

HIS MERMAID

By HENRY TROLENS

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"By Jove, Jack, you must wait until I get my camera for that afternoon sun over the water. Aren't those clouds magnificent? The rocks on the beach, the woods over yonder, the waves almost too lazy to break as they come rolling up—I can see the picture now, printed deep down on sepia paper, fast to a prize at the amateur exhibition."

Jack laughed good naturedly. "All right, old man; sail in, but hurry up," he said.

Five minutes later George Carrington had snatched his camera from the broad hallway of the Berkeley inn, snapped it at the waterscape, and he and Jack Grayson were off on a fishing trip. It was the last day of their vacation, spent wandering down the coast at random, seldom two nights in the same place.

The final day's sport over, Carrington sped back to the city in a train, camera, fishing kit and grip beside him, tanned and tired, but happy. He reached his apartments and thought of the last picture of clouds and rocks and sea. He must develop it forthwith, and he did.

"A vacation of jolly good fun without a romance," he mused. "Nature, sunshine, fresh air, a good chum and good fishing; nothing more to be desired."

The film sank in the developing fluid, and in a few seconds the outlines of a coast scene appeared. First came the blotches of black, representing the high lights—clouds and the crests of waves. By an alchemy which never ceases to be marvelous all the delicate gradations of light and shade filled in until the perfect picture appeared.

Then occurred something which caused Carrington to gasp in astonishment and almost drop the developing tray, for in the center of the picture, head and shoulders visible above the crest of a breaker, appeared the form of a young woman, like a mermaid arising out of the sea. There was a saucy tilt to the laughing face, and the bare arms were outstretched as a beckoning mermaid's might have been. Carrington knew that no human being had been in that expanse of sea while he was on the beach.

With almost feverish haste he made a print from the film. There was no doubt about it. It was no freak effect.

The girl's face, which he had never seen before, seemed to mock him in mystery. Clad in a dainty bathing



HEMPT AND BEWILDERED, SHE STUDIED THE PHOTOGRAPH.

suit, she fitted into the picture as if an artist hand had posed her there, a dainty bit of indisputably human life that rounded out the scene and perfected it. Fate had tossed a romance into his vacation after all.

He recalled the events of the day. Grayson and he had reached the inn just before noon, tired by a tramp of a half dozen miles from a fishing station farther down the coast. Dinner, then a rest; the snapshot and the final two hours' fishing that closed the fortnight's holiday, leaving the camera in the hotel office beside his grip while he was gone; then supper and the train back to the city. All this was clear enough. But how did the mermaid creep into his camera? Carrington stared at the laughing face in blank perplexity. Only one point was certain. It was the prettiest face he had ever seen in his life.

A paper he had recently read in a scientific journal flashed across his mind. It dealt with the photographic discovery of a new light ray invisible to the eye, but duly recorded on the peculiarly sensitized photographic plate.

"Nonsense!" he promptly said. "That's a flesh and blood girl. She has the face of an angel, but angels don't wear bathing suits with all those frills."

Next day he jumped on a train and was whisked to Berkeley inn. He sought the manager and showed him the picture.

"You recognize her, of course?" Carrington asked, with a careless air.

"I should say I did," said the manager, with a smile. "That's the last

some one of the Langford girls, who were here a month with their aunt. Went back to town only a couple of days ago. Splendid picture. Taken right here on the beach, too," he added in a quizzical tone. "I didn't know you were acquainted."

Carrington rejected the conversational tender. "Yes; I think it's pretty good," was all he said. But just before train time he sought the porter and casually asked him the destination of the Langford baggage two days before.

"New York, sah," came the ready response. "Thank you, sah."

The journey had not been altogether in vain. And while other passengers on that train chatted gayly together or read their newspapers or watched the panorama of forest and farmland and the twinkling lights of villages there was one young man whose eyes and attention did not wander from a photograph he held before him.

Three months later he was at one of Mrs. Bloomer Billings' receptions. He did not know Mrs. Bloomer Billings, but he had not been idle during the autumn months, and without being a Sherlock Holmes he decided that he must get an invitation, and he did. Mrs. Billings was a literary lady whose assemblages were diverse and often astonishing. Artists and writers attended them, musicians and player folk, with a leavening of accepted "society." They were truly heterogeneous gatherings.

Eagerly Carrington scanned the rooms. A long haired violinist had just finished a Beethoven sonata, and there was much clapping of hands. Carrington was presented to Mrs. Billings, who was surrounded by a bevy of pretty girls. A moment of gallant conversation, and then his face lit up with a sudden joy that caused his hostess to look up in politely suppressed wonder. In that group, now in a setting of pink and white, but with the same laughing face of the glistening beach and wave, stood his lady of the sea.

