

THE NEW HOUSE-KEEPER

By FRANK H. SWEET

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"Well, that is too bad!" She was sitting on the floor of one of the rooms of a Fifth Avenue hotel, anxiously examining the contents of a small traveling valise, which were presently scattered in a semi-circle before her. That the search was unsuccessful was apparent from the gathering frown on her face. At last she thrust the various articles back into the valise and walked impatiently to a window.

Several minutes of silent consternation, then the frown vanished in a clear, ringing laugh. "Sure, this is one on you, Miss Flighty Head," she cried, merrily. "Wouldn't Reggie reign triumphant if he knew! But he shall not find out. No, indeed!" with a grimace. "He would never let me hear the last of it if he did. But what shall I do? Three thousand miles from home, with only five pounds in my purse, and not the remotest idea in what part of this hurry-scurry New York Reggie is to be found. Well, no desperandum, as papa says. A Fitzgerald never gets to his wife's end. But what a ninny to lose that address."

She remained for a long time gazing abstractedly at the kaleidoscopic tides of humanity in the street below, then a sudden flash came into her eyes. "Why, of course," she said, as though she had come to the one natural conclusion; "I will earn my living until I can get the address from papa. He will be up at Ballyshannon with his guns and dogs before this, and it will take at least six weeks to hear from him. I have often read letters to the servants from their people in America, and they always go to an intelligence office. I will go to one myself."

The hotel clerk was experienced in his profession, and prided himself on an intuitive recognition of breeding. He had been rather impressed by the young lady when she put her name on the register, an hour before, and he now bowed very low as she approached.

Did he know of an intelligence office? Certainly, several of them. And he wrote the addresses for her with ceremonious courtesy, and even told her at which place she would be likely to find the best servants.

When she thanked him and turned away he reversed the register and stared meditatively at her signature. "Esther Geraldine Fitzgerald, Ireland."

"Name suits her," he muttered. "Some of the old nobility, most likely."

On this very day it happened that Mrs. Van Maurice, of Advanced Thought fame, was unexpectedly deprived of a housekeeper. She was in the midst of a round of engagements and social duties, and this defection filled her with momentary consternation. She visited the intelligence office and the young lady who rode home with her—"Esther Geraldine," as she called herself—sifted her very much.

Before the end of the second day she had all the details of the menage at her command, and Mrs. Van Maurice was already congratulating herself on her acquisition, the only drawback to her satisfaction being that said acquisition refused to engage herself for more than two months.

One morning Esther was in the music room arranging some folios on a table when she heard quick, approaching footsteps. Thinking it was Mr. Van Maurice, she went on quietly with her work.

"I beg your pardon, I didn't know Aunt Lisa had company," said an eager, almost boyish voice. "A servant told me she was up here."

"Mrs. Van Maurice just went into the library," and Miss Esther turned toward him quietly. It was a very handsome, athletic young man she saw, and as their eyes met, a puzzled expression of dawning recognition appeared on each face.

"Thank you. But—excuse me—haven't I seen you somewhere?"

"Why, on board the Aurora, of course!" cried Miss Esther, suddenly, as she stepped forward with outstretched hands, and then for some time they exchanged reminiscences of the trip.

The next day the young man called on his Aunt Lisa again, and again in the evening. And the next day and the next and the next, and after that two or three times each week. Aunt Lisa was pleased with his devotion, and gave him small errands to execute, and allowed him to turn her music when she played; and chess-loving Uncle Van Maurice grew more and more urbane, and actually told him one evening that he really played a fair game.

The young man went through it all heroically, and never even by a change of expression indicated that he was bored. And for reward he saw Miss Esther several times in the distance and once actually spoke to her as he passed through the hall.

"Why don't you bring your friend

with you occasionally, Harold?" asked Mrs. Van Maurice, one morning. "He must be a remarkable young man. Your mother was telling me about him the other day."

"He is a remarkable young man," answered Harold, warmly. "Just now he is absorbed in a new invention, and can hardly be dragged away from it. But perhaps I can bring him out tomorrow."

