

# A BOOR AND A BAIT.

By FRANK H. SWEET.

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Plug—the name had usurped and smothered any other which might have been more rightfully his in the forgotten days—was filling the wood-box, slouching over it and dropping down the sticks one by one. He was in no hurry, for that was not his way; and moreover, he was just now afraid to face the kitchen jeers, which somehow he felt were blunted and rendered ineffectual by striking his back.

But when the last stick had been dropped into the box, and he had stood gazing at it for fully three minutes, there seemed nothing for him but to re-cross the wide kitchen to the asylum of the outside door, which now seemed a long way off. This he did with burning, downcast face and a more diffident shuffle than usual.

"Say, Plug; not that way," called Ben, the horse boy; "she's over yon by the sink. Wheer's your eyes, boy? She's been blushin' ever sence ye comed in."

Plug's head dropped a little lower and his shuffle became a little faster. Why couldn't they leave the girl's name out of the talk, he thought, clinching his fists in impotent wrath. It was indecent of them to drag her name into such foolishness.

"Aw, come now, Plug," drawled Carrots, the gardener's boy, "don't wobble roun' so. It makes folks' eyes tired. Jest let your legs have their own way for onced, an' see if they don't sidle roun' to wheer Bet's a washin' dishes. Then you an' she can sot down on the woodbox an' be social like the rest of us. 'Tain't Christian for a six foot man to live 'tween the door an' woodbox like you does, 'specially when a gal's cryin' her eyes out 'cause he won't even look her way."

There was a sudden crash at the sink, and a girl with round, red face and square figure swung toward the groom with flashing eyes. In one hand was the remnant of the plate just broken, in the other a dripping dishcloth.

"If you don't shut that big mouth o' your'n, Carrots, I'll cram this dishcloth into it," she cried, hotly. "Plug an' me never spoke one word to each other, an' you all know it. Not that it's sayin' a word ag'in Plug, though. He's a better man than you be any day, Carrots; so there!"

Plug had stopped with one foot shuffling the air, his hand on the door latch. Now he set the foot down softly and slipped outside, his heart beating wildly. He a better man than Carrots, who had alternately jeered at and patronized and ordered him about! Why, he had never felt that he was equal to anybody, much less better. But the second dish girl, Bet, had said it, and what Bet said was more to the purpose than the opinion of the master himself. What if he had never spoken to her? He had loved her from the very first day—the very first hour—of entering upon his duties as wood bringer and kitchen chore boy. Had she not looked at him and smiled? That smile had been titillating his heart and keeping his face flushed and his eyes upon the ground ever since. He had been in that delightful state for one whole month, and it might have continued on forever but for his recklessness in lifting his gaze toward the sink this very morning. It had been his first open glance in that direction; but the whole kitchen had seen it, and now the whole kitchen was jeering him.

Well, he didn't care, for had she not said he was a better man than Car-

rots, take in another armful and look straight across at the sink; and not only that, he would make a face at Carrots.

"Haw, haw, haw!" laughed Carrots, as the door closed; "ain't it funny! Plug in love. Just think! Plug—the wood boy—in love—an' with one o' my own gals, too; the best one. Haw, haw! an' I ain't jealous a bit. It's the doggondest fool thing I ever did hear. But say, Bet," straightening up suddenly as a new idea seemed to strike him, "let's put up a game on the loony. He never goes anywheer



"Yes, Plug, I'll go with ye," she said, steadily, "and glad to."

'cause he's so bashful, an' that apple parin' frolic comes off to-morrer night. S'pose we bait Plug up to think you'll go 'long o' him, an' when he gits rigged up you an' me'll walk off an' leave him standin' with his mouth open. Haw, haw, haw! won't he feel cheap an' shuffle off to his roost in the barn. Hey, Bet?"

"Ho, ho, ho! Haw, haw, haw!" roared Ben, the horse boy, and the rest of the kitchen. "Good 'nough! Hey, Bet?"

But before Bet could answer the door opened and Plug shuffled in with another armful of wood; and to the amazement of the kitchen, his gaze rose squarely and swept them with an odd, challenging glance of triumph, finally circling round to the second dish girl at the sink, where it softened. But only for a moment, then it came back to Carrots, and the peculiar, grotesque face twisted itself into the most horrible contortion of which it was capable.

