

A WEIRD TALE.

CHAPTER I.

It was 9 o'clock in the lovely little breakfast room of the Stormonth family. It was also 9 o'clock elsewhere. The little onyx and oroidé ormulu clock on the mantel had just announced the hour in silvery notes, when Mr. Stormonth finished his last piece of bacon, seized his hat and coat and started for the office.

"Don't overtax yourself to-day," his wife called after him. He laughed a blithe reply. Stormonth was "the most level-headed man on the street," and didn't fear overwork.

CHAPTER II.

Out in the keen, frosty air the sunlight gleamed brightly, and the rumble of the approaching electric car sounded sharp on the ear. The electric car rattled on to the corner whereon Stormonth stood and came to a pause, while the noted business man entered and stood for a moment eyeing the passengers, who had spread themselves over as much seat room as possible. Two men shoved along, leaving an unoccupied place on the long seat.

"Ah, ha," said Stormonth to himself. "This is luck. I've got a seat downtown."

CHAPTER III.

Two blocks further on the motorman saw a lady on the crossing make the beckoning gesture which women use when they want to have a street car stop. The motorman turned his lever and the woman stepped aboard the car, which again began to bowl merrily along on its way.

The woman paused, and, with a queenly gesture, surveyed the car.

Every seat was taken.

CHAPTER IV.

But Stormonth was quick to grasp the situation.

Rising from his seat and lifting his hat, he said, politely: "Madame won't you have this seat?"

Then he started to go out on the platform. A voice arrested his progress. It was the lady who, before accepting the seat, turned toward him and said, distinctly:

"Thank you."

The color fled from Stormonth's face, leaving it white as marble. He passed his hand over his eyes as if to brush away the evil phantasmagoria of a dream.

"I beg your pardon, but what did you say?" he stammered faintly.

"Thank you," repeated the lady.

A low moan came from Stormonth's purple lips, followed by a shriek of unearthly laughter. The shock had been too great.

The man whom kindly friends led home that morning was a raving maniac.

THEIR MISCALCULATION.

Citizen—I suppose you will agree with me that education is a necessity for our people?

The Defeated Ward Candidate—You're dead right it is. If the blokes wot was my party's judges at the polls had a known the least t'ing about arit'metic I'd a' been elected by a safe majority.

THE FALL OF JACK GILLESPIE.

This fell when dinner time was—

'Twixt the first and the second—
That oor mon Jack cam' home again
To his rooms ahint the club.

An' syne he laughed, an' syne he sang,
An' syne we thocht him fou,
An' syne he trumped his partner's trick,
An' garred his partner rue.

Then up and spake an elder mon,
That held the spade its ace:
"God save the lad! Whence comes the licht
That whimples on his face?"

An' Jack he sniggered, an' Jock he smiled,
An' ower the card brim wunk:—
"I'm a' too fresh fra' the stirrup-peg,
May be that I'm drunk."

"There's whuskey brewed in Galashiels,
An' L. L. L. forbye;
But never liquor lit the low
That keeks fra' oot your eye.

"There's a thrid of hair on your dress coat breast
Aboon thec heart a wee?"

"Oh! that is fra' the long-haired Syke
That slobber ower me?"

"Oh! lang haired Sykes are lovin' beasts,
Au' terrier dogs are fair,
But never yet was terrier born
Wi' ell-lang golden hair!

"There's a smirch o' pouthier on your breast,
Below the left lappel."

"Oh! that is fra' my auld cigar,
Whenas the stump end fell."

"Mon Jock, he smoke the Trichi coarse,
For ye are short of cash,
An' best Havanas couldna leave
Sae white and pure an' ash.

"This nicht ye stoped a story braid,
An' stoped it wi' a curse—
Last nicht ye told that tale yourself,
An' capped it wi' a worse.

"Oh! we're no fou! Oh! we're no fou!
But plainly we can ken
Ye're fallin', fallin', fra' the band
O' cantie singlee men!"

An' it fell when sirris-shaws were sere,
An' the nights were long an' mirk,
In braw new creeks, wi' a gowden ring,
Oor Jockie gaed to Kirk.

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

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