She Was Their Half-Aunt

By MARTHA WILLIAMS

Florette dashed down the garden walk, wearing her grand air the least bit askew. To the girl studying herself in a hand mirror, she hissed softly: "Poor Esme-Samson! The Philistines are upon her, just as she has bobbed her hair. And there's not a Delilah of excuse for it."

"Well, what of it?" Esme-Samson asked, yawning faintly. "She can't do any more or worse. Already she has cut me off with one poor dollar in her will."

"But today she seems relenting. Anyway, she has come to take us on an all-day ride, and the hamper breathes of richness even afar and through its sole leather," Florette expounded.

"I love your imagination," Esme said, rising laggardly. "The hamper cost so much she never feels she can afford to put anything in it except bread-and-butter sandwiches and jam crackers, with the jam mostly left out."

"This time is different. Listen!" Florette flung back. "There's to be somebody else—double somebody else, in fact. Two men—actually. That means eats on top of eats. You know how Maria cottons to trousered beings as well as that she knows men have to be fed if you expect or wish to see them ever again."

"Ahem! This grows exciting," Esme answered, reaching both arms above her head for a specially choice yellow rosebud. It was no more golden than the hair straying mistily above the smooth forehead, no more enticingly curved than the slightly parted lips. They said languidly, "Names, please. I'd hate my expectations to get a crick in the neck." Then, after the least pause, "Names don't really matter so—if only the bank rolls are big enough—and the noses not too big."

"Fate sought to conceal them by naming them Smith—their mother did more and worse by making them Joseph—Jesse and Joseph."

Florette groaned, pretending to hide her eyes in sympathy, though they danced to match the leaves overhead. "But that isn't all nor even the worst," she went on. "They are known to each other, hence to all their familiar world, as Joe-Jesse and Jesse-Joe. Additionally—they are twins—of the very worst sort—liker than even two peas."

"Can heaven suffer such things?" Esme apostrophized wildly.

"It can—and we must," Florette returned. "Because our succoring Philistine Maria told me after reciting these things that they were so awfully girlishy she'd forgive us all our sins of omission and commission if we'd manage even to bring one of them to the altar—and, of course—the halter."

"It will have to be 'both or nothing.'" Esme sighed. "Since they come double-barreled needs must we take 'em so. I wonder how we'll ever know which is whose?"

"We may have to resort to branding," Florette began. Esme clapped her hands. "There Pat Parker will come in well—he knows all about such things," she cried.

"But not on such stock," Florette dissented, adding after a nice balancing upon one tiny foot: "Come along and make ready for the sacrifice."

"We're no kin at all," Florette explained three days later to a twin Smith—she was not sure which, "Maria resulted from my grandpa marrying Esme's grandmamma—when both ought to have known better. So she's our joint half-aunt. That excuses our irreverence—we can each lay all we don't like about her on the other blood."

"What is it you don't like?" the twin asked, giggling softly.

"Her luck," Florette answered shrugging. "You see, she married money—millions of it—and served only six months of the life sentence that went with it."

"And she won't try the game over—bad scran to her!" Pat Parker interjected over the girl's shoulder, pretending to frown. "Heartless, I call it—kapin' the illegant three av us clane out av our unconstitutional rights. The guv'mint should sit up and take notice at wanst."

Pat was no more Irish than his attempts at brogue, but liked to be thought so—it excused some of his audacities. Hence the foreshortening of his baptismal Kilpatrick to a single syllable and maltreatment of the commonwealth's English. "Say," he hailed the other twin Smith now approaching with Esme: "Now about makin' medicine—makin' it right. Supposin' the three av us go at Maria, in battalion, wan by wan—proposin' to her in the self-same hour—what d'ye reckon would happen?"

"The police—on a riot call," Esme laughed. "Our half-aunt is so canny I'm sure she was born with her eye-teeth cut. She may not know what she wants—but she certainly does know how and when she wants it."

"Lady—logic—is irresistible," Pat returned, bowing.

The new-come Smith looked thoughtful. "Granddad says, any woman will marry—except a dead one," he said. "I fthat's true—there's a risk—" pausing with eyes fast on Florette—who cried at him stormily: "Shame on you! Fie and double fie! We thought you had at least some sporting blood—we know Pat and Mr. Other-Smith are dead game."

"You really want us to try?" from Mr. Other-Smith. Florette nodded, Esme shook her head, but the gay chorus from the three men overrode her protest. The group broke up, with a promise to gather and hear the returns before tennis that afternoon.

