

A New Year's Eve Proposal

By L. G. Redmond Howard

(By L. G. REDMOND HOWARD)

Just my luck. There was New Year's Day coming round again, and I'm blessed if one of those miserable germs hadn't taken it into its silly head to have its honeymoon in the back of my throat of all throats and, apparently, had decided to settle down there for life, even if it means the "death" of me. Just the week, too, as it happens, I'd planned to be up and doing, and propose to its sweetest girl in the world in that most irresistible "setting"—the Chelsea Arts Ball at the Albert Hall.

I had my special act off by heart in words that would really have "melted asbestos," but started in a spirit of banter in a kind of competition between us for the best New Year's resolution for the both of us—when in steps "Mr. Laryngitis," the villain of the piece, with another rotter in the shape of a peremptory order to give up my room for arrears of rent. Now, in hopes and ambitions, I was a "millionaire of optimism" but, in solid cash, without the price even of the tickets but the blacker the prospect looked as I stared up at the white ceiling of my sick bed, the more I had that tantalizing feeling that clouds would break in the coming year.

I was staying at the time in one of those Bayswater boarding houses, described as a "Home from Home," where a kind of bargain-basement group of guests try to keep up outward appearances—till something turns up. I was just awaiting the acceptance of my first novel.

Amy, for that was HER name, said she was certain it would make my fortune, bless her. Her Christmas card stared down at me from the mantelpiece propped up by a collar stud, when suddenly, as I stared at this strange pair of articles, the door flew open and a head appeared. It was that of a very well, though only half dressed young man (the latest guest, I suppose), who at once apologised for the intrusion.

"Sorry, old man—thought it was my room . . ." and then his eye rested upon my collar stud, and then wandered back to my bedside where lay a bottle of liquid murder, as far as "germs" were concerned. "Please don't apologise," I replied. "You look worried though. Is there anything I can do?"

"Golly, you can lend me your collar stud, old man. I've got to get into glad rags, and all that kind of thing . . . don't you know, I've a Rolls Royce outside waiting . . ."

"About the only thing I can do for you, 'Take it,'" I replied, and I saw him give a glance round the room, spotting my tie.

"Gosh, the old school he—you were there, weren't you? Remember the French master? I was only a kid—you'd not remember me, 'Jones'—but I know your face."

The next moment we were deep in old memories. He remembered me at once when I reminded him of my name and said I was always painting at school. He recognized my touch as he saw a couple of landscapes of mine.

"I must have those," he said insistently. "Name your price. Fifteen guineas? I can afford it, old chap. No—no—don't lower your price for friendship's sake."

Here was a friend indeed—and I told him of my taking up writing—my new novel—and, of course the Christmas card, and its sender, whose photo was in the little silver frame beside it.

"As a matter of fact," I said, "if only I can get over this throat in time I wanted to take Amy to the Albert Hall Ball . . . for the New Year."

"Schoolboy confidence, I added: "I intend to pop the question that night."

"Now, that's funny . . . why, I'm joining Lord Wrancaster's party there . . . Having a box . . . if you'll have a couple of seats with us, you're more than welcome."

Here again would I hear a word against the old school tie.

Already my throat felt better—my heart throbbing with hopes, as he said going off with my stud: "Leave everything to me. It won't cost you a penny piece, and I'll run you out in the car—though whether it will be the blue one or the grey, I haven't decided yet. So long, and he vanished like a flash to complete his dressing."

Instantly I popped out of bed and peeped out. Sure enough, there was the most wonderful Rolls Royce I'd ever seen, complete with chauffeur in livery, so I waited till it "honked" itself off, then called in one of my fellow guests to make enquiries.

"Oh—Jones—new guest. He isn't half cutting a dash downstairs. Joy rides night and day—every time a Rolls—so we've called him Rolls Royce Jones. Just come into a fortune—down from Hazelmore. He inherits some 100,000 or more . . ."

