Two Mistakes

One Corrected the Other After a Long Interval.

By SHEELAH ESTHER DUNN

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Returning from shopping, I opened my reticule to take out some samples when, to my surprise, I found entirely different contents from what I had expected. In short, I had laid my own reticule down on a counter and picked up one belonging to some one else.

Among the articles I found inside was a slip of paper, on which was written:

Dearest Little Mary—Meet me at the fountain tomorrow at 5 o'clock. I have made all arrangements. We will be married at the rectory and take the evening train for B. Don't let your fears get the better of you. Remember, 5 o'clock sharp. I will be there half an hour earlier. If you think you had better come veiled carry violets. Your loving J.
Tuesday.

Fifteen years before I had received just such a note. Indeed, there was something similar in the handwriting of the two missives. Then I had married a man whom I had been obliged to leave before the honeymoon was over.

A sudden thought struck me. How would it do for me to keep this girl's appointment a trifle ahead of time, impersonate her, veiled and with violets? I could find out whether she was about to wreck her future or marry a true man. If the former, I might save her.

At half past 4 I sallied forth, bought the violets of a street flower vender on the way and at a quarter to 5 entered the square. I knew well how to assume a hesitating step, for I had "been there" before. On nearing the fountain, looking out for J., I saw a man looking eagerly at the violets in my hand, but of an age more suitable to an elopement with me than a young girl. As I drew nearer something in his face and figure appeared familiar to me. Then I stopped, overpowered with astonishment.

No, I was not mistaken. He was the man who had been my husband. Fifteen years make a marked difference in one's appearance, and they had changed him more than they usually change men.

I was now more than ever bent on playing the part. He joined me, and in a whisper, as though I had lost my voice through excitement, I said: "Take me where we can talk. I have something to say to you." He replied that his auto was waiting on the street and led the way there. I got in the auto, and he ran it out of the town.

"I am not satisfied about this previous marriage of yours," I said.

"Great heavens! Haven't we gone over that sufficiently? You have heard my explanation, and the last time we met you expressed yourself entirely satisfied."

"I don't like your laying the blame on your wife. If we were to have trouble and separate I suppose you would lay all the blame on me."

He turned to look at me as though taken aback at my words. He could not see my face for my veil, but his eyes were fixed on that as if they would pierce it.

"You women are all alike," he said presently. "We men no sooner stand you on your feet than you fall down again. Here at the last minute you are bringing up what I have been at such infinite pains to settle."

"But, tell me, don't you blame her?"

"No, I don't. I blame myself rather than her. A newly wedded pair are like two persons floating down a tortuous channel full of rocks and snags. It is the man's part to keep his head and steer the boat. I supposed that honeymoons were always what the name implies. I found my wife a prey to all sorts of temporary emotions—one moment loving, the next irritable, the next hesitating, the next despondent. I should have known that this, at least to some temperaments, is a condition to be expected—a reaction upon realizing that one's fate is irrevocably linked with another personality. Besides, she was very young. You are ten years older than she was at that time, and I confess I have looked to you for more steadiness. I am much disappointed."

"A woman of my age should have more sense than to elope."

"You know the reason for that. If your father and mother had not an absurd prejudice against your marrying a divorced man you might be married sensibly, as becomes our age."

"Your first marriage having been a case of elopement, I should suppose, considering that it resulted disastrously, you would not care to try it again."

"The elopement has nothing to do with either case. Two people elect to unite. The method of their doing so is a mere matter of sentiment."

There was a silence for a time—at least nothing but the chugging of the auto. We were both thinking, he probably of the fickleness of woman, I of how a trifle may turn the whole current of two lives. For years I had considered that I had married a brute. True, I had mourned that he was found to be such, but I had not doubted but that my interpretation of him was correct. And now I found him accusing himself of a want of tact in his former treatment of me, his bride, and laying no blame on me whatever.

I believe that feelings may be conveyed without outward signs. I felt that his heart was not in this second marriage. Possibly I may have judged by something in his tone, possibly by an absence of desire in his words. He was too rational for a lover. I wondered if he were not bent on marriage to escape loneliness or to help him to bury a melancholy memory. I determined to apply a test.

