

THE CAPTURE OF THE COLONEL

The announcement of the engagement of the Colonel to little Kitty Flinders was the heaviest bomb that had ever struck the camp. The President reverberated from end to end with the report, and every one, from the General to the rawest recruit, looked on the pair with pity for the Colonel and admiration for Kitty.

The Colonel had been stalked time out of mind by ambitious daughters and managing mammas, but he had run the gauntlet so successfully I had begun to think he was safe. And now Kitty—of all people in the world, little Kitty Flinders—had landed him securely, and the question on every tongue was, "How did it happen?"

I had often watched the light skimming and ambushed attacks of the charming girls San Francisco is so full of, and marvelled at his power of resistance, and as his old comrade-in-arms, I now felt a keen interest in his capture.

He had the reputation among the women of being an excellent listener—which endeared him to the hearts of those nothing else could—and owing to a chance remark on his part that day, the inference seemed to be that the way to his heart must be through the centre of the din, for he was sure to be surrounded by a bevy of lovely women, making themselves hoarse in his ear with their chatter. Consequently, one could always tell whether he was in a company by following up their efforts to entertain him. And now Kitty, only passably pretty, and without wit enough to talk always grammatically, had brought this invulnerable old mustache to her feet as a prey.

The Colonel's ravings were still more inexplicable. Not that an one ever tries to explain the aberrations of man in love, but the tendency of his wanderings suggested mental decay, for, after going off in a rhapsody to discover what he was pleased to call her remarkable prettiness—even he, fool as he was, couldn't call her doll-baby type beautiful—he topped off with: "And above all, Miss Flinders is so delightfully clever and entertaining."

This last remark decided me there had been some sort of black magic practiced upon him, and that it was the office of a true friend to save him if possible. But first I must hear the story from Kitty's own lips.

As she was a woman, all that was needed, I argued, to get her to talk and tell all she knew was a chance, and so on the first occasion I decoyed her about to the golf links, where we might talk unimpeded. As we sauntered out on the downs the wind blew fresh against us, whipping loose strands of hair across her eyes and scattering a dash of rose color to her cheeks. "She tripped through the tangle of lupine and sand-rhyme with the jaunty emerald of the white-tears that danced in the distance, and punctuated every remark with a breezy little giggle that expressed almost as much stability of character as the fitful gusts of wind that swept the hill. Circumstances favored me, for she actually hit her ball at the first drive, which put her in a good humor with herself."


"And so you are going to marry my old friend, the Colonel?" I began, anxiously.

"Yes," she answered, with an assumption of dignity that sat awkwardly on her tip-tilted countenance.

"How did it happen?" I asked, coming to the point boldly, and wondering if she would be discerning enough to resist my impudence.

"Well, you see, it was this way," she answered, falling unsuspectingly into my trap. She took a long, slight, swung her breezy with all her strength, and struck the tee. "We went down to a dance at the Vendome, five of us, just fancy! Nette's mother went with us, of course. We always get Nette's mother to go with us whenever we can; she's deal as a post, you know. We used to take Aunt Mary because she's so near-sighted, but, on the whole, we find that it's better to have a deaf chaperon than a blind one. Wouldn't the combination be just too lovely for anything?"

I thought of the fastidious Colonel, his ideals of what constituted dignity, but as she waited for an answer I agreed that it would, so she continued: "San Jose is an awfully hot place, ever been there? The gardens are all so cool and shady it doesn't look so, but if you ever find yourself there in midsummer you'll get suddenly convinced. They play tennis there all the time, too; that's some of the things the San Jose men do well. The hop was Friday night, and we had played tennis all day long, simply because there was absolutely nothing else to do. I stayed out on the courts, not because I don't hate tennis, but because we had heard the Colonel was coming in the afternoon, and as we wanted the first chance at him. At any rate, I guess, the other girls did. I freely confess that was my sole object, and from the way they hunted that hot place it was very evident they had the same reason. He didn't come, though; that is, not till later. But I stayed around so long after train time I left myself only about a minute to dress, then I just tore upstairs and began to make things fly. My trunk had been packed by my cousin; I can always tell her packing; she puts the light things on the bottom and the heavy things on top; they were all just that way when I opened it, but when I came to look for my slippers I could find only one. I searched high and low and turned things upside down and wrong, and being so late the door was struck from one end to the other; but that slipper was not to be found. There was only one thing to do about it, stay upstairs all evening in my self or go without that slipper. Just then the hand struck up 'The Blue and the Gray,' and that settled it. I put the left slipper on the right foot, and let it go at one conspicuous, and an russet one. Just while foot, and an russet one. Just then I saw an across to see if I was ready to go down, but I was so



