

Sissy

By S. B. HACKLEY

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"Gimme them close pins, Alice Emily! 'Pears like I see somepin' blue a-comin' across old man Shearer's pasture! Ef Johnny Beals a-hadn't jest been here a Sunday, I'd be willin' to swear hit 'us him. Now ha'n't it?"

Alice Emily Tower's eyes, black and wondrously soft, followed her mother's lean forefinger.

"Yes'm, it's him."

Minerva flung a screening sheet over the line.

"You git in the house," she ordered, "and skin off them sudsy things you got on, quick, and put on your new penang, and tell Mattie Lou to kill two of them fryin' size 'Nocker chickens,' the biggest uns!"

Minerva's command was tense with excitement. It was as though the king, a hoped-for but unexpected guest, approached. Indeed, Johnny Beals, queer, fifty-year-old Johnny, the grocer, with his reputation for wealth, hoarded and being added to, was to her a monarch, and the brilliant blue suit of clothes he wore, the coat glittering with the golden double-angles that served for buttons, the trappings of royalty.

Poor Minerva, for 30 years a tobacco-growing tenant's wife, with an unsatisfied longing for an abundance of life's good things physical, hoped through sons-in-law to bring riches to the family.

For two years Alice Emily, now eighteen, had lived in the heart of Beverly Dixon, who daily drove one of the Green River Wholesale Grocery company's big delivery trucks. But since that unfortunate May day when Alice Emily came into Beals' store with her little basket of eggs, Johnny had spent three Sundays at the 'Towers' ranshackle abode—a tenant house on the Ison Twemey farm, and each time he had brought presents for the family. With two exceptions, the family was highly elated over Alice Emily's rich beau. These exceptions were Alice Emily herself and Mattie Lou, the elder daughter, who was twenty-eight, and lovingly sympathetic in the plans of Beverly and the little sister.

Ten years before Mattie Lou and Ellis Brooks, a fine young fellow who cropped for a neighbor, in the tobacco, wanted to be married, but because of his poverty Minerva had raised objections so vehement and strenuous, Ellis, angered, had gone away, and Mattie Lou had never seen him again.

On the first two Sundays of Johnny's visits Beverly had not been able to make his usual Sunday's visits to Alice Emily because of his sick sister, but on the third Sunday afternoon he had gone joyfully to the 'Towers'. Minerva, eating luxuriously from a five-pound box of chocolates, greeted him.

"Them's what Alice Emily's new feller fetched me, Bev!" she had exulted. "Hit's Johnny Beals! He's been to see her twict sence you been here, and now he's tuck her out a-walkin'."

"Johnny's cut ye out shore, Bev." Alvah had spoken up, "fer good and all."

Then remarking the whiteness that came over Beverly's brown face, he had thrown a consoling arm about the boy's broad shoulders.

"Ther, don't ye feel that a-way about hit, Bev. Gals is cur'ls, and ther's a minny another party one in the world 'sides Alice Emily!"

Beverly had laughed, but his laugh was queer and forlorn. When the strollers had returned, Minerva had slyly but successfully frustrated his maneuvers to speak a word alone to Alice Emily. Hurt and miserable, he had refused friendly old Alvah's pressing invitation to stay to supper.

On the next afternoon he had received at the post office a hastily penciled note.

"Dear Bev," it read, "ma and pa and the boys would be mad at me if they knowed I written this, but I can't stand for you to think Alice Emily is carried away with Johnny Beals and his money, like they are. She ain't, but they've got him to thinkin' she is. You try to come down here about Wednesday, or any evenin' before Sunday and talk to Sissy."

"MATTIE LOU."

And now it was Wednesday, and Johnny had come again! Mattie Lou went upstairs to their little bedroom. Alice Emily sobbed softly in the folds of the red penang.

"Oh, Mattie Lou, he' come again, and ma and them are tickled to death. They're a-rushin' me to marry that old theng, with them pop eyes, and a mouth that looks like it wanted to eat somebody! I hate him, Mattie Lou! I never got to say a word to Bev Sunday, and he won't never come back any more!"

