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**ASINGULAR LETTER**  
 By JOHN Y. LARNED

We don't know how many cases have occurred where minors have been swindled out of their inheritances by relatives, guardians or executors, but there are quite a number of such instances on record. When we remember what a temptation a fortune is and the number of unscrupulous persons in the world it is a wonder that there are not more such cases.

When I was in the high school I formed an attachment for a girl named Hazel Mansfield. She belonged to a wealthy family, while my parents were poor. Indeed, when I went to college I was obliged to work my way by teaching and other expedients. I parted with Hazel Mansfield when we were graduated at the high school and did not meet her again for many years.

After leaving college I studied law and in time put out my shingle as an attorney. I had not practiced long before I received by mail a copy of a book handsomely bound and altogether quite an acceptable gift. After tearing off the cover, which was much soiled, I looked eagerly on the flyleaf for the name of the donor and was surprised to find the leaf as blank as the day it came out of the manufacturer's hands. I ran through the pages, expecting that a card would appear, but found none. Then I opened the book and shook it. There was nothing in it.

I examined the writing on the cover, which was in a woman's hand, but it was not familiar to me; at least I did not remember it. I was addressed as an individual, not as a lawyer. I looked all over the wrapper, but saw nothing to give me any clew. The book, considering the way it came to me, was a mystery.

A few days later I concluded to read the book, hoping that there might be something in the text that would suggest an explanation. It was a book of travels and to me very dull. I was about to give up its perusal when I came to a light lead pencil mark under the word "my." I noted the fact and read on. On the next page the word "dear" was similarly underscored. This began to look as though I was on the track of something. I now ceased to read, but looked for another marked word. It was "old." The next was "school." I was somewhat disappointed, for "my dear old school" meant nothing to me. But I turned the leaves till I came to the word "mate."

These five words were a revelation. My mind at once turned back to my school days, but I had a number of friends among them and could not settle on any one who would be likely to send me any such mysterious communication. I read on and evolved the following sentence: "I need both a friend and a lawyer." At this point I was so eager to learn who was my correspondent that I turned to the back of the book and examined it from the end to the beginning. Here I found letters, not words, underscored. The first letter marked was a "d," the next an "l," the next an "e," the next an "i," the next an "f." I knew I was noting the letters backward and kept trying by reading them in reverse order. When I came to the "f" I noticed that thus far they spelled "field." Four letters more, read also in reverse, gave me "mans." The two syllables together gave "Mansfield."

Could the communication come from my old chum Hazel Mansfield? I looked eagerly for the next letter, and, sure enough, it was an "l." I ran over the pages rapidly, coming to "e," "z," "a," "h," in sequence.  
 Having discovered my correspondent, I was now impatient to know why she had need of a friend and a lawyer. Turning to the forward part of the book where I had left off, I began again reading the message. It informed me that the writer was held a prisoner in a country house with no other near neighbors by the executor of her father's estate. She was kept there waiting legal permission to place her in a retreat for feeble minded persons or to be disposed of in some other way that would enable the executor to appropriate her estate. A part of this she knew and a part she surmised. She begged me to do something to extricate her from her terrible position.

Her reason for sending me the book was that she was not permitted to communicate with any one. She had found the book in the library and at times when she was not watched had underscored the words and letters that composed the message. She was permitted to go out riding guarded by a woman who was her jailer. She had concealed the book, which she had wrapped, addressed and stamped, in her muff and while being driven out managed, when the woman was looking the other way, to drop it out of the carriage.

All being explained, I went to work on the case at once, applying to the court for a habeas corpus, and before anything could be done by the enemy I got Miss Mansfield out of her jailer's possession. I unearthed so much rascality that before long I had the executor of the estate fleeing to some foreign land, where he went into hiding to keep out of jail. He had squandered one-half the estate that he had been appointed to manage, but I saved the other half for its legitimate owner.

As the husband of the beless I managed the property so successfully that it is now what it was when her father died.

**Practicing Forethought.**  
 Forethought looks beyond the obstacle to ultimate results. It reaches out constructively for a way to get over, through or around that which hinders the realization of its object.

Forethought when exercised develops the imagination. The mind accustomed to thinking ahead soon acquires vision. This leads to freedom in a higher degree. The one who takes no forethought is surprised, cast down, discouraged, when anything goes wrong. Such a one is enslaved, imprisoned, as it were, by a wall of circumstances. The one accustomed to use forethought is far less the slave of circumstance. Such a one learns to look for a way by which to turn the unpleasant experience into profitable results. He uses his imagination to find a way out. He thinks constructively instead of just blindly giving in to fate. He has learned that by forethought and imagination, by creative, constructive thinking, he can find new ways to success when one way is blocked.—Nautlius.

