

THE PAWNED BABY.

[By Vane Merriman.]

Rosa Hornitz moved heavily down the narrow aisle between the dusty glass cases of the pawnshop and peered up into the storm-swept streets.

"We got to light the lamps about now, papa," she said over her shoulder.

The little man huddled over a greasy ledger at a desk near the window looked up with hawk eyes.

"You shouldn't be cutting off all what light there is, Rosa," he reproved his wife. "When I make a footing of this here yesterday's page, then, maybe, we shall light lamps."

Rosa moved her bulky form so that it no longer obscured the window. From the basement doorway she could look up and see many feet passing along the sidewalk, the feet of men, women and little children, and if it had been light enough in the basement Papa Hornitz might have seen his wife's face wet with tears.

Suddenly a pair of large, masculine feet, shod in well-worn galoshes, hesitated at the top of the flight of stone steps and then passed on.

Rosa turned toward her husband. "Cousin Lensky just went by; I could tell his galoshes."

"The feet of a meddler," snarled Jacob Hornitz. "He dare not show his face to me."

"Papa, papa," soothed Rosa, laying her hand on her husband's trembling arm.

"Did he not steal my boy—my Joey?"

"Ah, papa!" wailed Rosa. "It was not Lensky who stole our son. It was his niece, that good for nothing Ray Nemuss, with her fancy ways."

"It was Lensky who told Joey if he broke his engagement to Ray her heart would break. And even though our hearts break from his disobedience our son marries her, and we never see him." Jacob's voice cracked drearly.

"You told him never to show face here again. And her; we hated her for her silly ways and because we were jealous. Now they have moved to Chicago—so far away," reminded Rosa.

The door opened suddenly to admit a customer. Jacob retired to light a lamp over a distant counter and prepared to haggle over a gold watch.

Mrs. Hornitz stood before the door watching the feet on the sidewalk. Suddenly a bulky object blotted out the view; there was a commotion on the stone steps and something bumped against the door.

Out of the storm and wet there was propelled into the shop a baby carriage pushed by a shawl-shrouded woman.

"For what—" Rosa was angrily beginning when the woman interrupted. "Please—please to let me have a dollar on it. It's a fine carriage, almost new and—"

"Wait," Rosa interrupted in her turn and lighted a bracket lamp. She examined the carriage closely, poked its empty depths and then nodded assent. While she fumbled in the cash drawer the woman pushed the carriage into a dusky corner out of the way of a passing customer.

The transaction concluded, the woman clutched the dollar bill and the pawn ticket and vanished into the night.

Jacob was lighting the remaining lamps that shone like dim yellow oases in the desert gloom of the shop.

"Times is hard, papa," observed Rosa.

"Times is always hard for some folks," retorted Jacob as he returned to his desk.

"Times is very bad when a lady pawns her baby carriage. Look, papa a fine, handsome carriage, and only a dollar asked."

Jacob glanced toward the corner and nodded. Rosa usually made a good bargain. He sighed sharply.

Rosa Hornitz knew that he was thinking of their son Joey, gone almost a year. They had not seen Joey since his marriage. Now he was in Chicago, where Cousin Lensky had relatives, but he had never written. Perhaps Jacob's denunciations still rang in his ears.

At eleven o'clock Rosa, nodding over her knitting, lifted her head sharply. Jacob locking up his books, stared at her curiously.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I thought you made a cry, papa," she said meekly.

"You would always hear things, Rosa," he reproved.

A queer little sound came from the darkest corner of the shop, a feeble, half-strangled cry.

Rosa and Jacob rushed from their place and met in the middle of the shop.

Their eyes questioned each other. Jacob spoke first. Perspiration beaded his forehead; he essayed a careless laugh. "I am like a child—a crazy one," he confessed. "I thought 'twas little Joey crying! And him—God knows where!"

"Ah, papa!" wailed Rosa. "I heard it too. It is a bad sign and—" She stopped and listened with a tense look on her round face.

The cry again—louder—a distinct wail.

"A—baby!" Jacob stamped his foot angrily. "Rosa, fool that you are! There is a baby in that carriage."

"Ah, no! The lady had no baby. The carriage was empty—I felt in it," protested Rosa, waddling toward the

corner. Jacob carried a lamp and flashed it toward the carriage.

