

A Night of Mistakes

YOUNG Mr. Winkle and his wife had just arrived in San Francisco from the country. After some days' search for a suitable house Mr. Winkle selected a large, old, two-story building standing in neglected grounds. It was No. 601 Blank street.

He contemplated opening a boarding house. Young Mrs. Winkle thought that a neat sign inscribed "Table Board, Home Cooking," would prove an irresistible attraction to the homeless public. So they moved in forthwith.

That evening they felt very lonely in the great, hollow rooms, which were strewn with their household goods like the debris left by a fresher. It was ten o'clock before they were able to fire up in the stove and brew themselves a cup of tea.

"Ophelia, dear," said Mr. Winkle, as he seated himself on a trunk with a cup of the mild beverage in his hand, "we don't know a soul in the city, and, of course, we shall lead a very quiet and uneventful life at first. But we must be as cheerful as possible under the circumstances."

At that moment there was a ring at the door bell, and Mr. Winkle took the lamp and went to the door. In a few moments he uttered such an exclamation of astonishment and dismay that his wife flew to his side in deep alarm.

Lying on the veranda close to the door, wrapped in an old blanket, was a little baby, fast asleep.

"Goodness sakes alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Winkle, carefully picking up the little stranger. "Where did it come from, Erastus?"

"Somebody has abandoned it," said Mr. Winkle. "I've heard of such things before. Well, I suppose we'll have to take it in for the present."

"Of course we will," chirped Mrs. Winkle. "The sweet little woody-tootsy. It's fast asleep."

She cuddled it in her arms and carried it in, and Mr. Winkle followed, feeling rather pleased than otherwise. Mrs. Winkle carefully laid it on a pile of loose bedding and ran to look at it every two minutes. Mr. Winkle cheerfully continued his task of arranging the furniture.

There was another emphatic ring at the bell, and Mr. Winkle uneasily hurried to the door. A very tall man in livery stood there with a huge basket on his arm.

"Mrs. Travers sends this basket to you with her best wishes. She's just got back from the east, and she wants you to know that she hasn't forgot you," recited the man, lowering his burden and setting it inside the door.

"There must be some mistake, sir," replied Mr. Winkle. "I'm not acquainted with Mrs. Travers."

"Perhaps you ain't, but there's no mistake," said the man. "This is No. 601, and I s'pose Mrs. Travers knows what she's about. I'm her footman, my name is Shafto and I obey orders, that's all. Good evening, sir."

The giant footman departed, and Mr. and Mrs. Winkle peeped under the white cloth that covered the basket. It seemed to be full of cakes, jellies, sweetmeats and delicacies of every sort.

"There must be some mistake about it," gasped Mr. Winkle. "Why didn't I ask him where Mrs. Travers lives? However, we will not touch it, of course. The matter will be explained to-morrow, no doubt."

Shafto, the footman, went ponderously down the street. Under a corner lamp he came upon 15 men, evidently a brass band, as they all carried instruments. The leader was anxiously searching in his pockets.

"What the devil was that number?" he growled. "It's lucky the young fellow wrote it down for me. I've got it here somewhere. O, here it is," and he produced a crumpled bit of paper, "601. That's the number plain enough, but that chap is an awful poor writer. Let's see, we're all here except bass drum and cymbals. Potts is working over in Oakland, but I sent him the number, so I guess he'll find us all right. Come on, boys. The young fellow said he'd be waiting for us at the place."

"Are you going to 601 on this street?" asked Shafto, who had never got over his boyish admiration for a brass band. "I've just come from there. I'll go with you and show you the place and hold your torch for you."

cheeks were bulging as they blew "La Fiesta" march from their blaring horns.

As the last strains died away a loud husky voice burst upon them:

"Darn my skin if that ain't real good, boys! That's the genuine article, sure's you're born."

Looking around, the musician saw a short, stubby man leaning over the gate. He wore a fur cap and a blanket coat.

"That's the fust music I've heerd fur years, boys," he said. "I'm Bill Spelt. I've jest got back from Alaska. I made my pile and dug out fur Frisco. This music makes me feel real good. Give us another tune, boys."

