The Match-Maker Matched.

By J. GRAY.

"I wish," said my Aunt Jemima, looking at me somewhat severely over her spectacles, "I wish Mr. Baynes had been at home this summer, so that you could have been introduced."

"Why do you wish that, aunt?" I asked, indifferently. "You expressed the same desire last year. Are you specially interested in Mr. Baynes?" I added, naughtily; "because, if you are not, I don't see any reason for cultivating his acquaintance."

"My dear," Aunt Jemima replied with a decided blush, showing through the tan of her handsome but uncompromising countenance, as if she were ashamed of what she was going to say—as well she might be— "Mr. Baynes is a very worthy man—"

"I hate worthy men!" I interpolated in the tone which always made Aunt Jemima declare I was a spoiled child. This time, however, she passed my comment by with scarcely a frown, and went on calmly, though the blush increased slightly, "and he is also exceedingly well off—and a widower."

I gave a little gasp, asking wrathfully what that had to do with me.

"Oh! well, really, Betty," she stammered, "you are now of a marriageable age, and—and I do not see any reason why you should not make Mr. Baynes happy. He wants a wife badly."

"Do you know of any reason why he should make me happy?" I asked, with an attempt at sarcasm which was quite unappreciated.

"Yes, several," my aunt replied, calmly. "As I said before, he wants a wife; and I suppose you have no desire to be an old maid."

I tossed my head with some indignation. In my own mind I did not fear that fate very greatly, and I certainly was not going to be palmed off on anyone in order to escape it.

"My dear aunt! I thought you always maintained that it was the happiest life for a woman."

"For some; not for you, Betty. Besides, you have no fortune, and are barely clever enough to earn your own living."

"Thanks!" I said, my temper—which was none of the coolest—rising, and showing itself in my burning cheeks; "thank you for your frank opinion of my mental and moral attributes. As I have not sufficient brains to earn a livelihood I am supposed to be willing to marry a man old enough to be my father—for whom I do not care a straw—so as to have a home! No, thank you, Aunt Jemima!"

To my surprise this did not arouse any corresponding ebullition, yet our tempers were so very much alike that I fully expected my aunt to flare up in like manner.

"My dear child," she replied, in quite a patient and even tender voice—that is, tender for her, for she was of a stern and almost manlike disposition—"I wish nothing of the sort; if you do not get to care for him you need not marry him. Still, I think you would be very fond of him, and I am sure he would like you very much."

"Why do you think that?"

"Oh! he would be sure to," she replied, in what I considered an exceedingly lame manner.

"Well, that is the first time I ever heard you express such a high opinion of my charms!" I said, somewhat scathingly. "Are they so fatal that he would have to succumb at once?"

Aunt's disclaimer to this query was more emphatic than flattering, yet she gave me to understand, distinctly, that though my charms were by no means great, she still believed they were sufficient to fascinate Mr. Baynes.

This only puzzled me more than ever, and I could not understand what possessed my staid aunt to turn her into a matchmaker. She had an uncompromising objection to matrimony in the case of any one, and particularly any one belonging to her own family.

None of us ever much looked forward to a visit to her quiet little house in the quiet little town in Norfolk; but one of us was packed off by mother twice a year, at mid-summer and about Christmas. I generally went in the summer, as I could cycle, while my two elder sisters hated the idea of rushing about on wheels. Besides, Jim—the eldest, who was called after Aunt Jemima, poor dear—had incurred her displeasure by marrying the previous year, so that meant that I must go every summer and Clare every winter. It was rather a dismal prospect, but mother would not let us off. She said aunt had always spent herself on her family when she was young, and we must look after her and cheer her now she was lonely. I did not believe she was lonely, and I know I was, when I had to vegetate for a month at a time down in Norfolk; but we all had to please the dear mother.

I should like to say, in case mother should be misjudged, that there was nothing mercenary in her mind, for Aunt Jemima's money was all sunk. I don't say I might have been more willing to go if I had thought it would have led to my being an heiress some day. There was, however, no consolation of that or any other kind, except that last year the dulness of my visit had been a little tempered by what I considered an exceedingly mild flirtation; at least, I thought of it in that light at the time, and concluded that the young doctor with whom it was carried on had been sent by a kind Providence for the special purpose of alleviating my terrible ennui.

