

AN ERROR OF JUDGMENT

Young men, however well furnished in the matter of brains, are apt to make errors of judgment. It is one of the penalties under which youth is made to labor; otherwise youth would possess even a larger proportion of the advantages of this world than it now unfairly enjoys. Such an error of judgment was made by young Peter Beauchamp when he called Sir Henry Budd "a pompous old ass," not exactly to his face, but in such a manner that the criticism reached the ears of its object, as, indeed, it was intended to. The error did not lie in the view taken of Sir Henry's characteristics. The opinion itself was no error at all. Universally held opinions seldom are. The mistake lay in the manner of its imparting, and Peter Beauchamp did not discover it until he saw Sir Henry's daughter. Then he came justly annoyed with himself.

Sir Henry Budd was what is called a self-made man. That is to say, he was responsible for his own development from an obstinate, self-centered, poor man, who, for his own advantage, was obliged to curb his tyrannical instincts, into an opinionated old one, with a large number of people dependent on his whims; and, however much he may have congratulated himself on the change, the world at large was scarcely the happier for it. He had his good points, however; he seldom bullied his wife, and his lovely daughter never. (He had tried to do so once after her childhood had passed, but that episode does not come into objectionable points of his character were hidden from those two ladies.

Sir Henry Budd, having lived for sixty-five years without setting foot in any country other than his own, had taken it into his head to pay a visit to America, where he had heard that a certain faint interest was shown by a section of the populace in matters of commerce, and to see for himself something of the methods employed.

So he had booked berths for himself, his wife and his daughter on the *Campania*, the queen of the sea. Queenstown, determined to show all and sundry whom he might meet on his travels that Sir Henry Budd, Knight, was as good a man as any of them, and a good deal better than most. By the same boat travelled Peter Beauchamp, bent upon getting all the fun that was possible out of a trip round the world.

It was on the first evening out that the error of judgment referred to was made. Peter Beauchamp was sitting, after dinner, in a compartment of the smoking room with two or three other young men, when Sir Henry Budd joined the party, uninvited, sank heavily into a vacant seat, fetched an opulent-looking cigar out of a plethora of cases, and placed an order for liquid refreshment in a manner calculated to show a harassed steward that among all his many masters, there was one, at least, who was not to be trifled with.

The young men were talking politics, not, perhaps, with any great grasp either of principle or detail, but hardly with such complete lack of knowledge as to justify Sir Henry Budd, whose views did not coincide with theirs, in breaking rudely into the conversation and giving them to understand that he had listened to a good deal of nonsense in his time, but had only then and there realized the futility of folly that could issue out of the mouths of persons presumably sane. He then proceeded to a disquisition on the subject in question, which was received for the most part in silence, an attempt on the part of one of the young men to treat his conclusions as, at least, defensible, being met with extreme impatience, and the lecture lasted until a rather heavy roll of the ship, which had been gathering momentum, forced upon the lecturer the consciousness that the internal arrangement of his body, if not his brain, were subject to revision, which by this time was heartily sick of him.

It was at this point that Peter Beauchamp made use of the expression already quoted. It was the revolt of critical youth against dogmatic age. As Sir Henry Budd staggered to his feet, and with one hand on a supporting post of oak, prepared to launch himself across the tilting floor, Peter Beauchamp said, in a low but clear voice, "Pompous old ass!"

Sir Henry Budd turned round and fixed him with his eyes. "I shall remember you, young man," he said, coldly, and then a heaving lurch sent him reeling out of the saloon in search of his cabin and the safety of recumbency.

Peter Beauchamp had forgotten all about the self-important old man whom he had offended when he came on deck early next morning to gain an appetite for breakfast by a brisk half-hour's promenade of the shifting deck. The sky was clear and the sun bright, but the great ship was rolling and pitching as she rode the Atlantic rollers, and the majority of her passengers were either suffering patiently in their berths or preparing themselves uncomfortably for a later appearance. Only one other besides himself seemed to have felt the storm of the night and the motion of the ship so little as to come up on deck for an early morning promenade, and that was a girl in a neat costume of brown tweed, in whose clear skin, bright eye and slender, active figure all the health and vigor of her twenty years seemed to have materialized.

