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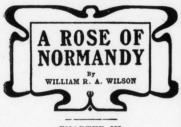
FORTUNE'S LITTLE JOKE.

When Fortune throws a gift at me I look at is suspice a girt at initial initialization initialization initial initial initial

For Fortune takes a great delight

For Forthie takes a great dengine In seeming prodigality; Her hand is open with no slight Display of liberality. But try to take her proffered gift, It's quite another thing. Her bounty one can hardly lift Before she pulls the string.

She seems so debonair and free. She does it so beguilingly; It makes it all the worse that she Will play that trick so smilingly. How sadly often it occurs That Fortune's gifts are snatched Because it is a way of hers To have that string attached! -Chicago Daily News.



CHAPTER IV.

SHOWS HOW MINE HOST OF "THE STRIPED ASS" TREATED HIS GUESTS, AND HOW HIS PUNISH-MENT WAS MADE TO FIT HIS CRIME.

It wanted but a few minutes to eight the same evening when the figure of Tonti might have been observed riding slowly along near the bank of the Seine. He walked his horse as though he were in no hurry and his ride were without an object. When opposite Le Poat Neuf, he halted and watched for a moment the group of idlers gathered about the equestrian statue of King Henry in the center of the bridge, who were leaning over the parapet and engaged in bandying jests with the boatmen passing beneath the arches. Having seemingly gained all the nusement possible from a contemplation of this spectacle, Tonti soon resumed his journey, turning off in a short time from the river bank and threading his way through various cross-streets until he reached the Rue St. Honore. Following this thoroughfare as far as the city gate, he stopped his horse in the shelter of the wall of Les Capucins, to await his companion. In a moment or two he beheld a sight that made it hard for his mirth-loving nature to keep itself within bounds. A small white ass came ambling along and passed him, carrying a very fat, unwieldly-formed monk of the Franciscan order, clad in gray cowl, girdle, and sandals. His monkship apparently had not been astride an animal for a long time, and such were the evident signs of discomfort op his face that one instantly surmised that he was undergoing a pen-ance of some sort. He made no attempt to guide the ass, but sat holding on helplessly to the rope that served as rein and bridle. The gate was not yet closed for the night, so



Tont The innkeeper quickly seized it, bit it, and after testing its ring, pocketed 'Peste! Pompon, if I do not get you it with alacrity, his suspicions vana place in the Horse Guards. You sit ished

"Draw near the fire," he exclaimed. "You would look like one yourself," as he busily stirred the logs, "and ${\bf I}$ shall return presently with the best Pompon replied, rather testily, "if you had a back stuffed with straw and a bottle to be found this side of Paris. paunch made out of enough hay to It has been in the cellar for 14 years, all ever since I came to this town, and squeezed into a heavy cowl and tied together with a stout cord. Between was there I know not how long before me.

the heat and discomfort of my dis-With these words, he hastily guise, and the jolting of this beast, brushed off a bench, motioned Tonti I am thankful we have only four leagues to go. He who is in great to be seated, and was gone. Tonti looked about him carefully.

"It must be the place," he mur-mured to himself. "He said he had been here 14 years, and it is just that length of time since Fouquet's down-

His eyes wandered toward the fireplace and his thoughts were confirmed. A huge stone slab some seven feet in length and three in width constituted the hearth. This stone was bordered by a single row of bricks that were covered with dust and ashes. Tonti's eyes danced with excitement as he beheld them, and he wondered why Pompon was delayed so long and what his plan would be to get a chance of testing the truth of his cipher-message.

Presently he heard the innkeeper returning, and he reappeared bearing the remains of a huge goose-pie in one arm and a dusty, musty, cobwebbed bottle of wine in the other. These he placed before his guest, who was soon devouring the one and sip-ping the other, whose grapes must have weighted the vine on the sunny vineyard slopes fully 30 years before He was about to compliment the landlord standing before him upon the excellence of his providing when he heard the voice of singing in the street outside the inn and close at hand.

