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ABOUT A GIRL WE DIDN'T GET

Polly sat on the other side of the table making tea. She wore a ridiculous little apron for nothing but show, about the size of a handkerchief, and a housewifely expression that she always dons on such occasions. Suddenly she glanced up.

"Look! Quick! Out of the window, Jack. No, the other way. There she goes."

"By Jove, what a pretty girl!" I exclaimed. "Who is she?"

"It was looking at the girl across the street," I said, "and she was the prettiest girl I have ever seen - except one," I added, dutifully.

"Polly set the kettle down with a thump that jarred the tencups. "It's always that way," she said, resignedly. "The girl across the street, like the girl he didn't get, always is a man's ideal. If he never marries, he carries her image about in his heart, or her photograph about in his pocket, and uses it for a standard with which to compare all the other women he may meet. If he does marry somebody else she becomes a sweet memory that rises every time his wife burns the biscuits or forgets to take her hair out of curl papers. Why is it?" and Polly tilted her little nose upward until she looked almost dignified, "that the mere fact that a girl doesn't want to marry a man makes him wild to get her?"

"Polly," said I, "do you remember when you were a very little girl how you used to lie awake nights trying to catch Santa Claus? Do you recollect how the jam on the top shelf was always the kind you liked best. Did you never long to see the other side of the moon, or eat what wasn't good for you, or play with the naughty little girl whom you were forbidden to speak to? It's human nature. The illusive, the unattainable, the thing we cannot get always has been the thing we want."

Polly pushed back a little curl that will get into her eyes, and began cutting lemon, meditatively.

"Yes," she agreed, "but it's different with a woman. She always feels a sort of resentment toward the man who won't fall in love with her, while a man rather respects a woman for refusing him and admires her for snubbing him. The longer she remains on the other side of the street -"

"That is it," I broke in, "the longer she remains on the other side of the street. But I have observed that it is generally very easy to cross over yourself, and then -"

"And then she is no longer the girl across the street?" broke in Polly, waving half a lemon triumphantly.

"Then she loses her illusion, her attraction. It is as if you had turned the limelight off of the leading lady in the play. Her hair becomes red; you observe that her nose turns up at the end; her diamonds are only paste, and her figure is nothing more nor less than the result of wearing a straight-front corset. The stock market falls, and you are glad to sell out your interest in the girl at the very lowest figure. The very fact that she has succumbed to your entreaty - or your fascinations, the very fact that she loves you, or is willing to dirt with you -"

"Polly will you put down that lemon. It is taking the color out of me already."

Polly subsided. "Let me ask you," I went on, seriously, "why, if you girls know all this, do you so often cross the street yourselves?"

"What do you mean?" said Polly. "You send us sofa pillows," I retorted.

Polly winced. "And necktie cases," I went on, "and invite us to violet teas."

"Mr. Heavyfeather," said Polly, "will you kindly pass the sugar?" I passed.

Polly took two lumps with the dignity of a tragedy queen.

"It is evident," she remarked in a tone like the trickling of ice water "that your charms have made you a victim of feminine attentions. But," she continued, "there are girls and girls. The kind to whom you have reference never were like the girl on the other side of the street. They never gave you nor any other man an opportunity to observe them from a distance."

I blew the smoke of my cigarette reflectively. It is always amusing to hear Polly talk sensibly, because - well - because her pompadour is fluffy and her nose is retrouse - and in that nonsensical apron - well -

"Yes," I began slowly, "now that you come to mention it, there was once a girl -"

"I didn't ask for particulars, Mr. Heavyfeather."

"The most beautiful girl I ever knew -"

"Will you have some more tea, Mr. Heavyfeather?"

"The cleverest -"

"One lump, or two?"

"The girl with the greatest amount of common sense -"

"Lemon?"

"And she was the girl across -"

"I don't want to know!"

"The girl across -"

"I won't listen!"

"The girl across -"

Polly rose in righteous wrath. "The girl across the table."

And the kettle bubbled merrily - Helen Rowland, in the Washington Post.

Consolatory. Sir Arthur Jelf was a formidable opponent at the bar, and on the bench has proved no less of a success. He has a pretty wit, too. Once at Quarter Sessions, as Recorder of Shrewsbury, he was sentencing a hypocritical prisoner who, hopeful of softening the judge's heart, shed copious tears, and in reply to his lordship's inquiry, "Have you ever been in prison before?" sobbed tearfully, "Never, my lord, never!" "Well don't cry," was the Recorder's reply. "I am going to send you there now." - Westminster Review.

