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Reminiscences

Gertrude Atherton tells an amusing story about her first meeting with Joaquin Miller, the Poet of the Sierras—who used to dress the part.

"It helps sell the poems, boys!' he once confided to friends at the Savage Club, in London, where he created a sensation by his picturesque appearance, "and,' he added, "it tickles the duchesses."

This in reference to the hit he had made in London drawing-rooms.

* * *

To get on with Mrs. Atherton's experience—related in her reminiscences "Adventures of a Novelist." One day, Miller called on her in San Francisco.

"He wore a black broadcloth suit, the trousers tucked into boots—with high heels!—that reached almost to the waist," she recalls. "His shirt had no collar but his neck was encircled by a lace scarf. On his head was a sombrero, which he removed with a sweeping bow as I entered, and I saw that his long hair, touching his shoulders, was gray on top, and ended in a series of stiff 'rat tails' that were dyed a bright orange."

* * *

The poet, striking an attitude, said not a word but gazed at Mrs. Atherton. She told him how glad she was to meet him. Still he uttered not a word. She rattled on, growing disconcerted by his persistent silence and his "round unwinking stare." Finally, she said tartly:

"Have you lost your voice? Suppose you say something for a change."

"He fetched a sigh that might have come from the soles of his boots," chuckles Mrs. Atherton, "and then his voice rumbled forth heavy laden with tragedy.

"'What a pity!' he groaned. 'What a pity we are both blondes!'"

Five minutes later he shot out without a word of farewell.

* * *

Joaquin Miller was not the only literary lion reduced to silence on meeting Gertrude Atherton. Later, at a reception in London, she met Thomas Hardy.

"He sat down beside me, dropped his hands on his knees, and stared into space . . . I floundered about, broaching one subject after another, but he never even glanced at me, much less made any response to my embarrassed efforts. He appeared to have fallen into a reverie, quite oblivious to his surroundings.

* * *

"Then, heaven knows how, I lighted upon cable cars in San Francisco. Abstraction fled. His face lit up. He turned to me eagerly. He asked me a hundred questions. In answered them as best I could, for it may be imagined how much I know of engineering and mechanics."

But the day was saved. A fortnight later when Mrs. Atherton again met Hardy at another reception, he no sooner caught sight of her than he was at her side, and plunged at once into "the exciting subject of cable cars in San Francisco.

* * *

Later still, Mrs. Atherton met Sargent, the portrait painter, at luncheon at the Duchess of Marlborough's.

"He did not get my name nor I his and we sat beside each other and were obliged to talk: we floundered about for some time trying to find a theme of common interest. Finally, how, heaven knows, we hit upon the subject of plumbing in Paris! Then he grew quite animated!"

* * *

Just after the Armistice, Mrs. Atherton ran into Lord Northcliffe, an old friend, in Paris, and during a talk with him,—"I had christened him Warwick, as he certainly had a great deal to do with the making and unmaking of Prime Ministers,"—she asked him if he "were having any trouble with Lloyd George.'

"Oh," he replied gravely, "I have to keep my hand on him. He wobbles! He wobbles!"

By the way, Mrs. Atherton describes Northcliffe as "altogether one of the most charming men I have ever met," and says that he was "the most popular of all Britons in the United States."

* * *

Mary, wife of John A. Logan, Republican nominee for the Vice-Presidency of the United States in 1884, was a beautiful woman with great poise, and by rights a "raven's-wing brunette," but she went through some sudden, severe shock connected with the death of her father. When she returned home her husband met her at the train—relates Mrs. Julia B. Foraker, in "I Would Like It Again: Memoirs of a Vivid Life."

"Goodness, Mary!" he gasped. "What has happened?"

* * *

She didn't know what he meant and he was too petrified to explain. Arrived home, the door was opened by an old servant. At the sight of Mrs. Logan she threw up her hands, gave an Irish shriek, and fled. Beginning now to be a little irritated, Mrs. Logan sought a mirror. There it was, her hair had turned white in a single mysterious moment—just the way the thing happened in novels.

"Like it, John?" she said, carelessly, to Logan, who had followed to catch her when she fainted.

Yet indeed (adds Mrs. Foraker), she must have been startled when she saw herself in the glass.

* * *

As a girl of twenty, Mrs. Foraker heard Dickens give one of his readings during his last visit here in 1868—sixty-four years ago!

