

Jones and the Missing Lady

I.

"You old fox!" exclaimed Dick Sinclair, looking up from his paper as the door opened to admit his friend and the sharer of his chambers.

"What's up?" growled the newcomer.

"Oh, you might as well drop that, Joney!" continued Sinclair, digging him lovingly in the ribs. "She's let the cat out herself!"

Jones ignored the tormentor and went in search of his slippers.

Gladys Raymond is a very pretty girl," pursued Sinclair soothingly; "and, after all, it's no crime to be engaged."

The other man paused in the bedroom doorway and stared.

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"Oh, come now, Joney, it's too late for that bluff! Did she promise to keep it dark? I could have told you that the old ladies of the Dorcas Society at home could worm a secret out of the Sphinx! Just look at this little give-away."

Jones took the copy of the "Mellowfield Observer" held out to him, and read the paragraph indicated. He stared at it with a dazed expression. Then he read it again—very slowly.

Mellowfield is a town of about two thousand inhabitants, and the "Observer" is its only local newspaper. Dick's aunt, the wife of the rector, sends it every week to keep her nephew posted on news from home. The paragraph in question was as follows:

"An engagement of much interest to Mellowfield is that just announced of Miss Gladys Raymond, daughter of Mrs. Robert Raymond, of New Street, to Mr. Cayley Jones of Barrowby, Leamshire, and London. Miss Raymond has just returned from London, where she has been visiting her sister, Mrs. Patrick Leeman. It is understood that she became engaged to Mr. Jones during her stay in the metropolis."

"Well, who in Heaven's name is Miss Gladys Raymond, daughter of Mrs. Robert Raymond, of New Street, Mellowfield?" demanded Jones.

It required but a glance at the puzzled face opposite to convince Sinclair that his friend was in earnest.

"Why, then you're not the man!" he said, in bewilderment.

"Oh, I seem to be the man all right! The question is—Who's the girl?"

"Gladys Raymond is a very nice girl indeed. Very good-looking. The Raymond family is one of the oldest in the country."

"I should have been glad of a chance to decide those questions for myself. But, thank fortune, the matter was discovered in time. I might have waked up one morning and found myself married."

"Of course, there is only one solution," argued Dick. "You must have a double. Jones is not such an extraordinary name."

"There are pages of Joneses in the 'Barrowby Directory,' but there is only one J. Cayley Jones, of Barrowby and London."

"By Jove, old fellow, this begins to be exciting!" cried Dick, enjoying the dilemma.

The affair certainly promised to develop some interest. Jones deliberated the matter that evening, and determined to begin an investigation at once by going himself to Mellowfield under the name of Ransome, armed with introductions from Dick.

He was received by Mrs. Mansfield, Dick's aunt, with every manifestation of cordiality. Good-looking single young men were rare in the neighborhood, and she hoped to have the exploiting of this rare visitor.

She began at once to arrange for his entertainment. It was while she was eagerly retailing the plans for these hospitalities that he broached the subject of Gladys Raymond, and expressed a desire to meet her.

"Why, Mr. Ransome," she protested, "what advice has Dick been giving you? Gladys is good-looking, of course; but we have ever so many pretty girls in Mellowfield—girls who are bright and attractive as well as pretty."

The young man hastened to clear his friend of the serious charge of not knowing a pretty girl from a plain one. He explained that he had noticed in a copy of the "Mellowfield Observer" which she had forwarded to her nephew in London an announcement of Miss Raymond's engagement to J. Cayley Jones. Cayley he explained, had been with him at college.

Mrs. Mansfield bobbed excitedly in her chair.

"Oh, then you know Mr. Jones!" she exclaimed. "Do tell me what he is like! You know, Gladys became engaged in London. No one in Mellowfield has ever seen him."

Jones answered evasively that Cayley was a good enough fellow, as men went.

As they sat talking the little garden gate opened from the outside, and that portion of the lawn which was visible through the vines of the porch became suddenly flecked with blue muslin.

"Are you a wizard, Mr. Ransome," said Mrs. Mansfield, "or is this mental telepathy? You are going to have a chance to meet Gladys immediately. Here she is."

There was no time to warn his hostess against repeating what he had said before a tall girl in blue appeared on the porch steps. She carried a large paper-covered parcel. At sight of a stranger she hesitated.

"Don't let me disturb you, Mrs. Mansfield. I just stopped to bring you the things for those poor Lawsons," she stammered.

"Don't go, Gladys," the rector's wife interposed. "I want you to know Mr. Ransome, of Barrowby, a friend of my nephew Dick. Mr. Ransome was just saying a moment ago that he should like to meet you. Mr. Jones was with him at college, and he is anxious to get some news of him."

