

## Barking-Wilmot's Camera.

I scarcely like to guarantee the truth of this story, but will narrate it in the simple, homely language in which Barking-Wilmot told it me.

We had been playing draughts, which, as most people are aware, is the usual occupation of City men in the afternoon, and I had had the pleasure of huffing Barking-Wilmot twice, when the conversation drifted in some curious way to the subject of photography.

"If at any time you go in for it," he said, sadly, "take my advice, and don't buy a camera that is too easy to manipulate. What you want is something fairly complicated; I should choose a camera with two or three wheels and a series of patent springs, that are guaranteed not to expose a plate with less than ten minutes' hard work."

He lifted his coffee cup to his mouth with trembling fingers, and, perceiving that there was some strong reason for his agitation, I put the draught-board away, and coaxed him into a full confession.

It was soon after he took up photography, when the enthusiast is in that curious frame of mind that tempts him to snap everything he sees, from a dead cat to a Chatham and Dover Railway station, that he sallied forth one Saturday afternoon with a six-and-ninety penny camera under his arm for the purpose of securing something "really good."

He had taken the train to the picturesque neighborhood of Beckenham, and was tramping along a country road looking out eagerly for subjects, when a young lady riding a bicycle turned the corner sharply, dashed into a heap of flints which the local board had thoughtfully deposited in the middle of the road, lost control of her machine, and fell off.

The bicycle rolled away into the hedge and the young lady picked herself up, or at least attempted to do so, as quickly as possible.

I really can't blame Barking-Wilmot for what he did. He placed his camera on a gate near at hand and stepped forward gallantly to assist beauty in distress. His conduct appears to have been quite correct. On attempting to rise the young lady discovered that her ankle was slightly injured.

Barking-Wilmot put his arm round her in perfectly respectful way — I have his word for it, and he is as truthful a man as I ever met in the wholesale drapery trade — and lifted her to her feet.

After expressing the hope that she was not seriously hurt, and finding that after a moment or two she was able to mount her machine, he fetched the bicycle and she rode away.

That is the entire incident. The trouble arose in this way. When he turned to pick up his camera he found it on the ground. Having a vague idea that he had better change the plate he did so, and went gaily on his way taking photographs.

Now comes the unfortunate development, both of the photograph and of the incident.

Barking-Wilmot was a great deal more enthusiastic about "snapping" pictures than developing plates. But his wife is one of those irrepressibly active women who gladly undertake any branch of work that comes in their way, from spring-cleaning to running a poultry farm. She said she would develop his plates one day in the following week. When she got to work she found that eleven out of the twelve plates were scarcely worth printing out. But there was one plate which was a surprising success.

It was a pleasing little picture, a background of foliage with a noble hill in the distance; in the foreground two figures, a lady, young and pretty, round whose waist was Mr. Barking-Wilmot's arm. He appeared to be looking into her face with an expression of ineffable tenderness.

It is easy to understand what had happened. In falling off the gate, the camera had "gone off," so to speak, and with that extraordinary "cussedness" which pervades human affairs, photographic and otherwise, the picture which had been fortuitously taken was really excellent.

His wife was not pleased. But, unfortunately, instead of approaching her husband on the subject, when he returned from the city that night, she determined to give him a little surprise by printing off a copy the following day and placing it in a prominent position on the mantelpiece, where he couldn't fail to see it.

As luck would have it, too, on the following afternoon she met at a neighbor's At Home a young lady from Beckenham, who was staying in the house.

Need it be said that the girl was the identical heroine of the bicycle adventure? It is the kind of thing that always happens in a world made up of coincidences and disappointments.

The ladies were introduced to one another in due course, and Mrs. Barking-Wilmot remarked with an air of suppressed unpleasantness, "I believe you know my husband?"

"I don't," said the girl.

"What — what is his name?"

"This was rather a childish question to ask, but it is probable that the girl was not even aware that such a family as the Barking-Wil-

mots existed. But Mrs. Barking-Wilmot was equal to the occasion. "Curiously enough," she said, with an air of bland offensiveness, "his name is the same as my own. I am Mrs. Barking-Wilmot."

