



ASLEEP.

Time to come up here, dear, On your daddy's knee; Time you had your night on; Time you came to me; Time to hear the stories, dear; Time to softly creep; In my arms and near my heart; Time to go to sleep.

Shall I tell of Riding Hood And the fierce wolf gray? How he slyly followed her Through the woods that day? What's that? "Tell of piggies?" Well, then, dear, here goes— Let me see, where have they gone? Dear, where are your toes?

Scoundrels & Co.

By COULSON KERNAHAN Author of "Captain Shannon," "A Book of Strange Sins," "A Dead Man's Diary," Etc.

CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

The incident was not, however, without a sequel, for one of the party (I discovered afterwards that he was Number Two), whose "jump" had been accompanied by a word unaccustomed to ears polite, but whose sins were not all uncovered by that cloak to the wearer of which much may be forgiven, that cloak which can transform the raggedst of rascals into a presentable personage and an agreeable companion—need I say I mean a sense of humor?—took advantage of the diversion to make a sensible suggestion.

He remarked that he had always been taught and was quite prepared to admit that the way of the Transgressors is hard, but as for himself he did not see why the transgressors—as he presumed the occupants of that wagon were—should be poisoned in this world as well as roasted in the next, and he begged leave to move that either the door or the window be opened.

It was not a brilliant observation, but it brought about two good results—the letting in of some fresh air and the lifting out of the awkward constraint which had bound us. Laughter is the greatest of levellers. To ask a man to drink with you—which, according to our English social code, is the very running up of the flag of fellowship—is not half so effective in setting you and him upon good terms with each other, as is a hearty laugh in common. From laughing at this allusion to the way of transgressors we went on to discussing the situation as it then presented itself, and as there was still no sign of the advent of Number One, we decided that something had happened to detain him, and that, as we could do nothing without him, we had best postpone the discussion of business till the next day, when he would, no doubt, make an opportunity to join us.

In the meantime we must pass the night where we were, so each of us proceeded to make himself as comfortable as he could in our very luxurious lodgings. For myself, what with the unusual circumstances, the tragic struggle in the train, the impatient tossings, turnings, twistings and sighings of my companions, vainly straining after ease on their most uneasy couches, I slept never a wink all night, and was glad indeed when morning was far enough advanced for one of us to venture abroad in search of breakfast for his colleagues. It was not long before he hurried back empty-handed, bringing us, in place of breakfast, news which was no news to me.

"Fellow councillors," he said, with evident agitation, "I have terrible tidings for you. Our chief, Number One, was killed on the railway last night. He must have been walking along the line on his way to join us, when he was knocked down between Benfleet and Leigh by a passing train. They were bringing his body in when I got into the village, and, though he was wearing no beard, I recognized him at once."

For half a minute no one spoke, and then one of the councillors said curiously— "How did you recognize him if he wasn't disguised?" "By his clothes, in the first place," was the answer. "He had the blue serge suit, turn-down collar and spotted tie which we all wear. But I should have recognized him quite apart from that, for I was to some extent in his confidence, and, in fact, met him by appointment only two days ago."

"Who are you, then?" said the man who had constituted himself spokesman to our late chief. I was the first man to

whom he unfolded his schemes and I was the first whom he invited to become a councillor. "Can you prove this?" asked the other. "I don't mean that I doubt your word, but, as none of us knows each other's name, there is nothing to prevent any of us from claiming that he is the senior member of the council. And if Number One is really dead, it will be necessary to elect his successor without delay, if the work of this society is to be carried on."

"Quite so," said Number Two. "Who is to be that successor will be for the council to decide, and need not yet be discussed, but as you challenge my statement and call upon me to prove that I really was in our dead chief's confidence let me ask if you or any other councillor can tell us what business was to be discussed at the meeting last night?"

"No, I can't," said the spokesman. "Is there any other councillor present who can?" He looked around inquiringly, but no one spoke, and with something of a triumphant air, Number Two went on. "The business which was to come before the meeting was two-fold. First the newly-appointed Councillor Number Seven was to make his report in regard to the removal of the traitor, Councillor Number Seven that was."

