

First Aids to Matrimony

CONFESSIONS OF A DEBUTANTE.

BY HELEN ROWLAND.

"Isn't the law a funny thing?" said Kitty, glancing speculatively at the back of a fat park policeman, just disappearing round a bend in the path.

"Perhaps," I conceded, as I usually led the way toward a secluded bench, in a secluded corner, "unless you happen to break it, or to run up against it, or try to get around it, or—"

"The idea," exclaimed Kitty scornfully, as she sank into one corner of the bench and frowned coldly at an innocent old gentleman who occupied the other corner, "of taxing things like dogs and bachelors?"

"The idea," I returned, supplementing Kitty's glance of disapproval, and inwardly wondering why old gentlemen are permitted to walk in the public parks at all, much less to take the best seats in the most out-of-the-way places, "is perfectly plain—in both cases. Besides," I added generously, "a man should expect to pay for his privileges."

Kitty swept me with a chilling glance.

"I suppose," she suggested, "it is to discourage them."

"To discourage the dogs," I corrected, "and to encourage the bachelors."

"What?"

"By making single life an expensive privilege," I explained. "Anything is more appreciated when you have to pay for it. The trouble with matrimony is that it's too easy. That's why it's going out of fashion. If the courts would make it a privilege or a crime, instead of a duty, by putting a tax or a penalty on it, there would be more marriages and fewer bachelors' clubs. Why," I continued, waxing dramatic, "all a chap has to do is to say 'I take this woman to be my wife, and he's got her. There isn't anything else worth having that you can get that easily."

"That's so," acquiesced Kitty, with a sigh. "It's easier than putting money in bank. You don't even have to give references, or prove your own identity, or tell your occupation. But," she added, thoughtfully, "it's a pity that you have to pay for it many times over after you've got it on your hands. Besides," I added, complacently, "there isn't any excitement in acquiring something which you can have for the asking—even a wife. If you want a small boy to grow indifferent to lollipops just keep a plate of them every time he feels hungry. Even money would lose its value if it were passed around your door with the morning paper and the patent medicine ads. It's because it's hard to get, and you have to work for it that you value it. And it's because it's hard to keep single that—"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Curtis,"

"Er—that—" I caught a glance from Kitty's eye that made me hesitate and swallow.

"That there are so many bachelor girls," I finished, lamely.

"Oh," Kitty resumed her mutilation of the park path with the point of the red silk parasol. "But," she protested, "just because the law encourages matrimony—"

"Oh, it isn't only the law that encourages it," I broke in, hastily. "The whole world encourages it! Everybody is against a chap—I mean—that is—er—"

"You might begin all over again," suggested Kitty, friendly.

"Well," I exclaimed in desperation, wadding myself in between Kitty and the suspicious old gentleman, "just look what happens the moment two people begin to take a casual interest in one another."

"What DOES happen, Mr. Curtis?"

Kitty leaned forward, with her hands clasped on her parasol and an inscrutable look of challenge beneath her lowered lashes.

Just then the old gentleman rose and casually sauntered off to get a game of golf.

"THAT happens!" I said, triumphantly, nodding toward the receding figure of the departing Nemesis.

Kitty blushed and transferred her gaze to the branches of the tree above us.

"Everybody," she said, "gets out of the way when the two appear. Everybody grows suddenly blind and deaf and dumb when they are around. Put a pair of lovers on a hotel piazza and in half an hour that side of the place is deserted by the rest of the world, and twenty minutes everybody is at the other end of the room; place them on an ocean steamer and every soul aboard, from the captain to the cabin boy, will be looking at them. Nobody seems interested in the dark corners or the tete-a-tete chairs when they are around. Society avoids them as persistently as if they were the plague. It's just as if the public had suddenly become blind and deaf to invade a man into committing himself or to mental suggestion to force him into matrimony. And if there's anything that will give a chap cold feet—"

"What?"

"A reaction," I corrected, "or a distaste for doing something, it's knowing that it's expected of him."

