Money Changers

By W. W. JACOBS

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"'TAIN'T no use waitin' any longer," said Harry Pilchard, looking over the side of the brig toward the tower stairs. "'E's either waitin' for the money or else 'e's a-spendin' of it. Who's comin' ashore?"

"Give 'im another five minutes, Harry," said another seaman persuasively. "It'd be uncommon 'ard on 'im if 'e come aboard an' then 'ad to go an' get another ship's crew to 'elp 'im celebrate it."

"'Ard on us, too," said the cook honestly.

"There he is!"

The other glanced up at a figure waving to them from the stairs. "'E wants the boat," he said, moving aft.

"No, 'e don't, Steve," piped the boy. "'E's wavin' you not to. 'E's comin' in the waterman's skiff."

"Ha! Same old tale," said the seaman wisely. "Chap comes in for a bit of money an' begins to waste it directly. There's threepence gone, clean chucked away. Look at 'im! Just look at 'im!"

"'E's got the money all right," said the cook; "there's no doubt about that. Why, 'e looks 'arf as large ag'in as 'e did this mornin'."

The crew bent over the side as the skiff approached, and the fare, who had been leaning back in the stern with a severely important air, rose slowly and felt in his trousers pocket.

"There's sixpence for you, my lad," he said pompously. "Never mind about the change."

"All right, old slack breeches," said the waterman, with effusive good fellowship; "up you get."

Three pairs of hands assisted the offended fare on board, and the boy hovering round him slapped his legs vigorously.

"Wot are you up to?" demanded Mr. Samuel Dodds, A. B., turning on him.

"On'y dustin' you down, Sam," said the boy humbly.

"You got the money all right, I s'pose, Sammy," said Steve Martin.

Mr. Dodds nodded and slapped his breast pocket.

"Right as ninepence," he replied genially. "I've been with my lawyer all the arternoon, pretty near. 'E's a nice feller."

"'Ow much is it, Sam?" inquired Pilchard eagerly.

"One 'undred an' seventy-three pun seventeen shillin's and tenpence," said the heir, noticing, with much pleasure, the effect of his announcement.

"Say it ag'in, Sam," said Pilchard in awed tones.

Mr. Dodds, with a happy laugh, obliged him. "If you'll all come down the foc's'le," he continued, "I've got a bundle of cigars an' a drop of somethin' short in my pocket."

"Let's 'ave a look at the money, Sam," said Pilchard when the cigars were alight.

"Ah, let's 'ave a look at it!" said Steve.

Mr. Dodds laughed again and, producing a small canvas bag from his pocket, dusted the table with his big palm and spread out a roll of banknotes and a little pile of gold and silver. It was an impressive sight, and the cook breathed so hard that one note fluttered off the table. Three men dived to recover it, while Sam, alive for the first time to the responsibilities of wealth, anxiously watched the remainder of his capital.

"There's somethin' for you to buy sweets with, my lad," he said, restored to good humor as the note was replaced.

He passed over a small coin and regarded with tolerant good humor the extravagant manifestation of joy on the part of the youth which followed. He capered joyously for a minute or two and then, taking it to the foot of the steps, where the light was better, bit it ecstatically.

"How much is it?" asked the wondering Steve. "You do chuck your money about, Sam."

"On'y sixpence," said Sam, laughing. "I expect if it 'ad been a shillin' it'd 'ave turned 'is brain."

"It ain't a sixpence," said the boy indignantly. "It's 'arf a suvring."

"'Arf a wot?" exclaimed Mr. Dodds, with a sudden change of manner.

"'Arf a suvring," repeated the boy, with nervous rapidity, "an' thank you very much, Sam, for your generosity. If everybody was like you, we should all be the better for it. The world 'ud be a different place to live in," continued the youthful philosopher.

Mr. Dodds' face under these fulsome praises was a study in conflicting emotions. "Well, don't waste it," he said at length and, hastily gathering up the remainder, stowed it in the bag.

"Wot are you goin' to do with it all, Sam?" inquired Harry.

"I ain't made up my mind yet," said Mr. Dodds deliberately. "I 'ave thought of 'ouse property."

