

INCIDENT OF THE TELEPHONE

I don't profess to be able to see further into a brick wall than my neighbors, but it really required no extraordinary degree of intelligence to perceive that my nephew Gerald was very much in love with little Amy Creswell. When two young people of opposite sexes living in different parts of town accept invitations to the same houses on six successive evenings, you won't persuade me in a hurry that the fact is due entirely to mere chance.

The Creswells were staying at the Hotel Albermarle for a few days, and it was a significant fact that Gerald was constantly sending the club commissaire with little notes to that hotel. I wasn't therefore, in the least surprised the other evening, soon after we arrived at the Willards' to dinner, to hear the Creswells announced, and I laughed in my sleeve when I called to mind the sudden eagerness which my nephew had shown in calling on the Willards when he found out that they were friends of the Creswells.

I don't pretend to know how these things are managed, but somehow or other it happened that Miss Amy and my nephew sat next to one another at dinner that evening.

I was a discreet but interested observer of what took place. Although I am myself a confirmed old bachelor, and consequently little versed in the art of detecting the symptoms which indicate the existence of the tender passions in others, yet on this occasion I saw quite enough to convince me as to how the land lay. When Gerald looked at his neighbor, her eyes were always demurely cast down, but when his gaze happened to be directed elsewhere she would steal a shy glance at him out of the corners of her eyes—and little Amy certainly has very nice eyes.

It has always appeared to me that the course of true love would run smoothly enough but for the wanton way in which lovers create obstacles to the fulfillment of their own desires.

That Gerald was no exception to the ordinary run of lovers in this respect I soon had cause to realize, for he and Amy Creswell had a tiff at dinner that very evening, which, but for a happy inspiration on the part of the writer of this simple tale, might have ended in their permanent estrangement. It was all on account of a certain Captain Lachmere, of whom Gerald didn't happen to approve, and who had been for some time paying marked attention to Miss Amy Creswell.

That young lady didn't really care a button for the man in question, but she was not unaturally resentful at any attempt on Gerald's part to put a stop to her intimacy with him. Accept my word for it, if you want to throw a woman into another man's arms, just abuse that other man in her hearing.

If my nephew had been a man of the world, he would not have made such a blunder; but you cannot put old heads on to young shoulders, and when a youthful head is under the influence of a youthful heart, which, in its turn is subject to the disturbing influence of the tender passion, there is really no telling what complications may arise. And so it came to pass that before dinner was half over these two young people were engaged in as pretty a little quarrel as you could well wish to see.

Of course, neither of them supposed for an instant that I or anybody else had heard a word of their dispute, for their conversation was carried on in low tones, and to all appearance I had been listening with deep attention to the voluble utterances of a formidable lady on my right hand, who was laying down the law on the subject of the extension of the franchise to women; but in the course of an acquaintance with what is so appropriately termed "Polite Society," one acquires the valuable knack of carrying on the conversation with one person while one's attention is really mainly occupied with something which is going on elsewhere.

"You are perfectly right, Miss Creswell," said Gerald stiffly, "I had no business to say what I did about a gentleman who appears to be such a particular friend of yours. Please consider my remarks as withdrawn." And with this he turned to his right hand neighbor, May Walshe, and commenced to chatter with a really surprising degree of animation.

Poor little Miss Creswell was for the moment placed at a disadvantage, for however much she may have desired to retaliate, it was rather a forlorn hope for her to attempt to make Gerald jealous by commencing a flirtation with me; but there happened to be no body else available at the moment, and a woman is capable of any folly when she is angry, with a man whom she really likes, and, to my intense amusement, little Amy, actually began to make the experiment.

I laughed in my sleeve when this more child, whom I remembered in short frocks, opened her feigned attack upon me; but I consciously did my best to help the situation along handsomely and I really felt quite gratified when presently I observed that Gerald's animated conversation with Miss Walshe was beginning to flag, and that he was casting glances of unmistakable surprise and annoyance in my direction.

my nephew's age! I should know how to use my opportunities. "But you aren't really a bit old, and besides men never understand us a bit until they have had twenty years' experience of the world."

Undoubtedly this remark was intended as a side shot at my nephew; but that youth gave no sign of having heard the remark. "I fear that we never really understand you thoroughly," said I; "the study of your charming sex is like the study of a book each page of which requires pages and pages of explanation."

