BOWSER MADE OVER.

HE MAKES THE GREATEST FLOP OF HIS CAREER.

Just as Mr. Bowser reached his gate the other evening as he came home to dinner a telegraph boy came out of his house, and he entered to find Mrs. Bowser reading a telegram just delivered. She gave a start of surprise and turned red at sight of Mr. Bowser, but, being caught in the act, so to say, she had no other recourse but to hand him the dispatch.

"I shall arrive on the 9 o'clock train. Mother," he read.

For the space of ten seconds Mrs. Bowser's heart actually stood still. Then Mr. Bowser said:

"So the mother is coming, is she? Well, I shall be glad to see her. We will hurry dinner out of the way, and I'll go to the depot to meet her."

"You—you——" she stammered, as she stood and looked at him.

"I what, dear?"

"You can't mean that you'll go and meet mother?"

"That's just what I mean. Certainly I'll go. I think she's just one of the nicest old ladies in the world, and I'm glad she's coming down. I'll get a carriage and you can go to the depot with me."

Mrs. Bowser was weak in the knees as she followed him down to the dinner table. For the last twenty years Mr. Bowser had been down on his mother-in-law. Time and time again he had expressed the wish that she was dead—blown up by dynamite or carried away in the debris of a cyclone. He had always refused to meet her on her coming, and generally managed not to say good-by to her when she departed. What sort of a change had come over him? What had brought it about? After puzzling over the change for a few minutes, Mrs. Bowser asked:

"Have you had any word from mother since she was here last?"

"Not a word."

"But when she paid her last visit you—you——"

"We had a little difference of opinion, you mean. Yes, I know. Mother and I have had quite a number of differences, but what of it? As I said, she's one of the best-hearted women in the world. The trouble has been that we did not understand each other."

"And you aren't mad about her coming?"

"On the contrary, I am glad."

"And there won't be any — any row?"

"I shall put my arms around her and kiss her."

Mrs. Bowser ate no dinner. Her

"THE WOMEN BENT OVER HIM WITH ANXIOUS LOOKS."

heart was too full. The judgment hadn't exactly come, but something almost as wonderful. She left Mr. Bowser to finish his dinner and ran away to have a five-minute cry, and then get ready for a trip to the depot. When he came up he said:

"Mother is very fond of lamb chops for breakfast, and she prefers chocolate to coffee. I have given the cook orders to have both."

He was calling her "mother" now, and yet Mrs. Bowser could recall that he had generally referred to the lady in question as "Old Cat," "That Person," or "Teeth and Claws."

"And she's great on apple dumplings, and we'll have them for dinner to-morrow night," he continued. "The theaters are open now, and we'll take her to a good play and try in every way to make her stay pleasant."

Was this Mr. Bowser—Mr. Samuel Bowser, who had told the mother on had last visit that she was getting to look more and more like a human hyena? Mrs. Bowser looked at him and rubbed her eyes, and then looked again. It seemed to be Mr. Bowser, but did the sudden and gigantice change of front presage his speedy death?

"You might also get her a new hat and a pair of shoes," he added, after telephoning for a carriage.

Mrs. Bowser ran upstairs and had a ten-minute cry before the carriage arrived, and it took her five minutes more to rub the red away from her eyes and use the powder puff. The depot was reached fifteen minutes ahead of time, and Mr. Bowser at once began worrying.

"Wouldn't it be awful if the train had run off the track and smashed poor old mother up?" he remarked, after walking about.

Only two months before, when she had paid her last visit, he had said to her:

"I don't say that I hoped your train would meet with a smash-up, and that you would be found in fragments; but I often wonder why Providence spares some people as long as it does."

In the next ten minutes he made five inquiries regarding the train, and was immensely relieved each time to hear that it was still on the rails and bowling along. It finally arrived with every car on the track and the mother-in-law on the front platform of one of the coaches with her satchel and umbrella. She caught sight of Mr. and Mrs. Bowser and went white in an instant. She expected to hear that the house had burned down, at least, and she couldn't say a word when she was gently lifted down, and a voice spoke in her ear:

"Mother, dear, we are glad to see you, and I hope you have come to stay a whole year."

She had been hustled into the carriage before she recovered from the shock. Then she came back to her normal feelings and said:

"Samuel Bowser, if this is a trick on me, I warn you that you had better look out for yourself."

Mrs. Bowser gave her the wink that Mr. Bowser had been made all over in the last three hours, while he replied:

"There is no trick about it, mother. I didn't want you to make three or four transfers and arrive at the house on the street cars."

"But I always have."

"Yes; but what has passed has passed."

