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THEY DIDN'T THINK

Once a trap was baited with a piece of cheese;
It tickled so a little mouse, it almost made him sneeze.
An old mouse said, "There's danger; be careful where you go,"
"Nonsense!" said the other, "I don't think you know!"
So he walked in boldly—nobody in sight;
First he took a nibble, then he took a bite;
Closed the trap together, snapped as quick as wink,
Catching mousey fast there, 'cause he "didn't think."

Once a little turkey, fond of her own way,
Wouldn't ask the old ones where to go or stray,
She said, "I'm not a baby, here am I half-grown;
Surely I am large enough to run about alone?"
Off she went, but somebody hiding saw her pass;
Soon like snow her feathers covered all the grass;
So she made a supper for a sly old mink,
'Cause she was so headstrong that she "wouldn't think."

Once there was a robin, lived outside the door,
Who wanted to go inside and hop upon the floor.
"Oh, no," said the mother, "you must stay with me;
Little birds are safest sitting on a tree."
"I don't care," said robin, and gave his tail a fling,
"Down he flew, and Kitty seized him before he'd time to think;
"Oh," he cried, "I'm sorry, but I didn't think!"

Now, my little children, you who read this song,
Don't you see the trouble comes of thinking wrong?
And can't you take a warning from their dreadful fate,
Who began their thinking when it was to late?
Don't you think there's always safety where no danger shows,
Don't suppose you know more than anybody knows;
But when you are warned of ruin, pause upon the brink,
And don't go under headlong, 'cause you "didn't think."

HOW BELLE PROPOSED

LEAP YEAR STORY

BY ELINOR MARSH

PROFESSOR POLAND of Woman's College was lecturing to his class, his subject being customs in India. He had excited considerable attention while dwelling upon the suttee, the girls showing great indignation at the immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. A hundred pens taking down the lecture scratched fiercely on as many notebooks. From the suttee he passed to the products of the country, and the pen scratching fell off so perceptibly that the professor was admonished that he was losing his hold on the interest of his class. He kept a number of slips, on each of which was written some bit of information calculated to attract the attention of young woman, and, taking up one, he interpolated it into his lecture.

"Among the singular marriage customs of different people there is one in India which is very delicate."

Every pen of the hundred young ladies began to send forth a sympathetic sound.

"A father will hold his daughter for a price to be paid by the suitor before marriage. A parent having a very beautiful daughter or being able to settle a large dowry will sometimes put to high a price on her that such young men as desire her cannot afford to pay it. This makes a market for marriageable women. Widows may be had at very low price."

A hum of expressions of amusement, approbation or dissatisfaction interrupted the lecturer.

"When a father finds that he has been holding his daughter too high and wishes, so to speak, to put her on the bargain counter (laughter) he does not tack a card to her on which is written 'Special,' as would be done in America if we had any such marriage custom. He adopts a much more poetic method. He marries her to a bouquet of flowers and throws her husband into a well. Since he must be drowned the bride becomes a widow. This is a notification to the young man that she may be had cheap."

Professor Poland, who was a young man of twenty-seven, paused and showed a white set of teeth under his dark mustache in a smile which was meant to be a partial unbending from his professional dignity. A ripple of amusement passed over his auditors, and he was about to return to a finish of the products of India when Belle Halliday, one of those girls who go to college to let off a surplus stock of mischief, arose to ask a question. Professor Poland paused and looked at her inquiringly.

"This being leap year," she said, "it occurs to me that this wedding to the flowers might be used as a delicate way of proposing to the man of her choice. It would be equivalent to saying, 'I may be had for a song; buy me.'"

The class tittered. The professor looked at the calling, then made the following reply:

"Your method, Miss Halliday, would involve a knowledge on the part of the man proposed to of the Indian custom in question, which he would not be likely to possess.

"Oh, I didn't think of that!" And Miss Halliday sat down in pretended confusion. But if there was any confusion in the matter it was with the professor, who was at the disadvantage of being one man among many women. He made an attempt to smile, then went on with his lecture, but did not again strike anything as interesting to his class as the matter of a girl being wedded to a bunch of flowers and her husband being thrown into a well.

