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They ain't no story book worth while, nei poetry ner such;
Y'kinder don't know what t' do, th world's so outer touch;
Tobacker's skeerse a relish, too, no matter what's th' brew,
An' th' world is one big desert
When a feller's
A feelin'
Kinder blue!

A clear sky doesn't matter, fer it doesn't seem jes' right,
An' th' sun gits outer kilter in a-kinder murky light;
An' th' birds they jes' won't whistle th songs they uster do,
An' th' world is one big desert
When a feller's
A feelin'
Kinder blue!

Plague on it! th' groc'ry store seems like a church t' you,
An' yer collar sets oneasy an' a-pinchin goes yer shoe;
An' yer don't laugh at them stories jes' like yer uster do:
An' th' world is one big desert
When a feller's
A feelin'
Kinder blue!

Th' dog, too, mopes in sympathy, th' house seems like a barn,
Th' womin ain't no use fer you, they hev so much t' darn;
An' "Uncle Tom" an' "Topsy" is a torture to go through,
An' th' world is one big desert
When a feller's
A feelin'
Kinder blue!

By George, I think thet I shell go an' see thet Polly Gray,
Who allus seems so chipper with her laughter bright an' gay;
Perhaps she'll cheer me up a bit jes' like she uster do!
Fer there's nothin' like a woman
When a feller's
A feelin'
Kinder blue!

—Harold MacGrath, in Syracuse Herald.

A Lesson in Temperance

Smith Finds a Use for a Stuffed Rattlesnake.

ONE of his friends recently sent Smith, of Brooklyn, a fine specimen of the diamond-back rattlesnake. It was a dead rattlesnake, though it didn't look it; in fact, it was only the skin of the reptile with the head attached, but all the diabolism of the live creature was expressed in the thick, flat head with two glittering black pinheads doing duty for the eyes. It was really a very fine skin, and Smith thought with pleasure how well it would look on the wall of his study, but upon taking it home he found that his household regarded it with mingled emotions. When he appeared with it in his hands Mrs. Smith ramped around the room as if it were a mouse that was confronting her and threatened alternately hysterics and a return to the home of her ancestors. Bridget, the maid, who had come upstairs on the run upon hearing the excitement, retired via the front door to the middle of the street, where she informed an interested public that Mr. Smith had come home to dinner and brought the devil with him; while the family cat, after one casual glance at the deceased reptile, shinned up the back yard grape arbor in a perfect abandonment of horror, and spit till her whiskers whistled.

"This snake's all right in its way," said Smith, "but I'd rather have my happy home, and it don't look as if the two were compatible. I'll give it house room for a day or two, and then present it to some bachelor apartment."

With some difficulty and after repeated assurances that the object of her terrors was quite dead, Smith persuaded Bridget to return to the house and her duties. Mrs. Smith was somewhat reconciled by learning that at any time the serpent could be turned into a handsome belt for herself, if she so desired, and consented to try it first as a wall ornament for a time. The cat refused to come back, but that night sat on the back fence and told all the other cats about it until the neighborhood quelled their comments and interjections with handy bric-a-brac.

Upon arriving at his office the next morning Smith found a note from his friend Bixby, setting forth a sad case, to-wit, himself. Bixby had recently returned from the arid south, whence he had brought a large fund of information regarding the noxious insect and reptilian life of the region, a reputation for a leaning toward revolver practice, and an abounding thirst which all the strong waters in New York couldn't quench—he hadn't tried the other kind. Bixby wrote:

"Dear Smith: I've been going it for the last week or year or something. Been trying to put the Raines law out of business by drinking all the booze before Sunday. I'm pretty much on the aboriginal bum in consequence. They haven't got me yet, but I saw one of 'em last night. It had long, pink, wriggly ears and I thought it was an eel till I saw the hoofs on it. It's been hovering around all this morning and I've been trying to chase it with ammonia cocktails, for I know if it ever gets near enough to say 'Tag,' I'm it. If you've got room in your place for a head like a barrel I wish you'd take me to Brooklyn to-night. I need a change of air. Oh, my boy: I've been on a toot that would make the Angel Gabriel's trumpet feel like a busted penny whistle. I'll be at your office at five, with or without assistance, as the case may be.
Yours hurriedly, BIXBY."

