

Personal and Local

F. M. Suver was in town Tuesday night on his way to Airlie.

A. E. Tetherow, of Suver, was in town Tuesday night.

Henry LaFrance of Bridgeport was doing business here, Tuesday.

Mrs. J. O. Davidson, of Parker, spent Sunday with Mrs. Ella Thorp.

Len and C. W. Fishback of Carlton were here visiting relatives Christmas.

Mrs. D. M. Hewitt spent several days visiting her son, Guy, and family on the Luckiamute, this week.

Mrs. F. S. Quisenberry, who fell and broke her hip some time ago has been taken to the hospital at Salem for treatment.

W. H. Myers and wife, of Condon, Oregon, are here visiting Frank Moreland and family. Messrs. Myers and Moreland are brothers-in-law.

Mrs. Ella Thorp was an Independence visitor Wednesday night where she attended joint installation of the Mason and Eastern Star lodges of that place.

F. O. Gray, of Corvallis, who has been visiting relatives here, left for home yesterday. His daughter, Greta, has gone to Portland, while Miss Glenva will remain here until her sister returns next week.

Prof. E. E. Arant, principal of the Island City school, came home from Eastern Oregon, to spend the Holidays, and by the way he was boosting for Eastern Oregon one would conclude that he had some pecuniary interests up there.

There was quite a home gathering at William Mulkey's residence Christmas, their daughters Mrs. Frank Lucas and Miss Eva Mulkey, of Portland, and Mrs. J. H. Gill, of Washington, being present, also C. C. Mulkey, of Dallas. Mr. Lucas and Mr. Gill were also present.

The Monmouth High School students will enter the Polk County Debating League. The teams have been cut down from three to two debaters, that the rural schools might have a better opportunity. The school here will soon make choice of those to compose the team.

Our Reporter called in at the Pharmacy yesterday, and while there, Dr. Bowersox came in with an armful of wood and a disgruntled expression on his face, announcing that he was mad. On inquiry as to the cause it was learned that Old Time's chilly influence had disturbed the doctor's sense of comfort and he was piling wood into his stove with the avowed purpose of "making it hot for him."

Unsealed Notes

How They Were Carried by a Girl Between Two Philanthropists

By F. A. MITCHEL

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"Lucy," said Mrs. Gonagle to me, "I wish you to take this note to Mr. Constable. The automobile is at the door, and Peter will drive you there at once. I send the note by you because it is upon a matter of unusual importance." I am Mrs. Gonagle's secretary. She is a wealthy woman and a philanthropist. I am unfortunate enough to have been born and reared in affluence and then forced to make my own living.

I confess I do not take to the work kindly. Mrs. Gonagle is very good to me, telling me that I should marry a man able to take care of me in style, to which I reply that fate has deprived me of an opportunity to meet such a man.

I was driven to Mr. Constable's house and admitted to a sumptuously furnished room that was used for his office. All I knew about him was that he was worth several millions, and like Mrs. Gonagle, a philanthropist, the two occasionally working together in their benefactions. A young man not more than twenty-one was sitting behind a rosewood desk writing. I advanced toward him with the note and said:

"Will you please give this to Mr. Constable and say that Mrs. Gonagle would be obliged for an immediate answer?"

The young man looked at me, and I could see in his eye that he admired my appearance. But I, being a woman of the world, knew how to appear unconscious of his approbation. Then he glanced at the address on the note and, inviting me to be seated, left the room. After a short absence he returned and handed me a reply addressed to Mrs. Gonagle. It was unsealed.

"Will you kindly mention to Mrs. Gonagle," he said, "that Mr. Constable, understanding that the bearer of his note is her secretary, does not feel warranted in sealing the reply? He wishes Mrs. Gonagle to understand this, for the subject matter is of considerable importance, and the note, if carried by an ordinary messenger, should be sealed."

Now, while I am to the manner born and thoroughly understand the motives that would induce Mr. Constable to refrain from sending a sealed communication by me, I am nevertheless a woman. The sense of honor supposed to exist in a highborn dame, I claim, is as strong in me as in the rest of my class, but that does not necessarily imply that I am devoid of curiosity. At any rate, what I did on this occasion was to prove that I am gifted with my full share of that feminine trait. I had not long been seated in the auto when I took out Mr. Constable's note and read it.

Great was my astonishment. This was what I found in it:

Dear Mrs. Gonagle—I am delighted with your secretary. I am sending this reply by her unsealed. If she reads it she has not the high sense of honor and the delicacy I would require in a wife. And if she does read it I shall know by the consciousness she will display that she has done so and shall be ready to have you recommend another helpmeet. I trust she will not, for I am half in love with her since this single meeting. Cordially and thankfully yours,

DONALD CONSTABLE.

Heavens! What had I lost? A millionaire husband? It was plain that Mr. Constable, instead of being a middle-aged or an old man, was the young fellow I had taken for his secretary. And I had spoiled it by my curiosity.

In another moment I resolved to fight the matter to the bitter end. But how? Ten minutes more would serve to carry me to Mrs. Gonagle, and that would be insufficient time for me to form a plan. I had owned an auto before the collapse of our family fortunes and knew how to run one.

"Peter," I said, "let me take your seat. I wish to drive awhile."

Peter stopped the machine, and I got into his seat.

"Are the tires in good order?" I asked.

