

THE GIRL AND THE CRAFT

A Breach of Promise Suit That Was Nipped in the Bud.

By O. HENRY.

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The other day I ran across my old friend Ferguson Pogue. Pogue is a conscientious grafter of the highest type. His headquarters is the western hemisphere, and his line of business is anything from speculating in town lots on the Great Staked Plains to selling wooden toys in Connecticut, made by hydraulic pressure from nutmegs ground to a pulp.

Now and then when Pogue has made a good haul he comes to New York for a rest. He says the jug of wine and loaf of bread and thou in the wilderness business is about as much rest and pleasure to him as sliding down the bumps at Coney would be to President Taft. "Give me," says Pogue, "a big city for my vacation, especially New York. I'm not much fond of New Yorkers, and Manhattan is about the only place on the globe where I don't find any."

While in the metropolis Pogue can always be found at one of two places. One is a little secondhand bookshop on Fourth avenue, where he reads books about his hobbies, Mohammedanism and taxidermy. I found him at the other—his hall bedroom in Eighteenth street—where he sat in his stocking feet trying to pluck "The Banks of the Wabash" out of a small zither. Four years he has practiced this tune without arriving near enough to cast the longest trout line to the water's edge. On the dresser lay a blue steel Colt's 45 and a tight roll of tens and twenties large enough around to belong to the spring rattlesnake story class. A chambermaid with a room cleaning air fluttered near by in the hall, unable to enter or to flee, scandalized by the stocking feet, aghast at the Colt's, yet powerless, with her metropolitan instinct, to remove herself beyond the magic influence of the yellow hued roll.

I sat on his trunk while Ferguson Pogue talked. No one could be franker or more candid in his conversation. Beside his expression the cry of Henry James for lacteal nourishment at the age of one month would have seemed like a Chaldean cryptogram. He told me stories of his profession with pride, for he considered it an art. And I was curious enough to ask him whether he had known any woman who followed it.

"Ladies?" said Pogue, with western chivalry. "Well, not to any great extent. They don't amount to much in special lines of graft, because they're all so busy in general lines. What? Why, they have to. Who's got the money in the world? The men. Did you ever know a man to give a woman a dollar without any consideration? A man will shell out his dust to another man free and easy and gratis. But if he drops a penny in one of the machines run by the Madame Eve's Daughters' Amalgamated association and the pineapple chewing gum don't fall out when he pulls the lever you



HE WAS ALL FRONT.

can hear him kick to the superintendent four blocks away. Man is the hardest proposition a woman has to go up against. He's a low grade one, and she has to work overtime to make him pay. Two times out of five she's salted. She can't put in crushers and costly machinery. He'd notice 'em and be on to the game. They have to pan out what they get, and it hurts their tender hands. Some of 'em are natural sluice troughs and can carry out \$1,000 to the ton. The dry eyed ones have to depend on signed letters, false hair, sympathy, the kangaroo walk, cowhide whips, ability to cook, sentimental juries, conversational powers, silk underskirts, ancestry, rouge, anonymous letters, violet sachet powders, witnesses, revolvers, pneumatic forms,

carbolic acid, moonlight, cold cream and the evening newspapers."

"You are outrageous, Ferguson," I said. "Surely there is none of this 'graft,' as you call it, in a perfect and harmonious matrimonial union!"

"Well," said Pogue, "nothing that would justify you every time in calling up police headquarters and ordering out the reserves and a vaudeville manager on a dead run. But it's this way: Suppose you're a Fifth avenue millionaire, soaring high, on the right side of coppers and cappers,

"You come home at night and bring a \$9,000,000 diamond brooch to the lady who's staked you for a claim. You hand it over. She says, 'Oh, George! and looks to see if it's backed. She comes up and kisses you. You've waited for it. You get it. All right. It's graft."

