EXPECTED CALAMITY CAME

ZEB'S WIFE KNEW THAT SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN.

The Possum Hunter Tells How He Came to Have a Lively Bear For a Bedfellow and the Result It Had on Certain Opinions of His.

[Copyright, 1900, by C. B. Lewis.]

"One mawnin at the breakfast table," said the old possum hunter as I asked him for a yarn, "me an the old woman got into a jaw 'bout coons. I held to it that all coons orter hev bin bobtailed, an she contended that the Lawd made 'em as he wanted 'em an did a good job. We wasn't mad at fust, but the mo' we talked the meaner we felt, an bimeby we got downright ugly. It was Sunday mawnin, an we was goin off to preachin that day, but when I got my mad up I said:

"'As long as I'm fur bobtailed coons an the Lawd didn't make 'em that way it ain't no use fur me to hear preachin. I'll stay home, an yo' kin go alone.'

"I reckoned that would cool her off a bit, but it didn't. She chawed away at her bacon fur awhile an then said:

"'Zeb White, thar's bound to be a calamity around this cabin. Can't nobody find fault the way yo' do without sunthin happenin. I'm goin right along to preachin, an if yo' want to fly in the face of Providence yo' must take the consequences.'

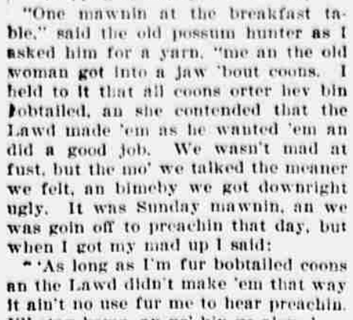
"'I'm contendin fur bobtailed coons,' said I. 'If all coons was bobtailed, they'd look a heap purtier an git along a heap better.'

"'But how kin they be when it's all fixed?'

"'Dunno, but I'm contendin.'

"'Then yo' keep on contendin an see how yo'll come out. Thar's bobtailed varmints in the mountings, an mebbe yo'll git 'nuff of them befo' yo' git through abusin Providence.'

"If she'd coaxed me a bit, I'd hev gone with her," explained Zeb, "but she'd said all she meant to. When she got ready, she started off through the woods an never even looked at me. My rifle was out of order, an my old dawg had run away, an so I couldn't go strollin through the woods. I sot down on the doahstep an smoked a pipe or two, an as it was a warm day I begun to feel sleepy. I went over an tumbled on to the bed, an it wasn't five minits befo' I was sound asleep. The doah was left wide open, an 'bout the last thing I heard befo' I drapped off was the old mewl brayin in the stable. I'd bin asleep an hour when sunthin crowded me over ag'in the wall, an I woke up. I opened my eyes to find a big b'ar on the bed with me. He'd found the doah open an walked in, an, seein me asleep, he sot out to hev some fun. He didn't see me open my eyes, an I took keer to shet 'em ag'in arter one look. Befo' the Lawd, but I was skeered! I felt the cold chills creepin up an down my back, an the sweat busted out on me as if I was choppin at a big tree.



SHE DUMPED HIM OUT.

"I had found fault with the Lawd fur not makin bobtailed coons," continued the old man as he refilled his pipe, "an a bobtailed b'ar had bin sent in revenge. It wasn't no use to think of jumpin up or fightin him. He had all the advantage, an if I made him mad he'd finish me up in a minit. My game was to play possum on him, but I hope I shall never hev sich another two hours while I live. That b'ar wanted a good time. He was feelin good natured, an he jest tried all sorts of circus tricks with me. He'd roll me over ag'in the wall with a bang, an then arter a chuckle he'd roll me back with a flop. He didn't bite at all, but every time he put his claws on to me they went through the cloth. I believe that varmint turned me over 50 times befo' he got a little tired of it. I was playin dead all the time an didn't know what minit he'd git mad an set out to finish me. He finally got thirsty an jumped off the bed an went to the water pail on the bench an lapped away fur ten minits. I had my eyes open all the time an was anxious to git away, but I was afeared of him. I couldn't fight him barehanded an stand any show.