The girl flushed painfully, and shot the stranger a swift, questioning glance. His expression was guileless itself, but at that moment he became convinced that there was no other J. Cayley Jones, of Barrowby. Somehow he began to feel glad that it was so.

"I am so sorry I didn't know Cayley was in London, Miss Raymond," said the young fellow, with a convincing air of candor. "I wonder a little that he didn't look me up in town."

"Oh, you know, he left London very abruptly," murmured Miss Gladys. "His father was taken suddenly ill, and he left within two hours. No doubt he intended looking up all his friends, but his stay was much shorter than he had expected."

At this point the Rev. Mr. Mansfield appeared, and shortly after Miss Raymond left.

II.

As the days went by Jones managed to get opportunities of meeting Miss Raymond frequently, and they became good friends.

He postponed his departure from day to day. The visit which was to have lasted a week lengthened into a month; but at last came the eve of his last day in Mellowfield, and still he was without any solution of the problem.

That evening he walked in a westerly direction across New Street, resolved to question Miss Raymond frankly about it.

He found her in darkness on one of these vineclad porches which abound everywhere in Mellowfield, and he told her he was leaving the next day.

"But before going," he added, "I have something to ask you. I think you can guess what I mean. You must know that I have always wondered at your engagement to Cayley Jones. Won't you tell me what could have induced you to take such a step?"

He felt, though he could not see, her violent start of surprise, and would have given a great deal just then for a glimpse of her face. For the first time in his experience he found himself sitting with a nice girl in a dark porch and wishing for a light.

She did not answer for a moment. When she did she laughed nervously.

"I suppose I might as well admit, then, that it is a peculiar engagement," she said finally. "But I hardly know how to tell you where to begin."

"Better begin at the beginning," he encouraged.

"The beginning," she said, with a ripple in her voice, "was Weatherby Tomson. You know Weatherby, don't you?"

"Tomson? Let's see. Short, fat fellow, with eyeglasses, isn't he? The chap that wrecked half a dozen trains at Mrs. Powell's dance the other evening?"

"Yes; that describes him, though his dancing isn't all there is against him—even to a casual acquaintance. But I grew up with him, you see. We've known each other for years, and on that account I always tried to be very pleasant to him. Often as he came, however, he felt it incumbent upon him to let me know on every occasion that his intentions were not of a serious nature. It was amusing at first, but in time it palled."

"Then there was Cecil Robinson. Cecil hardly came to my shoulder. He was amusing enough to waste an hour on now and then, and I used to

enjoy his calls well enough. But in an evil hour Cecil called upon me twice in the same day—he came once to borrow my camera and again to return it. The next morning Mrs. Robinson came in. She mentioned to mamma—incidentally, of course—that her son could not afford to marry a poor girl under any circumstances whatever—and I am a poor girl, you know."

"There were several others in between, but little Norris Senfield was the worst of all. Norris was just twenty. He'd recently left college, and was earning a pound a week. His case was all my Cousin Ida's fault. She admitted afterwards that she'd been teasing him about me just to see his pretty blush. But when he came to call one evening, with that rigid, resolute look on his face, I knew what to expect. He began with a long preamble, and then asked me I'd heard that idiotic report of his engagement to Fanny Paulton. When I assured him I hadn't, he informed me that he wasn't in a position to marry any girl at present.

"The irritating part of it all was that one dare not resent their conceit openly. I began to realize that, if I did not wish to become acid to every man in Mellowfield, I must adopt some preventive measures."

"The way out of my trouble suggested itself while I was in London lately. I happened to pass a shop-window containing the Rose Diamond Company's stock, with realistic stones at unrealistic prices. I stopped in a moment of inspiration and bought an engagement-ring for fifteen shillings. After that the rest was easy. I chose the name of Jones, as one that was not too distinctive. It was necessary to combine it with something well-sounding, so I adopted the name of Cayley from an advertisement I saw in going up town. The 'J' was just a little fancy touch to render it modish. I put my finance as far away from me as possible, and selected Barrowby as a suitable place."

"When I first met you, and heard that you knew a Mr. Cayley Jones, I was terribly frightened. But when I found that you hadn't seen him for years, and that it wasn't likely you would see him soon, I decided not to break my engagement."

"And may I ask," he demanded, "why in the world you haven't told me all this long ago?"

She moved uncomfortably in her chair, and did not reply.

He broke it to her by degrees.

