

A HEAVY RANSOM.

To judge by his haggard looks and the monotonous way in which he was pacing up and down the room, Hon. Robert Spenceley was evidently under the influence of a serious mental depression when his particular chum, Tom Langton, favored him with a morning call.

"Hallo! What's up, Bob? By Jove, you are looking seedy."

Hon. Robert stopped in his purposeless walk, languidly extended his arm, lightly touched the tips of his friend's fingers, and heaved a deep and bitter sigh.

"Are you ill, chappie, or has the peerless, patrician Penelope—"

"Sit down, Tom. The fact is, I've been a fool."

"And how did you discover it?"

"Well, as you know, I've been mixed up a bit with Lord Templeton and his set. Jolly fellows, but inclined to go the pace a bit too fast. Hang me, I can say 'No' to anything they propose, and the upshot of it all is that in two nights I have lost upward of three thousand pounds sterling playing cards at the Junior Aborigines—at least, that's the amount they hold my IOU's for."

"What confoundedly bad luck you must have had!"

"I posted down to the family nest yesterday, laid the whole affair before the governor, and vowed that I would never touch a card again if he would help me out of this scrape."

"And he has refused?"

"Point blank. He reminded me that on several occasions he had paid off my legitimate debts—small in comparison to this one—but he considered playing cards for high stakes so outrageously foolish that he could not and would not help me. I told him they were debts of honor, but he said it was a most dishonorable way either of making or getting rid of money."

"In conclusion, he told me that as it was most desirable that I should break off from this connection, he proposed to reduce my allowance to five hundred pounds a year, during which time I am to travel and see as much of the world as I can on a paltry ten pounds a week."

"And what did you say?"

"What could I say? I have no choice in the matter. I have made up my mind that I will not go to the money-lenders, and so I must get these fellows to wait until I can redeem my paper."

"Look here, old chap. I'll come with you for a time, and we'll go in for a walking tour."

"Tom, you are a brick. Let us start this week."

Three months had elapsed since Robert Spenceley's departure, during which period frequent communications—each bearing expressions of regret for the past and promises for the future—kept Lord Methwick fully acquainted with his son's doings. The absent one seemed to be thoroughly enjoying himself, judging from his graphic descriptions of the scenery and incidents of the walking tour. Then the letters ceased altogether.

Several times lately the doubt had arisen in Lord Methwick's mind as to whether he had not been too severe, remembering that his son had hitherto borne an irreproachable character, evincing a deep dislike to all the worse forms of dissipation, and there was no doubt that this unfortunate affair at the Junior Aborigines was not the result of inherent or newly-acquired viciousness, but rather brought about by a false position, in which, surrounded by companions of wealth and repute, he had been led away by the excitement and his inability to say "No."

Now that no news came from him, his father's resolution rapidly gave way under the disquieting influence of foreboding and the continuous entreaties of his mother, until at last his recall was decided upon so soon as the next intimation of his address should arrive. The next letter did disclose his whereabouts, and this was the thunderbolt.

"MOST ILLUSTRIOUS SIGNOR—The son of your excellency is doing us the honor to condescend our humble hospitality to partake and has to us your address given so that we may impart his well being. He now has the desires, but we would that your illustrious excellency to us sending the sum of pounds four thousand English to which we may be soled for his loss. Then followed an address to which a communication was to be sent, and the missive concluded: "Any information to the gentlemen will be on the son of your excellency."

"Giuseppe! The most noted bloodthirsty and brigand of modern times, about whose cruelties and tortures so many harrowing tales were told by travelers, and upon whose head a heavy price had been set long ago."

Lady Methwick piteously besought her husband to send the money at once.

"They will kill my darling boy, and you—your will have sent him to his death!"

