

Secretary of Trivolous Affairs

by MAY TURELLE

COPYRIGHT 1921
DORRIS-MERRILL COMPANY

CHAPTER I.

Two Ladies Beret.

Jo slipped off her gloves and tossed them on the table where they lay, long, handsome and rather distinguished—there's always something so personal in a woman's glove!—then she sat down and we stared at each other. The props had been knocked from under us, and we had landed with a good, sound bump, surprised, astonished, astounded, dumfounded! But not despairing as yet. The blow hadn't had time to numb us, consequently we hadn't arrived at the despairing stage.

Jo has gorgeous eyes with long lashes that sweep her cheeks when she looks down, and she has a trick of doing that when she's thinking. But she was not looking down now; she was looking at me plainly perplexed—hunted, I'd say if I were inclined to be romantic—staring directly at my nose, which I'm rather proud of, with a slight pucker between her gorgeous eyes. The blow was beginning to sink in. I could tell by the droop settling at each corner of her beautiful mouth.

Two years ago when Jo was just bursting out of Radcliffe with all sorts of honors, and I was specializing in French, voice, expression, art, tennis, baseball and automobile with no hope of college and no wish to have and hope, my father died suddenly. It had been coming on a long time—for five years, to be exact—ever since my mother died. Jo was sixteen then; I was twelve. Jo mothered him and myself, as well as the infinite wisdom of her sixteen years would permit; read the books he liked, played the music he wished to hear, followed advice for motherless girls so that we would never do the wrong thing and give him cause to worry. But we never could fill that aching heart, and we knew it.

The copper muddle had done something to his income. It was necessary to cut down expenses, so we did away with the footman and six maids, sold the horses, which gave us no use for the groom, fired the chef, put Wilkins, the housekeeper, to cooking, and kept only one car. It also put an end to any social ambitions Jo might have had, and didn't; and placed us on a lower plane in everything except our self-respect.

Jo set herself to studying Practical Economy, and housekeeping—and pounded it into me—did the marketing where we paid nothing for style, and began to cut out those pages in the Sunday newspapers that tell how to use the left-overs. Then came a time when something happened that we could fully understand. A customer, old, reliable, absolutely safe, ordered stock and failed to pay for it when it slumped, and poor old Dad went down in the ruins. He saved his reputation, but it was the end. He was too old and heart-broken to recover; even his faith in friendship was gone. He came home, went to his room and died.

After we laid him beside our mother Jo took an inventory. We found we had a home, elegant and imposing in the most exclusive section of Boston, packed to the garret with mahogany, most of which had come down to us from the wonderful supply on the Mayflower, and all of it mortgaged up to the hilt. Everything else was swept away. It had been gone gradually for five years while poor old Dad simply drifted. Also we had some stock in a western mine that gave us three thousand a year. Our personal assets consisted of our name, some family portraits and jewelry, old-fashioned and elegant enough, but worth little to any one but ourselves; Jo had a good education, I had a smattering of everything, and both of us had the advantage of two years abroad, and good, sound, robust, healthy bodies. I am not counting Jo's beauty or those gorgeous eyes of hers, because Jo never would use those eyes except to see with.

I don't know how she managed, except that she was a born manager, to pull out so much from the wreck. She exchanged our equity in the house for the mortgagee's equity in the furniture, rented a modest apartment in the best neighborhood we could afford, put in as much of the mahogany as we could crowd into it, and sent the remainder to a storage warehouse guaranteed fire-proof, and locked it in with care and affection. She wouldn't part with a stick of it. Then she began to fray the edges of Practical Economy, bought a pair of shears, some tissue paper patterns, and set to work to make her own clothes and mine. She allowed us one luxury—we kept the car.

Now the final blow had fallen. Mr. Partridge telephoned us to come to the office. In itself it was not unusual. We always had to go down to look over the report and sign a receipt when a dividend was declared. But Jo ran her finger down the calendar, consulted a little red notebook, then shook her head. To my



Illustrations by V.L. BARNES

questions she answered: "Oh, nothing."

