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## DODGE'S ELOPEMENT, Or, the Captain's Out-Work.

BY FALCONBRIDGE.

Dodge, the eccentric and unequalled delineator, or, as the ladies call him, the "incomparably ugly man," appeared "on change" again last week, and the next evening after the appearance, at Milken's fashionable saloon, Dodge's headquarters—was, at an early hour, densely crowded with the "members of the order," to listen to the rib-tickling account of the many incidents ever to be met with in the life of a concert singer. Many a time and oft have we shaken our sides with uncontrollable laughter, as the tormenting sentences of dry and spasmodic wit fell from the lips of the joker, as uncontrived and as careless as the drops of spray from the overhanging cliffs at Niagara. But less, however, of the many rich things related by him, in our presence, have left the laughter in us, like the following—but, in order to be fully appreciated, the reader should see Dodge tell the story:

Dodge, some years ago—about the time he quit teaching the art of wax-fruits and flower-making, and fortunately took up that of concerting—at which profession he has, according to repute, amassed an independent fortune—made a brake across the mountains, and one fine morning found himself in the city of Cincinnati.

Here he took passage in the afterwards unlucky steamer, the B———S———, bound to Memphis, Nicksburg, Natchez and New Orleans.

The boat was densely crowded, being stowed full on deck, with agricultural implements, horses, cord-wood, Dutch clogs, and other hard-ware, while the cabin overhead, was filled jam up with trunks, band-boxes, men, women, and such like plunder.

The boatswain out, fired her swivel, and away she headed down stream, under full steam, while her old pipes breathed forth a *cook, cook, cook*, which fairly caused the surrounding hills to echo again.

After supper, Dodge, having, by letter of introduction, made the acquaintance of a very useful personage, the Captain of the boat, they, arm-in-arm, took a peep into the ladies' saloon; it was quite full, and one of the ladies was playing the piano elegantly, while some others, having a greater taste for vocal than instrumental music, were humming over a few of the late fashionable productions of Balfe, Glover, Dempster, and other eminent composers.

The Captain and Dodge stood for some time in respectful silence, when the lady at the piano very politely requested aid from some one to assist her in that glorious, soul-exhilarating and never-dying old duet, the "Canadian Boat Song."

This was Dodge's cue; he very readily stepped forward and begged permission to lead off.

"If you please, sir," said the lady, whose angelic voice, Dodge vows, nearly took away his breath.

However, our hero pitched into the "Boat-man" like a load of coal, and says that, united with the angelic voice of the Mississippian nightingale, he fairly made "Rome howl."

After the Boatman came a few selections from the Operas, lately published; and the night being now far advanced, to wind up, Dodge was obliged to favor the ladies with a description of his trip to "Niagara Falls, Mam."

"Egad, old fellow," says the noble Captain, meeting Dodge in the social hall about midnight, "you got along swimmingly among the ladies. Why, you sing like a bird!"

"O, yes, I sing a little," says Dodge. "And, egad, you thumbed that lady's guitar into fits."

"Well, I ra-tter guess I did torture it some," replied Dodge; "but tell me, Captain, who the deuce is that lady dressed in black, that sings so like a nightingale, and plays with the finish and perfection of a professor?"

The Captain, being a noted wag, and the terror of all the jokers on the Mississippi-river, here suddenly conceived the idea of telling the Yankee, with a joke, that should count "high" among the New Englanders, in ages to come, as a model "sell."

"That lady, my dear fellow, is a—widow."

"You don't say so?" says Dodge. "Yes, but I do, though—and more than that, she's rich! rich as mud, sir!—rich as mud! worth seventy-five thousand dollars! young and beautiful into the bargain! a grand chance for a Yankee boy, just commencing life like you, sir!"

"She's certainly very beautiful," says Dodge. "Beautiful as an angel!" replied the Captain. "A very fine musician, too," says Dodge. "Unequaled on the river," rejoined

the Captain; "why, sir, she sings like a seraph!"

"How long has she been a widow?" inquired Dodge.

"A little over a year now, since her Captain was placed under the sod."

"Ah, then her husband was a Captain, was he?" says Dodge.

