

**A SLIGHT MISCALCULATION**

(By Susan B. Robbins, in the 'Sunday Republican'.)

'But, aunt!' young Haygood's tone was mildly expostulating. 'It seems to me rather imprudent to begin to use your principal. By using just the interest you can live in comfort here. I should think you'd want to continue living quietly and happily here, as you always have done.'

Mrs. Drake smiled indulgently, but there were no signs of yielding in her manner. 'A great deal you know about whether I'm happy or not. I've been repressed, that's what I've been. I ought not to say anything in criticism of my poor husband, who is dead and gone, but he did not understand me.'

He treated me like a child. He meant well, poor man, but he did not know. But now I am going to enjoy my money. I'm going to do some of the things I've always wanted to do.

'But when it is gone,' suggested the nephew, 'what then?'

'I shall be gone, too,' she smiled at him brightly. 'Oh, I'm not so foolish and imprudent as you may think, I've figured it all out and I know exactly how much I can spend each year so as to have it last just as long as I do. You see my father and mother died at 70 years, and a number of my aunts and uncles died at the same age. To be sure, my grandfather on my father's side lived to be 95, but his wife died when she was only 45, so that evened things up. After all my figuring and calculating I have set the time of my departure from this life at exactly 70 years and two months. To be sure, I shall not leave any money behind me, but that will save the bother of making a will. I'm going to begin to enjoy myself right away, and the first thing will be to start for Southern California for the winter, and I leave in just a week. You see I am 60 now, and I've only got 10 years left, so I don't want to lose any time. It is too precious and will slip away all too quickly.'

Haygood rose to go. 'So you have made up your mind, aunt,' he said. 'Well, I hope you will have a delightful time every minute the next 10 years. And if you live to be older than 70 and need any assistance, let me know, won't you?'

Mrs. Drake smiled. 'I'll let you know, she said, 'but I shall not live to be any older. I have made my calculations very carefully, I'm not so strong as I seem, and if I have made any mistake it is on the side of coming short of 70.'

Haygood chuckled as he went down the stone steps to the sidewalk. 'I'll bet on her being good for a hundred, he said. 'I see where I'll have to

support her in her old age. She's a dear old lady, and I guess I'm good for it,' and he squared his broad shoulders as he walked briskly along the sidewalk.

It was Mrs. Drake's birthday, and she was 70 years old. She was observing the day quietly at her old home. There had been two reasons for her return. From the first she had so planned it, wishing to spend her last days there, and the end was set for two months from this day. But there was another and most imperative reason: Her money was all gone. Not that she was absolutely destitute, but her finances were so straightened that it was impossible to continue her travels and the expenses that they necessitated. She had spent rather more than she had planned, and there had been some unexpected bills which she had felt obliged to pay.

As she looked back upon the past 10 years her strongest feelings were regret and dissatisfaction. Some of her money she had spent for others, but that which she had used for herself had brought far less happiness than she had expected. At the first she had been as pleased and interested as a child, but soon she had become bored and over-critical, and the last few years had dragged wearily.

As she sat thinking of these things she was not happy. The ill use to which she had put her money and the nearness of her exit from life's stage were enough in themselves to cause distress of mind; but these things were of secondary importance, while it was the financial situation which weighed most heavily upon her.

What was she to do? The expenses of the coming two months were likely to be heavy, what with doctors, nurses, and all that was to come after. There was the house, but she knew that her husband's will provided that she was to have merely a life interest in that. She got up and paced the floor in her keen anxiety. It was the first time in her life that she had been worried about money matters, and for the first time since her husband's death she longed passionately for his masterful presence and for what she had called his repression of her, but what she now thought of as a blessed safeguard and protection.

In the futile groping for a way out of her difficulties she thought of young Haygood's offer of aid, but she repudiated it proudly. 'I'll go out as a scrub-woman,' she declared, 'before I will live on charity. Besides, he has a family now, I believe. I ought to go and see them, I suppose.'

At this point in her reflection the telephone bell rang, and she answered the call, impatient of the interruption, 'I have called you up to see if you can help a friend of mine,' said the voice from the other end of the wire. 'They are a lovely family, a man and

a wife and three children. They want to find an old lady who would come and help about taking care of the children, amuse them, tell them stories, do light sewing and be a companion for the mother. In fact, they want to adopt a salaried grandmother, but she must be intelligent and nice, you know. It would really be a lovely place for some nice old lady. You know so many people all over the country, I thought you might think of just the right one.'

'Why, no,' answered Mrs. Blake, slowly, 'I can't seem to think of anyone.' Then she caught her breath sharply. 'Oh, yes, I do,' she said eagerly. 'I know just the one. What is your friend's address?'

'Mrs. Marshall,' came the answer. 'Two hundred and seven Orchard street. So glad you know some one, and I hope you'll send your friend's name to Mrs. Marshall at once—G. D. V.'

'Good by,' said Mrs. Drake in a trembling voice. She walked excitedly about the room. 'I've found a way out! A salaried grandmother! Isn't that delightful?'

Suddenly she stood still, while a shadow crossed her face. 'I forgot,' she said slowly 'I forgot, it's only for two months. Oh, what shall I do? Well, I'll stay till I am taken sick, and then I can go to a hospital or something.'

