

A Bashful Man's Troubles.

"HANG it all, what can a poor fellow do?"

A handsome, good-natured fellow was Charley Winter, but so very bashful, that in the presence of the gentler sex he never could have told whether he was standing on his feet or on his head.

"O, dear, I wish I knew a way to tell my love, and not be there myself. Deuce take the girls! they bother you on purpose, I believe, and always manage so your courage oozes out of your fingers' ends before you are ready to ask the fatal question!"

"Why don't you write?" "Write! I shouldn't know a word to say; and then I'd never dare to look her in the face again."

"O, what a spoozy! Simply say you love her, and ask her if she will make you happy. Then face the music like a man, and meet her next time as if nothing had happened—unless she answers yes, and then of course you'll act as if something had happened."

Charley groaned despairingly. "Easy enough for you to talk," he muttered, dubiously. "You who have been married seven years—with me the case is different. I tell you, Tom, you don't know anything about it."

"Faint heart ne'er won fair lady," quoted Tom Ridgely, indignantly, as he arose to take his leave. "You who have been married seven years—with me the case is different. I tell you, Tom, you don't know anything about it."

Charley thought about it after he was gone. The more he thought the better pleased he was.

"It's terrible, but suppose I must!" he groaned, seating himself at his writing desk, and clutching wildly at paper pens and ink.

An hour of torture. Charley began a dozen billet-doux and tore them up, then wrote a dozen more, and tore them up also.

"It's utterly useless," he moaned at last; and then the great booby laid his head upon the desk and fairly sobbed.

"I'll write and ask her to go to the opera with me to-morrow night, any how, and then, perhaps,——" he dared to think no further.

"My dear—no, that never'll do—was ever a mortal so perplexed as I am? I wish the girls were all at the bottom of the ocean, and Eve had never been created. Well, I'll begin again."

This time he was successful. His note was short enough, and some young ladies might take umbrage at such an invitation, but Clarice knew his bashfulness. It read as follows, and was not dated at all:

"Will you be kind enough to honor me by the acceptance of my escort to the opera to-morrow eve?"

And that was all beside the signature. "Well, there," said Charley, as he got it done, "I promised sister Minnie I would write to her this week, so I will do it now, while my hand is in." And tossing the note one side, he soon began his letter.

"SISTER MINE!" (it read) "Yours of the 17th came to hand and I have meant to answer it before. The fact is, I am deep in love with a young lady—Clarice Wilmer, of whom you've heard speak, and am afraid she don't return it. You know that I am so confoundedly bashful that I dare't speak a word to her about it, and neither can I write. Sometimes I think I've got the necessary courage, but when I meet her it vanishes like dew before the sun, and I'm a bigger fool than ever. I know she thinks I'm a fool, but I can't help it—I'd rather face a battery of mitrailleuses, or any other engine of destruction, than a pretty woman any time, and Clarice is the fairest, sweetest, and most beautiful young lady I ever saw."

Here followed three whole pages of lover's rhapsody, interspersed with wailings of despair, and then the letter wound up thus:

"I've asked her to the opera to-morrow night, and if she goes 'tis possible that I may learn my fate."

"T'is o'clock—can it be possible?" cried Charley, glancing at the clock, and stuffing his letters into two envelopes, which he backed in awful haste. "The mail goes out in half an hour. I shall be late, as sure as fate."

And paying no heed to the rhyme, and little to the letters, he grasped his hat and started for the post-office.

Clarice smiled her brightest when Charley called for her the next night, he fancied there was mischief in her eyes, which was not quite all a fancy. At the opera she talked between the scenes in such a way that he was quite bewildered. He did not learn his fate and after he got home felt worse than ever.

Next day he got a letter from his sister.

"I am very sorry," wrote she, "but I could not well come on two hundred miles, simply to attend an opera. I suppose, however, the invitation was intended for another person, and it—"

"O Jove, I am undone!" said Charley, dropping the missive to the floor, and breaking out in a cold perspiration. "I sent the letters wrong, and now I have done it brown. What will Clarice think of me?"

Driven to desperation at last, he plucked up courage and hurried to Clarice's residence.