Instead of being properly crushed by this reply, Miss Davidson, who seemed to possess a sense of humor, and this had the effect of increasing Mrs. Barking-Wilmot's annoyance until it became a public danger.

"I trust you spent a pleasant afternoon on Saturday in my husband's company," she observed.

The girl colored with indignation, and again said that she was not acquainted with Mrs. Barking-Wilmot's husband, and, as far as she knew, had never seen him in her life. She added also that she had not been aware until that moment that Mrs. Barking-Wilmot had a husband, and that she could only feel extremely sorry for him. There were two or three other visitors present, and an attempt was made to regard the matter lightly — as a kind of mild joke. But it was not easy to treat the wrath of Mrs. Barking-Wilmot as a joke. She had a record to maintain. She had driven two vicars out of the parish and broken the heart of at least one curate, and she was not at all disposed to allow a "chit of a girl" to carry on with her own husband.

So she returned to the conversation with a stout heart, and produced her purse, in which she had brought a rough proof of the fatal photograph.

"Perhaps you will accept a copy of the photograph, which some third party seems to have taken, in which you and my husband are clearly enjoying yourselves," she said, with a smile which would have broken the back of a rocking-horse.

The poor girl was aghast when she saw an excellent print of herself being embraced by a man she didn't know, and she made a confused attempt to "explain" it.

But the two or three ladies present were all married, and public opinion went dead against Miss Davidson, who, after a gallant attempt to outflank the enemy by suggesting a "horrid conspiracy," was obliged to leave the room with her cheeks ablaze with indignation.

War having been declared, the two ladies proceeded to mobilize their forces without delay.

Miss Davidson communicated by telegram with her father, a canny, careful Scotchman, and hinted that she was being grossly slandered by an "old cat" named Barking-Wilmot. She also went to the nearest telephone call-office and rang up the gentleman to whom she was engaged. She suggested that Mr. Wolfenstein, who was six feet high, and proportionately broad, should join her as early in the evening as possible and proceed to exterminate Mr. Barking-Wilmot, the innocent cause of all the trouble. Mr. Wolfenstein, being of a somewhat pugnacious disposition, made definite inquiries as to Mr. Barking-Wilmot's size and weight, and, finding that he was insignificant in appearance, accepted his sweetheart's suggestion gladly.

In the meantime, Mrs. Barking-Wilmot was not idle. After lodging her complaint with the vicar, who lived in daily terror of her, and suggesting that her husband was not a fit person to become a churchwarden, she proceeded to the office of a local solicitor, and insisted, in the face of his positive advice to the contrary, on preparing the way for matrimonial proceedings against her husband.

Consequently, on reaching home Mr. Barking-Wilmot found a royal welcome awaiting him. His wife had worked herself into a state of hysteria bordering on temporary insanity, and done as much mischief in a couple of hours as could well be expected from a middle-aged woman who was the mother of eight children. He was at a loss to understand the cause of the commotion.

The photograph of himself in the act of embracing an extremely pretty girl was, of course, very startling, but he didn't associate it at first with his six-and-ninety penny camera; neither was he aware that his wife had made the personal acquaintance of Miss Davidson, and that in consequence of his wife's ridiculous statements the young lady was anticipating with much pleasure an action for slander.

His wife was in a condition that made rational explanation impossible. But the little man was not altogether unaccustomed to these proceedings, and, postponing the subject of dinner to a more fighting time, he thoughtfully placed his wife's feet in hot water, and applied a violent mustard plaster to the back of her neck. It was not the first time that these simple, homely remedies had saved her life.

After whipping the two youngest children severely for giving extremely humorous but disrespectful imitations of their mother, the little man stepped across the road to the house where Miss Davidson was staying, for the purpose of making a gentlemanly explanation.

He handed his card to the servant, and the door was immediately slammed in his face.

