

JAY, A CALIFORNIAN STORY.

It was at a rather late hour in the evening, about a year ago, that the Piedmont, arriving at the ferry-landing, at the foot of Market street, deposited, among other travellers, a handsome young fellow, broad-shouldered, bronzed, and manly, but with much of the air of a stranger about him. This latter characteristic, however, was amply accounted for by the fact that he had just arrived from Northern Mexico and had never before set foot outside his native country. He betook himself to the Palace Hotel, and soon was sleeping the sleep that comes to a man who has been shut up for forty-eight hours in a drawing-room car after twenty-four years of active life on a cattle ranch.

At seven the next morning he appeared at breakfast, and later on he strolled down to California street and soon found the insurance office of Mr. George Russell, to whom he had a letter of introduction. Fortunately, a sleepy porter was opening the office for the day, and from him the stranger learned that Mr. Russell, being a young gentleman of fashion and having a nice regard for his personal comfort, would probably reach his office at about ten o'clock. So he left the letter with the porter, and, jumping on a car, spent a few hours in looking about the city.

Presently Mr. Russell appeared at the office and found, among his letters, the following, from his brother, who, some six months before, had gone down to Mexico to look after his business interests there:

DEAR GEORGE—This will introduce to you Mr. Ricardo Armstrong, who is making a visit to San Francisco, where he knows absolutely no one. I commend him to your care. Tell him around and show him the town. He is a thoroughly good fellow; his father is one of the leading men down here, having married into one of the old Spanish families about thirty years ago and since acquired several large cattle ranges up in the mountains, and he naturally has no end of money. You need not hesitate to keep him in funds if he runs short (which, he is not likely), and if you have any to spare (which is even more probable), and you can introduce him to your friends and acquaintances, for he does not cheat at cards and pays his bills with a promptness that is almost reprehensible. As to your fair friends, they will think none the worse of you if you present him; he is good-looking, as you can see for yourself, and as generous a prince as the matter of flowers or suppers, as the exigencies of the case may require. Your affectionate brother, HARRY.

Naturally, the young gentleman was received with open arms. "It is unfortunate," said Russell, "that you make your first visit to San Francisco just at this time. It is the most disagreeable part of the year here, and everybody is out of town. You would not find me here if it were not for this confounded business. However, I shall do my best to show you the sights and make your visit a pleasant one. Meanwhile, we may as well go out and get some lunch."

A quarter of four later, the two new friends were seated at one of the little tables in a swell restaurant. They had a rather elaborate lunch, judging by the bill, which the visitor would not let Russell look at; and, after that, Russell took the young cattle man around to his father's tailor's, his bootmaker's, and other shops, where he left considerable orders. In each of these places, as they were leaving, Russell managed to take the shop-keeper aside for a moment and intimate to him that Mr. Armstrong was going to be a very good customer, and that, by the way, "all his account" might be allowed to run a while longer—"one good turn, you know," and much more to the same effect.

Russell took the stranger around to his club that evening, and gave him a very good dinner—very good for a dollar a plate, without wine. Then they strolled into another room and had a *posse coffee* and a cigar. A number of Russell's friends dropped in, and had a cigar, and the cattle man was formally presented to them. At about nine o'clock they adjourned to the rooms of one of the men who had an apartment near by, and indulged in a quiet game of poker, with the result that, when the party separated, every one was "broke" except the young gentleman, who was seventeen hundred dollars ahead—five or six hundred in coin and bills and the remainder in I.O.U.'s.

"By the way, Armstrong," said Russell, "as they were leaving, 'let me give you a card to the club. You will find it a great convenience, and, besides, you can meet our friends there and get into a little game almost any evening."

"Thanks, you are very good," returned the young gentleman, and Russell's listening friends plucked up spirit at the prospect of revenge, only to become savage and dejected again as he added, "but I really don't care for poker. I think I shall spend most of my evenings at the theaters."

