

## THE BOY OF THE PERIOD

### Chooses His Loves From Picture Post Cards.

By A. Leverton.

Not long ago Eric suddenly sprang on me the information that, if he could not marry Miss Violet Vanblue, he would jolly well remain a bachelor.

I was distressed at the news. Eric is a great friend of mine; and eleven is young to take so stern a resolution. As gently as possible I told him that I feared his ambition could not be realized, as the eminent actress in question is already married to Mr. Arthur Voucher, the equally eminent actor.

He took it, as the modern boy takes these blows, without a word—without the slightest change of expression. He is always outwardly impassive, and generally has an air of self-restraint slightly out of proportion to the occasion. He went into the garden with a wooden pistol.

Knowing it was loaded (with damp "caps") I had no fears of a rash act. When he came into tea I said, "What have you been doing, Eric?"

"Snail-shooting. There's nothing like sport to make you forget a woman."

After tea—I noticed he took rather more jam than usual, but it seemed to have no effect on him—he leant back in his chair, took out a packet of chocolate cigarettes (best penny-in-the-slot brand, Americans), and said:

"Well! All I can say is, I hope she's happy!"

I reassured him.

"Mind you, if she likes Voucher, that's her business. Isn't it?"

"Undoubtedly," I said, gravely.

"And, after all, what does it matter? I don't care. You women are all alike!"

"Oh, don't be cynical, Eric," I said, pained at his reckless tone. "Don't let it make you hard on us, dear. Besides, that's nonsense! Women aren't all alike. They're all different."

"Are they? Well, perhaps you know. You seem to know a lot. Fancy you knowing she was . . ."

The case of Eric may be an extreme one. But it is not uncommon. Boys are not what they were.

I sat through an enormously long orchestral concert next to an Eton boy of fourteen, who had offered to escort me. He never "turned a hair" or "moved a muscle"; he hardly changed his position during two hours, except to pass the programme. Yet his face expressed little joy in the music, only calm, polite, tolerant interest.

I said, "Are you fond of music, Claude?"

"Yes, I like music all right, thanks."

"Who are your favorite composers?"

He glanced at the programme.

"Oh, Paul Rubens, I think. Wagner's all right, too."

He did not know one note from another.

I have had the honor of being confidante to my brother Savile, who is sixteen. He is, of course, still easier to talk to, as he is older, and we have great fun. For me he removes his mask of cool politeness at times. The other day he confronted me with the following problem:

"I say, I've got a rather awful trouble. What is a chap to do when—?"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Well, it's like this. If a chap—say a chap has a girl, say; awfully keen on him, and he is frightfully keen on another girl who is awfully keen on another chap—a tremendously decent chap, mind you. What's he to do?"

"What's who to do?"

"Why, the chap! Me, you know!"

"Do explain more clearly!"

"Well, this is how I stand. Last holidays I proposed to Dolly Clive—in the square, you know. She accepted me. Very well. This holidays I've gone and fallen in love with another girl—the real thing, you know—but she doesn't care much for me; and I don't care for Dolly. What's a fellow to do?"

"I should break it off with Dolly. It might interfere with her lessons—and

her mother wants her to go in for those physical exercises—what are they called?—in her holidays."

"I know. Swedenborgian, you mean. I hate 'em. Yes. Well, mind you. I left Dolly perfectly free—I mean it was fixed up that if she met a man she liked better when she's out, she's to chuck me—not but what I jolly well intended to punch his head—but there it was. Well, say it's off with Dolly. How does that help? About the other?"

"Who's the other girl?"

"Not exactly a girl, you know. But—oh! the way she sings 'Comin' Through the Rye!' Rippin's the only word for it."

"Savile! I hope she's not married."

"Well, I like her all the same."

"Oh, Savile!"

"Well, I do. It's only a sort of—"

"Distant worship?"

"That's it," said Savile, nodding.

"I suppose the Dolly affair was only a boy-and-girl affection," I observed;

"but this—this is going to last, eh?"

"By Jove, you are clever! You've hit it in 'nce, old girl!"

"Well," I said, considering. "You can't see much of her. I don't see what you can do. I should leave it as it is."

He nodded.

"How long has this been going on. How many concerts have you been to?"

I asked.

"Only one. A charity concert, in the season. Lady May took me—don't you remember? And that's where it happened."

"Then it is—?"

"Yes. Adelina Patti."

"You're just like papa, Savile! Papa was madly in love with her at your age."

"At my age!" said Savile, turning away contemptuously. "What did a man like papa know of love at my age!"

And he went—I suppose—to break it off with Dolly.

### HOSPITABLE.

"Well, doctor, how did you enjoy your African journey? How did you like the savages?"

"Oh, they are very kind-hearted people; they wanted to keep me there for dinner."—*Fliegende Blätter.*

### SCENE IN A STREET CAR.

Every seat was occupied when a woman with a baby in her arms entered, followed by a stout German. An American rises to give his seat to the woman, but the German with great presence of mind gets into it first.

Americus—Here, you big loafer, I gave that seat to this lady.

Germanicus—Dot's all right; you got up von dot seat an I take him.

Americus—Haven't you a wife and children of your own?

Germanicus—You bet, a wife and nine children, and ven I vant to sit down dey stand up, I bet you.—*America.*

### THANKS, AWFULLY.

She (to gentleman who has fallen on the ballroom floor)—I hope you are not hurt, Mr. Bounder. Pray let me help

He—Thanks; but I would rather sit this dance out. I am very comfortable where I am; besides, I am tired—*July*

### HELEN'S LETTER.

Helen's aunt was leaving and stopped to kiss her good-bye.

"Oh, auntie," the child exclaimed, the big brown eyes filling with tears, "I wish you didn't have to go. When are you coming again?"

"Why, I'm coming back soon, dear," her aunt replied, cheerfully, smiling down at the up-turned face, "very, very soon."

Two days later she received the following letter:

"Dear auntie:

"I am gladd you are comein bak soe soon but I wish you wer comein sooner.

"True lovein neese,

"HELEN DELL."



GENERAL

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