The young man eyed her with growing admiration as they passed and re-passed, stamping smartly along the shining deck; and an occasional side glance seemed to show that his interest in her personality was reciprocated in so far as was becoming in a young woman of good breeding.

By and by, when Peter Beauchamp was beginning to think it rather absurd that he and she should be passing up and down the deck in opposite directions when it would be so much pleasure to walk side by side, a more than usually heavy roll threw the girl off her feet and against the bulwarks. This happened just at their point of meeting, and Peter was instantly at her side, expressing fervent hopes that she had not hurt herself. It appeared that she had not, but the inquiry was permitted to serve as an introduction, and the pair finished their walk in company.

They got on surprisingly well, and learned a good deal about one another during the short interval that remained before the bugle summoned them to the breakfast table. One important fact, however, about his

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companion Peter Beauchamp failed to gather, and that was that she was the daughter of the gentleman whom he had called "pompous old ass," practically to his face, the night before.

This disturbing piece of information was mercifully withheld from him until after he had enjoyed almost a whole morning in Miss Beatrix Budd's society. Part of it was spent in company with her mother, who was led upon the deck shortly after breakfast and encamped in a sheltered corner, with plentiful provisions in the way of cushions, shawls and rugs. Peter Beauchamp was fortunate in being at hand to carry part of this paraphernalia from the companionway into the open, and Lady Budd accepted his assistance then and his continued presence thereafter in a way which caused him to congratulate himself heartily.

Lady Budd was a mild, placid lady, so overshadowed by the intelligence of her husband that her conversation never ran on for long together without mention of "Sir Henry." Sir Henry, it now appeared, had had a very bad night, but hoped to be well enough to appear at luncheon. She supposed that some people would say that she ought to be looking after him herself, but he had told her on no account to leave the deck as long as it was bright, which was very good of him. And he was very well off in the hands of his valet (pronounced "valley"), who had been with him a number of years, and knew his ways—such a comfort, that. So the good lady prattled on, and Peter Beauchamp listened politely and made assenting remarks in the proper places, and altogether, created an admirable impression, so that his reward, in the shape of an occasional tete-a-tete walk with Miss Beatrix during the morning hours, seemed only natural in view of the generally friendly relations, established.

The first hint of coming disaster was conveyed to him when he discovered the name of his newly-found friends. He had been vainly endeavoring to acquire this information all the morning, but could not summon up courage to ask the question point blank. At last it occurred to him to consult the list of passengers which he had in his cabin. He made an excuse to go below and then discovered that the only "Sir Henry" on board was Sir Henry Budd, who was travelling with Lady Budd, Miss Budd, a maid and a valet. The name struck him ominously; he could not have told why. For the first time since it had occurred, his little passage of arms of the evening before rose to his mind, and the figure of the overbearing old man whose behavior had caused it seemed to stand before him, crying aloud, "I am Sir Henry Budd!"

He put the horrid suspicion away from him and returned on deck. A little later, he found opportunity to say to Miss Beatrix Budd, "I hope I shall get on well with your father."

"Oh, I expect you will," she said, with a little laugh, "as long as you listen politely to what he has to say, and don't contradict him. He does not like that. There was a young man who was abominably rude to me in the smoking room last night. He was very angry."

Peter's heart sank into his boots. At luncheon time Sir Henry Budd appeared at the table with his wife and daughter. When the meal was over he shouldered his way through the outgoing crowd toward Peter, who saw full resolve in his eye and incontinently fled.

The young man accepted battle a little later on deck. He manoeuvred his adversary into a momentarily deserted corner, and stood to receive him.

"Hi, you, sir!" said Sir Henry, panting up to him. "You have had the impudence to joke yourself into acquaintance with my wife and daughter. Kindly keep away for the future. I'm not going to have every young cad on the ship hanging round them."

A full apology at this juncture might possibly have smoothed out the situation, but Peter had Irish blood in his veins, and the provocation was too great to admit of the soft answer.

"If you were a younger man I'd knock you down," he said hotly. "I dare say you'd try to, and I'd have you locked up for it," retorted Sir Henry, turning on his heel. "Just you keep out of my way for the future."

