

# Oh What a Joke on the Diplomats!



"Messenger boys arrived in droves with invitations for the captivating 'Miss Desmond'."

## "Run Along, Sonny," Said They to Pink-Cheeked Young Gardiner Bell at Smart Washington Receptions--And His Revenge When He Made Up as

## "Beautiful, Rich Miss Desmond."

**"D**ONNER UND BLITZEN!" growled the 33d Acting Second Secretary of the German Embassy at Washington.

"Corpi di Bacco!" shouted the 14th Military Attache of the Italian Embassy.

"Caramba!" blurted the 9th Acting Naval Attache of the Spanish Legation.

The 33d Acting Second Secretary brought his fist down on his desk. "Vot fast! Shall dot cub--dot pink-faced boy--dot Gardiner Bell, vich should be vearing dose bettoga all der time yet, shall he escape? Nein!"

"Wen I catch-a him he get-a da colt-elato. I stick-a him in-a da rib!" And the mustache of the Italian Acting Military Attache bristled fiercely.

"Por Senor Gardiner Bell, wen he grow up an' he no longer muchacho, I shall be ready wix sis." And the Acting Spanish Naval Attache, handling an imaginary foil, made a neat thrust in carte.

"Host!" I say," remarked the Third Secretary of the British Embassy, "vot dot mean to say that all three of you proposed marriage to this boy in girl's clothes?"

"Vot!" It is one affaire for our German confere," said the Second Secretary of the French Embassy, with a mischievous glance at the wrathful German Acting Second Secretary, who blushed furiously.

"An' w'ile he avengs his own honor he will also punish Monseieur Gardiner Bell for one violation of se law of his country, which say no man shall appear in public as a woman. N'est-ce-pas?"

But young Gardiner Bell, having had great revenge upon a score of diplomatists in Washington society, who had persisted through two seasons in putting him on the head and telling him to run home to his mother, had escaped from the scene of his record-breaking escapade, not to return for many moons.

Gardiner Bell is the son of Charles J. Bell, millionaire lawyer and banker, of Washington, D. C., and nephew of Alexander Graham Bell, of telephone fame and fortune. The two girls who aided him in his revenge were his sister Grace, now Mrs. Granville Fortesque, and Miss Mary Chew, his boyhood girl chum, who was later to elope with and marry her fellow conspirator.

Even three years ago, when these three principals in the affair were unconsciously preparing for it, they were familiar figures in Washington society. Gardiner Bell when in "prep" school, being specially trained to enter the diplomatic service, developed a talent for ventriloquism.

As he was slender, with regular, finely chiseled features and a beautiful complexion, this talent enabled him to amuse his sister and Miss Mary Chew with girl impersonations. Coached and trained by them he learned all the secrets of passing with his youthful aspect generally, he was not taken any too seriously by well-named diplomats. Once, after a peculiarly trying occasion, he remarked to his sister:

"Grace, I've got to get even with those fellows somehow. I'm tired of being pulled on the head and told to 'run along, sonny.'"

That speech was the little seed from which the whole conspiracy sprang. Miss Grace quoted it to Miss Mary Chew. Both were full of sympathy for Gardiner. They put their heads together.

"It's a shame the way they treat the poor boy," said Miss Mary. "He's told about it. The worst offender is that pompous German acting second secretary. I would love to see that big Dutchman taken down a peg."

"As I'm not out yet, of course I don't know any of them," said Sister Grace. "But I've heard Gardiner railing at some sort of Spanish Acting Naval Attache, who makes himself especially offensive."

"That's true, too," assented Miss Mary. "But, next to the pompous German, poor Gardiner finds the attitude of the Italian Acting Naval Attache hardest to put up with. Of course he can't do a thing--the poor boy!"

"I've heard that the big German is a great ladies' man," mused Sister Grace. "They say he makes violent love to every pretty girl who happens to be an heiress."

"It's the same with all of them," said Miss Mary.

