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## The Kindest Way to Jilt a Man—

An Etiquette Page

Just for Girls

By

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De Quincey Proved That MURDER Is a Fine Art; There Is a Scientific "Death Stroke" in BULL FIGHTS; EUTHANASIA Practises the "Happy Release;" Causes for DIVORCE Are Easily Arranged; We Have Grown Accustomed to Painless DENTISTRY; But the Practice of "Throwing a Man Over" Is Still Crude!

By Gelett Burgess.

"WAITING AT THE CHURCH" is the latest popular pastime of the British aristocracy. How far the well-known song on that subject has influenced fashion it is hard to say. Some where, Oscar Wilde (or no, was it Whistler?) said that Nature loved to imitate Art. The quotation would have a fine high-brow application to the present English jilting system, if it were not that, nowadays, it is the groom, and not the bride, who is left "waiting at the church." This takes the point out of the chorus, "My Wife Won't Let Me!"

The new chorus to the song evidently must be, "A Woman Has a Right to Change Her Mind!" That, at least, is what Gabrielle Ray thought. Gabrielle Ray is a professional beauty, the "amaazingest" of George Edwardes's corps of man-charmers at the London "Gaiety" Theatre, which is world-renowned for its pretty women. To qualify as a Gaiety girl one has to have, besides good looks, one thousand dollars for admission fee. Next comes an automobile and a dainty pink-and-gold apartment in Mayfair, Kensington, or some equally fashionable London district.

Gabrielle had all these, and more; for her appearance behind the footlights brought her suitors by the score. Scores? Yes, hundreds! Gabrielle kept most of the Johannes and Algies and Freddie in town jumping through her hoop.

Lord Dalmeny was after her, coronet in hand; so was the Marquis of Anglesey, hot-foot. No European actress's reputation is complete, of course, without numbering ex-King Manuel's affection. Gabrielle Ray claimed His Majesty, too, and, with a brigade of lesser known peers, plutocrats and such persecuting her with bouquets and notes and jewels, it was not long before she shut her eyes and picked Eric Loder out of the grab-bag, a young grandson of Sir Edmund Loder, one of the wealthiest knights of the realm.

Eric Loder made good; it was a regular Robert Chambers courtship. Eric presented her, it is said, with a diamond every morning—so, for some months, she put off the wedding.

When, at last, she "named the day," the wedding was stage-managed by an expert press agent. The ceremony was to be the most gorgeous Eric Loder's \$10,000,000 could produce. He bought the most expensive Archbishop in the country, he hired the most exclusive Windsor Roman Catholic church. Eric has a brand-new suit of wedding clothes made, with braid two inches wide, and spent most of the remainder of his fortune for music and flowers. He bought all the orchids in the world.

Groom and bridesmaids, bridesmaids, friends of the family, priest, verger, sexton and choir were all ready and all dressed up on Thursday, February 29. It was an unfortunate date—leap year day. No knowing what women may do!

The organist played on, while the grinning groom with his top hat waited in the chancel. Fifteen minutes passed, and young Eric Loder began to grow pale; thirty minutes, and he was still anxiously feeling of his necktie, behind. The organist began all over again, the dowagers began to yawn, and every person in the church, from the pew-opener to the parson, knew that "something was up." A hurried consultation of ushers ensued; the magnificent honeymoon automobile was dispatched to Mayfair. At Miss Ray's apartment the maid informed the messengers that Gabrielle was ill.

But WHY had Gabrielle not notified the guests? Why had she let the arrangements go on, allow the curtain to be actually rung up on the ceremony? No one knows but Gabrielle Ray! She, spoiled darling, doesn't have to tell.

The groom, prostrated, was taken to his home biting "people" at his gold-handled cane. The company, after much whispering, departed from the church. That the popular favorite of the English comedy stage had jilted a millionaire was not so remarkable; but that she had publicly insulted and humiliated him at the last moment was inexplicable. It was not "sporting," as they say in London.

Still, it was not the first time it had been done in London. Less than a year ago Lady Constance Foljambe,

The London Gaiety beauty Gabrielle Ray, now Mrs. Eric Loder, who barbarously, cruelly and callously jilted Mr. Loder by the axe method—and who, even if she did marry him after twenty-four hours, has made this etiquette page necessary.

half-sister of the Earl of Liverpool, Controller of the King's Household, etc., etc., had played the same brilliant joke on the Rev. A. H. K. Hawkins, the vicar of a Yorkshire hamlet. This was on July 4, known in America as "Independence Day." The bride's Declaration of Independence, however, came next day in the form of a letter which artlessly stated that she had "changed her mind."

This is the exceedingly casual way in which English brides are now regarding the marriage ceremony. One can imagine them saying, like Willie Collier in "I'll Be Hanged if I Do," when the agonized message comes, "There, I thought there was something I had to do to-day!"

Of course, every one will agree that it's "better late than never," and that even so brutal a rupture is better than a life of misery; but can't it be done a bit more neatly than this? Miss Ray used a pile driver, and Lady Constance used an axe, so to speak. We do these things more artistically in the United States.

