

THE OBSERVER

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ASH CANS GET THESE.

If you, perchance, have been brought up on a diet of the books in the Sunday school library or the school library, you cannot help sighing a little bit over the edict which has just gone forth from the committee room of the Washington Library. Many of the friends of your childhood are to be dumped into the ash can.

Among them are the following:— Oliver Optic stories; Horatio Alger's series. And if the worst is yet to come, the ban has been placed on the "Elsie" books and the "Pansy" series. To an omnivorous reader in childhood this list looms big. Not to have read the books of the Optic, Alger and Ranger style means that the childish mind from now on will be utterly devoid of marvelous and thrilling systems of reaching the golden goal of success by easy stages.

But the Washington Librarian opine that these books have made heroes have too easy a time of it, and this has given growing boys an undue sense of their own importance and of their own value from a commercial standpoint. He declares, also, that these books spoil the taste for better reading.

George Warren's "Tales of Revolutionary Days", Lester Charwick's College sport series, the Dorothy Dale and books of similar sort are also under the ban, many of them, said to be little better than "Old Sleuth" and the "Nick Carter" stories.

White boys possibly can worry along all right without the taboos of thrilling adventure, it is difficult to see how the little girls who tip-toe into the library can possibly grow up without Martha Finley's "Elsie" books. There are a lot of these books and they carry marvelous Elsie through all the trials and tribulations attendant upon growing from a tiny girl into a very noble woman filled with only the sweetest and most noble ideas about life and her mission.

"Pansy" is another name to conjure by, in the annals of girlhood. No one is ever quite so good as the heroine pictured by Isabella M. Alden but many a mother has anxiously wished her little daughter might grow up to practice a little of the good that she read so much about in the pages

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of the "Pansy" series. It is sad now-a-days to be a boy or girl who can't be allowed to read these old time favorites. Of course they did give boys a chance to swagger about a good deal, and they did incline girls to be too busily engaged reading to be anywhere in sight at dish washing time. At the same time for the sake of "Auld Lang Syne" it is with a feeling of sadness that we view the empty shelves where our old-time favorites in their dingy dog-eared bindings, have long been so snugly ensconced.

TALKS IN ADVERTISING. To Evening Observer Readers Advertising is a branch or an arm

of the business world, the same as law or medicine. There isn't a man in the world who, when he is sick, would call up the doctor to tell him what's the matter without first being thoroughly examined to learn the true state of his condition. Again, there isn't a business man who, when he has a law case on his hands expects his lawyer to win without first telling him every detail in connection with the case. Then why should business men neglect the matter of advertising which will cure his business ills and plead his case before the public, if given a square deal. Good advertising demands proper attention, personal interest and plenty of time. It cannot be done in a minute, or a day or possibly a week. Instead of a last-minute proposition it is a first-minute one.—Ralph Kaye.

HER ASSIGNMENT

It Was to Marry a Missionary She Had Never Seen

By F. A. MITCHEL

"Letitia," said my aunt the day after my uncle's funeral, "our income, small as it is, will be stopped at the end of this month. It behooves us to look the future squarely in the face."

"What we do in this world depends upon what we determine to do irrespective of distaste for the work, though what is distasteful one day may be a pleasure the next. Recently I saw it stated in a church journal that among the missionaries in groups of islands in the Pacific ocean there are but few women and nearly all of the clergymen who are devoting themselves to ameliorating the spiritual condition of the natives are without wives. The article went on to say that the bishop would pay the expenses of any young woman of good character who would go out to the islands of his diocese from a fund set apart for the purpose and would assign a clergyman to marry her."

I gasped for breath at this statement of my aunt's, for I knew from the fact of her having made it that she had determined to dispose of me in this manner. In those days there were few openings for women to make their own living, and if turned out to support myself I felt that I would starve. When giving me a few days to think over the matter my aunt forced me to a decision or, rather, to consent to be shipped to the island of assignment for the purpose of being married to a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal church. It seemed that I should never look for food to me who was starving. It was enough to be banished to such a place without having to

marry a stranger. My aunt, who was of strong will and intellect, endeavored to comfort me with the assurance that my husband would belong to a noble calling and would be educated. I pictured him a red headed, freckled man with high cheek bones and large joints. When not engaged in teaching the heathen he would be reading prayers and singing hymns. Instead of the love chats I had read in novels we would have the psalter, I humbly making the responses.

I thought my journey would never end, and I hoped it wouldn't. I was seasick, but that was nothing to meeting this awful man to whom I was to be given over to torture. The day we approached the island I leaned against the rail on deck and saw a concourse of dark skinned persons on the dock, among whom I could distinguish a few white faces. I could not restrain my tears, and when the ship was tied up to the dock I went ashore with wet eyes. I was the only woman to leave the vessel, and one who had been appointed to meet me had no difficulty in picking me out. A young man in clerical dress stepped up to me and with a pleasant smile asked me if I were Miss Letitia Trobridge. I replied that I was, and he relieved me of some hand baggage I was carrying, saying at the same time:

"The superintendent has received information from the bishop of your coming and that he had assigned you to be united in the holy bonds of matrimony to the Rev. Adoniram Mudge. But I regret to say that I have some bad news for you. Can you bear to hear it?"

"I can bear anything." "Well, your betrothed was sent last week to the neighboring island of Hapal to establish a mission, and this morning a boat came back with the news that he had been killed and eaten by cannibals."

The words "Thank heaven!" came up from my heart to my throat, but I repressed them. I had no difficulty in bursting into tears, for I was in tears already. I simply let go the dam, and they flowed forth in abundance.