The girls were over-prompt—nothing masculine greeted their eyes as they strolled toward the courts. But disconcertingly, Maria, the Philistine half-aunt, was in evidence, yet luckily, in a dissolving view. She called over her shoulder: "Remember, girls—we are due for a long drive after it" and went away high-headed—a small upright figure on tiny feet that stepped so decisively there was distinction in her movement. Esme looked after her saying: "She might have married fifty times over—but for the money. It makes her suspect everybody—" "No wonder," Florette interrupted. "Dad says she was an ugly duckling instead of a joyous surprise. So she was nagged and picked at as long as her parents lived. Enough, I say, to ruin any disposition."

"Our Argonauts are late," Esme said, glancing down at her watch.

"Coming! I see them in the offing—but they approach like beaten hounds," Florette answered, scanning the distance, where three laggard figures made haste very, very slowly toward them.

When the trio were just well within hail Maria shot from an ambush of shrubbery, saying mellifluously: "Well met, young people! Just what I was hoping for. I have news to tell—thanks to render—a weighty choice to make. You have all known how I thought of myself—a pill, so richly gilded some were willing to swallow it—only because of the gilding. Today I have been shown my mistake—three times over by these noble young fellows. The morning paper told how my riches had taken wings—at least, after I die. My husband's executors have dug up a residuary legatee, a husky grandson nobody dreamed existed. Yet—these three straightaway proposed to me, one after another—"

"And you accepted all three! I know it!" Esme shrieked with a convulsive giggle.

"Gratitude forbade anything else," said Maria. "Though, of course—I have a preference," laying a possessive hand on Pat. "But I do hope you girls will be wise enough to realize that my leavings are almost as good as my havings."

There she broke into the most real laugh of a lifetime, her eyes shifting from one to another of the blank faces fronting her. Pat came up first, saying with a hard breath: "Oh, ma'am—I renege—because the game was crookit from the start, belave me—besides, I don't deserve ye."

"Indeed," said Maria, trying to purse her lips but failing—they were so full of giggle—then to the Smiths: "And you. Still in the game?"

"I am," said Joe-Jesse. Jesse-Joe looked at Esme: "You—you've got the say for me," he muttered.

Again Maria laughed happily. "She may have you and welcome," she said, "because, you see, the lawyer-person who took away my fortune insists that he did it solely in order to give me a better one—his own."

Which brought the tangle to a properly happy climax.

FLOATING LAND IN HOLLAND

Turf Is Transported From Marshland to Add to the Area of an Existing Town Site.

Of all countries of Europe, Holland affords, perhaps, the best example of how the topography of a country affects the habits of its people, and influences their lives. A considerable portion of the low country lies below the level of the sea, and it was to resist its cruel invasions that the gigantic levees, or dikes, were built. Nevertheless, some of the flooded regions, periodically inundated by the sea, have been water-logged for centuries, and one of these is the province of Overyssel. Perhaps its quaintest spot is the floating village of Giethoorn. Taking advantage of the condition of the soil, these hardy Dutchmen have learned how to cut away sections of turf, and then float them to the spot where they are wanted.

Considerable skill, of course, is necessary to escape a ducking, because the footing is uncertain and slippery, and the marshland deceptive and treacherous. Poles, about 12 feet in length, are employed to shove off the floating home sites, which are cut away beyond the village limits and then guided to town. Some eight or ten men follow this work exclusively, and, naturally, are very adept in the handling of their poles and the "islands" in their charge. Giethoorn has been built up in this manner.—Popular Mechanics Magazine.

Whippoorwills Work at Night.

Nighthawks and whippoorwills work chiefly at night, when most of other birds are off duty, and at daybreak their good work is taken up by the swifts and swallows, says Nature Magazine. These birds are provided with big snapnet mouths, and as they swing through the air over wide areas of country, they scoop up almost unbelievable numbers of insects. Six hundred were taken from the stomach of a single Arkansas nighthawk.

Homing pigeons probably are closer to the human family than any other form of winged life. The birds have remarkable intelligence. They mate in pairs and the female of each union has exercised her right of suffrage to the extent that the male helps her in hatching out the eggs and in caring for and feeding the young.

Brother Williams.

Dey say Time an' Tide won't wait for no man, an' dey must be too wise to wait for de women. — Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Water Carries Sound.

