

A Clever Ruse

But It Was Very Unexpectedly Thwarted.

By WILLARD BLAKEMAN

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On coming home from business I found my wife in the dumps.

"What's the matter, dear?" I asked.

"It's all up with us."

"Bottom dropped out of the universe?"

"Worse. Aunt Abigail will have to live with us. She's written that her friend with whom she has had a home to give up her house the 1st of May, and that throws her out. I am her only relative, and of course she expects me to take her in."

"She's a bit cranky, isn't she?"

"Cranky is no name for it."

"Well, we'll have to make the best of it."

Aunt Abigail arrived. We had previously considered our home entirely our own. With the coming of our relative we saw at once that all this was changed. She settled herself down with an appearance of permanency that made my blood run cold.

"Well," she exclaimed, looking about her, "how did you ever come to build this house down in a hollow—it must have been a swamp once—when you could as well have put it up on that hill, where you could see something?"

"We live here winter and summer," Aunt Abigail. Up there we would freeze in cold weather."

"Freeze! Nonsense! Some people are always afraid they'll breathe a little fresh air. I'm not. I sleep with my window open, and I like to have a gale blowing in right on me. You should have fronted your house to the south."

"I can't stand this. We must get rid of her, I said to my wife."

"To turn her out would be awful."

"We needn't do that. We can fix it so that she will go of her own accord."

"For heaven's sake explain."

"You know the homeopathic principle—like cures like. Well, my Uncle Robert is more disagreeable, if that is possible, than your Aunt Abigail. He is a dictatorial old curmudgeon, with no respect for any one's opinion but his own. He is as poor as a church mouse, living in a miserable room in a rookery by himself. He amuses himself abusing his neighbors from his window and shying anything he can get his hands on at the cats. Now, it has occurred to me to bring him here as a foil for your aunt. She can't possibly endure to stay in the house with such a man, and when she's gone I'll find a way to get rid of Uncle Robert. Perhaps they may both go to get rid of each other."

"Your plan seems rather impracticable to me, Billy, but I have a good deal of confidence in those roundabout ways of yours. Suppose we try it?"

So I wrote Uncle Robert offering a home temporarily and, if he liked it, as long as he lived. He accepted eagerly, and it was not long before he was down upon us bag and baggage.

"My dear boy," he exclaimed, patting me on the back, "how you do remind me of your father! He and I were inseparable as boys, and I've carried you on my shoulder often. And to think that I'm to have a home with you! Put me anywhere. A garret is good enough for a broken down old codger like me. Phew! Somebody's been smoking here. Do you smoke? How I hate tobacco! It makes me sick."

"I won't smoke any more in the house since you've come, uncle," I said.

"Oh, don't mind me. I can stand anything; got to stand it. I've made a dead failure of life and don't deserve anything else. You don't mind my opening the window, do you—just to let the odor out?"

"Fanny has a bad cold, you know."

"Just the thing to cure her. Let her breathe the cool air of heaven."

Up went the window and out of the room went Fanny. Half an hour after any uncle arrived dinner was announced. I was watching our guests when they entered the dining room. It was like a dog and a cat at first catching sight of each other. Both seemed to crouch for an encounter. Neither spoke to the other for some time after taking seats at table. Then a remark of Uncle Robert's ruffled Aunt Abigail.

"This woman's voting craze"—he was beginning.

"Voting what, sir?"

"Craze, madam," raising his voice.

"I'm not deaf. I heard you well enough. I object to you calling woman's suffrage a craze."

"Are you an advocate of woman's suffrage, madam?"

"I most assuredly am."

"I believe in any one who advocates a principle standing by that principle and not attempting to straddle."

"Sir!"

"That is, to equivocate or knuckle down, defending the cause with all his or her strength. Per contra, I reserve the same privilege for myself. Woman's suffrage I consider the most abominable, diabolical, logical rot that was ever sprung on a Christian people."

"And I consider it one of the holiest causes."

"Aunt Abigail," interposed my wife, "do let me help you to this little bit of wing. You're not eating enough to feed a sparrow."

"I'm inclined to think," remarked Uncle Robert, "that there's a good deal in this new idea of diet. This man

what's-his-name who is proving that the less we eat the more work we can do is going to create a revolution."

"Have you adopted his idea?" asked Aunt Abigail spitefully.

Considering that I had just filled Uncle Robert's plate for the second time this was unkind.

"I have not, madam, for the reason that I am not yet satisfied that his views are correct. I'm nothing if not scientific. I must see a thing proved before I adopt it."

"Would you prove woman's suffrage before adopting it?"

This was quite bright of Aunt Abigail.

"I admit," replied Uncle Robert, "that to prove it before adopting it would be impossible. It isn't necessary to prove it. Any fool can see that the idea is ridiculous."

"Uncle," I interrupted for the purpose of calling a truce and preventing Aunt Abigail from firing a return shot, "let me fill your glass."

