

THE FAMILY STORY



A MALE FLIRT.



SCAR EDSON was a male flirt. There wasn't a girl in Dayton who hadn't received attention from him, and just those attentions which, when a young lady receives them from a gentleman, are generally considered to "mean something."

But the Dayton girls—or all of them but one, at least—found out that such attentions, when they came from Oscar Edson, instead of "meaning something" meant precisely nothing at all.

Lucy Brown couldn't believe that all Oscar's pretty speeches and fine compliments meant nothing. He had walked with her more than with any other girl in Dayton, and she had begun to think a good deal of him. He was so devoted and kind, and all that sort of thing, that she had faith in him.

"Better be careful," said Maria Spooner, warningly. "He's the biggest flirt in Christendom. He don't mean half what he says."

"I don't believe all I hear about him," said Lucy, stoutly. "He's not a flirt."

"Yes, he is," said Maria, in a tone that indicated that no arguments would change her opinion on the subject. "Isn't he always paying attention to every girl that comes along. Lucy? Isn't he always ready to make love to a new face? You know he is."

"No; I don't know any such thing," asserted Lucy. "He's genteel and polite, and if the girls will insist on taking the attentions which are prompted by politeness for attentions of another nature, he isn't to blame, is he?"

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Maria, in disgust. "Talk to me about it all being prompted by Oscar Edson's politeness! Humph!" and Miss Spooner gave her nose an upward turn, thereby expressing her opinion of Lucy's argument, if not adding very much to her beauty.

When Oscar came to Dayton to live he kissed Lucy after a very lover-like fashion and made her promise to write often, which Lucy, putting implicit faith in him, was quite ready to do.

"She couldn't help feeling a little disappointed to think he hadn't 'spoken out.' He had known her a year, but never had said a word about marriage in all that time; and if he hadn't had the idea of marriage in his head, what had he been so devoted and so lover-like for?"

"Perhaps he wants to get started in business before he settles down," thought Lucy, and that thought comforted her.

Oscar hadn't been in Dayton a week before he struck up an acquaintance with Miss Grant.

Miss Grant was tolerably good looking and had a rich father.

Oscar began to be serious in his attentions at once. Those attentions Miss Grant received cordially.

"Business is business," thought Oscar. "A few thousands won't come amiss to me, and if I can get a good wife and a snug banking account at the same time, I ought to think myself lucky. I say, Oscar Edson, old fellow, go in and win!"

And Oscar Edson did "go in" accordingly, and for a month devoted himself wholly and unreservedly to Miss Grant.

Then fate, or accident, or some other means, threw him into a dilemma by getting him acquainted with Belle Graham.

Miss Belle Graham was a very pretty young lady, with bold black eyes and a mischief-making disposition, and as Oscar had not flirted for some time, he proceeded, after his old fashion, to lay his heart at Miss Graham's feet, metaphorically speaking, and for a month was her most devoted cavalier.

Miss Graham liked a flirtation as well as Oscar did, and was in no wise backward in playing her part.

town to visit, and then he packed up his devotion and necessities of love-making and returned, like a prodigal son, to Miss Grant.

He had been so busy! Work had been unusually driving for the last month. He couldn't get away from the office. Oscar invented a score of excuses to account for his absence, and Miss Grant graciously accepted them all, and reinstated Oscar in her good graces, and "Richard was himself again."

In August Miss Grant went out of town and Oscar had a sorry time of it for want of some one to pay attention to. While she was gone he thought over the matter seriously.

Here he was, young, good-looking, and making a nice sum of money, but in need of a home. The first step toward securing a home was to secure a wife. Why didn't he get married? Sure enough, why didn't he?

The more he thought of it the more firmly he made up his mind to take the decisive step, and accordingly he cast about in his mind as to whom he should honor by giving the privilege of becoming Mrs. Oscar Edson.

Oscar knew of three who would be glad to have him—Miss Grant, Miss Graham, and Lucy Brown. All he had to do to get one of them to be his "for better, for worse," was to give her half a chance to say yes.

"I like Lucy," he soliloquized; "but she's a plain little country girl, and her father isn't worth much, and I don't think I'll throw myself away on her. There's Miss Graham; she's smart and handsome, and her father's worth a great deal; but she's got too much temper for me. I'm afraid I don't want any of these high-flyers! Miss Grant's the most desirable person after all. Old Grant's bank account is one very satisfactory feature about the transaction. When she gets back I'll speak to her about it and have the thing off my mind."

