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A BARRIER TO HAPPINESS

By LUCILE BARKER

There lived in the city of Philadelphia a widower and his son who were always seen together. The father was a little over forty, the son about twenty-one. The two always dressed alike, talked alike, acted alike and had the same opinions on subjects. Those who knew them intimately spoke of them as Dumbey & Son, though their name was Hardwick.

All went well between the two till the question of the son's marriage came up. Jimmie Hardwick fell in love with a girl who had no means whatever and if he married her had not sufficient fortune to keep up his position in the ultra fashionable golden circle to which he possessed a birthright. In vain his father held up to him the fact that if he made the intended match the relations that had existed between them must cease, the older man continuing in the same social scale, the son dropping out.

Emily Sherbourne was a very sensible, practical young woman. She had no ambition to hobnob with multimillionaires, but she loved Jimmie and was loath to give him up. Indeed, she did not propose to give him up.

The case dragged, poor Jimmie loath to give up the position in which he had been born, especially since it would put a wedge between him and his father. But one day Jim saw signs that his father was himself contemplating matrimony. None of the widows or young spinsters of society seemed to have attracted Mr. Hardwick's attention, for Jim kept watch of him whenever they were "out," and the older man's attentions seemed to be general. Confident that his father would not think of marrying out of his set, Jim made up his mind that he had been mistaken and there was nothing in it.

Then he concluded to make one more attempt to win his father to his own intended marriage. He begged Mr. Hardwick to call on his betrothed, hopeful that a view of her would so attract him that he would fall in with the scheme. But the father said that he had never made visits other than within his own circle of acquaintances and declined to make an exception in this case.

In an interview with Miss Sherbourne Jim told her of his effort and of the suspicion he had had of his father's attraction for some woman. Emily asked her lover if he had entirely given up this suspicion, and when he said that he was still uncertain about the matter she advised Jimmie to watch. Jim admitted that his father, who was too aristocratic to use street cars, now and again telephoned to a stable where he got his livery, order a carriage and drive away, whither the son did not know.

"Why don't you go, too?" asked Emily.

"How can I do that?"
"I will give you a plan. The next time your father orders a carriage go to the stable and bribe the coachman to let you take his place."

"But father would recognize me."
"Does he always have the same coachman?"

"No."
"Very well, if you wear a coachman's livery and make up for a colored man your father will never dream that you are his son."

"I have a mind to try it."
"Do so. It may be that your father is courting some one not of his set. If he is and you discover the fact he will no longer oppose your doing the same thing."

Jim made all his preparations, and when he next heard his father order a carriage he slipped out through a back door and went to the stable, where a burnt cork transformed him into an ebony instead of a white man. Then donning a livery he mounted the box of a coach and drove to his home. His father came out, opened the door, gave the address and got in.

When Jimmie heard that address the expression on his face was not only one of wonder, but of astonishment. His father had ordered him to drive to the house where dwelt Miss Emily Sherbourne. His first impulse was to get down from the box and ask his parent what the dickens he meant; his second was to drive on and see the matter to the end. He followed the latter. On reaching his destination Mr. Hardwick got out and, ordering the coach to wait, rang the bell and went into the house.

Here was a pretty pass—the son sitting on the box while his father was inside courting the girl he would not consent to his offspring marrying. It seemed to Jim that the call was interminable. What could be going on? He worked himself into a fury, then got down from the box, stalked up the steps and rang the bell.

Mr. Hardwick was sitting on the same sofa with Emily Sherbourne when the tete-a-tete was interrupted by a negro coachman with a whip in his hand standing in the doorway.
"What does this mean, pop?" cried coachman.

Mr. Hardwick was paralyzed with astonishment, and Miss Sherbourne burst into a laugh.

How through a friend in the gilded circle she had made the acquaintance of the father of her lover and drawn him on to visit her was her own secret. Her ruse was successful. Mr. Hardwick turned his supposed conquest over to Jimmie, consented to the wedding and the three gave up society to be happy in their own home.