"Yes; he was a Captain, but he got blown up, poor fellow! This steam-boating is a risky business for a man that cares anything about life, sir—risky business; but then if you get the widow—and you can do it, sir, like a knife, if you only cotton up strong enough, for she likes you already; I saw it in her eye—you can retire on some large plantation and spend the rest of your days in indescribable and unbounded luxury."

"Well! Captain, hang me, if I aint a mind to spread myself for the young widow, and try my hand at courting for the first time in my life!"

"Go it, my boy, I'll back you with all my influence; if I wasn't already a married man, I'd surely go in for that charming woman; but you'll win—young, good looking."

"Don't—don't—if you please, Captain."

"Hang it, Dodge, don't be so modest."

"But, Captain, gas, soap, putty—think of my feelings."

"Then you sing and play like a book; the widow loves music, she loves music to distraction, and now my boy, strike while the iron is hot! Why, sir, if I could sing and handle the guitar equal to you, I'd—"

"Hold on; Captain—hold on; I understand all about that, but now tell me about the young and beautiful widow, give me her name, age, and residence."

"Her name," replied the Captain, "is Aramanta Bronson—age about twenty-four—residence, New Orleans, and as you will probably find chance to exert yourself; so now take my advice, and make the best use of your time."

"Licill," says Dodge; and he did it to anything else, for always having an eye open for flytraps and spring-guns, his suspicions were aroused by the Captain's attempt at flattery, and his seeming disinterested endeavors to bring about a hastily arowal of love, for the young, accomplished, and really beautiful lady.

So, setting his wires to work, he lost but little time in discovering that the Captain had been under the delightful chains of hymen but about two weeks, and that the *pseudo* widow was no more nor less than the identical, charming, and idolized wife of the Captain.

"Now then," says Dodge to himself, "as the Captain has planned a joke, he shan't be disappointed; I'll only change, or slightly alter the plot; and if I don't, in the end, give him a regular eye-opener, then he may ever have the pleasure of informing his friends how he done the Yankee boy."

Dodge had, something like a week previous, sent on his bills and advertisements, to the Editors in Natchez, stating that he would be at that stirring little town during the races, and would, at fifty cents a ticket, treat the inhabitants and visitors, with a series of musical, musical and farcical entertainments.

Not letting any person on board know at what place he intended to stop, telling the Captain he would settle his fare when he left the boat, he implored every spare moment with the widows, over the music-pot-folios and piano, until the old steamer came puffing along side of the levee at Natchez.

Ascertaining from the Captain that the steamer would leave in about three quarters of an hour, he gave his baggage in charge of a resident in town who was just about leaving the boat. Then, watching the Captain until he had entered the counting-room of one of the large stores "under the hill," for which he occasionally brought goods from New Orleans, the vocalist immediately went to the Captain's wife, and very coolly informed her that through a mismanagement of one of the Agents, the boat would be obliged to remain about twenty-four hours at Natchez, and that her husband had accordingly accepted an invitation of some friends, to visit the race-ground, and wished the vocalist to come up, as soon as convenient, in a carriage, with the Captain's wife. Not dreaming of anything wrong, the lady hastily threw on her shawl and bonnet, and declared herself ready for a start.

Stepping on shore, Dodge hailed a colored coachman, gave him a shining double, ordered him to drive ten miles in an easterly direction, and then without a single question, turn around and slowly return.

Leaving Dodge and his fair companion to enjoy their pleasant drive, after a tedious confinement in a noisy and clattering steamer, we will now return to the Captain, who, at the appointed time, gave the steamer's bell the accustomed number of rings, hauled in the plank, and bade good-day to his friends, and shoved out into the muddy river.

After seeing that the additional freight was well balanced, ropes and chains properly stowed away, and everything in order, he said, "all fast," occupied nearly an hour, the Captain went into the ladies' saloon, to scrutinize his new passengers, and pass an agreeable half hour, with his sweet and affectionate wife.

Not seeing his lady, he repaired to her state-room, where he found the usual variety of out and inside dresses, night-caps, slippers, stockings, etc. (the honey moon not yet being passed), a general search was made, from stem to stern, in the old steam boat, but without the least success.

For a moment the Captain stood like a statue. A thought struck him. Where was Dodge?

