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Athens, Ontario

The Old Order Changeth

By JANE OSBORN

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"You may be only a poor typist," smug little Aunt Caroline had told her niece Babette, "but don't forget that you are a lady—or are entitled to call yourself one so long as you don't do any things that are unworthy of a real lady."

Aunt Caroline had never done any of those things; in fact, she had worked at rather trying odds for the last ten years in the uptown flat where she kept house for her own four sons and daughters and her niece Babette.

And they had all remained ladies—she and her daughter and the niece, and the three boys had, so far as the mother knew, remained "perfect gentlemen"—in spite of the three flights up and the dingy, bare, painted walls of the kitchen where Caroline's work never seemed to be done, and in spite of the debts there had been to pay after the husband's long illness.

On the parlor table there was a copy of a well-known book on so-called social usage, and although the chapter on candle parties and the advice the writer of the book gave on "how to act when meeting the English royal family," and how to write to the archbishop of Canterbury had been of little real use to Caroline, she found much of it immensely helpful to her in her task.

The fact was that Caroline had, as she said, seen very much better days in the years when she and her cousin, Babette's mother—for Babette was not a real niece—had, for one brief season mingled in a society that never found its way to Caroline's poor little widow's flat.

Then came the marriages of Caroline and Babette's mother and the death of both Babette's parents, the death of Caroline's husband, the bringing up of the five children in the ways of gentleness, and then, a year ago, Babette's engagement to Caroline's eldest son—who, to be sure, was only a sort of third cousin.

The courtship was conducted along lines that would have been approved by even the author of that book on social decorum on Caroline's parlor table. The young people, reminded that it was not well-bred to go to the theater unchaperoned, never went to the movies on a Saturday night without Caroline in tow, though poor Caroline sometimes endured all kinds of torment fearing that she was a hindrance to their good time. And Caroline remembered that when Babette's mother and she had been engaged they had not permitted their lovers more than the meagerest kisses, and those on the cheek.

Engagements are sometimes broken, they had been told, and a "real lady" would never cense regretting the fact if she had ever allowed any more passionate salute from a man who did not become her husband. So Caroline had told Babette and her son and, though they had been engaged a year, there was but one salute a day, and that very decorously upon the cheek.

When the first Christmas of their engagement came about Caroline had reminded her children that "well-bred engaged people did not give personal presents." The young man, besides the engagement ring, should give nothing but flowers, books and candy. Her own husband had given her a copy of Tennyson's poems on the Christmas they were engaged, and the Tennyson now reposed beneath the book on good form on the parlor table.

He had given her roses on all holidays and candies every week-end. There was no reason, Caroline said, why her son should not do so much for Babette. He could afford it, for he was now getting a generous salary.

Babette didn't often protest, but she was a practical bit of a girl, and when she might have been making a collection of useful household things given her by her husband-to-be—as other girls she knew did—she took small pleasure in the little bunch of roses that faded on her bureau after every holiday nor in the candies that she shared with her cousins every week-end.

From her own slender earnings she might have bought things that would eventually have helped feather the nest, too, but Caroline assured her that would not have been in good form. The great authority especially cautioned young women against giving anything of a personal nature to their fiancés.

Books, desk accessories, accessories of sport—a riding crop, or something of that sort—were the things suggested. And as Caroline's eldest son, Stephen, had no desk save the office one he tolled at eight hours a day, and knew no sports save struggling with the crowds on his daily trip to and from that office, Babette's choice was limited to books.

He liked the Stevenson and the Kipling she had given him, but how much sooner they could have been married if instead of those books she could have given him something that would do for the little flat—chairs and tables, or a rug, perhaps!

It was three weeks before Christmas and Babette and Stephen had each secretly decided to linger after office hours to make the Christmas purchases. Unknown to each other they were both part of the great throng that swarmed one of the department

store, not far from their own piece of work. At the door of the store Babette had received a little holly-decked card, and on it were words something like this:

"The patriotic gift this year is the useful gift. We feel it our duty to urge our customers to refrain from buying nonessentials. So, instead of displaying a large stock of Christmas candles and our usual Christmas books and flowers, we are recommending gifts of useful household articles and articles of apparel."

