

An Intermission

By CORDIA GREER PETRIE

(Copyright, 1903, by Daily Story Pub. Co.)

HE SANK wearily into the recesses of the big chair and silently called down blessings on the head of the considerate soul who had the forethought to arrange this sequestered nook, where, in the shadows of the balcony, a man could enjoy a brief respite from social frivolities and smoke his Havana in blessed quietude.

The music floating out from the ballroom suddenly ceased, and presently a man and woman stopped in their promenade and established themselves amid the bower of palms and rubber plants just inside the adjacent window.

"It's astonishing," he heard the woman say, "how quickly one tires, with advancing years. It is one of the first



"WHY RECALL BY-GONES, ALBERT?" signs of age. Time was when I could have danced on and on—like the proverbial brook, forever—and not feel the slightest fatigue.

"It depends on one's partner," her companion grumbled. "Now, I was just breathing maledictions on the director for the brevity of that last number."

"You always danced divinely," the woman graciously conceded. "I hold that dancing is an art not to be acquired. My husband, for instance, after years of patient endeavor has but to make a single revolution around the room to gain a complete and undisputed monopoly of the floor. The others, to put it correctly, his victims, precipitately seek places of safety, where they can nurse their wounds or adjust their detached trains."

She laughed lightly, displaying teeth of milklike whiteness. The man in the shadows stirred uneasily in his chair. He started to leave, but something—an odd, unfathomable look on the man's face just inside the window transfixed and held him.

"Do you know, Madge," he heard him ask, in a low, eager voice, "why I am 'among those present' to-night?"

The woman inclined her head so that her face was in the shadow. "How should I—mind reading not being included in the inventory of my accomplishments?" Then—as if an afterthought: "Probably to make new conquests among the buds out there," indicating the ballroom with a graceful little sweep of her fan. "Your old propensity, you know. Or, perhaps, to make

GEORGIE ON DIETING.

At breakfast ma she says to me That bread's the staff of life, and when I take a lump of sugar she Just makes me put it back again; I can't have doughnuts neither, 'cause Pa says I musn't eat such truck—I wish boys didn't have no pas Or mas to watch them, blame the luck!

Pa takes molasses on his cakes And sugar in his coffee, too— You ought to hear the row he makes When I want sweets!—I never knew The time when he let doughnuts go 'Cause they might be rich, you bet! I wish the doctor'd fix it so He'd only eat the things I eat.

At dinner when it comes to pie Pa says I musn't have a bite. 'Cause I might get sick and die. Or have the nightmare in the night, And then he takes two pieces, 'cause He gets the one I ought of had— If boys would never have no pas I guess they'd all be pretty glad.

When I grow up to be a man I'm gon' to be a doctor then. 'Cause I've thought about a plan For boys to even up with men— I'll fix it so their pas can't eat A thing unless the boys can, too— I guess that then the things that's sweet Won't be so bad to take, don't you?

It makes my pa and ma feel bad To have me eat for sweets or pie; You'd think one little doughnut had Enough bad stuff to make me die— But if they couldn't eat them till

glad the hearts of your erstwhile friends, whom you knew were eager to welcome you back to the old circle after your long absence abroad."

"Your penetration is not remarkable for its acuteness to-night," the man submitted tentatively. He gave her a long, searching look. "This is the first function I have graced (?) in five years. The night you gave me my conge, I swore society, and since then have sought companionship among the beasts of the jungle. They are, at least, merciful, as they inflict mortal wounds, which are far less cruel than the lingering variety."

The woman winced slightly, then with an effort, she said, quite steadily: "Why recall by-gones, Albert? It is so hopeless, so unavailing. Let us draw the mantle of forgetfulness over the old days, and for to-night give ourselves over to the present. Let our watchword be 'To-day,' for yesterday is gone from us forever, and to-morrow we may not live to see. Life is too short to waste in vain regrets."

"Agreed—on one condition," said the man, earnestly. "And that?" with a rising inflection in her voice.

"That you tell me—at least do me the justice to explain why you threw me over and married a man whom I have every reason to believe you did not love."

The woman's face was as white as the rope of pearls which encircled her fair throat. She sat nervously toying with the rings on her small, shapely fingers. When she at last looked up, there was a tired, weary look about her eyes.

