

THE CLOWN'S CODE

How It Was Overcome by a Woman

By THOMAS L. MASSON
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It was dusk when the old clown came in from his walk and slowly mounted the long stairs, which creaked mournfully with his weight. The fire in the wood stove had almost gone out. He put on another stick, turned on the draft and sat for some moments in silence, rubbing his attenuated hands.

Aided by long years of constant makeup, time had done its deadly work upon his face. The result was a network of involved lines—lines that crossed and recrossed and ran into one another, presenting a sort of curious facial puzzle. At a short distance these lines seemed to resolve themselves into a picture, in which, like a composite photograph, all the scenes of the man's life had left their traces.

He went over to a battered leather trunk in the corner, opened it, took out a huge scrap book and began reading from its yellow pages. It contained the history of his many triumphs. It told in clippings—varying from a single sentence to pages with his picture in the center—the story of his stage career. These were some of the headlines:

"Flaubert Outdoes Himself."
"Flaubert, the Prince of Clowns."
"Flaubert Funnier Than Ever."
"The Inimitable Flaubert."
"Little Jimmie at His Best."

How many times had Flaubert read all this! Now, in the long obscurity of age that had come upon him, it was his only consolation. Once more he lived in the arena or on the immense stage of some hippodrome and performed his delightful antics, while blue eyed children clapped their hands in glee and childlike grownups forgot their dignity and renewed their youth.

The old man, absorbed in his occupation, read on and on, at times stopping to brush his cheek or blow his nose with a tattered silk handkerchief. Suddenly his ears were greeted by an unfamiliar sound. He raised his head.



"DO YOU STILL LOVE ME?"

To one who lives in solitude an unusual trifle is always an object of curiosity. He listened intently.

A cab had driven up and stopped in front of the house. There was a pause. A bell had been rung. Steps were coming up the stairs—slow—as slow as his own. There was a knock—once, twice—

He opened the door. A woman stood without. She, too, was old, but her eyes gleamed still like diamonds in the frosty air of the hall.

"Little Jimmy?"

"Good heavens! You, Josephine!"

Like two old French generals who meet long after their wars, they embraced each other impulsively. Josephine Tuelon, the prima donna, whose name, now obsolete in the annals of the stage, had once been a household word, and Little Jimmy Flaubert, whom a whole generation could not think of without a smile, once more stood face to face in the last quarter of life—when the sun sinks low in the heavens and the shadow of a long, uncertain night slowly gathers.

M. Flaubert handed his guest the only wooden rocker in the room. She sank into it, loosened her furs from her neck and toasted her feet on the stove rim.

"Ah, my dear, what a search I have had for you! I went to Halbert, the son of your old manager. He did not know your address. He sent me to an agency. They had a record of the place you had lived in a year ago. From there I came here. Let me see. It must be twenty years since I have seen you."

For a time, like two voluble children, they disputed about dates. Then he said gently:

"But tell me of yourself, Josephine." "Do you remember the night the emperor, carried away by his enthusiasm, invited me to his palace? And now it is all gone. A younger generation has come up, and those I lived with have all passed away. But you, Little Jimmy—you were foolish. Why did you not save your money? I lost much of mine. Still I have enough to live upon."

The clown smiled gayly. "I am quite comfortable. It does not matter."

"Tut! You can't deceive an old friend. I suspected something. I— He betrayed an air of alarm. "You did not come," he said, "for that, I hope—to—"

"Nonsense! I see you are the same as ever, as proud and vain as a peacock!" She rose suddenly. "Come, Little Jimmy; let us go out to dinner!" He rose with her. There was anxiety in his voice.

"Oh, no, thank you," he said. "Really, Josephine, I cannot. I have another engagement this evening."

"Nonsense!" she repeated. "Come, Jimmy! You must!"

"I cannot. I—"

She put her hand up to his cheek and turned his face toward hers.

"See here, Little Jimmy," she said. "Do you still love me?"

