

JUST A SHORT STORY.



EVERYTHING happened exactly as it does in those charming novels which, of all literature, are my favorites. I was very late for the train; it was on the more; the porter bundled me in, flung my bag after me, slammed the door, and whistled. And the lady sat in the opposite corner of the carriage gathering her feet under the seat to avoid my hurting bag. She was extremely pretty.

"Depend upon it," said I to myself at once, "she's going to stay with the Blairs." For it had to be so—it always is so. I was going to the Blairs, you see.

Unhappily, she did not seem inclined for conversation. She was accommodating but not discursive as to the window; it was summer, and there was no foot-warmer to bridge the gap between us. The annoying girl had a paper, and buried herself behind it. This was, of course, all wrong. Something would happen soon, however.

Something did. The lady put down the paper and gazed in a puzzled manner at her left glove. I peered cautiously around the edge of the Huntsman. Her eyes expressed doubt and difficulty. I saw what was the matter: a button of the glove was undone. I was never intrusive or precipitate. I bided my time. Why, we were hardly at page ten of the novel yet!

She tried to button the glove. The glove was not too large; she could not button it. Her brow wrinkled into a perplexed little frown.

I love a dainty woman, and a woman whose life is spoiled by an obstinate glove-button is just the wife for me. She was bound to ask me to button it in another moment.

But she did not. A sudden smile—a smile of illumination—spread over her face. She had got it! Of course she couldn't button the tiresome thing with her glove on! Who could? With another smile for her own folly, she quietly unbuttoned all the buttons of her right glove and drew it off. Then she turned with quiet confidence to the left-hand button.

Had it not been for the look of the thing I'd have kissed her on the spot. As it was—and notwithstanding my interest in racing—I allowed the Huntsman to drop and fastened my eyes on her. Her hand was the most lovely little hand I have ever seen—small, plump, tapering white, piquant. I do not on a gold hand.

She buttoned the button of her left glove with immediate and complete success, and smiled rapturously; indeed, she held up her hand and surveyed the job with immense complacency. I was smiling broadly myself now, because I saw what was going to happen. Thank heaven, however, I made no sound! I wouldn't have spoiled it for the world.

Her white teeth gleamed radiantly between her parted lips as she gently drew on the right glove. She treated the glove lovingly, working and pulling and patting, stopping to look now and again, conducting the thumb with infinite niceness into its compartment. Then she gave a final persuasive tug to the upper part, and prepared to button the glove.

She tried the first button. She stopped to think. A curious expression stole over her face. She

"It was very curious," she remarked, "that I shouldn't have seen that as often as I unbuttoned one glove in order to button the other I should have."

"It is just what I liked about you," I interrupted.

"I must have been thinking of something else."

"Of course you were," said I, proudly. "You were thinking of me. But it would have been the same anyhow. You are a perfect woman."

"Have you known me long enough?" "Yes, for anything," said I.

"Even to take five minutes to button a glove for me?"

"It is nearly done," said I, undoing the second button again. "but I can't manage this one. Now if I had a hairpin I should be the happiest—I mean I should be able to manage it."

"I'm afraid my hair will come down."

"I am in favor of risking that," I observed.

She gave me a hairpin. I buttoned the glove with it and put it in my pocket.

"My hairpin, please," said she, holding out her hand.

"But am I to get nothing out of it?" I cried indignantly.

"The reward of a good conscience," she suggested.

"It is not enough."

"Oh, but you must give it to me."

"Well," said I, "I'll give it to you when we get there."

"Get where?"

"Why, to the Blairs, of course. How amused they'll be to find that we've made acquaintance!"

"But I'm not going to—where is it?"—the Blairs.

"My face fell a little, but I recovered in a moment.

"Oh, well," said I, nodding my head. "you live quite near and we shall often meet. I'm going to stay a month. I'm not sure now it won't be two months."

"I'm sure I hope you'll enjoy yourself," she said, "and had plenty of gloves to button; but why—the train's stopping!"

"All right! all right," said I. "We've another hundred—a whole splendid hundred—miles to go. And it's a slow train at that."

"I'm afraid I don't know what you mean."

"I'm afraid," I returned, "that I am being a little hasty, but—"

"Unless I am hasty," she interrupted, with a laugh and a blush, "I shall be carried past my station." And she folded up her paper and took hold of her parasol.

"You're never going to get out here!" I cried, aghast. "You're not going even to the same station!"

"I'm very sorry, but the next is my station."

