The Bee's Home Magazine Page

THE JUDGE TAKES HARRY TO A BOOBY HATCH

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By Tad

The Fatal Gift of Beauty

By DOROTHY DIX.

Is beauty an asset or a handicap to the woman who works?

A large and enthusiastic majority will reply that good looks are a satisfactory substitute for ability, talent, energy and faithfulness in business for a girl, and that so long as she has nicely marcelled peroxided hair on the outside of her head it doesn't much matter what she's got inside of it.

In proof of this position on the pulchritude question, they will point out that there are certain occupations, such as the stage, for instance, that are practically barred to all but pretty girls. Also that the clerks in department stores are recruited from the peach basket. Likewise that it cannot be a matter of chance that all stenographers and private secretaries are young and have straight front figures.

And, if additional evidence were needed to bolster up the assertion that a girl's best letter of recommendation when she goes to hunt a job is a peaches and cream complexion, those boosters will tell you that it is a common saying with business men that they like to have a pretty girl around the office to look at, just as they would like to have a pretty picture or a dainty piece of bric-a-brac. It rests their eyes.

Furthermore, the advocates of beauty-in-the-office would ask you to explain why, if good looks aren't an asset in business as well as in society, it is that you so very, very seldom see even a middle aged woman holding down a good job?

Surely fat, grizzled women or old skinny ones, must have just as much need of earning money as young, slim ones, but the woman who has lost her looks and her figure would walk her feet off looking for a good situation before she found one. When you see such a woman in a business house she either owns it, or she has been there for so many years, and shown such special aptitude for her work that she has made herself invaluable. She's never a new comer.

Nor does this indicate that all employers are flirtations. For from it. It is merely a tacit recognition of the fact that youth and beauty are the most enchanting things in the world and that we all like to surround ourselves by them when we can. It's just more inspiriting to have a fresh, pretty face smiling at us across a typewriter, or a lunch table, or a counter than it is to look upon a tired, homely, old face, and that's why sweet-and-twenty gets the job.

It appears, however, that there is another side to this question and that instead of good looks being a help in business to a girl, there is such a thing as being so good looking that it is a hindrance, and I am in receipt of a letter from a young lady who says that she is nineteen years old, and so possessed of a superabundance of the fatal gift of beauty it is a regular hoodoo.

She writes: "I have been seeking a position for some time without any satisfactory results because in every business office in which I apply for a position I am told that I am entirely too good looking to have around. Will you please advise me what to do under the circumstances?"

Isn't this sad? Alas, poor girl, how my heart goes out to her, and how gladly I would relieve her of half, or three-quarters, or all of this burden of pulchritude that she finds stands in her way. Unfortunately, in the foolish way that nature runs things, this is impossible, and as this too beautiful creature can't divide up her surplus good looks with those of us who are short of 'em, the only thing left is to suggest to her to sort of hide her light under a bushel, as it were.

Perhaps she might dim her radiance, so that it would cease to dazzle mankind and be safe to have around an office if she would comb her hair in the present unbecoming mode, which is guaranteed to turn a spotlight on a woman's profile and bring out every defect in it. Or she might leave her powder rag at home, and permit her nose to get red and shiny, or she might even go to the expense of wearing bunchy frocks that would make her look fat and frowsy, instead of lissome and willowy. It's dead easy to knock 10 per cent out of your appearance with your clothes, and if this Venus will make a real sincere effort to disguise her too dazzling charms she need not despair of being successful.

But is it not possible that my correspondent over-values her good looks, and that the reason that she doesn't get a situation is not because she possesses the fatal gift of beauty, but because she possesses the still more fatal gift of vanity and conceit? Men can stand a lot of beauty and survive her shock, but what they will not stand for are the airs and graces of a pretty woman who is always demanding to be flattered, and who spends her time in business hours preening and primping and smirking at herself in every mirror that she passes.

I recall once hearing a hard-headed old business man say of his stenographer: "Oh, yes, Miss A. is competent and a nice girl, but I've got to let her go because she's pretty and spends so much time fluffing up her hair and pulling up her collar and settling her belt just right that she's got no time to do anything else. Every time I ask her to take a letter I feel that I'm interrupting a beauty at the sacred rites of her toilet."