"Have you read much of the book?" asked Amy, with a little sidelong glance out of the corner of her grey eyes. "I never got further than the first chapter," I replied with a sigh. "And what did you find to prevent you from getting further?"

"I found that twenty different women might possess twenty different sets of charming qualities, all so deliciously attractive and so eminently desirable that for the life of me I could not make up my mind to content myself with any one of the dear creatures to the exclusion of the rest; and as, unfortunately the custom of the country in which we live does not permit a man to be married to more than one woman at a time, I am obliged to remain a forlorn old bachelor—I love too much to love exclusively."

"I think you put that rather nicely," said Amy reflectively; "but isn't that a pretty excuse for a man's inconstancy?"

"My dear young lady," said I, laughing, "constancy is only another name for narrow mindedness. Suppose, for instance, that I had been married ten years ago, what would have been my position at the present moment?"

"I don't quite understand, Mr. Stevens." "Miss Creswell is evidently unaware of her own attractions," said I; "there is a marginal note, destructive to previous attachments against your name in the book of which I was speaking."

"You mustn't talk nonsense," said my little neighbor demurely; but, between ourselves, I fancy that she was not particularly vexed at the innuendo.

"What about men from a woman's point of view?" she continued presently. "Are you men such paragons that you poor women must be satisfied with a share of one of you?"

"There are not enough to go around," I murmured. "Suppose now that we started the theory that no man possessed more than one or two of the many virtues which a perfect man should possess?" continued Amy, ignoring my interruption.

"That's just the difficulty," said I. "We are all so sadly unequal to the requirements of the case. Either we are too young or too old, too tall or too short, too amiable or too exacting, too ardent or too cold, too ugly or not handsome enough."

"That's the same thing," interrupted Amy. "Pardon me; there is a subtle difference."

"And you yourself, Mr. Stevens?" "I fear," said I, with a regretful glance at my pretty companion, "that in these days most ladies consider me too old for anything but a stop-gap."

"And how do you yourself feel on that point?" Upon my word when I talk to you I almost begin to feel that you are right and that I am not so very old, after all.

"Is it a pleasant illusion, Mr. Stevens?" "It has its drawbacks," said I. "Which are—?" said Amy, raising her pretty arched eyebrows.

"My nephew is one of them just now," said I, glancing at Gerald, and in truth the boy's rueful countenance did rather take the edge off my appreciation of the situation.

"He's horribly cross to-night," said Amy, "and it serves him right!" "Tell me," said I, suddenly looking full at my little neighbor, "does it give you pleasure to make him unhappy?"

"Poor little Amy's lip quivered, but she replied, 'He shouldn't have been so horrid about Captain Lachmere.' "I have no doubt Captain Lachmere is a very charming man," said I; "but—"

"I hate him!" said Amy, pointing, "and if your nephew had any sense, he would know that!" "Of course, he ought to, especially as you said that the gentleman was one of your particular friends and that you liked him so much!"

"You mustn't take everything which a woman says about one man to another man too literally." "It is perhaps wise to allow a liberal discount," I agreed.

At this moment Mrs. Willard gave the signal for the ladies to retire, and our conversation was brought to an untimely end.

We men were left to enjoy our cigars, and as I puffed meditatively at an excellent Havana, I really felt at peace with all the world.

Poor Gerald sat in moody silence, and when we joined the ladies he declined to notice the vacant seat next to Amy and went over to where that wicked little flirt, May Walshe, was sitting, and commenced quite a voluble conversation.

I fancy that the young lady in question rather enjoyed her triumph over Amy, for Gerald was an eminently respectable youth, and before Miss Creswell had appeared upon the scene he had flirted a good deal with this Miss Walshe. And we all know that, however amiable a girl may be, she does not, as a rule, regard with sincere cordiality the rival who has supplanted her in the heart of a man. And so the situation stood when it was time for us to depart.

"What a delightful girl that little Miss Creswell is!" said I to my nephew as we were driving home. "So you appeared to think," said Gerald drily. "For my part I hate all women."

"At your age, my dear boy, such sentiments are really incomprehensible." "Wait until you've been treated by a woman as I have," said Gerald gloomily.

