

## Accidentally on Purpose

By Henry Humiston.

Miss Martin picked up the little pile of letters that the maid laid down in front of her plate at the breakfast table and glanced at them one by one, and put them down unopened until she reached a gray envelope addressed in a big, bold hand that she seemed to recognize. She smiled happily, told the family without a blush that she supposed the letter was an invitation to another opening of some fur store, and then tearing the envelope across at the end, took out the letter and began to read it.

It began: "My dear Louise, I know you have my happiness at heart, and—"

Miss Martin put the letter down in dismay. She looked at the envelope again. It was certainly addressed to her. The handwriting she knew positively to be that of John Lanster. She was expecting a letter from him this morning. Yet she felt that this letter was not for her. Her principal reason for thinking so was that it began "My dear Louise." Her reason for thinking as she did was that her name was not "Dear Louise," or even "Louise." Her full name was Helene Elizabeth Martin. Almost anybody would say at first blush that a letter addressed "Dear Louise" was manifestly not intended for Helene Elizabeth Martin.

She turned to the signature at the end of the letter. Yes, there it was, "John Arthur Lanster." She was so perplexed she could hardly eat her breakfast. Immediately afterward she went into the library and sat in front of the grate fire and pondered. John had never called her Louise. He had never spoken of a Louise. Yet here was a letter signed by him and addressed to some one named Louise. Some one, too, who had "his happiness at heart." It has always been strongly suspected by philosophers that curiosity might be put down in black letters at the head of the list of mental attributes of every woman. Miss Martin was a woman. She had quite a struggle with her woman's nature for awhile, but finally she conquered and she put the letter back into the envelope unread.

Then she sent a short note to Mr. John Arthur Lanster, which said:

"Your letter addressed to me, but beginning 'Dear Louise,' is received. I am afraid that both 'Dear Louise' and myself have received the wrong missives. Will you ask 'Dear Louise' to return me my letter and I will send her hers? I shall have to admit that I read this much of 'Dear Louise's' letter, 'I know you have my happiness at heart.' I hope you will believe me when I say that I read nothing more. Possibly it will be as well for 'Dear Louise' to keep the letter she received by mistake or return it to you. On second thought, I do not believe I

want it, even though it were originally intended for me."

A messenger boy appeared a few hours after this note had been sent, with another note, which this time did not begin "My Dear Louise," but instead began, "My Darling Helene." Miss Martin pursued its contents. It said: "In justice to every one concerned, it is necessary that you read the letter intended for another person. I am sorry I made such a silly blunder as to get my letters in the wrong envelopes. But there is nothing to do now but for you to read the letter sent you by mistake. I am afraid you will not speak to me again. I have told Louise what I would never have dared to tell you. But now you must read that letter. There is no other way. I can only hope you will not hate me afterwards!" Then followed the signature, "John Arthur Lanster."

Miss Martin immediately took the "Dear Louise" letter and read it.

"My Dear Louise: I know you have my happiness at heart, and I write to answer your questioning of the other night. Yes, I am unhappy. Very, very unhappy. It is right that I should tell you why. You said you knew that I was in love. You guessed right. It is because I am in love that I am unhappy.

"But you think that love ought to make one happy. Well, it should ordinarily. But, Louise, my love is such a hopeless one. I am in love with one who is far away from me as the stars. She is so beautiful, so good, so sweet, that when I am near her I realize how utterly unworthy I am of her.

"If she were poor—O, if she were only poor—then I might go to her and presume to tell her how I love her as woman was never loved before. But she is rich, I am poor, and I could not ask her to share her lot with a man who had not one single thing to offer her but a desperate, maddening love.

"You know, my dear sister, whom I mean. It is Miss Martin. I cannot stand the pain that is eating out my heart any longer. I am going to resign my position here, bright as my prospects are, and go away. I don't know where I shall go. I care less—Alaska, South Africa, the Philippines, the ends of the earth. Anywhere. Just to go where I shall not see her and where in solitude and silence I can finish a life that, without her, is not worth living. Good-bye.

"John Arthur Lanster."

For an hour Miss Martin sat with the letter in her lap and with her eyes fixed on the flickering grate fire. Then she put on her hat and coat and went out.

The next morning Mr. John Arthur Lanster remained at his boarding-house for a considerable time after breakfast, waiting for the postman. When his mail arrived he had no difficulty in throwing to one side those envelopes which contained requests from various tailors, hatters and liverymen to please call and settle sundry and numerous little bills, and picking out a letter in a violet-covered envelope and sealed with a monogram which had an "M" prominently interwoven in it.

He tore open the envelope and started to read the letter when he suddenly put it down with an expression of dismay.

He looked at the envelope. It was addressed to himself. But he felt the letter was not intended for him. It began: "My Own, Darling Fred." He looked at the signature. It was signed "Helene Elizabeth Martin." Somebody else had made a mistake. He immediately wrote a telegram. It read:

"Miss Helene Martin: There is a mistake somewhere. Will return letter delivered to me unread. J. A. L."

Having called a messenger boy and dispatched this telegram he immediately sat down and read the letter. It was as follows:

"My Own Darling Fred: You asked me, only an hour ago, why I was laughing so merrily and for me to tell you the joke. I didn't tell you then, but I will now. You know Mr. Lanster, of course—John Arthur Lanster, as you always call him. I will confess that I have had a great deal kinder feeling for him than you have had. I always found him a delightful companion, although you always insisted he was such a bore. I have always insisted that Mr. Lanster was really funny, and now I am going to tell you something to prove it.

"I received a letter the other day in his handwriting and with his signature at the bottom, addressed to 'My Dear Louise.' Naturally I was somewhat taken aback when I read this salutation, and wrote to him telling him that he had probably sent me a letter intended for someone else. He immediately wrote me a note saying that a mistake had been made, but there was nothing to be done but for me to read the letter. I did so, and found that it was to his sister and not to a rival, as my jealous nature at

first led me to believe. In this letter Mr. Lanster told how deeply he adored me, and saying that because he dared not tell me he was going to Alaska or South Africa or Arkansas, or somewhere to end in solitude an existence intolerable without me. It was all really quite touching. But now for the joke: I investigated and found that Mr. Lanster had no sister Louise and never did have, and so his letter was intended for me after all. Wasn't it really clever of him? And do you know that I believe that he will keep his word and actually go to South Africa or some outlandish place, or at least that he will leave Los Angeles and never see me again? Sincerely, Helene Elizabeth Martin."

It was the next day that Mr. John Arthur Lanster went to accept a lucrative position in some small town in Texas.—From the San Francisco Star.

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A clergyman inspecting a lunatic asylum came upon a group of workmen repairing a wall. One of the harmless patients, apparently assisting in the work, was pushing a wheelbarrow along upside down.

"My friend," said the kind-hearted clergyman gently, "you should turn your wheelbarrow over."

"I know better than that!" replied the patient. "I turned it over yesterday, and they put bricks in it!"

### TO HONOR AN EDITOR.



Newspaper men are of late coming more and more to the front as the nominees for public office. The latest case is that of Thomas Pollock Peters, editor of the Brooklyn Times and president of the Republican Editorial Association of the state of New York. Mr. Peters, who is one of the best known newspaper workers in the country, refuses to entertain the idea of a nomination for president of Brooklyn Borough, one of the most important offices in New York government.

### LORD LANSDOWNE.



Lord Lansdowne, England's secretary of foreign affairs is the man behind Great Britain's policy in Venezuela. In his hands lies the control of the situation so far as England is concerned.

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