

A VERY NARROW ESCAPE.

BY COL. WILLIAMS, M.P. Colonel Augustus Choppleigh, late of her Majesty's Indian army, lived in stately residence upon his snug little estate in one of the pleasantest of the home counties.

From an outdoor seat, he viewed the colonial seemed to possess most things which are generally considered to constitute mundane happiness. His liver had survived pawnees, curries and a tropical sun; his income was ample; he belonged to two or three good clubs; he had an excellent cellar of wine; he was respected by his neighbors and worshiped by his tenants, and he rode to cover on the best of cattle.

The first was the possession of a ne'er-do-well son, and the second was the non-possession of a wife. Augustus Choppleigh, jr., although a ne'er-do-well in the eyes of a parent who was rigid and precise, was, after all, but an ordinary, "every-day young man."

But in the eyes of the colonial all these little peculiarities were heinous crimes, and the poor old gentleman, as he pondered in the solitude of what he called his "study," saw very clearly that unless the young man was settled in life with a well-to-do, well-connected girl, he would infallibly follow, as heading paces, that broad road which leads to destruction.

It was some six months ago that the society of his son and not caring very specially for that society when offered, it was hardly to be wondered that the colonial yearned for a suitable partner in his exile.

The memory of the departed Mrs. Choppleigh could hardly be said to be green, for she had succumbed to an aggravated attack of jungle fever some twenty years before, when Augustus, jr., was but a strapping lad in pink trousers and bare legs. It might be said that the remedy was easy.

Why didn't the colonial take unto himself a second Mrs. Choppleigh? There were plenty of eligible spinsters who had jumped up as an offer from such a fresh-faced, sunny, wealthy gentleman who was little beyond the prime of life.

tell you she's all that could be wished you must believe. "Of course I will. Of course I do!" roared the old colonial. "Who is she?" "Well, I don't want to give you her name just now, for many reasons, but you can take my word for it that she is nobody to be ashamed of," said Gus.

"All right, all right; I won't ask any more questions. So long as you are going to steady down with a good lady-like wife I don't care. By God, Gus, I thought you were going to be a millstone round my neck for the remainder of my life. And now, my boy, you've astonished me, I'm going to astonish you. What do you think is about the most unlikely thing I should do?"

"Glad to hear it," replied Gus. "Or sell your orchids, or—" "No, nothing of the kind," said the colonial, chuckling. "I'm—I'm going to be married."

"The son affected the greatest astonishment. The colonial continued: 'But look here, my boy, I've done before with your property—and when I say I am going to be married I mean that I have my eye on someone, and I rather think that—when I announce her a retrograde eye on me. I'm not such an old bird, eh?'"

"Not a bit of it," replied Gus; "and may I ask you the fortunate object of your attentions?" "Well," answered the colonial, laughing, "it's a good name, but to tell you, you dog, as you keep me in the dark about your immorality, but I will do you good. Tell me, brown hair, brown eyes?"

"Yes, yes—she's the one! She's going to be—Mrs. Choppleigh, the second," said the colonial, rubbing his hands gleefully. "I think—ah—what I can screw up my glands I shall speak to her to-morrow."

That evening the Rev. Alwyn Vanjohn received an unexpected visitor in the shape of the desperate aspect of affairs the young man had resolved to face the terrible parson, as he believed him to be, and to lay the whole state of affairs before him.

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Continuation of the 'A VERY NARROW ESCAPE' story, detailing the colonial's search for a wife and the challenges he faces.

Continuation of the 'A VERY NARROW ESCAPE' story, focusing on the colonial's interactions with his son and the parson.

Continuation of the 'A VERY NARROW ESCAPE' story, describing the colonial's financial struggles and the impact of the market.

Continuation of the 'A VERY NARROW ESCAPE' story, detailing the colonial's efforts to secure a future for his son.

Continuation of the 'A VERY NARROW ESCAPE' story, focusing on the colonial's final decisions and the resolution of his problems.

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