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MIRAMICHI ADVANCE

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The Strike at Partington's

Jim Wishart was secretary of the Dollybridge Millworkers' Union, and on that account it seemed the most natural thing in the world that he should drop in of an evening at Pete Carlow's to smoke a pipe and discuss matters affecting the welfare of the association, to say nothing of the opportunities which thus sometimes cropped up for a delightful chat with Nellie, Pete's winsome daughter. Indeed—and Jim always blushed when the thought occurred to him—but for love of Nell he would have refused point-blank to become involved in the active work of the union, for he believed that the toilers of Dollybridge had not then—and never would have so long as Mr. Partington lived—any real justification for instituting protective measures.

For more than twenty years the relations between the millowner and his workpeople had been ideal, and it was only with the advent of a swarthy, sinister-looking man named Alf Slocum into the secluded world of Dollybridge that the first cloud appeared on the industrial horizon. Whence he came no one knew. He had appeared a dilapidated tramp six months before the date of our story, had secured work in the mill, and proceeded to sow discontent around him.

Pete Carlow fell an easy victim to Slocum's fascinating doctrine, and the moment the idea of a union was suggested he went enthusiastically to work, called a mass meeting of the workmen, and in half an hour the union was an accomplished fact, with himself as chairman and Jim Wishart, who at the moment was thinking more of a woman's smile than the rights of man, as secretary.

One evening Jim had gone home from the mill unconscious of anything having occurred to seriously endanger the existing relations between master and men, and after tea found himself, as usual, cheerfully whistling his way down the street on his way to Carlow's house. It was dusk, and a man, carrying a bag, approached—a straight, soldier-like figure, who peered into Jim's face, then stopped and held out his hand.

"Thought 'twas you, Jim. How are you, old chap ?"

"Ned Peaseley !" cried Jim, surprised, shaking heartily the proffered hand. "Jolly glad to see you again. But where did you drop from ? I never heard you were coming home."

"I hardly knew myself," laughed Peaseley. "My time expired just as the war was comfortably finished, but, as you know, I stayed on for a bit with the idea of finding a crib as soon as things had shaken down into the old groove. But after a couple of years veldt-tramping a fellow does sigh for a look at an English meadow. Then there's mother—how is she, Jim ?"

"Well and hearty, Ned, I'm glad to say," answered Jim.

"Thanks for that, old chap. I've got some hair-raisers to tell you, but you'll excuse me to-night."

They parted, and Jim resumed his way to Carlow's. Nellie was standing on the doorstep with a shawl over her head, and the moment he appeared she came eagerly to meet him.

"Why, Nell, lass," he said, as he folded his arms about her, "this is indeed nice of you. Were you really waiting for me ?"

"Yes, Jim, dear ; and if you'll stop kissing me—now, you must !—I'll tell you why. I'm awfully worried."

Something in the tone vaguely alarmed Jim. "Yes ? Tell me, then, lass," he said, peering into his sweetheart's upturned face. Tense anxiety, even fear, was plainly visible there. Besides, she was trembling in his arms.

"Something happened at the mill to-night, Jim, after you left," she said. "Slocum"—Jim started violently—"yes, Alf Slocum got into a row with the foreman and knocked him down. Mr. Partington saw him do it and dismissed him on the spot. Oh, Jim, I'm afraid to think of what may be the upshot. Slocum's raging mad. He's upstairs with dad now, and they have sent Tommy round to call a meeting of the union committee for to-night. They are waiting for you—the two of them—and I came out to tell you about it first. What's to be done, Jim ? Don't let them strike, for that's what Slocum wants."

Jim smiled reassuringly. Said he : "Strike because Slocum has got what he deserves ? Our chaps are not such fools. I tell you he's a born skulker—the sort that never did an honest day's work ; unless, maybe, 'twere in prison with the warder looking on. No, no, lass ; we don't strike for such as he."

"I wish I could think with you, Jim," said the girl, sighing ; "but dad's siding with him, and you know what that means."

For all his brave words Jim Wishart groaned inwardly as he mounted the stair, for he knew that if Pete used his unfluence with the men in Slocum's favor, as appeared likely from Nell's words, the affair might soon become serious enough.

