

WHAT A BIT OF COQUETRY COST

(Original.)

Tracey Ashley, a young northerner, spent a winter in New Orleans, where he met and wooed Rosalind St. Leger, a resident of that old southern city. Miss St. Leger was a belle and had no end of suitors, among them a Julius Warfield, born and bred in Louisiana and heir to a large sugar plantation. Ashley was an ardent wooer, while the southerner appeared to be rather indifferent.

Mardi Gras was coming on and with it preparations for unusual festivities. Ashley, whose engagements at home required him to leave New Orleans with the advent of Lent, begged hard of the lady to give him an affirmative answer to a proposition of marriage he had made her, but she would not.

Meanwhile the Mardi Gras opened. On the last evening of the festivities Ashley put on a domino and mingled with the masqueraders. Among the throng he noticed a feminine figure in a green domino on the arm of a man dressed in a red one. In the former was something familiar to the young northerner. As he passed them the woman flirted her handkerchief at him. He followed the couple and at last made up his mind that she was Miss St. Leger. Then he purchased a bouquet from a street vender and, approaching her, offered it. She accepted it and slipped her hand within his arm. Her attendant fell back. Convinced of her identity, Ashley took a fancy to press his suit without revealing the fact that she was known to him.

"But supposing," she said in a voice thinly disguised, "that I am not of your class."

"That cannot be," he said. "One to the manner born cannot conceal it even in disguise."

"I may be homely."

"That I will risk."

"You haven't seen my face."

"I have seen your figure. I have heard your voice. Neither could belong to any but a beautiful girl. But were your face pockmarked, were your eyes green, your nose a beet, still would I love you."

She was silent. He felt her hand tremble on his arm.

"Oh, to have a lover like that," she responded presently—"to be loved for oneself by one who loves so well that a lack of beauty, a blemish, has no weight to turn his love."

"You will find me such. You are beautiful. I know it. But supposing some accident, some illness, should convert that beauty into ugliness, still would I love you."

"If you only would!"

"I know I would."

"But suppose you should find my face, which you insist on believing beautiful, to be hideous."

"I would love you."

They had passed beyond the crowd of merry-makers. The torches flickered in the distance. Shouts of laughter, the tooting of horns, the tread of feet, came confusedly. Ashley unclasped the hand from his arm and pressed it.

"Tell me, sweetheart," he said, "is it yes?"

"You do not know what you are doing."

"I know this—that I love you."

"When you see my face you will spurn me."

"Never!"

"Even if you should wish to keep your word I would not permit you to make the sacrifice. A hero once loved a beautiful woman. She refused him. Smallpox destroyed her beauty. They met again, and she accepted him. He married her. They lived a wretched life."

"It would not be so with me."

"I would not trust you."

"I beg of you, do not hold me off longer. I am becoming beside myself. Send me away from you, and I will bury my grief under the bosom of the Mississippi."

"You don't mean it."

"I do."

"You will surely die if I deny you?"

"I will."

"Then I must yield."

Removing her mask, she turned toward him the face of a full blooded African negress. He started back.

"Reckon yo' been mistaken, mars?" she said in broad negro dialect.

Ashley drew forth a well filled wallet and was about to open it when the negro snatched it.

"I want it all, Mars' Ashley. Ef yo' don' gib it to me I'll tell Missy Rosalind."

"You know her?"

"I ought to. I'm her maid."

"Keep it, and if you keep the secret as well you shall have more." And, turning on his heel, he rejoined the revelers.

An hour later Ashley again passed the green and red dominos. The woman shook his wallet at him triumphantly. He was about to turn his back upon her when she lifted her mask and showed the features of Miss St. Leger. She tossed his wallet to him with a merry laugh and turned away. As she did so her escort raised his mask and showed the face of Julius Warfield.

Rosalind St. Leger regarded her act as a bit of coquetry that would serve to draw the northerner only the more closely to her. She was mistaken. He left the city the next morning without a call or a line of adieu. When she realized what she had done she bitterly rued her folly. She waited a year, hoping that he would relent; but, failing to hear from him, there was nothing for her to do but complete the part she had played by marrying Warfield. The only comfort remaining to her was to send her wedding cards to the man she really wanted.

HERBERT DOUSMAN.

A Testimonial For Veracity.

"It's a mighty fine thing to have a character for truthfulness," remarked O'Grady when he returned home the other evening.

"Indade an' it is that same," agreed Mrs. O'Grady, with an approving nod, as she hauled one child out of the fender and scraped the clinders off his frock. "An' what makes ye say that, Phelim?"

"'Cause me master believes in me veracity intirely," was the response of Phelim. He lighted his short pipe and took his accustomed seat on a broken chair near the chimney. "I told him this morning that I couldn't help being late an' that I had run a melle in a minute an' a half to get there in toime. An' what do ye think he said?"

"'Mebbe that ye deserved another sixpence a week."

"'Better than that. These are his very words. 'O'Grady,' ses he, 'O' wud just as soon believe ye if ye sed ye had done it in half a minute.' So ye see 'hat faith he has in me veracity intirely."—London Answers.

Reading the Face.

