

Two Deacon's in a Fix.

"DEACON TARBOX, I'm a virtuous woman, and I've tried to be a good and Christian wife, and for me to be treated in this way, I declare it's a burnin' shame!"

The speaker was Mrs. Jerusha, the wife of Dr. Amadeus Brown, and the scene was the library of the deacon's house in the village of Oak Hollow. Mrs. Brown had worked herself into quite a heat of scarlet excitement, and the deacon sat in his armchair, looking at her with a troubled expression through his gold-bowed spectacles.

"So 'tis; so 'tis," said the deacon, "if your suspicions are correct. You say that your husband visits the parson's wife every day?"

"Every individual day for the last three weeks. Don't I know it? Haven't I watched him? I've stood it just as long as I kin, and now I'm goin' to speak out. I'll have a divorce, that I will. Let him run away with that little pink and white doll-baby if he wants to. He'll find out one of these days who kin cook his vittles best, and mend his clothes, and take care on him. Ef he'd rather have her to do it, he's welcome to try her.

"It is greatly to be regretted that Mister Gray didn't choose some older person," said the deacon, gravely. "His wife is too young for a parson's wife, and too pooty."

"Pooty!" exclaimed Mrs. Jerusha, firing up. "Well, that's a matter of opinion. I don't admire her style myself."

"This is a very serious matter," said Deacon Tarbox, with great solemnity. "This must be brought at once afore the selectmen of the parish—that is, supposin', of course, ma'am, that you ken prove what you say."

"Prove it!" replied Mrs. Brown, violently. "I ken prove it fast enough.—Didn't the doctor order the parson to send his wife to the city for a change of air, as he said, and when that poor unsuspectin' man went an' done it, didn't my husband post right off after her, under pretence of havin' business there?"

"It must be looked into," said Deacon Tarbox. "I promise you, Mrs. Brown, you shall hev justice done to you. Now, I'll jest step over'n consult Elder Pilberry. He's a clear headed man, the elder is, and we'll do whatever he thinks best about it. Dear, dear! Why can't folks obey the Scriptures and leave other people's wives alone?"

He found that worthy in his backyard, in his shirt sleeves, sawing wood, and at once laid the matter before him.

"Wall," said the elder, standing with one foot on his sawhorse and resting his elbow reflectively on his knee, "my opinion is jest this: We must work slow, ye know. Missis Brown is naterally a kinder jealous little woman, an' she may be mistaken in some of her facts. Now we can't git along without facts to steer by. Dr. Brown may be visitin' the parson's wife with the most honorable intentions, an' the parson may know all about it when Missis Brown don't. It won't do to stir this thing up, you know, deacon, till we git more facts.

"Yaas, that's so, Brother Pilberry," replied the deacon; "but how kin we do it? There aint no doubt about Dr. Brown's bein' down to the parsonage most every night sence Parson Gray went away. Then ye know, he follered her down to the city, too. That 'ere don't look right, elder, now does it?"

"No, it don't," said Mr. Pilberry, "but 'taint best to take things for granted. As you say, the parson's wife is young'n pooty and 'taint sing'lar the doctor should be kinder took with her; but then Doctor Brown is a married man, an' a member of good standin', so I guess we'd better make sure of our facts fust. Now wouldn't it be a good idee for you an' I to kinder hang round down by the parsonage to-night, and see what's goin' on? Ef we could git a look in through the widders, ye know, we might be able to tell what the doctor goes there for."

"That idee never struck me," said Deacon Tarbox, in a convinced tone of voice, implying that it had struck him now, and that he was very forcibly impressed by it. "That's a good suggestion."

"Wall," continued the elder, "you jest come over here along about eight o'clock, an' we'll walk down that way."

"How about the parson's dog?" asked the deacon a little nervously.

"O, he den't do nothin' but bark, an' besides, he's chained up. I guess 'taint best to say anything to Missis Brown.—Shouldn't like to hev it known how we git our information, ye know."