Aunt Jemima was to be thanked, too, as well as Providence, for she was the unconscious cause of our meeting. It was the result of a bad burn received while baking cakes. Aunt disapproved of girls being idle, and was determined to make me learn to cook. Now, I can make as pretty a blouse as any one, and trim a hat that will compare favorably with a West-end product; but these are only frivolous amusements in the eyes of Aunt Jemima. So she set me to cake-making, an occupation that I detest! It ruins my complexion and spoils my temper; and at home my brothers say they will not have me tampering with their digestions, so what is the good of trying? Nevertheless, I was made to try, and, consequently, I got a perfectly horrid burn.

Aunt Jemima sent for the doctor, who is an old fogey, and said to be very brutal in his manners—or lack of manners. He was away, greatly to my joy, and the assistant came, who is not at all an old fogey, and not a bit brutal in his way of treating one. In fact, he was very nice and polite to the aunt, and awfully nice to me. I was rather glad of that burn, pour passer le temps. I don't deny, however, that the remembrance of it all made the time pass more slowly during the winter months, when I often thought of my nice doctor, and wondered whether I should ever see him again. I pondered over the question, would he be married? and I wondered how I should feel if he were, and whether I should mind if he had forgotten all about me.

Aunt would have been shocked had she known I ever thought of him. I dared not even ask if he were still in the town, but I wanted, dreadfully, to know; and as two days went by without my getting a glimpse of him, I began to think he had gone away. On the third morning, however, I saw him pass the house, and I felt pleased; but it was not till he looked up, and I saw the glad look in his eyes that I was trying to keep out of mine, that I was really cheered. Aunt Jemima saw him, too, and made the ill-advised remark that he was to be married soon. I did not want the information, even if it were true but I did not believe it was. Aunt Jemima seems very different lately; she never used to take any interest in marriages and such silly local gossip. I can't quite make her out.

"Mr. Baynes will be home sooner than he expected," she remarked to me a little later. "I hear from his old housekeeper that business has recalled him."

"I wish he would keep away!" I muttered, but aunt did not hear me.

"I hope you will like each other," she continued in a somewhat anxious tone, which struck me as exceedingly silly.

"Well, as he is old enough to be my father," I replied, in a provoking manner, "I shall be pleased to accept all the chocolates and other nice things he likes to give me. Perhaps he won't be gallant enough to offer me any, for though you call him a gentleman farmer, I expect he is a bit of a boor."

"Not at all," was the reply, "he is not at all a boor, and he is certainly a gentleman. Besides, he is quite young—h'm'—a middle-aged man, at any rate, upright and strong. Oh! there is no doubt he would make a good husband for any girl."

"I thought you disapproved of disparity of age in marriage!"

"I do; that is to say, I object to a woman marrying a man who is her junior."

"Well, I do not see why a young girl should be bothered with an old husband any more than the other way about," I said, aggressively; "besides I am not sure that I do not care for somebody else."

Aunt looked at me shrewdly. "Does he care for you?" It was a confusing question, and I should have liked to say "As much as Mr. Baynes!" but I felt I must not arouse suspicion, so I merely assured her that I meant nothing, only I was absolutely tired of hearing about her friend.

That evening I met Dr. Alwyn, and after our little walk together I could have answered more satisfactorily the question, "Does he care for you?" but as this is not my love story it does not matter what happened then.

After that, however, my visit passed all too quickly. I had my cycle, and that gave me many opportunities of getting off alone—no, I do not mean that; I mean it gave me many chances of getting away not alone. We had some glorious times, and though I should have dearly liked a little sympathy, I did not dare tell Aunt Jemima till the home folks had sanctioned it. Dr. Alwyn—I mean Tom—was going to see my mother as soon as possible after my return home; but it seemed a long time to wait.

The day before Mr. Barnes' arrival I had arranged to cycle over to an old friend of mother's to spend the night. Tom was, of course, going most of the way with me, but he had to hurry home so see some bothering patients, so I was afraid he would not be able to take me all the distance. Still, the thought of the ride made us feel jolly, and Aunt Jemima was pleased because I would be home in time to see that wretched Mr. Baynes. Just as I was told to start, however, a note came from him to say that he would be back a day earlier, and as he was driving from the station he would come in for some tea on the way.

"I am particularly sorry you will be out," aunt said, with a worried look. "Could you not wire?"

"No, I could not," I replied, determinedly. "You know this is the only convenient day, and mother would be vexed if I did not manage to go. Besides, I do not want to see the old nuisance, and you can tell him so."

Aunt Jemima sighed, and that was so unlike her that I was a little compunctious immediately. I went over and sat down beside her.

