

THE SPORT OF GREASE.

(The author begs to gratefully acknowledge the considerable metrical assistance he has received from the late Lord Byron.)

The spots of grease, the spots of grease,
That linger on my old suit still,
That date from days of pleasant peace,
Before I tumbled down the hill!
I have not found their equal yet;
No king has got a better set.

My trousers do not fit my coat,
Nor do my coat and vest fit me;
The wardrobe woman would not quote
A price for any of the three;
But, seeing what a suit they've been,
I can't desert them now they're green.

This spot's a steak, and that's a chop;
This spot's records, and that one beef;
These from a tilted candle drop,
But not a from hunger, thirst or grief,
Though I have tumbled down the hill,
My spots of grease cling to me still.

I have no other suit to wear
No matter what the weather be—
I'll leave the genial grease spots there;
To scour them out were treachery!
From every spot glad memories spring,
But benzolin's a transient thing.

—From Pick-Me-Up.

A LONG BLACK GLOVE.

The wife of Contract-Doctor Rocheforte had passed the age when a woman is accounted most fascinating; but she was still dangerous, boldly and avowedly so. She was of Eastern type of beauty and had large brown eyes, distinctly blackened, curving full lips, brilliantly painted, and a skin naturally white, crusted with liquid powder. She affected rich colors and long lines of drapery, and fought hard for the attention of the officers. She went to the garrison hops, but she never danced, realizing that the whirl of a waltz would destroy the Oriental illusion; her card was filled, but she sat the numbers out, either in the corner, where a drapery of a flag upheld by several gaudious made some seclusion, or upon the steps of the hop-room.

She was on the steps at present with Farnsworth, the adjutant, and she felt that she had managed well in getting him at all, for he was one of the several who refused to play moth to her candle.

"It was so warm in there," she droned, in her soft contralto voice. "I feel the cool air out here on my neck."

The tone was a challenge, to call attention to her round, long throat; but Farnsworth sat gazing abstractedly at the lights in the windows of the Infantry Club. Mrs. Rocheforte shivered audibly.

"Are you really cold?" asked Farnsworth, promptly. "Haven't you better put your wrap on? Where is it—in the room?"

"No, I brought it with me. But I think it makes me cold to sit here. Suppose we stroll up and down."

"Certainly, if you let me run in and settle with Miss Lucy, which half of the dance is to be mine; there has been some muddle in the writing down. I shall be only a moment," he added, as he wrapped the soft cloak around the woman and then disappeared through the door.

"I can't find her, she must be off somewhere," he said, as he rejoined Mrs. Rocheforte.

"You seem distressed. You shouldn't be, though you are a little in love. Lucy must have some fun herself; she likes a good time as well as you do. And besides, I fancy she rather likes Mr. Staples, too. Oh, you mustn't move so impatiently; Mr. Staples is not half the bad fellow you think, and he makes love charmingly. It depends entirely upon the woman just how much love he will dare to make, that's all."

"He is not a fit associate for any young girl."

"He is a fit associate for any girl who requires 'fit associates,' which is about all, I believe, that can be said for the average man. And then—Lucy seems to like him. Doesn't she?"

"If one can judge by the number of times she has let him put his name on her card, yes."

"Well, one can judge by that; it is the only way."

There was a few moment's silence, during which Farnsworth's blood absorbed the poison, then he broke out: "I'll risk it on the second half of that dance. Let's have a glass of champagne over at the club."

"But the lights are all out."

"What difference does that make?—to you?" he added under his breath.

"None. I'll go but it isn't quite proper."

"What difference does that make?—to you?" Farnsworth repeated.

"None, again; if we are not caught. But what I meant when I objected to the darkness, was that we wouldn't be able to find the wine. I was not being squeamish, though I tell you honestly, you are the only man I could risk being seen there for."

"I am very good."

"No, I am not good. I cannot help it. I wish I could."

"Don't try."

"Are you glad?" she whispered, leaning a little more heavily on his arm.

