His Delayed Proposal.

By H. M. KERNER.

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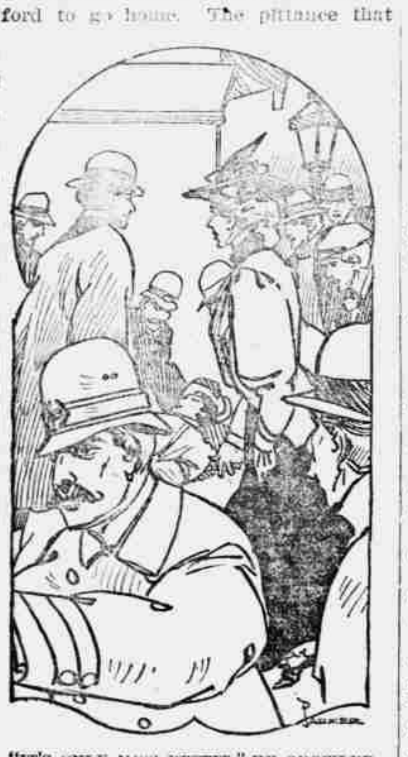
For a moment Nell's hand faltered. The pounding of the machines and the endless click of the shifting stencils seemed to pierce her very brain. She cast a quick glance down the long workroom of the Rotary Addressing company.

Out through the windows at the other end could be seen a patch of blue sky, blurred now and then by a puff of steam from the pipes of the adjoining building; a modest seven story structure. Here and there some building larger than their own reared its head to cut the skyline, and through the open window there came occasionally sounds from the street below, sharp notes in the monotone of the machines.

Within, long rows of girls leaned over their work, their deft fingers forcing envelopes into the hungry maws of the machines with only a pause now and then when a fresh stack of stencils were needed. Between the aisles paced the sharp eyed forewoman. A man had been in charge of the room once, but the firm had found that he was too easy, too commiserate of the women under his supervision, and they had moved him into the office, sending in his stead the angular Miss Pettit, who forced the girls in her charge to the limit of their endeavors. Her sharp eye detected Nell's pause.

"Burrowes," she called acidly. She never wasted time on "Miss." "If you have one of your silly headaches, put in your time at the office and go home. This is no hospital."

Nell's nervous fingers clutched a fresh package of envelopes, and the pounding of her machine added its noise to that of the others. She could not afford to go home. The pittance that came to her each Saturday was little enough without indulging the luxury of an afternoon off.



"IT'S ONLY MISS PETTIT," HE GROWLED.

Jimmy Nelson, coming into the room to consult with Miss Pettit about an order, looked with kindly sympathy at the tired girl. When he had had charge of the room, he had been more gentle. She had told him something of her story in the noon intervals, when he had insisted upon standing treat to hot coffee to augment the scanty sandwich that usually constituted her lunch. Coffee costs 5 cents a day, and the errand girl who made the trips to the lunch room must be tipped in addition. The Rotary Addressing company paid only from $3 to $5 a week, and coffee was a luxury to those who did not live at home.

There had been a time when Jimmy had dreamed of a little flat wherein Nell should be mistress. That was just after he had been promoted to the office and had had his salary raised to $15 a week. He had lacked the courage to make his proposal in person and had written her a note.

"I shall consider silence a polite negative," he had added.

Once Jimmy had aspired to the stage, and he had obtained the phrase from the advertisements in the dramatic papers that he studied with religious care. It had struck him as being a phrase of singular elegance. She need not refuse him. She could just ignore the note. He was sorry afterward that he had not asked for an answer. It would have been something to keep. As it was, she was as pleasant as ever to him, treating him with the same old friendliness and giving no hint of her reason for the refusal of his offer.

He longed to repeat it. He wanted to be able to take her out of the place, from under the very nose of Miss Pettit, yet he lacked the courage to speak and he contented himself with coming into the room as often as his business with the forewoman gave him an excuse. Of course it would never do for the office force to chum with the girls from the operating room during the noon hour, and in the evening it was Jimmy's duty to see that all were out before he locked up.

