

Reversing a Decision

By EDITH MELNO.

Thomas Henderson Howie stepped grandly from the elevator, rather resentful of the elevator boy's patronizing pat on the head. Men who come downtown on business should not be patted on the head even if their mothers do possess foolish ideas that curls are cute. Men on business bent always act importantly and should be treated with deference.

The pat had the effect of stiffening Thomas Henderson Howie's small backbone to an unusual degree of ramrod stiffness, and it was a very pompous six-year-old who entered Dorrington's office.

Tim Dorrington looked up from a pile of papers with a genial smile. "Welcome to our city, Mr. Thomas Henderson Howie," he cried. "And what good fortune brings you to the office? Surely you are not about to be sued for breach of promise? I am afraid of that little Houston girl, or perhaps it is the embezzlement of preserves again!"

"It's a letter," explained Tommy stiffly, as he delivered the square white envelope into Tim's trembling hands. "I will be going now," he added as he turned away. Tim raised his hand.

"Wait a moment, please," he asked. "There may be an answer."

Tommy climbed into the biggest chair and settled himself with quaint, old-fashioned gravity, while Dorrington opened and read the note. Twice the man read it, though the first time the words had seared themselves into his brain.

It was a cold, almost curt note in which Jessie Howie acknowledged the honor he had done her in offering to make her his wife, an honor she declined, regretting that there had been anything in their friendship to lead him to believe that the friendship might grow to greater intimacy.

Dorrington smiled bitterly as he read the last few lines. Surely he had had every reason to hope for a favorable answer to his letter. Jessie had been tenderness itself. With a sigh he thrust the letter into his pocket and turned to his small visitor.

"I regret, Thomas Henderson Howie," he said in the playful banter that had been suggested by the child's quaint dignity. "I regret that my pleasurable anticipations of a wild dissipation in soda water and candy in celebration of an important event have been dashed to earth. But man turns to drink both to express his joys and drown his sorrows. Therefore I pray you to descend with me to the drug store on the ground floor and assist me in the latter ceremony. They have hot chocolate with whipped cream."

"No, thank you," said Tommy politely. "I don't want any soda."

"Perhaps you prefer the stronger tippie of beef tea?" suggested Dorrington. "It is a cup that cheers without inebriety and can be rendered quite palatable if you use enough celery salt to disguise the flavor of the beef extract. Shall we go?"

"I don't want to go with you," said Tommy stolidly. "I don't like you any more. You make Jessie cry."

"That," said Tim, "is what they call an inversion of facts. Your sister has made me cry."

"I'm glad of it," said Tommy cruelly. "You made her cry lots."

"You are sure?" asked Dorrington quickly. "She was crying over my letter?"

"Lots," declared Tommy with a sweeping gesture that suggested a very flood of tears. "I went to her room to get her to sew the tail on my dog again. She was crying awfully, and she was kissing your letter and saying things."

Dorrington moved closer to the boy. "You don't remember what she said, do you?" he pleaded gently. "See if you can't think, Tommy, boy. Try hard, laddie."

Thomas Henderson Howie knitted his brows thoughtfully and assisted the mental process by solemnly wriggling his right foot.

"It was something about a mean sacrifice," he said at last. "Sacrifices," he added informatively, "is where the Indians kill people and burn 'em up."

"The operation is bloodless and the fires are internal nowadays," said Dorrington softly. "What else did she say?"

"She said, 'How can I do it?' and then she cried some more," continued Tommy. "Then there was something about for father's sake, and mother came in and said something about duty and then

something about Mr. Bowen, and Jessie cried lots more, and then she wrote the letter, and she gave me a penny for myself and kissed me." For a moment Dorrington sat stunned. Howie had invested heavily in suburban real estate, and much of his capital was tied up in land, but Dorrington had not guessed that Mr. Howie's need was so great that he had been compelled to go to Bowen.

For nearly a year Cyrus Bowen had sought to make Jessie the fourth Mrs. Bowen. Mrs. Howie had favored his suit, for the matron was ambitious for her daughter, but it must have been dire need that caused blunt Henry Howie to add his influence. Dorrington turned to Tommy.

"Thomas Henderson Howie," he said quietly, "I pledge you the word of one man to another that I did not make Jessie cry. Will you mind the office a moment?"

