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AN UNPREMEDITATED THEFT.

By FRANCES A. SCHNEIDER.

Mrs. Spreadbrow sat under the big willow in her front garden. Behind her stood the trim cottage, and in the grass, almost at her feet, gambled Eddy, her youngest born, and the new black and white puppy. She smiled placidly as she watched them, but it was not maternal pride that thrilled her bosom as she murmured: "He's a beauty! and his dear little legs and head are ever so much too large for his body; a sure sign that he'll be a big dog—and that's just what I want!" It is quite as likely that if the puppy had evinced signs of shrinking to the dimensions of a toy terrier, Mrs. Spreadbrow would have said to her kind, contented little self that a toy terrier was what she craved beyond anything else.

Spreadbrow had determined to assume toward the disturber of her seclusion melted quite away as the pretty young creature lifted a pair of sad dark eyes to her face and said in an embarrassing voice: "Please pardon me for intruding. I have come to—"

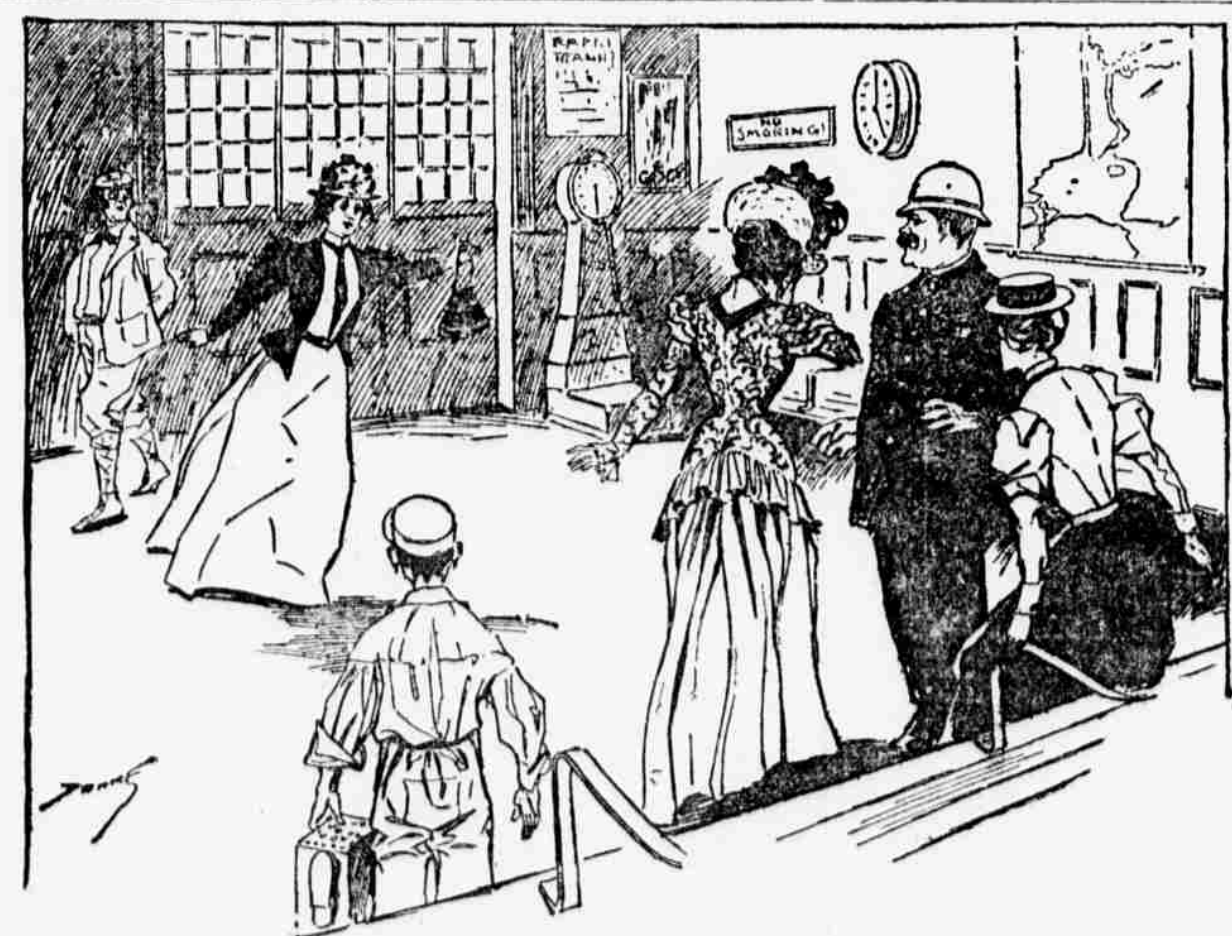
"Pray sit down," interrupted Mrs. Spreadbrow cheerily. "Thank you," said the girl, and dropped into a chair. "I will not detain you long. I have here a children's history—and from the depths of a roomy satchel she produced a small book—"that Catcham & Teasam are publishing."