Professor Poland's lecture was delivered in February, and Miss Belle Halliday was graduated in the following June at the foot of her class. As has been said, she did not go to college to study, but to have a good time. She was philosophic about it. "Why should I make a grind of myself when all the rest of the class are grinds? If I spent my time studying, who would do the devilitry? If I were destined to make my living as a teacher I would need to apply myself. But I'm not to teach; I'm to be married."

"Got him picked out, Belle?" asked a chum.

"Yes."

"Has he proposed?"

"No, and I don't expect him to propose. This is leap year, and I intend to do the proposing myself."

"Going to be married to a bunch of flowers and throw your husband in a well?"

"Maybe."

The chief reason underlying Miss Halliday's indisposition to make a grind of herself she did not mention. Her father was a rich man, and she was an only child. Besides what property she might expect from him, she possessed a fortune in her own right inherited from a grandmother. Indeed it would be difficult to find a reason why she should, like the busy bee, improve each shining hour over dead languages, mathematics or philosophy for which she would have little or no use, since the probability of her coming to want was very remote.

But Miss Halliday was bright enough to get what she wanted, and in one respect she knew very well what she wanted. She wanted Professor Poland. But Professor Poland was in receipt of an income of $1,500 a year and possibly might in the course of ten years be worth twice that to the cause of education. Miss Halliday knew very well that the modest young man would never have the assurance to propose for the hand of an heiress.

"I hope," she said to Professor Poland when they separated at commencement time, "that this will not end our acquaintance. I have always been greatly interested in your instruction and am indebted to you for having helped me through several examinations which would without your assistance have sent me home to finish my college course sitting round trying to look pretty. Mamma has directed me to invite you to spend a part of your vacation with us at our country place, and we shall look for you at an early date."

The invitation was followed up by one more specific, and in July Professor Poland found himself at Morning Glory—Belle had named the place from a flower she especially loved—a magnificent place in the centre of spacious grounds and commanding a fine view of distant hills and nearby lakes. While Miss Halliday was in college she, like other students, was under his authority. It seemed to him now that the conditions were inverted. He appeared to himself nothing more than a pedagogue with so little income as to be barely able to tip the servants, while his former pupil was arrayed in "purple and fine linen" and occupying a social position to which he could never hope for an entree, and if he was granted an entree he would not be able to support it.

Miss Halliday's treatment of Professor Poland was calculated to throw him into a fever. She was not only gracious; she was as devoted to him as he would have been glad to be devoted to her were their positions reversed, lavishing on him such delicate attentions as a woman will lavish on a man she feels privileged to favor. In other words, a courtship was going on, in which the woman was doing the courting. The professor sometimes drifted, resigning himself to this delightful spell she was throwing about him, and sometimes suddenly came to a realization that he was standing on the brink of a precipice.

Now, if woman were the privileged proposers they would doubtless acquit themselves far better than the men. At any rate, they are by a superior delicacy far better fitted for the purpose. To Miss Halliday what she was engaged in was as simple to her as the reconstruction of the Roman forum would have been to Professor Poland. When she was ready for his proposal she took him out into the garden and began to gather a bouquet of flowers.

"Are they for me?" asked the professor.

"For you? No. I'm going to be married."

The professor felt as if some one had knocked the life out of him.

"Who is the fortunate man?" he gasped.

"I'm not going to marry a man. I'm going to marry these flowers."

Several months had passed since Professor Poland had mentioned the Indian custom to his class, and it did not occur to him that Miss Halliday's words referred to what he had then said. However, he was not afraid of such a rival and somewhat recovered his equanimity.

"Oh!" was his sole reply.

Belle went on collecting flowers for a posy and when she had done so made a dumb show of affection for them. There was a stable on the place and a well from which to draw, which was brought up by a pump. Belle went to the well, lifted a trap-door and threw her bouquet down into the opening. Then, without remark, she sauntered back to the garden.