"I don't mean that," said the other. "I mean wot are you goin' to do with it now to take care of it?"

"Why, keep it in my pocket," said Sam, staring.

"Well, if I was you," said Harry impressively, "I should ask the skipper to take care of it for me. You know wot you are when you're a bit on, Sam."

"Wot d'you mean?" demanded Mr. Dobbs hotly.

"I mean," said Harry hastily, "that you've got sich a generous nature that when you've 'ad a glass or two you're just as likely as not to give it away to somebody."

"I know what I'm about," said Mr. Dodds, with conviction. "I'm not goin' to get on while I've got this about me. I'm just goin' 'round to the Bull's Head, but I shan't drink anything to speak of myself. Anybody that likes to come to 'ave somethin' at my expense is welcome."

A flattering murmur, which was music to Mr. Dodds' ears, arose from his shipmates as they went on deck and hauled the boat alongside. The boy was first in her, and, pulling out his pocket handkerchief, he ostentatiously wiped a seat down for Mr. Dodds.

"Understand," said that gentleman, with whom the affair of the half sovereign still rankled, "your drink is shandy gaff."

* * * * * * *

They returned to the brig at 11 o'clock, Mr. Dodds slumbering peacefully in the stern of the boat, propped up on either side by Steve and the boy. His sleep was so profound that he declined to be aroused and was hoisted over the side with infinite difficulty and no little risk by his shipmates.

"Look at 'im," said Harry as they lowered him down the forecastle.

"There it is, chaps."

"What'd 'ave become of 'im if we hadn't been with 'im? Where would 'is money 'ave been?"

"He'll lose it as sure as heggs is heggs," said Steve, regarding him intently. "Bear a hand to lift 'im in his bunk, Harry."

Harry complied, their task being rendered somewhat difficult by a slight return of consciousness in Mr. Dodds' lower limbs, which, spreading themselves out fanwise, defied all attempts to pack them in the bunk.

"Let 'em hang out, then," said Harry savagely, wiping a little mud from his face. "Fancy that comin' in for a fortun'."

"'E won't 'ave it long," said the cook, shaking his head.

"Wot 'e wants is a shock," said Harry. "'Ow'd it be when 'e wakes up to tell 'im 'e's lost all 'is money?"

"Wot's the good of tellin' 'im," demanded the cook, "when 'e's got it in 'is pocket?"

"Well, let's take it out," said Pilchard. "I'll hide it under my piller an' let 'im think 'e's 'ad 'is pocket picked."

"I won't 'ave nothin' to do with it," said Steve peremptorily. "I don't believe in sich games."

"Wot do you think, cook?" inquired Harry.

"I don't see no 'arm in it," said the cook slowly. "The fright might do 'im good, p'raps."

"It might be the savin' of 'im," said Harry. He leaned over the sleeping seaman and, gently inserting his fingers in his breast pocket, drew out the canvas bag. "There it is, chaps," he said gayly, "an' I'll give 'im sich a fright in the mornin' as 'e won't forget in a 'urry."

He retired to his bunk and, placing the bag under his pillow, was soon fast asleep. The other men followed his example, and, Steve extinguishing the lamp, the forecastle surrendered itself to sleep.

At 5 o'clock they were awakened by the voice of Mr. Dodds. It was a broken, disconnected sort of voice at first, like that of a man talking in his sleep, but as Mr. Dodds' head cleared his ideas cleared with it, and in strong, forcible language straight from the heart he consigned the eyes and limbs of some person or persons unknown to every variety of torment, after which, in a voice broken with emotion, he addressed himself in terms of heartbreaking sympathy.

"Shut up, Sam," said Harry in a sleepy voice. "Why can't you go to sleep?"

"Sleep be hanged!" said Mr. Dodds tearfully. "I've lorst all my money."

"You're dreamin'," said Harry lightly. "Pinch yourself."

Mr. Dodds, who had a little breath left and a few words still comparatively fresh, bestowed them upon him.

"I tell you you haven't lorst it," said Harry. "Don't you remember givin' it to that red 'aired woman with a baby?"