"I jest laid thar till the varmint had quenched his thirst an looked around, an then he come back ag'in. The circus was only half over. He was so rough at times that I almost yelled out with the pain, an between the clawin an the skeer I wasn't much better than a dead man. The mewl smelt of b'ar an kept up a tremendous brayin, an the old woman heard the noise when she was yit a mile away. Bimeby, when the varmint had had a show with the price of admission, he settled down fur a rest. I was then lyin with my face to the wall, an he planted all four feet ag'in my back an kept up a sort of purrin. He had me crowded ag'in the cabin logs till I could hardly breathe, an I had made up my mind that I'd never tree another coon when the old woman got back from preachin. The old mewl was kickin an brayin, an she seen the tracks of the b'ar leadin into the cabin. She stood in the doah an got sight of the varmint on the bed, an she did a thing which no man on these yere Cumberland mountings would hev attempted. Thar was no gun at hand to shoot with, an her only show was to take that b'ar by surprise. That's what she did. She tiptoed up to the bed an fastened her fingers in his fur, an, though he was a hefty load, she carried him to the doah an dumped him out. I never knowed she was home till she pulled the b'ar away. As I riz up the astonished varmint was makin fur the woods, while the old woman hadn't even turned pale.

"'Was—was it a b'ar?' I asked as she took off her sunbonnet an began to clatter the stove.

"'Of co'se,' she keerlessly replied.

"'An what did yo' do with him?'

"'Jest dumped him outdoahs. 'Pears to me yo've bin hevin heaps of fun. Most of yo'r clothes hev bin clawed off, the bedquilts chawed to rags, an yo' ar' blood from head to heel. Mebbe yo' was learnin that b'ar a lot of tricks?'

"I tried to git out of bed to hug her an praise her spunk," explained Zeb to me, "but I was so weak that I fell down. She never let on to mind me, an I had to help myself up. Bimeby I got over to a cheer an dropped into it an asked:

"'Did yo' find the preachin, an was it good?'

"'Powerful good,' she answered, 'but it wasn't 'bout coons or b'ars. Anything wantin of me befo' I puts the kittle on?'

"'I'm wantin yo' to help me doctor up 'bout fo' hundred scratches, an I'm also wantin to be forgiven fur my remarks 'bout coons.'

"'How is it, Zeb?' she said as she turned on me. 'When the Lawd dun put a long tail on a coon, was it fur the likes of pore human critters to kick about it?'

"'Reckon not—not skassly.'

"'An how 'bout b'ars? Mebbe yo' find fault bekase the Lawd made 'em bobtailed?'

"'I haven't a word to say ag'in it.'

"'Jest goin to let the long tails an the bobtails ramble around as the Lawd made 'em to ramble?'

"'That's it.'

"'An goin to hear preachin when thar is preachin at the skulehouse?'

"'Fur snah.'

"'Then I'll warm up some coon's fat an grease yo'r hurts, an yo' jest let this be a powerful warnin to yo' not to find any mo' fault with the Lawd's way of doin things. It was fur him to put long tails on coons an foxes an bobtails on b'ars an wildcats, an yo' jest keep yo'r gab still 'bout it an reckon to consider that it was all fur the best.'"

M. QUAD.

A SPELLING TEST.

Here Are Some Tongue Twisters With Which to Grapple.

