

# BOWSER'S ESCAPE.

### Fire Fiend Reaches For Him, but Fails to Connect.

### HE IS RIGHTEOUSLY INDIGNANT

First Mrs. Bowser Ridicules His Latest Purchase and Then Makes Him Forget About it at a Critical Moment. Case For Lawyers Soon.

By M. QUAD.  
(Copyright, 1909, by Associated Literary Press.)

“THERE was a package come here by an express wagon for you this afternoon,” announced Mrs. Bowser as Mr. Bowser came home to dinner the other evening.

“And did you open it?” he almost demanded.

“Of course not, but I’d like to know what is in it. I hope you’ve dropped the flying machine idea.”

“Never you mind what I’ve dropped or haven’t dropped. I shall probably open the package after dinner.”

Mr. Bowser’s tone and attitude were lordly, and Mrs. Bowser felt sure that he had run up against another sure thing. It was no good to question, and it was an hour later and they had reached the sitting room when he said:

“Mrs. Bowser, do you know how many dwelling houses in the United States were burned last year?”

“A hundred, maybe,” she answered.

“Over 4,000. I didn’t suppose you would have the least interest in it and am not surprised at your answer. Yes, over 4,000. The fire fiend is ever with us. How many people do you suppose were burned in their beds in the twelve months?”

“I haven’t the least idea.”

“But you should have an idea. You should know the exact number. Is it nothing to you when the red demon burns almost 12,000 men, women and children to a crisp?”

Not Mrs. Bowser’s Fault.  
“If folks are careless I can’t be held responsible.”

“Heart of flint, heart of flint! No wonder that tramps take one look at



“WOMAN, EXPLAIN YOURSELF!”

this house and then flee in terror. Twelve thousand people roasted alive, and yet you’ve got your nose stuck in a novel!”

“And you went away this morning whistling!” retorted Mrs. Bowser.

“Never mind how I went away. I was feeling for the poor unfortunates just the same. Twelve thousand people perished in the flames of their houses, and yet at least 11,500 might have been saved! Just think of that!”

“Then why weren’t they saved?”

“For the want of fire escapes to assist them to the ground. Every building should have been provided with them, but they weren’t. Such carelessness is simply criminal.”

“Mr. Bowser, have you gone and let some one take you in again?” asked Mrs. Bowser after a long look at him.

“Taken in?” he shouted. “Who ever took me in? Woman, explain yourself! I thought it was about time you said something mean.”

Fire Escapes to Burn.  
“You have invested in fire escapes three different times, and none of them amounted to anything. You didn’t dare to try one of them, even in the daytime and no fire around. I came across one yesterday in the storeroom. Is it a fire escape in the bundle?”

“It is, and I don’t want to hear seven words from you. I don’t propose to be baked here some night like a fresh ham. If you want to die that way go ahead. Yes, I have invested in fire escapes, and to spite me you have tinkered with them and rendered them useless. I should just like to catch you tinkering with this one!”

And he walked up and down the room and glared at her and snorted at the cat and let it be known that he was the boss of that domicile. Mrs. Bowser waited five minutes and then asked:

“Well, what about this one?”

“You don’t deserve to be told, but I may say it’s the latest thing out. It works like a charm. All you have to do is to hitch it to a book in the window casing, take a seat as you would in a buggy, and it lowers itself and you to the ground as slick as you please. It is warranted to lower one person a minute right along. I have bought two at \$5 each, and the inventor is going to call it the Bowser fire-escape.”

“But why should our house take fire?”

from rats or mice nibbling matches, from a dozen different things. Many’s the night I lie in my bed and shiver for fear the fiendish flames are already at work.”

“You snore pretty continuously for a man that shivers. I always thought you would carry me down in your arms in case of fire.”

“I probably should if we could get down, but if cut off I can lower you and then be down a minute after you. That’s what the escape is for—when you are cut off from the stairs. I’ll put up the hook, attach the escape and sleep sounder tonight than for months.”

