

THE WOMAN'S BEST SHORT FICTION

MISS JANUMIT LATLIT—By Empeigh Merwyn



"Running wildly and crying piteously"

It was on this wise that that pathetic, elusive, bewildering little personality first came into our childish lives.

We were comfortably established one hot afternoon on the piazza of the cottage, to which we had fled yesterday from Chicago August. My wife rocked lazily, her basket of embroidery on her lap, while I swayed slowly in the hammock, with a vague notion of reading at some pleasantly indefinite moment of the future, from the magazine in my hand.

The prospect of a month's freedom from the office—where I had left matters in good shape—imparted an optimistic tinge to my mood. I began to expatiate aloud upon our good luck in having discovered this pretty Michigan lake, which we knew no one and need not be bothered by callers dropping in—

"Where we can't even hear the children in the next flat," Bess put in.

"Yes," I acquiesced, "the wide expanse of territory between us and that cottage just beyond the point forms a sufficiently large light-shaft to deaden sounds of—"

It was at this moment that we heard a wail of childish agony that brought us both to our feet.

"No, no, no—oh!"

On the grass plot between us and the lake a tiny girl, perhaps three years old, was running wildly and crying piteously. We caught a vision of a little face of terror, before she flung herself upon the ground, burying her face in her arm, shrieking and kicking.

Bess—not so feet of foot as she was fifteen years ago—was nevertheless ahead of me, and bending over the little writhing figure, murmuring endearments.

The child sat upright, with flushed face, staring in surprise, in her grief and terror she had not seen us.

"What is the matter, you little precious thing?" asked my wife tenderly.

She wore a dainty pink frock, her hair was a mass of kinky yellow, her eyes were bluish grey, and all else visible of her was as described as peachy. Bess had gathered her up and was acting as though she actually was the fruit that she suggested.

"What made you cry, baby?" I inquired.

The tot looked at me an instant, then, surprise, to which the terror had given place, changed in its turn to an enchanting smile.

"I Mish Janumit Latlit," she said, as if that settled the whole matter.

I looked at Bess in bewilderment.

"She's telling you her name, stupid!—the little darling!" To the child, "What did you say your name is, Pet?"

"I Mish Janumit Latlit," she repeated.

"Janumit Latlit—what a name! And for such a little blossom! But why did you cry so, darling—Janumit?"

At Bess's question the baby's smile vanished, the look of fear and anguish returned, and clasping Bess's neck the child cried out, "Don't let her git me—don't let her git me—no, no, no!"

"Who wants to get you, baby?" I asked.

She looked at me, her little countenance distorted with fear. "Janumit's 'tep-muvver," she said. "Don't let her git me! No, no!"

might discharge itself. But the child began to cry again piteously, the word "whip" evidently having suggested the cruel treatment to which she had been subjected.

"Don't let her git me—no, no, no, no!" Janumit wailed away, way off!

She struggled out of Bess's encircling arms and flung herself face downward upon the floor, screaming upon her little arm, as when we first saw her, on the grass. Of all pitiful variations of baby woe I had never heard the like before; it seemed as though the little creature, in her short life, might have run the entire gamut of infantile suffering.

Bess's face was white and her lips formed a horizontal line—that I knew well—as she gave me one look. Then she swooped down upon the agitated pink mass and gathered the little sufferer with ineffable tenderness.

"You little flower, you shall not be 'sapped' here!" My little precious one don't cry any more now, darling—there, there, there!"

The baby looked up into her face with big eyes of wonder. It was plain that such treatment puzzled her—evidently enough, caresses and terms of passionate endearment were new to her experience.

"I Mish Janumit Latlit," she said, with a smile that might have fractured adamant.

"Yes, darling, yes, sweet," said Bess, soothingly. "Where do you live, Janumit, dear?"

"Way, way off, ovy there," she pointed to the opposite shore of the lake.

"How do you suppose she could get here?" I murmured incredulously.

The child held up her arms, wailing away, way off in 'e boat. 'Tepmuvver 'lan't git me now!" The little face began to pucker up into its look of agony.

Bess darted a glance of reproach at me. "Don't ask such questions, Robert! Do you want to make her cry herself sick?"