"The carriage was empty," repeated Rosa, bending over it. "Jacob, it is a baby—poor, forgotten one!" Her arms plunged into the carriage and brought from under the hood a bundle wrapped in an old shawl. The bundle wriggled and wailed lustily.

"You will take it to the police," commanded Jacob sourly. "What for should anyone wish us bad luck like this?"

The baby suddenly stopped crying and, cradled in Rosa's hungry, motherly arms, stared up at her with round, black eyes.

"He should maybe two months old," remarked Rosa. "Such a beautiful boy—see, Jacob he smiles at you!"

"I see nothing but bad luck," shrugged Jacob peevishly. "Where is my umbrella and my galoshes, Rosa?"

"What for, papa?"

"I go to the police."

"In the morning, Jacob—husband! Let me keep him tonight—I will take him tomorrow myself—poor little one—that a mother should pawn her babe for a dollar," she crooned softly.

Jacob stamped back to his desk and looked up his records.

"Ticket 13482," he mumbled. "Did you know the woman, Rosa?"

"No. She looked like that Vetta Vogel what keeps boarders down by Hester street." Rosa threw this information over her fat shoulder. "I go to give baby some milk, papa." The door into the living room slammed.

Jacob sat and stared at the closed door. He could hear Rosa's tender voice as she moved to and fro and again the baby's cry ending in a gurgle of satisfaction.

"But for the heavy years—it could be little Joey again," he sighed. "He was a good son—it was his only disobedience." He bowed his head upon his greasy ledger.

He did not hear Rosa when she came into the shop and dragged Joey's cradle from a dusty corner, nor the heavy vibration of her tireless feet as she waited upon the wail. He was thinking of Joey in all his delightful phases from infancy to upright young manhood.

A week later Jacob Hornitz faced a shawl-wrapped woman. She pushed some money and a pawn ticket across the counter.

"I came for it," she said briefly.

Jacob studied the ticket and nodded. He went to the corner and pulled out the baby carriage. "Here it is," he said.

The woman hesitated. She was old and wrinkled and her hair was grizzled. "I want the baby, too," she said sharply.

"The ticket calls for baby carriage—no more," said Jacob sternly.

"I want the baby. I hear him crying now." She started toward the back of the shop, but Jacob and the carriage blocked her path.

"No lady would pawn her baby. You are crazy," he said.

"I tell you I hear it."

"What you hear it our own baby—one I shall adopt. Will you go or must I call police?" he asked politely.

"I will go and bring police myself, old man!" she cried shrilly, and clattered up the steps.

Rosa came into the shop, carrying the baby in her arms.

Jacob poked a crooked finger under the baby's dimpled chin. "Such a little rascal babe!" he chuckled.

The shop door flew open and two people fung inside—a girl whose face was sharpened by illness and privation a young man gaunt and hollow-eyed, a ghost of dashing Joey Hornitz.

"I want my baby," said the girl tensely, holding out eager arms.

"Give her the baby, mother," said Joey gently. "She has pined for it."

Silently Rosa dropped the baby in Ray's arms. She and Jacob stared at Joey with unbelieving eyes. They scarcely listened to his tale of poverty and illness and how an avaricious and merciless landlady had caused baby and carriage to vanish one stormy night. They had just gained her confession that she had pawned the carriage and relieved her house of the nuisance of a baby guest.

"I am sorry for the trouble, papa," said Joey, "but we will go now. Come, Ray. Good-by, mamma."

Jacob scurried down to the door and locked it. "You couldn't take away our baby," he defied them. "It's got to stay here—and you, Joey—and Ray, your wife—we want you all. Eh, mamma?"

Rosa's eyes were full of tears. Joey's arm was around her and Jacob was awkwardly hugging Ray and the baby.

"Of course all our children must stay here by us," she said decidedly. "Joey, you help papa. Ray, baby's milk is warm—we must feed him now."

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A Poor Present.

A wounded soldier explained his grievance to his nurse.

"You see, old Smith was next me in the trenches. Now, the bullet that took me in the shoulder and laid me out went into him and made a bit of a flesh wound in his arm. Of course I'm glad he wasn't hurt bad. But he's stuck to my bullet and given it his girl. Now, I don't think that's fair. I'd a right to it. I'd never give a girl o' mine a second 'and bullet."

Work of Imagination.