"But I'm telling you about Artemisia Blye. She was from Kansas, and she suggested corn in all of its phases. Her hair was as yellow as the silk, her form was as tall and graceful as a stalk in the low grounds during a wet summer, her eyes were as big and startling as bunions, and green was her favorite color.

"On my last trip into the cool recesses of your sequestered city I met a human named Vaucross. He was worth—that is, he had a million. He told me he was in business on the street. 'A sidewalk merchant?' says I, sarcastic. 'Exactly,' says he, 'senior partner of a paving concern.'

"I kind of took to him for this reason: I met him on Broadway one night when I was out of heart, luck, tobacco and place. He was all silk hat, diamonds and front. He was all front. If you had gone behind him you would have only looked yourself in the face. I looked like a cross between Count Tolstoy and a June lobster. I was out of luck. I had— But let me lay my eyes on that dealer again.

"Vaucross stopped and talked to me a few minutes, and then he took me to a high toned restaurant to eat dinner. There was music and then some Beethoven and Bordelaise sauce and cussing in French and frangipani and some hauteur and cigarettes. When I am flush I know them places.

"I declare I must have looked as bad as a magazine artist sitting there without any money and my hair all ruffled like I was booked to read a chapter from 'Elsie's School Days' at a Brooklyn bohemian smoker. But Vaucross treated me like a bear hunter's guide. He wasn't afraid of hurting the waiter's feelings.

"Mr. Pogue," he explains to me, "I am using you."

"Go on," says I. "I hope you don't wake up."

"And then he tells me, you know, the kind of man he was. He was a New Yorker. His whole ambition was to be noticed. He wanted to be conspicuous. He wanted people to point him out and bow to him and tell others who he was. He said it had been the desire of his life always. He didn't have but a million, so he couldn't attract attention by spending money. He said he tried to get into public notice one time by planting a little public square on the east side with garlic for free use of the poor, but Carnegie heard of it and covered it over at once with a library in the Gaelic language. Three times he had jumped in the way of automobiles, but the only result was five broken ribs and a notice in the papers that an unknown man five feet ten, with four amalgam filled teeth, supposed to be the last of the famous Red Leary gang, had been run over."

"Ever try the reporters?" I asked him.

"Last month," says Mr. Vaucross, "my expenditure for lunches to reporters was \$124.80."

"Got anything out of that?" I asked.

"That reminds me," says he; "add \$8.50 for pepsin. Yes, I got indigestion."

"How am I supposed to push along your scramble for prominence?" I inquired. "Contrast?"

"Something of that sort tonight," says Vaucross. "It grieves me, but I am forced to resort to eccentricity." And here he drops his napkin in his soup and rises up and bows to a gent who is devastating a potato under a palm across the room.

"The police commissioner," says my climber, gratified. "Friend," says I in a hurry, "have ambitions, but don't kick a rung out of your ladder. When you use me as a stepping stone to salute the police you spoil my appetite on the grounds that I may be degraded and incriminated. Be thoughtful."

"As the Quaker City squab en casserole the idea about Artemisia Blye comes to me.

"Suppose I can manage to get you in the papers," says I—"a column or two every day in all of 'em and your picture in most of 'em for a week. How much would it be worth to you?"

"Ten thousand dollars," says Vaucross, warm in a minute. "But no murder," says he, "and I won't wear pink pants at a cotillion."

"I wouldn't ask you to," says I. "This is honorable, stylish and un-feminine. Tell the waiter to bring a demitasse and some other beans, and I will disclose to you the opus moder- andi."

"We closed the deal an hour later in the roccoco rouge et noise room. I telegraphed that night to Miss Artemisia in Salina. She took a couple of photographs and an autograph letter to an elder in the Fourth Presbyterian church in the morning and got some transportation and \$80. She stopped in Topeka long enough to trade a flashlight interior and a valentine to the vice president of a trust company for a mileage book and a package of five dollar notes with \$250 scrawled on the band.