The next evening they were all gathered in Mrs. Van Maurice's cosy music room, when the hostess suddenly turned to her guest.

"Would you mind telling us something about yourself, Mr. Fitzgerald?" she asked. "Something about your meeting with Harold, I mean. It must have been very romantic."

The young man looked embarrassed. "It was nothing," he demurred. "I just pulled him out of a hole."

"Hole!" echoed Harold, indignantly. "Do you call a crevasse like that a hole? And is my life nothing? Look here, Fitz, if you can't tell a better story than that, just keep still. I will do the yarning myself. Hole, indeed!"

He settled himself comfortably in his chair, and then looked across at his friend.

"You don't mind my giving the whole yarn, do you, Fitz?" he asked. "Aunt Lisa is getting interested in you, and will not be satisfied with less than the whole story. Well, then, here goes."

"In the first place, and as a sort of preface, I wish to say that I am an honorary member of Fitz's family. He has told me so much about his people that his brothers have become my brothers, and his sisters my sisters. I have never seen any of them, but am going across some day and put in my claim. His father is a gentleman of large estate and colossal mortgage, and numerous children. Cornac, the oldest, was given a fine education, and two years on the continent; and then he joined the Royal Engineers, where he is now a shining light. Reginald Cuan Fitzgerald, the second son—our friend here—with a low bow—early displayed signs of mechanical genius. He received the customary education and tour, which was somewhat curtailed by an unfortunate stringency of the family purse. It was on this tour that he pulled my unworthy self from a hole, and thereby endangered his neck and broke an arm. Naturally we vowed eternal friendship and continued the trip together. When it was finished, I induced him to cross the Atlantic with me. My father was an extensive manufacturer, and it seemed to me that this was a golden opportunity for the encouragement of fallow genius. Time proved I was right. Reginald Cuan Fitzgerald among machinery was as dry gunpowder in a burning building. Before we could collect our dazzled senses he had flashed across the horizon of inexperience into a position as superintendent of the works."

He paused a moment to sip the tea which Mrs. Van Maurice handed him, and then went on:

"The third son of the family is Miss Essie, a musical genius, who was obliged to assume charge of the household on account of her mother's invalidism. Stross of finance and this duty have hitherto kept her genius somewhat in abeyance, but now," waving his hand toward Reginald, "this young Croesus comes forward with his savings of four years, beseeches her to cross the big pond and avail herself of all the musical advantages offered by our proud city. There is a family consultation, in which it is decided that Elizabeth Tara Fitzgerald, the fourth aspirant, is competent to assume the family dictatorship, and that suppressed genius, in the shape of Miss Essie, shall find its natural expansion in America—and—er—I believe that brings us down to contemporary history?" glancing at his friend.

"Yes, I suppose so," answered Reginald, with a wry face. "When I have occasion for a biography I shall certainly apply to you." Then his face grew serious. "It seems strange that I have not heard from home. Essie wrote that she was all ready to start, and at least five or six steamers have been in since then. But at this season father usually goes up to Ballyshannon for a few weeks' hunting, and perhaps she concluded to wait until his return."

"It is all right, undoubtedly," said Harold. "From what you have told me of her, she is like the traditional pussy—or, more happily, like her illustrious brother—when she strikes America she will be on her feet."

During the conversation Mrs. Van Maurice had occasionally regarded her guest with a puzzled, inquiring expression. She had never seen him before, but somehow his features seemed familiar; and that peculiar way he had of throwing back his head—why, she had seen it dozens of times.

Suddenly a mirthful gleam of recognition swept the uncertainty from her face, and she rose quickly. With her a thought was to act.

"I suppose you and your sister resemble each other, Mr. Fitzgerald?" she asked.

"People used to say so, I believe; but Essie appropriated all the beauty and grace which rightly ought to have been divided between us."

"Those attributes naturally go to the sister," said Mrs. Van Maurice, smiling. "But would you mind going downstairs with me a moment? I have something to show you."

As they left the room, Mr. Van Maurice rose with the remark that he would go into the library after the chessmen. Hardly had he disappeared when Harold heard a slight rustle at the door.

