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PECULIAR ACCIDENTS.

The "Irony of Life" Illustrated in Stories of Falls.

The "irony of life" was strikingly illustrated recently in the news of a rustic who slipped from a six barred gate and broke his neck and of an Italian aeronaut who fell 1,000 feet with his collapsed balloon with no worse result than a sprained ankle.

A Frenchwoman, Mme. Morel, and her daughter, while climbing in the Alps, near Zermatt, fell a distance of 1,200 feet, not much less than a quarter of a mile, and, although the mother was killed on the spot, her daughter escaped with a few bruises. Mr. Whymer, the famous mountaineer, had a similarly miraculous deliverance from what seemed to be certain death when scaling the Matterhorn. Losing his footing, he fell from rock to rock to the bottom of a precipitous gully, 100 yards in depth, only to recover his feet with no worse damage than a badly cut head. And M. Parville, a French writer, tells the story of an East Indian lying in the island of Oghia, who fell over a precipice 1,000 feet deep with no more serious consequence than a good shaking, his fall being broken by the dense vegetation which grew at the foot of the cliff.

While climbing a waterworks tower 240 feet high in Chicago a stepladder dislodged a loose stone and was precipitated to the ground from a height of 175 feet, fortunately striking telegraph wires forty feet above the street and thus breaking his fall. The spectators gasped with horror as they saw the man drop swiftly to destruction. A rush was made to pick up his shattered remains only to discover that he was practically unharmed. Not a bone was broken, and a week later he was walking about as if nothing had happened.

More remarkable and indeed almost incredible was the experience of Charles Woolcot when he was making a parachute descent in Venezuela. At a height of 3,000 feet Woolcot flung himself off his balloon into space, when, to the horror of the thousands of onlookers, the parachute failed to open. The man dropped like a stone with terrible speed until, when about 200 feet from the earth, the parachute flew open and at once collapsed. He was dashed to the ground, his right thigh and hip were broken, both ankles and knees were badly crushed, and his spinal column was dislocated, and yet, after a year spent in hospital, Woolcot was restored to soundness of limb after surely the most terrible adventure of which any man has lived to tell the story.

But it is in the history of ballooning that one encounters the most remarkable cases of sensational drops from the clouds. When Mr. Wise, a famous aeronaut of the early nineteenth century, was once making an ascent his balloon exploded at an altitude of 13,000 feet and began to drop swiftly to the earth, more than a couple of miles below. "The descent at first was rapid," Mr. Wise writes, "and accompanied by a fearful moaning noise caused by air rushing through the network and the gas escaping from above. In another moment I felt a slight shock, and, looking up to see what caused it, I discovered that the balloon was catching over, being nicely doubled in, the lower half into the upper."

The balloon had, in fact, formed itself into a parachute and, oscillating wildly, continued its descent until it struck the earth violently, throwing the aeronaut ten yards out of the car. "The car had turned bottom upward, and there I stood," says Mr. Wise, "congratulating myself and the perspiration rolling down my forehead in profusion."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

GOOSEBERRY WINE

It must have been about two and a half years ago that the elderly lady with a husband residing in our village conceived the grand idea of making gooseberry wine. She communicated it to the elderly lady without a husband, who again imparted it to the lawyer's wife, a happy mother with four unmarried daughters, of whom I was and, alas, still am the youngest.

The elderly lady with a husband prevailed upon that appendage to gather fruit, and such was his good will that he arose at 6 o'clock in the morning from his comfortable couch to obey her behest. He appeared at breakfast with lacerated hands and a perspiring frame, but his zeal sent him back to the garden the moment he had satisfied his appetite.

The elderly lady without a husband, having lost what the elderly lady with a husband possessed, was fain to help her cook with her own fair fingers. The lawyer's wife's four daughters were pressed into their mother's service and most unwillingly plunged their fingers into the torturing bushes.

In due time the wine was put into the casks, and the casks were rendered air tight until the following spring, when the sparkling contents were bottled and stowed in their cellars.

My mother, I remember, was the happy possessor of six dozen. The elderly lady without a husband had two dozen less. But the elderly lady with a husband carried off the palm of quantity, no less than twelve dozen of this homely liquor.

But while the wine was yet in the casks there came to our village a young man with an unmistakable air of gentility about him. He had no occupation, yet his attire was good in quality and faultless in cut. His purse appeared well lined and quickly emptied.

It was whispered by some that he was an eccentric member of a very high family and had quarreled with his relatives all around, so that was how he came to settle in our quiet neighborhood. Others, more maliciously disposed, averred that he was a first class burglar.

My sisters and I believed in the first mentioned version of the mystery perhaps because it was romantic and suited to our girlish imaginations.

He was invited to our village soirees once or twice a week, and as he always sought me out the moment he entered the room I was a target for all the venomous darts from the bows of the other girls.

Meanwhile the gooseberry wine had been bottled and pronounced excellent by the select few who had tasted it. All the bottles were sealed until the following winter.

