DENTON JOURNAL.

1845. A Family Newspaper:—Devoted to Local and General Intelligence, Agriculture and Advertising,—Independent on all Subjects. Subscription, One Dollar per Annum, in Advance. 1908

VOL. 62 DENTON, MARYLAND: SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 4, 1908. NO. 23

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S'posin'

By E. M. MURRAY.

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IT had always been Cynthy's word, and Lem felt no disposition to quarrel with it under the circumstances. He let his mind run back to the long ago days when he carried her books to school and planned small treats within the scope of their narrow lives which his awkward tongue and self conscious mind almost prevented his laying before her. Cynthy was not given to many words herself, and so when he finally managed to suggest "S'pose we go berrying Saturday?" or skating, as the season might allow, Cynthy had always contented herself with replying "S'posin'."

He saw himself again as he was in those days, big for his years, hands and face tanned almost a leather color with sun and wind, a shock of unruly brown hair and eyes of almost the same shade. He did himself but scant justice as far as appearance went. It did not occur to him that he had been a goodly sight to look upon even at that time, for he had been then as now the seeming embodiment of rugged health. Looking at Cynthy, he saw traces of the same air of fragility that had characterized her as a child and seemed to set her apart from the other children. He had long known that it was not an indication of weak health, but was due rather to a certain transparency of skin which neither sun nor wind seemed to affect. He felt just as big and overgrown beside her today as he had done years ago, and Cynthy's assent to his latest suggestion had filled him with the same sense of wonder and delight as in that old time.

He would have liked to know if Cynthy was thinking of those old days in the same way as he was. He recalled that in that faraway time he used to speculate whether that simple word of assent "S'posin'" caused Cynthy any of the pleasurable sensations it gave him to hear it. He had never dared to ask such a question, and he wondered if he ever would. There was a delightful possibility that he might, and his heart beat higher at the thought. If he had stopped to consider that fact, he would have known it was quite unnecessary, as that organ had not been doing normal work for a week past and before this last increase had been going to an alarming rate. Indeed, were there no prospect of a decrease even the sturdy frame of Lem Minturn could not long have withstood its onslaught. But no thought of danger from that cause rose in the young man's mind. There were more dangerous things for him to consider than

"S'POSE WE GO BERRYING."

the state of his heart. In fact, if questioned, he might have replied that he knew it too well to need to give it further consideration. He was more alarmed about the condition of another heart which he wanted for his own.

Thought was ever swifter than speech with Lem Minturn, and now as he stood beside Cynthy, looking down at her while she looked off toward the horizon, it traveled over all the little bypaths of memory the very approaches to which he had apparently forgotten until that day a week ago when he had seen Cynthy for the first time in six years. Ever since then his thoughts had been busy with olden days. He could recall all the chief events in the early life of both from the time when she was a tiny mite in pinafores and he was a sturdy lad rejoicing in his first real pockets. There was no break until she was fifteen years old and her family had moved away to the city, where there were more advantages for the children. He had been seventeen then and had completed his first year in the mill.

There she stood, looking so much like the old days that he could almost have believed they had never been separated except for the recurring thought that he knew not what associations or ties she might have formed since last he saw her. It might be that the terrible longing in his heart was never to be satisfied, and then the necessity for speech became almost intolerable. It was because of this that he had spoken in the old fashion, "Cynthy, s'pose we tell what has happened since last we met?"

And Cynthy had not resented the return to old speech or the use of her name, but had answered simply, "S'posin'," and Lem was not disposed to quarrel about the answer.

But it was one thing to decide to speak and quite another to find the words one wanted. While he was still seeking them Cynthy said, "S'pose I begin?"

Gratefully Lem accepted their reversed positions and answered in his turn, 'S'posin'."

Cynthy found a comfortable spot and sat down, while Lem threw himself at her feet. Then she began in a simple, unaffected way to tell the story, which the man eagerly drank in. So much depended upon that story. It would either open his lips or seal them forever, and he knew it. He composed himself to listen, determined that neither by word nor look should he embarrass her or make it difficult for her to give him this glimpse of her life. He could not help wondering if it meant as much to her as to him.