"The fifth evening after she got my

wire she was waiting, all decollete and dressed up, for me and Vaucross to take her to dinner in one of those New York feminine apartment houses where a man can't get in unless he plays bezique and smokes deplorable powder cigarettes.

"She's a stunner," says Vaucross when he saw her. "They'll give her a two column cut sure."

"This was the scheme the three of us concocted. It was business straight through. Vaucross was to rush Miss Blye with all the style and display and emotion he could for a month. Of course that amounted to nothing as far as his ambitions were concerned. The sight of a man in a white tie and patent leather pumps pouring greenbacks through the large end of a cornucopia to purchase nutriment and heartsease for tall, willowy blonds in New York is as common a sight as blue turtles in delirium tremens. But he was to write her love letters—the worst kind of love letters, such as your wife publishes after you are dead—every day. At the end of the month he was to drop her and she would bring suit for \$100,000 for breach of promise.

"Miss Artemisia was to get \$10,000. If she won the suit that was all, and



THERE STOOD VAUCROSS AND MISS ARTEMISIA.

If she lost she was to get it anyhow. There was a signed contract to that effect.

"Sometimes they had me out with 'em, but not often. I couldn't keep up to their style. She used to pull out his notes and criticize them like bills of lading.

"Say, you," she'd say, "what do you call this—letter to a hardware merchant from his nephew on learning that his aunt has nettlesash? You eastern duffers know as much about writing love letters as a Kansas grasshopper does about tugsboats. 'My dear Miss Blye!' Would that put pink icing and a little red sugar bird on your bridal cake? How long do you expect to hold an audience in a courtroom with that kind of stuff? You want to get down to business and call me 'Tweedums Babe' and 'Honeysuckle' and sign yourself 'Mamma's Own Big Bad Fuggy Wuggy Boy' if you want any insight to concentrate upon your sparse gray hairs. Get sappy."

"After that Vaucross dipped his pen in the indelible tabasco. His notes read like something or other in the original. I could see a jury sitting up and women tearing one another's hats to hear 'em read. And I could see piling up for Mr. Vaucross as much notoriousness as Archbishop Cranmer or the Brooklyn bridge or cheese on salad ever enjoyed. He seemed mighty pleased at the prospects.

"They agreed on a night, and I stood on Fifth avenue outside a solemn restaurant and watched 'em. A process server walked in and handed Vaucross the papers at his table. Everybody looked at 'em, and he looked as proud as Cicero. I went back to my room and lit a five cent cigar, for I knew the \$10,000 was as good as ours.

"About two hours later somebody knocked at my door. There stood Vaucross and Miss Artemisia, and she was clinging—yes, sir, clinging—to his arm. And they tells me they'd been out and got married. And they articulated some trivial cadences about love and such. And they laid down a bundle on the table and said 'Good night' and left.

"And that's what I say," concluded Ferguson Pogue, "that a woman is too busy occupied with her natural vocation and instinct of graft such as is given her for self preservation and amusement to make any great success in special lines."

"What was in the bundle that they left?" I asked, with my usual curiosity.

"Why," said Ferguson, "there was a scalper's railroad ticket as far as Kansas City and two pairs of Mr. Vaucross' old pants."

Seasons of the Past.

Irate Guest—Look here, waiter, what kind of a dinner was that you served me? Why, the vegetables were stale.

Waiter (bristling up)—Yo' am wrong, sah. I served yo' wid all the delicacies of de season.

Irate Guest—Which season?—Chicago News.

Short Sermons FOR A Sunday Half-Hour

Theme:
THE COMPASSIONATE CHRIST.
BY THE LATE REV. THEODORE L. CYLER, D. D.

There is no place in which human sorrows are felt as they are felt in the heart of Jesus. No one knows human weakness as He knows it, or pities as He can pity. Every suffering of the body is known to our sympathizing Lord, and every grief that makes the heart ache.

