











# My Decision

A Story of Romance Versus the Practical.

By ALAN HINSDALE

Of all the girls of our bunch I preferred Gwen Meriweather. Gwen had character stamped in her face as plainly as the word may be printed. But she was, or seemed to me to be, devoid of sentiment. I was full of it. I fell in love with her, and since she was devoid of what was born in me I endowed her with it. For this purpose I had plenty of imagination and succeeded in covering her with an ideality which she did not possess.

It is said, and I believe it, that opposites are readily attracted to each other. At any rate, Gwen and I paired off. It was not long before I was making love at high pressure. Gwen did not seem averse to listening to my rhapsodies, but she made no return in kind. Besides, she showed her matter-of-factness in other ways. For instance, I gave her a book rack, handsomely inlaid, one of those contrivances to put on a stand to hold a dozen or so choice books. Not long afterward her little brother knocked it off the stand and broke it. I told Gwen that I would have it mended for her. She said that it would cost more to mend it than it would be worth.

This reply was a great shock to me. I had supposed that the gift, coming from me, would be of inexpressible value to her. Gwen looking at it in a pecuniary way rather than prizing it as an expression of my tender feelings for her seemed to me to be barbarous. I made no complaint. I simply went off and nursed my wound.

When I entered seriously with Gwen into a discussion of a future together she again threw a damper on me. She poo-pooed my talk about love in a cottage—poverty she called it—and brought up many objections to a match between us. I was so inflated by my romance that nothing seemed to stand in the way of our union. I told her that with love in our hearts objections were of no moment whatever. Her reply was, "When poverty comes in at the door love flies out of the window."

This was all the more chilling to me because there were no important worldly reasons why Gwen and I should not be married. I was in receipt of an income on property to enable us to live comfortably. I had, besides a good salary and was advancing as rapidly as was to be expected. I have noticed that women have a way of saying one thing and meaning another. Gwen's real objection to marrying me came out in good time. She saw plainly that I had set her upon a pedestal as an object of worship, and she feared that when the time came—as it inevitably must come—for taking down the gilded image and putting up one of flesh and blood my love would not prove to be of the kind to endure the change.

This was the way Gwen expressed it to me: "You have mistaken me," she said. "You consider me generous, unselfish. On the contrary, I am mean and never give anything away that I want myself. Besides, I have traits, inherited from my ancestors, that would turn any man from me whose love was of the most substantial kind."

I was a bit staggered by this confession, but not for long. My optimistic disposition rose above fear that I would not love Gwen even if she were all she painted herself, and I told her so in my most impassioned words, at the same time lavishing upon her an abundance of caresses. But she disengaged herself from me, avowing that at the first sign of a real fault in her my caresses would turn to expressions of contempt.

One day when Gwen and I were walking together we came to a fruit stand kept by a poor woman who was evidently obliged to keep her little child with her while selling her goods. Gwen took a fancy to some apples and asked the woman their price. Instead of paying it Gwen endeavored to beat the vendor down and, failing to do so, walked on without buying. I was so filled with commiseration for a woman whose sphere in life condemned her to make her living in such a humble way, especially as she was obliged to keep a hungry looking child with her while doing so, that I would have been glad to pay double the price she asked for her apples.

I said nothing to Gwen about the matter then, but I thought a great deal. After all, was she not right in asserting that after we were married her faults would come up to make trouble between us? She had said that she was very mean and when a time came had not scrupled to show that meanness. While I was repelled at her fault, I could not but admire her frankness and her wisdom in hesitating to marry a man who was ignorant of it.

Gwen and I were invited to spend a couple of weeks in midsummer at the country residence of a friend of hers. Gwen and Miss Emily Tucker had been schoolmates, and I did not doubt that Miss Tucker possessed my fiancée's confidence to a far greater degree than I did, for if there are two persons in the world who are bent on withholding confidence from each other they are an engaged couple. I know perfectly well that Gwen gave her friend a list of my good and bad qualities and certain other information about me that she would not mention to me.

One evening I was sitting in the

gloaming in the drawing room while the girls were upstairs in their rooms dressing for dinner. I heard a light step on the stairs, and a moment later Gwen entered the room where I was. I was sitting in a dark corner, and she apparently did not see me. There was a case of curios in the room, some of which were very rare and some very beautiful. Gwen went to this case and took from it a tiny statuette, for which she had expressed admiration. She concealed it in her drapery and a few minutes later passed out of the room.

