

When Woman Guides The Plot.

By HENRY LINSLEY DOOLITTLE

The unusual is ever the most attractive. From his assortment of morning mail Bowser first of all selected the one unbusinesslike envelope and hastily tore it open. He read softly, with rising elation:

My Dear Jimmy—Monday evening next, April 1, I am planning a little heart surprise party in honor of little sister's birthday. It won't be complete without one of her best friends, so please cut everything and come. I should have let you know sooner had I not expected to see you on the club reception last night. Where were you-out with the other girls? Anyway, fondly awaiting without fail. Your sincere friend,

GRACE LOUISE ELSTON.

"It wouldn't do to miss Marjorie's birthday—in memory of three years ago, if for no other reason," he meditated.

"Too bad she had to kick up such a fuss over nothing. How was I to blame? She must have wanted. I never should have invited. I wonder— But at that moment the pile of business letters caught his eye reprovingly.

Arriving early at the Elston home, he found the apartment ablaze with hearts. Large ones adorned the curtains and electric fans, while smaller tokens of the occasion were strewn about in picturesque profusion. Above the main doorway hung a flying Cupid, prince of romance.

The early arrivals had formed into interested groups. More than one Bower thought he heard the mention of some engagement, but upon drawing nearer he was met by a sudden change of subject and what seemed half startled glances. At last he cornered his hostess.

"What does a heart party usually mean?" she parried, with a laugh that jarred strangely on his nerves. "Oh, there's Mr. Stanwood. I must see that he meets some of the out-of-towners," and she was gone.

Just then Marjorie entered. "Little sister," as he had once called her, looked very much grown up tonight. Bower was among the first to press forward with congratulations. "How many is it this time?" he quizzed in well feigned ignorance. "Let's see, three years ago it was nineteen. 'This time you throw double twos—sign of good luck.'"

She smiled in some embarrassment. "You have too good a memory, Jim. Can't you ever forget? After the teens a girl isn't so proud of her age." He made way for the others with a tingling sensation of loss. After all, had it been so much her fault three years ago? At the other side of the room he caught sight of Miss Sherwood beckoning to him with parted lips. Mechanically he crossed to her side.

"I was never so stumped in my life," confided his companion. "You are an old friend of the family, Mr. Bowser. Did Miss Elston tell you before tonight?"

"It was about as much in the dark as any one," he evaded. "And did you see the ring?" she rattled on. "It's a perfect beauty!"

Jim smiled to hide his suspicion. Those best wishes—were they as innocently attached to her birthday as he had supposed? He tried to recall her new friends, but none seemed to fit the case.

"Well, if you can't tell me any more about the man than that, I guess I'll hunt up some one who can." Miss Sherwood disappeared with a parting shot. "I always supposed you were the right bower in that game."

Miss Elston was passing the tally cards. "The head table is up there," she indicated, "and the booty at the other end. As there are two people short, the poorest couple at the last table will have to drop out each time until the next change. You'll find a consolation cory corner in the conservatory."

Starting at the third table, Jim slowly advanced to the head and then as suddenly dropped to the other end Marjorie was already there.

"Unlucky in cards"—she laughed. "You might have given a fellow a little warning," he grieved—"a sort of chance to renew his option." But the sound of the bell cut short the conversation.

For the next ten minutes he played atrociously, now heaping hearts upon her score, now adding needlessly to his own. The other pair exchanged knowing glances. He couldn't have made a plainer bid for the cory corner. Ye Marjorie seemed oblivious.

"Now tell me all about it," began Jim a few minutes later. Marjorie hesitated.

"There isn't so much to tell," she began slowly at last. "Clinton is a distant cousin of mine. He cares for me, and I care for him. He's well off—and generous—and good looking." She weighed each winning quality with a deliberation that hurt. "And, above all, he knows his own mind. Why shouldn't I love him?" she demanded, turning suddenly to her companion.

"Oh, don't mind me tonight," she depressed. "It's just this: I can't seem to realize what it all means to me. We did have such good times once, Marjie."

She started at the sound of her nickname, so dearly loved of old. "We were children then," she reflected. "And you promised to give me first chances if any one else came along," he teased, drawing closer.

"Did I, really? How foolish of me!" she laughed. "Yet we were children through it all. We even scurried like children at the finish."

"Mostly my fault," he owned. Her laughing gray eyes glanced up to his.

