Columbus Journal

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COLUMBUS, NEB.

Success and Failure.

Peary failed to reach the North Pole, but he got nearer to that elusive proposition than any other of the numerous explorers who have tried to penetrate to that arctic region that has been so long an undiscovered country. He was within 191 miles of the pole, a short distance from the point desired, if the transportation in the frozen north were equal to our own in the matter of speed over good railroads. Peary beat the record of Capt. Cagni of the Italian Duke of Abruzzi expedition by over 50 miles, and is to be praised for his persistency and courage, but, nevertheless, many are asking what particular good has been accomplished by his efforts? Even if he had reached the regions where it is claimed there are 3,000,000 square miles of unoccupied territory, would this have been of any benefit to humanity at large? asks Boston Budget. Would the country have been inhabitable, and if it were, how would intending settlers ever get there through the icy barriers that would oppose their progress on all sides? Possibly in the distant future, modern inventiveness might be able to make journeying to the pole comparatively easy, so that even excursion parties might go there on pleasure trips, but at present this seems to be as little likely of realization as would be a trip to Mars on a flying machine. However, man is an inquiring animal, and is always wanting to eat of the tree of knowledge, and if only his curiosity would be gratified by the invasion of the North Pole, there would be some advancement made in developing the spirit of enterprise without which there is no progress in any acknowledged practical direction. Science would be benefited by the discovery, if nothing else came from it for the prosperity of mankind. Peary has not attained the summit of his ambition, but that will not discourage others from trying to outdo him. His example will encourage them to venture farther than he did, for as he followed others he will have, no doubt, many successors. The best solace that Peary has in his defeat is the faith that his wife exhibited during his silent absence in his ability to return to her unharmed, even though she knew from experience all the difficulties and dangers of arctic travel.

National Department of Health.

The plea made by Prof. Norton of Yale university for a national department of health is not to be ignored, remarks the Troy Times. Yale has taken up the matter, and other institutions and men of high professional standing are giving attention. A bulletin put forth by Yale's department of social science reminds the American people that the four causes of waste of human life and energy are preventable death, preventable sickness, preventable conditions of low physical and mental efficiency and preventable ignorance, and urges action by the people through the government to check this waste. Prof. Norton asserts that not less than 750,000 lives can be saved in the United States annually by the employment of proper means, and he puts the economic side of the question in almost startling form. Estimating wages at one dollar per day, which no doubt is far below the average, the professor shows that the yearly loss by illness is considerably over $1,000,000,000, while by the methods proposed at least half this sum could be saved. In an era notable for the economizing of force, that is a statement to compel serious thought.

Lowest Telegraph Rates.

Spelling reform has had a new and important development in a direction which no one has heretofore thought of. In Europe messages are charged for according to the number of letters, instead of words, as in this country. All trans-Atlantic messages from America are charged for by letter in accordance with the European system. The adoption of spelling reform will cause a modification of the schedules of the international telegraphic companies, and the consequent saving of money. For example, "thru" will have to be charged for as four letters instead of six, as formerly, and so on through the entire list. It will cause no trouble to the operators, because they for years have been using the shortest form by which words could be spelled without possibility of mistake. Consequently they will have nothing new to learn.

Out in Los Angeles there is a burglar who has recently been busy stealing oil paintings. This will come as a surprise to people who have supposed Los Angeles to be a place where there was nothing but a few fruit warehouses and a real estate boom.

Mr. Edison promises a cheap motor car, and M. Santos Dumont is satisfied that his new aeroplane will be the best runabout. Meanwhile the walking will be good, provided pedestrians are expert at dodging.

Somebody is trying to figure out that owing to the scarcity of platinum the price of false teeth is likely to rise until false teeth will become as scarce as the proverbial hen's teeth. With the price of teeth and everything on which they may be used going up together, the outlook cannot be considered altogether cheerful for the man who is shy a few.

Labor-saving machinery will never bother the manicurist. Her work must always be done by hand.

THE DELUGE

By DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS, Author of "THE CASE"

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CHAPTER XII—Continued.