The leader looked at the house. A light was bobbing about like a will-o'-the-wisp from window to window, but no one came out.

Presently the martial strains of a popular march jarred the window panes.

"Bully, boys!" ejaculated Bill Spelt, as the brazen notes ceased. "That's meat and drink and 40-rod whisky all in one. Boys, I see a saloon down the street, and—"

But at that moment the front door opened and Mr. Winkle came out with a lamp in his hand. Mrs. Winkle's dim form appeared behind him. He peered to the right and left like a hen in the dark.

"Gentlemen," he began, tremulously. "I do not know to what we are indebted for this great honor. You have made a mistake, haven't you?"

"No mistake at all, sir," replied the leader, with a sneaker. "That is 601, ain't it? It's all right."

"Will you come in, gentlemen?" said Mr. Winkle, with despairing politeness. "We're hardly situated so as to entertain you as we would wish, but you're welcome, I assure you—very welcome."

Just then a small, shrill voice floated out upon the still air.

"O, my goodness! They've waked the baby!" exclaimed Mrs. Winkle, and she vanished like smoke.

"Thunder!" cried the leader, aghast. "Never mind, gentlemen," said Mr. Winkle, with untiring courtesy. "It's not our baby, you know. Some one abandoned it on our doorstep this very evening. A very singular thing."

"Trot him out!" burst out Bill Spelt, stepping forward. "I hain't hardly seen a kid fur years, pardner. I've been up on the Yukon diggin' gold, and I jest got back. It was tough, pardner. But I was a-scoopin' in the nuggets jest the same. Can't I see the kid, pardner?"

"Certainly, friend," replied Mr. Winkle. "Come in. All come in, gentlemen."

"Well, we've waked up the baby, and I guess we can't do much more damage," said the leader.

So they all went in and stood around amongst the wreckage in the big parlor, and Mrs. Winkle brought in the baby, who blinked at the light and stretched out its little arms toward the shining brass horns.

"Darn my skin!" roared Bill Spelt, in high delight, as the baby's tiny hand clutched his big rough fingers. "See the little toad! There's the makin' of a miner, boys. He kin almost handle a pick a'ready. I've got something here fur the kid."

He thrust a hand deep in his pocket and pulled out a heavy buckskin bag, from which he poured a handful of gold nuggets. Selecting half a dozen of the largest he gave them to Mr. Winkle.

"Keep 'em fur the little feller," he said. "It's a little present fur him. And now I guess we'd better go. Me and my friends here has got a little business to attend to down the street."

"We are greatly obliged for this pleasant call," said Mr. Winkle, somewhat hazily.

"I see 'twas a surprise to you, sir," said the leader. "But a joke is a joke. I thought the young fellow was here, but I s'pose he'll be around to-morrow and explain it all and have the laugh on you."

"Who?" asked Mr. Winkle, hopelessly puzzled.

"Why, the young fellow that hired us."

Mr. Winkle said no more. It was too much for his troubled brain. Bill Spelt, Shafto and the band filed out. In the yard they halted and played "Peek-a-Boo." Then they all went down the street to the saloon where Bill Spelt threw a twenty at the bartender "for a starter," as he said.

Meanwhile several blocks down the street a well-dressed young man was impatiently waiting at the gate of a residence set in beautiful grounds. Beside him stood a man with a bass drum and cymbals.

"What has got the rest of the band?" exclaimed the young man, in a suppressed but angry voice.

"I don't know, sir," replied Potts. "I was working in Oakland, and our leader wrote to me to come, and sent me the number where to meet 'em. He's a terrible careless feller, but I don't see how there could be any mistake."

An hour passed. No band appeared, and the young man was fairly dancing with impatience and rage.

"I'll thrash that idiot of a leader," he burst out. "To play me a trick like this, when he knows it's a serenade, too!"

Just then another young man came up the street, quietly slipped in the gate and stole around the walks under one of the side windows. He carried a guitar in his hand. The first young

man almost foamed with indignation.

