

A Five Pound Kiss.

"If ever you or yours get five pounds out of me, madam, before I die, I promise you, you shall have five thousand; and I am a man of my word." So spoke Mr. John Beardmore, drysalter and common-councilman of the city of London, to Dorothea Elizabeth, his widowed sister-in-law, who had applied to him for pecuniary succor about three months after the death of his younger brother Isaac, her husband. There were harshness and stubborn determination enough in his reply, but there was no niggard cruelty. Mrs. Isaac wanted money, it is true, but only in the sense in which we all want it. She was only poor in comparison with the great wealth of this relative by marriage. Her income was large enough for any ordinary—Mr. John said "legitimate"—purpose, but not sufficient for sending her boy to Eton and finishing him off at the universities, as it was the maternal wish to do. Mr. John hated such genteel intentions; Christ's Hospital had been a fashionable enough school for him, and he had "finished off" as a clerk at forty pounds a year in that very respectable house of which he was now senior partner. With the results of that education, exemplified in himself, he was perfectly satisfied and if his nephews only turned out half as well, their mother, he thought, might think herself uncommonly lucky. Her family had given themselves airs upon the occasion of her marrying Isaac.—"allying herself with commerce," some of them called it,—and John had never forgiven them. He gloried in his own profession, although government had never seen fit to ennoble any member of it, and perhaps all the more upon that account; for he was one of those radicals who are not "snobs" at heart, but rather aristocrats. He honestly believed that noblemen and gentlemen were the lower orders, and those who toiled and strove in their own way as much as others, he made a gesture of contempt, and "blew" like an exasperated whale. It is a vulgar sort of retort, of course, but so eminently expressive, that his opponent rarely pursued the subject.

He rather liked his sister-in-law, in spite of her good birth, and would have doubtless, largely assisted her had she consented to bring up her children according to his views; but since she preferred to take her own way, he withdrew himself more and more from her society, until they saw nothing at all of one another. He had no intention of leaving his money away from his brother's children; he had much too strong a sense of duty for that; and as for marriage, that was an idea that never entered into his hard old head. He had not made a fool of himself by falling in love in middle age, as Isaac had done (in youth, he had no time for such follies), and it was not likely that at sixty-five he should commit any such imprudence.—So his nephews and nieces felt confident of being provided for in the future. In the present, however, as time went on and the education of both boys and girls grew more expensive, Mrs. Isaac's income became greatly straightened. Her own family very much applauded the expensive way she was bringing up her children, and especially her independence of spirit with relation to her tradesman brother-in-law, but they never assisted her with a penny. The young gentleman at Cambridge was therefore kept upon very short allowance; and the young ladies, whose beauty was something remarkable, affected white muslin, and wore no meretricious jewelry.—Their pin money was very limited, poor things, and they made their own clothes at home by the help of a sewing machine. If Uncle John could have seen them thus diligently employed, his heart would perhaps have softened towards them, but, as I have said, they now never got that chance, Julia, the elder, had been but six years old when he had last called at their highly-rented but diminutive habitation in Mayfair, and now she was eighteen, and had never seen him since. Although she had, of course, grown out of the old man's recollection, she remembered his figure-head, as the wickedly called his rigid features, uncommonly well; and, indeed, nobody who had ever seen it was likely to forget it. His countenance was not so much human as ligneous; and his profile Nephew Jack had actually seen upon a certain nobby tree in the lime-walk of Clare Hall at Cambridge,—much more like than any silhouette ever cut out of black paper. They had laughed at the old gentleman in early days, and snapped their fingers at his churlishness, but it had become no laughing matter now.

That remark of Uncle John's, "If ever you or yours get five pounds out of me, madam, you shall have five thousand; and I am a man of my word," had become a very serious sentence, condemning all the family to, if not poverty, at least to very urgent want. What it meant, of course, was, that he was resolutely determined to give them nothing.

