

A Bachelor's Surprise Party.

A CHILL December evening, with the rain and snow forming a disagreeable sort of conglomeration on the sidewalk, the gas-lamps at the corner flickering suddenly through the mist, and the wind taking one viciously as one turned the corner.

Not a pleasant evening to assume possession of a new home; but necessity knows no law, and Mr. Barkdale put up his night-key into the red brick house in the middle of the block, sincerely hoping that his new landlady would have common sense enough to light a fire in the grate.

"It is you, sir?" Mrs. Hinman quoth beamingly. "There's a good fire, and it's all right."

"All right, eh?" said the bachelor, feeling the blue tip of his frothy nose, to see whether it had escaped being frozen off entirely. "Well, I'm glad to hear that. Have the trunks come?"

"Oh, yes, sir, and the other things."

"What other things?" demanded Mr. Barkdale.

Mrs. Hinman pursed her lips. "I wasn't to tell, sir, please."

"Rather an eccentric old lady," Mr. Barkdale thought, pushing past her to the third story front room, which he had solemnly engaged the day before.

It had been rather a dark and dingy little room by the light of the moon; but now, softened by the choral shine of a well-filled grate, it wore quite another and brighter aspect.

"Velvet paper on the walls, gift panelings, red carpet and Sleepy Hollow chair," thought Mr. Barkdale, glancing around. "Not so uncomfortable, after all. When I get my things unpacked it will seem quite homelike."

He set his valise down in the corner, deliberately opened it, took out a pair of slippers, and invested his tired feet therein. Next he laid off his overcoat.

"Now for a cigar," thought he.

But the brown-lizard weed was yet in his hand, when there was a bustle, and a flutter, and a whisper, and a merry noise on the landing outside, and the door flew open, as if by magic, to admit half a dozen blooming, laughing girls.

Mr. Barkdale dropped his cigar, and retreated a step or two.

"Don't be alarmed," said the tallest and prettiest of them: "it's only a surprise."

"A very agreeable one, I'm sure," said our friend, recovering in some degree his presence of mind.

"There's no mistake, I hope," said a yellow-tressed blonde. "Your name is not Greenfield?"

"No mistake at all, I assure you," said Mr. Barkdale. "Of course it is not Greenfield. Sit down, ladies."

And he pushed forward the Sleepy Hollow chair, a camp-stool and two rheumatic reception chairs, which were all the accommodation presented by his apartment.

But, instead of accepting his courtesy, the girls all fluttered out again, giggling, and in a second, before he could realize this strange condition of affairs, they were back again, bearing benches and a table cloth, bouquets, a pyramid of macaronies, piled up plates of sandwiches, of frosted cake, and a mysterious something like unto an ice-cream freezer.

The golden-tressed girl clapped her hands.

"You needn't think we're doing this for you, sir," she said.

"Oh!" said Mr. Barkdale, bashfully. "I—I hadn't any such impression."

"It's all a surprise designed for Kate's cousin."

"Is it?" said Mr. Barkdale, more in the dark than ever.

"And how do you suppose we found it all out?" demanded the tall girl with the black eyes and scarlet feather in her hat.

"I haven't the least idea."

"We found your letter to Kate, and we girls read it, and we resolved to take you and her both by surprise. She is to be here in half an hour. Barbara—that is Barbara Morris in the blue merino dress, with a turn of her long lashes towards the golden-haired girl—pretends that she has moved here and Kate is to come and spend the evening with Barbara. Won't it be a joke?"

"Stupendous!" said our hero, gradually beginning to comprehend that he was mistaken for some one else.

"What will Kate say when she sees you here?" ejaculated another maid, merrily.

"Ah! What, indeed?" said Mr. Barkdale, wondering in what words he could best explain matters.

"Of course we shall all look the other way while you are kissing and hugging her," said Miss Barbara.

"Very considerate of you, I'm sure," observed Mr. Barkdale.

"She's the sweetest girl in New York," exclaimed the tall damsel, en-

thuslastically. "I am one of her dearest friends. We work our sewing machines side by side at Madam Grillard's. Hasn't she ever written to you about Alice Moore?"

"I don't just this moment recall that she has."

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter," said Alice. "Just you sit down and be a good boy while we fix the tables. Are not those roses beautiful? My goodness gracious how astonished Kate will be!"

"She can't be more so than I am," said Mr. Barkdale, sinking into the Sleepy Hollow chair, and passing his handkerchief vaguely across his forehead. "Well, it's a mere matter of fate; I can't see how I am to explain myself, and yet perhaps I ought to explain. Ladies—"

"Hush-sh-sh-sh," cried the six pretty girls, all in a hissing chorus: "Kate is coming; Bessie has brought her. Hush-sh! Don't say a word, Mr. Greenfield."

The golden-haired girl's hand was clapped promptly over his mouth. Alice Moore grasped his arm spasmodically, and the other forms danced a sort of bewitching little feminine war dance about him, while a seventh girl entered—a pretty Madonna-faced little creature like a dove.

