Curious Adventures of John, Mary and Beauty

BY EDWARD TOWNSEND.

(Continued.)

TO THE surprise of Mary and John, when they reached the entrance of the theater they heard a caller urging the people to come in, reminding them that each would receive a piece of money.

They asked the count about this and he explained that all who entered, except those, like their party, occupying boxes where they could be seen, but not see, were paid to attend when a new piece was performed. In that way people got money to pay for admission to theaters where old and entertaining plays were on.

The count was amazed to hear that admission was charged to new plays in the country of the guests.

"You people must be made of money," he said, "or be of a simple and trusting nature to pay to see a play before they know that it is entertaining. We allow admission to be charged only after a play has been judged and commended. Surely judges should be paid."

Boxes where the quality sat were well filled, but it took much eloquence and higher prices to fill the ordinary seats. Then the curtain went up. John fell asleep before the first act was over, but Mary was kept awake wondering how the actresses could change their gowns and hats so often without the stage manager calling out, "well, my dear, are you ever going to be ready?"

It was some time before one could tell whether or not the play would score. The favoring turn came when the heroine made her great speech. This caused such a storm of excitement that Mary had the official censor send her a copy, which is given below:

The hero had just left the stage after saying, "well, so long," in a shivering gasp denoting a psychic thrill. The heroine began her speech far up stage, with her back to the audience, but soon turned, found the spotlight and finished bending over the orchestra. She spoke thus:

Ah! as when the soul, gnawed by the remorseless tooth of doubt,
Grilled in the fires of earthly desires, seeks freedom;
Or, soaring cloudwise, as when comes the Truth of Time,
Grisley, grim, glorious—Then let it go;
Or, even as this hateful lie called dulls
The rosey promise of incarnate cause,
Even thus will the victim of existence triumph and defeat!

For a moment the audience was stunned by the beauty and grandeur of this speech, but when it also realized its pitiless truth a roar went up which woke John in time to put a dime in the chocolate slot machine before the curtain was down. Mary did not quite understand, but instead of asking about it she consulted the next day's papers.

One told her that the great speech was evidently a passionate appeal for the liberation of enthralled woman; a second, that it was a veiled attack on stand pettism (this critic demanded the suppression of the play as endangering foreign relations), while the third critic asserted that the speech was nothing less than a demagogic bid for 2-cent fares and 3-cent beers.

John, hearing all the fuss about the speech, asked his friends Gobemouche what he thought of it.

"Why," replied the well informed person, "that speech was never written by the blacksmith; it was what he said when, he hammered his thumb on the anvil. He can't read or write, and his little girl was taking the play from his dictation and supposed his language when he hammered his thumb was part of the play."

"The literary section of the Woman's club meets this afternoon to discuss the six best sellers," said Aunt Sue to Mary. "You must come with me because Miss Hoppe is to do a symbol dance expressive of the mysticism of Little Bo Peep. Then cambric tea will be served while the club listens to a paper on 'The Value of the Period at the Ends of Sentences.'"

"This is the age of progress," said the first speaker, "but I have never progressed far enough to understand why there are always six best sellers. Why not five—or seven?

"Some say it is caused by sun spots, some by the highest number of spots on dice. I have tried to anticipate the six best sellers in my book purchases, but I never hit more than two out of six. How is one to know?

"I remember one best seller whose heroine was not the loveliest and most fascinating creature on earth, whose hero was not the strangest and most imperturable. Who'd buy such a book and take a chance of getting a best seller?"

"You shouldn't buy 'em," said Beauty. "I'll make a law against reading 'em. Haven't the people who write poor books a right to live? Huh! I'll see to it that a law is passed which will make readers buy poor books or none at all. I'm for the poor author. Here are writers running about monopolizing the market, and I won't stand it."

"But, your serenity," said the lady president, humbly, "nobody has to write books."

"Yes they have," snapped Beauty. "I have to, don't I?"

"But," persisted the president, mildly, "people who can't sell their books oughtn't to write. They should design cutouts for the comic papers. Readers have rights."

