

LADY BLANK'S DINNER.

The True Reason Why Her Guests Had to Dine Without Vol-au-vent.

They started a telephone exchange some time ago in the Canadian town of Bytown, and the place being small, the subscribers eschewed the official numbers, and ringing up "central" would request to talk with Mr. This, Mrs. That, or Brown, Robinson & Co. Now this custom caused trouble once, grew some trouble.

One night Lady Blank, wife of an eminent Dominion politician, gave a big dinner party (they give "dinner parties" in Bytown) and about 2 o'clock in the afternoon found she needed various things. To the telephone she stepped, blessing Sir Charles's foresight in having it put in. She called up "central."

"Central," she said, "I am Lady Blank. Give me Rogers, please."

"Which Rogers, m'lady?" asked Central.

"Rogers of Curtin street," replied her ladyship; and though it seemed as if Central wanted to speak to her, she removed the receiver from her ear and turned to speak to her daughter. Presently she put the receiver to her ear again; Rogers was at the telephone.

"Rogers?" she began. "This is Lady Blank. Yes? Now, Rogers, I want you to send to me, by half past six sharp, two dozen small cases—"

"What?"

"Two dozen small cases, without fail. Do you understand?"

"Yes'm. Two dozen small cases, 6:30 sharp."

"Yes, that's right. Good-by."

So her ladyship went on with her preparations; and all went smoothly on until 6:30. That hour came and went without a word from Rogers. Dinner was for 7, and the guests might come at any moment. At a quarter before 7 heavy vehicles stopped before Lady Blank's house, and then came a ring at the door. A man in black asked for her ladyship. As soon as might be she appeared.

"Your ladyship," said the man. "I'm sorry to be so late—it's about them cases—"

"Well, take them to the cook."

"To the cook—your ladyship? The cases?"

"(Of course she is quick; she is waiting.)

"Well, m—your ladyship—if you say so; but I had to go all over Bytown for 'em, and they're not all in equally good condition—some of 'em's a bit shop worn—not but what they're puffy good, m—"

—your ladyship—they're never been used, m—your ladyship—"

Lady Blank stood aghast. What did the man mean? She was about to scream for help from a crazy man when she heard the voice of a guest in the hall. She ran to the hall. The newcomer was speaking to the butler.

"Are any of the children dead?" she heard him ask. Then "O, Lady Blank, has anything happened?"

"There's a crazy man here!" she cried.

"I'm not crazy m, your ladyship," said the man, who had followed her from the drawing room. He was so evidently sane that the guest turned to Lady Blank.

"Are any of the children dead?" he asked.

"Children dead? No—there is no one dead in the house!" cried Lady Blank.

"There are two undertakers' wagons in front of the house, filled with cases for children's coffins," said the gentleman, and the man who had seen Lady Blank first broke in:

"Yes'm, your ladyship—you telephoned to Rogers for 'em, and I had to hunt all over Bytown for 'em—course, if there's no one dead, must 'a been a mistake m. I'll take 'em back, and no harm done."

"I didn't telephone to you, I telephoned to—"

"There are two Rogers," said the guest.

"You wanted the confectioner and got the undertaker. If you'll excuse me I'll send this man away and tell Mrs. Mywife that the dinner is to take place as arranged."

But the little cases from which Lady Blank's guests were to have eaten vol-au-vent or some other dainty were conspicuous by their absence that night; and ever since her ladyship has been particular to specify which Rogers she wishes to talk with over the telephone.—N. Y. Sun.

The Curiosity of Jones

It was at a dinner party. He was a modest man. Of course that was where the surprise came in. It was during the fish, and the conversation had not become general. He had been occupied with the young woman whom he had taken in to dinner. Suddenly he was interrupted, in the middle of a sentence, by a girl who sat on the other side of the table saying:

"Mr. Jones, there were three girls who wished to see you very much the other day."

Everybody stopped talking. He looked pleased and then puzzled.

"I was one of them," she continued, and glanced at her sister, whose smile showed that she was probably one of the party.

Mr. Jones now lost the opportunity to finish the incident gracefully and with credit to himself. He should have been satisfied with the admission. But masculine vanity is rarely united to wisdom. He might have known that it did not suit the other to leave the matter where it stood. Guileless and without suspicion he walked into the trap.

"I should have been delighted. But why did you want to see me?"

"Well, we were down buying Christmas presents for a charity tree, and we thought if we only could meet you you would be delighted to carry them for us. They would have reached to the top of your hat if you had them all in your arms. You would have carried them, wouldn't you?"

It was at this point that Mr. Jones asked his neighbor if she wouldn't have some salt.—New York Evening Sun.

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DOG, FERRET AND MAGPIE.

They Were All There at the Same Time Made things Interesting.

There was a fight this morning in a bird and animal store on Washington avenue that turned out one of the funniest impromptu entertainments imaginable. A tall man, with whiskers and very large pockets in his overcoat, walked into a bird store and pulled two yellow ferrets out of them. He wanted to sell the ferrets to the Whitechapel gentleman that conducts the place, declaring that they were perfectly trained and the best pair of workers in the country. There is such a din in the shop from the throats of 1,000 or more canaries, bullfinches, chaffinches, linnets, larks, lovebirds, loons, magpies, and parrots that it is hard to carry on an intelligent conversation; but the loud-mouthed and cheekiest bird in the lot is a black and white magpie that says the most disgraceful things in a vociferous way. It is said that he once belonged to the captain of a tramp steamer plying between London and Philadelphia, whose wife insisted on going to sea with him. Anyhow, the magpie is possessed of an extraordinary vocabulary and a malignant disposition.

"You're a thief!" shrieked the magpie, and the tall man with the ferret jumped as though one of them had bitten him.