"Is Miss Wilmer in?" asked the servant who answered the bell.

"Yes," and he speedily found himself in the parlor, and face to face with his innamorata.

"I—I—did you receive—a note from me the other day, Miss Clarice?" he stammered, wishing the floor would give way and precipitate him into the cellar.

"Ah! Yes—I ask your pardon Miss Wilmer, for the inadvertency. I meant I—"

"Oh, you need not apologize, Mr. Winter. I rather like it, I assure you. You did not try your fate at the opera, though. Why didn't you?"

How mischievous her eyes were sparkling! A faint crimson dyed her cheek, and, altogether, Charley looking at her slyly, thought he never saw her look so pretty.

"But the annoyance—" "It wasn't annoyance. I was pleased." Charley's heart thrilled suddenly with hope. He took one step forward.

"You say that it was no annoyance.—Dare I believe you care for me?" "The faint glow deepened suddenly.—" "You may," she said.

If Charley's friend, Tom Ridgely, had dropped in five minutes later, he would have thought Charley's bashfulness was all a sham. It never troubled him again.

Operations of a New York Thief.

At eleven o'clock on Monday morning, a clerical-looking gentleman mounted the stoop of the brown-stone mansion, which is kept as a first-class boarding house by Mrs. Hill, at 261 West Fourteenth street, and rang the bell. He is about thirty years of age, of medium height, and slender build. His clothes were black, and were made long and square. They were ornamented with long rows of little black buttons reaching to his shirt-collar, which was straight and stiff, and bound around with a narrow black silk neck-tie.

When the colored servant-girl appeared at the door, the gentleman asked to see Mrs. Hill. He placed his hat on the rack in the hall, and was shown into the magnificently furnished parlor, where he took his seat on a luxuriant divan. At this moment Mrs. Hill entered. The clerical gentleman arose, and with the politest of bows, introduced himself as the Rev. Dr. Melville, a Roman Catholic priest, who would like to secure a room and temporary board. He referred to the Rev. Dr. Leou of Westchester county. Mrs. Hill thought that too far away, and he suggested that she might call upon the Rev. Father Hecker, in Fifty-ninth street.—Father Hecker had known him intimately in Rome, and was acquainted with his family—in fact knew all about him. He was shown to a room, and it pleased him. He was boarding in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and would drop round there and order his baggage, which would arrive within an hour. With another polite bow he took his hat and walked out.

He strolled down Fourteenth street in the direction of Broadway, down which he turned, entering Adams & Co's jewelry establishment. He proposed to buy two gold watches. An assortment was shown him. Their merits were discussed, and he selected two, valued at \$247, ordering them to be sent to 251 West Fourteenth street, to the Rev. Dr. Melville. He then retraced his steps to Mrs. Hill's. The lady meanwhile had been making preparations to visit Father Hecker to ascertain the truth of the Rev. Dr. Melville's story; but she was not ready when he returned. He walked into the front parlor and took up his position before the windows, looking out into the street. Mrs. Hill requested him to be seated, and he thanked her and complied. She had a slight suspicion of his honesty; so she instructed her servant to keep a watch on him. The told the doctor his room would not be ready until evening, and he answered that that would do.—He would not take the hint to go out, so she started for Fifty-ninth street.

He had hardly seated himself when the bell rang, and a young gentleman inquired for the Rev. Dr. Melville. The young gentleman is an employee of Adams & Co., and held in his hand a neat paper box containing the two gold watches which the Rev. Dr. had selected. He was shown into the parlor, and walking up to his Reverence delivered the parcel.

"I declare I have forgotten the bill," he said.

"Oh, never mind. You can leave the watches here, and run round to the store and get it," said Dr. Melville. "It won't take you but a few minutes."

The young gentleman was on the point of complying, when another employee of Adams & Co. arrived in breathless haste with the bill.

"Sorry for your trouble," said Dr. Melville, as he drew a blank check on the bank of America.

"Here Mary!" (to the servant.) "Mary! pen and ink if you please!"

The Reverend Doctor filled up the check for \$247. He then signed his name and handed it to clerk No. 2, in payment for the watches. That gentleman received it with suspicion.