"That's the talk of an unmitigated scoundrel!" exclaimed Beauty. "People write books because it's a pleasure. Are the poor to be deprived of pleasure? Not while I am on the throne. Tell the book stores that next month the six poorest books are to be the best sellers—or I'll take away their licenses to do business."

"Whee!" shouted Gobemouche, poking his head in at the window. "That's the stuff! Give it to 'em hot and plenty, your serenity, and the people will stand with you shoulder to shoulder, back to back, and elbow to elbow."

Then he nimbly dodged into the street, barely missing an article on the spirituality of G. B. Shaw.

Beauty followed.

"I'm going home," she said, "to get my Teddy Bear; I know he'd love this fight."

"Little Bo-peep," said the dancer, before she began to dance, "is one of our most profound world poems. Is man a palpable entity or a frost?

"What did little Bo-peep do when she lost her sheep? Did she go about writing letters to the papers and kicking about her stroke handicap and the condition of the putting greens? No!

"She let them alone. There's the secret of success. Let things alone and they'll come home when all the other places are closed.

"Does not this prove that we are imponderable? If my mere words do not convince you wait until you have seen my dance."

"But where is she?" asked Mary, for the dancer disappeared behind a curtain.

"Oh, her dance is out of sight," explained Aunt Sue. "You must visualize it while saying nine times nine backward. If that doesn't come out all right you don't get any cambric tea."

But tea was not served; the meeting was broken up by the intrusion of the Count calling loudly for John.

"The Street's in a panic!" he yelled. "Come, Sir John, you must do something for the market or we'll all be ruined."

"What have I got to do with it?" asked John, who was hanging around for tea.

"You are Minister of Finance. Help! Help!"

"I'm not!" declared John. "I've got only a nickel to my name, and I need 10 cents more for a ticket to the bleachers this afternoon."

"Oh, yes, Johnnie," said Beauty, who was trying to toss her Teddy Bear so that it would hang from the chandelier. "You're Minister, fast enough. I appointed you last night in my dreams. Get busy, Johnnie, or I'll investigate you."

John hurried to the street with the Count and found a terrible state of things. A number of the Cabinet had cornered all the marbles in the country at a cent a hundred and expected to sell them at 10 cents a hundred and buy grandstand seats for the afternoon game.

But a piratical rascal had discovered how marbles were made and was turning them out of a hot air furnace so fast that the price had slumped to a figure where those who had rigged the market couldn't sell their holdings for enough to get a peek through a knothole at the game. And Casey was going to pitch for the home team. It was too provoking!

"What can I do to relieve the situation?" asked John, aghast.

"Open the treasury so that money will become more plentiful, then the price of marbles will go up so that we can have boxes for the game," cried the count.

"But," protested John, "if the price of marbles goes up so will the price of other things—base ball seats for instance."

"Look here!" exclaimed the Count, sternly.

"If you want to keep your job as minister of finance you just chuck that political economy prattle. Open the safe!"

Before John could take the padlock off the treasury rain began to fall and a sign was hung up, "No game."

"There," moaned the count, "I never was so vexed in all my life. Not even rain checks saved from the ruin! The worst thing about it is that there are no widows and orphans."

"I should say that was the best thing," said John, who was tender hearted.

"No it ain't," responded the count, gloomily. "If we had widows and orphans the papers could say that they stood all the loss. That would save our faces. I never want to see another marble. Let's play tag until it's time for cabinet meeting."

"What shall I do with all this money?" asked John, for the vault was now open and money was runing all over the lot.

"Give it to me!" cried Gobemouche, the man in the street, eagerly.

"No you don't," commanded the count. "Never let that fellow get a cent if you can help it.

"We tried that once; gave him a roll as big around as a barrel, and what in ever did he do with it? My word! he didn't have it long enough to buy an automobile before he was playing the races.

"Then the bookmakers who won the money from him lost it to that rascal who is now making marbles, and we did have a deuce of a time getting it back into the street again.

