



The SUITORS OF Mrs. MERRIWID

BY KENNETH
HARRIS

MELISSA WOULD LIKE TO BE CANDID HERSELF.

"You seem thoughtful this evening, Melissa," remarked Mrs. Merriwid's maternal maiden aunt Jane, looking at her niece over the rims of the spectacles that she wore in the privacy of family life.

Mrs. Merriwid stopped frowning at a far corner of the room and laughed. "I get that way about every so often, dearie," she replied. "Sometimes, oftener still. Just now I was thinking of Mr. Pikestaff. He's been making his intentions quite plain and I was trying to frame up a few well-chosen words for use when needed."

"To what effect?" inquired Aunt Jane, with interest.

"I really can't say what the effect will be," said Mrs. Merriwid. "I hope it won't shatter the windows, but Mr. Pikestaff has a theory that language was given us to express our feelings, and they tell me that some of his candid opinions are calculated to precipitate a heavy rainfall. He's a man of decided views."

"He impresses me as being very genuine," Aunt Jane observed.

"As genuine as mud pie," agreed Mrs. Merriwid. "A downright, outspoken, homespun, frank chinestone in the rough. There are no frills about Mr. Pikestaff. Nothing namby-pamby or wishy-washy. He believes in giving things their proper names—with a few qualifying adjectives thrown in. If he doesn't agree with you, he'll take the liberty of telling you so, and if you don't like it, you can do the other thing."

"I can't help thinking that sincerely is an admirable quality," Aunt Jane remarked.

"Not in a husband at least, dearie," said Mrs. Merriwid. "What married

"He may, on some occasions, act like a hog or a cur, but believe me, auntie it doesn't do any good to tell him so. You'll get better results by letting him suppose that in your estimation he's about the wisest, most generous and noble specimen of humanity that ever happened, because, as a general thing, his vanity will make him try to sustain your delusion—and that lit the old rule goes double every time. You see, dearie, a man may act like a hog and not be a hog, and a woman may act like a fool and yet have considerable sense tucked away under her puffs. Anglo-Saxon is all right when it isn't Billingsgate, but some bull-necked, big-mouthed gentlemen never seem to get wise to the distinction. If I pay twenty-five dollars for a hat, I don't want the partner of my joys and sorrows to tell me that it's a piece of silly, wanton extravagance and that I'm not fit to be trusted with money any more than a rabbit. If he lets out a long, low whistle, that's about as far as he has any right to go."

"I agree with you there," said Aunt Jane; "but surely Mr. Pikestaff has not presumed to use any language of that nature to you?"

"Not directly," replied Mrs. Merriwid. "I imagine he means to be complimentary to me. I'm a plain man, Mrs. Merriwid," he told me, "and you mustn't expect any soft soap and butter from me. I say what I mean and mean what I say, and don't believe in splitting hairs; and I tell you right out and to your face that you're a confounded smart woman, and a confounded good looking woman, and by George! You know what's what and who's who, and I don't make any bones of saying so. There ain't any two ways about it. You're smart and you're good looking, and if any mar-



"I'm a Plain Man, Mrs. Merriwid."

riage calls for its diplomacy, and diplomacy with its coat on at that. When a man gets to speaking his mind to his wife, he generally winds up by bellowing it, and then there's all kinds of trouble. Poor dear Henry Merriwid got to be perfectly sincere with me at one period of our happy life together. I remember one time I asked him what he thought of a new dress I had just put on."

"My dear," said poor Henry, "I won't attempt to deceive you. I think it's the sloppiest looking thing, the most unbecoming, botchy, skew-goed waste of material I ever saw in my life. The color makes me sick, and the trimming gives me a pain in the back of the neck. It looks as if it had been designed by a cross-eyed house painter, suffering from delirium tremens, and put together by a sailmaker's apprentice with a sore thumb. What is it—a masquerade costume?"

"What did you say?" inquired Aunt Jane.

"I said I was very sorry he didn't seem to like it because it was going to lower his bank account seventy-five dollars," replied Mrs. Merriwid. "It was the most devilishly cruel thing I could think of at the moment. But I cured poor Henry of plain speaking before it got to be very much of a habit with him."

