

The Artist and His Ladder

By MATILDA STAPLEY

EVERYBODY was a business man and not in the least temperamental, but the artistic side of his nature would burst out now and again in spite of him.

It had been bursting forth of late in the form of interior decorating. His own three bachelor rooms were having a regular overhauling as regards color scheme. Saturday afternoons and Sundays he spent on a small ladder he had purchased from an impoverished artist, straddling birds and beasts and what not above the molding of his library.

He was having a happy time until he nearly broke his anatomy as well as the ladder on which he was perched. They came down together in a heap. Every, fortunately unbroken, but the ladder fared much worse. It was a light steel and wood affair, daintily built for the use of artists.

He sat down in a poise. It was early on Saturday afternoon and the day and tomorrow would be wasted. Every was no good at mending things—even a broken heart that he supposed he was carrying about within him. In his early and very tender years he had loved a maiden who had thrown him down to marry a richer man.

He picked up the paper idly, thinking more of his loss than what he was reading, but suddenly he saw an advertisement that caught and held his interest. It read: "Jacob's ladders mended, invisible and good as new. N. Carter."

Every popped out of his chair, took down the address, which was not far away, folded up his ladder and began to whistle.

The day had brightened. He hoped Carter would be in on Saturday and could mend the ladder while he waited.

Every realized that he had never heard of a ladder known as Jacob's, but he supposed that any one who could mend ladders could assuredly mend this one.

Every went by taxi to a side street where he supposed Carter's shop would be, taking the ladder with him.

The taxi drew into the curb, but not in front of a shop. It was one of the lower apartment buildings.

"Well," supposed Every, "Carter evidently does a little home work." He got out with his ladder and collided in the dark hall with a young lady about to ascend the stairway.

Every drew back to let her go up ahead of him, but she turned a too pale face toward him and asked that he go first.

"I'm very tired," she said, "and want to take my time going up."

So Every went on with his ladder but was vividly conscious all the way of the lovely girl totting up behind him. He wanted to wait and give her an arm up the stairs.

Her name, he arrived at the fourth floor and saw the name "Carter" on the doorplate. The girl was just behind him and stood on the same landing while he put down his ladder and rang the bell.

"Are you wanting N. Carter?" asked she.

"Well, yes—I want to get this ladder mended. I read his advertisement in the paper and—"

Nan Carter grasped the stair rail lest she lose her balance.

"Oh!" she said, and then repeated the bright remark. "Oh." Then she smiled at him. "If you let me—I will open the door for you. I live here."

Every and his supposed Jacob's ladder followed her into a cheery apartment. His thought this was worked upon the supposition that the girl had an indigent husband who worked at home mending ladders while she toiled in the city. He felt that he would dislike the husband. He waited a moment or two while Nan divested herself of a small hat, thereby releasing a gorgeous riot of tittan hair.

She was more at home and felt she could handle this delicate situation without wounding him, now that she had him safely within the apartment. She had dreaded turning him and his ladder away in the hall.

"Will you be frightfully hurt at me if I laugh at you?" she asked.

"By Jove!" said Every swiftly. "I don't think I care what you do to me." And he quite meant what he said because he knew without the slightest doubt that this girl was one day going to be Mrs. Every and come to live where the frites of birds and elephants roveled.

"Then come here and let me show you a Jacob's ladder."

Every drew nearer the girl and also to her sewing basket heaped high with stockings. She picked one up and, running her hand down it, showed him a real Jacob's ladder.

"That's the kind I mend," she laughed softly.

Every burst into a regular guffaw that must have been heard in the next apartment, and after a moment of very happy laughter they found each other's eyes and their glances lingered.

"It only shows you," said Every breathlessly, "how more than gutless I am where womenfolk are concerned."

The girl looked up at him with great tenderness in her eyes.

"Some 'womenfolks' long to know just such men as you," she said.

"Till marriage that, in this case," Every told her.

(Copyright)

Thirteen cars of hogs were sold by Farmers of Chowan county this year bringing in over \$20,000, reports County Agent N. K. Rowell.

Tom Tarheel says that carpet of green clover in his big field makes him feel good, especially when he sees the chickens and cows enjoying themselves these days.

THE FEATHERHEADS



THE FEATHERHEADS



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN IS LIVELY GUEST AT GAY PARIS PARTIES

(December 21, 1776)

All France was agog when Benjamin Franklin arrived in Paris on this day, as commissioner from the American colonies to seek aid for carrying on the colonial war for independence. Wearing a funny little fur cap all the time, this venerable sage, with his gray hairs flowing down upon his shoulders, his staff in his hand, the spectacles of wisdom on his nose, was the perfect picture of true philosophy. Almost before he arrived he was "all the rage."

Every mantelpiece exhibited his picture. Likenesses of him were set in rings, watches, snuff-boxes, bracelets, and looking-glasses.

His sea voyage from America had been a rough one full of dangers from hostile cannon. He had been seasick all the way over. But in spite of this indisposition he had made a study of the Gully Stream crawling out on the bowprit and taking the temperature of the waters at intervals.

Formal dinners were frequent in Paris. Six nights out of the week he dined out with his host, prevented by gout. Many of the banquets were so foolishly overdone that it must have required all the will power this lively 70-year old man possessed to keep from laughing.

The Countess d'Houdetot gave just such a feast. When Franklin arrived she met him, simperingly reciting a piece of original poetry in honor of her guest. More poetry at the banquet table—verse after verse of it. Then to the garden where Franklin planted a tree to the accompaniment of more doggerel about the lightning which he had "snatched from the clouds."

But this diplomat had a clever sense of humor and tact which carried him through just such times, and secured him many friends.

At the Academy of Sciences, of which he was a member, he was a welcome guest. Here he met the great philosopher, Voltaire, and much to the delight of the whole gathering, the two men embraced in true French fashion.

In his hotel apartment at Passy, a suburb of Paris, Franklin set up a printing press, and from time to time he sent out choice bits of writings, handbills, and pamphlets.

With the aid of Bergennes, a French minister, he secretly sent the colonies French arms and powder.

Requests for letters of recommendation by French soldiers wanting to go to America to fight overwhelmed the commissioner. But not until Burgoyne surrendered on Oct. 17, 1777 did France as a nation give the desired aid, the object of Franklin's mission.

For eight more years Franklin stayed on in France as United States minister, one of the best loved men in that country.

The production of late truck cobs for sale in Florida and other far-southern states will interest many growers in North Carolina next year.

THE FEATHERHEADS

Because of the demand for fur coats, the United States has become the greatest fur country in the world, even Russia.

A scraggly pig is the subject of a monument at Lusenberg, Germany. The pig unearthed the richest table salt mine in Central Europe.

A Druse girl of the Lebanon Mountain region of Syria may with propriety show one eye to the world, but to unveil two eyes would be the limit of bad taste.

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