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A WEIGHTY MATTER

(By Evelyn Grogan, in "Ladies' Field.")

Jack Mansfield was changing a fly, and Kathleen stood watching the preparations for luring the wily trout. Billy, her small brother, lay on the bank amusing himself with buckshot and a catapult, potting a rock lying in mid-stream. Jack wore a stubborn look. "Surely, Kathleen," he said, "you are coming in my car to the races to-morrow?" "It's no use, Jack, I can't. Claud Myles is taking me in his. He offered to include Aunt Jane and Billy, and I could not refuse." "My car only holds two, so let him take the family and you come with me."

"My dear Jack, be reasonable. Do you suppose he craves for Auntie and Billy?" "Fretted you have already promised me." "Oh! said Kathleen, virtuously, "that would be acting a lie." "Talk of the — there he is!" exclaimed Jack. "I never saw him fishing here before." "Claud Myles looked up sharply, and his eyes became general, though confined to matters piscatorial. Suddenly Jack beheld himself of a wicked ruse, and instead of acting a lie deliberately uttered one. "What time did you say I had better bring the car to-morrow?" he asked, blandly.

Kathleen raised her expressive eyes quickly to his and still more swiftly cast them to the ground. "Whenever you like," she replied, "but I don't want to lose the first race."

Claud Myles looked up sharply from the fly-book over which he was poring. "I think you have forgotten, Miss Stewart, that it was arranged I was to fetch you."

"Can there be a mistake?" said Jack. "Surely you promised to come with me!"

"On the contrary," said Myles, hotly, "Miss Stewart, her aunt and Billy have all settled to go in my car."

"Then we both claim you," cried Jack. "So make your choice now." "This is too absurd," and Kathleen looked first at one and then at the other. "I must have made a most foolish mistake. Did I really accept your kind invitation, Mr. Myles?"

"Of course, over ten days ago." "Then I must have forgotten." Jack, can it be possible I thought of coming with you?"

"Yes," he replied, sinfully, "I am quite sure you did."

"What shall I do? In any case it appears I must break a promise."

"Draw lots," suggested Billy from his bed in the grass. "Good idea, then neither of you can be offended."

She stretched out her hand to take two clover stalks offered by Billy. "Whoever draws the longest shall be my chauffeur to-morrow," she continued gaily.

"No," said Jack, "if chance must decide let us have a little skill thrown in. We will fish for the pleasure of your company, and whoever catches the heaviest basket of trout shall claim you."

"Agreed," said Myles. "Agreed," said Kathleen, "and when you return I will weigh the fish in your presence. A time for leaving off having been decided upon the fisherman got to work."

"I won't stay and watch," said Kathleen, turning away, but will leave you to your own devices. Au revoir till weighing-in time. Billy, I suppose you are not coming with me."

Billy shook his head. "I'll watch Jack," he said, and Kathleen felt that Billy knew where her inclinations lay.

In silence the boy hovered beside the fisherman of his choice till a sudden tightening of the line and a cheerful little screech of the reel gave evidence that a trout had met its fate.

Billy removed it from the hook. "That's one to the good," he remarked. "I'm frightfully keen for you to beat that other chap."

"Why?" "Because Katie wants to come with you. Wouldn't it be sport to see his face if he loses and has to cart Auntie and me to the races without her?"

"How brutal you are in your ideas of sport, young man," said Jack, casting his line once more. "I simply roared with laughter inside," continued Billy, "when you and Katie were humbugging him. She wouldn't have done that if she hadn't wanted to go in your car."

"Well, it all depends on the fish, Billy. Hi! here's another to swell my bag. Oh, rot, it's only about three inches long."

"Better than nothing," said Billy, philosophically, "an ounce may make all the difference in the long run."

The fishermen were lucky. There was a very fair take on and the trout were rising freely. Jack's basket began to feel considerably heavier.

Billy looked into the basket. "Pretty equal, except for Jack's big one. I believe you'll lose, Mr. Myles."

"Wait till we weigh in, time enough then. Run away now, I hate being watched."

