

THE JEALOUS BARONET.

ABOUT four months after my marriage it was my wont each morning after breakfast, to stroll about my gardens and fields until, perhaps, one o'clock at which hour I returned home to enjoy my wife's society, and when the weather permitted, we occasionally took a walk or ride.

One morning feeling myself not quite well, I returned much earlier than usual, about eleven o'clock, and went into the house by a back entrance: as neither knocking or ringing announced my arrival, my wife was not aware of my return.

I sought her first in the drawing room, but not finding her there, proceeded to her bed-room, and whilst basking through my dressing room to it, I was surprised by a sudden rush to the bed-room door, which was instantly bolted from within, distinctly heard a low whispering, and, as I thought, a hurried receding step, yet altogether, was not kept waiting more than a few seconds. My wife's maid opened the door, when, to my great perplexity, I beheld my wife's usually pale face suffused with crimson blushes. I also detected her manoeuvring a comb through her hair to hide, as I instantly suspected, her blushes from me, or her disordered curls.

"What is the meaning of this?" thought I; "it is strange! The maid, too, looks confused and frightened."

My wife did not hasten to meet me with her usual sunny welcome; there was not even one smile to greet me. At length recovering herself a little she with a hesitating manner said,

"Well, my love, how goes on the farm?"

But I was grieved; for the first time in my life I felt that I was not welcome. I felt that something was going on that I was not to know, so merely saying, "I will tell you when we meet in the drawing room," I quitted her abruptly.

Not knowing whether I was going, or why I suffered so sudden, so frightful a revolution of feeling. I hurried down stairs, rushed through the hall, across the lawn, and plunged into the fir path that leads to a sequestered part of the grounds; nor did I slacken my pace until I was fully a mile from the house, when I threw myself upon the green bank by the side of the river, the most miserable of men. I who, one hour before, was the happiest of men, now unaccountably, unutterably wretched.

Pride had, at that moment, prevented my asking for an explanation, that I thought ought to have been given unsought; and I determined not to ask Lady—why my visit was evidently unwelcome.

But henceforth I resolved to keep a watchful eye upon her. A thousand thoughts crowded upon me, now that I discovered that there was something which my wife kept concealed from me, she whom I had thought so artless, so free from all duplicity.

At this period I had attained my thirtieth year. Lady—was only two years younger than myself, but from her sweet and girlish style of beauty, and gay happy manner, no one would suppose her more than twenty. She had been educated on the continent. I knew that, soon after leaving school, she said received matrimonial proposals—if she had not been actually engaged to a gentleman—before quitting Paris. Hitherto, this circumstance had never given the slightest uneasiness; but now my thoughts involuntarily reverted to it, and haunted me night and day.

Between my wife and her maid there was an unusual intimacy, owing, as I understood, to the latter being what is called an old follower of the family. This woman was one of the tallest I ever knew, and large in proportion; her face was handsome the features strongly defined, her eyes large, intensely dark and penetrating; her long black ringlets looked false; in appearance you would have said that she was nearer fifty than forty. This person, with her erect figure, was, taken altogether, what many would pronounce a very fine woman, but somewhat masculine.

Having described my wife's maid, how shall I tell you of the horrible suspicion which seized upon my imagination!

I thought, perchance, this maid—was the foreign lover in disguise!

And you did not, could not believe it, though the frightful idea never absented itself from my brain. To hint such a thought at my beautiful Agnes, my beloved wife I could never bring myself. I strove farther to banish the idea from my mind as a suggestion of Satan.

From that day I became much changed, both in the outward and inward man.

My happiness was gone, my naturally light and cheerful manner gave place to irritability and gloom. Time flew on; days and weeks passed without any particular occurrence, until one morning having arranged to accompany a gentleman in the neighborhood on a fishing excursion, I informed Agnes that I should not return until evening, when I would bring my friend to dinner. Immediately after breakfast, we started in a dog-cart. We had not proceeded more than four miles, when in turning a corner of the road, a boy, who was shooting sparrows, fired so near to the horse's head that it took fright and dashed off at a furious gallop, nor stopped until we were upset in a ditch. We were compelled to give up our day's excursion, and leaving the groom to take care of the bruised horses my friend and I walked smartly home by a short cut, and entering the house. After conducting my friend into the drawing-room, I hastened up stairs to relate our disaster to Agnes. When as I again passed through my dressing-room, the door was again bolted, and I distinctly heard my wife say, with a faltering voice, "He is returned—we are discovered!" The scales fell from my eyes; I had no longer any doubt, my worst fears were realized:

Oh, the agony of the moment I staggered back a few paces, my head reeled, my heart felt bursting, and I had nigh fallen to the ground, when a frenzy of despair and rage seizing me I made one rush at the door, and roared for instant admittance. Agnes opened the door and stood trembling before me; her attendant flew to the farthest end of the apartment. I dashed my wife aside, shouting "this moment quit my house," and darting across the room seized my rival by the throat, thundering forth, "confess all, or this instant you die."