"Since you persist"—and there was a sort of break in her voice—"I will tell you. Father's business affairs were tottering, ruin was imminent. A rich son-in-law, he said, would reestablish confidence among his creditors, and bridge him over. He put up a pitiful story; there was no time for hesitancy—no alternative, and so—I broke with you, who had at that time no prospects to speak of—and gave myself up as a sacrifice."

The man in the shadow caught his breath fiercely. Inadvertently his hand sought his pocket and drew forth something small and glittering. He smiled grimly as he turned it over in his hand, and reflected with what facility it did its work. In one brief second it could forever remove the barrier which stood between her and happiness. But he must not make a scene and spoil her evening. Later . . . He set his lips resolutely, threw away his cigar (long since gone out), and then, like far-off music he could hear her saying:

"After all, Albert, it was the hand of Providence. We were such children, and did not know the meaning of love. Why, compared with the real thing, that youthful passion was but a spurious imitation. At that time I had not the faintest conception of the beauty, the fullness of what Drummond defines 'the greatest thing in the world.'—A wonderful being is the little god of love. Though blind and deaf to our wishes or desires, he dissipates cares, lightens burdens, and makes life one grand, sweet song. Ah, Albert, in the old days, I never dreamed of such perfect love as now fills my life."

The man rose and offered his arm. "Before returning to the ballroom," he said, in a voice disciplined to steadiness, "I should like to offer my congratulations, and—pardon me—but should you mind telling me the name of the fortunate one upon whom you—"

The woman interrupted him with a soft, rippling laugh. "As if there could be but one—that noblest and best man God ever created—my husband."

They passed on, and the man in the shadows sank back into the chair and drew forth another cigar. Before lighting it, he returned the glittering object to his pocket. In a voice strangely soft and tender, he murmured: "God! I thank Thee!"

Far down the street some one was strumming on a guitar and singing: "Tell me that you love me, Tell me that you love me, Tell me that you love me, For that's the sweetest story ever told."

They'd not set heavy on my chest, I guess they'd let me have my fill, And just keep hopin' for the best, —S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

South African Timber. Most of the timber of the South African interior consists of various kinds of thorny acacia, one of the handsomest of which is the spreading giraffe, acacia, or kameel-doorn. Here and there is to be seen the gigantic baobab, invariably called by the colonists, the "cream of tartar" tree. These enormous trees are found in the low veldt. Their timber—if timber it can be called—consists of a soft spongy growth, quite useless to anyone. The bark, however, is used by the natives for making a kind of strong cord, which is effected after submitting its fibers to due soaking and a heavy pounding. No harm is done to the tree by this stripping of the bark; indeed, the baobab seems to defy time and all other kinds of enemies. It is one of the most long-lived vegetables in the world and a well-grown specimen is estimated by scientists to attain the age of at least 1,000 years. A fair-sized baobab will measure at a height of three feet from the ground as much as 85 or 90 feet in circumference. The roots sometimes extend 40 or 50 yards from the trunk.

THE TRAVELERS AND THE CROW.



Find a Fourth Traveler.

Some Travelers, setting out on a journey, had not proceeded far when a one-eyed Crow flew across their path. This they took for a bad omen, and it was proposed that they should give up their plan, for that day at least, and turn back again. "What nonsense!" said one of the Travelers, who was of a mocking and merry disposition. If this Crow could foresee what is to happen to us he would be equally knowing on his own account; and, in that case, do you think he would have been silly enough to go where his eye was to be knocked out of his head?"

Moral—All bad omens may usually be dismissed as easily as was this one by the optimistic traveler.

EDITORS OF THE "SUPAO."

The Life of "We" in China is Not Exactly One Continuous Round of Pleasure.

In Germany the position of a newspaper editor is a precarious one. He must be very careful not to criticize the emperor, or otherwise incur the wrath of the press censor or he will be thrown into jail and his paper be suspended. But in China it is even worse. The offending editor who expresses opinions contrary to those of the administration is liable to the extreme penalty—death in no merciful guise. Several months ago a preacher of reform in Peking was beaten to death with bamboo rods. Later the editors of the publication called Supao were charged with sedition. Their sedition consisted in advocating more modern methods in the administration of the government. This brought down upon them the anger of the dowager empress, who ordered their instant apprehension. It appears, however, that the editors had realized the enormity of their offense, for they sought refuge in the foreign reservation, where they came under the protection of the consulates.

