

The Bishop's Experiment

A Story of a Lost Pin.

By KATE Y. DUNNE.

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"But, my dear, you are all wrong!" exclaimed the bishop's wife, looking reproachfully over the coffee urn, which had hidden her piquant face from her husband's adoring glance. "I wasn't careless. It was the washerwoman. If you must blame somebody, James, blame her. Of course I didn't mean to leave a pearl pin—and especially one you had given me—in my laundry bag."

That afternoon as he was walking briskly down Main street to make a parish visit in the distance he saw Aline's blue hat and shining hair. His heart had a habit of beating faster at the sight of her slender, dainty figure, and that afternoon she looked even more attractive than usual to him among a crowd of commonplace women. He hurried to catch up with her, but she, too, was walking fast and had turned into Pierce's department store before he was near enough to join her.

He went in, too, and secured a vantage point some feet away, where he waited until he should have a chance to slip into a space next to her.

As he waited he noticed her gold bag laid on the counter beside her muff, out of her direct line of vision. Still the old habit! An idea flashed into the bishop's mind. Object lessons often accomplish what all the lectures in the world fail to do.

Quietly and quickly he laid an arm on the counter, swept it along the glass unnoticed by the mob of women surging toward the bargain Mecca ahead. He was not seen. His hand touched the bag, closed over it, drew it to him, dropped it safely into his pocket.

Was he pickpocket or bishop? He certainly felt like the former. Never had he felt so abject, so criminally miserable, as when he pushed his way out of that shop, for to carry out his object lesson necessitated giving up that anticipated companionship on his walk. So he went on out and down town alone, wondering why the police did not take him by the arm, why no one pointed the finger of scorn, while that wretched gold thing was glittering so brightly in his pocket.

His parochial visit was not pleasant; his walk was not pleasant; nothing was pleasant. He was obliged to eat a solitary lunch, as Aline had rounded out her shopping expedition by lunching at her mother's. Even the telephone bell did not ring, as he half expected it might. Nothing happened, and he and that bag seemed to be the only occupants of that quiet house. Aline reached home just in time to dress for dinner. Then he had a visitor, who detained him until the last moment, so he had no chance for a sight of Aline until he found her at the table.

He had pictured her distraught, worried, had planned it all—what she should say and he should answer and what the result would be—but the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley, and he was disappointed. Aline was simply radiant, hesitating, having put on the blue dress he was so fond of and looking just as she had looked in those days when she had first lured him from sermons and from services by the magic of her charm.

She had seen old friends by chance, had lunched with a group of favorite aunts and cousins who had made much of her and had found just the desired bit of lace at that sale. The day had been a success from start to finish.

"You didn't lose your purse, did you?" The bishop felt impelled finally to jump into the ditch of his own digging. Aline looked her astonishment.

"Lose my purse?" she said. "Why, no, of course, I didn't! What a funny question, James! Just because I lost that pin—or, rather, it lost itself—you needn't think I am going to lose everything else I own."

"Are you sure you have your purse?" The bishop was obviously perplexed at her answer.

"Jimmie," she said, "I am going to send for an alienist. You certainly have softening of the brain. My purse is up in my bureau drawer at this very moment."

The bishop was growing excited. "Go and look for it," he interrupted. "I know it is not there."

Aline was staring at him with marked wonder in her blue eyes. "Jimmie, listen!" she said, emphasizing her words by tapping the table with the end of a spoon. "My purse is in my drawer, where I put it when I came home unless you have stolen it."

"Perhaps I have." The bishop's face was a study in crimson, and he spoke in a loud, dictatorial way. "Go and get it."

Aline's eyes filled with tears. She had never heard her husband speak in that way before. She was hurt and a little frightened, though she would not show it.

"Certainly," she said in a very dignified tone, sweeping out of the room, leaving the bishop as bewildered as he was excited. He was beginning to feel badly that she was about to be so locked, but surely there was never a

more glaring example of her carelessness than this. To think that she had brought her bag home with her when all the time—

Flying footsteps, flashing eyes, a gold bag swung into his lap! "There, Jimmie—crazy, crazy boy!" exclaimed a triumphant voice. "Now will you be good?"

