

A CURIOUS ADVENTURE.

SOME years ago I took my seat in the diligence from Marseilles to F—.

There were five passengers in all. Of these one was a short, fat man, with smooth cheeks and red face.

There was no doubt he was a rich man, and that I, at all events, might have no doubt of it, he informed me that his income exceeded fifty thousand francs a year.

I was partly amused and partly disgusted by his loquacity. Why he should make a confidant of me in particular I don't know.

"Where do you get out?" I inquired. "At F—," said he.

"But why do you go so far from Marseilles for a holiday?" I asked.

"Monsieur," he answered, "I am going to get married."

"The deuce!" I exclaimed, laughing, "and do you call that taking a holiday?"

"Why," said he, "that would depend. If I were going to marry an ugly woman, now I should call this tour by another name.

"I'll make you any bet you like you don't make me march off!" exclaimed the other pulling his moustache; and I'll further bet you anything you like that I make you take the road back to Paris, and that, too, without any delay."

The little man, whose face was now a deep crimson with rage, blurted out: "You won't find that a very easy matter, for I came here to get married."

"One hundred napoleons you do not marry,"

"Sir you are an impudent scoundrel, and I will pull your nose."

"I'll make you any bet you like, you see!"

The little man stamped with rage. He glared around him for some minutes in silence, then exclaimed:

"Do you want me to shoot you?"

"I'll bet you don't shoot me."

"Where can we procure pistols?" exclaimed the red-faced man, breathing short.

"The landlord will accommodate us," answered the other.

He hurried into the house and re-appeared with a box containing a brace of pistols.

I had hitherto treated the affair as a joke, laughing in my sleeve at the red-faced man's rage, and the other's cool insolence. But I thought it was now time to interpose.

"Gentlemen," I began.

But the moustached man turned upon me with a frown.

"I believe this gentleman to be a coward, sir," said he, "and if you interfere, I shall conclude you are conspiring to prevent him from proving himself a coward."

I said no more, but followed the two men to a lonely spot in the park, when the cigar hero was willing to become his second.

Having loaded the pistols, we placed the men. It was agreed that I should give the signal, which was to throw a five franc piece in the air.

My position was a peculiarly disagreeable one. Up to the last moment I had believed that the whole business was only a rather cruel practical joke on the part of the man with the moustache, and as my curiosity was excited to follow this adventure to its conclusion. I had volunteered to be the red-faced man's second; but it seemed now that one or the other, or both must be killed.

"Sir," said the man with the cigar, turning to me, "I believe Master Jacques to be an honest man, but though I can vouch for his wine, I can't vouch for his pistols. Before the gentleman and I make a target of one another, be so good as to throw that five-france piece in the air to see how my pistol carries."

I did as he desired, and tossed the money about seven yards high.

I heard the report of a pistol, and the piece of money fell indented.

"Bet," said the man with the moustache "that I pierce that leaf vibrating at the extremity of yonder bough."

And before the other could answer, the trigger was pulled and the leaf was pierced.

"Bet," continued the man with the most ridiculous coolness, "that I shoot you clean through the pupil of the left eye, and lay you dead, and that you miss me."

The other was white as a ghost.

"I believe you," he said; trembling from head to foot, and throwing his pistol down.

"I guess your motives and admire your stratagem, and as I am not yet prepared to die, shall take the road back again to Marseilles."

In fact we saw him deposit himself in the imperiale of the diligence.

I turned to the moustached man for explanation.

He asked me to take a glass of wine with him in the traveler's room, and with great good humor proceeded to solve the enigma.

He was a friend of the young lieutenant, and famous as the most deadly shot in France. He had received a letter only the day before from his friend, begging him to come back to F—, and help him to carry out a ruse which he trusted would enable him to marry the girl he was passionately in love with.

The moustached gentleman complied, left, Paris, and reached F— in time to receive from his friend's lips particulars of the stratagem he and the young girl had concerted between them.

The stratagem was perfectly successful. The little red-faced man as I afterwards heard, on his reaching Marseilles, wrote to the father of his intended bride, apologizing for not having been able to go down to them. You may believe he took good care not to inform the father of the real reason that had prevented him from paying his duties to his betrothed.

The red-faced man, however, had no intention of breaking off his marriage, until he was accosted one morning in the streets of Marseilles by the moustached gentleman, who asked if he still persisted in his intention to marry the young lady.

"Certainly," was the reply.

"Then," said the other, "if you want to reach her hand, you will have to mount, first, on my dead body, and secondly, on the dead body of the lieutenant. Are you prepared to scale these fortresses?"