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hot from fuming over that shoe my hair had all come out of curl and had to be done over. She didn't offer to help me the least bit; all she said was 'Oh, you little goose, why didn't you powder your hair when you curled it so it would keep dry and stay in place?' and off she went down the hall to tell the girls I wasn't half ready. I could see it was a good scheme, though, so when I got my hair done again I just powdered it thick; I had a full box, and emptied nearly half of it."

We were now half way around the links, and I suggested we might rest a few minutes. Kitty had lost her score long before and was glad enough to stop; so, dropping her cleek and asking if her hat was straight, she drew a long breath and went on. Her eyes seemed to catch the sparkling blueness of the water as her gaze rested ruminantly upon the scene before her, and her mind to stray in long, long thoughts, like the flight of the dipping seagulls overhead.

"It's perfectly awful the way those girls make themselves up in the evening. I wouldn't think of doing such a thing—that is, not often—but seeing what preparations they were all making to stun the Colonel, I thought I'd try it a little bit, too. So I took a pencil and made a beautiful arch of my eyebrows and a lovely shadow underneath. It really did make a wonderful improvement; my eyes looked twice their usual size, almost as large as Ethel's. But the light wasn't good in my room, so I skipped down to Nette's, where there was a chandelier; she was whitening the girls' necks and shoulders, and the air was so dense with the powder I could scarcely see until I got right under the light, and then you ought to have heard the shout that went up from every last one of those girls. What do you suppose I had done? When I held the glass under the light I found my hair was a lovely pink. You see the 'la Blanche' was flesh color, and I had put on too much. Oh, how we did brush and fan and tear my hair to get that miserable color off, but it was so thick it seemed to stick to every individual hair. The girls thought it was a very funny joke. They all gathered around, and made suggestions, and poked fun at me, till all at once Nette gave a shriek and said, 'What in the world have you done to your eyes, child?' I said, 'Oh, nothing; does it show?' I thought she was going to have a fit. She tried to tell me, but every time she looked at me she went off in such a gale of laughter the tears ran down her cheeks and made little furrows through the 'Camelline.' Finally, she got a glass and said, 'You look as if you had been done in pastels by a blind man.' That made me mad, and I snatched the glass out of her hand, and to my horror found I had gotten hold of the pencil her mother had been writing postals with and had made my eyebrows an indelible blue."

This recital of her misfortunes showed Kitty to be better-natured than I had supposed, and I began to feel somewhat mollified. "What did you do about it?" I asked her.

"Do? Why, there was nothing I could do—that was the worst of it," she answered. "The pencil was indelible, but I can tell you I felt very much plucked up with pink hair and blue eyebrows. Then Janet came to see if we were ready, looking like a little peach blossom, all in fluffy pink. The tears positively came to my eyes when I looked down and saw that her shoes were mates. Everything about that girl irritates me. She is always so cool, and never gets excited; so, seeing her looking so pink and perky, I said, 'You do look pretty nice, as you seem to know, but you'd look a good deal better if you hadn't gotten your lips so red.' Of course, she denied it, and vowed she hadn't done anything to them. Then what makes them look so cherry-ripe?" I said. That got on her nerves, and the other girls exchanged glances, because we always scrap, but it takes a mighty big streak of meanness to get back at a person by a practical joke. Quick as a wind she said, 'Oh, I guess it's the lusterine I've been using; it's such a lovely dentifrice. Don't you want to try it?' Here, quick; hold your breath so you won't swallow it.' She grabbed a bottle off the stand, and took an idiot. I held my breath and took a mouthful of ammonia. In a second my lips and tongue were swollen as if they had been stung by a whole hive of bees, and Janet was scared half to death when she saw what she had done. But I was mad, just hopping mad. Up to this time I hadn't lost my temper at all, but I was afraid the swelling might disfigure my mouth permanently, and I have always taken a humble little pride in my mouth. It is the only feature I have like the Halls and I value it as a sort of half-mark. I snatched up the first thing I could reach, which happened to be my carved ivory mirror that came from Japan, and threw it at her, and she turned around and laughed. Then I threw Nette's curling iron, and that, of course, missed her, and smashed the glass."

