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His Undesirable Inheritance

A Clergyman's Efforts to Get Rid of It.

By BARBARA PHIPPS

The new rector, Mr. Chiverly, or, rather, his wife, had moved his effects into the rectory, made vacant by his predecessor, and he was in his study, the furniture still disarranged, struggling with his next Sunday's sermon. Mrs. Chiverly came up from the basement. She had been much worn by moving and had struck the usual number of snags in that irritating process. Judging from her expression, she had now come upon a new one of the most exasperating character.

"Well, my dear?" said the rector, looking up from his work inquiringly and anxiously.

"What do you suppose?"

"I give it up."

"The basement is full of empty bottles."

"What kind of bottles?"

"Whisky bottles, brandy bottles, gin bottles, wine bottles, siphons—all kinds of bottles that should never be in the house of a clergyman, especially one who has preached total abstinence."

"Send them away," replied the rector, turning again to his sermon.

"What! Send them away! How could that be done without publicity? And publicity you know very well would result in an awful catastrophe to us. The town would ring with your condemnation. Your parishioners would be obliged to condemn you, innocent or guilty. Your resignation would be demanded."

Mr. Chiverly was evidently moved by such unjustice.

"But, my dear, these bottles have not been brought here by us. They were left here by Dr. Parkinson, who has just vacated the rectory."

"Not by Dr. Parkinson alone, but by a number of his predecessors. Quite likely some incumbent needed a stimulant and started the pile. The next added to it. The next, being confronted by the problem now before us, took no action, and so the tide of bottles has been steadily rising. Quite likely it started in the cellar. It has climbed to the basement. We cannot let it remain where it is, for we need the room. Besides, if discovered it would prove our ruin."

The rector cast his eyes up to the ceiling for a solution of the momentous problem. He had been struggling successfully with the ancient theological problem of foreordination, but this one of empty bottles staggered him.

"I'll tell you what you do," he said, his expression lighting up—"get rid of a few of them at a time."

"How?"

"To a junkman."

"Have a junkman calling every few days and seen by the neighbors carrying out empty bottles? Oh, James, how impractical you are!"

"How would it do to box them up and ask our grocer to call for them? Mr. Wilkins is very kindly disposed toward me. I will explain the matter to him."

"And he will explain it to Mrs. Wilkins, and she will explain it to her dearest friend, and the dearest friend will spread it broadcast."

Mr. Chiverly heaved a sigh. His wife continued:

"There is but one way out of it. They must be sent to another town to some intimate friend or relative of ours who will dispose of them without risk to us. Your brother Edward would be a good person to receive them. Once in his hands, he can easily dispose of them. But we must pack them so that no one will suspect what the cases contain."

"We might put on them 'Glass: handle with care.'"

"Oh, James! How stupid you are!"

"It would give the impression that they were tumblers and such things."

"Do you suppose our neighbors, who are ever on the lookout, seeing these boxes marked glass, would not at once suspect?"

"I'll order the cases sent, and next Monday you can begin the packing."

Mr. Chiverly heaved a sigh that his weekly day of ease after a hard Sunday's work should be devoted to so unattractive and laborious a service, then resumed his work on his sermon, while his wife went out to continue the arranging of the disordered furniture. In due time the cases arrived. Mr. Chiverly did the packing and the marking, and they were ready to be shipped. A wagon came to the door, the goods were carried out, and Mr. and Mrs. Chiverly fell into each other's arms in transports of relief.

"Thank heaven!" said Mr. Chiverly. "They're gone."

"Oh, James, you've no idea what a load is lifted from my shoulders."

"Do you think any of the neighbors took notice?"

"No! I was looking between the slats of the window blinds and saw no one watching."

"Good. Edward will receive them and dispose of them. And now I must settle down to my legitimate work. Please see that I am not disturbed in my study."

A month passed. One morning at breakfast Mrs. Chiverly remarked to her husband that it was strange they had heard nothing from his brother

about the cases sent him. Mr. Chiverly, who was about to raise a cup of coffee to his mouth, stopped short and seemed to be trying to recollect something.

"What is it, dear?" asked his wife, somewhat anxiously.

"N-nothing. I was trying to remember about writing Ed."

"Surely you wrote him?"

"Of course. That is, I wrote the letter. What I was trying to remember was posting it."

Mrs. Chiverly frigidly rose from the table, went to the study and after a few minutes' search came back with a letter addressed to Edward Chiverly, Esq., Cheltenham. The rector looked surprised and crushed.

"I wrote it the day I was packing the bottles," he said ingenuously. "I intended to take it out and post it the same evening, but I was so tired that I went to sleep on the sofa."

Mrs. Chiverly did not deign to reply. She sent their eldest boy out with the letter and, rising from the table, went upstairs without a word to her husband. She had scarcely done so when there was a ring at the doorbell. Mr. Chiverly answered the summons, and there stood a man with an express company's receipt book.

"Sign here, please. Seven dollars and fifty cents."

The rector cast a glance at a wagon standing by the curb and recognized the boxes he had packed a month before.

"W-w-what's this?" he stammered, calling.

"Goods returned, uncalled for."

