

A Good Story



The Transition of Constance.

BY E. RAY LOUNSBURG.

"Yes, it will be quite the match of the season! Let me congratulate you, Miss Blake," making an elaborate courtesy, showing a flash of dazzling teeth and a fleeting dip of dimples as she smiled at the pretty reflection in the tall, silver-framed mirror that hung in the innermost recess of her maiden sanctum sanctorum.

"It is quite true," she went on, still speaking softly to the dainty young person before her, "that Corson would never have proposed if I had not compelled him, but no one knows but you and me," nodding sagely to the now sober little face in the glass—"not even Corson himself."

"A dear stupid fellow," she went on, with something like a pout of the resolute lips, "but oh!" clasping her hands and admiring tentatively the whole her latest acquisition, a hoop of fire-flashing brilliants, "but oh! of such good old stock, and with lots of 'spendthrift' too."

"Ugh! you vulgar girl! Will you never cease to talk slang, I wonder," shaking a slender forefinger admonishingly.

"Dear old Gaardy! How very solemn he said it—'Connie child—are you sure you love this young man?' and I said, 'Sure, Gaardy'—'Then the question is already settled,' he answered."

"Good old Gaardy! He looks ill. Maybe that was the reason he sent me away without another word."

"I think my conscience did give just the very slightest twinge, though, when I answered him, and then my good sense came to my rescue. I just gave myself a shake, and said: 'Connie Blake! behave yourself! Isn't Corson Weyland passably looking, as young men go? Isn't he rich? Isn't he from one of the very first families? Isn't he fond of you? Pray don't begin to talk any absurd nonsense. Of course you love him!'"

"He isn't so nice as Don, to be sure, but dear old Gaardy! there are none that are like him."

"Well, it is late," stretching her arms above her head and making a distracting little moue at the face gazing earnestly at her from the glass, "and my list for tomorrow is a fearfully long one; so good-night. And on the whole," nodding her head in a sage little fashion, "I think you a very sensible sort of young person."

Below stairs, in his own particular den, Donald Orton sat crouching over a fire, and although the nights were not yet cold, he shivered. Gaspingly he pressed one hand over his heart, and with an inarticulate cry sank back in his chair. Slowly, very slowly, the color flowed back to his bloodless lips, and the man straightened himself.

"These attacks have not troubled me for a long while now," he murmured. "Well, maybe it is best they should come now and end it all. My occupation in life will be gone when I lose her—my wee white blossom! It had like to have unmaned me tonight. She must never know the effort it cost me."

"An old fellow like me seems quite a patriarch to her, no doubt. Thirty-nine and nineteen. No—she must never know of that wild impulse, that insatiate longing to take her in my arms and claim her mine, all mine!—by right of long years of love and watchfulness and care. To the child I have been a father—nothing more—oh God! nothing more!"

Leaning lazily over the side of the "Eurydice," her white sails billowing above his head, and looking far out to where

"The great slides of the tumbling bay
Swing glittering in the golden day,
Swing glittering to and fro,"

Corson Weyland communed with himself.

"By Jove! wonder how I came to do it! Always thought it would be a

hard thing to do—propose to a pretty girl. It just sort of slipped out; she had accepted me and it was all over before I realized it.

"Sober sort of duffer—that Orton—good sort of chap too, I guess—settled the whole business for me in a dozen words, without making things awkward, either."

"Well, the Mater will be satisfied now. I will settle down, and the best thing I can do, too."

"She's a dear little girl, pretty as a picture and quite exceptionable; even the Mater will acknowledge that."

"Heigh-ho! I'll go home now—tell the glad tidings and be rejoiced over accordingly."

Connie, in her bridal robes of heavy ivory satin, stood again before the tall, silver-framed mirror in her dressing room. Around her stood her maids, picturesque in Nile and heliotrope, azure and rose, great picture hats and long gloves of black making sharp contrast with the dainty gowns.

