

MICE AND A PUMPKIN COACH

By CRAWFORD LUTTRELL

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"Well, my first day at the office is over, and I can honestly say that I enjoyed it," Nan announced to the anxiously inquiring two who turned to welcome her at the sound of her key in the lock. She tossed off her smart black sailor hat and sat down on a hassock by her mother. "I feel so important, and although I don't know much yet, I know that I will learn. I am giving my entire time and thought to it. I have no silly sentimental ideas about my boss falling in love with me. Fortunately, he is bald, fat and forty, and his wife rings up every two or three hours to tell him something about the kids or to remind him to go by the baker's for bread. Why don't women attend to their own business as men do?"

"Pshaw!" sighed fifteen-year-old Ruth. "I hoped that there would be a young man in the office, good-looking and rich, and that he would come around on Sundays and take us all out riding to the country."

Nan looked up at her and winked. "Perhaps I can find that agreeable sort of boss next time I look for work." Then to her mother: "I am glad that things are just as they are. Personally I don't believe in mixing business and pleasure and in drawing a weekly pay envelope for time spent in trying to get a husband. Do you, muddle, dear?"

"When the right man comes along you'll know it, Nan, whether you are at a dance or buying chops at a butcher's. I believe that there is a fate guarding these issues of life. Perhaps it sounds foolish for an old woman like me to say such things, but it is one of my pet theories, grounded in innumerable cases of fact that I have observed."

"I don't agree with you, mother," said the sophisticated fifteen-year-old. "When I grow up I am going to pick out the best-looking, richest man in town and set about making him fall in love with me. Getting married is every woman's first business in life. Why, already I am encouraging Billy McMahan. His father owns a plumbing place, I know, but he is making money so fast that in two or three years from now the daily papers will quote him about everything, calling him colonel or general or something. Blood don't count any more. Why, nobody but the ten-year census man ever asks about your grandmother."

"Oh, wisdom in short skirts!" gasped Nan. "It's hard to say such things to mother, Ruthie. You know it shocks her."

"You might just as well know how I feel about such things. Of course, I expect to go to work just as soon as I leave high school and help cheerfully so that you will have most of your salary to spend on yourself, Nan. Mother has her little income and maybe by that time prices will take a tumble and we can manage better than we do now."

Mrs. Taylor laughed a bit shakily. Then she drew a letter from her dress pocket. "I have some astonishing news, girls. Nan, you can resign tomorrow."

"Resign! Why?"

"Your father bought some mining stock many years ago and we just considered the money lost, but today while you were at the office and Ruth was at school a strange lawyer called and told me that—that we are to have three hundred dollars a month from the investment. I wanted to ring both of you and tell you to run right home, but I saved the news for a happy surprise tonight."

Ruth threw her books on the floor and began a sort of Indian war dance, chanting weirdly as she circled the two. Nan sat there as if she had been turned into stone.

"Aren't you glad, Nan, dear?" asked her mother, bending over to touch her.

"I'm just staggered, stunned, but I am not going to give up my position."

"Why, child, we can live beautifully on what I have and that three hundred and send Ruth to college, too."

"I know," said Nan, seriously. "It nearly killed me to even think of going into a man's office to earn my own livelihood. All those months that I studied at business college were like a nightmare to me, but I conquered the feeling and now I won't give it up. I feel capable. I like getting up and going out every day. I like the hum of the office, people coming and going, all of it. It fascinates me."

"I'll bet there is a man in that office that you like," exploded Ruth suddenly.

"Nobody but Mr. Henderson, and he doesn't look as if he had ever been young enough to think of romance," explained Nan haughtily.

"I thought you said the firm was Henderson & Henderson, daughter?"

"It is. He has a brother or a nephew or somebody who does all of the out-of-town business. I haven't even seen him."

The telephone bell tinkled, then rang vigorously, insistently.

"It's a man and he wants you," tersely announced Ruth, who always rushed to answer calls.

In a few minutes Nan turned away from the telephone. "It's Mr. Henderson's nephew. He has just come in from the East. He wants to explain some letters to me, corrections to be made. I guess I must have bungled them, muddle, when I thought that I was doing so well. His voice was as

curt as it could be. Maybe I had better resign, after all!"