"They tell me that it's imagination that keeps the doctors busy," said the slow-pay patient.

"It is," replied the physician. "A lot of us are kept busy making out bills which we foolishly imagine are going to be paid."

NEVER AGAIN FOR HIM

MR. BURLISON DECLARES HIMSELF IN STRONG TERMS.

Good Reasons Why He Should Make Resolution Not to Bring the Sunday Dinner From the City—
"Why, Henry!"

There was the look of a man with a troubled soul in the face of Mr. Henry Burlison when he reached his home one Saturday evening. The smiling face of his wife did not lessen the look of grim determination in the face of Burlison. A wife with far less intuition than Mrs. Burlison had would have discovered that something had gone wrong, and Mrs. Burlison asked, "Why, Henry, what has happened?"

Burlison stepped into the vestibule of his home and dropped the suit case he carried to the floor with a dull thud. His voice had an edge like a blade as he said:

"Something has happened that will never happen again if I live to be so old that Methuselah will seem like a kid when compared with me. This is the last time I save 15 cents by taking that suit case downtown with me on Saturday and bring home our Sunday dinner in it to save express charges—the very last time!"

"Why, Henry, what happened?"

"Enough happened to make me tell you that I'll eat my Sunday dinner from an armchair restaurant with glittering white letters on the window announcing frankfurters and mashed potatoes for 10 cents before I'll do any Saturday marketing with a suit case."

"But you haven't told me what happened."

"You would have seen what happened if you had been with me just as I reached the subway stairs. I s'pose I had forgot to push down the clasps that help to hold the suit case together, and the thing was so crammed full that it was too much for the self-locking arrangement, and the thing opened right at the top of the stairs."

"Why, Henry!"

"You'd say 'Why, Henry!' if you had seen a six-pound Philadelphia capon traveling down those stairs, followed by three big yellow grapefruit and half a dozen apples!"

"Why, Henry!"

"A bunch of celery rolled down two or three steps, and a man racing down the stairs stepped on it and slipped, and he threatened to sue me for damages! You will find the print of a woman's boot heel on that pound of butter, and I left the dozen eggs I had bought on the subway stairs, for I would have needed a shovel to have scraped them up after they had rolled down six iron steps! One of the grapefruit rolled between the feet of an old lady going down the stairs, and she gave a yell like a maniac and called for the police! A grinning idiot caught up one of the grapefruit and flung it up toward me, and two other men pelted me with the apples!"

"Oh, Henry!"

"The bottle of maple sirup spread over six of the steps, and the people carried it home on the soles of their shoes; and the paper came off the soup bone I had bought, and I left it lying at the foot of the subway stairs. All this, this is the very last time you ever hear of me saving 15 cents in that way! My lacerated feelings are worth at least a quarter, and—"

"I left half of my stuff in the subway, and the other half will taste bitter to me when I think of that gaping, grinning, giggling, tittering mob that saw me standing there with my empty and open suit case in my hand and all that stuff traveling down the subway stairs!"

"Why, Henry!"—Judge.

Men's Wrist Watch a Flivver.

The wrist watch for men, at least, has been officially, if negatively, declared to be a "flivver." Even if the classiest looking men you've ever seen wears the time on his pulse, he hasn't the official sanction of the American National Retail Jewelers' association. They closed their convention with the refusal to have anything to do with the bracelet timepiece. It was a fearful blow for the man who introduced the fad who has been extolling the virtues of the wrist watch, especially for the male sex. Neither the advocate of the whimsy nor anyone else proposed that with the sport shirt men might wear watches draped about their necks on a string or a chain. Neither was it intimated that men might carry their subway tickets and cigarettes in vanity cases.

Snake Successful Angler.

That some snakes can catch fish as well as old anglers was demonstrated Sunday on the ranch of E. D. Osborne, near here.

A small spring creek runs through the pasture on the Osborne ranch, large enough for fish to play in. Here a large water snake was seen to grab a rainbow trout by the head and make for the tall grass.

Osborne killed the snake and threw the live fish back into the pool. The fish was about 12 inches in length.—From the Husum (Washington) Dispatch.

Work Demanded of Recruits.

The English recruit is expected to put every rifle shot into an eight-inch ring at 100 yards. The territorials must put 80 per cent of all shots into a 12-inch ring at that distance. The French soldier is required to put half of his shots into a 12-inch ring at the same range.