"No, sir," putting his hand over it—"not at all, sir. I drink just one glass of wine with my dinner. And that's enough for any man."

"Quite right," I replied and filled my own for the third time.

"One is too much for any man, especially an old man," snapped the aunt.

"Nothing is so disgusting to me as an old toper."

The shot, while it applied partly to me, was fired at Uncle Robert.

"Not at all," he replied. "One glass is good for the system. You know what St. Paul says, 'Take a little wine for the stomach's sake.'"

"Yes," retorted Aunt Abigail, "and I know that the devil can quote Scripture."

This was so well turned that I felt like patting the old lady on the back. But it did not squire Uncle Robert for the simple reason that he was unquenchable. The skirmishing went on, getting hotter and hotter, till at last, to prevent an open rupture, my wife arose from the table. She, poor woman, was dreading a fracas, and I was not anxious to have a break occur so early in the game.

As soon as Fanny and I were alone together we sat down and laughed.

"Did you ever see anything work more beautifully?" I said, slapping my leg.

"Never."

"Let them go their own gait. My opinion is that one or the other will get out within a week."

Every day my uncle came to me and said that he couldn't live in the same house with a cat and was going to tomorrow. Every day Aunt Abigail went to Fanny and said she could not possibly endure that opinionated old beathen and she was casting about for another home, but it was dreadful that she should be alone in the world, with no one to love but Fanny, and Fanny must needs be incumbered by all her husband's relatives. I told my uncle that if I were deprived of the comfort of caring for my father's brother in his old age it would break my heart. Fanny made faint hearted attempts to quiet her aunt and agreed with her that my uncle was a trifle hard to get on with, regretting at the same time that he had the same claim on me that her aunt had on her. It is true that occasionally there would be a lull in the hostilities and we would find the two chatting quite amicably. But this was when they happened to strike some subject which was a pet with both. As soon as they drifted into topics on which they disagreed the roar of battle recommenced.

Several weeks passed in this way, and Fanny and I were getting impatient for the denouement, when one day uncle came to me and said that he would like to have a few words with me and Fanny alone. He looked very serious, and I felt quite sure he would announce his departure. He was a born gentleman, and nothing would be further from his nature than to hurt one's feelings, and to appear ungrateful would break his heart. I called Fanny into the library, shut the door and waited for the old man to speak.

"My dear boy," he began, taking my hand, "and my dear little girl," taking Fanny's hand, "I have something to announce which will surprise you. I am going to leave you!"

"Oh, uncle!" we both exclaimed, trying hard to appear much disappointed, even shocked.

"Yes, I am going away, and your aunt is also going."

This was indeed a surprise.

"Your kindness has brought about a great change in two lonely lives. For a time it seemed to both of us that we must thwart your plans for the happiness of both of us. It has not seemed that we can live under the same roof together."

He paused, and I thought he was going to shed tears. Then he added abruptly:

"We are both going to leave you tomorrow."

"Both?"

"Yes, both. We are to be quietly married at 9 o'clock and leave on a short wedding trip on the 10 o'clock train."

"Goodness gracious!" from Fanny.

"Great Scott!" from me.

"But we shall be gone only a few days."

"And then?" exclaimed Fanny and I breathlessly.

"And then," resumed the old man, putting a hand on each of our heads, "we return to spend the rest of our lives with our dear niece and nephew."

Heaven helps those who help themselves. At any rate, heaven came to our relief. I inherited \$20,000 from a maternal uncle. Of this I put \$5,000 in a house for the old couple and invested the rest in an annuity for them. Strangely enough, they are quite contented together.

Fooled Mr. Devil.

"Women," said she, "just love to tantalize the—um—Satan, you know. It begins in them young. A little chum of mine called Katie has been taught that the devil tempts little girls to disobey. She was left alone the other day in a room with a plate of fruit and told not to touch it. For awhile she was brave, and then her courage wavered, and she took a big red apple and walked away. But before she bit it her courage returned with a flush, and she hastily thrust it back and exclaimed gleefully:

"Aha, you Mr. Devil, I fooled you, didn't I?"—Young's Magazine.

Homemade.

I do not yearn for terrapin or salmon steak or trout.

Or venison or quail or canvasback.

Or lobster a la Newburg or a dish of devilled crab.

Or mushrooms or truffles rich and black. But my thoughts go harking backward o'er the beaten path of years.

To places where I once was wont to roam.

And again I see before me on a china platter piled

The shortcakes that they used to bake at home.

They went into the oven, just a dozen to the pan.

Like little balls of light and fluffy snow, and they issued forth like cobbles from a prehistoric flint.

Or any substance far removed from dough.

But I think of them with longing, and I wish for them once more.

When I go to fish for tarpon in the coast.

For I'd like to take one with me for a sinker on my line.

The shortcake that they used to make at home.

—Minna Irving in Leslie's Weekly.

A Different Complexion.