I maintained what I still contend was a most exemplary expression of gravity, and asked my nephew what had occurred to cause him to take such an unfavorable view of the sex.

"She's a heartless little flirt," replied Gerald fiercely, "and I've done with her."

"It struck me that you were making the running fairly free with Miss Walshe," I observed casually.

"Oh, that's quite a different thing," replied my nephew, quite unabashed. "May Walshe knows that I am not in earnest, but Amy must know that I love her."

"You have told her so, I suppose?" "Well, not exactly; but she knows it as well as though I had done so."

"Oh, just so," said I; "still perhaps, if you were a little more explicit—"

"I've finished with the girl," said Gerald gloomily, "and I'm not going to see her again if I can help it."

For the next few days Gerald acted upon this resolve, and certainly during that time he was not altogether a desirable companion.

It really was too absurd. Here were two foolish young people, genuinely fond of one another, and yet determined to quarrel about a perfectly trivial matter, simply because both were too proud to make the first overtures to bring about a reconciliation.

Amy was moping because Gerald made no attempt to see her, and my nephew's manner was daily becoming more and more morose. If Gerald's mamma had been in town, or if the girl had had a mother to whom she could have confided her trouble, the whole thing might have been put right in five minutes, but as things stood, there was every chance of these two misguided young people ending their days in single blessedness.

After four or five days of this kind of thing, I came to the conclusion that it was desirable for me to do something to help matters along a little, as anything would be better than the continuation of the existing state of affairs.

I thought the matter over carefully one night, as I smoked my usual after dinner cigar, and by the time I had finished my weed I had decided upon my plan of campaign.

"What are your plans for to-morrow, Gerald?" said I. "I haven't any," replied my nephew, moodily.

"Well, then, you might come with me and leave a card at the Willards; we haven't been near the house since we dined there last Wednesday."

"I am sick of the whole fare of social intercourse; but I'm ready to do anything you like, Uncle Jack," said Gerald indifferently.

Gerald's was clearly a bad case. I rose from my comfortable chair, put on my hat and overcoat and strolled down to the club.

It really was a striking instance of self-sacrifice on the part of an old fogey. If I hadn't the slightest personal desire to go out that night.

When I arrived at the club I went straight to the telephone cupboard and rang up the Hotel Albermarle. Miss Creswell was "at home."

I awaited the reply to this question with considerable anxiety. Presently the little bell rang.

"Miss Creswell will be at the telephone in a minute."

I had made up my mind to attempt a manoeuvre which required some little finesse for the securing of its success. Presently Miss Amy's voice came faintly along the wire: "Yes; who is it?"

"Is that you, Amy?" I replied boldly. "Yes; who are you?"

"Gerald Stevens," said I, with mental reservations.

"I fancied that I heard a little exclamation of pleased surprise; but whether this was so or not I could not be positively certain; however, the next sentence which reached my ear through the instrument was spoken in tones of perfect unconcern."

"What is it that you have to say to me, Mr. Stevens?" "Oh, Amy," I replied, in the most soothing tone I could muster, "don't speak to me like that; I've been so miserable ever since we quarreled the other night!"

"That only serves you right," came clearly through the ear trumpet; but I fancied that I caught two little words in a much lower tone, that sounded like "Poor boy!"

"Oh, Amy," I continued, "don't be so cruel as to say that you won't forgive me, for it was only because I am so fond of you that I was so rude the other evening."

"Well, Gerald, you were rather horrid, I think; but, if you will promise never to be unkind to me again, I will forgive you for this once."

"I promise," said I; "but I wish we could kiss and make friends."

"That would hardly be proper, I'm afraid; besides, you see, you could only kiss my ear, which would not be very satisfactory, would it? And how do I know that you are the only person at your end of the wire?"

"I swear there's nobody except myself said I equivocally; besides, you might put the trumpet to your lips."

"I shall ring off if you say another word."

"Don't do that," I entreated; "the operator might intercept my message."

"Well, then, you must not talk nonsense."

"I was never more serious in my life," I replied; and really it was rather a serious situation for an old bachelor getting on for fifty to be talking nonsense at one end of a wire with a charming girl of eighteen at the other.

that view of the situation," said Miss Amy demurely. "Now I come to think of it," said I reflectively, "perhaps he does not; but it is rather cruel of you to experiment with an old gentleman's susceptibilities."

