

ESMEE'S ROMANCE

Justin Hoste, the brilliant young artist, was in South Africa making sketches of the Boer war for American newspapers. He was riding toward a kopje one morning when the sudden sound of heavy firing sent the blood flying to his heart, as he realized that beyond the brow were the Boers and that an engagement was taking place. Putting spurs to his horse, he rode forward at full speed, and the fever of battle swept over him when he reached a point where he could see the hollow that surrounded the base of the kopje.

Down in the dip was a "thin red line" of men, who scrambled as fast as the ones in front would let them up the hillside toward their hidden foes, entrenched behind every rock and bush and scrap of cover that could shield a man.

Justin rode straight down into the smoke, and then he felt a sudden blow and a sharp pang, and then all was a blank.

From the depth of oblivion he emerged at last in a hospital tent, where quiet nurses moved to and fro and where the stillness seemed almost oppressive after the clang and clamor of the hollow. His left arm was helpless and bandaged, and all his limbs felt singularly weak and his head swam dizzily.

"What is the matter with me?" he asked of a nurse.

"Not much now, Mr. Hoste. A bullet passed through an artery, and they only just found you in time. But you will soon get up your strength with rest and care."

To while away the tedium of his stay in the hospital he began to draw and sketched the face of a girl he had seen in a dream the night before the battle. She had a lovely, serious face, with great, earnest eyes and a tender mouth. She seemed to be standing at the gate of a beautiful country house, and she appeared in his dream to be holding the gate open for him to pass through. He called the sketch "His Dream Girl." It proved to be his best work.

When he was in London on the way to New York he responded to a Bond Street gallery's suggestion by sending his African sketches for exhibition, and he included among them his masterpiece.

He had no lack of friends now that he had made a little place for himself in the world of people who "do something," and they took him up and made him one of the minor fashions of the hour, going in parties to see his "show," writing it up in all the papers, inviting him to dinners and giving him commissions to draw and write for them.

He had never been so prosperous, and he found it pleasant enough, though now and then the loneliness seized him for a moment. And though it all he had the sense of something which was coming toward him, approaching always day by day until it was imminent. It seemed a mere chance that took him one afternoon in late spring to Bond Street to take a peep at his own pictures or at the people criticising them.

A group of three women at the far end of the second room attracted his attention. They seemed eager and interested and were absorbed in some debate concerning the sketch of "The Dream Girl."

Justin, curious to know what they discussed, drew near and heard one say with decision:

"There cannot be any one else in the world so exactly like Esmee as that. We must have seen her at some time or another."

"Esmee," she added, turning to the other, "are you sure you have never seen her?"

Justin stepped closer involuntarily and bent forward to look at the girl who spoke; then he started forward, exclaiming:

"My dream girl!"

She was gazing into a face that was the facsimile of his vision, only brighter even than the dream had shown it.

"They were all speechless with the strangeness of the incident. And Justin was just recovering himself and was about to apologize when the girl advanced out her hand to him, saying softly:

"You are Justin?"

His blood transfused, while a murmur of astonishment broke from the other two. And then Esmee said:

"I saw you once, years and years ago, when you were a boy and lived in the country. I was a lonely little girl, and you were a lonely little boy, and the powers that were decreed that we should meet and play together one summer day. They hoped you would be constant playmates, but you went away to school and never came back any more. Do you remember that day?"

"I begin to remember," he stammered, bewildered, "but I had quite forgotten it. Did you open the gate?"

"Here I did," she answered, smiling and looking from him to the picture.

They began a long conversation and wandered away together to a shaded seat in the corner. No shy reserve seemed possible to them in the presence of that picture, which, at the other side of the world, was "a romance in real life," while Esmee's friends to the left were "I always thought something would happen to her because she was such an odd girl. He looks tremendously happy in his new found joy."

"It was. Most people are when they find something that life can give them which they reach.—Boston Traveller."

Weeping Animals.

