

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 190.

THE CHECKERBOARD SUIT.

Percy Briggs is a busy man--so busy indeed, that I was much surprised to meet him at Cannington one day last week, apparently killing time, and incidentally killing himself with El Hempo Cabbages of local architecture.

For a week past Briggs had been absent from the city, without a word of explanation to anyone--in short, had erased himself as suddenly and as completely from our midst as if he had never been. His disappearance was the chief topic of interest at the clubs and in hotel corridors, and, as is usual at such resorts, many theories were advanced and much idle talk indulged in, but all was conjecture, for not even his most intimate friends knew where Briggs was or why he had left town so mysteriously. Even his partner in the well known law firm of Middleton & Briggs professed total ignorance of his whereabouts.

Of all men around town, Briggs was about the last to have been suspected of playing the vanishing act. Of moderate tastes and ambition, few vices, living as far as far as known well within his income, without enemies, but possessed of many friends, prosperous and popular, his farewell disappearance without the 'farewell' was indeed a hard nut to crack. Some there were who talked dogmatically about overwork and tapped their foreheads significantly; while others with an owl's leer, and looking as though they could say a great deal if so disposed, muttered in sepulchral tones about a woman being responsible for the affair. I was not to remain long in suspense.

The result of our casual meeting was an invitation from Briggs to dine with him at his hotel, which I was not slow to accept. Shortly afterwards I found myself comfortably seated in his temporary and modest quarters upstairs, outwardly calm, but inwardly a prey to the most consuming curiosity.

The fact is, Morrison, he began at length, pausing to bite the end of a fat, brown 'Cannington's Pride' which I had just politely but firmly declined, 'I am the victim of an ill-considered act of benevolence which I performed a couple of weeks ago, and have come here to get away from myself. The affair began in this way. An advertisement appeared in the city papers a few weeks ago inviting contributions of cast-off clothing for a certain mission in town, and here I saw a chance to get rid of a suit I did not like, and do a charitable act at the same time. You will probably remember the suit, for it was certainly conspicuous enough. It was that pepper and salt tweed with large check pattern all over it, which made one look like an animated checker-board. I had been wearing it regularly up till the day I gave it away, but never liked the pattern--don't know how I stood it so long--and although it was not much worn, I was glad of the opportunity to unload it. The mission people took it away, and I thought no more of the matter at the time.

'A few days afterwards, however, as I was going down Yonge street' Joe Marshall overtook me.

'Well, I'm blowed, he said. 'Is it you? I thought I saw you down town just now, coming out of Tankard's saloon, and I was going to claim that New Year's bet. I could have sworn it was you, only I never saw you so full before. But, of course, it couldn't have been you, for that was only half an hour ago.'

'I was indeed surprised, and assured Joe that I had not broken my resolution, and had not been in a bar this year.

'What was this fellow like? I asked.

'I only saw his back, but he was the dead image of you, same build and dressed as you generally are.'

'Strange,' I muttered. But the truth did not dawn upon me then.

'The next morning I met Gregory down town.

'I have just had the darnedest experience,' with a fellow that I could have sworn was you. He was walking along King street ahead of me, and thinking it was you, I endeavored to overtake him.

When I got near enough, I called out,

'Hi there, Perce, but he did not turn around, which I thought strange, as I was sure he must have heard me. So I quickened my pace, and when I got close up, drew off and fetched him a crack on the back that made him stagger. You're in a deuce of a hurry this morning,' I said.

Then a strange thing happened. The fellow jumped around quick enough, threw up his fists, and danced a jig on the sidewalk. 'Who's ye hittin'?' he said, looking as if he would eat me. 'I ain't no punchin' bag. Lock out er 'll knock yer block off,' and, with head down, he edged towards me by short tacks, locking not unlike a wrestling bear and about as grateful.

Finally he endeavored to land with a right swing which only my agility enabled me to avoid, so I tarried with him no longer, for he was a bad man. He certainly did not resemble you in the face, and wore about three days' growth of stubble on his face.

When I come to think of it, he had no collar or tie on, and was chewing tobacco, but I never saw a fellow more like you from a back view.'

'Thanks, old man, for the delicate compliment, I laughed. I could afford to then, for my troubles were yet to begin, thus far the laugh having been on the other fellows. And they were to begin soon enough.

'Scarcely had I left Gregory when I saw Daisy Charlton and her sister coming towards me. You know how matters stand between us, so I need not enlarge upon that. I stepped forward to meet them but they approached, they quickened their pace and passed me without a nod. They seemed to be conversing earnestly, but I feel certain they saw me. You could have knocked me down with a puff of tobacco smoke. I went on like a man in a dream. As I walked, the truth of the thing began to dawn upon me. It was that other fellow! My blood boiled with indignation and anger and I gritted my teeth savagely.

'Of course, thought I, Miss Charlton would at once grasp the situation when it was explained, and might even be amused at it.

'To cut the story short, Dick, I called at Miss Charlton's residence that evening. I know it was her evening in, but judge of my consternation at being told she was 'not at home.'

