

THE BOY DISPOSES

By SARA LINDSAY COLEMAN

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Polly dug the heel of her smart little slipper into the earth and sent the hammock forward vigorously. There were only forty minutes of freedom left.

At 6, when the train came in, she meant to rise from the hammock, deliberately cool in her swirl of white organdy, and give Mr. Howard the softest and prettiest of "yenes."

Visions of Paquin and Doucet creations swam before her mistily. It would be a pleasant life. She would ride, drive, golf, yacht, be an arbiter of fashions, an organizer of charities, a patroness of balls. In the spring there would be little jaunts to London and Paris. Polly pillowed her head on her arched and watched herself, all billowy satin and diamond sunbursts, float up the aisle to the beating of drums, the flutter of flags, the envy of bridegrooms.

"Dear," said a voice, breaking into her reverie. "I think you mean to say yes when Mr. Howard comes up this afternoon, and I want to tell you that I am pleased. He will be very kind; you will have everything and go everywhere. I loved your father, but the world didn't call it a good match. You know what my struggles have been to keep up appearances, and you have made a sensible decision." Polly's mother slipped away.

The dear 500 friends believed Polly to be a little unnerved by the winter gaieties. Polly knew that she was sunbathing at the mountain hotel because it was convenient for Mr. Howard to run up and stay over Sundays.

"The time has come," said Polly, quoting the Walrus, "and some of us are out of breath"—she almost decided to meet Mr. Howard at the foot of the hill. His breathlessness would be purely physical, but for her sake he had climbed the hill on a good many Saturday afternoons. Polly looked at the shining steel rails below her. There were thirty minutes left now. She told herself that she was well content and then shivered unaccountably. It was the ridiculous Walrus and Carpenter story; it was the memory of the fate of



HIS DIRTY HANDS CLUTCHED A BOX THAT POLLY KNEW.

the poor little oysters, the poor little oysters who thought they were in for such a frolic.

"May, sis," yelled Tommy from the hotel steps (Tommy was the despair of his family), "when you marry old Howard you'll set me up to peach cream every day, won't you?"

Polly sat up, very angry. "Come to me this moment, Tommy Baker," she called.

It pleased Tommy to obey. He stood before her with the wickedest of grins upon his freckled face. His dirty hands clutched a box that Polly knew—how well she knew it!

"I thought you wouldn't need campaign trophies now," he said. "I'm going to give 'em to the fellows that's got girls. I ain't got no girl."

Polly bent forward with a smile that even Tommy could not resist. He opened the little old treasure box, emptied its contents into her lap and beat a retreat.

Polly looked at the little heap. They were far from campaign trophies. Her lips twitched at sight of a rude little heart carved from a peach stone. Such a thing below to sweep the past wide open! How the heart was a cheap, worn copy of "Lucile." There had been other and costlier "Luciles," but never another like that.

At the faint whistle of an approaching engine Polly shivered again. Her mother said Mr. Howard would be very kind, but she wasn't aching for kindness.

"Polly," said a voice at her elbow, "aren't you going to run down the hill to meet him?"

Polly dug a part of her voluminous frock over her lap. She laughed, with

a "little catch" in her voice, and said, "No, I'm kissing myself goodbye."

The man looked down at the girl admiringly. "You're a thoroughbred," he said. "Where's your heiress?" asked Polly. "Why, are you not with her?" "She ain't mine, Polly. The evil hour has been put off. The heiress has hurt her foot and is too nervous to be proposed to. You've got five minutes left to you. Life hasn't been nice to us, Polly, but we are not vanquished. You'll look like a beautiful birthday

cake—all white and glittery. I'd do a jig dance up the aisle."

Polly got her lips into a smile. The train came on. It puffed and snorted as it climbed, and the little hills rumbled and grumbled in answer. The man looked down at the quiet figure and stooped and touched the girl's fingers with his lips.

"We were once a precious pair of fools, little Polly. We've learned to laugh and be wise now, but somehow I'd like to be a fool once more."

Not a line of the girl's figure stirred. With a long drawn out shriek the train swept around a near curve. The man turned away.

Polly dug her heel into the ground and sent the hammock out. With a bound the little peach stone heart leaped to the man's feet. It was going to find out if fate was such a scurvy goddess. It was going to see if she wouldn't turn kind.

Polly and the man were facing each other when the train pounded in. She had picked up the "Lucile." He held the heart of a peach stone.

"I told you I was telling myself a goodby," said Polly defiantly.

"Am I part of yourself, dear?"

