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THE RECONCILIATION.

By George Ade in the Artie Stories.

At eight o'clock the front room was gently baking with heat from the base burner, and the gas-jet, with four scalloped dance programs dangling from it, was lighted to the utmost.

On the marble-topped table was the photograph of a tense young man with plastered hair. The picture lay against a metallic prop of fanciful design which was entrenched between the album and a copy of "Lucille." The swollen furniture was ornately jig-sawed and confined in plush, and every piece of it was modestly backed up against the wall.

The crayon portrait of Mamie's father looked down benignly on this room cleared for action. The portrait represented a bearded fop with a fantastic forelock, a necktie spotted with great accuracy and a shirt front behind a lump of gold. On two or three occasions of his life, Mamie's father had borne an approximate resemblance to the man in the frame.

One occasion was that of the visit to the photographer's and the other was that of the social reception to the executive committee of the Union. In the picture Mamie's father was clean and unwrinkled and he bore a placid, maiden like expression which Mamie had seldom observed in him.

The crayon portrait had originally been a bargain at \$2.50, and the agent who delivered it had put in a frame at \$14. The frame was a boiling foliage of white and silver. With such a picture in the house there was no chance for Mamie to lose regard for her father. As for the father, he escaped an affliction of pride by remaining in other rooms of the house.

This crayon portrait dwarfed the "Yard of Roses," the "Wide-Awake" and "Fast Asleep" prints and the other pictures hanging on the walls. It was the luminous thing of the front parlor, and it was to the portrait that Artie Blanchard addressed himself as he came in from the hallway, with his arm lingering at Mamie's waist, half way between a caress and a hug. "Hello, old boy," said he, and then he asked Mamie, "How does the old gentleman stick up?"

"He's back there now, reading the paper."

"All right. I wasn't lookin' for him." Artie pulled out a chair and seated himself in it sideways. He happened to see the photograph on the table.

Artie—"Well, I'm not turned to the wall, eh?"

Mamie—"Don't begin talking that way."

Artie—"I was just kiddin', Mame. How's the ma-mah?"

Mamie—"She was asking about you today."

Artie—"Say, on the square, has she got any time for me?"

Mamie (warmly)—"Why, of course. She likes you."

Artie—"Well, the ma-mah's got a cold eye in her head. I can't make out whether I'm strong or not. She ain't the kind of a girl that'd be afraid to say a few things if she wanted to."

Mamie—"Pooh!"

Artie—"How about the ringer?"

Mamie—"What's that?"

Artie—"You know—that guy you was goin' to frost. Have you wrote to him?"

Mamie (excitedly)—"You mean Mr. Wilson. I haven't told you, have I?"

Artie—"Well, I should say not. Has he been trailin' you again?"

Mamie—"No, but he wrote to me. It's the funniest thing you ever read. I'll get you the letter."

Artie—"Gee! That boy's a stayer. If he don't keep off o' my route there'll be people walkin' slow behind him one o' these days. Let's see what he says."

(Mamie goes to the adjoining room

and returns with a letter and offers it to Artie.)

Artie—"Go on and spise!"

Mamie (with a nervous giggle as a preliminary)—"Well, he begins by saying, 'Miss Mary Carrol, My dear Madam.'"

Artie—"My dear Madam. Wouldn't that cook you, though?"

Mamie—"Listen." (Reads)

"I do not know why you should have treated me as you have done. I have always regarded you as a friend, but of late I have come to the opinion that you desire to sever our friendship, seeing that you did not speak when I met you last Sunday eve. If you have anything against me I would like to know in what regards I have not treated you right and like a lady. I am very truly, your obedient servant. GRANT WILSON."

Artie—"That's a good thing. I wonder where he got next to that fancy pass about severin' friendships. I'll make that foxy boy think somebody's severed him if I take a crack at him. Did you answer it, Mame?"

Mamie—"Not yet. Would you?"

Artie—"Sure! I'd send him one that'd burn a hole in the mail sack. You get your little o'd sheet of paper and I'll t'p you off a few things to tell that boy. I'll bet you a'l kinds of money that I can send him somethin' that he'll talk about in his sleep. You get the paper." (Mamie goes to the next room and returns with writing material. She removes the photograph album and then seats herself at the table ready to write. An attack of the giggles.)

Artie—"Chop the laughin'. Go on and write to him. I'll tell you what to say. Just begin this way, 'You're all right but you won't do.'"

Mamie—"No, no, Artie, please no. I don't want to say it that way. Besides, I've got to address him first. Now, what shall I call him?"

Artie—"You could call him a good many things and make no error, I'll tell you those."

Mamie—"I know, but shall I say 'Mr. Wilson, Sir,' or just 'Dear Sir?'"

Artie—"Naw, not in a thousand. What do you want to jolly him for? Get in plenty o' rough work right from the start. Throw it into him hard. Call him 'foolish Wilson boy.' You've got to wallop one o' them people to make 'em understand. Just say, 'Get out o' town and keep quiet and you may live to see the flowers again.' If you give him that easy talk he'll think you're leadin' him on. Let me write to his nobs and I'll fix him. (Artie takes the pen and writes for a few moments. Mamie watching him with suppressed giggles.) Now, how's this? This is the real stuff. (Reads.)

"I just received your nery letter. You are all right, but you won't do. Do not come into our ward or I will have you pinched. Remember, I never saw you before in all my life. You are worse than a stranger to me. I would advise you to stop smokin' that double X brand of dope, because it gives you funny dreams. By fallin' off the earth you will oblige."

Mamie (on the verge of hysterics)—"Oh-h-h-h-h! What would he think if I sent him a letter like that?"

Artie—"He'd think he was up against the cold outside, and that's where he is, huh?"

Mamie—"Of course. You know that."

(Artie drops the pen, and with great caution wraps his arm around her waist.)

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