**Reporters in the Commons.**  
 Shorthand writers first gained access to the house of commons with some sort of official acquiescence about 1786. In the year 1803 they are to be found occupying the back bench in the strangers' gallery without interference from the house officials, although the latter affected to be ignorant of their presence. In 1836 the house commenced to publish the daily division lists itself and from that time onward the old idea that there was something sacred about the doings of the house which required the prohibition of publicity was exploded. After the great fire of 1834 the reporters were admitted as a matter of course to the temporary building used by the commons and when, on Feb. 3, 1852, the representatives of the people took possession of their new chamber in the palace of Westminster the press was at last officially recognized and the reporters' gallery as it at present exists was an acknowledged fact.

**A Luckless Caterpillar.**  
 Nature is a curious force. There is a caterpillar in Australia. It looks for food under leaves and twigs in the usual way. As it searches, a parasite, specially equipped by nature for the purpose, drops on its neck and fastens itself there. In a week or two this little parasite seed begins to germinate, drawing its nourishment from the very lifeblood of the insect. The latter, feeling sick, buries itself about two inches into the ground. Eventually a pale green stalk about twelve inches high, at the summit of which is a most extraordinary flower, somewhat resembling the top of a burhus when in seed, appears. The poor caterpillar's refuge in the ground is of no avail, for its whole interior has to make room for a vegetable mass of roots. Sucked as dry as a bone, it is actually converted into a stick of wood.—Johannesburg Chronicle.

**In the House of Commons.**  
 In the days of Burke, Pitt and Fox members of the house of commons used to relieve the tedium of debate by sucking oranges and cracking nuts while lying full length on the benches, and Brougham made his great six hours' speech on law reform in 1828 with a hatful of oranges by his side for refreshment. Joseph Hume found solace in pears, which he took from his bulging pockets and munched by the hour, leaning the while against his favorite post. No wonder oranges were so popular, since their vender (one of them, at any rate) was a picturesque girl who used to sit with her wares in the lobby, attired in a "sprigged muslin gown with a gauze neckerchief" or in the glory of "clean white silk stockings, Turkey leather shoes and pink silk petticoat, becomingly short."—Westminster Gazette.

**Selfish Etiquette.**  
 Some rules in an old book on etiquette seem to encourage a practice commonly called "looking out for No. 1." Here are two of them:  
 When cake is passed do not finger each piece, but with a quick glance select the best.  
 Never refuse to taste of a dish because you are unfamiliar with it or you will lose the taste of many a delicacy while others profit by your abstinence, to your lasting regret.

**Better Things in Store.**  
 There are better things in store for you than you know. In the calendar of your future there are days marked for angels' visits. The angels may come disguised, but come they surely will. Yours be it to have for them an open door and a house where they shall find a home.—G. A. Merriam.

**His Dream.**  
 Towne—Do you believe in dreams? Browne—I used to, but I don't any more. Towne—Not as superstitious as you were, eh? Browne—Oh, it wasn't a question of superstition. I was in love with one once, and she jilted me.—Exchange.

**Tit For Tat.**  
 Affable Barber—You're very bald on top, sir. Self Conscious Customer (much annoyed)—What if I am? You needn't talk so much. 'Ow about that squirt of yours?—London Telegraph.

**Adding to His Offensiveness.**  
 The man who told us so is always doubly offensive if he comes around after the arrival of our troubles and tries to look as if he had forgotten all about it.—Chicago Record-Herald.

It is a wise man who knows his own business, and it is a wiser man who thoroughly attends to it.—H. L. Wayland.

**ANANIAS ELOPES**

His Tale of Woe  
 By CLARISSA MACKIE

Ananias Sline had at last made up his mind. Of all the desirable widows and spinsters in Quince Harbor none seemed so attractive as Mrs. Em Bevis, who was the proprietor of the Quince Harbor dry goods store. If any one had remotely suggested to Ananias that the profitable little business had enhanced the charms of the Widow Bevis in his middle aged eyes he would have laughed one to scorn. Still, being half proprietor of a dry goods business was infinitely better than being porter in a village bank. Any one would admit that!

When he put the question to Mrs. Bevis it was noontime and her two rosy cheeked clerks had gone home to dinner. Ananias had assured himself that they two were alone, and he had promptly possessed himself of the widow's generous hand and told her the story of his lonely life and his longing for a home, provided she would preside over it.

"Oh, Ananias," she simpered. "I never dreamed—I never thought—oh!" she shrieked as Ananias imprinted a kiss on her work worn hand.

