

Conflagrations

By INEZ DEACON

Miss Catherine Colvin's blackberry patch grew close to the line fence between her small farm and Madison Brinkley's few acres. Madison's blackberry patch leaned over this post and rail fence in the opposite side.

The mother of Miss Colvin was an invalid, who never left the house; the mother of Madison was rheumatic and also never left the house.

In the natural course of events it would seem that Catherine and Madison, who did the berry picking for their respective families, would occasionally have met at their briars. But Madison's mother had always wished her berries to be gathered in the morning while the dew was on them. Catherine's mother preferred hers picked in the afternoon, when the vines were dry.

In January of the fourth year of the Colvins living next the Brinkleys Mrs. Colvin died; in February occurred the death of Mrs. Brinkley. In the summer following their bereavements Madison and Catherine gathered their fruit at times that suited them.

One early July afternoon Miss Colvin, reaching through the fence to gather an unusually fine cluster of berries that hung over on the Brinkley side of the fence, put her hand full in the face and touched the lips of a large, fair man, who was down on his knees filling a three-gallon tin bucket from some low-growing vines.

Madison looked up quickly and at sight of a woman his round, full face assumed the pinkness of a July sunset.

"Oh!" gasped Miss Colvin, "I didn't know anybody was there!"

Madison arose, going two shades pinker, "I—I—hope I didn't scare you," he stammered.

"Oh, no, not at all!" prevaricated Miss Colvin, politely. Then, in an effort to put him at his ease she held out her half-filled bucket. "Ain't the berries fine this year?"

Madison's glance was directed at the blackberries, but Miss Colvin was a short woman; his embarrassed



From an Admiring Friend.

eyes fell on her bright black ones and with that glance his castle of bachelorhood he had believed would stand forever tottered.

Up to this time, facing an untamed lion with empty hands would have been no harder for Madison than facing a woman, especially an unmarried woman. Though he had often seen across the fields, the little figure of Miss Colvin going about her work, he had never met her face to face. In the few times she had left her mother to call on his mother he had fled the house.

"I'm lonesome," he said, meditatively, as he kindled his fire preparatory to making his jam. "I wonder if she ain't lonesome, too." The thought that a combination of two lonelines might mean happiness flash over him. A pink flush covered his high forehead and he dropped the stove-cap litter on his foot.

It was several days before Madison ventured to the blackberry patch in the afternoon again. No little black-clad figure with smiling eyes was there and his heart filled with a dull sense of disappointment. Madison went home and planted his late pole beans.

"If I wasn't such a dull, old, bashful fool," he said, as he moodily swung his hoe, "I'd think of some other way of getting to see her. Maybe I'd even go to her house; but I am a fool, a silly fool."

One wet day early in August Madison found in a far corner of his meadow field a clump of a species of milkweed bearing a brilliant red blossom of a great beauty. He remembered Miss Colvin had remarked on the beauty of a black-eyed Susan that grew by the blackberry fence and had even held a spray of the flowers caressingly up to her face.

The next morning, while the sun was yet asleep and two hours before dawn, a large shadow fell across the entrance to Miss Colvin's little back porch—a shadow that lingered only a moment.

When Catherine Colvin came out in the early dawn she found on the shelf of her porch a spray of scarlet blossoms in a glass fruit jar. On the jar was pasted a slip of paper on which was written, "From an admiring friend." There was no signature, but Miss Colvin looked at the footprints in the damp soil and traced them toward the fence that lay in the direction of Madison Brinkley's house.

The days wore on and daily Madison looked wistfully in the direction of his neighbor's house and daily his neighbor looked wistfully in the direction of his, but Madison made no more overtures.

One day in late September Alva Burrus and Robinson Dunn, young farmers of the neighborhood, came to Madison Brinkley to buy some seed wheat. Madison went into his granary to measure it out to them. His measuring box was not in the wheat house, however, and, remembering he had left it in his kitchen, he went to get it. Burrus, sprawled on the pile of wheat, carelessly thrust his hand in its depths. Something round and hard met his fingers. He swept off the wheat.

