

'THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT.'

(From the Dundee 'News'.)

Ye may gang East an' West, ye may gang North and South,
Ye may gang tae the farthestmaist spot,
An' ye'll find lika plum stickin' fast tae the thumb,
O' some pawky, 'unspeakable Scot.'

He thrives in Hongkong, an' he thrives in Japan,
An' he thrives amang icebergs an' snaw;
Should ye ca' upon Mars, gosh! yer greetin' wad be—
O' hullo, Tammy Tamson, hoo's a'?

If ye want tae find brains, perseverance an' grit,
Wi' guid sense keepin' guard ower the lot,
Ye'll find there the hall-mark, without e'er a doot,
O' ilk sturdy, 'unspeakable Scot.'

There's a Scot at the helm o' the braw ship o' state,
Mang the crew mony clansmen there be;
An' aune noo anither 'unspeakable Scot'!
Will be ruler o' England's High Sea.

The Story of Shylock II.

I.

The clerks in our office decided today that the story of Shylock II. must be given to the world. It was also agreed that the literary part of the work must be done by me, Jack Slade, because last year I won a silver watch in a competition, by guessing almost exactly the number of peas in a bottle.

Well, to begin with, four years ago Harry Heywood was the best-liked fellow in our office. Four months ago he was the best-hated man in the place.

This loss of popularity was entirely due to himself. From a bright, cheerful kind of a chap, up to no end of larks and always impetuous between pay-days, he became a quiet, miserable-looking beggar and a regular miser. Young Baines—awfully clever youngster, by-the-by—says that a miser is the most unselfish of all men, because he denies himself all his life for the sake of his heirs.

But, anyhow, you can understand that Heywood gradually ceased to be a favorite with us. Some one christened him Shylock II., and the name stuck to him like a leech.

We know for a fact that he lived in lodgings and had not a relation in the world, so that the venerable yarn about supporting a poor old mother and a bundle of sisters wouldn't answer in this case. It was also known that he had been engaged to be married, but no one had seen him with the girl for a long time—several years. The most plausible explanation was that a broken engagement had soured his heart and turned him into a misanthrope.

His clothes were worn to the very last stage of shabbiness. It was five years since he had had a new overcoat, and as for gloves, they were extinct altogether.

And yet, somehow, most of us liked him, although we were ashamed to admit it. There was something so sad about his face. Not that I or anyone else ever heard him complain; he'd too much grit for that.

And as for his miserly habits, we couldn't think they were adopted for his own benefit, otherwise what became of the money he saved, and why did he spend so little on his clothes and food?

Of course, I'm arguing these matters now in his favor, but at that time the opinion of the fellows was entirely hostile. I think we were all inclined to imagine the poor chap could have justified himself, but he never tried to do so, and perhaps that turned us against him; and after a while we had drifted so far apart that no one in the office spoke to him except about business. How he stood it I don't know. I expect he felt bad sometimes, but he gave no sign, except that he seemed to grow thinner and shabbier every day. But all this time he must have been saving nearly a hundred pounds a year out of his princely income of one hundred and fifty.

II.

One evening I had to meet a train at Blucher Street Station. You know what an old rabbit-warren of a place it is, so you will understand how I only found the platform at the last minute. The porter told me it was No. 7, and so I fixed myself there with a cigar so as to impress the girl favorably when she looked for me as the train came in.

I struck a grand attitude and hung on to it until the train stopped. The guard skipped out of his van, and just to make certain I asked him if he had come from Clapham.

"Not exactly," he answered; "this is the South Coast express."

"Oh!" I said, and looked round for the porter who had accepted my twopence on false pretences.

The next moment I forgot all about everything else in the shock of seeing Shylock II. He was shaking hands with a fellow who had just come in by the train. They walked down the platform together as friendly as could be, and when I saw the other man's face you could have knocked me down with a feather. He had formerly been employed by our firm as lift man, but was discharged for making bets with the clerks in the office. He used to "make a book" on every race in the year except the human race, and that, he said, was too uncertain to bet about.

I felt downright sorry at seeing these two together. The instinct that had told me Heywood was saving for some straightforward purpose oozed out of me at once on receiving such a squeeze as this.

It seemed such a pity to think that a fellow

of his age should be so irretrievably entangled. A slave to gambling, a mere low-class plunger! But it couldn't be so; there must be a better explanation. I was trying to think out some excuse for him all the way out of the station. As for the girl, I forgot all about her, and that's the truth.

Half-way across Waterloo Bridge I collided with a chap who was staring miserably down at the river. And when he turned round I saw to my amazement that it was the very man who was troubling my thoughts.

"Looking at the river?" I said, trying to speak in a friendly tone.

"Yes," he answered, drearily; "it flows very smoothly, doesn't it?"

"Why, yes, I suppose it does. But, look here, Shy—Heywood, what's the use of being such a miserable sort as you are? Look at me; I've far more troubles than you, and yet you don't catch me moping."

"If you've more troubles than I have," he cried, passionately, "then may heaven help you!" and he turned away to the river again, and his head dropped miserably on his chest.

"While there's life there's hope," I said, trying to cheer him up, "and however bad your luck is, it's better than despair. That would be a miserable game. It would simply be admitting you were beaten."

"And I am almost beaten," he groaned. "Four years have I fought and done the best that could be done, and now the end is closing in and the odds are all against me, and in three days from now—Oh!" He shivered from head to foot as he spoke, and clutched me by the arm. "Look here, Slade, I think you're a kind-hearted fellow. Come and spend this evening at my lodgings. Come and talk to me or I shall go mad. The suspense is killing me."