Travelers through the Syrian desert have seen horses weep from thirst. A mule has been seen to cry from the pain of an injured foot, and camels, it is said, shed tears in streams. A cow sobbed by its mistress, who had tended it from calfhood, wept pitifully. A young soko ape used to cry with vexation if Livingstone didn't nurse it in his arms when it asked him to. Wounded apes have died crying, and apes have wept over their young ones slain by hunters. A chimpanzee trained to carry water jugs broke one and cried, which proved sorrow, though it wouldn't mend the jug. Rats, discovering their young drowned, have been moved to tears of grief. A giraffe which a huntsman's rifle had injured began to cry when approached. Sea lions often weep over the loss of their young. Gordon Cumming observed tears trickling down the face of a dying elephant. And even an orang-utang when deprived of its mango was so vexed that it took to weeping. There is little doubt, therefore, that animals do cry from grief or weep from pain or annoyance.—Harper's Weekly.

The Laborer's Thanks.

A train car was going down a busy street one day and was already comfortably full when it was hailed by a laboring man much the worse for liquor, who presently staggered along the car between two rows of well-dressed people regardless of polished shoes and tender feet.

Murmurs and complaints arose on all sides, and demands were heard that the offender should be ejected at once.

But amid the storm of abuse one friendly voice was raised as a benevolent citizen rose from his seat, saying:

"No, no! Let the man sit down and be quiet."

The discomfiture of the party turned to mirth when the drunken one seized his benefactor by the hand, exclaiming:

"Thank ye, sir—thank ye. I see you know what it is to be tight!"—London Answers.

Served Him Well.

During the early days of the career of William Allen White, when he was charged with the conduct of a country paper in Iowa, he one day received a call from an indignant contributor, who bitterly complained that matter of his, long before submitted, had not been published.

"Softly, my friend," said White in his most soothing tone. "Really I must offer my best thanks to you for those features. They have served me well. From time to time when I get to thinking that this sheet is a pretty poor one to inflict upon a long suffering public I look up your stuff and read it carefully, a process which enables me to perceive how much worse my paper might be, whereupon I become real cheerful. Please don't take them from me."—Cleveland Leader.

A Multiplication Trick.

Here is a little trick in multiplication that may amuse you. Ask a friend to write down the numbers 12345678, omitting the number 5. Then tell him to select any one figure from the list, multiply it by 9 and with the answer to this sum multiply the whole list—thus, assuming that he selects either the figure 4 or 6:

Select 4 x 9 = 36      Select 6 x 9 = 54  
12345678              12345678  
      36                        54

Men in Petticoats.

It will probably be a matter of surprise to the general reader to learn that the petticoat was first worn exclusively by men. In the reign of King Henry VII, the dress of the English was so fantastic and absurd that it was difficult to distinguish one sex from the other. In the inventory of Henry V, appears a "petticoat of red damask, with open sleeves." There is no mention of a woman's petticoat before the Tudor period.

Crue! Blow.

"Are you aware of the fact," remarked Miss Cutting, "that I am a mind reader?"

"Nevah suspected it, weally," answered young Softleigh. "Would you—aw—object to weading my mind, doncher know?"

"Certainly not," she replied. "Bring it with you the next time you call."

Paced Too Rapidly.

"Walter, ask the orchestra to play something different."

"Any particular selection, sir?"

"Something slower. I can't chew my food properly in waits time."—Kansas City Journal.

Only Chance.

"Do you believe," queried the fair widow, "that universal peace will ever be established?"

"Not unless people quit getting married," growled the old bachelor.—Chicago News.

The Settlement.

Suitor—What will your father settle on the man who marries you? The Girl—All the rest of the family, I suppose.—St. Louis Times.

The Two Pias.

Ruth, who has been married just two weeks, lives in a little flat and there keeps house for her lord and master. She has read a little and is wise beyond her nineteen years. On Sunday after their dinner had been served by the wife she went to the kitchen and returned with a pumpkin pie.

