

CAUGHT IN THE TRAP

THE GREAT SMALLPOX SWINDLE AND HOW IT WAS WORDED.

A Brazen and Well Planned Scheme by Which Two Sharp Confidence Men Banked a Hotel Keeper Out of \$5,000.

"I dare say you never heard of the great smallpox swindle," said the hotel manager. "The facts of that remarkable affair were withheld at the time for the most urgent reasons of policy, and even now I prefer to tell the story without names or localities. It happened in the fall of 1886, when a certain hotel in a large western city was crowded with tourists. One day, at the height of the season, two gentlemanly looking strangers put up at the house and were assigned to what we call a 'double room.' About a week later one of them appeared at the office and requested a private interview with the manager. 'I regret to inform you,' he said, after the door was closed, 'that my friend is down with a severe attack of smallpox.'

"The proprietor nearly fell out of his chair. There was known to be smallpox in the city, and the bare suggestion that the disease had appeared in the hotel was enough to empty it in a twinkling. To let the news get out meant the loss of thousands upon thousands of dollars. It meant the ruin of the season's business. 'He must be quietly removed at once,' said the proprietor, trying to control his agitation.

"Removed," exclaimed the other. "Taken through the cold air to a lazaretto! Why, man, that would be murder! I'll not permit it!"

"The hotel keeper was thunder struck. 'Do you mean to say he must stay here?' he gasped.

"Certainly," said the stranger.

"It was a ticklish situation. The hotel keeper dare not enforce his suggestion, while to let the case remain was like storing gunpowder in a furnace room. He pleaded, protested, begged, threatened and blustered, but all in vain. The man was firm as a rock. 'If you attempt to eject my sick friend,' he declared, 'I'll publish your inhumanity to the entire community.'

"Finally it occurred to the distracted proprietor to see, first, whether it was really a case of smallpox. So he sent for a physician, swore him to secrecy and hustled him up to the room. The doctor took one look at the disfigured face on the pillow and reported that the malady was there in a malignant type. He advised the man's immediate removal at any cost. 'If you keep him concealed,' he said, 'the disease may spread, and it would ruin you for life. You owe something to your guests.' Again the proprietor interviewed the friend, and again the latter refused to budge from his position.

"Where can I take him?" he demanded. "You know very well I can't get comfortable quarters for such a purpose, and I won't have him butchered in a pesthouse to please any landlord on earth!" The hotel man felt his hair stand on end, but concluded to let things stand as they were until morning.

"Next day he sent for the sick man's friend and asked him whether he had any suggestions to make.

"Yes," he replied; "I thought up a plan over night, which you may adopt or not, as you like. As I said before, he continued, 'It is useless to try to rent quarters for such a case. We might, however, buy a small cottage and take him there. I have figured the thing up and the total expense would be about \$5,000. If you are willing to hand over that amount, I will take him away and assume all further responsibility. I make the offer entirely out of sympathy for your guests.'

"The landlord looked him in the eye. 'I, too, have thought the situation over,' he said, 'and I'm convinced it's a confidence game pure and simple. I'm convinced there's nothing the matter with your dear friend up stairs, but I am also convinced that the slightest breath of the affair would greatly damage the reputation of the house. As a business proposition I consider it worth \$5,000 to get rid of you.'

"The other man smiled ironically. 'Call a cab and get out your money,' he said, and inside an hour the incubus had been spirited through a side door swathed in blankets and driven away.

"As the landlord shrewdly surmised, the whole thing was a confidence game, and he learned the particulars later on through a sport he had once befriended. There was nothing the matter with the rascal up stairs except that his face had been crooked a little with a quill dipped in croton oil, something that makes a horrible looking pustule, which disappears in a few days and leaves no mark. I always thought the hotel man showed good sense in taking the course he did. He was caught in a trap and took the cheapest way out. The bare rumor of even a suspected case would probably have involved a loss of \$50,000 or \$60,000. It was far better to pay the \$5,000 and charge it to education."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Be True to Yourself.
Nobody is more entitled to the gratitude of his country than the man who is true to himself—who is a useful, right living, law-abiding subject. Happy the man, and happy the community in which he lives, if, through all the storms and struggles of his day, he carries unstained to the end "the white flower of a blameless life."

Easy.
Miles—There is a man over in that museum who has lived for 40 days on water.
Giles—Pshaw! That's nothing. I have an uncle who has lived for nearly 40 years on water.
Miles—Impossible!
Giles—Not at all. He's a sea captain.

—Chicago News.

Destroying Money.