He returned home with his nerves considerably shaken, and found his wife's solicitor waiting for him in the drawing-room with the cheerful tidings that matrimonial proceedings would be instituted in the morning. Scarcely had the man of law left the house when Mr. Wolfenstein arrived. He had an overbearing German accent with manners to correspond, and he proceeded to state his opinion of Mr. Barking-Wilmot with Teutonic accuracy and wealth of de-

tail. Mr. Barking-Wilmot leaned back in his chair and listened in silence. He was not at all offended nor even annoyed, because he had no notion who Mr. Wolfenstein was, where he came from, nor what he was talking about. In the course of time, however, Mr. Wolfenstein proceeded to state his opinion of his wife, and this the little man couldn't stand. With that instinctive loyalty which I have so often observed in down-trodden husbands, the bewildered little chap flared up in a minute, and threatened to cast the Teuton out of the house. He was only five feet one inch high, and the position had something in it of humor. But the German was not in the mood to be amused. He seized the hero of this story by his collar and the left leg of his trousers, and, without any apparent effort, carried him into the hall, opened the front door, and flung the master of the house out on to his own lawn.

He then smashed all the hats that he could find in the hall, broke the umbrella, destroyed the hat stand, and left the house stating that the following morning he would institute proceedings for assault. In the meantime Mrs. Barking-Wilmot had been awakened from a brief sleep by the commotion, and, being thrown into a new state of excitement, again became hysterical.

Mr. Barking-Wilmot returned to his house and tried to review the situation calmly. So far as he could understand, three separate actions would be brought against him in the morning — an action for slander by Miss Davidson, an action for assault by Mr. Wolfenstein, and matrimonial proceedings by his wife. His hall was wrecked and his wife was prostrate.

It really isn't easy to imagine how the affair would have ended. But solution came from the least expected quarter. There was a knock at the front door, and Mr. Barking-Wilmot himself answered it, as both the servants had left on the ground that they objected to living in a mad-house.

On opening the door he found standing on the step the very charming original of the photograph that had given all the trouble. "I want to come in, please," she said. "That is, if you will promise to lock up your camera and not let it play any further tricks on us."

Without waiting for an invitation, she led the way into the drawing-room. "Now, I want you to ask Mrs. Barking-Wilmot to come in here, as I have something important to say to her," remarked the young lady, seating herself comfortably in the best chair in the room.

"Are you — are you acquainted with my wife?" he stammered; "do you think it wise to ask for an interview?"

"I think I am prepared to face the consequences, awful though they may be," said the girl.

He staggered out of the room, quite believing in his heart that before morning broke there would be bloodshed. When she heard the message his wife rose from her bed with a look of truly awful indignation on her face.

But the interview was a brief and extremely successful one. Miss Davidson remarked that her father had come down to see her, and that she believed that Mrs. Barking-Wilmot was already acquainted with her father.

Mrs. Barking-Wilmot denied the suggestion with an air of gloomy joy.

Miss Davidson persisted sweetly that her father was an old friend of Mrs. Barking-Wilmot's, and Mrs. Barking-Wilmot hinted that Miss Davidson was not speaking the truth. The young lady, quite unruffled by this last thrust, produced from her purse a photograph, just as Mrs. Barking-Wilmot had produced one from her purse earlier in the day.

"Father brought this over with him from home," she said. "And he thinks you will recognize it."

It was a very faded photograph, taken, oh, a great many years ago, and showed a lanky young man sitting in arm chair with his arm round the waist of a girl whose dress looked quaintly old-fashioned. The girl was sitting comfortably on the arm of the chair, and, faded though the photograph was, there was an unmistakable resemblance in the young girl's face to the middle-aged features of Mrs. Barking-Wilmot.

"Is — is your father Birkett Davidson?" she stammered. "I so, I — I remember him quite well."

"You and he seem to have been great friends," said Miss Davidson, slyly. "But it must have been a great many years ago. Now, how many years would it be?"

But Mrs. Barking-Wilmot was not disposed to go into the delicate subject of the number of years that had elapsed since the time when she and young Davidson had been sweethearts, and peace was signed forthwith, and all insinuations, charges, and libels unreservedly withdrawn.

Mrs. Barking-Wilmot discovered that Miss Davidson was a "sweet girl," and kissed her affectionately in the neighborhood of the left ear before she left the house.

Nevertheless, she told her husband gloomily that she had her own opinion of the matter, and apparently found unalloyed joy in the fact that "he had forfeited her confidence for ever."

Which shows how foolish it is to handle a cheap camera carelessly — especially if you are a married man. —London Tit-Bits.

