

out to dinner. At 7.30 he came back, let himself in with his private key, and carried the Venus out to a waiting motor car. At 7.49 he had, spurning the good offices of his servant, struggled under its weight and deposited it in his garage.

Mr. Paxter had, to speak the truth, accepted the inevitable. It seemed impossible that he should ever lose his "Michael Angelo," and he had concocted the hideous idea of burning it! But, just as he was ready, he saw he could not do so without probably burning down his new garage. Likewise it was too big to poke into the furnace, and his only open grate—in the swell drawing-room—was not in running order. What was he to do—burn it in the garden? Hardly, on Thirteenth Avenue West. Mr. Paxter was in a dilemma until an entirely original and striking solution occurred to him—he would bury it!

He went so far as to get a spade, when he remembered the impossibility of interring anything in his back garden without incurring a great deal of most undesirable publicity. He must go farther afield—farther afield to regions unscanned by human eye. And which particular region would—why, in a flash, he remembered Mount Tuxadora Heights!

It was the work of only five minutes to call in next door and borrow a wheelbarrow—for he could not drive his new automobile himself. On the wheelbarrow, he loaded his dreadful burden, securely swathed. The shades of night had fallen fast; his servant was entertaining her "steady" in the kitchen; and he slipped off unobserved.

Possibly if some of us could have seen him that night, we might have voted for him in greater numbers in his recent unsuccessful attempt to run for alderman, for we should have recognised him as a man who could put his back into a task! From his house to Mount Tuxadora Heights it is four and three quarter miles as the crow flies. Mr. Paxter weighed

two hundred and one pounds when he started. When he reached the last house he had reduced it to one hundred and ninety three; when he paused at the end of the projected green-and-white car-line, it had receded to about one hundred and eighty-eight. Any other man would have stayed right there, and buried the Venus near the projected loop; but Mr. Paxter was going the whole hog. He went on. By the light of the moon he read his own signboard in the distance, and very soon he stood on Mount Tuxadora Heights.

"Now you—!" cried Mr. Paxter, using a horrible word. The last spurt had winded him badly, but he still had breath for the imprecation—"In you go!"

Very methodically he measured out a space six feet by four. Twelve inches would be deep enough to dig.

"Take your last look on the dear departed!" cried Mr. Paxter to the gophers. He turned the first sod.

As he did so someone touched him on the back.

"Help!" he shrieked.

But it was only Kendrick Evans, who, with Mr. Romford of Ontario, had stalked him all the way.

"Damn you both!" snarled Paxter.

Mr. Evans smiled amiably.

"Before you commit the dear departed to the vasty deep," he remarked, "and before its—er—corruptible shall put on the—er—incorruptible—can't we help?"

"Damn you!" said Paxter again. "You fixed this plant on me, Ken., and I'm storin' up something for you as it is."

"You fixed a plant on Romford here. Dust to dust, fake to fake—eh?"

"So that's why?"

"Of course. Billy Romford is my brother-in-law—didn't know that, did you? See here, Pax., we don't want to be hard on you. You planted some especially bad real estate on Billy—well, give him back his fifteen hundred dollars."