Carrots' mouth had been open for another jeering remark; but the words froze before they issued. He stared, gasped, then threw his head back in a roar of laughter that shook the room.

"Plug made a face at me," he choked; "haw, haw, haw! Bein' in love's made Plug a man. Mebbe he'd fight now, mebbe he'd even go to doin' with his gal. Haw, haw! Say, Plug, now's yer chance. They's the frolic to-morrer night, an' Bet's jest achin' for ye to ast her."

Plug cast a wavering, longing glance toward the sink.

"I'd—I'd mighty well like to go," he stammered; "I've never been to a doin'—an' to go with Bet," he drew a long, ecstatic breath at the thought. "If Bet could feel to—to—will ye, Bet?" desperately.

The girl hesitated but an instant. Then something—perhaps it was the entreaty in Plug's eyes, perhaps the sneer on Carrots' face—made her step forward quickly and hold out her hand.

"Yes, Plug, I'll go with ye," she said, steadily, "and glad to. You're a better man any day than Carrots."

The sneer on Carrots' face gave way to amazed consternation.

"Why, ye're goin' with me, Bet; ain't ye?" he expostulated. "I s'posed—"

But his words were lost in the rattling of the dishes. Bet was back at the sink, her dishcloth again in energetic motion.

## Women Bell-Ringers.

St. Andrew's church, at Bradfield, Berkshire, is the only church in this country where the bells are rung by women instead of men. The reason why women have been engaged for this task is very simple. About eighteen months ago there was a great dearth of men and boys in the district owing to the scarcity of labor, and the appeal was instantly and heartily responded to, and six young women have rung the bells of this pretty little church regularly and punctually for nearly eighteen months. It is certainly heavy and trying, but the fair bell-ringers have become enthusiastic in the work and do it excellently.

## WHAT HE PAID TO WIN

### Kansas Candidate Reports the Cost of His Campaign.

The candidates in Kansas refuse to take seriously the law which requires them to file an itemized statement of the expenses of their campaigns. At Winfield, J. E. Torrence, elected county attorney, files an elaborate expense account, declaring that it is in response to "the intensely moral provisions of the fool legislature of Kansas." Here are some of his items:

"To cards announcing to the eager public that I was a candidate for reelection, \$5.

"To circulars printed to head off the nimble campaign lies turned loose by my enemies, \$12.50.

"To the ubiquitous solicitors for charitable purposes who called on me just before election, and while suffering from intense agony, and therefore at a time when I was afraid to refuse, \$22.50.

"To the colored editor of a newspaper at Topeka, which seemed to be exerting its entire influence to save me from the avalanche of democratic votes which apparently hung in the balance, \$3.

"To stationary used by me in exposing the infamous fake circular gotten out by Rev. Smith and others, 2 cents.

"I wish to further state that any inaccuracies or omissions which may be found in this statement (involving a total of about \$300) are due to the strenuous condition of things, and to the break-neck rate of speed at which I was compelled to run to be able to look back at my opponent as I came under the wire."—Kansas City Journal.

## TRUTH OF OLD LEGEND

### Writer in New York Sun Sheds New Light on Story.

A woodsman, says the New York Sun, was one day chopping a tree overhanging a stream, and passing in his work to flirt with a passing milkmaid, he dropped his axe into the river.

The woodsman sat down comfortably and proceeded to bemoan his fate. Mercury, hearing his lamentations, appeared before him, and upon being informed of the loss of the axe he at once dived into the water and brought up a golden hatchet.

"Is that yours?" asked Mercury.

"No," replied the man.

Mercury thereupon plunged into the water for a second time and brought up a silver hatchet. Again the man denied that the axe was his.

For the third time Mercury disappeared under the water, and at last brought up the very axe that the man had lost, which the woodsman eagerly claimed as his.

The god, being pleased with the man's honesty, presented him with the gold and silver hatchets also.

The man told his friends about this and the Mercurial Gold and Silver company was organized with a capital of a billion or so. They bought up all the rivers and ponds in the country and honest woodsmen were employed in double shifts to drop iron axes into the water and get gold and silver ones for their honesty. The stock paid very well.

