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Mid-Summer Clearance Sale

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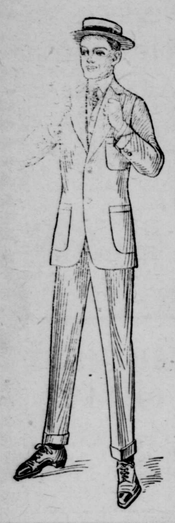

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A SNARL IN THE ROPE

Trifling Incident Produces an Astonishing Effect

By EUGENE A. VOGT

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We believe it is generally conceded that the two most trying occupations in life are editor of a newspaper and husband of a society leader. Galdorf Johnson, our hero—for a man must needs be a hero to essay so much—was doing his level best to be both. He was the editor of the Pillingsby Banner and wedded to the chief runner-up of the social game of that thriving little city.

He came home one evening and found his wife using a dainty duchess lace handkerchief as a strainer for a torrent of scalding tears. In answer to his solicitous inquiry as to the cause of her palpable distress she uttered an almost incoherent sob and pointed a well manicured finger toward the rear of the house.

He followed the direction of the digit until he came into the kitchen, where he discovered Fricka, their Scandinavian hired girl, engaged in a warm tussle with an ancient and imperishable carpet bag.

"What's the matter?" he asked, his voice full of anxious foreboding.

"I bane gone quit yob by you," advised the perspiring daughter of Thor, "an' gone tak' yob by Missus Widders."

"She says she is going to work for Lucy Withers," he said huskily, as if some one were dead near by, when he returned to his wife.

"Yes," she replied brokenly. "That woman has got her away from me at last."

"Never mind, dear," he soothed. "We'll have dinner downtown tonight, and tomorrow I'll run a display want ad. in the Banner and by noon I'll send you a battalion of girls."

But Mrs. Johnson's wound was too deep for salve.

"Don't be brutal, Galdorf," she remonstrated between sobs. "If you had the least scintilla of love for me you would understand that that isn't it."

The editor's wife let it be known that she had finally and inexorably determined on open warfare with the mayoress ("that Withers woman," to quote Mrs. Johnson's own succinct appellation instead of the state of high society, sugar coated enmity hitherto maintained by these two ladies.

The alluring of Fricka was the last straw, the stray wavelet to wash asunder the rope of sand which had held the two competitors together for the

"FRED, DON'T YIELD AN INCH TO THAT WOMAN'S HUSBAND."

last four years of their grim struggle for social supremacy.

Why do women ask the fruitless privilege to vote when Mrs. Johnson can say to her lord, the mighty owner and editor of the Banner, "Galdorf, I want you to hammer the administration of Fred Withers with the biggest and broadest ax you have," and Johnson hastens to comply, and Mrs. Withers murmurs to her 290 pound husband, the redoubtable mayor of the municipality, "Fred, don't yield an inch to that woman's husband," and he yields to the editor not the breadth of a hair?

When the first veiled attack on his administration appeared in the Banner Withers read it with great surprise. But when he reached home that night and told his wife about the sudden change in the Banner's editorial policy that lady enlightened him forcibly.

"That wife of his is behind this, Fred," she exclaimed resentfully. "Just because Fricka cousin stand it no longer with her and came to work for me, she gets that henpecked husband of hers to attack you in his rag of a paper. Don't you budge an inch."

"Budge!" bellowed the mayor. "I—budge! Catch me allowing a woman to run me!"

The next morning a stronger editorial met the mayor's expectant and defiant eye. After he had read it he crushed the paper in his big fist and rammed it into the waste basket.

"All right, Sally Johnson," he muttered vindictively; "then it's war."

Later in the day he dictated a bristling statement to the Herald, the opposition evening paper. When the editor of the Banner read that statement blazoned on the front page of the scurrilous sheet he gurgled joyously:

"Bully! All right, Lucy Withers, you shall have all the fight you want."

From being one of the most popular of the chief magistrates of his state's cities Withers became one of the most hated and despised. The few that stuck to him were impelled to loyalty only by the patronage he bestowed.

Among the latter Dennis Finnegan, the janitor of the city hall, was the most outspoken. For twenty-eight days of each month (except February, when it was only twenty-six) Finnegan was the best janitor the city hall ever had, but for the other days of the month—the two or three immediately following pay day—he was the worst possible. In fact, on these days he was no janitor at all except for the empty title.

