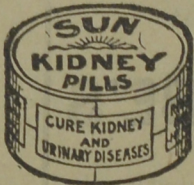


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DOG AND DIPLOMAT

By LOWELL OTUS REESE

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Magnolia was one of those quiet little towns by the southern sea where many people go to spend the winter. Its chief beauty lay in the wide forest of live oaks all about, through which wound the level driveway, with its accompanying bicycle path. The sea knocked lazily at the door, but never with enough energy to cause the quiet little town to give it any attention beyond that of an occasional midwinter bathing party or a clambaking expedition up the coast, where the rocks were large and black in the moonlight and the scene peculiarly adapted to the telling of ghost stories and the walks home eminently well suited to the telling of love stories which, while not so thrilling, were infinitely more satisfactory.

Carleton saw her on the avenue one morning. He watched her enter a certain house with magnolias in the front yard. She entered with an air of proprietorship, and Carleton promptly decided that it was her home. He strode away to the nearest drug store and by skillful diplomacy elicited from the benevolent old gentleman with spectacles that the house was occupied by Colonel Barclay of New York, and—

But Carleton promptly forgot the rest of it as being "irrelevant, incompetent and immaterial." He remembered the name, however, and he saw her again that evening—afar off.

He was a modest fellow, and he tried to keep out of sight. However, he thought about her most assiduously, and finally he dreamed about her. This was getting serious. To think all day about a girl you've never met and to dream about her all night is alarming and an indication that it is time for you to leave town or hunt up a mutual friend.

Carleton knew no one in Magnolia, and he could not induce himself to leave. He continued to haunt the beach and drive and tell his troubles to the big pointer, who always listened with an appreciative thump of the tail and a tremendous droop of his cavernous jaw.

One evening Carleton was lying upon the grass half a mile from town when suddenly the pointer sprang up with a startled bark and rushed out into the middle of the bicycle path, frisking and ready for a romp. He was just in time to collide with Miss Barclay's wheel and send that frightened young lady to the ground in an undignified heap.

Carleton ran out in a perfect agony of contrition. "It's all Don's fault!"

he cried. "I hope you won't—are you hurt?" he finished anxiously.

The young lady was regarding her muddy costume with mingled wrath and mortification. Her face burned a rosy red, and she sprang quickly upon her wheel and started with all speed from the scene of her tumble.

"He's a horrid, muddy beast," she half sobbed, "and if I owned him I would have him shot." Then with a half glance at the abject young man, who stood hat in hand, she swept around a bend in the road and was gone.

Carleton stood benumbed. "It's all over now," he sighed. "Don, you've done it this time all right." The poor pointer hung his head and slunk away to lie down behind a tree and watch his master with agonized, apprehensive eyes. He was guilty, but so sorry.

Carleton regarded him long and thoughtfully.

"Don, old boy," he said, "it's up to you. You've got to be sacrificed. It goes hard with me, old chap, but she has condemned you, and that settles it."

Don wagged his tail anxiously and with doubt. He didn't understand, only that things were not at all right and that there was trouble ahead.

When Miss Barclay came down the next morning she found the big pointer tied to a magnolia tree in her front yard. Affixed to his collar was a card. She stood for a moment in blank amazement looking at the dog. Don sat down and smiled at her, thrashing his tail vigorously among the leaves to tell her he was sorry, but mighty friendly.

The girl approached slowly. Don watched her, but made no extravagant demonstrations. It was a point in his favor and went far toward excusing his ill chosen frivolity of the day before.

Miss Barclay laid a tentative hand upon his head. Don looked into her eyes gravely, but made no effort to presume upon the short acquaintance by unseemly fawnings.

The girl smiled finally. "Whose dog are you, anyway?" she asked quizzically.

The pointer opened his wide jaws and laughed with a soft, panting breath. Then he solemnly raised the right paw and laid it in Miss Barclay's hand. Curiosity took possession of the girl, and she tore the card from the dog's collar and read it:

Dear Miss Barclay—Here is the bearer, Don, pursuant to your expressed wish of yesterday. Perhaps it is a bit cowardly, but I confess I haven't the heart to kill him myself. He and I have been chums a long time, and he is the only being I know in the whole south. So, while I express my deepest regret for the annoyance he caused you yesterday, let me bespeak for him an easy and painless death, for he has his good points. Very respectfully, ROBERT CARLETON.