A VALUABLE SATCHEL

By EDWIN C. SMITHSON

"Put a few things in a hand bag at once," I said to my wife. "I have a letter from a man in B. who says he will publish my novel and give me 30 per cent of the price of the book."

"Oh, Henry! Just think of it! From poverty we will jump right into comfort."

"H'm! If the book sells."

"Oh, my goodness gracious!"

"What's up now?"
"We have only one bag, and I loaned that yesterday to Maggie Jones."

"Well, wrap some things in paper. There's a trunk store on the way to the station. I'll stop and pick up a satchel."

Ten minutes later I kissed my wife goodby and started out with a light heart. I had worked two years on my novel and had used up all but enough money to take me to B. I had offered my story to ten different publishers, and all had refused it. Here, at last, was a publisher who had had the intelligence to discover its value. But he must be a poor business man or he would not have offered me 30 per cent when I would have been glad to get 10.

I stopped in at the trunk store and found a bargain in a leather bag a man had ordered, saying that he would call for it. The bag was marked with his initials, but he had not called. I paid half price for it, the vendor agreeing to erase the initials on my return. I had no time for him to do it then. Dumping my belongings into it, I hurried on to the station.

When I reached B. I met with a shock. The publisher who had made me the liberal offer had done so for the reason that he proposed when he got me to B. to soak me for \$800 with which to get out a first edition of the work. His letter was an advertising dodge to secure a customer for his printing business. I gave him a piece of my mind, but what did it avail? Nothing. I started for home to break the sad news to my wife.

I was sitting in the train waiting for it to start, with my eyes shut and my hat drawn down over my eyes, when some one sat down beside me.

"Fool!" he whispered.

I started up and looked at him, astonished.

"What do you mean by putting your initials on my bag?" he asked.

"What do I mean?"

"Yes. Are you crazy?"

I was on to something; that was evident. What I didn't know, I must dissemble.

"How did you know me?" I asked.

"Why, by the bag, of course—R. L. B." Besides, you were described to me as a sawed off man with a bad eye, mutton chop whiskers and a hook nose."

"This was not pleasant. My wife always told me that I was considered more than ordinarily handsome."

"Well, now you've got on to me, tell me what you want," I said.

"Half."

"When and where shall I turn it over?"

"You're going to A., aren't you?"

"I wasn't, but I said I was."

"Where do you put up?"

"At the S."

"Suppose I see you at 8 o'clock to-night."

Now, it was as plain as the nose on your face that there had been some sort of get-away with property by a man whose initials were R. L. B. It occurred to me that I might have changed bags with him, but that couldn't be. I had bought the bag empty, and it now contained my belongings. I was sure of that, because ten minutes before I had opened it. I am a writer of detective stories and always looking for material. I was a trifle discouraged by my late experience, but once a man gets the literary fever he can't get it out of his system. I must follow the thing up. To meet the man that evening would be rather quick work. But what matter? I could have a police force in an adjoining room to listen and if the plan ripened could arrest my man. So I told him I would be ready for him.

The police came pretty near spoiling the next detective story I wrote by arresting me as I left the station. One of them, who was keeping a close watch, saw the letters on my bag and took me. Fortunately "my pal" had given them the slip by crawling under a train and getting out another way. I was taken to the station, where my bag was examined and a nightside, comb and brush and toothbrush found, whereas they were looking for \$200,000 in negotiable securities. The reward offered was 10 per cent of the amount recovered. I offered to divide all over \$10,000, and the offer was at last accepted, since I threatened to keep mum on any other terms.

Well, at 8 o'clock my man appeared, and by a lot of talk that I had been conchided in by the police I got him to give away enough for them to get on to the right man. I didn't go home till I had followed the matter up. It was a quick job, and when I did go home I had \$17,500 in my pocket.

"Oh, my, dear," exclaimed my wife. "I thought you were never coming! Did you make a good contract?"

"First rate," I said.

The next morning it was in the newspapers that a detective story writer had snared a big haul, and I received twenty-four offers from publishers for the book I had gone to B. to sell.