"I can't say as I approve of your spending three or four dollars on a carriage to give me a ride. I presume Sarah needs gloves, stockings and handkerchiefs."

"Nothing is too good for you, mother dear, and Sarah can have all the shopping money she wants."

Mrs. Bowser winked again, and winked more vigorously and shook her head at the same time, and the old lady settled back in her seat and wondered if the house of Bowser had been struck by lightning and what was pushing the electric street cars along so rapidly. When the house was reached she hustled right upstairs to take her things off and learn all about it. She sat with her mouth open and her eyes bulging out and heard the news, and when she had taken it all in she exclaimed:

"Sarah, it hain't natural! If Samuel Bowser keeps this thing up for four or five days he's a dead man!"

"But why?"

"Because it's agin his nature. His nature is to kick and bluff and blow and find fault about the gas bills, and when he becomes a rabbit all at once you look out for awful results. I knew a man just like him once, and when he suddenly became good and humble and loving and stopped his kicking he went out to the barn and hung himself. Have you seen any signs that Samuel is struck on another woman and may be going to elope with her?"

"Mercy, no!"

"Has he been talking in his sleep lately, as if his conscience troubled him?"

"MOTHER, DEAR, WE ARE ANXIOUS TO SEE YOU."

"I am sure he hasn't."

"He may have a murder on his mind, or he may be going insane. I'm going down stairs now to see if I can rouse him up."

When she descended Mr. Bowser sat in the rocking chair with the cat on his knee and a smile on his face. He looked up with the light of love in his eyes, but the mother-in-law greeted him with:

"Look here, Samuel, if you have turned to drink you will have me to settle with."

"But I haven't."

"Do you feel any peculiar feeling in your head?"

"No, dear."

"Well, you sit right here till I have had something to eat, and then I shall have more to say to you."

She puzzled over the matter and asked Mrs. Bowser many questions as she ate, and when they went upstairs again Mr. Bowser was asleep in his chair. The women bent over him with anxious looks and as he murmured "She's a fair, good mother!" the mother-in-law whispered to her daughter:

"Sarah, I'm shaking in my boots. He'll either be dead and with the angels by morning, or he'll get up in the middle of the night, and chop us into minco-meat with the ax!"

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HOMETOWN HAPPENINGS

It grieves us to announce that while making pickled peaches one day last week Mrs. Frank Jones scalded her right arm in a very bad manner. She has the heartfelt sympathies of the Banner.

In walking about town yesterday to see if we could borrow $3 of some one to pay for a keg of ink we noticed that Mr. Henry Peck has lately painted his horse barn a beautiful and artistic yellow.

Farmer James Brown will please accept our thanks for two squashes left at the Banner office on Monday.

Mrs. Henry Davison heard yesterday that a little two-year-old niece of hers was killed in the earthquake in California early in the Summer. The news was a long time coming, but she promptly went into hysterics over it, and in this she has the support of the Banner. We are strong on sentiment, no matter how old it is.

The Rev. Mr. Peters one of our local ministers, paid the Banner a great compliment a day or two since when he said that he watched its columns carefully all Summer and never once saw the expression: "It's hotter than——"

One dear wife has now so far recovered her health that we do not have to wash and iron any more, and the time thus gained will be spent in making the Banner the greatest metropolitan weekly in the State. Wood and all sorts of provisions received on subscription.

People who are saying that Mrs. Saul Jones did not invite us to her birthday party last week because she looked down on a country editor are badly mistaken. We were among the first to be invited, but when we told the lady that the state of our wardrobe prevented she kindly excused us. Some editors will attend a party barefooted, but that is not our way.

Providence must have arranged it last Saturday that we should be on our way to Skinner's grocery at just the moment when a large and savage calf was about to attack Frankie, only son of David and Susan Hill. We caught the calf by the tail and twisted him around and saved the child's life. We are no hero, but when we happen to be on the spot we make things hum.

Farmer Jones, who is one of nature's noblemen, called at the Banner office yesterday to say that he intended to bring us in a bushel of crabapples in the course of a couple of months, and Farmer Schemerhorn whom we met on the street the same day, has promised a bushel of carrots. It is evident that we have a rosy future before us.

We met our mother-in-law, Mrs. Carrie Henderson, on the street three or four days ago and stopped to chat, and because she talks in a loud voice and gesticulates a great deal the report is going around that we were quarreling. We wish to deny it in the most emphatic manner. She was simply cautioning us against eating too many new potatoes. It was a useless caution, as we have not seen one for a week past, but it shows what a good heart the old lady has, and how little foundation the report of a quarrel had.

THE LUCK OF A BOY.

