

Three Men and a Maid

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

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"PINCHED MY TROUSERS!"

Mrs. Horace Hignett, world-famous writer on theology, author of "The Spreading Light," etc., etc., arrives in New York on a lecturing tour. Eustace, her son, is with her. Windles, ancestral home of the Hignetts, is his, so her life is largely devoted to keeping him unmarried. Enter her nephew, Sam, son of Sir Malabaly Marlowe, the eminent London lawyer. It is arranged that Sam and Eustace shall sail together on the Atlantic the next day. Enter Bream Mortimer, American son of a friend of an insufferable American named Bennett, who has been pestering Mrs. Hignett to lease Windles.

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

Bream Mortimer looked embarrassed. He wriggled a little and moved his arms as if he were trying to flap them.

"You know," he said, "I'm not a man who butts into other people's affairs."

He stopped.

"No?" said Mrs. Hignett.

"I'm not a man who . . ."

Mrs. Hignett was never a very patient woman.

"Let us take all your negative qualities for granted," she said curtly. "What is it, if you have no objection to concentrating your attention on that for a moment, that you wish to see me about?"

"This marriage?"

"What marriage?"

"Your son's marriage."

"My son is not married."

"No, but he's going to be. At eleven o'clock this morning at the Little Church Round the Corner?"

Mrs. Hignett started.

"Will you please tell me who is the girl my misguided son wishes to marry?"

"I don't know that I'd call him misguided," said Mr. Mortimer, as one desiring to be fair. "I think he's a right smart picker! She's such a corking girl, you know. We were children together, and I've loved her for years. Ten years at least. But you know how it is, somehow one never seems to get in one for a proposal. I thought I saw an opening in the sun-ner of matrimony, but it blew over. I'm not one of those who, as the saying is, you see with a level line of sight. I'm not."

"If you will kindly," said Mrs. Hignett impatiently, "postpone this essay in psychodynamics to some future occasion I shall be greatly obliged. I am willing to hear the name of the girl my son wishes to marry."

"Haven't I told you?" said Mr. Mortimer surprised. "That's odd. I haven't. It's funny how one doesn't do the things one thinks one does. I'm the sort of man . . ."

"What is her name?"

"Bennett."

"Bennett? Wilhelmina Bennett? The daughter of Mr. Rufus Bennett? The red-haired girl I met at lunch one day at your father's house?"

"That's it. You're a great guesser. I think you ought to stop the thing."

"I should do."

"Fine."

"The marriage would be an article in every way. Miss Bennett and my son do not vibrate on the same plane. I am much obliged to you for coming and telling me of this. I shall take immediate steps."

"That's good! But what's the procedure? It's getting late. She'll be waiting at the church at eleven. With bells on!" said Mr. Mortimer.

"Eustace will not be there."

"You think you can fix it?"

"Eustace will not be there," repeated Mrs. Hignett.

Bream Mortimer hopped down from his chair.

"Well, you've taken a weight off my mind. I'll be going. Haven't had



She Tiptoed Softly to Her Son's Room.

breakfast yet. Too worried to eat breakfast. Relieved now. This is where three eggs and a rasher of ham get cut off in their prime. I feel I can rely on you."

"You can?"

"Then I'll say goodbye."

"Goodbye."

"I mean really goodbye. I'm sailing for England on Saturday on the Atlantic."

"Indeed? My son will be your fellow-traveler."

Bream Mortimer looked somewhat apprehensive.

"You won't tell him that I was the one who spilled the beans?"

"I beg your pardon."

"You won't wise him up that I threw a spanner into the machinery?"

"I do not understand you."

"You won't tell him that I crabbled his act—gave the thing away—gummed the game?"

"I shall not mention your chivalrous intervention."

"Chivalrous?" said Bream Mortimer doubtfully. "I don't know that I'd call it absolutely chivalrous. Of course, all's fair in love and war. Well, I'm glad you're going to keep my share in the business under your hat. It might have been awkward meeting him on board."

"You are not likely to meet Eustace on board. He is a very indifferent sailor and spends most of his time in his cabin."

"That's good! Saves a lot of awkwardness. Well, goodbye."

"Goodbye. When you reach England remember me to your father."

"He won't have forgotten you," said Bream Mortimer confidently. He did not see how it was humanly possible for anyone to forget this woman. She was like a celebrated chewing gum. The taste lingered.

