

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 1901.

## A WIDOW'S BID.

As a sailorman, holding a certificate as chief mate, though at the time out of a berth, I was in the Maritime Exchange, San Francisco, when the ship Good Intent and cargo were put up at auction for the benefit of the under writers. I had heard something about the queer voyage of the ship. She was from China and Japan, laden with teas, silks and fancy goods, and, being blown to the south among the islands by a typhoon, she had struck on a reef off one of the Necker islands. The shock dismissed her, and she was breaking up when her crew took to the boats and were picked up after several days of suffering. When this had been properly sworn to by master and crew, it was for the insurance companies to come down, and when they had landed over the cash the programme was to put the wreck up at auction and hope to get a bid large enough to cover the cost of making out the papers.

There was just one bidder, and, to everybody's surprise, it was a woman. I soon heard that she was a widow and kept a boarding house for people of the better class. She bid \$100 for the wreck as it stood, whether still hanging on the coral reef or at the bottom of the sea, and there was a general laugh as her bid was accepted. She had recognized me as a sailor while writing to bid and had asked me the distance to the islands and if I had ever been there. When she had bid in the wreck and was ready to go she gave me her address and asked me to call. Just what she was up to I couldn't figure out, but the fact of a woman bidding in a wreck was sufficient to satisfy a sailor that she was acting upon some information not possessed by the underwriters. I was on hand at the hour named, and I soon discovered that she was a woman of business. When she had made many inquiries about me and was evidently satisfied that I was all right, she told me she had discovered through one of her boarders that the cargo of the ship was far more valuable than appeared by the manifest. It seemed that some one had a private speculation in opium, the captain and mate standing in, and it was this knowledge that had caused the Widow Jackson to bid for the wreck. The secret had been let out by the mate while ill of fever and out of his head.

What the widow wanted of me was first, to ask if there was a possible chance that the wreck was still on the reef and if any part of her cargo could be got at; second, the cost of fitting out a craft to visit the scene, and third, if I would take a command on a percentage of what might be recovered and could scare up a crew to do the same. The widow Jackson was a brisk spoken, decisive woman. She had been left money. The adventure would be a big risk, but if the wreck was found the profit would be enormous. All I had to risk in it was my time, and I soon decided to do that. Acting under her instructions, I looked about for a craft to charter and after a little lighted upon a brig which filled the bill. I also routed out among the sailor crowd a mate, cook and six men who would take all the chances if paid a month's wages in advance. I got figures on the necessary stores, and the widow took a day to look them over. I expected the sum total would frighten her, as the figure was pretty steep in spite of all I could do, but when I called again she said:

'I have got that amount of money and a little over. I am going to sub-lease this house for six months and go with you on this voyage. I see you have figured on a cook. Strike him off the list. I shall be cook myself. If I can cook and work here, I can do the same aboard of a brig, and we want no idlers. I have fully made up my mind to carry out my ideas, and you will go ahead as fast as possible.'

I was pushing things along to get away at the earliest hour, when I heard that the late Good Intent was secretly seeking a craft for charter. Thus satisfied as to the value of the wreck if it was still intact and also made me hustle the harder. When we finally got away there was no talk

about it, and I was the only man who knew our real destination. That we should be followed within a week or ten days was certain, and we were no sooner clear of the heads than orders were given to crack on and keep the little hooker travelling for all she was worth. We were in ballast only having cleared for Japan, and I had picked up a good sailer in chartering the Duchess.

There is a wide stretch of salt water and weeks of sailing between the California coast and the Necker islands, which lie in a southwest direction and number 12, great and small. Only the largest two are inhabited, but I knew that residents of them roved among the whole group and that shell gatherers and traders would be frequently met with. Among our outfit was a 6 pound cannon and 10 muskets, bought of a junk dealer in San Francisco. If we found the wreck, we might have to hold it by force and do some sharp fighting. From the first day of sailing until the morning we sighted Nigger island, one of the Necker group and the one where the Good Intent had left her bones, she appeared to be certain that our adventure would turn out all right.

The wreck lay there on the reef as she had been abandoned, and a yell came from every throat. We had simply to feel our way down to her as near as possible and then take the yawl and board her. She looked a sad wreck, but we found her in fairly good shape when we got aboard, having the widow with us. The reef was half a mile from the beach, and the ship had driven on to it stem first, run about half her length and then made a cradle for herself. At high tide there were two feet of water in her lower hold; at low tide she was drained of every drop.