"Well!" ejaculated Miss Barclay when she had read it. "Oh, my!" She glanced furtively up and down the street and across the way and seemed

about to run. Nobody was in sight, however, save a ragged negro boy carrying a valise around the corner. "How foolish of me!" she smiled. She read the note and looked at the dog. Don wigwagged her a friendly signal, and the tears came to her eyes. "Kill such a dear fellow! Never!"

She sat down on the grass and puckered her brows as she thought. Presently a light came into her eyes and she gasped. Then she frowned and smiled.

"Impudent rascal!" she said. "He's trying to get acquainted with me. It's perfectly outrageous of him!" She tried to be angry—very, very angry. But somehow she did not quite succeed. She remembered the picture of a tall, flushed young fellow with a well bred face standing before her with a look of miserable apology, and she was bound to confess that she was not able to feel just as indignant as she ought. She read the note once more.

"Impudent!" she said to Don. "Impudent—but—but clever!" and she laughed. The dog laughed back and whacked the ground violently with his tail.

Then the real serious part of the puzzle occurred to her. She did not know the man's address. How then could she send this valuable animal back to him? And really did she not owe him an apology for her rude remark to him yesterday? He had not been to blame, and he had tried so hard to apologize.

After awhile she decided to advertise—discreetly. It seemed the best solution of the distracting problem. She untied the rope and led the dog around to the rear of the house, where she turned him over to the housemaid, and went in to telephone her advertisement to the paper.

Fifteen minutes later she found herself out in the back yard again. Don's eyes met her reproachfully. He was confined ignominiously in a chicken coop.

Miss Barclay tried her best to think it was all right. Then she gave it up. He was such a splendid dog after all! She took him from the coop and allowed him the freedom of the back yard. Don did not abuse the privilege. He seemed to understand that he was on parole. He lay down at her feet and watched her adoringly. She wandered away to the hammock and tried to forget the whole incident in a book. Don followed, sat down and peered solemnly

over the edge of the hammock with grave eyes which seemed to say, "What are you going to do about it?"

That evening Carleton picked up the paper and read:

R. C.—Your dog has been pardoned and released on his own recognizance. Please come and get him. L. B.

And when Carleton called Don had been promoted. He was in the parlor, lying on the best Persian rug.

"Bless old Don!" said Carleton fervently six months later. "He caused it all. He's a diplomat worthy the court of St. James."

"Yes," said Miss Barclay, with a shy smile. "he's almost as great a diplomat as his master, save that he lacks his master's impudence."

"Perhaps," assented Carleton cheerfully, "but much goes with impudence which might possibly be missed by mere diplomacy." And he kissed her.

Indirect Answers.

Yankees are said to answer one question by another. Turks meet questions by another sort of evasion, quite as irritating. Sir A. Henry Layard says in his "Autobiography" that during a journey through Asia Minor he met a shepherd driving his flock.

I asked him how many goats he possessed.

His reply was, "As many as passed by you."

"But," said I, "I did not count them. How many are there?"

"The same number I took with me to the mountains."

"But how many did you take to the mountains?"

"As many as I had."

It was useless to inquire any further. Passing a caravan of laden camels, I asked one of the drivers whence he came.

"From that side," was the answer, pointing with his finger in the direction.

"But from what town?"

"The town is there," pointing again.

"But the name of the town?"

"It was toward Smyrna."

And so the colloquy ended.

This habit is derived from the suspicion entertained by easterners of strangers, who are generally taken for government officials on some mission connected with taxgathering or other business distasteful to the population.

Two Doses Daily Enough.

Hewitt—Briet used to be a big eater, but now he has only two meals a day. Jewett—You know the reason, don't you?

Hewitt—No; what is it?

Jewett—The doctor gave him some medicine to take after each meal.—Brooklyn Life.

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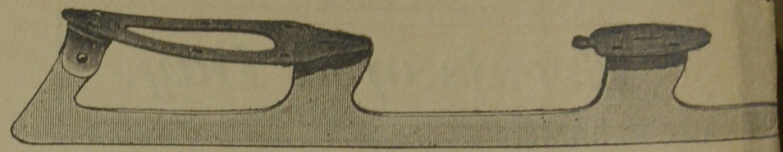
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