

FRIENDSHIPS and ENMITIES

(Continued From Page 94)

selling or buying a horse advantageously.

"You can have him for cat's-meat price," said Mr. Barnes. "I warn you that he's lame and likely to remain so. Give me £12 and you can take him away with you."

The gipsy examined the pony, suggested thirty shillings, and was finally worked up to £2, though he said despondently that he was afraid he'd made a bad deal.

Mr. Barnes consulted his solicitor on the following day. There was no warranty. Mr. Dinlees's record was extremely bad. It was practically certain that the gipsy would not have offered £2 for the beast if he had not believed the lameness to be curable. Acting under advice, Mr. Barnes decided not to invoke the aid of the law, but he wrote a very bitter letter to his old friend, beginning "Dear Mr. Robertson." Mr. Robertson replied with a few lines of pure Angostura, beginning "Dear Sir." Mr. Robertson was therefore, on the accepted rules of quarrels, one up.

And after that the two men did not speak for five years.

The results, which were a little complicated, may be tabulated as follows:

1. Mr. Barnes and Mr. Robertson did not speak and did not recognise one another when they met, and no invitations from one couple to the other were issued.

2. Mr. Barnes always took off his hat when he met Annie Robertson and was rewarded with a slight bow. Mr. Robertson did the same thing when he met Lucy Barnes and was similarly rewarded. You see, they were both of them perfect gentlemen. I ought to have made this much more clear than I have done.

3. Lucy Barnes and Annie Robertson, having no quarrel whatever with each other and being mutually satisfied that men were so silly, laughed and chatted when they met. They were also not averse to tea and bridge at each other's houses at afternoons when their husbands were safely away at business.

A fortnight after the break between the two friends, Mr. Robertson met that pony being driven along the road by a man of the name of Lovell. The pony was going very well indeed—rather better, in fact, than it cared about going. Mr. Robertson stopped the gipsy and asked him what he wanted for the animal. The gipsy said he did not want to sell him, and nothing under £15 would tempt him anyhow.

This gave the sardonic Mr. Robertson a very nice story to tell, and he told it frequently, concluding "and now we've only got to wait till George Barnes brings out his book 'All About Horses.'"

II

At the end of the five years Mr. Robertson was engaged one day in his garden doing things to the roses which would probably break his

gardener's heart, when his wife came down the path towards him. There were tears in her eyes.

"James," she said. "Did you know that Mr. Barnes was ill?"

"Well, I've not had the misfortune to see him at the station lately. I did notice this morning they'd got the straw down in the road in front of the house, but of course that might have been for anybody."

"He's very ill indeed, James. They think he's dying. Lucy Barnes has just been here with a message for you. She said that George feels he would very much like, in consideration of your many years of friendship, to make it up with you again before he goes."

"Oh," said James. "Well in that case—what do you think about it yourself?"

"What I told Lucy was that I

LANES IS BEST

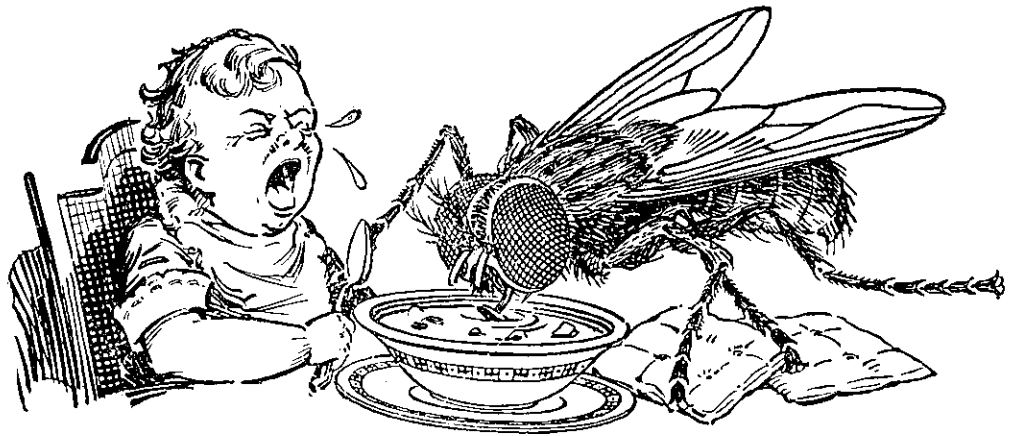
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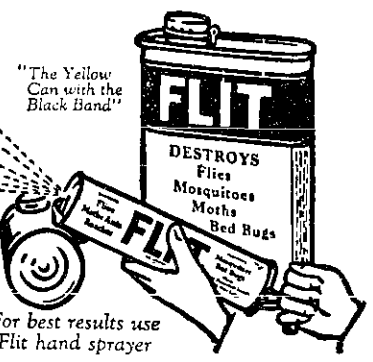
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