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SHREWD WOMAN SPECULATOR

Bought Bark "Good Intent" At Underwriter's Auction

And Made Big Clean-Up From Opium Found Aboard the Wreck One by M. Quad.

As a sailorman, holding a certificate as chief mate, though at the time out of a berth, I was in the Maritime Exchange, San Francisco, when the ship Good Intent and cargo were put up at auction for the benefit of the underwriters. I had heard something about the queer voyage of the ship. She was from China and Japan, laden with teas, silks and fancy goods, and, being blown to the south among the islands by a typhoon, she had struck on a reef off one of the Necker islands. The shock dismasted her, and she was breaking up when her crew took to the boats and were picked up after several days of suffering. When this had been properly sworn to by master and crew, it was for the insurance companies to come down, and when they had handed over the cash the programme was to put the wreck up at auction and hope to get a bid large enough to cover the cost of making out the papers.

There was just one bidder, and, to everybody's surprise, it was a woman. I soon heard it said that she was a widow and kept a boarding house for people of the better class. She bid $100 for the wreck as it stood, whether still hanging on the coral reef or at the bottom of the sea, and there was a general laugh as her bid was accepted. She had recognized me as a sailor while waiting to bid and had asked me the distance to the islands and if I had ever been there. When she had bid in the wreck and was ready to go, she gave me her address and asked me to call. Just what she was up to I couldn't figure out, but the fact of a woman bidding in a wreck was sufficient to satisfy a sailor that she was acting upon some information not possessed by the underwriters. I was on hand at the hour named, and I soon discovered that she was a woman of business. When she had made many inquiries about me and was evidently satisfied that I was all right, she told me that she had discovered through one of her boarders that the cargo of the ship was far more valuable than appeared by the manifest. It seemed that some one had a private speculation in opium, the captain and mate standing in, and it was this knowledge that had caused the Widow Jackson to bid for the wreck. The secret had been let out by the mate while ill of fever and out of his head.

What the widow wanted of me was, first, to ask if there was a possible chance that the wreck was still on the reef and if any part of her cargo could be got at; second, the cost of fitting out a craft to visit the scene, and, third, if I would take command on a percentage of what might be recovered and could scare up a crew to do the same. The Widow Jackson was a brisk spoken, decisive woman. She had been left money. The adventure would be a big risk, but if the wreck was found the profit would be enormous. All I had to risk in it was my time, and I soon decided to do that. Acting under her instructions, I looked about for a craft to charter and after a little lighted upon a brig which filled the bill. I also routed out among the sailor crowd a mate, cook and six men who would take all other chances if paid a month's wages in advance. I got figures on the necessary stores, and the widow took a day to look them over. I expected the sum total would frighten her, as the figure was pretty steep in spite of all I could do, but when I called again she said:

"I have got that amount of money and a little over. I am going to sublease this house for six months and go with you on this voyage. I see you have figured on a cook. Strike him off the list. I shall be cook myself. If I can cook and work here, I can do the same aboard of a brig, and we want no idlers. I have fully made up my mind to carry out my ideas, and you will go ahead as fast as possible."

I was pushing things along to get away at the earliest hour, when I heard that the captain of the late Good Intent was secretly seeking a craft for charter. This satisfied me as to the value of the wreck if it was still intact and also made me hustle the harder. When we finally got away, there was no talk about it and I was the only man aboard who knew our real destination. That we should be followed within a week or ten days was certain, and we were no sooner clear of the "heads" than orders were given to crack on and keep the little hooker travelling for all she was worth. We were in ballast only, having cleared for Japan, and I had picked up a good sailer in chartering the Duchess.

There is a wide stretch of salt water and weeks of sailing between the California coast and the Necker islands, which lie in a southwest direction and number twelve, great and small. Only the largest two are inhabited, but I knew that residents of them roved among the whole group and that shell gatherers and traders would be frequently met with. Among our outfit was a 6-pound cannon and 10 muskets, bought of a junk dealer in San Francisco. If we found the wreck, we might have to hold it by force and do some sharp fighting. From the first day of sailing until we sighted Nigger island, one of the Necker group and the one where the Good Intent had left her bones, she appeared to be certain that our adventure would turn out all right.

The wreck lay there on the reef as she had been abandoned, and a yell came from every throat. We had simply to feel our way down to her as near as possible and then take the yawl and board her. She looked a sad wreck, but we found her in fairly good shape when we got aboard, having the widow with us. The reef was half a mile from the beach, and the ship had driven on to it stem first, run about half her length and then made a cradle for herself. At high tide there were two feet of water in her lower hold; at low tide she was drained of every drop.

Now see how queer are the ways of fortune. We had not been on the wreck an hour before two native catamarans, each carrying 15 islanders, hove in sight and came down to us. The fellows at once demanded a share of the loot, and we had to resort to the big gun to drive them away. They returned under a white flag before night and offered their services for pay, and 20 of them were engaged to assist us.