Miss Grant came back the next week and Oscar wended his way to her home shortly after her return to inform her of the decision he had arrived at during her absence.

Miss Grant was rather cool. "She's fluffed to think I haven't spoken on the important subject before," thought Oscar.

A good chance presenting itself, Oscar proceeded to offer his heart and hand to Miss Grant after the most genteel manner possible.

He expected her to burst into a flood of thankful tears or perform some other equally original feat to demonstrate the gladness of her emotions, but she did not do anything of the kind.

"You do me a great deal of honor, I suppose," said she, in a tone which seemed to imply that she hardly considered that she was speaking truthfully, "but I don't feel like accepting it. I would refer you to Miss Graham."

Oscar was thunderstruck. He had never dreamed of anything like this. It flustered his wits up terribly for a minute or two. Then he rallied them and tried to explain matters, but Miss Grant was obstinate as a woman ever was, and would not listen to a word from him.

"Go to Miss Graham," was all she said, and Oscar at last withdrew from the field, discomfited.

"It's plain as the nose on my face that she's heard something about my flirting with Miss Graham, and she's mad about it. Confound Miss Graham!"

But after sober second thought on the matter he concluded to accept Miss Grant's advice and go to Miss Graham.

Accordingly he set off to inform Miss Graham that he had concluded to marry her.

Miss Graham was all smiles and pretty words, and Oscar felt that he had but to say the word and the thing was settled.

And by and by he proceeded to inform her of the honor he had decided to confer upon her.

"Marry you!" exclaimed Miss Graham, "why, I couldn't think of such a thing!" and she laughed as if it was the best joke of the season.

Oscar began to feel scared. "Why not?" he demanded. "Because I'm engaged to one man al-

ready and the law objects to our marrying two, you know!" And thereupon Miss Graham laughed again as if it were immensely funny.

For the life of him Oscar could not see the point.

"How long have you been engaged?" stammered Oscar, feeling cold and hot, and, to use a handy old phrase which is very expressive if not strictly elegant, "decidedly stunked."

"For as much as—let me see"—coolly—"as much as a year, I fancy. Yes. It was in October that it happened. Just about a year ago."

"And you never told me!" growled Oscar.

"You never asked me," said Miss Graham.

Poor Oscar! He gathered up his lacerated heart and withdrew from his second battlefield completely routed.

"I won't give it up!" he decided. "There's Lucy Brown. She'll have me and jump at the chance, and she's worth forty Miss Grants and a traidload of Miss Grahams! I'll write to her and ask her this very afternoon."

And write to her he did.

He had not answered her last letter, received three months before, but he put in a page of excuses for his negligence and smoothed the matter over to his satisfaction, if not to Lucy's.

The letter was sent, and he awaited a reply with considerably anxiety.

At last it came.

"It's favorable, of course!" he said, as he tore open the letter. "Lucy's always thought her eyes of me."

But his opinion as to its being favorable changed somewhat as he read it.

"Mr. Oscar Edson: I am very thankful for the honor, etc., but I don't take up with second-hand articles when I can get them at first-hand. John Smith says: 'Tell him I have something to say about it now, and I'm not going to forego my claim on Lucy Brown for all the Oscar Edsons in the world, and it isn't quite the thing down in Dayton to propose to other men's wives.'"

"Love to Miss Grant; also Miss Graham. Yours,

"LUCY BROWN SMITH."

"Good gracious! Lucy married!" Oscar's eyes were like saucers when he read that name.

Then he suddenly dropped into the nearest chair.

"Well, I've gone and done it this time!" he groaned. "Oscar Edson, you're a fool!"

Poor Oscar! He is in the market yet! Who bids?—Spare Moments.

A Misguided Burglar.

Scar-faced Sikes, the burglar, was operating on the ground floor of a house of Steenth street the other night, making judicious selections from the articles of silver and alleged silver which he found in the dining-room, when he inadvertently made a noise, which disturbed somebody upstairs.

He heard that somebody cautiously open a door, and then all was still, as if the somebody were listening. Then a voice floated down the staircase:

"William, is that you?"

Without a second's hesitation the burglar replied, "Yes, darling," and began to move toward the door, hoping that his reply had satisfied the inquirer, who would then go back to bed, and wait for "William" to come upstairs. But he was disappointed.