As Kitty habbled on I felt my hair slowly turning gray at the revelations her confidences made; old stager

that I was, I still clung to my belief in the genuineness of the visions of loveliness I saw about me, but with every confession another delusion had to go. I suggested the homestretch, and whistling up the caddie, started back, sadder and wiser.

"Nette said," resumed the indefatigable Kitty, "you would better go to bed now for safe keeping; there is no knowing what else might happen to you, and in the morning we will tell you all about the dance and the Colonel." But I said, "No, siree, I'm going to this hop now if it's the last act of my life. I shall sit in the shade, with your mother and look on, for I know that if I should try to dance something would paralyze me so I wouldn't be able to move a muscle. I had made up my mind that I wouldn't dance—you see, I didn't know how the pink and blue combination would suit the San Jose taste—but I didn't propose to stay upstairs all evening by myself. It was a lovely night. There were lots of people we knew there, the music was fine and the floor not crowded. The Colonel loomed up early in the evening and asked Nette for a dance the first thing. I watched them sailing around the room and knew Nette had been thinking up topics all day. She is one of the few people who can talk and dance too. I could imagine just how entertaining she must be, for she talked every minute of the time. Things went on that way half the evening, and if my lips hadn't pained so I would have had a pretty good time watching the others, but after the Colonel had danced with the other girls he looked over their heads into the chaperon row and asked me if I wasn't dancing. It was a lovely sweet-temper, and I simply couldn't resist; I tried to bobble about on the white slipper so the russet foot wouldn't show, but I soon had to give it up, for when I let my dress drag everybody stepped on it, and when I held it up I caught curious glances directed at my feet."

Through all this recital of her misfortunes I dumbly wondered what they had to do with my friend the Colonel, but remembering that "the longest way round is the shortest way there" in a woman's story, I listened patiently.

"Just imagine my predicament!" she continued. "I couldn't dance on account of my slipper; I couldn't stay in the light because of my blue eyebrows, and couldn't mumble a single word distinctly on account of my swollen lips. Then the Colonel suggested the veranda. It was simply glorious out there, warm and moonlight, and I began to think I was glad I was there after all, but it didn't last long. You know, I just love to talk; they tell me at home I talk entirely too much, but it would have done them some good if they could have seen me then. My lips were so blistered I couldn't even open my mouth, so I just drew myself up into the corner and wondered if that nightmare evening would ever end. The Colonel said something about the weather, and I could only nod my pink head; then he said something else, and I raised my blue eyes at him to show that I had heard, and with that, if you can believe it, he began to talk himself."

I did not understand her surprise, for I had always rated him as a great talker, but recalled his reputation, and said nothing.

"Well, if you please, he kept right on talking. I never heard of his doing such a thing, for the girls all say they have to rack their brains to prevent a pause in the conversation. He told me all about his career; where he had been and what he had done; all the active service he had seen, and his whole family history, beginning with his grandmother's maiden name, and there I sat in the corner like a wooden image, not able to say a word."

Now, for the first time, I began to understand how the Colonel had gotten his impression of Miss Flinders being "delightfully clever and entertaining." It would have been impossible otherwise. The poor fellow had been starving all these years for a listener and been suffocated by the well-meant efforts of the women to entertain him.

"However, he tells me he found you very interesting," I interrupted.

But Kitty only laughed. "How could he?" she asked. "He didn't even hear the sound of my voice; we sat out three dances and he talked all the time."

Then I saw it all and didn't blame him. The talked-to-death Colonel had at last gotten a chance, owing to this woman's tongue being temporarily disabled, and had talked a good long time without interruption, about himself at that. I did not wonder that he had been fascinated by the novelty of the experience, and in his exhilaration had attributed the fact of his having been so highly entertained to the presence of poor, stupid little Kitty Flinders. But as we sauntered homeward I was fully satisfied in my own mind how it happened—Marguerite Stabler in San Francisco Argonaut.

