

HOW MISS JENNY ASTON-
ISHED THE NATIVES

BY MARY FOOTE ARNOLD

AS Miss Jenny folded her work she said to her Aunt Elizabeth: "I've a great mind to run into town to see those blessed babies."

Now, Aunt Elizabeth was nothing if not prudent; she remonstrated vigorously:

"My dear! It is almost dark now, and you will not reach there for two hours at least; Jack and Laura will be horrified to have you arrive alone; besides, I am afraid it is too late to catch the train."

"Jack and Laura will not care a bit," declared Miss Jenny. "As this is my fortieth birthday it stands to reason that I am old enough to take care of myself. Besides," she added, "I want to do something to celebrate the fact that I've arrived at the age of discretion. I think I shall put on my new gown and astonish the natives."

So saying she ran lightly up-stairs to begin preparations, for, though Miss Jenny was forty, she was still supple and attractive.

The new gown, a dark brown cloth, fitted her shapely figure to perfection, and it gave out a pleasant silken rustle as she stepped briskly to and fro, while a brown velvet bonnet crowned with autumn-tinted foliage, added the finishing touch to a most becoming toilet.

Then, dress-suit case and wrap in hand, she descended the stairs with a rush, bestowed a flying kiss on Aunt Elizabeth, and was off. She reached the station, a block distant, just in time to catch the train, and all would have gone well had not the wreck of a freight train ahead delayed her about an hour. However, she spent the interval very pleasantly in wondering where Gerald Holmes was keeping himself. Not that it mattered to her, but—

So absorbed was she in trying to find a reason for Mr. Holmes's peculiar, though (to her) uninteresting actions, that the train resumed motion and reached its destination in what seemed an incredibly short time; still it was eight o'clock when the cab was driven away which had brought Miss Jenny to her brother's door. She noted with satisfaction that the light was still burning in the nursery; then, having ascended the steps, she was about to ring when a glance through the half drawn curtains of the library window caused her to withdraw her hand from the bell button. For there on the divan, with pillows disposed gracefully about her, conversing animatedly with Jack and Laura, sat Mrs. Summers.

Now Mrs. Summers was a widow whom Miss Jenny greatly disliked; more, she distrusted her, and she had advised Laura to have nothing to do with her. Laura, on her part, was capable of putting two and two together; however, if she suspected that the widow's evident admiration for Mr. Gerald Holmes had anything to do with the attitude assumed by her sister-in-law, she said nothing about it. Being in the confidence of Mr. Gerald Holmes she continued to enjoy the friendship of Mrs. Summers, and watched with interest the little drama that was being played before her eyes.

But Miss Jenny did not understand the situation, and resented it; and she disliked Mrs. Summers, more and more. Now as she looked at the cheerful group in the library, she determined to stay outside in the cold rather than meet Mrs. Summers. So she went around to

the side porch, and putting on her wrap, sat down on the steps. But a left-out-in-the-cold sort of atmosphere, which soon became unendurable, seemed to pervade everything. Then she thought of the kitchen entrance and wondered if she could get in that way; once inside she could slip up the back stairs, make herself comfortable until Mrs. Summers should depart, and then surprise Jack and Laura. Thus consoling herself, she went cautiously around the house only to find the kitchen door locked and the lights out. She tried the fastenings of the windows and of the basement door; all locked. By this time Miss Jenny began to feel very much abused; it was hard to be out in the dark and cold while within her unfeeling relatives made merry with her enemy. She determined to make one more effort to get into the house; if that failed—she did not know what she would do.

She tiptoed back to the side porch and turned the knob of the dining-room door; it was unfastened. Through the door leading from the dining room into the library was open, she decided, after reconnoitering, to slip into a chair which stood at the end of the sideboard farthest from the library, and await developments. Scarcely had she settled herself in the chair, however, when she was startled by a voice proceeding from the library. It is that of Gerald Holmes.

Miss Jenny arose and made a frantic effort to reach the door through which she had just come, but she was arrested by the sound of approaching footsteps. Like a hunted creature she looked about for a means of escape; then, in the twinkling of an eye, she dropped to her knees and crawled under the dining table drawing her bag after her. No sooner was this done, than she wished it undone; she trembled behind the table cover as Jack entered the room. What if he should look under the table! What if—Jack went back to the library.

"Strange, I thought I heard a noise," he said.

Miss Jenny became more and more miserable. Her head was craned forward, she was uncomfortably warm, and she was possessed by a wild desire to sneeze. Added to that, the quartette in the next room began to talk about playing whist; that meant two hours more at the very least. In the midst of her reflections she heard the soft voice of Mrs. Summers drawl:

"When did you hear from that handsome sister of yours, Mr. Pembroke?"

"Last week, Mrs. Summers; we're hoping to have a visit from her before long," answered Jack.

"I have a great admiration for your sister, Mr. Pembroke; she is so—so altogether unusual—and original—don't you know," gushed the widow.

Mr. Pembroke's handsome sister under the table suddenly sat up—to the detriment of her bonnet.

"I imagined once that Gerald had a penchant that way," added the widow, playfully.