## STORIES OF PLUCKY MEN.

### SOME WHO HAVE MADE WONDERFUL RECORDS.

#### Many Times Ruined, and Yet Have Paid Every Dollar They Owed.

In spite of being ruined over and over again, and assailed by years of ill-fortune, that would have crushed almost any man, a silver casket, with £125 in gold, has just been presented to Mr. Charles Goodson, of Norwich, as a prize for pluck and honesty which no amount of bad luck could beat, says London Answers.

When in business at Norwich, 23 years ago, a bundle of misfortunes caused him to make a deed of assignment, and his creditors accepted a dividend of 8s. 5d. in the pound, for bad luck had "let him in" for £5,000 in liabilities. He gave up every penny, and emigrated to New Zealand in the hope of wiping out the deficit. By hard work day and night he gradually built up a business, and saved £6,000. When on the point of sending this to England to his creditors — although they had no further legal claim on him — a blight fell suddenly on all trade in the Colony, and hundreds were plunged into ruin from which the country has

#### SCARCELY RECOVERED YET.

Mr. Goodson's little fortune, built up by hard work, was swept away with the rest. For the third time he began again from the beginning, and for twelve years fought against stroke after stroke of bad luck, but finally built up a third business, and paid his New Zealand creditors in full — £4,500.

Eighteen months ago he sent a cheque to England for £992, and only a few months back came home to Norwich, called a meeting of his creditors 23 years before, and paid them to the last penny, in all, £1,795.

The creditors rewarded this record of pluck and honesty by giving him a silver casket and £125, which was presented by Mr. Gurney Buxton, the well-known Norwich banker.

Martyn's-Stead Farm, on the Lincoln coast, is an up-to-date monument of extraordinary "grit" in the face of wave after wave of crushing bad luck. Mr. Martyn Martyns was

#### A YEOMAN FARMER

who shared in the general breakdown of agriculture some years ago, and his farm, which his forefathers had held for three hundred years, was eventually sold up.

The ruin was complete, but attached to the farm, and not included in the sale, was a big track of salt-marsh and foreshore, through the channels of which the sea flowed. It was of no value as it was, but an ancient charter gave him the right of it, and he set to work to bank the tide out and save it from the sea. In three years he succeeded, and began to carry out his scheme, which was to graze cattle on the salty grass. This diet will put nearly a stone weight a week on bullocks.

The plan acted well, and just as the owner had ready a splendid herd of cattle for market, which would have raised a price to set him up for life, the foot-and-mouth disease, as it is called, seized the beasts, and all had to be killed.

Ruined a second time, Mr. Martyns started again, but on the brink of success the sea broke down the embankments and

#### FLOODED THE LAND.

Completely ruined this time, the unfortunate owner went to a colony and started a cattle ranch, after working for a wage three years to earn the money to start it. He prospered in spite of difficulties, and in twelve years saved £3,000. Full of belief in his salt pastures at home, he left for home with the money, and was robbed of every penny in a now famous "hold-up" of the mail train in which he was traveling in 1879.

He went back, and after a time managed to start the ranch again, saved £2,000 more, and eventually saved the Martyns-Stead Farm, as the big salt pastures are called. He retired worth £12,000 a year ago, and his son owns and works the prosperous pastures at present — a lasting mark of doggedness.

A record worth knowing by anybody who feels that luck is against him, is that of Mr. Norman Goodyer, who came out on top by his own exertions after five separate ruinous misfortunes, and managed to keep the Goodyer Orphanage at Newport, which provides for ten parentless children, regularly going all the time, even when penniless and working with his hands for day wages. Starting on nothing, he made his first fortune against tremendous opposition, out of patented inventions for wool-combing and cotton-spinning, and lost the whole of it by his cashier, who "levanted" with over £12,000.

#### BROKEN DOWN IN HEALTH.

Mr. Goodyer started all over again, and in five years got everything straight, and made £20,000 by a dye works which he built up from the fruits of his own labor. He started a small private orphanage at Newport, to take up his spare cash, and kept it endowed always three years ahead. Foreign competition and a ruinous lawsuit left him penniless within a year, however, but he got a job as railway outer-porter, and even then contrived to send a little money to his orphan-

age, which was still running on the endowment he had left it. Getting a little cash together from his earnings, he started a coffee-stall in Birmingham, which soon became a hotel, and gained him another fortune, worth £2,000 a year. Ill-health came down on him, and his business ran to seed, for he could not look after it, but before the crash came he re-endowed his orphanage, and paid everyone in full. Broken in purse and health, in a year he started again, succeeded as an iron-founder at Wolverhampton, and died last year owing no man a penny, but leaving £17,000 out of all his fortunes and misfortunes.