Mrs. Hignett was a woman of instant and decisive action. Even while her late visitor was speaking, schemes had begun to form in her mind like bubbles rising to the surface of a rushing river. By the time the door had closed behind Bream Mortimer she had at her disposal no fewer than seven, all good. It took her but a moment to select the best and simplest. She tiptoed softly to her son's room. Rhythmic snores greeted her listening ears. She opened the door and went noiselessly in.

CHAPTER II

The liner Atlantic lay at her pier with steam up and gangway down ready for her trip to Southampton. The hour of departure was near and there was a good deal of mixed activity going on. Sailors filled about with ropes. Junior officers tilted it and fro. White-jacketed stewards wrestled with trunks. Probably the captain, though not visible, was also engaged on some useful work of a nautical nature and not wasting his time. Most women loaves, hats, gloves and fashions of fruit were flowing on board in a steady stream. The cavernous customs shed was congested with friends and relatives, and Sam Marlowe, heading for the gangplank, was only able to make progress by employing all the muscle and energy which Nature had bestowed upon him, and which during the twenty-five years of his life he had developed by athletic exercise. However, after giving minutes of silent endeavor, now driving his shoulder into the midriff of some obstructing male, now courteously lifting some stout female off his feet, he had succeeded in struggling to within a few yards of his goal, when suddenly a sharp pain shot through his right arm and he spun round with a cry.

It seemed to Sam that he had been bitten, and it puzzled him for New York crowds, though they may show and jostle, rarely bite.

He found himself face to face with an extraordinarily pretty girl.

She was a red-haired girl with a beautiful ivory skin which goes with red hair. Her eyes, though they were under the shadow of her hat, and he could not be certain, he diagnosed as green, or maybe blue, or possibly gray. Not that it mattered, for he had a catholic taste in feminine eyes. So long as they were large and bright, as were the specimens under his immediate notice, he was not the man to quibble about a point of color. Her nose was small, and on the very tip of it there was a tiny freckle. Her mouth was nice and wide, her chin soft and round.

Nature abhors a vacuum. Sammie Marlowe was a susceptible young man, and for many a long month his heart had been lying empty, all swept and garnished, with "Welcome" on the mat. This girl seemed to rush in and fill it. She was not the prettiest girl he had ever seen. She was the third prettiest. He had an orderly mind, one capable of classifying and docketing girls. He swindled compulsively. His well-developed chest swelled beneath its covering of blue flannel and invisible stripe. At last, he told himself, he was in love, really in love, and at first sight, too, which made it all the more impressive. He doubted whether in the whole course of history anything like this had ever happened before to anybody. Oh, to clasp this girl to him and—

But she had bitten him in the arm. That was hardly the right spirit. That, he felt, constituted an obstacle.

"Oh, I'm sorry," she cried.

Well, of course, if she regretted her rash act. . . . After all, an impulsive girl might bite a man in the arm in the excitement of the moment and still have a sweet, womanly nature.

"The crowd seems to make Pinky. Boodies so nervous."

Sam might have remained mystified, but at this juncture there proceeded from a bundle of rugs in the neighborhood of the girl's lower ribs a sharp yapping sound.

"I mean he didn't hurt you much. You're the third person he's bitten to-day." She kissed the animal in a

loving and congratulatory way on the tip of his black nose. "Not counting hellboys, of course," she added. And then she was swept from the crowd and he was left thinking of all the things he might have said—all those graceful, witty, ingratiating things which just make a bit of difference on these occasions.

Sam reached the gang-plank, showed his ticket, and made his way through the crowd of passengers, passengers' friends, stewards, junior officers and sailors who infested the deck. He proceeded down the main companion-way, through a rich smell of India-rubber and mixed pickles, as far as the dining-saloon; then turned to his stateroom.

A footstep sounded in the passage outside. The door opened.

"Hallo, Eustace!" said Sam.

Eustace Hignett nodded listlessly, sat down on his bag and emitted a deep sigh. He was a small, fragile-looking young man with a pale, intellectual face. Dark hair fell in a sweep over his forehead. He looked like a man who would write vers libre, as indeed he did.

"Hallo!" he said, in a hollow voice. "What on earth's the matter?" said Sam.

"The matter?" Eustace Hignett laughed mirthlessly. "Oh, nothing. Nothing much. Nothing to signify."

"Only my heart's broken." He eyed with considerable indignity the battle of water in the rack above his head, a harmless object provided by the company for clients who might desire to clean their teeth during the voyage.

"If you would care to hear the story?" he said.

"Go ahead."

"It is quite short."

"That's good."

"Soon after I arrived in America I met a girl."