Her daughters, Hon. Agatha, Ondine and Clovis, added their agonized entreaties; indeed, so carried away were they by their feelings that they actually offered to go without new hats and dresses for the next twelve months, in order to contribute to the ransom money. But his lordship did not believe in giving way at once. Doubtless a lesser sum would be accepted, and while negotiations were in progress and there was a chance of the ransom being ultimately paid, he did not think his son would be in any danger. So he sent an offer of two thousand pounds sterling. The reply to this was a curt refusal, and a postscript added in Robert Spenceley's handwriting: "Father, send soon; feel sure they will not take less." B. J. still Lord Methwick would not give in without effort to reduce the amount, and he increased his offer to two thousand five hundred pounds sterling.

The day came when Giuseppe's reply was due, but it did not arrive, and pent-up anxiety caused his lordship two sleepless nights and two miserable, irritable days. On the third morning, amongst the contents of the post-bag was a small parcel, the handwriting of the address of

which was immediately recognized. With trembling fingers Lord Methwick tore open the package, and there lay disclosed the bold brigand's staggering reply—a cardboard box containing a man's ear packed in sawdust, and inside the lid these words were scrawled: "No less than four thousand. Part of his excellency is sent free so that he may hear your decide which was final."

In after years that day always remained impressed with startling vividness on his lordship's memory. What with his wife's continual fainting fits; his three daughters in consecutive hysterics, their conscious intervals being employed in upbraiding him in such severe terms that one would have thought that the poor man had himself cut his son's ear off; his own mental anguish as he remembered that the future head of his house would never be able to hear both sides; the horrid possibility of getting the wanderer back for nothing—a piece at a time, and the fear that at that moment further tortures might be in course of infliction—he often marveled, not only that he survived it, but that reason did not altogether forsake her tottering throne.

And the climax was reached when, in the softening shades of twilight, Lady Methwick and her three daughters, dressed in black, went in solemn procession to a distant part of the grounds, where, beside a rippling stream and beneath a spreading tree, the gardener had already dug a grave. There, with fresh bursts of tears and passionate sobs, the box of sawdust with its precious freight was solemnly buried, and a cairn built over and about its resting place.

The outgoing evening mail carried two letters, one to the brigands agreeing to their terms, the other to a friend of the family, who happened to be a consul in the near neighborhood, inclosing a draft for four thousand pounds, and begging him to put himself in instant communication with Giuseppe and obtain the captive's release.

The consul did as he was desired, and in compliance with instructions from the robber band, who were evidently taking every precaution against being trapped, proceeded alone one evening, carrying a parcel of four thousand sovereigns to an indicated spot on the outskirts of a forest. Here he was met by a sunburnt, black-bearded giant, picturesquely attired in his native dress, who carried a rifle, while a couple of revolvers and a poniard adorned his sash. Motioning to the consul to follow him, he proceeded but a few paces into the forest, then halted and blew a long, low, peculiar whistle on his fingers.

Approaching footsteps were immediately heard, and there emerged from among the trees the whilom prisoner, alone. As he ranged up to the side of his deliverer, the gold was handed over, carefully counted, and then, with a low bow, the robber turned on his heel, at once disappeared, without having uttered a word, and the consul and his purchase were free to depart.

Methwick hall was ablaze with light on the evening of the heir's return to his ancestral home. The female portion of the family had spent the day in alternately laughing and crying for joy, and were now in a state of intense excitement, anxiously awaiting the return of the carriage from the station. Presently the sound of wheels was heard drawing up to the door, and mother and sisters rushing out, fell upon Robert, hugged him and kissed him into the house, but it was not until after they had been for some time assembled in the library that there flashed across their minds the remembrance of that horror that lay buried beside the stream. His mother first made the discovery.

"Why, Robert, you have two ears!"

"Two ears, mother! Have I not always had two?"

"But we buried one of them."

Hon. Robert was evidently in the dark, and when they explained he declared (truthfully) that he knew nothing about it. As a word-painter he proved a decided failure, considering the adventures which they expected him to recount. He had nothing to relate, simply monotonously waiting for the ransom, and, no matter how they plied him with questions, he could tell them nothing of the doings of the gang, for he said he never saw any of them except the one who had him in charge.