"I am very sorry, but I cannot help disappointing you. You are so matter-of-fact and prosaic, aunt, you do not understand; but really, to me, it would be an awful thing to think of marrying a man for whom I did not care!"

"I know it is," she answered meekly, "and I do not want you to do that."

"And I never could care for him," I continued.

"You do not know—"

"Oh! Yes, I do. Never! never! never!"

Aunt Jemima only smiled at my vehemence and said quietly, "You might in time, child."

"No, I never could! and, aunt, do you want to marry—"

Her look of horror was so great that I tried to improve upon the question. "I mean, do you think it is advisable for any woman to change her state of single blessedness?"

"Not if she can help it, as a rule; but I have already told you some of the reasons why I think it would be wise for you to look favorably on Mr. Baynes."

"And I have already replied to them. No, aunt, I shall not marry for the sake of a home; and I shall only marry when I love someone so much that I want to be his wife, more than anything else on earth."

This speech was evidently too much for Aunt Jemima; and I hurried off to get myself ready for my ride, leaving her to digest it at her leisure.

The next evening when I arrived again at my aunt's, I found, to my disgust, that Mr. Baynes had come to pay a second visit. He was evidently quite determined to see me. "Persistent wretch!" I said to myself, "I hate you already!"

"I thought he was coming last night!" I remarked, savagely, to my aunt, who had met me in the hall with the news, and was looking a little frightened and triumphant.

"So he did—but—he would like to see you—dear."

Her hesitation riled me still more.

"Then he shall not have the pleasure!" I said, throwing down my gloves viciously! "I won't come in!"

"Oh! you must!" and aunt's look of distress was so real that I relented a little.

"Well, I'll get you out of the difficulty this time. I'll let him know he has not any chance!" I ejaculated, refusing to hear some agitated whisper of my poor aunt's, who was terribly afraid our conversation would be overheard. I did not mind if it were, and I marched in boldly, resolved to give this troublesome suitor his quietus at once.

Aunt Jemima, however, followed on my heels.

I did not look at all friendly, but Mr. Baynes disregarded my grim aspect.

"I hope we shall," he responded genially, "especially as I am going to be her new uncle."

I sank into a chair and gazed at them both. In a moment my heart went out to him—this dear Mr. Baynes! There was something about his open, frank, and friendly countenance that one could not resist; besides, it was such a relief to me.

"Betty, dear," began my aunt, timidly, "I could not persuade him to marry any one younger and prettier, so I just had to give in."

"I am very, very glad!" I said, rising and kissing me, "and I'm sure you will be happy, Mr. Baynes!"

"Ought to be," he replied, laughing! "I've been long enough getting what I wanted. Your aunt tried to convince me that she could find a younger and prettier edition of herself, but it was no good imagining any other woman would do for John Baynes!"

Aunt Jemima blushed most becomingly, and I could not help hoping that Tom would always feel like that towards me.

"Moreover"—and there was a wicked twinkle in Mr. Baynes' eyes—"I am told at last, after all your aunt's romancing, that this 'younger and prettier edition' would not listen to any of her suggestions, but scouted the idea with scorn. Very sensible too, I think! You see, my dear niece—you are my niece, aren't you?" I nodded cheerfully. "Well, a man may not marry his niece, even if he wants to—which I do not; and you don't want to marry your uncle, so we're happy all round—even Jemima, I think, in spite of her long aversion to matrimony." Their eyes met at that moment, and I saw a glance pass between them that told me that Aunt Jemima was already becoming reconciled to her fate.—London S. S. Times.

In round figures, the area of India is 1,500,000 square miles; the United States, 3,500,000, and Russia 8,000,000.

HOW THE "CONSCIENCE FUND" LIFTS THE LOAD OF CARE.

What is known as the "Conscience Fund" of the Treasury Department is growing beautifully less, indicating that the world is growing better or that the people are becoming conscienceless.

For the fiscal year closing June 30 the total amount received and credited to this fund amounted to only $5,789.90, being a decided decrease from that of the year 1906, when it was $7,343.49. In 1905 it was $21,336.92, a year in which conscience got in its work in good shape, but which was not the largest received in any one fiscal year, since the account was opened in 1811. The total amount of this fund now goes considerably over $550,000, every cent coming from those who wished to make atonement for sins committed in the way of pilfering from the government.