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THE DANCING HOURS

"Maybe it's true," sighed Dangan. It was very early on a sunny morning, so early that the sun did not look to see words cut in the granite, and Dangan tra la the letter yet again. "Love leadeth ye Dancin' Hours," so they ran.

"Of course it's true," said Dangan, and leaning his elbows on the dining table, he began to watch the rising sun.

It was late for him the hours had not dragged weary limbs, with garland withered, at least they had not danced recalled from world wandering to brighten the lonely life of his father he had come in the spring of the year to the beautiful old house, with its orchards and grassy lawns sloping down to the river, and had lived there some two months, writing - as he loved to write - songs of women, and stories of men, and been passably content.

But, as he leaned on the sundial that morning, he recognized a change: he had come to an understanding of the words he had read idly so often before. For the hours to dance, love must lead them.

And yesterday she had said she hated him, Oh, Dangan was very hopeful!

He had often imagined the coming of his Queen to the dream palace he had built for her. From the sky, as an angel? No; Dangan would not have cared for an angel. He had early set aside the things no gentleman may do: for the rest, he had laughed at the world, flirted with the flesh and nodded to the devil, having a great charity and a rare gift of smiling.

Now she had come - not from the sky, nor from the land, but from the water.

A few days before, at the same early hour of the morning, he had been wandering by the river, when a measured beating of the water and a gentle splashing had roused him from a reverie. Almost as if a dark head floated and a white arm appeared in the early sunlight. A girl was swimming with the stream, gracefully, with the ease of long practice. Dangan, among the willows, stood still and watched her. He recognized afterward - indeed, the lady herself urged it on him - that he should have gone away at once. But he told her that, at the time, the idea did not occur to him; also, that if Diana had had the sense to wear such a charming bathing costume poor Aetnao need not have suffered - and many other arguments of a like nature.

Presently as he watched, the arm disappeared and the swimmer rolled over lazily and floated on the still water, only her face visible, with a dark shadow below the surface, and past that a soft, quivering gleam of white. Then the head sank farther back, the dark shadow took form more distinctly, and Dangan fled, with a memory of ten white toes appearing out of the water, to be kissed by the rising sun.

It was a chance mention of these that had caused Claire the owner of them, to announce, on a future occasion, that she hated Dangan. He promised never to mention them again; even said he would try to forget them. He was very anxious to please, was Dangan.

But a man's memory is his master, and on this particular morning it was a beautiful profile, a perfection of fine carving, and tea-smoked toes that occupied his mind, to the exclusion of all else.

Even to the exclusion of Miss Marjorie Paget-Lumley, although she had lately returned from the continent to the big house half a mile away, and twice he had visited her.

It was the dearest wish of his father that Dangan, his only son, should marry Marjorie, the only daughter of his old friend and neighbor, Col. Paget-Lumley, and so join the properties. On the arrival of Miss Marjorie, Claire had learned of this arrangement from her aunt, and in consequence, had been mightily odd to Dangan, and put many subtle questions to elicit details of the personality of the heiress. Afterward, she had informed a distracted aunt that she wished to go away, and asked her to leave the little house by the river they rented for the summer months. But the aunt was old and the aunt was comfortable.

"You said it was the most delightful place in the world, only yesterday," she objected.

"I hate it!" exclaimed Claire. But she had said that - yesterday.

There can be no doubt that her aunt would have yielded, had not Claire soon after ceased her entreaties, as suddenly as she had begun them. Her aunt recognized a mystery, but said nothing; which was very thoughtful of her.

Miss Marjorie Paget-Lumley was a tall, dark girl, handsome enough, and quite aware of it. A course of badly digested reading had led her astray and she had early joined herself to the Order of the People, who talk themselves seriously. Her emotion were all analyzed; love itself she longed to resolve to a formula. She would drag life from the sunshine and the scent of the flowers into the labor toxy and the smell of clean cuts. She forgot that Aphrodite rose from the sun-kissed foam of the sea; she would have divined deep to seek her, at found there only ugly, blind fish as cold, dead water.

"She's grown a fine, handsome girl," said Mr. Comerford to Dangan, as they walked home by the moonlight after their first visit.

"Yes, she's handsome," assented his son.

"And clever, too?"

"Very clever, I should think."

Dangan scarcely spoke as of a virtue.

"I hardly know her yet."

"It will come in time," said his father, cheerfully.

"I dare say," said Dangan.

"You'll not disappoint me?" asked the old man, affectionately pressing the arm on which he leaned. Dangan did not reply; they were passing the very spot which his queen had first appeared to him in the water.

But presently he said:

"No, sir; I will try not to disappoint you."

And they walked on silently.

