

The Bath Comedy

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE

Authors of "The Pride of Jennico"

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When he returned to Pierpoint street he found the mysterious stranger already in her sedan, Lord Verney leaning through the window thereof engaged in an earnest conversation. Captain Spicer jocularly pulled him back by the coat tails and inserted his own foolish face instead. The lady was masked and cloaked as he had left her.

"Madam, I have done your errand," said he. "It was," said he, "a matter of difficult negotiation, requiring—ahem—requiring such tact as I think I may call my own. Sir Jasper was vastly incensed; one might as well have tried to reason with a bull. But, sir," said I, "would I, Captain Spicer, come with this message if it were not in accordance with the strictest rule of honorable etiquette? That floored him, madam."

Here Mistress Kitty snapped the letter flickering in his gesticulating hand with scant ceremony, turned her shoulder upon him, read it and handed it out to Lord Verney, who had lost no time in coming round to the other window.

"Now," said she, "bid the men take me to the pump room." She leaned her head out, and Lord Verney put his close to hers, and there followed another convulsion.

"Madam, madam, I demand the fulfillment of your promise!" from the other side came Captain Spicer's clamorous, this voice. "Verney, my good fellow, I must request you to retire. There is a compact between this lady and me."

"A compact?" said the mask, turning her head.

"Oh, madam, the vision of that entrancing countenance!"

He strove to unfasten the chair door, when "What?" cried she, "and rob you of all the charm of uncertainty and all the joy of guessing and all the spice of being able to take away the character of every lady in Bath! Oh," she said, "I hope I have been better taught my duty to my neighbor!" Out went her head again to Lord Verney; there was another whisper, a silver laugh. "Oh, men," she cried.

Lord Verney skipped round and in his turn dragged the disgruntled captain out of the window and restrained him by main force from running after the retreating chairmen and their fair burden.

CHAPTER X.

LORD MARKHAM was a person of indefinite age and indefinite manners. He wore an 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 curlicue sped 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.

"'Tis an early spring," said Lord Markham, in the well meant endeavor to beguile away the heavy minutes and distract his principal's mind. "'Tis 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 parts, 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 oars with the lash so that they spun the slope.

"But we shall get wet returning," pleaded the well meaning earl. "I will do all I can. '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 hold that Villiers' ball may speed so well that I may feel neither rain nor shine coming some 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," youth Stafford from the back, "and a nice pair of fools you and the colonel he, 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 curlicue, eh? What are you going to fight Lord Villiers about, I should like to know?"

"You do know," growled Sir Jasper. Then he exploded. "You good me, sir. Do I want to fight Villiers? Is not this business the merest fooling, sheer waste of time, when the real fellow—villain!—has eluded me?" His hold on the reins tightened, he laid on the whip, and the curlicue swayed as the horses leaped and plunged.

"Really," said Lord Markham, "I wish I had come in a coach."

"Hold on," cried Stafford. "Hold on,

Jasper. We don't all want to leave our bones in this business."

There came a pause in the conversation. They bowed along a more level road with the wind humming in their ears and the rhythmic trot of the grays beating a tune. Then Stafford remarked vaguely:

"I have a notion there will be no duel today at Hammer's fields, Jasper; that you will be able to return with undiminished vigor to the hunt of the unknown culprit."

"How now?" cried Sir Jasper fiercely. "Have you heard from Villiers? Are they all rats nowadays? Verney first, then that Spicer, then the colonel? No, no; the fellow was mad with me, sir, and the offense was mine!"

"Nevertheless," said Stafford, unmoved, "I happen to know that Colonel Villiers' man was sent in all haste for his physician, Sir George Waters, at such an unseasonable hour this morning that Sir George dispatched the apothecary in his stead, and the apothecary found our fine eating colonel roaring in a fit of the most violent gout 'tis possible to imagine, so violent, indeed, that poor Mr. Wiggintotham was soundly beat by the colonel for not being Sir George. Villiers' foot is as large as a pumpkin, old Foulks tells me. I had it all from Foulks over a glass of water in the pump room this morning, and zooks, sir, his false teeth rattled in his head as he tried to describe to me the awful language Colonel Villiers was using. He's to be Villiers' second, you know, but he swore 'twas impossible, rank impossible, for any man to put such a foot to the ground."

They were rounding the corner of Hammer's fields as he spoke, and Stafford's eyes, roaming over the green expanse of grass, rested upon the little group drawn up toward the entrance gate.

"Unless," he went on, "the colonel comes upon crutches. No, zounds! Ha, ha! Jasper, I will always love you."

"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 churr 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."

"Hello! Morning, colonel."

man, for the capital jokes you have provided of late. Strike me ugly if the old fellow has not come—in a bath chair!"

"Really," said Lord Markham, "this is very irregular. I have never before been privy to a duel where one of the combatants fought in a chair. And I am not sure that I can undertake the responsibility of concluding arrangements in such circumstances."

"Blasted nonsense!" said Sir Jasper, with all his former urbanity of demeanor. He flung 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 exultant 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, yes. 'Twould 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. (Curse this root!) Mr. Foulks, have the kindness 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, is he going to shoot in his rage—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 already referred to by Mr. Stafford. "But it strikes me it is some what irregular."

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

Sir Jasper remained standing gloom-

ly looking at the ground and driving his gold headed mallets 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 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 Cranbrook, 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 if we got another bath chair for Jasper? We cannot give him the gout, man, and 'twould be too dashed un-fair!" Colonel, you would shoot too well or too ill, 't's not 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—did 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! 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."

