

Natural Gas And Miranda.

By MARY ALDINE

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Mr. Samuel Perkins, assisted by two Italians, all with their coats and vests off and perspiring profusely, was boring an artesian well on his farm.

Suddenly the drill was forced out of the ground. There followed a great puff of vapor that had the odor of bad eggs and sulphur mixed together. Mr. Perkins had struck a natural gas well. A month later Mrs. Perkins was saying to him:

"Samuel, remember that we spell our name P-a-r-k-i-n-s; also that a month hence we sail for Europe. We've got money, and we've got a daughter Miranda. We are going to give her a chance."

"A chance for what?" asked the husband, who was trying to get used to wearing a collar and a coat around the house.

"To get polished up and to marry some one worthy of her. You needn't sit there thinking that a few weeks ago Miranda was hanging out the clothes. We've struck natural gas, and that makes a difference. We sail in four weeks."

"I did kinder think we might go to Niagara Falls for a week or so"— began Samuel as he rubbed his chin.

"What's Niagara Falls to people with money? What are they to Miranda? Samuel Parkins, can't you realize that you struck gas?"

"I know I did."

"We are climbing for the top of the ladder. We can't be kept down. Haven't you got it through your head yet? It's Europe and polish. It's Europe and a husband for Miranda. If them Chicago butchers can take their daughters to Europe and marry them off to lords and dukes, why can't we?"

"Isn't natural gas just as high toned as pork chops? You keep a coat on and your shoes black and get used to looking like somebody and leave the rest to me."

Mr. Parkins would rather have sat on the steps of the village and related for the five hundredth time what his emotions were when he struck gas, but he was dragged off to Europe.

Miranda betrayed a surprising lack of interest. But Mrs. Parkins did the thing with all her might. She had native wit and observation. By sitting in a corner most of the time and having as little as possible to say the husband and father-made out after a fashion.



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In due time he even became interested in things. He became so interested that one evening after they had been in London for a fortnight he asked her wife:

"Mary, are we hitting the pike all right?"

"Hitting the pike!" she repeated in scornful tones. "Samuel, cut the pike and other things out. Miranda and me are watching ourselves every minute, and you want to do the same. Don't you leave the spoon in the cup when you drink your coffee, and don't tuck your table napkin clear up under your ears. If you spoil Miranda's chances I'll never forgive you."

"But what I want to know is has any feller come around yet?" persisted the husband.

"No, not exactly. But I've noticed different ones looking at her and sorter edging around. You leave that part of it to us, and you tend to yours. Whenever you can, you just drop in a word about natural gas and millions."

"Oh, I won't spoil nobody's chances. I didn't want to come at first, but now that I've got over here I rath'er like it. Makes a feller feel as if he was somebody to have a boy ready at every turn to brush off his coat."

"I guess I'd be proud to have a lord or a duke for a son-in-law. That's Miranda's lowest figger, ain't it? She hain't coming over here and then take up with no hayseed?"

It was Paris after four weeks in London, and there was a continual improvement in the family. Miranda and her mother picked up as much as one French word a day, and the husband and father left his fears behind him and assumed a little swagger and a patronizing air that sat well on him.

He had struck natural gas at home simply by accident. He reasoned that he might strike a husband for Miranda abroad in the same way. Therefore whenever he came across any one who would listen to him and who could speak English he introduced gas wells into the conversation.

It was always in the plural. It was never one gas well, but half a dozen. He also tried his best to make the head waiter understand the gas question, and if he did not succeed entirely he at least elicited the exclamation:

"Gas from the ground, mon dieu! And each well \$1,000,000! How you must suffer with so much money!"

"Yes, a heap of suffering, but I grit my teeth and stand it."

When Mrs. Parkins announced that they were to leave Paris for a resort in the Alps, Mr. Parkins had his opportunity to ask:

"Any feller in sight yet?" "Samuel, hain't you got no polish in these last two months?" demanded the wife.

"Of course I have."

"Then show some of it. No gentleman would speak in that brutal manner. I'm glad Miranda was not here."

"Well, has any lord or duke been making up to her?" "Making up! Making up! Humph! Mr. Parkins, are you in Europe or Texas? My daughter Miranda cannot be made up to. I catch your meaning, however, and in order that you may not use any more such expressions let me say that I'm not worrying."

"You mean?" "I mean that we are going to Switzerland to stop for a month or more at the same hotel with a lord."

"By George, but you don't mean it!" exclaimed the husband. "How in thunder did you bring it about?" "Samuel!"

"Yes, but that's a cute trick of yours. You'll have him penned right up."

"Samuel Parkins!" cried the wife as she flushed up.

"Oh, well, I won't say nothing more. You'n Miranda go right ahead, and I'll back you with natural gas enough to run all France. I guess it hain't for me to mix in."