My offences are often of an occult nature, although my wife can detect them every time. But I made no protest—the matter in hand was too tragic—as I watched Bess exerting every effort to soothe the little, moaning creature.

At last we were half distracted. All the soothing and caressing seemed but to make matters worse. "For heaven's sake, Robert, do something!" commanded Bess, at her wife's end.

I hastily made a collection of articles that seemed to me sufficiently gaudy and curious—or breakable and valuable—to attract a young child's fancy. We finally got her attention, and after a time she forgot her troubles in the examination of a red leather needle-book.

"The sorrows of childhood," I remarked, somewhat tritely, "are quickly healed."

Bess was bent upon keeping the sorrows of this specimen of childhood permanently healed. "We must not let her cry again!" she said sternly, then, in a rapturous tone—"Now, precious, you are going to have the nicest time and be so happy!" It is perhaps needless to say that the first remark was addressed to me, the second to the baby.

She now constructed a throne of pillows in the hammock, and when the child was ensconced thereon, all the valuables in our possession were piled up on her lap, the overflow being placed upon a chair within easy reach. The little peachy creature took to playing contentedly with the skeins of brilliant embroidery-silks, pouring out over them a flood of the most delectable baby-prattle that I ever heard. We looked at each other.

"What are you going to do, Robert?"

"Dot! I don't see anything to do now—the child has stopped crying—"

"As if that were the end!" she cried scornfully. "Do you think that I shall let that little, blessed baby go back to an inhuman—"

she paused, glancing apprehensively toward the hammock. Janumit was talking to herself and subjecting the silks to such an ordeal that I, recalling an occasion when I once inadvertently produced a slight confusion in the work-basket, began to fear for her. But Bess beamed upon her. "She shall scrouze the silks all up, she wants to, the darling!" she boomed. "Would you like to stay here, sweetheart, all the time, and have all the pretty things to play with? Would you, Janumit?"

The child looked into Bess's eyes with the steady stare of childhood. When the question was repeated, she said, with that entrancing smile, "Yes, she wants to, the darling!" Then she went hastily back to the silks, "scrouzing" up the silks. Presently we heard her talking to herself:

"Want to 'tay wiv 'e nice lagy an' 'e mams and play wiv 'e pitty dngs, Janumit!"

"What is this, dearest?"

"You sweet little thing!" Bess lifted the hurt wretch tenderly, preparatory to removing the awkward bandage, but the child screamed with pain.

"No, no, no! don't touch it—I got hurt—I, I got hurt—I!" She struggled down to the floor in terror.

When Bess had convinced her that we would not interfere with the little injured arm, and had coaxed her back to her lap, I asked, "How did you get hurt, little Janumit?"

She stared into my eyes for a few seconds, in silence, as though reluctant in her baby soul, to reveal the cruel truth. Then, with great solemn eyes, she said in that irresistible baby patois, "I got hur-r-t! yessady-day, 'Tepmuvver hit Janumit wiv 'a knife, 'a bid knife!"

My wife began to shower passionate kisses over her face and neck and hair. I got up and walked hastily across the piazza and back. Bess is far from strong, and what we had been listening to—the little victim before

me—was enough to upset stronger nerves than hers. I was not surprised to find her sobbing and crying into the yellow mass of hair.

Little Janumit manifested the same surprise as before at the caresses lavished upon her. And now when the "nice lagy" began to weep, the child gazed in consternation. Then the flood of her own grief broke forth anew. The grief had been tearless before, but now she sobbed and sobbed, and abundant tears assuaged the pretty little countenance. I looked on helplessly at the two.

Presently she began to comfort Bess. "Don't cry, lady, don't cry!" she begged, kissing her and clasping her neck.

This touching development brought Bess to herself. She put an end to her own sobbing and devoted herself to calming the child. This, however, was not an easy matter this time. We have learned since then that the blessed little soul cannot endure to see anyone else crying—the sight of another's tears affects her more profoundly than the cruel experiences of "Mish Janumit Latlit" herself.