"That's Jim Barker," he growled. "He's going to serenade her. Think he can sing, the conceited puppy! Come on, I'll fix him!"

The obedient Potts followed the angry young man through the grounds until they were only a few paces from Jim Barker, who was tinkling in a preparatory way upon his guitar before singing. He seemed somewhat disturbed by the proximity of such unwelcome company, but presently he lifted up his voice in a sweet and tender love song.

"Now, play! Play! Work those cymbals for all they're worth," whispered the first young man, furiously.

Potts had his pay to earn. Instantly the big drum boomed, and the cymbals crashed with a fearful and deafening sound. There was a half minute of this uproar, and then a startling silence. Barker turned upon Potts and his employer with pardonable anger.

"You interrupt me again in that way, Joe Woods, and I'll put your head through that drum," he said, with suppressed fury.

"Ho, ho! What would I be doing all that time?" sneered Woods.

Barker turned away and again tinkled his guitar. Again he essayed his love song. But he had hardly uttered three words when, "Boom! boom! clang! crash!" went the drum and cymbals.

Barker quietly laid his guitar on the grass and pounced on Woods like a catamount. There was a lively and vigorous fight. Occasionally one or the other went down, which event Potts duly signaled with a triumphant thump of his instruments.

Suddenly a shrill, quavering voice broke upon this sanguinary scene. It was the old housekeeper.

"For the land's sake, boys, what are you up to? Miss Beatrice and all the family have gone away to Sacramento for a week, and it's a good thing she isn't here to see your disgraceful carryings-on. Go away home, now, and behave yourselves. Ain't you ashamed!"

When Woods and Barker reached the street they paused.

"Say, Jim," said Woods, frankly, "I didn't do just right, but I was pretty mad. I hired a band to serenade Miss Beatrice and they all went back on me except this faithful drummer. But we're both badly sold, it seems. Let's shake."

They shook hands and parted. Woods and Potts walked up the street together. As they were passing a saloon a troop of men with brass horns came pouring out, jovially and hilariously.

"Darn my skin!" said a stout, husky man, "this is real good. I'm glad to have met ye, boys."

Woods and the leader met face to face.

"Confound you!" thundered Woods, "what do you mean by going back on me in this way?"

"I didn't go back on you," returned the leader. "We went to the place and you wasn't there."

"You never went near the place."

"Well, here's the number you gave me in your own handwriting: 'Blank st., 601,'" said the leader, producing the crumpled bit of paper.

Woods took the paper, glanced at it and burst into a sarcastic laugh.

"Why, you moon-eyed galoot," he said, "you had it upside down. It's '109 Blank st. Look at it!'"

"Thunder!" cried the astounded leader. "I just glanced at the number by a street lamp. And that writing of yours looks about the same either way."

Further recriminations were interrupted by a wild-eyed man who came rushing down the street. In his arms he held a bundle from which there came a lusty wail. It was the unfortunate Winkle.

"Hello, partner!" shouted Bill Spelt. "Has the kid got the colic?"

"Merciful heavens!" ejaculated poor Winkle. "This is another one! You were not gone half an hour when the doorbell rang and we found this! Where's the police station—the jail—the engine house—anything!"

A big policeman came hurrying along. He had espied the fleeing Winkle in the distance and had given chase. The appalling facts were related to him.

"Where do you live? What's your number?" he asked.

"601," replied the shivering Winkle.

"Why, that's the old Foundling asylum," said the policeman. "They've just moved into their new quarters, and I s'pose the parties that left the kids didn't know about the change."

Loud and long was the laughter of the crowd, for they were mellow and ready for mirth.

"Why, I guess that's what my basket was intended for," said Shafto.

"Darn my skin!" roared Bill Spelt, as he again drew out his sack of nuggets. "This little chap shall have the next largest."

The next day the babies, the nuggets and the big basket of delicacies were transferred to the new Foundling asylum, and Mr. and Mrs. Winkle moved.—Boston Globe.