"Ah! Now Mrs. Spreadbrow knew the worst. "But I don't want it," she said, gently. "It won't do any—any—harm—to look at it." The girl spoke as if trying to repeat a lesson, and with a wistful look in her face.

"Yes, it will; because if I let you show it to me I may buy it, and I really don't want it." "Nobody does; but you have put your rejection of it very kindly," said the girl, rising to go. Her voice trembled, and the smile she managed to scrow her pretty lips into was far from cheerful. Mrs. Spreadbrow was touched. There was something so pathetic about the voice and manner, and she was so very young and so very pretty. The motherly lady laid her hand on the girl's arm, saying softly: "Let me give you a glass of claret before you set out again in the heat—O!" For the little book agent had turned away to hide the tears she could not restrain.

"Excuse me," said Mrs. Spreadbrow. "It's the hot weather, and—oh, not being accustomed to the work. I—I began only yesterday, and it's a long trip to and from New York."

"Sit down," urged Mrs. Spreadbrow gently, and I will go and get the wine. "When she returned the girl had quite recovered and was sitting quietly at the window smiling at the gambols of the puppy. She apologized for having given way to her emotions, sipped her wine and then rose again to go: "Thank you so much for your kindness," she said warmly, "and goodbye!" "Stop," exclaimed Mrs. Spreadbrow. "I've changed my mind about the book, I'll take it."



"HERE IT IS! HERE IT IS!"

"A hundred dollars," replied Mrs. Townley. "I brought it with me for safety. But who—who? There has been no one—" "The little book agent!" gasped Mrs. Spreadbrow. "She is the only person who has been in the parlor besides myself since you left. Is it possible—can it be—that innocent-looking—O, dear!"

But Mrs. Spreadbrow was a woman of action, albeit mild and gentle, and she sprang to her feet fiercely denouncing her small soft fats. "I'll follow her!" she cried. "Do you go one way, Maria; I will go another and Della and the children shall go in other directions. O, we will run her down! The little hypocrite!"

In a few moments the house was empty of occupants, barring the cook, who stood with her elbows on the fence and watched the departing search party, and the black and white puppy, which in its foolish way growled at and worried something under the big willow. With the hot August sun pouring down upon their heads, the pursuers scurried from house to house, while with what Mrs. Spreadbrow termed "the intense cunning of a thief," the little book agent managed ever to elude them. At last Mrs. Spreadbrow found a maid servant who said she had seen the girl enter the railway sta-

tion and that if Mrs. Spreadbrow hurried she could overtake her before the arrival of the train for St. George. Stationward the anxious woman sped, her heart palpitating with hope, fear and indignation, intermixed with a spice of uncertainty. What should she do if the girl refused to give up the purse. Ah, she knew, she would get on the train, find a policeman at St. George and intercept her as she stepped on the boat. She reached the station just in time to see the book agent's skirt whisk through the door of a forward car; she herself was hauled onto the last car by an obliging brakeman just as the train moved off.

