

## His Courier.

C. HENRY, IN THE SMART SET FOR MAY.

It was neither the season nor the hour when the park had frequenters; and it is likely that the young lady, who was seated on one of the benches at the side of the walk, had merely obeyed a sudden impulse to sit for a while and enjoy a foretaste of coming spring.

She rested there, pensive and still. A certain melancholy that touched her countenance must have been of recent birth, for it had not yet altered the fine and youthful contours of her cheek, nor subdued the arch through resolute curve of her lips.

A tall young man came striding through the park along the path near which she sat. Behind him tagged a boy carrying a suit-case. At sight of the young lady, the man's face changed to red and back to pale again. He watched her countenance as he drew nearer, with hope and anxiety mingled on his own. He passed within a few yards of her, but he saw no evidence that she was aware of his presence or existence.

Some 50 yards further on he suddenly stopped and sat on a bench at one side. The boy dropped the suit-case and started at him with wondering, shrewd eyes. The young man took out his handkerchief, and wiped his brow. It was a good handkerchief, a good brow, and the young man was good to look at. He said to the boy:

"I want you to take a message to that young lady on that bench. Tell her I am on my way to the station, to leave for San Francisco, where I shall join that Alaska moose-hunting expedition. Tell her that, since she has commanded me neither to speak nor write to her, I take this means of making one last appeal to her sense of justice, for the sake of what has been. Tell her that to condemn and discard one who has not deserved such treatment, without giving him her reasons or a chance to explain, whatever the cause may be, is contrary to her nature as I have believed it to be. Tell her that I have thus, to a certain degree, disobeyed her injunctions, in the hope that she may yet be inclined to see justice done. Go, and tell her that."

The young man dropped a half dollar into the boy's hand. The boy looked at him for a moment with bright, canny eyes out of a dirty, intelligent face, and then set off on a run. He approached the lady on the bench a little doubtfully, but unembarrassed. He touched the brim of the old plaid bicycle cap perched on the back of his head. The lady looked at him coolly, without prejudice or favor.

"Lady," he said, "dat gent on de oder bench sent yer a song and dance by me. If yer don't know de guy, and he's tryin' to do de Johnny act, say de word, and I'll call a cop in three minutes. If yer does know him, and he's on de square, w'y I'll spiel yer de bunch of hot air he sent yer."

The young lady betrays a faint interest. "A song and dance!" she said, in a deliberate sweet voice that seemed to clothe her words in a diaphanous garment of impalpable irony. "A new idea—in the troubadour line, I suppose. I—used to know the gentleman who sent you, so I think it will hardly be necessary to call the police. You may execute your song and dance, but do not sing too loudly, it is a little early yet for open-air vaudeville, and we might attract attention."

"Aw," said the boy, with a shrug down the length of him, "yer know what I mean, lady. Tain't a turn, it's wind. He told me to tell yer he's got his collars and cuffs in dat grip for a scoot clean out to Frisco. Den he's goin' to shoot snowbirds in the Klondike. He says yer told him not to send 'round no more pink notes nor come hangin' over de garden gate, and he takes dis means of puttin' yer wise. He says yer refereed him out like a has-been, and never gave him no chance to kick at the decision. He says yer swiped him, and never said why."

The slightly awakened interest in the young lady's eyes did not abate. Perhaps it was caused by either the originality or the audacity of the snowbird hunter, in thus circumventing her express commands against the ordinary modes of communication. She fixed her eye on a statue standing disconsolate in the disheveled park, and spoke into the transmitter:

"Tell the gentleman that I need not repeat to him the description of my ideals. He knows what they have been and what they still are. So far as they touch on this case, absolute loyalty and truth are the ones paramount. Tell him that I have studied my own heart as well as I can, and I know its weakness as well as I do its needs. That is why I decline to hear his pleas, whatever they may be. I do not condemn him through hearsay or doubtful evidence, and that is why I made no charge. But, since he persists in hearing what he already well knows, you may convey the matter."