And then she gave a little shriek of delight.

"I have it, Grace! They shall meet our charming young heiress, 'Miss Mabel Desmond.'"

"Splendid!" exclaimed Sister Grace, clapping her hands. "They shall meet 'Miss Desmond,' and fall in love with 'Miss Desmond,' and propose to 'Miss Desmond.' Gardiner can do it as easy as anything. Oh, won't that be getting even!"

"We'll have to 'personally conduct' him," said Miss Mary thoughtfully, "engineer him through the boulevards and ladies' dressing rooms, and all that."

"Yes," admitted Sister Grace, "and we can't let a single

soul into our secret. Wait, I'll run and bring Gardiner, and we'll plan our campaign."

At first the prospect alarmed him. But on the girls' promise of absolute secrecy, and of their constant guidance among the obvious pitfalls of a man masquerading as a woman, he consented, entering into the conspiracy with enthusiasm.

It was Sister Grace who superintended the costume and toilet department. To pretty Mary Chew fell the task of coaching Gardiner in all those nuances of ingenueness and coquetry which belong to the technique of a debutante.

Truth to tell, Gardiner would have liked to prolong indefinitely that part of the coaching process designed to bring his diplomat-tormentors to their knees before the charming young heiress, "Miss Desmond." Several times when pretty, blonde Mary Chew, playing the amorous diplomat's part, threw herself on her knees to him, begging "Miss Desmond"

Miss Mary Chew, Now Mrs. Gardiner Bell.



"The Spanish Acting Naval Attache Snatched Off 'Miss Desmond's' Artistic Wig."

to be her, Gardiner accepted on the mustache. Again the big German was spot, raised and took her to his bosom. Indeed, those scenes grew very palatable for both, as the sequel was to show. But Miss Chew persisted, and presently both girls declared "Miss Desmond" perfect in her part. All that now lacked was an auspicious social occasion at which to "bring her out."

After many anxious conferences between the three conspirators, it was agreed that "Twin Oaks," the beautiful country place of the Bells, should be the scene of "Miss Desmond's" social debut, and at the coming-out party of Sister Grace, and the details were arranged accordingly. As the flower of the diplomatic corps was sure to be present, Gardiner Bell would have an opportunity to look for revenge while introducing "Miss Desmond" to Washington society.

The great occasion arrived. More than three hundred guests were present, all members of the Capital's smartest sets. They were received by Miss Bell, standing beside her father. According to the conspirators' programme, however, there were two of the most charming guests who did not have to run the gauntlet of the receiving line. These were Miss Mary Chew and her "old school chum," "Miss Mabel Desmond." They watched the others assembling in the great hall room between slightly parted curtains at one end.

As may be imagined, Gardiner Bell had provided his father with a satisfactory excuse for his son's absence. Hearing the name, the German Acting Second Secretary, whose front elevation, as an architect would say, was spangled with decorations, was heard to remark:

"A good thing also. Dis is no place for boys."

At length, while "The Blue Danube" was stirring the dancers into activity, Miss Chew and her lovely, slender, brunette friend, "Miss Desmond," quietly appeared among them.

Instant stampede of guided youth to claim "Miss Desmond" for the next waltz. The spy Italian Acting Military Attache "landed" first--while the ponderous German Acting Second Secretary gnawed his

cut out by the agile Spanish Acting Naval Attache--but so fiercely did the German confere glare at him that the joy in the waits of whispering soft nothings in "Miss Desmond's" coral ear was much marred. Still "Miss Desmond" felt "she" was doing pretty well. During an interval she whispered to Mary Chew's ear:

"The Italian and the Spaniard are both mine, as soon as they get a chance to propose."

Swearing destruction to any man who stood in his way, the big German finally captured "Miss Desmond" for the latter, and after that carried her off boldly to supper, where he overwhelmed her with attentions. Moreover, he was able to segregate the charming debutante for two minutes behind a palm, where "Miss Desmond" had a chance to practice what Mary Chew had so carefully taught "her."