So Nell struggled on. Just so many thousand envelopes must be completed to constitute a minimum day's work. A record was made each evening and the advancement or reduction of salary depended upon that. She had barely managed to complete the task when the gong struck and the girls began to cover their machines and put their tables in order. Nell staggered slightly as she took the last of her work to the timekeeper, who entered her record in the book. Miss Pettit eyed her sharply as she went back to her machine.

"Unless you are feeling better you had better not come tomorrow," she said crossly. "I can put on another girl who will make faster use of the machine."

"I will be all right in the morning," Nell answered. Miss Pettit could not know that the girl had had no breakfast. There had been medicine to buy, and until pay day came again she would have to walk to her home and make dry bread serve for food.

She was slow in preparing for the street and even Miss Pettit had gone when she stepped into the elevator. The street was dark and lonesome. Most of the places closed at 5, and there were few persons moving along the narrow strip of sidewalk as she stepped out.

On the corner a little knot of people had gathered about some object of interest, and she peered curiously over the shoulder of the office boy in front of her. The next moment she was pushing the men aside.

Miss Pettit had slipped upon the greasy sidewalk and lay moaning and half unconscious with pain. The girls had all gone on and a bootblack was trying to make her comfortable until the attention of a policeman could be attracted.

Nell pushed him away and took the woman's head into her lap, disposing her so that the wretched ankle was more comfortable. Then she turned to the lad who had stuck to her side, determined to at least share the interest with the newcomer.

"It is my forewoman," she said. "Run up to the Rotary Addressing company and ask Mr. Nelson to come quick."

The lad's statement that a lady was almost killed and was asking for him brought Jimmy on the run. White faced he tore his way through the increasing crowd of curious people to come to a dead stop, when he perceived the situation.

"It's only Miss Pettit," he growled in mingled relief and disappointment. "I thought it was you."

"We must get her home, Jimmy," pleaded Nell. "She says she won't go in an ambulance. Please call a cab."

"The ambulance is plenty good for her," he growled, though to them the ambulance was but a shade less disgraceful than the patrol wagon. "Did not she talk to you like you were a dog this afternoon?"

"Get a cab for me," pleaded Nell, and Jimmy turned away.

It was not far to Miss Pettit's boarding place, and Nell hustled about making the tiny hall room more comfortable. Jimmy stuck doggedly, too, waiting to take Nell home. Miss Pettit sank back on the bed with a sigh.

"That will do very well," she said faintly. "The doctor will bandage my ankle, and then the girl will put me to bed. You were very good to me, my dear."

"It's all right," said Nell coldly as she turned to go, but Miss Pettit caught her hand.

"Wait a minute," she said. "I want to tell you something. Jimmy here gave me a letter to hand you some weeks ago. I wasn't going to have any flirting in my room, so I didn't give it to you. Jimmy is a good boy, my dear, and here it is."

She sank back upon the pillow as Jimmy sprang forward. In his excitement he had forgotten Miss Pettit and his wrath against her. Now he only realized that Nell had not received his letter.

"And silence ain't a polite negative?" he asked. Nell smiled. Jimmy had loaned her some of his paper, and she recognized the phrase.

"If you want proverbs, Mr. Nelson," she said primly, "I can give you a better quotation—'Faint heart never won fair lady.' Ask me to my face like a man, an' mebbe I'll say 'Yes.'"

Give the Chef a Chance.

It is my belief that the man who has dined in the best Parisian restaurants without finding them wonderful, says Julian Street, is either a dyspeptic or a self reliant ignoramus who did not give the chef a chance. You know the story of the miner who, having "struck it rich," arrived in New York and, anxious to "do it right," went to Delmonico's for dinner. After studying the menu with growing despair he turned to a patient waiter with, "Just bring me $45 worth of ham and eggs!" Some of our fellow countrymen give similar performances in Paris. I have known them to go to famous restaurants and order plain broiled chicken or steak and fried potatoes, dishes so elemental that the greatest chef could hardly cook them better than Maggie in the flat at home could do it. A Parisian chef broiling a chicken makes a pathetic figure. The asking him to do so is like requesting a learned professor of higher mathematics to add a laundry bill.—Travel Magazine.

O'Connell's Hat.