In desperation I produced my watch. I do not, as a rule, cherish the idea of beholding my watch in the clutch of immaturity, devoted to robust uses for which it was not designed. But I made this sacrifice willingly, and after we got her attention, I rejoiced to see the snickers of my measure.

Great was our relief when the sobbing and tears finally ceased entirely, and the baby, tired-out, leaned her yellow head against Bess's breast, the "pitty tek-tek" clasped in her plump hand.

Presently the long lashes began to waver and fall, and now we beheld that ever-beautiful phenomenon of childhood, when the seemingly tireless activity of the little individuality gradually yields to the peace of oncoming sleep.

"So sleepy," she murmured. "Then the blue-grey 'deeps were ob-

scured by the white coverings deeply fringed with black—sleep resigned!"

I shall not attempt to describe my emotions as I gazed at little Janumit asleep in my wife's embrace. Thus far we had not felt the lack of children. Youth and middle-age have many diversions, but a childless old age—I had thought of that before.

My deep-seated aversion to action on the impulse of strong emotion, my prudence, my apprehension of probable practical difficulties in the way of taking this child—well, if there had not been written in me something very strong combating all these considerations, I knew the import of that look in Bess's eyes as she hugged the child to her breast. I have never regretted that I concealed my feelings—partially, at least—putting forward the practical, prudent side; I am a generous man, and am willing to let my wife have the satisfaction of having taken the initiative in the adoption of little Janumit.

I waited until she began—as I knew she would—"Robert, you may be hard-hearted if you like, but I shall never allow this child to fall into the hands of that inhuman—!" She set her teeth. "And what is more, I shall keep her myself."

"I know how you feel, my dear," I said indulgently. "I only desire to caution you against allowing your feelings to run away with you. A woman is all feeling—"

"Feeling!" indignantly. "And what is a man under such circumstances, I wish to know?"

"A man at least attempts to govern feeling by reason," I said mildly. "Now it occurs to me at once to wonder if there might not be some exaggeration in the statements of this child—"

"Robert Evans, this is no place for you to drag in that hateful pessimism of yours and air your knowledge of human depravity! The idea that such a baby could speak anything but the truth; I am ashamed of you!"

"Squelched here, I began again. "But, my dear Elizabeth, there are matters that ought to be considered. There is heredity, for instance—now what do we know of this child's antecedents?"

"Herodity!" Look and tone united to wither me. "What do I care for heredity? Humanity is enough for me—especially such an adorable specimen of it as this."

"She is certainly a fine child," I conceded; "apparently without drawbacks, physical or mental. Everything seems to be normal, with the possible exception of her fantastic name."

"I like her name—it is so quaint, it seems to suit her, somehow, the little dear!" Now she veered round and took me unexpectedly. "Robert, you don't mean a word that you say—her intuition is sometimes startling—"

you are just talking to hear yourself talk—you want this child just as much as I do! We've been growing frightfully selfish—a child in our home will be our salvation. And this precious little blossom—if providence didn't bring her to us, what did, I should like to know!"

Unable to answer this, I mused a moment. Then I resumed—less hypocritically. "Granting the perfect eligibility of the child for adoption and our desire to avail ourselves of the apparently providential opportunity, you must recall, my dear, that there may be legal obstacles."

"What legal obstacles?" She braced herself to meet them on the spot.

"Well, the child is not ours, you see."

"Oh, indignantly, 'it belongs to the stepmother, no doubt!'"

"There is the father to be reckoned with. He may not wish to resign his offspring, and he would, in that case have the laws on his side."

"Oh, then, the laws of this civilized land would take a helpless little child and hand it over to be beaten and abused! Very well, then, I will break the laws—all of them, if necessary—and do the country a service, too!"

Her idea, evidently, was that breaking a law constituted its repeal and erasure from the statute books.

"But my woman's instinct tells me that there is some way to evade such laws—and you will have to find it, Robert!" That is the usual way—her woman's instinct seems something, but she must hunt around and get it located when she needs to use it. "Do you think that any jury would tear this ridiculous name we don't know—"

Bess's acquaintance with proceedings at law is slight, and her ideas on the subject present an interesting vagueness. She must first buy the goods. Then she persistently applied a well-known dye to these locks and eventually they turned a bronze green.

