

## A Decision ... Of Fate.

(Original.)  
"It is useless for you to press me. Kenneth, I cannot be your wife."  
"Why not?"  
"Mother, I cannot leave her alone. Old age is coming upon her; she would suffer untold misery."  
"She can live with us."  
"Kenneth, do you know what would be in store for us—for you—under such circumstances?"  
"What?"  
"You don't know women. Mother has been head of her house all her life. She would regulate ours."  
"I don't mind who keeps house."  
"I do—that is, if I have one of my own. I prefer to keep it myself. But there are other considerations. Mother requires a very high temperature. You, I know, like a cool house. When you came home to a hot one you would throw open all the doors and windows. Mother would retire to her room and stay there all the evening. She would wish to have me with her. I would remain with you. She would call me. I would say: 'No, mother; you have had me with you all day. My husband needs me now.' To which she would reply: 'I shall not live the night through. Goodby. I die of cruelty.' Then you would say: 'Go to her. Tomorrow we shall be free.' I would go, but we would not be free tomorrow or the next day or the next."  
"You mean that in time she would be free; we would do the dying?"  
"No; we would drag out a miserable existence."  
"The picture interests me. Go on."  
"Then occasionally we would have a little misunderstanding."  
"Never."  
"Yes, we would. All married people do. Mother would be aware of it. She would take my part and would treat you like a criminal. That would make you furious, and we would be forever making up. Then she would be constantly discovering that you had no respect for the hardships I was enduring. She would consider you a model of selfishness and treat as such."  
"Any more of it?"  
"Yes; you would soon lose your equanimity and treat her harshly. That would stab me to the quick and would

only irritate her the more against you."  
"Go on."  
"Occasionally we would wish to go out to a theater or to visit our friends. Mother would make such a fuss about being left alone that we would have to give up such pleasures. Then you might wish to go on a journey and take me with you. I couldn't leave mother. Then you would begin to curse and to swear and wish her at the bottom of a bottomless pit or in the hottest of a fiery furnace. It would be terrible."  
There was a long pause. Presently he said, but with a faint heart: "I love you so well, sweetheart, that I would rather stand all this than give you up."  
She wavered and at last said: "Let fate decide for us. Do you see those two volumes in the library in red morocco? Well, tomorrow morning when you come downstairs there will be a 'Yes' in one volume and a 'No' in the other. Choose one. We will abide by the result of your choice."  
For the rest of the day he thought hard. That night when all were in bed he slipped downstairs in his stocking feet and went to the library. He opened volume one and found a "Yes," then volume two and found also a "Yes." Rubbing out both, he wrote a "No" for each, put them in and stole upstairs to bed.  
The next morning when he heard her leave her room he left his, and they went downstairs together. He went to the library, hesitated long between the two volumes, lifted his eyes as if in silent prayer, then took out volume two, opened it, read the word "No" and sank limp in a chair. Then, with a moan, he rushed from the house.  
There were complications for a few days.  
Then he wrote "Mother" on a slip of paper and "Kenneth" on another, placing one in each of the red morocco volumes. The next morning she was to draw as he had drawn. He did not slip downstairs that night to make both "Kenneth." Indeed, he feared that if "Kenneth" were drawn it would mean both "Kenneth" and "Mother," a combination he especially wished to avoid. But as the clock struck the midnight hour there was a silken tread on the stairs. A white figure descended and, going to the library, took out the slip on which "Mother" was written and wrote "Kenneth" in its stead.  
"Fate has decided in your favor, Kenneth," she said after drawing, and

he held her in his arms. "But if all does not turn out as well as you expect you mustn't blame me."  
There was an interval of ten years.  
"Will the old fiend live forever?"  
"Now, Kenneth, I will not hear you call poor mother an old fiend. I told you when you persisted just what you had to expect. You were willing to leave it to fate."  
"But I wanted to steal a march on fate."  
"Not on fate—on me."  
"But I didn't in the end."  
"No. When a man practices such miserable devices on a woman he usually gets the worst of it."  
"Just so. I had the game in my own hands, but I was too stupid to play it."  
"How?"  
"I should have made both slips to read 'Mother.'"  
"It wouldn't have done any good. Susan had instructions to see in the morning that they were both 'Kenneth.'"  
F. A. MITCHELL.  
  
Nothing to Get.  
"Nearly all good papers fail," said a man who had been through the mill himself. "I have an aged friend who runs a splendid paper in a small village. The last copy my friend sent me had this editorial paragraph marked: 'Burglars entered our house last night. To the everlasting shame of the community for whose welfare we have labored thirty-eight years, be it said, they got nothing.'"  
  
A "Sure Thing" Bet.  
Those who are unsportsmanlike enough to bet on a sure thing might try this: A bet that B cannot endure a piece of ice on his arm for two minutes. A to select a place between the fingers and the elbow. B bares his arm, and A puts a lump of ice on the pulse in the wrist. In forty-one seconds usually the pain becomes so great that B gives it up.  
  
When Fainting is a Feint.  
Fainting, which anciently was known as swooning, is a term that seems to have come to us through the French from the verb we still have in "feign." "Feign" has been spelled with an "a" and with an "e." The spelling with an "e" retains its early meaning; the spelling with an "a" denotes cardiac syncope, or fainting. So great is the change made by a single vowel that a "feint" if "feigned" is a "feint."