At the appointed hour Bixby arrived in a cab, and when he saw him Smith sent word home to Mrs. Smith that she had better invent and accept an invitation to dine and spend the night at her aunt's. Not that Bixby was intoxicated. He was sober and sorry for it. After dinner, Smith judged, there might be trouble. Upon their arrival he explained Mrs. Smith's absence and Bixby suggested cocktails as a starter before dinner. His friend persuaded him to tackle the bathtub instead of a bracer, and after a cold bath and some fresh clothes Bixby said he thought he could eat something, with a little help. All the help that Smith allowed him was one long whisky and seltzer, whereupon Bixby locked unutterable reproach at the dispenser of sparse hospitality, but was too polite to protest. After dinner Bixby was nervous. Smith suggested club. They went. One game of billiards there showed up Bixby's condition in its true light. He tore two holes in the cloth and nearly put out the marker's eye in trying to score three on the play. Then he demanded drink not loudly, but so fervently that his host knew there was nothing else for it. An hour passed and Bixby was feeling better, at least he said he was. Smith got him to start home and suggested dropping in to see a doctor on the way. Bixby snorted at the mention of a doctor. He didn't want to see any doctor; what he wanted to see was a bartender. Off he went in search of one, and Smith had to follow. By the time they got home Smith was mad and his guest was apparently happy, but behind that happiness was a strain of anxiety evinced by sundry furtive glances which he cast around him, and in the front hall he embraced the stairpost with tears, confiding to it that it was his only salvation against a hungry horde of gigantic germs which were, even then, camped upon his trail. By urgent insistence Smith made him drink large quantities of water, and presently put him to bed, secure that nothing worse than a very bad head would be the result of that evening's indulgence. But he saw, too, that it was only a question of a short time before his friend would go to pieces if a stop weren't put to his course, and he sat down and meditated deeply upon the subject. Suddenly his recently acquired rattlesnake projected its wicked head and shining eyes into his thoughts and he slapped his thigh as does a man when he hits upon a happy thought or a mosquito.

"By thunder, I'll do it," he cried. "It'll scare seven kinds of moonlight, sunlight and starlight out of him, but it'll serve him right and it'll cure him, too, if anything will."

Even then Bixby was snoring with that thick, sticky snore that means "dead to the world," in the room adjoining Smith's and connected with it through a double washroom. Above the head of the sleeper were two pulleys fastened to the ceiling, formerly used for the manipulation of a mosquito net. To rig up a tackle of fine but strong thread on these pulleys took Smith less than five minutes, and he worked with perfect security that nothing could awake his guest, who didn't so much as stir or groan when Smith stepped on his chest. A few minutes' work with the rattlesnake and a needle followed, and then the reptile, fastened head and toil, rose and soared above the bed of the sleeper. Smith ran the thread into the washroom, made the snake fast to the ceiling and went to bed, knowing that he would wake up before his guest. The last thing he heard that night was the snoring of Bixby; it was still going on, though in a higher key when he awoke in the morning.

All the probabilities were that the guest would sleep heavily for an hour more at least, so Smith had breakfast alone and leisurely and then went upstairs with a large pitcher of ice and a siphon of seltzer to call Bixby. It was something of a job to arouse that gentleman, but he finally responded to Smith's knocks in a drawling snarl. It would take him some time, Smith knew, to get his eyes open, so the host slipped around to his tackle and waited. To his great disappointment Bixby snoozed again. There was an alarm clock in the room. Smith went quietly in and set it, and in three minutes its buzz was whirring in the sleeper's ears. Pawing the air and with his features twisted into an expression of extreme disgust, he fought against it for a moment; then he opened his eyes and looked straight up at a flying serpent which gently wiggled its tail at him. What Smith rather expected was that he would then leap from the bed with a shriek and rush out, but it didn't happen so. For a second Bixby contemplated the prodigy with checked breath, then shut his eyes slowly and tubbed them gently inward. Watching him from the crack of the door, Smith could see what a struggle it was for him to open his eyes again, but he did it, and this time his head gave a jerk. Smith trembled a little with excitement and the snake jiggled. There was a catch in Bixby's throat both visible and audible, and he swallowed painfully. Then came his voice in a whisper:

"I know what you are. I saw you that last night before I left the plantation, only you had wings then and now you fly without them. But I know you; you're nothing; you're not there at all, and when I wake up and get my head into cold water it'll be all right."

He shut his eyes again determinedly and lay quite still, but he was not asleep His eyes were too tightly closed for that, as Smith could see by the little wrinkles around the corners, and many small beads came out on his forehead. Now when a man wakes in the morning and perspires suddenly it is not well with him. Only long and earnest devotion to the bottle will produce that effect. The heart of Smith, which had been growing pitiful within him, hardened again. The lesson should be complete. Bixby opened his eyes again after a period and beheld his old plantation acquaintance, minus the pinions, swinging gracefully to and fro. He tried to follow the motions with his head, but quickly gave that up, for the effect produced was that of a score of aerial serpents wheeling dizzily around in the center of a spinning universe, and his head reeled among waving pillows. He buried his face in the bedclothes and the smothered accents of his woe were barely audible to the listener.

"Oh, if I could only get out of this room! But I suppose there's more of 'em waiting for he in the hall. Where am I, anyway? I wonder if this is ward 19? I wouldn't mind if I could only look up and not see that thing. Oo-oo-ooh-h-h-h! I can see my finish, and it's worse than I thought it would be."