Mr. Partridge was a little old lawyer, bald and a bachelor. He received us with ceremony, bowed us into his inner office, where he raised his eyebrows to his stenographer and she disappeared. Then he fussed an unusual time over the papers on his desk, cleared his throat until I began to feel like coming forward with a suggestion about drafts on his poor little bald head, and fell to rubbing his glasses abstractedly as if making up his mind how to say whatever it was he had to say. Jo began to get suspicious. I could see it in the way she sat quite, quite still and held in.

Then it came! The mine—our mine—was up to its neck in water with every prospect of staying that way, and we no longer had three thousand a year. Jo didn't wince when the blow fell. She's like a wonderful piece of steel, anyway. It took me some little while fully to comprehend, so I didn't faint or do anything foolish. After all, Jo and I had the same father and mother; it's the only vanity I allow myself.

Mr. Partridge threatened to cry, instead of ourselves, as he patiently explained the details. There was no hope—he didn't tell us until there was no hope—the mine was now abandoned. An effort had been made to pump it dry, but it was like trying to pump out the Atlantic ocean. "We have the stock?" Jo asked quietly.

"It's not worth the paper it's printed on," Mr. Partridge replied with a groan. "Lock it up just as if it were," directed Jo, and rose to go.

"Have you thought?" Mr. Partridge blew his nose rather inelegantly to give vent to his feelings—"what you are going to do to replace that three thousand a year? Two young, attractive women left to make a living?"

"I'm going home, sit down and think what we're going to do," replied Jo.

I began to examine some Japanese prints on the wall which I knew nothing about, just to get command of myself. I was shaking as you do when you go to your window in the middle of the night to see the fire-engines pass.

"I don't mind for myself—" Jo paused and raised her eyebrows toward my back. I saw it quite plainly in a mirror set at just the proper angle. I turned around.

"I've been studying Practical Economy, too, Jo," I said bravely. "Don't you think I'm going to be game—too?"

Jo sweat me into her arms as if some one were trying to steal me—which, of course, nobody was—and patted my cheek.

"You're game enough, my dear little sister, but it isn't only Practical Economy we've got to look out for now—it's bringing in something to economize on." She turned to Mr. Partridge. "Here's a girl," her voice broke a little—"a young, attractive, well-bred girl, who has to get out into the world and earn her living. We

have to decide the best way she can do that to reflect credit upon herself and her family."

"And yourself? What are you going to do?" he asked after a minute. He rubbed his eyes as if he were very tired, and the broken piece fell to the floor where it lay unnoticed.

"There are a thousand things I can do," Jo smiled.

"Don't try to be too brave, my dear," Mr. Partridge replied. "The reaction will only come harder." He could see right through anybody just as if they were a newly-scrubbed pane of glass. "Now, I'm not rich, but I want you always to look upon me as your protector and come to me. I will help, heart, head and money-bag."

Jo put out her hand suddenly, and the handclasp was like that of two pals.

"And remember, too, my dear girl,

that the better looking a woman is when she's battling with the world, the harder it is for her to keep her footing. Remember! This very solemnly. "Now let me kiss you each on the forehead just as if I were your father, and don't fail to send me your morning, noon or night if you need me."

He jokingly climbed upon a hassock to deliver the kiss and even then Jo had to stoop, but it left us feeling that after all we were not so terribly alone in the world. I've often wondered why he never married.

So, Jo and I sat staring at each other across the room and tried to pretend that losing three thousand a year income wasn't anything at all; only so much as a broken vase, to be mended when we could get our breath. Jo's eyelashes swept her cheeks and I knew she was beginning to think.

"It's like so many keys on the piano," I said finally, breaking a silence that threatened to be tragic. "You try to pick out the ones that will give you the prettiest melody. And it's awfully hard." I ended, suddenly aware of it.

