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THE ACROBAT.

The young man rose up quickly from the carpet on which he had been kneeling.

"Dora, take care!" he cried. "You know how much I think of you. Do not push me too far!"

The young woman simply shrugged her shoulders as she remained calmly seated upon the sofa.

"So you threaten me now. The last straw! And by what right?"

"By the right you gave me, in allowing me to believe you loved me for six months past."

"And if I allowed you to think so, you big fool, it was perhaps because I did."

"But now, I am to understand, you do not!" the young man asked, through his set teeth.

"You must not suppose—no, see here, Mario, let us have an end of it right now—once and for all! That will be the best thing for both of us."

You talking about rights! I gave you none. Chance brought us together at Vienna in the same crowd—I as a rope-dancer and you as a clown. A mere chance. Well, I found you were a nice fellow; I liked you—perhaps it was foolish of me. Now, you want the thing to last forever—always—the same nonsense. Ah! no, no! no more of it for me. Now, because we happen to find ourselves together in Paris, I see no reason why we should have to remain fettered to one another like two convicts. I have had enough of the chain. If it was even a gold chain, it might be less unattractive. But I have found a chain of just that sort of steel, if I choose to wear it. I have myfiancé to make, and between you and fortune I can't allow myself to hesitate a moment. I like you; but I like a hundred thousand francs of income a great deal better. I tell you so frankly; and I must tell you frankly everything is over between us. Come, let us shake hands and say no more about it."

Mario remained motionless before her—a fine-looking young man, whose athletic figure, robust and graceful, showed to advantage in the Paris suit he wore.

He remained staring at her eyes, as if struggling with himself to repress a furious impulse to strangle her then and there—an impulse which betrayed itself in the flash of his black eyes.

"That is your final resolve?" he asked, with a painful effort.

"That is all I have to say to you—"

"Dora, I beg of you—"

"There, now! I trust you are not going to begin again. Go now—go, and don't come here again. Go!"

As the door slammed after him, the clown shook his fist at it.

Eleven o'clock. The Cirque d'Automme is all aflame with lights. A flutter of impatience visibly passes through the circle of seats, all a blossom with bright lights. Pretty gloved hands nervously crumple up programmes. Every one is waiting for Miss Dora's performance.

"Fifty feet above the ground, without a pole? That will be worth seeing."

"And without any net?"

"What, that is crazy! Why is there no netting?"

"Oh! just to keep up the emotion, my dear. No danger, no emotion. Why, what would be the effect with a net? As well have a lion-tamer's lions all muzzled."

"Yes, but this is terrible. If she were to fall?"

"Miss Dora never falls. She exhibited last year in Vienna, and has been performing here for a whole month. You never think about the danger after you once see her begin—she appears to do it so easily."

"It's really wonderful."

"Look! There she is!"

Miss Dora had suddenly made her appearance, alighting with a bound in the center of the arena—light and nimble as a bird—her light and slender figure arrayed in pink silk tights. A murmur of admiration runs through the circus, and a vast circle of opera-glasses flash upon her in the ring. The tight-rope dancer bows right and left, gracefully bending her limbs, showing a fine double row of white teeth as she smiles upon the audience. Then, stooping in two paces back, and catching a rope hanging before the stable entrance she commences to ascend slowly and easily—hand over hand.

Now she is upon her wire, leaning against the double ropes which form the termination of the apparatus. A moment she remains thus, smiling down upon the sea of faces watching her from below. Then she puts one foot forward, and strokes the wire with the sole of her slipper. In another moment she will begin.

In the middle of the arena three clowns are performing a series of tumbling feats. At each somersault all fall upon their feet at precisely the same time. Two have tumbled head over heels, and the curly—meaning at every moment to disengage themselves—quitting their grotesquely painted faces between their legs. The third one stands still, looking up at the rope dancer as she makes her first step. What is he going to do? Something extremely absurd, no doubt. No one looking up there, old fellow; her smiles are not for you!

Mario seems to be a very conscientious fellow. No one is looking at him; but he goes on with his performance all the same. Now he is there in the middle of the arena, trembling in every limb. What a farce. She is the one who is doing the dangerous feat, and he is the one who does the tumbling. But that is old, my friend—a played out sort of farce—one would have expected something better from a clown of such widespread reputation. Besides, you don't even vary your performance! Everybody has had enough of it. What fun is there, you great fool, in mocking the dancer and holding up your arms as if she

was going to fall? That sort of comedy does not interest everybody—

"Oh!"

