

Cupid and Psyche fountain on the south lawn. Workmen were called in to examine it, and poking about in the waste pipe they came across a mass of wet correspondence, which was conveyed to headquarters and examined. The notes were all signed C. G. B., and were worded somewhat after this fashion—

"My Heart's Darling,—Cruel, cruel girl! I rode out last night as usual and waited quite two hours for you at the gate. Were you ill that you did not come? I know you love me in spite of this cruel opposition. You do, darling, don't you? So come out to-night and convince your true and faithful lover. C.G.B."

As soon as Lady Dives had mastered the contents of each document she remembered her daughter's curious habit of retiring every evening, and realised that "the gate" referred to must be the wicket gate in the lane behind the house.

The "Divinity's" bedroom was in a corridor, which possessed a door opening into the garden; so, putting two and two together she interviewed that young lady. Moreover, she locked the door at the end of the corridor at sun-down every evening and kept the key in her own pocket. But love laughs at locksmiths, and after that the letters were hidden in a fresh place.

About this time, to our amazement, Mr. C. G. Bassidge, who before had declined every invitation he received, suddenly became a great votary of fashion, religiously attending every society gathering in the hope I suppose, of meeting with his lady love. The consequence was that Sir John, Lady and Miss Dives were invariably conspicuous by their absence. Every day the warfare grew more and more bitter, and we outsiders wondered how it all would end. As might be expected, public sympathy was entirely with the lovers, and to my knowledge, Mr. Charles Grenville Bassidge had more than one offer of assistance.

At this juncture Sir John and his lady contemplated a master stroke, and announced immediate departure in the "Ormuz" for England, in order, they said, that their daughter might be presented at the next Drawing-room.

A stroke of luck favoured the lovers, for just a week previous to the boat's sailing Miss Dives came of age. Some one sent her an anonymous box of Neapolitan violets, and I believe she valued it more than all the costly presents of her family, inasmuch as within the bunch was a tiny note, on the contents of which she acted.

Bassidge had given no trouble for nearly a fortnight, and her ladyship began to flatter herself that she had at last defeated him. I must leave you to judge whether or not such was the case.

In view of their trip to England, the "Divinity" had ordered a travelling dress of superlative texture and neatness, and in order that it might fit as never dress fitted before it was necessary that she should have it most carefully tried on.

For this purpose, on the morning following her birthday, she drove to her tailor's place of business, and after instructing the coachman to keep the horses moving, entered the shop.

The dress having been fitted to her satisfaction, she watched her opportunity, and, as the carriage was going up the street, she strolled quietly out of the shop and down the street in the opposite direction.

On reaching the General Post Office she chanced upon Mr. Bassidge, and after a moment's conversation they entered a hansom together and drove rapidly away.

Her own coachman moved up and down till sundown and then went home to report the curious behaviour of his young mistress. He received his discharge upon the spot, and has been wondering the reason why ever since.

Lady Dives was beside herself with rage, and consequently Sir John was furious, and a penitent note which arrived next morning, signed "Gwendoline Bassidge," only made them the more vehemently declare that

neither she nor her husband should ever set foot within their doors again.

This was, of course, very unpleasant for the "Divinity," for, in spite of their cruel opposition she was really very fond of her parents. At the same time she was convinced that her Charley was the best, the cleverest, the handsomest, as well as the wisest man in existence, and had only to be known to be appreciated by everyone.

That young gentleman, though perfectly aware that he was many degrees removed from what she thought him, began to look upon himself as rather a fine fellow. He was also quite sure that he had a scheme which would bring the old people to their senses in no time when so desired. His past was going to prove useful after all. However, he was wise enough not to let his wife into the secret just then.

They spent their honeymoon at Largs Bay, and their affection was strong enough to colour even those awful sandhills the loveliest of rosy hues.

On Tuesday the "Ormuz" steamed up to the anchorage, and early on Wednesday the young couple boarded her for England. They lay concealed all the morning in their cabin, and during that time Bassidge told his wife his secret.

An hour before sailing, Sir John and Lady Dives came on board, and at one o'clock the vessel weighed anchor and steamed down the gulf.

Lady Dives, after inspecting her cabin, examined the passenger list. Something she saw there must have pleased her, for she closed her pince-nez and took her husband's arm, murmuring, "Really, how very pleasant!" Then they strolled down the promenade deck together, and turning the corner of the smoking room were confronted by the two delinquents.

The "Divinity" looked surpassingly sweet in a white costume, fastened at the waist with a broad antique-silver buckle, a large white hat, and the daintiest of tan shoes imaginable. Even the graceless Bassidge looked the picture of honest English manliness.

The elder couple stood paralysed with rage and astonishment. All things considered it was really a most awkward meeting. Fortunately, however, no other passengers were present.

Lady Dives was the first to recover, and she addressed herself to her daughter—

"Oh, you wicked, wicked girl," she said, "How dare you play us this trick?"

The Graceless One interposed, and raising his hat politely to his mother-in-law, answered for his wife.

"Pardon me, Lady Dives," he said, "but before you say anything further perhaps you will allow me to introduce you to my wife!"

Then, bowing with the air of a court chamberlain, he continued, "Lady Dives—the Marchioness of Laverstock!"

"What!" cried his mother-in-law, stepping back as if thunderstruck. "What do you mean? Can this be true?"

"Certainly, mamma," answered her daughter, "though I only knew it myself this morning. Charley came to Australia because he was too poor to live in England, and rather than win his way by means of his title he dropped it, and was only known to us by his family name. A month ago he came into a lot of money, and now we are going home to revive the glories of the house."

I must leave you to imagine her ladyship's surrender. Sir John, of course, doesn't count.

Last week Lady Dives assured me in confidence that Sir John had altered his will in honour of "My son-in-law, the most noble the Marquis of Laverstock." I'm told they're a most united family now, but we can never forget how perilously near they once came to a serious breach. Such is the true story of the "Great Dives' Elopement."

