

BREAKING THE ICE

By ALAN HINSDALE

My cousin Polly was a witch—at least there was a witchery about her that drew men to her as flowers draw bees. I called her a flirt, not doubting that she purposely exercised this fascination upon men in some such spirit as a fisherman decoys trout.

One day when we were sitting at a table looking over a book of pictures together Polly drew closer to me than was necessary for her to see the pictures, and some loose strands of her hair grazed my cheek. I turned upon her and said:

"None of that, Pol. You and I are cousins. We have been brought up together like brother and sister. If you throw a spell over me you'll spoil it all."

She seemed hurt. Her only reply was a reproachful look through those expressive eyes of hers. I considered it one of her wiles, and it irritated me.

"Do you know what you're trying to do? You're bent on scooping me in as you have so many other fellows. You want me to be soft on you for awhile; then, when I get beside myself with love for you, you'll say, 'What a pity that you should have so misunderstood me!' All our cousinly friendship will be gone, and there will be nothing to take its place."

She listened to me, looking as if she were about to cry, till I had finished, then said in an injured tone:

"You have no right to assume that I have ever treated any man dishonorably. Men have sought my society, and, since girls like the companionship of the opposite sex, I have encouraged them to be friends. But I deny that I have encouraged them to be lovers."

With this she walked out of the room, keeping her back to me, evidently to hide a dampness in the eyes.

I was puzzled. Was this a part of her method of enticing a man for the purpose of refusing him, or was she speaking the truth? Whether it was her game or whether she wanted me, I was at a loss to decide. If she wanted me it seemed likely that she had made a move to break through the ordinary friendliness of my treatment of her, which would be perfectly legitimate in any girl toward any fellow she desires to be on lover-like terms with.

Whichever of these propositions was true the effect was the same. Polly had inoculated me. With what? I don't know. Was it curiosity? That was an ingredient. Was it a realization that I had not before experienced that I wanted her? Possibly. Whatever it was it had got into my blood and had produced that fever which accompanies love.

While before this episode it had not occurred to me to trouble myself about how many fellows Polly had turned down, I now began to dread that the next man who was attentive to her she would accept. Then it occurred to me that she might have felt an incipient love for me which I had nipped in the bud. A bud destroyed will never bud again. The thought was maddening. I wanted to go to Polly and undo what I had done.

But supposing she had simply been tempted to try her fascinations upon me? If I went to her with a serious and sorrowful face she would laugh at me. At any rate, what I had said to her about breaking up our cousinly status was true. When next we met there would be something that had never existed before between us—constraint. She would be shut up like an oyster, I like a clam.

And so we were. There was no more "Hello, Pol!" "Morning, Bob!" then an interchange of chaff, in which I usually got worsted. Polly seemed distrustful of looking at me. And I was glad of it, for if I caught her eye I wouldn't know what to express in mine. I remarked that it was a very disagreeable, damp morning, and she replied, "Very," in a tone that indicated the conditions between us were more disagreeable than the morning. Then she took up a book and pretended to read. I looked out through a window. Presently I tired of the situation and nerved myself to break it.

"You seem very much interested in your book," I remarked.

"It's quite interesting," without taking her eyes off it.

Silence for awhile, at the end of which I said, "I presume I owe you an apology."

She looked away from the book, but not at me. She was evidently ready to listen.

"I should not have accused you," I went on, "of drawing fellows in to throw them over."

"Oh, that's nothing. The fellow must look out for himself."

What marvelous consistency! Quite worthy of a woman. Nevertheless there was a telltale look in her eye that belied her words. I drew my chair nearer. She did not move away.

"Pol," I said, "I believe I would like to feel those stray hairs graze my cheek."

No reply. I drew my chair close beside hers and looked at the book she was reading. It was upside down. In order to see the better I placed my cheek so near hers that they touched.

The ice was broken—that is, if a kiss can be spoken of as ice. Then I talked a lot of what I now call balderdash, though Pol pronounced it "very sweet." If she had referred to the kiss the words would have been something approaching a description of what it was.

Facts Versus Fallacies

FACT is a real state of things. FALLACY is an apparently genuine but really illogical statement or argument.

THE "dry" State of Kansas is usually pointed to with pride as an example of what Prohibition can do for a community, and attention is frequently called to the fact that in many counties of Kansas the jails are empty.

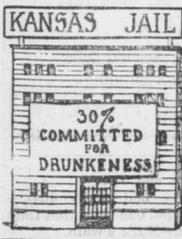


THE FALLACY of this statement is apparent when it is known that so sparsely settled is Kansas that in some counties of that State there are but two residents to the square mile—and it is comparatively easy to keep the jails empty under those circumstances. And on January 1, 1910, in Nebraska, a sister State and next-door neighbor (and Nebraska is a license State, remember), out of 91 jails, over half of them—47—were empty!



