

DECLINED WITH THANKS.

A Rejected Love Story and the Letter That Came After.

By E. J. BURKE.
"Miss Cecil Travers—Mr. Philip Saunders."

Some benevolent individual introduced them at the Pen and Pencil club. Saunders afterward spoke of him as "the hand of fate." But then he was under the sway of the blind god and so not responsible for either his remarks or his eyesight.

It was certainly a case of love at first sight—on the part of Saunders. When he looked down into the dark eyes raised so frankly to his own he gave up his heart unconditionally. In all his thirty-five years nothing had sent the blood rushing so riotously through his veins as the firm, warm clasp of her hand.

But he was a quiet, self-controlled fellow, with a composure born of years of struggle up the uncertain literary ladder. So he did not hold the little hand a second longer than politeness demanded. There was no trace of eagerness in his manner as he sat down on the divan beside her and began to talk as few men and fewer women had heard him talk—brilliantly, with flashes of wit and sarcasm relieving the underlying earnestness of thought.

Cecil Travers was quite unconscious of the metamorphosis she was producing. She only thought that this big blond man was not nearly as unapproachable as he looked. He was really charming. And, what was the more remarkable, he did not talk about himself.

The girl found this an unusual experience. As reader for one of the magazines and writer of short stories she had met many men of many minds. "Yet," as she had said pathetically to herself, "the minds always seem to turn inward. How can they write about the world around them when they are so absorbed in self?"

Her wonder grew when she discovered that he, too, was an author. She remembered now seeing his name signed to several clever sketches. He had never tried any with the Symposium. As he talked the desire to read some of his stories became overmastering.

"Why don't you send something to me at the Symposium?" she asked at length frankly.

He flushed up to the roots of his hair as he said hesitatingly, "I have been busy about something else, but I will—some time."

It was his first trace of awkwardness. Cecil could not know that the "something else" was the novel which was the work of many months and which was even then seeking a publisher. Not even to her dared he trust himself to speak of this child of his hopes. If the world gave it a welcome—ah, then! His thoughts were busy weaving a beautiful day dream, and its central figure was this dark-eyed girl who was almost a stranger to him.

He awoke to realities with a start. Miss Travers, puzzled at his silence, had risen and was holding out her hand in goodbye.

"You will come to see me some time, will you not, Mr. Saunders?" she asked, with the frank smile that was her especial charm. "I have enjoyed my talk with you so very much that I would like to repeat it. I am always at home on Tuesdays and Thursdays."

Her tone was so cordial that he blushed and stammered over his thanks. He called himself a fool a minute afterward when he found himself standing stupidly staring at the doorway through which she had disappeared. But that did not prevent his going home in a strangely excited and exhilarated mood. The glamour of his day dream seemed still around him. And she, the lady of his dream—he loved her.

He whispered it to himself as he strode across the park, half fearful that the flickering lamps and the swaying branches might guess his secret, but in the silence of his room he said it boldly, and the confident ring of the words seemed to echo the mad beating of his heart.

It was inevitable that the next Thursday night should find him in the parlor of Miss Travers' flat. It was equally inevitable that he should bend all his energies to hide his love from the smiling eyes of this girl, who treated him with an air of bon camaraderie fatal to sentiment.

It is doubtful whether even encouragement would have wrung the secret from his lips. The first joy of loving was past, and in its place had come a flood of self-distrust, of self-depreciation. To his tortured mind an unbridgeable gulf of training and traditions seemed to sweep between them. She had been the petted child of rich parents, and on her had been lavished the gifts of a college education and years of foreign travel. This attempt at independence and self support had been treated as her latest whim and humored accordingly. He had scrambled from a common school education into the pitfalls that beset the path of a newspaper reporter. Every upward step had been bought at the price of hard work. It was but a short time since the problem of meeting his board bill had been an all important one.

That was the first of many calls, but the succeeding visits, while they strengthened his love, gave no courage for its declaration.

At last, in his desperation, a plan dawned upon him by which he might learn his fate and yet spare her the pain of a refusal. She had asked him

to submit a story to the Symposium. He would send her one embodying his love and its hopelessness and offering two sequels for the choice of the reader. In the one the lover should boldly set aside the barriers of position and meet and win his ladylove. In the other he should patiently bow to the inevitable and devote his life to the uncertain happiness of literary success.

He bent himself feverishly to the task. For several weeks he had not dared to trust himself to call upon her. She would understand the reason why when she read the story he addressed with a trembling hand.

A day went by, another, a week. Saunders could not work. He could not sleep. He haunted the park and the streets where he had sometimes met her, hopeful yet fearful of meeting her again and reading in her face his answer.