Arrived at St. George, Mrs. Spreadbrow hurriedly accosted a policeman, explained that the young woman in the gray linen dress, carrying the black satchel, had committed a theft and urged him excitedly to search, and then the three went into the ferry house. "Sit down," said Mrs. Spreadbrow weakly, when they had reached a quiet corner of the big room. "Thank you, I prefer to stand," replied the girl proudly. "And now may I ask what you accuse me of stealing?" "I—I," said Mrs. Spreadbrow, trembling before the pale "little thief." "We think you took Mrs. Townley's purse out of my parlor this morning; you were the only person in the room, besides myself between the time she left it there and the time we found it was gone, and—"

"My God!" murmured the book agent, dropping into a seat and covering her face with her hands. Presently she recovered herself, and turning to the policeman, said: "Search my satchel, please. And you?" to the seat and, regardless of curious eyes, was weeping copiously. "I—I—I'm so sorry. But things did look so against you. Please forgive me."

THE OLD-TIMERS.

Jacob Billings, aged 90, was master of ceremonies at the fourteenth annual reunion of the Billings family at Boston.

Colonel Frank J. Queen, who recently died in Birmingham, Ala., aged 92 years, married the daughter of Daniel Boone. She died ten years ago. Colonel Queen assisted Boone in driving Indians out of Kentucky.

Wilford Woodruff, head of the Mormon church, who died at Salt Lake City a week ago, was in the ministry for sixty-four years, in which time he traveled 172,369 miles, held 7,655 meetings and preached 3,226 sermons.

Although as a rule they are men of long lives, no fewer than 123 members of the Sacred College of Cardinals have died since Leo XIII. assumed the papal throne, and sixty-seven of this number were of his own creation.

The oldest sexton in point of service in the United States is Mark McTigue of Kokomo, Ind. For thirty-one years he has been custodian of the silent city. He has buried 3,500 people and knows every grave, marked and unmarked, in the cemetery.

Level Clark of Denmark, N. Y., who is 92 years old, has seen the soldiers march to fight under the stars and stripes four different times—first in 1812, then 1846, in 1861 and a few weeks ago, when he went to Syracuse to see the boys off for camp.

James Tuttle of Atlanta, Ill., secured nearly twenty years ago a promise of a funeral oration from a prominent general. Mr. Tuttle is now 92 years old and has just drawn up a will in which \$1,000 is set aside "to defray the expenses of Colonel Ingersoll's journey."

Sir Henry Keppel, who is "the father of the British fleet," is just finishing his autobiography. Sir Henry lives in London and was born 27 years before Waterloo, but notwithstanding his age he is as vigorous as possible. He was a lieutenant in the British navy as far back as 1829, and during his active career had many interesting experiences.

The mother of the late secretary of state, W. Q. Gresham, celebrated the ninety-second anniversary of her birth in Lansboro, Ind., a few days since. She was one of the first white children born in what is now Harrison county, Indiana. She was married to Colonel Gresham seventy-five years ago. One of her sons, a soldier, was killed by a desperado. Her oldest son was in the Mexican and the civil war, and recently died of wounds sustained in the latter war. Judge Gresham, former secretary of state in Cleveland's second administration, and postmaster general in Arthur's cabinet, died at Washington in 1894.

To Save Doctor Bills.

Use "Garland" Stoves and Ranges. The provincial lodge of America has jurisdiction over Hawaii and Japan. The regular routine of business was transacted at the morning session, after which recess was taken until 2 p. m., when the degree of the order was conferred on fifteen candidates. The head of the order is Judge Josiah Hayden Drummond, R. L. M., Portland, Me.

Do you like a dry champagne. Try Cuvée Imperial Extra Dry; its flavor is unrivaled and it is perfectly pure.