"Quand nous fumes sur le pont qui tremble, Helas, mon Dieu!

were the words they heard. Then came a silence, broken only by the shuffling sound as of some one walking laboriously among the pebbles and sand of the roadway. Then came the song nearer than before:

"Quand nous fumes le Saintonge, Helas, mon Dieu!"

followed by a heavy knock at the The innkeeper hastened to open door. it, and the light from the fire fell full on the figure of Tonti's late compan-ion. He had found and trimmed a young tree into a serviceable pilgrim's staff, and his expression was that of great weariness.

addressing the innkeeper. This indi-vidual crossed himself, replying, "And with you, father."

and approached the table next to the one at which Tonti was seated.

Gold have I not, for it would ill be-come him whose boast is that poverty is his bride to carry any money with But I am privileged to grant him. an indulgence, in return for food and lodging," and the tired monk settled down upon a bench and looked hungrily about him.

"Have you no relics that will ward off disease?" asked the innkeeper. off disease?" asked the innkeeper. "A bone from the hand of some good saint or something from the holy land?'

"Nay, nay," exclaimed the monk in seeming anger. "I am no hawker of bogus relics, nor claim any kindred with the devil-spawn who go through the land plying their unholy trade. With them they have but to see your money in their hand when the merry rougues will sell you a cart-load of laths from the ark of pere Noah, a ring from the snout of St. Anthony's pig, or the crest of the cock that crowed before Pilate.'

The landlord seemed duly impressed with the superior merits of the begging friar, and started off to get some scraps for his meal. Tonti, who had up to this time remained silent, watching the game his companion was playing, called after him: "Bring the reverend father's meal

whose copious potations during the early part of the evening made him an casy prey. His eyes seemed heavy, and an overpowering desire to sleep seized him. A moment he struggled against the feeling, then surrendering to it entirely, his face fell forward on his hands, which lay upon the table. Pompon jumped up quickly and, seiz-

ing the man, shook him to make sure of the depth of his slumbers. There was no response. "He will sleep thus for 24 hours. Let us hasten, though." A table and bench were first placed in front of the door leading out of the room into the other part of the house, so that they would have time to leave in case any one approached from that direction. The other door was fastened, and the curtain drawn. Pompon, then taking a small dagger, knelt down beside the hearth, and counting the row of bricks until he came to the middle one, carefully dug away all the accumulated dust and dirt, and gently pried the brick from its place. Beneath it was seen a small iron ring, which he seized. It gave readily, and could be pulled out about an inch. This evidently withdrew some hidden bolt, for when he cautiously bore the weight of his foot on one extremity of the huge stone, it turned slowly on an unseen axis, one end rising into the air while the other lisappeared in a large space below. Bending down, Pompon found a cavity corresponding in width and length to the stone and about four feet in depth. By lying on the floor and stretching over the hole, he was able to feel the contents. A smothered exclamation of joy passed his lips, as he tossed to the floor a bag of money, and soon after feeling around more carefully in the opening, he found another.

'What say you now, mon ami?" he cried joyfully. "Did I not say M. Fou-quet (Heaven rest his soul!) was faithful to them who served him faithfully? Here are the 2,000 pistoles."

They placed the money on the table, and swung the stone back to its normal position. Pompan then handed the bags to Tonti, and urged him to go ahead of him to the place where their animals had been left, saying that he would remain behind and attend to the unbarricading of the door and yet overtake him before he had his horse untied.

Tonti did as suggested, leaving Pompon in the room. No sooner had he gone than Pompon approached the slumbering landlord, and, turning his face toward the light, examined it closely. As he did so, a look of awakened recognition was confirmed, and Pompon's eyes became smaller and glittered with a strange envenomed look of hatred like a snake about to strike. With deft fingers he searched the clothes of his victim, but it was not for robbery, for he left the bag of money he found there; something else was the object of his search. [To Be Continued.]

Her Company Voice

"Who is that in the parlor, Nellie?" asked the little sister.

"O, yes, there must be some one else," rejoined the little girl "for rejoined the little girl, "for mama has her company voice on It was a little squib under the head-

ing of "Fun," which a member of the family read aloud from the paper. The circle about the table who heard it smiled, and one said, "That's a good joke." But a more thoughtful member turned it over in her mind. She was the mother, and she admitted to herself that it was more than a good joke-that in many instances it was sober truth.

It came home to her heart with great signficance, for she acknowledged to herself that "the company voice" was entirely too often put on when in the presence of those outside the home cirele. We wish to appear at our best before those whose good opinions we desire to gain. But with those who love us how often we speak in irritable, harsh, quick tones.-Evangelist.

