

THE WEEK OF PROBATION.

By MARTHA C. SANFORD.

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Dorothy's love affairs had come to a crisis. Three proposals in as many weeks put literally a stop to her coquetry. A decision had to be made. So she composed a form letter, brief and noncommittal, and mailed a copy to each of the three anxious aspirants. It read as follows:

My Dear Mr. —: Please do not come to see me again for a week or until I give you permission to see me, and thinking things over. Very cordially yours,
DOROTHY BRETT.

Not that Dorothy seriously meant to do any tall amount of thinking. The week of probation would save her all that trouble. The test would be simple enough. Of the one whose absence should make her heart grow fonder of that one Dorothy would feel sure. She wondered dreamily why all girls did not resort to a solution so commendably automatic. It was so simple to allow oneself to be consumed by a prolonged period with nerve racking doubts and feverish fantasies. All one had to do was to assume a passive frame of mind—and wait.

When Reginald Warren received Dorothy's laconic instructions he laughed long and confidently.

"So Dorothy actually believes it's necessary to think it over," he commented. "Bless her heart, she shall be allowed that privilege if she wants it. As if there could be the least doubt!"

Right here Reginald broke off his colloquy and whistled, for in sorting over his mail he had come upon another envelope in Dorothy's handwriting. It bore the name of Mr. Robert Butler, but was addressed by accident to Reginald's street and number.

Reginald balanced the letter tentatively in his hand. "How many more, I wonder?" he asked himself. "Shall I forward it to Butler or return it to Dorothy?" In a misguided moment he decided upon the latter alternative.

Dorothy was furious when the letter came back to her. She recognized Reginald's handwriting and immediately consigned him to the oblivion he deserved. How did she dare treat her slip of the pen humorously, for that was what he had done, of course! She could tell it from the rollicking style of the penmanship. Had he been a gentleman he would have forwarded it to Robert and spared her the humiliation of knowing what a telltale blunder she had made.

Robert Butler of course profited by his rival's hasty faux pas—temporarily, that is—for, receiving no warning to the contrary, he continued to call upon Dorothy and found her so engagingly gracious that his emotions soared once more to the point of a proposal. Simultaneously Dorothy's hospitality fell to the freezing point, and the following morning she mailed Robert his delayed ultimatum.

The week of probation went by with no word or sign from the third handle of Dorothy's overall loving cup. This unparadiseable negligence piqued her not a little.

"Ned might at least have taken the trouble to find out if I really meant it," she argued, with proverbially feminine logic. "It's positive proof that he's indifferent. Well, he'll find out that I can be indifferent too. I'll write to— I'll write to Reginald Warren this very night and tell him!"

She took up her pen with an air of determination. One beginning after another was dashed bodily off, read over with misgivings and finally discarded.

Reginald himself interrupted these spasmodic outbursts.

"Oh, I was just writing to you, Mr. Warren!" was Dorothy's more or less fluttering welcome.

"Dorothy—my own!" Reginald exclaimed jubilantly.

She saw the gleam of happiness that lighted his eyes and quickly drew her hand away from her ardent clasp.

"How did you dare to come before I had written to tell you?" she asked defensively.

Reginald laughed easily.

"Because I knew what you would write, dearest, and the week of my enforced absence is up tonight, you know."

The amazing assurance of this lover struck Dorothy dumb for the moment. It was as though the man's real character had revealed itself in a flash. He had taken her answer for granted, Dorothy's vacillating little heart grew hot with rebellion and prompted her to take recourse in very daring strategy.

"I was writing to tell you that I am engaged to some one else," she announced bravely.

Robert stared at her. Slowly the situation dawned upon him.

"So Mr. Butler is the lucky man, then?" he answered sneeringly. "I did not realize that he was a rival until I got his letter by mistake. Doubtless that was your acceptance of him, Miss Warren, that I recognized to you. I shall

certainly take pleasure in congratulating him at my first opportunity. Good night!"

"No, no; wait!" called Dorothy as soon as she could recover from the shock of this man's anger. But it was too late.

"Heavens!" she gasped. "Suppose he announces my engagement to Robert Butler!"

She rushed to the telephone and waited impatiently for central to get the number.