Polly was silent. Her eyes were on a stout man who had stepped from the Pullman and was making his eager, panting way toward her hammock.

"Polly," some one very much nearer was panting now, "I couldn't let you bent your life out in Poverty street; I couldn't let his bare walls crush your spirit; I couldn't ask you to give up all the gay, smart, empty things you love for—"

"Tiresome things!" "Polly"—the cry went straight to the girl's heart—"you couldn't!" "I could," said Polly.

"Then you wouldn't?" The sun slanted into the depths of Polly's shining, misty eyes. She tried to speak, but could not.

Howard, not twenty feet away, stopped short and wiped his wet brow. "I'm frightened!" Polly's voice quivered childishly. "We used to—"

"We did," with conviction. "It got us out of every scrape."

Howard wiped his perplexed, middle aged brow; then he wiped his perplexed, spectacled eyes. He was very conventional, and the gossamer web of convention was torn in shreds.

They were headed for a little summer house a hundred yards away, running lightly and easily, hand in hand, laughing, two truant children overtaken in an act of unusual and delicious naughtiness.

Lead Pencil Wood.

The cedar used in the manufacture of pencils in this country is that which grows in Florida, the common red cedar with shreddy bark and aromatic heartwood. The wood is shipped from Florida in small slabs, a little longer than a pencil, a little wider than four or six pencils placed side by side and of proper thickness.

The cedar case of a pencil is made in halves, each half being equally channeled, so that the place where they join comes against the center of the lead.

First we have the slab of wood as it is shipped from Florida. This slab is passed under a rotary cutter, which planes the surface perfectly flat and smooth and at the same time grooves it to receive six leads. These leads are now laid in the grooves of one of these slabs, and another slab, similarly planed and grooved, is spread with glue and laid upon it. The two thus put together are placed in a press and when perfectly dry are taken out and passed twice under a grooved rotary cutter, first on one side, rounding one half of the pencil, and then on the other, finishing the rounding of the whole pencil and separating one from the other at the same time.

These single pencils are then passed through other machines which polish, varnish, stamp and put them in cases, ready for delivery to the trade.

Such Fun.

"So you are really engaged, dear?" said Elsie gushingly to her particular friend Madge.

"Yes, dear," was the blushing reply. "I am really engaged at last."

"And to that stern, stolid looking fellow, Alec Wilson?" "Oh, yes, dear," replied her friend quickly. "He often says that after we are married he means to manage the house, look after my personal expenditure as well as his own and, in fact, have his own way in everything."

"Good gracious! And you seriously tell me you mean to marry a man like that?" cried Elsie in astonishment.

"Oh, yes, dear. I wouldn't give up the idea on any account. You see, it will be such fun to show him how absurd such ideas are, won't it?" And the speaker smiled a wicked smile, which the happy Alec ought to have seen, but luckily didn't.

A SURPRISE

(Original.)

Marguerite, wife of Prince Sergius Scaroff, chief of police at St. Petersburg, possessed a rare intellect. Her husband admired her vigor of brain, but was not sure that it was leading her in safe channels. However, the two were very happy together, and fortune smiled on them.

One day Scaroff received a terrible shock. Among a number of intercepted letters that had fallen into the hands of the police and were laid before him was one written by his wife. It read:

Bring it to the rear door at 11 o'clock tonight—that is, if the emperor's trip has been announced on that day. If the trip is postponed act accordingly.

Scaroff was unnerved. It was plain that his own wife was in league with nihilists to assassinate the czar. After awhile he tapped a silver bell on his desk. An attendant entered, and the chief directed him to pass the intercepted letter. Then he ordered his carriage and drove to the Winter palace.

"Your majesty," he said as soon as admitted to the emperor, "I beg that you will excuse me from attending you this evening."

"Why so, prince?" "My spies have intercepted a letter indicating that a bomb is to be delivered to a certain person at 11 o'clock on the night of your departure. It is doubtless to be used on your return. Your majesty will be safe, at least, from this danger on your outward journey, and I wish to attend personally to the capture of the bomb and its bearer myself. I consider it too important a matter to leave to any one else."

"As you think best, prince." Scaroff returned to his house at 4 o'clock, threw some things into his valise and bid his wife goodby. She had known that he was to accompany the czar—it was his custom to do so whenever his master journeyed—and there was no surprise.

"The trip not being put off, I presume there is no suspicion of danger," remarked the princess.

"None whatever." Without looking at his wife he started to go. He had reached the door when he heard her call him: "Sergius!"

He turned. She was looking at him reproachfully.

