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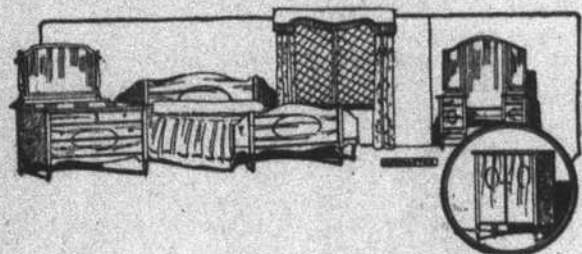
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DURHAM-DANVILLE BUS LINE

Overplaying Her Hand

By MARTHA M. WILLIAMS

(Copyright.)

"O! YOU must learn mah-jongg!" Miss Dorrance said to Lurline, who shook an obstinate head, answering: "Wind in it—your temper gives me all of that I can stand."

Miss Dorrance set her teeth. This country girl so brutally truthful had money, youth, beauty of sorts, most of all, Elverson as a family friend—Elverson whom Miss Dorrance revered as a demi-god of literature, and coveted as a husband. Distinctly hard lines to have to endure from the girl—yet without the money she was paying there would be no going on. Miss Dorrance had rather plunged in surroundings and hospitalities the three years since she came from Paris. It had not seemed hazardous with the constant Trevor, who owned sixty years and half as many millions, at hand for taking when she would. Then Elverson had dawned, tempting her to dally desperately in the matter of Trevor. In revenge Fate had snuffed Trevor out by help of his French motor car.

Elverson had said tentatively to Miss Dorrance: "Can you be sorry enough for a girl-child to let me fetch her here and have you show her about for a year or so? No charity understand—name a stiff figure, as her guardian, I'll be glad to pay it. She's so alone, an orphan—man-bred until two years back when her father died. Since then she's tried out schools—and been as miserable in them as a wild colt in a stall."

Thus Fate had brought them together, the woman, poised, hard as steel—and as chill—world-wise, experienced, in the middle thirties, and the slim girl of rosette nineteen with the look of untouchedness in her bright wide-set eyes. Her father had guarded and shielded her like a jewel. Facing sure death he had appealed to Elverson: "Marry her when she grows up, Bill—she'll do you credit—need no curb—if she doesn't know there is one. But let her think it's your notion—if she knew it was mine she'd marry you, if she hated you outright."

Elverson had promised—with a look, a hand-grip—one hand already growing cold—to find himself rather bewildered when the stress of feeling was past. He knew Lurline only as a tiny child, a miss of ten. Her father had died on the voyage from India, so it was weeks before he saw her transformed into something still, piteously alone.

He was eager to watch each development of her new phase with Miss Dorrance, hence a reckless caller, regardless of hours. "You're tryin' to catch us with our dispositions in curl-papers," Lurline girded at him, shaking her curly locks in his face sometimes—and getting her ears boxed for the impertinence. But he never discovered in her anything rude or loud. She was honest, but not brutally truthful as Miss Dorrance appraised her. As child of the house she acquired herself well, showing Miss Dorrance exactly the proper deference, but pretending to nothing more. They entertained in select fashion. They went about to the choicest private functions—Miss Dorrance had truly the grand entree. Thus Lurline came in view of gilded youth a-plenty, laughed with and at them, dance if she chose, had no crushes.

This until the era of Elverson Mayne, sponsored by the great Elverson, his nephew and heir presumptive. Lurline liked him so genuinely she tried hard to fight off his infatuation—but in vain.

After a month of it Miss Dorrance came one vacant afternoon upon Lurline prone on the library couch, her hands behind her head, smiling happily. "Only think—that child, Elvers, thinks he wants to marry me," she said almost dreamily. "What would you say to it?"

"That it is—what he was brought here for," Miss Dorrance answered, smiling almost humanly. She had begun to fear wildly that Elverson was not indifferent to her charge.

"How funny! What makes you think so? You surely don't mean Uncle Bill led him a lamb to the slaughter?" Lurline murmured.

Miss Dorrance took her courage in both hands and said breathlessly: "You must understand—you are not the least bit stupid."

"Thanks for the first compliment," Lurline half sighed, "but—I still don't see what Elver's turning mooncalf can mean to—everybody."

"You accepted him?" from Miss Dorrance, her face white and drawn.

"That's my affair—and his," from Lurline placidly.

Miss Dorrance pulled her to her feet, saying in a hard voice: "Your guardian, Mr. Elverson, feels bound to remain single so long as he has you in charge. He brought his nephew here to match him with you—once that is done—he can plan for himself."

"He's old enough to know what he wants," Lurline interrupted.

"He does know," gasped Miss Dorrance. "We have been engaged months—now he is tired of waiting—"

"Why, the miserable old Mormon—I've been engaged to him since the first of last week," Lurline said, smiling softly.

ing softly. "I had to tell Elver to pacify him, Uncle Bill is comin' in about five minutes—then we'll tell him to make his choice—and be hanged to him."