"I cannot think anyone ever heard a person read with such inimitable realism and charm as this 'foreigner' (they called him that) in a black velveteen jacket," she says. "I remember the jacket and the charm, though of what the author read only the unforgettable death of Little Nell, which provoked sobs."

* * *

Mrs. Foraker—widow of the late Senator Foraker of Ohio—has, at the age of eighty-four, written as lively a book of signed reminiscences as has come out of Washington in many a day. One of her stories has Chauncey Depew, at a dinner, describing an evening spent with King Edward VII., to whom he told the story of the spinster taking her first ride on a railroad train. There was a collision; the dear, old thing found herself sitting in splinters. She straightened her "bunnit," looked 'round for her reticule, then asked innocently if the train always stopped like that?

* * *

Depew happened to mention to King Edward that Mark Twain was stopping at his hotel. Thereupon the King asked Depew to come back for dinner next night and bring Mark with him.

"And what do you think that man Clemens started off with" said Depew. "My story! My identical story of the old lady in a railroad wreck! Said he was there, too! And of course I had said I was there! How the King laughed!"

* * *

Among the treasures of Bob Sherwood, the "last of Barnum's clowns," is an autographed photograph of Eng and Chang, the "original Siamese Twins," who, with Bab, were star attractions of the Barnum Show for years.

"On the back of it," says Sherwood (in "Hold Yer Hosses!") "Eng wrote, expressing his congratulations to me that I could live my life alone. Below Chang wrote: 'Them's my sentiments too'.

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING.

"Well, madam," said the Easter boarder, as he was about to leave, "I can testify that you are one of the most honest persons I have ever met."

The landlady rubbed her hands happy.

"That is very nice of you,"—she said. "I always try to please."

"Yes," he went on, "your honesty is conspicuous on the very front of your house. Your sign says: 'Boarders taken in'!"

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"It's best for you and Baby too"

Only one oil is good enough for household equipment, says chemist

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Naturally such oil costs more to make, but it really costs less to use. Play safe; insist on 3-in-One Oil. At good stores everywhere. For your protection, look for the trade mark "3-in-One" printed in Red on every package.

ISSUE No. 22—'32

Gems of Peril

By HAZEL ROSS HAILEY.

SYNOPSIS.

Old Mrs. Jupiter, wife of a millionaire automobile manufacturer, gives an engagement dance for her secretary and protege, Mary Harkness, who is to marry Dirk Ruyther, society man.

Mary's scapegrace brother, Eddie, calls saying he is in trouble and must see her. The house is closely guarded as Mrs. Jupiter is wearing her famous pearls. Mary arranges to admit him secretly.

CHAPTER I.—(Cont'd.)

"I'll be there in ten minutes. Tell the doorman I'm coming, and to let me in," said Eddie. Well, what could she do? She had told him to come come ahead, but to come round to the side door; she would leave word that he was to be admitted. He could right up to her room, and she would go later and see what was up.

That she had done wrong in permitting him to come here, to seek sanctuary in the Jupiter's house, without asking their consent, did not occur to her at the moment. It was only afterward, as she sat thinking it over, that she thought about that. But where else could her brother Eddie go, if he were in trouble. They had no home, the two of them; she felt the shame of that.

She got up and went back to the ballroom. She must find Mrs. Jupiter or her husband right away and tell them what she had done. She did not really believe that either of them would mind.

Afterward, there seemed to be no reason for what she did during the next few minutes—or for what she failed to do. Even to herself, wild with regret and self-accusation, it seemed as if she might have told somebody—found someone to share with her the awful responsibility for what came after. But at the time her reasons seemed excellent. What she did seemed the only thing to do.

The floor had cleared during an interval in the dancing and across the room she caught sight of Mrs. Jupiter, magnificent in gold lace and far too many jewels, seated on a divan, watching the dancing with a listless eye. At her side, Mary noticed just in time to check her forward progress, was Dirk's mother, a pale woman in gray chiffon who seemed to be thinking "Rather a nice party—but horribly overdone!"

It would have been easy to go at once to Mrs. Jupiter and tell her her troubles, if it had not been for Mrs. Ruyther. She was, Mary had to admit to herself, a congenital snob, and a priggish one. With Dirk for a son, she would never be able to understand Eddie's peccadilos, or condone them. And Mary felt miserably that she had little enough to bring to her union with the impeccable Ruyther family—just herself and a name that had never been brought to shame. If that scant dowry was in danger Mrs. Ruyther must not know.

