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An Embarrassing Mistake

Consequent on a Football Game

By OSCAR COX

"Cuthbert?"
Cuthbert Brown lay abed, oblivious to the call and the shaking he received simultaneously. He had been playing right tackle with his team in a championship game of football the day before and was ready for a twenty-four hour sleep. He had taken six of the twenty-four when his sister entered his room and tried to awaken him.
"Cuthbert, get up! You're wanted to go on an errand."
"What's the matter?"
"Our next door neighbor is dying. They want you to go for a clergyman."
There was something sufficiently impressive in this to awaken Cuthbert. He lay for a moment gathering his faculties, then sprang out of bed, put on his clothes and while passing out asked:
"What clergyman shall I go for?"
"Any one. Make haste!"
Cuthbert Brown, now thoroughly in possession of his faculties, hurried along the street till he came to St. Mark's church, with the name of David Hathaway, pastor, on a board on the wall. He stopped at the rectory beside it, rang the doorbell and was immediately admitted by some one whose figure he could barely distinguish to be that of a woman, for the light was turned low. He was ushered into a parlor without an inquiry as to whom he wished to see or any other question for that matter and was left alone in a room still darker than the hall.
"That's queer," he remarked to himself. "I suppose she's the maid and knows that no one would call at a clergyman's house at this time of night unless he wanted to see the parson himself."
The maid went upstairs and in a few moments came down again and said that the doctor would be down soon.
Cuthbert settled himself in an easy chair and sat wondering what it all meant. Presently he fell asleep. He dreamed that some one shook him; that he stood upon his feet. He heard words mumbled that sounded like parts of the marriage service; he felt a delicate hand in his; some one thrust a ring upon him and a finger was slipped into it; he dimly saw the figure of a woman leaving the room.
Was this a dream or a reality? He remembered nothing more of it or how he got out of the house, home and into his bed. He did not awaken till noon the next day, when the events of the night were much blurted in his mind. His sister awaking him, the walk to the rectory and his admission to the house he remembered with tolerable distinctness, but the rest of it was very misty.
He called his sister, took a round-about course to find out from her what he had done and discovered that some one else had procured a minister for the dying man. The rector of St. Mark's church had not responded. There remained that singular, dream of a marriage, or whatever it might be, of which his sister was not supposed to be cognizant, and Cuthbert said nothing to her about it. If he had been sure that it was a dream he might have told her of it, but he had a feeling that it was not a dream; that while sitting in the rectory something like it had happened, that somebody had been married, and he could not divest himself of a consciousness that he had been mixed up in it.
That day was Sunday, and Cuthbert, having nothing to do, thought continually of his singular experience. A dozen times he resolved to put it out of his mind. It would not stay out. Then he thought that he would go to Dr. Hathaway and ask him for an explanation. But the matter seemed too ridiculous to warrant an inquiry. Ask a clergyman if he had taken part in a marriage when half asleep? Absurd! There is nothing so worrying as that which needs an explanation. Cuthbert Brown fretted over the matter for three days; then one afternoon he called on Dr. Hathaway. He was received in the doctor's study, and, being unknown to the clergyman, the latter waited for him to speak.
"Doctor," he began, "I have come to ask"—He stopped short. He was going to ask if the doctor had married him, but, not caring to be taken for a lunatic, he desisted. He began again: "Last Saturday night about 12 o'clock I came here to ask you to go to the house of a dying man. I was left in your parlor by a maid and, being very tired, fell asleep."
From the start the doctor pricked up his ears. When Cuthbert got this far he interrupted him:
"So, you are the party?"
"Party? What party?"
"Why the party that came instead of the right party. What object had you in stepping in between a bride and a groom in that despicable way? You have rendered yourself liable to criminal prosecution."
"Will you kindly tell me what I have done?"
"Done! Why, you married a young lady who came here to marry some one else."
"Great Scott!"