Since nine of the clock Connie had been in the hands of her dressers. The dainty filberts of nails were polished and pink, the refractory curling locks were piled high on the proudly poised little head. Everything was in readiness but the filmy veil, and it was as yet only eleven by the clock.

Connie glanced uneasily at the tiny silver timepiece, and then gave a sigh of relief.

"One whole hour yet," she murmured. Then turning to her attendants: "I shall not have the veil arranged till the last minute. Baxter, tell Mr. Horton I would like to see him in my boudoir." Then: "Dear girls," to the admiring group in their dainty gowns, "you look lovely. I am glad I insisted upon that color scheme; it is certainly picturesque. Now leave me. Go and see the rooms. Baxter says the florists are gone."

Left alone, Connie still stood before the glass. It was a troubled and a pale little face that looked back at her today. Overwhelmed for weeks with trosses and what not, it had not been till the very last night of her girlhood that she began to feel, as she tossed restless and wide-eyed, the gravity of the step before her.

Oh for a reassuring mother-love to enfold her in soothing arms and quiet her fears! It was the first time she had ever missed a mother's care. Don had been so good to her, so good through all the years; he had been father, mother, brother, friend. Life without Don was a something she had never faced before. And only last night he had talked of a long journey—had spoken vaguely of Abyssinia and Afghanistan and Ashante.

She stood looking at her reflection in the mirror, feeling strangely alone in the great, empty world. A wild longing for comfort seized the girl and unnerved her. A well-known step in the outer room caused her to turn swiftly and more forward. With outstretched hands and pleading, troubled eyes, she half sobbed as she went:

"Oh Don! Don! take me in your arms and comfort me as you used to when I was only your little 'Blossom,' for I am afraid—afraid!"

"Connie! Blossom! my darling! my darling wee girlie! You are mine—by every right of God and man! You are mine and not this other man! I claim you! by my overpowering consuming love!" he exclaimed, raining all the while passionate lover's kisses on eyes and lips, on hair and cheek and chin.

"Oh Don! Don!" she cried, a flood of joy overspreading brow and neck.

But the man, loosing his hold of her, pushed her roughly from him, and raising his hands in a bewildered way to his head cried:

"My God! my God! what have I done! Then throwing himself on his knees, prostrating himself before her, wringing his helpless hands he sobbed:

"Forgive me! Forgive me! Forgive me!"

Her woman's wit came quickly to her rescue and she grew quiet. She was very white, but the hand she laid on the man's shoulder was firm.

"I have been wicked—wicked! But I did not know—I could not guess! See, my Don—you are always good and kind and brave. We must be brave now, you and I."

They had changed places—these two. It was the man who needed comfort most. A moment before it

was a child who cried out for sympathy—now it was a woman who sympathized, so quickly does one pass the Rubicon that lies just beyond girlhood.

There was a low murmur of admiration as the bride, leaning on the arm of her guardian, passed slowly up the aisle of the flower-embowered church.

Little Mrs. Gossip could not resist saying to her friend as she gazed:

"Aren't they a handsome couple! He is quite the handsomest man in the city, and they say he worships the ground she walks on. I shouldn't wonder if it were true, too, for he looks like a ghost, and she is white enough too, for that matter."

"Dear! dear! that was an unlucky speech. 'Like a ghost' I said, and at a wedding, too!"

The last triumphant note of the organ swelled out on the perfumed air and ceased. The bishop's sonorous voice rolled forth in the words of the old solemn service: "Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and in the face of this congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony." On and on, and at last to the old question: "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"

Donald Orton, stopping back after the presentation, was seen to stagger and press one hand quickly over his heart.

There was a stir far down the aisle, the swift approach of quiet feet, a shuffling noise for a minute or two as some persons went towards the vestry, but the bishop's voice rolled on and the group at the altar stirred not.

When the last sonorous "Amen" sounded, a buzz of excited talk and the pealing chime of bells sounded through the building. Attention was divided between the procession winding down the aisle and the closed door of the vestry.

The bridal group passed, but the crowd waited, talking excitedly the while. Quickly the word passed from lip to lip:

"Dead! how shocking! Heart disease, the doctors say. Oh, poor Constance! Poor little bride!"

