



"EXACTLY SO!"

SMITH—Ha! Jones, let me congratulate you,—I hear you've had some money left you!
JONES—Yaas; it left me long ago!

THE MEANDERERS.

CHAPTER I.

It was night, "a phenomenon," as says the *Omaha Journal of Commerce*, "occurring seven times a week." But it was night in Woodbridge, that charming major village of the fertile township of Vaughan. The moon rose over the eastern pine-clad hill, as per usual loving couples meandered up to the station to see the last train of the day pass on its rushing journey from the Sound to Toronto, ruthlessly running over the thousands of stolid sleepers in its bed. It heeded not the sleepers' groans. They were too wooden to groan. The train dashed into the station. This is figurative, and means that it drew (not with pencils, but by means of coals) up on the track in front of the depot, where it paused for ninety-two seconds in its career. The usual crowd of passengers disembarked. The village dogs barked two, two or perhaps three, or, before I proceed, if I've made a possible mistake, six. The other ordinary crowd got aboard. Those who did not get aboard were content with toothpicks. There are no ordinary people in Woodbridge, so the departing crowd were not natives. They were from Parkdale—some distance—and came out with the Solteros Club. It was so long since they had experienced a whipping that they knew not a threshing machine when they saw one, and asked "Charlie, what that red and green thing was?" Ah! if they had known the true name of that part of the thresher they would have implored their Charlies to hurry up street, and would have thought of home and father. It was a separator! But where ignorance is bliss there's no need to seek a blister, so they didn't hurry unduly.

SUB-CHAPTER I.

It was at this station above referred to that the smiling station-master was asked one evening when the train was late, why the said train was like Christmas, but the conundrum was so innocently simple that he guessed the answer immediately. You know it too, but the next was better. Why was the engine of the Christmaslike train like the village corporation after it had instituted a pound and appointed a pound-keeper? The answer had to be left to the pro-pounder, who announced that it was because it had a cow-catcher. This is respectfully referred to *Dick Dumping* when

he comes to write his *box* essay. But leaving beef let us return to our mutton.

CHAPTER II.

The train had glided off into the night, the thirsty had gone for a drink, and the drink had "gone for" some of the thirsty, when one of the loving couple aforesaid turned their faces villageward and gave themselves up to the pleasing pastime of holding sweet converse, and occasionally (when they came near the drain so lovingly lingered over—in their deliberations—by the Council) holding their noses too, while they performed mentally the operation which one landed proprietor threatened to do with a spade:

Not the hanging of the crane,
But the damming of the drain.

In such moments they covered their beaks with their handkerchiefs, an action which would have been totally unnecessary had the drain been as faithfully covered by plank. But we all have to submit to drains—many on our own puses.

SUB-CHAPTER II.

On they went past the cage of the red bird, whose owner on being interrogated as to its species, replied "It is a cardinal." "Did the present Pope create it such?" "I know not, but this I know: I am going to make an Orangeman of it." "Then, by my halidome, must it dye first."

CHAPTER III.

So on went our meanderers till they reached the noble bridge which spans the silver stream. Here they paused and gazed upon the beauty of the scene spread out in an eight-o'clock-dinner-in-the-park-table fashion—sumptuously before them.

The moon, now high in the heavens, beamed benignly down and tipped each little wavelet with a bamboo-cane-silver-ferrule-tip, while the silent, stable stars strewed strips of lesser light in a gas-jet-at-the-corner-of-Yonge-street-under-the-electric-illumination manner around, only more so.

The ripple of the river made music for their ear, but the beating of their own hearts was what they best could hear.

SUB-CHAPTER III.

The night owl hooted beyond the sombre hill, and the tom cat looted the creamery until he had his fill.

CHAPTER IV.

A faint aeolian-harp-like-music-producing breeze sprang up and floated down the river, winding through pleasant meadows and grassy glades. Why did that melancholy music of the evening wind cause the maiden to turn pale, and the youth to experience an out-in-mid-lake-on-board-the-*"Empress-of-India"* on-a-rough-day feeling?

SUB-CHAPTER IV.

It didn't.

CHAPTER V.

It was a strange, an indescribable, but very palpable something—if our Wilde method of description will be tolerated—a something floating on the pinions of the wind which wrought the mischief. Not the odor of wild woods skirting the river's bank, except a dead horse was handy, not the pleasing perfume of the flower-sprinkled meadow, not the odor of the green and grassy-glade—no!

SUB-CHAPTER V.

Not much!

CHAPTER VI.

It was the beastly smell of the slaughter house close by, which came in like a home-

wrecking Bedouin, destroying all that was sweet in the air and leaving instead the fatal blast of its own foul breath! Even as a deliberately committed mortal sin will blight the fruit of a good life, so came this dreisome stench annihilating the pleasant spicery and balm of the charming evening zephyr.

SUB-CHAPTER VI.

It was real bad—horrible.

CHAPTER VII.

"My love," said HE—and she trembled violently (was it the unwonted word or the stench from the slaughter house?). "My love, I fain would speak with thee—but not here, 'tis too skunk-like: let us go up Canal street." So they went. "What is't my Romeo?" murmured SHE as the purer air, and the reaction, set in. "Darling," quoth he, National Policy Willis says, "The sweetest thing in life is the unclouded welcome of a wife, and, but you will accept me and give me a welcome as unclouded as is yon moon above us brightly beaming. I am constrained to think that I would verify N. P.'s saying for myself." "Willingly would I acquiesce, but that yet I lack, a week of twenty-one; still, as a charming little actress (now dead, alas! but formerly of Toronto) used to sing (so tells my cousin):

I'll ask my mother and I'll let you know
Next Saturday afternoon."

They sealed the compact with the usual seal—tulips rampant!

SUB-CHAPTER VII.

Saturday afternoon came. So did the answer. It was favorable, and our meanderers are now happy in each others' possession and in—Kansas.

CHARLIE JAY.

SMITH'S PHENOMENAL ROOSTER.

Smith was a man, whose fancy lay
In rearing stock in the poultry way.
Unrivaled by other folk,
And once he went across the main,
For British birds of purest strain:
He scorned the foreign yokl.

He bought a rooster and seven dames,
Of lineage pure and noble names.
And faultless pedigree;
And when those hens began to lay,
He "ova" looked them day by day,—
A brooding man was he.

And there he kept his patient seat
Till incubation was complete;
When something strange befell
That startled Smith's expectant sight,
For one, a little rooster mite,
Crowed as he cracked his shell.

And Smith has frequently averred
It was the most precocious bird
That one might well desire;
A little forward, strutting thing,
That scorned the warm maternal wing,
And perched beside his sire.

And strange it was to hear and see
That youngster crow in treble key.
Be-ide his "daddy's" bass:
And all the hens declared it too,
Who heard his minor "doodle-doo":
A most unusual case.

But though that bird would early crow,
He has not grown a bit; and now
His voice one seldom hears,
He's lost his cheek and early strut,
And of the hens he's quite the "butt,"
He's getting, too, in years.

A moral here one might with truth
Apply to some Toronto youth
Who early failings show:
Don't strut and ape and play the fool,
Nor scorn the mild maternal rule:
Whatever you do, don't "crow!"

R. C.

Motto for a scandal monger—All's fish that comes to my net.