But when he told her that Cayley Jones, under the name of Percival Ransome, had come down to Mellowfield to investigate his engagement, and that, in doing so, he had fallen deeply in love with his fiancée, she was greatly startled, and feigned some annoyance.

They talked the matter over at some length, however, and in the end he persuaded her to adopt his own way out of the difficulty, which was to allow the statement in the "Mellowfield Observer" to remain uncontradicted.—London Answers.

GOOD LUCK IN SHEEPSKIN.

According to jewellers, the belief in charms is widespread. Stones and bits of metal stamped with quaint markings, little strips of sheepskin or leather bearing a verse or the symbol of a heavenly body, are deposited along with money and keys and other valuables, to say nothing of four-leafed clover, wishbones, and other talismans in one guise or another. And the wearing of these averters of evil is not confined to any one class or nationality. The well-to-do woman or the well-instructed is as apt to have the quaint charms upon her as the untutored. It is stated that persons born under the two extremes of planetary influence are most addicted to carrying mascots. Those born under the gloomy spell of Saturn wear charms to neutralise the malignity that ever threatens to encompass them; and those born under the beneficent influences of Jupiter and Venus carry amulets to ensure their continued run of good fortune. The Italians of both high and low degree are inveterate believers in the efficacy of charms to ward off evil and invite good. The old spell of the medieval mysteries still holds them in thrall.

About the ... House

CULINARY HINTS.

Delicate Baked Apples.—Select large medium sour apples and wash them. Remove the cores without peeling and fill the centres with sugar. Bake until tender when tried with a fork but not until mushy. The sugar will melt and with the juice form a jelly. Serve hot or cold.

Baked Cabbage.—Cook one small head of cabbage until tender, drain, cool and chop fine. Beat two eggs light, add one-half cup of thin cream one-half level teaspoon of salt and a dash of pepper. Mix the cabbage and sauce, turn into a buttered baking dish and bake one-half hour.

Light Corn Bread.—Mix and sift two cups of flour, one cup of cornmeal, two level teaspoons of baking powder, Beat the yolks of four eggs, add two and one-quarter cups of milk and turn into the dry mixture. Beat smooth, add two tablespoons of melted butter and the whites of four eggs beaten stiff. Bake in a loaf thirty to forty minutes.

Egg and Tomato Stew.—Cook together for twenty minutes one quart can of tomatoes, one-quarter of a large onion chopped fine, one-quarter cup of fine bread crumbs, with a seasoning of salt and pepper. Stir often, add two level tablespoons of butter, and when all is hot stir in four well-beaten eggs. Serve as soon as the eggs are cooked through.

Fried Rye Muffins.—These muffins are good on a cold day, and especially good with some kind of acid jelly. Sift together three-quarters cup of rye meal, that has been sifted before measuring, three-quarters cup of flour, two level teaspoons of baking powder, two level tablespoons of sugar and a saltspoon of salt. Mix with one egg beaten with one-half cup of milk. Drop in small spoonfuls into hot fat and fry like doughnuts.

Banbury Cakes.—Make a rich paste and cut in egg-shaped pieces, after rolling thin, or cut in rounds and press each out longer with the rolling pin. For the filling use one-half pound of currants, one-quarter pound of candied orange peel, cut very fine or chopped; one-quarter pound of butter creamed and one-half level teaspoon each of cinnamon and allspice. Mix in sufficient stale sponge cake crumbs to give a firm consistency. Put a small spoonful of this mixture on each oval of pastry, cover with another, and pinch the edges together. Brush over with beaten egg and bake in a quick oven.

Sponge Cake.—Beat the yolks of six eggs light, add one cup of powdered sugar and beat fifteen minutes. Beat the whites of six eggs to a stiff froth, add the strained juice and the grated yellow rind of one lemon to the yolks and sugar, then one and one-half cups of pastry flour that has been sifted twice, and after mixing well fold in lightly the whites of the eggs. Bake in a thick sheet about forty minutes.

Children's Pudding.—Fill a pudding mold half full of fine bread crumbs, cover with milk and allow an inch more in depth of milk than crumbs. Let the mixture stand until softened and then add two well beaten eggs and three-quarters cup of raisins seeded. Cover and boil for one hour; serve with sweetened cream or with a liquid sweet sauce.

String Bean Salad.—Cook young string beans in boiling salted water for twenty-five minutes or longer if necessary. Drain, cover with cold water to chill, and drain again. Lay on a napkin to absorb all the extra moisture and serve on lettuce leaf cups with French dressing seasoned well with onion juice.