Peter gulped down his wrath. His adversary held the winning cards.

When he passed the Budd encampment, shortly after, Sir Henry beckoned below. Lady Budd looked away and fumbled nervously among her cushions. Not so Miss Beatrix. She looked directly at and through him, and Peter held his back straight with difficulty.

She did not quite relin

the afternoon, and at last achieved the feat of coming smartly around a corner and running plump into her.

"Oh, I am so sorry! I say, may I say something to you?" he gasped, all in one breath.

The girl looked him straight in the face for the second time. "I think you are making some mistake," she said, and left him. After that he could do nothing but pass her as frequently as possible and gaze at her, as often as he did so with a look which was at the same time imploring, deprecatory, admiring, pained and doggly faithful. Its multitudinous meanings were apparently completely lost on her, for she did not appear to notice him.

That evening the customary insinuating busybody who is to be found among every collection of ship's passengers began to make arrangements for a vocal and instrumental concert, to be held two days later, in aid of a seamen's charity. Peter Beauchamp had some reputation in London as a musical amateur, and there were those on board who knew it. He was asked to sing.

"I will with pleasure, if you can find me an accompanist," he said.

"That will be easy enough," said the entrepreneur, and booked him for two songs.

It turned out not to be so very easy, after all. There were doubtless many competent accompanists among the few hundred passengers, but they did not come forward, and the matter was left in abeyance for the present.

Peter Beauchamp was on deck early the next morning. So was Miss Beatrix Budd, and he went against hope that the new-born day might give him another chance of reinstating himself. The girl was walking with another young man, with whom she appeared to be on the best of terms. This young man was one of the party to whom Sir Henry Budd had discoursed politics two evenings before. He gave Peter "good-morning" as he came on deck and passed as if to give him the opportunity of joining them. Miss Beatrix walked straight on, with her head in the air, and the young man hurried after her. Peter took his constitutional on the other side of the deck, a prey to bitter thoughts.

"I say, old man," said his friend, afterward, "she's a topper, that girl. But what have you done to offend her? She told me she didn't wish to have anything to do with you."

"What have I done?" exclaimed Peter, angrily. "Why, she's the daughter of that old blitherer who bored us all the other night. You were in it as much as I was."

The other young man whistled. "By Jove!" he said. "You've put your foot in it. I'm going to get her mamma a cushion," and he hurried off.

The busybody now approached Peter. "I have got an accompanist at last," he said. "Come into the music room and try over your songs."

It was a very sore young man who disintegrated an album of songs from his cabin trunk and made his way to the music room a few minutes later. There he found a middle-aged young lady, with a stringy voice, in the act of presenting somebody vocally with the sweetest flower that blows, which, she explained, although it might, by an unobservant recipient, be mistaken for a rose, was in reality her heart.

The best part of the performance was the accompaniment, which was played by Miss Beatrix Budd.

When the song was over, and the singer had explained diffidently that she required the accompaniment hurried up a little in this place and retarded in that, the busybody said: "Miss Budd, will you be kind enough to play an accompaniment for Mr. Beauchamp?"

Miss Budd ignored the implied introduction.

"I think," she said coldly, "as I am to accompany Mr. Seeley and Miss Robinson, as well as Herr Wisenschmidt on the violin, I shall have enough to do. Can't you find someone else?"

"My dear lady," said the busybody, clasping two fat hands imploringly, "it is an extraordinary thing, but I really can't! There is not a soul."

"You've got a solo pianist, haven't you?" asked the girl. "Yes," said the busybody. "But Belloni! I couldn't ask him to play accompaniments, you know. He wouldn't do it. We are very fortunate to get him at all. Now, do, pray, be good natured."

Miss Beatrix turned impatiently toward the pianist. "Very well," she said, ungraciously; "but I can only play easy things."

"My dear young lady," protested the busybody, "you played Wisenschmidt's accompaniments superbly!"

"I knew them," she said, shortly, "I sat waiting with her hands in her lap."

"Thank you very much," said Peter, in a low voice, as he put a piece of music in front of her. It was "The Song of the Bow," which could not be said to present any great difficulties to a pianist who had rattled off her part of the Kreutzer Sonata in a way to draw guffawing compliments from the German violinist who had performed it with her.