At a meeting of the County Kildare Archaeological society some years ago a hat worn by Daniel O'Connell was exhibited. O'Connell's name in his own handwriting was written on the inside of the hat, which was of large dimensions, the width inside being eight and one-half inches and its longer diameter ten inches. The chairman of the meeting put on the hat, which entirely covered his head and went down to his chin.

What He Took.

Mrs. Backpay—Good morning, sir. Will you take a chair? Installment House Collector — No, thank you, ma'am. I've come to take the piano.—Philadelphia Record.

THE GREAT CITIES.

Of the world's great cities Paris has the greatest number of inhabitants per acre. For its 2,731,000 inhabitants an area of only 19,275 acres is available, so that each acre has 142 inhabitants.

Berlin is almost as thickly populated, inasmuch as its city ground (now almost entirely built up) comprises only 15,568 acres, and in this space 2,034,000 people live, or 131 to each acre.

The conditions are considerably better in London, where 4,536,000 people live in an area of 75,370 acres, or 60 to the acre.

Vienna has only 39 inhabitants per acre, the city ground comprising 42,503 acres and the population being 1,675,000.

Of the great cities New York has the smallest ratio of population to the acre. Its 3,716,000 inhabitants have an area of 203,866 acres (by far the largest city territorially in the world), so that there are 18 people to an acre.

Why He Was Spared.

A motor bus without passengers came tearing into the Boulevard des Italiens, Paris, from a side street, ran into a cab, knocked it to pieces and threw over the horse, the cabman having luckily just got down, lurched across the road, then back again, spreading terror, hurtled off into the Rue Drouot, apparently bent on demolishing the Figaro offices, but changed its mind and charged into a bakery at the corner of the Rue Rossini. It stopped at last in a wreckage of loaves, rolls and broken glass. By a miracle no one had been hurt. But the crowd which had collected was in a temper to damage the chauffeur. He was dragged out of his seat, and things looked ugly for him. But he yelled: "Spare me! It was my first trial trip!" And the crowd was tickled and disarmed.—Paris Cor. London Telegraph.

Patent Office No Pauper.

More patents were issued during 1906 and more money collected by the United States patent office than in any single year previous, with the exception of 1905, since the establishment of the patent office in 1836. It is shown that the receipts reached a total of $1,790,921.38 for the twelve months, while the expenditures of the office were $1,554,891.20, making a net gain for the year of $236,030.18. The patent office is one of the very few self supporting departments of the government. The amount of the patent fund to the credit of the office in the United States treasury is now $6,427,021.86. During the past year there were 56,482 applications for patents for inventions, designs and reissues, and a total of 31,965 patents were issued. — Technical World.

A House With Walls of Wind.

Percy A. Rockefeller, son of William Rockefeller and a nephew of John D. Rockefeller, is building a country home in Connecticut which is unlike any other ever planned. Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of it is a confined air space in the walls, forming a nonconductor of heat, cold or moisture. The air space, it is said, will make the house warmer in winter, cooler in summer and drier all the year around than any other man's home, rich or poor. It is said that if all the windows and doors were closed on a hot summer day, air being introduced only through the basement, the temperature would be from 15 to 20 degrees lower inside the house than without.

Only Half the Time.

"That is no defense at all," said Senator Curtis during a discussion of emotional insanity at dinner. "What you have just said, sir, is as weak a defense as the young automobilist's.

"The young man's father said to him:

"'Look here! I am ashamed of you. You spend all your time choochooing around the country in a motor car.'

"'Not all my time, father,' said the youth gently, 'only half of it.'

"'And the other half?' asked the mollified old man.

"'That is passed underneath, sir, with a monkey wrench.'"—Philadelphia Record.

A French Railway Story.

Chairman Knapp of the interstate commerce commission told in New York the other day a French railway story.

"A traffic manager," he said, "came to the president of the line and exclaimed disconsolately:

"'We are having no end of trouble with the public, sir, about those old dark blue cars. Everybody says they bump so frightfully in comparison with the new light blue ones, which, of course, ran very smoothly.'

"'Humph!' said the president. 'We must attend to this matter at once. Have all the old cars painted light blue immediately.'"

THEODORE TILTON'S WIT.

