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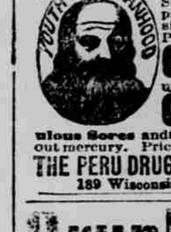

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McFagin's Flat.

Me b'ys, it's not often ye'll hear me complain-in',
And it's sorry I am that me story is thrue:
Fer iv'ry man knows it's not dacent or manly
To go back an a fri'nd that has stud up fer you.
But I'll git satisfaction before I'm much older,
Ye may gamble yer life, or me name isn't Pat.
Fer I can not be aisy, I'm almost turned crazy
By the airs of McFagin, that lives in the flat.

When we both were at home in the townland together,
In the very same spot where his wife was dragged up,
Sure the fact was well known that my people had plinty,
While McFagin just worked for the bit an' the sup.
With a goat at the dure and a pig in the corner,
With a rusty dudheen stickin' out of his hat—
If he shaped himself here as I've seen him in Ireland,
Faith, he'd frighten the people that lives in the flat.

In the gutters up in Harlem we paddled and waded
Through water and mud, like a pair av ould snipes,
Till the Aldherman's brother—for some cause or other—
App'inted McFagin upon the big pipes.
Ah, the lugs he put on—ye would scarcely believe it!—
In liss than a fortnight we had a big spat.
But with all his loud boastin', his rantin' an toastin',
I never wance dhramed that he'd move to a flat!

Now he wears a b'iled shirt an' a chokeaway collar;
His son keeps his feet brushed, an runs a mustache,
With a step like an ape he slides out iv'ry evenin',
An' he's known to the gairls as a half-witted mash.
The fat daughter Jane has set up for a beauty,—
She's as broad as a toad, an' as blind as a bat.—
When at church she meets people, she looks at the steeple—
She's gone up so high sinse she's lived in a flat.

Well, they'll stay where they are for a little while longer,
Then they'll move from the place with their illigant clan;
For their heeler, Big Casey, is knocked out in flinders—
Sure I knew he'd be beaten as sure as he ran.
But the man that we backed, he was nobly illicted,—
That myself did the business, he gives in to that.—
On the first of the month whin me sons gits app'inted,
Faith! there's somebody else 'll move into the flat.

—George E. Devyr, in Puck.

MY WIFE'S LEGACY.

"I don't like to calculate upon such things," observed my wife, "but if Aunt Jane were to die I should not be a bit surprised if she left us that old-fashioned set of silver that belonged to my great-grandparents."

Out of consideration for the printer I will omit indications of the emphasis with which she usually spoke. If the reader will kindly consider every second word printed in small caps or italics he will have some faint idea of her manner of expressing herself.

"It is a very handsome set," I returned, glancing about our modest dining room, "and will hardly accord with our furniture."

"It wouldn't look at all well with that sideboard," returned my wife promptly. "It is so dreadful shabby—oh, of course I mean the sideboard, not the silver; don't be so smart."

"I suppose, then, if such a thing were to happen, you'd have to have a new sideboard."

She nodded complacently.

"I saw such a lovely one down town to-day; antique oak, beautifully carved. I do admire oak so much."

"But the rest of the furniture is walnut," I objected.

"Walnut is altogether out of style, especially for dining rooms," she replied, with a disdainful glance at the chairs which we had once found very good to look at; "and, after all, the sideboard is by so much the most expensive piece of furniture in a dining room that it doesn't cost much more to get a whole set than just that one piece. And even a walnut sideboard, new, would not look well with those chairs and this table."

I said nothing, and the tacit surrender was accepted by my wife. Thenceforth it was understood that if Aunt Jane should bequeath us the silver we were to purchase a new set of dining-room furniture.

The next evening, as we were again at dinner, my wife remarked:

"I have been looking at carpets to-day, and saw one that just suits me; rich and subdued, you know, but not dingy."

"Carpets," I repeated in some surprise. "I didn't know that there was one needed this season."

"Why, stupid," rejoined my wife, petulantly (and the emphasis was all upon the pet name), "did we not agree that the dining-room must be refurnished? And this carpet is so old and worn of course it would not do at all with new furniture."

Again I acquiesced silently, and she proceeded to make plans for meeting me the next day to examine and choose the carpet and furniture to be purchased later on. Well, if my wife's relations left her handsome silver I must, of course, provide things in keeping with it.

She met me according to appointment, and, having inspected the articles, gave me to understand that my taste was so execrable as not to merit a moment's consideration, and announcing her own choice, suggested coolly:

"And now let's go look at the wall paper."

"Wall paper?" I echoed, blankly.

"Of course; the room must be repapered if it is refurnished. As for the woodwork, I suppose there is no help for that; it will just have to be regrained. Can they make that natural wood finish on wood that has been painted?"

