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# VENGEANCE OF BLUEJAYS UPON A HORSE THAT HAD DESTROYED THEIR NEST.

## The Owner of the Equine Had to Take a Hand in the Furious Attack.

"I hated to do it," said a suburban dweller, "for the birds were so pretty and had remained about my place in the country all winter, serving greatly to brighten things up during the sombre season, but I had either to make away with them or let them make away with my horse."

Along one side of the field that stretches away from the rear of my place is a thick growth of bushes. Various kinds of birds find that thick favorable for their nesting places. The field itself is let as a pasture, and in the spring and early summer the cattle and horses, pasturing there vary their diet by browsing on the sweet and tender young foliage of the thickets. Among the three or four horses in the field, along in May was my horse, an unpretending and kindly old fellow and almost one of the family.

"One day I was working in my garden when I heard bluejays down in the thicket along the field fence making more noise than is usual even with these birds of harsh and strident voice. Looking down that way, I saw four bluejays engaged in fierce and persistent assault on my horse."

"They were darting at him from all sides, pecking at his face, striking him in the neck and nipping his ears. The poor old nag ran first one way and then another to escape the assaults of the excited and SHRIEKING BIRDS."

but he was headed off by them whichever way he turned.

"As there might be danger of the horse being blinded by some well aimed stroke of a bluejay's sharp bill, I hurried down to lend him my aid in escaping from the vicious birds. Even after I arrived on the scene and took the horse by the mane and led him away from the spot the infuriated jays hovered about and followed us, making frequent bold dashes on the horse and inflicting jabs that made him jump."

"I led the horse to the far side of the field and the birds returned to the thicket, where they held toasty consultation at one particular spot and seemed to be in great tribulation. It was evident that my horse had offended the bluejays in some way, and to discover it possible in what way I walked up to the thicket. At the spot where the clamor of the jays was concentrated I found on the ground the bodies of three newly hatched bluejays."

"The four old birds circled about me with noise and fury for a while as if inclined to hold me responsible in some way for the tragedy. Then they dashed away across the field toward where my horse had resumed his quiet feeding and arriving there angrily renewed their attack upon him."

"I hurried thither, and again rescued him from."

**THE FURIOUS BIRDS.**

and they flew yelling back to the thicket. As often as the horse was left to himself in the pasture the jays attacked him as fiercely as ever, and I was compelled to remove him from the field. The birds made no attack on any other of the horses, although two of them were feeding near the spot where the birds were clamoring in the bushes."

"The jays became quiet after a while and presumably went about their business. Believing that the unfortunate incident was closed I turned my old horse into the pasture again, but he had no sooner begun to crop the grass than the jays emerged from the thicket again and renewed the assault on him with all the old fury. I rescued him once more and took him home and shut him in the barn."

"A road passes along the field on the other side of the thicket, and is much travelled by teams. Two or three days after the affair between the bluejays and my horse I hooked the horse to my buggy for a drive to the village. As he was jogging along by the thicket these bluejays recognized him and in-

stantly assailed him. That was too much for even the staid old nag to put up with, and he took the bit in his teeth and in spite of all I could do, ran away.

"And didn't those infernal jays keep right along with him for half a mile, urging him to still greater effort in his runaway stunt by pecking him and jabbing him and yelling in his ears! They quit then and went back to the thicket, yelling congratulations to one another at the top of their lungs. I never got the old horse allowed down until we got to town, about two miles."

"No damage was done except to my temper. That was wrecked so that when I got home, returning by a roundabout way to escape the danger of another furious bluejay assault and possibly more damage to my temper if to nothing else, I went for those jays with a shotgun."

"I hated to do it, but I couldn't stand by and see my horse constantly in jeopardy, and I didn't want to sell him. At the same time I suppose the jays had some excuse for their enmity against the horse, for there is no doubt that while he was browsing along the edge of the thicket he had pulled down a limb on which a family of bluejays had their nest and tumbled the young ones out of it to the ground. The jays were simply wreaking vengeance on the despoiler of the nest, although I am sure the old horse wouldn't have dumped that nest for all the juicy foliage there was in the thicket if he only had known."

# BELIEVE GRAVE CURSES THEN Afflicted Persons Visit Burial Place in Ireland for Relief.

Two quaint old ceremonies, one of very ancient date, the origin of which is not quite known, have just taken place, one in Ireland and the other in the old world village of Braunstone, in Leicestershire.