At length, when ten days had passed and suspense had become almost unendurable, the postman left a bulky envelope in his letter box.

It was his story, and as he unfolded it a typewritten slip fluttered to the floor. He picked it up mechanically. It was the usual rejection slip, curt and businesslike, without an added line to soften the blow.

It might have been minutes, it might have been hours, that he sat there staring at the scrap of paper. Then, with a groan, he buried his face in his arms, as if to shut out the world. His castle in Spain had fallen down about his ears, and he sat among the ruins.

The sun was setting when he rose brusquely and went out into the air to walk and walk in the hope that physical weariness might stifle his suffering. The coolness of night brought a dogged courage to blot out the past, with its day dreams, and turn to the future.

But it was weary work. The end of the week found him so worn and haggard that his friends declared he was overworked and advised rest and change. "Your novel is making such a success you can afford to do it," they urged. He only smiled bitterly and shook his head. It seemed such cruel mockery to think that the success of his cherished novel should bring him no happiness.

He was listlessly sorting his mail one morning when his eye fell upon a tiny blue envelope which had been hidden by the others. His heart seemed to leap into his throat, for he recognized the hand. He read:

Dear Mr. Saunders—It is so long since I have seen you that I am pinning for one of our chats. To be sure, I have just come back from my three weeks' vacation, but then you had not been to see me for ever so long before that. Is there anything the matter? Come up tonight, and perhaps I can explain. Yours sincerely, CECIL TRAVERS.

Again Mr. Saunders sat staring at a piece of paper, but this time it was the shock of sudden joy. She had never seen his story. It had been turned down by her deputy reader.

He made most of the explanations that evening, but Miss Travers did not seem to mind.

They Agreed.
To his valet no man is a hero. Even his caddy is apt to hold the highest in very low estimation. The latter discovery was made the other day by a certain legal luminary who already had quite a modest opinion of his own abilities, though he has been for many years an ornament of the bench and is himself the son of a judge. During his off days he usually divides his energies between golf and dairy farming. On the occasion in question it happened to be golf, and, not being in his usual form, he made a very bad fizzle.

He gazed incredulously at the ground, looked inquiringly at his club and, having apparently solved the difficult problem, faced his caddy and exclaimed, with emphasis, "Well, I am an ass!" The caddy, started out of a dream of bliss, was too well trained to contradict his employer, so he solemnly replied, "Yes, sir!" The man of law had overlooked the other's existence, but this candid opinion recalled him to earth. He looked at the caddy, and the caddy looked at him for a brief second. Then both burst into a shout of laughter. The humor of the situation had struck them simultaneously.—London Tatler.

Buried in Woolen.
In 1679 an act was passed in England requiring the dead to be buried in woolen, the purpose being to lessen the importation of linen from beyond the seas and the encouragement of the woolen and paper manufactures of this kingdom. A penalty of £5 was inflicted for a violation of this act, and as frequently people preferred to be buried in linen a record of the fine appears. For example, at Gayton, Northamptonshire, we find in the register: "1708. Mrs. Dorothy Bellingham was buried April 5, in Linnen, and the forfeiture of the Act paid, fifty shillings to ye Informer and fifty shillings to the poor of the parishes."

Pope wrote the following lines on the burial of Mrs. Oldfield, the actress, with reference to this custom: "Odious! In woolen! 'Twould a saint provoke." Were the last words poor Narcissa spoke. No; let a charming hint and Brussels lace Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face.—Chambers' Journal.

An Unconventional Graduate.
"So you've just graduated from college?" snaps the head of the firm. "And I suppose you think you know enough to run my business if I give you a place?" "I hadn't considered that phase of the matter," replies the graduate. "I called to inform you that I have combined all your rivals' claims willing to let you into the competition if you will talk business."—Post.

FOR THE ENGAGED GIRL.

Pretty Ways of Announcing the Great Secret of Her Happiness.

Usually an engagement is announced by the young woman writing notes to her friends, her fiancé to his. It is becoming more and more the fashion to "break the news" to one's friends at luncheon or dinner.

This can be done in a formal way by the girl herself or her mother, but it is less embarrassing and more clever to convey the news with a unique touch.

The dessert course is a good time for the announcement. One girl had the ices served in the shape of small wedding bells. Struck into the top was a tiny heart shaped envelope which contained the names of the girl and her fiancé. Each name was written on a small silver paper heart joined by a silver paper arrow piercing the two.

Another girl had a tray passed at the close of the luncheon with a single red rose for each guest. Coiled in the heart of the rose was a crumpled heart of white paper with the names of the engaged persons bracketed together.