The festivities of the dark season were ushered in by a small dance given by the elderly lady with a husband. Every one was invited, even the unknown, although our hostess looked on him with anything but favor.

The entertainment seemed meant to inaugurate the gooseberry wine rather than anything else, for instead of champagne our glasses were frequently filled with this home production.

Our hostess, with a beaming countenance, told us that she wished the rising generation to patronize this harmless beverage rather than its more potent reality.

The unknown and I after one waltz strolled away to the conservatory. When we were alone he looked at me with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks, gently pressing my hand at the same time.

"Dearest," he whispered, "may I hope that some day you will allow me to claim this dear hand as mine?"

I blushed as became a surprised maiden, although the only wonder I felt was that he had not asked me before.

I murmured "Yes" in my most dulcet accents and immediately received his reward for my acquiescence.

My heart bounded in response to a knock at the front door soon after breakfast the next morning. I knew it was the unknown's hand that had wielded the ponderous bronze ring. I heard in my distant dormitory the door opened and closed, and then there was a pause, next a quick step on the stairs, a gentle tap on my own door and the entrance of the housemaid bearing a card.

The piece of pasteboard bore my love's name and at the back in the penciled letters this short sentence: "Will you spare me a few minutes?"

Not very love-like certainly, but I clothed it in love's own language. When I entered the drawing room I found the unknown impatiently drumming his fingers on the window. The face he turned toward me was grave, not to say gloomy, but still unsuspecting. I went toward him with a gay welcome on my lips. He shook hands certainly, but very considerably.

"I have sent for you," he said, "to—Dash it! I don't know how to put what I am going to say. It is most confoundedly awkward. The fact is I had no right to ask you to be my wife last night, for I cannot marry if I would."

"Why did you, then?" I asked coldly. "Well, to tell you the truth, it was that deuced wine at supper that did it. It went to my head at once, and the waltz afterward finished the business. I am come to throw myself on your generosity. My income dies with me if I marry, and as I have no profession I must keep single."

"Go!" exclaimed I, with a withering look and pointing to the door.

He obeyed me and went and left the most miserable of beings behind him. After the first paroxysm of outraged nature was over I crawled to the cellar, and I did not leave that place till every bottle of gooseberry wine lay at my feet in shivered atoms.—London News.

The Man Who Thought He Was In Love.

By LULU JOHNSON.

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The worst of it all was that Alice was happy. "That," Buick told himself, "was the cap of the climax."

Had she been decently miserable, as he had been ever since they had had their quarrel, the misery that loves company would have drawn them together, and once more the superb solitaire which Teddy Buick had bought with a glad heart and a half of his savings would have gleamed on Alice Ryder's finger.

By all precedent that very thing should have happened, instead of which Alice presently became engaged to Harvey Post, and the expression of gloom which had become habitual to Ted's face deepened to a scowl. He took to reading poetry in the long hours of the night, and even in his dreams he lamented his lost love.

Reproachfully he gazed upon Alice's radiant face when he could not avoid meeting her in Harvey's society. At such times the sky seemed overcast, no matter how brightly the sun shone, and Teddy hurried home to brood over his great grief, made the sharper by the very apparent happiness that had come to Alice.

The day that the wedding invitations were issued was Teddy's field day, and the sun was stealing through the half closed curtains when at last he threw off his clothes and flung himself upon his bed to gain a brief transition from wakeful to dreamy grief.

He did not go near his office, but late in the afternoon his mother persuaded



SLOWLY HE FOLLOWED ALICE ALONG THE PATH.

him to take a walk, and he made for the fields, where he was least likely to be observed.

He plunged into the woods, which in that happy summer had been the favorite objective point of their walks together.

Now the foliage was sear and withered, hung to the ground as his own heart had been, and the giant trees lifted their naked arms to the autumnal winds in dumb supplication.

The place was thoroughly in harmony with his mood, and Ted flung himself upon a bank of moss to commune with his unhappy thoughts.

The woods represented his own life. Springtime, with its bursting buds and tender foliage, had marked the birth of love; then had come the summer of courtship, the rich fruition of promise under the ardent glow of the sun of love.

Ted skipped the harvest time, but now the woods were, like love, dead. The chill of winter was in the air and in the dull November clouds.

The fancy pleased him, and so occupied was he with his thoughts that he failed to hear the footfalls on the rustling leaves until the newcomer halted him with cheery cry.

"Mooning again, Ted?" cried Alice brightly. "Forget your troubles for awhile and help me gather some hickory nuts."

Ted rose slowly to his feet, and as he did so he glanced about and made certain that Harvey was not to make a third. He felt that he could not stand by and see the loving glances which the two would exchange.

Slowly he followed Alice along the path. Most of the nuts had been gathered, but some few remained, and presently Ted forgot his great grief in Alice's merry chat.