"Wot?" said the astounded Mr. Dodds.

"You give it to 'er an' told 'er to buy the baby a bun with it," continued the veracious Mr. Pilchard.

"Told 'er to buy the baby a bun with it," repeated Mr. Dodds, in a dazed voice; "told 'er to— Wot did you let me do it for? Wot was all you chaps standin' by an' doin' to let me go an' do it for?"

"We did arsk you not to," said Steve, joining in the conversation.

Mr. Dodds, finding language utterly useless to express his burning thoughts, sat down and madly smashed at the table with his fists.

"Wot was you a-doin' to let me do it?" he demanded at length of the boy. "You ungrateful little toad! You can give me that 'arf suvring back, d'you hear?"

"I can't," said the boy. "I followed your example an' give it to the red 'aired woman to buy the baby another bun with."

There was a buzzing noise in Mr. Dodds' head, and the bunks and their grinning occupants went round and round.

"'Ere; 'old up, Sam," said Pilchard, shaking him in alarm. "It's all right. Don't be a fool. I've got the money."

Sam stared at him blankly.

"I've got the money," repeated the seaman.

Mr. Dodds' color came back.

"'Ow'd you get it?" he inquired.

"I took it out of your pocket last night just to give you a lesson," said Harry severely. "Don't you never be so silly ag'in, Sam."

"Gimme my money," said Mr. Dodds, glaring at him.

"You might 'ave lorst it, you see, Sam," continued his benefactor. "If I could take it, anybody else could. Let this be a lesson to you."

"If you don't gimme my money"—began Sam violently.

"It's no good tryin' to do 'im a kindness," said Harry to the others as he turned to his bunk. "'E can go an' lose it for all I care."

He put his hand in his bunk and then, with a sudden exclamation, searched somewhat hastily among the bedding. Mr. Dodds, watching him with a scowl, saw him take every article separately out of his bunk and then sink down appalled on the locker.

"You've took it, Sam—'ain't—you?" he gasped.

"Look 'ere," said Mr. Dodds, with ominous quietness, "when you've done your little game—"

"It's gone," said Harry in a scared voice. "Somebody's taken it."

"Look 'ere, 'Arry: give 'im 'is money," said Steve impatiently. "A joke's a joke, but we don't want too much of it."

"I ain't got it," said Harry trembling. "Sure as I stand 'ere, it's gone. I took it out of your pocket an' put it under my piller. You saw me, didn't you, Steve?"

"Yes, an' I told you not to," said Steve. "Let this be a warnin' to you not to try an' teach lessons to people wot don't want 'em."

"I'm goin' to the police station to give 'im in charge," said Mr. Dodds fiercely; "That's wot I'm goin' to do."

"For the Lord's sake, don't do that, Sam," said Pilchard, clutching him by the coat.

"'Arry ain't made away with it, Sam," said Steve. "I saw somebody take it out of 'is bunk while he was asleep."

"Why didn't you stop him?" cried Harry, starting up.

"I didn't like to interfere," said Steve simply, "but I saw where he went to."

"Where?" demanded Mr. Dodds wildly. "Where?"

"He went straight up on deck," said Steve slowly, "walked aft an' then down into the cabin. The skipper woke up, an' I heard 'im say somethin' to him."

"Say somethin' to 'im," repeated the bewildered Dodds. "Wot was it?"

"Well, I 'ardly like to repeat it," said Steve, hesitating.

"Wot was it?" roared the overwrought Mr. Dodds.

"Well, I 'eard this chap say somethin'," said Steve slowly, "an' then I heard the skipper's voice. But I don't like to repeat wot 'e said. I reely don't."

"Wot was it?" roared Mr. Dodds, approaching him with clinched fists.

"Well, if you will 'ave it," said Steve, with a little cough, "the old man sez to me, 'Well done, Steve,' he sez. 'You're the only sensible man of the whole bilin' lot. Sam's a fool,' 'e sez, 'an' 'Arry's worse, an' if it wasn't for men like you, Steve, life wouldn't be worth livin'.'"