"You have been considering me vacillating," I said. "Now you seem to be undecided yourself. And I am not quite sure but you are right. Suppose after we are married you should meet your former bride. Suppose she should admit that in a condition new to her, a very young girl, she had tried your patience severely; that she had mistaken you; that she deplored the break between you and her and would give years of her life to undo what she had done. You would then look upon your marriage with me as a chain of slavery."

He said nothing for some time. When he did his words thrilled me:

"Candor compels me to admit that I would."

I leaned back on the cushion as though much disappointed. I am not sure, but I practiced the deception of a sigh. His mood was indicated by the speed he was driving the machine. I was tempted to tear off my veil and throw my arms about his neck. But I dared not. As his bride I had been a girl. Now I was approaching middle age. Another denouement to this singular freak of fate occurred to me. I would go with him to the church, then reveal myself.

"Well," I said, "it is time that we stop this backing and filling. I shall show you that I have more steadiness than you suppose. Come; turn about. Let us go to the rectory."

Without a word he turned his machine, and we were soon speeding in the opposite direction. Neither spoke for some time. I wondered of what he was thinking. Perhaps that loneliness which comes over a single man after he has passed the heyday of youth would now be ended. Or was he thinking of his bride of fifteen years before? When we drew up at the rectory, before alighting he said:

"There is yet time to reconsider this most important step in your life. If you have not perfect confidence in me I beg of you to withdraw before it is too late."

"If there is vacillation now it is in you, not in me."

He got out of the auto, but not with the springy step of a groom. I knew he was swayed by two opposite currents. Whatever were his feelings, he would not recede from the position he had taken.

We were received by the rector, who had been expecting us for some time. He placed us before a mantel, took up his prayer book and waited for me to take off my veil. Slowly I unwound it and when removing the last fold turned and looked at the groom.

He had not seen me since I was eighteen. Now I was thirty-three, but he knew me at once—that is, he knew me as soon as he could recover from his astonishment. And the fact that his bride was the same as he had stood by years before rendered that astonishment rather a confusion of ideas than a natural impression. He stood looking at me, dazed.

"Gwen!" he exclaimed at last.

With the two men looking at me, the one waiting to know what the scene meant, the other how I came to be there in place of the woman he expected, it was incumbent on me to make an explanation. I did so to the rector, telling him briefly the circumstances. When I had finished I turned to my groom, wondering what expression I would find there. I saw at once that he was eager to know what would be the outcome of this contretemps. Did it mean punishment, revenge, or would it lead to a reconciliation? I replied to the question asked by his eyes with my lips. I gave him a smile. With a profound sigh of relief he turned to the clergyman and said:

"Proceed!"

The rector seemed puzzled. Evidently the situation flustered him; but, being in holy orders, with a churchman's antagonism toward marrying divorced people and a churchman's pleasure in reuniting those who have been separated, he was not long in recovering his equanimity. He looked at me for my assent. But he looked in vain. I gave no assent. Neither did I express dissent. He looked to the groom for instructions and doubtless received them, for without further delay he began the ceremony.

Neither man was quite sure what would be the outcome until the question was asked me, "Will you take this man to be your wedded husband?" I hesitated for a moment, then said firmly, "I will."

Both men gave a sigh of relief.

And so it was that, while I was separated for fifteen years from the man I loved and who loved me, by a senseless tiff, I was reunited to him by a marvelous coincidence. Had not the woman he was to have made his second wife put his note in her reticule and left it on a counter, had I not taken it up by mistake, I would not have been in the nick of time in a position to take what belonged to me and appropriate it to myself. The reticule was hers; the man was mine.

I never asked my husband how he explained matters to the woman with whom he had intended to elope. I considered it none of my business. Moreover, I was not interested in it. But I did ask him if he did not suspect that the woman beside him in the auto was not the one he expected to meet. He told me that, while he did not suspect me, he felt that there was something in the situation foreign to what was intended. My voice, he said, was the only real difficulty in the way of a perfect deception.

JUGGLED BY BRUIN

A Boy's Remarkable Adventure With a Pet Bear.

