The Port Tobacco Times

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The Talkative Wife.

Old Solomon hinted, and he ought to know,
That a woman of quarrelsome mind,
Like the dropping one hears when the skies overflow
Never ceases, no matter how weary you grow,
And is harder to squelch than the wind.

There once was a woman who talked, talked, talked.
And she was a serious ill;
For whether she rode, or whether she walked,
She couldn't be stopped, and wouldn't be balked,
For she really never was still.

At [illegible]ning, at night, and all through the day,
She kept up her horrible din;
She [illegible]tered and scolded and gossiped away,
And [illegible]ed even when she had nothing to [illegible]
But [illegible]n that's not an uncommon sin.

Her [illegible]nd, of all men, had most cause to [illegible]
She [illegible]e, I'm sorry to tell—
For all through the night she would chattering keep.
Kind angels defend us, she talked in her sleep!
And his bed was a foretaste of hell.

Only once in his life did a smile overflow
The poor fellow's features, 'tis said;
With a sigh of relief to his bed did he go,
And smiled as one smiles an adieu to all woe.
And in less than a minute was dead!

But all earthly doings must finally cease,
Time's prowess were vainly denied;
So this woman's tongue did at last find release.
For she lay down one night, and for once held her peace—
'Twas the night that she lay down and died.

And now we are come to a strange anecdote
For the truth must be told, come what may;
Although she ne'er afterward uttered a note
She chanced to be talking when death seized her throat,
And her jaw still kept wagging away!

They tied close her mouth with a napkin and strap,
But such strength had the muscles acquired
That her jaws flew apart with a forcible snap,
Then together again, like the jaws of a trap,
And then worked as though ne'er to be tired!

Years after, three doctors this strange story knew,
And agreed that the bones must arise.
(A decision that doctors are pained to come to,
But if their devotion to science is true
Their feeling they oft sacrifice).

So they called upon madam, and found her within,
But the sight brought their blood to a chill;
For her face upward leered with a skeleton grin,
And, most horrid of all, may I nevermore sin
If the jaw was not working on still!

So the doctors agreed, and I think were not wrong,
As soon as their heads became level,
That the will of woman is wonderful strong,
And works over spaces and distances long,
And opposes e'en death and the devil!

—George Horton, in Sunday Mercury

FOUND IN AN EYE.

[illegible] Theodore, chef de surete, sat in his cabinet deeply perplexed. His [illegible] elbows on his desk his head on his hands, he was musing.

"And was it going to last, this, which had been going on for so long a while? And these assassins, were they going to end by beating him? Were they going to compel him by adverse public opinion to send in his resignation?

"Parbleu; it looked so, and if they did it on purpose, passing the word from one to another to force him to get out of their way. Eight assassinations, one after another! Crimes of the worst caliber, with startling details, which peopled alike with horrifying visions the sleep of the bureaucrat and concierge! And not an assassin, for all their skillful work, had they been able to lay their hands upon! They had fled, every man of them; they had disappeared, vanished—piff, like a puff of air. Celerity, dispatch, their motto, and to go without leaving an address behind them! Frankly, it had begun to pass the bounds of all reason.

"And now, to top off these eight other crimes, there was still another one, a ninth one, a murder, like the others, accomplished the evening before, under similar conditions, a femme-galante with her throat cut, 5,000 francs' worth of jewels gone, and—not a trace of the assassins!"

Despite his robust philosophy, that had long been the admiration and emulation of his century, M. Theodore felt himself drifting into melancholy and reflection, not unmixed with anger.

"Nine murders, one after the other; nine crimes without an author; nonsense! impossible!" The chef de surete pulled himself together, threw back his head like a war horse sniffing battle, and—the door opened.

It was his secretary who presented himself, bearing a card in his fingers.

"A gentleman, monsieur, who insists upon seeing you. He declares"—and the secretary smiled a little at the absurdity of the claim—"he declares himself in a position to furnish you with definite particulars regarding the crime of yesterday."