Thus, in the heat of the fight, when the Banner was roaring its loudest, we find Finnegan descanting to an attentive audience in Schlegel's saloon on the woeful state of dilapidation to which this shameless administration had allowed the rope on the city hall flagstaff to sink.

"Ye're taxpayers an' ye're citizens," he declared rhetorically, "an' ye have the right to know, an' I'm a free man an' a friend of the peepul, even if I am a janitor. That rope, gents, is goin' to the devil. I done my duty by the peepul of the city; I asked Fred Withers for a new rope. An' what does he say, fellows an' citizens? He says there ain't no 'propriation."

He paused to empty his glass and resumed sarcastically:

"I'll bet a new hat if the trolley company or the gas company or anny of them other robbers wanted somethin' he'd fall all over himself tryin' to find a way to get it. It's a shame, gents, the way he knuckles down to them Wall street, New York, interests and neglects that there rope. It allus was a good rope until Withers started monkeyin' with them money barrens. Wan of these fine days there'll be a lot of trouble about this same rope; you see if it don't."

Too forceful to bend, Withers kept up the uneven battle until something had to break. Something did break in the stillness of a night—his health. The next day the mayor left Pillingsby.

The true reason—a sudden nervous breakdown—was announced as the cause of the mayor's departure, but the ensuing editorial in the Banner came nearer voicing the general opinion held by the community.

It announced that Withers was pretending illness and had gone east really for the purpose of consulting his Wall street masters and learn how he might further serve them.

The next day the Banner printed a dispatch from Asbury Park announcing that the mayor of Pillingsby, accompanied by his wife, two daughters and his private secretary, was stopping at one of the most fashionable and expensive hotels at that resort, and another sizzling editorial appeared, roundly condemning the mayor's ostentatious display.

The following day the mother of the mayor's private secretary received a letter from her son advising her confidentially that Mr. Withers was a very sick man and would have to stay in Asbury Park for some time. The old lady told not a soul except her bosom friend, the wife of the editor of the Banner.

The latter lady kept the news a profound and guilty secret from every one except her husband, to whom she went for consolation. But the latter snorted contemptuously when he heard the tidings and commanded his wife to tell no one else of this palpable plot to create sympathy.

The morning after the editor's wife had apprised her husband of the alleged alarming state of Mr. Withers' health Dennis Finnegan got up bright and early to make an attempt to raise the city hall flag.

He pulled at the rope. Suddenly he felt that the rope would pull no more and, with a satisfied grunt at the accomplishment of this duty, he fastened its end and went forth on his joyous rounds.

When Galdorf Johnson reached the square that morning he found a large assemblage of Pillingsby's best citizenship and its clerks and stenographers gathered in the park, each craning his or her neck and gazing skyward. Following the direction of Pillingsby's concentrated stare, the editor looked up at the city hall tower, and his horrified eyes fell on the flag: It flew at half mast.

"Good heavens!" he gasped involuntarily. "He's dead!"

"Who's dead?" inquired a haberdasher standing next to Johnson.

"Gee," murmured the editor, unhearing, "I had no idea he was as sick as that!"

"Who are *you* talking about, Gal?" demanded the haberdasher. "The president, the gover— You don't mean—Holy smoke! It's Fred Withers!"

Johnson nodded, stunned by his overwhelming emotions, and hurried away. The haberdasher did the rest.

Wildfire is a lazy smoke compared with the rapidity which news thus started spreads. Ten minutes after the editor's gaping mouth had uttered its first ejaculation all of Pillingsby knew that it was mayorless. A great sense of bereavement fell on the community.

When the editor of the Banner arrived at his establishment he rushed into his sanctum and locked the door behind him. A strain of tender recollections pervaded his thoughts like a melody of past and happy days, but clever quips from his recent diatribes constantly obtruded and jangled harshly—those same bon mots that had sounded so keen and witty only yesterday. Heavens! How could he—how could any man—for any conceivable reason or motive write as he had written about a man like Fred Withers?

Where had been his heart—the same heart which just now seemed to be trying to thump a hole through his breast—where could that heart have been all these days and months while he was writing these things of big, fat, wholesome Fred Withers?