It was the middle of that night that Mrs. Drake suddenly burst out laughing. She got up and turned on the electric lights and stood before her mirror, looking at herself long and earnestly. Then she turned out the lights and went back to bed, where she lay and laughed and chuckled to herself in the most absurd manner. 'I'm an old goose,' she said aloud. 'I'm in perfect health, and there's no earthly reason why I shouldn't live to be 100. And it's very fortunate, too, that I'm so well and strong, seeing that I've got to earn my living.' With another prolonged laugh she turned over and went to sleep.

It was the third week that she had held her position in the Marshall family, and sat darning stockings with Mrs. Marshall in the pleasant sitting-room.

'I don't know how I ever got on without you,' the younger lady was saying. 'You are such a help to me, and you are so cheerful and companionable. My husband will be delighted to find I have you with us, for I have kept it for a surprise when he comes home. And I want you to promise that you won't ever leave us. The children love you dearly, and I'm very fond of you myself. You won't ever leave us, will you?'

'Not till you request my resignation,' said Mrs. Drake, smiling. 'That is,' she added, 'unless Mr. Marshall and I should not get on together. You know that might make things less pleasant than they are now. When is it I am to meet him?'

'To-morrow,' answered Mrs. Marshall. 'He will be home from his trip

then. But I have no uneasiness on that score, for I know you will be very fond of each other.'

The next morning as Mrs. Drake came down to breakfast, she heard a man's voice in the dining-room. Then the children, hearing her step, ran out into the hall shouting, 'Papa has come—papa has come.'

As she entered the room the man of the house turned toward her and they stood confronting each other.

Mrs. Drake was the first to speak. 'Marshall Haygood!' she cried, and then her nephew kissed her affectionately. 'I shall hold you to the promise you gave Mary,' he said, 'and there won't be any trouble about our getting on together, will there?'

Mrs. Drake looked long in each of the faces about her, then she sighed contentedly. 'No,' she said. 'I don't think there will.'

**Scutari's Fate in the Balance.**

London May 1.—A proposal that the Montenegrin seaports of Antivari and Ducigno shall be occupied by a joint international force of Austrians, Italians and British troops as a further demonstration to King Nicholas that the European powers are to carry out their decision in regard to the inclusion of Scutari in the future State of Albania, is to be made at to-day's meeting of the ambassadors in London of the European nations.

Should Austria-Hungary accept this middle course, its adoption would allow time for further pressure being brought to bear on Montenegro and for the making of arrangements to provide her with compensation of some kind.

The reply of Montenegro to the demand of Europe for the evacuation of Scutari has been received by the powers. It is non-committal in character and keeps the door open for further negotiations.

The little kingdom of the Black Mountain tells its big neighbors that it has the greatest deference for them and declares the capture of Scutari to be in no way a defiance of their announced decision to give the former Turkish fortress to Albania. At the same time Montenegro suggests that there is room for discussion and reserves the right of bringing up the question of Scutari in the course of peace negotiations when the definite delimitations of Albania comes before the Balkan allies and the European powers. King Nicholas, thus, while he has not consented to yield Scutari, has opened the way for further discussion.

In the meantime arrangements are in progress for the definite conclusion of peace between the Balkan allies and the Turks. The European powers have requested the respective governments to appoint plenipotentiaries who on meeting in London will be invited to sign a draft of the preliminaries which the powers have already drawn up. This course has been adopted in order to prevent prolonged discussions.

The moderate tone of Montenegro's reply to the European powers has cleared much of the electricity of the diplomatic atmosphere and these is much more hopeful feeling that an early agreement will be reached.

The impression derived by diplomats here from the Montenegrin note is that King Nicholas is extending his hand waiting for the compensation which is

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to be offered him and that as soon as it is forthcoming he will quite Scutari.

The general belief now prevails that the danger point will be safely passed without a split in the concert of Europe.

BERLIN, May 2.—Political circles here are very reticent to day concerning the Montenegro situation, apparently awaiting information as to the result of the council of ministers at Vienna.

On the stock exchange, however, the activity of business indicated that the opinion prevailed there that the critical point of the situation had been passed. Speculators seemed to have reached the conclusions that the European powers would stick together and that Montenegro was preparing to back down.

**Fatal Results Of The Prairie Fires.**

MOOSEJAW, Sask, May 2—W. S. Woodward, government immigration agent for Moosejaw, returned from a trip through the burned out South country where he gave relief to settlers suffering from prairie fires. A conservative estimate of the loss is a quarter of a million. Gus Linberg and daughter, Mrs. Pease were turned to death and a son, Arthur, is now in Weyburn hospital in a precarious condition.

Homemade cakes will be nicer if the flour is put in ast.

**Reciprocity Between Canada And Australia**

LONDON, May 3.—The Daily Telegraph's Melbourne correspondent says: A provisional reciprocity trade agreement has been concluded by the Hon. Mr. Fisher, of New Zealand, and Hon. Mr. Tudor, of Australia, ministers of trades, subject to the approval of their respective parliaments, which it is fully anticipated, will be readily obtained. Negotiations for reciprocity between Canada and Australia are proceeding between Hon. George E. Foster and the Commonwealth government. The general principals have been accepted and the ministers authorized to state the agreement will undoubtedly mature shortly.

Cotton crepe is taking the place of chiffon to a great degree in millinery.

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time she was well and does not now complain about her back, the kidney secretions have become normal, and she plays around the house with no apparent fatigue. We always recommend Booth's Kidney Pills.

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