If a boy is born lucky you can't keep him out of it. Vicksburg has a boy 14 years old, named Walter Phelps, who in the last three years has gathered up a drove of twenty wild cattle found in the woods and swamps and without owners. He has also killed five alligators, captured and sold three white herons, earned $200 for saving a steamboat that was adrift, and gathered and sold in the North ten tons of Spanish moss.

The other day young Phelps went out in his boat and was run down by a steamer. He swam half a mile to an island, and it was six hours before he was taken off. During that time he found a cannon buried beneath the soil, and while inspecting a hollow tree he felt something metallic in his fingers and presently hauled out ten twenty-dollar gold pieces that had rested in the hollow since some time during the civil war. There is no use predicting that that boy will make his way. He has simply got luck on his side and can't help it.

PILGRIM JOE.

HIS FELLOW-MEN DO NOT ALWAYS PLAY HIM FAIR.

I had stayed overnight at Dog Hill and sold over fifty bottles of my Pilgrim Pain Alleviator, besides winning ten dollars at poker and ten more by betting on my grasshopper agin a big tumble-bug, when I started out for the town of Desolashun. The early birds were singing their sweetest lays, the Summer sun warmed up my back, and in my pocket was a liberal wad of the long green. Under these circumstances I sang and I whistled, and I said to myself:

"He that hath a heart in which there is no guide can overcometh a nation."

And also:

"Honesty is the best policy, but a good-sized roll helpeth a critter to be honest."

And further:

"Let us lift up the downtrodden and sorrer with the sorrering as we pass through life, but at the same time remember that 10 per cent. profit is considered a reasonable figger the world over."

Jest before reaching the enterprising burgh with the desolate name I came across a human hyena lying on his face on the grass, and as I halted my outfit and asked why he sorrered he sat up and wiped the tears from his eyes and answered that a man of innocent look who hailed from Missouri had come along and proposed a game of poker for the outfitting of the heathen of Africa with red flannels for the Winter. The hyena had been worrying for two weeks for fear the heathen wouldn't be supplied, and it was with gaiety in his soul and thankfulness in his heart that he sat down to play. Finding the other man an amateur at the noble game, he went in to win a hundred bolts of flannel right off the reel. He had four aces to do it on, but alas! when the showdown took place he found himself scooped on a straight flush. He was cleaned out to a dollar, and hence his sorrer and his tears. I was about to read him a moral lecture on the sin of poker and other games of chance when he appealed to me to get down and give him a show. He felt that Providence might be on his side if he tried it again, and his heart was heavy for those heathens who would have to shiver through a harh Winter if nothing was done. Under the circumstances, and always having felt to pity the heathens of all countries, including America, when it could be done without too heavy a financial investment, I descended from my wagon, and we were soon engaged in the intricacies of the game.

I soon had cause to believe that the sorrowing man had a way of palming the cards, and when I was sure that he had cheated me four or five times I hardened my heart and resorted to the practices of my ungodly days. In my youth a lightning rod man had taught me a few tricks with cards to assist me on life's journey, and I now brought them to bear. I dealt the sorrering critter a flush and myself a full house, and it warmed the cockles of my heart to see the smile that came to his face. He opened the pot and I raised him. He raised back, and we had fifteen dollars in it when we both stood pat. Notwithstanding what he had said about being cleaned out, he produced a wad of the needful and defied me until we had fifty dollars up. Then I called him, and raked in the pot, at the same time explaining that 90 per cent. of the money would be sent to the heathen of Boston, and that all the Winter flannels should be medicated. I was going on to express my great gratification that I had been chosen as the humble instrument to bring this flannel occasion about, when the old hyena precipitaled himself upon me, and I had to fight for my life. The struggle was long and fierce, but I finally got in one on the point of

"HE HAD FOUR ACES TO DO IT ON, BUT, ALAS!"

his chin and he slumbered. While he was thus occupied I took my departure, wiping my bleeding nose on a tuft of grass as I went. As I looked back over my shoulder when I was half a mile away, and saw that he was still lying where he fell, it occurred to me to say to myself:

"The world is made up of those who have no guile, but at the same time every mother's son of them will bear watching."

On proceeding into the town I was welcomed by the Mayor in person. He informed me that this was not his usual habit, as he was a critter that felt his dignity, but seeing that it was me he had departed from his usual course. I tried to show him that I appreciated the honor, and all went well until he suggested that in selling my Pain Alleviator I raise the price from twenty-five to fifty cents and whack up with him. I have no doubt that the people would have purchased at the price, as there had been an epidemic of the measles in town and the patients wanted something to brace up on, but with indignation burning in my face I said the Mayor nay. I wish to say right here to the public:

The standard price of my Pilgrim Pain Alleviator is twenty-five cents.