Clad in the simplest of white breakfast gowns, Constance stepped from her dressing room for the second time that day, holding out pleading hands for sympathy to the man before her.

"Dear little wife, let me comfort you," said Corson, touched to the depths of his simple nature by the solemn service and more solemn after-scene.

For a few moments she stood still, her head on his shoulder; then, looking earnestly in his face: "I will be a good wife to you, Corson. God will help me, and indeed I will try hard."

"Yes, yes, darling. A far better wife than a useless fellow like me deserves," he said, feeling vaguely a something above and beyond him in the tense quiet of her voice.

And so to earth's long list was added one more of those dear uncanonized saints, who, dropping self-ease and inclination, take up their threads of duty and, one by one, weave them faithfully into life's warp and woof, that the completed web, beyond the veil, may shine with the light of the Throne.

And so standing, her husband's arm around her, her vacant eyes seeing only the things of the far future, from somewhere, the depths of her innermost consciousness mayhap, Constance heard a voice, and the voice said:

"There be harder things in life than burying our dead; there be greater strifes in living than in dying; but for him who overcometh there awaiteth a crown of victory."—The New Bohemian.

The Market Value of Cast-Out Teeth.

I wonder whether all my readers know the value of old artificial teeth when they contain gold in any quantity. If they do not, I should advise them to get good advice on the subject before selling, for there is an enormous demand for such articles in the advertisement columns of the papers, and I suspect that a good deal of swindling is done in the trade. There is one advertisement in which these who have teeth for sale are recommended to apply to a manufacturing dentist rather than to a wardrobe buyer. A lady responded to this advertisement the other day, and got an offer of £1 for her set, but being dissatisfied with the offer, she took the goods to a pawnbroker, who at once offered her £2 14 shillings for them. If, therefore, a manufacturing dentist is a better purchaser than an old clothes merchant, a pawnbroker would seem to have the advantage of both.—London Truth.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

London and Liverpool are both at the level of the sea.

It is said that bees can fly 20 percent faster than pigeons.

A laboratory for the examination of patients by the Roentgen rays has been established in Berlin under Professor Baku, of the Polytechnicum.

Recent Austrian observations in the Mediterranean sea proves that the deepest spot in that body of water is 2,496 fathoms, or nearly three miles.

The Rio News says that Dr. Pinto Portella claims that he has obtained favorable results from the employment of tincture of eucalyptus in yellow fever cases.

The healthiest place in Germany seems to be St. Anton, near the Arlberg. It is a village of 500 inhabitants, in which there has been no death since May 5, 1895.

A royal commission has been appointed in England to inquire into the administrative procedures available for controlling danger to man through the use as food of the meat or milk of tuberculous animals.

An electric umpire has been devised to determine hits in fencing. When the foil strikes the opponent's jacket it makes a bell ring, and the place hit is distinguished by the difference in sound of electric bells.

The medical department of the War Office of the British government considers that the Roentgen rays are so practical that two sets of Roentgen ray apparatus have been sent up the Nile to be used by the army surgeons in locating bullets in soldiers and to determine the extent of fractures.

On St. Kilda's Island, which lies in the Atlantic eighty-two miles west of the main island of the Hebrides, a house belonging to the stone age has been discovered, with a number of stone weapons, hammers, and axes. There are only seventy-one inhabitants on the island, which is 4,000 acres in extent. The minister is at the same time the doctor and the school teacher. He sails to the mainland once a year to shop for the whole island.

A City Beneath the Water.

It is a fact well known to the geologists and the geographical sharps that the whole crust of the earth is in a state of constant agitation, changing its level first in one place and then in another. In some places this change sinks whole leagues of coast line, and in others it causes immense islands to rise above the ocean's surface.

One curious result of some old-time sinking of a portion of a continent may be seen in the Arabian Sea, not far from the mouth of the Indus. At that place it is well known that a drowned city lies at the bottom of the sea. When the waters are clear the great stone houses and the peaks and minarets of temples may be plainly seen only a few fathoms beneath the surface. No one knows when the city sunk, there not being even so much as a tradition of the awful calamity of that vicinity.—St. Louis Republic.