In vain the young ladies worked for Uncle John slippers and book-markers for his birthday, and sent to him their best wishes at Christmas in Rimmel's highly-scented envelopes; in vain Jack sent him a pound of the most excellent snuff that Bacon's emporium could furnish, at the beginning of every term.—He always wrote back a civil letter of thanks, in a clear and clerical letter, but there was never any enclosure. When Mrs. Isaac asked him to dinner, he declined in a caustic manner,—avowing that he did not feel himself comfortable at the aristocratic tables of the West End—and sent her a pine-apple for the desert, of his own growing. He had really no ill-feeling for his relatives, although he kept himself so estranged from them; but I think this sort of conduct tickled the old gentleman's sense of humor. If he could have found some legitimate excuse for "making up" with his sister-in-law, within the first year or two of their falling out, perhaps he would have been glad to do so; but time had now so widened the breach, that it was not so easily repaired; what he had satirically written when he declined her invitation had grown to be true; he rarely went into society, and almost never went into the company of ladies, the elder portion of whom he considered frivolous and vexatious, and the younger positively dangerous. He had a few old-bachelor friends, however, with whom he kept a cordial intercourse, and spent with them the various festivals of the year as regularly as they came round.

On the 31st of December for instance, he never omitted to go down to Reading, and "see the old year out and the new year in," in company of Tom Wharton, with whom he had worn the yellow stockings in those school-days that had passed away more than half a century ago. Tom and Isaac had been even greater cronies as boys than Tom and John, but the latter did not like Tom the less on that account; secretly, I think, he esteemed him the more highly as a link between himself and that luckless family whose very existence he yet chose to ignore. Mr. Wharton had intimate relations with them still; they came down to stay with him whenever his sister paid him a visit, and could act as their hostess; but this never happened in the last week of the year. Tom was never to speak of them to his old friend,—that was not only tacitly understood, but had even been laid down in writing, as the basis of their intimacy.

On the 31st of December last, Mr. John Beardmore found himself, as usual at the Paddington Station, looking for an empty compartment, for his own company had got to be very pleasing to him. Having attained his object, and rolled himself up in the corner of the carriage in several greatcoats, with his feet upon a hot tin, and his hands clothed in thick mittens, and looking altogether like a polar bear, who liked to make himself comfortable,—when everything was arranged, I say to the old gentleman's complete satisfaction,—who should invade his privacy, just as the train was about to start, and the whistle had sounded, but one of the most bewitching young ladies you ever set eyes on!

"Madam, this carriage is engaged," growled he, pointing to the umbrella, carpet-bag and books, which he had distributed on all the seats, in order to give it that appearance.

"Only engaged to you, I think, sir," replied the charmer flippantly. "Happy carriage! I wish I was. Isn't that pretty?"

Mr. Beardmore had never had anything half so shocking said to him in all his life, and if the train had not already set in motion, he would have called the guard for help and left the carriage forthwith. As it was, he could only look at this shameless young person with an expression of the severest reprobation. At the same time his heart sank within him at the reflection, that the train was not to stop till he reached his destination,—Reading. What indignities might he not have to suffer before he could obtain protection! She was a modest-looking young lady, too, very simply dressed, and her voice was particularly sweet and prepossessing, notwithstanding the very dreadful remarks in which she had indulged. Perhaps she was out of her mind,—and at this idea Mr. John Beardmore broke out, notwithstanding the low temperature, into a very profuse perspiration.

"Now, what will you give me for a kiss, you old—you old polar bear?" asked the stranger playfully, as the train flew by Ealing.

"Nothing, madam, nothing; I am astonished at you," answered Mr. Beardmore, looking anxiously round the carriage in the desperate hope of finding one of those newly-patented inventions of affording communication with the guard.

"Well, then I'll take one, and leave it to your honor," continued the young lady with a peal of silver-laughter; and with that she lightly rose, and before the old gentleman could free himself from his wraps or ward off with his

muffetees, she had imprinted a kiss upon his horny cheek. Mr. Beardmore's breath was so utterly taken away by this assault, that he remained speechless, but his countenance was probably more full of expression than it had ever been in his life. "O no, I am not mad," laughed she in reply to it, "although I have taken a fancy to such a wonderful old creature. Now, come, if I kiss you again, what will you give me?"

"I shall give you in charge of the police, madam, the instant that I arrive at Reading."

"Give me in charge! What for, you curious piece of antiquity?"

"For an assault, madam; yes for an assault. Don't you know that you have no right to kiss people without their consent in this manner?"

Here the young lady laughed so violently that tears came into her eyes.