"Cross as a weasel," muttered the boy to himself, as he turned and left the unscolding Myles. "Doesn't like being beaten."

Before he had gone far Billy changed his mind, and determined for a while to watch Myles unscen. He crept through the hedge, and quietly retracing his steps, peeped and witnessed a little scene of which he most certainly was not supposed to be a spectator.

A local countryman was strolling towards Myles equipped with a clumsy rod and rough tackle, evidently homeward bound. Over his shoulder he carried an old fish basket, which he removed when meeting Myles.

"Any sport, sir?" he asked. "Pretty good. And you?" "Real lucky, sir. I ain't been out long; but just as I was leaving off a grand one took hold."

He knelt down and turned the speckled fish out upon the grass. Among them lay a fine trout. "Two pounds or more, I reckon, sir."

"Wish I had your good fortune," said Myles, enviously. "Take him, if you like, sir. I want some for my missus's tea, but you're welcome to the big 'un. Lots of gentlemen is glad to catch 'em on the bank, so as to make a good show when they get home."

To do him justice, Claud Myles tried to resist the temptation, but the man pressed, and argued that "it was a real gentleman's fish," and finally, when he saw signs of wavering, stuffed it into Myles's basket.

"Don't mention this to anybody," said Myles, looking very uncomfortable. "The fact is—well, ah!—I don't want a sou to know I didn't catch it. Mr. Mansfield is a little higher up, and I would like to have more than he has, just for fun, you know."

"I understand, sir, I've played this game before. Thank you, sir—much obliged, I'm sure, sir," and the vendor, of trout pocketed the proffered coin, and began to gather up the remainder of his fish.

Billy bolted, and though he had taken up his position with Jack by the time the countryman hove in sight, his lips had been sealed concerning what he had seen.

"Good evening, sir, said the man. "A gentleman down the river has got a fine haul, a real good trout he've creeled. I suppose you couldn't do with a few extra ones to fill up your basket? I'd spare some, although my missus do look for them."

"No, thanks," said Jack, "much obliged, but I don't want more than I can catch myself."

The same blandishments were again tried, but no change was to be got out of Jack. The man went away grumbling, and remarked, "it was difficult to do business with gents, and he,"—Jack—"was as bad as the other gentleman who would buy nothing neither."

"The lying old scamp," thought Billy.

"Here, Bill," cried Jack, hoisting the basket off his shoulder, "collar hold of this; I'm beginning to feel the weight."

The boy took it eagerly, for an idea suddenly struck him—how he might possibly get the best of Myles.

"And no one will guess," he thought, "not even Kathie."

He sat down at some little distance under a tree, while Jack continued patiently to thrash the river.

From the moment Myles had transferred his purchase into the basket, the take ceased, and no trout fished away till time was up, when they again joined one another.

"Which basket weighs the most?" asked Jack, balancing the two together. "By Jove! it's a jolly close thing. Billy, you were right. I shall bless my small fry, for, I believe, after all, it is a matter of ounces."

Kathleen met them as they advanced towards the house. She also essayed to find out which basket weighed the most.

"Whoever would have imagined it could possibly be such a near thing?" she cried.

Each fisherman deposited his shining trophies upon a large dish. It was a moment of supreme excitement when the slippery fish slid into the scales. Claud Myles had the greater number, so his were weighed first. Down went the scales, and Kathleen, now adding, now removing, weight after weight, at last declared that they scaled exactly 8lb. 9oz.

Myles removed his fish, smiling somewhat triumphantly as he eyed Jack's smaller number.

Billy darted forward, begging to be allowed to place Jack's trout into the scale. One by one, he put them in, as if to prolong the agony. The big one first, the medium next, and so on till only three were left. Slowly he lifted one of these important fish and laid it with its fellows. Surely—surely the scales trembled. Breathlessly the last but one followed, and the weights gently rose, causing the fish to remain balanced midway. With an exuberant grin spreading all over his countenance, Billy flung down the little three-inch trout, and down came the scale with a bump in favor of Jack.