Human pity is often worn out from overuse. It impatiently mutters, "Is that poor creature here again? I have helped him a dozen times already." Or it says, "That miserable fellow has taken to drink again, has he? I am done trying to save him. He makes himself a brute; let him die like the brutes!" Human pity often gives way just when it should stand the heaviest strain.

Compassion dwells in the heart of Christ, as inexhaustible as the sunlight. Our tears hang heavier on that heart than the planets which His Divine hand holds in their orbits; our sighs are more audible to His ear than the blasts of wintry winds are to us. When we pray aright, we are reaching up and taking hold on that compassion. The penitent publican was laying hold of it when he cried out of that broken heart, "Be merciful to me, a sinner!" It is His sublime pity that listens to our prayers and hears our cries and grants us what we want. Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace and make our weakness, our guiltiness, and our griefs to be their own pleas to Him who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

One of the most characteristic stories of Abraham Lincoln is that a poor soldier's wife came to the White House, with her infant in her arms, and asked admission to see the President. She came to beg him to grant a pardon to her husband, who was under a military sentence. "Be sure and take the baby up with you," said the Irish porter at the White House door. At length the woman descended the stairway, weeping for joy; and the Irishman exclaimed, "Ah, naum, it was the baby that did it!"

So doth our weakness appeal to the compassionate heart of our Redeemer. There is no more exquisite description of Him than in this touch: "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs in His arms and carry them in His bosom; He shall gently lead those that are with young." Such is our blessed Master's tender mercy to the weak. It is tender because it never breaks the bruised reed or quenches the feeblest spark.

This world of ours contains vastly more weak things than strong things. Here and there towers a mountain pine of stalwart oak; but the frail reeds and rushes are innumerable. Even in the Bible gallery of characters, how few are strong; yet, none but had some weakness. Abraham's tongue is once twisted to a falsehood; the temper of Moses is not always proof against provocation; Elijah loses heart under the juniper tree, and the stout Peter turns poltroon under the taunts of a servant-maid. But evermore there waits and watches over us that infinite compassion that knoweth what is in poor man, and remembereth that we are but dust. For our want-book He has an infinitely larger supply-book. The same sympathizing Jesus who raised the Jewish maiden from her bed of death, who rescued sinking Peter, and pitied a hungry multitude, and wept with the sisters of Bethany ere He raised a dead brother to life, is living yet. His love, as Samuel Rutherford said, "hath neither brim nor bottom."

This compassionate Jesus ought to be living also in the persons of those whom He makes His representatives. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." That law is love.

This law of Christian sympathy works in two ways; it either helps our fellow-creatures get rid of their burdens, or if falling in that, it helps them to carry the load more lightly. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

Here, for example, is a strong, rich, well-manned church, some of its members are dying of dignity and others are debilitated with indolence. Yonder is a feeble church in numbers and money. Let the man who counts one in the strong church go where he can count ten in the weak church. If the compassionate Christ should come into some of our churches, I suspect that He would order more than one rich, well-fed member off his cushion, and send him to work in some mission school or struggling young enterprise.

That early Church was saturated with the compassionate spirit of their Lord. They fulfilled the "law of Christ." The only genuine successors of those apostles are the load-lifters. Jesus Christ exerted His Divine might and infinite love in bearing the load of man's sin and sorrows. Consecration means copying the compassionate Christ. Power means debt—the debt we owe to the poor, the feeble, the sick, the ignorant, the fallen, the guilty and the perishing. May God inspire us, and help us to pay that debt!

