

ries, plaintively. "Forgive me, but I do remember a little verse about not calling your brother a fool in your heart."

"You're not strong on Bible quotations. The recognition of idiocy is an affair of the head, not of the heart. Now, must I coax any more?"

"No; bring me another cigar and I'll talk all the scandal you want."

I bring the cigar, saying, as I do so, "Is it true?"

"True as gospel."

"Then it is not scandal. It is a bit of life, and life is the most interesting thing in the world."

"Except death," my friend responds.

"Do you think it interesting? It is too often merely ghastly."

"So is life, and yet hasn't the majesty of death. Now, this story of Schenskow is tragic enough, and yet it is the ludicrous which will strike most of us."

"It was Shakspeare's recognition of the fact that life held both very near each other that made him Shakspeare."

"Yes, and what a motif for Shaksperian drama Schenskow's mistake would make. The great William liked people who made blunders. Schenskow's was that he married the wrong woman."

"So have other men. Indeed most of them do. If they waited until they knew the right one they wouldn't marry at all."

"Why? Because they would have passed the foolish age?"

"That's old. I read it in an almanac years ago. But it isn't the reason. I meant they would be in their dotage."

"No reason why they shouldn't marry. But I wasn't uttering a maxim; I was stating a fact. Schenskow married the wrong woman—that is, he didn't marry the woman whom he wanted to marry and whom he thought he had asked to marry him."

"Schenskow was on his way to San Francisco to fill an engagement, and stopped at Denver to give a concert. While there some lion hunter, who looked upon him as a rara avis, captured him and invited him to dinner."

"Well, it was this way. Schenskow took in a beautiful girl to dinner. When he was presented to her there was another whom he did not notice. He is an ardent little fellow, and before the entrees were reached, he was head over heels in love with the girl beside him. He wanted to declare his passion on the spot, but had not been in America long enough to know how that would do, so he waited until he left Denver, and he wrote it."

"To girl whom he had taken in to dinner?"

"He supposed so, and she answered, and before his return from San Francisco he had proposed and been accepted."

"Shade of Daisy Miller, and we say you are a caricature!"

"Daisy wasn't half bad, and Schenskow is a man to win a young girl's love. He plays, as you say, like an angel, though, come to think of it, I've heard the other fellow knew Schenskow's instrument pretty well."

"And so they married and lived happy ever after?"

"Not exactly. Schenskow returned to Denver all eagerness. All arrangements for the wedding were made, so that she could go right on with him to the East, where he would finish his en-

gagements, and then back to the Vaterland. Imagine his happiness as he neared the depot. She would be there, and next day would make her his. It seemed to him the train would never reach Denver, but at last it stopped before the ruins of the depot; it was the year of the fire. In a moment his hand was grasped in a friendly grip and a manly voice said: 'I know you from my daughter's description of you. She is waiting for us.'

"The two walked through the station to a carriage in which sat, not the woman whom Schenskow expected to see, but the other whom he had met only to forget."

"Do you mean —"

"Yes, I do. He had mixed the names. I don't know what they were, but he had loved Miss Smith and written to Miss Brown, who, of course, did not know he was thinking of Miss Smith while he wrote to her. Not an unnatural mistake, either, seeing that he had met them together, and but once."

"But what did he do?"

"Do? What any man of honor would do. Perjured himself like a gentleman and married her next day."

"But the other girl—?"

"I had never known, and this one confessing her love for him by letter if not viva voca, had bullied her parents into giving their consent to the marriage. Her friends knew of her plans. What man could have the heart to humiliate her by telling that he had made a mistake?"

"So he sacrificed himself. Quixotic, but fine. I believe I like him."

"I don't know. You see, he rescued himself afterward—sacrificed her."

"You mean he told her?"

"Yes, in one of his rages. He's a great little brute when he's angry."

"Oh, the beast! Then it was no fine scruple that made him marry her. It was cowardice. He was a coward and afraid to tell, and afterward he was a coward and told. Please don't bring him here. What became of her?"

"She took her baby and went home. His telling her was a nasty thing, but I think you a little hard on him. He is capable of doing a fine thing if it would not take too long. You know, lots of men who can't live nobly die noble deaths. She may have rasped him. We ordinary folks haven't the nerve that a genius has. But here's Jem. Ask him about it."

"Dear old Jem," I cry, "I'm so glad you're no genius. Otherwise you would find that you had married the wrong woman."

"Perhaps I have. What or whom have you been discussing?"

"Whom? As if we ever talked about people."

"You can't get anything better to talk about, my dear. Who was it, Wright?"

"Oh, I've been telling her about Schenskow's mixing up the names, and now she wants to know what you think of it."

"Think of it? Why, you rascal, you know there's not a word of truth in it. It's too good to be true."

On which I went to bed.—Town Topics.

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