

# Ladies' STORY Column.

## FLOSSIE'S BRAVERY.

BY MRS E. BURKE COLLINS.



NE cannot help admiring bravery—a truly brave and fearless nature. If I ever marry, "the not impossible she" must be a brave lady. None of your silly, affected, bread-and-butter misses for me. I could not love a cowardly nature, but one that is strong, bright, and brave—an—

"Anonally, Herbert Wylie, you are a dreamer. Women are not prone to be brave and all the rest of it, and heroines such as you describe are not found every day. Give it up, my dear boy. If you wait for this very "impossible she" you will doom yourself to a lonely old bachelor's existence. That's my opinion."

And Arthur Way proceeded to light a cigar, while his friend, Herbert Wylie, unfolded the morning paper, and began to glance indifferently over the freshly-printed pages.

Two strikingly handsome young men were they—boon companions and warm friends, while his friend was dark and grave of feature, while his friend was fair, with golden-brown hair and moustache. Herbert had just arrived upon a visit at the Way farm—a large and valuable stock farm. It was Herbert's first visit since his boyhood, and the two friends were anticipating all sorts of pleasures in each other's society. The farm lay on the outskirts of quite a flourishing town—a small city, in fact, and there was no lack of amusement. The Way household consisted of Arthur Way and an only sister.

"I can't help your opinions, my dear Art," observed Wylie, glancing up from the paper all at once. "I am in real, sober earnest, though you do not seem to believe me. I am tired of these nobby-pamby girls who scream at the sight of a spider, and go into spasms over an unfortunate little mouse. I want a wife with a stronger mind; but none of your woman's rights, blue stockings, spectacles, and short hair for me. In fact, I suppose I shall never realize my dreams, or meet my imaginary divinity."

And he sighed dolorously. Arthur Way laughed aloud. "Then, I suppose you wouldn't care a straw for Flossie?" he observed. "She is a perfect little blue—"

A terrific crash in the adjoining room startled the young men and put an end to the conversation. Arthur hastily entered the apartment, where he remained an unconscionable time. Then he returned to where Herbert sat comfortably reading and smoking. If there was a mischievous twinkle in Arthur's blue eyes, his friend did not observe it; and how was he to know that there had been a plot laid during Arthur's absence.

"Cats" was Arthur's laconic explanation of the tumult which had called him away. He seated himself once more and turned the conversation immediately back in its old channel. "No you want to marry a strong-minded woman, eh, my boy? Well, I prophesy that you will marry the very reverse."

"I will never do it," warned. "I do not mean that I prefer a strong-minded woman in the usual sense of the term. One thing sure, I will never fall in love with a "clingy vine"—a silly, sentimental school-girl. Arthur, who is that?" glancing as he spoke from the open window at his side into the cool, fragrant grounds, where a graceful figure had just come in sight—a beautiful young woman attired in a soft white gown with a basket of roses on her arm. She was gathering flowers and singing softly to herself as she went. Arthur Way's eyes twinkled once more.

"She?" Oh, that is my sister Flossie; but you will never fall in love with her, Herbert, much as I should like to have you for a brother-in-law."

"Why?" eagerly, excitedly, the cigar which he had just lighted tossed into the empty grate as he spoke.

"Because she will not fill your bill; she is anything but strong-minded. I have known her to shriek like a Comanche chief in his war paint at a spider; and one day coming into the kitchen, I found her actually perched on top of the table, holding her breath in unfeigned horror because she had seen a small mouse capering across the kitchen floor. "Had seen," I say, for the poor little wretch was half a mile off, I suppose, before Flossie could be induced to come down from her perch on the table. Oh, no! Flossie will never do for you; and I must say, Bert, I have dreamed lots of nice, romantic dreams about you and Floss falling in love with each other. What in the world are you staring at?"

For all during this baragone Herbert Wylie's eyes had been fastened upon that graceful figure in the white gown and big sun-hat, with the roses all about her.

"Are you never going to present me?" he cried, stilling a laugh. Arthur led the way through the long window out into the grounds.

Two minutes later Mr Herbert Wylie had been presented to Miss Flossie Way, and the mischief was done. She was the loveliest little creature whom Herbert had ever met—a perfect blonde, with a crinkling mass of golden hair, and pearly-blue eyes—almost black beneath the shadow of the long golden-brown lashes. Graceful as well as beautiful, there was a nameless charm about her that made the young man's heart thrill in his breast whenever her beautiful eyes met his own. Yet remembering Arthur's remark in regard to Miss Flossie's lack of wisdom as well as heroism, the young man studiously avoided all reference to abstruse topics, scarcely ventured to discuss books and authors, and only then did he touch upon the very lightest of novel-nere froth.

Miss Flossie said little, but there was a demure look upon her face all the time, and Herbert never dreamed that there was a conspiracy against him.

The very first day of their acquaintance Herbert was treated to a succession of proofs which ought to have satisfied any man that the young lady was not different from the rest of her sex as represented by the silly school girls already frowned down by Mr Herbert Wylie. Flossie was really and unfeignedly frightened half out of her wits by a twal which ran across her foot while standing in the garden walk with Mr Wylie, and a spider discovered upon the filmy white skirt of her evening dress that evening, when they all sat out in the porch watching the moon rise,

created great havoc, Miss Flossie shrieking wildly and executing a war-dance until the unfortunate insect was safely removed.