And I know another stenographer who lost a place because she dressed too conspicuously. "Not good for business," explained her employer. "She is a good looker, but she gets herself up in a way to catch men's eyes, and that doesn't give an office an atmosphere that inspires confidence in customers."

For all of which it would appear that while beauty is an asset, it may also be a hindrance, unless the pretty girl has got sense enough to put the soft pedal on her looks, and to realize that while her youth and prettiness may help her to get a job, she's got to hold it by good work.

Electric Civilization

By EDGAR LUCIEN LARKIN.

When writing the series on electricity some time ago, I said that "electricity is used in 4,000 different ways." Now the number of methods, ways and works is by name legion, whatever that means. The use of the elusive tentity—these words are used to obscure the notable fact of ignorance of what electricity is—is now extending and ramifying into all departments of human industry and daily life.

The fact that enormous power can be sent on thin wires is the great basic fact. An equally basic is the fact that weak power, but strong enough to convey intelligence, words, symbols, numbers and signals, can be transmitted by space-waves without wires. And the fact that electricity can appear as magnetism, and magnetism conserve electricity, or appear as electricity, is the one prominent in all electrical machinery.

Thus, press a switchkey and lift by means of magnetism a white-hot steel ingot out of a furnace, that weighs tons. This is a standard advance in metal work. Men do not now stand in the fierce heat of furnaces, with open doors, to handle ingots. Huge soft-iron masses are placed in contact for a moment with the hot mass. Current is turned through the wires around the soft iron: it is energized, becomes at once endowed with power and lifts out the heated bar, mass or ingot.

Ringing of detective bells, sounding of alarm and telltale buzzers are so complex in large business houses, banks, police controls, insurance registers and the like that crime, burglaries and fires are at once located. Burglars should ignore wired buildings.

Numbering and registering every detail and transaction may be said to be a complex science of itself. And disputes leading to lawsuits are saved by the unerring accuracy of the electric register.

Electricity in mining is now so great that it is a science all my itself. The uses of electricity underground are so many and of so varied character that they cannot be mentioned here.

Silver and gold plating, iridium and platinum manipulation, metallic flowers, pictures, electrical work in a hundred ways in the refined arts are also a grand department of electricity. Gold-plated roses are beautiful.

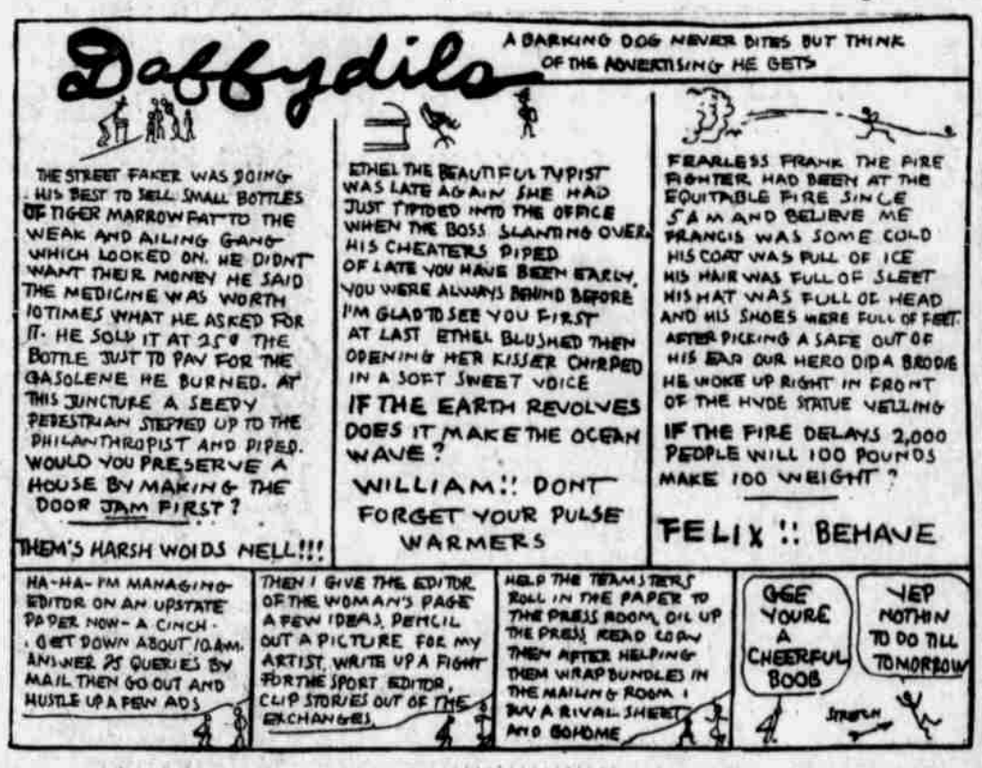
Motors on mountain peaks and within inaccessible places in the wilderness actuated by power sent up on wires from turbines in streams far below is a triumph.

