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**MY UNCLE'S FORTUNE**

It Stood Between Me and Happiness.

By EILEEN BRENNAN

While traveling on the continent I had met Winthrop Sayles, and we had been members of the same party traveling together in Italy, with a long stop at Lake Como, in Switzerland, and in France. Mr. Sayles singled me out among several other girls of our party, and so marked were his attentions that we were soon considered to belong to each other.

The party broke apart in Paris. I going to London. My admirer followed me. He had proposed to me while we were in Lucerne and had during our subsequent journeying together implored me to marry him. It was not a case on my part wherein a girl feels that she has met her fate—that is, that the proposer is absolutely necessary to her happiness. Nevertheless I liked him well enough to consider his proposition, and I was sensible of the fact that girls are liable to let desirable parties slip away from them till they have become old maids, when they are left out in the cold.

Mr. Sayles was so persistent that I at last yielded, but so late that we had barely time to be married before we were obliged to endure a separation. I was about to sail for home, while he was obliged to remain temporarily in England. Yielding to his solicitations, I consented to do what I afterward considered an unwise thing. I agreed to marry him before going aboard the ship, reserving our honeymoon till his return to America.

Just before sailing I was handed a letter from an aunt of mine in America. Her husband was wealthy; they were getting old and had no children. If we would agree to abide with them so long as they lived my uncle would leave me all his property.

Had I been desperately in love with the man I had married I doubt if this offer would have had more than a passing effect on me. If my husband had accompanied me to America the inevitable association of marriage would have brought the same result. But, receiving this offer immediately after parting with a man I had known but a few months, it caused regret.

We see marriage on the surface. There are the happy pair, the wedding gifts, the shower of rice and old shoes. The first month of wedlock is called the honeymoon and savors of sweetness. What we do not see are the baskings that may take place or certain regrets that may thrust themselves in the face of one or both of the happy pair up to the point where the knot is tied. Yet it is possible such may occur in the case of those who are destined to become absolutely necessary to each other.

I confess I should have put the matter out of my head. I was married, and that was all there was about it. But I fancy, as I have already said, that I am not the only person who has just been married to wonder whether he or she has taken a wife or a foolish step.

However, by the time I had reached port I had made up my mind to cease to think about the proposition I had received, but to write my aunt, telling her why I could not accept it. I had promised to write something every day to my husband and mail what I had written on arrival. I wrote him of the offer I had received, and on reading over what I had written it occurred to me that possibly what I had said might be interpreted to express regret that I had lost the power to decide between him and a prospective fortune. I would have rewritten this part of my letter, but could not very well get it out from the rest. Besides, the letter was all ready to mail, and so I dropped it in the post.

As soon as I landed I wrote my aunt, who lived in the west, that I had been married abroad and, of course, could not accept her proposition. I received loving letters from my husband till about the time he should have received my epistle written for several days, when I received a brief note from him stating that he had been ill, but was now better. He would write again soon. A few days later I received a cablegram from a friend of his that my husband was dead.

I confess I was much shocked. Besides, the message brought a revelation to me. I learned that my affections had been more completely engaged than I had supposed. I blamed myself for my regrets. I felt that if I could only have my husband back again I would not exchange a prospective fortune for him nor even a fortune in hand.

The cablegram had advised me to remain where I was and await a letter. When the letter came I was informed that my husband had requested that I should not on any account return to England as a result of his death and that his body be buried abroad. He had very little property to leave and had—so I was informed—some time before his marriage left what there was to a sister. This was entirely satisfactory to me.

My aunt and uncle, being informed that I had become a widow, renewed their proposition to me, and I went to live with them. They were very kind

to me, and I entered upon a style above what I had been accustomed to. My uncle made a will in my favor, and I had before me the anticipation of enjoying a fortune. Nevertheless my life was dull. They were old persons and had outlived most of their intimate friends. They were certainly not companionable for me.

