

A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.

Mr. John Jones:
You are requested to draw two weeks' salary, and for reasons with which I trust you are acquainted, seek another position.

P. V. KNICKER, President Drovers' Bank.

Philadelphia, Dec. 18, 1887.
How many times John Jones had read this note he could hardly have told. Reasons with which I trust you are acquainted. He, the cashier of the Drovers' bank, dismissed for reasons with which he was acquainted. What did they mean? What were the reasons, and why was he supposed to be acquainted with them? These were some of the questions he was putting to himself as he sat in his room almost stupefied.

He did not fear inability to procure another situation. John Jones was too well known and had been too faithful in his services at his bank to fear that.

But why was he dismissed?
Well, he couldn't find out until the next day, unless, to be sure, he called upon Mr. Knicker at his home, and that John couldn't do in the state of mind he was in just then.

The feeling of injured innocence is not altogether unpleasant after all, and John finally dispersed the constantly recurring questions and prepared to go out. He would go and see Beth, his Beth, and together they would talk over the matter, and he would decide what to do.

John Jones had been sick all day. A blind headache had begun to bother him before he left the bank the day before, and had grown constantly worse all that night, until when morning came he was unable to go to his business. The headache was forgotten now; occasionally a throbbing pain would make him wince physically, but his thoughts were so thoroughly occupied with that unaccountable note to realize the pain.

He soon left the house and decided to walk up Chestnut street and thence to see Beth. He saw no one, did not even feel the exertion of walking until he brought up with a bang against a gentleman who was going the in the opposite direction. He mechanically apologized and started on, but soon did the same thing again, and saw he was unable to think about the present even enough to dodge his fellow pedestrians. He called a cab and gave the driver orders to take him to Beth's home. Before he realized that they had started he was aroused by the sudden pulling up of the vehicle, and the man, clambering down from his seat, opened the door and stood waiting for him to get out. He did so, and started up to ring the bell when the driver called after him. He had forgotten the man's fee. He paid him, and then pulled the bell.

The door opened and he passed in, not speaking to the servant who admitted him. He seated himself and didn't move for three or four minutes. This time it was the servant who aroused him.

Who do you wish to see, sir?
John then noticed for the first time that he had never seen the man before. He turned on him, and the man started back and asked him if he were ill. John paid no attention to his question, but told him to tell Miss Hughes that Mr. Jones was in the parlor. Then he settled into his former position and did not move again until Mr. Hughes entered and said:

Well, sir?
John looked up and asked for Beth. My daughter is engaged at present, said Mr. Hughes.

Beth engaged when he, her betrothed husband, was waiting to see her? That was strange; he couldn't understand it. But he said: Very well, I will wait.

Miss Hughes will be unable to see you this evening and requested me to give you this package. I am sorry, Mr. Jones, but I must beg you to discontinue your calls.

Great God! What did it mean? John was thoroughly painfully wide awake now, and sprang to his feet.

Bertha can't see me, and you ask me to discontinue my visits? Please tell me why?

He was now standing perfectly straight and gazing composedly but intently at Mr. Hughes.

I trust that you understand the reasons, Mr. Jones, as well as I do, said Mr. Hughes, with a peculiar look.

Almost the identical words, Knicker had used in his note. John turned without a word and left the house. He did not put on his overcoat, although the night was cold. He tipped his hat over his eyes and walked. He now realized how sick he was. His head throbbed until he thought it would burst. What did he care? It even made him smile a little to think of it. He pulled his hat down hard, so hard that its tightness hurt him. He wondered if that would make his head ache any harder. If it could he should like to have it. He didn't notice where he was going, but suddenly surprised himself by unlocking the door of his house, going upstairs and sitting down. Ah! there was the afternoon paper. He would read the accounts of the misery of others and smile to think how much more miserable he was than any of them. He picked it up, glanced it over, and was about to lay it down again when his attention was arrested by this headline:

"A BANK IN A HOLE." DROVERS' DECEASED BY AN OLD EMPLOYEE.

