

THE COST OF A KISS.

BY PHILIP GIBBS.

It was a grand morning for a hunt. The dew lay thick on the grass and sparkled like a myriad of gems in the bright sunshine. The hunters opened their mouths and drank in the keen morning air as they dashed after the beagles, past farm and homestead, over hedge and ditch, up hill and down dale. The fox was a gallant fellow, and fled like the wind before his pursuing foes, who followed the scent with nose to the ground and tail erect. After a dashing chase, in which many a horseman was left behind, Sir Bernard slackened speed at last, and in another moment Lord Willowbrook shouted the "view halloo!" By this time they had formed a semi-circle, and were half way back to Willowbrook village. On the crest of the hill stood a little stone-built house covered with jasmine and Virginia creeper. It was the little school of Willowbrook, and the singing of the children came through the open door and mingled with the faint baying of the weary beagles, who panted up the hill after their tired victim. They were close upon him now, and in another moment his fate would have been sealed, when suddenly there was a cry of astonishment from Lord Willowbrook, who was the foremost huntsman.

"By Jove, the animal has run into the schoolhouse!" It was a fact; the poor tired beast had seen the open door, and had dashed in to escape the fangs of the hounds behind him. The children in the school set up a frightful shriek, and the school door was rapidly banged to in the face of the hungry beagles, who ran to and fro, baying and whimpering in frantic excitement.

"Well, this is certainly a rum go," said Lord Willowbrook, as the other huntsmen struggled up. "What shall we do?"

"Call off the hounds and get inside," said Frank Cowley, the parson's mad-cap son. After some consultation this was finally agreed upon. The school door had been locked and nobody opened it after repeated knocking, so with very little ceremony, Frank Cowley put his shoulder to the door and attempted to burst it open. It was a solid piece of oak, with strong bolts outside, a somewhat singular arrangement, only used when the place was empty. The lock resisted all his attempts; but, when half a dozen stalwart fellows hurled themselves against it, it yielded. The dozen or so young huntsmen entered pell-mell into the school room, but pulled themselves up suddenly when they realized their situation.

At the end of the large room, on a little raised dais, upon which was a school desk, stood a young girl, surrounded by a group of little children who were clinging to her skirts in terror at the sudden invasion. She was a slim, fair girl, with a mass of sunny golden hair; and, as she stood by her desk, with flushed cheeks and an angry light in her blue eyes she looked very pretty and haughty.

"What is the meaning of this unwarrantable intrusion, gentlemen?" she said, in a clear, silvery voice.

The young huntsmen touched their caps, but could not find anything to say.

"Gadzooks, what a pretty gal!" whispered the irrepressible Frank Cowley.

Lord Willowbrook was the first to speak.

"Madam," he said, in that deep, musical voice of his which caused such a thrill to the hearts of the female inhabitants of Willowbrook, "we sincerely ask your pardon, but—but we are rough huntsmen, our fox took refuge in your school and in the ardor of our sport, we have, perhaps forgotten our manners."

"I think that is the case," said the schoolmistress with a faint suspicion of a smile. "However, gentlemen, you will not find your fox here, because it has gone up the chimney, where you are at perfect liberty to follow it."

The huntsmen burst into a merry laugh which put them at their ease.

The young lord of the manor sat down on the foremost bench and looked round curiously at the little schoolroom, fitted with rows of wooden desks, and decorated with colored maps and charts. Then his eyes returned to the pretty schoolmistress, with the golden hair, and to the little group of village children who had recovered from their fright, and were peeping behind her skirts.

"Really, this is quite charming!" said the young man, pleasantly, as if to open a conversation.

"Reminds one of one's youth, doesn't it?" said Mr. Frank Cowley, sitting down on another bench, and taking up one of the children's slates.

"I say, schoolmistress," said Tom Hardy, one of the neighboring squires, more renowned for his good temper than for his brilliant wit, "s'pose you give us a lesson?"

The proposition was received with a general burst of applause from the huntsmen, who sat down with much clatter and jingle of spurs in the children's benches, and possessed themselves with slates and pencils. The school children, who were beginning to think the whole scene fine fun, clapped their hands at the idea of "schoolmistress" teaching 12 big huntsmen in scarlet jackets.