Some one remarked that he had not been seen since the boat left Natchez.

With the speed of a madman the Captain rushed to the state-room of the Yankee Singer, when, to his astonishment, he found that the baggage had all disappeared, and on the bed lay a letter, directed to Captain—— of the steamer B———S———.

The letter was quickly torn open, when to add still greater force to his phrenzy, his eyes fell on the following:

"Dear Sir—Thinking that you might possibly have the pleasure of relating to your friends, how you caught Dodge 'napping,' by persuading him to make a declaration of love to your talented and truly accomplished lady, you tried your utmost, both by misrepresentation and personal influence, to get me in the meshes of your skillfully woven net; and thinking that when we are among the Romans, we are justified in doing as the Romans do, I have by the same method taken possession of your beautiful wife, without either her own or your consent."

Your lady shall receive that attention and kindness, that none other, better than a Bostonian, knows how to bestow; and unless you conclude to "best ship," acknowledge the error, and immediately take possession of the prize, (which, between you and myself, I consider the most manly and wisest course, I shall, if it meet her approval, take her under my charge in the next steamer bound for the Crescent City.

Yours for fun, let it come at whose expense it may, in a horn.

OSSEAN E. DODGE,  
The Boston Vocalist.

P. S.—Enclosed, you will find the amount of my fare, and inasmuch as I have taken possession of your fair, it is perfectly fair that you should take possession of my fare."

In a voice of thunder the Captain gave orders for the motion of the engine to be reversed, and taking possession of the pilot house himself, he had for a time, an excellent opportunity of cooling himself down into something like a state of reflection and reason.

Being naturally of a generous, noble hearted and lively turn of mind, he was soon obliged to acknowledge to himself, that the "infernal Yankee" outwitted him; and that, after all, if his wife had received that situation promised in the letter, it would be better not to make a fool of himself, by a great plunge and show, but handsomely acknowledge that he had been whipped by his own weapon, return the vocalist the amount of his fare, and then present him with a life-ticket for the steamer B———S———, current at all seasons of the year.

About the time that the Captain was raging the widest, Dodge was explaining to his fair companion the manner in which her honorable lord had compromised her honor and dignity, by representing her as a widow; and the proper person to receive addresses of any and all young men who might by accident or otherwise engage a passage in the same steamer.

Little by little, in his usual shrewd manner, the vocalist revealed the complicated plot from beginning to end, until the whole conversation, plans, &c., were brought to light, including even the espousal of the whole—the vocalist's letter, left in the state-room.

The lady trembled, and wept violently for a few moments, and finally wound up, with a merry, ringing laugh, exclaiming:

"O, won't he be angry for a few minutes! but he's a noble soul, and will in half an hour afterward, be willing and happy to forgive and forget. But he shan't as I've tongue! Oh won't I better have but Mr. Dodge, hadn't we better have the driver hurry? For the Captain will return immediately on the receipt of your letter—I know he will; for, oh, sir, we are very fond of each other; indeed we are."

Dodge ordered the driver to increase his speed, and if he should discover a steamer coming up the river to immediately inform them.

"Dah's one come now, massa," immediately replied the driver.

"What's her name?" inquired Dodge. "I reckon massa's from de North!—Don't know, nigger can't read," rejoined the driver.

Dodge and his fair companion immediately took a view of the distant steamer from the window of the coach, and

soon satisfied themselves beyond a doubt that she was none other than the identical B———S———.

"Where does massa want nigger to drive now?" inquired the wonder-stricken but respectful driver.

"To Natchez, under the hill," replied Dodge, "and govern yourself according to the speed of your steamer, as we wish to board her."

"Yes, sir."

As the boat-time was thrown ashore, Dodge and the *pseudo* widow alighted from the carriage and walked slowly toward the boat.

The Captain, overcome with joy at the sight of his young and beautiful bride, sprung from the taffrail and soon had her clasped in his arms, and after a long kiss, and a few words in private, he turned round to Dodge, who stood looking on like one convinced he had no right to enjoy the scene, and exclaimed:

"My dear fellow, this is happiness and no mistake; but I'll own up that I've been sold—COMPLETELY sold, and that you're too many for me altogether. And now, sir, if you'll promise that you'll never relate the facts of this case South of Mason & Dixon's you shall receive a ticket which shall entitle you to a cabin passage on my boat from the present time till the fall of 1895."