WHIRLED ABOUT LIKE A TOY.

After the Unique Performance Was Over Seventy-six Stitches In the Lad's Scalp and Rolls of Surgical Plaster on His Shins Saved His Life.

Ben was a pet black bear four years old and as good natured and friendly as if his ancestors had never had bad reputations. There is only one occasion on record, says his owner, Mr. William H. Wright, in his biography of Ben in "Black Bear," when even to appearances did Ben misbehave himself.

The circumstances being examined, however, the animal came off with his good name virtually untouched. Ben had been left in his shed as usual. Later in the day a crowd was seen about the door. I hurried home to find most of the women of the neighborhood wringing their hands and calling down all kinds of trouble on my head.

At first I could make neither head nor tail of the clamor, but finally gathered that that bloodthirsty, savage and unspeakable bear of mine had killed a boy, and upon asking to see the victim I was told that the remains had been taken to a neighbor's house and a doctor summoned.

This was pretty serious news; but, knowing that whatever had happened Ben had not taken the offensive without ample cause, I unchained him and put him in the cellar of my house, well out of harm's way, before looking further into the matter. Then I went over to the temporary morgue and found the corpse—it was one of the Urlin boys—sitting up on the kitchen floor, holding a sort of impromptu reception and, with the exception of Ben, the least excited of any one concerned.

I could not help admiring the youngster's pluck, for he was an awful sight. From his feet to his knees his legs were lacerated, and his clothing was torn to shreds, and the top of his head—redder by far than ever nature had intended—was covered with blood. As soon as I laid eyes on him I guessed what had happened.

It developed that the two Urlin boys had broken open the door of the shed and gone in to wrestle with the bear. Ben was willing, as he always was, and a lively match was soon on, whereupon, seeing that the bear did not harm the two already in the room, another of the boys joined in the scuffle. Then one of them got on the bear's back.

This was a new one on Ben, but he took kindly to the idea and was soon galloping round the little room with his rider. Then another boy climbed on, and Ben carried the two of them at the same mad pace. Then the third boy got aboard, and round they all went, much to the delight of themselves and their cheering audience in the doorway.

But even Ben's muscles of steel had their limit of endurance, and after a few circles of the room with the three riders he suddenly stopped and rolled over on his back.

And now an amazing thing happened. Of the three boys suddenly tumbled helter skelter from their seats one happened to fall upon the upturned jaws of the bear, and Ben, who for years had juggled rope balls, cord sticks and miniature logs, instantly undertook to give an exhibition with his new implement.

Gathering the badly frightened boy into position, the bear set him whirling. His clothing from his shoe tops to his knees was soon ripped to shreds and his legs torn and bleeding. His scalp was lacerated by the sharp claws until the blood came. His cries rose to shrieks and sank again to moans. But the bear, unmoved, kept up the perfect rhythm of his strokes.

Finally the terrified lookers-on in the doorway, realizing that something had to be done if their leader was not to be twirled to death before their eyes, tore a rail from the fence and with a few pokes in Ben's side induced him to drop the boy, who was then dragged out apparently more dead than alive.

The doctor took seventy-six stitches in the lad's scalp and put rolls of surgical plaster on his shins. So square and true had Ben juggled him that not a scratch was found on his face or on any part of his body between the top of his head and his knees. He eventually came out of the hospital no worse for his ordeal, but I doubt if he ever again undertook to ride a bear.

How She Won Out.

"Oh, George," she cried in perplexed tones, "I'm afraid we must part."

"Part! Why must we part, dear?" he echoed.

"On account of father," she replied. "He fears we would be mismated. We are so very different, he says."

"In what way are we so different?" he asked, with a show of dignity.

"Well, father says I am of such a ready and willing disposition, while you seem so—so backward, so reluctant and hesitating, so—so loath to come to the—the point, don't you know."

"He does, does he?" blustered George, bracing up, and the very next afternoon she was showing her girl friends how stunning it looked on the third finger of her left hand.—Boston Herald.

He that lives upon hope will die fasting.—Franklin.

CANNIBALISM.

It Is the Religion of the Savages Who Practice It.

