

THE LATEST HUMOR.

MRS. BROWN'S VISIT TO THE PARIS EXHIBITION.

WHAT THE OLD LADY SAW AND DID THERE.

BY ARTHUR SKETCHLEY, AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN PAPERS."

PART V.

[Continued.]

We was all-a-goin' to San Cloo, as they call it, as is their foolish way of talkin', for it's spelt Saint Cloud as is downright plain English; but they'd only speak plain, and not mess all their words up that fast, there's no doubt as a-many would understand 'em quite well, for the words isn't so out of the way if they was spoke proper, tho' I must say it's werry absurd on 'em to call that 'er church the Muddy Lane, for tho' arter a 'evry shower the streets is lithy, yet certainly no one could say as it's a lane; but then it ain't more ridiculous than our callin' the big theater in London Dreary Lane, tho' the time as I see it dreary were the word, but then it's all along of the French bein' one time so much about the place, as I've 'eard say as some of our kings was more French than English. But as to they're a-callin' the long street with the arches the river Lee, it's downright foolishness, unless perhaps there was a river run thro' it once, as I've 'eard say did used to be in London just close by where Fleet street stands now, and must 'ave been a big river, too, for to let the fleet come up it. But what I were a-goin' to say about San Cloo was the way as one of them parties went on-a-goin' in the chary-bang, as 'olds a good many, and we was all a-startin', and there was three werry nice young ladies as wanted to go partikler, but when it come up to the door where they was a-waitin' for to be seen with 'em, for I didn't feel over well, and there was to be a party for San Cloo in a day or two as I'd rather go with, so out I gets, and some 'or other my parysol 'ad ketchin' that field-male's bonnet, and in me a-gettin' up quick I took it all back off 'er 'ead, and if them ringlets wasn't false, she give a squall and shov'd at me that wient as pitched me nearly out of the chary-bang, so I turned round and give 'er a good tapper and then bundles out.

I do believe if several of the gentlemen 'adn't stood atween us, we should 'ave come to blows reg'lar, not as I should 'ave let myself down for to fight, but really, she did aggravate me, so she 'ad to go in to set her bonnet to rights, and I felt my parysol a-comin' on that dreadful that I 'urried into the 'ouse, and 'ad a good cry with a little somethin' 'ot, and then felt better, tho' far from all 'at, as come 'ome in the hevenin', and made their selves that pleasant a-singin' and playin', and thro' the weather bein' that warm, we set out in the gardin' a-listenin'; and as to that party in the black satin, she over-eated herself or somethin', for she was obligated to go to bed as soon as ever she got 'ome, 'ad been ill all the way in the chary-bang; but I wouldn't 'ave no disagreeables, so the next time as I see 'er, I goes up to 'er and says, "I asks your pardon, mum, for anythink as I said rude yesterday; and as to your bonnet, I do assure you it was an accident, as I wouldn't 'ave done it for the world, a-knowin' what it is thro' 'avin' took to a front myself." "Oh," she says, "never mind, tho' I did feel 'urt at the time, Mr. Johnson bein' present, and only lost my 'air three months ago thro' a bilious fever," as was all rubbish, for she was five-and-forty for a 'our; and as to Mr. Johnson, as was a great big hulkin' lookin' chap not thirty, as 'ad a nasty 'abit of larlin' without a-emptin' of 'is mouth fust; I'm sure he'd never think of 'er, tho' she's a-settin' of 'er cap dead at 'im, as the sayin' is, but arter that, we got on better, and that party for that bit of a breeze between us seemed like a thunder storm for to clear the air. I was a-goin' to bed afore Brown that werry night, and though I was a-undressin', as I 'eard a sobbin' like, so I listens, and sure enough it was some one a-sobbin' in Mrs. Wilby's room, so I puts my shawl round my shoulders, and goes to the door and knocks and says, "Mrs. Wilby, mum, are you not well?" "Oh," she says, "Mrs. Brown, is that you? I'm so thankful you've come."

I see 'er lookin' like a ghost for whiteness, so I says, "Whatever is the matter?" "Oh," she says, "I'm a 'art-broken wretched woman."

I says, "What is it?" So she says, "It's all my own fault." I says, "Can I help you?" "No," she says, "you can't, nor no one else. I'm rightly punished."

I says, "What for?" "Oh," she says, "I married that old man for 'is money, thro' bein' in dreadful distress, and now he leads me such a life, and ill-uses me thro' jealousy."

I says, "The toothless old brute." She says, "He's 'orridly mean, and I do assure you he'd 'ardly let me 'ave a meal, except what I get here, and because I met an old friend to-day in the Exhibition as I stopped to speak to, he dragged me 'ome 'ere, and has gone to 'ave 'is tea," and she says, "my brother is in Paris, and is coming to see me this evenin', but I darn't let 'im know."

I says, "Not let you see your own brother; I never 'eard tell of such a old Bluebeard."

While we was a talkin', there come a tap at the door, as was her brother as looked like a seafarin' character, as proved to be, and only just come 'ome.

I went out of the room in course, and thinks as I'd go over and stop that old Wilby from comin'. So I slips on my gownd, and tho' far from well, goes over to where they was a-takin' tea, and there was that old wagabone still at 'is tea, a-tuckin' into 'am like one o'clock. So I jest took a cup and set down near 'im, and begun a-talkin' to him, a lyin' old beast, as begun a humbuggin' about 'is dear wife bein' that delicate as she was forced to go to bed. I didn't say nothink, but when he'd took 'is tea, and said as he was a-goin', I says, "Law, won't you 'ave a 'and at orbrage with me, Mr. Wilby?" For w'd play one evenin' afore, and he'd won sixpence on me, as I see he were reg'lar greedy arter.

