

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.



CHAPTER XXIV.
JUST IN TIME.

Hardly had the engine commenced to slacken its speed, as it approached the smoking bridge, when Louis leaped to the ground, and in a moment was examining the extent of the damage. He saw the stringers were so weakened that it would be impossible to run the engine over.

Quickly comprehending what must be done, Louis started on a rapid run for a farm house on a hill, about one hundred rods distant. It took him but a few moments to reach it. In the yard he met the owner of the farm.

The two recognized each other at once.

"God in Israel! Holy Moses, Louis Patterson, what on earth are you doing here?" was the familiar and astonished salutation. "Are you mad? Fleeing from a bride that only wants wings to be an angel, Louis Patterson, in the name of—"

"Stop, for heaven's sake, stop and hear me," said Louis. "I want a horse; the fleetest one in your stable, I want it quick. Not a second to lose. The man who is now leading Mary Nordrum to the altar is a villain and a black-hearted scoundrel. He is not Louis Patterson. I must get there before the ceremony."

By this time Farmer Dickson was dancing all over the yard. He was too excited to be of any help.

"Hallo there, Hank, go and bring out the little gray—Sam, for the love of all the saints, put a saddle—Jane, wife, Molly come out here and help, quick, quick; taint Louis Patterson that's being— good Lord, I forgot, every blessed one of them have gone to the wedding. Take any horse you want. They are all good ones; hitch up—"

But Louis was not listening; he had heard very little what the old gentleman said; he had rushed into the stable, put a saddle and bridle on the only horse there, and was just mounting when Farmer Dickson yelled out:

"Give him the reins; let him have his own way; he is the fastest horse in the country. Don't be afraid to let him jump. Nerry Jim never yet lost a race, and by the eternal heavens he won't lose this one—stars and snakes see him go!"

And before the honest old farmer had finished his exciting instructions to the rider, Nerry Jim was a mile away, leaping astonishingly long strides, gathering himself at each jump as though his limbs were steel springs and plunging ahead like the swift wind, the noble brute seeming to understand that it was no common race he was making that day.

Nerry Jim doubled himself right down to work. His big nostrils were extended wide and broad, his beautiful neck was stretched straight out from his little body, as if he expected to win the race by passing under the wire only a hand's breadth ahead of time; his mane and tail stood out full length with the wind, and ere half the distance was made, the white foam completely encircled his black body.

It was ten miles ride from Farmer Dickson's house. When the bold rider mounted his steed he had twenty-six minutes to make the distance. The best he expected to do was to reach the scene of the festivities before the ceremony was finished.

Nerry Jim needed no urging.

"He was doing his best; and Louis felt that was enough if no mishaps overtook him. Farm houses were past but they were deserted.

One little village was reached and not a soul was seen. Everybody was at the wedding except the bridegroom.

On yonder rise in plain sight was the school-house and a little further on was the church building, but the daring rider saw neither; his eyes were strained to catch the first sight of scenes beyond.

The horse and rider may safely be left to proceed alone to the Nordrum farm. The reader can reach there first and just in time for the completion of the outdoor arrangements for the wedding festivities.

The trees which line the lawn are festooned with wreaths of prairie flowers, fruit blossoms and gaily colored ribbons. Two parallel banks of flowers a few feet apart and running the whole length of the lawn, mark the boundaries of the green aisle along which the bride must pass to reach the altar.

The altar is a raised platform, over which and high enough for a person to stand upright, is a covering made of branches of trees, and wreaths of evergreens, and the sides are bedecked with flowers, surrounded with a dense thicket of hot-house plants.

On either side the aisle rough seats have been placed and these are now occupied by the guests, who have come from far and near to witness the marriage ceremony and participate in the wedding festival.

It is a gay throng, a merry, laughing, chattering gathering of hard-working, industrious people.

Inside the house there seems but little stir for such an hour. There is a quietness unusual, more like preparation for a funeral, than a marriage. Most of the bridesmaids have been ready for some time. They, too, mistake the sound of the music surrounding the altar for a dirge. There is a mysterious something constantly suggesting something but gayety and cheerfulness.

THE ANGEL OF THE HOUSE.