Heaven preserve me! My fiancée was a thief—a thief who would steal from her bosom friend, who, at the time of the theft, was entertaining her. Never before or since have I experienced such a shock. Surely this was too much. I could bear with faults in a wife, but not with ingratitude and dishonesty. The only redeeming point about my fiancée's actions was that she hesitated to drag me down to her level. She shrank from marrying a man who adored her, he to find out what she was when it was too late.

With all my own faults, I am certainly conscientious. I mean by this if I do wrong I don't attempt to excuse myself. I deemed it my duty to inform my hostess that she was harboring a serpent in my fiancée. But I found it very difficult to do this. It involved my first informing Gwen that I had seen her steal. There was a remote possibility that she could explain her act, but I could not see how she could do so satisfactorily.

When dinner was announced I dreaded to go into the dining room. Pulling myself together, I did so. And that there was something on my mind was very apparent. There were others present besides the two girls, and all were dampened by my saying nothing and looking as if I had received a stab. When the dinner was over Gwen led me into the drawing room and, turning to me, said:

"Something troubles you. Tell me what it is."

I stammered an account of my being in the drawing room alone in the gloaming, of her entry and, supposing that she was unobserved, of my seeing her appropriate the statuette.

"It is well," she said, "that you have discovered a serious blemish in me before tying yourself up to me for life. My maternal grandmother was a kleptomaniac. Had she not been a lady she would have doubtless spent the most of her life in prison. Since she was a lady she was followed by a woman employed to return what she stole or pay the bills. I should have had the strength to tell you that I have inherited this mania, that you might cast me off. I can only say that I had not the moral strength to do so."

Here was a falling which, being inherited, Gwen was not responsible for. If she should become a confirmed invalid, loving her as I did I would not hesitate to marry her and devote my life to her care. Should I cast her off for this other physical defect, for which she was no more accountable than the other?

I walked away from her to another part of the room. This matter was of too much importance for me to decide on impulse. After pacing back and forth a few minutes I stopped before Gwen, who had sunk upon a sofa, and said to her:

"Gwen, give me till tomorrow to decide what course I shall take in this matter."

She made no reply, but left the room. Later Emily Tucker came in and said to me:

"What has happened?"

"I can't tell you now. I must have till tomorrow morning."

She, too, retired, and again I was alone. Taking my hat and cane, I left the house that I might have the dome of heaven under which to think. I did not return till near midnight. Seeing a light in Gwen's room, I called to her softly. The window was open, and she heard me.

"I have decided," I said. "Come down and I will tell you."

She had not gone to bed and in a few minutes came down on to the porch, where I was, and, approaching, stopped a short distance from me.

"I love you so well that I can't give you up," I said. "In screening you from the consequences of your misfortune I shall be far happier than passing a lifetime without you."

I supposed that she would stand mute. I would approach her and take her in my arms; her head would drop on my breast in token that she accepted the sacrifice. What was my astonishment when she broke into a laugh. And I was still more surprised to hear it echoed from an upper window. I recognized the echo as Emily's.

"Stupid," Gwen said to me, "how could you have been deceived by such a shallow trick? My kleptomaniac grandmother was a minister's wife and inherited nothing but goodness. When I entered the drawing room this evening I knew you were there and took the statuette on purpose that you should see me. I carried it to Em and told her that I had given your romance a severe test. I am happy that you have stood it valiantly."

For the next two hours we relapsed into billing and cooing.

I am free to confess that Gwen's common sense and practicality have counted for far more than my romance. I have missed a certain companionship of appreciation in my wife, but one may enjoy ideality alone, while management is necessary for all parties concerned. Whenever I have talked "in the clouds" Gwen has taken me by the coattail and pulled me down to earth. When fits of generosity that we could not afford have seized upon me Gwen has locked up the family purse where I could not get at it. Every year that we have lived together has found us in better condition than the year before. Our prosperity is entirely due to my wife's management.

## USE PLAIN SHAPES

Paris Milliners Put Ban on Trimming This Season.

Flower-Pot Models, With Narrow Brims and Very High Crowns, are Very Fashionable Just Now.

The quaint hat for a young girl, which is shown in the accompanying sketch, was created by the famous Caroline Reboux. It is exceedingly simple, but at the same time amazingly chic, writes Idalia de Villiers, a Paris correspondent. The hat itself is made of lacquer-red Japanese straw, and the broad ribbons are in a delicate shade of silver gray.