"Ah, the crime of yesterday!" The chief turned quickly. "Then bid him enter," said he, and while the secretary regained the ante-room to do his bidding, M. Theodore cast his eye upon the card before him.

"Frederick Bouscal!" he read in a half voice. "Bouscal, Bouscal; it seems to me that I knew that name—that I've heard it somewhere."

He scrawled a line upon a scrap of paper, handed it to his secretary, who returned at the moment ushering in the visitor who had asked to see him, dismissing him with a word, and was ready for the matter in hand.

M. Theodore raised his eyes. Before him was a man simply, but neatly clothed, and with a frank and honest countenance, though veiled, as by a cloud, with sadness. The eyes were clear and open, the mustache and goatee gray and pointed; in short, there was something in his manner, something in his whole appearance of militaire "in retreat."

"You have particulars to give us, have you not, monsieur?" questioned the chef de surete, "particulars, I believe, of the crime of yesterday?"

"I hope so, monsieur," simply responded the visitor.

"Ah, hope so! You are not sure, then?"

"It rests with you, M. le Chef, whether I am sure or not. All depends, in fact, upon an operation the means of which you alone are able to furnish me."

"Explain, if you please?"

"Certainly, and at once, though doubtless you have heard it spoken of, M. le Chef, a certain scientific procedure which permits under certain conditions, better even than description could do it, a reconstitution of the portrait of an assassin. Briefly, behold my meaning. You know, of course," he continued, "that in the phenomenon call d vision the object which we see throws or forms upon a screen in the eyeball itself—in plain words, upon the retina of the eye—an image which remains there until displaced by another. It has been proved also that this image persists even after death. You recognize, therefore, that if a person murdered has been struck from the front, and in a light sufficiently distinct for him to see, the last thing upon which his eyes would be fixed would in all probability be the face or form of the murderer. Naturally, the image of that face or figure would be thrown upon the retina of the eye where—and this is what I came to say—it is not only possible to refind it, but also possible to reproduce it. Ah, well, monsieur, in the case which occupies us——"

The door of the cabinet opened anew, and the secretary of M. Theodore re-entered, holding in his hand a roll of papers that he laid before the chief, then turned and was gone again as quietly as he had come. M. Theodore lifted it and ran his eyes over the contents.

"You are named Frederick Bouscal, are you not, monsieur?" he demanded presently, addressing his visitor.

"Yes, M. le Chef, Frederick Bouscal."

"——your age?"

"Fifty-eight years, M. le Chef."

"Hum-m-m." M. Theodore rapidly twirled the sheets beside him; "27 years!" he murmured, as if thinking aloud. "So it was not you then, who was imprisoned two years ago, and condemned for contumacy and the theft of a thousand florins?"

A sudden flush empurpled the countenance of the visitor.

"No; monsieur," he responded with effort, in a dull voice; "no, it was not I—it was—my son."

"An employe of the Credit Agricole, was he not? And—you are ignorant of what has become of him?"

"Absolutely. It is fifteen months that his mother and I have been without news of him. That child, M. le Chef, that child has been our sorrow and our shame. He has broken our hearts, dishonored our name——"

His voice was choked, he was silent, unable, evidently, to go on.

"Pardon me, monsieur," said the chef de surete. "I have reopened a painful wound, but—I listen to you—you were saying?"

The man passed his hand across his brow and eyes to clear his vision, then resumed:

"I was saying, M. le Chef, that in the case which occupies us now the reconstitution of the assassin's portrait should be entirely possible. The victim was struck in the face, the direction of the blow and the form of the wound indicates it plainly. More than this, it must have been light enough to see the murderer, and with sufficient clearness to have stamped his likeness upon the retinal screen, for the papers assert that even in death her eyes were fixed in a 'wide and frightened stare.' Thus, monsieur, we find ourselves in the presence of a half-certainty; it is probable, if not sure, that the eye of the corpse lying now upon the slab at the morgue contains the exact production of the features of the one you seek. With your permission I will draw it from them."

"Draw it; but how?"