Dry hair seems more apt to turn grey than oily hair, and the woman who has such hair accompanied by a dry, scaly dandruff on the scalp should use massage with vaseline or olive oil. Generally speaking, however, grey hairs are due to some organic condition, general debility and nervous disorders. The woman who wishes to prevent her hair from turning grey should look well to her health and

After a quick glance at Bess, the young woman resumed. "Sometimes I am a little worried for fear Marjorie will grow up among of young-motherly anxiety, but she was playing for time—our attitude was peculiar, but we were yet the persons to whom she was indebted for taking in her little runaway. "But my husband thinks that it is just imagination."

"Imagination, pure and simple," said the young man promptly. "The adventures of Miss Janumit Latlit would make your hair stand on end!"

Bess would no longer serve as a model for a sculptor with a commission for a figure to be called Defiance, and I had so far recovered myself as to place chairs for our visitors.

The young woman, with a growing appreciation of what the situation might be, asked, a mischievous gleam in her eyes, "What has been telling you? Lately, Janumit has had a cruel stepmother."

My wife's face grew red. The young people were politely striving to keep their amusement down. I reflected on the wisdom of honesty and candor.

"Well, we might as well own that we were a little wrought up by the child's story. To tell the truth, I thought it rather preposterous. I did not look at Bess, but she did look at me. "But my wife is very tender of heart, and I don't mind telling you that she had decided to adopt the child."

"Bess now spoke with dignity. "I shall not attempt to conceal from you, Mrs. Dent, that my husband had just started out, when you came, to consult the authorities and find out the laws of this State for the protection of children."

Then we all gave up, and vented our varied emotions in the same way.

In the course of explanations, freely interspersed with laughter, Bess indicated the bandaged arm.

The mother seized it ruthlessly and, removing the "hannachness," displayed a plump and flawless member. "She gets hurt constantly," she explained, "so as to bandage the wound. She bandages my fingers and arms as long as I let her, and then she gets 'hur-r-t' herself in every conceivable place. She is going to be a nurse, I think."

"If she isn't a confidence lady, or a dealer in gold bricks," said the father, "Want to go home, wight now?" said the child impudently. "Want to see my dolly-fwing!"

"But you said you would stay with us, darling," said Bess, with reproach that was not all feigned.

The young father surveyed the collection of valuables that covered the piazza and chuckled softly, as he rose and swung his offspring to his shoulder.

"Where is Miss Janumit Latlit?" I demanded.

"Goned way off! Way up in 'e'ky, on 'e choo-choo car!" with a last magnificent sweep of fancy.

Then she rode away triumphantly on the broad shoulder of "Mr. Latlit," to the cottage just beyond the point, where "Marzhry, the uvver itty girl," lived.

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to snatch the child from her grasp. She pointed dramatically to the little bandaged arm, that we had not dared to touch.

"Do you suppose," she breathed, "that the little thing had to bind that up herself?"

I arose and walked up and down to banish a mental picture of my own—a little shrieking innocent and an inhuman creature wearing the outward semblance of a woman! I do not know what my face said, but when I stood again before Bess and the sleeping child, my hat in my hand, my wife gave me a long look of perfect sympathy.

"You may rest assured," I said decidedly, "that I shall investigate this matter. I know little of the laws of this State, but I venture to say that the statute books contain some provision against cruelty to children. You would better keep the child hidden—out of sight—while I go up to the hotel and make some inquiries. Then I will go at once to the village and consult the proper authorities."

As I descended the steps, the sound of voices came from the direction of the lake. A young man and woman were hurrying along looking in every direction.

"Now don't worry, Milly," I heard the man say. "She'll turn up all right pretty soon—she never gets hurt, you know that! Probably they have taken her in some cottage."

At this they both looked toward our cottage, and the man said in a voice of relief, "There she is—right there—on that porch! I see her pink dress."

They came rapidly toward us. I looked at Bess, and she looked at me, and hugged little Janumit closer.

The man stood at the foot of the steps. He removed his hat and stood there, smiling. "I hope, Madam," he said, "that you have not been annoyed too much. My wife and I went to the city this morning, and left our little girl with a friend. We have just come back to find that she slipped away and that they've been looking for her for an hour."