SQUIRREL AND KITTEN PLAY

Game of Hunting and Being Hunted Watched on a Lawn in Melrose—Billie Saves His Dinner.

In some sections of Melrose the gray squirrels have been petted and fed to such an extent that they do not hesitate to enter houses in search of nuts and dainties. It is common to see as many as a half dozen of these squirrels playing about the lawns at one time, and they seem almost to have lost their fear of mankind.

The other day an odd incident was witnessed in which one of these squirrels figured. His squirrelship, locally known as "Billie," was engaged in foraging for some of the nuts he had cached in the grass on a lawn near a huge oak. He was seen by a playful maltese kitten about three months old.

When it noted the squirrel, the beribboned kitten became all attention. Then, nature asserting itself, the kitten crouched and began to stalk its quarry.

"Billie" was perfectly aware of the kitten's proximity, and with one eye watched its attempt at a stealthy approach, while with the other and his nose he proceeded with his search.

The kitten appeared puzzled at the boldness of the squirrel and its curiosity became aroused to such an extent that it neglected its crouch and arose to its full kitten height better to see what the squirrel was doing in the grass.

Then as the squirrel paid no attention to it, the kitten slowly walked over to within two feet of the squirrel. Billie had secured his nut and calmly sat upright to open it.

Without a preliminary crouch the kitten jumped for the squirrel. Billie leaped at the same instant, but went clear over the back of the kitten. When the squirrel came to the ground two feet away, it at once resumed its effort to open the nut.

That was play the maltese could appreciate. It crouched, wiggled its slick length, leaped and sailed gracefully over the squirrel. The latter dropped his nut, but otherwise did not move until the kitten again came toward him, when in his turn he jumped over it. As he landed the little maltese ran for him, and he ran round and round the kitten, purely in play and without apparent fear.

For nearly three minutes the pair kept up their antics. Then suddenly there was a black streak from the flower bed as an older kitten rushed for the squirrel. But Billie knew his ground and his rush carried him six feet up the trunk of the friendly oak by the time the older kitten was at its base.

Then Billie hung, head down, tail flirring, and in his squirrel way gave that black kitten a piece of his mind. After five minutes of vain waiting for him to come down, the two kittens decided they must delay their attack and adjourned for a romp of their own.

They were scarcely 15 feet from the tree when Billie leaped down, secured his nut and scampered back up to a sheltering limb of the oak to enjoy it in peace.—Boston Globe.

Marked Similarity.

The dispatches state that in a determined effort to eradicate from the Ottoman empire all traces of things European, the Young Turks have ordered the removal of all business signs written in any other language than Turkish. Great confusion prevails in Constantinople on this account. Two-thirds of the inhabitants are natives of other countries and know little of the Turkish printed characters. Strangers find it exceedingly difficult to get about, and the average citizen cannot tell from his sign whether a building harbors a hotel or a stable. Much the same condition prevails in this country. Here in Kansas City so few of the corners have street signs on them that one can scarcely tell where he is. The Metropolitan conductors call the street names in an unknown tongue. And in the average village there is a Palace hotel, Palace Barber shop, Palace restaurant, Palace livery stable, and so on, with little in their appearance to differentiate one from the other. The op'ry house never housed an op'ry, and the moving picture shows usually bear such names that one would fain wonder whether they are movie theaters or beauty lotions.—Kansas City Star.

Tiny Pellet Brings \$500.

A little round ball of paper which Mrs. Charles E. Vincent dug out of the pocket of an old sweater she was washing made her heir to real estate valued at \$500. The paper proved to be her husband's will.

Vincent died on March 29. His widow knew he had made a will, but a five months' search failed to reveal where he had put it.

Recently she took down the sweater her husband had worn, and which had been hanging in a closet since his death. She washed it and was about to wring it out when she noticed a lump in one of the pockets.

Mrs. Vincent unrolled the paper, dried it and ironed it out. It bequeathed real estate at Pine Brook, N. J., to her. The widow took the paper down to the city hall and had it admitted to probate.—Philadelphia North American.

In Peace Also.

Prof. Irving Fisher of Yale says the cost of the war in money and lives is small compared with its cost in the emptied cradles of this and future generations. We desire to remind the professor that peace hath its emptied cradles as well as war has.—Houston Post.

Dry Goods, Etc.

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