"By photography—it is my business, M. le Chef. And this matter, this subject I speak of, I have studied it long and almost with passion, for I hold it to be, in case of success, one of the most useful and beautiful applications of modern science. I know it can be done. I have myself experimented, and in one instance have reproduced the lineaments of the physician who had leaned above the bed of the dying."

The man spoke with animation and while speaking his voice vibrated, his eyes burned, his whole countenance was illumined, irradiated with the light of a legitimate pride. M. Theodore regarded him, visibly moved himself by this ardent conviction.

"And you conclude?" he questioned, after a moment's thought.

"I conclude—but authorize me to attempt the experiment on the woman assassinated yesterday and I will tell you what I conclude. If I succeed it will be for us—my wife and me—a little glory, and also a little money—a ray of hope in our misery; if I fail,—well, no matter—we are used to misfortune. A deception, more or less, need not be counted. In any event, M. le Chef, you lose nothing in the adventure but the chance of an unhoped for success."

"Then, so be it, monsieur," agreed the chef de surete. "Take your instrument to the morgue to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock. I will see that the clerk is instructed. Later on I shall myself be there. I have the honor, monsieur, to wish you good morning."

In the obscure nook at the morgue where he had inclosed himself in accordance with the arrangement made at the office of the surete Frederick Bouscal, his body bent, his face drawn, watched anxiously the result of his last washing. The plate was there before him in its bath of quicksilver, into which he had dropped it awhile ago with such fear and infinite precautions.

Sensitivized? Vitalized? At least it should be, and if the conditions of the crime were such as he supposed them, and the victim before dying had really seen her murderer's face, the portrait of the assassin would be there under the bed of gelatine en traine to melt away.

His throat closed as by a grip of iron, the operator held himself immovable, hearing only with painful distinctness the gurgle of the water as it dripped upon the faces of the dead in the adjoining chamber; the plunge of his blood as it throbbed and hammered through the arteries of his heart.

And at last the moment came—the moment that was to reveal to him all or nothing. He rose, that poor, trembling photographer, rose, I say, took it carefully by its dripping edges, that plate upon which his fate was hanging, half closed his eyes, held it to the single ray of light that filtered through the yellowed pane—to stagger back with a groan of anguish, to let it crash into a thousand pieces.

"His son! Great God! The face of the murderer, the face of his son!"

Five minutes later, when Frederick Bouscal, the photographer, came from his nook, and the chef de surete, awaiting him with impatience, hurried to meet him, he saw immediately by the pallor of his face, by his somber eyes, that he had nothing good to announce to him.

"Well," said he, "nothing?"

"No," responded Bouscal, "nothing."

"Allons! no matter; try it a second time; do it over again."

"Impossible! the transparency of the cornea is destroyed. I wished to wash it, and I burned it through mistake in the vials. I salute you, M. le Chef!" And Frederick Bouscal turned away.

The next morning the commissioner of the quarter of Ternes, forwarding to the prefecture his regular report headed it with the following item:

"To-day at 10 o'clock, a summons to 109 Rue Laugiere. A call from the concierge, suspicious of charcoal fumes from the room of the Bouscals, man and wife, his locataires. The door, by my order, was forced. Too late—they were dead both of them, side by side upon the bed, a brazier of lighted charcoal plainly indicating the manner of their death. A double suicide—poverty the cause.

"From —— Commissaire, quarter of Ternes, third month, 16th day, 188—."

"Bah, these inventors!" murmured M. Theodore, as his secretary concluded the reading, "they are all alike, stupid and rash! though I, too, on this occasion, have naught to boast of. But how the devil," he added, as the memory of that pale, sad face rose up before him, "how the devil could I think of suicide for a cause so trifling as this?"

"A cause as trifling as this?"

"Ah, my worthy chef de surete, it is not everything that is known in that prefecture of thine!—*Translated from the French by E. C. Waggener.*

The Projected Air-Ship.

