Partnerships

By CLARENCE EUSON

"But suppose you don't win," suggested Dorothy anxiously.

Vernon shrugged his shoulders. "Then our marriage is indefinitely postponed," he said, "but it cannot fail," he added. "My information is positive."

"It's an awful risk," whispered the girl. Vernon took her in his arms.

"Dear little girl," he said soothingly. "It is a deal that takes place almost every day. It is the only way in which I can quickly make enough money to support you in good style, and I cannot take you from your father's house to lead a life of dreary economy."

"I'd rather do that than risk losing it all," she said bravely. "That would be awful, dear."

"Never fear," he assured. "This will win. It is just a case of selling something for more than you expect to pay for it, while the other man expects you will have to pay more."

"Suppose father should find it out," she whispered, and a shade of awe crept into her tones. She was a little afraid of this father, who was one of the financial kings.

"He would probably hold up the market and clean me out," he concluded. "Therefore he must not know."

"Tell me all about it again," she pleaded. "I am so slow."

Patiently he went into the details again. F. and V. stock was steady at 78. He had reason to know that there would be a drop in a week. He would purchase "calls," the right to sell within ten days, shares of the stock at 73. The profit would come if the stock was selling lower than that. If things went well, the stock should fall to 65, leaving him a profit of $8 on every share that he sold.

Some large operators had combined to force down the stock, and he was to profit by his knowledge of that fact before the break came. Two days before Morton Harvey had refused his consent to the marriage of his daughter to Chester Vernon and had suggested that he should make some mark in the world before he aspired to the hand of the daughter of a man who owned entire railroads. This tip had come as an

"YOU SEEM PRETTY CHIPPER FOR A MAN WHO HAS BEEN CLEANED OUT."

inspiration, and he determined to stake his entire fortune in an effort to show what he could do.

For two days he worked industriously buying "puts," or permissions, to sell certain blocks of stock at stipulated prices. If the price did not fall below that price he would be reduced to practically nothing. If it fell below he could demand the difference between the price and the actual selling price in cash.

Beyond a hurried telephone call he did not hear from Dorothy, for after the exchange closed he was busy with his agents settling their figures.

It was not until the third day that he placed his block and in jubilant tones invited Dorothy to lunch with him. "I've won," he exulted; "there is nothing to do now but to sit still and watch the stock fall. I don't even have to bother about depressing it. The other fellow kindly does that for me."

But his triumph was short lived, and it was a haggard faced man who presented himself at the restaurant. "It's all up," he said in answer to Dorothy's eager questioning. "I have just had word that the pool has been abandoned."

"But can't you take those things back and get an exchange slip for them?" asked Dorothy, with a recollection of shopping tours.

Vernon shook his head. "No such luck," he groaned. "They've got pretty nearly every cent I own, and they won't give it up."

Dorothy smiled softly to herself. "I don't think it is as bad as that," she said decidedly. "I have an idea."

"If your idea will depress F. and V. ten points," he said grimly, "I should like to have it."

Dorothy dimpled and shook her head. "You can't have it," she laughed. "You just sit still and let the other fellow do the work."

Vernon remembered his words of the morning and groaned. The other fellows had decided to do nothing with the stock. It was to be left alone.

"Your father won't help out," he said dolefully. "I told you that the other day. Remember?"

Dorothy nodded her head. "I don't mean to laugh, Chester," she said tenderly, "but it is all too funny."

"It won't seem so amusing later," he warned, but in the end he caught something of her confidence, and the dessert found him far more cheerful than had the consomme, so suggestive of his own impending fate.

If there was a chance for a fight there would have been some comfort, but even the opportunity of a struggle was denied him. He could only wait for the unexpected to happen—or Dorothy's plan to work. He could not believe that the latter was of any avail. What could she know about the market?

But for all that F. and V. went to 77⅝, held there for an hour, then dropped to the quarter. It gave the traders no concern. F. and V. was a steady stock, but it could not always stand at 78. It might even go a trifle lower.

But when it went to 74⅝ the next morning and closed a half point lower the room traders began to grow interested and speculated as to where the drop was coming from. When it was found that the blocks of stocks were coming from the largest holders a panic took them, and for the next three days the market steadily declined. When it went to 63⅞ Vernon closed out and in his jubilation telephoned Dorothy to select the ring. He had cleaned up an enormous profit.

Morton Harvey found them in the library when he came home. He frowned slightly as he saw Vernon, then his face lighted up.

"You seem pretty chipper for a man who has been cleaned out," he said grimly.

"Cleaned out?" laughed Vernon. "Why, it's just the other way around. I was on the right side of F. and V."

