

The First Snowfall.

The snow had begun in the gloaming, And busily all the night Had been heaping field and highway With a silence deep and white.

PLAYING A BULL.

The Hon. Gus Trenchard knew life—at least he thought so, and it certainly looked like it; for he had managed to live sumptuously on next to nothing for some years.

The Hon. Gus had a sister—not very handsome and not very young; but a fine, tall, stylish girl, who dressed well and made the most of a good figure.

Even the soothing influence of a good cigar had no charms for him now, and he allowed it to burn out, and then threw it viciously into the grate.

"What do you propose doing?" asked Constance, closing her book. "Give up schooling those youngsters—they know as much as I do nowadays—and going in for business."

Hon. Constance, tossing her head in high disdain. "I will have him here to dinner tomorrow, and you must be attentive to him; put on that pretty smile and charming manner that you wear when you want to bowl a fellow over," continued her brother, calmly.

"Marry the fellow with the money, Con; do not be a silly fool! Five thousand a year cannot be caught every day." Her romance ended, as these unpractical romances generally end, in nothing; or rather, in Jack emigrating to Australia, and being completely forgotten, and in Constance being single at 27, and perfectly willing to marry any average man with sufficient to keep her.

"Who is that fine girl. By Jove what a figure!" "Gus Trenchard's sister; but no spooning there. Hawks, you know, and all that," replied his friend.

"The worst is bad enough, though it is only to make love to Samuel Jones." "And—," she commenced; but here she stopped, looking up at Gus with a frightened, nervous deprecatory expression on her face that amused him.

"I am afraid, Gus, I must be very stupid. Am I to ask him to invest twenty thousand pounds for me, and to tell me in what he invests it?" "It is pretty much like it, though it isn't exactly that. Just find out if his ring are going in for a big thing soon, what it is, and if they will be 'bulls' or 'bears.' Admire his cleverness, tell him you love speculation and want to make a lump of money with the couple of thousand you have idle at the bank. Just get him to promise to let you into 'the swim' and to put a big lot on for you."

"Do you think he will do it?" "If you play him properly he will to a certainty. I will then give the 'tip' to a fellow I know, who will put a pile on for me. But now, Con, I shall go to bed, he said, rising, "and you can think matters over."

"I wonder you are seen with him. He does not play or lend money, does he?" "He is as rich as Rothschild, and he admires you, Con." "Admires me—that fellow?" said the

The two men now pulled their chairs around the fire, and lighting their cigars talked in a desultory way about things in general. Gus kept Jones's stories of dukes and duchesses and royal personages, talking of them patronizingly, as if they were his bosom friends and everyday companions.

"They are a queer lot, Jones, when you know them well, as you will by and by," he said yawning. "I have a high respect for our old nobility," said Jones.

"She is playing him splendidly," he muttered. "Egad, she could bowl him over to-night if she liked!" "Jones was 'bowed over' completely, and he never felt so happy in his life as when Constance, having finished singing, sat on the sofa, and made room for him by her side.

"I suppose it is a State secret?" "No," she answered, laughing, "I suppose there is no harm in telling it. She said she would come to my wedding, whoever I married."

"Do you really envy such men? May I venture to say that I am a pretty big man myself on the Stock Exchange?" Constance looked at him in apparent astonishment. "You," she exclaimed, "on the Stock Exchange! Oh, Gus, fancy! Mr. Jones is on the Stock Exchange."

"I wonder he has such bad taste," said Jones, gallantly. "Now, do tell me all about the Stock Exchange and the bulls and bears. Do you really have wild animals there?" "No, no," he laughed, "though the men are wild enough when they are 'cornered.' 'Bull' is a vulgar expression for fellows who want to force stocks up, and 'bear' for the lot who want to force them down."

"I will tell you before we operate," replied Jones, cautiously, though intensely gratified. "Do promise me one thing; dine with us the night you operate, as you call it,

and I will sing or do anything for you. Do promise, won't you?" "Yes, with pleasure," said Jones, decisively. "Oh, thanks, how good it is of you what can I do to repay you?" "You can do a great deal," he said, softly.

"I have a high respect for our old nobility," said Jones. "Just so—all rich men have. By-the-by, Jones, why don't you marry? You are not a chicken, you know."

"I will, and, Miss Trenchard, you will make a thousand pounds before three days, or my name is not Samuel Jones."

"I would rather not run any more risk. I would sooner have the two thousand—I really would, Mr. Jones. I have not had for this tremendous speculation; I am only a woman—and, oh! Mr. Jones, how clever you are!" she exclaimed.

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It is reported that the Czar intends in 1887 to assume a title equivalent to that of Emperor over the whole of Central Asia. It is that his Imperial Majesty will make a state entry into Samarcand, and there formally assume the sovereignty over Central Asia in the presence of all the amirs and khans who are under the sway of Imperial Russia.

KNIGHTS OF THE BAR.

Students of Nature who Mix Drinks Behind the Bar. "Oh, yes, I have handled the glasses," said a rather stylish-appearing, but decidedly over-dressed man of middle age, as he leaned against the bar of a fifth avenue saloon, New York, and ordered up a 'cocktail' at the invitation of a friend.

