

The Bishop's Impromptu
By E. E. GARNETT
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"Whatever possessed you," said Miss Cordelia, "to quarrel with her?"
"I didn't," she quivered with me.
"Don't be an Adam."
Bert ignored the case of Adam. "If I could see her alone," he said gently—"alone accidentally."
"Accidentally, of course. That's where I come in."
"Why not?"
"Because I am on her side."
"But so," he said, "am I, always on her side."
"Oh, indeed?"
"Miss Cordelia, she sent me her ring with a note saying she had changed her mind. I can't go cringing after that, can I? But accidentally."
"Why," interrupted Miss Cordelia, "did she change her mind?"
"Some law of the fourth dimension may explain it."
"You've no guess?"
"Well, I protested, 'a man can't be an Egyptian mummy just because he's engaged.'"
"I see. And I don't see any hope for you."
"When I'm sorry to be a nuisance, Miss Cordelia, but setting himself like a rock, 'I must stay until she comes. She comes often, doesn't she?'"
Miss Cordelia began to laugh. "Why," she asked, "don't you write to her?"
"I want to be sure that she cares before—well, about, doesn't like to be a bound dog for nothing."
"And how will you be made sure?"
"Oh, the minute I see her."
"It must be delightful," Miss Cordelia remarked pleasantly, "to be a man."
"Oh, I'll know," said Bert, with general assurance, "and you'll help, and then—" He stopped, with a sudden flash of mischief in his eyes.
"And then?" Miss Cordelia leaned toward him, with her own eyes twinkling.
"Then I'll kidnap her," cried Bert, and sprang to his feet. "If she cares, Miss Cordelia, upon my soul, I'll kidnap her."
"Oh, how young and silly!" said Miss Cordelia and sighed.
"Listen. It's quite sensible," Bert explained joyously. "The engagement was talked about, you know. Every one discovered it."
"Yes," assented Miss Cordelia and smiled.
"Now the break is being talked about, and little Nixie, poor girl, hates the whole business."
"It's quite likely," Miss Cordelia put in dryly, "that she especially hates the talk going on about you and that little flit Nellie Carl."
"That isn't my fault. Anyway," with conviction, "this plan will make everything right."
"Oh, indeed," repeated Miss Cordelia.
"You see, after all she's been through—" "Exactly," Miss Cordelia put in, with feeling.
"I mean in the way of talk. She'll hate to begin all over again."
"So?"
"So," beamingly, "we'll cut the thing short."
"And I'm to furnish the knife?"
"Bert gave her a nod. "It's great," he cried and made for the door. "I'll see the bishop."
"Mercy on us!" protested Miss Cordelia, but he only paused to make a brief request.
"Miss Cordelia—" "Oh, you silly boy!"
"Ask her to wear white."
"I dare say."
"I'll tell her the rest myself."
"And when," laughed Miss Cordelia, "is she to wear white?"
"Tonight, of course. You wouldn't have me live through another day like this?"
Miss Cordelia surrendered. "Come to dinner," she told him. "Come early—and we'll see."
"It's great," said Bert and was off. Miss Cordelia began to feel a little fluttered. She got Nixie on the telephone. Would Nixie come to dinner? Nixie would be delighted to come.
"And I wish," called Miss Cordelia next, "that you'd wear white, dear. I—I like you in white."
"It's very fortunate, then, that I've a new white silk," said Nixie.
Miss Cordelia chuckled. "Come early," she added. "Be sure to come early, and Nixie!"
"Yes."
"There's quite a snow beginning. Wear that pretty, warm cloak of yours, the long fur lined one with the hood. We're all going to a—little impromptu at the bishop's and come back to supper." And then she fled out of hearing.
Nixie dressed as desired and came early.
"What sort of impromptu?" she questioned brightly.
"Miss Cordelia helped to unfasten the fur cloak."
"It's a secret," she explained.
"Gracious, how funny! Does the bishop know? Who knows?"
"Very few know," admitted Miss Cordelia.
"Mayn't I?" pleaded Nixie sweetly.
"Have a white dress and a cloak," smiling "anything to do with it?"
Miss Cordelia suddenly kissed her. "It's a beautiful secret. Bert will tell you, and you mustn't be angry, dear."
"Oh," said Nixie, and for an instant the flash of battle was in her eyes.
"Mr. Bert Jordan is here?"
"You don't want to avoid him, do you? Since every one knows you have rejected the poor boy, I think," faltered Miss Cordelia—"but I mustn't meddle—I think you might show him a little grace."
"How?" Nixie questioned frostily, "does any one know anything?"
"Oh, they look at Bert, I suppose," said astute Miss Cordelia. "Shall we go down, dear?"
They went down and found Mr. Jordan waiting. There was a white robe in his coat, and he was rather white himself, but a kind of smoldering fire was in his eyes.
"Will you show Nixie my new orphans?" suggested Miss Cordelia. "I must stay here to receive the other guests." And Bert, tell her about the impromptu—the bishop's impromptu.
Mr. Jordan bowed. Nixie led out with a graceful nonchalance.
They at once forgot the new orchids, though a whole end of the conservatory was a cascade with their weird rainbow bloom.
After a silent time Nixie pouted.
"You needn't sulk," she told him.
"I didn't mean to," Bert protested in hurried meekness. "I was only anxious about—about some roses that I've ordered."
"Oh, indeed?"
"Yes. I was wondering if they'd get

