

## THE "GREAT UNRUFFLED."

The Unhappy Lot of the Average Hotel Clerk.

"If this is not a hard hotel I give it up," said a stranger with an easy, worldly air as he leaned upon the marble counter of a leading hotel.

"What's that, sir?" asked the obliging clerk, with an air of interest.

"I just remarked," said the stranger, indifferently, as he bit off and lighted his cigar, "that you kept a tough caravansary."

"Ah," said the clerk, in the most serene and affable manner, "what can we do to increase the sum of your happiness?"

"Nothing at all at present," was the response.

"Then why do you complain?" said the clerk, with the air of a man whom nothing could annoy.

"I registered here a while ago," said the newcomer, "and was shown to a room by the porter. I had my own key, and still, when I entered I found a man there dressing."

"Well, what has that got to do with the hotel?" asked the clerk.

"Oh, nothing in particular, except that it proves what I said about it. It's a hard place that don't give one man time to get out before another is sent to take his place."

"Well, now, me boy," said the clerk confidently to his new acquaintance, "it takes great head to run a big hotel and prevent friction. You may think you can stop it, but you can't. It's no use trying, and the only way to do is to let things take their own course, while you do the best you can. Do you see that?" said he, touching the guest on the shoulder as if to pin the fact there with the point of his finger.

"I like to hear a man talk, but I guess I'll pay my bill if I owe you anything, and take a walk," said the guest in an off-hand, don't-care sort of way.

"What! Leave this house? My dear John—your name is John, isn't it? I think your brother told me so—you must be mad. You can't find any such accommodations anywhere in the United States. Is that a good cigar? No? Well, I've another; and just wait a minute. I'll have the porter show you up to 108—the best room in the house, northern exposure, opens right out on the alley, and is as bright and airy as a hayloft."

"I'll take a look at it," was the non-committal response, and the clerk turned to give attention to a man who wanted to know whether Mr. Jones and wife had registered there "a week ago Saturday night last," while a bell-boy stood with a card in his hand repeating the words "Not in," and another person begged to know whether anything had been heard from the occupant of No. 458.

But the clerk was equal to the situation. Shaking his head to the man who asked for the Joneses, he said: "Not in," to the other, and dismissed the boy with a wave of the hand, the latter movement being prolonged into a friendly "shake" with a newcomer.

"It's rather dull to-day," he was about to say to the last arrival, when down came a great, huffy individual, in a fever of excitement, bearing a heavy valise which he refused to permit any of the porters to touch, as if it were liable to suffer from contact with the "luggage-man's" fist. "Do I owe this house anything?" he asked, as the key rattled on the marble.

"Not yet, sir," said the obliging clerk.

"Well, I never will," was the nervous retort.

"Why, sir?"

"Because I am going to leave you, and I don't propose to return. That's why, and that's all I've got to say," said the man with the valise.

"Well, good-by, sir," said the clerk, extending his hand. But the fat man seized the traveling-bag, which had rested temporarily on the floor, and hurried toward the door.

"Judge, Judge—why, wait a minute," the clerk appealed. But the person so addressed pulled his slouch hat close over his eyes, hugged his valise tightly under his arm, and hurried away as if he were afraid he would be persuaded to stay if he should confess the cause of his singular conduct.

"I guess he's mad," was the comment of the affable man behind the counter when he saw the porter gaping after him. "Did you do anything?"

"No, sir," said the porter.

"Then what ailed him?" asked the clerk, as he shook the hand of the newest and latest arrival.

"The bed was not made up," said the porter.

"How do you do, Mr. Roberts?" placidly said the "great unruffled."

"How do you do, sir?" said the possessor of the last name on the register. "Really, you have the greatest hotel on earth."

"Now, there, you are right," was the response. "Show the gentleman to 108—Chicago Tribune."

## Wanted's Chance.

In the smoking car of a Michigan Central train a Detroit man got to going on the political situation, and as a crowd gathered around him he kept his chin working away for a full half hour without a stop. Finally a stranger came up to him and whispered in his ear:

"Cut it short, my friend—cut it short."

The Detroitian launched forth with a new idea, but at the end of ten minutes the same man whispered again:

"Say, friend, aren't you going to divide up? I want a chance at this crowd."

"Eh? Do you belong to the opposite party?"

"No, sir—I'm a three-card monte man, and I want to work the crowd and get off at Jackson."

He was given a chance.—*Free Press*.

## Hong Kong's Prosperity.

Hong Kong occupies an enviable distinction. It is one of the very few communities in the world which is absolutely without a public debt. On the contrary, it possesses a balance fund invested at interest, and amounting to £200,000, which is nearly equal to a year's revenue. During forty years of the reign of the Queen, between 1843

and 1883, the city of Victoria, in Hong Kong, which was not in existence at the time of her Majesty's accession, has added to the British empire a vast shipping trade. The tonnage of the shipping entered at the port of Hong Kong in 1882 was nearly 5,000,000, a total larger than the tonnage of the shipping entered at the port of London in 1837, or six years before the annexation of the colony to the British crown, and when the island was a desolate rock uninhabited save by a few Chinese pirates and fishermen.—*London Letter to the Manchester Courier*.