Now, Professor Poland was not quite so stupid about the art of love as might be supposed. He attended Miss Halliday on her visit to the well, and when she led him to a vine clad recess and sat down on a rustic seat a vague connection between what she had done and the Indian custom he had embodied in his lecture found lodgement in his brain. He realized that this might be in lieu of a proposal. Surely it was not encouragement for him to propose. It was either a proposal or it was nothing. If it was a proposal it was incumbent on him to respond. If he responded and Miss Halliday's act meant nothing he would be in an unfortunate position. If she meant what he suspected and he made no reponse he would still be in an unfortunate position. What should he do?

His inclinations decided him.

"The honor you do me is, I assure you, fully appreciated. Since I love you and have loved you for some time it is not an absence of love that causes me to hesitate. It is the disparity of our incomes."

"That, I think, can be easily arranged to your satisfaction. I am ready to settle upon you—"

"Pardon me; I cannot accept a settlement. If I marry you I shall do so with the expectation of always remaining self-supporting. If I am to be a rich woman's husband you must be a poor professor's wife."

"I shall be very proud of your standing in your profession and shall do nothing to turn you away from it and your enjoyment of it."

And so it was arranged that the professor should still occupy his chair at the university. This he did for a time. Then his wife was calling on him continually for some duty in connection with her estates, and at last, finding that such duties took up the principal part of his time, he resigned his professorship and devoted his whole time to the management of a property which had by this time come to be considered a family matter.

THE RICH SISTER

"Don't put that in, Elsie," said Mrs. Shannon, as she watched the packing of her own trunk. She was preparing for a great event. At the age of seventy she was leaving her comfortable city home to journey several hundred miles, for the purpose of visiting an eighty-year-old sister, whom she had not seen in a quarter of a century.

"Not put in your prettiest wrapper?" her daughter protested.

"I shan't want it—with all that lace trimming."

"I know. You're afraid it will be nicer than anything Aunt Hannah has. Do you think she is poor, mother?"

The habitual look of worry on Mrs. Shannon's face deepened.

"I never can find out by her letters just how poor. But I know she has lost all three of her children and lives there with her grandson, Wilbur; and I'm sure your Uncle James had nothing to leave her but that little house and lot. Wilbur earns something, but it can't be much. One reason I'm determined to go is to see with my own eyes that wrapper."

A long-hoped-for railroad had never come to the village where the aged sister lived; so it was at the end of a jolting stage ride that Mrs. Shannon "saw with her own eyes." A neat brick sidewalk, dividing a tiny green lawn, was the first thing she noticed; then a vine-shaded porch, barely large enough to hold two small rockers, and standing there, with arms outstretched, a little spirit-like figure, snow-haired and shining-faced.

"Oh, my dear, I am so glad!" cried Sister Hannah. "After all these years, you're in my home!"

That was the key-note.

"I've a nice little guest-room all ready for you," the happy voice went on, as the sisters, in single file, climbed a narrow, enclosed stairway to a suite of a room, with low, slanting ceiling. "Look out of the window, Barbara. Those great honeysuckles have grown from seed James planted when we first came here. Do you wonder I love this place? I wouldn't change it for a castle! Wilbur laid the brick sidewalk all alone, and built my little porch, too. He's the dearest boy!

"When you're ready we'll go down. Such a pretty dress, Barbara! I'm glad I can see enough to enjoy it. Yes, this left eye has failed me, but the other one is nearly as good as ever. I shall be so thankful if I can just keep what eyesight I have as long as I stay."

It was a wonderful visit. At its close, Mrs. Shannon put both hands on her sister's shoulders and looked into her eyes. Both knew that probably it was their last good-bye in life.

"You won't cry after I'm gone?"

The little white-haired woman smiled like an angel. "Cry!" she echoed. "I'm too happy to think I've seen you again."

A few days later, in her own large bedroom, Mrs. Shannon put on the lace-trimmed wrapper. "I wish I'd taken it with me," she said to her daughter. "Your Aunt Hannah would have liked to have seen it."