"I suppose I'll teach," Jo said, and then she gave way just a little. "I never wanted to think I'd have to teach."

I went down on my knees, took her hands and made her look at me. "You're not going to do anything you don't want to do," I said firmly. "You're not going to do all the sacrificing in this family. You're good, and firm, and strong, Jo, and I want to obey you, but away back in my get-up-there's a good, strong will of my own, and I'm going to have some say about this. Wait! There are many more keys on the piano; that tune jangled a bit, didn't it, dear?"

"Let's play a game," she suggested. "Let's prospect. We will begin with the things we would like to do and see how practical they are, then—"

"Or," I interrupted, breathlessly, "write a lot of things on a piece of paper and stick pins in to see how they come out."

"Perhaps that's as good a way as any," she answered much to my amazement. Jo has a clear sense of humor.

She got up and put aside her hat, then she picked up the gloves and pulled them through her fingers while the long lashes swept her cheeks again.

"The car will have to go," she said firmly. That Practical Economy certainly had seeped into Jo.

"It's not so much the money the car will bring, but the saving of its keep," I said, just to prove that I knew something of Practical Economy myself.

Jo nodded like a teacher does when you've answered the question properly; then a smile parted her beautiful lips.

"Louise, you're a dear," she said. "I was afraid to say so for fear—you'd be terribly disappointed."

I don't know why she paused unless she wasn't quite sure just what she was afraid of, although she's always so sure of everything. But, goodness! There are street cars to the Country Club.

"Perhaps I am," I replied, "but Jo, I'm not one, two, three bestie you."

CHAPTER II.

The Utility or Uselessness. Before the morning was over Jo was sure on what she'd economize, although she wasn't sure what she'd economize on. There's a difference there if you'll just notice it. We had no way of fixing our prospective income. We tried to aim high and didn't know if we could afford the apartment or not. We might be able to afford a better one—even the car! Again: here we were practically penniless, for we had no income and no profession; yet we stood the chance of landing something in our ambitious mood that would make the three thousand a year look foolish. We had never worked; we didn't know what we could do. It was a problem that had the Servant Question tied in a double knot.

Jo, for all her cheerfulness, had a hard time to put into words even the things she wanted to do. I knew what she wanted to do. She was just about to do it when the blow fell. She wanted to take a course in botany at the Harvard gardens and specialize in orchids, for she had hope of one day owning a country place where she could experiment, though how she was going to get the country place the Lord knows, unless she married it, and she hadn't counted that far. She finally swung back and around to teaching. It seemed the only thing.

"You might," I suggested, "demonstrate automobiles. It's outdoors and the hours are not long. No new man just learning to drive can stand the strain on his back—very long. Sometimes the place is in the country where the roads are beautiful. I don't think it would be wearing, Jo, because you always know without half thinking when a person is going to change gear without throwing out the clutch. You could make him fix punctures as a lesson."

"Perhaps, instead of a man," Jo smiled, "it would be a woman, a frail little creature whom the Lord never intended to drive a car; and she couldn't let off the emergency, much less jam it on if necessary I'd whack her and lose my job."

"You may be cut out for teaching, after all," I mused.

"Or," she went on, "he might be a fat man with short pudgy fingers, wearing diamond rings, and on one of those beautiful country roads we might reach a secluded spot and he might try to kiss me."

"Whack him!" I suggested. "She is quite capable of doing it, too."

While walking, and this after a time led me to discover the secret of his amazing industry. He sat only for a few hours at his desk, and I always wondered how he could be so prolific an author.

"Well, owing to his tactfulness in our country walks I began to suspect that it was then he evolved most of the plots of his novels. His brain was active all the time and the task of reproducing on paper the things he imagined and thought about became more or less a mechanical process."

"Anyhow it's the same thing the other way 'round. If you were learning to drive, and he were teaching you? The position is just the same."

Jo shook her head.

