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THE OLD STORY



"And so their marriage turned out unhappily?"
"Yes; she was a hard ice cream soda drinker, and he married her to reform her."

No Blasphemy in Japan.

Blasphemy in Japan is another rude disillusionment for the credulous traveler. Prof. B. H. Chamberlain in his "Things Japanese," remarks: "The Japanese vocabulary, though extraordinarily rich and constantly growing is honorably deficient in terms of abuse. It affords absolutely no means of cursing and swearing."

That Famous Unknown.

L. E. Ralston lost a valuable umbrella on a St. Clair street car the other day. In his advertisement in the Leader asking for the return of the umbrella, Mr. Ralston said: "Will the man for whom Diogenes made his famous search kindly bring back my umbrella and receive his reward."—Cleveland Leader.

India's Cultivation of Sugar Cane.

India has a larger area under cane than any other country, and yet is one of the heaviest importers of sugar. There was a time when India manufactured practically all the sugar it required, which was used in the form of molasses, but a taste for refined sugar sprang up, since which time it was found more convenient to import than to manufacture.

An Extraordinary Family.

"Lord Brokeleigh comes of an extraordinary family." "I have never heard of any member of it who was an eminent statesman or a great soldier." "No, but there is no record that anyone belonging to the house of Brokeleigh ever married a cory- phoe."

MABEL'S MISSION

Covington was cleaning up the desk. The upstairs girl, answering his ring for a larger waste basket, almost fell down the back stairs in her hurry to spread the news.

Covington had come to board at the Bradley's three years before, and since then no one could recall having seen the top of the desk. A little space in front, just large enough to write upon, was kept fairly clear, but for the rest, Covington seemed to take pride in the confusion he maintained and boasted that he could find anything he wanted at a moment's notice.

At the office his desk was scrupulously neat, but the roll-top in his sitting room, used for his personal correspondence, was piled high with papers and books.

It might have continued so far another three years, but Covington was restless. He found the evening papers dull, the theatrical advertisements made no appeal to him, and books were intolerable.

In his restless roaming around the room his attention was attracted by the desk, and sinking into the chair he began to clean up. Here, at least, was a novel occupation, and soon he was busily engaged in reading over old letters and discarding those of no further interest.

Mabel's letters, of course, he kept in a drawer, the top one with the Yale lock. Well, perhaps it would be well to clear those out, too. Romance was dead. He had written her the proposal he seemed unable to make in person, and had added, "I shall not write again until your answer comes." That had been a fortnight ago.

His eyes caught a line in an advertisement in a theatrical paper that formed part of the litter of his desk. "Consider silence a polite negative," it ran. That was what he was doing. Mabel had not even taken the trouble to answer.

He viciously thrust the paper into the basket and caught up a letter. It was that check for his tailor. He had been positive he had mailed that; the subsequent argument had resulted in a transfer of his patronage, yet here was the check still inside. He was rather glad that he had commenced the cleaning up process.

There was another envelope under the pile of consular reports. He drew it out and his face blanched. It was the letter to Mabel. In some fashion it had slipped into the tangle on the desk. He remembered he had written a number of other letters at the same time. When he had done he had snapped a rubber band about them and had given them to one of the fellows to take out.

What could she think of him? He had ceased his customary visits and had not even written. He slipped out of his house coat and into his dinner jacket. There was a telephone in the lower hall. Perhaps Mabel had not gone out.

It was her mother who answered, rather frigidly and with a certain note of disapproval in her voice. Mabel was in, but she was ill and had gone to her room. She did not think that she could see Mr. Covington.

But Covington was persistent and in the end he gained permission to call. He found her pale, with nervous lines in her face. She tried to laugh it off but he would not have it so.

"I have a special delivery letter for you," he announced. "It should not have been a letter at all, but I guess I'm a sort of moral coward."

"Anyhow, I was cleaning up my desk at the house tonight and I found this. I thought it had been sent two weeks ago."

"Letters often go astray," she commented as she stretched out her hand to receive it.

"It was my fault," he said humbly. "You see I've a desk up at the house and I've rather prided myself upon its confusion. Tonight I cleaned it up, just to have something to do, and I found this letter."

Something in his tones conveyed its import and she slowly broke the seal and glanced through the contents. At last she looked up.

"So that is the reason I have not heard from you lately," she said. "I wondered that you forgot the Apollo concert."

"That is only one count," he said humbly. "I did not bring the letter expecting that you would give the same answer I hoped for two weeks ago. I just wanted you to see that I was not quite as bad as you think I am."

"I did not give it great thought," she said, while the red, flooding her face, denied her words. "I thought that perhaps you were engrossed in some important deal."

"This is the most important deal in a man's life," he laughed a little bitterly. "And I have bungled it, badly."

"Pity is akin to love," she reminded, "and do you know, Frank, I think I have a mission."

"And that?" he asked hoarsely.

"To keep that desk straight," she smiled.

He Shouldn't Have Done It.

The impassioned orator at the tramps' convention paused and wiped his perspiring brow.

"Brothers," he said, "this is hard work."

Then they expelled him.



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