

# "THE FIRST FOOT."

By ROBERT BARR.

THE house was chaos. One lamp burned, a cheap made in Germany affair, which gave but sufficient light to show the hopeless disorder of the room. The furniture stood about at all impossible angles; pictures, instead of being neatly arranged upon the walls, rested on the floor, leaning their faces against the wainscot, as things in grief; books, loosely tied with coarse string, were flung here, a bundle of firelogs huddled there. Chaos indescribable.

But Stuart Brazier was a methodical, philosophic soul, the very type of the satisfied and satisfactory suburban dweller. He had glanced at the disheartening scramble of furniture and ornaments without the least little discouragement. To-morrow, not to-night, he would begin to set things to rights.

The June night closed in, and Stuart Brazier sat in his comfortable chair, smoking and turning matters over in his mind. He was glad to be at length in the first detached house he had ever possessed; he thought of its spacious lawns, spacious for a London suburb, and of the grounds well bushed in from spying neighbors. He was glad, too, that he had sent his wife and little girl to Margate, where, in bracing air, they would know nothing of the discomforts of a moving day. The dust and the turmoil of the morning, the heavy boots trampling on uncarpeted stairs, the sight of men straining in their determination not to injure heavy furniture, the sounds of hammers and falling things, the whole picture of turning out of one house and going into another had got upon his nerves just a little, and now that he sat at rest he felt disinclined to stir himself. But write to Margate he must. His wife would look to receive a letter from him the first thing in the morning, telling her all about it; assuring her that no precious family god had been broken, and that her jewelry box was quite safe. After their little girl, the chief care of the Braziers was that small tin box which contained the wife's valuables. Its contents were richer than are usually found in a suburban villa, for both Stuart Brazier and his wife were connected with people who could well afford to remember in a pleasant and substantial way birthdays, and did remember them.

At length Stuart Brazier stirred himself. He refilled and lighted his huge, homely pipe, gathered a miscellaneous collection of bric-a-brac off the round table, and sat down to write. He wrote cheerfully, telling all about the small events that make up a moving, and, strangely enough, had just finished these words: "Like a tinker, I am happy in my squalor; all I yearn for is company, and I wonder who will 'first foot' our new house?" when his ear caught the sound of footsteps coming boldly up the gravel path which led to the front door. Brazier listened, and then quickly glanced at his watch. "Ten o'clock," he muttered to himself. "Too late to be the last post. Now, who the deuce is coming, and what does he want? Perhaps one of the movers has left something behind."

As the crunching sounds grew nearer, Brazier made out that there must be more than one person approaching his door. The windows of the room in which he sat were wide open, allowing him to hear with great distinctness. Outside, the night was pitch dark, occasionally illuminated by heat lightning, which blotted out moon and stars, the whole world seeming to pant in the clammy heat of threatening rain. Within a few yards of the front door the visitors paused, and the next instant Brazier heard the high-pitched voice of a woman say:

"I'm sure there's robbers in; I feel it in my bones."

"Be quiet, dear; do shut up," roughly commanded the voice of a man.

"How can I be quiet, if burglars and housebreakers are rumping and tearing my—"

"Oh, shut up. You'll be in hysterics first thing, you know. You'd better stay out of 'arm's way. Go back there, to them bushes, and keep still."

"I wouldn't leave you for worlds; indeed and indeed I wouldn't. I would die of fright, I know I would."

"Well, then, keep your 'ead shut, and let me and the constable do the talking or anything else."

Brazier grinned, and started for the door, taking the miserable light with him. Before he had picked his way through the furniture to the hall, the front bell was rung violently. He placed the lamp on the hall table, and, flinging open the door, asked:

"Well, what's up?"

"What's up, indeed! How have you got into this house?" demanded some one, he could not well see who.

"By promising to pay rent, principally," Brazier replied, good naturedly, realizing that a mistake had been made—a mistake that would turn out all right for him in the end. Peering into the darkness, he saw that the party numbered three, a man, a woman and a constable. The man had in his

trousers, he proceeded to place upon the grass.

"Well, by 'eavens, you're a cool customer, you are. What are you doing in my 'ouse?"

"I'm not in your house."

"It's a lie; you are!" exclaimed the man, in a passion. "You thought to 'ave the place all night for a quiet search, I suppose, but you've been found out, you 'ave. You're trapped, you are."

"Be calm, sir, and don't talk nonsense, if you can help it," Brazier replied. "This is my house, and it is filled with my furniture. I moved in to-day."

"I know jolly well you moved in to-day, and I know jolly well you'll move out to-night. Policeman, I give this man in charge."

The policeman looked at Brazier, but made no move.