"Look him over first!" admonished the wily Ruth. "I thought his voice was perfectly delicious. When is he coming? Let's have supper over, then you slip on that dark blue georgette. You look like a million dollars in that."

"Ruthie, don't be so slangy!" said the mother patiently.

"Silly child!" laughed Nan, picking up her hat and starting toward her bedroom. "I told you I did not expect to mix business and pleasure. Do you think I would ever fuss up for my employer? Why, they pay me to write their letters, not to dress up like a chorus girl. I must have made some awful blunders. He said that the letters could not be mailed as they were. Oh dear, and I was feeling so efficient, too!"

"Just resign at once, dear! That will be best," insisted her mother comfortingly.

At eight o'clock sharp the buzzer sounded in the tiny hall. On her way to answer Nan instinctively put her hand to her shining brown hair and smoothed it.

Mrs. Taylor and Ruth sat waiting patiently for Nan's employer to leave. Presently they heard laughter, a man's ringing voice and Nan's little chuckle. She never laughed that way except when she was happy.

"He sounds young and good-looking, too, doesn't he, mother?" demanded Ruth, listening attentively. "They don't sound businesslike to me, either, talking about plays and books and everything."

The door opened and Nan called them. When she had presented them she turned to her mother. "Mr. Henderson wants to take me to see vaudeville over at the Palace, mother, the nine o'clock performance, you know. Is it all right?"

Mrs. Taylor looked at the young man and nodded smilingly.

Ruth followed Nan to her bedroom, and shutting the door carefully behind her, asked, "Wherefore borrow mother's sealskin coat and powder your nose and rouge your cheeks—just for your employer?"

Nan had the grace to blush as she lifted a little swirl of blue tissue that was, if you please, a spring hat. "Silly!" she said again, and hurried back into the living room.

"I was just telling Mr. Henderson about our mining stock, dear, and that it made us quite independent again," her mother said, "I told him, too, that I thought it would be wise for you to resign. There was something wrong with the letters, was there not? You are inexperienced, of course."

"On the other hand, the letters were perfect, quite perfect," Mr. Henderson hastened to assure her. "You won't think of leaving us, will you, Miss Nan; that is, not yet? I am going to be right in the office now for two months."

"No, I like it," Nan smiled at him from under the bewildering swirl of blue tissue. "I am going to work always," she added emphatically.

At the door the good-looking young man paused. His hand had a possessive touch on the little fur-clad sleeve beside him. "Of course, Mrs. Taylor, I know that some day I am going to agree with you. I am going to urge Miss Nan to resign." He laughed boyishly, flushing a little.

"Now, the only difference between sis and me is that I am open and above-board, mother," calmly acknowledged Ruth when the door had closed on the two. "I'll bet my new red hat that Nan knew about him all the time. Mix business and pleasure? All a girl wants is the chance."

"It is fate, Ruthie. I know," said Mrs. Taylor when the high-priced purr of Mr. Henderson's smart gray rooster had proclaimed that Nan had found the mule and pumpkin coach that waits for every Cinderella in the world.

HUMIDITY IN AIR CURRENTS

Observations Have Shown That Irrigation Has Little Effect on Conditions of the Air.

"Irrigation has little to do with the humidity readings in any section," it is declared by J. H. Gordon, observer of the Arizona division of the weather bureau. Any rise of humidity readings in the Phoenix station is due, he states, simply to increase of rainfall. During the past ten years there has been increase in rainfall at different points ranging from 11 to 29 per cent. Most of the humidity cases in air currents from the Gulf of California. Yet the driest point in Arizona is Ajo, a mining camp on the desert, nearest of all points to the gulf. Somewhat less dry are Yuma and Phoenix, while the greatest absolute content of moisture by cubic measure is in Tucson. While Phoenix is in the midst of a great irrigated valley, the influence of irrigation upon her climate is pronounced immaterial.

Somewhat the same result was secured by the weather bureau in studying problems of evaporation, in connection with the formation of the Salton sea, in southern California. No humidity influence could be found at stations established around the sea, while at Mecca, at the date farm, the seasons following the creation of the sea were the driest ever registered. The driest air uniformly has been found in the foothill region somewhat above the valleys.

