

LUCKY THIRTEENTH

By INA WRIGHT HANSON

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The sky was blue, the ocean bluer, and Dorothy's eyes the fairest blue of all. The sand was white, the breeze caressing, and Dorothy seemed unusually susceptible. I judged it to be an auspicious time to declare my feelings, so I began:

"Dorothy, dear, I have wealth through no fault of my own, social status ditto and a moderately good disposition. I love you. Will you marry?"

To my surprise, Mistress Dorothy sprang to her knees, crying, "Don't, don't!" and clapped her small hand over my mouth.

"Very well, then, I won't," I said to the circumstances.

"Oh, but I want you to!" was the next astounding development, while she dropped down on the sand again, bowed her head and wept.

I thought I was used to Dorothy's moods, but I realized then that my knowledge concerning them was small. As I didn't know what else to do, I just sat still. Finally she raised her head from the sanctuary of her hands and looked at me reproachfully.

"Oh, George, I've been waiting a whole year to hear you say it, and now why couldn't you have said it differently?"

I sat up a little straighter. "How should you wish me to approach the subject?" I inquired coldly.

"Of course you don't understand, poor boy!" she sighed, poking back behind her pink ear a little damp brown curl. "I have a chum at home, and we were always thinking of something that no one else would. One day she said, 'Let's make vows.' So we each took a piece of paper and wrote on it a vow which we were bound to keep if we were—were—lung for it. Nell's vow was—"

"Never mind Nell's vow," I said. "What was yours?"

"I vowed I wouldn't marry a man who didn't propose to me in a way no other man ever did."

"Ever proposed to you?" I asked jealously.

"No, no! Ever proposed to anybody. I vowed, so I have to keep it. Oh, George, I've just lived to have you say it in some strange way!"

"There's no law against a fellow's proposing twice, is there?" I asked.

She looked up eagerly. "Oh, you haven't said it yet, you know. I stopped you. Do you suppose you could think of some original way?"

"Well, I'll try mighty hard. But what a fool thing for you to do anyway!"

"I know it," she acknowledged, with unusual meekness.

As our afternoons at Santa Monica were devoted to the surf, we met again in front of the bath house and hand in hand walked toward the seething breakers. She looked more charming than ever in her black suit, banded with scarlet, and a scarlet handkerchief knotted about her small head.

"Heavens, Dorothy, how I love you!" I exclaimed as we emerged from our plunge through the first swell.

"And I love you, too, dear," she murmured, coloring a little. "You will find some way, won't you?"

"Yes, if I have to pick you up some day and run off with you."

"That wouldn't do. Some of the savages behave that way. It isn't the doing anyway; it's the asking."

"Dorothy Allen, see that swell coming? When it gets here I'll hold you under it till there isn't a breath left in your body if you don't say you'll marry me!"

"It isn't original," she persisted. "The man Nell's engaged to said almost that."

"Darn the man, and Nell, too!" I said viciously under my breath. I didn't try any more that day, but she allowed me one kiss as we sat on the raft, and that was something.

It would be a wearisome task to relate all the ways in which I tried to propose to Dorothy that summer. I lay awake nights trying to think of some wild and woolly way to ask her to marry me, only to face bitter defeat by being told that some other John had said the same to his Joan. Dorothy's knowledge on the subject seemed prodigious. It would have looked suspicious to me had she not really felt as bad as I did over my inability to be original.

The summer was almost gone. A certain Thursday was to mark Dorothy's departure for her New York home. On the Tuesday before we, with a gay party, were to visit Mount Lowe.

Dorothy's pretty lips read the description from the guidebook as we left Los Angeles and were borne swiftly through suburban places toward the fog wreathed mountains. The rest of the crowd was considerably oblivious of us two, so I made bold to interrupt.

"Dorothy, this has got to end. I am losing my appetite, and I can't sleep nights. I have tried twelve times. If I can't find a way to suit you on this trip I am off for Africa or Shanghai next week. You needn't look incredulous. I am in dead earnest."

"Seems as though you might think of something," she replied.

"And if I do you are going to marry me right away and let me go home?"

"I went on, ignoring the reproaches of my chum. 'I deserve something for all I've done for you.'"

"She didn't say yes, but on the other hand she didn't say no, so I felt fairly confident."

"Echo mountain," called the conductor. "Change cars for Alpine tavern. Five minutes' wait."

On the right were the ruins of a ho-

tel, which we went over to observe. Here we found a cannon, mounted and ready for business.