"A lesson! A lesson!" cried the huntsmen.

"Certainly," said the schoolmistress, with a mischievous twinkle in her blue eyes. "I will give you a lesson on manners!"

Frank Cowley, with a roar of laughter. "Perhaps, gentlemen," she said, in a clear, decisive tone, as if she were delivering a lecture, "perhaps you have not been told before that it is extremely rude for gentlemen to wear their hats in a room where there are ladies."

The huntsmen looked at each other rather sheepishly and pulled off their caps hastily.

"You also seem to be unaware of the fact," continued the schoolmistress, with a triumphant smile at her success, "that no gentleman has a right to be seated while a lady stands without first obtaining her permission."

Lord Willowbrook rose from his seat with a stately bow and his companions followed his example.

"Thirdly and lastly," continued the schoolmistress, "it is the height of bad manners to intrude one's self where one is not wanted."

The dozen or so young squires went off into prolonged laughter, during which the schoolmistress resumed her place at her desk with much dignity, but, with a smile lurking at the corners of her mouth.

When the laughter had subsided Lord Willowbrook stepped forward and bowed low before the fair instructor.

"Madam," he said, "my companions will, I am sure, join me in apologizing profoundly for the grave breach of etiquette of which we have been guilty, and I beg to assure you, in their name, and in my own, that we will not forget the lesson which you have given us."

The huntsmen applauded vigorously and cried "Hear, hear!" with much enthusiasm.

"I beg to second my friend's speech," said Frank Cowley, "and thank you heartily for your valuable instruction. Before we take our leave, however, we must not omit the payment of so great a favor."

"Hear, hear!" shouted the huntsmen.

"The payment?"

"As payment," continued the parson's son, with much gravity, "I propose that before we take our leave we each and severally give our fair schoolmistress—a kiss!"

"A kiss! A kiss!" shouted the young fellows, enthusiastically.

The schoolmistress turned pale and retreated behind the blackboard.

"At your peril, gentlemen!" she cried, indignantly.

They were about to carry out their intention when young Lord Willowbrook sprang forward and placed himself between his friends and the blackboard.

"Stop, gentlemen!" he shouted authoritatively.

His companions started back, surprised and angry.

"Faith! You're not going to be fool enough to spoil sport?" said Mr. Frank Cowley, irritably.

"Gentlemen," said the young lord of the manor, determinedly, "I will horse-whip anyone who dares to touch this lady. I appeal to your sense of honor. We are a dozen against one, and it would be unmanly to insult this lady after so well-merited a lesson as she has given us."

The huntsmen looked at each other with hesitation. Willowbrook evidently meant what he said, and he was not the sort of man to tackle.

"Oh, well, don't let's quarrel over it," said Cowley, at length. "Kisses are not so scarce that they are worth fighting over. Come on, you fellows; let us turn back and get something to drink." So saying, the young men sauntered out of the schoolroom whistling carelessly.

His fellow huntsmen scowled angrily at Lord Willowbrook, but following into their saddles, cantered back to Willowbrook village.

Lord Willowbrook rode behind them for a little way, but when he came to the bend of the road by the old mill he suddenly turned his horse's nose and galloped back to the little schoolhouse on the hill. He tied his horse to the stump of a tree and sauntered into the school again. It was Saturday—a half holiday—and all the children had gone, but the schoolmistress was engaged in putting away the books.

She started at the clatter of Willowbrook's spurs on the threshold and blushed a deep crimson when she saw who was her visitor.

"May I ask what—that is the cause of your return?" she said, nervously.

"Madam," said the young man, smiling pleasantly and with a gallant bow, "I have come for the favor of a kiss."

The schoolmistress retreated hastily and placed herself behind a desk.

"I—I do not understand you, sir. After your generous defense, for which I thank you much, I am sure you do not mean what you say. Perhaps you are joking?"

"No, madam," said the young huntsman, with cool assurance, "that is the inconsistency of human nature. Because I do not permit my friends, Frank Cowley, Tom Hardy, William Eccles and the others to salute your fair cheeks with a kiss is no reason why I, Anstus Willowbrook, lord of the manor, should deny myself that pleasure."

