

"BUSTED" BLAKE.

How a Fortune Fell to His Deserted Widow.

Harken to the tale of how fortune fell to the widow of "Busted" Blake. The outcome has shown that "Busted" was not radically bad. But he was wretchedly weak of will to reject an opportunity of having another drink with the boys—or with the girls—or with anybody or nobody.

In the days of his ascendancy, when he was a young and newly-married architect, he was a buyer of drinks for others. Waiters in cafes vied with each other in showing readiness to take his orders. He was rated a jolly good fellow then. No one would have supposed it destined that some fine night a leering bar-room wit should reply to his whispered application for a small loan by pouring a half-glass of whisky upon his head and saying:

"I hereby christen thee 'Busted.'"

The title stuck. Blake, through continued impetuosity, lost all shame of it in time; lost, too, his self-respect, and his wife. Mrs. Blake, a gentle and pretty little brunette, had wedded him against the will of her parents. She had trusted, for his safety, to the allurement of his future, which everybody said was bright, and to his love for her.

The years of the tearful nights, the pleadings, the reproaches, the seesaw of hope and despair, need not here be dwelt upon. They would make an old story and some of the details might be shocking to the young person. They reached a culmination one day when she said to him:

"You love drink better than you love me. I have done with you."

She was a woman and took a woman's view of the case.

When he came back to their rooms that night, neither she nor his two weeks' old baby girl were there. Then he knew how much he loved them and how much he had underestimated his love.

She did not go to her parents. There was a very musty proverb that she knew would meet her on their threshold: "You made your bed; now lie on it." Her father was a man of no originality, hence he would have put it in that way.

She got employment in a photograph gallery, where she made herself useful by being ornamental, sitting behind a desk in the ante-room. I know not what duties devolve upon the woman who occupies that post in the average photographer's service; whatever they are, she performed them, and with the wages received managed to care for herself and child.

The next day he made a Herculean effort to pull himself together. He obtained a position as draughtsman from one who had known him in his respectable period, and he went tromblingly and sheepishly to call upon his wife and child.

The consequence of his visit was a reunion, which endured for two whole weeks. At the end of that time she cast him off in utter scorn.

How he lived for the next two years can be known only to those who are familiar through experience with the existence of people who ask other people on the street for a few cents toward the price of a night's lodging. By those who know him he was said to be "no good to himself or anyone else." He acquired the raggedness, the impudence, the phraseology of the vagabond class. He would hang on the edge of a party of men drinking together in front of a bar on the slim chance of being "counted in" when the question went round, "what'll you have?" He was perpetually being impelled out of saloons at foot race speed by the officials whose function it is in barrooms to substitute an objectionable person's room for his company.

One winter Sunday morning he slept late upon a bench in a public square. Awakened by an officer, he rose to go. Hazy in head and stiff in joints he slightly staggered. He heard behind him the cooing laugh of a child. He looked around. It was himself that had awakened the infant's mirth—or that strange something which precedes the dawn of a sense of humor in children. The smiling babe was in a child's carriage, which a plainly dressed woman was pushing. He looked at the woman. It was his wife, and the pretty child was his own.

He walked rapidly from the place, and on the same day he decided to leave the city. He had herded with vagrants of the touring class. The methods of free transportation by means of freight trains and free living by means of beggary and small thievery in country towns were no secret to him. He walked to the suburbs and at nightfall he scrambled up the side of a coal car in a train slowly moving westward.

Mrs. Blake and the child lived in a fair degree of comfort upon the mother's wages, but often the mother shuddered at thought of what might happen should she ever lose her situation at the photographer's.

Consumption had its hold on "Busted" Blake when he arrived in the mining town called Get-there City, in Kansas, one evening. Get-there City had not gotten there beyond a single straggling street of shanties, but it had acquired a saloon, although liquor selling had already been forbidden in Kansas.

"Busted" Blake, with ten cents in his clothes, entered the saloon and asked in an asthmatic voice for as much whisky as that man was good for.

While awaiting a response his eyes turned toward the only other persons in the saloon—three burly, bearded miners of the conventional big-hatted, big-booted and big-voiced type. Above their heads and against the wall was this sign, lettered roughly with charcoal under a crudely drawn death's head:

"Five thousand dollars will be paid by the undersigned to the widow of the sneaking hound that informs on this saloon. This is no meek bluff."

P. Gibbs.

Blake, after a brief coughing fit, looked up at the man behind the bar—a great, thick-necked fellow, with a mine

of authority and yet with a certain bluff honesty expressed about his eyes and lips. This man, whose air of proprietorship convinced Blake that he could be none other than P. Gibbs, had first looked sneeringly at the ten cents, but had shown some small sign of pity upon hearing the ominous cough of the attenuated vagrant. He set forth a bottle and glass.