The sound of a bell, which can be heard 45,000 feet through the water, can be heard through the air only 456 feet.

BOY SCOUTS

(Conducted by National Council of the Boy Scouts of America.)

BANKERS AID SCOUT THRIFT

A line of boy scout depositors drawn up at a receiving window in charge of a boy scout teller, is a frequent occurrence at an increasing number of banks where boy scout thrift departments are an established feature.

The thrift training of the scout program appeals to business men, and American bankers are more and more becoming active allies in scouting's work for substantial citizenship.

The president of a national bank of Richmond, Va., Oliver J. Sands, says of scouting's thrift requirements for advance in rank: "Earning and depositing a dollar in a bank before a tenderfoot becomes a second class scout, and two dollars before he becomes a first class scout, means that many thousand American boys are being taught the great lesson of thrift."

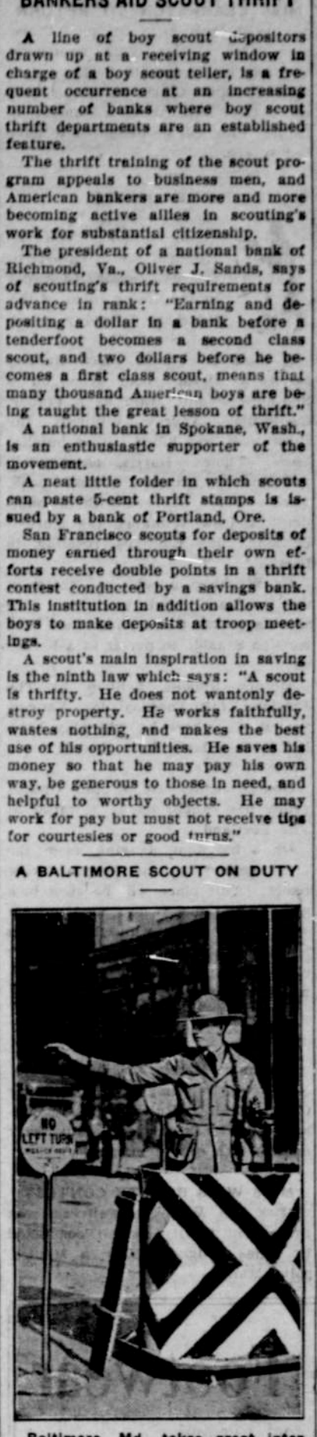
A national bank in Spokane, Wash., is an enthusiastic supporter of the movement.

A neat little folder in which scouts can paste 5-cent thrift stamps is issued by a bank of Portland, Ore.

San Francisco scouts for deposits of money earned through their own efforts receive double points in a thrift contest conducted by a savings bank. This institution in addition allows the boys to make deposits at troop meetings.

A scout's main inspiration in saving is the ninth law which says: "A scout is thrifty. He does not wantonly destroy property. He works faithfully, wastes nothing, and makes the best use of his opportunities. He saves his money so that he may pay his own way, be generous to those in need, and helpful to worthy objects. He may work for pay but must not receive tips for courtesies or good turns."

A BALTIMORE SCOUT ON DUTY



Baltimore, Md., takes great interest in her scouts' citizenship training and offers them frequent opportunities for community service. During Boys' week 50 acted as traffic officers. Scout William Aire, Troop 117, above, was stationed at the busiest corner in the city.

BOY SCOUTS AS LEADERS

When the city of St. Louis, some months ago, decided to put on its safety council a corps of junior safety cadets, it placed the responsibility of electing representatives to the formation meeting of the cadets in the hands of the school children. Then boy scout leadership qualities received a tribute, for the school children elected the entire scout organization—approximately 50 troops—for the important mission. The junior safety cadets now constitute a division of the council as strong as any of its other divisions. It numbers a total of 3,500 boys, who pledge themselves to watch for and stop dangerous practices among their fellows, to report to the proper authority all dangerous conditions that come to their attention and to spread safety propaganda. The city also conducts examinations for safety merit badges among boy scouts as part of its safety program.

LIONS DO SCOUTS GOOD TURN

The Sacramento (Cal.) boy scouts are rejoicing in the gift of a week-end camp site near enough to the city so that they can easily go there for week-end camps and for training in outdoor tests. The camp site is the gift of the Sacramento Lions, who plan also to raise money enough to erect a lodge on the grounds.

