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WILD GAMBLE TO WIN A BRIDE.

Chicago Plunger's Motive in Try- ing to Get a Fortune.

This is the story of Arthur Mason, a Chicago plunger who is making a fortune, or, rather, trying to make a fortune, in speculation with the purpose of carrying out a romantic love compact, says the Chicago Inter Ocean. Young Mason—he is only 29 years old—cares little for the money so far as his own financial benefit is concerned. He wants it in order to cancel a debt of honor, and thus be free to marry the girl of his choice. It is by long odds the queerest and most interesting story that ever came out of the maelstrom of speculation; and the strangest part of it is the fact that Mason has thus far been successful in his quest.

Mason set out a few months ago to gather in \$250,000 from the New York stock exchange. Contrary to the customary experience of ninety-nine men out of every hundred, he has frequently had a great run of luck. He has succeeded at one time in accumulating nearly \$150,000, and his wise friends begged him to stop. They told him that such luck as he had could not stick to him long, and that, unless he quit the game, he was sure to go broke. Mason, however, was deaf to all their entreaties. He insisted that nothing less than \$250,000 would satisfy his needs, and that when he had secured the sum he would drop out of Wall street and never engage in any sort of speculation again. He plunges with the delirium of a crazy man. Some days he cleans up \$10,000 or \$15,000; on others he loses an equal amount. Old-timers shake their heads and see only disaster in the end.

The accumulation of \$150,000 only served to make him more rash and daring. He took desperate chances of doubling it, and lost nearly all his money. Since then he has been up and down by turns; one week worth \$50,000 or \$75,000, the next operating in bucket-shops or on race tracks, with a shoestring." as the saying is.

Why He Wants \$250,000.

Arthur Mason wants \$250,000 with which to repay the sum that his friend Horace L. Porter lost in speculation on his advice in San Francisco two years ago. Porter is dead, but he left a pretty sister, a Miss Alva Porter, to whom Mason has been engaged for five years. He says he doesn't wish to marry the girl so long as the debt of honor is unpaid, and at the same time he feels it is unfair to keep a girl of her age tied up with a matrimonial contract the fulfillment of which is uncertain. So Mason has set to himself the task of securing the money within the next six months.

"It wouldn't be fair to the girl to keep her waiting longer than that. If I can't get the money by the expiration of the time I have set, I'll give up the speculative game and cancel the engagement." This is his ultimatum.

Arthur Mason is the son of Elias Mason, the head of a large shipping business on the great lakes. The elder Mason would gladly have his son join him in business, but the young man has determined that, alone and unaided, he will make his own fortune.

Mason's ambition and romance are the result of a five years' career as interesting as any young man ever had after leaving college. While Mason was at Princeton he met Horace L. Porter, a quiet, mild-mannered youth of a rather retiring disposition. Porter was of the sort that is susceptible to a man of strong personality. So it was that, despite the extreme difference in their physical and mental compositions, a strong attachment sprang up between the two young men, which strengthened as time wore on.

Shortly after leaving college Mason came to Chicago and began to speculate. Like many other men who have tried the same game, he lost, and lost again, and again. His father refused to give him an additional allowance. At the very time of Mason's financial distress he received an invitation from his former college chum, Horace L. Porter, to visit him at his home in Nevada. The invitation came as a piece of good fortune to Mason, who jumped at this temporary abatement of his troubles.

His Betrothal to Miss Porter.

It was at Porter's Western home that Mason first met sweetfaced little Alva Porter. The girl, like her brother, became enraptured with the air of reckless bohemianism which Mason habitually assumed. In less than three months' time the girl, but 19 years old, had given her promise to Mason that she would become his wife. In this alliance Porter saw a speedy termination of all his financial difficulties. But he was too much of a man to marry Miss Porter till he had made a start in life.

Mason went to San Francisco as the most convenient place for operating in stocks. He was soon joined by his friend, Horace Porter, who brought plenty of cash to do business with. As an evidence of his sincerity in his friendship, Porter suggested to his friend that they go into some business together. Porter had the capital and he was sure Mason had the brains. The offer was accepted and under Mason's guidance Porter began speculating on the stock exchange.

