

# TALBOT'S LESSON

... By MARY FRANCES

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"Jack, dear, you haven't said a word about Christmas. What shall we do? Here are the Clendennins asking us to come out to their house party, but I thought if we asked Molly and the children to dinner and had a Christmas tree it would be—"

"What in the world are you talking about, Josephine? Christmas! We can have Molly to dinner at any time, and what do you want a Christmas tree for?"

"Why, Jack, what do you mean? For the presents for the children, of course, and then we could have a little party, and—"

"Josephine! I really thought you were a sensible girl. If there's a piece of nonsense on the face of the earth, it's this row about Christmas—nothing but a scrap of Aryan sun worship left over! And the silly custom of giving presents is a relic of vassal paying tribute. I'm surprised that you—"

"Oh, Jack!—she was almost crying—"

"Don't you give presents at Christmas?"



HE SPIED THE LUXURIOUS DRESSING GOWN. We made so much of it at home. Why, I couldn't bear not to celebrate, and this is our first anniversary since we were married too."

"My dear, celebrate it anyway you like. If it's our first wedded Christmas, it won't be our last, you know. Go and get anything you like and have the bill sent to me, but don't count me in on any of these tiresome festivities. After a fellow's knocked about the world as I have, loading down the Nile in Egypt, shooting elephants in Africa, hunting tigers in India, Christmas and other holidays don't mean anything to him."

"Jack Talbot, do you actually mean to say that you don't intend to celebrate Christmas?"

"My dear, if I don't that is no reason why you shouldn't celebrate all you want to."

"But if you don't celebrate how can I? You know we have always had all our pleasures together."

Jack Talbot looked calmly and half coldly at the flushed, beautiful face of his wife across the table.

"Josephine, I really hope you are not going to be foolish. Go ahead, but I must really draw the line on these domestic roundups for myself. If you have Molly and the children, let me know in time, so I can go out to Tom Harcourt's stag party at West Chester. Remember we're due at the opera to-night."

Josephine, her brain in a riot of anger and distress, sought the seclusion of her room, just as Molly was ushered in.

"Put on your hat, Josie, and come down town with me. I'm finishing up my shopping, and today's the last day I'm going to be caught in that mob. I nearly had my clothes torn off my back yesterday, but I've got to get something for Cousin Sarah. What do you suppose would suit that old frump? She makes me sick, but of course we've got to keep on the right side of her, as she's taken such a fancy to Harold."

"Look here, Molly," said Josephine suddenly, "do you really think it's any use to give presents?"

"Josephine Torrington! What on earth is the matter with you? For a girl who always got about a cart load of presents every Christmas you ought to be ashamed of yourself! Jack has spoiled you, giving you so much. What have you got for him?"

Josephine had an inspiration. She jumped up.

"Molly, I'll go with you. I—I just remember what Jack wants."

Jack Talbot was half way through his toilet on Christmas morning when he spied the luxurious dressing gown, fit for a nabob, that Josephine had laid out for him.

"What the mischief—is this for me? I thought it was some newfangled dud of yours. What did you buy it for? I have about half a dozen of such things in some traps not yet unpacked."

And poor Josephine, almost in hysterics, nearly cried her eyes out after Jack had gone to his club to see about a cob without giving her the wrappings of her finger. But, being a woman of spirit, she sat up later in the afternoon and said: "Wait till next Christmas."

Jack Talbot, and I'd come with you for this!"

A year rolled around, and Christmas was again at hand, just six days off. Jack Talbot sat comfortably smoking in his office when the noon mail came in, and among the letters he spied the Allahabad postmark and the writing of Hugh Tracy. Breaking the seal, he read:

Dear Old Man—You are a lucky fellow, and I congratulate you on your Christmas under your pine and fir tree. I'm glad you've settled down, and since I cannot in person share your Christmas joys I have sent you as a present for your charming wife an ivory Buddha, older by hundreds of years than you or me, and if she will say a prayer to him for me I'll come home next year and celebrate all the holidays in the calendar and introduce a bill to have them doubled in the bargain.

Goodly, old fellow. I wish you both a very merry Christmas, and, with devoted regards to Mrs. Talbot, I am, as ever, yours eternally.

