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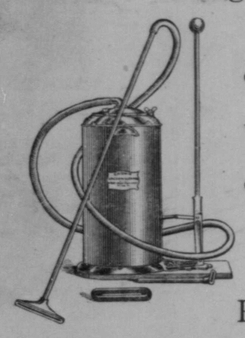

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The Jonah Club's Lucky Day

Encountered the Clover Club and Met Its Fate

By CLARISSA MACKIE

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It would be hard to find thirteen more enthusiastic young men than the members of the Jonah club. Verily, it would seem that each one had been "born to trouble," for every man had first opened his eyes on the thirteenth day of a month. Another bond that cemented them closely together was the singular fact that their birthdays came in calendar order—one for each month in the year save that White's and Sheldon's both occurred in the merry month of May. As they were of an age they were called "the twins."

Each month witnessed the celebration of a birthday as the thirteenth day came around, and, while the members of the Jonah club did not throw defiance to the fates and enliven their feasts with miniature skeletons and witches and coffins, they did consume thirteen courses of a very good dinner.

Thirteen was a number to conjure with among the Jonah club men, and each man wore it on his scarfpin. When June came around it brought with it the birthday of Paul Delwin, the latest member of the club. As it was a glorious day it had been decided that they should all enjoy a tramp in the fields that lay beyond the limits of the city. So at the appointed time they set forth on a trolley car to reach the outskirts of the big city.

They tumbled off the car into the dusty road like a troop of schoolboys. The twins had a map of the locality, and it was with some definite purpose that they broke into a large field of daisies and cut a narrow swath through its rippling sea of white and yellow loveliness.

Beyond the field there lay a meadow, lush and green, where blue violets and white were starred in the shade of drooping willows.

They had crossed the meadow and were entering another field, waist high with daisies timidly bowing to the west wind, when Sheldon proposed a race.

"One, two, three—off!" yelled Sheldon, and away they went with long flying leaps over the astonished daisy heads. The race was accompanied by whoops of excitement and cries of triumph as one or another gained on his fellows. Delwin was well in the lead when suddenly there arose from the field of daisies a covey of pink sunbonnets which fluttered ahead of them in unmistakable alarm. A long rail fence snaked across their path and impeded progress. The pink sunbonnets ducked under the lower rail and emerged on the other side to present fourteen pretty girlish faces, pink with wrath; they stared at Delwin, and fourteen hands bristled with deadly looking hatpins brought from the pink bonnets.

Delwin cast one appealing glance behind him. He stood entirely alone. The other twelve members of the Jonah club were crouched behind bulwarks of nodding daisies and were no doubt enjoying his discomfiture.

He swept off his cap and opened his lips to speak, but the prettiest girl of all, the one with the soft brown eyes and hair of the same tint, brandished a pearl beaded pin in his face.

"Not a word, sir," she commanded, "until you have explained what you and your companions mean by pursuing us."

"I am very sorry," said Delwin mildly; "but, you see, we didn't know you were there until"—

"Oh-h-h-h-h-h!" came in an incredulous whisper. "The very idea!" But the beauty with the brown eyes hushed them with a glance. "Let the gentleman explain—if he can," she said.

"I can," returned Delwin quickly. "If you will kindly scan the field which we have just crossed perhaps you will tell me where my twelve companions have concealed themselves."

Twenty-eight bright eyes looked in vain for the members of the Jonah club, who were listening with all their ears to the controversy.

"There is not a soul to be seen," admitted Brown Eyes regretfully.

"Then," said Delwin, with dignity, "perhaps you will believe me when I repeat that we did not know the field was occupied until the pink bonnets rose up. We were as much surprised as you may have been. I am exceedingly sorry it has happened, and if there is anything I can do to"—

FOURTEEN HANDS BRISTLED WITH HATPINS.

"Oh, of course it is not your fault," said Brown Eyes, speaking for her companions and blushing delightfully under her becoming sunbonnet. "We were rather frightened because your advent was unexpected. We were picking clover leaves when we heard the shouting and tramping and thought at least it might be a loose animal of some sort."

