

KEEN WITS WIN.

BY ROBERT H. BABCOCK.

When Henderson heard of it, a thrill swept through him from head to foot, for he felt instinctively that the outcome of the absurd little contest that he saw impending would decide whether he or Dickson would marry Natalie Platt. I say Henderson felt this instinctively, because, there really was no reason whatever why the prettiest girl that ever neglected her household duties for the sake of studying art should bestow her hand upon one of two rivals merely because he had succeeded in a painting of hers that had been put up at auction. And yet Henderson was sure that this was the crisis.

When Amy Burton had told him what was to happen, he was in the act of demanding of a girl in gipsy dress what had been the result of a certain raffle in which, at her behest, he had become possessed of a "chance" earlier in the day. The fair, for the benefit of the village church, which, since two in the afternoon, had been in progress on the church green, was now drawing to a close. To its complete success, the condition of the picturesque stalls, which were on every side, bore witness for the stock of each of them now consisted chiefly of "remnants," while it was noticeable that practically every member of the crowd which still gaily thronged about the stalls, carried one or more parcels.

Several hours before, it had been whispered about that toward the end of the day such knick-knacks from the stalls as had failed to find purchasers would be disposed of at auction, with the Mayor of the village in the role of auctioneer, and Henderson had heard like everyone else, but with no special interest. And then Miss Burton had whispered in his ear that one of the early items in the sale would be a water-color painting by Natalie Platt, and a thrill had gone through him as he realized what the announcement meant.

For there was no doubt in Henderson's mind that from the moment the auctioneer called for bids upon Miss Platt's painting, it would be a question only whether he or Dickson got it. Their rivalry for the attractive girl who at this moment was presiding over a stall at the other end of the green had lasted for several months, but never yet had the two young men come into what could be called actual collision. Now, however, with nearly every second person at the fair a friend of the three parties concerned, it was obvious to Henderson that some one was about to sustain the ignominy of a public defeat.

A moment's thought told him how it had happened that neither he nor Dickson had secured Miss Platt's painting already. It was simply because the work had not been on sale at her stall. There was a booth at which pictures, autographed books and photographs were displayed, and there the water-color must have been from the first. Natalie Platt, however, had elected to make the sweet-salt scene of her activities, which indicates why the contents of the various other booths failed to be examined with any great attention by Messrs. Henderson and Dickson.

Henderson knew well that the girl whose labors with the brush had been at first the amusement but finally the pride of her well-to-do people was the last in the world to have wished that her painting should be the cause of a public contest between the two men whom she had good reason to know were in love with her. Probably Miss Platt had no idea even that her work was among the unsold articles.

And then there came to Henderson the feeling that he had had so many times during the last few weeks, that the bitterness of losing to his rival—did he lose—would be lessened had he felt surer that Dickson was worthy of Natalie Platt's love. On meeting Dickson, Henderson had felt a certain distrust that he knew did not spring from jealousy, and later a story had reached him which he preferred not to believe, but could not help remembering. That Dickson was a dangerous rival there was no doubt. Henderson, looking across the crowd, could see him chatting with Mrs. Arnold at the flower stall, and admitted that he was a handsome fellow, and one to attract even so proud a girl as Natalie Platt. As to himself, Henderson always had known that the girl who loved him would do so mainly for the manhood and some brains which he believed he possessed. What chance had he? Henderson's only answer to this was a flash of the eyes and the resolute drawing up of an under jaw, in the set of which those who knew him always had been able to read—the last ditch!

And then the young man glanced up and saw that it was beginning. The platform, which, until a few minutes before had been occupied by the village band, now had been cleared and upon it, behind a table piled high with odds and ends of all kinds, stood the popular Mayor himself, while, at the sight of him, the crowd was deserting the stalls and gathering about the new center of interest.

It was at this moment that Norton Willis, Henderson's chum, ran his arm through that of his friend with a "Hey, messmate, this way to the auction sale!" and then continued: "By the way, Henderson, old man, did you know that a painting of Miss Platt's is going up pretty soon?" Henderson nodded.

"You're not going to let Dickson get it, are you?" Willis went on. "Not if I can help it."

"Good boy!" approved his chum; "but, by George, he'll give you a fight for it. Beatrice Mills told him what was up, and all our crowd is waiting to see the fun."

While talking, Henderson and Willis had taken up their stand in the crowd within a few yards of the auctioneer's platform. Suddenly the latter demanded:

"How about the money?"

"Plenty, I think," said Henderson, tranquilly.

