

"Picture come back," he said.

"Where?"

"Here."

"Well?"

"Guy said he wasn't goin' to be flamdoodled. Orders was to leave it, and if it was refused again he'd make trouble."

"Well?" said Mr. Paxter.

"So I signed for it."

"Jimmy," said Mr. Paxter, "you're fired."

Jimmy turned on his heel. "All right," he replied, and was gone. Five minutes afterwards Mr. Paxter rang again.

"Where's Jimmy?"

"Just left."

"Chase after him and bring him back."

In a few minutes the unrepentant Jimmy stood before him.

"Jimmy," said his boss kindly, "you needn't go. . . . Say, would you like the picture for yourself?"

"Whaddud I do wiv it, anyway?"

"Why, you fool, hang it up."

"No," said Jimmy, "maw wouldn't let me."

"Jimmy," said Mr. Paxter, you can stay fired." He sat for several minutes after Jimmy's final exit; then, in a spasm of fear, he darted into the outer office. All his clerks plunged into work immediately, but Mr. Paxter heeded them not. There, in the corner, by the door, was the picture, still unwrapped, and Jimmy, in a flash of inspiration, had turned its incriminating face to the wall!

It was a hot morning, and the picture, as well as being heavy, was large and awkward. Nevertheless, and despite the fact that he had fourteen clerks, Mr. Paxter caught hold of it and lifted it.

"Can I help you, Mr. Paxter?" inquired one clerk.

"No!" shouted his irate boss, through whose mind flitted the conviction that perhaps Jimmy had introduced the staff to Venus before reversing her. The clerk hung back, surprised. Mr. Paxter struggled alone

with Venus. His way led past the young stenographer's desk, and at one moment he had a scare that she would rise to let him go by, as he carefully carried the picture with his back to her. But at last the hated thing was safely in his room, where he swore at it something fearful.

Strange, the number of visitors Mr. Paxter had that morning! Not only Kendrick Evans, Shotover, Brasted, Stevens, and many others, who came in on the most transparent excuses, but also unexpected ones, all of whom glanced pointedly at the unusual spectacle, a picture with its face to the wall in a real estate agent's room. Finally Mr. Paxter hung a big blue print over it.

Instead of going to lunch at 12.30, as usual, he waited until one o'clock, when he knew that all but two of his staff would be out. He telephoned for a wagon, and, having wrapped the Venus, carried her out himself and instructed the driver to take the parcel to the railway station, and leave it in the parcels office till called for. As he went to lunch, immediately afterwards, he passed Kendrick Evans, who laughed in his face.

The adventures of the Calgary Venus (accelerated, no doubt, by Messrs. Evans *et al*) were exceedingly rapid thereafter. Instead of leaving her at the station, the driver—instigated, possibly, by Evans—took it to Mr. Paxter's house. Mr. Paxter's servant telephoned her master to know if she should accept it, and being told "no," back came the picture to the McSporran Block, whence it was re-directed to the Acme Auction Emporium. Mr. Peabody deemed it desirable to return it to its owner, who then gave it in succession to his chief clerk, a Presbyterian minister, and an insurance agent, all of whom, when they saw it, refused it indignantly, the insurance agent especially. At 5.27 it was still in Mr. Paxter's office, re-hidden under a blue print (for the brown paper had given out long since), and at 5.30 Mr. Paxter went