Mrs. Jupiter did not look any too happy; she looked tired and uncomfortable. The strain of being nice to Mrs. Ruyther was telling on her naturally jolly disposition. From the grimaces she made from time to time, Mary judged with amusement that her shoes hurt, into the bargain.

No, she would not add her own trouble to those from which that poor old woman was already suffering.

Mr. Jupiter would be somewhere about—he would be better able to tell her what to do than his wife would. Mr. Jupiter absented himself from the social scene as much as possible; she knew she would find him outside somewhere, roaming around the grounds, smoking, listening to the music as it filtered out to him, mercifully mellowed by distance. She would go out by way of the terrace, and look all 'round the house.

As she moved cautiously along the wall, avoiding the heels and elbows of the swooping couples as best she could, she had to pause once to rub tenderly an ankle-bone which had been the target for somebody's French heel. As she looked up she saw just ahead of her, in the corner, Dirk and Cornelia dancing—if they were dancing. They seemed hardly to move at all.

But what was odd was that Cornelia was crying. Mary could see it even though Dirk's back was toward her, shielding the girl from curious eyes. Once he looked about worriedly and she saw that he looked white and strained.

Well! That was a surprise. She hadn't thought Cornelia cared that much, enough to make a spectacle of herself.

What in the world should she do—go forward and let them know she had seen? Her first impulse was to rescue Dirk there and then. Let Cornelia go and cry on somebody else; there were dozens of men present who would gladly dry the tears of the heiress to so many millions. Dirk must feel an awful brute. And that wasn't fair.

On second thought, that would merely make Cornelia hate her. But Cornelia hated her anyhow as it was.

As she hesitated, Dirk evidently resolved to get Cornelia away befire she made a complete fool of herself; holding her arm firmly, he moved with her toward the wide door opening on the terrace. She reached the door just in time to see them step outside the circle of light from the doorway and disappear into the dark grounds.

Mary could have stamped her foot with annoyance—if it had not already hurt. She could not follow them out there, even if her errand was looking for Mr. Jupiter. It would be too much like spying. People would see, and what would they think? She knew what Cornelia would think, if she bumped into them accidentally—that she was jealous. She wouldn't give her the satisfaction. No, indeed! They could have the terrace all to themselves.

Swiftly she turned into the flagged corridor which ran along the side of the house to the conservatory, and led into the back hall. She hadn't too much time. Better make her arrangements first, and tell the Jupiters afterward. She was so sure of their understanding that it hardly seemed necessary anyhow. So she intercepted one of the maids—Bessie, the comeliest, and therefore assigned to parlor duty—and told her a man would be coming to the side door presently, and to be sure to let him in. Bessie said, "Yes, Miss Mary," and scurried on. She was carrying drinks out to the chauffeurs, who were clustered about a big car in the back driveway, talking.

Mary smiled—she knew with certainty now where Mr. Jupiter was. It was one of the favorite occupations of the old automobile manufacturer, talking with the men who drove cars. Other officials of the Jupiter Motor Company, Incorporated, were only too well aware of it. Whenever they put forward ideas about the Jupiter motor which did not coincide with his sentiments, he was wont to stop all argument by yelling, "And where did you get your information? I'll tell you where I got mine—from the men themselves!"

He had been an automobile mechanic once and it was his boast that he was still one—just that, and nothing more. They might know about stock issues, and the like of that, but he knew carburetors. When he was in that mood, there was nothing more to be said.

His interest in motors and in the men who drove them was genuine enough; their talk was his talk. But his wife, among others, thought he sometimes carried it too far. He judged a man by the way he treated a car, for example. Many a friend's chauffeur, and even some taxi-drivers he had taken a liking to, were now holding good jobs in his plant. On the same basis, he had never really warmed up to Eddie, Mary remembered. Eddie was known as a "wild driver," and that was enough for Mr. J. If it was that again that had gotten Eddie into trouble—

Mary paused, pinching her lower lip thoughtfully between thumb and finger.

She resolved presently that this was a family matter, and why bother anyone with it except herself? It really seemed the kindest thing to everyone concerned—just to say nothing about it. Later, it might seem very different to other people, but she could not know that then.

Mr. Jupiter was sitting on the running-board of a limousine, surrounded by a group of "his boys." Some of them looked as if they would like to break away and start a crap game, but were afraid to suggest it. She could hear his voice droning on and on. He was having a good time.