The deacon nodded, and the elder returned to his wood-sawing, each of them gloating with an inward satisfaction over the choice bit of scandal of which they had suddenly become possessed, and never for a moment doubting that it was their sacred duty, as godly men and pillars of the church, to stir it up and make the most of it.

from his seat on the damp grass for the twentieth time, remarking that he should "ketch his death a' cold ef he staid there any longer," and that he didn't believe the doctor would come that night, anyhow, when the elder, looking through the branches of the hedge, suddenly exclaimed:

"There he is! Duck your head, deacon!"

The doctor fastened his horse to the tying-post, and knocking briskly at the door of the parsonage, passed a few words with the person who opened it, and entered, closing the door behind him.

"Back door!" muttered the elder.—"That's suspicious."

"Where's that light?" asked the deacon. "Aint that in Missis Gray's room?"

"Yes," said the elder, "that corner room in the second story is Missis Gray's chamber, an' there's some'n goin' on there, too. Jest see them shadders."

The curtain of the room was not drawn, and the two eavesdroppers, looking upward at the windows, could plainly see the ceiling and a small segment of the opposite wall. Upon this portion of the plastering was cast a singular complication of moving shadows, giving apparent evidence of there being several persons in the room. Who they were, or what they were doing, the elder and his companion, not being favored with a view of the whole apartment, were unable to determine.

"Hi!" exclaimed the deacon, after vainly stretching his neck for several moments. "That's the doctor's figger?"

And so it was. As the deacon spoke a person advanced to the window for an instant, and then quickly turned away. But in that instant both of the watchers below had recognized the familiar outlines of Doctor Amadeus Brown.

"Wall," exclaimed Elder Pilberry, rising to an erect position, "I never would hev believed it to my dyn' day ef I hadn't seen it with my own eyes!"

"In Missis Gray's own chamber!" said the deacon. "And her husband away. This is a subjec' for a vestry meetin', elder."

"We must find out about this," observed Pilberry. "Ef it goes afore the selectmen we must have facts. I calculate that it's our moral dooty, Deacon Tarbox, to see what's goin' on in that there chamber."

"How kin it be done?" asked the deacon. "'Twont do to go bustin' the door open, an' ef we ring the bell he'll take the alarm."

"We kin do better than that," replied the elder. "There's a rain-water barrel at the corner of the house, right by the settin' room winder. Now, ef we kin git another barrel to put on top of it, we kin git up to the second story easy."

The deacon approving of this idea, they searched cautiously through the parson's woodshed and succeeded in finding a headless barrel, which they duly placed on the top of the water-but at the corner of the parsonage. On the barrel the elder balanced a board, and mounting this unsubstantial structure with the deacon's assistance, he succeeded in gaining a good view of the sitting room on the first floor, but found himself considerably below the window-sill of the upper chamber. The lower room was quite empty, but a lamp was dimly burning on the centre-table.

"Kin you see?" whispered the deacon in a voice which might have been heard for a hundred yards.

"No," returned Elder Pilberry, "not high enough."

"Hey?"

"Not high enough."

"Will the choppin'-block do?" asked the deacon, with a gesture towards the wood-pile.

"Yes, hand it up."

It was rather heavy, but the deacon succeeded with much difficulty in bringing it to the water-but and passing it up to the elder. The latter placed it firmly in the centre of the board, and mounted it carefully, holding on to the spouting to steady himself. With the aid of this last addition to his pedestal, Mr. Pilberry now found the rim of his hat about on a level with the lower panes of Mrs. Gray's windows. Letting go the spout, he raised himself on his tiptoes and prepared to take a leisurely survey of the apartment; but at this critical juncture the parson's dog which was chained in the barn, suddenly became suspicious that something was going wrong, and forthwith set up such a terrific howling and barking that the deacon was frightened nearly out of his wits. This sudden loss of his presence of mind on the part of Deacon Tarbox was fatal to the success of the Elder Pilberry's observations, for the former fell in consternation against the water-but with such force as to upset his companion's equilibrium, and to cause the overthrow of barrel, board and chopping-block together, thereby precipitating Mr. Pilberry through the sitting room window with most astonishing velocity, and landing him on the floor with a crash of broken glass which might have been heard for half a mile.

It was fully two minutes before the elder sufficiently recovered himself to realize what had happened. His first impression was that there had been an earthquake, but this idea gradually resolved itself into the idea that the great and solemn day of judgment had arrived. He seemed surrounded by a blaze of fire-works, and he

only awoke from the influence of this optical illusion to find himself held fast in the bony clutches of an infuriated female, who was rapidly removing his hair by handfuls, apparently with the idea of trying to obtain enough to fill a mattress.