It was not until the nuts had been gathered and they sat down to rest on a fallen trunk that remembrance came again.

Alice saw the cloud that settled down upon his face, and she turned abruptly. "Ted," she asked, "do you want to make me very happy?"

"You're about as happy now as one girl deserves to be," was the ungracious response. "What do you want?"

"I want you to get married," was the surprising reply.

"That's what I wanted to do," reminded Ted, "but you wouldn't have it. Has Harvey jilted you?"

"Mercy, I don't want you to marry me," was the hurried reply. "I want you to marry some other girl."

"Rather hard on the other girl," commented Ted, "considering that I could only offer an empty heart."

"And an empty head," was the caus-

tic interruption. "That's just the trouble, Ted. You are having a lovely time with your heartache, and you don't want to give it up yet, but I can't be really happy with Harvey with the thought of your accusing eyes following me."

"Then forget it," advised Ted inelegantly.

"That's what I want you to do," explained Alice. "You never were really in love with me. I know it, and you know it. That is why we were always quarreling. We used to get along beautifully before we became engaged. Then when you realized the mistake you had made you became ill-natured."

"All on my side?" asked Ted.

"I suppose that I was just as mean," admitted Alice, "but it was because we both realized that we had made a mistake. I want you to forget all about it. Marry Beth Agnus or Letty Fredericks or Nancy Bellman."

"What's the matter with Audrey Dunbar?" demanded Ted. "She is the only eligible you left out."

"You wouldn't like her," protested Alice hastily. "I should hate to see you married to her. You would never get along with her."

"She's a nice girl," growled Ted, "but I'm not going to marry any one."

He rose to his feet again and shouldered the bag as an intimation that he was ready to depart, and Alice meekly followed.

Ted carried the bag to Alice's home, and it was fate that on the way they should pass the disputed Miss Dunbar and that Ted should be unusually effusive, while Alice was barely civil.

He did not know that Alice could be so pretty, and he was glad when he could leave the burden on her porch and hurry away before her little speech of thanks was half completed.

She came flying after him and reached him before he had opened the gate. "You won't marry Audrey, will you?" she asked pleadingly.

"I told you that I was not going to marry any one," was the impatient response as Ted shut the gate with a vicious bang and started for home. He was not yet ready to abandon his grief, but one ray of comfort pierced his once pervading gloom. Ted disliked girls who decried others. He had never known Alice to do it before.

Just to show Alice what he thought of her conduct, he escorted Audrey to the wedding and smiled sardonically when she caught the bridal bouquet, unfailing sign that she was to be the next bride.

However, Alice kissed her in congratulation with a warmth that little suggested the jealousy she felt.

There were three weeks of the honeymoon, and Harvey was giving the news to the new Mrs. Post after his first trip downtown.

"Ted's going to marry Audrey Dunbar," he announced as the choicest morsel.

"So mother was telling me," was the reply. "I expected it, but not so soon."

"I didn't suppose that you would relish such a quick desertion," said Harvey, with a laugh. But Alice only smiled.

She smiled still more broadly when Ted proudly escorted Audrey to call and welcome them home. There was an air of defiance in his manner that was amusing to the girl who knew him better than he knew himself, and Ted did not realize how truthful was Alice's declaration Audrey was the very girl she would have picked out.

He could not tell that Alice was counting upon his stubbornness to make her happy by removing his reproachful gaze. He only thought that he had shown her that he was a man of his own action, and therein he found great content.

The Medical Fee.

Dr. Arthur C. Heffenger, discussing "The Medical Fee" in the North American Review, deplores the notion which prevails in some quarters that the physician charges more for his services than they are worth. He instances some abnormally large fees which have been paid to medical men and shows that these were justified either by the delicate nature of the services rendered or by unusual conditions attending them. He says:

"The American Medical association, our highest medical authority, has never attempted to establish an ethical fee. In point of fact, the fee evolves itself and ever has been and ever will be a graded one. The great bulk of practice is practically charity—that is, it represents small fees or no fees. This is true alike in the remote country districts and in the great metropolitan centers. There is one difference, however, which should be distinctly remembered, and that is that rural charity is generally deserved, whereas urban charity is often misplaced. It is stated that practically 33 per cent of the entire practice of New York city is charity and that in a third of such cases the doctor is imposed upon."

Same Vintage.

There are some things in this world for which not even the most profound rural philosopher can account to his own satisfaction.

"I never saw an animal move so slowly before in all my life!" cried an exasperated traveler in an Essex carrier's cart, behind which the clouds of a rapidly rising storm were growing blacker every moment. "Can't the horse go any faster? You had an excellent one fifteen years ago when I used to spend the summer here."

"That's the curious thing about it," said the driver, gazing first at his steed and then at the uneasy passenger in a mildly speculative way. "This horse is the very same identical horse that I drove that summer. I don't know what on earth's the matter with him! He seems to have lost his animation."

—London Telegraph.

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