My Checkered Luck

[Original.]

"It's too bad."

"I am dreadfully sorry, my dear young lady. It could not be helped."

"I have been counting on this story to give me a literary reputation. You have ruined all these hopes."

This was ridiculous. The story was below the average.

The truth is that Howkins, the editor and proprietor of the magazine, had no business to go away and leave me, a scatter brained youngster, in full control. I had hosts of friends, and my mind was absorbed with youthful pleasures. As to my work at the editorial rooms, Howkins had arranged everything before his departure, so that there was nothing to do but take the copy for the next issue out of his desk and send it to the composing room. Among other copy I sent up a story called "What's It All About?" by Miss Mildred Eaton. I was locking my desk one Friday afternoon preparatory to going into the country till the following Tuesday when a message came down from the composing room that the story "What's It All About?" was incomplete. I called for the copy and found the last two chapters missing.

Here was a pretty kettle of fish. I ransacked the office without success; sent for the author and was informed that she had gone on a trip, no one knew where. What was I to do? Give up my outing to search for a needle in a haystack? Not I. My resolution was taken. It was then 2 o'clock. By 4 I could skim the manuscript, by 6 I could write the last chapters and be ready for the 7 o'clock train instead of the 3 o'clock, as I had intended.

Had I taken more time and put my mind on my work instead of dwelling on the outing I was to have, afraid all the while that I would miss the train—the last till the next morning—I might have done fairly well. As it was I made a frightful mess of the job. I mistook the hero for the villain and brought the story to a close by putting in his mouth a high flown, virtuous enunciation. The heroine I made to take a back seat, but fortunately on the same bench with the hero. I finished the work at half past 6, gave it to a composing room messenger who was waiting for it, and made a dash for the train.

Well, the story came out, and with it came the author, a pretty girl of twenty, who sought me in my office with tears in her eyes. Had she stormed I could have stood up against her manfully. As it was, I could only pretend to weep, not at the position my blunder had placed me in, but that I should have ruined her hopes of literary fame. I told her that I seriously meditated drowning myself. Since I made the threat with my head buried in my arms, both head and arms resting on my desk, my whole body shaking convulsively, she feared I would carry it out. When she raised my face with her own soft hands and I looked into her tear dimmed but forgiving eyes, I was filled with shame.

"My dear Miss Eaton," I sobbed, "let us hope that out of this misfortune may come some reparation for you which, taken at the flood, will lead to fortune. I am one of those fellows whose lives are a chain of lucky and unlucky incidents. I am constantly meeting with misfortune—my own fault, I dare say—but I always come out ahead in the game. Write a new story, and I will use all my influence with Mr. Howkins to have it published as a 'special feature.' Now tell me that you forgive me."

She put out her hand, smiling through her tears, and went away, leaving me to go on repenting my carelessness.

When the first batch of criticisms for the story of the magazine came in I braced myself to bear the references to the tale I had ruined as one about to be executed nerves himself for the ordeal. With the first I caught a faint gleam of hope. Here it is:

The story by Miss Eaton, "What's It All About?" is, judging from its name, what it is doubtless intended to be—a puzzle. What principles are covered under the strange ending probably only students of the introspective school will be able to explain satisfactorily. In this respect the story will excite great interest.

The next was evidently a criticism by some critic who was possibly hurrying, as I had done, to the country and had only skimmed the early part of the story, for he pronounced the ending "just what might be expected in this inferior class of work." The third spoke of the pleasant style in which "What's It All About?" was written—an easy way of criticising a story the critic is too busy to read. Seven critics gave but pathetical explanations of the mystery attending the closing chapters. In the whole batch of criticisms there was not one which indicated that the story had been slaughtered by a graceless scamp in a hurry to get away on a pleasure trip.

In view of the attention these criticisms called to the story the author found no difficulty in securing a publisher for it in book form. It was considered too deep to have a large sale except among critical, analytical, philosophical and skeptical people, but it made a name for the author, and she has made a fortune.

I suppose I should have had the modesty to consider myself well out of a bad scrape and acknowledge my fault. To Howkins I did; to Miss Eaton I did not. I threw out a hint that seeing the story as he had written it was doomed to failu. I had concocted a scheme to make it a success and make her famous. Her gratitude gave me not only her for a wife, but the management of her fortune.

EMERY FORSYTHE.

Symptoms.

A physician was talking about his patient's symptoms.

"Young, strong people don't give me enough symptoms when they are ill," he said, "but the middle aged and the aged give me too many. Thinking about their health all the time, studying their condition all the time, the aged and the middle aged discover a symptom in every muscle, in every organ, in every limb. Thus they confuse me.

"The average sufferer of fifty or so will pour upon my head a deluge of symptoms like this:

"'Well, doctor, I'm miserable all over, feverish one minute, freezing the next. I've a gnawing pain in my hip and side and back and an all gone sensation in the stomach, with a shooting, neuralgic headache over the left eye. I have a queer taste in my mouth, a dizziness when I stoop over and a dull ache up and down the right side, along with a kind of numbness. I cough a lot, my throat's sore, and I've the earache. Appetite's fair, but not what it should be. I have a feeling of lassitude, and I'm very weak. These are only a few of my main symptoms. To proceed, etc.'"—Exchange.

An Unruffled Spirit.