"No," Mrs. Merriwid resumed, "I think most of your fine, rugged, bluff, straightforward men, with no shilly-shallying nonsense about them, need a plain, hearty, straightforward kicking. The trouble with them generally is that they're too big. It takes a big man to tell people the unvarnished, unsweetened truth about themselves, and get away with it. A fine, full-bodied man like Mr. Pikestaff, for example, with a collection of good, honest Anglo-Saxon language.

"I suppose there are moments in every married woman's life when she realizes that her husband's behavior is foolish," Mrs. Merriwid went on

tells me any different, I'll tell him that he's a liar. I don't smooth it over. I'm not mealy-mouthed like some folks. I mean that he's a liar and I say that he's a liar, and that's all there is about it."

"That does seem complimentary," said Aunt Jane. "But what do you think you'll say to him when he actually proposes?"

"I was considering that when you disregarded the signals and collided with my train of thought," Mrs. Merriwid answered. "I shall say, 'Mr. Pikestaff, I'm a plain, blunt woman and I'm not going to be mealy-mouthed or flinching with you. I think that you're a big, whooper-jawer, pig-headed, sty-bred aggregation of noisy bluff and bunk, and I wouldn't marry you if you were eighteen-carat gold plated and the last chance I had on earth.'"

"Oh, you wouldn't say that, my dear," remonstrated Aunt Jane.

Mrs. Merriwid sighed. "No," she admitted. "I don't suppose I would, I expect I shall tell him that I deeply appreciate the high honor that he has paid me, but I feel that I am unworthy of it and cannot consent to the sacrifice that I know he would be making if he married me, and trusting to retain his friendship and esteem, I remain—and it won't be necessary for him to remain."

"But the other is what I'd love to say," added Mrs. Merriwid, viciously. (Copyright, 1912, by W. G. Chapman.)

Odor Not Wanted.

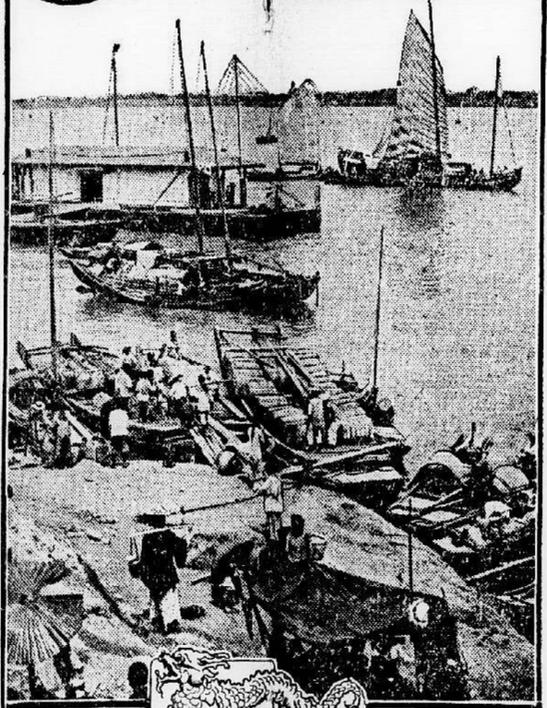
Church—They do say the atmosphere of London's subways is now made to resemble that of the seashore by blowing ozone into them.

Gotham—Now, just stop to think. Were you ever at the seashore when there was a dead whale on the beach?

Manlike Apes.

There are four species of manlike apes—the gibbon, the orang, the gorilla and the chimpanzee.

Boating On Chinese Waters



YANG-TSE RIVER SCENE

ONE may have journeyed up the Hudson; steamed down the whirlpool St. Lawrence; skiffed on the willow-lined Merrimac; excursioned along the Potomac; houseboated on the Ohio; steambotted past the levees of the Mississippi; barged at evening on the Sacramento; sailed in the Columbia; mined on the Yukon; gathered rubber along the Congo; shot big game by Zambesi's cataracts; attended a regatta on the Thames; pulled grapes on the Rhine hills; reveled in art by the Arno; been stranded in the Volga; swam the Tiber; crossed the Jordan; floated under the Nile palms; roamed in the palaces of the Junna; smelled the ghats of the Ganges and the stench of the Hooghly; hobnobbed with cannibals and eaten Dorian nuts on the Irrawaddy—all these he may have done and more, but his river reveries are incomplete unless he has sailed on Chinese waters; for like everything else in the Celestial land, its rivers are not like anything else found anywhere else in the world.