"My lord, I am sure you will do no such thing," said the schoolmistress.

"Madam, I most assuredly shall!" said the young man.

The schoolmistress looked for some means of escape, but Lord Willowbrook stood with his back to the door.

"I think you had better give up!" said the schoolmistress.

"Never!" said Lord Willowbrook.

"I am hungry, my lord, and want to get home to dinner."

"You can easily do so."

"How?"

"By letting me kiss you," said Lord Willowbrook, calmly.

The schoolmistress thought for a moment.

"I will let you do so, on one condition," she said, at last.

"What is that?" said Lord Willowbrook.

"If you will promise to remain here until I've had time to get half way to Willowbrook village."

"Agreed," said Lord Willowbrook, cheerfully.

The schoolmistress came from behind the blackboard and waited slowly for the young man to approach her. Lord Willowbrook stepped forward, and, lifting up the girl's head and looking into her blue eyes, he imprinted a kiss on her lips.

"You shall pay dearly for this my lord!" she cried, with flushed cheeks and an indignant frown.

"Anything you please," said Lord Willowbrook, with perfect good humor. "So great a pleasure is worth any price."

But he was not quite prepared for the little schoolmistress' next move. Before he could realize the situation she had darted out of the little house, the great oak door was slammed to and the bolts were thrust into their sockets.

"Caught, by Jove!" he cried.

It was true. The door was securely fastened from without and resisted all efforts to budge, the little lattice windows were too small to admit of egress, and he was imprisoned like a rat in a trap.

"I wish you good day, my lord!" cried the schoolmistress, with a triumphant peal of silvery laughter, and then the young man heard the sound of her retreating footsteps which gradually grew fainter and fainter, and finally died away.

Taken prisoner he was. There was not the slightest chance of escape, and his only hope was that his captor would repent and come back to liberate him. But hour after hour passed and the schoolmistress did not return. He examined the maps on the walls, the initials carved on the desk, the ink stands on the floor, and still he did not come. Hour after hour went by until the light began to fail and twilight crept in through the lattice windows and Lord Willowbrook became very cold and hungry. Still he did not lose his temper, or wish that he had not been so eager for a kiss, and he paced up and down, holding imaginary conversation with the little schoolmistress, in which he expressed his undying admiration for her trick, and offered her his hand and heart.

But the schoolmistress did not come to answer him, and at last the twilight deepened into darkness, and he realized that he would have to spend the night in the little schoolhouse. At last he fell into a confused sleep, disturbed by dreams of the little schoolmistress, and he awoke next morning feeling very cold and hungry.

It was Sunday, and the church bells in Willowbrook village were ringing for service. He could picture all his friends trooping into the little church and wondering at his disappearance. What a fool he should look when the story became known! He, the lord of the manor, who had disdained the advance of the combined female forces of Willowbrook, to be caught in the toils of a little schoolmistress. He would be the laughing-stock of the country-side. He would not dare show his face outside of the manor house.

The day passed tediously for the young man, and he was beginning to picture a death by slow starvation, when the sound of approaching voices, the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the tramp of many feet sounded joyfully in his ears.

"At last!" he cried, springing up from a bench on which he had been reclining. The sounds grew nearer, and presently stopped before the little school, and Lord Willowbrook blushed when he heard the laughter of many voices.

"Now for a nimble wit!" muttered the lord of the manor. "Help me, all ye powers, to get out of this pretty scrape!"

The bolts were drawn back, the door was thrown open and disclosed to the eyes of young Lord Willowbrook half the population of Willowbrook village, foremost among whom was the pretty schoolmistress with the golden hair, accompanied by Messrs. Frank Cowley, Tom Hardy and William Eccles, while the rear was brought up by old Parson Cowles, in the threadbare coat and white bands, with old Dr. Featherfew and Mrs. Bodkin.

A burst of derisive laughter greeted the young man as he stepped out jauntily into the open and bowed low before the assembled company.

The pretty schoolmistress stepped forward and curtsied to her former prisoner.

"My lord," she said, with a pretty impudence, "I have had my revenge."