"I should have waited," said the young man sympathetically, "till we had reached the mission and broken the news more gently."

"No-never mind," I stammered, "I guess I can bear it."

On the way to the superintendent's quarters we passed here and there a man in clerical garb, all of whom looked at me wistfully and at my conductor with jealousy. Not a woman was to be seen anywhere, and it seemed to me that were these men not in the service of the Lord they would be soon shedding one another's blood to determine which should possess me. I wished that they might be thus disposed of like the Kilkenny cats and I might be permitted to build a funeral pyre under them after the custom of the heathen of India and sell them to the skin in which I might dine.

When we reached the superintendent's office or headquarters, or whatever it might be called, he found me in a state of mind that was anything but cheerful. He asked me how I was and I replied that I was as well as could be expected under the circumstances. "Who are you engaged to marry?"

"I am engaged to marry a young man of my own country."

"Owing to this affliction," he said, "the bishop's assignment cannot be carried out. I shall write him by the ship you came on requesting him to assign you to another of the Lord's servants."

I was about to ask him if this would require a long time when it occurred to me that the question might be misinterpreted to indicate that I was in a hurry instead of hoping that the ship that bore the message might be wrecked and all on board go the way of my intended husband, though into the bellies of fishes instead of cannibals.

"It will be several weeks," continued the superintendent, "before a reply can be received. Meanwhile my wife will be happy to take you under her care and give you a home here with us."

At this first mention of a woman on the island I felt a ray of comfort in my heart. The superintendent dismissed the young clergyman who had been my guide and leading me through a hole in the wall—I would not call it a door—presented me to his wife, a motherly old lady, who greeted me kindly, and for the first time since my arrival I felt a possibility of my enduring a residence on the island—that is, if the cannibals would kindly eat each successive husband to whom the bishop might assign me.

One thought, I admit, stood forth as a compromise between the sacrifice of these noble lives and my being permitted to remain single. If I might be assigned to the young clergyman who had met me on the dock and had been my conductor I thought I would be willing that the good work should go on without any more missionaries finding their way into the stomachs of the heathens.

And here, having come to the first hill in my agony, I will say a word as to this young man. He was about twenty-seven years old, of medium height, with fair skin and flaxen hair. When I came to know him better I noticed at times a twinkle in his eye that is not usual in persons whose minds are fixed upon a serious work. His smile was very winning, and his face, being clean shaven, displayed a mouth that might have been cut after a cameo. While I was waiting to be disposed of by the bishop this young man, Henry Stockbridge, was very kind to me, making my miserable life as little miserable as possible. Indeed, I came to contemplate a life with him even with such barbarous surroundings, as quite endurable, and by the time my new assignment was expected I had come to the conclusion that if I were allotted to him I should not permit him to serve the Lord in any field where there were cannibals.

One day a ship was sighted making for the island and was soon recognized as the one that would bear the bishop's presence. Oh, that I might see her strike a rock and go to the bottom! Henry Stockbridge was with me while I was waiting at her, and I expressed my thoughts to him. Instead of comforting me with words he asked:

"Who are you engaged to marry now?"

"I am not engaged to any man of my country."

"Have you a choice?"

I was so desperate that I had lost all maidenly shame. I was ready to go down on my knees to him and beg him to save me by marrying me himself. "Yes," I said doggedly, "I have."

He knew well enough what would be the result of further questioning and spared me.

"Heaven knows," he said after a brief silence, "that if I were the man of your choice how gladly I would save you from being assigned to a husband in this unromantic fashion."

"Brutal fashion, you mean."

"Unfortunately in my case," he went on, "there is a barrier in the way."

I had the decency to let him tell it without asking him.

"You know," he continued, "that I am very high church."

I remained silent, but my bosom was heaving.

"I am resolved to celibacy."

An inspiration came to me, an inspiration to act at once and to the point. I threw up my arms with a wall and fell against his bosom. He clasped me, and I remained passive till I thought I heard a chuckle. Then I looked up into his face and saw the most wicked, merry, tantalizing spark I ever saw in the eye of a man. I was about to disengage myself when he tightened his arms about me and covered my face with kisses.

"You wretch!" I exclaimed. "You can remain in celibacy, and I will marry the man to whom I am assigned, if he is first cousin to Satan."

"Then I will wait for you till the cannibals get him, as they did your first betrothed. By the bye, this assignment business has been a put up job. I was informed that a young woman was coming out for a husband and told by the superintendent that I might meet her and, if I liked her, woo her in my own fashion. Adoniram Mudge is a myth. It was at my suggestion that the superintendent spoke to you of sending to the bishop for another assignment. That ship never took a message to him, and there is no reply from him on her. I have given you time to learn to love me. As for me, my mind was made up the moment I saw you."

I stood looking out at the coming ship through tears, this time happy tears.

"Are you weeping for Mudge?" asked my tormentor.

I turned and saw that same taunting look in his eye and sympathetic smile on his face.

I threw my arms about him and buried my face on his breast.

As the wife of Henry Stockbridge I remained on the island two years and was contented. Then he was called to a church in America, where my position as the wife of the rector was by no means unpleasant. I was and am thankful that I escaped what I most dreaded, a life of solitary labor.

A Challenge.

I am willing to meet any 165 wrestler, especially Clarence Smith of Portland, for a side bet of \$250, the match to be staged in this city, in the near future. (Signed) Ed. Warner.

During the recent session of the Board of Trade, the present comparative estimation of trade disputes was strongly opposed.

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