

His Desperate Remedy

By CECILIA A. LOIZEAUX

"I tell you, Mary, I cannot afford it, and that's all there is to it!"

John Brent unfolded his evening paper and held it under the light, which was shaded to an artistic dimness by many ruffles of crepe paper. His wife brought her hand down upon the piano keys in a crashing discord that made him shiver and set his teeth. Presently she seated herself in a low chair at the other side of the table, the soft light falling full upon her pretty, petulant face as she bent over her fancy work.

John Brent forgot that he had been reading the political editorials and looked over the top of the paper at his wife.

"What makes you want a diamond ring, Mary?" he asked gently.

Her blue eyes brightened. She thought he was relenting.

"Why, I've wanted one all my life. When I was a little bit of a girl I had one with a glass set, and when I grew too old for that I used to dream of the time when I would be old enough to be engaged, so that my lover would get me one."

"You should have chosen a richer lover," said her husband, with a tinge of bitterness. "Young hardware merchants can't quite go at the diamond ring pace."

His wife hardly heard what he said. She stretched a dimpled white hand out across the table and was admiring it.

"See," she said, with a flash of coquetry, "it's pretty enough for diamonds, isn't it? That Mrs. Burrows on Tenth street has hands that are big and red. She has one diamond as big as a robin's egg—almost."

"Her husband can afford it," smiled John, looking at the dainty hand that lay in his rough palm. He was wondering just how long he was going to be able to keep it from doing any work, hardly considering the diamond question. Then he put it gently down and leaned on the table, looking at his wife closely.

"Perhaps I haven't told you so that you fully understand, Mary," he said after a minute. "You're a good deal of a child about some things, and you don't think. But business is bad—not mine only, but every one's. There's that new store here, a branch of the big one in the city, and they are cutting prices murderously. And we have heavy expenses too. I don't know how, but we manage to eat and drink and wear almost more than we can pay for. And then there was the hospital bill as well as the doctor's. It took months to pay those."

"I suppose you wish it had been a funeral bill," said Mary sulkily.

"Mary! Don't you dare to say such a thing again as long as you live! You shall not twist my meanings in that way. Can't you be a little reasonable? Then you decided that the house was too shabby to be lived in, though the things we had bought when we were married seemed very fine to us at the time, and it wasn't so very long ago."

"We were awfully green," she said.

"Well, you've got over the greenness," said her husband dryly. "And the rugs and furniture and hangings have not yet got the last payment, and the furnace needs fixing, and the house needs painting. We must go slow, little girl."

Mary Brent's lips quivered for a moment, and then, hiding her face on her arm, she sobbed like a spoiled child. Her husband was first sorry, then angry. This was too childish.

"The trouble with you and all the rest of the women like you is that you haven't enough to do to keep interested. You sit around and think of yourselves until you believe you are martyrs, when a little work would be better for you. It isn't all your fault, though," he added slowly. "If the baby had lived you would have been more grown up."

His wife sprang to her feet. "I—I'm almost glad he didn't live," she sobbed. "I wouldn't want him to hear his father talk like that to me." And she whirled from the room.

John Brent spent a wakeful, uneasy night, but by morning he thought he had found a solution. He ate his lonely breakfast—Mary never got up to breakfast any more—and went downtown early. During the forenoon he went over to the office of Jim Reade, the most prosperous attorney in the town and his best friend. The two were closeted in the consulting room for over an hour, and as he came out into the reception room John said: "Till

take good care of it, Reade, and bring it back tomorrow. The fact that you aren't married makes it easier. I wouldn't want any other woman to know."

As soon as he got to the store he went straight into his private office and called up the police station. Within a few moments a detective whom John Brent knew well passed through the store and into the little room. The clerks looked at each other furtively and applied themselves vigorously to their work. They could not help hearing the burst of laughter that came from the office, however, though the ensuing conversation was too low to be heard.

That evening John Brent went home a little later than usual and sat down to the waiting dinner table without changing his coat, which he usually did to please his wife. Mary, apparently entirely recovered from the headache she usually had after such stormy times, sat opposite to him, dainty and pretty in her pale pink house gown. The dinner table was attractive and daintily set, and Nora, in a clean white apron, lumbered awkwardly around the table serving the simple dinner.

John seemed to be very nervous. He ate little and kept glancing furtively at his wife, who was seemingly indifferent, but who knew the signs and thought he was about to present her with a peace offering. She wondered what it would be.

They had reached the pudding and Nora had retired to the kitchen when the doorbell rang, and John started to his feet as if he had been expecting some one. He sat down again, however, as he heard Nora's step in the hall, and in a moment she opened the door, and Jack Burnett appeared in the doorway.

"Come in! Come in!" cried John heartily, a trifle too heartily, his wife thought. She wished John would not associate with this class of people.

"Sit down and have a bite," said her husband, and she was forced to echo the invitation, though she felt greatly relieved when the man refused. He leaned over the back of a chair, seeming at a loss how to begin. His feet shuffled nervously.

"I—I just dropped in," he stammered. "Fact is, I'm working on a case. Can I see you alone, Brent?"

"Oh, fire away!" said Brent. "My wife would find it out sooner or later."

