

STALLS FOR THE GAIETY.

Reggie Matterson was not a man who seriously intended to work mischief on his fellow-creatures. He was simply a good-natured, well-meaning idiot, who usually said or did the wrong thing. He was the kind of a man who carries his umbrella in triumph throughout a hot summer day, but leaves it at home the day the weather breaks up.

At school he was frequently thrashed for other boys' offences, and his business career was a long chain of unfortunate incidents. He said he caught trains that didn't run, missed those that did, got shunted into sidings, and charged for excess luggage, where ordinary men arrived at their destinations fresh and smiling, after travelling first with a third-class ticket.

But it was when Reggie took a hand in other people's affairs that he really shone. On one occasion he was begged to remonstrate with his wife's younger brother on his evil courses. It was suggested that Reggie should speak to him kindly, but firmly.

Nobody will ever know what happened. Perhaps Reggie overdid the "firmness," but it ended in his returning home badly disfigured, while his brother-in-law was so exasperated that he pursued his evil courses more violently, and was shortly afterwards bound over to keep the peace.

Perhaps the most remarkable mess that Reggie ever dragged himself and others into was a little matter connected with a couple of wrongly-addressed telegrams. He had a talent in that kind of thing, and on this occasion he brought off a double event in the shape of an exchange of telegrams which nearly wrecked two homes, and which has left an unpleasant cloud of doubt in the minds of two excellent women to this day.

It happened like this. Reggie was at that time confidential clerk to a solicitor named Peterfield. It always seemed to me that to make Reggie a confidential clerk was rather like tempting Providence, but the arrangement worked well enough until one morning Mr. Peterfield instructed the champion muddle manufacturer to send off two wires.

"I've had two stalls sent me for the Gaiety, Matterson," he said, "so you might wire to my wife, asking her to meet me here at seven."

"Very well, sir," remarked Reggie, genially, "I'll attend to that at once."

"Thank you very much," said Mr. Peterfield, not knowing the kind of circus which was to follow. "And while you are about it you might send off this wire to Mrs. Knott. It's a very awkward case, but it seems the best thing to do. Don't forget to fill in the address. You have it in your book."

How he managed to do it Heaven alone knows, but in some mysterious way he wired to Mrs. Knott—a good-looking, racy little woman, for whom Mr. Peterfield was conducting a matrimonial case of extreme delicacy—the following message: "Have two stalls for Gaiety. Meet me here at seven."

While to Mr. Peterfield's wife, a young but highly nervous woman, he wired the joyful tidings: "Your husband's previous wife still living. Return home to parents immediately."

With the genial courtesy which was characteristic of the man he paid for a reply to both telegrams, and then wrote an apology to a client to whom he sent somebody else's account by mistake.

Mrs. Peterfield sent no reply to the wire, which rather surprised Reggie, who, of course, didn't know that she was in shrieking hysterics on the dining-room hearthrug, but Mrs. Knott's answer came within the hour: "Shall be delighted to go with you to Gaiety."

Reggie was much puzzled. Why should a woman suggest a visit to the Gaiety because her husband had contracted a bigamous marriage?

In the course of an hour or two the truth dawned upon him. He had invited the wrong woman to go to the theatre with his employer. What should he do? Mr. Peterfield had gone away for the entire day, so Reggie decided to use his own discretion. This was a pity. If he had left the muddle where it was it wouldn't have been so bad, but unfortunately, Reggie decided to take "prompt measures" to put things right.

Mrs. Knott lived at Balham. He went there in a hansom, and explained, as delicately as possible, that she had received the wrong telegram—"through a fool of a clerk," said Reggie, piously. He then added that the private detective employed on her case had discovered that her husband had been previously married and that his first wife was still living.

Reggie broke the awful news to her tenderly, but Mrs. Knott received it with rare fortitude. She said that she supposed it couldn't be helped, and added, with a quiet wink at the muddle-maker, that she fancied she could find someone else.

Reggie was so shocked that he gasped for breath and groped blindly for his hat. But Mrs. Knott had not finished with him. She was pretty and a really charming woman, and told him playfully that if he had robbed her of her husband, at least he mustn't disappoint her about the theatre. She had quite set her heart

on going to the Gaiety that night. What was to be done? "You see Mr. Peterfield has arranged to take his wife," said Reggie, in perplexity. "That doesn't matter," she said cheerfully. "What about you? Can't you take me?"

(Concluded tomorrow.)

Found Her by a Tune.

West, New York, N. J. July 14.—Anthony Sperner a professional guitar player, who lives in East Sixteenth street, New York city, went through Adams street, this place recently, playing an air from the opera "Romeo and Juliet" on the guitar, in the hope that the music would reach his wife, who eloped sometime ago from New York. The opera had always been a favorite with his wife. While playing Sperner kept his eyes on each house as he passed, and soon he saw the face of his wife appear at a window in one of the houses. The face only remained for a moment and then was withdrawn.

Sperner immediately went to the office of Recorder Murray, who issued a warrant for the arrest of the woman and the man with whom she disappeared. A policeman returned to the house with Sperner to serve the warrants, but the couple had disappeared over the back fence.

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halt at nightfall by the corner of some wood to cook the dubious morsels of their evening pittance, are mercilessly reported to the local police, looked on as malefactors. Everyone goes in fear of these hungry marauders, and nobody will give them alms.—Independent Review.

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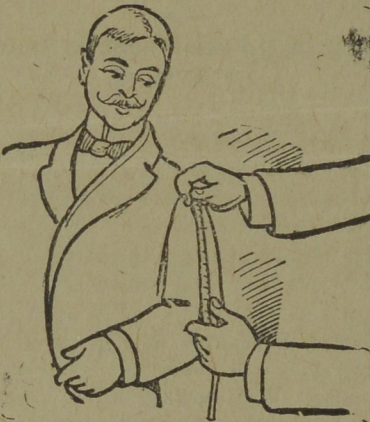
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