Every night of her life it was Flossie's custom, as house-keeper, to make a regular tour of the house, to see that every door and window was secured and several times during Herbert's visit she aroused the household with a false alarm of burglars.

In short, Flossie Way was a perfect little coward; it did not require much penetration to arrive at that conclusion.

Yet, an awful thing had happened to Herbert Wylie. He awoke one day to the terrible truth—he was desperately in love with Flossie; his heart gone forever into her keeping—this silly, shrieking school-girl, who was afraid of her own shadow! He smiled grimly at the thought.

"I should be ashamed of such a silly little wife!" he decided, sternly; "and yet, oh, heavens! how bewitching she is! Of all the ladies of my acquaintance—and their name is legion—there is none to begin to compare with her!" And at last the end came. He was out riding one day with Flossie. She, with her characteristic timidity, rode a gentle, slow old horse, while Herbert had mounted the most fiery steed in the Way stable. Something frightened the animal, and it started off like a mad creature, dashed into a belt of woodland, and threw its rider upon a pile of stones which lay at the roadside. When Flossie, urging her own horse into its fastest pace, arrived at the scene, he lay there pale and insensible.

Dismounting from her horse without a word, the girl bent over the prostrate form. Her lips trembled; she was pale as death.

"I must help him!" she murmured, wildly. "Poor Herbert! he thinks me a cowardly little fool. Now is the time to a swift the truth."

A swift examination, such as a practised physician might have made, revealed the fact that his right arm was badly fractured. With swift, deft fingers she tore up her own handkerchief and his, and speedily bandaged the arm, doing all that could be done without help. Then she bathed his brow and restored him to consciousness.

Fancy Herbert's astonishment to find his injuries attended to by the cowardly little creature who was moving about him now like a real physician. But Herbert had more wonderful truths yet to learn.

Flossie had found a conveyance in which to carry him back to her brother's house, and he was soon placed in bed and the old family physician summoned.

To Herbert's intense surprise, Miss Flossie proved an expert assistant.

"Oh, yes!" cried old Doctor Holden, smiling at the young man's astonishment, "Flossie Way is a medical student. She has studied under me for a year or two now, and is a splendid surgeon for a beginner. A trifle nervous by nature; but when there is work—real work like this—before her, she becomes as cool as an icicle, and never breaks down."

"But," interposed Herbert, "she is so young!"

"True; she is not much over twenty-two; but she is a brave little woman, and has already done much good out here in the country, nursing the sick and assisting me. She will soon be ready for a diploma. She has also contributed several very able articles to a medical journal. She is going to be one of the intellectual lights of the day."

"I never dreamed of such a thing," murmured Herbert. "I thought her just like other women."

The good old doctor laughed aloud.

"Well, to be sure she is. And, I tell you, Wylie, if I were young and could win her, Flossie Way is the girl who would be my wife."

And before Herbert Wylie had recovered from his injury—nursed all the time by Flossie, in conjunction with the old housekeeper—he had asked a certain question, to which the girl whom he had found to be so self-reliant and brave, with the truest kind of bravery, blushing answered yes.

## MARIE ANTOINETTE'S LOVE OF JEWELLERY.



MARIE ANTOINETTE, a bride, young and beautiful, was naturally very fond of dress.

Cardinal Rohan, a profligate, luxurious, and dignitary of the church, by enormous extravagance had become inextricably involved in debt. He had lost favour at court, and loitered around the salons at Versailles, watching for an opportunity to regain it. At the same time there was at Versailles a very and beautiful fascinating, though thoroughly unprincipled woman, the Countess Lamotte.

The jewellery of the Queen was quite ample. She had brought from Vienna a large number of pearls and diamonds. As Queen of France she inherited all the crown jewels of the kingdom. In addition to these her royal husband, Louis XVI., had presented her with a set of rubies and diamonds, and a pair of bracelets, which cost £8,000. Still the Queen's thirst for gems was not satisfied. Boehmer, the crown jeweller, had collected six pear-formed diamonds of prodigious size. He offered them, set as earrings, to the Queen for £16,000. The Queen could not resist the temptation, though, as a matter of special economy, she removed two of the gems and replaced them by two of her own, engaging to pay for the jewels, thus arranged, £12,500, in equal instalments, for six years, from her private purse. She now turned her mind to collecting the most magnificent necklace of diamonds in the world. Wherever he could hear of a large and beautiful gem, he negotiated for it.

At length the magnificent string of the costliest diamonds to be purchased in Europe was complete. The glittering bauble, which became famous as 'The Diamond Necklace,' was exhibited to the Queen, and offered to her for £50,000. The king, a man of no common sense, and at that time exceedingly attached to his wife, was anxious that she should possess the ornament, and yet the treasury was so bankrupt that he could not put his hands upon the money. The rings of the storms of the French Revolution were also then beginning to be felt, and the whole nation was clamouring against the extravagance of the court. The Queen, having far more vigour of mind than her husband, felt that the purchase would expose her to measureless censure, and reluctantly declined the offer, stating, for public effect:

"We have more need of ships than of diamonds." Boehmer was in consternation. He was raised if he could not find a purchaser, and none but those possessing regal wealth could be expected to indulge in such a luxury.