In the course of his thirteen years as a missionary in the Fiji islands the Rev. Joseph Nettleton learned a good deal about cannibalism and even saw some of his colleagues killed and eaten. "It is a common mistake to think that these men eat human beings because of hunger," he said. "Cannibalism is their religion. The ovens in the temple where they cook their human sacrifices are never used for any other purpose. I once witnessed the capture of a white victim. He was surrounded, bound hand and foot and dragged along to the temple, where he was dashed with terrific force against the altar. Then he was pushed inside the compound, while the chiefs arranged as to the division of the body and began a war dance. Their hideous war dance—the 'derana' they call it—makes one's flesh creep. An American sea captain who once visited the islands said he was not so much afraid of being eaten as he was of this dance. It took all the courage out of him."

Mr. Nettleton had to use extreme tact to avoid arousing suspicion among the savages. "My colleague, Mr. Baker, was murdered, cooked and eaten with seven others while exploring," he said. "The cannibals thought he was spying. I never carried a revolver. Why? Because the cannibals say at once, 'He doesn't carry that to kill himself; therefore he means to kill us,' and they act accordingly."

The Rev. J. Calvert, another of Mr. Nettleton's colleagues, had a narrow escape. He was surrounded by cannibals, and it was decided that he should be killed. By a miracle his life was spared. "My friend pleaded till he was hoarse," said Mr. Nettleton, "but it was of no avail. Suddenly one of the cannibals remembered that Mr. Calvert had doctored him when he was ill. That saved my friend's life."—Chicago News.

DEMONIAC PLEASANTRY.

Humorous Diversion of the Roman Emperor Commodus.

Professional barbers are said to have been introduced into Rome by Menas from Sicily, of which island he was praetor in the days of Cicero. Under the empire their shops in some instances became fashionable resorts at which every luxury of the toilet was enjoyed and the gossip and news of Rome and the empire were discussed. The means, luxury and weaknesses of personal adornment therein carried to excess are amply immortalized in the pages of Terence, Plautus, Horace, Juvenal and Martial.

Other barber shops were more retired, as we learn from the annals of the Emperor Commodus, who, having wearied at times of the wholesale tragedies of the Coliseum, wherein armies engaged in murder at his savage behest, and being desirous of a little humorous diversion, used, like the caliph of Bagdad in the "Arabian Nights," to disguise himself and sally forth, accompanied by two or more of his favorites, and, having hired a barber shop suitable for his purpose, would place one of his men at the door to solicit custom.

Having secured a customer, the emperor barber would politely affix the towel and apply the lather, all the time keeping up a running fire of the latest jests and little pleasantries until the customer and himself were almost overcome with laughter. Then the keen edged razor would slip, and among regrets and proffers of assistance the noseless victim would be assisted to the rear of the shop, where between threats and bribes he was kept from making a riot until one or two more victims were added to the number and Commodus, weary of his demoniac pleasantry, was ready to return to the palace or to the arena.—Charles Winslow Hall in National Magazine.

The Mails.

When does a crime become punishable? When it is committed by mail. The mail is the most sacred thing known to the United States government except itself. Nothing but treason surpasses in egregiousness the misuse of the mails. So far as the federal authorities are concerned, one may steal, gamble and murder so long as it is not done by correspondence. Do ye whatsoever ye will one unto another, but do not write it down and stick a stamp on the upper right hand corner, for if ye do then in truth will all the demons of justice be unloosed upon your trail.—Life.

Startled the Natives.

Herrara, the Spanish historian, says that Pizarro when he landed in South America owed his life and those of his companions to the fact that one of the party fell off his horse by accident. The natives had succeeded in cutting off the retreat of the Spaniards to their ships, when one of the riders was thrown. The Indians were so astonished at the dissolution of partnership that they took flight at once. They had supposed horse and man to be one animal.

An Inference.

Rose—Why don't you pop in and have a game of bridge sometimes?
Violet—Oh, well, you see—er—I've become a bit of a recluse lately. Rose—How much do you owe?—Illustrated Bits.

Thriftless.

"Did she marry the man who rescued her?"

"Yes, and now she's discovered that her life was the only thing he ever saved."—Detroit Free Press.