As to enjoying the society of persons of my own age, I had very little opportunity to do so. My aunt soon after I went to live with her became an invalid and required my constant attention. Besides, my aunt had not for many years had anything to do with social affairs, and I was not thrown into the "swim." I had stepped into what from a distance I had considered an enviable position, but was not satisfied. I had become a nurse, my pay to consist of a living and a fortune after my patient's death, or, rather, after the death of two persons, either one or both of whom might outlive me.

And now that I had experience in this condition which had led me to regret my marriage I turned longingly to what would have been my lot if my husband had lived. I pictured a little house that I would have made cozy and an interest in husband and children—an interest which is paramount to all other interests. I do not except those cases where the husband and wife quarrel or separate. The interest is there, but it has become, so to speak, diseased. I had all the comforts wealth could bring, but there was no soul in them. I lived in a splendid house, but there was no home in it for me.

I did not meet my husband's sister, who inherited what little property he left. She wrote me offering, inasmuch as it was mine by right, to give it up to me, but I declined to accept it. She was very sympathetic, and somehow through her letters I conceived a decided liking for her. I would have liked to see her, but she lived at a distance, and neither could well go to the other. She and I became regular correspondents, and I confided in her my dissatisfaction at the life I led and my regrets that I could not have had a home of my own, "be it ever so humble."

To this she replied that the day would come when I would be wealthy, and I would then be satisfied that fate had kept me from marriage without adequate income and had given instead the power and comfort that money brings. But to this I replied that, having become familiar with wealth, it did not seem so much of a blessing as those who saw it from a distance supposed.

I had lived with my aunt three years when she died. Then my troubles began in earnest, for I had the whole responsibility of bolstering up my uncle in his old age. A woman left desolate can accommodate herself to the new situation better than a man. My uncle could not accommodate himself to get on without his life partner. I endured his misery with him for the greater part of a year, when I saw evidence that he was intending to marry again. A woman about half his age had set her cap for him and was not long in securing him.

My standing in dead men's shoes had been a failure. I knew well enough that this new wife would seriously object even to sharing her husband's inheritance with me, and I did not believe that, under the circumstances, we two women could get on together under the same roof. This turned out as I expected. The lady soon made it plain to me that I was not desirable and set my uncle against me. What should I do? I had no place to go, and the means at my command were limited. My uncle was soon got under the thumb of his wife, and she would not even permit him to give me an allowance. I knew nothing about his destroying the will made in my favor, but if his wife permitted it to remain she was not the woman I supposed she was.

In my distress I wrote to my sister-in-law, pouring my troubles out to her. She wrote me a sympathetic letter, reminding me that I was still young—I was twenty-four—and would likely marry. She suggested no plan for me, but said she would write again soon.

Later I received another letter from her inviting me to make her a visit. We could then talk over what it was best for me to do and would doubtless hit upon some plan for my comfort. I determined to accept the invitation.

I found Miss Sayles living in modest comfort and took her into my heart on sight as I had through her letters. She made me feel at home from the moment I entered the house. She was older than my husband had been and seemed to have looked upon him more as a son than a brother.

"I have a surprise for you," she said, "of such importance that I fear to give it to you without preparing you for it. You remember that you wrote Winthrop while coming from England of the proposition of your aunt and uncle to live with them and inherit your uncle's wealth. In your letter you showed regret that you had been married and must consequently decline their proposition. Winthrop—a very sensitive man—was much hurt by your letter and determined that he would not stand between you and the life you preferred. He—"

"What did he do?" I gasped.

A door opened, and my husband entered.

It was some time before I could give him for having through a friend sent word to me that he was dead. He had often regretted having done so and had as often thought of reappearing to me in the flesh, but my uncle's for time stood between us.

I was still young enough to build up a home with my beloved husband, and it is and has been more enjoyable, more serene for my experience in waiting for dead men's shoes.

**KILLED IN BATTLE.**

Methods of Different Nations For Identifying the Dead.

