

given. Two conditions, however, were exacted as the price of his consent to an engagement—first, that the young couple were to wait a year before marriage; and, secondly, that after their marriage James was to take up his abode at the Fold Farm, in order that Mr. Basset might not be separated from his favourite child and heiress. That Susan was his heiress, and that consequently, after his own death, the ancient name must die out, that there would be no more Bassets of the Fold Farm, was, despite his love for his

“little girl,” a source of much secret grief to the worthy farmer.

Annette—Lady Standon—remained a widow to the end of her days. For an indefinite number of years she continued to look excessively juvenile. Also she continued to keep in her train an indefinite number of lovers, even after she had ceased either to be or to look juvenile. But, whether from her own fault or theirs, none of those lovers was ever converted into a husband.

THE END.

HOW I GOT MY TELEPHONE FOR NOTHING: AN EXPERIENCE.



“THINGS are not looking very lively, Louisa,” said my husband to me one morning after breakfast. “There seems a little conspiracy against my sketches of Canadian scenery—dealers won’t bid!”

“Oh, Charlie! and they are so beautiful,” I cried.

“Who, dear?” said Charlie; “the dealers or the pictures?”

“The pictures, of course, you silly fellow,” I replied affectionately, for I am fond of Charlie—“still, what can you do?”

“That is just the point, my dear girl. But I must run off and write a few letters. It is a bore, this letter-writing. You are off shopping, I suppose?”

“Yes; I wish I had not to go,” I answered; “there are such a number of things to attend to at home. Why can’t one give orders without going out, as we did in America—by telephone?”

“My word, Louisa, you’ve hit it!” cried Charlie excitedly. “You’ve hit it this time. My dear girl, you are an angel. We’ll have a telephone!”

“And pay twenty pounds for it, Charlie? Nonsense! Where are we to get the money? Travelling with the British Association was very cheap, and yet we spent a good deal of money. We positively cannot afford it!”

“We *will* afford it, because I think I see my way to getting it *for nothing*,” replied my husband. “I have an idea, honestly my own, and I will use it.”

“Well, meantime, I must go and order the things. What a dreadfully dreary day it is!” I exclaimed.

It was one of those drizzling, foggy mornings, for which the British climate is remarkable. Everything

was damp, dripping, and clammy. How nice, I thought, to sit quietly in my little boudoir, and—as I used to do in America—telephone to my tradesmen, or the cab-office, in fact make all my arrangements comfortably, without any trouble at all!

“Charlie,” I said, “if you can manage the telephone you will be a public benefactor.”

“Certainly,” replied Charlie; “the company will find a way; I must find the means, *and I will!*”

Just as I was going out Charlie appeared again.

“Are you going round to the tradespeople, Loo?” he asked. “You look dressed up for a polar expedition.”

“It’s so chilly and damp. I wish you would go instead,” I said tentatively.

“I will,” he answered, greatly to my astonishment. “I will purchase your mutton, I will order your beet-sugar, or your Normandy dripping. What do you want?”

“Here is a list. Now run away, and come back as soon as you can.”

So Charlie went off, and, as I afterwards heard, he interviewed all the tradespeople, sounded them, and proceeded to business. His manner of proceeding was simple. He first spoke to the butcher.

“Mr. Bullin,” he said, “I want your assistance. Will you come to a meeting at the hotel on Thursday?”

Bullin, scenting a possible feast, agreed. So all the tradespeople—the baker, the chemist, the coal-merchant, the fishmonger, the greengrocer, the stationer, and linendraper—came; and all branches of business in our neighbourhood were represented. All these men were, as usual, totally opposed to dealings with the various “stores,” a fact which my husband well knew when he selected the members.

“Gentlemen,” began Charlie—this is what he said according to his report after—“Gentlemen, I have ventured to ask you to meet me this evening as representatives of the trading community. Those present, I perceive, supply, generally, the entire district here, and do, presumably, well.”

“Not so well as we might,” remarked one shock-headed man—“sugar’s a drug.”

“Not in my shop,” tittered the little chemist.

“Well,” continued Charlie, “I want to benefit you

all, and, I may add, benefit myself too. You would not, perhaps, believe me were I to say I am purely philanthropic. I am philanthropic after I see five per cent. for my money, or say seven and a half in some cases; but it will be your interest."

"To *pay* the interest do you mean, sir?"