Pete was listening with a flushed and frowning face, while Slocum slashed the air with his arms, denouncing masters in general and Mr. Partington in particular, in strong terms. Pete greeted Jim with a nod of relief. "Ha, lad," he said, "we've got business on hand now." Then he rapidly repeated the substance of Nell's story. "Now," he concluded, with a grim laugh, "let's go down to the institute, and, by Lucifer, Mr. Partington'll soon find that we're both fit and willing to stand up for our rights !"

Jim made no comment, and presently the three men sallied forth and made for the committee-room, around which a noisy and excited crowd had assembled—men, women, and children seizing and absorbing eagerly every scrap of information that was flying about, and feeling in a vague, indefinite way that Mr. Partington, whom they had hitherto regarded as their best friend, was in reality a slave-driving tyrant, grown supercilious and haughty because of the wealth which their hearts' blood had earned.

That was the feeling which dominated the meeting of the committee. Jim Wishart urged moderation, and in consequence came in for many menacing scowls from Slocum; but his counsel was utterly disregarded, and he grew sick and angry when it was resolved to present Mr. Partington with an ultimatum at the breakfast hour next morning, the terms of which were, in effect, that work would instantly cease pending Slocum's reinstatement ; the chairman, a young firebrand named Wilde and Jim Wishart being appointed delegates.

At this Jim rose. "Mates," he said, sternly, "I'll be no party to such foolery. I hold Mr. Partington was in the right, and——"

A jeering laugh from Slocum interrupted him. "There's a chicken-'eart for you, gents. I votes we chuck 'im out so's he can go right away to the big 'ouse and lick 'is guv'nor's boots !"

Jim flashed round and let drive his fist straight across the table at Slocum, who ducked, and in an instant Jim was struggling helplessly in the grasp of two powerful pairs of arms.

"Jim Wishart," said Peter, coldly, "I reckoned you was a man that could be trusted to stand by his mates in a time like this. I see I was mistaken. You're no friend of me and mine after this—d'you hear ?—mine ! You can clear out, and my advice to you is to quit Dollybridge for good !"

* * * * * *

Mr. Partington, a silver-haired old gentleman with a firm mouth, and eyes that twinkled good-humoredly behind his spectacles, received the delegates genially.

"You wish to have a talk with me ? Certainly, gentlemen. Always pleased to have you come direct to me when anything goes wrong." He rubbed his hands together with a pleased chuckle.

Pete Carlow suddenly felt his courage begin to ooze away under Mr. Partington's mild, inquiring glance. He strove angrily with the weakness then plunged desperately into the all-important subject. "We've come to talk about Alf Slocum's affair," he began, lamely.

"Ha, I'm glad of that," said the millowner. "It gratifies me to know that our sentiments agree in the matter, and I take it that you wish to express the sympathy of your fellows with poor Robinson, who, I may say, is rather seriously hurt."

Pete's companions grinned uneasily at each other ; this was hardly what they had bargained for. Pete himself turned purple.

"N-no," he stammered "We didn't come for that at all. We are here representing the Millworkers' Union to state a grievance."

"Oh ! Well, pray continue."

Pete cleared his throat. "We want to know why you sacked Slocum," he said. "He's one of us, and the men, through me, say they won't have him, nor no one, sacked without having a say in it—might be anyone's turn next since this sort of thing's begun."

Pete paused and nervously wiped his brow, while Mr. Partington eyed each of the shuffling delegates in turn with a smile.

"Dear me ! dear me !" he said ; "this is a most regrettable matter—unprecedented, indeed, in our annals. But really, Mr. Carlow and gentlemen, I hardly think this is a question that affects your interests in the slightest. I fancy I engaged the man and paid his wages. You will admit that ?"

"Of course you did, sir."

"Thanks ! That admitted, you can hardly question my right to dismiss him when I choose, more especially when I find him shirking the work which he is paid for doing, using physical violence against the foreman when called in question for skulking, and doing his best generally to destroy the harmony which has all along existed between us."

"That's not the question, sir," said Pete, hotly. "We must have Slocum back. He's outside now ready to start, and we're deputed to say that if you refuse our request we stop work until you change your mind."

Mr. Partington's lips clipped together.

