

Cambria Freeman

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THE BOOK-KEEPER'S DREAM. BY JOHN W. EDDY.

The day had wearily worn to its close. And night had come on with its needed repose. As a book-keeper wended his way from the office... Peter was soon in sight of Beaville again. He was determined to become acquainted with Miss Delong at once...

PETER PUNCH'S HEROISM.

Peter Punch was a Yankee peddler. His home was in a neat little village near the sea coast. Peter had two reasons for returning from his peddling tour at the end of every fortnight...

When the night had rolled back and its shadows were gone, and a rosy dawn had blushed into dawn, on the swift wings of faith rose the incense of prayer. From the altar God's angel had sanctified there.

up as her uncle's folks. For my part I don't see what's the use of some folks feeling so mighty big; I hope she ain't proud. She looked as clever as pie, though I've heard say you can't tell by a frog's looks how far he can jump.

'Not by any means, Mr. Punch; we were acting a tragedy for our own amusement. Will you come in and witness the last?' 'Not much, I reckon,' muttered Peter, as he put in his best jumps for home.

'Well, if I had known how you were going to take on, I should have let you drown a few minutes longer. There's no credit to be got saving anybody till they're going down the third time.'

'What is the meaning of this?' asked one of them sternly. 'It means,' said Peter promptly, 'that I saved this young woman from a watery grave, and she insults me for it.'

'Supposed her drowning! And was it possible, then, that she was not—that she was only bathing? It seemed so; indeed, and Peter marched away crestfallen enough.'

'No ma'am, not a bit; but I should not mind it if I was, I'm so glad I saved your life.'

'Saved my life, Mr. Punch. In what way? Your conduct struck us as something very strange,' said the lady.

'Do you see that bridge yonder? If I hadn't stopped that runaway team, you would be soaking in the bottom of the river now.'

'A merry laugh from both the women rang out on the air. 'Why, bless your simple soul, Mr. Punch, the horses weren't running away. We were in a hurry to reach the depot before the train leaves—that was all.'

'And with that the ladies drove on again faster than before, leaving Peter to sneak off home, feeling, as he expressed it, 'as though he had been caught in a hen roost,' but he did not give up the notion of becoming a hero. He felt sure he would yet have an opportunity, and he resolved to watch for it.'

'One evening he was passing the house where Miss Delong was staying, when her voice, talking in a pleading tone, reached his ears. The windows were open, and several persons were assembled in the parlor.'

'Save me! save me! Will no one save me from this cruel fate?' rang in pleading tones on the evening air. Peter bolted into the house like lightning.

'In his wild anxiety he saw no one but the lady of his love, and a man standing over her with a dagger in his hand. Miss Delong must have fainted away, for she was lying on a divan, pale as a lily. Peter ran up to her exclaiming: 'Save you! Yes, I will save you, though ten thousand villains seek your precious life.'

'He raised her quickly, and before any one could comprehend the affair he bore her into the street. How Mr. Punch found his charge considerably revived and desperately determined to be released.

'Fear not, my pretty pink, it is your own hand that has saved you. Peter Punch's show his head now.'

'Not by any means, Mr. Punch; we were acting a tragedy for our own amusement. Will you come in and witness the last?' 'Not much, I reckon,' muttered Peter, as he put in his best jumps for home.

'Mr. Punch, you are in luck at last, Miss Delong is drowning and you must save her. I hope she'll swoon just as I reach her, and wake up to find me breathing lovingly over her and chafing her hands—that's the way the heroes I've read about acted.'

As he talked thus, Peter was plunging furiously through the water to Miss Delong, who was quite unaware that a rescuer was at hand.

'Peter made several lunges at her before he succeeded in getting hold of her dress; and thus drawing her toward him, he bore her in triumph to the beach, notwithstanding violent opposition, accompanied by hysterical screams from the young lady.'

'Mr. Punch, this is too outrageous! I demand an explanation!' said she indignantly. 'Well, if I had known how you were going to take on, I should have let you drown a few minutes longer.'

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A Sharp Diamond Smuggler.

There is a very important traffic carried on in diamonds in the various European lines in this country, and as the duty upon them is ten per cent, ad valorem the sharp-eyed watch is kept upon those suspected to be engaged in it.

'Peter knew by the hat she wore that it was Miss Delong. 'Peter Punch, you are in luck at last, Miss Delong is drowning and you must save her. I hope she'll swoon just as I reach her, and wake up to find me breathing lovingly over her and chafing her hands—that's the way the heroes I've read about acted.'

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Glass-Eye Trade of the United States.

It is not generally known that the entire glass-eye business of the United States is in the hands of one firm, Messrs. Theissen & Paulding, of Pittsburg, and but few people have any idea of the immensity of their business.

'The officers mentally determined if he did they would try it again. Upon inquiry it was found that he really engaged a retainer passage, having held his state-room for that purpose. Two hours before the sailing of the steamer he was driven down to the pier in his carriage, his wife and daughter, with him to see him off. When they returned they carried with them over ten thousand dollars' worth of diamonds which he had secreted in his state-room during the whole time the steamer had remained in port.

'The would-be-hero was confined to the house for a month with the rheumatism after his last attempt at heroism. At the end of that time he considered himself cured both of his ailment and his love for Miss Delong, often saying to himself: 'Fine feathers make fine birds. Louisa wasn't any prettier in that gray bathing dress than Charity; and the ebony red of her cheeks was all washed in streaks by the waves. Charity don't paint, and, what's more, she don't care whether I'm a hero or not, and I mean to ask her to have me the first time I see her.'

'AN INQUEST ON ABEL.—The other afternoon an excited individual with his hat standing on two hours, and his eyes projecting from his head like the horns of a snail rushed into the office of Coroner Holmes. The coroner is by profession a dentist, and his first thought was that he was well nigh distracted with the toothache.