It would have been a great find without the opium, but the stuff was aboard all right. The value of the tin cases packed in one of the staterooms was not far from $20,000, and of general cargo we took in a load which sank the brig to her plimsoll mark. In a week we were through with the wreck and ready to turn her over to the islanders for what they could get out of her. We up anchor and headed for the Pacific coast at noon one day, and within three hours we saw a bark which was heading straight for the spot we had left. It was the captain of the lost Good Intent, but he had come too late.

We made port after an uneventful voyage, the cargo was landed and disposed of with only a few days' delay, and one morning we were all paid off, said goodby to the widow, and I never saw her again.—M. Quad.

We All Do It.

It's a common enough thing for children to try to pick up sunbeams, but the earnestness with which this attempt was made by a small boy in an elevated car attracted the attention of the other passengers.

He was a very small boy, not more than 2½ years old and still in dresses. The seats in the car were all taken, and the small boy stood up with his mother.

There came into the car over one of the blinds a slender sunbeam, which fell diagonally downwards across the little fellow's dress, and when his eye fell upon this he reached down and carefully closed his hand over it and then raised his hand to his face and opened his fingers. But there wasn't any sunbeam there.

The passengers who saw this were as much interested in it all, in their way, as the small boy was in his, and presently they saw him try it again. Looking down, he saw the sunbeam still there, just where it had been before when he had tried to grasp it, and he made that effort again.

Reaching down, he closed his fingers around it once more, and once more he raised his hand and opened it and looked inside for the sunbeam, once more to find—nothing there.

Then taller buildings cut off the ray, and the small boy's mind was diverted into some other channel.—New York Sun.

Job Printing at Nugget office.

The Angle Child.

When young Sellshoes called the other evening, Miss Ohfudge, in a flannelette wrapper was reading an intensely absorbing novel in her room up stairs, and so she sent her angel sister, Pansy, aged 6, down stairs to inform Mr. Sellshoes that she'd be down in a few moments. The angel sister carried the information to Mr. Sellshoes in the parlor, and then hovered around, waiting for an opportunity to deliver herself of a few bright little sayings of childhood.

"Mr. Sellshoes," she remarked after awhile, in a shy manner, twisting her hands coyly, "have you got many bureau drawers where you live, and do you hunt in them much?"

"Well—er—I dunno," replied Mr. Sellshoes, hesitatingly. "Why?"

"Oh, nuthin," replied the angel child, "'cept that sis she began t' hunt 's soon's you came through the bureau drawers f'r a piece of stickin' plaster t' cover up a big pimple she's got on her chin, an' she said she jes' wisht you had t' rubber an hunt through all your bureau drawers, an' then you wouldn't be so willin' t' put folks out so. Do you often have t' hunt through your bureau drawers?"

Young Sellshoes flushed slightly, then paled slightly and made an inaudible reply. The angel child pretended to fix the rug in front of the grate fire for a moment, and then she opened up again.

"Oh, Mr. Sellshoes," she exclaimed, "what a funny hat you must wear! Do let me see it, won't you?"

"Why, it's just like all other hats" replied young Sellshoes, in a muffled choked sort of tone. "Why do you wish to see it?"

"Oh, nuthin," replied the angel child, turning around and drumming the piano, "'cept that sis she says that you talk through your hat, an' I thought it must be a funny lookin' hat."

Young Sellshoes twisted some more in his seat and half rose to go, but, thinking better of it, again stared hard out of the window. The angel child drummed on for a couple of minutes, and then she once more wheeled about on the stool.

"And, oh, Mr. Sellshoes," she prattled in her sweet, innocent little voice "please, sir, tell me what you won't do."

"Won't do?" repeated young Sellshoes hoarsely. "Why, I don't think I understand what you"—

"Well," cut in the lovely little prattling lamb, "I heard sis say yesterday, w'en she was talkin' 'bout you; 'He won't do'—jes' like that, an I thought that"—

The rest of it was drowned in the tum-tumming of the angel child's angel little paws on the piano.

Then young Sellshoes went out into the clammy night without waiting for Miss Ohfudge, and three minutes after he left the angel child of the Ohfudge household was learning things about the back of a corrugated sterling silver hairbrush that he had never dreamed of in her young and joyous life before.—Ex.

Statistics.

About 25,000 robin redbreasts are exported from England annually.

Liverpool, with 99 people to the acre, is the most crowded city in England.

There are ten battalions in the British army that wear the old Scotch kilts.

The national debt of the United Kingdom is five per cent. of its wealth.

Australia's first measured wool crop was 20,000 tons, in 1821. This has now risen to 2,700,000.

The Columbian ice fields in the Canadian Rocky Mountains cover an area of at least 110 square miles.

The first lord of the admiralty is said to have approved the proposal to christen British battleships in future with colonial wine. Heretofore foreign brands have been used.