It might have been three minutes before Smith heard the sound of a long breath, the indrawn spirit of determination. The face of Bixby emerged from the clothes and froze with horror. Above his face and o near that the wind from it fanned his brow the vision of horror nodded its devilish head rapidly. Then began the real thing in a serpentine dance. Up soared the terror to the ceiling, only to swoop down again like a hawk. For a moment it hung swaying, then began to coil and writhe and wriggle and waggle and squirm and dart and glide and glidder until the flesh slid on Bixby's bones and the fibers of his soul writhed in imitation of the convolutions of the floating monstrosity. It occurred to Smith that the thing had gone about far enough and he let his hideous puppet come to rest and was thinking what to do next when he observed that Bixby was about to do something himself. Keeping his strained gaze fixed on the rattlesnake, the guest reached out and grasped his trousers, which lay on a chair within reach. He drew them toward him and fumbled in the pockets. Before Smith had time to comprehend what he was after there was a succession of deafening reports, and amid a cloud of smoke Smith could see the disintegrating particles of his snake fluttering down upon an empty bed. Bixby threw himself, yelling, upon the floor, and, casting his revolver from him, scrambled on all fours to the nearest door, which happened to be the one that sheltered Smith. Grabbing Smith by the knees he proceeded to give a very fair imitation of a fit of hysterics. Smith seized the seltzer bottle and gave him the stream full in the face. It was not with that intention that he had brought it upstairs, but it answered admirably. Gasping and choking, Bixby came to his senses.

"Tell me it was; tell me it was," he brokenly besought Smith.

"Of course it was, old man," said Smith, perfectly comprehending the somewhat elliptical query. He knew what was filling Bixby's tortured mind to the very brim at that moment. "It was a stuffed snake that I had about the place."

"Thank God!" said the other, simply and fervently. "Whew! It was awful."

Shooting the rest of the seltzer into the pitcher of ice, Smith handed it to him, and he drank chokingly, shaking all over with the reaction of the relief. Smith wondered why his friend wasn't furiously angry at the trick that had been played on him, and felt himself somewhat conscience-stricken, but determined to make the best of the occasion.

"It might not have been real, Bix," he said.

Bixby groaned.

"You'd never have known the difference," said his host.

Bixby groaned again and pressed some ice against his head.

"What are you going to do about it?" asked the persistent Smith.

"Eh?" said Bixby, dully. "Do? Oh, my head! You're sure that thing was there, Smithy? You aren't fooling me? I wouldn't look into that room for a thousand."

"Oh, it was there," Smith assured him. "I fixed it myself while you were dead to the world. But don't you think it's time you whistled down brakes on this gay career?"

"Smith," said Bixby, after a long pause, "I'll buy you a new snake. You give me that one as soon as I feel well enough to stand its company. Did you teach it to fly yourself? I-I-I-I-mean-I guess I'm not very steady yet. I want it as a memento to remind me of what it can do if a man goes too far, you know."

"You'll get it as soon as you prove that you are fit company for a sober and decent snake," said Smith.

"Don't you fear," said Bixby, solemnly. "This is the end. Three drinks per day after this is my limit. And that goes, too. That isn't the common or garden variety of next-morning-never-again. Bring me out my gun, old boy. I don't feel steady enough to go in there after it yet."

When Mrs. Smith got home, which was after Bixby had left, there were certain matters to be explained to her. First, there was the snake. Smith said the cat did it. Then there was the bullet-riddled ceiling; he couldn't say that the cat did that, but he explained that it must be the work of rats. Bridget had reported hearing shots fired. Smith said yes, that Bridget was undoubtedly right; he had heard them himself, and they seemed to be very near at hand. Mrs. Smith doesn't tell all she knows, or even all she believes, and Smith appreciates this spirit. She now enjoys the possession of a handsome snakeskin purse and a cardcase to match. Bixby has the rattlesnake, cleverly put together by a taxidermist, mounted on a panel in his room. Everybody is satisfied except Bridget, who suspects that she ought not to stay in a house once perforated by the presence of a representative of the prince of darkness, and the cat, who never did come back.—N. Y. Sun.

She Didn't Recognize Him.

A parson who occasionally preaches in South London arrived to take the place of the vicar, who had been called away on account of some family bereavement, and found an old and rather asthmatic lady struggling up the steps which led to the front door. He courteously gave her his arm to assist her, and when they reached the top the dame asked him if he knew who was going to preach. "Mr. So-and-So," replied the parson, giving his own name." "O, dear me!" exclaimed the old lady, "help me down again, if you please. I'd rather listen to the groaning and creaking of a windmill than sit under him," and she prepared to descend. The parson gently assisted her downstairs, and sighfully remarked, as he bade her goodby: "I wouldn't go in either if I weren't the preacher."—London Telegraph.

A Warning to Young Men.

San Francisco girls have a new fad. They think boxing makes them beautiful, and all the fashionable maidens out there are learning how to use "the mitts." The Chicago Times-Herald warns slender young men who are looking for life partners to keep away from San Francisco.

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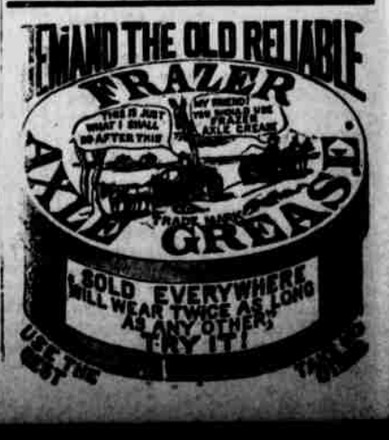
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