

A DESPERATE MOMENT.

"Bat, Tom, are you sure there is no danger?" cried the girl, clinging to her lover's arm as the moment of parting drew nigh.

"No danger?" he cried scornfully. "Of course there may be danger. It doesn't depend on me, it depends on him, whoever he may be. You don't expect a robber to be as mild as a boarding-house miss? But I think, rough or mild, I shall be able to answer for him, if he isn't very much out of the common indeed."

He released himself from his sweetheart's grasp and stood before her in his pride of six feet and breath of shoulders proportionate.

"Tom, you'll take care, won't you?" asked Nellie.

"I'll take precious good care of him if I get my hands on him, you may be sure."

"Oh, I'm afraid I'm afraid!" moaned Nellie Milward, the sweet, rosy-cheeked eldest daughter of John Milward, station-master of the little out-of-the-way town of Penhurst in Devonshire.

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid you may be hurt—afraid these robbers may harm you."

"Now, Nellie, my dearest girl, don't be foolish. In the first place, it is most unlikely that more than one man is concerned in these thefts. Penhurst is too small and too remote and too simple to produce more than one daring thief. Then men who commit crimes of this kind never show fight, and if our friends of the goods store does resist—well, I think you may trust me to take care of myself. If you don't be sensible and cheer up I shall begin to regret I told you about my design. Now I must go, and mind, above all things, not a word of this matter to anybody, not even to your father or mother, and I know you would not be so silly as to mention it to your brothers or sisters."

"I promised you I would not speak of it to a soul, and I'll keep my promise," said she firmly enough, but fear was in her pretty face and tears were in her eyes.

Nellie Milward the station-master's daughter, was far and away the best looking girl in Penhurst.

Tom Atkinson melted at the sight of her tears. He put his arm round her and said tenderly, "Nell, try to look at it as I do. I am thinking of one future—of your future, dearest. Here I am at twenty-five with seventy pounds a year as clerk at this station. On such a miserable salary we never can marry. If I could find this thief it would bring my name up and I should be sure to get promotion soon. Think of that!"

"But you have nothing to do with the goods. They aren't your department," she pleaded.

"Quite right, but I shall get all the more credit if I succeed in capturing the thief of the goods store. And now, my dear girl, cheer up; not a word to anyone, and to-morrow, win or lose, you will see I will not be anything the worse."

He kissed her and darted away out of the deserted waiting-room.

A few minutes after Tom Atkinson left her Nellie crossed the booking-office from the waiting-room and entered the station-master's house.

She was the eldest of ten children and just completed her nineteenth year. John Milward, her father, was a tall, thin, anxious-looking man of fifty. Her mother was round and short, the picture of prosperous contentment, though how she contrives to be so stout and contented on the poor salary her husband received no one in Penhurst could tell. To feed and clothe respectably twelve people out of one hundred and twenty pounds a year, even with house, gas and coal, was a problem which would turn many a woman grey before her time.

Only eleven of the Milwards sat down to tea that evening. Morton Milward, seven months old, being asleep in his cradle.

"My dear," said John Milward when tea was over "old Chadwick asked me to smoke a pipe with him this evening. He has had a letter from his son in Canada, and he wants to tell me all the news. I hardly like going, as 'tis Wednesday, and the three times things were missed from the store it was Wednesday evening."

"Go!" cried Mrs. Milward cheerfully. "Of course you'll go. It will do you a world of good. As to the goods store, you are not a detective, thank goodness! If the company want to find the thief let them send down a detective from London."

Mrs. Milward never felt sympathy with the company in any of their losses. They underpaid her husband, and in the good wife's eyes no individuals could commit a crime more unpardonable.

"Well, maybe you're right, my dear. I'll go to Chadwick's. I hope there will be no fooling at the store tonight, for there are ten barrels of blasting powder in it which ought to have gone on to the quarries this evening, but were not called for."

Nellie turned pale, but said nothing.

When Tom Atkinson left the railway station for the town half a mile off, he went to his lodgings for tea. It was growing dusk, being the last Wednesday of September.

Tom dawdled over his tea until daylight was gone, then he put on his overcoat, slipped a dark lantern into his pocket, and went forth, carrying a heavy oak cudgel.