Now, see how queer are the ways of fortune. We had not been on the wreck an hour before two native catamarans, each carrying 15 islanders, hove in sight and came down to us. The fellows at once demanded a share of the loot, and we had to resort to the big gun to drive them away. They returned under a white flag before night and offered their services for pay, and 20 of them were engaged to assist us.

It would have been a great find without the opium, but the stuff was aboard all right. The value of the tin cases packed in one of the staterooms was not far from \$20,000, and of general cargo we took in a load which sank the brig to her plinsoil mark. In a week we were through with the wreck and ready to turn her over to the islanders for what they could get out of her. We up anchor and headed for the Pacific coast at noon one day, and within three hours we rose a bark which was heading straight for the spot we had left. It was the captain of the Good Intent, but he had come too late.

We made port after an uneventful voyage, the cargo was landed and disposed of with only a few days' delay, and one morning we were all paid off, said goodby to the widow, and I never saw her again.

### Further Information Wanted.

In one of the later settlements of New South Wales a man was put on trial for stealing a watch. The evidence had been conflicting, and as the jury retired the judge remarked kindly that if he could give any assistance in the way of smoothing out possible difficulties he should be happy to do so.

Eleven of the jury had filed of the box but the twelfth remained, and the expression on his face showed that he was in deep trouble.

'Well, sir,' remarked the judge, 'is there any question you would like to ask me before you retire?'

The juror's face brightened, and he replied eagerly:

'I would like to know my lord, if you could tell us whether the prisoner stole the watch.'

First Carrier Pigeon—I once flew 100 min. in an hour.

Second Carrier Pigeon—Hub! 'You're a disgrace to the profession!'

First Carrier Pigeon—Well, I'd rather be that than a meal for a hawk.

### OLD TIMER'S VIEWS OF BASEBALL.

"Smiling Mickey" Welch Talks of The Progress of the Game Since He was a Star.

'Smiling Mickey' Welch, who helped pitch the New Yorks to the pennant in 1888 and 1889, has interesting ideas regarding the progress of the game since he was one of the stars. The fact is, he does not think there has been much progress since then, and as he was a player of intelligence as well as of mechanical ability his opinions are entitled to weight however much they may be differed from. Welch lives at Holyoke, Mass., and comes here now and then to see a game, so he is not criticizing from heresy.

'The pitchers nowadays have not got anything on the pitchers in the '80s, and players nowadays have not got anything on the players of those days,' said Welch a day or two ago. 'The same tactics were used when I was playing ball that are used now, and the only way in which the game has improved that I can see, is that there are more good players. There are more good pitchers too, a larger number of scientific batters and more fast fielders. That is natural in the development of the game, as it would be in any other business, but the first-class players of the present are no better than the first class players fifteen and twenty years ago.'

'I know the pitcher has to stand back further from the plate now, but that does not make pitching any harder for him except that it gives the batter more chance to time the ball. But look at the new foul strike rule that batters have to go against now. Why, the first thing they know the very best hitters have two strikes on them and are in a hole.'

'They played the hit and run game in the '80s, but as I said, did not have as many players who could work it as now. I don't believe there ever was a better hitter than Anson; in fact, I think he was the best batter the game ever saw. Talk about place hitting, there was one man who could do it. Show me any pitchers of the present time who were better than Clarkson, Keefe and Radbourn. Those men not only had the arms, but the head. They were pitchers of fine judgment. I believe Clarkson was the greatest pitcher that ever threw a ball. Nobody was in it with him in the knowledge of how to use a slowball. 'Lady' Baldwin was the only great left hander I ever saw.'

'As an argument of what I say about old timers is the fact that the champions of today are instructed by one of the old-timers, Ned Hanlon. He, by the way, was the best base runner on the diamond in those days and the only one that gave Buck Ewing any trouble when the latter was in his prime. Speaking of Ewing, I believe he was the greatest ball player that ever lived. There may have been better catchers, but for knowledge of the game, knowing just what to do and all-around ability he had them all beat. Why, when I was pitching to him we used to waste three balls on such a good base runner as Kelly in order to get him to run to second and then Buck would give him a start and nail him by twenty feet. We always knew when a base runner was going down. We simply watched him, used our heads, and he would tell us himself. Ewing certainly was the king of them all and I've yet to see his equal.'