"Such as a bull," shuddered one of the girls.

"Lambs might describe them better, ladies," smiled Delwin in a tone sufficiently clear to reach the listening ears. "You see, we are out for a half holiday. We are members of the Jonah club, and"—

"The Jonah club!"

"Oh, how funny!"

"Where is the whale?"

Delwin dodged these laughing questions with a humorous explanation of the purpose of the organization. After he had explained that this was his birthday and that the members were enjoying their customary half holiday on such occasions the girl with the brown eyes jabbed her hatpin into the fullness of her pink bonnet and turned to her companions.

"Well, girls, we may as well return and pick up our scattered clover leaves if we can find them."

"You are picking clover leaves?" asked Delwin curiously as the fourteen heads ducked under the fence once more, this time to arise on his side.

"We are members of a club, too," admitted the brown eyed girl. "We are the Clover club, and it is our purpose to encourage cheerfulness and belief in good luck wherever we can."

"Yes," said Delwin soberly. "Do you know, I'm rather ashamed to think that our Jonah club is such a useless affair. Why, all we care about it is to get some fun out of the fact that we're unmistakably hoodooed!"

"Try this, then," said the girl, and she placed in his hand a large four leaved clover which she took from the bosom of her gown.

"Thank you," said Delwin, tucking the leaf carefully inside his cardcase. "That will ward off evil, I suppose?"

"It will bring you great good luck," said the girl.

"It has already answered its purpose then," said Delwin to himself as his eyes lingered on the face of the brown eyed girl. Aloud he asked: "Did our coming scatter the clover leaves to the four winds?"

"Something like that," she smiled.

"What could you expect from a Jonah club than to scatter good luck?" asked one of the pink sunbonnets saucily.

"Then we must help you pick up the fallen leaves, said Delwin firmly, and, although the girls demurred at first, at last they permitted the hidden members of the Jonah club to come forth and pick up the scattered clover leaves, which took all of two hours.

"Why are there fourteen in your club?" asked Delwin of the brown eyed girl.

"Because seven is a lucky number, and twice seven makes fourteen and is twice as lucky," she dimpled.

"Feminine reasoning," chuckled Delwin, and then: "Who is the tallest lady with the eyeglasses? Surely I have seen her before."

"That is Mrs. Lester. She is the organizer of the Clover club. Perhaps you know her husband. He is the editor of the Budget."

"Of course I know Lester. I ought to, for he is my boss. I guess I better go over and introduce myself to Mrs. Lester and perhaps she will let us remain with you for awhile longer."

Mrs. Lester proved to be amendable to the charms of the young reporter, and then followed such a period of introductions that when it was over it was necessary to partake of some of the refreshments so generously provided by the Clover club.

Delwin attached himself to Marion Blake, the brown eyed girl, and the other members of the Jonah club found so much in common with the thirteen unmarried members of the Clover club that just as the sun was setting they all rode home together on the car and quite dazed the conductor with chatter of good and bad signs, hoodoos and lucky stones until they drew into the lighted city square, where they disbanded. Each member of the Jonah club found an opportunity to tell his fair companion that this 13th day of June was the luckiest day in the life of a hoodooed man, and each one carried away a sprig of four leaved clover as a souvenir of the queerest day the club had spent since its inception.

On the 13th day of the following month there was handed in the resignation of one member. Young White had decided that as the club had no definite object there was not any special advantage in being a member. "One wants to be useful or something, you know," he muttered sheepishly.

Each month after that saw a lessening of the membership until when the new year dawned there remained one lone member, the erstwhile president, Frank Newton. Even Paul Delwin had dropped out, for the charms of Marion Blake had made a curious change in him. He it was who organized the club which was an auxiliary to the Clover club and carried cheer to many a discouraged young man who had battled with sickness or ill fortune.

Frank Newton demolished the club records and hastened to join the other forces.

Paul Delwin was the first to marry, and of course he married Marion Blake, and before another 13th of June had dawned all the members of the Jonah club were married to the members of the Clover club, and each one thought himself the luckiest chap in the world, and of course he was.

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