



HOW HE GOT HIS WEALTH

A WEIRD NEW YEAR'S TALE BY EX-DIPLOMATIST.

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YOU want to know the origin of my wealth, do you? Well, that certainly is a rather indiscreet question, and by right deserves no response. But, however, as tonight is New Year's eve, and I have enjoyed my dinner I don't mind telling you something about it while we are smoking our cigars beside the fire. It's a queer yarn—one which you are at liberty to believe or not, as you think fit. The origin of my fortune dates back to an eventful New Year's eve, just eighteen years ago today, and I am indebted for its possession to a conversation which I overheard on the Christmas eve a week earlier.

I was a farmhand in those days. You stare—I know, I don't look much like it now—more like an old general, eh? True, I have been a soldier; in fact, I had just completed my time in the army at the period which I am speaking of, and I remember what difficulty I experienced in reacustoming myself to the humdrum and monotonous life of a farm laborer after the gay, rollicking times I had in the garrison towns of France. Many a night did I lie awake on my bed of straw, in the long low barn where I slept along with the oxen during the bleak Briton winters, thinking of my past years of soldiering and regretting them.

It was Christmas eve, and as my return from midnight mass I had thrown myself wearily onto my hard couch, tired and sick at heart and cursing my miserable fate. Fatigue, however, soon overpowered me, and I speedily lost consciousness of my wretched surroundings. I suppose that I must have been asleep about an hour, when I was suddenly aroused by the sound of voices close beside me. The tones were strange, muffled and unnatural, and filled me with a nameless terror which I had never felt before. For I am no coward. During a few minutes I lay there with closed eyes listening intently, trying to concentrate all my mental and physical powers in endeavoring to find out who had spoken.

Curiosity at last impelled me to raise my head cautiously and to look around me. The barn was but dimly lighted by a great lantern, but my perceptions were rendered so acute by fear that I could see almost as well as in broad daylight. Again and again I glanced at every nook and corner, but I could discover no one in the stable excepting the cattle, standing knee deep in the thick litter, and yet a voice was proceeding from the stall beside which I had made my bed. The occupant of this stall



THE OX SPEAKS.

was a very aged ox who was kept on the farm more for the sake of his past services at the plow than for any actual present use. I peeped through a chink in the low wooden partition separating us. Now, my friend, believe me if you can—it was the old ox who was talking! For a short spell I was thunderstruck with astonishment. Then, like a flash, the memory of the old legend, according to which animals are endowed with the power of speech on Christmas eve between the hours of midnight and daybreak, came back to my mind, and, although a cold shudder ran through me, I resolved to hear what they had to say.

When he had finished his story, its thread was taken up by an equally antiquated donkey at the farther end of the stable.

"Ah!" exclaimed he in conclusion; "how blind men are not to understand the sounds of nature. If they were told that we were enabled on Christmas eve to speak as they do, they would only shrug their shoulders and laugh in scorn at the idea." "Men only care for us," retorted the ox, "because we assist them to gain money. Money is all they are after. Yes, yes, only money; and—ah! if they only knew—I could tell where gold and riches are to be found in such abundance that—" "What on earth are you talking about, old friend?" interrupted the donkey. "You must be getting on toward your dotage to tell such extravagant tales. The clover has gone to your head."



SWAYED TO AND FRO.

"Laugh away," replied the ox, evidently nettled by the donkey's remarks. "But for all that I can assure you that on the eve of St. Sylvester, New Year's eve, once in every hundred years, at midnight, the old Druidical stones of Plouhinec, a mile from here, lead to the spot where they have stood so many long centuries and go down to the sea to drink. Beneath the place they leave vacant during that time are great holes filled to the brim with treasure—and I have been told long ago that the glitter of the stones which men call diamonds, the soft gleam of pearls, the fiery light of rubies heaped up therein, make a halo around the spot equal to that of the brightest moonshine."