"Am I glad?" When you are a beautiful woman! How can you ask? He turned his eyes upon hers—her eyes that looked so gorgeous in the starlight.

After an instant she shifted her gaze to the ground, and caught sight of a long dark glove lying at her feet. She knew it was Lucy's glove. It was one of that young lady's harmless little affectations to wear immensely long black gloves in the evening, and she had been the only woman at the hop who had had them. It all flashed through the beautiful creature's brain in an instant, and in that instant she had bent over and for ward, making the folds of her long wrap swept outward, and cover the glove; then she stooped and picked it up, the movement quite hidden under the cloak. "I dropped my handkerchief," she explained to Farnsworth as she rose again.

For a while she was silent, thinking out a course of action. Some women's silence is more caressing than speech. Mrs. Rocheforte was one of these women. Farnsworth fancied she was silent enjoying still and savoring to the utmost the deep looks they had exchanged. Her chain of reasoning was not of that

sort. She realized that the glove she held crushed in her tinted palms would be a potent weapon in the destruction of Lucy's fair fame—the fair fame which she flaunted just a little in Mrs. Rocheforte's face, as virtuous and very young girls who have never felt the melting heat of temptation are apt to flaunt it before those who are under ever so slight a social ban. If Farnsworth's exploited devotion to Lucy could be cut off in its flower, perhaps he would turn to herself on the rebound. It was worth trying at any rate.

They had reached the club steps. "Tread lightly," cautioned the adjutant. "It won't do to get caught." He opened the door with a pass-key, followed the tall, draped figure into the dark hallway, and relocked the door. "I think we can manage to see in the dining-room by the light of the moon—what there is of it. My bottles of wine are in my private locker, so we'll have a little spree all to ourselves, and no one will be the wiser."

Farnsworth cut the wire and drew the cork quietly, muffling the sound as much as possible with his handkerchief. Mrs. Rocheforte held up the glass he had filled for her to the moonlight, and the man stood admiring her fine pose. It would have been a picture for some master of high light and deep shade.

When Farnsworth began to drink his wine, the hot hand under the cloak dropped the glove. They set the glasses down, and Farnsworth took up the bottle to refill them.

"I have dropped my lace pin," complained the woman at that moment, and she bent down and ran her hand along the rug.

"Wait," said the adjutant, "I'll strike a match."

Mrs. Rocheforte stood erect and moved well to one side. The glove was between them on the ground, as the light of the match flared up, and Farnsworth saw it before he caught sight of the glittering pin that had been thrown down near it.

"Is this your glove, too?" he asked, picking it up, and conscious of a familiar and lovingly remembered scent of jasmine.

"No; I haven't any with me. Why, it's Lucy's! Oh! no, maybe it isn't. It couldn't be; she, of all people, would never come in here."

"It is kind of you to defend her," answered Farnsworth, coldly, "but it is Lucy's glove, and she has been here." He put the glove in his pocket, and they finished the wine in silence.

"Aren't you going to close your locker?" she reminded him. He turned back and shut the door, and they crept out of the house together.

When they re-entered the hop-room everyone was dancing. Farnsworth looked ostentatious devotion into Mrs. Rocheforte's eyes as he asked if he might put his name on her card that evening.

"Yes, you may. Scratch out Mr. Wilbur's name; he is only a civilian." Farnsworth knew that Wilbur was a rich civilian, who gave fine dinners and presents, and he appreciated the compliment.

"I must claim the other half of this with Miss Lucy, now, if you will excuse me for a little while. Whom have you it with? Parker? Here he comes for you now."

The adjutant went over to where Lucy stood beside her partner. She looked even prettier than usual, Farnsworth realized with a pang, as she smiled at him and pushed back a teasing lock of hair. They swung off in the waltz, and he did not speak until the dance was finished; then he said, "Get your cape and come out on the steps." She obeyed him with alacrity.

"I have something of yours," he said, when they had left the room.

"Have you? What is it?"

"It is something you lost this evening."