Mr. George Russell caught it hot and heavy the next day when he strolled into his club at lunch time.

"Where the devil did you pick up that jay you sprung on us last night?" demanded one. "He had hayseed in his hair and aces in his sleeves. I'll take my oath."

"Did you get on to his diamonds?" snarled another. "Worst taste of any man I ever saw brought into this club. Why, he looks like a country bar-keep."

"Oh, let go!" said Russell. "He's all right. My brother Harry vouches for him—says he's a big cattleman in Northern Mexico and has no end of rocks. But I must confess it is rather nasty—he's ahead about seventeen hundred good California dollars, and it he doesn't care for poker, I don't see how the mischief we are to get them back."

From that evening the young gentleman was marked for vengeance by the joyous band to whom Russell had introduced him. They always alluded to him as the jay, and declaimed loudly, even in his presence, on their hard luck in allowing themselves to be "done up in that shape by a rank outsider." He was courteous and kindly, however, constantly inviting the entire crowd to little dinners and taking their jibes in good part. The result was that they made him the victim of all sorts of practical jokes. The third night after his arrival they took him to a South-of-Market street variety show, telling him it was one of the swellest theaters in town, and introduced him to the distressingly light-hearted young women there as leading members of the Daly company.

Russell and three of his friends nearly fainted with horror at the sight of the two ladies in travelling dress, who were writing letters at a little table, Mrs. Pollock herself and her younger sister, Miss Bessie Barton! As to the cattleman and one other—a young rouser named Arthur Clark, whom Russell would never have

thought of presenting to Mrs. Pollock—they imagined nothing unusual in the situation, for they had never before seen Mrs. Pollock or her sister.

"What a delightful surprise!" cried Mrs. Pollock, a jolly widow of thirty-odd. "Why, you are veritable wizards. We were not to arrive until to-morrow, Bessie and I, and it is only by the merest chance that we are here twenty-four hours ahead of time. How did you find out we had arrived? We have seen no one and told no one we were coming."

"Yes—er—quite so—I shall explain presently," said the badly flustered Russell; then, plunging boldly in, he continued: "But first allow me to present two friends whom—it is not quite usual, perhaps, but—it was a mere chance you know, the merest chance in the world. And one of them has just arrived from Mexico—such a distance, you know. Mr. Ricardo Armstrong begs that you will excuse his not appearing *en masse*."

Mrs. Pollock could not imagine the cause of the intense embarrassment of Russell and the men she knew, who turned white and red by turns, while great beads of perspiration stood out on their faces. Being a woman of tact, however, she thought to put them at their ease by turning to the young cattleman and saying:

"Mexico is such a distance from here," she said. "Did you have a pleasant journey, Mr. Armstrong?"

"Quite pleasant, madam, I thank you," said the young stranger, with a bow, that dated from the last century. Then he drew the watch from his pocket, removed the paper that enveloped it, drew it from its box, and placing it in the hand of the astonished Mrs. Pollock, he continued, in the midst of a dead silence:

"As I have for the first time, madam, the honor of paying my respects to you, permit me to conform to an old custom."

"An old custom?" repeated Mrs. Pollock, her eyes wandering over the horror-stricken faces about her. "I do not understand."

Poor Russell, who by this time had not a dry stick on him, stepped up to her and whispered in her ear: "Take it. You would wound him horribly if you refused. I shall explain later. The poor fellow thinks he is acting quite properly."

"Truly, Mr. Armstrong," said Mrs. Pollock, "you overwhelm me with your kindness. We San Franciscans are not accustomed to such a thing."

Meanwhile Clark thought he was witnessing the farce arranged beforehand with Marie, and was enjoying it all hugely. Unable longer to restrain his admiration, he sauntered over to Mrs. Pollock.

"Glad, girlie, I must compliment you on your style. I was not on to the whole thing. I would have been taken in myself. Why, with your looks and your style, there's no saying where you'll end up."