'He was soon undeceived, however, as the frenzied individual cried out, as soon as he could catch his breath after running up stairs, 'Been a man murdered?' 'A man murdered?' cried the coroner; 'how? where?'

'In a garden, I believe, with a club or a rock.' 'How long ago?' cried the coroner, seizing his hat and cane. 'Been done a good while ago, and no police nor constable hasn't never done nothing about it. Never been no coroner set on the body, nor nothin' of the kind; no verdict.'

'What was the man's name? Who was he?' cried the coroner. 'His name was Abel.' 'Abel? Abel who?' 'Don't know. Never heard nothin' but his first name.'

'Well, what is the name of the man who killed him? Do they know? Any one suspected?' 'Well, I've heard that a fellow named Cain put out his light. Cain was the brother of Abel, and—'

'Coroner smells a mice, and, flourishing his cane, cries, 'You git down them stairs, my fine fellow. Git and don't show yourself here again!' With a loud guffaw he fell down the stairs three steps at a time, the doctor calling out to him, 'How dare you trifle with an officer in this way, sir?'

'In Virginia, lately, an eagle pooned on a young lady, fixed his talons in her hair, and flew off—with about ten pounds of jute. This incident will undoubtedly be used by the ladies as an excuse for wearing such enormous chignons; but is it right, is it fair to deceive a poor bird in that way? Imagine the feelings of that proud American bird when it sighted in the nest of its young, with keen appetites, and found no girl attached to that bunch of hair!'

'That frightful epidemic, the plague, which spared neither high nor low in station, swept away one-third of the inhabitants of Venice. On a previous visitation the epidemic, the great artist, Titian, had fled to Cadore, but this time he delayed leaving the city until too late. His death was a peculiarly sad one. He had outlived most of his relations and his dearest friends, his son Pomponio was away from him; Orsola had been one of the first victims of the plague. Even his servants deserted him; and as he lay breathing his last, alone and unattended, a band of ruffians broke into the house and ransacked it of all its contents, ruthlessly destroying whatever they could not carry off—all of which Titian, in his powerless agony, was compelled to witness. Fame nor unobscured genius could help dying mortality then—he was but one of earth's poor worms, trodden on, yet powerless to turn.

'Several years ago Messrs. Theissen & Paulding were burnt out in the big fire in Pittsburg. The sorrow, the ruin, the misery it caused, can only be appreciated by a one-eyed man. Almost all had to content themselves with second-hand eyes, dim and considerably the worse for wear and tear.

'A well-known merchant of New York, who was wanting in optics dissected a doll of his daughter in order to procure an eye, so that he might appear in society decently, and a poor man in a very similar strait, made use of those large variegated crystals of which children are so fond. His eye of many colors produced quite a sensation, and Messrs. Theissen & Paulding threw a quantity of Tolly Vardon eyes on the market, but somehow they did not take and become the fashion, and the cargo was an entire loss.

'Messrs. Theissen & Paulding have almost entirely banished the French glass eye from this continent; the English eye never took well here, was never popular. They are now engaged in supplying the Chinese market, and have invented a new patented aquatic eye just suited for the Mongolians. They are also patentees of the strabismic glass-eye, suitable for cross or cock-eyed people.

'With each dozen glass eyes, a copy of directions how to wear glass eyes are sent. It is to be hoped that this book will be studied, as some of our best citizens display a disgraceful carelessness in the manner in which they wear their eyes. To be glared at by an eye upside down, is apt to disturb a man; indeed, it is extremely disagreeable.

'Shooting a Stuffed Squirrel. There is in the neighborhood of Ridgewood an old gentleman who was once a Nimrod among the hunters. He could shoot out a squirrel's eye from the top of the tallest hickory, nine shots out of ten. Indeed there was no limit to his skill. He has been renewing the sports of his youth for the past few weeks, but as squirrels were scarce, and his eyesight was dim, his game bag was not well filled on his return home. He has a mischievous rascal of a grandson, who would ever play pranks on him, and as he was wandering through the woods day before yesterday, the youngster got into the path before him and perched a stuffed squirrel on the limb of a tree, tying it fast. As the old man came near, the youngster showed himself and called attention to the squirrel. The old man looked. 'Sure enough there is a squirrel,' he remarked. 'Be still; I'll fetch him.' And taking careful aim he pulled the trigger. When the smoke blew away there sat the squirrel with his tail over his back, not in the least disturbed. The old man loaded his gun with great care and aimed again. The squirrel stood this fire with as much equanimity as the first, only his tail seemed to be broken and had fallen over on his side. The old man was nonplussed. He did not, however, see his grandson, who was rolling in convulsions of laughter behind a convenient log. He had become warmed up to the sport and thought of nothing else but fetching that squirrel. The third shot out the cord that bound the squirrel to the tree and he fell, not with the usual heavy thud he well known to sportsmen, but bouncing several feet into the air. This aroused the old man's suspicions, and, going up to it, he found the true nature of the sell. His change of position brought him in full view of his affectionate grandnephew who was tearing up the ground in his effort to laugh without making a noise. A realizing sense of the situation crept over the mind of the venerable man. He cast his eyes on the ground; they fell on a piece of shingle, which he picked up, and approaching the convulsed boy unawares, he effectually fanned him a couple of times on the seat of his breeches. This brought the youngster to a perpendicular, and he took to his heels, thereby escaping more loving demonstrations. The old gentleman could not help relishing the joke, and tells the circumstance with greater good will than one would suppose. The boy is just ten years old, and his grandfather declares that he will sometime be President of the United States. He now has most unbounded faith in the ability of that boy.