Extraordinary precautions are taken by the United States government in the destruction of its worn out and filthy paper money. The fact that this could be used again makes it necessary that its destruction should be conducted with care and be made complete.

All the paper money that passes through the treasury is sorted, and the old bills are sent to the redemption division, where they are searched for possible counterfeits. Then they are carefully counted and tied up into bundles of 100 notes each.

A great canceling machine then drives four holes through each of these bundles, of which a careful record is kept. The piles of bills are then cut into two parts, one set of halves going to the secretary's office and the other to the register's office.

In each place the halves are again counted, after which they are chopped by machinery into fragments. Not satisfied with this, the bits are then boiled in vats of hot water and alkali until they are reduced to an unrecognizable pulp. This the law permits the treasury to sell to manufacturers of novelties, who make it into little models of the capitol and the White House, which are sold as souvenirs in the Washington stores. New bills are issued in an amount equal to those destroyed.—Youth's Companion.

A Deceptive Blush.

A writer in the New York Press says of Hugh J. Grant, ex-mayor of New York, and Ulysses S. Grant, Jr.: It is not a bit odd that they should have been clumps at college. Names often draw men together. One day, long after they had cut their political eye-teeth, after Hugh was sheriff, "Buck" said as they strolled down Broadway: "Hugh, why is it you are so modest?"

With a sly twinkle, the future mayor replied:

"Modesty doesn't do a man any harm in politics."

Hugh Grant may have an "easy" look about his face, but he can hold his own with the shrewdest. Naturally warm hearted, he is as cold at business as Russell Sage. At poker he is recognized as pastmaster. I have yet to see the man who can outthrust him. Lay 'em down quicker when he's beat, but 'em harder when he's got 'em, and gather in the pot with a more regretful air. His skin being clear and his blood clean, he can blush like a sensitive girl still tied to mother's apron strings. But, brethren, don't let that blush fool you.

Hose Water and Rain.

Flowers know the difference between a rainstorm and a drenching from the garden hose. You may deluge them with barrels from the hydrant, and they will at best simply hold their own. Generally they wither in the long, dry seasons and that without regard to the artificial wetting they may receive from the gardeners. But let a little shower, however brief, fall upon them, and they brighten visibly.

The difference is that the rain brings down with it through the air or collects in the air a chemical quality that the vegetation needs. The rainwater may be as like that in the lake as two volumes of water can be, but when it has hidden the upper levels of the atmosphere, when it has traveled through the various stages of vapor and liquid and has tumbled down through that retort of the air, it has become charged with elements that no man can give it, and the flower knows and recognizes it, as the first field flowers recognize it in the beginning.

A Fighting Swan.

That a swan will fight fiercely was shown by an exciting struggle between a swan and a park policeman on the upper lake in Waterlow park, England. Some India rubber balls had rolled into the water, and to get them the constable paddled out in a punt. This drew the notice of the male swan, which deserted its consort and the brood of cygnets and went for the constable with great fury. Once or twice it almost upset the punt by causing the constable to overbalance it in saving his legs from the bird's beak. It was only with difficulty and risk that the balls were recovered. The swan then followed the punt to the bank, making vicious darts at the constable.

A Fallacy About Cheese.

"Cheese," said some wiseacre long ago, "digests everything but itself." Never was there a greater error perpetuated by a popular proverb. It aids in the digestion of nothing, and, being almost totally indigestible, simply adds another burden to an already overburdened digestive system. The feeling of comfort produced in a person of robust digestive faculties by partaking of a little—a very little—cheese is due entirely to the excitation of the flow of digestive fluid provoked by the ingestion of a completely indigestible substance.—National Druggist.

Strange Things in Nova Scotia.

It was here I met a woman who had never seen a peach, a young lady who had never owned a box of chocolates, and, best of all, a handsome, intelligent young fellow who had never seen a drunken man. It was here I attended a concert consisting of songs, recitations, organ solos and a duet, all furnished by one woman. The duet, she announced, was between herself and the organ, the organ taking the soprano and she the alto.—Bay of Fundy Letter in New York Post.

A Sure Thing.

Biggs—On my last trip to Europe I lost \$200 betting on the ship's daily run.
Hoggs—You must have been very unlucky.

Biggs—Yes; I found out afterward that I had been betting with the chief engineer.—New York Journal.

LIFE'S VARIORUM.

Some work for this, some strive for that, and grind at every turn;
Some long for what they haven't got, and what they have they squander;
And some rush for the mountain peak to get the sun's last ray,
Then crawl into some sunless hole and sleep it off next day.