These four gray walls are but the bodily shell. Whereof my lady of the brave blue eyes Is the immortal soul. All sweet replies Are spiritual records of a touch, known well. The five the tone within a golden bell. Per- sde them with gentle atmosphere. The things are just, here-if she being here— The breath that makes the rose tree sweet to smell.

Through sunshine and through shadow and through gloom. With mirth and gracious courage for her ways. And goodness ever forth, but never spent. She passes with light hands from room to room. And sweetly grows before h— and the days Are full and quietly round— and content.

STRAWBER'S STORY.

I am not an ordinary or commonplace individual in any sense of the word, and I flatter myself that among gentlemen I make a very creditable appearance. I have often been told that my frank, open countenance is a passport for worth and honesty, and my language has always been of the best, as my parents were too poor to keep servants. I have recently learned, however, that a man's appearance and previous record may have nothing to do with the case, and that there are occasions when nothing will avail against direct circumstantial evidence.

In this particular case my best friend happened to be the De Clanceys, a young couple who live in town and occupy a medium-sized room on the third floor front of a large and respectable boarding-house, kept by a lady with long line of ancestors, and whose husband, the possessor of enormous wealth and a member of the then existing Four Hundred, died suddenly, leaving her penniless. I have never seen the lady, elf, but having lived in boarding-houses more or less all my life, I know her as a type far better than my friends, the young couple referred to, who, having but just transcended the honeymoon period, have placed themselves for a brief spell under her protection preparatory to embarking upon the chop-sea of housekeeping.

In search of a type for a new picture that I hoped soon to place on exhibition, I had cut loose from the metropolis, and I was rustivating on the outskirts of Boston. One day while I was Dreaming of color, and thinking out my new creation, I received from New York an invitation for a dance at the Von Blumers', which had been forwarded to me, and which was to take place that very evening. I determined to accept almost before tearing open the envelope for Maude Von Blumer is a great favorite of mine, I felt that I had an unusual claim on her regard.

"For who knows," I said to myself, "but this may be the turning point in my career?" and I determined at the most favorable opportunity to ask her again. I hastily packed up my dress suit case, caught the 12 o'clock express, and at precisely 6:30 I found myself in front of my favorite restaurant on 6th avenue. Although cast in a delicate mold, and the possessor of a highly sensitive organization, I am by no means birdlike in my appetite, and a loud call from my inner man forced me first to consider this imperative claimant. "After which," I said to myself, "I will seek a hotel, don my evening dress, and at 10 o'clock be ready for the fray."

I entered and was about to seat myself in my favorite nook when my favorite waiter, with an expectant flourish of his napkin, was placing the dinner card before my plate, when happening to glance up I saw, over the Paderewski head of a foreign nobleman, the beaming face of my friend De Clancey and the more composed features of his charming young wife. What could be more opportune? And what could be more cordial than their reception of me?

"Thank goodness," I said, as I seated myself at the end of their table, "that you have just begun, and that fate has been so extremely kind to me."

"And to us all, my dear fellow," said De Clancey. "Occasionally we grow tired of the young man who comes down to dinner every evening in a dress suit and never goes anywhere; of the elderly gentleman opposite, who has met all the distinguished people in the world; of the ailing widow, who has her capsules brought to her with her soup, and who is more to the point of Mrs. Morrellton's dishes, and we steal away to get a square meal." But for you to drop in upon us in this way is the very best of all, isn't it, my dear?"

I explained the purpose of my visit and the presence of my dress suit case, and how it was necessary for me to leave them immediately after dinner in order to go to my hotel and make myself presentable for the evening.

"You will do nothing of the sort," said De Clancey, "will he, my dear? After dinner we will go round to Mrs. Morrellton's, which is but a step from here. Next to us on the stone floor there is a unoccupied room. While you are here you must be our guest."

"But my dear fellow," I protested, "the hall won't be over till the small hours of the morning. I don't want to wake up every one in the house, and, besides, I couldn't think of putting you to so much trouble. If you were in your own house it would be different."

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I accepted the key with a mild protest, inwardly glad, however, that luck had done so much for me, for it occurred to me almost instantly that I would sleep late in the morning and would breakfast some time after De Clancey was obliged to leave for business, and the prospect of breakfasting with Mrs. De Clancey was very agreeable to me. Although quiet, Mrs. De Clancey is a charming woman, particularly in a tete-a-tete. She is one of those women who shine best when there is no third person present. I had proposed to her twice before she married De Clancey and never quite understood why she preferred him, but this never interfered with our friendship. Indeed, I think De Clancey always liked me better for it.