It may be that the sojourn of some of the sinners at the Moundsville penitentiary and the narrow escape of others from that institution have something to do with the decrease of the fund. The close watch kept on government employes has unquestionably had much to do with the falling off of the fund, for there is not now the opportunities to pilfer from Uncle Sam as in the days a-gone, when laxer methods prevailed throughout the entire government. It is true that once in a great while a large amount is restored. For some time after the war, when all sorts of stealings were rife in all parts of the country, consciences of the criminals seem to have reached a very respectable proportion and penitence found vent in a regular cornucopia of regrets expressed in cash or its equivalent.

"The decline of the fund," said one of the Treasury officials, "is not due to the fact that the world is growing better, but that people have not the conscience they once had. That the world is growing worse there can be no doubt, and that little monitor called conscience is not overtaxed. There is just as much small pilferings in the government as there ever was. We seldom hear of these, but occasionally one of the 'plungers' is caught up with and made to pay the penalty. Not all the 'plungers' are caught, either, by a long jump. In a word, you may say that conscience is simply not doing its work; it is held in check."

The history of the fund is not without interest and entertainment. The account was opened in September, 1811, with a contribution of less than $1, which was forwarded to the Treasury by a conscience-stricken resident of New York, who stated that he had taken the amount from the government and wanted to make restitution. Officials of the department state that it was not known at that time what to do with the money, and a simple memorandum was made and the slip of paper filed in one of the drawers, where it remained undisturbed for many years. It appeared that there would never be another contribution of this character, and, in fact, it was not until 1861, soon after the breaking out of the Civil War, when a bundle was received containing $6,000 in bonds, accompanied by a statement that the restitution which had long been due the government was prompted by conscience. This gave the account its name, "Conscience Fund." It has since remained open, and all amounts returned to the Treasury in consequence of the prickings of the inward monitor (which in too many instances seems to be ironclad) have been credited to it, covered into the general treasury as a miscellaneous receipt, and may be used like other assets of the Treasury for any purpose that Congress may deem proper.

Letters with inclosures intended for the conscience fund are usually addressed to the treasurer, but they go to the public moneys division, which makes note of the amounts and deposits them with the treasurer of the United States. The sums received are almost always in cash, stamps, with now and then a draft. They are never accompanied by the names of the senders, except once in a while in the cases of persons who have made mistakes as to payments of customs duties. The written communications relating to them are very brief as a rule. If otherwise, they contain elaborate apologies and appeals. Occasionally letters are signed by clergymen at the request of penitents. Remittances are received almost weekly—occasionally the receipts are two or three a week.

In forwarding money for the conscience fund the senders frequently request that acknowledgment shall be made by publication in the newspapers, and this is nearly always done, for the local newspaper men are generally in evidence to gather in such items. A great many of the letters accompanying the remittances are preserved, and the lifting of the red tape of the department gives some interesting reading. Many of these letters on file are from jocose correspondents, who have not scrupled to make light of so serious a matter as to address the treasurer pretended conclence letters, whose humor is far in excess of the money inclosed. One of these letters reads:

"Inclosed please find 75 cents, coin of the realm, won from a United States paymaster at draw poker, and which I am convinced rightfully belongs to Uncle Samuel. I have carried it for nearly six months, and dare not trust myself with it any longer. My conscience calls for relief—my harassed nature calls for a good night's sleep. I can have neither so long as I carry this terrible witness. Now I can feel a realization of the proverb, 'Be virtuous and you will be happy.' Now I can feel an assurance that in years yet to come it can be said of my children (yet to come), 'they were of poor but honest parents.' Please acknowledge through local press, and request them to put in double-leaded brevier, editorial page."

A conscience-stricken department clerk wrote:

"A clear conscience softens the hardest bed, and as I am a poor government clerk my bed is very hard and needs softening, so I herewith return $1 which was overpaid me last payday, and, besides, I have loafed a good deal lately."

Here's a letter which has the true ring:

"Inclosed is a check for $190. I will briefly explain. I have been in the United States service and a part of the time with rank which entitled me to two servants. I drew pay for two, but actually had but one. It was the common practice of officers to do this, and the paymasters were well aware of it. I entered the army poor and sick—too poor, in fact, to get along well without a clear conscience."

One of the largest contributions ever received was $12,000, and it was accompanied by this letter:

"I am sending you herewith inclosed $12,000 which is to go to the use of the United States government. Years ago I defrauded the government of money, but now I have returned it all and am paying fourfold in accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures. The way of the transgressor is hard, and no one but God knows how I have suffered."