"Oh! Is it my glove? I looked everywhere for it."

"You are frank, to say the least. I shouldn't tell, if I were you, where I had been."

The girl gave a great start. How did you know?" she blurted out.

"And I would choose more reputable companions," he went on.

"How did you know?" persisted Lucy weakly.

"I found the glove in the dining room of the club, where you dropped it, that's how."

"Of the club? But—and then she hesitated."

"But what?"

"Oh! nothing. Give it to me."

"Here it is. But I must have back in exchange my freedom. You will release me, of course."

"Oh! Hal, not that! Oh, if I could only explain it away."

"I'm afraid you can not. You have your glove," he added, after a moment's pause.

"And you?" she hesitated—"have back your word," and she ran with a little sob, down the hallway and into the dressing-room.

A few minutes later Lieutenant Staples, coming out on the steps, saw Farnsworth standing there alone. "Hello!" he exclaimed. "All alone?" Where's Miss Lucy?"

"I really can't say," replied Farnsworth, turning on his heel.

"You don't say! Phew! Come on over to the club and get something."

"Thank you, no. If you take my advice, you will keep away from there. You've been there often enough for one evening."

"Now, how in the deuce did you know I'd been there at all?" queried Staples, astounded.

"That is my business."

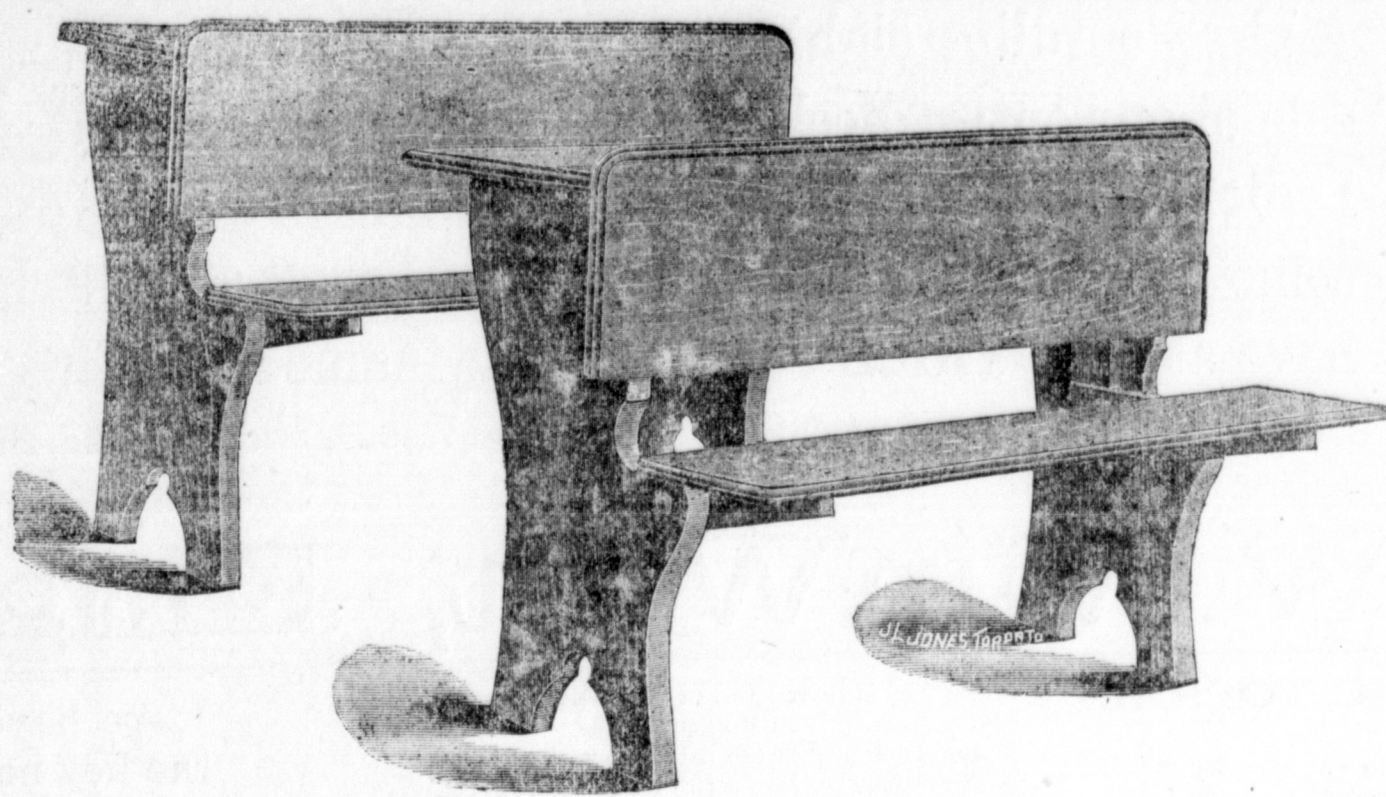
"I suppose it is, but don't give the lady away."