These ribbons are tied in a full bow right at the top of the high crown, passed through the brim at either side and then passed under the chin. In all black, with a bright colored lining in



Quaint Hat for Young Girl.

the narrow brim, this model would be charming, or in dark blue straw with japonica-pink ribbons and a lining of cream glove kid.

These flower-pot shapes are very fashionable just now. They always have narrow brims, very high crowns and hardly any trimming. Indeed, the leading note of the 1917 millinery season is simplicity.

Very beautiful and expensive straws are selected for the hat shapes, but trimmings are lightly used.

Georgette is making a specialty of Boy Scout hats for morning wear, in fine chip and also in Japanese straw. Lengths of picot ribbon are twisted round the crowns of these wide-brimmed hats, the ends hanging loosely over one shoulder.

### SUPPER SET FOR LITTLE ONES

Same General Decorative Scheme Can Be Carried Out in Tray Cloth, Bib and Napkins.

When your particular little boy sings for his supper see that he is set down to something as attractive as this little supper set, which will amuse him if he eats alone or at least keep him quiet if he shares his evening meal with the family.

It consists of a traycloth of crash all finished with fancy buttonholing in black and embellished with a procession of animals from the cross-stitch book. The bib, which Tommy Tucker will put on to protect his clean suit will follow the same general decorative scheme. Then there are two little napkins each with one of the cross-stitch, cross-stitched—animals in one corner. These are used to form an extra protection under the little one's plate, especially if the cloth is used to cover his portion of a polished table. Surely a kiddie would not grow obstinate at a supper served under such attractive conditions.

### HOW TO TRANSFER DESIGNS

"Window Pane" Method the Easiest and Most Successful When the Material Used Is Thin.

Here are suggestions for transferring the embroidery design to any material.

Perhaps the easiest way is the "window pane" method. This is successful when the material is thin, like linen batiste, etc. Pin the sheet of paper and the material together and hold them up against the glass of a window. With a sharp pencil draw on the material the design, which can be easily seen through the goods. If one-half of the design only is given, unpin the paper and turn the other side to the fabric.

If you have carbon paper, you should place the sheet between the fabric and the newspaper. The latter is on top. With a sharp pencil go over the outlines of the design. The impression will be left in fine lines and will last until worked.

### Coloring Process.

If you have ribbons or waists of delicate shade which have become faded and soiled you can restore them to their natural color or change to a darker shade if desired. Buy tube water color paints. Put a few drops, or until the shade desired is reached, in gasoline. After well dissolved, dip goods in and continue dipping until shade is desired. You can color feathers in this way also.

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## NEW PERFECTION OIL COOK STOVE

## The KITCHEN CABINET

To aid in righting the wrongs that cross our path by pointing the wrong-doer to the better way, and thus aid him in becoming a power for good.—A Creed of the Open Road.

### HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS.

A safe fire kindler is this, prepared by the saving one of the household.

All bits of trimmings, threads ravelings are wound into a small ball, put into a bag behind the stove, then when a kindler is wanted, a ball is moistened with kerosene from a bottle and applied to the wood in the stove, when lighted by a match. It burns long enough to start the wood to burning. This same bottle of kerosene moistens a cloth to keep the porcelain sink white and stainless. One may make her own baking powder, having it pure and at less cost. Mix a pound of pure cream of tartar, six ounces of tartaric acid and a pint of flour together and sift at least five or six times. Place in tin cans and keep tightly covered; use as any other baking powder.

If suede shoes become shiny, rub with a fine piece of emery paper. When shoes squeak run linseed oil into the sole. Sandpaper also removes the shine from clothing.

Mix flour with lye and fill the mouse holes. The most courageous mouse will not reopen such a hole.

An emergency funnel may be made by rolling into a cone shape a piece of writing paper.

A new kind of toast. Slice a loaf of bread through to the lower crust, leaving that intact. Place the loaf in the oven until thoroughly heated and slightly crisp around the edges. Serve the loaf whole and very hot; each may then be served with a hot slice. It may be buttered before going into the oven if desired.

A handy pie crimper is made by using a large screw along the edge of the pie.

An upholstered chair may be cleaned nicely after a thorough dusting in the open air. Rub it with a good big pan of hot bran, brush well and the chair will be clean.

Let a tough steak lie in olive oil and vinegar, turning it once during the softening process. An hour will serve to soften the fibers of the meat, making it very much more palatable. Use equal parts of oil and vinegar.

Nellie Maxwell

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is one in which the merchant himself has implicit faith—else he will not advertise it. You are safe in patronizing the merchants whose ads appear in this paper because their goods are up to date and not shop worn. : : :