In North Kilmurry, some 12 miles from Cork there is a grave to which certain country people still make pilgrimages at certain periods of the year, believing that they will be cured of rheumatism and other ills. On the grave are a number of crutches and sticks which have been left by pilgrims who have been "cured." The pilgrims bring with them cups and jars of holy water, which they place on the burial place, some of them also tearing off parts of their clothing, which they hang on a thorn bush beside the grave. The tombstone bears the inscription, "Erected by a friendly hand to the memory of Rev. Patrick Dilworth, died January, 1838, aged 66 years."

"The Holme Meadow," at Braunstone, is always mowed on the Thursday before "Feast Sunday," and the hay taken by the parish clerk, who, having it removed to the village church, has it strewn all over the aisles. The origin of the custom is not known, but it is thought that it had its beginning in the time when the floors of churches and houses were on earth and covered with rushes, times in which there took place each year the ceremony of rush beating, the villagers going in processions to the churches to strew the floors with new rushes.

Few men carry a bigger roll of bills than the professional detector of counterfeiters. It is a felony to have counterfeit money in one's possession, but each counterfeit detector has a special license from the treasury department at Washington to carry about 150 samples of bogus money. For each counterfeit bill the detector carries a genuine note of the same kind and denomination for the purposes of comparison. The total value of this good money that is carried side by side with the bad is between \$10,000 and \$50,000. The bills run from \$1 up to \$1,000 in denomination.

A little boy was learning his letters, and found it much easier to remember them by appearance than by name. One day, wishing to inquire the identity of the letter "L," the puzzled youngster asked:

"Mother, what is this letter that goes straight out north on one side and up to God on the other?"

# SIGNOR!

It sounds a bit mean of me to say it was all Amy's fault, but it really was. The idea was hers, and its execution was hers. And that was everything—everything except the trifling contribution I made to the sum total of conspiring circumstances.

My affairs had not been quite so flourishing as they should have been, and I had put the position frankly before Amy, as I hold a husband should be quite frank with his wife when things are gloomy, whatever he may do when they are bright; and we had discussed economies for four successive evenings, and finally agreed that rather than give up our little house and move into a smaller one or a wretched flat, if we could get someone to share its comforts, conveniences and expenses, we might meet the difficulty.

Amy's cousin, in West Hampstead, had met a similar difficulty in that way, and Amy didn't see why we shouldn't. The notion seemed so excellent, indeed, that I consented, and left the whole matter for Amy to arrange, the more readily because she had an idea that her West Hampstead cousin had mentioned to Amy that she, the cousin—had said to her—that is to Amy—that her (cousin again) guest, a German gentleman, had mentioned having a friend, also a foreigner, who was anxious to find accommodation in a gentleman's house, where he could pick up English quickly amid congenial surroundings.

For this he was prepared to pay four or five guineas a week, according to circumstances. Amy thought she could get this German to come to us, if she mentioned the matter to her cousin; and as he seemed all right, since he was a personal friend of Amy's cousin's guest, I left the matter entirely in her hands, as I said before.

I'm obliged to explain all this in order to be understood. But to justify myself saying to you it was all Amy's fault, I must tell you the rest from her standpoint.

She saw the West Hampstead cousin the following afternoon, and was introduced to the German. No, come to think of it, he was an Italian, though it is not material, since the real point is that he only spoke enough English to nod affirmatively when asked a question, and shrug his shoulders and point when he required anything. He had come to England to learn our language by residing with people who couldn't make themselves understood in any other language.

It must have been a trifle difficult for Amy to make the exact purpose of her visit clear to the distinguished foreigner, but she was quite satisfied with her success when she told me all about it in the evening.

"A charming man!" she declared. "What his lips can't say his eyes can. He is to see his friend to-morrow—at least, I think so; and he'll let me know if I am when his friend will come to us—I fancy that's what he meant. A most charming man, Alfred! So genial and vivacious. So alive!"

"Well, I hope his friend will be equally genial and vivacious and alive," I observed, not particularly happily.

Two days elapsed. Then Amy was summoned to the front door to "try and make sense of what a nasty foreigner was saying," as Emily, the housemaid, explained. Amy rushed out to find her West Hampstead cousin's Italian guest, who had called to try to make her understand the arrangements he had made with his friend. She experienced great trouble in comprehending his volubility and gestures that his friend would arrive to take up his abode with us the following day.

Her greatest uneasiness arose from the fact that the charming Italian had dropped so many words in his native language that she hadn't the faintest notion which of them represented the name of his friend. However, she consoled herself with the reflection that she would be perfectly safe in addressing the coming guest as "signor," and that he himself might have finished his education in conversational English.

