The Observer

MORO. OREGON.

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MOTHER KNEW

By JOSEPHINE MURPHY.

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"James is at such an uninteresting age—thirteen, you know."

"It is too bad, isn't it? My brother is just the same as James. So uninteresting and always in the way."

James, sitting on the back door step, heard the words and a dark flush mounted his brow. The answer of his sister's companion killed a budding romance that had but lately entered his heart.

He arose and walked down the path out into the broad sunny avenue. His sister's words came as a climax to an already unhappy week, and mother, his real friend, was up in her room, with a new little head reposing in the curve of her arm.

"A boy!" James' heart had leaped when he heard the words; but now it was filled with pity. Inevitably it would have to reach the uninteresting age. He kicked a pebble viciously. Today was Saturday; baseball day, and when mother was well, cake and pie day. Early in the morning he had entered the kitchen and asked Mary when the cake would be done. She had muttered something about youngsters "always on hand."

Then he had met his brother John, for whom he had a deep feeling of admiration.

"Hello, son!" John's greeting had been.

James had tried to laugh at the joke, but a little lump in his throat checked the laugh. Next he met his father, and asked for his weekly allowance. Father had given him the money, then looked him over, with a slow, disconcerting gaze.

"You must hurry up, James, and grow to an age when you'll be able to earn your own allowances," said the father, with a kind pat on James' shoulder, but James had swallowed another hard lump in his throat.

He wandered back to the house and into the library, where sat his sixteen-year-old sister, Ruth, and her chum, Irene. James sat down, uninvited, to be sure. He admired Irene, and liked to watch her long lashes. Ruth gave him one look, then:

"James! You haven't polished your shoes this morning," she said.

His cheeks burned, for Irene's eyes had followed Ruth's glance at the muddy shoes. He went out and sat down on the back steps. Then his sister's voice reached his ears.

"Uninteresting."

"I wonder just when a fellow becomes uninteresting," he said.

He started to walk down the street. He was glad he met none of the boys. He wanted to be alone. He did not want to meet even George Long, who was also thirteen, and probably uninteresting. His allowance jingled in his pocket, and with the jingle came a thought. He wouldn't touch a penny of it. He would earn his own money and buy flowers for his mother.

James reached the grocery store and went to the proprietor, who knew him.

"Do you want a boy to deliver goods?" he asked.

"You're just in time, James. We're short of help. Get on that wagon going out. I'll pay you 50 cents a day."

James did so, and the wagon started at a mad pace. He had some difficulty to maintain his seat on the rear end. Finally it stopped with a lurch.

"Here, boy," the driver commanded, "take this up to the third floor, Mrs. Hale."

James took the box filled with groceries and started on his journey. He was puffing breathlessly when he came down. After hours of climbing, the day ended, leaving him with weary feet, skinned knuckles, and every bone in his body having a separate ache. He had pocketed his 50 cents and was on his way home. He stopped at the florist's and purchased some very pale, creamy looking roses. It was quite late now, but he knew they wouldn't miss him at home.

He pictured them all at the table. Father at the head, then brother and sister. No, mother wouldn't be there; if she were, and he would straighten up his shoulders, she would say: "Sit here next to mother, my little man."

At last he reached the house and walked bravely in. One of his long legs came in contact with a leg of the chair, but he recovered himself quickly, and going over near his father, placed the 50 cents he had received from him that morning near his plate.

"I worked today, father," he said in a low voice, "and I'm able to return the money to you. I'm just as much obliged, though. It's all right, isn't it?" he asked. "You see, I wanted roses for mother."

Still the father did not answer because of a tightening in his throat.

James turned and flew upstairs. Reaching his mother's room he gently pushed open the door. Yes, she was there. She looked around dreamily, then half started at the pathetic little figure standing there. Coat torn, two buttons missing, muddy shoes and withal holding carefully an armful of roses.

She put out her arms and in a minute he was in them, sobbing and kissing her between the sobs, forgetting his soiled hands and his uninteresting age.

After a long silence he looked up and said, with a half smile: "The world doesn't matter, with knocks and digs, while mothers still reign."

For answer she hugged her boy closer.

THE SUBSTITUTE

By GRACE WEATHERBY.

