

GRESHAM'S DAY OFF

By Theodore Banta Sheldon

“ASK Mr. Gresham to step here,” said Follansbee, dipping his pen in the mucilage and attempting to blot the stub of the book with the cheque he had just drawn.

“Where is my list of engagements and memoranda?” he asked of the mild-eyed young man who entered.

“Er—you destroyed it by mistake. I’ve made up a new one,” and Gresham laid a typewritten sheet of paper on the desk.

Follansbee bent over it.

“H’m-m! Breakfast with Von Heilbron at eleven, and it’s now ten minutes to twelve!”

“Colonel Baskam,” announced the office boy. “Shall he come in, sir?”

“By gracious! I had forgotten him. Ask him to wait five minutes and then show him in. Gresham, will you take a letter to—now, who the devil was I going to write to? What have I on for this afternoon?”

Gresham picked up the list and read:

“Billings & Company at one-thirty; directors’ meeting, H. F. & D., two o’clock; safe deposit vaults with Saunders, half-past three; try on at tailor’s—”

“Confound it!”

“Dine at the Schuylers’, and meet Wesley at eleven with the Danforth papers and plans.”

“And to-morrow I go to Rodney in the morning and to Philadelphia in the afternoon!”

“No, Rodney in the afternoon and Philadelphia in the morning.”

“Ah, yes; quite so, quite so.”

“And then Wednesday, of course—you’ll hardly need *me*, will you, sir?” queried Gresham.

“No, I think not— My *dear* Baskam, how do you do? Why didn’t you come right in?”

The caller looked somewhat amazed as he stepped into the private office.

Curtis Follansbee had the day before returned from a three months’ business trip to Nicaragua. Middle-aged, he found himself the possessor of wealth and political power. His schemes and deals fairly outnumbered his dollars, and of the former the Nicaraguan Company was the last but one. The “but one” was matrimony. In his nervous yet thoughtful manner Follansbee had decided to marry. He observed very business-like methods in becoming engaged to Helen Atkinson. He wished to be married with absolutely no fuss or frills. She was twenty-eight, sensible, poor and plain-looking. He proposed to her by letter the day before he left for Nicaragua; was accepted and forgot all about an engagement ring until he discovered a memorandum on the back of an envelope after he had been away six weeks. He indited a telegram directing Helen not to write or expect letters, as he was so busy—so busy, in fact, that he neglected to send it.

Wednesday evening, after having consummated an unexpected *coup* in forming a new company, Follansbee slapped his knee as he sat in the hotel corridor and exclaimed:

“Why the devil did I let him go to-day? This *is* a mess!”

He paced up and down a moment, then suddenly turning, almost ran into Gresham.

"I wish an immediate explanation!" said Follansbee.

"I supposed you would."

There was a strange look in Gresham's eyes.

"Well! Why did you neglect to remind me yesterday that this afternoon I was to marry Miss Atkinson?"

Gresham paused and looked at his shoes.

"Because I knew you were not to."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I married her myself."

"What! I don't believe it!"

Drawing from his pocket an evening paper, Gresham pointed to a marriage notice. Follansbee read it, muttered to himself, and blurted out:

"Remind me to discharge you—er—that is—we will arrange for a discontinuance of your services in the morning."

Whereupon he rushed out.

Next day Gresham appeared at the office, but Follansbee forgot to discharge him.

"I can't let you have more than a week for your trip," was all he said.



THE SECRET OUT

WHY the waves are blue and sad,
The poets have not told us yet;
Perhaps they sob and feel so bad
Because they feel so very wet.



CERTAINLY SUSPICIOUS

BIBBS—Is he a drinking man?

GIBBS—I shouldn't wonder. I heard him say he didn't know where his next dollar was coming from, but he knew where it was going.



HOW HE KNEW

HE—The girl I am engaged to is very modest.

SHE—Is she?

HE—Yes. She asked me if I didn't think her twin sister was beautiful.



JUST THE MAN

JOBSON—I'm all run down. I think I'll try Dr. Fakem.

HOBSON—Good idea. He will wind you up all right.



NATURALLY IN THE DARK

PAULINE—Have you heard the latest scandal?

FLORENCE—No. This is the first time I have seen you in a week.

HIS MAGNIFIENCE

SEVEN years—Have I been with his Magnificence. He loves me and Selia, who is my wife; and the two little ones.

I have Rupees now, in my possession; given to me, by Him, after swearing at me.

He always swore at me. No others would he swear at.

Once I had pains. His Magnificence alleviated them, by giving me bullets (which were white). He taught me to swallow them, without chewing. Once I chewed.—The taste was bad and bitter.—I do not chew them now.

He has often told me, I was the largest liar in all India.—And then he would swear.—That was his way, as he loves me as a brother.

At Christmas time.—He would give the two little ones, eatables, in Brown, Red and Yellow—In many shapes—Pleasant to the taste.

To myself and Selia, He would make a great oration and then we would receive many gifts from him.

Without me, he could do nothing. All the years, I spent with Him, were pleasant. It was horse racing and such.

And all night, and far in the morn. It was drink and smoke with his three friends.

At times.—Much silver and gold would pass from one to another.

Then she came.—Her hair was the color of the Sun.

She came from afar.

Her abode was on the Hill.

Then a change, that was great took place.

It was thus—His magnificence became fussy.

No more drink No more smoke No more three friends.

It was all day, Darie Dey Go here Go there. Many times I went to the Bazaar, to see if the habilments He purchased, were ready.

He would say to me—Darie Dey tell the brownheaded heathen, to send my habilments at once—Immediately.

He never gave me a moment's Peace, after She came.

Yes—She made great trouble for myself and His Magnificence.

Wherever She was, He was. On Sunday we went to devotions. Before She came on Sunday we never devoted.

It was Sleep—Sleep all day—We never devoted.

After one year of this laborious work She and He had a Celebration which to Behold was Sonething.

Then He brought Her to our abiding place.

To look at Her made me feel joyful.

But She gave myself and Him much to do.

She called Him a great lazy boy.

She would say to me.—Darie Dey—Go the Bazaar, and get which is written on the paper.

She would tell me to Make Haste. Make Haste means. Go quick and return the same way.

Then She would tell me, An extra Rupee I would receive from Her—on settlement day. Then She would smile—Her teeth was the color of Pearl. How could one refuse to make haste? She finally took His Magnificence away. To a place called England, which is merry. He will return as without Me He can do nothing.

WALTER GRIEVE.

IN the beginning the woman forsakes the world for the man; in the end the man forsakes the woman for the world.