"I have always loved you!"

"Of course; you cannot help it. That is why I came. We are two old people left alone in the world. Our triumphs are past. Our work is done. Our friends are dead. Why should we sit apart and mope? Come now! Be a good boy!"

"I cannot. I—"

Then, with a change as swift as lightning, the artist in her—all the combined impulsiveness and dramatic force of her nature—came over her.

"How dare you say that?" she said. "Who are you, pray, to refuse an invitation to dinner? Have I not often dined with you? Well, now you are to dine with me. You understand. Come. Where is your coat?"

She sprang to the tumbledown wardrobe, pulled out an old ulster and pressed it over him. Then, with an imperious gesture, she waved him out of the room into the hall, holding his faded silk hat in her hand.

He obeyed her without a word. Only in the cab he said:

"Dear me, Josephine, the years have not changed you, have they? I ought not to be doing this! Why, my dear, I have never dined as the guest of a woman in my life. It has always been a part of my code not to do so."

"Nonsense! You are too old now to have any code. Young sports like us no longer need a code. It is high time that some one took you in hand. Besides, I am not doing it for you. Don't you know that I have always been selfish? You are a good companion. There is none better, I am sure. And am I not all alone and lonesome? It is I, therefore, that you must blame. I need you!"

The lights in the restaurant, the laughter, the sudden return to a long vanished existence, acted upon Flaubert like a tonic. His face grew ten years younger. They sat in a far corner, remote from the music. No one knew them—two artists who once had ruled their world.

Her old habit came back upon her swiftly. She ordered the dinner without looking at the card—a thin soup, a small duck, a salad, a bottle of wine from the sunny vineyards of the Rhone.

It was wonderful, under the spell of their surroundings, to see them both relax. Story after story came from him. His observations of life, like old wine, had a flavor all their own.

At last she lifted the glass, half empty, to her lips.

"Come," she said; "let us drink to ourselves!"

"I drink, mademoiselle, to your wit, to your beauty, to your genius, for these are to me as fresh as ever."

"And I drink to the artist Flaubert, than whom there is none greater; also I drink to"—She looked at him steadily, fixedly, with that wonderful light in her eyes which yet remained undimmed at nearly threescore and ten.

"Little Jimmy," she said. "I drink to us two. Let us never part again on earth!"

He lowered his glass.

"You know, my dear," he said, "I am quite poor."

"I have enough for both."

He laughed.

"Really, mademoiselle, I could hardly pay the clergyman."

"Dear me! I know one who will be pleased to do the slight service for nothing."

"You are in earnest?"

"Surely. And you consent?"

She put forth her hand.

"Josephine, I have always loved you. But—"

"Your hand."

He gave it under the spell of her eyes. They arose from the table. They threaded their way out of the restaurant. The attendant helped him on with his shabby ulster. The door was opened for them. They stood for an instant alone in the vestibule.

He bent over her.

"Josephine," he said, "promise me one thing. I know I am weak. I guess I'm growing old. But promise me that you'll never hold it up against me!"

"Don't you see that if I should let it go who could hold it up against me, for am I not the temptress? Tut, tut, my dear, it is just as it should be. It was my fault in the beginning. It was I who delayed matters."

Then he stooped and kissed her. As he put her into the carriage with all the ease and grace of the Flaubert of old he turned to the coachman.

"Home," he said proudly.

GOOD ROADS COUNTRY'S AIM

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SALVATION FOR THE POOR.

Construction of Serviceable Highways is One of the Most Important Factors Which This Country Must Consider in the Next Few Years.

The building of good roads is the one biggest and most important factor which this country must consider in the next few years. The improved highway is the one means of salvation for the poor man, for in these days of high cost of living we must look to the cheaper transportation of foodstuffs as our way out. We can no longer expect to better our condition through a greater supply of necessities, for every effort we have made toward lowering the cost of foodstuffs heretofore has been met with the response that the United States is now about as intensively cultivated as it can be. In other words, our people are no longer turning to the country in an effort to produce a larger amount of food. Therefore we must face the problem of getting along with the same amount that is now produced.