"Constable," said Brazier, now thoroughly amused, "there is a ludicrous mistake here somewhere. The irate gentleman, perhaps, has taken a house near by, and moved into it, as I have into this to-day. He has made a mistake in the number of his house." Turning to the stranger, he continued: "If your good lady and you will step in and glance at the furniture, you will find out that you are in the wrong. I'm sorry there is not a better light for you, but you will, perhaps, make that do." Without a word, the two stepped into the hall.

Turning to address a pleasant remark to the policeman, Brazier suddenly found himself sprawling on the gravel path, and at the same instant heard the door shut to with a bang. The policeman hastened forward to assist the astonished man to his feet. Before astonishment and anger allowed him to open his mouth, Brazier heard the voice of the woman sing out: "Go away, you wicked housebreaker, or the policeman will take you in charge," and next the front windows were shut down in great haste.

"What possesses these two people? Surely they are out of their minds," Brazier at length said to the attentive policeman. "That's my house; I have valuables in there. I can't have strangers in possession, and unwatched. I don't care who they are, or how mistaken they may be. I must ask you to get them out without delay."

"I have no right to break into a house, sir," answered the constable. "To speak plain, I don't know either of you, so I can't tell whose house it is. You may be right, or you know, sir, he may be right. How am I to know which is which?"

"I had possession, you saw that," hotly replied Brazier. "You saw me installed in the house. Isn't that enough for you?"

"Certainly not, sir. You had possession, then I was on your side; they have possession now, and I am on their side—that is, in a way. Bless if I know what's up, though, between you all. I would not have taken you out, nor can I take them out."

"You're partly responsible, you know. If you had not been here with them, I would not have given them the chance to break in."

"They didn't break in; you showed them in. I wouldn't have let them break in, no fear. But you asked them in as polite as a preacher, and you see they've accepted."

"You allowed them to assault me, and to evict me—"

"Me? How could I help what they did? It was done in the twinkling of an eye. I didn't know the man was going to give you his shoulder."

"You have seen him do an illegal thing—"

"There's no use your talking to me. You'd better see the sergeant at the station. Between you and me, I think this is a summons job; it will take you a day or two to get them out, even if they don't belong here, if they sit tight."

"Summons to get, heaven knows who, out of my house, just because they have the daring impudence to get in the way they did! They'll suffer for this, if there is any law in the land. They're impostors; the chances are they're worse; they're thieves."

Out of the first floor window a head was thrust, and a man's voice asked: "Asn't he gone yet? Let 'im go, policeman. We've no further use fer 'im."

"Are you people staying in?" asked the policeman.

"Of course we are; it's our 'ouse, and I suppose we 'ave a right to stay 'ere for the night, ain't we?"

"What am I to do, constable?" asked Brazier, for the first time realizing that the matter of getting two stubborn people out of his house was likely to be a much more tedious business than getting them in. "What do you advise?"

"Now that your temper has left you, and you ask advice I'll give it. To tell the truth, I don't like the looks of things here, and so I'll stay and keep a sharp watch on what goes on. You cut off as fast as you can to the station, and explain everything to the

Foster sent you. You know the station?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, outside your gate, turn to the left and keep straight on to the end of the street; you'll find it a goodish step, you will, so you may as well make haste. I'll watch these gentry, I will."

Stuart Brazier, Latins and slippers on feet, darted down the gravel walk, and at his best pace made off in the direction indicated to him by the policeman. He thought of his wife's jewels, and could not keep from grinning ruefully at his words regarding the "first foot." Here was a pleasing first foot indeed. How his wife would laugh, and enjoy the plight—providing always that nothing happened to her treasures. But he solaced himself the couple must be crazy, and crazy people do not steal, however much they may delight in destroying.

He had gone but a few hundred yards before good fortune came to him. At the corner of a street he came within an ace of running full tilt against two mounted policemen, who, having met, were passing the time of night with each other. All breathless, Stuart Brazier explained matters to them. When they had heard, they quickly swung off their horses. One constable led the animals to a lamppost, to which he secured them; the other closely questioned Brazier.

"What did you say the constable's name is?"

"Foster."

"Yes, and did Foster tell you this was the way to the station?"

"Yes, he said, 'Turn to the left when you get out of your gate.' I turned to the left."

"I'm afraid, in your anxiety, you have mistaken what he said. You should have turned to your right."

"He said 'left,' I'm sure."

"It does not matter, now that you have met us. Come on, and we'll see what's to do. Please make no noise; you can't tell what's up or who's about."

All three scaled the palings at the corner of Brazier's garden, and, keeping in the shadow of the bushes, as noiselessly and as quickly as ferrets they made their way to a spot that commanded a view of the hall door.

"I don't see Foster," one whispered.

"He may be at the back of the house," the other answered, "or he may not be here at all."