Mattie Lou kissed her. "Bev's a-comin' tonight, honey. I wrote to him to come."

"But that old thing's here!" Alice Emily wailed.

"I'll watch for Bev, and tell him to wait out by the pine until Johnny Beals leaves, then me and you can slip out and you can tell Bev how you're a-feelin' to him!"

lamp on the front porch water shelf, so's Mr. Beals won't ketch his feet at that rickety old floor!"

Alice Emily obeyed. Johnny followed her out, and the young lover, waiting in the shadow of the big pine, in the revealing light, saw her folded in Johnny's arms, and in apparent willingness receiving Johnny's kisses.

He turned on his heel, and with his heart on fire, went back to town. Mattie Lou meant well, but she was mistaken about Alice Emily's feelings. Well, he was done!

When their mother's light was out the two girls slipped out to the big pine. After an hour's wait, chilled to the bone, they crept back to bed.

"Bev sure said he'd wait, but I expect he concluded he'd better come back tomorrow, it bein' so late," Mattie Lou whispered. "Don't cry so, Sissy; it'll come out all right."

Several days passed and Beverly did not come, but Johnny did. Also he brought news.

"That Bev Dixon I saw out here is goin' to marry some time in July, my piece, Hannah Smith, over in Lancaster," he told Minerva carelessly on Sunday. "I'm afraid she ain't doin' much. And here's the silk I brought to make my little girl's weddin' dress."

After that Alice Emily protested no more against marrying Johnny, but on the day preceding the day that was to bring the wedding night, she looked at the silk dress. Mattie Lou, her eyes red from surreptitious weeping, was bent over her.

"Don't take too much pains with that dress, Mattie Lou. I'm never goin' to wear it while I'm alive."

"What did you say, Sissy?" Mattie Lou's lips trembled.

Alice Emily laughed and went down the stairs. Next day she laughed and sung all day over the preparations, but a sense of dread weighed on Mattie Lou's heart. At five o'clock Minerva bade her quit work.

"Alice Emily's done went upstairs to nap fer an hour, so she'll be fresh-lookin' fer the ceremony at eight o'clock, and you do the same," she bade her. "Some feller at the weddin' might git tuck with you!"

With leaden feet Mattie Lou climbed to their room; the red silk dress lay on the bed, but Alice Emily was not there. Nor was she anywhere in the house or yard. Across Mattie's troubled mind an awful thought flashed. Without saying anything to her mother, she ran down the path that led to the river. A little way down the path she ran into a young man.

He threw out his arms to save her from falling, then they tightened around her.

"Oh, honey!" he cried, "don't you know me? I'm Ellis Brooks come back for you! Why' what's the matter, Mattie Lou?"

She did not look at him or answer him, but pushed him away from her and ran to the river bank.

At the water's edge, Alice Emily stood, swaying weakly. "I'd better drown myse'f," she was saying, "than to live to see Bev married to another woman, and me married to an old thing I despise—but the water is so deep and cold—oh, I'm afraid, afraid!"

Mattie Lou seized her and drew her unresistingly away from the river.

"Oh, Mattie Lou!" she wailed, "I'm so miserable, so miserable!"

Brooks took hold of Mattie Lou's arm. Honey, what's the trouble?"

Holding fast to him with one arm and to her sister with the other, Mattie Lou sobbed out her explanation.

"Poor ma ain't never had no property," she concluded. "She thinks it's a fine thing for Sissy!"

"A young feller named Dixon, I saw in town, told me I'd run on a weddin' out here tonight," Brooks said, "and I was scared blue at first, thinkin' it was you, Mattie Lou, but Dixon said the bride was your sister, and his girl. I said: 'If she's your girl, why in thunder ain't you the man that's marryin' her?' He said he'd give his hand to be, but the other feller with money'd got ahead of him. I felt sorry for him, he looked so down."

Mattie Lou shook the tears from her lashes.

"Hear that, Sissy? Bev's still a-lovin' in you!"

Alice Emily raised her forlorn face.

"I've got to marry that old thing!"

