wishing and congratulation, for none of this will pardon the neglect or oversight of the gift. There will be the question, where is Mrs. Jackson's present, and then the unpleasant comment if she has made none.

So Mrs. Jackson's sets out to find some compromise between pride and purse, perhaps poverty, something that costs no more than absolutely compulsory and yet looks as if it were worth a great deal more something that the other guests will not look at slightly if not speak of contemptuously or at least think of in the same spirit.

And then the guests compare these proxies of themselves and put themselves on exhibition, after a fashion, but in the same way that they stand up before a committee of critics and have the style and elegance of their clothing passed upon. The show is at least over, but the jealousies and heartburnings remain, the fear that respectability has been endangered by the insignificance of the gift or the overtopping consciousness of a few that they each made the best of one of the best presents of the lot.

Afterwards, as is more or less the custom in some parts of the country, the names of the donors and a brief description of their gifts, appear in some newspaper there to undergo further comparison and criticism and all the train of accompaniments. Finally, if the present was valuable enough it may find its way to a shop where duplicate presents are bought and sold, so little did the receiver care about the personality of the giver, or of such little use is it to the recipient among several other presents of the same kind.

Gift extortion and compulsory gift making are little less than sinful, if they are short of that. Gifts are by no means always the token of friendship and when combined with the abuses that are often made to accompany them, they are demoralizing, they are unpleasant features of what take the form of duties, and they are dark spots in social life.

Something is wrong when a present is made a test of social standing or when it is the prerequisite of performing a social act. There is an opportunity for reform, when what is apparently a friendly deed, is confessedly empty of honest intent when it is burdensome, annoying compulsory, false-hearted, or made for show, or evidence of wealth or merely for social conformity.

The only excuse that one can make for these abuses of gift making is that their compulsory features have the effect of putting people into the habit of making presents at a time when their friendly feelings have not become strong to prompt the act unaided. With the growth of these feelings the custom gradually gets a better and surer foundation and stands more plainly in harmony with civil-

ization. A gift should be an embodiment of sentiment from which cost should be totally divorced as an element of weight, and with which no social compulsion should be linked, except the compulsion of a spontaneous expression of feelings. The world is not good enough for this yet, but some attempt, if only a feeble one, if general enough, would be a green oasis in the social desert.—*Good Housekeeping.*

HUMOROUS.

High strung—Telegraph wires. A poor relation—A blood-and-thunder story.

A railing woman is like a swordfish. She carries a weapon in her mouth.

An enthusiastic meeting—two girls who haven't seen each other for an hour.

Husband (attempting to sing) "MY voice is rather h-hus-husky to-night." Wife—"No wonder it's husky! You are full of corn."—[Newman Independent.]

"Now is the accepted time," remarked the poor young man solemnly when his girl told him she would have him.

A firm who advertised for a boy "to do heavy work" received but one applicant and he came in charge of his father.

FAITHFUL TO THE LAST.

A touching instance of fidelity on the part of a dog has just occurred in the east of Paris. Some gendarmes going their rounds a day or two since, found on a waste land near the Mémorialmont gate a man hanging to a shrub. His suicide was a most determined one, for his legs were extended along the ground, and his hands touched the soil, so low was he suspended. Between his legs a dog lay sleeping. The poor animal when aroused by the footsteps of the gendarmes, tried to make them understand in dumb show what had happened to his master. The body was cut down and carried away to the Morgue, in spite of the frantic protests of the four footed friend, and the latter was locked up.

There being nothing on the body to show its identity, the Police Commissary made use of the dog to ascertain the abode of the suicide. The animal was released and made straight for a house in the Rue des Haries. The police on arriving there, found that a working carpenter was missing, and the dog was recognised by the conclave as belonging to him. The animal has been adopted by some of the inmates of the house.—*Galigmani's Messenger.*

A DOG'S STRATEGY.

A family removed to San Francisco a few weeks ago and let the furnished house it vacated to an old lady. Among the assets was a large New Foundland dog, says the Virginia City (Nev.) *Chronicle*. In the drawing-room of the residence is a large cushioned chair, in which the aged tenant is fond of reclining. The dog watched wistfully for the lady to vacate this comfortable seat, and so soon as she did he leaped into the chair and refused to vacate it.

The lady being afraid to eject the dog violently resorted to strategy. She opened the window and looking out called "Cats!" The dog left the chair instantly and leaped through the widow in search of the intruding felines; the lady sat down in her favorite chair. The next day the dog entered the room while the mistress of the house was seated in the covered chair. Suddenly the animal rushed to the window and began barking furiously. The old lady ran to the window to ascertain the cause of the dog's excitement, when the animal leaped into the chair she had vacated and refused to leave it.

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