"You're right," replied the first. "You slip up under the shadow and take your stand against the front door." Turning to Brazier, he whispered, "Now you stick by me and I don't funk, you know. Is the back door locked?"

"It was when I left the house."

"All right; be as silent as a ghost now, and when I shove in the door with my shoulder, you feat this light in ahead of me. We'll rush right in pell-mell. I may as well tell you there is no policeman named Foster in this district. But I know who Foster is, I think; he's Jim Cumming, the cunningest—but no talk now; come on, and be steady."

The door went in with a crash to the might of the constable's great shoulders, and two seconds later Brazier stood in his dining-room. Before him, in various attitudes of surprise and vicious terror, were three men dressed in ordinary clothes. The bogus policeman grasped a chair by the back, and swung it to strike, but the real constable's voice rang out:

"Jim, don't do that. You should know better. It will go hard enough with you as matters stand. Don't make a fool of yourself. Don't earn more time."

The ruffian put down the chair without a word and seated himself upon it.

"You have me fair and square, you 'ave, and no mistake. Who's with you?"

"Ronald; he's at the front door."

Turning to Brazier, the policeman said, "Let my chum in, please."

"You have to be doing something all ways, Jim. This is a new wheeze you've struck."

"Yes, and a good one, only I'm out of luck of late. Think of the bareheaded fool running against you two! I counted on him looking for the station for a bit yet."

The constable ran his eye over the other two, he that so lately was a woman and the other who had the Gladstone bag.

"These are new friends?" queried the policeman.

"Yes, and good 'uns, too; they played the game well. Claude here made a fetching gal—but there, where's the use of talking now it's all over. You haven't such a thing as a cup of tea or a little to eat in the house?" Brazier had to admit that he hadn't.

"No apology, mister," said Jim. "I know you've just moved in. Luck is down on us with both feet to-night."

"Where's your togs?" asked the policeman.

"You'll find my policeman's uniform in the front room. Claude, you left your petticoats upstairs, didn't you?"

An hour later Stuart Brazier, back from the police station, picked up the thread of his letter, and told of his company and the "first foot."—The King.

Named in order of market sales, fish captured by New England fishermen are cod, haddock, hake, pollock, hal-

# FOR THE FAIR

## VOLUMINOUS SKIRTS.

As the season advances the skirts of midday become fuller and fuller. This the great creators of feminine fashions across the water have determined upon, and on this side the gowns of the fashionables already show the result of their decision.

The voluminous innovation is particularly noticeable in the evening gowns. Chiffons and mousseline de sole were never successful while scantiness was the vogue, and in soft fabrics the fullness is and ever was pretty. To the slight figure the full skirt is always becoming, and even in street costumes the finest and most supple cloth is gathered and pleated across the hips.

## THE MAKING OF WOMAN.

Twashtri, the god Vulcan of the Hindoo mythology, created the world. But on his commencing to make woman he discovered that with man he had exhausted all his creative materials, and that not one solid element had been left. This, of course, greatly perplexed Twashtri, and caused him to fall in a profound meditation. When he arose from it he proceeded as follows:

- He took
- The roundness of the moon.
- The undulating curves of the serpent.
- The graceful twist of the creeping plant.
- The light shivering of the grass blade and the slenderness of the willow.
- The velvety softness of the flowers.
- The lightness of the feather.
- The gentle gaze of the doe.
- The frolicsomeness of the dancing sunbeam.
- The tears of the cloud.
- The inconstancy of the wind.
- The timidity of the hare.
- The vanity of the peacock.
- The hardness of the diamond.
- The sweetness of honey.
- The cruelty of the tiger.
- The boldness of the lion.
- The glance of the sun.
- The heat of the fire.
- The chill of the snow.
- The cackling of the parrot.
- The cooling of the turtle dove.
- All these he mixed together and formed woman.

## THE GIRL WHO IS LOVED.

A woman cannot be said to be truly attractive or popular unless she is loved and admired by the members of her own sex, as well as the opposite. She must be welcomed by all, old and young, male and female, or she cannot be called an attractive woman without reservation.

She must be herself, her best self, at all times and with all people; she must think and act for herself and express her own opinions, rather than try to copy some person she may admire or who is admired by the lords of creation. Individuality, when combined with polite manner and tact, is always attractive. A woman's happy, infectious laugh is better than medicine or advice, and her cheery presence is as welcome as the sunshine.

A girl to be truly popular never says mean things about other girls thinking that the men will like her better, and she doesn't try to monopolize the attentions of all the men at once, but is willing to let other girls have their share of admiration and attention along with her. She doesn't mope and retreat within herself if there are no men about to admire her, but she cheerfully sets about making the best of matters without them and making such companions as she has happier and brighter for her presence.