Mr. Chiverly caught at the doorpost for support. As soon as he recovered his voice he asked the man to wait a minute and, staggering back into the hall, called his wife.

"What is it?" she asked, aghast.

"The bottles."

"What about them?"

"They're at the door."

"Oh, my goodness gracious! What's happened?"

"Edward, not receiving any explanation about them, probably refused to receive them or pay for them."

"Didn't you put on them who they were from?"

"No."

"Why didn't you?"

"I dare not. If they had fallen into the wrong hands it would have been a dead give away."

"Oh, James, what shall we do?"

"There's nothing to do but pay all charges—\$7.50—and send them again."

"We can barely scrape enough money together to pay the \$7.50."

"Well, then, pay it."

Mrs. Chiverly gathered all the money in the house, even borrowing from her son's savings bank, to make up the required amount. Mr. Chiverly had a dollar bill in his vest pocket besides. Taking it to the express driver he bribed him to take the boxes to his home, promising that they would be called for the same night.

"What are you going to do?" asked his wife on his return to her.

"I'm going tonight to take them and dump them in the river."

"You will do no such thing."

"Why not?"

"Suppose any one should see you doing it."

"I shall be dressed as a cartman."

"That won't help the matter. You will be traced the same as if you were seen trying to get rid of some one you had murdered."

"I'm going to risk it. We can't stand this business any longer. I'm going to get rid of the bottles if I have to swing for it."

Mr. Chiverly's blood was up. His wife's efforts to dissuade him were in vain. When night came he shaved off his whiskers, appropriated a suit of old clothes intended for a poor man he had befriended and started for the house of the expressman. On the way he tried to hire a wagon, but could find no one who would trust him with his team without going with him. So he changed his mind and decided to rely on the expressman.

"See here my man," he said on reaching the house. "I want you to go with me and get rid of these cases. Have you a box opener handy?"

The man brought the tools and opened one of the boxes.

"You see," said the clergyman, "what they contain. Will you go with me to the river to throw them in?"

"There's no need to do that," replied the man. "I'll get rid of them by selling them."

"Do so," cried Chiverly rapturously, "and pocket the proceeds."

"All right. You're sure there's no skulduggery about it?"

"None in the least. These bottles were accumulated by other persons than myself. I simply wish to get rid of them."

"All right. I'll send you anything there is over or above half the profits, less cartage."

"Please don't," urged the rector imploringly.

The man consented. Mr. Chiverly then wrung his hand gratefully and hastened home. Once there he doffed his old clothes, put on his nightgown and went to bed.

For weeks, indeed months, never was there a ring at the rectory doorbell but Mr. and Mrs. Chiverly started as though they were expecting an arrest for murder. And whenever a cart was heard stopping before the door the lady would peep through the blinds to assure herself that the bottles were not back again before answering the summons.

However, in time the dread wore away and the pair finally found comfort. They remained in peaceful possession of the rectory till Mr. Chiverly was made a bishop.

"What an awful difference, dear," said his wife, "it would have made had the secret of the empty liquor bottles got out."

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NOTICE OF AWARDED CONTRACT

Board of Local Improvements of the City of Highland Park.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to all persons interested that the bids for grading, draining, curbing with combined concrete curb and gutter, providing with catch basins, paving with an asphaltic macadam pavement and otherwise improving Michigan Avenue, from the west corporate limits of the City of Highland Park, East to the westerly line of the paved roadway in Green Bay Road, were opened on the 28th day of July, A. D. 1916, and the Waukegan Improvement Company being the lowest responsible bidder, the contract was awarded to the said Waukegan Improvement Company on the 1st day of August, A. D. 1916.

Said bid for the work as a whole is as follows:

300 Cu. Yds. excavation or grading @ .40 \$ 120.00

510 Lin. Ft. 6 in. hard burned drain tile including cinder backfill @ .28 142.80

380 Lin. Ft. 6 in. No. 2 sewer pipe, including cinder backfill and branch connections @ .30 114.00

340 Lin. Ft. 6 in. No. 2 sewer pipe outlet, including necessary connections to existing drain system @ .30 102.00

2 catch basins complete with cast iron covers and connections to drainage pipe @ 35.00 70.00

875 Lin. Ft. concrete combined curb and gutter 7 in. thick and 21 in. wide @ .55 481.25

680 Sq. Yds. asphalt macadam pavement 2 1/2 in. thick upon a macadam foundation 5 1/2 in. average thickness, 13 ft. wide (total width including gutters 15 1/2 ft.) @ 1.40 952.00

30 Sq. Yds. macadam pavement patching connection with pavement in Green Bay Road @ .65 19.50

Total \$2,001.55

The owners of a majority of the frontage of the lots and lands upon said Michigan Avenue, in the City of Highland Park, wherein said work is to be done, may, within ten days of the date hereof, elect to take said work and enter into a written contract to do said work at ten per centum less than the price at which the same has been awarded.

SAMUEL M. HASTINGS, FRITZ BAHR, EDWARD G. HUBER, WARD W. WILLITS, Board of Local Improvements of the City of Highland Park.

Dated at Highland Park, Illinois, this 3rd day of August, A. D. 1916. (23)



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