"Your luckier than I am," his comrade went on. "I've been regularly cleaned out by these eternal raffles and what-do-you-call-em's. Those Clemens girls would have your last dollar for their blessed poor children's soup kitchen. I expect you'll have to give me a lift home!"

But Henderson only half-listened to the situation. With a start he noticed that the auction had begun, but it was only a flowered sofa pillow which the Mayor was describing to the audience as "combining comfort with elegance," and the young man's attention wandered away. He was looking for Natalie Platt, and presently caught sight of her fair head and graceful figure. She was standing behind her graceful stall, now deserted, like the others, and trifling with the ribbon of a basket of candy, apparently unconscious of the auction; but Henderson was not deceived. Miss Platt knew what was coming. But where were her sympathies?

"There's Dickson!" whispered Willis, and Henderson looked in the direction in which he pointed. His rival was standing at quite the opposite side of the crowd. Owing to the position of Miss Platt's booth, Henderson doubted if Dickson could see the girl without leaving his position, and this he was inclined to consider an advantage.

Just at that moment, however, Henderson stopped thinking about the arrangement of things, for suddenly he felt Willis' hand on his arm, and turned just in time to hear the jocular Mayor begin: "And now it gives me peculiar satisfaction, ladies and gentlemen—" after which Henderson heard Natalie Platt's name, but lost the rest in taking in the painting which the Mayor was holding aloft. And he saw what it was, Henderson knew that there would be no truce in the contest for its possession. For the painting represented its author herself.

Responding to some little impulse of vanity, Miss Platt had chosen to portray herself in a character of whose attractiveness she had been assured times enough—that of skipper of the little dingy of which, when summering at her family's place in Maine, she was wont to be captain, mate and all hands. Of course, the girl artist had not given the picture's subject her own face—though evidently she had worked from a photograph—but the rest of the figure was life-like enough to be recognized by any one who knew Natalie Platt well, not to mention any one who happened to love her. There she was, just as Henderson had looked back at her so many times as they raced before the wind; her figure slightly bent forward as she held the sheet with one hand and the tiller with the other, her dark blue skirt drawn tightly about her limbs, while tendrils of her luxuriant hair blew out gloriously from beneath her crimson tam-o'-shanter. It was enough! Henderson wanted that picture as he had wanted few things before, and he doubted not that Dickson felt similarly.

The auctioneer still was praising the painting to his audience, so Henderson had time for another glance round the room. And he thrilled again as he saw that the girl of his heart—abandoning her little pose of unconsciousness—was now leaning upon the counter of her stall and watching the proceedings with an interest which she made no attempt to disguise. He felt his eyes feast upon her for one instant more, after which they sought Dickson. Through the dense crowd Henderson could just see his rival, standing beside one of his men friends, with excitement written upon his handsome face, and his eyes riveted upon the picture in the auctioneer's hand.

And then suddenly, the Mayor's demand for bids was replied to by a vigorous call of "One dollar!" from the center of the crowd. "Two dollars!" from Dickson, and the battle was on.

"Five dollars!" Henderson's voice rang out, and almost immediately the bidder in the crowd's center responded, "Ten dollars!"

"Fifteen!" came from Dickson.

"Twenty!" This offer was made by a smiling woman who stood near the platform.

"Make it twenty-five," whispered Willis to Henderson, and Henderson called out, "Twenty-five!"

"Thirty!" came from Dickson. "Forty!" flung back his rival. Perhaps the two young men's voices had betrayed their eagerness, at all events it was now patent to Henderson that even such of the spectators as did not know him and Dickson had realized what was going on, and that he and his rival were being regarded with looks of amusement, mingled with curiosity, as to which would prove the winner. All this the young man took in at a lightning glance while he waited for Dickson's next bid, but then they were interrupted.

Evidently the Mayor had decided that he personally was playing a less prominent part than was desirable in this particular episode of the sale, for he now interpolated a speech which apparently was designed to lend a further touch of humor to the proceedings. "Ladies and gentlemen," he began, in dulcet tones, "a word, a word, I beg! I esteem highly the modest offers that have thus far been made, but evidently the attractions of this work of art which I am offering have not appealed to you with that force which might have been expected. A gem of purest ray serene, this picture, my friends; for which the lowest possible further bid should be, in my opinion, not less than twenty dollars in advance of what has been offered. In this way—"

"By George!" gasped Henderson's henchman, turning upon that young man, though the Mayor had not finished his harangue, "can you stand this pace?"

