

Poor Mrs. Dolby

By M. QUAD

When Mr. Dolby sat down for the evening he had his newspaper on his knee and Mrs. Dolby was singing "Rock of Ages" and clearing away the supper table. He had been reading for a quarter of an hour when she quietly entered and sat down and said:

"Samuel, I don't want to disturb you nor make you feel bad, but I feel obliged to ask you a few questions. Last night at midnight Mrs. Watkins saw a light moving around in our back yard. It was a light which bobbed up and bobbed down and dodged this way and that and when it finally went out gave a great wink and a splutter. It was what they call a ghost lantern, Samuel, and it meant that there would be death in this house within a week. I'll be my death, of course. I've got twenty-seven different ailments, with heart disease thrown in, while you are as healthy as a cornfield. Yes; it'll be me, but I'm not weeping over it. I'm sitting right here as calm as a catnip, but I want to know some few things."

Mr. Dolby must have known of her presence, but he was too deeply interested in his paper to recognize it. He had found an article which said that a spider could be killed in water for four hours and then come out with its ambrosia undimmed.

"I shall go to heaven when I die, of course," continued Mrs. Dolby, as her voice broke a little. "I order go there. Any woman who has whitewashed the cellar every spring for twenty-seven years, besides making soft soap, cutting carpet rag, dyeing over old clothes and making a new skirt last for her for three years, will go to heaven. What bothers me, however, is how I'm going to act after I get there. You know how company visits frustrates me. If three or four of the neighbors come in I'm almost sure to fall off my chair or knock over something. How's it going to be when I get up there and meet a bull pasture full of angels? There'll be millions of 'em, Samuel."

She seemed to wipe the tears from her eyes with the palm of her hand, but as she had asked no direct question Mr. Dolby finished the bag article and turned to one on the care of closets.

"I don't want to be looked at as a printed out and made fun of up there," said Mrs. Dolby, as she sat with her eyes on the carpet.

Not Caused by the Hat. "How do you like my hat?" she asked. "Why, to tell the truth," replied her dearest friend frankly, "I don't like the effect very well. It seems to me it gives you a rather cross look."

On a Mississippi Steamboat

By F. A. MITCHEL

When the stagecoach and the steamboat passed out as the ordinary means of travel a certain social status passed out with them. Both these methods of transportation fostered something that no longer exists—the society of travel.

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A Big Difference. "I notice a great change in your little boy." "As to how?" "He used to dawdle and lag when you sent him in the morning to the store. Now he's off like the wind."

THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

By F. A. MITCHEL

In a western community into which the people were introducing courts of law John Bradshaw, a man to whom every one looked up as a very wise man, suggested that together with a public prosecutor they have a public defender. Mike Conover replied to the suggestion.

"It seems to me," he said, "that it's hard enough to get at the truth with a prosecutor to muddle the jury. If we have a defender to throw up the same amount of dust who's going to see through it all?"

But Mike had not standing with the community beside Bradshaw, who was a large man with an impressive demeanor and seldom spoke, but when he did his words seemed to weigh a ton. The public defender was appointed, and the citizens congratulated themselves that justice thereafter would be provided for accused persons as well as for the state.

The first person to come before the court was Mike Conover himself. A robbery had been committed in the town involving the loss of a watch and about \$10 in currency. It had occurred about 12 o'clock at night. Joel Harkness had been walking home when some one came up behind him, put his arms around him, and a scuffle had ensued.

When Harkness arrived at home he found that he had been relieved of a gold watch and chain and the money which he had carried in his vest pocket. He reported the matter to the police, who advised him to say nothing about the matter for the present. They were engaged in ferreting out other criminals, and it would aid them if the criminal supposed that Harkness had pocketed his loss without reporting it.

A few days after this Mary Doonan went to see Mr. Conover, but not finding her at home, sat down in the living room. Mary had very keen ears and, hearing a ticking, wondered where it came from. Making a search, she found a gold watch and chain in a bureau drawer.

Under Fire

By WILLIAM CHANDLER

At twenty minutes past 8 o'clock in the morning, when the people in the town of Yarmouth, on the east coast of England, were wrapped in slumber, there sounded on the still air the stroke of a bell.

Within a few seconds there was another and another stroke, until it was evident that not the hour was being struck, but an alarm. Then on the streets were heard sounds of men running, followed by a cry.

Then a boom, and in a few seconds a deafening explosion. The colonel of the woman's regiment jumped out of bed and into her uniform, descended to her headquarters on the floor below, where members of her staff were dressing and ascertaining that there was delay said sharply:

"Come, get a move on! Never mind that switch, Captain Black. Day, you, there! Miss Brewster! What are you looking for a bracelet? Never mind ornaments. The enemy is upon us, and there's no time to lose. General Mainwaring, put down that hand glass, turn out and help call the regiment to arms."