As to the young gentleman, who did not catch much of this scene, his brown eyes were centered on Miss Bessie Barton. Nothing so disarming as a refined and pretty blonde as the constant sight of the dusky women of Mexico, and Mrs. Pollock's sister was a peachy vision of delight.

By this time, Mrs. Pollock, who knew, by long and short, the lengths to which George Russell would go to carry out a practical joke, had got that man into a corner of the room.

"Well, sir," she said, her blue eyes flashing ominously, "what last folly has that rattlebrain of yours led you into?"

"Poor Russell! I was not going to let it but to make a clean breast of it and throw himself on Mrs. Pollock's mercy. At first she was inclined to be angry and turn the whole crew out of doors. But the adventure struck her as droll at bottom, and, beside, Russell and his accomplices looked so utterly pitiful that she judged them sufficiently punished. After all, the young gentleman was the only one who had a right to be angry at this school-boy prank; and that is just what he was on the point of becoming when he discovered the *role* he had been led to play. But Mrs. Pollock smoothed it all over, for she was as wise as well as a charming woman. She forgave them all on condition that there should be no further words about it."

The young gentleman soon became a great favorite with Mrs. Pollock. She conceived a great liking for him, made him an intimate at her home, and launched him in society, where, indeed, he was presently quite in his element. Perhaps she had her designs on him. At any rate, in the spring, Grace church was the scene of a very pretty wedding which united the lives of her sister, Bessie Barton, and the wealthy young gentleman.

The only one who was not forgiven was poor Marie, who was dismissed that very evening. So in all ages have the lesser ones paid for the follies of the greater. —The Argonaut.

SOME SNUFF STORIES.

Amusing Experiences of Scotchmen who took "the snuff-box."

Some of the snuff experiences of the Scotch are not without humour. There was the minister—somehow most Scotch snuff stories have a minister in them—who set forth to kirk one very windy day, thinking over his discourse as he went; when he got half way, and had reached the thirdly in the sermon, his chain of thought missed a link; to regain it he took out his snuff-box and rapped it, but the wind was in his face, and as he could not take a pinch to windward he turned round, and enjoyed one, two, three; hah! the missing phrase came in the sermon went on smoothly, and so did the minister, who had forgotten to turn again to face the wind, and by-and-by astonished his servant by walking into the house instead of into the kirk two miles away!

Snuff, of course, had some virtues. At Grathie church to wit, it is reported that a stranger lady came one Sabbath and sat in a large pew with certain farmers and their wives. Just before the sermon a big snuff-mull was handed round, which the lady passed without helping herself to. Tak' the snuff-mull men, I think, the snuff-mull holder in a hoarse whisper: "Ye kinna ken oor meenister; ye'll need it afore he's done."

Dean Ramsay has several strange stories to tell of snuff-taking among the Scots. "When the text had been given out," he says, "it was usual for the elder branches of the congregation to hand about their Bibles amongst the younger members, marking the place and calling their attention to the passage. During service another handing about was frequent amongst the seniors, and that was a circulation of the snuff-mull or snuff-box. Indeed, I have heard of the same practice in an Episcopal church, and particularly in one case of an ordination, where the bishop took his pinch of snuff, and handed the mug to go round amongst the clergy assembled for the solemn occasion within the altar rails."

In another place the Dean tells us of the honest Highlander who saw at the hotel door a magnificent man in full tartan, and noticed with much admiration the wide dimensions of the nostrils in a fine upturned nose. The Highlander, a genuine lover of "snuff-shin," went to the stranger, and as his most complimentary act offered him his mull for a pinch; but the stranger drew himself up, and said rather haughtily, "I never take snuff." "Oh," said the other, "that's a peety, for there's grand accommodation!"