That evening Ananias called upon her and discussed their early marriage. "There's only one obstacle to a fancy wedding," said Ananias when Em Bevis had outlined a plan for the ceremony to take place in the Baptist church, with her little niece as flower girl and white satin ribbons festooned from the tops of the pews.

"And that is?" asked Em in a disappointed tone.

"My landlady!"  
 "Hetty Rowell? My land, you ain't engaged to her, be you?" inquired the widow sharply.

"Not if I know it," said Ananias cautiously, "but somehow I never know where I stand with Widow Rowell, Em! I swan I never proposed marriage to her in my life, but half the time she talks like she was engaged to me! I wish we could be married in a few days," added Ananias.

"But what's your hurry?" protested Em. "I'd like a chance to make some wedding clothes and get ready!"  
 "I know it, my love," cooed Ananias in her ear, "but I am afraid of the Widow Rowell. Great blizzards, I am! I talk in my sleep, you know. What if she should hear me saying something about you! It would be all up in the air!"

By the time Ananias went home he had persuaded his fiancée that she could select a very presentable trousseau from the stock of her own department store; so, relieved of this momentous question, Em agreed to elope with Ananias on the following Thursday, and Ananias wrote a note to the Rev. Josiah Twigg apprising him of the coming event and asking him to consider the matter as entirely confidential.

That night Ananias let himself into his boarding place and tiptoed up to his room with unusual caution. One never knew when the Widow Rowell would pounce out. And one never knew in what part of the house she was seeking a night's repose. She had a pleasantly careless custom of taking prospective guests through her spacious old house and permitting them to choose whatever room suited the moment's fancy, provided it was disengaged. As for herself, she slept around as fancy dictated—one night the west front chamber appealed to her, for she loved to hear the roar of the waves on the beach; the next night it might be a small hall room for the moment unoccupied that would tickle her restless impulse.

What Ananias did not know was that on this particular evening the widow had been approached by the proprietor of the Quince Harbor hotel and asked to accommodate a half dozen guests for whom he could find no room until the following day. Mrs. Rowell sweetly assented and gathered up her own belongings and carried them into a tiny room next to the room of Ananias Sline. Here she dropped her weary limbs upon a most uncomfortable cot and slept.

The sound of the softly closed front door aroused her. If that was Ananias Sline tiptoeing in at such a late hour she would have a serious talk with him in the morning. Either he had been courting—and that was not to be allowed, for Hetty Rowell felt that she had a prior right to the affections of Mr. Sline—or he had been to lodge meeting, and as it wasn't lodge night—why, he must have been courting! So there the widow's logical mind calculated the matter, as we know, quite correctly.

She dozed off to sleep again and awoke to the resounding snores of Mr. Sline in the next room.  
 "Drat him!" she muttered, turning over. But she could not sleep again. She got to thinking about Ananias and where he had spent the evening, and she decided that it was Em Bevis who had captured him.

She was convinced of it when Ananias ceased snoring and fell to talking, as was his habit when the day had been an exciting one.  
 "Ahem!" babbled Ananias. "Ahem, next Thursday evening at 8 o'clock!

My dear Mr. Twigg, would you perform a most interesting service for me? Of course I shall wear a white flower in my coat—ahem! I'm not afraid—no, siree! I, Ananias, take thee, Em Bevis—no; that's not right. Em—Em—Emma—or Emmaline—ah!" Mr. Sline resorted to snoring once more, and the widow, now thoroughly awake to the perfidy of her star boarder, sat up in bed and fell to planning.

When the Widow Rowell fell to planning—well, things usually happened. For an entire week she watched and waited and listened and peeked and pried, and when Thursday evening drew around she was possessed in some mysterious manner of most of the details of the approaching elopement. She knew that Hep Riddle's buggy had been engaged and that Hep was to harness the sorrel horse, although Hep Riddle himself didn't know what Ananias Sline wanted to do with a buggy.

By Thursday evening Ananias Sline was shivering with nervous dread. He had a feeling that in some way or other his elopement would be frustrated. Time and again he had found the Widow Rowell's wits could outmatch his own, but so far as he knew not a soul was aware of the approaching marriage save the prospective bride, the minister and himself.

Ananias ate scarcely any supper, although Mrs. Rowell had prepared his favorite dish of oyster stew. She sat opposite him and blinked her eyes at him until he gulped down a huge cup of scalding hot tea and bolted away from the table.

"Little dear!" murmured the widow with a strange smile on her face.

Ananias locked himself into his room and made an elaborate if hasty toilet. After many maneuvers he let himself out and managed to escape by the back hall door. There was no sign of the widow, and he hoped she had gone to call upon one of her cronies. It would be ill luck indeed if she had taken it into her head to call upon Em Bevis, though the two rivals were not the best of friends since Ananias came between them.