Within six years the New Zealand Government has bought back of the original settlers 334,167 acres of land used for sheep runs, and 1,630 families have found homes on them.

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GEO. WASHINGTON'S WOOING

A Hoop-Iron Bill Story of the Pa of His Country

When Martha Saw the Young Officer Slay the Indians She Murmured, "He Is My Lolapaloosa."

"George, George," cried a beautiful young woman rushing up to the commander of the little fort, "we are besieged! Save me! Save me, or I shall call for help."

Colonel Washington calmly took his sword out from the chimney corner, where it had been used as an instrument for poking up the hickory logs, and buckled it on. Then he turned, with a resolute face, and said:

"It is as I had feared. We have been betrayed by Screech Owl, the Indian whose ears I boxed last Monday for stealing raisins from the blockhouse cupboard. But you call me George. Have we ever met before?"

With a becoming blush she looked down at the rough, hard floor and replied:

"No. But I was so frightened that I forgot. Oh, surely you will protect me. I am only a poor, weak woman, with two sweet little children and a large fortune left by my late husband. My family is an old and distinguished one—but, hist! Let us hist a few times. Was that not the stealthy tread of an Indian?"

Then he noticed for the first time how beautiful she was, and his strong heart gave a great throb.

"Trust yourself to me," he cried as his sword leaped from its scabbard. "I will meet them single handed."

At that moment the door of the little fort was crushed by a mighty battering ram, and 16 Indians, led by a white man, rushed through the opening!

"Aha!" cried Washington. "My old foe, Benedict Arnold!"

Before he could say more the attacking party was upon him. With one hand he caught the trembling little woman and tossed her backward. She landed lightly in a sitting posture upon a leather trunk.

The Indians, armed with battleaxes and pikes, seemed to completely surround the brave soldier, but his sword circled in the air above his head, darted out at either side and flashed before him simultaneously. The sparks of fire produced by the keen, finely tempered blade as it struck the weapons of the maddened Indians flew about in showers, blinding some of the howling devils and causing others to believe that they were contending against one possessed of supernatural powers.

All this time the sweet faced woman sat upon the trunk, nervously stitching at the hem of a piece of drawn work that she wanted to have ready for a wedding present on the following Thursday. Suddenly she saw one of the Indians who was supposed to have been killed rise up behind the colonel, and, with a long, blood stained knife, begin moving toward him. She tried to cry out a warning, but her lips for the first and only time in her life refused to open.

Her agony was terrible. Slowly, inch by inch, the crouching savage moved toward his noble victim, while the traitorous Arnold and his red allies, seeing all that was passing, put forth renewed efforts in order to hold the attention of the gallant officer. Only four Indians now remained in front of him, and Washington, although wounded in a score of places and weak from the loss of blood, was beginning to smile a grim, sardonic smile in anticipation of the moment when he and Arnold would remain alone, face to face.

One step more and the Indian who was stealing up behind would be within reach of the man who had so bravely staked his life for a woman's love, there being no back door through which to escape. Already the cruel blade was beginning its swift, murderous descent. Martha, looking in dumb horror from her position upon the trunk, could hear the crash of the hateful steel against the bones of the one who, as she now knew for the first time, was more than life to her.

But even as the blade was in mid-air Washington turned with a mocking laugh and by a dexterous movement of his sword cut the Indian's right arm off near the shoulder. With howls of terror the two savages who were still able to do so turned and fled, leaving only the dastardly Arnold to be dealt with. Then Colonel Washington cried out in triumph:

"Save fast!"

The traitor's face was as white as death, his knees shook, and the sword that he tried to flourish fell from his nerveless hand. Then Washington hitched up his trousers, drew in a long breath and gave the villain a kick as he was turning to flee.

A few minutes later the tall, handsome colonel and the beautiful, blushing young woman stood in front of the little fort, and she was saying:

"Ah, but you must give me time to think. Perhaps I may learn some day to lo— Land sakes, what was that?"

Something had crashed through a tree and fallen with a horrible thud a short distance away in the direction of the river.

"Arnold has just come down," Washington calmly replied.—S. E. Kiser in Chicago Record-Herald.

Nick in the Lapel.

You who have been wearing coats and vests since childhood have perhaps never stopped to consider the nick in the lapel. A controversy is now in progress on the other side of the Atlantic as to how this originated. The following ingenious explanation has at length been offered.

It is said that when Napoleon first felt the sway of ambition he tried to implicate General Moreau in Pichegru's conspiracy. Moreau had been Napoleon's superior and was exceedingly popular, but under the circumstances, with the man of destiny in power, it was not safe to express publicly sympathy with Moreau. His admirers and supporters quietly agreed to nick their coat lapels to show their fellowship, the outlines of the coat after the nick was made, forming the letter M. Moreau was exiled by Napoleon and lived in Morrisville, Pa.

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