"All but this front one on the left. I've got a new one I'm going to put on there."

I determined to obtain delay by bursting that tire. Turning into a street in which I knew the pavement to be badly broken, I drove vigorously over several holes, at the last of which there was a report, and the imperfect tire was burst.

"I shall have to leave you, Peter," I said, "to get out of this trouble as best you can. I am carrying an important message to Mrs. Gonagle which must be delivered as soon as possible."

Alighting, I walked on. The ten minutes that had been necessary for me to get home was now extended to nearly an hour, for I had driven the car as far as possible from a trolley line. When I reached Mrs. Gonagle I pretended to be so full of the breakdown as to forget Mr. Constable's note. I talked "a blue streak" about the former, not mentioning the latter. Finally Mrs. Gonagle spoke of my errand.

"I saw no one," I said, "but an understrapper, who took the note to Mr. Constable and brought me this one in reply. He told me to say to you that, though it was on a matter of great importance, he did not seal it, since he sent it by your secretary. All that was entirely unnecessary. I'm not in the habit of poking my nose in other people's business."

This latter assertion I made with a toss of the head and left my employer to read the note by herself.

So far so good. I had got over the danger of showing consciousness to Mrs. Gonagle, and this was a great aid. She would doubtless tell Mr. Constable that so far as she could discern I had stood the test. This would incline him to infer, unless I quailed under his searching gaze, that I had stood it. Emboldened by my first suc-

cess, I determined that I would deceive him if it took all the talent for deception there was in me. Besides, now that my blood was up for the fight, I would teach him that he could not play such a game on me with impunity.

Nevertheless I knew that unless I could at my next meeting with him throw up a dust as I had done with Mrs. Gonagle I would be beaten. What was my consternation when Mrs. Gonagle came into the room where I was writing, not ten minutes after my arrival, with a note in her hand and told me that I must go right back with it to Mr. Constable. She had telephoned for an auto and it would be at the door in a few minutes. "I will trust to your high sense of honor," she said, "as Mr. Constable has done, leaving my note unsealed."

"It doesn't matter about that, Mrs. Gonagle," I said. "I won't feel hurt if you seal it."

But she didn't, and I sealed it myself before her eyes. I had no use for what it contained. The plot was to send me right back to Constable so soon after my guilt—if indeed I was guilty—that he might the better detect it. There was no time to form or carry out a plan for his deception, certainly not another breakdown. Two such artifices would be a dead giveaway. I resolved to march straight up to him, driving all embarrassment out of my head, acting with absolute apparent indifference. I made another resolution. I resolved—but never mind what I resolved.

When I was ushered into the room where I again found him sitting behind his rosewood desk I think I could have envied any part—I could have announced to him that he was to be decapitated in ten minutes without showing the slightest trace of emotion. The gray eyes were brought to bear on me, but I met them with an inquiring, childlike wonder as to why he looked so hard at me. Then, as if my modesty had been touched by such a gaze, I called up a faint blush and turned my eyes away. I felt that I had conquered. My penmanship would have deceived Satan himself.

Still pretending that Mr. Constable was another person than himself, the secretary took the note out of the room and returned with another, which he handed me unsealed. He did not open his lips to me during my brief stay, but I knew that he was watching me. I acted as though there was no one present except myself, looking most of the time out of the window. The note he gave me I dropped at once into my bag without looking at it, pretending to be at the moment hunting for either my handkerchief or my purse.

From this time forward I felt that I was mistress of the situation. The only mention I made of Mr. Constable was as "the old gentleman who did so much for the poor," and this was not to Mrs. Gonagle, but in her hearing. I think this took away any suspicion she might have had that I knew of her plot. She did not send me with any more notes to Mr. Constable, but did send me to him with verbal messages. When I went with the first of these Mr. Constable's pretended secretary waxed affable and endeavored to engage me in conversation. I showed no indisposition to talk with him, though he never gave me one of those gazes of his but that I lowered my eyes. In one of our chats I asked him if he were Mr. Constable's secretary, and he replied that he was more than that—he was his business manager.

"Mr. Constable must be a splendid old gentleman," I said, "to do so much for the poor."

"What else can he do with his money?" was the response. "He can't spend it all on himself."

Then the secretary began to come to Mrs. Gonagle's on various pretexts, and every time he came she would manage to leave us in her office room together while she pretended to be attending to the matter about which he had called. I saw that he was bent on wooing, and I permitted him to woo. He took me out several times, and one evening on our returning from the opera on leaving me in the vestibule he pressed my hand. There was light enough for me to show him that I was very much impressed by the performance.

Time came when he proposed to me. I laughed at him. "I don't care to marry a man," I said, "who began his courtship with the idea that he was a match for a woman."

"What do you mean?" he asked, astounded.

"Why, you and Mrs. Gonagle formed a plot to make me believe that you are Mr. Constable's secretary. I knew from the first that you were Mr. Constable himself."

"How? You surely didn't read the first note I sent by you?"

"Of course I did. Did you take me for a ninny?"

"You played me?"

"That was easy."

"And all this encouragement is—"

"Pretended. I don't care to marry. I am much pleased with my work and have no intention of leaving it."

That was several weeks ago. Since then Mr. Constable has been pursuing me, and I have at last consented to marry him. Mrs. Gonagle is to give us a splendid wedding, and we are to go abroad on our bridal trip.

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