An hour later they sat together on a window seat listening to a prima donna's song.

"I have a picture I would like you to see, Miss Langford," he said diffidently. He took the photograph from his pocketbook and showed it to her.

She gave a little startled cry, and the unmounted print fell from her hand.

"Why—why, you were at Berkeley inn?" she exclaimed.

"I took a picture of the beach, but not that one," he said slowly. "And yet that is the one I found in my camera."

Their eyes met for an instant, and the girl flushed crimson. Silent and bewildered, she studied the photograph. Suddenly she broke into the laugh of the water witch again.

"No less surprising was the picture my sister took of me," she exclaimed excitedly. "The water and rocks were lovely, but I was nowhere to be seen!"

"Now the mystery is no longer mysterious," laughed Carrington. "It's plain enough. I saw another camera in the hotel office, but never thought until this instant that I might have picked up the wrong one. Your sister took a picture with my camera, and I took one with hers." Suddenly he became silent and after a moment or two stammered, "I—I suppose this is your sister's property, but may I not keep it?"

The girl tossed her head and smiled in mock hesitation. She had been turning the picture around and around in her hand. Then the smile and the warm blood left her face in company, and there was an almost imperceptible tremor of the long dark eyelashes. On the back of the photograph she had read:

"My mermaid."

Again their eyes met, but hers were quickly withdrawn. Her hesitation was real now.

Both were silent another moment. He sat eagerly, expectantly. Her eyes were fixed on the floor, and as she slowly extended her hand and placed the picture in his he felt the warm touch of her finger tips.

Politeness.

If those who are doubtful as to the correct course to pursue in any given situation will remember that even the wrong thing is overlooked if one is but absolutely polite in the doing of it their relief might be great.

A gentleness of demeanor and a courteous response or question can never be out of place. A man may wear a business suit of clothes to an evening wedding less noticeably than a truculent air of insolence. If he be perfectly well bred as far as behavior goes, it matters not so much what his outward garb, although by an unwritten law of social observance certain clothes are the correct thing for certain occasions.

Politeness is never wrong. Its practice goes nearly all the way toward the goal of the right thing in the right place. We hear of polite insolence, but insolence is never polite, and it is never, under any circumstances, polite to be insolent.

The Tourist and the Porter.

An English tourist was discussing the relative merits of British and American railway service the other evening when he suddenly sprang the following clincher on his cisatlantic cousin:

"I tell you, though, there's one point you folks are behind in, and that is the lack of consideration shown white passengers in having them pass inspection by an African. Why, the idea of such treatment is an insult to any gentleman."

"A few days ago when boarding one of your famous express trains I was chagrined, to put it mildly, to be asked by a liveried colored man to show my ticket to him. I subsequently learned that this same individual is nothing but a train waiter. Such a thing could not happen in my country."—New York Press.

HIS STORMY WOOING

By... IZOLA L. FORRESTER

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"Then it is 'No' again?"

MacDowell's voice was reflective and regretful. He did not look at the small, erect figure in brown linen sitting in solitary state on the old fallen log among the pine needles. The serious hazel eyes regarded him with a calm, disinterested independence that was exasperating.

"It is always 'No.' This is the fourth time."

"Three and a half." There was a flash of mischief in her quick smile. "You only got as far as a lifetime of evasion last time, and Mr. Tisdale came for his waltz. When will you try again?"

"Never!" His voice was quiet. She could not see his face. "I give up the fight. I think that even you will grant I have made a hard one for the cause, and since it is hopeless I shall leave Arleigh."

"For the summer?" She dug the point of her parasol a trifle viciously in among the innocent pine needles.

"No. Indefinitely. I expect to go to Japan on business and from there



THE BURDEN IN HIS ARMS GREW HEAVIER WITH EVERY DRAGGING STEP.

will merely drift anywhere. It does not matter so long as I do not drift into Arleigh harbor and try again for the fourth time."

She did not answer. There was a new tone in his voice that troubled her, a tone of cynicism and finality. She looked off at the broad half moon of the bay and shivered at the sudden chill in the air since the sun had gone down. The sea looked gray, with long wreaths of swirling white foam where the tide was coming in full. There was a dull, low roar to the breaking waves on the beach below, and the anchored yachts out in the bay were tugging and straining like restive horses as the swell plunged them to and fro.

"We had better go back," MacDowell said presently, turning to her. "There is a storm coming up."

