

# The Bath Comedy

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE

Authors of "The Pride of Jennico"

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CHAPTER X.

ORD MARKHAM was a person of indefinite age and indefinite manners. He wore a ill 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 carriage sped cheerfully along the up and down Bath streets out into the country basking with green, down, 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.

"Tis an early spring," said Lord Markham, in the well heavy endeavor to beguile away the heavy minutes and distract his principal's mind. "The 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 purloins, 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. "Blast it, a pretty home mine is!"

"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 curl, 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 with all."

## 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 andgulp down whatever is presented to them, either in the way of food, drink or medicine, without knowing exactly what the properties and characters 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 kept in ignorance. Dr. Pierce's medicines are made wholly from the roots of plants found 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 affined than any amount of lay, or non-professional, endorsement, or testimony.

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

as he spoke and chambered down from the carriage. 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 man? Oh, come in. 'Twon't be fair if he do not sit in a bath chair too! Say, Fouks, 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 was it not purple with fury.

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 which was not purple with fury.

"Mr. Stafford, sir, these jokes, sir, are vastly out of place. (Curse this

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 nasty nasty and burst into howl of rage and agony.

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

"Such is his intention," said Mr. Fouks; grinning nervously as he spoke and showing the set of the Bond street ivory already 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 malacca 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, Fouks, 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 fury that he gripped the arms of his chair and flung back his head, displaying a ghastly countenance.

"I remember," champed old Fouks, "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 behaved—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 ever! 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? 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