Each woman, as each as she had finished her toilet, dashed out and away. Men while members of the force came hurrying in, some jabbing pins into their alpine hats, some buttoning their jackets, some pressing their hands upon their back hair to make sure that it was fast.

As they arrived the companies fell in under their sergeants, and soon a line consisting of fully half the roster was drawn up in the street. Then the colonel, standing before the colors, gave the order to break into column, and placing herself at the head cried in a loud mezzo soprano voice:

CHARACTER. A good character is every thing. A good heart, benevolent feelings, and a balanced mind be at the foundation of character. Other things may be deemed fortuitous; they may come and go; but character is that which lives and abides.—John Todd.

A TRIFLING MISTAKE

By THOMAS R. DUNN

I was dressing for dinner one evening when the telephone bell rang. Stepping to the instrument, I heard a very sweet feminine voice say:

"Is that you, Mr. Pemberton?" "Yes, I'm Pemberton." "You're to be at the corner of Eighth and Walnut this evening at 9. Take the cab you will find there and—"

"Who are you?" I asked, not understanding all this talk. "I'm Edie Strong. You will be driven to the park entrance. Go to the fountain, where you will find Edith. Carry a rose in— Oh, heavens, some one is coming!"

There was a click and that was the end of those remarkable instructions. It was evident that there had been a call for some one bearing my name, and the telephone girl or the person calling or some one had made a mistake.

Now, I would not nod on any account the advantage of such a blunder to gratify curiosity, pry into other people's affairs or for any other purpose. But I felt it incumbent on me to correct the error if possible. This other Pemberton would not get the message intended for him, the driver of the cab might wait all night on his box, and Edie might grow so desperate as to drown herself in the fountain.

I called up the telephone office and asked who had given me the last call. I might as well have asked the operator to tell me how many grains there are on an ear of corn. I looked in the directory for the name Pemberton, but mine was the only one there.

A Letter That Came a Day Too Late

By MAY C. ETHERIDGE

Edwin Marmaduke at his death left a large estate. He was a widower with no children, at least no children at home. But no one seemed to know much about him, and, being a railroad man, he kept his past history to himself.

Marmaduke had lived alone in a big house which he had occupied when his wife was living. When he died a neighbor who had an eye to his estate went to his house and looked for a will. He found none. This gave the inheritance to the heirs-at-law. The nephew, John Williams, hunted up those persons and found a large number of them. But they were all descendants of the deceased's brothers and sisters, none of whom could claim descent from him direct.

Williams called a meeting of Marmaduke's relatives and told them that unless they took concerted action in the matter the estate was liable to be wasted in chancery. A great many claims might be made by persons who would try to prove falsely that they were related to the deceased. Some of these claims might be allowed, and money might be wasted by the court in disproving others. Of course the matter of the distribution was in the hands of the courts, but the heirs would facilitate matters and save wastage by acting together so as to secure a proper distribution of the property.

Among those who attended the meeting was a young girl of sixteen. She took a back seat and listened to what was said without remark, being the only one present who said nothing. She was very poorly dressed and had a hungry look. When those present were requested to step forward and put their names on paper, giving their relationship to the deceased, this girl hung back. Williams, seeing her, asked her if she had any claim on the Marmaduke estate. In reply she said that she had recently arrived in the city from Canada, where she had been discharged from a foundling asylum.

At leaving she had been given the baby clothes she had on when left at the asylum and a letter addressed to Edwin Marmaduke. She had been given money by a director of the institution to go and deliver the letter. On arriving she had inquired where Edwin Marmaduke lived and on knocking the door she had found it closed. Persons to whom she had told her story informed her of the meeting of the heirs-at-law to Mr. Marmaduke's estate and suggested that she might find out something concerning her relation from some of them.

Williams asked the girl why she did not open the letter, and she replied that it was stated on the envelope that it was to be opened by Edwin Marmaduke and by no other person. A young man who signed his name Steven Marmaduke and claimed to be a grand-nephew of the deceased noticed the girl and pitied her. She had signed no name on the list of relatives, for she had not come as a claimant, but for information. When the meeting adjourned young Marmaduke joined the girl and asked her if she could do anything for her. She thanked him and said that since the person she had come to see was dead she would return to the place from which she had come. He asked her name, and she said she had no name. At the foundlings' home she had been called Ruth, but this had been given her there to distinguish her from the other orphans.

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