"He's ahead of time," Elverson said from the door, coming in to bat Lurline over the head with a spray of orchids.

(Copyright.)

PETER DICK JONES was dressing for his wedding. His keen, dark face was strained as he struggled with his tie, and it did not clear even when he shrugged into his coat and stood forth as handsome a bridegroom as any girl could dream about. Perhaps he was thinking of the first time he had dressed for a wedding—his own—and had stood there in the chancel waiting for a bride who never came—he would never forget that awful period when he stood there cold, impassive, waiting for the arrival of Edith Mayse and her bridal attendants. He stood alone there, young Peter Dick, uncertain, conscious of the curious eyes focussed upon him. Even his best man had been late.

Then he was summoned to the vestry and the guests were dismissed. He could barely remember the feeling that he must be a marble statue to stand there in the vestry and listen to someone telling him that he had been jilted—that Edith had eloped with the best man!

Well, Peter Dick Jones had fought that down, down in the dust under his feet, until people began to say he never cared for Edith after all, for he had even dined with Edith Deyo and her husband. Only once, though, not that he cared any longer, for their action had killed his love and respect forever. But the hurt to his pride still clung.

Well, there was no danger now, for lovely Sally Gray was as desperately in love with him as he was with her, and as neither of them had much money the wedding would be very simple—not even a best man.

"I can carry my own wedding ring, thank you," decided Peter Dick. He felt for it now—there it was safe in his waistcoat pocket. He had ordered the wedding bouquet days ago—lilies-of-the-valley, which were to fall in a lovely shower down Sally's white satin dress.

He glanced at his watch. The wedding was at noon, and the hands pointed to eleven-thirty now.

"Might as well start now," he thought, and adjusting his boutonniere he telephoned for a car he had ordered from a garage, and soon he was set down before the vestry door of the church. There was no one in the vestry but he did not wait, this wedding was to be a very simple affair. Sally's mother had told him to go to the church and at a quarter to twelve to go to the chancel and wait there.

Peter Dick walked in, his head high, conscious that people were moving into the pews. He mounted the chancel steps and stood there, handsome, pale, composed outwardly. Within he was combating an old fear that assailed him now.

Suppose Sally should fall him now? Reason told him that Sally's love was as solid as Gibraltar itself, yet, for a little while he stood there, staring at a familiar stained glass window—it was familiar indeed—years ago he had stared at it for a full hour—now an organ played softly, and he heard the rustling of people coming and going. He could hear whispers and at last he looked through his eyelashes at the people.

The people! The people coming and going and there were several cleaning women moving about their work of dusting the pews. Except for them the church was empty. There was not even a flower—yet—here was a familiar chancel and a familiar stained window—. Suddenly light broke upon Peter Dick Jones.

This church was St. Paul's, North, where he had waited so long for Edith—and he was to be married at noon to Sally Gray in St. Paul's, South, on the other side of the city. It was two minutes to twelve now!

The cleaners looked amazed at the bridegroom as he shot across to the vestry. They had about decided that the solitary figure was that of a bridegroom rehearsing his part. Peter Dick jammed on his hat and ran for a car. In a moment they were tearing across town to St. Paul's South. They were three minutes late, when Peter Dick rushed into the church, and went swiftly up to the aisle between rows of people, who watched him amusedly.

"Peter Dick's hurrying as if he feared that he might lose Sally," whispered some one to Mrs. Edith Deyo, whose heart was in her eyes as she looked at her lost lover. Somehow women always kept a tender spot for Peter Dick Jones.

Then the organ tones rose and rose, and there was Sally and her father, coming up the aisle, valley lilies showering down the white satin of her dress, and her tender eyes ashine for him through the mist of her wedding veil.

Disregarding all conventions, Peter Dick turned and held out eager hands for her. A little smile ran around among the guests, tenderly reminiscent of other wedding days, perhaps, and eager young lovers.

Mr. Gray gave his daughter away, and stepped aside, Peter Dick fumbled for the ring, dropped it, and it was Sally who picked it up and gave it to

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Vincent Taylor, 17, of Hackensack, N. J., in helping an air-mail pilot straighten away a plane for a night flight caught his hand in the tail of the plane where he rode for 30 miles. The pilot was unaware of the boy's plight.

him with the most adorable smile.

"The loveliest wedding I ever attended," everyone said, when the happy bride and groom had started on the honeymoon.

"The next time I get married," Peter Dick jokes sometimes, but Sally always touches his hand softly and he never finishes that sentence.

Henry Gilbert Holt, of Richmond, son of A. G. Holt, of Danville, entered Duke University this year as a Freshman. He graduated from John Marshall high school of Richmond last year.

Forty cars of demonstration fed hogs have been shipped by farmers of Chowan county this year. Plans are underway now to increase these shipments next year.

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Mrs. J. H. Buck, of Almond, is now visiting her mother, Mrs. Lelia Williamson, at Locust Hill, prior to moving to their new home in Alabama.