

The Bath Comedy

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE
Authors of "The Pride of Jeannico"

COPYRIGHT, 1906, BY EGERTON CASTLE

CHAPTER X.

LORD MARKHAM was a person of indomitable age and indomitable manners. He wore a full fitting wig, but he had a high reputation as a man of honor. He sat beside Sir Jasper on the front seat, while on the back seat sat Tom Stafford; and the curried speed cheerily along the up and down Bath streets out into the country budding with green, down the hill to Hammer's fields by the winding Avon. Sir Jasper's face bespoke great dissatisfaction with life at large and with his own existence in particular. Tom Stafford was beginning to feel slightly bored.

"An early spring," said Lord Markham, in the well meant endeavor to beguile away the heavy minutes and distract his principal's mind. "This very mild weather for the time of year, and the lambs are forward."

"Ugh!" said Sir Jasper. "Speak not to him of lambs," whispered Stafford. "Do not you see he is all for blood and thunder?"

Then he added maliciously: "There is but one animal in the whole fauna that Sir Jasper takes an interest in at present, and that's not easy, it seems, to find in these purities, though we know it does haunt them; 'tis the red deer!" He chuckled, vastly delighted with the conceit.

"Let us hope we shall not have rain," said Lord Markham; "these clouds are menacing."

"Nay, they will hold up for half an hour, enough to serve our purpose," growled Sir Jasper, and tipped the horses with the lash so that they spurned the slope.

"But we shall get wet returning," pleaded the well meaning earl. "I said so all along. 'Twould have been better to have gone in a coach."

"I vow," cried Sir Jasper, with a sudden burst of spleen—"I vow that I have it in my heart to wish that Villiers' ball may speed so well that I may feel neither rain nor shine coming home again. Home again," said he, with a withering smile. "Blasit it, a pretty home mine ist!"

"And a pretty cheerful fellow you are to bring out to a merry meeting," quoth Stafford from the back, "and a nice pair of fools you and the colonel be, plague on you both! And when you are shot 'twill be a fine satisfaction to think that your wife can console herself with the owner of the red deer, eh? What are you going to fight old Villiers about, I should like to know?"

"You do know," growled Sir Jasper. Then he exploded. "You goad me, sir. Do I want to fight Villiers? Is not this business the merest fooling, sheer waste of time when the real fellow—"

Do You Like Honest, Square Dealing?

Dr. Pierce's world-famed medicines are put out under the belief that publicity is the best possible guaranty of merit, and that the most intelligent people generally want to know what they take into their stomachs, whether it be as food, drink or medicine. Although it was a bold step to take, and quite out of the usual practice of makers of proprietary medicines, yet Dr. Pierce, some time ago, decided to publish broadcast and on all his bottle-wrappers all the ingredients entering into the composition, or make-up, of his celebrated family medicines. A square deal is therefore assured every one using his medicines, for one knows exactly what he or she is paying for when purchasing them, since every ingredient is published in plain English on the bottle-wrappers and the correctness of the same attested under solemn oath. These several ingredients are selected from among the very best known to medical science for the cure of the various diseases for which these medicines are recommended.

The most eminent and leading medical teachers and writers of all the several schools of practice have endorsed each of the ingredients entering into Dr. Pierce's medicines in the strongest possible terms. The makers of Dr. Pierce's medicines believe that intelligent people do not wish to open their mouths like a lot of young birds and gulp down whatever is presented to them, either in the way of food, drink or medicine, without knowing something of the properties and character of the agents employed. They believe that health is too sacred a heritage to be experimented with, and that people should not take medicines of the composition of which they are ignorant. Dr. Pierce's medicines are made wholly from the roots of plants growing in the depths of our American forests. They are so compounded that they cannot do harm in any case, even to the most delicate woman or child. By open publicity Dr. Pierce has taken his medicines out of the list of secret nostrums, of doubtful merit, and made them REMEDIES OF KNOWN COMPOSITION. They are therefore, in a class all by themselves, being absolutely and in every sense non-secret.

By this bold step Dr. Pierce has shown that his formulas are of such excellence that he is not afraid to subject them to the fullest scrutiny.