"Trust me for that. I am not risking the reputation of a woman," and the adjutant strode away.

"Of course, it mustn't be generally spoken of. I'd only tell it to you two," murmured Mrs. Rocheforte, after the lapse of several months. "It happened before your court-martial, Mr. Elsmere; the night of the hop given for the Stantons. Mr. Farnsworth found Miss Lucy's black glove on the club floor, when he went over to get something or other to drink. She had been out with Mr. Staples, the earlier part of the same dance, and you know Mr. Farnsworth hasn't any use for Mr. Staples. Of course, he guessed right away that she had been in the club after the lights were put out, alone with the man; so he accused her of it; and she wouldn't deny it, and Staples was trapped into admitting that he had been there."

Lieutenant Elsmere leaned forward anxiously. "At what time was this?"

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Hartland, Nov. 9, '95.

"About the fourth dance; about ten o'clock. Where are you going?"

"To find Farnsworth," he called, as he snatched his cap and ran down the steps.

Farnsworth was meditating over a cigarette and a newspaper in his quarters; he laid down the paper to greet his second lieutenant.

"Say, Farnsworth," he began at once, "I've just heard that you and Miss Lucy have had a split, because you found her glove in the club and thought she'd been there with Staples about ten o'clock; is that so?"

"I must ask by what right you speak of this?" said the adjutant.

"Because she was with me, not 'Staple.'"

Farnsworth rose to his feet. You are not helping matters. You probably forget that you were under arrest and confined to your quarters at that time. Did she go there?"

"No. I will put my commission in your hands. I broke my arrest and met her by appointment at the flag-post. Of course it's all up with me if you give me away."

"I won't. But why did you meet her?"

"To ask her to marry me. More fool I."

"She didn't deny having been at the club."

"She couldn't without risking my dismissal. Jove, it was noble of her!"

"Then who was there with Staples?"

"I have reason to think it was that madeap, Miss Hurlburt."

"There still remains the fact that the glove was there," muttered Farnsworth, thoughtfully. Then he drew back his head. "I have it! I understand it now. It wasn't that devilish woman's handkerchief; it was the glove, and the pin—was all part of the game."

"I suppose it was, though I don't know what you mean."

"You don't need to, but I'm eternally obliged to you, old fellow. That fiend of a woman!"

"Who?"

"Never mind. I'll go and fix things right now with Lucy."

An hour later Farnsworth's striker stood, cap in hand, at Elsmere's door. "The lieutenant says to tell you, sir, that it's all right and he has got the same glove, sir."

All right, Tupper. Tell him I say I'm very glad," and Elsmere sighed as the man saluted and turned away.—From The San Francisco Argonaut.

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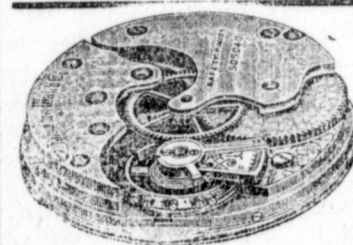
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