"I was at school with him—at least he says so—but, you know, he was only a kid—so I wouldn't

Meadowbank Concert

The Meadowbank School Concert was held on Friday, December 30 in Meadowbank School with a large number present. The school was prettily decorated for the occasion. The secretary, Mr. George Boyle presided and the following program was presented.

Chorus, There'll Always Be An England.—School.
Welcome, Shirley Jewell.
Christmas Wishes—Five pupils.
Recitation—Norma MacFadyen.
Recitation, Norman MacPhail.
Solo, Charlie Was a Sailor—Norris Scott.
Dialogue, Christmas Disappointment.
Recitation, Merwyn Scott.
Duet, Away in a Manger.—Mrs. S. Drake and Teacher.
Monologue, Christmas Acknowledgments—Pauline MacLean.
Solo, You Are My Sunshine—Merwyn Scott.
Tableau, Christmas Stocking—Parker Jewell.
Recitation, Howard Murray.
Dialogue, Irish Philosophy.
Solo, Where Do We Go From Here—Roland Hyde.
Solo, Heck Says It.
Recitation—Parker Jewell.
Monologue, Digestin' the newspaper—Lawson Drake.
Recitation—Lennis MacFadyen.
Solo, Lloyd Scott.
Dialogue, Christmas Wants Supplied.
Recitation, Lorraine Clow.
Chorus, Ring Merry Bells—School.
Farewell—Audrey MacPhail.
Instrumental music by Hector and Lloyd Scott was heartily applauded at intervals in the program.

After the program there was a drawing for a lovely fruit cake, in aid of the Red Cross, the lucky winner being Wendell Horton. There was also a drawing for a door prize won by Mrs. Roland Jewell.

Jolly old Santa arrived and presented the gifts from a well loaded tree. The teacher received a beautiful pair of house slippers and stockings from her pupils.

After singing God Save The King the crowd dispersed.

Hollywood beauty news!

LUX Toilet Soap NOW DOWN IN PRICE!

I'VE FOUND THE RIGHT CARE FOR MY SKIN

LUX Toilet Soap




The luxurious beauty care of Hollywood's most famous stars, and lovely women everywhere, is now yours at a real saving.

Yes, Lux Toilet Soap . . . the fragrant, white soap chosen by 9 out of 10 screen stars to guard their precious complexions . . . is down in price! That means more women than ever before will enjoy this luxurious Whipped Cream Lather beauty care.

Use Lux Toilet Soap, not only for your complexion but for the bath, too! There couldn't be a more delightful way to protect daintiness! You'll find a Lux Toilet Soap beauty bath leaves your skin delicately fragrant, sweet!

Begin now to give your skin the all-over care it needs for loveliness. Get several cakes of Lux Toilet Soap at the new low price today!

9 out of 10 screen stars use Lux Toilet Soap

ever, rather than that on their faces, which struck terror into my soul.

"Possibly His Lordship may not want to charge, but he seems to answer the description."

"This, just as the New Year was being run in! My heart was fit to break. I could never hope, try as I would, to explain all this to Amy, much less to her parents."

Happy New Year, indeed I felt in my pockets. I still had the fare to the Thames Embankment, when just then in came "His Lordship and Her Ladyship, the latter like oversize mannequin using diamond bullets, her eyes flashing like a couple of searchlights.

I rose and bowed apologetically. I did not forget I am a gentleman, but quite forgetting I was dressed in the most perfect disguise of a Paris "apache"—that I thought would win first prize at the Albert Hall.

"Alice—Cochon—Prison," said the American heiress, wife of the Noble Peer . . . fresh from the French Embassy and anxious to appear a linguist. Being able to speak French from childhood this gave me my chance and I addressed Lord Wrancaster, a typical old "Diplomat."

"If—Madame la Comtesse—had any secrets, possibly she would be better advised not to speak in French, which I understand perfectly."

The touch of sarcasm, combined with perfect politeness, seemed to tickle His Lordship's sense of humor, and he dismissed his late spouse to her room, saying he would deal with the "situation" himself.

For this I thanked him profusely, and left alone, he pressed for my explanation of the cock and bull story, which seemed to have reached him from Scotland Yard.

