

OUR SERIAL. The Man on the Box. By HAROLD MacGRATH. Copyright, 1904, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

CHAPTER XII.—CONTINUED. "I wish Chuck was in there. I wish he would come out and kick me good and hearty."

(Chuck would have been delighted to perform the trifling service; and he would not have gone about it with any timidity, either.)

"Hang the horses! I'm going to take a peek in at the side window,"—and he slid cautiously from the box. He stole around the side and stopped at one of the windows. The curtain was not wholly lowered, and he could see into the drawing-room. They were there, all of them; and Miss Annesley was folding the baby, which Mrs. Jack had awakened and brought down stairs. He could see by the diffident manner in which Jack was curling the ends of his mustache that they were comparing the baby with him. "The conceited ass!" muttered the self-appointed outcast; "it doesn't look any more like him than it does like me."

Here Miss Annesley kissed the baby, and Warburton hoped that they hadn't washed its face since he performed the same act. Mrs. Jack disappeared with the hope of the family, and Nancy got out a bundle of photographs. M'sieu Zhammes would have given almost anything he possessed to know what these photographs represented. Crane his neck as he would, he could see nothing. All he could do was to watch. Sometimes they laughed, sometimes they became grave; sometimes they explained, and their guest grew very attentive. Once she even leaned forward eagerly. It was about this time that our Jehu chanced to look at the clock on the mantel, and immediately concluded to vacate the premises. It was half after ten. He returned to his box forthwith. (I was going to use the word "alacrity," but I find that it means "cheerful readiness." After what seemed to him an interminable wait, the front door opened and a flood of light blinded him. He heard Nancy's voice.

"I am sorry, Betty, that I can't dine with you on Monday. We are going to Arlington. So sorry."

"I'm not!" murmured the wretch on the box. "I'm devilish glad! Imagine passing soup to one's sister! By George, it was a narrow one! It would have been all over then."

"Well, there will plenty of times this winter," said Betty. "I shall see you all at the Country club Sunday afternoon. Good night, every one. No, no; there's no need of any of you coming to the carriage."

But brother Jack did walk to the door with her; however, he gave not the slightest attention to the groom, for which he was grateful. "You must all come and spend the evening with me soon," said Betty, entering the carriage.

"That we shall," said brother Jack, closing the door for her. "Good night."

"Home, James," said the voice within the carriage.

I do not know whether or not he slept soundly that night on his stable cot. He never would confess. But it is my private opinion that he didn't sleep at all, but spent a good part of the night out of doors, smoking very black, strong cigars.

Celeste, however, could have told you that her mistress, as she retired, was in a most amicable frame of mind. Once she laughed.

CHAPTER XIII. A RUNAWAY. Four days passed, I might have used the word "sped," only that verb could not be truthfully applied. Never before in the history of time (so our Jehu thought) did four days cast their shadows more slowly across the dial of the hours. From noon till night there was a maddening nothing to do but polish bits and buckles and stirrups and ornamental silver. He would have been totally miserable but for the morning rides. These were worth while; for he was riding Pirate, and there was always that expectation of the unexpected. But Pirate behaved himself puzzlingly well. Fortunately for the Jehu, these rides were always into the north country. He was continually possessed with fear lest she would make him drive through the shopping district. If he met Nancy, it would be, in the parlance of the day, all off. Nancy would have recognized him in a beard like a Cossack's; and here he was with the boy's face—the face she never would forget.

He was desperately in love. I do not know what desperately in love is, my own love's course running smoothly enough; but I can testify that it was making Mr. Robert thin and appetiteless. Every morning the impulse came to him to tell her all; but every morning his courage coiled like Bob Acres', and his lips became dumb. I dare say that if she had questioned him he would have told her all; but for some reason she had ceased to inquire into his past. Possibly her young mind was occupied with pleasanter things. He became an accomplished butler,

and served so well in rehearsals that Pierre could only grumble. One afternoon she superintended the comedy. She found a thousand faults with him, so many, in fact, that Pierre did not understand what it meant, and became possessed with the vague idea that she was hitting him over the groom's shoulder. He did not like it; and later, when they were alone, Warburton was distinctly impressed with Pierre's displeasure.

"You can not please her, and you can not please me. Bah! Zat ees vat comes of teaching a groom table manners instead of stable manners. And you vil smell of horse! I do not understand Mees Annesley; no!"

And there were other humiliations, petty ones. She chid him on having the stirrup too long or too short; the curb chain was rusting; this piece of ornamental silver did not shine like that one. Jane's fetlocks were too long; Pirate's hoofs weren't thoroughly oiled. With dogged patience he tried to remedy all these faults. It was only when they had had a romping run down the road that this spirit fell away from her, and she talked pleasantly.