Lord Willowbrook bowed with a pleasant smile.

"Tis true, madam," he said, in so low a tone that it could be heard by none save the schoolmistress, "and I will now have mine."

So saying he took the young girl in his

arms before she could escape from him and kissed her again and again before the astounded villagers.

Then he turned to the little group who were staring at the scene in open-mouthed astonishment.

"Gentlemen," he cried, in a loud, triumphant voice, "permit me to present to you my future wife—the lady of the manor!"—Peterson's Magazine.

Bread, Butter and Health.

Many physicians, according to a lecturer on dietetics, are ordering thin bread and butter for delicate patients, especially to those suffering from dyspepsia, consumption and anaemia, or any who need to take on flesh. This thin bread and butter insensibly induces persons to eat much more butter than they have any idea of. It is extraordinary, says the lecturer, how short a way a pat of fresh butter will go if spread on a number of thin slices of bread. This is one advantage, and a great one, in the feeding of invalids, for they are thereby provided with an excellent form of the fat which is so essential to their nutrition in a way that lures them to take it without rebellion. But the thin bread and butter has another advantage equally as great—it is very digestible and easily assimilated. Fresh butter made from cream is very more digestible when spread upon thin slices of bread than the same amount of cream eaten as cream, per se, would be.

MAKE THE MEN MARKET.

A Woman Writer's Bold Suggestion to Help Weary Wives.

There are few things that exhaust a woman more than a day's shopping. The average man looks upon a woman's "purchasing day" as one of pleasure, but when he accompanies her on one of these shopping expeditions he goes home, after his patience has been all exhausted, with a different belief. He learns, too, that a woman can endure vexations and disappointments with much more equanimity than he can, and he mentally vows never to do it again.

The number of miles traversed is really what tires one, and it is little wonder that the woman who does the shopping for herself and her entire family, as well as the marketing and the bargaining with the "butcher and baker and candlestick maker," should feel the need of rest for her tired nerves.

The man of the house should always do the marketing. In the old days, when the butcher was not the stately personage he is now, women were never troubled with the worries of household purchasing, for the head of the house did the entire buying, and "James" carried the parcels and was not ashamed to do it.

No mother who has the care of little children should give the precious morning hours to anything else but the nursery, nor should she let butchers' and grocers' boys call for and deliver orders, because there is sure to be dissatisfaction if she does. Some wealthy families allow their chef to take charge of the household, and he collects a large percentage from the tradesmen, which, of course, is added to the monthly bill. Reputable storekeepers will not do this kind of business, however, and the chef "patronage" is controlled entirely by a few men. On the whole, it is much more satisfactory for the man of the house to do the marketing. He will get the best meat, have his orders promptly attended to and save about 25 per cent in the transaction, as well as the health of his wife.—Chicago Times-Herald.

Lived to Be Doctored.

When the new boy got into the schoolroom, he was of course pestered with numerous questions by the other scholars as to his name, his parents' profession, the amount of his pocket money and various other matters about which boys are curious.

"Who's your family doctor?" asked a big lad.

"Ain't got none," was the prompt if ungrammatical reply.

"How jolly!" responded the questioner.

"Why, you don't have no medicine to take."

"Don't I!" was the sarcastic reply.

"That's all you know. Why, my father's a homeopath, mother's an allopath, my sister Maggie's joined the ladies' ambulance corps, grandfather believes in massage, my Uncle Sandy's a horse doctor, and"—with a pathetic sigh—"they all of them experiment on me."

That boy got the sympathy he desired.—Strand Magazine.

An Inconvenient Parrot.

Young Hankinson (making a call)—You have had that parrot a long time, Miss Laura?

Miss Laura—Yes, we have had him several years.

"Quite intelligent, is he not?"

"Very. He can imitate almost anything."

They have a remarkably clever parrot over at the Casterlins, Miss Laura. It can imitate the sound of a kiss to perfection. Is that among the accomplishments of our feathered friend here in the corner?"

Miss Laura (indignantly)—No, sir. He does not attempt an imitation of a sound he is not accustomed to hear, Mr. Hankinson.