Woodland in the United Kingdom. There can be reckoned as woodland 3,000,000 acres in the United Kingdom at the present day.

TIDE OF TELEPHONE TALK.

The Ebb and Flow of Communications That Come to the Hello Girl Over the Wires.

"It's very curious how talk ebbs and flows over the wire," said a New Orleans telephone girl, according to the Times-Democrat. "Low tide is at 1:30 in the morning. Around about that time several minutes will sometimes elapse when nobody in this whole big city is using the 'phone. When you come to think about it that is something very remarkable. Between one and two o'clock the calls will average from 160 to 180, rarely more, but, for some reason I was never able to understand, business always picks up between two and three—in fact, it nearly doubles. Then, for equally mysterious reasons there is another lull, and the hour between three and four is almost as quiet as between one and two. I have often tried to figure out some theory for those two curious fluctuations, but have never even hit one that was even plausible."

"After four o'clock, however, there is a steady and continuous increase in the stream of talk. We girls, who have been in the exchange a good while get to know exactly how the city wakes up. The market men head the procession, and then follow the different tradespeople and clerks and office employes, according to the necessities of the various callings. All of them use the 'phone more or less, and it is very curious and interesting to watch the gradations by which the community settles down to its day's work. By nine o'clock the rush of traffic has become something tremendous, and it grows by leaps and bounds until it reaches a climax at ten. From nine to ten the calls will often exceed 4,000. Then there is a slight falling off, becoming more marked as the day advances, and between four and five nine-tenths of the business 'phones have subsided. But, oddly enough, the residence 'phones at that juncture suddenly take up the tale, and their heaviest business is between four and six. I suppose the business folks are through then with the main cares of the day, and have a little leisure for long distance gossip. Throughout the early evening calls don't vary much one way or the other, and, with nine o'clock they begin to dwindle steadily down to 1:30, which, as I said before, is extremely low-water mark."

"How many calls can a girl attend to in an hour? Well, I have made connections for 300 talks between nine and ten, exclusive of the numbers I reported as busy."

BRIDAL GIFTS GO AROUND.

Often Pass from One Bride to Another and Back to the Shop That Sold Them.

"I wish people would know enough to send unmarked presents," said a sweet bride, as she stood contemplating a tableful of silverware. "Here I must pay good money for a wedding present, which I could have taken from this lot if each piece did not have a letter or monogram engraved on it. I thought I could have this bowl fixed up, but the thing is so thin that there would be nothing left of it if the name were erased," and the young woman, who had sent a polite note thanking her "dear friend" for the gift, expressed contempt for the "mean thing," says the New York Tribune.

A man who had witnessed the scene and heard the remarks, said later: "That's nothing to what happened a few days ago. A woman purchased a handsome piece of silver and sent it unmarked as a wedding present to a friend. It was the only piece of the kind in the store—in fact, it had been made especially for a show piece—and you may believe that the woman was surprised when she came to the store two months later and found the piece again for sale.

"She asked the salesman how it came there, and heard to her amazement that it had been returned by the woman to whom it had been presented. 'She brought it back,' said the salesman, 'and asked to have it credited to her account.' 'And you took it,' asked the original customer, 'knowing that I had bought it?' 'What could we do?' asked the salesman. 'She is a good customer, who has an account with us, and we would have lost her trade if we had not taken it.' So, you see, this woman went a step further—she actually took the money for it. If she had been a 'cash customer' at the store the transaction could never have been consummated, but the system by which a 'charge customer' may return goods at any time and receive credit for them made the disgraceful piece of business possible. The class of people who value a wedding present in keeping with its weight are a source of great trouble to the dealers, and one of the safeguards against them is deep engraving."

One Good Trait.

Katie—I don't like Mr. Rox.

Katie's Mother—Why not?

"He's got money, and though he has been coming to see me for a year, he has never given me anything in his life."

"I don't know about that. He gives you a chance to get to bed at a reasonable hour, which can't be said of some of the other young men I know."—Detroit Free Press.

HUMOROUS.