A Doubtful Compliment. "My dear, I have a great compliment

for you," said the Boston man to his New York niece, who was paying a month's visit and attending many serious entertainments.

Contraction ("A compliment?" and the pretty eye-brows were raised incredulously.



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haste should not ride an ass. "Where got you your disguise?" "From my friend the cabaretier," was the reply. "He was one of M. Fouquet's secret agents; many is the message I have taken from him. The fall.'

words 'Remember sixty-four' that I told you to whisper to him is the secret means of recognition among all those who were connected with the unfortunate minister. It was in 1664, you know, that he fell."

"Are there any others?" "Hundreds. They are in every rank

A shout of laughter from

your animal like a sack of meal."

keep a horse in health for a week,

reeted this sp

queried Tonti.

and condition. M. Fouquet was a good master to serve and a liberal one, as I can bear witness. All who served him loved him."

Talking thus of his old employer, a theme Pompon never tired of, the strangely assorted pair rode on into the shades of the on-coming night. When about half the distance had been traversed, they turned off into a road leading to the left, and by ten o'clock saw a light or two from the small hamlet of Ecouen twinkling in the darkness ahead of them. On reaching the outskirts of the village, they dismounted and led their beasts into a wood at the side of the road and tethered them.

Entering the town on foot, they found it considerably later than they had hoped for, so they quickened their pace, lest the inn be closed for the night. Here and there a light was visible where some late-a-bed still kept his house open for a neighborly game of dice, and from one or half-open doors came the sound of easting. As they drew near the most prominent of the window-lights, they found it to belong to an inn of the older type. All was still in the story above, and quiet reigned about the place. A shed for the disposal of travelers' horses was situated at one end of the building, while above the door a sign of some sort grated harshly as the light night wind moved it on the signboard, so they approached the window from which the glow pro ceeded. Tonti raised himself on tiptoe and looked in.

The interior was apparently empty and consisted of the usual public-room of the average inn of the period. Upon hearth a bright fire the huge hearth a bright fire was blazing, which cast alternate light and shade upon the low ceiling and the further corners of the room. A number of heavy wooden tables with benches around them filled up the greater portion of the floor space On these a profusion of emptied, dirty glasses and mugs bespoke a good night's custom for the proprietor. the side of the room was arranged a kind of private office, as it were, fenced off from the rest by a railing, behind which was placed a table and a bench. It was evidently the innkeeper's especial domain, for, as Tonti's eyes be-came more accustomed to the halfgloom, he spied the figure of a man seated upon the bench, busily engaged in counting a small pile of coin spread upon the table before him. He glanced uneasily over his shoulder now and then at the door and the window as though fearful of being seen. He soon finished his task, and quickly swept the money into a small leather pouch, which he closed with a look of satisfaction, stowing it away in the recesses of his blouse. At this moment Tonti left the window, and, advancing to the door, struck it sharply with the hilt of his sword. Pompon whispering that he would come in

he swung the door open in spite of the landlord's efforts to hold it.

"How now, Sir Innkeeper! Dame! but I believe you would have kept me

out there a full hour longer if you had

So speaking, he stepped into the

light of the room. Upon seeing a man evidently a soldier and from

Paris, the landlord's fears quietee

hemselves. One suspicion, however

bowing obsequiously, "but where is your companion? Did you not say

that there were two of you, a soldier

Tonti was puzzled for a moment, and ther, laughed.

"And may I not be both? Here, bite

that, and tell me if it be gold or no. If

so, fetch me a bottle of wine, the very best, and some food." So saying, he

flung down a pistole upon the table

"Pardon, Sir Capitaine," he cried

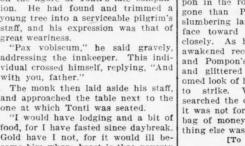
had your way.

remained.

l near him

and a gentleman?