There is a *badge of honesty* on every bottle of Dr. Pierce's medicines in the full list of its ingredients duly attested as correct under solemn oath.

No other medicines put up for general use through druggists can make claim to any such distinction, and none other than Dr. Pierce's medicines have any such professional endorsement of their ingredients. Such professional endorsement should have far more weight with the afflicted than any amount of lay, or non-professional, endorsement, or testimonials.

Of course, the exact proportion of each ingredient used in Dr. Pierce's medicines as well as the working formula or manner of preparing the same, and the specially devised apparatus and appliances employed in their manufacture, are withheld from publicity that Dr. Pierce's proprietary rights may be fully protected from such unprincipled imitators as might be piratically inclined.

The preparation of these medicines without the use of a drop of alcohol, so

memor. He hung the reins to his man as he spoke and clambered down from the curlicue. Stafford had gone before him to the gate and was now stamping from one foot to another in exquisite enjoyment of the situation.

"Ha, ha, ha! Hello! Morning, colonel. Sorry to see you this way! Ha, ha! Have you brought another bath chair for our use? Oh, come, yes. 'Twon't be fair if he do not sit in a bath chair too! Say, Foulks, you wheel one chair, I'll wheel the other, and we will run them one at the other and let them fire as soon as they please. Gad, what a joke!"

Colonel Villiers turned upon his volatile friend, a countenance the color of which presented some resemblance to a well defined bruise on the third day. It was yellow and green with pain where it was not purple with fury.

"Mr. Stafford, sir, these jokes, sir, are vastly out of place. (Curses this time for the colonel, who was about to explain. Major Topham, explain to these gentlemen that I have come out to fight, sir, and that fight I will, by the living jingo!)

He struck the arm of the chair in his fury, gave his suffering foot a nasty jar and burst into a howl of rage and agony.

"Stab me," said Stafford, "I'd as soon fight an old bear! Whisper, Foulks, he is going to shoot in his cage—beg pardon, I mean his chair?"

"Such is his intention," said Mr. Foulks, grinning nervously as he spoke and showing the set of fine Bond street ivory all regularly referred to by Mr. Stafford. "But it strikes me it is somewhat irregular."

"Somewhat irregular?" ejaculated Lord Markham. "It is altogether irregular. I decline to have anything to say to it."

Sir Jasper remained standing gloomily looking at the ground and driving his gold headed mace into the soft mud as if all his attention were directed to the making of a row of little tunnels.

"What is the difficulty? What is the difficulty?" bellowed Colonel Villiers. "You wheel me into position and you mark the paces, eight paces, Foulks, not a foot more, and you give me my pistol. What is the difficulty? Blast me! Blast you all, I say! What is the difficulty?"

"The combatants will not be equal," suggested Major Topham. "I told Villiers that I will gladly take his place."

"No, no, no," screamed the old man, turning round, and then, "Oh!" cried he, and screwed up his face. And then the gout had him with such a fury that he gripped the arms of his chair and flung back his head, displaying a ghastly countenance.

"I remember," champed old Foulks, "the dear Duke of Darlington insisted upon fighting Basil Verney (that's Verney's father, you know) with his left arm in splints, but as my Lord Marquis of Cranbroke, his grace's second, remarked to me at the time—"

"Oh, spare us the marquis!" interrupted Stafford brutally. "Let us keep to the business on hand, if you please. The whole thing is absurd, monstrous! Look here, Jasper, look here, colonel, you two cannot fight today. How could you be equally matched even if we got another bath chair for Jasper? We cannot give him the gout, man, and 'twould be too dashed unfair. Colonel, you would shoot too well or too ill; 'twon't do! Come, come, gentlemen, let us make a good business out of a bad one. Why should you fight at all? Here's Jasper willing to apologize. (Yes; you are, Jasper. Hold your tongue and be sensible for once. You pulled off his wig, you know. It was not pretty behavior—not at all pretty.) But, then, colonel, did not he think you had cut him out with his wife, and was not that a compliment? The neatest compliment you'll ever have this side the grave! He was jealous of you, colonel. Faith, I don't know another man in Bath that would do you so much honor nowadays!"