A few days after his return, pleading the necessity of a visit to a West End tailor, he traveled to London, after receiving strict injunctions and giving a promise to shun his old haunts and companions. Arrived in town, he at once proceeded to Tom Langton's chambers, and his first words to his chum were:

"I say, Tom, what about that ear, and why wasn't I told of it?"

"Well, I thought you might object, and as it was desirable to bring things to a climax, I got it from the dissecting room at the hospital through a student."

"It took me quite by surprise when they accused me of having two ears, and told me they had buried one of them. But how about the money?"

"I have told the fellows that you have negotiated a loan and empowered me to pay your debts. Here are the IOU's that I have bought up, and the total amount is about £2,996. The remaining £1,004—"

"You will please keep for yourself, as arranged, for the double purpose of paying your personal silence."

"Thanks, old chap. I will be silent as the grave; but, I say, I had a difficulty in keeping silence when we had her majesty's consul in the forest. I never wanted to laugh so much before."

"Tid-Bits."

Talent is more valuable than genius, because a man can control it.—Detroit Free Press.

—Mrs. Fogg—"But how in the world did she come to marry him?" Mr. Fogg—"He asked her, I believe."—Boston Transcript.

SOMETHING WONDERFUL.

The New Experience of an American Traveler Abroad.

He Actually Runs Across a Man in a Barber Shop Who Willingly Yields His "Next" Privilege to Another.

A New Yorker who recently returned to the city after a foreign tour says that he enjoyed one experience while abroad the like of which he never before heard of, says the Sun of that city. "During my life in New York, for forty years," he said, "I have met plenty of nice people and seen more acts of courtesy and deeds of kindness than would fill a book. I have known of a skindiving fellow money to the needy, and of a passenger in an elevated car resigning his seat to a woman, and of a Wall Street man with Christian symptoms, and of a smoker handing his lighted cigar right end foremost to a stranger who asked a light, and of a human being who always had a match when anybody needed one, and of a woman who would dole out the beauty of another without jealousy, and of an entertainer who would cut for his guest a better piece of porterhouse steak than he kept for himself, and even of a curmudgeon who would, upon occasion, give proof that there was a streak of virtue in him. All such things one can safely expect at times in the world."

"But, though I have been a customer at barbers' shops in New York for twenty years, I never saw and never heard of a case in which a man who, when it came his turn to get in the chair for a shave, and when the barber cried 'Next!' would resign his place to any other man in waiting. He will stick up for his rights there against the world. I have seen many a quarrel, and two or three fights, between men waiting to get shaved, when there was a crowd, as to which one came in first. I was angry myself one day when a fellow who had been getting his boots blacked in the rear of the barber shop, and whom I had not seen, stepped up to a chair which I was about to take, and said he had come in before me. No matter if another man is in a hurry, or if he must catch a train, or if his wife is anxious about him because he is too late for dinner, you won't give up your turn in the barber's chair on his account. There is one of his rights a man will stand up for, and you can see it at the barber's."

"When I went abroad I found the same thing in England and France. In London once I asked a barber if he could not put me ahead, and he answered sharply that he would not do it for the bank of England. The Parisians are polite everywhere except in the barber's shop when their turn comes, and you would have to fight a duel if you asked one of them to let you get shaved before him because your soap was growing cold."

"It was in my programme, after seeing the French and English, to take a trip through the highlands of Scotland. I saw plenty of historic spots as I made my way far up on the Grampian hills, where the frugal swains feed their flocks, and further yet, where the fishermen breast the waves; but I would give them all away for an experience I had when I reached an ancient town beyond the Grampians one Saturday afternoon. At the inn I asked for a barber, as I wanted to go to church the next day, and must be shaved. When I got to the barber's place his only chair was filled, and four or five customers were waiting their turn. In a few moments the chair was emptied, and I expected that one of the men would spring into it. Not a man moved. The barber looked at me, smiled, and told me he was ready for me. I said to him in a low voice that several others had been there before me. 'I dinna mind that,' he replied. 'You're a stranger up here, maybe an American, and the stranger always comes first as it is.' I glanced at the other men as if to apologize or to secure their assent. 'Aye,' said one of them, 'the stranger must always be first here; we can wait.' I took the chair with thanks, and the price of a shave was two-pence."