Whenever you find a human hyena asking more for it set him down as a swindler. Look fixedly at the cork of every bottle before buying and see that the initials "P. J." are stamped on it.

Look for the yaller label. Any sort is a fraud.

My bottles have been emptied of their contents and vinegar and other liquids substituted. Protect yourselves.

There is no graft about the Alleviator. It is straight goods first and last.

The druggist who advises you to take Old Crow whisky in place of my Alleviator is a horse thief and a swindler and is inviting his own doom.

When the Mayor found that I was not on the whack he complimented me as an honest man and said that he had only been testing me. Having eaten a boiled dinner at the tavern, I sought the public square and offered my wares for sale, but when I had sold a dozen bottles the buyer of the first one began to double up and howl with pain and accuse me of selling a rat exterminator in disguise. I knew at once that the Mayor was behind the game to get even with me, but I had no show. While I was offering to drink the contents of a whole bottle and forfeit one hundred dollars if one single spasm of pain followed, I was seized by numerous hands and thrown into a horsepond and became the sport of the populace. I was flung in again and again, and when exhausted at last I was ordered to leave town in a hurry. I went, but as I drove along in the darkness it occurred to me to say to myself:

"He who is honest hath a clear conscience, but now and then it may be just as well to whack up with a grafter and save going in swimming against your will."

That night I slept the sleep of the shivering and the just on the prairies, and an hour after sunrise I came to the cabin of a pioneer and asked for breakfast. The pioneer had taken a skate and left a grass widow. She was searching for another husband, and notwithstanding my dilapidated appearance she looked upon me favorably. I sought to cool her ardor by referring to my old woman back in Indiana, but it was a failure. Finally she came right at me with:

"Sir, do you scorn this loving heart or don't you?"

I told her that I didn't, but mentioned fifteen or twenty difficulties in the way of our getting married, even if we were inclined. She said that love conquered all difficulties, and that I might drive my outfit into the stable and go to plowing and consider all questions settled. When I declined she charged me with toying with her young heart, and appealed to three men who were passing. They didn't render any opinion on the toying business, but proceeded to pitch into me and hammer me until I was an object for commiseration, and was laid up for the ensuing fortnight. I seek the betterment of mankind and always have an eye out for the sorrering and downtrodden, but it is no snap. Human nature seems all molasses until you get below the surface. Then you find the guile and the thorns and have to use arnica to restore your pristine beauty. Hic jacet, which means that no square man gets a square deal.

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THE COLONEL'S KID.

BY M. QUAD.

Among the batch of forty recruits received at Fort Blank one day from Jefferson Barracks, was one who attracted attention immediately from his superior looks and bearing. He had an aristocratic face, a good figure, and it was evident at a glance that he did not belong among that crowd. Uncle Sam gathers in all sorts of men for his ranks in times of peace. If a would-be recruit passes the physical examination no details of his history are asked for. The man who dined at Delmonico's in evening dress a week before may be enlisted at the same time as the one who was driving an ice wagon. The ranks are an asylum for many who want to disappear from the world for a time.

"We have another gentleman among us," smiled Colonel Banks as he and others were watching the recruits as they drew up in rank and answered to roll call on the parade ground.

He referred to Private Harker. During the Colonel's time there had been half a dozen other recruits who had been set down as gentlemen, and he had never favored any of them. He preferred the other sort for soldiers—the machine sort. The Colonel was ready to admit that no two horses were alike in disposition, and that some must be favored over others, but when it came down to private soldiers he argues that all were alike. When commanded they must obey without stopping to think or to question. For any dereliction there was the guard-house. The superior bearing of Private Harker displeased him at once.

Like colonel like captain. Like captain like orderly sergeant. Private Harker had not been in the barracks an hour when it had been determined from colonel to corporal that he was a man who must be disciplined. Others would be given a chance, but he would be hauled up short the first time he was caught tripping. There are likes and dislikes in the ranks as well as in private life, and when a man in the ranks gets his officers down on him for any reason it may be figured that he will desert or commit suicide before half his term of service has expired.

Colonel Banks had lost his wife two years before, but he had not sent his little daughter Edith East

"THE COLONEL HAD FALLEN ASLEEP OVER HIS PAPERS"

among relatives, as it had been supposed he would do. She was a handsome, sunny-haired child of ten, and he clung to her and had an aunt come out and act as his housekeeper and a mother to the motherless. Scarcely any one at the Fort gave the child her name when speaking of her. She was referred to as the Colonel's Kid, and the appelation was given in affection. Of course, every effort was made to prevent her from straying beyond Officers' Row, but now and then she eluded her watchers and wandered over to the barracks of the "machines," and even as far as the laundries. She got to know the names of sergeants and corporals and privates, and there were some she fought shy of and others that she took by the hand and gave her confidence to.