He swung the youngster into the big chair before the roll top desk, supplied him with a pencil and pad and slipped from the room. It was less than a block to the office building in which Henry Howie had his suit, and shortly Dorrington entered the private office of the operator.

"You will pardon my abruptness," began Tim, "but I have just had a letter from Jessie refusing an offer of marriage. From what Tommy says I imagine that her refusal is influenced by the fact that you need Bowen's assistance, and she is the bonus for the loan. Am I right?"

For a moment Henry Howie's hands clinched and unclenched themselves nervously. The blunt statement of facts roused him to anger, but the white, tense face of the man before him restrained him from pitching Tim out of the office as he longed to do. He liked Tim, and it hurt him to give pain to the young fellow.

"You are not entirely correct in your premises," he said at length. "I believe that Jessie does contemplate marriage with Mr. Bowen. Bowen has promised to come to my aid in an extremity. That Deepdale tract has been a heavy burden to me. Bowen will take it at what I paid and pay cash. This will enable me to save other investments. Naturally Jessie is grateful to the friend who has come to my rescue and looks with favor upon his suit. I tell you this that you may understand. Of course it will go no further."

"I thank you for your confidence, which will be respected. But I want to ask what you are getting for your Deepdale holdings."

Howie looked at the younger man in surprise. "I presume that you have a reason for asking," he said. "The sum is \$10,000. That is \$200 more than I gave for the land."

"Bowen is generous in the extreme," said Dorrington, with a sneer. "No doubt you are aware that the Central and Suburban plans a cutoff to the main line that strikes the property? That will be better than the trolley which was not built. I am junior counsel for the road and I know that Bowen has known this for two weeks."

For a moment Howie shrank back, stunned at the treachery of his fancied benefactor. Bowen would make a handsome profit from his supposed charitable action.

"I suppose this is the reason you seek Jessie's hand," sneered the elder man, stung to a retort as an outlet to his feelings.

"Not at all," said Dorrington calmly. "My reason for speaking now is that they purchased my old homestead for a model town. They are to build their shops there. I had not thought of your holdings. Do you want a loan?"

Twenty minutes later Dorrington burst into his own office.

"Tommy—boy," he cried, "for your great services let us get soused on soda and then buy out a candy store and take it up to Jessie. You've enabled me to beat Bowen at his own game and wipe Jessie's tears away. 'Soused' is a vulgar word, Tommy—boy, but it's expressive of my feelings, and to your uncanny powers of observation I owe the fact that I've reversed the decision."

Wooing the Wind.

Mary Stuart's house at Roscoff, a little village on the coast of Finisterre, now the property of the French nation, was built as a chapel marking the spot where Mary, queen of Scots, landed in 1548 to marry the dauphin. In the chapel, which is named St. Ninian, a curious custom has grown up among the Roscoff women. They gather the dust from the floor and carefully blow it in the opposite direction from where their husbands and sweethearts are out fishing. This, they believe, will assure a fair wind home.

Merry Moments

As We Journey Through Life Let Us Laugh by the Way

Done Deliberately.

"What is the meaning of that big 'D' on the dustbin?" asked the new servant.

The haughty footman replied: "Damsel, the 'D' displayed on the dustbin denotes that the despairing domestics of this detached domicile desire that the deserving dustmen during their daily diversions will deem it their delightful duty to dislodge deliberately and deftly the dirt and dust deposited in that disagreeable dustbin."—London Tit-Bits.

Clever.



Jim—The last I heard of Spike Yegg he was being tried for burglary—did his lawyer get him off?
Jem—He did. He gave Spike the measles, and Spike escaped from the hospital.—Boston Globe.

Common Sense.

Sunday School Teacher—And when the prodigal son come home, what happened, Tommy?
Tommy—His father ran to meet him and hurt himself.
Sunday School Teacher—Why, where did you get that?
Tommy—It is said his father ran and fell on his neck. I bet it would hurt you to fall on your neck.—Stray Stories.

In Doubt.

An insurance agent was filling out an application blank.
"Have you ever had appendicitis?" he asked.
"Well," answered the applicant, "I was operated on, but I never felt quite sure whether it was appendicitis or professional curiosity."—Ladies' Home Journal.

By Right of Purchase.

"Pa, what does it mean when they say a man is 'the life of the party'?"
"The life of a party, my boy, is a man who buys while the other fellows are hanging back trying to remember whose turn it is."—Detroit Free Press.