"Fewer fish, but better condition," explained the conqueror. "The prize goes to Jack," shouted Billy, gleefully.

Could there have been a hidden meaning in his words that only Jack and Kathleen understood? "Fairly beaten," said Myles, gloomily.

A Difficulty for George V.

When Japan banished all Catholics from its shores it granted the Dutch a privilege of very restricted trade, and lest any Catholic should share in this, so histories tell us, to trample on the Crucifix. Dutchmen and Englishmen, too, having just finished half a century or so of Crucifix-trampling in Europe, found in the East; for Englishmen occasionally managed to buy at the appointed price a little bit of the Japan trade. Nevertheless, the ceremony, as a preliminary to huckstering, is so revolting to any decent mind that modern Englishmen and Dutchmen call the fact in question, doing their utmost to show it to be a fiction of malignant Spaniards and Portuguese.

The Shoguns thought lightly of salt-encrusted, sea-battered mariners who would deny their God for a little gain; and one can conceive them exacting the ceremony and despoising its performers. Could they, on their side, have understood a Christian nation requiring a similar ceremony from its sovereigns? Yet the Declaration against Transubstantiation imposed upon its sovereigns by the British Parliament, is an analogue of the Crucifix-trampling demanded from the traders by the Shoguns. These said to the merchants: "As some of you may be secretly Christians,—to these persecutions princes Christian and Catholic were one and the same—"

"Prove you are not by insulting what Christians most revere." Parliament, as Mr. Gardner the historian observes, says to the king: "You may be a secret Catholic. Prove you are not by outraging what Catholics hold most sacred, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, transubstantiation, and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Be good enough to say plumply that with regard to all these Catholics are idolaters." The traders obeyed Parliament. And traders and kings found, no doubt, a common justification; they were simply making their own teaching and practice of Protestantism. This holds the Crucifix to be an idol no less than the Host, or the Blessed Virgin as venerated in the Catholic Church; and the trader manifested by his act that abhorrence of idolatry the king expressed in words. They, then, who are forced by a sense of decency to take from the memory of dead traders the stain of Crucifix-trampling, should be compelled by the same sense of decency to free a living king from the obligation of reviling Catholic faith and worship.

Parliament goes further than the Shoguns did, and requires the king to declare that he has no dispensation from the Pope to lie. The Japanese intellect is acute. Had this ingenious device to secure absolute candor been suggested to a Shogun, he would possibly have answered: "To limit the possibility of such a dispensation could be to nullify the test. If the Pope can permit his servants first to lie and then to violate their religion that men may believe the lie, he can also give them permission to lie about such a dispensation and to deny its existence. I decline to stultify myself. Either the test alone or no test at all." Should one have insisted that the English demand such an assurance from their king, the answer would have been to the point: "Only barbarians could accept one capable of lying as their king; only a barbarian could wear a crown after such humiliation; only fools could believe a suspected liar assuring them that he does not lie."

The shameful test and still more shameful guarantees originated in the reign of Charles II. He was secretly a Catholic, his brother and heir, the Duke of York, was such openly. The Protestantism of the country took alarm. The Test Act passed in 1673 required from every public officer the oath of royal supremacy and a declaration against transubstantiation, as pledges of his renunciation of the Catholic religion and of its visible head. The Duke had to resign his office of Grand High Admiral. His enemies were able to procure his temporary banishment. But they could not touch the royal dignity. Strong as they were, Parliament and the country would allow them neither to exclude the Duke from the succession, nor to impose the test upon the crown with a view to taking it on succeeding to the throne.

Two years later the first outrageous story of Popish plots, De Luzancy's, fell to the ground. But in 1678 Titus Oates appeared, and, supported by Shaftesbury, kept the people for three years on the verge of insanity with his absurd perjuries of plots, murders and Papal dispensations. To this vile wretch's calumnies is due the offensive wording of the royal declaration which, when the Revolution had degraded the majesty of the crown, was introduced into the Act of Settlement of 1701; and has since been uttered by every English sovereign.