MIRANDA'S PINGPONG

By G. B. BURGIN

IT is all over; finished; done with; exhausted! So am I! So is Miranda! But little Noel Hartley is as fresh as a rose and wonders why the Rev. Arthur Greatorex thinks so much of her. The Rev. Arthur also wonders—many things.

In crises like these Miranda and I have sometimes hinted desperately to one another of an eternal Separation, with a capital S. We have drawn pathetic pictures of how we would divide everything between us, and she should go and live with her mother, while I strode into life's highway, manfully putting the past behind me in order to become great, and, instead of going to theaters, spend my evenings sitting by the fire, waiting her footstep on the stair. Miranda would always get quite worked up by this pathetic picture until she remembered that it was useless taking half the things, because her mother had no intention of turning the house into a storage company for the furniture of others. So the trouble generally blew over. But this time it went as far as my making out a list of the things in my "den" before we were reconciled. Miranda saw then that she was on the brink of an awful precipice, and it made her shiver. So it did me, because there's a beautiful bronze British lion (from Japan) in my "den" which she has set her heart upon having, and I know we should have squabbled over that. When she says, "Dicky, you're such a dear!" pats my brow and with the other hand takes the very thing I don't want her to have, the pathos of the situation degenerates into farce, and—and—oh, you know what young wives are like! The next time I marry I shall choose a solid, estimable lady of mature age, with a false front and without what little Noel calls "parlor tricks."

As soon as Miranda told the Rev. Arthur Greatorex about her projected pingpong tournament he smiled in a pleased way and said that he himself would be the first to take a two shilling ticket. He also threw out dark hints that Miss Jarvis would like to be asked. They're not really engaged, because the Rev. Arthur hasn't enough money to marry, but he calls Miss Jarvis "dear sister" and looks at her, if he thinks he is unobserved, in the same way that Sir Lancelot did at Guinevere when King Arthur was out. Of course Miranda knew all about this "go-hilty passion," as she calls it, and that was why she told Miss Jarvis that the Rev. Arthur was going to play and then informed him that Miss Jarvis would also be there. So she had them "in the net," as it were, and the members of the blanket club almost cried when told they were too old to play. To please them, Miranda made a special rule that if they liked to take tickets they could get some one else to play for them, and, as the old men were fond of excitement, they pawned their remaining blankets and bought twelve tickets for the tournament. "It do my old 'eart good to get a little permiskus sport like this 'ere," said Gaffer Hindley to Miranda, "and I've got four quarts on with Joe Burridge as little missie"—pointing to Noel—"'ill play for me and knock his ugly 'ead off. I do 'ear as 'ow Mistress Jarvis' sewing club be a-goin' to try to knock us out, and there's twelve on us wants little missie to do her best for us. It do warm our old 'carts, it do, to have a bit of real sport like this newfangled game. Most as good as a day's rattin' it be, surelie."

When Miranda asked her little niece Noel to stay with us, she said that Noel's blue eyes, golden hair, mournful face, with its "I do want to be loved before heaven claims me for its own" kind of expression, made her uneasy. It did me also. I knew the child, and I was also aware that heaven could get along very well without her—for a time, at all events. She was a little demon at lawn tennis and would pick up any new game in ten minutes. Besides, as she told me, she had been working hard at pingpong in order to "lick Brother Tom." I had a little practice with her before the tournament came off, and she— But I anticipate.

Miss Jarvis, although she loved Miranda dearly, did not like the success of the blanket club. After all, we were only newcomers, and we ought, like Agag, to have "walked delicately" for a few years before bursting into such meteoric fame. It occurred to Miss Jarvis when she saw the special rule that it would be a sporting kind of thing for her sewing club members to enter en masse. Though most of them were the wives of the blanket club men, she never seemed to realize that a house divided against itself cannot stand. So she bought a dozen tickets for the sewing club and, when Miranda remonstrated with her on this prolific expenditure, as she said, as hinted that it was no business of Miranda's. Newcomers in the place could not be expected to understand "the dear people" as well as she did. Of course when she got "nasty" like that Miranda nightly prayed that the blanket club players would smite the feminine Amalekites of the sewing club hip and thigh.