"When you first knew me ten years ago," he continued, addressing his friend, "I was just learning how to mix the drinks. I have learned a good deal besides that since then."

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M. de Freycinet has informed the Earl of Rosebery, minister of foreign affairs, England, that he has instructed M. Sannay, the French minister at Cairo, to support the demands of Moukhtar Fasha, the Turkish commissioner to Egypt, that the English evacuate Egypt and that the English force there be replaced by a Turko-Egyptian army.

Lily Langtry's Father.

St. Heliers is a clean little city, well paved and shaded. Its inhabitants are very proud of it, and, albeit they have never crossed to the Continent in their life, they tell you flatly that their shops are much handsomer than any in Paris. You really want to believe them, they lie so earnestly. Yet there is one thing the Jerseyman may brag about until he dislocates his jaw, and I am sure he will not succeed in overpassing—the beauty of the women. I have met everywhere on this lovely island a dozen of girls far handsomer than the Lily of which it boasts. This is, doubtless, the reason why the members of the Royal Yacht Club find it so pleasant and convenient to linger here for months at a time. It is their bounteous patronage, indeed, which has made St. Heliers so thriving a place; for, whether it be the equable climate or the pretty girls or both, certain it is that my Lord Duke, tarrying here from August to December, contrives at once to enrich his citizens and have a "jolly time" himself. Thus did that great and good man—the benefactor of London society, the stage, and chiefly the Prince of Wales—His Grace, the Duke of Bedford, who discovered the Jersey Lily.

The rectory stands in the heart of the town, a *rus in urbe*. The clean granite stones and white shutters show dimly through the thick hedge and tall, umbrageous trees. As I approached by the gravel path the front door opened and out came the Dean, very handsome and *distingue*, indeed, as Madame at the hotel had said. If you will add two or three inches to Dan Dougherty's (of Philadelphia,) height, thirty or forty pounds to his weight, remodel his jaw and lower lip upon the English plan, and trim his whiskers, you will have the Dean's double.

Talking commonplace for a time, I finally broketh ice with: "How do you regard your daughter's entrance upon the stage?" "Oh, I don't know," said he, smiling. "I really haven't thought much about it. She is the best judge now of her own conduct. She is old enough, don't you think?" "How old is she?" "I'm afraid Lily wouldn't wish me to tell. Not that she's much older than she looks, but age, you know, is a woman's only secret. The finest Christian lady I ever knew would lie about her age to me—once vowed she was only 40 years old, with tears in her eyes, whereas the parish record showed her to be 60."

"Have you ever heard of Mr. Gebbard?" The Dean looked wicked for an instant, and then said coldly: "I think Mr. Gebbard is a fool. I am sure Lily has been misunderstood in this matter. You Americans doubtless believe her to be very shrewd and knowing in the ways of the world, but she is not. I have often cautioned her against permitting her inclination to repose implicit confidence in people to lead her into relations which would be misconstrued to her social hurt. She takes after me in this respect, and I can only pity, not chide her."

"Only as an amateur. But I am sure she has talent and will succeed. You see the great difficulty is that her old unfortunate fame as a 'beauty' predisposes the critics against her, and it must be some time before the real merit that she undoubtedly possesses can eradicate this prejudice from their minds. But that time will come; we are sure of it, absolutely sure." "Do you keep up any communication with Mr. Langtry?" "None whatever. But I have nothing harsh to say of him at all. Indeed, my own family affairs take up all my time and attention, and I can give but brief consideration to Lily's. They were no doubt extravagant while in London, foolishly so, I believe, and are now engaged in the mortifying task of repaying the whirlwind. It is often a very profitable, if not pleasant, employment, you know."

A Fish-Eating Plant.

The common bladderwort found in ponds and stagnant pools all over England looks a harmless enough weed. It is only about twelve inches long and its leaves are just like hairs. Yet it feeds on insects and fishes. Among its branches will be seen a number of small green bladders, from which the plant gets its name. These bladders have each a door that opens inward only, and into these doors fresh water shrimps and insects go as unsuspectingly as a fly into a spider's parlor. But they never come out again, for they are held by the hairy coating of the bladder and become the weed's food. It was at first supposed that the creatures thus imprisoned entered the trap by accident, without the plant trying to catch them. But there is now every little doubt that the bladder doors open whenever prey approaches near enough to them, and that a distinct attempt is made to seize it. Professor Moxley of Oxford has seen the bladders with baby roaches caught in these snares, some by the head and others by the tail. As the bladder is hardly as large as a garden poppy seed, it is obvious that its victims must be in the very earliest stage of infancy.

Three Ways of Spelling It.

It is Allegheny in Pennsylvania, Alleghany in Virginia, and Allegany in New York. Recently the Postoffice Department being in doubt as to how the name should be spelled in Maryland, applied to the Historical Society of that State, which recommended Alleghany, because that spelling accorded with the statute creating Alleghany county, Maryland.

Soft soap, with half its weight of pearlash, one ounce of mixture in about one gallon boiling water. This is in everyday use in most engineers' shops in the druggists used for turning long articles of bright wrought-iron and steel. The work, though constantly moist, does not rust, and bright nuts are immersed in it for days till wanted and retain their polish.

A Challenge to England.

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