"Didn't you know what you were doing?"
"No."
"Had you been drinking?"
"No. I had been tired out by a big game of football. I was awakened in the middle of the night and came to you on an errand. I was left in your parlor by your maid and fell asleep. I dreamed something about a wedding ceremony."
"Wedding ceremony? Man, you were married!"
"I married?"
"Certainly. I received a telephone call on Saturday, asking if I would marry a couple late that night. I agreed. You came in and were supposed to be the groom. The bride came later and was so afraid that some one would see her being clandestinely married that she insisted on the light remaining as it was. I found you asleep, awakened you and married you. I thought at the time that there was something the matter with you, but the bride was very nervous, very much in a hurry, and insisted on having the matter over as soon as possible. I protested, but—"
"Then I am a married man!"
"You certainly went through a marriage ceremony. Wait."
The doctor went to a telephone booth, called up Miss Amelia Brooks and said:
"The man who married you by mistake is here."
"Thank heaven! How did you find him?"
"I didn't; he found me. He walked in here a few minutes ago."
"Was he intoxicated?"
"He says not."
"That's a comfort anyway. If it gets out it won't be quite so bad."
"Hadden't I better send him around to you? You'll need to confer with him, of course."
"I think I'll come to you. Where are you?"
"In my study in the church."
"Well, I'll come at once."
Cuthbert was informed that he was to meet his bride, and the doctor asked him his name that he might introduce him on her arrival. He and the clergyman talked upon the mishap till the lady came. Then the latter said:
"Mrs. Brown—I mean Miss Brooks—this is Mr. Cuthbert Brown, the gentleman who we supposed intentionally imposed on us the other night or was intoxicated. He has explained the mistake to me, so that I believe he is not to blame in the matter."
"That's all very well, but what are we to do?"
"Where was the man you intended to marry?" asked Cuthbert.
"He was delayed."
"Did you marry him when he came?"
"Marry him! How could I do that when I had—"
"I see. I'm very sorry. I couldn't help it. You see, our team relied upon me to carry them through. I'd been practicing for several days, been up nights and during the game made what was considered the biggest run of the season."
"Did you score a touchdown?"
"Yes."
"How about the kickoff?"
"I made that too."
"Good!"
"Are you fond of football?"
"I adore athletics of all kinds."
"Is your—the man you were to marry an athlete?"
"No; he's intellectual. That's the reason he didn't get here in time. He was working on a problem."
"I see."
Meanwhile the clergyman in order to leave the two alone together had gone out into the church. After having been absent long enough, as he thought, for them to find a way out of the difficulty he returned to the door of his study and listened. What was his astonishment to hear Mr. Brown giving the lady a graphic account of the game, including his part in it, between two rival teams, which had incidentally caused her to marry the wrong man. The rector waited while for a change of topic, then re-entered his study.
"Well," he said, "have you found a way out of the difficulty?"
"So far as I am concerned," replied Cuthbert for both, "I have no desire to find a way out of it, but I am willing to do all in my power to free the lady."
"I'm afraid," said Miss Brooks, "that I shall have to make a confession to papa. He will see his lawyer about it. It's awfully embarrassing. You see, papa wouldn't let me marry George. He calls him a bookworm. Papa wanted me to marry some man who would lead what he calls a strenuous life."
"Ahem!" said the clergyman. "I wish the matter might be settled without publicity. I fear I shall be greatly blamed."
"You may tell your father," said Cuthbert, "that if he wants a strenuous son-in-law—"
"That, of course," interrupted the clergyman, "would be the simplest solution if by any possibility it could be brought about."
"Oh, dear!" said the lady. "What an embarrassing situation! Well, I'll go home and tell papa. I'm sure that even if this marriage is annulled I'll not be permitted to marry George."
Addresses were exchanged, and a few days later Cuthbert Brown received a call from Edward Brooks, his wife's father. A long interview ensued between them, followed by other long interviews. Then one evening Cuthbert called upon his bride, and his call was followed by other calls. In time an engagement was announced, and one day at high noon, with plenty of light instead of midnight with a very small quantity of light, Dr. Hathaway in the presence of a fashionable assembly repeated the wedding between Cuthbert Brown and Amelia Brooks.

BELGIAN KONGO SAVAGES.

Cannibals in War-Paint Whose Past is Black Mystery.