Enough Nuts to Feed World.

The nut trees of the world, it is calculated, could provide food all the year round for the population of the globe. Brazil nuts grow in such profusion that thousands of tons of them are wasted every year.

Novelty Models in Spring Hats

Liberal coats of lacquer are applied to every sort of fabric for millinery use, frayed out horsehair cloth and violently thrusting feathers vie with gaily dyed raffia and spun glass. There are not so many monkey hair scalp locks as during the winter season, notes a prominent fashion writer, but their place is taken by turbans of lizard skin. Chinese hats have imitation queues dangling from their crowns and Egyptian hats have colossal earrings dangling from each side, while naive fruits, flowers and vegetables decorate hats of every description.

The first, if not the last, word of any talk about early spring hats is news of the waxed and varnished fabrics which are so pronouncedly in evidence. Beginning with that curious substance cellophane, which is conjured into so many forms, everything glitters, ribbon, satin, feathers and straw. Cellophane, as a braid in rather wide strips, resembles a flat, shiny straw, but there are many genuine straw braids which are treated to a highly polished finish.

Raffia, which is used so extensively in a decorative way, is also finely shredded and varnished until it appears like a delicate, silky floss, of which draped turbans are made and veiled with tulle. Another strange fabric, spun glass, twisted and as tough as wire, is made use of in a similar manner.

No End to the Unique.

But there is no end to the unique and interesting substances which French milliners have been experimenting with in these early hats, whether to eke out a scarcity of straw, to distract attention from a lack of originality in design, or merely from caprice, it is impossible to say. How

greater numbers later in the season. At the same time there are many satin hats and hats of faille and taffeta combined with straw.

Ribbon hats are having a great success, and the ribbon is used in many interesting and amusing ways, among them the fashioning of it into wings. Both silk and velvet ribbon are woven into a plaided fabric with strips of cellophane, and a clever little hat with a narrow upturned brim is concocted of alternate strips of ribbon and straw, which are twisted slightly on the crown and terminate at the top in a crisply tied ribbon bow.

The Egyptian Influence.

The only new note in line is provided by the Egyptian influence, so much talked of. In so far as hats are concerned, the Egyptian inspiration has rather attractive results, which are only possible with the hair bunched out over the ears according to the prevailing fashion. This balances the thrusting out of the hat brim over the ears and its characteristically flattened front.

The line is accentuated by spreading wings, by clumps of flowers and in a rather spectacular manner by large pendant glittering ornaments resembling earrings. In a general way any hat which points out over the ears confesses Egyptian inspiration, a hat which is draped with a gracefully flung back veil inherits from the Spanish and a hat with a peaked crown acknowledges Chinese influence.

The hat brim turned back from the face has found so much favor with women of all sorts and conditions that it is still a feature of the vast majority of the new hats, whether their brims are broad or only an inch wide.



No. 1—Beret Covered With Painted Kid Fruit. No. 2—Straw Hat Trimmed With Glycerinated Feathers. No. 3—Chinese Hat of Ribbon and Straw. No. 4—Haircloth Hat With a Wreath of Handsome Flowers and Fruit.

many of them will find permanent favor and last over into the normal spring hat season will develop later.

Grass cloth of various weaves and under such suggestively barbaric names as Batavia and Congo cloth is much used and its semi-transparent and extremely pliable texture makes it desirable for the somewhat bizarre and informal hats which were once delegated to the sports wardrobe. Hindu turbans, plaited and embroidered toques, as well as larger shapes, are produced from these primitive fabrics and are often embroidered with crushed wools and gaily dyed raffia.

Hairlike Hindu cloth, which may be crushed to look like skeins of silk or pulled apart to the fragility of a spider's web, is another of these drapable fabrics, and a really beautiful French hair cloth has been produced which may be softly draped or blocked into stiff, high crowns. These hair cloths are lovely in color, for even such gorgeous tints as burnt orange, topaz and mint green are considerably softened by the transparency of the fabric.

Built Over Lining of Taffeta.

