

He found a sheltered nook by one of the paddle boxes, and here Mrs. Hartfield sat comfortably wrapped in shawls and railway rugs, and amused by her fellow-traveler's conversation.

"I thought the steamer crossed in an hour and a half," said she; but we have surely been more than two hours on board."

"O, dear no, I think not. There's a good deal of wind to-night, however; so I dare say they will be a little longer than usual."

Mrs. Hartfield questioned him about the time more than once after this, but he was unable to give her any definite answer.

It is all right, he said vaguely, and his spirits mounted as the boat plunged gaily through the water.

With the first gleam of morning they neared the shore. Their luggage was ready for landing among the first, only a couple of carpetbags and a portmanteau which was pounced upon by officials, and borne off to a building in the distance.

Mr. Comberford led Alice up the steps and put her at once into a fly that boomed daskily upon them in the chilly atmosphere. He came back to her presently with the luggage and seated himself by her side; but before he could rejoice her she had asked the driver the name of the place, and he had told her that she was in Ostend.

She looked at Edward Comberford with a face full of horror.

"What a wretched mistake!" she said; "we have come by the wrong steamer! Why did you not tell me the truth on board? But, of course, we can go on from here to Paris. It is only the loss of time that annoys me."

"My darling Alice, you are as innocent as a baby," exclaimed Mr. Comberford, with a triumphant smile. "We are no more going to Paris than we are to the moon. All stratagems are fair in love and war. George Hartfield is as well as ever he was in his life, and the little note you so implicitly believed in was only a specimen of imitative penmanship by your humble servant. I wanted to get away from that dreary old town without esclandre, my love. We are bound for the sunny Rhine and, there to forget that there is such a place as Norbury or such a person as George Hartfield."

"And you think that I will go with you?"

"My dearest, I do not think you so foolish as to resist your fate. The Rubicon is passed, and return utterly impossible. We gave your husband's old clerk the slip at Dover. He will be in Paris at seven o'clock, with the story of your journey, which will at once be set down as an elopement."

"I am not so weak or so wicked as you think," cried Alice snatching her hand indignantly away from his grasp. "Foolish and guilty as I have been in listening to you, I am not so base as to bring dishonor on my husband's name. You must take me on to Paris, Mr. Comberford, or I must go alone."

"Impossible!"

"Where are we going now?" "To a hotel. I must get you some breakfast. There is no train for Paris till seven; there is one for Cologne at the same hour, and it is by that we are to travel."

Alice looked at him in despair. Whatever love she had felt for him died a sudden death in this moment of agony. How gladly she would have welcomed her husband's honest face! How bitterly she reproached herself for the neglect of the old clerk's warning.

"He was my truest friend," she thought—"and I refused to listen to him."

They were at the door of a hotel by this time, and while the driver was ringing a second fly drove up, and an old man alighted. It was Mr. Morgan, the clerk.

Alice gave a cry of delight, and called him to the door of the vehicle. "There has been a mistake," she said; "Mr. Comberford brought me by the wrong boat. But, thank Heaven, you came the same way. You can take me on to Paris."

"Or back to Norbury, whichever you prefer, madam," answered the old clerk, respectfully. Mr. Comberford has an unfortunate habit of making mistakes.—This is not the first time he has signed another man's name by mistake. There was an awkward business about a forged accommodation bill some four years ago, which induced Mr. Comberford to cross the Atlantic.

"What do you mean sir?" cried the younger man, indignantly.

"I mean that there is no one in the world who knows you better than Bessie Raynor's uncle," answered William Morgan. "I never set eyes on your false face till you came into my office; but I have heard your history from the lips of a woman who loved you, and who would fain have made the best of it. You have not changed for the better since your days of poverty, and you have not taken the trouble to ascertain what became of the girl who shared your hardships and disgrace. She is living with me, sir, three miles from Norbury, where you are

now so grand a gentleman. I told this lady to beware of you, but she was too confiding to doubt you. I think, however, you have thrown off the mask too soon."