"Wonder if he's had the fever," mused Jack, after which he went down to the custom house. The bill rather staggered him. It's a long way from Allahabad to New York, and Hugh did not seem to have prepaid all the charges. Jack settled them and ordered the god sent to his office.

Before the week ended Talbot had received letters fairly bulging with Christmas from his friends in most of the inhabited portions of the globe, and by some curious coincidence they had all sent gifts to his wife.

Vinton De Witt sent a case of priceless embroideries from Persia, Tom Macy a stuffed tiger and a pair of boars' tusks from the heart of Africa, Major Norton jewels from an old Hindoo temple, Fred Bayless a chest filled with rare bronzes, lacquer and lacid work, and Gordon Taylor an array of rugs and tapestries that would make a collector turn green with envy. Suave officials presented him with due bills for goods that had come half way around the world, and other officials suggested that he settle with Uncle Sam for tariff rates, and so it came to pass that he spent most of the week before Christmas in the custom house settling with the appraisers and cursing the robbery of the transatlantic companies and the tariff rates of the United States.

On the evening before Christmas he was in his office footing up the bills when a idea came to him. He pulled out a private drawer and carefully compared the dates of all the letters. Then he looked at the accumulated amount of the bills, exactly \$614.29. Again he thought harder than before. Slowly a light began to dawn on his inner consciousness.

"By Jove, but it was clever!" he said. "And to think that I never suspected anything when I gave her all those addresses!" After which he put on his hat, went up town to a fashionable furrier's and bought a dream of a sealskin jacket.

"Got any—er—any engagements for tomorrow, Josephine?" he inquired that evening at dinner.

His wife looked serenely across the table at him and arched her eyebrows delicately.

"Tomorrow, dear? No. Why? Do you want to go to the office earlier than usual?"

"Office! Well, no! The fact is, I thought I'd take a day off tomorrow."

It was 10 o'clock the next morning when a van about the size of an apartment house drew up in front of the Talbot residence. An hour later, amid the gorgeous scenic effects of rugs, jewels, bronzes, ivories, Indian draperies and curios of the orient, Josephine looked artlessly into her husband's eyes and said:

"How perfectly ravishing they all are, my dear, and how nice to have them given to us by our friends, so they didn't cost anything!"

Words failed Jack Talbot. He silently drew from his hiding place the sealskin jacket for his wife, and as she slipped into it and with a little feminine cry of delight felt its luxurious warmth she thought:

"Poor old Jack! But I had to do it!"

**Female Jesters.**  
Nothing better illustrates the dullness of society in the middle ages than the custom used by all high placed and wealthy persons of keeping a professional jester, nor was it confined to Christendom, for we read that Cortes found an individual of this profession at the court of Montezuma. Our modern clowns, though very different from the licensed jesters of old, owe to them, of course, their origin; but, so far as I know, the female jester, who was in vogue before the male, has no present representative.

We are told by Erasmus that in all the great Inns on the continent there was in his time a female official of this description who enlivened the company as she waited at table by witticisms and repartee. It should be added, however, that she was generally young and pretty. So late as 1858 we read in Mrs. Hornby's "Travels" that she found a female jester at Constantinople who was exceedingly amusing.

**Animals That Do Not Drink.**  
Darwin states in his "Voyage of a Naturalist" that unless the guanaco, or wild llamas, of Patagonia drink salt water in many localities they must drink none at all. The large and interesting group of sloths are alike in never drinking. A parrot is said to have lived in the zoological gardens, Regent park, for fifty-two years without a drop of water.

**Geology and Biology.**  
Geology is the complement of biology. As soon as one has mastered the rudiments of botany and zoology and of the distribution of life forms in space the range of his thoughts should be extended to take in the orderly succession of life in past ages and the evolution of modern specialized plants and animals from the earlier generalized types.

## DON'T GET TOO FULL.

A Lesson That May Be Learned From the Habits of the Bees.

"Don't stir up a beehive unless you know it is a rich one," said an apiarist to a visitor at his bee farm.

"I think that I would leave them alone altogether," was the reply. "They have too angry a buzz about them to win my confidence."

"You are not used to them, that's all," said the bee man. "For example, these hives are full of honey, and if I puff a little smoke into the doors so as to sort of suffocate the sentries I can topple a hive over, handle the bees like so many beans, clean the honeycombs and carry them off. The bees won't harm me." And, to prove his words, the speaker performed his experiment and came back to his friend with a smile and several heavy combs of honey.

