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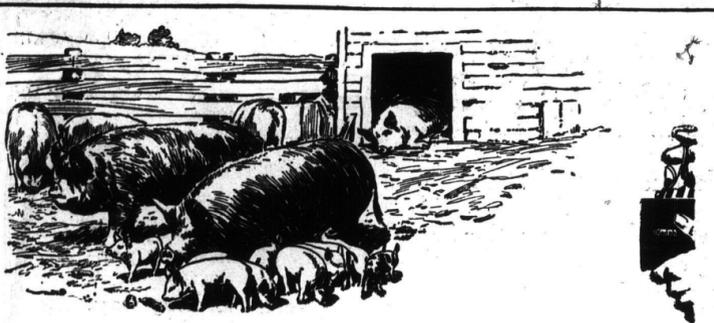
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## A Case for Diplomacy

By W. R. Gilbert

It was right on the main street, on a warm Saturday afternoon, that a climax suddenly developed itself in the love affairs of Mr. Horace Payne, clerk, and Miss Cissie Gregson, typist.

Mr. Payne came to a full stop in the middle of the sidewalk and gazed in sour reproach at Miss Gregson.

"Go on, say that again, that's all!"

"Oh, don't be silly!" she urged sharply. "Everyone's looking at you. Come along do!"

"Calls me 'silly' now," said Mr. Payne in shrill notes, addressing the world in general, "me—silly!"

"Got over yourself?" she queried pleasantly.

"Come down this side street," he said, "I've got something important to say to you."

With no visible sign of concern she accompanied him.

"Now then," he said impressively,

"there's got to be an end of this!"

"Just what I was thinking," she retorted.

"If we are to be married in less than six weeks' time, we ought to know how we stand. I won't be treated like this."

"Well, I like that!" said Miss Gregson.

"You come out in a bad temper and just



Lieut.-General Sir Percy Henry Noel Lake, New Commander of the British Forces at Mesopotamia.

Lieut.-General Sir Percy Henry Noel Lake, who has just succeeded General Sir John Nixon as commander of the British forces at Mesopotamia, has had a brilliant career in India and Egypt. He received a medal in the Afghan war of 1878-79, and also one in the Wolsley Nile Expedition of 1885. Later he went to reorganize the Canadian militia. He left Canada in 1911 to assume command of a division in India, but since 1912 he has been Chief of the General Staff in India.

"So you are," she retorted, "carrying on like that."

"Very well," he said stiffly. "Perhaps you would rather walk on alone."

"Much rather!" she snapped and, suiting action to the words, stepped briskly away.

Aghast at this unexpected independence Mr. Payne stared after her. When a dozen yards away she looked back at him.

Mr. Payne, to demonstrate his complete ease of mind, swung his cane jauntily and was speedily engaged in an altercation with a gentleman whose flow of language severely criticized Mr. Payne's probable character.

Mr. Payne made a few ineffective responses, shouldered his way through a grinning crowd, and hastened after Miss Gregson.

"There's got to be an end of this," muttered the ruffled Mr. Payne, as he hurried along. "I'm jolly well going to prove to Cissie that I'm boss before it's too late. Treating me as if I was a lump of dirt!"

He caught up with Miss Gregson at the window of the first milliner's shop.

because I won't agree with you in all you say, you make a silly of yourself."

"Oh, do I?" he queried, laboring under strong emotion.

"Yes, you do," she replied firmly.

"Silly, eh? Strikes me," he declared heatedly, "I made a silly of myself when I asked you to marry me."

Miss Gregson sniffed haughtily.

"That's soon remedied," she said icily, and began to take off a glove.

"Still, if you like to apologise—" he suggested, weakening a little.

Miss Gregson smiled amusedly at the idea of apologizing.

"That's right, laugh at me!" he bitterly exclaimed.

"I can't help it, you are so—so funny!"

"That's enough!" snapped Mr. Payne.

"The sooner we part, the better—only don't say I didn't give you a chance to apologise."

For answer the girl slipped a ring from off the third finger of her left hand and held it out.

"You don't seem much upset," he growled.