(Copyright, 1919, by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

George Thompson, familiarly known to his shipmates as "Jake," idly turned over in his hands the letter the mail orderly had just given him. He scarcely glanced at it. It probably was from Sister Jo, anyway, as she was the only one who wrote to him lately. Jake was homesick. Just at present his ship was in drydock for repairs, and Jake had a 24-hour "liberty" hanging heavily upon his hands. There was no place to go, and nothing to do. Suddenly he remembered his letter. Without glancing at the address, he tore it open, but repented of his act the next moment, for he realized that the letter was not meant for him. As he looked at the address on the envelope his suspicions were confirmed. The letter belonged to "Jacob Thompson" and not "George Thompson." It was easy to see how the mail orderly might get the two confused, as the latter was known as "Jake." Shamelessly Jake read the short note written in a girlish hand. "Dearest Jake, I am so glad you are home. Please do come up and see me very soon, won't you, for I am anxious to know what my sailor looks like. With love, Mildred." In spite of himself Jake laughed. Jacob Thompson was surely not much to look at! He was a short insignificant looking man, with wisps of colorless hair. Amused and a little puzzled, Jake went in search of him. He found him busily writing, and the young fellow noticed what a perfect penman he was. "Say, Thompson," he began, "I got a letter of yours here. The mail orderly opened it. I'm very sorry."

A half hour later Thompson himself approached Jake. He was gruff as usual but plainly disturbed. Without a preliminary he said, "You know that letter you so thoughtfully opened for me?" Jake nodded, curious. "Well, the girl who wrote it is a friend of mine. She made this sweater and I found her name in it and wrote to her. I am a pretty decent writer and she thinks I am a good-looking young chap who is in love with her.

"That doesn't happen to be the case, for I'm no lady's man, so, my lad you take my place!"

"But why," asked Jake, "don't you go yourself?

Thompson twisted his ungainly figure uncomfortably.

"Why—er—she won't be disappointed if you go, while one sight of me would knock her air castles to nothing. You'll go?"

After thinking it over, Jake decided to agree, on condition that he might tell her who he was.

Accordingly, at three o'clock Jake presented himself at the home of Miss Mildred Campbell. A little serving maid admitted him, plainly confused at the sight of the handsome sailor. With many bows she showed him into a cozy little room, where, at one end, an old-fashioned fireplace attracted his attention. He seated himself stiffly on a straight-backed chair, but he could not resist the temptation and settled himself comfortably on the wide couch, soft with many pillows, his boyish head buried in the pillows.

It was thus Miss Mildred Campbell found him when she came downstairs. He did not hear her when she came and her girlish laugh aroused him. He sat bolt upright in an instant, a deep flush staining his cheeks. "Oh, I beg your pardon, I just couldn't help it; that couch looked so inviting!" Mildred soon put him at his ease and before long he was telling her numerous tales of his adventures in the navy. When he left at ten o'clock that evening he had promised to come again. Thompson was waiting for him when he got back to the ship and in his customary gruff way demanded to know what had taken place. Jake was only too willing to tell someone of the wonderful Miss Campbell. That young lady ready for the night was engaged in earnest conversation with her pet cat, "Funny Face," and she confided to that feline that Jake Thompson was absolutely the nicest man she ever met!

The days flew by and the heart of Jake was in grave danger. As yet he had not told Mildred of his deceit and each day made it harder to do. Thompson paid no attention to him whatever except to listen silently to Jake's accounts of his visits to Mildred. At length one day Jake summoned courage and told her.

She did not speak until he had finished, and then she only said: "You must bring the real Jake to see me." Accordingly Thompson accompanied Jake on his next call. Mildred greeted them graciously and poor Jake was quite astonished when she said to Thompson, "You see, you were really more than kind to us, for if it weren't for you, Jake and I would never have met, and that would be terrible for we love each other, you know!" When they were alone for a moment, Jake asked her, "Why did you say that, Mildred?" The girl's eyes sparkled with happiness. "Well, it's so, isn't it?" she whispered. "Yes, of course it is, but how did you know?" From the depths of a dark blue shoulder came the muffled words, "As for me, I knew when I saw you on the couch that day."