"Whew!" exclaimed the donkey, "that must be a grand sight. But how is this treasure to be reached?" "The treasure is known to none; the secret thereof has never been betrayed, and even if man knew about it it could not be touched, for the stones would rush back and crush the thieves like insects under their ponderous mass, unless the blood of a Christian were sacrificed to the spirit which animates these monuments of past and pagan ages."

As the ox pronounced these last words a distant bell boomed forth the hour of daybreak. This was the end of the time allotted to the annual yearly power of speech, and with a deep drawn sigh they relapsed into silence.

More dead than alive I lay there almost stunned by what I had just heard. Could all this be true? Could it be within my reach to become one of the wealthiest men on earth? A cold and clammy perspiration gathered on my brow, and I shook in every limb at the mere thought of it. Gradually I grew more accustomed to the idea, and a firm resolve filled my heart to make the attempt, and to enrich myself by robbing the stones of some of their treasure, if human strength and courage were of any avail.

The light of dawn was stealing into the stable when I arose from my bed. All was still and silent around me as I made my way toward the door. But as I was about to open it, I paused transfixed with astonishment, for there, stretched out on a bundle of straw, I caught sight of a human form. It was that of an old man, miserably clothed in rags, and with long, unkempt locks of grizzly hair falling in disorder about his wrinkled and emaciated face. I drew nearer, and recognized in him an old beggar of evil repute, who wandered about the country craving his daily bread from the peasants and fishermen. On the impulse of the moment I bent over him, and rudely shaking him by the shoulder I cried:

"What are you doing here, Kerriek, and who allowed you to intrude in my master's barn?" The old man opened his bright, glittering eyes, which shone strangely in his yel-

low, parchmentlike countenance, and shaking me off impatiently he said, with an ugly grin:

"Keep quiet, my lad; you and I had better be friends. For there is much at stake for both of us if we agree. The master allowed me to take shelter in his stable last night, and I thank the spirits that he did so."

It was evident from his words that the old man had, like myself, heard the words spoken by the animals, and I realized at once that I must submit to all he might ask, even if it were to share with him the wealth which I hoped to obtain from the stones of Plouhinec. I had surmised right, and, after a short discussion, we finally decided upon going together on the vigil of St. Sylvester to the Bay of Plouhinec, and if we really found that the words of the ox had been true, to unite our efforts and to carry away all we could gather of gold and precious gems.

During the week which followed this eventful night I lived as one in a dream, and on the 31st of December I was almost sick with anxiety and expectation. At 11 o'clock on the vigil of St. Sylvester I started, accompanied by old Kerriek, for the Bay of Plouhinec. The weather was very cold and the waves were rolling heavily with a deep roar upon the beach eighty feet below the cliffs along which we were walking. All around us rose huge piles of Menhirs and Dolmens, sacred Druidical stones of the times of the Gauls, looking ghostly, weird and terrible in the fitful rays of the moon, which now and again was hidden behind banks of angry, snow laden clouds. It was almost 12 o'clock when we reached the spot where the gigantic boulders known as the "Stones of Plouhinec" raised their rugged heads toward the sky.

Silently we crouched behind a rock close to the edge of the cliff, in near proximity to a steep incline leading down to the beach. We remained quite motionless, gazing anxiously at the apparently unmovable masses of gray, storm beaten boulders of granite.

The minutes seemed hours to us, but at last the dim sound of the faraway church bell was heard, toward as it began to strike the fatal midnight hour.

One, two, three—a smothered cry escaped from my lips. For now we could no longer doubt. The enormous stones were slowly oscillating on their bases. They swayed to and fro, faster and faster, with a heavy swinging motion, till at the last stroke of 12 they tore themselves from the spot where they had stood, and rolled pell-mell past us down the incline, on their way to the sea.

For several minutes we remained spell-bound. Then we rushed toward the places left empty by the erratic memorials of paganism.