There was a moment's pause; oh, the agony of that moment!

Pale as a corpse, Agnes stood transfixed with horror, gazing breathlessly upon the tableau before her, whilst, with suffocating accents my victim sobbed out, "Oh! sir, sir; as sure as the life is in my poor body, I have nothing to confess, but—that I was plucking out mistress's gray hairs!"

A Slight Mistake.

A strange appearing genius on his first visit to the city, observed a sign over a store thus:

"Wholesale and Retail Store." He worked his way through the crowd of ladies, until he faced one of the clerks, who was exhibiting some articles to a young lady, when he broke out with:

"Say, Mister, who's boss here?" "The proprietor has just stepped out, sir."

"Well, this is a re-tailing shop?"

"Yes, sir, a wholesale and retail store."

"Guess you understand your trade?"

"Oh, yes," replied the clerk, wrapping up a bundle for his lady customer, "what can I do for you?"

"Well, as the cold weather is coming on, I thought I might as well come and give you a job."

"I don't understand you sir," replied the clerk, who began to suspect that the fellow was in the wrong box.

"Zactly so; well, I'll tell you."

"Explain what you mean, my friend," said the clerk, as he saw him produce a roll from under his coat.

"Well, as I said before, the cold weather is coming on, and I thought I might as well be fixin' for it. Came mighty near freeze'n t'other winter, well I did, but—"

"I hope you will tell me what you want, so that I may serve you."

"Certainly squire certainly, I always do business in a hurry, and just as quick as the old master will let. I want you to re-tail these old shirts. Let them come down about to the knee, kase I don't wear drawers."

The effect may be imagined, but as novelists say can't be described. The loud laugh which followed, served to convince the poor fellow he had committed himself and his long legs were put in motion for the door.

A German applied to Judge G—to be relieved from sitting as a jurymen.

"What is your excuse?" asked the judge.

"I can't speak English," he replied.

"You have nothing to do with speaking," said the judge.

"But I can't understand good English."

"That's no excuse," said his honor. "I'm sure you are not likely to hear good English at this bar."

A Good Enigma.

I am composed of four letters.

My 1, 2, 3 is controlled ecclesiastically.
My 1, 2, 3, is the most extensive, most powerful, most beautiful object on earth.

My 2, 3, 4, is man's duty, whether successfully or not.

My 3, 1, 1, represents a praiseworthy, though much abused individual.

My 4, 2, 3, invigorates but does not intoxicate.

My 1, 3, 4, 2, is to get more than sufficient.

My 2, 3, 1, 2, is not to be bought for money.

My 2, 3, 1, 4, contained anciently the treasures of the world.

My 4, 2, 1, 4, generally makes known the truth.

My 1, 4, 3, 4, 2, is the pet of politicians.

My 4, 3, 1, 4, 2, appreciates beauty.

My 4, 2, 3, 1, 2, is calculated to annoy.

My 3, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, provokes oftentimes national commotions.

My 3, 4, 4, 2, 1, 4, is to affirm.

My 2, 1, 4, 3, 4, 2, is the most attractive point in a rich man.

My 3, 1, 1, 2, 4, 1, seems indispensable to a corporation.

My 1, 2, 4, 4, 2, 2, often sustains a dying man.

My 4, 3, 1, 1, 2, 1, is part of a knight's armor.

My 4, 2, 1, 4, 3, 4, 2, is a good quality in a man leaving this world.

My 4, 2, 4, 2, 3, 4, 2, 4, 2, is agreeable to two, but always spoiled by a third party.

My whole is an article of furniture.

ANSWER to Enigma in No. 4.—Rayard Taylor.

A Careful Charge.