"Well, some one stole Jim Reade's diamond ring this morning. They got me working on the case, and I've got to do my duty."

Mary Brent, looking across the table with a sudden, lurking fear in her eyes, saw John's hand make a sudden involuntary movement toward the breast pocket of his coat. She turned white.

"Of course you must do your duty," said John. "Who is the thief?" He tried to look unconcerned and natural, but something clicked in his wife's throat, and she was not surprised when the detective laid a hand heavily on her husband's shoulder.

"John Brent, I place you under arrest," he said solemnly, and then, "I hate to do it, John."

"I'll get my hat and come with you," said Brent, rising. "Mary"—

"No, you won't," she interrupted, running around the table and standing in front of him. Then she stepped back and put her hand through John's arm. She looked steadily at the detective, her small face very pale and her blue eyes flashing.

"If any one has to go I will. It isn't his fault; it's mine. I—I made him do it. He told me he couldn't afford it, and I acted like a little beast, and so he did it to satisfy me, I suppose. He isn't a thief. You know he isn't a thief." She appealed to the detective.

He stammered, "But the ring"—

"Take the ring back," she said, "and I will come and explain the whole thing to Mr. Reade. He wouldn't let you arrest John anyway if he knew who it was. Oh, please go! Give him the ring, John," she begged.

John drew the ring from his pocket and threw it down on the white tablecloth. She picked it up and handed it to the other man.

"I don't ever want to see a diamond again as long as I live," she said, beginning to sob. The detective went to the door feeling somehow as if he'd been robbing widows and children. He looked back once as he reached the door and then hastily let himself out.

"Gee!" he said to himself as he went up the street. "It was a mean trick to play, but it did the work. I'll bet that by tomorrow morning that little woman will be thinking she'd rather darn his socks than make tidies!"

Never Sees It Again.
"Does your poetry come back?" asked the young woman.
"Not always," replied the poet.
"Sometimes I neglect to inclose return postage," Chicago Tribune.

OUR PYGMY EARTH.

Compared With the Sun It Is as a Pea to a Two Foot Globe.

A dime held at arm's length from the eye will much more than cover the entire disk of the sun. If it were placed at the exact point of coincidence and its diameter and distance from the eye accurately measured it might be used as a means of determining the sun's diameter, its distance being known. The foremost philosophers of long ago would have been appalled at the true statement of both the sun's distance and its size.

The sun's diameter is about 866,000 miles. It is bewildering to be assured that it would take 1,300,000 earths to equal the sun in volume. If the interior of that truly gigantic globe were hollow and the earth were placed at its center with the moon revolving about it at its usual mean distance of nearly 240,000 miles there would still exist a vacuum between the moon and the inclosing shell of the sun of nearly 200,000 miles. This is perhaps the most graphic and impressive illustration possible of the sun's colossal bulk. We must note, however, that the density of the sun is only about one-quarter that of the earth, so that it would weigh only as much as 330,000 earths. In very round numbers the sun's weight may be stated at two octillion tons, which if expressed in figures would require almost as many ciphers as a newspaper line can accommodate.

A very comprehensive illustration of the pygmean dimensions of the earth as compared with the sun is to represent the latter by a globe two feet in diameter and the earth by a dainty pea. And yet the little pea weighs more than six quintillion tons. As to the solar surface, it is some 12,000 times that of our planet. Yet the sun when compared with its true peers, the stars, is not only not of extraordinary size, but in all probability is only to be ranked among the medium self luminous bodies which sparkle in "heaven's ebon vault." And because of its spottedness it has a place, although a humble one, among the "variable" stars.

How It Feels to Freeze.

Freezing to death is preceded by a drowsiness which makes the end painless, the body actually feeling warm and going comfortably to sleep. Experiments have been made with animals to show just how freezing to death proceeds. In one of these experiments, in which the animal was placed in a temperature of from 125 to 150 degrees below zero, the breathing and heart beats were at first quickened, the organic heat of the body actually rising above the normal, which is 98.6 degrees F. This showed a sudden and intense effort on the part of the functions to preserve the body's temperature. Then violent heart action gave out suddenly, and death came when the temperature of the body dropped to 71 degrees F.—Popular Mechanics.

Man and Sleep.

How much sleep is necessary for a man? The question was raised centuries ago by Montaigne. "Physicians," he wrote, "may consider whether sleep be so necessary that our life must needs depend of it, for we find that Perseus, king of Macedonia, prisoner at Rome, being kept from sleep, was made to die, but Plinie altogether that some have lived a long time without any sleep at all. And Herodotus reporteth there are nations where men sleep and wake by halves yeares. And those that write the life of Epimenides the Wise affirm that he slept the continual space of seven and fifty yeares."

Warships In Olden Times.

Although a warship of today is useless without her guns, artillery was not always used on board ship. It first appears to have been made use of about 1100 B. C., in a battle between the Phoenicians and Iberians, the former winning and occupying Cadiz, or, as it was then called, Gades. The Iberians, from the north of Spain, believed that their enemy had lions on board which belched forth fire. The artillery consisted of long copper tubes, out of which a sort of Greek fire was discharged. The first cannon ever cast in England appears to have been made in 1543 by Ralph Hogge.

