

Is Flirting Unpardonable?

"Why shouldn't I flirt if I want to?" demanded Alison, with a superior air. "It is good for one. It sharpens one's intellect. It makes for the equality of the sexes. It breaks numerous hearts," I murmured.

"Hearts!" Alison brought her hands together with a movement of contempt, as though she were crushing a heart between them. "What about that?"

"Oh, nothing," I replied quietly. She seemed to be annoyed because I was not annoyed.

"Why shouldn't I flirt if I want to?" she inquired again.

"Oh, why not, indeed, my dear lady," I returned, and then, bowing low, I added, "I am everlastingly at your service."

"You?" Oh, I couldn't flirt with you.

"Why not? If I am deficient in intellectual capacity—I accept your dictum that the pursuit sharpens the intellect—you see, it might benefit me if you were to make use of me."

She looked at me with a frank smile so charming that—well, it made me angry to think that she should flirt with any one else.

"It isn't that," she remarked brightly. "The fact is I don't like the heart breaking part of the business. To enjoy flirting thoroughly the person one flirts with must be devoid of heart."

"Well?" I asked.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I'm afraid I shouldn't enjoy it with you."

"Because I have a heart?"

"That, I should imagine, is the inference," she remarked superciliously. I nodded.

"And is there the further inference that you have—er—no heart?" I asked.

"Oh, not necessarily, because"—She paused and then went on: "It's like this, you see: In a flirtation the woman, as a rule, is the initiator, and that being so she is prepared to place exactly the correct amount of importance on anything that is said."

"In other words, she says things which she doesn't mean and listens to things which are also not meant, eh?"

"That, I fancy, is flirting," she said.

I shook my head in disapproval.

"It's a bad thing morally," I remarked. "It tends to pervert one's sense of"—

"Sense of fiddlesticks!" she cried. "Really, Hector, I am surprised to hear you. A good flirtation is"—

"Like imitation diamonds," I interrupted.

"But"—she fixed her eyes on me—"but if one doesn't want to run the risk of losing the real"—

"Oh, now you are carrying the simile too far," I said. "In love-making"

Her face assumed an expression of utter disinterestedness.

"You are beyond me now, Hector."

"In the interests of the public, flirting ought to be sternly suppressed," I said.

She laughed slyly.

"That's because you love one woman, my dear boy." She waited to see whether I would contradict her and then went on, "One cannot expect a man who is in love to tolerate the flirting propensity in the woman he loved."

I stared hard at her. Her words just allowed of an interpretation other than the one that I loved her; but I was not at all certain that in a dual interpretation was in her mind.

"You mean?" I asked.

"Oh, Hector, how blind you are! I mean that you never did see any one you cared for so much as you care for me. And I?"

She paused, and a flood of tenderness swept over her face.

"Yes—and you?" I asked eagerly.

"Surely you know," she murmured. "Surely you have seen"—

"I haven't seen anything," I interrupted hotly, "except that you have kept me hanging around you for months, and—and you know so well that I love you more dearly than life."

A smile flashed across her face and the tenderness vanished.

"There now?" she cried. "What did I say? There isn't any fun in flirting with a man of heart. You say what you mean and you mean what you say. You can't call that fun. Besides, it's very embarrassing."

I controlled myself with an effort.

"I beg your pardon Alison," I said with dignity. "I quite agree with you—there's no fun in it, and it's very embarrassing—for me."

We stood staring at each other for some moments, she with a smile on her face and I with a scowl on mine. I had been fooled, once more.

I bore the silence until it threat-

ened to turn my brain.

"If you were a man, I would demand an apology," I said stiffly.

"If I were a man—but men don't flirt with each other, do they?" I ignored the question.

"But seeing that you are a woman"—

"Only a woman," she murmured. "I shall accept my dismissal and go away."

I could have kicked myself for having said that.

"But, Hector"—she began; but I would not allow her to go on.

"Oh, no doubt you would like me to remain to be made a fool of again," I said sarcastically; "but unfortunately I can't. As you say, I have a heart, and"—

"We all have," she murmured, and her tone was the same as the one she had before deceived me with.

"You needn't begin with that again," I said coldly, "not that you could take me in with a remark so obviously untrue."

Her face stiffened slightly.

"Why not call a spade a spade?" she said. "I am a liar—that is what you mean?"

"Something of the kind," I said, for I was deeply hurt. "One who says things which she doesn't mean is, I take it, a— You will excuse me if I leave the word unsaid."

