O. Henry Stories

II.—The Discounters of Money

By O. HENRY

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THE spectacle of the money caliphs of the present day going about Bagdad-on-the-Subway trying to relieve the wants of the people is enough to make the great Al Raschid turn Haroun in his grave. If not so then the assertion should do so, the real caliph having been a wit and a scholar and therefore a hater of puns.

How properly to alleviate the troubles of the poor is one of the greatest troubles of the rich. But one thing agreed upon by all professional philanthropists is that you must never hand over any cash to your subject. The poor are notoriously temperamental, and when they get money they exhibit a strong tendency to spend it for stuffed olives and enlarged crayon portraits instead of giving it to the installment man.

And still old Haroun had some advantages as an eleemosynarian. He took around with him on his rambles his vizier, Giafar (a vizier is a composite of a chauffeur, a secretary of state and a night and day bank), and old Uncle Mesrour, his executioner, who toted a snickersnee. With this entourage a caliphing tour could hardly fail to be successful. Have you noticed lately any newspaper articles headed "What Shall We Do With Our Ex-presidents?" Well, now, suppose Mr. Carnegie should engage them and Jess Willard to go about assisting in the distribution of free libraries? Do you suppose any town would have the hardihood to refuse one? That caliphalous combination would cause two libraries to grow where there had been only one set of E. P. Roe's works before.

But, as I said, the money caliphs are handicapped. They have the idea that earth has no sorrow that dough cannot heal, and they rely upon it solely. Al Raschid administered justice, rewarded the deserving and punished whomsoever he disliked on the spot. He was the originator of the short story contest. Whenever he succored any chance pickup in the bazaars he always made the succoree tell the sad story of his life. If the narrative lacked construction, style and esprit he commanded his vizier to dole him out a couple of thousand ten dollar notes of the First National Bank of the Bosporus, or else gave him a soft job as Keeper of the Bird Seed for the Bulbuls in the Imperial Gardens. If the story was a crackerjack he had Mesrour, the executioner, whack off his head. The report that Haroun Al Raschid is yet alive and is editing the magazine that your grandmother used to subscribe for lacks confirmation.

And now follows the "Story of the Millionaire," "The Ineffacious Increment" and "The Babes Drawn From the Wood."

Young Howard Pilkins, the millionaire, got his money ornithologically. He was a shrewd judge of storks and got in on the ground floor at the residence of his immediate ancestors, the Pilkins Brewing company. For his mother was a partner in the business. Finally old man Pilkins died from a torpid liver, and then Mrs. Pilkins died from worry on account of torpid delivery wagons—and there you have young Howard Pilkins with $4,000,000, and a good fellow at that. He was an agreeable, modestly arrogant young man, who implicitly believed that money could buy anything that the world had to offer. And Bagdad-on-the-Subway for a long time did everything possible to encourage his belief.

But the rat trap caught him at last. He heard the spring snap and found his heart in a wire cage regarding a piece of cheese whose other name was Alice von der Ruysling.

The Von der Ruyslings still live in that little square about which so much has been said and in which so little has been done. Today you hear of Mr. Tilden's underground passage, and you hear Mr. Gould's elevated passage, and that about ends the noise in the world made by Gramercy square. But once it was different. The Von der Ruyslings live there yet, and they received the first key ever made to Gramercy park.

You shall have no description of Alice v. d. R. Just call up in your mind the picture of your own Maggie or Vera or Beatrice, straighten her nose, soften her voice, tone her down and then tone her up, make her beautiful and unattainable, and you have a faint dry point etching of Alice. The family owned a crumbly brick house and a coachman named Joseph in a coat of many colors, and a horse so old that he claimed to belong to the order of the Perissodactyla, and had toes instead of hoofs. In the year 1898 the family had to buy a new set of harness for the Perissodactyl. Before using it they made Joseph smear it over with a mixture of ashes and soot. It was the Von der Ruysling family that bought the territory between the Bowery and East river and Rivington street and the Statue of Liberty, in the year 1649, from an Indian chief for a quart of passementerie and a pair of Turkey red portieres designed for a Harlem flat. I have always admired that Indian's perspicacity and good taste. All this is merely to convince you that the Von der Ruyslings were exactly the kind of poor aristocrats that turn down their noses at people who have money—oh, well, I don't mean that; I mean people who have just money.