He got the package and opened it and revealed a device like a child’s chair swing with the cords attached and then hastened upstairs to make the hook fast. When he came down he was rubbing his hands and smiling and saying:

“It’s all ready for business, and I almost wish the house would catch fire and give us a chance to use it. I have no doubt that before the winter is over it will be the means of saving our lives.”

He might have as well thrown his money into the fire, and Mrs. Bowser realized it, but if it hadn’t been fire escapes it would have been some other fad. She smiled, and if Mr. Bowser had known the reason for it things would not have turned out as they did. There were fire and smoke hidden behind that smile.

Mrs. Bowser Gives the Alarm.  
At 11 o’clock, when everything was quiet and Mr. Bowser was sleeping like a log, a white robed figure moved around the bedroom and the upper hall. Ten minutes later the sleeper was shaken by the shoulder, and a voice shouted in his ear:

“Mr. Bowser, I smell smoke. The house must be on fire.”

“Thunder! You don’t say! Yes, that’s smoke!”

“The kitchen must be all ablaze!”

“I thought it would start there.”

“And we are cut off. Get your escape ready. You said we would need it, and”—

Mr. Bowser got up and shouted “Fire!” at the top of his voice. Then he ran to the window and threw up the sash and shouted the word again.

“Don’t stop to shout, but lower me down!” exclaimed Mrs. Bowser.

Mr. Bowser ran to the other window and raised it and was climbing out on the sill when he was hauled back. Then he broke away and rushed into the hall and downstairs, shouting at every jump. Mrs. Bowser followed him into the hall and then picked up a bunch of absorbent cotton which was giving out the smoke and the smell. It had been the simplest thing in the world to prepare the “conflagration,” and it only needed a squeeze to quench it.

Only a False Alarm.  
Meanwhile Mr. Bowser had gone out of the front door with his tropical garments shaking in the breeze and made a run for the firebox on the corner. Fortunately there was a policeman there, who asked:

“Where is the fire?”

“In my house. It’s a solid mass of flames.”

“But I don’t smell smoke nor see a blaze. Where is your house?”

“Down in the middle of the block. For heaven’s sake get the engines here!”

“Go easy, old man. Let’s see about this thing. Come along. I guess you’ve had a pipe dream. How did you get out?”

“I—I dunno.”

“Where’s your wife and children?”

“In—in the house.”

“Left ‘em to roast, eh?”

When the house was reached Mrs. Bowser was found standing in the open door. The officer came to the foot of the steps with Mr. Bowser and looked up and seemed to understand. Understanding, he smiled and said:

“They do escape from their keepers now and then, ma’am, but we always catches ‘em ag’in.”

Mr. Bowser was followed upstairs. His teeth were chattering and shivers going over him, and all he could say when the bedroom was reached and Mrs. Bowser pointed to the fire escape was:

“Divorce tomorrow!”

# TOO SMART.

By HARRY C. ERNEST.  
(Copyright, 1910, by American Press Association.)

Captain Andrew Baldwin of the cavalry, tired and hungry—he had been engaged in a duty involving much effort and exposure—entered the mess room, unbooked his saber, stood it in a corner, took a seat at the table and called for a servant to bring him some refreshment. The captain was a caterer of the mess, and a very efficient caterer. When a luncheon had been set before him he asked of the servant who placed it there:

“Julius, did you order the supplies?”

“Yes, sar.”

“Any one been to my quarters to see me today?”

“Major Leadbeater. He was here to see you this mornin’, sar.”

“Did he say why he called?”

“No, sar; he didn’t say nothin’ ‘bout what he wanted to see you fo’, sar, but it must ‘a’ been somepin very particular, fo’ he waited some time fo’ you, sar.”

“Waited, did he?”

“Yes, sar; he waited in the room out thar.”

“How long did he wait?”

“Must ‘a’ been ‘bout half an hour, sar.”

“Half an hour! What did he do with himself all that time?”