"I will never do it again, Gerald; but he's an old dear, and I think he will forgive me, Don't you?"

"Possibly," said I laughing. "Tell me, Gerald, have you really been unhappy because of our little tiff?"

"Miserable. And you?" "It's very vain of you to ask that question, Gerald; but perhaps I have been a little bit sorry."

"Then, Amy, do you love me just a wee scrap?" "That's a very improper question to ask a girl through the telephone; in fact, I think the whole of this conversation is very incorrect, and if you ever breathe a syllable about it to anybody, I'll never speak to you again."

"The severity of the punishment would be proportioned to the heinousness of the crime," I replied. "I will never allude to this incident again as long as I live—even to you."

"If you will promise that faithfully I'll forgive you for this once. Do you promise?"

"With all my heart," said I. "Good night, Gerald."

"Good night, dearest," I replied. I could have sworn that the soft little sound which followed Miss Amy's good night was not caused by the hanging up of the receiver; but before I had time to try a little experiment on my own account, I was disgusted to hear the voice of the operator at the exchange asking whether I had done with Number—

"Number— has done with me, I'm afraid," said I; and before the puzzled operator had time to ask what I meant, I "rang off." There are some things which one cannot explain even to a telephone operator.

I walked slowly home. "There's no fool like an old fool," I thought, as I felt about with my latch-key for the keyhole; "unless it's a young fool." I mentally added a moment later, as I observed poor Gerald gazing disconsolately into the dying embers of the fire.

"Where have you been during the last hour?" said Gerald presently.

"I have been making love to a charming girl," said I cheerfully. "Gerald was rude enough to laugh."

"And I flatter myself that she wasn't altogether displeased with the performance," I added, with a self-satisfied air. "As for you, you young dog!" I proceeded, severely, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself. What business have you to be sulking here at home, while a pretty girl has been wearing the willow for the last week on your account?"

"How do you know that?" said Gerald, with the nearest approach to cheerfulness that I had observed in him for some days.

"A particular friend of hers told me that it was so," said I; "but if you ever dare to let her know that I told you, I'll disinherited you as sure as my name is Jack Stevens."

"I should deserve it," said my nephew. Of course, Gerald and Amy Creswell met at the Willards' the following afternoon, and Amy's manner was so cordial to my nephew that the dear boy was firmly convinced that she was trying to show him how anxious she was to make up their little quarrel.

A week later their engagement was publicly announced. The best of it is that to this very day each believes that the other took the first step towards a reconciliation.

RANGOON ROMANCE.

A Rich English Girl Fell in Love with a Burmese When on Exhibition.

The scent of this story is in London, but the tale itself comes all the way from Rangoon. It is told by the Rangoon Times, which prints it on the authority of no less a person than a deputy commissioner.

A showman took a few Burmese families to London, where they gave an idea of village life in the Crystal Palace. There was one young and handsome Burmese, who won the love of a young woman of education and wealth. She has acres in Maidstone, a place in Dartford, fruit gardens outside of Canterbury, and other possessions. She is twenty-eight years old and nice looking.

The Burman and the English woman met nightly, despite the protestation of her friends. While the fireworks were on they used to walk around the pavilion and make love to each other. The most active effort of her friends could not keep them apart.

The Burmese were stranded, and all of them, except the fortunate young man, who won an English sweetheart, had an experience in the poorhouse before they were sent back home.

The young man was sent back rather hurriedly, and perhaps the friends of the young woman had something to do with it. But she would not relinquish her brown sweetheart. An order was sent to Rangoon to find the Burman and ship him to London immediately. His passage has been prepaid. The Burman was supposed to be working in the jungle near Mandalay when the Rangoon newspapers printed the story.

DR. CHARLOIN'S CHOLERA CURE.

According to advices by the Empress of China cholera is raging in Java and the mortality is terrible. Dr. Charloin is becoming famous for his treatment of those afflicts. His prescription consists of muriate of quinine, tannic acid, and morphia in powders. The cures from this prescription are said to be marvellous.

A QUEER ADVERTISEMENT.