"I say!" shouted the elder. "Confound it! Git out! Let me go, will you?"

"Let you go!" screamed the woman, shrieking at the top of her voice, and shaking him violently by the collar. "No I won't. Come on! I've got him! Fire! Murder! Robbers! I've got him!"

"Do you—you know—who—I—I—am?" exclaimed Mr. Pilberry, his remark rendered somewhat disjointed as a result of his antagonist's shaking.

"No, nor I don't care who you are!" shouted the woman. "Murder! murder!"

A violent tussel ensued, the elder using his most desperate endeavors to escape, and the enemy hung to him with the tenacity of a bull-terrier, the only appreciable result being the removal of the greater portion of the clothing of both combatants. In the midst of the melee the door burst suddenly open, and Doctor Amadeus Brown entered in a state of great excitement.

"For Heaven's sake," he exclaimed, "what is the matter? Elder Pilberry! Nancy! Let go the gentleman at once. Do you know who he is?"

"No," said Nancy; "who is he?"

"He's—why, bless my soul!—he's an elder in the church."

"He's an elder of the church!" exclaimed Nancy, drawing off and looking at the dilapidated Pilberry contemptuously.—"And do eiders in the church come round smashin' the minister's widders in this 'ere way?"

By this time the deacon had gained admittance by some means, and he now appeared upon the scene, with his eyes fixed upon the doctor solemnly. He was determined that the elders unfortunate plight should not deter him from his righteous purpose.

"Doctor Brown," he exclaimed slowly, "how came you in this house?"

"Well, gentlemen," said the doctor, "I will answer that question by asking another. Pray how came you here?"

The deacon might have replied that it was very evident how Mr. Pilberry got there, and as that for himself he came in through the back kitchen—but that would hardly have comported with the dignity of his errand.

"We came," he said, "in pursuance of our dooty as selectmen of this village. It is a painful dooty, but we must do it. You hev been seen, Doctor Brown, in the chamber of Missis Gray, in the absence of her husband."

Nancy here burst out into a loud laugh, and the doctor smiled.

"Yes," yes he said I don't deny it."

"Elder Pilberry," exclaimed the deacon, "you hear that? He don't deny it. Now, Doctor Brown, perhaps you hev some explanation to make—some excuse to offer. We are ready to hear what you have to say."

"Well, gentlemen," replied the doctor, looking from one to the other, and making a great effort to restrain a strong inclination to laugh, "peahaps you will not deem an excuse necessary when I tell you that our respected pastor has this night become a happy father. It was a little premature perhaps, gentlemen, and the parson would undoubtedly have remained at home had he supposed the event likely to occur so soon; but it is a fine boy, gentlemen, and weighs eight pounds and a half."

Deacon Tarbox and Elder Pilberry hung their heads and looked foolish. Stammering out a confused apology, they hurriedly took their leave, both sadder and wiser men. The experience was not without its results, for from it the elder derived a very excellent motto, which he never afterwards failed to fire at the deacon on all favorable occasions: "Never jump at conclusions without fust bein' sure of your facts."

There are some excellent shoe shops in Washington, and my insatiate thirst after knowledge led me into one of 'em. I have no doubt the proprietor was a perfectly pious leather dealer. He had a leather head anyhow.

Says I, "Got a nice store, hain't ye?" Says he, "So, so."

Says I, Sew, sew. I thought in your business it was stitch, stitch."

Says he, "A-hem!"

Says I, "No, stitch."

Then I propounded a conundrum, Says I, "Why are shoemakers like ministers?"

Says he, "Blast your conundrums."

Says I, "That ain't the answer: its because shoemakers and ministers both peg away at soles, and they both heel soles too."

Says he, "Well, do you want to buy anything. If so, I have everything in my line you can name."

Says I, "You have, hey? Are gaiters in your line?"

Says he, "Yes."

Says I, "And you can show every kind of gaiters?"

Says he, "I can."

Says I, "Well, sir, if that is the case, I'll look at a pair of alligators."