If you can spell every word correctly in the following rhymes—all legitimate expressions—you may consider yourself qualified to enter a spelling bee:

Stand up, ye spellers, now and spell—
Spell phenakistoscope and knell;
Or take some simple word as chilly
Or ganger or the garden lily.
To spell such words as syllogism
And lachrymose and synchronism
And Pentateuch and saccharine,
Apocrypha and celadine,
Jepsine and homeopathy,
Paralysis and chloroform,
Rhinoceros and pachyderm,
Metempsychosis, gherkins, basque,
Is certainly no easy task.
Kaleidoscope and Tennessee,
Kamtchatka and erysipelas
And etiquette and sassafras,
Infallible and ptyalism,
Allopathy and rheumatism
And cataclysm and beleaguer,
Twelfth, eighteenth, rendezvous, intriguer,
And hosts of other words all found
On English and on classic ground;
Thus Bering strait and Michaelmas,
Thermopylæ, jalap, Havana,
Cinquefoil and ipecacuanha
And Rappahannock, Shenandoah
And Schuylkill and a thousand more
Are words some prime good spellers miss
In dictionary lands like this.
Nor need one think himself a scroyle
If some of these his efforts foil
Nor deem himself undone forever
To miss the name of either river,
The Dnieper, Seine or Guadalquivir.

—Lewiston (Me.) Journal.

The Stomach.

Large portions of the stomach may be excised, or even the whole may be removed, with no very great mortality, and in successful cases with wonderfully little effect on the patient's digestion. The stomach hardly occupies in our present opinion so important a place in digestion as it formerly held. We know that it is rather a preparer for the exercise of the digestive powers of the pancreas than an active digestive agent itself and that one of its functions is to render innocuous many of the micro-organisms which enter with the food. So we can understand to some extent the small amount of interference with digestion produced by even considerable resections of the stomach.—Lancet.

Cassava and Fish.

Cassava and fish form the chief articles of food of the Caribs of Guatemala, and the former is cultivated only in sufficient quantities for their daily needs, as a vegetable to eat with their fish, to make their strange bread and to make the cassareep, which forms their only sweet.

Two Uplifters.

"What," exclaimed the orator—"what two things are helping mankind to get up in the world?"

"The alarm clock and the stepladder," answered the dense person in the rear of the hall.—Baltimore American.

It always makes a man mad to have his name misspelled in a newspaper, because he believes everybody ought to know his name.—Atchison Globe.

No man is absolutely perfect, but one who acknowledges his faults is more than half way up the ladder.—Chicago News.

MATED BY A PAWN

By A. E. Manning Foster.

When a man is about to entertain a very charming girl whom he is anxious to impress and suddenly finds that, with the exception of a few coppers, he has no money in his pocket, he may surely be forgiven the use of a few strong ejaculations. Such was the plight of Everard Hamlyn at 10 minutes to 1 on a certain Saturday afternoon. He had been so absorbed in reading the brief of an important case which was to be heard in the courts on Monday that he had forgotten the emptiness of his pocket. At 1 o'clock Alice Valentine, an American girl with whom he had formed a deep friendship, was coming to see what a barrister's chambers in the Temple looked like, and she was also to be taken out to lunch.

The worst was that there were only ten minutes to rectify the mistake. He wrote out a check hurriedly and then remembered that time would not permit him to go to the bank to cash it. His clerk was gone, and the Temple was wrapped in its usual Saturday afternoon peacefulness.

Without a hat he rushed over to Harcourt buildings to see if his friend Anderson was in the chambers. He could rely upon him for a couple of pounds.

But the fates were against Hamlyn. Anderson was out and the doors were locked.

Realizing that there was nothing for it but to go to the bank, he hurried along up the court into Fleet street, meaning to hail a hansom. But as he arrived there the clock struck 1, and he knew that he could not get to the bank and back under 20 minutes. Alice would never forgive him if he were not at his rooms to receive her.

Suddenly his eye was caught by the three brass balls hanging over a shop almost opposite. The sight suggested a new idea to his mind, and he promptly acted upon it. In another moment he rushed across the road and, entering the shop, handed his 80 guinea hunter over the counter.

"How much?" said the clerk, eying the hatless and breathless Hamlyn somewhat suspiciously.

"Oh, I only wanted a fiver," replied Everard hurriedly.