"There isn't a great deal to my story, Lem," said Cynthy. "I did not know how fond of the old place I was until we had moved away. They say that those who are left behind feel worse than those who go because new things take up the attention. I dare say that is true in a way at least, but there is a kind of longing for old places and old friends that is worse than physical pain when it strikes and that only the absentee can feel. True, it is not always there. One could not stand it if it were." Cynthy spoke in a reminiscent tone, more to herself than to him, and Lem felt a sort of comfort in the knowledge that he was not the only sufferer.

"I went to school and gave my whole attention to my books, as I had determined to fit myself for a teacher. Somehow I think it always lay back in my mind that I should return here some day. I will not deny that the desire became less a conscious purpose than a subconscious dream as the years went by, but about six months ago it flamed into a purpose that would brook no opposition."

Here Cynthy paused and fell to thinking. Lem noted the fast changing color now, and his heart sank a little. He wondered what had roused Cynthy to the sudden determination and whether it boded good or ill for him and his hopes. Every moment seemed to make it more a matter of life and death that he should know his fate.

With heightened color and eyes that looked steadfastly at the far horizon, Cynthy resumed her story, apparently unconscious of the anxious scrutiny of her companion. "About a year ago a young student came to board with us. As you know, I never had a brother, and before long we became excellent friends. It was very nice to have some one to depend upon, ever ready to do what one needed, to play escort and 'big brother.' That was what we both called it at first. But it seemed to grow to be more, and—and—why, then, he asked me to marry him. It was a surprise to me at first, but after awhile I thought I would say yes. Then it occurred to me that before tying myself to a promise that I might not be able to keep I should see more of life. I was not sure I could be a minister's wife, and besides I did not know whether I loved him or not. I needed absence to prove my feeling to myself. So that is why I am here. I applied for and finally got the position of teacher, and here I am, out with you just as in the old days, and it hardly seems as if it could be six years since then. Does it, Lem?"

Something in the question made the young man's heart leap and the hot blood rush to his head. He looked sharply at Cynthy, but she appeared to be merely wondering aloud, and hope died down again. But it was time for his story now, and, moreover, he felt as if he could tell it, indeed must tell it, let the outcome be what it might.

"It seems to me, Cynthy," he said, "that perhaps without my knowing it you have always been a big factor in my life. I had taken your friendship as such a matter of course that if I thought of it at all it was as something that could not be changed. Therefore your going off to the city that way was a blow that stunned me. I could not get used to it. I did not once think of asking you to write to me. In fact, I could think of nothing but that you were going. The place seemed mighty lonesome after you were gone, and I gave myself up to my work in the mill as if that, too, would never change. But it bothered me that you were going to have opportunities in the city that would put you away out of my class. That thought was discouraging until one day I said to myself, 'Cynthy, s'pose we both study?' And it seemed to me that I could hear you say, 'S'posin'.' That settled it. I began, and after a year or two, during which I had been steadily advancing in the mill, I asked this question: 'Cynthy, s'pose I go away and take a technical course and fit myself for assistant superintendent?' And again you seemed to answer, 'S'posin'.'

"I talked the matter over with the superintendent, who had always been a good friend, and he heartily approved. Well, a few months later I went and put in some hard studying for the next few years. During vacations I worked in the mill and got thoroughly acquainted with its needs. I have not known many girls, because I have been too busy, and—well, that seems to be all there is to it. Here I am in the position I worked for, and I arrived just the same day you did."

"That is a coincidence, is it not?" said Cynthy as Lem paused. "We are both lucky, I think, to have found things going our way. Now that you have proved your dream true are you content?"

"I thought I was, Cynthy, until the night I got back; then suddenly it came to me that there was something lacking."

"Isn't that always so with dreams that come true, Lem? It seems to me that the only happy dreams are those that stay dreams," said the girl, with a slight sigh.