The pianist's skill, however, seemed to have deserted her. She stumbled atrociously over the introductory bars, and, when Peter's fine baritone broke in, she stumbled still worse. He struggled on to the end, but his efforts were entirely spoiled. He was hurried unmercifully in the slower parts of the song, and kept poised for an undue length of time on high, sustained notes while she spelled out the accompanying phrases with careful attention.

At the end of the song the busybody, with his head nervously on one side, suggested further practice for Peter, without a word, but his second song on the music stand. "Any schoolgirl could play this," he said.

But Miss Beatrix apparently could not. She made a worse hash of it than of the other, though one would have thought that she must have been hard put to it to invent mistakes, for the accompaniment was chiefly one of simple chords. A simple chord, however, played quite decisively but with one wrong note in it is disturbing.

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind trying them over once or twice before tomorrow evening," said Peter, when the infliction was over. His expression of face was not amiable.

"Yes, that will be the thing," said the busybody, who was not particularly observant. "Miss Budd plays so beautifully that I am sure it will be all right. I must go and find Belloni!" And he hurried out of the room.

Miss Budd made as if to follow him, but Peter faced her squarely. "Are you going to play like that tomorrow night?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I shan't have time to practice," she replied.

"I don't want you to practice," said Peter. "Are you going to spoil my songs to-morrow?"

"If you don't like my accompaniments, you had better find somebody else," said the girl.

"I shall not find somebody else," replied Peter, looking straight in the face.

"I don't want to play your accompaniments," she said angrily. "I don't want to have anything to do with you."

"I shall know whether I want to have anything more to do with you to-morrow evening," said Peter. After which cryptic utterance they left the room by separate doors.

The wrath of Sir Henry Budd burned furiously when he was informed that his daughter had undertaken to appear in the sight of all beholders in company with the young man who had earned his deepest resentment. It was met with cold determination.

"I shall certainly play his accompaniments, as I have promised to do so," said Miss Beatrix, in answer to a direct prohibition. "But you needn't be afraid. You will hear what you will hear."

"A nice thing!" exclaimed Sir Henry. "You go hobnobbing with a fellow who has grossly insulted me!"

"You brought it on yourself, father," retorted the young lady. "I heard all about it from Mr. Melville."

This answer might have brought gratification to Peter Beauchamp if he had chanced to overhear it. It brought none to Sir Henry Budd, who could only splutter in his wrath that he washed his hands of the whole affair.

Peter Beauchamp no longer tried to meet and catch the eye of the lady who had scorned him. He gave himself to the smoking room and played bridge. During a short constitutional between rubbers in the afternoon it was he who, meeting Miss Beatrix, kept a haughty front and an indiffererent eye.

The next morning, the girl was on deck early. Peter made his first appearance at the breakfast table. After breakfast he walked for an hour in the company of a charming American, with whom he talked and laughed gaily, especially when passing Miss Beatrix Budd. She did the same with the assistance of the other young man.

At 11 o'clock Peter began to play bridge, and continued to do so until 5 o'clock, with an interval for luncheon. After tea he walked again, but alone. So did Miss Beatrix. Again they met somewhat awkwardly at a blind corner, but this time the collision was none of Peter's seeking. He lifted his cap coldly, apologized and walked on. It occurred to him afterwards that the girl had waited for a further apology, but he could not be quite certain. She had certainly stamped her feet as they parted.

The hour of the concert arrived. It was little more than a recital by the great pianist, who was taking his muscles of steel and his profuse locks to America for the purpose of gain, and the eminent violinist who was inwardly consumed with jealousy of him.

A song opened the proceedings, beautifully accompanied by Miss Beatrix Budd. Then came the violinist, and afterward the unhappy middle-aged young lady, who found that her good nature had involved her in comparisons which she would have preferred not to evoke. Then the great virtuoso played to an audience breathlessly silent, and when the encore had been finally refused and the applause had died away, Peter Beauchamp stood up to sing.