"The seven wonders of the world, all put together, and with the addition of Cleopatra's Needle in the Central park, would not have impressed me as deeply as I was impressed by this romantic incident, never before paralleled in my experience. I have traveled from Boston to Chicago, from Cripple Creek to New Orleans, without ever hearing of a thing of the kind."

"I do not suppose that many Americans possess sufficient brain power to believe in the literal truth of this incident; yet, for all that, it is true as the Grampian hills of the highlands of Scotland, where it occurred. I have told the story to two or three Scotchmen since I came back to New York, but they did not think there was anything curious or sensational about it."

Clearly Proven.

Forty years since, "Porte Crayon" was down on Albemarle sound, and told a native that there were men with mouths eight inches wide. The native declared that was a fish story; Porte reproved him for his incredulity, and pointed out that deductions from known facts proved this statement. "We know," he said, "that oysters must be eaten whole; we know that there are oysters eight inches across the minor dimension; therefore, there must be mouths eight inches wide to take them in, or the beautiful chain of harmony in the universe is broken."

Telephones in Clairvoyance.

M. Trouve, the well-known electrician of Paris, has brought out a tiny telephone no larger than a franc piece, and, in conjunction with Rostoff, the "wizard," has applied it to clairvoyance. The telephones attached to the ears of the blindfolded performer are hidden by a wig and connected by fine wires, also invisible, to a transmitter behind the screen, who can see and hear all that passes, prompts him by means of the telephone.

FASHIONABLE FOOTWEAR.

More Attention Paid to Comfort and Convenience Than Formerly.

"Of course, for carriage wear, horse wear, evening wear, the Louis Quinze heel is all the go—although I do not advocate women moving about all day in the house, for instance, with their feet at the angle those heels enforce. Whether a woman is walking on the street or walking in the house her foot should be properly poised. The low heel and pointed toe, even an extremely pointed toe, are to be preferred to the broad toe and high heel which prevailed a dozen or so years ago."

"And about the piccadilly toes—are they vanishing?"

"A rounded toe, neither pointed nor square, is what we are making now for walking boots, but slippers still terminate in a sharp point, perhaps not as exaggerated as last season."

"Buckles have little to do with the anatomy of the foot," he added, "but I want to show you these cut-steel buckles on the patent-leather slippers," and he took from the show window a variety of Cinderella-like footgear strapped and buckled in novel and dainty designs. They were pretty enough for the roseleaf feet of fairies.

"In regard to leggings, a subject so important to the tuniced and gaited Rosalinds who flit through our parks and along our boulevards, it is revealed that shapely and satisfactory accessories of the kind are being made of black leather and pigskin. The majority are buttoned for convenience in getting into them, but the more expensive are laced with delicate precision and fit like wax."

"Undoubtedly people pay much more attention to their feet, take better care of them and think more of their comfort now than they ever did. And well they need to do so," quoth the shoe-maker, emphatically. "Many people are one-sided and their bodies thrown clear out of plumb simply from always having balanced themselves on absurd heels and having worn the wrong shape of shoe. I know personally an apparently sensible woman who weighed two hundred and twenty-five pounds and who wore habitually a one and one-half shoe with a heel three inches high. She fell once or twice and hurt herself, but the fall was never attributed to the shoes. I have another customer, a fine-looking girl of noble proportions, who invariably orders an 'A' last. It is entirely too narrow for her. Among the people who come to us to be fitted are a great many whose feet are totally unlike. They have a corn, perhaps, on one foot, and habitually walk in such a way as to ease that foot; that is, throw the pressure off the corn. A different set of muscles is used and the foot enlarges in a different way from its companion foot. People invariably 'favor' one member of the body more than the other; in measuring for leggings one leg is often found much larger than the other, and the same is true in regard to feet. The shoes are made similar, but the feet are distinctly different."—N. Y. Tribune.

