

1800

Dangers of Delay, or, the Careless Isabella: Embellished with a Magic Lantern Exhibition

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Recommended Citation

Unknown, "Dangers of Delay, or, the Careless Isabella: Embellished with a Magic Lantern Exhibition" (1800). *Historical Quaker Books*. Book 28.

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DANGERS OF DELAY;

OR, THE

CARELESS ISABELLA,

Embellished with a Magic Lantern Exhibition.

Published and Sold by David Hogan, No. 249,
Market-street, Philadelphia.



CARELESS ISABELLA;

OR,

THE DANGERS OF DELAY.



MR. AND MRS. MANLY, FREDERIC, EDWARD,
SOPHY AND CAROLINE.

MR. MANLY.

CAROLINE come here; you shall sit by me this evening: and I will shew you a young lady as untidy and careless of her person as yourself.

I must, however, confess that the moments Isabella did not employ in washing her hands and face, combing her hair, and pinning her clothes neatly, were not employed in any way that could possibly improve her understanding, or serve as the slightest excuse for her want of order. Your fault is that of not dividing your time properly, of giving all to one object, and not leaving a moment to bestow on any other; her's was that of trifling away her time, flying from one occupation to another, and finishing nothing. Now cast your eyes on my Magic Lantern; there she sits in her room, combing her hair, her frock half on, one shoe on her foot, the other on the floor at a distance, and every thing else in equal disorder.

MRS. MANLY.

Oh ! I never saw a young lady's room in so much confusion in my life !—Disorder indeed !

SOPHY.

I would not have mine in such a litter on any account. Pray observe her pretty bonnet, so nicely lined with pink-coloured silk, and new ribbon to tie it ; see how she lets it lay upon the floor, without troubling her head about it ; and, mamma, do pray look at her drawers, there is only one of them shut, all the others are half open, and her clothes hanging out of them.

Pray, dear papa, do not vex Caroline by comparing her to this Isabella ; for though she certainly dresses herself in a hurry, she never leaves her room in such disorder.

EDWARD.

My dear uncle, will you be so good as to tell me who that pretty girl is, dressed in a green spencer, who appears so much surprised, and as if she was saying, "Well, I cannot help it, I must go without you."

MR. MANLY.

That pretty girl is Isabella's sister, who certainly was surprised at finding her in such a state, and said to her nearly what you have suggested. The truth is, she never was ready to go any where with her family, even though she had a couple of day's notice given her. She never was ready for breakfast, dinner, tea, or supper ; and even on Sundays, if her mamma and sister (for she did not pay much attention to her maid)

did not stand by, and insist on her being a little more expeditious, and absolutely wait to see her dressed, she never was ready to go to church. One Sunday, when they imagined they had left her completely dressed, and that she was following them down stairs, they were surprised, after they were seated in the coach, that she did not appear: a servant was sent to call her, who found her in her room, (though she had been told that it was already late, and the coach was at the door), her tippet off, and her bonnet on her lap, with all the ribbon unpinned, which she said she had that moment thought of turning, because it was probably fresher on the other side.

Another time, they were almost at the church door, when her mamma perceived that she had on one red shoe, another blue: she said, the other red one hurt her foot, and she had changed it for the first she met with, without thinking about the colour.

FREDERIC.

I hope her mamma made her walk into church, and that every body laughed at her: if I had been there with the boys, I would have called her *Goody Two Shoes*.

MR. MANLY.

In any other place it would have served her right: —but at church, Frederic! I hope you will always remember, that you do not go there either to laugh yourself, or to excite laughter in others; and you might have supposed that Isabella was not allowed to disturb the congregation. She was sent back in the coach, with orders to retire to her room, and read till her mamma's return; but going up stairs, she saw from the window that one of her chickens had entangled its

foot in a little gate which opened into the garden, and she was sure her mamma would not be angry if she went back to liberate the poor thing : so down she flew to the hall, and from thence into a passage which led to the spot where the little prisoner hung in the gate.

Here she met Pompey, who growled as she passed him, because she trod (though very lightly) on his foot ; but as she was not conscious of having done so, she was foolish enough to suppose the dog had done it to remind her of a promise she had made him the day before, and which, like all her promises, she had never thought of afterwards ; so determined to keep her word this time, away she went to get a piece of bread for Pompey, thinking the chicken would be quiet till she came to his assistance. Long before that time the poor thing had its leg broken, and had bruised itself so much that it died immediately.

Her mamma found her weeping at the door, instead of reading in her apartment, and gave her a long lecture on her ridiculous and inconsistent behaviour, which she appeared to listen to with great attention, and promised amendment ; but did not keep her promise, for no later than the next day she fell into the same fault she had so often been guilty of.