"You have forgotten." "Pardon me, dear. My mind is preoccupied. These nihilists who are constantly conspiring against the life of the czar keep me always thinking."

He returned and kissed her. "How cold your lips are!" she said. "Something is wrong. A blow is sure to fall somewhere before morning. Some person or persons will go to the scaffold. I wish you were engaged in another occupation."

"The chief horror of it is that we officers of the police never know when it will be our duty to turn over to the executioner some one near and dear to us. Last week one of my deputies was obliged to arrest his own sister."

"Dreadful!"

The prince passed out. Well might his wife call his lips cold. It was a wonder that he could control himself as well as he did, since he was going to watch for a bomb to be delivered to his own wife. Starting in the direction of the railway station, he soon gave his coachman orders to turn and drive to his private office, which was separate from that in the headquarters of police. There he dismissed his carriage, telling his coachman that he would go to the station later and on foot. Entering his office, he remained there till the clock struck 10, then emerged, disguised as a peasant, and directed his steps to his own house. Taking position near by where he would be unobserved, he waited and watched.

At a quarter to 11 a man came down the street and without looking about him to see if he was watched was making straight for the rear door when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and one in rough peasant garb covered him with a revolver. His captor led him to a short distance from the house, put him into a carriage and the two were driven to the private office of the chief of police. As soon as they were alone in the office Scaroff threw off his peasant's costume and revealed his identity.

"Valevitch!" he exclaimed. The other stood mute.

"I told my wife tonight that the horror of my career was never knowing when we must arrest some one we know—some one dear to us. Put down the bomb!"

Valevitch, the brother of the princess, placed the box on a table. Sergius approached it and put his ear to it.

"Oh, heavens!" he exclaimed bitterly. "It is so. I hear the click of the clock-work that is to regulate the explosion. You, Valevitch, to lead your own sister to the scaffold!"

Valevitch stood meekly looking at the prince with a peculiar expression; then he went to the box, drew a sliding cover and took out a clock of antique workmanship.

"What the Ivan clock—the clock of the terrible czar which I have so long desired?"

"Yes, Marguerite has intended a surprise for you."

Scaroff stood astounded, a great relief spreading over his face. Then he took out his watch.

"Eleven five," he said. "If you hurry you'll not be far behind time. If you tell Marguerite of this I'll send you to Siberia."

The next morning the prince at breakfast time, on seeing an antique clock on the mantel, manifested the most demonstrative surprise, and when told that it was a present to him from his wife embraced her with far more tenderness than the occasion seemed to require. WESTCOTT ATWELL.

CHRISTMAS IN BUSINESS LIFE

Custom of Merchants and Bankers Who Reward Employees.

MUCH MONEY IS DISTRIBUTED.

Last Year a Department Store Owner Spent \$8,000 in Giving Each of His Wagon Drivers \$50—How One Commission House Rewards Its Clerks—Lament of a Bank Clerk Who Received a Present of Steel Stock.

The following is taken from an article on the observance of Christmas in business circles by Ralph D. Paine in the World's Work for December:

Last year the owner of one of the largest department stores in the country expanded his customary system of rewards by giving \$50 to each of the drivers of his delivery wagons. There were 150 of them, and they received \$8,000. They were paid for their overtime, but their work was so uncommonly arduous that they deserved something more, and it came to them as a surprise. In the height of the rush the wagons were delivering from 40,000 to 50,000 packages daily. On the day before Christmas 100,000 patrons visited the store, and it was promised that all purchases, including pianos, made before 6 o'clock at night should be delivered at their homes before breakfast Christmas morning. This immense undertaking was accomplished, and it was loyalty as well as wages that inspired these drivers to make good the promise of their employer. To them the extra fifty dollar checks came as wealth unforeseen and were accepted in the true spirit of Christmas. The Christmas spirit was in this transaction, although the employer was paying for value received, and this year he will similarly surprise some other column of his vast array of industry.

This proprietor has on his payroll during Christmas time more than 11,000 employees, and a system is in operation whereby the majority of them receive extra money in the holiday season. It is in payment of extra services, yet it is so distributed that the Christmas spirit is not wholly obliterated. For ten days the store is kept open until 10 o'clock in the evening, and for this work after regular hours the salespeople receive a commission on their sales instead of fixed wages for overtime. Last year saleswomen made as much as \$50, \$75 and \$100 on these holiday commissions.

One New York merchant has for many years presided over a Christmas gathering of his entire force. The custom, begun when less than 100 guests were eligible, is maintained now when 1,000 employees, from managers to cash boys, meet on equal footing for one night of the year and listen to the sincere greeting and recognition of loyal service which are spoken by the proprietor as the head of the table. This traditional observance has done much to inspire in this force a notable esprit de corps. It is a genuine Christmas festival.