"I thought you sold long," he cried. "Dorothy said"—

He checked himself, but the murder was out.

"I never could understand those things," sighed Dorothy. "Were you listening when I telephoned Jessie?"

"Didn't you know that the library door was open and that I was sitting there?" he demanded. She looked bravely into his face.

"Yes," she said quietly, "I did know. I knew that you were there and that you would hurt Chester's deal if you could."

"And fooled me into putting the market down to help him out?" he laughed.

Dorothy hung her head. He crossed the room and raised the dimpled chin.

"Daughter," he said tenderly, "I guess I'd better confess that I am beaten. I think I'm getting to be too old a man to play the game all alone. I think I shall form a partnership of Harvey & Vernon."

"You and Chester?" she cried, springing up and throwing her arms about his neck.

"No," he corrected, "myself and Mrs. Chester Vernon, nee Harvey. Chester won't need me if he has you. You may form a matrimonial partnership with him. That would be satisfactory."

A Jewel of a Wife.

A certain Russian nobleman visiting Paris was noticed to be constantly plunged in deep sadness. He wore on his finger a very remarkable ring, large enough for a bracelet, and which extended over his hand like a buckler for the ring finger. It was of a greenish color and was traversed by red veins.

A lady, meeting him in public, ventured to say:

"You wear a very handsome ring."

"It is not a ring," he answered, "but a sepulcher.

"This jewel," he continued, "is my wife. I had the misfortune to lose her some years since in Russia. She was an Italian and dreaded the bed which awaited her after this life. I carried her body to Germany, where I was acquainted with a celebrated chemist, whom I directed to make of the body a solid substance which I could carry about with me. Eight days after he sent for me and showed me the empty coffin amid a horrid collection of instruments and alembics. The jewel was lying upon the table. He had through means of some corrosive substance reduced and compressed that which was my wife into this jewel, which shall never more leave me."

The Fishing Fleets.

In many localities off the Scotch coasts and the coasts of Norway the fishing grounds lie at some distance from the shore and the start must be made with the ebb tide, sometimes in the middle of the night. All the boats of a single locality generally start together, and to one unaccustomed to the sight the spectacle of 200 to 300 fishing boats putting off from a harbor like Yarmouth is a sight never to be forgotten.—London Graphic.

Bonus.

"Bonus" ought to be "bonum," since it is evidently intended to mean "a good thing" and therefore should be neuter, not masculine. The word is found as early as 1773, but no one knows who was the ignorant or willful sinner against Latin that introduced it, though conjecture assigns it to the London Stock Exchange.

Made Him Tired.

Affectionate Wife—George, dear, sit down and rest in your elegant new chair. Worried Husband—How can I rest in that chair, Emily, when I know that the man is likely to come in at any moment to collect an installment on it?—Chicago Tribune.

Mr. Bowser Meant Well

Showed Poor Judgment, However, In Buying His Wife's New Tea Gown.

TRIED TO SURPRISE HER

Neighbor Enlightens Him on the Folly of Trying to Take Advantage of Bargains.

When Mr. Bowser came home the other evening with a package under his arm he entered the house and crept upstairs and down again so softly that Mrs. Bowser did not hear him. He did another thing unusual with him. He did not give away the fact that he had a little plot on hand until dinner had been disposed of and he had skimmed over the contents of the evening paper. Then he carelessly observed:

"I suppose you were down to that sale of tea gowns today?"

"I haven't heard anything about a sale," she replied.

"There was a big one advertised yesterday, and I don't see how you missed

"YOU'LL LOOK LIKE A PRINCESS IN THIS GOWN!"

it. Gowns that had been selling at $25 were advertised to go at $12."

"I couldn't have gone if I had seen the advertisement," she sighed, "as I had no money to buy with."

"But you need a new tea gown, don't you?"

"Indeed I do. If you can spare the money I'll go down tomorrow and see what I can do."

Mr. Bowser slapped his leg and chuckled.

"Do you mean that you will give me the money?"

He chuckled and slapped some more and then walked upstairs and brought down the mysterious package and said:

"Mrs. Bowser, I don't claim to be a model husband, but I think I do deserve credit for certain things. Whenever I can give you an agreeable surprise it delights me. You needed a new tea gown. I saw that you did a month ago, but I was lying low for a sale. I kept the paper away from you last night so that you couldn't see the advertisement."

Bought Her a Present.

"And what—what have you done?" she asked, with her heart in her mouth.

"Nothing to be hanged for. I simply left the office two hours earlier than usual and attended the sale."

"And you bought me a tea gown?"

"I bought you a tea gown, Madam Bowser—the finest one in the lot. You have an old bulldozer for a husband, but now and then he gets his good streaks on. My dear woman, I take pleasure in presenting to you my purchase. Some men might have done better, but I did the best I could."