"No, all your fault," she corrected. "Marjie, do you really love him?" demanded Jim. She started violently.

"Why, the idea—what a question! Here I came out for a friendly little talk with you, and you're proving a regular inquisitor. Do you suppose I shall ever marry a man I don't love? Not much!"

His arm crept softly around her

"Haven't you any regard for honor?" she entreated. "We mustn't—I mean, you mustn't forget!"

"Honor? repeated Jim slowly. "No. What do I care for honor if I lose you, Marjie? I care for you. I've loved you all the time and that it was just my infernal jealousy and pride that kicked up the trouble? Yes, I suppose we were children then, for children never stop to appreciate their happy comradeship till too late. But couldn't you be children again, Marjie—you and I—while all the rest are growing up? Do you remember, it was four years ago tonight that I met you—at the Prestons' box party?"

He drew her closer to him. Everything favored the contrite lover. The fragrance of the hot-house plants blended into a heavy perfume. The Japanese lanterns glowed softly with warm color harmony.

He gently turned her face from the shadow to the softly glowing light. "Do you really love me, Marjie?" he repeated.

With a gesture of impatience—or was it of fright?—she arose and threw open a window. As she stood gazing into the night a distant hurdy hurdy struck up the much worn "Good O' Summer Time." He joined her.

"Do you remember the first time we heard it together down on the Jersey shore, Marjie?"

"Do it? Oh, what was I saying? It isn't fair," she implored.

Jim turned unsteadily from the fresh breeze to the heavy fragrance within. "Well, I guess it's goodbye, Marjie." He held out his hand.

"Oh, why couldn't I"—she breathed. He snatched her to him. "Marjie, look at me."

Slowly she raised her eyes, then as suddenly buried her face in her hands. "Oh, how could you?" she gasped, with a frightened cry.

Gently he stroked her hair. "I'll go away and wait if it will do any good," he began feverishly. "You'll—ah, hang that suggestion! Others have discovered their mistake and broken off before it was too late. Will it do any good if I wait? Tell me, Marjie. I must know."

Resisting, yet shaking violently, she rested her head against his shoulder, but only for an instant. There was a sound of moving chairs and approaching voices.

"May I come around tomorrow night?" he urged as he turned to the room.

She nodded carelessly, for steps were close at hand.

"We were just looking for you, Marjie," said her sister. "It's time to cut the birthday cake. What has kept you two has-beens so busy out here?"

"I was just outlining my future plans," answered Jim, following the girls to the card room.

"You're perfect dears, both of you," Marjorie was saying to Grace and Clinton an hour later. "Jimmy's such a dog in the manger. I knew he cared for me, but that he'd never come to the point unless some one else butted in. It was such a joke to see how everybody thought Clinton was engaged to little me when big sister was it the whole time."

Grace sleepily consulted her watch. "It is getting very late," she commented. "Suppose you return my ring. From my first glimpse into the conservatory I should judge that yours will arrive in a day or two."

Memory of Sleepwalkers. The memory of sleepwalkers is occasionally prodigious under the influence of the dominating impulse that moves them. There is an instance of a poor and illiterate basket maker, who was unable to read or write, yet in a state of sleep he would preach fluent sermons, which were afterward recognized as having formed portions of discourses he was accustomed to hear in the parish church as a child more than forty years before. Quite as strange a case of "unconscious memory" is referred to by Dr. Abercrombie. A girl given to sleepwalking was in the habit of imitating the violin with her lips, giving the preliminary tuning and scraping and flourishing with the utmost fidelity. It puzzled the physician a good deal, until he ascertained that when a child she lived in a room adjoining a fiddler who often performed on his violin in her hearing.—Pearson's Weekly.

The Foot of the Reindeer. The foot of the reindeer is most peculiar in construction. It is cloven through the middle, and each half curves upward in front. It is slightly elongated and capable of a considerable amount of expansion. When placed on an irregular surface, which is difficult to traverse, the animal contracts the foot into a sort of claw, by which a firm hold is secured. When moving rapidly, the two portions of the foot as it is lifting strike together, the hoofs making a continuous clattering noise, which may be heard at a considerable distance. It is this peculiarity of the foot that makes the reindeer so sure footed and so valuable in rocky and uneven country, where almost any other animal would prove a failure as a beast of burden.

on the Safe Side. They had been engaged for fully thirty minutes by the cuckoo clock.