One evening Pilkins went down to the red brick house in Gramercy squire and made what he thought was a proposal to Alice v. d. R. Alice, with her nose turned down and thinking of his money, considered it a proposition and refused it and him. Pilkins, summoning all his resources as any good general would have done, made an indiscreet reference to the advantages that his money would provide. That

"My name is Pilkins and I'm worth several million dollars."

settled it. The lady turned so cold that Walter Wellman himself would have waited until spring to make a dash for her in a dog sled.

But Pilkins was something of a sport himself. You can't fool all the millionaires every time the ball drops on the Western Union building.

"If at any time," he said to A. v. d. R., "you feel that you would like to reconsider your answer send me a rose like that."

Pilkins audaciously touched a jack rose that she wore loosely in her hair.

"Very well," said she. "And when I do you will understand by it that either you or I have learned something new about the purchasing power of money. You've been spoiled, my friend. No; I don't think I could marry you. Tomorrow I will send you back the presents you have given me."

"Presents!" said Pilkins in surprise. "I never gave you a present in my life. I would like to see a full length portrait of the man that you would take a present from."

"You've forgotten," said Alice v. d. R., with a little smile. "It was a long time ago when our families were neighbors. You were seven, and I was trundling my doll on the sidewalk. You gave me a little gray, hairy kitten with shoebuttony eyes. Its head came off, and it was full of candy. You paid 5 cents for it—you told me so. I haven't the candy to return to you, I hadn't developed a conscience at three, so I ate it. But I have the kitten yet, and I will wrap it up neatly and send it to you tomorrow."

Beneath the lightness of Alice v. d. R.'s talk the steadfastness of her rejection showed firm and plain. So there was nothing left for him but to leave the crumbly red brick house and be off with his abhorred millions.

On his way back Pilkins walked through Madison square. The hour hand of the clock hung about 8. The air was stingingly cool, but not at the freezing point. The dim little square seemed like a great, cold, unroofed room, with its four walls of houses spangled with thousands of insufficient lights. Only a few loiterers were huddled here and there on the benches.

But suddenly Pilkins came upon a youth sitting brave and, as if conflicting with summer sultriness, coatless, his white shirt sleeves conspicuous in the light from the globe of an electric. Close at his side was a girl, smiling, dreamy, happy. Around her shoulders was, palpably, the missing coat of the cold defying youth. It appeared to be a modern panorama of the "Babes In the Wood," revised and brought up to date, with the exception that the robins hadn't turned up yet with the protecting leaves.

Pilkins sat on the bench, one seat removed from the youth. He glanced cautiously and saw (as men do see and women—oh, never can!) that they were of the same order.

Pilkins leaned over after a short time and spoke to the youth, who answered smilingly and courteously. From general topics the conversation concentrated to the bedrock of grim personalities. But Pilkins did it as delicately and heartily as any caliph could have done. And when it came to the point the youth turned to him, soft voiced and with his undiminished smile.

"I don't want to seem unappreciative, old man," he said, with a youth's somewhat too early spontaneity of address, "but, you see, I can't accept anything from a stranger. I know you're all right and I'm tremendously obliged, but I couldn't think of borrowing from anybody. You see, I'm Marcus Clayton—the Claytons of Roanoke county, Va., you know. The young lady is Miss Eva Bedford—I reckon you've heard of the Bedfords. She's seventeen and one of the Bedfords of Bedford county. We've eloped from home to get married and we want to see New York. We got in this afternoon. Somebody got my pocketbook on the ferryboat and I had only 3 cents in change outside of it. I'll get some work somewhere tomorrow and we'll get married."

"But, I say, old man," said Pilkins in confidential low tones, "you can't keep the lady out here in the cold all night. Now, as for hotels"—

"I told you," said the youth with a broader smile, "that I didn't have but 3 cents. Besides, if I had a thousand, we'd have to wait here until morning. You can understand that, of course. I'm much obliged, but I can't take any of your money. Miss Bedford and I have lived an outdoor life and we don't mind a little cold. I'll get work of some kind tomorrow. We've got a paper bag of cakes and chocolates and we'll get along all right."

"Listen," said the millionaire, impressively. "My name is Pilkins and I'm worth several million dollars. I happen to have in my pockets about $800 or $900 in cash. Don't you think you are drawing it rather fine when you decline to accept as much of it as will make you and the young lady comfortable at least for the night?"

"I can't say, sir, that I do think so," said Clayton of Roanoke county. "I've been raised to look at such things differently. But I'm mightily obliged to you, just the same."

"Then you force me to say good night," said the millionaire.

Twice that day had his money been scorned by simple ones to whom his dollars had appeared as but tin tobacco tags. He was no worshiper of the actual minted coin or stamped paper, but he had always believed in its almost unlimited power to purchase.