“Well, sar, I dunno what he did with himself all de time, but once when I was goin’ past de window outside I looked in here in de mess room, and I sor him measurin’ de legs of de mess table.”

“What?”

The captain was about to put a piece of meat into his mouth, but he stopped his fork a few inches from his chin and stared at the darky.

“He was measurin’ de legs ob de table, sar.”

“What with?”

“A yaller tapeline.”

The captain laid down his knife and fork, leaned back in his chair, put his hands in his pockets, puckered up his lips and gave a low whistle. There was no change in his position for full ten minutes, when without regard to his unfinished luncheon he arose from the table, took up his sword, hat and coat and left the mess-room. Going over to the officers’ club, he found several men playing billiards and then there entered into secret conference with them. The results of that conference will appear later.

A few days after this Captain Baldwin strolled over to the quarters of the infantry, where he met Major Leadbeater.

“Hello, major!” he said. “Heard you were over to my quarters the other day. Sorry I wasn’t there. Anything special?”

“Oh, no! I was around your way with nothing to do and thought I might as well drop in.”

“Well, try again. By the bye, can’t you dine at our mess some evening this week?”

“I don’t mind.”

At the dinner the officers comprising the mess were present to a man. During the coffee and the smoking, when all were feeling comfortable after a good meal and plenty of wine, Major Leadbeater, who was a great hand at making odd wagers, asked one of the officers how high he thought the clock was from the floor. The officer named a height, whereupon Leadbeater offered to bet him a small sum that it was a certain other figure. The bet was taken, and Leadbeater lost. Several other similar bets were made by those present, when Leadbeater proposed a pool as to the height of the table at which they were sitting.

There was no difficulty in getting the officers into the pool. Indeed, every man took the chance allotted him. Then Leadbeater made a number of side bets. He had come to the dinner after having cashed his pay accounts in advance and had plenty of money. The figure he named was three feet two and one-eighth inches. The other figures named ranged from three feet and three-quarter inches to three feet one and a quarter inches.

When the bets were all made the colonel and the chaplain came in together—just to smoke a cigar with the youngsters—and the colonel, knowing of the pool, asked to be permitted to take a chance. But the chances were all taken, so he asked if any one would make a side bet with him. Leadbeater remarked that he would were it not that all his ready cash was staked. The colonel offered to accept his I. O. U. in lieu of a stake, and Leadbeater took him for \$50. The chaplain, too, remarked that he had never made a bet before in his life, but he wouldn’t mind taking something on his gues. But no one would make any side bets with him.

When the funds had all been put in the stakeholder’s hands the quartermaster was called on to measure the height of the table. Procuring a tape-line, he proceeded with the work amid suppressed excitement and many glances at one another among those whose money was at risk. Finally, with his thumb on a point in the tape indicating the table’s height, he held the tape up to the light and announced:

“Three feet one and a quarter inches!”

“There’s a mistake there!” cried Leadbeater and checked himself.

“Measure it yourself,” said the quartermaster.

Leadbeater took the tape, made the measurement and turned pale.

“I’ve lost,” he said as calmly as was possible under the circumstances.

That ended Major Leadbeater’s money making by bets. An inch had been sawed off the legs of the table.

# Reflections of a Rube

“A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.”

“A road is as good as its worst hill.”

During the last campaign for county offices I was accosted by a gentleman from Newport, who was a candidate for county commissioner. He was accompanied by a gentleman from the upper Columbia valley, who wished to succeed Thos. Major in that district. Their plea was that the county should be run on a business basis. One of them gave me a card with a beautiful picture of a nice old man with a “Billy goat” beard and a line which read:

“Vote for a business man to control the county’s business.” These gentlemen were the republican nominees for commissioners.

