

LITERATURE.

[From the Yankee Blade.]

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BROWN;

—OR—
THE VICTIM OF A BORE.

BY PAUL GREYTON.

(Continued.)

By this time, all my interest in the dinner was dissipated. Mr. Brown's eccentricities had spoiled my appetite, and I wished myself leagues away. I should have left the scene of my mortification at once, but civility compelled me to remain—to wait for Benjamin Franklin Brown. And I thought he would never have finished! With undisturbed equanimity, he pursued the arduous occupation of dining, talking to the company through jaws laboring with morsels of tough mutton, and occasionally upsetting a salt dish, or dropping a vinegar cruise by way of variety. Amid the smiles and significant looks of the company, who began to appear less amused at his eccentricity than disgusted at his vulgarity, Mr. Brown betrayed no shadow of diffidence—no evidence of confusion. Until this time, I had always admired that hearty expression of Burns—

"O, wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see ourselves as others see us."

But now I understand how well it is for us that we know not in what light we are regarded by others. Mr. Brown's blissful ignorance of the opinions of his new companions, caused me to exclaim inwardly—"Oh, Burns! how could you make such a stupid observation? Let me always be satisfied with myself—always ignorant of the ill opinions of my neighbors!" For it seemed to me, that had Mr. Ben. Franklin Brown been intelligent enough to perceive the ridicule of which he was the object, his complacent and happy state of mind would have vanished. His stupidity saved him from mortification.

At last the dinner was over. Mr. Brown had had finished his meal—and I ventured to hope that the fiery ordeal was passed—my trials at an end. Not so! As Mr. Brown entered the parlor to take leave of his new friends, he once more drew from the profundity of his coat-tail pocket the silk handkerchief before described. But misfortunes come not singly—neither did the handkerchief! With the impetus given to it by that article, in which it had been unconsciously rolled up by Mr. Brown, a napkin shot forth into the light, and fell fluttering upon the carpet!

"By jingo!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, "if I don't believe I tucked that towel into my pocket with my handkerchief!"

"You would have done better to tuck it into your mouth!" I muttered, half audibly.

"How very eccentric!" exclaimed Mrs. Julep.

"How very stupid!" whispered Miss Cataway, loud enough for me to hear.

Miss Lark looked astonished, while Mr. Strap and Mr. Sprightly laughed at the awkwardness of Mr. Brown.

About that time, I had very urgent business somewhere, and announced my intention of leaving the house immediately. I cared little what became of Mr. Brown; but he declared it his design to accompany me. Having, therefore, gone through with the ceremony of five profound bows, he gravely marched off with me, with the air of a man conscious of having achieved triumphs.

"Nice people where you board," observed Mr. Brown with great satisfaction. "That Cataway girl's a rouser, I tell you!"

"How did you like Miss Lark?" I asked mechanically.

"A nice girl I should say,—only a little old. Is she thirty?"

"As much as that. She would like to get married, I presume."

"Would she though?" cried Mr. Brown, eagerly. "I thought she looked at me rather winnin'—as if she would have liked to catch me!"

I scarcely remarked Mr. Brown's words. My whole mind was occupied in the endeavor to devise a scheme for ridding myself of his

rather unpleasant company. To my surprise, I found him quite ready to permit our walks to diverge, when I coolly informed him that I had an affair to attend to, which required that I should be alone!

"Well, I've a little running round to do myself," said Benjamin Franklin Brown. "I'll see you in the evening—"

"But in the evening I am engaged," said I, with great firmness of manner.

"At what time," candidly enquired the unsuspecting Brown, who, I suppose, was never guilty of taking a hint.

"All the time," said I, "from six o'clock to midnight."

"Well, then, I'll see you before six, or I'll see you after six, or I'll see you in the morning—or any time when I can," exclaimed Mr. Brown. "So, good day."

And having, during the performance of one of his peculiarly original bows, smashed his hat over his eyes, by thrusting it into a fat old gentleman's stomach, tripped up an errand boy who was carrying a looking-glass in each hand, and knocked a stout Irish girl into an apothecary's shop, Mr. Brown set out to retrace his steps. But the boy, whose mirrors had been broken into innumerable pieces by his fall, regained his feet, and seized Mr. Brown's coat-tails, yelling lustily for him to stop and pay for the damage he had done. The fat gentleman, flushed and angry, sought revenge by going to the boy's assistance, and cursing Mr. Brown for his awkwardness; while the Irish woman commenced a most violent piling up of anathemas upon the unfortunate Benjamin Franklin's head. Mr. Brown looked at me with a volume of prayers and entreaties in his countenance, but I fixed my face like a brazen statue, and my eyes like lumps of ice, as if I saw nothing, and with the utmost unconcern, marched majestically down the street.

