

EQUAL PARTNERS

By HOWARD FIELDING

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CHAPTER XVI.

ELSIE PERPETRATES A JEST.

THEY say," remarked Elsie, "that people always feel particularly well just before they die. Do you remember Bernhardt in 'Camille,' the very last words before she dies in Armand's arms: 'I shall live! Ah, how well I feel!' How I cried when she said that! And then Gaston says, 'She sleeps.' Isn't that a lovely scene?"

"As it came to your mind at this moment," said Brenda, "I joyfully infer that you are feeling very much better."

"You must think I am silly to talk so much about dying," said Elsie. "I am soggy with sentimentality."

"You have mentioned it on just four occasions," said Brenda, "including this, but it seems often to us because we don't wish to lose you and to yourself because really and truly you don't wish to die. On the whole, you have been as cheerful as any girl could possibly be under the circumstances, and as for your sentimentality, my dear, I'd give the world to have some of it myself."

"I was going to say," continued Elsie, "that my motive for continually harping on it is that you may know I am not afraid, and afterward you may tell Mr. Alden."

This exchange of pleasantries upon a cheerful subject occurred during the time when Kendall was experimenting with the white mice.

"I must have been pretty near it the last time," said Elsie. "It was double. I scarcely knew what was the matter when it began, even though I'd fainted such a little while before. It was like drifting, drifting away. You are surprised. You think you must stop, and before you really have time to be frightened you are gone. But I waked just for a second—just long enough to remember and realize; then down, down, down, sideways to the left there, slipping away from the room and the light. The last was a sensation that they were lowering me into the ground. But I'm going to be cremated. You've promised me that, Brenda."

Then, catching the expression of amused horror—if that can be—on Brenda's face, she laughed with the most delicious and clear sound, like the singing of birds.

"Oh, but it hurts to laugh," she said. "You mustn't make me do it."

"I?" cried Brenda. "You're the first that ever accused me of being amusing."

"Do you know," said Elsie, "that of the two of us you're the blue one? It's much more cheerful to talk about dying than to 'roast' oneself as you do."

"Roasting is popularly supposed to be one step beyond dying," replied Brenda. "But I suppose the roasting you mean is the saying of uncomplimentary things. My child, I can't help it; I suffer by contrast."

"With me?" cried Elsie. "Now you really are amusing. If I had your hair and eyes! Well, that's absurd, of course. But do you know I lie here



He came back with a tumbler.

imitating your ways, your calm, gentle, sweet way of doing things? I'm studying you, Brenda, and if I were to play a society part again you'd see! This is the way you say: 'Good morning, Dr. Kendall.' * * * Ah, thank you so much. * * * Shall we see you again soon? * * * Goodby. You make all the little things mean something. That's dignity, personality. I haven't any more than a blade of grass, but I'm gaining on it. If I live another week, I shall die and go to Daniel Frohman's No. 1 company instead of to heaven. I'd rather."

"Do I speak like that when I address Dr. Kendall?" said Brenda, with a slight access of color. "Well, it may be so. You are very clever, my dear."

"This is the way you hold your arms when you walk," said Elsie. "Isn't that pretty? Of course I can't do it very well lying down, but see the fingers and the ease of the wrist. Were you taught to do that?"

"I used to have a governess who was crazy on Delsarte," replied Brenda. "But she presently went crazy on all other subjects also, and we had to send

the poor thing to an institution. I was not aware of my debt to her."

"You owe her a great deal," said Elsie. "I wish I'd had a lunatic of that kind in my family. I couldn't afford to have much teaching. Of course I had some, but when I found what my mother was enduring in order to pay for it—well, I took an engagement with the first thing that came along. And it was a barnstorming crew! We gave six plays a week, and I had to learn a long part in every one of them. The second Monday, in the afternoon, the leading lady came into my room and found me huddled up on the floor in the corner gibbering—just gibbering, that was all—words out of all the plays, as she told me afterward, all jumbled together, and I was cross-eyed with sitting up all night studying under little flickering gas jets. Yes, that's the way she found me, and the room was as cold as a barn too. I had the bed quilt wrapped around my shoulders and my arm through a hole in it."

