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AN INTERRUPTION

By ANNABEL BRINSMAD

Preparations were being made for a funeral in the Margot family. The body of Betty Margot, aged eighteen, was to be buried at 11 o'clock, and it was now 10. A great deal of sympathy was shown the family, for there were very sad circumstances attending the young girl's death. In fact, it was considered a case of suicide.

About a year before Betty began to show signs of despondency. She had left school and was ready to take a social position among the young people of the town in which she lived. Her mother, partly to divert her from the condition of mind, did what she could to induce her to do so. Betty did not refuse to go among those of her own age, but when with them, instead of being the bright, cheery girl of a year before, she was listless. The young men and maidens who had grown up with her endeavored for a while to draw her from her lethargy, but, finding their efforts futile, at last gave up trying.

The family physician was, of course, consulted. He talked with Betty, asked her a great many questions, prescribed a tonic to be taken "three times a day before meals," but told her mother that he could find no organic disease. He thought that change of scene might be beneficial, but the Margots could not afford to take the patient away. Besides, she said she didn't care to go away. The doctor suggested that there might be a young man in the case, but Mrs. Margot declared that her daughter had never shown any preferences for any of her male acquaintances. To this the doctor replied that first love on the part of a young girl, from sixteen to twenty was apt to assume very singular forms. He had treated cases of arrested menstrual menses which eventually had turned out to be due to despondency. One of his patients had shown signs of a breaking down in health simply because she could not make up her mind between two suitors and had finally eloped with a third, to whom her parent had no objection whatever.

One morning when the good lady went into her daughter's room with the usual toast and coffee—she would not permit Betty to arise before 11 o'clock—the room was empty. The bed had not been slept in. The frightened matron rushed from the room, calling her daughter wildly. The household Betty excepted, responded, and eventually the whole town was roused.

The day passed with no word from the missing girl. She must have departed in the night, for no one had seen her go. Every village in the neighborhood received telephone messages describing Betty's personal appearance and inquiring if she had been seen. All her relatives far and near were notified. Not a hopeful word came from any point.

Mrs. Margot, after she became so far calmed as to express an opinion on the cause of her daughter's departure, said she believed that Betty's mind had been affected through some disease which "that stupid doctor" had failed to discover. The people of the town had many and diverse opinions. Mrs. Griffin, across the street, who had heard Mrs. Margot—an impatient, excitable woman—scold her daughter, averred that the latter had been driven away by cruelty. Some of the neighbors—old maids or married women who had adopted dogs in lieu of children—said that Betty had not been properly brought up and had gone to the bad.

One day a fresh impetus was given to these conjectures by the discovery of a body of a woman in the river. It was floated beyond recognition, but was about Betty's height, and the hair was about the same color as hers. The consensus of opinion was that it was her remains; that in a fit of temporary insanity she had escaped from home and drowned herself. The sight was so awful that the parents were permitted not to look at it. An undertaker prepared it for burial, and the bodies us to the beginning of our story, which is also the end.

Persons were assembling at the Margot home to pay their last respects to the dead. The clergyman had arrived, the undertaker was going about with soft tread giving directions in a moderate voice, when a young man in a brown coat turned a corner and caught a view of the hearse and carriage standing before the door. The lady sank on the man's bosom with a shriek, recovering, the two pursued their way to the house of the funeral. The clergyman was mentioning some lovely traits of the deceased when the chief mourners uttered an exclamation of surprise and made a bolt for the hall, where stood the newcomers.

"Oh, Betty!" exclaimed both father and mother in a breath.

The obsequies were discontinued on account of the appearance of the object for which they were held, and a great relief, a great joy, reigned in their stead. This was Betty's explanation:

"George met me when I was a schoolgirl, and we loved. Then that horrid Kate Baxter came between us, and for a long while I was afraid she'd get him away from me. But one day he wrote me that she had been telling lies about me, and I concluded to go and give her a piece of my mind. The result was that George and I thought we'd better be married. So, here we are."

