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Perfumed Epistles

By R. RAY BAKER

Big Bruce Forrester was not a woman hater. He was not interested, that was all.

While the rest of the surveying crowd that was measuring the Low Bridge range for the coming of the railroad spent its spare time in receiving perfumed mail and answering it, Bruce sought solace in nicotine in the seclusion of his bunk or roamed the wilds of Wilderness woods and continued with nature.

"So to the boys," was his advice. "Some day you'll learn better. With me all right as per the decorations and to consume surplus cash in candy and clothes, but as for me—well, I'm going to buy myself a farm some day, where I can have horses, dogs and cows and chickens. They're of some use in the world, and they don't go back on you when you're down and out."

Naturally, the others resented these remarks. They detested the fair sex naturally and he showed signs of being forced to desert from his oral attacks.

"All right, I'll keep still in the future," he growled; "but you can't prevent a fellow thinking; and while you're fooling your time away with pens and ink you can let your mind dwell on the fact that I consider you're all unforgotten idiots."

Sunday was a day of rest in the woods as well as the places where civilization reigned, and also it was a day when a great deal of letter writing was accomplished in "Lover's Lodge," which Big Bruce sarcastically christened the shanty where the surveyors were making their headquarters.

On one of these Sundays Bruce set out on a hike which he called a "relief expedition."

"I'm going to get relief from the perfumed air of this shack," he announced as he took an old walking stick he had carved from a tree branch, a package of sandwiches and a sanitary cup. "I'm hoping you all got married and settled down to blissful contentment, no excitement, no pleasure, no nothing," and he strode disdainfully from the shack into the woods.

It was not a case of envy with Big Bruce. He could have been admired by many girls had he chosen, for he was a good, healthy, handsome specimen who looked well either in his room or backwoods. However, Big Bruce had not met the right sort of women.

His mother died when he was a toddler, and when he grew up his father's financial standing threw him in with a lot of society buds who had no mission in life other than to look beautiful, sip lead drinks and play bridge. No women held no interest for him. They were to him, as he had said, mere ornaments or playthings and not to be given consideration in a serious, busy world.

Big Bruce drew his lungs full of pure air as he swung along the ridge, heading for Lake Crescent, where he knew a flat-bottomed rowboat was drawn up on shore. It was well along in summer and vegetation was in full bloom, with birds chirping in the trees and insects buzzing merrily—and some of them stinging just as merrily.

Bruce expelled clouds of pungent tobacco smoke, drawn from a venerable pipe, and hummed a tune. He was enjoying himself immensely.

Coming into the rowboat, he propelled it across the lake, which was about two miles wide and five miles long. A stiff breeze ruffled the water into choppy waves, but Big Bruce's strong arms drove the boat through them without noticing the resistance. Arriving on the other side he drew the craft up on shore and continued his wanderings.

Suddenly, while walking along enjoying the solitude of the woods and thinking of his foolish friends back in "Lover's Lodge," he felt a sharp, stinging pain in his right side. At the piercing instant the report of a rifle echoed through the forest. Big Bruce tumbled in a heap on the ground and almost lost consciousness.

For moments that seemed like hours the young man lay there helpless, the pain growing more intense all the while. With an effort he reached his left hand to the wound and withdrew it covered with blood. He felt nauseated and black dots swam before his eyes.

Realizing it would not do to lie there and allow the strength to go, he forced himself to crawl along the path on which he had been walking. It seemed that he had crawled at least three miles, stopping frequently to regain strength, when he came into a clearing in which some one was cooking over a fire.

With the knowledge that help was at hand, Big Bruce drifted into unconsciousness. When his eyes opened some time later, he looked up into a pair of black ones which were owned by a girl of about twenty, who was gazing in wolf-like buckskin clothes, with a short skirt, leggings and a wide-brimmed hat.

She had dark hair that fell in heavy folds around her neck, and she had white teeth and a pug nose and long freckles. She was attractive in some ways, but in others she was decidedly plain.

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PHONE 232 - GEORGETOWN

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"I've got your wound fixed up," she told him. "Some fool man has been hunting out of season and got the wrong kind of game. I had fired that shot it would have hit what was aimed at."

She started in disgust. An examination with his hand showed Bruce that his shirt had been cut away around the wound and a bandage of place. The bandage was wet, but he ascertained that it was with water instead of blood.

"It's not serious if a hurry you home," she told him in business-like tones. "If you'll try to walk, and lean on me all you want to, we can make it to the canoe."