Twice he ran into Karloff, but that shrewd student of human nature did not consider my hero worth studying; a grave mistake on his part, as he was presently to learn. He was handsome, and the only thing he noticed about the groom was his handsome face. He considered it a crime for a servant to be endowed with personal attractions. A servant in the eyes of a Russian noble excites less interest than a bloodless dog. Mr. Robert made no complaint; he was very well satisfied to have the count ignore him entirely. Once he met the count in the Turkish room, where, in the capacity of butler he served liquor and cigars. There was a certain grim humor in lighting his rivals cigar for him. This service was a test of his ability to pass through a room without knocking over taborets and chairs. Another time they met when Betty and the two of them took a long ride. Karloff did notice how well the groom rode his mettlesome mount, being himself a soldier and a daring horseman. Warburton had some trouble. Pirate did not take to the idea of breathing Jane and Dick's dust, he wanted to lead these second-raters. Mr. James' arms ached that afternoon from the effort he had put forth to re-

frain Pirate and keep him in his proper place, five yards to the rear. Nothing happened Sunday; the day went by uneventfully. He escaped the ordeal of driving her to the Chevy Chase Club, William being up that afternoon.

Then Monday came, and with it Betty's curious determination to ride Pirate.

"You wish to ride Pirate, Miss?" exclaimed James, his horror of the idea openly manifest.

"Saddle him for me,"—peremptorily. "I desire to ride him. I find Jane isn't exciting enough."

"Pardon me, Miss Annesley," he said, "but I had rather you would not make the attempt."

"You had rather I would not make the attempt?"—slowly repeating the words, making a knife of each one of them, tipped with the poison of her contempt. "I do not believe I quite understand you."

He bravely met the angry flash of her eyes. There were times when the color of these eyes did not resemble sapphires; rather disks of gunmetal, caused by a sudden dilation of the pupils.

"Yes, Miss, I had rather you would not."

"James you forget yourself. Saddle Pirate, and take Jane back to the stables. Besides, Jane has a bit of a cold." She slapped her boot with her riding-crop and indolently studied the scurrying clouds overhead; for the day was windy.

Soberly Warburton obeyed. He was hurt and angry, and he knew not what besides. Heavens, if anything should happen to her! His hopes rose a bit. Pirate had shown no temper so far that morning. He docilely permitted his master to put on the side-saddle. But as he came out into the air again, he threw forward his ears, stretched out his long black neck, took in a great breath, and whinnied a hoarse challenge to the elements. William had already saddled Dick, who looked askance at his black rival's small, compact heels.

ignored the sign of conciliation which his mistress made him.

"I am not afraid of him. Besides, Dick can outrun and outjump him." This did not reassure Warburton, nor did he know what this comparison meant, being an ordinary mortal.

"With all respect to you, Miss Annesley, I am sorry that you are determined to ride him. He is most emphatically not a lady's horse, and you have never ridden him. Your skirts will irritate him, and if he sees your crop, he'll bolt."

She did not reply, but merely signified her desire to mount. No sooner was she up, however, than she secretly regretted her caprice; but not for a hundred worlds would she have permitted this groom to know. But Pirate, with that rare instinct of the horse, knew that his mistress was not sure of him. He showed the whites of his eyes and began pawing the gravel. The girl glanced covertly at her groom and found no color in his cheeks. Two small muscular lumps appeared at the corners of her jaws. She would ride Pirate, and nothing should stop her; nothing, nothing. Womanlike, knowing herself to be in the wrong, she was furious.

And Pirate surprised them both. During the first mile he behaved himself in the most gentlemanly fashion; and if he shied once or twice, waltzed a little, it was only because he was full of life and spirit. They trotted, they cantered, ran and walked. Warburton, hitherto holding himself in readiness for whatever might happen, relaxed the tension of his muscles, and his shoulders sank relievedly. Perhaps, after all, his alarm had been needless. The trouble with Pirate might be the infrequency with which he had been saddled and ridden. But he knew that the girl would not soon forget his interference. There would be more humiliations, more bitter pills for him to swallow. It pleased him, however, to note the ease with which Dick kept pace with Pirate.

As for the most beautiful person in all the great world, I am afraid that she was beginning to feel self-important. Now that her confidence was fully restored, she never once spoke to or looked at her groom. Occasionally from the corner of her eye she could see the white patch on Dick's nose.

"James," she said maliciously and suddenly, "go back five yards. I wish to ride alone."