SCOUTS' COUNCIL TO MEET

The National Council, Boy Scouts of America, will hold its thirteenth annual meeting at Interstate park, New York, July 9 and 10. The sessions for the most part will be held out-of-doors. The one discussing camping matters will take place around a mammoth campfire at the boy scout camps, Interstate park, the largest boys' camps in the world. The national council consists of over 1,000 members, many of whom are nationally prominent, in the church, school and other lines.

Fundamental Details of Better Roads Will Help

It is not necessary that the rank and file of the public should become expert road builders, but the best results will not be obtained until the people themselves are conversant with the fundamental details of good highways and are intelligent enough to discern between good legitimate plans and bogus ones.

Look after the little leaks and avoid a big loss.

POULTRY

Flesh of Guineas Much Like That of Game Birds

Guineas are good layers; the eggs are good for cooking and table use, and the meat, while not as popular as chicken, is used extensively in hotel circles to take the place of game birds, which their flesh resembles very closely. The meat of old guineas is very tough, so they should be eaten before they are a year old, unless kept for breeding. They do not scratch like hens, so are very useful for eating bugs in fields and gardens. This suits them fine, for they dislike confinement, but are great foragers. When the guinea hen starts to lay you may remove some of the eggs, but this must be done very carefully and without touching any of the eggs with the hand. It is recommended that they be taken from the nest with a wooden spoon. Not less than five eggs must be left in the nest all the time the hen is laying. She will lay many more than are required for one sitting if properly managed. The extra ones can be marketed or used in the household, or set under hens or turkeys, but if, after the first five eggs are layed, there are not that many in the nest at any time when the hen returns to lay, it is said she will abandon the nest and start another elsewhere.

Some people say the guinea fowl can count five. If not she has a remarkable intuition, and it is well to humor her with regard to her peculiarities. They should not be confined with hens, as they are very domineering and will chase hens all around the yard or pen and prevent them eating with any degree of comfort.

Feed All Young Chicks Little but Do It Often

Young chicks should be fed a little at a time and often. They should be fed early in the morning and just before going to "bed" at night, and not less than two times in the intervening period. For the first two weeks they may be fed three meals of soft feed and two of hard, feeding less soft feed as they grow older.

No more moistened soft feed should be given at one time than they will eat up clean. If any feed is left it should be removed or it will grow sour and cause bowel looseness and dysentery. The finely cracked grains may be safely used from the start, but the chicks do not as a rule grow as rapidly as when a part of the feed is ground. When the chicks are from four to six weeks old the frequency of feeding may be decreased to three times a day.

From the very first chicks should be induced to exercise. Activity is a prime factor in promoting health and growth. Feed grain in the litter, and make them scratch for it. A little fine chaff or finely cut clover makes a good litter.

Decayed Animal Causes Limberneck Among Fowls

Limberneck is recognized by the fact that the fowl seems to lose control of its neck muscles, thereby allowing the head to hang down and touch the ground. The fowl seems powerless to raise the head or have any control of it.

The trouble, according to Harry Embleton, professor of poultry husbandry at Oklahoma, A. and M. college, is brought about by the eating of decayed animal matter. "The best means, therefore, of preventing further trouble is to look the premises over for a carcass of some kind," Embleton says. "In some cases we have found it to be rabbits, in others, snakes or carcasses of fowls. Castor oil given by means of a small funnel and a rubber tube inserted in the food passage seems to help somewhat in restoring the affected birds to health."

Light Brahmas Are Too Large to Mature Early

The Light Brahmas are used commonly for capons, but they are rather too large to mature during the comparatively short summer season. Nine or ten months would be required for them to mature if they were standard weights.

POULTRY POINTS

The rearing of ducks for market on a large scale requires extensive capital and experience.

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About 50 per cent of the chicks hatched die. For every six eggs used for hatching purposes one mature pullet is produced.

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After the growing poults "shoot the red" as it is called, that is, after the bright red begins to show on their heads and necks, there is comparatively little danger of loss except through accident or hostile animals.

Jerusalem Artichoke Is Good for Growing Stock

The Jerusalem Artichoke, and especially the Mammoth French White, deserves more attention from poultrymen. Extremely hardy and prolific, it can be grown almost anywhere and under any conditions. The green shoots form abundant shade and succulent feed for growing stock, the closeness of the foliage helps to choke out weeds, while the tubers keep well, are relished for winter feed for laying hens and early spring feed for little chicks.