"Talking of girls," said Marlowe with enthusiasm. "I've just seen the only one in the world that really amounts to anything. It was like this. I was showing my way through the mob on the deck, when suddenly . . ."

"I'll tell you my story, or will you tell me yours?"

"Oh, sorry! Go ahead."

Eustace Hignett scowled at the printed notice on the wall informing occupants of the stateroom that the name of their steward was J. B. Midgeley.

"She was an extraordinarily pretty girl."

"What was her name?"

"Wilhelmina Bennett. She was an extraordinarily pretty girl and highly intelligent. I read her all my poems and she appreciated them immensely. She enjoyed my singing. My conversation appeared to interest her. She admired my . . ."

"I see. You made a hit. Now go on with the rest of the story."

"I asked her to be my wife, and she consented. We both agreed that a quiet wedding was what we wanted—she thought her father might stop the thing if he knew, and I was dashed sure my mother would—so we decided to get married without telling anybody. By now," said Eustace, with a morose glance at the porthole, "I ought to have been on my honeymoon. Everything was settled. I had the license and the parson's fee. I had been breaking in a new tie for the wedding."

"And then you quarreled?"

"Nothing of the kind. I wish you would stop trying to tell me a story. I'm telling you. What happened is this: somehow—I can't make out how—mother found out. And then, of course, it was all over. She stopped the thing."

Sam was indignant. He thoroughly disliked his Aunt Adeline, and his cousin's neck subservience to her revolted him.

"Stopped it? I suppose she said, 'Now, Eustace, you mustn't!' and you said, 'Very well, mother!' and scratched the fixture?"

"She didn't say a word. She never has said a word. As far as that goes she might never have heard anything about the marriage."

"Then how do you mean she stopped it?"

"She pinched my trousers!"

"Pinched your trousers?"

Eustace groaned. "All of them! The whole dolly lot! She gets up long before I do, and she must have come into my room and cleaned it out while I was asleep. When I woke up and started to dress I couldn't find a solitary pair anywhere in the whole

place. I looked everywhere. Finally, I went into the sitting-room where she was writing letters and asked if she had happened to see any anywhere. She said she had sent them all to be pressed. She said she knew I never went out in the mornings—I don't as a rule—and they would be back at lunch time. A fat lot of use that was! I had to be at the church at eleven. Well, I told her I had a most important engagement with a man at eleven, and she wanted to know what it was and I tried to think of something, but it sounded pretty feeble and she said I had better telephone to the man and put it off. I did it, too. Rang up the first number in the book and told some fellow I had never seen in my life that I couldn't meet him! He was pretty peeved, judging from what he said about my being on the wrong line. And mother listening all the time, and I knowing that she knew—something told me that she knew—and she knowing that I knew she knew—I tell you it was awful!"

"And the girl?"

"She broke off the engagement. Apparently she waited at the church from eleven till one-thirty and then began to get impatient. She wouldn't see me when I called in the afternoon, but I got a letter from her saying that what had happened was all for the best and she had been thinking it over and had come to the conclusion that she had made a mistake. She said something about my not being as dynamic as she had thought I was. She said that what she wanted was something more like Lameter or Sir Galahad, and would I look on the episode as closed?"

"Did you explain about the trousers?"

"Yes. It seemed to make things worse. She said that she could forgive a man anything except being ridiculous."

"I think you're well out of it," said Sam judiciously. "She can't have been much of a girl."

"I feel that now. But it doesn't alter the fact that my life is ruined. I have become a woman-hater. Women! When I think how mother behaved and how Wilhelmina treated me I wonder there isn't a law against them. What mighty ill have not been done by women! Who was it that betrayed the Capitol?"

"In Washington?" said Sam, puzzled. He had heard nothing of this. But then he generally confined his reading of the papers to the sporting page.

"I was quoting from Thomas Gray's 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of St. Peter's Church.' He knew what he was talking about."

"Well, of course, he may be right in a way. As regards some women, I don't. But the girl I met on the deck—"

"Don't!" said Eustace Hignett. "If you have anything bitter and derogatory to say about women, say it and I will listen eagerly. But if you merely wish to gibber about the ornamental exterior of some faded girl you have been fool enough to get attracted by, go and tell it to the captain or the ship's officer or J. B. Midgeley. Do try to realize that I am a soul in torment. I am a ruin a spent force a man without a future! What does life hold for me? Love? I shall never love again. My work? I haven't any. I think I shall take to drink."

"Talking of that," said Sam, "I suppose they open the bar directly we pass the threshold. How about a small one?"

