

WHAT BECOMES OF THE WOMEN WHO DISAPPEAR

By J. Mabel Dilhan

"WHAT becomes of the women who disappear?" I inquired of Chief of Police John Martin when I had got together sufficient courage to beard the lion in his den.

A very tame and genial appearing lion responded to my question with a quizzical smile, and the telephone bell rang sharply. A moment of attention, and—"Yes—yes—Oh! What is your boy's name? John? Oh, George—well, he will probably be kept, yes, goodby," and hanging up the receiver, the chief again turned to me, spreading out his hands in a deprecatory fashion. "That is the way it is all day," he said. "People seem to think I am the whole thing when it comes to giving out the jobs; while, as a matter of fact, I have nothing to do with it; nothing more than—than you have. What is it you want to know? The women who disappear? Well, mostly, they don't disappear. Nine-tenths of them show up again—either return voluntarily to their homes or are easily located; their friends usually have an inkling of where they may be found."

"The hundred or more disappearances reported to the San Francisco police in the last year were not actual disappearances?" I ventured.

"By no means," replied the chief; "never more than one-tenth of them are; that is a fact which applies to all cities."

"What is the proportion of disappearances in San Francisco in comparison with other cities?" was my next question.

"It is lower. There are fewer disappearances in San Francisco than in most other cities of its size."

"Is there a special bureau to look after such cases?"

"No, because the cases are not numerous enough to warrant such a department. We run that along with the usual detective work."

"What kind of women are they who usually disappear? Who are they?"

"They are mostly women who are not in good circumstances. The women in better circumstances are surrounded by so many people, have so many amusements and interests that they have not the time to brood over troubles that women who are not so well situated find overpowering."

"Are the women who disappear generally or ever women of education who are trying to get along by themselves?"

"Not often. There is the occasional case of a cultured woman who tries to establish herself on a plane of her own and drops out of sight, allowing her friends to believe her dead while she disguises herself as effectually as possible, changes her name, place of residence, the color of her hair, etc., but such a woman is very seldom met with. It takes a woman of unusual strength of character and will power to do this."

"Do mothers disappear?"

"Very seldom. If a woman deserts her children it is usually a case of mental aberration."

"What is the average age of the disappearing ones?"

"There are more young girls than older women. A girl who deliberately runs away does not appreciate what it means to her, all that she is sacrificing, and what it will mean to her later in life, and if she runs away she does it through thoughtlessness. Many young women come from the country expecting to find work in the city, thinking the work will be easier and life gayer and pleasanter than at home and they soon learn that they have been misled. Some of these drop out of sight for one cause and another. It would be far better for them to remain at home and marry good, honest men whom they would meet in their home environment. They have practically no opportunities for meeting men who would make them good husbands in the city, where they drag their lives out in long hours behind counters or in such other hard and unremunerative work as they can find, if indeed they find any work at all to do. Then, of course, there is the stage struck girl who is lured by the bright star of ambition and thinks she is sure to achieve great wealth and fame and who, knowing she can never get the consent of her parents to take up the stage as a profession, runs away."

"Are there many disappearances due to unfortunate love affairs?"

"There are of course always a few of these."

"What about the 'white slave traffic'?"

"Are girls being kidnaped for that purpose?"

"No. The 'white slave traffic,' so called, is about as absurd as the 'third degree' about which so many would be needlessly agitating themselves. The girls who are found in questionable places are usually there of their own free will and generally assert emphatically that they are of age and can do as they like and prefer that life to as any other. That is a problem for the sociologist."

"Do women ever disappear to escape from financial embarrassment, run away from creditors?"

"Very few, indeed. A woman can usually rise to an emergency and get out of her financial-entanglements by legitimate means."

"What is the usual course of the police when a disappearance is reported?"

"An investigation is made of everything in connection with the woman; her age, dress, size, height, weight, any peculiar distinguishing marks, her disposition, tastes, who her friends are, who she goes with, her inclinations, manner of talking, anything special that she may have said, any desires that she may have expressed; in fact, of every possible detail that can be obtained. If the occasion requires, we get a photograph and print slips with the photograph on them and send them to the police authorities all over the country. We notify the different police stations and have the information read out to all the watches and instruct the policemen to take particular notice of the water front and of the shipping district, to see if any person answering the description had shipped on any outgoing steamer or has been seen on their boats."



"What becomes of the unrecovered bodies of the people who are drowned in the bay by suicide or otherwise?"