"Indirectly. You will use a sprat, Mr. Fisher, to catch a salmon. In other words, you will benefit me and other residents, and keep all our custom in the neighbourhood, on certain conditions to be subscribed to by both parties."

"Let's hear 'em, sir," said the baker.

"I propose to reduce your working expenses, to insure you custom so long as you will undertake to provide the goods we require according to quality, and as ordered; to save you time and trouble, and save your customers money. My idea is this: you charge high prices because you have to keep up stock and send round for orders; then you have to send the goods afterwards. I propose to save at least half this expense—perhaps even more."

"All very well, sir; but how?" said Bullin.

"BY THE TELEPHONE!" said Charlie triumphantly; and then he explained his plan. His enthusiasm was infectious, and he wound up by saying—

"There are ten of you present. Let each of you put down two pounds—my discount for one year, ten per cent. on twenty pounds. Or you can divide the sums, some less than others. I want the twenty pounds for my TELEPHONE."

"What good will it do *us*?" inquired the fishmonger. "I don't care for new-fangled things."

"Ah! you *will*. Listen. Firstly, if I have the telephone in my house I can converse with you if you are on the system. This will save you a great deal of money. You will be able to dispense with the daily sending all round *for* orders, which means a cart and horse and boy the less. This alone will more than pay your connection with the telephone centre. You will *insure* a regular custom if you fulfil orders honestly. We shall gain in time and money. Look at me. I spend five hundred a year, at least; of that, three hundred pounds will surely come into your pockets for household necessaries. You can afford me seven and a half per cent. discount for ready money; that will pay for my telephone."

"Yes, but not our own telephone," said the butcher.

"You are unreasonable, Bullin. The saving to you, particularly, will be immense. Your whole expenses annually in the matter will be trifling when compared with your savings. Will you try it?"

There was some consultation, and they said they would think over it. Two days afterwards Mr. Bullin called to see my husband, and said as we had always dealt with him he would try the telephone. "It can't hurt much," he said. "If it pays with me the others will unite; meanwhile, they are willing to give you percentage, ma'am."

So it was arranged. All our tradespeople deducted seven and a half per cent. from our books weekly for ready money; and Charlie, delighted at the prospect, worked so well that he sold four pictures. Then we

went to the Telephone Company, who treated us very fairly indeed; and for the "agency," which Charlie was "sharp" enough to claim, he managed to get a discount from the company. So he netted a little there, too. The telephone was put up, and worked well.

One morning a neighbour, Mrs. Elmore, came in hurriedly, and begged to see me.

"My dear Louisa, what *do* you think? Just now I was at Bullin's shop, and bargaining with him, when a little bell rang, and he said, 'Excuse me, ma'am; I must attend to Mrs. Farrant.' I was perfectly astonished when he went to a little instrument, and talked to some one through a dice-box-looking mouth-piece. So I asked him, when he had finished, what it was. He said, 'The telephone,' and had got your orders for dinner. Now, *is this possible*? My dear, what a tremendous saving this would be! Why, I have to come out to see this man, and here you are, so cosy, at home! How *do* you do it?"

Here was an opportunity. I took Mrs. Elmore into my boudoir, where, locked in a case for fear of servants, was my telephone.

"Now, Annie," I said, "tell Mr. Bullin you have altered your mind, and will have a leg of mutton instead of the ribs of beef."

"Nonsense, Louisa. How can the man hear me all this way without telegraphing first?"

"Shall I do it?" I asked.

"Please—if you *can*," she added.

In a moment the case was unlocked and I rang my bell. The answer came directly.

"Put me on Number 5,016," I said. Mr. Bullin was 5,016.

"Right," came the answer. Then I told Mr. Bullin to change the joints, and he promised he would.

"The ribs have not gone yet," he added.

"Now, Mrs. Elmore, will you tell him you are here? Ask him something."

"I will tell him to send change for a note," she said. Then she called to him; he replied, and she told him. To her astonishment, when she returned home, she found the mutton and the five pounds in gold, which trusting Mr. Bullin had forwarded.

"I will have a telephone, Thomas," said Mrs. Elmore to her husband. "It is only twenty pounds, and I can get seven and a half per cent. off orders."

"Have it, by all means," said Thomas Elmore; "it will save me, too, a great deal of trouble, for I can have my office letters read to me when I am laid up."