Indolent.—"Oh, her husband is as rich as Croesus! She could have the loveliest things if she were not too lazy to pine for them!"—Detroit Journal.

The people of Paris are doing their best to overcome the fast life they have been living. They are buying 100,000 pounds of snails for food every day.—Indianapolis News.

"Please, boss," whined the mendicant, "can you help a poor fellow out of work?" "No, sir," returned the pedestrian. "I only believe in helping people into work."—Philadelphia Record.

A Joint Wardrobe.—"Do you like your new cook?" "Oh, yes; I haven't worn my silk cape but once since she came, but, gracious! I'm not going to bother her about a little thing like that."—Indianapolis Journal.

Rev. Mr. Sainly.—"I was very sorry that I couldn't fill my pulpit last Sunday, but I hope you liked my substitute." Mrs. Witherby—"Oh, yes. He was fine, and I told my husband, who didn't go, that he little knew what he had missed."—Life.

His Amended Complaint.—Porter Ashe, a lawyer of San Francisco, had a client who wanted a divorce from his spouse. By way of cause, he complained that his wife made a practice of throwing things at his dog. "You can't get a divorce on that," explained Ashe. "The worst of it is," complained the husband, "every time she throws at the dog she hits me."—San Francisco Wave.

WAGERS OF OTHER DAYS.

Some Odd Stakes That Were at Risk on Political Elections Held in the Past.

Betting on elections was as prevalent in the early days of the republic as it is at present, says the Chicago Chronicle. It is recorded that in a campaign between federalists and democrats a cask of ale was wagered on the result by two prominent men of Philadelphia. The terms were that the ale was to be drunk at the Blue Anchor tavern in Dock street, then a widely patronized inn. A fortnight after the election was held enough returns had come in to show the result, and the bet was paid. There was a good old-fashioned jamboree at the ale drinking and before the night was ended the whole party was in the hands of the night watch. The newspapers of the day got hold of the story and printed it, but, after the fashion of those days, no names were given. And, also after the fashion of the day, the little affair was referred to as "a brawl and affray," when in these days it would be called a case of "drunk and disorderly."

About 20 years ago Jay Gould put up a steamboat as a stake on an election. Whether the other party to the wager put up another steamboat or an equivalent in cash, real estate or railroad stocks and bonds is not recorded, but at any rate Mr. Gould won. Later he sold the steamboat he had wagered to an actor, who converted it into an excursion boat and got rich.

When George Francis Train, the eccentric, lived in Omaha some years ago, at the time when he was prominent in the building of the Union Pacific railroad, it came to pass that an election was scheduled. Mr. Train thought he knew how the election was going, and to prove his courage made a wager that if his man was defeated he would wear a duck suit all the year round. Mr. Train's guess was bad and he lost. He lived up to the letter of the bet, however, and for a whole winter—one of those Omaha winters, too, in which the thermometer takes sudden and unexpected dips to far below zero, and blizzards come along over night and freeze everything that is actually not on fire—he wore white duck. There were those who said he violated the spirit of the bet by wearing half a dozen suits of underclothes under his white duck. But Mr. Train could stand criticism better than he could stand an attack of pneumonia, and refused to abandon his warm underclothing.

They tell another story of an election bet in the blizzard country. It is to the effect that in 1888 Ezekiel Timrock, of Hunnewell, Kan., made a bet in these terms: If Cleveland was defeated he would join the church. Timrock was a gentleman with a reputation as a tough and a bad man generally. He had long scorned religion and cursed religionists. So his bet was a heavy one. Well, he lost. There were many who thought he would back out and compromise by giving the winner a big farm or something of that kind. But he didn't. He made application for membership in the church.

It so happened, however, that the deacons knew the terms of the bet and his application was blackballed. Timrock thought this released him, but the man who held the other end of the wager insisted that he had not paid up. Timrock considered that he was insulted and promptly there was a shooting match. Both were equally quick on the trigger and both were equally good shots, and the result was the death of both parties. The coroner summoned a jury and when the inquest was over a verdict holding the church responsible, because it rejected Timrock's application, was returned.