Few have had the joy of exploring the great Hoang-Ho or the Kiang; but those who know the latter put it first among their river experiences, writes Sarah G. Morrison. The Yangtse-Kiang, as most Americans call it, is the third greatest river in the world, over three thousand miles long and seventeen miles wide at its mouth at Shanghai, where the writer well remembers its yellow flood which stained the ocean for 150 miles from shore.

One may have taken the 700-mile steamer trip up to Hankow; changed for a smaller boat and three days' ride to Shasi; then houseboated for 100 miles to Chungking, where one sees the finest "hongs" on the street of the White Elephant. It is in the houseboat days that one's adventures begin and the grandeur of the Yangtse is encountered. Brown and blue and white-striped sails of many junks, with long-queued, chanting crews, dot the water between needle-spired pagodas and bold headlands. At Ichang and the river is a mass of blue-boated and yellow-decked native steamers; war junks with red standards and pennants and throbbing tom-toms.

Through Mountain Gorges.

During the next 500 miles the river rises 500 feet as it runs through the mountains of the Seven Gates and then the boat fights its way or "tracks" along over thirteen big rapids and seventy-two minor ones. Yet this region of perils is annually traversed by over seven thousand junks, the average loss being more than five hundred.

The mountain gorges being passed, and these are often 1,800 feet high, one finds himself in a rice-irrigated section, or, that impossible, sugarcane, sweet potatoes, or tea is the order. Here the persistent, peculiar Chinese lives simply, crudely and picturesquely, with no malice toward "foreign devils," a phrase never heard in these parts. Here the head man of the village, in silken gown, offers a hospitality of twenty or thirty courses from a central dish, his menu including such rare delicacies as shark's fins, cod-bladders, frog legs, bird's nests and slugs.

But it is given to more people to take the voyage from Hongkong to Canton on the Pearl river, in southern China. To begin with, Hongkong harbor is one of the finest and most fascinating in the world. From a sapphire sea thronged with fussy steam launches, cumbersome merchantmen, hundreds of junks and thousands of sampans, rises a steep slope, terrace on terrace, to 1,800 feet, while the island edge is crowded with three miles of solid stone buildings. The many-colored highways of the city are alluring with their motley array of Chinese Mohammedans, Turks, Hin-

dus, Jews, Japs, Malays, Portuguese, Europeans and Americans; but the most remarkable sight in Hongkong, or Victoria, as the city is called, is the superb view from the peak, obtained by going up part way on a very steep incline railway, thence by sedan chair. The top reached, 2,000 feet below, upon hundreds of hilly islands scattered over a blue sea everywhere we looked. The panorama was a symphony of blues.

It was evening when we left Hongkong on the "Pow An" en route for the blue city of Canton, ninety miles up the Pearl river. Twenty thousand Chinese are said to live in this harbor entirely on boats, in sampans where shrill-voiced women steer, cook, scull, raise families, drive bargains. It is a picturesque locality at night, when there are hundreds of boats drawn up side by side, their masts gently raking the air as they sway up and down, their dark sails flapping and snapping against the rigging, the straining timbers and creaking tillers adding a subtle sense of action, while the arch of each mast forms a cave of light, against which the whole family is silhouetted as they cluster about the low, round table to bolt their rice. The light of the lantern falls on a circle of yellow faces, casting strange shadows on the roof, the black background broken only by an occasional ray falling on some piece of china or brass. Always outside the circle is the woman, a weird black figure in the dark.

Guard Against Pirates.

From the hurricane deck we watched the city lights and the moon until the one dwindled to a mere line and the bleak headlands shut out the other, leaving us only a narrow, gloomy stream. Screened off from us by heavy iron bars were the natives, and firearms were stacked in conspicuous places, as protection against pirates. The better class of Chinamen sat around on chairs, or laid on mats with their little bundles huddled up beside them. The cobles occupied the lower deck, thick as blackberries in August, but they were more suggestive of rats with their long, black queues and scuttling, noiseless motions.

When I reached the deck next morning we had passed Lintin Island, famous in 1830 as a freebooter's haven, and were steaming past an old Chinese fort in the Tiger's Mouth. No sentries saluted; the guns were covered up; but the glorious yellow flag with the dragon floated above. It was here the Chinese had their "Opium Party" in 1841, when the English government tried to force them to admit opium, and the "heathen Chinese" dared to think he had a right to drive their ships out of Celestial waters.