"The leading lady yelled to the juvenile man, and he really was juvenile—about 18, as I remember. She said, 'Go get a glass of brandy.' The juvenile man went down to the bar and came back with a tumbler solid full. He had to carry it carefully in order to keep from spilling any. The leading lady was a temperance woman. She never touched a drop of wine, and, in fact, she was a regular straitlaced New England pilgrim, but somebody had told her once that brandy was good for the thing that I had—'white brain,' we call it. The juvenile man didn't know how much brandy a person ought to take, and I—well, I didn't know anything. So I drank it all, and then I lay down on the bed, and the leading lady covered me with everything she could find, and pretty soon the bed got up and stood on the ceiling, and I didn't care at all."

"When it came time to go to the theater—Brenda, it's disgraceful, but I was so—so drunk that I couldn't walk straight! The leading lady got me up and told the juvenile man to walk me around the block, and he walked me around about fifty times in the snow. We were in a little Minnesota town, and it had snowed for a week. When he took me to the theater, I was perfectly sober, and I didn't care for anything. I had no troubles whatever. I walked up to the stage manager, and I said cheerfully, 'Well, what do we play tonight?' He told me, and I couldn't remember ever to have heard of it, but I got out my part and studied it while I was making up."

"When I went on, I knew about half of my first scene, which was the longest one I had in the play. But I didn't care. I'd always been troubled with stage fright more or less, but not this time—not a fright. When I forgot, I waited calmly for the prompter, who was off left, having a fit. By and by I had to go across right and sit down by a table. I knew I couldn't hear the prompter there, so I walked over and got the table and dragged it clear across the stage, and the audience applauded because I did it so naturally."

"Then I went crazy, and what happened afterward I scarcely know. But when I came off after the thrilling climax of the scene I fell into the leading lady's arms, and she hugged me up tight. She said: 'You never played so well as that before. You were like Julia Marlowe.' And she kissed me on both cheeks. Julia Marlowe was my idol then, and I cried with heavenly joy on the leading lady's neck. That's all true, just as it happened, Brenda, and I never had stage fright afterward."

"Poor little Elsie!" said Brenda, kissing her. "It was a hard school where you were taught."

"It was," said Elsie. "Yet I think I wouldn't have amounted to much anyway. How could any mortal fail to see the difference between you and me?"

"My child," said Brenda, "no man can. Why, the brass knobs on the posts of this bed know the difference between you and me—the vital, essential difference. They love you in their little brass hearts. Everybody loves you, Dr. Kendall, for a cold blooded sawyer of bones who could amputate my head without a trace of emotion, takes your hand with the eternal reverence of man for woman, and when he gives you pain I can see his own heart shrink. But he treats me as if I were a gentleman whom he had met at the club."

Elsie opened her eyes so wide that they seemed to light the room as she stared at Brenda, whose cheeks were flushed by her unusual earnestness.

"I am glad to hear you speak like that," she said.

Brenda rose and walked across to the window. Then she returned to the bed and took Elsie's hand.

"I am going to open my heart to you," she said. "It was not because Clarence Alden preferred you to me that I lost my self control that last day. I cared nothing for you, despised you; I admitted no comparison. It was because, though the intensity of his own nature for a time deceived him, he never really loved me at all. Nobody ever loved me. I am called good looking, even a beauty, in the society columns of the papers, and I am so rich that I have attracted many

men. But not one of them was able to present even a creditable counterfeit of love (though some of them could counterfeit almost anything else, from good breeding to the national currency) until Mr. Alden entered the lists. That's hardly fair to him; he was sincere, but mistaken."

"Yet I didn't have at all the feeling that I have now," she continued. "It was only that last day that I became enraged, mostly at myself. It is since I have come here, since I have known you, the most womanly of God's creatures, that I have had some true comprehension of my own lack, some honest sorrow for it."

"Only since you have been here," said Elsie. "How remarkable! But, Brenda, it is sweet of you to talk this way to me, and I am so glad, so very glad! How long have you known Dr. Kendall?"