"Oh, take me out of this!" cried the colonel, suddenly giving way to the physical anguish that he had been struggling against so valiantly. "Zounds, I will fight you all some day! Take me out of this! Where is that brimstone idiot, my servant? Take me out of this, you devils!"

Between them they wheeled his chair into the road, and his screams and curses as he was lifted into the coach were terrible to hear.

"Lord, if he could but call out the gout!" cried Stafford. "Well, Jasper, what did I say? No duel today."

"Do not make so sure of that," said Sir Jasper. He was moving toward the curlicue as he spoke and turned a sinister face over his shoulder to his friend.

"Oh," cried the latter, and fell back upon Markham, "the fellow's look would turn a chum full of cream! No, I will not drive back with ye, thank ye, Sir Jasper; I will walk," said Stafford. "I don't mind a little jealousy in reason myself, and if a husband has been given a pair of horns I don't see why he should not give somebody a dig with them, but if I were to drive home in that company I'd have no appetite for dinner. Come, gentlemen; 'tis a lovely day; let us walk." So Sir Jasper rolled home alone, and, as his coachman observed a little later, as he helped to unharness the sweating horses, "Drove them cruel."

CHAPTER XI.

LADY STANDISH was one of those clinging beings who seem morally and physically to be always seeking a prop. Before adversity she was prostrate, and when his lordship the bishop of Bath and Wells was ushered into her sitting room, half an hour after Sir Jasper's departure for Hammer's fields, he found the poor lady stretched all her length upon the sofa, her head buried in the cushions.

"Dear me," said his lordship, and paused. He was a tall, portly, handsome gentleman, with sleek countenance, full eye and well defined waistcoat. Could human weakness have touched him, he would have felt a pride in those legs which so roundly filled the silk stockings. But that human weakness could never affect the bishop of Bath and Wells was a thing that dignitary (and he gave his Maker thanks for it) felt to be utterly inconceivable.

"Lady Standish," said the bishop; then he waved his hand to the curious servants.

"Leave us, leave us, friends," said he.

Lady Standish reared herself with a sort of desperate heartiness into a sitting posture and turned her head to look dully upon her visitor.

"You come too late," she said; "my lord, Sir Jasper has gone to this most disastrous meeting."

"My dear Lady Standish," said Dr. Thurlow, "my dear child." He took a chair and drew it to the sofa and then lifted her slight languid hand and held it between his two plump palms. "My dear Lady Standish," pursued he, in a purring, soothing tone. If he did not know how to deal with an afflicted soul, especially if that afflicted soul happened to belong to the aristocracy and in preference inhabited a young female body, who did? "I came upon the very moment I received your letter. I might perhaps have instantly done something to help in this matter had you been more explicit, but there was a slight incoherence—very natural! Here he patted her hand gently. "A slight incoherence which required explanations. Now tell me, I gather that your worthy husband has set forth upon an affair of honor, eh? Shall we say a duel?"

Lady Standish gave a moaning assent.

"Some trifling quarrel. Hot headed young men! It is very reprehensible, but we must not be too hard on young blood. Young blood is hot! Well, well, trust in a merciful Providence, may dear Lady Standish. You know, not a sparrow falls, not a hair of our heads, that is not counted. Was the—ah—quarrel about cards, or some such trifle?"

"It was about me," said the afflicted wife in a strangled voice.

"About you, my dear lady?" The clasp of the plump hand grew, if possible, a trifle closer, almost tender. Lady Standish was cold and miserable. This warm touch conveyed somehow a vague feeling of strength and comfort.

"About me," she repeated, and her lip trembled.

"Ah, is it so? And with whom does Sir Jasper fight?"

"With Colonel Villiers," said she, and shot a glance of full misery into the benign, large featured face bending over her.

"Colonel Villiers," repeated the bishop in tones of the blankest astonishment. "Not—eh, not—old Colonel Villiers?"

"Oh, my lord," cried Lady Standish, "I am the most miserable and the most innocent of women!"