Pilkins walked away rapidly and then turned abruptly and returned to the bench where the young couple sat. He took off his hat and began to speak. The girl looked at him with the same sprightly, glowing interest that she had been giving to the lights and statuary and sky reaching buildings that made the old square seem so far away from Bedford county.

"Mr.—er—Roanoke," said Pilkins, "I admire your—your indepen—your idiocy so much that I'm going to appeal to your chivalry. I believe that's what you southerners call it when you keep a lady sitting outdoors on a bench on a cold night just to keep your old out of date pride going. Now, I've a friend—a lady—whom I have known all my life—who lives a few blocks from here—with her parents and sisters and aunts and all that kind of indorsement, of course. I am sure this lady would be happy and pleased to put up—that is, to have Miss—er—Bedford give her the pleasure of having her as a guest for the night. Don't you think, Mr. Roanoke of—er—Virginia, that you could unbend your prejudices that far?"

Clayton of Roanoke rose and held out his hand.

"Old man," he said, "Miss Bedford will be much pleased to accept the hospitality of the lady you refer to."

Pilkins conducted them to the crumbly red brick house of the Von der Ruyslings. His card brought Alice downstairs wondering.

"Of course I will take her in," said Alice. "Haven't those southern girls a thoroughbred air? Of course she will stay here. You will look after Mr. Clayton, of course."

"Will I?" said Pilkins delightedly. "Oh, yes, I'll look after him! As a citizen of New York and therefore a part owner of its public parks I'm going to extend to him the hospitality of Madison square tonight. He's going to sit there on a bench till morning. There's no use arguing with him. Isn't it wonderful? I'm glad you'll look after the little lady, Alice. I tell you those 'Babes in the Wood' made my—that is—er—made Wall street and the Bank of England look like penny arcades."

Miss von der Ruysling whisked Miss Bedford of Bedford county up to restful regions upstairs. When she came down she put an oblong small pasteboard box into Pilkins' hands.

"Your present, that I am returning."

"Your present," she said, "that I am returning to you."

"Oh, yes, I remember," said Pilkins, with a sigh, "the woolly kitten."

He left Clayton on a park bench and shook hands with him heartily.

"After I get work," said the youth, "I'll look you up. Your address is on your card, isn't it? Thanks. Well, good night. I'm awfully obliged to you for your kindness. No, thanks, I don't smoke. Good night."

In his room Pilkins opened the box and took out the staring, funny kitten, long ago ravaged of his candy and minus one shoe button eye. Pilkins looked at it sorrowfully.

"After all," he said, "I don't believe that just money alone will"—

And then he gave a shout and dug into the bottom of the box for something else that had been the kitten's resting place—a crushed but red, fragrant, glorious, promising Jacqueminot rose.

Washerwoman Says She Was Once British Society Woman

Minneapolis, Minn., March. 4.—When British government authorities came here today to seek Mrs. G. Lasher, the former British society woman and accepted habitue of nobility circles who was taking in washings here, they found her and her daughter, graduate of St. Mary's, vanished.

Mrs. Lasher's decline has been gradual. She is the daughter of the mayor of an English town, she said, and widow of a British army officer. In London, she, Lady Somerset and Princess Beatrice did social work together.

Upon the death of her husband, Mrs. Lasher discovered that she had no funds. Her husband's estate was tied up by British litigation. Members of the British nobility took her children. She came to Canada, thence into the states. Her eldest daughter found mother ties strongest and left her life of luxury to join her mother at the wash tub here.

British authorities, it is said, need Mrs. Lasher's signature to complete certain land deals, out of which she would get nothing. Fear that signing such papers would lead to other "complications," which she declines to discuss, she has evaded officers. In Seattle they sought her, but she donned working clothes and witnessed the Britishers' frantic efforts to find her. Her appearance had been very materially changed by her experiences. Publication of her story by a newspaper here brought authorities who found only the house from which she had moved.

Kings and Queens of the Fish World Flirting Their Tails In Chicago Today

Chicago, March 4.—Fish of all species were on exhibition here today as the Chicago Aquarium society sported its first real fish show. The show is being held in the art institute. It will end March 12. Fishermen from all over the world have contributed exhibits to the show. A tank of typical fish, each colored in all the delicate shades of the rainbow, formed the most attractive single collection. Fishermen are looking forward to an evening during the show, not yet set, when they will swap fish stories.

On his return from a tour in Malheur county and eastern Harney, H. J. Hansen, of Burns, told the Times Herald that he had had a ride on a train within the borders of Harney county and he believed he was the first Burns man to have ridden on a train in the county.