"Oh, yes; but you are quite wrong, you know. All flirts are not liars."

"They say things which they don't"—

"You don't understand," she interrupted. "They say things which they don't mean perhaps, but they may mean them all the same."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Please excuse me for being so dense, Alison; but really I don't quite follow you."

"No? Well, let us be more personal. Supposing I were to say, 'Dear Hector, I love you.'"

"I should immediately tell you that you were saying what was not true."

"But, don't you see, you might be wrong?"

"Possibly, but"—And then I looked straight at her, and her eyes told me that I was making a bigger fool of myself than she had made of me. "Alison!" I cried, and before I knew what I was doing my arms were round her.

She freed herself after a time and surveyed me thoughtfully.

"Will you really marry a flirt?" she asked.

I laughed joyously, for my views regarding such things had changed.

"Of course. I must, in the interests of the public. It isn't safe to leave any one so bewitching as you are free to play with men's hearts."

"So you will sacrifice yourself? How noble of you! But"—She paused. "What difference will marriage make? Once a flirt always a flirt, you know."

"I shall take jolly good care that you don't flirt," I said.

"And I'd like you to prevent me. Why should a woman not flirt?"

"Because the habit is degrading to her sex," I said.

"It is very unlike a gentleman to interrupt, Hector. I was going to say—why should a woman not flirt with the man she loves—the only man she has ever flirted with?"

"Oh, if I had to have the exclusive rights," I said.

"You have had them all along," she returned.

It was, of course, necessary that I should calm down, but I saw no reason why I should not do so in a dignified manner.

"But flirting consists in saying things which one doesn't mean, Alison."

"But one may mean them all the same," she said softly. "Dear Hector, I love you."

And, after all, dignity in my descent was out of the question.—King.

The Blow Landed

She doesn't go to her clubs and euchres half as much as she did. People used to say this charming woman spent most of her time at these gatherings. One day she called on a dear friend to reproach her for her slackening interest in the club. I believe it was a club for reforming the gas meter or something—anyhow it was a reform affair.

"Look here, Lizzie," said the enthusiast, "why on earth don't you come to the meetings? Here you are paying your dues and never showing up. You owe it to the club to take an interest in the work."

"But I can't come," explained her friend. "There's the baby, and Henry doesn't come home sometimes till late, and supper must wait, and if he wants to go out I can't go away and leave the children. I would worry myself to death."

"Well, I must say Henry is inconsiderate," said the caller. "Why,

there's my husband and children too. They give me no trouble. Every time I want to go to the club Charlie says he will be glad to stay at home with Bridget and keep an eye on things till I come back. He never objects."

"Maybe," retorted the amiable hostess, "if I had a housegirl as handsome and young as Bridget Henry would be glad to stay at home, too, but mine is black and goes home at night."

The slow landed, and Charlie hasn't been asked to look after Bridget and the house since.—Louisville Times.

Length of Dreams

Three physicians were discussing the matter of the length of dreams a day or two ago, when one of them related a strange experience.

"Yesterday afternoon," he said, "I called to see a patient, and much to my satisfaction, I found him sleeping soundly. I sat by his bed, felt his pulse without disturbing him and waited for him to awaken. After a few minutes a junk dealer's cart with discordant ringing bells turned into the street, and as their first tones reached us my patient opened his eyes.

"'Doctor,' he said, 'I'm glad to see you and awfully glad that you woke me, for I have been tortured by a most distressing dream that must have lasted for several hours. I dreamed that I was sick, as I am, and that my boy came into the room with a string of most horribly sounding sleighbells and rang them in my ears, while I hadn't power to move or speak to him. I suffered tortures for what appeared to be an interminable time. I'm so glad you woke me.'

"The ringing of those bells for one second had caused all of that dream and just at the waking moment."—New York Herald.

Three Ways

An Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotchman, making a tour around the city a short time since, were observed looking through a confectioner's window at a beautiful young woman serving in the shop.

"Oh," exclaimed Mr. Patrick, "do let us be after spending half a crown with the dear craytur, that we may look at her conveniently and have a bit of chat wid her."

"You extravagant dog," said Mr. Bull. "I'm sure one-half of the money will be sufficient. But let us go in, by all means. She's a charming girl."

"Ah, wait a wee," interposed Mr. McAndrew. "Dinna ye ken it'll serve our purpose equally well just to ask the bonnie lassie to gie us twa sixpences for a shilling and inquire where's Mr. Toompson's house and sic like. We're no hungry and may as well save the siller."—Birmingham Mercury.