"But I don't know anything about this check," said he. "How can I tell whether it is good or not?"

"Sir?" answered the indignant clergyman, "What do you mean, sir? Not good! You are crazy, sir. It is good as gold, sir. I am the Reverend Doctor Melville, a Roman Catholic priest, sir. Send to the Reverend Father Hecker of the Caulist Church in Fifty-ninth street, and he will tell you who I am, sir."

"That's too far to go," quietly responded the clerk. "I can't take the check unless I know it to be good."

"Well, then, sir, send it round to the bank. It will take only a few minutes, sir. Here, young man, go to the bank with this, and see whether it is good or not."

One of the clerks accordingly departed on his mission to the bank, while the other remained to watch Dr. Melville, who all the time retained possession of the box containing the time pieces.

The Reverend gentleman's indignation at the clerk's imputation upon his honesty was something extreme. He fretted and fumed, and unable to contain himself in his seat any longer, arose to his feet, and began pacing the parlor, muttering to himself all the time. Happening to pass by the door once, and finding it in his way, he impatiently slammed it too. The frosecoing of one corner of the ceiling in the back parlor had been damaged by an overflow of water in the upper part of the building. Casting his eyes in that direction, he suddenly stopped.

"Why, what's this?" he exclaimed. "The frosecoing ruined? Mary!" He stepped up to the silver bell on the centre table, rang it energetically. Mary appeared. "Mary, what's the matter with the ceiling? It's ruined completely," he said. "Mary unsuspectingly answered that the water had come through. "The water? And you never told me of it before? This must be fixed at once. You can go." And poor Mary, bewildered, quit the room.

The clerk felt sorry that he had suspected the Reverend Doctor; he now believed him to be the owner of the house and became fully convinced that the check would turn out all right.

Dr. Melville next took a look at the piano. He thumbed upon its keys. "They've even let the piano get out of tune," he said. "These things must be attended to immediately. No time like the present, sir. I'll just call my man and get him to work at them at once.—Charles!" he shouted. No answer. He advanced to back parlor door and pulled it open. Charles!" he called again. Still no answer. "Charles!" he fairly yelled, stepping out quickly into the hall-way at the same time. He waited not for answer now, but with lengthened strides he made for that front door on tiptoe, seized his hat, and walked rapidly up Fourteenth street, with the box containing the watches still in his hand. The astounded maid servant saw him go. She rushed into the parlor, and informed the clerk.—"Where? Which way did he go?" asked that gentleman mechanically, but he had so utterly lost his presence of mind at the audacity of the scoundrel, that he was unable for a few minutes to stir a foot in pursuit. Who he did rush forth, the Rev. Dr. Melville had disappeared, and hasn't been seen since. Neither have the watches.

A Game of Cards for a Wife.

In the State of Illinois there is a certain village boasting of a tavern, three stores and four groceries, where from morning till night and from night till dawn, a person may find in the tavern, stores, and groceries aforesaid, one or more groups of persons playing cards—gambling there is reduced to a science—and from the schoolboy to the veteran—and from the Miss in her teens to the mother of a large family—they are all initiated into the mysteries of high, low, jack, game, right and left bowers, the honors and all tricks. One of the best players in the village was Maj. Smith, the tavern keeper, or as he expressed it, the proprietor of the hotel—a widower, who like

—Jethro, Judge of Israel, Had a daughter, passing fair.

Fanny, the daughter, was one of the prettiest girls in the village.—The sweetheart of Fanny was a young farmer residing in the neighborhood, whom we shall designate by the name of Bob.

It happened that one day before harvest, the young man was detained in the village, and night found him as usual at the hotel, seated between the Major and his daughter. After a desultory conversation between the two gentlemen on the state of the weather, the prospects of the approaching harvest, the important staples of conversation, the Major asked Bob how his wheat crop promised to yield. In reply he was told that the young farmer expected to have at least 500 bushels.

The Major appeared to study for a moment, and then abruptly proposed a game of "old sledge," or "seven up," the stake to be his daughter Fanny against the crop of wheat.

