

AN OPEN SECRET

By MARGARET C. QUINBY

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"I am sorry, Helen, to have been obliged to ask you to come to the office to execute these papers, but you and I are not the only ones concerned. However, I have got matters in such shape that all can be attended to right here."

"Thank you, guardy."
"Now if you will sign here and here and here— There; the transfer has been effected, and you are the possessor of your property, to do with it as you like."

"Weren't you rather young for mother to put all my inheritance in your hands?"

"I was only twenty-seven, but I had had my profession four years, and—well, your mother was inclined to—"

"She was very fond of you."
"You don't know anything about that. You were too young to notice her partiality for me."

"Girls of twelve to thirteen are usually set down as not knowing anything. Don't you believe it. When I was thirteen I knew a lot. Mother used to talk to me about you, and I knew very well what she thought of you. That's the reason she left all my property in your hands. She told me all about that too. She said to me: 'Helen, Jim is not only honest, but he's smart. I'd rather trust him to handle your property after I'm gone than many older men.'"

"She was a mighty good woman, your mother. After what you have said I can't compliment her intelligence without directly complimenting myself."

"She told me a great deal more, too—that is, when she made the will she had an object in making you my guardian."

"What object?"
"That would be telling."

"Did she forbid you to tell me?"

"No."
"Then why don't you tell?"

"Because I'm not going to do it."
"There's no getting around that reason. There are no promises, no deductions, no conclusions. I call that flat reasoning."

"And I call it my own individual reasoning."

"Rather it is woman's reasoning. I must discover some method of getting it out of you."

"How are you going to do it?"
"That would be telling."

"Oh, I'm to be hoodwinked into telling you my secret?"

"So it is a secret! Well, how many know it?"

"Only I."
"Who would be most interested to know it?"

"Don't you wish you knew?" (making a wry face.)

"Was this object of your mother solely for your benefit, comfort, pleasure?"

She was looking for a trap and considered her reply before giving it.
"Well, that depends."

"On what?"

"Whether it would give comfort or pleasure to some one else."
"Now we are getting on."

"Is this a twenty question game?"

"It is my method of getting your secret."
"Oh, well, go on!"

"Is this other person masculine or feminine?"

"That's not fair. It's a direct question, I decline to answer it."
"You might as well have admitted that the reply, if made, would be masculine."

"How do you make that out?"

"I'm not submitting to a process; it is you. Having learned that this other person who would be interested in your secret is masculine, perhaps I can find out more about him by learning his age. Is he old, middle aged or young?"

"Young."

He started. There was a look of disappointment on his face.
"I would divide a man's life into three sections—young from his birth to thirty, middle aged from thirty to fifty, old from then till death."

"I wouldn't divide it that way. A man is young till forty-five."

He drew a breath of relief and went on catechising, but took another tack.
"Would this party—"

"He isn't a party; he's a man."

"Would this man who would be interested in this secret be interested in it peculiarly?"

"No."

Again the man started and looked disappointed.
"Then he could not be interested in you, because you have a fortune."

"Oh, I didn't mean that. He would not love me for my—"

She stopped short and blushed.

The questioner was happy. He had gained an important point. In fact, he had learned the whole secret, of which he had been reasonably sure at the first, but had from two of her replies received a bad scare.

"I think," he said, "that I'll try to learn this secret on another occasion. Will you be at home this evening?"

"I suppose so."

"Well, I'll drop in about half past 8. You are so smart about it that I haven't much hope of worming the secret out of you, but I can still try, you know."

"Yes, you can try."

He called the same evening, but it was she who learned his secret, not he hers. When he left her they were engaged.

Statistics recently collected show the horse population of the world to be 111,000,000. Of this number there are 11,000,000 in Asia, 28,000,000 in North America and 43,000,000 in Europe.

With prime mink pelts worth all the way from \$7 to \$12 apiece it is not surprising that a good many boys and men have their traps out and make regular trips of inspection during the winter months.

Some six months before the child is old enough to be affected by evil influences of whatever kind is the time to begin his instruction in morals, and with most kids of average intelligence and perception this is while they are still at breast or bottle.

It's a pretty good citizen that never makes a kick when he comes to pay his taxes. However, assessors and treasurers are but human, and it is a good plan to look into the charges which a fellow has to pay for living in a civilized and orderly society.

One who keeps close tab on the butter situation states that within the past few weeks thousands of tons of this commodity, bought during the summer of 1910 and held through the disastrous slump which came a few months later, have been put on the market at prices ranging from 28 to 30 cents or about 8 cents below the price paid for western extras.

That the average flock of hens do not have the dust bath privileges that they would like is plainly indicated in the avidity with which they will get on to a pile of ashes or pick out a dry spot of mellow earth in some sheltered spot most any time during the winter months. This dust bath is one luxury the hens should not be denied, is easily provided and will do much toward keeping them free from vermin.

President Taft helped stow away a fifty dollar prize pie that was presented to him by a lady friend eighty-four years old. This is how it was made: Two pints of apples cut in squares, half a pound of sugar, a pint of water and a teaspoonful of grated nutmeg. The crust of this prize winning culinary creation was made of two pounds of flour, a pound of butter and half a pound of lard. Do you notice that shortening?