"In plain English—strike !" he said, slowly. His face saddened, then he leant forward and resumed : "Have you considered what your resolve may entail upon your wives and children ? I think not. But I have. Listen ! You are aware we have been working an hour per day less for three weeks past. Do you know that every other manufacturer in the county is working half-time only ? Do you know that for months my stock of goods has been steadily accumulating ; that I couldn't sell out just now, and I'm afraid for many months to come, at the cost of the material ? Do you know that I am keeping the place going at present at a cost to myself of, roughly, a hundred pounds weekly ? Of course, you don't, but I wish to be quite frank with you. Do not let me detain you now, but if by the dinner hour you have found no cause to alter your plans the gates will be closed, to open again—Heaven only knows when."

He waved his hand, and the delegates retired, crestfallen and angry.

* * * * * *

Around the mill gates the men were assembled to await the result of the fateful interview. Not quietly, for the situation was a novel one to them, and they discussed the pros and cons of it with vehement gestures and noisy tongues.

Jim Wishart was in the centre of an excited group, reasoning, exhorting ; aye, pleading with them to refrain from pushing the matter to extremes for so slight a cause—for no cause at all, indeed. To no purpose. Jim's action of last night they held to be both cowardly and treacherous ; and black, threatening looks and blatant cries of "Turncoat !" "Traitor !" and the like were showered upon him from all sides. He quickly grew excited under the storm of epithets, and they began to hustle him. It might have gone hard with Jim, but just then a stalwart figure burst through the ring and took his place beside him. It was Ned Peaseley, looking cool and business-like, with a glint of steel in his eyes.

"The fellows who try to maltreat Jim Wishart have got to do the same to me," he said, "and I reckon I won't be standing idle at the time. Seems to me Jim's showing you the straight course, and you're fools if you don't take it. What's the row about, anyway ? If Slocum had been in the army and knocked down his officer he'd ha' got a sight more than his walking ticket, and serve him jolly well right. Stand back, I say. Ah, would you, Abe Jenkins ? If you will have it, here goes !"

There came a rush, and with his cautionary words Ned placed his back to Jim's and proceeded, with the utmost cheerfulness, to hit out ; Jim, goaded to frenzy, doing likewise. The human wave recoiled ; but suddenly a stone, slung with reckless venom by Slocum, who from the skirts of the crowd had been watching for an opening, hurled through the air, struck Jim on the temple, and sent him reeling. Ned wheeled and put an arm around him.

"I'm all right, Ned," was his reply to Peaseley's inquiry. Then Ned faced the mob with the glare of a lion, and told them his estimate of them in the choicest barrack-room language, before whose scathing virulence they slunk away ashamed. Not an eye met his, and the delegates appearing at that moment there was a general rush and the friends were left alone.

Ned immediately led Jim to a seat and bound up the wound—an ugly gash—with his handkerchief.

"How do you feel now, lad," he said, sympathetically.

"A bit groggy, that's all ; but who's that speaking ? Pete ? What's he saying ?"

"Never you mind, old chap. Just you sit here. I'm going to find the coward who threw that stone, and if I don't wipw the floor with him—Halloa ! Great heavens, who's that beside Carlow. Tell me, Jim ?"

"That's Slocum," he said, "the man they're going to strike for."

"Slocum ! Slocum ! No, not that !" Ned's eyes were riveted fiercely upon Slocum's face. "He reminds me of——oh, if he'd speak I'd know in a moment. And he's going to, by Jupiter ! Listen !"

To their ears came the strident voice of Slocum : "Gents, the great moment has come, and——"

Ned sprang to his feet with a gasp. "Barker, the murdering scoundrel, by all that's wonderful !" he cried. The next instant he gave vent to a great shout, and dashed forward full speed towards the platform.

It was an ear-compelling cry, and Slocum paused in his oration and glared at the rushing Ned. But at the first glance his whole body seemed to grow limp. His face, a moment before so flushed with dogged purpose, grew livid with fear ; then, with a yell of unmistakable terror he turned, rushed from the platform, and, the men falling back amazed, darted through the crowd and scudded off like the wind.

Ned pulled up with a grim laugh, the astonished unionists surging around him. "It's no use me trying to catch him," he said. "He was always good at running, was Barker—'specially running away. He's good for five miles at that pace."

Pete Carlow squeezed through and faced Ned, wonder-stricken.

"What's the meaning o' this ?" he demanded. Ned's lip curled.

"Well," he said, "you're a sweet lot of innocents to let Barker lead you by the nose ! And his cheek's a caution, too, though I guess he's busy regretting it now. He was in our corps down South—an out-an'-out wrong 'un. Loot ! My word, he'd ha' stolen the whiskers off a dead Boer if he'd thought there was a market for 'em !"