Some find this earth a first rate place to slave and stint and save
And life's chief pleasure to consist in being grim and grave,
And others with a twinkle in the hand and heart and eye
Will stake their lives that they can spend more than they can find laid by.

Some take a drink when they are dry and some when they are wet;
Some drink for sweet remembrance sake, some that they may forget,
And some there be, like you and me, free from all sham accursed,
Who have laid down a rule for life—never to get thirsty.

Some turn to this, some turn to that, for fortune and for fame,
And some won't turn for anything and get there just the same;
But there's a common turning point, a fate, unkind but just,
Where rich and poor and great and small turn one and all to dust.

—Galveston News.

TALKING SHOP.

A Sentiment Concerning Which There Is Considerable Haggling.

"If there is one thing that makes me a little wearier than another," said an amateur cynic, "it is to hear a man boast that he 'never talks shop.' I met a fairly eminent actor at a little gathering not long ago, and when some pleasant reference was made he drew himself up and said, 'You will pardon me, I am sure, but, really, I make it a rule never to talk shop.' That remark convinced two or three thick headed hearers that he was singularly free from vanity, but it convinced the rest of us that he was a double dyed donkey and a poseur of the purest ray serene.

"Every right minded man likes to talk shop and does so whenever he gets a chance. It is that which makes class clubs almost invariably a success. The members are all interested in the same thing and can talk shop ad lib. without getting called down. One of the redeeming features of matrimony is the fact that a man secures a helpless victim to whom he can talk shop every day of the year.

"When a chap is travelling as in a strange city, what a joy it is to bump up against somebody in one's same line of business! It is like meeting a long lost brother! I have often thought that the chief objection to being a hangman is that there are so few persons with whom a fellow could chat about the craft.

"And yet it has grown to be a fashion among people of eminence in all the professions to affect a reluctance to discuss the precise thing in which each is most interested. They don't like to talk shop! Laugh! Nobody has any right to make such an assertion except a burglar in a police station!"—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

He Saw the Point.

A former attorney general of the United States, in a recent article, tells the following anecdotes of Mr. Justice Miller of the federal supreme court.

Judge Miller was a very agreeable man socially, but in the later years of his life became somewhat impatient upon the bench. He was no orator himself and seemed to have an aversion to all attempts at oratory in court. I have seen him on more than one occasion disjoin with sharp questions a beautifully prepared speech with which an ambitious orator expected to charm and captivate the court. One midsummer day, as it is said, he was holding court in a western state, and a lawyer, whom we will call Brown, was addressing him in a long, rambling speech. The judge listened and fanned himself and fidgeted about on the bench for some time, and, finally, leaning over his desk, said in an audible whisper, "Confound it Brown, come to the point."

"What point?" inquired the somewhat astonished lawyer.

"Any point," responded the judge; and, though the sequel does not appear, it is probable that there was a rapid condensation of talk in that courtroom after this short colloquy.

The Camel's Eye.

The Nile is essentially a river of silence and mystery. Even the camels turn their beautiful soft eyes upon you as if you were intruding upon their silence and reserve. Never were the eyes in a human head so beautiful as a camel's. There is a limpid softness, an appealing pliancy in their expression which drag at your sympathies like the look in the eyes of a hunchback. It means that with your opportunities you might have done more with your life. Your mother looks at you that way sometimes in church when the sermon touches a particularly raw nerve in your spiritual make up. I always feel like apologizing when a camel looks at me.—Lillian Bell in Woman's Home Companion.

Pinning Him Down.

He—I believe that a man should let his acts speak for themselves.

She—Am I to understand then that when you took my hand in yours last night you intended it as a proposal of marriage?—Chicago News.

Quite the Reverse.

Osmond—Well, you've never seen me run after people who have money.
Desmond—No; but I've seen people run after you because you didn't have money.—Baltimore Jewish Comment.

The most celebrated battle steeds of the civil war were Cincinnati, Traveler and Winchester, the favorite charges of Grant, Lee and Sheridan.

The first postoffice was opened in Paris in 1462; in England in 1581; in America in 1710.

THE BALD EAGLE AT HOME.

He Chooses a High Tree For His Offensive Nest.

An old friend met us. He first showed as a black spot far up on the shore, then drifted grandly down upon set pinnacles, tacking in and out like a yacht working to windward. It happened he was slanting shoreward when he passed, and at 40 yards his snowy head and tail, broad, brown fans showed to fine advantage. We could see the polished yellow of his hooked bill and the fierce flash of his marvelous golden telescopic eye as he turned it upon us and then back to his tireless searching of the water and the wave line along shore.