That is the true derivation of the term—watered stock. As for the milkmaid (the cause of it all), the woodsman very properly married the girl.

## Peculiarity of Japanese Women.

"Did you ever see a woman shaving herself?" asked a traveling man. "Well, it's a funny sight, but you must go all the way to Japan to witness it, for the Japanese are the only people in the world whose women shave. They have a certain day in the week—I think it is Friday—for this operation. They use no lather, but warm water alone, and they shave not only the face and neck, but the forehead also. They are very quick and get through the whole process in a minute or two. Nor is it strange that they are quick, for they have no more hair on their faces than any other women. Shaving with them is, in fact, a mere matter of form—a religious ceremony, and not a thing of necessity. But in some cases this constant shaving develops beards in old Japanese women, and then they must ply the razor to some purpose. The habit never, though, causes a growth upon the forehead, and yet the foreheads of Japanese women are shaved weekly from their girlhood till their death.

## Publisher as Robber Chief.

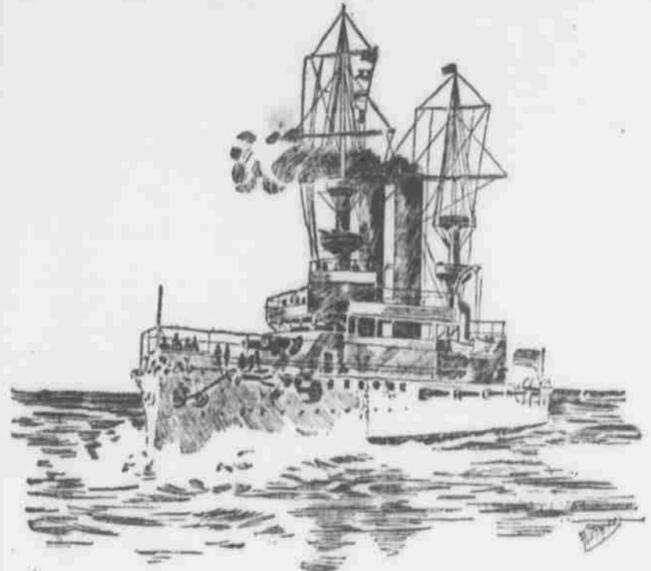
At Budapest the police have arrested a notorious gang of thieves. They were all in evening dress and were leaving a concert hall. Their chief is a publisher, and the gang includes a lawyer, a bank clerk, and a sergeant in a Hungarian infantry regiment.

Their depredations have been carried on for months. Houses in all parts of the city have been broken into, including Prince Odescalchi's mansion, and many jewelers' shops.

The chief sufferers, however, were the Hungarian regiment mentioned above, whose quarters were robbed day after day. The whole regiment had been confined to barracks for weeks in consequence.

# DIE AT THEIR POSTS

## Explosion Kills and Wounds Gunners on United States Battleship Massachusetts.



The Battleship Massachusetts.

Five men were killed and four injured Jan. 17 in an explosion on the battleship Massachusetts off Culebra Island.

The Navy Department at Washington received the news in a dispatch from San Juan. An eight-inch charge exploded in a gun in one of the forward turrets of the Massachusetts.

The men on the Massachusetts were engaged in target practice at the time.

The names of the dead and injured, as given out by the department, are as follows:

Dead—  
FELIX HERBERT LOESSER, New York.

STEPHEN FRANK MALINOWSKI, Chicago.

ANDREW HENDRICKSON, Christland, Norway.

KENNETH JOSEPH PLATT, Troy, N. Y.

ROBERT RULE, Mount Washington, Hamilton County, Ohio.

Injured—  
Alexander Newton Dossett, Durham, N. C.

James Garfield Patterson, Pittsburg, Pa.

Albert Stephen Tacke, St. Louis, Mo.

Walter William August Schert, Cleveland, O.

Details of the explosion were obtained when the Massachusetts arrived at San Juan, Porto Rico. The explosion occurred in the starboard after-eight-inch turret, and was due to the

accidental discharge of a percussion primer while the breech of the gun was open. The full charge exploded in the turret and killed or injured all the crew of the gun, numbering nine men. Ensign Ward K. Wortman, who was in charge of the turret, escaped injury, though he was standing near the scene of the explosion.