"If those hives had been nearly empty," said the apiarist, "I would have been lucky to have escaped with my life. The tenants of a poor hive sting to kill."

"That's strange," said the visitor. "I should think that they would defend their hoards with especial jealousy, and the more they have the hotter they would fight."

"The reason is," said the bee man, "that when alarmed the bees fly to their storehouse and gorge themselves. When full of honey, a bee can't bend its body and sting."

"Which should be a lesson to us," said the other. "Don't get too full."—New York Tribune.

## A Punctual Bird.

What tempts the little humming bird that we see in our gardens to travel every spring from near the equator to as far north as the arctic circle, leaving behind him, as he does, for a season, many tropical delights? He is the only one of many humming birds that pluckily leaves the land of gayly colored birds to go into voluntary exile in the north, east of the Mississippi. How it stirs the imagination to picture the solitary, tiny migrant, a mere atom of bird life, moving above the range of human sight through the vast dome of the sky! Borne swiftly onward by rapidly vibrating little wings, he covers the thousands of miles between his winter home and his summer one by easy stages and arrives at his chosen destination, weather permitting, at approximately the same date year after year.—Country Life in America.

## His Best Role.

They were discussing the amateur theatricals of the previous evening, and Thespis was bewailing the hard luck that had brought on a violent headache and prevented his appearance.

"Do you know, old boy," he said confidentially, "that was to have been the effort of my life. I had the love scene down fine, and Mildred's heart must have been of stone if she failed to see that I was in earnest. I was willing to stake everything on the result, for I was confident she would accept me the moment the curtain went down. And to think that my usual hard luck would step in just when all my hopes were about to be realized!"

"I heard Mildred refer to your non-appearance," remarked Fayer.

"You did? And what did she say?"

"Said you performed an act of charity by not coming on."

## It Puzzled Him.

It is said of a former Marquis of Townshend that when young and engaged in battle he saw a drummer at his side killed by a cannon ball which scattered his brains in every direction. His eyes were at once fixed on the ghastly object, which seemed to engross his thoughts. A superior officer observing him supposed he was intimidated at the sight and addressed him in a manner to cheer his spirits. "Oh!" said the young marquis, with calmness, but severity. "I am not frightened. I am puzzled to make out how any man with such a quantity of brains ever came to be here!"

## Too True to Be Profitable.

"How about that historical novel?" asked the publisher.

"No good at all," answered the reader to whom it had been assigned. "The man doesn't understand how to write historical novels, and he hasn't perverted the truth as we know it enough to make any kind of a rumpus among the critics. His book would fall flat."—Chicago Post.

## Two Babies For a Cent.

A novel poster was seen by a recent sojourner in Nova Scotia. It was printed on rough paper with red paint, in a childish hand, and was tacked to a telegraph pole in a conspicuous position: "There will be a concert and fair in Mrs. Parson's sitting room today at 2 o'clock sharp. Admission—adults, 5 cents; children, 2 cents; babies, two for a cent."

## Slitting Tree Bark.

When a young fruit or shade tree stops growing and looks as if it were about to give up the struggle for existence, the trouble may often be traced to its being barkbound. In this case a long perpendicular slit in the bark will enable it to resume its natural growth.

## The Value of Science.

Science is a first rate piece of furniture for a man's upper chamber if he has common sense on the ground floor, but if a man hasn't plenty of good common sense the more science he has the worse for the patient.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

## Extremes Meet.

"Were you positive enough when you told the old man you intended to marry his daughter?"

"Yes, but he was negative."—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

## Wade Hampton's Slaves

It is related of General Wade Hampton that on one occasion he was riding along a highway that led through one of his numerous southern plantations when he met a slave of the build and appearance. He drew rein and said: "You are a likely fellow. Who do you belong to?" "Wade Hampton, sir." "Ah! And who is Wade Hampton?" "Please, sir, master, you must be from de norf, 'kase Mas' Wade Hampton is de berry first genimun in de souf."