Restless eyes denote a deceitful, designing disposition; greenish eyes mean falsehood, malice and a love of scandal; blue eyes tell of tendency to coquetry; black eyes mean a lively, spirited and sometimes deceitful character; eyes with a yellowish, bloodshot white usually betoken strong emotions and hot temper; gray eyes mean dignity and intelligence and brown eyes a tender, true, kind and happy nature. A mouth had better be too large than too small, for a very small, pursed up mouth is seldom significant of good conversational power. Large mouths are more often found in conjunction with liberal dispositions than very small ones. A person with a pointed chin is fanciful, refined in taste and difficult to please. A broad, square chin signifies ardent love, often accompanied by jealousy. A broad, round chin means ardent love, with a steadfastness and purity of affection.

When Did You Oil Your Watch?

When did you oil your watch last? Never? You may remember when you lubricated your sewing machine, typewriter, lawn mower or grindstone—within a year, probably—but your watch you never oiled, that you can remember. Yet in a period of eighteen months the balance wheel turns on its axis 13,906,800,000 times. Expert watchmakers say that a watch should be thoroughly cleaned and oiled every eighteen months. Many persons wear a watch for years, winding it up each night, and never oil it. Watches are instruments of uncertain age; some run indefinitely, keeping accurate time, without need of repairs. As a matter of fact, nothing is so neglected as this small, delicate and useful instrument. —North American.

Blond Indians.

One of the mysteries of Mexico is presented by the Maya Indians, who inhabit the Sierra Madre mountains in the lower part of Sonora. They have fair skins, blue eyes and light hair, and students of ethnology have always been puzzled to account for them. There is a tradition, however, that these Indians are the descendants of the crew and passengers of a Swedish vessel wrecked on the Mexican coast centuries before Columbus discovered the new world. But this tradition is founded on nothing more substantial than a folklore tale current among them that their ancestors came over the big salt water hundreds of moons ago.

A Frog of Peculiar Habits.

South America has a frog of peculiar habits. Dwelling in the virgin forests, at the tops of the highest trees, it chooses as a site for its nursery some hollow stump and then proceeds to line it with resin procured from trees in the neighborhood. This lining serves to catch and hold the rainwater, with which it quickly becomes filled. As soon as this takes place the eggs are laid therein, and here they undergo development into tadpoles. How the resin is collected is a mystery, nor is it yet known how the separate pieces become welded to form the water tight basin necessary to insure the safety of the treasures deposited therein.

Something of That Kind.

"Young man," said the serious gentleman, "did you ever pause and think that each tick of the clock brings you another moment nearer to the end of your existence?"

"I was thinking of something of that kind this very minute," cheerfully replied the youth, "only the lady struck me that each tick brought pay day that much nearer."

A Puzzler.

An old white haired darky living on a plantation, not feeling well, had the doctor pay him a visit. The doctor told him as he was getting old he must eat plenty of chicken and stay out of damp night air. "But, sah," said the old darky, "how can you expect me to stay in de house at night and still get my chickens?"

His Rising Day.

"He never did rise in the world till he stumbled over a lot o' dynamite," the village gossip said, "an' even then, like so many men in the risin' business, he never did know what he riz fer!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Health Recipe.

One time a man asked the poet Longfellow how to be healthy, and this is the answer he received:

Joy, temperance and repose
Slam the door on the doctor's nose.

England and Australia are the only islands which exceed Cuba in their natural resources.

Suicide as Experiment.

A wealthy young man named Leandro Improta after taking refreshment at a cafe in Naples called for pen and ink and wrote a number of notes and letters. He then quietly took out a small revolver and shot himself in the breast. One of the letters found in his pocket runs:

To the Curious Public—In this century it is impossible voluntarily to leave this world without great efforts being made on the part of newspapers and curious people to discover the cause of the deed. In my case I wished to study metempsychosis at close quarters. Is that not a fine idea? So much has been written on the subject, and it pleases me to discover instead of talking. So I determined to die and see whether I shall be reborn in the form of some animal. It would be delightful to return to this world as a lion or a rat. This is why I wanted to die. ADDIO.

Let No One Boast.

Nevertheless, let no one boast. Just as every man, though he be the greatest genius, has very definite limitations in some one sphere of knowledge, and thus attests his common origin with the essentially perverse and stupid mass of mankind, so also has every man something in his nature which is positively evil. Even the best—nay, the noblest—character will sometimes surprise us by isolated traits of depravity, as though it were to acknowledge his kinship with the human race, in which villainy—nay, cruelty—is to be found in that degree.—Schopenhauer.

The Whole Show.

When Rubinstein was traveling through the United States upon a concert tour it chanced that Barnum's circus followed exactly the same route chosen by the great Russian. On one occasion when the train was filled with snake charmers, acrobats, clowns and the like the guard, noticing perhaps Rubinstein's remarkable appearance, asked him, "Do you belong to the show?" Turning his lionlike head with a savage shake, Rubinstein fiercely growled out, "Sir, I am the show!"

Aids to Humanity.

No women have done more for humanity and for the individual than the old maid reformer and the old maid aunt. There is none to whom we owe a deeper debt of gratitude and none whom we could not better spare, says a writer in the Cosmopolitan, for be sure of this, God sends old maids into the world to do the work that the rest of us leave undone.

Congenial Employment.

The high prize of life, the crowning fortune of man, is to be born to some pursuit which finds him in employment and happiness, whether it be to make baskets or broadswords or canals or statues or songs.—Emerson.

Able For the Rest.

"William, were you ever whipped at school?" queried the visitor.

"Only by the teacher," was the rather significant reply.—Chicago News.

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