Just how Mrs. Parkins located the lord doesn't matter. For a five franc piece Parisian chambermaids have been known to locate a whole duke. He wasn't registered as a lord, but that wasn't expected. He would be Jacog. Mr. Parkins took it that any

of the forty men around the hotel might be his lordship, but the wife, with the keener intuition of her sex, spotted the right man within twenty-four hours.

Then Mr. Parkins came to the front like a man. He introduced himself to the victim and talked of America and gas wells and dollars. There was enthusiasm in his voice as he talked of the gas that would continue to pour out of the earth for centuries to come, and he worked up considerable pathos over the admission that he hadn't enough wells to supply over half the United States. Mr. Parkins had done his full share. The rest devolved upon other shoulders.

A day or two later his lordship strolled up a mountain path by himself. A little later Mrs. Parkins and Miranda strolled up the same path. His lordship was overtaken just in time to rescue Miranda from walking out on an overhanging rock that would have surely given way with her weight and dropped her into the valley a mile below.

The half fainting girl and the shattered mother were assisted down the path to the hotel, and Mr. Parkins found them in bed to recover from the shock. He heard the story and then rushed downstairs. When he appeared half an hour later there was a bland smile on his face, and he was rubbing his hands.

"Mr. Parkins, what have you done?" asked the wife as she sat up in bed. "Have you been saying anything to his lordship?"

"Now, don't you folks get into a sweat about me," replied Mr. Parkins. "Mebbe I haven't polished up quite as

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fast as you have over here, but I know when to do the right thing for all that."

"And you've seen the lord?"

"I have."

"And talked with him?" "For sure. Yes, sir—had quite a talk with him."

"Samuel Parkins, what did you say?" asked the wife as she sat up straighter and a look of fear came into her eyes.

"What should I say under the circumstances? I thanked him from the bottom of my heart for saving Miranda's life. You don't think I spoke about the weather, do you?"

"And what else, Samuel?"

"What else, pa?"

"I offered him \$25 in cold cash."

Two shrieks shrieked out in chorus, and two females went into mild hysterics, only Miranda's was suspiciously like laughter, while her mother's was the real thing. It was a long minute that Mr. Parkins stood there, hands in pockets and wondering what had happened. Then his wife forced back her emotions and faintly asked:

"And—and—what?"

"And he took it and said, 'Thank ye!'"

Two days later as they sat in the train bound for home Mr. Parkins noticed a tear stealing down Mrs. Parkins' cheek. He turned to her and asked:

"Ain't you feeling chipper today?" "Chipper! Chipper! How could I feel chipper?" exclaimed Mrs. Parkins in fierce tones.

"Dunno, but you mustn't blame me. I didn't know that he was a lord that went about saving human lives for cash on the nail! And, anyway, Miranda kin marry Joshua Rawlins to home. He writes to me that he's going to give up farming because he's struck gas too."

And Miranda squeezed his hand and whispered, "You do everything just right, pa."

The Facetious Suburbanite.

The second story man had climbed into the front window of the facetious suburbanite's villa and was engaged in rifling the latter's pockets of such random possessions as were to be found therein.

"Ah, good evening, my friend," said the facetious suburbanite from the depths of his bedclothes. "Aren't you working overtime?"

"We can't help it in our business, governor," replied the burglar. "We ain't got no regular organized hours of work. It's to do while you can with us, day and night."

"That's a shame!" said the facetious suburbanite. "You ought to get together and form a burglars' union for your own protection."

"We ain't a trade," retorted the burglar scornfully. "We're an industry."

"Then you should be incorporated into the steel trust," said the facetious suburbanite.

Whereupon the midnight marauder laughed so long and loud that he was overheard by the policeman on the corner, who, recognizing the laugh, immediately fled to a place of safety—Judge.

Candy-makers' Tricks.

An Atchison man went into a candy factory. He was surprised to see one of the candy-makers reach with his bare hand into a pot of boiling candy. He brought out a handful of the boiling fluid. He was testing its consistency. He first put his hand in a pail of water. After he had jerked out his hand he put it back in the water. The Atchison man tried the same thing and did it without getting burned.—Atchison Globe.

Another Boring Question.

"I say, pa, is a man from Poland called a Pole?" "Yes, my son."

"Then, pa, why isn't a man from Holland called a Hole?"—Comic Cuts.

Insult Added.

Big Man (with a grinch)—Will you be so kind as to get off my feet? Little Man (with a bundle)—I'll try, sir. Is it much of a walk?—Cleveland

HEROES OF THE DEEP

Brave Captains Who Have Perished With Their Ships.

A STERN RULE OF THE SEA.

"The Captain of the Vessel Shall Be the Last to Leave," and From This Mandate No Captain is Exempt. Heroism in Face of Certain Death.

"The captain of the vessel shall be the last to leave."

