

That Episode of J. Gordon's

By Ida M. Shepler

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His name, in full, was Jay Gordon Stanford, but his intimate friends seldom got farther with the name than J. Gordon.

J. Gordon had seriously contemplated matrimony at the age of 17. Shortly after he was brought rudely out of such contemplation by being softly informed by the recipient of his adolescent affection that her heart was in the keeping of one much his senior, one to whom she had been betrothed these many years. Many years? Why how old was she really? He afterward learned, some 12 more than himself. Perhaps it helped him forget her.

At 25 J. Gordon was actually engaged. The girl, this time, was his own age. She was energetic. She went in for woman's suffrage, for reform of many kinds and J. Gordon smiled indulgently, although after the close intimacy of engagement days set in, he did begin to sit up and notice that she had faults worse than wanting to vote. When it came to using one's handkerchief for a whole week, and wearing soiled shirt waists out in company, he did hint a few wee hints of surprise.

He also found she had a temper when, after a little lecture from him upon wearing white slippers on muddy tramps, she flung his ring to his face.

The relief he felt at this action upon her part frightened him. Had he been fool enough to promise love to a woman he had not loved? It made him cautious.

At 30 J. Gordon was still unmarried, and had taken a suburban residence to himself. City noises disturbed his rest, he told his friends, and he loved to look at growing vegetables, fruits and the like.

"It is simply one of the signs of incipient bachelorhood," they told him.

And now he really began to be troubled. Was it a fact that he would not love the right sort of a woman?



Gazing Upon the Damage.

The men of his family usually married early in life. Was he born to live unloved?

As long as the villas on each side of him held the kind of children they did, J. Gordon was not sure but that bachelorhood had its advantages, for these were spoiled children. But when the children moved and on one side moved in an elderly gentleman, grouchy and snuffy, and in the other, a loving young couple took up abode, his uneasiness returned. The first disgusted him with a picture of what he might yet be; the other—there were evenings when they made him feel lonely. But he would forget all this next day through office hours.

The young wife on the one side of him was rather pretty in a soft, demure way. And she loved flowers and green things as well as did J. Gordon, and thus they sometimes came close, each across the dividing fence from the other. She was very modest. He learned only that she was Mrs. Mumford, and it was born in her to love country quiet, or as near as she could get, and digging in the ground.

One morning he saw her, from her top veranda step, stoop and kiss her husband goodby. The husband at the time was well ballasted with a big valise in each hand. Business called J. Gordon from his villa during the two days after.

Upon his return, gazing with some concern upon the damage done some of his growing things by a great goose, he was startled by a cherry laugh from the other side of the fence, and looked up to behold Mrs. Mumford, merry-eyed, smiling radiant, in pink and white. Never had he seen her so beautiful as now, and so friendly and merry. What a change the departure of her husband had brought about in her nature. Then she began:

"That goose has eaten all our late strawberries, the hired girl tells me. Isn't it awful? We found out why the woman down the avenue keeps it. She's an old maid, and so afraid of burglars, but more afraid of dogs—says they all have hydrophobia, but geese never do. Can't inoculate them with it in any way. And a goose, you

know, always squawks if anybody comes in the house. See? It's her safeguard against burglars. Poor thing, if I were so afraid of burglars I'd marry a—well, a great, big brave man."

Her laugh was catching, her smile irresistible, and J. Gordon found himself planning little tricks with her on that goose, to the vexation of its owner. Over half the time they held it for ransom, which ransom the poor woman would send by her maid, and which money Mrs. Mumford would send back.

And how she sang and how well she played the piano! Each night J. Gordon went to sleep to sweet tones floating in at his open window, and each morning awakened to the same. He had not known Mrs. Mumford could sing.

Twice J. Gordon, how, he never could tell was tolled over to the Mumford veranda, and each time came away wondering if it were possible for a man of his regulated mind to fall in love with another man's wife.

A few more days of this merry suburban friendship and he pulled himself together to flee the spot, for he realized just the power she was exercising over him. It was not pretense at love on his part, now. It was a genuine case to be fought out as he would fight it. He would go away.

Next morning, after this resolve, he saw Mr. Mumford on his veranda. He was home again.

Out in the bushes Mrs. Mumford was silently trimming some small shrubs. Mrs. Mumford, her dress of subdued color, her manner retiring. She raised her eyes to him, then nodded demurely.

