

## Needed a Keeper

She was a very pretty girl. Blake had noticed this fact before he elected to sit at that particular table at the lunch club, and she was sitting with her elbows on the table and her slender white fingers joined. On the graceful structure rested a delicate tinted chin. Her blue-gray eyes, heavily lashed, were gazing dreamily into space. She made a charming picture. Nevertheless, Blake gave a startled jump when she remarked suddenly, but with extreme earnestness: "I believe I'll use alcohol!"

It must be confessed that this seemed a rather cryptic beginning for a conversation with a total stranger, but, as I have said, she was a very pretty girl and after his first start of surprise Blake recovered himself with commendable promptness.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but were you speaking to me?"

The girl glanced up, then unclasped her dainty hands and dropped them into her lap. After a short preliminary struggle she leaned back in her chair and broke into a laugh.

"There," she said, "I knew I'd do it. Talking to myself, I suppose. Perfectly crazy. Would you mind telling me what I said?"

"Not in the least," responded Blake gallantly. "I think it was something about alcohol."

She laughed again and Blake smiled in sympathy. "It's my skirt," she explained. "I got an awful spot on it, and I've been wondering how I could get it out. I never have any luck with gasoline," she concluded mournfully.

"As a steady diet I think I prefer alcohol myself," agreed Blake.

Even Blake didn't think this was so very funny, so he felt flattered and cheered when his vis-a-vis broke into a really amused little giggle. It encouraged him to make a further sally: "You'll have to consider carefully, though," he said, "before you risk making an inebriate of that young and innocent garment."

She dimpled charmingly. Then she frowned. "There's really nothing young about it," she explained. "It's an old thing, and I hate it, but I can't afford to get another one now, so I suppose I've got to get that spot out."

She began to put on her gloves, and in a moment rose from the table.

"I wish I knew more of first aids to the injured," said Blake.

"I wish so, too," she agreed. "It's certainly a most terrible spot and I'm worried to pieces about it." She nodded in a bright and friendly way as she tripped off.

For days Blake haunted that particular lunch club without again encountering the young woman of the spotted skirt and dancing eyes, and he had about given up hope of seeing her again when one evening as he was waddling toward the door of the suburban train, which nightly carried him to his suburban home, he was unceremoniously brushed aside and temporarily unbalanced by a large, haughty, irate person, dressed in many expensive and expansive garments. Blake recovered his balance in time to see her tap angrily upon the shoulder of a young woman just ahead of him.

"My umbrella, please," she boomed commandingly.

The eyes which the girl turned upon her assailant were the very eyes that Blake had been looking for. The owner of them looked at the other woman in momentary blankness, then down at the umbrella she held in her hand.

"My goodness! Oh, my goodness!" she cried, the hot color flooding her soft cheeks. "I never knew it! I beg your pardon! I didn't know—really I—it was a mistake—I'm so awfully absent-minded! I know I'll be arrested some day. It was so stupid of me!"

Giving a very fair representation of the goddess of war rampant, the owner of the umbrella snatched her property and prepared to retreat with it. "I've known such cases of stupidity before," she said, emphasizing the final word strongly. She stalked back to her seat and at this juncture the girl's eyes met Blake's amused ones. With a little squeal of mingled mirth and embarrassment she turned and fled down the steps of the car and away into the darkness.

Several mornings after this Blake, having taken a train somewhat later than usual, was roused from his absorption in his paper by a distressed voice from across the aisle.

"I don't know what to do," it was saying. "I just perfectly crazily picked this thing up instead of my purse, and I haven't any money or any ticket—or—or—anything."

The voice sounded familiar, the tale like one he had heard before. Blake gazed shamelessly around the conductor's back. It was, as he had suspected, the girl of the two previous adventures. Once more their eyes met. Once more she blushed a lovely, embarrassed blush. Then she collapsed in a little giggling heap. "Look!" she said. "This is what I brought instead of my purse."

It was a very dainty, fluffy, pink and white bedroom slipper!

"I suppose," she said, when the conductor had been settled with and gone his way, and Blake had boldly moved across the aisle and seated himself beside her, and they had brought to light a number of mutual acquaintances, "that you think I need a keeper."

"I do," said Blake earnestly.

## Why He Remained.

A certain representative of Georgia says that when he was judge of his county court a fellow was before him charged with having stolen a pair of pantaloons—they call them "britches" in Georgia.

There were several witnesses, but the evidence was rather meager, and the accused was acquitted. He was told that he could go, but he remained in his seat. His lawyer, to whose successful defense he owed his liberty, hinted to him that he was free to depart, but he didn't budge.