That there is still a good sized nigger in the wood pile somewhere in the transit of apples between producer and consumer is shown in the prices paid growers in central and eastern states for apples the past season—in some cases as low as 37 cents a bushel—and the price now being paid by the chap who eats 'em—from 3 to 5 cents apiece. Any one who will locate this Ethiopian and chase him out of the wood pile will confer a favor on his fellows.

While the usual time for using the King road drag is just following rains during the open weather of the spring, summer or fall, there is no time when better work can be done with one of these drags than during pleasant winter weather when there is no snow on the ground and when the surface of the dirt roads has been softened and mellowed by warm weather. Especially is such work with the road drag to be urged when the roads froze up rough and rutty.

It will be a very natural mistake for the farmer in the northern part of the corn belt to make this year to select larger ears of corn for seed than will mature in an average season. The past season was one of unusual length between frosts, there being 165 days instead of 120 days, as is often the case. This made possible the ripening of huge, deepkerneled ears, seed from which it would be decidedly unsafe to use next year for any considerable portion of the field crop.

The calla lily is a favorite plant with many and reaches its highest perfection during the winter months when it has had a couple of months' rest during the summer and is put in a well drained pot and fertilized generously. While prepared fertilizers give good results, pulverized cow or sheep manure is excellent. A liquid made by soaking some of the fertilizer in water for a few hours should be applied at least once a week. The calla being a warm country plant should be given plenty of sunlight and should not be allowed to get a chill.

Catalpa seeds for spring planting may be kept through the winter nicely by mixing with sand, putting in a box and burying just below the surface in a dry place until spring. In the preparing of nuts for seed it is well to reproduce in a general way the conditions which are to be found during the winter months in the wood lot where nut trees grow—a covering to take the place of leaves and yet sufficient exposure so that they will be subject to frost, but not to alternate thawing and freezing, as would be the case where the nuts are entirely exposed.

There may be some readers of these notes that do not know how to best prepare the grapefruit for the table. While the fruit may be cut in halves, the seeds removed and served at once with plenty of sugar, a much more satisfactory way is to prepare them the night before. After cutting them at right angles to the seed axle the central seed core should be removed by snipping the tough membranes or walls with a sharp pair of scissors. The membranes should also be cut where they join the rind. Two or three tablespoonfuls of sugar should then be put in the center and scattered over the cut surface. By morning the fruit will be properly sweetened and most appetizing.

Humor and Philosophy

By DUNCAN H. SMITH

PERT PARAGRAPHS.

GIVE a man a choice between going to a concert and playing the agreeable to his maiden aunt and he will hunt a bowling alley.

The person who has never invested in a get-rich-quick scheme has never known the wild thrill of opening a letter with the secret hope that it contains a check for \$1,000.

When a city man gets the back to the land fever his wife seldom has the forethought to hire him to a farmer for a month as a chore boy.

One nice thing about winter is that your wife no longer tells you five times a day to be careful about letting in the flies.

The man who can always tell you just how to do it is as about popular in the neighborhood as a family with a goat.

Is the girl with the drug store complexion and the tailor made figure who marries the aged millionaire guilty of obtaining money under false pretenses?

Our idea of a self sacrificing wife is one who buys her clothes to please her husband.

Our standard of prosperity is fixed by the amount of money our friends spend.

When he hears that an enemy has said something nice about him the wise man lies awake nights wondering what he is planning now.

Not So In Life.

Behold the villain on the stage Who hangs about the joint And has in manner and in speech Not one redeeming point. He never has one kindly thought In all his monstrous heart. One grain of pity, only one, Would outrage so his art.

In life, were you to look around, You would not find a lad Constructed as the villain is. Of that you may be glad. There'd be no living with a man Or standing for his game Who didn't have a single speck Of goodness to his name.

The villains that you meet in life Are very pleasant chaps, Not working at it all the time Or half the time perhaps. And, on the whole, they average up With others, I'm afraid. Who are not thought to be so much Addicted to that trade.

The villain struts about the stage, His only thought to kill, To rob and plunder and elope Or else destroy the will. But if he feels that way in life His snails he has to trim. With such bad acting day by day We wouldn't stand for him.

Too Prosaic.

"How are your good resolutions coming?"
"I didn't make any."
"Why not. It doesn't cost anything."
"I can never keep them."
"Say, have you no imagination?"

Dazzled.

"He can't see anything that we put before him, no matter how much we argue it."
"Certainly not."
"But why?"
"He's always in the limelight."

Beset.

"Isn't she beautiful?"
"Sure, she is beautiful, and do you know she is the busiest woman in town?"
"What is she busy about?"
"Just being a widow."

Too Brief.

"I dreamed last night that I had fallen heir to a million."
"That is so unsatisfactory."
"I rather enjoy it."
"But the nights are so short. One wakes up before half the money is spent."

Natural Question.
"So you are going to marry?"
"No."
"No? I heard you were."
"Living is too high."
"Well, don't you expect to live if you don't marry?"

Sure Sign.

"Percy is such a sentimentalist."
"Where?"
"What?"
"I didn't think you'd let him get stuck on you."

Explained.

"I am not afraid of anybody."
"Why did you back down before Bob then?"
"Huh! Bob's nobody."

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