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CLEVER RASCALS.

Robbers of Naples as Daring as They Are Resourceful.

SCHEME OF ONE LONE THIEF.

Masterly Manner in Which This Audacious Rogue Pilfered a Church Furnishing Shop and Corded Up Its Too Confiding Proprietor.

His name was Signor Domenico Doctor Dolcetti, and he was host in Rome. For a scholar with a degree he enjoyed his meals rather unstrainedly, but after the spaghetti and capretto had disappeared he used to slow his pace over the foccchio con vino and to straighten his back, wipe his mustache and begin his stories.

"Napoli? St. si! Naples? Bella città, beautiful, beautiful! And what thieves are they in Naples! It is the one city where you cannot lead a donkey through the streets."

There did not seem to be much connection between these, and our puzzled looks said so.

"Perche? You dare not lead. You must take him by the tail, for when the unsuspecting peasant leads an ass laden with panniers or onions or wood into Naples before long he happens to glance back, and behold, all is gone—produce, panniers, pack saddle, all tumbled. Thereafter he takes the ass by the tail and steers him through the streets that he may watch constantly."

"Poi—it is all organized. Some years ago the leader of the robbers was the captain. Everybody knew him. When anything was stolen from one, one went not to the police, but to the captain."

"There was a little music master came home one day and found his piano gone, a whole piano, and no one in the house could say how, when or where it went. The little man was distracted."

"Then he took heart and went to the captain and stood before him with his hat in his hands. He was just a poor music teacher. His piano was all he had in the world. He—'Go,' said the captain. 'At 6 this evening you have your piano.' And about the time of the service that afternoon a wagon came to the little man's door, and four men heaved out a piano, which they set in its accustomed corner; then they drove off without a word."

"Poi, the music man, went again to the captain's house and began to thank him and to fumble about in his pockets, saying that he did not have much, about 20 lire, all his savings—22 lire perhaps. 'What—twenty-two lire?' yelled the other. 'I, who am rich, whom men call the captain—22 lire to me! You poor!—And he kicked him down the stairs.'

"But the most remarkable robbery was done not by the band, but by a Neapolitan single handed."

"One day there drove up to a church furnishing shop an equipage with two prancing horses and a liveried coachman and halted before the big windows full of precious finery. A beautifully dressed little signor alighted and asked to see the proprietor. He said he had a cousin who would the next day be ordained bishop and he desired to purchase appropriate gifts. First he would see a crozier. The proprietor fetched a superb crozier of silver, the crook of it gold, wonderfully chased and overwrought with carving."

"How much?" asked the well dressed man.

"Five thousand lire, signor."

"Good! Tie it up and put it in the carriage. And let me see also a mitre. And again he chose the costliest, one frosted with silver arabesques and beaded with pearls. He sat down to write a check for 8,000 lire altogether. But, no; he would see also a bishop's ring. 'How much was this one?'"

"Two thousand lire, signor."

"Good! And that, too, went into the carriage with the mitre and crozier. Finally this princely customer would buy a complete vesture and decided on a figured all brocaded with cloth of gold from shoulder to foot. 'Only,' he doubted, 'will it fit? But stay,' he said to the shopman; 'you are a big man, almost as large as my cousin. See if the garment will fit you.' So the proprietor put it on and stood clothed in magnificence from cravat to sash."

"Good! Beautiful! Only the waist. My cousin happens to be enormous of girth. Suppose you put your arms at your sides, and I shall fix the girdle to include them. That will about equal my cousin's waist.' So he buckled the belt tight about the proprietor's wrists and moved back to survey the effect."

"Boun! Bellissima! Most beautiful!" he cried. "And now, signor—buon giorno!" He skipped through the door, into his carriage and whirled downtown.

"At that 'Good day' the proprietor let out one awful yell and bounded into the street. 'Thief!' he screamed. He crashed into astounded people, tripped in his golden skirts, rolled and could not get up again."

"People would not touch him, kicking and frothing and trying to point—'Thief, thief!'—would not even look in the direction of the vanishing carriage. Finally the police grabbed him, discovered that he was insane and a robber and hustled him to prison. Poi—they let him go next morning."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Not Worthless. Ashley—I always thought that Beesling was leading a worthless life. Seymour—Wasn't he? Ashley—No; his life was insured for a thousand.—Exchange.