The Ghost Club Man's Story

By ROGER N. OLNSTEAD

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Though I am now a general superintendent of a railroad, I was once a locomotive engineer. I crawled up to my present post through every intermediate position. One wouldn't suppose that a man who had made his way by hard work and a practical makeup would be a member of the Ghost club, as some persons call the Society For Psychological Research. But I am, and I'm going to tell you what started me in that line.

When I was a young fellow my father wanted me to go to college, but I disgusted him by taking a position as fireman on a locomotive. I had just learned enough about the machine to take the throttle when the civil war broke out, and I enlisted. While campaigning in the south we captured a hundred miles of railroad, including a good supply of rolling stock. Of course there was a call for those of us who had railroad experience, and I gave in my name as an engineer. I did that because I was young and ambitious to run an engine.

I was given a machine at once. This was more than I wanted, for we had made some sixty miles of forced marches, advancing every hour of the night, before we had made the capture. The consequence was that we were all dead tired, and as for sleep we had hardly any for several days. We had come down on a central point where the rolling stock was kept and used it to capture the terminals on our flanks. I was ordered to pull a train loaded with a regiment of 500 men on an expedition to occupy the eastern terminal, and I wasn't permitted to go to sleep for a few hours before starting either. I told Major Twining, who had been made superintendent, that he had better send a man with me in case I went to sleep in the cab from sheer inability to keep awake. He sent Bob Stewart, who was to shovel the coal and be ready to relieve me in case of absolute necessity.

We started at dusk to run through a country, the people of which were all hostile to us and ready to throw us off the track or fire into us whenever an opportunity arose. It seems now more than it did then a pretty risky business to put a man who hadn't had six hours' sleep in forty-eight hours in charge of the lives of 500 men. Besides, I was young then, and young persons require more sleep than older ones. For awhile the danger of running into obstructions was so terrible to me that I had no thought of sleep, but we had some seventy miles to go before morning, and with the load, the condition of the road, the grades and the locomotive of that date we could not do more than twenty miles an hour, and the required stops lessened that figure.

We had got over seven-eighths of the distance when the monotonous puff of the engine began to tell on me and I looked around for Bob. He was not in the tender. Looking over the tender, I saw him lying on top of the next car back sound asleep. Thinking it would be better to let him get a little rest before calling him, I turned again to the throttle.

I must have gone several miles half asleep. At any rate, I was roused by bullets spattering against the sides of the cab and hearing a fusillade which was answered by men from the cars. Realizing that we had struck a nest of enemies, I pulled her wide open, and she sprang forward with considerable speed. Anyway, we got away from whoever were firing on us. Then things settled down to the same old jog.

The next thing I knew Bob shook me and, taking the throttle out of my hand, told me to find a place to get some sleep. I preferred to sit on the seat on the other side of the cab. I saw Bob running the engine, looking as wide awake as if he hadn't been doing forced marching, and, reassured by the sight, I went to sleep. I was awakened by a touch which I supposed came from Bob, who wished to be relieved. I didn't see Bob, but I saw that day was breaking. No one was at the throttle. No one was in the cab or the tender. The locomotive's speed had been reduced to a minimum.

Where was Bob? I had seen him asleep on top of the car; then he had relieved me. But where had he gone since, and how had he come to leave the engine without a guide? And who had awakened me if not he?

We needed water, and as soon as I came to the next tank I pulled up to take in some. Colonel Fordick, in command of the troops I was hauling, came forward to ask why we were getting on so slowly. I told him my story and asked him to have a search made for Bob. He did so, but no Bob was to be found. I began to feel kind of queer about the whole business. I couldn't stop thinking what had become of my assistant and when or why he had left his post, endangering the lives of a whole regiment.

We made the point we were going to before sunrise, and when I took the train back I had orders to look out for Bob or his body on the way. We found the body where we had met with the firing. He had been shot dead and rolled off the top of the car. He couldn't have relieved me, and from the time I supposed he did till dawn the locomotive had been without an engineer. Nor could he have awakened me—at least not in the flesh.

That's what made me a member of the Ghost club.

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