A good story is told of Judge M—, presiding in one of the Supreme Court districts in Western New York:

An action was brought in his court for one thousand dollars for damages for assault and battery. The facts were that the defendant, while walking in the street with his wife on his arm, was rudely accosted by the plaintiff, whom he had in some way offended, and was called in loud and insulting terms an abominable epithet. On being thus addressed, the defendant left his wife and knocked down the plaintiff, who thereupon brought this action. The judge sympathized very strongly with the defendant, but, as the case was closely tried by the plaintiff's attorney, he knew that if there was a peg given the latter whereon to hang an exception to his charge, the clever lawyer would get a new trial. So, when the violence to the law had been duly expatiated upon, in the summing up, the judge arose and charged the jury as follows:

"Gentlemen of the jury, if the plaintiff had met me walking along the street with my wife on my arm, and had called me what it is not denied that he called the defendant, I should have knocked him down just as the defendant did.—But, gentlemen of the jury, that is not the law. You may take the case, gentlemen."

The jury gave the plaintiff six cents damages, without leaving their seats.

This ludicrous incident is told of a quick-witted Boston toper; "Going into a bar-room he called for something to drink, but was told that no liquor was sold, but he might have a glass if he would buy a cracker, the price of which was twelve cents. "Very well," said the Yankee, "hand down your decafter." This was accordingly done, and a strong draught taken, when, as he was about departing, the landlord handed him a box of crackers, and asked him if he didn't want one. "Well, no, I guess not," said the customer, "you sell 'em too dear. I can get lots on 'em five or six for a cent anywhere."

A waggish journalist, who is often merry over his personal plainness, tells this story on himself:

"I went to a chemist's the other day for a dose of morphine for a sick friend. The assistant objected to give it to me without a prescription, evidently fearing that I intended to commit suicide. "Pshaw!" said I, "do I look like a man who would kill himself?"

Gazing steadily at me a moment he replied, "I don't know. It seems to me if I looked like you, I should be greatly tempted to kill myself."

Sir John Herchell always maintained that the moon was a furnace—so hot a place that nothing could live under its torrid influence. Capt. John Ericsson declares that the moon's surface is one solid mass of ice. Thus it is, the learned men of each differ.

A verdant youth at Charles City, Iowa, sent seventy-five cents to New York, recently, for a method of writing without pen or ink. He received the following inscription, in large type, on a card: "Write with a led pencil."

Digby says it is true that "there is more pleasure in giving than receiving," but he also thinks it especially applies to medicine, kicks and advice.

HUNTING A MURDERER.

I WAS aroused one morning from a sound sleep by a quick and loud rap upon my door.

I had been on duty late into the morning and hence kept my bed later than usual. By the time my wife had reached my room I was up and half dressed. She told me that Inspector Startling, one of my brother detectives, wished to see me.

I hurried down, and found him pacing to and fro across the room in a state of considerable excitement.

"Ah, Goff, we've got some work on our hands," he cried, the moment he saw me. "There's been a murder—a strange one—by Newgate Market. And come along, and I will tell you as we go."

As soon as we gained the street, Startling resumed:

"Last evening one of the butcher's packed a box of meat to go off to-day, but this morning he changed his mind, and concluded to unpack it, as there was some doubt of the stuff keeping. When he removed the cover, he found the body of a man cut up and stowed snugly away in place of his meat, and the latter article was afterwards found in a neighboring cellar."

I asked if the butcher was not suspected.

"No," replied my companion. "We knew it could not have been he, for his time is all accounted for; and, besides, his character is above suspicion. No; some one who knew that the box was packed to go off this morning, must have taken advantage of the circumstance, and thus hoped to gain time to escape, or perhaps to have the blame upon another. It was an old man who was murdered, and it was evidently done for revenge."

"Why do you think so?" I asked.

"Because his watch and some money were found in his pocket."

We overtook a party of men at this juncture, and ere we had time to converse much more, we had reached Newgate.

The box was in a small office.

Our first object was to find if the remains could be identified, but in this we failed entirely.

The next day, news arrived that a human head had been found in a small pond in Epping. There might be a clue, and I was finally set upon the track. It was late in the morning when I started taking the saddle for my seat, and reaching Epping at midnight. I found the coroner, and with him examined the human head; it was the very one—I knew it by the grey hair, and the manner in which it had been cut off.

My next movement was to obtain a suit of laboring men's clothes, which my host procured of a fellow who was at work in a drain in his garden. I then made my own clothes up into a snug bundle, which I tied up in an old cotton handkerchief, and having swung it upon a stout oaken staff, I started off upon the Waltham Abbey road, and reached Hatfield at noon the next day.

It being near dinner time, I sat down, a few minutes, in a room fronting a street where there was a brick building in course of construction; the walls had been raised above the second story windows, and half a dozen men were engaged in carrying up brick and mortar for the masons. For some reason—I can not tell why—I watched these operations with great curiosity.