"You really found her much better off than you feared, didn't you, mother?"

A curious expression crossed Mrs. Shannon's face. She was thinking of a little box of a house, bare of all but actual necessities. Then she remembered the shining peace on her sister's face.

"Yes," she answered. "Oh, yes—much better off."

"A MITE TOO PRYING"

Bushby had many natural advantages and beauties, but Mrs. Abner Crane, who was a brief sojourner in the place, having been there a matter of ten years or so, never appreciated it. "She was aching to get back to Nashua the whole enduring time," said one of Mrs. Crane's Bushby neighbors, "and I was glad to see her go, feeling as she did."

"What was it she didn't like about Bushby?" asked one of the summer residents, curiously.

"She said she 'didn't get the news o' the day quick enough to suit her,'" quoted the neighbor, with as near an imitation of Mrs. Crane's air as she could manage.

"As I said to my Ray, what on earth she wanted more than we have in the way of news-spreaders here, I don't know.

"When you consider that there are five telephones in town, a grocery wagon driven by Lucy Grant's boy twice a week, Lucy Grant herself to saw for everybody in town by the day, and all taking milk from Jed Kimball, I don't know how we could be any better fixed. I call anybody that wants more news o' the day than Bushby folks get a mite too prying myself."

NATURALLY BASHFUL

Many happy marriages have been made on short acquaintance; nevertheless, it is unwise to recommend very short courtships as a general rule. As instance is the extremely brief wooing of a certain English maid who had come to America. One morning she appeared before her mistress, and announced that she had named the day and would become a wife at the end of the week.

"Are you going back home, then?" the lady asked.

"Oh, no, ma'am; it's an American gentleman," replied the maid.

"But," remonstrated her mistress, "you have only been here a fortnight."

"That's no matter. He wants the wedding to be on Saturday."

"But can't you get him to postpone the marriage just a little till I can get another maid?"

"Well, ma'am, I'd like to oblige you, but, ye see, I don't feel well enough acquainted to ask him to do that."

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From Our Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 18th, 1896

Mr. Barry has purchased from Dr. Lowry the twenty-five acres adjoining the corporation on Queen Street.

Mr. Asa Hall addressed the Methodist Sunday School last Sunday, the first Sunday of his 87th year. He spoke very feelingly of his connection with the church and school here from the time of their organization.

Sir Charles Tupper, Premier of Canada, addressed a large crowd at the G. T. R. Station on Monday while en route to points west.

Last Wednesday evening Hon. G. W. Ross, Minister of Education of Ontario, addressed Mr. Waddle's meeting in the town hall.

Prof. Welsh, phrenologist, of Toronto, has been feeling the bumps of a great many people in Acton, and his readings were invariably remarkable and true to known peculiarities.

The Epworth League Officers for the year from July 1st, are:—President Geo. Vincent; Christian Endeavor Dept.—Miss Mina Walker; Missionary Dept.—Mrs. Oram; Social Dept.—R. J. Gurney; Secretary—Chas. H. Moore; Treasurer—Miss Clara Ramsbaw; Organists—Annie Stephenson, Lizzie McLam.

Rev. Richard Hobbs, of Brantford, lectured in the Methodist Church, on Monday evening on "The Triangular Man."

Rev. J. E. Howell preached an impressive sermon in the Methodist Church on Sunday morning touching the work of the third year of his pastorate just commencing. His text was, "This is the third time I am come unto you," 2 Cor. 13: 1.

Knox Church pulpit was supplied last Sunday by Rev. Mr. McPherson, of Galt, who was so acceptable a supply last winter during the pastor's absence. He is an excellent speaker, full voiced, of pleasing manner, and commanding personal.

Rev. R. Hobbs stayed at the home of Mr. Anthony Stephenson while in town.

NEIGHBORS

Mrs. Enderby let her sewing drop unheeded into her lap with a happy little sigh of contentment. All the rest of the long June morning stretched before her in lovely profusion, here to spend as she chose, for Bobs was packed off to his nap, Katie-in-the-Kitchen was wrestling stoutly with domestic problems, and Mr. Enderby had gone to town, not to return until the midnight train.

