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THE BEST USE.

Out of the bud the bright rose bloweth, And all the soul of her sweetness goeth Abroad to the sun and wind and rain; But ah, ah never in any weather Can she fold up her leaves together And close herself in a bud again.

But if the sun and wind be sweeter, And summer's beautiful dress completer, Because of the rose's graceful part, Were it not wiser far and better Than, shut and locked in her fair green fetter To die, with an untouched virgin heart? ....Mary Ainge De Vere,

#### MR. BIRD'S UMBRELLA.

BY F. W. BOBINSON,

Rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-Bangt There was a pause, and a long enough pause to give me the impression that I had been dreaming of earthquakes, or of the bombardment of the British museum, or of a volcanic cruption in Russell square, to convince me even forcibly that I must have been dreaming, as I sat up in bed, and rubbed my eyes and listened. Then-Bang! bang! bang!rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-Yes, there was somebody evidently knocking at the street door, hanging by the street door knocker, and throwing his whole soul into the instrument-the house was on fire perhaps, or we were wanted next door at Brian's or a lunatic had escaped, and was clamoring for admittance, straight waistcoat and all, or else the up stairs lodgers had come back prematurely from their visit to Tunbridge, and were anxious to get in out of the rain, which was coming down with a vehemence that was certainly startling. I could surmise nothing more at a moment's notice and at 2:30 in the morning.

We all slept very soundly in No. 10 Prossiter street, Prossiter place, Russell square, Bloomsbury, for we worked very hard at No. 10, and the house was a large one. It was a house of many lodgers-parler floor, first floor and second floor-and all comfortably let, and those lodgers who were at home were all fast asleed, or else waiting for me, the poor, weakly proprietor of the establishment (Jane Neild, at your service, gentle reader, age'22, and an orphan with an establishment on her mind, and a living to get out of the establishment), to call to the servants (Bridget, able bodied, "general," aged 40, and a frightful temper, and Sarah, aged 13, child with a chronic cold and a red nose, but handy as a help to Bridget) to get up and see wit was the matter at No. 10, or with the party outside No. 10 who was "kicking up such a deuce of a row."

That was the way it was put at last by. Capt. Choppers, my drawing roor floor, an irritable old gentleman-not to say violent when roused-who came out on the landing at last in an attire which Bridget told me afterwards was far from decorous, and began bawling vociferously up the staircase the names of each of my maids in turn, concluding with my own name in a shrick of sheer

"Miss Neild-here, I say-is everybody doad! Mis Nee-e-ild!"

"Bless my soul, captain, what is it now?" I cried through the crack in my door.

"Don't you hear that infernal noise down stairs, madam! Who the deuce is it at this time of night, who the-what do you say, madam!"

"I'm going to open the window and inquire unless you"---

"It's no business of mine, Miss Neild," bawled the captain. "I don't expect anybody-I'm not going into the drawing room at this time of night, with my cold. I'm disturbed enough, as it is, through your being all so diabolically deaf. I shall leave this day week, ma'am. There!"

And slam went the back drawing room door, and crick crack went the key in the ir scible captain's lock. I was in my dressing room, with a flannel garment, which I take the liberty here of calling a "muffler," wrapped round my head and shoulders; and, as I went toward the window, trembling, I must say, in every limb, the knocking was repeated for the third time, and with a three fold victor, born of the delay and irritation to past summonses.

I waited until there was silence again, or nearly silence—for I could distinctly hear Capt. Choppers loading all his firearms—and then opened the widow, and peered into the damp, shiny street, which the wind and rain had all to themselves, with the exception of a dark figure on my top step, whose hat I could see was as shiny as the pavement.

"What is it!" I inquired; but the wind whisked my voice into Museum street, and l had to repeat the inquiry in a shrill falsetto. The man below paused with his hand to the knocker again-for he was just going to begin afresh-listened, and then ran down the steps and stood on the edge of the curbstone, with his hands behind him, looking up at me at last. I could make nothing of him in the darkne : from my point of view.

"What do you want, sir!" I asked, now that I had secured the attention of this individual. "What are you making such a noise Por at this time of night?"