I stared aghast; that silver was going to cost me a pretty sum. But I was helpless, entirely so; my wife had made up her mind.

That evening she was much elated at the prospect of being surrounded by such things as she had that day selected. There was but one cloud on her horizon.

"The dining-room will be nicer than the parlors," she remarked, plaintively; "I am afraid that they will really look shabby."

I said nothing, hoping that if she were not contradicted she would not pursue the subject further.

Vain hope! She had fixed it in her own mind that silence gave consent, and when I came home the next evening had assumed that the parlors were to be newly fitted.

"Don't you think," she said, coaxingly, "that as long as the parlors and dining-room are to be torn up, and we are to have the painters and paper-hangers here, we might as well have the whole house done? It would be very little more trouble, and then it would all look nice together."

"It would be considerably more expensive," I remonstrated, faintly.

"You might draw the money out of the Building Association," she suggested, and then I knew that our savings in that institution were doomed.

Aunt Jane lingered a long time. In justice to my wife I must admit she had become oblivious of the fact that all these improvements depended upon a legacy which could only be possessed after the death of her venerable relative.

A day or so after she had decided that the house was to be thoroughly renovated my wife said to me:

"I have been examining the parlor carpets, and I find that by using the best parts of both, and buying a wide border, I can get quite a new carpet for our bed-room, absolutely unworn."

"Indeed!" I remarked, with pleased surprise; there was one thing that she would not want anyhow.

"Yes, and the carpet that is now on it has enough good to cover the children's room, if I put the worn part under the bed. Or maybe I'd better put that on the spare room," she added, reflectively, "and give that one to the children. Theirs gets such hard wear that an old one will not last any time hardly."

I said nothing, but felt greatly relieved.

"As long as we don't have to buy a bedroom carpet," she remarked insinuatingly, "don't you think we could afford a new set of furniture?"

"No, I don't," I returned, savagely; whereupon she burst into tears and called me a heartless monster. To pacify her, I had to promise the furniture, together with a new silk and a sealskin, that the mistress of the house might be as fine as her dwelling.

"It does seem a shame," she said, a few days afterward, "to spend so much money on this house. That's very handsome and expensive paper that we looked at, and to substitute an archway for the folding doors will cost something"—this was the first that I had heard of the archway—"and then those lovely carpets cut up to fit these small rooms, too."

"Yes, it is a shame," I replied, hardly crediting my sense. Not all had been lost, although much had been in danger.

"I'm so glad that you think so," returned my wife, briskly; "I was sure that you would agree with me that it would be wiser for us to find a house that suits us better, and buy right away. Real estate is cheap now, they say—there's so much in the market."

She tried to put on a knowing look; if she had known half as much about that subject as about managing me, I should have felt impressed. As it was I weakly objected:

"My dear, I don't know where in the world I could get the money to buy a larger and better house, any house at all in fact."

"You could sell this," she replied, nothing daunted.

"But if real estate is a drug on the market I do not want to sell," I retorted, thinking cunningly to turn her own weapon upon herself.

"There are those shares of stock, then."

"But that stock is going up daily; if I wait six months I can get double what it would bring now; or hold it and draw big interest on my investment."

"Well, what else are you going to do? You said yourself that we must have a larger and better house."

Thereupon I mentally bade a regretful farewell to the stock and the money which I had expected to pocket by holding it. My wife occupied her leisure time for the next three weeks in looking for a residence which should be in all respects suitable for the furniture we were going to buy. What she would desire next I could not guess, unless she should become thoroughly dissatisfied with me.

At the end of the period mentioned I came home one evening to find her in tears.

"Aunt Jane's dead," she sobbed; "the poor old lady died this morning. I have just come from her house."

As Aunt Jane had been at the point of death for the past six months, I was hardly surprised to hear this bit of news. I did my best to comfort my wife, however, and comported myself like a dutiful nephew-in-law at the mournful ceremonies following the death.

When I returned home the day after the funeral my wife met me at the door, her face flushed, her eyes blazing.

"What do you suppose that old crank has done?" she demanded.

"What old crank?" I inquired wonderingly.

"Why, Aunt Jane, of course."

"I'm sure I don't know," I returned, mildly; "but you should remember, my dear, that—"

"Oh, I know she's dead. She wouldn't give her things away under any other circumstances. She's left me $100 in cash, and that dear old silver to my second cousin, John Scott. He'll sell it and spend every cent on liquor and cigars and horses. I know he will."

Then the blaze in her eyes was quenched by a flood of tears. I did my best to soothe her, but my efforts were useless. I assured her that if her cousin sold the silver we would buy it.