"I am much obliged to you, Captain, or the offer," replied Dodge, "but should prefer not to accept it, as jokes that are paid for, are not, as a general thing, so long remembered or so well enjoyed as those founded on affection for the victims."

"Hit again—by the great father of rivers," exclaimed the Captain, "but I'm now behind him, and must hurry off; so, God bless you, my dear fellow—but don't mind the exciting scenes in concealing ever forget Captain—— of the steamer B———S———, or your ELOPEMENT WITH ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE!"

On his arrival at New Orleans, the vocalist found a letter in the Post Office containing, together with the gold wishes of the Captain and wife, an elaborately finished, and massive gold ring, on which was engraved the Captain's name and residence, and underneath, in very fine lettering, the simple word—"SOLD."

Dodge showed us the ring, and amid the shouts of the fraternity, exclaimed—

"Boys, I have preserved this ring with great care and attention, for a wedding gift, but have't, as yet, found the first woman who had the courage to offer herself, and it's all nonsense for me to mention the subject, for they'd insist upon it, Old Dodge was coming another of his jokes."

The Love of Home.—It is only shallow minded pretenders who ever make the humblest origin matter of reproach, Taunt and scoffing at the humble condition of early life affect nobody in this country but those who are foolish enough to indulge in them, and they are equally sufficiently punished by the rebuke.

A man who is not ashamed of himself need not be ashamed of his early condition.

It did not happen to me to be born in a log cabin, but my elder brothers and sisters were born in a log cabin, raised among the snow drifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early as that when the smoke first rose from its rude chimney, and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of white man's habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist, and I pay it annual visits. I carry my children to it to teach them the hardships endured by the generations which have gone before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early affections, and the narrations and incidents, which mingle with all I know of their primitive family abode. I weep to think that none of those who inhabited it are now among the living, and if ever I am ashamed of it, or if ever I fall in my affection or veneration for him who raised it and defended it against savage violence and destruction, cherished all domestic virtues, beneath its roof, and through the fire and blood of seven years' revolutionary war, shrunk from no toil, no sacrifice to serve his country, and to raise his children to a condition better than his own, may my name and the name of my posterity, be blotted forever from the memory of mankind.

Home and Woman.—If there has ever been a more touching and eloquent eulogium upon the charms of home, and its dearest treasure, woman, than is contained in the following extract from the Christian Inquirer, it has not been our good fortune to meet it.

"Our homes, what is their corner stone but the virtue of woman, and on what does social well-being rest but our homes? To them we trace all other blessings.—Are not our hearts guarded by the holy forms of conjugal, filial, and fraternal love, the corner stones of Church and

State, more sacred than either, more necessary than both? Let our temples crumble, and our academies decay; let every public edifice, our halls of justice, and our capitals of state, be leveled with the dust; but spare our homes. Let no socialist invade them with his wild plans of communism. Man did not invent, and we cannot improve or abrogate them. A private shelter to cover in two hearts dearest to each other than all the world; high walls to exclude the profane eyes of every human being; a seclusion enough for children to feel that mother is a holy and peculiar name—this is home; and here is the birth-place of every sacred thought. Here the Church and State must come for their origin and their support. Oh, spare our homes! The love we experience here gives us our faith in an infinite goodness; the purity and disinterested tenderness of our home is our fore-taste and our earnest of a better world. In the relations there established and fostered, do we find through life the chief solace of our joy and existence. What friends deserve the name compared with those whom a birthright gave us? One mother is worth a thousand friends; one sister truer and dearer than twenty intimate companions. We who have played on the same hearth, under the light of the same smile, who date back to the same scenes and season of innocence and hope, in whose veins runs the same blood, do we not find that years only make more sacred and more important the ties that bind us? Goldness may spring up, distance may separate, different spheres may divide, but those who can love anything—who continue to love at all—must find that the friends whom God himself gave, are wholly unlike any we can choose for ourselves, and that the yearning for these is the strongest spark in our expiring affection."