He was a good looking young fellow of about thirty, with nothing in his appearance to make it impossible for him to be the father of such a beautiful child as Janumit. But what excuse can there be for a man, who, whatever his own disappointment may be in his second marriage, can allow his own child to be grossly maltreated?

I faced him. "You are Mr. Latlit, I presume," I said icily.

He looked at me bewildered for an instant, then a broad grin began to take possession of his countenance. A little note of laughter came from the young woman behind him.

I stood, a sort of defensive outwork against them, while Bess had risen, a statuesque figure, clasping the child still closer.

Indeed, under the growing pressure the child opened her eyes upon the scene. Instantly, when she saw the newcomers, she began to struggle, and kicking herself out of Bess's arms, she fled—not to the remotest corner of the piazza, but straight into the arms of the young woman. The latter began straightway to behave much as my wife had done previously, acting under the evident delusion that the child was literally as well as metaphorically a peach. The young woman's hair was yellowish-brown, her eyes were blue-grey, and she was very good to look upon. She did not carry a knife.

"My name," said the man, still smiling, "is Dent. Did she tell you that her name was Latlit?"

"Marjorie, you naughty little rogue, what have you been doing?" The young woman shook the child, but not in a fashion accurately to be described as stepmotherly. "Did you tell the lady that your name was Janumit Latlit?"

"I jus' a-playin', Mamma!" The small imposter let forth one of those insinuating and engaging smiles with which she is accustomed to make the path of life easy for herself. Then she recollected something. "Papa, did he bring my dolly-fwing?" she demanded a dozen times.

Bess had made some progress in the process of pulling herself together. "Do you mean that her name is not—"

she began.

The young woman laughed pleasantly. "Her name is Marjorie, but she is always playing that she is Mish Janumit Latlit. Where she ever got that ridiculous name we don't know."

"But she told us all about—!" Bess stopped. "How could such a baby keep it up so long?"

"Oh, she plays it for hours, if I will only talk with her. Did you call her Janumit?"

"Why, yes, of course."

"Well, that explains it—she thought you were 'jus' a-playin', too."



"I hastily made a collection of articles"



"She rode away triumphantly"

The Art of Cleaning and Dyeing

If a little time and thought are given to the fixing up of things that have begun to look dowdy and soiled you cannot imagine how it will repay you. The process of dyeing has become so easy that almost any woman can do it successfully at home, unless the garment be extremely intricate in its style and elaborate as to trimmings. However, the small things of a girl's wardrobe can be handled at home very successfully. Take for instance, your chiffon veils that are soiled and faded. These veillings should first be washed in a warm soda and dried. Any druggist carries a full line of reliable dyes and ten-cent packages will dye a pound of goods. The dye should then be prepared and the veils dipped to the desired shade and ironed dry.

Another thing that can be successfully handled at home are the coque feather boas which fade so quickly in the summer and are soiled from the dust. Wash these first as you would the veils by making a soda and dipping the boa up and down until all the dirt has disappeared. Now dry it, and then dip it in the dye and take

it out in the open air and keep shaking it until it is quite dry. This will require fifteen or twenty minutes, but if you do not shake it dry the feathers will hang heavy and lose their fluffy appearance.

Perhaps you had a light foulard with white or pale colored background and a spot or figure running through it. This dress can be successfully dyed beyond mending with aniline dye. The figure will still show, of course, but will only be just a different tone from the solid background. Dresses of this goods that are no longer fit for general wear can be dyed and used for trimming another new dress. Cashmere dresses for the house, the skirts trimmed with bias bands of foulard silk, with kimono sleeves edged with the foulard, and a soft crushed belt of the same, are extremely pretty and would involve only the expenditure of a little money to buy eight yards of cashmere. Any soiled foulard that is beyond mending would answer for the trimming if the owner would just clean and dye it. But the point to remember is this—that all goods must be thoroughly washed until they are

free from grime and dirt, and dried, before they are put into the dye.