"Is Mrs. Van Maurice here?"

"Esther!" Harold's face was in a glow as he stepped eagerly toward her.

"No, don't go," as she drew back. "I—I must speak to you, dear. I have been coming here for weeks, and have only just been able to catch glimpses of you as you fitted through some distant door. I cannot endure it any longer. Uncle Van Maurice and the others will be back in a moment, and I want this settled before they return. Darling, will you—"

She raised her hand quickly. Her face was in a glow now. She had not been prepared for this precipitous denouncement.

"Why—I—" Then she burst into a merry peal of laughter. "What absurdity! We do not even know each other's names."

He looked blank, but only for a moment. Something even in her rally gave him courage.

"What of it?" he asked, boldly. "Names don't signify. We know each other. And, besides, the names can be easily remedied. I am Harold Allyn Ferrers, at your service."

"What?" The glow faded from her face, and then came back in a quick flood of eager questioning. "Not my brother's friend?"

It was his turn to look surprised. "Your brother? I—don't—understand."

"Reginald Fitzgerald. He is my brother."

"O—h!" There were sudden footsteps, then: "Here you are, Esther. We have been looking for you everywhere. I wish to introduce you to my friend, Mr. Fitzgerald."

An hour later, Reginald and his sister were standing in the hall, waiting for the carriage that was to take them home.

"It has come out all right, Essie," he said, a little soberly, "so perhaps it will be as well to say no more about it. But why did you not look in a city directory?"

Her hands went up with a quick gesture of dismay.

"Reggie, I never once thought of it."

Harold remained half an hour longer. When he left, his aunt followed him to the door.

"By the way, Harold," she said, as she reached up to brush a stray fleck of dust from his coat, "you must allow me to congratulate you."

(Copyright.)

NOVICE GOT THE MONEY.

Twice-Told Tale of the Noble American Game.

"One thing is certain, and will never be disputed; I will never play poker with a beginner again."

The man wiped a perspiring forehead and then took up his tale in awestruck tones.

"I sat in a little game last night. Two of the players were old friends of mine and old hands at the game. The third man was a stranger to me and a novice at poker. All of us older hands said we would show the green man how to play, so after telling him the principles we stacked the chips and started the game."

"Never in my life before did I see a man hold such hands, and never did a man have such a continuous run of luck. That novice fairly chewed us up. He didn't play the game. He didn't need to, he simply held his hand and raked in the pots."

"I remember one time I had two pairs. Well, I opened the pot, and everybody but myself, including the novice, discarded three cards. It was a cinch that nobody had anything higher than two of a kind. I didn't draw anything on my own discard, and everybody but the novice dropped out. He bet against me and kept on raising the pot no matter how high I went. I thought that he was bluffing at first. Then I began to get scared, so at last I threw in three chips."

"I call you, I said. 'What have you got?'"

"He didn't say a word, and words, heaven knows, were idle things then, for he held up four face cards of a kind. He had drawn four of a kind on a discard."

"Well, sir, the bunch of us got cleaned out after awhile. Just to try his luck I dealt three hands."

"Throw out the face cards and count the spots," I said.

"The novice had just twice as many spots as any of the rest of us."

"No, sir, I don't play cards with greenhorns any more. If anybody says to me in the future: 'Come, I have got a young friend here who wants to learn the game,' I am going to be my pocketbook in my trousers pocket, and hike out."—Washington Post.

Troubles Endured by Austria's Ruler.

As to Francis Joseph, the man, it has been always the same. Blessed with the most beautiful and gracious lady in all royal Europe as his consort, he early suffered estrangement from her, which, although an effect rather than a cause, brought him the consciousness that as a husband, in the eyes of his empress and queen, he was amenable to the same rules which governed the hearth of the humblest of his married subjects. He saw their only son grow up a reflection of his own weaknesses, unredeemed by his own worldly honesty and mental and physical strength; and he saw this son die a tragic, mysterious death. His beloved brother, Maximilian, found an unpitied grave in Mexico. One of his wife's sisters, the queen of the Two Sicilies, lost her throne in vanity and strife; another, Duchess d'Alencon, lost her life in the horrible Charity Bazaar fire of Paris. And then, at Geneva, September 10, 1899, came the hardest blow of all—the death of his saintly consort by the knife of an assassin.