A Bottle Post.

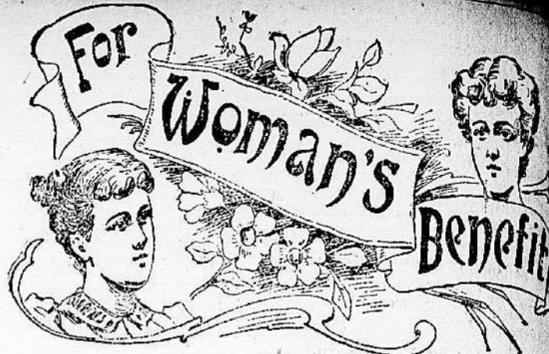
The inhabitants of the small group of islands south of Iceland possess a very curious means of communication in their so-called "bottle" post. When the wind blows from the south and one of the islanders wishes to communicate with the mainland he puts his letters into a well-corked bottle, and to insure its delivery, he incloses at the same time a plug of twist tobacco or a cigar. The wind speedily impels the bottle to the shore where people are usually on the lookout, who are willing to deliver the contents of the bottle in return for the inclosed remuneration.

Sleeping Bees.

At a recent meeting of the Entomological Society of Washington, a description was given of the sleeping habits of two species of bees in southwestern Texas. Certain small dead bushes are selected by the bees as sleeping quarters. The sleeping insects grasp the thin twigs and thorns of the bushes with all six of their legs, and according to the reader of the communication describing them, Mr. Schwarz, they obtain additional security against falling off by inserting the tip of their widely separated mandibles firmly into the wood.

Presence of Mind.

Minnie—Did you hear of Mand Edith's wonderful presence of mind? Mamie—Dear me, no. What was the occasion? "Why, when her wheel began to run away down hill she pulled back on the handle bars and screamed 'whoa' as loud as she could."—Indianapolis Journal.



BLIND WOMAN LAWYER.

Miss Christine Blanche Labarraque, a blind girl, who has been a study for the educators at Berkeley College, California, is going to be a lawyer. She will be the first blind girl lawyer in that State, and her determination to take up the profession of law has led to much discussion among those that have assisted in her college course. The young lady has had a remarkable career, and has been the subject of much comment because of her great learning.

THE NEWEST SUNSHADE.

The latest Parisian sunshades are small. It is suggested that at the present rate of decrease we shall soon be using the tiny silk and lace togs of our grandmothers. Those most popular at the present, however, are of rational size. A recent novelty is white, with flowers printed on its surface, such as convolvuli, poppies and the like, used with a handle whose color harmonizes with the flower and a knot incrustated with precious stones.—New York Journal.

QUEENS AS MOTHERS.

The Queen of Spain looks upon the personal training of the young King as part of the business of a sovereign, and has rarely, since her widowhood, been absent from him for a single day. The Queen Regent of Holland has educated her daughter almost in solitude—a state of things which, it is rumored, the little Queen Wilhelmina promises herself one day to alter. The Empress of Germany is an equally devoted mother, and would possibly take a more active part in the destinies of her little sons if her somewhat autocratic consort permitted her to.

"MURDER HATS."

A correspondent of the London Chronicle thus relieves her mind, that paper printing the letter with the above heading:

Sir: Mr. Boskin tells us that the real meaning of the term "vulgar" is callousness, indifference to the feelings of others; and Cardinal Newman's famous description of a gentleman is summed up in the sentence, "One who never unnecessarily inflicts pain." According to these authorities, then, I think the wearing of the poor heron's plumes may justly be described as a vulgar fashion, and one unsuited to a lady. Yours faithfully, A LADY.

SHE DESIGNS PAPER DOLLS.