Ellersly sat opposite me, and I was irritated, and thrown into confusion, too, every time I lifted my eyes, by the crushed, criminal expression of his face. He ate and drank hugely—and extremely bad manners it would have been regarded in me had I made as much noise as he, or lifted such quantities at a time into my mouth. But through this noisy gluttony he managed somehow to maintain that hang-dog air—like a thief who has gone through the house and, on his way out, has paused at the pantry, with the sack of plunder beside him, to gorge himself.

I looked at Anita several times, each time with a carefully-framed remark ready, each time I found her gaze on me—and I could say nothing, could only look away in a sort of panic. Her eyes were strangely variable. I have seen them of a gray, so pale that it was almost silver—like the steely light of the snow-line at the edge of the horizon; again, and they were so that evening, they shone with the deepest, softest blue, and made one think, as one looked at her, of a fresh violet frozen in a block of clear ice.

I sat behind her in the box at the theater. During the first and second intermissions several men dropped in to speak to her mother and her—fellows who didn't ever come down town, but I could tell they knew who I was by the way they ignored me. It exasperated me to a pitch of fury, that coldly insolent air of theirs—a jerky nod at me without so much as a glance, and no notice of me when they were leaving my box beyond a faint, supercilious smile as they passed with eyes straight ahead. I knew what it meant, what they were thinking—that the "Bucket-shop King," as the newspapers had dubbed me, was trying to use old Ellersly's necessities as a "jimmy" and "break into society." When the curtain went down for the last intermission, two young men appeared; I did not get up as I had before, but stuck to my seat—I had reached that point at which courtesy has become cowardice.

They craned and strained at her round me and over me, presently gave up and retired, disguising their anger as contempt for the bad manners of a bounder. But that disturbed me not a ripple, the more as I was delighting in a consoling discovery. Listening and watching as she talked with these young men, whom she evidently knew well, I noted that she was distant and only politely friendly in manner habitually, that while the ice might thicken for me, it was there always. I knew enough about women to know that, if the woman who can thaw only for one man is the most difficult, she is also the most constant. "Once she thaws toward me!" I said to myself.

When the young men had gone, I leaned forward until my head was close to hers, to her hair—fine, soft, abundant, electric hair. Like the infatuated fool that I was, I tore out all the pigeon-holes of my brain in search of something to say to her, something that would start her to thinking well of me. She must have felt my breath upon her neck, for she moved away slightly, and it seemed to me a shiver visibly passed over that wonderful white skin of hers.

I drew back and involuntarily said, "Beg pardon." I glanced at her mother and it was my turn to shudder. I can't hope to give an accurate impression of that stony, mercenary, mean face. There are looks that paint upon the human countenance the whole of a life, as a flash of lightning paints upon the blackness of the night miles on miles of landscape. The look of Mrs. Ellersly's—stern disapproval at her daughter, stern command that she be more civil, that she unbend—showed me the old woman's soul.

"If you wish it," I said, on impulse, to Miss Ellersly in a low voice, "I shall never try to see you again."

I could feel rather than see the blood suddenly beating in her skin, and there was in her voice a nervousness very like fright as she answered: "I'm sure mamma and I shall be glad to see you whenever you come."

"You?" I persisted.

"Yes," she said, after a brief hesitation.

"Glad?" I persisted.

She smiled—the faintest change in the perfect curve of her lips. "You are very persistent, aren't you?"

"Very," I answered. "That is why I have always got whatever I wanted."

"I admire it," said she.

"No, you don't," I replied. "You think it is vulgar, and you think I am vulgar because I have that quality—that and some others."

She did not contradict me.

"Well, I am vulgar—from your standpoint," I went on. "I have purposes and passions. And I pursue them. For instance, you."

"I?" she said tranquilly.

"You," I repeated. "I made up my mind the first day I saw you that I'd make you like me. And—you will."

"That is very flattering," said she. "And a little terrifying. For"—she faltered, then went bravely on—"I suppose there isn't anything you'd stop at in order to gain your end."

"Nothing," said I, and I compelled her to meet my gaze.

She drew a long breath, and I thought there was a sob in it—like a frightened child.