Related to the Queen.

Victoria, queen of Great Britain and empress of India, has just given her royal and parental consent to one of her relatives entering upon a professional career in order to earn his living on the public stage. In an English paper the following business-like announcement appears among the court news: "A member of the queen's family is about to go on the stage as a professional singer. Countess Valda Gleichen, the daughter of the late Prince Victor of Hohenlohe, the queen's nephew, more remarkable for her voice than her pocketbook, finds herself compelled to make her own living by singing."

"The oldest known piece of wood is formed into the statue of an Egyptian sheik. The statue is evidently a likeness; the eyes are of crystal, the expression of the face bold and commanding. The man whom it represents has been dead for 6,000 years, and yet the wood of the statue is as perfect to-day as when turned from the workshop of the carver."

MOTHERS recovering from the illness attending childbirth, or who suffer from the effects of disorders, derangements and displacements of the womanly organs, will find relief and a permanent cure in Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. Taken during pregnancy, the "Prescription" makes childbirth easy by preparing the system for parturition, thus assisting Nature and shortening "labor." The painful ordeal of childbirth is robbed of its terrors, and the dangers thereof greatly lessened, to both mother and child. The period of confinement is also greatly shortened, the mother strengthened and built up, and an abundant secretion of nourishment for the child promoted. If

THE MARRIED WOMAN be delicate, run-down, or overworked, it worries her husband as well as herself. This is the proper time to build up her strength and cure those weaknesses, or ailments, which are the cause of her trouble. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription dispels aches and pains, melancholy and nervousness, brings refreshing sleep and makes a new woman of her.

Mrs. ABRAHAM LYON, of Lorraine, Jefferson Co., N. Y., writes: "I had been suffering from ulceration and falling of the womb, for several years, or since the birth of my youngest child. I consulted all the physicians around here and they gave me up and said there was no help for me."

At last, almost discouraged, I began taking Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and took five bottles. It is three years since and I have not had any return of the trouble. I feel very grateful, and in fact, owe my life, to Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. I had not taken your medicine."

Mrs. LYON.

CASTORIA

for Infants and Children.

MOTHERS, Do You Know that Paregoric, Bateman's Drops, Godfrey's Cordial, many so-called Soothing Syrups, and most remedies for children are composed of opium or morphine?

Do You Know that opium and morphine are stupefying narcotic poisons?

Do You Know that in most countries druggists are not permitted to sell narcotics without labeling them poisons?

Do You Know that you should not permit any medicine to be given your child unless you or your physician know of what it is composed?

Do You Know that Castoria is a purely vegetable preparation, and that a list of its ingredients is published with every bottle?

Do You Know that Castoria is the prescription of the famous Dr. Samuel Pitcher. That it has been in use for nearly thirty years, and that more Castoria is now sold than of all other remedies for children combined?

Do You Know that the Patent Office Department of the United States, and of other countries, have issued exclusive right to Dr. Pitcher and his assigns to use the word "Castoria" and its formula, and that to imitate them is a state prison offense?

Do You Know that one of the reasons for granting this government protection was because Castoria had been proven to be absolutely harmless?

Do You Know that 35 average doses of Castoria are furnished for 35 cents, or one cent a dose?

Do You Know that when possessed of this perfect preparation, your children may be kept well, and that you may have unbroken rest?

Well, these things are worth knowing. They are facts.

The fac-simile signature of *Dr. H. Pitcher* is on every wrapper.

Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria.

L. M. LYON, CONTRACTOR AND BUILDER.

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All work guaranteed first-class. Plans and estimates furnished or all kind of work either brick or wood.

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