"My dear madam," cried the bishop. "I never for an instant doubted the lady's honor."

His hold upon her arm relaxed, and she withdrew it to push away the tears that now began to gather thick and fast on her eyelashes. The bishop wondered how it was he had never noticed before what a very pretty woman Lady Standish was, what charming eyes she had and what quite unusually long eyelashes. It was something of a revelation to him, too, to see so fair and fine a skin in these days of rouge and powder.

"And yet," sobbed Lady Standish, "tis my fault, too, for I have been very wrong—very foolish. Oh, my lord, if my husband is hurt I cannot deny 'tis I shall bear the guilt of it!"

"Come, tell me all about it," said the bishop, and edged from his chair to her side on the sofa and repossessed himself of her hand. She let it lie in his. She was very confiding. "We are all foolish," said Dr. Thurlow. "We are all, alas, prone to sin." He spoke in the plural to give her confidence, not that such a remark could apply to any bishop of Bath and Wells.

"Oh, I have been very foolish," repeated the lady. "I thought, my lord, I fancied that my husband's affection for me was wearing the guise of a fever."

"Impossible!" cried his lordship. But he felt slightly bewildered.

"And so, acting upon inconsiderate advice, I—I pretended—only pretended, indeed, my lord—that I cared for some one else, and Sir Jasper got jealous, and so he has been calling everybody out, thinking that he has a rival."

"Nevertheless," said the bishop, "he has no rival. Do I understand you correctly, my dear child? These suspicions of his are unfounded? Colonel Villiers?"

"Colonel Villiers," cried she, "that old, stupid red nosed wretch! No, my lord, indeed, there is no one. My husband has my whole heart. She caught her breath and looked up at him with candid eyes swimming in the most attractive tears. "Colonel Villiers!" cried she. "Oh, how can you think such a thing of me? But my husband will not believe me. Indeed, indeed, indeed, I am innocent. He was jealous of Lord Verney, too, and last night fought Mr. O'Hara."

The bishop smiled to himself with the most benign indulgence. His was a soul overflowing with charity, but it was chiefly when dealing with the foibles of a pretty woman that he appreciated to the full what a truly inspired ordinance that of charity is.

"My dear child, if I may call you so, knowing your worthy mother so well, you must not grieve like this. Let me feel that you look upon me as a friend. Let me wipe away these tears. Why, you are trembling. Shall we not have more trust in the ruling of a merciful heaven? Now, I am confident that Sir Jasper will be restored to you uninjured or with but a trifling injury. And if I may so advise, do not seek, my dear Lady Standish, in the future to provoke his jealousy in this manner. Do not openly do anything which will arouse those evil passions of anger and vengeance in him."

"Oh, indeed, indeed," she cried, and placed her other little hand timidly upon the comforting clasp of the bishop's, "indeed I never will again!"

"And remember that in me you have a true friend, my dear Lady Standish. Allow me to call myself your friend."

Here there came a sound of flying wheels and frantic hoofs without, and the doorbell was pealed and the knock-er plied so that the summons echoed and re-echoed through the house.

"Oh," screamed Lady Standish, springing to her feet, "they have returned! Oh, heavens, what has happened? If he is hurt I cannot bear it; I cannot—I cannot!" She clasped her head wildly and swayed as if she would have fallen. What could a Christian do, a gentleman and a shepherd of souls, but catch her lest she

fall? Lady Standish, however, she turned and clung to him as she would have clung to the nearest support.

"Have courage," he purred into the little ear. "I am with you, dear child. Have courage."

So they stood, she clasping the bishop and the bishop clasping her, patting her shoulder, whispering in her ear, when Sir Jasper burst in upon them.

It was his voice that drove them apart, yet it was neither loud nor fierce—it was only blighting sarcasm.

"So!" said he.

What was it Stafford had said: "There's the bishop of Bath and Wells. He's red, as red as a lobster, from toe to toe. They have a way, these di-



Sir Jasper burst in upon them.

vines." Oh, Stafford knew, doubtless—all Bath knew! Sir Jasper cursed horribly in his heart, but aloud only said, "So!"

