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A Compromise

By MRS. RACHEL L. OLMSTEAD

My husband is an excellent, good, pure, noble man. He has but one fault—he is very unreasonable. This defect in his character is especially noticeable in the choice of a place to spend our summer vacation.

Last year Frank and I discussed for two months this question as to where we should go for two weeks. Frank wished to go to some secluded spot in the mountains where he could take a rest. He works very hard, and fourteen days is all the recreation he gets during the whole year. That being the case, I couldn't see why he should want to go to a poky place where he wouldn't meet any one, with nothing to see and nothing to do all day long.

I am shut up at home all winter with no maid and a couple of little children, and I can't get out at all in the evening because they must not be left alone. The consequence is that all the nice dresses and things I buy are for summer. That's the only season I can wear them. Now, isn't it provoking that when the summer comes I must go to some out of the way place where a calico gown would do me as well as a silk one?

Last spring when it came time to engage board for our outing, after disputing for two months where we should go, Frank maintained that since he must have his rest in his own way we had better go to different places. He would get rid of the continued clatter the children make and the annoyance of having to correct them every time they misbehaved. I could go to a seashore resort, where, as he put it, I could show my fine clothes. That's all the sympathy a wife gets from her husband—just as if there was any use to buy nice things for no one to see.

Well, Frank went off to a one horse town in the mountains, stopping at a hotel near by. I went to a large seaside city where there were thousands of people coming and going every day. It was very nice to be in the whirl, but unfortunately I struck a spell of bad weather. For three days there was nothing but rain and fog. Then a chill northeast wind sprang up, and I thought I should freeze. The children, who had anticipated so much pleasure playing in the sand and running in bare legs in the foam, couldn't go out at all, and I was obliged to devote myself to them all the while. I couldn't play nurse and wear good clothes; besides, the weather was too cold for my thin dresses.

So there I was. I had been on the coast for three days when I received a letter from Frank saying that he was doing splendidly in the mountains. The weather there was fine, the air was bracing, and it seemed as if he drew in strength with every breath. He supposed I and the children sat all day on the beach with the warm sun pouring down on us (when it wasn't too hot) watching the beautiful blue waves roll in. He could almost hear the children laughing and shouting as they ran about in the sunshine. And he could fancy me dressed in those clothes I had been all winter preparing for the occasion looking as pretty as a peech mingling with well dressed people.

Wasn't it aggravating? I just made up my mind that I'd wait till the first week was up and if the weather didn't mend I'd pack up and join Frank. There wasn't any use in my staying where I was on account of my clothes when I couldn't wear them, and if I were with Frank he could relieve me of the children. He would have had a week's absence from them and would now doubtless be glad to take them out walking and driving and boating.

Well, the weather didn't improve—that is, it cleared up for one day, then the clouds came again and it was worse than ever. Every day I studied the weather reports, and when on the sixth day there was a prediction that another storm was collecting in some out of the way place in northwestern Canada I telegraphed Frank that I was coming and took the next train.

We reached his place of rest in the evening and drove to his hotel in beautiful moonlight. But the next morning we awoke with the rain coming down worse than anything I had seen at the seashore. And what do you think Frank said? He accused me of bringing the bad weather with me.

Well, here I was with my costumes that I'd had so much trouble to procure still in my trunk. The only comfort in this was that even if the weather had been fine nobody wore flannel, and it would have been out of place. Tom did help me with the children, playing games with them, and when ever there was a temporary let up between the showers he would take them out for walks. The boats were too wet for rowing and the roads too muddy for driving. What were my feelings when I read in the papers that at the seashore where I had been it had cleared up the day after I left and the safety was booming!

One day before we went home we had sunshine, and this was all the pleasure I got on my outing. We agreed that we would not try the separation plan again. So this year we decided we should go together. We disputed over it the same as last year. I wishing to try the seashore again, Frank wishing to get his rest in the mountains. Finally we concluded to compromise. We went to the seashore.