His eyes flashed. "By Heaven," he continued, "Lootenant Jones, as decent a chap as ever lived, caught him one night in a Kafir settlement outside the lines after loot, which was against the rules—but that was the least of it. The beggar had found a fat old nigger hiding, and thinking, no doubt, the chap had something put away for a rainy day, he had trussed him up to see whether a good welting would loosen his tongue. The lootenant tried to arrest him, of course, and asked him to hand over his rifle. When the skunk saw his game was spoilt, d'ye know what he did ?"

"Go on," cried the listeners, in an impatient chorus, as Ned paused.

"Cracked his officer's head with the butt of his gun and bolted to the Boer lines . . . Jones ? He recovered all right, but Barker doesn't know that."

The befooled unionists looked sheepishly at each other, and at that moment the starting whistle sounded.

"Halloa !" cried Ned ; "you chaps can strike or no, as you like, but here's one as is going in to see after that job of Barker's, and stop him who can."

There was no strike at Dollybride, and Mr. Partington, to whom Ned applied for the vacant post, enjoyed his recital of the hour's proceedings so much that he vowed it had added years to his life. "You may start now if you choose, my lad," he said.

The Dollybridge Millworkers' Union came to an untimely end that evening ; its last act being, on the chairman's motion, to tender an apology to Jim Wishart for the manner in which he had been treated.—London Tit-Bits.

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Mrs. T. Dalzell, 21 Charles street, Kingston, Ont., states :—"My daughter suffered very much with headaches, caused no doubt from over-study and a run down condition of the nervous system. These attacks of headache were very trying on her and I noticed that she was gradually growing weaker and more nervous. About two months ago I got her a box of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and since she has been using this preparation we are more than pleased with the improvement which has been made in her health. She looks one hundred per cent. better, her nerves are steadier, she is not bothered with headaches and is gradually increasing in flesh and weight."

Mrs. R. Wareham, 267 Sherbrook street, Peterboro', Ont., states :—"One of my children has suffered a great deal with nervous headaches, dizziness and sleeplessness, and, in fact, was all run down, pale and languid. These troubles were attributed to over-study and confinement at school. She began using Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and I can say that we have found this treatment exceedingly helpful. It has relieved her of headache, steadied her nerves, and built up her system wonderfully. We can see a great change in her, as the color is returning to her face, and she is gaining in flesh and weight."

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, 50 cents a box, 6 boxes for $2.50, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto. To protect you against imitations, the portrait and signature of Dr. A. W. Chase, the famous receipt-book author, are on every box of his remedies.

About the ....House

SPRING DINNER TABLE.

Glace Rhubarb—For the first few weeks of spring, rhubarb has a delicious fruity flavor which appears later on. The wise home caterer will not fail to utilize this at the right time, which cannot be mistaken, for while it is at its best the root end has a pinkish hue and the skin is barely thick enough to be removed. A dish clear to the eye and delightful to the palate may be made by combining gelatine with the rhubarb. This is called glace rhubarb.

Peel a dozen stalks of young but not thin rhubarb, and cut into good sized pieces, which, while not large enough to be clumsy, will retain their shape while cooking. They should fill a quart measure. Lay them in a crock or saucepan large enough for them to cook in a single layer. This is important in cooking all summer fruits and such a broad-bottomed saucepan should always be kept in stock.

Cover the rhubarb with a pint of cold water, stew gently and when it begins to soften, sprinkle a cup of sugar over all. Stew again gently, shaking a little until the sugar melts. Try the fruit with a fork, and when tender remove from the syrup singly, taking care to keep each piece whole, and lay in a broad shallow glass dish.

Put a tablespoonful of granulated gelatine in a bowl and mix with just enough cold water to soften it. Then gradually stir in the boiling rhubarb juice. Allow it to cool a little, and then pour over the fruit and place in the refrigerator for a few hours. At the end of that time the tender pieces of rhubarb will be found incased in jelly of just the right consistency, which is slightly more firm than the white of an egg. If a more solidified form is desired, heap the spoon with delatine.

Granulated gelatine is the same price as the coarser sort, but as it needs no previous soaking, it will be found convenient, especially for fruit desserts.

