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Jungle Fever

By R. RAY BAKER

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An "M. D." was the cause of the rupture in relations. No, it was not a doctor; it was just those two initials.

Carrie Crothers wanted to put the letters to her name, and Austin Fredericks strongly opposed. Of course, the right to the initials would involve a course at college; but Carrie was prepared for that. Austin was not prepared. He wanted Carrie to settle down with him, and cook and sweep and do sundry other household duties.

But Carrie was willing—after she wrested a career from the world. When she had proved to herself and everybody else that she was capable of making her own way she would be content to give it all up and be plain Mrs. Fredericks, subtracting and discarding the "M. D."

"But that isn't reasonable, Carrie," he protested. "If you're so determined to do something, why don't you be a teacher? That won't take so long, and besides—well, anything but a woman doctor for me. It isn't their place—not by a long shot. Now, women make fine teachers, and I rather admire them, and think what a fine thing they are doing in educating the rising generation. Of course, you know I want you to get married right away, but I know your disposition enough to realize that you won't until you learn some kind of profession. But make a little concession to me and be a teacher. Give up this doctor idea. Women doctors are no good."

Carrie took umbrage at his attitude. Women doctors were just as good as the men variety, and a lot better in many cases, she contended, stamping her foot and growing red with anger. Did he mean to intimate that she could not be a good physician or anything else she chose to be? Very well, if that was all the faith he had in her, he might as well take his hat and coat and go, and he needn't come back unless it was on her terms. She'd show him whether a woman could be a successful doctor. Maybe some time he'd get down on his knees and beg for the services of a feminine physician.

Austin was desperate. He realized Carrie would not yield a point, and somehow he was bound to admire her for her ambition.

"By George!" he pondered. "I believe she will do it at that. But who wants a doctor for a wife? People would pass me on the street and remark: 'There goes Doctor Fredericks' husband.' That's all I would count for, because she'd change her mind about giving up practice, once she got her degree. I can't do it, that's all. I'll wait a few days and see if she won't change her mind, although I'm almost certain she'll stick to it."

He was hardly prepared for the swiftness with which things developed. His morning paper two days later made public the fact that "Miss Carrie Crothers, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Crothers, 853 Jefferson avenue, left last night for Ann Arbor, where she will take a six years' course in the study of medicine at the University of Michigan."

Austin was so dejected that he ate only one of the two doughnuts furnished him for breakfast at the arm-chair lunch and drank only half the coffee. He went around in a daze for three days, and was constantly afraid that, in his capacity as assistant teller at the bank, he might cash a cigar coupon for a hundred-dollar check or commit some equally tragic error.

In desperation he wrote her a special delivery letter, which came as near being a pleading nature as his rather proud spirit would permit.

The answer came the next day on a postcard:

"After six years. No sooner. Wait or not, as you see fit."

The reply and the manner of replying aroused Austin's wrath.

"She's going to show me, is she? Very well, I'll show her, too," he whispered vengefully to himself, and he went to the bank and resigned, after drawing out his savings account.

He was determined to go away. He had no idea what his destination would be, but it would be somewhere out of the civilized world, where he would try to forget and at the same time give Miss Carrie Crothers a good opportunity to think things over and come to her senses. At the end of a year, he decided, he would come back and see if things were different. It was going to be hard for him, but it would be harder to stay and "take her insults," as he put it in conversation with his aggrieved self.

By chance he picked up a newspaper which announced that Thomas Stevenson, the explorer, was preparing to sail in a week for Africa on a new expedition.

Austin's eyes brightened. Here was his chance. He had accompanied Stevenson on the latter's first exploring journey into the African wilds, and he would arrange to go with him this time. Invoking the aid of the telegraph, using as the address the name of Stevenson's favorite hotel in New York, Austin ascertained that he would be a welcome addition to the party.

The young man found the explorer packing up in his room. There was a hearty handshake and a brief exchange of words, and a week later Austin sailed with Stevenson and five others

for Durban, on the southeastern coast of the dark continent.