Oh! what a sight met our eyes! In the cold light of the moon, now shining brightly, diamonds sparkled between heaped up gold bars and nuggets. Rubies, emeralds and sapphires glittered and sentintilled, and twinkled like so many wicked eyes alluring and tempting us, in the open flanks of the earth.

"Fill your pockets; hurry, hurry, hurry," whispered Kerriek, falling on his knees, and throwing himself on his hands and knees in a capacious canvas bag which he had brought with him. Feverishly, passionately I obeyed his directions, stuffing the precious jewels in the bosom of my shirt as quickly as my trembling hands would allow me to do so.

"We are lost," I called despairingly, struggling to my feet. "You are; not I," yelled the old beggar throwing himself on me. At this frightful moment I remembered the last words of the ox's revelation, namely, that the blood of a Christian could alone pacify the spirits which animate the stones! Kerriek, to save himself, was going to kill me. I saw the flash of a knife in his upraised hand.

Gathering my strength together I seized the old villain by the throat, and hurled him against the towering block of granite which was already almost upon us. There was a scream of agony, and I fell in a dead faint on the ground.

When I recovered consciousness I gazed around me in horror. The stones of Plouhinec were standing motionless at their old places as if they had never stirred, but there, close beside me, lay the blood stained body of Kerriek, with his shattered skull pillowed on the bagful of stolen treasure. I sat up and tried to collect my scattered thoughts. In spite of all I was lost, for I should certainly be accused of the man's murder and also of robbery, for nobody would give credence to my strange story. Nothing remained for me but immediate flight.

As soon as I was able to stand on my feet I dragged the corpse under a projecting rock, covered it with furze, and, shouldering the precious bag, wended my way along the cliffs toward the oak forests of Feuerck. There I remained concealed for some hours, and on the following night I walked to the next seaport, which was only some miles distant.

I worked my passage to this country before the mast in a small trading vessel, and I only breathed freely when I reached America.

Such is the origin of my wealth, my friend. It is romantic, I confess, and perchance many would doubt the truth of my story, for only those who will be alive a century from now can prove the veracity of my statements by visiting the Bay of Plouhinec, when the sacred stones will once more go and drink at the sea, laying bare the sources from whence I obtained riches.

In the above I have striven to reproduce exactly as it was given to me, only in more condensed form, the curious story told me one New Year's eve by a rich old Frenchman in New York regarding the origin of his wealth. That his riches are considerable is well known to everybody in New York. But it is only right to add that there are many strange rumors as to its source among his countrymen—whom he persistently shuns. Indeed there are not a few who assert that its derivation is not altogether free from crime and bloodshed.

EX-DIPLOMATIST.

Sworn Off.



The chimney stood up straight in air. Said he, "Come now, no joking; I am resolved this year, at least, that I will give up smoking."

SENSE AND NONSENSE.

He stood upon the theatre steps. And longed to be in Rome, no joking. Or any other place, because He'd left his tickets home.

Headquarters for ladies hats, the great 25 cent store, 1124 O street.

There is an Irish Negro in this city. He of course has a wooly head and a flannel mouth.

Our competitors advertise ladies "cheap hats as well as good." We sell good hats cheap. Great 25 cent store 1124 O street.

Insurance Examiner: Are you engaged in any hazardous business? Applicant: Um, well—yes. The fact is, I am a poet.

Ladies fine velvet hats—milliners prices \$5.00. We make to order the same for \$3.25 at the great 25 cent store.

Evangelist: Young man, did you know you were on the road to Hell? Young Man: No, not till I met you. Just up!

Misses caps, usual price \$1.00. The great 25 cent store sells them for 40 cents.

Awkward Barber—Does this razor hurt you, sir?

Patient Customer—Only when it gets under the skin.—Good News.

One trial will convince you that we are leaders in ladies fine hats at prices that are astonishing. Great 25 cent store, 1124 O street.

She—Her father is an undertaker in Chicago, isn't he? He—Yes. She told me she was the daughter of a planter.—Life.