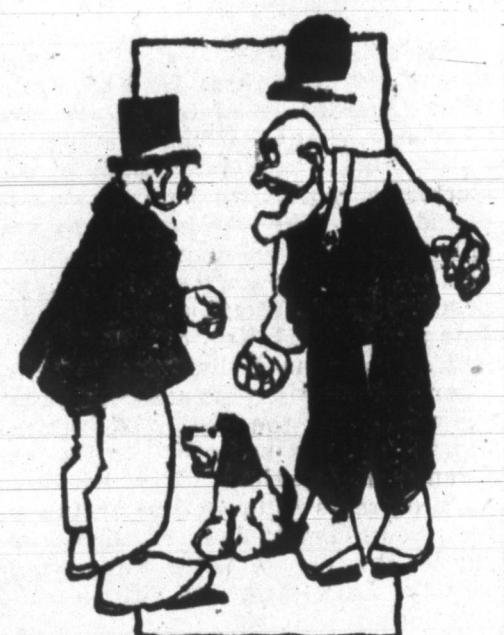
"I don't want to go," said the fellow.

"And why?" asked the lawyer.

"Let the witnesses go first."

"Why?"

"Why, sir, I've got on the 'britches' I stole."



## Generous.

At the funeral services of an elderly darky of Richmond, Va., the following colloquy was overheard between two aged negroes:

"There ain't no use in talkin'" said Mose Barker; "Dick Williams, he was the most charitable man dis town ever seen."

"I reckon dat's so," said the darky to whom Mr. Barker imparted this information. And he paused as if waiting for evidence on this point.

"Yessuh," continued Mr. Barker, "Dick Williams, he always owned a plug hat, and durin' my time I ain't never heard that Dick ever refused to lend dat hat to anybody."—Judge.

## The Wrong Man.

Not long ago De Wolf Hopper, the actor, was selecting a hat in a well-known Fifth Avenue shop in New York. His own hat removed, he stood holding two others, trying to decide which to buy. At this moment a young man of the over-dressed, would-be-swagger type entered the store, and mistaking Mr. Hopper for a salesman, drawled at him in an affected and peculiarly irritating tone:

"My hat doesn't fit, my good man."

Before replying Mr. Hopper quite deliberately inspected the speaker from head to toe. Then, turning away he said sweetly:

"Neither does you coat, my boy."

## Not in His Line.

One of Atlantic City's life guards was discussing his profession.

"Funny things happen to us guards sometimes," said he. "A society belle from Spruce street went into the water wearing one of those fashionable transformations, or wigs. A big wave went over her, and when she came up the transformation was floating out to sea. She turned and ran to Tim."

"Oh, save my hair," she yelled. "Save my hair!"

"Pardon me, my lady," says Tim. "I'm a life saver, not a hair restorer."

## Needed Something Large.

Miss Audrey had come to spend the week-end with friends in a little New Jersey town and exhibited a keen interest in the much talked-of "Jersey skeeter."

When the greetings were over and the party settled down, the guest remarked to her host, after a careful survey of the porch.

"I don't see any mosquito netting around, William."

"No," answered he, "we're using mouse traps."

## How She Talks.

"When yo' has a quah'l wif yo' wife, do she pout and sulk or do she talk back, Brudder Rumpus?"

"She talks back, sah! And she not on'y talks back, but she talks front-ards and sideways and crost and endways and diag-nal and round and round, and den she comes all de way back an' repeats herse'f. Aw, yash-sah; she sho' talks back!"

## Understood the Coal Business.

A coal dealer asked some law students what legal authority was the favorite of this trade. One answered "Coke."

"Right," said the coal dealer.

Another suggested "Blackstone."

"Good, too," said the questioner.

Then a little man piped out "Littleton."

Whereupon the coal dealer sat down.

## Instructions Were Clear.

Caller—"Is your mistress in?"

Maid—"Did you see her at the window as you came up the walk, ma'am?"

Caller—"No."

Maid—"Well, she said if you hadn't seen her to say that she was out."

"I do," said Blake earnestly.

## Near to Nature

"He's such a fine man, the one Gertrude Filkins is going to marry," said the woman embroidering a dolly. "What I especially like about him is his devotion to nature and outdoor sports."

The woman with the obvious cold in her head groaned. "Stop her!" she moaned frantically. "Stop Gertrude before it is too late! Look at me! My husband loves nature, too—and if I hadn't been born to be hanged I'd have been dead long ago from pneumonia. We went back to our cottage at the lake after we got the children in school and Henry said I should now have a real rest and bit of recuperation before the winter season. So he decided we'd better go fishing."

"Now, I am an active person, and fishing is my idea of nothing to do. I told Henry I had a million letters to write and all his stocking to mend, but he never heard me. When he gets an idea you might as well throw up your hands and knock your head on the ground three times, because it's all over, and it's the wise person who knows it; but there are times when I struggle feebly."

"So we went fishing."

"When he mentioned incidentally that we should have to go seining first for the minnows I let out several feeble yowls that made no more impression on him than a grasshopper."

"He said seining would be perfectly nice, healthy exercise for me and that he would do all the hard part. All I had to do was walk along the shore hanging on to one end of the seine while he struggled through the waves with the other, his hip rubber boots saving him from actual contact with the icy water."