At first he sed he wouldn't, but then give way, and we set down to play, and he kep' on a-chucklin' over me a-losin'.

Afore ever I come in, I asked the lady of the 'ouse if she'd send me tea over to that poor young woman, as promised she'd do it as soon as possible.

I kep' lettin' that old fellow win till he'd got a shillin' out of me, and then he wanted to leave off. But I says, "No, give me a chance of winnin' some of it back," as he was obligated to give in to, thro' the others a-sayin' it were fair.

Brown he come into the room, as 'ad been doin' a pipe, and says, "Hallo, Martha, I thought you'd gone to bed."

I says, "I changed my mind."

Jest then the waiter come in and says to me, "The lady ain't there, for I've took over the tea myself, and the room's empty."

I says old Wilby, "What lady?" I says, "Oh, nobody you knows; a friend of mine."

So the waiter says, "Then you don't mean the tea for this gentleman's wife?"

Up jumps old Wilby, and rushes out of the room: I follers 'im, and got up to the room as quick as he did, and sure enough it was dark and empty.

He turns on me, and says, "This is your 'andy work, you old cockatrice!"

I says, "You call me such names, and I'll tear your eyes out."

He says, "Where's my wife?" and rushes into my room.

I says, "Come out of there, and don't make a fool of yourself." I'd got a light, and on the table there was a letter for 'im, as he ketch'd up and read, and then says, "It's all a plot, and you're in it."

I says, "I knows nothink about it," but I says, "I do know one thing, and that is, as you treated 'er shameful; and if she's gone to her brother, it only serves you right."

He says, "You don't mean to say that seafarin' parysol as I left 'er here along with isn't 'er brother?"

He says, "You must be a fool to believe sich a tale, and was a-rushin' out."

"Now," I says, "you'll excuse me, but," I says, "don't you go and make yourself a larlin' stock to every one in the 'ouse, but keep quiet; if she's a bad woman, let 'er go, and you're well rid of 'er, and be sure it'll come 'ome to 'er."

He begun a-cussin' of 'er, so I says, "Don't do that, for, remember as cusses is like chickens, they comes 'ome to roost;" so I says, "let 'er go, and you take yourself off to the quiet."

"Well," he says, "you're no fool, tho' nobody wouldn't believe it was in you to look at you."

I says, "Don't the letter say where's she's gone?"

"Oh," he says, "I don't care, leave me alone, that's all," and so I did, and when Brown come over to 'im, and he says, "I do believe as you'll be a-goin' into the Toolrees and a-interferin' with the Hemptre 'isself next."

"Ah," says I, "I could tell 'im a bit of my mind as would do 'im good, and I'm sure I could manage that poor little Prince Imperial better, as I see lookin' werry pasty a-walkin' in the gardins, as wants feedin' up and not to be allowed for to set about a-drinkin' wine with a lot of little boys as I see in the picture on myself."

We 'eard old Wilby a-fidgetin' about a good deal, and I kep' a-dreamin' and a-thinkin' about that poor young woman, and didn't get no sleep, but just as I dropped off if they didn't come and thump at the door and say as it was time for me to get up as it had gone five.

I says, "Get up at this hour, what for?" The man says, "You're a-goin' by the fast train."

I says, "I ain't."

"Oh," he says, "then it's the next room, as is sure enough it was old Wilby a-goin' off, and go he did, and good riddance; and I says to Brown, "he must 'ave done very bad by 'er for to make 'er run away like that."

"Oh," he says, "she's only a-actin' ally mode de Parry, and has caught up their ways."

"Rubbish, there's good and bad, no doubt," ere like everywhere else; but I couldn't go to sleep no more, and lay there a-thinkin' over all manner, and what I 'eard about their French ways of puttin' 'all the children out to nuss, as dies by the thousand, and is a bad way for to go on jest to save their selves the trouble; but, law, it don't do for to think over the way as children is treated in England, as is bad enough, goodness knows.

Brown, he got up in a reg'lar bad temper, that short, as there weren't no speakin' to 'im, and was that rude to me over breakfast thro' a-sidin' agin me when I said as I'd see Bony-party a-lyin' 'is state in Baker street, 'cos parties said they was a-goin' to see 'is tomb, as I've seen myself, but wanted for to go into Paris to do a little bit of shoppin' with Mrs. Ditcher, as I knows is as good as French to go shoppin' with, and wouldn't 'ave thought of goin' alone, for no sooner do they find out as you're English, than they sticks it on pretty thick, I can tell you, everywhere about Paris, downright barefaced robbery; but I must say as I do think as I never did know sich a reg'lar swindle as one of them dinners as we took in the Pally Royal as was two francs seventy-five, as they tell us means three francs; and they'd been and put on a lot for to ketch the English, as they couldn't wone be that ravenous as they'd be drove to eat anythink and pay thro' their noses into the bargain.

Well, we was a pretty large party, and Miss Tredwell were there, as 'ad got sick of 'er 'art at Wersales and come back, and she kep' on a-talkin' what she calls French, as is, in my opinion, nothink but gibberish; well, one says as they'd like one thing, and one another; as for me, the only thing as I took extra were a bit of butter and a reddish 'or, and couldn't drink their wine, and 'ad a bottle of pale ale, and bless you, the money as that dinner come to was turtle and wension, as the sayin' is.

So I says it's downright robbery, and quite as bad as the Caffee Shanton, as they charged us a franc and a-half for a cup of the most awful coffee as ever I did taste, wuss than the Tunis.

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