"Go on," said the other, nodding. "We might have guessed that far, even without being in the confidence of the chief."

"The second business," said Councillor Number Two, without noticing the interruption, "was to arrange a matter of importance. A week or so ago the police raided a house, No. 89 Fasset Square, Dalston, in which a considerable quantity of dynamite was stored. That dynamite had been brought there from the continent by a man in the pay of our chief, acting on behalf of the council. Can any one present tell us the sequel of the raid?"

He paused and looked around inquiringly, but received no answer. "I thought not," said Number Two, with evident satisfaction. "I can, as it was told me by our chief himself. Listen! The police made what they thought a big haul of dynamite, but they have left behind them more than they took away, and last night the facts were to have been placed before the council, that the dynamite might be secured and used for the carrying out of an enterprise which Number One has long been contemplating. Can any one tell me where the explosive which the police failed to find was concealed?"

Again there was a sullen silence. Then Number Two went on speaking with the air of a man who feels that he has the game in his own hands. "In the cellar of the house I am speaking of there were a few dozen bottles of wine, half a dozen bottles of spirit and a small cask of beer. The wine and spirit the police took with them and the beer they drank, leaving what they supposed was the empty barrel behind them. Their way of looking at things evidently was that, as barrels were made to contain beer, and as this particular barrel did contain beer—and good beer—and beer was made to be drunk, all they had to do was to drink the beer and there was an end of the matter. If they had taken the trouble to ascertain whether the barrel contained anything else but beer they would have left the house with full hands as well as with full bellies, for the barrel was divided into two compartments, the lower containing that concoction of the devil, as our teetotal friends would call it—Double X, and the upper that pretty little plaything, which it has been left to man and not to the devil, to devise—dynamite."

"Well, gentlemen," he went on in a brisk and more business-like tone, "you all know the story of the quarrel between Lord Cranthorpe and his work people—that he has reduced the wages of more than 1,000 men and women who work in his mill, taking 20 per cent. off the men's pay and 25 off the women's, and has refused to listen to anything which is to be said on behalf of the people or to receive a deputation on the subject. He has taken advantage of the fact that he is rolling in money and that they are entirely dependent upon their earnings to act toward his fellow-countrymen as the rich acts towards the poor in Russia. At this moment hundreds of families are starving through his greed. He is the best-hated man in England to-day, and nothing we can do would make the societies which we direct more popular among the people who support us than a blow aimed at him. This dynamite of which I have spoken was brought to England by the instruction of our late chief, who had intended at the next meeting of the council to propose the blowing up of Lord Cranthorpe's house in Plantagenet Square. If this could be accomplished by us successfully it would give a wonderful stimulus to our work all over the world, and would cause subscriptions to pour in, which, as the first handling of whatever money is subscribed is one of the privileges (shall I say perquisites?) of being on the council, is a very desirable state of affairs. Gentlemen, there is not a moment to lose. I know the house where the dynamite is concealed. If you will appoint another member to act with me, I will endeavor to obtain possession of the explosive that is concealed at Fasset Square, and to meet you here at midnight this day week, that we may make the necessary arrangements for using the late chief in the manner in which our late chief intended—I mean in blowing up Lord Cranthorpe's house in Plantagenet Square."

He paused and looked around him in a somewhat dramatic, not to say melodramatic, manner. But he had spoken so confidently and with such evident conviction that it was very plain he carried his hearers with him. Just as we saw a thread of ringed fire slide

out upon the charred edges of a sheet of paper, when a live coal has dropped from the grate, so, as the last words fell from his lips, there ran around the circle of listening councillors a thin murmur of unmistakable approval. In the next instant—as the ring of smouldering fire breaks out into open flame—the murmur of approbation swelled into something like enthusiastic applause, and the very councillor who had hitherto seemed suspicious of Number Two's credentials called out—

"Hands up, those who vote that Number Two's proposal be accepted."

Like a parcel of school-boys who shoot out eager hands for permission to reply to an easy question which has been asked by the master, the whole of the listening councillors (myself included, for I thought it wise to stimulate the enthusiasm of my quondam colleagues) held up an assenting fist.