SCOUTS TO SAVE GIANT DUNE

A giant sand dune overlooking Grand Haven, Mich., is to be rescued by the local boy scouts from disintegration by sand blows. Seventy-five scouts passed their spring vacation working to save the dune. More than 20,000 poplar clippings were planted along the sides. Yearly plantings will be made until the brush growth controls the blows. It is estimated that five years' work will be required before the dune is out of danger of annihilation.

POULTRY

Ontario College Gives Tuberculosis Treatment

The Ontario Agricultural college reports that tuberculosis in poultry is very common in that province. There is not a county from which there has not been received for examination hens either dead of, or suffering from, this disease. Almost invariably a letter accompanies such birds stating that deaths are occurring in the flock at frequent intervals.

Tuberculosis results in considerable financial losses to the poultryman, due to decrease in egg production, and heavy mortality in the flocks where it is present.

The disease is chronic rather than acute. The birds suffering from it usually lose flesh, turn pale around head, become listless, mopy and frequently lame, while egg laying is reduced to a minimum.

To be sure that such a condition of the birds is due to tuberculosis it is necessary to hold a post-mortem examination of one of them. The bird should be killed and opened up. If tuberculosis is present the liver and spleen will be spotted with white or cream colored spots varying in size from a small pin head to a pea or bean. These are the socalled tubercles, which are composed of dead tissue that has been killed by the action of the poison secreted by the tuberculosis bacteria which have developed there. These tubercles are often found on the intestines and in the lungs and bones as well as in the liver and spleen.

Birds suffering from the disease give off large numbers of the tuberculosis bacteria in their droppings. Other birds in the flock scratching around and feeding with such birds pick up the bacteria with their feed and grit and so get infected.

When this disease is found in a flock it is advisable to kill off all the birds. Those birds which on examination do not show evidence of the disease may be used as food. Those that show the disease should be destroyed by burning or burying deeply in quicklime.

The entire premises in which the birds have been kept should then be well scraped, cleaned and thoroughly disinfected by the application of a disinfectant wash or spray, as quicklime, cresol, etc. The runs should be well covered with quicklime and then ploughed deeply. Even after such treatment it would be preferable to establish new runs on fresh ground and then restock from flocks that are known to be healthy.

Poultry Producers Now Favoring Infertile Egg

The heat of summer has exactly the same effect upon fertile eggs as does the hen or the incubator used to hatch them. The fertile germ in hot weather quickly develops into a blood ring which spoils the egg for food or market purposes. Heat is the great enemy of eggs, both fertile and infertile. On this account poultry producers are urged to keep nests clean during warm weather; to provide one nest for every four fowls, in order that the nests may not be used too often and soil the eggs; to gather eggs twice daily; to keep eggs in a cool, dry room or cellar; to market eggs at least twice a week.

Hens isolated on range and pasture from the male birds produce infertile eggs of desirable market quality. In general, about two weeks after the roosters are removed from the flock the hens will again yield infertile eggs. Occasionally hens running with male birds produce infertile eggs, but as a rule this results from the fowls being confined too closely, being overfat, or not having access to enough green feed.

Best Plan to Segregate Geese From Other Birds

Geese need a separate range from poultry if many geese are raised. The big birds are not particular where they dig their bills, but are sure to wash them off in the hens' drinking water or the crocks of sour milk. This means dirty water for the hens or frequent emptying and refilling of troughs or pails. If the hens are on a limited range they will need plenty of tender grass and geese also need a lot of grass.

If geese are allowed to range where young chicks are growing the geese will steal the mash and some of the scratch feed. This increases the cost per pound of producing goose meat, and the profit in geese is due to the fact that they are largely grass eaters and can be raised on cheap feed.

Interesting Changes in New Type of Hard Road

Several interesting changes are apparent in a new type of concrete road form, described in Popular Mechanics Magazine. The new form is of steel, three-sixteenths of an inch thick, and comes in twelve-foot sections instead of the usual ten-foot lengths, and its top edge has been made rounded, so that it is impossible for small stones or concrete to lodge there and cause the finishing machine to ride high.

In Shape All the Time.

There is no longer any question that most of our dirt roads if rightly cared for would be in fair shape at any time of the year.

Ride in Airplanes.

By the time all the states get their good roads programs finished the world will be riding in airplanes.

Timber Is Best Bet.

Timber is the one best bet to make poor land pay a profit. It's slow but sure.