"Oh, I think so," replied Henderson easily, as he slipped his hand into his pocket. But then Willis, watching his friend, felt a cold hand get him by the throat, for suddenly there had appeared on Henderson's face a look of puzzled horror. And this look was reflected on Willis' face as Henderson withdrew his hand from his pocket and, without speaking, held out on his palm—a single ten dollar bill.

But in an instant Willis realized that they were not "done" yet, for Henderson's face had grown calm again, and his jaw was set in a way that his chum knew of old.

"You think you can get the money?" he whispered. "Not from me! I told you that I was cleaned out, you know. Who do you expect to get it from?"

"I am going to try," said Henderson, "to get it from Natalie Platt."

"You are!" was all Willis could gasp. Now to describe this little development of affairs took some words, but it happened very quickly, and the auctioneer, encouraged by appreciative smiles from his hearers, still was urging them to extravagant deeds.

"You will bid for me," he whispered to Willis, "when it begins again. It may prove wise to withdraw gracefully."

With a start of surprise, and an involuntary blush, Natalie Platt found Henderson standing in front of her and she could only look at him with a puzzled expression. Henderson believed that he had not been observed as he crossed the room but he did not waste words.

"If I am to get that picture," he said, simply, "it will be necessary for you to lend me some money. Can you do it?"

The girl was as quick to grasp the situation as Willis had been, but she hesitated. She had made up her accounts half an hour before, and it would have been easy to say that her takings had been handed in—a fib that struck her as excusable. But a look into Henderson's eyes decided her.

"How much do you need?" she asked, softly.

"I think fifty dollars will be enough," he said.

Miss Platt took from her pocket a small key, which she inserted into the lock of a black enamelled money-box which stood on a shelf just beneath the counter of her stall, opened the box and took from within it five ten-dollar notes, which she silently handed to Henderson. The young man gave her one look which said everything, and then turning, started back with long strides for the corner where he had left Willis.

Even, as he had stood with Miss Platt, the sound of renewed bidding had reached his ears—a contest that had begun with an offer of forty-five dollars from Dickson upon whom the auctioneer's gibes evidently had not been lost.

"Forty-six dollars!" came from the obedient Willis.

"Forty-seven," snapped Dickson. But Henderson's rival had been struck by the fact that he no longer had to do with that young man, and as the possible significance of this came home to him, Dickson gave a startled glance around and caught sight of Henderson in the act of returning to his place. Perhaps instinct told Dickson where he had been. Perhaps he saw the look that was on Henderson's face. At any rate, the young man needed no one to tell him that he had lost—not even the next bid that came from Henderson.

"Fifty dollars!"

"Sixty!" cried Henderson had taken leave of his senses.

But it was enough. The auctioneer, looking to Dickson, saw him shake his head.

"And sold!" he announced, "to the gentleman—ah, Mr. Henderson," as some one prompted him, "for sixty dollars."

As might, perhaps, have been expected, there was no contest on this occasion for the privilege of escorting Miss Platt home. But it happened that, as the girl swept toward the gate with Henderson at her side, a child in Hans Andersen fairy costume, with a tray bearing bunches of flowers, pounced upon them. "You must buy," she said to Henderson; "they are the last for the flower stall. And only fifty cents a bunch!"

"A sacrifice sale!" laughed the exultant young man. He took a bunch of the flowers for Miss Platt, and handed the child some money.

And Natalie Platt, glancing at the hand which Henderson had drawn from his pocket, was amazed to behold a goodly number of bills therein.

"You wretch!" she cried, her cheeks burning. "You had plenty of money."

"I had," confessed Henderson, "but I was somewhat curious to find out which one of us you wanted to win."

"The American Queen."

The Last Word Against Woman Suffrage

By Caroline F. Corbin.



SIDE from the general fact that women and suffrage are better kept apart, for the best good of both, the following are a few reasons why tax-paying women should not be given the ballot:

Because the property qualification for voters has been long ago eliminated from our government, and any return to it in this time when the dangers of plutocracy are not only serious, but are being used to incite sedition and violence is ill-timed and inexpedient.

Because the majority of women owners of property have become possessed of it through gift or inheritance from the original male accumulators of it, and not by the exercise of any business skill or enterprise of their own. They are passive rather than active property owners, and are thus the less liable to be fitted for the active duties of ownership. As a matter of fact, few of them do vote in those corporations where the ownership of stocks gives them that right.

Because much of the property in the hands of women has been placed there by male relatives for the sake of those privileges and immunities which the law allows to property so held. In most states woman property owners have already more privileges than men, a fact which makes men willing to place property in their hands, in which they themselves hold all a voter's interests.