The queen was interested in the unfortunate man's trouble, and, through Madame Campan, inquired what disposition he had made of the necklace. He said that the grand sultan of Constantinople had purchased it for the favourite sultana. The queen expressed much gratification that Boehmer had been extricated from his troubles. Soon after this, Marie Antoinette's infant son was baptized. The king purchased of Boehmer, as a baptismal present for the child, a diamond epaulette and buckles. As the crown jeweller delivered them to the queen, he slipped into her hands a petition, containing the following sentence: "I am happy to see your majesty in possession of the finest diamonds in Europe; and I entreat your majesty not to forget me."

"What does the man mean?" said the queen, as she read this note. "He must be insane."

A few days after, Boehmer called upon Madame Campan, and anxiously inquired if she had no commission for him from the queen, adding:

"To whom must I apply for an answer to the letter I presented her?"

"To no one," Madame Campan replied; "Her Majesty could not comprehend its meaning."

"That is impossible," said the man trembling; "the Queen knows that she owes me £50,000 for the necklace."

"Man, you are crazy," said Madame Campan; "did you not tell me yourself that you had sold it at Constantinople?"

"The Queen requested me," he replied, "to state that to all who inquired upon the subject, as she did not wish to have it known that she had made the purchase. Cardinal Rohan took the necklace in her name. I have all the promissory notes signed by the Queen."

"It is a detestable plot," said Madame Campan.

The poor man, delirious with fright, hastened to the cardinal. Rohan seemed much embarrassed, and was disposed to say nothing. He then hastened to the Queen, who was at the Little Trianon. She was very much alarmed, and told the story to the King. He immediately sent for the cardinal. Rohan said, trembling in every nerve, that the Countess Lamotte had brought him a letter from the Queen, requesting him to purchase the diamonds for her, and that he had done so, supposing that he was being of service to the Queen.

"How could you suppose," said the Queen, "that I should have selected you for such a purpose, that I could have employed such a character as the Countess Lamotte?"

"I see that I have been duped," he said, and drew from his pocket a letter directed to the Countess Lamotte, and signed in the name of the Queen.

Still there were circumstances which exposed the cardinal very strongly to the suspicion of having been an accomplice in the fraud. He was arrested, and his trial, though various interruptions, continued more than a year. The enemies of the queen took the ground that he was innocent, and that the queen, with the infamous Lamotte as her accomplice, had duped him. All France was agitated with the contest. The cardinal appeared at his trial in the utmost pomp of ecclesiastical robes, and was treated with the most marked respect. He was finally acquitted by a majority of three votes. This was regarded as a virtual declaration that the queen was guilty. A friend who called upon the queen immediately after the decision found her weeping bitterly.

The Countess Lamotte was brought to trial. It was popularly understood that the Queen was tried in her person. The dissipated beauty appeared before her judges in the most costly robes. It was clearly proved that she had received the necklace, and that she had sold the separate diamonds here and there for large sums of money. The populace were taught to believe that the Queen was her accomplice in this infamous deed, sharing with her the money. The Countess was found guilty, and was doomed, with horrid barbarity, to be whipped on the bare back in the courtyard of the prison, to have the letter 'V' branded on each shoulder with a hot iron, and to be imprisoned for life.

As the terrible sentence was pronounced rage and despair overwhelmed the wretched woman, and a scene of horror ensued unimaginable. She threw herself upon the floor with piercing screams. The executioner seized her and dragged her, struggling and shrieking, into the courtyard, her garments were torn from her back, and the lash cut its way mercilessly into the quivering nerves. The hot irons simmered upon her recoiling flesh. Then, mangled and half dead, she was conveyed to the prison hospital. After nine months of captivity she was permitted to escape, and died in England.

No one now doubts that Marie Antoinette was entirely innocent. Whether the cardinal was an accomplice is a question which can never be decided. But the occurrence threw reproach upon the unhappy Queen, which hastened the overthrow of the throne of the Bourbons and conducted her to the guillotine.

## THE GREAT SLAUGHTER OF SEALS.

The Standard says:—Mr Tingle, the Revenue and Marine agent, reports that the Alaskan seal poachers have this season taken sixty thousand seals, including forty-three thousand five hundred taken by forty-eight British boats, and eight thousand five hundred and eighty-five by twenty-three American boats. It is reported that the British Commissioners estimate the number of the herd in the Pribilof rookeries at five hundred thousand, which is a decrease from 1890. *Appropos* of the British protest against exceeding the stipulated number of seven thousand, five hundred to be killed, Mr Williams, the Treasury agent, reports that the total authorized slaughter has been ninety thousand including only four thousand since the date of the *modus vivendi*. Mr Williams estimates that the poachers killed seven seals for every skin that was saved.

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