The very bag—the very—cobwebs filled the bishop's brain for a moment. "I—I—don't see," he stammered. "Wait a minute, will you?" Then he in his turn fled upstairs and went to his bureau drawer. The very bag! It took him some time to get his bearings, to summon up courage to go down to that lighted room and to the reproachful glances of those blue eyes. But the bishop was a good sport, although the brilliancy of his sermons was sometimes open to criticism. Down to the dining room he bravely walked and laid the bag beside his duplicate. Aline looked and looked and looked again. Then her haughtiness was that of a tragedy queen:

"James, explain! Did you think you had my bag? And where did you get it?"

The bishop was silent. He was absentmindedly comparing the duplicates. Aline's had her monogram on the framework; the other had only initials, "M. M. B." He repeated it over and over to himself, as if it were a favorite refrain. Then he knew that his day of judgment had come.

"I stole it!"

"Where, James?"

"I saw you on Main street this morning"—his tone was of the yet unshriven monk—"I followed you into Pierce's to ask you to walk down to the Grants with me. I saw your bag lying on the counter beside your muff, and I—took it."

"What for?"

"Why, just to—to"—the bishop was growing extremely nervous under the steady gaze of those questioning blue eyes—"why, my dear, to—hau; it all, Aline! Haven't you any imagination? Can't you imagine why?"

"Certainly not—and I don't propose to try! The idea of a bishop stealing his wife's purse, even trying to give her a moment's fright for any reason at all, is something for which there can be no possible explanation and which I don't even care to think about. But I do say this—I think when a bishop stoops to those dreadful things it is time for his wife to leave him!"

High tragedy was written all over the little lady's face as she folded her arms, arched her eyebrows and looked sternly at her writhing husband. Then a sudden change of expression swept over her mobile face. "James," she said, "did you really and truly do it for the good of your poor black sheep? Did you steal your wife's purse to save her soul?"

Silence.

"James!"

Still silence while the bishop twiddled a lock of hair furiously between his thumb and forefinger.

"James, answer me."

The bishop turned appealing eyes to hers—so hard, so cold—and as their eyes met something happened. Laughter such as possesses the spirits of elfland overcame the dignified bishop and his wife. Words were impossible. Anger was a thing of the past. Explanations needed not to be made. Peals of laughter met and mingled across the table. Aline was the first to recover sufficiently to speak.

"Let's see whose it is," she said. And the bishop handed it to her, while wiping his eyes with the other.

"M. M. B. H'm!" muttered Aline. Then, opening the bag, she held aloft a visiting card. "James," she shrieked, "it is mother's!"

His mother-in-law's! The bishop was speechless—this time with horror. Aline was an only child, her mother ever on the watch lest he should let the winds of life blow too strongly on her child. He never could face her after a situation like this. She was always severe on his clerical ideas. And now this!

"What can I do?" His tone was that of a suppliant, and Aline thoroughly enjoyed his misery.

"Do?" she said. "There are several things you can do, and you will have to do one of them quickly, or mother will be here asking my advice about what she can do to recover it. Father gave it to her on their last anniversary, and she will be frantic at having lost it. By the way, I don't see why you didn't see her in the shop."

"Neither do I. Now tell me what to do."

Aline held up her plump hand and counted off fingers as she spoke: "Way No. 1, messenger boy sent to leave it at her door, with no explanation, note or card—spirit too cowardly for a bishop to resort to; way No. 2, send it once to Pierce's, saying you found it—falsehood unworthy of your ideals; way No. 3, take it to her yourself and own up to your methods of improving her child's character."

Silence. The bishop looked downcast, Aline roguish.

"Well, James," she said at last, "what have you decided to do? Mercy, there's the telephone! Oh, my dear, suppose it's mother!"

It was. Muffling the transmitter, Aline whispered in a flush of excitement:

"Dearest, if I save your life now will you stop trying to save my soul any more?"

The bishop's answer was unintelligible, but understood. Still Aline did not show her hand.

"And, dearest, if I do you must let me choose the text for your special sermon next Sunday. Yes? Now listen while I show you what can be done with a complicated situation."

