

side James, my chauffeur. "Belmont-road, I said, "as fast as you can make it." And away he went.

"Do you know any minister of the Gospel residing on this road, James?" I asked.

"Reverend Grandison," he answered briefly.

"Episcopalian?"

"No sir, Presbyterian."

"Are there any others between here and town?"

"Not that I know of, Mr. Brooke." "Then stop at the Grandison House, James."

I found the Reverend Calvin Grandison in his study. He greeted me kindly, but reproachfully, as though my sudden entrance had nipped in the bud some fair flower of speech that was to have decorated his sermon the following Sunday. In the fewest words possible I explained who I was and what I desired.

"Oh, you are the man with the beautiful garden!" he said, his fine face lighting up with interest.

"With your help, my dear sir, I shall henceforth be known as the man with the beautiful wife," I replied. "You will help me, won't you?"

"I shall be most happy, Mr. Brooke," he declared. "Half-past four you say. I shall order the phaeton at once."

"Perhaps I can pick you up on my return from town," I suggested. "I have an automobile outside."

He declined my invitation gently, but so firmly that, in my mind's eye, I beheld a motto, among his more secular articles of faith, reading: "No Automobiles for Mine." I thanked him warmly for his kindness and resolved then and there to have Allison discover his pet foible, and to foster it indulgently no matter what it was—orchids, Japanese prints or the heathen in darkest Africa.

From the Reverend Calvin Grandison's to Belmont (fortunately for me it was the county-seat) was but a three mile spin, and we made it in law-breaking time. Once there I directed James to take me to the courthouse, and in less than ten minutes had emerged from that building and from my interview with the county clerk, with our marriage-license—Allison's and mine—safe in my pocket. Next I sought the safe-deposit vaults of the trust company, where I withdrew my mother's wedding ring together with a wonderful emerald ring that had been hers, and a necklace of perfect pearls. There were other jewels in the box for Allison, but these three I knew would please her most, and time was more precious than jewels just then.

That accomplished, we turned our faces homeward, James and I. No bird ever flew to its mate more swiftly than I flew to Allison, once we were out of town, and on the hard, broad Belmont-road.

We passed the Reverend Calvin Grandison about a mile from our destination poking along in an antiquated phaeton behind an antiquated white horse. I waved my hand to him as we passed and he favoured me with a horror-stricken stare. I'm sure the good man approached Brooke House with grave doubts as to whether he would not be called upon to repeat the burial service over me instead of marrying me that afternoon.

I looked at my watch as we drew up at the side door; it was just ten minutes past four. "Not so bad, James," I said. "I shall want you in the library in fifteen minutes to sign a paper as witness."

Having dismissed James I made a hasty survey of the garden. Allison was evidently in the house with Mrs. Perkins, so I turned my steps thither, entered the house and went direct to the library. Still no Allison. "She is in the upper part of the house," I thought, and was on the point of going upstairs when my eye fell on an envelope on the table, addressed to me in a handwriting with which I was not familiar. I reached for it and broke the seal, prepared to read it as I ascended the stairs. I got no farther than the library door, however, for this is what I read:

My dear dear John:
When you read this I shall have fled. I just can't marry you, John. It seemed so natural that I should while you were here, but now you are gone it has become impossible; it has been like the foolish stories you read in magazines—the kind you know could never have happened.

I do love you, John, and it is in my

heart to wish you had not left me till we were married. Now, all the prejudices all the teachings of my girlhood, of my mother's girlhood before me—all the traditions of my sex bid me fly from you, and I am powerless to resist. I may not even tell you where I am going. I may not leave one little clue to point the way.

I know you will search for me. Yes, and I know you will find me. You must find me, John. I should be so unhappy if you didn't find me!

I shall leave the watch, the keys and the seal ring with Mrs. Perkins; the scarab scarab I shall keep. Take good care of my house and my garden, John; of my birds, my flowers and my strawberry-beds; and try to believe it is not my wish that I desert them—that I go unwillingly.

ALLISON.

There was sunshine in the room, and birds sang in the garden, but my world was in darkness, my sun in complete eclipse. With Allison's letter in my hand I stared blindly at the door opening upon the hall; it seemed to me that something was moving toward me, but I was not sure. Then my mind cleared, and my eyes rested on Mrs. Perkins, not three feet away.