The coward, who, having been compelled to accept a challenge from a notorious duelist, sufficiently skilled to be able to snuff out his candle of existence at twenty paces, before he himself can possibly pull a trigger, may reasonably be supposed to experience a sense of relief, when informed that his terrible antagonist has been bound over to keep the peace, killed by a railroad accident, or knocked on the head by one of his boon-companions. A similar sense of relief rejoiced my heart, when I perceived that I had fairly escaped the presence of Mr. Ben. Franklin Brown. Having shaken off this nightmare of a man, I resolved, notwithstanding the request of Jefferson Miles, to be troubled by him no more.

Two hours afterwards I was walking arm-in-arm with an English gentleman, to whom I had recently been introduced. Mr. Fitz Williams was a remarkably fastidious man, considerably prejudiced against the Americans, and skeptical with regard to the existence of good society on this side of the Atlantic. With commendable pride for my country, I was endeavoring to convince him that there were gentlemen in America, and that the name of republicans did not apply exclusively to clowns. Fancying that I had successfully laid siege to the fortress of Mr. Fitz Williams' prejudices, I was beginning to congratulate myself on having taught him to regard with respect and good-will Americans in general, and myself in particular, when all my castles in the air were suddenly thrown to the ground, and all my hopes completely crushed. Before me, with his head and feet in extraordinary proximity, stood Benjamin Franklin Brown! Having accomplished his bow, Mr. Brown advanced, grinning recognition, while I regarded him in blank dismay. To escape him was impossible; for when I would have passed him by as if he had been a lamp-post, or a common barber's pole, he caught me by the arm, exclaiming—

"Jerusalem! don't know me, do you?—Look'e here—how are ye?"

I muttered something about an improvement in the state of my health, and drawing Mr. Fitz Williams close to my side, hurried along. But Mr. Brown was not to be got rid of so easily. He caught my arm and walking sideways, so as to face my companion and myself, broke in upon our conversation with shocking freedom.

"I knew I should find you!" he exclaimed,

with a broad grin of satisfaction. "I've been up to your rooms, over to your boarding-house, and down to your office, and here I've got you at last! I'm going over to take tea with you—did you know it?"

"I certainly did not, for I do not remember having invited you," I replied, with freezing coldness.

"Jes so!" cried Mr. Brown. "But Miss Lark invited me. She's a nice girl, Miss Lark is! I went over there to find you, and Miss Lark was in the parlor, and I vow, I sot and talked with her half an hour. Think she fancies me, eh? Pshaw!"

And Mr. Brown drove his thumb into my side, chuckling with satisfaction. Mr. Fitz Williams regarded him with wonder and disdain; I with indignation and patience.

"Mr. Brown," said I, with lofty dignity, "you will oblige me by falling a little back. I don't like to have you walk before me in that way. I may tread on your toes."

"Oh, there's no danger; I'll keep out of your way."

At this moment Mr. Brown too intent on looking at my companion and myself, to navigate a crowded street properly, ran into an old lady whose arms were loaded down with bundles, and scattered her cargo on the pavement.

With surprising dexterity, Mr. Brown leaped over the wreck of Dry-Goods, and leaving the old lady to gather up her load as best she could, walked on as if nothing had happened.

"By the way!" he exclaimed, a moment after, as we passed a fruit store, "don't ye want some apples? Come, I'll pay for 'em—don't be bashful."

Mr. Fitz Williams did not deign to notice the invitation, which I, on the other hand, respectfully declined.

"Wal, by jingo, I must have a taste any way," Benjamin Franklin Brown.

We walked on without him, and presently he came running up to us with a large apple in his left hand, half an apple in his right, and half an apple in his mouth. This, Mr. Fitz Williams, no doubt, considered the height of vulgarity for he regarded my new acquaintance with supreme contempt. It was some time before Mr. Brown could clear his mouth sufficiently to speak; when he accosted a lad who was hurrying past with an armful of large illustrated bills.

"What ye got there?" asked Mr. Brown.

"What?" growled the lad.

"Them things with picters 'em?"

"Posters!"

"Posters!" echoed Mr. Brown, plunging his right hand into his pocket, while he held the hemisphere of fruit in his mouth. "I want one! What do ye ask for 'em?"