The voice immediately let loose some piercing screams, and as the burglar rushed out into the street, he said to himself:

"That comes of my inexperience with the ways of husbands. Instead of replying 'Yes, darling,' I should have said, 'Of course it's me; shut up and go to bed.' That would have been more natural and soothing, and I could have got away without giving myself a nervous fit."—Harper's Bazar.

Prolongation of Human Life.

Statistics tending to prove that the average of man's life has been increased through modern improvements in medicine and hygiene are always interesting. Among the most recent instances is a table prepared by a correspondent of Nature, showing a steady increase in the proportion of sexagenarians among the population of Canada. In 1851, out of every 100 persons living in Canada, 3.70 were 60 years of age or over. In 1861 the percentage of sexagenarians in the population had increased to 4.49. In 1871 it had become 5.10; in 1881, 6.32, and in 1891, 7.01.

Time Resisting Cedar.

Cedar-wood is famous among farmers for its lasting qualities, when used for fence-posts. An interesting proof of the power of this wood to resist the effects of time is furnished by the Egyptian boats made of cedar which were found buried near the banks of the Nile, and which, according to recent estimates of their age, were probably in use 4,500 years ago! The fact must not be overlooked, however, that these boats were covered by the dry sand of the desert.

SERMONS OF THE WEEK

Flat Levels.—We live too much on the flat level of our lives, and do not rise to the elevation of the beautiful things about us.—Rev. S. A. Elliot, Unitarian, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Worldly Hopes.—Our worldly hopes must die. The sap must all run out of them and leave them worthless and empty before our ambition and aspiration shall be fixed upon truth and righteousness.—Rev. Frank Crane, Methodist, Chicago, Ill.

The Faith Cure.—It is right and helpful to use prayer in the treatment of disease. But along with that and going before it natural means are to be used. If medicine is useless, why was the earth made a vast pharmacy of "materia medica"?—Rev. Walker Lewis, Methodist, Atlanta, Ga.

Masks.—We may mask for a season the inner man, we may still the heart's struggle so effectually that the world hears it not, but by and by nature asserts herself, and all the world know what we have felt and thought and done, for with a legible hand does God Almighty write in each face a life's history.—Rev. H. M. Cook, Baptist, Chicago, Ill.

Happy Workingmen.—Abundance does not and cannot produce happiness. The workingman who has a good job and a fair wage, thrifty habits, a happy home and a conscience void of offense toward God and man is the most independent man in the community.—Rev. W. H. Carwardine, Methodist, Chicago, Ill.

The Ministry.—The ministry is not a profession at all, not for the natural man at all, not of natural origin nor to secure natural results. The ministry is not one of any class of employment. It is a class by itself—unique, peculiar, a sacred calling of divine appointment.—Rev. W. F. Paddock, Episcopalian, Philadelphia, Pa.

Klondike Visions.—We look at the grains of gold in Klondike with a microscope, and at treasures within our reach and those laid up in heaven with an inverted telescope. Hold your position, spend less than your income, and some of your relatives will return from Klondike to share your bounty.—Rev. J. H. O. Smith, Christian, Chicago, Ill.

Mob Law.—Do we wonder at lynchings and mob law? Were the people assured that the criminal would meet the penalty of the law and that justice would not miscarry, they would be content to rest the matter with the courts. But justice and judgment having failed, our hands are defiled with blood.—Rev. Albion W. Knight, Episcopalian, Atlanta, Ga.

Thoughts that Burn.—A word is only a form, but it may contain a thought that burns. A number is only a form, but he who will not use the form will never weigh the stars and measure their orbits. A letter is only a form, but he who will not learn the alphabet will never read the world's noblest and best literature.—Rev. C. F. Winbigler, Baptist, Philadelphia, Pa.

Quiet Forces.—In this world it is the quiet forces that are the most powerful ones, and this is true in all of the wonderful forces of nature. The morning sun is not heralded by any loud or forcible demonstration. Reformation that changed the forms of Christianity have had their beginnings in the mind of a single person.—Rev. A. S. Yantes, Episcopalian, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Men for Sale.—In very truth, every man, unless the divine life abides in him, has his selfish price. The Word tells of only one who could bear all temptations, outward and inward, of the flesh, of the intellect and of the heart, and even he continually acknowledged that of himself, or by his nature, inherited from man, he could do nothing.—Rev. John Goddard, Swedenborgian, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Rich and Poor.—Sometimes strikes are not justified, but at other times I believe they are. All rich men are not Christians, and it is just as true to-day as in the time of Christ that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Rich men have the power to oppress and to slay, and too often they use it. If a man becomes a money-making machine, he will, as the Scriptures say, grind the face of the poor.—Rev. John Stephens, Methodist, San Francisco, Cal.