The Parrot—Wait, George, dear, till I take this bird out of the room.—London Tit-Bits.

DEALING WITH LUMBERMEN.

Feecular Tricks Indulged In by Both Buyer and Seller.

There is an old retired merchant in Detroit who delights in recalling his experiences when an active man running a general store in one of the northern cities of the lower peninsula.

"I used to reap a harvest when the men were coming out of the woods," he relates. "They were not up in styles, and about any old thing would suit them provided the color was right and the fit even passable. But there were tricksters among them, and I had to have my wits about me in order to keep even with them."

"How much is that hat?" asked a strapping six footer, who arrived from camp one day with a pocketful of money.

"Two fifty," I replied.

"Then he informed me that he always had the crowns of his hats punched full of holes in order to keep his head cool and his hair from coming out. I soon had this attended to, and then he asked what the hat was worth. 'Two fifty,' I responded in surprise, but he laughed at me for asking such a price for damaged goods. He had me, and got his hat for \$1, while the jolly crowd with him had a laugh at my expense. He wanted to look at some 'fiddles,' and after pricing one at \$10 concluded to take it."

"Where's the bow?" he asked, as I was doing up the package.

"You only bought the fiddle," I laughed. The others saw the point and laughed too. The giant tried to bluff me, but I kept good humored, and got even on the hat by charging him \$1.50 for the bow. I not only got even, but the others were so pleased with my 'Yankee trick' that they spent plenty of money with me.—Detroit Free Press.

Her Impressions of Angels.

The wife of a well known senator took her little daughter, a 4-year-old daisel, to a matinee once to see "Jack and the Beanstalk." A week or so afterward she was discovered prouetting and lifting her petticoats before a cheval glass. Her father reproved her and told her it wasn't a pretty way to do.

"Why," said the child, "I saw the angels do it."

"The angels?" exclaimed her father.

"Why, where?"

"When mamma and I went to heaven that day," said the child.

The father explained that the fancied heaven was only the theater. The little girl's face fell.

"And wasn't they angels?" she asked.

"No," said the father; "they were just girls."

The child put on an air of intense disgust.

"Well," she said, "I fink they ought to be taken home and spanked, 'cause they wasn't dressed any more than angels."—Lewiston Journal.

Queen Victoria's Marked Poem.

Here is a funny story told of a happening at the English court: Sir Theodore Martin had been requested by Victoria to read aloud from "The Ring and the Book." Sir Theodore was courtier enough to make a cautious study beforehand of the poem, and he placed marginal notes as danger signals against passages of doubtful propriety.

The marked copy chanced to come into the hands of a rather thoughtless court lady. "I have so enjoyed this wonderful work," she said to a friend, "and it has been such an advantage to read it after the queen, for she has placed marks against the most beautiful parts, and, oh, what exquisite taste the dear queen has!" she added, pointing to the danger signals of Sir Theodore Martin.—Quiver.

"A Dangerous Man."

Here is a story illustrative of the ignorance of the colonies that once prevailed in the colonial office and is not yet entirely banished from Downing street. As we all know, the late Lord Carnarvon, when colonial secretary, officially recorded his opinion of Sir George Grey as "a dangerous man."

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, on one of his visits from Victoria, called upon Lord Carnarvon in Downing street, and in conversation chanced to introduce a reference to Sir George Grey.

"A very strange and comprehensible character," said Lord Carnarvon, with a shake of the head. "I hear he has now withdrawn to an island off the coast of New Zealand and surrounded himself with a number of wallabies."

"Oh, yes; I think that is not at all improbable," replied Sir Charles.

"You surprise me," rejoined Lord Carnarvon. "What must be the state of morality in a country where you make light of such a proceeding?"

"Why, my lord, what do you suppose a wallaby to be?"

"A half caste female, of course. Is that not so?"

"Certainly not; a wallaby is simply a small kangaroo."—London Chronicle.

A Conclusive Calculation.

"I should think that young man would have more sense than to call on a girl every night," said Mabel's father at breakfast.

"The idea!" exclaimed the young woman. "That shows how carelessly you judge. Herbert's the only person I ever saw or heard of who was smart enough to talk seven nights a week without telling all he knew."—Washington Star.