What was that? The Drovers' bank defrauded? Why, he used to be cashier at the Drovers' bank. What a long time it seemed since he had stood at the cashier's desk yet it was only yesterday. He would read the article anyway. He didn't care now about Mr. Knicker's note. Beth's message had inflicted so much deeper a sting that he had almost forgotten the note, but he would read the article and he thought he should feel pleased to learn that Knicker had been cheated.

This morning, when P. V. Knicker, the president of the Drovers' bank, reached the office, he found a note telling him that his cashier, John Jones, was ill, and would be unable to be at his desk to day. Mr. Knicker is a very careful man in business matters, and he decided to take the duties of cashier upon himself until Mr. Jones was in a condition to relieve him. He accordingly unlocked the vaults and prepared for work. Soon Adam, Malic & Johnson presented a check for a large amount, and upon referring to the record of yesterday's business, Mr. Knicker found that a package of ten \$1,000 bills had been deposited. He immediately decided to use one of those bills in cashing the check, and going to the vault, removed the package supposed to contain them. In counting the money he found nine \$1,000 bills and a \$100 bill. On investigation it transpired that the last person who handled the bills was John Jones, the cashier. Before passing into the hands of the cashier the bills had, however, been handled by four subordinates; who reported that there were ten of the \$1,000 notes in the package when they saw it. It then went to Mr. Jones, and one of the clerks happened to be standing near by when Jones took it. The clerk noticed particularly that Mr. Jones seemed to find it all right, but that instead of pinning the little strip of paper with the amount marked on it, which was customary to place around packages of money, he withdrew one of the bills and laid the others loose on his desk. The clerk was then called to some other part of the room and gave no further information. Other evidence conclusively shows that not withstanding Mr. Jones' previous integrity he had yielded to temptation and gone the way of many others. It is mentioned incidentally that that very morning Mr. Jones had said he was in great need of \$900, the exact amount extracted from the package. Mr. Knicker, in consideration of Jones' former uprightness and strict discharge of duty, will not prosecute.

John read this once, twice three times. He only uttered two words: My God!

Falling back in his chair with wide open eyes he sat staring at the wall. The clock ticked away on the mantle shelf, the fire grew lower and almost died, the lamp sputtered and smoked, but still John Jones sat back in his chair, staring at the wall. Finally he gradually became light and the noise of traffic began in the street. John moved uneasily, looked around the room and got up. His head, he thought, was aching somewhat harder than on the night before, and he bathed it. There was a spot on his cuff and he put on a clean pair. Yes, he was sure his head was aching a little. What was that noise? Why, of course, some one was knocking at the door. He would open it and see who it was—a messenger boy. He took the messages, opened it, and forgot to read it. He was standing still and wondering if it was foggy outside or if his eyes were dim.

The lady said to wait for an answer, said the boy.

Oh, yes. There was that note. He would read it.

DEAR JOHN—Come and see me today. I cannot believe it. BETH. Who was Beth? Oh! he remembered now; she was the girl who had promised to marry him, the thief. The word he thought, sounded well, so he said it over and over again. Thief! Thief! The boy asked for the answer.

Well, he laughed wildly, tell her that I will be there.

John sat down again, and again began glaring at the wall. It was nearly 10 o'clock now, and John got up and put on his overcoat and hat, scrupulously brushed them and went out. He again took a cab and went to Beth's house. This time he paid the cabman, and as he went in was about to speak to the servant when he saw that it was Beth herself who had opened the door. He, however, was not at all surprised, but said good morning to her much as he would have done to the servant.

Oh, John, I am so glad you have come! Why, John, are you ill?
He laughed and again said good morning. He preceded her into the parlor, and sat down in the same chair he occupied the night before. He was laughing quietly to himself all the time. His head was aching terribly now, and that was very funny.

John, dear John, tell me it isn't true. I know it is not. I was hasty last night, John; won't you forgive me?
John looked at her, brushed a speck from his knee, and laughed a little louder.

John, John, why don't you answer me? Why don't you tell me it isn't true? But no, I won't ask that. I know it isn't. She threw her arms around him and sank at his side.