When a German soldier falls in battle he is identified by a little metal disk which he carries. This disk bears a number, and this number is telegraphed to Berlin. There the soldier's name is determined. This system is as effective as everything else connected with the German army.

The British use an aluminum disk that contains, besides marks of identification, the soldier's church affiliation. The Japanese system is similar, each soldier wearing three disks, one around his neck, another on his belt and the third in his boot. The Russians wear a numbered badge.

The United States army uses a cloth tab woven into the shoulder strap of the tunic. The French use identification cards stitched inside the tunic. The French once made use of metal identification badges, but these proved an irresistible attraction to the savages whom the French faced in Africa, so the cards were substituted. Austria still uses a badge of gnu metal in the form of a locket with parchment leaves inside.

Turkey has no identification badges for her soldiers. Edhem Pasha once explained this omission as follows: "A dead man is of no use to the sultan. Why, therefore, trouble with him?"—Baltimore American.

**MOVING PICTURES IN JAPAN.**

Shoes Are Doffed at the Door, and Spectators Sit on the Floor.

Many of the motion picture theaters in Japan, particularly in Tokyo, where there are over 100, are quite as elegant as some to be found in any American city. You can secure admission for as low as 5 cents up to as high as 50 cents. In the cheaper portions of most theaters the natives sit crosslegged on the floor in characteristic Japanese fashion. They remove their shoes before entering, and an attendant takes charge of these.

Both American and European pictures are shown, but the principal attraction is a long Japanese play, which is presented in a very unique fashion. In fact, it may be said that the Japanese have real talking pictures. The film is produced in the same manner as a stage play, with every portion of dialogue spoken.

When the picture is projected an actor and actress stand on each side of the screen and repeat the dialogue in full view of the spectators. The two reciters share the parts played by the different characters. As their spoken words keep strict time with the lip movements of the silent artists, the result, as may be imagined, is very effective.—Popular Electricity.

**Shelley Was a Queer Boy.**

The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley as a small boy was an eccentric little being. He used to dress his four sisters to represent fends, and, filling a fire stove with some inflammable fluid and setting it aflame, he would marshal the diabolical procession to the back door. As a boy at Eton he would watch the living night for ghosts and consulted his books how to raise one. His diet in after years was meager enough to bring him weird fancies. Bread became his chief sustenance, and his pockets were well stored with it.

A circle upon the carpet, clearly defined by an ample verge of crumbs, often marked the place where he had long sat at his studies, his face nearly in contact with his book, devouring bread at intervals amid his profound abstractions. Sometimes he ate raisins with it, and his sweet tooth was immense.

**Absolute Zero.**

In the absence of all heat the temperature is zero, not the zero of the thermometer, but "what is called 'absolute zero.'" In other words, where there is no heat there is no temperature. Absolute zero is supposed to be about 274 degrees below the thermometric zero of the Centigrade scale and about 461 degrees below the thermometric zero of the Fahrenheit scale. Absolute zero might, imaginatively, be defined as molecular death, because a substance which has lost all temperature has necessarily lost all molecular, or internal, energy and has become entirely inert.—New York Journal.

**Wood in Flying Machine.**

Flying machines are made almost entirely of wood. The propellers of the aeroplanes are in most instances made of selected ash, which, in addition to being strong and light, will not split under vibration or shock. Built up layers of spruce with mahogany centers are also in use. Spruce is used in the construction of the frame because of its markedly straight grain and freedom from hidden defects.—Washington Star.

**Installation Plan.**

Bill—Thought you said you were going to buy a cow?  
Jill—Well, I'm doing it.  
Bill—Where is it?  
Jill—Over at my neighbor's. I'm buying it on the installment plan. I've bought a lot of the milk already.—Yonkers Statesman.

**Investigating His Credit.**

"Say, Brooks, can I borrow a little money from you until next pay day?"  
"Why—yes, I suppose so. How much do you want?"  
"None at all, dear boy. I only wanted to satisfy myself that my credit was good."—London Standard.

\* worked with patience, which means almost power.—Mrs. Browning

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