## "Pumps."

"Do you think you can sell dress-goods and ribbons?" inquired Mr. Nathan Watrous, senior member of the retail firm of Watrous & McGill. The party addressed was a florid young man, with a florid nose, florid mustache, and florid hair. He was, in short, quite a Florida youth, and his name was Theopolis Duggan.

"I reckon so," he replied.

"Can you be sauve?"

"Which?"

"Can you support a becoming address in the presence of ladies—politeness, sauvity, you know?"

"O, yes," answered Duggan, "in the last place I worked the boys all said I was the sauviest man in the troupe, and a rustler among the customers."

"What business was it?"

"Pumps—wooden and iron pumps, and hydraulic rams."

"Quite a different line from dress-goods and ribbons."

"Well, yes, but I ain't afeared to talk 'em."

Mr. Watrous gave him a trial. The boys in the store labeled him "Pumps" from the first moment of his initiation into the dress-goods and ribbons department. The second day a petite brunette inquired for some "chicken down" nun's veiling. Pumps commenced to sweat.

"What color is it?" he blurted out.

The girl only rewarded him with a stony stare. Pumps rushed off after a new stock of information, and inquired:

"Is this a provision store or a butcher shop?"

"Why?" answered a one-hundred-and-fifteen-pound salesman.

"Because, there's a gal up there by the show-case who wants some chicken down."

The 115 pounds of pure and unadulterated sauvity waited on her.

"Show me some elephant's breath cashmere," said an elderly lady in gold-bowed spectacles. Pumps dropped a roll of paper cambric and again started down the road after some more intelligence.

"What's elephant's breath?" he gasped. "Hanged if I ain't thinkin' I've struck a menagerie."

"It's a shade of woolen goods," murmured another salesman, moving up toward the elderly lady, and selling her a large bill.

"Bet your boots I'll catch on," said Pumps, swaggering before the glass where the ladies tried on bonnets and hats.

Another young lady interviewed Pumps in the afternoon and said:

"You know steel soutache on gray velvet is considered very chic."

"It's just the chickiest thing agoin'," observed Pumps.

The young lady looked grieved.

"Show me some girafe-colored cashmere," she said, quietly.

"Another animal wanted," muttered Pumps, breathlessly, as he reached the other end of the store. He, of course, lost the sale.

"Show me some crinolettes," demanded a spare woman with a cast in one eye. Pumps was nonplussed.

"If I was you I wouldn't get a crinolette," he ventured.

"You wouldn't?" sneered the lady.

"No, not at this season of the year. I'd get a pair of striped stockings and a pair of bonnets."

The lady walked out.

"What did she want?" inquired Mr. Watrous, who had kept his eagle eye on the proceeding.

"She was hankerin' after a crinolette," said Pumps, "and I don't think we have 'em in stock."

"These are crinolettes," said Mr. Watrous, sternly, and pointing to a pile of the garments.

A Voice from the Northwest.

MILWAUKEE, WIS.—The *Daily Sentinel*, which is the leading morning paper of this State, writes: "St. Jacobs Oil, the wonderful remedy for rheumatism, has been used by a large number of people in this city, and with effect truly marvelous."

## The Fern-Gully of Melbourne.

Melbourne, the capital of Victoria, possesses a large and beautiful botanic garden, which, under the management of Mr. Guilfoyle, as the London *Garden* informs us, has been so remodeled and beautified that it now ranks among the most picturesquely planted gardens in the world.

Each class of plants is, so far as practicable, grouped by itself. The place devoted to Ferns is a naturally favorable location—a gully of about 300 feet in length, the average width of the Fern-ground on either side being about fifty feet. A meandering pathway, some 900 feet in length, crosses and recrosses the gully every here and there. Along this narrow pathway one passes under the beautiful green fronds of native Tree Ferns, Dicksonia antarctica, Atroparia australis, etc., the trunks of which stand like so many columns on either side. A large number of these and other Tree Ferns of various heights, from one to fifteen feet, many of which are indigenous to New Zealand and Norfolk Island, are planted along the water-course, as well as promiscuously over the whole Fern-ground. On the trunks of the Tree Ferns, and also in the forks and on the stems of most of the large, umbrageous trees which have been placed about in order to provide shade for and protection from undue exposure of the Ferns have been fixed hundreds of the Queens, land and New South Wales epiphytic Ferns, Platycerium grande and alcornoce (the Elk's-horn and Stag's-horn Ferns), and Asplenium nidus (the Bird's-nest Fern); while all over the gully some thousands of hardy outdoor Ferns, including Lomarias, Aspleniums, Aspidiums, Blechnums, Doodia, Polypodiums, Pteris, etc., have been planted extensively as an undergrowth. A perforated pipe is placed all around the edge of the Fern-ground, by which the place is conveniently watered by the mere turning on of taps. At almost any point along the narrow, meandering pathway beautiful vistas may be had, while from either of the large walks which pass across the gully charming views of Ferns, with glimpses of the lake and rustic bridges in the distance, serve to make some of the most beautiful natural pictures one could desire to look upon.