He did not move, but stopped laughing. Oh, how his head did ache! No, it had stopped aching. Where was he? Oh, yes. Beth was with him, and was sobbing. Why was she crying? He didn't remember, but thought that he was connected with it in some way, he didn't know how.

He lifted her head from his knee, bent down and kissed her. Kissed her many times, and drew her up folding his arms about her, and telling her he was sorry. What he was sorry for he couldn't have said.

He got up, and drawing her to him, kissed her again and again, and said, Good-by, Beth.

He could see her lips move, but he didn't hear anything. He went to the door, opened it and went down to the street, and wondered why the horses and wagons didn't make any noise. How silently they went along; how quiet everything was. He couldn't even hear his own footsteps. He looked at his watch and saw that it was almost 12 o'clock. The bank had been open two hours. He would be late for business. Well, he would hurry.

John had forgotten that he was no longer cashier of the drovers' bank; he only remembered that he would be late at his desk. He reached the bank, walked in, took off his coat and hat and started to go behind the desk. Mr. Knicker confronted him, and he suddenly saw it all again. The note, the newspaper and the night before at Beth's. This man, this benevolent looking old gentleman, who was frowning at him now, had branded him as a thief.

It's a lie! It's a lie! he shouted. Great God, how his head ached. Well, he had told Mr. Knicker that it was a lie; he would go now.

He took down his coat and hat, put them on, and went out into the street. How was this? This wasn't the city street he had just left; this was the old grass grown lane running before his old home. How the sun shone! How the birds sang! There was the yard with the old farm wagons and hay-stacks standing at one side, and yes—yes—there was the old tortoise shell cat sunning himself on the fence. There were the old milk pans, bright as silver, standing in a row on the grass by the kitchen door. But best—far best of all—there was his mother; his mother, who had lain in the church yard up on the hill for ten years, holding out her arms to him.

Oh, mother! oh, my dear old mother! All was black.

When John regained consciousness there were many faces around him, but the light was so dim that he could not see whether he knew them or not. He heard some one say, in a soft voice: He has opened his eyes. Then one of the faces leaned forward and kissed him. It was Beth.

John, John, don't you know me? John lifted his arms and pressed the sweet face to his breast.

John, here is Mr. Knicker come tell you it is all a terrible mistake. to John didn't look at Mr. Knicker, but kept his eyes on the sweet face close to him. His hand gently smoothed her hair, and he kissed her lips.

Beth, my darling Beth, how I love you. Of course I forgive you; and so will go—His voice sounded strange and weak. How hard it was to talk. We will go and get married, won't we, dear? Why, there is mother. Mother, this is Beth. We are going to be married.

John Jones was dead.

ST. PETER.—Well stranger, who are you?

"I am an American. I died last night."

"I see your record is pretty good. You may go in."

"Where is my lyre and crown?"
"We don't give them to Americans, but you will find a bat and spiked shoes inside the portals."

AN IMPENDING CALAMITY.—Wife (sternly)—"Well John, what have you to say for yourself?"
"What about?"

"You know well enough what about. You kissed the servant girl this morning. How did you dare to?"

"Ah, well, you see—er—why?"
"You will keep on until she leaves the house."

AGENT.—Can I put a burglar alarm in your house, sir?

Citizen Nop: I had one once.
"What was the matter? Wouldn't it go off?"

"O, yes it went off easily enough. Burglar got into the house one night and carried it off."

FLOWER GARDEN AND LAWN.—If the summer is a dry one do not mow the lawn so frequently as when the weather is more favorable for growth. Look out for seedling or weeds in the grass. Thistles, docks, etc., are easily pulled while small and the soil is moist, and save future trouble. At Christmas there is always a demand for everlasting flowers for decoration. Heliotropes, rhodanthes, and the whole set known by the seedsmen as "everlasting," if sown at once, will give a good crop of flowers in time. Weeds need frequent attention. A strong stiff knife to cut the roots of weeds below the surface is useful, as soon as perennials are out of flower, cut off clusters.

Hints for the Farm.

THE CHINESE PRIMROSE.—If you wish for an abundance of winter flowers, do not fail to sow one or two packets of Primrose seed in the spring, there by laying a foundation for many pleasant hours during the long and dreary winter, when you can count your blossoms by the hundred, instead of hunting diligently all over your window in the forlorn hope of discovering an adventurous flower somewhere, and finding "nothing but the leaves."