"Is this Mr. Butler? This is Dorothy Brett. What? You recognized my voice the very first word? You were expecting me to call up?" (Dorothy made a very little face.) "Well, I just wanted to tell you that I am engaged to Ned Hamilton. What? You say he denied it this very afternoon? Well, you see, I wanted to tell you about it myself. Why, thank you, Mr. Butler. I'm sure we shall be. Come to see me. Good night!"

Again Dorothy waited with the receiver close to her little pink ear, this time with almost dancing anticipation.

"Oh, Ned, is this really you? It seems as though you had been all this week? It seems a month. It's my own fault. Well, Ned, could you possibly come over this evening? You can't? Got to take whom to the theater? Oh, your sister! Goodness! I thought you said Leicester somebody. Well, do find some one else to take her. You see, I just telephoned Mr. Butler that you and I are engaged and— That's what I said— engaged! I had to. Um-hum. Now hurry!"

Ned put on his "seven league boots" and hurried.

"Dorothy," he gasped when he reached her, breathless, but happy. "Do you really mean that I'm the lucky dog?"

"Of course!" she answered, laughing at his boyish incredulity. "Who else did you suppose?"

"Why, I don't know, dearest. I guess I was a bit shaky about Butler and that Warren fellow. Warren's been boasting, in fact, that you'd soon announce your engagement to him."

"The little beast!" exclaimed Dorothy, flashing. But her anger died down as suddenly as it came.

"Oh, Ned, I'm so happy!" she whispered, for by this time Ned had her in his arms and was making up for lost time.

"It was awfully risky of you leaving me alone for a whole week," she chided. "I came very near accepting Reginald Warren not more than an hour ago."

Ned loosened his hold of her slightly. "Out of spite," Dorothy added roughly, "because you didn't care enough to come for your answer."

"But you asked me not to come till you gave me permission," he reminded her.

"Didn't you see the special postscript on the inside of the envelope—on the flap?"

Ned drew the envelope from his pocket. It had been cut open at the top. He folded back the flap.

"If you get very anxious," he read, "you needn't wait."

"Dorothy," he exclaimed, kissing her rapturously, "if I had only known!"

"Men have no curiosity," she sighed happily, "and no imagination. They lose a lot of fun."

An Extraordinary Dinner.

Sir Frank Lancelotti was some exciting experiences in the course of his diplomatic career. He was with Sir Edward Malet in Paris in 1870 during the siege and the commune and told the story of an extraordinary dinner which they had at the embassy shortly after a cannon ball had driven in the front wall and reduced the kitchen to ruins. A general retreat was made to the cellar. And here the two Englishmen solemnly arrayed themselves in dress clothes and sat down to dine in as much "state" as possible, amid a hopeless jumble of treasured bric-a-brac, valuables, clocks, china, etc., for not a scrap of the usual ceremony and etiquette was waived despite the incongruous surroundings. "It looked like the haunt of brigands," Sir Edward wrote to a friend, "who had just ransacked a stately castle and brought the booty hither, while in the center in wild contrast of neatness with disorder was the table laid out for dinner, with its white tablecloth and silver candlesticks and, to crown the feast, Frank Lancelotti and myself in evening dress and white ties, waited on by the stately butler and embassy servants."—London Tit-Bits.

A Human Oddity.

Most men are queer, but some are queerer. A prize winner in the second class drew the eyes of the entire company upon him in amazement as they sat around a table in a downtown restaurant at luncheon. They had been discussing apartment house life when one of the party turned to the man next him and asked:

"By the way, Jim, how many rooms have you in your flat?"

"Blessed if I know," said Jim. "My wife can tell you I can't. Never counted 'em."

"Well, isn't he a bird?" whispered a man opposite. "Wonder if he knows how many fingers and toes he has?"—New York Globe.

A Golf Outrage.

The Earl of Wemyss was on a Fifo golf course on one occasion accompanied by an old caddy. His lordship got his ball on one occasion so near the hole that to play it was, as it appeared to him, superfluous. So he simply tipped it in with the toe of his boot.

The caddy revolted instantly, threw down the clubs and looked horrified. When he found words to speak it was to say, "Hang it, me lord, golf's gowf!"

Satin Ashes.