For your better dresses of pale colored goods, it will probably pay you to take them to a professional. Crepe de chine is very apt to fade in the process of cleaning, and often they fade just from wearing and hanging mused in the closet. These dresses should be taken to a dyeing establishment and dyed their original shade. A pale blue dress that has lost its color takes on a dirty appearance and nothing will restore it but dipping it. Pale pink shades are apt to fade and take on a yellow tinge that is most trying to the complexion.

Very few materials take black well. Many women going in mourning try to have the dresses they have on hand dyed black in order to make some use of them. This is seldom successful. Even in the finest quality of broadcloth a dyed dress is apt to come home with a gray or greenish tinge. Indeed, I think that you can have things dyed more successfully any other color than black. I know this from experience.

Ribbons dye very easily at home, and all the soiled ribbons left over from

the summer season can be dipped a dark shade and worn as belts, hair Ribbons, etc. This is pre-eminently a season where one tone is being carried out in gowns, and this means that all laces which go to trim a dress must be dyed that color. Lavender dresses are trimmed with laces dyed the same shade; brown laces are dyed made up in entire gumpies to be worn with the new shades of brown broadcloth suits. To carry out this idea you must first buy the goods. Then buy the amount of lace you want in pure white or ecru. Take a sample of the goods and the lace to any reliable dyeing establishment and they will dye it the desired shade. Hats are made of this dyed lace and much of it is used in trimming the fashionable Japanese sleeves.

Let the woman at home who wants to try her hand at this work get a ten-cent package of dye at any drug store and begin on something that is not particularly valuable. Make the dye and test its color with a piece of old rag that is clean. Go slow at first and with each time you will find that your success has grown and that in this way you can keep your little accessories in a nice fresh condition.

Care of Hair, Eyes and Nose

The man or woman who can find a panacea for the evil of grey hair will make a fortune. Thousands of women put this question to me every year. Thousands of dollars' worth of dye is sold to women who, once they begin to have grey, become helpless slaves to it. Any dye strong enough to color the hair will eventually change it from its natural color to the metallic tints that enter into the manufacture of the dye. For instance, a girl who had dark brown hair, through illness came into the possession of several prominent grey hairs among the brown. She persistently applied a well-known dye to these locks and eventually they turned a bronze green.

Dry hair seems more apt to turn grey than oily hair, and the woman who has such hair accompanied by a dry, scaly dandruff on the scalp should use massage with vaseline or olive oil. Generally speaking, however, grey hairs are due to some organic condition, general debility and nervous disorders. The woman who wishes to prevent her hair from turning grey should look well to her health and

avoid fretting. It is against my principles to furnish any of my correspondents with formulas for dyes which contain minerals; however, I am giving here an herb tea lotion which may be used without any bad results, and it may arrest the change in color. Take two ounces of green tea and two ounces of garden sage of the latest crop. Steal lifeless sage will not do. Put these two ingredients in an iron pot, pour over them three quarts of boiling water, rainwater if you can get it. Cover with a tight-fitting lid. Simmer very slowly until the liquid is reduced one-third. Remove the pot from the fire and let the liquid stand in it for 24 hours, then strain and bottle. Wet the hair with this lotion every night and sleep with a cover over your pillow, as the lotion will stain. Do not use an enameled or tin pot—the iron pot is absolutely essential.

The number of women who write to me that they would like to change the color of their eyes is simply astounding. This cannot be done. The appearance of the eyes can be changed by encouraging the growth of the eyelashes and the brows. Massage with

a little vaseline will do this. The eyebrows should be brushed and trained to a good arch. If the brows are too thick in spots these hairs should be removed with a tweezer. Dull and lifeless eyes are generally due to ill health. In fact many facial effects can be traced directly to a bad condition of the digestive organs.

This is particularly true of that common defect—a red nose. The woman who is suffering from this ailment should first treat her digestive organs and make sure by the advice of her physician that her food is assimilated. Mal-assimilation of food will cause a red nose. The only external remedy which can be used for an enlarged and discolored nose is this: One drachm of muriate of ammonia; one-half drachm of tannic acid; two ounces of glycerine, and three ounces of rosewater. The muriate and the acid should be dissolved in the glycerine and then the rosewater should be added. Take a piece of absorbent cotton and saturate it with this lotion and bind on the nose at night.