The story used to be told to illustrate the greatness in numbers of Wade Hampton's slaves. His own slaves did not know him by sight—that is, hundreds and thousands of them did not. The slaves he owned numbered 4,000, and he was therefore the largest slave owner of the south or of modern times.—Birmingham Age-Herald.

## A Royal Tallman.

For 400 years the Hohenzollern family has possessed a peculiar tallman in the shape of a black stone set in a ring, each end of the house having passed the charm on to the next in succession for many generations. Frederick the Great is said to have found the ring sealed in a package with instructions as to its preservation and transmission written by Frederick I.

Precisely what value or significance attaches to this carefully treasured bit of jewelry it would be difficult to say. Tradition says that a huge toad hopped into the royal presence centuries ago with the stone held in its mouth. As to whether the golden setting in which the stone is now preserved is due to the forethought of the intelligent toad or to the afterthought of the Hohenzollerns tradition fails to enlighten us.

## Floorwalking.

Head Floorwalker (severely)—I heard you tell the lady she would find the ribbons at the third counter to the left.

New Floorwalker—That's where they are.

Head Floorwalker—Yes; but you should have told her to go to the right past the necktie bargain counter, turn to the left past the stocking bargain counter, then three counters to the right past the silk skirt bargain counter, and so on. You'll never make a floorwalker.—Judge.

## One Definition of It.

"What do you consider domesticity in man?"

"It is the trait of wanting to stay home when his wife wants him to go out with her."

"And what is domesticity in woman?"

"That is the trait of being willing to stay home when her husband wants to go out without her."—Chicago Post.

## Fond of Books.

H.—Is your boy fond of books?  
D.—Very. I gave him a copy of "Robinson Crusoe" the other day, and he got lots of fun out of it.

H.—I didn't know he could read.  
D.—He can't read, but he tears the pages out and makes boats of them. Oh, yes; he's fond of boats!

## Saving His Father's Hair.

Lord Charles was often troubled by importunate acquaintances, who begged for some of his father's (the Duke of Wellington) hair. On such occasions he said to an old servant whose hair was like the duke's: "Sit down, John. I must cut off another lock!"

## PLACEBO PRESCRIPTIONS.

**An Old Doctor Tells a Secret of His Profession.**

"Never tell a patient that there is nothing the matter with him," said the old doctor, who was revealing the secrets of his profession. "If you do, you make a lifelong enemy and lose your patient, who sends for another doctor. Give him something, if it is only flavored water. If the disease is only imaginary, cure the imagination with a harmless dose, and your patient gets well. In the profession we call such prescriptions 'placebos,' and more wonderful cures are effected by placebos than the world wots of. So, also, when you run across a patient who announces the first thing that he cannot take certain sorts of medicine, don't tell him he must. Agree with him and give him the medicine, if he needs it, in a disguised form.

"There are thousands of people who labor under the conviction that they cannot take quinine and will tell you that they have never taken it in their lives, while at the same time they may be taking large doses of it. The taste of quinine is hard to disguise, but if administered in a pill the patient can be made to take it and never suspect what he has swallowed. The trouble is the patient is apt to recognize a quinine pill by its appearance, to suspect, bite into the pill and thus discover your ruse. To obviate this difficulty druggists now have pills of quinine made in odd shapes and colors. Pink pills, containing nothing but quinine and a little harmless coloring matter, are a favorite form for use in cases where an antipyretic crank has to be medicated. In giving a placebo it is not wise to have it taste too well. The patient is apt to suspect if you do. And be sure that you gravely impress upon the patient that only a teaspoonful is to be taken at a time and that at stated intervals. The whole virtue of a placebo exists in the solemnity and importance with which you surround it."—New York Press.

## Living in a Crater.

There is no more interesting or curious sight on this earth than the interior of the extinct crater, Aso San, about thirty miles from the city of Kumamoto, in Japan. This peculiar locality is inhabited by 20,000 people, who live and prosper within its vertical wall 800 feet high. The inhabitants rarely make a journey into the outer world, but form, as it were, a little nation by themselves.

## THE GAME OF GAMES.

Golf, Says This Writer, Involves Art, Science and Inspiration.