"Tell him that I entered the conservatory that evening from the rear, to cut a rose for my mother. Tell him I saw him and Miss Ashburton beneath the pink oleander. The tableau was pretty, but the pose and juxtaposition were too eloquent and evident to

require explanation. I left the conservatory, and, at the same time, the rose and my ideal. You may carry that song and dance to your impresario."

"I'm shy on one word, lady. Jux—jux—put me wise on dat, will yer?"

Juxtaposition—or you may call it propinquity—or, if you like, being rather too near for one maintaining the position of an ideal."

The gravel spun from beneath the boy's feet. He stood by the other bench. The man's eyes interrogated him, hungrily. The boy's were shining with the impersonal zeal of the translator.

"De lady says dat she's on to de fact that gals is dead easy when a feller come spiellin' ghost stories and tryin' to make up, and dat's why she won't listen to no soft-soap. She says she caught yer dead to rights, huggin' a bunch o' calico in de hot-house. She side-stepped in to pull some posies, and yer was squeezin' de oder gal to beat de band. She says it looked cute, all right all right, but it made her sick. She says yer better git busy, and make a sneak for de train."

The young man gave a low whistle, and his eyes flashed with a sudden thought. His hand flew to the inside pocket of his coat, and drew out a handful of letters. Selecting one, he handed it to the boy, following it with a silver dollar from his vest pocket.

"Give that letter to the lady," he said, "and ask her to read it. Tell her that it should explain the situation. Tell her that, if she had mingled a little trust with her conception of the ideal, much heartache might have been avoided. Tell her that the loyalty she prizes so much has never wavered. Tell her I am waiting for an answer."

The messenger stood before the lady. "De gent says he's had de ski-bunk put on him without no cause. He says he's no bum guy; and, lady, yer read dat letter, and I'll bet yer he's a white sport, all right."

The young lady unfolded the letter, somewhat doubtfully, and read it.

Dear Mr. Arnold,—I want to thank you for your most kind and opportune aid to my daughter last Friday evening, when she was overcome by an attack of her old heart-trouble in the conservatory at Mrs. Waldron's reception. Had you not been near to catch her as she fell and render proper attention, we might have lost her. I would be glad if you would call and undertake the treatment of her case.

Gratefully yours,

Robert Ashburton.

The young lady refolded the letter, and handed it to the boy.

"De gent wants an answer," said the messenger, "Wot's de word?"

The lady's eyes suddenly flashed on him, bright, smiling and wet.

"Tell that guy on the other bench," she said, with a happy, tremulous laugh, "that his girl wants him."

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### London's Cadi.

The English papers are printing many amusing anecdotes of Commissioner Kerr, who recently at the age of eighty retired from the bench of the City of London court, which he had occupied for forty-two years. The aged Scotsman has been a fine old judge, says the London Daily Mail—capable, caustic, rugged, original, fearlessly honest, concealing under a crusty exterior a kindly heart.

He was an enormous worker, and always alert to economize time, one of his saving methods being to cut off redundant evidence. "Don't want any more witnesses," he would say to a lawyer. "You've proved your case; now you are only trying to run up costs. Sit down."

More saving of time was effected by his method of summing up. Frequently it was something like this: "Gentlemen—You have hear-r-d the evidence just as well as I ha' hear-r-d it myself. I just leave the case to the cawman sense which juries are supposed to possess. Cawnseder your verdict."

He was a maker of phrases. That now famous maxim, "Every dog is entitled to his first bite," was the commissioner's way of

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settling forth that a dog must have won a character for savageness before a claim could be made against its master.

In a housebreaking charge before him once the delinquent was an eleven-year-old boy who had broken and entered a shop by lifting a latch and descending two steps in order to secure a handful of sweets. The commissioner protested against the employment of the whole criminal machinery of the country—policemen, magisterial healing, and Old Bailey trial—in so small a case. "The proper course to adopt," he said, "would have been to take the child into the back yard and to have inflicted punishment upon that part of his anatomy which a beneficent and far-seeing Nature had provided for the specific purpose."