Saved—not by grace, but by Aline—a very meek bishop took his place in the pulpit the following Sunday and announced as his text "The way of the transgressor is hard."

HINTS FOR FARMERS

Draft Brood Mares.

The first thing which the farmer and future horse breeder must select is his brood mares. These should be selected primarily from the standpoint of their being able to do the work required of them. It would be a mistake to select heavy draft mares for some of the rough hill or mountain farms and a greater mistake to try to do the work on comparatively level farms with light mares. Horse power is cheaper than man power.

Maternity rather than beauty should also be kept in view. The best looking mare is seldom the best breeder. The brood mare should have a roomy, somewhat loose construction rather than the compact, closely knit form, which is more attractive to the eye. It is a general rule of breeding that compactness should be sought in the male, size in the female. A partial exception to this rule is in the production of draft horses on the farm. Excessively heavy mares would be unwieldy for general farm work. Therefore size is sought in the stallion, and mares are chosen which are not too large to be profitable workers, but large enough to mate consistently with the stallion selected.—Professor Thomas I. Maize Before Pennsylvania Normal Institute.

Color in Draft Horses.

This important matter is certainly too little considered. It is all moonshine to say that a good horse is never of a bad color, and the old saw has done harm enough and to spare. The fady colored equine may possibly be able to do as hard a day's work as the black, the brown or the dark chestnut, but it very likely may not. Fady colors and delicate constitution go together very often, while such shades or blazing marks are never admired by the buyer. The dealer will not be long telling you about it if you have a fady chestnut, a piebald, light gray or cream colored horse to sell, and certainly those firms that pay high figures for their heavy horses will not countenance bad colors. Then upon the principle of holding every feature up to top quality and missing no advantage a farmer is foolish to breed from peculiar colored mares. How many of the most promising fillies which will make the best brood mares are sold just because they bring in a little extra money, while the inferior ones are kept to become brood mares!—W. R. Gilbert in National Stockman.

Feed Cows Liberally.

Remember it pays to feed a cow to the limit of her capacity. It can be safely depended upon that a cow which receives only three-fourths of a full ration will yield only one-half as much milk as the same cow receiving a full ration. The reason for this is that about 50 per cent of all the food that a cow consumes is required for her maintenance. The other half goes to form milk. When we withhold one-fourth of the full allowance of feed for a cow we are supplying only one-half the amount of feed which is actually required for the production of milk. Yet I think that it is safe to say that at least nine-tenths of our dairymen fail to supply the final quarter of the cow's ration. Always feed a cow to her full capacity, and this means to supply feed as long as there is an economical response in milk. Of course it would be perfectly useless to feed a cow whose milk production is limited to two gallons per day a four gallon ration, because the feed for the two gallons would be wasted.—Professor John Michels.

How Often to Milk.

Most farmers and dairymen milk their cows only twice a day, and that is right. Sometimes a fresh cow needs to have an excess of milk drawn between times in order to prevent congestion and fever, but not for a long period. Some cows again have "leaking teats," which waste the milk if not relieved three or four times a day, but such cows are a nuisance and should be disposed of. To milk twice a day is enough, as a general rule. To milk three times does not seem to bring more milk, though some people have thought so and acted on that supposition.

Paint Mixed With Skim Milk.

A good inside paint where a gloss is not required and one that will not rub off can be made by mixing the dry color with sweet skim milk and applying as other paint, says Farm Progress. Ten cents' worth of dry color (some colors sell at about 5 cents a pound), with milk to thin, will cover as much surface as a dollar's worth of oil paint and answers admirably where one is not justified in buying expensive paint, as the case where one is renting by the year.

Producing Fertile Eggs.

In order to get hens in prime condition to produce fertile eggs you are required to follow as closely after nature's plan as possible. Provide them with a liberal amount of green food, together with animal food, at least twice each week. If you cannot give them a large, roomy yard release them from confinement at least an hour each day.

Cabbage Rack For Hens.

A convenient rack for feeding cabbage, cut or whole clover, etc., is made by nailing poultry wire to the side of the house in such a way that it bulges and forms a pocket. It is nailed on two sides and bottom. The hens eat the green food through the mesh of the wire, and very little is wasted.—Western Poultry Journal.

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