Mr. Johnson's Three Trunks

By M. QUAD
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Lemuel Johnson was twenty-two years old and had just finished the carpenter's trade when he got married. He earned good wages, lived as happy as the average and nothing of moment occurred until the week he was forty years old.

A farmer living six miles from the village wanted a barn built, and one evening the carpenter hired a horse and buggy to drive out there. This was the last seen of him for twenty-three years. An hour after starting the horse came back alone and with the lines dragging. Of course the inference was that Mr. Johnson had been thrown out on the road, and searchers started out. By the light of their lanterns they found where the rig had been turned around, but there was no man there with broken bones.

There was a search that lasted for months, but not the slightest clew could be found. Mr. Johnson had vanished from sight as if he had been pulled up into the air. A good many wise men gave thought to the mystery, but it was a stone wall for all of them. The carpenter had no enemies, was at peace with his wife, and that he should have been fatally assaulted by robbers and his body buried was not to be thought of. After five years his widow married again and after ten she died.

Lemuel Johnson had left three brothers and two sisters behind him. In time all married and all had homes in and around the village. After those twenty-three years Moses came riding into the town on the stage one day. He was now an old man, gray haired, bowbacked and none too spry. He had three heavy trunks with him. There were but few to remember him, and for three or four days he was looked upon with suspicion.

As to why and how he disappeared Lemuel explained that as he was driving along the highway a sudden faintness overcame him and he must have pitched out on his head. When he recovered consciousness he had forgotten his name and all else in the past. He had a dim remembrance of walking across fields and traveling by cars and of being called by another name. One morning after twenty-two years had passed, he woke up clear headed. He was Lemuel Johnson again. He learned from others that he had been living under the name of Joe White and had been a miner and prospector and mine owner for many years. He was a rich and respected man.

As soon as Lemuel came to himself he felt a longing for wife and home. He didn't start off with a rush. He wanted to settle up his business and then came along by easy stages.

The restored missing man didn't weep over the death of his wife. He just arranged to settle down and take comfort for the rest of his days. He thought he would board at the tavern, but the three brothers and two sisters, all of whom were alive and kicking, cried out:

"Lemuel, we can't permit it. You must come and live with us. You poor man, but the best is none too good for you after what you have gone through."

"But I shan't pay board," announced the returned wanderer.
"Of course not."
It was plain to all that Mr. Johnson was a crank before he started in, but an old man with three trunks full of cash and only a few years to live must be allowed special privileges. There were three children in the first family, and they were kept half scared to death. Even the dog did not dare bark. Lemuel demanded canned oysters, fried chicken, boiled eggs, custard pie, raisin cake, currant jelly, raspberry jam, porterhouse steak, lobster and whatever might be called for at a first class hotel.

As he lived with one family so he lived with all. He had an iron rule. If he wanted the whole family to get up at midnight and sing a hymn with him and play the tune on the parlor organ, out of bed they had to come.

When the wanderer first came back it didn't look as if he would live the year out. In fact, a doctor examined him and reported:

"He is on his last legs, and you might as well order his coffin. I never have seen a human system so shattered."

That shattered system began to pick right up next day, however. Lemuel straightened his back, got the bow out of his legs and in a few weeks was jumping fences to show that nothing ailed him. Instead of stepping off at sixty-four, he was as chirp as a cricket at seventy.

Not one cent of his own money did the old man use. He made his relatives hand over. He smoked good cigars, ate a heap of candy and wore good clothes. A thousand times the family he was stopping with wanted to boot him out; but, alas, there were four other families ready to take him in.

Lemuel was killed by accident, an old tree falling on him on a windy day. When he had been buried the brothers and sisters examined the three trunks. They had agreed to make a fair divide in case no will was to be found. The contents of the trunks consisted of old papers and brickbats. No will—no money. Lemuel had simply played it low down on the whole hand. The minister conducting the funeral said he trusted that Brother Johnson had gone to heaven. All the surviving relatives trusted he hadn't. In fact, they wanted to bet he hadn't.