The doctor's diagnosis of the case was, "The insanity of juvenile love."

FARM ORCHARD AND GARDEN BY F. E. TRIGG CENTRAL POINT, ROGUE RIVER VALLEY, OREGON. CORRESPONDENCE SOLICITED

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If the turkey for the Thanksgiving feast came a bit high, remember that four little turkeys out of every five hatched die before they are six weeks old.

It is about time for the champion corn husker to put in an appearance. The best man on the job husked in the neighborhood of 200 bushels in ten hours last season. Will the high man this fall do as well?

A rule put in force some time ago by the internal revenue department rates all butter as unlawful, from the standpoint of its right to interstate shipping privileges, which contains more than 10 per cent of moisture.

The burning of barns by the spontaneous combustion of mows of alfalfa or clover hay comes as the result of putting the hay up too green before it is properly cured. This curing process should take place in the field while the hay is in cock.

The homemade candies in which sorghum or New Orleans molasses or white sugar are used are economical to make and satisfy the craving the youngsters have for sweets. Besides this the homemade article is all candy, with no harmful adulterations.

The power corn shredder is no distinguisher as between a husky stalk of corn and a man's hand. Since this is so it is a pretty good idea for the fellow who prizes the use of his hands and fingers to keep them out of reach of the rapacious maws of the unfeeling machines.

A friend who is in the grocery business and who has had considerable trouble with rats got tired of the nuisance some weeks ago and ordered three dozen of the snap or gullotine traps. He baited all of these one night and the next morning there were sixteen rodents done for. Since then rats have been a mighty scarce article in his cellar.

A Pennsylvania gardener worked a potato stalk overtime the past season. In the spring the sap grafted a potato plant with a sprig of a tomato plant and later in the season picked ripe tomatoes from the upper portion of the freak and gathered potatoes from the root system. The grafting succeeded because the two plants belonged to the same botanical family.

The winter Nells pears that have been on the market for some time and which look none too inviting in their green russet jackets, should be bought and put away in a dark and cool place and allowed to ripen. When they have turned to a golden russet yellow and have become soft, they are not surpassed in juiciness and fine flavor by any pear that grows.

There may be some of the good wives who read this department who do not know that sticking a fork into baked potatoes and giving it a twist so as to make a small opening just as they are taken from the oven will keep them dry and mealy. This vent made with the fork permits the steam to escape, thereby preventing it from condensing on the inside of the potato.

The Rock Island, Santa Fe and Frisco railroads, operating in Kansas and Oklahoma, make a business of hiring bird dogs during the quail shooting season to ferret out suit cases of travelers containing the quail, which it is unlawful to ship from one state to another. It is said the dogs sometimes get a point on a suit case containing cold fried chicken, but they never skip one containing any of the dead game birds.

It is only when a strong and vigorous person is confined to bed with illness or injury of one sort or another that he prizes at full value the very common blessing of unimpeded power of locomotion. The writer remembers a number of years ago, when laid up with typhoid fever, how he used to look from his bed to the school children as they passed his home and envy them in their ability to frolic and play at will.

If there are covays of quill that are making their headquarters in the undergrowth in the nearby wood lots it would be a kindly service to those useful birds to scatter a little grain for them now and then with the idea of gradually coaxing them to the feed lots and yards, where it will be quite an easy matter to give them a lift through the severe winter weather. The housewife eats a greater variety of destructive insects than any bird that frequents the average farm, and it is simply the part of good farm management to afford it every protection possible.



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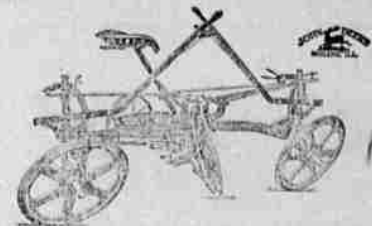
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