Mr. Pembroke's sister collapsed again. "Imagined once!" So Gerald had gone over to the enemy. That accounted for many things.

A mist came before her eyes; she swallowed with difficulty. Then she remembered the equivocal position in which she had placed herself, and she decided that she must get away from there at all hazards. With this object in

view, she peered from under the table-cover to find a way of unobserved retreat. Two doors on the opposite side of the room opened, respectively, into the kitchen and the pantry. To reach the kitchen was out of the question, but the pantry was nearer and the door was slightly ajar; the table would hide her movements, and, once in the pantry, she could go upstairs by way of the back hall. Carefully pinning up her dress she proceeded stealthily on all-fours, then drew a long breath, as, once more upright, she quietly closed the pantry door.

But fate was indeed unkind to Miss Jenny, for the door leading from the pantry into the back hall was locked, and the key was on the other side. If she should stay there until the visitors had gone she realized that it would be necessary to explain to Jack and Laura more than she cared to explain; whereas, if she could get upstairs they need know nothing but what she choose to tell them. Besides, Laura might come into the pantry in search of refreshment for the whist players; of course, she would be startled and would scream, the others would rush in, and there would be a scene, with Miss Jenny Pembroke as leading lady and Mrs. Summers and Gerald Holmes as audience. The thought was maddening. Why, oh why, had she left a peaceful and happy home to become a fugitive in a butler's pantry! Then she thought of the slide between the pantry and the kitchen, and eagerly felt for the little door; it was pushed back and the opening was free from obstacles.

Never before in her wildest flights of fancy had Miss Jenny thought such a feat of agility was possible to her; yet now she prepared for it with the nerve of a professional acrobat. She took off her new gown and placed it, with her bag, on a chair which stood within reach on the kitchen side. Then she climbed on the shelf and with some difficulty got her head and shoulders through the aperture. She was wondering what she should do next when a key grated in the lock of the kitchen door. Miss Jenny tried to draw back but could not; neither could she move forward. Humiliating as it was, there was nothing to do but to appeal to the generosity of the cook; she remembered that, fortunately, Mary was sensible and level-headed. So she waited until the newcomer had lighted the gas before she uttered a warning "Sh-sh!" Horrors! Instead of Mary, a new cook, whom she had never seen, faced her in astonishment.

"For the land's sake!" ejaculated the new cook.

"Be quiet, my good woman; I will explain everything. But first turn out the gas for fear some one might come in," said poor Miss Jenny trying to speak naturally.

"I guess you'll explain to the perlice if you ain't careful," threatened the cook. Then she gave way to mirth: "My, but you're a bird! Wisht I had a kodak; I'd like to take your pictur."

Miss Jenny fairly writhed; that is, she would have writhed had there been room.

"This is all a mistake," said she, desperately. "I am Mr. Pembroke's sister; I arrived late this evening, and seeing company in the library, and not wishing to meet anyone, I foolishly attempted to climb through here as you see."

"It's as clear as mud," responded the new cook, unfeelingly.

"And, if you will help me out of here and

said nothing about it, I will pay you well," said Miss Jenny.

At that instant footsteps were heard approaching from the dining-room.

"Put out the light," implored Miss Jenny; "A dollar to you—five dollars!"

The cook extinguished the light just as the door opened; then Laura called:

"Nancy!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

"I thought I heard voices, Nancy."

"'Twas my cousin that's just gone, ma'am," answered Nancy, giving Miss Jenny a facetious poke.

"Why are you in the dark?" then inquired Laura.

"My eyes are so poorly ma'am; they can't seem to bear the light," said Nancy.

"Oh!" said Laura, vaguely. Then: "Get the chafing-dish out, and bring some beer from the cellar, Nancy."

Her mistress gone, Nancy first made sure of the promised five dollars, then lent a grudging shoulder and helped Miss Jenny through the aperture into the kitchen.

Hastily resuming her dress Miss Jenny said: "I am very much obliged to you, Nancy. Now I'll just slip up the back stairs and wait for Mr. and Mrs. Pembroke."

But Nancy had reached her limit; she stood against the stairway door.

"No, you don't," she said. "I done as you asked me, and helped you out of that hole, but that's all. Maybe you're Mr. Pembroke's sister, and maybe you ain't. Like as not you ain't; so you have to git."

There was no help for it, so Miss Jenny "got!"

Once more out in the night she felt very humble and contrite. She realized that her actions during the evening had been undignified to the verge of silliness. Again she sat down on the steps of the side porch; as she did so the town clock struck nine. Just one hour had passed, yet in that time she who had once prided herself on her fine sense of honor, had sneaked into her brother's house; had been guilty of eavesdropping; had stooped to bribery, and had connived at deception and falsehood. What would Gerald Holmes think should he know her as she really was! The only thing to do now was to go home and stay there; the sooner the better. She could walk to the station and take the next train back.

With this laudable intention Miss Jenny reached the sidewalk and gazed uncertainly up and down the street. It was very dark, but she imagined that she could see a masked highwayman waiting behind each tree ready to sand-bag her as she passed. Suddenly the front door of Jack's house opened, and a man ran down the steps, colliding with her.