The consequences of a successful issue to the undertaking would be so momentous that they can with difficulty be realized. The first result would unquestionably be to put an end to wars. To show how hopeless any military operations would be in a country defended by such weapons, we will suppose that Prince Bismarck, after waiting until Dr. De Bausset has, unknown to him, completed a few of his air-ships, picked a quarrel with us on the pretext of a dispute about Samoa. War is declared suddenly, after the German manner, and the military trains, which are said to stand ready packed, with the horses at hand for harnessing, in the German arsenals are set in motion. The transports, which lie equipped for sea, are filled with men from the nearest garrison, and in a few hours an immense force is on its way to invade America. About half way across the Atlantic the fleet is met by one or two De Bausset air-ships, which sail about far out of reach of shot, and, taking position in a leisurely manner drop a 500-pound shell filled with explosive gelatine into the funnel of each, and having thus annihilated the expedition, proceed to Berlin to treat the remaining portion of the hostile army in the same way. Of course it might be that the Germans would have the air-ships first, and the war would be brought to a conclusion by the unconditional surrender of all the principal cities in the United States, under the perspasion of a dynamite shell suspended over each. But it would be so easy to turn the tables at a moment's notice that, after a few towns had been mutually blown up, the quarrel would be terminated by common consent.

In regard to passengers, the air-ships, if they proved practicable at all, would offer such immense advantages in point of safety, speed, and comfort that they would soon supersede all other conveyances for traveling long distances. It seems to us that the proposed speed of 100 miles an hour would in practice be greatly exceeded. There would be no such obstacles to fast sailing in the air as are met with in ocean traveling, in the shape of waves, fogs, and danger of collision. By keeping ships on the outward passage in the lower strata of the atmosphere and the inward-bound ones in the upper strata, serious collisions would be out of the question; and, provided the speed could be made to exceed that of the air currents as much as that of steamships exceed that of the ocean currents, it is difficult to see what danger would remain of which travelers by well-built and well-managed air-ships need be afraid. —*Fire and Water.*

Humor of Irish Blunders.

An Irishman, testifying in a police court, was asked to explain why he had "shown the white feather" on a certain occasion. "Tis better to be a coward for five minutes than dead all your life," he replied. Another Irishman, while accompanying a fishing party, had a bad fall down a steep mountain slope. Picking himself up he devoutly exclaimed: "Glory be to God that I wasn't walking back over the mountain a dead man!"

An Irish lady, observing that her bed curtains had caught fire hurried away to fetch water. She caught up a can of water, and as she was about to pour it upon the flames remembered that it was hot water, and mentally decided that it could be of no use. An Irish school boy placed a cup full of coffee on a sloping desk. Finding that it overflowed, he sough to remedy his difficulty by turning the cup around. An Irish tenant wishing to raise the roof of his cabin began by excavating the floor.

An Irishman on a gentleman saying to him, "How did you like that whisky, Pat?" at once replied, "Sure, your Honor, it has made another man of me, and that other man would like a glass, too." A temperance lecturer might make that bull do good service in illustrating the fact that "the first glass does the mischief.—*London Spectator.*

The Widow's Supply.

A New England Sunday-school teacher had for a lesson the story of the Prophet Elijah and the widow whose whole supply of food when the man of God asked for refreshment was "not a cake but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse." When the teacher asked her class how much food the widow had the answer came quickly from one little fellow: "She had just enough meal to make a cake and oil enough to start a fire."

DISPERSING A TRAMP.

What Happened to Those Who Tried It.

I was eating dinner at a farm house in Indiana when one of the children came in and announced that a highway tramp had called at the kitchen door and asked for a bite to eat. The farmer was a very short, very fat, and very bald-headed man, and he was Postmaster at the corners and Justice of the Peace in and for the county. He had a son called James, another called Moses, and a hired man who was addressed as Towser. He sent out word for the tramp to sit down and rest, and as a laugh went round the table he explained.

"After dinner I shall be pleased to show you how we encourage tramps in this section. This is evidently a new man to this part of the State, or he would never have called here."

After dinner we went out. The tramp was sitting under a cherry tree, looking as comfortable as you please, and evidently unsuspicious that anything except dinner was in store for him. He looked to me like a bad man to fool with, but the farmer didn't seem to read him that way.