"I have a surprise in store for you, Alfred, dear," she said. "I can cook as well as I can play the piano."

"That being the case, darling," he replied, "it will be well for us to board."

Appropriate. The society editor was writing up a church fair.

"Mrs. Green, the wife of our prominent milk dealer," he wrote, "was appropriately gowned in watered silk."

You must bear that which hurts that you may gain that which profits.—Cicero

After It Is All Over. When yarns are being spun one hears a good deal concerning the curious antics people go through when highly excited, but very little is said about the man who "gets scared after it is all over." And the latter, not being so constituted that he can faint, as a woman often does after a fright, generally keeps his own counsel and often is given the credit of being cool and "nervy" when the fact is that his knees are ready to bump together for mutual support.—Forest and Stream.

PLIGHT OF THE ACTOR.

Behind the Scenes He Is, in a Manner, a Prisoner.

In a way, behind the scenes is a prison. It is surely one of the very few places where intelligent men and women are locked in their place of work and where no message from the outside world is allowed to reach them. There is a tradition that actor folk are of unusually emotional temperament, and if therefore a telegram is received at the stage door it is never delivered until after the performance. The message might be an invitation to supper, or it might announce that the actor's favorite brother has been hanged, or it might be an offer in a stock company to play twelve times a week, or it might tell the actor that he was the father of twins or that his wife would die without seeing him again unless he came at once to her bedside, but all of this information is supposed not to be good for the actor's emotional disposition, and the telegram is therefore given the same distinction as the "trash" note and kept until after the performance is finished. It cannot be said that the actor's emotional disposition is very seriously considered before the cast iron rule in regard to telegrams. His comfort and intelligence have been slightly flattered in a few theaters of very recent date, but for the most part the condition of behind the scenes in most playhouses is not calculated to breed particularly high thoughts of any kind. As a matter of fact, he is treated little better than when he was only a "strolling" player—a gypsy—several cents ago.—Charles Belmont Davis in Outing Magazine.

SHOPPING IN LONDON.

Methods of the Big Stores in the English Metropolis.

TRICKS OF THE MILLINERS.

A Ruse That Was Met by a Clever Counter Ruse—The Agitating Experiences of an American Woman Who Was Looking For Bargains.

In American shops the establishment and the customer are separate entities. The firm displays its wares; the buyers examine them and purchase or not, as they see fit.

In London it is different. The moment you enter the door of a shop you are accepted as part and parcel of its interests, member of the family, as upon you and insists on knowing what you want. If you hesitate as to your reply, he plants himself squarely in front of you and waits. When, in sheer desperation (for you had intended a happy, aimless sort of looking about), you say "gloves," he grasps your arm, firmly marches you to the glove counter, seats you at it and details a salesperson to wait upon you.

All this happened to me, and in an exasperated frame of mind I bought a pair of gloves merely to keep peace in the family, but the bland and gentlemanly glove seller had no notion of letting me off so easily. He took it for granted that that first pair was simply by way of preface, and he displayed gloves of my size of all styles and colors. The very forenoon of his conclusion that I would buy them all irritated me, and, briefly announcing that I wanted no more gloves, I paid him for the pair I had bought. Surprised and grieved beyond expression, he beckoned the shopwalker, and together they cross examined me as to why I refused to buy more gloves. Did the colors not suit me? Were the prices not reasonable? Disdaining to answer these questions, I endeavored to stalk haughtily away, but this was not allowed. More in sorrow than in anger, they told me I must wait for my bill. As the gloves were to be sent and I had given the exact change I deemed this unnecessary, but I soon found it to be one of their inexorable laws. Bills, signed and countersigned, must be waited for, no matter how trifling the purchase.

The next thing I learned was that the price asked is far from being the real selling price of the article. I cringed at the thought of offering five guineas for a seven guinea hat, but I soon learned that I was expected of a customer and that the marked prices were merely amounts from which to begin the haggling.

And the ruses resorted to by these wicked milliners! In Mayfair is one of the most fashionable millinery shops in the world. Over the door gilt letters spell one of the most famous Parisian names. To this shop I went for a hat. Being very chummy, I expressed great interest in several hats which I knew I should not buy. At last I carelessly inquired the price of a hat which had really charmed me from the first. The price was 8 guineas. As it bore four magnificent ostrich plumes, this price was not exorbitant; but, knowing the game, I bargained.