Although the last years of Theodore Tilton's life were spent in retirement and poverty and he avoided the society of all but a few of his most familiar friends, he never ceased to enjoy the company of young people, punning and joking with the merriest of them. One young member of the American colony in Paris who knew him well has related some of his quaint witticisms.

"I remember once," she said a few days ago, "that he had been to the hairdresser and had his long, flowing white mane considerably shortened. As soon as we saw him we all called out, 'Oh, Mr. Tilton, what did you have that done for?' 'For 50 centimes,' he quietly replied, with a merry twinkle in his eye.

"On another occasion he received a letter from the late Philip Marston, the blind poet, who was very anxious to live in Paris, but who was not certain that he could do so on his slender means. Accordingly, he wrote to Mr. Tilton, asking him to go to the Palais Royale and to test the two franc dinner served there and to let him know the result. Mr. Tilton's reply was:

"My Dear Friend—Do not ask for a too frank criticism on that two franc dinner. Yours, T. T."

Going Out on Strikes.

"I do not think there's any excuse for a man going out on strikes," remarked a large, smiling young man on an Eddy street car.

"Uh-hugh," observed a passenger. "That's one of your bloomin' capitalists. That's their talk."

"When he can't reach 'em," resumed the large young man, "a fellow ought to let 'em pass, but when they do come his way he ought to watch his chance and lam 'em good, soak 'em for all he's worth."

"Gosh! I thought he was a capitalist, but he talks like a red eyed anarchist."

The car stopped. The large, smiling young man headed for the Olympic club.

"Wonder who that is?" queried a passenger.

"Him?" said another passenger. "Why, that's Jack Gleason, manager of the San Francisco team."—San Francisco Chronicle.

Tattooed Dogs.

For a long time dog owners have been at a loss to know just how they could place permanent identification marks upon their pets. Dog collars are out of the question on account of the numerous petty thieves who make a specialty of stealing them from dogs all over the city. An inventive Chinaman of the Tenderloin, who heard of the thieves' operations, has hit upon a plan which makes collars useless. His name is Len Hung, and he is an expert in tattooing. Len reads the lost and found columns in the newspapers and gets in touch with dog owners all over the city. He tattooes the master's initials under the dog's left ear and also any private mark that the owner desires. The marks are guaranteed to last as long as the ear or until the animal is ready for dog heaven.—Philadelphia Record.

A Great Fish Story.

D. B. Rundle of Rockport says that before the Kansas City railroad was built a part of the Missouri river ran by their place and that his brother James, now residing in Kansas, set his trout line one night, using minnows for bait. On examining the line next morning they found the catch included a 140 pound catfish, which had swallowed the hook. When the hook was pulled from its mouth it brought with it a white perch weighing five or six pounds, which had previously swallowed the hook, and in removing the hook from the perch it was found a chub weighing one or two pounds had swallowed the minnow.

Mr. Rundle says his former neighbor and schoolteacher, Hon. John P. Lewis, will verify the correctness of the above.—Kansas City Journal.

The Apparent Reason.

Statesmen in Washington over their black coffee and cigars are telling about Chief Justice Fuller of the United States supreme court. The chief justice, so the story runs, met an old time friend and after a hearty hand clasp Mr. Fuller remarked:

"You are looking exceedingly well. Aren't you filling out a little?"

"No, indeed," replied the friend. "You probably think so because I'm looking Fuller in the face."—Judge.

The Message of Japan.

Within twenty years Japan will send her missionaries to London for the conversion of England. They will come claiming a morality that is higher, an idealism more lofty and a philosophy of life more sane than Christianity can show. "We will bring you not the yellow peril, but the yellow blessing," Japanese teachers declare. — London Standard.

As Arranged By Archie.

By Carson Willard.

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"Had trouble with sis?" Archie regarded Deering with a sympathetic gaze. Deering nodded. They were good chums, these two. A couple of years before Deering had talked Mrs. Shelby into taking Archie out of the Buster Brown suits he detested, and since then Archie had been Vance Deering's sworn ally.

But even Archie could not help much with Letty Shelby. At heart Letty loved Deering, but she was not to be easily won, and, though Vance had proposed a score of times, she had turned aside the question without giving a decided negative.

