

pressed in the most positive terms is not sufficient to disinherit the heir unless there is a gift over to somebody else. It is not enough for the testator to say, 'I don't intend my heir to take any part of my estate,' but he must go on and say whom he intended to have it. If he don't the heir takes notwithstanding the will."

Broderick sprang to his feet, an eager light transforming his gloomy features. "Then you mean—" he stammered.

"That this will isn't worth the 'blind' typewriter it was written on," declared Blaine, "and you take the estate as your uncle's heir just as if there never had been a will."

"And the money is actually mine?"

"Yes," winced Blaine, "you are in a financial position to ask Elsie to marry you if you wish."

Broderick was relieved from the embarrassing necessity of a reply. A mud-festooned corporal rushed in and summoned him to the front trench where the usual nightly attack of the Saxon troops was assuming unusual proportions.

Blaine gazed at the little tin stove with unseeing eyes. Then he rose wearily and unfolded the crumpled letter. He had been so absorbed in the legal discussion that he had forgotten the letter for the moment, and its contents came to him again with new and crushing force.

"I guess Elsie's right," he muttered, "and I'm too much of a law bookworm to be a marrying man. Well I hope she and Broderick will be happy."

He turned to throw the letter into the fire; but his eye caught the inevitable feminine P.S. at the end.

"John Webster, who, you remember, married Nellie Harmon last summer, eloped with his stenographer yesterday. Really, I believe I prefer a book fiend after all."

One Package Too Much

"How came Fluddub to be arrested?"

"Well, he's an earnest exponent of the theory that you ought to carry home your own packages. Only he had a package that was too much for him."

Elizabeth Bids

By V. S. Thompson

AS a matter of fact, I am afraid I ought not to have shown that catalogue to Elizabeth at all. Yet it looked harmless enough. "The household furniture and effects of the late William Westinghouse, Esquire, at eleven precisely." William Westinghouse—probably an elderly bachelor. Lots 1 to 93 consisted mainly of pipe racks and liqueur stands. Lots 94 to 567 of— But here, in a weak, unselfish moment, I handed the catalogue to Elizabeth.

"Anything there you care about?" I asked with assumed carelessness.

With feminine ease Elizabeth passed right over Lots 1 to 93 and settled in the best bedroom. From there she descended to the drawing room, ticking off various items with a blunt pencil.

"The thing's genuine enough," said

Elizabeth about tea-time. "There's no doubt about that."

"Not a scrap."

"And we do want a new hall-stand."

"Do we?" I said; then, "I suppose we do."

"And if we get there early—about Lot ninety-four—we shall have plenty of time to see how things are going before starting to bid."

"Plenty," I agreed. Then what novelists call "an awkward pause" ensued.

"Er—about bidding?"

"Of course, if you'd rather," began Elizabeth.

"Not at all. Still, I fancy it would look better for a man—"

"Perhaps," conceded Elizabeth; "though I do think a woman's intuition—"

"Ah, yes, a woman's intuition," I murmured, and I knew I had been miserably beaten.

"We do want a new hall-stand." Those were Elizabeth's words. That was Monday. Unfortunately it was four days before the sale took place. On Tuesday we wanted a coal vase and an alarm clock. Wednesday, an overmantel. Thursday, a pair of curtains. Then I wished I had burned that catalogue.

Now there are two ways of bidding. One is to beat the other man at all costs. That is unscientific and expensive. The second is the way Elizabeth discovered in a little book, "Secrets of Success in the Auction Room." You mark the highest price you are prepared to give on the margin of your catalogue. You start the bidding at exactly half this figure. You advance your bids by easy stages until your outside price is reached. Then—you remember method No. 1.

When we arrived at the residence of the late Mr. William Westinghouse, a mahogany sideboard was being offered.

"It's too large," said Elizabeth.

"Much."

"And it's in shocking bad repair."

"Shocking."

"And it—Four pounds ten!" cried Elizabeth.

"But, my dear," I remonstrated, "we have one. Don't you remember—the pot of aspidistra?"

"I'm only practising," explained Elizabeth.

"To acquire confidence in the auction room the beginner should make one or two trial bids before actually buying. That's what the author of 'Secrets of Success' recommends."

A few lots further on a piano was put up.

"I'm safe up to thirty pounds," said Elizabeth. "I'll help the bidding on a bit, then drop out just before—"

But either that crowd was not musical, or else Elizabeth had overestimated the value of early Victorian pianos. Anyway she—we—I—bought it for twenty-nine pounds.

"Of course, it's absurdly cheap," said Elizabeth as I paid the deposit.

"Of course, but—do you really think you need more practice? I'm no judge, you know, still—"

"You think I've got the knack?"