On this particular morning Dangan had learned on the sundial and on

the one situated 240 was in love with Claire - and she with him. Claire's latter were wanting in confirmation, he recognized that to assume a proper orderly marshaling of circumstances and the growth of a decision. Dangan, watching for the rising sun, decided to assume it.

But his father earnestly desired his marriage with Miss Paget-Lumley, and Dangan had visited her, weakly, under some such understanding. He broke from the idea of joining his father in his last years; he would not desert him and go away again; and one ladies resided within a mile, one on each side of Mr. Comerford's estate. The sun came over the trees and woke the sundial; the black line began to travel and mark the hours, and still Dangan reviewed the situation, thinking sometimes of its perplexity, but much of the pleasant reminiscences on which he based his arguments, it was only the evening before, steeped in the witchery of the noon in summer time, that he had learned - perhaps half-learned only - that he might assume such a thing.

He was at last roused by the voice of Mr. Comerford announcing breakfast as an established fact.

"I am sorry," said Dangan; "I forgot the time."

"It's under your nose," laughed the old man, pointing to the sundial.

Dangan, still full of his arguments, pointed also, but to the words on below the dial.

"So were those," said he.

"Dumphy!" grunted his father, looking at him sharply.

"I've been thinking they're true."

"Well?"

"Are they going to dance for me? Suppose I won't marry Miss Lumley - what then?"

"I'll cut you off with a shilling!" said the old man, fiercely. (Only his eyes, unnoticed by his son, were laughing.)

"Give me the shilling," said Dangan, quietly, holding out his hand.

"You're an obstinate good-for-nothing!"

"I'm a man in love."

Mr. Comerford grunted on a deeper note and turned away.

"Won't you ask me to breakfast?" plaintively asked the good-for-nothing.

"I have guests," growled his father.

"But you can come."

"Guests - to breakfast?"

"Miss Manning and her niece were like myself, taking an early walk, and consented to breakfast with me."

"Claire!" cried Dangan.

Mr. Comerford turned on him and took him by the shoulders. They stood on the edge of the lawn under the trees.

"I've treated you well, Dan, these thirty years - been a good father - eh?"

"There was never a better, sir."

"And you think I'm going to play the tyrant now, with only a few more years to live? You're a young fool, and I'm an old one, and the breakfast is spoiling."

Dangan, astonished, found no words as they crossed the lawn.

"Did you think," continued Mr. Comerford, "that sweet creature has lived within a stone's throw for months - yes, last summer when you were away - I? If I were twenty years younger you shouldn't have her, I'd marry her myself."

"They were close to the windows now, and Dangan heard Claire's voice. At last he found something to say: "You don't really care on which side of the property I marry?"

His father looked into the room, then back at Dangan.

"I am on the side of the angels," said he.

So Dangan knew the hours would surely dance for love would lead them - Harold Gibson, in Sketch.

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BORN "BUSINESS MAN." If this Boy Don't Make a "Hit" then Something's Wrong. I had an amusing experience on the smoking car coming through Ohio last week," said the traveling man who had just come from the West. "A little ragamuffin with a shaggy blacking kit tried to get a free ride by hiding beneath two seats that were turned back to back. His clothes were in a deplorable state, and it was easy to understand that he did not have the price of a rail road ticket. All of us in the car watched him hide, and we waited for further developments as the conductor came walking through. "But the old boy spied three inches of leg sticking out in the aisle, and it didn't take him long to pull the lad out of his retreat. "I haven't got any money," whined the youngster, wiping away a tear that had already left its path on his besouped cheek. "Then you'll get off at the next station," answered the irate official, who had evidently dealt with many similar cases in the past. "I felt sorry for the chap, and didn't want to see him put off the car, so I went up to him and told him to shine my shoes, after which I handed him a quarter. In a short time he was shining the shoes of other men in the car until he had made seventy-five cents more than the price of his fare. "We saw to it that he straightened out matters with the conductor and forgot all about the incident, until half an hour later, when the man next to me poked my arm and pointed over to the corner of the car. The little shoback was sitting back as big as a lord, his feet stretched across the opposite seat. He was slowly ruffling away at a cigarette, blowing the smoke lazily toward the roof of the car with a look of supreme satisfaction on his face." - Philadelphia Telegraph.

What a Yarn! This cold weather story comes from Mapleton, Me. Some of the old pioneers say that they used to have some very cold weather here when they first came. They tell of taking a duck of ice and making a trough to water the cattle in, which would last until May; also of the tea kettle boiling over on a red hot stove and the water rolling on to the floor like shot, frozen solid. - Lewiston Journal.

C. L. JONES, Special Agt., Wards, S. C.