"A man with diamond rings wouldn't be teaching me to drive," she reminded me. "I won't argue it. I'd be exposing myself, for I never heard of a female demonstrator in the automobile business. I wouldn't be exposed teaching."

"You certainly wouldn't," I remarked, thinking of the frumpy professors who—But then they sometimes do, Jo—the professors kiss, I mean. I've seen it in the papers." She had to agree with me, too. "I'd back you in any capacity," I told her admiringly, "and the novelty of a female demonstrator might get you the job."

"A female chauffeur!" she laughed. "How does it sound?"

And from the way she looked at me I knew she never had considered the idea for a single minute. I'm sure I went red, for I'd been in earnest, and the whole idea seemed so novel and possible. She leaned forward finally and clasped her hands. I knew from the attitude that she was resigned—for something.

"The trouble is," she mused, "it's the wrong time of year to begin to teach. Another month and all the schools will be over."

"Good!" I said heartily. "So that's out."

I just wouldn't think of Jo as a teacher! She'd grow old and gray, and have to put spectacles over the gorgeous eyes, and fall into the habit of talking theorems and such stuff. I hate theorems!

"But then I may need time for preparation," she went on, not hearing me, I guess—at least not paying the

"I shall do something!" I burst out. "slightest attention if she did. "You see I don't know a thing about it, and then, too, I'll have to get the position."

"Well, where do I come in in this scheme of things?" I asked. "What am I to be doing all this time?"

Jo drew in her breath sharply as if something hurt, then put out her hands as if I had tried to strike her.

"I shall do something!" I burst out. "Surely, Jo, you don't think I'm a little nippy and can't?"

"You're too young," she began. "Young! Bosh!" I wouldn't let her go on with that. "Why, I'm nineteen!" I said it as if I'd been a thousand.

"My mother was married when she was nineteen. Why, Jo, when she was as old as you, you were three years old." I was getting rather mixed, I was so anxious to impress her.

"Poor old me," Jo sighed, then she laughed so heartily I know I grew red again. "And I've been thinking all this time that I was just getting a look-in on life. Why, I'm an old maid! And here I've never even had a thought of getting married."

And, sure enough, she never had. She never had had as close as a fourth cousin connection with a romance. I looked at her suddenly and wondered how in the world she had managed to escape; how she had kept some one from running off with her bodily.

"I suppose I've wasted my time," Jo went on. "I know I have thrown away chances. I might have married long ago and settled the future for both of us."

"You might have," I agreed, "but introspection, dear, won't take the place of our three thousand a year." Which argument must have made Practical Something or other sit up and take notice. "Now just don't you speak to me for ten minutes, and I'll tell you at the end of that time what I am going to do."

I put out my hand toward the newspapers just to brush up on the things there are to be done in this world. After consideration I selected a held-over Transcript as I wanted the very best advice going. The first thing that met my eye was: "The dancer who is supposed to have caused the downfall—" I turned over hastily. After all I was looking for the want column. Two minutes had not passed before I landed on the very thing: Wanted—Companion. Wealthy woman recovering from nervous prostration, wants young, good-looking, well-bred, well-educated, well-read, tactful girl for companion. Must speak French, bridge, foot-ball, baseball, automobile and golf. Prefer a musician who sings. Name your own salary.

"How much salary shall I name?" I asked excitedly.

"She doesn't want much!" Jo said with hauteur—just that, truly—not hearing my question, anyhow not answering it. "Well, I should say she would let any one name the salary. Where does she expect to get—"

I was jabbing my chest with my two forefingers and distorting my face to make Jo see I was it, because she didn't seem to listen to what I said.

"My goodness!" she exclaimed. "Do you qualify for all that?" She looked at the paper helplessly—the only time I ever saw Jo helpless about anything.

"You've always told me that good looks are a matter of opinion," I replied, "so barring looks and skimming in on golf—I know my A-B-C's of golf; I drive fairly, but I'm too wiggy to putt—why I think I might venture to say I do qualify for the rest. You see she doesn't say I've got to do all those things; I've just got to speak 'em."