Lady Standish flew half across the room to him, with a joyful cry, but was arrested midway by his attitude, his look. The bishop said "Ahem" and "Ahem" again, and then said he:

"I rejoice—I rejoice, Sir Jasper, to see you return unscathed. Lady Standish has been greatly distressed."

"And you," said Sir Jasper dryly, "have been consoling her."

"To the best of my poor power," said the bishop, and felt he knew not why (if, indeed, it were possible for him to feel that way), a shade uncomfortable.

Sir Jasper closed the door and bowed.

"I think," said he, "I ought to crave pardon for this intrusion."

"Oh, Sir Jasper," cried his lady. Her husband turned toward her for a second. She writhed beneath his eye and sank into a chair.

"Oh, Sir Jasper," said she, maudering, "the bishop has been very kind. I have been so unhappy about you."

"I see," said Sir Jasper, "that his lordship has been very kind. His lordship, as I said, has been administering consolation."

Here all at once his stoniness gave way. He walked toward the bishop and bent a ghastly face close to the florid, uneasily smiling countenance.

"My lord," said Sir Jasper, "your cloth will not protect you."

"Sir!" ejaculated the divine. "Your cloth will not protect you?" repeated Sir Jasper in that voice of strenuous composure that seems to tremble on a shriek. "Oh, shepherd, you!"

"Sir!" cried the bishop. "Do you mean to insinuate—"

"I insinuate nothing," cried the other, and sneered. "So, madam"—he turned again to his wife—"this is your choice, eh? You were always a pious woman, were you not? You would like to have the approval of the church upon your acts, would you not? Indescribable was the sarcasm upon his lip.

"Really," said the bishop, "I am seriously annoyed." He looked reproachfully at Lady Standish. "Madam," said he, "I came to you, as you know, in pure charity, in unsuspecting friendship. I was not prepared for this."

(To Be Continued.)

Mrs. Edward Jones and Miss Anna Jones of Hamilton will come next week to be the guests of Mrs. W. D. Scott.

CASTORIA

The Kind You Have Always Bought, and which has been in use for over 30 years, has borne the signature of *Charles H. Fletcher* and has been made under his personal supervision since its infancy. Allow no one to deceive you in this. All Counterfeits, Imitations and "Just-as-good" are but Experiments that trifle with and endanger the health of Infants and Children—Experience against Experiment.

What is CASTORIA

Castoria is a harmless substitute for Castor Oil, Paregoric, Drops and Soothing Syrups. It is Pleasant. It contains neither Opium, Morphine nor other Narcotic substance. Its age is its guarantee. It destroys Worms and allays Feverishness. It cures Diarrhoea and Wind Colic. It relieves Teething Troubles, cures Constipation and Flatulency. It assimilates the Food, regulates the Stomach and Bowels, giving healthy and natural sleep. The Children's Palace—The Mother's Friend.

GENUINE CASTORIA ALWAYS

Bears the Signature of

Charles H. Fletcher

The Kind You Have Always Bought
In Use For Over 30 Years.

THE CENTAUR COMPANY, 27 N. 3RD ST., NEW YORK CITY.

PALLADIUM WANT ADS PAY.

DR. PARK

has the exclusive right in Richmond of the new White Porcelain to take the place of dark amalgam filling. Guaranteed five years. No. 8 North Tenth Street.

Cheap Rates

California
Arizona
Utah and
Pacific Northwest

Rock
Island

Every day up to October 31

Only \$33 from Chicago; \$36 from St. Louis to California. Corresponding reduction from all points East to practically all points West, Northwest and Southwest beyond the Rockies.

Full particulars concerning the Rock Island's two transcontinental routes, thru tourist car service, rates and stop-overs promptly on request.

J. F. POWERS, Dist. Pass. Agt., 9 Claypool Bldg., Opposite Claypool Hotel. INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

ROOFING!

READY TO PUT ON Galvanized Steel Painted Steel Prepared Gravel Amazon Rubber Tarred Felts

TOOLS LOANED FOR APPLYING

JONES HARDWARE CO.