The Thompson-Campbell wedding was a gay affair, and more than one person wondered why, out of that throng of good-looking men, the bridegroom should choose the short, insignificant-looking fellow for his best man.

Ancient Rock Drawings.

A huge buffalo with enormous horns is conspicuous in prehistoric rock drawings lately found in Algeria. The African elephant is also a striking feature, and other animals include the lion, leopard, gazelle and domestic goats and sheep.

Fellowship.

It is for him that is lonely or in prison to dream of fellowship, but for him that is of a fellowship to do and not to dream.—William Morris.

TAFT OUTLINES LEAGUE PLAN

Puts It Into Plain Language Free From Legal and Diplomatic Verbiage, in Response to Request.

MANY ARE CONFUSED BY PRESENT DEBATE

Danger That People Will Lose Sight of Basic Principles During Discussion of Complicated Details and Technicalities.

(By ex-President William H. Taft.)

The plan for a League of Nations is based on a few simple principles, which are not hard to understand when lifted out of the morass of technical discussion and freed from legal and diplomatic language. As the one authority best able to present these points without partisan bias, ex-President Taft has been asked to put the league idea into a few plain words for the benefit of millions of Americans who desire a better understanding of the plan but find themselves confused by the debate in the United States Senate. In response to this request he has written the following article.

Purpose of the League.

The chief purpose of the League of Nations is to keep the world in a state of peace. Another way of expressing it is to say that the league is designed to prevent wars.

We have just finished the greatest, which is to say the most horrible, of all conflicts between nations. We have won a glorious victory. But that victory will be wasted unless this war has made the nations ready to put aside their differences and cooperate to end war forever.

It is not enough, however, to provide for the prevention of wars and the settlement of disputes after they have arisen. We must foresee causes of trouble and remove them before they have reached an acute stage. Hence there must be provision for frequent consultations of members of the league for exchange of information, for agreement on common policies and for the gradual formation of rules of international law which at present are uncertain and incomplete.

The representatives of the great free nations which won the war have met at Paris and, after long consultation, have drawn an agreement which they believe will accomplish these ends. At the very least it will set in motion great changes which will result in universal benefit to all mankind. This agreement is called the Covenant of the League of Nations and it is a part of the peace treaty.

There will be no league worth talking about, however, unless the United States is a member. The decision as to whether the United States shall join rests with our Senate. The Senators, chosen by the people, will in the end vote as the people desire. For this reason the people themselves will decide whether or not the United States will join the league. In this question every citizen should have a voice. He or she can express opinion either by writing direct to Senators, by letters to the newspapers, by speeches in his lodge or local union or in conversation with friends.

Methods of Maintaining Peace.

Since the prime object of the League of Nations is to preserve peace—and to reap the benefits of peace—let us see how the league will operate to accomplish that purpose.

In the first place it will seek to remove the main causes of war. By the formation of an international court it will create a means for the peaceful settlement of disputes between nations. Then it will seek to compel the nations to make use of this court. This is nothing more nor less than an application of the rules and customs governing private individuals in civilized communities to the relations between nations.

Secondly, the League will seek to remove a great temptation to war by the general agreement to reduce the size of armies and navies. This will halt the race for military and naval supremacy which was largely responsible for the war just ended. The amount of armament any nation may maintain will be strictly defined. Thus it will be impossible for one country to overwhelm its neighbor by unexpected attack, in the way that Germany crushed Belgium and would have crushed France had not the other democratic nations gone to her aid. The idea is that each country may keep an army and navy large enough to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities as a member of the League, but no larger. The United States, for example, probably would be expected to keep a check on Mexico and the state of constant turmoil in that country would be taken into consideration in deciding how large an army we should need.

The third important safeguard which the League will set up is a system of penalties. This will make an outlaw of any nation or group of nations which goes to war in violation of the rules of the League. The outlawed nation will be boycotted by all the other members of the League and will find itself cut off from both business and social communication with the rest of the world.

How It Will Prevent Wars.

It is not claimed that the League of Nations will do away with war altogether. Every possible provision that human intelligence can devise will be made to settle international disputes peaceably. But should all these measures fail and two nations go to war, this is what will happen:

If both parties to the dispute have observed the rules of the League, the other nations will stand back and let them fight it out. War under such circumstances is difficult to imagine; however, because before the angry nations will be allowed to fight in accordance with the rules of the League, so much time must elapse that in all probability their anger will cool and they will reach an amicable understanding.