Intellectual Courtship

It Is a Very Different Affair From Simple Love.

By EDITH B. ARNOLD.

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Miss Margaret Lyall took all the degrees of the under and post graduate university courses. Being possessed of an independent income, it was not necessary for her to make a living, but she was so clever that the college sent her abroad to study for a professorship. She returned with an additional foreign degree and assumed the chair for which she had been preparing herself.

When Miss Professor Lyall was twenty-seven years old it occurred to her that after all she would prefer to be a wife and mother to growing old as a teacher. If she were to choose the more natural course it was high time she were doing so. She was considered a very attractive woman and was comely. She had had a number of offers, but had not been thinking of marriage and for this reason had accepted none of them. Now, having determined to wed, she looked over the list of her suitors and settled on Royal Richardson, a journalist.

Mr. Richardson was editor in chief of a large newspaper. He was a highly educated and a forceful man. There is no place in the world where exactness, system and, above all, a quick resource are more essential than in the makeup of a daily newspaper. Mr. Richardson had a quiet, dignified way with him that carried great weight.

"That match," every one said, "is between one of nature's highest type of men and the same grade of women. Such a couple united should produce important results for good. What a splendid spur the one for the other!"

"No doll wife for me," said Mr. Richardson. "Give me a woman with a brain in her head!" "If I am to be married," said Miss Lyall, "I prefer a man who is certainly not my inferior. If he is my superior I will follow his lead, for that is a law of nature. If he should turn out to be of poorer judgment than I, then that same law will compel him to submit to my decrees."

Two persons were especially disappointed at this engagement. One was Walter Fairbanks, a quiet, unobtrusive man several years younger than Miss Lyall. Not being highly educated himself—he had gone into business at seventeen—he had a profound admiration for Professor Lyall. It was the acme of his desires to have such a woman for his wife. It would be like an intellectual beggar marrying one with an intellectual fortune. The other disappointed person was Miss Lucy Brooks, a girl of twenty, whose knowledge had been gained in a public school, but whose heart was as fresh as a rose and exhaled as much fragrance upon all who knew her. She had long worshiped Mr. Richardson from a distance, but considered him so far above her that it was madness for her to aspire to be his wife.

No sooner had Professor Lyall become engaged to Mr. Richardson than she began to take an interest in his paper. She liked to pick out editorials in which she could see his vigorous opinions expressed in his terse, pungent style. But one day she noticed that what she had not discovered before. She was much interested in the national problems of the day and sympathized with every movement calculated to bring the trusts under a proper legal subjection. Mr. Richardson had given in his editorials an impression that this was the policy of his paper. But in an article which bore every evidence of having been written by him he made use of the term "trust buster." The next time he met his fiancee she said to him:

"Royal, I supposed the policy of your paper was to advocate the regulation of the trusts by law."

"My dear Margaret, the policy of a newspaper is an unknown quantity to any one except its manager."

"Will you kindly explain?"

Mr. Richardson for the moment forgot that he was not in his editorial chair. It seemed an icicle rather than a sentence that came through his cold lips.

"Yes; I will explain by saying that I alone dictate the policy of my paper."

Miss Lyall looked at him with astonishment. "And I alone," she said, "will decide as to the man I will marry. He shall not be one who would make use of the obnoxious expression 'trust buster.'"

She strode majestically out of the room and upstairs.

Mr. Richardson departed with a complication of feelings. He was disappointed, angered, hurt. For the first time he had been interfered with in his life work. His eyes were opened to the fact that the high grade of character, of intellect, he had wished in a wife had in this case at least proved a boomerang. If he had been called to account by another his feelings would not have been the least ruffled. But he had formed the very important plan of marrying Miss Lyall, and he saw that such a union would necessitate the rooting up of the main habit of his life.

"Good morning, Mr. Richardson," came a soft voice, and, looking aside as he walked, he met the amiable smile of Miss Brooks. It was like a warm sunshine breaking through a wintry cloud. He turned and joined her. For an hour he walked beside her, listening to her prattle, scarcely speaking himself, the girl all the while pouring balm on his perturbed feelings. He went with her to her home, and it was another hour before he left.