Ladies felt hats 35 cents at the great 25 cent store.

An Artistic Showing.

No windows along O street have the attraction for passers by as do those of the Globe Clothing House. The new show was made the forepart of the week and on Thursday the curtains were raised, opening to public view two of the most artistically decorated show windows ever seen in the city. Particularly is it west window attractive and shows clever taste of the designer. Yohl Bostrom, the affable and efficient head salesman is the artist and is making his mark as a window dresser of no mean merit. He is to be congratulated on his last effort.

For the Great Christmas Dinner. June, the irrefragable dealer in delicatessen, corner Thirtieth and O, has been making elaborate preparations for the holiday trade and his reputation as headquarters for all the choicest table victuals will not suffer next week. Everything toothsome and delicious in the way of poultry, oranges, game, etc., will be on hand in abundance. But as the rush will be great—the joyful Christmas tide comes on, it would be well for all to leave orders as soon as convenient so that every want may be fully satisfied.

"Here's to a cheap Christmas dinner."

MILLER THE GROCER. GREAT REMOVAL SALE.

Having leased the store heretofore occupied by George Bosselman on Eleventh street next to Miller & Paines, into which

We Will Move Next Saturday

we have decided that it would be cheaper to reduce or close out our present large stock than to move it. We will therefore commence on Monday to dispose of everything in the store at such prices as will certainly be to every ones advantage to buy.

THIS IS NO FAKE

but a genuine removal sale and everything in our present location will be sold if low prices are an object. It is the great chance of the season to stock up for the winter and especially for

HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES.

The goods will go and we propose to keep them going even if we sacrifice part of the cost. There are too many articles on which to quote prices, but the following are fair specimens:

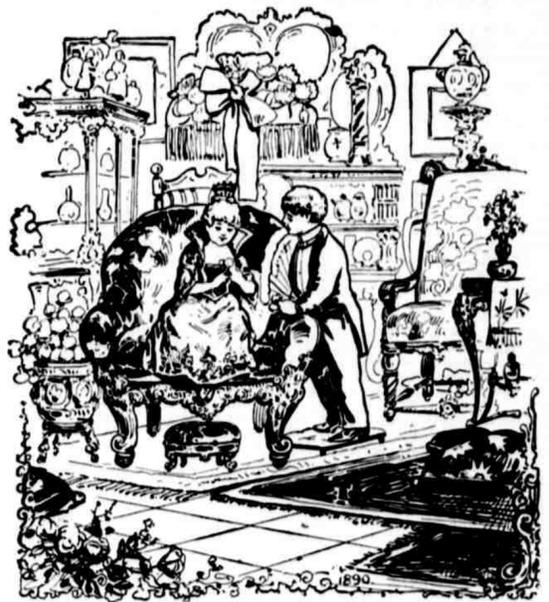
Table listing various grocery items and prices, such as Imported Valencia Raisins, Strictly Pure Boiled Cider, etc.

We could quote prices to fill a page of this paper but that would not suffice to give any further information than above. A call at our store will convince you that this sale is strictly business and for your interest to buy.

MILLER, THE GROCER,

1130 N St.

After Dec. 27th, 143 S. 11th.



ARE YOU AT HOME, AT HOME?

We are receiving some of the handsomest kind of compliments on our thirty-five dollar bed room suite. If money saving is an object, it is a suite that will suit you to perfection. You have read a good deal about furniture and perhaps you have not quite believed all that you have seen in print but this suite tells its own story and you will be lost in wonder when you see it. How it can be sold at such a figure will be a riddle to you. Come along and echo what we say about it and don't forget to take advantage of the opportunity which your visit will afford us to show you our fine stock of holiday goods.

A. T. Gruetter & Co.

124 to 134 North 13th.

Opposite New Lansing Theatre Block.

Office, Cor. 10th and O Sts. Phone 716.

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Yards, 16th and Y Streets. Phone 707.