The sun shone brightly on the muddy river that morning, and on the numerous bits of picturesque craft (some man-propelled—men walking on tread wheels); on the wide-spreading fields and shapely lochee trees; the strange-looking pagodas (fantastic, hollow towers of brick, about 300 feet high, adorned with numerous circular terraces ornamented with trees and bushes). In that silvery, hazy light no one ever thought of pirates, nor that the little yellow rolls of matting by the water's edge contained unwelcome little girls left there to die; but it was sickening enough when we churned up one as we were making our landing at Canton.

I have heard friends tell of their landing at Joppa and at Pernambuco, and I have landed at Matras when it was necessary to beat the natives over the head with strong clubs in order to get into the mesullah boats to be rowed to shore; but at Canton the river was so crowded with sampans there seemed no place to land at all, for at Canton 400,000 people live in their boats, and these are lined up from three to ten deep along shore

NORA'S BLUE EYES

One of Many Romances of the
Great Receiving Room at
Ellis Island.

By HAROLD CARTER.

Dr. Sergius O'Flanahan, stationed at his post in the great receiving room at Ellis Island, examining immigrants for trachoma, let his hands fall upon his apron and gasped. He found himself staring into a sweet face upturned twinkled with fun and then suddenly to his and into two blue eyes that clouded with sorrow.

"Nora Mulcahy!" he muttered. "Glory be! I guess there's nothing the matter with your eyes, Nora. How did you get here?"

"Whist! You're holding up the line, Sergius," said Nora. "I'll see you afterward at the place they're sending me to, unless they won't let me go there."

Then she was gone and Sergius O'Flanahan was resuming his daily prosaic task of examining eyes. He looked into several hundred pairs that morning, but none of these affected him in the least like the blue eyes of Nora Mulcahy, his former sweetheart.

"Mulcahy?" asked the official to whom he applied. He turned to his register. "That little Irish girl? They're holding her in the detention room until her man comes. He was to have met her. They won't let her in if he doesn't come."

So Sergius found her in the detention room, her eyes piteously red, her face white, her lips trembling. At the sight of him a faint smile came to her lips, and presently she was twinkling



"Nora, is it too late?" He asked softly.

with laughter again. Nora was never sad for more than a few minutes together.

"Sure, Nora, this is a bad business," said the young doctor, sitting down beside her. "I hear you're to be married."

"That I am," answered Nora, looking sideway at him.

"It's a bad business," said O'Flanahan again. "Who is it, Nora darlin'?" "You mustn't call me that, Sergius, nor squeeze my hand," said Nora primly. "I wouldn't have thought it of you, Doctor O'Flanahan."

"I'm not squeezing it, Nora; I'm just holding it," said Sergius, and, as she made no protest, he continued holding it. "Who is the lucky man?" he continued. "Is it Piggy MacShane?"

"Now do you think that I'd be after marrying MacShane?" cried Nora indignantly. "No, indeed it isn't."

"Then it's Terry MacBride; bad luck to him," cried Sergius. "I knew he'd get you, Nora, if you didn't take care. Is it MacBride?"

"No, it isn't MacBride," said Nora faintly. "And please—please don't ask me. You'd be so jealous."

"Then I know who it is for sure," said the young doctor. "It's Ellis O'Flaherty. Ellis, who always boasted that he'd get you and went to Chicago four years ago and made his pile fattening pigs."

"And what if he does fatten pigs, Sergius O'Flanahan?" exclaimed Nora indignantly. "He's worth his ten thousand dollars today, is Ellis, if he's worth a penny. Mind you," she added, "I'm not saying that it is Ellis, though."

"I know it's Ellis," answered Sergius O'Flanahan gloomily. "I knew he'd get you. He always beat me out of everything. Do you remember when he won the pig at the fair by staying on the mule when I got pitched into the mud? He was always great on pigs, Ellis was. Ah, Nora, if only you hadn't turned me down when I asked you, before I left the Old Sod to walk a lonely wanderer over the earth. Twice I asked you and each time you said no."

"Twice!" exclaimed Nora. "Why, Ellis asked me seven times before he sailed and wrote me five times afterward. Why didn't you try me again, Sergius?" she continued softly.

The young doctor edged closer to ward her. "You'd—you'd have taken me, Nora?" he whispered.

Then he saw that the tears stood in her eyes again. He clasped her in his arms, and she did not resist but lay there.