"Don't bite off your words, Louise," she said in that calm, cool way of hers that's lots more effective than a slap. "Breath is cheap."

"I'll remember, dear," I promised. "I'd have promised her anything right at that minute."

"You're not tactful," she contradicted flatly, although she always tells me never to contradict anything flatly.

"I could be if I tried," I returned. "I know the rules."

"I wonder if she would consider you a musician, and if she would think you could sing? You've slapped at everything generally, but—"

"I'm sure I could squeeze in," I told her. "She only prefers a musician who can sing."

Now Jo knows my throat is a regular Trilby throat. The bridge of my nose is good and my diaphragm—from tennis and swimming—is almost as good as Tetrazzini's.

"Nervous prostration!" she mused finally, gazing at the lines she'd just seen. "A vampire who'll take the best of you and will leave you high and dry in the same condition as herself. I guess not."

"Why I have the constitution of an ox," I argued. "I haven't a nerve in my body."

"Not now," she interrupted. "Please, may I try? May I at least answer it?" I pleaded.

"It won't do any harm to answer it," she agreed, and I pounced upon her so suddenly with a kiss that it landed on her nose, "but—" She held up a forefinger. "Why not write an advertisement yourself, dictate your own terms, and let somebody come to you."

"Oh, I say, Jo, but that's two birds in the bush." I was thinking of the salary part.

"No harm trying," she smiled, "and I would call it another iron in the fire. You haven't the bird in the hand yet, and anyhow it may not be at all the kind of bird that I am going to like."

You will notice that she said "I" instead of "you," I suppose she knew the salary part made me blind as to which kind of a bird it was.

"True," I said, trying to look as wise as she did. I went to the desk to write one advertisement and answer the other. Of course I answered first. I chewed the end of the pen-staff reflectively, which I know is awfully bad form. Then I looked at Jo.

"Do you think?" I asked, "I dare name three thousand a year?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



Illustration of a woman sitting at a desk, looking thoughtful.

WHO & WHO

HEAD OF A NEW DEPARTMENT



Charles J. Brand, chief of the newly created division of markets under the agricultural department's new rural organization service, has the job of attempting to better market conditions, and thereby reduce the cost of living. His work will be educational and he will endeavor to create a high standard in packing and shipping food products to prevent waste. Co-operative markets for the producers will be tried and everything will be done to better the quality of the produce and to make its cost lower by establishing a standard method of marketing.

The possibilities of the plan are large and will involve questions of highway and railroad transportation. It is understood that country communities will be urged to co-operate as largely as they can in selling their products. It is understood the plan is ultimately to go further afield than marketing, for the development of the agricultural community is interlaced with the social development of the community in such a way that the officials think that one cannot be considered without considering the other.

The department, so the officials say, does not want to go too deeply into the problems of the individual farm family, but wants to encourage the communities so far as possible to develop themselves. They do not want to do anything for the farmers officially that can be done by the farmers themselves. At the same time the aim of the division will be to discover and work out effective methods of community development.

One problem will be to discover the natural boundaries which mark an individual community and urge the members in that circle to trade and exchange products among themselves when that is feasible, and to co-operate effectively when buying and selling outside. It has been found by observation that great economies can be effected in many communities by co-operative buying as well as selling.

Mr. Brand was born in Minnesota in 1879, is a graduate of the university of that state and is by profession a botanist and agriculturist.

PROTECTOR OF AMERICAN BIRDS

Dr. William T. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological park, appeared in Washington a few days ago before the senate committee to ask the congress of the United States to stop the activities of the American people in the extermination of birds for millinery purposes.

On the day of his return to this city he told the writer that fully 100 species of the most beautiful and curious birds of the world are now being exterminated to meet the demands for plumes, feathers and skins to use on women's hats.