"You here?" I said. "You? Do you know what has happened? Do you know what has happened, I say? Miss Cornwall is gone. I left her with you, and you let her go. I do not blame you, Mrs. Perkins—I do not blame anybody but myself. Please inform the Reverend Mr. Grandison, who will appear shortly, that there will be no wedding this afternoon. In the meantime I beg you will telephone to the stables and tell James to bring the automobile to the side door at once. That will be all, Mrs. Perkins."

"But, Mr. John!" she protested.

"That will be all, Mrs. Perkins," I repeated.

"But she hasn't gone!" cried Mrs. Perkins.

"What do you mean?" I thundered.

"I mean that she's upstairs in the north bedrooms."

"How can she be? She can't be!"

"Excuse me, sir, but she is."

I had every reason to doubt my housekeeper's sanity. For all that I started for the second storey on the run.

"Mr. John!"

I paused.

"Here—here's the key."

"The key?" I exclaimed. "The key?"

"Yes, sir. I—I locked her in."

Then I understood. I had told Mrs. Perkins, in a laughing way, not to let Allison escape; she had taken my commands literally, and had obeyed them like a soldier. Dear, good Mrs. Perkins! I ran to her and hugged her then and there. "I shall never be able to thank you, Mrs. Perkins," I said. "You have done more for me this day than I can ever repay."

"Thank you, Mr. John," she said, acknowledging my embrace with great dignity. "But the young lady—will she thank me?"

I hadn't thought of that. Truly, it was a high-handed proceeding for my housekeeper to place my Allison under lock and key. "How long has she been there?" I asked.

"At least a half-hour, Mr. John."

"She didn't make any—er—demonstration?"

"I haven't heard a sound, Mr. John. After I locked the door I hurried right away."

"Well, I think we'd better release her now, Mrs. Perkins."

"We, Mr. John?" she asked.

"Perhaps it would be better for me to go alone," I said bravely.

"I'm sure it would," said Mrs. Perkins with decision. "Here is the key."

This time I mounted the stairs very slowly; I felt decidedly criminal, and not at all sure. What would Allison think? What would Allison say? What would Allison do? My courage had all but deserted me when I stopped before the door behind which there might be a raging Allison, a weeping Allison, a haughty, imperious Allison.

It seemed so foolish to knock. It seemed so foolish to call through the door. The situation, while absurdly farcical, was to me seriously, vitally grave; my misgivings were many, and my mind uncertain.

Perhaps it would be best just to slip the key in the keyhole and unlock the door. That, at least, would attract Allison's attention, and if she wished me not to enter she would have plenty of time to tell me so while I fumbled with the lock. Yes, that was undoubtedly the

best plan—so with trembling fingers I started to put it into execution.

"Is that you, John?" came a fresh, clear voice from within.

"Yes, Allison."

"Why don't you come in?"

"I'm coming," I replied meekly. Then, as I pushed open the door, all my misgivings vanished; it was no raging Allison, no weeping Allison, no haughty, imperious Allison, whom I beheld—just my Allison, the spirit of my garden and the joy of my house and heart.

Reading my welcome in her eyes I ran to her and caught her in my arms. "Allison!" I whispered—"Allison! You are really here?"

"Yes, John," she laughed. "Thanks to your old she-dragon of a house-keeper."

"My estimable, loyal, and priceless jewel of a housekeeper," I retorted.

"She is, indeed," said Allison. "I love her for locking me in; I really and truly didn't want to go, John—only I had to."

"Only you thought you had to," I corrected.

"It was very real, John."

"I know," I said. "I hope this is real. Are you sure I am not dreaming?"

"If you like I'll pinch you," she replied.

We were married in the garden. Although the Reverend Calvin Grandison wore no churchly vestments, he suited Allison in every way. And after the ceremony the dear old boy—quite unconscious, I'm sure, that he was stealing my thunder—approached her with a fine, old-fashioned bow, and said:

"Mr. Brooke has long been known in the neighbourhood as the man with the beautiful garden. Hereafter I shall always think of him as the man with the beautiful wife."

A Much-Travelled Postcard.

