

Waverley's Way

By OTHO B. SENG

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Gordon Waverley was in love and had just discovered it. He had been proof against the wiles of feminine art, and having reached the age of thirty-two he considered himself immune. Then vengeance overtook him. He did not recognize vengeance, however, in the charming guise of Madeleine Vernon. He only knew that she was, as he expressed it, just the girl for whom he had been looking. This would have been very amusing to his associates had they known it, for since his grammar school days he had been noted for sedulously looking away from everything feminine.

Gordon had suffered from a blighted heart at the age of fourteen and had never fully recovered. The author of his injury, Miss Laura Boice, fifteen years his senior, had been led to the altar by his elder brother, and envy, hatred and malice had rankled in his boyish heart for several years.

At the age of sixteen he was a professed woman hater. At twenty-four he tolerated the poor, weak creatures as necessary evils which might have been dispensed with had a little more foresight been exercised when the earth and its inhabitants were being planned. At thirty he found them very convenient as managers and servants in the beautiful mansion where he dwelt alone after his parents had gone to their long rest, but he often wondered how other men found them attractive and companionable.

Now he was holding a long and not altogether pleasant interview with himself before the glowing grate fire in his luxurious library.

His thoughts reverted to the pleasures of the glorious October just passed. The long drives over the pleasant country roads—how delighted Madeleine had been with the gorgeous coloring of the maples! The exhilarating rides in the crisp morning air—how well Madeleine rode, and how superbly beautiful she looked in the saddle! The jolly afternoons on the golf links—Madeleine was a fine player, and how full of unconscious grace!

The delightful evenings at the Grahams! He considered Jack Graham one of his best friends, and Mrs. Graham really was quite entertaining. He laughed a little in confusion as he remembered that this very high opinion of the Grahams had been reached only since the advent of Miss Madeleine Vernon, a cousin of Mrs. Graham.

"I suppose," he soliloquized, his honest face reddening in the dancing firelight—"I suppose this is what they call love. There is no reason why I should



"I HAVE JUST BEEN TOLD, MISS VERNON, THAT WE ARE REPORTED ENGAGED."

not be in love," half defiantly, "and, of course, the next thing is to marry. I wonder how long it takes for a girl to fall in love."

Then an expression of anxious doubt came into his face.

"Perhaps—perhaps she's already in love. She may be engaged. No," he continued emphatically, "she isn't engaged. I'm sure of that. Now, Gordon, get a hustle on yourself and see to it that she is engaged at once and to yourself. I wonder how such a thing is done."

He looked diligently over the bookshelves. "Surely there ought to be some treatise on such an important theme," he murmured disappointedly.

Then, as a more feasible idea occurred to him, he turned to another part of the room and anxiously searched through several of the popular novels of the day.

"Bah," he muttered disgustedly, "any self respecting girl would despise a man who talked like that."

"Jack, old fellow," as Graham's square shoulders pushed in from behind the silken draperies, "you are just the man I want to see. How did you propose to your wife?"

Graham stared, bewildered by the blunt and unexpected question.

"I'm in earnest, Jack. I want to know how the thing is done."

Jack grinned and actually blushed. "Shall I give it to you 'fancy' or straight?"

"No frills, Jack, please, straight goods. I'll keep it."

"Well, on your honor to keep it, I learned a lot of poetry twaddle and started to reel it off to her, and she

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looked me straight in the eyes and said, 'Goodness, Jack Graham, are you trying to propose to me?' And I said, quite humbly, 'That's what, Edith.' She laughed and said, 'Jack, I wouldn't miss you for the world.' That's all there was to it. If you're really in earnest just make a start, and the girl'll do the rest—that is, if she's in earnest too. If she isn't she'll make you amble through the whole thing and then say sweetly, 'So sorry, I never dreamed' and 'We'll always be friends.'"

Waverley smiled appreciatively. Jack had been proposing since he was sixteen and he should know.

"I was going to ask you," Jack continued, "but of course I needn't now—if congratulations are in order. I heard this morning that you and Miss Vernon are engaged."

"Congratulations will have to be postponed until I go and ask her," admitted Waverley. "You sit here and read while I run over and see if the report of our engagement has any foundation in fact."

Jack obediently took the easy chair before the fireplace.

"Waverley's an odd stick," he said to the fire, "but if Madeleine doesn't help him out she's a goose."

Waverley lost no time in preliminaries.

"I've just been told, Miss Vernon, that we are reported to be engaged."

"How strange! Who would have taken such a liberty?"

"Well, Miss Vernon, I think it would be far easier and certainly for me much happier to make the rumor true than to go to the trouble of denying it and trying to have the denial accepted. Can you agree with me, Madeleine, dear?"

"I—I think you are right," she admitted. "Denials of such a thing are always ineffective and in some cases positively distressing. It—it would be to me in this case," she added demurely.

He took one quick step toward her, then turned and crossed the room to the telephone. When communication had been established with his own home he called jubilantly, "It's all right, Jack; congratulations are in order, but—you needn't be in any hurry about extending them in person."

Then he sat down beside Miss Vernon and said and did things just as happily foolish as those of which he had read in the novels in his own library.

Verily, no man's way is the only way.

Cautious Now.

Mr. Timidity once had the misfortune to figure as defendant in a libel action, and since then he has been remarkably cautious with his pen. Some little time ago he was obliged to dismiss his servant, and subsequently the lady who thought of engaging the domestic wrote to Mr. T. for the girl's character.

Now, Mr. T. might have said a good many things, but he remembered that libel suits. A week or so later a lady called upon him in anything but an amiable temper.

"I've called for an explanation, Mr. Timidity," she began. "I engaged a girl solely on your recommendation, only to find she's worthless. You said that, like other girls, she had her faults."

"She has, madam."

"I'm aware of it! But this is also an extract from your letter: 'In one or two departments she excels.' What do you mean by that, may I ask?"

"Well, madam, she eats well!"

"Good gracious! I should think she does!"

"Very well, madam. She also sleeps well, and those are the departments referred to!"—London Globe.

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A Whistler Story.

A friend of the late James MacNeill Whistler saw him on the street in London, talking to a very ragged little newsboy. As he approached to speak to the artist he noticed that the boy was as dirty a specimen of the London "newsy" as he had ever encountered. He seemed smeared all over—literally covered with dirt.

Whistler had just asked him a question, and the boy answered: "Yes, sir, I've been selling papers three years."

"How old are you?" inquired Whistler.

"Seven, sir."

"Oh, you must be more than that."

"No, sir, I ain't."

Then, turning to his friend, who had overheard the conversation, Whistler said, "I don't think he could get that dirty in seven years, do you?"—Harper's Weekly.

After crosses and losses men grow humbler and wiser.—Franklin.

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