Letty was only nineteen, and she had formed a theory that it would be foolish to marry early.

"I like you," she admitted to Vance, "but you see a girl who marries so young loses an awful lot of fun. None of the boys pays any attention to a young matron."

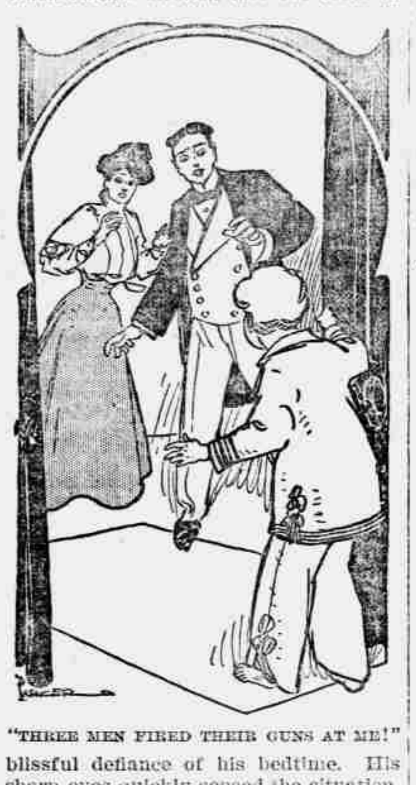
"If you really loved me," he reproached, "you would not care for their attentions."

"My dear Vance," she smiled, "unless I had some attention paid me, how could I learn to value your devotion? It is through contrasts that I shall learn to appreciate you best."

Deering gritted his teeth. In the face of such arguments he was powerless. Somehow Letty's way of quietly setting aside his protests was aggravating in the extreme. They could not even quarrel comfortably, for she had a way of quietly retiring when the argument grew too strong for her and throwing the blame upon him in a way that was maddening.

That was just what happened. She had swept from the room with an imperious air and a remark that she should be glad to see Mr. Deering again when he had a better command of his temper. That she was at the moment sobbing out her regret in the security of her own room was a thing he could not know.

He was preparing to let himself out when Archie strolled into the room in blissful defiance of his bedtime. His sharp eyes quickly sensed the situation, and he sat down to talk it over with an odd assumption of elderly dignity that would have been amusing had Deering been less upset.



"THREE MEN FIRED THEIR GUNS AT ME!"

Archie had mixed more with his elders than with children of his own age and had acquired an odd faculty of observation. Now he swung his stocky legs to and fro from the highest chair he could find and regarded Deering with the impression of owl-like wisdom.

"You see," he explained, "Letty is odd. I heard mother say so. When she gets mad the only way is to get her scared. Then she'll come around quick. The time she got mad at me for losing that invitation I set the dog on her and then grabbed him quick. She was frightened and thought I saved her, and she cried over me and gave me candy and said I was a dear."

"I don't believe that it would work in my case," said Deering, with a smile.

"I'll fix it for you," offered Archie, "if you'll make me one promise."

"What's that?" demanded Deering.

"You remember when Tommy Mullen's sister got married they made him wear white satin pants and hold up her train?"

"I remember the ornate Master Mullen," chuckled Deering as he recalled Archie's pointed remarks at the time of the wedding.

"If I fix it so you can marry Letty I don't want that sort of thing done to me."

"It's a promise," said Deering. "Shake hands."

Archie shook hands and slipped from the chair. "I guess you'd better be going now," he said hospitably. "You come round Thursday."

Archie solemnly superintended Vance's departure and then disappeared down cellar. It was nearly 11 when at last his sister remembered that he was supposed to be in bed at 7:30 and found him innocently reading in the dining room.

"I thought you was with Vance Deering," he remarked casually, "and I didn't like to disturb you."

"Mr. Deering is not coming here again," Letty said severely, but her eyes filled.

But for all of that a box of flowers and a note preceded his arrival, and Thursday evening found him in the Shelby parlor and not at all happy over the fact. Letty wore her most impenetrable armor of reserve, and the slightest suggestion of reconciliation was met by a frigid silence that was most depressing.