HEPBURN MEASURE MAY BE IMPROVED

Interstate Commerce Commission Behind Move.

Difficulty in Constraining Some of the Provisions Occasion the Suggestion.

TO EQUALIZE COTTON RATES

Washington, Sept. 17.—Representative Hephburn of Iowa and Senator Elkins of West Virginia are in Washington, and they met John Sharp Williams, minority leader of the house, during the lunch hour. Senator Elkins is chairman of the senate committee on interstate commerce. Representative Hephburn is chairman of the house committee on interstate and foreign commerce. These are the committees from which the railroad rate bill was reported last winter. Mr. Williams, as Democratic leader, was a prominent factor in making the arrangement by which the rate bill was passed through the house with practically no opposition.

Col. Hephburn had a long conference with some of the members of the interstate commerce commission concerning certain possible changes in the interstate law. Asked about this conference later, Col. Hephburn admitted that it had taken place, and very frankly told its purpose.

"There will doubtless be some effort to improve the rate law at points where improvement seems needed," said he.

Some surprises will be occasioned by the practical announcement that already the interstate commission is asking changes in the new law. It is known, however, that some of its provisions have been difficult of construction. The railroads have asked the commission to tell them what these mean, and the commission has declined to take the responsibility. "Go and ask your lawyers," has been the ultimatum of the commission. The fact that there is to be something like an administration bill for further amendment of the rate law will give new importance to the coming short session.

Equalize Cotton Rate. Washington, Sept. 17.—The interstate commerce commission today rendered its decision on the petition of the Southern railway and other carriers operating in the territory east of the Mississippi river and south of the Ohio and Potomac rivers, for permission to equalize export rates on cotton, cottonseed and its products, and lumber, and there by make changes in their export rates on these commodities without the thirty days' notice required by the new rate law.

The commission holds that carriers may legally issue through bills of lading from the interior point of shipment to a foreign destination which specify the interest and rate to the port of export, even though no joint through rate is published.

The commission orders that "no published rates on cotton shall be advanced except upon thirty days' notice."

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, perhaps, but it is merely here say with the majority of us.

Frankfort, Ky., Sept. 17.—The grand jury today returned sixty-two indictments, mostly for violation of the liquor laws, including some violations of the Sunday laws. Among the indictments was one against the Capitol Square Policeman Wingate Thompson, for selling liquor without license.

Senator Hickman's Condition Worse. Owensboro, Ky., Sept. 17.—Reports from Calhoun say that Senator Hickman, who has been critically ill for several weeks is not at all improved, and his life has been despaired of.

Brigade Elects Officers. Fulton, Ky., Sept. 17.—The Second Kentucky brigade of the United Confederate Veterans met here in annual reunion and elected the following officers: H. S. Hale, colonel, Mayfield; J. S. Lawrence, lieutenant colonel, Bardwell; J. L. Davis, major, Bardwell; J. L. George, adjutant, Mayfield; Chas. Haskan, chaplain, Fulton; Henry Buchanan, sergeant major, Hickman; W. J. Willingham, sergeant major, Water Valley.

About Normal Schools. Frankfort, Ky., Sept. 17.—State Superintendent Fuqua today ordered the printing of several thousand pamphlets containing all information necessary for persons who contemplate seeking appointment as pupils at the state normal schools, when they are opened in January. A number of these pamphlets will be sent to the county superintendents over the state, from whom prospective applicants can secure them. The pamphlet contains, in addition to other information, the entire course of study for the schools, as mapped out by the Normal executive council, composed of Superintendent Fuqua and the presidents of the schools.

His Defense. Is Being Prepared by James Franklin Graham.

James Graham is now preparing his defense and today Patrolman James Clark is looking up evidence in his favor.

"Graham," Patrolman Clark said, "wants witnesses who heard the two shots and gave me the names of several who he thinks heard them. This afternoon I will look after it for the boy. It is his only means of establishing the plea of self-defense, with the recovery of the pistol he alleges he took from Bass in the fight."

ONE CENT PER MILE Via The Lookout Mountain-Battlefield Route N. C. & ST. L. RY. \$6.30 Chattanooga and Return \$6.30

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ALSO SIDE TRIPS, from Chattanooga to points in the southeast at rate of one fare plus 25 cents for the round trip. TWO TRAINS DAILY. For further particulars see D. J. MULLANEY, Agent City Office, 430 Broadway, Phone 212. E. S. BURNHAM, Agent Depot Ticket Office, Phone 22.

Enormous Value of Utilized Wastes. "Thirty years ago for every ton of finished product turned out by our manufacturers there was from one to several hundred pounds of materials which were thrown away as waste. Not only was this so-called 'waste-material' considered valueless, but the disposition of it was often a source of considerable expense and annoyance to the manufacturers. Owing to the wonderful progress of chemical knowledge during the last quarter of a century, and the constant finding of new revelations and uses for substances of all kinds, a complete revolution has been wrought in nearly every branch of the manufacturing industry. Instead of this waste material being a source of expense to manufacturers, the experiments of chemists have shown how it can be converted into products which have a high marketable value, and it is no exaggeration to say that the value of products annually manufactured out of materials which thirty years ago were thrown away as waste today amounts to fully \$500,000,000—a sum equal to nearly seven times the annual production of gold in the United States."—Henry C. Nicholas in Moody's Magazine for August.

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NEWS OF KENTUCKY

Drys Win.

The "drys" were victorious in the Hardin county local option election yesterday by a majority of 551 votes. Prohibitionists won in the local option election in Trigg county yesterday.

Capitol Square Police.

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