He sobbed like a woman and roared like a man as a knock at the door disturbed him. With the knock came the piping voice of the "devil:"

"A wire for you, Mr. Johnson."

The editor rose angrily. Why must some fool telegraph him while his soul is engaged in writing the obituary of his good old friend Fred Withers?

He opened the door and viciously snatched the message from the boy's

HERE'S THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE RAISED A WARNING FIST.

hand and slammed himself back into solitude. He threw the offending message on the desk without opening it and fell to his task with fresh vigor. Nothing must be permitted to disturb him. He had a great deal to atone for. Nothing—not even his pride—must intervene. So he sat and wrote for a full half hour—his soul in every word. At last he read the copy with a sense of gratification mingled with a feeling of intense regret.

"If just Fred Withers could read this!" he muttered chokingly.

Then his eyes fell on the yellow envelope with which the devil had disturbed him. He picked it up and ripped it open, still spiteful at its intermeddling. Then he stared at it for a long time, and then—he laughed.

"Dear Gal," read the message, "my wife just received a telegram from yours condoling on my death. I have stood about all I am going to stand from you, and if you print my obituary ahead of time I shall slap the libel law on you. Fred Withers."

Johnson thrust the message into his pocket as some one again knocked at the door.

"Who is it?" he asked petulantly.

"It's me, Gal—Bates."

Bates, president of the board of aldermen and mayor pro tem., entered as Johnson opened the door.

"Well," puffed Bates, "I suppose you've heard the news?"

"Yes, but don't congratulate yourself too soon," snapped the editor.

"Me! Why not?"

"Because Fred Withers isn't dead."

"Oh, we know that," returned Bates placidly. "That doesn't make any difference."

"Doesn't make any difference! Why?"

"Because Fred has just wired his resignation."

Johnson gasped. Bates fixed him with his most determined eye.

"And I want to tell you one thing, Gal Johnson," resumed Bates belligerently, "before we start. I'm mayor of this burg now. Understand?"

Here the chief magistrate of Pillingsby raised a warning fist.

"And if you ever print anything about me like you have about Fred Withers I'll wring your blamed neck for you!"

"Bates," replied the editor earnestly, "don't imagine that you have frightened me, because you haven't. But of this I solemnly assure you: I'll never write any stuff like that I wrote about Fred Withers about any living man—or dead one either. And now congratulations, and excuse me. This is one of my very busy days."

Two days later a convalescing statesman sat on the veranda of a fashionable hotel at Asbury Park, perusing his own obituary with moist and bulging eyes.

"What are you reading, dear?" asked his plump and rosy wife.

"I'm reading a letter from the ablest liar in Christendom," replied Fred Withers as he tenderly folded the manuscript and placed it in the inner pocket of his coat.

JUSTICE AND LUNCHEON.

They Seemed to Clash a Trifle, So the Court Made a Change.

It was formerly the practice of the supreme court to sit from 12 noon until 4 o'clock continuously on each day that it was in session. From time to time, as the afternoon progressed, the justices, one or two at a time, would slip out of their seats, snatch a bite of luncheon and return. Sometimes as many as four or five of them would be off the bench at once. They usually had their luncheon brought to them by their messengers and ate it in the little curtained recess behind the bench, and as the argument progressed there could be plainly heard in the courtroom the clink of knife and fork on plate and what O. Henry has called "the crash of dishes on the American plan."

One day a lawyer pleading a case made bold to enter a protest. He most solemnly inquired if he could count upon the continuous and undivided attention of even one justice to the thread of his argument. "The personnel of the court has been twice entirely changed since I began," he said plaintively.

The court deigned no response, but on the following Monday it was announced from the bench that a recess for luncheon thereafter would be taken every day from 2 to 2:30 o'clock and that the court would sit until 4:30 o'clock every afternoon. — World's Work.

CHIEF BACON RIND.

Maybe He Was an Indian, but One Man Thought He Wasn't.

Not long ago the Oklahoma Editorial association visited Pawhuska, which is the capital of the Osage Indians. The Indians put on a corn dance for the editors, and everybody had a good time. The editors elected Pete Duffy, mayor of El Reno, Okla., for their chief, and the time came for an interchange of views between the Indian chief, Bacon Rind, and the editorial chief, Mayor Duffy.