Knowest thou that in that immortal mind there are no riches more valuable than all thy coffers of gold? May he not be rich in the wealth of loving hearts and sweet smiles? And is he not rich in the beauties of nature—is not all the earth his to enjoy? And how knowest thou but the "pearl of great price" is his, compared to which, all thy wealth is as the small dust of the balance?

"He is a poor man." And so mayest thou be to-morrow. A day, yea an hour may strip thee of thy possessions, and doom thee to beggary. Thy riches are uncertain, thou canst not calculate upon them. And even if they follow thee through life, there is a moment when in many respects, in fact in everything, thou wilt be as poor as thy neighbor. It is the moment of death. Thou canst not carry thy gods with thee; they would sink thee in the dark river.

Again thou sayest, "He is a poor man." And was not the Master of us all poor? Were not his followers and friends among the earth's destitute ones? And if thou art saved at last, will it not be through humble reliance upon him who had not where to lay his head? And art thou ashamed of those in the same humble condition? Must thou not become poor in spirit before thou canst inherit eternal life? Little then it becomes thee, because thou hast a few more grains of golden dust than thy neighbor, to exult and triumph over him, to pass him by with a sneer or even with coldness and neglect.

Genius in a Barber Shop.—A little more than seventy years ago, might have been seen in the town of Preston, in the North of England, a poor unknown and unlettered man, who contrived to keep soul and body together by shaving the dusty heads of wayfarers at half penny a shave. This man was then thirty years of age. But while pursuing the humble vocation, he was filled with high thoughts of an invention which was destined to effect the most surprising results.

He contrived, at moments stolen from sleep, to form a model of his invention. His wife broke it, thinking her man had better stick to barbering. He turned her out of doors, and made another. His townsmen, understanding what he was about, and how his invention would do away with labor, mobbed him, and made him fly for his life.

Persevering against innumerable difficulties, from poverty and opposition of the ignorant, he at last succeeded in perfecting and introducing his spinning frame, an invention to which England owes her greatness, power, and wealth; and without which she might have been a colony of France, or at best, a third or fourth rate nation. The poor barber became Sir Richard Arkwright, and his splendid estates in England still attest British gratitude.

A Dangerous Beverage.—Water is composed of certain gases, one of them quite explosive. The other night, when Professor Howland, in Pittsburg, was decomposing water, and causing terrific explosions of its component gases, a rather feeble liver in the audience exclaimed as he held his hand to his ear, "Catch me putting water in my brandy after this—I might be blown up, like the boiler of a steamboat."

He was quick in the practical application.

Dr. WATTS was fond of learning from his infancy. Before he could speak plain, whenever any money was given him, he would run to his mother and cry, "A book, a book, buy a book." At four years old he began to learn Latin, and at about seven he could write pretty poetry. His father kept a boarding-school at Southampton; and good Mrs. Watts sometimes employed the pupils after school-hours in writing her a few lines; for which she rewarded them with a farthing. On one of these occasions, Isaac being required to do the same, he directly wrote:

I write you for a farthing, but to try How I your farthing writers can outvie.

About the same time he wrote this acrostic upon his own name:

Wash me in thy blood, O Christ, And grace divine impart; Then search and try the corners of my heart, That I in all things may be fit to do Service to thee and sing thy praises too.

A curious exhibition is in course of preparation for the World's Fair, by Mr. Wild, M. P., the eminent map engraver. He is constructing a huge globe, of 55 feet in diameter, which will be provided with a convenient mode of ingress and egress; the different countries of the world will be represented upon the inner, and not upon the outer surface, and the interior will be fitted up with galleries and staircases, so as to enable the visitor to make a tour of the world, and visit each of the countries whose industry or productions will be displayed in the Great Exhibition.

HE IS A POOR MAN.

And is he any the less thy brother, and as such, entitled to kindness and sympathy? Does he not breathe the same air, enjoy the same sunshine, and tread upon the same earth as thou? Hath he not joy and sorrow the same as thyself? Is he not susceptible of pain, and do not health and ease bring happiness to him as well as thee?

"But he is a poor man." And how knowest thou? Hast thou penetrated the secret recesses of his heart and found his hidden springs of joy are there?