"Have you got a card on you?" asked the clerk, thinking that he was on the track of a swell mobsman.

Unversed in the ways of pawnbrokers, Hamlyn pulled out his case and handed him a card.

"All right, sir," said the clerk, seeing the name and address and noticing the name corresponded with the initials on the watch. "I beg your pardon, sir," and he hastily filled up a ticket and counted out £5. "Have you a penny for the ticket, please?"

Hamlyn impatiently threw down a copper and fairly bolted out of the shop. The people in Fleet street stared at him with amazement, and a gutter arab with whom he had collided shouted, "Who are yer shovin of?" as he crossed the road.

Now, it happened that Alice Valentine was just at that moment passing down Fleet street on her way to the Temple. She had arrived somewhat earlier than she had intended, for she upheld the traditions of womanhood with regard to unpunctuality.

"It would never do," she said to herself, "to be quite punctual. He would think I was too impatient."

So, timing herself to arrive at the Temple about 1:15 o'clock, she was strolling leisurely along when she caught sight of Hamlyn rushing wildly out of a pawnbroker's shop. For a moment the ludicrous side of the situation struck her very forcibly, and she laughed softly to herself. But gradually, as she realized the full significance of the action, her amusement gave place to pity.

"Poor boy!" she murmured. "I had not the faintest idea he was hard up. And to think that I have let him spend such a lot of money in taking me about. I must get even with him somehow."

There was a very tender spot in her heart for the tall, clever young barrister, who had shown so plainly his preference for her above all other women. Alice Valentine and her aunt, Miss Safford, were making a tour of Europe, and had met Hamlyn first of all at a hotel in Geneva. He had rendered them a number of civilities and as he happened to be doing the same round of Switzerland as they for a month he was their almost daily companion. With the frankness of American women, they accepted his attentions graciously, and, finding him a pleasant attendant, enrolled him in their services without further ado.

Miss Safford generally accompanied Alice wherever she went and showed quite as much eagerness to "do" every place thoroughly as her niece. It was only on rare occasions, when the elder lady was obliged to admit that she was "too tired for anything," that Hamlyn had a chance of taking Miss Valentine out alone.

The constant companionship, however, had brought about the usual result. Hamlyn was not an inflammable man. He had reached the mature age of 30—not unsought after—without having succumbed to feminine charms. But there was something about the fair American which fascinated him in spite of himself.

Today, as she came into his room, a perfect vision of freshness and loveliness in the gloomy atmosphere of the Temple, Hamlyn was conscious of the certain shyness and reserve in her manner that he had not noticed before.

"I don't believe I ought to come here by myself," she said as she closed the door. "I wonder what Aunt Catherine would say to it."

"You are late," said Hamlyn. "I have been waiting impatiently for you."

"Am I, really?" replied Alice. "What is the time, then?"

He pulled at his watch chain mechanically, forgetful of his escapade, and disclosed the bare swivel. He colored slightly as he realized his mistake, and felt her eyes upon him, but answered lightly:

"About 20 minutes past 1, I fancy."

She was walking round the room, glancing at the ponderous looking books and the papers tied with pink tape, getting, as she expressed it, the "atmosphere" of the place.

"It must be just lovely to work here," she said. "Everything seems so old and historic. I believe I should only have to sit here a few hours a day and I should become a lawyer by breathing the air."

"Which reminds me," said Hamlyn, "that I have been breathing air quite long enough and want lunch. Where shall we go?"

Alice Valentine hesitated.

"Look here," she said at last. "I want to say something to you. You have been taking me about such a lot, and I have done nothing for you. I feel real mean. I want you to let me stand you a lunch today."

He shook his head laughingly. "You forget," he said, "that you are my guest. But I want you to say where you would like to go."

He named a well known restaurant in Piccadilly, where she knew the prices were ruinous.