I thought for a moment. The plot was not exactly what I had expected, but it might do as well. And I need not stand on ceremony with the Blairs. I rose from my seat and took my bag down from the rack.

"A wire will put it all right," said I, with a cheerful nod. "It's impossible to leave you stranded alone at a wayside station like this."

"But I live here!" she cried, gleams of wonder and fun in her blue eyes.

"There could be no other reason for getting out at such a place," said I disdainfully.

"And I shan't be alone," she continued. "If I were—"

"Ah, if you were—"

"Oh, well, but I shan't be. I'm to be met."

"That's rather a mistake," I admitted.

"But my husband," said she.

"For a moment I said nothing. The train was nearly at a standstill. The lady looked out of the window.

"It's not treating me quite fairly," I observed.

"Yes, there's George," said she. "Oh, you've never given me the hairpin!"

"I never will," said I, in sad determination.

"Oh, you're very—"

But George was at the window. Will not attempt to describe him; should probably do him an injustice. The lady bowed to me politely. George, from outside, can have seen nothing but a slight, graceful, distant bend of the head. I saw more; much more; gleaming eyes, white teeth, everything in the world. And a voice said quite in a whisper:

"I wonder if those Blairs are nice?"

There was regret, longing, wistfulness in that whisper. George was just outside. I could but hold up my hairpin with a romantic air.

And the lady was gone!

"Hang it!" said I to myself as we rolled out of the station. "It's only a short story, after all!"

But it wasn't a bad one.

London Music Hall Belles and Marriage.

Few of Them Who Do Not Expect to Lead a Lord or a Duke Before They Retire from the Footlights for Good.

(London Correspondence.)

THE WOMEN OF the London music hall stage have always had a peculiar interest for American theater goers. A somewhat solid but still gaudy halo of romance surrounds them, giving them an interest which the home made and just as clever commodity has never been able to obtain.

Perhaps this is due to women of the Belle Billon stamp, the dashing lady with a past, who married the young Lord Duno and is now the Countess of Clancarty. There are countless other evidences in Burke's page of the linking of the concert hall and the nobility via the matrimonial altar, and it is perhaps this fact which makes the London variety performer a person of unique interest to the American mind.

Every concert hall celebrity taken across the ocean is adroitly advertised as having just narrowly escaped being a countess, baroness or duchess, a method which is sure to establish her in high favor with the chaffle class.

London and Paris differ greatly on the question of nobility and the variety stage. There are very few members of the aristocratic class on the London boards, but in Paris there are dozens of counts, barons, marquises and even a princess or two singing nightly in the cafe chantants of the Paris boulevards.

Until recently the Princess Pignatelli, a magnificent looking brunette, and daughter of the king of Naples' minister to St. Petersburg, sang ques-

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For a long time Miss Tilley has been a kind of goddess to the gilded youth of



PRINCESS PIGNATELLI.

English metropolis, but she has a very level little head on her pretty shoulders and has kept entirely clear of the unstable in a variety performer's life.

At the Pavilion theater is an American girl who has made a great hit in London. She is a Miss Billie Barlow, or, as she is better known among her friends since the advent of "Prilly," as "Little Billie." She is not very little, however, but a plump young lady, who sings charmingly, dances nimbly and has succeeded in popularizing a number of songs within the last year.

When Miss Marie Loftus was in New York some time ago she captured the chaffle world with ease. She is a dancer of grace, and by reason of many admirers could write an interesting essay on the "Life of a Concert Hall Singer."

She has jewels galore, the gifts of lords, and is said to have stored away a snug fortune, the result of a good business management and her stage success.

The Prest in sisters are almost as well known on one side as the other, although it has been some time since they faced an American audience. They are the best character singers of coster-mongers songs on the stage to-day, Miss Jass being particularly bright. She has grown quite plump recently, but her voice has improved, and as Robinson Crusoe in an extravaganza of that name has made quite a hit at the Grand Georgian in the Polly Perkins of the play, a rollicking part giving wide scope for her comic talents.

Gov. Upham's Misfortune.

Gov. Upham of Wisconsin is said to have been robbed of a diamond at his first official reception.

favorites in England to-day. At present she is singing and displaying her fine figure at the Theater Royal at Birmingham.

Miss Marie Kendall is a recent star, and has not been to America as yet. She has made a great hit in the character of the English sporting girl, role, modeled somewhat after Miss Lewis' famous tough girl.