In less than a year Porter's inheritance of \$250,000 had dwindled to about \$10,000. Mason would not ask his father for assistance and Porter refused to write to his mother for money, and thus it was that at the outbreak of the recent war with Spain Porter was working as clerk in a Boston dry goods store while Mason earned a sort of a livelihood as a board marker in a Boston bucket shop. When President McKinley issued the call for volunteers Arthur Mason and Horace Porter were among the first to present themselves for enrollment on the books of the Ninth regiment of Massachusetts volunteers.

Mason went from choice; Porter because his friend enlisted. They went to Cuba and underwent all the hardships into which that gallant band of heroes was driven. Mason, strong of physique, withstood the awful ordeal, but Porter, always delicate in health, quickly began to feel the effects of the climate.

Death of Young Porter.

He became ill and was removed to the hospital. Mason begged to be allowed to go with his friend, and the request was granted. Porter was unable to resist the tropical fever and in a few days was dead. Mason cared for Porter as tenderly as a mother would a sick child, and as he held the fever-stricken hand of his comrade friend he made a vow that in life his only motive would be the redemption of Porter's money lost in speculation, and the reestablishment of his own previous good business character.

Upon his return from Cuba almost the first one to meet him at Mantauk Point was his father. An affecting scene followed, during which Mr. Mason implored his boy to return home and the past would all be forgotten and forgiven. The soldier's answer was: "When I have made things right with the mother of the dearest friend I had on earth I will come to you, father, but until then I must work as I never worked before."

For the past few months Mason has been living in New York city. He has made the statement that as he lost his father's money by speculation he will continue speculating until he finds it again. He spends his time among the bucket shops and poolrooms of the Wall street district and he is now the recognized plunger among the world of small speculators who woo chance for a livelihood.

At times his play at the races is phenomenal his luck seemed to be always in range; his play at the brokers' stock boards is considered remarkable. His entrance at any of the smaller brokers' offices is generally a signal for a crowd to gather near and watch his moves.

On three separate occasions lately his winnings have reached over \$15,000 a day, but in his eagerness to master fortune at one bold stroke he has every time forfeited the greater part.

Girl Urges Him to Marry Her.

During all this time Alva Porter has written many letters. She urges him to abandon his self-imposed task and marry her. She waits for him to say the word and yet he refuses till he has accomplished his purpose of securing \$250,000. One of the most joyous meetings of the Dewey celebration of two months ago was that of the young speculator and his fiancée. Upon the big observation

stand on Central Park west, opposite the Hotel Majestic, the two happiest spectators of the great parade were Arthur Mason and Miss Alva Porter. It was the only blissful day that Mason has had in five years, since he first won his sweetheart's promise of marriage, and then set out to make a name and fortune. But the happy holiday was soon over and Mason is back at his self imposed work again.

PASSING REMARKS.

The clearing up of the murder mystery at Odessa by the confession of the murdered man's widow but adds another number to the long, long list in which unholy love figures as the primal cause.

It is only the old, old story,
 And only the world-old woe;
 A foretaste first of Sin's Eden
 And then—but the rest you know;
 And into the soil of the ages
 The root of this sin will grow
 And its fruit will be just as bitter
 As in Eden long ago.

They have a potato in Kentucky that it would not be advisable to introduce here. A farmer's wife in Owen county put some in the oven stove along with the pan containing roast beef; by the bye there was an explosion that blew open the oven door and scattered the roast beef all over the kitchen. In that same county at another place, some spuds that were boiling in a kettle also exploded, throwing hot water over the scared farmer's wife and scalding her as well. This Kentucky story comes to us by way of Texas. We will let some other fellow ask how the powder got inside the jacket.

An effort is being made to promote the migration of the Negro to the Northern and Western states and an association has been formed in Buffalo, N.Y., for this purpose. It will fail unless the promoters can change climatic conditions. The negro is a creature of the tropics. A wiser move would be to induce our colored brother to go to Porto Rico, Cuba and our other tropical isles.

Sentiment prevails sometimes in the naming of postoffices, as in other things. Our lads and lassies will be pleased to know that there is a "Love" in Colorado, a "Lover" in Pennsylvania, while "Sweet Lips" is in Tennessee; but they will not admit that these are all they are. What lover but thinks his love has the sweetest lips in all the wide, wide world?