"Against," called out the self-constituted chairman; and there being no response, he, so to speak, let fall the hammer with a decisive "nem. con."

"Thank you, brother councillor, for this mark of confidence," said Number Two. "The dynamite should not be left in that house an hour longer than is necessary. I should like, if possible, that I and whoever be appointed to work with me should catch the next train up, and I beg to propose that all other business before the council be postponed until we meet here seven days hence at midnight."

This also receiving the assent of the meeting, the council next proceeded to settle who should act with Number Two in obtaining possession of the dynamite. Lots were cast, and the duty falling to the share of Number Three, he was instructed to join Number Two in London, traveling thither by the other line, to avoid attracting attention.

"The only matter that remains for us to settle," said our self-constituted chairman, Number Two, "is that of our departure from this wagon. We must go at different times and by different routes; and as Number Two and Number Three are leaving this morning, I propose that Numbers Four and Five should wait until nightfall, and go by different routes, and that Numbers Six and Seven should leave tomorrow morning, one traveling by the Tilbury line and the other by the Great Eastern."

This was an arrangement by no means to my liking, as it would give Number Two and Number Three a day's start of me, and I had made up my mind to devote my best energies to frustrating their attempt to lay hands upon the dynamite. But, as my colleagues, Number Four, Number Five and Number Six, gave ready assent to the proposal, I did not think it wise to demur, though I confess it was with no little reluctance that I saw Number Two and Number Three depart upon their errand of devilry.

CHAPTER VII. HOW I CAUSED A HORSE TO RUN AWAY AND THEN RAN AWAY MYSELF.

My first business after leaving the wagon next morning was to regain possession of the dead man's bag, which I was disappointed to find contained nothing more important than a false beard. I then took the train to London, and after hurriedly changing

my clothes at my chambers, I made my way to No. 89, Fasset Square, Dalston, the house where the dynamite was concealed.

As I turned the corner of the square, a brewer's dray drove up at No. 89, and a man wearing a red cap and an apron of brown sackings jumped down and knocked at the door. It was opened by another man at the moment I was passing. Both looked curiously at me, and then the driver of the dray said, in what I thought was an unnecessarily loud voice—

"I've called for the empty barrel, and to know if you have any orders for our firm."

Had I not heard his voice I should have guessed instinctively that he was Councillor Number Two, and that the asking for "orders" and mention of "calling for the empty barrel" was a mere bluff with which to deceive the casual passer-by. The man inside the house was, I had little doubt, Councillor Number Three. How he had effected an entrance I did not know, but this driving up in open daylight of a brewer's dray in which to take away what was apparently an empty barrel was a piece of "bluff," which, if only by virtue of its very impudence, might well have been carried through to a successful issue.

"Oh, yes, that'll be all right," said the man who had opened the door. "You'd better come down into the cellar and fetch it."

No one happened just then to be approaching, so the instant the door was closed upon this precious pair of scoundrels, I struck the horse that was harnessed to the dray under the belly with my stick, making at the same time that peculiar clucking sound

which signifies in the language current between horse and man "Go on." As I had intended, the animal plunged, and then started off down the square, the heavy van jolting behind him noisily. The sound must have reached the men inside the house, for the door was opened again hurriedly, and the two of them ran out into the road. When they saw what had happened, the fellow dressed like a brewer rushed in the chase, walked slowly after him to witness the result.

Here was my chance. I had strolled along in the opposite direction from that in which the horse was going, and the two men, having eyes only for the runaway, had not looked my way at all. Treading on tip-toe, so as not to be heard, I stepped softly back, and crouching down almost on all fours when I reached the gate, I scrambled along the pathway and into the house, banging the door after me as I entered.

In less than half a minute the door was tried, and then I heard some one, whom I took to be Number Three, muttering an oath to himself under his breath. Soon after, there was the rumble of the retreating van, and putting my ear to the key-hole, I could just catch what was said by a voice which I recognized as that of Number Two.

"What are you standing there for, without a hat, you fool? Anybody would think you wanted to attract attention. Why don't you open the door and get inside?"