Miss Kendall is at present at the Britannia theater, where she sings and dances in a pantomime called "The Giant of the Mountains." Miss Kendall is a really pretty girl, with a good deal of talent of the imitation order and of a higher order of refinement than the average young woman given to sott-brette parts.

A little lady who made a great hit when she was in New York some time



MARIE KENDALL.

ago was Miss Vesta Tilley, who, it is claimed, can wear a dress suit more gracefully than any other woman living.

At the moment Miss Tilley is not showing off her graces in the conventional garb of masculine evening clothes. She is now at the Prince of Wales', Birmingham, doing character work with a vast amount of cleverness.

CHICAGO'S THEATERS.

AMUSEMENT ATTRACTIONS FOR COMING WEEK.

What the Managers of the Various City Play-Houses Offer Their Patrons—Drama, Vaudeville and Opera Engagements.

SCHILLER.

The engagement of Wilson Barrett, at the Schiller, which begins next Sunday evening, will be a notable one from the fact that it signals the production for the first time in Chicago of "The Monkman," his own dramatization of Hall Caine's great novel. "The Monkman" will be readily understood the popularity which "The Monkman" has attained in England and the various American cities in which it has been presented. The text of "The Monkman" follows quite closely the trend of the story, with the necessary dramatic changes at the end. The dramatic part of Kate will be interesting to Miss Maud Jeffries. The others of the cast include T. W. Percival, Horace Hodges, Ambrose Manning, George Howard, T. Bolton, Stafford Smith, G. Derwood, Marcus St. John, W. Grainger, Miss Hoffman, Daisy Belmont and Miss Elma. The scenic effects will be beautiful and perfect in detail, as is always the case with Mr. Barrett's productions.

CHICAGO OPERA.

In the latest comic opera success, "The Devil's Deputy," Francis Wilson needs no introduction to the patrons of the Chicago opera houses, his annual engagement there having made his face a familiar one to the entire theater-going public of Chicago. The engagement commences Monday, March 11. Mr. Wilson is far and away the most intelligent, the most unctuous and the most legitimate of American comic opera comedians, and he is in addition a manager and stage producer whose high artistic ideals and liberality have combined to give the American stage some of the most notable productions of recent years. Mr. Wilson this year has an exceptionally good company. The new opera in which he comes is "The Devil's Deputy," which is a comedy of all American blood. Mr. J. Chester Goodrich and the music is from the pen of no less intelligent a composer than Mr. Edward Jakobowski, composer of "Kismet." "The Devil's Deputy" is said to be very near the lines of legitimate comic opera, both in story, lyrics and music. Mr. Wilson comes supported by an excellent company, including Mr. Rhys Thomas, lately the principal tenor with the Carl Rosa Grand Opera company of England, Mr. J. C. Myron, bass, Miss Anna C. Ellis, soprano, Miss Lulu Glasser, Miss Josephine Knapp and Miss Christie McLaughlin. There will be no Sunday matinee performances during Mr. Wilson's engagement, and matinees will be given on Saturdays only.

Hagenbach's trained animal show will be the attraction at McVicker's theater beginning on Sunday evening, March 10. It includes the largest and most perfect specimens of wild beasts in captivity. They are sleek, fat and full of life, and look like pictures of animals once in books. Since the show was at the World's Fair there have been no deaths of any of the larger animals, and but a few trifling accidents. Peter the famous side bear, has grown taller and is still growing. There have been recent additions to the leopard family, and the mother is very careful to guard them when strangers are around. When the dinner bell rings at Hagenbach's show, the animals all give attention. They come a sharp knock at the little wooden door set in the back part of the cage, accompanied by the clanging of chains. At this sound the excitement of the animals reaches its highest. The leopards hurl themselves against the sides of the cage. The tigers lie still, purring and switching their tails. Yellow Prince, the fierce Nubian lion, bounds across the cage and back again. Presently the cage door opens, Fritz, the groom, enters, one arm hung with chains and holding in the hand a short wooden club. He fastens the door behind him, and while he is doing so, one of the leopards jumps on him. It is only a friendly jump, however, and the keeper easily shakes the animal off. With the chains the animals are fastened to the sides of the cage. The lions occasionally are excited and angry, and should the chain part now it might fare badly with Fritz. When all is ready Fritz opens the door again and passes out. The animals focus their eyes on that open doorway and fling themselves toward it to the full length of their chains. After the animals are all secured the keeper brings the meat. Twenty pounds are given to each lion, a less amount to tigers and leopards.