### Returned for the Pan.

Only the experienced and methodical housekeeper knows the agony of the woman whose maid forgets her tray while performing the ceremonious obligations of the house. That the importance of the tray is recognized in Milwaukee is evidenced by the relation, by the Sentinel, of the horror which seized upon a fashionable mistress while listening to conversation in the hall.

The maid had just arrived, and had been solemnly instructed as to the necessity of carrying the silver card-tray when answering the door-bell. It was an 'at home' day, and the domestic, immaculate cap and apron rushed to the door of the first tinkle. The caller proved to be the most imposing representative of the very upper set.

'Sure, an' she's in,' said Mary, affably, in answer to the usual inquiry, and started up-stairs. Half-way up she turned and rushed madly back, snatched the card-tray from the table, and holding it out to the astonished visitor, exclaimed:

'And wasn't I after forgettin' me pan?'

### The Little Seeds.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie was asked recently why he devoted so large a portion of his charities to the establishment of free libraries. He replied, 'When I was a poor boy at work in Pittsburg, Colonial Anderson opened a little circulating library of four hundred volumes for boys. No one but he who has felt it can ever understand the intense longing with which I used to wait for Saturday to come, when I could have a new book. I resolved then if ever I had money to give away, I, too, would found a library for poor boys.'

Colonel Anderson, as he distributed the worn volumes among the ragged urchins every Saturday evening, had no thought of the millions which would be spent in keeping up his good work.

No man who plants a single good seed can foretell the tree which may grow from it, or the fruit which it may yield for the healing of men.

Many years ago, Mr. Childs, the well-known philanthropist of Philadelphia, was asked by a crippled boy for work. Mr. Childs secured a position for him as book-keeper in a neighboring town, and at parting gave him a volume containing biographies of certain great authors.

For thirty years Mr. Childs lost sight of him; then he heard of his death in New York. He had never married owing to his ill health. His one book had given him a passionate desire to know the works of the men whose history he read in it; every leisure hour he gave to study. He had amassed great wealth and had spent a large portion of it for rare books and manuscripts.

His library was one of his most valuable in the country. In his will he left it to the city for the free use of scholars, stating that he owed all of the comfort and happiness which books had brought into his life to that gift of a single volume from a kindly stranger.

Lady (to departing servant)—What shall I say in your reference?

Servant—Just that I stood it for six months, mum.

'Ah, Miss Clarindi! may I dream that you will return my love?'

'You may, but it won't come true!'

### A Remedy for Worry.

It is impossible not to fret under certain conditions. Many a woman would be a wellspring of pleasure if she would only stop whining, scolding and fretting. It is not always inborn hatefulness that makes her do these things; she is irritated and out of patience with others who do not do their duty, and doubly so with herself for not being able to accomplish all she wishes.

She longs for more time and strength, then she thinks perhaps she could get through.

There are other women who have altogether too much leisure; their time is employed in pitying themselves, and magnifying all ills which fall to their share. Many lovable qualities are as naught when possessed by the complaining woman. Her friends, dread and her family endure her.

It seems a simple remedy—to go out of door. Will that give time and strength to the over-worked woman, or cure the chronic growler? Yes; if coupled with judicious healthy exercise. It must be an exercise that will give a woman something to think of in place of the narrow "head-mill" either of real or fancied or fancied cares. Mere exercise is not enough. A woman of family has sufficient of that in her ceaseless rounds. It is merely basking in the sunlight and fresh air that will cure the dissatisfied, sick soul of the woman of leisure and groans. To get at the best results, pleasurable exercise and and flesh should be combined.

May—Charley Stubbs is a good dancer in his way.

Sue—Yes, and in everybody else's way.

'I suppose it is a long time since you have had stage light,' said the friend.

'Yes,' answered Mr. Stormington Barnes, 'But I have box office fright every now and then.'

Hotel clerk—But, madame, this larger room is pledged to some other people.

Madame—That's all right; I'll just take possession, and when they come you can tell them you can't get me out.

Is it true, doctor,' asked a patient, 'that physicians won't take their own medicine?'

'It is about as true, replied the doctor, 'as that other people won't take their own advice.'

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