"Help yourself," said P. Gibbs. While Blake was doing so, Mr. Gibbs went on: "Bad cough o' yours. Y' mightn't guess it, but that same cough runs in my family. It took off a brother, but it skipped me."

Here was a bond of sympathy between the big law-defying saloonkeeper and the frail toper from the east. "Busted" Blake drained his glass and presently coughed again. P. Gibbs again set forth the bottle and this time he drank with Blake. Before long, by dint of repeated fits of coughing, on the part of Blake, the sympathy of P. Gibbs was so worked upon that he invited the three miners in the saloon to join him and the stranger.

Blake slept in a corner of the saloon that night. He left there the next morning, a curious expression of resolution on his face.

During the next three weeks he was now and then alluded to in P. Gibbs' saloon as the "coughing stranger."

In the middle of the third week, at nine o'clock in the evening, when the lamps in P. Gibbs' saloon were exerting their smallest degree of dimness, and the bar was doing a good business, the door opened and in staggered "Busted" Blake. His staggering on this occasion was manifestly not due to drink. His face had the hideous concavities of a starved man and the uncertainty of his gait was the token of a mortal feebleness. His emaciation was painful to behold. His eyes glowed like huge gems.

The crowd of miners looked at him with surprise as he entered.

"The coughing stranger!" cried one. "The coffin stranger, you mean," said another.

"Busted" Blake lurched over to the bar. His eyes met those of P. Gibbs on the other side, and the latter reached for a whisky bottle.

Blake fumbled in his pocket and brought forth a piece of soiled paper, which he laid on the bar under the glance of P. Gibbs.

"Keep that!" said Blake, in a husky voice, whose service he compelled with much effort. "And keep your word, too. That's where you'll find her."

P. Gibbs picked up the paper.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"That woman's name there! It's the name of my widow; the address, too, of a photographer man who will tell you where she is. Get the money to her quick, before the governor comes down on you with the troops to close you up. And don't let her know how it comes about. Pick out a man to take it to her, let him pay his expenses out of it—a man you can trust—and make him tell her I made it somehow, mining or something, so she'll take it. You know."

P. Gibbs, who had listened with increasing amazement, opened wide his eyes and drew his revolver. He spoke in a strangely low, repressed voice:

"Stranger, do you mean to say—"

"Yes, that's it," shrieked "Busted" Blake, turning toward the crowd of intensely interested on-lookers. "And I call on all of you here to witness, and to hold him to his word. That's no mere bluff, he says, in his notice there, and I'm the sneaking hound that informed. My widow's entitled to his five thousand dollars. I did it in Topeka, and for proof see this newspaper!"

P. Gibbs fired a shot from his revolver through the newspaper that Blake pulled from beneath his shirt. Then the saloon-keeper brought his weapon on a level with Blake's face.

"It's good your boots is on!" said P. Gibbs, ironically.

But he did not fire. Blake stood perfectly still, awaiting the shot, and feebly laughing.

So the two remained for some moments, until Blake suddenly sank to the floor, quite exhausted. He died within a half-hour, on the saloon floor, his head resting in the palm of P. Gibbs, who knelt by his side and tried to revive him.

At the next dawn a man whom they called Big Andy started east; and the piece of paper that Blake had handed to P. Gibbs was not all that he took with him. The United States marshal arrived and duly closed Gibbs' saloon, which reopened very shortly afterward, minus the five thousand dollar offer.

And Big Andy found the widow of "Busted" Blake, to whom he told a bit of fiction, in accounting for the legacy conveyed by him to her, that would have imposed upon the most incredulous legatee. When she had recovered from the surprise of finding herself and her child provided with the means of surviving the possible loss of her situation, she forgave the late "Busted," and there was a flow of tears unusual to a boarding house parlor and unnerving to Big Andy.

Presently she asked Andy whether he knew what her husband's last words had been.

"Yep," said Andy, "I heard 'm plain and clear. Pete Gibbs, the other executor of the will, you know—Pete says: 'It's all right, partner; me an' Andy will see to it,' and then your husband says: 'Thank Gawd, I've been some good to her an' the child, at last.'"

Which account was entirely correct. When Big Andy had returned to Get-there City and related how he had performed his mission, he added:

"I'd been such a lovely liar all through, it's a shame I had to go an' spoil the story by puttin' in some truth at the finish."

They put up a wooden grave mark where Blake was buried, and after his name they cut in the wood this testimonial:

"A tenderfoot that was some good to his folks at last."—R. N. Stephens, in Philadelphia Press.

