

THE TONE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

(By Crawford Sherlock.)

"It's simply outrageous," declared Mrs. Bagby emphatically. "To think that such people should have moved to West Park is just awful!"

"It's worse when you live opposite them," mourned Mrs. Pratt. "I saw that detestable man sitting on his porch last night in his shirt sleeves smoking a miserable clay pipe."

"That isn't all," chimed in Mrs. Waters, who managed to gain more information about her neighbors doings than anyone else in West Park. "His wife actually scrubbed the porch this afternoon in full view of everyone. I saw this Mr. Smith—I believe that's his name—grooming his own horse this morning. They're just common people, that's all they are, not to have servants to do these things."

"I wish Mr. Elder had not sold them his cottage," deplored Mrs. Bagby. "I didn't think he would let any but nice people have it. It's a shame to ruin our property this way."

"Much Mr. Elder cared," retorted Mrs. Waters scornfully. "He got his price for the cottage; that's all he wanted. Something must be done or the tone of the neighborhood will be lowered."

Mrs. Pratt and Mrs. Bagby were of the same opinion, but they could make no suggestion as to how relief could be afforded. At this moment the topic of conversation, Mr. James Smith, who had recently occupied a cottage in the fashionable suburb of West Park, drove past the house of Mrs. Bagby in a runabout. He was a short, stout, red-faced man, wearing an exceedingly loud suit of clothes and an air of indifference to the opinion of the world.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," remarked Mrs. Pratt, who, on account of her proximity to the objectionable neighbor, was more anxious for his removal from West Park. "We'll buy the Elder cottage from this man and sell it to some desirable person. We will have to pay more than it's worth and sell it at a loss, but it's better to lose a little than to have our homes ruined. We'll get some of the other residents to join with us and the share of each will not be much."

"But it will take a great deal of money," objected Mrs. Waters. "Who will advance such a sum?"

"I will," declared Mrs. Pratt, who was a widow of ample means. "All I want is for everyone to stand by me and pay a proportion of whatever loss we have. It won't be much if it is divided between so many. The men shan't have anything to do with it; they'd get someone to buy the cottage who wouldn't be any better than this Smith is."

Having been promised the required support, Mrs. Pratt, accompanied by Mrs. Bagby and Mrs. Waters, waited upon Mr. James Smith with the purpose of purchasing the Elder Cottage. As the ladies approached the house Mr. Smith, who was sitting upon the porch in his shirt sleeves, arose and greeted them cordially as he knocked the ashes from his clay pipe.

"Just take seats on the porch; it's cooler out here. Wait a minute and I'll call Marthy."

"Horrid creatures," murmured Mrs. Waters as Mr. Smith disappeared in search of his wife. "He thinks we have come to make a social call."

Marthy, in response to her husband's vigorous calls, speedily made her appearance and the party was soon comfortably seated upon the porch.

"Ahem! Mr. Smith," began Mrs. Pratt, somewhat awkwardly after politely declining Mr. Smith's urgent request for the removal of the visitors' hats, "we've come upon a matter of business."

"Jim'll be glad to do anything he can for you," observed Marthy, assuringly. "He's the most accommodatingest man in the world. Always likes to be friendlylike."

"That's so, mem," asserted Mr. Smith affably. "Let's hear what your business is, mem."

"You're very comfortably fixed here, Mr. Smith," continued Mrs. Pratt, "and I don't know just how to tell you. There are some people very anxious to buy this house and they would be willing to pay you something over what was paid for it. It won't make much difference to you, as you have no children and one place is as good as another."

"As to children, mem," responded Mr. Smith thoughtfully, "there will be five of them down here next week. Twasn't right to bring 'em till we got things fixed up a bit."

Consternation reigned in the breasts of the visitors. Five little Smiths running wild in West Park! There wouldn't be a whole pane of glass in the place in two week. The necessity for getting rid of the Smith family was greater than before.

"We will give you two hundred and fifty dollars more than you paid for the property," offered Mrs. Pratt in a businesslike tone. "That will be a good profit in so short a time. Will you take it?"

"Couldn't think of it, mem," returned the affable Mr. Smith. "I wouldn't pay for the expense of moving both ways."

"Will you take five hundred?"

Mr. Smith had never moved in good society, but he was nevertheless a man of keen judgment. A faint smile appeared around the corners of his rather large mouth, and his gray eyes twinkled merrily.

"This place was for sale a long time before Mr. Elder sold it, warn't it, mem?" he questioned, eyeing Mrs. Pratt closely. "It's a pity your folks didn't buy then."

"They didn't want the house then," replied Mrs. Pratt evasively. "Will you take the five hundred, Mr. Smith?"