"I can't," was the reply. "The door blew to while I was looking after it, and the key's inside. But you've got a duplicate, luckily, so it won't much matter."

"Yes, it will, for my duplicate at home," was the angry answer. "You've made a pretty fine mess of it, after all the trouble I've been at, to get an entrance and to arrange about the dray. Well, we can't get it without a key, and, what's more, you can't stand here bareheaded, or we are sure to be noticed. You'd best go somewhere and get a hat. In the meantime I'll get rid of the dray (we can't bring it here twice in the same day) and get my key and meet you at the corner of the square. We shall have to open the barrel and take the stuff away in bits, instead of in the lump, and it will be a risky job too. Now then, come along. We've no time to lose."

Once they were gone I began to explore the house from the top downwards. In a cupboard of the front bedroom I found a packet of plans and papers, which I commenced to overhaul. Some of them puzzled me not a little, so much so that I must have spent more time poring over them than I was aware of, for the two conspirators had not been gone very long before I heard a latchkey turn in the lock downstairs.

"We must look slipshod about it," said a voice, which I recognized as that of Number Two. "It's lucky I hadn't far to go to get rid of the dray and to get the other key. We'd better go down in the cellar at once."

In another moment I heard their footsteps upon the stairs that led to the basement, so I slipped softly down into the hall, where I could still catch the sound of their voices.

ENGLISH COMIC ARTIST.

Has Some Very Amusing Experiences With Models—Why a Negro Objected to Being Painted.

In my early days I once tried to engage as a model a big negro, who made a living out of chewing glass in sundry barrooms for the entertainment of those gathered there, says Tom Browne, in Booklovers' Magazine. "I want to paint you," I said, when he had taken round the hat after his performance.

"What cullah, boss?" he asked, suspiciously. "Why, natural color, of course," I replied. "I want to paint your face, you know."

"Yah, I've not taking any, boss," he said, firmly. "The cullah I've got is good enough for this chile."

I once nearly got hammered for making a colored sketch from life of a very respectable golf caddy in an attitude of ease, subsequently adding a street corner as a background and sending it to an exhibition under the title "A Loafer." The man came round to see me in a violent rage, said he was a bloomin' respectable, 'igh class golf caddy and no loafer, and, if I didn't alter the title of that dashed picture, he'd either put his solicitor on to me or jolly well bash me.

Oh, yes, there's a lot of places where if you only look for it in humor about you don't expect to find it.

Some Remarkable Brains.

Dr. Mattieglia of Prague, in a memoir on the brain, states that the heaviest brain he has found is that of a young man of 22 years, and 1.80 meters in height, which weighed 1,820 grammes. The female brain does not seem to rise over 1,500 grammes, and the lightest he knows about (excluding the very aged) was 1,020 grammes, that of a woman of 25 years, 1.50 meters in height. There is one of 1,000 grammes belonging to a woman of 89 years. The average male brain weighs 1,400 grammes, and the female 1,200 grammes, between 20 and 50 years. Of remarkable brains, that of Smetana, a composer, only 1,250 grammes. The average weight of the brain for different occupations he gives as from 1,410 to 1,440 for workmen, 1,468 for business men, professional musicians and photographers, and 1,500 for medical men and persons whose calling presupposes a connected education. Persons connected with the production and sale of alcoholic liquors have, as a rule, light brains.—London Globe.

SISTERS OF CHARITY

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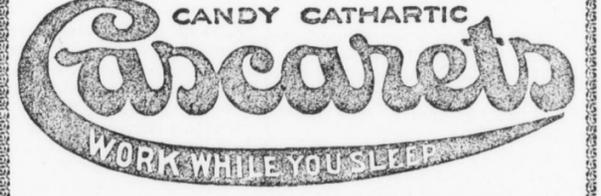
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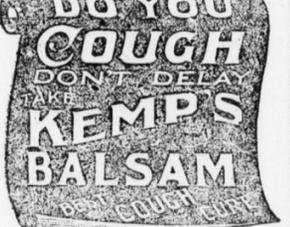
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