

The Difference

By ANNIE HINRICHS

The chorus girl and the chorus soldier boy swung into place in the marching, singing column.

"Our life is a glorious glitter," they sang.

"It's a glitter all right," muttered the soldier boy, "a silly, tinsel glitter."

The chorus girl looked at him in surprise. For weeks they had marched side by side in the chorus of "The Fighting Prince," and this was the first time he had ever spoken to her.

"You don't like it?" she asked.

"I hate it. Do you care for it?"

The leading lady was singing. They were at the rear of the stage.

"I have no illusions about it," she answered. "It is a means of bread and butter."

"I had illusions, an artistic ideal and operatic ambitions."

"Have you kept them?"

"I have learned the limit of my ability. The best I can do is to carry a tin sword and strut in a chorus with a score of other mediocre warblers. I leave the stage at the end of my contract. Say," he hesitated like a bashful schoolboy, "I know you are—you are awfully particular and prudish, but would you—won't you have supper with me after the show tonight? I abhor this whole crowd, except you. I've wanted to know you—you are different from the others."

The girl looked squarely into his eyes. "You're different, too," she said frankly. "I'll go with you."

"You are more different than ever in your street clothes," he informed her across the restaurant table.

"So are you," she retorted. "In citizen's apparel, with your face washed clean you look like—may I say it?"

"Go on."

"Like a nice, well raised young man from some quiet, little city a long way from New York."

"Good. At least, I was well raised and the home city is quiet and little and far away."

"And probably your father was the wealthy man of the little town and your mother was the grand lady. You

lived in a big, old-fashioned house. They sent you away to college and gave you everything you wanted."

"How do you know all this?"

"You are stamped mentally and physically by your environment."

"Next month I shall return to the little far away city and a desk in my father's bank. Do you intend to remain on the stage?"

"As there is no father, no bank and no home waiting for me I shall remain in the chorus of 'The Fighting Prince.'"

"I wish you wouldn't," he said earnestly. "It is not the life for a girl like you. There are other vocations. School teaching, nursing or something like that would give you better opportunities for the development of the womanly virtues you surely possess. On the stage you learn all the seams of the world, all its dark spots, its tragedy. You are exposed to a thousand hideous experiences which the sheltered woman never knows. Some day you will want to marry. The right sort of man—and you could never care for the wrong sort—chooses his wife from an environment that makes a girl gentle, trusting and thoroughly womanly. Give yourself such an environment."

"Little country boy," laughed the girl, "don't lecture this worldly, wicked chorus lady."

"You are a good, true woman. Your eyes are clear and gentle and steady. Your mouth is tender and that dimpled chin is as firm as granite."

On the last night of his engagement with "The Fighting Prince" they went to the table where they had eaten their first supper together.

"It is the good old life for me again, Eleanor, and I am happy at the prospect; regular habits, home cooking, simple ideals."

She nodded comprehendingly. "It is the life for you," she agreed. "You will work hard and gratify your father's pride. You will be the rising young man of the little city. Your recreations will be picnics and strawberry festivals. There will be a girl,

a sweet, charming, conventional girl with domestic tastes and little knowledge of the outside world."

"There is such a girl there."

"An old sweetheart, Jack?"

"We grew up together in the little city. She is my ideal woman—conventional, domestic and innocent."

"You will be very happy," she commented dully. The color had left her face and her lips were rigid.

"I wish you would leave the stage, Eleanor. You have been a good friend, a true comrade in this last month. I shall be happier if I can think of you in a different, less disillusionizing environment."

"Don't think of me at all. I am a child of this great, wicked city. After tonight we shall never see each other again."

"It's no use to send a letter in to Miss Mayne," the doorkeeper was saying to an insistent young man. "She never reads stage door letters nor speaks to Johnnies."

The young man wrote his name beneath the superscription on the letter. "Take that to her."

A few minutes later he was in a stage dressing room.

"I've come back," he announced. "To carry a tin sword in the chorus?"

"No; to take a certain girl out of the chorus; to take her back with me to a quiet, little town."

"To visit your wife?"

"To be my wife."

"But the other girl, the first sweetheart, the innocent—"

"We have broken our engagement. She is as glad to be free as I am. When I went back she—she, I don't want to talk like a cad, but I want you to know the truth—she bored me. Her innocence and conventionality are the result of a narrow environment. She knows only the little world of the little town, and she is satisfied that that is all there is worth while in life. She welcomed me as a prodigal and expected a bended knee repentance and confession of the sins I must surely have committed out in the wicked world. We have not the taste or interest in common, except the picnics and the strawberry festivals. The woman I love is one who has lived in the big, wicked world, who knows life and has kept her soul pure and true. The little town is a lovely, quiet spot, and it will be a heaven if—if you are there. Will you come back with me?"

"The right sort of man chooses his wife from an environment which makes her innocent—"

"This man has learned a few things about women, and he will learn more if you will teach him. I am an ignorant country boy—"

"You are not. You are everything that is clever and wise and dear, and—of course, I am going back with you."

Another Cure by Thunder.

Another case has been added to the long list of those who are said to have been cured of deafness and dumbness by a sudden shock. This time the story comes from Amiens, where a woman is said to have recovered her speech after a particularly loud clap of thunder. There have been heavy storms in the region for the last few days, accompanied with hail, rain, thunder and lightning, and trees in some places have been pulled up by the roots. At others lightning struck houses and barns and horses and cattle have been killed. A woman forty-eight years of age, the wife of a workman, had completely lost her speech since 1905. She was still able to hear, but the only way she had of communicating with any one was by writing. She was subjected to various treatments, among others that of electricity; but they seemed to have no effect. During the recent thunder storms she was seized with a terrible nervous attack, and suddenly she recovered her speech, and is now able to converse as easily as before. Several physicians have come to question her, and her cure is talked of as almost miraculous.