The only solution left for us is to cut our cost of production and delivery. The best way to accomplish this is to provide good roads, for we have already had many demonstrations of how good roads will work to our advantage.

The improvement of highways in many parts of our country in the last



THE AUTOMOBILE WOULD BE HELPLESS WITHOUT HIGHWAYS.

few years has been invariably followed by better living conditions. Where the roads leading into a large city have been improved we have seen an increased supply of foodstuffs on the local markets and a larger number of farmers bringing their products into the city. This, of a necessity, results in lower prices for the products and a long step toward better conditions.

On the other hand, the improvement of roads throughout the country is invariably followed by an improvement in farming methods. The agriculturist who heretofore devoted his energies to grazing and the production of rough foodstuffs, such as corn, is now turning to what is known as market gardening. He is raising potatoes, beans, peas and other commodities that are in everyday demand simply because he can get them to market, where heretofore markets were denied him. It is no uncommon sight now to see farmers driving eighteen or twenty miles to market with loads of produce, which, before the highways were improved, were denied the consumer. The automobile, it is true, has had a great deal to do with increasing this supply, but even this vehicle would be helpless without highways on which to run.

The advent of good roads, too, has brought about another revolution—that of intensive farming. The countries of the old world have always regarded us as a criminally wasteful people in that the product raised on 100 acres of land in this country was often less than they produced on ten acres. Good roads have changed this condition. The American farmer now finds that he will get a greater return from one acre of land intensively cultivated than ten acres farmed in the old slipshod manner would heretofore produce. This intensive farming is the direct result of good roads, for where the farmer heretofore found it necessary to cultivate crops, which made a large bulk, so that his infrequent trips to market were profitable, now finds that he can take a small load to the consumer as often as he desires.

Good roads are a blessing, and this every one who has given the matter any thought will admit. They not only promote increased industrial activity and therefore better the living conditions of thousands of our city dwellers, but they provide an improved social life for people who live in the country. The family which has access to a good road and therefore quicker and more pleasant trips goes to church oftener, visits the neighbors oftener and attends farmer club meetings more frequently. No one can deny that all of these are important factors in the farmer's life.

LINED WITH SPIDER WEBS.

One Has to Cut One's Way Through the Roads of Paraguay.

The roads of Paraguay are about five yards wide throughout, and the trees meet overhead at a height of some eighteen feet, thus forming a tunnel of very unusual dimensions. In the clear parts of the tunnel—that is, where it is not choked up with the giant nettle—it is full from roof to ground of enormous spiders' webs stretching clear across the road, the big trees usually being chosen as anchorages and the total clear span being thus more like eight yards than five.

The main cables or framework of the nets are composed of five or six strands of thick yellow web and are almost as strong as cotton thread. The rest of the net is made up of single and double strands of the same stout material, which is as sticky as it is strong. Every yard or so one of these nets extends across one's path, making it necessary to hold a cutlass or a fairly stout stick at arm's length in front as one walks.

The makers of these troublesome but picturesque obstructions are large, highly colored, gaudy looking spiders with bodies that look as if they were about to explode, they are so blown out and glossy. At intervals in some more open space where the sky is visible one will notice a different kind of web, far more irregular in shape, but far larger than the others. Not content with the space available in the tunnel, these webs are stretched in complicated mazes from the ground to the very tops of the surrounding trees, with clear spans frequently twenty or thirty yards from one tree to another.

From these main cables smaller ones extend to the ground—a drop of fifteen or twenty yards—and the spaces in between are filled up with a mass of webs spun in all directions.—Wide World Magazine.

SIRIUS, THE DOG STAR.

It Was Given Its Canine Name by the Superstitious Egyptians.