Warburton, his face burning, fell back. And thus she made her first mistake. The second and final mistake came immediately after. She touched Pirate with her heel, and he broke from a trot into a lively gallop. Dick, without a touch of the boot, kept his distance to a foot. Pirate, no longer seeing Dick at his side, concluded that he had left his rival behind; and the suppressed mischief in his black head began to find an outlet. Steadily he arched his neck; steadily but surely he drew down on the reins. The girl felt the effort and tried to frustrate it. In backing her pull with her right hand, the end of her crop flashed down the side of Pirate's head—the finishing touch. There was a wild leap, a blur of dust, and Mr. Pirate, well named after his freebooting sires, his head down where he wanted it, his feet rolling like a snare-drum, Mr. Pirate ran away, headed for heaven only knows where.

For a brief moment Warburton lost his nerve; he was struck with horror. If she could not hold her seat, she would be killed or dreadfully hurt, and perhaps disfigured. It seemed rather strange, as he recalled it, that Dick, instead of himself, should have taken the initiative. The noble sorrel, formerly a cavalry horse, shot forward magnificently. Doubtless his horse-sense took in the situation, or else he did not like the thought of yonder proud, supercilious show-horse beating him in a running race. So, a very fast mile was put to the rear.

The girl, appreciating her peril, did as all good horsewomen would have done; locked her knee on the horn and held on. The rush of wind tore the pins from her hair which, like a golden plume, stretched out behind her. (Have you ever read any thing like this before? I dare say. But to Warburton and the girl, it never occurred that other persons had gone through like episodes. It was real, and actual, and single, and tragic to them.)

The distance between the two horses began slowly to lessen, and Warburton understood, in a nebulous way, what the girl had meant when she said that Dick could outrun Pirate. If Pirate kept to the road, Dick would bring him down; but if Pirate took it into his head to vault a fence! Warburton shuddered. Faster, faster, over this roll of earth, clattering across this bridge, around this curve and that angle. Once the sight of a team drawing a huge grain-wagon sent a shiver to Warburton's heart. But they thundered past with a foot to spare. The old negro on the seat stared after them, his ebony face drawn with wonder and the whites of his eyes showing. Foot by foot, yard by yard, the space lessened, till Dick's nose was within three feet of Pirate's flowing tail. Warburton fairly lifted Dick along with his knees. I only wish I could describe the race as my Jehu told it to me. The description held me by the throat. I could see the flashing by of trees and houses and fields; the scampering of picaninnies across the road; the horses from the meadows dashing up to the fences and whinnying; the fine stone and dust which Pirate's rattling heels threw into my Jehu's face and eyes; the old pain throbbing anew in his leg. And when he finally drew alongside the black brute and saw the white, set face of the girl he loved, I can imagine no greater moment but one in his life. There was no fear on her face, but there was ap-

peal in her eyes as she half turned her head. He leaned across the intervening space and slid his arm around her waist. The two horses came together and twisted his leg cruelly. His jaws snapped.

"Let the stirrup go!" he cried. "Let go, quick!" She heard him. "Your knee from the horn! I can't keep them together any longer. Now!"

Brave and plucky and cool she was. She obeyed him instantly. There was a mighty heave, a terrible straining of the back and the knees, and Pirate was freed of his precious burden. The hardest part of it came now. Dick could not be made to slow down abruptly. He wanted to keep right on after his rival. So, between holding the girl with his right arm and pulling the horse with his left, Warburton saw that he could keep up this terrible effort but a very short time. Her arms were convulsively wound around his neck, and this added to the strain. Not a word did she say; her eyes were closed, as if she expected any moment to be dashed to the earth.

But Dick was only a mortal horse. The fierce run and the double burden began to tell, and shortly his head came up. Warburton stopped him. The girl slid to the ground, and in a moment he was at her side. And just in time. The reaction was too much for her. Dazedly she brushed her hair from her eyes, stared wildly at Warburton and fainted. He did not catch her with that graceful precision which on the stage is so familiar to us. No. He was lucky to snatch one of her arms, thus preventing her head from striking the road. He dragged her to the side of the highway and rested her head on his shaking knees. Things grew dark for the time. To tell the truth, he himself was very close to that feminine weakness which the old fellows, in their rough and ready plays, used to call "vapours." But he forced his heart to steady itself.

(To Be Continued.)

Down in Dixie. The old colored man was sitting on the fence tuning up his fiddle when the tourist from the north came up to him. "Uncle," said the tourist, "doesn't the present agitated state of the world worry you?"

"What's dat sah?" asked the old man, turning the well-worn key. "Why, war, for instance?"

"Wal? Huh! Ah hab a wife en a mule. Dey creates mo' trouble den all de wahs."

"Well, cyclones and floods?" "Huh! Las' time we has a cyclone a strange bahn blew in mah yahd en nobody he ebah claimed et yet. De flood cum rushin' down de ribbar en landed three chicken coops right et mah do'."