A giant watermelon, the largest Burrus had ever seen, appeared, bearing an inscription on the rind, traced with a pin when the melon was small. The letters had grown with the melon's growth until they looked as if done in crevel embroidery.

"Miss Catherine Colvin," read Burrus, aloud. "Say, Dunn, Madison thinks so much about his neighbor he's got to writing her name on watermelons."

"Cover up that thing," cautioned Dunn. "Madison's coming, and we wouldn't get any wheat today if he thought we had an idea he was courtin'." He'd die before he'd face us."

Some days later Burrus saw Madison in the vicinity of the Court House and later on the road in his buggy with a ministerial-looking gentleman, who accompanied him to his home.

This was sufficient to warrant Burrus to arrange with some kindred spirits a plan for an all night's fun.

That evening Miss Colvin, who, sitting in pensive thought, had fallen asleep, awakened suddenly. She went to her window to see a flash of flame in the direction of Madison Brinkley's house. As she looked toward it in a cold fear two other big flashes of flame arose. Throwing a little white shawl over head, she ran toward the blaze.

"The fire is so low it must have caught in the cellar," she thought as she ran, "and he may be asleep! Oh, if I can only get there in time to rouse him!"

When she reached the thick hedge about the yard the flames were rising on every side, but the fire was but bonfires of cornstalks built at safe distances from the house. A dozen men replenished them. At that moment her ears were deafened by a terrific clamor of horns, bells, a beating of pans, loud shouts and yells.

"Come out on your porch, Madison Brinkley," she heard Alva Burrus' clear voice call above the uproar. "Come out on the porch with your bride and receive the congratulations of your friends."

Catherine clutched weakly at the coral honeysuckle vine on the post by which she stood. "His bride!" So what she thought was the fire of Madison Brinkley's house burning was the bonfire of a celebration.

Presently, accompanied by a tall old gentleman in a black frock coat, Madison came out of his door.

"I am not married," Catherine heard him say. "You have all made a mistake."

"What'd you bring that preacher in with you this mornin' for, then?" called out Francis Larimer. "Al Burrus said you was takin' him to marry you to Miss Catherine Colvin! There's Miss Catherine—I mean Mrs. Brinkley—now, a hidin' behind that honeysuckle!" he ended, pointing at the shrinking visitor.

Catherine came to the edge of the porch. "Don't say that, please," she said, her voice trembling with mortification. "I saw the light and I ran over here to see—I—I—was afraid Madison—Mr. Brinkley was asleep in the fire! I—I thought maybe I could save him!"

She covered her face with her hands and burst out sobbing.

"'Til bet that ain't so!" said Larimer, roughly. "She's tryin' to put us off the track, boys!"

The bashfulness that had kept Madison away from Catherine melted like wax in the fire.

"You shut up, Frank Larimer," he commanded sharply. "Everything this lady says is the truth! No, I ain't married to her, but it 'n't because I don't want to be. I've been afraid to ask her to marry me, and if I wasn't afraid, I'm not good enough for her, anyhow!"

The minister, Lorenzo Varrs, Madison's cousin, who was making him a little visit, brought out a chair for Miss Colvin, and the crowd melted away.

Madison sat down by Catherine, and Rev. Lorenzo wisely went to the back of the house for a pitcher of water, which he was a long time getting.

Catherine looked up in Madison's face. "Part of that wasn't so you told the men," she said, shyly.

"What part?" asked Madison.

"That part about you not bein' good enough for me!"

"I ain't," murmured Madison huskily.

"If I'm willin' to ask you bein' good enough for me, what then?" was Catherine's encouraging whisper.

There was no answer in words, but Madison's arm went around the little woman and drew her to his breast.

Will Teach Housewifery.

Holland is about to establish schools of housewifery for the daughters of farmers.

OLD WEDDING KNIVES

FEW SPECIMENS LEFT OF ONCE COMMON BRIDAL GIFT.

Some Generations Ago They Were Considered an Indispensable Part of the Wedding Costume—Origin of Custom Lost.

Of the many dainty and curious relics belonging to old wedding customs none is more interesting and beautiful in themselves than the once indispensable bride knives, specimens of which still linger here and there among the cabinets of old country houses.