"Do you suppose you poor old dotting creature, that any body will ever believe such a story as that? Do you ever use such a thing as a looking-glass, you poor dear? Are you aware how very unprepossessing your appearance is, even when you don't frown, as you are doing now, in a manner that is enough to frighten one? You have, of course, a perfect right to your own opinion, but but if you suppose the police will agree with you, you will find yourself much mistaken. The idea of anybody wanting to kiss you will reasonably enough appear to them to be preposterous."

"What is it you require of me, you wicked creature?" cried the old bachelor in an agony of shame and rage.

"I want payment for my kiss. To a gentleman at your time of life, who scarcely could expect to be so favored surely it is worth,—what shall I say?—five pounds. What! not so much?—Well, then, here's another for your other cheek." Like a flash of lightning she suited the action to her words.—"There, then, five pounds for the two, and I won't take a shilling less. You will have to give it to the poor's box at the police station, if not to me. For I intend in case you are obstinate to complain of your disgraceful conduct to the guard, at the first opportunity. I shall give you in custody, sir, as sure as you are alive. You will be put upon your oath you know, and all you will dare to say, will be that I kissed you, and not you me. What 'roars of laughter' there will be in court, and how funny it will all look in the papers!" Here the young lady began to laugh again, as though she had already read it there.—Mr. Beardmore's grim sense of humor was, as usual accompanied by a keen dislike of appearing ridiculous. True, he hated to be imposed upon; still, of the two evils was it not better to pay five pounds, than to be made the laughing-stock of his bachelor friends, who are not the sort of people to commiserate one in a misfortune of this kind.

In short, Mr. John Beardmore paid the money. Mr. Thomas Wharton found his guest that evening anything but talkative. There was a select party of the male sex invited to meet him, by whom the old drysalter was accustomed to be regarded as an oracle; but upon this occasion he had nothing to say; the consciousness of having been "done" oppressed him. His lips were tightly sealed; his cheeks were still glowing from the audacious insult that had been put upon them; his fingers clutched the pocket-book in which there was a five-pound note less than there ought to be. But when his host and himself were left alone that night, "seeing the old year out and the new year in," his heart began to thaw under the genial influences of friendship and gin-punch, and he told his late adventure to Tom Wharton, not without some enjoyment at his own mischance.

"I could really almost forgive the jade," said he, for having taken me in so cleverly. I dare say however, she makes quite a profession of it; and that half a score of old gentlemen have been coerced before now into ransoming their good name as I did. And yet she was as modest and lady-like looking a girl as you ever saw."

"Was she anything like this?" inquired Mr. Wharton, producing a photograph.

"Why that's the very girl!" exclaimed the guest. Ha, ha! Tom, so you, too, have been one of her victims, have you? Well, now, this is most extraordinary."

"Not at all, my dear fellow. I know her very well; and her sister, and her mother, and her brother, too. I can introduce her to you if you like. There's not a bit of harm in her; bless you, she only kissed you for a bit of fun."

"A bit of fun," cried Mr. Beardmore. "Why she got a five-pound note out of me?"

"But she does not mean to keep it, I feel very sure. Would you like to see her again? Come, 'Yes' or 'No'?"

"If she will give me back my money, 'Yes.'"

"Very well," returned the host; "mind you asked for her yourself," and he rang the bell pretty sharply twice.

"Here she is; it's your niece, Miss Julia, her mother and sister are now staying under this very roof."

"Yes uncle," said the young lady demurely. "Here is your five-pound note; please to give me that five thousand you promised mamma if ever she or her's got five pounds out of you; for you are a man of your word, I know.—But what would be better still would be, to let me kiss you once more in the character of your dutiful niece; and let us all love you as we want to do. It was an audacious stratagem, I admit, but I think you'll forgive me,—come."

"There go the church belles!" cried Tom Wharton. It is the new year, and a fitting time to forget old enmities.—Give your uncle a kiss, child."

Uncle John made no resistance this time, but avowed himself fairly conquered; and between ourselves, although he made no "favorites" among his newly-reconciled relatives, but treated them with equal kindness, I think he always liked his Niece Julia best, who had been the cause of healing a quarrel which no one perhaps had regretted more at heart than Uncle John himself.