"But I repeat," I went on, "that if you wish it, I shall never try to see you again. Do you wish it?"

"I—don't—know," she answered slowly. "I think—hot."

As she spoke the last word, she lifted her eyes to mine with a look of forced friendliness in them that I'd rather not have seen there. I wished to be blind to her defects, to the [illegible] and smutches with which her surroundings must have sullied her. And that friendly look seemed to me an unmistakable hypocrisy in obedience to her mother. However, it had the effect of bringing her nearer to my own earthly level, of putting me at ease with her; and for the few remaining minutes we talked freely, I indifferent whether my manners and conversation were correct. As I helped her into their carriage, I pressed her arm slightly, and said in a voice for her only, "Until to-morrow."

XIII.

FRESH AIR IN A GREENHOUSE.

At five the next day I rang the Ellersly's bell, was taken through the drawing-room into that same library.

"I CAUGHT HER IN MY ARMS AND KISSED HER—NOT ONCE, BUT MANY TIMES."

The curtains over the double doorway between the two rooms were almost drawn. She presently entered from the hall. I admired the picture she made in the doorway—her big hat, her embroidered dress of white cloth, and that small, sweet, cold face of hers. And as I looked, I knew that nothing, nothing—no, not even her wish, her command—could stop me from trying to make her my own. That resolve must have shown in my face—it or the passion that inspired it—for she paused and paled.

"What is it?" I asked. "Are you afraid of me?"

She came forward proudly, a fine scorn in her eyes. "No," she said. "But if you knew, you might be afraid of me."

"I am," I confessed. "I am afraid of you because you inspire in me a feeling that is beyond my control. I've committed many follies in my life—I have moods in which it amuses me to defy fate. But those follies have always been of my own willing. You"—I laughed—"you are a folly for me. But one that compels me."

She smiled—not discouragingly—and seated herself on a tiny sofa in the corner, a curiously impregnable intrenchment, as I noted—for my impulse was to carry her by storm. I was astonished at my own audacity; I was wondering where my fear of her had gone, my awe of her superior fineness and breeding. "Mamma will be down in a few minutes," she said.

"I didn't come to see your mother," replied I. "I came to see you."

She flushed, then froze—and I thought I had once more "got upon" her nerves with my rude directness. How eagerly sensitive our nerves are to bad impressions of one we don't like, and how coarsely insensible to bad impressions of one we do like!

"I see I've offended again, as usual," said I. "You attach so much importance to petty little dancing-master tricks and caperings. You live—always have lived—in an artificial atmosphere. Real things act on you like fresh air on a hothouse flower."

"You are—fresh air?" she inquired, with laughing sarcasm.

"I am that," retorted I. "And good for you—as you'll find when you get used to me."

I heard voices in the next room—her mother's and some man's. We waited until it was evident we were not to be disturbed. As I realized that fact and surmised its meaning, I looked triumphantly at her.

"I see you are nerving yourself," said I with a laugh. "You are perfectly certain I am going to propose to you."

She flamed scarlet and half-started up.

"Your mother—in the next room—expects it, too," I went on, laughing even more disagreeably. "Your parents need money—they have decided to sell you, their only large income-producing asset. And I am willing to buy. What do you say?"

I was blocking her way out of the room. She was standing, her breath coming fast, her eyes blazing. "You are—frightful!" she exclaimed in a low voice.

"Because I am frank, because I am honest? Because I want to put things on a sound basis? I suppose, if I came lying and pretending and let you lie and pretend, and let your parents sell Sam lie and pretend, you would think me—almost tolerable. Well, I'm not that kind. When there's no special reason one way or the other, I'm willing to smirk and grimace and dodder and drivel, like the rest of your friends, those ladies and gentlemen. But when there's business to be transacted, I am business-like. Let's not begin with your thinking you are deceiving me, and so hating me and despising me and trying to keep up the deception. Let's begin right."

She was listening; she was no longer longing to fly from the room; she was curious. I knew I had scored.