Lem made no direct reply to this bit of philosophy. He was in the mood of having his dreams come true and risking the contentment. The suspense grew unbearable. He must know. Anything was better than uncertainty.

"Cynthy," he said softly, and the girl started from her reverie and turned toward him. Her face looked pale and weary, as if life had lost some of its charm. It made him pause a moment, but he gulped hard and spoke again.

"Cynthy, there is a reason for the failure of contentment for me. It is a

"S'POSIN'."

reason so old that I had not recognized it and at the same time so new that it brings more pain than joy. Cynthy, you are the reason."

He paused again and saw the blood surge up into the girl's face. Her breath came in quick gasps, but she turned toward him with a look that was partly inquiry, partly surprise and some doubt, but there was no repugnance. That encouraged him to take up his narrative where he had so abruptly stopped.

"I love you, Cynthy, but I did not know it until a week ago. I thought I was too busy to care for girls; but, Cynthy, it was because you had all my heart, and I did not know it. It was really for you that I studied and won my way to success. I was too wholly a boy when you went away to understand what gave me such pain to part with you. But even then I must have loved you."

He paused for a moment as if to steady himself for what must follow. Cynthy said nothing, but she drew nearer to him as if unconsciously drawn, and her face was lighted with a smile that even Lem saw was the outward expression of inward joy. He drew her into his arms, and she did not resist. For a moment he held her so, while he waited for his heart to steady. Then with a twinkle in his honest brown eye he turned her face up to his and before kissing her said, "Cynthy, s'pose we get married?"

And Cynthy answered, "S'posin'."

He Won't Always Be One.

"I have a clerk," a New York wholesale merchant remarked the other day, "and he sometimes manages to hand back a rather good one, though as a rule he is little short of stupid, apparently. As a matter of fact, I suppose he is one of those dreamy sort of chaps, and you never can tell about that kind.

"I was sorry after I said it," he continued, "but recently he had made a most unnecessary blunder, and I lost my temper.

"'I say, Jones,' I sneered, 'you'd make a pretty good clerk, maybe, if you had a little more sense!'

"He looked at me for a minute with a sort of half smile. 'Didn't it ever occur to you, Mr. Brown,' he said, 'that if I had a little more sense I wouldn't be a clerk at all?'"—Chicago Record-Herald.

A Royal Golfer.

King James II. was a fine golfer in the sense of fondness for the game and in other senses too. He it was, as Duke of York, who, when challenged by two English noblemen at the Scottish court to a match, the duke to take any partner whom he could find, took to his side an Edinburgh shoemaker named John Patersone. The duke and Patersone won, and the latter, being given half the stake, built for himself a house, which is to be distinguished by the record upon it in Canongate to this day.—Fry's Magazine.

The Aurora Borealis.

The aurora borealis, or northern dawn, is an electrical phenomenon which in high northern latitudes, especially in winter, illuminates the skies with streamers of light. As the streams of light have a tremendous motion, they are called in many places the "merry dances." They assume many shapes and a variety of colors, from a pale red or yellow to a deep red or blood color, and in the northern latitudes they serve to illuminate the earth and cheer the gloom of the long winter nights. The connection of the aurora displays with the disturbance of the magnetic needle is now regarded as an ascertained fact.

Not For Fishes.

"What are you children talking about?" demanded the old catfish.

"Nothing much, ma," replied the little kitten fish. "We heard somebody say that iron was good for the blood, and we were wondering if it really was."

"Not if it comes to you in the shape of a hook, my child."—Catholic Standard and Times.

The Daughter.

Oh, the blessings that a daughter can bring into a household if she only wishes to! The communion of her mother, the comfort of her father, the pride of her brothers and sisters, the joy of the whole household!—Martha Washington.

Unimpeachable . . . Evidence.

[Original.]

"Are you John Borland?"

"Yes."

"You're wanted. Come along with me."