Still, the Widow Rowell was apt to do the most baffling things. Ananias hurried to Riddle's stables and climbed into the buggy which a grinning negro had prepared for him. He drove rapidly out of the yard, nearly losing a wheel in the turn, for he was not a skillful driver.

Quince Harbor folks are inquisitive and prone to mind each other's business to a most annoying degree; therefore it had been decided that Em Bevis was to wait for Ananias in Whippoorwill lane by the brook. He would catch her up into the vehicle, and away they would go to Big Harbor.

Whippoorwill lane was there, and so was Em Bevis, for Ananias recognized the white veil she was to wear about her uncovered head.

He pressed her hand and received a tender pressure in return. After that they rode in silence through the woods toward Big Harbor.  
 At last they reached the main street of Big Harbor, and the sorrel horse chose to gallop madly until Ananias, saving at the reins, managed to bring him to a stop before the gate of the parsonage.

"Belay there!" yelled the little ex-sailor angrily just as the minister opened the front door and stepped into the porch to meet them.

The prospective bride got out unaided while Ananias was tying the sorrel horse and she was inside the house by the time Ananias had reached the gate.  
 When Ananias Sline reached the parlor, where stood the beaming clergyman and his smiling wife and a couple of servants for witnesses, he stood in the doorway aghast at the sight that met his amazed eyes. The bride was there—a bride was there, indeed, but not the one he had so carefully chosen! Standing there in the modest splendor of a gray satin dress hurriedly garnished with white lace and bunches of artificial orange blossoms was the Widow—Rowell!

Em Bevis was nowhere to be seen. Somehow he had been tricked by the artful widow whom he had at first courted, only to leave when a better chance presented itself. Surely retribution was close upon the heels of Ananias Sline!

"We are waiting, Mr. Sline," reminded Mr. Twigg, smiling benevolently.  
 "Dear Ananias!" cooed Hetty Rowell, fixing her agate colored eyes upon him.

Ananias moved forward mechanically. There seemed nothing else to do. Things were hideously mixed and a bitter fate seemed to have driven him straight into the arms of the Widow Rowell. He felt that she had outwitted him again—never more would he try to get the best of her. He would admit defeat. As for Em Bevis, what could he do about it now without creating a scandal that would shake the three villages to the core?

Nothing!  
 So Ananias went forward and was joined in the bonds of holy matrimony to Hetty Rowell. When the ceremony was over Mrs. Twigg congratulated them warmly.

"It's the oddest thing," she babbled, "but Josiah and I really thought the bride—we understood it to be—another. We are quite surprised!"  
 "So are we!" smiled Mrs. Ananias Sline as she took her husband's arm and went down to the waiting buggy and the impatient sorrel horse.  
 Somebody tossed an old shoe after them for luck and it struck Ananias right in the back of the neck, so that he uttered an explosive blast of profanity that caused the minister and his wife to close their front door hurriedly.  
 But the Widow Rowell—I mean Mrs. Ananias Sline—merely smiled compassionately, as if she knew that her husband had just cause for exasperation.

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**WITH OUR CHURCHES.**  
 Danish Lutheran Church, West Chippewa street—Sunday School at 9 a. m. Morning services at 10 a. m. Confirmation classes meet Tuesday at 9 a. m. Sunday, May 24th, there will be an important church meeting right after services in regard to the proposed new church building. All members are urged to attend.

A good place for you and your friends to spend next Sunday evening is at the religious services held at Dorman school house at 7:45 o'clock. Theme for May 24 is "The Three Crosses." And don't forget, Sunday School at ten o'clock a. m. A welcome for all.—John M. Jensen, pastor.

Congregational Church.—Rev. F. F. Farrington, pastor. Services for Sunday, May 24, 1914: Sunday School, 9:30 a. m. Morning service, 10:45 a. m. Children's sermon, "Creatures of the Summer." Morning sermon, "Making Repairs in the Spiritual Life. No service in the evening. A welcome for all.

Bethel Danish Ev.-Luth., Church—Rev. Chr. Sorensen, pastor, W. Seminole St., Sunday School, and Bible Class 9:30 a. m. Services 10:30 a. m., and 7:30 p. m. second and fourth Sunday in the month. Young peoples meeting every Wednesday 8 p. m. Other services and meetings will be announced at the Church. Everybody welcome.

German Ev.-Luth. Church—Rev. W. Kistemann, pastor. Services every Sunday: Sunday School from 9 to 10 a. m. Service from 10 to 11 a. m. English service every first Sunday in the month at 7:00 p. m.

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