"My Lord," I said, "I only beg for one thing—for God's sake spare me the ignominy of the police courts—it would bring sorrow to one for whom I would lay down my life."

"I suppose I must have been hysterical certainly, but I wish the joybells all round crying out as if in cynical triumph. 'A Happy New Year.'"

No—a thousand noes—all the happy year I should ever know would be the "past year"—of memory.

The old peer relaxed. He put up his eyeglass and I felt like a worm under the microscope—the fat man under the "X" rays. I knew it would be impossible to deceive him, even if I had tried. Might as well make a clean breast of it—no fool such as I had made of myself could possibly be a criminal. So I told him my story . . . without hiding a single detail, while he gazed on in silence . . . or such silence as the New Year, joys, echoing all round, allowed.

"If you don't believe me," I pleaded in desperation, "just ring up the lady's father—a well-known Australian K. C.—himself a Prince of Hosts. Ask him if he knows 'Reddy' (my nickname out at Hurlingham). Then, if you are satisfied, make some excuse for me—say the party is off—I've had a nervous breakdown . . . anything you like."

The moment I mentioned the name of Amy's father he smiled, for, as it chanced, they were apparently known to each other . . . and I felt myself going red hot with sheer shame as I listened to the disjointed conversation.

Is there anything in the world more provoking than a "one-way traffic" of words? Anyway, I heard a great laugh—that hearty colonial laugh that warms the cockles of one's heart, and the next moment I was declared a free man.

I passed out between the two Scotland Yard men with a noble handshake and "Happy New Year," and went back to my bed-sitting-room, there to pen the most abject apology I had ever written in my life and saying "goodbye," as I was leaving for Ireland in a day or so, never to return.

I would never forget her kindness and the happy home at Hurlingham, I said where I dwelt—a memory that I should cherish to my dying day—however unworthy I might have appeared to deserve it. Then I turned into bed to face a continuous nightmare.

In the land of dreams I committed every form of suicide—by fire, water, poison, dagger, revolver and cliff-jumping, etc.

New Year's Day brought me back to a sense of reality. Suicide?—not on your life!—I'd live to make Rolls Royce Jones pay for this—and with his life if need be.

Meanwhile, however, Scotland Yard had got on to the right scent, but it was more a medical than a criminal case. The father of Rolls Royce Jones had come up from Hazelmore looking for his escaped lunatic of a son, who was car mad . . . who was once again in the safe hands of his keeper in the country asylum.

Meanwhile, as to Amy! For, in reply to my abject note. I got a hurried note to come to see her, which I did in fear and trembling, and learnt that, thank heaven, she had been blissfully unconscious of the whole story, her dutiful parents having taken the precaution to check the mad Irish Bohemian's invitation to the Chelsea Arts Ball on New Year's Eve.

In fact, she only heard the full details as her father, a twinkle in his eye, told the tale before a bunch of guests, boys and girls, invited for the week-end as if it had happened to somebody unknown to the company . . . while I was on the verge of apoplexy all the while. Suddenly, after the dear old host had pulled my leg enough, Amy said:

"I think it was very wrong of her father not to let her go."

It did show the poor fellow loved the girl . . . and if it had been me I'd have married him for it.

Then her father remarked quickly: "By the way, you've forgotten to wish Reddy a Happy New Year." I wonder what resolutions you two are going to make . . ."

Do you know? Can't you guess? Well, every day since both Amy and myself send a lunatic a "card" with "all the best—from us both."

The last answer we got from the warden of the sanatorium was that "Jones" was getting better, so that's all.

UNION ROAD WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

On December 17th a meeting of the Union Road Women's Institute was held at the home of Mrs. Robert Mellish. Nine members and two visitors were present at the meeting. The minutes of last meeting were read and adopted.

It was decided to make a district collection for the King's County Hospital.

Mrs. George Mellish agreed to take charge of the donations.

An auction sale of small household articles was held and proceeds amounted to \$1.40.