—A great deal of meanness masquerades in all parts of the land under the name of prudence.—Bain's Hours.

CROWDS AT CAPE MAY.

The Attraction Was an Address by Ex-President Harrison.

CAPE MAY, July 5.—Independence day was observed here with unusual vim, the presence of ex-President Harrison adding vim to the occasion. The announcement



that he would deliver an address brought in many visitors. The ex-President made a patriotic address upon the rights and duties of citizenship.

The ex-President's eloquent words were attentively listened to by a large crowd of people, and he was loudly applauded when he concluded.

After the delivery of his address, Gen. Harrison held an impromptu reception, and shook hands with most of his auditors.

FOUR FIREMEN HURT.
They Were Celebrating, However, and Not Putting Out the Fire.

ANN ARBOR, Mich., July 5.—At fire department headquarters about midnight last night a cannon burst and seriously injured four firemen. They had been celebrating and were loading the cannon preparatory to firing the last charge. Fred Kapp was holding the cannon on his leg and Charles Carroll was raming the charge home. The cannon was hot and exploded prematurely.

The butt was blown through Kapp's right leg cutting it off nearly to the thigh so that it hung only by a shred of flesh. Carroll had both hands blown off. Henry McLaren and William Retlich, who were standing near, were struck by pieces of the cannon and severely but not fatally injured.

Interesting Celebration at Woodstock.

WOODSTOCK, Conn., July 5.—The usual Fourth of July exercises were observed at H. C. Bowen's residence, Roseland Park. The Hon. Charles A. Russell, of Connecticut, delivered an address of welcome, and prayer was offered up by the Rev. William Hayes Ward, of New York. The other speakers were Hon. Seth Low, Justice D. J. Brewer, of the United States Supreme Court; Hon. A. R. Spofford, Librarian of Congress; R. S. MacArthur, D. D., New York city; Hon. S. B. Elkins, ex-Secretary of War, and T. R. Murphy, of New York. Exercises were read by Maurice Thompson, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe and Miss Edith M. Thomas. The exercises were interspersed with vocal and instrumental music.

Firecrackers Crazed Him.

NEW YORK, July 5.—Augustus Wolf, junior member of the firm of Henry A. Wolf & Co., case manufacturers, committed suicide by shooting himself at his office. His brother, Henry, was in the front office at the time. Mr. Wolf said that his brother being of an irritable temperament, seemed to be annoyed by the shooting off of firecrackers by street fakirs, and complained of it. He could not account for his act.

Quiet Day in St. Louis.

ST. LOUIS, July 5.—The 117th anniversary of the birthday of American freedom was celebrated in rather a quiet manner here. The weather was intensely hot and the streets of the city were nearly deserted, all who could get away having gone into the surrounding country on picnics and excursions. Several accidents were reported from careless use of fireworks.

MAY LEAD TO BLOODSHED

Western Coal Miners' Strike Becoming Serious.

"Strippers" Who are Not Allowed in the Union Refuse to Quit Work—Operators Threaten to Import Negroes.

TOPEKA, Kas., July 5.—The strike of the coal miners in Kansas and Missouri is fast assuming a dangerous condition. The strikers are determined that no outside miners shall be permitted to work, and they are especially determined that negroes shall not be imported for that purpose. They declare that if the operators carry out their expressed intentions and employ negro miners, there will be violence.

There is a class of labor engaged in removing the earth from the more shallow veins who are known as "strippers." These men are not miners, nor are they recognized as such by the Miners' Union. The coal they uncover supplies a large portion of the commercial coal used in the state, and its production interferes very largely with the success of the strike.

The union men have declared that these strippers must quit work, making serious threats in case they do not. The strippers say that as the miners have denied them the right to join their union, they are under no obligation to aid in any manner those who have gone out. Besides this they have no grievances, as their work simply consists in removing the earth, and they are in no wise affected by the scale of wages for mining coal.

Stripped of all verbiage the statements of the two contending parties are contained in those two brief sentences. Of the 10,000 or more miners now out on strike the majority quit work out of sympathy, in order to reduce the production of commercial coal. The latter class assert that their wages are fair and that they have no personal grievances. Of those who struck in Crawford and Cherokee counties, where the trouble began, the married men are all idle, while the single men have sought fields and have gone to work.

There are fully 3,000 negro miners in the district who while working in the union mines, have never been permitted to become members of the miners' organization. They were induced to quit work with the rest, but they are becoming restless and uneasy, and declare it to be their intention to resume work. The miners have been considering this possibility and say there will be bloodshed in case they do.

The leading operators have inclosed their mines with fences, and have given notice that they will, next week, import miners

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