DOCTOR WAS IN LUCK.

How He Got a Quarter of Beef He Was to Want Of.

A prosperous Pittsburg physician, who resides in an aristocratic part of the city, related an experience he met with about a year after he had graduated from college. He was practicing in a small village in Indiana county about 18 miles from any railroad. He had been recently married, and in the struggle to make ends meet the prospect at times became very discouraging. It was during one of these depressing periods in the middle of the winter, with snow a foot and a half deep covering the ground, that he was called to attend a farmer who lived some miles away. The stock of provisions in the house was exhausted, and it seemed certain that the resolution that had been made by the young couple not to ask any one for credit must be broken. When the call arrived, the doctor was preparing to go to the nearest store to ask the proprietor to give him "tick" so that he could get something for breakfast. Instead of going to the store he mounted his faithful mare Molly and started off through the drifts to visit his patient. When the doctor rose to leave, after attending to the patient, the old farmer said:

"Doc, I ain't got no money, but if a quarter of beef'll do you any good I'll send it in when the roads git broke."

The young doctor's heart gave a bound. Concealing his exultation as best he could, he said: "What's the matter with me taking it right along? I was thinking of buying some beef, and this will come in handy."

The proposition was accepted, and the farmer's son helped put the quarter of beef across Molly's shoulders, and the homeward journey began. The mare was skittish, and the doctor had difficulty in keeping the beef from falling. Finally the mare shied at something, and away went the beef into a big snow-drift.

The doctor was a member of the Methodist church, and, according to his story, did not swear. He dismounted and endeavored to put the beef on the mare, but she wouldn't stand still, and after repeated attempts the task seemed a hopeless one. Thinking of the resolution, the young doctor set his teeth and tried again. This time he was successful. He felt like a conqueror here as he dumped the beef on the portico of his modest home about midnight. The faithful little wife was sure it was a dispensation of Providence, but the doctor, remembering his struggles at the snow-drift, reserved his opinion.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

When the Time Came.

Maud—Oh, Ethel, and what did you say to him when he proposed to you? Did you say what you said you were going to the other day? That was a noble speech, just suited to crush the boldest man. And did he sink away like a whipped dog?

Ethel—Well, not exactly. You see, I didn't say just that. I—I—well—er—well, you see, I said "yes."—London Fun.

Strange Mistake.

North Side Mother—I told you a little while ago, Jerry, who our first parents were. Let me see if you remember who was the first man?

Precocious Boy—Adam.

North Side Mother—That's right who was the first woman?

Precocious Boy—Evel.—Chicago Tribune.

Two of a Kind.

Husband (at the breakfast table)—Oh, for some of the biscuits my mother used to make!

Wife (sweetly)—I'm sorry you have not got them, dear. They would be just about stale enough by this time to go well with that remark.—New York World.

A Tough Contract.

"Well, Caleb," said Captain W. of Massachusetts years ago, "what will you ask a day to saw wood for me? I've got several cords that I want sawed in two for the fireplace."

"I should charge you about half a dollar a day if I had a saw," replied Caleb, "but I ain't got none, captain, so I don't see how I can accommodate you."

"If that's all that's lacking, I guess we can manage it," said the captain. "I've got a prime new one, keen as a brier, and I'll let it to you reasonable. How would ninenence (12 1/2 cents) a cord do for the use of it?"

"I reckon that's a fair price, captain. I'll be over in the mornin'."

Bright and early that next July morning Caleb was at work, and he kept at it so faithfully that he finished before sunset, when he went to the house to settle.

"Let's see," said the captain, "you were to have half a dollar a day. We'll call it a day, although it ain't sundown yet. That's 50 cents for you, and you were to pay me ninenence a cord for the use of the saw. There were three cords and a half in the pile. That makes 43 1/2 cents due me. Somehow, Caleb, you don't have very much coming to you."

"How unfortunit," said Caleb, after scratching his head dubiously for half a minute, and then looking up quickly, as if a new light had broken in upon his mind—"how unfortunit that you didn't have half a cord more, for then we'd 'a' come out just square!"—Success.