"Come and kiss him Kate," cried all the others. "Now, don't be ridiculous, for we shan't take any notice. Here he is."

"Kiss who?" cried Kate, standing still and staring around her. "Girls, what on earth do you mean?"

"You provoking thing!" said Barbara, stamping her little foot. "Do you suppose we are all fools? Why, of course we know all about them! It's Mr. Greenfield—your cousin. Kate—the young M. D."

Kate looked around in bewilderment.

"Where?"

"Why here!"

"Nothing of the sort!" said Kate, demurely.

Our hero stood up, feeling himself growing very uncomfortably warm and red.

"Ladies!" said he, "there's some mistake here. I said at the outset that my name was not Greenfield."

"There!" cried the girls, all at once.

"There!" echoed Kate, defiantly.

"Didn't we tell you?" cried the girls.

"Didn't I tell you?" retorted Kate.—"Be kind enough to let us know what your name is, sir."

"Cephas Barkdale," said the wretched victim of a misunderstanding.

"But," said Miss Moore, "you said it was Nott Greenfield."

"Of course I did!" said the puzzled bachelor. "It isn't Greenfield, and it never will be unless I have it changed by act of Legislature."

"Oh-h!" cried the girls. "Dear, dear, to be sure! And we thought you were Kate's lover—and his name is N-o-double t—Nott Greenfield."

"Do hold your tongues, you ridiculous things," said Kate, half vexed, half laughing. "What must Mr. Barkdale think of us?"

"I think you are very nice," he said, gallantly.

"Miss Barbara in the meantime had taken a slip of paper out of her pocket. She uttered a hysterical shriek.

"It's all my fault!" she exclaimed.—"It was No. 39 instead of No. 36—and the tall of the horrid figure turned the wrong end up—that's all. And the cake and the flowers and everything!"

"Stop, ladies, if you please," said Mr. Barkdale, courteously. "Because the surprise has come to the wrong place is no reason why the right person should not enjoy it. Allow me to give up this room to your use this evening. I will just step across the street and send Mr. Nott Greenfield over."

"But you must return with him," said the girls.

And Mr. Barkdale was not allowed to depart until he had promised.

Mr. Nott Greenfield—a good-looking medical student—who had the "sky parlor" directly opposite—came promptly on mention of the name of Kate Kelford, and did the polite thing in introducing Mr. Barkdale; and Mr. Barkdale ate of the sandwiches, and enjoyed the cake and cream, and coaxed Miss Barbara to pin a little pink rosebud in the buttonhole of his coat, and enjoyed himself prodigiously.

"I'd like to be surprised like this every night in the year," said he.

"Oh, you greedy creature!" said Miss Barbara.

"But there was one time I seriously meditated throwing myself out of the window," said he, "when you told me I was to kiss Miss Kate."

"Dear, dear," said Barbara, ironically; "that would have been dreadful, wouldn't it?"

"But the awkwardness of the thing."

"I dare say you never kissed a pretty girl!" pouted the blonde.

"I never did," said the bachelor, growing bold, "but I will now, if you say so."

"But I don't say so," said Barbara, coloring and laughing. "Behave yourself, sir."

Mr. Barkdale went home with the fair Barbara, and they grew to be very good friends, and there's the use of trying to conceal how it all ended? They were married at the year's end, with all the surprises as bridesmaids, and Kate Kelford included. Mr. Nott Greenfield proposes to follow the example as soon as he gets well.

A LOVER LOST BY TEMPER.

MR. WALTER LANDOR stood on the steps of an elegant mansion in a suburban village, his hand just touching the bell-knob, when, suddenly, the sounds of altercation floated through the open window, from the parlor.

"Jane Evans," cried a shrill, angry voice, that at first he did not recognize, "did you break my vase, you good-for-nothing imp? I'll tell mamma! And there take that."

The sound of a blow followed, accompanied by more angry tones, the words of which were inaudible to the unwilling listener outside.

Walter Landor turned from the door, walked swiftly down the steps, and gained the street, almost dazed.

"Could it be possible," he said to himself, "that this harsh, angry voice belonged to the lovely Isabel Leighton? She, whom he had thought the perfection of womanhood? Was it possible that these coarse words issued from the same beautiful lips, which had sung for him almost every evening of late such notes of tender sweetness?—Was it possible that she who had seemed so amiable and lovely, could have struck a defenceless servant?"

Yes! It was possible. There could be no mistake. Alas! his idol had fallen. It had been shivered to atoms in a moment. He saw it had been nothing but a common clay image after all.

A few hours later, Miss Leighton sat in her room reading a note from Mr. Landor. "Mr. Landor," it ran, "regrets his inability to keep his appointment to ride with Miss Leighton this afternoon, and begs she will excuse him, as he is unexpectedly called from town."

Miss Leighton crushed the paper in her small jeweled hand, and threw it angrily upon the carpet.

What could it mean? Some subtle presentiment told her that there was more in it than met the eye. She little suspected the whole truth, however.