In a moment after leaving the restaurant we were at the Morrellton's, and so busy were we laughing and chatting that it never occurred to any of us as anything peculiar that De Clancey, in the most natural way, should unlock the door for us. I thought of it afterward, however, in a way that did not reflect much credit on De Clancey's intellect.

The hall was a great success as indeed the Van Blumer affairs always are, and Maude was especially nice to me. It is true that she rejected me again, but her "No" was not so emphatic as on three former occasions and I was not the least bit discouraged. I felt that it was only a question of time now, and I was content to wait. Maude introduced me to a howling swell named Castleton, who, when we broke up at 3 in the morning, insisted on my getting into his coupe and being driven around to my quarters for the night. Here I must confess to a little deception, though not in any way wishing to reflect on the De Clanceys, who are charming in every way and the best of friends I have. But I told Castleton to take me around to the Waldorf, and when his coupe had vanished around the corner I set out to walk to Mrs. Morrellton's, for the fact is I didn't want Maude's friend to know that I was staying at a boarding-house.

As I remarked before, I am naturally delicate, and as I inserted the key in the door of Mrs. Morrellton's establishment I was very sleepy and tired from the long hours of dancing, and a peaceful smile played over my face as I thought of the little bed that was waiting for me upstairs. I have had a large and extensive experience with latch keys, and I did not expect this particular door to open at once. First I inserted the key right side up, then up-side-down. Then I turned it both ways, first softly, then quickly. Then I tried the other door, found a key-hole there, and repeated my experience. When I grew tired of one door I would try another. Finally I lighted a match and looked for another key-hole, but there was none, so I sat down on the doorstep for a moment to think. At this moment it became apparent to me that two men were watching me from the gloom of a neighboring house and while I was debating what had best be done I saw the watchman sauntering along slowly, swinging his club. I retired within the storm door, from which point of observation I presently saw the two men hold a whispered consultation with the guardian of the peace. To retreat was now impossible, so I boldly advanced to the step, and in my most self-possessed manner I called out: "Officer, will you kindly see what you can do with this key? For some reason or other it doesn't work."

The watchman approached, while the two men stood in the background. He silently tried the key, it a match, examined it, and then he turned on me. "Oh," said he, "so this is your little game, is it? Well, you are a cool one, young feller, you'll have to go along wid me to the station-house."

"What do you mean?" said I, "with your impertinence! Can't you see I'm a gentleman? The idea of insulting a man who is trying to enter his own house!"

"Your own house," he grinned. "Sure you never saw this house before, or, if you did, it was for no good. Come along now wid you, an' no gassin'!"

"But, my dear sir," said I, "let me explain. There suddenly flashed over me the picture of De Clancey opening the door, and the knowledge that by mistake he had given me the wrong key. Let me explain, my dear sir. The key—"

"You can explain later on," he remarked, hustling me off the step. "Come on wid ye and none of your tongue," and he waved his club in the air.

"Look here," I shouted, "I've had enough of this, and if you don't instantly ring that bell and wake my friends I'll make it hot for you tomorrow."

I flatter myself that when I'm on my dignity I am quite impressive, and the watchman instantly lowered his club.

"Sure, sir," he said, apologetically, "that's a different matter. If yez had friends in the house why didn't you say so?"

I walked back up the steps and rang the bell furiously three or four times, for my blood was up. Then we all sat down and waited, for the two strangers had moved up so they would not miss one word of what was going on. After an interminable period, as it seemed to me, I heard steps on the stair, the door was slowly opened, and a formidable face was thrust out.

"Well," said the man whom I had never seen before, "what is it?"

I arose promptly and faced the unknown.

"Are you, sir," I questioned timidly, "are you the elderly gentleman who has met all the distinguished people in the world?"

"No, sir, I am not," he growled.

"What the devil do you mean?"

"Perhaps, sir," feebly suggested, "you are the young man who always comes down to dinner in a dress-suit."

"Look here, you," he shouted, "if you don't tell me what you want, and be quick about it, 'I'll—I'll break your face."

This was something I had not bargained for. Behind me I felt the firm clutch of the officer of the law and I was thoroughly rattled.