Noel was so popular in the village that the landlord of the Spotted Dog, as she informed me after the tournament was over, "put his last shirt on her," a phrase which, I understand, in sporting parlance means that he risked all his spare cash on the event. I wasted a good deal of time teaching Noel how to "serve" into the double edges of the big mahogany table which we borrowed from the vicar. It was just the right size (nine feet by five), but the double edges gave a sort of bouncy to the play which I thought would be lacking in a mere ordinary table from a professional place. Miranda was to look after the ten, and I was to lead off against the vicar, who, instead of practicing, went to the British Museum to hunt up ancient authorities. He said that before undertaking so serious a task he wanted to see whether the Athenians had ever played the game under another name. But, in spite of his putting it in that way, he grew just as keen about pingpong as anybody else and actually made his wife practice with him one evening. They quarreled for the first time in their lives because she would serve into his waistcoat, and he said it was taking a mean advantage.

When the eventful evening came, we had the old sewing clubwomen on one side of the room and the blanket fund old men on the other—"Montagues and Capulets," the Rev. Arthur called them. Burridges and Hindleys would have been nearer the mark. Then the vicar opened the proceedings in his usual absentminded way, as if he were at a penny reading, and from mere force of habit announced that "Mr. Recitation would give a Smith." Before he could be prevented young Smith began on "It was at Flores, in the Hazores," and Noel was the only person present who had the pluck to stop him. He has hated her ever since.

We started with myself and the vicar, and he didn't play badly for a beginner, although between "serves" he frequently stopped to explain that he had seen a picture of "Prehistoric Pingpong" in Punch and that if any one would give him Mr. Reed's address he would communicate with him on the subject, as even prehistoric animals had their feelings and could doubtless be influenced for good if treated with kindness. When he lost, he became a little testy; so we played it all over again, and I let him, as Noel said, "romp home an easy winner." That dear child is learning the most extraordinary expressions from her bosom friend the landlord of the Spotted Dog.

After Miranda had won her game against the churchwarden no one else in the village professed to understand pingpong or to have the hardihood to play it in public, so about 9 o'clock we came to the Capulets and Montagues, the Burridges and the Hindleys, the blanket fund and the sewing club. Noel told me afterward, with a seraphic smile, that she and the landlord of the Spotted Dog had arranged with the villagers that they were not to interfere. The landlord had a dim sort of idea what Miss Jarvis was going to do, and he worshiped Noel to such an extent that the child believed that if he could have "got at" the Rev. Arthur's modest glass of table beer he (the landlord) would have "hocused" the poor curate or "painted his bit," whatever that may mean.

When old Mrs. Burridge's name was called, she smiled at Miss Jarvis and said, "Do 'e tell the gentry, dearie, as his reverence is goin' to play for me, and God be good to us all." She went to sleep again, and old Hindley got up and said, "Little missie be a-goin' to play for I, and I've got four quarts on her!"

Then this seraphic child, with eyes of heavenly blue (she's only twelve), her golden hair flowing down her back (blue ribbon), white tennis things, blue sash round her dainty waist, white doeskin shoes and another blue ribbon at her pretty throat, floated up to the table, produced a lucky penny with a hole in it from her pocket and held it out to the Rev. Arthur, with a smile so sweet, so pure, so holy, that old Mrs. Gammel burst into tears and said "the pretty creetur' is a mort too good for this world, and it do seem savage-like for a girt big man to worrit her so."

"W-what's that for?" asked the Rev. Arthur, taken aback.

"Toss for service, please," said Noel. "Your call."

The Rev. Arthur called, "Head."

"Tail, I think," said Noel politely. "Yes, tail it is. I serve."

"Cer-certainly. By all means, Miss Noel," said the Rev. Arthur.

"You go to the other end," said Noel, "and, mind you, keep within the lines of the table."

"I—I don't see any lines," protested the Rev. Arthur.

Noel explained.

"You—you won't think me unkind if I win?" asked the Rev. Arthur, who is the tenderest hearted man in the world.

"Certainly not," replied Noel. "'Twouldn't be sportsmanlike."