## The Rain-Tree.

Some travelers in South America, in traversing an arid and desolate tract of country, were struck with a strange contrast. On one hand there was a barren desert, on the other a rich and luxuriant vegetation. This remarkable contrast was due to the presence of the Tamai Caspi, or the Rain tree. This tree often grows to the height of sixty feet, with a diameter of three feet at its base, and possesses the power of strongly attracting, absorbing and condensing the atmosphere. Water is always to be seen dripping from its trunk and branches in such quantities as to convert the surrounding soil into a veritable marsh.

This tree also grows in the Canary islands and other tropical climates, where it seems like a God-send to the poor people, who must almost perish from thirst during the dry season, were it not for this curious water supply. And what seems most remarkable of all, is that during the hot season, when the streams and lakes are most or quite dried up, the tree is most active, and sends forth abundant supplies of water.

## The Tails of Comets.

The spectroscope has furnished us with the only evidence as to the material of which the tails of comets are composed. Several, which from their remarkable development have deserved to be noted as great comets, have had multiplied tails, or streams flowing from the same head, but separating so as to be distinguished by the unaided eye. These were supposed to be formed of different chemical elements, and the spectroscope has shown that such is actually the case. Thus when the comet has an abundant supply of hydrogen the finest of tails are produced; others are formed of carbon, chlorine, or even of iron as principal ingredients.—*Philadelphia Times*.

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"And do you think fried pigeons will fly into your mouth over there?"

"Oh, no, I don't believe that; but if one should fly there, I'd have the privilege of eating him myself. I'll not have to give two-thirds of the pigeon to the nobility and gentry, and the rest to the robbers."—*Texas Siftings*.

THE name of the Gladiolus, one of our most popular and beautiful summer-blooming bulbs, is almost invariably mispronounced. The accent should be on the second syllable instead of the first, thus, *Gladi-o-lus*. The name is derived from the Latin word *Gladius*, meaning a sword, on account of the peculiar sword-like shape of the foliage.

"All I ask is a fair show for my money," returned Pumps, dejectedly.

"What would you do if a lady should inquire for an imported jersey?"

"What are you giving us?" whined Pumps, "this is no stock yard or dairy farm."

"That, my friend," said the head salesman, "is a short jacket, introduced into this country by Mrs. Langtry. What if she should inquire for a tournure?"

"Me—oh, I'd—"

"That will do!" shouted Mr. Watrous, bobbing up from behind a bale of sheeting, "you can tourne back on this establishment and hunt work in a lumber yard."—*Texas Siftings*.

## Why He Wouldn't Get Up.

Domestic midnight scene: "Robert, you get up now and carry the baby awhile; I'm tired out."

"I can't, Jenny; I've got the headache."

"So have I the headache; still I must keep up. It's as much your baby as it is mine."

"No, it isn't. It's a girl. If it was a boy I'd carry it all night."

"So you are still angry about that, dear me!"—*Christian at Work*.

## A TERRIBLE PROPHETY.

The Red Sunsets, Cyclones and Earthquakes Foretelling Coming Disaster—How to Meet It.

The recent mysterious appearances following sunset and preceding sunrise have attracted wide attention from students of the skies and the people generally. During the days of recent weeks the sun seems to have been obscured by a thin veil, or a leaden hue, which, as the sun receded toward the horizon, became more luminous, then yellow, then orange, then red; and, as night fell, it was thought these appearances were ordinary sunset reflections of light; but it is now pretty certain that they are either the misty substance of the tail of some unseen comet, in which the earth is enveloped, or a surrounding stratum of world dust, or very small meteors. Prof. Brooks, of the Gault Observatory, Phelps, N. Y., has turned his telescope upon these objects and discovered what he thinks are myriads of tell-tale meteors. The formula is: "The earth will be enveloped by a dense cloud of meteors, and the sun will be obscured by them." The formula is: "The earth will be enveloped by a dense cloud of meteors, and the sun will be obscured by them."

Whatever the mystery is, there is no denying that some very strange forces are at work in the upper air. The terrible tornadoes and cyclones which have swept the country, and the great destruction and mortality visited upon the earth, are the result of the same forces which have been produced by the sun's rays.

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