The Osages are the richest Indians in the world. There are but 2,000 members of the tribe, and they have some $10,000,000 on deposit in Washington in the treasury on which they draw interest. They own 1,500,000 acres of land, and each member of the tribe gets a good sized sum each year in oil royalties from a company that operates in their territory.

Chief Bacon Rind talks little English, and his remarks were interpreted by a brave, who talks but little more. However, the editors got the trend of the chief's speech. He said he advocated happiness on the part of his people, and for this reason he was sternly opposed to manual labor by any Osage brave. In his opinion no man could be really happy who had to work, and, as the Osages are rich, if any work is to be done it is easy enough to hire white men to do it.

When Chief Bacon Rind concluded his address Duffy said to the interpreter: "Have the old boy slip it to me how he does it. What is his recipe that permits his tribe to live like kings while we editors have to chase our meals after working eighteen hours a day? Tell him that, as chief of the editors, I am crazy to get his recipe, and ask him what he thinks about dividing with me. Just ask him if he will not split up with a brother chief who knows all about the high cost of living?"

The interpreter had some difficulty in transmitting Duffy's talk to the chief, but finally the chief understood and replied through the interpreter as follows:

"He say he like Chief Duffy and welcome him. He like his talk—yes. He believe in dividing—yes. Use to be Indian he take buzzard and white man he take turkey, or white man he take turkey and Indian he take buzzard. He say he divide with Meester Duffy. He say he take bacon and give rind to Meester Duffy, or Meester Duffy take rind and he, big chief, take bacon—yes."

"Huh!" said Duffy when the interpreter had finished. "That old sport isn't an Indian, he's a Kansan."—Saturday Evening Post.

FACE TO FACE WITH A LION.

It Took All This Woman's Nerve to Pass the Ordeal in Safety.

Few women can be so familiar with the king of the wilderness as Mrs. Fred Maturin (Edith Cecil-Porch), whose "Adventures Beyond the Zambesi" contain many thrilling lion tales.

One evening she met a lion in a forest of impenetrable brass. She was quite alone—her gun bearer, Lang Wan, having disappeared two miles from camp.

"Through the long, dry grass a large male lion stood gazing at me. * * * I stood as still as he. All my blood appeared to rush to my head. I could not have stirred had I wished to. I stood still. I don't think I even breathed or that my heart gave one faint beat for some seconds. * * * I must stand quite, quite still, and stare back. * * * It was perhaps my only chance."

In all her terror she was conscious of the animal's great beauty. She watched him draw a step or two back: "I thought he was about to spring, but I took care not to move, mastering my terrible but fatal instinct to turn and run. Then he dropped his head * * * and with obvious fear slunk quickly away." That was at Dam river.

GERMAN "KURS."

They Are Not "Cures," Though Sometimes Translated as Such.

Many newspapers are hasty in announcing the discovery in Germany of some method of treatment more or less new, and not infrequently information is given the public through the failure to keep in mind the actual meaning of one little word. The German word "kur" does not mean "cure," although it is not an uncommon thing to find it so translated into English.

"To cure" in English means "to restore to health, to effect a cure," but in other languages it means merely to apply "a method of remedial treatment of disease, medical or hygienic care, method of medical treatment." The German word for "restoration to health" is "heilung," not "kur."

The Latin word "cura" means merely "care," a shade of meaning which is preserved in the derived term "curator." An Italian physician was recently made to say, when his article was translated into English, "I cured ten typhoid patients last month, and six of them died." What he really said was that he had treated ten patients. —From the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The Nervous Laugh—A Theatrical Test

In "The Spirit of Paris" Mr. Frankfort Summerville has an interesting chapter on the theater in Paris, including that curiosity of Paris, the Grand Guignol—a theater that was originally a church—and the "creepiness" of its art. The little, highly dramatic Grand Guignol plays "are chosen for their power of acting upon the nerves," and the acting usually being superb, they never fail in their effect. A perceptible wave of nervousness communicates itself through the audience; some people begin to gigle in a perturbed manner, there is a tense silence broken by a scream or two or an exclamation, and then an 'Ouf!' of relief." "When I hear one or two nervous laughs," M. Brizard, one of the cleverest of the Grand Guignol actors, told me, "I know I have succeeded. I work up my effects to get that nervous laughter."