If she has a grievance she keeps it to herself, for a woman with a grievance is very soon voted a bore. The weeping, fainting, sad-eyed young woman is very much out of style nowadays, not only in novels, but in real life, and the healthy, happy, independent, cheerful and sunny girl has totally eclipsed her in popularity.—American Queen.

## HER UNIQUE SCHEME.

An enterprising young woman, who had had one year's study in Paris and most earnestly desired another, hit upon a unique scheme to secure the wherewithal for it. She rented a room in one of the great office buildings whose tenants at noontime are counted by the hundreds. She paid \$25 monthly for this room—one of the top floor offices, having a large window. She bought half a dozen little, round, unvarnished tables with painted legs and covered the tops with the soft, bendable matting that comes round tea chests and any large dealer is glad to give away. With excelsior and denim and two long wooden shoe boxes, which cost at a shoe store twenty-five cents each, and some gilt-headed tacks, she made two divan-like affairs whose excelsior-filled tops could be raised

to store innumerable things out of sight. Then with tape at one end and three cents apiece, and some paper and tea chest matting she covered the walls; the curtains were of Japanese paper, and little penny paper umbrellas were stuck here and there about the room. Japanese paper napkins, plates and cups and saucers and a three-burner gas stove behind a screen completed the outfit. Then the enterprising young woman announced that she and her "tea room" were ready for business. She served tea, coffee and cocoa and all sorts of cold sandwiches. Soon she had to double and triple the number of her tables and her dishes, and almost every man and woman in the building was her customer. Besides the rent, her initial outfit was only \$12, and before the first month was over she had covered all the expenses for that four weeks and laid by the rent for the second. She modelled the "tea room" on one she had seen while a student in Paris, and after a busy winter here she had made enough to go back to that city for her coveted second year of study.—New York Tribune.

## WOMEN OF GENIUS.

The history of learned ladies, with that of their works, is a subject which awaits the historian. There have been learned ladies in many ages; one would like to compare their learning with that of the scholars, their contemporaries.

Here are a few—are their names familiar, and how many of our readers would pass an examination in their works—Hrotsvitha, the tenth century Terence; Teresa of Spain, Anne Maria Schurmann, Antoinette Bourignon of Flanders, La Mere Jeannine, Juana Inez de la Cruz—what about all these illustrious dames?

Antoinette Bourignon indited twenty volumes with her own fair fingers. Anne Maria Schurmann wrote a philosophical treatise proving that the female mind is as capable of learning and of science as that of the other sex. In these days who would take the trouble either to write or to read such a treatise? She fell into mysticism in her old age and had a strange passion for eating spiders, but everything must be permitted to genius.

Then there was Juana Inez de la Cruz. She interests one strangely, because she was a Mexican, and one has never before or since heard of any genius or learning coming from the quarter between California and Texas, and the Terre del Fuego; it is a good, large tract of country, with a good many people, among whom there seems to be neither learning, nor science, nor art, nor genius. However, Juana showed the way. While still quite young she disputed with the scholars of Mexico on equal terms. She wrote poems in several quarto volumes. The critics seem agreed that the lady's verses are conspicuous for elegance, but are deficient in energy.

As for La Mere Jeannine, she was a Venetian and not a poet, but the author of a new system, which she herself—no one knew the fact so well as herself—declared to be inspired. In this system she assigned the dominion of the world to woman instead of man.—New York News.



Women workers are invading every line of employment. The census of 1900 makes returns for 303 separate occupations, and in only eight of these do women workers fail to appear.

No one will be surprised that there are no women among the soldiers, sailors and marines of the United States Government, yet there are 153 women employed as "boatmen" and sailors.

Women have not invaded the ranks of the city fire department, still not less than 879 women are returned in the same general class of "watchmen, policemen and detectives."

There are no women street car drivers, though there are two women "motormen" and thirteen women conductors.

Women have not taken up the employment of telegraph and telephone "linemen," yet 22,556 of them are operators for these companies.

There are no women apprentices and helpers among the roofers and slaters, yet two women are returned as engaged in these employments.

No women are returned as helpers to steam boiler-makers, but eight women work at this industry as full mechanics. There are 193 women blacksmiths, 571 machinists, 377 women workers in iron and steel, 866 in brass and 1775 women workers in tin.

Among unusual employments for women are 109 workers as "lumbermen and raftsmen," 113 woodchoppers, 373 sawmill employes, 904 "draymen" and teamsters, 232 undercarriers, 143 street-cutters, 63 "quarrymen," 65 washers, 11 well borers and 177 stationary engineers and firemen.

Women are largely employed in the fish-curing business at Great Yarmouth and a great proportion of them come from Scotland. It has been computed that of 90,000 Scots who are engaged in the fishing industry, about a quarter are women who spend some part of their time in the curing of fish.