She had been called up at six o'clock, because she was to breakfast with a young lady who lived at the distance of half a mile from them ; but thinking it was very early, and that she had quite time enough, she would amuse herself with just peeping for a minute at her silk worms,—then why not give a drop of water to her geraniums ? and after that new dress her cousin's doll for her ?—poor little Patty would be pleased ! and she should not be a minute about it : but so many minutes were employed with one thing and another, that at half past eight o'clock, when her mamma (finding she was not gone to her friend) sent her a summons to

come immediately to breakfast, she was still not half dressed ; and throwing the doll into a drawer and the doll's clothes upon the bed, she scrambled on her own in so much haste, that when she made her appearance in the parlour every body burst into a fit of laughter, except her mamma, who was extremely mortified, because there were two gentlemen present who were quite strangers, and had only called to deliver some letters to her papa. Her maid had been so tired of waiting for her that she had left the room, and Isabella went down with her face dirty, her cap the fore part behind, her frock with one sleeve almost off (having torn it in her haste to dress herself), and tied round the waist with a ribbon which had been throwing about under the drawers, and behind the drawers, and sometimes on the chimney piece, for above a month.

After she had been new dressed, and had had her breakfast, she still determined, with her mamma's permission, to pay a visit to her friend, because she was certain she said, that she expected and would wait at home to receive her ; but having crossed two fields, and got into a narrow lane, she found so many strawberries that she could not think of leaving them ; and meeting with a little boy and girl, who had gathered each a small basket full, she desired to know what they were going to do with them.

They told her that their mother, who was going that morning into the town, would sell them, and that the money she received for them would be laid out in something they liked : " it would not be much," they said, " that they were sure of ; but it might perhaps purchase a small white loaf, or a little rice and brown sugar to make them some rice milk, which they were very fond of."

Isabella said she should like to go to their mother's cottage, and see what kind of a place they lived in ; and as her maid thought she was sent out merely to

walk, knowing nothing of her engagement, and supposing it of little consequence which road she went, she made no objection : so away they all went to Mary Dyer's cottage, where they found her very busy preparing to go market, and loading her jack ass with vegetables for that purpose.

Isabella was extremely pleased with this new scene, and neither thought of her visit to her friend nor her own home ; but after the good woman was gone, amused herself with asking a thousand questions of the children, and running about their garden, till it was quite dinner time, when, ashamed to pay her visit, and scarcely knowing what to say to her mamma, she slowly sat forward on her return home.

Her mamma was extremely displeased with her, and still more so when she learnt that the young lady, after waiting breakfast a considerable time for her friend, was so thoroughly persuaded that some unforeseen circumstance must have prevented her and that she should certainly see her before dinner, that she positively refused to accompany her family on a visit to a lady in the neighbourhood, though she knew very well that she should be highly entertained if she went, because the lady had always a large quantity of prints and drawings, as well as many other curious things to show them ; and had spent a very melancholy day at home quite alone, and lost so much amusement, for an uncivil girl, who suffering herself to be led away by every novelty she met with, never had it in her power to fulfil her engagements ; and, by continually deferring till another moment what she ought to do immediately, never did any thing in proper time.

It was in the month of June, and the weather fine and settled as it usually is at that season, when her papa and mamma made an appointment with another

gentleman and lady, to spend a day on the water, with their children and a few friends. They were to be provided with cold provision; and, after rowing along the coast, and visiting several caves and remarkable rocks which lay in their way, were to dine on the beach in a beautiful little bay, and return home in the evening.

Their friend's house was near the coast, and it was agreed that they should breakfast there, and walk down to the sea side to embark.

Isabella was delighted with the idea of this charming day, could talk of nothing else. Her papa and mamma often reminded her of her trifling, and how very seldom she was ready when sent for on any occasion whatever; but she said she was sure she should be in time for this party, that she had two whole days to prepare for it, and at any rate she would not lose so great a pleasure for all the world.

CAROLINE.

I cannot imagine what she had to prepare; or if she was allowed half an hour to dress herself, what more was necessary. I think that was quite sufficient, and that nothing could prevent her being ready.

MR. MANLY.

It might be supposed so, particularly as she had a maid to get her clothes ready for her every day, and to help to dress her; yet she had so strangely accustomed herself to trifle away her time, and to find something to do every day which she ought to

have done the day before, that it is not to be wondered at if she could never truly say she was ready, and had nothing left undone.

The day before that on which the delightful and so much wished-for party was to take place, her mamma desired her to carry some money to a poor woman, who lived in a small cottage in a lane close to their garden: it was to pay for the schooling of one of her children, and she was ordered not to forget to go with it immediately.

I would not forget it for the world, thought Isabella, but I have time enough; I will go and make Mary take out all my clothes, and put them together on a chair by my bed side: even my bonnet and gloves shall be there, for we are to go very early, and I am determined for once that I will not be accused of being too late.