"Well, the beef trust. Don't that worry you?" "No, sah. Ah jilbs on bacon en pones. Nuffin worries me, sah, nuffin tall." And the old man struck up a jig—Chicago Daily News.

Enthusiastic Bird Architect. The process of the building of a bird's nest is always interesting, and the most wonderful of all nests, those of the weaver birds, can always be seen in the making by any one who will buy a few males of the African red billed weaver, which cost about half a crown each. This is a little bird much like a small hen sparrow with a bright red bill, and decked in the breeding season with a pink cap and breast and a black mask. He is an enthusiastic architect, and in France is always sold as travailleur—the worker. Even in the cage he will weave any fibrous material in and out of the wires till they are covered, and in an aviary he will construct beautiful round nests with the greatest enthusiasm, pausing occasionally to swear at fellow craftsmen who presume to criticise his efforts or cast a lacerous eye on his materials.—London Express.

Everything but Love. There is not a country bred man or woman now living but will tell you that life can offer nothing comparable with the innocent zest of that old style of courting that was done at singing school in the starlight and candlelight of the first half of our century. There are few hearts so withered and old but they beat quicker sometimes when they hear, in old fashioned churches, the wailing, sobbing, or exulting strains of "Bradstreet" or "China" or "Coronation," and the mind floats down on the current of these old melodies to that fresh young day of hopes and illusions—of voices that were sweet, no matter how false they sang—of nights that were rosy with dreams, no matter what Fahrenheit said—of girls that blushed without cause, and of lovers who talked for hours about everything but love.

No Pajamas for Him. It was at a dinner, and the shy young girl was in misery because she had to talk to a very deaf old man. In great embarrassment she began looking for some topic for conversation, and, seeing a dish of bananas said to the old man,

"Do you like bananas?" "Hey?"

"Do you like bananas?" "What's that?"

"Do you like bananas?" shouted the poor girl, conscious that every one at the table was listening in amusement. "No, I don't," said the old man loudly, "old-fashioned nightgown every-time!"—Judge.

In Cleveland. He—I don't suppose you entertain any objection to having your house number changed? She—O, Mr. Beasley, this is so sudden.—Cleveland Plaindealer.

A MODERN MADRIGAL. If I was a robin bird A swingin' in de tree, I'd sing so sweet dat when She heard She'd stop to look at me. If I was er ol' bullfrog I'd jump aroun' so spry But when I tumbled f'um a log I'd sho'ly catch Her eye.

Verisimilitude. "Hiram," said Mrs. Cornstossel, "what makes you say 'by gosh' so much and wear your trousers in your boots?" "I'm rehearsin'" answered the farmer, "for the benefit of the summer boarders who are comin' next week. If some of us don't talk that way they won't think we're real country folks like they've been readin' about."—Washington Star.

UNCERTAINTY AND CERTAINTY.



Wandering William—I don't know where my next meal is coming from, lady.

Lady—Well, I know where it is not coming from.

Disqualified. "Cheer up, dear," she said to her dying husband. "I can keep boarders, you know."

"Ah, but you forget," he sadly replied, "that you have never had your own carriage to ride in, and you have no rich relatives whose offers of help you can spurn to show your independence."—Judge.

Paradoxical. The nature feminine is prone To paradoxes-sly. To hints that may be deftly thrown The nature feminine is prone; For while she cannot throw a stone, A girl can heave a sigh. The nature feminine is prone To paradoxes-sly. —Puck.

Thankless. "Do you enjoy being a weather prophet?" "No. It's a thankless task. When you predict good weather people remind you that it was coming anyhow, and when you predict bad weather they'd rather not hear about it."—Washington Star.

Just the Opportunity. Manager—What's to be done with Jenkins, sir? He's turned quite deaf temporarily, I hope, but still it's awkward, you know. Owner—Oh, Jenkins! Turned deaf, has he? Then send him to help in the complaint department.—Cassell's Journal.

Couldn't Help Himself. Mother (to little daughter)—I am surprised, Eethel, that you should talk so impertinently to your father. I'm sure you never heard me talk that way to him. Eethel—Well, you choosed him and I didn't.—Tit-Bits.

A Martyr for the Common Good. "You say you had an opportunity to kiss that pretty waitress and did not do it?" "That's what I said." "Well, why in the world didn't you?" "I belong to the anti-tip society."—Houston Post.

What He Came For. "How did you come to get mixed up in this altercation?" asked the prosecuting attorney. "Oi didn't come to git mixed up in it," answered Pa. "Oi come to collect a bill av four dollars an' twinty-seven cints."—Judge.

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