So he had. *That is a fact!* By degrees all the tradesmen came in, and the telephone in our district became an institution. The other evening we went out to dinner, and the carriage was ordered at half-past ten. But an "at home" succeeded. Our friends insisted on our remaining; so Charlie walked down to Mrs. Elmore's, a few yards away, and telephoned home to tell Andrews, the flyman, to send the carriage at one o'clock instead of half-past ten. The livery stable keeper thanked us afterwards for not keeping his man and horse waiting, and got himself attached to the telephone at once, for he was enabled to use

our carriage meantime, and saved sending out another.

Thus we made the telephone quite a success; and Charlie, who has considerable business acumen (for an artist), made something out of his idea. We obtained our telephone for virtually "less than nothing," as we more than gained in the percentages. But the greatest triumph was to come.

We had been out one evening, and it was past twelve when Charlie came up-stairs. He generally looks out of the window when he comes into my room, and on this occasion he called out—

"Hallo! Loo, here's a fire, I believe."

"Where?" I cried, rushing to the casement.

"Up the road. It's at Adams's. The house will burn rapidly; the timber-yard will ignite the whole place. My goodness! this will be serious, and no call nearer than a mile!"

"Dear, dear!" I exclaimed. "But can't we telephone?"

"Of course; well thought of, Louisa!"

In a minute Charlie was in my boudoir, and was ringing to the Central Exchange. I looked in the book; the fire number was something—I forget what.

"Put Southwark and outlying stations in connection. Fire in Hamer Road, Kensington. Serious!"

"Thanks," came back in three minutes. In twenty minutes, and before the police had sounded the call in the street, an engine came up. Then four more in quick succession. In an hour and a half all danger was over, and Charlie came back.

Next day a gentleman called. He sent in a card from an insurance company.

"We have to thank you, I understand," he said, "for your promptness and presence of mind in an emergency. We do not suspect—at least, we do not wish to suspect—anything criminal, but that timber-yard is *very* heavily insured. Hem! in fact, insured far beyond its present value; so, sir, you did us a real service. The first half-hour is generally the worst for us—fires gain a hold so rapidly."

"I am very glad," said Charlie. "I am on the

telephone, so I was enabled to give the alarm at once."

"Yes, sir; I wish all our clients were. We are not so anxious concerning the *number* of fires; in fact—yes—hem——"

"In fact," said Charlie, "fires do you good; they make people insure; but disastrous fires have an unpleasant effect on dividends!"

"Well, you know, I cannot admit that," said the gentleman. "Will you come and see our directors on Wednesday?"

"Certainly," said Charlie. He did, and the Board of Directors passed him a vote of thanks. They liberally reduced our fire premium to a merely nominal sum, for Charlie, having so many pictures, is rather heavily insured.

So Charlie's idea, and mine, has prospered. We have had our telephone eight months, and have saved, or gained in time, postage, cab-fares, underground tickets, and worries, ten times our expense in putting it up! We can call on all our tradesmen, book our places at the various entertainments, transact bank business, and all kinds of other business, by telephone. I keep it locked up, so no one can tamper with it; and if Charlie dines out unexpectedly it saves a telegram.

In conclusion, I would strongly advise all heads of families to be connected with the telephone. Tradesmen will find it an immense saving, as our people have done. They have formed a little "Association," and thus all orders to them by telephone have precedence. They take off the discount on these transactions, and reap a perfect harvest in the saving of labour, and sending backwards and forwards to the houses. Charlie and I have no longer fears for the future, as he has received orders—owing to his being "on the telephone," and ready to act—to proceed to Scotland to make some sketches for an illustrated paper. Had he not been on the telephone, the editor says, he would have sent a cab for Mr. M—. But time pressed; Charlie starts to-night, and now I must rush and pack up, for I am to go too.

AN ENGLISH GIRL.



FAIR as is the fragrant rose
That in an English garden grows,
That breezes woo, that dews impearl—
O sweet she is, an English girl!

With tresses dark, or golden hair,
Blue eyes or black, she still is fair,
With all the lovely looks we see
In Jessie, Kate, or Dorothy.

The happy eyes are frank and bright,
And full of laughter, full of light;

The lips are perfect, speaking truth,
And peerless with the smile of youth.

A queen—by every poet sung—
She needs no sceptre, being young,
Nor cares to wear a brilliant crown
On brighter tresses rippling down!

O sweet as is the stately rose
That in an English garden grows,
That breezes kiss, that dews impearl—
My love, she is an English girl!

J. R. EASTWOOD.