One scream of fear burst from five thousand throats simultaneously. All of a sudden the iron wire has snapped under the dancer's feet; and she falls—turning over and over in her fall.

The whole audience rises up—men and women all white with fear.

At the same moment the woman and the clown roll on the sand together. By a miracle of strength and quickness Mario has caught Miss Dora in his arms!

They are both lifted up and carried out. ** Miss Dora, it is found, has received no injury; she only fainted from the shock. But the man who wrought that miracle, Mario the clown, is less lucky. A broken arm and dislocated shoulder.

"He is spoiled for the business for good!" said the manager of the circus.

Two days later, Miss Dora was seated by the bedside of her former admirer.

"Poor Mario! How do you find yourself to-day?"

"So so," answered the sufferer with a melancholy smile.

"I owe you my life, Mario, and I'll never forget you for it."

"Oh!" said the young man, with a sudden brightness of hope in his eyes, "will you love me again?"

"Yes; but not as you want me to. Now, Mario, don't let us talk any more nonsense? I want to tell you about something else. Did you hear what they have found out?"

"No."

"Well, the wire was cut."

"Ah!"

"And the guilty party has been arrested."

"Guilty party! Who's that?"

"The head property man. You know that fool I had to put out of the dressing-room one night?"

"Him!—he never did it—never in the world!"

"How do you know? They have arrested him, and all the proofs are against him."

There was silence for a moment, and Mario's face became singularly contracted. He seemed to be struggling with some strong impulse. Then he said, all at once, in a husky voice:

"Listen, Dora—that man must be released."

"Why?"

"Because it was not he that cut the wire."

"But what do you know about it?"

"I am certain of what I say."

"Then who did cut the wire?"

"I did."

The woman pushed back her chair with a gesture of terror.

"I beg of you don't go," he sobbed. "Forgive me. I loved you so much it made me crazy."

Miss Dora had already risen. Coldly and without a word, she walked to the door, opened it and passed out.

The poor wretch, helpless in his bed, heard the dry sound of her shoes descending the stairs and the silken *frou frou* of her dress.

"And to think!" he cried out in a burst of rage, "to think I almost killed myself for such a creature!"—Translated from the French, in *New Orleans Times-Democrat*.

WHY SHE WORE A SHAWL.

About a week ago some New York ladies got up a party to go on a moonlight excursion up the Hudson river.

The night finally arrived, and the moon flooded field and river with a glow of early richness. When the party was ready to leave the house which had been appointed as a rendezvous, says *Texas Siftings*, it was noticed that one of the most charming ladies of the coterie had a shawl on.

"What's the matter, Lucy," inquired one young lady, "are you afraid of taking cold?"

"No! No!" she replied.

"Perhaps you are troubled with malaria," suggested a young man who was struggling to direct all his vitality into a mustache.

"I never had malaria," replied the pretty creature with a smile.

"The thermometer is up at 86. You'll roast if you wear that shawl."

"I'm willing to roast," she said, rather pettishly.

"Don't you know why she wears that shawl?" laughed her little brother, as he wiped some taffy off his mouth with his jacket-sleeve.

"You keep still, you John Henry!" screamed the dear angel, as she turned a trifle red.

The boy got out of reach and yelled: "I'll tell you why she wears that shawl. When she gets on the river Bob puts his arm under it and hugs her, and nobody can see through the game."

Then there was a scene, John Henry was driven summarily to bed, and the party started for the scene of the festivity.

A HOME RUN.—A few days ago two ball teams composed of boys were playing a match game in Brooklyn, and in place of a bat were using an old discarded shovel handle. The game had become intensely exciting and the opposing nine had what they termed a slugger at the bat. Two runners occupied the bases, and three strikes had been called on the slugger. The next ball pitched the slugger banged away, and, at the call of his enthusiastic captain, ran down to the first, then to the second, third and home, keeping the shovel handle in his hand all the way round. The nine having the field and spectators, from the time the slugger had struck the ball were in the wildest excitement, for the sphere, but did not discover it. Whereabouts until the runner showed it to the umpire, wedged fast in the hand-grip of the shovel. Of course there was much kicking indulged in at the discovery, but the umpire decided a home run.