This heroic sentiment has been exemplified time and again by the brave men who go down to the sea in ships, and to their everlasting honor there is no attempt or desire to shirk the fearful duty and responsibility. So it was that Captain Sealby of the ill-fated Republic refused to leave his ship till every man, woman, child and member of his crew had been saved.

"The last to leave!" It is the law, universally acknowledged at sea by officers and men alike as the basis of self respect and honor. From it captain is exempt.

One of the bravest of these heroes was Chief Officer Paterson of the British King. One day some winters ago he sailed from New York under Captain O'Hagan. Great storms impeded the passage of the ship, and so stupendous was the violence of the waves that they stove in the bow plates, and before the leakage was discovered tons of water rushed into the hold.

Captain O'Hagan told his men to shift the cargo, but barrels and cases were hurtling this way and that, and one of them, driving the captain back against the wall, crushed his leg so severely that he had to be carried to the lifeboat.

For a brief space there was no captain. Then Paterson took command. At a critical moment his strong personality and calm assurance saved the crew from panic. Three boats filled with sailors from the British King were launched in safety, while the new commander stood in silence on the bridge. Lower and lower sank the ill-starred ship, and as she heaved and took her final plunge Paterson blew a farewell blast upon his whistle to the fast departing crew.

Quite different, but no less heroic, was the manner in which Captain Griffith of the Atlantic Transport line steamship Mohegan faced death. Though it was scarcely darker than twilight, he had run his vessel on the rocks near the Needles in October, 1898, and it was rapidly sinking. The last glimpse of Captain Griffith showed him standing on the bridge ordering the boats to be lowered in order to save his crew.

Heroic in death, too, was the captain of the oil ship Loodana, which several years ago was burned at sea. Before thinking of his own safety he saw every man of his crew clear of the doomed vessel, and then it was too late. Foot by foot he was driven forward by the flames till at last he hung over the bow. A tramp steamship came up, but the waters were too rough for the lowering of the boats. Finally the flames compelled him to loosen his hold, and while his ship burned fiercely on he was dashed into the angry seas beneath.

But still more dramatic was the death of Captain Deloncle of the French liner La Bourgogne, sunk in the summer of 1898. As he stood one night upon the bridge a tall bark suddenly loomed out of the darkness and, dealing La Bourgogne a fatal blow, steamed hurriedly away. The men on board went frantic. In a scramble for safety firemen and crew lost their wits, and people ran up and down the deck in wild despair.

Deloncle stood calm amid the tumult. Suddenly he abandoned himself to the dramatic horror of the scene and, seizing the whistle rope, sent into the skies one long, wild, wailing scream. It was Deloncle's last salute.

Perhaps the noblest death of all was that of Captain Craven of the monitor Tecumseh at the attack in August, 1864, on Mobile. The ship was fast sinking. There was not a moment to be lost. At the foot of the ladder leading to the manhole above, the turret of safety, two men met, Captain Craven and his pilot. There would be time for but one to mount. The captain knew it; the pilot knew it. But there was no hesitation. With a smile Captain Craven stepped to one side.

"After you, pilot," he said. The man sprang up the ladder, and his life was saved, but the brave captain was swept under and carried to destruction by the cruel sea.—London Answers.

Euler's Wonderful Memory.

Leonhard Euler, who was born in 1707 and died in 1783 at St. Petersburg, where he spent his life as a teacher of great power and as a prolific writer, was an instance of the genuine mathematician endowed with almost superhuman powers. He left more than 200 manuscript treatises on his favorite subject, and the bulk of the works published by his academy between 1727 and 1783 were from his pen. In his old age he was totally blind. Then he carried in his memory a table of the first six powers of the "series of natural numbers up to 100."

It is related that on one occasion two of Euler's students attempted to calculate a converging series. As they advanced they found they disagreed in the result by a unit in the fifteenth figure. The question was referred to Euler, who decided to make the calculation. He did this mentally, and his result was found to be correct.—New York Tribune.

The Codmoppe.

Herrings are still eaten as much as in the days when Yarmouth had to send a hundred yearly to the king, baked in four and twenty pasties. But where is the codmoppe gone, and what was it like when kings dined off it in Lent? "Codmoppe sauce Hollandaise" would sound most intriguing on a Savoy menu. More original still would be the "roasted perpes" of a Henry V. banquet, which was the "sen servus" of the unrefined Saxon, the "porco marino" of the mediaeval ecclesiast. A maister cooke gives an early receipt for "pudding of porpasse," another teaches how to "saute porpasse and seele," another how to "undertraunche that porpus." From which it may be seen that enterprise extended also to the spelling of the porpoise.—London Chronicle.

The Answer.

"They say the Joneses are a very happy couple." "But Jones is a traveling man and is very seldom at home." "Exactly."—Cleveland Leader.

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