"I'm very sorry to disturb you, lady"-"So it seems," I said, acrimoniously; but he did not hear me, and perhaps it was as well he did not. I have not a reputation for being severe in my remark, but then this was an exceptional proceeding, and deserved

"The fact is, madam, the wind has blown my umbrella clean out of my hand into your area. I would not mind so much," he condescended to explain still further, at the top of his voice, "but it's an umbrella I set great store by. Besides, it's raining tremend-

ously.' "I really cannot come down at this hour and get your umbrella," I said, severely;

"you must call to-marrow for it."

"Isn't there any one in the house—any man -who can get it? "The house is locked up for the night,"

"It's such a very deep area or I would drop over and get it myself. But then I don't see how to get out again," he said.

"I can't help you, sir; I am very sorry," I replied, "but I can't go down to-night for it." "I should be a brute to ask you, ma'am," he said, politely now; and here I could see he raised his hat to me; "of course I could not tell who was in the house, or whether it might not be easy to get my umbrella-which I really value very much, I assure you; it's an umbrella which—but I am very sorry to have disturbed you. I will call in the morning-thank you; good night."

And away the gentleman strode, turning up the collar of his coat above his ears as he went on down the street. I closed the window. I set my "muffler" aside, and in another moment I should have been in my humble couch again, when Rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tata-tat-a-tat-a-tat-Bang! once more aroused the echoes of the neighborhood, but brought no policeman to the rescue, or any anxious inquirers to the windows, except myself, who, once more enwrapped, and this time trembling with indignation, was a minute afterward in my old position facing the dangers and inconveniences of the gale, and looking down once more at the figure below me, standing in his old position on the brink of

the deep gutter in the roadway. "I beg your pardon again very much, I am awfully sorry to be such a nuisance, but

I really don't know where I am," he cried, rattling on with great volubility. "I haven't the least idea, and the streets are all alike, and I am quite a stranger to this part of the world, and I am afraid I shan't know this house from any other in the daylight. Might I just trouble you for the address?"

"Prossiter street," I called down to him. "I thank you very much. Boshington street

"Prossiter street," I screamed. "Prossiter-a thousand thanks and apologies. And what number, ma'am, may I ask?"

"No. 10." "I am very much obliged to you," he bawled forth, "I am exceedingly indebted. I would not have troubled you in this way if

the umbrella had not been"---But I would not listen to any further explanation; he had already said that he set great store by the umbrella, and I did not want to hear that fact again with the rain coming down like a waterspout, and the wind blowing every way at once. I closed the window summarily and cut short his volubility, and the instant afterward I heard him running along towards New Oxford street as if to make up for lost time, or to overtake a passing cab of which he had probably caught

It was some time before I could get to sleep after so lengthy a discussion under such peculiar circumstances. I was annoyed at the man's pertinacity concerning his trumpery umbrella, his indifference to time, and the personal inconvenience to which he exposed people by his unseasonable request, and I lay in considerable fear of his third return and another series of questions at the top of his lungs. But he came not again, and I dropped off to sleep at last, and was troubled by dreams of tempests and tornadoes, and white squalls carrying away whole grosses of umbrellas, until Sarah knocked at the panels of my door with her customary information that it was 6:30 o'clock.

I was perforce an early riser. There was a great deal to superintend, and my parlor floor was a gentleman connected with the railway goods traffic department who was always getting up early and going out to business and letting himself in again with his latch key about 7 in the morning, when he expected breakfast ready, and ate it walking about the room, as a rule, preparatory to running away again in hot haste. I should have considered Mr. Goode an irritable lodger if it had not been for the angelic contrast that he afforded to Capt. Choppers. As it was, he seemed only a little bit fussy and precise, which was attributable chiefly to his lot in life. Mr. Goode was a widower with two sons at boarding school, and if those boys had lived and died at boarding school, instead of coming home twice a year for the holidays, I think Bridget and Sarah would have rejoiced exceedingly.

I remember Mr. Goode asked Sarah that morning if he could speak with Miss Neild before he left, and I went up stairs at once to see him. He was walking about with his mouth full and a slice of bread and butter in his hand.

"That was a dreadful noise last night, Miss Neild," he began; "I couldn't get a wink of sleep. The captain, I suppose, again! I must certainly ask you in my name to present my compliments to him, and"---"It was not Capt. Choppers."

"Indeed! No. Well, I thought I heard his voice," said Mr. Goode, very much disappointed.