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T STUB A BOY.

—Don't stub a boy because he wears shabby clothes. When Edison, the inventor of the telephone, first entered Boston he wore a pair of yellow linen breeches in the depth of winter. Don't stub a boy because his home is plain and unpretending. Abraham Lincoln's early home was a log cabin. Don't stub a boy because of a dullness in his lessons. Hogarth, the celebrated painter and engraver, was a dull boy at his books. Don't stub a boy because of the ignorance of his parents. Shakespeare, the world's poet, was the son of a man who was unable to write his own name. Don't stub a boy because he chooses a humble trade. The author of *Pilgrim's Progress* was a tinker. Don't stub a boy because of physical disability. Milton was blind. Don't stub a boy because he stutters. Demosthenes, the great orator of Greece, overcame a harsh and stammering voice.

GEORGE WAS THERE ALL THE SAME.—The son of a well known New Yorker, left the city last summer to make his home with an uncle who had grown rich in the Orient. Several months ago, says the *Media Record*, the family received a letter from the uncle saying that his nephew was dead, and that the body had been embalmed and sent home by a sailing ship. Last week the vessel arrived here, and the man's parents, attired in mourning, went to receive the remains. A peculiarly-shaped box was delivered to them and was removed to their home. When the undertaker opened the chest to give the parents a last look at the body, it was found to contain a large Bengal tiger. The surprised father at once called to his brother in India: "Some mistake. George's body not arrived. Coffin contained a Bengal tiger." Quickly came back this response: "No mistake, George inside tiger."

A FINE MELON.—"I want the biggest and best watermelon in that lot," he said as he surveyed a great pile of watermelons in front of a Woodward avenue grocer.

"Yes, sir—here it is—best melon I've seen this."

"Plug it," was the brusque command.

"Yes, sir—splendid red core. Shall I put it on ice?"

The purchaser drew from his pocket flask of port wine and proceeded to pour the contents into the rifice. The melon readily absorbed the liquid, and then the plug was replaced the man chuckled: "He! he! he! I want that melon sent to—He! the temperance fanatic! Say nothing, and it will be a big joke on him."

A couple of days later the man came around to the store again and asked:

"Well, the melon was sent up?"

"Oh, yes."

"And the boy didn't give my little plot away?"

"Oh, no, but we heard from it."

"He did! He! he! he! What did he say?"

"He said his family were off up the lake, but the hired girl and coachman said it was the finest melon they ever put tooth into!"

BUTTERMILK AS A DRINK.

A great physician once said that if everyone knew the value of buttermilk as a drink it would be more freely partaken of by persons who drink so excessively of other beverages and further compared its effects on the system to the cleaning out of a clogged pipe that has been clogged up with ashes that have sifted through, filling every crevice and crack, saying that the human system is like the stove, and collects and gathers refuse matter that can in no way be exterminated from the system so effectively as by drinking buttermilk. It is also a remedy for indigestion, soothes and quiets the nerves, and is very salutary to those who are troubled with sleeplessness. Its medicinal properties cannot be overrated, and it should be freely used by all who can get it. Everyone who values good health should drink buttermilk every day and let tea, coffee and water alone. For the benefit of those who are not already aware of it, I may add that in the turning of it, the first process of digestion is gone through, making it one of the quickest and easiest of all things to digest. It makes a gastric juice, and contains properties that readily assimilate with it with very little wear on the digestive organs.—*Hall's Journal of Health*.

AN INTELLIGENT OFFICIAL.

In one of the Dakota cities where the free delivery system went into effect the men appointed as carriers were somewhat inexperienced. One of them seemed to get over his routine in a remarkably short space of time. Long before the others returned he was back with an empty pouch, looking for another load. The postmaster who thoned him a little, but he insisted that he knew what he was doing and didn't need any instructions. The fourth day he came back with about half the letters he took out.

"What is the matter?" asked the postmaster.

"The boxes on my route are all full."

"What boxes?"

"Then little iron boxes that you put up around on the lamp posts that say 'U. S. mail' on the end. I've been putting the mail into them every day, and have left them unlocked too, but I don't believe the big fools around the neighborhood know enough to go to them and get out their letters. I caught one man to-day putting letters he wanted to mail into one of them, though I know there are half a dozen for him in it now. I threatened to lock him if I caught him trying it again, and he said he was going to report me."

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