First I asked if they would call it pounds instead of guineas. This meant a reduction in price of only 8 shillings, but the indignity (I discovered) was beyond all words. With a scathing glance the saleslady informed me that they never sold by pounds in that shop, and I stored away the knowledge for future use in swagger establishments.

Determined to beat them at their own game, I then offered 6 guineas for the hat. This was met with appropriate expressions of horrified surprise, and as a great concession 7½ guineas was proposed. I remained firm in my six guinea offer, and, after a faint of leaving the shop without buying a hat, it was reluctantly accepted.

The following what I considered a ruse of extreme cleverness on my part. I had been told that if I left a new hat to be sent home the milliner would change the trimming for others that looked the same, but were of inferior quality. I had been advised, therefore, on purchasing a hat to carry it away with me in order to prevent this. So I remarked on paying for this hat that as I wished to wear it that very afternoon I would take it with me, the large handbag being easily managed in my Benson cab. The saleslady kindly agreed to this plan and sent the hat upstairs to be boxed.

After waiting fifteen minutes for the hat to return to me I began to grow suspicious, and when it did come I deliberately untied the box, removed the tissue paper wrappings and examined the hat. Sure enough, the four long, rich ostrich plumes had been removed and replaced by four others of the same color, but of a distinctly cheaper grade. I boldly declared this fact, but the saleslady haughtily denied it.

"But," said I, "look in the hat. See the stitches, hastily put in to hold these feathers. They were not there when the hat left me."

"Ah," she said, "merely a few stitches to fasten a bit of trimming that was loose!"

And nothing remained for me but to take the hat and depart. I could not prove my case. I could get no redress. But I learned, when buying a hat, to pin it firmly on my head and walk away, leaving my own old hat to be sent home.

I think such an episode would not occur in any reputable shop in America.—Carolyn Wells in Woman's Home Companion.

Progressing. Miss Weston—And have you played much golf, Mr. Jones? Mr. Jones—Well, no; can't say I've played much, but I've walked round the links several times in golf clothes, and I'm beginning to understand the language.—Illustrated Bits.

The best part of beauty is that which no picture can express.—Bacon.

The Little Pitches. Edith to her doll: "There, don't answer me back. You mustn't be saucy no matter how hateful I am. You must remember I am your mother!"

"PLUG" TOBACCO.

An Old Farmer's Story of How the Name Originated.

In the jury room at the courthouse a few days ago an old time farmer said as he took a chew of tobacco:

"All the difference in the world in tobacco. I've tried twenty different kinds, and none is as good as that we used to make ourselves down on the farm. We would take a maple log while 'twas green and bore a dozen holes in it with a two inch auger. They were our molds. We selected our choicest tobacco and soaked it for a week or more in wild honey. Then we'd take the leaf to the log, get a good hickory tamping stick and go to work."

"A little ball of the honey soaked tobacco would be put in the auger hole and tamped in with the stick and a hammer. We'd pound it in solid. Ball after ball would be rammed in and pounded until the whole became a solid plug. When the hole was nearly full, we would pound in the plug, and then the log would be put away to season. As the wood dried the moisture would be drawn from the tobacco. And when it was split the sweetest tobacco ever made was taken from it. We called it 'plug' tobacco, and that's where the name originated."—Kansas City Star.

Teutoburg Forest. The Teutoburg forest, where Arminius defeated Varus and put an end to Roman progress in Germany, is a wooded, mountainous region, located partly in the principality of Lippe and partly in Prussia, extending at first under the name of Egea in a northerly direction through the territory of Paderborn to Druburg, then northwest to Berberga, five miles east of Rheine, on the Rhine.

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To Make Your Hair Curl. A curious recipe for making the hair curl "naturally" is given in an ancient household notebook and is as follows: "In the early spring, when the sap of the wild grapevine begins to flow, take a bottle to the woods and tie it under an incision made in the vine, through which the sap may drip, and leave it there till it is filled. The same subtle chemistry which curbs the tendrils of the vine will act upon the hair and twist it into softer rings than the ubiquitous hot iron or any of the patent curlers of the day. The sap should be allowed to ferment all it will before it is corked. When ready for use it should be rubbed into the hair with a soft sponge."

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