He didn't take it pleasantly, and if I hadn't dispensed with his society just as I did, that leather dealer would have tanned me.

Two Wealthy Men.

THE two wealthiest Englishmen, so far at least as personal estate goes, who have ever lived in England, have died within the last decade. They were Mr. Morrison and Mr. Brassey. The personal property of the first was sworn under twenty million dollars; that of the second under thirty millions; but it is understood that a great deal of Mr. Brassey's estate has not yet been sworn for duty, owing to difficulties in appraising it, and that, in fact, it will prove to be nearly one hundred millions when this has been done. Both these men, like most of those who have made the very largest fortunes, began life poor. Mr. Morrison entered a dry-goods warehouse, where he contrived to secure the affections of his employer's daughter. They were married, and he was taken into the business, to which he ultimately succeeded.

One great stroke he made was the buying of all the craps in England, in anticipation of the death of the Princess Charlotte, of Wales. This lucky hit is supposed to have put a very large sum of money into his pocket.

He invested a large portion of his enormous wealth in real estate, and became one of the greatest landlords in the United Kingdom. His principal country residence was Basildon Park, near Reading in Berkshire. It is a stately mansion, standing in a very pleasant park, and filled with a magnificent collection of works of art, of which he was a very liberal purchaser. The very book-cases, tables, and chairs, were designed by men such as Sir Charles Eastlake, R. A. In the dining-room were two columns of rare and beautiful marble, purchased from a church in Italy at a prodigiously price. These pillars were extraordinarily heavy, and considerable difficulty was experienced in bringing them to their destination, the roads being, at various points, quite broken into holes by the weight. Besides his collection at Basildon, Mr. Morrison had a gallery of choice pictures at his home in London.

He was not in the least ostentatious, nor did he ever evince the tendency, so common to nouveaux riches of toadying people of rank, his principal associates being eminent artists. Toward the close of his life he became, as so often is the case of rich men, oppressed with the idea that he was miserably poor and should die a pauper; and a small sum was paid to him every week, as a wage, to humor his fancies.

Mr. Morrison left several sons. To the eldest he bequeathed the interest in his warehouse, estimated at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year (which that gentleman sold to a joint-stock company), and further very extensive estates.

To the second he left some two hundred thousand dollars a year, and to the others incomes varying from sixty to eighty thousand dollars.

All his sons have turned out steady, respectable men; and one is a well-known Liberal member of Parliament.

Mr. Brassey's great fortune was the result, in the first instance, of successful railway contracts, and then of the accumulations consequent upon the great sums thus made. Like Mr. Morrison, he was the least ostentatious of men, and, like him, too, was fortunate in a wife who resembled him in this respect. Indeed, Mr. Brassey's expenditure, so far as his establishment, etc., went, probably did not exceed fifty thousand dollars a year, when his income was two million dollars a year. Like Mr. Morrison, he was fortunate in his children. He had three—all sons. They bear the highest character, and now have divided among them the colossal fortune which their father and mother only seemed to care for in so far as it would contribute to their children's happiness.

It is remarkable that these two men—England's wealthiest sons—should all their lives have been indifferent to what most successful men in this country aspire to—a seat in Parliament. Mr. Morrison, we believe, did occupy one for a brief time, but Mr. Brassey never. Two of his sons are now very useful members of Parliament.

A Frenchman, who knew very little of our language, unfortunately got into a difficulty with a country-man, and fight he must, and that, too, rough and tumble.—But before he went at it, he wanted to know what he should cry if he found himself whipped. After being informed that when satisfied all he would have to do would be to cry out "enough," at it they went; but poor Monsieur, in his difficulties, forgot the word, and finding his eyes likely to be removed from their sockets, he began to cry out, but instead of saying what was told him, he commenced bawling lustily:

"Hurrah! hurrah!"

To his astonishment, the country-man kept pounding harder; when Monsieur, finding there was no use in hallooing, turned and went to work in such good earnest, that it was not long before the country-man sag out in a stentorian voice:

"Enough!"

"Say that again," said the Frenchman.

"Enough! enough!" the country-man again.

When the Frenchman in his turn exclaimed:

"Begar, dat is do vere word I was tryin' to say long time ago."

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