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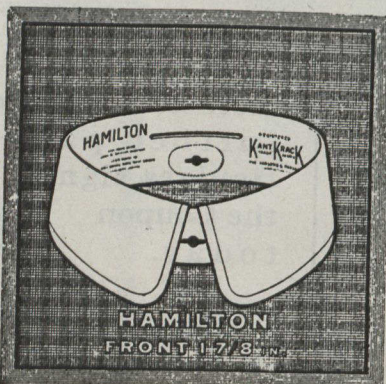
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that never returns?" asked Prince, overjoyed at finding a society girl who could talk intelligently on subjects other than the tango.

"Hyperbola? That's too erratic for consideration. A mind travelling in such a path leaves experience behind and so may make the same errors along its whole course. The beauty of a spiral development is that one's mind is continually coming close enough to one's past to perceive its ethical value. Now, that first meeting of ours, which you have so ungraciously forgotten, whenever my mind swings round to that, my sense of humor receives a new impulse," and again she laughed.

"Fair lady, you puzzle, bewilder and fascinate. This is the most unique conversation that ever gladdened my ears at a dance. You have a mind far above the usual, and you may succeed in your attempts to fly high—but it would really be refreshing to find one single college girl who put into practical working some of the knowledge she has imbibed. The world would be far more benefitted than by anything she might write. For instance, it was only this morning that I had occasion to go, on a little business, into the cellar of a house in this town. I found a stupid, humped-over Hungarian simply flinging ashes all over the place. I called her 'Cinderella,' but of course she did not understand ('Oh, didn't she?' said Lu, to herself). So you see you are the second Cinderella I have met to-day—but what a contrast!" Lu laughed.

"Maybe your stupid Hungarian would look as fine as I if her fairy-godmother waved her wand."

"Hardly. That stupid creature could never by the wildest stretch of imagination look as you do now. But she might be trained to some degree of efficiency if her mistress would give her mind to it. The college-bred daughter, if there is one in that house, was probably lolling about reading trashy novels. She would think it beneath her to try to run a house on a scientific basis. But how absurd to speak to Cinderella of such prosaic things! Let us talk of fairy circles and spirals. I could sit in this lovely spot with you forever—"

But Lu was again at her trick of laughing. She said:

"You know I have to vanish at twelve, so please let us once more trace some circles and spirals on Mrs. Weston's floor."

True to her part, Cinderella left at midnight, still refusing to unmask. Prince escorted her to her auto, Mrs. Weston having played the part of fairy godmother by placing her limousine at Lu's service. As he handed her in, Prince said, slyly:

"Where shall I tell the chauffeur?"

"Oh, he knows! Don't you, Denton?"

"Yes, Miss Lu," replied the man, who had known her since she was a ten year old child playing about with the Weston girls.

"Good-bye, Prince," and, still laughing, Lu rolled rapidly away.

Turning to re-enter, Prince spied an oblong, black object lying on the newly fallen snow. He picked it up. It was a rubber—number six!

"Jove! That's no Cinderella slipper, but it's hers!" He carried it up the steps, and, examining it under the light, found inside the initials "L. E. A." "Lu E. A. That ought to make it easy. The list of guests will be in to-morrow afternoon's paper—but I'll go ask Mrs. Weston at once who Cinderella is." He crowded the "slipper" into his breast pocket, where it made a beautiful bulge in the figure of the Marquis de La Fayette, and then he sought his hostess. But Mrs. Weston answered his query with:

"If she would not reveal her identity, you may be sure I shall not. You'll have to use your wits to come out even with this Cinderella."

Van Dieu Prince had an excellent outfit of wits, but he had no need to deplete that generous supply, nor even to wait for the afternoon paper's advent, for, unromantic as it may seem, Lu's identity and certain of her traits were revealed to him at noon the next day, through the medium of two workmen. These two men were eating their lunch as they sat on the steps leading from the main floor of the Public Service Corporation to the basement. Prince was about to close his desk, near the head of these steps, preparatory to going out for lunch.

The two men talked seemingly regardless whether he heard or not.

"I sure do like to go to Ashton's on Lafayette Avenue. What do you think that young lady, just out of college, did this morning?"

"Dunno! Something cantankerous, I'll bet."