Suffering, which blessedly prevents your finding force in the things of earth, will force upon you the priceless lesson that salvation can alone be found in clinging to God with all your strength. If your seeming inability threatens to crush your heart with sadness, take comfort and courage in the thought that by the constant pleading of your pain and weariness before the Throne of Mercy you may draw down God's blessings upon men more powerfully even than others who are actively engaged in charitable undertakings. What a rich morning offering you can make for promoting the desires of the Sacred Heart! For remember well that though Our Lord went about doing good in the days of His public ministry, yet it was when called last upon His bed of torment that He benefited men the most. Nothing that He did was more precious to Him than what He suffered. It was His Passion and Death which secured the glory of His Father and wrought the world's salvation. Cling to Him and you shall love God, "the greatest and the first Commandment," and you shall also love your neighbor for His sake.



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What is the Index?

(Rev. M. I. Stritch, S.J., in The New Voice.)

What is the Index of Prohibited Books?

This question is discussed by theologians and canonists who wish to make clear the scope and purpose of ecclesiastical authorities in sanctioning the publication of a list of forbidden books. It is asked by well-meaning non-Catholics who desire to obtain information for merely speculative ends. It is asked by conscientious Catholics because they seek the guidance of the Church in what is now a matter of the greatest importance—the matter of reading. It is asked by bigoted and flippant declaimers in order to have a suitable occasion to show the obscurantism, the timidity of the Church. The index, they claim, is one of the pitiable devices of Pope and Cardinals to hold the allegiance of Catholics by keeping them ignorant of the enlightening teachings of modern times. Or again, these writers, deeming it not worth while to waste their virtuous indignation on the Church, take an apparently different talk. They grow merry over the futility and ineptitude of such means and instruments as the Index. They point out the fact that in this list comparatively few books are contained, while hundreds of thousands go unlisted. And the unlisted are incomparably more dangerous to Rome and Roman pretensions than many of the practically harmless books on the Index. Evidently the Pope and Cardinals are a little too timid or too lazy to pursue, capture and put into their pillory the great faith destroying criminals who are closing about at large. For all these classes of inquirers a very interesting article appeared recently in the "Civiltà Cattolica." This magazine is a bi-weekly edited by learned Jesuit fathers in Rome, under the immediate supervision of the Holy Father. The gist of the article is as follows:

The Index is not the whole, but only a small part of the legislation of the Church in the matter of the reading of books dangerous to faith and morals. No upright man would think himself permitted to do every deed in his power, speak every word or think every thought or entertain every wish. Because such a course is clearly forbidden by the law of nature, revealed in the reason and conscience of man. A vast multitude of books are so openly coarse, obscene, immoral, irreligious, blasphemous, that no other law, is needed to declare authoritatively that they are not to be read. The Church teaches that this natural law is the will of God, binding on the conscience not merely of Catholics, but of every man and woman whose mental condition is such as to leave them responsible for their actions. The natural law is unchanged and unchangeable. Books of this kind have always been, are now and always will be prohibited to all. They need no further listing or indexing.

Second, Many books not clearly forbidden by the natural law because not openly heretical or immoral or atheistic or obscene are still full of danger to unsuspecting readers. We know on good authority that the devil has a way of taking the role of an angel of light. In olden times he displayed this angelic disposition through the instrumentality of the serpent. In modern times his favorite instruments are certain classes of authors.