Finally I noticed one man, who often got in the way of others, and whose movements were strange and erratic. No one else might have seen this as I did, it arrested my attention in a moment.

Said I, "There's my man."

I sat and watched him for about ten minutes. I saw that when he set his hod down, he did so with a nervous jerk; and when he started off with the load upon his shoulder, he not only moved away too quickly, but he ascended the ladder with a speed unsuited to his work. No hod-carrier ever moved so before. I also observed that when any one approached, he started, and looked at them in a way any thing but natural.

I waited to see no more; but having thrown my bundle over my shoulder, and seen that the dirt had not been rubbed off my hands, I started out and walked up to "my man."

"Do you find work hard here?" I asked.

He started as though I had struck him.

"What do you want to know for?" he returned.

"Because, I am going to work here."

"Oh, well, the work isn't very bad," he said, looking relieved. "But where are you from?"

"From Epping."

He turned pale, and his hand quivered upon the hod.

"And, by the way," I added, "I saw a horrible sight there."

I waited for him to ask some question, but he only gazed into my face with a fixed stare, while his whole frame trembled, and his pail increased.

"It was in a pond," I said at length.

The man started back, while his face assumed a deathly hue, and his hod dropped from his hand.

"You look at me as though I did it," he gasped.

"I might as well suppose you knew something of the chopped-up man at Newgate market?"

The fellow continued to gaze into my face a moment; and then turned to flee. But I had watched for this, and my hand was upon his collar in an instant, and with the other I held a pistol to his head. At this moment the foreman came up.

"I have done my work," said I. Of course many questions were asked, which I answered as I thought proper. The man first begged me to shoot him, and then he began to declare his innocence in the most frantic terms. But I could not believe him. I took him to London and there soon found a full proof of his guilt.

One of the last acknowledgements he made was, that "the London detectives were a strange sort of men." And I told him that he was not the only criminal who thought so.

Going to Sea in a Coffin.

A Dutch Sailor, (a long time ago) forfeited his life on a Dutch man of war by the murder of an officer. The captain, being a humane man, told the poor fellow that if he had rather be left on a desert island, where they were about to land to bury the officer, he might go ashore, and thus save his neck from the gallows. The sailor readily assented to this. A party of marines and officers landed and buried the officer, leaving the sailor without a morsel of food, and with no prospects but starvation, as the island was barren. This poor sailor had struck the officer in a fit of passion, without malice, or intention of killing him; and he really was not a bad man at heart. In a few hours the vessel was out of sight! The poor fellow in bewailing his sad fate, bethought himself that it was better to be drowned than starved. As the sea was calm, he would construct a raft and commit himself to the mercy of the waves rather than stay there. He therefore travelled over the whole island, but could not find any wood of sufficient size to answer his purpose. A thought struck him. The coffin of the Dutch officer might be disinterred! It was a large and broad one for the dead officer was a fat man. The poor sailor therefore took up the body out of the coffin, and having well caulked it with his shirt, and made a kind of a rudder of the upper board of it, ventured himself; to sea in the coffin. It happened, fortunately for him, to be so great a calm that he did not upset, and soon he discovered that a ship lay as it were unmovable within a league and a half of the island. He was thus enabled to escape a painful and terrible death from starvation.

Anecdote of Macready.

In 1823 this actor was performing Hamlet at Birmingham. Walking home one night, he saw a small cottage in flames, surrounded by a crowd of sympathizing but frightened people. There came from the centre of the burning furnace one agonizing cry. Macready in a moment threw off his hat, coat, and waist-coat, sprang through the parlor-window lithe and agile as a harlequin; reappeared with an infant in his arms, restored it to its half-crazed mother, and darting through the crowd unknown, returned to his lodgings without his coat, which had been in a moment ruthlessly, snapped up. In vain a self-elected committee offered a reward for the brave man. A few days after, however, a thief was apprehended while offering for sale a handsome coat, in the sleeve of which was written the name of the well-known actor. The papers blazed abroad Macready's modesty and intrepidity, and thunders of applause greeted him whenever he appeared on the stage. His benefit shortly afterwards was a bumper; and in an anonymous letter came a bank note for ten pounds, as a small tribute to his humanity and courage. Macready instantly sought out the unfortunate couple who had lost their all in the flames, and presented them with the acceptable sum, saying modestly that he had only been the mean instrument in the hand of God, and promising to assist the rescued child in after years.