Arriving there they employed three Zulus and two Hottentots to make up the remainder of the expedition and do the work. Many weeks later found the party north of the Transvaal, through which they had passed, and shortly afterward they began exploring in earnest.

Austin understood well before going that it was a hazardous undertaking on which he had embarked, for the dangers from both disease and uncivilized natives, especially the Bushmen, were many and serious. However, he wanted excitement to occupy his mind.

The expedition continued for months, always heading northward, climbing over mountains and, passing through jungle regions. In many places wild beasts were to be reckoned with, and Austin's experience with the elephant rifle and other weapons stood him in good stead.

Stevenson wrote constantly concerning his observations. He said he was in quest of an undiscovered river, hoping to rival Roosevelt's feat in finding the River of Doubt, and he pushed on with few rests.

In the vicinity of the Zambesi river Austin was taken down with jungle fever, and Stevenson reluctantly detailed two of his Zulus to carry him back to the coast. The journey was long and laborious, but it finally was completed and Austin was taken into the home of a hospitable English settler in a small colony. Austin was out of his head most of the time, but at rare intervals he came out of the fever world and heard snatches of conversation, to which he sometimes replied, usually with an erratic remark.

During one of these near-lucid moments he heard a man's voice.

"He's got to have a doctor, and we'd better summon that woman who arrived here last month. They say she's a regular physician, although I've always been skeptical about the ability of a woman M. D. She's the only medic around here, though, so we'll have to have her."

"No woman doctor for mine!" shouted Austin, but, of course, his words bore no weight with the others.

After weeks of struggling with the fever, one morning Austin awoke to find himself back in the world. He felt weak, but otherwise no traces of the disease remained with him. He stared round in wonder at the strange walls that surrounded him. Slowly his memory came back; that is, the part which dealt with events up to the time the fever had got a strong hold on him.

Strange jabbering noises outside the window at his side attracted his attention and his eyes encountered a number of half-naked black children engaged in various grotesque forms of play.

"Well, how do you like it?" said a gentle voice at the other side of the bed.

"The woman doctor," he thought, recalling the words he had heard while in the throes of the fever. Turning his head slowly he looked into the pale blue eyes of Carrie Crothers.

"You!" he ejaculated. He was too astonished to articulate any further words for a moment, but mechanically he reached out his hand and took the small one extended toward him.

"Then—then you brought me out of this," he finally said. "You're the lady doctor!"

She smiled, captured a vagrant strand of brown hair and replied, with eyes sparkling in a strange way:

"No; the lady doctor is Elsie Shaw, an elderly woman, and she brought you out of this. But of course I helped nurse you when I could find the time. You see, I'm pretty busy."

She pointed out the window.

"Those black youngsters keep me pretty well occupied," she went on. "You see, I'm a teacher in the mission school, and they are the rising generation."

Round Towers in the West.

Those who venture into the West of the United States in these days are often puzzled by the number of round towers that at times throw very lengthy shadows across the landscape. There is always more or less guessing at the windows of passenger coaches as to the name and purpose of these structures. Most of them have greater circumference, and some seem to have greater height than the famous round towers of Ireland. They are silos, so called because they are employed for the preservation of ensilage or fodder crops at their green stage. There are possibilities in barn and silo combinations which will some day, we believe, be developed by the skillful architect. Even now departures from the crude and conventional are visible in many parts of the Indian corn belt.

London's Ugliest Church.

Charing Cross is by common consent London's ugliest bridge; do you know which is her ugliest church? It dominates Smith's square, Westminster, and Canon Wilberforce was vicar for many years. The story of its origin is that Queen Anne wanted a church built hereabout and ordered an architect to prepare the design. When the plans were brought for her approval she disliked them so much that she tore them into shreds, threw them at the artist's head, and kicked over a footstool in her rage. "There," she said, pointing to the overturned footstool, "build me a church like that." The terrified man took her at her word, and the result we see.—London Chronicle.

Way of the Henpecked.

Wills—"Bump claims to be a very strong-minded man." Gillis—"That's right. When Bump tells his wife to do a thing he does it."—Life.

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