Eustace shook his head gloomily.

"Do you suppose I pass my time on board ship in gadding about and feasting? Directly the vessel begins to move I go to bed and stay there. As a matter of fact I think it would be wiser to go to bed now. Don't let me keep you if you want to go on deck."

"It looks to me," said Sam, "as if I had been mistaken in thinking that you were going to be a ray of sunshine on the voyage."

"Ray of sunshine?" said Eustace Hignett, pulling a pair of mauve pajamas out of the kit-bag. "I'm going to be a volcano!"

Sam left the stateroom and headed for the companion. He wanted to get on deck and ascertain if that girl was still on board. About now the sheep would be separating from the goats; the passengers would be on deck and their friends returning to the shore. A slight tremor on the boards or white frod told him that this separation must have already taken place. The ship was moving. He ran lightly up the companion. Was she on board or was she not? The next few minutes would decide. He reached the top of the stairs and passed out onto the crowded deck. And, as he did so, a scream, followed by confused shouting, came from the rail nearest the shore. He perceived that the rail was black with people hanging over it. They were all looking into the water.



"Oh, Nothing, Nothing Much—Nothing to Signify—Only My Heart's Broken."

"Oh, Nothing, Nothing Much—Nothing to Signify—Only My Heart's Broken."

"I seen wet guys, but I never seen anyone so wet as you."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Iris the Poor Man's Orchid.

It was the iris of which Ruskin wrote that it "has a sword for its leaf and a lily for its heart." It is the iris that is known as the fleur-de-lis of France. In Greek, from whence it came, the name means rainbow. In the United States it is often spoken of as the poor man's orchid. There are fully 100 species in cultivation, with varieties almost without number. The flowers of different classes do not all bloom at the same time, however; by choosing different kinds it is possible to have a long season.

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IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL
Sunday School Lesson
By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D.,
Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.
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LESSON FOR OCTOBER 28
SOME MISSIONARY TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHETS

LESSON TEXT—Isa. 60:1-3; Jonah 4:10-11; Micah 4:1-2; Zeph. 3:9.
GOLDEN TEXT—"The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising"—Isa. 60:3.
PRIMARY TOPIC—The Story of Jonah.
JUNIOR TOPIC—God's Love for All Nations.
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Prophets as Missionaries.
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—The Missionary Message of the Prophets.

Perhaps the best way to teach this lesson will be to note the message of the individual prophets.

I. The Message of Isaiah (Isa. 60:1-3).

1. Its Central Fact (v. 1). Isaiah's light, by Redeemer, has come. The primary meaning of this is not the illumination of the Redeemer, but His manifestation in glory and power as He comes back to this earth to reign as Israel's King. This glorious fact is presented under the figure of a bright sunrise. It will be a glorious morning without clouds dawning upon a dark world.

2. The Ringing Summons (v. 1). Messiah himself calls Israel to arise henceforth from her long sleep of indifference and slumber forth in the glory of her glorious king.

3. The Darkened Earth (v. 2). In spite of all the progress of the arts and sciences, spiritual darkness—blindness touching spiritual things—has settled down upon the earth. It will be peculiarly gross in the last days. It can only be dispelled by the glorious appearing of the Lord.

4. The Blessed Result (v. 3). The gentile nations shall come into the land, being attracted to Zion by the appearing of the Lord. In the midst of such darkness the sudden appearing of the light shall attract the nations and draw them to Jerusalem.

II. The Message of Jonah (Jonah 4:10-11).

Jonah was commanded by the Lord, to go and preach unto Nineveh and proclaim its destruction, in a forty-day period. This was a dangerous mission, for Nineveh was the greatest city of the world. A man who opposed the superstitious customs then in vogue, and who was surrounded by a great mob and after three days and nights was cast upon the shore. Having learned the needed lesson, he went to Nineveh and preached with such earnestness that the whole city repented. The mercy shown by the Lord in sparing this wicked city so angered Jonah that he went out of the city and improvised a shelter where he could see whether God would really destroy Nineveh. To protect the prophet, God made a gourd to quickly spring up and throw a shade over him. When the gourd died and left Jonah exposed to the burning sun he prayed for death. The particular message of Jonah is that God is great in mercy to all the nations when they penitently turn unto Him from their sins.

III. The Message of Micah (Micah 4:1-2).

In this message the prophet portrays the blessings of the Messiah's Kingdom in the last days. Three things are predicted:

1. The Supremacy of His Kingdom (v. 1). It shall be exalted above all the kingdoms of the earth. Its glory shall attract the people from afar.