Mrs. Bowser had grown pale. Without a word as to her bust measure or preference for style or color Mr. Bowser had gone and bought her a tea gown, and the chances were not one in five hundred that he had hit the right thing. It was inevitable that she would be disappointed, but she must do her best to conceal it and not humiliate him. He saw her perturbation and said:

"The little surprise rather knocks you out, eh? Didn't suspect that I had had my eye on that old tea gown for the last two months and meant to replace it as soon as I could? Open the paper and see how you like it."

Mrs. Bowser pulled herself together and made up her mind to praise that gown if it brought on fatal palpitation of the heart. She forced a smile, broke the string and almost at a glance she discovered:

That the color was lavender—a color she could not have been found dead in.

The bust size was forty-two instead of thirty-four.

It was cut lower in the neck than she ever wore one.

The style was more for a girl of twenty than for a woman of forty.

The selling price marked on the card was $2 higher than she had seen the same thing a week before.

Was a Great Surprise.

"Well, why don't you get up and dance and shout and swing your hat?" asked Mr. Bowser, as he held the gown up to her view.

"It—it is very nice, and I thank you many, many times for buying it," she replied. "It is indeed a great surprise."

"I thought it would be. They tried to work a dozen other styles off on me, but I was after the best and would take no other. By George, but you'll look like a princess in this gown!"

Mrs. Bowser smiled, but it was a ghastly smile. She wanted to "swing her hat," but it wouldn't swing. Mr. Bowser finally caught on to the fact that she wasn't enthusiastic and he queried:

"Is there anything wrong about it?"

"No-o," she replied, as she held it up against her.

"But if there is just say so. I may have made a mistake, you know. If you were to make any criticism at all, what would it be?"

"There is nothing to criticise, you good man, you," she answered, knowing that she could take it down in the morning and exchange it, and that the chances were he would never discover the fact. "It is perfectly all right, and you are one of the best husbands in the world."

"That pays me for all my trouble," he said, as a tear gathered in his left eye. "There are wives and wives. There are wives who appreciate and wives who don't. You belong to the former class, and I thank heaven for it."

Met Mrs. Green.

Ten minutes later Mr. Bowser had an errand at the drug store. On his way over he met Mrs. Green. When she had asked after Mrs. Bowser she said:

"I thought I saw you in one of the stores this afternoon, but I was probably mistaken."

"I was in one of the stores all right enough, and you can't guess what for?"

"Gloves for your wife?"

"No. I was down to the tea gown sale."

"Oh, she gave you a hint that she wanted a new tea gown, did she?"

"Not a blessed hint. I wanted to give her a little surprise, you know, and I think I did. She was raving about the gown as I left the house."

"What color did you get?" asked the woman.

"Lavender."

"Lavender on Mrs. Bowser! Why, you don't tell me! She can't wear lavender any more than I can wear pink!"

"Why not?"

"Because it doesn't become her. What size did you get?"

"Forty-two bust measure."

"Sakes alive! I know that her measure is only thirty-four. Was it high or low cut?"

"Low, of course."

"Then she will never, never wear it. She hasn't got the neck for a low cut gown, and you never saw her wear one. The salesgirl must have thought you wanted something for a woman weighing about 300 pounds and seventy years old. You shouldn't have done it, Mr. Bowser."

Told He Had Made Mistake.

"But do you mean to tell me," he retorted, "do you mean to tell me that I don't know enough to pick out a tea gown for Mrs. Bowser?"

"Of course you don't. Not one husband in a thousand does. Mr. Green would no more attempt to pick out a gown for me than nothing in the world. Can't you see that you made four or five bad mistakes?"

She said "Good night!" and passed on, and Mr. Bowser took a walk around the block. When he came to his house he turned in at the gate. He opened the door like a man who has determined to scale the Alps. He walked down the hall like a man having no fear of a Colorado avalanche. The tea gown lay on a chair. Mrs. Bowser and the cat seemed to have been weeping.

"What's the matter?" was asked as he counted out $10 and slapped the bills down on the table.

No answer.

"What are you going to do?" was asked as he flung the gown over his arm and turned away.

No answer. Mr. Bowser walked straight out of the house, straight down to the gate, straight down the street, for half a block, and then the tragedy occurred. He seized that tea gown by the neck and choked it to death. He seized it by the arms and wrenched them from their sockets. He gathered up the skirt and rent and tore and made strips of it, and then he jumped up and down and uttered cuss words, and the spring robin roosting in a tree over his head uttered a shriek and flew away through the darkness.

M. QUAD.