Catholic relief bills have abolished the oath and declaration for subjects generally, and the situation to-day is the exact reverse of what it was at the accession of James II. Then every subject in office had to take the Test; the sovereign was exempt. Now virtually every subject is exempt; only the king and one or two officers of the crown intimately connected with his official person have to take it.

Why does it survive? This is not an easy question to answer. We have shown that, if the theory it involves be true, it is absolutely worthless. On the other hand, the Act of Set-

Sweden's Sobriety Vote. The result of the plebiscite organized by the Swedish temperance societies on the question of total and permanent prohibition in Sweden is overwhelmingly in favor of prohibition. Every man and woman was entitled to vote, and the figures were: For prohibition, 1,846,249, or 54 per cent. of the population, against, 16,471.

Had Weak Back. Would Often Lie in Bed Few Days, Scarcely Able To Turn Himself. Mrs. Ann Schware, Black Point, N.B. writes:—"For years I was troubled with weak back. Oftentimes I have lain in bed for days, being scarcely able to turn myself, and I have also been a great sufferer while trying to perform my household duties. I had doctors attending me without avail and tried liniments and plasters, but nothing seemed to do me any good. I was about to give up in despair when my husband induced me to use Doan's Kidney Pills, and after using two boxes I am now well and able to do my work. I am positive Doan's Kidney Pills are all that you claim for them, and I would advise all kidney sufferers to give them a fair trial."

Doan's Kidney Pills are a purely vegetable medicine, realizing quick, permanent relief, without any after effects. A medicine that will stimulate your kidneys and all forms of kidney and bladder disease. Price, 50 cents per box, or 24 boxes, \$12.00, at all druggists or The T. Milliken Co., Lowell, Toronto, Ont. In ordering specify "Doan's."

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ment which requires the king to be a Protestant, and forbids him and his heirs to embrace the Catholic faith or to marry a Catholic, under penalty of deposition in one case, of exclusion in the other, amply guarantees the Protestant succession. Its language, offensive and absolutely unwarranted as every reasonable person knows, is a scandal to the Catholics of the Empire. It is an insult to the king, making him a liar by putting into his mouth words that are not true; for what ever Catholic worship may be it is not idolatrous, as Dr. Johnson sanely observed more than a hundred years ago. It is a further insult to the king inasmuch as it compels him to declare solemnly that he is not a liar, and to stultify himself by offering his word as the only guarantee of his truth. There are a few madmen who still think it a bulwark against Rome. But its Protestant supporters generally, English, Scotch and Irish, objecting not only to its abrogation but also to any change in its terms, do so, we believe, through their inherited dislike of Catholicism. They have a vague notion that, though many Catholics of their acquaintance are good fellows, the religion as such is getting to be too cumbersome. It ought to recognize its inferiority to Protestantism; but instead of this it asserts its superiority. They would not make conditions more onerous for us; but when there is question of relief on its own merits that notion produces the adverse vote. And so all efforts made during the last reign for a moderating of the language of the declaration were fruitless. When Mr. Redmond's Bill was withdrawn last year because the narrow majority of ten by which it was referred to Committee could not be depended on to carry it through, the minority contained men of the best families of the three kingdoms, Liberal as well as Conservative, who, if asked why they had voted against the Bill, would have found it hard to give a reasonable answer.

There is some talk of a change before George V. meets Parliament. They say he desires it. Certainly Catholics demand it. Lawyers find constitutional difficulties. A change requires an Act of Parliament. An Act is effective only when it has received royal assent. The king cannot give the assent before he has made the declaration. This, however, has to be proved, and we think it will not be hard to find examples since the Revolution, of sovereigns exercising analogous constitutional functions before making the declaration. Anyhow, it is impossible to solve a constitutional difficulty. The Revolution and Pitt's Regency Bill are examples. Parliament is about to reassemble. Will anything be done? We can answer only in words which have become classical: "Wait and see."—Henry Woods, S.J., in America.

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