Magnificent discipline was immediately shown by the officers and crew of the battle-ship. Capt. Harry Lee, commanding the marine guard of the vessel, and Ensign Clarence Abele immediately flooded the turret with water, and Lieut. Charles F. Hughes and Gunner Kubiweil went below to the magazine, picking up powder charges, and prevented further explosions, while Lieut. William C. Cole and Gun Captain Someman entered the turret and withdrew the charge from the other gun, whose breech was open.

The survivors of the gun's crew when rescued were burned, mutilated, and nearly dead. One man, whose clothing was on fire, jumped overboard.

In less than a minute after the explosion three streams of water were pouring into the turret, preventing the charge in the other eight-inch gun from exploding.

The men met their death heroically, and the wounded men who were horribly burned about the body walked without assistance to the hospital in the clothes they wore at the time of the accident. They were heartily cheered by their companions.

A funeral service for the men who met their death in the explosion was held next day on board the Massachusetts, Chaplain Wright officiating. Afterward a procession was formed on shore and proceeded to the military cemetery of Porto Rico, where the interment took place.

The regimental band of the garrison of Porto Rico took part in the cere-

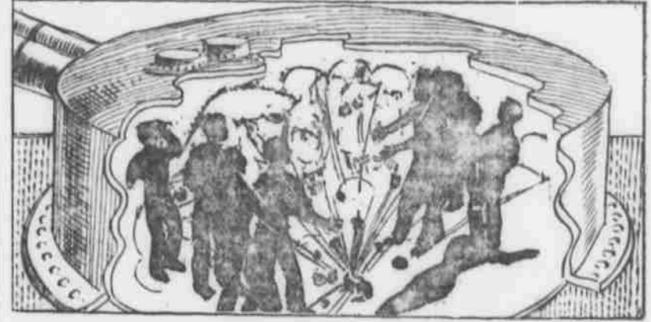


Diagram Showing Effect of Explosion.

mony. Admiral Higginson and the officers of the Massachusetts were at the graveside, where military honors and also Masonic honors for one of the dead was rendered.

A board of inquiry, consisting of Capt. Converse of the Illinois, Commander Smith and Lieut. Pratt, has been appointed to investigate and report on the matter.

## Enterprising Chicago Thieves.

Fred E. Coyne, postmaster of Chicago, was accosted on the street recently by a stranger who wished to be directed to the postoffice. "I gave the desired information," says Mr. Coyne, "but after a moment's reflection on the enterprise which Chicago thieves have been displaying of late I hurried after the man and explained that I had not been in the postoffice building for an hour, and therefore could not be bound down to a guarantee that it was still in the same place."

## Old-Time Indian Fighter.

One of the old-time bad men of the northwest is a member of the South Dakota legislature this winter. Dressed in a long gray frock coat, woolen shirt, low-cut waistcoat and broad, white sombrero, Ellis T. Pierce, or "Bear Tracks," as the Indians once knew him, is a picturesque figure about the hotel lobbies in Pierre. Pierce was a contemporary of Will Bill Hickok and his slayer, Jack McCool, and is brimful of reminiscence of the old days.

## HOOR GLASS ON MEN-OF-WAR.

### Universally Used on Ships of the British Navy.

Among things not generally known is the fact that the hour glass is universally used on board British ships when the log is heaved at night.

Every hour the boatswain, or one of the boatswain's mates, blows on his whistle a peculiar shrill note called the reel. The person in the watch to whom this duty is assigned then heaves the log, a small piece of wood with a sinker fitted in it, and at that moment the glass is turned. Though termed an hour glass generally, it is only a 14-second glass really.

As the last grain runs out the log line is stopped with a jerk, which also loosens the lead sinker. The log floats up to the surface of the sea, the line is hauled in, and an entry made in the book, which, from its containing this among other items of the daily and nightly events of the voyage, is called the log book.—Country Life, London.



"Say, Plug, Not That Way," Called Ben, the Horse Boy. "She's Over Yon by the Sink."

rots—Carrots the bold, the jeering, the masterful? He had not intended to carry in any more wood to-night, had not even intended to go in after his supper. It would be easier to go hungry than to face the kitchen jeering. That had been his thought as his hand touched the door latch. Now everything was changed. He would