Amy confided all this to me on my return home in the evening, and as she was so sure it was all right, and I was so uncertain that it wasn't, that I did not disturb her mind particularly as she was somewhat ruffled by her anxiety to have everything prepared for "signor's" reception on his arrival the next day.

It happened most unfortunately, that when I arrived at business the following morning and went through my correspondence, I found it would be necessary for me to start tomorrow for the journey to Glasgow which I had been anticipating for some days. It was extremely awkward having to leave Amy to receive this stranger, and entertain him, in my absence; but as my trip was in connection with

a big bit of business, I never hesitated about going. I had, indeed, kept a portmanteau ready packed at the office in anticipation of this summons.

So I wired Amy, and raced off North. That was part of my own personal contribution to the beautiful affair.

On receiving my wire, Amy at once telegraphed to Clara Stamer, a Norwood cousin, to come and stay a day or two, and Clara arrived at five in the afternoon, and was made aware of the situation just in time to be looking her nicest, when Emily announced that the "foreign gent" had come.

"Fresh tea, immediately. Emily," whispered Amy excitedly, and hastened to greet the handsome young foreigner who stood bowing in the hall.

He seemed most pleasantly surprised at the cordiality of Amy's welcome to him, but the difficulty of the situation were manifest to Amy at once. He was terribly nervous, stammering and blushing like a timid girl and he knew as little of the English language as his friend Amy's cousin's Italian guest.

I can imagine the scene. I have done so and laughed outright. It must have been very dull! There was the broad-shouldered little Italian, blushing and stammering to find a lady of such charming appearance greeting him with all the warmth of old friendship; and there was Amy, tall, elegantly dressed, frowning in her bewilderment, nodding genially to every half-uttered and wholly incomprehensible sentence or word that escaped him.

With the greatest difficulty—having in the end, indeed, to take him by the arm and lead him—she forced him to overcome his nervousness sufficiently to enter the drawing-room.

Seeing Clara rising to greet him, he stopped dead, and looked down at his feet.

"Bit ze poots, madame," he protested, grinning. "Ze poots."

"He hasn't rubbed his boots, perhaps," suggested Clara.

"Ah! No—no! Ze poots!" he exclaimed, waving his hands at his feet.

Laughingly Amy led him to the hall mat, and pointed down.

He regarded her sorrowfully for a moment, then sighed profoundly, and wiped his boots upon the mat.

"Ze shen man—im—not com, ah sa!" he inquired with engaging innocence.

Amy led him back into the room and forced tea and cake upon him, while she went through an elaborate pantomime, employing a variety of aids and great ingenuity to convey to him the cause of my absence and her hope for my safe and speedy return.

This, or the cake and tea, seemed to satisfy him; he ate heartily, shrugging his shoulders and smiling widely at everything Amy or Clara said. At first the girls found it very amusing and refreshing, but no one who has not experienced similar difficulties can imagine how fatiguing it is to keep up an intelligent conversation with a perfect stranger by means of smiles, nods, incomplete sentences, and various gestures on the lines of Swedish drill.

There was no getting any sense from "signor"; he could not explain anything as to his route to the house, luggage, arrival in England, or anything else. He assumed an air of blended mystification and resignation, and he held on to it doggedly.

At length Amy took him to show him his room, and with Clara's assistance she conveyed its meaning and significance to him, pointing to the bed and to him and nodding, then pointing to the wash-stand, and, after pointing to his face, making a gesture of washing her own. She had given up talking by this time.

"Ah, sa!" he exclaimed with his chronic smile. "An' ze poots!"

"Put them outside," said Clara, pointing down at the landing-floor, and nodding. "His boots do seem a terrible anxiety to him," she added, aside to Amy.

Then Amy took him in hand again, and showed him how to lock and unlock the door, and used the clock as an aid to explain to him that we dined at eight, and took breakfast at eight-thirty.

He took it all in with the same of blended mystification and resignation, and they left him to follow them down to the drawing-room at his own sweet pleasure.

But he had not put in an appearance when Emily announced dinner.

"Run up and knock quietly on the gentleman's door, and tell him," said Amy.

After a short absence, Emily, looking very scared, returned to say that she could not get any answer.

"I tell you what it is," said Clara. "He's misunderstood us, and thinks you told him to go to bed."

"That's it, m'm," declared Emily. "I eard a 'orrible noise like snoring,' an' there's no light in the room."

They discussed it while the vegetables got cold. Finally, Amy and Clara went up to investigate, and being confirmed in the belief that he had retired for the night, Clara knocked loudly on his door, with the heroic intention of trying to explain his mistake.