One of the most wonderful catalogues ever printed is the long alphabetical list of names of wireless stations on land and sea. Every ship with a plant has its own distinctive signal.

Twenty-five cents will buy a perfect time-warning watch regulator in a few years. It will be a mere index or needle pointing to numbers in the dial. The master clock in Washington will set many millions of watches from Cuba to Alaska at noon each day.

After a while each person will be numbered like autos. Carry the wireless plant in hat or pocket, receive messages, hear the news, be modern—that is, be tuned to the wireless.

Them's Harsh Woids, Nell! -:- By Tad



Sherlocko the Monk

By GUS MAGER.

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The Case of the Flight in the Snow

New Light on Some Queer Ideas of China

Arranged by EDWIN MARKHAM.

Prof. Edward Alsworth Ross' "The Changing Chinese" (Century company) is filled with his experiences in the Flowery Kingdom. It is the best of the recent volumes on the far east. Here are some instructive comments:

"It is a Chinese trait to go on employing a likely means without considering whether, as a matter of fact, they are getting the coveted results. The river junk has a big eye painted on either side of the prow so that the boat may "look see" its way. They have never inquired whether these optical craft fare better than others in the crowded waterways.

"Just inside the gateway to a court yard a brick screen is built in order that the viewless flying demons of the air may collide disastrously with it when they seek to enter a domicile. To no one has it occurred to mark whether families without such screens have worse luck than other families.

"In the same uncritical mood our coolies would leave their joss sticks burning before the wayside shrines; and, 2,000 miles from the sea, our boatmen, before starting on a perilous down river trip, sacrificed a cock at the bow to bring good luck.

The sentry on the escort boat moored alongside us rolled his drum and beat his triangle every quarter of an hour through the night to soothe us with the assurance that he was awake and vigilant. The actual result was a ruined night's rest and the request next day that he desist from such marks of attention.

"The night watchman steadily claps as he goes his rounds, the theory being that his din will scare away the thieves. In all the centuries no one has pointed out that in practice the thieves are warned of the watchman's approach and once he is by, work in perfect security.

"It looks as if moral precept will mold character; and so the Chinese endlessly rehearse precept without noting its utter want of effect.

"It looks as if memorizing the noble teachings of the sages will form the incorruptible official; and so the classics are made the basis of training for government service, with the result that nowhere does performance square less with professions than in China.

"It looks as if a fierce aspect would intimidate the enemy; and so there were 'tiger' soldiers in yellow ochre hoods, with tiger stripings down the back of the uniform, and with shields painted to represent the tiger's open jaws.

"In a word, the Chinese have never accepted the principle of efficiency, which is, that the methods or means to be chosen for a given purpose should not be those which seem apropriate, but those which actually do produce most surely, promptly and economically the coveted results. They fail to discriminate real from apparent fitness because they have never made the efficiency of agents and processes an object of inquiry.

"In the middle ages white men were just as haphazard and uncritical as are the yellow men today. They looked for signs and wonders in the heavens and trembled at comets. They held that blood root, on account of its red juice, must be a blood purifier; liverwort, having a liver-shaped leaf, will cure liver disease; eyebright, being marked with a spot like an eye, is good for eye troubles, and so on.

"It was the rise of the natural sciences that cleared the fog from the European brain. In the building of astronomy, physics, chemistry and physiology were wrought out certain methods—observation, measurement—which were as helpful for practical life as for science. For a method that connects cause and effect may also light up the relation between effort and result.

"The truth is, there is nothing the Chinese lack so much as discipline. Discipline of the army, the workshop, the ship, the school, the athletic field—yes, even of the home—is needed if they are ever to develop that smooth, intelligent team work which makes our race so formidable.