2. The Extent of It (v. 2). Many nations shall come with the urgent request that others accompany them. The kingdom of Messiah shall be universal, it shall extend from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

3. It Shall Bring Peace (v. 3). Enmity will then be taken from men's hearts and they will love each other. When their hearts are changed they will no longer wage war against each other, they will even destroy their implements of warfare. War will continue till men's hearts are regenerated. The way to get wars to cease is to get men to love Jesus Christ.

IV. The Message of Zephaniah (Zeph. 3:9).

Zephaniah declares that following the judgment upon the nations God will turn the people from their impure speech so that they may call upon Him. He declares that God's will is that all nations turn from their filthy conversation and call upon Him. He desires that all nations should come unto Him.

Christianity.

In order to abolish Christianity the one thing needful is to get rid of Sunday.—George Holyoake.

To Appreciate Institutions.

Faithfully to appreciate institutions one must not hold them up against the light that blazes in Utopia.—Viscount Morley.

Mammon.

Mammon has enriched his thousands and has damned his ten thousands.—South.

The World.

Who may dispense the world, but we must do without it.—Baron Wessen.



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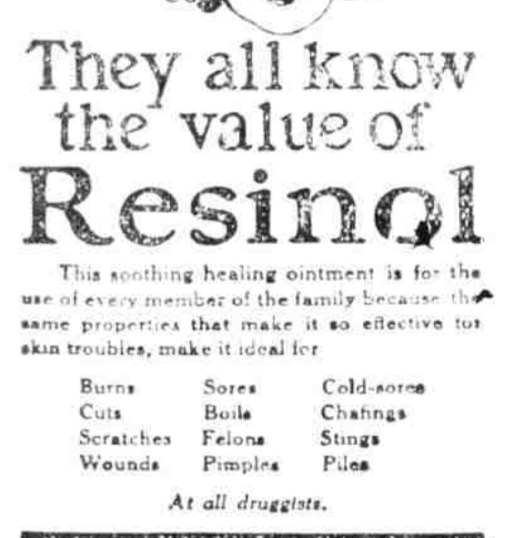
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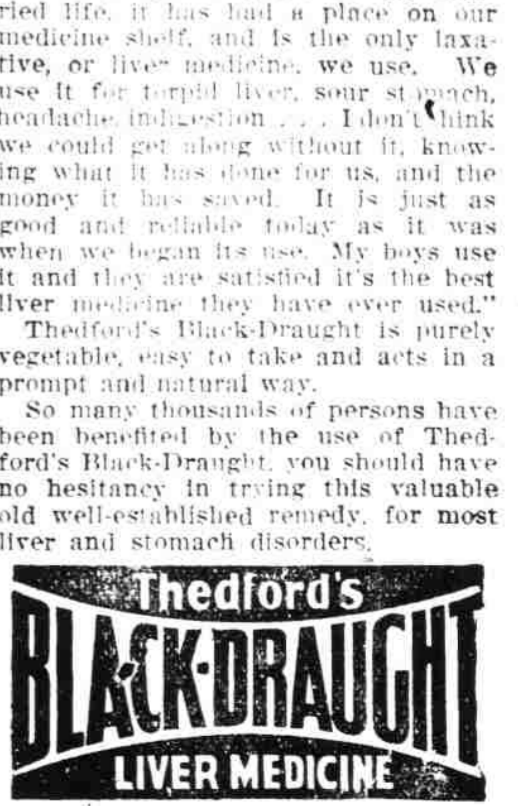
"I have used Thedford's Black-Draught—I believe I can safely say for fifty years."

"I was born and reared in Texas, Freestone County, sixty-four years ago. I have been married forty-four years. My father used Black-Draught before I was married, and gave it to us."

"For forty-four years of my married life, it has had a place on our medicine shelf, and is the only laxative, or liver medicine, we use. We use it for torpid liver, sour stomach, headache, indigestion. . . . I don't think we could get along without it, knowing what it has done for us, and the money it has saved. It is just as good and reliable today as it was when we began its use. My boys use it and they are satisfied it's the best liver medicine they have ever used."

Thedford's Black-Draught is purely vegetable, easy to take, and acts in a prompt and natural way.

So many thousands of persons have been benefited by the use of Thedford's Black-Draught, you should have no hesitancy in trying this valuable old well-established remedy, for most liver and stomach disorders.



Thedford's BLACK-DRAUGHT LIVER MEDICINE