Or you may discover, says a writer in the Queen, a slender, quaint, old pair of these ancient posy knives, in their delicate, faced cases, hiding behind the glass in some sleepy, provincial museum.

You scarcely realize as you examine them that without her wedding knives duly attached to her girdle the medieval and seventeenth century bride would hardly have considered herself dressed. So complete a part of the marriage costume were they and so important an item of the ritual of the ceremony that they once came to be considered almost as necessary to an orthodox marriage as the veil and the ring itself. The old plays teem with allusions to them.

And who can forget the figure of Juliet, wearing her wedding knives as she stands in tragic anguish in the Friar's cell, and again when she is about to take the sleeping potion Shakespeare in the old quarto of 1597 made special reference to his heroine wearing them.

Of the hundred and one delicate trifles of the ancient wedding toilet few were invested with more tender fancies or mystic symbolism than these knives; there was first the idea of the savoring of the knot of love and then the more practical suggested emblem of good housewifery and domestic policy.

They were not worn in England alone, but all over Europe wedding knives formed part of the bride's regular accoutrements. The highest invention was often brought to bear upon their metal, brocade and shagreen cases and sheaths. In the old Flemish pictures they may be seen hanging from the ladies' girdles beside the bodkin, scissors and other personal articles of the new wife.

Very beautiful indeed are some of the quaint old blades and handles, and all were of superior quality and artistic ornament. As the rank of the bride rose so they became more elaborate chased, and sometimes they were jeweled to a standard of immense value. It is very curious to learn that many of the finest English specimens emanated even in those remote days from Sheffield.

The precise origin of the custom of wearing wedding knives is lost in obscurity, but their decline from favor seems to have set in after the reign of William and Mary. In the time of Anne and the early Georges the custom was already obsolete and archaic. There is something almost mysterious in the way in which these beautiful little mementoes have completely vanished from modern usage, disappearing almost concurrently with the ill-fated Stuarts.

Men Fined for Being Vain.

Every ugly man who looks in the mirrors on either side of the entrance to the Christmas Tree association headquarters at Hertzberg's old store on Commerce street, is to be assessed a dollar, and every good-looking man is to be assessed seventy-five cents. That is the edict of the ladies who met to plan for the Christmas tree which is to be for the poor children of the city.

Much merriment was occasioned among the ladies when screened by the painted canvas signs in the windows they observed first one man and another stop before one or the other of the mirrors in the doorway and "primp" himself up. "Don't tell us," they said, "about women being more vain than men. Let's make them pay for the use of the mirrors." So we to the man who is caught parting his hair or adjusting his tie before the mirrors of the Christmas Tree association headquarters.—San Antonio Light and Gazette.

The Dangerous Fly.

A fly in the house is as dangerous as a rattlesnake, as filthy as a louse, as disgraceful as a bed-bug. The time will come when any modern, cleanly home will feel itself shamed and disgraced by the presence of a fly, and when every household upon whose premises a brood of flies is detected will be fined heavily and sent to jail. The fly is a literal "eye of the Lord" because he is in every place beholding evil and the good, especially the evil, for he loves to lay eggs in it. You can't hide dirt from a fly. He is also the most intimate and domestic animal we breed and keep. An ounce of cleanliness is worth a ton of fly paper and wire screens. One-half the money wasted on fly traps and window screens, one-fifth the energy squandered in slapping and profanity, would clean up the back yard and wipe out the fly.—From address before the American Civics association at Washington by Dr. Woods Hutchinson.

The Result.

"I believe that old man really made ducks and drakes of his supposed fortune." "Then his heirs' hunt for his money will be a wild goose chase."

Two Attractive Costumes



Smart Russian Coat.—This would look well in material to match the skirt, or might be made in tweed or serge to wear with any dress; it fastens down left side of front, where braid and buttons form a trimming; the turn-down collar and sleeves are trimmed to match. A black patent leather waist-band encircles the waist. Hat of black satin trimmed with masses of white wings completes the costume.

Materials required: Four yards 48 inches wide; 6 1/2 yards silk for lining, nine buttons, one dozen yards braid.