Theater Bulletin for Next Week.

Alhambra....."South Before the War" Academy.....John Kernell Auditorium.....Grand Opera Columbia.....Marie Joseph Chicago Opera House.....Francis Wilson Frank Hall's Casino.....Variety Globe Time Museum.....Variety Grand Opera House.....Ole Skinner Hooley's.....The Princess Bonnie Haymarket.....Lottie Collins Haymarket.....Continous Performance Hopkins.....Continous Performance Kohl & Middleton.....Curlo and Vanoc Lincoln.....Dark Lyceum.....Variety McVicker's.....Hagenbach's Royal Winter Circus.....Walsh Avenue Schiller.....Wilson Barrett Sam T. Jack's Opera House.....Variety United States.....Vaudeville

Piney Miss Everett.

Minerva Everett, a young Italian girl, is the mail-carrier of Borough Valley, which lies fifty miles northeast of Fresno, Cal. The valley is somewhat shut off from the outer world, and the only means of communication is by wagon or horseback over a narrow road, and there is no post-office near at hand. The men who undertook to carry the mail always gave it up because of the hard work and small pay, but Miss Minerva, the seventeen-year-old daughter of the well-to-do Everett family, is not daunted by these difficulties. She enjoys the venture, and undertaking, and makes the journey through the wilderness twice a week.

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THE MIKADO'S DAILY LIFE.

Rises Early and Works Hard, is Fond of Sweets and Hunting.

The emperor of Japan, according to the people most closely connected with him at Tokio, has by no means an easy office to fill. Japan now contains more than 40,000,000 people and there are a baker's dozen of political factions, many of which are anxious to create trouble. The changing condition of the people makes plenty of work. You can never tell who is going to fly off on a tangent, and the newspapers have to be carefully watched. The emperor keeps his eyes on everything. At least, I am told so. He rises early and breakfasts about 7 o'clock. He uses a knife and fork whenever he takes foreign food, but he prefers the chopsticks at his Japanese dinners. He eats both kinds of food and is very fond of rice, taking it with every meal. He likes meats and usually eats his breakfast alone. He also has lunch. His dinner is served in table d'hôte style and with all the European accompaniments. Contrary to the regular practice in Japanese families, his wife often sits down at the table with him, and also the crown prince.

His work begins as soon as his breakfast is over. From 9 o'clock until 12 he receives his ministers and discusses matters of state. After this he takes his lunch, and then spends a little time in reading newspapers. He watches closely the Japanese press, keeps track of public opinion, and, I venture, changes his actions somewhat to suit it. All the papers are looked over for him and the passages which he should see are marked. Ordinary mistatments or criticisms he passes over, but if a newspaper becomes at all dangerous he gives an order to his censors and the newspaper is stopped, while its editors are liable to be thrown into prison. He also has the leading foreign papers, and the articles of these which treat on Japan are translated for him, and he keeps track of public opinion all over the world. He takes our illustrated papers and the articles relating to the pictures in them are sometimes translated. He does a great deal of work in the afternoon, but toward evening goes out for exercise. He is a good horse-back rider and is fond of horses. He has about 300 in his stables, and these are of all kinds, including a number of fine hunters. The emperor is fond of hunting, and he has large game preserves where there are deer and wild pig. There are plenty of pheasants and his majesty is said to be a very good shot.

HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER.

Russian Tells of His Initial Experience with the English Language.

A Russian gentleman told me a funny story of his first encounter with the English language. The day after his arrival in London he made a call on a friend in Park Lane, and on leaving the premises wrote down in his note book what he supposed to be the exact address. The next day, desiring to go to the same place again, he called a cabman and pointed to the address that he had written down. The cabman looked him over, laughed, cracked his whip and drove away without him. This experience being repeated with two or three other cabmen, the Russian turned indignantly to the police, with no better results. One officer would laugh, another would tap him suspiciously, and another would eye his head and make a motion imitating the revolution of a wheel.

Finally the poor foreigner gave it up. Miscellaneous—2.

and with a great deal of difficulty recalling the landmarks which he had observed the day before, found his way to his friend's house. Once there and in company with one who could understand him, he delivered himself of a hot condemnation of the cabmen and police of London for their impertinence and discourtesy. His friend asked for a look at the mirth-provoking address, and the mystery was solved. This was the entry:

546

RING THE BELL.

The Russian had with great care copied, character for character, the legend on the gate post, supposing that it was the number of the house and the name of the street.

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