Unless one purchases a packer of each variety of seed it is well to confine experiment to mixed seeds alone, for they are, as a rule, very satisfactory, producing so many and such diverse varieties, each of which has a charm pertaining only to itself, some peculiarity of color or marking, or perhaps a difference of form or tint in the foliage, enhancing its beauty and effectually preventing monotony, which may exist even in the floral kingdom. The seed, if sown in March or April, the young plants pricked out into small pots as soon as they have put forth a few leaves, and transferred again after an interval of a few weeks into jars of large size, should make strong specimens in autumn, and be ready for the winter's campaign, especially if grown in good light—not sunshine, which produces stocky plants.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE RUNTS.—With every litter of pigs, Dr. A. G. Chase, Kansas, writes us there will be one dwarf or "runt" often two if the litter is a large one. It will always be profitable, and often, if not generally, an act of humanity to sever the spinal cord when the neck joins on the head, with a sharp-pointed knife, as soon as these runts are born. They usually die anyway before six months old; and with the utmost care and attention, and with but three to five in the litter, I have never been able to make any thing of them but little mangy runts; a torture to themselves and a nuisance to the owner. In ordinary litters, up to their death, they consume milk that would nourish the other and only seem wasted on them. Hence the earlier they are put out of the way the better. Breeders generally know this, but hesitate to kill them; but it is on all accounts the better way.

SWEET CORN.—It is better to plant sweet corn in rows than in hills, and if the plants are thinned out to about eight inches apart in the rows, with the rows four and a half feet apart, the yield will be larger than that gained from hills. Large areas of field corn are nowadays usually planted in drills, and corn planters and cultivators are generally adapted. Flat shallow culture is gaining new advocates every season, especially in the Eastern and Middle States. In the Northern and Western States, the system of checking corn is still practiced to some extent.

By successive planting, made every two weeks, the season of sweet corn can be indefinitely prolonged. Numbered with early varieties that have gained deserved popularity are the "Earliest Cory" and Northern Pedigree.

Dwarf pears should be planted on a spot that has a moist subsoil, either natural or made so by subsoiling or mixing some material with the soil that will give out moisture in dry weather. Trees already planted on a dry, gravelly subsoil, should have a circle dug out two feet deep and two or three feet from the tree. This should be filled up with well enriched soil. If the dwarf pear does not grow freely it is a sign that something is wrong. It should be severely pruned so as to aid in producing a vigorous growth.

HONEY PLANTS.—All flowers, whether wild or cultivated, are visited by the industrious bee for honey, and it is not easy to say from what species it derives the most of its sweets. Orchards in full bloom are melodious with their hum, and later on the fields of buckwheat are extraordinarily attractive, so much so, indeed, that honey made principally from this plant is readily distinguished from that made earlier from fruit blossoms, white clover, etc., which is more highly esteemed on account of its finer color and quality.

As the growing season approaches it requires more skill to properly feed farm stock than earlier in the season. Care must be taken to not only furnish good food but enough of it. Some farmers who are likely to come short of hay will begin towards spring to feed too small rations, and thus little by little the cattle will lose flesh. This is very poor policy; better buy hay or grain, or if this cannot be done then reduce the number of cattle by selling of the most undesirable ones, but never sell the best ones.

SWEET POTATOES.—The sweet potato is extremely sensitive to frost and except in the South, its season must be prolonged by means of the hot bed. No other plan than sprouting and setting the plants is now thought of by experienced growers. It succeeds well on nearly any soil that can be easily drained, but not on a wet one of any description. Alluvial and peaty soils are not adapted to it.

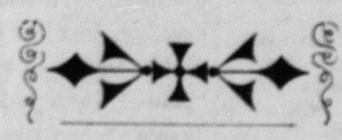
The Southern Queen is the earliest of all sweet potatoes; the root is very large and longer than the Nansemond variety, is a favorite in Virginia, and the yellow Nansemond is preferred by many to all other kinds.

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