

The Bet of a Woman Hater

(Original.)

Bob Brackett after learning a great deal in college about football tactics—he was a wiry quarter back—and a very little of Latin, Greek, mathematics and such annoyances to young men who go to college for fun, woke up one June morning and found himself in possession of a diploma.

Bob determined to do some more studying abroad. He was a professed woman hater, and before he left the girls poked fun at him by betting him a box of cigars against a hundred yards of Brussels lace that he would bring back a wife with him, and one little mix declared that she would be black. Bob offered to take a hundred such bets, but his teasers were quite content with one.

Six months after his departure Bob was in India. He was dining one evening with a party of Americans and British officers when the subject of the suttee or burning of widows with the bodies of their husbands was introduced.

"That's stopped now," said a British captain, "by a treaty with the British government."

"Hah!," said an Indian servant, "there will be a suttee tomorrow morning at sunrise. The young widow of the prince of Pingapore will be burned with her husband."

"The deuce you say!"

The servant being questioned said that the prince was a very old man, who had married the wife when she was twelve years old. She was now fifteen. The party became much interested, but as there was no English garrison near it did not seem that anything could be done to prevent this outrage against civilization. Brackett proposed that the party constitute themselves a posse to do so. The Englishmen were hard to move until they had had a number of brandy and sodas. Then they chimed in with alacrity. The party arose from the table and, guided by the servant, went to the place where the pyre had been set up in the court of a ruin. On the pyre was the body of the old prince, guarded by heathen Hindus.

"I have a scheme," said Brackett—"a real out and out Yankee scheme. We'll conceal ourselves in what is left of that apartment on the other side of the wall from the pyre. It isn't more than thirty feet from the pyre to the room. Suppose we dig a tunnel to a point beneath the pyre, remove the material from under where the widow will lie and let her down and out before the flames touch her."

"Good," said every one, and the Hindu servant was dispatched for spades and a wheelbarrow. With a will they set to work, all of them young strong men, and in three hours a spade broke through the ground and struck the wood of the pyre. Then commenced the more difficult work of locating the required spot and removing that part of the pyre directly under the spot where the widow would lie. However, it was at last accomplished, the wooden platform being left supported by pieces of timber that could be removed at will.

In the morning there was a great din of the funeral procession approaching. A troop of Brahman priests, their shaved heads uncovered, carrying torches, followed by a concourse of natives, came howling into the court. In their midst was the young widow. The party of Anglo-Saxons had pushed the mortar from a chink in the wall, through which they watched the proceedings. At the foot of the pyre the widow was stripped of all her clothing except a fine silken undergarment. To see the young thing stand there, looking about her with a bewildered stare, then at the pyre with a shudder, was enough to move stouter hearts than the English and Americans. Brackett took one look through the peephole, then dashed into the tunnel and to the bottom of the pyre, where he stood ready. When the widow ascended the pyre and lay down and a cloud of smoke concealed the bodies, the signal was given by a British officer at the peephole. Removing the supports, Brackett lowered the living body, receiving it in his arms. The widow, frightened at this unexpected occurrence as well as the flames, swooned and was easily carried through the tunnel to the ruined chamber. When she came to, a hand was clapped over her mouth, and she was forced to remain quiet.

It was not till night that the party, dressing the widow in the costume of their servant, Bob Brackett sacrificing his beard to conceal her features, dared to leave their place of concealment and return to their quarters. The widow, knowing that if found she would be spurned by her people and compelled to again go through the dread ordeal to its completion, begged her liberators to take her out of the country. As none of them could go where he liked except Brackett, he was assigned the post of honor. It was on a long journey on a P. and O. steamer to England, sitting with her daily on deck, talking of her past life and telling her of the western world, that Brackett lost his heart. The consequence was that when they reached England the widow of the Prince of Pingapore became Mrs. Bob Brackett.

On the arrival a few weeks later of the steamer Lucania at New York Brackett's girl friends, who had heard of his marriage with an Indian, were on the dock awaiting him.

"A hundred yards of lace, please." "I didn't lose the bet, which was that my wife would be black. She is copper colored. Nevertheless I am so happy that I am ready to pay." And he drew from his pocket a bundle of the finest quality of lace. Then they all dined together, and Bob presented his bride. EDNA CARROLL.