"Hey?" cried the astonished bill-poster.

"Fo'pence a-piece?" suggested Mr. Brown.

"Wal, ef you ain't a greeny!" ejaculated the lad, roaring with merriment. "See 'ere you; that chap wanted to buy one o' these posters! Oh! criminy!"

This was too much for Mr. Fitz-Williams, who formally took leave of me, and probably hurried to his hotel in order to write an awful article on "Vulgarity in America." I was left to the tender mercies of Benjamin Franklin Brown.

(Conclusion in our next.)

A THRILLING SCENE.

BY CHARLES RAND.

The following narrative—a true one—describes a scene that actually took place not many years since, in a country town in the State of Maine.

One evening in the month of December, 1834, a number of townsmen had assembled at the store of a Mr. Thomas Putnam, to talk over "matters and things—smoke—drink—and in short do anything to kill time."

Three hours had thus passed away. They had laughed, and talked, and drank, and chatted, and had a good time generally; so that about the usual hour of shutting up shop, each of the party felt particularly first rate.

"Come," said Charles Hatch—one of the company—"let's all liquor; and then have a game of high-low-jack!"

"So I say," exclaimed another, "who's got the cards?"

"Fetch on your keards," drawled out a third, his eyes half closed through the effect of the liquor he had drank.

After drinking all round, an old pine table was drawn up before the fire-place, where burned brightly a large fire of hemlock logs, which would snap and crackle, throwing large live coals out upon the hearth.

All drew up around the table, seating themselves on whatever came handiest. Four of them had rolled up to the table some kegs, which from their weight were supposed to contain nails.

"Now," said Hatch, "how shall we play—every one for himself?"

"No, have partners," growled one man.

"I say, every one for himself," exclaimed another.

"No, hang'd if I'll play so," shouted the former, bringing his fist down upon the table, knocking one candle out of the stick and another upon the floor.

"Come, come," said Hatch, "no quarrelling—all who say for having partners, stand up."

Three arose.

"Now all who say, each one for himself, stand up."

The remaining four immediately got up.

"You see, Barclay," said Hatch, "the majority are against you. Come, will you play?"

"Well, as I don't want to be on the opposite side, I'll play," answered Barclay, somewhat cooled down.

Mr. Putnam was not in the store that evening, and the clerk who was busy behind the counter had taken very little notice of the proceedings. About half-past ten, Mr. Putnam thought he would step over to his store and see that every thing was safe. As he went in he walked up towards the fire.

When within a few steps of where the men were sitting, he started back in horror.

Before him sat seven men, half crazy with drink and the excitement of playing cards. There they were within a few feet of the fire just described, and four of them seated on kegs of powder!

Barclay—who was a very heavy man—had pressed in the head of the keg on which he sat, bursting the top hoop, and pressing the powder out through the chinks. By the continued motion of their feet, the powder had become spread about the floor, and now covered a space of two feet all around them.

Mr. Putnam's first movement was towards the door, but recovering himself, he walked up towards the fire. Should either of them attempt to rise—he thought—and scatter a few grains a little further into the fireplace where lay a large quantity of live coals!

At that moment Hatch looked up, and seeing Mr. Putnam with his face deadly pale, gazing into the fire, exclaimed—

"Good God! Putnam, what ails you," and at the same time made a motion to rise.

"For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, do not rise," said Mr. Putnam. "Four of you sit on kegs of powder—it is scattered all around you—one movement might send you all to eternity. There are two buckets of water behind the bar. But keep your seats for one minute, and you are saved—move, and you are dead men!"

In an instant every man was perfectly sobered—not a limb moved—each seemed paralyzed.

In less time than we have taken to describe this thrilling scene, Mr. Putnam had poured the water and completely saturated the powder on the floor and extinguished the fire so that an explosion was impossible. Then and not till then, was there a word spoken.

Before those seven men left the store that very night, they pledged themselves never to taste another drop of liquor or play another game of cards!—*American Union.*

Remarkably mild weather seems to have been experienced in England as well as in this country. An English paper says:—

"On the right of the road leading from Weymouth to Smallmouth Sands, in a large field occupied by a cow-keeper, there was witnessed on Saturday last, the extraordinary scene of men mowing grass in the middle of January!"

Value of

A London account of what happened at a question society in Paris. A window in the Rue de la Harpe, where the maker of the window was backed a shop-front of glass in which cracked liere's fire the own morning whose son resperty; manner Moliere to look "How

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