Baked Pears.—The demand for fruity desserts before berries are on the market forces the housewife to concoct palatable dishes from the better grades of dried and evaporated fruits. This season grocers are offering for 16 cents a pound a brand of evaporated pears that show each half section in perfect condition. A pound is equal to about a dozen pears, and for a family of five or six half this quantity will be sufficient. If a gas range is used only one burner should be lighted, and this turned as low as possible.

Soak the pears over night and spread in a small baking dish, sweetened to taste with molasses or sugar. Half a cup of water and a little whole clove and cinnamon should be added, the whole covered with a close-fitting plate or lid and baked in the slow oven for forty minutes. Serve with hot gingerbread made after this recipe :

Turn into a mixing bowl one teacupful of molasses, one-quarter cupful of shortening, boiling hot and composed of half butter and half lard; one teaspoonful of ground ginger, the grated yellow rind of half a lemon and one large tablespoonful of milk. Blend together, but do not beat, if you desire the cake to remain dark. Now mix in smoothly without beating two even teaspoonfuls of flour, sifted, with a teaspoonful of soda—not baking powder. Bake in a shallow pan, or in patty pans, about twenty minutes. The crust will be crisp if the recipe is closely followed.

RAW EGGS.

When raw eggs are ordered for an invalid to whom they are objectionable, make as palatable as possible by having the egg as cold as one can make it and then serve it from a cold glass as soon as it is opened, writes a physician's wife. Of course it is useless to serve any save perfectly fresh eggs.

If the white alone is to be taken, it should be beaten with a whisk until very stiff and frothy, then seasoned with salt, or sugar, whichever is preferred, and eaten with a spoon. This can be flavored with a few drops of brandy if the patient likes the taste.

Some who object to an egg beaten in a glass of milk sweetened and flavored, can take the egg if the sugar is omitted and the flavoring extract replaced by brandy.

A spoonful of rich thick cream added to the white of an egg beaten stiff and flavored with a spoonful of brandy is palatable and nutritious for an invalid or anyone whose health is impaired. A good "pick-me-up" is needed in every family from time to time, and wise people understand that it is far better to spend a little time and trouble in this way rather than to resort to stimulants of any kind.

An egg, beaten in a cup and the cup filled with coffee should be given to one with a jaded appetite for breakfast. Stir the egg rapidly while pouring the coffee over it to prevent its curdling. Cream or milk and sugar should then be added as usual.

ABOUT CHILDREN'S FEET.

It seems almost absurd to advise mothers not to pinch babies' feet, and yet physicians say that much of the fretfulness and irritation of babyhood is due to tight shoes and stockings. Not tight, perhaps from a grown-up standpoint, but sufficiently snug to hurt the tender, soft flesh of baby feet. The shoes that are gotten for the very little baby are very often actual instruments of torture because of some slight roughness or pressure. If the shoe fits snugly, no matter how soft it is, the sole is sure to press into the sensitive flesh and irritate the temper, if not actually injure the nerves.

Baby flesh is so soft that mothers or nurses often do not notice how badly the little foot is being crowded until impeded circulation tells the story of suffering. And small stockings are as frequently a means of injury as are small shoes. Always buy both shoes and stockings at least one size larger than the so-called "easy fit." This rule should hold good until the foot has ceased to grow. The result would be a generation of healthier, better-tempered and more graceful men and women.

KITCHEN ECONOMY.

The economical woman will use even her bread crumbs. She will heat the crumbs in the oven until crisp, then roll and put them away until needed in a glass jar. The possibilities in bits of bread are by no means confined to the familiar bread pudding.

Any vegetable of assertive flavor will be improved for persons who are inclined to scorn it, by first parboiling it. Cabbage will be found far more delicate if it is treated in this way.

The odor from boiling cabbages or onions may be prevented to a great degree by soaking either vegetable in cold water one hour before it is cooked, and then boiling it in fresh water.

A French salad for use with cold boiled tongue is made by adding to a regular French dressing mustard and half a small onion, six anchovies and six sprigs of parsley chopped fine. Lay the tongue in delicate slices on a platter and pour the dressing over.

RETURNS A POCKET-BOOK.

An English visitor at Geneva has had a curious experience. As he was entering his hotel in company with his wife, a stranger walked up to him, and, handing him a packet, quickly disappeared. On opening the packet the Englishman was surprised to find it was his note-book, which contained title deeds and shares worth many thousands of pounds. The contents had not been touched, and on examining his inside coat pocket he found it cut open. The thief, not finding any bank notes in the pocket-book, had evidently thought the rest of the contents worthless, and returned the pocket-book to its owner.