A big, foreign-looking limousine stopped a second under the portico, then shot around the circular drive and out again, at a high rate of speed. The uniformed drivers all looked up interestedly, as it circled, then went on listening in respectful silence to the old man's words.

"Lorimor. Special body," one remarked to another quietly.

"Junk," said Mr. Jupiter, pricking up his ears. Lorimors were his special antipathy.

Mary turned and went into the house. Mrs. Jupiter was not in the ballroom any longer; someone said she had complained that her feet hurt and had gone upstairs to change. Mrs. Ruyther had gone home.

Mary looked at her wrist-watch, and hurried upstairs. Mrs. Jupiter's sitting room was at the head of the stairs, flanked by her bedroom and her husband's. Mary's room was at the farther end of the hall. As she paused on the top step to catch her breath before turning back along the corridor, she heard sounds issuing from Mrs. Jupiter's sitting-room—an angry, snarling voice, a woman's loud scream, and then two shots in rapid succession. There was the thud of something heavy falling. Then silence.

Mary stood frozen to the newel-post, too terrified to move.

"Eddie," she cried to the closed door. "Eddie, is that you?"

(To be continued.)

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Active!

Norman Parrish of the Los Angeles Athletic Club breaks world's record for the rope climb, then pops up the rope again with a pal on his back. Good exercise.

Wandering Housewives

American passport statistics show that more housewives take trips abroad than women in any other occupation. In a list of 31 classified occupations, "housewives" received 13.09 per cent. of all the passports issued in 1931. Travel writers foot the list, with only 0.83 per. cent. of passports credited to them.

One frequently hears the expression that a certain object "moves at a snail's pace." It is only recently, however, that this pace has been chartered. The average snail travels about three inches a minute—a mile in fifteen days.

Ramblings

It takes up to twenty-four sheep to provide enough gut to string one first-class lawn-tennis racket.

One American University has 103 different slang words for intoxication, although the United States is "dry" by law.

Two leather flowers, about as big as a sixpenny-piece, attached to the ends of shoelaces, are a fashion novelty from Paris.

London has seventy-seven ancient City guilds, of whom only thirty-one have halls of their own, the other forty-six having to borrow or hire.

Many priceless records of the Great War are beginning to fade so badly that they may soon become unreadable. This is due to the use of the typewriter.

The smallest workable engine in the world has been constructed by a German clockmaker. No bigger than a coffee-bean, it represents years of patient work.

There are now about 200 women licensed as air-pilots in England, five of whom hold B certificates, which entitle them to take fare-paying passengers.

The food consumed by the animals in the London Zoo last year included 145 cwt. of monkey-nuts, 2,104 pints of shrimps, 4,600 bunches of carrots, and 224,904 bananas.

Girls of to-day are extraordinarily good and much more alert and alive than their mothers were, in the opinion of the principal of London's oldest college for women, Queen's.

When the inhabitants of Trinidad, the British island in the West Indies, were recently given the right to divorce, they sent a delegation to London to protest against having this privilege.

Mannequins employed by big London dressmakers range in age from six to sixty. The youngest may receive as much as $5.25 for a "parade" lasting a quarter of an hour.

Stowaways in British vessels are liable to a maximum penalty under the Merchant Shipping Act of a fine not exceeding $100 or four weeks' imprisonment with or without hard labor.

The record non-stop freight train run on British railways is stated to belong to the L.M.S. Railway, who have a goods train which travels 191 miles between London and Liverpool without a stop.

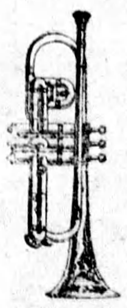
Although aliens entering or leaving Gt. Britain are carefully checked, last year twenty-one foreigners out of a total of 11,739 came in on excursion tickets without passports and failed to leave again.

No scholars under seventeen will take part in tugs of war, girls under eighteen will be banned from the long jump, and cross-country runs for boys under seventeen will be limited to three miles, if the recommendations of the recent London conference on athletics for school children are carried out.

Mr. Pinhead—"They say men of brains live long."

Miss Cutting—"Well, don't be discouraged, all rules have their exceptions, you know."

Bowling enthusiasts in Florida have discovered that grapefruit make an excellent substitute on the greens for wooden bowling balls, and several tournaments have been held. Well, many a breakfaster will testify to the uncanny aim of the grapefruit.—The Christian Science Monitor.



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