The giant sun, the bright star Sirius is now called the "dog star" from the very ancient and curious custom of personification. The great nations of remote antiquity personified every activity of nature—that is, compared them to living men or animals.

They didn't know a thing of any law of nature, so they said that motion is caused by living animals, because only animals have the inscrutably mysterious power of moving themselves. No wonder the ancients were astonished to see an animal move itself. And the wonder has vastly increased now, for the ablest scientific man cannot possibly see how an animal is able to move.

The overflowing of the Nile was the chief event in all of Egypt. Without this pouring of water over the land once each year, the valley would be a desert. The Egyptians at a certain period in their long history noticed that when they first saw the star Sirius early in the morning before sunrise the Nile river began to rise and pour over the banks. They personified Sirius as a watchdog, watching the sun and the Nile and the land of Egypt, its people, destiny and harvests.

The Egyptian name of the Nile was Siris, and the faithful dog watching in the sky was finally named Sirius. Centuries later their horrible religion taught that it was necessary to murder or sacrifice a dog to the star Sirius to secure its aid in growing grains and herds. This terrible habit of slaughtering animals to propitiate imaginary gods descended to the Greeks and Romans. The Romans named the stars near Sirius the constellation Canis Major (the great dog)—New York American.

Ministers and Ambassadors.

The first minister plenipotentiary from the United States to England was John Adams. Thomas Pinckney of South Carolina became the first minister to England under the constitution. The United States continued to be represented by ministers until 1823, when Thomas F. Bayard of Delaware became the first American ambassador to the court of St. James. The first British minister to the United States was George Hammond, who was appointed in 1791. Lord Poncefote became the first British ambassador to Washington in 1813.

He Fell Right In.

His Wife—I met our maid Anna just now on the street and she pretended not to see me. Her Husband—You ought to point out to Anna the impropriety of such conduct. His Wife—But how can I? You see, she had another girl with her, and it was quite evident she didn't want her friend to know she was working for a woman who wore a two dollar and fifty cent hat.—New York Post.

Peace With a Punch.

"Here, what's all this row about?" asked the copper breathlessly. "Why, this woman is collecting money for the peace society, and when I refused to contribute she knocked me down," explained the meek looking man.—Buffalo Express.

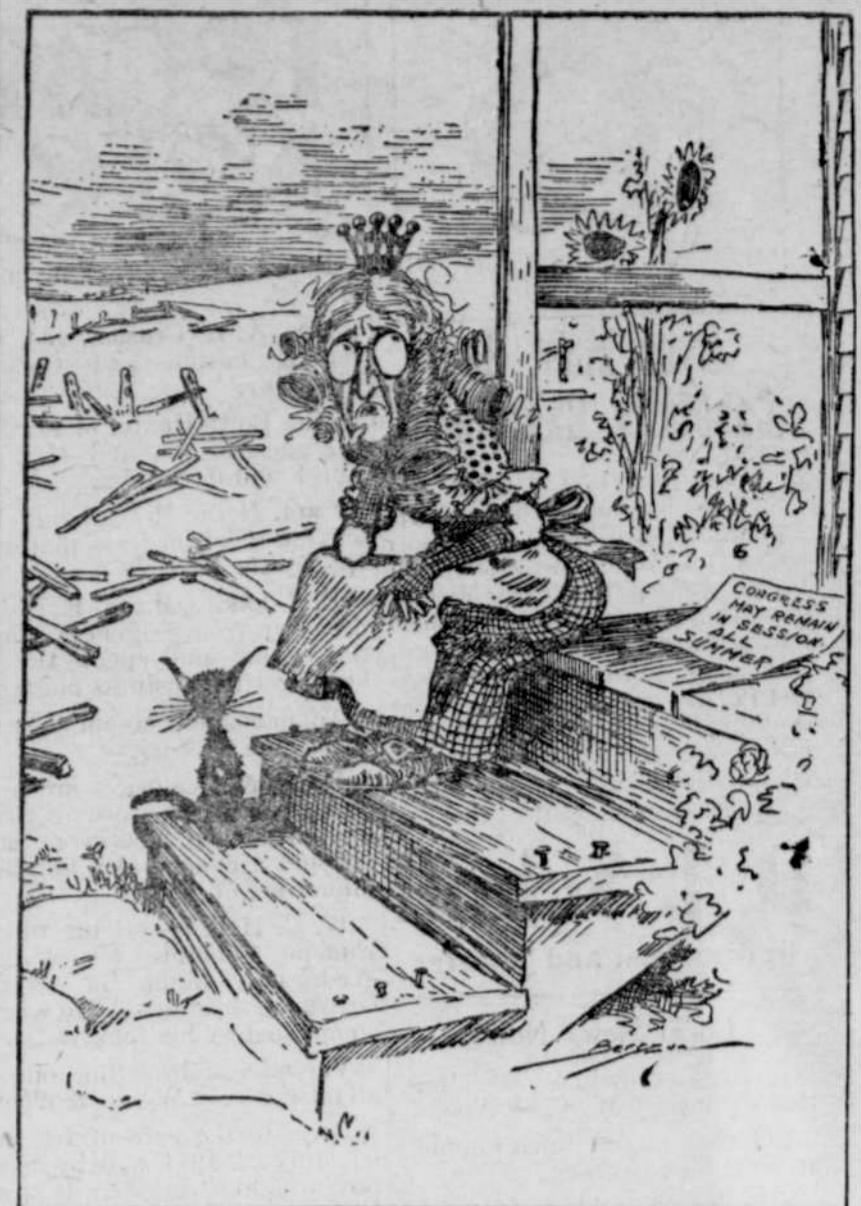
Great Scheme.