Because the paramount duties and interests of women lie in a higher sphere than that of the material interests of life, and anything which tends unnecessarily to divert their attention to the selfish and material aspects of the business world subtracts just so much from their possible usefulness in that higher life which has for its aim the development and improvement of the morals of the home and society. This distinction is already too much lost sight of in our modern social conditions, where the effort to place men and women on a so-called "equality" has resulted in the lowering of the ideals of womanhood in a way that involves great loss to the higher interests of society.

Because the call for suffrage is by no means general on the part of tax-paying women. A large proportion of them, when the question has been raised, have enrolled themselves against it, while many woman property owners are among the most effective supporters of the anti-suffrage associations. This country has always erred on the side of a too liberal rather than a too restricted suffrage, and every measure increasing this liberality should be carefully scrutinized, and only approved when weighty reasons can be adduced in its favor. No such reasons can be found for giving the ballot to tax-paying women.—New York Sun.

The One-Hundredth Wife

By Elizabeth Jordan.

B E HOLD a problem constantly reappearing in every quarter of the United States. A man in Smallville has attained thirty-five years, a wife, two or three children, and success—a Smallville success. He is, we will say, cashier of the Smallville bank with a total income of about \$2000 a year. This income is to be considered in connection with the fact that, such is the cost of living in Smallville, eggs sell for ten cents a dozen; the best butter is from fifteen to twenty cents a pound; porterhouse steak is fifteen cents.

The man owns his home. He is a prominent member of the church. He might be mayor of the city, but "business is business," so he leaves political preference to the saloon element, who find it not incompatible with business success. Church circles and high society in general in Smallville look down on politics; indeed, it is held to be an indication of real superiority to look down on Smallville. Cows run the streets; saloons are wide open all day Sunday; taxes are scandalously disproportionate to public improvements; but—it is Smallville. What can one expect of a town like Smallville?

As often as business permits, the cashier of the Smallville bank runs down to the city. For the while middle West, the city is Chicago. He buys clothing for the family there, and tea and coffee and fine groceries—what can one find fit to eat or wear in Smallville? He goes about Chicago, defended by the roar of the life there, intoxicated by the motion of it; he rubs his hands together in the warmth of his satisfaction, and declares, "Ah! this is something like!" Then he remembers bitterly that he is out of it—in Smallville. Behold! here is the measure of his own greatness!

One day the tempter meets him. A Chicago man looking for fresh brains and plump purses offers him an opportunity to get away from Smallville and go into business in Chicago. Now the woman enters. What shall the wife decide? For the man always tells his friend in Chicago that he must go back to Smallville and talk it over with his wife. What does she say? Ninety-nine times out of a hundred she decides in favor of going to Chicago. She wants to be near the great shops. She likes style; she wants to be in it. She says it will be a great opportunity for the children.

And what does the hundredth wife decide? That she prefers a nice, airy home of her own with a splendid shady yard to a six-room flat in Chicago; that the public school of Smallville in which \$20,000 has been invested is good enough for her children, who can always run home at recess for a kiss and an apple until they are old enough to enter the state university on a diploma from the Smallville high school; that so far as the husband is concerned, it is better to be somebody in a small town than nobody in a great city; and as for the shortcomings of Smallville, what's to hinder the best people of the place making the town as good as they are? Thus one sees that this universal American problem, or a rational solution, compels only the achievement of another problem: How multiply the one-hundredth wife?—Harper's Bazar.

The Poor Idle-Rich

By Henry Waterson.

T HE idle millionaire, whether he has a title or not, must follow the fashion if he would keep in the swim; and to keep in the swim is the objective point. For him the year is subdivided, laid out in regular parterre, like an Italian garden, and he must even fulfill his destiny as a gentleman of wealth and leisure; the world to him six seasons—Paris, London, Switzerland, the shooting box in Scotland, the country house in England, the south of France. He buys a palace, lives in it awhile and goes away. "So awfully dreary, doncherknow." He buys a yacht, tires of it, sells it and buys another. "Nothing like the water, doncherknow." The automobile craze caught him where he was weakest—fast, fast, faster is the word—and he is now scudding and scorching over Continental byways, having found a new and costly toy—which perhaps accounts for some of the absentees from Nice. In a word, fortune's favorite is never happy except when he is giving proof that he can spend more money than his rival, yet wretched when he finds how little it brings him either of distinction or diversion.