John Borland was a hardworking man, with a wife and seven little children. He was not getting on very well, and when a constable took him away accused of theft it was a sad blow to his family as well as to him.

"What does it mean, John?" his wife asked.

"I don't know," John replied.

"Well," she added, "there's some mistake, and it will be rectified. Keep up your pluck, John."

"But you and the children," he moaned.

"We'll get on. Jane Borland is not going to lie down."

"Plucky woman, that," remarked the constable to himself. Each one of Borland's children kissed him as he was led away.

A few days before this John Borland had been in the private office of Peter Stiver canvassing for a fire insurance company. Stiver had been called out and remained out for some time. Meanwhile John, becoming tired of waiting and having an appointment with another party, went away. The next day Stiver missed $50 from a tin box kept in a drawer in his desk. After racking his brains to think of an opportunity for some one to steal it, he remembered that Borland had been in his office alone with the money. He immediately swore out a warrant for the insurance solicitor's arrest.

Jane Borland made an effort to get bail for her husband and failed. She succeeded, however, in getting a trial for him within a reasonable time. One of the clerks swore that no one had been in the office while Stiver was away except Borland.

The only witness called by the defendant's attorney—a young man just admitted to the bar—was Jane Borland.

"Mrs. Borland," he said, "did your husband give you any more money than usual for household expenses or any other purpose during the time of this robbery or soon after?"

"No, he did not."

"Was there any evidence that he had any more money than usual?"

"No. We were scraping along just the same as ever."

"Do you know that your husband was not in possession of any more funds than usual?"

"I do."

"How?"

"After he has gone to sleep nights I always search his clothes." Borland started. "He didn't have any money that night. He didn't have any money for several nights before or after that night either."

There was a titter among the spectators, and several of the jurymen smiled.

"That will do," said the attorney, and he looked at the prosecutor as much as to say, "You may take the witness."

"Mrs. Borland," said the prosecutor, "why do you search your husband's clothes after he goes to sleep?"

"Why do women usually search their husbands' pockets?"

"You are on the stand to answer questions, not to ask them. Answer my question."

"Well, my husband finds it necessary to keep money about him for his ordinary expenses, such as car fare and lunch. Sometimes he keeps more than I consider necessary. Then sometimes he makes a commission that he forgets to turn over to me. I pay for what we have, so make sure that I get it all except what is absolutely necessary for him."

"And you are quite sure that you don't search his pockets to prevent him from spending the money in dissipation?"

"Quite sure."

"And you trust him?"

"Of course I do. He's always been fair with me and the children, denying himself a glass of beer when he is thirsty and often walking when he is tired to save car fare."

"This being the case, why do you not ask him to give you all the money he has in his pockets except a stated amount for his legitimate expenses without waiting till he has gone to sleep and then rifling his clothes?"

"No woman would do that, sir."

"Why not?"

"Nothing irritates a man so much as to be called to account by his wife for the chicken feed he spends. And the more he sacrifices for his family the angrier such a course makes him. To take the money when he is asleep is a much better way."

There was a shout of laughter from the men present, and the judge as he rapped for order did so with a smile. It was evident that the wife's testimony was not to be shaken, and her womanly way of looking at the matter of taking care of the interests of her family captivated the jury. Without leaving their seats they pronounced John Borland not guilty, and he was discharged from custody.

As the couple left the room Borland looked shamefaced, as though he would have rather been convicted than endure the exposure of family secrets, while his wife was not only happy, but proud of the act that had won her husband his freedom. There was a clapping of hands to show the interest of the spectators in the family affair.

The clerk who testified that Borland was the only person in the office after Stiver left it till his return afterward confessed that he himself was the thief.

BEVERLY WORTHINGTON.

The Fun of It.

"Dear, I only play poker for fun."

"But you bet, don't you?"

"Well, there wouldn't be any fun without a little betting."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Didn't Like His Head.

Manager—My stock in trade is brains.

Principal Girl—You've got a funny looking sample case.—London Pick-Me-Up.