What is the Etiquette of Jilting, then? There must be some code, some rules for the guidance of women desiring to switch, so that they needn't change their minds so indecently in public. In the theatre nothing is so dreaded by actors and audience as a "stage wait." In a church it is almost as bad. One get to thinking of the wedding presents one has bought so uselessly. Can they be returned? One is too apt to watch the groom's face change (like heated steel) from gray to yellow, from pink to scarlet. What will he do with the ring? Will the clergyman issue return checks for a postponed performance? All this, the Prince of Denmark left out never made a hit, surely, can and should be avoided. "Hamlet" with Now, jilting must inevitably cause pain. Modern science, however, has advanced, with the use of anaesthetics, to a point where the infliction of pain is reduced to a minimum in all operations. Why, even in a Spanish bull fight, if the matador, after the bull has been tortured, does not drop his victim instantly with a single plunge of the sword between the cervicle vertebrae, the crowd hisses violently. The dentist kills the nerve before he uses the drill; the surgeon administers ether before he amputates the useless appendix.

The books on etiquette are all reticent on the question: "How to Jilt a Fiancee." We can easily find in



bases. Suppose, for instance, that the man you are engaged to calls, as usual, unaware of your change of mind. You have only to approach the subject as follows: "John, do you believe in the Fourth Dimension?" He will answer "No." You continue: "Are you a Pragmatist? Have you an Eighth Sense? Do you understand the Mendelian Laws of Variation?" By this time he will probably cower, and you must act firmly. "John, I have been studying Egoism. I have read Nordau, old Doc Woods Hutchinson, Nietzsche and the Annual Reports of all the State Insane Asylums since the year 1886. Biology teaches, and the biographies of the crowned heads of Servia prove, that we are incompatible. Hegel hints that the fate of the macrocosm inheres in the tendency of the microcosm. We simply cannot combat Tendencies. My grandfather developed an ingrowing Ego at the age of thirty, and you have often told me of how your maternal aunt used to throw her spectacles at the cook whenever she ate hot cakes. Don't you see, darling, that our third son would probably be a taxicab hand or perish while jumping from a flying machine, and that all our daughters would be anti-suffragettes? It would be too terrible. We have no right to sacrifice the race to our own private happiness. Why, even Darwin proved that the eighteenth child of such ungenetic unions must inevitably be afflicted with a horrible thirst for unadulterated milk."

"But, my dear," he might say, "isn't it a bit premature, you know, all that? We might go in for Race Suicide, perhaps."

"Ah," you retort, "I have had my blood examined by a specialist. I have only 12,354,000 phagocytes to the white corpuscle, and, although Socialism doesn't forbid such persons to marry, it would be exceedingly unwise. In such cases we cannot be too careful."

No man could feel really hurt at such a dismissal, and fewer yet would refuse to go. Lady Foljambe's manners remind us of the old song: "It was all very well to dissemble your love, But why did you kick me downstairs?"

But if there are rules for the jilting, there is, also, a code of Etiquette for the Jilted.

While waiting in the church, for instance, the best grooms do not bark at the clergyman, or bite the bridesmaids during the first hour, at least. Only the mildest gnashing of the teeth is permitted.

A proper respect toward the ex-bride demands that the jilted must not become artificially intoxicated for one week. The period of mourning depends, of course, on circumstances; but, as a general proposition it is safe to say that the jilted usually does not commence making love to any one until the girl is re-engaged. Do not, at any rate, kiss women in restaurants or public places until you are quite sure that your actions will not be misunderstood.

Do not give her letters to reporters without a receipt. Never accuse your ex-bride of hydrophobia, color-blindness, megalomania, spavin, or anything eccentric, in order to excuse yourself. Take all the blame, and see that the clergyman and choir are paid before you leave the church. The ring may be made over into a steckpin in the form of a lemon, if desired, and presented to your mother-in-law-to-be.

But if the ordinary American is unfamiliar with the etiquette of jilting, it is mainly because he so seldom needs the rules. Can you imagine an American, for instance, not finding out that something was wrong before the fatal day, like poor Eric Loder or Vicar Hawkins? No! He wouldn't have engaged the minister till he was sure the bride was in one of her lucid intervals.

But there is a code of etiquette which will be still more necessary this year, even in the United States. This will govern the cases where the man wishes to get rid of the girl. For the year 1912 is divisible by four, and leap-year proposals have begun, at the instigation of Mayor Gaynor. How are you going to let her down gently? No appeal to reason will do with a woman. There are sure to be some lively cases of jilting before Christmas, but whatever you do, have it out with her somehow before the ceremony, and don't, in any case, keep her "waiting at the church!"

struction about letters of condolence to Retired Undertakers, How to Eat Chewing Gum, and Where to Wear a Black Shirt. We have Rules for Addressing Goops, Guinea and Ghosts, and also "Don'ts for Dubs." Yet the jilt is as prevalent as the turkey trot, and every woman should know the rules of the game. They are, briefly:

First. Remember that a kiss is as efficacious as a kick, if given to the proper person. If the girl does the kissing, the man will do the kicking himself.

Second. Never break the engagement by means of a postcard. It is not necessary for any one to witness your signature.

Third. It is not necessary for a woman to give a reason for changing her mind, but a few critical comments upon his looks, dress and manners will greatly modify his sadness at the engagement.

Fourth. Good form requires that a woman should return all presents when severing her relations to her fiancé. Candy, however, need not be sent back if it has been eaten. Diamonds should never be wrapped in newspapers. Pack his letters in asbestos and take copies of all poetical verses for future use. He may become engaged to your best friend.

Fifth. It is wise to have the new man propose before you definitely cast off the old one. If your former lover refuses to be released, however, mention the fact to No. 2, and let the man arrange it in a gentlemanly manner outside of the house.

These rules, however, are more or less formal. In most cases the matter can easily be settled by a personal interview, maintaining the friendship on a common-sense