"Quite certain of it."

"Then I shall bid in real earnest next time."

Then the duel commenced—Elizabeth versus The Field. The auctioneer played for The Field. He was a host in himself.

"Thirty-two-and-six for this lovely pair of cut-glass celery glasses," he would cry. "Only thirty-two-and-six."

"Thirty-five," came a voice from an empty corner. (Did I mention that the auctioneer was an accomplished ventriloquist, and could make bids from all parts of the room?)

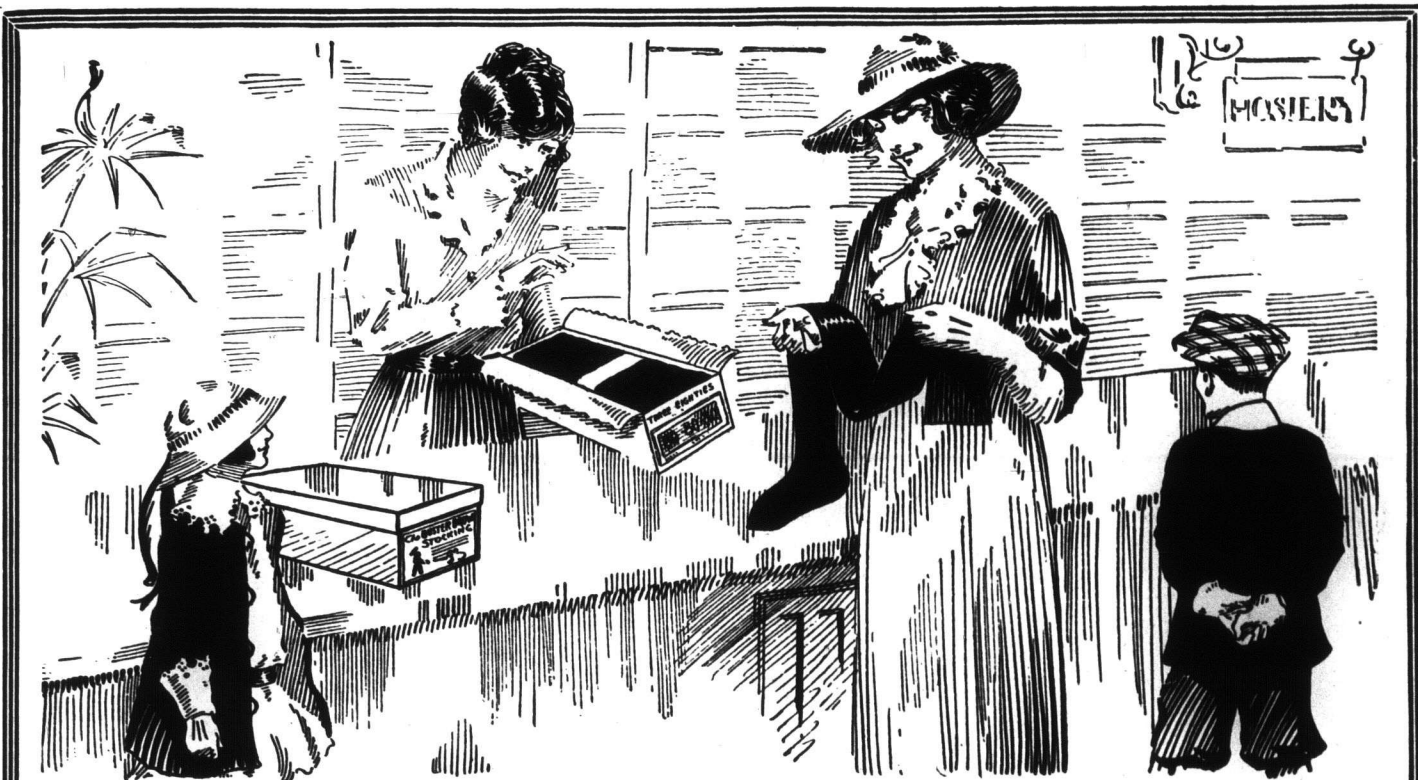
"Thank you, sir."

"Thirty-seven-and-six." This from a lady who had just left the room.

"Thirty-seven-and-six," said the auctioneer very deliberately. "Thirty-seven-and-six" (silence). "May I say two pounds? May I—"

Then he looked at Elizabeth. I really don't know what we shall do with another pair of celery glasses, though. There were three sets given at the wedding.

We had now bought a grand piano, a hall-stand (it came on earlier than Elizabeth expected), and a pair of celery glasses. The hall-stand could, with alterations in the peg department, be made useful, and it cost no more than a new one—which is what a bargain means



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