"That," said the man who had been there before, "is fired off occasionally to show the marvelous power of echo. It reverberates here, yonder, to the right, the left, many times over."

I grasped Dorothy's hand and drew her away from the crowd.

"Darling," I whispered, "I'm going back on this car, and I'm going to marry you tonight. Wait here or at the observatory yonder. When you get tired of observing, pick your wedding bouquet, for you will need it as soon as I get back. Goodby, sweetheart." And before she could do anything but stare at me in a half frightened, wholly charming way I had caught the down car and was out of her sight.

Once the car reached Los Angeles I was out, tearing along the sidewalk to the courthouse, where the smiling county clerk favored me with the precious bit of paper which would allow me to wed my Dorothy.

"Do you know anything about any of the preachers in this town?" I asked, wiping my perspiring forehead.

His smile broadened. "Well, if it is a runaway match I shouldn't advise you to tackle the Methodist. A tride narrow is Mr.—"

"It isn't a runaway match," I answered hastily, "but for certain reasons I want the services of a young man."

"Mr. B. of the Unitarian is about your age, I should judge."

"He's the man. Where can I find him?"

After getting definite directions I fled down the courthouse steps. I found Mr. B., who when he had heard my story laughed immoderately, but, as I thought a young man would, consented to go with me. Consequently the last car for Altadena and Mount Lowe found us on board, together with a huge, awkward parcel which I had purchased on the way to the station.

As the car reached Echo mountain I found a laughing, much larger crowd than we had started with and in their midst Dorothy, looking most uncomfortable, but holding in her little hands a bouquet of Indian paint brush, the gorgeous coloring matching well the hue of her own sweet cheeks.

"They've surmised something," I whispered to my companion. "Well, the more the merrier, I suppose; kind of tough on us, though."

At which speech I thought the minister was going to disgrace his cloth again by unseemly levity. The crowd drew back a little as I advanced toward Dorothy and introduced the reverend gentleman. I tucked her little trembling hand under my arm, and with my great parol under the other, the minister discreetly leading, and after us the crowd, though not fully understanding the play, we wended our way toward the cannon, mounted and ready for business.

I dropped Dolly's hand, tore the paper wrapping from my megaphone and put it to my lips.

"Dorothy!" I shouted, and first this hill, then that, here, there, yonder, repeated her sweet name.

I raised it to my lips again, and "Be mine!" sang out the hills. Then I laid it on the ground and held out my hand, while the women smiled and the men tossed up their hats in delight. The situation was severe, but my Dorothy was game. Blushing, tearful, yet happy within, she gave me her hand, and the minister stepped forward with his little book.

General Hamilton's Orders.

In the Boer war one of the columns, half Canadian and half regular, under General Ian Hamilton, became so notorious for looting that the soldiers were nicknamed "the Thousand Thieves." Consequently General Hamilton reviewed them one day in a small village near Bloemfontein, says the writer of "Some South African Reminiscences," for the purpose of warning them against any future depredations.

The column had just drawn up and was waiting for the general to begin the review when a ragged rooster ran out from a hut and across the front of the line. Suddenly a private left the line and ran after the rooster.

"Halt!" shouted Hamilton.

The soldier ran on. He soon overtook the rooster and turned back, wringing the neck of the fowl. As he passed the general he noted the fierce scowl on his face. The soldier, an Irish Canadian, was not easily daunted, but this time he temporized. Throwing the defunct rooster to the feet of the general, he said, "There, now; I'll tache ye 't halt when the general says so!"

At which the column roared with laughter, and even the general smiled, and the soldier got only two days' imprisonment for one of the most barefaced breaches of discipline in the records of the army.

Freezing Food Before Eating.

In nearly all parts of the arctic regions food is frozen not only for purposes of preservation, but also to increase, as the natives believe, its nutritive properties. Their fish and seal flesh are frozen and eaten in thin slices, cut off by ax or knife. Seal flesh, half decomposed and then frozen, is one of the Eskimos' greatest delicacies. Walrus liver, too, when frozen is held to possess great sustaining power, and it is considered that cooking deprives it of its delicacy of flavor. The natives of the Titiaca basin, in Peru, who inhabit a district 12,000 feet above the sea, prepare their potatoes by soaking them in water, then freezing them, then steeping them in water and mashing them to remove the soluble matter. After this they are dried and become an article of food. They will then keep any length of time and are extremely convenient for carrying on long journeys. The oka, another vegetable of the district, is prepared in the same way.

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