"If a body gets into the undertow and goes out through Golden Gate it is taken miles out to sea, where, with being torn by rocks and fishes and lashed by the waves, there is in a very short time no body left, which can easily account for the bodies which are not recovered."

"Are disappearance cases increasing or decreasing?"

"The cases are not proportionately more numerous than formerly. The city is larger than it was 10 years ago,

and as the population increases, the number of disappearances increases in the same proportion, as do ordinary fatalities, accidents and deaths."

"Still meditating upon the disappearance of the woman, I made my way to the park, where I encountered a policeman on duty."

"I want to talk to you," I remarked.

"In the discharge of your duty do you find that the trouble comes from the women who are prone to get away, to drop out of sight, or who are even contemplating suicide?"

"Oh, yes; often," he replied. "Whenever we see a woman who sits a long time by herself, gazing out to sea, we know that something is wrong and we keep our eyes on her. When such a woman is addressed we usually find that she is in trouble and we try to get her to get away, to drop out of sight, or who are even contemplating suicide?"

"Oh, yes; often," he replied. "Whenever we see a woman who sits a long time by herself, gazing out to sea, we know that something is wrong and we keep our eyes on her. When such a woman is addressed we usually find that she is in trouble and we try to get her to get away, to drop out of sight, or who are even contemplating suicide?"

"One girl whom I remember well was bent on suicide not long ago, and she had an altruistic view of the matter. Her death, she said, would harm no one, while if she continued to live the only life that was open to her she would bring sin, disgrace and endless trouble to countless others, men and women. She had packed her trunk, putting in it all her clothes and small treasures, and had it ready to send by express to her brother in the north, and she told me of some pretty little toys and trinkets for her brother's little son, whom she loved so well, and who would say with his baby smile, 'Aunt Emma sent me these from San Francisco,' and they would never know where Aunt Emma was. They would always be waiting for her, and thinking that some time she would return. She had formerly had stage aspirations, and they would undoubtedly think her a successful actress in some great eastern or European city. Oh, yes, that was the better way. It didn't occur to her, poor thing, that when they received her trunk they would at once know that she was dead—at least that the idea that would strike any intelligent person. What became of her finally? Oh, I talked to her for several hours and got her into a more reasonable frame of mind and she seemed to see things differently, and to feel that she might have another chance to live right. Eventually she wrote to her brother in the north and he sent her money to return home. She wrote me once afterward that she was doing well and was fairly happy."

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THE SICKROOM BOOSTER

By Charles Cristadoro

"MY father and father in law were both deacons in the church and I was a good churchman until lately, when I ran into the deacon of our church in a streetcar on the way home," said the Sickroom Booster.

"The car was crowded and I had a seat, but there were no women standing or I would not have been sitting, mark you that, when I espied Deacon over in one corner. Now, the deacon was a worldly man in business, like Rip Van Winkle, a lucky man, and given to gathering shekels all the week, and he kept it up Sunday, collecting for the Lord by passing around the plate. He was like a veritable pillar in his long face and long Prince Albert coat, holding up the respectability of the congregation."

"So, spying him, I, in no uncertain voice, said: 'Hello, Deacon——' and a demure acknowledgment came back, but very demure, for and except in a trade the deacon was a modest man. Everybody in the car looked around and toward the deacon, and the same was not a bad looking man, either."

"Now, look here, deacon, I understand that they are revising the creed and telling us how far we can believe and relieving us from believing things we have always believed, and that, deacon, is what ails me." The car was smoothly bowling along on jointless rails and I had the whole car for an

He Explains to the Deacon Why He Left the Church



audience and a very attentive one at that, as the deacon would testify. You could hear a pin drop almost.

"So now, deacon," I continued, "I have been a member of the church from my boyhood's earliest days, attending it before I arrived at the years of dis-

cretion, and early getting the church habit. In regular years, if I did not attend so regularly, I contributed freely to the funds and I felt that perhaps my money was more welcome than my presence. But I always contributed and upheld the church and had my own

with whom I have done business and got quite well—in fact, too well—acquainted with, and the only source of comfort that I could get because and an account of such dealings was the established belief in damnation for the hereafter, utter and complete, and while those men I had in my mind might to my idea miss out and dodge what they deserved in this world, they would catch damnation in the next, because the creed said so, and there was no getting away from that." And then a roar went up that made me feel that the conductor was in a mixup with a lot of lumber jacks and was trying to put them off the car en masse.