The question whether the daring newspaper men should be surrendered to the native authorities was referred to the legations. It was certain that if this should be done, cruel and barbarous punishments would follow. The British consul stoutly opposed giving the fugitives up. State Minister Conger sided with the Russian representative, who wished to accede to the Chinese demand. An agreement was finally reached to detain the newspaper men for trial by a mixed tribunal.

The trial has not yet taken place. On nothing more than an accusation the men have been kept in prison, all bail having been refused. And now the government announces that a special deputy will be appointed to hear the case and that this deputy will be instructed not to be lenient should the defendants be found guilty. Evidently, the penalty has already been decided upon, and the trial will be a mere form. All of which goes to show that the life of the Chinese editor is not one grand, sweet song, and that he who incurs the wrath of the Chinese law is the most unenviable of culprits.

Coldest Liquid.

Liquid hydrogen is by far the coldest liquid known at the present time. At ordinary atmospheric pressure it boils at -422 degrees F., and reduction of the pressure by an air pump brings the temperature down to -432 degrees, at which the liquid becomes a solid, resembling frozen foam. According to Prof. Dewar, to whom the credit is due of having liquefied hydrogen in 1898, the liquid is a colorless, transparent body, and is the lightest liquid known to exist, its density being only one-fourteenth that of water; the lightest liquid previously known was liquid marsh gas, which is six times heavier. The only solid which has so small density as to float upon its surface is a piece of pith wood.—Cassier's Magazine.

The Cotton Boll Weevil.

The weevil, which is blasting the cotton bolls in Texas, traveled over 200 miles across burning sands and desolate wastes from the nearest cotton fields south of the Rio Grande. One pair of cotton boll weevils will produce in a season 134,000,000 full-grown weevils, which must subsist exclusively on cotton.

LIFE A LOTTERY.

Mexican Publication Points Out the Many Chances Human Beings Take Upon Entering Existence.

A far northern contemporary objects to the phrase, "Life is a lottery," and goes on to repeat the time-worn platitudes that "Life is an opportunity," a "struggle," etc. But life may be both an opportunity and a battle, says the Mexican Herald, and yet have some of the features of a lottery. In the first place, men and women are not responsible for their temperament, which makes or mars fortunes, and renders life happy or the reverse. We think as our temperaments incline us, and here does fate lay a heavy hand upon us at the very outset of existence. Then there is the bare chance of being born into a well-to-do family with civilized instincts, and so having the benefit of solicitous care bestowed on one's health and education. The child born into a cross-grained, unhappy, perhaps struggling, family is surrounded by unfortunate influences.

There is the lottery chance of drawing a health prize. To be born with a strong constitution in addition to a genial and care-free temperament is an immense advantage. To be born nervous, rickety, subject to fits of depression from childhood, is nothing less than a calamity. Many a man who has won fame, though handicapped by an irritable disposition, has confessed how hard was his struggle. To make enemies more easily than friends is the lot of many men and women.

No human being can select his time for entering the world; he may arrive just when the "lean years" begin, when parents are forced to deny themselves and their children not merely luxuries, but comforts. The child born of a care-worn or anxious mother is marked for moodiness during life. The child whose mother is a superstitious, timorous person is handicapped in a world where courage and cheerfulness are the great success-compelling qualities.

All through life the lottery features of human conditions are made manifest. Luck may easily go past the careful, honest and industrious, and throw its prize into the laps of fools. Life is very much a lottery.

Tame Wild Birds.

Naturalists commissioned by the United States government have discovered on the distant island of Laysan in the Pacific some new birds and many novel facts in regard to known species. The visiting scientists were perhaps the first human beings whom the myriads of birds that crowd this tiny speck of land had ever seen. In consequence, birds representing species which in other lands wing hurriedly away at the sight of men came up to the naturalists, looked curiously into their faces, perched on their writing tables, wonderingly inspected the tripods and other accessories of the cameras, and permitted themselves to be stroked. The fact that these birds are ordinarily regarded as the wildest species made a profound impression on the visiting scientists.

Secret Trade Processes.