Two rival belles at an evening party were seated in the conservatory with their respective cavaliers, enjoying their supper. The gas was turned down somewhat, as it should be in a conservatory at an evening party.

"My dear Julia," said one of the fascinating creatures, "how beautiful your complexion is in this dim light!"

"Oh, thank you!" responded her rival. "And how lovely you look in the dark!"—Ideas.

Tantalus.

It 'peaks to me dem routin' fans is rootin' in mighty loud.

Ab 'spect dah's somefin' doin' dat's of lively consequence.

Ah'd lak to see what's goin' on to ginger up de crowd.

But, Lordy, dah's no knotholes in dis new concrete fence!

Somebody's giv de ball a yip. Mah goodness, heah dem shout!

Ah'd lak to know who placed de swat. It sholy wuz immense.

Oh, wats de use o' hangin' round—my Lordy, dat's an out!

It's shame dat dah's no knotholes in dis new concrete fence!

—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

In the Quick Lunch.

"Yes, sir," remarked the garrulous waiter as he brushed off the crumbs, "according to the papers, we will be eating rhino and hippo steaks within the next ten years."

"H'm," commented the sarcastic guest. "From the toughness of this porthouse I thought you had started serving them already."—Chicago News.

My Sweetheart Lu.

I saw a pretty maid named Lu A-paddling down the stream.

She made such clever eyes at me I thought her just a dream.

'Twas then I felt my heart was rent—Aye, riven through and through!

'Twas then it went down to defeat—She was my Water Lu!

—Judge's Library.

My Unknown Love.

I used to meet her in the park Behind a prancing pair,

While this poor heart went pipat To see a form so fair.

I grew to know her lovely eyes, Her cheeks that flush and pale.

But who can see a maiden's blush Beneath an auto veil?

In winter she's an Eskimo In heavy furs arrayed.

In summer she is nothing but A giggled mummy maid.

And so my heart has ceased to throb At sound of horn or bell.

It might be Angelina. If it were I could not tell.

—Harper's Weekly.

Bench Made Joke.

Mrs. Smith-Jones-Brown (effusively): Congratulations, my dear! I hear you just received your final decree.

Mrs. Greene-Robinson-Johnson-Jackson—Yes, indeed, and the judge paid me such a pretty compliment.

Mrs. S.-J.-B.—Really? What was it?

Mrs. G.-R.-J.—He said that in view of my excellent record in the divorce courts an honorary decree should be conferred on me.—Illustrated Sunday Magazine.

Reverses.

"There was certainly a contrary fate which resulted in my wife's giving up housekeeping."

"What was it?"

"First she broke down, and then she broke up."—Baltimore American.

Psalms of Death.

Wives and children all remind us We must work and make a pile

And, departing, leave behind us Means for them to live in style.

—Louisville Courier-Journal.

To Be Kept In Mind.

Harold—I know that I'm worthy of you, darling.

Fair One—Remember that, Harold, and my married life is sure to be happy.—Jewish Ledger.

No Laughing Matter.

The farmer to the grocer sells. The grocer to the city folk.

The latter know the price of things Means for them to live in style.

—Buffalo Express.

What Everybody Wants.

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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Public Land Sale—Isolated Tract.

No. 65835.

United States Land Office, The Dalles, Oregon, July 14th, 1910.

Notice is hereby given that, as directed by the Commissioner of the General Land Office, under the provisions of act of Congress approved June 27, 1906, Public No. 303, we will offer at public sale, to the highest bidder, at 10 o'clock a. m., on the 7th day of September, 1910, next, at this office, the following tract of land, to wit: S¹/₂ NE¹/₄, and NE¹/₄ SE¹/₄, Sec. 7 T. 4 S. R. 26 E. W. M.

Any persons claiming adversely the above described lands are advised to file their claims, or objections, on or before the day above designated for sale.

C. W. MOORE, Register.

July 21 Aug 25

CITATION.

In the Probate Court of Morrow County, State of Oregon.

In the matter of the estate and guardianship of George D. Taylor, insane.

Order to show cause why real estate should not be sold.

Lewis A. Manning, guardian of the person and estate of George D. Taylor, insane, having filed his petition herein praying for an order of sale of certain real estate of said George D. Taylor, insane, for the purposes therein set forth, it is therefore ordered by the Judge of the Probate Court of Morrow County, Oregon, above named, that Cynthia A. Taylor, Carrie L. Manning, Robert S. Taylor and Francis M. Taylor the next of kin and all persons interested in the estate of said George D. Taylor, insane, appear before the said Probate Court on Monday, the 23d day of August, 1910, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon of said day, at the court room of said probate court in the city of Heppner, County of Morrow, Oregon, to show cause why an order should not be granted to the said guardian to sell the real estate of said insane ward, at private sale; and that a copy of this order be published at least four successive weeks in the Heppner Gazette, a newspaper printed and published in the City of Heppner, Morrow county.

Dated and signed this 21st day of July, 1910.

C. C. PATTERSON,

Probate Judge.

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