"Then there's two or three houses in West Park, just as good as this one, that can be bought for the price this 'ere cottage cost," continued Mr. Smith, not heeding Mrs. Pratt's question. "I can't quite make it out, mem, unless—"

"Unless what?" demanded Mrs. Pratt, not relishing the searching glance Mr. Smith fixed upon her.

"Unless, mem," continued Mr. Smith slowly, "you don't sorter think me and Marthy good enough for West Park and want to get rid of us."

"Oh, Mr. Smith!" demurred the three visitors in chorus, but the telltale flush on their cheeks betrayed the consternation that had been wrought by the unexpected words.

"What makes you think such a thing?"

"Well, ladies," returned Mr. Smith without the slightest trace of ill-feeling, "I saw one of you pass the other evening when I was a-sittin' here in my shirtsleeves, and that one's nose was turned up so far that I was 'fraid it would get out of 'jint. Then, when another of you folks saw Marthy a-washin' off this 'ere porch that one's mouth got all puckered up as if she had been eatin' persimmons. I guess you think we ain't good enough for you, don't you?"

"We look at it this way, Mr. Smith," stammered Mrs. Pratt nervously, feeling devoutly sorry that she had undertaken the plan of purchasing the cottage; "we don't think you are—ahem!—well, accustomed to such society as there is in West Park. We don't mean any disrespect, Mr. Smith, but every one likes to mingle with those who are congenial. You don't keep any servants and you won't enjoy it down here, so we thought we'd make you this offer. What do you say?"

"It's very kind of you to think of me," returned Mr. Smith in no way offended. "I'm sorry, mem, but I must say that we're goin' to stay in West Park."

"Good evening," chorused the visitors, indignant at the failure of their plan and crestfallen at Mr. Smith's correct surmise of their view regarding him.

"One moment, ladies," called Mr. Smith as his visitors descended the steps; "me and Marthy won't lower the tone of this neighborhood. We don't own this house—not much! Martha she's the cook, and I'm the gardiner. We just come down to fix up the place for Mr. Norwood, who's comin' down next week with his wife and children and three more servants."

English Workman's Defects.

Notwithstanding that he has to pay more for his clothes than the English workman,

the American dresses himself and his family far better and more tastefully than his English cousin. The American also, says The World's Work, spends more money on luxuries and legitimate pleasures, and the food that he eats is more varied and of better quality. It is the intemperance, coupled with a love of gambling which seems to be born in the English working classes, that eats into their very life and frequently keeps them in abject poverty.

The English workman's two hobbies are football and horse-racing, and it is no uncommon thing to find these men having bets of considerable size on horse-racing every day in the week, tho the majority of them have never seen a race or racehorse in their lives. Frequently, almost the whole of their earnings are squandered in this way at the expense of their wives and children who are the sufferers in consequence. It is no uncommon sight to see their children waiting outside the works on pay day to try to get their father to come home. I knew quite a number of men who often left work on Saturday with their week's wages in their pockets and staked every penny of it on some race during the afternoon.

Apples as Food.

The apple is one of the most valuable and most wholesome of foods, for the reason that it keeps so well in temperate climates, and presents such a variety of flavors, suiting itself to a man's needs by ripening at different seasons and supplying a considerable amount of nourishment in the most easily digestible form. The nutritive food value of the apple is about 14 per cent., says Health. Its value consists chiefly in the amount of carbohydrates and vegetable acids it contains. The apple contains also a large amount of phosphorus.

They Woke Up.

"A pressing engagement with my dress-maker sent me downtown in a Broadway car the other morning," said Lillian Russell. "The sleepy morning passengers sat up and rubbed their eyes, when the car stopped at a crossing and a shrill musical voice plaintively demanded: 'Why can't you wait till I get my clothes on?' 'Every man in the car lengthened his neck like an ostrich, only to behold a very small, woolly-headed negro, patiently tugging a huge laundry basket up on the rear platform. Then the necks were suddenly shortened and the car proceeded downtown, every man oblivious of his neighbor.'—November Young's Magazine.

Would Scratch Till Blood Flowed.

DOCTORS COULD NOT CURE—ITCHING WAS TERRIBLE—NO TRACE OF DISEASE LEFT SINCE USING.

Dr. Chase's Ointment.

What is so disagreeable and what so torturing as dreadful, itching eczema? Here is a record of a Nova Scotia woman being thoroughly cured of this horrible disease by the use of Dr. Chase's Ointment.

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Whenever there is itching skin or a sore that refuses to heal, Dr. Chase's Ointment can be used with most satisfactory results; 60 cents a box, at all dealers or Edmansson, Bates & Co., Toronto.



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