"What a queer question!" said Brenda. "About two years, but we haven't met a dozen times. By the way, he is going to be married."

"He is going to be married!" exclaimed Elsie. "To whom?"

"I don't know," Brenda replied. "From something he said the other day, I judge there's a difficulty. I don't know the lady's name."

"Well," said Elsie, letting her head sink back on the pillow as one relieved, "you will when it happens."

"If you mean that he cares anything for me, you are quite mistaken," said Brenda. "His manner when he is in this room should show that. I am nothing—a piece of furniture. Do you know, it has inspired me with something like jealousy—jealousy merely of the difference between you and me, which is the theme we started with."

"I'll show you what Dr. Kendall thinks of that difference," said Elsie. "Wait till he comes in here again. I'll suggest that you're going away, and then you watch him. He'll know that I'm going to stay till I'm carted away. But watch him!"

"You must not do it," said Brenda. But Elsie insisted that she should, and they were still having a cheerful little quarrel about it when they were interrupted by Kendall's familiar rap.

The doctor entered, looking very serious, but his brow cleared at the sight of Elsie.

"Upon my word," he said, approaching the bed, "you are the miracle of our species."

"I am so well," replied Elsie, "that Brenda is thinking of deserting me."

Kendall had been holding Elsie's hand. He dropped it and slowly straightened his tall figure till he stood erect. The dead white mice seemed to be dancing before his eyes.

"You can't mean it," he said, and his face was bluish gray as he thought of the certain inference that Elmdorf would draw from Brenda's departure at this time. "Brenda"—he began, "I truly beg your pardon!"

"That is my name," she said, "and I shall always answer when you speak to it."

"I thank you from my heart," said he. "And—Brenda, you mustn't go now. I can't explain. I was taken unaware and may have said too much already. Upon my soul, I don't know what I have said. But don't leave us now!"

In his excitement his voice broke in a queer little sob.

"I had no idea," said Brenda, "that my presence was so important."

"I can't think of anything earthly

that is more important than your presence here," he said, with such impressive earnestness as would have carried conviction to any woman's heart. "This must seem strange to you, this sudden outburst, but I am nervous, overstrained. You must pardon me. I cannot tell you all I mean!"

"Go on," said Elsie. "Don't mind me."

And she put her fingers into her ears.

Then for the first time Kendall comprehended the preposterous construction of which his words were susceptible. His face suddenly blazed with color.

"We—really need you," he stammered, "both of us. Tell me that you will stay."

"I had no intention of going," said Brenda in a strange and stifled voice. "It was only Elsie's joke."

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Kendall, and he took both of Brenda's hands. "I



"I have your promise?" said he.

can't be sure of what you think I mean, but—and he threw back his head with a fine, strong air—"whatever it is, I mean it from the bottom of my soul!"

He still held her hands, but not at all in the society fashion which Brenda had recently deprecated.

"I have your promise?" said he.

"I can't be sure of what you mean," she answered, smiling, "but whatever it is you have it!"

They looked straight into each other's eyes for a moment. Then they laughed together like happy children. Kendall's hands closed more

tightly upon hers. He released them gently and inclined his head as he turned and left the room.

"Well, considering that that was only a little joke," said Elsie, "I don't think I ever saw so much for the money."

"What could the man have meant?" exclaimed Brenda.

"He probably meant," said Elsie, "that you were nothing more to him than a gentleman whom he had met at the club."

TO BE CONTINUED.

PROMINENT PEOPLE.

President Roosevelt is forty-four years old.

King Edward has been godfather to seventy-five persons.

Premier Balfour is not only a fine musician, but also a golfer and an automobilist.

For a country seat, Robert T. Lincoln, of Chicago, has bought 2500 acres of land at Manchester, Vt.

The Crown Prince of Germany is a clever automobilist and understands how to repair all accidents to the machine.

The Shah of Persia owns the largest diamond in the world, while the Sultan of Turkey is the possessor of the largest ruby.

The German Emperor has taken up a new hobby. He is very much fascinated just now with the collecting of book plates.