"Maybe," I stammered, "you are the widow who takes her capsules with her soup?"

"See here," he roared, "this is too much," and he opened the door and made a pass at me. Then seeing the watchman, and taking in the situation at a glance, he calmed down and observed: "Ah, watchman, burglar, eh? and in a dress-suit, too. Well, well, this is most extraordinary."

"No, sir," I protested, "I am not a burglar. I am a peace-abiding citizen, and I came to spend the night with my friends, the De Clanceys? Of course, you know the De Clanceys?"

"No, I don't either," he laughed. "Never heard of them. Take him away, officer, and I'll testify in the morning."

By this time quite a crowd had assembled at the foot of the steps, and as the watchman grabbed me and wheeled me around I stood there like an animal at bay. Evidently we had made considerable noise, for in this brief instant I saw heads popping out of the windows opposite. Then I was hustled rapidly down the steps and off toward the station-house. There was no helping it. I was doomed. But with a last desperate attempt, like a drowning man who clutches at a straw, I raised my voice and shouted: "De Clancey! De Clancey!" at the top of my lungs.

"Is that you, George?" came the faint answer from what was now half way down the block. "Hey there, watchman, wait a minute!"

"There," I hysterically cried, "don't you hear that?" The officer stopped. I was saved.

The next morning I met the man who had opened the door for me the night before.

"I have been told, sir," I remarked, respectfully accosting him, "of the habits and peculiarities of most of the other occupants of this house. May I inquire, sir, what position you occupy?"

"Certainly, sir," he replied, while an amused smile played over his bronzed face. "I am the husband of a lady who married a drummer, and I returned yesterday from a three months' trip."—Hartford Times.

The Alamo.

The Alamo was a fort near San Antonio, Texas, so called because of the almond trees (alamo) that grew near it. During the war of Texan independence against Mexico, 140 Texans under Col. William Travis were besieged in the fort by some 4,000 Mexicans under Gen. Santa Anna. The siege began February 23, 1836. After a few days thirty-two men from San Felipe managed to pass the Mexican lines, making the garrison all told 175 persons, including women and children. On March 6 the Mexicans assaulted twice, but were driven back; a third time they captured the fort, killing every person in it except nine. Col. Davy Crockett surrendered himself on a promise of safety, but was murdered by Santa Anna's orders. Col. Bowie, the inventor of the bowie knife, was killed as he lay ill in bed, but not until he had killed several of his assailants. Major Evans was shot while trying to explode the powder in the magazine. Three others were murdered with Crockett. Only three persons—a woman, a child, and a servant—were permitted to escape. The Mexicans had lost 1,600 men in the three attacks. On April 21, 1836, the Texans met the Mexicans at San Jacinto, Texas, and their battle-cry was, "Remember the Alamo!" The Mexican army was entirely defeated, and Santa Anna himself was taken prisoner.

Monkeys and the Sick.

Monkeys, with some notable exceptions, are some degrees worse than savage men in their treatment of the sick. On the new Junna Canal, at Delhi, monkeys swarm in trees upon the banks, and treat their sick comrades in true monkey fashion.

The colony by the canal being overcrowded, and as a consequence unhealthy, did, and probably does still, suffer from various unpleasant diseases. When one monkey is so obviously unwell as to offend the feelings of the others, a few of the larger monkeys watch it, and, taking a favorable opportunity, knock it into the canal. If it is not drowned at once, the sick monkey is pitched in again after it regains the trees, and either drowned or forced to keep aloof from the flock.

At the London Zoological Gardens the monkeys torment a sick one without mercy, and unless it is at once removed from the cage it has little chance of recovery. The small monkeys bite and pinch it; the larger ones swing it around by the tail. When it dies, as many monkeys as can find room, sit on its body.

Dairy Utensils.

The question is sometimes raised whether it is possible to always keep wooden dairy utensils perfectly clean. It is no good policy to let milk stand for any length of time in wooden pails or receptacles, but wooden churns and butter workers are all right, and can be kept perfectly sweet and bacteric-proof by the use of lots of hot water.

Somewhat we never feel at home with the people who are so nice they won't eat apple without first peeling them.

YARN MADE OF LEATHER.

Wornout Harness Shoes and Belting Turned to Account by a Yankee.