Mr. Shelby had gone out of town, and Mrs. Shelby was calling on a neighbor. Archie was safely tucked away in bed, and they had the lower part of the house pretty much to themselves.

Suddenly from the basement came the sound of pistol shots and frightened cries, followed an instant later by the appearance of Archie in pink and white pajamas and bare feet.

"I slipped downstairs to get a drink of milk," he yelled, "and three men fired their guns at me! Go down and kill them, Vance!"

A wink from Archie conveyed a deal of meaning, and Vance headed for the stairs leading to the cellar. Letty sat in the parlor with her fingers in her ears and could not possibly have heard Archie's whispered injunction.

"Billy Widner's pistol is at the head of the stairs," he explained as he pattered out into the dining room after Deering.

Feeling half ashamed of the subterfuge, Deering carried out Archie's obvious scheme. The house was some distance from the street, and his artistic simulation of a fight attracted no attention. Archie was doing a solemnly ecstatic dance in the dining room when Vance came back up the stairs.

"I saw 'em from the kitchen running across the back yard," Archie explained. "Now, stick to it."

Letty shrieked as Vance came into the dining room and threw herself sobbing upon his neck.

"I was sure they had killed you!" she cried. "It was awful, Vance!"

"Did you care so much?" he asked as his arms went around her. "Did you really care, little woman?"

"I didn't want you to be killed," she sobbed.

"And you do love me?" he insisted. "Was that why you cared so much?"

"I guess it was," she confessed. "I do love you, Vance, but it wasn't good for you to tell you so."

"It was the best thing in the world," he insisted. "I've been two years trying to get you to confess, dear. Don't you think that my patience ought to be rewarded with 'yes?'"

"Perhaps," she admitted. "Suppose they had killed you, Vance?"

"There was no danger," he laughed shamefacedly as he bent and kissed her, consoling himself with the reflection that all is fair in love and war. "It was not half as bad as you think."

"Anyhow," she dimpled, "it showed me just how much I loved you."

"And that is all important," confirmed Vance.

The Benardites of Jamaica.

There is probably no other race in the world so enthusiastic over religion and who enter so heartily into its forms and ceremonies as the negroes. They seem to lose all thought of their surroundings and throw themselves body and soul into their own peculiar forms of worship.

In Jamaica there is a very large religious sect called, after their leader, Benardites. Four times a year the followers of Benard are baptized in the water of the river Mona. Hundreds of these religious enthusiasts meet on the banks of the river before daybreak, and as many as 600 have been dipped in a single morning. The price of a dipping is a shilling, so that at the rate of 600 a quarter the income to the leader and his church is a tidy little sum.

After the baptism the freshly cleansed and purified of sin form a line, and with gold embroidered banners and silken streamers waving above the long line of men and women they march, singing, to the church, which is situated a short distance back from the river. Hundreds of these negroes make up the long swaying and winding procession, which sings as it moves and eventually enters the church doors or distributes itself outside near windows and doors.—New York Herald.

Origin of "Hoodlum."

"Hoodlum," America's equivalent of the English word "hooligan," was coined at San Francisco very early in the seventies, but did not become generally popular in the United States until about 1877, by which time all certainty as to its origin was lost. One version is that the leader of the San Francisco "larrikin push" was a man named Muldoon, whose name a newspaper writer ingeniously reversed to christen his gang "noodlums," and a compositor's mistake of "h" for "n" did the rest. Another explanation is that "Huddle 'em!" was the San Francisco rowdies' cry when the police appeared, and a third alludes to a curious fez or "hood" worn by an eccentric character which the young rowdies adopted as their uniform.

China's Priority.

Priority in the invention of not only gunpowder, but also of the art of printing, is attributed to the Chinese. According to Du Halde and the Jesuit missionaries, printing was practiced in China nearly fifty years before the Christian era. Books in the Celestial empire were made out of slips of bamboo 500 years B. C.; in 150 A. D. paper was first made; by 745 books were bound into leaves, and in 900 printing was general in China.

Spiteful.

Miss Elderleigh — Jane Jones is a mean, spiteful old cat. Miss Younger —What's the matter? Miss Elderleigh —I told her that my family came over in the Mayflower and she asked me if I was seasick.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.