The Family of Man.—It is as true of the whole family of man as of the Church of Christ that they have community of interests, oneness of life and a mutual interdependence. We are under the law of solidarity. We rise or fall together. Whatever affects the financial or moral or spiritual welfare of one is felt by all. If there be distrust, the capitalist banks his money and labor is unemployed; thus capitalists, laborers and the community all suffer.—Rev. G. W. Mead, Presbyterian, New York City.

Manhood.—No manhood can be truly beautiful which is not gentle. Yet there is a tendency in many men toward misanthropy. They strive to

harden themselves against the world's sorrows. They would deny the natural sensitiveness of their hearts. They think tenderness and sentimentality unworthy of a manly man. Such a hardening of feeling is really the crushing in one's heart of that which is life's very radiance and glory. The most divine thing in us is love.—Rev. J. R. Miller, Presbyterian, Philadelphia, Pa.

PRAISES THE COUNTRY.

Former Governor of Alaska Speaks Kind Words for the Territory. James Sheakley, who has returned from a ten years' residence in Alaska, the last four of which he was governor of the territory, speaks in terms of highest praise of the country and its great gold resources. He says that the territory will furnish the country with gold for a century. The great bodies of low grade ores buried in Alaska, he says, are practically inexhaustible. The most important information brought back by the former governor, however, is to the effect that the American territory contains regions rich in gold as the British. It is the necessity of an early start to the mines. "When the Yukon freezes up," said Mr. Sheakley, "it freezes to a depth of six and seven feet, and blocks of ice pile up so that no boat left in the

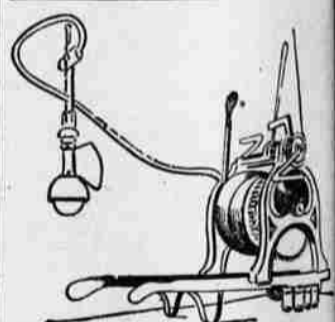


JAMES SHEAKLEY.

river could possibly be saved. Alaska resources are her mines and her fisheries. The fur business is a passing industry that will disappear with all the seals in a few years unless the strictest protection be accorded the animals. Mr. Sheakley says that Alaska has no agricultural possibilities and will never have any. There is no soil, he adds, and no climate. It never gets warm enough for crops to mature. Wheat and oats, even if they could be grown, would stay green until Christmas and would not mature. At present there is hardly any government in Alaska. There are no taxes, no Legislature, and no multiplicity of laws. There are a United States district court, a United States marshal, with seven deputies, a district attorney and seven commissioners or judges. But, according to the recent governor, the territory's mineral prospects are unlimited.

HEAVING THE LEAD.

Electric Sounding Outfit with Which It Is Proposed to Equip Vessels. The Lloyds, in estimating the causes from which all kinds of ocean craft have met their fate in the last fifteen years, assign 44 per cent of such causes to strandings, because of fog, darkness, etc., in unknown depths of water, but at a time, of course, when the craft's officers imagined that their ves-



AN ELECTRIC SOUNDING OUTFIT.

sel had plenty of water under its keel. To place in the hands of mariners an apparatus which will enable them to ascertain with ease and certainty the depth of water under their vessels, Dr. J. F. Babcock of Bangor, Me., has recently devised the electric sounding outfit illustrated in the accompanying sketch.

An iron ball, with a rod or standard attached, is suspended at the bottom of a cylinder by the rod passing through a hole in the bottom of the cylinder, which is rendered water-tight by a rubber cap that moves with the rod as it passes in and out, the rod connecting with a spiral spring inside the cylinder. When the ball is suspended there is a space of about one-sixteenth of an inch between the upper end of the rod and the ends of the conducting wires, and, when the ball and rod are pushed up through that space, the ends of the wire are connected, completing an electric circuit and ringing an alarm bell on board the ship.

The heaviest man whose weight is recorded authentically was Miles D. Den, of Tennessee. He weighed a little less than 1,000 pounds.