The Hon. Maudie Pauncefoot, daughter of the late British Ambassador, is compiling her father's papers for publication in memoir form.

Nothing could prove more clearly the complete restoration of King Edward to health and strength than his visit to the Newmarket races.

Senator Pettus, of Alabama, declares the secret of longevity to be: Work. He says those who get rich and retire early from business are apt to die.

Lord Kitchener, when asked recently for his autograph, refused, saying: "Young man, make your own autograph worth something. Mine's worth nothing."

John Morley has presented the library of the late Lord Acton, which was given him by Andrew Carnegie, to Cambridge University. There are 70,000 volumes.

Hedin Sven, the Asiatic explorer, has been ennobled by Sweden, despite the protests of many friends, that he might better have received a money compensation for his discoveries to atone for the fortune he has spent on explorations.

NEWSY CLEANINGS.

Massachusetts has the largest apple crop for several years.

A combine of American and European linotype manufacturers is contemplated.

Large quantities of chinaware are being shipped from Germany to Johannesburg, South Africa.

Sioux Indians have ordered a marble monument to mark the battle of Wounded Knee, S. D.

Timber is being exported from Bona to South Africa to be used in rebuilding farms destroyed during the war.

The trustees of the National McKinley Memorial Association will not start construction until \$650,000 has been raised.

Russian newspapers desiring to publish only certain portions of the official court news have to submit the abbreviated news to the Ministers of the court.

A commission of Mexican commercial experts has started through South America to see what can be done to open up trade between Mexico and South American countries.

Of the 47,000 persons who were examined for employment by the Government in the period covered by the last published report of the Civil Service Commission 34,000 passed and 13,000 failed.

Everything that was formerly considered waste is now made use of in some way, but a distinctly new idea comes from Jena, Germany, where a large German factory utilizes its surplus hot water in giving 1000 baths to its workmen a week.

One of the notable results of the long coal strike is the largely increased attention that is now given to the other fuel supplies of the country. Never before has the usefulness of oil, gas, coke, soft coal, wood and peat been so much considered as during the past month or two, and it will be strange if important discoveries touching substitute fuels do not come out of the situation.

Mothers Flog Their Boys in Court.

A brand new whip made its appearance in Juvenile Court and five offenders are willing to swear as to its stinging qualities. Four stout mothers, at the order of the Court, whipped as many small boys until the officer said the punishment was satisfactory. The new whip is made of a select piece of oak, to one end of which is attached a half-dozen small straps.

Four boys, Pat Hunt, Alva Pierce, Orey Barnett and Walter Worth who broke into a shed at the yard of the Coburn Lumber Company on West Maryland street several days ago, were before the court. The first three named are old offenders and were given a good thrashing by their mothers in the presence of an officer, who reported to the judge that the boys had been properly punished. The fourth, Walter Worth, nine years old, was given a lecture only, as it was his first offence.

Lloyd Cabbal, a colored newsboy, who confessed to having stolen \$2 from a desk in the office of the Aetna Savings and Loan Company's building, was allowed to go free after his father had administered a good, sound thrashing.—Indianapolis Sentinel.

The automobile seems destined to supersede the horse; but in establishing its supremacy the automobile should not be permitted to indulge in massacre.

THE STATE FAIR A SUCCESS

The Admissions Were Away Above the Average.

The South Carolina State Fair, held under the auspices of the Fair Association, was the feature of general interest last week. Columbia was crowded with visitors all the week. It was the most largely attended fair in the history of the Association. The attractions were numerous, the racing good and the display of agricultural products, poultry and stock up to the average. Many prizes were awarded to the successful exhibitors. The admissions were far more numerous than usual, and financially the fair was a great success.

For Assistant Attorney General.