I have heard for years that in choosing county officers we should look at policies and not politics, therefore I listened with interest to these gentlemen, and I said: “If you are elected I am going to watch with equal interest your administration.” They were elected, and here is the result of my observations:

I received my tax receipt for 1909 the other day and compared it with my 1908 tax receipt. I was surprised to find that it cost about 50% more to run the county on a business basis than on the other basis, whatever it was. Or, to be exact, my total county tax in 1908 was 12.42 mills, while in 1909 it was 18.20 mills or an increase of 5.88 mills, and while my road and bridge tax for the county was 2.50 mills in 1908 it was 3.10 mills in 1909, and my district road tax had raised from 4 mills to 5 mills in the same time, a total increase of 1.6 mills, or about 25% more than the previous year.

Now I believe in good roads and in paying to get them, therefore I said this is good. We will have better roads in this district now. And as we are 25 or 30 miles from a railroad we can afford more taxes to better our roads. I hope we shall soon see the result of this heavier tax.

I was compelled to make a visit to Davenport recently and I crossed the Spokane river at Dettillon’s bridge. I noticed that a new bridge was being built there, and as the old one is only six or seven years old, I asked a man who was working there, why?

He said that the old one was a foot or two out of line, at least its middle pier was.

On looking the bridge over I could see that that was so, and I asked him if they could put a new pier in there.

“O, yes,” he said, “the original plan was to do that, but after part of the material was delivered the commissioners changed their plan and decided to build a new bridge. It will be one of the finest west of the Rockies. They put it below the rock, because they could get a pier on that side easier by blasting the rock off than by making a concrete one on this side.”

I answered: “Well, if they are going to build a bridge as good as that why don’t they put it where we can use it. To reach that bridge I will have to pull over that clay hill on a 4% grade and then pull down that grade again for 80 rods before I can get on it, and it will take four good horses to pull a ton up it when it is dry, and when it is wet a buggy will sink half hub deep, and where do you suppose a load will go? If I want to go the other way I will be compelled to pull over this hill also. On the other bridge I can go over a level road, and if they will level the old bridge there I will use it and look at this one. If they don’t, I will use the Nee bridge, eight miles lower down the river. I don’t see why the commissioners should spend \$11,000 or \$12,000 building a new bridge when the old one could be repaired for a third as much and would serve the public 10 times better.”

I have since heard that the old bridge stood the highest water we have had in the Spokane in years. True, the traffic is not going that way, because the commissioners have pronounced it in danger. But before high water came the bridge men had built a concrete pier for the new bridge, and by that token they could have repaired the old one in time to have made it safe.

It may be good business for the United Steel Company to buy this new bridge, but we Rubes do not believe it is good business to increase our taxes and make our loads harder to haul.

So, Mr. Businessman, when you come again you will have to show us why we want you to build more monuments to carelessness, ignorance or graft.

A RUBE.

NOTICE, No. 681  
In the superior court of the state of Washington, in and for the county of Stevens.

In the matter of the guardianship of the person and estates of Adolph Rivers, Clara Rivers and Ernie Rivers, minors.

Notice is hereby given that Henry A. Rivers, as the guardian of the person and estates of Adolph Rivers, minor, has rendered and presented for settlement and filed in said court his final report and account as such guardian of the said Adolph Rivers, and has asked that said report and account be settled, approved and allowed, and that he and his bond be discharged from any further liability on account of the said Adolph Rivers, and that he be ordered to turn over to the said Adolph Rivers his portion of said estate, and that Monday, the 22d day of May, 1910, at the hour of 9:30 o’clock a. m. of said day, in the courtroom where said court is held, at the courthouse in Colville, said county and state, has been duly appointed by said court for the hearing on the settlement of said account and report, etc., at which time and place any person interested in said trust may appear and file his exceptions in writing to the said account and report and contest the same and show cause, if any there be, why said account should not be settled and allowed and distribution as to the said Adolph Rivers ordered.

Witness the honorable D. H. Carey, judge of the said superior court, and the seal of said court hereunto affixed this 23d day of April, 1910.

W. LON JOHNSON,  
Clerk of said superior court.  
By W. J. SHELTON, deputy.

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The Colville Examiner