"I like a storm." She took off her hat rebelliously and fastened it with the pins to the log. The wind caught her hair and blew it in a brown veil across her eyes, and she held it back, laughing as she looked up at him. "You may go if you wish."

He frowned and threw himself down on the ground near the edge of the bluff.

"I suppose that is one reason why I love you," he said bitterly. "You are so charmingly tractable. You always do as I say."

"There is no necessity for sarcasm." The little square chin tilted higher. Miss Dunderdash felt indignant. "You always wish me to do something that I don't want to do. And you are—masterful."

She brought out the hateful word solemnly, and he shrugged his shoulders. There is something most annoying in a person shrugging his shoulders at you when you want to argue. It implies mental superiority and an impregnable stand. She closed her lips tightly. She would not say another word. He could go to Japan or the moon. It was a matter of the utmost indifference to her. She turned away from the stalwart figure on the ground and looked off at the storm clouds racing up from the breast of the sea on the horizon, her chin on her palm, one small foot swinging to and fro expressively as she reviewed the case of Hugh MacDowell.

There were just thirty-seven good and excellent reasons why she should marry him. Cecil knew all thirty-seven by heart. They were rehearsed to her with faithful exactitude by an anxious bevy of sisters and cousins and aunts.

And there was but one reason why she should not. She did not choose to.

To Cecil the one reason was sufficient and outweighed all the good and excellent thirty-seven. To the anxious bevy it was a foolish and willful obstacle set up before one of the happiest chances fate ever offered a girl.

MacDowell was twenty-nine—a traveled man of the world, with a generous fortune back of him, who had come from his globe trotting, cultured, broad minded and cosmopolitan, with

his native American point of view still fresh and optimistic.

Cecil's elderly relatives dwelt lovingly on these points. Her younger ones veered to the outward and visible signs of grace and said the tall, six foot wooer was handsome and altogether desirable.

That was just it. He was too desirable. He was faultless. Ever since he had come down to Arleigh, Cecil had felt herself lifted bodily by fate, and tilted slightly by the anxious bevy, thrown at his head and heart.

Any other man in his position would have courteously and diplomatically avoided the snare. He had walked into it, eyes open, lips smiling and arms extended to receive fate's gift. Wherefore the gift, with faithful feminine contrariness, declined he received.

There was a sudden vivid glare that ripped the heavy mass of clouds from end to end and a long crashing peal of thunder like cannon. The sea seemed to swell and leap to meet the sky. The boughs of the pines lashed up and down like fragile broeze blown ferns as the wind swept over them.

At the second crash Cecil had turned instinctively to the trees for shelter, but the gale caught her, and she would have fallen had not Cecil's firm clasp of her arm. All most instantly the whole world of land and sea and sky seemed on fire, and she shrank back into his arms with a cry of fear as a bolt struck a nearby pine that towered above its brothers a few yards away and left a blasted, smoking ruin.

Before she could recover herself he had lifted her in his arms and gained the path that led down over the face of the bluff.

"We can't get to the shore," she exclaimed. "The tide is in."

"Put your arms around my neck and keep still," he answered curtly. "We can't stay up here."

She obeyed in silence, and he made his way down the path. What had been a smooth stretch of sand was now a swirling mass of low breakers. MacDowell paused an instant for breath as he reached it and looked down at the face on his shoulder. Her eyes were closed. A wild impulse seized him, and he bent and kissed her. The next instant he was knee deep in the waves, struggling in the teeth of the gale to where the shore curved and safety lay, and he fancied that the arms around his neck were clasped closer than before, although the eyes were still closed and the face was white and still.

The waves leaped and snarled with a hissing roar at his feet like a pair of hungry wolves, and he was forced to stop again and again and lean back against the bluff as the wind beat down on him. The burden in his arms grew heavier with every dragging step, but at length the beach shelved and broadened, and he staggered up the higher ground in safety and laid her down under the shelter of the overhanging rocks.

The first wild fury of the storm had passed, and only a faint rumble of distant thunder broke the stillness. She opened her eyes and looked up at him as he knelt beside her. Something new in their hazel depths seemed to answer the cry of his heart, and he raised two small cold hands to his lips. "Cecil," he asked, "must I go?"

The first soft gleam of midsummer moonlight was casting a path of silver scales on the water when they reached the hotel veranda. The soft, delicious music of a mandolin orchestra came through the bright lighted windows, and they paused a moment in the shadow of the clinging vines to look back at the sea.

"I knew you would try the fourth time," she said laughing, as she raised her face to his. "Japan is so far away!"