CAUGHT THE COINER.

An Accident Spoiled an Ingenious Counterfeit Passing Scheme.

A case which shows the ingenuity used in passing counterfeit coin is the following: A tailor, who also was a very successful coin, had a little daughter who was some ten years old. She was being taught to play the violin, and twice a week she went to have a music lesson at a house about a mile distant. Once a week the innocent little thing carried besides her violin case and violin a package cunningly secreted in the false bottom of the violin case, which contained some twenty or more pieces of counterfeit coin.

The music master, a rogue who was in the know, found no difficulty in abstracting the package unnoticed by the child and in his turn passed it on to a woman "fence," who again gave it to a male friend, who delivered it safely to the "utterer," a woman again, at a street corner, the package being this time concealed in the false bottom of a canary cage. Thus it passed through six hands, and besides the man himself only the music master knew who manufactured the coin.

The tailor was caught by an accident. His little girl let the violin case fall in the street, the bottom of the case was smashed, and all the coins, done up in tissue paper, fell into the street. The child, much mystified, opened one of the little packages, and the glitter caught a policeman's eye. This mishap led to the instant arrest of the tailor, who confessed, hoping for a light sentence, a hope which was not realized. Among the coiners' stock in trade were discovered two works on chemistry, fourteen molds, two batteries, plaster of paris, two ladies, a melting pot, crucibles and a quantity of chemicals.—London Telegraph.

HENTY AS AN INVENTOR.

The Author's Reversible Boat That Was a Halfway Success.

George Henty, the author of boys' stories, is described in "Sixty Years in the Wilderness," by Henry W. Lucy, as the warmest hearted, shortest tempered man in the world.

"Before he found his true vocation in writing boys' books Henty tried various methods of supplementing his salary on the Standard. One was the recovery of tin from broken or disused utensils. For some months his study was filled with a bad smell and scraps of broken tin. The smell was engendered by efforts to melt off the tin from the baser metal with the assistance of a chemical compound invented by the operator."

"The next thing that attracted Henty's attention and filled him with hope of fortune was the building of a reversible boat, bound to right itself automatically. He took rooms up the river and, with some assistance from a village mechanic, built his boat. To a certain extent it proved an unqualified success. At the slightest well directed touch, sometimes without it, it would turn over, keel uppermost, with Henty in the river. Righting itself was, as the French say, 'another pair of sleeves.'"

"Through some anxious weeks he was frequently ignominiously rescued by a passing boat and walked home, cozing water from pockets and boots. In the end his landlady gave him notice that she could not 'be always mopping up after him.' I fancy he gladly seized this opportunity of retiring from the boat building business."

Stories of the Gravediggers.

Grimly humorous is the tale of the Scottish gravedigger who complained that he did not get constant work.

"But, George," said the minister, "if you were to be constantly employed in the duties of the office you would soon bury the whole parish."

"That might be, sir, but hoo am I to keep a wife and family unless I get regular work? 'Deed, sir, I havena buried a leevin' soul for the last six weeks."

Harder still was the case of another gravedigger who was asked to reduce his fee for digging a grave because, "mind ye, James, she was an auld woman and was sair spent."

Malay Houses.

Malay houses are invariably built on posts so as to raise the floor from four to six feet above the ground. The floor is composed of bamboo, with interstices between the slats, the earth beneath becoming the receptacle of the drainage of the establishment. The universal plan of the well to do natives is to build the house in two divisions, the front one for receiving visitors and lounging generally, while the rear portion is reserved for the women and children.

City Streets.

Dr. Johnson would have said a wise thing had he said what somebody said later for him—"Come, let us take a walk down Fleet street." It sounds commonplace, but often a commonplace is concentrated wisdom, and that is how in our careless day a master of the commonplace gets to be regarded as an oracle. If you want to understand a people just do take a walk—many walks—in their great highways of traffic.—James Millie in Fortnightly.

A Thorough Optimist.

"You are an optimist?" "I am," replied Mr. Dustin Stax. "I not only hope for the best, but I make practical arrangements to get it."—Washington Star.

Her Words.

His Sister—And did she say she loved you in so many words? Her Brother—That's what! Her words filled twenty-seven pages.—Chicago News.

BOARDING IN A CUBAN HOME

You Must Not Mention Money, but You Pay All the Same.