"Oh, well," sighed Kitty, with a vicious little dig of her parasol. "I suppose they do it because they are sentimental and remember how it was when they were young and—"

"If they do," I asserted vehemently, "they ought to remember that what they considered was not encouragement, but discouragement; not the sugar of approval, but the spice of opposition; not a clear field and a leading string, but a stone wall to climb and a stern parent to outwit. It's a mighty weak fly who won't take wings at the sight of sticky flypaper, and a very silly fish who will swim against a net that is hung out in plain view. And it's a mighty unsophisticated young man who won't dodge the snares of a sympathetic public and the traps of a 'manning mama."

"What kind of a mama," Mr. Curtis?"

"The kind," I explained, "that keeps the house full of window seats and cozy corners and low lights and music, and always sends the family out of the room when you arrive and then disappears herself after giving you a brief inventory of her daughter's domestic accomplishments and—"

"Yes," broke in Kitty, "it's always the orphan girl with the cruel guardian who marries the moment she escapes from the convent, while the girl with the accommodating parents is sitting around acquiring croquet waiting for an offer."

"And it's two people," I added, "who are under age and unsuitable and whom the whole family are trying to tear apart, who are willing to take poverty and dragons for one another, never the two who are thrown at each other's heads. What this country needs is not a bachelor tax, nor more laws for the protection of matrimony, but a few don't-for-lovers, a few difficulties and obstacles—"

"Like the iron-barred windows, behind which Spanish maidens are kept!" cried Kitty enthusiastically.

"Or the iron-bound rules that hem in the French girls," I interpolated.

"Or the wicked dragons that always

ing," she added, as that minion of the law hove into sight.

"If that is all," I suggested eagerly, "we will wait—"

"And," continued Kitty, firmly, "if it weren't bad form."

"That wouldn't deter me," I protested boldly.

"And too conspicuous—"

"There are other places—"

"And," finished Kitty, rising and putting up her sunshade, "too easy."

"What's the way," I demanded, coldly, "to walk into the sticky fly paper?"

"The way," sighed Kitty, glancing back at me over the edge of her parasol.

MAKING HABITAT GROUPS.

Most Minute Details Are Reproduced at Great Expense.

Stuffing the skins of birds and of animals is no longer the method used in up-to-date taxidermy. The latest thing is the manikin system.

This is the method employed in the preparation of the so-called habitat groups, showing birds and animals in their natural surroundings. In making these groups expense is not spared.

Pieces of rock, stones, shells, trees, plants, and even earth are brought from the localities whose general characteristics are to be produced. The artist who is to paint the background goes to the very place itself and paints from nature.

If leaves or small, soft twigs are to be reproduced, plaster impressions are taken of the real objects and melted wax is run into these molds, so that every leaf and vein is shown. The wax leaf or twig is then sprayed with paint, says a writer in *Fur News*, the operator using an air brush, so as not to put on more paint than is necessary.

In some instances the leaves are punctured to represent injuries inflicted by insects. The finished leaves are attached to the stems of the plants or trees so skillfully that they have every appearance of growing there. Two men and two women are employed at the museum continually in this branch of the work alone.

In representing water, sheets of celluloid are used, which are so strong that when placed in the position in the case they will bear the weight of a man. This substance is used to great advantage in this branch of the work, as it may be cut to any shape, and may also be bored full of holes to admit the stems of water grasses, cattails, etc., without danger of breaking.

MOLDS THE FASHION

Queen Alexandra Sets Style in London Society.

HER MAJESTY HAS INFLUENCE

Strict Regarding Points of Etiquette. She Insists on Customs Pleasing to Her and Royal Apparel Is Displayed in London Shops So Style Can Be Copied by Others.

Until recently, Queen Alexandra had been wearing black for her father, though her mourning was not exactly the common variety; at least, not at court functions where she wore elaborately spangled black. Of late, the Queen has gone back to her beloved lavender and mauve.