"Pardon me, I did not see you," he said.

Then they stared at each other.

"Jenny!" he exclaimed.

"Gerry!" she echoed, faintly.

There was a long pause. Then Gerry took Jenny's hand and placed it on his arm where he held it tightly, and began to walk down the street in long strides. And Jenny, her senses numbed by the singular chain of events that had led to this meeting, walked meekly beside him; she could not help herself.

"How did you get out?" he asked presently.

"Out of where?" she asked in turn with a premonition—she knew not what.

"Out of the pantry, of course!"

"How—did you know—that I—was in—the pantry?" she stammered.

"I saw you crawl to it from the table," he said, shortly.

Miss Jenny said nothing; there was nothing she could say.

"From where I sat in the library, I could see your reflection in the glass over the dining-room mantel," Gerry further explained. "At first, when I saw the tablecover moving, I thought a burglar must be secreted under the table, but just as I was about to give the alarm, I saw that it was you. Earlier in the evening I had heard Laura ask Jack to lock the back door of the pantry; naturally I wondered what you would do."

Jenny refrained from relieving his curiosity on that point.

"At least explain why you have acted so strangely," he urged.

"I wanted—to avoid—a certain—person."

In other words you wanted to avoid me; you always want to avoid me," said Gerry, sadly.

"Gerry, how can you!" said Jenny, tearfully. They had reached a lighted corner, and Gerry, looking down, saw something in her face for which he had looked in vain many times before. Then, tucking her arm into his again, he strode on.

"Where are we going?" she ventured to ask at last.

"We are going to get a marriage license and to find a minister," he answered.

"Not to-night!" she gasped.

"To-night or never," replied Gerry. "If I should wait until you are ready to set the time it would be never. Do you know that with your evasions and postponements, the motives of which I do not pretend to understand, you have almost driven me into never seeing you again? And that would have meant the spoiling of two lives. Now, I shall not let you out of my sight until you are mine irrevocably."

"But my clothes," she remonstrated.

"Bother your clothes; telegraph for them," he said.

Half an hour later, as Jack descended the steps of his house with Mrs. Summers for the purpose of escorting that lady to her home, a carriage drawn by two white horses dashed up to the curb. The driver jumped from his seat and opened the carriage door. There first alighted an elderly man in clerical garb; next came Mr. Gerald Holmes, wearing a white flower in his buttonhole, and then came Miss Jenny Pembroke, her arms full of bride roses.

"We are going to be married," said Mr. Gerald Holmes, proudly. "We'll be glad to have you witness the ceremony."

"Certainly," said Jack, not knowing what else to say.

With that the entire party went into the house, and the two were made one. And the midnight "flyer" saw Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Holmes en route for New York, whence they took passage for Europe, where they now are.

Communications must be signed with the name and address of the sender. No others will receive consideration with a view to publication.

THERE—

Comes news and a sample of a very smart coatee. The material has a furry plush surface in brown, black and orange, something very new and for winter wear. Gold handwork and fur borderings combine towards the smartest creation imaginable. White satin in Duchesse quality continues to be the choicest lining for jackets of all kinds when intended for full dress particularly.

ONE—

Of the pleasures of this summer is the satisfaction of seeing so few sailor hats worn by any one high-born or plebeian. We are thankful that such hats and stiff shirt fronts and collars have had their day and gone, let it be hoped for many a decade. But fashions never die out unfortunately. Let the next generation take more kindly to them.

THAT—

Black tulle bows and choux are as smart as ever on demi and grande toilettes. Three black tulle bows are decorating many of the high corselets draped with colored taffetas. These bows are placed one above the other in the middle of the back. One must sit very erect to keep them in order.

VERY—

Convenient are black guipure or Chantilly boléros, whether long sleeved or with elbow sleeves; they are much worn by matrons with silk as well as lawn gowns, retrimmed very often from last season with black laces by the yard. A very economical "make-over," considering its smart appearance.

THAT—

Among the forenoon sheer tissue veils, worn walking or driving, the new emerald-green shade is the most becoming. An all-white hat and gown are made all the smarter by the addition of such a veil.

YOU—

Must order your gowns and hats, according to the places they are to be worn in, if you are a woman with a reputation for dress, or are ambitious to make a name for yourself in that direction. This advice holds good for all the seasons of the year. In winter, for instance, when you give an order to your New York tailor, gown-maker and milliner, for an outfit for a month at Washington, if they are the best makers, they know exactly the style required. A wardrobe suitable for New York entertainments would not be thought worthy of admiration at the Capital city. To be well dressed there, means that a touch of gorgeousness must be evident. If that is lacking, a woman's reputation for smartness fades or halts. In summer—taking Newport for an example—anything loud or voyanté is frowned upon, and the gown-makers there for the season know that too well to risk even some of the charming imported things worn in London and Paris. These same gowns at Saratoga or Narragansett would not be looked at twice; but what Newport will not wear, they will and do, and pay well for them.