A Galley o' Fun!

MR. TODD TELLS A STORY

"That reminds me," observed Mr. Todd reminiscently, "of the story about the bluejay."

"It's clouding up outside," broke in Mrs. Todd, gazing absently through the parted curtains of the front window.

"It was when I was a boy," continued Mr. Todd musingly. "In those days boys wore knee breeches and went barefooted——"

"I do hope it doesn't rain!" exclaimed Priscilla Todd, moving about uneasily. "I wanted to go to the park this afternoon."

"My, how we hated to wash our feet at night!" murmured Mr. Todd, with a fond smile.

"Dad," inquired Sammy Todd, "what is it about the bluejay?"

"I'm coming to that, son. You see there was an old orchard out back of the house. My, such orchards we had in those days! Apples of all sorts and sizes—good apples, too! You never see such apples any more——"

"What's that got to do with the bluejay, dad?" bluntly asked Sammy.

"Don't be impatient, my boy. In this orchard there were a number of squirrels, which came over from a neighboring hickory grove. My, such squirrels as those were! Big, gray fellows, with long, bushy tails——"

Mrs. Todd yawned behind her hand and Priscilla picked up a copy of Vogue.

"We used to hunt squirrels frequently, and father never would allow me to bring one home until I had shot it through the head——"

"But the bluejay, dad! What about that?"

"Did I say bluejay, son? What was I thinking of? It wasn't a bluejay at all, but a crow—a big black crow."

"It is starting to rain," said Mrs. Todd, moving again to the window.

"Crows in those days were mischievious fellows. No such crows nowadays. They used to come to our orchard in big flocks——"

"Isn't there any bluejays at all in this story, dad?"

"No, son, it was a crow——"

"Isn't it mean that it has to rain?" mourned Priscilla. "Charlie Bangs was coming over for me, too!"

"In the hickory grove I mentioned," pursued Mr. Todd, "there were many hickory nuts. My, such hickory nuts as there were in those days! Bushels and bushels of them, just going to waste!"

"Dad, I don't want to hear this story if there is'nt a bluejay in it. I only wanted to know about the bluejay!"

"Well, perhaps it was a bluejay, after all, but it occurred to me it was a crow."

"There, my bread is burning!" wailed Mrs. Todd, rushing excitedly to the kitchen.

"Now, one day a big gray apple—I mean squirrel——"

"Oh, it's going to clear up cried Priscilla happily. "There is the telephone ringing. It must be Charlie!" She bounded quickly away.

"This big, black hickory nut—crow, I should say—came over into the hickory grove with its mouth full of apples—— Wait, son, I am not starting this correctly—it came over into the orchard with its beak full of hickory nuts——"

"A squirrel hasn't got a beak dad!"

"Certainly not—I'm talking about the bluejay now!"

"You said it was a crow, dad."

"Well, I changed it because you wanted it to be a bluejay!" Mr. Todd got up from his chair and walked impatiently about.

"Hurry up, dad, I haven't got much time. Mother, where are my boots? I want to go out and wade."

Patiently and slowly Mr. Todd renewed his narrative.

"This big gray apple came over into the hickory orchard and found a black bluejay quarreling with a flock of squir——"

"Here are your boots, Sammy!" called Mrs. Todd.

"At this the crow—I mean the bluejay—became angry——"

"Oh, good! Now I can go wading!"

"All right, son," said Mr. Todd amiably as Sammy dashed away. "I can finish the story some other time. I don't know as I can remember just how it goes, anyway."

AT THE LODGE INITIATION.

Not all the "nuts" fall from old family trees.

The world would make little progress if everybody feared to be considered a crank.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

THE TABLE.

Oysters in Baking Dish—Beat in egg with two tablespoons cold water, roll oysters in this and then in crumbs and place close together in baking dish. Season with salt and pepper, dot with butter and cut over all a few nice white leaves of celery tops. Put in oven until brown. Do not put lid on baking dish.

Porcupine Apples—Cook six apples in a syrup until tender, but not broken. Place on a dish and to one cup of syrup add one teaspoon of granulated gelatine. Pour over apples and when ready to serve and jelly is set decorate with whipped cream and bits of red jelly — use this as a sweet entree.

Sausafe Crullers—Use your own favorite cruller recipe and make a little softer than usual. Turn dough out on to a floured board into a roll, cut off finger lengths and drop into hot fat. They come out looking like sausages.