There was no homogeneousness between

Mr. Goode and Capt. Choppers-I may say even that there were times when they hated and loathed each other. "He's a beggarly upstart civilian, madam," the captain would roar in excited mo-

ments; and "He a captain!" Mr. Goode would say, with withering contempt. "Captain of a penny steamboat, perhaps, nothing But to my strange story. "A gentleman dropped his umbrella down

the area and knocked me up for it," I explained, with a little acrimonious emphasis. "Well, of all the confounded impertinence!" exclaimed Mr. Goode; "I should like to treat that party to a bit of my mind.

You never got up and gave it to him!" "No, I did not." "I am glad to hear that. For you must take care of yourself, Miss Neild, and keep strong. You are not looking well," he said, regarding me with his head on one side, as if he had a troublesome wen on the other which

he was anxious to keep clear of the edge of his shirt collar, "upon my word you are not. You are pale and fragile looking. A little change at the seaside now would do you a world of good."

"Yes, I dare say it would." "This large house is a trial to you-and that captain, with his absurd fancies and his ridiculous tempers, would worry the life out of a saint—and you are really looking extremely pale this morning. And—good gracious, I had no idea it was so late!"

Mr. Goode swallowed the last portion of his bread and butter whole, and dashed like a harlequin out of the front door. When he had gone I surveyed myself in his parlor glass and wondered if I was looking very ill, or whether, being a dismal man, he was trying to frighten me, and I arrived at the conclusion I was looking about the same as usual-a prim, pale, pert little puss, as my dear old dad called me once, when I was arguing with him on the housekeeping expenses, and how the weekly money would never hold out if he would continually ask the lodgers in to supper and a game at cribbage afterward.

Poor dad; he died next year and left me sole proprietor of the lease and furniture of the house in Prossiter street, and there were no late suppers and cribbage any more. was 17 when he died, and I had had five years' charge of No. 10 since-"getting quite an old maid, Lily Brian, who lived next door, said; but then Lily was four years younger than I, and assumed upon her youth, as girls will. A nice girl was Lily Brian, and my one friend and confidante, but perhaps too fond of laughing at everything, although that showed she was happy and had a keen sense of humor and a fine set of teeth.

Well, perhaps I was a trifle paler, was my second conclusion after the first five minutes, and with a tinge of redness-a mere tingeabout the nose, just as if I was breeding a cold, as Bridget put it. And this was not remarkable, considering last night's experiences, and sure enough the cold was bred before my early dinner hour, when the sneezing stage had set in with considerable force. This reminded me once more of the umbrella which had been dropped into the area last night, and I asked Bridget to bring it to me. "The what, m'm?" asked Bridget, with

a wild stare. "The umbrella." "Umbereller, and down our airy, did ye say, m'm? There's not a scrap of umbereller down our airy. I've been in and out twenty

toimes, and must have seen it," continued Bridget. "Bridget, there must be an umbrella," I said: "go and see."

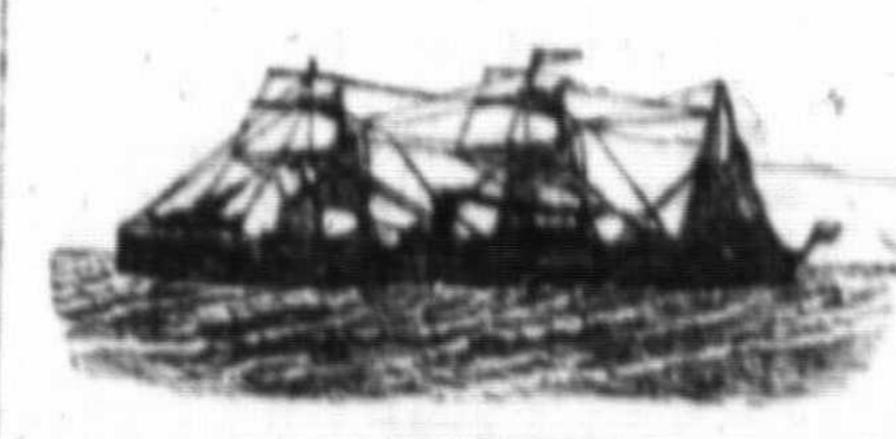
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