"Did I get you—didagetti," went on the magpie, dancing up and down in his cage as though thoroughly pleased with himself.

"Don't take no notice of 'im," said the dealer: "ees allus got's 'ammer hout in the morning."

The tall man put his ferrets on the ground to show them off better, when the door opened and in walked a fellow with a half-grown bull terrier pup that looked as though he had seen grief, young as he was.

The male ferret went from the pup's hind legs, straight as a die and nipped him severely. The pup turned on the ferret with a snarl, but the ferret bit him on the nose, and then there was fun. The loon in the back end of the store had been taking a bath in a big dish of water, but he crawled out, stuck his long neck through the bars of his cage and laughed idiotically. About twenty parrots and a whole crowd of parakeets made all sorts of remarks, some of them yipping and yelling like the dog, and others squealing like the ferret. The magpie was simply beside himself.

"What the—what the—what the—well—well—well—what am I saying, what am I saying?"

"Take the ferret off," cried the owner of the dog; "you ain't got no business with ferrets running around loose now."

It was not such an easy matter to take the ferret off, though, because ferret and dog were all tangled up and rolling round the floor promiscuously. At that moment the other ferret decided to take a hand in the game, and his sharp jaws closed on the pup's off hind leg with a snap. That made the pup crazy. He got both his forepaws on the ferret and tried hard to pull it loose from that nose hold, but the rabbit chaser was riveted. The female ferret kept taking bites at the pup's rear extremities. Such a worrying, snarling, growling, snapping exhibition was never offered as a free show before, and all the talking birds appreciated it. "Chew him up—chew him up—what the—what the—what am I saying?" continued the magpie. Then somebody threw a big pail of water on the combatants, the ferret let go, the bull pup sneaked, and the magpie wound up the performance with "What the—what the—well—well—well—Minneapolis Journal.

Bobby's Composition on "Parents."

Parents are things which boys have to look after them. Most girls also have parents. Parents consist of pas and mas. Pas talk a good deal about what they are going to do, but mostly it's mas that make you mind.

Sometimes it is different, though. Once there was a boy came from college on vacation. His parents lived on a farm. There was work to be done on the farm. Work on a farm always has to be done early in the morning. This boy didn't get up. His sister goes to the stairway and calls: "Willie, it's a beautiful morning. Rise and list to the lark." The boy didn't say anything. Then his ma calls: "Willie, it is time to get up. Your breakfast is growing cold." The boy kept right on not saying anything. Then his pa put his head in the stairway, and says he: "Bill!"

"Coming, sir!" says the boy.

I know a boy that hasn't got any parents. He goes in swimming whenever he pleases. But I am going to stick to my parents.

However, I don't tell them so, 'cause they might get it into their heads that I couldn't get along without them.

Says this boy to me: "Parents are a nuisance; they aren't what they're cracked up to be." Says I to him: "Just the same, I find 'em handy to have. Parents have their failings, of course, like all of us, but on the whole I approve of 'em."

Once a man says to me: "Bobby, do you love your parents?" "Well," says I, "I'm not a-quarrelling with 'em."

Once a boy at boarding school went to calling his pa the Governor, and got his allowance cut down one-half. His pa said he ought to have waited till he was going to college.

Much more might be written about parents, showing their habits and so forth, but I will leave the task to abler pens.—Harper's Round Table.

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To Over 245 to 250 lbs., 2.60.

THE HAUNTED HAT.

A Story of a Dream that May Point a Moral to Some of the Ladies.

Angelina could not understand the cause of her misfortunes. All through the day she had had the luck against her. She had visited her favorite spinster aunt (from whom she expected to inherit wealth untold), and that usually amiable old lady had treated her with marked coldness.

"I don't know what it is," said the venerable dame, "but there are voices in the air, Angelina, accusing you of murder, I can hear them, I can, indeed!"

"My dear aunt, what nonsense! But there, I only looked in to show you my new hat. Do you like it?"

"Well, no," returned the elderly spinster; "I don't care for such a heap of feathers. The original material is completely hidden in a perfect nest of wings. The hat is suggestive of limitless slaughter."

"It is the fashion," replied Angelina, rather angrily; "and what is the fashion must be nice."

And then the ruffled maiden, after a cold adieu addressed to her aged relative, took herself off. She visited several of her friends, but one and all complained of the voices. They heard in the air accusations of assassination. Angelina was "an accessory after the fact," and these cruel indictments quite eclipsed the success of the hat.

The head-gear was pronounced here and there "stylish," but the cry of "murder" overwhelmed the praise. At last Angelina met Edwin.

"What is the matter?" cried the girl, as her betrothed turned away from her in horror.

"Your hat!" cried the budding barrister. "Every feather accuses you of cruelty! The voices of the birds are chirruping out charges of brutality!"

"But it is the latest fashion!" urged the now weeping Angelina. "Feathers are all the vogue."

"And to procure them the poor little songsters of the grove are massacred by millions! The parent birds are taken away from their young, and the fledglings are allowed to die of starvation! Your hat is eloquent of misery! There is not a wing on it that does not suggest a tragedy!"

The young man spoke earnestly. He had been called to the bar, and spoke as if addressing a jury.

"Then you no longer love me!" sobbed Angelina.

"How can I?" replied Edwin. "The birds are witnesses against you. I am fully aware of the consequences. I know the dangers of breaches of promise. But, Angelina, in spite of those dangers, in spite of possible damages of untold amount, I must withdraw. I can no longer be yours! All is over between us!"

"Oh, Edwin!"

And then not an altogether strange thing happened—Angelina awoke. The retribution of the birds had been a dream!

More was the pity! It would be such a loss to the feathered tribe if such a dream could become a reality!—London Punch.

DONE BY THE BAD BOY.

How he can Make Himself