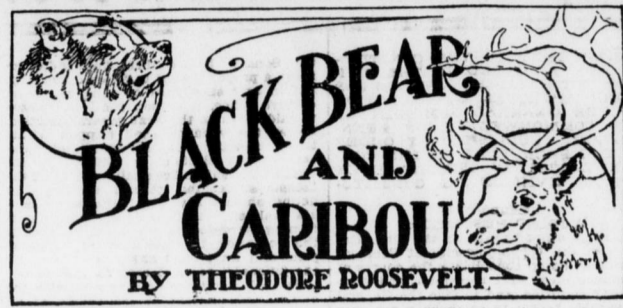
Small Nellie read aloud from her Sunday school lesson as follows: "And the king of Nineveh covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes."

This was a puzzler, and finally she said, "Mamma, what kind of ashes is satin ashes?"—Chicago News.

Fault Finding.

Nothing is easier than fault finding. No talent, no self-denial, no brains, no character is required to set up in the grumbling business, but those who are moved by a genuine desire to do good have little time for murmuring or complaint.

Most people who rob Peter to pay Paul forget the last part of the contract.



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On September 14 I was camped on the shores of Kootenai Lake, having with me as companions, John Willis and an impressive-looking Indian named Ammal. Coming across through the dense coniferous forests of northern Idaho we had struck the Kootenai River. Then we went down with the current as it wound in half circles through a long alluvial valley of mixed marsh and woodland, hemmed in by lofty mountains. The lake itself, when we reached it, stretched straight away like a great floor, a hundred miles long and about three in breadth. The frowning and rugged Selkirk came down sheer to the water's edge. So straight were the rock walls that it was difficult for us to land with our batteau, save at the places where the rapid mountain torrents entered the lake.

We had come down from a week's fruitless hunting in the mountains; a week of excessive toil, in a country where we saw no game—for in our ignorance we had wasted time, not going straight back to the high ranges, from which the game had not yet descended. After three or four days of rest, and of feasting on trout—a welcome relief to the monotony of frying pan bread and coarse salt pork—we were ready for another trial; and early one morning we made the start. Having to pack everything for a fortnight's use on our backs, through an excessively rough country we of course traveled as light as possible, leaving almost all we had with the tent and boat.

We walked in single file, as is necessary in thick woods. The white hunter led, and I followed, each with rifle on shoulder and pack on back. Ammal, the Indian, plodded along behind, carrying his pack, not as we did ours, but by help of a forehead band, which he sometimes shifted across his breast. The traveling through the tangled, brush choked forest, and along the bowlder strewn and precipitous mountain sides, was inconceivably rough and difficult.

An hour or two before sunset we were traveling, as usual, in Indian file, beside the stream, through an open wood of great hemlock trees. There was no breeze, and we made no sound as we marched, for our feet sank noiselessly into the deep moss.

Suddenly the hunter, who was leading, dropped down in his tracks, pointing upward; and some fifty feet beyond I saw the head and shoulders of a bear as he rose to make a sweep at some berries. He was in a hollow with broad leaves, grow luxuriantly; and he was gathering his red berries, rising on his hind legs and sweeping them down into his mouth with his paw, and was much too intent on his work to notice us, for his head was pointed the other way. The moment he rose again I fired, meaning to shoot through the shoulders, but instead, in the hurry, taking him in the neck. Down he went, but whether hurt or not we could not see, for the second he was on all fours he was no longer visible. Rather to my surprise he uttered no sound—for bear when hit or when charging often make a great noise—so I raced toward the edge of the hollow, the hunter close behind me, while Ammal danced about in the rear, very much excited, as Indians always are in the presence of a big game. The instant we reached the hollow and looked down into it from the low bank on which we stood we saw by the swaying of the tall plants that the bear was coming our way. The hunter was standing some ten feet distant, a hemlock trunk being between us; and the next moment the bear sprang clean up the bank the other side of the hemlock, and almost within arm's length of my companion. I do not think he had intended to charge; he was probably confused by the bullet through his neck, and had by chance blundered out of the hollow in our direction; but when he saw the hunter so close he turned for him, his hair bristling and his teeth showing. The man had no cartridge in his weapon, and with his pack on could not have used it anyhow; and for a moment it looked as if he stood a fair chance of being hurt. As the bear sprang out of the hollow he poised for a second on the edge of the bank to recover his balance, giving me a beautiful shot, as he stood sideways to me; the bullet struck between the eye and ear, and he fell as if hit with a pole axe.