Dinner Dress.—Apricot Korean crepe makes an exceptionally pretty dress carried out to this simple design. Both the over and underskirts are trimmed with wide and narrow insertion to match. The bodice has the sleeves cut in with it, and is trimmed with a strip of insertion over the shoulders, also at edge of sleeves; the under sleeves are of fine lace to match yoke.

Materials required: Ten yards crepe 22 inches wide one yard lace, 7 1/2 yards silk and five yards narrow insertion.

RAFFIA HAT FOR WINTER

Sounds Rather Unseasonable for Frigid Weather, but is All Right at That.

The raffia hat will do very good service for evening wear even now. But what it is chiefly designed for is evening make—in other words, a very pleasant and profitable way to spend the idle hours that come, more or less frequently, to all of us.

The hat is of braided raffia natural colored or dyed, and made by hand from beginning to end. First, it is plaited in long strips, just as tightly and as evenly as possible. When you have about two dozen of your thin "plaitals," start sewing them together, round and round, forming the crown first. A paper pattern, cut out from any broad picture that you may have, will serve as a model.

By thus braiding and sewing at the same time you can get an idea of how much raffia you will need. When you get to the brim, plait more loosely, as the "floppy" effect is picturesque and desirable. Lined with silk, the raffia hat makes a charming frame for a young face.

The older women may desire something more in the line of a turban. This is obtained by braiding loosely and winding the raffia round and round upon itself. Of course, if you wish, you may work over a wire or canvas foundation, but where stiffening really seems necessary it is best to give it by means of milliner's wire, which can be sewed just where needed. The fashionable turbans nowadays, which fasten way down over the ears, and are so soft and close-fitting that they need no pins to hold them, seem to cry aloud for raffia as their material.

There are great possibilities here for the clever woman.

SOME SEWING MACHINE HINTS

Little Annoyances That May Be Avoided If These Tips Are Followed.

When much machine work has to be done, filling the shuttle is a constant annoyance. This can be partly obviated by threading the shuttle with finer cotton than that used on the needle. The sewing will be quite as strong and the shuttle will not need refilling half so often as it would if threaded with the same number of cotton as the needle, because the bobbin will hold a great deal more of the finer cotton.

If you want your sewing machine to do satisfactory work, remember that it needs to be kept clean. After every ten hours' work it needs oil; but all surplus oil must be carefully wiped off afterward. Always work it steadily and never start or stop with a jerk.

The best way to finish off a machine seam is to turn the material round and stitch back for about an inch. This saves tying the ends of cotton, which is annoying work and takes up a good deal of time if there are many seams.

Use for Tennis Racket.

An old tennis racket, threaded with stout cord, makes the best kind of flower rack for trailing plants that need a frame. Cut off half the handle, sharpen the end and drive it into the flower pot.

NOVELTY IN CUT OF SKIRTS

Smartly Cut Garment That Has Many Points That Will Appeal to the Fancy.

This smartly cut tight-fitting coat, has a panel down center of back and one each side front, which meet in the middle where fastening is formed by buttons sewn on each side and connected with loops of cords; a



Long Coat.

band is cut in with front panels and is carried round waist to back panel. The large collar is braided.

Felt hat trimmed with a large silk bow.

Material required: Four and one-half yards 48 inches wide, one dozen yards braid, four and one-half yards silk or satin for lining to waist, eight buttons, one and one-half yard cord.

Girl and Her Complexion.

A clear complexion and a fine skin, are the gifts of nature, but they may be marred to a great extent by injudicious foods, just as an ordinary complexion and skin may be considerably improved in appearance by carefully chosen diet. Strong tea and coffee, taken frequently, rob the skin of its whiteness and the complexion of its freshness and clearness, while milk and water are in every way beneficial to health and beauty. The girl who drinks milk instead of the darker beverages will keep her complexion pure and fair, and if she does not wish to sacrifice her good looks to her palate she will eat charily of rich, fat foods, cheese, cakes, pastries, sugar and so on and take freely of fruits and green vegetables.

