

A CASE OF PLAGIARISM.

The young couple stood on the bank opposite the Gaffly contemplating that small house boat with something less than a feeling of ownership than they had hitherto experienced. A fiery little steamer went up the river, and the waves, taking advantage of the confusion, ran and kissed the green bank and were off again before the green bank had time to protest. From the top deck of the Gaffly came a song to the ears of Mr. Stewart, of Thromorton street, and of young Mrs. Stewart, that they were beginning to know quite well, albeit Miss Bagge, the singer, had only been there since the morning. Miss Bagge accompanied herself on the banjo, and accompanied herself all wrong:

"I'm a little Alabama coon, An't been born very long."

"I wonder," said little Mrs. Stewart—"I wonder, now, how many more times she's going to play that?"

"My dear love," said Mr. Stewart, sitting down on the bank.

"Don't call me your dear love, Harry, until that dreadful girl has gone."

"My dear Mrs. Stewart, what can I do? I can't treat her as we brokers treat a stranger who happens to stroll into the house, can I? You wouldn't care for me to catch hold of her and wash her hat in and hustle her out of the place."

"I shouldn't. All you have to do is be distant with her."

"One can't be very distant on a small houseboat."

"I believe you like Miss Bagge still," said Mrs. Stewart.

"I don't mind her when she's still," said Mr. Stewart. "It's when she bobs about and plays that banjo of hers that she makes me hot."

The shrill voice came across the stream:

"Hoosh a-bye, don't you cry, mammy's little darling."

"Papa's wine to smack you if you do," "Boat ahoy," called Stewart.

The boy on the Gaffly came up from somewhere and pulled over to them, and conveyed them to the houseboat.

Miss Bagge, looking down from between the Chinese lanterns, gave a little shriek of delight as their boat bumped at the side of the Gaffly.

"Oh, you newly-married people," she cried, archly, as she bunched up her skirts and came skittishly down the steps; "where have you been? Leaving your little me alone with my music for such a time."

"Did you say music, Miss Bagge?" "Yes, dear Mrs. Stewart. My banjo, you know."

"Oh!" said little Mrs. Stewart.

"Afraid you don't like plantation melodies, Mrs. Stewart?"

"I used to think I did, Miss Bagge." Stewart had gone along to get something good to drink and something in the shape of a cigar to smoke.

"How things change, Mrs. Stewart, don't they? I'm sure it doesn't seem six years ago—hem—Mr. Stewart and I and me and two or three others came up to Marlow. I think that was long before your day, before you came over from Melbourne, and we did really have the most exquisite time."

"Have you looked through the evening paper, Miss Bagge?" interrupted little Mrs. Stewart, hurriedly.

"Oh, yes, dear, I've looked through it twice. One or two most interesting cases."

"Where did you put it? I want to see what O'Brien has done for Middlesex."

"I've dropped it somewhere," said Miss Bagge. "Could the boy go up for my trunk before it gets dark? I left it at the station, and I shall have some more things down next week."

"Next week?"

Miss Bagge put her hand to her brown thin neck and gave a cough of apology.

"If I stay longer I shall have to run up to town one day to do some shopping."

There was a pause. The rings of smoke from Stewart's cigar at the other end of the boat floated down by them. The boy below broke a few pipes and danced a few steps of a breakdown to cover the noise.

"Dear Henry! How the scent of his cigar does remind me of old times! I remember so well that night at Marlow—"

"Miss Bagge, will you go and play something?"

Miss Bagge went obediently and strummed her banjo, and mentioned once more that she was a little Alabama coon, and young Mrs. Stewart ran hurriedly to her husband.

"I'm going to quarrel with her," she said, breathlessly.

"That's right," said Henry, calmly; "anything to stop that row."

"I'm going to ask her to go back to town to-night, Henry."

"But, my dear, isn't that rather rude?"

"Of course it is. That's why I am doing it. You'll have to see her to the station."

The private row was quickly and quietly over. When the last word had been spoken, the self-invited guest begged five minutes to write a letter, and then she pronounced herself ready for Stewart's escort to the station.

"Stewart are obliged to go, Miss Bagge," Stewart politely.

"What an important engagement," said Miss Bagge, trembling, "or I would have stayed. Good-by, dear Mrs. Stewart. I dare say we shall meet again."

Now the said thing happened. As Stewart took his charge into the boat, a letter fell from her pocket on the deck of the Gaffly. Mrs. Stewart, in her usual cool temper now that her husband's old admirer was departing, called to her as soon as she noticed the letter; but Miss Bagge paid no attention. It almost seemed that she did not wish to hear. When Mrs. Stewart picked up the letter and saw that it was addressed to Henry Stewart, Esq., and marked "private and confidential," she opened it without a moment's hesitation.

"What a beautiful letter—it is so good to be able to hear from you again."

Young Mrs. Stewart sank down on a low deck-chair and gasped and looked across at the two.

"Wall," she said, "this now is fearful."

"There would be a good half an hour before Henry returned, and in that good half-hour it was necessary to decide what was to be done. What was quite clear was that the creature must have had some encouragement to induce her to write such a letter, and—"

"Why, she is taking his arm!" she cried.

Indeed, Miss Constance Bagge was resting her hand upon the arm of Mrs. Stewart's husband. Henry was carrying her banjo, and looking back, laughingly waved it at his wife.

"Does this mean," asked Mrs. Stewart, distractedly, "that they will never come back?"

The letter seemed to explain his slight diffidence in agreeing to the lady's dismissal; it explained also why when Miss Bagge had that morning made her unexpected appearance on the bank hailing the boy with a shrill "Hill!" Henry had only laughed very much.

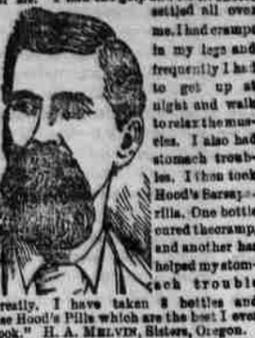
Mrs. Stewart summoned the boy.

"Yes, mem, there is a trine up liter than this. It leaves Thames Ditton at eleven fifteen, and you get to good old Waterloo at about ten to twelve. And I wish to Gawd," added the boy, piously, "that I was there nah. This plice is a lump too quiet for me."

That would give half an hour to speak her mind to Henry (if he did come back), just half an hour to extract from him a confession, and then a rush for the last train up. At Waterloo she could take a cab to Uncle George's; and if Uncle George couldn't see her through, why, nobody could. Uncle George was an agent general. He was a stern man, and he treated everybody as severely as though they were his fellow-countrymen.

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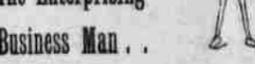
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JOHN H. MARKS, Administrator. SAM'L M. GARLAND, Atty. for Adm. Estate of Nancy Marks, deceased.

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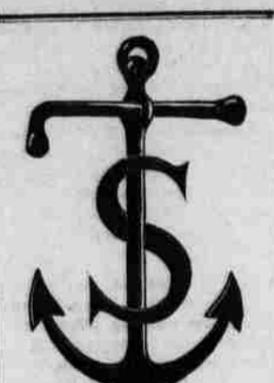
Try walking with your hands behind you if you find yourself becoming bent forward.

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Try a cloth, wrung out from cold water, but about the neck at night.

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