

Their Scarlet Thread

By KEITH GORDON

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In his heart of hearts the handsome young principal of the high school sometimes characterized the young people under his charge in highly unprofessional language as "little beasts." Teaching was by no means his vocation, but simply a compulsory grace by which he hoped to obtain two coveted years of study at Heidelberg.

He did so now with a viciousness that would have horrified their parents, for as he and Miss Comyng entered one of the smaller recitation rooms to look at a globe they were confronted by their own names scrawled upon the blackboard and bristling with the canceled letters common to both. By counting first the canceled and then the remaining letters to the formula "Friendship, love, indifference, hate," the youthful tormentors had discovered and duly published to the world that Miss Comyng's feeling for him was a compound of friendship and indifference, while his own for her was unadulterated love.

But this was not all. Lest the inscription should by any means escape the attention of its objects, warningly scrawled beneath it was the admonition, "Change the name and not the letter, and you change for worse and not for better."

Cartright glanced at his companion swiftly. He devoutly hoped she was not one of those mawkishly sentimental young women who blushed and quivered at occurrences of this sort, thereby giving him an uncomfortable feeling that possibilities hovered in her mind.

But this time he need have had no fear. Miss Comyng took the matter much more coolly than her predecessor had done under similar circumstances. She faced the scrawl a moment with puckering brows, then transferred her gaze openly to his face and laughed outright at the dawning look of relief she surprised there, and when she spoke it was with a great demureness.

"I don't feel a bit embarrassed," she remarked. "No one, I'm sure, need feel ashamed of feeling 'friendship and indifference' for a colleague. But candidly—her tone changed and became frank and matter of fact—"Isn't it amazing that in all those young heads from which the pigtails are still dangling, as well as the clipped and rumpled ones on the other side of the room, the romantic idea should be dominant? You and I, being neither very old nor very ugly—her lips twitched—"will play the leading roles in a living drama for the next few months. One hundred and twenty pairs of keen eyes will be watching us daily, awaiting some sign of our admiration for each other. It's—It's simply appalling!"

"Appalling!" he echoed. "I should say it was—and some of them are still in the stage where they spell future with a 'ch' and busy with an 'I'! But I don't mind if you don't," he added magnanimously.

She was sitting on the arm of one of the chairs in a thoroughly girlish but rather undignified attitude. Cartright noticed with satisfaction that her teaching had not "sunk in" as yet.

"Mind! Not I. Why, it's as good as a play. Now, if you come into my room to speak to me during a recitation, especially if you should happen to smile at me, the air becomes electric with meaning. Minnie telegraphs Jennie a swift 'Did you see that?' and even the bulking, overgrown boys who have been sitting like lumps upon logs arouse to something like life."

"I've half a mind to show you something I found on the floor today," she remarked slowly, and from the bag at her side she took a slip of paper and held it out to him. "It's extremely flattering to you, anyway."

He looked at the slip. "I bet she's in love with him" was written in a wabbling, unformed hand. "I don't see how she can help it, he has such fearful fires in his dark eyes. They're just like Rochester's."

There was a moment's silence, and then the two young instructors broke into a roar of laughter that wiped out the last sense of strangeness between them.

"Now that you know that I know, and I know that you know," was Cartright's somewhat involved explanation. "I don't see any reason why we can't be friends. Nothing that those young cubs do can possibly make us shy. We'll show them that the thread of romance doesn't run through every friendship between a man and a woman."

"As the scarlet thread through every bit of rope used by the British navy," she supplemented saucily, and then the talk reverted to school matters.

But the pupils of the Central High school were not slow to discover that there was a new ease and understanding between the incoming teacher of algebra and physiology and the principal whom every girl in the room secretly raved over.

