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A Few Precious

Japanese Swords FOR SALE AT Yokohama Bazaar.

The Man and the Hour

By KEITH GORDON

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Elinor for the first time in her life was looking the future squarely in the eye.

New Year's day is significant only because then, by common consent, time moves up a number.

"I shall say I'm thirty-one all this year anyway," she announced defiantly to that other self that receives our dearest confidences.

However, as she found, by far the worst thing about beginning to be thirty-two was the fact that you couldn't forget it.

This was the remark that our heroine slung into space when, after a week of torment, she sat down with her chin resting on her hands to have the thing out.

She paused in her enumeration, struck by the thought that all these friends were married. Matrimony was a subject to which she had given the minimum of thought.

When she had thought of it at all it had seemed to mean chiefly a tiresome round of housekeeping that resulted in three perpendicular lines just over the nose.

Could it be, she asked herself, that she had made a mistake after all and that those three inclusive lines were as much of an honor as an officer's bars?

She faced her plight with a stiff upper lip, realizing that she had no one but herself to blame.

"You're an old maid—just a plain old maid!" she said audibly. But it sounded like a joke—like one of those things too bad to be true.

No such happy awakening came, however, and with desperate philosophy she decided that since she was an old maid she would enter into the role for all it was worth.

Little by little her plainest gowns were brought into requisition. Certain little graces and frivolities of the toilet were one by one abandoned.

"What is the matter with you?" gasped Alice, with a stare of amazement.

"I'm just wearing the things suitable to my age before the dear friends have a chance to point them out to me," was the answer.

Another of her friends and comrades, Max Anderson, also noticed the subtle change.

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"Haven't you ever been in love, Max?" she had asked him once, with genuine curiosity in the gray eyes that had been more than one man's undoing.

"What's up?" he demanded, surveying her cynically as she came down to receive him one evening, with renunciation speaking from every line of her plain gown and her smooth, parted hair.

"No; omission! I'd tell you about it, only you're never any comfort to a person. You're just like a stone, Max. I don't know how I've endured you so long."

He turned his eyes lazily upon her with a look long, steady, inscrutable. Neither spoke, but after a moment Elinor, with a beautifully assumed air of perfect ease, sought refuge in a study of the pattern of the carpet.

"Possibly I may tell you some time," he said, with a nonchalant laugh.

"You see, Max, I've omitted to get married. And now I'm thirty-one!"

There was a pause in which it seemed to her that she suddenly heard the beating of her own heart.

"Look at me, Elinor, and see if you can't find out. I've waited years for you to finish sowing your wild oats."

Small Nancy, aged four, had a doll to which she was devotedly attached. It could open and shut its eyes, and every night Nancy took it to bed with her.

"But, Nannie, you've forgotten your baby. She won't be able to sleep unless you take her to bed with you, as usual."

To her mother's amused astonishment Nancy threw a half contemptuous look over her shoulder at the doll, recumbent on a chair, and said:

"Oh, what's the use? She can't sleep anyway. Who ever heard of anybody sleeping with their eyes wide open?"

"My wife is not always as considerate of my feelings as she might be," says the man who invariably means well.

"That's not new," she said. "I found that out long ago. It doesn't matter either whether the hair is pulled out or falls out naturally."

"That's what I get for trying to be good to that woman. Stung by my wife."

Here he raised his hat. He was as bald as a newly plucked egg.—Washington Post.

It is generally known that bananas are shipped while yet green and unripe, but few persons are aware of the careful and elaborate time calculations required in setting out the plants and cutting off the fruit in order to insure the arrival of the bananas in proper condition at their destination.

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