Another of Ramsay's reminiscences tells us how a severe snow storm in the Highlands had lasted for several weeks, and stopped all communication between neighboring hamlets, and reduced the snuff-boxes to their last pinch. Borrowing and begging from all the neighbors within reach were first resorted to; but when these failed, all were alike reduced to the longing which unwillingly abstinent snuff-takers alone know. The minister of the parish was amongst the unhappy number; the craving was so intense that study was out of the question, and he became quite restless. As a last resort the bottle was despatched through the snow to a neighboring glen, in the hope of getting a supply, but he came back as unsuccessful as he went. "What's to be done, John?" was the minister's pathetic inquiry. John shook his head, as much as to say he could not tell; but immediately thereafter started up, as if a new idea had occurred to him. He came back in a few minutes, crying, "Hae!" The minister, too eager to be scrutinizing, took a long, deep pinch, and then said, "Whaur did you get it?" "I soupt the poupp!" was John's expressive reply. The minister's superfluous Sabbath snuff had not been swept up in vain.—W. J. Gordon, in the Leisure Hour.

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The economic world, the late Professor Hodgson, again, was made to declare, "was a chaos of discordant and conflicting demons." The professor really said "atoms," which was more scientific and less satanic. Mr. W. E. Forster must have been amazed to learn that he was held responsible for the astounding statement "intoxication is the best thing in England," whereas he had said, "intoxication is the besetting sin of England."—Cassell's Saturday Journal.

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Aside from the cost of the great buildings at the world's fair, which will not far from \$7,000,000, the following are among the sums which have been or will be spent in preparation of the exposition grounds: Grading and filling, \$450,000; landscape gardening, \$323,500; viaducts and bridges, \$125,000; piers, \$70,000; waterway improvements, \$225,000; railways, \$500,000; steam plant, \$800,000; electric lighting, \$1,500,000; statuary, \$100,000; vases, lamps, etc., \$50,000; lake front adornment, \$200,000; water supply and sewerage, \$600,000; other expenses, \$1,000,000; total \$5,943,500. The total expense of organization, administration and operation of the Exposition is estimated at nearly \$6,000,000. This takes no account of the sums to be spent by the government, the states or foreign nations.

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Oh, what some power the gentle gleam
To see ourselves as others see us;
It was free merriment a blunder free us;
And foolish notion.

Power to avoid the worry, the
steam of wash day, the greater
part of the hard work—the power
to get the best satisfaction is given
to all who use SURPRISE Soap
on wash day. SURPRISE Soap

has these remarkable qualities—you can see yourself as others see.

MAY COPPIN, St. Thomas, writes:—"We came from England about nine years ago, and we have been using several kinds of soap. Since we began to use the Surprise Soap we like it better than any other. We would not be without two or three dollars worth in the house."

MRS. ELIZABETH CAMPBELL, Turin, N. S., says:—"I won't use any other soap but Surprise. It is the best soap for all purposes, especially when water is scarce."

You would free yourself from "many a blunder and foolish notion" by using Surprise Soap.

SURPRISE SOAP is pure Soap.

READ the directions on the wrapper.

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At the same time, the attentive transcriber should not have done his work mechanically, but made the third line run—

The right, when others curse, to bless.

The economic world, the late Professor Hodgson, again, was made to declare, "was a chaos of discordant and conflicting demons." The professor really said "atoms," which was more scientific and less satanic. Mr. W. E. Forster must have been amazed to learn that he was held responsible for the astounding statement "intoxication is the best thing in England," whereas he had said, "intoxication is the besetting sin of England."—Cassell's Saturday Journal.

Two centuries ago the traveller in Japan, had such been asked, would have been asked the following declaration in Chinese characters: "As long as the sun shall warm the earth, let no christian be so bold as to come to Japan; and let all know that the King of Spain himself, or the christian God, or the Great God of all, if He violate this command, shall pay for it with his head."

When Japan Was in Darkness.

Two centuries ago the traveller in Japan, had such been asked, would have been asked the following declaration in Chinese characters: "As long as the sun shall warm the earth, let no christian be so bold as to come to Japan;