"When I came up from the Ashton's cellar after turning on the water—I'd been putting washers on every faucet in the house—she was in the kitchen. She'd been makin' a lot of little cakes, each with a dab of white on top, and a nut on top of the dab. My hands and face were about as clean as mud. The young lady takes up a cake and standin' in front of me, she says, as if I was a two-year-old kid: 'Open little moufie.' And she feeds

me that cake with her own dainty fingers, laughing all the time! When anybody 'pretty's up' to me like that, she can have me, all right!"

"Say, Bill, you must be a dum sight more attractive than me. That young lady didn't feed me no cookies. She give me Hail Columbus, cause my nose didn't suit her—said there wasn't a nose in the Public Service Corporation that was worth a cent—we'd ought to have our adenoids cut out. Said she was running that house on scientific principles and all leaks must be stopped. I told her meters allus smelled more or less, but she sarsed me somethin' awful! I wouldn't go there again, not if she was fixatin' wid gas!"

"Aw, you don't know how to get on with the ee-lite. Miss Ashton told me all about how she was puttin' her college education to practical use—she's shunted the ignorant Hank that was worken' for 'em and she's havin' loads of fun doin' all the housework for her mother and gettin' the money for it. I tell you, Jim, you got to humor these highly educated folks in their eccentricities—show a little interest into 'em, and they'll eat out of your hand!"

"But 'twas you et out o' her hand, I notice," said Jim.

Prince seized his hat and overcoat hanging near, and got outdoors as rapidly as possible. He was convulsed with laughter—filled with amazement and amusement at what he had heard revealed. That was where he had heard her voice, Cinderella's, over the 'phone, asking for a real nose. Lu E. Ashton! What a soft, pretty name! And she was doing housework—Applied Domestic Science and Physical Culture—post-graduate course! No wonder she had laughed so much last night at so many things he had said. Suddenly he paused in his rapid walk as he thought:

"But I've never met a Miss Lu Ashton I suppose she's one of the numerous girls I've been introduced to here, and I'll recall her face as soon as I see it without the mask. At least I know were to find the foot that fits the rubber—247 Lafayette Avenue—that's why she laughed at my being the Marquis, I suppose. Well, Miss Cinderella Ashton, you have certainly got me more interested in your charming self than I've ever been in any other girl." And he stepped vigorously along Main Street through the falling snow to the restaurant, cogitating some original way of returning that number six rubber. With a bunch of rare flowers? No—that was too tamely conventional. It was while he sat munching a stalk of celery that a grin of amusement suddenly spread over his face. What more appropriate accompaniment for the sign of a "large understanding" than a big bunch of fine celery? It would appeal to her sense of humor, which he had already done so much, though quite unintentionally, to develop. But he did not send the celery.

He stopped in a grocery to secure it, on his way back to the office.

There was only one customer in the store, for Lu, in accordance with her method of never wasting a minute, did her marketing at 1.15, a time when she was sure of instant attention.

Van Dieu Prince glanced indifferently at the girl who was standing with her face the other way, selecting vegetables. But his heart leaped and he almost sat down in a box of prunes as he heard the familiar musical voice:

"I'll have this beautiful celery."

He spoke suddenly:

"How do you do, Miss Ashton?"

Lu turned. A glorious flush spread over her bright face—her eyes fairly flashed sparks of fun, but before she could speak, Prince, seeing a face he could not recall, apologized in puzzled confusion and disappointment, for it was a very charming face.

"I beg your pardon—I was sure you were Miss Ashton."

"I'm quite sure of it, too. How is the Marquis de La Fayette after last night's seance with Cinderella?"

"The Prince is puzzled to death by his inability to recall when and where he first met Cinderella, and he refuses to return her—er—sandal, which he found in the snow, until she reveals the mystery," said Van Dieu, joyously entering into her spirit.

"Since the Prince has been so successful in discovering Cinderella's name, he can surely solve the other problem. Good afternoon, your highness!" and Lu tripped out, all blushes and mischievous smiles.

But it was a full month before Prince solved it—a month of many meetings with Cinderella, resulting in much love of Cinderella, who toyed with her Prince skilfully, and tossed his heart lightly to and fro, saying she would never dare give her love to a man on whom the first sight of her had made so slight an impression. Meaning all the time, of course, to accept him as soon as she had her fill of scientific management. And that time was near.

At seven o'clock one morning, on arriving in the kitchen, Cinderella, scientific manager, met a flood—down from the ceiling rained water that spouted up

(Concluded on page 30)