Our prize was a large black bear, with two curious brown streaks down his back, one on each side the spine. We skinned him and camped by the carcass, as it was growing late. To take the chill of the evening air we built a huge fire, the logs roaring and crackling. To one side of it we made our beds of balsam and hemlock boughs; we did not build a brush lean-to, because the night seemed likely to be clear. Then we supped on sugarless tea, frying-pan bread, and quantities of bear meat, fried or roasted—and how very good it tasted only

those know who have gone through much hardship and some little hunger, and have worked violently for several days without flesh food.

The morning after killing Bruin, we again took up our march, heading up stream, that we might go to its sources amidst the mountains, where the snow fields fed its springs. It was two full days' journey thither, but we took much longer to make it, as we kept halting to hunt the adjoining mountains. On such occasions Ammal was left as camp guard, while the white hunter and I would start by daybreak and return at dark utterly worn out by the excessive fatigue. We knew nothing of caribou, nor where to hunt for them; and we had been told that thus early in the season they were above tree limit on the mountain sides.

Until within a couple of days of turning our faces back towards the lake we did not come across any caribou, and saw but a few old signs; and we began to be fearful lest we should have to return without getting any, for our shoes had been cut to ribbons by the sharp rocks, we were almost out of flour, and therefore had but little to eat. However, our perseverance was destined to be rewarded.

The first day after reaching our final camp, we hunted across a set of spurs and hollows, but saw nothing living. The next day we started early, determined to take a long walk and follow the main stream up to its head, or at least above timber line. This intention struck so brisk a pace, plunging through thickets and leaping from log to log in the slashes of fallen timber, and from boulder to boulder in crossing the rock-slides, that I could hardly keep up to him, struggle as I would; and we each of us got several ugly tumbles, saving our rifles at the expense of scraped hands and bruised bodies. We went up one side of the stream, intending to come down the other; for the forest belt was narrow enough to hunt thoroughly. For two or three hours we toiled through dense growth.

Then we came to a spur of open hemlock forest; and no sooner had we entered it than the hunter stopped and pointed excitedly to a well-marked game trail, in which it was easy at a glance to discern the great round footprints of our quarry. We hunted carefully over the spur and found several trails, generally leading down along the ridge; we also found a number of beds, some old and some recent, usually placed where the animal could keep a lookout for any foe coming up from the valley. They were merely slight hollows or indentations in the pine-needles; and, like the game trails, were placed in localities similar to those that would be chosen by black-tail deer. The caribou droppings were also very plentiful; and there were signs of where they had browsed on the blueberry bushes, cropping off the

berries, and also apparently of where they had here and there plucked a mouthful of a peculiar kind of moss, or cropped off some little mushrooms. But the beasts themselves had evidently left the ridge, and we went on.

After a little while the valley became so high that the large timber ceased, and there were only occasional groves of spindling evergreens. Beyond the edge of the big timber was a large boggy tract, studded with little pools; and here again we found plenty of caribou tracks. A caribou has an enormous foot, lighter than a cow's, and admirably adapted for traveling over snow or bogs; hence they can pass through places where the long slender hoofs of moose or deer, or the round hoofs of elk, would let their owners sink at once; and they are very difficult to kill by following on snow-shoes—a method much in vogue among the brutal game butchers for slaughter-

ing the more helpless animals. Spreading out his great hoofs, and bending his legs till he walks almost on the joints, a caribou will travel swiftly over a crust through which a moose breaks at every stride, or through deep snow in which a deer cannot founder fifty yards. Usually he trots; but when pressed he will spring awkwardly along, leaving tracks in the snow almost exactly like magnified imprints of those of a great rabbit, the long marks of the two hind legs forming an angle with each other, while the forefeet make a large point almost between.

The caribou had wandered all over the bogs and through the shallow pools, but evidently only at night or in the dusk, when feeding or in coming to drink; and we again went on. Soon the timber disappeared almost entirely, and thick brushwood took its place; we were in a high, bare alpine valley, the snow lying in drifts along the sides. In places there had been enormous rock-slides, entirely filling up the bottom, so that for a quarter of

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Journey's End

By Forbes Dwight.