A third young woman had suspended from the chandelier over the center of the table a large bomb shaped decoration made of snowballs. From it white ribbons were attached to the plate of each guest. When the table was being cleared for dessert each person was asked to pull her ribbon. The bomb burst, scattering rice and small envelopes, which on being opened were found to contain the announcement in the shape of a limerick.

A clever announcement at one luncheon came in the form of a telegram brought by the maid to one of the guests in the secret. When opened it was found to contain the news of the betrothal amusingly kept within the usual ten words. It was read aloud at once, creating much surprise.

JACK HORNER PIE.

The Latest Guise of This Popular Centrepiece.

An addition has been made to the contrivances for aerial navigation and, while it would defy the skill of a Wright or a Zeppelin to operate it, has attracted considerable attention from all beholders. It is fashioned from



crap paper, and, as the accompanying illustration shows, it is carried out in realistic fashion, even to the basket suspended by tinsel cord from which depend satin bags for favors, the mission of this particular airship being to serve as a Jack Horner pie.

The Servant Question.

In England the proportion of men to women indoor servants is as one to three or four. In France the reverse is the case, parlor maids being unknown, the one femme de chambre being lady's maid as well as housemaid. The housework—sweeping, dusting, etc.—mainly falls upon the man-servants. One element entailing much extra work for servants in England is absent in a French house. This is the staying guest, the succession of visitors. Outside private hotels and in the handsome flats of fashionable quarters there is, indeed, no room in Parisian households for friends. The words "dine and sleep" or "week end" visits have not found their way into French dictionaries, nor have dine and sleep or week end guests yet become French institutions. It is easy thus to understand why three or four servants suffice in France, while in England a dozen would be needed for people of similar means and position, and where three or four maids are kept in England only a general servant is kept in France.

She Will Decorate Governor's Home.
To Miss Marie Irvin of Boise, Ida., has been awarded the contract to decorate and furnish the new official mansion for the governor of that state. It is one of the few contracts of the kind that have been won by women in this country. In that city there are several women who have found furnishing and decorating a profitable profession, but most of their commissions have come from women's clubs or other women's organizations. It is a line of work for which women are especially well fitted. Miss Irvin studied in art schools there and in Chicago, returning to Boise a little more than a year ago. She arranged the decorations for the last inaugural ball in Idaho, and it was her success then that led to the award of the present contract. Miss Irvin aims at simplicity in all her work, which when attained means the best artistic expression.

ENGLAND'S NEXT KING.

The Prince of Wales is Very Different From His Father.

Intellectually the Prince of Wales is a typical Guelph. He has not inherited his father's quick moving mind. His speeches are rather terrible performances to read or listen to. He has never quite found his platform legs. To do him justice, he has no desire to find them. He would far rather be on a quarterdeck. But he cannot escape the penalties of his position. Hardly a week goes by without his being obliged to deliver a public speech on some subject of which at any rate he can not possibly know more than the alphabet. A clever man would get used to such ordeals, would even learn how to emerge from them triumphantly. But fifteen years at sea are not a good preparation for this kind of work, and the prince gets no farther than a few amiable commonplaces, awkwardly expressed. Very possibly the English public would prefer not to have it otherwise. A brilliant prince would strike a great many Englishmen as improper. And, after all, the possession of a comfortable, unexciting intellect saves the Prince of Wales from a great many dangers, among others from the danger of being misunderstood. His face, it is generally agreed, is the image of his mind. Stupid would be an exaggerated as well as an unkindly adjective to apply to it, but in the heavy eyes and their wonderful power of warding off expression one detects the insignia of sound British stolidity. There is no scandal—it would be difficult to imagine any scandal—attaching to his private life. And the gossip that he inclined to intemperance—let me say it with all possible emphasis—the idiom of calumnies. In none of his actions does he give any opening for criticism. In none, too, does he inspire any great enthusiasm. An uninteresting man? One hears that comment passed, and on the whole it is not perhaps without some share of truth. If he has not inherited his father's swiftness of apprehension, neither has he inherited his tact. And perhaps the most interesting thing about him is his recklessness of speech in private, the way he blurts out anything that may be in his head. Moreover, he has some rather strong political views—views which incline toward a decidedly stiff necked Toryism. And in addition he is fond of getting up cases in connection with the leading questions of the day.

The combination of these qualities leads at times to some amusing developments, and the spectacle of the Prince of Wales trying to convert a leading free trade publicist to tariff reform and lecturing cabinet ministers on their iniquities is by no means uncommon. In another age one can easily conceive the prince enacting the part of George III. He holds forth, at any rate, on the misdeeds of "those—Radicals" in quite the old autocratic style. But the prince and a king are two very different personages, and as the supreme head of affairs he would, one imagines, be everything that is decorous, solemn and a trifle dull. At the same time he would be free from embarrassing ties, he has no "set," and strongly disapproves of his father's "set," and in time no doubt he will make a most manageable ruler.—Harper's Weekly.