"Not much, you ain't!" interposed Brooks exultantly. "I've made scads of money West. I came out here in my own big fine touring car—left it up on the road and walked across the field. Now all you got to do is to go to the house, gather up a few clothes and slip out, and the three of us'll get in that car, hit town, hunt up your young man and do some speedin' until we cross the state line; then we'll have a double weddin'. What do you say, Mattie Lou?"

Mattie Lou, folded in his arms, raised a glorified face from his shoulder.

Freedom of the Press.

The Constitution of the U. S., as originally adopted, contained no provision regarding the freedom of the press, but the first amendment, introduced in the first congress, covered that subject and some other important ones. It reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

A Proper Excuse.

"There are ants in the sugar," said the boarder.

"You're the first to complain," remarked the hostess.

"I hope you'll excuse me. But—you see—I'm a vegetarian."

Pretty Party Frocks



If you would forget that there is anything in the world but joy, spend a little time looking at the party frocks in which the summer girl will dance some hours away. If these dance frocks flourished in the daytime, bees and butterflies might pursue them, for they certainly borrow from flowers their color and piquancy and sunshine glimmers in their brocades and embroideries. Evening gowns indulge in sumptuous materials, in gold and silver tissue, in rich embroideries and twinkling sequins and all kinds of shimmering things—including the new shot taffetas. Finally they turn to tulle and laces or sheer crepe. A world of fine and fragile fabrics belongs to them.

The two pretty party frocks shown here are of the simpler designs, one of them in white and the other in black with embroidery and brocade sash in metal and colored brocade. The white frock has a slim underslip of embroidered satin, draped about the ankles and full draperies of fine net ending in points about the bottom, hang over it. A vestee of twinkling sequins fills the V-shaped opening of the bodice—the net makes a filmy drapery that falls from the shoulder. For a lovely finishing touch a narrow ribbon hangs in loops and ends from the girdele.

The long, slim suit and dress skirts almost make the wearing of petticoats an impossibility. But we may be just as modestly and comfortably clad, for there are the long bloomers to take their place. These bloomers or pantaloids are usually chosen in dark suit colors and may be had ankle length or shorter and with or without ruffles. A new style has an accordion plaited piece set in just above the shoe tops. For summer the short silk jersey bloomers in flesh and pink with uneven insets of lace at the knee, are perhaps the newest. Camisoles of silk jersey with lace or embroidered in pink and blue silk are also very new.

Black georgette over a satin slip serves for the dignified gown at the left of the picture. Its construction is so simple that the picture tells about all that can be told. It has a very plain bodice with round neck, bound with brocade. The skirt is gathered to this and hangs straight with an overhanging panel at the front that is embroidered near the bottom. The same embroidery appears at the sides below the hipline. A very gorgeous sash of heavy brocaded ribbon makes the wide girdele with one long hanging end.

Petticoat Substitute.

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Hats for Midsummer



Dress hats for midsummer, as compared to other millinery, are as orchids compared to other lovely blossoms. These millinery blooms are the most fragile, most splendid of all, the fairest and the shortest lived. They are midsummer interpreted in hats by designers whose fancies are unhampered by thoughts of anything but beauty. They look to the sheerest fabrics and to the most beautiful colors to translate their thoughts into millinery.

In the group of three hats made for the heart of summer, two are of printed georgette and one of plain georgette in the sheerest quality. The same wide-brimmed, graceful shapes appear developed in laces, malines and nets. Brims usually have lines in flowing curves about the face and crowns are often flexible. The hat at the right of the group is a lovely example. A vague flower motif against a black ground provides color. There is no trimming except the sash of velvet ribbon, in one of the colors in the crepe, that is brought about the crown and tied in a bow at the back.

In the hat at the left there is a hint of sport styles in the covering. It is of white crepe georgette with gay figures of Rin-tin-tin and Nanette departing themselves over its surface. A covered silk cord with small tassels at the ends disposes itself in a careless bow on the crown—to answer "present" in case any one asks for the whereabouts of trimming.