BOTH MISTAKEN.

An Irish merchant, who had more money in his pocket than his appearance denoted, took a seat in a first-class carriage. A dandy fellow-passenger was much annoyed at Pat's presence, and, missing his handkerchief, taxed him with having picked his pocket. After recovering the handkerchief, which he had put in his hat, he made a lame apology, but Pat stopped him with the remark :—

"Make yourself easy, darlint ; don't bother about the matter. You took me for a thafe, I took you for a gentleman. We were both of us mistaken, that's all, ane honey."

THE FIRM'S GOOD NAME.

A shopkeeper of an excitable temperament, hearing his assistant say to a customer, "No, we have not had any for a long time," was unable to countenance such an admission.

He fixed his eye on the assistant and said to the customer:—

"We have plenty in reserve, ma'am plenty upstairs."

The customer looked dazed for a moment, and the shopkeeper did not seem happy when his assistant informed him that the customer was speaking about the weather, and had remarked, "We haven't had any rain lately."

COMMEMORATIVE ATTIRE.

The black silk handkerchief which British bluejackets wear was first tied round the sailor's throat in mourning for Nelson, and it was never dropped. So in a sense, though unconsciously, we still mourn for Nelson. In the same way the white stripes round the collar of the sailor's jumper commemorate the victories of Trafalgar, Copenhagen, and the Nile.

BULL DOG v. WILD CAT.

After having killed a dozen terriers a newly-captured wild cat was pitted against a British bull dog by two Cincinnati men. The animals fought for twenty minutes. The dog killed his rival, but was shockingly mauled.

FROM WITCHCRAFT TO SCIENCE.

A century ago the work of the modern surgeon would have been denounced by the theologians, who then ruled mankind, as audacious intrusions into the exclusive jurisdiction of God. Two centuries ago, or, at the furthest, three, the man of science who would take out the viscera of a man, cut out their disease, and put them back, would have been fortunate to escape the stake or the block. But the audacious invader of the secrets of the body, the beneficient healer who, with his phial or his knife, lessens the miseries of humanity, diminishes or destroys pain, prolongs life and smoothes its pathway to the grave—this is now the man who appeals most strongly to his fellow-beings. For him and his training the captains of industry are pouring out their millions, building him colleges and laboratories, endowing professorships, while the world at large hails him as the man of power and influence at a time when wealth is accumulating and when men are not decaying.—Harper's Weekly.

QUITE HARMLESS.

A Londoner just arrived at a Scottish town, and on his way to an hotel, addressed the porter who led the way : "Not a large place this?"

"Eo' verre," was the answer.

Next question came : "Has it a corporation ?"

"A what, sir ?" inquired the baggage-bearer.

"I mean who rules it ?"

"Rules it ? Jist the provost."

"Ah, the provost. Like our Lord Mayor. Has he any insignia ?" remarked the Cockney.

"Insignia ! What d'ye mean ?" quoth the puzzled Scotsman.

"Yes, insignia ; that is to say, has he a chain ?" the polite visitor hinted.

Whereupon the almost dumfounded native gasped out : "A chain, sir ? The provost chained ? Na, na, he gangs loose ; but dinna be feared, he's quite harmless."

CURIOUS COSSACK CUSTOMS

Many queer customs and usages are prevalent among the Cossacks of the Don. No man changes his clothing on a Monday. If he did it is believed that he would suffer from a severe skin disease. On Thursday no fat or flesh must be pickled or corned. If anyone neglected this the meat would be full of worms in a fortnight. Wool is not spun on a holiday, else the cattle will sicken and die. A hen is always given an uneven number of eggs to hatch, never an even number. Bones left from a dinner at a funeral are thrown into the river, else the dead will appear to the living in fearful shape. And at the same meal no one dare cut bread—it must always be broken.

Kauri-wood lasts perfectly underground for twenty-five years. Jarrah, another Australian timber, has been tested for thirty-three years beneath the sea, and found sound at the end of that time.

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JOKES ON BRIDAL COUPLES

OFTEN MORE CRUELTY THAN HUMOR IN THEM.