"Now, then," he said, as he rubbed his fat hands together, "you will stand up."

"What fur?" asked the tramp.

"To be kicked! I am going to boot you from this spot down to that slivered telephone pole."

"But I object."

"Can't help that. As a fourth-class Postmaster of the United States of America I command you to rise."

"If I am kicked somebody else will get hurt!" cautioned the tramp as he got up.

"As one of the Justices of the Peace in and for this county I command you to disperse," said the farmer as he turned the tramp toward the gate and administed a kick.

Next instant he received a left-hander on the nose which knocked him into a confused heap on the grass, and the tramp got out of his old coat and prepared for business.

"Towser, pulverize him!" shouted the farmer as he struggled to his knees. "In the name of the United States I command you to knock him down!"

Towser advanced, his big fists doubled up, but the tramp danced to the right and the left, and then sent in one on the hired man's commissary department which doubled him up and laid him among the bellyaches.

"James, Moses, make him a prisoner!" yelled the old man, as he plucked a handful of grass, and held it to his bleeding nose.

The tramp chuckled. There [illegible] fun ahead.

The two boys [illegible] fellows, strong [illegible] an ox, and they were [illegible]. As they stripped off the[illegible] up between two currant bushes, [illegible] they could not flank him, and as they advanced upon him he grinned all over. He played with them for a minute or two, and then drew a long breath, made three or four faints, and piled them on the grass together. Neither moved to get up for full two minutes. Meanwhile the tramp rested and looked over to me and queried:

"You ain't one of the crowd?"

"No."

"And don't want me to disperse?"

"Not particularly."

"All right. I don't think the United States and his gang want anything more of me just now, and as I have an engagement down the road, I'll move on. When they get washed up and the bandages on, tell 'em I used to scrap with the boys in Chicago in days gone by, and that I held myself in and let 'em off very mild.—Good-by stranger. Ta, ta, old fatty!"

And he had been gone ten minutes before the Postmaster came over to me and whispered:

"Did you ever!"—*New York Sun.*

Useful Information.

"There are lots of people who are taking good care of a piece of rope under the belief that it helped to hang Guiteau," remarked Deputy Graham to a Washington *Critic* reporter, "when, in reality, there is no more interest attached to it than there is to an ordinary piece of clothesline. I can tell a piece of the Guiteau rope as soon as I lay my eyes on it. There was a druggist in this city who paid $5 for a little bit of hempen twist. He had the ends fastened with pieces of silver and put in his show-case with a big label where everybody could see it. He was telling me about it one day, and I showed him, to his great disgust, that the rope had in all probability never been anywhere in the neighborhood of the Guiteau execution. You see, in running a rope through the hole in the scaffold beam it got hot and burned the wood a little bit. When the Guiteau rope was running through, in making ready for the hanging, the charred wood left a black streak all along one side of it. If that black streak is wanting, you can be pretty sure that it is not a piece of the rope that hanged Guiteau."

Whittier's Dog.

During Mr. Whittier's recent birthday celebration he was visited among others by Mrs. Julia Houston West. After dinner Mrs. West was asked to sing, and, seating herself at the piano, she began the beautiful ballad of "Robin Adair," singing it as she can with all the longing and heart-break of the words and music in her voice. She had hardly begun before Mr. Whittier's pet dog came into the room, and, seating himself by his side watched her as if fascinated and listened with delight unusual in the animal. When she finished he came and put his paw very gravely into her hand and licked her cheek.

"Robin takes that as a tribute to himself," said Mr. Whittier; "he also is 'Robin Adair.'"

It was true. That was the dog's name, and he evidently considered that he was the hero of the song. From that moment, during Mrs. West's visit, he was her devoted attendant. He kept by her side when she was indoors and accompanied her when she went out to walk. When she went away he carried her satchel in his mouth to the gate and saw her depart with every evidence of reluctance and distress.—*Wide Awake.*

Of the fifty or more ambitious writers who have attempted to fill Josh Billings' shoes, not one has succeeded in attracting attention.