Miss Beatrix, beautifully attired, took her seat at the piano just vacated by the great man, and rushed into the accompaniment of the song. She managed to make three more mistakes in the short introduction than she had achieved at her former attempt. Peter's face took on a look of firm determination, and he prepared to battle through to the end. If he was to be made to look like a fool before all those people he would look as little like one as possible. His only consolation at the end of the performance was that the accompanist had covered herself with at least as much confusion as she had caused to be thrown upon him, and he was in a mood in which nothing would have pleased him better than to tell her so if he had had the chance.

The chance came a little later, but he did not avail himself of it. The performers sat together near the piano, Peter and Miss Beatrix at opposite ends of a long settee. During a painful performance on the banjo by a very young American gentleman,



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the great virtuoso, who had been soothing the qualms of the spinster lady with graceful politeness, turned to Peter and said: "I like to hear you sing. You use your brain, and your voice is musical. But your accompaniment was terrible. If you please, I will accompany you myself in your next song."

Then Peter risked everything—a second fiasco, and the probability of offending a man whom he would have given a good deal to know.

"You do me a very great honor, Sir," he said; "but I am afraid it would be slighting a lady if I were to accept."

"As you please," said the musician, turning his back.

Peter stepped boldly up to the lady whom he had refused to slight. "Signor Bellini has offered to play my next accompaniment," he said.

She turned scarlet. "Very well," she replied; "I don't mind."

"But I refused," continued Peter. "I felt sure that you would play better this time." Then he returned to his former seat, leaving Miss Beatrix considerably flushed.

She did play the next accompaniment better. She played it perfectly. It was to a simple Irish song, full of melody and pathos, which was received with a burst of applause, louder even than those which had greeted the two professionals, and an insistent demand for an encore.

The Peter did a very bold thing, considering the eminence of his fellow performers. He put down on the music stand no less a work than "The Eriking," and said, "Play that!"

And Miss Beatrix did play it, with a fire and grasp that could hardly have been excelled by Belloni himself. Peter's triumph was complete.

Perhaps, though, it was hardly complete enough to entice him to go up to Miss Beatrix after the concert was over and to say to her, boldly, "Why did you play that first accompaniment so disgracefully?"

She eyed him coldly. "That is hardly the way to speak to me," she said. "In fact, now that this is over, there is no necessity for you to speak to me again at all."

"I should like, at any rate, to thank you for playing the last two songs so splendidly," said Peter.

"Well, you can't do it now," she replied, somewhat inconsistently. "Here comes father, and he would be rude to you."

"Hang it all, when can I do it," said Peter, "if you are not going to speak to me again?"

"Father doesn't get up very early in the morning," she said, in a low voice, before she was whisked off by an irate, white whiskered Knight, who cast upon Peter a look calculated to wither him on the spot, if he had not been in the process of adjusting his ideas to an entirely new development of affairs.

It is not necessary to record more than a fraction of the conversation which took place during a half-hour's promenade of the deck before breakfast the next morning. Peter was up and out early, but not very long before Miss Beatrix Budd made her appearance. The other young man was five or ten minutes late, and was given to understand that his company was not required.

The two of them were standing at the head of the companionway.

"But, dearest," Peter was saying, "what about that little error of judgment of mine that enraged your father the other night?"

"You needn't worry any more about that," was the reply. "I told him last night that it was his fault and he ought to apologize to you. He won't do so, but when you tell him, you will find him quite tame."

"Tell me," said Peter, "were you really very angry when you found out that it was I who was the culprit?"

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Miss Beatrix gave a little laugh. "I knew it all the time," she said. The Sketch.

Death of Mother Veronica

Rev. Mother M. Veronica, who died on Tuesday, was mother superior general of the Sisters of the Divine Compassion. Her death occurred in the convent of our Lady of Good Counsel, at White Plains, N.Y., the mother house of the order. She was 66 years old. Before entering the religious life she was widely interested in the charitable work in New York, and in 1870, with other well-known Catholic women, founded the Association for Befriending Children and Young Girls. In 1886, under the direction of the Right Rev. Mgr. Preston, V.G., she founded the religious order of the Sisters of the Divine Compassion, becoming its mother superior general, and continued so until her death.

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