Roots

Barks Herbs

That have great medicinal power, are raised to their highest efficiency, for purifying and enriching the blood, as they are combined in Hood's Sarsaparilla.

40,000 testimonials received by actual count in two years. Be sure to take Hood's Sarsaparilla

Get it today in usual liquid form or chocolate tablets called Sarsatabs.

Wearing of the Hood.

In England the hood was not finally given up until the early part of fifteenth century. The "great velvet hat furred" worn by the mayor of London, John Welles, in 1432, is cited as a singularity by Stow, who states that previously "the coverture of men's heads was hoods, for neither cap or hat is spoken of." In point of fact there are a few earlier instances of hats being worn by nobles and even the middle classes.

Refreshing Disinfectant.

The following is a refreshing disinfectant for sick room or any room having an unpleasant odor pervading it: Put some fresh ground coffee in a saucer and in the center place a small piece of camphor gum, which light with a match. As the gum burns allow enough coffee to consume with it. The perfume is pleasant and healthful, being far superior to pastilles, and much cheaper.

A Use for Salt Bags.

I have found a use for the little cotton bags which salt comes in. I wash them very carefully to get the lettering out, then put them away for use as wanted. When I bake poultry, as well as some kinds of meats, I make an extra lot of dressing, stuff one of these bags full, sew it up, and bake it with the rest. It makes a roll of just the right size to slice with cold meats.—Suburban Life.

Don't Tell Everything.

Do not tell everything, even to a friend. When you undertake great affairs, confide in but few. Never love a mean man; he will not rescue you from calamity nor share what he has with you. To do good to the base is like sowing the sea. The mean are never satisfied; one slip cancels all former benefits. Comrades in feasting are plenty; not in serious matters.—Theognis.

Sheep Flocks Diminishing.

Because sheep need such extensive ranges in order to get enough to eat, sheep flocks are uniformly diminishing in all countries, even in Argentina, where sheep farming was believed to be one of the best sources of wealth for an indefinite time. Only in districts where the immense area of pasture land is out of proportion to the hands available for tilling it can sheep be kept at a profit.

Knowledge.

Knowledge is indeed that which next to virtue, truly and essentially raises one man above another. It finishes one half of the human soul. It makes being pleasant to us, fills the mind with entertaining views, and administers to it a perpetual series of gratification. It gives ease to solitude and gracefulness to retirement.—Addison.

Making Babies Cradle.

The poorest of Indian mothers must have a beautiful baby basket or cradle, fashioned by her own careful fingers. The general design depends upon the customs and traditions of the tribe, and the materials used are determined by the natural resources of the region inhabited; but the ornamentation is dictated by the mother's ingenuity.—Receptionals.

Fabric From Stone.

The Russians are manufacturing a fabric from the fiber of a filamentous stone from the Siberian mines which is said to be of so durable a nature that it is practically indestructible, says Tit-Bits. The material is soft to the touch and pliable in the extreme, and when soiled has only to be placed in a fire to be made absolutely clean.

Long as We Bream.

The state of Sao Paulo, in the republic of Brazil, says L'Etoile du Sud, a French paper, published in Rio de Janeiro, has a river that carries one of the longest names of any stream in the world. The name is of Indian origin and is "Tamanduatehy," and is also called without saving anything in length, "River of the Great Tamanoir."

The Best Way.

When you resist the temptation to go the Sour Way, don't go too far and go the Sweet Way. Some people have such sweet dispositions that they are disagreeable. The best way is the Quiet Way—to let people alone as much as possible.—Athenian Globe.

Are Like Chestnuts.

Many Christians are like chestnuts—very pleasant nuts, but inclosed in very prickly burrs, which need various dealings of nature and her grip of frost before the kernel is disclosed.—Paul Chaffield.

Swallowed Toothbrush Fatal.

Howard Bolton, on whom an inquest was held at the London, England, hospital, died from the effects of swallowing a toothbrush while endeavoring to dislodge a piece of meat that had stuck in his throat.

Found Fossil Stag.

While French railroad builders were digging a tunnel recently a fossil stag was unearthed in clay one hundred feet below the surface of the ground.