Saved by the Solist.

An old lady who at the best was certainly not very musical attended church one morning a little while ago. During the service an anthem was sung by the choir, during which a certain Mr. Wood rendered a solo. When returning home, the old lady remarked to a friend:

"Dear, dear! What a mess they made of that anthem, to be sure. Why, if it had not been for Mr. Wood they would have broken down entirely in one part."—London Standard.

Matched.

Towne—Met Gabbie and Perkins at a smoker last night and introduced them to each other.

Browne—Oh, say, it's a shame to introduce a bore like Gabbie to anybody.

Towne—It's evident you don't know Perkins or you'd see the humor of it.

Criticizing His Own.

"But, my dear husband, it really is unjust of you to abuse mothers-in-law so. There are good ones."

"Well, well; never mind. I haven't said anything against yours. It's only mine I'm grumbling about."—Boston Traveler.

New Assistant Secretary of State.

Francis B. Loomis, the new first assistant secretary of state, was a news-



paper man before being made minister to Venezuela by President McKinley. Since being recalled from that post he has been minister to Portugal.

MARDI GRAS REVELS

NEW ORLEANS' MERRY PRE-LENTEN FESTIVAL SEASON.

How the Carnival Has Changed During the Past Fifty Years—The Street Pageantry and Gorgeous Balls—How It is Maintained.

This year's Mardi Gras, New Orleans' great midwinter festival, promises to eclipse all previous carnivals in the beauty and gorgeousness of its street pageants and in the social festivities which always precede the Lenten season. Within half a century Mardi Gras has changed from a day of indiscriminate masking, when the people of the old half French, half Spanish city indulged in a huge sort of open air masquerade ball, into a permanent annual festival extending over a period of several days and unequalled on this continent as a picturesque and unique display.

Practically it is the same as formerly, but if the celebration of this year is compared with that of half a dozen years ago it will be noticed that not only are the pageants more numerous and more elaborate, but the whole festival has been systematized as to details and arrangements.

While there are parades by several organizations the pageants of King Rex on the afternoon of Shrove Tuesday, Feb. 24, and that of the Mystic Krewe of Comus in the evening have heretofore been the most elaborate. Upward of twenty floats are in each of the parades and each year represent some new fancy. Directly after the festivities are over the committees meet and outline the plans for that of the year to follow.

And then the Mardi Gras balls. To all the citizens of New Orleans and many of the visitors these are the crowning glory of the season of merriment. There will be fifteen this year, the social season having opened on Jan. 8 with the grand ball of the Twelfth Night Revelers. The culmina-



ONE OF THE FLOATS.

tion will come with the pageant of Rex, king of the carnival, and his ball at the carnival palace in the evening and the ball of the Mystic Krewe of Comus at the French Opera House.

Noticeable among the visitors to the Mardi Gras this year will be Miss Alice Roosevelt, daughter of the president of the United States. She will be the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Edward McIlheny. Mr. McIlheny served with the rough riders in Cuba and is the president's personal friend. The McIlhenys have leased a fine residence for the carnival and will entertain lavishly in Miss Roosevelt's honor.

Miss Roosevelt has received invitations from all the prominent carnival societies and to receptions and parades of the various merry monarchs who will hold brief sway while she is in the city. Had her father granted his permission she would doubtless have been chosen queen of the carnival.

The New Orleans carnival parades date back to 1827, but not until ten years later was the first organized street parade of maskers given, and not until the night of Mardi Gras, 1857, did the Mystic Krewe of Comus appear—moving upon vans or cars and representing the demon actors in "Paradise Lost."

This was the first of the several grand scenic displays which now occur yearly, the parades being followed by magnificent tableau balls.

The enormous expense is evident. In one display alone where several societies combined in one grand pageant there were nearly a hundred floats bearing tableaux, with a thousand richly dressed characters and as many horses. VALOR TYPIFIED IN BRONZE

Sculptor Ruckstuhl's "Apotheosis of the Confederacy."

"An Apotheosis of the Confederacy," the bronze group ordered by the Daughters of the Confederacy for presentation to the city of Baltimore and which has just been completed by the casters, was designed by F. W. Ruckstuhl, the sculptor, and has attracted much attention among sculptors and artists.

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