They are frequently built over a lining of taffeta in a different color, especially in the case of the small draped turbans or toques. One of these turbans in high favor is a twist of cherry colored hair cloth tied around the crown lining in gypsy fashion and without other trimming than a single frayed end, which falls over one ear. The hair cloth hats with mushroom brims and high crowns are more often than not decorated with thin ostrich plumes in the same color as the hair cloth, or there may be a straggling spray of waxed flowers stretched across the crown.

Milan straws and colored leghorn are still to be had in this writer of fabrics strange and unaccustomed, and they, as well as straws of rougher braids, will undoubtedly appear in

These brims are frequently embroidered or trimmed with flower petals or sprays of flowers.

Use Fruit and Vegetables.

Large turbans are not unusual, and all manner of little toques and berets have made their appearance in their accustomed manner. Among these are extraordinary embroideries in brightly dyed straws and applied silken figures, the latter outlined with a gay Chinese cord. A curious decoration makes a thing of wonder of a soft full beret in gray blue raffia. The color is produced by sprinkling the surface with pears, peaches, plums and cherries in the most realistic manner by hand. The vines and leaves which connect these products of the orchard are worked in colored raffia.

Contrary to the usual practice, the early spring models are frequently flower trimmed, and extraordinary fruits and even vegetables are to find favor, the latter of course on sport hats. Large flat flowers are applied to the entire surface of a hat or flower petals may decorate the upturned brim. Little rosebuds border a close fitting top of blue straw and two discs are solidly packed with roses over the ears, thus proclaiming itself an Egyptian hat.

The remarkable flowers and fruits which trim the spring hats are made by hand of bits of silk and velvet. Wheat and grapes are made of shot taffeta and velvet plums of natural size and coloring are arranged with sprays of wheat and small velvet flowers to produce a subtle and lovely bit of color. A huge pink silk rose with foliage and a long soft stem is frequently the only decoration of which a hat can boast.

Use of Plaid Effects.

Plaid effects are used not only for entire frocks but for lacings and trimmings.

Swallows Fight for Farmers

They Are the Light Cavalry of the Bird Army

"The army of the birds" is a familiar phrase, yet the picture it paints in most minds is, perhaps, an army on the march rather than an army in combat; the birds in annual migration from zone to zone rather than the birds on daily duty from field to field. The latter and more accurate idea comes only when special branches of the service are pointed out—when, for instance, a bird expert says, "The swallows are the light cavalry of the army of birds, ever on the move, always on the skirmish line, foraging the fields of air, constantly on the alert to cut off stragglers from insect camps and missing no opportunity to destroy these enemies of the farmer."

The phrases quoted are used in the opening paragraph of a bulletin issued by the United States department of agriculture. It is entitled, "Food Habits of the Swallows, a Family of Valuable Native Birds." It is the last work done by one of the greatest economic ornithologists the world has produced; Prof. F. E. L. Beal, for 25 years an assistant in the bureau of biological survey, and whose death occurred October 1, 1916.

The bulletin deals with the seven species of swallow that are of wide distribution in the United States, the Purple Martin, the Cliff swallow, the Barn swallow, the Tree swallow, the Violet-Green swallow, the Bank swallow and the Rough-Winged swallow. The food habits of all the species are, of course, similar, but they vary in certain more or less important details. It is shown, for instance, that while the other six species eat practically no vegetable food except such as is incidentally taken with insect food, the Tree swallow occasionally makes a full meal of berries or seeds. It is definitely shown, however, that no swallow consumes any vegetable food that is of use to man, only worthless forms of wild berries and seeds being taken. And even this forms such a small part of the total diet as to be negligible. Except for the Tree swallow, the vegetable element will not average one-half of 1 per cent of the total diet.

With few exceptions, the insects eaten by swallows are injurious. Since swallows take their food on the wing, it follows that they must feed upon flying insects, and, for the most part, predacious beetles and other beneficial ground-frequenting forms escape. The biggest single item in the swallow diet is Diptera, the order of insects to which belong flies, gnats and mosquitoes. This item constitutes nearly 27 per cent of the total when averaged for the seven species. The next largest item is Hemiptera, the order of insects including the chinch bug, plant lice and the like. It is shown that, of the beetles eaten, a large part is made up of weevils, including the cotton boll weevil, the clover weevil, the strawberry weevil, the alfalfa weevil, which is a recently imported pest, and other highly destructive weevils.