"Nora, is it too late?" he asked

softly. "We were a couple of young fools to quarrel over nothing at all, ashore. And all the years I've been in America I've been seeing your sweet face before me night and day, darlin'. And when I wrote you from Newark, when I had my last job there, I was sure you'd come out to me, but you didn't even answer me. Wouldn't you rather take a fine, rising young doctor with a government job than old Ellis O'Flaherty, with his ten thousand dollars and his pig-sticking?"

Nora was smiling up at him as she lay in his arms.

"Yes, Sergius, darling, I'd like to," she whispered. "But now—now that they've sent a telegram to the man I've come out to marry I'm afraid it's too late. He may be here any moment. And how would I look, walking off with the doctor? If only I'd known you were here. How long have you been at Ellis Island, Sergius?"

"A month last Saturday," the doctor answered. "Why?"

"O, nothing," sighed Nora.

"Nora, ashore," whispered Sergius, "it isn't too late. I think I can square the folks here. They can't hold you so long as you've got some means of support. And I can support you, Nora, yes, even if I lose my place in consequence. And I guess a woman's always privileged to change her mind."

"And what about Ellis, Sergius?" inquired Nora demurely.

"It is Ellis, then?"

"I'm not saying it's Ellis," Nora protested.

Sergius O'Flanahan snapped his fingers. "Nora," he said, "you always were a tease. If I'd had a grain of sense in the old days I'd have captured you and carried you to the priest and made you marry me before you knew what I was doing to you. But it isn't too late yet. And as for Ellis, a man who lets a chance like you slip through his fingers isn't worth the having. Now I've got you and I'm going to keep you. Come along and see the commissioner."

He led her out of the detention room, along the corridor, and up the stairs to the room in which the offices of the commissioner are situated. He paused at the door.

"I'd like to see you a minute, sir," he called.

"Come in, O'Flanahan," the commissioner answered. "Let the lady come in. By the way, here's a telegram just come for you. I held it here, knowing you'd be up for the board meeting. You'd better open it."

The doctor tore open the envelope and pulled out the missive inside. He read:

"Yes, Sergius, Nora." It had been re-sent from Newark. And the place of dispatch was Ellis Island.

Nora was looking over his shoulder. Now, as he began to understand, she snatched the telegram out of his hands.

"Don't you understand, you stupid?" she whispered. "It was you, I sent it to you at Newark when I landed here. It's you, you, you, you, and not Ellis O'Flaherty at all."

A sound behind them made them start. The commissioner, with his back turned, was coughing exceedingly loudly.

"I beg your pardon, doctor," he said, turning round. "What was it that you wanted to see me about?"

(Copyright, 1912, by W. G. Chapman.)

JUDGE WILLING TO PLEASE

Protesting Prisoner Escaped With Light Sentence After He Had Put Up an Argument.

Judges were very considerate in the old days. Lord Brampton, in his "Reminiscences," relates a story illustrating this:

Baron Martin, a famous English jurist of the old school, whose native idleness and sense of fun often placed him at the mercy of the very men he was trying, was once about to sentence an old offender charged with a petty theft.

"Look," said the baron, with an assumption of severity; "I hardly know what to do, but you can take six months."

"I can't take that, my lord; it's too much," said the prisoner, respectfully but firmly. "I can't take it. Your lordship sees I didn't steal very much, after all."

The baron indulged in one of his low, chuckling laughs before replying:

"Well, that's very true; ye didn't steal much," he said. "Well, then, ye can take four months. Will that do—four months?"

"Nay, my lord, but I can't take that, either," was the reply.

"Then tak' three."

"That's nearer the mark, my lord," the prisoner said, approvingly. "But I'd rather you made it two, if you will be so kind."

"Verra well, then, tak' two," said the judge, with the air of one who is pleased to have done the right thing at last. "And mind, don't come again. If you do I'll give yer—well, it all depends!"

Forty and a Bittock.

The novelist, Barrie, has given a new phrase, a Scottish phrase which may be adopted into the English language. It is to take the place of the awkwardly polite terms of "a woman of uncertain age," or "on the wrong side of forty," or "of years of discretion." His phrase is "forty and a bittock." A "bittock" is Scotch for a bit more or a short distance. It may mean five years or twenty years. In the case of Madame Yale, Lillian Russell or that woman of imperishable youth, Sarah Bernhardt, it might mean even more years beyond forty.