## AT THE TICKER.



—Macaulay in New York World.  
"How quiet the office boy is!"  
"Yes. I just raised his salary. He thinks it a dream and is afraid he'll wake up."—Life.  
To avoid a task and to fear it is to make it our master. To set about it cheerfully at once is to become its master.  
Creditor—I say, old man, why don't you get out of debt?  
Debtor—Haven't time. It keeps me busy getting in!

**An Emergency Measure.**  
The principal of one of the largest and best known girls' boarding schools in the country was a splendid woman, but one whose discipline was not always appreciated by those directly under its sway—as often happens. Being called out of the city unexpectedly one time just before time for the weekly evening prayer service, her absence left those next in authority unprepared to take her place. But the assistant principal thought of a brilliant way out of the difficulty, and, rising, she gravely announced, "Since Miss — has unexpectedly been called away I think, under the circumstances, it will be most advisable to hold a praise service of song."—Lippincott's Magazine.  
  
A Man Not Salted.  
A "freshman" at college is a man "not salted." It was an ancient custom in many colleges (as it is today) to play practical jokes on the newcomers. One of the most common of these jokes was to assemble them in a room and make them deliver a speech. Those who acquitted themselves well had a cup of "caudle," those who barely passed muster had a caudle with salt water, while the rest had the salt water only. Before this ordeal had been gone through they were all "freshmen"—had not been salted. In the meantime the name somehow stuck to them until they had finished their first year at college, when they ceased to be freshmen.—New York American.  
  
His Repertory.  
"What have you been playing during your present tour?"  
"We played 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear' on the stage," answered Mr. Stormington Barnes.  
"Were there no comedies in your repertory?"  
"Only one. When we came to count up the box office receipts it was usually 'Much Ado About Nothing.'"—Washington Star.  
  
The Mystery.  
Visitor—I understand that you had an amateur dramatic performance in the town hall last night?  
Native—Yes; the Sock and Buskin club played "Little Mae; or, The Mountain Mystery."  
"Ah! And what was the mystery?"  
"As near as I could make out, the mystery was how the audience stood it till the last act was over."—London Scraps.

**Facing the Enemy.**  
Two veterans were in the habit of "jolly" each other in regard to a lack of valor on the field of battle.  
"Why," said the one, "at the very first engagement, when the order was given to retreat, you were so scared that you threw your arms away and ran for dear life."  
"Nonsense," replied the other. "That was the time I got the three flesh wounds in the chest. If I'd been running away, as you claim, I would have been shot in the back."  
"Oh, no, you wouldn't," returned his friend. "The reason you got shot in the chest was because you took to the river and were trying to get away in a rowboat."  
  
Becoming a British Subject.  
It is an easy thing to become a British subject. All that an alien has to do is to declare his intention to reside within the British dominions on leaving his own country, and forthwith he takes out his naturalization papers, issued to him by the secretary of state upon his taking the oath of allegiance. These papers invest him with the rights and privileges of a Britisher, except that he is barred from becoming a privy councillor or a member of parliament and also barred from accepting office under the crown. But if an alien be naturalized by special act of parliament passed for his own benefit then he becomes as much a British subject and has all the rights and privileges as though a native.  
  
The Persian Language.  
Persian is said to be not a very difficult language. The modern Persian is very much like the English in its sensible rejection of the inflections that burden so many of the world's tongues. There is no difference of termination to mark the gender either in nouns or adjectives, and all inanimate things are neuter. In other ways the Persian conforms to the English.—London Chronicle.  
  
Rogers once said to Sheridan, the renowned wit, "Your admiration of Mrs. Siddons is so high that I wonder you never made open love to her."  
"To her?" said Sheridan. "To that magnificent and appalling creature? I should as soon think of making love to the archbishop of Canterbury."  
  
"See how nicely she is dressed. A woman dressed like that is a credit to her husband."  
"Wrong, dear; she is a debt."

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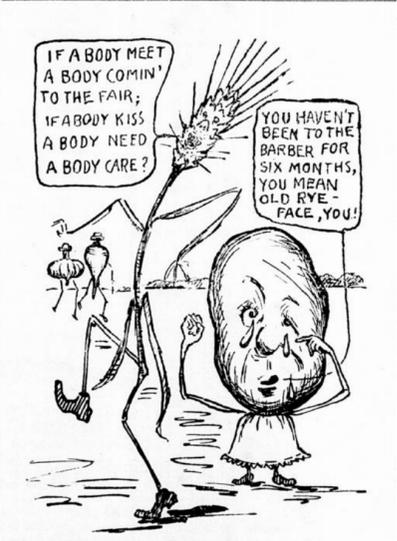
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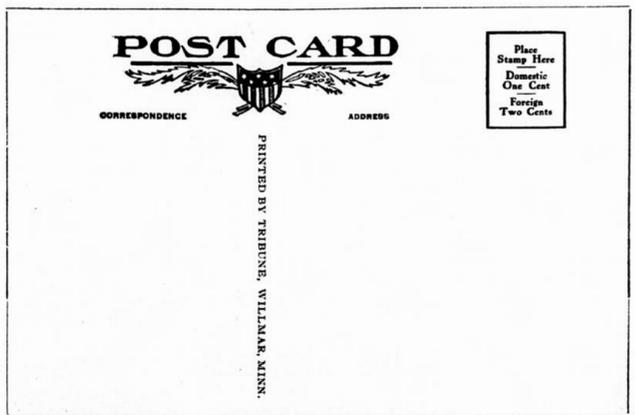
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