Miss Lyall suffered the same perturbed sensations, and as Mr. Richardson had been comforted by Miss Brooks she turned to Walter Fairbanks for similar treatment. If a person of strong mind becomes balked and consequently irritated there is a craving for some one—not to rely on for advice, but to whet opinions upon.

Miss Lyall made an excuse to send for Mr. Fairbanks in order that she might have a dummy to pound. Mr. Fairbanks proved himself admirably suited to the purpose. Not capable of understanding that higher role of elevating by an unceasing flow of information which is the great work of newspapers, he saw only the blemishes resting on the press. When Miss Lyall told him of her disagreement with Mr. Richardson he was surprised that she did not know that his paper was owned by a combination of industrial magnates. This opened Miss Lyall's eyes not only to the fact of an entire absence of sympathy between her and the man who was employed to oppose views she held very strongly, but that there was, after all, a comfort in coming down with her aeroplane and having a heart to heart talk on the earth's surface with a man who knew what was going on there.

But Mr. Richardson before any announcement was made of the breaking of the engagement concluded to make an effort to set matters right between him and his fiance. He called upon her, and she came down with a disappointed look on her face.

"I have called to say, Margaret," he began, "that perhaps you are not aware that a newspaper is not exclusively a concern for dispensing noble ideas. Noble ideas there may be in it, but they would not be there at all if the paper had no means for its publication. Unless a newspaper can be made to pay"—

"Has that anything to do with pretending to advocate ideas and at the same time sneering at them?"

"I don't admit"—

"What is your definition of the term trust buster?"

"A trust buster? Why, a trust buster is one who advocates breaking up those combinations which are essential to business at the present day."

"But I don't admit that they are essential."

"Certainly your opinion can have nothing to do with the management of the paper I edit."

"If the paper you edit is the exponent of the principles, or, rather, the want of principles, of the man I am to marry it certainly is of great importance to me."

"I am employed to carry out the policy laid down by the owners of the paper."

"Why, then, do you pretend to carry out opposing ideas?"

"Margaret, a newspaper is a practical affair. It must have advertisements; to secure advertisements it must have circulation; to have circulation it must have readers. Readers are of various opinions. One must steer a middle course to"—

"Enough! You, the man with whom I had decided to unite my very being, have no principles of your own"—

"My principles are my own; the paper's principles are its own."

"Then if you were paid to advocate anarchy and assassination you would do so without a qualm of conscience."

"Margaret," he said, changing his tone to one of despondency, "if our union is to be one of argument instead of simple love it will be a failure."

"And unless I marry a man whose principles are not for sale it will be a failure."

"You are impracticable."

"Goodby!"

Mr. Richardson and Miss Lyall had again found themselves in the position of

Birds of tempest loving kind
Thus beating up against the wind,

though neither of them loved the tempest. They were obliged by their nature to beat up against it. Again they sought solace in the sympathy of their intellectual inferiors. Mr. Richardson called on Miss Brooks, and Miss Lyall called in Walter Fairbanks.

Richardson sat on a sofa beside the lithe, laughing girl, rested by her every innocent word, by her every dainty motion and more than all by the perpetual smile which hovered over her lips. She cared nothing for the policy of his paper, and, as to his principles, she did not for a moment doubt that they were noble. A lock of his hair fell down over his forehead, and with the touch of her waxen fingers she put it back in place, laughing as she did so. He took the fingers in his hand and kissed them. Then he kissed her. That settled it.

Miss Lyall talked to Walter Fairbanks about her conversation with Richardson. He listened to her without a word, looking at her the while with a pair of sympathetic eyes. Whenever she said, "Am I right?" he replied, "You are," and when she said, "Am I wrong?" he said, "You are not." In other words, Miss Lyall got from Mr. Fairbanks what she wanted. And so in time she became accustomed to getting what she wanted and found it more convenient to place Mr. Fairbanks where she could have him all the time. She married him.

Mr. Richardson and Miss Lyall meet occasionally and have intellectual talks. She considers him a brilliant man, but without principle. He considers her a very smart woman, but educated in a theoretic, impractical school. Each is very happy at home.