What if Caroline could see it that way? mused Babette, and then, yielding to the temptation, she took the elevator to the floor where were sold the household articles, dishes and furniture and kitchen things. There she ran almost precipitately into Stephen. He, too, was holding one of the little holly-decked cards.

"I have been looking at a set of dishes," he said. "Maybe after we are married we can get one. He pressed Babette's hand—perhaps that wasn't exactly good form, but the crowd was pushing close beside them and no one could have seen. "It's pretty hard to wait," he said. "Babette, if we had the things to start housekeeping on, perhaps we wouldn't have to wait so long. Perhaps in February—I heard today I'm to get a good raise at New Year's."

"If, instead of getting each other a set of Scott or Dickens we could get that set of dishes and some things to cook with—" faltered Babette.

"I could give mother \$10 every week, and still have enough to run our little flat on," whispered Stephen, "and Roger will be bringing in more after New Year's."

There was little further explanation. It seemed as if they were compelled by a force greater than the will power of either, greater than the silent influence of Caroline or the binding force of that book on the parlor table. Yes, they did go and they ordered that set of dishes—that with the money Stephen had expected to spend on the leather-bound Scott with Babette's money saved for the edition de luxe of Dickens they went and, after a half hour with a patient saleswoman, bought everything that any clever bride ever needed to make a little flat kitchen complete.

Then they turned their steps homeward toward Caroline.

"Perhaps we can arrange it in January—would you, Babette? I've got enough saved for the bedroom set, and with the dishes and the kitchen things I've enough for the other things. Do you suppose your mother—"

"There was a pause, for traffic made it hard to understand; then a lull; "There's something in that Tennyson on the parlor table that goes like this:

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways."

"Perhaps mother will see it that way, and I brought this little card home. Mother is very patriotic."

And, strangely enough, Caroline made no protest, so busy was she at once in reading what the book on good form had to say on "wedding etiquette."

NOT HARD TO RECOGNIZE HIM

Almost at a Glance Papa Could Tell
Which of the Swans Was
the Father.

Congressman Seaborn Ruddenbury of Georgia gently smiled when the talk topic dwelt on the lord and master of the domestic ranch. He said he was reminded of little John's visit to the zoo.

While rambling around among the animals with his father one afternoon, so ran the story of the congressman, little Johnny came to a miniature lake on which two swans were swimming.

"Papa," said Johnny, pointing a chubby little finger out over the lake, "is that the father swan or the mother swan?"

"Which one do you mean, Johnny?" asked the old man, glancing in the direction indicated by the boy.

"I mean the one over there," answered Johnny. "The one with all the feathers pecked off his head and isn't allowed to have the biscuit or nothing."

"Yes, my son," promptly replied papa, with just a suspicion of a sigh, "that's the father swan, all right."

An Ancient Custom.

Mr. Inglefield, the principal door-keeper at the British house of commons, is dead. His was quite a responsible post, for the holder must have an astounding memory for faces. The house of commons is probably the last place where snuff is regularly taken. The attendants take it because they have long hours of duty in which smoking is barred, and a good many members apparently follow the ancient habit. Mr. Inglefield, the Liverpool Post says, always kept a box on his seat at the door, and it was surprising to see how numerous were the members who helped themselves to a pinch as they went in or out of the house.

Historic Memorials.

In course of time the historic associations of the battlefields of Manchuria will be preserved by numerous monuments that are being erected by the Society for the Preservation of the Memory of Manchurian Battlefields. Up to date 22 memorials have been erected, among the latest being one marking the spot where Generals Nogi and Stoessel met on the eve of the surrender of Port Arthur.

Women in Parliament.

Women are now entitled to sit in the British parliament.

The Farmer-Banker Alliance



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