When a wedding is to occur in the royal family, it is the practice of her majesty, says *Current Literature*, to cause a public display in certain shop windows of the dresses, the hats, and the underwear of the ladies of the royal family, thus giving timely warning of the season's coming fashions.

The wedding of a princess in England is invariably preceded by an adequate manifestation of her lineage along the London thoroughfares. There is, in short, no detail of woman's wear to which her majesty does not stand in the relation of final arbiter.

Her favorite gems—diamonds, rubies, and pearls—have been made to supersede the emerald, the turquoise, and the opal. The waistbands of all bodices must be quite deep to please the Queen.

Favors Long Trains.

Ever since she came to the throne the Queen has insisted upon long trains, preferably the blue satin or pink Lyons velvet. A gown of black satin, of course, would imply a train of black brocade. Jet in long, tapering sprays is then mandatory.

The growing length of trains is admittedly a source of much fatigue at Buckingham Palace. The Duchess of Buccleugh, weighted with plumes, tiaras, necklaces, and compassed roundabout with yard after yard of black brocade, had to be lifted bodily out of her coach and transported into the presence like a bale of goods this year because it was so interminable that it remained streaming out of sight long after her grace had kissed hands.

Men in attendance upon their majesties have been known to compromise their department, through inefficiency, and endeavor to get out of the way of trains. Yet her majesty now lets it be known, by sanctioning the toilets of the peeress in attendance as mistress of the robes, that trains are henceforth to be even longer than before. The Queen's own train is said to be the longest in the world, being eighteen feet in extent.

The Queen is strict, too, on such points of etiquette as make it a breach of decorum, for instance, to hand anything but new and unaltered coin, fresh from the mint, to the consort of the British sovereign. It is likewise intolerably bad form to put a question to the Queen directly. Only the King may do that with propriety. To make love to her majesty is punishable by the law of Britain, with death, unless, of course, one happens to be the King.

Keen Interest in Racing.

"Her majesty's keen interest in racing, and her refusal to tolerate a lady in her suite who plays cards for money are deemed somewhat incompatible. So, again, are the regular visits of the Queen to church and her patronage of ballet dancers."

When her majesty visited Chatsworth, the stately home in England perhaps, the private chapel there was set apart for her exclusive use, and a dance was imported from Paris to present in rights (not in the chapel, however) for the amusement of the royal leisure. The incongruity is attributed to the Queen's Danish training.

Denmark and her Danish relatives absorb her still. The Queen's most intimate friend is her sister, the Dowager, Countess, with whom she spends at least two months of every year.

It is during these Danish vacations that the Queen of England indulges her passion for amateur photography, one of her principal forms of recreation. Unlike her daughters, she does little golfing, although she will spend a whole morning on the links watching the play. Prime Minister Balfour, however, the Queen, is the best golfer in England.

Woman About Town

What She Sees and Hears.

He came so briskly down the street, and no one could mistake the look of business on his face. Some great deal was at stake.

And then he stopped—just stopped and looked. And stood, and looked and stood. And presently the second man was standing at his side.

The third man walked quite briskly, too, and he was not to be mistaken. But he, too, stopped and joined the two. First comes in their state.

The fourth came, and the fifth, the ninth. The tenth, until a knot of full a score was standing there. Their business all forgot.

What was the wonderful thing they saw? What was it that held them so? Of men! What was the thing? They'd never seen before!

They stood and looked, they stood and stared. They hung entranced to see Three men—digging where the cellar of a house will be.