Her music master arrived, but she was so busy with her maid that she could not go down to him: he was a good-natured man, and waited an hour for her, when she appeared in the parlour, and went through her lesson.

I have always an hour to spare, thought she, between my music and my drawing lessons; so the moment Mr. Smith has done with me, I will go to Jenny with the money for her little girl's schooling. But she made a very wrong calculation, she had lost the hour in teasing her maid without any necessity, and Mr. Smith had scarcely finished when the drawing master entered the room. This vexed her sadly—she was inattentive—she had so much to rub out, and so often in the same place, that she made a hole in the paper: her master was angry, but unwilling to let it be a lesson lost, he said he would stay with her half an hour longer, which was a civility she would very readily have excused, for

by the time he had done with her it was the dinner hour.

As soon as the cloth was removed she slid quietly out of the parlour, intending to go up stairs for her bonnet, (for she was afraid to let her mamma know that she had neglected her orders), but was stopped at the door by a young girl, who in a very humble manner begged her pardon for being so troublesome, but said she had come the third time by appointment, for some old linen for her poor mother's arm, which she had promised to give her. "You told me, Miss Isabella," added she, "that if I came yesterday exactly at three o'clock I might depend upon having it, but when I came, you said you had been obliged to write a letter which you ought to have done the day before, and you had not had time to look for the linen, I would not have returned to trouble you any more about it, miss, but my mother is indeed greatly distressed."

It was impossible for Isabella to send her away again without giving her what she came for; she therefore went back to her room to look for it, but she never knew where to find any thing, and was more than an hour putting together a handful of old linen.

She once more tied on her bonnet, but on going down stairs found it was beginning to rain, and in a few minutes it increased to a heavy shower, which continued the whole evening, and entirely put it out of her power to go to Jenny with the money.

Her papa had often told her, that if she lost an hour in the morning, she might run after it the rest of the day without being able to catch it: she now felt the truth of this forcibly. She would have

gone to Jenny the moment her mamma ordered her to go, but, as usual, she chose to do something else first, and now it was impossible to go out of the house.

Well, thought she, it is only getting up an hour the sooner; and if I do but carry the money to Jenny myself, as mamma told me I must, she will never enquire when I carried it.

Having thus settled the matter with herself, she went to bed very easy, and was up and dressed a full hour before the time appointed for their departure.

The morning was beautiful, and Isabella, gay as a lark, tripped away with a light heart to Jenny's cottage. She found both the mother and the daughter in the garden, clearing a bit of ground of some cabbage stalks, that they might turn it to better account. "I do not think that is very hard work," said Isabella, "I am sure I could pull up those things as well as you do;" and, immediately jumping over the ditch, went to work, which she found no very difficult task, for the rain had softened the earth; but in less than five minutes she had made herself so dirty, that she knew not how to return home or what to do. Her muslin frock, so nicely clean and white when she left her room, was covered with mud; her pale yellow gloves in the same condition; and taking off her bonnet whilst she stood lamenting at the cottage door, without recollecting how dirty they were, she left the mark of all her fingers on the front of it. In the same instant Jenny's son who was in a room immediately above the spot she stood in, not knowing that any person was under the window, shook out an old sack, in which they kept the bran they feed their pigs with, direct

over her head, and so completely filled her hair with it that it was impossible to say what colour it was of.

She returned home in the greatest haste and vexation, got into her room unperceived, and immediately prepared to change her clothes, and clean her hair.

In the mean time the coach drove round to the door, her papa and mamma took their seats in it, and her sister was stepping in, when inquiry was made after Isabella. "She is the most provoking girl in the world," exclaimed her papa angrily, "she is never here when she is wanted. I will answer for it that she is not ready. Laura, go up to her room, and see what she is doing; but I command you not to stay a moment: if she is ready, she will come with you; if she is not, she shall stay at home, for I will not wait an instant."

Laura found her in the situation in which you see her, endeavouring to clean her hair, and certainly very far from being ready to accompany her sister down stairs; but, as usual, thinking she had always sufficient time for any thing she liked to do begged her sister to wait a minute, and she would go with her.

"It is impossible, my dear Isabella," said Laura, as she was turning towards the door; "and it would be to no purpose, for you have your hair to clean, your stockings and shoes to change, as well as your petticoat and frock: it will be at least half an hour before you can be dressed, and papa has commanded me not to stay a moment, so I cannot help it, I must go without you."

As she left the room the maid entered it, and found Isabella in tears. "Aye, aye! cry, miss," said she, "you never do any thing in the proper time;

and moreover, miss, you wanted to deceive your mamma, and make her believe you had obeyed her orders the moment she gave them to you. Now you will pay for your artful tricks by staying at home all day by yourself, whilst your sister is taking her pleasure." So saying, she flounced out of the room, leaving Isabella, overwhelmed with shame, to dress herself as she could.

JOHN BOUVIER, PRINTER.