"The new people are moving in to-day," she said, half-aloud. "Will they be anything like the Babbitts, I wonder? I hope"—she rocked restlessly—"I mean, I wish if there are fairies one would come this very minute and give me three wishes. I'd lump them all in one, and wish for a real, truly neighbor to drop right down here this very minute. No, not drop down," she added, sinking back in her chair as she remembered Mrs. Babbitt's wide circumference. "She'd shake the porch to pieces. But I mean a woman by own age, a friend I could neighbor," she went on, half-aloud, for, like Alice in Wonderland, she had a habit of self-conversation. "Mrs. Babbitt would never let me do anything for her, yet she lavished her possessions on me. She never understood that sometimes it's blessed to receive, too."

Her cheeks flushed uncomfortably as she remembered how her simple gift of cinnamon roses had been returned by a glorious bunch of Jacqueminots, how her cake had been patronized, and she herself urged "not to overdo with just one servant, my dear," and worst of all, how Mrs. Babbitt never, never ran out of supplies and forgot to order them at the last minute. Mrs. Enderby bent over her seam again, and longed for a fairy more than ever.

All at once there was swishing of silk skirts, and she looked up to see a young woman, quite out of breath and very pretty, who held out a bowl benevolently.

"Will you lend me some coffee?" she pleaded. "I'm Mrs. Coolidge, your new next-door neighbor, you know. We've moving, and I forgot to order any,—Mr. Coolidge says I always do,—and I know from the nice look of your house you'd let me have some. No, I'll just wait here and look at your lovely view. I believe it's better than cure."

Mrs. Enderby returned with a bowlful of coffee, a heartful of happiness, too, to find her guest heading lovingly over the old-fashioned roses.

"May I cut you some?" she asked, half timidly.

"Oh, will you really?" cried Mrs. Coolidge. "I love them so. They grew all around my house when I was a child, and now all of ours are such grand, formal flowers."

When her neighbor had disappeared up the long drive with her arms full of coffee and roses, Mrs. Enderby took up her sewing again with another happy sigh.

"And to think there are people who don't believe in fairies!" she said.

A DISAPPOINTED MAN

Mr. Halloran surveyed the insurance agent with a dark and hostile countenance. The fact that one eye was concealed by a somewhat grimy bandage did not add to the attractiveness of his expression.

"Haven't you made up your mind yet to insure with us?" inquired the agent. "You told me I might call again in a few days."

"There was two of you at me to get an accident insurance policy," said Mr. Halloran, breathing heavily. "I towld you and him both you might call in again, and he come first, day befoor yiatherday and I insured wid his company.

"That very night I met up wid Barney Casey on the way home, which was what I was expecting wud happen," continued Mr. Halloran, raising himself by grasping the arms of his chair with two capable although scarred hands, "and whin we'd finished wid one another I was like this.

"Yiatherday morning I went for the insurance chap, and says I to him, 'Look at me,' I says, 'and intimate the damages and pay them.'

"He squirmed right out o' the door, saying 'twas no accident I'd had.

"Now if meeting wid Barney Casey, after keeping out o' his way for six months, is no accident I'm done wid insurance companies and 'the sooner you 'ave this house the bother 'twill plaze me."

A SOLDIER'S PRAYER

Captain Fred C. Curry, son of F. R. Curry, who accompanied the First Contingent to England, has written the following verses at the front. Lieut. Curry was one of the first to enlist at Brockville, Ont. When he wrote these lines he signed himself lieutenant. His promotion followed later on:—

Oh, God of Wars, Whose only Son
A sacrifice for peace did make,
Look down from heaven, bless our arms,
And grant us victory for His sake.

To those whose sufferings and in sleep,
To those who toss on beds of pain,
To hearts that ache, to eyes that weep,
Grant that they suffer not in vain.

Grant that the Comforter, the Friend,
Support us when, with waning breath,
We wait with courage to the end,
That last relief we know as death.