The "Sun Drawing Water." The phenomenon commonly known as the "sun drawing water" is due to rays of sunlight between the shadows of clouds. It is seen to best advantage when the atmosphere is somewhat hazy and when the sun is wholly or partly behind a cloud and is not in the higher part of the sky. Patchy stratumcumulus clouds are most favorable for the formation of these rays, and they are probably most distinct when seen in the part of the sky below the sun, when they appear to extend either directly or somewhat obliquely downward. It is in this form that the effect is most commonly called the "sun drawing water." But such rays may extend in any direction, so that they diverge from the sun as a center. No rain need be falling anywhere near the observer, though it is not impossible for the rays to be visible at a time when rain streaks also are visible in part of the sky. The rain streaks, however, do not diverge from the sun, but are in lines of the falling rain.—St. Nicholas

Ireland's Decline. Ireland at the end of last year had 890 fewer inhabitants than in 1908. The registrar general's report, just issued, shows that the population, 4,371,570, has fallen by 130,000 in ten years. Emigrants last year numbered 28,676, 5,379 more than in 1908 and 890 more than the excess of births over deaths.—London Mail.

Arctic Rock Weed. Drifting down from Alaska comes the greatest of all sea plants, the arctic rock weed, that grows in shape like a huge ship's hauser and sometimes with branches 500 feet long. There are no signs of leaves, but at intervals of a fathom or so a knob, for all the world like the buoy on a drift net, grows around the stem, aiding, as does the buoy, in keeping the plant afloat and creating the impression that some nets have gone astray.—New York World.

Method in Her Breakage. "Augusta is an awfully bright girl, isn't she?" "Yes, indeed. When she is reading a novel on the front porch her mother never thinks of asking her to wash the dishes." "Why not?" "She's sure to break so many of them."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Trouble Ahead. Young Husband (to wife)—Didn't I telegraph to you not to bring your mother with you? Young Wife—I know. That's what she wants to see you about. She read the telegram.

Aeronauts Fired At. Berlin, Oct. 18.—Three aeronauts who ascended from Senbrucken in the balloon Prince Adolf report that they were blown over the French frontier and were fired at by the forts at Verdun. Neither the balloon nor its occupants were hit.

BERKSHIRES IN LITERATURE.

Many Writers Seek Rest and Recreation in These Hills.

Much of the literary history of Massachusetts lies in the Berkshires. The region has always seemed to have a peculiar charm for men of letters, and Longfellow, Bryant, Oliver Wendell Holmes and many others whose names are inscribed in imperishable letters on the literary records of the land have written of the Berkshires from that sympathetic first hand knowledge that is never to be stimulated and have not hesitated to express their love for the smiling hills.

Records of the life and passing of these men are to be met on every hand in the villages of the section. Here is a house where Longfellow lived; there a chair upon which Oliver Wendell Holmes was wont to sit. William Dean Howells is only one of the literary lights of to-day who choose to follow in the steps of the giants of a bygone day and take rest in the Berkshires.

Man with Iron Mask. The Man with the Iron Mask was a mysterious French prisoner of state, whose identity has never been satisfactorily established. He was closely confined under the charge of M. de St. Mars at Pignerol in 1679; at Exiles in 1681; at Sainte-Marguerite in 1687; and finally was transferred to the Bastille in 1698, where he died on November 19, 1703, and was buried the following day in the cemetery of St. Paul, under the name of Marciall.

Woman as a Traveler. When a woman who is traveling is assigned to her room in a hotel she looks up the hotel rules on the door and carefully reads them. When she comes to one as follows: "No washing of clothes permitted in this room," she gives a satisfied sigh. Then she unpacks her trunk, rings for hot water and within an hour has the mirror covered with handkerchiefs pasted there to dry, and has hose, underwear, waists, etc., hanging over the back of every chair. Then she gets out her diary and notes in it how much money she has saved. "There are said to be some very historic places in this town," she notes after detailing her wash, "but I will not have time to see them."—Aitchison Globe.

Fish That Carry Candles. Some of the fish found at a depth of about ten thousand feet by a German deep sea expedition resembled the fossil species in the rocks of the Mesozoic era, when the earth's atmosphere was dense with carbon. These fish in many cases had special means of collecting light. Some possessed enormous eyes occupying nearly the whole side of the head and some were supplied with telescopic organs. Others carried their light on their heads in a manner similar to that of the glow worm.—Montreal Standard.

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