In the words of a humble toiler of the house: "It doesn't help pay my bills and it doesn't raise my wages, but the dinner is the real thing, for to hear the old man talk of his start as an errand boy in a country store and how he fought his way up to the top makes him one of us. And when we wish him 'Merry Christmas,' a thousand strong, a good many of us mean it, and I think he does when he shouts it back."

In one commission house, whose history is a part of the coffee trade for four generations, the present partners are two brothers, both bachelors, who have added wealth to inherited fortunes. It has been their custom since they succeeded in control of the house to present each of their clerks with a Christmas gift, sometimes equal to half his yearly salary. The amounts are not fixed, however, and unlike most rewards of this kind the partners take into account not only the services rendered, but also the personal needs of the recipient. In other words, the friendly interest is not bounded by the office walls, and the brothers find a quiet pleasure in investigating the conditions which please or worry the young men who work for them. One of them who told me this story said:

"If one of the office staff is single and is able to live comfortably on his salary he may get \$500 for Christmas, while a young fellow who was threatening matrimony last year was handed a check for \$1,500, and an old gray haired clerk who is supporting a sister and a half dozen of her children and

has other relatives hanging on his costals got \$1,000 when his salary is only \$1,800, which is all he is worth to the firm. Of course, good work and loyalty are counted in, and it's a system of reward and merit, but it is finely tempered with human interest." These gifts are distributed with a formal courtesy and a personal greeting that make of this office the reception room of a host and his guests for a brief time on the day before Christmas.

Wall street is lavish in its gifts when the stock market is free with its favors, and last year made a high water mark for this form of distribution. A conservative estimate is that bankers and brokers gave away \$1,000,000 in rewards to employees, and in the Stock Exchange \$10,000 was raised for its working force. These gifts included \$5,000 gold certificates in one house and an entire year's salary to employees of more than one bank. While such munificence made one joyful Christmas, failure to equal it this year will spoil many holidays. Such magnificent generosity has its flaw, as shown by the lament of one favored bank clerk:

"It was a wonderful Christmas last year. I received a whole year's salary, and I had been with the firm only one year, and I was so happy when I went home that I did not bother to criticize the fact that the salary was in steel stock at the market rate. My wife and I were beside ourselves planning a country cottage, the dream of our lives, and of course when Steel began to 'slump' we held on and hoped for an upward turn and are still holding on. My Christmas present has shrunk, and our dream is smashed, and all I ask of Kris Kringle this year is that he will restore my last year's present to its original size."

In the same institution there was an employee whose Christmas gift had the saving grace of individual consideration. He was a bookkeeper, nearly forty years in harness, and he had been overlooked in former years of fatness in Wall street, except for a customary and unvarying ten dollar gold piece. Several days before Christmas last year the office became agitated with rumors of an unprecedented flood of good fortune. The old bookkeeper tried to keep calm, but his hopes ran riot, and the day before Christmas found him in a nervous flurry. He saw his fellow employees called into the cashier's office one by one, each returning with a sealed envelope. The bookkeeper waited for his summons, but it came not. Even the office boys emerged biting new gold pieces to test them, and the roll was complete an hour before the bookkeeper summoned courage to send in an inquiry whether a mistake had been made in the case of Mr. Blank and whether an envelope had been overlooked. The answer was:

"There is no envelope for Mr. Blank, but the president wishes to see him for a moment."

The bookkeeper saw only one interpretation. This meant his discharge for falling efficiency. He fairly tottered into the sanctum, a pitiful figure of panic fear.

"Sit down, Mr. Blank," said the president. "I have omitted your name in the list of Christmas rewards for faithful service, and I regret that the bank will have to find another man to fill your position after tomorrow. Compose yourself, sir; tears are undignified in this office. You should know better after being here for so long a term of service. Don't go. I have a few words more to say before you leave. The directors have decided to retire you on full pay for the rest of your life, and the year's salary will be paid you in advance. This does not establish a ruinous precedent, for employees with thirty-eight years of faithful service to their credit are not sprinkled very plentifully through Wall street."

A Suppressed Tennyson Poem. In Harper's Magazine for December J. C. Thomson has collected a large number of Tennyson's suppressed poems, some of surprising beauty. Of the one quoted below and referring directly to America Mr. Thomson rightly asks, "What reason can Tennyson have had for suppressing such stanzas as these:

Gigantic daughter of the west,
We drink to thee across the food;
We know thee most, we love thee best,
For art thou not of British blood?"