It was now or never with him. "You mean you are killing yourself," I said, sternly; "as for the end coming in three days from now, that's impossible while you hold on to your situation."

He stared in such a pitiful, astonished way that it almost unnerved me.

"What do you mean?" he said, quietly.

"I mean that if you will give up this gambling you've the best part of your life, and a happy life, before you. And if you'll promise me to give up gambling I'll help you in any way you like, except with money, and that I don't possess."

This time I'd touched him up, and no mistake. His face was as white as chalk and his eyes fairly blazed. And yet the poor beggar was so weak after his years of semi-starvation that he had to hold on to the bridge, he trembled so much. But I stood firm and waited for his reply. And when it came I believe I felt more shaky than he did himself.

"I'm sorry to have troubled you," he said, quietly enough. "You misunderstood me, but I ought to get used to that after four years. Goodnight."

"But how have I misunderstood you?" I cried. "You live on a third of your salary, you meet and are friendly with a professional gambler, you talk of the odds being all against you, and of ruin coming in three days. The Derby is run three days from now—"

"Good-night," he said again. "You are mistaken, but no matter. I will ask for no more sympathy. Good-night."

He turned and hurried away, and I spent the rest of that evening alternately patting myself on the back for my firmness and then wondering whether we were all wrong in our opinion of Shylock II.

III.

The next day he did not turn up at business, nor for many days after. When a week had gone by I became anxious, and looked up his address in our book at the office.

I went round that evening, and a miserable little place it was, away up four flights of stairs, at the top of a dreary old house in one of the poorest suburbs of the City.

I tapped at the door gently, whilst all manner of sympathy and pity tore through my heart. Gambler or no gambler, he was down on his luck and should be tenderly treated. And as I reached out to seize the handle the door was suddenly opened from the inside, and Jones, the betting man, stood before me.

I felt savage, and told him so before entering the room. But he only shrugged his shoulders as though indifferent to anything I might say about himself. And I believe the silly ass had been crying. His eyes were all red and swollen.

Heywood was sitting up in bed, propped with pillows. The doctor was by his side, and a motherly-looking woman, the landlady, stood staring at the fire. And her eyes were red and swollen too.

But if I dwell on things like this you'll never know the end of this story, so I'd better go straight on and get it done.

Poor old Shylock smiled faintly when he saw me. "It's good of you to come," he said, after our last meeting."

"How about the suspense—the three days?" I asked.

"It's over now," he said, and his thin, white hand patted the counterpane gently.

"Did you know I was engaged to be married," he said, presently, "about four years ago?"

"Yes, I had heard so," I muttered, huskily.

"We were to have been married that summer," he continued, gazing through the window as though he spoke to himself; "but Bertha was seized with illness—some spinal disease. The doctor said her only chance was to go into a certain home for a few years, but that it would cost a lot of money, as she was not eligible for free treatment."

He stopped speaking for a moment, for his breathing was difficult. And my eyes were red and swollen now, as I knelt by the bedside.

"We managed it," he said, quietly, in a minute or two, "and she seemed to be getting better. I got Jones a place as attendant at the home, and he used to bring me news of my poor girl. Then the doctor said that if she would undergo an operation she might be cured almost at once. It was a very dangerous operation, and painful; but she agreed and it was fixed for three days later."

She died this morning," he added, with just a quiver in his voice, and his thin hand trembled.

I don't know exactly what happened next or how I got out of the room, but I wasn't the only idiot next morning at the office. Poor old Shylock never really recovered his health, but we did our best to make up for our past unkindness, and I think the dear old chap understood.—Tit-Bits.

Beauty's Seven Nurses.

Don't forget that the nurses of a woman's beauty are seven—fresh air, sunshine, warmth, rest, sleep, food and whatever stirs the blood, be it exercise or enthusiasm.

Don't neglect sleep. You can sleep yourself into good looks. A long nap and a hot bath will make any woman more attractive, and lift years from her shoulders.

Don't eat when tired, don't work when tired. It is a mistake to work when not in fit condition—bad for the work and worse for you.

Don't miss your "beauty sleep." It is a mistake to go to bed late at night, rise at daybreak, and imagine that every hour taken from sleep is an hour gained.

Don't give unnecessary time to a certain established routine of housework, when it could be much more profitably spent in rest and recreation.

Don't sit down to table as soon as you come in from work, or a round of social duties. Lie down, or sit down for ten minutes, waiting until you can partake of your dinner with the physical machinery rested and refreshed.

Don't bathe in hard water. Soften it with a little powdered borax, or a handful of oatmeal.

Don't bathe the face while it is very warm or very cold.

Don't wash the face when traveling, unless it is with a little alcohol and water or a little cold cream.

Don't attempt to remove dust with cold water. Give the face a hot bath with soap, and then rinse thoroughly with clear tepid or cold water.

Don't rub the face with too coarse a towel. Treat it as you would the finest porcelain, tenderly and delicately.

Don't be afraid of sunshine and fresh air. They offer you bloom and color.

Don't forget that hearty laughter is a source of relaxation. So are all high thoughts, as those of hope, beauty, trust and love.

Don't forget that beauty is power. There is nothing more potent. It is to a woman what capital is to a merchant. Its absence is a misfortune; its culture wise and proper.

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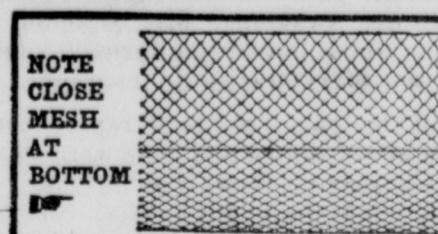
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