To prevent this cunning deception, especially since the time of the Reformation, the Church has issued general decrees prohibiting, not individual books, but large classes and divers kinds of writings which either manifestly or insidiously labor to undermine the faith and morals of their readers. The zeal of the reformers in

propagating their doctrine was largely frustrated by the loyalty of the Catholic peoples to ecclesiastical authorities. It was then that the wily "angel of light" process began to be extensively used. It was then, too, that the great Catholic invention of printing was made a means of spreading heresy and immorality, everywhere endeavoring to lead men away from their allegiance to the Church. Ever since this propaganda of, first, Protestantism, then rationalism, and afterward paganism, has gone vigorously forward. The printing press in multiplying books encouraged and facilitated education. Books and readers grew together. The need of special action on the part of the Church to save her people from false teaching and immoral influence became urgent at once and has lasted to our own day. Our critics of the Index are guilty of an ignorant elench. They take the Index as identical with the complete and general legislation of the Church on this matter of reading. The fact is, the Index is not, strictly speaking, in the nature of legislation at all, but rather in that of a series of court judgments. The natural law and the general decrees of the Church did not make known by name what books were prohibited. Thousands of books—to-day—we might better say hundreds—were clearly to be placed in the categories of the books forbidden by either the natural law or the general decrees of the Church. Thousands, too, were just as clearly free from any taint that would bring them under either ban. In between these two classes there would naturally be many doubtful and controverted cases. When doubts occurred or controversies arose as to whether a book was prohibited or not, inquiries were made of the proper authorities. The book thus brought up for trial was examined and condemned or acquitted, according to its merits. In order to make the saving legislation of the Church more effective, Bishops, priests, educated laymen, and especially officers of Catholic schools and universities were encouraged to present doubtful books for examination. Again, it happened that careless and wayward Catholics might read books about which there really was no doubt on the part of conscientious and intelligent men. The latter knew that such books came under the general prohibition, while the former persisted in reading until an examination took place and an explicit decision was rendered; in other words, until the book was put on the Index.

Out of cases of this character grew the list of prohibited books now known as the Index. Hence: First, not all prohibited books are contained in this list, but only a comparatively very small number. Second, they are not by any means the worst books that are found in the Index, since real and bona fide doubts existed as to whether they were forbidden or not until a decision was obtained and the books listed. Third, some grossly bad books are indexed either because it was found that disobedient Catholics would otherwise read them or for some other particular reason.

Our conclusions from these facts and explanations should be that the Church is not tyrannical or intolerant, but laudably vigilant in safeguarding the souls entrusted to her keeping; that the character of the works on the Index and the smallness of their number do not show any carelessness or incompetency on the part of the Church in selecting the books worthy of condemnation, but rather demonstrate the ignorance and conceit of the critics; that Catholics ought to have a sincere respect and reverence for the natural law, the ecclesiastical decrees and the special decisions as shown in the Index relating to this matter of prohibited reading.

There is not much use in asking God to bless the whole world as long as we are not willing to stand our share of the expense.

The old friendships, safe, genuine, and firmly built, for which we take little thought, and which always avail us, are like those good, thick walls of bygone days, which need no repair, and are ever ready for shelter or defence.

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For the Conversion of Non-Catholics

Washington, D. C., October 27—The Apostolic Mission House at the Catholic University in Washington has opened its second year with an increased number of students.

Pending the completion of the new building the priests who are following the lectures given by Father Elliott are living in Keane Hall. The new Mission House will be finished by January 1, but the blessing of it will not take place till after Easter, when the Archbishops are assembled for their annual meeting. It looms up most majestically on the University grounds, and both in style of architecture and in appearance it is very notable among the group of buildings that surround the University. There are now eighteen students attending the lectures; four are from the South and two are Benedictines.

The arrangement that is made with the Bishops in the South is to accept their students without any expense to the diocese and to provide a salary for them for five years while engaged in mission work. The Northern diocese that are represented among the students are Dubuque, Peoria and the diocese where the Apostolate hands are already existing.

In Pittsburg, through the practical management of Bishop Canevin, the diocesan mission hand has been put on a permanent basis. Rev. Edward Griffin, who has been pastor at New Brighton, Pa., for some years, has been made the head of the diocesan missionaries and associated with him are three English-speaking priests, a Slav and an Italian. The beautiful Church at Mount Washington, on the South Side, has been assigned to the mission hand and every opportunity is given to them to do efficient diocesan work. The establishment of the Pittsburg band is another link in the chain of Apostolic mission hands that will before many years stretch across the country.

It is now just ten years since the non-Catholic mission work began in its organized form, and the results in awakening religious activity and in dissipating ignorance, in stopping the leakage and in building up the Church are most remarkable.

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