"How's your play?" "A great success. My creditors are all coming to see if I am making money, and through their patronage I am."—Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Your Friends.

Treat your friends as you do your bank account. Don't be reckless with them just because you're got them.—Detroit Free Press.

WATCHFUL WAITING BACK HOME.



—Berryman in Washington Star.

Our Query and Reply Department

Please give names of present rulers of countries of Asia.

The Shah of Persia is Ahmed Mirza; the King of Siam is Chulalongkorn; the Sultan of Turkey is Mehmed V.; the President of China is Yuan Shih Kai; the Emperor of Japan is Yoshihito; Great Britain, France, Germany and Holland have colonies in Asia.

What is the government secret service?

The secret service is a division or bureau of the treasury department, with a chief and a number of trained detectives. The service is principally engaged in detecting and prosecuting makers and dealers in counterfeit paper money and coin. Details are also furnished for the protection of the president of the United States, and in the frequent journeyings of the president he is always accompanied by one or more secret service men. The arrests of counterfeiters number about 400 annually. Other arrests are for bribery, impersonating United States government officers, perjury and violating sections of the United States revised statutes relating to foreign and domestic obligations and coins.

Why do sailors wear trousers bell shaped at the bottom?

One reason given is that the trousers are made tight around the waist and large at the bottom so that if the wearer falls overboard they will not hold the water around the legs, but will allow it to escape. Another reason given is that the trousers are cut this style so that they may be turned up at the bottom more conveniently than those of the usual style. It often happens that when sailors are making a landing in a small boat the craft grounds a few feet from the shore, making it necessary for them to jump out and pull the boat ashore or wade to shore. With trousers cut wide at the bottom it is easy to roll them up when necessary to jump into the water.

What is the definition of the word "gringo," used by the Mexican people against the United States, and where did it originate?

One explanation says the word originated during our war with Mexico, when the Americans called the Mexicans gringos and the latter in retaliation called the Americans gringos, having picked up the word from hearing American sailors singing, "Green grow the rushes O." This explanation probably is fanciful, because, first, the term is applied in Mexico to Englishmen as well as Americans; second, it prevails in Chile, where all English speaking persons are called gringos. The word is found in a standard Spanish dic-

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