The Right Of Proposal

By SARA L. WHITING

Charles and Edward Duffield were of opposite dispositions, Charles being one of those outspoken, generous fellows whom every one loves. He was older than his brother, who was selfish, polite and practical. When Charles had finished his education his father, who was a manufacturer on a large scale, offered his elder son an interest in his business. The offer was declined with the words: "Father, I would bring you to bankruptcy within two years. There is not a business hair in my head. I shall study art."

Mr. Duffield took his second son out of college, put him into his factory and advanced him rapidly. He wrote Charles, who was in Italy studying art, "Since you have decided to spend a dreamer's life perhaps you will be able to live on dreams." To this the son replied that he understood perfectly his father's life had been that of a business man and it was natural that he should look at things in a business light. He, Charles, was born with an artist's temperament and would be happy in his work.

Both Charles and Edward Duffield had been attentive to the same girl, Ethel Sanger was one to keep her own counsel. Up to a certain point neither brother had offered himself to her, though Edward had come very near it. But no one except the lady knew how the matter stood between the trio. Charles on going to Italy at the time he declined his father's proposition left Edward master of the field.

Edward made an excellent business man. He had a certain faculty that is valuable in business. He would as a buyer grind the seller and as a seller get the best price for his goods. Besides, he could figure expenses down to the lowest notch. He assumed first place under his father and worked so hard that he undermined his health. His doctor ordered him away, and he started on a trip around the world. He had been trying to induce Miss Sanger to engage herself to him for some time, but without success. Just before he started on his tour he made a last attempt and succeeded. Edward gave her to understand that if he could go abroad with the anticipation of claiming her as his bride he would have a better chance to regain his health. She considered it under the circumstances her duty to accept him.

While Edward was away his mother pined at the absence of both her sons at the same time and wrote Charles begging him to return to America. It was quite a setback to him in his profession to leave his studies at that time, but he listened to the call of duty and returned at once. He was received coldly by his father, who had not forgiven him for thwarting his wishes to take up a business career with a view to becoming his successor. Nevertheless, Charles was his favorite son, and no one doubted that he would inherit his share of his father's estate.

Charles had not been at home a month before Mr. Duffield, after an illness of a few days, died. When the will was opened it was discovered that all the property except the widow's share had been bequeathed to Edward. The Duffield family seemed doomed to sudden and continued afflictions, for scarcely had the father died and the will read when a cablegram came from Japan announcing the death there of Edward. This put a different complexion on the inheritance. Charles would come in as his brother's heir and thus, after all, a doubly rich man.

Charles wrote Miss Sanger that since she would have inherited his brother's fortune instead of himself as Edward's heir had Edward live to return he proposed to make over Edward's inheritance under the law to her, adding that he (Charles) and his mother would have left sufficient for both. After the elapse of some days he received a note from the lady declining the offer. Surprised, he asked if she would accept half of Edward's share. This she also declined.

Charles was puzzled. He had loved the girl and loved her still, but she had accepted his brother, and he presumed she loved or had loved her fiancé. The idea entered Charles' mind that possibly after a sufficient period had elapsed to enable her to recover from her grief she might accept an estate that she should have inherited from Edward by marrying Charles. So he determined to wait awhile.

But the poorest man in the world to wait is one in love. One evening Charles called upon Miss Sanger with the intention of proposing his plan by which she might after all accept the fortune she should have had. Miss Sanger came into the room wearing the serious demeanor of one who had recently been bereaved. Nevertheless there seemed to be an underlying cause for pleasure. Duffield noticed that she held in her hand a long, fat envelope.

He entered upon his proposition stumbingly. The lady heard him through; then, instead of replying, she handed him the envelope, saying she had received it by mail from Japan that morning. It was a will drawn by his brother leaving all he possessed to her. Since the father had died ten days before the son, the property involved belonged to Ethel Sanger instead of Charles Duffield.

Duffield rose and was about to depart when she called him back and threw her arms around him. It was she who had the right of proposal, so far as fortune was concerned.

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