MAD NO TIME FOR SENTIMENT.

Secretary Morton Smashed Lifetime Dream of Old Sailor.

In an article on Paul Morton, late secretary of the navy, the New York Evening Post says:

"When, on one occasion, a navy department clerk brought him the great official parchment commission of a newly promoted rear admiral for his signature he signed it, after reading it, as he would any document before signing, and noting the clerk still present with the document, inquired what he wanted and was told:

"Admiral Blank would very much like to receive his new commission from the hands of the secretary of the navy personally."

"Where is he?" asked the secretary.

"Admiral Blank is upstairs, in his office, sir."

"Ask him to come here," was the command, and in a few moments the grizzled veteran presented himself to the secretary of the navy.

"Evidently, the officer was filled with sentimental emotion on this event—the climax of his naval career. From boyhood he had lived for this moment, his long terms of sea duty, the monotony of shore service, the anxieties of war, the arrogance of superior officers, the whole chapter of the rigors, the self-denial and self-discipline, was to be crowned with the evidence of honor which his country bestows upon faithful naval officers. He looked his expectation of words of praise, as if in lonely watches he had dreamed of the eloquent sentences which would become the psalm of his old age."

"The secretary of the navy stood up, handed the open parchment to the speechless rear admiral, and said only this:

"Admiral Blank, here's your commission."

"Then he sat down to his desk and went on with his work, unconscious of having smashed a lifetime's dream."

NOT GIVEN TO THE WORLD.

Senator's Mischief Making Confined to His Own Knowledge.

A senator who went to Washington recently was met by a friend, who cordially greeted him, and, knowing his predilection for quiet sport, said: "Well, I hope you have been keeping out of mischief."

"That reminds me of a story," was the response. "Out in my state there was a member of the legislature who never had been known to make a speech. He was a farmer and had been elected against his will. In company with me, he attended a cross-roads meeting and the crowd yelled that they wanted to hear from him. He shambled to the front of the platform, threw back his coat, and rested his hand on his hip."

"I want you people to know at the outset," he declared, "that I am a good man."

"There was a storm of laughter at what was believed to be a humorous saying. The old man, however, was in dead earnest in his protestation of purity. The laughter of the crowd angered him."

"And I want you to know, moreover," he shouted, "that I am a d—bad man, and I've got guns here to prove it. But, I know you are a bunch of coyotes and I'll keep my guns in my pocket."

"So," the senator concluded, "I am a good man and I am a bad man. But I'll keep my evil ways to myself."

Status of Marble or Bronze?

There is a division of opinion in the Indiana commission which has been named to make arrangement for the placing of a statue of Gen. Lew Wallace in the statutory hall of the capitol in Washington. Some of the members want the memorial to be of bronze, while the others want it to be of marble. It is said that there is no agreement on the matter in sight.

There are only a few statues of bronze in Memorial hall, and those that are there, to some eyes at least, have not the beauty of the statues in marble. It may be that this is altogether a matter of workmanship rather than of material, but the marble memorials have a holding beauty that the others seem to lack.

An officer of Wallace's old command, Capt. McGrew, who is a member of the commission, declares that he never will consent to a bronze statue of the soldier-writer. It may be that the matter will have to be settled by the legislature of Indiana, but if the legislators were to go to Washington and look over the memorials already there the chances are whether they know anything of art or not they will decide in favor of marble.

Make Trouble for Reporters.