"I think we are ready to begin," said the Rev. Arthur after a bewildered pause.

"I have been ready for the last five minutes," Noel declared.

"I am anticipating your service," said the Rev. Arthur.

Something happened. This small child "served." A streak of white flew over the net, touched the table in the left hand corner and disappeared through the doorway.

"One—love," called the umpire.

She served again. This time the ball caught on the edge of the table and went into the stove.

"Two—love," called the umpire.

Noel took another ball. It touched the table, smote the Rev. Arthur lightly on the nose and divagated into Mrs. Burridge's lap.

"Three—love," called the umpire.

Yet again. This time the ball lodged in the Rev. Arthur's lower chest.

For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

"Four—love," called the umpire.

And once more. The Rev. Arthur, with flashing eyes (he was beginning to get excited) returned the ball into the net.

"Five—love," called the umpire.

Noel bowed. "Your service, Mr. Greatorex," and turned back her cuffs.

"If the ladies will pardon me, I will divest myself of my coat," said the Rev. Arthur.

"Strip, by all means, if you like," said Noel. And he stripped.

But it was no good. The game went on until it became twenty—two. He made two.

"John Livesey and Mrs. Clummel," called the umpire.

"Our turn again, I think," said Noel to the Rev Arthur. "I'm playing for John. Your service, Mrs. Clummel.

John won.

"Martha Raggetts and—eh—Chumpy Poe," called the umpire.

"I play for Joey" said Noel. "I suppose you are Martha Raggetts?"

"I am," said the Rev. Arthur, and he looked like another Marthe who was "cumbered with many cares."

They played that game until the Rev. Arthur began to improve. Besides, the blood of his ancestors boiled in his veins. But it boiled to no purpose. Noel won easily.

"Elihu Sands and Jane Lovejoy," called the umpire.

"My service, Jane," said Noel to the Rev. Arthur.

The Rev. Arthur did not like it, but he played and lost.

"Thyrza Tulstlethwayte and Tom Gerridge," called the umpire.

Thyrza did a little better, for weight began to tell.

"Sarah Thorne and Martin Clarke," called the umpire.

"Better make the game ten points, Sarah, instead of twenty," suggested Noel encouragingly, for she was beginning to tire.

"Certainly, if the umpire allows us," said the Rev. Arthur.

Sarah joined Thyrza with a slightly damaged nose.

"Anna Jones and Old Coulston," called the umpire.

"Go it, missie," said Old Coulston. "I see myself a-drinkin' that beer, I do."

Missie "went it," but, in spite of all she could do, the Rev. Arthur made the game seven—ten.

"Time to sponge off, I think," suggested Noel to Anna Jones.

"Eh—I beg your pardon?" said Anna Jones.

"Refreshments," explained Noel kindly. "I'm going to have a bun and ginger beer."

The Rev. Arthur inwardly hoped they would disagree with her. He, too, adored Noel, but he carried the money of the sewing club and was prepared, if necessary, to die on the field of honor. He tossed down a lemon-squash prepared by the fair fingers of Miss Jarvis. "I wear your glove upon my helm," he whispered.

"Mind that child doesn't knock it off," said Miss Jarvis sternly. "If you lose—a mere chit of a thing like that!—I'll never forgive you."

The landlord of the Spotted Dog gave Noel a cake of butterscotch to "top off" with, and, a pretty color in her cheeks, she danced back to the table. "Suppose," she said politely, "we lump all the other games and stand or fall by this one. I think you will then be"—she looked at the list—"Elizabeth Halsey, Keturah Banks, Alice Manns, Jemima Ward and Mad Kitty."

"I—I think so," said the Rev. Arthur.

"Oh, what a duck he is!" said Mad Kitty, beaming rapturously upon the poor curate. "Isn't he a duck?"

Miss Jarvis hastily pulled the crazy girl back into her seat and told her to be good.

"I will," said Mad Kitty; "but isn't he a duck?"

Noel poised her racket reflectively. "I'm Keeper Jones, Silas Poorbody, Scranny Eyed Bill, Sawyer Hurd and Garge the Shepherd, and I must be very careful, because they have twenty quarts of beer on me between them."