Quick Biscuits.—To one quart of sifted pastry flour add five level teaspoons of baking powder and one level teaspoon of salt and sift again. Rub in two level tablespoons of butter and mix with one cup of milk, shape into biscuits and put into a buttered pan. Bake about twenty minutes. Make the biscuits very small.

Chili Sauce.—Chop eighteen tomatoes, six green peppers and three onions fine. Add one-quarter cup of salt, one quart of good vinegar, one cup of brown sugar, one level tablespoon each of ground ginger, cloves and allspice one grated nutmeg, and two level tablespoons of ground cinnamon. Simmer together for two hours, bottle and seal. Or put in small jars and seal.

USES FOR KEROSENE.

The kerosene can is not a thing of beauty, neither is it suggestive of strength, yet it is one of the most valuable of the housewife's allies. A spoonful of kerosene added to the basin of water in which the windows are to be washed makes them beautifully clear and easy to polish, while at the same time it repels flies and mosquitoes. If screen doors and windows are thoroughly brushed and freed from dust, then wiped over with kerosene, they will look as good as new, while mosquitoes, flies and moth millers will give them a wide berth as long as any trace of the odor remains.

If, as is frequently the case in the best regulated families, the beds become infested with occupants that do not belong there, they may be exterminated by a free use of kerosene. If one has a careless neigh-

bor, as is apt to be the case in an apartment house, baseboards, window sills and the springs of beds should be wiped off with oil at least once a week as a preventive.

Applied liberally about the kitchen sink, boiler and pipes, cockroaches and water bugs may be defied, even in an old house.

For wagon grease or tar spots rub well with kerosene while the grease is fresh, then wash out in cold, soft water, using no soap.

Kerosene will remove ink stains and fresh paint, while nothing takes out blood stains better than cold soap suds to which kerosene has been added.

Irons that have been put away sticky should be well scraped with a thin knife, then rubbed with a rough cloth, moistened with kerosene.

A spoonful of kerosene in boiled starch keeps it from sticking, but do not use enough to make it smell of the oil.

Nothing equals kerosene for cleaning porcelain bathtubs. The ugly black streak around the sides that requires such vigorous rubbing when only soap and water is used, disappears as if by magic when wiped with a soft cloth, moistened with kerosene.

Common kerosene is excellent in cleaning hardwood or stained floors. Sweep carefully and dust before applying the oil. Use only a small quantity at a time, wiping a small space, then rubbing the oil up with a soft, absorbent flannel cloth.

USEFUL HINTS.

To cool a hot dish in a hurry place it in a vessel full of cold salt water.

If a chimney catches fire run to the salt box and empty it out on the flames.

Borax will keep moths out of clothing that is stored away in drawers or boxes.

If you eat a small piece of parsley it will remove the odor of onions from the breath.

Do not throw away the sour cream; it makes delicious scones. You can also use it for pastry.

When boiling eggs put on the lid of the saucepan, and you will find your eggs have a much better flavor.

A pound of prunes is said to be equal in value as regards food to a gallon of milk, and is far more healthful.

Although celery has the name of being very indigestible, it can claim to be both an invigorator and soother of the nerves.

Always put an unpeeled onion in the water in which corned beef has been placed to boil. The meat will be much more juicy and tender.

The best pieces of old tablecloths, if cut into squares and hemstitched do excellently to spread over the cloth where the meat dish stands.

A weak solution of salt and water is recommended by good physicians as a remedy for imperfect indigestion, and for a cold in the head it is a complete cure snuffed up from the hollow of the hand.

To make egg sauce put a piece of butter in a saucepan and mix with a little flour till smooth. Add one teacupful of milk and stir till it boils and thickens. Season and stir in a hard-boiled egg chopped small.

Never put clothes away unbrushed, nor forget to pull and straighten out gloves, to roll up veils carefully, and never sit about in a walking dress indoors, are golden rules to remember for the preservation of clothes.

THE WORST EVIL.

The Gambling Instinct Is the Most Vicious.

Of all the vices to which men are addicted, gambling is undoubtedly the worst.

Gambling has a worse effect on the mind and conscience even than drink.

The inveterate gambler cannot remain honest, he does not remain honest.

We talk earnestly to the young men with the gambling habit, because many such young men are strong in ability and character and would render good service to the world if they could use their energies properly.

The gambling instinct is a perverted form of ambition, the most dangerous of human perversions.

Every young man who has genuine strength should think about gambling from his own point of view, and his own pride should give him reason for stopping.

If you want success in life you should want it as a result of your own efforts, not as the result of an accident. If you want to be prosperous you should have the ambition to be prosperous because you have worked hard not because some horse, lashed and spurred and overdriven, has happened to win when you bet on it.