Women's and Horses Ears.

Dr. Garrish, speaking of horses' said that greater attention should be paid to their comfort. They should get fruit and sugar occasionally, and, above all things, they ought to have one day's rest out of seven. He said that horses, though not so intelligent as dogs, are very sagacious, and mentioned an instance of a horse of his that used to stop of his own accord at the door of a patient whom he had been treating for fever: a year afterward, passing by, the horse astonished the doctor by stopping as before.

Dr. Lambert thought that while a horse might not be so intelligent as a dog, he could see further. A long-lived horse, he said, was known by the elasticity and firmness of its ear, and a short-lived one has a flabby ear. The same rule, he said, held good with regard to women. A woman whose ear was pulled out of shape by a heavy earring had not many years to live, while one whose ear stood the strain would attain a good age.

An Economical Elopement.

A Minneapolis paper says: J. Ropp, of Pine City, who eloped with his landlord's daughter, Annie Ryder, a 15 year old girl, July 3, has been discovered, after a long search by the girl's parents, in Anoka, where the bridegroom was working in a brickyard. The girl's mother caused the arrest of Ropp, but relented and left for home with the couple. The story of the elopement, as told by the husband, is as follows: They started down the railroad track simply for a walk, but after talking the matter over decided to elope. Walking along the track until dark they came to some empty box cars, and in one of them roomed for the night. Next morning they started across the country and made St. Francis for dinner, which consisted of three cents' worth of crackers purchased from the cash capital of four cents. They made Anoka that night and the man obtained work in the brickyard. Jacob is a bright-looking fellow of 22, and Annie is quite comely and has seen 15 summers.

A Strange Attempt at Suicide.

A scene both ludicrous and ghastly was presented in a recent case of attempted suicide in Columbus, Ohio. The woman who wished to end her life hired a little boy, ten years old, to assist her in the desperate deed. She succeeded in breaking, not her neck but her nose; and at the subsequent judicial investigation that was made, the boy testified as follows: "She got on the box; and I asked her for the ten cents before she put her head in a rope. She wouldn't give me the ten cents, and I let her go, and she didn't put her head in. She hollered and fell down, and then you men came running and I got out of the way." One cannot help wondering how the friends of the little fellow, and indeed he himself, after he had grown older, would have felt had the woman succeeded in her design; and also the probably effect of the affair upon the child's moral sensibilities.

Feeble Ladies.

Those languid, tiresome sensations, causing you to feel scarcely able to be on your feet; that constant drain is taking from your system, all its elasticity; driving bloom from your cheeks; that continual strain upon your vital forces, rendering you irritable and fretful, can easily be removed by the use of that marvelous remedy, Hop Bitters. Irregularities and obstructions of your system are relieved at once, while the special cause of periodical pain is permanently removed. Will you heed this?—Cincinnati Saturday Night. 332.

A Difficult Problem Solved.

Ambition, competition and over-exertion use up the vital powers of men and women, so that a desire for stimulants seems to be a natural human passion, and drunkenness prevails on account of this necessity for bodily and mental invigoration. Parker's Ginger Tonic fairly solves the difficult problem, and has brought health and happiness into many desolate homes. It does not tear down an already debilitated system, but builds it up without intoxicating. 26 1/2 m

Advertisement for Dr. J. C. Jacobs' Oil, featuring an illustration of a man on a horse and text describing it as 'The Great German Remedy' for rheumatism, neuralgia, sciatica, lumbago, backache, soreness of the chest, gout, quinsy, sore throat, swellings and sprains, burns and scalds, general bodily pains, tooth, ear and headache, frosted feet and ears, and all other pains and aches. It also mentions 'Women's and Horses Ears' and 'An Economical Elopement'.

Advertisement for Musser & Allen Central Store, Newport, Penn'a. It lists various goods including dress goods, black alpaccas, mourning goods, muslins, and groceries. It also mentions 'A Strange Attempt at Suicide' and 'Feeble Ladies'.

Advertisement for John Lucas & Co., 141 North Third Street, Philadelphia, Pa. It features a large illustration of a man and text promoting 'Pure Tinted Gloss Paint' and 'Hop Bitters'. It also includes a notice about an estate and a mention of 'A Difficult Problem Solved'.