"That seine may have been a harmless, well conducted thing ordinarily but when it saw me coming it rose on its hind legs and proceeded to buck. It pulled me into the water over my shoe tops twice, and then when we tried to land it the wind, which was pretty high, simply lifted it in the air, twisted it over, and showered me with all the minnows, a small turtle and a lot of sticky seaweed stuff."

"I shrieked for help, but there was no response. When I had got all the fish out of my ears and neck I saw Henry was on the ground all sewed up in the seine. He was fighting like a giant whale, but I rescued him at last. He said it was all my fault for not handling the net properly and that we'd try again for the minnows if I'd use my brains."

"This time I broke my back keeping the pole at my end of the seine pushing along the ground ahead of me, as per orders. We dragged through an acre of water and then Henry rounded in to shore, with low hissing to me to do thus and so and wild orders not to do this and that."

"I obeyed his commands with strict attention to details."

"We've got a big catch this time!" Henry cried, triumphantly, as we landed the seine right side up.

"Breathlessly we laid it open—and it contained two big snags or roots, an empty pickle bottle and some weeds. I am a dutiful wife and I won't tell you the piece Henry recited to ease his mind. It consisted of brief exclamations mostly."

"By the time we had really trapped enough minnows I was drenched to the knees and Henry had received most of the wild waves in the tops of his rubber boots. Then he said we must hurry to the dock because it was growing late for fishing. I had on a sweater, a heavy coat and my head wrapped up, and I felt as frolicsome as a baby elephant. Henry was a thing of beauty in some nondescript wrappings that he reserved for the country."

"Then we sat and fished. The cold wind whistled and my nose was purple."

"What Was the Use?

The Englishman was attending his first ball game. He seemed very uneasy after the fifth inning and finally said to his American friend:

"I say, old chap, when do they serve the tea?"

"They don't serve tea at ball games," laughed the American.

"No tea between innings," gasped the Englishman. "Then what's the object of the blooming game?"

Always a Way.

Tramp—"Please, mum, I don't want nothin' but the privilege of sittin' here and listenin' to Madame Patti, th' great prima donna, sing."

Mrs. Youngwife—"Goodness me! she isn't here."

"Pardon, mum, but I hear her now."

"Why, that's my baby crying. But don't go. Dinner will be ready soon."

He Meant Well.

"But, Captain Hawley," said the handsome Miss Plute coquettishly,

"will you love me when I grow old and ugly?"

"My dear Miss Plute," answered the captain gallantly, "you may grow older, but you will never grow uglier."

And he wondered why their friendship ceased so suddenly.

No Discrimination.

A prisoner in one of the Irish police courts the other day was asked his calling that he followed from time to time.

"And among all other things," inquired the prosecutor, "do you pick pockets?"

"No," he retorted, "I don't pick them; I just take them as they come."

## The Breaking Point.

She never looked lovelier than tonight, in her Argentine basque with soapwork insertions, yet, as he took his hat he laughed harshly.

"All is over between us," he gritted through his teeth. "I told you time and time again that any girl who powders her face foretells her engagement, and now I will prove it! Have I been engaged to a girl or a clown?"

"Winklewood," she moaned. "Give me one more chance. It shall never happen again!"

"You have had your warning," he replied, still gritting, and slamming the door.

"I will go to a barber shop and try to forget," he muttered, and was soon ensconced in Angelo Vespa's tonsorial operating chair.

"Shave me, then a massage with cocoanut oil, then bay rum, a hollyhock rub, a little cream of lily and a crude oil hair treatment," he ordered.

An hour later, somewhat lighter of spirit, he walked home, scenting the air for a block in every direction and still reflecting on the fearful fashions of foolish females.

Would Accompany Her.

There is in Brooklyn a young, recently married couple who have been having the usual half-pathetic and wholly amusing experiences incident to somewhat limited means and total inexperience. Last Saturday there was a hitch in the delivery of the marketing, and Sunday found them with a practically empty larder. When dinner time came the young wife burst into tears.

"Oh, this is horrible!" she wept. "Not a thing in this house for a dog to eat! I am going home to mamma!"

"If you don't mind, dear," the husband exclaimed, as he visibly brightened and reached for his hat, "I'll go with you!"

The Instructor Was Mistaken.

A member of an athletic club, after swimming the length of a large tank in the basement of the institution, came out puffing and blowing, apparently exhausted.

"You don't manage your breathing right," said the swimming instructor. "It ought not to tire you so. As to the upper part of your body, including your arms, you use exactly the same muscles and in very much the same way in swimming as in sawing wood."

"No, I don't," gasped the swimmer. "When it comes to sawing wood I use the muscles of some other man."

Unprintable.

Bill, the foreman, went to the railway office to report an accident on the line. He was handed a form to fill up, and got on first rate until he came to the space for "Remarks."

"What's the matter, Bill?" asked the clerk.

"Well, you see," said Bill, "it was Pat Murphy's big toe as was hit wid th' hammer and it wouldn't luk well for me to write down the remarks wot Murphy made."