All that bad luck and the worst moods of the sea combined could bring to bear on Captain Stevens Cortwright, of Hull, could not crush him altogether, for though they brought him down six times, he

#### BOBBED UP SERENELY

at last. He was skipper and owner of a trading schooner, the "Florrie Ford," having started as a ship's boy; and she brought him £600 profit the first year, after he had worked fifteen years to get her. At the end of the first year she was run into and sunk off the Belgian coast by an unknown vessel — £600 and all — and Captain Cortwright had to serve two years before the mast on another man's ship to earn his bread.

Becoming prompted suddenly to skipper, he came upon a derelict off the Scotch coast, the salvage of which yielded him £1,000, and this he turned into £3,000 in eight years by purchasing and working two herring smacks. In the big gale of 1881 both vessels were lost in a night, and he, on board one of them, lost his leg through a spar falling on it.

Three more years' work with nothing to start on but sheer hard work and brains, produced him £4,000, which he invested "off the sea" — which means inland — and it was all lost promptly in the fraudulent crash of a big publishing firm which ruined many people some years ago.

He started a shipbuilding yard which began to prosper, when the big tidal deluge that swept the east coast a few years back invaded it, and broke down the scaffolding and shipways, smashing up the half built vessels, and involving him in heavy liabilities. Ill and crippled, but undaunted, he worked as a shipbroker's clerk for some time, finally starting a business of the same kind for himself, yielding a little fortune of £20,000, which he invested in Consols and retired, so that, unless the British Empire fails, he is safe.

#### NAPOLÉON'S BAD WRITING.

##### Mr. Andrew Lang Explains Why He Failed at Waterloo.

Napoleon, according to Alexander Dumas, lost such battles as he did lose because he wrote such a fiendish hand. His generals could not read his notes and letters, type writing had not been invented, and the trembling Marshals, afraid of disobeying, and striving to interpret the indecipherable commands, loitered, wandered, and did not come up to the scratch, or not to the right scratch. Thus Waterloo was lost. Cannot you fancy Grouchy handing round Napoleon's notes on that sanguinary Sunday? "I say," cries the Marshal to his aide-de-camp, "is that word Gemboux or Wavre? Is this Blucher or Bulow?" So probably Grouchy tossed up for it, and the real words may have been none of these at which he offered his conjectures. Meanwhile on the left and centre D'Erlon and Jerome and Ney were equally puzzled, and kept on sending cavalry to places where it was very uncomfortable (though our men seldom managed to hit any of the cavaliers, firing too high), and did no sort of good. Napoleon may never have been apprised of these circumstances. His old writing master was not on the scene of action. Nobody dared to say, "Sire, what does this figure of a centipede mean, and how are we to construe these two thick strokes flanked by blots?" The Imperial temper was peppery; the great man would have torn off his interrogator's epaulettes and danced upon them. Did he not once draw his pistol to shoot a little dog that barked at his horse? And when the pistol missed fire, the great soldier threw it at the dog, and did not hit him. The little dog retreated with the honors of war.

Such was the temper of Napoleon, and we know what Marlborough thought of the value of an equitable temper. Nobody could ask Bonaparte to write a legible hand, so his generals lived a life of conjectures as to his meaning, and Waterloo was not a success, and the Emperor never knew why. Of all his seven or eight theories of his failure at Waterloo, his hand-writing was not one. Yet if this explanation had occurred to him, Napoleon would certainly have blamed his pens, ink and paper. Those of Nelson, at Copenhagen, were very bad. "If your guns are no better than your pens," said a Danish officer (who came in under a flag of truce before the fight, and was asked to put a message in writing), you had better retire."

Tourist (in South America) — "Couldn't some of these disputes be settled by arbitration?" Native — "More waste of time. We could finish ten revolutions in the time required for one arbitration."