The Colonel's Kid stood holding her father's hand when the recruits lined up for roll call. Her eyes roved along the line until they rested on Harker and there they paused. There was that in his face that attracted her, and she secretly determined to be friends with him. He saw her from his place in the ranks and his face softened. He dared not smile at her, but more friendliness came into his heart than had been there for many a day. The next day and the next and the next he saw her from a distance while he was being drilled. On the fourth day, while he was doing sentry duty at the flag-staff, she came walking up to him and held out her hand and said:

"I like you. Won't you shake hands?"

Private Harker's face was all smiles as he took her hand and assured her that he liked her in return, and that back in the East he had a little piece who looked almost like her. Ten minutes later the Colonel's Kid was back in Officers' Row with tears in her eyes, and Private Harker was in the guard-house. It was a tremendous breach of discipline he had committed. Never before in the history of the American Army, according to the sergeant, had a sentry on duty dared to pause in his monotonous tramp and ground arms and shake the Colonel's daughter by the hand. The captain agreed with the sergeant, and Private Harker got five days confinement. He knew that spite was the foundation, and he set his jaw hard. He had only been at liberty three days when fault was found with him at inspection of barracks. He answered back, and this time it was ten days in the guardhouse. At the end of that time he was called before the Colonel.

Private Harker bent down and kissed the child and then walked away and out of the fort, and was seen never again. The signal did not come and the waiting conspirators cowered in their bunks and made no move. The Colonel's Kid had saved the day.

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IT HAD MELTED.

"Like all other Americans landing in England," said the Baltimore man, "I was surprised at the absence of ice as one of the necessities. I thought to find it at the hotels in London, but when I asked for ice water I was met with such a stare as a waiter would put on if asked for kangaroo steak. Drinking water was served in almost a tepid state, and the drinks at the bar were the same way. Should one put out a sign of 'Ice Cold Beer' it would be stared at as a novelty.

"In every case where I mentioned ice I was told that I might find it at the drug stores. Therefore, I set out one day to make the rounds. Out of twelve drug stores I found five that kept ice, but they would not make me ice water. At the last of the twelve the druggist halfheartedly consented, but when he returned from looking into a closet under the stairs he placed his hands on the counter and leaned toward me and said:

"'My dear sir, it gives me pleasure to inform you that the ice which I had two weeks ago is all melted and gone, but if you are going to be here until next January, and will give me three days' notice any time, I will have from one to five pounds on hand for you!'"

THE GOOSE HANGS HIGH.

John Tyler, a merchant in an Ohio village, stood on the steps of his store, counting over a roll of bills. A goose from a flock on the street waddled up against him and scattered the money. A tin peddler helped him pick it up, but he had not seen the bill.

By means of a warrant and a constable and a Justice of the Peace the peddler was sent to jail for three months, and everybody said that it served him right. He alone registered a kick over it. When Mr. Tin Peddler had served ten days of his sentence, a boy in the village climbed a tree to get at a sparrow's nest and found the missing $20 bill woven into the nest. It had blown away beyond search, and a sparrow had picked it up to make a soft lining for the nest.

Of course, the peddler has been released and ample apologies tendered, but the end is not yet. He proposes to sue for damages, but it is not clear whether to begin action against the goose, the sparrow or the merchant. But for the goose the money would not have been distributed over half the village; but for the sparrow the bill might have been found sooner; but for his being a red-headed man would never have been suspected. Taken all around, it is a tangle that may bother the lawyers, and meanwhile the sparrow twitters the Summer hours away, and the goose that started the fuss hangs high and will keep an eye on the case.

WELBECK ABBEY'S UNIQUE ENTRANCE.

Welbeck, the Duke of Portland's residence, has the most unique entrance of any house in the world, for it is nothing more or less than a subterranean passage. On passing through the gates the visitor is conducted into a yawning tunnel, through which the daylight filters by means of great bulbs of glass let into the roof. This tunnel is wide enough for two carriages to pass abreast. As is well known, the late Duke scrupulously shunned his fellow-creatures, and he built this grim underground gallery in order that he might go backward and forward without being seen. The whole of the estate is undermined with these tunnels, which branch off in every direction from the Abbey, and each has its own secret means of entrance and exit, while fifteen of them have their termini in lodges whose rooms are also built underground, and which can only be opened with the Duke's master-key.