Once Jennie Bascom met them walking in the park, and notwithstanding the fact that on this occasion they were deep in the discussion of pedagogy she described the meeting to Minnie Brown, her chum, the next morning somewhat after this fashion:

"They didn't even see till I was close to them they were so interested in each other. Her cheeks were all pink—you know how lovely she looks with the color shining through that down on her face—and he was looking at her, and his eyes were shining with a great happiness." Here Jennie dropped dreamily into the words of her latest novel—

"And words of love fell from his lips." "But how do you know? You didn't hear them, did you?" demanded the practical and unimaginative Minnie. "Hear them!" was Jennie's scornful retort. "There are some things you don't have to hear to know them. I'll bet you that he was proposing to her. Just wait—and watch the third finger of her left hand."

But, though they waited and watched with a patience that deserved reward, the tapering fingers of Ruth Comyng's left hand remained unadorned. Had they shown any sign of a misunderstanding all might have been forgiven; but, on the contrary, they were apparently the best of friends, and Minnie Brown formed a mean habit, twitting Jennie like this: "Yes that will happen just about the time that that ring appears on Miss Comyng's left hand!" And poor Jennie was forced to listen in silence, for had she not asserted positively that words of love were falling from his lips? She was conscious of a fearful disappointment with life, and she watched this unaccountable hero and heroine with bitter, resentful eyes.

Meantime the school year drew toward its close, and Cartright, with a dancing heart, saw his dream of two years at Heidelberg about to materialize into a real experience.

"Think of it," he said to Miss Comyng as they rowed upon the little lake in the park one dusky spring evening, "after June 15 I'm free. Then, ho, for the waterland! No more refractory boys, no more pert, half fledged girls, no more tinkling of bells, no more wasting of life and energy on a life I'm utterly unfit for—no more chalk, no more Latin!"

He paused abruptly, as if some unexpected thought had arrested him, and, trailing his oars, he looked curiously at her. She, too, appeared abstracted, but she aroused herself and smiled. "Well?"

"I've had an awful thought," he resumed soberly. "It never occurred to me until this moment, but don't you see—there'll be no more you, either. And I've got so—so accustomed to you, you know!"

His face showed a puzzled amazement that this should be so, and the girl opposite, seeing it, smiled involuntarily. She, too, was a trifle bewildered at a certain quick constriction of the heart that his talk about going abroad had given her. They had been the very best of friends and companions, but was that any reason why she should feel a quick, overwhelming sense of desolation at the mere mention of his going away?

Cartright rowed on absently, mechanically. Then, as the dusk melted softly into darkness, he made for the shore. The girl opposite him was a mere blurred shadow. The boat poked its nose into the shore, and he jumped out. The action seemed to shake off the benumbing amazement that had fallen upon him, and in its place came a great, glad certainty.

He held out a hand—two hands, in fact—to help Miss Comyng ashore, and as she put hers into them he murmured, "My dear, my dear—it's the scarlet thread after all!"

Napoleon and Beet Sugar.

Although the great Napoleon was not the sort of man whom it was ordinarily safe to laugh at, he was ridiculed and caricatured on account of his faith that sugar could be made profitable from beets. In 1811 the emperor promised the French people that they should have sugar from beets if he excluded from France the commerce of England, including the sugars of the British West Indies. This promise led to the publication of a caricature in which the emperor and his little son, the king of Rome, were represented. The emperor was shown sitting in his boy's nursery, squeezing a beet root into a cup of coffee. The baby prince sat near him hard at work sucking a beet root, while the nurse, standing close by, was represented as exclaiming, "Suck it, dear, suck it; your papa says it is sugar!" This biting sarcasm did not prevent Napoleon from spending several million francs at a time when his empire was under a tremendous strain of expenditures in bounties for sugar made from beets.

Pride of Profession.

Old Barney Maguigan was as well known on his "sweep stretch" as the bluecoats on the beat. As his work became somewhat burdensome with the increase of years the residents of the neighborhood urged the employment of an assistant.

Barney did not look upon the suggestion with favor—it savored too strongly of the time when he should be "laid on the shelf"—but he consented to the trial of a new hand at last, and a stout youth was engaged whose broom made quick work of the leaves and litter.

"Yes, sir," Barney admitted reluctantly a few mornings later when asked by an old friend if he did not find his assistant a good worker—"Yes, sir, there's no denying he's got the muscle to swing a broom in the open; but, man alive, when it comes to the fancy touches round a lamp post or a sewer mouth, why, he's no good at all!"