This, of course, the young man indignantly refused, because he could not bear the idea that the hand of her he loved should be made a bet, or that he should win a wife by gambling for her, and perhaps, because he knew how hard the old man was to beat, and there was a strong probability of losing both wheat and wife.

It was not until the Major, with his usual obstinacy, had sworn that unless he won her he should never have her, that the young man was forced reluctantly to consent to play.

"The table was placed, candles lit, the cards produced, and the players took their places, with Fanny between them watching the game. The cards were regularly cut, and it fell to the Major's lot to deal. The first hand was played, and Bob made jack to his opponent's high low game. Bob dealt, the Major again made three to his opponent's one.

"Six to two," said Miss Fanny, with a sigh.

The Major, as he dealt the cards, winked knowingly and said.

"I'm good for the wheat, Master Bob." The old man turned up a trump.

It was a spade. Fanny glanced at her father's hand—her heart sank; he held the trey, eight spot and king. She then looked at Robert's hand, and lo, he had the ace, queen, deuce, and jack or knave. She whispered to beg—he did so.

"Take it said the Major."

Robert led the deuce, which the old man took with the trey; he then followed by playing the king, Bob putting his queen upon it, the Major supposing it to be the young man's trump, leaned over the table, and tapping on the last trick with his finger, said:

"That's as good as wheat."

"Is it?" said Bob, as he displayed to the astonished Major the ace and jack in his hands.

"High, low, jack, gift, and game," cried Bob.

"Out!" ejaculated Fanny.

"Good as wheat!" added Bob, as he flung his arms around her neck and kissed her.

In due time they were married. Ever after that, when anything occurred of a pleasant nature to the happy couple, they would express their emphatic approbation of it by the phrase—"Good as wheat."

SUNDAY READING.

The Apple in the Bottle.

On the mantelpiece of my grandmother's best parlor, among other marvels, was an apple in a phial. It quite filled up the body of the bottle, and my childish wonderment constantly was, "How could it have got there?" By stealth I climbed a chair to see if the bottom would unscrew, or if there had been a joint in the glass throughout the length of the phial. I was satisfied by careful observation that neither of these theories could be supported, and the apple remained to me an enigma and mystery. One day walking in the garden, I saw it all. There on a tree, was a phial tied, and within it a tiny apple which was growing within the crystal. The apple was put into the bottle while it was little, and it grew there. Just so we must catch the little men and women who swarm our streets—we call them boys and girls—and introduce them within the influence of the church; for alas! it is hard indeed to reach them when they have ripened into carelessness and sin.

God's Deer.

A correspondent of Zion's Herald tells the following story, as told to him by an early settler in Northern New York:

When our settlement commenced, we had to live mostly by fishing and hunting. Our guns were usually kept loaded and ready for use. On Sunday morning, opening my door, there was a deer near by, and stepping back, I took down my gun.

Before I got to the door, something whispered, "It is the Sabbath," but this was followed by "It is a Godsend." I paused, and inwardly said, "No. He would send on a week day," and hung my gun. At the evening prayer we thanked God that He enabled us to endure the test. Notice, on Monday morning, when I opened my door, there stood a fine deer. I used my gun and killed the deer, and added, "God's deer is far larger, better, than the Devil sent." Brethren, let us trust the Lord.

Little by Little.

A poor woman had a supply of coals laid at her door by a charitable neighbor. A very little girl came out with a fire shovel and began to take a shovelful at a time, and carry it to a sort of bin in the collar. I said: "Do you expect to get all that coal in with your little shovel?" She was quite confused with my question but her answer was striking. "Yes, sir, if I work long enough." Humble worker, make up for your want of ability by abundant continuance in well-doing, and your life-work will not be trival. The repetition of small efforts will effect more than the occasional use of great talents. —Spurgeon.

A Boston minister says he once preached on "The Recognition of Friends in the Future," and was told after service, by a hearer, that it would be more to the point to preach about the recognition of friends here, as he had been in the church twenty years and didn't know any of its members.

An angry word spoken to a friend is like the poison-tipped arrow used by the savages in war, sometimes. You may extract the arrow, but its virus will work in the blood; you may recall the word, but its memory will forever remain—a regret, if not a sting.



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