

**ORTON'S ORDERS**

By CHARLES WILSHIN

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It was, of course, a very foolish thing to write a letter of acceptance to the man one intended to refuse, and yet Alint took a childish delight in writing the dainty little note and thinking of the expression that would come to Orton's face if he should read it.

Then she tucked it into the flap of her lap desk and on her last remaining sheet composed the letter in which she sought to make her refusal as easy as possible.

It is no easy thing to make a pen say "no" when the heart cries "yes," and the rest of the party was ready to start for the woods before she had completed it.

Of course she could not say that it was her stepmother's order and that it was obedience to command and not the answer of her heart. She could only hope that he would see how the matter stood and understand that she had not been flirting with him through those long weeks before Marquand and his money had appeared upon the scene and had been pleased to bestow his attentions upon her.

Until then Mrs. Appleton had regarded Jack Orton with favor. He had money, not much, but enough for two, with excellent prospects, but he could not hope to compete with Marquand, and Mrs. Appleton wondered why Aline should be so stubborn as to continue to care more for Orton.

There had been one scene after another, usually terminating in Mrs. Appleton's hysterics, and at last the girl's will had been broken down, and the negative she could not utter was now signed to paper and intrusted to Billy, who promised faithfully to take it to Orton's room and place it on his table.

Billy was perfectly honest in his intentions, but just as he was scamper-

and with a wave of his arm swung on to the train and began collecting and punching tickets already punched almost beyond the semblance of paper. So engrossed was he in his occupation that it was several minutes before he noticed that his engineer had stepped off the train and was striding through the rain. He, too, left the flier, with its precious feminine freight, and started off after him.

"Aren't you going to play any more?" he demanded as he caught up with the man. Orton started.

"I declare, Billy," he laughed, "I had forgotten all about being engineer. I want to catch the crowd at the woods. You'll forgive me this time, won't you, old fellow?"

"I guess I can get Gracie Arnold to be engineer," said Billy doubtfully. "But, I say, can I have those orders? I want some more tickets."

Orton laughed. "Here's a whole lot of paper," he said, drawing some old letters from his pocket. "I need the one you gave me." And he was off down the road.

The chestnut grove was only a couple of miles away, and he was soon there. He had not been invited to be one of the party. It was Mrs. Appleton's own party, and Orton had not been popular with that lady since the advent of Marquand, but he went in search of the party with a happy heart.

He found Aline and Marquand apart from the group. She flashed him one glance of welcome from her eyes, then dropped the lids on them while the red spread over her face. In the instant of greeting she had forgotten the note, and with recollection of the cold, formal phrasing of her letter she became ashamed to meet his glance.

Marquand regarded the intrusion in no pleasant fashion and began to sulk. He had been assured by Mrs. Appleton that Aline would accept him, and this nutting party had been arranged to make an opportunity for his proposal. Mrs. Appleton had drawn the others deeper into the woods, and he was just about to make formal offer of his hand when Orton came up.

He was just contemplating the possibility of saying something that would give Jack a hint to take himself elsewhere when that young man spoke up.

"I say, Marquand," he began, "I wish you'd look up the others for a bit. I've something very particular to tell Miss Appleton."

Marquand looked at Aline for encouragement in his refusal, but she would not return his glance. He paused irresolute for a moment and then strode off to search for Mrs. Appleton.

Aline looked up with a frightened glance. "I told you not to come," she murmured. "What will they say?"

"I was acting under orders," he insisted, holding out the letter. She seized it and looked at it.

"I wrote you another," she faltered. "Where did you get this?"

"Billy was playing train, and I was the engineer," he explained. "He was looking for train orders for me, and as he had used up a letter he had in his pocket for tickets he had to make a raid on your desk. When I saw this I could not wait for your return. I obeyed orders, like a good engineer."

"I think it was fate," she murmured. "I will obey the orders too."

And Orton never knew how much he owed to Billy.

**Knew Her at Once.**

Minister Wu once talked at a mothers' congress in Washington. He told how mothers-in-law were revered in China. Then he said that all the mothers before him would be mothers-in-law some day, and therefore he would tell them something that they might remember and profit by. "A parlor maid," he began, "answered a ring at the doorbell one morning and a few moments later ascended to her mistress. 'If you please, ma'am,' she said, 'the strangest lady is downstairs. She won't give her name, and she has taken off her coat and hat, and she opened the two closets and rummaged through them, and then she looked at the windows and shook her head, and she rubbed her finger over the mantle and the piano, and then she held it up to see the dust on it, and now she is—' But the mistress interrupted calmly. 'Dear me,' she said. 'My husband's mother wasn't expected back from Texas till December.'"

**Worldly Wisdom.**

There is a certain young minister who has been remarkably successful in paying off the debts of the various churches to which he has been assigned from time to time. A brother minister who was laboring earnestly by means of bazaars, fairs and other affairs to accomplish a like happy result at his own church went to him and inquired the secret of his success.

"And I observe that you never have to resort to my present methods," he concluded.

The successful one smiled.

"No," he replied. "You see, when we need money some good sister suggests a bazaar. Then I call on the husbands of the married ladies of the membership and explain to them that in order to raise a certain sum we are finding it necessary to hold a bazaar. We have never had to actually bring the affair off."—Harper's Weekly.

**Stagnant.**

"It seems strange," said Deacon Mayberry as he counted the money after church, "that a large congregation can be so small."—Philadelphia Telegraph.

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