The announcement has just been made that Attorney General-elect Gunter has appointed William Hay Townsend, Esq., the present State code commissioner to be assistant attorney general when the transfer of the office is made in January. A prominent South Carolina journal in speaking of Mr. Townsend says:

"The subject of this sketch was born in the town of Barnwell on the 9th day of January, 1868. Though he has seen but 34 summers, he has filled several places of trust and honor, worthily and to the entire satisfaction of the public—every position he has occupied has been adorned by reason of his incumbency. Mr. Townsend read law under that distinguished jurist, Hon. James Aldrich of Aiken. In May, 1889, he was admitted to the bar. During the fall of the same year he went to Beaufort to practice his profession. The firm of Elliott & Townsend was the result. Congressman William Elliott being the senior member of the firm. This copartnership continued until Mr. Townsend's removal to Barnwell in 1894, when he formed a copartnership with Hon. G. Duncan Bellinger, which still continues. In 1899 he was appointed solicitor by Governor McSweeney to succeed Col. C. E. Sawyer, who resigned to go to the front in the Spanish-American war. In January, 1901, he was elected code commissioner of the State by the legislature over several worthy opponents. 'Townsend's code,' as it has been characterized, stands as a legal monument."

"Mr. Townsend will enter upon the discharge of his duty as assistant attorney general with an experience which covers every branch of the law, eminently fitting him to be the associate of the brilliant, peerless Gunter."

Mrs. Nation in Charleston.

Charleston, Special.—Mrs. Carrie Nation arrived here at midday from Columbia, where she has been making a study of the operations of the dispensary law. She had not been in Charleston 15 minutes before she was in a blind tiger, almost opposite to the St. John hotel, where she is stopping. She made a close examination of the place and then called for whiskey and beer. The proprietor knew her to be the saloon-smasher and he was fearful of trouble. He told her that he did not handle beer or whiskey, and the great temperance advocate was not foolish enough to believe him, and she told him that she did not accept his word. She pointed to a beer sign which adorned the place and asked why the sign was in place if beer was not sold and the keeper replied that it was an old sign, antedating the dispensary law. Again she let the blind tiger know that she knew that he was not telling her the truth.

Mrs. Nation said that she visited a number of blind tigers at Columbia and these places were of the same sort as are found in parts of Kansas. She regretted the non-enforcement of the dispensary law, although she believed that liquor should not be sold at all. She commended upon the number of whiskey advertisements which she saw in passing along the street on her way to the St. John hotel. She will spend several days in Charleston, but she said that she will not do any smashing here. She has already paid \$5,000 in fines this year for breaking up saloons. She registered at the hotel as "Carrie Nation, Home Defender."

Mrs. Nation delivered an address to-night at the First Christian Tabernacle, under the auspices of the women's temperance societies. She had a good audience, many preferring it to the minstrel show which held the boards at the academy of music.

Silver Workers May Strike.

New York, Special.—A meeting of silver workers, attended by 800 men, representing the 3,000 of the craft employed in this city, Brooklyn and Newark, was held to discuss differences between the employers and workers. It was decided to go on strike at noon tomorrow unless a 9-hour day instead of the 10-hour day, now the rule, is granted.

A Still Hunt.

Blacksburg, Special.—State Constable R. L. Scoggins of Hickory Grove, and Chief of Police J. C. Durcan of this place, made a raid Saturday night in the King's Creek section in search of moonshiners and their manufacture. Owing to the darkness of the night they lost their way and were delayed for several hours, and when they arrived at the place they discovered that the parties they were hunting had gotten warning of their coming and had torn up and removed their still. However, they found 1,000 to 1,500 gallons of "mash" and beer which they destroyed.

Educational Gifts.

New York, Special.—Francis Asbury Palmer, founder of the National Broadway bank, died Sunday at the age of 90 years. He spent the last days of his life in arranging for the distribution of a fortune of \$6,000,000 among various educational institutions. Which are the institutions are not known. The Herald will say tomorrow that from an authoritative source it was learned that little or no provision has been made for the relatives, although family servants are to receive substantial legacies.

Household Matters

To Relacquor Brass Beds.

If your brass bed is tarnished you can relacquor it yourself at small cost. Buy ten cents' worth of gum shellac dissolved in alcohol, and apply it with a paint brush. Other household articles made of brass may be treated in the same way.

Lavender-Scented Sheets.