All That Was Necessary.

"Can you support my daughter and give her everything that she wants?"
"I can support her and give her her principal want."
"And what is that?"
"Me."—Houston Post.

In Duty Bound.

"Do you eat your daughter's cooking?"
"Of course," replied Mr. Meekton. "I've got to. Observing the effects on me constitutes a part of her course of study."—Washington Star.

Acknowledgment.



"You were always a faultfinder," growled the wife.
"Yes," responded the husband meekly. "I found you."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Discerning Youth.

Adolphus—It's an awful shame. My little nephew got hold of that poem I wrote to you and tore it to shreds.
Augusta—So the little fellow can read already!—London Opinion.

A Self Evident Fact.

"How do you like my new skirt?" asked the sweet young thing. "Isn't it perfect?"
"Well, there isn't much room for improvement," replied the grouch.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

DEATH VALLEY DELIRIUM.

Madness That Leads to the Circuitous Route to Death.

Death valley, that treacherous road to madness that ends the life of its victim, was denominated by the early tribal Indians in California as the "Valley of Fire."

The Piutes, Washoes and other tribes in early days condemned their criminals to the country surrounding Death valley. When an outlaw Indian violated the most sacred laws of his tribe he was condemned to the "Valley of Fire," where he was expected soon to perish.

Of the hundreds of bodies found in Death valley, where men perished from heat and thirst, they are almost universally naked to the waist. The trail made by the men before death also shows a circuitous course.

At a certain date, after being attacked by the heat, the person begins to run and claw at his breast. First his hat is abandoned. Then he begins to claw at his shirt and finally tears it from him.

Then he turns in a circuitous route and narrows the circuit until finally he falls exhausted in a heap and never rises again. Delirium comes on instantly.

It is when the heat delirium sets in that the victim begins to tear at his upper garments and run. It is presumed that the terrible suffering from the heat and thirst feels like a load on his lungs and makes breathing difficult and that the victim imagines by running he is getting away from the thing and that in clawing off his garments he is releasing the weight.

Scientists who have visited Death valley in warm weather and had a touch of the heat state that the extraordinary effect of the heat there is caused by the peculiar situation of Death valley. It is from 100 to 400 feet below sea level and is shut in on all sides by high mountains.

The atmosphere of that region is the driest of all places on earth. It absorbs from every living thing, both human and vegetable, every particle of moisture.

When the system is drained of all moisture the brain yields, the victim's eyes stare like a madman's, and he runs his circuitous course to death.—Indianapolis News.

Cold and a Candle.

Dr. Moss of the English polar expedition of 1875 and 1876, among other odd things, tells of the effect of cold on a wax candle which he burned. The temperature was 35 degrees below zero, and the doctor must have been considerably discouraged when, upon looking at his candle, he discovered that the flame had all it could do to keep warm. It was so cold that the flame could not melt all the wax of the candle, but was forced to eat its way down the candle, leaving a sort of skeleton of the candle standing. There was heat enough, however, to melt oddly shaped holes in the thin walls of wax, and the result was a beautiful acelike cylinder of white, with a tongue of yellow flame burning inside of it and sending out into the darkness many streaks of light.

Insomnia.

There are various simple cures for insomnia. The secret of the hot milk cure, often recommended for sufferers from insomnia, lies in sipping the beverage just before retiring. The act of slowly swallowing the liquid is soothing in its effect and generally produces the much desired drowsy feeling which leads to the coveted sleep. Bathing the feet in warm water just before going to bed is sometimes effective in inducing slumber. The use of drugs should be avoided, as once the habit is established it is not easy to secure sleep without them, and serious results are sure to ensue.

Shooting Stars.

When a shooting star breaks into flame in our atmosphere the residuum of the combustion remains in the air and can be found in what is known as atmospheric dust. The virgin snow of the polar regions is often seen to be spotted with traces of dust which contains particles of iron. Like particles are found on church towers and elsewhere. Among the minute bodies that dance in the sun's rays there are certainly particles of shooting stars.

Atlantis.

A. Henry Savage Lander discredits the existence of Atlantis, the island continent, which is supposed to have occupied much of the sea that now separates Europe from America and to have been submerged in a great earthquake. The first account of the existence of Atlantis comes from Plato, who gives the story as a tradition existing in his day, but there are still many persons who cherish the belief.

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