He called attention to such salient facts as these: The number of wild birds annually consumed by the feather trade is so enormous as to challenge the imagination. The whole world is under tribute. No species is spared for sentimental reasons.

And the most beautiful and most curious species are the ones in the greatest danger of extermination. For instance, the exquisite birds of paradise are being exterminated literally before our eyes, and the extermination of a species is a crime. The greater and lesser birds of paradise and the Jobi bird of paradise are now nearly extinct.

The beautiful quetzal of Guatemala cannot be obtained alive at any price. The scarlet ibis, roseate spoonbill, Carolina parakeet and flamingo are now forever gone from the bird fauna of the United States—thanks, says Dr. Hornaday, to the feather hunters.

IS NOT A MENACING FORCE



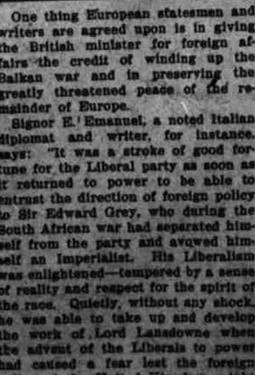
Twenty-five years ago, on June 15, 1888, the sudden death of the German Emperor Frederick, after 100 days of reign, brought to the throne of the German empire his son Wilhelm II, only twenty-nine years old, and looked upon as an autocratic and impulsive youth wrapped up in heart and soul in military matters and thirsting for military glory. When, soon after his accession, he broke with Bismarck, the iron chancellor, making it perfectly clear that he intended to be sole master in Germany, the apprehensions as to what his reign might bring became graver and more widespread. Within his own dominions and abroad Wilhelm was considered a menacing force—a potential war lord.

Now, 25 years later, he is acclaimed everywhere as the greatest factor for peace that our time can show. It was he, we hear, who again and again threw the weight of his dominating personality, backed by the greatest military organization in the world—an organization built up by himself—into the balance for peace whenever war clouds gathered over Europe.

And, on every hand, this is enthusiastically acknowledged by his contemporaries. In this twenty-fifth year of his rule eminent men here and abroad are intoning a chorus of praise to him as the great peace lord of the world.

In spite of all its ostentation, Germany is working splendidly and is moving forward with the best in science and art and economics and law. Herein, too, the emperor with his incessant energy represents the noblest impulse of the popular feeling.

ENGLAND'S PEACE ADVOCATE



One thing European statesmen and writers are agreed upon is in giving the British minister for foreign affairs the credit of winding up the Balkan war and in preserving the greatly threatened peace of the remainder of Europe.

Signor E. Emanuel, a noted Italian diplomat and writer, for instance, says: "It was a stroke of good fortune for the Liberal party as soon as it returned to power to be able to entrust the direction of foreign policy to Sir Edward Grey, who during the South African war had separated himself from the party and avowed himself an imperialist. His Liberalism was enlightened—tempered by a sense of reality and respect for the spirit of the race. Quietly, without any shock, he was able to take up and develop the work of Lord Lansdowne when the advent of the Liberals to power had caused a fear lest the foreign policy of the United Kingdom might undergo an abrupt and radical change. From the outset of his career as minister he was able, naturally and with innate facility, to find the just path, and this reassured all those, within the diplomatic world and without, who feared that the assumption of power by the Radicals might be fatal to England's prestige and interests."

Straightforwardness, in the opinion of Signor Emanuel, is the best, better than any other, account for the success of "this exceptional statesman." His program has been "Make new friendships without renouncing the old ones," and he has faith in its realization.

DICKENS' METHOD OF LABOR

Great Novelist Evolved Plans as He Walked, According to Testimony of Old Friend.

Thomas Stone, the veteran painter whose sketches of young men and women ministering to parting in old-fashioned parlors have for so many years delighted the British public, yesterday told the birthday last reminder to a new giving case in the country road. Dickens spoke but little

while walking, and this after a time led me to discover the secret of his amazing industry. He sat only for a few hours at his desk, and I always wondered how he could be so prolific an author.