Wellington as a Wit.

Although it cannot be said that the Duke of Wellington shone to any great extent as a humorist, he was quite capable of administering a crushing retort when occasion demanded, as the following story, called from a biography of the Iron Duke, shows: Louis Philippe once introduced the duke to one of the French marshals whom he had defeated in the peninsula. With unparadonable discourtesy the marshal turned his back on his old foe during the presentation. The king apologized with what grace he could.

"Forgive him, sire," laughed the Iron Duke. "Why, it was I who taught him to do that in the peninsula!"

An Animal Story For Little Folks

The Little Goat's Trick

One day a very hungry wolf pounced down upon a little goat and was just about to make a meal of him when the goat cried out:

"Wait a minute! I have something to say!"

"What is it?" asked the wolf.

"If you will let me go and not eat me, as you intended to do," said the



HE LOOKED DOWN AND SAW THEM.

goat. "I'll tell you where there are more goats than you have teeth in your mouth."

"My, my," exclaimed the wolf, smacking his lips, "I'll agree to that."

"Well," declared the goat, "if you run up to the top of yonder mountain you'll see the goats on the other side, and I am sure there are more there than you could eat in a month."

So the wolf ran off up the side of the mountain, but the farther he ran the higher the mountain seemed, and it was a very long time before he reached the top, tired and footsore and out of breath and more hungry than he had been before.

And what do you think was the first thing he saw? A herd of goats. There must have been 200 of them. They were grazing peacefully on a broad plain on the other side of the mountain.

But what else do you suppose? Why, the other side of the mountain was perfectly straight up and down, just like the walls of this room, only as high as fifty houses placed on top of each other, and at the foot of this steep cliff was a broad river that was as swift as an ocean current. Then it was on the other side of this stream that the plain lay upon which the goats were feeding. It was impossible for the wolf to get to them.

"That little goat has played me a trick," said the wolf sorrowfully.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

An Animal Story For Little Folks

The Cautious Gobbler

The Rev. Ishbosheth Whitewash had at one time a large brood of fowls. They kept him supplied with eggs enough to make cake for the donation parties that so frequently visited him. They also furnished food for the large number of visiting clergy who found it convenient to drop in whenever they



"THEY'RE AFTER ME."

felt the need of chicken. But so large had been the demand on his larder that the stock was now reduced to a tough old rooster and a forlorn turkey gobbler. One day the Rev. I. Whitewash had friends to dine and went out into the yard for the capture of one or other of the lonesome pair.

Mr. Turkey Gobbler saw him coming. "No, you don't!" he cried as he flew up on the ridgepole of the barn.

"They're after me," said the rooster as he slipped through the parson's fingers, leaving a crop of tail feathers. "Git under the barn!" shrieked the gobbler.

"Give me time, that's all!" the rooster cried back at him. The parson was outwitted. He poked and shooed and entreated, but both were wary.

At length, discouraged, he went into the house.

Cautiously Mr. Rooster crept out and crowded up to the gobbler. "D'yerr-think—he's—gone—for—good?"

And the cautious old gobbler gobbled back: "Doubtful! Doubtful! Doubtful! Doubtful!"—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

THE SLOVENLY GIRL.

Give Her Dainty Work to Do, and It May Cure Her.

One of the best ways of developing daintiness and dainty tastes in a girl is to give her dainty work to do. Give the girl who is careless about her room (and especially of the order of her bureau drawers) material as fine as you can get it for a couple of corset covers or a chemise with fine, dainty lace and narrow ribbon to finish it with. Get her interested in making these things; encourage her to go a step further—to make the rest of a set to match. By the time she has made a piece or two and her friends have begun to exclaim over her making—and having—more of these bits of daintiness. In the meantime, as the piles grow she unconsciously begins straightening out her bureau. If she is to be constantly pulling out the drawer where her handiwork is kept she naturally begins to straighten it out, arranging everything in neat piles, so that they may be displayed to advantage. When she straightens out one drawer she—still unconsciously—begins to notice that the others are not in order and gradually her noticing includes the whole room, until by the time her drawer is full of dainty made underclothes she has acquired orderly habits in spite of herself.