Anything but a compliment to some one is implied in the following advertisement, which a French provincial journal publishes:

FOR SALE—One monkey, two puddle-dogs, and a parrot. The owner, Mademoiselle L., being about to marry, has no further use for these animals.

HIS EYES ARE IN HIS NOSE

A FRENCHMAN, THOUGH SIGHTLESS, CAN SEE.

Similar Case on Record—Strange Story of a Blind Farmer With a Wonderful Olfactory Organ—No Chance for Impairment.

A Paris paper published a few days ago an account of a man who can see through his nose. This extraordinary person, it seems, was born blind, and by systematic training has been enabled to make his nasal organ take in some measure the place of his eyes. The story was read far and wide, and it is safe to say that the majority of readers gave little credence to it. Extraordinary things are daily happening, but most of them are conceivable, and hence credible. But how is it possible for a man to see through his nose?

Many asked this question and waited in vain for a satisfactory answer. If such persons, however, will look into an old book, which was printed at Nuremberg, in 1702, they will find a record of a case very similar to that recorded in the Paris journal. This book is entitled "Oculus Artificialis Telescopicus Sive Telescopium Est," and it is the work of the distinguished German scholar, Johann Zahn. Copies of it are very rare, and the one which was consulted in the present instance was found in the University of Bologna.

TWO STRANGE ACCIDENTS.

The man who, according to Zahn, could see through his nose was a farmer. While he was still an infant he met with a serious accident, which resulted in the loss of his right eye. A few years after he fell from a cherry tree, and lost his left eye. His nose and left cheek were terribly mangled at the same time, and it was a year before the wound was healed. When he was well enough to go out of doors the blind lad would sit in the garden and warm himself in the sun.

Now one day he fancied that he saw through his nose a dim ray of light. He was naturally puzzled, but next day he noticed the same unaccountable phenomenon. A week after week and month after month he looked for this ray of light, and, strange to say, it not only never failed him, but, as time passed, it grew more constant and more potent, until, at the end of five years, he was able to see all objects within a reasonable distance. Here, however, is a curious fact. He was able to see all objects on the ground or in front of him, but he could not see any objects above him. Zahn vouched for the truth of these statements and said that the distinguished physician, Heinrich Spexius, was also ready to make an affidavit as to their truth.

BOTH EYEBALLS DESTROYED.

Sceptics may say that the man was shamming, but, as both eyeballs were lost, it is difficult to see how shamming was possible. Of course, the man may have imagined that he saw objects on the ground or in front of him, but, according to Zahn, he was subjected to all eye witnesses that he was not imposing on them.

There must be some explanation of this amazing phenomenon, and, if there is really in France now a person who can see through his nose, he certainly deserves to be made the subject of serious study.

LOTS OF COUNTERFEITS.

U. S. Officials Struggling Against an Avalanche of the "Queer."

The United States secret service bureau is struggling with an epidemic of counterfeit. Hardly a day passes without the arrest of from one to half a dozen persons detected in passing spurious notes or silver coin. It is evident that there is a large volume of counterfeit silver afloat and that the circulation is continually being diluted with that sort of material. When these certificates were first put out expert engravers predicted that counterfeiters would be tempted to resume activities, and the result shows that they were not wrong in their prophecy. As works of art these certificates may be very fine, but for purposes of money they were shockingly deficient in many of the safeguards which the department had provided against counterfeiting.

Government detectives have been instructed to be on the watch for bogus silver dollars the tip having been given the Treasury Department that a move was being made in some mysterious and unknown quarter for the minting of such dollars on a large scale the coins to have the same amount of silver as the genuine, and to be in exact similitude of the coin bearing the stamp of the United States mints. Thus far the department has not been able to locate any of this ill-fated product, and it is not believed any of the bogus dollars of that sort are yet in circulation, but that is no guaranty that the country may not at any time be flooded with them. At the present price of silver bullion there is a margin of 60 cents on every dollar privately minted.

TAKING NO CHANCES.

Then there is no hope, doctor? asked the fair woman, her face bedewed with the tears of a great grief.

None at all, answered the savant, murmuring, "How she must love him in a soft aside."

You are sure? Perfectly sure. Well, I'll risk it. I'd hate, though, to buy that bit of black goods and have him get well on me.