In his present enterprise he knowingly ran two risks:—First, he had borrowed without leave the goods clerk's key of the store, and it found in the store after dark, and with the key in his possession, it might be difficult for him to clear himself. Second, he might have an encounter with the thief. He knew nothing of a third peril—the powder.

interior changed, and the ways across the floor were altered by the advent of new packages, the departure of old ones, and the shifting of those that still awaited removal.

When he had closed the wicket behind him he was listening intently for a while. Hearing no sound he struck a match, lit his lantern, and flashed the light about to find an open way to the point where he intended taking up his position.

The floor was comparatively clear, and by the wall stood a line of small kegs. "I can lie down behind those barrels of nails," he thought, "and spy out between two of them. The thief is not likely to care about walking off with one of these kegs."

Having taken bearings, he shut off the light and cautiously crossed the floor in the dark.

When he reached the line of kegs he raised the slide of his lantern again and found that three to four feet of floor intervened between the kegs and the wall. This would do splendidly. He shut down the slide, crept over the kegs, and stretched himself on the floor, ascertaining by feeling that his eyes were in line with the space between two of the diminutive barrels.

How long he lay there he never knew, an hour most likely, when he thought he heard fumbling at the lock of the wicket through which he himself had entered. He listened. He heard a key turn in the lock and then the door close softly.

Someone had entered the store. The thief and he were alone together! He should catch this robber with these hands now clutching and grinding in the darkness! He should be commended and thanked from the head office in London, and promoted on the first opportunity!

He strained his eyes in what he knew must be the direction of the wicket. At last light flashed from a lantern carried by a man at the further end of the floor. Atkinson held his breath. He feared the beating of his heart would betray his presence.

He could not yet clearly make out the figure of the other man. He could see it was tall and thin; that was all. He saw the other carried a heavy iron wrench in his right hand.

The intruder placed his lantern on a large box, elbow high. His face now came into the full light of the lantern, as he thrust his wrench between the lid and the side of the box.

"Mr. Milward, don't be afraid. It is I, Tom Atkinson," whispered the young man. The stationmaster started and looked round, an expression of deep horror on his face. His knees shook under him. He caught up the light and flashed it in Atkinson's direction.

The young man had risen to his knees, but had not the power to stand up.

All at once Milward ceased to tremble. He stepped quickly across the floor to Atkinson, saying, "Tom, are you here too? Have you, too, come to catch the thief?"

"I came to catch the thief, Mr. Milward but I came with an oak cudgel, not a wrench."

"Bah!" cried the other, "what's the difference. The thief was the object of both of us. What is the difference between a cudgel and a wrench? Look here Tom, the company have been robbing and starving me for years."

"You should not try to make things even between them and you with that wrench."

"I can do more with it. With it I can make things even between myself and fate." He struck one of the kegs a tremendous blow, shattering the head into splinters, and at that instant opened the lantern. "Now you take the wrench, give me the cudgel, and I swear there will be no more robberies here, Tom Atkinson."

"And if I refuse?"

"I will drop the lamp into the powder." "Powder! These are nails."

"Put in your hand and try."

The large round grains of blasting powder ran through the young man's fingers. "Merciful heaven, 'tis powder!" he cried.

"It gives me a verdict of not guilty if I appeal to it. Will you not give me your cudgel for my wrench?"

Suddenly both men started and looked towards the wicket. For the third time the door opened that night. The light of both lanterns was shot upon the wicket.

"What, you, Nellie!" cried the old man. "I thought you were gone to Chadwick's father, and I knew Tom was here, and because he didn't know of the powder I could not rest, and I came to tell him of it, and hearing and recognizing your voice I tried the latch."

"Your cudgel for my wrench!" cried the old man, holding out his hand.

Atkinson clutched his stick and made an upset at the lantern in the old man's hand, when, all at once, Milward staggered on of reach and fell to the floor, smitten by apoplexy. He never recovered consciousness, and in three days he was dead.

Neither to Nellie nor any other living being did Tom Atkinson ever reveal the identity of the thief of the Penhurst goods store. In the spring of next year he was pronounced and married Nellie.

people. In olden times slices of mushroom were used to bind up cuts, and were used to bind up cuts, and were said to insure their speedy healing. In the days of flint and steel, before matches were invented, the powder of the dried puff-balls was often used to catch and hold the sparks. Another strange use to which it was put was to burn it before a bee-hive. The fumes made the bees drowsy, and the honey could be removed without difficulty. —St. Nicholas.

THIS IS A CATASTROPHE.

How Tommy And Jack Had A Misunderstanding And Made Up Again.