The gambling instinct is weak as well as vicious. It is self-indulgent and contemptible, it represents the desire to get something for nothing.

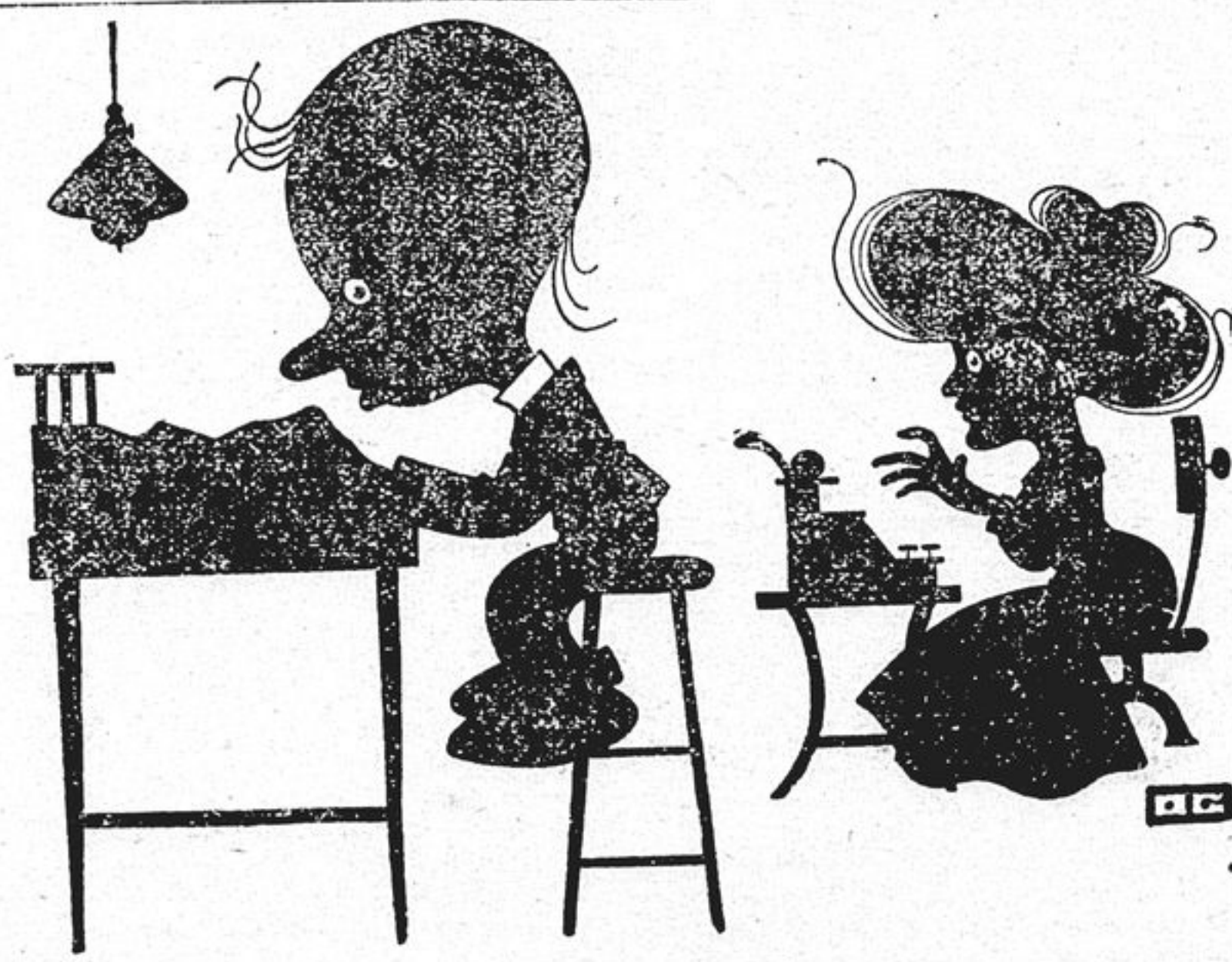
POLITENESS BETRAYED HIM.

"Yes," related the tattered wayfarer, "I told de lady in de wayside cottage dat I was a street car conductor out of a job, but she wouldn't believe me."

"Why was dat?" asked his companion of the ties.

"She said I was too polite."

A man never knows what a woman thinks of him until after he has been married to her for at least six weeks.



A WISE CLERK.

Bookkeeper—That last office-boy reminded me of a rusty shotgun.
Stenographer—In what way?
Bookkeeper—He kicked when he was fired.