BOWSER IN GRIEF.

Spring Feeling Brings on Tearful Thoughts.

THE JUG WAS ON THE STEPS.

Mrs. Bowser Peeped and Saw Samuel in the Act—The Cause Removed—A Change at Breakfast the Morning After.

By M. QUAD.

MR. BOWSER had come home in a cheerful state of mind, and nothing unusual had been noticed in his actions until an hour after dinner. Then he began to hitch around in a nervous way and finally said:

"Seems to me it's going to rain tonight."

"The stars were out half an hour ago," replied Mrs. Bowser.

"I think I'll go out and see."

He put on his hat and passed out and was gone ten minutes and returned to say:

"Yes, the stars are out, but I was sure it was going to rain."

He picked up the paper and read for a quarter of an hour. Then he began to hitch again.

"Are you sitting on a tack?" asked Mrs. Bowser, who had an eye on him.

"No, of course not. Do you take me for a fool?"

"But you seem nervous."

"Well, I am. I believe we are going to have a thunderstorm. You know I

CAUGHT STAR GAZING.

always have these nervous fits on when there's thunder in the air."

"I never heard of it before."

"Oh, you didn't! Well, there's a good many things you never heard of before. If there's a thunderstorm coming up I want to know it."

He went down the hall and outdoors again, and it was ten minutes before he returned.

"I don't hear any thunder," observed Mrs. Bowser.

"There isn't any," he replied, "but the weather has a peculiar influence on me this evening."

The house settled down to peace and harmony again, but not for long. Of a sudden Mr. Bowser began to giggle like a schoolgirl and then cried out:

"By George, that's funny! Funniest thing I've read in ten years! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is it?" was asked, and as Mrs. Bowser put the query she noticed that his face was growing red.

"Man in Boston was walking along, and another man asked him for a match—ha, ha, ha!"

"What else?"

"Nothing else. Man just walking along, and another man asked him for a match. Think of it, Mrs. Bowser! Man comes right up to another man in Boston and asks for a match!"

"The weather does seem to have a strange effect on you. You had better go out and see if there are any signs of a cyclone."

"I will, dear. I guess that's what's the matter. Yes; I guess there's a regular old cyclone coming."

What Mrs. Bowser Saw.

For the third time he passed out of the front door. Mrs. Bowser tiptoed to the parlor window, whence she could get a view of the front steps, and she saw him descend and pick up a jug and raise it to his lips and take a hearty swig. He had evidently left the jug out there when he came from the office. She was back in her chair when he returned, and she quietly asked:

"Well, does the weather look cyclonish?"

"It does and it doesn't," he answered. "Never saw such queer weather. We may be going to have an earthquake. Oh, well, if it comes, it will come."

It was to be noticed that Mr. Bowser's hilarity had departed. He picked up the paper again and turned it over and over, but laid it down with a long drawn sigh and pathetically said:

"Mrs. Bowser, I should commit suicide if you was killed in an earthquake—I surely should!"

"I guess there's no danger."

"I hope not. If an earthquake shook this house down and the roof hit you on the ear and spared me I'd be the lonesomest man in the world. I couldn't live. I'd be thinking of you all the time. I'd be thinking what a good woman you was."

"Hadn't you better lie down on the lounge awhile?" suggested Mrs. Bowser, who saw that the jug was getting in its work.

"No, darling. I've got to sit up and protect you. When we was married I swore to protect you, didn't I? Well, I shall do it to the last drop of my blood. If a tiger was in this room and he was about to spring on you"—

"Mr. Bowser, you generally take a spring tonic about this time of year."

Creeps of Sadness.

"Yesh. I must see about it. It always does me good. Why is it that I feel so sad tonight? I'm thinking of graveyards and doctors all the time. Mrs. Bowser, I can't hardly look at you without crying."

She excused herself for a moment and ran downstairs and brought the jug into the basement. When she reached Mr. Bowser again he had the cat in his lap, and the tears were rolling down his cheeks.

"I was thinking of how often I have tried to murder her," he explained. "Poor old cat! She can't help being a cat, you know."

Mrs. Bowser thought the evening air might do Mr. Bowser good, and after a minute she said:

"I wish you would go out and see if there is any moon tonight."

"Moon? Moon? Mrs. Bowser, do you want 'er moon? If you do just say so and you shall have it."

"If there is a moon then we won't have a thunderstorm."

"I shee—I shee. Mrs. Bowser, you are a sharp woman—awful sharp. You know all about 'er moon, and I don't know a single thing. I'm no good. When I die I want you to put on my tombstone, 'Here Lays That Old Rip of a Bowser.' Yes, put that on and tell everybody I didn't know about 'er moon. What a sad world! How I should like to break down and cry!"

Mrs. Bowser got him down the hall and put his hat on and worked him outdoors and shut it after him. He stood for a minute to sniff the air and then carefully descended the steps and felt for the jug. It wasn't there.

Queries About the Jug.

"Do jugs have wings? Do jugs fly?" He straightened up. "No, of course not. Nobody ever heard of a jug walking away."

He stooped down again and felt all around on the stones, but there was no jug to further increase his sadness.

"Do jugs have wings? Do jugs fly? I left that jug right there, and now—and now"—

Mrs. Bowser came out on the steps and asked:

"What are you looking for, dear?"

"I—I lost a shent down here."

"Sure it was a cent?"

"It was either a shent or a dollar. Mrs. Bowser, does a shent walk away?"

"Oh, no."

"Does 'er dollar have wings?"

"No. You'd better come in now and go to bed."

"Yes, I guess so. No thunderstorm—no cyclone—no moon. Just thinking all 'er time about doctors and tombstones and our old cat. I wish I wasn't sad, but how can I help it? This is Mrs. Bowser, ain't it?"

"Surely."

"Then I'll do just as she says. Mrs. Bowser good woman—mighty good woman."

When Mr. Bowser came down to breakfast next morning the jug sat beside his chair. He recognized it at a glance, but asked:

"What's this?"

"The cook found it at the area gate. It may be a spring tonic for you." The jug was lifted and part of a glass of its contents poured out. It was pure water.

Mr. Bowser looked at Mrs. Bowser with hardened eyes and said:

"If our cook has got so that she has to keep a jug around you let her go. What can the neighbors think of us to see a jug sitting at the basement door!"

More Noise Than Cover.

Too often is the mantle of charity louder than a Navajo blanket.—Puck.

Nearsighted.

Jones—George, I hear you were discharged from the marine band. What was the trouble?

George (the cornet player)—Vell, I told you how it vas. De band vas blaying sweet and low, und I saw a big note und played it loud, und, by gosh, it was a horsefly!

Degrees of Sense.

There's "fine sense" and "coarse sense,"
Each good in its way,
But the man who has "horse sense"
Knows when to say "neigh."
—Catholic Standard and Times.