"Certainly not."

"Then go home; write to the lady's father that circumstances compel you to abandon your promise to wed her. I shall know by the day after to-morrow if that letter has been written. If yes, I will be your friend, and help you, as I have helped the lieutenant, in any honorable love scheme you may choose to enter upon, if no, be prepared to meet me in the evening."

The letter was written, and six months after the young lady was married to the lieutenant.

garments and then taking his horse sent him back to camp, afoot through the cold night air, having to pass over stony roads and wade through brooks. At a late hour he arrived in camp, almost exhausted from the fatigue and exposure. He was quickly wrapped in blankets and a hot whisky punch ordered. It was some time before he could explain the cause of his ludicrous appearance. He puffed and blew like a porpoise, and declared that but for his bravery, which the enemy respected, they would have murdered him. On the following day he entered Col. Jordan's tent and with a sorrowful face told him his troubles, and, of course received no sympathy. He began to make preparations for returning East and reporting himself as a prisoner at Richmond. He was allowed to remain in blissful ignorance of the trick played on him for several days, when his garments were returned to him and the plot exposed. A madder man never was seen than Surgeon Moore. He threatened all manner of vengeance and intimated that he would prefer charges against all engaged in the plot.— But as he violated orders in leaving camp at night, he thought better of the matter and pocketed his wrath. The telegraph operator at Whiteside, hearing of Surgeon Moore's capture, and, not understanding the joke, telegraphed the same to Gen. Thomas, then in Nashville, organizing an army in anticipation of Hood's last desperate and disastrous movement.

Of course back came a dispatch from the General to Colonel Jordan demanding an explanation of the matter, and, not in pleasant words, asking how it was that with his force of men rebel cavalry was permitted to dash into the vicinity of his camp and surprise and capture his Surgeon at night. An explanation was returned and in a few days the regiment left Whiteside and proceeding to Marietta, Ga., joined Kilpatrick's cavalry and with Sherman "marched down to the sea," and nothing more was heard from General Thomas in reference to the surprise and capture.

The lesson had its desired effect, for Surgeon Moore never was known to call on a lady during the balance of his life.

Many a drink of whiskey was presented by Moore to the officers thereafter by the latter nearly mentioning his capture. The subject was always quickly changed and the whiskey produced.

Poor fellow, he is dead now and our laughter will not disturb him.

John's Luck.

John, the fool of the New York Sun, was made rich in spite of himself at Long Branch, and this is the way it was done:

"Just as I was the hungriest, Longfellow and Henry Bassett were brought out, and they went around the corner like two Colt's revolvers. All the nice young men around me stood up and bowed and scraped and held up their one finger as if they were stopping an omnibus. They all yelled 'a hundred to eighty on Harry Bassett.' They all appeared to be so very polite that I held up my finger too, and nodded and bowed back to all of them. I never saw such a polite lot of young men before. You would have thought I was the Grand Duke of Alexis. I kept up the bowing just as long as they did, and pretty soon the race was over, and I confess I was agreeably surprised to see about four hundred young men file up and each one chuck a \$100 bill in my lap. Then I thought that lot of young men just about the nicest lot of chaps I had ever met. There I sat with \$10,000 in my lap, and much to my astonishment, I found out that all the time I was pointing my finger and bowing back to 'em, darned if I wasn't taking every darned bet that was made, and darned if I knew it. I only had eight dollars in my pocket, and if I had lost I'd slept in an oyster-bed that night, sure."

An Irishman who was known to have wholesome dread of the infernal fire, was taken by some of his friends, while intoxicated to the glass-house, where they left him until about midnight to sleep off the liquor. The foreman at that time happened to spy him sleeping in the corner, and thinking he was one of the workmen, he walked over to him and waking him up asked what he had worked at. Patrick, having been waked up so suddenly, and seeing the lights of the fires in full blast, thought he was in hell, and replied to the foreman: "Howly mother of Moses, it's in limbo I am at last; well, Mr. Devil, I need to work at the shoemaking in the other world, but as long as you have me here you can put me at what you like."

Mrs. McKenny, the young married woman who shot and killed A. M. Cummings at Petaluma, Cal., for slandering her, has been bailed in \$20,000.

A Jones county, Georgia, gentleman went hunting last week and caught a bird with only one leg, and not even the stump of another. Evidently a freak of nature.

Indolence is to the mind like moss to a tree; it bindeth it up so as to stop its growth.

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