It is true that there is a point of view from which golf may be regarded as an extremely simple game—the very simplest of all the games with a ball and a club, says William G. Brown in the June Atlantic. The player's object is simple and single to the point of simplicity and singularity, one might say—to put a small ball in a small hole with the fewest possible strokes. But so are the objects of the highest ambitions, the guiding stars of careers the most perplexed and devious. It is true, likewise, that all the countless strokes a golfer makes are divisible into three kinds of strokes—driving, approaching and putting. But Mr. Everard, in a lecture unsurpassed for truth and brilliancy by any in all the extremely clever literature of golf, has declared that to make those three strokes a right one must have "art, science and inspiration."

From the moment the ball leaves the tee, whether it be topped, pulled or sliced or whether, struck in proper fashion a trifle below the medial line and urged forward with an exquisite free lashing out of the wrists, it takes flight as with wings and seeks its true course as with a mind and purpose of its own until it drops into the cup with a tintinnulation that no louder clang or pean ever surpassed in its suggestion of victory and consummation, there is no foreseeing what perplexity or temptation to carelessness or overconfidence it will present.

Not twice off the tee ground and the putting green will the possibilities and probabilities of the stroke be quite the same. In the lie, the wind, the distance to be traversed, the obstacles to be carried, there are variations not to be reckoned by any known mathematics.

Then, as the match approaches its dreadfully quiet climax of defeat or victory, the responsibility may grow positively appalling. The very deliberation which, impossible in most games, is so characteristic of this, so far from lessening the strain on one's nerves, undoubtedly heightens it. One has time to estimate the emergency, to realize the crisis.

Not the hottest rally at tennis, not the longest and tightest home run at baseball, not the most heroic rush at football, requires a more rigid concentration of thought and energy or a more dauntless courage than the flick of a putter that sends the ball crawling on its last little journey across the putting green when the put is for the hole and the hole means the match. There is not a quality of mind or body—I will not except or qualify at all—no, not one, that life itself proves excellent which a circuit of the links will not test.

## The Declaration.

It is a rather curious fact that while facsimiles of the Declaration of Independence were common enough several years ago and were largely used for advertising purposes they are now very scarce—so scarce that a Philadelphia collector recently paid \$10 for one bearing the advertisement of a western railroad. The original document, preserved in glass, is still to be seen in the possession of the department of state in Washington, but it has become so faded as to be nearly illegible, by reason of which a photographic reproduction would be valueless. James D. McBride had plates made and secured a copyright on them in 1874, but these plates were later destroyed by fire, and none are now in existence. Consequently the copies that have been preserved are constantly increasing in value.—Philadelphia Record.

## Drury Lane.

Drury lane was named after the great family of the Drurys who once lived there, and Clare market after Lord Clare. The fame of Drury lane is worldwide. Who has not heard of the famous pantomimes at Drury Lane theater and of the many famous actors and actresses who have played there? Who has not read of the wild exploits of Nell Gwynn, the flower girl, who obtained such an ascendancy over the Merrie Monarch? Peppys calls her "Pretty Nell" and records how he saw her in Drury lane "standing at her lodging's door in her smock sleeves and bodice, a mighty pretty creature."—Chambers' Journal.

## A Good Prophet.

Cassidy—Kearney seems to be doing well in his print job.  
Casey—Ah, but he'll not last long in it!  
Cassidy—He seems dacint an' s'ober now.  
Casey—Aye, but he'll not last a month. Ol' ve said so iver since he got the job two years ago, an' Ol' ve bet Ol' in right.—Philadelphia Press.

## The Tramp Ready For Any Job.

The gay cat applies for a job where he hears men are wanted, he knows not for what. "Can you drive four?" asks the boss. It may be the hobo doesn't know whether it is four nails or four tent stakes he is to drive, but he confidently answers: "Sure thing! Had a job driving four last month at —" (any of the 10,000 places he has been to, so he can answer questions if the boss is inclined to put them), and the next morning, finding the "four" he is to drive are horses, he confidently approaches a fellow employee with, "Say, Bud, show me how to put the harness on the plugs, will you?" Asked if he knew how to make watches or dynamite cartridges, he would doubtless say he did. He might fall at either, but he would not weakly deny himself an opportunity to try. This is not true of all, but it is a distinctive trait born of necessity in men that seek employment in many and various fields.—Leslie's Monthly.