At Home Especially.

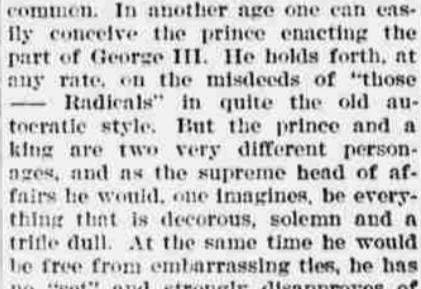
Society Reporter—Instead of saying, Mr. Cashit, that your wife is being received everywhere, don't you think it will sound better to word it that your wife is going into the best society? Society Aspirant's Husband (sighing)—Perhaps it would. She prefers the active verb herself.—Baltimore American.

Greenhorn Caution.

"I am afraid to go with you. Do you understand managing a boat?" "No," replied the youth, "but I notice that the fellows who know all about it are the ones that get drowned."

Taking this hopeful view, the girl relented and experienced nothing more tragic than a sunburned nose.—Public Ledger.

How to Do.



"A man learns to do by doing," remarked the moralizer. "Yes," rejoined the demoralizer, "and also by being done."

Parental Wisdom.

The Friend—Your son graduates from college this term, I believe? The Father—Yes. The Friend—Going to set him up in business, I suppose? The Father—Not right away. I'm going to send him to school awhile first.—Houston Post.

Hint to the Optimist.

Sam Sunflower—Dese heah optimists am always talking about a man ought to be up to his ears in happiness. Pete Persimmon—Huh! Der's only one way to be up to yo' ears in happiness, en dat am to be up to yo' eahs in a watahuelm, sah.—Chicago News.

Technical.

"Uncle Silas," said the man who takes an interest in people, "I am afraid you went fishing last Sunday." "I 'spects I kin prove er allib. When you jes' hangs a line in de water an' never gits a nibble, you can't call dat fishin', kin you?"—Washington Star.

Quite a Shock.

Bridegroom (expectantly)—Now, my dear father-in-law, I wish to say just a word about my debts. Father-in-law (slapping him on the back)—Did you say debts? Why, my boy, I'll bet my debts exceed yours three to one!—Fliegende Blätter.

Can't Come Unless He Goes.

Staylight—Oh, Miss Wobbins, may I come to see you again? Miss Wobbins—Well, I cannot see how you can very well unless you go this time!—New York Life.

Uses His Influence.

"Johnny, do you ever pray for the success of the home baseball team?" "Same thing, ma'am. I root for 'em."—Detroit Free Press.

Your Bait.

"You are going out to fish Where beck'ning waters wait In your anticipated joy Do not forget your bait. It matters not how nice your rod Or reel of silver plate; You cannot coax a fish to bite If you forget your bait." If you are working out a scheme In stocks or real estate Don't think that you can coax your fish Without the proper bait. Life is a fishing game right through. You'll sit and sit and wait For fame, success and wealth unless You're well supplied with bait. —Joe Cono in Boston Herald.

HUMOR OF THE HOUR

The Man With the Conundrum.

"I've got a good one today," said the man with the extemporaneous mustache to the man with the discouraged eyebrows.

"You have?" sighed the other man. "Yes. What is the difference between a man who is engaged in a transaction that requires more funds than he has readily at hand and who hypothecates a large excavating machine that he owns, in order to tide himself over financially—what is the difference between him and a man who shallow for navigation and for that reason employs a force of men to deepen it?" "Say that over again, and say it slow," demands the man with the discouraged eyebrows. The man with the extemporaneous mustache does so. "Why, there 'isn't any difference," says the man with the discouraged eyebrows. "Each of them wants to float something."

"No. You're wrong." "But I can't be." "You're wrong. The answer is—" "I tell you I'm dead right. I ought to know. I've been guessing conundrums for forty years, and I know—" "But you didn't quite hit it. I asked you what was the difference between—" "I don't care what you asked me. I told you the answer."

Turning with great dignity, the man with the extemporaneous mustache started away muttering, "One of them pawned his dredge, and the other dredged his pond, but I wouldn't tell him if he begged me on his bended knees."—Wilbur D. Nesbit in Chicago Post.

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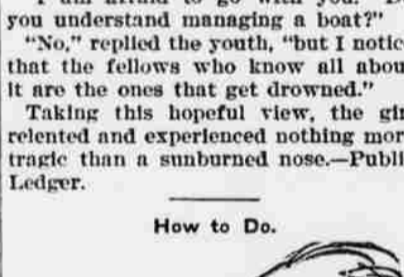
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