It was long before a gruff and

# BLACKBIRD MUSICIANS. One That Accompanied a Band Another Gave Cavalry Call.

One April while studying bird voices in a wood near a breezy upland village in Banffshire Scotland, I was startled by a whistler, who produced again and again part of the opening phrases (six notes) of the fine English song "Should He Upbraid," says the Scotsman.

No professional clarinet player could have rendered the phrases with closer attention to quality of tone and to exactness of time and pitch. At first I thought that it had been whistled by a ploughman who was working in a neighboring field. Other blackbirds in the same wood whistled the phrase, but no one performed it so well as the bird I first heard.

Two summers ago a blackbird that patrolled a small beat in the gardens to the south of Buccleuch place, Edinburgh, whistled a part (over a dozen notes) of a five-finger exercise for the piano, which he had without doubt picked up from some player in one of the neighboring houses. Some years ago in the month of June I attended a concert in the Luxembourg Gardens which may be considered the central point of the Latin Quarter of Paris.

The performers were the band of the Garde Republicaine (the finest band in the world), and the programme they submitted consisted wholly of extracts from Beethoven's works. While the Adagio of the "Sonata Pathetique" was being played a blackbird sitting high up in a tree near the band stand accompanied the instruments and stopped when they did.

He sang during the whole movement—beautiful, leisurely snatches of melody. His notes seemed like an instrument added to the band and quite equalled in quality any of the wood winds. The way in which his extempore melody fitted in with Beethoven's composition was perfectly marvellous.

All through that summer the heat in Paris was terrific. Often every day I had occasion to pass along a torpid old street in the Latin Quarter, near which I lived, the Street of the Four Winds—a narrow thoroughfare, lined by high white painted houses above which could be seen a mere ribbon of dark blue sky.

In this street a cobbler, an ex-bugler in a Cuirassier regiment had his booth. Above the booth hung a large wicker cage in which was a blackbird with a tremendous voice—a "hundred throated" bird to borrow the adjective which Ten-Tyson qualifies the nightingale.

The ex-bugler had taught his merle (the French word for blackbird) a cavalry call, and many times a day the street reverberated with the blood-stirring sounds. One broiling day in July an old abbe stopped in front of the cobbler's stall, and began to mop his crimson face. "Monsieur," he said to the cobbler, "accept my congratulations: your merle is the most eloquent preacher in Paris, for his notes are a battle call to the strong and a sursum corda (lift up your hearts) to the despairing."

# CAREFULLY EXPLAINED. "Good-bye," said Mrs. James to her husband, as she left for a short visit to her mother. "I've put everything in order for you. If you can't find anything write me and I'll let you know where it is."

Two days later Mr. James missed a favorite hat of his and wrote to ask where it had been put. This is the reply:

"I think I put it in the wardrobe in the front bedroom, but if it isn't there you might try in the hat-stand drawer, or the hall-table, or perhaps it has fallen behind the dressing-table in our bedroom. I think it's upstairs somewhere. P. S.—Perhaps after all I changed it at the door for some ferns."

As an old lady who was ill seemed much easier, the nurse in attendance said: "Now, I think you will be all right if I put this bell beside you, and I will go and get a sleep." "A sleep!" exclaimed the only lady in evident wonder. "Why, I thought you were a trained nurse!" "I am," said the nurse drily, "but unfortunately we are not trained to keep awake for ever."

# CASE OF BLIND JUSTICE. Peasant Convicted of Murder He Never Committed.

The sum of \$6,000 has just been awarded by the Cher Assize Court in France as compensation for seventeen years' penal servitude undergone by a peasant named Charles Michaud, who received a life sentence for a murder he did not commit.

A rich old peasant farmer was murdered and Michaud, a neighbor, was convicted, chiefly on the evidence of a necktie which had belonged to the dead man and of some stains on his clothes supposed to be blood. Michaud protested his innocence throughout and declared he knew nothing about the tie and that the stains were caused by cider. He was convicted and sent to French Guiana for life.

While he was there a fellow convict confessed or rather boasted that he had committed the murder. This man later succeeded in escaping from the penal settlement, but newspapers having taken up his case and found confirmation of his story, the Court of Cassation decided that his confession was the necessary new fact which would allow it to set aside the condemnation and order a new trial.

Michaud, who was twenty-nine when convicted, is now 46, but looks like a broken down old man. His wife, always convinced of his innocence, was present at the second trial. His counsel asked for \$30,000 damages, but the court awarded \$6,000 and the placarding of the judgment.

"John," she said gently, "you are interested in temperance movements, are you not?" "Or course I am," he answered. "Well, suppose you go and make a few of them at the pump-handle. I want a pail of water at once."