There is always great excitement among the official reporters of the house when Representative Littlefield begins a speech. The men who do the shorthand work of congress are regarded as the most expert reporters in the country, but it is with fear and trembling that they approach their task when "the gentleman from Maine" is recognized by the speaker. Littlefield talks like the proverbial blue streak. He seems never to tire or to pause for breath. If he did not enunciate well it would be almost impossible for the reporters to catch his utterances. As it is they manage, by a special effort, to keep pace with him, but they are always glad when he has finished. Senator Money of Mississippi gives the senate reporters much trouble. He is not only a fast talker, but has a wonderful vocabulary. His rapid fire of words, in a low tone of voice, drives the reporters almost to distraction.

BABS IN THE CITY

By ARMIGER BARCLAY

(Copyright.)

"Well, how did you like the city, Babs?" asked the admiral.

Babs, perched on a high stool in front of the tape-machine, ceased pulling the paper ribbon through her fingers and looked up.

"I'm waver bovered," says she. "It's the figures. I never was good at awifmetic."

"Oh, the quotations! They are puzzling when you're not used to them," agrees the admiral.

"I never shall be," admits Babs. "I never could learn the multiplication table. When people say eight times nine's fifty-free, how can you tell if it's true?"

The admiral ponders the indictment before he answers. "Your illustration certainly does place arithmetic in a new light. All the same, business would be rather dull on the stock exchange without it. Eh, Mr. Hands?"

Babs throws a glance over her shoulder at the stock broker. "If fings go up free points how much would I make on a fousand?" she asks him.

The question took him by surprise. He had been regarding the earl's small daughter with great interest, but hardly as a potential dealer.

"It depends, Lady Barbara," he smiles. "Depends whether it's stock or shares."

"I was flinkin' of Mexicans—second prefs," observes Babs, sagely.

It is as much as Mr. Hands can do to answer. "A rise of three points on a thousand Mexicans means £30 profit," he stammers.

"Fanks," says Babs, and becomes immersed in the tape once more.

People who meet Babs for the first time are usually bewildered by her baby-like perspicuity, and the stock broker is no exception to the rule. The admiral evades his glances of stupefaction by addressing Babs.

"What is the trouble, little lady?" he asks, leaning over her chair.

"Noffin'; I'm waver busy," she answers without moving her eyes from the tape.

The admiral dutifully moves away and rejoins the earl and Mrs. Fane, who are now in consultation with Mr. Hands. Mrs. Fane has certain investments to make, and the earl, her

trustee, has accompanied her into the city. For reasons not yet apparent, Babs has insisted on being of the party, and persuaded the admiral to make it a partie carree.

While the tape machine ticks and jerks under the regard of her big blue eyes, the others go into the merits of Japanese fours, colonial government securities and English rails, and in due course Mrs. Fane's business is disposed of.

"We may as well have a flutter, now we're here," suggests the earl to his sailor friend.

The admiral concurs with a nod. "What would you advise?" he asks the stock broker.

"Grand Trunks and Hudson Bays are looking up," answers Mr. Hands impartially.

"You'd much better stand in my way me," murmurs Babs from the other end of the room.

Mr. Hands sits up with a start, then turns an inquiring face to his clients.

"What is it, Babs?" asks the admiral. "I didn't know you were an authority on stock exchange transactions."

"I'm perfectly serious," insists Babs. "If you want to earn your winter's corn, buy Mexican second prefs."

Mr. Hands, through his pince-nez, eyes her in a fascinated way, but feels compelled to dissent. "The very last thing to touch," no dividend expected, you know," he observes in an undertone to the earl.

"I know it's not expected," returns Babs, whose sharp ears have caught the words. "But there's goin' to be a dividend, all ve same. It's a stable secret."

"My dear child!" reproves Mrs. Fane, fearful of the stock broker taking offense. "How can you know anything about it?"

"Oh, I've known it for a couple of fortnights. I had it stwaid from the Beltstetins."

"Beltstetins?" repeats Mrs. Fane. "I

Wolf Creek valley may take it into their heads to pay us their respects."

"Then there is a social set in Wolf Creek valley?"