"Twenty what?" gasped the Rev. Arthur.

"Quarts," said Noel gently, "and they have asked me to supper at the Spotted Dog if I win."

Even Miranda gasped at this revelation. Fortunately she was cutting cake and did not realize its full significance.

The Rev. Arthur bowed gallantly. "I wish the ladies had so good a champion also," he said kindly. He glanced at Miss Jarvis, and his fine features clouded over, for she frowned. "A slip of a child," she whispered contemptuously to her neighbor.

Her disdain stung the Rev. Arthur, who was generally pretty good at field sports, and he began to serve as hard as he could, after previously stipulating that this final game should be twenty points. Amid tremendous excitement they crept up to eighteen all. There was agony in the Rev. Arthur's eye, for Miss Jarvis, coldly contemptuous, applauded Noel vigorously. Noel, seeing his distress, purposely served into the net, then blushed scarlet. She "carried the beer of the blanket club," yet had betrayed her trust because she loved the Rev. Arthur. Her pretty lips trembled.

The Rev. Arthur saw and understood. With fine chivalry he also served into the net, mentally vowing to refund their losses to the members of the sewing club. He would not be outdone in magnanimity by a slip of a child.

"Nineteen all," cried the umpire. "We'll make the next final stroke. Your service, Miss Noel."

Noel was so unnerved that she sent over an easy ball. The Rev. Arthur, with a hypocritical pretense of activity, drove it into the net, bowed and announced himself conquered.

Noel threw down her racket, flung her arms round his neck as he stooped to her and kissed him. Then they went off hand in hand to Miss Jarvis, who began dimly to understand that there are finer things in the world than winning a pingpong tournament.

"Noel has beaten me," said the curate gayly, "and I'm proud of being beaten so quickly."

Noel made them both a pretty courtesy. "I am twice beaten," she said. "Will you and Miss Jarvis come and have your evening oats with us at the Spotted Dog?"

We all went.

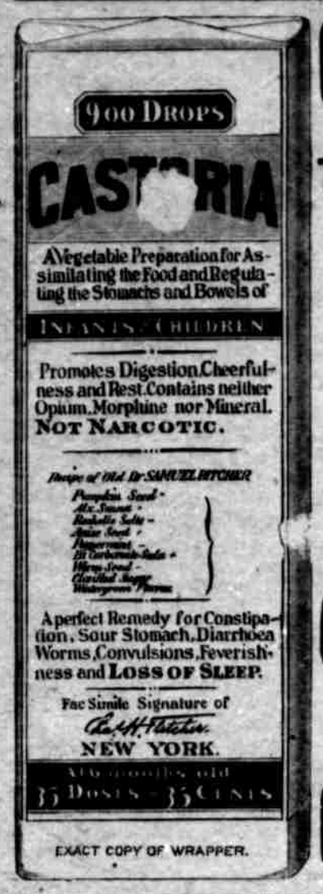
"Took his grueling like a man and a gentleman," said the landlord of the Spotted Dog. "I'm goin' to church next Sunday!"—Queen.

Nelson's Odd Appearance.

When Lord Nelson was commanding the Mediterranean squadron and lying off the bay of Biscay, the captains of two Spanish frigates lately arrived from America sent to entreat the honor of an audience with the admiral, merely to give themselves the gratification of seeing a person whom they considered to be the greatest man in the world. Captain Hardy took their request to Lord Nelson and urged compliance with it, notwithstanding the admiral's querulous reply of, "What is there to see in an old, withered fellow like myself?"

Nelson always wore short breeches and silk stockings, and at this moment his legs were bound at the knee and ankle with pieces of brown paper soaked in vinegar and tied with red tape. The application was to allay the irritation of some mosquito bites.

Quite forgetting this and the extraordinary appearance it presented, he went on deck to the Spanish captains and conducted the interview with such perfect good breeding and courtesy that his odd appearance was quite forgotten in the charm of his manners, and the Spaniards went away with every high opinion confirmed which they had previously formed of Lord Nelson.



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