On the whole, the swallows are shown to be a highly beneficial bird family and deserving of all the encouragement and protection that can be given.

Pitcher Jack Coombs Is to Retire This Year—To Look After Business Interests.

Jack Coombs announces that this will be his last year in baseball. At least he declares it to be his last year as an active player and perhaps nothing short of a managerial job will tempt him to remain.

Colby Jack's contract with the Brooklyn club expires this year, which is the reason he is making the announcement. He feels that he has



Jack Coombs.

served his time as a pitcher, but he has also built up a number of business interests which are paying him good dividends, and this is probably the real reason why he intends to retire from the game.

Coombs makes his home at Palestine, Texas, where he has a general merchandise store in addition to being interested in two banks. His business has been growing with the boom times and he feels that there will no longer be any necessity of playing baseball for a living.

Importance of a Tan Coat Depends on How Acquired.

Tan is the result of the action of chemical rays or of the ultra-violet rays of the solar light on the pigment of the skin. It proves nothing, says an authority, but that the skin has been exposed to photographic rays of one kind or another. The skin is also tanned by exposure to the rays of a mercury lamp, but such tan has nothing to do with health.

Tan is important and of meaning according to the circumstances under which it is acquired. Acquired at sea or by the sea as a result of life and exercise in the open air, it is a sign of health, because it accompanies general effects which are lacking in the conditions of electric tan.

Electric tan is accompanied by no multiplication of red corpuscles in the blood, such as exercise produces, insuring a renewal of physical strength.

Eggless Breakfast Soon.

Pennsylvania, which has been taking a census of its fowl population, finds that it has 4,000,000 less chickens than a year ago. Three-fourths of the decrease is in laying hens.

About 90 per cent of Norway's dentists are graduates of American dental colleges or have taken post-graduate courses in the United States.

POULTRY DON'TS

Don't allow your hens to eat decayed flesh of any kind unless you want them to get down with limerneck and have many of them die from the effect of it.

Don't allow filth and dampness to abound in and around your poultry roosting house; it will cause roup and its various attending ills.

Don't let the mites and lice get the upper hand about your place and cause you untold trouble and loss of both old and young stock.

Don't be afraid to give your fowls an abundance of green stuff at all seasons and all times; it is their salvation, whether they are old or young.

Don't be afraid to invest a few dollars in good stock any more than you would in improved seeds and grain to insure success.

Don't keep any males with the females unless you intend hatching the eggs. Eggs for market will keep much longer if they are not fertile.

Don't put all sizes, shapes and colors of eggs in one lot for market; learn to grade them so they will look as much like one hen laid them all as possible.

Don't allow a dirty, stale egg to go into your market basket, no matter how high they are or how badly you need the money.

Don't be afraid to work with your poultry the year round, as it is the only road to success, and one must stick to the right track. Keep up interest in your poultry both winter and summer. No matter what other duties you have, they should not be neglected.

Don't expect every egg to hatch when you buy eggs for that purpose from some good breeder. Your own eggs as a rule will not do that well.

Scientific Facts.

The Siamese government has consolidated a civil service college and a medical school into a university to provide instruction in all the higher branches of education.

A method for rebuilding worn-out automobile tires and making them puncture proof with fabric woven from thread and a vegetable fiber has been invented by a Californian.

Oils obtained from Antaretic sea leopards, seals and penguins have been tested by scientists in London and found useful for soap and leather making and for heating purposes.

Ants in the Kitchen.

In regard to the question as to how to get rid of small ants in a kitchen, the Indiana state entomologist says: "One of the best remedies is to make a sirup of four ounces of sugar to one-half pint of water, and after this sirup has boiled add one ounce of sodium fluoride. Moisten a sponge with this and put it in a can that has some holes punched in it; then place this where the ants are most numerous. The idea is to get the ants feeding on this and in that way carry some back to their nest. If they stop feeding, move the can back a short distance and they will again start eating. The can should be kept moist with this sirup and the ants will soon disappear."

Japan has superseded China as the chief source of supply for tea used in the United States.