

The Episode of the Bachelor Dinner

BY EVERETT P. CLARKE.

A LAWYER having been sent for to call at the city jail at 10 o'clock in the morning to see a prisoner, found a young man in evening dress very much cast down.

"Here's a pretty how-de-do," exclaimed the prisoner—"locked up on a charge of burglary, insanity or both. For heaven's sake, get me out of this before my fiancée hears of it. I would not have it get into the papers for a million!"

"What's the trouble?" asked the lawyer.

"Well, you see, I'm to be married tomorrow, and last night I gave my bachelor friends a supper. We broke up at 2 o'clock this morning, and I went home. Nobody got full, and I was sober as a judge. I live in a row of ten stone front houses, all alike as peas in a pod. My house is the sixth one from the end of the row and the fifth from the other end.

"The light was turned low in the hall. I heard something moving in the parlor. Remembering that the front door hadn't been locked, it occurred to me that a burglar might have come in. What I heard sounded exactly like some one trying to tread softly. My fiancée lives on one side of the city, and I live on the other. Being used to walking home nights after visiting her I have become used to carrying a revolver in my hip pocket as a protection against footpads. On hearing the sounds in the parlor I drew the weapon and cocked it. Then I went into the room.

"I couldn't see anything, but I distinctly heard somebody in the adjoining room in the rear. I listened and heard him go into the kitchen. Stepping out into the hall, I went back to the kitchen myself and listened at the door. All was still for awhile; then I heard the fellow scurry across the floor.

"Next I heard him in the dining-room again. He evidently stumbled against something, for I heard it drop on the floor. By this time I had made up my mind that either I must get the burglar or he would get me.

I didn't know exactly what to do. My mother is in poor health, and I feared to give an alarm on her account. Besides, the telephone booth was upstairs and if I went to it the burglar would probably get away with the plunder. While I was deliberating I heard a tin pan tumble down in the kitchen. It made a big racket, and I dreaded lest my mother

should be awakened, for if she learned that there was a burglar in the house she would go into hysterics.

"I opened the kitchen door softly and looked in, but it was so dark that I couldn't see anything. I heard a scratching, however, that made me suspect the noises might have been made by some animal. But as we didn't have any dog or cat I didn't take much stock in this theory.

"Not hearing any further noise, I went cautiously into the kitchen. After standing in the middle of the floor awhile listening for a new sound I made up my mind to light a gas jet and take the consequences, whatever they might be.

"Every house in the block is built alike, and there is a square opening in all between the kitchen and the dining-room through which to pass dishes. I approached this opening with dread, because if the burglar was in the dining-room he could see me through it and make short work of me.

"Gathering courage, I stood at the aperture and looked into the dining-room. There he was, sure enough. Both of us raised our weapons. It was a matter of life and death which fired first. I pulled the trigger, and there was a loud report.

"I supposed I had killed my burglar, for the range was very short, and I aimed straight at him. There was nothing for me to do but await the inevitable rousing of the household. I heard footsteps above and voices; then down came a man in his nightshirt.

"Great Scott! I had never seen him before!

"I had got into the wrong house. The man, seeing me standing with a smoking revolver in my hand, ran back upstairs, and I heard him call for the police.

"What should I do?

"I wanted to get out, but knew that would be worse for me in the end than standing my ground. I heard nothing from the burglar—not even a moan. While waiting for the police I determined to go into the dining-room, light the gas and learn the worst.

"What I learned was that there was no living thing in the room except a cat crouching in a corner. Directly opposite the opening between the dining-room and kitchen stood a sideboard topped by a mirror. The mirror was shattered. I had put a bullet through it trying to kill my own image.

"When the police came the man upstairs called down to them to run in any one they might find there. I tried to explain to the police what had happened, showing them the opening through which I had fired at the mirror. Some of them thought me a housebreaker, who had been caught redhanded; others took me for a lunatic. Anyway they arrested me, and here I am."

Happily the attorney secured bail and succeeded in hushing the matter up. The next evening his client was married without his bride knowing of the episode following his bachelor dinner.

Work of Government Forest Service During Past Year

SELLING some billion and a half board feet of timber and supervising the cutting on several thousand different areas, overseeing the grazing of more than 1,500,000 cattle and 7,500,000 sheep and building more than 600 miles of road, 2000 miles of trail, 3000 miles of telephone line and 700 miles of fire line are some of the things which the Government forest service did last year upon the National forests, as disclosed in the report of the Chief Forester for 1914.