Tommy Kirby is a cat, says a Washington paper. His habitat is on Capitol Hill. Among his many friends and admirers Tommy Kirby numbers a large Newfoundland dog called Jack, who lives at the same house with Tommy Kirby. The two are often seen in each other's company, and on hot afternoons take their strolls on the same back porch in the most amiable, friendly fashion. They have a most thorough understanding, and on meeting after a brief separation will express their mutual satisfaction in short cries and ejaculations in their own language, which they seem to understand perfectly.

The other afternoon Newfoundland Jack lay wrapped in slumber in the yard. Tommy Kirby came out, and, after looking up and down the causeway, concluded to go over and visit a friend named Billy, who himself was a cat of worth, and belonged to Tommy Kirby's set. He was picking his way across the street with that dignity and composure that some cats assume, when he encountered a strange dog. The dog was disposed to make it a case of assault and battery. Now, Tommy Kirby is a cat of great valor, and the neighborhood has night after night rung with his war whoops. Instead of flying from his assistant he came to a full stop, made green his eyes, enlarged his tail until it looked as if it were meant to clean lamp chimneys, and gave his back an arch of much hauteur. Then he spat with exceeding emphasis and as he announced himself ready for the worst. When Tommy Kirby had thus fished himself, what they would in St. Louis call his tout ensemble very much daunted the strange dog.

Instead of rushing wildly in and rending Tommy Kirby as he had at first proposed, he gave way to clamorous barking. This uproar aroused Newfoundland Jack. This came tearing to the scene. Never having beheld his friend Tommy Kirby in this heroic guise, Newfoundland Jack utterly failed to recognize him. Being a dog of vigorous methods he unhesitatingly assailed Tommy Kirby out of hand. Such base behavior on the part of his friend and ally was too much for the composure of Tommy Kirby. He straightened the arch out of his spinal column, lowered his tail, and fled with a screech of pained surprise.

That it was that Newfoundland Jack recognized him. He looked after Tommy Kirby, while grief and remorse shone in his eyes. He was full of apology to the brim. This lasted for a moment, and then the meditations of Newfoundland Jack took a new turn. He abruptly fell upon the strange dog, whose catlike uproar had gotten him into this mess and gave him such a trouncing as few dogs get, and which sent the strange dog howling from the scene at a faster pace even than that of Tommy Kirby. The next day Newfoundland Jack and Tommy Kirby were seen sedately walking the yard together; so they must have made mutual explanations.

IT IS NOT SANDPAPER.

Glass Paper is a More Accurate Name for It These Times.

Sandpaper as now made is false to its name, for it has no sand about it, the place of that material being now taken usually by powdered glass, which does its work with vastly greater effect.

One of the most important operations in the fabrication of sandpaper is the pulverization of the glass into the powder of the different grades of fineness. Commonly an iron mortar is used for this purpose, a heavy iron pestle being the crushing instrument. Stamping machinery is better. It consists of a stout box, whose iron side walls serve as a base for the stamping machinery.

In the box, which can be closed by a wooden door to prevent wast of material and also injury to the workmen, are two iron cylinders in which play the stamps. These crush the glass, turning on their own axes as they work.

For grading power several shifting cylinders are necessary, covered with gauze of different mesh. Beginning with the coarsest the workman proceeds gradually to the finest, resting each time that which passes through the network.

The paper to be used in the manufacture must be good, strong and rather long fibred; it must also be free from knots and irregularities, and if there are any such they must be planed off. If they should be overlooked, they would interfere with the proper use of the sandpaper; the knots would protrude through the glue, and little ridges and channels would result, making it impossible to smooth off a surface evenly with the paper.

The paper is cut into large sheets, spread on work tables, fastened down, and then painted, by means of a large brush, with a thin even coat of hot glue. If the glue is too thin and the paper of bad quality, the glue soaks into the paper, so that which remains is not of sufficient consistency to hold the glass. This results a sandpaper from which the glass easily rubs off, or which, in places, has no glass at all, or not enough. This is notably the case with the coarser varieties, in which the layer of glue must be put on with exceeding care that the relatively large fragments of glass, which can in no manner be soaked with the binding material, if the layer of glue is thick or the consistency too viscous, the outer part hardens too quickly, so that the glass powder cannot embed itself in it.