"No," she said; "don't let us go there. Will you take me to one of those little Bohemian places you told me of where you get a table d'hote lunch for 18 pence? I should love to go. It would be a new experience."

"You look too smart," he replied, glancing at her admiringly, "but I tell you what I will do—we will split the difference and go to a kind of semi-fashionable place where you shall see all sorts and conditions of people and hear a band."

Once or twice during lunch, when conversation flagged, Hamlyn noticed again the thoughtful expression on her face. At last he took the matter up.

"Tell me," he said, "what you are thinking of."

"I was thinking," she replied slowly, "of how I could help some one who has been very good to me."

"Not a difficult matter, surely, for you."

"It is very difficult," she said, "under the circumstances. The person I want to help is poor and, I think, very proud."

She was looking down at the tablecloth and studiously avoiding his eyes.

"Can I be of any assistance?" he said.

"You? Why"— She laughed. "Yes, perhaps you can. I will think about it and let you know."

There was a new sympathy in her voice and manner, and Hamlyn felt a mad desire to take her there and then in his arms and cover her face with kisses.

But there was no opportunity then to tell her of his love. Immediately after lunch they were obliged to hurry off to meet Miss Safford at a matinee, and Hamlyn had no further chance of a tete-a-tete with Alice, but he arranged satisfactorily a meeting for Monday afternoon, when he determined to put his fate to the test.

"You will not forget," he said at parting, "to let me help you in the matter you mentioned?"

"No," she replied, with a singular look on her face; "I will not forget."

As Everard walked home he recalled her tones, her face, the fair, flushed cheeks; sweet mouth, earnest brows, and eyes of softest fire. There was that in her look which satisfied him.

He was awakened from his reverie by an urchin inquiring what o'clock it was. For the second time that day he mechanically tugged at his watch chain.

"Confound it!" he exclaimed as he realized his loss. "I never knew that it was such a nuisance to be without a watch. I must get it out first thing on Monday morning."

The urchin, grasping the situation, ran away, grinning.

On Sunday Hamlyn again bethought himself of the watch.

"I had better study the ticket," he said, "and see what I shall have to pay."

He fumbled in his waistcoat pocket. It was not there! He tried the others, with the same result. With growing uneasiness he searched in every pocket of the clothes he had worn on the Saturday, but the pawn ticket was not to be found.

"I must have left it at my chambers," he decided at last. "It is very careless of me. I hope my clerk won't find it."

On Monday morning he got up earlier than usual and drove down to the Temple in a hansom. His clerk had already arrived. Hamlyn searched all over the table carefully, then in all the drawers, but could not find the ticket. Finally he summoned the clerk.

"Have you moved any papers?" he asked rather irritably.

"No, sir; I haven't touched a thing."

"You haven't by any chance found a ticket, I suppose?" pursued Hamlyn.

"No, sir. What kind of a ticket have you lost?"

"It doesn't matter," he replied impatiently. "It's of no importance."

Putting on his hat, Hamlyn hurried into Fleet street to the pawnshop.

"I want to redeem the watch I left here on Saturday," he announced.

"Where is your ticket, sir?" said the man.

"I have mislaid it," replied Hamlyn. "But it's all right. You remember me, I expect. The watch belongs to me, and I want it now."

"I am very sorry, sir, but you can't have it without the ticket."

Hamlyn muttered an exclamation of impatience.

"But suppose I have lost it. What then?"

"I will give you a form of declaration to be made before a magistrate."

"Is there no other way?" said Hamlyn, realizing the trouble and annoyance this would cause.

"No, sir," said the pawnbroker. "I am afraid there is not."

There was no time to waste. He had to be in court early, as his case was among the first on the lists. It was no use stopping to argue the matter. He must go before a magistrate and sign the declaration as soon as possible. Returning to his chambers, he put on his robes and was soon lost in contemplation of the business in hand.