"In any event," I continued, "you would have married for money. You've been brought up to it, like all these girls of your set. You'd be miserable without luxury. If you had your choice between love without luxury and luxury without love, it'd be as easy to foretell which you'd do as to foretell how a starving poet would choose between a loaf of bread and a volume of poems. You may love love; but you love life—your kind of life—better!"

She lowered her head. "It is true," she said. "It is low and vile, but it is true."

"Your parents need money—" I began.

She stopped me with a gesture. "Don't blame them," she pleaded. "I am more guilty than they."

I was proud of her as she made that confession. "You have the making of a real woman in you," said I. "I should have wanted you even if you hadn't. But what I now see makes what I thought a folly of mine look more like wisdom."

"I must warn you," she said, and now she was looking directly at me, "I shall never love you."

"Never is a long time," replied I. "I'm old enough to be cynical about prophecy."

"I shall never love you," she repeated. "For many reasons you wouldn't understand. For one you will understand."

"I understand the 'many reasons' you say are beyond me," said I. "For, dear young lady, under this coarse exterior I assure you there's hidden a rather sharp outlook on human nature—and—well, nerves that respond to the faintest changes in you as do mine can't be altogether without sensitiveness. What's the other reason—the reason? That you think you love some one else?"

"Thank you for saying it for me," she replied.

You can't imagine how pleased I was at having earned her gratitude, even in so little a matter. "I have thought of that," said I. "It is of no consequence."

"But you don't understand," she pleaded earnestly.

"On the contrary, I understand perfectly," I assured her. "And the reason I am not disturbed is—you are here, you are not with him."

She lowered her head so that I had no view of her face.

"You and he do not marry," I went on, "because you are both poor?"

"No," she replied.

"Because he does not care for you?"

"No—not that," she said.

"Because you thought he hadn't enough for two?"

A long pause, then—very faintly: "No—not that."

"Then it must be because he hasn't as much money as he'd like, and must find a girl who'll bring him—what he most wants."

She was silent.

"That is, while he loves you dearly, he loves money more. And he's willing to see you go to another man, be the wife of another man, be—everything to another man." I laughed. "I'll take my chances against love of that sort."

"You don't understand," she murmured. "You don't realize—there are many things that mean nothing to you and that mean—oh, so much to people brought up as we are."

"Nonsense!" said I. "What do you mean by 'we'? Nature has been bringing us up for a thousand thousand years. A few years of silly false training doesn't undo her work. If you and he had cared for each other, you wouldn' be here, apologizing for his selfish vanity."

"No matter about him," she cried impatiently, lifting her head haughtily. "The point is, I love him—and always shall. I warn you."

"And I take you at my own risk?"

Her look answered "Yes!"

"Well,"—I took her hand—"then, we are engaged."

Her whole body grew tense, and her hand chilled as it lay in mine. "Don't—please don't," I said gently. "I'm not so bad as all that. If you will be as generous with me as I shall be with you, neither of us will ever regret this."

There were tears on her cheeks as I slowly released her hand.

"I shall ask nothing of you that you are not ready freely to give," I said.

Impulsively she stood and put out her hand, and the eyes she lifted to mine were shining and friendly. I caught her in my arms and kissed her—not once but many times. And it was not until the chill of her ice-like face had cooled me that I released her, drew back red and ashamed and stammering apologies. But her impulse of friendliness had been killed; she once more, as I saw only too plainly, felt for me that sense of repulsion; felt for herself that sense of self-degradation.

"I cannot marry you!" she muttered.

"You can—and will—and must," I cried, infuriated by her look.

There was a long silence. I could easily guess what was being fought out in her mind. At last she slowly drew herself up. "I can not refuse," she said, and her eyes sparkled with defiance that had hate in it. "You have the power to compel me. Use it, like the brute you refuse to let me forget that you are." She looked so young, so beautiful, so angry—and so tempting.

"So I shall!" I answered. "Children have to be taught what is good for them. Call in your mother, and we'll tell her the news."

Instead, she went into the next room. I followed, saw Mrs. Ellersly seated at the tea-table in the corner farthest from the library where her daughter and I had been negotiating.

"Won't you give us tea, mother?" said Anita, on her surface not a trace of the cyclone that must still have been raging in her.