to the bishop's in time."
"You tell Miss Cordelia," she remarked sedately, "seem to have the bishop's impromptu quite weighing on your mind."
"Oh, it's no great matter to her," said Bert.
"But a great matter to you?"
"Well, they're—bride roses, you see." "A wedding," cried Nixie alertly. "Was that what Miss Cordelia meant—a wedding?"
"Yes," he admitted, "that is what she meant." And he was white as his rosebud.
She looked at him, and suddenly the battle was again in her eyes.
"How stupid of me!" she said and made a low bow to him. "Of course only the bridegroom sends the bride roses. Allow me to congratulate you. You've been breaking it to me gently—I am so much obliged to you—that you are the happy man."
"It is a wedding," said Bert and set his teeth.
"So kind of you to mention it. Has Miss Carl come yet?"
"I don't know."
"Shouldn't you be finding out?"
But here there came a confusion—the clash of skirts, with chatter and laughter, going down the hall.
"Oh," said Nixie, "they're going in to dinner."
Mr. Jordan gravely offered his arm. The girl's lips quivered. She looked up at him with a swift appeal in the way of the days before the quarrel.
"They'll all know," she faltered, "that you've been telling me, and they'll try not to stare and not to smile, and it will be horrid, horrid!"
"Don't go," said Bert.
"She goes a nervous laugh and slipped her hand within his arm, but he stood still.
"We must go," she said and gave a little pull and set her mouth in an firm line as she could. "It's too late to not."
"It's rather late to go," said Bert.
"They're all seated by now. If Miss Cordelia has given us the places that she went to, we're safe."
"We'll have to walk the whole length of the table," broke in Nixie and gave a little sob. "I'll never forgive Miss Cordelia—never. And where," suddenly drawing away from him, "is Nellie Carl?"
"I think," said Bert, astutely bending his head to listen, "that they're sending for us." Truly a step came down the hall.
"Oh," gasped Nixie, "so they are!"
"Let's sit and run," said Bert.
"Among the instant they had whisked out among the straggling flock of the pillars. One hand in a hurried little flutter of excitement went to her throat. The other Bert held and felt it trembling.
"Come on," he said, joyously facing the snowy night, "come on!"
"The snow was a nuisance, of it was touching, but Bert laughed.
"To the bishop," he explained. "The impromptu."
"But I don't want to go there now."
"Why not? You always intended, didn't you—to be married by the bishop? Why not now, where you vainly through the darkness he tried to search for her face.
"Let me carry you to the sleigh." Bert entreated, "so that your little feet will not get wet in the snow."
"Your sleigh is waiting?"
"And Nellie Carl?"
He laughed triumphantly and, snatching her up in his arms, ran out into the street, and ready under the great robes of the sleigh was the hooded cloak.
"How ever did Miss Cordelia guess?" laughed Bert as he drew it about her, "or did you tell her?"
"You are two wicked plotters," returned Nixie indignantly. "I shall go back to that dinner."
But the groom had stepped back from the horse's head.
"It's great!" cried Bert, as they dashed down the street with the soft, cold beat of the snow in their faces. "And I can't stop the horse unless—" "Well, unless?"
"Unless you want him stopped, Nixie."
"Do you know," asked Nixie demurely, "if either of you has told the bishop, because it would not be respectful to disappoint him?"
"But there's one thing, Nixie," this somewhat later.
"Oh, is there?"
"You haven't your mind at all on Nellie Carl, have you?"
"Well," said Nixie, and softly laughed, "I don't see why you should kidnap the wrong girl."
So they dashed on toward the bishop.

Retelling a Joke.
A west side man heard a joke, new to him, the other day, and the first thing he did upon reaching home for dinner was to tell it to his wife.
"Mary," he said, "here's a new joke that's mighty good. One man says, 'The theater caught fire last night. Did they save anything?' the second man asks, 'Yes, says the first, they carried out the programme.' Isn't that a good one?' His wife said it was, and next day she tried it on her grocer.
"Mr. Blank," she said, "here's a new joke for you. One man says, 'The theater caught fire last night. Did they save anything?' the second man asks, 'Did they save anything?' Yes, replies the first, they went on with the programme and finished it.' Isn't that a fine joke?' The grocer said it was excellent, but confidentially he acknowledges that he hasn't yet seen the point.—Kansas City Times.