"He has taken offence at something," she said, after she had calmed down.—"Perhaps he thinks I flirt too much with Harry Fairfax." Then her eye lit up with a gleam of triumph. "Pshaw! it is only a little fit of jealousy. When he returns, I can soon have him back."

She looked at herself in the mirror, as she spoke, and the fair face reflected her spirits.

"Have you seen Walter Landor since his return?" asked one of her acquaintances, a fort-night later. And Miss Leighton thought there was malice in the tone. "He is constantly at your house, isn't he?"

"No! Yes!" answered Miss Leighton, violating the truth, rather than admit her defeat; for this was the first she had heard of his coming back.

"He was at a small party at Mrs. Beacon's last night and very attentive to her niece, Miss Thornley, who is from the country. Her father was a farmer, I believe; but she is very pretty."

Every word of this was a stab to Miss Leighton. Three weeks ago, no party, no pretty girl, much less "a school teacher," as she scornfully called Miss Thornley, could have kept Walter Landor from her side.

When her malicious guest had left, Miss Leighton went to the window, and watched her walking down the street.

"Nasty thing," she soliloquized, "she came here just to tell me that."

Suddenly, as she stood there, a thought flashed on her, like a revelation.

She remembered the morning she had struck Jane Evans, and that it was about the hour that Walter Landor often called. She summoned Jane, angrily, who came in, looking sulky.

"Do you remember the morning, you clumsy fool," she said, "that you broke that vase? Was Mr. Walter Landor here?"

"Yes, mam," answered Jane, glad at last to have her revenge. "Leastwise, when you hit me, and I ran from you, I saw, through the window, Mr. Landor on the doorstep; but he didn't ring; he turned and walked off promiscuous like." She grinned in triumph. "And he hasn't been here since."

"You leave this day, you impudent

thing," broke out Miss Leighton. "How dare you stand there, and grin at me?"

"Please, Miss, I'm not a thing," replied Jane, with a mock courtesy. And knowing she would go for good this time, she dared everything in her retort. "But when young ladies lose their young men, I 'pose they are mad enough to call other girls any names that comes first."

Dodging a book that Miss Leighton, now roused to fury, flung at her, Jane fled through the door, and went straight up to the attic, to pack her things.

Miss Leighton remained in the room blind with rage. She understood everything, now. All was lost. And it was hard, very hard; for Walter Landor was not only elegant and fastidious, but the heir of nearly half a million; and he was the only one of all the train of admirers for whom the proud beauty had ever really cared.

Six months later Walter Landor wedded Lucy Thornley, whose sweet loveliness and charming manners were admired by every one, save Miss Leighton.

She wondered what people could see in that "country girl to admire. The chit hadn't a bit of style. Moreover, she had taught school for a living. A lady? not she! to think that the bride of Walter Landor should be only a poor school teacher!"

A Whistling Corpse.

There are some things about corpses, however, that need to be explained, and of one of these phenomena is the dead man's whistle; for there are departed gentlemen that can whistle.

A correspondent of the Syracuse "Courier" relates an experience of his which bears upon this point. He and his friend Nick were sitting up to watch over the body of an old gentleman.

Nick lay down on a sofa for the first nap, and his companion paced up and down the spacious library where the body was laid out, occasionally stopping to change the ice cloths on the face.

All was silent as the tomb, save the trickling water as it dropped from the thawing ice.

Suddenly the corpse began to whistle, and every hair on the watcher's head bristled in horror.

"Nick, come for God's sake! The old man is getting up!"

With these exclamations on his lips, the startled watcher slammed the door behind him and ran home as fast as his legs could carry him, leaving Nick to face the music, as it were. But the scientific explanation is very simple.—Gas had formed in the dead man's stomach, and the jarring, caused by the fall of pieces of ice from the forehead into palls beneath, had allowed it to escape through the toothless and wrinkled mouth. So the dead man whistled like a school-boy.

Long Words.

"Bob," said Tom, "which is the most dangerous word in all the English language to pronounce?"

"Don't know," said Bob, "unless it is a swearing word."

"Pooh," said Tom, "it is stumbled; because you are sure to get a tumble between the first and last letter."

"Ha, ha!" said Bob, "now I've one for you. I found it one day in reading the paper. Which is the longest word in all the English language?"

"Valetudinarianism," said Thomas promptly.

"No, sir," it's smile, because there's a whole mile between the first and last letter."

"No, ho!" cried Tom, "that's nothing, I know a word that has over three miles between its beginning and ending."

"Now, what is that?" said Bob faintly.

"Beleagured," exclaimed Tom, triumphantly.

Benefactors.

Recently a wealthy and eccentric citizen called upon the undertaker, to pay a bill for the burying of a member of his family. The account was handed to the gentleman, who taking it, stood for some moments in a contemplative mood, eyeing it closely and murmuring an occasional "hum," "hum."

"Anything wrong in the bill?" inquired the undertaker.

"No," replied the honest old chap, "but I was wondering how poor people dare die now-a-days."

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