For years this eagle, hoary old beach comber as he is, has patrolled the shore daily for miles, seeking what the waters have cast up, for he it known he is not above accepting even carrion. Many a dead fish and lost bird he gets for the trouble of picking them up, but he can hunt, too, when he feels so disposed. Season after season he and his mate have watched the old nest and reared their eagles in peace.

No one can climb the tree, and no decent man would shoot at the birds. Should you visit the foot of the tree your nose will be assailed by a most objectionable odor, and your naturally brief inspection will convince you that the eagles do hunt more than they are given credit for. Everywhere are fragments of fish, while among them are wings and tails which must have belonged to grouse, portions of hares and other fragments suspiciously like certain parts of lambs, sucking pigs and domestic fowls. But they were not our lambs, pigs or fowls, and so no shot whistles after the old pirate, who seems to understand that he is free to lincepioneer to his heart's content.—Ed W. Sandys in Outing.

GESTICULATING TALKERS.

Italians Wave Arms Wildly When Conversing With One Another.

The farther south one goes in Europe the more do the people gesticulate in conversation, asserts a traveler who is at present "doing" Italy.

A Neapolitan, he says, goes through an entire course of callisthenes before he has talked five minutes. Give a Neapolitan a pair of dumb bells and ask him what he thinks of the weather and before he finishes his answer he will have taken enough healthful exercise to last him all day.

This traveler spent many an interesting hour in watching the Neapolitan talk. One day in a cafe he sat next to a couple of Italians, who were engaged in a most spirited conversation. The younger of the two men grew very excited. With his hands he made reaching and clinging motions, as if climbing. Then he reached right and left above his head, as one would do in picking cherries. Then, without slackening his remarkable flow of conversation, he put the thumb and first finger of his left hand together and held them a few inches before his eyes and went through the careful movements of one threading a small needle. And all the time he talked. Next he made overhand motions as of throwing. Then he gave an imitation of some one swimming. After that he described several rapid circles with his left hand, which gave the impression of a revolving wheel. Then he leaned forward and, with his right hand lifted, acted as a person would act in trying to put a key into a keyhole. The writer asked his friend, who understood Italian, what all the fuss was about.

"They're talking chiefly about the weather," was the reply.—London Mail.

His Brogue Saved Him.

The thickness of his brogue secured for a recent arrival from the Emerald Isle a ride of several hundred miles at the expense of the Pennsylvania railroad. His destination was Boston, and at the Broad street station he asked for a ticket to the Hub. The ticket seller was unable to determine whether it was Boston or Washington the man wanted to reach, but finally sold him a ticket for the latter city, and a few hours later he found himself in the national capital. As he was unable to read, the mistake was not discovered until he reached Washington, and to complicate matters he had not sufficient funds to purchase a ticket to Boston.

He presented his case to the railroad officials at Washington, and they, putting him to a test, were unable to distinguish from his pronunciation of Washington and Boston any material difference, thus exonerating the clerk at the Broad street station, in this city, for his error. The facts of the case being laid before the general passenger department, the man with the brogue was forwarded to his proper destination.—Philadelphia Record.

Fruit Versus Alcohol.

Fruit will destroy the desire for alcoholic drinks. Oranges and apples have been found to be the most effectual cure for inebriates. And the more they eat of these luscious fruits the more the desire for drink will diminish, until at last it is completely crushed and, so far as the individual is concerned, is gone forever.

The Bluff Called.

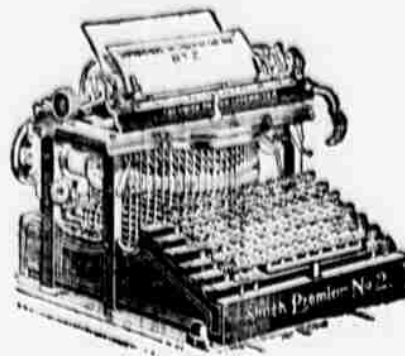
Father (from head of stairs)—Bessie, if that young man doesn't go pretty soon he will miss the last car.

Bessie (in parlor)—That's all right, papa. He likes to walk.—New York Journal.

When a married woman talks of her girlish days she reminds us of the amateur fisherman. The best catches always got away from her.—Denver Post.

The highest inhabited place in the world is the customs house of Ancumara, in Peru, it being 16,000 feet above the sea.

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SHE WAS BLIND.

A blindness comes to me now and then. I have it now. It is queer—I can see your eyes but not your nose. I can't read because some of the letters are blurred; dark spots cover them; it is very uncomfortable.

I know all about it; it's DYSPEPSIA. Take one of these; it will cure you in ten minutes.

What is it?

A Ribans Tablet.

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