Belmont Salad—In a bed of lettuce arrange sections of canned pear. Between two sections put chopped beef; in center of pear put cooked bits of celery that have been marinated in boiled cream salad dressing. Use a sprinkling of nuts. Mayonnaise dressing may be used in addition to the marinated.

California Salad — One-third cup of sliced ripe olives, one-third cup broken English walnuts, two chopped hard cooked eggs, one pimento, boiled dressing and lettuce; mix olives, nuts, eggs and pimento just before serving; then mix with enough salad dressing to moisten and place on lettuce leaves.

Muffins — Two cups of flour, one-half teaspoon of salt, four teaspoons of baking powder, two tablespoons of sugar, two tablespoons melted butter, one cup of milk, one egg; sift together the dry ingredients; beat the egg, add the milk and melted butter; mix into the dry ingredients; fill well buttered muffin tins half full and bake in a moderate oven for twenty minutes.

Rice with Pimentos—Two and a half cups of cold boiled rice, one can of tomatoes, one small can pimentos, one teaspoon of sugar, one minced onion, two teaspoons of salt, pepper, two tablespoons butter, one-half cup dry bread crumbs; add salt, pepper, sugar and onion to the tomatoes; spread a layer of tomatoes in a buttered baking dish, then a layer of rice and sprinkle some of the pimentoes, chopped; dot with a little butter; repeat until the dish is filled; sprinkle the top with bread crumbs mixed with a tablespoon of the butter. Bake about forty-five minutes in a moderate oven.

An Economy Stunt — Use the tomato bisque left from luncheon to prepare a delicious baked macaroni for dinner. Use the tops and coarser parts of the celery served at dinner to flavor a bisque for luncheon. (For a greater variety save the bisque till next day.)

Tomato Bisque—Boil together fifteen minutes one can of tomatoes, a small sliced onion, the tops and waste parts of a stalk of celery and one olive. Press through a sieve when well cooked. In a sauce pan melt a tablespoon of butter and stir in one tablespoon of cornstarch. When smooth add a pint of rich milk or cream. Season with salt and cayenne. Just before ready to serve add the hot strained tomato and stir until evenly mixed Serve with salted wafers.

Baked Macaroni — Boil one-half pound cut macaroni for twenty minutes in salted water; then pour into a colander and let cold water run through it; butter a baking dish and put a layer of macaroni on the bottom, then a layer of thinly sliced cheese, then more macaroni, etc., until the dish is nearly filled; on top put a layer of cracked crumbs and then pour oer one and a half cups of the tomato bisque saved from luncheon; place thin slices of cheese on top and bake in a moderate oven twenty minutes; the top should be a delicious brown.

Apple Sauce—Cook tart apples without too much water; then press through a sieve, sweeten to taste and add a few drops of lemon extract. Sprinkle the top lightly with ground cinnamon.

Lady Fingers — Six eggs, 1 1-4 cups powdered sugar, one cup sifted flour, one-eighth teaspoon salt, one-half teaspoon vanilla. Beat yolk and sugar to light cream, stir in flour, fold in beaten white (do not stir after adding whites). Bake in quick oven.

Angel Pudding — One cup granulated sugar, two eggs beaten light, four tablespoons flour, one teaspoon baking poyder, one cup chopped dates, one cup English walnut meats (chopped), one teaspoon vanilla. Bake in moderate oven thirty minutes. Serve with whipped cream.

CUPID OUTDOES THE SPEED FIEND

Chicago, March 4.—Louis Disbrow, famous automobile racer and Miss Harriet Henry will be married at the home of the bride here today. With the taking of the nuptial vows, Disbrow's racing career ends, Miss Henry persuaded the speedster to quit the track. Disbrow will operate an auto salesroom in Cleveland.

Snowbound Indians Starving—One Goes Insane and Is Buried Alive

Winnipeg, Man., March 4.—Eighty Indians snowbound in the extreme north of Saskatchewan, near Waterhen Lake, today face insanity and starvation. Authorities admit their inability to reach the marooned men until the coming warm weather. Snows there this year have been heavier than since 1896. One member of the tribe was buried alive when he went insane. One straggler managed to get through the drifts to a telegraph wire, but efforts of relief parties to follow him back failed completely.

Without ammunition, nets, traps or blankets, the Indians' plight is pitiable. Digging through six or eight feet of ice to get fish is nearly impossible. Four Months, a member of the tribe, went insane from lack of food and shelter. His tribesmen, knowing of nothing better to do, buried him. An educated healer in the tribe heard of this and dug up his unbalanced fellow tribesman.