In his book "Hunting and Hunting in the Belgian Congo," Mr. R. D. Cooper speaks of the remarkable people who live in the forest wilds:
"Threading our way down the stony path, winding in and out among the trees, we began to walk the remaining few miles along the sandy shore to Butaba. A slight breeze sprang up from the southwest, and very shortly the sun had kissed the Belgian mountain peaks that rose thousands of feet sheer from the water's edge in the west."
"Giant forbidding sentinels of the Congo! What strange people dwell behind you—the dwarfs and others, with their poisoned implements of war—cannibals with all its attendant horrors—a people that cannot tell us of their past. The ages gone by are all a blank to them. These people are akin to the beasts of the forest, but much as they care only for the present they live for the present. The past is gone. No records have been written of them."
"The war paint of vermilion colored pigments which is smeared all over their bodies adds to the hideousness of these savages, darting from rock to rock, hiding behind trees, lying hidden in the foliage overhead, waging war with all. Tragedy follows tragedy behind those Belgian mountains in the Congo, to the south of which lie the snow capped crests of rugged Ruwenzori."

QUEER JOURNALISTIC FEAT.

It Hit the London Times and Boomed the Manchester Guardian.

Once there was an obscure subeditor of the Manchester Guardian in England. It was a long time ago, and the Guardian was scarcely known outside of its own city.
The subeditor had a habit of drinking ale until he was so drowsy that he could not lift his head from his desk. On one occasion the composing room was yelling for "copy," as the editorial page was absolutely vacant.
The subeditor had been asleep on his desk for hours and his pen had been idle. The foreman of the composing room finally succeeded in arousing the man and yelled in his ear that something must be done for copy.
Whereupon the sleepy one grabbed a pair of shears and clipped one whole column from the editorial page of the London Times. At the top he wrote in a crabbed hand:
"What does the London Times mean by the following?"
It was printed, column and all. That single quizzical introduction made the Manchester Guardian famous. People began to ask what the Times did mean by the editorial, which was on a rather revolutionary subject. The subeditor slept for several hours, but John E. Willie says his paper's greatness began from that moment.—Washington Star.

"Engaged Man's Panic."

"Engaged man's panic" is as familiar a phenomenon as the squawking of a captured chicken or the flopping of a hooked fish. And woman instinctively anticipates it, feels it before it actually begins, deals with it according to her abilities. No woman ever feels that this is a stupor upon her. She knows that it does not involve her, but is only the nervousness of the free at the touch of the matrimonial bride—and that bride, as she knows and as he knows, is not in her hands, but in the hands of society. Even the man marrying for a home, even the man marrying for children or for money, even the man marrying because only by marriage can he hope to get some one to associate with him; bear with him; listen to him on terms of his own arranging—even these men feel the nervousness as the bride drops over their heads and the bit presses their quivering lips.—From "Deznermo's Wife," by David Graham Phillips.

"Knotty" History.

Tying knots in a handkerchief to jog one's memory had its origin in China thousands of years ago. Before writing was invented in that country, which did not happen until 3000 B. C., memorable and important events were recorded by long knotted cords. The most ancient history of China is still preserved as told by these knots. When Emperor Tschang Ki invented writing the entire system of "knotting" was abandoned. And today the memory knots made by us in handkerchiefs are the only surviving descendants of that ancient custom.

Copper's Hawk.

The almost universal prejudice against birds of prey is due to the activities of a few members of the hawk family, chief among which is the Cooper's hawk. Cooper's hawk usually approaches under cover and drops on unsuspecting victims, making great inroads on poultry yards and game coverts. This bird, together with its two near relations, the sharp shinned hawk and the osprey, should be destroyed by every possible means.


He Wanted to Know.

"Charles," said the teacher, "do you know the causes of the Revolutionary war?"
Charles looked interestedly at his instructor and replied, as if carrying on a social conversation, "No, do you?"—Ladies' Home Journal.

Amber.

Amber is believed by the Turks to be an infallible guard against the injurious effects of alcohol; hence its extensive use for mouthpieces of pipes.

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