"It was not a great distance, and somehow in spite of the pain and his weakened condition, which became more pronounced when he became to walk, Bruce was almost sorry when they arrived at the shore and she helped him into the canoe.

It was growing dusk, but Big Bruce could see that there were several other boats in the bay. He doubted the girl's ability to paddle through the savage waves, but he kept his own counsel.

Before pushing the craft into the water she filled a tin can with water, placed the stem between his teeth and lifted it. He was so amazed by this act of thoughtfulness that he came near forgetting to drink the pipe.

Soon they were tossing on the lake, the Bruce was somewhat apprehensive, but he knew he was powerless to help the girl who was seated at the stern paddling vigorously to keep the bow of the boat headed into the ridges of foam. If she faltered and allowed the oncoming waves to turn the canoe and sweep against its side there was no telling what would result.

However, she worked like a Trojan, never uttering a word, and despite the fact that it was now so dark the shores on either side were blotted out, she seemed confident of being able to reach her destination, whatever it might be.

At last they were landed, and the girl surprised Bruce by dragging the canoe clear of the water with him in it, almost tipping him out.

"There," she breathed, rather harshly. "Now for the car."

She left him, and presently a flood of light from the spotlight of an auto surrounded him. Again she aided him to walk, and presently he was ready in the tonneau of the car speedily over the road.

Soon they came to a branch road, which they followed for a short distance, stopping finally in front of a comfortable looking cottage, in which "heavy lights were burning.

Half an hour later Bruce was in bed, a fresh bandage over the wound, the girl's brother having come to help him after the patient.

"Father will be back soon," the girl told him. "I'll be a doctor, and he'll fix you up right; but I know you'll have to stay here three weeks. It's lucky we didn't go back to the city yesterday as we had planned."

Three days later Big Bruce was back in "Lover's Lodge," practically recovered from his wound.

One day one of the boys came bearing into the shack a packet of mail in one hand and a lone letter in the other.

"Help help!" he cried, in mock distress. "Here's a letter for Mr. Bruce Forrester—and it's pink and got perfume on it."

Bruce took the letter, his face blanching and retired to his bunk. The envelope contained round and looked on its open-mouthed astonishment while he read to himself smiling the while.

Presently he finished perusing the missive and was looking up he apparently noticed for the first time that he had an audience.

"What's the matter with you, brother?" he asked, with a fellow-fell in love if he wants to? Say, where in thunder's some ink, paper and pen?"

A Frightful Peril.

When the railway was first built in Germany, it was considered as a serious menace to health. In the archives of the Nuremberg railway, which was the first line constructed in Germany, a protest against railways has been found, drawn up by the royal college of Bavarian doctors. It declares: "Travel in carriage drawn by locomotives ought to be forbidden in the interest of public health. The rapid movement cannot fail to produce among the passengers the mental affection known as delirium fatyrorum, which if travelers are willing to incur the risk, the government should at least protect the public. A single glance at a locomotive passing rapidly is sufficient to cause cerebral derangement. Consequently, it is absolutely necessary to build a fence, ten feet high, on each side of the railway." "Delirium fatyrorum" holds possession of not a few automobileists nowadays.

Smile Is Better Than Frown.

It has been proved that anger and violent emotion cause for the time being a poisonous condition of the blood, which is injurious. It must be equally true that facing the passing hour with a mournful, gloomy and look not with a mild gleam for the best that the day offers is beneficial. This is a pretty decent old world after all, if we but treat it right. And surely we face our children and our work not with frowns but with gladness. It will give us a more kindly greeting and a helping hand in return.—From the Three Partners.

Consulting.

Mrs. Cassidy—Nora's Maguire is takin' on awful! Her husband's got three years, but he can get worn off to good behavior.

Mrs. O'Brien—Till her to read any day, an' he never behaves himself.—Edinburgh Scotsman.

X-Ray to Detect Age.

X-ray photographs which can be used to detect disease in airplane wood also have been accepted in a law court as proof of a man's age. The case in question was tried before the superior justice at Atlanta, Ga., and had to decide whether one of the testing parties was under or over 25 years of age. Fragments of the elbow joints and knee joints were produced and two X-ray experts gave evidence that the plates showed that modification of the inner and outer cartilage had taken place and that they had joined the shafts of the bones. It was stated that the ages between ages of 14 and 18, and the corresponding age of the person concerned was more than 18 and less than 19 years. Another opinion made for X-ray was that by exposing to their X-ray modern violin it will acquire characteristic tone of a genuine Stradivari, the action of the rays in 24 hours aging the wood by about years.

Don't Miss the Minstrels, April 8-9