Lavender-scented sheets are the delight of dainty housewives, and it is claimed that they induce sweet slumbers. The odor is exceedingly fresh, clean and wholesome, and old-fashioned housewives always scented their linen and napery with sprigs of the sweet flower.

Italian orris root is sometimes substituted for the lavender if the latter cannot be procured, but there is no reason why the farmer's wife or any one who has a plot of ground large enough to raise vegetable or flower garden should not raise quantities of lavender and keep the linens deliciously fragrant.

Baths For Palms.

"Those whose palms persist in having yellow and brown tips on their fronds should try the expedient of giving them a daily and thorough bath," says a woman who has always been most successful with her winter palms. "A sponge dipped in warm water and rinsed as often as it becomes dusty should be used to cleanse every crevice and both the under and upper side of the leaves, as otherwise the plant cannot breathe, and breathing is as essential for plants as for people. Then instead of pouring water on the top of the earth set the pot, if not too large to handle, in a bucket or the bathtub over night, two or three times a week. In either case the water should not be above the level of the pot, so that the plant may drink the moisture up and the porous earthenware vessel become thoroughly saturated. In this way no earth or sustenance is washed from the roots."—New York Tribune.

Indian Rugs Need Disinfection.

A woman who knows the West and its Indians gives a word of caution to those who are collecting Indian baskets and rugs. Any one, she says, who has ever been among the Indians realizes the unsanitary conditions prevailing in their wick-i-ups or hogans. Filth and disease of all sorts are much more apt to be the rule than the exception. Among the aborigines of the Southwest particularly water is almost an unknown quantity. They have to depend upon the irrigation ditches through their reservations, and a "two hours' run" of water every eight or ten days with no vessels to conserve the precious fluid for use in the meantime, gives small leeway for water to be used for cleansing purposes. The beautiful Pineau and Apache baskets will all bear a good scrubbing with some disinfectant in the water. The Navajo rugs, if new, may be disinfected with sulphur or formaldehyde—but if they show signs of any wear—wash thoroughly. The native wool blankets colored with vegetable dyes are improved, not injured, by washing. Those dyed with mineral dyes are apt to shrink and fade. The Navajo rugs honestly made are not only practically indestructible, but rarely beautiful in design and coloring.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

RECIPES.

Baked Squash—Quarter the squash and remove the seeds; place in a baking pan; pour on it a few spoonfuls of water, just enough to keep from burning, and bake in a very moderate oven until tender and merely scrape the soft portions from the shell; mash, season well and serve very hot.

Egg Salad—Cut hard boiled eggs in thick slices or into quarters; arrange each portion on a leaf of lettuce partly covered with mayonnaise; arrange in a circle on a flat dish or platter, placing the stem of the leaf toward the centre of the platter; place a bunch of nasturtium flowers in the centre.

Vanilla Sauce—Scald two cupfuls of milk in the upper part of a double boiler. Cream together two table-spoonfuls of sugar and the yolks of four eggs and stir them into the boiling milk. Stir the custard until it thickens. Remove it from the fire, add a teaspoonful of vanilla and stand away to cool.

Clam Soup—Chop fine a cupful of clams and add to them their own liquor, strained. Put in one cupful of water, one slice of onion, a blade of mace, and simmer for thirty minutes. Thicken two cupfuls of milk with two table-spoonfuls of flour and two table-spoonfuls of butter. Strain the liquor from the clams and stir it slowly with milk. Season with salt and a dash of paprika. Just before the soup is sent to the table, and as it is removed from the fire, stir in the well-beaten yolks of two eggs.

Stewed Celery—Scrape and wash the green stalks of the celery; cut each stalk into inch pieces; let them stand in cold water ten minutes; put them in a steam pan; cover with boiling water and add one table-spoonful of salt; cover the pan and let cook until celery is tender; then drain off the water and cover with cold water; put one level table-spoonful of butter in a frying pan; when melted add one table-spoonful of flour; stir until smooth; add gradually one cupful of milk; stir over the fire until boiling and thickened; add half a teaspoonful of salt, a little pepper and the stewed celery; serve in a vegetable dish very hot.

Since 1872 4000 miles of railroads have been laid in the Japanese Empire.