There are many such letters as these, but in a large number of instances the contributions are made without any explanations whatever. On several occasions it has happened that people have cut bills in two, sending one-half to the Secretary of the Treasury, and the other half to the treasurer, for the sake of safety. There are persons who do not entertain absolute faith in the integrity of government officials. One man forwarded $10 to the conscience fund, saying: "Pay this money where it belongs and keep your record clear." An envelope postmarker Bealeton, Va., contained six two-cent stamps and a sheet of paper upon which was written, "I misused six stamps and am now refunding them." A remittance of $3.40 was received from a man who wrote that he felt sorry for having beaten his passage on a government train during the war.

It is a melancholy thing to be obliged to say that the swindles against the government which bear such fruit of repentance seem to be a sadly small percentage of the multifarious cheats that are practiced undetected and apparently unregretted by those who perpetrate them. A fraud on the government of a comparatively innocent sort is often practiced in the army. A quartermaster finds his stores short by 100 tent pins, five anvils, and fourteen sledge hammers. Very likely it is not his fault; such things will happen. Presently a soldier deserts and disappears. Incidentally to the report of desertion sent to Washington, mention is made of 100 tent pins, five anvils and fourteen sledge hammers as having disappeared with the delinquent. The latter is supposed to be walking across the country with these articles thrown termaster, who would otherwise be over his back. This squares the quarobliged to pay for the missing articles.

Voyagers returning from across the seas fetch gems concealed in cakes of soap, in the hollowed heels of boots, beneath porous plasters, in cartridges from which the bullets have been removed and the powder taken out, and in various and sundry other ways. The device of folding diamonds in a slice of meat, feeding it to a dog just before reaching port, and killing the animal a few hours later is a familiar one.—Washington Sta.

His Name for It.

I was once teaching a class of small pupils in physiology in a rural school and asked the class what name was given to the bones of the head as a whole. A little girl raised her hand.

"What it is, Lucy?" I asked.

"Skull!" she answered.

"Correct," said I; "but what other name has it?" expecting someone to answer "cranium." All were silent for a while, then a little fellow who seemed to be in a deep study quickly raised his hand, his eyes sparkling and a confident smile spreading on his face.

"What it is, Henry?" I asked.

"Noggin," was his immediate reply. —Judge's Library.

New Use for Ribbons.

Forty million yards of narrow ribbon have been ordered by a western brewery from a Philadelphia concern to be used for advertising purposes. The ribbon will be placed about the necks of the beer bottle, and it is estimated that four inches will be required for each bottle. Basing calculations upon this, it is estimated that 360,000,000 bottles of beer are to be brewed, while the ribbon, stretched out, would reach nearly 23,000 miles and, in the latitude of Philadelphia, would encircle the globe.—Philadelphia Record.

Securing Conviction.

This story comes to The Church Standard from an English correspondent: A barrister, accustomed to practice in criminal courts, made sneering remarks concerning preachers. "If," said he, "I were to address a jury in the average way you clergymen do, I should never get a conviction." The elderly clergyman to whom he spoke, replied: "If you had to address the same jury 104 times a year, and your object was not to get them to give a verdict against some other person—which they might be willing to do—but to induce them to convict themselves, I doubt if you could do any better than we do." Silence on the part of the barrister.

Origin of "He's a Brick."

The expression "He's a brick" is traced back to Lycurgus, King of Sparta. The king was conducting an ambassador from Epirus through his kingdom. The envoy was much amazed to find that the cities were very poorly supplied with walls of defense. He remarked to the king: "Sire, I have now visited most of the towns, but find no walls built for their defense. Why is this?" "Indeed," replied the king, "thou canst not have looked carefully. Come with me to-morrow, and I will show you the walls of Sparta." Accordingly on the following morning the king had his army, drawn up in battle array, and pointing proudly to the serried host said: "There thou beholdest the walls of Sparta, and every man a brick."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Peculiarity of Hair.

A woman leading two children stepped into a barber shop with her charges.

"I want their hair trimmed," she said, "but not all the way 'round. I only want it trimmed off even. It is just the right length on the right side, but too long on the left side. I had her trimmed only a little while ago, and here it is noticeably longer on the left side. I don't believe it was trimmed evenly in the first place."

"Oh, yet it was," the barber assured her. "It grows faster on the left side, that is all. Most people's hair does grow faster on that side, but it is on children's heads that we are most likely to notice it."—New York Press.

World's Diameter.

Up to this time the diameter of the globe has not been arrived at within 1,000 feet, but Nikola Tesla says that his system of wireless telegraphy will be the means of reducing this margin of error to within 50 feet or less.