To tell the truth, the women get on much better than the men. They still love to dance. It shows their faces. It parades their gowns. The men despise dancing. "Too fatiguing, doncherknow." It is so much easier to gamble and to flirt. Your professional beauty, on the other hand, has a deal to engage her—herself, to begin with; then clothes; then diamonds; ropes of pearls; and, finally, the men. If hard put to it, she can amuse herself of a rainy afternoon before her looking-glass; selfish and vain, and a philosopher. When the men are tired of one another or get broke they will come after her. She knows that, and she knows them—only too well. She has learned all their tricks and their manners, and can talk slang and scandal with them, smoke and drink with them, and often beat them at bridge or bacarrat.

For my part, I would embezzle no man of his happiness; not even his money; though sometimes I want to take one of these blase youngsters of two or three and twenty, who fancies he knows the world; and that outside the titles and the dollars there is nothing in it, and tell him what an ass he is, and put him in a Keeley cure for sleeplessness.

PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

The poorest life is the one without friends.

He who gives happiness helps others to Heaven.

It takes the hard winter to make hard wheat.

The labor of love never advertises for spectators.

Some people never feel pious until they get pinched.

The trouble with most advice is that it is only accusation.

Men will never think alike as long as they think at all.

Repentance for wrong goes deeper than dread of results.

A man's position in the world depends on his purpose.

Better the pushing pessimist than the dreaming optimist.

The tie that binds is more than the latest style of necktie.

The man without reverence should not be trusted with power.

The solid wisdom of the ancients has vanished; their myths abide, having entered into our every thought and language.

Dreams are the clouds in our spiritual sky, that now overspread the mind with gloom, and now are fired by some sunset enthusiasm into shapes of unspeakable beauty.

The progress of the human mind through history has been like that of an owl flying slowly from tree to tree, while all about him swing and dart and chatter an innumerable host of dream creatures, like a flock of pesting jays.

JAPAN'S RED CROSS.

Probably the Finest Organization of the Kind.

The Red Cross society of Japan is probably, all things considered, the finest organization of the kind in the world. It has been growing and improving constantly since its small origin in 1877, and now has nearly a million members, an excellent relief organization and large funds. Its methods are radically different from any volunteer aid we have yet seen in America, for its fundamental assumption is that the army knows its own business and is competent to attend to it. Its general attitude, instead of implying: "We know the medical department will break down in the field, and therefore we insist on going to the front and into the camps to supply the defect," indicates this: "The people of Japan appreciate so highly the work of the medical department that they ask the privilege of assisting it."

On the contrary, in the Spanish-American war we had a multiplicity of small societies, meaning well but working blindly and at cross-purposes, accomplishing good at an altogether disproportionate cost of money and labor and not infrequently interfering with and handicapping the work of the responsible medical officers.

But in the Japanese-Russian war there is a single great, well-prepared organization, the ally and assistant of the medical officers, working only where it is instructed that it will be of use, and accomplishing vast good at a minimum cost.

The Japanese Red Cross society is characteristic of the nation; for every war, campaign and great disaster since its foundation has been to its officers a lesson by which they have profited. In the present war they are always on the alert to discover their defects, to learn how to remedy them, and to gain new ideas for improvement. It was as one of many means to attain these ends that some American army nurses were wanted in the Japanese hospitals, where their work would be carefully observed; and for the same reason the writer was appointed by the minister of war as supervisor of nurses of the Red Cross, with the rank of officer, sent to many hospitals, and required to make reports and recommendations to the Red Cross society. A Japanese lady, by profession a teacher, had formerly held this position, but since her death it had been vacant.—Century.

Berlin's Streets.

There are in use within the municipal limits of Berlin, exclusive of suburbs, 7,425,384 square yards of paved streets, which have an approximate length of about 300 miles. The pavements are divided according to material and method of construction, into three general categories, as follows: Asphalt, 2,696,448 square yards; wood, 108,312 square yards, and stone, 4,644,524 square yards, in which the latter group are included 1246 square yards of cement macadam and 178 square yards of small stone blocks on beton foundations, laid for experimental purposes. All these pavements are cleaned frequently, a large part of them daily, by a carefully organized corps of 1834 men and boys, which can be increased by taking on extra men in case of snow or other temporary stress of duty. During 1914 the wages of the street cleaning force amounted to \$513,776, beside 15,297 paid for extra help. During the year there were collected and hauled away 156,692 wagon loads of ordinary street dirt and 47,289 wagon loads of snow, the latter being generally dumped into the river and canals within the city limits.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Much the Same.

"The strawberry," remarked the moralizer, as he looked at some early specimens in a glass case, "is said to be more than 90 percent water."

"In that respect," rejoined the demoralizer, "the strawberry is like a lot of other good things in the stock market."—Chicago News.