He was the scourge of the money-lenders in the days of their unfettered exorbitance, and one Shylock who claimed his pound of flesh was served with Portia-like justice. The defendant had to pay. Although he had paid the original loan some four times over, he still owed as interest and charges nearly twice as much as he had borrowed. "You must pay this debt," said the commissioner, sternly, "but you will pay it at the rate of one penny a month." It will take that defendant exactly three hundred and eighty-five years to repay the amount at the specified rate.

### At the Change of Life

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### Davis and the Italian.

(Philadelphia "Saturday Evening Post.")

A pleasant story is told of Mr. Richard Harding Davis, and of how he once forced his ideas of courtesy upon another, even at personal risk.

Walking near old Fulton Market, New York, one morning, he saw coming toward him an Italian fish dealer and his wife—the wife with a heavy fish basket balanced upon her head, and the husband walking empty-headed, so to speak, by her side.

Mr. Davis flushed with indignation. "See there!" he said to his companion.

Then he walked up to the Italian. "Take that basket!" he commanded. "Carry it yourself, and be quick about it. We don't let women do this sort of thing in America."

The woman trembled and looked deprecatingly from one man to the other. It seemed as if she would prefer to carry two baskets rather than be even the innocent cause of her husband's anger.

The Italian slowly gathered what Davis meant, and his big fists doubled up and with an ugly scowl he made one step toward the novelist.

Although Davis is himself a large and athletic man, the Italian towered far above him, and seemed made of knotted muscles.

But Davis was undaunted, and something in his look, something in his firm athletic build and posture, made the Italian pause.

"Take that basket, and take it quick!" cried Davis, more mandatory than before; and the Italian giant hesitated, turned toward his wife, took the basket from her head, and walked off with it, while the woman trotted silently at his side.

### To Cure a Cold in One Day

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A writer in the London Spectator remembers to have seen the border country of Suffolk and Essex lighted night after night with blazing ricks, fired as a protest against the introduction of thrashing-machines. Where, to-day, he asks, is the man under fifty who can use a flail? The question is only an emphatic way of referring to labor-saving machinery. Imagine for a moment an attempt to harvest Western crops without a reaper.

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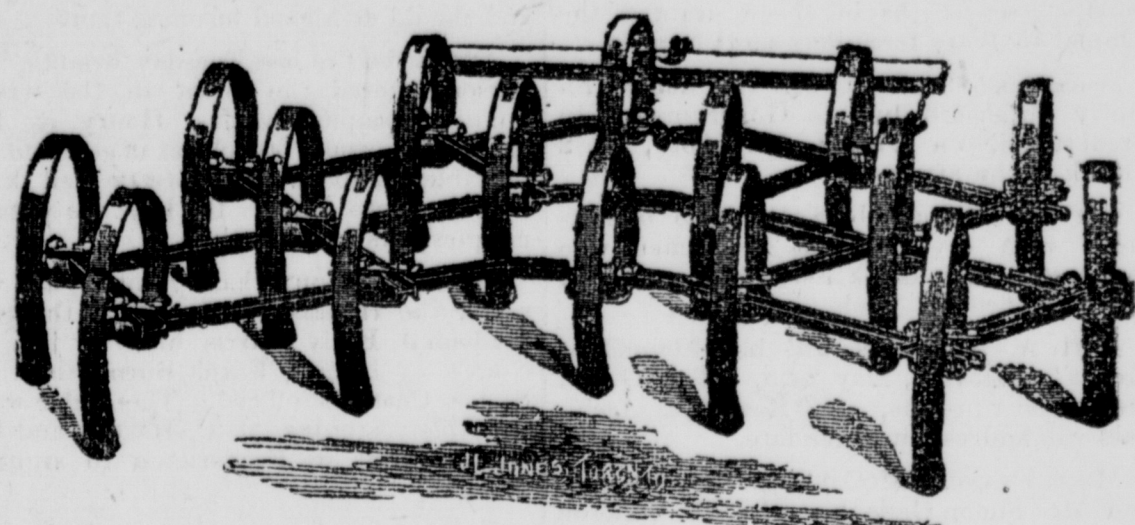
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