"And I finished by saying: 'Now, having taken damnation out of the creed, the last tie that bound me to the mother church, the church of my childhood as well as old age, having been ruthlessly snapped, torn asunder, broken and all my cherished hopes destroyed in one fell, revised swoop, and my good money paid in from year to year wasted, as it were, I want to serve you, deacon, with notice right now that I am through and have paid in my last dollar, and if there is any way of recovering what I have paid in I will try to do so.'

"This was too much. The deacon pushed the stop button at his back, pulled his hat well down upon his ears, made a good run, a sort of hurdle jump, for the rear of the car and left as the car came to a slowdown, amid the shouts and cheers of every occupant."

"There are some men in the church

How to Make the Best of Bad Partners at Bridge

WE have been at work for weeks preparing a monumental guide for playing bridge with bad partners. Everybody has been writing books about how to play with good partners, but no one has seen that—as there aren't any good partners in the world, all partners being more or less bad—what we really want is a work on how to understand bad partners and not on how to understand good bridge.

Instead of avoiding, as we have in the past, the bad players at the club—hiding behind screens in card-rooms and even taking sanctuary in the barber shop when we see them approaching—we now go bravely forth and shake them cordially by the hand. As a consequence of this affability on our part and of our special and kindly method of play with them, they all hope for a chance to play with us. We are known among them as the only man who appreciates "really good play," as they call it, and as a result of this they play a hundred per cent better with us than with any other man in the club.

The forthcoming work on which we have been so busily engaged and of which we have spoken is to be entitled: "Rules for Playing Bridge Whist

two or three tricks, and then looking inutterably wise and saying: "I was playing for a big thing, partner."

Rule 5. The four things that give him the keenest and most unalloyed pleasure at bridge are as follows: (a) Beginning a hand on his own deal by ruffing a lot of losing cards in his weak hand, with the trumps in his strong. (b) Leading a suit of which both his adversaries are void, thereby enabling the weaker of the two hands to ruff and the stronger to throw away a losing card. (c) Leading a queen up an ace without the jack in either hand. This probably pleases and gratifies him as much as anything in the game. (d) Playing the queen, third hand—from ace, queen and one small card—on his partner's original lead of the suit, when the king is seen not to be in the dummy. (This play he invariably calls a "finesse.")

Rule 6. Remember that he never leads trumps. If he should start to lead them show no surprise or gratification, as the lead is merely an inadvertence. He is certain to think better of it and stop the trump lead at the very next trick, as one round of trumps invariably satiates him. Remember the saying that there are thousands of men walking to dinner parties who would be riding to them in cabs if they knew enough to lead trumps at bridge.

Rule 7. If he refuses to ruff the losing cards of one of your suits, do not jump to the conclusion that he

has no trumps; on the contrary, he probably has an honor or two, but these honors look too compellingly beautiful for him to part with.

Rule 8. When he opens the three of a suit you may be sure that it is from some combination like the four and the three alone, or else from the king, queen, jack, ten, three, two.

Rule 9. When playing against the dealer, if he should lead a king, you may conclude definitely that he has not the ace. In the same way when he takes a trick with the queen he can not have the king.

Rule 10. Let him take up the tricks. It always gives him a little thrill of infantile delight.

Rule 11. Play as confusedly as you can or else he may find something in your play to base conclusions on—always a dangerous thing.

Rule 12. Remember that you are always playing against three players—your two adversaries and your partner.

Rule 13. Never expect your partner to remember any card lower than a queen. He is not an adding machine.

Rule 14. Always return his suit at the very first opportunity in a deuced trump, or he will fret and squirm himself into an alarming condition of nerves. He must have a reason for leading that suit and it will go hard with you if you don't return it. Never mind what is in your hand or in the dummy. Never, at no trumps return your best card of his suit, or he will think you have no more; overtake your card and lead another suit.

Rule 15. As he will never return your lead at no trumps it is often wiser to open a weak suit in the hope that when he gains the lead he will switch to that suit in which you are really strong. In the same way he will be certain to notice none of your discards save the last. Try to arrange your discards in such a manner that your last shall give him the information that, with another partner, you would have conveyed by your first.

Rule 16. Never explain or point out. You will only confuse him and give yourself a headache in the bargain. Simply continue to smile blandly and ecstatically, as if you were a cat being stroked under the chin.

Rule 17. Remember that he particularly enjoys making what he calls a "fat" trick, that is, a trick with two or three court cards in it. This sort of a trick always stimulates and excites him. It also goes to his head to make a trick in the trump suit at the very end of a hand. He will invariably save his trumps until the bitter end, with this unholy surprise in view,

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