The committees appointed for next month are as follows: Sick, Elsie Mellish and Mrs. Everett Moore; School, Mrs. Tom Mellish and Mrs. Alex McPherson; Programme, Mrs. Vernon Ross and Mrs. Minard's for dandruff.

DONAGH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

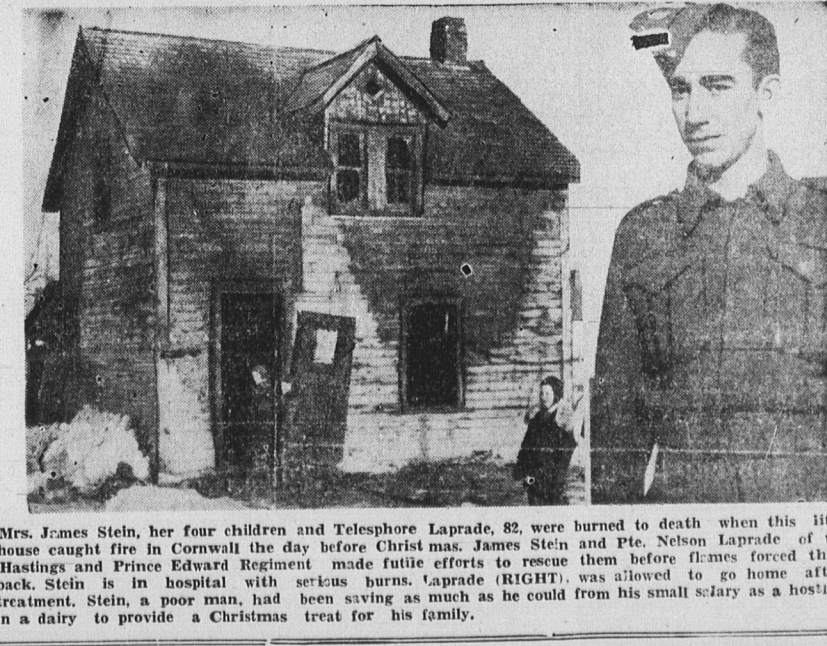
Donagh Women's Institute held their annual meeting at the home of Mrs. Leo Trainor. The president presided and opened the meeting with the "Ode" followed by the "Credo" in unison. Roll call was responded to by payment of fees. The minutes of last regular meeting were adopted as read. A detailed report of the financial statement was given by the secretary-treasurer. This report showed total receipts of \$72.06. These funds were raised by ice-cream and other entertainments in the school. The total expenditure was \$71.35.

The members completed seven pairs of socks, and twenty pairs of wristlets for the Red Cross. It was moved and seconded that the same officers be appointed. Motion carried a vote of thanks was tendered the officers for the past year. New committee were appointed for three months. School Committee, Mrs. Joseph Trainor and Mrs. Lenus Smith; Sick Committee, Mrs. Joseph Murtagh and Mrs. Frank Trainor; Program Committee, Mrs. Eugene Trainor and Mrs. John McNally. Mrs. Mathias Koughan invited the January meeting to her home.

A dainty lunch was served by the hostess and the meeting adjourned.

Hospital. Mrs. Lloyd Mellish and Mrs. George Mellish agreed to take charge of the donations.

Use Minard's for dandruff.



Mrs. James Stein, her four children and Tephore Laprade, 82, were burned to death when this little house caught fire in Cornwall the day before Christmas. James Stein and Pte. Nelson Laprade of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment made futile efforts to rescue them before flames forced them back. Stein is in hospital with serious burns. Laprade (RIGHT) was allowed to go home after treatment. Stein, a poor man, had been saving as much as he could from his small salary as a hostler in a dairy to provide a Christmas treat for his family.

TILLIE THE TOILER — SHE CAN'T TAKE IT!



By Westover

SILENT SCREEN STAR DIES

Agnes Ayres, star of the silent screen, who played opposite Rudolph Valentino and other film hits of the day, is dead in Los Angeles at the age of 41. She died in comparative privacy after retiring from the screen with a considerable fortune.