Courtship In Oshima.

On the Japanese island of Oshima, in the sea of Japan, the young people enjoy more freedom in the matter of courting than in central Japan. They are left to themselves to select their own mates, much after the fashion of the west. When a young suitor proposes to the girl of his choice the girl declines two or three times as a matter of form and in order that she may enjoy the period of courtship.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

IT WAS A GOOD PLAY.

That Much at Least the Actor-Critic Was Forced to Admit.

John Hare, the English actor, once went to see one of Beerbohm Tree's infrequent performances of Hamlet. He would willingly have avoided Tree for some little time afterward for reasons obvious to others who, like him, had seen this least impressive of this actor's roles.

Hare chivalrously remained in his box to the end of the play. As the curtain descended on each act he had dreaded the invitation of his fellow player to his dressing room, where the usual courtesies would have been expected.

Act by act slipped by without any word from the stage, and Hare grew proportionately relieved. As the last curtain fell, however, and Hare retired from the box he found a messenger at the door with Mr. Tree's compliments, and wouldn't he come home for a bite of supper with some friends?

At table Hare parried opening after opening, yet not once did Tree refer directly to his Hamlet. Hare on his part dreaded every break in the conversation would bring the dreaded topic. After a decent time he drew away from table to go home. Tree accompanied him to the hall to put on his coat. "Now's my hour," thought Hare. Not one word from Tree. They shook hands on the threshold, and Hare started down the steps in happy relief. Tree followed him to his carriage. Hare heard him in dread. Still the topic was avoided. Tree, with cordial courtesy, opened the door. Hare slipped into the cushions of the carriage, joyfully heard the door slam and drew a deep sigh.

But before the horses started Tree's head was in at the window, and he said, with blighting suavity: "At least, John, you'll admit it's a good play."

Largest Grave In the World.

The largest single grave in the world occupies just exactly one acre of ground, which is surrounded by an iron railing. This enormous grave is located at Puerto Cortez, in Honduras, and is the burial place of a woman. The tombstone occupies the center of the ground inclosed, and several wooden figures representing the deceased are arranged in statue-like form in different parts of the ground. There are sixteen of these figures, which in the evening give the place a ghostlike appearance. The deceased had died rich and in her will had specified the amount of ground to be purchased for her grave and the manner in which it should be decorated. She had many curious notions, and the size and ornamentation of her grave were among them.

Looking Backward.

How far back in one's life can one remember? Herbert Spencer used to recall faint pictures of playing in the garden with a sister, a year his junior, who died at two years old. His most vivid recollection, however, "worth mentioning because of its psychological interest, is that of certain results caused in me by being left alone for the first time." The nurse went out and locked him up alone in the house. It was the evening of the week when the bells of All Saints, Derby, was rung, and they were going all the time the child suffered in loneliness. "All through the earlier part of my life, and even in adult years, I never heard these bells without a feeling of sadness coming over me."

Parisian Gay Life.

Speaking of the so called gay life of Paris, Theodore Dreiser says in the Century: "Consumption, cocaine and opium maintain their persistent toll. This is a furnace of desire, this Montmartre district, and it burns furiously with a hard, white hot flame until there is nothing left save black cinders and white ashes. Those who can endure its consuming heat are welcome to its wonders until emotion and feeling and beauty are no more."

Matches.

Matches have not been in use for a hundred years yet. It was in 1833 that Isaac Holden of London found out the secret of putting the sulphur of the igniting mixture directly on the wood and the match was made. They were called 'lucifer matches at first, because the word which applied usually to Satan really means light bringer, from the Latin lux, light, and fero, I bring.

The Wind of Fame.

"Press agents are all very well," said Alfred Noyes, the English poet, "but a press agent won't advance you to success unless you have the real qualities of success within you." The eyes of the poet twinkled, and he resumed: "Before the press agent blows the trumpet of fame for you, for yourself have got to raise the wind."

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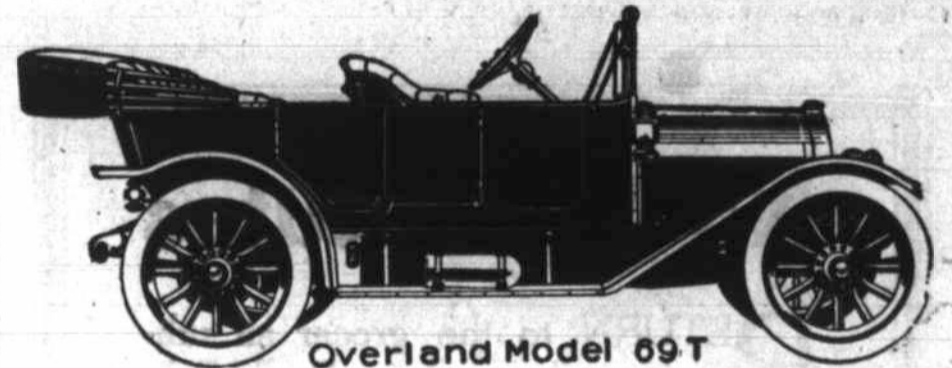
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