"The cabinet will come to order. The first business before us is the bill to regulate the artillery. I move we adjourn."

"Hold on!" cried the minister of War. "I guess I've got a right to say something. Her Serenity is getting too fresh. She sends me orders that the cabinet is to instruct Parliament that unless it arms the artillery with bows and arrows she won't attend the next review."

"What of it?" demanded the count, impatiently.

"What of it!" repeated the minister of war, indignantly. "If her Serenity does not attend the public won't attend; and if we are not backed by public opinion how do we get our appropriation? You are a fine old count, you are!"

"Why not bows and arrows?" demanded Gobemouche, who had come in through the fireplace. "If an enemy should attack us and find us armed with bows and arrows they'd fall dead with surprise. That's better than wasting powder and shot on 'em. How do you think I'd do for vaudeville? If a man's a man for a' that what is he for dinner? That's a hot roast, eh?"

Gobemouche dodged the ink well the count threw at him, looked out of the window and shouted, "Sun's out! Game at 4:30!"

This important news of course broke up the council, for which John was glad, being in doubt on how to vote on the artillery bill. He knew, there was no artillery to arm. He spoke of this to Gobemouche as they hurried to the ball game.

"I can explain that," said Gobemouche, "in less time than it will take to tell it. In the even years we have an artillery force, but no arms, in the odd years arms, but no forces. If we ever got 'em both together a certain person would want to do something with 'em and we'd have to go to war. So the older statesmen adopted the plan I've explained and we have the blessings of peace cinched."

At this moment a practice ball was knocked over the fence, Gobemouche caught it neatly and was let in through the gate, leaving John waiting for some one to come along and take him in. He waited but a short time before a most peculiar person came along, and not only took him into the game but into his confidence.

(To Be Continued.)

PROGRESS IN CANCER SURGERY

Remarkable Operation of Removing Six Organs Performed with Success.

What is described by physicians as a remarkable surgical operation for cancer was performed at the Hahnemann hospital, New York City, with apparent success. The patient was Mrs. George Blydenburg, wife of George Blydenburg, a wealthy contractor of Bay Shore, Long Island.

Mrs. Blydenburg entered the hospital two weeks ago, after several physicians had been consulted, all of whom refused to undertake the operation, fearing fatal results. Mrs. Blydenburg was suffering from a cancerous growth of the abdominal organs. Dr. Walter G. Crump, after an X-ray examination, found that her death was only a question of a few days unless something was done and decided to perform the operation at once.

He sent for Dr. George King, the patient's family physician. The operation was witnessed by ten physicians, several from out of town, one being a woman from Schenectady, and Dr. Judson Sanders of Reading, Pa., professor of obstetrics. The operation lasted for nearly three hours. In that time six organs were removed, including the upper portion of the bladder, the vermiform appendix, ten inches of the ilium and the ascending colon.

According to the physicians, operations on these individual organs have been performed, but never in a combination of six. In performingf the operation, to insure its success, it was necessary to remove the large glands from the abdominal blood vessels, any injury to which would have been certain death. Throughout the process the patient was under anesthetics. Before the operation she had a pulse of eighty, and after it only 100, much to the surprise of the surgeons.

The third day after the operation Mrs. Blydenburg showed great improvement, the news of the operation soon spread throughout the medical fraternity and many physicians called at the hospital to see the patient.

In commenting on the operation Dr. King said that it appeared now that the time was not far distant when almost any excepting the vital organs can be removed without danger of death. "The mortality of cancer which is so appalling," said the physician, "is the mortality of delay. If patients would only consult physicians early, and if physicians in general would appreciate that it only takes a few weeks to develop into a hopeless case, then cancer would, with other conditions, take its proper place as to mortality."

Mrs. Blydenburg's condition has so improved that she has asked for solids to eat. She is about 50 years old, and was in good health until a year ago. If she recovers, the physicians say her case will be a matter of importance to medical history.—New York Tribune.