"Congratulate me, Mrs. Ellersly," said I. "Your daughter has consented to marry me."

Instead of speaking, Mrs. Ellersly began to cry—real tears. And for a moment I thought there was a real heart inside of her somewhere. But when she spoke, that delusion vanished.

"You must forgive me, Mr. Blacklock," she said in her hard, smooth, polite voice. "It is the shock of realizing I'm about to lose my daughter." And I knew that her tears were from joy and relief—Anita had "come up to the scratch;" the hideous menace of "genteel poverty" had been averted.

"Do give us tea, mamma," said Anita. Her cold, sarcastic tone cut my nerves and her mother's like a razor blade. I looked sharply at her, and wondered whether I was not making a bargain vastly different from that my passion was picturing.

(To be Continued.)

Regulating the Whirlwind

But the Mother Failed to Succeed in This Case.

The Mississippi is proverbially an unreliable quantity and Shakespeare has celebrated the "woman's wit," which, when the door is shut, will "out at the casement," or, that exit being denied, selects the keyhole or flies out with the smoke. But even more difficult to foresee or control is the action of the individuality inclosed in the small boy.

Young Mrs. Randall was often in despair about Percy, who would ask dreadful questions at inopportune moments. For instance, when there were guests—and guests were frequent at the minister's table—in some lull of conversation Percy was liable to point a fat finger at the guest and solemnly inquire: "Mamma, what's that man's name?"

However, Percy could by superhuman exertions, be made to understand some things, and then he invariably obeyed—one great comfort to the young mother. Just before two visiting clergymen arrived for supper Mrs. Randall had an interview with her son, and succeeded in making him understand that he must not ask people's names.

"Besides, mother's going to tell you just what these gentlemen's names are now," she said, "then you won't need to ask."

Percy repeated "Mr. Small" and "Mr. Lawson" until he thoroughly knew them. The mother put him in his high chair this time with a sense of relief.

He kept praiseworthy silence for some time, but finally—

"Mamma," he burst out—and the fat finger irresistibly lifted itself—"which one of 'em is Mr. Small an' which is Mr. Lawson?"

Uncle Jerry.

"Don't take no stock in the man that's always whisperin'," advised Uncle Jerry Peebles. "If he's afraid to trust his own voice there's some thin' wrong on the inside of 'im."

A FRONTIER CHRISTMAS

George Ely Ran Forward.

THE times were flush; there had been good crops, and an abundant harvest had been gathered and stored away. The people on old Lick creek, in Ralls county, Mo., were happy and eager to enjoy themselves. The country was sparsely settled, and there was little to be had that was good to eat or drink nearer than the town of Florida, on Salt river, where Squire Clemens, the father of Mark Twain, kept a store.

They danced all night under the hospitable roof where sat old Uncle Rhuebin Reddish, Aunt Lou extending them a warm welcome; then they went home with Rube Purvis to eat bear meat, and from there to Uncle Harry's and Aunt Edy's, where venison was broiling and bee gums had been robbed.

Christmas eve day was bright and pretty. The sun broke through a rift of clouds and the revelers were fairly intoxicated with joy. They intended to spend the night and Christmas day at the Widow Mackelroy's, where there was plenty of room and an abundance of good things to eat and drink.

The Widow Mackelroy was with the crowd. She had left Uncle Ned and Aunt Polly to look after her house, telling them that if they went away to close the doors. The faithful old servants were not liable to go farther than some cabins occupied by colored people, and the widow knew that they would answer the summons of the ranch bell. Though it was Christmas time she never dreamed that the negroes would leave the place.

Old Ned and Aunt Polly did leave the house, and a big black bear must have been watching them when they walked away. He had doubtless scented the odor of a Christmas feast. It was easy for bruin to smash one of the kitchen windows and enter the apartment unmolested. After feasting upon such things as had not been securely hidden away, the bear probably prowled through the house until his curiosity was satisfied, and then, finding a dark corner under the stairway in the hall, he laid down and closed his eyes to pleasant dreams.

