

THE STORY OF A SCANDALOUS FLIRTATION CARRIED ON IN A NICKEL SHOW

BY JANE WHITAKER

Did you ever feel so very disagreeable that nothing in the world seemed worth while and you felt spiteful toward the people with laughing faces and happiness in their hearts?

That was the mood in which I entered a moving picture show one night not long since. Consequently when a male creature crushed past me and stepped on my foot I turned toward him with a baneful glare.

Of course, I expected the usual empty apology because no apology ever soothes a foot that has been tramped on, but you can imagine my surprise when instead of an apology the mortal looked at me with a grin so good-natured and full of the joy of living that before I thought I grinned back.

That was a mistake, because he was a flirtatious mortal and also an irrepressible one, as I was soon to discover.

Having rectified my mistake in smiling by looking at him icily for a moment, I turned back to the pictures, only to be conscious that he was dividing his attention between the screen and my face.

And in the next interval when I knew he was looking at the pictures I looked at him. He really was quite prepossessing; he had a shock of hair that made you just long to rumple it with your fingers, and his nose wasn't very large or full of character, but it turned up in an adorable manner.

He caught me looking at him and his green blue eyes flashed another smile of comradeship, but this time I wasn't caught off my guard, though I did turn hastily away.

Then something funny in a picture made me forget my grievance against the world and I laughed aloud.

It was the opportunity the flirtatious one was waiting for.

"Funny, ain't it?" he said, and

without waiting for my reply—"there was an awful funny one in here last night."

I made no reply, but this did not discourage him, for very soon I felt his shoulder pressed quite affectionately against me and I wriggled over in my seat only to encounter the shoulder of a very fat lady on the other side, who glared at me, so I wriggled back.

This encouraged the flirtatious one still more. He contented himself with leaning against me for a few moments then, to my amazement, he reached over and took hold of my hand.

Of course, I tried to draw away, but he held the hand so tightly I realized that unless I wanted to create a scene I better let it alone.

"I like you," he said in a whisper that could be heard three seats away.

I again looked at him icily.

"Do you like me?" he asked, still louder.

Diplomacy dictated that, having gotten myself into such a disagreeable situation, I get out of it the best I could, so I answered, briefly: "Oh, yes."

A sigh of content and we both relaxed with my hand still clutched in his warm one.

"Do you come to the picture show every night?" he again broke the silence.

"No."

"Will you come tomorrow night?"

"I don't know."

"If you do come, will you look for me?"

I made no answer, but reached suggestively toward my hat.

"All the pictures ain't done," he said, clutching my hand still more tightly. "There's three and there's only been two now."

I sat through the third picture, more, I am compelled to admit, through curiosity than interest. I