

Story of a Lady Killer

By GERALD GREEN

Having passed through a siege of typhoid fever, when I became convalescent my hair began to come out. I at once had my head shaved and ordered a wig. The wigmaker, a Frenchman, measured my head and before departing asked:

"Blond, noir or rouge?"

I understand nothing of any language except American and did not know what he was talking about. But there is a dislike in all persons to acknowledge that they do not understand or do not hear or cannot see. I looked at the man as though I was deliberating on what he said, then replied:

"Oui, rouge."

This seemed to satisfy him, for he bowed himself out without another word.

"I wonder what he said to me?" I mused after he had gone. "Was it the price he was speaking of or the time it was to be finished?"

I found out what he had said when the wig came in. It was a beautiful red. I abused him for having made a wig of such a color, and he expostulated with the usual French shrug and gesture.

"Monsieur, I ask you if you have it blond, black or red. You say I make him red."

Seeing that I had authorized the color, I said no more, but paid for the wig like a man. The price being \$25, I could not afford another one and subjected myself to wearing it till my own chestnut locks should reappear.

It was about this time that I received an anonymous note written in a woman's hand. The writer said that she had seen me on a sickbed in the hospital and had been impressed with my appearance. She plastered the communication over with a lot of stuff about my intellectual, pale brow and other features. What her object was I did not know, but I did know that there were emotional women in the world who are silly enough to do just that sort of thing.

However, since she gave me no clue to her identity, I paid no attention to her letter, tossing it into the fire and thinking no more about it.

When I had forgotten it a married lady friend of mine told me that she desired to introduce me to a friend of hers. "I think," she said to me "that, to use a slang phrase, you have made a mash. I think the lady admires you."

"Has she ever seen me?" I asked.

"Of course. How could she admire you without having seen you?"

"Oh! Her admiration doubtless only exists in your imagination."

Nevertheless I was flattered. This was the second case of admiration of which I was the subject, and I began to feel quite Adonis like. It seemed to me, after this last conquest, that every girl who came near me was struck with me. I waited impatiently for my friend to introduce me to my victim, but nothing came of it, and I was beginning to settle down to the opinion that I was not, after all, a lady killer when another woman friend of mine said to me one day:

"I would like to know whether or not you carry a love potion about you."

"Why do you say that?" I asked, my finger ends tingle and my heart increasing its beat.

"Oh, nothing. A friend of mine—"

"Well?"

"A friend of mine was going into raptures over you the other day."

"What did she have to say about me?"

"I don't think that the flattering things said of persons should be repeated to them any more than the disagreeable things."

That is all I could get out of her.

By this time I felt sure there was something about my appearance that attracted the fair sex. I stood before a mirror trying to discover what it was. It seemed to me that if my own black locks decorated my head I would be passably good looking, but my sorrel top, I considered, spoiled the whole. Then it occurred to me that these "mashes" had been made since I had donned it, and it struck me that this must be the secret of my success.

One evening at a dinner the hostess came to me and said she would introduce me to the lady who was to be my companion at table. She took me to one who the moment she saw me started and shrank away from me. I noticed that her eyes were fixed on my wig. The hostess looked at her in astonishment, but the other, recovering herself, took my arm, and we marched together to the dining room. Passing a mirror, I saw that my face and my wig were both very red.

My dinner companion, when seated, turned from me for an animated conversation with a man sitting on the other side of her. She scarcely spoke a word to me during the dinner.

This treatment brought me to my senses, and I resolved to make an investigation. Before I got through I knew more than I wished to know. All these women who admired me were one—my demure companion. She had seen me in the hospital and, being aggressive instead of retiring, had written me the anonymous letter. She had seen me with black hair falling over white temples. Meeting me at the dinner party, she saw my sorrel wig. The effect was not only disenchanting, but irritating.

Months later I appeared before her in my own natural hair. She had by this time recovered from the shock occasioned by the wig, and I had little difficulty in completing my conquest.

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