A contented spirit was Mrs. Snow's, so contended that at times her neighbors found it trying and took an unrighteous satisfaction in presenting any small thorns which might prick through her comfort.

"No, my Angie hasn't the measles," said Mrs. Snow one day. "Well, perhaps it seems strange she should escape the epidemic, but my children are unusually fortunate always in those respects. Of course I take the best of care of them, and, then, they inherit a tendency to throw off any germs. I anticipate no illness with Angie."

In spite of this the redoubtable Angie came down with measles a week later, and the inquiring friend again approached Mrs. Snow.

"Yes, dear Angie has the measles at last," said the contented mother. "Now, most of the other children are well, and as the doctor has plenty of time to attend to her it really seemed an opportunity for Angie. I don't suppose there ever was a child on whom they came out more beautifully than on Angie. I tell the doctor I think he may well be proud of his little patient."—Youth's Companion.

Equally Ignorant.

The author of "Reminiscences of a Country Politician" once asked a laborer in an English village how old he was.

"I be just the same age as the queen," he said. "It be either a fortnight older or a fortnight younger. I don't rightly know which, and I don't suppose her knows either."

A Witty Forlornity.

A forlorn looking man said, "I've tried everything that I could turn my hand to, but couldn't make anything answer, and now I have decided to go up among the hills, where they say there's a wonderful echo, to see if I can make that answer."

"Sir," said Dr. Johnson to a friend, commenting upon a widower who remarried, though his wedded life had been unhappy, "it is triumph of hope over experience."

An Animal Story For Little Folks

The Wolves and the Cougar

Once there were two wolves who had a chicken tree, in which fowls were very fond of roosting.

One day when they went down to the chicken tree to get each of them a bird they heard a snarly-snarly sound and found feathers all around the tree, while every bird for a mile around was either eaten or scared away.

"Who has been robbing our chicken tree?" cried the wolf brothers together.

"Your chicken tree? Your chicken tree? Your chicken tree?" snarled the cougar, who lay, gorged full, at the bottom of the tree. "Who gave you this chicken tree? Who gave you anything? Who are you, anyhow?"

The wolf brothers made haste to say that nobody had given them the chicken tree, that nobody had given them

THEY SCUTTLED AWAY.

anything and that they weren't anybody and didn't count anyhow, but their hearts were hot and sore while they said it.

As they were scuttling away they met Bruin, the bear. And when he heard their story he told them of a trap which the hunters had set for the cougars down by the brookside.

"Lead him there," said Bruin, "and you may have your revenge, also you may have as many chicken trees as you can find."

So the wolves went trembling back and told the cougar that they had found a much finer chicken tree for him. When they came to the spot where Bruin had told them the trap was they stepped aside and said they could not walk ahead of so great a person, that he must lead the way and let them follow.

Snap went the trap on the old cougar's foot.

"There," said the eldest wolf brother, "that will teach you not to insult people after you have robbed them."—Worcester Post.

The Atmosphere.

Even if it were possible for man to live without breathing air he could not exist on the earth if it were without an atmosphere. Plants derive carbon, the most important element of their food, from the air, and without plants there could be no food for animals and therefore no human beings. Water also comes from the atmosphere, but if there were no water there could be neither plants nor animals. If food and water could be supplied in some other way the world would still be unhabitable by plants and animals owing to the severity of the cold. Without an atmosphere there would be no winds and consequently no waves or ocean currents. The sea—if we may suppose one to have been supplied by some unknown cause—would be a stagnant pool, uninhabitable by seaweed or fish.

American Buyer In London.

"My American accent came near to taxing me just $430 on my last trip to London," remarked a clubman. "When I tried to buy a certain bulldog pup there the kennel man priced it at $500, as he had me sized up as an American and, in his regard, an easy mark. I made a deal with a cabby at the hotel stand, who went around and bought the same pup for me at $60, a very fair price, as the dog will never be a show winner. I gave a $10 tip to the cabman, so I made $430 by employing an agent who called his hansom an 'ansom and his horse an 'orse."—New York Sun.

Jackdaw and Magpie.

In England the daw is hardly ever mentioned but as Jack, yet daw and not jackdaw is the proper name of the species. It is suggested that the pie owes the "mag" to some corruption of Margaret or Meg. To mag is to chatter, but whether the verb was derived from the name or the name from the verb is a question. It is more than probable that the Jim Crow of America (the old name for a negro boy) was brought across from England in the days when a crow was Jim, as a swallow was Dick.—London Standard.

Egg and Bottle.

Take a boiled egg, remove the shell, have a bottle with a large neck, add a piece of paper to the neck and light it. When in blaze put the egg on it, point down, and the heat will pull the egg with great force inside. Now put again a blazed paper in the bottle and manage to have the egg in the neck point up, and the heat will push out the egg with an explosion.

Perpetual.

"You always appear to be worried about your housekeeping," remarked the sympathetic friend.

"But really," replied the housekeeper, "there are only two occasions when I am really worried. One is when I haven't a servant and the other is when I have."

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No 1.	6 50 a. m.
No. 5	9 02 p m.
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No. 1 Chicago, St. Paul & Minneapolis Limited, (Daily)	5. 36 A. M
No. 31 St Paul & Minneapolis & Omaha Daily	6. 51 P. M
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