"I don't want it," she declared; "I won't have it"—very vehemently—"and I won't get a single new thing in the house, or a new dress, or that sealskin, or anything. I'll just stay here with things as they are, and John Scott can keep his silver and you can keep your building association money and stock, too. So there, now."

After that I did not try to assuage her grief. I was afraid that consolation might be costly.—*Good Housekeeping.*

A Journey on the Volga.

Isabel F. Hapgood, the writer of the graphic paper, Count Tolstoi at Home, in the *Atlantic*, contributes to that magazine a paper called A Journey on the Volga. Of Kazan she says:

The Tatar quarter alone seemed to possess the requisite mystery and "local color." Here whole streets of tiny shops, ablaze with rainbow-hued leather goods, were presided over by taciturn, olive-skinned brothers of the Turks, who appeared almost handsome when seen thus in masses, with opportunities for comparison. Hitherto we had thought of the Tatars only as the old-clothes dealers, peddlers, horse-butchers and waiters of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Here the dignity of the prosperous merchants, gravely recommending their really well-dressed, well-sewed leather wares, bespoke our admiration.

The Tatar women, less easily seen, glided along the uneven pavements now and then, smoothly, but still in a manner to permit a glimpse of short, square feet encased in boots flowered with gay hues upon a green or rose-colored ground, and reaching to the knee. They might have been houris of beauty, but it was difficult to classify them, veiled as they were, and screened as to head and shoulders by striped green kaftans of silk, whose long sleeves depended from the region of their ears, and whose collar rested on the brow. What we could discern was that their black eyes wandered like the eyes of unveiled women, and that they were coquettishly conscious of our glances, though we were of their own sex.

We found nothing especially striking among the churches, unless one might reckon the Tatar mosques in the list; and, casting a last glance at Sumbeka's curious and graceful tower, we hired a cabman to take us to the river, seven versts away.

We turned our backs upon Kazan without regret, in the fervid heat of that midsummer morning. We did not shake its dust from our feet. When dust is ankle-deep that is not very feasible. It rose in clouds, as we met the long lines of Tatar carters, transporting flour and other merchandise to and from the wharves across the "dam" which connects the town, in summer low water, with Mother Volga. In spring floods Matushka Volga threatens to wash away the very walls of the Kremlin, and our present path is under water.

Edison Has a Rival in Maine.

A man in Caribou, Aroostook county, Maine, claims that he has discovered an electrical power in the earth by the means of which he is able, using electrical instruments which have been invented by himself, to transmit sounds for any distance. This is done simply by connecting wires with the earth at different points and making use of the positive and negative electrical currents in the earth. If this system can be properly utilized and developed it will do away with the use of all batteries. The Caribou man has his system working over a distance of about a mile in successful operation. If all that is claimed for this new discovery is realized it will cause a revolution in electrical science, and powers heretofore unknown, and therefore useless, will do the work now done by costly machinery.

AN INTERVIEWER DAZED.

Senator Sanders, of Montana, Wanted to Know, You Know.

Most of the newspaper correspondents in Washington are of the opinion that Senator Sanders, of Montana, is an original somebody. One of the new men is deeply impressed with the Montana man's originality, says a writer in the Richmond *Times*. It seems that the recent arrival was desirous of interviewing the senator, and, meeting him at the Capitol, notified him that he expected a talk on the irrigation of arid lands. Now, Colonel Sanders is a very pleasant man to know when you know him, but it happened that the correspondent and he had never met before.

"So you want to interview me?" said the senator.

The would-be interviewer nodded.

"Would you have any objection to letting me know who you are?" queried the colonel.

"Here is my card."

"Thank you, but even that doesn't give me the information I am looking for. Where were you born? Who was your father and who was your mother? Did either of them ever do anything calculated to earn the applause of men? Did you receive all the benefits which are supposed to spring from a common school education, or was knowledge pumped into you from academic and collegiate sources? Are you bright mentally, and do you know how to transfer your impressions to paper? Have you accomplished anything that would fairly entitle you to a reasonable amount of renown?"

The interviewer was dazed.

"I ask you these things," continued the colonel, "because I am very much in earnest. Why should I be interviewed by a man of whose ability, or lack of ability, I know nothing? I might talk to you most entertainingly; might conversationally outshine historic chatterers and promulgate ideas on which fortunes and nations might be upreared; but all this would avail me nothing if you were—excuse the term—a chump. I should appear like a fool. But if you are brainy and keen witted and able to write, it would not make much difference what I said. I could be as dull and as prosy as a Senator—no, I won't mention his name—and you would be able to so sketch my conversation that the world would admire and say, 'What a statesman!'

"It doesn't make much difference what the man who is being interviewed says; the main point is the interviewer. That's why I insist on knowing a newspaper man before I talk to him for publication."