## Keeping Friends.

There is nothing so very difficult in making friends; the trouble is to keep them. Pleading manners and a taking way will always win admirers, but a lasting friendship must be built upon a firmer foundation than a transitory smile, an hour of high spirits or even great physical beauty. Of course it is a pleasure to feel that one is favored by some radically beautiful woman, but unless there be genuine congeniality between the two concerned the time will come when passive friendliness will cease to be attractive. To retain friendship one must be continually on the watch and not let the familiarity that comes from a lengthy knowledge of the other's life breed the contempt that so often follows a close intimacy.

To retain either friendship or love the illusions must not be dispelled. Do not, because you feel sure of your ground, let the commonplace enter in and monopolize the everyday affairs. Let the halo of sentiment hover over even the prosaic affairs of daily life, for, once dispelled, they can never form again, and in the one glimpse of the material side of the intimacy may be utterly destroyed a relation at one time thought to be eternal.

## A Song Fit.

An English tourist in the highlands tells the following amusing story: He was traveling one day last summer by rail in the north of Scotland, and at one of the stations four farmers entered the train. They were all big, burly men and completely filled up the seat on the one side of the compartment.

At the next station the carriage door opened to admit a tall, cadaverous individual with about the girth of a lamp post. He endeavored to wedge himself in between two of the farmers, and finding it a difficult operation he said to one of them: "Excuse me, sir; you must move up a bit. Each seat is intended to accommodate five persons, and according to act of parliament you are only entitled to eighteen inches of space."

"Aye, aye, my friend," replied the farmer; "that's a' very good for you that's been built that way, but ye canna blame me if I ha'nna been constructed according to act of parliament!"

## Scots In American History.

It is a noteworthy fact in American history that of the four members of Washington's cabinet Knox of Massachusetts, the only New Englander, was a Scotch-Irishman; Alexander Hamilton of New York was a Scotch-Frenchman, Thomas Jefferson was of Welsh descent, and the fourth, Edmund Randolph, claimed among his ancestors the Scotch earls of Murray. New York also furnished the first chief justice of the United States, John Jay, who was a descendant of French Huguenots, while the second chief justice, John Rutledge, was Scotch-Irish, as were also Wilson and Iredell, two of the original associate justices; a third, Blair, was of Scottish origin. John Marshall, the great chief justice, was, like Jefferson, of Scotch and Welsh descent.—Charles R. Hanna's "Celt In America."

## A Choice of Hymns.

When the English troops in South Africa were daily expecting the announcement of a peace settlement with the Boer leaders, a worthy dean telegraphed to Lord Kitchener from the Orange River Colony, saying: "As I am the acting chaplain and conducting divine service in many camps tomorrow, may I ask if the hymn 'Peace, Perfect Peace,' would not be a most appropriate one to give out to be sung?" And the great "K." wired back, "Please yourself, but I think 'Onward, Christian Soldier!' quite as good."

## Irish Language of Lovers.

The Irish language is above all others the language of lovers. You may find in French or Spanish or Italian superlatives or diminutives of endearment, but you will never find anything so soft, so sweet, so subtle, so sad and sometimes so rapturously extravagant as you will find in the Irish language.—Sydney Freeman.

## Working Him.

Boroughs—Say, old man, can you break a twenty so I can get a five dollar bill out of it?  
Markley—Sure! Here you are. Where is your twenty?  
Boroughs—Oh, you misunderstood me! I thought you had a twenty. Thanks! One five will do.—Philadelphia Press.

## Literally.

"I suppose," said the supercilious stranger in town, "your city has had its ups and downs notwithstanding its present prosperity."  
"Yep," replied the resident cheerfully; "still got 'em—streets being torn up and old buildings being torn down."—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

## Voices to Order.

A knowledge of the physiology of the human larynx has made it possible to supply artificial voices to persons who have been deprived of the one nature gave them, and a number of cases exist where the cavity has been opened and a larynx made of suitable material with rubber membranes has been inserted and become practically useful in speech.

## Why He Wept.

The extensive authority of parents under the Chinese laws is well known. A Chinaman of forty years, whose aged mother fogged him every day, shed tears in the company of one of his friends.

"Why do you weep?" he was asked.

"Alas, things are not as they used to be!" answered the devoted son. "The poor woman's arms grow feebler every day!"—Sporting Times.