And unto those we leave behind
We pray Thy grace and comfort give,
So that they somehow solace find
That we have died that they may live.

Lieut. F. C. Curry,
C. E. F., Belgium.

LIVING YOUR OWN LIFE

The phrase "living my own life" is often used to cover a ruthless and devouring selfishness. Individuals as well as nations assert that they have a right to live their own lives, to work out their own destinies, even if it means forgetting and sacrificing some of the dearest ties of nature and of affection.

But although such excesses, like all others, are to be deplored, it should always be remembered that every soul, man's or woman's, has its own natural bent, its own peculiar, complex inheritance of desires and sympathies and purposes, and that it will flourish best and be happiest and most useful where the natural bent is most encouraged and most freely allowed to have its way.

This secret of individuality is too likely to be overlooked by parents, perhaps most often by some who are most devoted and least selfish, with results as disastrous as those of deliberate selfishness. A mother has loved music all her life, but from lack of early training has never accomplished anything with it. She determines that her daughter shall be a musician, although she has no taste for music, and the child's heart is soured by an unspeakable drudgery, which leads to nothing. A father has never ceased to regret that his father put him into his shoes, instead of making him a doctor or a lawyer. Consequently, he dreams of a son distinguished in medicine or at the bar, and ends by forcing a vocation upon one who has no talent for it and who consequently wastes his life.

It is not meant that you should not advise your children or guide them. Study their natures early, seek out their tastes and aptitudes and ideals of your own, which may or may not be better, but which are wholly unsuited to those who are born for something else.

Either you have lived your own life, or you have passionately longed to live it. Help your children to live, not yours, but theirs.

AN ASTONISHING TEMPERATURE

A private soldier had had pneumonia, and had been for some time in a hospital where he had been so well treated that he was by no means ready to be discharged as "cured". One day the doctor was taking his temperature, and while Tommy had the thermometer in his mouth the doctor moved on to the next bed and turned his back to the first patient.

Tommy saw his chance. He pulled the thermometer out of his mouth and popped it into a cup of hot tea, replacing it, however, the moment he saw the doctor begin to turn his back to his bed. When the physician examined the thermometer he looked first at Tommy and then back to the thermometer and gasped:

"Well, my man, you're not dead but you ought to be!"

A SINGULAR COINCIDENCE

It would not have taken surprising intelligence to predict a repetition of the mistake referred to below, but the porter, lacked the necessary perception:

A passenger on a New York and Chicago limited train, upon looking under his berth in the morning, found one black shoe and one tan shoe. He called the porter's attention to the error. The porter scratched his woolly head in bewilderment.

"Well, an' don't dat beat all!" he said. "Dat's de second time dis morning dat dah mistake's happened!"

BRIEFLETS

Many a girl manages to strangle her emotions because she has discovered that weeping makes her nose red.

A woman knows her new hat isn't becoming to her because her dearest enemy tells her it is.

Even if an up-to-date woman did look like the pictures in a fashion magazine she probably wouldn't be satisfied.

If it is true that there are no marriages in heaven, the old bachelors—if they get there—won't be able to crow over the other fellows.

But it is better to labor than be worked.

A poor leader may make a good follower.

OBLIGING

Sailor—"Want to buy a parrot, lady?"

Lady—"Does he swear?"

Sailor—"No, this one don't but if yer want to pay five bob more I kin get yer a very choice article wot do."

A Powerful Medicine.—The healing properties in six essential oils are concentrated in every bottle of Dr. Thomas' Eclectric Oil, forming one of the most beneficial liniments ever offered to the use of man. Thousands can testify as to its power in allaying pain, and many thousands more can certify that they owe their health to it. Its wonderful power is not expressed by its cheapness.

Long Standing Asthma. Many have suffered so long from asthma and have tried so many so-called remedies they think that there is no real help for them. They should read the letters received by the manufacturers of Dr. J. D. Kellogg's Asthma Remedy from hundreds of cases once as desperate as their own. Even in long-neglected cases this famous preparation brings prompt help.