There is one turkey in the country that for years has had no fears about Christmas or any other holiday. It is in Illinois, stands five feet on its toes, and weighs sixty-five pounds; probably the largest bird of its species known. It looks like a young ostrich. Its wings measure seven feet from tip to tip. Of course its owner is proud of it, and no money would induce him to sell it. If its gobble is equal in sound to its corpulence, no ordinary darkey will ever attempt to hypnotize it and cart it off in a wheelbarrow on a moonless night.

Last winter when the Cuban troops were quartered in Florida, at swamp-surrounded Tampa and Miami; and at Jacksonville, where they are high land areas that were not swampy, the headquarters of General Lee was in one of the big hotels, that came to be known as the Palace of Tears and Good-Byes.

The general was a man beloved by all, especially by his men, whom he ever kept in mind, ministering to the comfort of the sick in a way not usual to department commanders. The hospitals were filled with the flowers he had sent to the invalids, and he spent largely of his salary to provide delicacies for them.

Not only this, but it came to be understood that no mother, wife, sister or sweetheart visiting the various camps in the suburbs of the city must leave without calling on the commanding general; each he gave a cordial greeting, a few kind words such as fitted each case, and gave also a few flowers to be carried away as a memento. With many the good-by to the general was said with tearful eyes and trembling lips; and so

headquarters got its name of the Palace of Tears and Good-Byes.

A writer on marriages in Self Culture declares that marriages are happy only between the very stupid and the very intelligent; which is a very stupid assertion to make and leads one to conclude that he must belong to neither of the two classes named. "The average man no longer loves his wife." Ergo, of the twenty or more million men in this country alone, nine-tenths are making a failure of happy marriage life.

This comes from the Minneapolis; Lillian Murray Knott, a prima donna soprano of reputation, stood at the wash tub in the workhouse yesterday and worked out the first of her sentence of forty days for petty larceny. When her days work was over the girl trembled in every limb and seemed on the verge of physical and mental collapse.

Aside from the doubt as to her guilt, as given in the account from which the preceding paragraph is clipped, it would seem as though justice could have been easier satisfied than by putting a delicate, cultured woman at a task to which she was unaccustomed, and for which she evidently was not physically fitted. What is that Shakespeare says? "And earthly power doth then show likest God's When mercy seasons justice."

We often hear about the injurious effects of coffee on the human system and once in a while a case comes under observation that might be used as an argument in the affirmative; as, for instance, the story of the Cincinnati woman who put \$95 in bank notes in her coffee pot; then forgetting the incident, added a couple of tablespoonsful of coffee, put water in to brew a breakfast drink and swallowed the decoction. Then, suddenly remembering, she investigated the contents of the pot and found brown grounds and greenish pulp. A nervous fit followed. Naturally there was good grounds for it.

The race problem is up to the salons of Alton, Ill., in a case brought by a colored man and brother to compel the admission of his children into the school with white ones, when they are schools especially established for negroes. A jury, after fifty-seven hours' deliberation, had to be discharged. A new trial is to follow. Eleven to one in favor of the city leads us to wonder if the one obstinate fellow who stood out for negro equality had mixed blood in him.

With snowdrifts sixty feet high, up in Minnesota at a place called Harmony as a result of a storm of sixty hours' duration, how much harmony was there likely to be among the shut-in inhabitants? Perhaps each family, having a copy of Whittier's poems in the house, whiled away the snow-bound hours by the open fireside in its fresh perusal.

The tidal wave that wiped out the population on the Island of Ceram, suggests future events that await our islands in the China seas; and it is also a warning to the enterprising Americans who want to get up colonies to replace the native inhabitants. When waves fifty feet high sweep over the lowlands and transform miles of coast line into a mud puddle, it would seem the part of wisdom to prefer—well, say the sixty feet snowdrifts of Minnesota.

The "quiet and apparently harmless citizen" who went into a Chicago theater, watched the play for a few moments, and then began to mutter unintelligibly, winding up by firing four shots over the heads (and heels) of the astonished playfolks, was evidently from the Wild West; but not quite equal to the legitimate dramatic presentation on the stage of the city by the lakes, and so expressed his sentiments in the only way he was accustomed to at home.

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