"I suppose so," he replied. "Most of our neighbors, I find, are Kiowas, who took allotments in the valley. I think Lane Dog, the Kiowa, might be considered as the leader of the fashionable set. He is very dissipated, drinks and gambles and has three wives. Lane Dog usually makes his calls under cover of darkness, invariably carrying away with him—unknown to his host—some little souvenir of the visit, such as a pony or other detached property. But the three Mrs. Lane Dog, we may expect, will use more formality in their calls, and I should not be surprised to see them drop in any day."

"I was half persuaded that Frank was only joking, but nevertheless I was quite sure that he was in earnest when he continued:

"If they should happen to drop in you will be expected to offer them something to eat. An Indian always expects this. It will do no harm to keep on friendly terms with them."

But despite Frank's admonition, I think I should have shut the door on the visitors when they came—for they did come some three days later—had it not been for the sympathy I had for the little copper-colored papoose strapped on boards, and the fact that some of Frank's friends on the range had brought us nearly a whole quarter of beef, which equipped me to meet the demands of the occasion.

I was preparing dinner and Frank was sitting by the window cleaning his rifle when, happening to step to the door, I was surprised to see three Kiowa squaws standing before me. They were very wretched and dirty, but perfectly healthy specimens of humanity. Each was wrapped in a blanket and carried on her back something that resembled a snowshoe, to which was bound with buckskin thongs a little brown papoose.

The visitors greeted me in broken English, and insisted on shaking hands with me. Then, without more ado, they entered the shanty and began inspecting the furniture and draperies with child-like simplicity.

The instinct of barter is strong in the Indian, and they began to banter me to trade. One offered me her blanket for the drapery in the corner, and another a pair of moccasins for the covering on the couch. They were all three talking at once, gesticulating at this and that article of furniture, each trying as well as her limited vocabulary would permit to strike a bargain with me, so that in my bewilderment I felt as if I had suddenly been called to preside over a bazaar.

Frank looked on the scene with evident amusement. I was helpless and knew not what to say or do. All the time I was planning in my mind how to get rid of the disagreeable visitors. I think Frank divined what was in my mind, for presently he suggested that the quickest and surest solution was to serve the visitors with refreshments, and I was glad enough to act on the suggestion.

When the meal was finished they sat down in the middle of the floor and began to jabber to one another in their own language. Presently they spied the piano which was open, and it was evident that the sight of it aroused their curiosity to the highest pitch. They gathered about the instrument, talking volubly and touching it with their hands as if it had been some sort of an animal which they expected to move at their touch.

"Heap teeth!" cried one, waving her hand in the direction of the keyboard. "Oh! Mah-chee-loo-thee!"

I was quite sure they had never seen a piano before, for when one of them happened to touch one of the keys, the sound produced caused her to jerk her hand away and step back in momentary terror.

At this juncture Frank suggested that I play for my visitors, and moved by a sudden impulse, I sat down on the stool and struck the keys. The effect on the visitors was startling. They retreated quickly to the far end of the room, jabbering incessantly and pointing to the instrument. Turning my gaze from them I went on playing, selecting a piece from Wagner—supposing that it would likely prove as pleasing to the uncultivated ear of the three Kiowas as anything else.

I must have presented a strange—even a terrifying aspect—for as the notes died away, I turned to find that the visitors had disappeared and Frank was laughing.

I went to the door to see the three squaws beating a retreat from the house. At sight of me in the doorway they uttered excited ejaculations, muttering: "Heap crazy!"

I never saw the three Mrs. Lane Dog again, nor was I bothered by any more visitors from the tribe, but I learned afterwards that I was known as the "Mad White Squaw, who made the big box howl" like the hungry coyotes, which Frank declared was a very fitting tribute to my art as a musician. But for all his badinage, I am sure that he was glad I brought my piano to the claim, for he remarked that it not only served to make me more contented, but opened up for the instrument a wider field of usefulness, not the least of which was its use as an extinguisher of unwelcome visitors.

Bandbox.

Pearl—Let me see. I wonder what it was that Pandora had in that wonderful box?

Ruby—Oh, I guess it was a new autumn hat.—Chicago Daily News.

As the World Wags.

As our inclinations, so our opinions.—Goethe.



The Men Come and Stand Over Her, Watching the Ribbon.