How a Bridegroom Was Cured of Practical Joking—Romantic Episode.

Why bridal couples should appeal so peculiarly to the practical joker's sense of humor is one of the mysteries which baffle explanation ; but it is a fact that weddings are becoming more and more the arena in which the practical humorist loves to exercise his arts, and it is to be feared there is often more cruelty than humor in his joking.

The son of a Pittsburg millionaire had won a rather unenviable notoriety by jests of this kind ; and when, a few months ago, his turn came to lead a bride to the altar his victims decided to pay off old scores with interest. And this is how they did it. When he and his bride were being driven to the station after the ceremony they were seized and placed in a large wire cage, which was drawn on a waggon through the principal streets for the entertainment of thousands of spectators, who had been attracted by the announcement of a circus procession with "a caged mad bridal couple." What the sensations of the bridegroom were is not revealed ; but it is probable that his own days of practical joking came to an end in the cage.

A small Hungarian village was, last month, the scene of a romantic episode which recalls the days of Gretna Green and runaway matches. It was the wedding day of the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, who had been compelled by her father to give her hand to a rich suitor, and to discard her own handsome but

PENNILESS LOVER,

Petrovics. At the appointed hour a carriage arrived at the bride's house to take her to the church. She entered the carriage, and the bridegroom was about to follow when the driver, who was masked, revealed himself, whipped up his horses, and drove off. He was Petrovics, the rejected lover. Not a trace of the runaway couple has been found, although the carriage was returned and the wedding-feast was consumed by the guests of the disconsolate bridegroom.

In a recent and more amusing case a jilted lover also personated the coachman ; and on the return journey from the church drove the bridal couple into the very middle of a large and deep pond, leaving them to extricate themselves as well as they could, to the amusement of a crowd of onlookers who had been admitted into the secret.

A practical joke, designed by his friends for the benefit of Mr. Carter Prenz, son of a New York millionaire, came to an ignominous conclusion. The humorists had arranged that a carriage should be filled with confetti, rice, old slippers, and white ribbons, and should follow the young couple to their hotel, where they were to be inundated by these emblems of matrimonial bliss

DURING THEIR BRIDAL FEAST.

The bridegroom, however, who had been forewarned of this little conspiracy, took the precaution to hire half a dozen sturdy men, who stopped the carriage, dragged out its surprised occupants, and gave them a sound thrashing by way of illustrating one of the risks of practical joking.

A newly-married couple who recently started on their honeymoon from a North-country station, were the victims of an amusing, if annoying, joke. They had secured a compartment, which was guarded from the intrusion of the profane by a bold label marked "Engaged," and thus secure, settled down to enjoy their solitude in peace. Conceive their amazement and indignation, therefore, when, at the very first station the train stopped at, their carriage was quickly surrounded by a gaping, laughing crowd whose comments were distinctly embarrassing, and who sent them off on their journey with a ringing cheer. When the scene was repeated at the next stopping-place the indignant bridegroom put his head out of the window and asked the meaning of the demonstration. "Meaning ?" said one of the crowd ; "why, look there"—pointing to the label on the carriage-window—and there, sure enough, was quite sufficient explanation, for the bridegroom read in glaring letters

THE WORD "MARRIED,"

where the simple announcement "Engaged" should have been. The later legend had no doubt been affixed by a practical joker just before the bridal couple commenced their journey.

There was little that was humorous in the joke played on a bridegroom in a village near Lyons last year. The bridegroom had been notoriously inconstant in his affections, and on the eve of his wedding-day he was waylaid on his way home from seeing his bride of the morrow by three of his jilted lady-lovers, armed with stout sticks. Before the interview came to an end they had administered such a "striking" proof of their regard that an hour later their recreant lover was found still insensible and covered with bruises by the roadside.

Even more grim, if less painful, was a joke practised on a bridal couple some time ago in the West country. Just as the ceremony was on the point of beginning in church, a mourning coach drew up at the door, and a procession of half a dozen men, all in deep mourning, filed up the aisle and took seats in a pew immediately behind the wedding-guests. They followed the service with dejected mien and simulated tears, and at its conclusion as solemnly filed out again and drove off. The mourners consisted of two rejected lovers of the bride and four of their friends, who had chosen this singular method of burying their love and grief—and, incidentally, of paying off old scores.—London Tit-Bits.

There are 36,639 Wesleyans in the British Army.