The Wink Test.
"It is easy," said an oculist, "to tell what kind of light most thoroughly suits your eyes. The light that is best for you is the one which you wink least. The wink, you see, is the eye's act of weakness. I have experimented on myself, and I find that an electric light is even better for my eyes than daylight. In daylight I wink two and eight-tenths times a minute, whereas in an electric light I only wink one and eight-tenths times a minute. In it I give six and a half winks a minute. Gaslight is better, for in it I only give two and a third winks."
Posthumous Editions.
"Did you ever see anything to equal the way some of these live young authors turn out books?"
"Well, they can't compete with getting out of the dead ones who keep on getting out new volumes every year."—New Orleans Picayune.

When trouble goes hunting him a man may find it, but when a man goes hunting trouble it hasn't one chance in a thousand of escaping him.

No Reminder.
"What's the matter?" inquired Asen. "What are you searching your pockets for?" "I tied a knot in my handkerchief this morning," said the absent-minded man, "to remind me of something I was to get for my wife, and now I can't find the handkerchief."
—Exchange.

THE COCOANUT PALM.
It Plays an Important Part in Life and in Law in Ceylon.

When a traveler gets his first sight of a palm grove he does not easily forget it. He sees the trees springing up, as it were, from the water in which their shadows are reflected. Besides being beautiful ornaments to a landscape these palms are among the most useful gifts which nature has given to the inhabitants of tropical islands. In supplying actual necessities and in the number of useful purposes to which it can be applied bamboo takes first rank, but the palm comes next. To many of the people of Ceylon the coconut trees are their own. They form the most important asset of his estate and by will are generally divided among his family. As one of the important traits of the Cingalese is his love of litigation, one can readily see what an important part the palm tree plays in the law cases there. There is a case on record in which two thousand five hundred and twentieth part of a grove, containing only ten trees, was the subject of dispute. One of the greatest difficulties which the engineers have to encounter in building a railroad across the island was to determine the ownership of the palm trees. The ramifications of relationships and the fractional claims set up were most difficult to understand and disentangle.

A MILITARY EXECUTION.
It is a Most Impressive and Dramatic Ceremony.

"The solemnity of a military execution is about the most impressive and dramatic act that is known in human affairs," said an old army officer. "I had a young friend in California who enlisted in the Union army at the same time with myself, and coming east, we were placed in the same company with a Virginia girl and under her influence deserted to the enemy. A few days afterward he was captured and, being easily recognized, was condemned to be shot. He had fought like a demon in the engagement which resulted in his being made a prisoner, for he knew well what his fate would be if taken. His execution was the most mournful ceremony I ever witnessed, and being nothing ever seen on the stage more theatrical—the procession to the scene of death, the band in advance playing a dirge, the coffin, with the prisoner sitting upon it; the guard in the rear and a brigade of cavalry formed in a hollow square. The condemned man, sitting on his coffin, met his fate like a hero, without exhibiting a tremor of fear, and those who witnessed his death were far more excited than he. It seemed a sad thing that such a courageous lad should be sacrificed, but it is one of the necessities of war, and this terrible punishment was necessary to deter others from playing the role of traitor."—Washington Post.

The Town Stood the Loss.
While the engine was taking water the passenger with the imposing watch chain and eyeglasses strolled out on the platform and looked with interest about him.
"By Jove!" he said to the solitary native who was sitting on a flag barrel. "This village looks just exactly as it did twenty years ago, when I moved down from here. I don't believe it has changed a particle in all that time."
"I reckon not, mister," said the solitary native, biting off a chew of tobacco. "Your girl's away don't seem to have made much difference in the old town."—Chicago Tribune.

merchant (to lawyer)—Call those silver matches? Why, they won't light at all! Hawker—Well, wot could ye 'ave safer?—New Yorker.

Silver money 250 years old is still in circulation in some parts of Spain.
Subject to sinking spells—divers.—Philadelphia Telegraph.

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Belleville	12:10	11:00	2:30
Williamsport	12:20	11:10	2:40
Scranton	12:30	11:20	2:50
Delaware	12:40	11:30	3:00
Easton	12:50	11:40	3:10
Northampton	1:00	11:50	3:20
Easton	1:10	12:00	3:30
Delaware	1:20	12:10	3:40
Scranton	1:30	12:20	3:50
Williamsport	1:40	12:30	4:00
Lock Haven	1:50	12:40	4:10
Pittsburg	2:00	12:50	4:20
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