BUT, as throwing even a greater light on the situation, consider this: the Chief of Police of Topeka, Capital of Kansas, reports 2200 arrests in that city of 45,000 population during 1914—and 661 of these arrests—over 30 per cent.—were jailed for drunkenness! Yet Kansas is a Prohibition State!

ANOTHER FALLACY. In 1910 the entire State of Kansas had a population of 1,890,949. Yet the State Board of Control of Kansas, in its last report, conceded 892 prisoners in the Kansas penitentiary, and 4883 in the jails!



THE FALLACY of Prohibition is seldom easier proved than by the **FACTS** furnished by the prohibitionists!

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CHEERFULNESS.

Cheerfulness means a contented spirit; it means a pure heart; it means a loving disposition; it means humility and charity; it means a generous appreciation of others and a modest opinion of self.—Thackeray.

The Spanish Moors.

When the people of the rest of Europe were little better than barbarians the Spanish Moors were in the midst of a splendid culture. As early as the tenth century this country was the source of learning for all Europe. Their libraries, schools, arts, sciences, luxurious refinements and all round material and intellectual advancement differentiated them from the rest of Europe as clearly as ancient Greece was from the peoples that surrounded it.

How the Natives Treat Gorillas.

Natives in the countries inhabited by great apes regard them always as human beings of inferior types, and it is for this reason that for a long time it was found impossible to get hold of an entire gorilla skin, because the savages considered it religiously necessary to cut off the hands and feet of the animals when they killed them, just as they do with their enemies, possibly for the purpose of rendering them harmless in case they should by any chance come to life again.

Rescuing Napoleon by Submarine.

In his book on submarines Frederick A. Talbot tells us that the submarine is "practically as old as the sailing ship," though he passes the fact over with the statement that the majority of these efforts were fantastic in conception and crude in design.

The most daring expedition ever suggested in the early days of the submarine was that proposed for kidnapping Napoleon from St. Helena. It was suggested to a British mariner, Captain Johnson, who was to get £40,000. The construction of the boat was begun, but on the day when the work on the outer shell of copper was to be started Napoleon died.

Cats' Eyes.

As showing how widely the permanently blue eyes of cats differ from other eyes it is noted that immediately the eyes of white cats that are to have permanently blue eyes open they shine bright red in the dark, and neither the ephemeral kitten blue nor any other colored eye does this.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Take Flight.

"Riches have wings, they say." "Yes, and whenever I go after them they migrate."—Boston Transcript.

Wounds of the Heart.

In wounds of the heart itself the escape of blood is never in large quantity, and the lethal consequences are due to the fact that the escape of blood from within its cavity of cavities into the surrounding sac of the pericardium mechanically interrupts the alternate contraction and expansion by which its pumping action is maintained. Accordingly the results of the wound of the heart are usually identical with those of gradual suffocation.—Exchange.

Tell It Not in Gath.

"Tell it not in Gath" means nowadays "Keep it a secret" and is from the Old Testament. Gath was a Philistine city, but is sometimes used to mean "Judah." The reference is found in II Samuel 1, 20.

Bedouins and Water.

It is not unusual to hear a Bedouin upon reaching a camp where water is offered him refuse it with the remark, "I drank only yesterday." On the Bedouins' long marches across dry countries the size of the water skins is nicely calculated to just outlast the journey, and they rarely allow themselves to break the habit of abstinence, as this would be sure to make their next water fast all the harder. They are accustomed from infancy to regard water as precious and use it with religious economy.

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THE TWO DWARFS



WEIRD and grotesque figures, the two dwarf brothers, Alberich and Mime, deepen the legendary atmosphere of Richard Wagner's great music drama "Siegfried," which a cast of world famous artists from the Metropolitan Opera House is to give in the home grounds of the Pittsburgh Pirates, Forbes Field, Thursday evening, June 8. The performance, with a concert Saturday afternoon, June 10, by school choruses, Metropolitan stars and orchestra, constitutes the Siegfried Festival. The malicious schemers who are seeking the dragon guarded gold stolen from the Rhine maidens will be portrayed in the Pittsburgh performance by Otto Gortz (Alberich) and Albert Reiss (Mime), who have no equals in the world in the interpretation of these roles. In the smithy of Mime, after the dwarf's efforts have proved futile, the youthful Siegfried forges the sword, Nothing, with which he is to conquer the dragon and obtain the treasure. Alberich, after attempting in vain to league himself with the dragon against Siegfried, watches the victorious fight from concealment and sees, not without satisfaction, Siegfried slay Mime, when the latter, after the hero has the treasure, reveals his murderous envy.

Very Moving Pictures.
"Say, old chap, are you fond of moving pictures?"

"I should say so!"
"Then come round to our house next Tuesday and give a hand. We're moving that day."—Chicago Herald.

Not a Bad Way.
"I wonder how Ananias and Sapphira got along as a married couple. They were both liars."

"Probably they just accepted each other's little yarns and let it go at that."—Exchange.

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