"Don't lecture me, sir. The lady must decide between us. Whatever wrong I have done, has been done for her sake. I had reason to think she loved me."

This was said with a tone of bitter reproach, and then the young man stood awaiting his fate with a moody countenance.

"I think I had better take you on to Paris, Mrs. Hartfield," said the clerk.—"It would set Norbury folks talking if we went straight home. You can tell your husband the whole truth, and he can settle the score with this gentleman."

"I am going straight on to Germany," said Mr. Comberford. "If Hartfield wants me, he must follow me there."

He walked into the hotel, the door of which had just been opened by a sleepy-looking waiter, leaving Alice under the care of the old clerk. She went on to Paris with him, and there made the best story she could to her husband, humbly confessing her own shortcomings.

"I suppose I must have flirted with him a little, George," she said shyly, "or he would never have done such a wild, wicked thing."

And this confession had a very good effect upon George Hartfield, who felt that he had been wanting in due care and consideration for his pretty young wife. He withdrew himself from the club at the Crown, left off billiards and took to rowing Alice on the river in the summer evenings, and reading to her or playing chess with her in the winter. He did not follow Mr. Comberford to Germany, but contented himself by writing a formal letter, relinquishing the conduct of that gentleman's affairs.

Mr. Comberford came back to the Hall three years afterward, with an aristocratic, but by no means agreeable wife. Before returning he took steps to settle a modest annuity upon Mr. Morgan's niece, Bessie Raynor, an annuity which was accepted by the young woman, but the quarterly payments of which were carefully banked against that rainy day when William Morgan should be no more. The old man scorned to touch a penny of Edgar Comberford's money.

A Mean Man.

WE have heard of many mean transactions in the way of close bargaining and shaving, but we don't remember to have met anything closer or smaller in that line than the following:

Paran Judkins was a justice in a western district—a grasping, miserly, close-fisted, flinty-hearted man, who had grown old and gray in money-making. One day he hired a poor man to come and do some work about his house. Upon removing his coat preparatory to setting to work, the laborer's pipe slipped out upon the ground, and old Judkins saw it, and picked it up. After working awhile the man thought he would smoke, but upon looking for his pipe it was not to be found. Judkins came out while he was searching, and asked him what he had lost.

"I've lost my pipe," said the man. "Is this it?" asked Judkins, holding up the pipe.

The man said was, and reached out his hand to take it.

"Hold!" said Judkins. "It is a small thing, I know; but since I am a justice, we may as well proceed legally. In order to make a proper avowal of ownership you must be sworn. Hold up your hand."

The man held up his hand, and Judkins administered the oath, after which, the laborer still persisting in his ownership, the pipe was surrendered.

When the job for which the poor fellow had been engaged was done, he came for his pay. He had worked half a day, and wanted fifty cents.

"All right," said Judkins. "You owe me half a dollar, so we are just square."

"I—I—owe you, 'Squire?"

"Yes. The law allows me half a dollar for administering the oath? Don't you see?"

The poor man saw to his sorrow; for upon that basis Judkins forced the settlement.

A Puzzle.

Three jealous husbands, A, B, and C, with their wives, being ready to pass by night over a river, find at the water-side a boat which can carry but two at a time, and for want of a waterman they are compelled to row themselves over the river several times. The question is, how those six persons shall pass, two at a time, so that none of the three wives may be found in the company of one or two men unless her husband be present.

This may be effected in two or three ways; the following may be as good as any: Let A and wife go over; let A return; let B's and C's wives go over; A's wife returns; B and C go over; B and wife return, and A and B go over; C's wife returns, and A's and B's wives go over; then C comes back for his wife.—Simple as this question may appear, it is found in the works of ALCIBADES, who flourished a thousand years ago, hundreds of years before the art of printing was invented.

Couldn't See the Joke.