What we have to fear is that some nation will go to war in defiance of the League, and every precaution has been taken to suppress such a nation by the immediate use of the united power of the other nations. If international boycott failed to bring her to terms she would have to face a combined international army and navy. The founders of the League believe that the mere possibility of such a situation will prevent any nation from violating its agreement. Does anyone think that Germany would have begun war five years ago if she had known that nearly all the other great powers would combine against her?

Doing the World's Work.

In addition to settling international disputes peaceably the League of Nations will provide means for doing much of the world's work more systematically and effectively than can be done now when each nation is working only for itself. The people you know best and like best are those who work with you on the same job. It will be the same way with the nations of the future. The more they work together, the sooner they will come to understand and like each other.

For example, the League will establish an international organization for the bettering of labor conditions in different countries, for the protection of women and children and the native inhabitants of civilized and semi-civilized countries. One of Germany's greatest crimes has been her barbarous treatment of the helpless people in some of her colonies. One of the chief tasks of the League will be to look after peoples that are not strong enough to protect themselves.

The League will appoint commissions to take charge of various international undertakings so that they may be carried on, not for the benefit of any one nation, but for the benefit of the whole world. Provision will be made for promotion of fair and equal trade conditions.

These are only a few of the benefits the world will derive from the League. As time goes on we shall find more and more tasks at which the nations can work in common and a greater number of opportunities to remove causes which stir up jealousies and animosities between races and peoples.

Objections Answered.

Of course we cannot hope to make the great changes such as the League of Nations will bring about without opposition. Fortunately the war has taught us the great advantages of international co-operation. It was only by good team work that the free liberty loving nations were able to whip Germany.

The treaty which the United States Senate is debating obligates the members of the proposed League to protect one another against attack from enemies outside their own boundaries bent upon conquest. Although this agreement (Article X of the Covenant) is vital to any arrangement which seeks to prevent war, it has been attacked on the ground that it would draw the United States into wars in various parts of the world and force us to send our boys to fight in quarrels which did not concern us.

We should remember, however, that the main purpose of Article X is to frighten nations tempted to wars of conquest from yielding to the temptation, by the certainty that they will be crushed if they begin such a war by a universal boycott and a union of forces of the world against them. If a big war breaks out again, the United States will be forced to take part in it whether we have a League of Nations or not. We tried hard enough to keep out of the war with Germany but found we couldn't.

A little war contrary to the League rules could be handled by the powers close at hand. Certainly it would not be necessary to send American troops to suppress an uprising in the Balkans when prompt action by the armies of Italy or some other nearby powerful nation could suppress the fracas before American troops could even get started.

Great Gain for Small Loss.

We had to make many sacrifices to win the last war and we made them willingly because we knew they were worth while. It will be the same in a smaller degree with a League of Nations. When men form a business partnership each one has to make concessions to the views and opinions of the other members of the firm. When we enter the League of Nations we may have to give up certain privileges, but the losses will be small compared with the profits.

The United States will not have to sacrifice her independence or right to make her own decisions.

Use for Rat Skins.

Exhibiting the cured skin of a brown rat, the veterinary inspector of Newcastle, Eng., has pronounced such skins superior to the linings found in some expensive coats. The difficulty in creating a ratskin industry appears to be the uncertain source of supply; but the demand that would be aroused would be an incentive for destroying the rats that now constitute so serious a plague. The bodies of the animals need not be wasted, as they form suitable food for pigs, poultry and dogs.

Didn't Know the Groom.

"I made a terrible break today."

"That so?"

"Yes. You know I went to Lillian's wedding."

"Yes."

"Well, the other day I met Lillian on the street, and I didn't recognize the man with her as the groom."

Tannin.

Paraguay has valuable resources, the most important of which is quebracho, which is particularly rich in tannin.

You Never Can Tell

By IMES MacDONALD

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The roving eye of youth is ever eager for adventure. Romance lurks just around the next corner and the man or girl of dreams is ever a potential possibility, for in the eyes of youth no dream, no matter how improbable it may seem, is entirely impossible. "You never can tell" is the slogan of youth—"you never can tell."