"What's that?" asked the L. and M. "I made a pumpkin pie yesterday," his wife answered timidly.

He attacked the confection with a knife and fork, but could not make much headway and was about to declare himself when Ruth announced:

"I have another in the pantry, dear. Your mother sent one over yesterday."

She then produced the second pie, which was as tender and appetizing as the first had been tough and unsavory.

"That's something like it," he said patronizingly. "Of course you couldn't expect to become expert at once, my dear."

The girl laughed. "You're eating the one I made now," she said. And in her diary for the day is written:

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."—Portland (Me.) Express.

The Hip Joints.

The cup and ball socket and the air tight valve were first used in the human body. If our hip joints and arms were not provided with air tight sockets we should get too tired to continue our work for any length of time in just holding these limbs together by muscles. It is the pressure of the air which holds them in place, and thus all physical effort is avoided. In the various air tight joints and sockets found in the human body one may find nearly all the mechanical principles involved in the air brake or the use of compressed air for a thousand different things. Some may aver that nature did not discover ball bearings, a mechanical device which has revolutionized the vehicular world. But the principle is almost developed in the ball of the leg bone and the socket of the hip, which are made so smooth and are so well oiled that they slide backward and forward with practically no friction.

Marrying For Votes.

Marrying for votes was a device of old time British election agents. As the law stood before the reform act of 1832 widows of freemen or marrying again made their second husbands freemen and therefore voters. At election times widows were consequently paid handsomely to go through a formal marriage with a voteless bachelor, who, for a consideration, similarly agreed to support the candidate. The pair were married, the man voted according to instructions, and then he and his wife, standing on either side of a tombstone, said, "Death us do part." With this literal fulfillment of the matrimonial vow they regarded their marriage dissolved. At the last election in Bristol before 1832 a hundred women gave votes to men.

A Literary Light.

A short time ago a well known writer of London, remembering that he had never read the noncanonical books, went out in search of a copy and in one bookshop after another drew blank. At last he went to his own particular newspaper shop, which also dealt in Bibles and light literature. "Have you the Apocrypha?" he asked. "For a moment the young woman behind the counter was puzzled; then, brightening, she said, "Is it a weekly or a monthly?"

Acres and Bible Letters.

It has sometimes been stated that there are more acres in Yorkshire than there are letters in the Bible. A person hearing the statement for the first time is inclined to doubt it, but it is true, all the same. Authorities differ as to the exact acreage of the county, one giving it as 3,882,848 and another as 3,771,843. But the number of letters in the Bible is said to be 3,566,480, so the acres beat the letters, with something to spare.—London Notes and Queries.

On the Wrong Side.

A temperance missionary in Glasgow left a few tracts with a young woman one morning. Calling at the same house a few days after, he was rather disconcerted to find the tracts doing duty as curl papers on the head of the dame to whom he had given them. "Weel, my lassie," he remarked, "I see ye have used the tracts I left ye, but," he added in time to turn confusion into merriment, "ye ha' putten them outside instead of inside your head."

The French Horn.

The French horn, or cor de chasse, is regarded by some musicians as the sweetest and mellowest of all the wind instruments. In Beethoven's time it was little else than the old hunting horn, which for the convenience of the mounted hunter was arranged in spiral convolutions to be slipped over the head and carried resting on one shoulder and under the opposite arm. The Germans still call it the waldborn—that is, "forest horn."

No Occasion For Alarm.

Said a nervous lady to another lady, at whose house she was making a call, "Are you not afraid that some of your children will fall into that cistern in your yard?"

"Oh, no," was the complacent reply. "Anyhow, that's not the cistern we get our drinking water from."

He Didn't.

"Do you believe in signs?"

"No. A dentist's sign reading 'Teeth Extracted Without Pain' fell the other day just as I went under it and knocked out two teeth of mine."

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