This audacity was the result of careless training on the part of one James Irvin, an old bachelor of the vicinity, who had made a pet of this same bear, Bolivar, as the bear was called, frequently answered the call of the wild. In his youth Bolivar was an interesting pet. He was capable of performing many tricks, and he was an accomplished wrestler.

The crowd of Christmas ramblers reached the Widow Mackelroy's house about dark on Christmas eve. The lively young widow led the way to unlock doors, and the boys and girls followed, snowballing and singing Christmas carols.

The widow was in the act of making some interesting discoveries in the kitchen, and a dozen couples of dancers were moving over the parlor floor in harmony with music that was loud and fast, when shrieks and screams echoed through the rooms, and those who were able to command their senses saw a monster black bear entering the parlor on his hind feet and swinging his forelegs invitingly, as if seeking a partner for a waltz. The ballroom instantly presented a scene of the wildest excitement. Boys and girls who were near windows lost no time in making their escape. The bear cut off the retreat of a considerable crowd and hemmed them in a corner of the room. Bolivar pranced in front of these, licking froth from his red lips and glaring into the faces of the screaming girls as if he were trying to select a dainty one for his Christmas supper. George Ely, a young man who was proud of his strength and his ability to hit hard blows, ran forward and struck the bear on the side of the head. Bolivar shook his ear as if he were tickled, and, turning about, he seized the amazed young man with his powerful paws and drew him to his breast. The bear was becoming angry, and he would soon have crushed every rib in George's body if the youth's sweet heart had not come to his rescue.

Mary Goodwin had been dancing with George Ely and when the bear entered the room the thoughtful girl ran to the fireplace and seized an iron poker. It proved a good weapon. It was an iron bar about four feet in length, and it had been in use so long that one end had worn to a sharp point. Its effectiveness had been improved by a young man who had stuck the sharp end in the fire for the purpose of using it to take the chill from a pitcher of hard cider.

When Mary Goodwin saw her lover's face distorted with pain as he struggled to get loose from the mad bear's powerful arms she ran to his assistance, "Help! For God's sake, help me, boys!" shouted George. The bear was trying to fasten his teeth in his victim's throat, when the brave girl thrust the red-hot point of the iron bar behind the monster's fore shoulder and threw her whole weight upon it. The sharp point slipped between the bear's ribs and entered his heart.

With an angry growl Bolivar sank in a heap upon the ballroom floor, and George Ely staggered away, to fall, gasping for breath, in the arms of his quick-witted, fearless sweetheart.

Bolivar was barbecued on Christmas day, 1854. During those same holidays George and Mary were married.

Bits from the Trees

Hence the Mistletoe.

Florence—Don't you remember that last Christmas you broke your engagement?

Geraldine—Yes; but I'm a year older now.

• • •

SORROW OF IT.

Mildred—Oh, dear! I wish I knew what to give Mr. Slowboy for a Christmas present.

Helen—Why don't you give him your heart, dear?

Mildred—The big goose has it already, but he doesn't know it.

• • •

The Sum.

Knicker—Christmas mathematics are puzzling.

Bocker—Yes, you put down tens and carry everything.

• • •

An Explanation.

"Women are naturally more artistic than men."

"Yes," answered the matter of fact person, "that's why so many of us look funny when we wear our Christmas neckties and smoking jackets. Our wives want us to look artistic."

Effect of College Education.

It would be interesting to trace in detail, and after careful study of facts, to just how great a degree the 'varsity bred man influences us in respect of dress, says Men's Wear. For instance, the knee drawer, which retailers could not get enough of during summer, is nothing more or less than the running "pant" of track athletics, as the jersey that is coming to be worn with them is the jersey of the "gym." The turning up of the trousers to show fancy hose is an outcome of turned up tennis trousers, not for 'varsity's sake but for expediency and comfort.

So, the list of what we owe to college men in matters of dress might be lengthened. The collegian is certainly a force to be reckoned with by makers and sellers of men's wear.

Couldn't Have.

"Did Brown smoke the cigars his wife gave him Christmas?"

"No, I guess not; I saw him this morning and he is a perfect picture of health.