About an hour after his visit to the pawnbroker's shop Alice Valentine drove up in a cab to the same door. She had found the pawn ticket lying on Hamlyn's table on the Saturday afternoon and had appropriated it, meaning to redeem the watch and send it back to him as soon as possible. She was rather nervous at going into the shop, but she was not the kind of girl to allow her own feelings to stand in the way of any project she wished to carry through; so, putting on an air of unusual haughtiness, she entered the little compartment and handed in the ticket.

"I want the watch, please," she said.

The pawnbroker's assistant looked her up and down carefully. When he had, as it were, sized her completely, he inquired dryly, "Where did you get this?"

Alice flared up indignantly. "That is no business of yours. Tell me what I have to pay and give me the watch."

"Not so fast," said the young man. "You must answer one or two questions first."

He went away and after a whispered confabulation returned with a gray bearded old man, who was polite, but firm.

"I am sorry, madam, but I cannot allow you to redeem this pledge until you inform me how this ticket came into your possession."

"I found it," said Alice.

"Allow me to inform you, then," said the pawnbroker sternly, "that you are committing a very grave offense. By attempting to obtain the watch you lay yourself open to criminal proceedings."

"But," said Alice, "I am a friend of the gentleman to whom the watch belongs."

"Come, come," replied the man; "that won't do at all. A gentleman who called himself Mr. Hamlyn was here about an hour ago endeavoring to get the watch himself."

"Mr. Hamlyn been here this morning!" cried Alice. She had never suspected that he would be able to redeem his watch so soon.

"Better send for a policeman," suggested the assistant.

"Hold your tongue!" said his master. Then, turning to Alice Valentine, he said: "I do not wish to be hard upon you, but I insist on an explanation. I will send over to the address on the ticket, and if your story is true Mr. Hamlyn will corroborate it. Harvey, send the boy over to Queen's Bench walk and ask Mr. Hamlyn to come here immediately."

"Mr. Hamlyn coming here!" cried Alice unguardedly. "Oh, I must go at once!"

"I cannot allow it," said the pawnbroker. "You must wait. If you refuse, I have no option but to call a policeman."

If looks could kill, the pawnbroker would have died on the spot as Alice, with the air of a tragedy queen, submitted to the indignity of being escorted to the back parlor, while Harvey kept watch and ward over her.

A quarter of an hour later Everard Hamlyn jumped out of a hansom and hurried into the shop. He was an impetuous person, and he had not waited to change his robes, but had come straight away in wig and gown from the law courts. He was met in the passage by Harvey, who had been awaiting his arrival with keen interest.

"There's a woman in here," he said, pointing to the parlor, "who says she's a friend of yours and has found your pawn ticket, but I suspect"—

"Out of the way!" cried Hamlyn, thrusting the officious young man on one side and rushing into the room.

"Alice, by all that's wonderful!" he exclaimed, and then, seeing that her bosom was heaving convulsively, he put his arm around her and inquired tenderly what had happened.

"They have been so rude and insulting," she sobbed.

Hamlyn waited for no further explanation, but, seizing Harvey by the throat, shook him until the unfortunate youth had not a breath in his body. Then, turning to the older man, he cried sternly, "What do you mean by insulting this lady?"

The pawnbroker, discovering his mistake, was all apologies, but Hamlyn's temper was still up.

Nothing could justify rudeness to a lady, he said, and he insisted on an abject apology from the crestfallen assistant.

Then he took Alice back to his rooms in the Temple. When they were alone, he put his arm around her and said impulsively:

"Oh, my darling, how sweet of you to try to get my watch back for me. Did you do it because you care? Tell me, darling—I love you!"

"It was very silly of me, I know," she said softly and shyly, "but I thought you were poor, and—oh, I wanted to help you."

"I am not poor," he said smilingly; "at least not very poor. I have a thousand a year, and we might manage on that."

He took out the watch and held it before her eyes.

"I shall never look at it," he said, "without thinking that I won you through it."—Royal Magazine.

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