TWO sprightly and beautiful young ladies of Louisville were lately visiting their cousin, another sprightly and beautiful lady, who, like her guests was of that happy age which turns everything into fun and merriment. If the truth were told, those three misses were just a little bit fast. They were fond of playing practical jokes, and were continually playing all sorts of pranks with each other. All three occupied a room on the ground floor and slept in one bed. Two of the young ladies attended a party on the evening in question, and did not get home until half-past twelve o'clock. They had concluded not to disturb the household, and quietly stepped into their room through the low, open window. In about half an hour after they had left for the party, a young Methodist minister called at the house where they were staying and craved for a night's lodging, which of course, was granted. As ministers always have the best of everything, the old lady put him to sleep in the best room, and the young lady (Fannie) who had not gone to the party, was intrusted with the duty of setting up for the absent ones and informing them of the change of rooms. She took her post in the parlor, and as the night was sultry, sleep overcame her, and she departed on an excursion to the land of dreams.

We will now return to the young ladies who had gone to the room through the window. By the dim light of the moonbeams, as they struggled through the curtains, they were enabled to descry the outlines of Fannie (as they supposed), encoined in the middle of the bed.—They saw more too—with a pair of boots. They saw it all. Fannie had set the boots in the room to give them a good scare.—They put their heads together and determined to turn the tables on her. Silently they disrobed, and stealthily as cats, they took up their position on each side of the bed. At a given signal they both jumped in, one on each side of the unconscious parson, laughing and screaming. "Oh, what a man! They gave the poor bewildered minister such a hugging as few persons are able to brag of in the course of a lifetime. The noise of the proceeding awoke the old lady, who was sleeping in an adjoining room. She comprehended the situation in a moment, and rushing to the room, she exclaimed: "Gracious, it is a man! It is a man! sure enough. There was a prolonged consolidated scream, a flash of muslin, and all over. The best of the joke is that the minister took the whole thing in earnest. He would listen to no apologies the old lady could make for the girls. He would bear no excuse, but solemnly folded his clerical robes about him and silently stole away.

Snyder's Trick.

Peter Snyder had drunk himself out of mill house and home—there were no homestead laws in Virginia at that time. It was consequently often hard for Snyder to "make a raise" to get a drink, and many and ingenious were the expedients to which he resorted for the purpose of filling the inner man with whiskey. On one occasion he perpetrated the following ruse:

On a hot day in August, Peter and his "drouthy crony," Abram Fulwiler, were lying down in the shade of a locust on the banks of Purgatory creek. Said Peter to Abram, "is you dry?" "Yes, Peter, very dry." "Well, Abram, I'll get some whisky from Cartmill's grocery." "De mischief you will!—where's your money?" "You let me alone—I'll manage dat."

So he went off, got two bottles, and filled one of them with water. Then he returned, found Abram waiting, and showing the latter the empty bottle, said he "knew how to fill it." He put the bottle of water in one pocket and the empty one in the other. The twain then started for the grocery.

Arrived there, Peter placed the empty bottle on the counter, where it was soon filled with the ardent, which the old toper stowed in one of his pockets and was retiring, when the storekeeper bawled out: "Stop there, Peter pay me for your whisky." "Isn't my credit good for a quart?" indignantly replied the latter. "No," answered the former; "leave the money or the liquor." "Well," rejoined Peter, "take your whisky,"—and placing the bottle of water on the counter, he strutted out in fury with the bottle of whisky in his pocket.

About half an hour afterwards the storekeeper smelt the bottle, found it filled with water, and rushed out after Snyder but he found him and Fulwiler both gloriously drunk on the banks of Purgatory creek.

Professor Porson, a short time before his death, was in a mixed company among which were many distinguished literary characters. One of the number, a person of some celebrity, had a very high opinion of his own talents; and when the conversation turned on some of his productions, as usual he began to extol their merits.

"I will tell you, sir," said Mr. Porson "what I think of your poetical works. They will be read when Shakespeare's and Milton's are forgotten" (every eye was instantly turned on the professor), "but not until then!"

A Laughable Incident.

THE train from Mobile to Jackson recently brought up a lot of oysters which was something never before seen by some darkeys present, who began to examine them with great astonishment.