Should war's mad blast again be blown,
Permit not thou the tyrant powers
To fight thy mother here alone,
But let thy broadsides roar with ours.

Oh, rise, our strong Atlantic sons,
When war against our freedom springs!
Oh, speak to Europe through your guns!
They can be understood by kings.

Fads in Men's Clothes. The London tailors are doing everything they can to induce their customers to use colored material for evening clothes, says the New York World. Shades of blue, green, crimson and plum, which look well by artificial light, and browns are worn. Yet few men have the courage to identify themselves with the innovation, which has a tendency to make them look like flunkies. Tight waisted, double breasted overcoats with bold lapels are being worn by dressy Londoners, chiefly in gray. The craze for "loud," fancy waistcoats continues.

Obsequies of an Arm. Newton Loehr of Milton, near Indianapolis, Ind., had an arm crushed in a corn shredder several days ago, and the

member had to be amputated. He installed the limb should have a regular burial, and accordingly the funeral took place in the Milton cemetery the other day, says the Chicago Record-Herald. The arm was placed in a satin lined coffin, and the services at the grave were the same as though a body was being buried. Loehr's relatives from Anderson and other points in the county were present at the interment.

Last Century's Dead. It is estimated that 5,000,000,000 people died last century. This of course takes in the whole world and is necessarily approximate.

Venezuela. In midsummer the towns of Venezuela seem deserted during the day-time. The sun is so hot that exposure to it without a hat for only fifteen minutes usually results in illness and death within a day or two.

Berlin's Oldest Tavern. The oldest tavern in Berlin, "Zur Stadt Ruppin," was built early in the fifteenth century.

Pecan Trees. From seed a pecan tree will begin producing in seven years, and an average tree will yield from one-half to three bushels. A peculiarity of the pecan tree is that it grows a good crop only once in three or five years.

THINGS THEATRICAL. "A Stagestruck Village" is the name of a new farce.

Virginia Harned recently started a fund for the relief of Mme. Janauschek.

James O'Neil will start starring in Conan Doyle's dramatization of his own story, "Brigadier Gerald."

Carrie Nation's play is called "War on Drink." It is a melodrama in four acts. Mrs. Nation has the role of the Home Defender.

Miss Gertrude Elliott is a great lover of Japanese art and has a large collection of dainty Japanese bric-a-brac, paintings on porcelain and silk.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell will be seen before long in an English version of Racine's famous French classic, "Phedre," made famous by Bernhardt.

James K. Hackett recently cabled his representative in England declining the offer made for the London rights of "John Ermine of the Yellowstone."

Chorus girls for musical comedies are beginning to realize salaries proportionately handsome with themselves. Some got \$40 and \$50 per week.

Encouraged by the success of his later pieces, George Ade is thinking of polishing up and taking the dents out of his first stage attempt, "The Night of the Fourth."

CHURCH AND CLERGY. Missionaries are well treated in Siam, and the king, a Buddhist, is giving the site for a new Protestant church in Bangkok.

Rev. James Roosevelt Bayley of the Roman Catholic diocese of Newark, N. J., has just celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his consecration as bishop.

Bishop Boyd Vincent lately talked to business men and thus counseled them: "To say nothing of your self respect, never forget what a good investment there is, even in business, in that grand old name of gentleman."

The Lutheran church ranks first among Protestant denominations in the United States, having 1,200 congregations and a membership of 1,500,000; 48 theological seminaries, 43 colleges, 50 academies, 10 young ladies' seminaries, 22 hospitals, 52 orphan asylums, 20 homes for the aged and 8 deaconess houses.

ANATOMICAL. The proper distance between the eyes is the width of one eye.

The wrist contains eight bones, the palm five and the fingers fourteen.

There are over 10,000,000 nerves, branches and minute ramifications that connect with the brain.

The School of Experience. "Daughter, you ought not to wear those high heeled shoes. They will make corns on your feet."

"How do you know, mamma?" "By experience. I used to wear them when I was a girl."

"Did grandma tell you they would make corns on your feet if you wore them?"

"Yes."

"How did she know?" "She found out by experience, just as I did."

"Hain't she any mamma to warn her against wearing them?"

"Oh, yes."

"But she wore them just the same?"

"Ty be sure."

"Yes, that is what I was telling you."

"Well, if I ever have any daughters I ought to be able to give them a warning against high heeled shoes from my own experience, oughtn't I?"—Chicago Tribune.