"When I was in New Orleans about six weeks ago," says the man who travels, "I heard one of the prominent physicians of the town make a formal statement that astonished me. He said that in proportion to its inhabitants, New Orleans had more cases of tuberculosis than any other town in the United States. Of course, he made an exception of some of the health resorts like the Colorado towns to which consumptives go in hope of cure, but conditions in such places are artificial. The normal death rate in New Orleans from consumption, he said, beats the world instead of being beaten. I don't remember what he proposed as a remedy for the condition, but I have an idea of my own about it. I believe the mosquito bars of the South are about the deadliest things on earth. If you go to New Orleans at any time of the year, you're sure to find mosquitoes, and your bedroom is not likely to have screens in the

windows. Instead, it has a cotton net tent arrangement over the bed. This is true of both hotels and private houses. The bed bars are usually clean so far as looks go. They are washed about as often as window curtains, but certainly they are not antiseptically clean. I never yet slept under one without wondering whether the former user of it hadn't been tuberculous. Just as an ignorant layman, I feel sure that the percentage of tuberculosis would be cut down tremendously in all Southern cities by the abolition of the bars over beds. They keep out mosquitoes, and mosquitoes convey a good many diseases, but they must be excellent lairs for the tuberculous bacillus."

Speaking of New Orleans, a Georgetown woman who went down there for this year's carnival season brought back with her a great armful of Spanish moss, which she proceeded to festoon on the old magnolia tree in her yard, hoping that it would grow there. I've no doubt in the world that Providence sent us an incentive to reflect that Spanish moss, instead of discarding that Spanish moss, and I rejoiced when I passed the magnolia last Tuesday and saw that the moss had fallen off. Half the old live oaks on the Gulf Coast are smothering under the weight. It kills every leaf, every branch on which it festens its parasite self. It has the cheering look of grape streamers on a door, and why anybody should want to infest Washington with it, I can't imagine. The only proper use for Spanish moss is to stuff furniture with it, and when it's nicely killed by boiling or burying, it makes a very good stuffing for the hair we buy in mattresses. It's worth about 9 cents a pound for stuffing, and if it grew on any tree I owned, I'd be willing to pay twice 9 cents a pound to have it picked off. If there were any real likelihood of the flourishing in this climate, I'd ask Congress to make bringing it here a penal offense.

"I see they're discussing the question of whether a woman should be called by her husband's name," says the club woman's husband. "I suppose it is a bit galling to a woman to reflect that no matter how many times her husband marries, she 'Mrs.' visiting cardlets is all her name has to buy. No doubt a woman hates to give up her family name when she marries. I've heard my wife say that her visiting card doesn't represent a personality at all. She says it expresses a sociological fact merely. She's talked about this name business a lot, and I'm willing to let her call herself anything she likes. I don't want to hamper the free expression of her individuality in any way, but there's one thing I won't stand for. It happened to me once, and I'm never going to tag along with my wife anywhere unless she can assure me it won't happen again. A man has a few feelings even in these days. She took me to an entertainment where her club gave her long ago. There was a whole drawing-room full of women, with a man here and there, and every one of those men looked as if he'd been caught stealing sheep. I understood why as soon as we were seated. A girl-looking young woman stood in the door and shouted out the names. Never again for mine. She announced us as Mr. and Mrs. Minnie Bings Brown."

A young woman who had rather a prominent part in an amateur musical entertainment given not so very long ago tells this story on herself. One of the bellboys in the apartment house in which she lives went on an errand for her the day before the entertainment. When he returned, with an anticipatory look on his face, she wished to reward him, and asked him whether he'd rather have half a dollar or a ticket to the entertainment. He chose the latter. A few days afterward the young woman asked him how he liked the performance. His reply was frank.

"I'd enjoyed it better," he said, "if I hadn't kept a thinkin' of that 50 cents."

I have discovered the use of those innumerable puffs which the up-to-date woman pins promiscuously about her topknot. I had supposed they were intended merely to enlarge the coiffure to the dimensions demanded by the new fashion in hats—and as soon as I can find a fireman who will give me his helmet I'm going to put a brown bow on it and have one of those new hair puffs, by the way. I had looked on those puffs, as I say, as mere useless excrescences, but since Monday I am better informed. A very smart young woman came into the dressing-room of one of the department stores. She was undulated and puffed and hatted till her head was the size of a bushel basket. She took off her hat, and I saw the face that had been hidden by the hat. I looked on those puffs, as I say, as mere useless excrescences, but since Monday I am better informed. A very smart young woman came into the dressing-room of one of the department stores. 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