PRETTY LIGHT SHADES.

One That Would Do For Either Gas or Electricity.

One of the prettiest shades for an electric bulb is a large iris or orchid blossom. Stretch a pattern of the leaf from a flower or trace and enlarge from a book illustration. Then fold crease paper and cut so as to make five or six petals. Each petal is lightly caught to a wire that runs up the center of a petal like the midrib of a leaf. This flower can be bent to entirely cover the light or left partly open.

A shade that would do nicely for either gas or electricity is made on a wire frame in petal shaped segments that grow narrow at the top. For gas they should not be decreased in size too much, for the opening at the top has to be large enough to fit over an ordinary glass shade or a burner shade. On these petals the silk is plaited down tightly. Three rows of fancy millinery braid of the same color edge each petal. Where the petals join the border stands up in a ridge. There is a ruche of the braid around the top.—New York Telegram.

THE HOME DOCTOR.

For sudden hoarseness try a lump of borax the size of a pea dissolved in the mouth.

A teaspoonful of warm honey taken every fifteen minutes has a surprising effect on catarrh.

An old fashioned cure for a cold is to wrap a silk handkerchief over the head after having soaked the feet in the customary mustard water.

One of the best remedies for toothache is compound tincture of benzoin. Saturate a piece of cotton wool with it and apply to the offending tooth.

A few drops of coal oil are useful in many directions for home nursing. Apply to the throat as soon as any soreness is felt and further trouble will probably be avoided.

If butter is applied immediately to a bruise it will be found healing. It will often prevent any discoloration. If the butter is salt it may smart a little, but there will be no harm done.

Our Lady of Nerves.

The woman who is nervous from ill health, overwork, anemia or other physical ailment merits the warmest sympathy. But it is the poseur—the woman who is "afraid" to walk a square at night when masculine escort is available, yet who would walk a mile if sufficient lure was at the other end and it was to go alone or not to get it—it is to this descendant of the agitated female of fifty years ago that scant sympathy is due. She thinks it ladylike to be timid, not realizing that cowardice, either in man or woman, is a miserable, a deplorable flaw. Could some one take this great grownup baby and tell her after suitable old fashioned punishment that what she called nervousness was nothing but temper, selfishness and a determination to have her own way it might bring about a sharp but lasting cure.—Philadelphia Telegraph.

Delicate Cake.

From a new cookbook this recipe for old fashioned white cake or delicate cake is taken: Cream together a cupful of butter and two of sugar; then add slowly a cupful of sweet milk and the whites of eight eggs beaten to a stiff froth. Finally mix in three cupfuls of sifted flour in which have been mixed three teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Stir as little as possible. Flavor with a teaspoonful of almond extract. Sometimes a cupful of blanched and chopped almonds is added at the last. When such a cake is iced and ornamented with whole blanched almonds an orthodox christening cake is produced.

Cruet Stoppers.

Often your prettiest cut glass vinegar cruets become ruined because the stopper suddenly becomes immovable and no power on earth short of breaking seems to move it. When it does stick pour a little oil around the top. Let it stand for ten or fifteen minutes and then try knocking the stopper gently with the back of a knife, giving it an upward motion. Continue this knocking all the way 'round the stopper. This is the best chance of loosening without running any risks of breaking. But if the stoppers of oil and vinegar cruets be exchanged every few days the trouble will be prevented.

Keep Flexible.
The most graceful and beautiful women the world has ever seen were those of ancient Greece. Every woman there was trained in childhood to take part in athletic games suited to her sex; also to dance in rhythmic motion. Clumsy and ungainly movement on the part of a woman partook of the nature of sin. A woman can make no greater mistake either to conclude that she is too old to dance or to learn gymnastic exercises. The stiffer a woman's joints and muscles are the more need she has of limbering exercises. Let her get a move on.

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