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Billy's Celebration

By James Seymour Copyright, 1904, by K. M. Whitehead

Daisy slammed down the lid of the typewriter desk viciously. It had been an especially trying day. Mr. Cartaret had been as disagreeable as only the head of the firm can make himself, and she was so out of sorts that she did not even smile upon Jimmie, the elevator boy. When she found Billy Teller waiting at the door she tried to pass without speaking. "What's the matter, girly?" he asked as he caught up with her and fell into step. "Do go away," she said crossly. "I don't want ever to speak to a man again." "Not even me?" demanded Billy in affected surprise. "I'm not the head of a firm." "Don't you ever be such a horrid thing," she said, laughing, as she slipped her arm through his. "It's been an awful day, and I never knew a man could be so hateful." "I don't seem to be in line for head of a firm," said Billy ruefully. "I asked the boss this morning if he could raise my pay, and he said I'd be lucky if he didn't find he'd have to cut my wages until after election." "What did you say?" she asked. "Told him I supposed the election would be as good an excuse for a cut as anything he could think of, and he fired me for being impertinent." "Oh, I'm so sorry," she cried. "What did you do for?" "It was bound to come," he said cheerfully. "Yess, he's got a nephew he wants to put in my place." "I was dismissed, too," she said. "I simply couldn't stand some of Mr. Cartaret's language, and when I protested he told me he was going to get a man, so he could say what he wanted to." "Billy!" said Billy. "Let's celebrate!" "What for?" she demanded. "For our liberty," he retorted. "Come on. We'll have supper downtown



HE LEANED OVER TO WHISPER SOMETHING TO BILLY.

somehow, and we'll go to the theater afterward." "And you'll go broke after that," she supplemented. "Oh, I'm used to that!" said Billy. "Come on in here." "In here" was a table d'hote, where a seven course dinner with wine could be had for 40 cents, and, not being over-particular as to the minor details of service, they enjoyed the meal thoroughly. Billy insisted upon paying 10 cents extra for a better grade of claret, and the festivities were in full swing when the obsequious waiter pulled out a chair and John Cartaret sat down at their table—right between the two. Matters calling for his attention had held him downtown, and he decided that he would make the best of the handiest restaurant. The room was crowded, and he had taken his place at the table before noticing his companions. He flushed redly as his glance fell upon Daisy, but he would not retreat. "You see," said Billy, breaking an awkward silence by the continuation of an imaginary conversation—"you see, this 'Society For the Encouragement of Expletives Among Employers' is bound to be a good thing. It will give the employer an excuse for swearing at his typewriter by letting him tell her that it's one of the rules of the organization." "Billy," said the giggling Daisy as she stole a glance at Cartaret, who was apparently busy with the menu. "Don't interrupt the orator," said Billy severely. "You see, I am going to have a button badge, sulphur colored, with little blue flames about the edge and a big red D in the middle. It will be very ornamental, and at the same time it will show a decent girl what to expect." "They're not always bad just because they swear," protested Daisy, mindful of Cartaret's many kindnesses when his dyspepsia lay low. "Well, their language is bad," insisted Billy, "or we wouldn't be celebrating our joint dismissal. Maybe we could initiate our former employers as members and get enough to pay our board bills next week." "May I offer a suggestion?" broke in

Cartaret. To their surprise, he was smiling. "It's a little irregular," declared Billy before Daisy could speak, "but as founder of the society I am always ready to listen to suggestions." "I would suggest," said Cartaret, pushing away his soup plate, "that instead you both make application for reinstatement." "Ever hear of Blackton & Stone?" inquired Billy. "I have often," said Cartaret, his eyes twinkling. "Well, I worked for 'em," said Billy sententiously. "Would you like to make that motion again?" "If the worthy president permits," said Cartaret. "I would suggest as an amendment that Mr.—er—" "Teller," said Billy encouragingly. "Go ahead." "That Mr. Teller make application to Miss Denning's late employer. I have reason to believe that some advantage may accrue." "Motion carried," said Billy. "What time d'ye want me to come around?" "If your duty to the 'society' permits, may I suggest at 10 o'clock Monday?" said Cartaret. "I'll be there," Billy assured him. "Say, want to go to a show?" "I beg pardon," said Cartaret with an inquiring inflection. "To the theater," explained Billy. "Y'see, we were going to celebrate losing our jobs. Now we can celebrate getting back at the same time. We're going to see 'Halted at the Altar.' It's a bully show." "I am afraid," said Cartaret, "that a business engagement will occupy most of the evening, but if you will permit I should be glad to have you as guests at supper after the play." "Say, we don't want to rub it in," expostulated Billy. "I don't think you understand," said Cartaret a little wistfully, "that the favor is yours. It's been fifteen years since I've had young people about me, and I should really enjoy your company." "We'll buy a seat for you and leave it at the box office," declared Billy. "Try to get in for the last act, where the villain's crazy wife kills him and three choir boys. It's great." "I'll be there," said Cartaret laughing. "Such intellectual joys are not to be despised. And if you will permit"—He ended with a glance at Daisy and leaned over to whisper something to Billy. "Sure!" was the hearty answer, and Cartaret rose to return to his office. "What did he whisper?" demanded Daisy as they again turned their attention to dessert. "He says," answered Billy gravely, "that the job he wants me for needs a steady married man, and I told him I thought I could fix that."

Biped Lobsters. The word "lobster" as a slang term of ridicule and opprobrium is generally regarded as of recent origin. On the contrary, it would seem to go back at least to the seventeenth century. In John Baldwin Buckstone's play, "The Green Bushes," produced in London about seventy years ago, the scenes are laid at the time of the Irish rebellion of 1798. One of the characters mentions the English soldiers derisively as "lobsters," referring no doubt to the uniforms of the "redcoats." Eden Phillpotts in his novel, "The Farm of the Dagger," published last year, makes an American prisoner of the war of 1812 speak of the British soldiers as "lobsters." A fanciful etymologist might easily find a connection between the present day slang use of "lobster" and the sixteenth century word "lob," denoting a sluggish and stupid person, which occurs in Shakespeare and contemporary plays and poems, usually as a synonym for "lubber." But the earliest known instance of the derisive use of the slang term is the coupling of "lobsters and tattered-millions," meaning soldiers and vagrants, by Tom Brown (1673-1704). Brown is the satirist who made the most quoted impromptu adaptation of an epigram by Martial, directing it against his instructor and beginning, "I do not like thee, Dr. Fell."—Philadelphia Press.

The Drumming of Grouse. Who has not heard the drumming of ruffed grouse while in the woods during the spring months? It is the most common sound of wooing, heard from every thicket at every hour of the day. There is still a misconception as to how the drumming is done. The general belief is that the bird produces the sound by working its wings rapidly, using them to strike its body or a log. It is true that the ruffed grouse, like most chickens, flaps its wings in the excitement of its love song, but that the drumming is produced in that manner is a myth. I have often watched a cock which, standing on a log and drumming for dear life, apparently did not move a feather, though I must state that the drumming was not so loud as if the wings had been flapped. Flapping the wings evidently fills with air the lungs and throat of the bird, but is not an indispensable agency in producing the drumming. If the ruffed grouse could work its wings as quickly as the closing strokes of the drumming it would be the swiftest motor in existence.—Country Life in America.

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