Old leather belting, leather scraps, old boots, and, in fact, every kind of waste leather, no matter how old, decayed or soiled it may be, is now going to be utilized in the making of yarn, says the Bulletin. A process has been introduced by a Fitchburg inventor for reducing old leather to a pulp, and then drawing the pulp down to a thread. The work is done by the use of a vacuum bleacher, a grinding machine, and a device for drawing a leather strand from pulp. The vacuum bleacher is a kettle arrangement, from which the air is pumped after the leather is put in. Then ingredients are introduced which cleanse the oil and other foreign matter from the leather. The next process consists in running the cleaned piece of leather through a machine made like a grinder. In this the pieces are ground to a pulp by revolving blades. Next the powder-like stuff is mixed with water and allowed to stand till it becomes a lot the consistency of melted glue. Then it is poured into a tank in which there are a series of holes side by side. As the pulp emerges from these holes in long strands it passes between rollers, where it is rubbed into a circular form as it leaves the worsted card. The rubbing process serves to separate the strands as well as to give them sufficient twist to strengthen and solidify them. As the strands leave the rub rollers they are run through grooved wheels, in which a press wheel fits into the groove above the strands, thus further solidifying the strand. From this point the strand is wound upon a bobbin.

Doesn't Despise the Toadstool.

A thoughtless man, wandering through the woods, caught sight of a cluster of giant toadstools growing at the foot of a tree and began to slash them with his walking stick.

"Now, what on earth do you want to do that for?" asked his thoughtful companion.

"Why, they're no good. They're poisonous and unsightly, too," replied the cane wielder.

"Well," retorted the thoughtful man, "they're one of the most useful things that grow. They are excellent proof of the old chestnut that everything in nature has its use and value to man."

"It's the first time I ever heard of it," said the thoughtless man, dubiously, whereupon the thoughtful one, at the very first opportunity, took the thoughtless one into a big city drug store. Heaped high in a glass case on one of the counters were hundreds of old shaped things that looked like pieces of chamois skin. It was all odorless and as soft as velvet almost to the touch.

"What are they?" asked the thoughtless man in surprise.

"Dried toadstools," replied the thoughtful man.

"Nobody ought to be without them," chimed in the druggist. "There isn't a better simple cure for nosebleed known than a bit of toadstool thrust into the bleeding nostril. Toadstools make excellent dressing for certain kinds of wounds, are highly valued by surgeons, and are in high demand in hospitals. Germans use toadstools extensively as pine lighters also. The dried fungus makes perfect tinder. It is cut in long strips, and these in turn are clipped at the edge in a sort of fringe and tipped with phosphorus and sulphur just like match heads. By rubbing the fringe against any rough surface, it ignites just like a match, and burns like punk. If you thrust a bit into the bowl of your pipe you can light the tobacco with ease in the highest wind in the biggest storm. In fact, the harder it blows the better your pipe will light. Hunters and fishermen find this sort of a match much preferable to any other. A dried toadstool makes a curiosity, too, for it is astonishing how few people know what it is when they see it."

A Strange Match.

It is an historical fact that Frederick of Prussia formed the idea of compelling unions between the tallest of the two sexes in his dominions, in the hope of having an army of giants. It so happened that during a rather long ride the King passed a particularly tall young woman, an utter stranger. He alighted from his horse, and insisted upon her delivering a letter to the commanding officer of his "crack" regiment. The letter contained the mandate that the bearer was instantly to be married to the tallest unmarried man in the service. The young woman was somewhat terrified, and, not understanding the transaction gave an old woman the letter, which was conveyed to the commanding officer, and that old woman was in a short time married to the handsomest and finest man in the "crack" regiment. It is hardly necessary to say that the marriage was an unhappy one—particularly so to the old woman.

A Sea-Dog's Criticism of Steadman

An amusing story is told of an uneducated mariner's views on Mr. Steadman's views. One of the latter was given to the sea dog to read in midocean. For lack of something better to do he condensed to wade through it, and then this colloquy ensued between the mariner and the companion, who tells the tale:

"Well, this man Steadman seems to have a pretty big notion of some of these poets."

"Yes, he has."

"I wonder why. Is he a poet himself?"

"Yes."

"Oh, that accounts for it. He'd be sure to praise the other 'cause he's in the swim with 'em."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

"Tux came" is said to be the most popular drink in the market.