'After a restless night, and feeling much worried, I came down early to the office next day and found out Middleton there before me, a most unusual thing. He was walking up and down restlessly, evidently much disturbed about something. Presently he called me into the inner office and closed the door.

'I have been hearing some strange and disagreeable stories about you lately, Briggs,' he began abruptly 'which in view of your past record and generally excellent behavior. I can hardly believe. Before I come to any decision, however, I would like an explanation.'

'What do you mean?' I demanded, curtly enough.

'Just this, Mr Briggs,' he continued. 'I have heard on what I consider pretty good authority, that you have been frequenting the saloons a good deal lately, and have been seen several times very much the worse of liquor. What have you to say?'

'What I said is not fit for publication. I wanted to knock him down, but restrained myself with an effort abruptly. While I was walking up Yonge street, and making up my mind to leave town and go away anywhere, so long as I could get away from this infernal couple, I met Gregory.

'There he is,' said Greg, pointing excitedly across the street. 'That's him coming out of the Horseshoe Inn.'

'I knew whom he meant and looked. There, sure enough, was the cause of all my mischief--the toughest looking hobo you could pick out in a tour of the Central or the 'Pen.' I saw all in a moment. He was wearing my checker board suit.

'There would be no use reasoning with a fellow like that, and upon second thoughts I concluded it would be unwise and equally futile to try to take it out of his hide. The only thing I could do would be to leave the town to him, and

trust that he would leave also, or commit some offence that would land him behind the bars. So I skipped, Dick, and that's all there is to it--so far,' he added meaningfully. 'For I'm not done with it yet, and there's a few details to be squared up when I return,' and he broke off a section of black ash from his cigar as carefully as though it were a prime Perfecto.

'I have had lots of time to think things over since I came here,' he continued, after a momentary pause, 'and have come to two or three conclusions. When you give away a suit of clothes, Dick, have it sent to the heathen in Africa or China, or have a placard sewn on the back of the suit. 'This is not Dick Morrison.' Better still keep an advertisement standing in the daily papers. 'To all whom it may concern: The undersigned knows nothing about, and is not responsible for the acts of any prize fighters, loafers, boozers or beats who choose to masquerade in clothes like his.'

As An Adjunct.

Rivers--'And you approve of the shirt-waist?'

Brooks--'Certainly I do. It's a cool, comfortable, sensible, and becoming style of garment, and I can't see why anybody should try to ridicule it.'

Rivers--'I thought you had more sense than to take up with such an idiotic fad. The idea of a full-grown man putting on the upper half of a shirt as an outside garment and going around exhibiting himself where people can see him, strikes me as so absurd that I am at a loss to understand--'

Brooks--'Who's talking about a man wearing a shirt-waist, you walking imita-

tion of a human being? You asked me if I approved of the shirt-waist, and I said yes. So I do--with a pretty girl on the inside of it--and if you throw that inkstand at me I'll run you through with this paper knife.'

A Relic of The Past.

A Darlington lady, upon engaging a new cook was very careful to impress upon her that no followers were allowed at that establishment and added that the last cook had been disgraced through breaking that rule. Shortly afterwards suspecting that all was not right in the culinary department she paid a surprise visit to the kitchen and upon making a tour of inspection was astounded to find a fine specimen of the genus Atkins standing bolt upright in a cupboard.

'Bridget! what is this man doing here?' she asked.

'Faix, ma'am he must have been left there by your last cook,' said Bridget.

Musical Identification.

That very original character, the late Sir Frederick Gore-Ouseley, professor of music at Oxford, used his finely attuned ear to some purpose. When going to call on a friend in London, he asked a fellow-musician the number of the house in which he lived in a certain street. I don't know his number, answered the other, but the note of his door scraper is C sharp. Sir Frederick went off contentedly kicked the door-scrappers all down the street until he came to the right one, when he rang the bell and went in.

Ready To Oblige.

He was a commercial traveller, and when he boarded a train one day there was

only one sitting left in the coach which he entered. Half of the seat was occupied by a very prim, precise-looking lady, and when the commercial traveller lifted his hat and asked if he might occupy the other half, the lady eyed him carefully and enquired:

'Do you chew?'

'No, madam,' he replied, 'I do not. But I guess I can get you one.'

Successful Alarm.

Parents who like to encourage early rising in their children might find this scheme successful. It is relayed by a city newspaper.

A patrolman has two boys of about the same size. He bought for them two suits of clothes, one new and expensive, the other very ugly and cheap.

They own these suits in common, and the one who gets up first in the morning wears the good suit as a reward. Both boys like to be neatly dressed, and the plan works well.

The minute the lads are called they spring out of bed and make a rush for the new suit. Sometimes they reach it together; then the father steps in and renders a decision, from which there is no appeal.

Omar, The Sausagemaker.

A pre'zel unb zwel stein of peer, und dou, Mit sigtteen kinder, O mein liebe Frau! Sitting der pright peer-garten happy in-- Ach, dis wass Baradise already, now!

Song of The S. O. Stockholder.

Let us then be up and squinting Oil on weeds and sod and soil; If it doesn't kill the 'skeeter It may help the price of oil.



A GRECIAN BRIDE.