The two oldest secret trade processes now in existence are considered to be the manufacture of Chinese red, or vermilion, and that method of inlaying the hardest steel with gold and silver which seems to have been practiced at Damascus ages ago, and is known only to the Syrian smiths and their pupils even to this day.

WITCH HAZEL DISTILLERIES.

An Industry That Has Made Considerable Progress in the River Towns of Connecticut.

Few persons who use witch hazel extract for the many purposes to which it is put are aware of the way in which it is manufactured. It has for years been used as an ingredient for toilet and shaving soaps and owing to its great healing properties it is many times called golden treasure. The name witch hazel, or witch hazel, known by the Latin name, Hamamelis Virginiana, came from the early settlers from England where witch hazel, or wych hazel, is the name applied to an elm which grows in considerable quantity. The leaves of this shrub, or small tree resemble those of the hazel, and its wood is often used to make the chests of boxes for provisions, formerly called witch boxes.

The American hazel is found in damp woods from Canada to Louisiana. It is a shrub with long and pliant branches, which sometimes reach the height of 20 feet, but usually not over ten feet. The flowers, from buds formed during the summer, open just as the leaves are falling in October and November. Its yellow petalled flowers blossoming at this time of year give it a strange appearance, which together with its healing properties helped to fasten upon it the name witch hazel. The fruit, which is a two-seeded capsule, matures the following summer.

The wood is white and close and the bark and leaves contain a large amount of tanning. The trunks are usually twisted and owing to the spotted bark, slatish and white, the shrub is known throughout New England at least, as spotted alder. The small branches are often used as divining rods in locating water, so great is the faith put in the shrub. Sometimes it grows to be as thick through at the butt as a man's arm, but usually it is from one to five inches in diameter and this is the size desired by the witch hazel distillers.

While witch hazel is found generally throughout Connecticut, says the Hartford Courant, it grows much more thickly in some places than others; for instance, Simsbury is rich in this shrub and in parts of Litchfield county it abounds. It is also found in goodly quantities along the valley of the Connecticut and on the hill towns nearby. So great has been the demand for brush that it has been largely cut off in many places in Middlesex county, especially along the river towns, and the manufacturers are reaching back to the country towns beyond to secure their supply. It usually takes from three to five years for a new crop to grow.

Essex is really the home of the witch hazel distilleries, for there it has been distilled for many years, and also in neighboring villages. Essex is the home of the largest distiller, or one of the largest distillers, in America, E. E. Dickinson, having made his money chiefly in the witch hazel business. His father, the Rev. Thomas Dickinson, distilled, in a small way, witch hazel and black birch, the latter for oil.

To-day the extract is shipped to every part of the civilized world, and it is as well known in Cape Town as in Paris. The business increased with such rapidity that others branched out into the trade, but Dickinson being in the lead continued on, while others dropped to the rear. However, a few continued and there are other plants scattered along the Connecticut river towns in Chester, Higganum and Haddam, as well as in other parts of the country.

About five gallons of alcohol to every barrel of extract is used. The securing of the brush has proved a profitable business for the farmers, as it is gathered in the fall and winter. As high as 3,600 pounds has been carried at one load. The brush delivered bring \$3.50 a ton. Where it is purchased standing the price varies as to conditions in gathering, etc., from 50 cents to one dollar per ton. Its yield can be imagined when it is known that about eight tons have been cut from 16 acres. It is easy to cut, and, being left in piles, is gathered up, openings being left for the wagons to come through.

Fever That Seldom Dies Out.

Do you know there is such a thing as "newspaper fever," and that it just worms and burns its way into a fellow's system and remains there as long as life lasts? It is a fact. Men who work around newspaper offices know it to be true. They know it is true, not only to the men who work in the business, but many others who never happen to get into the business at all. There is an old legend to the effect that if a man once takes the Mississippi river water he will keep coming back to the same old river, no matter where he goes. It is the same way in the newspaper business. Taste it once, and you have got it in your system for good.—N. O. Times-Democrat.

The Coffee Tree.

The coffee tree reaches its maximum of production in about 12 years, and should continue in full bearing for 50 years, though some trees are known to be as old as 82 years.

Gay Costume.

For color, few costumes can rival that of a modern Indian bride. One recently wore pink silk with large pink sash, blue collar and cuffs, yellow and lavender trimmings on a black hat, green veil and black gloves.