"Their stand-by now is mass action—the strike or the boycott. During the last two years every school in Shantung is said to have had a strike. One school struck because the foreign teachers required the student to pass an examination before they would give him a testimonial.

"When folly is afoot in an American college there will be some who, by standing aloof, spoil the unanimity of the move and it doesn't come off. But the Chinese lad crumples under mass pressure. All his life he has been trained to get in line, and so the spirit of conformity rules him. It is all due to a struggle for existence so severe that he realizes he cannot survive without the steady backing of his family, clan or guild. To take a line of one's own would be suicide.

"Chinese gentlemen wear their finger nails long to show they don't work, so it is not surprising that young China despises anything with the talent of manual labor. The professor of engineering has to speak sharply to his students to get them to carry chain and drive stakes, for they consider it 'coolie work.'. Their idea is to listen and look, but not to do.

"When the mission school at Swatow was preparing for some festivity, a lady teacher said, 'Come, boys, help me move these heavy benches.' Not a boy stirred; it was 'coolie work.' Since then they have learned better.

"In another school the pupils refused to bring in more chairs to seat their guests at a reception. They had been trained to care for their rooms; but the mandarins were present, and, knowing the standard of these gentlemen, they were afraid of 'losing face.'

"To stroll, bird cage in hand, on the city wall in the cool of the evening and give birdie an airing, is their idea of a gentleman's exercise. When the tennis court was first used by the American professors in a certain North China university, the Chinese could not understand the absurd antics and capers of their erstwhile dignified teachers. 'Can you not afford to hire coolies to do this for you?' asked an interested but scandalized observer."

The Manicure Lady

"Well, George," said the Manicure lady, "you can't keep a squirrel on the ground. I have came back to the shop again."

"I don't care whether you have came back or whether you have went," declared the Head Barber, who was plainly in a bad humor. "You ought to be here every day, and you know it. I know you are clever, and I know that you think you are pretty, but that ain't no sign that we have gotta all the the time be putting on subs for you. Some of these days the old man will get sore and put on a girl that is more faithful."

"You make me tired," sniffed the Manicure Lady. "What do you suppose I care about you and the boss? Haven't I got at least two-thirds of my inheritance left? What do you suppose an heiress cares for a few barbers? Why, I could marry the boss if I would only say the word.

"Besides, George, I had to work hard for a number of years, and you know it. I want you to know that it ain't all honey for a girl to stick around a place like this and remove terra cotta from gents' nails."

"You don't mean 'terra cotta,' corrected the Head Barber, who never overlooked a chance to make the Manicure Lady miserable.

"Oh, well, then," snapped the Manicure Lady, "Terra del Fuego, or whatever they call it. I mean dirt. To illustrate what I mean, look at your own nails right this minute. Do you think it is a pleasant task for a girl like me, which can speak three different languages, to be around a barber shop making men's nails pink and telling them that they have hands like little babies when all the time their hands look like the hands of them hard-rock men you see going home nights in the surface cars with their drills and shovels? No, sir, George. As long as the bank roll lasts I am going to be an heiress and act with all the dignity with which a heiress is supposed to act with."

"It's none of my business," said the Head Barber, "but I only wanted to tell you that the old gent that runs this shop is getting sore. There's a lot of class to you, kid, and I hate to see a girl like you making way for some half-baked kid that doesn't know how to fix nails so that the customers will have to come back again the next week. You know what it says in the Scriptures, 'Work for the night is coming.'"

"Thanks for the kindly interest, George," sneered the Manicure Lady. "I should think that a gent like you, with all your knowledge of how to get along in the world, would have got further up the ladder by now than to stand here handing out a lot of silly chatter to your customers and all the time honing razors. I wish you wouldn't be all the time honing razors, George. Some of them knives squeaks so that it gives me the Willies."

"You don't need to be changing the subject, kiddo," said the Head Barber. "I mean what I say. You can't get nowhere in this world without no effort. I had to work like a slave to fit myself for this job, and now I can meet gentlemen and talk the same as them. Nobody learned me good English—I had to work to where I am."

"You ain't got nothing on me," said the Manicure Lady, "nobody never learned me good English either."

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