later, disappeared in the darkness. "Hola! Landlord. open here! to my table, and fetch another glass. Would you keep a gentleman and a soldier waiting in the night when you that he may share my wine with me. I warrant he is a good judge of it." have within a good fire to warm his hands and good wine to cheer his The monk bowed his thanks, and r plied with a wink at Tonti: heart? Corbleu! Open, I say, or it "He is an ill guest that never drinks will be the worse for you. I am not to his host. Might I suggest, my sol-dier friend, that the good innkee er the man to be kept waiting." So speaking, he belabored the door with hilt and fist so lustily that the fetch a glass for himself?" Tonti agreed, and the host hastened landlord came running to let him in, to find the glasses, feeling glad to get crying: chance to taste some of his own "Yes, yes, gentlemen, in one morare wine at the expense of some one ment, I pray you. But do not awaken the whole house. It is late," he con-tinued, unfastening the door and openelse As soon as he had disappeared, the monk reached over to Tonti's glass and ing it an inch, peering out meanwhile to see what manner of guests he was shook a white powder into it, from a bit of paper in his hand, then filled it from the bottle. "Now, your part is welcoming, "late indeed for honest folk to be about." to see that yon rascal gets your glass. As soon as the crack of the door e said in a low voice, and resumed widened sufficiently to adimt the hilt his seat. of the sword, Tonti inserted it, and with a quick pressure with this lever



CAME AMBLING ALONG.

passed unchallenged, the guards laughing heartily at the figure he cut. Tonti waited until he had gotten a couple of minutes' start of him, and then turned into the road and passed likewise through the gate without hindrance. The night watch had just arrived, and in the confusion attending the change of guard he was easily overlooked. He had hardly gone a score of paces beyond, when he heard the gate close behind him. Any one leaving or entering after that hour would be carefully scrutinized.

In the fast-gathering gloom, Tonti spied his ecclesiastical friend trotting peacefully along the Chemin de Vil-lers. He hurriedly followed him, but preserved a respectful distance. He received no sign, neither heard any sound from him. Becoming alarmed lest he had really made a mistake, he was about to turn back toward the city, when suddenly the ghostly figure began beating his animal with the rein and kicking his sides as effect ively as he could with his sandaled

"A murrain seize this beast for a vicious, rough-riding child of Beelze May the devil take him and all bub. his kind! Ha! mon ami Tonti, feared it was not you. Someone else followed me on a horse almost up to the gate, and I did not know but that you were he. I fear that he suspected that I was disguised. I don't believe that I sit well when I ride."

The innkeeper soon returned with two fresh glasses which Tonti filled and then by a deft movement of the hands he exchanged his glass for that nearest thể landlord. "Here's to our host," cried Ton#i, as

the man sat down and seized his glass. "May he never want a lodger!"

"And to this goodly quiet inn, the what is your house called, sir host?" asked the strange monk.

"The Striped Ass." was the reply "To the Striped Ass, then, con tinued Pompon; "may his bray be ever loud to attract customers, and his temper mild, so that he will spare them

All three drained their glasses, and period of silence ensued, breken a period of silence ensued, breken only by the sound of the fire and the munching of the goose-pie, as Tonti made another onslaught. A touch from the monk's foot under the table a few moments later made him look up, and he beheld the effects of the drug beginning already to manifest ther selves on the face of the innkeeper, Youth's Companion.

*XXXXXX "Yes," said her uncle, cordially. 'Professor Mildew said he noticed you particularly at the reception Monday afternoon and he thought you had a most intelligent face."

"There, aunty," said the frivolous SCACKCACKCACK oung person, turning reproachful eyes on her relative. "I told you I looked like a perfect frump in that brown dress, but you said I didn't! You see what he thought, don't you? He couldn't think of another thing to say!"-Youth's Companion.

Twitting on Facts.

"A certain class of insane persons are remarkable for their ready and apt retorts," said Dr. George T. Winston, the criminologist, "I have in mind a young man in a Boston retreat. The first time I ever saw him he sat

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The first time t ever saw firm he sat on the floor, swearing bitterly.
"Tut, tut!' said I. 'Don't swear!' "'Why not?' said he.
"Because,' said I. 'you won't go

o Heaven if you do.'

'On,' said the young man, disdainfully, 'I'm not going to try to go to Heaven. There's more trying now than'll ever get in.' "-N. Y. Tribune.

The Professor's Function.

An Oxford professor, distinguished for scholarly habits of the most pronounced description, remarked to his companion at table that he had accepted the invitation of a well-known peer for a week's shooting in Scotland

"Why Professor Blank, ex laimed his companion, "I didn't know ou were a gun!"

"I'm not, my dear," said the pro-ssor. "I'm a knife and fork -fessor.

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