In Cuba, where money is not talked of, where no one is valued according to his money, the need of it is nevertheless the sword hanging over every home. Money—the lack of it is evident everywhere, but the word is never mentioned, writes Kate Jordan in the New Idea Woman's Magazine.

"Be sure you do not speak of money," the Cuban friend who had introduced us had said. "From her cousin's brother-in-law I know the senora expects \$15 a week for each of you. Put this in an envelope with her full name on it, which you know means not only her husband's name, but all of her own family names, which I will give you, and leave it where she will find it. It will disappear, but," said our Cuban friend proudly and sternly, "it will never be mentioned."

To eat one's three meals under the summer sky gave a holiday flavor to what becomes habit. Our table was set under a palm on one of the galleries. Our first taste of the ice-cream of Cuba was a moment to be remembered. They are peeled whole and so close that even the juicy pods are cut into a little. A fork is stuck into each orange, and, resting in a bowl of ice packed all night, they are in the morning little globes of ice-cream sweetness. They are eaten while held up on the fork, on the pulp, the skeleton of the orange being left impaled on it.

The Havana housekeeper believes in having the cook, with the gravity of a prime minister, deposit the food on the table, because to her point of view what is meant to be hot should be as hot as cayenne and what is meant to be cold of a polar iciness.

After the cook's triumphant bearing in of a fish other servants are on hand to give minor service.

AN EXPERT BOOKMAKER.

One in Havana That Puzzled a Chicago Betting Man.

"If you want to see expert bookmakers you should go to Havana," remarked a Chicago man. "They certainly have their business down fine. I went to a cockfight in one of the suburbs of Havana on a Sunday. Nearly everybody in that part of the town had turned out."

"With two friends I got seats close to the pit. I had never seen a cockfight, and I was interested. At the edges of the pit several natives were standing, facing the audience and yelling and waving their hands. I asked one of my friends, who had been in Havana a short time, what they were doing. He said they were taking bets. Sure enough, the spectators were shouting back at them, announcing their favorites and placing their bets. But the bookmakers were not using even a pencil. One of them, I am sure, must have taken fifty bets."

"I wanted to get in on the game, so I decided to bet \$2 on a black gamecock that looked good to me. I handed over my money, but I didn't get a ticket. I felt sure I should never again see my money even if I had picked the winner. Well, the main was fought, and my bird won. I watched the bookmaker as he went among the crowd, handing money here and there. When he came to me he handed over \$10. I was surprised, but he didn't notice it, as he was too busy cleaning up his slate. Finally I discovered through a spectator near by who could speak English a little that my bird had been a four to one shot."

"How that 'bookie' ever kept all those bets in his mind is more than I can understand."—Washington Post.

A Tale of "Tipping."

To tip or not to tip the person who but does his or her duty is a question recalling an incident set down in Walpole's reminiscences of how a king once unwillingly encouraged the custom. "This is a strange country," commented George I. "The first morning after my arrival at St. James I looked out of the window and saw a park with walls, canal, etc., which they told me were mine. The next day Lord Chetwynd, the ranger of my park, sent me a brace of carp out of my canal, and I was told that I must give 5 guineas to Lord Chetwynd's servant for bringing me my own carp out of my own canal in my own park!"

A Puzzle.

"That is a puzzle," said a novelist at a dinner in New York. "Yes, that is as much a puzzle as Mrs. Malaprop's definition of snivels."

"Mrs. Malaprop and a gentleman were discussing a beautiful young lady poet. The gentleman said: 'What I regard as the most conspicuous thing about her is her native.'"

"Yes," said Mrs. Malaprop; "I wonder what made her get such a tight one."—Washington Star.

A Straight Tip.

"Ray," growled the first hobo, "why didn't yer go ter dat big house an' git a handout?"

"Why, I started ter," replied the other, "but a minister lookin' zuy gimme a tip not ter. He sez: 'Turn from yer present path. Ye're goin' ter de dogs.'—Philadelphia Press.

Sorry He Spoke.

Husband—Well, I must say that all fools are not dead yet. Wife (affectionately)—I'm glad of it, dear. I never look well in black.—Illustrated Bits.

The Old Story.

"Did Hardluck bear his misfortune like a man?" "Exactly like one. He damed it all in his wife."—Judge.

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