There is need, says the Chief Forester, to increase the cut of timber from National forests wherever a fair price can be obtained, because a great deal of it is mature and ought to be taken out to make room for young growth. Unfavorable conditions in the lumber trade caused new sales of National forest timber to fall off somewhat during the year. There was, however, a big increase in small timber sales, these numbering 8298 in 1914, against 6182 the previous year. All told, the Government received \$1,304,953.66 from the sale of timber on the forests in 1914.

After eight years of experience, stockmen are well satisfied, says the Chief Forester, with the way the grazing of livestock on the forests is regulated, and have even urged upon Congress the application of the same method of control on the unreserved public range. Almost 29,000 permittees graze stock on the National forests, and these paid to the Government in the fiscal year 1914 fees amounting to over \$1,000,000. The present tendency to raise fewer sheep and goats and more cattle and horses, is shown in the fact that the number of cattle and horse permittees on the Western forests increased last year by 1579, while the number of sheep and goat permittees fell off by a total of 268. The forester points out that the Western stock business is becoming attached to the soil, and the itinerant sheep grower and the speculator in cattle are giving place to the permanent resident and owner of improved ranch property. The latter is always given the

preference in the use of National forest range.

Since 1909, when systematic classification of the National forest lands was begun, more than 10,000,000 acres have been eliminated. Scattered interior tracts which it is not practical to eliminate are opened to settlement through listing, which allows them to be taken up under the forest homestead law. Anyone may apply to have land within a forest examined to determine whether it is best suited for agriculture, and if found so, it is opened to settlement under this law. During the year 2690 tracts, totaling 282,483 acres, applied for by individuals, were opened for entry. By elimination and listing, the percentage of unpatented agricultural land within the National forests, never large, has been reduced to a very small amount.

Small Lambs.

Lambs may be small yet healthy. The heaviest lambs are not always the most profitable feeders. The size to buy depends upon the time they are to be marketed. In feeding for an early market a 60-pound Mexican lamb will perhaps prove the most profitable. If they are to be held over until Spring and shorn before marketing, which method is practiced quite extensively, a 45-pound lamb, if healthy, will as a rule, yield the most satisfactory returns.

In the range country most sheep and lambs are sold by the head, although of later years the contracts call for weighing at some unloading point where they have scales.

This method has its advantages as a fellow then buys by weight and gets what he buys besides the benefit of the shrink and the saving of time and expense of chasing around over the range. No matter where sheep are bought, however, the first step toward a successful and profitable feed is to get the right kind of stuff and at the right price.

A Quicer Region.

Nebraska's sandhill region offers one of the most unusual fields for scientific investigation in this country. In some places the wind begins its work on the very top of a hill. Gradually while the outline of the hill remains intact, the hole goes down deeper until it reaches hardpan or rock where water collects. The top of the excavation may be only a few yards across and then the pit has the appearance of a great well. The air seems to go down into one of these holes with a sort of suction and the day is never so calm but that some sand rises from the pit. It always piles out on the northeast side. The excavations are not confined to the hills. They may start on level ground and then as in the other case, the hole will go down to water. The level land excavations may be of any size from a pond of many acres to a narrow pit three times as deep as it is wide. They are called blow-outs.

Alberta Sets New Record.

The record sale of wheat in Alberta was made in Major, Alberta, when Preston Mills, a farmer in this district, sold a carload of wheat, even 1000 bushels, to a flour company for \$1450 or at the rate of \$1.45 per bushel. Officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway predict that the price will go much higher and many farmers are holding their wheat. They also say that the high prices are resulting in a great many inquiries from prospective settlers.

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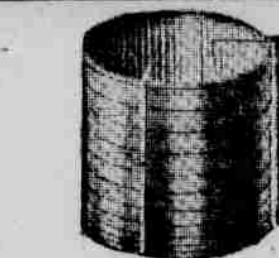
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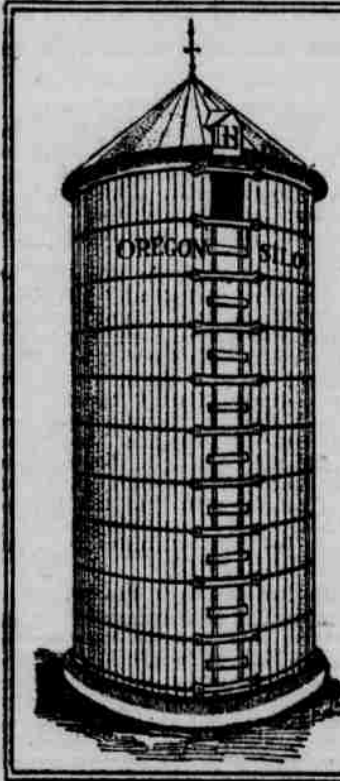
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