"You never can tell," thought Summer Lane as she tripped lightly along toward her job at the library. "Something might happen today—you never can tell." And she hummed a snatch of song as she started on her regular routine. But her lunch hour came and nothing had happened. At five o'clock she started home and nothing had happened. She entered her little apartment and found Alice Martin, a pretty schoolteacher with whom she lived, already there—and still nothing had happened—and then the telephone rang and indifferently Summer leaned toward it from where she sat on the couch.

"Is this Miss Lane, Miss Summer Lane?" asked a man's strange but very nice voice.

"Yes," said Summer, "this is Summer Lane," and her eyes opened very wide.

"I am Lawrence Gardner, from Chicago, an old friend of Elsie Turner's who was a school friend of yours, I believe. She told me to be sure to look you up while I was in town and so I am doing it."

Summer swallowed three distinct but very rapid separate times before she could reply. "And now that you've 'phoned—are you coming up to see me?" she invited.

"I'd love to," he said genially, "but what about the theater or somewhere tonight. Is there any particular show you'd like to see? They're all new to me, you know."

"I've been wanting to go to 'The Eyes of Youth,'" said Summer breathlessly.

"'The Eyes of Youth' it is then," he laughed, "and if I call about 7:30 will that be all right?"

"Splendid—and I'll be ready," sang Summer joyously, "and I'm just so glad you called, Mr. Gardner, you don't know how glad. It was terribly nice of Elsie to send you."

It happened to be Alice's night for doing the dishes, and when she came into their bedroom after her task was done she gasped in astonishment.

"My goodness, Summer! You're all dressed up like a queen. I never saw you look so ravishing and—so—so reckless, you bright-eyed thing! Who is this Gardner person, anyway?"

But Summer only laughed gayly and twirled about on her toes. Just then the bell rang and she danced toward the electric button to let the ringer in and then skipped to the door to admit Lawrence Gardner.

For a long moment adventure clasped the hand of romance, and each looked deep into the eyes of the other. Romance so shyly and radiantly lovely—and adventure so well groomed and stalwart, with smiling, quizzical eyes and genial, friendly manner.

And a few moments later they descended the stairs and were whirled away in a taxi, and when they had returned after the show he left her at the door regretfully.

"It has been a perfectly wonderful evening," said Summer, "and it was very dear of Elsie to tell you about me."

"Shall I see you again tomorrow?" he asked eagerly.

"You—you never can tell," she answered demurely and vanished within.

A short time later she related to Alice the events of the evening. "And he is so attentive and thoughtful and jolly in a quiet sort of way! I just had a be-au-tiful time," she chattered. Alice eyed Summer suspiciously. "Summer Lane, are you going to fall love with that Gardner person?" she demanded sternly.

With brilliant eyes and flushing cheeks Summer reached up to turn out the light, then turned and groped to her bed, and as she pulled the covers up to her chin she chuckled a little in the darkness there. "You never can tell, Alice, old dear—you never can tell."

A week passed—two weeks—and each day Lawrence Gardner either made it a point to see Summer Lane or to telephone her—usually he saw her. Three weeks passed—and a month—and still he lingered in New York! Until one morning at his hotel he received a night letter from his father that made him grin just a bit, but as usual that afternoon he happened to meet Summer at the library and strolled home with her.

"Let's have a nice little home party with Alice tonight," suggested Summer. And so they did. He helped set the table and ran out at the last minute to get ice cream for the dessert. And after the dishes were done he and Summer sat side by side on the couch while Gardner smoked his pipe in contented silence.

"Summer," he said, after a long interval, "I've got a confession to make." He reached over and drew the telephone book toward him, opening it at the "Lanes." She sat on one foot and leaned close to him watching curiously as his finger slid down the column of names. Finally he pointed out the name of a firm—"Lane, Summers & Griggs, Importers." "You see," he explained, "the day I called you up I had occasion to call up these people. The name just above theirs is '—and he pointed out her own—" 'Lane, Miss Summer, librarian.' Now," he went on, "that name of yours interested me so that I got curious to hear your voice, and when I had heard your voice I was determined to see you. Of course I didn't know any such person as Elsie Turner in Chicago, but I soon realized that by some strange coincidence you did—because you're always ringing her into the conversation and making it uncomfortable for me. I just—didn't want to go on any longer under false colors, so to speak, so I had to tell you."