A Cheering Arabian Plant.

"I saw a little of Arabia in my trip around the world by way of the Suez canal," said Reuben Ferguson of Maryland. "An English tourist suggested that I ought to take a turn with the laughing plant of the Arabian region. He had a native find some of the plant and the seeds thereof, predicting that if I would make a tea out of the seeds or even make the seeds and leaves into a powder and take a dose of it occasionally the effect would be cheering and that I would desire to laugh for an hour or more without apparent reason."

"Once assured that there was no danger from the effects," I tried the seeds and am ashamed to tell what others told me of my antics. It was a case of high jinks, dancing and foolishness both in conversation and actions. I cannot recall what I said or what sort of capers I was guilty of, but those who were with me seemed to take delight in telling of my intoxication and the utter nonsense of my conversation. Once they had told me of a few things I decided to have nothing more to do with the laughing plant."

Terrifying.

The little boy regarded the pictures of the harem skirt with starting eyeballs.

"Does it mean that I am to have twice as many trousers cut down for me?" he shrieked.

Then he fell on his knees and prayed as never before that several sisters might be vouchsafed him in the future.

Guarding the Valuables

After the Blakes moved into their new quarters Mrs. Blake still kept her account at the outlying bank where she had always done business. That was the reason when she received the note and the mortgage she did not instantly put them into her safety deposit box.

When she was preparing to leave the house for the first time she hid the papers successively behind a sofa, under a pillow, under a rug, under the dresser scarf and behind the picture of Sir Galahad in the library. Then when she was a block away she returned hastily, because it had just occurred to her that the house might burn down during her absence and then where would she be in respect to those precious papers?

She discarded the small mesh bag she was carrying and got out her biggest leather shopping bag, although it was decidedly inconvenient to take to an afternoon tea. However, she could carry the papers in it. The bag, being big and square, bumped into everybody and got her disliked. She nearly wept that evening as she begged her husband to take care of the papers for her.

"I will not!" he told her. "You simply must learn to look after your own business affairs, so you might as well make up your mind to it! Why on earth are you carting jewelry around in that bag, too?" He asked it in the tone that a man uses when the foolish peculiarities of the feminine half of the world are utterly, absolutely beyond him.

"Because it's the safest place for my rings and things!" retorted his wife. "Every woman does it!"

His demeanor still disclosing skepticism, she went on: "If you leave things at home and the new servants don't turn burglars, then the bogus gas inspectors and the sham telephone men will get them! I've read about all those tricks!"

"You'll lose the whole affair!" declared her husband.

"I certainly won't when the bag is slipped right over my arm like this," said Mrs. Blake, loftily. "I shall go to the bank just as soon as I can, and you are perfectly horrid to make me carry this bag to the theater tonight. The papers won't tuck inside of my waist and there's positively nothing else I can do with them!"

Frequently that evening the bag slipped from her lap and each time she almost had hysterics, thinking she had lost it. After Blake had bumped his head the third time while fishing out the bag from beneath the row of seats in front he put it in his chair and sat on it. But he made her carry it home.

Something happened every day for three days to prevent Mrs. Blake's going to the bank. She ate, slept and visited in company with her leather shopping bag and she positively began to grow thin from her continuous and strenuous efforts to keep a watchful eye on it.

An afternoon progressive bridge party nearly finished her, because she insisted on hanging the bag over her chair back, and each time she moved she forgot it. Missing it, she would imagine that she had lost it coming to the party and would have to be revived with fans and kind words till it was discovered. She was a nervous wreck when the afternoon was over and had in addition the consciousness that all her partners disliked her intensely because she had so lowered their scores by her wild, abstracted playing.

"I'll go to the bank tomorrow if it is the afternoon party that I have to miss!" she declared.

Then she lugged the fatal bag to a club directors' meeting to a luncheon, where it fell to the floor and was nearly eaten up by the hostess' pet dog before it was discovered, and on a shopping trip.

She hung to the bag with an energy that gave rise to the idea in the minds of casual observers that it must be filled with dynamite or diamonds.

"Thank goodness!" she muttered as she neared her home. "I've got these awful papers safely through a whole week and the first thing tomorrow morning sees them in the safety deposit box, and then maybe I can draw a long breath! What's that door open for?"

She ran up the steps and through the swinging door. It was most unusual. The house appeared tranquil, however. Laying down her bag, she pulled off her gloves and coat and then, being still uneasy, mounted to the second floor. The second floor also was calm.

"It's the queerest thing," she said as she started downstairs and headed for the kitchen to see if the cook had returned, it being the cook's day out. In the hall she stopped transfixed, with her eyes staring at the table where she had laid her shopping bag. The bag was gone!

"The burglar," Blake explained to her, with righteous reproach that night, "must have just got inside when you came and probably he hid behind the piano. When you went upstairs he grabbed your bag and departed by the front door. I can fix up the note and the mortgage, but not the rings!"

"Anyhow," said his wife, "I don't see why he couldn't have stolen it the first day I carted that bag around instead of waiting till I had done it for a week!"



"Take That to Her!"

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