The paper doll seems an insignificant article of trade, but its designing is not altogether unimportant branch of art. One of the firms which is responsible for the brilliant-looking dandies who inhabit "play" houses in all well regulated nurseries has for its chief designer a young girl of sixteen—Marguerite Macdonald. When she was only thirteen the little girl began her career as a seller of designs, although for years before she had delighted her own circle of acquaintances with her handiwork. She is the daughter of a naval officer, and lives in Washington. She has received no instruction whatever beyond that afforded by the public schools, but her talent is so marked that she expects some day to be as successful in "regular" art as she now is in its toy department.

THE "BIKE BOUQUET."

Two pretty new fashions have appeared recently, adding much to the brightness of our public gatherings. One is the adoption of white cycling habits by lady riders. They are beautifully cut, having the skirt a trifle fuller than the old riding habit, and the natty little coat finished by a pale-colored tie, which matches the ribbon on the white sailor hat. Thus attired, a pretty girl looks her very best. It is now the correct thing to carry a big posy of flowers fastened to the front of the bicycle, near the handle-bar. One damsel will have roses, white, red, pink or yellow; another cornflowers, another pinks, and so on. What a brilliant opportunity for devoted swains desirous of paying delicate yet not too obtrusive attentions! The

"bike bouquet" ought to have a distinguished reign.—New York Advertiser.

SHE RUNS A SAWMILL.

A woman runs a sawmill in Maine and the Lewiston Journal thus describes her: She doesn't run her mill at arm's length or in a diletto fashion. No; Miss Clara M. Stinson of Houlton not only has had the practical experience in making boards, planks and shingles, but she applies and there are few mills in Maine where the employees are scrutinized more carefully by the proprietor at the busy, screaming mill at Mendon, Aroostook county, Me. Miss Stinson is a firm believer in the theory that any woman ought to do what she can do well, and make money by doing. She is a sawmill owner choice.

"Now, I could make a living dress-making," said she, as we were in her cosy Houlton library the other day. "I know that the hats I trim wouldn't have any sale, and an artist I would have a struggle to bread and butter. But when we come to shingles and handling a crew of men, I claim, without egotism, I think I should have left the trade."

Shingle making comes to Miss Stinson as a natural heritage. Her father was a lumber manufacturer. He died some years ago his daughter took up the business where he left and since then has handled that along with other speculative operations with such energy and judgment that she now is replete with the solid manufacturers of the town.

Her lumber and shingles have earned a reputation in the market, but the plucky little woman has many discouragements at first. She went away to Worcester, Mass. a few years ago, dealers, she says, afraid of her. They couldn't understand the situation. The idea of a woman operating a shingle-making establishment evidently inspired with as much apprehension as she had come with a proposition to cut their hair and trim their wigs. "But she had samples and knew how to talk plainly, direct and eminently business-like," said, "No, you don't know, and I don't know you either, you're buying shingles and I'm selling them. I back my shingles, I'm Houlton, Me., but I haven't any experience. I won't ask any one for creences and I don't think they owe me much. But my shingles are what I say they are, and I want them to be so on the word of a woman with a desire to develop a business and make an honest dollar. Do you want to purchase?"

The dealer with whom she had looked at the alert woman from Lewiston, Me., and said that he believed in her. He bought, and has been patron ever since. Her market comes to her. Occasionally she makes a trip to the big cities when prices do not suit her, and she never fails to stir the dealers up to an appreciation of the quality of her goods.

FASHION NOTES.

Skirts made in seven gures are popular. Side-combs are as stylish as ever, but are not so conspicuously worn as formerly. Stockings with small pockets on the outer side, just above the knee, are shown in the shops. Black etamine made up over a brilliant colored silk produces a handsome frock for matrons, either young or old. The fienn needs the touch of a tist quite as much as the veil, and folds must be arranged gracefully, the ends coquettishly twisted and fastened with fancy pins to make a case of this pretty article of dress.

For house gowns the princess is supreme in favor. The big bodice dressmakers are turning out patterns after costume on this pattern, shades of gray are eagerly sought, the slate, the gris ardoise, the French consins have it, is perhaps most popular.

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