"A Canvasbacked Clam."

Traveling on the continent of Europe with a party of young Americans, I was witness of their dismay at being assailed from time to time by friendly English fellow travelers with such questions as these: "Is it not very lonely in America? Are there any singing birds there? Any wild flowers? Any bishops? Are there booths in the streets of New York? Do people read English books there? Have they heard of Ruskin and how?" These were from the rank and file of questioners, while a very cultivated clergyman lost caste somewhat with our young people by asking confidently, "Are Harvard and Yale both in Boston?" a question which seemed to them as hopelessly benighted as the remark of a lady just returned from the wonders of the new world who had been impressed, like all visitors, with the novelties offered in the way of food at the Baltimore dinner tables, but still sighed with regret at having been obliged to come away without eating a "canvasbacked clam."

—Thomas Wentworth Higginson in Atlantic.

Witty Response of Lecturer.

A professor who, acted as chairman of a meeting at which Max O'Rell was to lecture introduced the Frenchman in the following manner:

"Ladies and gentlemen, when we wish to see ourselves as individuals we have recourse to the mirror. This we cannot do as a nation. I take pleasure in introducing a gentleman who will act as a French mirror, by means of which you will, I am sure, obtain an adequate and pleasing view of yourselves as a nation."

The introduction pleased O'Rell, and he responded in a vein as jovial. "I am requested to reflect on a nation. However, I must take second place to the man in the moon, for he reflects on the earth. As an imported French mirror, I shall do the best I can to give you a correct picture of the nation. And if your chairman remains where he is, in the background, he will add greatly to the reflective power of the mirror."

JUNCTION CITY'S EXCELSIOR MILLS

Articles of Incorporation of the New Company Filed Today.

The Junction City Manufacturing Company filed articles of incorporation with County Clerk E. U. Lee this morning. The incorporators are Soren Jensen, A. C. Neilson and W. F. Neilson, and the capital stock is \$5000 divided into three shares of the par value of \$1666.66 2/3 per share.

The objects and purposes of the new corporation are to construct, equip and maintain an excelsior mill and planing mill at Junction City, to deal in lumber, shingles, sash, doors, blinds, mouldings, etc.

A large amount of balm wood for the manufacture of excelsior has already been secured and contracts are being made to secure an unlimited supply.

A lumber yard will be run in connection with the excelsior plant and planing mill. The lumber has already been contracted for at the big Springfield mill, which will be shipped as soon as it can be hauled to advantage by the new company.

EXTRAORDINARY APPLE TREE

There is an apple tree on Bob Campbell's ranch across the river which he points out to his friends with pride. While the tree is now full of blossoms there is still a large number of good solid apples hanging to the limbs, left over from last year's crop. This is an extraordinary occurrence and peculiar to itself.

Prof. McCrady Injured.

Professor Julius McCrady, a well known Lane county pedagogue, was severely injured while playing baseball at Pleasanton last Saturday. He was running toward second base when he attempted to stop suddenly, throwing himself on his knee out of joint. He fell to the ground and was carried to his board of place. He is now at home in Eugene and is around the streets on crutches.

Buy Notice.

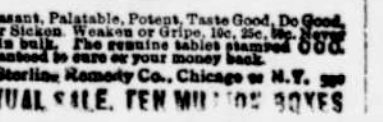
The following described horses came to my place about April 12th: One dark bay mare, weight 1050, brand "C S" on right hip, shod; one sorrel horse, weight 900, shod; one small bay horse, no brand. Owner can have the same by calling at my place, 1 1/2 miles above Hendricks' ferry on the south side of McKenzie river, and pay for their keeping.

A. TUPPER, Waltherville, Oregon.

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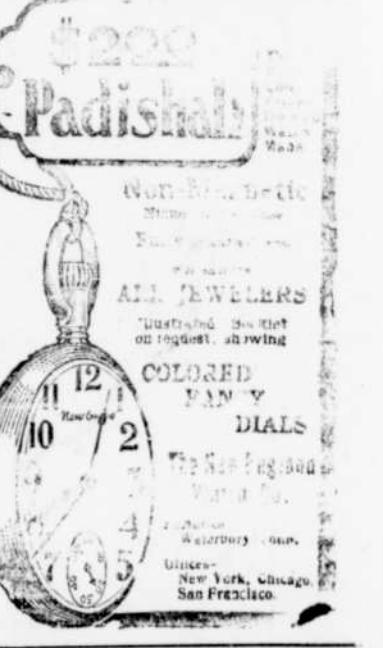
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