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SPEEDING THE PARTING.

Host—So sorry you have to be
going.

Guest—Indeed I am, too. By the
way, I'm not sure about my train.

It's nine something, but—

Host's Little Son—It's 9:32. Pa
said he hoped you'd take that one.

Boston Transcript.

"BIRDIOLA"

By LILLIAN CYR.

(© 1921 by McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

Theed, in spotless white flannels,
sauntered aimlessly down the sun-
baked sidewalk in Newspaper Row. It
was June, and the abhorred quest for
education was temporarily suspended.
In September he would enter Worces-
ter high, as a junior, an estimable ac-
quisition in Theed's opinion. He slowed
down to a halt in front of a hitching
post, and, having languidly reached out
for its iron ring, he twirled it absently.

He was in one of those day dreams
boys have. His eyes remained open;
but he saw nothing. It has to be ad-
mitted that three-quarters of Theed's
dreams, waking and sleeping, were of
Anita, the girl who wore his fraternity
pin, and whose lovely hand he had
kissed in a pageant in which they had
been the star performers.

He turned back up Newspaper row
and down Old South to Anita's home.
He hesitated with bewildering indeci-
sion at her gate, shyness or some other
boyish attribute, having seized him;
then he walked away. He soon re-
turned, playing a melancholy air on a
newly bought small instrument of
baked clay, called a "Birdiola," said
instrument containing ten holes for ten
fingers and capable of a series of
wied and depressing whistling tones.

He had nearly passed the house
when Anita hailed him from the plaza.

"On up, and have some lemon-
ade," she invited.

He pocketed his instrument and
sank down in a comfortable wicker
chair, while the little hostess presided
over the drinks and edibles.

"What is it?" asked Anita, not with-
out some curiosity, "that thing you
were blowing?"

"This," said Theed, holding up the
instrument, and adopting the manner
and the fluency of the young clerk in
the music store who sold it to him, "is
a 'birdiola,' an instrument of rare
qualities. From it one may induce the
calls, the whistles of any bird, or all
birds—"

"Here comes Fred. Hello, Freddie,"
called Anita sweetly. "Oh, I'm so glad
you brought your clarinet."

"Hello, Laurie, ol' top," said Fred,
gayly.

"How d'y do," Theed responded,
stiffly. He thoroughly disliked Fred
and his clarinet.

A bit later the two boys rose to go.
"I'm glad you boys are coming to my
party," smiled Anita, "and Freddie,
bring your clarinet."

The day for Anita's party arrived.
Theed made an elaborate toilet and
proceeded to Anita's.

A few minutes before the dancing
began Theed made his way to Anita's
side to claim her first dance.

"I just promised Fred," said Anita.

"You promised it to me Monday af-
ternoon when we were sitting in the
hammock. Don't you remember?"
asked Theed, pained that she should
have forgotten that wondrous incident.

"No."

"Well, this is my dance, Anita. You
promised me first," Theed declared
stubbornly.

"Here comes Fred. Hurry, Theed.
Find a partner before the dance be-
gins."

Theed stared at her in amazement.
"Very well," he said coldly.

And he did find a partner. A visit-
ing girl received him tenderly.

At first he was a bit bored, his mind
more on Anita's behavior than the
lively talk of his companion, but she
really was interesting, and Theed
could not help coming out of his sad
mood.

Great was Anita's indignation to find
him so absorbed in that visitor that
he had not returned to her for a single
dance.

During an intermission Anita had
Fred play his clarinet. At the first
soft tentative toot Theed rose and
slipped out of the room.

Fred was part through his ovation
when he was startled by the wild trill-
ing of a bobolink, which was repeated
at intervals to the end of his recital.
In several parts of his song sheeplike
bleats and "moos" suggestive of cows
exchanged places with the short, tenta-
tive toots and issued from his clarinet
in rural discord. At the end of the
song, however, polite clapping greeted
Fred.

"Anita," he begged, "explain to them.
That bird outside. Oh, my reputa-
tion's lost!" He was breathless and
his complexion assumed a bright pink.

"Just then through the open window
there floated a melancholy air. Both
Fred and Anita recognized the dread-
ful whistling tones as those of Theed's
"birdiola." Fred was angry. Anita
was pleased at Theed's flare of jeal-
ousy.

The mournful tone was touching,
even if the tones were depressing. An-
ita ran out on the piazza and shut the
screen door softly behind her.

"Theed," she called tremulously.

Anita sat down in a chair beside
him. "Play for me," she commanded.

Theed brightened visibly and raised
the "birdiola" to his lips.

Light-hearted once more, the de-
pressing whistling tones of the "birdi-
ola" grated on Anita's sensibilities.

"Theed," she said solemnly, "your
"birdiola" has become very dear to us.
Please give it to me and I will keep
it and cherish it forever and ever."

A wise little miss, Anita. She was
insuring quiet enjoyment for herself
in Theed's future visits. It was true
that the instrument had bridged the
estrangement between them, but it
was a "birdiola."

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