Two Are Asphyxiated

San Francisco, June 7.—Blanche Warren, a well-known soubrette, and her mother, Mrs. G. W. Brown, were asphyxiated in bed last night, at 425 Golden Gate avenue, a boarding house kept by M. Schwartz and wife. The dead bodies of the unfortunate women were found this morning in bed with the room full of the fumes of illuminating gas. One of the keys nearest to the side of the bed on which Miss Warren lay was turned partly on. The fixtures were in bad order, the keys turning at the slightest touch.

Blanche Warren, as she was known on the stage, was the wife of W. M. Chapman, of Los Angeles. She had just completed an engagement which closed its season in Pittsburg on May 17, and she came to this state on May 27, engaging rooms at 425 Golden Gate avenue on May 31.

Property Loss Heavy

Chicago, June 7.—Hundreds of acres of flooded lands in the southwestern part of the city, streams swollen to the tops of the banks, two city bridges and several railroad bridges disabled and heavy property loss from flooded basements are among the results of the extremely heavy rainfall of the last two days. A full inch of water fell in one hour and a half this afternoon. The day before almost an inch fell, and

thus far this month the total precipitation has been so heavy that it is almost record-breaking for a week during the last twenty-five years.

At One Hundred and Sixty and One Hundred and Twentieth streets the bridges of the Calumet river are disabled. One other bridge is also badly damaged and it will be out of service for thirty days.

He is Dying Game

Port of Spain, Trinidad, June 4.—Gen. Matos has personally taken command of the Venezuelan revolution and was on June 1 at Urica, twenty leagues distant from Carupano, marching toward Caracas, with an army which some persons estimate at 5,200 and others at 7,500 men.

To believe, however, that he will reach the capital and take possession of the presidency without a deadly struggle would be an illusion. Gen. Castro is preparing to offer resistance and hopes to bar the invasion either in the plains of Carabobo or in the valley of the Tuy.

This is not the only direction in which the president's political horizon is menaced. Coro, Valencia and Barquisimeto are all more or less in the hands of the revolutionists. At Coro, Gens. Riera and Solagni have effected a junction and are absolute masters of the environs. Revolutionary troops enter the city of Valencia every night and as the town is no longer lighted, give themselves up to all sorts of reprisals. Even La Guayra, the port of Caracas, is attacked nightly by armed bands who on the night of May 27 killed the military chief of Maiquetia before his own door.

President Castro's political conduct leads to the belief that before his departure he will indulge in all sorts of extra arbitrary acts. He has lately suppressed the newspapers El Tiempo and La Linterna, arrested the manager of the Bank of Caracas, Mr. Castillo, imposed on the widow of the late Guzman Blanco a forced war contribution of one million and has arrested the president of congress Gen. Tosta Garcia, and the president of the Societe Francaise, M. de Ridgelo, a highly respected man, on a slight supposition. He also caused his faithful officer Gen. Davila, the vanquisher of El Mocho, to be arrested after a very violent scene at the palace of Mira Flores, during which Davila reproached him with his ingratitude.

Business is paralyzed and the banks are without specie. The Bank of Caracas, the capital of which is six million bolivars (a bolivar is equivalent to about 20 cents), has only 126,000 bolivars in its coffers, that is to say, about \$25,000.

Whatever may be the result of the revolution, Gen. Castro said to one of his intimate friends a few days ago:

"I shall show them that I am neither Andueza nor Andrade, whom they sent to La Guayra in a basket. If I leave my palace at Mira Flores it will be feet foremost."

Boycotts Meat

Chicago, May 25.—Mayor Harrison announced his intention of trying a vegetarian diet. A desire to reduce his weight induces him to boycott the Meat Trust. Meat, according to Mr. Harrison, has enlarged his girth until his tailor makes him blush.

He decided on a change of diet after he had held a conference with Herr Van Chapman, of the Royal Vegetarian college of Amsterdam. Mr. Chapman came with a note of introduction from the Netherlands consul.

"And you have never eaten meat?" inquired the mayor as he admired his caller's lithe build.

"Never, sir; not even when a child," came the response.

"And you find nourishment in the beet, the bean and the apple?"

"I am so fond of beets that I frequently eat naught else for a week."

"Then I shall give your theories a good trial. Oh, I want to get thin."

Boggs—I hear you have fallen out with your sweetheart.

Joggs—Yes. She got an idea into her head that I was angry with her, and it made me angry to have her think I was unreasonable enough to get angry at her.—Chicago News,

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