Summer pulled the telephone book out of his hand and hugged it up to her breast, at the same time rolling him an accusing look out of the corner of her dancing eye. Then she hunched up her shoulders and laughed merrily.

"Silly," she giggled. "Don't you suppose I knew you didn't know me from Adam, nor any Elsie Turner person, either? Why, I never even heard of her myself!"

"What?" Lawrence Gardner's pipe fell out of his mouth and he sat up eagerly. "You were pretending, too?"

But Summer would not look at him and only nodded with downcast eyes. So Gardner drew from his pocket the telegram he had received from his father that morning and she read it with flushing cheeks.

"What in Sam Hill's keeping you so long in New York? You ought to have finished there ten days ago. I'm buried to my eyes in work here, so for heaven's sake marry the girl—and come home.

"Yours, DAD."

The telegram fluttered to the floor and Summer started to rise, but Gardner reached up and dragged her down beside him.

"Dad's a wise old boy," he said, with his cheek against hers; "will you marry me, Summer?"

And Summer snuggled a bit, as she murmured, "You never can tell, Larry, dear. Something like that's liable to happen most any day, now."

Music in Prisons.

In a paper read before a convention of music teachers, the musical director of a well-known prison said that the band and orchestra maintained in the institution with which he was connected was as important a part of the prison life as any of the industries which contributed to make the prison self-supporting.

The mayor of an important middle-Western city said not long ago: "Music operates to destroy anarchistic tendencies; to foster, preserve and operate constructive citizenship. It is unnecessary to defend the usefulness of music as a practical agent in life. It has been demonstrated as such. We need the spirit of music now, if ever, in a world of strife, confusion and violence. As an influence in the direction of affection and kindliness it has a place."

Fortune Tellers.

It is asserted that there is not one case on record of a man who profited by the wizardry of a fortune teller who afterward rewarded the card reader or crystal gazer, or whatever it was, by so much as even a small cash tip.

This fact shows that either patrons of fortune tellers are an exceedingly ungrateful lot, or that there isn't one of them who ever had the slightest reason for being grateful. In other words, can a fortune teller really tell fortunes?

Baby Shoe an Ornament.

The first shoe of the first baby may be preserved as an ornament with both intrinsic and sentimental value. A jeweler plates in gold or silver the creased and worn little shoes just as the baby foot formed it.

Pass the Salt!

Two reporters were boasting of the speed of their shorthand writing.

"Whenever I am reporting at a meeting on a warm evening, all the people try to get near to my table.

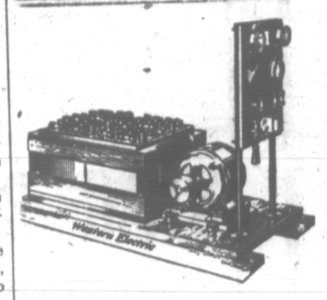
"Why?" asked the other.

"Because," said the pen pusher, "my hand goes so fast that it creates a current of air like a fan."

"A mere nothing," said number two. "I always have to report on wet paper, or else the current of air caused by the movement of my hand would blow it away. Besides the paper has to be wetted every few minutes, because the friction caused by the rapid movements of my arm would set fire to it in no time."

Nothing New.

"All the world's a stage"—and yet some people look upon the revolving stage as a modern idea.—Boston Transcript.



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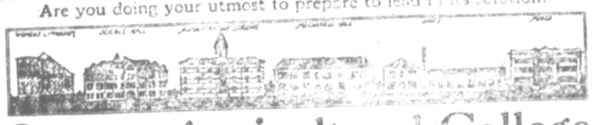

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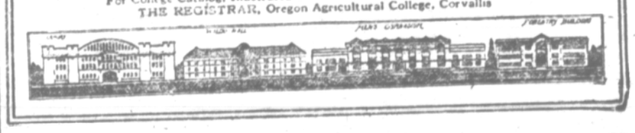

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