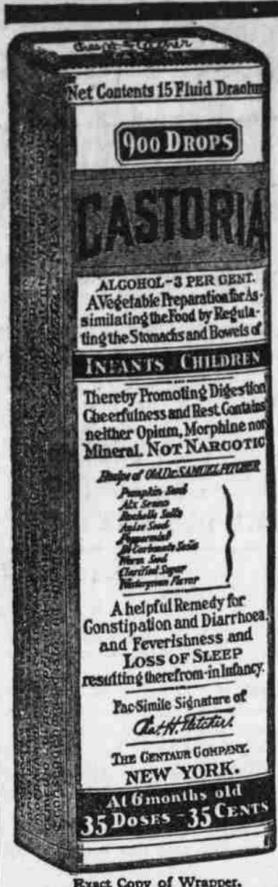
In the last hat, georgette is shirred over a wire frame with a wide ruffle flowing about the brim edge. This is one of a few models in which the crown is not flexible. Although in this particular hat there are no flowers or fruit in the trimming it is an exception to the rule, the designer having placed a sash of ribbon about the crown, tied in a generous but simple bow near the front.

Julia Bottomley

Substitute for Furs.

The reported decision of clothing manufacturers, particularly specialty houses, of going more into leather-lined or convertible overcoats for next fall and winter finds an echo in the women's wear trade. According to a dress goods representative the suggestion that leather be substituted in some cases for fur trimmings has met with quite a little response. The price consideration is not one that holds the important place for the change, even though there is a difference in favor of the use of leather, but the novelty of leather trimmings is expected to be a big factor.

Blue and orchid is a color combination much in evidence this season, especially for evening and semi-evening gowns.



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STILL FAITHFUL TO STUARTS?

Pretender of that Line to Britain's Throne is Now Prince Rupert of Bavaria.

There was once to be found in Britain a little group of romantic sentimentalists who remained faithful to the Stuart line, and celebrated on January 30 a kind of Jacobite feast day. A writer in Living Age remembers seeing postage stamps bearing the likeness of the "pretender," who happened to be a princess of Bavaria. These were attached to the envelope by the side of the official postage stamp, thus constituting a source of annoyance to the serious minded Victoria. Since the death of his mother, Maria Theresa of Bavaria, a few weeks ago, ex-Prince Rupert of Bavaria is now the official Stuart pretender to the throne of Great Britain. The muse of history has ever had a leaning toward irony.

Swivel Chair Officer.

Bacon—And did he take any part in the war?

Egbert—Oh, yes. He was an officer."

"Where?"

"In Washington."

"What did he command?"

"About \$6,000 a year, I believe."—Yonkers Statesman.

A shark's teeth are movable at will, and become erect at the moment the animal is seizing its prey.

MEANS DEATH OF GRAMMAR

New Rule Which Has Abolished Formal and Elaborate English Style of Former Days.

English as commonly written today certainly seems to have lost the purity and strength that it had a century ago, observes the Spokane Spokesman Review. Then such masters of the language as Cobbe, Coleridge, DeQuincey or Hazlitt were journalists as well as poets or essayists, and their leading articles lost nothing of effect on the public from being literature.

The arrival of the age of steam, electricity and cheap postage was followed by a change, not for the better, in the popular style of speaking and writing. "Say what you have to say as briefly and quickly as possible, and don't bother about fineness of expression," became the general rule and practice. The new millions of readers demanded that their reading be expressed in the language of every-day speech. The obligation of compressing conclusions about important matters into 1,000 words, or fewer, is death, in the end, to style. The literary form favored is in touch with the turned-up-trousers fashion of wearing one's clothing. It is free and easy and crammed with linguistic atrocities. Plural subjects are polygamously wedded to singular verbs, and Lindley Murray turns in his grave on account of the death of grammar.

Joy for Antiquarians.

A remarkable discovery of Roman silver vessels has been made on the estate of Arthur J. Balfour, British foreign secretary, at Washington, 20 miles east of Edinburgh. The fragments are much hacked and broken, but covered with designs classical in style and exquisite in technique. The silver is Christian in design, presumably ancient church plate lost from some monastery. No such find ever had been made in Great Britain and hardly even on the continent.

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