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The mad gallop up the bridge path ended at the bridge across the little pond. The girl drew rein close to the stone parapet and, calmed her restive steed, whose every nerve seemed a-quake with the excitement of the wild dash, sat quietly on the saddle staring with passive eyes at the unruffled water below.

Dean ranged his own horse beside the girl's, smiling as he watched the glowing color in her cheeks. All about them the trees flaunted the gorgeous tints of late autumn—scarlet, ochre and more subdued shades blending into a splendid, far-reaching vista. The crisp, clear air stirred the blood like wine.

The girl laughed, a trifle uneasily. "We shouldn't be doing such things," she said severely.

"Of course not," said Dean, with a chuckle. "We should have maintained a staid pace. We should have contented ourselves at the most with a measured trot. It's tremendously wicked the way we smash all the conventions of this park. We'll have a mounted officer on our trail yet. Pleasant prospect that. A glorious gallop, all the same, wasn't it, and well worth the risk of incurring the displeasure of the law?"

"Yes; it was glorious," the girl admitted. "Still, we shouldn't do it."

"That's where half the fun comes in," said he. "Hang their old park and its rules! Do they think we'll limit

ourselves to a funereal pace such a day as this and with such a pair of steppers?"

"We really ought to," said she.

Dean laughed. It was a pleasant, almost boyish laugh. His big shoulders were squared defiantly.

"The things one ought to do are generally unpleasant," he observed. "Come on. We'll let them out once more."

The girl shook her head. "No! Oh, no!" she demurred.

"Afraid?" he questioned.

She nodded.

"Of the rules they are pleased to hamper us with in this 2 by 4 plot of grass?"

"No; not of that," she replied. "Afraid of you, I think."

"Of me? Oh, pshaw!"

Again his laugh rang out, but the girl turned to him with a sudden seriousness.

"You make me rather afraid of you at times," she said. "You tempt me to do reckless things. I don't know why it should be so, but it is. I would never in the world have thought of riding here with any one else as I have with you; just now, and the strange part of it is that I enjoy it so immensely."

"Enjoy what?"

"Doing the reckless things you inspire."

Dean leaned toward her quickly. "I wish it were so," he declared. "I wish I really might inspire you to reckless deeds. I wish I might!"

"Now, please," the girl begged, with heightening color.

"Oh, all right!" said he good naturedly. "I know the subject is tabooed. I observe the conventions you've imposed upon me and keep my tongue to the funereal pace."

He sat for a time staring silently into the water. At last he straightened himself in the saddle.

"I'd like another gallop," he remarked, "a wilder one, a madder one. I'd like to get out of this little old park and go somewhere where there's a level stretch of road and no hampering rules of pace."

A light came into the girl's eyes. She threw back her head and gathered up the reins.

"So would I," she declared, a trifle breathlessly.

Dean swung about to face her. There was a quiet smile on his lips.

"Come, then," he said simply.

"We really shouldn't," she objected.

"Come," he repeated.

"I'm afraid when you speak in that fashion."

"Come."

He turned the horse from the bridge and headed for the gate at the farther side of the park. The girl followed silently.

"Where are you going?" she asked as he turned through the gate and made for the road that led into the country.

To a place where we can let them out to our hearts' content," said he. Up the road through the afternoon sunshine they went at a sober pace, but once the city was fairly behind them Dean quickened the pace. Faster they went and faster until they were teaming along at a mad gallop. Across level stretches and over the low hills they sped. The two horses had caught the spirit of the gallop and tore along at their best pace. The girl's cheeks were glowing; Dean's eyes sparkled with the excitement of it.

They paused finally on the crest of a hill. Far behind them lay the city, its position outlined against the sky by a smudge of blue smoke. Ahead of them lay a ragged line of hills, behind which glowed a sky red with the embers of the sunset.

"Well, that was a ride," said Dean, turning to the girl.

"Wasn't it?" she cried. "But we must be starting back. See, the sun has set. It will be quite dark if we don't hurry."

"I wish I might inspire you with a thorough recklessness," he said.