He spoke to get a look into her eyes. They had surprised him. He had thought them blue, but they were a dark hazel now. "Mr. Mumford is back." She glanced up and he had an excellent glance into the changed eyes. In fact the change that had come into her face was actually startling. He was glad of it. Better could he forget her now. But why the change?"

"Yes," she replied, "we came back last night. He went two days before I did. Some business took him a little out of the way. We had a delightful vacation. Bell says you helped her pass some of the lonely hours; I thank you. She kept house for me."

"Bell?" Light was breaking. "Your twin sister?"

"Oh, no, I never had a twin sister. Bell is my cousin. They do say we look very much alike."

And so they did, lacking the vivacity, the blueness of eye, the pink of cheek and lips on the part of Mrs. Mumford. These were the cousin's charm. And Bell was not married. With elation J. Gordon guessed it, and guessed right.

She was coming along the path humming. Catching sight of him, she called:

"The woman with the goose as body guard wasn't an old maid. She was a charming young widow. Yesterday she was married, and this morning she sends me the goose with her compliments. What am I to do with it? Will you help us eat it, if I roast it?"

"Come here, very close," he called across the fence.

When she came, ignoring the goose question, he asked: "Why did you allow me to call you Mrs. Mumford? I came pretty close to falling in love with another man's wife."

"Ah, no, you didn't. No danger of that. You simply fell in love with me, and—" she paused, her eyes alluring.

"Is it all right that I did?" And now, across the fence his right hand was reaching out to her. She nodded, yes.

Women Architects.

Not so long ago a woman architect was an unknown quantity, but it is becoming more and more evident that the planning of the house intended for a home is the legitimate work of the woman architect, and as one newspaper states it, "she is getting on to her job." The man architect plans the building for the contractor to construct with little, if any, thought of the woman who is expected to spend her life in it. According to all the rules of the profession, the planning is all right, both as to dignity and beauty, proportions, lines, slopes and sweeps; but so far as conveniences or "handiness" is concerned it is entirely out of the question and seems only to be a menace to health and happiness where the woman worker comes in. Women should plan the inside arrangement, at least, of the houses destined to be homes, and for this work those gifted in the necessary lines should make a profession of it, just as brother does of his part.

How to Cook a Loon.

Bill Crozer, a guide for fifty-two years at Charleston Lake in Ontario, Canada, has a novel receipt for cooking a loon. He was rowing a couple of Somerville, N. J., councilmen a few weeks ago and when a loon came in sight the strangers asked Bill if they were good to eat.

Bill replied in a rather evasive way, and one of the fishermen then asked Bill how they were cooked. This was what Bill was waiting for and here is the recipe that Bill gave: "Cook the loon in water for twelve hours, at night pour off this water and cook him over night, in the morning throw in a piece of grindstone and when you can stick a fork in the grindstone the loon is done."—Fur News.

For a Purpose.

Reynolds—Why is Kutler laying double floors in his ten-story apartment house?

Arbutnot—He wants to be conscientiously able to advertise that the apartment is a twenty floor building.

TRICKS OF DEBATERS

SUBTERFUGES TO WHICH OVER EAGER CONTENDERS RESORT.

Deliberate Misquoting of Authorities Sometimes Reported as Penalty for Dishonesty in College Debates is Severe.

Debating has shortcomings, even dangers. It is easy, for example, to manufacture evidence with little likelihood of detection. However, the penalty of such dishonesty when discovered is most severe, a writer in the Century states. In a debate in 1907 one of the speakers deliberately misquoted an authority. An unusually shrewd opponent walked over to the desk of his rival, picked up the book and read the statement exactly as it had been quoted. Then he continued: "Honorable judges, the gentlemen read the sentence as if it were punctuated with a period at this point. As a matter of fact the punctuation is a comma." He then read the final clause, showing the real intent of the authority, which was exactly opposite to the interpretation given by his opponent. The result was disaster for the dishonest debater.

There are still more subtle forms of dishonesty. Dozens of requests pour in from colleges and high schools upon every prominent debating team, offering to buy, rent or borrow material. A typical letter reads:

"Dear Sir: We understand that your university debated the question of commission government last spring. We shall be glad to procure a set of the speeches made and will pay any reasonable price."

Unless such dishonesty can be prevented it will soon bring deserved condemnation to an honorable sport. Reputable institutions are refusing either to sell or buy material.