When the glue has been spread on the paper the powdered glass must be sifted

on through an appropriate sieve. This operation also requires considerable skill, though not so much as the spreading of the glue. For the glass must not be sifted merely in such a manner as to use a given quantity to a sheet, but so that each sheet may be covered evenly. Even then all the powder will not stick, and some of the particles lie upon other without touching the glue; these can be shaken off by a slight movement of the paper. When the superfluous glass powder has been removed a wooden ruler is passed lightly over the paper to press the particles of glass as firmly as possible into the glue and to form a perfectly even surface.

IF THE MACHINE GOES WRONG.

Now bring your mind to bear on this idea. Suppose you were to find yourself gaining in weight at the rate of about 100 pounds a month, what would you think?

You would be scared out of your wits, wouldn't you? In six months from now you would weigh about 750 pounds, including, of course, your present weight. You would be a phenomenon, a monster, a curiosity. People would pay shillings to look at you; but not for long, you would soon be smothered and die.

Well, there is one thing certain; if what you put into your body every day, in the shape of food and drink, stayed there you would grow heavier at the rate I tell you, and more too. A man actually takes in at least three or four pounds a day and yet grows in weight slowly, or not at all. What becomes of this stuff? Most of it is turned out again at once as useless, and the rest is changed into the substance of the body, and then worn-out. So the balance is maintained. "Wonderful?" You may well say so. It is Nature's constant miracle; it is digestion, a mere word to most people.

Sometimes things run the other way, and food goes out of the body, unassimilated, as fast as it is taken in. This happens in diabetes, commonly ending in death by consumption. Inside of these processes there are scores of mysteries. If you knew half of them you would be astonished at how you live from one day to another. It becomes the wisest man to be humble and reverent.

From the heap of letters on our table we take one this morning, just to give you the main points in it. They are as old as the hills and yet new as every sunrise over those same hills.

This is Mrs. Slade's letter. She lives at 29, Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading. The date is November 17th, 1892. It should have been noticed earlier, but others got in the way by mistake.

She says that when a girl, she suffered a good deal from flatulence and some disorder of the liver. Early in 1878 she fairly broke down and was "fit for nothing." She felt tired and heavy, no spring, elasticity, nor ambition in her. She was obliged to eat of course; yet was punished for eating by a pain and tightness at the sides, back, and chest. At times she had a hacking cough which made her chest still more painful and sore. We shall not be surprised if she thought her lungs affected and feared the arch destroyer, consumption, threatened her. We hardly need say that she took drugs and medicines in great plenty and variety. Any one would. But they did no good. They seldom do, because they are almost always the wrong things. Taking medicines without knowing what for, is travelling a dangerous road in the dark.

Well, it is enough to say that Mrs. Slade suffered in this fashion for years. In 1884 she attended at the Reading Infirmary as an out-door patient, and was treated three months without benefit. Then she ceased going there—reasonably, we shall agree. About that time she got hold of a book—a sort of pamphlet—which explained her complaint and suggested a remedy for it. Impressed with the completeness and accuracy with which her symptoms were set forth in the book, she sent for the medicine and began to use it. What followed is best put in her own words.

She says: "After taking this medicine one week I was relieved, and when I had taken four bottles I was in better health than I had been in for many years. Since then I have kept this preparation—Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup—in the house, and if at any time I feel at all out of sorts a dose of it soon sets me right. As I am desirous to let other sufferers know about what has done so much for me I am willing you should publish this letter if you think fit. (Signed) (Mrs.) M. Slade."

Now mark but a minute over this statement and you will perceive that Mrs. Slade's illness covered fourteen years, to say nothing of what she endured as a girl. What a fearful waste of time, strength, and happiness this was. "Not uncommon?" Oh no, God pity us! Common, too common; like all kinds of misery and misfortune. But what caused it? That's the question—what caused it? Here's the answer, a had defect in that wonderful digestive machinery we talked of—indigestion and dyspepsia; which could have been cured long, long ago if she had only come across the true remedy.

Something About Rain.

An engineer has figured out that an inch of rain falling upon an area of one square mile is equivalent to nearly 16,000,000 gallons, weighing 145,200,000 lb., or 72,000 tons. Assuming this quantity to have fallen from clouds about half a mile or, say, 3,000 ft. above the earth, we have for the energy represented by it about 28,000 horse-power.

With pumping machinery working at the low rate of consumption of two pounds of coal per horse-power per hour, it would take 200 gross tons of coal to raise the water represented by an inch of rain on a square mile to the assumed height of 3,000 ft.

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