

WAX FIGURE OF A HERO

[Original.]

"Where did you first meet your wife, Halstead?"

The question was asked by a guest of Austin Halstead after dinner, when the wives of the two men had retired to the drawing room and cigars were brought to the dining table. A smile passed over Halstead's face.

"That's a funny story," he said. "Funny stories, especially about the first meeting of wives and husbands, are always interesting."

"I hadn't been out of the Naval academy a year and was as full of nonsense as the day I left Annapolis. Our ship was ordered to the Brooklyn navy yard for refitting, and, having a good deal of time on my hands, I spent it in New York. I found the Eden Musee a good place to get away with an afternoon and spent not only one but several there. One day—I was in uniform at the time, having been ordered on some official duty in New York connected with the ship—I strolled into the show of wax figures along with one of our fellows, Tom Anderson. Tom was on leave and in mufti. We went through the place and sat on a wooden settee to rest and watch the people. A friend of Tom's went by, and Tom left me temporarily to go to speak to him.

"I noticed that several persons looked at me scrutinizingly, suspecting that since I was in uniform I might be a wax figure of some great naval hero, but as soon as they perceived that I was merely a real live middy they lost interest in me and passed on. Presently I saw coming a young girl of sixteen, whose dresses had not been let down to the length for women, in the care of a French maid. She was one of the piquant kind, full of animation. This was evidently her first visit to the show, and she was intensely interested in everything she saw. She gave me an inquiring glance, then asked her maid in French whether I was flesh and blood or wax. Not getting a satisfactory reply, she came nearer and fixed her sparkling black eyes upon me.

"Of course it was a mean thing to do, but what can you expect from a youngster who has also the disadvantage of being a sailor ashore? I looked straight before me. Tom Anderson was standing at a little distance, talking with his friend, and saw the girl trying to make me out. He smiled and called his friend's attention to the pantomime. Tom had as much devilry in him as I and was equally culpable. Tipping the wink to his companion, he led the way toward me.

"Did you ever see Admiral Farragut as a young man?" he said, loud enough to be heard by the girl. "Here he is just as he was at twenty-one."

"The two stood before me while I stared at vacancy. The girl drew near to hear all about the great admiral.

"This waxwork," Tom continued, "was made after photographs taken at the time."

"This was such a palpable lie that I found it difficult to retain my gravity. When Farragut was twenty-one, photography was unknown. Besides, the uniform was then very different. But these facts had no effect on the girl.

"No one would suppose," said Tom, "that the great naval hero could have been such a miserable looking specimen of humanity in his early days. Look at that nose. Did you ever see such a proboscis?"

"I think he was very handsome," said the girl to her maid indignantly.

"Then his hands—big enough for a No. 10 glove. And his feet—they'd cover the quarter deck of a line of battle ship."

"The girl tossed her head and turned her back on the speaker. How I ever retained my gravity I don't know. I remember that I felt a horror of laughing, for it would have revealed a terrible slight upon the young girl. I had already had enough of the joke and wished that Tom would go away and the girl would pass on without knowing how we had fooled her. When she looked away for a moment, I gave Tom an appealing look, which he understood and drew his friend to another curiosity.

"As soon as they had gone the girl entered upon an animated dialogue with her maid, in which the former did nearly all the talking.

"Those men ought to be ashamed of themselves to talk that way. We've been studying about Admiral Farragut at school, and it's a disrespect to speak so even about his wax figure. I think he was lovely."

"My heart melted more and more to my charming defender, and I was becoming dreadfully ashamed of my deception. The maintaining of a fixed position was tiresome, but I would rather die than reveal myself."

"I don't see," the girl remarked, "how it is possible to make wax look so lifelike. See the color in the cheeks, the veins. Those eyes can't be glass. I wonder if he is a wax figure after all."

"At this juncture a fly lighted on my nose and made my position intolerable. The girl came very near and examined me critically. Then she raised her taper finger and touched me on the cheek. This was too much. I broke into a smile and said as kindly as I could:

"Mademoiselle, you have made a mistake."

"Oh, goodly gracious!" she gasped, drawing away as from red-hot iron.

"I would have apologized, but she turned and ran away as fast as she could go, followed by her maid."

"And the second time you met?" asked the dinner guest.

"Oh, that was three years later at a ball on board the flagship. She recognized me and laughed at the incident. I fell in love with her, and we were married. But there's nothing funny about that."

Scotch Consolation.

A story is told of a canny Scot who dealt in old horses, alternating his spells of labor with heavy spree. During the period of depression which followed each overindulgence John habitually took to bed and there diligently studied the family Bible. During one of these fits of attempted reformation his condition prompted his wife to call in the Rev. Mr. Wallace, the parish minister, who at the time happened to be passing.

"Oh, Malster Wallace, come in and see our John. He's real bad."

"What's wrong w' him?"

"He's feart to meet his Makker," said Mrs. John.

Quick as fire came the crushing reply:

"Humph! Tell'm he needs be feart for that. He'll never see'm!"

The Home of the Kindergarten.

The Japanese have the most perfect kindergarten system in the world. In fact, they originated this method of instructing by entertainment instead of by punishment. Their play apparatus for such purposes is elaborate, but all of it is adapted to the infant mind, which it is designed at once to amuse and to inform. The little ones of Japan even become somewhat interested in mathematics by seeing and feeling what a pretty thing a cone, a sphere or a cylinder is when cut out of wood with a lathe. They make outlines of solid figures out of straw, with green peas to hold the joints together, and for the instruction of the blind flat blocks are provided, with the Japanese characters raised upon them.—Pearson's Weekly.

McKinley and His Mother.

Dr. Rixey, who for some years was the private physician in the McKinley household, used to tell that when the late president's mother sat down for the first time to a White House dinner what seemed to impress her most was the prodigal supply of cream. She commented on the abundance and then added, "Well, William, at last I know what they mean when they speak of the cream of society."

The president laughed. "I admit," said he, "that there seems to be an extravagant array of cream on the table, but you know, mother, we can afford to keep a cow now."

Dickens' Unfortunate Love.

Concerning Charles Dickens, it is well known that though he married Catherine, one of George Hogarth's three daughters, in 1836, he was later devotedly attached to her sister Mary. Why he did not marry Mary in the first place is not certainly known, unless it be that Mary, a young woman of great loveliness of character, had successfully concealed her own affection for Catherine's betrothed in order to save her sister from disappointment.—Percy Fitzgerald in Harper's Magazine.

Friendly Aid.

Jinks—See here, old boy! You ought to do something to reduce your flesh. You are becoming fearfully stout.

Minks—Say, Jinks, you are about the fourth friend who has made that offensive remark today, and I'm getting tired of it. It worries me.

Jinks—That's all right. Worry reduces flesh.—New York Weekly.

Good Health

Is doubtless the highest human good. It is especially so to women, to whom it means the preservation of beauty, happiness in the home, and the enjoyment of social duties. There can be no good health for any woman who suffers from womanly diseases. Her complexion falls. Her flesh loses its firmness. Her eyes are dull. She has no home happiness, no social enjoyment.

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