Some little time back we gave a reproduction of a postcard with an unusual history. On October 21, 1903, this card was placed in a bottle and dropped overboard by a Mr. Lacey from the barque Grassmere, while making the voyage from California to London, and, after drifting about 9000 miles, it was picked up at Parangarenga, near the North Cape of New Zealand, about two months ago, and handed to Captain Stein of the Northern S. S. Company's Waitangi, who forwarded it to its address, "Miss L. E. Bloomfield, Oakfield, Witherington, Manchester." By the last mail the captain received from Miss Bloomfield a copy of a Manchester paper referring to the card's interesting voyage, and also a very nice letter of thanks, dated August 30th, from which we make the following extract:

"Please accept my most sincere thanks for the trouble you have taken to forward me the wonderful postcard, which my cousin placed in a bottle and dropped into the sea, and which was found in such a romantic circumstance. My cousin, who is now chief mate of the barque Sacora, told me about two years ago that he had dropped several cards into the sea, addressed to me, and wondered if I would ever receive one of the them. That forwarded by you is the only one that has reached home."



The "awakening of China" is illustrated by the fact that an express letter stamp has been issued, namely, 10 cents green.

A whole batch of stamps of the Philippine Islands is reported as surcharged O.B., presumably meaning "official business." There is a fine field here for the specialist, as there are several varieties of the letters "O.B." and some surcharges are black, while others are in red. Even violet colour, done with a typewriter, is reported, so that there will not be much trouble in forging overprints.

Some new stamps have been issued in Roumania to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the election of Charles, second son of Prince Charles Antoine of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen as hereditary Prince of Roumania, on March 26, 1866, and also to commemorate the 25th anniversary of his proclamation as King, which took place on March 26, 1881. There are three types, the centre of each stamp being in black. One bears the portrait of King Charles at the present day, another a portrait of him as Prince in 1866 and King in 1906. The third design shows Charles at the battle of Calafat. In type I. are 1 bani brown, 3 pale brown, 10 carmine, 40 dark brown, and 1 ten orange red. Type II. is represented by 15 bani violet, and type III. by the 5 bani green.

Yet another provisional stamp is reported from Panama, namely, 5c on 1 peso lake, the surcharge being in red.

For use in British Post Office on the Levant a provisional stamp was issued on the 2nd of August. The 2d surcharged "Levant" was further over-printed "1 piastre" in black. If, as is stated, only 480 copies were so over-printed, these stamps should be worth having, more especially as they were sold solely for use on letters by the outgoing mail on that particular day.

The death is reported at Geneva on the 8th of August of Mr. Robert Ehrenbach, at the early age of 45 years. He was travelling on the Continent apparently in good health, reached Geneva on the 6th, took bed next day, and died the following afternoon. Mr. Ehrenbach's reputation as a philatelist was world-wide.

On April 25, 1840, the following notice was issued in England: "To all postmasters and sub-postmasters." "It has been decided that postage stamps are to be brought into use forthwith, and as it will be necessary that every such stamp should be cancelled at the post-office or sub-post-office, where the letter bearing the same may be posted, I herewith forward for your use an obliterating stamp. The first obliterating stamp was the one commonly called the "Maltese Cross" which is seen on the 1d black, and later on the 1d red, and 2d blue. The 1d black and 2d blue were issued on May 6th 1840, and next year the 1d red was substituted so as to make the obliteration more distinct.

A comforting assurance for the small medium collector appears in one of London's Philatelic journals in an article referring to the recent exhibition. It is as follows:—"There is as much amusement and instruction to be got out of many of the common stamps as there is in the very rarest, and any collector who is so faint-hearted as to be discouraged by seeing somebody else's stamps of more value than his own, will never be a valuable recruit to the pursuit. We therefore urge upon small medium collectors not to be in the least discouraged by seeing great collections, but to steadily persevere, and they may rest assured that the day will come when others in turn will feel discouraged at seeing the collection got together by their own patient research, and philatelic knowledge." The writer well remembers the feeling of discouragement years ago when a member of a philatelic society, a gentleman called in on club night, and said he had brought round a few sheets of stamps for the members to look at. Of course he was promptly welcomed with that free masonry spirit so characteristic of stamp collectors. When his sheets were passed round for inspection, the members simply gazed at them in astonishment. There, in blocks of four, were various shades of stamps, so rare amongst the then members of the society, that if one possessed a single specimen it gave him a higher rank in such a young society. To the remark that they were a valuable lot to carry round so casually, the visitor replied "Oh!" I like to have them with me, but in case of fire I have them covered for £4000." After that the members of the society were not so anxious to produce their own albums for inspection.