A third form of dishonesty sometimes arises. Coaches too frequently are far more responsible for the argument presented than are the debaters themselves. One debating coach has made a special study of trade unions for ten years. He began in his school debates, followed it out in his college contests, and finally, taking charge of a college team, gave them three carefully prepared speeches to memorize. Thus his students received none of the value which comes of working up a case. They were parrots, nothing more. For this evil there are two possible remedies. Many colleges, among them Stanford, the University of California and Swarthmore, rightly throw the burden of preparation entirely upon the debaters, doing away with all coaching and trusting to the honor of their opponents to do likewise. Still better is reducing the time of preparation from three months to six weeks. Stanford and California pursue this method in their annual Carnot medal debates, which are models of the best debating in the country. The actual debating deteriorates under shorter preparation, but the exercise becomes far less academic and more nearly like the occasions of every day life. The debates under this system are contests not of voluminous research but of individual constructive thinking. Above all, this plan places the men upon their own responsibility, and as far as possible eliminates opportunities for dishonesty.

The President Laughed.

President Taft, who has difficulty in keeping his weight down to 300 pounds, often cracks a joke or gets off a witticism about his size. One afternoon, as he was leaving the White House to take a horseback ride, he met a group of newspaper correspondents, and among them was Matthew Tighe, an old friend.

After greetings had been exchanged, Mr. Taft looked down at his legs encased in leggings which emphasized the girth of the limbs. He struck his left leg a resounding blow with his riding-crop, and, turning to Tighe, asked with a smile:

"What do you think of that, Matt?"

"That," said Tighe, grinning, "would do credit to any piano ever manufactured."

And the loudest laugh about it came from the president.—Lippincott's Magazine.

Fishing at Biarritz.

In the neighborhood of Biarritz in southwestern France an original method of taking fish from the sea has been invented by the inhabitants along shore. Two poles forty or fifty feet tall and placed eight or nine yards apart are erected on the beach.

By means of pulleys a continuous line running over the tops of the poles and attached also to the top of another pole placed 500 yards out in the sea can be alternately drawn either shoreward or seaward.

Short lines with hooks and bait hang from the main line, and when they are loaded with fish the fisherman, sitting by his little cabin on shore, draws in his "take," rebats his hooks and by pulling in the opposite direction replaces the row of baited lines in the sea. This apparatus is called a "va et vient" or "go and come."—Youth's Companion.

Realism Indeed.

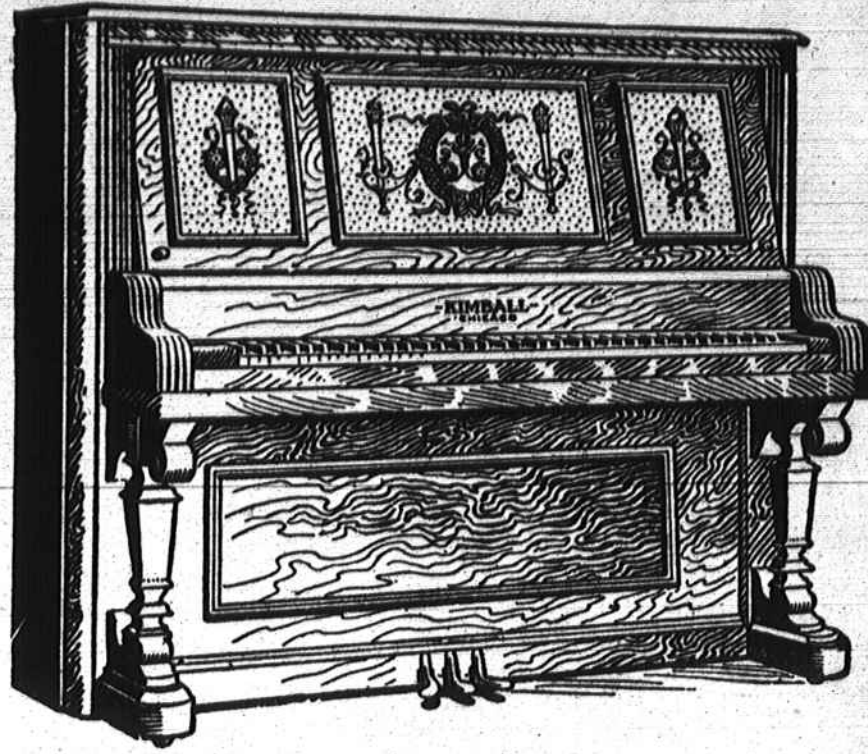
Jings—How was the new play last night?

Minks—Biggest thing yet. One scene shows Broadway natural as life; wonderful thing, wonderful! Real wagons, real horses, real paving stones, real excavations, real dirt and genuine imported Italians digging at it.—New York Weekly.

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