

THE MUTABLE MANY.

BY ROBERT BARR.

The Story of a Labor Union. A Tale of Present Day Problems. With Episodes from Real Life.

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From Wimbledon to Surbiton is comparatively but a step. An entertaining train, but on accomplishing the feat, can do the distance in seven or eight minutes, and even the slowest of "locals" takes but twice. Barney was an energetic young man, and where a check was concerned, being the danger of delay, he resolved, being in the neighborhood, to go to Surbiton, see his mother and settle the business. The young man often reassured himself by saying inwardly that he was no fool, and the few minutes he had to meditate on the situation as he paced up and down No. 3 platform waiting for the train enabled him to formulate a course of action.

Barney had a well defined mental process by which he arrived at any plan of procedure. "The great thing, my boy," he used to say, "is to know exactly what you want, and then to go for it." In going for it the young fellow tramped on anything that came in his path, truth, for example. His one object was success—the kind that succeeds. Having attained that, he was careless of the means.

In this instance what he wanted was to prevent any interference with Surbiton, and he knew, if he boldly opposed his mother's scheme, such opposition would inevitably bring about the meddling he desired to avoid, and at the same time place himself on her bad books, which was financially undesirable.

BARNEY ON HIS MOTHER'S HEARTH.

with her Lady Mary Fanshawe, who had driven over from her father's country place in the Dorling direction. Lady Mary was a nice girl, rather shy, who looked pretty when Barney came in, and had a great admiration for the young man's blithe and unappreciated artistic talents, liking a painter better than a manufacturer. Her father, having ascertained definitely that Barney's possession of a studio would in no way interfere with his ultimate coming into the proprietorship of the remunerative factory, had no objection to the acquaintanceship between the Hope family and his own.

never in a studio since I had my portrait painted. I'll ask my father, but he doesn't go very far from the safe side. "Oh, I know you can get him to come, so that's a promise." In the hall his mother handed Barney a check.

"The sure you got at once to Surbiton," she said, "and see that you don't bungler the business a second time." And yet the young boy had merely predicted that her former orders had been carried out. Barney made no remark about the money, but she observed, as she kissed her two cheeks, as a diletta son should do, and departed.

CHAPTER VII. In almost any other country than England the name by which the evil-smelling rail-leads are known would be known by some cynical humorist. It was called Rose Garden court, as there is a reason for almost everything in this world, the chances are that once upon a time a garden stood there, and that roses probably bloomed in it.

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ried him up, and laid him in his room with his wife. "You've killed the poor man, as never did so any other," he said, "and he's left the wife. "No such luck," said Braunt. "He's too drunk to hurt."

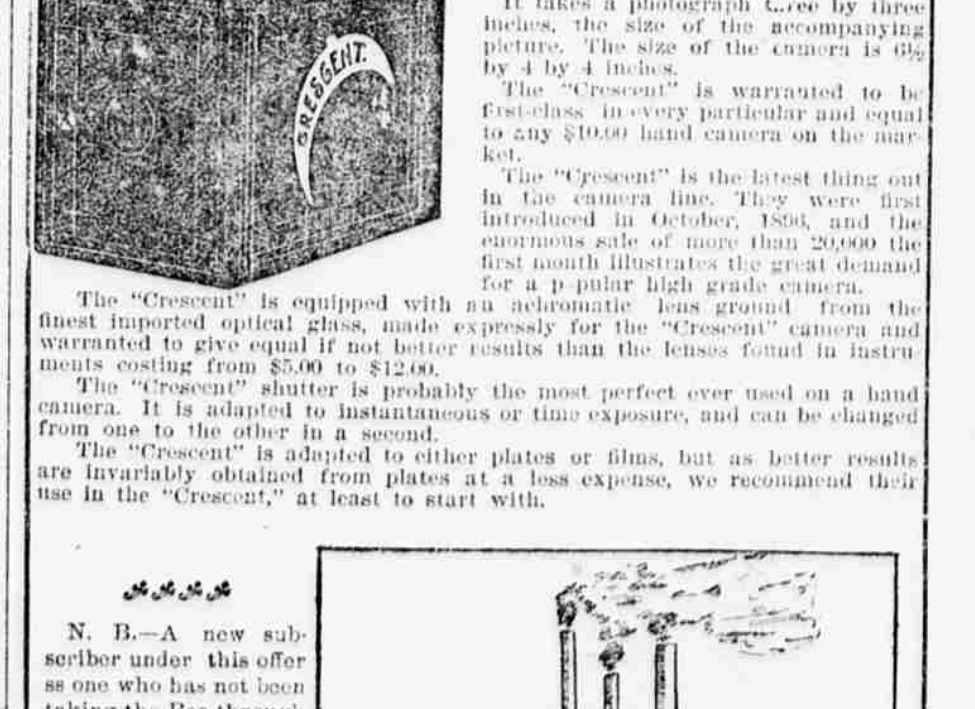
Miss Scimmia had much sympathy for the poor man who had related the incident. The women were more intelligent than the men. It was a fine state of things if a great, hulking, sulky brute like Braunt was to interfere in the domestic discussions that happen in all well regulated families. Much as they disliked the police, it seemed that now, if ever, their aid should be invoked.

"If he'd tried to break any head in my man's body," said Scimmia, "I'd have been there with a good stick." "I dunno about that, Sarah," said Mrs. Scimmia, who did not wish to rest under the imputation of not doing all she could under the circumstances for her husband in his comparatively helpless state. "With a stick?" she asked, "and the face, an eye and a nose?" "I couldn't see out of an eye, and I couldn't see out of a nose," she said, "and I'm not a young girl of yet, or wouldn't have been enough to give anybody the eye."

"Gawd 'elp us!" he went on, more in earnest than in anger, "with this world a-coming, it's a hard time, I give it up. I'll get with Braunt and the police both on a cheap shoulder, if he'll rise in 'and to be over the top of the world, for a poor 'ard workin' man to live in."

But neither ventured to remonstrate with the Yorkshireman, least of all Scimmias, although the latter's indignation held more aloof from him than ever. "Are you coming to the meeting tonight, Mr. Braunt?" he asked, "young man, when he had greeted father and daughter."

"Not me," he answered. "Why not?" "I'm not going to the meeting tonight, Mr. Braunt, I'm not." "Well, you see, Mr. Braunt, there is a crisis on. The committee is to report, Mr. Braunt has refused to meet them and this will likely anger them and the object of the strike or no strike will be put to vote and I for one don't want to see a strike—letting me see how it'll turn out."



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