"You haf der peauty, 'Miss Desmond,' of der early Pysandine Brinessees. Your gomblexion iss softer as dot vot comes from der preeses mit der Rittas vers I haf mine ausserdral gastic yet."

"Oh, I would so love to own a real German castle," sighed "Miss Desmond." "Noddings--noddings else vould pe a proper seddings for your peauty," said the German Acting Secretary, pressing "her" hand.

"Alas!" sighed "Miss Desmond," while her long lashes brushed her cheeks, "er such joy can ever be mine. For girls who have beauty enjoy such an unfair advantage. They know that they are loved for themselves alone. How often have I lamented that I am an heiress!"

"Oxguse me, 'Miss Desmond,'" began the German in tender tones.

And just then Mary Chew, fearful of too much precipitation, tore her friend from the German's side and guarded her close during the remainder of the evening--while the German Acting Second Secretary, the Italian Acting Military Attache and the Spanish Acting Naval Attache devoured "her" with their eyes while glaring fiercely at each other.

The very next day, while Gardiner Bell was exacting another pleasant but quite unnecessary lesson from Miss Mary Chew, the big German drove up to the Chew mansion with an immense bouquet which he desired to personally present to Miss Chew's charming friend, "Miss Desmond."

It was Gardiner who grasped the opportunity to coldly inform the German Acting Second Secretary that Miss Desmond had just departed for her Northern home--adding maliciously:

"Miss Desmond" expects to return later in the season."

Other enamored diplomatists wasted no time. Messenger boys arrived in droves with invitations for the captivating "Miss Desmond."

Young Gardiner Bell was now so enamored of his role of an irresistible debutante that, with the connivance of Sister Grace and Miss Chew, "Miss Desmond" got into the habit of turning up in Washington quite unexpectedly. During that season and the following one "she" quite established herself in Washington boulevards and as a centre of attraction at important social occasions.

"She" skillfully played the German, the Italian and the Spanish diplomat against each other until they grew lean and gaunt from hope deferred and from jealousy of each other.

It was at the Bachelors' Cotillon of a year ago last Christmas that "Miss Desmond" forced the denouement of the comedy. As usual, Miss Chew was "her" inseparable companion. It was after supper that the German Acting Second Secretary found his opportunity.

His protestations were most passionate, his proposal absolute and unreserved. Miss Chew, at some distance, half hidden, knew that Gardiner's revenge was complete. The next instant she was horrified to hear "Miss Desmond" give vent to a peal of manly laughter. It was Gardiner's own intensely marred "ha, ha, ha, ha," she saw the startled German give one look into the eyes of "Miss Desmond" and then turn and flee from "her" as from the plague.

Another account has it that several suspicious bachelors rushed upon the scene, and the Spanish Acting Naval Attache snatched off "Miss Desmond's" artistic brunette wig.

Mary Chew lost not a minute in getting herself and hurrying "her" away in a taxicab. So deftly was the thing done that few besides the three diplomat suitors were the wiser.

Gardiner Bell, as related, made himself scarce in Washington after that for a whole year. You already know how he and Mary Chew planned an elopement, which was frustrated by her parents carrying her off, weeping, to Europe; and how, quite recently, they escaped surveillance, went to Baltimore, and were married at Old St. Paul's by the Rev. E. S. Neires, to be forgiven by their respective parents, though young Gardiner had not yet achieved his first diplomatic appointment.

Let us should consider this published account of "Miss Desmond's" exploit indiscreet--though admitted by both Sister Grace and the new Mrs. Gardiner Bell--It is explained that the three duped diplomatists are no longer in Washington, and bloodthirsty, having been promoted by their respective Governments to more responsible posts at other capitals.

"It was Sister Grace who superintended the costume and toilet department."



Old St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, Where Miss Mary Chew and Gardiner Bell Were Married.