"What he mouf?" exclaimed one of the most inquisitive. "How um eat, eh? Golly! I tinks um nuffin 'cept a bone.—Yah! yah!" he continued, laughing at his own wit. "I 'spec' some white man tink nigger a fool when he call dat ting ister."

Just then he discovered an oyster slightly open, and seizing it he eyed it closely. Not satisfied with this examination, he placed it to his nose; but no sooner was that organ inserted between the shells than they closed, when darkey howled with pain, and called out: "Pull um off! pull um off!"

But the more the oyster was pulled, the more it would not let go; and, as poor Cuffee danced and yelled, his frantic efforts to rid himself of his uncomfortable nasal ornament were both ludicrous and painful.

"Hit um wid a stick," said a buxom wench; and in a moment the oyster was knocked right and left with a hearty will, but Cuffee's head went with it.

"Pinch he tail," cried a little nig, "and he sure let go."

But there was no tail to pinch, and poor Cuffee seemed doomed to wear the oyster forever. At this moment an "intelligent contraband" whipped out a knife, and it soon severed the oyster. Cuffee looked at the shells with amazement, and finding the oyster toothless, threw it away, with the remark: "Um got no toef, but he gum it powerful!"

The Lasso.

This is a favorite weapon with the rangers of the prairie in South America, who handle it with singular dexterity. In the early days of the Paraguayan war a company of Southern Brazilians captured one of the enemy's steamboats with lassos! They concealed themselves in the matts, or thick bushes, on the bank of the river, where they knew the vessel must come close to the shore, and when it was within their reach, a party of them threw ropes around the figure-head and every available projection; while the others with their firearms, drove the Paraguayans from making any resistance, till the lasso party hauled the prize to the land, and the Brazilians took possession of it. Another singular weapon of these rangers is a lasso of a different kind from those generally known by the name—one having three leaden balls or other heavy material attached to the main cord by three lesser thongs. One of the balls they grasp in the hand, and swing the other two a few times over the head to give them velocity and aim, and then sling them with such force and precision that they wrap around the legs of any animal they are pursuing, in such a manner as to hamper it, till they come alongside. In the Spanish South American countries men are frequently garroted in this manner, with a facility that is truly marvelous.

Half Price.

A young rustic in Albany, named Knox, saw a placard, "Linen Drilling at Half Price," before a dry good store, went in and purchased ten yards, the price being stated by the clerk to be fifty cents per yard. Taking the parcel, he handed the clerk two dollars and a half.

Clerk—"How is this, my friend? You have not given me enough." Knox—"How in thunder do you make that out; didn't you mention that the price of these goods was only fifty cents a yard?"

Clerk—"To be sure I did; and you asked for ten yards at that price, so that your bill is five dollars."

Knox—"I'll bet that my bill ain't five dollars. Look at the sign board, young man; don't it say 'Linen Drilling at Half Price?' You said the price of this 'ere piece I chose was fifty cents a yard; half of fifty is twenty-five, and ten times twenty-five is two fifty. Stranger, you can't climb me, I've traveled!"

The proprietor was called, but the rustic could not be argued out of his arithmetic, and rather than have a "scene," the loss was put up with, and the young man allowed to travel with his bargain; which suggests the fact that people who keep shop should be careful what contract they advertise for the acceptance of the public.

A Queer Blunder.

A suburban friend, blest with eleven children, and being a very domestic man and very fond of them, told this story: One afternoon business being very dull, he took the early train out to his happy home, and went up stairs to put the children to bed. Being missed from the smoking-room his wife went up stairs to see what was going on; upon opening the door she exclaimed—"why, dear, what for mercy's sake are you doing?" "Why," says he, "wifey, I am putting the children to bed, and hearing them say their little prayers." "Yes," says wifey, "but this is not one of ours." Sure enough he had got one of the neighbor's children all undressed, and he had to redress it and send it home. After that he calls the roll every morning and night.



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